

Chapter 14

The Use of Technology in Small Hospitality Businesses in Pakistan: A Review and Comparison With India

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines technology adoption among small hospitality businesses in Pakistan, comparing it with India to highlight key gaps and challenges. Pakistan significantly lags in providing affordable and efficient technological solutions and training for small hospitality enterprises, limiting their ability to scale. To illustrate the potential impact, the chapter presents a case study of OYO, a booming industry aggregator in India. OYO's innovative model demonstrates how aggregators can consolidate fragmented hospitality industries and drive small businesses to adopt the technology. The chapter offers strategic recommendations for Pakistan's government and small hospitality businesses. It emphasizes the need for targeted government interventions, such as subsidies and policy frameworks. Practical steps are suggested for enterprises to adopt affordable digital tools and invest in staff training.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Technology has long played a pivotal role in the operations of global hospitality and tourism companies, enabling major brands like Marriott Hotels and McDonald's to enhance efficiency and improve service quality. However, technological advancements are no longer confined to large corporations; smaller hospitality businesses are increasingly adopting technology to compete with larger players. This trend is evident in both developed and developing countries, with varying degrees of success.

In India, the hospitality sector has witnessed significant technological adoption, fostering innovation and competitiveness across the industry. In contrast, Pakistan lags behind in this domain. According to the World Economic Forum's Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report (2024), Pakistan ranked 101 out of 119 countries on the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index. Moreover, the country was placed second to last in the Asia-Pacific region in terms of information and communications technology (ICT) readiness, highlighting critical gaps in its ability to integrate and leverage technology within its hospitality sector.

This chapter examines the availability and adoption of technology among small hospitality businesses in India, drawing a comparison with businesses in Pakistan. It shows how small hospitality businesses in India have successfully integrated technology across various operational dimensions to enhance their competitiveness within the market.

Comparison between Pakistan and India is important due to the shared historical and cultural backgrounds (Meo et al., 2022). This comparison can assist Pakistan in leveraging insights from the Indian market, as both countries operate within similar contexts. For instance, religious tourism plays an important role in the economies of both nations. Furthermore, benchmarking the availability and adoption of technology is relevant, as India is ahead of Pakistan in this regard. In general, even outside the hospitality industry, India's small businesses demonstrate higher levels of technology usage compared to Pakistan. For example, there is widespread adoption of technology among small-scale retailers in India (Aithal et al., 2023). Additionally, there is a gap in the literature comparing technology adoption in the hospitality sector between Pakistan and India, while studies exist comparing India with other South Asian nations, such as Bangladesh (Islam et al., 2022).

Given the lack of research available in the India-Pakistan context, this chapter adopts an exploratory and inductive approach, as suggested by Eisenhardt (1989). An in-depth case study is conducted (Yin, 2018) of a hospitality business in India. Main focus of this study is the accommodations segment within the hospitality industry. The chapter seeks to address the following questions:

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