



LUND UNIVERSITY

School of Economics and Management

Master's Programme in Innovation & Global Sustainable Development

## Human-centric Service Co-Innovation in Hospitality:

A practice-based view

by

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Innovation is an important determinant for economic survival and growth in the hospitality industry. As a highly human-centric industry, service providers and customers as users join forces to co-innovate. By using their needs, experiences and knowledge as the sources of innovation in a human-centric service innovation approach, the developed outcomes are more relevant to the various stakeholders. However, there is a lack of understanding of the practices that shape these innovations. This study applies a directed content analysis to secondary qualitative data available online to uncover relevant and successful practices. It is found that firms personalise the service offerings to individual customers given their feedback and complaints. These customers also inform the deliberation of service standards. Feedback is further gathered from groups of users to co-innovate new service concepts or develop new ways of service delivery. As such, novel services are made fit with other service offerings and/or the lives for the targeted customers. Contributions from the collective of users are collected in-person, through surveys or online. The application of artificial intelligence to evaluate the feedback data is highlighted. Moreover, hospitality firms encourage customers to raise their voices for societal benefit, reflected through consumer behaviour trends and the promotion of sustainability, or the benefit of an internal community of stakeholders. Lastly, research and development in laboratories, testbeds or incubator spaces are found to play a critical role in hospitality innovation strategies.

### **Keywords:**

User-based Services Innovation, human-centric innovation, co-innovation practices, hospitality industry, research and development

EKHS34

Master's Thesis (15 credits ECTS)

May 2020

Supervisor: Claudio Fassio

Word Count: 17,982



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# Definitions

**Hospitality** – A highly diverse industry, made up of hotels, restaurants, pubs and clubs, contract catering, and any other related businesses that provide similar products and services (Martin & Gardiner, 2007). Elements of hospitality are further found in services provided as part of touristic business, such as air travel (Brotherton & Wood, 2008), and other service provision industries, such as co-working spaces (Merkel, 2015). The common point is the delivery of a consumable service experience with the customer at the centre (Walls, 2014).

**Innovation** – “a new or improved product or process (or combination thereof) that differs significantly from the unit’s previous products or processes and that has been made available to potential users (product) or brought into use by the unit (process)” (OECD/Eurostat, 2018, p. 20). In principle, innovation is defined as “the creation of novelty that provides economic value through the creation of new products and services [and] organizational changes” (Baunsgaard & Clegg, 2015, p. 6). In addition to novel products (goods and services) and processes, innovations may also produce novel methods in business practices, marketing, stakeholder relations or workplace organisation (OECD/Eurostat, 2018).

**Sustainability** – “To make development sustainable – to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987, p. 8). This includes four dimensions: environmental, economic, social and cultural (Michelsen, Adomßent, Marten & von Hauff, 2016).

**User** – “a person or an organisation who or which applies the end result of the innovation process in practice and benefits from it due to the new value included” (Sundbo & Toivonen, 2011, p. 5). As such it may be a customer, employee or another stakeholder.

**Internal user** – employees who are also consumers of the firm’s products/services; thus they combine user and organisational knowledge. It is a common phenomenon in consumer industries, such as leisure and hospitality (Schweisfurth, 2017).

**External user** – customers who are users of a firm’s products or services (Schweisfurth, 2017).

**End-user** – the last link in a chain of beneficiaries of an innovation (Sundbo & Toivonen, 2011)

# Abbreviations

AI	Artificial Intelligence
FLE	Frontline Employee
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
MNE	Multinational Enterprise
R&D	Research and Development
SD	Service-dominant
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise



# 1 Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 brought the global travel and hospitality industries to a standstill. Demand collapsed, restaurants and hotels were forcibly shut due to governmental restrictions and emergency laws (Partington, 2020; Rossmann & Strieder, 2020). The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (2020) estimates a global loss in international tourism spending of US\$ 80 billion and a 58-78% global decline in international tourism arrivals. Even though business will undoubtedly resume, it will not be business as usual and start again at pre-pandemic levels. Decimated discretionary household income and lower business levels across other travel-intensive industries will impede a quick recovery (Rossmann & Strieder, 2020). It is hence of utmost importance to understand how to overcome the negative impact of the crisis.

Looking at history, innovation is identified as a key driver of industry renewal (Devece, Peris-Ortiz & Rueda-Armengot, 2016). It stimulates growth and channels consumer demand to those companies that could gain competitive advantages through these unique, newly developed offerings (OECD, 2012). The hospitality industry is part of the tourism sector, an extremely competitive sector characterized by continuous transformation (Hallin & Marnburg, 2008; Orfila-Sintes & Mattsson, 2009), as there are no barriers to protect companies from imitation (Ottenbacher & Harrington, 2007) and thus keeping their exclusivity (Nieves & Diaz-Meneses, 2018). As a response to increasing global constraints and ever-changing market and customer demands, service firms need to innovate quickly and effectively (Santos-Vijande, López-Sánchez & Pascual-Fernández, 2018). Particularly in the hospitality industry, innovation is an important determinant for economic survival and growth (Orfila-Sintes & Mattsson, 2009; Ottenbacher, 2007).

An effective way to gain competitive advantages is by making services more relevant to internal and external users, as hospitality services are delivered by and catered to individuals (Grissemann, Plank & Brunner-Sperdin, 2013). Individuals may be involved in the innovation process by taking their knowledge and experiences as the source of innovation (Feurstein, Hesmer, Hribernik, Thoben & Schumacher, 2008). However, there is a wide variety of user-based innovation practices, outlining the difficulty to differentiate between effective and ineffective ones (Sundbo & Toivonen, 2011). In principle, effective innovation practices cater to users' overt and covert needs and wants (Ottenbacher, 2007; Von Hippel, 2005). As such, Berlin, Loomba and Gandhi (2017) find that travellers are increasingly sustainability-minded. Faced with the problems of a growing global population, climate change and generational shifts, travellers require companies to reflect environmental and social awareness in their business concepts. Moreover, driven by increasing hedonism and the widening social gap, firms are compelled to act with a social conscience (The Future Laboratory, 2020). However, traditionally businesses focus solely on environmental and economic issues in their Corporate Social Responsibility reports (Hutchins, Richter, Henry & Sutherland, 2019).

## 1.1 Research problem

Hospitality is a highly dynamic and human-centric industry. However, in its core, the industry has neither embodied principles of social sustainability nor changed. While hospitality managers have been increasingly concerned with environmental issues and economic stability (Hutchins et al., 2019), a focus on the human elements of service delivery has been avoided as it would require a profound rethinking of the basic structures of the industry. For example, hospitality continues to rely heavily on low-paid workers (Auguste, 2019), a concept that has been discussed and admonished at large (eg. Boella & Goss-Turner, 2020; Kelliher, 1989; Sturman, 2001) but the industry seems to be resistant to change. Yet the aforementioned customer demands now force a new perspective upon industry leaders.

Turning to academia, it is evident that a similar issue persists: most previous studies on sustainable innovations in hospitality have been nested in the fields of business strategy, environmental management and corporate social responsibility (Alegre & Berbegal-Mirabent, 2016). The application of social sustainability concepts to hospitality research is lacking. Empirically, social entrepreneurship (Dzisi & Otsyina, 2014; ed. Sheldon & Daniele, 2017), institutional innovations in developing countries (Mzembe, Novakovic, Melissen & Kamanga, 2019), social sustainability realised in operational business models (Von Der Weppen & Cochrane, 2012), social sustainability among eDistributors and the sharing economy (Turker & Ozdemir, 2019) and the impact on employee wellbeing (Bohdanowicz & Zientara, 2009) have been studied in a hospitality context. However, only a limited amount of theories has been derived or empirically tested (Alegre & Berbegal-Mirabent, 2016).

Considering research on innovation in hospitality, Alzyoud (2019) asserts that most previous studies have been conducted in the geographical setting of Asia, outlining a need for more studies centred on Europe. Customers and employees have been recognised as informants (eg. Hon & Lui, 2016; Nieves & Diaz-Meneses, 2018) and as targeted beneficiaries (eg. Wu & Yang, 2018; Wu & Gao, 2019) of hospitality innovation, but studies on innovation practices that truly include internal and external users are missing. While a practice-based view of innovation in hospitality has been previously employed (eg. Jacob & Groizard, 2007; Orfila-Sintes, Crespí-Cladera & Martínez-Ros, 2005; Orfila-Sintes & Mattsson, 2009), a clear deficiency in the literature is recognised. There is a lack of studies focussing on the practices of innovation in the hospitality industry in light of the new trends and heightened sustainability pressures. This study aims to fill this gap, concentrating on European and North American hospitality firms.

## 1.2 Aim, research questions and scope

### 1.2.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to investigate how hospitality organisations innovate with internal and external service users in order to offer socially sustainable, non-monetary value to

customers and gain competitive advantages. The target audience is actors within and scholars of this sector.

### 1.2.2 Research questions

Hospitality companies act in highly competitive business environments and hence constantly produce product and process innovations to differentiate themselves from their competitors and gain economic advantages (Martin-Rios, 2018). Considering rapidly changing consumer demands and expectations (Ball, 2005) as well as economic and social pressures, innovations that offer customers more than monetary value propositions are required in the hospitality sector (Alegre & Berbegal-Mirabent, 2016). As a relationship-driven industry (Lashley, 2001), hospitality firms co-innovate with their stakeholders (Nieves & Diaz-Meneses, 2018). As such, customers' needs, experiences and knowledge are utilised as sources of innovation in a human-centric service innovation approach (Feurstein et al., 2008; Fuglsang, 2019).

This study is to determine how hospitality companies innovate using a practice-based approach by employing a human-centric innovation lens. For this reason, the main research question is:

*RQ1. How do hospitality companies include users in the innovation process?*

Besides, a secondary research question is to capture practices of innovation that are not based on customers' needs, knowledge or experience:

*RQ2. What methods are applied to develop innovations?*

These research questions are answered utilising a deductive, qualitative approach. Fuglsang's (2019) typology of innovative practices of human-centric innovations serves as the basis for the application of a directed content analysis on secondary accounts of hospitality innovation practices. By highlighting users' experiences, knowledge and needs as the basis of innovation, this framework facilitates the discussion of internal and external end-users as co-innovators. The focus is thus directed at the innovative practices these various users evoke with an outlook on social benefits.

### 1.2.3 Scope of the study

The scope of this research is large multinational companies, as these are the most likely to engage in and have most resources available for innovation activity (Martin-Rios, 2018). The regional focus lies on European and American companies, answering to the deficiency in the literature (Alzyoud, 2019) and as innovation activity among European hospitality companies is high (Martin-Rios, 2018).

This study will primarily contribute a common understanding of current innovation practices of hospitality companies to the academic community. By highlighting the industry response to trends in social sustainability, a basis for further research is to be presented and a humble contribution to the under-researched field of socially sustainable innovations is to be offered.

The academic debate is to be enriched by a discussion of the roles various actor groups adopt in services innovation and how this shapes possible outcomes. The study is further relevant to industry professionals who may gain an understanding of how their innovations can increase the pertinence of their services for their targeted customer base. Policymakers may gain a better understanding of which policies and behaviours are most favourable.

### 1.3 Outline of the thesis

This thesis was commenced with a discussion of current economic and social pressures for innovation in the hospitality industry as well as the presentation of the research questions. Chapter 1 detailed the need for the study to contribute a discussion of user-inclusive innovation practices in hospitality for social sustainability. The subsequent chapter 2 presents the literary context of the research, highlighting discussions about services innovation and hospitality innovation. Hereafter, the typology of human-centric innovation practices will be introduced which is guiding this thesis as the core theoretical approach. Chapter 3 presents the directed content analysis as the methodological approach and outlines the data to be analysed. Chapter 4 details the findings of the analysed data which is discussed and compared to the prevalent streams of literature in chapter 5. Chapter 6 concludes the thesis with a summary of the main findings, contributions to the academic discussion and limitations of the study.

## 2 Theory

This chapter introduces the theoretical background of services and innovation studies before addressing various approaches to services innovation. Subsequently, their application in the hospitality industry is highlighted with a focus on practices that build monetary and non-monetary value. By linking the discussion to concepts of social sustainability, the theoretical approach of this study – Fuglsang's (2019) typology of human-centric innovation practices – is introduced and explained in detail.

### 2.1 Services Innovation

According to Tether and Metcalfe (2004), the provision of service relates to the transformation of the what (people, object, information) across physical, spatial or temporal dimensions to produce an outcome. The service provision has a subjective and objective nature: whilst a meal in a restaurant objectively provides nutrition, the catering element at the table subjectively adds value to the dining experience. Hence, the service is made up of a core element, the provision of food, and the periphery, all value-added services. The core element is provided without the active participation of the consumer whilst all value-added services require co-production of consumer and provider. Services are perishable in nature, thus cannot be stored or resold like manufactured goods (Randhawa & Scerri, 2015) but are not always produced *ad ordo*. Public transportation is not produced upon request but provided on a scheduled basis (Tether & Metcalfe, 2004). Supported by technology and *ad hoc* production, services can be better controlled to answer to varying degrees of demand in the market (Trott, 2012).

Services are further characterized by heterogeneity, increased customer interactivity, intangibility and simultaneity between consumption and production (Randhawa & Scerri, 2015). In a heterogeneous service landscape, a wide variety of services is present (Bitran & Lojo, 1993). A more dynamic approach is hence required in service innovation, tailoring activities to many different service contexts (Randhawa & Scerri, 2015). As intangible goods services cannot be sensorially explored or experienced (Bitran & Lojo, 1993). Thus, they are more prone to imitation (Ottenbacher & Harrington, 2009) and evaluated based on user perception (Bessant & Tidd, 2015). This evaluation is immediate because services are conceived, produced, delivered and consumed at the same time (Randhawa & Scerri, 2015). Differentiating between service product and service process innovations is thus more difficult (Bessant & Tidd, 2015; Trott, 2012) and relies heavily on the interaction between the service provider and consumer (Randhawa & Scerri, 2015). Customers are continuously involved in the service provision making services innovation multidimensional and more complex (Sampson & Froehle, 2006). These characteristics are interlinked, adding to the intricacy of

service innovation. Customer interactions, for example, increase the number of personalised services which in turn increases the heterogeneity of services (Randhawa & Scerri, 2015).

Service is seen as the foundation of every business transaction, based on the seminal works of Bastiat (1848): customers provide a service to the firm in exchange for a service received from the firm. Following this line of argumentation, a service-dominant (SD) logic is replacing a goods-dominant logic. Hence, Vargo and Lusch (2008, p. 1) observed that “the customer is always a co-creator of value”. Value is created through the interaction between a service provider and customer (Toivonen, 2016). Following in the footsteps of Schumpeter (1934, 1947), innovation is defined as “a firm’s ability to create new value propositions through offering of new products and services, adopting new operating practice, technological, organizational, or market-oriented, or creating new skills and competencies” (Liao, Kickul & Ma, 2009, p. 268). Combining the notions of innovation, service and SD logic, Randhawa and Scerri (2015, p. 28) define Services Innovation as the “study of dynamic interactions among technological and human systems driving managerial and organizational change in services”. Various business functions may contribute to the service innovation process: Marketing, for example, is commonly seen as the location of innovation and information source for innovation within a firm (Prabhu, 2014).

Innovations are to be strategically motivated and not the result of the changing involvement of various actors to be in line with the Oslo Manual (OECD/Eurostat, 2018; Sundbo & Gallouj, 2000). For this reason, the invention of new or modified processes, products etc. may become an innovation if strategically adopted thereafter. Similarly, innovation links invention with commercialisation (Enz & Harrison, 2008). Innovation studies elevate the notion of service co-production to the co-creation of services innovations, as customers have greater say in the entire innovation process: from idea generation to pre-, during and post-service delivery (Baunsgaard & Clegg, 2015). Especially given the rise of ICT, customers are more informed, more connected and feel more empowered and active (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004).

The idea of involving customers/consumers/users in the innovation process is not new. User-based Service Innovation refers to the process of developing a new or improved service offering or conditions of service production in co-production with users and/or by utilising previously acquired deep and shared knowledge of user needs (Sundbo & Toivonen, 2011). Traditionally, two modes of user-based innovation have been identified and are still in use today: users building the starting point of innovation through user feedback mechanisms (Nelson & Winter, 1977) and users as active innovators (Von Hippel, 1978). In the latter case, users may contribute a new idea, a problem statement, or even an entirely innovative product design. In the former, user refers to customers or external users. The discussion is enriched by the concept of internal users who are generally seen as employees who also use a firm’s products or services (Schweisfurth, 2017). While they experience the needs, issues and problems during the service use, they may also draw on organisational knowledge structure that external users lack (Schweisfurth, 2017). Internal user innovations are associated with higher realizability but lower originality, market potential and user value as compared to external user innovations (Magnusson, 2009; Poetz & Schreier, 2012; Schweisfurth, 2017). This widely acknowledged and discussed theory of user-based service innovation forms the foundation for Fuglsang’s human-centric innovation practices typology, which serves as the main framework of the study and is discussed in subsequent parts of this chapter.

