SERVICE INNOVATION IMPLEMENTATION IN INTERNATIONAL HOTEL GROUPS: A CRITICAL REALIST STUDY

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Abstract

Services have a dominant role in the world economy, with an increasing number of organisations adopting business models that incorporate product and service provision, in an effort to offer holistic customer experiences. Service innovation, as an avenue for growth, is becoming a major strategic focus in organisations worldwide. Service innovation research however, does not reflect the high level of interest in innovation shown by practitioners. There is a long tradition of product-related research that describes the conditions underlying service development in relation to products. However, evidence in the literature suggests that services are different from products and their features uniquely shape the innovation process. A significant research gap exists in the ways innovation projects are implemented in services. Existing studies fail to provide complete models of implementation that go beyond prescriptive step-by-step process manuals and to cover a variety of service industries that are as heterogeneous as products and services. This study attempts to fill these gaps by focussing on the implementation process in the under-studied service context of hotels, an industry that provides unique insights into the way interpersonal interactions shape implementation. Findings in this study derive from qualitative data collected from semi-structured interviews with managers and employees involved in two service innovation projects rolled out to European countries in 2011. Guided by a critical realist philosophy that perceives the world as mind-independent but accessible only through our subjective interpretations, the role of the researcher in this study was to approach innovation implementation by searching for valid explanations behind the participants' experience. The study has found that the implementation process is an iterative process of planning, training, launch, review and routinisation, and follow-up periods. These are repeated as the implementation cascades through large organisations from the regional level to local organisational units. Secondary adoption and adaptation processes permeate implementation, whereby choices made at higher levels are evaluated at lower ones in a continuous cycle of decision-making. A variety of factors relating to the individuals involved, the firm where the innovation is implemented, the innovation concept, and the execution of the process have been linked to the realisation of the projects. Among these factors, knowledge, organisation of informal activities and the innovation-market fit have been shown to have the most significant positive influence on implementation. The events in the process have been explained by a combination of four mechanisms as diverse as sensemaking, organisational learning, organisational politics and emotional reactions to the implementation process. Thus, this research sheds new light on the theory and practice of service innovation implementation and paves the way for further research into the field.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

This study focuses on the implementation of service innovation in the international hotel sector. The implementation part of the innovation process is particularly relevant to this research as this part is a key step for reaping the benefits from an innovation project and a part often blamed for innovation failure. The implementation also presents unique difficulties that have been under researched in the context of services. This chapter presents the rationale for the study and explains the organisation and content of the thesis. It first justifies the need for research in the field of service innovation, by highlighting gaps in the knowledge. Then the focus shifts to the international hotel industry and the innovation implementation processes that have not been widely studied in service innovation research. Thus the scope of this study, expressed in specific aims and objectives, is justified. The chapter ends by explaining the structure of the thesis and providing an overview of the content.

1.2. Service Innovation

Services can be understood as

> configurations of resources that are bundled together into innovation ecosystems through which the various actors involved aim to achieve something but which also result in unexpected consequences (Kimbell, 2014, p. 12)

Most developed countries rely on services for a major part of their economic activity; these are acts that require use of resources or time and can include renting a car or booking a hotel room. In recent years, researchers have recognised a move towards a service economy with more manufacturers offering services (Barrett et al., 2015; Orlikowski and Scott, 2015). Services account for 20% of international trade (Orlikowski and Scott, 2015) and 75% of wealth and employment in these developed economies (Bryson and Daniels, 2015). Policymakers point to innovation as a driver of productivity in services, reflected in Europe's 2020 strategy for growth (European Commission, 2013; Haskel, 2009). Innovation involves developing new or improved ways of operating (Martovoy and Mention, 2016). In a competitive global environment, organisational survival and success depend on innovation which encourages differentiation of capabilities and requires integration of customers, employees, and partners in the innovation process (Santos-Vijande, López-Sánchez and Pascual-Fernández, 2015; Salunke, Weerawardena and McColl-Kennedy, 2013).

Studies in product innovation are prolific in the literature and span many disciplines including politics, economics, and management (Clayton, 2003), but more recently, the EU has emphasised the need for service innovation research with scholars calling for empirical studies and theoretical development of the field. Despite a dramatic increase in the number of studies in the last 25 years there are still knowledge deficiencies in implementation (Carlborg, Kindström and Kowalkowski, 2014), and in high-contact contexts such as the hotel and catering industries (Randhawa et al., 2015; Yee et al., 2013).

For some scholars, service innovation research is redundant, as services are incapable of innovating (Barras, 1986), being 'laggards', mere adopters of supplier innovation (Pavitt, 1984). Others argue that product innovation theory can be applied to services with no need to investigate service innovation in its own right given the similarity of processes (Evangelista and Sirilli, 1997; Miles, 2000; Howells, 2006). Difficulties with assessing innovation effects on services arise from their intangible and simultaneous nature (De Jong and Vermeulen, 2003). However, these service-specific characteristics can be used to enrich product innovation theory (Sundbo, 2006). Services are poorly covered in innovation statistics, with their output being difficult to measure (OECD, 2000; Christensen, 2013). Recent statistics from the European Service Innovation Scoreboard have shown that service innovation is prevalent (ESIS, 2015) and linked to employment creation in European regions, higher GDP per capita, and improved labour productivity (Zenker, Muller and Hollanders, 2015) through developed human capital and increased competition among services (OECD, 2001). Therefore, service innovation research is valuable for advancing the body of knowledge on innovation, whilst better measurements of service innovation activities that are fit for the purpose need to be developed.

IBM consultants indicate the difficulty of some organisations to initialise service innovation and to capitalise on its benefits, while others are ready to accept the challenge but lack the necessary service delivery mechanisms (IBM, 2013). Cadwallader et al. (2009) suggest that a useful place to start the innovation process is by involving employees that interact with customers and are naturally placed at the core of service provision. With services having a social character innovation requires behaviour change (Jiao and Zhao, 2014). According to Ordanini and Parasuraman (2011) employees can indeed positively influence both the volume and radicalness of innovations. Therefore, it is not surprising that front line employee engagement, project champion appointment, and support from leadership are associated with successful management of key innovation activities. Furthermore, building external contacts, knowledge sharing, and providing employee autonomy contribute to a supportive innovation climate (De Jong and Vermeulen, 2003). Despite evidence of the impact of staff on service innovation outcomes, few studies have included the employee perspective (Randhawa et al., 2015). The current research aims to address this shortcoming by exploring innovation from the perspectives of both employees and managers in the diverse hotel industry context.

1.3. Innovation in the Hotel Industry

Much service innovation research is based on production-intensive industries, such as financial, telecommunications, transport, and wholesale services (Aas et al., 2015). In contrast, innovation in supplier-dominated hotels, restaurants, and retail stores is rarely studied (Randhawa et al., 2015; Farsani et al., 2016), possibly due to perceptions of their lack of innovation activity (De Jong and Vermeulen, 2003). Indeed, in the most recent European Community Innovation Survey hotels were the second least innovative businesses after retail (Robson and Achur, 2012). It is true that high turnover and unskilled labour hinder hotels from fully exploiting investments in innovative technologies. Hotels often declare themselves too busy or too short-staffed to innovate (Ottenbacher, Shaw and Lockwood, 2006), or argue that innovation is too costly and not recognisable by customers. However, innovation presents an opportunity for hotels to differentiate themselves from competitors in an industry inundated with similar, often substitutable service offerings. Indeed, innovation can have a positive impact on hotels' firm value, future sales (Nicolau and Santa-María, 2013) and competitive advantage (Jacob, 2010) even though these benefits may only be realised at the medium- and long-term level (Campo, Díaz and Yagüe, 2014). Besides, even a small increase in hotel service innovation, such as innovations aiming at increased operational efficiency, creating personalised guest experiences, or building new business models such as AirBnB (Bilgihan and Nejad, 2015), can have wide implications for the economy considering that the global hospitality industry, of which hotels are a core component, accounts for more than 266 million jobs worldwide (Roth and Fishbin, 2015). In addition, the industry is growing 23% faster than the global economy overall by approximately $3.4 trillion dollars annually (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2014). It is therefore beneficial both for firm and economy performance to pursue innovations in the hotel sector so empirical research should pursue this relatively unexplored line of study and offer practical guidance on effective ways to innovate.

The hotel industry being labour-intensive offers a unique setting for innovation study (Baum, 2012). The role of employees is accentuated and found to be the most critical aspect of innovation success in the sector (Ottenbacher, Shaw and Lockwood, 2006). Hotel groups with multiple hotel units also provide a unique innovation setting with implications for innovation implementation due to their range of contract structures involving a variety of managed and franchised properties. Managed hotels allow hotel groups to "keep control over their product, service, brand, quality ownership, and the management of their products" (Russell and O'Connor, 2014). Conversely, franchising entails a franchisee who is granted the right to engage in offering, selling, or distributing goods or services under a marketing format which is designed by the franchisor (Kotler, Bowen and Makens, 2016). The franchisee is allowed to use the franchisor's trademark, name, and advertising, the success of the agreement relying on a balance of control between the two parties (Della Corte, 2014). As a result, hotel groups can more easily enforce innovations on managed hotels than franchisees, a difference that is investigated in this study due to the implications of the contract structures for the implementation process.

1.4. Levels of Analysis in Innovation Studies

From a micro-level approach, innovation is typically studied at the individual, group, or organisational level of analysis (Staw, 1984; Anderson, de Drew and Nijstad, 2004). Scholars studying individuals can explore creativity, innovative employee selection and training, and the effect of organisational characteristics on idea generation (King and Anderson, 2002). At the group level, research questions delve around innovative groups' attributes, the effectiveness of team-building activities, and social-psychological theories of group innovation (Shee and Nsenduluka, 2009). Finally, effects of structure, climate, culture and process on innovation are analysed from an organisational perspective (Adams, Bessant and Phelps, 2006).

The challenge is to explore what makes certain individuals, groups, and organisations more innovative than others (West and Altink, 1996), and what leads to overall innovation success (Toivonen, 2010; Bygstad, Munkvold and Volkoff, 2016). The distinction of levels facilitates the organisation of the literature, but creates a false assumption of boundaries which in reality do not exist (Langley et al., 2013). Therefore, empirical studies need to integrate two or more levels of analysis (Lovelock, 1984). By integrating the levels more interesting research questions can be formulated (King and Anderson, 2002), for example ones that juxtapose individual to group perceptions during a particular innovation programme, and a more accurate picture of attitudes towards innovation can be obtained. This study focusing on hotels, facilitates this approach as innovations typically span the organisational level (hotel group), the team level (hotels and their departments), and individual level (employees) (Rutherford and O'Fallon, 2011).

1.5. Stages in the Innovation Process

A considerable amount of research is devoted to understanding the innovation process (Jiao and Zhao, 2014), with numerous models in disciplines including marketing and organisational psychology depicting the stages through which innovation projects move (Zomerdijk and Voss, 2011). Despite differences, the broad stages of idea generation and implementation conceptually exist in the majority of models (Sarooghi, Libaers and Burkemper, 2015). Distinguishing between the two stages is useful for two reasons for innovation researchers and practitioners alike. Firstly, it is useful because they are different, and even opposing to each other, characterised by explorative and exploitative activities respectively, which creates tension, paradoxes, and dilemmas in the process (Zaltman, Duncan and Holbek, 1973; Sarooghi, Libaers and Burkemper, 2015). For example, routines, efficiencies, goal orientation, and external demands support implementation, but may hinder creativity (Sarooghi, Libaers and Burkemper, 2015; West, Sacramento and Fay, 2006). Secondly, the distinction between the two stages helps to illustrate a disparity in the literature with implementation rarely being the focus of innovation research (Michaelis, Stegmaier and Sonntag, 2010). Early calls for research in the area by Klein and Sorra (1996) and Repenning (2002) have not been addressed, particularly with empirical evidence missing from the literature (Keupp, Palmié and Gassmann, 2012). Reasons for this may be that many innovation studies are conducted in laboratory settings focusing on idea generation, removed from the empirical world (West, 2002a). It is erroneously assumed that innovation will be implemented after its adoption (Keupp, Palmié and Gassmann, 2012; Magadley and Birdi, 2012); and valuable implementation studies are considered only those with longitudinal orientation involving large research teams (Klein and Knight, 2005). It can therefore be seen why the stage of implementation has a rightful place in the contemporary innovation research agenda (Keupp, Palmié and Gassmann, 2012) and is chosen as the focus of the current study.

