

Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management



Integration of Robotics Service on Guest Experience in Fine Dining Restaurants: A Case of Kileleshwa in Nairobi City County Kenya

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ISSN: 2706-6592

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How to cite this article: Binyanya, B. (2026). Integration of Robotics Service on Guest Experience in Fine Dining Restaurants: A Case of Kileleshwa in Nairobi City County Kenya. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 9 (2), 12-25. <https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t5453>

Abstract

The hospitality industry has increasingly integrated robotics and artificial intelligence technologies into service delivery to improve operational efficiency, strengthen competitiveness, and enhance guest experiences. This study examined the integration of robotics and artificial intelligence technologies and their influence on guest experiences in fine dining restaurants in Kileleshwa, Nairobi City County, Kenya. Specifically, the study assessed the influence of robotics and artificial intelligence technologies on guest experience and evaluated employees' reception towards their integration. A descriptive research design was adopted, targeting 37 respondents comprising 25 restaurant employees, including managers, supervisors, waiters, cashiers, receptionists, cooks, and chefs, and 12 guests, including able bodied persons and persons with disabilities. A census approach was used, while data were collected through questionnaires and analysed using percentages, means, and standard deviations. The findings revealed that employees generally received the technologies positively, with 92 percent agreeing that they could work alongside robotic systems and 84 percent reporting improved staff efficiency. All guests agreed that robotics and artificial intelligence technologies improved dining satisfaction through accurate order delivery, while 91.7 percent reported improved meal experiences through timely service. However, most guests continued to value human interaction, with 66.7 percent disagreeing that they preferred robotic interaction to human touch. Acceptance was also lower among elderly guests, while responses concerning the accessibility and user friendliness of robotic systems for persons with disabilities were mixed. The study concludes that robotics and artificial intelligence technologies improve service accuracy, efficiency, restaurant image, and guest satisfaction but cannot fully replace personalised human service. Fine dining restaurants should therefore adopt a hybrid service model, provide employee training, retain human assisted service options, and prioritise accessible technological designs that accommodate guests with diverse abilities and preferences.

Keywords: *Robotics; Artificial intelligence (AI); Guest experience; PWD guests; Fine dining.*

1.0 Introduction

As a new trend, technology has become crucial to satisfying visitor needs and improving the whole experience. According to the World Economic Forum (2020), technology gives the hospitality, tourism, and leisure sectors a worldwide competitive advantage. The integration of robots and

<https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t5453>

artificial intelligence (AI) technology in the hospitality sector has significantly improved the memorable experiences of visitors (Choi, Choi, Oh, & Kim, 2020). For the majority of enterprises, including those in the hotel and tourism sector, robotization has started to provide a more promising and competitive future. The application of AI in the hospitality sector has grown rapidly (Solution Analysts, 2023), with the hotel business experiencing the most notable application. The accuracy of robotic and artificial intelligence (AI) technology, which offers several advantages like speed, cost savings, and a replacement for labor crises, particularly the high turnovers linked to this industry, is challenging the traditional human-centric service model in order to deliver outstanding customer experiences (Fuentes-Moraleda *et al.*, 2020; Choi *et al.*, 2020).

Employees in some positions may be displaced as a result of this new trend. In particular, workers who lack the skills necessary for other tasks may experience increased job insecurity and find it difficult to concentrate on their work (Wu, Li, & Wu, 2022). The incorporation of robots has both positive and negative effects on turnover intention. Employees' skepticism about the adoption of robots tends to trigger feelings and worry over being replaced or losing motivation, which may increase turnover intention (Khaliq, Waqas, Nisar, Haider, & Asghar, 2022; Koo, Curtis, & Ryan, 2021). When workers learn about the capabilities of robots, they fear that they will replace them, which increases job insecurity (Koo *et al.*, 2021; Wu *et al.*, 2022). Accordingly, human talent in the hospitality sector is at risk from the use of AI technology (Ruel & Njoku, 2020).

