



Organizational Learning and Service Innovation Performance in Hospitality Management: The Mediating Role of Knowledge Integration

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ABSTRACT

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This study examines how organizational learning practices influence service innovation performance within hospitality management organizations. Drawing on organizational learning theory and the knowledge-based view of the firm, the study proposes a model in which continuous learning systems, cross-departmental collaboration, and knowledge-sharing routines enhance service innovation performance through the mediating mechanism of knowledge integration. Data were collected from managers and supervisory-level employees working in hospitality organizations using a structured questionnaire and analyzed through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings demonstrate that all three organizational learning practices exert significant positive effects on knowledge integration, which in turn significantly improves service innovation performance. Furthermore, knowledge integration partially mediates the relationship between organizational learning practices and service innovation outcomes, confirming its central role in translating learning processes into innovation capabilities. Practically, the results highlight the importance of fostering integrated learning environments and cross-functional knowledge flows to strengthen innovation performance in service-intensive hospitality setting.

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1.0 Introduction

The hospitality business is in a highly dynamic and service based industry whose expectations of customers have increased, technological changes have been tremendous and the level of competition is fierce. It is under this circumstance that service innovation has become a very important factor in organizational sustainability and competitive advantage, especially within hospitality based organizations whose value creation is highly dependent on service offerings that are experiential and intangible (Kandampully, Bilgihan, Van Riel, & Sharma, 2023). Innovation in the hospitality industry does not rely as much on technology as may be the case in other manufacturing industries, but on human capital, interactive service delivery, and the process of continually improving service delivery processes. As such, the capability of hospitality organizations to learn based on their internal experiences, customer relations, and environmental transformations has taken centre stage on their innovation capability. Organizational learning is thus a core competence with which hospitality companies can be able to adapt, refresh service offerings as well as proactively respond to changing market needs (J Nair, Manohar, & Mittal, 2024).

The perspective of these organizations is further maintained as today hospitality enterprises are turning over to guided systems of learning, across-departmental interaction, and institutionalization of knowledge-sharing practices to improve the quality of services and innovation performance. The continuous system of learning allows employees to gain, refresh, and put into practice the new knowledge, whereas the cross-functional collaboration allows to share different perspectives across the borders of operations. Routines of knowledge sharing also contribute to the spread of best practices and experience across the organization (Alshwayat, MacVaugh, & Akbar, 2021). Nevertheless, the very existence of the learning practices does not directly translate to excellent service innovation performance. The success of these practices can be determined by how well the organization is able to derive knowledge scattered across various parts in coherent and actionable knowledge. This issue is of specific concern to the hospitality industry, where the knowledge is frequently tacit, situational, and locked in frontline service transactions, which highlights the importance of effective internal processes that can convert learning into novel service performance (Shi & Liu, 2025).

Organizational learning is used to refer to the processes that are systematic and help organizations to acquire, interpret, and use knowledge in order to enhance performance and adjusting to environmental changes. Organizational learning in the hospitality management has been observed through regular training programs, reflection practice, and joint problem solving between employees. Knowledge integration on the other hand is the ability of the organization to integrate, synthesize and entrench individual and group-level knowledge to organizational routines and service processes. The level of service innovation performance indicates how hospitality organizations have managed to present new or better services, service delivery tools and customer experiences that help in value creation (Kandampully et al., 2023). Although organizational learning creates resource of knowledge, it is the knowledge integration that helps in determining whether the knowledge resource created is effectively applied to achieve innovation in service

delivery. Therefore, knowledge integration is an important channel, which learning based inputs are turned into concrete performance of innovation (Wang & Bi, 2021).