1.6. Methodological Choices

The research study was designed in order to serve the aims and objectives specified for this study while the philosophy of critical realism guided the methodological choices. An intensive research design was adopted in order to achieve rich descriptions of context and understand the processes of meaning making. The retroductive approach allowed the construction of theory through observations and the case study strategy allowed the monitoring of the entire implementation process step-by-step. Interviews, documents and observation constituted the data collection means of this study while the template method was chosen for analysis for its opportunity to combine themes built before and during data interpretation. Two innovation projects representing a radical and an incremental innovation were used as the main cases of this study while a smaller innovation project was used to test the research instrument and build a pilot case. In the first main case (Case A) 27 participants including senior managers, managers and employees provided insights on the innovation project of Brain Food while in the second main case (Case B) of Stay Real – Be You 22 participants shared their experience of the implementation. The choice of international hotel groups meant that the scale of implementation was large and likely to be affected by cultural differences when transferred from one country to the next.

1.7. Scope of the Research

Guided by the gaps in the service innovation literature the aim of the current study is to explore, critically evaluate, and explain the implementation of service innovations in the hotel industry and the factors that influence such implementation.

In order to achieve the stated aim, the objectives of this study are:

1. To review the extant literature on service innovation and new service development in order to identify and evaluate existing models of innovation implementation;
2. To enrich the innovation models by identifying the factors that play a significant role in implementing service innovations, and to propose mechanisms that can explain the implementation process;
3. To offer a conceptual framework which depicts the events occurring during service innovation implementation, the entities influencing the process and the proposed explanatory mechanisms;
4. To apply the conceptual framework in two cases of hotel service innovation by exploring the views of multiple stakeholders;
5. To revise the framework in the light of findings, and thus contribute to the theory and practice of service innovation implementation.

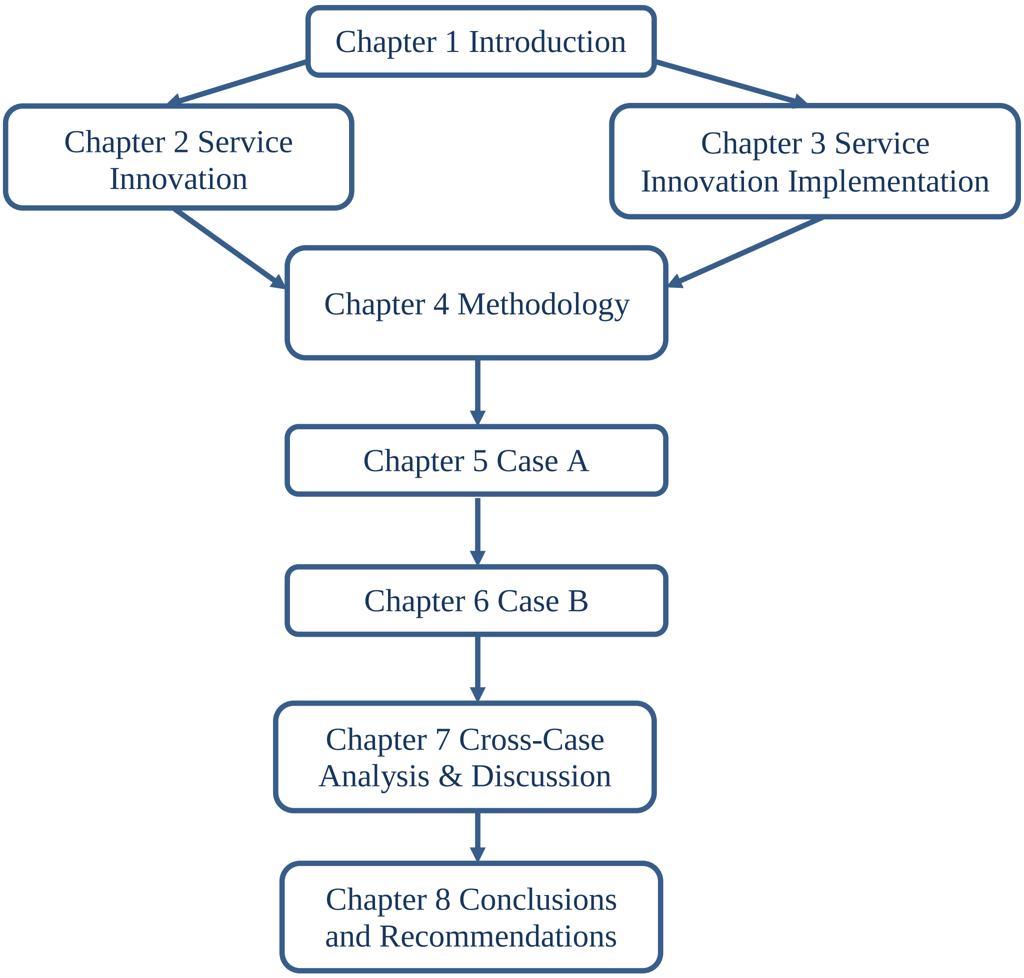
Given the volume and diversity of innovation research, boundaries are drawn to the scope of the research and the associated review of the literature. This study concentrates on innovation management and new service development, as well as aspects of organisational and social psychology, as well as organisational behaviour and management applied to services. It excludes the stage of idea generation and largely ignores the literature on creativity and problem-solving, due to the focus of these strands in the literature on abstract concepts and early stages of development. Appendix 1-1 provides an overview of inclusion and exclusion criteria for the literature review. Finally, the research focuses on one service sector, that of the hotel industry.

This study makes three distinct contributions to knowledge in service innovation. Firstly, it explores the innovation process with an exclusive focus on implementation and concludes that implementation is an iterative process of planning, training, secondary adoption and adaptation, launch, review and routinisation, and follow up. Secondly, the study discerns that a combination of individual, firm, innovation, and process-related factors form the context of implementation and influence the process, whilst pointing out the most important factors of knowledge, innovation fit to market and organisation of formal activities. Finally, this study points at the mechanisms that explain the events in the implementation process and proposes the application of sensemaking, organisational learning, organisational politics and emotional reactions as valid mechanisms in the explanation of implementation events. The study also offers a methodological contribution with the application of a critical realist paradigm to the study of innovation implementation. With the focus of this study on the hotel industry, this study adds to knowledge on innovation within the sector by demonstrating how the intensive nature of customer-employee interaction in the industry affects the implementation process. In addition, the study showcases that innovation does exist in the hotel sector despite claims of the contrary in the literature, and illustrates how existing measurements of innovation output in current innovation surveys can be misleading by underestimating the true level of innovation in the field.

1.8. Structure of the Thesis

The thesis begins with the Introduction chapter (See Figure 1-1) that presents the rationale for this study and the content of the thesis, while identifying specific gaps in service innovation research, specifically in implementation and the hotel industry context. The aims and objectives of this study are stated and its boundaries are set. Finally, the contribution of this study to the knowledge base of the field is explained.

Figure 1-1 Structure of the Thesis



Chapter 2 presents the current literature on services and innovation by including the definitions, typologies, and relevant concepts to service innovation, that later help to define the selected cases in this study. The chapter also identifies three approaches to service innovation research, mainly in relation to past product innovation literature, and justifies the approach adopted in the current study.

Chapter 3 deals with implementation by focusing on the employee perspective and the relevance of a critical realist approach. Evidence from empirical studies on the factors that influence implementation and the process models is used to build the conceptual framework of the study, while specific gaps in the literature reveal the need to include institutional theory, the role of feeling and emotions and that of customers in the discussion.

Chapter 4 explains the philosophical stance of the researcher and justifies the methodology of this study by defending the choices of the case study approach and the intensive research design. The chapter presents the data collection techniques in the form of interviews and documents, and the data analysis techniques in the form of Template Analysis. Finally, the chapter highlights the quality assessment criteria used in this study, while reflecting on the role of the researcher and the methodological limitations.

Chapters 5 and 6 explore the findings of two service innovation projects following the trajectory of implementation grounded in the collected data. With emphasis on context, the background to the innovation project and the organisation is presented. Based on the critical realist perspective, the events that took place during implementation are detailed, followed by the identification of key entities instrumental to the process. Mechanisms that can explain the way that events and entities interact are proposed by comparing the findings to the previously developed conceptual framework. The analysis of findings leads to the formation of the thematic template, built with first case data and updated with the second case.

Cross-case analysis and discussion are the focus of Chapter 7. The chapter amalgamates the two cases findings and presents the main implementation activities and their influencing factors related to individuals, organisation, innovation, and process. It also presents the review of the conceptual framework with emphasis on the role of people in implementation.

Finally, Chapter 8 completes the thesis by revisiting aims and objectives and drawing clear conclusions in relation to the purpose of the research. The chapter justifies the contributions to knowledge in the field of service innovation and offers recommendations to managers of innovation projects. The limitations of the study are exposed and opportunities for future research are presented.

2. Service Innovation

2.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the literature on services and innovation, mainly flourishing the last three decades. With the employee perspective being critical in implementation, innovation studies in the fields of organisational psychology and management science are primarily reviewed. The chapter specifically looks at the definitions and typologies of service innovation, and associated terms, which are useful for setting the boundaries of the empirical cases involved in this study, and for specifying the research contribution. It also details the main approaches to service innovation research and the link to the established product innovation literature. Theories on service innovation, new service development (NSD) and new product development (NPD) relate to innovation in services, and often carry a different approach to the similarities between goods and services. It is therefore important to justify the approach adopted in each innovation study, as it affects the relevance of different strands of literature.

In line with the first objective of this study that is to review the literature on service innovation and new service development, this chapter explores the extant literature in relation to two review questions and their implied sub-questions:

(1) What are the different conceptualisations of service? Why is the Service-Dominant logic adopted in this study? (Section 2.2)

(2) What is service innovation? What is its relationship with the concepts of new service development (NSD) and change? What are its classifications and research approaches? (Section 2.3)

2.2. The Service Concept

In order to understand the implementation of service innovation, it is useful to deconstruct the term to its components and clearly state the adopted definitions for the purposes of comparison, so this section focuses on the concept of service and its meaning. Scholars from service management, service marketing and operations management disciplines have engaged in the discussion on service with two clusters of views identified: the Goods-Dominant (G-D) logic, which regards service as a market offering and the Service-Dominant (S-D) logic, which conceives service as a process of value creation (Lusch and Nambisan, 2015).

2.2.1. Service in the G-D logic

Based on the tradition of manufacturing as the main economic driver, G-D logic proponents negatively define service as everything that is not a product, i.e. a good embedded with utilities and a nominal exchange value (Lusch and Nambisan, 2015). The business focus is on units of output, and value-in-exchange is created through economic transactions characterised by change of output ownership (Lusch and Nambisan, 2015). Examples of such goods are cars, food, clothing and furniture.

