

**The exploration of innovative experiences in the hotel
industry: How are hotel organisations marketing
innovative experiences to target the Millennial
generation?**

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ABSTRACT

The importance of innovation as the essential driver of sustained success has been amply demonstrated in the hotel industry. Most hotel innovation research has focused on technological innovation, while few studies have attempted to investigate how hotels market innovative experiences (Orfila-Sintes & Mattsson, 2009). Furthermore, even fewer studies have explored hotel innovation experience for Millennial consumers. Hence, this research explores how hotels market a brand image portraying innovative experiences. The research adopts a qualitative methodology and uses content analysis to analyse the data. The results show how hotel operators use experience innovation to appeal to the Millennial generation.

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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 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.

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Date: 7.12.2020

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Chapter 1. Introduction

The purpose of this research is to explore how hotel operators use experience innovation to appeal to the Millennial generation. This chapter includes the following contents: the research background, the aim of the research, significance of the research, and an overview of the dissertation contents.

1.1 Background

In the context of increasingly fierce competition in the global market, constantly changing consumer demand, rapid technological progress, and increasing environmental uncertainty, the hotel industry has undergone tremendous changes in the past few years, and faces great challenges (Hilman & Kaliappen, 2015). Because of the fierce competition in the hotel industry, innovation is regarded as an essential means for survival and development (Agarwal et al., 2003). McDermott Christopher and Prajogo Daniel (2012) believed that the service industry needs more unique and decisive innovations to be able to cope with complex environments. Wang and Ahmed (2004) explored the many different types of innovation in organisations, such as product and service innovation, market innovation, process innovation, technological innovation, behavioural innovation, and strategic innovation. Innovation can become an effective driver for the advancement of the hotel industry, and bring indirect benefits to hotels, such as building brand image, and improving customer loyalty and attracting new customers (Ottenbacher & Gnoth, 2005).

In addition, innovation has specifically been highlighted as a way to attract more Millennial consumers. Bastawroos (2017) claimed that new forms of innovation enrich the lives of Millennials, providing them with knowledge and entertainment. Due to the increased spending power of Millennials, a large number of hotels have developed a great deal of interest in Millennials. Millennials are quick learners who can rapidly adapt to new technological innovations (Dimitriou & Blum, 2015), and they use the internet extensively. Millennials are characterised by their digital abilities and affinity with online social interaction. They enjoy online experiences, because they tend to use the internet and social media to obtain information, which plays a significant role in the tourist experience (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Social media is a means of communication among tourists. From the perspective of hotel brands, the use and analysis of social media by hotel operators is particularly important, because hotels can use social media platforms to participate in discussions to inform and influence consumers about brand information. In addition, hotels can use online marketing to create new experiences (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010), in order to attract Millennial consumers. For instance, Millennial consumers like to use Facebook or Instagram to find online word-of-mouth about hotels and travel destinations.

Therefore, hotel marketers can strategically publish the latest hotel services and activities on their hotels' social media pages to attract young consumers. Barton et al. (2012) observed that Millennials prefer a personalised consumer experience and have new ideas on how to adapt to experience innovations. Therefore, the hotel industry and its brands need to be aware of these characteristics in order to attract Millennials to participate in their business. Furthermore, innovative practices need to shift the focus from products and services to experience in order to create unique value for individual consumers (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2003).

According to Cai and Hobson (2004), brand positioning is a crucial strategy for hotels to reach their target market and consumers. Hotels need to carefully consider the needs of customers, and then meet or respond to those needs. Grönroos (2007) observed that consumers play an active role in the development of service brands. Therefore, the positive development of a hotel seems to be affected by its relationship with guests. Solomon (2015) found that Millennials believe that the relationship between them as consumers and the brands they use, is inseparable. Therefore, the hotel industry may find it useful to develop more innovative experiences to meet the needs of Millennial consumers. Hotels often have innovative products and services that could contribute towards a strong competitive advantage in the marketplace.

1.2 Aim of the Research

Due to the strong spending potential of Millennials, some hotel brands are looking for ways to attract them (Porschitz, E., & Hay, S., 2016, as cited in Bastawroos, 2017). In the rapidly changing hotel industry, attracting and retaining Millennials is important for the future development of hotels, so they need to explore the factors that interest this younger generation of consumers. It seems that brands from various hotel chains implement different approaches to creating innovative experiences. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to explore how hotel brands aim to attract Millennial consumers through innovative experiences.

1.3 Significance of the Research

According to previous studies, most of the research on innovation experience is about technological innovation and innovation performance, and few studies have examined innovative experiences in the hotel industry (Orfila-Sintes & Mattsson, 2009). For example, Orfila-Sintes and Mattsson (2009) explored innovative behaviour in the hotel industry, in terms of management, external communication, service scope and back office. However, their research did not focus on the marketing of innovations to consumer groups such as millennials.. If hotel brand marketers want long-term development, in order to gain an advantage in the market, it is important they consider innovative ways to attract millennial consumers. According to Trejos (2016), some hotel chains are already implementing innovations as well as developing new brands for this

younger generation of consumers. A review of scholarly research on Millennials shows very few studies on the hotel industry that specifically target Millennial consumers. There are many studies on Millennials as employees, but not many studies on Millennials as hotel consumers. Therefore, it is timely to undertake research on hotels' innovative experiences.

This research helps narrow the gap between Millennial generation consumers and the hotel industry. The results of the research provide suggestions for hotel brands to implement innovative experiences to attract Millennials. When hotel managers try to attract Millennials to their brands, they will have a more comprehensive understanding of different innovative experience categories. Simultaneously, this research also helps hotel brand management teams determine which strategies they may want to strengthen in their hotels to create a strong competitive advantage in the Millennial market.

1.4 Overview of the Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. This first chapter introduced and established the background, purpose, and meaning of the research, and provided an overview of the dissertation. The second chapter reviews and discusses literature on the hospitality industry experience and hotel industry experience. In addition, it also reviews the innovative experience, brand image, and definitions and characteristics of Millennial consumers. After the literature review is the methodology chapter. This chapter first defines the ontological and epistemological philosophies, then discusses the qualitative research methods used in this research and explains the steps taken in the content analysis. In addition, this chapter also introduces the use of hotel websites and social media as data sources, and the use of image analysis and text analysis used to analyse the data. Chapter 4 summarises the results and presents and discusses the analysis of the data from four sample hotels. Finally, through comparing and contrasting the innovative experiences at the four hotels, a theoretical framework of innovative experience is developed. The final chapter reviews the implications of the research and outlines its limitations before offering some suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

This chapter reviews the experience of the hospitality industry, including the types and definitions of the hospitality industry experience, and experience within the hotel industry. The chapter also reviews the literature on innovation experience and brand image. The literature on Millennial consumers, including definitions of Millennials and their characteristics, Millennials as consumers of hotels, and the innovative experiences that Millennials expect is also reviewed.

2.1 The Hospitality Experience

According to O'Gorman (2009), the hospitality industry is one of the most important industries, as it includes many aspects of service supply. The term "hospitality" is often used to describe a wide range of services, such as those for accommodation, food, leisure, meetings, and travel (Ottenbacher et al., 2009). From this perspective, the *hospitality industry* can be defined as the provision of accommodation and food or drinks to improve common prosperity (Brotherton, 1999). Nevertheless, Hemmington (2007) argued that past definitions of hospitality do not include consumer experience or needs, which are key to the success of the hospitality industry. Hemmington (2007) redefined the hospitality industry, and added "experiential" to the services offered, arguing that customers buy experience rather than service. Lockwood and Jones (2001) considered that customers have the ability to influence the hospitality experience, and the hospitality industry needs to respond to this ability. The contemporary hospitality industry is facing a consumption era in which customers are in a dominant position in the relationship between supply and demand.

Hospitality also refers to the creation of experiences (Pizam & Shani, 2009), that enables guests to feel welcomed, respected and cared for (Lashley & Morrison, 2013). According to Pizam and Shani (2009), the definition of a *hospitable experience* is the integration of performance elements into customer service to create an unforgettable experience. Teng (2011) observed that as the significance of the hospitality industry develops, making a hospitality experience for customers can improve customer satisfaction and commercial performance. In addition, Ariffin and Maghzi (2012) pointed out that interactions between front-line employees, consumers, and the physical environment, can jointly create an unforgettable experience for customers. The combination of physical environment and social interaction has developed the hospitality industry into an attractive field for developing experience (Cetin & Dincer, 2014). With the development of the economy, hospitality has now become a diversified industry, and includes commercial operations and providing generous hospitality (Teng, 2011).

2.1.1 The Hotel Experience

Ottenbacher et al. (2009) suggested that the hotel industry is a specific segment within the hospitality industry. The *provision of experience* in the context of hotels can be defined as the entertainment of visitors so they can form memorable and inviting experiences by having their physiological and emotional needs met (Hemmington, 2007). Knutson and Beck (2004) further suggested that the hotel experience encompasses the entire process from booking, to actual check-in, to settlement of the account. Ariffin and Maghzi (2012) also emphasised the undeniable importance of creating memorable experiences for hotel customers. Customers not only regard hotels as providing accommodation, but also as providing experiences. According to Berry et al. (2002), the hotel experience means providing creativity to guests. Bharwani and Jauhari (2013) pointed out that in order to effectively provide guests with an experience, hotels need to pay attention to the customer's perspective. Although hotel managers realise that it is necessary to create value for guests in the form of experience, there are still gaps in the hotel research related to the dimensions of hotel experience (Knutson et al., 2009).

2.2 Innovation Experience

The highly competitive environment of the hotel industry prompts hotel managers to seek innovative approaches to providing an effective performance. One of the core elements in this is the advancement and application of different innovations, which can become an effective driver for the improvement of the hotel industry (Dzhandzhugazova et al., 2016). The development of the hotel industry is reflected in its innovation capabilities, which ensure effective improvement of the industry (Zaitseva, 2013). *Innovation* can be defined as a new thought or a new approach to doing things (Goktan, 2005). Innovation can be the evolution from conventional products, processes, or services to progressed products, processes, or services with unique functions. Ulwick (2005) believed that innovation is a process of providing customers with new value in the form of physical products or services. According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2005), innovation can be categorised as product innovation, process innovation, marketing innovation, or organisational innovation.