Some users may choose to start their own business and become “user entrepreneurs” (Franke & Lüthje, 2020; Shah & Tripsas, 2007). Corporate service entrepreneurship is indirectly linked to sustained competitive advantage through a bricolage approach to service innovation: by strategically combining resources at hand, firms create new value directly with customers and indirectly through enhanced products (Salunke, Weerawardena & McColl-Kennedy, 2013). They may choose to engage in entrepreneurial activities fuelled by dissatisfaction (‘necessity entrepreneurship’) which is often directed at the current or previous workplace (Stephan, Drews & Hart, 2015). Alternatively, they may recognise a market gap or service opportunity as a customer or firm representative in a bricolage environment (‘opportunity entrepreneurship’) (Enz & Harrison, 2008) and pursue this given the ease of market access facilitated by ICT (Shah & Tripsas, 2007).

Another dominant service innovation theory is ‘Design Thinking’: a practical, iterative, creative and human-centred approach, according to Brown (2008). Through direct observations, a thorough understanding of consumer wants and needs is gained which is matched with the economically and technically feasible to innovate new market opportunities, products, services or anything else creating customer value. This problem-solving approach is central to contemporary service innovation and relevant for engaging with a wide range of service and social issues (Barrett, Davidson, Prabhu & Vargo, 2015; Brown & Wyatt, 2010). However, considering Design Thinking and SD logic, Vargo, Wieland and Akaka (2015) and Barrett et al. (2015) call for a wider set of stakeholders to collaborate in innovation, including managers, employees, customers and end-users. In addition to customer inclusion, it is recognised that firm collaboration with governments is essential to drive innovations, particularly for social purposes or the common good (Mei, Arcodia & Ruhanen, 2013). The authorities promote and protect social interests as well as adapt legislations and regulations (Hall, 2008) but also coordinate, plan and initiate such public-private collaborations (Mei, Arcodia & Ruhanen, 2013). Fuglsang (2019) considers these various actor groups; hence, his human-centric innovation practices typology (cf. chapter 2.5.1) may be seen as an answer to the aforementioned shortcomings.

A third concept to user involvement is Open Innovation. Chesbrough (2003) coined the term opposing Schumpeter's (1934) paradigm of ‘Closed Innovation’: “Open Innovation is a paradigm that assumes that firms can and should use external ideas as well as internal ideas, and internal and external paths to market, as the firms look to advance their technology” (Chesbrough, 2003, p. xxiv). Within open innovation, three different core processes are differentiated: outside-in (inbound), inside-out (outbound) and a coupled process (Egger, Gula & Walcher, 2016). The inbound mode of open innovation refers to firms making use of external sources’ knowledge (Brunswicker, 2016). Knowledge may be insourced from research institutes, network partners, users or competitors (Brunswicker & Vanhaverbeke, 2015). Outbound open innovation refers to innovation-related knowledge flowing across organisational boundaries to be used by other organisations and individuals (Van De Vrande, De Jong, Vanhaverbeke & De Rochemont, 2009). Companies may give up exclusivity rights to their innovation free of charge (Henkel, Schöberl & Alexy, 2014) or retain some exclusivity and share the knowledge against compensation (Brunswicker, 2016). The use of inbound open innovation is exceeding its outbound counterpart, as found in both SMEs and large firms (Chesbrough & Brunswicker, 2014). Following the coupled or interactive process, the inbound and outbound modes are hybridised with several feedback loops in multiple directions across

multiple boundaries at different stages of the innovation process in an interactive process of knowledge flows (West & Bogers, 2014).

Similarly, building on the connectivity of ICT, Brabham (2013) conceptualises ‘Crowdsourcing’: a process in which a collective of users collaborates to solve a problem. It is defined as a “form of outsourcing process to a dispersed audience via open call. It is an interactive form of value creation by a large number of participants using information and communication technologies”. (Egger, Gula & Walcher, 2016, p. 8). Open innovation and crowdsourcing are independent concepts with a common base (Egger, Gula & Walcher, 2016). Particularly MNEs engage in crowdsourcing; the method’s application in hospitality, tourism and SMEs is rare (Brunswicker, 2016). If applied, crowdsourcing may impact hospitality firms’ service and operational departments, the infrastructure of support (non-operational) departments, technology development as well as sales and marketing functions (Galdon-Salvador, Garrigos-Simon & Gil-Pechuan, 2016). In a novel form of crowdsourcing, firms sponsor online user innovation communities (OUICs) to generate new ideas for innovations (Dong & Wu, 2015). Users post, comment on and/or vote for new ideas and firms select the applicable ideas for further development to improve their existing or launch new products, services, and processes (Ogink & Dong, 2017). Relatedly, crowdfunding - the sourcing of financial means from the public via an open call - may arrange to finance grassroots innovations (Mollick & Robb, 2016). Customers contribute financially to the innovation process and gain the opportunity to shape the strategic development through conversations that open up between inventors and backers (Stanko & Henard, 2016). Overall, crowdfunding is seen to establish a better understanding of consumer demand and grassroots initiatives for established companies and contributes to user-driven innovations (Mollick & Robb, 2016).

## 2.2 Innovation in the hospitality industry

The hospitality industry is characterised by FLEs delivering services to customers. In his seminal work, Jones (1996) outlines that customer-facing FLEs often initiate the innovation process. They are seen as an esteemed source of innovative ideas and resources in planning how to successfully deliver and implement new service innovations (Schneider & Bowen, 1984). FLEs’ involvement in the idea generation, planning and design stages of innovation is linked to superior financial performance (Ottenbacher, 2007). Employees shift the focus on customers and thus unlock understanding of market needs, wants and demands during the innovation process (Ottenbacher, 2007). Moreover, Melton and Hartline (2010) explain that they have the most positive impact when involved in the launch stage of innovation, as they impact greatly the service delivery quality and thus marketability which in turn improves sales performance. From a manufacturing perspective, Lee, Yang and Yu (2001) find that employee involvement in new product development leads to better product quality and is associated with improved performance. In principal the end goal of all innovations in hospitality is similar: improved service quality, better operations and thus customer satisfaction leading to competitive advantages that will drive financial performance (Alzyoud, 2019).



Furthermore, customers are seen as the most important resource for incremental innovation in hospitality (Clausen & Madsen, 2014; Nieves & Diaz-Meneses, 2018). Other sources are found to be local non-complementary companies (eg. water suppliers), non-local complementary companies (eg. airlines) and general or institutional information (eg. trade fairs) (Nieves & Diaz-Meneses, 2018). The benefits of customer co-creation of innovation (hence: co-innovation) in hospitality are faster new service development speed and improved service quality (Santos-Vijande, López-Sánchez & Pascual-Fernández, 2018). Top management support is a key factor of service innovation success (Kuester, Schuhmacher, Gast & Worgul, 2013) and as such enhances the effect of customer co-innovation on the speed of service innovation (Santos-Vijande, López-Sánchez & Pascual-Fernández, 2018).

The Internet empowers customers to engage in co-innovation (Santos-Vijande, López-Sánchez & Pascual-Fernández, 2018). Social network sites and online review platforms shift power to customers and allow them to build significant market information by sharing their experiences (Shaw, Bailey & Williams, 2011). These online communities accumulate collective knowledge that surpasses the information and skills of any individual customer, which companies may readily access and draw on for innovation purposes (Hall & Williams, 2020). A common commercial technique for analysing this collective online customer feedback is through sentiment analysis, whether Lexical (human-supported) or based on Machine Learning and AI (Thelwall, 2019). Hospitality firms utilise AI to inform their marketing and innovation activity, for example, by mass-evaluating psychographic data on consumers (Inanc–Demir & Kozak, 2019) and recognising pervasive megatrends (Thelwall, 2019). This powerful tool may at least partially replace old practices such as surveys because problems can be better understood and solved faster and cheaper (Lisi & Esposito, 2015; Thelwall, 2019). Data is considered an informant and facilitator for innovation, especially in the digital tourism economy, enhancing innovation output (Sigala, Rahimi & Thelwall, 2019). However, an understanding of effective usage strategies for firms to capitalise on big data is still missing (Wedel & Kannan, 2016).

While data analysis typically takes place in dedicated research facilities, it has been outlined that R&D departments and the inherent development stages are absent from service firms (Johnes & Storey, 1998). Innovations are generally tested in the market, as they are evaluated based on user perceptions (Bessant & Tidd, 2015). Orfila-Sintes, Crespí-Cladera and Martínez-Ros (2005) find that the hotel industry does not engage in proprietary R&D but rather innovates by introducing R&D embodied technology from suppliers and other sectors. However, they outline that hotels may collaborate in the development and implementation of these technological innovations. On the other hand, Battisti, Gallego, Rubalcaba and Windrum (2015) proclaim that the R&D function is distributed among various groups of employees in service organisations. While there are no formal R&D laboratories, this intra-organisational collaboration is the main contributor to producing radical innovations. Radical innovations involve greater effort, risk and uncertainty, thus making them less attractive for the hotel industry (Nieves & Diaz-Meneses, 2018), where new ideas are difficult to protect from imitation (Ottenbacher & Harrington, 2007). The likelihood of imitation is increased by hospitality managers being highly mobile and by a high rate of consolidation through mergers and acquisitions; hence, the first-mover benefit in hospitality innovation is short-lived (Enz & Harrison, 2008).

## 2.3 Social Sustainability

The concept of Social Sustainability is commissioned to ensure the satisfaction of basic human needs such as freedom, safety, dignity, human rights, and happiness, etc. (Vavik & Keitsch, 2010). Following a global ethic, all humans have the right to fulfil their desire for a better life and satisfy their basic needs (Michelsen, Adomßent, Martens & von Hauff, 2016). Businesses adopt sustainability strategies and declare impacts in Corporate Social Responsibility reports but focus mainly on environmental and economic issues. Social sustainability is often neglected, as the loci of focus are unclear: employees, customers, communities or the entire supply chain (Hutchins et al., 2019; Von Hauff, 2016).

There are two approaches to social sustainability: an individualistic and society approach. Following the society approach, McKenzie (2004, p. 12) defines social sustainability as “a life-enhancing condition within communities, and a process within communities that can achieve that condition”. His focus lies on intergenerationality and access to key services to sustain a society in the long term.

Following an individualistic approach, Hutchins et al. (2019) connect the notion of sustainability to Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow (1943) argues that once their physiological needs are met, individuals pursue their safety needs. Hereafter, they seek to meet their belongingness, esteem and ultimately self-actualization needs. An outline and examples are depicted in Figure 2.1 (p. 12). The sequential order has since been challenged (Wahba & Bridwell, 1976). Nevertheless, the hierarchy is an accepted framework for categorising human needs (Hutchins et al., 2019). According to Hutchins and Sutherland (2008), a business influences its stakeholders' lives given constant interaction. Similarly, it influences other organisations and stakeholder groups. These stakeholders are concerned with the meeting of their individual needs. As such, the firm has an impact on the satisfaction of these needs which implies a social responsibility.

## 2.4 Aligning innovations in the hospitality industry, social sustainability and value

Representing the hospitality industry as a whole, hotels cater to the provision of mere function but also the hedonic elements of the service experience (Wu & Yang, 2018). Their success is usually measured in financial profits and hence monetary value for guests but this does not account for the sustainability of its economic practices or customer wellbeing. Customers are actively involved in value creation (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Value is co-created and hence has to cater to customer emotions (Vargo & Lusch, 2008; Wu & Gao, 2019). However, emotions do not function in binary terms (good, bad); a single service interaction can evoke multiple emotional responses of customers (Wu & Gao, 2019). Moreover, the resolution of negative feelings and dissatisfaction does not lead to satisfaction and value generation in

tourism (Alegre & Garau, 2010). However, being perceived as an innovative company impacts value co-creation, leading to customer satisfaction and loyalty (Kim, Tang & Bosselman, 2019).

In monetary terms, innovation is positively associated with hotel profitability (Sandvik, Duhan & Sandvik, 2014), particularly driven by process innovations (Hilman & Kaliappen, 2015). Through process improvements, the quality of the existing service delivery can be enhanced, increasing the value of customer experiences (Gomezelj, 2016) and setting new standards of service quality, thus creating new value streams for firms (Tweneboah-Koduah, Anning-Dorson & Nyamekye, 2020). By aligning process innovations with customer involvement and service customization, an augmented competitive advantage is created (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004) which in turn boosts hospitality organisations' overall performance (Tweneboah-Koduah, Anning-Dorson & Nyamekye, 2020). Moreover, innovative companies are more flexible and as such can identify and adapt to market trends quickly, turning these into competitive advantages and enhanced customer value (Anning-Dorson & Nyamekye, 2020). More innovative hospitality companies can charge premiums compared to their non-innovate counterparts (De La Peña, Núñez-Serrano, Turrión & Velázquez, 2016).

Hospitality companies can strengthen their value propositions by unlocking non-monetary value. Hutchins et al.'s (2019) suggest considering customers as emotional beings by catering towards higher-level emotional and transformational needs in their application of Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs. This may further drive customer loyalty, as they feel fulfilled by frequenting the socially-minded business (Maslow, 1998). An application of this theory to the hotel customer was devised by Conley (2017), as adapted in Figure 2.1. Most hospitality companies focus on the mere provision of products to satisfy basic needs. As a truly customer-centric industry, the emphasis needs to be placed at the top layers and the pyramid inverted: “established companies can miss innovation if they get too fixated at the base and address only the expectations of their core customers” (Conley, 2017, p. xv).

To guarantee sustainable competitive advantages, co-innovation must put the customer as a multifaceted human being at the centre, catering towards their emotional and physical needs at multiple levels. As such, Fuglsang (2018) suggests a human-centric, practice-based approach to service innovation which is applied in this study and explained in the following chapter 2.5.1.

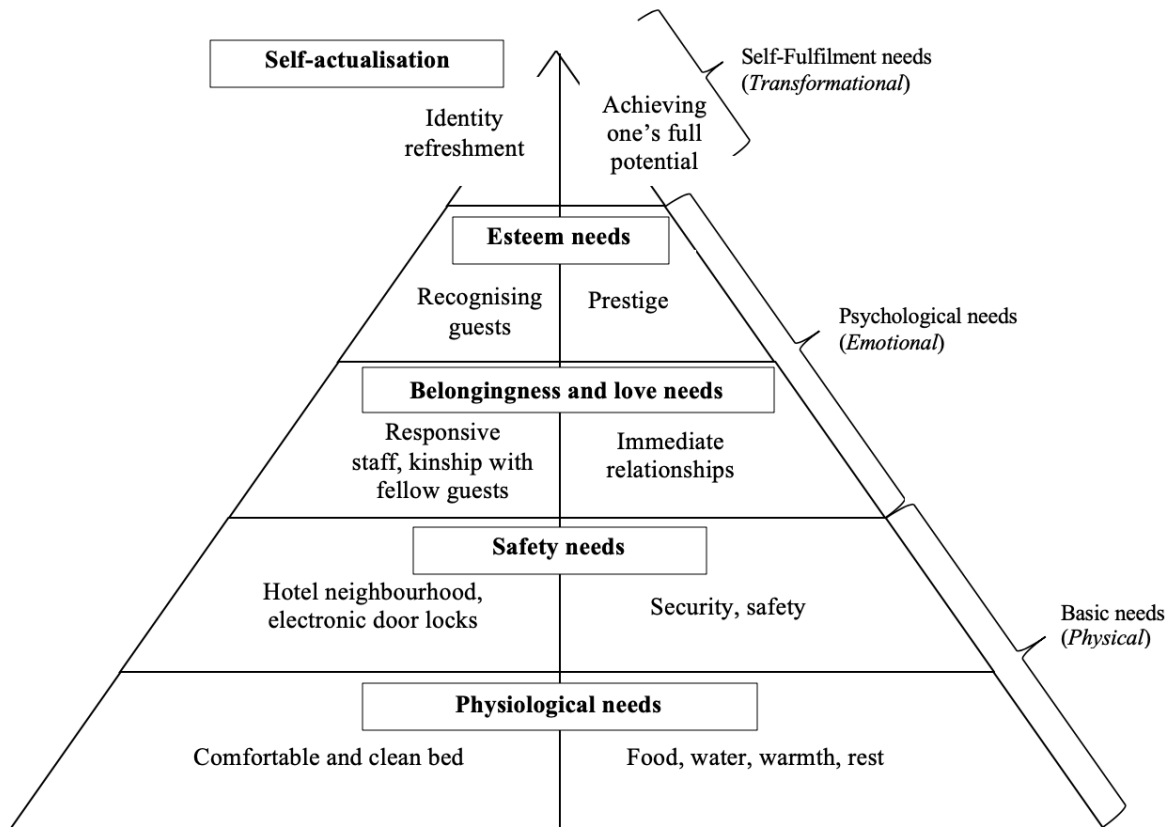


Figure 2.1: Hierarchy of hotel customer (left) and individual (right) needs adapted from Conley (2017) and Maslow (1943)

## 2.5 Theoretical approach: Human-centric innovation

“Human-centric innovation is co-innovation activities with end-users” (Fuglsang, 2019, p. 19). However, human-centric service innovation is not just involving users but taking their individual and/or collective knowledge, needs and experiences as the sources of the innovation process (Feurstein et al., 2008). The motivation is to make services more relevant for the respective user groups (Fuglsang, 2019). The focus on meeting humans’ needs by incorporating their feedback can be seen as a practice of social sustainability in the definition of Vavik and Keitsch (2010). Human-centric innovation contributes to the goal of socially sustainable innovations catering towards human psychological and self-fulfilment needs, as per Michelsen et al. (2016). It is argued that innovations are to put the human element back in the centre of attention, which is the principle behind human-centric innovation (Fuglsang, 2019).