Four characteristics of services deriving from early economic thought and Adam Smith's goods-versus-services debate permeate services in the G-D perspective (Lovelock and Gummesson, 2004). They are intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability, and perishability (IHIP) and are considered to be a source of problems in service provision (Spring and Araujo, 2009). Services are considered intangible, i.e. they cannot be seen, felt, tasted or touched before use (Edvardsson, Gustafsson and Roos, 2005); they are predominantly processes rather than physical entities, and therefore difficult to test in concept, vulnerable to copying by competitors and easily modifiable by service staff (Johne and Storey, 1998). For example, a restaurant meal cannot be tasted by the customer before it is served. Services are presented as heterogeneous, i.e. they can vary in quality due to the human touch (Johne and Storey, 1998), and require extensive staff training, practice and standard operating procedures (SOPs) to increase consistency. For example, a taxi ride from home to the cinema is different every time it is made. In contrast to the sequential nature of production, purchase and consumption of physical products, services' production and consumption are inseparable (Vargo and Lusch, 2004b), which increases risks for customers unable to personally assess services prior to purchase (Verma, 2008). For example, a home is cleaned at the same time as the home cleaning service is bought. Finally, services are viewed as perishable, i.e. unable to be stored and sold at different times, which creates particular challenges for managing demand through careful capacity planning (Johne and Storey, 1998). For example, an empty hotel room cannot be sold the following night.

Despite the long tradition of IHIP characteristics in the service literature, their relevance to services nowadays is contested. For example, self-services such as automated car cleaning, online check-in and buffet-style dining, are produced and consumed by customers alone, therefore reducing heterogeneity. Not all services are perishable either; an ATM, for example, being a robust store of standardised cash withdrawals (Edvardsson, Gustafsson and Roos, 2005). It should also be noted that IHIP often characterise the service delivery process rather than the service itself, and therefore are the concern of service providers, who need to manage service quality or plan capacity, rather than that of customers (Edvardsson, Gustafsson and Roos, 2005).

It is thus argued that attention to IHIP should be driven by their consequences (Vargo and Lusch, 2004b), in the case of innovation management, intangibility and inseparability being the most pertinent characteristics. Conceptual development of intangible services is more complex than that of physical products, thus making it difficult to communicate their essence to employees and customers. The use of 'tangibilisers' to create evidence and justify benefits can be a viable solution to this problem. For example, a cleaning maid can leave a card at the end of service explaining to the customers that the hotel room was cleaned by this person. Similarly, inseparability hinders concept testing of new services prior to their launch to customers. Although apparently problematic, this issue could be used as a co-creation opportunity among customers, employees and other parties in the process (Edvardsson, Gustafsson and Roos, 2005). IHIP-related issues should therefore be explored more fully in service innovation studies in order to advance knowledge about the way organisations practically address the challenges associated with IHIP.

2.2.2. Service in the S-D logic

In a world where both manufacturers and service organisations increasingly bundle services with products (Visnjic, Wiengarten and Neely, 2016), the IHIP characteristics can provide an insight into what a service is about, but neglect a definition of such a service. For example, Xerox a traditional printing manufacturer now offers printer maintenance services to its customers. Toy manufacturer LEGO has also used a web service allowing users to design their own toys as a means to increase profits from the sale of toys (Visnjic, Wiengarten and Neely, 2016). The G-D logic is also limited in depicting the organisational reality as both products and services render a service when the customers use them (Ottenbacher, Shaw and Lockwood, 2006; Gummesson, 1995). For example, a lawnmower provides customers with the service of a trimmed garden after its use, the same way as a hotel stay provides guests with accommodation service for a night. Concentrating on customers and their benefits therefore seems to be the key in understanding service, with the S-D logic focusing on the processes of serving rather than on outputs (Lusch and Nambisan, 2015). Service is thus defined as the "application of specialised competencies (knoweldge and skills) through deeds, processes, and performances for the benefit of another entity or the entity itself" (Lusch and Vargo, 2006, p. ix). Although this definition is criticised for its ambiguity (Edvardsson, Gustafsson and Roos, 2005) and its minimal discriminatory value for the purpose of drawing meaningful managerial insights (Sampson, 2010), it has important implications for the study of innovation by encompassing the concepts of value, and the roles of customer and provider in service provision.

Based on S-D logic, value is always determined by the beneficiary when a service is used (value-in-use), rather than the firm (value-in-exchange) (Lusch and Nambisan, 2015). Time, place and network relationships are critical variables in the determination of value (value-in-context) (Vargo, Lusch and Akaka, 2010). It follows that companies do not produce or deliver value, but can only offer value propositions which turn into actualisation with customer participation (Vargo, Lusch and Akaka, 2010). For example, the value of a fun park ticket is actualised when the customer enjoys a ride, not at the moment the ticket is bought. The way that these value propositions are practically conferred in organisational settings can be the contributions of service innovation studies.

Customers and their perceptions are central in services, although their exact role in the process, and the nature of their participation, remain in question in the literature. Customers and providers co-create value by applying relevant knowledge and skills in service, for example by using the internet to access online-banking services (Chew, 2015), and need to be trained accordingly (Grönroos, 2008). Customer skills, such as using of credit cards, handling of car-washing equipment and operating launderet machines, become particularly critical in self-services, while in business-to-business services customers have to support their everyday activites with their own, or outsourced resources. Innovation studies should therefore shed a light into the actual role of customers in service provision.

Finally, S-D logic points to the binary role of service provider, being a facilitator of value creation for customers through the provision of resources, such as goods, services, and information, and a co-creator of value with customers through direct customer interaction (2008). By being integrated in value creation, firms have the opportunity to control the benefits that customers derive from services. It follows that, during service innovation, when services are renewed, firms can be directly involved in customer activities, learn from customers and teach them new skills, and adjust to customer preferences. Empirical studies are valuable in demonstrating how this is implemented in practice during innovation projects.

2.3. Service Innovation

Having defined and discussed service, the focus shifts to service innovation, the subject of this study, and the review questions 'What is service innovation?', 'What is its relationship with the concepts of new service development (NSD) and change?', and 'What are its classifications and research approaches?'. It is important to deal with definitions of these conceptually close terms in order to be able to provide clear statements on the contributions of this study to the service innovation field. As Baunsgaard and

Clegg (2015) confirm the erratic use of labels in the literature so far renders consistent terminology paramount in ascertaining cumulative and comparable innovation research.

2.3.1. Service Innovation and NSD

The term innovation is derived from the Latin word innovare*,* meaning 'to renew' or 'to alter' (Frost and Egri, 1991). Schumpeter (1947) was the pioneer of innovation theory development, connecting innovation propensity to company size; large corporations with more resources and market power were seen as in a better position to innovate than smaller organisations. Generally, innovation is considered the creation of 'something new' (De Jong and Vermeulen, 2003), and is expected to provide benefits such as a profit or growth (King and Anderson, 2002). Innovation research can take both a macro- and micro- level approach to innovation (Goffin and Mitchell, 2005). In economics, the focus is on entrepreneurship and innovation patterns across countries and industrial sectors. For example, studies explore the traits of entrepreneurs and the diffusion of new technologies in developing countries. In the business strategy tradition studies deal with the implications of offering new services (Menor, Tatikonda and Sampson, 2002, p. 4) and the ways organisations build innovative competencies (De Jong et al., 2003). For example, studies examine the way marketing competencies such as marketing research, promotion, distribution and customer service are developed in the context of innovation (De Jong et al., 2003). The organisational and social psychology disciplines, on the other hand, offer a micro-level approach and concentrate on individuals and the innovation projects (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1995).

The literature offers a large number of definitions of innovation; however, the classical definitions that have been used as the basis for subsequent attempts to define the term are presented in Table 2-1. The common term used in all definitions is 'new' to the relevant unit of adoption according to the perspective of the implementer. Service innovation and NSD, primarily employed in the service management and marketing fields, are terms often used synonymously in service innovation studies (Roth, 2015), as illustrated by the definitions in Table 2-1. The common ground between the two terms is 'newness' in relation to the content (new ideas, processes, or products/services).

Table 2-1 Innovation and NSD Definitions

Term	Definition	Author
Innovation	"Any idea, practice or material artefact perceived to be **new** by the relevant unit of adoption."	Zaltman, Duncan and Holbek (1973, p. 10)
Innovation	"The intentional introduction and application within a role, group or organisation of ideas, processes, products or procedures, **new** to the relevant unit of adoption, designed to significantly benefit the individual, the group, organisation or wider society."	West and Farr (1990, p. 9)
Innovation	"The generation, acceptance and implementation of **new** ideas, processes, products or services."	Kanter (1983, p. 20)
New Service Development	"The development of service products which are **new** to the supplier."	Johne and Storey (1998, p. 185)

The term NSD is used to describe all the activities involved in bringing a concept to the market (Bettencourt, 2010), and is often associated with models showing the process of innovation through which projects go (Baunsgaard and Clegg, 2015). It is therefore restricting for studies encompassing a larger view of service innovation, by including for example factors that influence the process, and is avoided in this study. NSD studies are nevertheless included in the literature review due to their input describing the process of innovation.

2.3.2. Service Innovation and Change

The term *innovation* is conceptually close to *change*, the two terms being used interchangeably in the literature (West and Farr, 1990). Innovation studies, particularly the ones dealing with people relationships and behaviour, are often considered a sub-area of mainstream change management research

(Greenhalgh et al., 2004). However, not all change is innovation (Dewett, Whittier and Williams, 2007). Unintended or undesired change, such as reducing the workforce in a recession or stopping operations due to natural catastrophes, does not constitute service innovation (West and Farr, 1990), which is usually perceived as a positive, constructive, and productive change (Dewett, Whittier and Williams, 2007). However, differentiating the two terms on the basis of a negative versus positive connotation can lead to a 'pro-innovation bias' that disregards the complexity of the process and considers all innovations beneficial for users and producers (Mariano and Casey, 2015). Service innovation involves risks and better organisational performance is not guaranteed when pursuing innovative activities (Cobbenhagen, 2000); Nevertheless, change is part of innovation implementation and therefore change management theories have been reflected in innovation models and included in this literature review as they can enrich innovation research (West and Farr, 1990).

2.3.3. Service Innovation Classifications

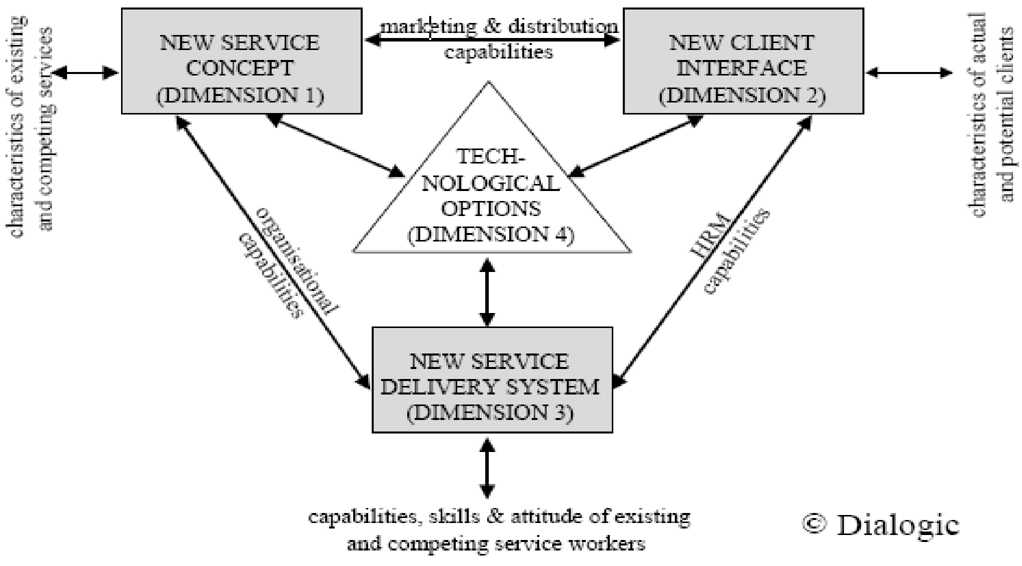
Following the discussion on the links between service innovation, NSD and change, this section turns to the service innovation classifications, which are used to draw boundaries around the cases selected in this empirical investigation, and to assess differences among innovation types with regards to implementation.

