Technologies as KM Tool for Sustainability in Hospitality: Practitioners Perspective

Jagoda Goll-Stefańska and Krzysztof Zięba
Gdansk University of Technology – Gdansk TECH, Fahrenheit Universities Association, Poland

jagoda.goll@pg.edu.pl
krzysztof.zieba@pg.edu.pl

Abstract: This study explores how hospitality businesses leverage technologies as Knowledge Management (KM) tools to enhance sustainable performance in this sector. By integrating artificial intelligence (AI) and other emerging technological solutions, businesses can mitigate negative environmental impacts, improve employee working conditions, and reduce operational costs. The study highlights the strategic role of technology in facilitating knowledge creation, sharing, and application to drive sustainability in the hospitality sector. The research is based on a narrative analysis of qualitative secondary data obtained from the Hospitality Technology Network and expert panel discussions at a leading industry conference in Poland, focusing on automation and technological advancements in the hospitality sector. The results indicate that AI and other technological innovations serve as effective KM tools, enabling hospitality businesses to achieve economic, social, and environmental benefits. Practitioners view these technologies as critical enablers of sustainable development, process optimization, and long-term competitive advantage. The study underscores the role of technology in transforming knowledge into actionable insights and facilitating sustainable business practices. This paper provides insights into the adoption and effective use of sustainable technologies, particularly for small and medium-sized hospitality enterprises (SMEs). By examining practitioners' experiences with KM-driven technological solutions, the study offers practical recommendations for hospitality managers seeking to enhance sustainability. The findings can serve as a knowledge base for SMEs aiming to integrate technology into their sustainability strategies. This research contributes to the discourse on KM and sustainability in the hospitality industry by identifying specific technologies and systems used by practitioners. By emphasizing the intersection of technology, KM, and sustainable business practices, the study offers a novel perspective on the digital transformation of hospitality businesses. The insights presented provide a foundation for further research and practical applications in the field of sustainable knowledge management.

Keywords: Technology, KM, Hospitality, AI, Practitioner perspective, Sustainability

1. Introduction

Emerging green technologies, serving as innovative tools for knowledge management (KM), are increasingly recognized as powerful catalysts for advancing sustainability (Shahzad *et al.*, 2020). Knowledge-based organizations supported by technology-driven innovation and social-driven innovation (Trunfio and Campana, 2020) and enhanced by company culture (Kucharska and Karwowska, 2025) reinforce the holistic perspective of sustainability drawn by Lozano and Haartman (2018). This perspective highlights the importance of identifying the factors that influence sustainability within organizations embedded in particular sectors, consequently encouraging the examination of sustainability through the lens of their respective industries. Sustainability's positive impact on a firm's competitiveness and survival makes this topic very attractive for practice and science (Gomez-Trujillo *et al.*, 2024). Following this line, this study aims to explore how hospitality businesses leverage technologies as KM tools to enhance sustainable performance.

The hospitality industry represents one of the most significant economic sectors (Pizam and Shani, 2009). Its uniqueness stems from the multifaceted nature of its services, which extend beyond the provision of food and accommodation to include entertainment, psychological comfort, and overall well-being (Brotherton, 1999). These core activities are inherently based on social interactions (Andriani *et al.*, 2019), making the industry highly human-dependent (Aman-Ullah *et al.*, 2022). Even in times of crisis, human capital remains a critical factor in ensuring the long-term resilience of hospitality businesses (Goll and Zieba, 2025).

Given these characteristics, the hospitality industry has demonstrated resistance to technological adoption and digitalization (Alfehaid *et al.*, 2024). The pace of integrating technological advancements remains relatively slow (Cheng *et al.*, 2023; Kumar, Kumar, *et al.*, 2024). Nevertheless, emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), big data, and the Internet of Things (IoT), enhance sustainable performance by facilitating more effective knowledge management (Bradu *et al.*, 2023; Elkhwesky *et al.*, 2024). When properly leveraged, these technologies enable knowledge-driven decision-making, allowing hospitality businesses to optimize resource consumption, minimize food waste, and enhance energy efficiency (Abdou *et al.*, 2020).