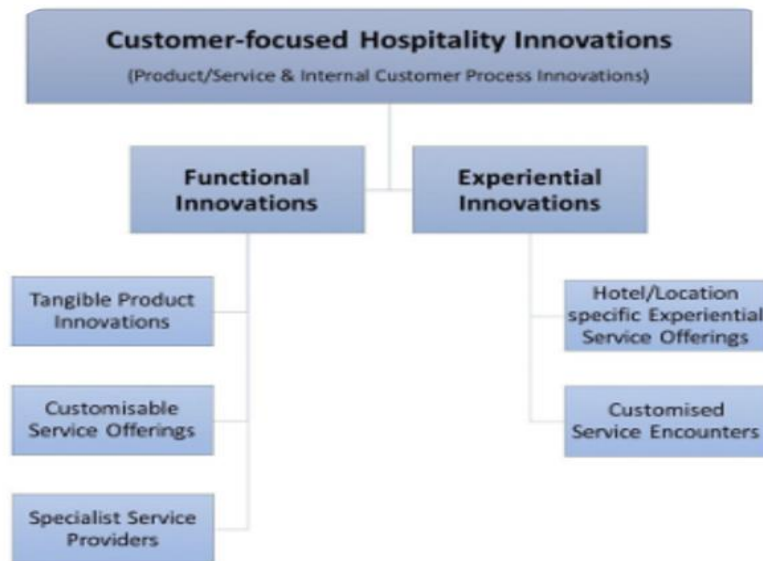
Hu et al. (2018) suggested that innovation in the hotel industry is reflected in its ability to produce various innovative products and services. Innovation has many advantages in the hotel industry, but its main benefit is to increase the competitiveness of an organisation, which helps maintain the competitiveness of services and products (Otterbacher, 2008, as cited in Tomala & Sénéchal, 2004). Ottenbacher and Gnoth (2005) discovered that innovation can bring indirect benefits to hotels, such as building a brand image, improving customer loyalty, and attracting

new customers. In addition, increased innovation makes it feasible to meet new customer needs (Tomala & Sénéchal, 2004). Innovation can keep a brand up-to-date and show continuous attention to changes in customer needs. In order to keep up with the development of the market, companies need to meet and exceed the needs and desires of consumers (Nowlis & Simonson, 1996). Successful new brands are usually more distinctive and novel than are mature brands (Nowlis & Simonson, 1996). There are many factors that may affect the application and development of innovation, such as social development, technological changes, a wide range of industry issues, customer needs, and culture. This suggests that a hotel cannot rely on past successes. If a hotel company does not participate in any innovation processes, its performance may decline and its competitiveness lost (Ilyenkova & Kuznetsov, 2009). However, Gyurácz-Németh et al. (2013) argued that in the hotel industry, innovation is not effective, because the hotel structure is conservative and capital-intensive, and the rate of return is long, which is not conducive to developing innovation. The high failure rates of innovation can also lead to a waste of time, money, and human resources.

Gilmore and Pine (2002) suggested that if a hotel organisation presents a new experience, it can occupy an advantageous position in the hotel industry. Iplik et al. (2014) found that hotel organisations primarily innovate to improve customer experience; innovation in the hotel industry means providing consumers with benefits worth paying for, such as providing unique experiences. Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2003) discovered that traditional innovation focuses on products and services, while experience innovation focuses on unique experiences. Experience innovation is targeted at providing a unique value-added experience, and may require specific hotel properties, locations, and capabilities of service staff. Bharwani and Mathews (2016, p. 421) wrote that consumer-centric hospitality innovation can be divided into the two categories of “functional innovation and experiential innovation.” *Functional innovation* is product or service-based innovation established to meet functional requirements, and includes three subcategories: “tangible product innovations, customisable service offerings, and specialist expert services”. Experiential innovation can be seen as a unique value-added experience product, involving the capabilities of a specific hotel property and/or its location and service staff. This can be further divided into two sub-categories: “hotel or location-specific experiential offerings, and customised service encounters” (Bharwani & Mathews, 2016, p. 421).

Figure 1:

Customer-Focused Hospitality Innovations



Note. From “Customer service innovations in the Indian hospitality industry,” by S. Bharwani, & D. Mathews, 2016. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, 8(4), 416-432. <https://doi.org/10.1108/WHATT-04-2016-0020>. Copyright 2016 by Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

The tangible products provided by hotels can provide consumers with innovative experiences and can be transformed into a type of service. In addition, the exclusive service provided by the hotel staff is also an innovative experience. As customer value creation often depends on experience (Pine & Gilmore, 2011), hotels can increase the value to customers through product innovations that provide them with unique experiences (Bharwani & Mathews, 2016). Therefore, hotels can use innovation to provide services and products that not only meet customers’ functional needs, but also provide delightful experiences (Tang et al., 2015). In this way, customer experience innovation can provide companies with a competitive advantage in the hotel market. Ottenbacher and Gnoth (2005) examined the lack of research on innovation in the hotel industry. This research aims to fill this gap by analysing innovation experiences offered by the hotel industry.

2.3 Brand Image

Brand image has an important role in providing a foundation for brand positioning and differentiation from competitors (Aaker, 1991). When customers associate a positive experiences with a brand, they are usually loyal to that brand and recommend it to other people (Jin et al., 2012). Therefore, establishing an excellent brand image is an essential marketing

strategy for enabling an organisation to gain an advantage in its market (Jin et al., 2012). Although brand image is considered a significant concept in marketing, the definitions and measurement standards of brand image are not consistent (Nunthapirat, 2014). Dobni and Zinkhan (1990) defined *brand image* as the customer's perception of products and services, but Keller (1993) pointed out that *brand image* is the perception of a brand, which is reflected in the brand associations held in consumers' memory. Malik et al. (2012) suggested that *brand image* is recognition of a brand from information around the brand and past experience. According to Zembik (2015), *brand image* is related to consumers' thoughts, perceptions, expectations, and beliefs about products or services. A brand image means that consumers buy a brand not only because of its physical properties and functions, but also because of its brand-related meaning (Levy & Glick, 1973, as cited in Nunthapirat, 2014).

A positive brand image can build on the benefits of brand determination and create more prominent consumer faithfulness. A brand image likewise specifically affects brand-related evaluating, distributing, and promotional activities. A brand with a recognisable brand image can also deliver a brand extension, which uses a current brand to launch new products or services (Keller, 1993). *Brand image* can be thought of as the management of a marketing team to guarantee that customers' perceptions of the company are consistent with the brand image created by that company. The brand image should be as close as possible to customers' expectations and their actual experience of the product (Haynes et al., 1999). Customers' perception of brand image is based on the functionality, symbolism, and experience of the brand (Park et al., 1986). There are three strategies for brand image: functional, social, and sensory. Organisations can use brand image to enhance consumer experience value to segment their market (Nunthapirat, 2014).

The hospitality industry has undergone tremendous changes. In order to keep up with these changes, research on the framework of brand image has become increasingly important (Lahap et al., 2016). According to Hunt and Johns (2013), hospitality organisations differentiate themselves from their competitors through unique brand images, which potential customers associate with symbols and concepts. As Pine and Gilmore (1998) emphasised, creating a unique customer experience can bring significant commercial value to a company. Encouraging these experiences has become the core of the hospitality industry, since many of its products and service are based on experience (Williams, 2006). Additionally, the relationship between customers' experience and brand image is inseparable from the success of the hospitality industry (Kim & Kim, 2004).

As far as a hotel is concerned, the image can be thought of as the image of the hotel in the minds of consumers (Medlik & Ingram, 2000). The hotel industry could enhance advantages of the

important role of brand image, as customers may have a strong dependence on a brand through the hotel brand's name, décor, and style. Saleem and Raja (2014) explained that a brand image is a reflection of the brand in the consumer's memory. When customers evaluate brand names, they spontaneously think of brand characteristics. The brand image is also an essential variable that positively or negatively affects the hotel's marketing strategy (Lahap et al., 2016). A stable brand image can improve a company's self-esteem, financial performance, occupancy rate, average price, income, and degree of profitability (So et al., 2013). Padgett and Allen (1997) considered that image is a key factor that differentiates services amongst competitors. Numerous organisations have attempted to construct strong brands, since building and effectively managing a brand image is considered a key driver of success in the hotel industry. Before customers purchase an accommodation product, they cannot see, touch, or feel that product. Therefore, the pre-decision evaluation depends on factors such as the hotel's brand image, or word-of-mouth judgments based on internal and external information. A goal of hotel managers is to enable consumers to associate a particular hotel image with their brand name. If the brand image is consistent with the consumer's self-image, this may result in a positive evaluation of the brand, which will enhance consumers' willingness to buy from that brand (Belén del Río et al., 2001). Therefore, many hotels highlight themes in their advertisements and provide consumers with visual images to distinguish their brands from those of other competitors. Consumers may make hotel accommodation decisions based on their perception of a particular brand (Jiang et al., 2002), and form a brand image for each brand's position, based on various product traits. It is a current trend in the hotel industry to use brands with positive brand images (Bowen, 1997). For example, many hotel stores sell Starbucks coffee, because Starbucks has a strong brand image that allows consumers to associate a certain level of quality of the hotel.

A challenge for hotels is how to clearly formulate a brand image so that consumers can understand the different concepts of different types of hotels, to avoid confusion (Nunthapirat, 2014). Large hotel corporations provide different hotel categories (i.e., brands) for different target customers. This means that hotel organisations need to clearly define the brand image of the regional or specific brand. Silva and Alwi (2008) wrote that an organisation with a positive brand image may attract customers, while an unfavourable image may have a negative impact on customer decisions and behaviours.

The colours, symbols, text, and slogans contained in a brand image convey the brand's message (Berry et al., 1988 as cited in Tepeci, 1999). Brand image has an essential role in product selection, because consumers like to purchase products that match their self-image, to enhance their self-image (Tepeci, 1999). For example, young consumers may choose W Hotels instead of Marriott, because of the style and design they feel in the image of W Hotels. Consumers may

also choose an accommodation brand because of image differences. Zhang (2015) observed that through consumers' exposure to advertising and other marketing methods, the brand image of an organisation can be developed and enhanced. Consequently, social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram are becoming increasingly important for organisations to use to disseminate information related to their brand image (Mollen & Wilson, 2010).

2.4 Millennial Generation

2.4.1 The Definition of Millennial Generation

Millennials, also known as “Generation Y,” are a group that has attracted much attention in recent years (Delbosc & Nakanishi, 2017). Millennials account for more than 25% of the world's population (Nusair et al., 2013), and have significant consumption power (Parment, 2013). According to McGlone et al. (2011), there is no universally accepted definition of generation for Millennials. There are many ways to define the Millennial generation, including as those born between 1979 and 2001, between 1980 and 2000, and between 1982 and 2002 (McGlone et al., 2011). Smith and Nichols (2015) considered that Millennials were born between 1980 and 2000 because they are closely related to the new millennium, and grew up in a digital environment (Kaifi et al., 2012). Nevertheless, as there is no consensus on the start and end dates of Millennials in the literature, following Lancaster and Stillman (2009), in this research *Millennials* are defined as those born between 1981 and 1999. Although there are differences in the particular years that define the Millennial segment, demographers and marketers agree that Millennials are the first adult generation group in the digital age.