Although the literature contains multiple classifications of service innovations based on criteria such as standardisation, volume and variety (Randhawa and Scerri, 2015), the difficulty of distinguishing innovation types in services is also acknowledged (Voss and Zomerdijk, 2007). Innovations are commonly classified in the innovation literature into product/service innovations, process innovations and organisational/administrative innovations. This classification is adopted in the Oslo manual used to capture EU innovation data (Damanpour and Gopalakrishman, 2001). The first type involves a new product or service introduced to meet external user or market needs (Uchupalanan, 2000). The second type relates to a new element introduced to the production stage or to operations to increase efficiency (reduce costs) or effectiveness (improve operations e. g. reduce lead time, improve quality and increase flexibility) (Boone, 2000). The third type aims at enhancing a firm's performance through improved control, organisational structures, management systems, recruitment and personnel policies, and motivation systems (Damanpour, 1987). However, in the service sector, product and process innovation are interlinked, so a sharp delineation between the two types is hardly possible and rather simplistic (Nightingdale, 2003; Gallouj and Weinstein, 1997; Miles, 2008; Uchupalanan, 2000). There is therefore a need to move away from classifications that distinctively separate service innovation into types to other ways of understanding the variety of innovation in services.

Four-dimensional model of innovation

To solve the issue of weak service innovation typologies Den Hertog (2000) proposes a four-part model of service innovation. This model does not distinguish between innovation types, but has dimensions that can be combined within a single innovation. These dimensions are a new service concept, a new client interface, a new service delivery system, and technological options (Figure 2-1), and are associated with capabilities that need to be developed or enacted for the innovation to be realised, and characteristics of existing services and customers.

Figure 2-1 Den Hertog's Four-dimensional Model of Service Innovation



Source: den Hertog (2000, p. 495)

The first dimension involves a new service concept, for example a call centre, and is affected by tensions between the characteristics of existing and competing services. For example, a restaurant that starts offering take-away services needs to balance high quality of meals offered on site and the speed of delivery out of site. The second dimension refers to a new client interface, such as an account management system, and has to consider the effect on existing and potential customers. The third dimension, a new service delivery system such as online client and provider interaction associated with the introduction of home shopping services, focuses on changes in internal organisational arrangements that allow service workers to perform their jobs more efficiently. Attention should be placed on balancing capabilities and skills of existing and competing employees by offering training and support during the change. Finally, the fourth dimension in the model is technology, a particularly pervasive and strong enabler of service innovation (Den Hertog, 2000). For example, tracking and tracing systems in supermarkets, hotels, and transport have revolutionised services in the fields (Dolfsma, 2004).

One of the four dimensions may be more prominent in any service innovation but can prompt changes in other dimensions (Gallouj and Weinstein, 1997). For example, entry into hotel online check-in combines a new client interface with new technological infrastructure.

Similarly, in advance data warehousing the technological dimension dominates but needs to be supplemented by changes to the other three dimensions: a new shop formula (dimension 1), a new way of communication (dimension 2), and employee training (dimension 3) (Den Hertog, 2000). Therefore, linkages between dimensions are often more important than the dimensions themselves (Den Hertog, 2000), suggesting the need for research to build a comprehensive view of dimensions involved in any service innovation project.

Classification based on degree of newness

Another classification of innovation types that helps with the categorisation of innovation cases is based on newness, with ‘new’ being an acknowledged feature in all definitions of NSD and innovation as shown earlier. Fierce debate in the literature is punctuated however by questions of "how new or different a service should be to be called an innovation?" and "to whom is the innovation new?" (Peters and Pikkemaat, 2006, p. 94). For scholars such as De Brentani (2001) and Drejer (2004) only completely new offerings constitute innovations, while for others such as Oke (2007) and Veflen Olsen and Sallis (2006) innovations can be either radical or incremental, i.e. lower impact improvements (Lovelock, 1984; Johnson et al., 2000). It is important to acknowledge the incremental types as valid forms of innovation as they positively affect organisational performance (Lichtenthaler, 2016) and should be incorporated in innovation strategy, further theory and practice by being the subject of empirical research and included in global innovation statistics.

Going into greater detail, Avlonitis and Papastathopoulou (2001) distinguished between six service innovation types placed on a continuum from most to least innovative (Table 2-2).

An element to consider with regards to newness is the perspective of the people involved, in other words to whom is the innovation new. Radical innovations can be new-to-market or new-to-the-company, new to all customers, or new to a specific target market (Peters and Pikkemaat, 2006), and can be more easily identified than the least innovative types, perhaps because of the need to judge the degree of change required, a socially constructed concept (2007). From a customer point of view, innovations can only be evaluated and perceived as radical or incremental innovations if they are visible to them (Lovelock, 1984). From an organisational perspective, however, incremental innovations can be "a tweaking of some aspect of the service offering or the mode of service delivery" that is not immediately visible to customers but affects service provision (Johnson et al., 2000, p. 22). Besides, innovations related to productivity or employee wellbeing for example, may target 'internal customers', the company's employees. From this perspective, therefore more incremental innovations are likely to be acknowledged; nevertheless, their characterisation to radical or incremental innovation types remains subjective.

Table 2-2 Innovation Types

Broad service innovation types	Detailed service innovation types	Description	Degree of newness
Radical	New-to-market	-allows the company to enter a new market for the first time and satisfy new clients and needs -offers new features versus competitive products or -is totally new to the market.	Really new – most innovative
	New-to-the-company	-supplements an existing company product line -is totally new to the company or -creates a new product line for the company.	
	New delivery processes	-requires the installation of new software to the company -requires the installation of new hardware to the company -requires a change in the customers' buying behaviour or -is supported by innovative technology	
Incremental	Service modifications	-is a modification of an existing company service -is a revision of an existing company service	
	Service line extensions	-requires similar NSD and marketing practices compared to current company services	
	Service repositioning	-is a repositioning of an existing company service	Not so new – least innovative

Note: Darker colour indicates more innovative

Different types of service innovation impact on implementation of innovation projects as they are driven by different success factors (2010). Radical innovations require more adaptation and refinement (Perks, Gruber and Evardsson, 2012), more resources, lengthier planning, and greater attention to strategic directions and activities compared to their incremental counterparts (Johnson et al., 2000). On the other hand, employee-related factors such as empowerment, training, and behaviour evaluation are more significant for incremental innovations (Ottenbacher and Harrington, 2010, p. 9).

2.3.4. Service Innovation Defined

It was stated earlier in the chapter how important it is for an innovation study to define the terms that guide the investigation, in order to advance knowledge in the field. Guided by the existing definition by Van Ark (2003, p. 15) and amalgamating the elements of the discussion so far this study proposes that

> service innovation is a *radically* or *incrementally changed* service concept, client interaction channel, service delivery system or technological concept that individually, but most likely in combination, leads to *increased value creation for either or both the internal and external customer*; and requires *the application of specialised competencies (knowledge and skills)* [italics indicate differences to original].

This definition is used to appropriately select and classify the innovation cases in this study. The aim was not to arrive at a universally accepted definition of the terms, but rather to justify the ones adopted for this study and summarise corresponding implications. Although it can be argued that innovation 'is a chaotic concept and even fuzzy term' (Bryson and Monnoyer, 2004), and many problems are associated with the definitions of service and innovation, 'this is something that we need to be aware of but not overtly concerned with; in this case, diversity can mean vitality' (Bryson and Monnoyer, 2004).

2.3.5. Service Innovation Research

Due to the proliferation of innovation studies, it is important to place any study on innovation into a category of research type for the purposes of meaningful theory development. Research following the G-D logic has adopted either an assimilation or a differentiation approach to service innovation (Gallouj and Savona, 2009; Coombs and Miles, 2000; De Vries, 2006; Drejer, 2004). The first approach views service innovation as fundamentally similar to manufacturing, driven by technology, and able to be studied using existing manufacturing-based theories (Flikkema, Jansen and Van Der Sluis, 2007; Tether, 2005). Service firms are seen, at best, as facilitators for 'proper' innovators (thought to be manufacturing firms), or occasionally as good imitators transferring ideas from manufacturing to services. At worst, they are seen as inactive, passive adaptors, "laggards" or "no hopers" in innovation terms (Howells, 2001, p. 56). Part of the problem behind not recognising innovation in services may be sourced in the measurement tools of innovation which are currently based on the manufacturing context (OECD, 2005). Examining R&D expenditure and the number of patents makes services appear short on innovation, compared to manufacturers. At the policy level, therefore, there is a recognised need to be more inclusive in measuring innovative activities in order to capture relevant activity in services.

The second approach is based on the criticism of the assimilation approach for its narrow view on service innovation (Drejer, 2004) and its ignorance of services idiosyncrasies (Akamavi, 2005). The differentiation or demarcation approach uses the IHIP characteristics to distinguish services from products, and calls for separate theory development for service innovation which is broad and often non-technological (Damanpour, 2014).

The S-D logic has given emphasis on combining innovation research in service and manufacturing firms, and therefore initiated the synthesis approach to service innovation (Drejer, 2004; Howells, 2006; Nijssen et al., 2006; Gallouj and Weinstein, 1997; Agarwal et al., 2015). Synthesis is based on the recognised need to link service innovation and mainstream innovation studies in order to carry any lessons from the long withstanding tradition of innovation research in manufacturing to the services context (Miles, 2000). In addition, empirical studies have shown that pure products and pure services should be seen as the two extremes of a continuum; in between products and services incorporate both tangible and intangible elements (Akehurst, 2008; Greenfield, 2002). Besides, with more manufacturers moving to service business models (Visnjic, Wiengarten and Neely, 2016) in a trend called servitisation of manufacturing

(Roth, 2015), it is often the service component of their business that becomes the source of competitive advantage (Kandampully, 2002). However, such amalgamation of products/services and focus on the benefits that the customer receives as proposed by the synthesis approach creates challenges for empirical studies and theory development. Meaningful classifications of services and products into relatively homogeneous groups are needed to allow comparisons among studies. Lovelock and Gummesson (2004) propose to abandon services as a general field, and instead study its subfields based on new parameters that need to be set, for example economy sectors, such as financial, transport, and retail industries. Hipp and Grupp (2005, p. 529) found however, that "innovation patterns in services are less sector-dependent"; thus, a segregation of innovation practices based on industry sector may not be futile.

It remains to be seen what type of classification would benefit innovation research in the long-term future. The hotel industry, being a largely diverse industry in terms of size, affiliations, geographical spread, service quality and seasonality may be a suitable context in which to explore differences in innovation patterns (Ottenbacher, 2007). For example, managed hotels and larger properties apply a more centralised decision-making approach to innovation, compared to franchises that enjoy greater autonomy in terms of innovation choice but have fewer innovations implemented overall. Small firm size is found to be a major and broadly recognised impediment for hotel innovation (Peters and Pikkemaat, 2005; Sundbo, 1997; Lejarraga and Martinez-Ros, 2014), similar to low hotel category and seasonality (Orfila-Sintes and Mattsson, 2009).