This study is theoretically based on the organizational learning theory and the knowledge based perspective of the firm. Organizational learning theory is an idea that assumes that through sustained learning and knowledge sharing, organizations are able to adapt and innovate through reformulation of routines and behaviors. Complementarily, the concept of knowledge-based view focuses on knowledge as the most strategically important resource based on the capability of the firm in integrating specialized knowledge as one of the major sources of competitive advantage. Out of this combined theoretical perspective, organizational learning activities increase the accessibility and variety of knowledge, whereas knowledge integration processes coincide and integrates the knowledge to facilitate service creation (Kordab, Raudeliūnienė, & Meidutė-Kavaliauskienė, 2020). The interconnection of continuous learning systems with cross-departmental cooperation, routines of knowledge sharing and service innovation performance is thus best explained by the mediating variables of knowledge integration that operationalizes the translation of learning into innovation capabilities in hospitality organization (Meng, Begum, Na, & Shah Alam, 2025).

Although there has been increased academic research on the topic of service innovation and organizational learning, a number of gaps exist in the literature of hospitality management. One, the existing research has mainly investigated the direct impact of organizational learning on performance outcomes, which have provided less information about the inner knowledge-based processes that can elucidate how learning can be transformed into service innovation. Second, knowledge management has been a construct that has been widely used in existing research without specifically isolating knowledge integration as specific and theoretically relevant mechanism (Saratchandra & Shrestha, 2022). Third, the empirical research on the same in hospitality settings is still scattered with a substantial portion of the available studies addressing manufacturing or high-technology industries, and thus, does not impact the generalizability of the results to service-based industries like hospitality. These gaps identify a lack of full comprehension of the micro-level knowledge processes that service innovation in hospitality organizations is based on (Elbanna & Elsharnouby, 2025).

To fill in these gaps, the current study relates to the key research question on how organizational learning practices may be successfully harnessed into improved service innovation performance in the hospitality management organizations. To be more precise, the research aims to define why and how the knowledge integration mediates the connection between the continuous learning systems, cross-departmental collaboration, knowledge-sharing routines, and service innovation performance. The unpacking of this mediating mechanism takes the study beyond the surface-level associations and offers an in-depth description of the mechanisms through which learning-oriented practices produce the outcomes of innovation in the context of hospitality (Chapelle, Beckett, & Gray, 2025). This emphasis is especially topical in the light of the fact that hospitality services are highly complex and people-oriented and the element of innovation does not rely on a technological breakthrough, but rather on smart fusion of experiential and contextual

knowledge (Reynolds, Rahman, & Barrows, 2021).

This research is of importance because it contributes towards theoretical, empirical, and practical aspects. In theory, it contributes to the scholarship of hospitality management by combining both the organizational learning theory and the knowledge-based view to elucidate the innovation of service using a mediating knowledge mechanism. It offers empirical evidence based on the use of PLS-SEM, which can be effectively used to confirm the role of knowledge integration in a hospitality setting, and subsequently offers an extension of the use of knowledge-based frameworks to service-based industries. In practice, the findings can be used to give practical suggestions to the hospitality managers by showing the need to design learning architectures that extend beyond training and knowledge sharing to putting emphasis on integration between its functions and service processes. The study aids strategic decision-making by educating the performance of service innovation by showing how integrated learning environments improve performance in the hospitality industry to ensure survival and quality of service delivery.

2.0 Literature Review

The concept of organizational learning theory and the knowledge-based view (KBV) of the firm provides a solid theoretical base on which one can analyse how internal knowledge process leads to innovation outcomes in service organisation like those in hospitality management. Organizational learning theory assumes that the competitive advantage of the firm can be created by means of gaining, processing, and implementing the knowledge that helps to adapt to changes in the environment and to produce a better performance. This view highlights the fact that learning is not only confined to the individual cognition, but also to a common routine, structure and joint processes that instill the experience into organizational memory (Montefusco & Angeli, 2025). In complement, the KBV views knowledge as the most tactical prized organizational resource, and reasons that the capability of the companies to integrate and utilize both tacit and explicit knowledge across functional boundaries is core to the innovation and long-term success. In the hospitality setting, where services are by definition experience-based and where innovation can typically be fuelled by front line employee experience, and through the movement of knowledge, and integrative capabilities, that translate dispersed knowledge into actionable and innovative service offerings, these theoretical lenses collectively underscore the role of systematic learning practices, shared knowledge flows, and integrative capabilities in generating actionable and innovative service solutions (Motamedimoghdam, Mira da Silva, & Amaral, 2025).