2.4.2 Characteristics of Millennials

Ng et al. (2010) found that there are two main characteristics of Millennials: they “want it all,” and they “want it now” (p. 282). The distinguishing characteristics of Millennials are their creativity, free expression, and the need to be independent and unconstrained (Alch, 2000, as cited in Nicholas, 2008). Millennials are considered technologically savvy and technology-driven. The popularisation of technology has affected the development of this generation, in terms of how they obtain and process information (Balda & Mora, 2011). They can download digital recordings and music, take photographs with their mobile phones, and send instant messages to one another in their own language of data (McCasland, 2005). Texting, instant messaging, blogs and video games are familiar to most Millennials, and they are keen to interact with others on social media (Dale, 2017). The love of social interaction for Millennials has been combined with the adoption of technology, and smartphones, instant messaging, and chat rooms keep them in touch with their friends (Nicholas, 2008). The lives of Millennials are influenced by digital technology in social, hobby, and shopping activities (Lissitsa & Kol, 2016). Additionally, in terms of their lifestyle,

Millennials are most keen to participate in online activities (Smith, 2011). Therefore, their response to online marketing may be different from those of other generations (Bilgihan, 2016). They can quickly adapt to technological innovation changes, especially when these are related to lifestyle (Shankar et al., 2010, as cited in Purani et al., 2019). In addition, millennials are keen to interact with people from different backgrounds through social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, they are also the first generation to grow up with the internet (Bowen & Chen McCain, 2015). The influence of social media on Millennials is significant, because they like to connect with others (Nusair et al., 2013), and believe that the opinions of peers and other consumers are more reliable than company information (Smith, 2011).

2.4.3 Millennials as Hotel Consumers

According to Ogbeide et al. (2013), the Millennial generation was the largest segment of customers at the time of their study, and Bilgihan (2016) suggested that Millennials would become the largest customer base for global hotels, as they prefer to spend money on experience, and not just on materials (Mettler, 2015). Therefore, hotel operators need to implement innovative ideas to ensure that the younger generation of consumers choose their hotels. From a brand perspective, Millennial consumers are very knowledgeable about brands (Lazarevic, 2012), and have experience in brand selection (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003). Millennials believe that the brand image they buy matches their own image (Noble et al., 2009); they like brands, and are prepared to pay the high prices of expensive brands. However, Ipsos (2014, as cited in Purani et al., 2019) argued that Millennials do not care about brands, and are very concerned about prices. Similarly, Caplan (2005, as cited in Lissitsa & Kol, 2016) claimed that Millennials want products that match their personalities and lifestyles, and rarely pay attention to brands. Phillips (2007, as cited in Lissitsa & Kol, 2016) found that Millennials are rational consumers, and for them, price and products are more important than brands. Therefore, they tend to actively compare prices when shopping online (Goldman, 2013, as cited in Purani et al., 2019). Since these contradictory views emerged, increasing numbers of marketers have become interested in Millennial consumers.

Hotel operators use online surveys, such as those often on social media, to explore the consumption behaviours and habits of Millennials. In order to build relationships with Millennial customers, hotel marketers need to re-examine their strategies. Hotel brands need to develop websites to engage customers and promoting online booking. Millennial consumers attach great significance to the online user experience when shopping online. A booking website is a means for users to interact with the hotel. Therefore, a positive experience from a website can establish a connection between the customers and the hotel brand (Bilgihan, 2016).

It is no secret that Millennials love to use social media. However, effective contact with

Millennials requires more than just an advertisement on a Facebook page or a brand's YouTube channel (Mobolade, 2016), as they pay more attention to direct interaction with brands (Mobolade, 2016). For example, Millennial consumers want to see content related to their lives, interests, and needs on social media. They are eager to have direct conversations with brands in a simple way. Increasing numbers of brand managers are seeking ways for the brand to interact with consumers on social media to convey its characteristics and interesting content instead of using sales promotions.

2.4.4 What Hotel Experience Millennial Consumers are Looking for

Millennials are known for their independence and self-sufficiency (Williams & Page, 2011), and are likely to seek out novel experiences (Aksoy et al., 2013). According to Jones et al. (2013), Millennials are passionate about hotels that offer them innovative experiences, functions, modern design styles, as well as highly personalised services. Since Millennials can be seen as experience seekers, hotel operators need to provide this generation with the type of experience they are looking for (Leask et al., 2014). Fields (2008, as cited in Bastawroos, 2017) stated that Millennial consumers want to experience quality and service quality in their hotel experience, rather than just make basic purchase transactions. The interactivity of the check-in experience is therefore very important. If consumers can ensure that they have the memorable experience they desire, they are usually willing to pay a higher price (Jennings et al., 2010). Therefore, the hotel industry needs new and creative strategies to achieve this. An innovation may be to create a unique experience (Dzhandzhugazova et al., 2016). The fast development of social media has allowed Millennials to integrate technology into their lives (Leask et al., 2014). Innovative experiences for Millennial consumers may therefore need to include the application of technology.

Chapter 3. Methodology

This research applied an interpretivist paradigm and a qualitative approach to exploring how hotel organisations are marketing innovative experiences to target the Millennial generation. This chapter explains the methods of data collection used to explore the innovative experiences provided by hotels to attract young consumers. The use of content analysis as a method for analysing the data in order to address the research question, is also explained.

3.1 The Ontology, Epistemology, and Paradigm

According to Killam (2013), an *ontology* can be defined as a specific theory about the essence of existence or the kinds of things that exist, and can be relativist or realist. Bilgrami (2002) explained that *realism* can be defined as the absolute truth, whereas *relativism* holds that reality is subjective (Davies & Fisher, 2018). A relativist ontology was considered suitable for the current research because the aim was to discover how hotels can enhance their marketing to target young customers through innovative experiences. *Paradigms* can be defined as different ways of looking at the world and are used as the basis for research (Davies & Fisher, 2018). According to Pernecky (2007), *interpretivism* produces knowledge that is a result of human activity, and tries to describe, explore, and understand the background of events.

3.1.1 Interpretivist Paradigm

A paradigm usually guides how research should be conducted and explained, and the selection of topics (Gray, 2013). Interpretive inquiry does not generate logical or legal interpretations of actions that can be used to make future predictions, but is related to how individuals understand their experiences and behaviours (Potrac et al., 2014). In terms of investigative design, the interpretivist paradigm can help researchers interactively explore and explain the experiences of others (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). According to Thanh and Thanh (2015), interpretivist paradigms can help researchers observe the world through the perspectives and experiences of their research participants. Interpretivism supports researchers in exploring the world by explaining personal understandings (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). It is focused on the depth and detail of data collected from small groups, rather than prioritising broad data for generalisations (Potrac et al., 2014).

Interpretivism accepts multiple views and changes, and promotes participatory and holistic research (Willis et al., 2007). Thanh and Thanh (2015) believed that the subjectivity of interpretivist research is greater than its objectivity. The research of Willis et al. (2007) was consistent with this view, as the goal of interpretivism is to emphasise subjectivity. There seems no universal standard for interpretivist research. In contrast, interpretivism seeks answers to

research in an open method, starting from the subject and approaching reality (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). Interpretivism often accepts multiple viewpoints to make the research more comprehensive (Morehouse, 2012). This can help researchers obtain information when they need to understand the data deeply, rather than obtaining information from numbers. Based on these viewpoints, as data were collected from different hotels to obtain diverse and multifaceted information for interpretation, the interpretivist paradigm was considered suitable for this study.

Scotland (2012) defined *epistemology* as the nature and form of knowledge. An epistemology focuses on the creation, acquisition, and dissemination of knowledge. There are three types of epistemology: objectivist, subjectivist, and rationalist (Moshman, 2013). A subjectivist epistemology insists that the truth is based on one's own point of view and informs decisions accordingly. A subjectivist epistemology interprets knowledge itself as intrinsically subjective (Moshman, 2013). Subjectivist epistemology was considered suitable as research in to the role of innovation experience in hotel marketing requires interpretation which is affected by the researcher's experiences and knowledge.

3.2 Qualitative Research

The methodology guides the process and methods of research. Kramer-Kile (2012) believed that the *methodology* is the link between theory and method that provides consistency and coherence to the research. The methodology has an important role in guiding the research process. A methodology in qualitative research is a compound exploration approach that incorporates research questions and the analysis process (Kramer-Kile, 2012). Researchers believe that the interpretivist paradigm leads logically to a qualitative methodology (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). Willis et al. (2007) explained that qualitative methods can provide rich data for the research. Thomas (2003) posited that the interpretivist paradigm helps to describes the reality as a society constructed, complex and constantly changing world. Goldkuhl (2012) suggested that qualitative research is often associated with interpretivism. Following a qualitative methodology, this study applied a content analysis to documents collected from publicly available sources. Gray (2013) stated that qualitative research is mainly an analysis of literature and qualitative data.

3.2.1 The Advantages of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is considered to provide a deeper understanding than is possible with quantitative research, and emphasise subjectivity (Barnham, 2015). In this research, qualitative research methods were adopted to achieve a deep understanding of hotel experience innovations and how these might appeal to the Millennial generation. A qualitative analysis can uncover in-depth knowledge, such as the causes, connections, effects and processes of the research problem.

In this research, the qualitative approach helped to understand the meaning of the hotel's innovative experience offerings. After reading previous studies, researchers can have a subjective view of their research problem. Therefore, in the process of data collection for analysis, they need to target data that can solve their research problem. It was important in this research to identify themes in the data that helped understand different types of innovative experiences. The research objectives selected for qualitative research are exceedingly significant, as they often require highly targeted information acquisition, which needs more in-depth analysis. Creswell (2009) pointed out that qualitative research is a means of exploration and research. In the interpretivist paradigm, the important task of the researcher is to obtain insights and in-depth information. Researchers need detailed data to classify and organise sources and topics. Qualitative research can be adjusted and changed as the research progresses to improve the quality of the data and insights generated. In-depth exploration in this study helped to understand the motivations and perspectives of hotels that implemented innovative experiences. Researchers can generate unique insights, concepts and ideas from in-depth exploration, and use them to develop qualitative research and evaluation. Therefore, qualitative research is very effective way to help researchers obtain in-depth data.