2.4. Summary

This chapter explored the literature on service and service innovation with a view to clarifying the way these concepts are used in this study and providing a clear framework for its contribution to knowledge. It was first demonstrated that theory in services has matured in moving from the G-D to S-D logic of service, where customers and value creation are placed at the centre of attention. Then the discussion concentrated on service innovation with newness shown to be the common denominator in definitions of the term. It was argued that both radical and incremental innovations are valid innovation types which can take the form of a new concept, new service delivery channel, and, or, a new client interface. Therefore, the definition adopted in this study acknowledges both incremental and radical innovations and the four innovation forms. Analysing the service innovation field demonstrated that service innovation research can adopt one of three approaches, namely assimilation, differentiation, or synthesis, based on the degree to which knowledge built in manufacturing settings is perceived as transferable to the context of services. It was maintained that the synthesis approach now offers a closer depiction of organisational reality compared to the other two approaches, since an increasing number of manufacturing firms adopt service business models making services appear in all sectors of the economy. Such an approach however does not offer enough clarity on the implications of different innovations for innovation implementation, a shortcoming that this study begins to address by empirically investigating two distinct innovation cases in the unique hotel context.

3. Service Innovation Implementation

3.1. Introduction

Having clarified the concepts of service and innovation, this chapter turns to the literature on the specific topic of this study, the implementation of service innovations. Findings from the literature review help to build the conceptual framework of the empirical investigation that forms the core of this study.

In line with the first and second objective of this study, this chapter explores the extant literature in relation to four review questions:
(1) What is service innovation implementation? (Section 3.2)
(2) How is the implementation process depicted in models? (Section 3.3)
(3) What are the factors influencing service innovation implementation? (Section 3.4)
(4) What are the mechanisms that explain the implementation process? (Section 3.5)

3.2. Implementation Defined

Comprehensive definitions of implementation are missing in the service innovation literature (Martin, Metcalfe and Harris, 2009). Implementation is usefully defined in the context of IT as "the process of gaining targeted organisational members' appropriate and committed use of an innovation" (Klein and Sorra, 1996, p. 1055); this definition can be applied to other services by considering both employees and customers as the innovation users. According to Dominguez-Péry, Ageron and Neubert (2013, p. 443), "service innovation implementation consists of deployment and use of the service in the value chain". For example, the implementation of an IT-driven service innovation in jewellery supply consists of the steps undertaken to transfer the jewellery from the suppliers to the points of sale through the logistical processes of receiving, warehousing, order picking and delivering (Dominguez-Péry, Ageron and Neubert, 2013). Implementation takes places towards the end of the innovation process, and has received substantially less attention in the literature compared to the earlier idea generation stage where ideas are created (Somech and Drach-Zahavy, 2013). This is surprising given that implementation failure is often cited as the reason behind unsuccessful innovations. Organisations can gain maximum benefit from fully implemented projects; as West (2002a: 411) succinctly put it "ideas are ten a penny: it's team implementation not idea generation that counts". In addition, most innovation studies do not differentiate between the two parts of the process (Somech and Drach-Zahavy, 2013), which is problematic because the required managerial skills, dynamics and drivers of the processes are different in each case (Dewett, Whittier and Williams, 2007; Van de Ven, 2008). For example, Axtell et al. (2000) demonstrated that autonomy and self-efficacy are most useful for idea generation, whereas participation in decision making and support for innovation are related to successful implementation. The practice of combining the two phases may also explain why contradictory, or inconclusive, results are observed in the literature with regards to antecedents or drivers of service innovation performance (Sarooghi, Libaers and Burkemper, 2015). It is therefore both sound and necessary to separate the two processes in the study of innovation (Wolfe, 1994), and, due to the identified gap in the literature, this study focuses on the implementation stage. It should be noted however, that implementation efforts are not confined to the later part of the process, but are exhibited throughout the course of the innovation when teams attempt to integrate the new with the old and reinvention takes place (Van de Ven, 2008; Rogers, 2003). For example, adoption of external innovations takes place at the higher organisational level before moving to lower levels in large organisations. Implementation research can be broadly divided into three streams of research, namely diffusion of innovation, innovativeness and innovation process research (Wolfe, 1994). Diffusion studies look at the ways innovations spread across a population of adopters over time and space. These studies describe innovation attributes that promote adoption and endeavour to classify adopters of innovations. Innovativeness studies concentrate on what makes certain organisations more innovative than others, placing the organisation and its characteristics at the centre of attention. Innovation process studies investigate the process of bringing an innovation to life by focusing on the innovation project and project-related factors. As all three streams provide useful links to the implementation process, they are used for the purpose of this study to amalgamate knowledge in the field.

3.3. The Implementation Process

The idea generation and implementation parts of innovation projects are often broken down to a collection of stages, activities or tasks that are depicted in detailed process models in the literature (Cooper et al., 1994). Generally, the stages involve planning, engaging, executing, and reflecting and evaluating. It is suggested that, in order to understand implementation, which usually incorporates the market introduction (launch) of the new service and follow up activities, "one must place it in the context of the entire innovation process" (Linton, 2002, p. 65). Thus, this section tackles the review question 'How is the implementation process depicted in innovation process models?'. What is being problematized in this section is the timing of actions during the implementation process, the perspectives of the individuals involved and the reasoning behind performing implementation steps. Process models can be largely classified into linear and non-linear models, the latter built in order to critique the first, and supported by empirical investigations.

3.3.1. Linear and Non-linear Process Models

Linear process models portray the innovation process as a well-defined and structured sequence of steps, although the terms scholars use to describe these steps may differ (Damschroder et al., 2009). The seminal work by Booz, Allen and Hamilton (1982) in product innovation has been used as a basis for the development of subsequent models (Table 3-1). Booz, Allen and Hamilton (1982) split implementation into the stages of testing and commercialisation. Testing includes trials to assess marketplace suitability, and provides feedback to better the offering prior to making it available to customers. Commercialisation contains the full-scale introduction of new offerings to the market while customer feedback needs to be sought actively and competitors' reactions need to be monitored carefully (Booz and Hamilton, 1982). Representative models that are subsequently proposed in the literature are by Shostack (1984), Scheuing and Johnson (1989), Bitran and Pedrosa (1998), Alam and Perry (2002), Zaltman et al. (1973) and Klein & Sorra (1996) (Table 3-1). Depending on their focus, whether on the provider or the user perspective, they can be divided into source-based and user-based models as shown in the table. They vary in the level of detail and importance of steps, but the order and content of the tasks are largely comparable (Jimenez-Zarco, Martinez-Ruiz and Gonzalez-Benito, 2006). Generally, source-based models portray implementation as containing the steps of training, service testing, marketing testing, secondary adoption, launching and reviewing. User-based models are proposed by Zaltman, Duncan and Holbek (1973) and Klein and Sorra (1996). They divide the implementation process into initial and sustained implementation (or routinisation), but are limited by their technological innovation and internal customer focus (Johnson et al., 2000). Nevertheless, such models point to the need for behaviour change in implementation (Klein and Sorra, 1996). They can therefore be useful to understand discrepancies between intended management actions and employee reactions. For example, such models differentiate between manager adoption and employee secondary adoption, in contrast to source based models that conflate the two. In services, the user perspective is particularly relevant as customer-contact employees translate a customer-oriented strategy into practice by driving external service value to the customer (Cook et al., 2002). This can be especially useful in a sector in which a firm is often judged by service quality which is driven by front-line staff responsible for the appropriation of new services (Ottenbacher, Gnoth and Jones, 2006).

Linear process models have been criticised in the literature for their linearity and their rigid, step-by-step, and dated format (Read, 2000; Alam and Perry, 2002). They also over-simplify the implementation process, without accounting for the fast pace of the business world and external environmental influence (Anderson, de Drew and Nijstad, 2004). According to Cooper et al. (1994), following the linear approach would lead to laborious, excessively bureaucratic and time-consuming practices, as well as communication breakdowns and increased costs (De Jong et al., 2003). In addition, sequential models do not integrate the way firms are organised, and nor do they help to define what must be produced during each implementation stage (Stevens and Dimitriadis, 2005).

Table 3-1 Linear Service Innovation Process Models

	Seminal model	Source-based models				User-based models	
	Booz, Allen and Hamilton (BAH) (1982)	**Shostack (1984)**	**Scheuing and Johnson (1989)**	**Bitran and Pedrosa (1998)**	**Alam and Perry (2002)**	**Zaltman et al. (1973)**	**Klein & Sorra (1996)**
IDEA GENERATION	Strategy development Idea generation Screening and evaluation Business analysis Development	First phase definition First phase analysis First phase synthesis Second phase definition Second phase analysis Second phase definition	Objectives and strategy Idea generation Idea screening Concept development Concept testing Business analysis Project authorization Service design and testing Process and system design and testing Marketing programme design and testing	Strategic assessment Concept development System design Component design	Strategic planning Idea generation Idea screening Business analysis Formation of cross-functional team Service design and process system design	Knowledge awareness Attitude formation Decision	Awareness Selection Adoption
IMPLEMENTATION	Testing Commercialisation	First phase implementation Second phase implementation Market introduction Post-introduction audit	Personnel training Service testing Test marketing Launch Post-launch review	Implementation	Personnel training Service testing and pilot run Test marketing Commercialisation	Initial implementation Sustained implementation	Implementation Routinisation

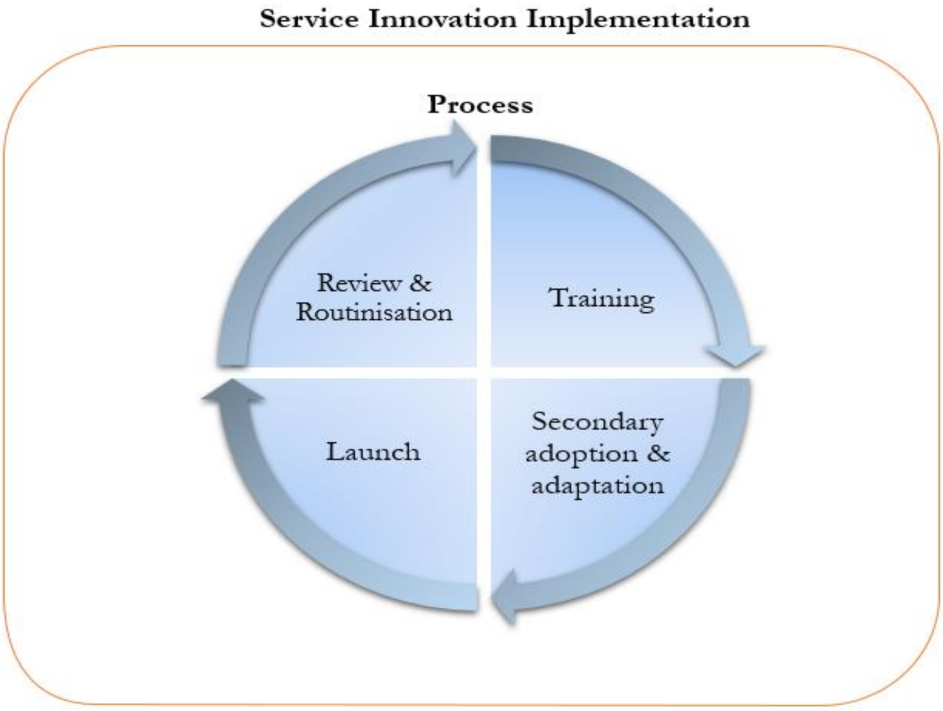
Only models by Scheuing and Johnson (1989) and Alam and Perry (2002) have an exclusive service focus (Hjalager, 2010; Roth, 2015), and even those have only been validated in the financial services industries. There are more reasons to question the linearity of the process in the service context. The intangible character of services means that testing and market launch cannot be fully separated, since there is no possibility to develop a service prototype (Debackere, van Loy and Papastathopoulou, 1998; De Jong et al., 2003). Quality control is difficult to achieve prior to consumption (Dolfsma, 2004). Therefore, according to Dolfsma (2004, p. 328) "dividing the process into separate steps might only work if and when the service resembles a product more". Criticism of linearity, however, does not imply an informal innovation process, as empirical studies have shown that firms with an ad hoc approach to innovation are less successful in their innovative efforts (De Brentani, 2001; Kelly and Storey, 2000; Dolfsma, 2004). Planning and organisation benefit implementation, which can be a "controllable event" (Edgett, 1994, p. 48) with a flexible process (Edvardsson and Olsson, 1996; Bodewes, 2000).