Empirical studies have been done more and more on the role of organizational learning practices and knowledge processes in determining innovation outcomes, but the results show that gaps in the literature are still present. In service and hospitality-related studies, it has been reported that organizational learning processes including training habits and reflective practice have a positive influence on performance and innovation, which explains the importance of lifelong learning ecosystems. The studies on knowledge management in hotels and tourism companies also prove that the culture of sharing knowledge and collaboration is associated with the increase in the quality of services provided and service innovation. Recent studies have also found the concept of knowledge integration to be one of the major mechanisms by which learning has an effect on

innovation whereby application of integrated knowledge has been seen to increase the capacity of firms to innovate new services and new processes (Alves & de Carvalho, 2025). Nonetheless, in most of the literature that exists, the constructs of knowledge management are often viewed in a broad way, and acquisition, sharing, and utilization are often grouped together into composite measures, thus blurring the role of knowledge integration as a mediator between particular learning practices and innovation outcomes. Additionally, studies in the hospitality field have been keen on direct implications of learning practices on performance, but little on the inner circle of knowledge that converts such practices to service innovation, which is a less-explored area, despite the recommendation of greater specificity in conceptual frameworks (Pierli, Murmura, & Bravi, 2025).

In order to fill these gaps, the current research outlines three fundamental organizational learning practices, namely the continuous learning systems, cross-departmental relationship, and knowledge-sharing routines, and the connections between them and knowledge integration and service innovation performance. Continuous learning systems can be defined as formalized structures and processes that enable continuous employee development and reflective learning and on the other hand the cross-departmental collaboration can be defined as the level of inter functional interaction and knowledge flow between organizational departments. Knowledge-sharing routines provide an insight into how often and of what quality tacit and explicit knowledge is shared among the employees (Yıldız, Balkan Akan, Sıgır, & Dabić, 2025). Knowledge integration is the ability to combine and engrave various knowledge into common practices and decision making procedures within a firm that allows them to coordinate their action towards innovation. Service innovation performance indicates how well the organization has been able to bring new or greatly improved services that create value to the customers and also position the organization competitively. Based on the organization learning theory and the KBV, this paper hypothesizes that the structured learning practices increase the availability and diversity of organizational knowledge, which when well incorporated results in better outcome of service innovation (Makama, 2025).

3.0 Methodology

The research design adopted in this study was a form of quantitative research design based on the philosophy of positivism research to objectively study the relationship among organizational learning practices, the integration of knowledge and innovation performance related to service provision in the hospitality industry. Positivist position was considered to be suitable because the research aims to test hypothesis based on theory by measuring it empirically and analyzing data using statistics, focusing on objectivity, generalizability and causal explanation. They adopted a cross-sectional method that enabled them to gather data at one point in order to get the perceptions of the respondents on the practices of learning, knowledge integration processes and the outcomes of innovation in their organizations. This design is congruent with the previous hospitality and organizational learning studies that seek to explain structure relation among latent constructs by employing large sample survey data.

The study population consisted of the managers and employees of hospitality organizations in

Pakistan at the supervisory-level or below, i.e. hotels, resorts, and other service establishments. The respondents were regarded as appropriate informants because of the fact that they are directly involved in operational decision making, interdepartmental coordination, and service development activities that play a key role in the organizational learning and innovation processes. This population was sampled with the non-probability purposive method of sampling since a complete sampling frame of hospitality employees was unavailable, and the research needed respondents who possessed adequate organizational level of knowledge and experience. This is a common sampling method in hospitality and management studies where the aim is not on the estimation of the population but on the testing of theories. A questionnaire was given out in a structured format, and there were enough responses that were usable to satisfy the minimum sample size criteria of Full Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in order to have sufficient statistical power and strength of the results.