Technological advancements serve as KM tools, supporting industry practitioners in mitigating the sector's environmental footprint while simultaneously improving operational efficiency (Sharma *et al.*, 2023). These

technologies have the potential to enhance employees' working conditions, contributing to the social sustainability of the industry (Ghobakhloo *et al.*, 2021). However, there remains a significant gap in understanding which specific technologies are effective KM tools within the hospitality sector, and how they can be implemented to enhance economic, social, and environmental performance.

This paper aims to address this gap by examining emerging technologies in the hospitality market and analyzing their application through the lenses of KM practices. It provides insights into how industry professionals utilize these technologies to drive economic and social performance while reducing the sector's negative environmental impact.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Sustainability in Hospitality

The hospitality industry is a vital sector in the global economy, contributing significantly to employment, GDP, and regional development. The growing demand for accommodation and food services (Eurostat, 2024) also underscores the social importance of the sector, as it meets the needs for leisure, tourism, and local employment. Hospitality also presents substantial sustainability challenges, as its resource-intensive operations, including food service and accommodation, lead to high levels of waste, energy consumption, and water usage, as well as greenhouse gas emissions (da Costa Maynard *et al.*, 2020). Food waste is a particularly pressing issue, with the hospitality sector contributing approximately 12% of overall food waste in the European Union, while more than 70% of this waste is avoidable (Oliveira *et al.*, 2016). Additionally, the industry's dependence on natural resources exacerbates water scarcity, particularly in tourism-heavy regions, where water consumption from hospitality businesses significantly exceeds local averages (da Costa Maynard *et al.*, 2020).

One of the most promising solutions to these challenges is the use of technology. Technological advancements can enhance efficiency, reduce waste, and optimize resource consumption (Madanaguli *et al.*, 2022; Sharma *et al.*, 2023). AI-driven food waste tracking, smart management systems, and automated energy monitoring tools show the potential to improve sustainability performance while lowering operational costs (Elkhwesky *et al.*, 2024; Okumus, 2020). However, little is known about the extent to which they are adopted in practice (Huang *et al.*, 2020). The existing research primarily focuses on a broad view on sustainability issues in hospitality and how they can be addressed by technologies (Abdou *et al.*, 2020; Sharma *et al.*, 2023), although the emphasis is put on economic and environmental aspects of sustainability, while social aspect is rarely discussed (Goll *et al.*, 2025). While studies acknowledge the potential of technological solutions to mitigate environmental impact, they rarely explore the specific practical applications within hospitality businesses and management processes related to the usage of these technologies.

2.2 Technology as Knowledge Management Tool for Improving Sustainable Performance in Hospitality

Implementing knowledge management (KM) practices — encompassing knowledge storage, sharing, and conversion — significantly enhances the overall performance of hospitality firms (Brahami, 2020). These practices foster employee creativity (Sigala & Chalkiti, 2015) while improving job performance and satisfaction (Gürlek & Koseoglu, 2023). KM plays a particularly crucial role in hospitality businesses, especially during crises, by fostering long-term resilience and innovation (Goll & Zięba, 2022; Zayed et al., 2022). The use of technological tools enables organizations to effectively manage, store, and utilize existing knowledge, thereby maximizing the value of intangible resources such as human capital (Santoro & Usai, 2018). However, despite its potential, recent reviews of KM research in the hospitality sector reveal a lack of studies exploring the integration of KM practices with emerging technologies in hospitality management (Gürlek & Koseoglu, 2023).