3.3 Content Analysis

A qualitative content analysis is applicable to explore the potential problems and depends on the meaning of the context (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Understanding text and images in qualitative research can help researchers find answers to research questions (Hanson et al., 2005). Content analysis can be undertaken on company documents and social media text, which can be connected to each other on the internet through various forums such as Facebook, and YouTube (Rabinovich & Cheon, 2011).

According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005), content analysis is a research method that systematically classifies text or image data, and then determines the subject of the research based on the subjective interpretation of the researcher. Content analysis is a process of organising information into categories related to research questions. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) explained that content analysis includes comparison and counting, usually of keywords or content, and then analysing the basic context. Content analysis can be used to explore and describe the meaning and relationship of specific words, images, and themes. It can be divided into four processes: coding, classification, comparisons, and conclusions (Cohen et al., 2007, as cited in Sándorová, 2019). Coding emphasises the specific characteristics of the data. Saldana (2008) explained that a code in qualitative research can be a word or phrase that symbolically summarises the substance of text or visual data. Data can include files, documents, photos, videos, and websites. According to Stuckey (2015), coding can use pre-set codes or acquired codes, or a combination of the two.

Categorisation refers to the establishment of meaningful categories from words, phrases, and sentences - the contents for analysis are classified into these. *Comparison* refers to establishing a more profound connection between categories, and the conclusion is based on the data and analysis of results to arrive at a theory. Based on the problems of this research, qualitative content analysis was the chosen method and is further explained in the next section.

3.3.1 Directed Content Analysis

Qualitative researchers look for themes in text or image analysis. There are three types of content analysis, namely conventional, directed, or summative (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) (see Figure 2). The main difference between these three methods is the coding scheme and code source. In conventional content analysis, the coding categories come directly from text data, whereas in a directed content analysis, the analysis starts from prior theoretical or related research results. In directed content analysis, the theory established by other researchers serves as a guide for the initial coding (Elo et al., 2014). Directed content analysis is a reliable research method that can improve the accuracy of data analysis, and allow the results of different studies to be compared (Assarroudi et al., 2018). Summative content analysis is used to calculate and compare keywords or content, and then explain the underlying context (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Table 1:

Major Coding Differences Among Three Approaches to Content Analysis

| Major Coding Differences Among Three Approaches to Content Analysis | | | |
|---|-------------------|---|---|
| Type of Content Analysis | Study Starts With | Timing of Defining Codes or Keywords | Source of Codes or Keywords |
| Conventional content analysis | Observation | Codes are defined during data analysis | Codes are derived from data |
| Directed content analysis | Theory | Codes are defined before and during data analysis | Codes are derived from theory or relevant research findings |
| Summative content analysis | Keywords | Keywords are identified before and during data analysis | Keywords are derived from interest of researchers or review of literature |

Note. From “Major Coding Differences Among Three Approaches to Content Analysis,” by Hsieh H-F, Shannon SE, 2005. *Qualitative Health Research*, 15(9), 1277-1288. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732305276687>. Copyright 2005 by SAGE Publications.

According to Hunsinger et al. (2010), the most traditional use of content analysis is to analyse the written content of mass media. However, many researchers now also use it to analyse content on the internet. The goal of content analysis is to systematically inspect and process communication materials such as text, music, images, videos, and other similar materials (Mayring, 2004). Bengtsson (2016) suggested that data should be displayed in the form of text in content analysis. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) discovered that text, images, videos, and other related content could also be used as data sources. The basic idea of qualitative content analysis is to maintain a systematic approach to the analysis at all stages and without excessive quantification.

Many qualitative methods use the directed method to design and analyse research (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Directed content analysis can be thought of as theme or feature analysis. The purpose of the directed analysis method is to help conceptually expand a theoretical framework, and using existing theories to analyse research problems, determine the relationship between the initial coding and the codes (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Directed content analysis uses existing theories or research to determine key words as the initial coding category (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999). Then, theory is used to determine the definition of each category. The next step uses pre-set codes to encode key information. If data in the original coding scheme cannot be classified, they are assigned a new code (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Directed content analysis requires the use of pre-conceived categories while also combining new categories from data to develop new insights. The theory or previous research guides the discovery of new data, and the newly identified categories may further expand and enrich the theory (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Then the codes are classified into meaningful clusters according to the associations between different codes (Patton, 2002). According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005), the advantage of directed content analysis method is that existing theories can be supported and expanded. Nevertheless, its disadvantage is that researchers have an informed position when processing data, making it easier for them to find evidence that supports rather than refutes a theory.

Induction is usually used in qualitative research. Holloway (1997) explained that that inductive methods use data to create ideas, while deductive methods start from an idea or theoretical framework and use data to verify or refute the idea. This research used inductive methods. Researchers can start with inductive coding, try to identify patterns in the data, and establish categories. Then, in further steps, the remaining data can be coded. Some theoretical structures can be used to explain and evaluate the categories. In the process of inductive coding, the researcher moves from having more codes to fewer topics or categories. Researchers can thus refer to some existing theories and concepts related to the research and provide further support for the research results (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019).

3.4 Sampling

This research used purposive sampling. Neuendorf (2002) explained that purposive sampling helps researchers select samples they deem appropriate, and is one of the most commonly used methods in content analysis. This research explored the innovative experience methods that hotels have adopted to attract Millennial consumers, so investigating the hotels' innovative approaches was the goal of data collection and analysis. Millennial consumers tend to stay at places recommended on social media, because they want to be familiar with where they are going (Aceron et al., 2018). For instance, before choosing a hotel, Millennial consumers often use social media, such as Instagram or Facebook, to find popular hotels that have positive reviews. They choose whether to book after considering online word of mouth reports and hotel promotions. Therefore, to understand hotels' latest innovative experience measures, this research used social media content posted on official websites and Instagram, of selected hotels, between January 2019 and September 2020 as sources of data. As updates on Facebook pages of the hotels used in this study were over a year old, it was decided to exclude Facebook as a data source.

The size of the sample is irrelevant in qualitative methods, because qualitative research usually analyses data from a small number of participants instead of testing large samples as in quantitative studies (Slevitch, 2011). As many hotels target Millennial consumers, this research adopted purposeful sampling because representative information was needed to effectively achieve the research objectives. As the research aimed to identify trends in innovative experiences that appeal to Millennial consumers, the selected hotel needed to provide representative data. Some larger-scale hotel industry chains tend to be very well-known and have quite open communication, which can make for meaningful content analysis. It is important that the research documents have quality analysis elements such as authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and significance (Bell et al., 2018). The information published on the hotels' official websites and Instagram met these standards, and offered valuable existing information for the research. According to Ketter (2020), big hotel brands are adapting to the Millennial generation's needs in terms of hotel design and services. These young consumers will not spend much time in hotel rooms, as they tend to use the lobby space to work and socialise. Therefore, the food service, public social spaces, and room design in hotel rooms are changing. In selecting hotels for the study, these aspects were used as criteria.

To meet the purpose of the research, four hotel chains that targeted Millennial consumers were selected: Moxy, Motto by Hilton, JO&JOE, and Radisson RED. These hotels published on their official websites that they targeted young consumers, and all four hotels were opened in recent years. Moxy Hotel by Marriott is a new hotel sub-brand for the Millennial market (Ketter, 2020).

“Created for the young at heart, Moxy celebrates nonconformity, open-mindedness, and originality above all” (Marriott International, n.d.). “Marriott International introduced its Moxy brand in the U.S. in 2016, with hotels trying to appeal to Millennials with small rooms, high-tech gadgets and large common areas in the lobby” (Martin, 2018). Motto by Hilton is also an innovative hotel brand, providing a flexible and innovative hospitality experience (Hilton, 2018). “Now targeting the Millennial market, Hilton has launched a new brand which is Motto by Hilton with a range of affordable lifestyle hotels with an urban vibe” (Hilton, n.d.). Motto by Hilton aimed to attract Millennial travellers. JO&JOE is an Accor brand, uniquely designed for Millennials (Accor Group, n.d.-b), and Radisson RED is specifically designed for Millennial travellers, attracting guests by providing a non-traditional experience (Hospitalit Net, 2016).

3.5 Data Collection

In order to perform meaningful secondary data analysis, researchers need to carefully search for an appropriate source of data. Willis et al. (2007) believed that understanding the background of the proposed research is essential to interpreting the data collected. Researchers use collected data to find answers to the research question. The data in the current research was extracted from secondary sources such as social media and official hotel websites. This research followed the image analysis method on the collected data.

Vartanian (2010) pointed out that in secondary data research, the goal of the researcher is to collect and analyse existing data. According to Greenhoot and Dowsett (2012), *secondary data analysis* refers to the analysis of existing data by researchers who did not participate in the collection of the original data. Secondary data have many advantages, including saving time and costs (Gray, 2013). Due to the limited time of this research, secondary data were used to explore the innovative experiences that hotels offer Millennial consumers. Yang et al. (2017) explained that secondary resources have been widely used in many studies, because they can provide the latest information about the research topic- in this case. Windle (2010) believed that secondary data can also avoid unnecessary duplication of effort. Since well-documented auxiliary data allow researchers to use the data easily, time and money can be saved using these data instead of collecting raw data. Secondary data can be a valuable source of information to gain knowledge and understandings of different issues and phenomena (McCaston, 2005). Secondary data analysis in this research helped to provide an understanding of the current innovation measures taken by hotels, but compared with what original data may have shown, the secondary data lacked explanation and analysis of the reasons for the information in the data. The data analysis process for this dissertation is described in detail in the next section.

In this research, the purpose was to identify and understand the classification of innovative experiences, but not to count according to these classifications. Therefore, eight images representing the innovative experiences offered by the four target hotels, were taken from the hotels' official website and Instagram. The images and text data captured from the internet represented the types of innovative experiences that the hotels considered would attract Millennial consumers. The captions that hotels used when they posted on Instagram, or comments that customer used to describe an image on Instagram, were also used as data to support the analysis of the hotel website images. Chen et al. (2020) suggested that the use of images and media as a source of information, is widely supported.

3.6 Data Analysis

This research carried out a content analysis of text and images to determine the innovative experiences that hotels had adopted for Millennial consumers. The text data was analysed to provide research results from the images. The content analyses of text and images were carried out separately.