Building the basis for human-centric innovation, Nabatchi, Sancino and Sicilia (2017) differentiate three main actors: the individual, the group and the collective. On the individual level, one or more employees interact with a single service user, collecting their knowledge and incorporating their feedback into the service delivery. These interactions create outcomes mostly beneficial to the service user, but spillovers with greater social benefits are possible.

The installation of a special toilet seat for an elderly hotel guest, for example, is of benefit to this guest but may also be of value to other elderly guests if adopted as a new, innovative standard.

On the group level, several service users who share similar characteristics are involved in service co-creation and co-innovation. The outcomes are of personal benefit to group members but spillovers aid other groups or society at large. However, issues such as inequalities between service users and the divergence of interests may direct the co-innovation activity and impede the equal benefit to all group members. For example, when designing new ways of serving drinks for wedding guests in restaurants, all guests benefit from prioritized service over non-wedding guests but the bridal party may benefit most as they are given priority within the group.

On the collective level, end-users are involved in service delivery and prioritisation thereof with one or more employees (of the same or multiple cooperating organisations) for the benefit of the whole community of users. Unlike the group level, the collective is not targeted at producing personal benefits for a specific segment of the population but rather includes a diverse set of end-users who co-innovated to produce benefits for the entire community of users. Formal coordination is required given the large number of actors involved. An example would be all members of a private club cooperating to shape new sustainable business standards that are pervasive to the club's operations and benefit everyone at large.

### 2.5.1 Practices of human-centric innovation

Considering the great variety of actors involved in human-centric innovation, it is important to understand how these innovations are produced. As such, the real practices of innovation are to be identified, whether linearized or unstructured, so the benefits may be recognised and optimally shaped. The following discussion draws on Fuglsang's (2018, 2019) typology of innovative approaches of human-centric innovation practices. The typology's premiss of users as the core of the innovation process makes it appropriate to determine how hospitality companies involve users in the innovation process (RQ1) and what methods are used to innovate (RQ2).

Three interactive practices of co-innovation are distinguished: immediate service innovation and delivery in a familiar context, a planning practice considering a broader set of actors and a systemic practice focussing on a wide set of actors. From these practices, Fuglsang (2018) derived three distinct approaches: the bricolage approach, the system approach and the systemic approach. In the bricolage approach, service is innovated under time and resource constraints. It may hence be more relevant to smaller firms without a proprietary R&D department. In service firms, the ongoing interaction between the service provider and user is the driver of innovation. The system approach adopts a strategizing function, thus making it more reflexive of business strategies, individual desires and goal-orientation. Innovations are planned for the future and affect the service providing company. The systemic approach focuses on the interaction between the service providing company and its environment. Rules, norms and perceptions are maintained, disputed and changed to secure funding, legitimise an innovation and stabilise practices in a social context.

Combining both actors and approaches, Fuglsang (2019) tentatively laid out a typology of nine practices for human-centric innovation, as displayed in Table 2.1. On an individual level, service providers solve problems on the spot with users in a bricolage practice. Following a system approach, a user co-develops activities or practices that lead to service innovation. When a user is deliberating about service standards and shares their feedback in a public context, a systemic approach is followed.

On a group level, several users develop and trials an innovative practice with service provides on the spot in a bricolage approach. When a service is co-created and co-planned by a group of users, a system approach is followed. The coordination of a particular service with other activities by a group of users relates to systemic practice.

On a collective level, immediate service adjustments by providers following community feedback relates to a bricolage approach. When users and citizens are encouraged by a service provider to put pressure on authorities and stakeholders to change the service delivery framework for the common good, a system approach is followed. The development of a new community by service providers and a multitude of users and actors for the common good outlines a systemic approach.

Table 2.1: Typology of innovative practices of human-centric innovations adapted from Fuglsang (2019)

	<i><b>Bricolage approach</b></i>	<i><b>System approach</b></i>	<i><b>Systemic approach</b></i>
<i><b>Individual human-centric innovation</b></i>	Practices that engage users in solving problems on the spot with resources at hand	Practices that engage users in strategizing about ways of service delivery	Practices that a) engage individual users in disputes about standards of services offered for users and b) empower users
<i><b>Group human-centric innovation</b></i>	Practices that engage several users in solving a specific service problem on the go for the benefit of the group	Practices that engage groups of users in co-planning and co-production with other stakeholders about the delivery of a specific service	Practices that engage users a) in the development of common standards for services offered for them and b) in making them fit with other practices
<i><b>Collective human-centric innovation</b></i>	Practices that recognise and make use of the voice of users to change the service portfolio for the benefit of a community	Practices that empower the users by giving them instruments for voicing their opinion vis-à-vis authorities and other stakeholders for the benefit of a community	Practices that engage service providers in agonistic development strategies for the common good

While the typology was initially developed for public service innovations, it may be applied in the private sector as well. The author advocates for the hybridisation of sector-specific approaches given commonalities (Fuglsang, 2018; Fuglsang & Møller, 2020): the three approaches appear in both public and private sectors; organisational strategies are followed, enabling organisational interaction and thus innovation; and lastly, management holds control over actors in the innovation practices, their freedom and interaction with stakeholders.

Fuglsang's (2019) typology of human-centric innovation practices is contributing greatly to the answering of the research questions. Firstly, it draws the focus on the various practices that involve and are shaped by users. Secondly, it offers a categorisation of these practices, thus easing the understanding for the reader and offering structure to the analysis. Lastly, it highlights practices that do not necessarily produce a product or service innovation, but an innovation of the organisational processes or conditions in the stakeholder communities. An emphasis is placed on social sustainability which may otherwise be overlooked.

## 2.6 Literature summary

This chapter introduced the theoretical background of the study. Practices of human-centric innovations link various streams of literature that were discussed, including innovation studies, the notion of services, social sustainability concepts as well as monetary and non-monetary value. This typology of innovative practices of human-centric innovations will be used to interpret the collected data which will be introduced in the subsequent chapter.

# 3 Methods

This chapter details the methods and source materials of the study. Firstly, the data collection and sampling strategy are discussed with a subsequent discussion of its limitations and biases. Hereafter, the methodological approach is presented along with its advantages and limitations as well as other relevant considerations. Altogether this study analyses secondary data from online sources using a qualitative, directed content analysis method to identify the user-inclusive practices of innovation in the hospitality industry.

## 3.1 Data

### 3.1.1 Data collection strategy

In order to gain a holistic and thorough understanding of the innovation practices in hospitality, the collection of qualitative sources is deemed appropriate. Collecting as many different accounts as possible is embodied as a guiding principle until a point of saturation is reached to detect cross-case patterns. The goal of the data collection is to uncover the most important (in terms of quantity) and most successful (in terms of quality) ways how hospitality companies innovate, with a focus on co-innovation with customers and on human needs, wants and demands. Online secondary sources were chosen as the mode of data collection as an effective way to collate many accounts in a resource-effective way, as suggested by Creswell (2014) and Hewson, Vogel and Laurent (2016).

This research draws on secondary, qualitative data gathered through online searches. As part of the data collection strategy, the sources are to cover innovation practices of hospitality firms, highlighting motivations, strategies and outcomes. These are first-hand reports from innovators or secondary accounts. Text documents, such as newspaper articles, magazine articles, interviews with industry professionals, industry reports as well as company reports and blogs are analysed. Additionally, audio-visual, media-produced data are utilised. These are transcribed prior analysis to keep the structure of the text's meaning (Figueroa, 2008).

This research utilises a form of convenience sampling, appropriated for Internet research (Sheldon, 2018). Keyword searches in computerised databases (Creswell, 2014), namely Google as well as industry publications and travel magazines are the initial mode of source material gathering. These keywords are drawn from academic literature, in particular the main theoretical approach (Fuglsang, 2018, 2019) and reviews of industry-specific papers (eg. Gomezelj, 2016). From there, forward and backward searches are employed to find more relevant sources as recommended by Hewson, Vogel and Laurent (2016). Reports on the most innovative hospitality companies aid in locating relevant sources. This use of online research



allows the scholar to gain a holistic view of secondary data available on innovations in hospitality and then delve deeper into detailed accounts (Hewson, Vogel & Laurent, 2016).

### 3.1.2 Overview of the data

The total sample consists of 57 source materials. Out of these, 41 are articles, seven videos, five blogs, two podcasts and two books. An overview of the sample including the respective classifications and locations can be found in Appendix A. The innovation practices of 32 different companies are investigated, as detailed in Table 3.1. Nearly half of the source materials cover innovations in hotels which also represent 50% of the total share of firms in the sample. 60.7% of reports are about upscale, upper-upscale or luxury hotels, as represented in Figure 3.1. These tiers of hotel classifications<sup>1</sup> are associated with a higher level of innovation (Orfila-Sintes, Crespi-Cladera & Martínez-Ros, 2005). The second biggest group of hospitality firms are Members Clubs with nine source materials, which mainly cover one company Soho House. The firm is recognised as an industry disrupter that employs novel practices of innovation (Burton, 2017).

*Table 3.1: Types of hospitality companies in the sample*

<b>Type of hospitality firms</b>	<b>Count of source materials</b>	<b>Share of source materials</b>	<b>Count of firms</b>	<b>Share of firms</b>
Hotel	28	49.1%	16	50.0%
Members Club	9	15.8%	2	6.3%
Restaurant	5	8.8%	4	12.5%
Tour Operator	3	5.3%	2	6.3%
Airline	2	3.5%	2	6.3%
Brewery / Restaurant	2	3.5%	1	3.1%
Café	2	3.5%	1	3.1%
Food Supplier	2	3.5%	2	6.3%
Mix of firms	2	3.5%	-	-
Online platform for local homes rental	1	1.8%	1	3.1%
Food Delivery	1	1.8%	1	3.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100%</b>

<sup>1</sup> STR's chain scale hotel classification includes (in hierarchical order, from top to bottom): Luxury, Upper Upscale, Upscale, Upper Midscale, Midscale, Economy and Independent (the latter being non-ranked); hotels are grouped primarily according to actual average room rates but higher scale businesses are associated with higher levels of service provision.

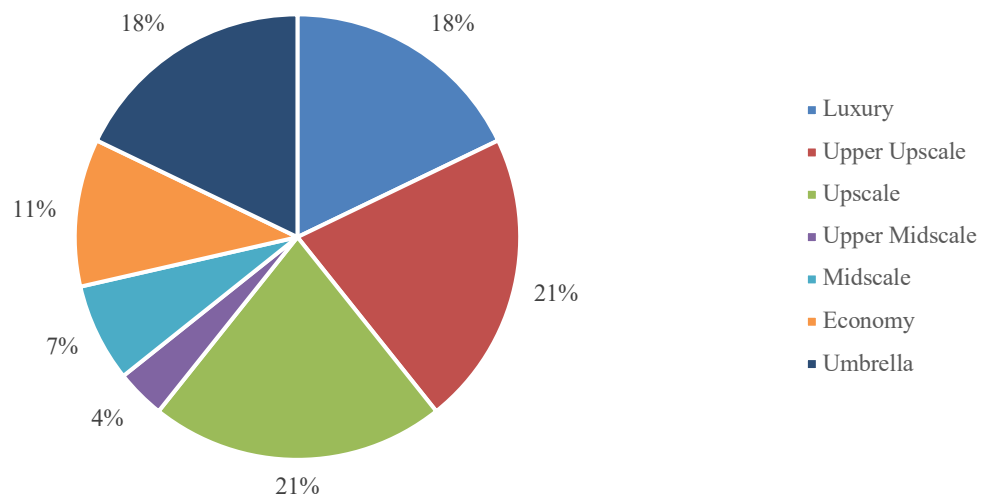


Figure 3.1: Share of hotels in sample by classification level  
 Classification is based on STR Global's (2018) scales of hotel chains

The collected data's focus lies on large, MNEs with an annual turnover of more than €50 million which make up 56% of the sample. SMEs, accounting for 37% of the source materials, lack the budget and focus on innovation as they more operationally fixated. Oppositely, executives in international market leaders can make innovation a strategic focal point (Barsh, Capozzi & Davidson, 2008). Moreover, these companies are more prone to develop distinct innovation strategies with practice focus (Pisano, 2015). While customer involvement in service innovation is well researched globally, Alzyoud (2019) noted a lack of non-Asia centric studies on hotel employee innovations. The study's regional focus lies on the Europe and the United States of America, as highlighted in Table 3.2. On the one hand, this regional focus limits the diversity of the sample and potentially introducing a regional bias. On the other hand, this allows a more consistent approach, aiding in identifying patterns of innovation practices. Furthermore, it represents the dominant regions in the global hospitality landscape, as 43% of the global Top 100 accommodation and restaurant brands are based in the United States of America, 19% respectively in Europe (Statista, 2019).

Table 3.2: Locus of hospitality companies in the sample

Locus of hospitality firms	Count of source materials	Share of source materials	Count of firms	Share of firms
Europe	39	68.4%	21	65.6%
United States of America	18	31.6%	11	34.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 3.1.3 Data limitations and bias

The applied approach to data sampling and selection thereof inherently bears several limitations and introduces bias. Data gathering through directional searches may limit findings to solely

related sources, as these share similar business philosophies or understandings of the investigated phenomena. Moreover, the convenience sampling approach introduces author bias: a preselection of innovative companies is taken by various reports' authors which may force a unidirectional perspective upon this research. Moreover, this bias of perspective may be reinforced by employing forward- and backward searches, as these produce findings with similar understandings of the topic.

Press reports and articles lack coverage on SMEs, which are hence not the focus of this study. However, many individual small businesses engage in innovation – often unknown to the innovator given an improvisational approach (Ferneley & Bell, 2006). This perspective may lack in this study. Additionally, “Newsprint, depending on the source of publication, can be seen as being sensationalistic, informative, didactic or a feature story” (Cousins & Brunt, 2002, in Brunt, Horner & Semley, 2017, p.256). The type of reporting may introduce bias; the researcher is thus to consider the context and purpose of the publication (Brunt, Horner & Semley, 2017). Company branding may further impact published reports: business may want to be perceived as innovative and thus creative, as a strategy to attract customers (Adamson, 2013). However, numerous business models solely focus on the basic service provision in hospitality which still may produce innovations (Conley, 2017). These are rarely covered in newsprint and hence not included in this research.

Other data bear limitations as well. While recording audio-visual data, the presence of uninstructed observer can be intrusive, influencing the participant's expressions and reflections (Creswell, 2014). Regional publications that publish their articles in local languages are mostly not included in the study. This may introduce a bias to the study, as an international, Anglo-American perspective in reporting is conveyed. Local connotations or interpretations may be omitted. Moreover, this study might miss out on innovations of non-English speaking countries that are not covered in international or industry-relevant media. As such, the results of this study are not generalisable on a global scale and might miss out on relevant, novel practices of innovation. However, the inclusion of multiple, various sources of evidence is to counteract some of these biases. Their confirmation of similar results increases the external validity of the study (Creswell, 2014).

## 3.2 The Methodological Approach

Qualitative content analysis is employed to answer the research questions. The content and context of communications, in text format or transcribed, are studied (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). As the thesis aims to gain thorough understanding and insight of the phenomenon of study (i.e. innovation practices in the hospitality industry) (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992), employing a “subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” is an appropriate method of analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278).

A deductive, qualitative approach using a directed content analysis is deemed most suitable, as it conceptually extends or validates an existing theory or theoretical framework (Hsieh &

Shannon, 2005). In this research, Fuglsang's (2019) typology of innovative practices in human-centric innovations is validated in a hospitality context and enriched. According to Potter and Levine-Donnerstein (1999), this approach is deductive given their distinctions of the role of theory in research: it aids in identifying key concepts or variables. Thus, these theoretical key concepts serve as an initial coding scheme (Brunt, Horner & Semley, 2017).

In this study, nine key concepts based on Fuglsang (2019) have been identified and serve as preliminary codes. This stipulates greater focus on the phenomena under investigation. Particularly, the involvement of users in innovation practices contributes greatly to answering the research questions. Following Hsieh and Shannon (2005), the text is read and parts that are identified as an innovation practice are highlighted. These highlighted passages are then coded using the pre-defined scheme; any uncoded yet highlighted passages are assigned a new code. In a second step, these codes are arranged and summarised into categories, subcategories and codes; a relational analysis is applied (Creswell, 2014). The results are to offer support, disprove or enhance the original theory (Brunt, Horner & Semley, 2017). A summary of all categories and codes is provided in Appendix B, their hierarchical structure in Appendix C.

Software solutions were utilised to support data collection and analysis. Video and podcast transcriptions were supported by AI, namely Otter.ai (2020). The computerised transcriptions were re-read, verified and corrected if necessary. QSR International's (2020) application NVivo12 was utilised for data organisation, coding, thematic organisation and to report findings without losing access to the original data. Its use allows researchers to gain an overview of the data through word counts before coding. Moreover, the data are recontextualised, enabling their interpretation in a purely categorical setting removed from the text (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). Overall, the use of software makes the analysis more efficient and theory-building more effective (Brunt, Horner & Semley, 2017). On the other hand, it is associated with the risk of emersion from the data and a loss of context (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013).