Recent studies show that the integration of KM with blockchain enables organizations to develop green supply chains and meet sustainability regulations, suggesting that KM may play an important role in leveraging technology for sustainability (Sun *et al.*, 2022). The study by Tajpour *et al.*, (2022) proved that also other technologies, like social media, serve as KM tool that improves business sustainable performance. Using ICT tools is crucial for sharing knowledge within the organization which, if effectively managed, allows the reduction of the negative environmental impact of the business (Evangelista and Durst, 2015). The effective use of technologies relies not only on their availability and implementation, but also on how well hospitality managers and employees understand, integrate, and optimize these tools within their operations (Jones and Wynn, 2019). Therefore, KM is essential in bridging this gap, as it enables businesses to systematically acquire, share, and apply knowledge (Wellton and Lainpelto, 2021) in order to improve sustainable performance. Recent reviews dedicated to KM in the context of sustainability prove that point, showing that emerging

technologies serve as useful and effective KM tools for enhancing the sustainability of organizations (Ulhaq *et al.*, 2024). However, existing research does not investigate how technologies can be integrated with KM practices in the hospitality industry, even though, as suggested by Fauzi (2023), adapting technology within the KM perspective may have a crucial impact on society and the environment. Therefore, this paper aims to address this gap by explaining how technologies are leveraged by industry practitioners through KM practices to improve the sustainable performance of hospitality organizations.

3. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative secondary data analysis to explore how hospitality businesses leverage technology as a KM tool to enhance sustainability. The research is based on data collected from two key sources:

- The Hospitality Technology Network website – a platform dedicated to hospitality practitioners, which publishes industry-relevant content based on expert interviews, practitioner insights, and vendor reports. The articles reviewed were published between January 2023 and January 2025.
- Panel discussions from the MADE FOR RESTAURANT conference in Poland (November 2024) – a specialized event for restaurant owners and managers, focusing on technological change and automation in the hospitality sector. The conference recordings were transcribed and analyzed.

These sources were selected due to their practical orientation and industry credibility. The Hospitality Technology Network ensures reliability through its editorial team, consisting of industry practitioners and hospitality leaders, while the MADE FOR RESTAURANT conference serves as a real-time knowledge exchange platform, reflecting the experiences and expectations of hospitality professionals.

The data was examined using a narrative deductive approach (Heaton *et al.*, 2010), following the guidelines by Cheong et. al. (2023), allowing us to extract insights that align with the study's research objectives. Specifically, we sought to answer:

- What technologies are implemented in hospitality organizations, and how do they function?
- How are these technologies integrated with KM practices?
- What sustainability-related outcomes arise from using these technologies as KM tools?

Industry reports and practitioner discussions offer a holistic perspective, allowing us to bridge the gap between theoretical insights and practical applications.

4. Results

We present our findings in the form of direct answers to our research questions, as during the analysis of data we focused not on the emotions and personal experiences of practitioners, but rather on objective information about specific technologies and their usage in the context of KM. We present the specific technologies used in the hospitality industry and explain how they are used through KM practices, and what sustainability outcomes it allows to achieve.

Customer Mobile Apps

Hotels and restaurants design customer mobile apps that guests can use from home or during their stay. They enable knowledge acquisition by collecting guest preferences and usage patterns. The collected data is stored and analyzed to enhance service offerings. Moreover, they enable knowledge sharing by providing guests with instant access to relevant information, reducing the workload of hotel employees. Thanks to using such apps instead of typical informational brochures, hospitality businesses use much less paper, eliminating printing costs, and giving their guests instant updates on the offer, which enhances the guest experience.

Unified Property Management System (PMS)

Unified PMS integrates various operational functions within the hospitality business, streamlining processes through automated knowledge exchange across departments. The system is a form of knowledge storage, allowing seamless access across business units. The Unified PMS is often integrated with AI-driven analytics which serve as a knowledge utilization tool. AI facilitates logical storage and analysis of the data, optimizing managers' work and supporting them with information on demand, which is useful for strategic decision-making. Using PMS systems with AI-driven analytics significantly reduces the amount of paper documentation, facilitates business operations and employees' work conditions, and also gives the opportunity to enhance guest experience.