3.6.1 Content Analyses of Images

The most common method for evaluating images is based on themes and content analysis (Hellemans & Govers, 2005). Image research usually uses two formal methods: content analysis and semiotic analysis (Banks, 2018). Image analysis relies on the use of media to generate and express knowledge (Banks, 2001), and image analysis data can include but not is not limited to films, imagery, pictures, paintings, and sculptures (Chen et al., 2020). In the current research, online images were used to explore the differences between hotel innovation experiences (Wood & Brotherton, 2008).

This research analysed each image based on the Five Lines Enquiry proposed by Tinkler (2014, p. 19). The five steps in Tinkler's analysis process include: 1) identifying basic details, 2) scrutinising images, 3) considering materiality, 4) doing contextual research, and 5) reflecting on meanings.

Table 2:*Tinkler's Five Lines Enquiry and Modification*

| Tinkler's Five Lines Enquiry | The current research |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Identify basic details | Analysed four images for each hotel |
| Scrutinise images | Conducted detailed and repeated investigations of all aspects of the images |
| Consider materiality | Considered the availability of images |
| Do contextual research | Identified the authenticity and representative assessment of the images |
| Reflect on meanings | Considered the meaning of the image |

According to the Five Lines Enquiry, identifying the basic details of each image requires determining the background of the image, including where the image was collected, released, and for what purpose. In this step, websites and Instagram images from four hotels were analysed. Scrutinising images requires detailed and repeated investigations of all aspects of the image. For example, it was necessary to observe the characteristics of images such as the use of props, lighting, and colour, and what these elements were trying to convey to the audience (Tinkler, 2014).

Considering the materiality of digital images needs to consider the availability of photographs, the facilities that can be used to search and view the images and the way of presentation, and how to repeatedly browse the pictures (Tinkler, 2014). The images analysed in this study were from the official websites of the hotels and Instagram, which are public and updated regularly. Contextual research of the image is the key to identifying the image. In this step, it was important to think about the authenticity and representativeness of the images. The purpose of contextual research is not only to provide a background to support and explain the images, but also to display, disseminate, view, and use the photos in a public environment. For example, the innovative experience offered by a hotel may be a young and fashionable style. In this stage, the researcher needed to consider who the audience was and when and where they would encounter the picture. For example, hotel guests and Millennial consumers tend to follow the hotel's social media and official website. In the reflection stage, it was important to consider the content of each image, the audience's interpretation, the photographer's intended meaning, and the themes of the image.

According to Tinkler (2014), these five investigation steps may overlap, so there is no clear order for examining each image. In addition, it is necessary to review each step repeatedly, involving a process of moving back and forth between each line of inquiry. The results of the data analysis

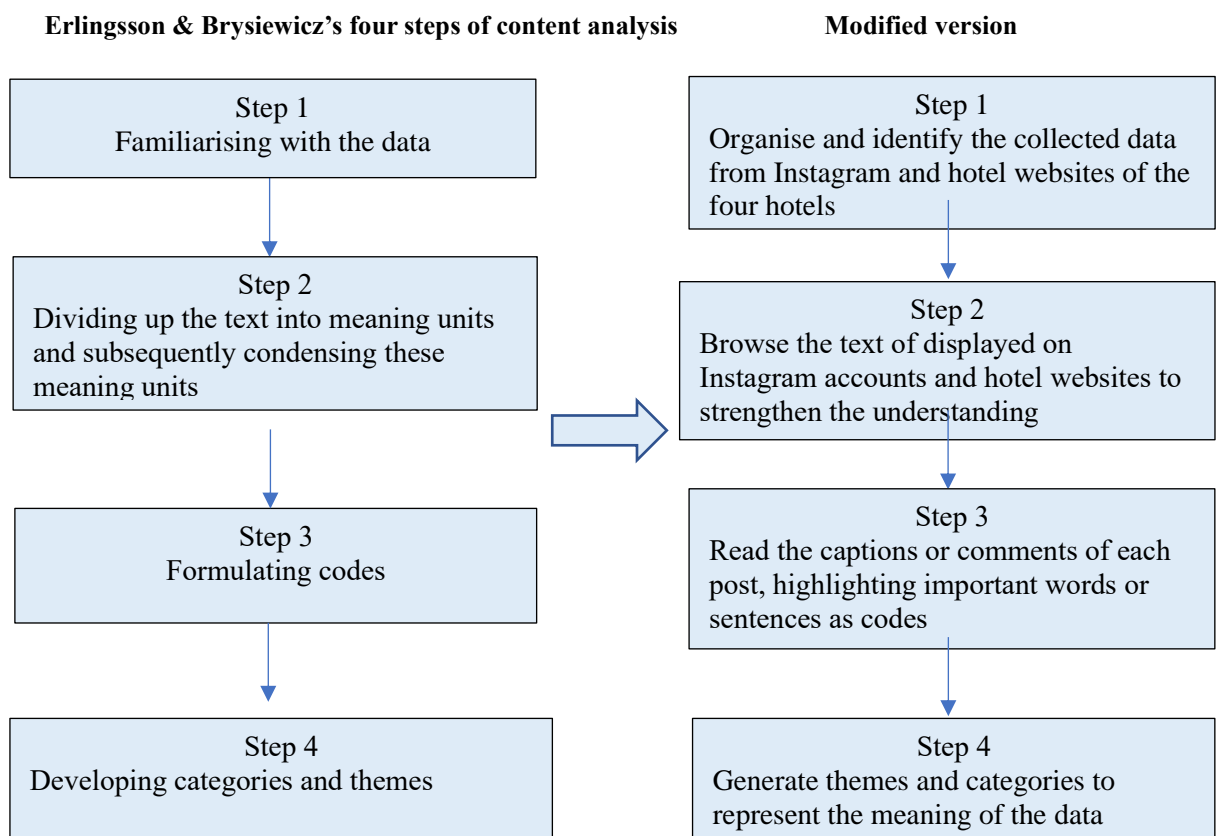
are explained in the next chapter. Each hotel in the research is supported with an image example to illustrate how the image can project the hotel's innovative experience.

3.6.2 Content Analysis of Text

Text analysis was used to support image analysis in this research. The content analysis of text followed the four steps suggested by Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017). The four steps in Erlingsson and Brysiewicz's analysis process are: 1) familiarise oneself with the data, 2) divide the text into meaning units, 3) formulate codes, and (4) develop categories and themes. The first step was outlined in the data collection section (3.5). The other procedures are presented in the findings section.

Figure 2:

Steps of Content Analysis



Note. From “Erlingsson & Brysiewicz’s four steps of content analysis,” by C Erlingsson, P Brysiewicz, 2017. *African Journal of Emergency Medicine*, 7(3), 93-99. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.afjem.2017.08.001>. Copyright 2020 by Elsevier B.V.

Step 1: Familiarising with the data

In this step, the researcher needed to read the websites and Instagram of the four chosen hotels. In order to better understand the meaning and significance of the specific captions of the hotels' Instagram posts, it was important to read the data carefully, and lay the foundation for in-depth analysis.

Step 2: Dividing the text into meaning units

The researcher had a preliminary understanding of the hotel's innovative experience based on the literature. In this step, the textual information provided on hotel's websites and Instagram posts were examined to strengthen the understanding of the content of experience innovation. Computer software programs were not used, because software systems may not have been able to consider the context of the entire posts.

Step 3: Formulating codes

Keywords were extracted from the captions or comments of Instagram posts as codes, to then represent the basic meanings of the text. If the comments posted by followers below each posts were related to the caption, the content of the comment was collected as part of the data.

Step 4 : Developing categories and themes

The researcher classified codes into categories, and then formed the categories into themes to answer the research questions. Themes were developed based on the posts of Instagram. After determining these themes, it was possible to have a new understanding of the original framework of innovative experience. The themes were reviewed and refined, and the links between the themes explained. The themes were based on the literature and the customer focused hospitality innovations framework (Bharwani & Mathews, 2016), as outlined in Chapter 2. Data were obtained from the websites and social media of the four hotels, and then classified into related themes.

3.7 Limitations of the Method

This research only employed qualitative methods, using four representative hotels as samples. In addition, only eight images were collected, as the data for image and text analysis. Therefore, the amount of data were limited, and extensive research and investigation was not conducted.

Chapter 4. Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents the findings of this research, from data on innovative experiences at four hotels. The chapter also discusses the findings on innovative experiences for Millennials in relation to the literature. A representative image from each hotel's websites or Instagram was used for in-depth analysis. Text analysis used screenshots of Instagram posts that captured the captions and some comments about the posts, to support for image analysis. This procedure was based on the innovation experience framework, which was overviewed in section 2.2 in the literature review. Since that framework had not previously been applied to hotels that target Millennials, the current research explored a new framework of innovative experiences that focus on Millennial consumers, but based on existing themes. The three themes of services, behaviours, and language were identified in the analysis. This chapter presents the main themes for each of the four hotels, with each theme broken down into categories of personalised service, carefree behaviours, and informal language.

4.1 Moxy Hotels

Moxy hotels are a new concept of hotel launched by Marriott International and IKEA. Moxy are budget hotels with a boutique personality, and aim to attract and inspire young travellers. Peters (2020), a travel writer, described Moxy as hotels designed for social media lovers of the Millennial generation. There is typically a large video wall called "Guest Book" in the lobby, where visitors' photographs posted on Instagram with the hashtag #atthemoxy immediately appear in the hotel's public area. In Moxy, the bar replaces the traditional front desk, offering a new way to check in. When guests come to check in, they can take a complimentary drink and then obtain their room key. Additionally, Moxy hotels is an animal friendly hotel which means guests can bring their pets and experience the hotel together (Moxy hotels, n.d.).

4.1.1 Image Analysis of Moxy

Figure 3:

Moxy Hotels Bedroom



Note. From *Moxy hotels Instagram*. From <https://www.instagram.com/p/B2ep0LnFYVQ/>. Copyright 2019 by the Moxy hotels.

Figure 3 is of an image taken and posted by the Moxy hotels at Moxy Washington, DC Downtown, on the hotel's Instagram on September 17, 2019. The image shows two dogs seated on the bed looking at the camera, and as the dogs are looking straight at the camera, attention goes straight to the dogs. The main point of the image is the dogs, which may encourage potential consumers to pay attention to, when they see this image. A table is set with food placed in front of the pets, and as there is no person in the picture, it seems that this food was prepared for the dogs. This gives the impression that Moxy hotel will treat pets as they would treat human hotel guests. Furthermore, the sheets are creased, suggesting that behaviour in the bedroom in a Moxy hotels does not need to be restrained. It can be seen that Moxy hotels offer a very relaxing environment for consumers. There are no rugs or carpet, but instead, wooden floors, which may make the room easier to clean, making it convenient for guests to stay with their pets in the hotels.