The entire customer experience may suffer as a result of the loss of human interaction or the work that users must put in to deal with the new technology. There is a significant research vacuum that must be filled because the majority of technologies do not take into account the demands of users who are physically challenged, especially those who are visually impaired (Sáez *et al.*, 2019). Service providers must make accommodations for clients with a variety of disabilities, including vision impairment, in accordance with Title III of the ADA (US Department of Justice 2022). The majority of assistive technology used in dining establishments, hotels, and other travel-related settings is made to accommodate patrons without impairments, which leads to prejudice (Vo-Thanh *et al.*, 2022; Jiménez-Barreto *et al.*, 2021; Buhalis *et al.*, 2023).

This claim puts PWD employees at a disadvantage since, with the population expected to expand at an annual rate of 2.9%, there will probably be 3.5 million people with disabilities by 2030 and they will be at a significant disadvantage when AI technologies are fully integrated. Similarly, this is a concern to ponder as guests with severe disability will not fit into the system, and so the sector will lose the revenue generated or received from these niche markets (Bonaccio, Connelly, & Ginis, 2020). The hotel sector is the largest in the world, accounting for 10% of global GDP and growing at an annual rate of 8.6%. More than 200 million individuals can work there (UNESCO, 2020). The travel and hospitality industry accounts for one out of every ten job opportunities in nations with comparatively small hotel industries.

The sector contributes more than 10% of GDP in nations where it is thriving. This labor-intensive company is increasingly having to compete with other businesses for workers because of the limited labor pool in the nation. AI is predicted to be the most popular product on the market for businesses in the hotel sector by 2030 (Belanche *et al.*, 2021). According to Krzak (2023), this creates predictable difficulties because human interactions are crucial in the hospitality sector, as staff members develop emotional bonds with patrons. Conversely, Fu *et al.* (2022) claim that AI encourages a lack of human emotion and touch. No machine can alter or replace the culture of hospitality, which is what keeps industries alive. Furthermore, a number of additional concerns

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pertaining to the dynamics of the customer experience, including data breaches and the perceptions of AI technology, require further investigation (Johnson and Ogunnaike, 2020).

Further, according to Gartner (2020), the use of AI technologies has improved the analysis of customer sentiment and customer feedback that is not achievable through humans. The feedback serves as a baseline to establish the quality and effectiveness of the process that further assists in analyzing and interpreting the level of satisfaction for purposes of decision-making regarding service delivery to the target markets served, since guests seek unique and memorable experiences as well as psychological satisfaction. The global shift towards technology drives the hospitality sector to integrate the use of robotics and AI technologies to stay afloat by meeting the diverse needs of their market segment (Francis, 2021). According to Price Waterhouse Coopers, by the 2030s, 25% of US hospitality occupations will be automated (Zhou, 2021). When workers discover that robots are capable of doing their occupations, they fear that they will be replaced, which increases job insecurity (Wu *et al.*, 2022; Koo *et al.*, 202). Therefore, human talent in the hospitality sector is at risk from the introduction of AI technology (Ruel & Njoku, 2020).

With 10% of the world's GDP and an annual growth rate of 8.6%, the hotel industry is the largest in the world. Over 200 million people may be employed therein (WTTC, 2020). The entire customer experience may be compromised due to the absence of human interaction or the effort required by customers to interact with the new technology (Ameen *et al.* 2021). According to Marin-Pantelescu (2021), older people, women, and business market tourists exhibit reservations and mistrust regarding the employment of robotics and artificial intelligence. The hospitality sector relies heavily on human interaction and is service-driven. It's still unknown how much robotization will affect personnel' perceptions and guests' capacity to adjust. In order to satisfy the interests of all stakeholders in the hospitality industry for seamless integration, this study must be carried out in order to dispel the barriers and mistrust around robotization and AI technologies.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives;

- i. Ascertain the impact of integration of robotics and AI technologies integration on guest experience in fine dining restaurants in Nairobi City County, Kenya
- ii. Evaluate the employees' reception towards the integration of robotics and AI technologies in fine dining restaurants in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

2.0 Literature Review

Innovations in robotics and AI integration have drastically and rapidly altered the type of service that guests receive and the way that they interact with service providers. Thus, marketers and hotels must comprehend and embrace these technologies (Ukpabi & Karjaluoto, 2020). Guests from a wide range of social backgrounds and with higher expectations define today's competitive markets (Koo *et al.* 2021). Knowing how to manage client expectations is essential to delivering outstanding guest experiences in the hotel sector since they represent novel discoveries or daring and customized service encounters from various hospitality settings (Operto, 2023). Stronger automated social interactions are assumed by robotics, which results in an unforgettable visitor experience. Therefore, it is anticipated that the incorporation of robotics will provide the fundamental service features, autonomy, ease, and personalization, that are needed for a

memorable and thrilling eating experience. As Malone (2024) contends, customer satisfaction is positively and directly impacted by service robots.