### 3.2.1 Methodical advantages and limitations

This directed content analysis holds several advantages and limitations. The main strength is seen as the ability to support and extend an existing theory (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Furthermore, it reduces the naivety in perspective linked to naturalistic research designs (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Potter and Levine-Donnerstein (1999) argue that theory-guidance increases confidence in code development. However, it introduces directional bias as the researcher may only look for preconceived codes (Brunt, Horner & Semley, 2017). The research is thus more likely to find evidence in support of the existing theory (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). An overemphasis on the theory may blind the research to the contextual aspects of the phenomenon in question (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Moreover, during the coding process, “low-level abstractions easily could link raw data to categories” (Assarroudi, Heshmati Nabavi, Armat, Ebadi & Vaismoradi, 2018, p. 48). Thorough preparation of the initial set of codes and a meaningful categorisation during the relational analysis is key. A data analysis protocol is used to counteract these limitations and enhance the neutrality of the researcher (Creswell, 2014; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This study's audit trail can be found in Appendix D.

### 3.2.2 Validity and reliability considerations

Addressing validity, the coding exercise in directed deductive content analyses must employ categories that accurately address the theoretical concepts (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kanste, Pölkki, Utriainen & Kyngäs, 2014) and capture what was intended (Schreier, 2012, in Elo et al., 2014). A theory-driven approach using clear definitions is the basis for face validity (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999). To satisfy predictive validity, a theory needs to inform which concepts are related (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999), which is outlined for investigated human-centric innovation theory in chapter 2.5 of this study. Validity is further bound by trustworthiness, credibility and authenticity (Creswell, 2014).

Trustworthiness is enhanced if the study is systematic (Creswell, 2014). Content analysis is seen as systematic, as all relevant material is included, a pre-defined sequence of analytical steps is followed and the employed codes are checked for consistency (Schreier, 2012, in Elo et al., 2014). Thorough documentation, given an audit trail (cf. Appendix D), further strengthens the trustworthiness of the study (Elo et al., 2014).

Credibility is influenced by three distinct elements: the credibility of the researcher (hereafter discussed in chapter 3.2.3), philosophical belief in qualitative research, which cannot be directly tested, and rigorous technique of data collection and analysis (Patton, 1999). For the latter, a systematic approach with audit documentation is suggested; data triangulation may significantly enhance credibility if consistent patterns from varying sources are found (Cope, 2014; Patton, 1999). However, inconsistencies are not weakening credibility but are to act as a stimulus for further insight into the relationship between phenomenon and mode of inquiry (Patton, 1999).

Allowing the reader to grasp the essence of the analysed data's meaning through (participant) quotes is referred to as authenticity (Cope, 2014). The authenticity of the phenomenon is an important criterion for validity given the multivocality of interpretive perspectives; hence, it must be attempted to stay true to the phenomenon under investigation (Whittemore, Chase & Mandle, 2001). Nevertheless, it is important to note that data bias, by analysing secondary newsprints, interviews and reports, may negatively influence authenticity.

Research reliability is linked to a consistent approach (Creswell, 2014). The employed data analysis protocol (in Appendix D), as well as a source database (in Appendix A), are to enhance reproducibility and reliability (Creswell, 2014). The re-reading of transcripts is to cancel out mistakes in the transcription process; the definition of codes is to enhance reliability, as well (Gibbs, 2007, in Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, Potter and Levine-Donnerstein's (1999) recommendations to check for consistency in the application of coding rules and the avoidance of coder fatigue to enhance reliability are followed.

### 3.2.3 The researcher's role

According to Oleinik, Popova, Kirdina and Shatalova (2014, p. 2704), "if a single researcher performs the tasks of reading a text and coding it with the help of a codebook, the coder's judgments may be highly subjective". The researcher inherently introduces bias to the study.

However, a systematic approach may alleviate some of the bias. Moreover, the bias is shaped by the researcher's background, including their gender, history, culture and socioeconomic origin (Creswell, 2014).

Having grown up in a hotel and built a career in the hospitality industry over the past decade, the researcher is naturally close to the industry. Having spent most of his career in the luxury hotel industry in the United Kingdom, Germany and France, the researcher recognises a personal bias to the European hospitality market and the luxury segment thereof. This is expressed in the researcher's belief that luxury brands are able to invest more resources into business transformation and thus produce industry-leading and -defining innovations. The researcher was part of such an undertaking in his last job before entering postgraduate education, thus may introduce preconceived notions to the study. However, by using a predefined coding scheme and a rigorous, systematic approach, this bias is to be diminished.

### 3.3 Summary of methods

This chapter presented the data and methods of the study. The sample of 57 secondary accounts of innovation practices in European and American hospitality companies was outlined with its various strengths, weaknesses and implications. Directed content analysis was introduced as the deductive, qualitative approach of the study. The results of this methodological approach's analysis will be presented in the following chapter.

## 4 Empirical Findings

The empirical analysis of the data provided examples enriching the discussion of all types of human-centric innovation practices, as detailed in Appendix C. Given the confirmation of the emergent themes and categories by several sources, a point of saturation has been reached. Thus, the following section presents the results of the empirical data analysis. The human-centric innovation practice typology is used as a reference point, ordered by the number of involved users. Hereafter, findings are enriched with a discussion of R&D practices which arise as themes independent to the human-centric innovation practice in hospitality.

### 4.1 Individual human-centric innovation

Individual human-centric innovation practices primarily focus on a single user innovating a service on its own or with one or more other stakeholders (Nabatchi, Sancino & Sicilia, 2017). These practices take place either under resource constraints, adopt a strategizing function or involve individual disputes of service standards (Fuglsang, 2019).

#### 4.1.1 Bricolage approach

Considering innovating using individual users under time and/or resource constraints, only one case represents the approach per se. By interacting with their customers, Amba Hotels' employees are empowered to discover the likes and dislikes of their guests. Through interactions they are to personalise and adapt the service, thus innovating new services or processes on the spot to satisfy their customers' needs and wants, as one employee reported:

We are the sole decision-makers at the hotel. So, we're allowed to try and test different things and see whether they work and I think that's really key. Because now that we have accountability and we manage ... the accounts. We have a close relationship with the clients at the hotel, we're able to find out what ticks them and what works. And that gives us the ability to tailor our offering to fit their needs. (Video 7)

Moreover, other firms reportedly use a trial and error technique when building their business and interacting with customers: “[I] used the technique of ‘trial and error’ in social media whilst building my Pavlova & Cream brand” (Article 27).

Other data sources show findings that are not exactly in line with the Individual-Bricolage approach yet cover innovating on the spot after recognising a service deficiency or a gap in the market. According to Stanley Fourteau, former Head of Global Growth, Airbnb Experiences,

Airbnb was created because a business opportunity was recognised and subsequently seized. The founders understood that during a major conference in town, accommodation was needed for the delegates. Hotels partially satisfied this demand but were unable to house all delegates.

So, they knew that there was a demand that wasn't being met for accommodation. And so that's how Airbnb emerged. They put their air bed in their living room, and they rented it out for people that were going to this conference. (Video 5)

#### 4.1.2 System approach

Strategizing with users how to deliver services, firms contact their customers both prior consumption and during to obtain their feedback. Company representatives encourage users to share their opinions by proactively asking them questions. The service delivery agents are empowered to seek feedback, deliberate with users and subsequently innovate. They personalise the service according to each user's feedback. This is part of the company strategy of Amba Hotels:

Before guests even arrive at Amba Hotel Charing Cross, they are contacted by a relationship manager who provides an enhanced service looking after guests throughout their stay. The management strategy at Amba Hotels gives staff responsibility and accountability, allowing them to make decisions for the benefit of the hotel. (Video 7)

At Dorchester Collection, employees are rewarded for posing these inquisitive questions and personalising guest experiences to build loyalty (Article 36).

From a product innovation point of view, an entrepreneur reports that she obtained strategic and financial involvement from a user to scale the innovation after he had sampled her new, innovative type of bread. Lucinda Bruce-Gardyne, founder of Genius Foods Ltd, reported:

And he asked if he could try the bread. He got back to me really quickly to say: "Wow, that's delicious. That's going to change my life. And it's going to change the lives of many other people. I'd like to back up and help you recruit that team you're looking for." (Video 1)

#### 4.1.3 Systemic approach

On a systemic level, users are involved in the dispute of service standards and subsequently empowered. Data analysis shows that many hospitality firms merely utilise customers to determine the desired standards of service and innovate thereafter themselves. Multiple companies report that they are leveraging customer complaints, both as industry insiders and outsiders. Ana Brant of Dorchester Collection reports that through acting upon guests' complaints, the company was able to diversify and strengthen its service proposition:

To figure out how to act on the laundry issue cropping up in our data, we had to start by better understanding what our guests really wanted from us; beyond clean, undamaged



clothes being returned on time. By diving into the data, we were able to dramatically reduce customer dissatisfaction, increase customer loyalty, and develop new, [sic] differentiating service offerings. (Article 19)

Two sources report that some users who deliberate about service standards choose to become active themselves. Fuelled by frustration, they feel empowered to innovate. This is footed in a deep and through dispute of the current levels of service provided in the hospitality landscape rather than just recognising a specific issue or gap in the market and exploiting this; thus, offering a differentiation to Individual-Bricolage practices. BrewDog, a disruptor in beer manufacturing and pub operation, for example, was started because the founders were “bored of the industrially brewed lagers and stuffy ales that dominated the UK market, [and] they decided the best way to fix this predicament was to brew their own beers.” (Blog 2). Similarly, as a hospitality industry outsider who led a fashion company, the founder of CitizenM Hotels received several complaints of his employees that were staying at hotels during business travels. Through the discourse on unfulfilled yet desired standards of service, he recognised the opportunity to innovate in hospitality and successfully started his own company (Video 3).

Another emergent theme is firms choosing to engage their customers in the deliberation of service standards. Dissimilar to reacting to customer complaints, these companies actively initiate such customer deliberation activity. At Soho House, the Coffee Quality Control Manager offers customers to switch their own beverage for another one that the company is currently testing (Article 7). Customers are encouraged the weigh in on the pros and cons of the new coffee innovation versus their own coffee, thus setting new standards. Similarly, Hans Meyer, Co-founder of Zoku Hotels, reports that he engaged customers in service standard deliberation though voicing their dissatisfactions during the brand conception process.

We didn't ask them [representatives of the target audience] what they want, because we learned also that people not always know what they want, but they are very well aware about what they're frustrated about when they are living and working internationally.  
(Video 6)

Based on their customers' dissatisfactions with other services and offerings in general, Zoku Hotels' founders were aware of what to avoid when innovating the Extended Stay accommodation offering. This provided both insights into the target audience and set the level playing field for starting their innovative company.

## 4.2 Group human-centric innovation

Group human-centric innovation practices involve groups of service receivers in co-innovation activities (Nabatchi, Sancino & Sicilia, 2017). These practices solve specific service problems, adopt a service co-planning and co-production function or focus on the development of common service standards (Fuglsang, 2019).

### 4.2.1 Bricolage approach

When involving several users in solving problems of a certain service for a group benefit, the findings can be grouped into two themes: the involvement of customers and the involvement of internal users.

Two hotel companies report collecting feedback from external users on a specific service or product. The Standard International hotel group uses their venues as incubators to present novel services, goods or ideas to their customers and actively obtain their validation (Article 34). Dorchester Collection, a hotel operating company, involves their customers passively through observation. Learning how they use certain services or product offerings, the company innovates and improves these, as Ana Brant reports:

For instance, while sitting in the lobby of The Dorchester, members of my innovation team observed guests walk to the theatre desk to book tickets for a West End show, and then go to the Concierge Desk to arrange for dinner reservations and transportation. Why, they [the innovation team] asked, should guests have to go to two desks to arrange one evening? Now the theatre desk staff make all the arrangements a guest might need. (Article 11)

Contrarily, two other firms reportedly involve internal users in the innovation process. They are to provide feedback on innovations to ease their daily dealings with the service or room product. Starbucks has a pop-up store in its headquarters in which new product innovations are sold (Article 35). Employees, as critical consumers, are encouraged to provide real-time feedback to perfect the new inventions before commercialisation. Comparably, Marriott International seeks to improve the services for the benefit of their internal users:

The collaborative space makes it easy for, say, housekeeping to walk into the room, look around, and point out that an element would be nearly impossible to clean, or suggesting a change in layout that would make vacuuming a lot easier. (Article 23)

### 4.2.2 System approach

Hospitality companies are reported to involve users in co-planning and co-producing specific services with other stakeholders. This takes place at several levels: the conception of entire services, suggesting new service innovations or co-planning during service conception. The research shows that most investigated hospitality firms, however, use this practice to innovate certain products on offer, mostly hotel rooms, rather than service delivery processes.

Blink, a service provided by Black Tomato, a travel experience company, is entirely grounded in co-planning with users. Customers are instrumental in shaping the service according to their expectations and needs. Without their input, the service is not possible, as it is unique and thus innovated each time it is produced, as Tom Marchant, co-founder of Black Tomato, explains:

Blink is about us working with our customers to create temporary structures in places in the far ends of the earth, that they have a say in designing and where they get located.

And the idea is that ... [the] experience is unique to them. ... once you've had that experience, it gets taken down, ... blink and you miss it. (Video 2)

Four sources show that users are further involved in the co-production of service innovations during the design stage. For example, 21c Museum Hotels partnered with a local construction company to host a competition, issuing the following request for proposals: “21c Museum and FirstBuild are calling on designers, makers, engineers, artists and more to submit their inventive, functional designs to create the ultimate hotel stay.” (Blog 1). The winning proposal was then further innovated and introduced as the future room offering of 21c Museum Hotels.

Similarly, four other hotel brands employ practices that include prospective customers and employees in the concept development stage. For example, at Accor Hotels, “The design [of the new Jo&Joe brand] was the result of a co-construction process with future guests, external experts, students, the shadow executive committee and AccorHotels teams”, as Sébastien Bezin, Chairman & CEO of Accor Hotels, reported (Article 4). At Zoku, a process of prototyping and refinement after user feedback was employed whilst inventing their room product. Various stakeholders were involved to reiterate the room concept, as Hans Meyer outlines:

We built six prototypes, and every prototype has been tested between with between 100 and 150 people from the target audience. We worked together with two housekeeping companies. And after every iteration, we made improvements with regards to the social spaces. We worked together also with the big tech companies here in Amsterdam, ... for example, I worked together with a global HR director from booking.com. And every now and then they send over a team to our offices to debate about the concept. So actually, before we opened up, we had all those iterations of concept. We worked together with many people from the target audience. (Video 6)

At this stage, a wide variety of employees, external customers and stakeholders are involved by hospitality firms in service and product co-production and co-planning. These include current and/or future guests, employees with operational or strategic functions, external suppliers and contractors, business partners, booking intermediaries, artists and artisans, students, financial shareholders as well as brand supports, whether organised in a community or not.

### 4.2.3 Systemic approach

Differently from the bricolage approach which mainly relies on innovating on the spot under resource constraints and the system approach which adopts a planning practice, the systemic approach is engaged with developing common standards for services offered with and for involved users and making these fit with other practices. This approach is not uncommon in hospitality firms and many different techniques are utilised which include behavioural analysis, cultural analysis, complaint analysis, interviews and community building.

Soho House Group, an international private members club and restaurant operator, employs cultural analysis by looking at big wave trends among their target audience to shape their service standards, as CEO Nick Jones outlines:

People are looking at the 9-to-5, corporate way of life and rejecting it. They want more flexibility ... Because of that journey, we have created not a lifestyle brand but a way of living for our members, morning, noon and night, an amalgamation of work time and personal time. (Article 33)

Moreover, the group investigates the demands and attitudes of their existing customers which challenge the standard of currently offered services and to conceive new services with a respective set of standards. Using customer feedback, this novel service is not only established but also fit into the existing service framework.

So that's why Soho Works was created, it was really from the demand of our members, to give them an option if they did really need a proper regular space to work from where they can have their laptop out all the time. (Article 3)

Customer complaints are utilised to establish the lower boundaries of service standards. Dissatisfaction is to be avoided by not violating these and ultimately losing business. At Dorchester Collection, this is paired with further insight to shape standards that ultimately add value:

Complaints could indicate areas that are deeply important to customers. These may be areas where being “good enough” is not good enough. For performance data to have meaning, it must be paired with insight about what customers really want. (Article 19)

Interviews are another means of user involvement in shaping service standards. These allow to identify customer demands, service standard suggestions or ascertain trends, as in Aman’s case. The hotel operator employed this technique to shape the service standards of its new sub-brand Janu during the development phase, as COO Roland Fasel indicates:

The brand conducted intensive research, interviewing hundreds of regular travellers, Aman guests, journalists and travel agents, who represented growing trends, such as the rise in solo and multigenerational travel, and many of which demand a greater focus on togetherness rather than seclusion. (Article 21)

Zoku employs a similar interview technique but rather opted to involve a curated group of users. This community-building and -investigating approach is a common way to easily learn from the voices of users. At Zoku this was also used during the development phase, as “it's a concept where actually 290 people from the target audience work together to come to the point where we are today” (Video 6).

### 4.3 Collective human-centric innovation

In collective human-centric innovation practices, end-users are primarily involved in co-innovating, shaping and prioritizing services for a community’s benefit or the common good (Nabatchi, Sancino & Sicilia, 2017). This may take shape in hearing customer voices to change

the service portfolio, vis-à-vis other stakeholders and authorities or in agonistic discussions (Fuglsang, 2019).