The limitations of linear process models have led to the emergence of non-linear models in the literature. Non-linear models portray the innovation process as an iterative (Anderson, de Drew and Nijstad, 2004), "complex process with multiple, cumulative and conjunctive progressions of convergent, parallel and divergent activities" (Gopalakrishnan and Damanpour, 1997, p. 16). Since they paint an intricate and muddled picture, such models are difficult to represent diagrammatically; therefore, authors rely on 'rich descriptions' instead. Examples of such models are offered by Stevens and Dimitriadis (2005), Lawrence et al. (2005) and Van de Ven, Angle and Poole (2000). The models usefully bring a particular perspective into understanding the innovation process, for example a learning (Stevens and Dimitriadis, 2005) or political perspective (Lawrence et al., 2005). Corroborated by findings in one of the widest innovation research studies, the Minnesota Innovation Survey, Van de Ven, Angle and Poole (2000) propose a cyclical representation of innovation. Van de Ven et al. (2008) depict the journey of innovation in core elements of learning, leadership, relationships and infrastructure development. Findings from this research are particularly relevant to this study as they demonstrate that the dynamics are different during the early and later parts of the innovation process, during initiation and implementation. For example, the two parts include different types of learning taking place, different types of leadership required, different emotions displayed, and different forms of relationships forged (Van de Ven, 2008). The dynamics of the process, the influence of the environment, organisational culture and structure, leadership issues and power balances are touched upon in non-linear models. Another important contribution of such models is the link of implementation activities to each other through feedback loops. For example, it is shown that the innovation process does not end with the innovation launch, but customer suggestions and complaints can be used as valuable feedback towards building insights and initiating new implementation cycles. Despite their contribution, current non-linear models in the literature do not elaborate on implementation or are not specifically applied to services, limitations that also apply to the linear models of innovation (Carlborg, Kindström and Kowalkowski, 2014).

3.3.2. Towards a Conceptual Framework: Step 1

The literature review so far is a first step in defining the conceptual framework of this study (Figure 3-1). Amalgamating evidence from linear and non-linear models, it can be concluded that the core implementation process consists of four activities: training, secondary adoption and adaptation, launch, and review and routinisation, with feedback loops 'breaking' the linear pattern. The four activities mirror the implementation models reviewed so far in the literature review and are unpacked in turn in the following section.

Figure 3-1 First Step in the Conceptual Framework: Process



<u>Training</u>

Training is the first implementation activity explicitly mentioned by Scheuing and Johnson (1989) and Alam and Perry (2002), but it is also discussed in all remaining reviewed models. Training involves the acquisition of the necessary knowledge and skills by employees and managers in order to administer the service innovation, but it can also be useful beyond competency building. Training often constitutes the first encounter of employees with the service innovation, and therefore provides the opportunity to share the innovation's rationale and benefits to users. It can also serve to build the confidence of employees who may find it stressful and tedious, due to the departure from old systems associated with the introduction of innovation (Klein and Knight, 2005; Lin and Rohm, 2009). Employees may be initially dissatisfied with how long it takes to acquire new and necessary competencies, during which time they should be supported to feel psychologically safe to share experiences and admit errors (Edmondson, Bohmer and Pisano, 2001; Edmondson and Mogelof, 2006).

Empirical studies of IT-enabled innovations have revealed that issues of appropriateness, effectiveness and timing are the source of dissatisfaction with training for both employees and managers (Lin and Rohm, 2009; Amoako-Gyampah and Salam, 2004). For example, employees are happier with innovation use training directly before the launch, rather than too early in the process (Lin and Rohm, 2009). In addition, concerns of individuals may differ at particular points in time, which creates significant challenges for the setup of collective appropriate training plans. There is a dearth of studies that focus on such differences, according to Lin and Rohm (2009); therefore, this research area is in need of development.

<u>Secondary adoption and adaptation</u>

In large organisations structured into headquarters and local units at different locations, assimilation of innovations is a primary concern in implementation as with lack of assimilation the innovation goals cannot be fulfilled. Secondary adoption refers to employees and managers embracing the innovation at the local organisational level, following the primary decision to adopt at a higher level (Gallivan, 2001; Rogers, 2003). It should be seen as a multiphase process rather than a dichotomous acceptance-rejection choice (Damanpour and Schneider, 2006). The secondary adoption stage is included in certain implementation models, such as those by Zaltman, Duncan and Holbek (1973), albeit without explanation of the ways to achieve the goal (Gallivan, 2001). (Gallivan, 2001) explains that adoption can be optional, consensus-based or authority-based, with the most common pattern found to be a consensus-based manager adoption, followed by an authority-based employee adoption (Rogers, 1983; Gallivan, 2001). For example, an innovation decision is made at the corporate office based on the majority of senior managers agreeing on a course of action; the decision is then implemented in local organisational units by managers exercising their authority rather than following a democratic approach.

Secondary adoption is often contingent on the possibility of adapting the service innovation to local circumstances or changing conditions (Rogers, 2003), with adaptation beginning as a thought process during training (Gallivan, 2001). Also characterised as re-invention, adaptation is defined as “the degree to which an innovation is changed or modified by a user in the process of its adoption and implementation" (Rogers, 2003, p. 180) and explains why innovations are implemented differently in various contexts. Innovations can be conceptualised as having a dual consistency; core components, i.e. essential and indispensable elements and an adaptable periphery, i.e. adaptable elements, structures, systems related to the innovation and the implementing organisation (Damschroder et al., 2009). The role of the periphery is to allow the modification of an innovation without compromising the integrity of the new offering. Balancing the need to fully and consistently implement an innovation across multiple sites and to adapt it to local circumstances is a substantial but worthwhile challenge in implementation (Damschroder et al., 2009). Shaping and customising the innovation may be beneficial for the employees using it (Rogers, 2003) and increases the chance of a successful implementation and routinisation in the organisation (Gustaffson et al., 2003). Adaptation to the innovation does not occur in isolation but is often accompanied by an adjustment to organisational processes in order to accommodate it (Boone, 2000; Rogers, 2003).

Launch

The launch of service innovation (Scheuing and Johnson, 1989), also named 'commercialisation' (Booz and Hamilton, 1982; Alam and Perry, 2002) and 'market introduction' (Shostack, 1984) in innovation models, refers to the point after which employees are required to fully implement the service innovation. In their review of service innovation research Carlborg, Kindström and Kowalkowski (2014) found that the launch is one of downstream deployment activities that connects the new concept to its delivery and is in need of further investigation in the service context, especially in relation to standardised processes that can increase efficiencies. Launch is considered effective when it is formal, full-scale, well-coordinated, and well-targeted (Melton and Hartline, 2013). It should also include a formal promotion to internal and external markets and a post-launch evaluation of the process and appropriately modification of the service innovation (Melton and Hartline, 2013).

Timing is the most critical issue in launch. If the launch is timed correctly it can lead to vast competitive advantage, and conversely, if it is delayed it can decrease potential financial returns (Carlborg, Kindström and Kowalkowski, 2014). It is suggested however, that incremental innovations benefit more from accelerated market introduction compared to radical new services where attention to accurate development and quality are considered more important (van der Panne, van der Beers and Kleinknecht, 2003). So a tailored approach to launch timing according to innovation type may be appropriate although evidence from empirical studies in services is admittedly incomplete. Besides, Kimbell (2014, p. 46) suggests that in a fast-changing and uncertain environment organisations need to "launch clumsy solutions and learn" instead of wait to perfect proposed innovations. A learning capability then becomes key if this approach is followed.

Review and routinisation

Review is the formal procedure of assessing performance against success criteria (Cooper and Edgett, 2005), and providing feedback which initiates another implementation cycle of improvements. It is called post-launch review and post-introduction audit in innovation models by Scheuing and Johnson (1989) and Shostack (1984) respectively. Routinisation refers to the innovation fit in daily operations whereby new behaviours and processes become the norm (Edmondson, Bohmer and Pisano, 2001). Routinisation is achieved at the local organisational level when major issues, such as lack of coordination between organisational departments or lack of customer promotional materials, associated with the innovation are solved; then the innovation is widely used by its targeted population and no longer perceived as new. Rather than focusing on individual adoption, routinisation examines coordination and synchronisation among work groups as maximum innovation benefits can be achieved with consistent innovation use (Gallivan, 2001). Routinisation includes both the internal diffusion, the breadth of usage focusing on the number of users and infusion, the depth of usage focusing on integration and comprehensive innovation use (Gallivan, 2001).

Although the conceptual framework built so far provides an overview of the stages in service innovation implementation it lacks reference to the impact of the organisational context on the process. A comprehensive model, grounded in empirical evidence, should aim at including not only the events, but also the embedded conditions in the organisational context which determine the process (Wolfe, 1994). For example, based on findings from two longitudinal cases Stevens and Dimitriadis (2005) propose a service innovation model, rooted in a learning process affected by multiple interactors including individuals, groups and technical devices. The model is systemic rather than normative in recognition of the impact of the external environment in innovation projects. A number of studies that look at the factors influencing implementation can provide clues that assist in forming a wider picture of implementation.

3.4. Factors Influencing Implementation

A substantial part of the literature deals with antecedents of service innovation, as highlighted in the literature reviews by Akamavi (2005), De Jong and Vermeulen (2003), and Johne and Storey (1998), and subsequent studies by Salunke, Weerawardena and McColl-Kennedy (2013), Santamaría, Jesús Nieto and Miles (2012) and Carlborg, Kindström and Kowalkowski (2014). These so-called variance studies quantitatively assess the correlation between independent and dependent variables (Kankanhalli, 2015), or more loosely match inputs and outputs (Tsohou et al., 2008). Inputs in variance studies are called drivers, antecedents, influencing factors, success factors, or critical success factors. They relate to individuals, the innovation concept, the process or the project and they are further analysed in the following sections. Outputs are perceived as innovativeness, effectiveness, or success, and are measured in different ways (Table 3-2).

Variance studies, which often overlook the complex, unpredictable and non-generalisable nature of the interaction between factors, are criticised for being descriptive and non-systemic (Greenhalgh et al., 2004). Their proliferation and variability hinders comparisons between them. Other limitations include the mix of self-ratings and independent ratings (Hülsheger, Anderson and Salgado, 2009) and lack of precision and inconsistent use of terms (Storey and Easingwood, 1996). For example, in the marketing literature, innovativeness is a measure of the newness of an innovation (Garcia and Calantone, 2002); in management, it relates to the number of adopted innovations (Wolfe, 1994). Besides, certain measurements are questioned for their meaningfulness. For example, the number of adopted innovations does not in itself pre-empt success in implementation (Cobbenhagen, 2000). However, evidence from such studies can be used in the effort to build a comprehensive model of implementation.

Table 3-2 Outputs and their Measurements

Outputs	Measurements
Innovativeness	- Number of innovations adopted or implemented - Frequency of the innovation use (Yetton, Sharma and Southon, 1999) - Radicalness (status quo alterations) - Originality (West, 2002b)
Concept effectiveness	- Fit with existing service systems, including processes, participants, infrastructure (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1995)
Process effectiveness	- Speed to market (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1995; Carbonell, Rodríguez-Escudero and Pujari, 2009) - Cost effectiveness (Voss et al., 1992) - Productivity (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1995)
Implementation effectiveness	- Appropriate and committed innovation use (Klein and Sorra, 1996) - Assimilation in daily organisational practices (Choi and Chang, 2009)
Project effectiveness	- Financial indicators e.g. turnover, market share, profit - Non-financial indicators e.g. customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, employee morale (Klein, Conn and Sorra, 2001; Brown and Eisenhardt, 1995)

Variance studies with an exclusive implementation focus are particularly rare, and mostly deal with IT innovation implementations (Dewett, Whittier and Williams, 2007; Cheng and Shiu, 2012). This creates challenges in pinpointing the influences on implementation in services, and creates an urgent gap in the literature. The few studies that differentiate determinants based on process stage and innovation type (Avlonitis and Papastathopoulou, 2001; De Brentani, 2001; Cuerva, Triguero-Cano and Córcoles, 2014) classify factors as those related to individuals, the firm, the concept and the process (Damschroder et al., 2009). Due to its prevalence in the literature, this classification is adopted in this study.