However, without human interaction, the global hospitality business would not exist as it does today. The entire customer experience may suffer as a result of the lack of human interaction or the work that users must put in to use the new technology (Ameen *et al.* 2021). It is necessary to gain a deeper understanding of the implications and other potentially troublesome issues pertaining to the customer experience and the acceptance of robotic services (Chiang & Trimi, 2020). Accordingly, AI's potential is enormous and poses a danger to the hotel sector (Ruel & Njoku, 2020). Even though artificial intelligence (AI) will change service employment and could eventually lead to the replacement of human skill by technology (Huang & Rust, 2018), skepticism and possible issues with client acceptance of robots may be on the rise (Lee & Lee, 2021; Mori *et al.*, 2021). According to Blut *et al.* (2021), older people are less inclined to value technology because they are more skeptical of it and have an adverse perception of robots.

In addition, the acceptance of robotic services is generally lower among women and elderly people. The customer experience is also negatively impacted by age, which has a somewhat negative effect on people's motivation to use technology in general (Luo *et al.*, 2021). Service providers must make accommodations for clients with a variety of disabilities, including vision impairment, in accordance with Title III of the ADA (US Department of Justice, 2022). Given that they are unable to connect and use these technologies successfully, their omission shows bias towards this group of clients, creating a gap that needs to be filled.

2.1 Theoretical framework.

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), a theory that describes how people accept and use technology, served as the foundation for this investigation. Fred Davis introduced TAM in the 1980s, and it has been crucial in illuminating how users embrace and adapt new technology. According to TAM, perceived utility and usability influence the adoption of technology (Venkatesh & Thong, 2012). TAM asserts that subjective norms and individual attitudes have an impact on behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). In the fine dining context, where personalized, efficient, and luxurious service is key, TAM helps explain how guests' expectations shape their acceptance of intelligent technologies (Wirtz *et al.*, 2018).

Incorporating AI and robotics enables fine dining establishments to enhance service personalization and efficiency. AI systems analyze guest preferences to deliver tailored services, while robots perform tasks such as food delivery and interaction (Tussyadiah, 2020). These technologies improve the guest cycle, before, during, and after dining, by offering personalized communication and seamless service experiences. Data collected through these systems enables the creation of detailed customer profiles, supporting real-time service adjustments that match individual preferences (Luo *et al.*, 2021).

However, customer acceptance remains crucial to successful implementation. Research shows that attitudes toward service robots are influenced by perceived trustworthiness, social presence, and emotional intelligence (Ivanov, Webster, & Garenko, 2020). In high-end dining, where emotional and experiential elements are central, businesses must balance automation with human interaction. TAM provides a useful framework for managing this balance, ensuring that technology enhances rather than disrupts the refined experience expected in fine dining.

3.0 Research Methodology

In order to examine the results using descriptive analysis techniques, the study used a descriptive study design. The study was conducted in Nairobi City County's Kileleshwa. The location was deemed appropriate since it is home to upscale eateries in Kenya that have used robotics and artificial intelligence. Twelve customers (both able-bodied and PWDs) and twenty-five hotel employees (restaurant managers, supervisors, waiters, and kitchen staff) made up the target demographic. A census sampling technique was used to create the sample from this population. Questionnaires were utilized to gather data for the study. A 10% sample from Maasai National Polytechnic was used to pretest the surveys. The surveys were coded, condensed, and reviewed for potential mistakes. Means and percentages for each response were displayed together with descriptive statistics, particularly the measures of central tendency.

4.0 Research Findings

Research findings are discussed in sections.