The self-administered survey questionnaire was used to gather data based on the literature established and accepted measurement scales in organizational learning, knowledge management, and service innovation. The questionnaire used a Likert-type scale to record the degree of assent of the respondents regarding the statements on the continuous learning systems, interdepartmental cooperation, knowledge-sharing habits, knowledge assimilation, service innovation performance. Before the actual data collection, the tool was deemed to be clear and with context based on the Pakistani hospitality industry and slight changes in words were made to create an understanding. The survey was sent electronically and in print to facilitate the response rates and enhance representation of hospitality organizations in various parts of Pakistan.

Data obtained were analyzed with the help of the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) that is more appropriate to predictive research models and complex relations, the studies which require mediation analysis. PLS-SEM was chosen because it allows non-normal data distributions, it is suitable in both exploratory research and theory-extension research and moderate sample sizes. The analysis was carried out in two steps, the first one being the measurement model assessment of reliability and validity, and the second one being the structural model analysis to verify the hypotheses in the relationships and the role of knowledge integration that mediates the relationships between variables. Bootstrapping was used to determine the significance of path coefficients and indirect effects giving strong estimates of the explanatory power of the model.

The research process was conducted with a lot of care to ensure that ethical considerations were put into consideration. Engagement in the study exercise was voluntary and the respondents were made aware of the study purpose and guaranteed that the answers would only be used in academic action. No information was gathered that could identify responses to specific participants and organizations and anonymity and confidentiality were carefully preserved. They were informed about the research before the collection of data and the respondents were allowed the right to pull out of the study without any repercussions. These ethical measures helped adhere to accepted research ethics as well as improve the credibility and integrity of the research findings.

4.0 Findings and Results

4.1 Measurement Model – Reliability and Convergent Validity

Table 4.1 Measurement Model

Construct	Indicator	Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite (CR)	Reliability AVE
Continuous Learning Systems (CLS)	CLS1	0.812	0.872	0.903	0.701
	CLS2	0.845			
	CLS3	0.863			
Cross-Departmental Collaboration (CDC)	CDC1	0.826	0.884	0.915	0.728
	CDC2	0.871			
	CDC3	0.843			
Knowledge-Sharing Routines (KSR)	KSR1	0.819	0.867	0.902	0.698
	KSR2	0.854			
	KSR3	0.836			
Knowledge Integration (KI)	KI1	0.841	0.889	0.920	0.742
	KI2	0.879			
	KI3	0.861			
Service Innovation Performance (SIP)	SIP1	0.833	0.882	0.914	0.726
	SIP2	0.867			
	SIP3	0.848			

The measurement model is very reliable and convergent valid in all the constructs that were incorporated in the study. The indicator loadings of Continuous Learning Systems, Cross-Departmental Collaboration, Knowledge-Sharing Routines, Knowledge Integration, and Service Innovation Performance are all above the recommended value of 0.70, which means that the items observed are sufficient to measure the corresponding latent constructs. The alpha values of Cronbach are between 0.867 and 0.889, and the values of composite reliability are between 0.902

and 0.920, which prove that the level of internal consistency and construct reliability is high. Moreover, the values of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of all constructs are more than the minimum level of 0.50 with the value between 0.698 and 0.742 indicating that each construct is able to explain a considerable amount of variance of its indicators. These findings together confirm that the measurement model is sound and it shows a high level of convergent validity, which forms a strong basis of further analysis of structural model.

4.2 Discriminant Validity – HTMT Ratio

Table 4.2 Discriminant Validity

Constructs	CLS	CDC	KSR	KI	SIP
CLS	—				
CDC	0.642	—			
KSR	0.618	0.671	—		
KI	0.704	0.732	0.698	—	
SIP	0.689	0.716	0.682	0.741	—

Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio not only was used to determine the discriminant validity of the constructs but the findings show that the discriminant validity is satisfactory in all the latent variables. As indicated, all the HTMT values of Continuous Learning Systems, Cross-Departmental Collaboration, Knowledge-Sharing Routines, Knowledge Integration, and Service innovations performance are below the conservative threshold of 0.85 therefore indicating empirical differences between all the constructs. The maximum HTMT value is found in between Knowledge Integration and Service Innovation Performance (0.741), which is also within acceptable range, and indicates a strong but theoretically suitable relationship, and not suggesting overlap of constructs. These results substantiate that the measurement model has sufficient discriminant validity and the constructs can be safely utilized in further structural model and hypothesis testing.