3.4.1. Individual-related Factors

Implementation is regarded as a "human process" in service innovation (Choi and Chang, 2009, p. 252), and factors related to the individuals involved are set to influence the process. Traditionally, these factors refer to employee and manager characteristics such as autonomy and self-efficacy, but, with recognition of customers and suppliers as value co-creators (Agarwal et al., 2014), they can be extended to include factors related to all actors involved in the process (Kimbell, 2014). Particularly, characteristics of front line staff, such as customer and practice knowledge (Karlsson and Skålén, 2015), are crucial in service innovation, due to the perceived quality of customer interaction being more important than the service product itself (Cooper and De Brentani, 1991). However, they have been the subject of little research up to date, and are in need of further investigation (Damschroder et al., 2009; Yang, Lee and Cheng, 2016). Evidence from empirical studies in services demonstrate that three factors relating to individuals influence service innovation implementation (Table 3-3). They are empowerment, knowledge and self-efficacy.

Table 3-3 Evidence on Individual-related Factors

Input Factors that are shown to affect implementation in the studies below: **Empowerment** - the provision of confidence to people involved in the process and belief in their abilities to perform the required work tasks (Ottenbacher, Shaw and Howley, 2005) **Knowledge** - Familiarity with facts, truths and principles around the innovation project (Damschroder et al., 2009; Alexander, Neyer and Huizingh, 2016) **Self-efficacy** - Individuals' beliefs in their own capabilities to execute desired courses of action (Michael, Hou and Fan, 2011)	
Key Authors	**Evidence**
De Brentani (2001)	148 Canadian cases in services, covering all major business service sectors, 64 radical innovations, 84 incremental innovations
Ottenbacher, Gnoth and Jones (2006)	183 cases in hospitality services, Germany
Damschroder et al. (2009)	Meta-analysis of previous research in implementation of health services
Chang, Gong and Shum (2011)	193 independent hotels and restaurants, China
Grissemann, Pikkemaat and Weger (2013)	244 hotel managers in Tyrol, Austria and South Tyrol, Italy
Karlsson and Skålén (2015)	Multiple case study of four service innovation in a public hospital; a multinational telecom equipment and service provider; a spa hotel; and an information technology (IT) consultancy agency
Storey et al. (2016)	Meta-analysis of the antecedents of service innovation performance conducted on 92 independent samples obtained from 114 articles
Yang, Lee and Cheng (2016)	146 frontline bank teams, China

Empowerment

Empowerment is an individual-related factor that affects implementation by providing confidence to people involved in the process and belief in their abilities to perform the required tasks. Empowered actors are the ones provided with autonomy and control over job-related decisions (Ottenbacher, Shaw and Howley, 2005), who are allowed to work independently (De Jong and Vermeulen, 2003) and encouraged to show their personal initiative (Ottenbacher, Gnoth and Jones, 2006). In a comparative study of three service areas, public sector services without considerable degree of self-control, public sector services with a certain exercise of authority, and private sector services, interviews with customer-contact employees revealed that participants value the prospect of controlling their work situations, and prefer conditions that allow them to be empowered (Edvardsson and Gustavsson, 2003). For example, employees prefer autonomy on when to answer telephone calls and prefer use of computers that allow them to control customer flows (Edvardsson and Gustavsson, 2003).

Empowerment is also found to be an important influence on implementation in the hotel industry (Grissemann, Pikkemaat and Weger, 2013), particularly in relation to the introduction of incremental service innovations, such as a new software version not accompanied by major technological changes (Ottenbacher and Harrington, 2010). It can be achieved by integrating employees in the innovation process through a strategic human resources approach (Ottenbacher, Gnoth and Jones, 2006), and by devising reward systems to drive enthusiasm for the innovation (De Jong and Vermeulen, 2003). However, other employee characteristics impact on perceptions of autonomy; employees unwilling to try the innovation, less skilled employees and low performers perceive more managerial influence in the implementation process, regardless of other efforts to promote empowerment (Leonard-Barton, 1988). Nevertheless, even if employee integration in the innovation process can provide them with a valued learning experience, the ultimate responsibility for implementation should remain with the leaders (Grissemann, Pikkemaat and Weger, 2013).

Knowledge

Knowledge refers to familiarity with facts, truths and principles around the innovation project, and is seen as a prerequisite for implementation support

(Damschroder et al., 2009; Alexander, Neyer and Huizingh, 2016). It includes how-to knowledge concerning how to apply the service innovation and awareness of the rationale behind the initiative. It can be achieved through training, best practice sharing, peer-discussion and personal experiences (Skålén et al., 2015), and can make employees more motivated and passionate about the service innovation (Damschroder et al., 2009). Ordanini and Parasuraman (2011) state that front-line employees' proximity and frequent customer interaction equip them with "latent knowledge, gained through experience about how things could or should be done differently to improve customer service". Karlsson and Skålén (2015) found in their study that front-line employees contribute customer knowledge, product knowledge and practice knowledge during the five phases of the service innovation process, but primarily during implementation, as the types of knowledge together constitute the service. Melton and Hartline (2013) also discovered that frontline employees can contribute implementation expertise in the innovation process and, by communicating features and benefits of the new service, can build trust and confidence in the innovation. Therefore, frontline employees can assist both with internal and external dissemination of the service innovation (Karlsson and Skålén, 2015).

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy signifies individuals' beliefs in their own capabilities to execute desired courses of action (Michael, Hou and Fan, 2011), and is particularly relevant to implementation as it is associated with committed innovation use. The concept is integral to the process of changing and relevant to change theories of human behaviour (Damschroder et al., 2009), advocating that the more confident individuals feel about their ability to implement the change, the more likely they are to embrace it. Strongly associated with self-efficacy is the construct of role clarity (Bray and Brawley, 2002) that managers may leverage to boost motivation (Cadwallader et al., 2009). A role is a "set of expectations or norms applied to the incumbent by others in the organisation" (Cadwallader et al., 2009, p. 8). Role clarity can be achieved through training and appraisal systems in organisations. In a survey of 170 subordinate-supervisor dyads Whitaker, Dahling and Levy (2007) found that employees with high role clarity understand better the requirements of their role and are likely to have increased perceived ability in executing the task; believing more in their abilities, their motivation increases, their behaviour is likely to change (Cadwallader et al., 2009) and institutionalisation of service innovation occurs.

3.4.2. Firm-related Factors

Factors that relate to the firm where the innovation is implemented are bound to determine the appropriate course of actions in implementation (Lam, 2005), and are often more difficult to change than individual factors, due to their collective nature. Three firm-related factors impact on implementation, according to a number of case studies in service organisations (Table 3-4). These are organisational structure, a positive implementation climate and readiness for change.

Structure

Factors relating to the organisational structure which influence service innovation implementation include the complexity of the structure and levels of centralisation (Lam, 2005). These two factors are often perceived as having opposite effects on the idea generation and implementation parts of the process (Damanpour and Schneider, 2006); for example, centralisation of decision-making is seen as a facilitator of implementation, but an inhibitor to creativity, potentially restricting employee ideas to reach higher organisational levels. Empirical examinations on the issue are scarce and evidence is mixed, even among studies by the same scholar (Damanpour and Schneider, 2006); findings by Damanpour (1996) supported the positive association between complexity and implementation (albeit less positive compared to idea generation), while subsequent findings reversed the position (Damanpour and Schneider, 2006). There is therefore a need to empirically test the way structure impacts on innovation implementation, and whether the proposition of a shift from a top-down strategy to a wayfinding strategy that emerges through "purposeful improvisations in context" (Kimbell, 2014, p. 47) holds true.

Table 3-4 Evidence on Firm-related Factors

Key Authors	Evidence
Input Factors that are shown to affect implementation in the studies below: **Structure** - the complexity of the organisational structure and levels of centralisation (Lam, 2005) **Positive implementation climate** - A situation where "targeted employees shared perceptions of the extent to which their use of a specific innovation is rewarded, supported, and expected in their organisations" (Klein and Sorra, 1996, p. 1060) **Readiness for change** - Leadership support by top managers, lower level supervisors and resource availability (Choi and Chang, 2009)	
De Brentani (2001)	148 Canadian cases in services, covering all major business service sectors, 64 radical innovations, 84 incremental innovations
Edvardsson and Gustavsson (2003)	45 interviews, high-contact service firms, Sweden
de Jong and Vermeulen (2003)	Literature review of service innovation
De Brentani and Kleinschmidt (2004)	158 service firms and 162 manufacturing firms, north American, business-to-business, international NPD programmes
Froehle and Roth (2007)	Interviews with 17 respondents from service industries: financial, healthcare, education, media, food services, pharmaceuticals, utility
Helfrich et al. (2007)	Four case studies in health services
Ottenbacher (2007)	185 cases in hospitality services, Germany
Choi and Chang (2009)	47 agencies and ministries (public service process innovation), Korea
Cadwallader et al. (2009)	One case study of service innovation in a manufacturing firm
Damschroder et al. (2009)	Meta-analysis of previous research in implementation of health services
Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2013)	96 primary care teams, Israel
Santos-Vijande, López-Sánchez and Pascual-Fernández (2015)	256 survey responses in hotels, Spain
Storey et al. (2016)	Meta-analysis of the antecedents of service innovation performance conducted on 92 independent samples obtained from 114 articles

Positive implementation climate

A positive implementation climate has been defined as occurring when "targeted employees shared perceptions of the extent to which their use of a specific innovation is rewarded, supported, and expected within their organisations" (Klein and Sorra, 1996, p. 1060), and can make the difference between successful and failed implementation. Implementation climate represents the way organisational culture, including assumptions and beliefs, is manifested in practices and behaviour (McLean, 2005); it is therefore more tangible compared to culture, and can be identifiable in policies, procedures, and rewards. These policies and rewards can include provision of training to acquire desired skills, time allowance for experimentation and offer of incentives for innovation use (Klein, Conn and Sorra, 2001). It is found that the more positive the climate, the more widespread the innovation use by employees (Klein and Knight, 2005). A positive implementation climate can be nurtured by managers, justifying the need for change and making individuals understand the value and priority of innovation (McLean, 2005). According to Atuahene-Gima (1996), the meaning assigned to being innovative in services is more vital than in manufacturing. Clear goal setting and revision based on shared feedback can also be expected to contribute to a positive implementation climate. Finally, it is important for firms to establish a learning orientation, where managers feel safe to evaluate performance and admit failures, and employees feel safe to test new practices (McLean, 2005; Edmondson, Bohmer and Pisano, 2001). The difficulty with creating a positive climate lies in the choice of the right combination of policies and practices to promote innovation use, given the highly contextual nature of innovations (Helfrich et al., 2007). A universal set of policies and procedures cannot be specified for all organisations implementing service innovations; such a combination will depend on each firm's "structure, history, culture, human resources and regulatory demands" (Helfrich et al., 2007, p. 298). Even in the same firm, established policies need to be revised according to the stage in the implementation process through which the innovation moves (Helfrich et al., 2007).