Digital training tools

Digital training tools are embedded in hospitality businesses' software systems. They allow employees to find needed information, and enhance their skills and competencies through standardized training programs (knowledge sharing). Managers can track their learning progress (knowledge acquisition), and store training records (knowledge storage). The knowledge gained by employees is applied in real time which leads to enhancing guest experiences. Thanks to the training platform, employees gain confidence through personal development, which also increases their job satisfaction. Using such a form of training instead of typical training allows to reduce training cost in the long-term perspective, and contributes to better environmental performance - not only because of not using paper for training but also by educating employees about sustainability practices which they implement at work after training.

AI bots

AI-driven customer support bots are integrated into hospitality communication systems, automating responses to guest inquiries. These bots are the first contact help for customers. They allow businesses to acquire knowledge on guest interactions. The AI interface streamlines escalation processes by directing complex issues to human agents and responding to customers' simple needs immediately, which reduces employees' workload and increases guest satisfaction.

AI supported Attribute-Based-Selling (ABS) model

ABS utilizes AI-powered analytics to offer guests a customizable stay by allowing them to select specific room attributes. This system acquires knowledge of guest preferences, analyzes demand trends, and automates price adjustments based on real-time data. As a result, companies increase their revenue through smart price adjustments, and optimize resource allocation, while improving guest satisfaction by offering tailored experiences, and lightening employees' workload as the booking is made automatically.

AI-Integrated Point-Of-Sales (POS) system

POS system can be integrated with AI-driven analytics to streamline order processing, payment transactions, inventory management, and customer interactions. Such a system allows to collect knowledge on sales in detail, and also track each order at each step. Thanks to AI the knowledge is analyzed and managers receive very specific information on demand, resource usage, and job performance. This knowledge is used to manage supply in such a way as to minimize waste generated and lower waste-related costs. Moreover, thanks to tracking the order at each step managers get insight into potential problems and adjust operations in real-time which improves the quality of service, and also enhances guest experience.

Smart rooms

Smart room technologies in hospitality utilize AI, IoT, and automation. These systems collect and analyze real-time data on customer preferences, and resource usage (e.g. temperature settings, lighting, water consumption). AI applies this knowledge to automate energy-efficient climate control, lighting adjustments, and appliance use, optimizing operations without compromising guests' preferences. Smart sensors detect occupancy and adjust settings, reducing unnecessary energy and water waste. This integration leads to lower resource consumption and operational costs while improving guest comfort. Additionally, automation reduces staff workload, allowing employees to focus solely on service quality.

Smart kitchen

Similarly to smart rooms, smart kitchen technologies also utilize AI, IoT, and automation. These technologies collect and store real-time data on cooking processes, energy consumption, and inventory levels. AI-driven systems analyze this data to provide chefs and managers with knowledge about food preparation, waste generated, and resources used. This knowledge is used to make decisions regarding the optimization of resource use and waste reduction. Smart appliances, such as energy-efficient ovens, refrigeration units, and dishwashers, adjust settings based on demand, minimizing energy and water consumption. Additionally, streamlined kitchen processes enhance employee workflow, and improve food quality which leads to enhanced customer experience.

5. Discussion

Our findings indicate that hospitality industry practitioners use technologies as fundamental tools for KM. The integration of AI into organizational software and systems significantly enhances KM processes. AI serves as a

KM tool by facilitating knowledge acquisition, analysis, and logical storage, thereby optimizing strategic decision-making, and enhancing sustainable performance. As noted by Gajić (2024), the integration of AI with KM contributes to improved environmental performance, aligning business operations with sustainability objectives. Through AI-powered analytics, hospitality practitioners can monitor resource consumption and automate data-driven solutions to minimize energy and water usage. Such insights support the argument of Dávideková et al. (2020), who highlight that technological advancements strengthen KM practices, ultimately enhancing both operational efficiency and environmental sustainability. Consistently, our findings align with those of Sahoo (2023), demonstrating that effective KM through technological integration translates into measurable improvements in environmental performance.