4.1 Personal information of respondents

Gender of respondents

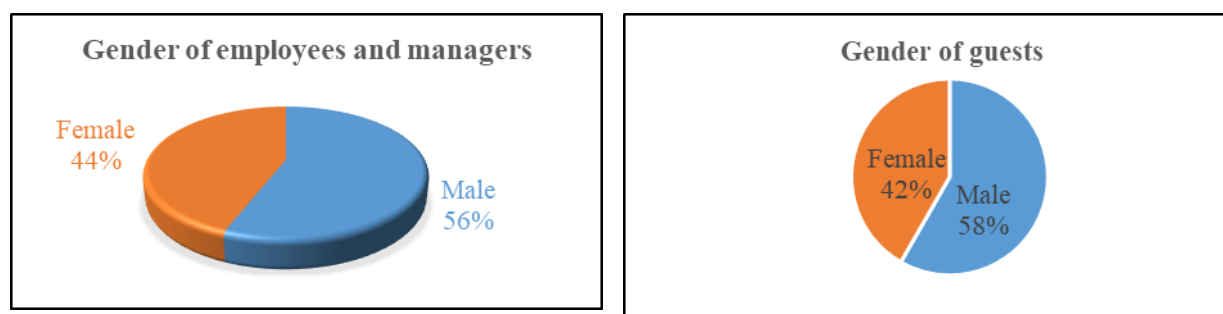


Figure 1: Gender of Employees and Guests

The male gender slightly dominated the sample of employees, (44% male and 56% females) as well as guests (42% female and 58% male). This implies that the hospitality industry is dominated by the male gender.

Age of respondents

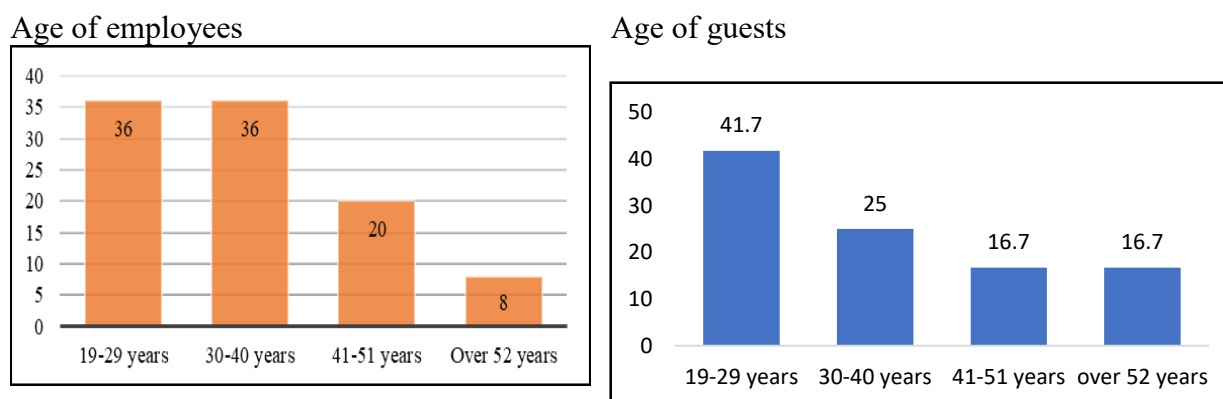
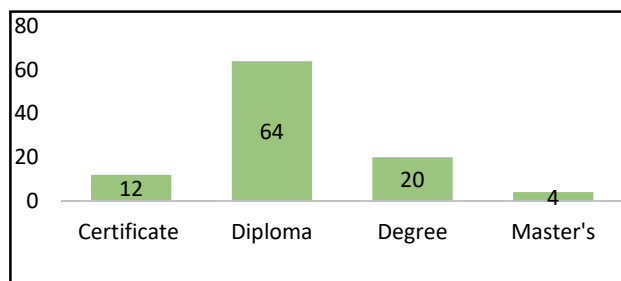


Figure 2: Age of Employees and Guests

<https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t5453>

Majority of the respondents were between 19 – 29 years (36%, employees and 41.7% guests) Highest education level of respondents followed by those between 30 – 40 years (36%, employees and 25%, guests). The least group among employees were over 50 years whereas the least among the guests ranged between 41-51 years and over 52 years at 16.7%.