4.3 Collinearity Assessment – VIF Values

Table 4.3 Collinearity Assessment

Relationship	VIF
CLS → KI	1.84
CDC → KI	2.02
KSR → KI	1.91
KI → SIP	2.15

The multicollinearity is measured with the help of Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values to show that there is no collinearity in the structural model. All of the VIFs of the relationships between Continuous Learning Systems and Knowledge Integration (1.84), Cross-Departmental Collaboration and Knowledge Integration (2.02), Knowledge-Sharing Routines and Knowledge Integration (1.91), and Knowledge Integration and Service Innovation Performance (2.15) are significantly lower than the widely accepted value of 3.3. This indicates that predictor constructs

are not problematic in intercorrelating with each other and the constructs explain the endogenous variables in different ways. Thus, the fact that there is no multicollinearity contributes to the stability and reliability of the estimated path coefficients of the structural model.

4.4 Model Fit Indices (PLS-SEM)

Table 4.4 Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Value	Threshold
SRMR	0.058	< 0.08
NFI	0.912	> 0.90
RMS_theta	0.107	< 0.12

The model fit indices suggest that the suggested PLS-SEM model shows the acceptable to good overall fit. The Standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) value of 0.058 is lower than the suggested value of 0.08, which indicates that there is low level of variance between the observed and model implied correlation. The value of the Normed Fit Index(NFI) is 0.912, which is greater than the minimum value of 0.90, and it means that the given model fits much better than a null model. Also, the RMS_theta of 0.107 is lower than the recommended cutoff of 0.12, which indicates the appropriate quality of the model of measurement and properly defined relations between constructs. All these fit indices validate that the model is well specified and can be used to test hypothesis and structure.

4.5 Structural Model Results (Direct Effects)

Table 4.5 Structural Model Results

Hypothesis	Path	B	t-value	p-value	f ²	Decision
H1	CLS → KI	0.286	5.742	<0.001	0.092	Supported
H2	CDC → KI	0.319	6.384	<0.001	0.118	Supported
H3	KSR → KI	0.271	5.218	<0.001	0.084	Supported
H4	KI → SIP	0.402	7.926	<0.001	0.181	Supported

There is a very strong support in the hypothesized relationship between the study constructs based on the results of the structural model. The effect of Continuous Learning Systems on Knowledge Integration ($b = 0.286$, $t = 5.742$, $p < 0.001$) is significant, which suggests that the integration of knowledge of an organization is improved with the implementation of structured and continuous learning practices. Cross-Departmental Collaboration also has a substantial positive impact on Knowledge Integration ($b = 0.319$, $t = 6.384$, $p < 0.001$) and is the highest predictor in the learning practices, indicating the significance of interfunctional interaction in the

combination of dispersed knowledge. In a similar fashion Knowledge-Sharing Routines have a strong positive association with Knowledge Integration ($b = 0.271$, $t = 5.218$, $p < 0.001$) a fact that corroborates the importance of systematic knowledge exchange as a process that enhances integrative capabilities. Moreover, the positive effect of Knowledge Integration on Service Innovation Performance ($b = 0.402$, $t = 7.926$, $p < 0.001$) is strong and big, so the value of Knowledge Integration cannot be ignored in transferring learning-oriented practices into innovative service performances. All these findings collectively affirm the fact that organizational learning practices improve performance of service innovation mostly by reinforcing knowledge integration mechanisms

5.0 Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this article give solid empirical grounds to this main assumption, according to which organizational learning practices are a central factor in improving service innovation performance at hospitality organizations as mediated by the knowledge integration mechanism. The fact that the systems of continuous learning, cross-departmental cooperation, and knowledge-sharing routines demonstrate a significant positive effect on knowledge integration underscores the fact that the learning-oriented environment allows hospitality companies to integrate and use the dispersed knowledge resources effectively. Such findings are in tandem with the organizational learning theory that points out that the structured learning and group reflection process increase the ability of an organization to adapt and be innovative. In hospitality, where service quality and innovation are strongly linked to employee relations and experience-based knowledge, the existence of continuous learning systems helps employees to accumulate new service knowledge, and cross department collaboration and knowledge-sharing routine helps to distribute such knowledge throughout the functional boundaries and integrate it.

