

Potentials to Develop Artificial Intelligence for the Hotel Industry in Sri Lanka (Special Reference to Star Class Hotels in Colombo District)

B.W.D. Dananjaya^{1*}, J.P.R.C. Ranasinghe¹ and E.M.U.W.J.B. Ekanayake²

¹*Department of Tourism Studies, Uva Wellassa University, Badulla, Sri Lanka*

²*Department of Computer Science and Informatics, Uva Wellassa University, Badulla, Sri Lanka*

**Corresponding Author E-mail: duleepa96@gmail.com, TP: +94710101113.*

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has made great changes in various industries in response to the incessant technological revolution. Equally, such changes have affected the global hospitality and tourism industry at large. AI technology was originally used in the aviation industry and subsequently in the hospitality and tourism industry. It was used not only to satisfy the customers' needs but also as a mechanism to reduce cost and increase revenue. Furthermore, AI technology applied in the hospitality and tourism industry as it was used in the aviation industry. Currently, this technology is used globally in the hotel industry. Highly competitive and unpredictable challenges in the hotel operations have created the need of applying new technology to provide better services for their customers and maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the Sri Lankan hotel industry too. The key objectives of this study were to examine different AI tools applied in the hotels in Sri Lanka, examining the perception of managers in the hotels on AI and identifying the barriers for AI implementation in hotels in Sri Lanka. A sample of ten General Managers and IT Managers from star graded hotels from Colombo district was drawn for the study using purposive sampling technique. Structured interview method was used to investigate perceptions, potentiality of implementation as well as barriers of implementation. Primary data was transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis. Results indicate that, Sri Lankan hotels are not much familiar with the AI technology and have limited knowledge on AI application. All participants had a positive perception on AI technology use in the hotel industry. The paybacks of AI technology, rewards of AI to the hotel operations and facilitating factors that are needed for hotels, also were identified in this study. Based on the findings, researchers recommend fully developed AI technology for new and up-coming hotels for improved performance. AI tools can also be used in the existing hotels in Sri Lanka.

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