Education of employees



Education of guests

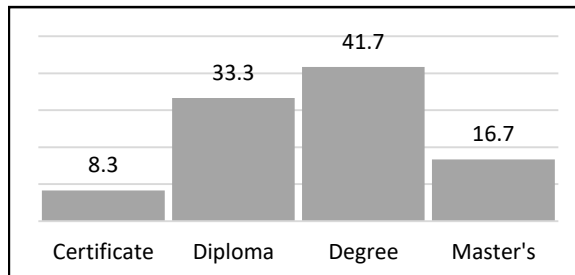


Figure 3: Highest Education Level of Employees and Guests

Majority of employees had a diploma (64%) as the highest level of education, followed by a degree (20%). The least of the employees held a master's degree. For guests, a majority had acquired a degree (41.7%), followed by diploma holders (33.3%). The least held a certificate training (8.3%).

Job title of employees

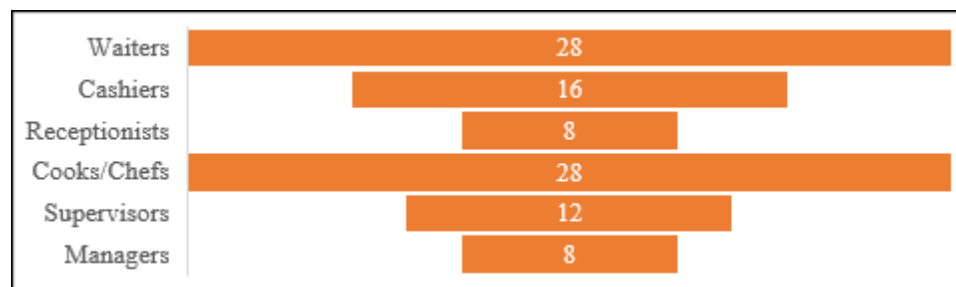


Figure 4: Job title of Employees

Most employees worked as waiters, cooks and or chefs (28%) followed by cashiers (16%). The least of the employees were managers and receptionists (8%).

4.2 Employee perceptions of the integration of robotics and AI technologies in fine dining restaurants in Nairobi City County, Kenya

Employees were asked to rate their response on their reception towards the integration of robotics and AI technologies in fine dining restaurants using a Likert scale. The findings suggest that most employees (48%) agree that robotics and AI technologies have improved their efficiency. 64% agreed that robotics and AI technologies have improved their routine duties and that they can work alongside robotics (84%). In addition, a great percentage (64%) agreed that they had positively embraced the use of robotics and AI technologies. A majority (52%) of the group also agreed that the integration of robotics and AI technologies had reduced their absenteeism from work, while 68% agreed that the complaints from guests had reduced. Table 1 summarizes the findings.

Table 1: Employee's Reception on Robotics and AI Technologies Integration

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Std. Dev
Robotics and AI technologies have improved the efficiency of the staff	36	48	8	8	0	4.12	.881
Robotics and AI Technologies have improved our routine duties	24	68	8	0	0	4.16	.554
Employees can work alongside Robotics	8	84	8	0	0	4.00	.408
I have positively embraced the use of Robotics and AI technologies	20	64	8	8	0	3.96	.790
The integration of Robotics and AI technologies has reduced my absenteeism from my work	12	52	8	28	0	3.48	1.046
Robotics has reduced human interaction complaints from guests	28	68	4	0	0	4.24	.523

Employees were asked to rate their response on robotics and AI technologies on PWDs guest's dining experience using a Likert scale. The findings provided mixed results on whether robotics and AI technologies had improved the dining experience of PWD guests. 44% agreed to this statement while 36% disagreed. 60% disagreed on the question whether robotics and AI Technologies instruction was more exciting to PWDs guests than human interaction. However, 68% of the respondents agreed that robotics had reduced human interaction-related complaints. Lastly 48% agreed that robotics design adopted was user-friendly to PWD guests. Table 2 summarizes the findings.

Table 2: Robotics and AI Technologies on PWDs Guest's Dining Experience

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Std. Dev
Robotics and AI technologies have improved the dining experience of PWD guests	12	44	4	36	4	3.24	1.200
Robotics and AI Technologies instruction is more exciting to PWDs guests than human interaction	4	20	16	60	0	2.68	.945
PWD guests are served alongside trained waiting personnel.	12	60	8	20	0	3.64	.952
Robotics has reduced human interaction-related complaints	24	68	8	0	0	4.08	.759
Robotics design is user-friendly to PWD guests	4	48	8	32	8	3.08	1.152

4.3 Integration of robotics and AI technologies on guest experience in fine dining restaurants in Nairobi City County, Kenya

The guests experience on robotics integration in fine dining restaurants was sought using a Likert scale. Results indicate that robotics and AI technologies have improved dining satisfaction by serving the correct dishes as per order (66.7% agreed, 33.3 strongly agreed). 50% agreed while 41.7%strongly agreed robotics had improved the meal experience through timely service. There

were mixed findings on whether robotics and AI adoption had influenced guests' regular or repeat visits to the restaurant. 50% agreed to this statement, while those who strongly agreed, remained undecided and disagreed tied at 16.7%.