The results suggest that the knowledge stored and processed through technological solutions enables precise demand forecasting and more efficient supply management. This leads to significant cost reductions, thereby enhancing economic performance. Additionally, customer satisfaction and overall experience are markedly improved through the implementation of digital technologies. The utilization of AI and IoT for optimizing energy and water consumption further reduces operational costs, reinforcing the economic advantages of integrating technology with KM (Caputo *et al.*, 2019; Hassan *et al.*, 2018). The adoption of predictive analytics within KM supports revenue optimization strategies, ensuring that businesses remain competitive in the evolving hospitality market (Cooper, 2018).

POS systems, digital training tools, and PMS facilitate internal communication, enabling knowledge exchange among employees. These technologies play a pivotal role in knowledge sharing, as evidenced by M. Kumar (2024), by enhancing training methodologies and organizational learning capabilities. The implementation of digital training programs allows hospitality businesses to track employee progress, ensure standardized knowledge dissemination, and promote continuous professional development, hence enhancing organizational learning (Caputo et al., 2019). AI-driven technological tools provide managers with real-time insights into employee performance and competency gaps, allowing for targeted interventions and continuous operational improvements (Lubis *et al.*, 2024).

Beyond internal operations, the role of technologies in external communication is equally crucial. Digital platforms enable real-time interaction with customers, offering tailored services and instant updates. This not only enhances the guest experience but also serves as a conduit for sustainability awareness. By embedding sustainability information within customer engagement platforms, hospitality businesses actively contribute to environmental consciousness among guests. This aligns with Hassan et al. (2018), who assert that technology-mediated knowledge sharing fosters CSR and sustainability.

6. Study Limitations and Further Research Directions

The study presented here acknowledges several limitations. First of all, the study is based on qualitative secondary data gathered from a platform dedicated to practitioners interested in technology usage in the industry, and from a conference dedicated to automation and technological change in hospitality industry. That creates a risk that obtained data is biased, as both of them aim to promote technology usage by industry practitioners. Presented information may exaggerate the sustainable benefits of using specific technologies as KM tools. Secondly, our findings show what technologies are used, but not to what extent. The findings do not provide insights into how common are the KM practices. Additionally, our study does not present measurable sustainability outcomes of using technologies as KM tools in hospitality. Obtained results show in which areas of sustainability hospitality business performance may improve, but not how big this improvement is.

Future research can address this gap by comparative analysis of the sustainable performance of both hospitality businesses that utilize specific technologies as KM tools, and those that do not. A large-scale survey or industry report could assess the prevalence of KM technologies across different hospitality businesses and geographical regions. This would help identify which technologies are most widely used, and which types of hospitality businesses are more likely to adopt them. While our study highlights the potential benefits of integrating KM with technologies, future research could explore what motivates or hinders their adoption.

7. Conclusions

This study provides valuable insights for practitioners by identifying the types of technologies that hospitality businesses can effectively utilize. It outlines practical approaches for acquiring, sharing, and applying knowledge to enhance both service quality and the working conditions of employees. Furthermore, it offers concrete examples of technologies and their applications in the context of knowledge management (KM),

demonstrating how these tools can contribute to cost reduction, increased customer satisfaction, and a diminished environmental footprint. The study also emphasizes the potential for hospitality businesses to align operational efficiency with sustainability goals. The findings may serve as a useful reference for industry professionals seeking to implement more sustainable and knowledge-driven practices through the adoption of appropriate technological solutions.

Ethics Declaration: No ethical clearance for the research referred to in this paper was needed.

AI Declaration: AI tools (OpenAI and Grammarly) were used to improve the language quality of the paper. The tools were used to check the correctness of the text written and, if necessary, to correct grammar and any language errors. AI tool Scite was used as the additional search engine to find relevant literature.

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