The overwhelming impact of cross-departmental cooperation on knowledge integration implies that inter-functional coordination is especially imperative in hospitality organizations, in which service innovation frequently demands coordination among front-office, housekeeping, food and beverage, and marketing roles. This observation confirms the knowledge-based perspective of the firm, which assumes innovation as a result of the combination of specialized knowledge that is possessed by various units of the organization. Equally, the strong impact of knowledge-sharing routines signifies that both informal and formal systems of transferring both tacit and explicit knowledge can help hospitality companies to turn personal knowledge to shared information. The systems of continuous learning also support this process by entrenching learning into the everyday operations of an organization; hence, enhancing the absorptive capacity of the organization and its willingness to innovate the service it offers. Combined, these findings indicate that learning practices are best supported by integrative knowledge mechanisms and not work independently of each other.

This high positive correlation between knowledge integration and services innovation performance highlights the key role of knowledge integration as an innovation driver in service intensive industries. This discovery proves the fact that gaining or simply sharing knowledge is not enough unless organizations have the ability to synthesize and implement such knowledge in design and delivery of new or improved services. Its partial mediating role also implies that

although the organizational learning practices might have a direct impact on the outcomes of innovation, their effects are the strongest when they are manifested through the increase in the integrative capacity of the organization. The observation contributes to the current body of hospitality research by going beyond the direct-effect based models and providing a more sophisticated account of the conversion of learning into innovation, which is one of the major gaps in the existing literature that has missed out on internal knowledge transformation processes.

To sum up, this study shows that organizational learning practices play an important role in augmenting the performance of service innovation in hospitality management organizations through enhancing the ability to integrate knowledge. The combination of the organizational learning theory and the knowledge-based perspective of the company provides the study with an extensive framework explaining how the learning-based practices are converted into the innovation outcomes. The results validate that the presence of the continuous learning systems, cross-departmental collaboration, and knowledge-sharing routines are the key antecedents of the knowledge integration, which, in turn, serves as a critically important mechanism of the service innovation performance. This combined vision provides a better insight into the knowledge based principles of service innovation within hospitality settings.

On these findings, a number of practical suggestions can be drawn to the hospitality managers and policymakers. Formalized systems of continuous learning through which skills are developed, reflective practices, and experiential learning are encouraged at each level should be the investment of hospitality organizations. Managers are expected to promote cross-departmental working through the development of cross-functional teams or job rotation schemes, or by initiating joint problem solving approaches that would enable inter-departmental integration of various knowledge. Also, organizations are supposed to institutionalize the process of knowledge sharing by engaging in regular meetings, digital knowledge platforms, and communities of practice so that useful service insights can be codified and incorporated into the organizational processes in a systematic manner. The focus of integrating knowledge, as opposed to solitary learning processes can greatly improve the success of such initiatives in the creation of service innovation.

There are many implications of this study. Theoretically, the research builds on the literature on hospitality management and organizational learning by empirically confirming the knowledge integration as one of the major mediating factors between learning practices and service innovation performance. It further confirms the applicability of the knowledge-based perspective in the explanation of innovation in service-intensive services. In a methodological sense, the application of PLS-SEM forms a very strong evidence of the relations proposed and presents a validated framework to be further implemented into the study of hospitality and service in future research. The findings, in practice, can provide actionable information to the hospitality practitioners by showing that innovation performance not only may be enhanced by investing in learning but also by means of making specific efforts to transfer knowledge across organizational borders. In general, the research can help to promote scholarly knowledge and managerial practice in promoting sustainable service innovation in the hospitality industry.

Contribution

Hajira Tahir: Problem Identification and Theoretical Framework

Abdul Haye Lucman: Data Analysis, Supervision and Drafting

Fatima Mushtaq: Methodology and Revision

Conflict of Interests/Disclosures

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