Half of the total (50%) agreed that robotics and AI technologies had improved the overall image and brand loyalty of the restaurant. A statement that elicited mixed results sought to find out whether robotics design was user-friendly to PWD guests, an equal number of respondents 41.7% agreed and disagreed on this statement. However, 16.7% were neutral. A majority (58.3%) agreed that they can always recommend guests who haven't interacted with robotics before to try it out with no reservations. However, the human touch remains to be a significant part in the fine dining experience as a majority (66.7%) disagreed that they do not prefer robotics interaction to human touch, only 25% agreed.

A majority (58.3%) agreed that elderly guests are more likely to be challenged by the use of robotics than their counterparts. The number of respondents who agreed and disagreed on the statement whether men guests are more likely to embrace the adoption of robotics and AI in the dining experience than female guests was 41.7%, followed by those who strongly agreed at 16.7%. Lastly, it was clear from the 66.7% who agreed and 33.3 % who strongly agreed that the youth and middle-aged enjoy the robotics and AI service the most. See table 3 for the summary of results.

Table 3: Integration of Robotics and AI Technologies on Guest Experience in Fine Dining Restaurants

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Std. Dev
Robotics and AI technologies have improved dining satisfaction by serving the correct dishes as per order	33.3	66.7	0	0	0	4.33	.492
Integration of Robotics has improved the meal experience through timely service	41.7	50	8.3	0	0	4.33	.651
Robotics and AI adoption have influenced my regular or repeat visits to the restaurant	16.7	50	16.7	16.7	0	3.67	.985
Robotics and AI technologies have improved the overall image and brand loyalty	25	50	16.7	8.3	0	3.92	.900
Robotics design is user-friendly to PWD guests	0	41.7	16.7	41.7	0	3.00	.953
I can always recommend guests who haven't interacted with Robotics before to try it out with no reservations	16.7	58.3	25	0	0	3.67	1.073
I prefer robotics interaction to human touch	0	25	8.3	66.7	0	2.58	.900
Elderly guests are more likely to be challenged by the use of Robotics than their counterparts	16.7	58.3	8.3	16.7	0	3.75	.965
Men guests are more likely to embrace the adoption of Robotics & AI in the dining experience than female guests	16.7	41.7	0	41.7	0	3.33	1.231
The youth and middle-aged enjoy the robotics and AI service the most	33.3	66.7	0	0	0	4.33	.492

4.4 Discussion of the Findings

The discussion of the findings is presented per objective.

4.4.1 Employee Perceptions of the Integration of Robotics on Fine Dining Restaurants in Nairobi City County, Kenya

The results of the findings by the restaurant frontline employees and managers demonstrated that robotics is a competitive, cutting-edge trend that is envisioned to the efficiency and profitability in the hospitality service industry as it supplements the personalized human touch, which is a tradition of the hospitality sector. A study by de Vries *et al.* (2020) showed that robots can do routine jobs that are repetitious and cognitively taxing. Though the acceptance rate was mixed. The elderly and PWDs reported low acceptance, mixed feelings accompanied by AI technologies, and generally skepticism on adoption from the perspective of loss of the traditional approach of personalized human touch (Luo *et al.* 2021).

Additionally, the study's findings revealed that tech-savvy young people are embracing AI technology with great enthusiasm and enjoyment. To meet the demands of the varied market sectors that restaurants serve, service robots must be accepted as a new standard of innovation (Fuentes-Moraleda *et al.* 2020). These sentiments generally indicate that robotization integration needs awareness campaigns at the introductory stage to build acquaintance with the idea to propel the business to the top-notch global trend of the industry. A study of robotics global insight by PwC (2021) observed gaps that indicated the need for improvement and overall alignment to meet the desired objectives and goals. This study coincides with previous studies which found that males view robotic technology more favorably, are more anxious to use them in their daily lives, and have a more positive attitude about them overall. Conversely, women are less likely to employ robots, have a negative opinion of them, and are more reluctant to interact with them (Krzak, 2023).