#### 4.3.1 Bricolage approach

The data shows that innovation is instigated by recognising and using the voice of users to change service portfolios for a community benefit. Half of the analysed companies engage in practices of the Collective-Bricolage approach in some form or manner. This may be either a specific community within the customer base or the community of all customers. This insight is collected through customer feedback, employees or when prototyping.

Seven firms report to collect and use customer feedback as qualitative or quantitative data. A usual function to collect customer feedback is through employees. However, rather than using this information to innovate on the spot as in the Individual-Bricolage approach, the insight is recorded as data and analysed centrally, as outlined in reports of Dorchester Collection and Amba Hotels. Surveys are further used to avail narratives of user voices as well as quantitative statistics. These are invaluable in hospitality organisations, as Ana Brant of Dorchester Collection describes:

One survey we recently did helped us distinguish between what business and leisure travellers look for in a hotel. It told us that we needed to work on winning back a greater proportion of business travellers as leisure guests. (Article 11)

Online channels are an integral facilitator of raising customer voices. Review sites such as TripAdvisor or Booking.com 's post-stay reviews conventionally play a primary role. At Zoku, review scores are analysed, as Hans Meyer outlines: "if you look to our service scores on Booking.com, they are ... at 9.8 out of 10. ... [customers] are raving about a service that we provide through our sidekicks" (Video 6). But narratives are also analysed, as Dorchester Collection's Ana Brant outlines: "Sites such as TripAdvisor can also help identify gaps in what you think is important to customers vs. what customers say is important" (Article 11). This company is also turning to Social Media to listen to customers' voices:

We found our guests most often use these channels [social media] to brag that they have stayed with us. What can we do with that sort of feedback? A lot. These insights don't tell us about our customer service performance, but they can inform our marketing and customer experience strategies. ... Social and review posts can also deliver "aha" moments about competitors' offerings. (Article 11)

Dorchester Collection also employs technology, namely AI, to triangulate qualitative and quantitative data collected online through multiple public and proprietary sources. Ana Brant explains that "our tool, Metis, analyses data from online reviews and social media to uncover problems" (Article 18).

At Ennismore, continuous cultural sentiment analysis is applied. A dedicated community of stakeholders called Musings is engaged with and analysed. In addition to receiving answers to direct questions, community members are encouraged to share personal preferences and

suggestions, whether related to the Ennismore's business units or not, both with the company and other members. Understanding shifts in consumer demand and behaviours, Ennismore is continuously adapting and innovating their service portfolio (Podcast 2).

At Marriott, a dedicated customer feedback team is tasked with recognising customer voices to adapt the service offerings for the benefit of all customers. When developing its brand Aloft, which is targeting a community of tech-savvy Millennials and Generation Xers, Marriott International turned to virtual prototyping. On Second Life, a virtual reality platform, a publicly accessible, digital version of Aloft was opened:

In the brick-and-mortar realm, the plan is for the first Aloft inn to open sometime in 2008, catering to active, urban 30- to 50-year-olds. But the real-world lodge will be preceded by a 3D cyberversion designed to prompt feedback from virtual guests and help guide the earthbound endeavour. (Article 1)

#### 4.3.2 System approach

Hospitality companies also empower users to voice their opinion to authorities and other stakeholders for the benefit of communities rather than solely for business benefits. Albeit, this is seemingly not a common practice, as only four firms were found to follow this approach. The scale of such communities can vary: the entire hospitality landscape, all consumers or a curated community of business stakeholders.

Ennismore draws heavily on its insights platform Musings with 100 to 150 people as a continuous focus group. In addition to using community acumen to change their service portfolio (cf. Collective-Bricolage approach), members are encouraged to share insights for the benefit of the internal community of business stakeholders. Former Director of Ennismore's 23lab, Philippa Wagner, explains:

They get to share insights and learnings with each other in the community. So, they'll be talking about a restaurant in their city, ... or they'll say, I'm travelling to Chicago and then all the all the community in Chicago will then say you should to visit here ... So, they're creating their own community. (Podcast 2)

On a more drastic note, BrewDog staged a public protest to change a 300-year old licensing law to allow serving a specific, smaller size glass in their pubs. The company intended to showcase their strong beers in a controlled reasonable manner for the benefit of all customers. As such, they forced authorities to listen to consumer voices and looked out for the benefit of their clientele, as BrewDog co-founder James Watt writes in his book:

We then instigated the world's smallest protest ... We had a dwarf holding a week-long protest at Westminster, arguing that two thirds of a pint measures should be introduced in British bars. ... our tiny protest blew the dust off our archaic licensing laws and brought about the first change to draught-beer measures for over three centuries. Two thirds of a pint is the perfect size for artisanal beers and will help to combat

irresponsible drinking as well as introduce new audiences to the craft-beer revolution.  
(Book 1)

### 4.3.3 Systemic approach

The last type of human-centric innovation practice relates to service providers engaging in agonistic development strategies for the common good. This is not fulfilled by hospitality companies in its entirety, according to the data collected. However, service providers may engage in activities that partially fulfil this definition, such as engaging in sustainable development (four observations), lower level agonistic development that changes the landscape for the business or local community (six observations) and presenting opposing views (one observation).

Given increasing sustainability pressures from the public and its consumers, many companies are forced to rethink their ecological footprint. In order to preserve the environment for the current and coming generations, some hospitality firms enter collaborations with external stakeholders to jointly develop innovative approaches. British Airways, for example, held a contest in conjunction with academia:

We're running a number of initiatives, and one of them is ... the fuels of the future. And we've been running an exercise with a number of universities in the UK. There will be a judging panel, ... and we will select one of the projects and we'll continue investing in the project to try to understand how fuels will evolve over the future and what is it that we as an industry can do. (Podcast 1)

Moreover, some hospitality providers join forces with local actors to develop a sub-community for the common good. The Good Hotel, for example, started a project with the local council authorities in London to reduce long-term unemployment. The company is offering trainee- and apprenticeship programmes to reintegrate the jobless in the employment market.

The Good Hotel Group is a “social business” that trains and employs disadvantaged people from the local community and dedicates all profits generated from the hotel operation to support local communities in need. (Blog 5)

Agonistic development is also carried out in conjunction with legislators to create new, suitable regulations once innovations gained a foothold. Airbnb, a company that notably changed the level playing field in hospitality, entered discussions with authorities after realising that their business model increases rents in local areas. To counteract negative externalities on the local communities, Airbnb negotiated suitable legislations and adopted new business practices for example by acquiring or leasing real estate themselves. This induced process innovations, as Airbnb themselves were leasing out apartment rather than just offering a marketplace for third parties. Whilst this *prima facie* opened up new revenue streams to the firm, this also offered marketing benefits, as the company's reputation was improved and awareness of Airbnb in these markets increased (Video 5).

However, not all hospitality professionals share a positive attitude toward collaboration. Some disruptors favour independent approaches to strategic development, whether for business success or the common good. BrewDog co-founder James Watts argues that “A brainstorming party is for the brain-dead. Collaboration is for those with no ideas, desperately trying to magic up some half-baked nonsense from thin air.” (Book 1). Nevertheless, his company helped change the industry for the common good, for example by aiding to introduce smaller beer serving sizes.

## 4.4 Research and Development

An independent theme that emerged in the data is that many hospitality companies engage in formal R&D activities. This captures further formalised practices of innovation that were disqualified by the hospitality innovation literature. As traditional R&D practices exclude users, these practices are not considered by the human-centric innovation practice typology either. However, these practices were found in a substantial number of sources and partially involved customers and other users. Thus, this theme is contributing to answering the research questions. The discussed research takes place mostly in R&D laboratories but also using innovation testbeds and incubators.

### 4.4.1 R&D laboratories

These R&D laboratories fulfil various functions in hospitality firms. 25hours Hotels’ Extra Hour Lab acts as a Think Tank (Article 22). Employees of various departments and various, international backgrounds collaborate in a purely hypothetical manner to imagine future innovations and start new company projects. As this is that starting step of the firm’s innovation process, not all ideas may be worked on or eventually realised.

Other firms go one step further and utilise their laboratories for actual service and product development. Starbucks’ sees its “Tryer Center [as] the company’s secret sandbox for every flavor of innovation, from product to process to store design.” (Blog 4). Creating a start-up-like environment, baristas are encouraged to materialise their ideas, from new beverages to proprietary machinery. Similarly, Zoku Hotels prototyped their hotel room during the development phase in a remote lab to perfect its design and functionality (Video 6).

Large firms with higher budgets build entire testing facilities for their brands, often located at the company headquarters. In replicated real-life environments, novel products or services can be tested in situ before perfection and deployment to the various business units. Marriott International’s Underground Innovation Lab is “a maze of rooms, each a perfect replica of where you will eventually drop your weary head after a day on the road” (Article 23).



#### 4.4.2 R&D testbeds

Three of the observed hospitality companies test proprietarily developed innovations in operational business units or dedicated facilities that are frequented by real customers. Those customers are often unaware that they are visiting a testbed site and contribute to the innovation process. Cava Group, an American restaurant chain, for example, converted one of their restaurants into a so-called ‘innovation kitchen’ to try out new technology, new menu design and new dishes in real-time (Article 40).

Marriott International operates a testbed internally known as ‘M Beta hotel’ which publicly trades under the Marriott brand. “Guests pay standard rates at this hotel and may not realize it’s in experimental mode until they arrive”. The hotel captures customer feedback live for example through “‘beta buttons’ and on iPads, ‘beta boards’—both instant-feedback apparatuses that allow customers to weigh in on every aspect of their stay.” (Article 26). Another hotel company’s CEO, Amar Lalvani of The Standard International, highlighted the advantages of using all hotels as testbeds in his statement:

We have a wonderful incubator [the hotels] of product, services or ideas because we have our guests for twenty-four hours a day. The idea of introducing new things to them, and us being a validator, is so interesting to me. (Article 34)

#### 4.4.3 R&D incubators

In order to leverage innovations made by stakeholders that are not employed by the firm, some hospitality companies embed incubators in their R&D strategy. Hilton International’s Chief Customer Officer, Jon Witter explains that “Hilton Innovation Gallery [is] a space for us to incubate, test, scale and showcase the products and processes.” (Article 15).

Marriott International operates its CANVAS project in Europe. Company outsiders can apply to the project to receive funding and support in further developing and trialling restaurant ideas. In order to achieve the best results, the company even changed its standard operating procedures for these newly conceived restaurants. “Positioned as incubator labs, these restaurants sit outside Marriott’s standard restaurant protocols in order to fully experiment with the design.” (Article 25). Once successful, these concepts are integrated into the firm’s hospitality offering and its entrepreneurial developers hired as operating managers.

# 5 Discussion

In the following, the empirical results will be discussed and analysed. The typology of human-centric innovation practices (Fuglsang, 2019) is guiding the discussion which highlights the main user co-innovation practices in hospitality. The analysis is to answer both research questions, with a focus on RQ1. In support, an overview of the actors involved in hospitality innovation practices is provided in Appendix E, an overview of beneficiaries of hospitality innovation practices in Appendix F. Subsequently in this chapter, other important innovation practices in hospitality are discussed. This analysis is also contributing to both research questions yet offers a focus on RQ2.

## 5.1 Individual human-centric innovation

### 5.1.1 Bricolage approach

According to Fuglsang (2019), it would have been expected to find that guests co-innovate with employees to solve a specific service problem under time and resource constraints. The data review, however, did not confirm this; while in the case of Amba Hotels, employees engage in co-innovation of services with customers, this is to build loyalty and enforce a strategic relationship. This is more in line with Sundbo and Gallouj (2000) who outline the strategic nature of FLE-driven innovations and Kim, Tang and Bosselman (2019) who outline that perceived innovativeness is associated with higher loyalty and firm performance. By tailoring their offer with resources at hand, Amba Hotels engage in a bricolage approach in corporate service entrepreneurship to directly create new value with guests, as per Salunke, Weerawardena and McColl-Kennedy (2013).

Furthermore, a service problem as the core frustration and driver of innovation can lead to entrepreneurial activity rather than user-inclusive innovations, thus opposing Fuglsang's (2019) typology. The founders of Airbnb recognised the lack of accommodation as an unmet need in the market, engaging in opportunistic entrepreneurship in a bricolage manner (Enz & Harrison, 2008). However, this may still be classified as an approach to human-centric innovation in a wider sense, as individual needs and experiences are taken as the sources of the innovation process (Feurstein et al., 2008).

### 5.1.2 System approach

The continuous exchange with customers and the personalisation of services is a strategic priority for hospitality firms, in line with Fuglsang's (2019) typology. At Dorchester Collection,

employees are incentivised to personalise services for guests. Whilst this is a short term cost, this aligns process innovations with service customisations, ultimately boosting overall performance by creating competitive advantages (Pralhad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Tweneboah-Koduah, Anning-Dorson & Nyamekye, 2020). By contacting guests prior arrival and adapting the entire service delivery chain to guests' needs, Amba Hotels is enhancing customer value, in line with Gomezelj (2016), by making the services more relevant to the various users (Fuglsang, 2019). This is further meeting customers' esteem needs, thus unlocking non-monetary value (Conley, 2017; Hutchins et al., 2019).

The research also showed that customers may engage in the innovation process through strategic advice or financial contributions. In Genius Foods' case, a customer offered funding and support with upscaling and commercialisation of the product. This can be seen as a case of crowdfunding, in line with Mollick and Robb (2016). Through the exchange of financial means, a conversation opened up that encouraged the user to contribute strategic advice to the inventor, thus driving the innovation process, as per Stanko and Henard (2016).

### 5.1.3 Systemic approach

Fuglsang (2019) outlined that users may be engaged in disputes about service standards and subsequently empowered to innovation. This is the case in hospitality. By convincing customers to sample new coffee offerings, they are involved in a strategic discussion about the quality of the beverage and standards of coffees available. These conversations aid the company in setting its service standards. On the one hand, these are conceived to meet a minimum level of customer satisfaction, but also unlock new value streams (Tweneboah-Koduah, Anning-Dorson & Nyamekye, 2020). In Soho House's case, these new value streams take shape in the diversification of the coffee specialities on offer. Moreover, the sampling in itself represents a hedonic service experience which in turn elevates the non-monetary value of the hospitality firm in general (Wu & Yang, 2018).

Leveraging customer complaints is another common and effective way to innovate through service standard disputes. For Dorchester Collection, this led to diversification and strengthening of their service propositions, as the complaints directed the firm's attention to the service elements that required innovation. Therefore the firm could channel their resources through co-innovation, reducing the time taken for innovation and increasing service quality (Santos-Vijande, López-Sánchez & Pascual-Fernández, 2018).

The data further showed that dissatisfaction is a principal driver for service innovation. In the case of CitizenM, the entrepreneur received complaints from his subordinates (users) and was thus made aware of unfulfilled demand in the market. As such, he could be described as an opportunistic user entrepreneur (Franke & Lüthje, 2020) that capitalises on a service opportunity (Enz & Harrison, 2008). BrewDog's founder James Watt, on the other hand, was dissatisfied himself with the current market offerings. While this is recognised in the literature, it is mostly outlined that dissatisfaction with the current workplace fuels entrepreneurship (Stephan, Drews & Hart, 2015). This dissatisfaction with the offered services in the market being the driver of entrepreneurship is hence a novel finding.

## 5.2 Group human-centric innovation

### 5.2.1 Bricolage approach

Hospitality companies are utilising internal users, in shape of their employees, to solve a specific problem. By selling novel beverages in their headquarters, Starbucks is collecting feedback from employees as potential customers. The company benefits from twofold input: specialised flavour feedback from coffee connoisseurs' trained taste buds and general market acceptance from untrained, administrative employees, increasing realizability as per Schweisfurth (2017). While this is not done 'on the go', this practice largely concords with Fuglsang's (2019) typology. Similarly, Marriott eliminates attributes of their room product that are harmful to their employees or time-consuming in the room's turnaround by previewing it to internal Housekeeping specialists. This is at odds with the literature which advocates for employees' best use in innovation during the idea development and launch phases (Melton & Hartline, 2010; Ottenbacher, 2007). Nonetheless, this is in line with manufacturing innovation literature that finds improved product quality and performance through employee involvement in development (Lee, Yang & Yu, 2001).

Moreover, one company outlined the importance of observations to innovation through problem-solving. By observing customer habits and needs, Dorchester Collection was able to streamline their services, offering an enhanced and innovated service to their guests. This is reflective of Brown's (2008) Design Thinking, as Dorchester Collection shaped their new service around guest needs and the economically feasible, thus solving a service issue (Barrett et al., 2015). However, this new service also led to a duplication of tasks, as both the Theatre Desk and Concierge were now in charge of restaurant reservations. This may cause confusion and disputes of authority. Therefore, it would have been sensible to include the respective line employees in the service innovation process, as suggested by Barrett et al. (2015) and Vargo, Wieland and Akaka (2015).

### 5.2.2 System approach

The travel service 'Blink' is co-planned and subsequently co-produced with the customers. Their input on the destination, the type of accommodation and other elements is indispensable to the service provision. This is a prime example of the definition of co-innovation in services innovation, as the input covers idea generation, pre-, during and post-service delivery (Baunsgaard & Clegg, 2015).

Hospitality firms engage a wide variety of actor groups in their co-innovation processes. Groups of users were, for example, engaging with hospitality professionals, strategists, academics, suppliers and other stakeholders when developing Jo&Joe or Zoku in line with Barrett et al.'s (2015) and Vargo, Wieland and Akaka's (2015) suggestions. This co-innovation approach is especially useful to hospitality companies during the concept development phase, as it allows the identification of users' higher-level needs and how to cater towards these with the overall

concept. This is at odds with Fuglsang's (2019) typology, as a set of services is innovated rather than just an individual one.