4.1.2 Text Analysis of Moxy

Figure 4:

Moxy Hotels Bar



Note. From Moxy hotels Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/B55oQmxFmx7/>. Copyright 2019 by the Moxy hotels.

This post was saved from Moxy Hotel’s Instagram as a screenshot, and published on December 11, 2019, by Moxy Columbus Short North. The caption of the post shows that Moxy was endeavouring to promote the idea that customers are given complimentary drinks when they check in. Additionally, the post also introduces the bar at Moxy hotels. All consumers are given a free drink from the bar, suggesting that the hotel may appeal to consumers who like to socialise. The hotel uses “first drinks is on me at check in” in the caption, which promotes the idea that they provide a new type of service when people checked in, by replacing the reception desk with a bar counter. This attempt is novel and offers consumers something different from traditional hotels. In addition to referring to themselves with a personal pronoun, the Moxy caption used informal language, such as “Oh and say hi,” and slang words such as “fam” to describe the new Moxy hotels. The image shows the Moxy bar. It can be seen that the bar uses purple and red fluorescent lights to create a mysterious atmosphere, which may attract guests to the bar.

4.1.3 The Innovative Experience of Moxy

Millennial consumers have received extensive marketing attention (Aceron et al., 2018). Kimanuka (2014) pointed out that customer service is particularly important in the hotel industry. Guests need hotels to improve their opportunities for relaxation and comfort. It is evident that the Moxy bar tried to create a lasting impression on consumers by offering free drinks to encourage them to perhaps unwind upon check-in and to provide a relaxing environment. This also provides an ideal environment for consumers who like to socialise. The replacement of the check-in desk with a bar counter and the design of the bar as an attractive place with social elements, can be considered as innovative experience factors. According to Sofronov (2018), Millennials are not very interested in staying in the hotel rooms, as they would rather meet new people in open public places. Rezeki and Sagala (2019) stated that Millennials use five types of slang: fresh, creative, imitative, acronyms, and clipping. Millennials use slang in Instagram for various reasons, such as to initiate relaxed conversations, express impressions, and show intimacy. Beukeboom et al. (2015) observed that brands seem to adopt an informal communication style on social media. According to McArthur et al. (2018), *informal communication* can be defined as common, informal, familiar, casual, and colloquial. Brand strategists adopt informal language styles because they can convey intimacy and promote relationships between consumers and brands. Moxy Hotel used informal language and slang to portray itself as a casual and laid-back place, which can be effective in portraying a narrowed distance between the hotel and consumers, and creating a comfortable experience.

In addition, as a pet-friendly hotel, Moxy may attract a large number of pet lovers. Pet-friendly hotels allow certain types of pets to accompany their owners during their stays, and allow pets to enter some areas of the hotels, or provide pet-appropriate services (Kirillova et al., 2015). Pets are very popular among Millennials (Graham et al., 2019), so the trend of travelling with pets has become an emerging market in the hospitality industry (Kongtaveesawas & Namwong, 2020). Quinn (2001) reported that as an increasing number of tourists consider pets as a part of their families, they will not travel without them. Moxy hotels welcome pets, and want pets to receive high quality services. It can be seen that Moxy have made efforts to attract Millennial consumers, especially those who like pets.

4.2 Motto by Hilton

“Motto by Hilton” is Hilton's micro brand, located in prime locations around the world, and allows guests to freely create their own exclusive experiences in the popular cities. Hilton evaluated the development model of emerging fashion hotels around the world to understand the opportunities for improving the concept of shared rooms.

4.2.1 Image Analysis of Motto by Hilton

Figure 5:

Motto by Hilton Bedrooms



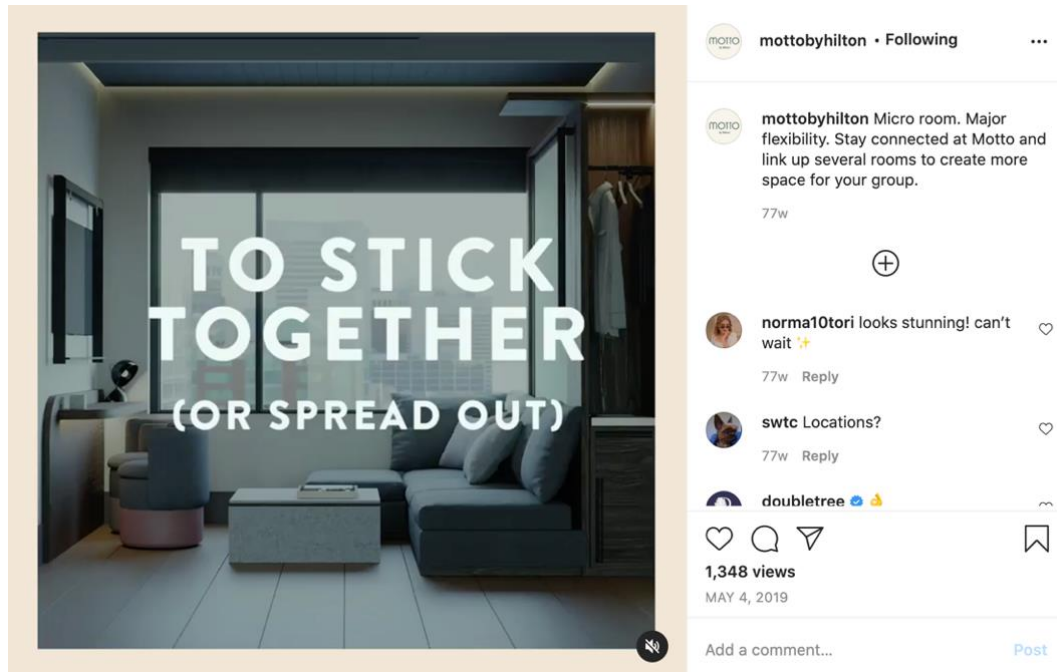
Note. From *Newsroom Hilton*. <https://newsroom.hilton.com/corporate/news/hilton-announces-innovative-new-hotel-brand-motto-by-hilton-will-deliver-affordable-style-in-coveted-urban-destinations>. Copyright 2020 by the Motto by Hilton.

Figure 5 presents an image from the website of the Hilton's newsroom home page in August 2020. The image shows the Motto by Hilton's multifunctional bedrooms. The overall style of the room is dark, reflecting the hotel's focus on simplicity and sleep. Also, the picture shows that although the Motto by Hilton bedrooms are small, they contain all the essential elements such as a sofa, coffee table, lamp, and hanger. This room represents the connection function of the hotel's bedrooms. When guests want to spend time with their companions or request to stay in adjacent rooms, Motto by Hilton Hotel can effectively provide accommodation solutions for group travellers by creating connecting rooms, with bunk beds and folding beds in some rooms. Hotel bedrooms provide special bed types to meet different accommodation needs. It can be seen from this, that Motto by Hilton is a group travel-friendly hotel.

4.2.2 Text Analysis of Motto by Hilton

Figure 6:

Motto by Hilton Bedroom



Note. From *Motto by Hilton Instagram*. https://www.instagram.com/p/BxA89iGBc_C/.

Copyright 2019 by the Motto by Hilton.

The image in Figure 6 was taken from the Instagram of Motto by Hilton, published on May 4, 2019. The caption shows the Motto by Hilton is committed to creating “major flexibility,” and connecting people together for group travel. Motto by Hilton used the phrases “stick together” and “or spread out” to further emphasise the flexibility of the micro room. It can be seen that the hotel advertised to attract consumers looking for group travel options. Motto by Hilton provided an option not seen in traditional hotels, as the usual options would have been just to provide more beds or connecting rooms. Therefore, this bedroom offers a type of innovative experience. Furthermore, Motto by Hilton attempts to reduce distance to consumers, for example, by using informal words such as “stick together” or “separate out” to describe the flexibility of hotel rooms, as if they were people. Although the picture of the Motto by Hilton hotel had no people in it, the text on the picture conveyed that there was no wall in the bedroom, and consumers could choose to “stick together” or “separate,” showing that staying in this hotel promoted freedom for guests in terms of their group accommodation choices.

4.2.3 The Innovative Experience of Motto by Hilton

According to Motto by Hilton, its hotels around the world have demonstrated flexibility and brought innovative experiences to younger consumers (Hilton, n.d.). Motto by Hilton appeals to travellers looking for value and unique experiences by combining the best elements of a lifestyle hotel. The core of Motto by Hilton is to provide a flexible and innovative hospitality experience through elements such as connecting rooms, group travel, and vibrant public spaces (Hilton, n.d.).

Studies have found that Millennials enjoy group activities and community exchanges (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Millennials like to take group trips with friends or family, rather than travelling alone (Aceron et al., 2018), and because they are sociable, they are happy to meet new people or enhance friendships in hotels (Sofronov, 2018). According to Veríssimo and Costa (2018), Millennials prioritise social interactions and adventures with friends. This characteristic is evident in the photos used by Motto, as they show that it could meet the needs of young consumers seeking to stay with friends and family. It is evident that Motto hotels sought to provide group services, such as room sharing flexibility, that may very well meet the accommodation needs of Millennial customers who not only enjoy group travel, but also flexibility and the option to customise. The consumption experience that Millennial consumers seek is personalised, customised, and selective (Sweeney, 2006). This type of customisation can be seen in the bedroom of Motto, which can be divided, left open and shared, providing consumers with either a private or shared space, and allowing their behaviours to be carefree. In addition, use of informal language such as “to stick together” or “spread out” in describing the bedroom options indicated the attempts to seem more laidback. Speaking in such ways would ideally attract Millennial consumers who may most appreciate group accommodation options in hotels.

4.3 JO&JOE

To seize the increasingly important Millennial market, AccorHotels launched a youth hostel brand called “JO&JOE” (Fox, 2019). According to the hotel’s website, the brand is a living space full of vitality, an open residence designed to meet the expectations of Millennials and people who value sharing interests or hobbies as well as experience (JO&JOE, n.d.). There are three types of bedrooms in this brand of hotel: private bedrooms, shared bedrooms, and cabins (JO&JOE, n.d.). JO&JOE not only provides a type of bedroom, but also provides chic and interesting social experiences to young consumers.

4.3.1 Image Analysis of JO&JOE

Figure 7:

JO&JOE Bedroom



Note. From Accor Group. <https://group.accor.com/en/brands/economy/jo-and-joe>. Copyright 2020 by Accor.