4.4.2 Robotics Integration on Guest Experience in Fine Dining Restaurants in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

The study has important ramifications for the travel and hospitality sector. Following observations that were apparent on engagement with robotics, particularly the new encounters and excitement on embracing new technologies, the incorporation of robotics improved operational efficiency and the overall experience of customers (Ivanov & Webster, 2019). The study reveals that the adoption of AI technologies is so pertinent as it has achieved guest comfort, interactive encounters, as well as fun experiences, with the potential of achieving referral business. This observation concurs with Wirtz *et al.* (2018) study on harnessing AI for a global feel and touch. The study indicated that females and older people had reservations about robots' integration, following a concern about the reduction of human touch aligned to this unique industry. The tech-savvy youth had a great desire for AI Technologies. This calls for a deeper understanding of acceptance by hotel managers for seamless integration to meet the needs of a wider market because this is an emerging trend (Belanche *et al.*, 2021).

5.0 Conclusion

The study concludes that the integration of robotics and artificial intelligence technologies positively influenced service delivery and guest experience in fine dining restaurants. The technologies improved employees' efficiency, simplified routine duties, enhanced order accuracy,

reduced service delays, and supported consistency in restaurant operations. Employees generally demonstrated a willingness to work alongside robotic systems and recognised their usefulness in improving service performance. Robotics and artificial intelligence can therefore provide fine dining restaurants with operational and competitive benefits when appropriately integrated into existing service processes.

The study further concludes that robotics cannot completely replace human employees in fine dining restaurants because personalised interaction remains a central component of hospitality service. Although guests appreciated the accuracy, timeliness, novelty, and convenience associated with robotic services, most still preferred human interaction and emotional engagement. Acceptance of the technologies also differed across demographic groups, with younger and middle aged guests demonstrating greater enthusiasm than elderly guests. Successful adoption therefore requires a hybrid service model in which robotic technologies support operational tasks while employees provide empathy, flexibility, personalised attention, and service recovery.

The study also concludes that the accessibility of robotics and artificial intelligence technologies to persons with disabilities remains inadequate and uncertain. The mixed responses concerning the user friendliness of robotic systems indicate that some designs may not effectively accommodate guests with visual, physical, communication, or other functional limitations. Failure to address such accessibility challenges could exclude an important customer segment and undermine the inclusiveness of fine dining services. Sustainable technology adoption must therefore balance innovation, employee participation, human interaction, demographic differences, and the diverse accessibility needs of guests.

6.0 Recommendations

The study recommends that fine dining restaurant managers adopt robotics and artificial intelligence technologies gradually through a hybrid service delivery model. Robotic systems should be assigned routine, repetitive, and standardised tasks, while employees should continue handling personalised communication, complex requests, emotional engagement, and customer complaints. Restaurant managers should clearly communicate that the technologies are intended to complement employees rather than eliminate their roles. Employees should also be involved in technology selection, implementation, evaluation, and improvement to strengthen acceptance and reduce job insecurity.

The study further recommends that restaurants provide continuous training to employees on robotic operations, artificial intelligence applications, system troubleshooting, data protection, and human machine collaboration. Managers should also create awareness among guests and provide clear guidance to elderly customers and individuals with limited technological experience. Restaurants should retain alternative human assisted service options so that guests are not compelled to interact with robotic systems against their preferences. Technology integration should remain flexible, personalised, and responsive to the characteristics and expectations of different customer groups.

The study also recommends that developers and restaurant operators prioritise accessible robotic designs that accommodate persons with disabilities. Robotic systems should incorporate voice commands, readable displays, simplified instructions, tactile controls, sufficient navigation space, and immediate assistance from trained employees. Hospitality training institutions should introduce courses and practical simulations covering robotics, artificial intelligence, smart

restaurant operations, and inclusive service delivery, while relevant regulatory bodies should establish ethical and accessibility guidelines for technology adoption. Future studies should use larger samples, include more fine dining restaurants, examine different types of service robots, and compare guest perceptions across diverse social and cultural settings.

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