One analysed case sought to involve a wide group of users and external knowledge providers. In hosting a building and design competition, 21c Museum Hotels not only engaged in collaborative open innovation (Chesbrough, 2003) but introduced crowdsourcing to its innovation approach (Brabham, 2013). An open call to external users is posed to create value through external idea sourcing enabled by ICT (Egger, Gula & Walcher, 2016). However, it's purpose – the design of a new product – is at odds with the application suggested by the literature (Galdon-Salvador, Garrigos-Simon & Gil-Pechuan, 2016), as it is neither aiding operations, support services nor technological development.

### 5.2.3 Systemic approach

When developing common service standards and making them fit with other practices, hospitality companies use innovative approaches. Rather than just making the services fit with their other services on offer, they are motivated to make them fit with the lives of their target customers. User feedback is employed to shape a lifestyle rather than just a consumable service. Soho House, for example, created Soho Works to meet the basic needs of their customers, a physical yet social space to work. But the brand also employs the user insight to provide identity refreshment: an enhancement to their customer's lives that may inspire them (Conley, 2017). Thus, the company is generating non-monetary value for its customers which in turn drives loyalty (Hutchins et al., 2019). However, customers are also locked into around the clock usage of Soho House's facilities, through the restaurants, co-working, fitness and leisure facilities. These innovative services offer monetary value, driving company revenues and impact profitability (Hilman & Kaliappen, 2015; Sandvik, Duhan & Sandvik, 2014).

Standards are further set through customer complaint analysis. Lower limits of service standards, which may not be violated in order not to lose business, are set by understanding service deficiencies. However, in tourism, the absence of dissatisfaction does not produce satisfaction (Alegre & Garau, 2010). Therefore, companies employ further practices to gain user insight to shape standards that also drive value. Interviews and focus groups with curated communities are utilised by hospitality companies to shape their participatory service design. By curating these communities, companies also harness current trends such as fostering togetherness, as Roland Fasel of Janu outlined. This is meeting customers' belonging and esteem needs, thus generating non-monetary value (Conley, 2017; Maslow, 1943). Group-Systemic practices have thus a holistic approach to shape services in line with current customer sentiment, employing techniques such as cultural analysis, behavioural analysis and interviews. As disruptors (Soho House) and newly developed concepts (Janu), these companies are seen as very agile and able to exploit trends quickly by turning them into a competitive advantage (Anning-Dorson & Nyamekye, 2020). However, the high number of firms in this study focussing on the trend of 'community' (Soho House, Ennismore, Habitas, Life House, Zoku, CityHub, Jo&Joe, etc.) confirms that the first-mover benefit in hospitality is short-lived (Enz & Harrison, 2008) and quickly imitated (Ottenbacher & Harrington, 2007). However, this does not seem to diminish the attraction to introduce such radically different concepts, opposing Nieves & Diaz-Meneses (2018).

## 5.3 Collective human-centric innovation

### 5.3.1 Bricolage approach

Hospitality firms are engaged to recognise voices of users and thus change their service portfolio for benefit of a community. While in Fuglsang's (2019) original typology this alluded to a social community of the common good, in hospitality firms this is often a business community.

The use of data to recognise users' opinions is frequently drawn on in hospitality organisations. It both informs the innovation practice and improves the quality of the innovating output, which reflects the academic findings by Sigala, Rahimi and Thelwall (2019). Within the realm of data, the Internet and Social Media are tools used to readily highlight the voices of customers. Especially review sites in both quantitative and qualitative terms are drawn on to access customers' feedback. This is in line with Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) as well as Shaw, Bailey and Williams (2011) who outline that customers readily present their perception on market information online which shifts power to customers. However, brands now use this as a catalyst for innovation, as they may build on the wealth of readily available collective information, in line with Hall and Williams (2020). As such, Dorchester Collection is also accessing information about their competitors which catalyses their own innovations and outlines service strategies that should be avoided. On the other hand, Tapscott and Williams (2006) outline that customers will drive co-creation activities online. While they are known to shape the innovation process by freely expressing their wants, they do not proactively shape innovations. This is confirmed by Dorchester Collection's business practices of using AI to triangulate customers' expressions and wants online. This is a form of machine learning sentiment analysis. While Thelwall (2019) highlights this method as potentially replacing surveys and other forms of data gathering, Dorchester Collection uses these practices in complementarity. The purpose, however, is in line with the literature: solving service problems (Lisi & Esposito, 2015) and gaining competitive advantages (Thelwall, 2019). Nonetheless, the findings are partially at odds with Inanc–Demir and Kozak (2019), as only one of the observed companies engaged in AI analysis, rather than the majority of firms.

Ennismore employs an online user innovation community, Musings, to source ideas for innovations from a group of stakeholders, in line with Ogink and Dong (2017), but also to track society sentiment and trends. This can be seen as a form of inbound open innovation, as per Chesbrough (2003) and Brunswicker (2016). On the one hand, this allows Ennismore to gain an understanding of what changes in their service portfolio are important to their stakeholder communities, thus building monetary value for them. On the other hand, the firm is encouraging its internal community to provide mutual support and suggestions, thus co-innovating for the benefit of an internal community. Nonetheless this is at odds with Fuglsang (2019) who only recognises the benefit of innovation for an external user community.

Furthermore, some firms create an environment that engages customers in innovative co-creation exercises (Tapscott & Williams, 2006) such as Aloft. By making a virtual prototype of their new brand accessible online, they stipulated feedback from virtual guests and empowered

users to co-innovate their physical product (Santos-Vijande, López-Sánchez & Pascual-Fernández, 2018). Moreover, the virtual channel allowed the brand to directly engage with their target market, tech-savvy Millennials, which made the innovations relevant for this community of users, partially in line with Fuglsang's (2019) typology.

### 5.3.2 System approach

Users are engaged in voicing their opinions to authorities and other stakeholders for the good of a community. While hospitality firms engage in such actions, their motives can be multi-layered. BrewDog, for example, staged a public protest to change a 300-year-old law to allow smaller sizes of beer to be served in British pubs. This alludes to the government's role in adapting legislation and regulations to accommodate innovations (Hall, 2008). While this elevated consumer voices and changed a law for the common good, the company also engaged in this activity for marketing and sales purposes. Although marketing is commonly seen as a locus and source of innovation in the literature (Prabhu, 2014), firm innovativeness is positively associated perceived with customer value co-creation (Kim, Tang & Bosselman, 2019) and profitability (Hilman & Kaliappen, 2015). Therefore, this protest could be seen as a promotional innovation that improved brand image and thus customer value. BrewDog's strong beers were expected to sell better and at a higher price if served in smaller quantities. Users' voices are thus exploited to like the firms' invention with commercialisation (Enz & Harrison, 2008). As BrewDog was thus seen as more innovative and engaged, they could charge premiums for their beverages, in line with De La Peña et al. (2016). Moreover, by harnessing the evocation of multiple emotional responses in their customers (Wu & Gao, 2019), such as pride, gratitude and prestige, the company built non-monetary brand value and drove customer loyalty (Conley, 2017; Maslow, 1943).

### 5.3.3 Systemic approach

Service providers engage in agonistic development strategies for the common good in two manners: either meeting sustainability needs or by shaping business practices. Coinciding with McKenzie's (2004) definition of social sustainability, the Good Hotel Group engages local communities and authorities in innovation to produce life-enhancing conditions. This practice is a public-private collaboration for social purposes, as suggested by Mei, Arcodia and Ruhanen (2013). In this case, previously unemployed are given trainee- or apprenticeship so they are able to satisfy their basic needs and live a better life in the long run (Michelsen et al., 2016). On the one hand, the business ensures to all humans the meeting of basic needs by offering accommodation, food and drink, and on the other hand supports its employees in achieving higher-level goals, in agreement with Hutchins et al. (2019) as well as Wu and Yang (2018). Employees are given a feeling of self-worth (esteem) and belongingness through the job opportunity.

Hospitality firms are also innovating due to heightened environmental sustainability pressures. As such, British Airways is innovating with academic partners to reduce their ecological footprint. This thinking is in line with the World Commission on Environment and

Development's (1987) definition of sustainable development, as the firm is aiming to preserve future generations' ability to meet their own environmental and economic needs. Through academic cooperation, a discussion-based development strategy for the best solution possible is enabled, mirroring Fuglsang's (2018) definition of the Collective-Systemic approach.

Contrarily, BrewDog defends its stance as a non-collaborative company, declining ideas of cooperation and discussion. This is at odds with the definition of user-based service innovation (Sundbo & Toivonen, 2011) but not with human-centric innovation practices. As previously discussed, BrewDog produced innovations for the common good following a Collective-System practice. It thus fulfilled parts of Fuglsang's (2019) typology. This calls for a further distinction between user involvement in concept development and human-centric practices.

## 5.4 Research and Development

The typology of innovative practices of human-centric innovations is profoundly footed in the informal interplay and interaction of two or more people to innovate based on users' needs, knowledge and experiences. R&D practices that are commonly associated with more formal, non-interactive practices are hence disregarded. However, the data analysis showed that hospitality companies indeed engage in interactive R&D practices. These are tasked to innovate services based on internal or external user needs or experiences. These formalised R&D processes oppose the discussions in the literature (Battisti et al., 2015; Orfila-Sintes, Crespi-Cladera & Martínez-Ros, 2005) and can be distinguished into three research practices: in dedicated research laboratories, through testing in live, operational business units or through offering incubator spaces.

Research laboratories take many shapes in hospitality firms. The 'Think Tank' approach followed by 25hours Hotels and Starbucks where multiple employees from various departments and backgrounds come together is reported on favourably. This is in line with Battisti et al. (2015) who see intra-organisational collaboration as the main contributor to producing radical innovations, even though in these cases it occurs in a formalised R&D environment. Especially at Starbucks, this is confirmed, as employees are given free rein to invent novel machinery or test radical store redesigns. As these employees are also internal users, the realizability of these novel product or service innovations is increased (Schweisfurth, 2017). Thus, the risk and uncertainty of these radical innovations are reduced, increasing their attractiveness for the hospitality industry (Nieves & Diaz-Meneses, 2018). Moreover, these innovations are to facilitate employees' work practices or end-user experiences. Thus, they are developed based on human's needs and knowledge as the source of innovation, in line with Feurstein et al.'s (2008) definition of human-centric service innovation.

In many cases, users are still directly involved in formalised R&D practices. Following the testbed approach, Marriott and The Standard actively seek user feedback in real-life settings. The existence of Marriott's 'M Beta hotel' confirms Bessant and Tidd's (2015) findings that innovations are generally tested in the market and evaluated based on user perceptions. This may be seen as an addition to Fuglsang's (2019) typology which fits in between the Group-



System and Group-Systemic approaches, as users are encouraged to raise their voice in the co-planning of a service while making it fit with other practices. Moreover, the involvement of users in providing feedback is in line with Nelson and Winter (1977) and may be classified as coupled open innovation (West & Bogers, 2014) because the innovation is shaped through multiple feedback loops and retesting. Harnessing services' characteristic of increased customer interactivity (Randhawa & Scerri, 2015) and the eventual value creation through interactivity (Toivonen, 2016), these testbeds serve as a validator of firm's prior estimations of service value, as Amar Lalvani of The Standard International described (Article 34).

By offering incubator spaces, hospitality companies introduce external innovations to their operations. This is partially in line with Orfila-Sintes, Crespí-Cladera and Martínez-Ros (2005) as hospitality firms such as Marriott collaborate while incubating innovations. However, hospitality firms may also engage in proprietary R&D, opposing the aforementioned authors' views. As such, Marriott incubates innovative service concepts through their CANVAS programme but also has a propriety research laboratory in which new service concepts are conceived. This incubation activity may be seen as a form of inbound open innovation as per Brunswicker (2016). However, contrary to the knowledge sources identified in the literature (Brunswicker & Vanhaverbeke, 2015), Marriott builds on former employees' ideas and external inventors to provide innovative ideas. This draws a connection to human-centric innovation practices, as these former employees may act as internal or later on external users whose knowledge, external and internal to the organisation, as well as experiences form the source of the innovation process (Feurstein et al., 2008; Fuglsang, 2019).

## 6 Conclusion

This thesis aimed to highlight the innovation practices applied in the hospitality industry which primarily involve internal and external users. As such, an appropriation of the human-centric innovation practice typology was examined and used to analyse the data in light of the research question ‘*How do hospitality companies include users in the innovation process?*’.

When analysing the innovation practices of individual users, firm employees are found to co-innovate specific services with customers by personalising their experiences. Moreover, individual customers are contributing to the innovation process through their positive feedback and complaints, whether directed at industry professionals or external stakeholders. Subsequently, firms empower customers in the deliberation of service standards and engage in discussions to inform their innovation practices. Besides, some individual users are found to involve themselves financially or through strategic advice in the innovation process.

Groups of internal users (employee-customers) are found to predominately provide feedback during the innovation process. The involvement of groups of external customers is multifunctional. They may be used to provide feedback by highlighting deficiencies or validating changes or engage in the co-planning of service innovation, during conceptualisation or when planning the service execution. Moreover, they co-produce innovations or provide information through direct engagement. The highlighted ways of information collection are interviews, focus groups, observations and cultural analyses. Lastly, groups of customers may also establish new standards of service with firms, through complaints establishing a lower boundary and advice to allow growth and innovation. This growth materialises through new service conceptualisation which is often contributed to by other stakeholders. These may be prospective customers, designers, engineers and artisans, academics, suppliers and business partners, external communities and stakeholders, shareholder or firm management.

End-users as a collective are both involved in co-innovation of services and shaping of service standards for community or societal benefit. Customer feedback may be collected through in-person conversations, surveys, online or other research methods and analysed scientifically. The role of AI is elevated, as it bridges quantitative and qualitative data analysis. This may inform innovation practices and validate outcomes of concept development or co-innovation activities. Moreover, hospitality firms encourage customers to gather in communities or as the public to raise their voices for societal benefit. On a business level, this may shape service operations and standards or on a global level, as reflected through consumer behaviour trends and promote sustainability.

The thesis further contributed an analysis of other hospitality innovation practices that are not necessarily human-centric, in response to the research question ‘*What methods are applied to develop innovations?*’. As such, R&D is found to play a critical role in hospitality innovation strategies. They are carried out by hospitality firms themselves in laboratories, testbeds or

incubator spaces, opposing the previous discussion in the literature. Both MNEs and SMEs are engaging in proprietary R&D to produce radical product and service innovations. In most cases, these R&D activities are based on human needs and knowledge obtained through employee or customer feedback. Henceforth, hospitality R&D practices are in line with human-centric innovation theory and may add to Fuglsang's (2019) typology.

## 6.1 Contribution of the study

This study's key empirical contribution is providing an overview of user-inclusive, human-centric innovation practices in the European and American hospitality industries. On a theoretical level, the thesis' main contribution is the explanation of the strengths and shortcomings of Fuglsang's (2019) typology of human-centric innovation practices by applying it to the private sector. The framework is applicable to the hospitality industries as it captures both external and internal user's involvement. Moreover, an emphasis is placed on co-planning and co-production, hence co-innovation in line with the definition of user-based service innovation (Sundbo & Toivonen, 2011). This is particularly reflected during concept development and product design stages of innovation which represents a new finding to the literature. However, this is at odds with the initial typology, as not just a single but multiple services or processes are innovated.

Deficiencies in the application of the framework are recognised in the bricolage approaches across all levels. The data did not provide any direct accounts of co-innovation practices on the spot under time and resource constraints (individual level) and problem-solving practices with users on the go (group level). Moreover, on the collective level, the typology identifies a community as the beneficiary of innovation. In hospitality, this is mostly a business (customer) or internal (stakeholder/employee) community whereas the theory alludes to local, non-commercial communities. Thirdly, user collaboration is outlined to be a prerequisite for innovations for the common good. The case of BrewDog, however, challenges this view; innovations for the common good are recognised to be produced by entrepreneurs without the collaboration of the firm with a collective, broadening the definition of Individual-Systemic practices.

This study further contributed several new findings to the typology of human-centric innovation practices and hospitality innovation literature at large. Firstly, on the individual level, the discussion of the human-centric innovation is enriched by the notion of entrepreneurship. These innovators are understood to take individuals' needs and experiences as the source of innovation and found their own enterprise either after solving a service problem on the spot (Bricolage approach, cf. Airbnb). Moreover, it was shown that hospitality organisations indeed engage in propriety R&D activities that are mostly based on user needs or experiences. Thus, this adds an additional non-user involving base level to the human-centric innovation practice typology. Moreover, building on the testbed R&D approach, users raise their voice in the co-planning of services while making them fit with other practices. As such, this practice bridges the Group-System and Group-Systemic approaches and enhances Fuglsang's (2019) typology. Further adding to the Group-Systemic approach, hospitality service innovations aim at making new

services fit with the lives and demands of their targeted customers, further broadening the scope of innovation. Prior discussion also showed that on the collective level, hospitality firms sometimes innovate purely for internal communities, either employees, internal users or stakeholders. This is a new finding under the human-centric innovation practices and enriches Fuglsang's (2019) typology. Summing up the theoretical contribution of this thesis, a revised depiction of the typology of innovative practices in human-centric innovations including all aforementioned changes and additions can be found in Appendix G.