The image in Figure 7 was presented on the main page of Group Accor-JO&JOE official website and shows a cabin room at JO&JOE. The room looks very warm and bright, and includes bold artwork, such as the painting on the beds. The guests in the room use horse head masks to reflect the vitality and personality of the bedroom. As shown in the image, consumers can have their own private spaces in a cabin-like layout. The image shows consumers using their laptops while in bed, suggesting that this is the type of activity the hotel expects from the guests they are targeting. There are no tables, desks, or seating in the room, which encourages the multi-functional use of the bed, as represented in the image. It is made apparent that the function of the bed is not only for sleeping. The hotel rooms and their bed structures are very distinctive and unique in their design, this could satisfy consumers' both private and shared space preferences at the same time. This type of room layout reflect the concept of group accommodation, in which people can socialise in a semi-private, yet shared space.

4.3.2 Text Analysis of JO&JOE

Figure 8:

JO&JOE Bedroom



Note. From *JO&JOE Instagram*. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CECWeTtiWuG/>. Copyright 2020 by JO&JOE.

Figure 8 is a post from the Instagram account of JO&JOE on August 19, 2020. The caption accompanying the post shows that JO&JOE has redefined the traditional notion of beds. In JO&JOE, the bed can be used as a “fighting ring,” “trampoline,” or “whatever you want.” It seems that there is no limit to the function of the bed in the JO&JOE. The picture of this post showed two people pillow fighting with each other on the bed. It is evident that JO&JOE regards a bed as not only a place to rest, but also a place to relax and have fun. The two guests in this image are seen wearing horse masks and dressed in very casual attire, which may indicate that this kind of youthful and unrestricted behaviour is encouraged when staying at this hotel. Consumers looking for hotels that allow accommodation options where they can break the traditional boundaries of a hotel bed (for example) are evidently the target market they were appealing to. For example, the caption “usually, bed means sleep,” indicated that guests could feel free to do whatever they wanted, and not just the expected behaviour of sleeping. In this post, JO&JOE also used slang words in their hashtags, such as “good vibes,” and “chill,” this simple approach can be seen as an attempt to close the gap between Millennial consumers and the hotel.

4.3.3 The Innovative Experience of JO&JOE

The main feature of JO&JOE is that it offers unique beds, including shared dormitory style rooms, in which the living places are not rooms, but beds (Andrad, 2014, as cited in Veríssimo & Costa, 2018). This can satisfy Millennial consumers who are keen to socialise, make new friends, and at the same time have a semi-private space. This room caters to the innovative needs of young consumers with this Millennial mode of thinking. The hotel marketers aimed to meet the expectations of the younger generation of consumers who enjoy the fun of sharing and innovative experiences. As mentioned before, Millennial travellers do not look for formulaic experiences in hotel accommodation, but are typically eager for new and unique experiences. Howe and Strauss (2000) stated that Millennial generations desire freedom. The representations in Figure 8, and the image in Figure 9, both reflect the hotel company's intention to create an innovative experience, breaking away from the traditional function of a bed. For example, in the past, guests generally used their laptops at a desk in a hotel room, at JO&JOE, a flexible space is provided where they are instead encouraged or rather expected to use their laptops in their beds instead.

Millennials are typically inclined to free expression and performance, so the flexible rooms can meet the unconstrained lifestyle of Millennial consumers. They can enjoy freedom, liberation, and create enjoyable, comfortable and unique memories in JO&JOE hotels. The hotels are full of vitality in use of bed layouts and vibrant artworks or bold colours, and aim to bring consumers a sense of freedom. These hotels seem to appeal to consumers who regard the hotel room as not only a place to sleep, but also a place for socialisation and entertainment in any way or form they desire, without restriction.

4.4 Radisson RED

Radisson Hotel Group created the brand "Radisson RED," which they describe as a stylish boutique hotel that is particularly attractive to Millennial consumers (Radissonhotelgroup, 2020): "Radisson RED is a new hotel philosophy that connects with an ageless Millennial mindset through art, music and fashion" (Radisson RED, n.d.). Radisson RED is a non-traditional hotel brand that aims to provide guests with an upscale hotel accommodation experience. Radisson RED focuses on art, fashion, and music to build interpersonal relationships, and stimulate the imaginations of consumers. Their aim is to ensure guests will not be bored when they stay in their hotels. Radisson RED hotels have eye-catching designs, using red as the main colour to create interesting hotel spaces. There are avant-garde artworks created by local artists in the rooms, showing that Radisson attaches great importance to its trendy and lively design style. Radisson RED has a dedicated application to manage services directly from mobile devices. Consumers can explore local activities through their hotels' digital social centres.

4.4.1 Image Analysis of Radisson RED

Figure 9:

Radisson RED Bedroom



Note. From *Radisson Red Instagram*. <https://www.instagram.com/p/B9OZvr3AIqB/>. Copyright 2020 by Radisson RED Hotel.

The image in Figure 9 was published on Radisson RED's Instagram on September 2, 2020. The artwork on the wall illustrates a person shouting in surprise. Radisson RED hotels portray a vigorous, unrestrained atmosphere and brand image with this bold artwork. The person in the image is a young guest pictured stretching, with a relaxed and satisfied expression; there is a red eye mask placed beside her. This close-up image of just the guest and bed in the picture may indicate the simplicity of the room with an emphasis on the sleep quality consumers can expect from this hotel. The bed seems to be the main feature. Simplicity and perhaps no-frills approach of the room can also be noticed through the strict colour palette of just red and white.

4.4.2 Text Analysis of Radisson RED

Figure 10:

Radisson RED Bedroom



Note. From *Radisson Red Instagram*. https://www.instagram.com/p/CDvx68qo-_8/. Copyright 2020 by Radisson RED Hotel.

The image in Figure 10 was taken from Radisson RED Hotel Dubai Silicon Oasis on August 11, 2020, when it was posted by the company on Instagram. The caption uses the terms “staycation” and “bestie” to describe the image of the bedroom. It can be seen that Radisson RED hotel marketers used these slang words to promote the idea that they welcomed local consumers that may enjoy staycations there, but especially young consumers that would relate with words such as “bestie.” A comment made in response to the post described again the bold artwork in the room as “sick,” providing evidence that it appealed to the desired audience. The image in the post shows two young female guests seated comfortably on the bed, engaged in a conversation. This reflects the hotel’s focus on promoting social interaction in their rooms and their appeal to young guests.

4.4.3 Innovation Experience of Radisson RED

The images in Figure 9 and 10 show the bedrooms at a Radisson RED Hotel, decorated with bold red artwork on the walls. The room design of this image reflects a distinctive, novel, and fashionable style intended to influence the purchase intentions of Millennial consumers (Eastman et al., 2013). There seems to be a focus on the bed and the artwork in terms of room features,

turning attention away from all ‘other features’ that may have usually been promoted in hotel rooms such as a desk, sitting area or room views.

Millennials search for accommodation and destinations on social media before travelling. They may want to find some popular attractions or hotels or check the destination's online word of mouth. Therefore, as Veríssimo and Costa (2018) suggested, the language style of the hotel's social media represents an integral part of the travel experience. Consumers may find hotels that match their interests and preferences from the language style of the post.

Millennials value friendship and peer exchanges more than other groups. According to Goldgehn (2004), most Millennials found that accommodation places are the best places to make new friends and form strong connections. Radisson RED hotels seem to attract Millennial consumers with rooms that are simple yet unique, with bold artwork that may appeal to Millennials. In addition to this, the appeal may lie in providing beds that not only guarantee a good night's sleep but beds that invite guests to socialise in. This suggests that Radisson RED hotels are targeting Millennial consumers interested in the bold design and style of a hotel room.

Chapter 5. Synthesis and Conclusion

This chapter compares and contrasts the innovative experiences of the four hotels using a content analysis of the data. Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that a new innovative hotel experience framework suitable for Millennial consumers has been introduced. This chapter reveals how hotels are marketing innovative experiences to target the Millennial generation. Conclusions and implications are also presented, and the chapter reflects on the limitations of the study before and providing recommendations for future research on innovative experiences offered by hotels.

5.1 Innovative Experiences at Four Hotels Compared and Contrasted

The four hotels in the study examined the innovative experiences offered to Millennials in three themes: services, behaviour, and language. The four hotels shared similarities in how the innovative experiences were promoted, by presenting personalised services, carefree behaviour, and the use of trending words, all in the attempt to reduce the distance between accommodation styles and Millennial consumers. In addition, these four hotels all focused on sociability, and meeting the needs of Millennial consumers who socialise to enhance relationships with families or friends. For Millennial consumers, it seems hotels were not only accommodation spaces, but also a place to socialise, which is a common factor the four hotels were using to appeal to Millennials. However, there were also some different innovative experiences noted amongst the four hotels. For example, Moxy provided services for pets, Motto by Hilton had a focus on group travellers, JO&JOE paid attention to providing consumers with a carefree experience, and Radisson RED emphasised staycations. These differences are discussed in the following section.

5.1.1 Personalised Services

According to the results obtained through image and text analysis, these four hotels all focused on personalised services. For example, Moxy are pet-friendly hotels, allowing pets to stay with their owners. Many consumers of the Millennial generation are considered pet lovers, and they like to have their pets with them when they travel (Quinn, 2001). According to Kongtaveesawas and Namwong (2020), the trend of people travelling with pets has prompted the hospitality industry to target this emerging market. Therefore, customised pet services catering to particular customer segments have become a competitive innovation experience offering. Moxy hotels provided services to pets to attract Millennial consumers. As noted in the literature review, a tangible product can become a service that can be experienced. Moxy provided a tangible product in that their guests could have a complimentary drink when they checked in, which can be regarded as a personalised service. This could effectively attract consumers who like to drink and

socialise. Motto by Hilton also focused on promoting customised services by providing flexible room configuration options for group travel. The shared room (see Figure 4) was user-friendly for group travellers, and allowed guests to re-shape the room configurations according to their needs. Similarly, the cabin-style room of a JO&JOE hotel also enabled consumers to have some sense of privacy when staying in shared rooms. Radisson RED provided consumers with customised eye masks, ensuring a high-quality sleeping environment.

From the content analysis of the posts of Radisson RED hotels posted on Instagram in the year prior to the research, it was evident that serving pets was a personalised service for offered by Radisson RED to attract Millennial consumers. Large numbers of photographs of dogs and cats, as well as photographs of pets interacting with their owners are displayed on Instagram. It was evident that the hotel marketers were trying to attract Millennial consumers to a pet-friendly hotel. These four hotel companies seemed to recognise that personalised services are an important aspect for attracting Millennial consumers.

