

## INNOVATING GUEST EXPERIENCES: THE IMPACT OF HOSPITALITY INNOVATION ON TOURIST SATISFACTION

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper examines the influence of hospitality innovation on tourist satisfaction in the context of boutique hotels in Malaysia. As competition in the hospitality sector intensifies and customer expectations evolve, innovation has become a key factor in enhancing service quality and delivering memorable guest experiences. The study draws on Social Exchange Theory and the Diffusion of Innovation framework to explore how innovative practices in hotel services affect tourists' satisfaction levels. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to tourists who stayed in selected boutique hotels across Malaysia. A quantitative approach using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed to test the proposed relationship. The results indicate a significant and positive impact of hospitality innovation on tourist satisfaction, confirming that modern, adaptive, and guest-focused innovations improve overall satisfaction levels. The findings contribute to both academic literature and industry practice by emphasizing the strategic role of innovation in hospitality management. Hotel managers are encouraged to invest in creative and technological enhancements to exceed guest expectations and strengthen customer loyalty. This research also provides valuable insights for policymakers aiming to support innovation-driven growth in Malaysia's tourism sector.*

**KEYWORDS:** Hospitality Innovation, Tourist Satisfaction, Boutique Hotels, Malaysia, Innovation Strategy, Guest Experience, PLS-SEM

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