## 6.2 Practical implications

Hospitality professionals may take several learnings from this thesis. Firstly, innovation practices do not have to be directed at producing monetary value. Generating non-monetary may be more beneficial in the long run. By basing their innovation endeavours on users' needs and exploiting their knowledge and experience, firms may cater to customers' higher-level needs, building loyalty and being perceived as 'good' and innovative. As such, they can charge premiums for their products and services, whether newly conceived or established and can establish competitive advantages.

Furthermore, this study may remind professionals that formal R&D activities are applicable to the hospitality industry. However, these do not need to follow traditional laboratory settings. This thesis presents several, novel alternatives, such as Think Tanks, incubation spaces, testbeds as well as digital solutions such as Online User Innovation Communities. These can contribute novel service solutions or aid in adapting learnings from external sources and industries.

Lastly, customers are key to hospitality innovation. Their involvement in all stages of the innovation process and at all levels of scale are proven useful by this thesis. They may act as sources of innovation, strategic co-planners, provide feedback, engage in the active co-production of innovative products and services and join firms in internal and public debates. While they may be grouped on several levels, it is found that the bigger the group of customers involved in the innovation process, the larger scale the outcome is. Involving a collective of end-users often results in an impact on a community of stakeholders or the public.

## 6.3 Limitations of the study and future research

This study innately bears several limitations. First of all, its results are specific to the context of the data and region. The ability to generalise the findings is limited. As the study is regionally bound in Western cultures, the outcomes may be different in other regional settings. Moreover, behavioural and market trends may differ. Decreased generalisability may also be influenced by a potential directional bias introduced by the applied method of analysis. An overemphasis on the human-centric innovation practice typology may have led to the partial ignorance of the contextual aspects of the phenomenon in question.

Additionally, limitations of the applied data, outlined in chapter 3.1.3, may have influenced the results of the study. While the analysis of secondary data presents global trends, the sensationalistic nature of news articles may have introduced bias. Moreover, the non-randomised sampling approach may have influenced the study. Furthermore, the aforementioned lack of individual- and group-level practices in the empirical analysis might be caused by an issue with the data sources, as both practices are FLE-led. This study did not include direct accounts given by FLEs but only used secondary sources reporting a managerial point of view which may have introduced bias. For these reasons, it is suggested to reconfirm the findings of the study using primary data.

A separate study on SMEs and entrepreneurs is advised, as these were underrepresented in this thesis. The outcomes of this study were general and not broken down by firm size. For these reasons, the impact of innovation practices on SMEs or purely regional firms may be different. The scale of these effects has also not been determined in this study and may be the topic of another analysis.

Future research is recommended to further investigate formal R&D activities in hospitality firms, as this study found them to be heavily utilised, opposing the current literature. It would be of benefit to understand the exact practices used, the direction of innovation activity and the scale of such innovations. The outcomes of R&D activities investigated in this study were newly conceived services and radically new concept developments. However, as some companies build on Think Tanks and extensive user feedback mechanisms, hospitality R&D ventures may probably produce incremental service upgrades as well. Another area of topical investigation is the involvement of local structures in the hospitality innovation processes. Several companies emphasised the importance of tapping into the local vernacular as a pervasive trend. As such, the drivers, practices and outcomes of innovation with and for other local entities is to be understood. These may be economic structures, such as rival- or non-rival firms, or non-economic structures, such as local interest groups, neighbours or the city as a public space.

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# Appendix A: Overview of sample

Table A.1: Overview of sample

Category	Label	Title	Publication	Company (Brand)	Company Classification <sup>2</sup>	Hospitality Classification <sup>3</sup>	Region <sup>4</sup>	Year
Article	Article 1	'Second Life' gets first look at new hotel chain (Girard, 2016)	Cnet	Marriott (Aloft)	MNE	Hotel (Upscale)	US	2006
	Article 2	A Boutique Hotelier's Perspective on Co-Working and the Future of Hospitality (Ting, 2018)	Skift	Ennismore	SME	Hotel (Upper Upscale)	EU	2018
	Article 3	Above all, design has to be comfortable says Soho House founder Nick Jones (Fairs, 2016)	Dezeen	Soho House	MNE	Members Club	EU	2016
	Article 4	AccorHotels challenges Airbnb with new Jo&Joe brand (Doggrell, 2016)	Hotel Management	Accor (Jo&Joe)	MNE	Hotel (Economy)	EU	2016

<sup>2</sup> Company classification is based on the European Commission's (2020) definition of firm size classifications

<sup>3</sup> Hospitality classification is based on STR Global's (2018) scales of hotel chains

STR's chain scale hotel classification includes (in hierarchical order, from top to bottom): Luxury, Upper Upscale, Upscale, Upper Midscale, Midscale, Economy and Independent (the latter being non-ranked); hotels are grouped primarily according to actual average room rates but higher scale businesses are associated with higher levels of service provision

<sup>4</sup> Regional abbreviations: Europe (EU), United States of America (US)

Article 5	CEO Talks: Nick Jones of Soho House (Ap, 2019)	Women's Wear Daily	Soho House	MNE	Members Club	EU	2019
Article 6	ClassPass For Flights? This Startup Wants You To Buy 1-Way Trips Like Gym Classes (Walmsley, 2019)	Forbes	SkyHi	SME	Tour Operator	US	2019
Article 7	Coffee In Fine Style At Soho House (Tomlinson, 2017)	Sprudge	Soho House	MNE	Members Club	EU	2017
Article 8	Compass: Habitas Tulum, a Hotel for the Burning Man Set (Tauer, 2017)	Women's Wear Daily	Habitas	SME	Members Club	US	2017
Article 9	Domino's opens 'Innovation Garage' to test technology (Fantozzi, 2019)	National Restaurant News	Domino's	MNE	Restaurant	US	2019
Article 10	Europe's Hip 25hours Hotels Injects Storytelling Into Business Travel (Oates, 2014)	Skift	25hours Hotels	SME	Hotel (Upscale)	EU	2014
Article 11	Everyone Says They Listen to Their Customers—Here's How to Really Do It (Brant, 2015)	Harvard Business Review	Dorchester Collection	MNE	Hotel (Luxury)	EU	2015
Article 12	Exotic fruit and meat alternatives to fill plates in 2020, finds New Covent Garden Market report (Jenkins, 2020)	The Caterer	New Covent Garden Market traders	SME	Food Supplier	EU	2020
Article 13	Five minutes with... Keith Edwards of Soho House Group (Eversham, 2018)	Hospitality & Catering News	Soho House	MNE	Members Club	EU	2018



Article 14 Floating hotel aims to help London's long-term unemployed (Shackle, 2017)	Deutsche Welle	Good Hotel Group	SME	Hotel (Midscale)	EU	2017
Article 15 Hilton Launches Innovation Gallery (Kostuch Media Ltd., 2017)	Hotelier Magazine	Hilton	MNE	Hotel	US	2017
Article 16 How AccorHotels' JO&JOE Enhances Travel Experiences (2018)	HospitalityNet	Accor (Jo&Joe)	MNE	Hotel (Economy)	EU	2018
Article 17 How Deliveroo et al are delivering change as ordering apps serve up the future of food (Faull, 2020)	The Drum	Deliveroo	MNE	Food Delivery	EU	2020
Article 18 How Our Hotel Chain Uses Data to Find Problems and Humans to Fix Them (Brant, 2018)	Harvard Business Review	Dorchester Collection	MNE	Hotel (Luxury)	EU	2018
Article 19 How Our Hotel Used Data to Make Our Laundry Service Glamorous (Brant, 2017)	Harvard Business Review	Dorchester Collection	MNE	Hotel (Luxury)	EU	2017
Article 20 How The Habitas Brand Is Changing The Way We Travel (Villa-Clarke, 2018)	Forbes	Habitas	SME	Members Club	US	2018
Article 21 How the world's most luxury hotel group is celebrating the 'art of connection' (Mulkerrins, 2020)	The Telegraph	Aman (Janu)	MNE	Hotel (Luxury)	EU	2020
Article 22 Innovative Konzepte statt Standard (Grothe, 2019)	Gastgewerbe Magazin	25hours Hotels	SME	Hotel (Upscale)	EU	2019

Article 23 Inside the secret laboratory where Marriott is cooking up the hotel of the future (Locker, 2019)	Fast Company	Marriott	MNE	Hotel	US	2019
Article 24 Introducing Life House, The First Silicon Valley-Backed Hotel Company In The U.S. (Binlot, 2018)	Forbes	Life House	SME	Hotel (Upper Midscale)	US	2018
Article 25 Marriott Europe's CANVAS Project - Millennial F&B Incubator Programme (2016)	HospitalityNet	Marriott	MNE	Hotel	US	2016
Article 26 Marriott Is Preparing For Gen Z With An Innovation Lab Hotel (Segran, 2016)	Fast Company	Marriott	MNE	Hotel	US	2016
Article 27 Measuring product lifecycle and witnessing innovation in social media (2019)	Hospitality & Catering News	n/a	n/a	n/a	EU	2019
Article 28 Meet the owners: Olivia Byrne of Eccleston Square Hotel, London, UK (Salas, 2012)	Boutique Hotel News	Eccleston Square Hotel	SME	Hotel (Upscale)	EU	2012
Article 29 Molecular gastronomy and beyond (Godsmark, 2010)	The Caterer	n/a	n/a	n/a	EU	2010
Article 30 Nick Jones' 10-Year Journey To Open Soho House Hong Kong (Banks, 2019)	HighSnobiety	Soho House	MNE	Members Club	EU	2019
Article 31 Restaurant by design: how Leon's in-house team is using design to grow the brand (Mortimer, 2015)	The Drum	Leon	SME	Restaurant	EU	2015
Article 32 Soho House, Explained (Burton, 2017)	Eater	Soho House	MNE	Members Club	EU	2017

Article 33 Soho House's Nick Jones on the new era for the private members club to White City and beyond (Curtis, 2018)	London Evening Standard	Soho House	MNE	Members Club	EU	2018
Article 34 Standard International's CEO On The Future Of Hospitality (High, 2016)	Forbes	The Standard	MNE	Hotel (Upper Upscale)	US	2016
Article 35 Starbucks is speeding up innovation at its Seattle research hub (Rogers, 2019)	CNBC	Starbucks	MNE	Café	US	2019
Article 36 The Best Luxury Services Are Customized, Not Standardized (Brant, 2016)	Harvard Business Review	Dorchester Collection	MNE	Hotel (Luxury)	EU	2016
Article 37 The Hoxton Hotel officially enters the co-working space with new brand (Faull, 2019)	The Drum	Ennismore (Working_From)	SME	Hotel (Upper Upscale)	EU	2019
Article 38 This Company Will Create a Custom Pop-Up Hotel for You Anywhere in the World (Malacoff, 2017)	Brit + Co	Black Tomato (Blink)	SME	Tour Operator	EU	2017
Article 39 Virgin Atlantic Builds an Igloo on a Deck at Heathrow — Airline Innovation Report (Sumers, 2017)	Skift	Virgin Atlantic	MNE	Airline	EU	2017
Article 40 What's cooking: An inside look at Cava's new innovation kitchen (Beckett & Littman, 2019)	Restaurant Dive	Cava	Large enterprise	Restaurant	US	2019
Article 41 Why Fifteen Cornwall is a social enterprise success (Meneer, 2011)	The Guardian	Fifteen Cornwall	SME	Restaurant	EU	2011

Blog	Blog 1	21c Museum Hotels and GE Appliances' FirstBuild Join Forces to Create The Hotel Room of the Future (2017)	21c Museum Hotels Blog	Accor (21c Museum Hotels)	MNE	Hotel (Upper Upscale)	US	2017
	Blog 2	Brew Dog's disruptive innovation strategy (2015)	DNA People	BrewDog	MNE	Brewery / Restaurant	UK	2015
	Blog 3	Domino's® to Open New Workspace Dedicated to Collaborative Innovation (PRNewswire, 2019)	Domino's Blog	Domino's	MNE	Restaurant	US	2019
	Blog 4	Inside the Tryer Center, the Starbucks lab where anything is possible (Warnick, 2019)	Starbucks Stories	Starbucks	MNE	Café	US	2019
	Blog 5	Marten Dresen: a go-getting social entrepreneur forging new paths to fight poverty (Lee, 2019)	Advance	Good Hotel Group	SME	Hotel (Midscale)	EU	2019
Book	Book 1	Business for Punks (Watt, 2015)	Penguin Random House	BrewDog	MNE	Brewery / Restaurant	EU	2015
	Book 2	Peak (Conley, 2017)	Wiley	Joie de Vivre Hotels	MNE	Hotel (Upper Upscale)	US	2017
Podcast	Podcast 1	Interview: British Airways CEO Alex Cruz (The Airline Weekly Lounge Podcast, 2019)	Skift Airline Weekly Lounge	British Airways	MNE	Airline	EU	2019
	Podcast 2	Pop-In Call #6: The Hotel as a Community w/ The Hoxton's Philippa Wagner (Matusek, 2020)	Co-matter	Ennismore	SME	Hotel	EU	2020

Video	Video 1	A winning recipe for innovation   Lucinda Bruce-Gardyne   TEDx Talks TEDxGlasgow (TEDx Talks, 2018)	TEDx Talks (YouTube)	Genius Foods Ltd.	SME	Food Supplier	EU	2018
	Video 2	Black Tomato's Tom Marchant on Blink & Get Lost (Independent Lodging Congress, 2017)	Independent Lodging Congress (YouTube)	Black Tomato	SME	Tour Operator	EU	2017
	Video 3	citizenM is Revolutionizing Hospitality - Luxury Accommodations, Affordable Price [PSFK 2015] (PSFK Originals, 2015)	PSFK Originals (YouTube)	CitizenM	SME	Hotel (Upscale)	EU	2015
	Video 4	Interview: Sem Schuurkes, CityHub (BoHoSummit, 2017)	BoHoSummit (YouTube)	CityHub	SME	Hotel (Economy)	EU	2017
	Video 5	Is Home-Sharing Reaching its Peak?   Stanley Fourteau   YHS Virtual 2020 (YHS Global, 2020a)	YHS Global (YouTube)	Airbnb	MNE	Online platform for local homes rental	US	2020
	Video 6	The Future of Hotel Concepts   Hans Meyer   YHS Virtual 2020 (YHS Global, 2020b)	YHS Global (YouTube)	Zoku	SME	Hotel (Upper Upscale)	EU	2020
	Video 7	The value of technology and innovation in hotel management at glh. (glh., 2015)	glh. (YouTube)	Glh Hotels (Amba Hotels)	Large enterprise	Hotel (Upscale)	EU	2015

# Appendix B: Hierarchy of codes

Table B.1: Hierarchy of codes, with relevant counts

Category Subcategory – Code	# of coded text passages	# of source materials coded
Human-centric innovation practices		
Individual		
– Bricolage	10	9
– System	4	3
– Systemic	6	6
Group		
– Bricolage	7	6
– System	13	11
– Systemic	13	9
Collective		
– Bricolage	31	16
– System	6	4
– Systemic	16	11
Research & Development		
– Incubator	3	2
– Lab	15	9
– Testbed	5	4
Trends & Drivers		
– Customer interaction & emotion	25	17
– Local connection	16	16
– Psychographic community	10	9
– Technology	14	10
Sustainability		
– Social Sustainability	7	6

# Appendix C: Concept map of codes

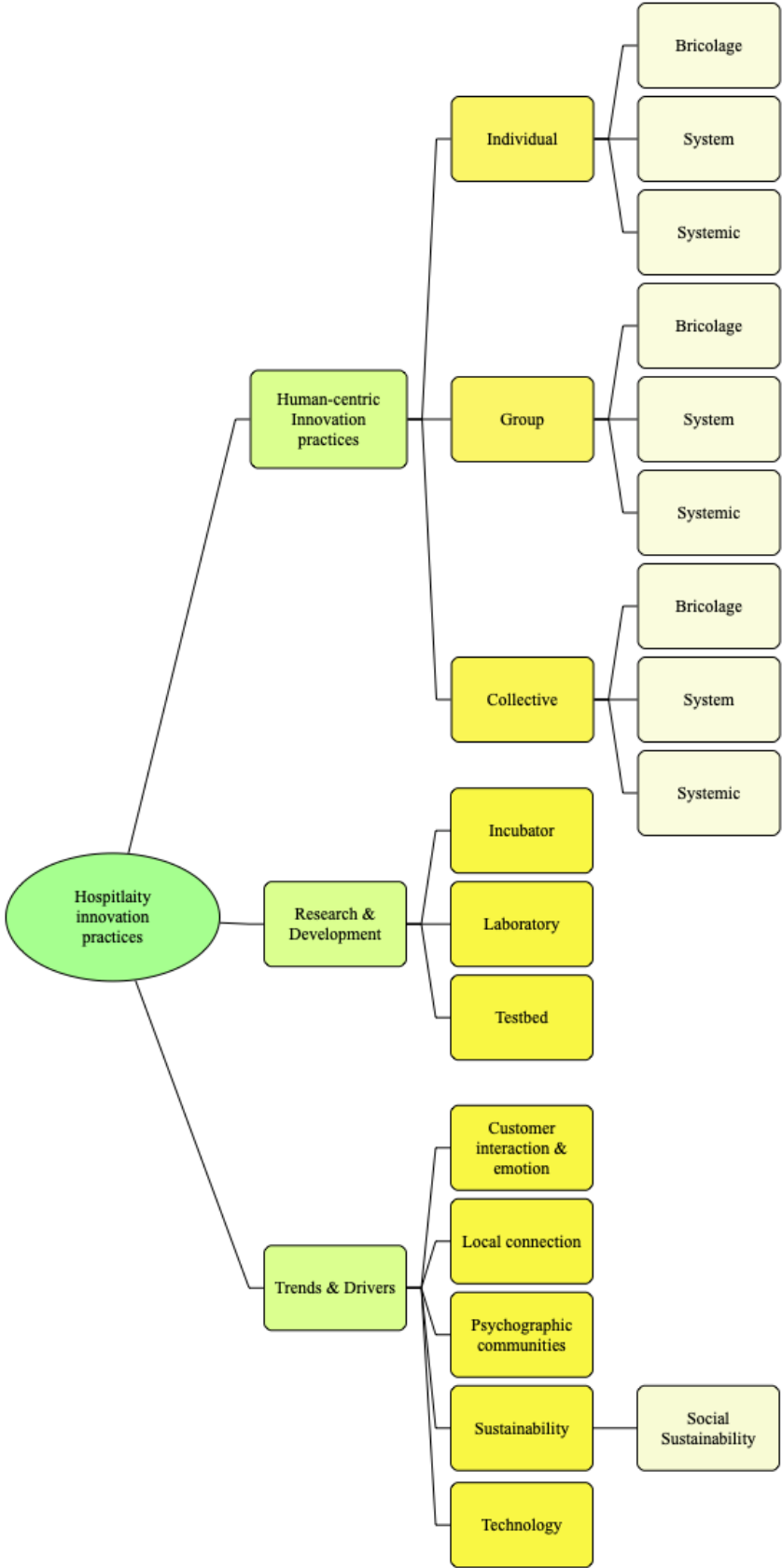


Figure C.1: Visual representation of the hierarchy of categories, subcategories and codes

# Appendix D: Audit protocol

The below audit protocol details the steps followed to analyse the data in this study.