5.1.2 Carefree Behaviours

From the images obtained from the websites of four hotels and Instagram for image analysis it was evident these hotels placed a focus on bedrooms that allowed consumers to show carefree behaviour. For instance, the bedroom at the Moxy hotel was different from that of a traditional hotel, because the bed was not particularly neat, the bed linen was wrinkled, and there was no furniture suitable for business use. The atmosphere shown in the images analysed for Moxy hotel was free and relaxing, which is different from that of a traditional hotel bedroom. Moxy hotels allowed pets on the beds. This indicates that consumers did not need to pay much attention to cleanliness there, and guests could use the bedroom without the usual constraints. At Motto by Hilton, although there were no people or animals in the Instagram images, the text analysis showed that the shared bedroom did not have a permanent wall. “Stick together or separate” was enough to show that the room could be flexible, and consumers could move furniture to suit their needs.

Similarly, the bedroom of the JO&JOE hotel gave consumers the idea of carefree use of a hotel room, showing that the bed could be used as a trampoline or fighting arena (see Figure 7). Overall, this promotes the idea that consumers could do whatever they wanted in this hotel. In addition, from analysing the text of the Radisson RED post, it was evident that the hotel marketers were trying to attract local consumers and provide them with a staycation. Consumers can use hotels as a destination when travelling. These four hotels had no boundaries in the bedrooms, and were breaking with the traditional layouts and functions, instead adopting a free, flexible, and rebellious way of accommodating guests to meet the expectations of Millennials. The literature shows that

Millennials want choices and freedom (Goldgehn, 2004). It seems that the members of the Millennial generation seek freedom, rather than being bound by rules and regulations (Goldgehn, 2004), and the carefree behaviours promoted in the images and text of the four hotels appealed to this preference. It is clear that the marketers of these four hotels attached importance to creating a free and comfortable environment for Millennial consumers.

The way hotels appealed to the Millennial generation by offering a type of service to promote socialisation, came under the theme of “carefree behaviours.” According to Siegel and Wang (2019) marketing using socialisation will encourage responses from Millennial consumers. From the analysis of the content of JO&JOE hotel Instagram posts, it was found that JO&JOE attached great importance to providing innovative experiences for socialisation. JO&JOE hotels often host events for local people and guests, offering tourists the opportunity to meet local people. Millennials like to experience the culture of a destination while travelling (Siegel & Wang, 2019). If Millennials can meet locals, this is an authentic way of learning about the local culture. It seems that marketers at JO&JOE’s were appealing to Millennial consumers that may be eager to meet local people through travel, to learn about local culture and to enrich their social experience. Therefore, the hotels offered a wealth of activities to allow consumers to meet their social needs.

5.1.3 Informal Language

Informal language on social media was an innovative way of trying to attract Millennial consumers. The four hotel companies used slang to describe the posts on Instagram, to attract Millennial consumers. This may make customers feel a sense of emotional resonance, which could bring hotels and their consumers closer together. For example, the Moxy brand used the phrase “say hi to the newest member of the fam,” Motto by Hilton used “to stick together, or spread out,” JO&JOE used “have fun, chill,” and Radisson RED used “staycation” and “bestie.” These show the extensive use of slang or buzzwords on Instagram, designed to attract the attention of Millennial consumers and help them resonate with the style of the hotels. According to Goldgehn (2004), there are four key elements in Millennial communications: they are authentic, original, relevant, and focused on building relationships. Millennials use slang in Instagram because they want to initiate relaxed conversations and show intimacy (Rezeki & Sagala, 2019). In order to create innovative experiences, hotels need to interact with Millennial consumers and express their care of and interest in them. Brands use buzzwords that are consistent with the lifestyles of Millennials (Moore, 2011). Goldgehn (2004) suggested that Millennials are “fashionable and cool,” and looking for advertisements that are contemporary in style. Millennials need to be cared for and want to feel that they are valued. Therefore, the use of slang and trending words on social media can meet the interests of the Millennial generation.

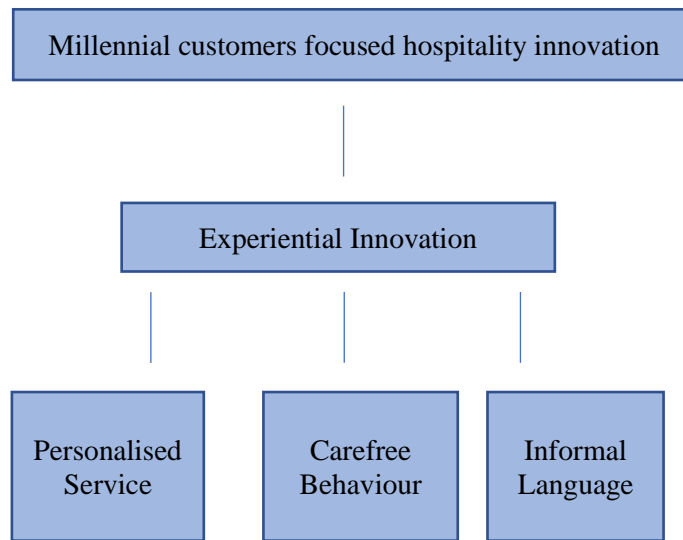
5.2 Final Framework of Innovative Experiences for the Millennial Generation

In this study, the service, behaviours, and language, can be seen as themes. Through an inductive approach, three categories were determined: personalised service, carefree behaviours, and informal language. The key results from the innovative experiences examined in this study are related to Bharwani and Mathews (2016) framework identified in Chapter 2. The findings of this study, including the analysis of the images and the text content, were used to modify the existing framework to present a new framework suitable to answering the research question.

This research sought to develop a new model of innovative experiences offered by hotels, and that could appeal to Millennial consumers. The findings identified three categories: personalised services, carefree behaviour, and informal language. *Personalised services* can be defined as services that break with the traditional passive service model, and instead, provide consumers the power to customise services to meet their needs. The consumption style that Millennials expect is personalised, customised, and selective (Sweeney, 2006). As Millennials choose unique, tailor-made experiences instead of negative stereotypes, hotels need to provide places for consumers to feel at home (Rickes, 2009). *Carefree behaviour* can be defined as providing consumers the opportunity to break away from traditional behaviours that is usually expected in hotels, instead enjoying unfettered freedom in a hotel. “Carefree behaviour” not only refers to rebellious, non-traditional behaviour in a hotel, but also to social behaviour and socialisation. Many Millennial travellers are interested in leisure travel (Starčević & Konjikušić, 2018), and are eager to socialise during travel (Rockies, 2009, as cited in Devine, 2010). Hotels that provide an environment for carefree behaviour promote social interactions for guests staying at their hotels. The third category of “informal language” refers to the use of slang or trending words on social media to resonate with Millennial consumers. The communication between consumers and hotel employees on social media is a part of the travel experience, and is different from traditional hotels using formal language on social media. The modified framework is presented next.

Figure 11:

Millennial Customers Focused Hospitality Innovation



5.3 Implications

This research has made several theoretical contributions. In order to explore innovative experiences for Millennials, the research developed a framework explaining Millennial customers' focus on hospitality innovation. Future research could use this modified framework to examine other hotels' marketing focus. In addition, future research could explore more aspects based on this modified framework. The current research also has practical value. Millennials have become the generation with the strongest spending power, with expendable income as well as travel plans. As noted in Chapter 2, Millennials are typically passionate about hotels that provide innovative experiences and highly personalised services. Therefore, hotel brands can provide innovative experiences to attract these Millennial consumers. According to the findings of this research, there are three types of innovative experiences that hotels use to target Millennial consumers: service, behaviour, and language. Hotels need to provide personalised services, such as allowing pets to stay with their owners. There needs to be no restrictions on behaviour, breaking with the traditional restrictions of bedrooms, allowing consumers to do whatever they want. In terms of language, hotel marketers can use slang and trendy words to make consumers feel the communication is novel and interesting. If hotel brands can provide these types of innovations to this group of consumers, they may obtain a strong competitive advantage, offering a positive customer experience and acquiring customer loyalty to their brands. Ultimately, personalised services, carefree behaviour, and the implementation of informal language are the keys to making Millennial consumers recognise a hotel's brand. Through this research, hotel brand marketers can understand how to implement different types of innovative experiences to attract Millennials. The

implementation of these different types of innovative experiences will benefit the competitive advantage of the hotel brand, attract a large number of young potential customers, and enhance the brand image.

Hotel companies need to work hard to provide timely responses to reviews, enhance interactions with consumers, and improve the use of websites and social media platforms. Additionally, they need to publish content related to the activities, parties, animals, and other needs of Millennial consumers, rather than just selling their products and services, which may enhance consumer interest in their hotels. Innovative experiences are the need and expectation of the new generation of consumers.

5.4 Limitations

This research encountered some limitations. The first limitation was that the sample size was relatively small; only four hotels were used as samples. Many hotels target Millennial consumers, not just chain hotel brands. Four hotels were selected as the content analysis sample, and may not have represented the innovative experience of the entire hotel industry. However, these hotels were still useful examples of what larger hotel chains targeting Millennials are offering. Furthermore, this research only used Instagram and hotel websites as data sources, which may have excluded the ideas of hotel brands and consumers using other social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. A further limitation of this research was the limited time span covered by the data. The data collection of this research used Instagram posts published in the year prior to the study being undertaken, which may have resulted in missing valuable insights. A third limitation was identified in relation to personal opinions affecting the process of data analysis, as the content analysis may have been influenced by the subjective nature of personal judgments.

5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

The topic of innovative experience is worth exploring for future hotel brands and consumers, so there are some suggestions for future research. First, the sample size of the research could be increased. Comparing hotels in the same country or region to analyse their innovative experience, could identify ways to improve innovative experiences. In addition, future research could consider using primary sources for the data. For example, researchers could use questionnaire surveys or interviews with hotel guests or managers. Researchers could also analyse the innovative experiences that attract Millennials from the perspectives of both hotel guests and marketers. Analysing the innovation experience from the perspective of consumers could identify the effectiveness of innovative experiences. This topic is significant because it provides a new perspective on innovation experience to appeal to the growing market segment of Millennial

customers. Researchers could compare the two different perspectives and reveal meaningful findings. This could lead to more reliable research. Finally, it is important to research and pay attention to other consumer age groups, such as that of Generation Z, because this generation of young people is about to become mainstream consumers. Different generations could be also compared and analysed in terms of the preferred innovative experiences of different age groups.

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