1. Data collection
2. Data categorization
  - By type of source material
  - By source market
3. AI-supported transcription
4. Verification & correction of transcripts
5. Setting up preliminary codes in NVivo
6. Import data to NVivo
7. Read through data
8. Coding the data:
  - Assign preliminary codes
  - Assign new, natural codes to important passages
9. Sight new codes & verify suitability in categorical context
10. Re-code unsuitable passages
11. Group & classify codes
  - Into themes
  - Into descriptions of phenomena
12. Interrelate themes and descriptions, build a hierarchy of categories
13. Re-read data to establish
  - Completeness of codes
  - Point of saturation
14. Interpret the meaning of categories, themes and descriptions; report findings



# Appendix E: Classification of principal actors

Table E.1: Classification of principal actors involved in innovation practices in an academic context  
Findings opposing the current academic discussion are marked with an Asterix\*

Role Actor	(Co-) Innovator	Informant – Ideas	Informant – Strategic	Informant – Feedback	Agonistic Discussant
Entrepreneurs	Start-Ups, eg. <i>CityHub</i> (Enz & Harrison, 2008)				Creating a legal framework, eg. <i>Airbnb</i> <b>(Fuglsang, 2019)</b>
Employees – operational	Personalise & innovate, eg. <i>Amba Hotels</i> (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Tweneboah-Koduah, Anning-Dorson & Nyamekye, 2020)			Virtual and physical testing of innovations, eg. <i>Starbucks</i> (Santos-Vijande, López-Sánchez & Pascual-Fernández, 2018)	
Employees – strategic and managerial	Corporate Innovation Labs, eg. <i>Marriott</i> (Johne & Storey, 1998; Orfila-Sintes, Crespí-Cladera & Martínez-Ros, 2005)*		Corporate guidance, eg. Concept development, eg. <i>Janu / CitizenM</i> (Kuester et al., 2013)		Challenging conditions that create negative externalities, eg. <i>BrewDog</i> <b>(Fuglsang, 2019)</b>
Customers – existing	Co-innovation of new services, eg. <i>Blink</i> (Baunsgaard & Clegg, 2015)	Inform about trends and fuel innovation, eg. <i>Zoku</i> (Anning-Dorson & Nyamekye, 2020)	Strategic and financial advice, eg. <i>Genius Foods</i> (Mollick & Robb, 2016; Stanko & Henard, 2016)	Preview innovations, eg. <i>Marriott</i> (West & Bogers, 2014)	

<i>Customers – prospective</i>		Track society sentiment, eg. <i>Ennismore</i> (Ogink & Dong, 2017)	Preview innovations, eg. <i>Marriott</i> (West & Bogers, 2014)
<i>External stakeholders</i>		Joint concept development, eg. <i>Jo&amp;Joe</i> (Barrett et al., 2015; Vargo, Wieland & Akaka, 2015)	Co-planning of innovation, eg. <i>Zoku</i> (Barrett et al., 2015; Vargo, Wieland & Akaka, 2015)
<i>External inventors</i>	Incubation of externally developed innovations, eg. <i>Marriott</i> (Brunswicker, 2016; Chesbrough, 2003)	Ideas from other industries, eg. <i>Zoku</i> (Nieves & Diaz-Meneses, 2018)*	Contest to produce new ideas, eg. <i>21c Museum Hotels</i> (Brabham, 2013)
<i>Authorities</i>		Offer innovation guidance for the common good, eg. <i>Good Hotel Group</i> (Mei, Arcodia & Ruhanen, 2013)	Adapt legislation to fit innovations, eg. <i>BrewDog / Airbnb</i> (Hall, 2008)

Various sets of actors were found to be involved in hospitality innovation practices: three types of firm representatives (entrepreneurs, operational employees, managerial employees), two types of customers (existing and prospective) and three types of external stakeholders (authorities, external inventors and other external stakeholders). This is both in line with Fuglsang's (2019) typology of human-centric innovation practices as a widening set of actors is included across the various practices which reflected in the individual discussions. Moreover, this answers to Vargo, Wieland and Akaka's (2015) call for a wider set of actors including management, employees and end-users to be involved in the innovation process per se. Additionally, the cooperation with legal authorities is in line with using institutional information as innovation sources, as suggested by Nieves and Diaz-Meneses (2018). However,

these authors also suggested that hospitality firms draw on either local non-complementary or non-local complementary companies as innovation sources. This research is not agreement, as Zoku, for example, drew on H&M or Zara (non-local, non-complementary) and Marriott draw on local restaurants and cafés (local, complementary) as innovation sources in their M Beta hotel. An overview of all actors with their roles in an academic context is provided in Table E.1.

Functionally, these actors adopt co-innovation, informing or discussing roles. The co-innovation was discussed at large in previous chapters, as this builds the basis of any human-centric innovation practice (Feurstein et al., 2008; Fuglsang, 2019). Considering collection information from customers for innovation purposes, this broadly follows the academic discussion of user innovation through user feedback mechanisms (Nelson & Winter, 1977) and co-producing user-based service innovations by acquired through knowledge of user needs (Sundbo & Toivonen, 2011). Even though a large amount of customer information is gathered through online and social media, in line with Shaw, Bailey and Williams (2011), hospitality firms continue to utilise other qualitative research methods, such as interviews, focus groups or ethnography.

# Appendix F: Classification of beneficiaries

Table F.1: Typology of hospitality innovation beneficiaries in an academic context  
Findings opposing the current academic discussion are marked with an Asterix

<p>For innovators:</p> <p>Solve own problems, fulfil own wants eg. CityHub, BrewDog <u>but</u>: may inherently bear monetary motivation (Feurstein et al., 2008; Fuglsang, 2019)</p> <p>Solve problems of a close relation eg. Genius Foods (Feurstein et al., 2008)</p>	<p>For society:</p> <p>Solve societal problems eg. Airbnb (lack of accommodation) (Fuglsang, 2019)</p> <p>Ensure environmental sustainability eg. British Airways (Fuglsang, 2018; Michelsen et al., 2016)</p> <p>Benefit the socially disadvantaged eg. Good Hotel Group, Fifteen (Hutchins et al., 2019; Michelsen et al., 2016)</p> <p>Ensure public wellbeing eg. BrewDog (smaller pint size) <u>but</u>: may inherently bear monetary motivation (Fuglsang, 2019; Prabhu, 2014)</p>
<p>For customers (monetary value):</p> <p>Personalised service provision eg. Amba Hotels (Salunke, Weerawardena &amp; McColl-Kennedy, 2013)</p> <p>Increasing service quality eg. Dorchester Collection (Santos-Vijande, López-Sánchez &amp; Pascual-Fernández, 2018)</p> <p>Eliminate customer dissatisfaction, eg. Zoku, The Standard, Marriott (Santos-Vijande, López-Sánchez &amp; Pascual-Fernández, 2018)</p> <p>Meet expectations and wants by leveraging current trends eg. Jo&amp;Joe, Janu (Anning-Dorson &amp; Nyamekye, 2020)</p>	<p>For communities:</p> <p>Enrich local communities' lives eg. Zoku, Joie De Vivre (Conley, 2017; McKenzie, 2004)</p> <p>Facilitate work-life of team members eg. Marriott (Fuglsang, 2019)*</p> <p>Foster mutual support within internal communities, eg. Ennismore (Fuglsang, 2019)*</p> <p>Meet needs and wants of an internal community, eg. Soho House <u>but</u>: may inherently bear monetary motivation (Hilman &amp; Kaliappen, 2015; Hutchins et al., 2019)</p> <p>Meet needs and wants of an external community, eg. CitizenM <u>but</u>: may inherently bear monetary motivation (Fuglsang, 2019; Hilman &amp; Kaliappen, 2015)</p>
<p><u>Overall focus</u>: Innovate by learning from humans to meet 'current' needs to generate monetary value (Feurstein et al., 2008; Michelsen et al., 2016; Prahalad &amp; Ramaswamy, 2004)</p>	

Several different beneficiaries benefit from the produced innovations, as outlined in Table F.1. A main group of beneficiaries is the innovators themselves as well as their close relations. This group creates benefits by solving problems of close relations and themselves in a bricolage practice (Fuglsang, 2019), as discussed in subchapter 5.2.1. This approach, taking individual needs and experiences as the sources of the innovation process, is a type of human-centric innovation (Feurstein et al., 2008). As such, the primary intention is to create non-monetary value by eliminating negative circumstances (problems) and improve the quality of life of certain individuals. Over time, this may also benefit the society at large, as in Genius Foods' case: initially, the innovation solved the problem of innovator's son, but over time offered soft gluten-free bread loaves to everyone. The inherent monetary value generated for the innovator is a negligible motivator in this scenario.

Societies as the collective of potential customers and stakeholders are benefitting from hospitality innovations that were produced for the common good, whether intentionally or not. This is mostly in line with Fuglsang's (2018, 2019) typology. Airbnb's business concept, for example, solved the local, societal problems of lacking accommodation space and a missing local connection of accommodation providers. This novel concept is harnessing the wide reach of the Internet and thus readily available to the public. British Airways is innovating for the common good alike: by innovating environmentally-friendly solutions, they are improving the livelihood of the current generation and generations to come, in line with Michelsen et al. (2016). BrewDog proposes health benefits to the public, by enabling a law change to offer smaller beverage serving sizes. However, their motivation behind the innovation was at least partially driven by a marketing endeavour and the will to increase the monetary value of their products, in line with Prabhu (2014). Hence, not all hospitality innovations that contribute to the common good were produced for purely altruistic motives. However, on the other hand, some innovative companies were built as a social enterprise to give back to society. The Good Hotel Group's founder innovated the hotel concept to satisfy the basic needs of his previously underprivileged workers, unlock their self-actualisation needs and ultimately aid them in living a fulfilled life, in line with Hutchins et al. (2019) and Michelsen et al. (2016).

Communities may be found at the receiving end of hospitality innovations as well. Zoku's involvement of the local community by offering its space to them and hosting activities, the company is creating life-enhancing conditions for the local community, in line with McKenzie (2004). Networking opportunities help sustain the community in the long run by building economic benefits, while the social element introduces non-economic benefits. Thus, the community's belongingness needs are catered to and non-monetary value for them is created (Conley, 2017). Furthermore, Marriott is innovating for a group benefit, particularly their employees. The aim is to ease their daily work life. While Fuglsang (2019) a group of users as the beneficiary of innovative practices in his typology, this alludes to external users (customers). Here, the findings are at odds with this definition, as the practice benefits internal users. Similarly, Ennismore is encouraging its internal Musings community to provide mutual support and suggestions, thus innovation for the benefit of an internal community. Fuglsang (2019) only recognises the benefit of innovation for an external user community. On the other hand, these internal communities may also be comprised of users, as in Soho House's case. The company is innovating to meet the needs and wants of these users, such as by providing SohoWorks as the demanded co-working solution of the firm. This unlocks non-monetary value by catering towards psychological and self-fulfilment needs, in line with Hutchins et al. (2019),

but also drives revenues and profitability by creating new opportunities for monetary value through process innovation, in line with Hilman and Kaliappen (2015). This is also reflected in CitizenM's case whose concept was developed for an external community of users. By benefitting an external community of users, CitizenM's approach is in line with Fuglsang (2019).

Ultimately, the majority of hospitality innovations are commissioned to benefit customers. Overall, by increasing their satisfaction and thus driving customer loyalty, the guest has an elevated service experience and the innovative company takes financial merits. Amba Hotels achieves this by focusing on personalisation. Through a corporate service entrepreneurship approach, empowering employees to engage with customers and personalise the service at all levels, new value is created with guests, in line with Salunke, Weerawardena and McColl-Kennedy (2013). Co-innovation practices can drive the value creation for customers and firm, in line with Santos-Vijande, López-Sánchez and Pascual-Fernández (2018), which are found to be applied in two ways. By listening to customer feedback and subsequently improving services, Dorchester Collection is closing the gap in services and meeting customer needs. Companies such as The Standard or Marriott specifically tackle customer dissatisfactions. By leveraging customer complaints, problems can be solved, in turn lowering dissatisfaction levels and fully meeting customer needs. Moreover, especially by building on current trends and early adopter benefits, innovative hospitality firms can transform trends into competitive advantages and meet ever-changing customer wants and expectations, in line with Anning-Dorson and Nyamekye (2020). This offers firms a unique value proposition and customer that embody these new trends a way to meet their novel wants.

Overall, innovations in the hospitality industry benefit its recipients in two ways. On the one hand, the relevant needs of the individual customer, groups of customers, employee communities or society at large are to be met. For such, individual and/or collective knowledge, needs and experiences are used as the sources of the innovation process. This is a reflection of human-centric innovation, as per Feurstein et al. (2008) and incorporating ideas from Social Sustainability by meeting the needs (economic and non-economic) of all affected humans in the long term, in line with Michelsen et al. (2016). On the other hand, hospitality companies are businesses that engage in innovation to co-create value with customers, as per Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) building on the characteristics of service, especially customer interactivity and simultaneity between consumption and production (Randhawa & Scerri, 2015). This innovation and value-creation ultimately are associated with firm profitability (Sandvik, Duhan & Sandvik, 2014), underlining the economic drivers of firm innovation practices.

# Appendix G: Revised framework

Table G.1: Adaption of Fuglsang's (2019) typology of innovative practices of human-centric innovations, enriched with new findings from the hospitality industry; new findings are underlined

	<b><i>Bricolage approach</i></b>	<b><i>System approach</i></b>	<b><i>Systemic approach</i></b>
<b><i><u>Passive human-centric innovation</u></i></b>	Practices that are <u>solving users' problems on the spot without their immediate contribution</u>	Practices that <u>push firms to strategize new ways of service delivery to meet users' needs or include their passively contributed ideas, potentially in R&amp;D environments</u>	Practices that lead <u>firms to rethink their service standards based on users' expressed dissatisfactions, potentially in R&amp;D environments</u>
<b><i>Individual human-centric innovation</i></b>	Practices that a) engage users in solving problems on the spot with resources at hand b) <u>fuel entrepreneurship to solve service problems on the spot and hereafter capitalise on these</u>	Practices that engage users in strategizing about ways of service delivery	Practices that a) engage individual users in disputes about standards of services offered for users <u>or the common good</u> b) empower users c) <u>fuel entrepreneurship following disputes about standards of services</u>
<b><i>Group human-centric innovation</i></b>	Practices that engage several users in solving <u>one or more</u> specific service problems on the go for the benefit of the group	Practices that engage groups of users in co-planning and co-production with other stakeholders about the delivery of <u>one or more</u> specific services	Practices that engage users a) in the development of common standards for services offered for them and b) in making them fit with other services c) <u>in making practices fit with users' lives</u>
		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> <u>Testbeds</u> </div>	
<b><i>Collective human-centric innovation</i></b>	Practices that recognise and make use of the voice of users to change the service portfolio for the benefit of an external <u>or internal</u> community	Practices that empower the users by giving them instruments for voicing their opinion vis-à-vis authorities and other stakeholders for the benefit of a community	Practices that engage service providers in agonistic development strategies for the common good

Passive human-centric innovation has no direct user-involvement but outlines innovation based on their needs, knowledge and experiences. In testbeds, users are encouraged to raise their voice in the co-planning of service while making it fit with other practices, bridging the System and Systemic approaches.