Readiness for change

Readiness for change is the firm-related factor most explicitly linked to service innovation implementation. Closely linked to positive implementation climate, this factor is translated to leadership support by top managers, lower level supervisors and resource availability (Choi and Chang, 2009). Leaders that show "strong, convincing, informed, and demonstrable support for implementation" in their daily behaviour are likely to inspire employees to implement the innovation (Klein and Knight, 2005, p. 245). Their continuous commitment, patience, involvement and accountability are found to be essential components of successful implementation (Damschroder et al., 2009; Repenning, 2002; Klein and Knight, 2005). However, the manifestation of support in practice is difficult to trace according to Linton (2002), who warns that it is an artefact of retrospective case studies of successful innovations receiving positive responses on support that was not really there. Availability of resources, notably financial resources (Chiaroni, Chiesa and Frattini, 2011), is another indicator of readiness for change (Carlborg, Kindström and Kowalkowski, 2014). It is very costly for any organisation implementing service innovations to offer extensive training, provide employee support, launch a communication campaign for internal and external customers and relax performance standards while learning takes place.

3.4.3. Concept-related Factors

The third set of factors that influence innovation implementation relates to the innovation concept itself. They include the fit of the innovation with the existing service system, the fit with the market, and the fit with the values of the organisation (Table 3-5).

Fit with existing service system

A service system can be defined as the combination of service elements, namely processes, stakeholders and infrastructure, interacting with each other in service provision. Examining implementation from a service system perspective entails drawing attention to the shift from the current to the new service system, and the organisational capability to handle change in practices and behaviours (Kimbell, 2014).

Table 3-5 Evidence on Concept-related Factors

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Input Factors that are shown to affect implementation in the studies below:
Fit with existing service system - The extent of which the innovation fits with the combination of service elements, namely processes, stakeholders and infrastructure, interacting with each other in service provision (Cooper and De Brentani, 1991; Kleinschmidt, de Brentani and Salomo, 2007)
Fit with market - The degree to which a service innovation satisfies identified market needs and responds to changing needs (De Brentani, 1995; De Brentani, 2001; Menor and Roth, 2007)
Fit with values - The extent to which targeted users perceive the use of innovation will foster (or, conversely, inhibit) the fulfilment of their values (Klein and Sorra, 1996).</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Authors</td><td>Evidence</td></tr>
<tr><td>Cooper and De Brentani (1991)</td><td>106 cases in financial services industry</td></tr>
<tr><td>Martin Jr and Horne (1993)</td><td>217 service firms from 11 service categories (including consultancies, IT services, retailers, financial services, hospitality firms)</td></tr>
<tr><td>De Brentani (1995)</td><td>274 cases in financial services, transport and communication, management services</td></tr>
<tr><td>De Brentani (2001)</td><td>148 Canadian cases in services, covering all major business service sectors, 64 radical innovations, 84 incremental innovations</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ottenbacher (2007)</td><td>185 cases in hospitality services, Germany</td></tr>
<tr><td>Melton and Hartline (2013)</td><td>160 service innovation projects, education (50%), health care (30%), and financial services (13%), USA</td></tr>
<tr><td>Storey et al. (2016)</td><td>Meta-analysis of the antecedents of service innovation performance conducted on 92 independent samples from 114 articles</td></tr>
<tr><td>Yang, Lee and Cheng (2016)</td><td>146 frontline teams in the banking sector, China</td></tr>
</table>

Therefore, the fit of the innovation with the service system impacts on implementation (Cooper and De Brentani, 1991; Kleinschmidt, de Brentani and Salomo, 2007), and the bigger the change, the more challenging the new service integration (Mattsson and Orfila-Sintes, 2013). Tax and Stuart (1997) explain the process that organisations need to follow and the options they have in relation to service system alterations; firstly, identify the system elements affected by the service and state proposed changes, then, either modify the service innovation to match the existing service system, or integrate the existing and new service systems, accepting that quality may be compromised initially. If the first route is followed, care should be given so that the modified service innovation still provides the intended benefits. In the second case, effort should be placed in minimising the negative impact on service quality (Tax and Stuart, 1997).

The requirement for a close innovation-system fit leaves organisations in a paradoxical situation. A close fit of an innovation to the existing service system indicates a small departure from the current state of affairs, in other words a lack of radicalness. If close fit is a criterion for success, this leads to the conclusion that incremental innovations are more likely to succeed compared to radical innovations. Investigating differences between innovation types, Menor and Roth (2007) found that moderately new innovations are likely to perform better than incremental or radical ones. Cooper (1993), on the other hand, suggests that highly innovative new-to-the -world products are often perceived as more successful, due to the high competitive advantage they provide to organisations. Besides, it is suggested that managers are more motivated to do a 'better job' in radical projects due to the challenging nature of such projects (Cooper, 1993). It is not clear, however, whether differences exist between employees and managers on the perception of system fit and its impact on implementation, an area of research in need of further investigation.

Fit with market

Market fit refers to the degree to which a service innovation satisfies identified market needs and responds to changing needs. It is found to be a strong driver of implementation success (De Brentani, 1995; De Brentani, 2001; Menor and

Roth, 2007), especially when a high-growth, or high-profit, market is involved (Ottenbacher, Gnoth and Jones, 2006). Customers are more likely to welcome the innovation if it solves problems in their everyday activities, for example automatic ordering of supplies when stock becomes low solves the problem of monitoring stock levels. Employees are more willing to accept the new offering if they recognise the benefits it provides to the organisation, such as an increase in sales of supplies. In the hotel sector innovative offerings are found to impact on customer accommodation decisions, but not all customers value innovation equally (Victorino et al., 2005). Economy hotel guests, compared to mid- to up-scale customers, as well as leisure guests compared to business travellers, seem to have greater appreciation for innovative amenities, such as childcare programs and in-room kitchenettes, according to a large study of American travellers by Victorino et al. (2005).

Fit with values

Innovation-values fit can be defined as the extent to which targeted users perceive the use of innovation will foster (or, conversely, inhibit) the fulfilment of their values (Klein and Sorra, 1996). In this context, values are viewed as "generalised, enduring beliefs about the personal and social desirability of modes of conduct or end states of existence" (Kabanoff, Waldersee and Cohen, 1995, p. 1076). At the organisational level, values represent the way an organisation relates to external customers and competitors, and the way members of the organisation relate to each other internally. Examples of work values include positive interpersonal relationships, work benefits and open communication (Dong, Neufeld and Higgins, 2008). At the group level, values are shared among members of a group, and may be different among groups in the same organisation, depending on group self-interests. For example, senior managers and supervisors may have different values to employees at lower levels. Common experiences and personal characteristics affect the degree of sharing of values (Schein, 1992), which are generally stable, but can also change in the long-term. Studies testing the relevance of innovation-values fit however have inconclusive results. Cadwallader et al. (2009) showed in their study that perceived fit with organisational goals, key competencies and professional background, rather than normative values, are more important for implementation success. Dong, Neufeld and Higgins (2008) found that task-related values, such as speedier task completion with the use of technology, are directly related to implementation compared to the indirect effect of more general work-related values. Besides, it is shown that other factors, such as employee experience and feelings of self-efficacy affect employees' perception of innovation-values fit; experienced staff and employees with strong self-efficacy see a stronger fit compared to novices and those with low self-efficacy respectively (Dong, Neufeld and Higgins, 2008). There is therefore need to assess the context shaping the perceptions of innovation-value fit in order to understand its effect on implementation.

3.4.4. Process-related Factors

Factors, such as efficiency of the development process and launch proficiency, that relate to the implementation process play a major role in the outcome of a particular service innovation, and are ones that can be corrected from the outset so that organisations can succeed in their innovations. In general, it is expected that a well-executed implementation process will help firms to gain more benefits from an innovation than a poorly-executed process (Johne and Storey, 1998), but an efficient process is not in itself a sufficient requirement to reap the benefits from innovation. Criteria for evaluating the process of implementation are different to those for evaluating the overall innovation project. In other words, a successful process does not guarantee a successful innovation project. Therefore, evaluation should be performed with unique constructs (Voss et al., 1992). Three process-related factors are shown to affect implementation in empirical studies (Table 3-6). These are appointment of leaders, organisation of formal activities and stakeholder involvement.

Appointment of leaders

The implementation process is affected by the presence of four types of leaders who stir the process in desired directions, namely opinion leaders, formally appointed internal implementation leaders, champions and external change agents (Damschroder et al., 2009). Opinion leaders are those with formal or informal powers to affect how colleagues behave and what they believe.

Table 3-6 Evidence on Process-related Factors

Input Factors that are shown to affect implementation in the studies below: **Appointment of leaders** - The appointment of opinion leaders, formally appointed internal implementation leaders, champions and external change agents (Damschroder et al., 2009) **Organisation of formal activities** - The way the activities of planning, engaging, executing, and reflecting and evaluating are organised, formalised and ordered (Damschroder et al., 2009) **Stakeholder involvement** - The engagement strategy of involving multiple stakeholders (Postema, Groen and Krabbendam, 2012; Lynch, O'Toole and Biemans, 2016).	
Key Authors	**Evidence**
Cooper and De Brentani (1991)	106 cases in financial services industry
De Brentani (1995)	274 cases in financial services, transport and communication, management services
Johne and Storey (1998)	Literature review of service innovation studies
(Avlonitis and Papastathopoulou, 2001)	132 new financial services, success and failures, Greece
De Brentani (2001)	148 Canadian cases in services, covering all major business service sectors, 64 radical innovations, 84 incremental innovations
(De Jong and Vermeulen, 2003)	Literature review of service innovation studies
De Dreu (2006)	Two case studies in postal service and recruitment services respectively
Ottenbacher (2007)	185 cases in hospitality services, Germany
Hülsheger, Anderson and Salgado (2009)	Meta-analysis of 104 independent studies on innovation
Papastathopoulou and Hultink (2012)	Meta-analysis of 145 NSD-related articles
Melton and Hartline (2013)	160 service innovation projects, education (50%), health care (30%), and financial services (13%), USA
Somech & Drach-Zahavy (2013)	96 primary care teams, Israel
Storey et al. (2016)	Meta-analysis of the antecedents of service innovation performance on 92 independent samples obtained from 114 articles

Their opinions are influential because of status and authority, or because they represent their colleagues, and are seen as credible (Damschroder et al., 2009). Formally appointed internal implementation leaders can be coordinators or project managers of the implementation, often in combination with their existing role in the organisation. Champions are "charismatic individuals who throw their weight behind the innovation, thus overcoming the indifference or resistance that a new idea often provokes in an organisation" (Rogers, 2003, p. 414). With both managers and subordinates often being equally novices in the innovation process, the role of the champion gains elevated importance (Frost and Egri, 1991). Champions actively pronounce themselves in support of the innovation in antithesis to opinion leaders, who may not express their views from the outset. Champions are the type of leader most associated with success in implementation research (Leonard-Barton and Deschamps, 1988). Theoretically, a champion is in a powerful position to persuade opponents and mobilise resources (De Jong and Vermeulen, 2003). In practice, however, champions are either not used (Vermeulen and Alexander, 2001) or not efficiently supported in their role. Helfrich et al. (2007) explain that, although champions may serve as strong advocates of the service project, they may lack positional authority to shape the agenda and direct resources to implementation. Finally, external change agents are leaders that may be sourced outside the local organisation to shape the implementation either through their expertise or their facilitation skills in organisational change (Damschroder et al., 2009).

<u>Organisation of formal activities</u>

Four essential activities take place in the process according to Damschroder et al. (2009): planning, engaging, executing, and reflecting and evaluating. The way these activities are organised is considered an important factor in influencing service innovation implementation. The degree of formalisation of the process, and the order of activities are debated in the literature. Menor and Roth (2007) found that process formality is linked to success in implementation, as it implies a process focus, that allows for a simplicity and repetition in the process; on the other hand, a study of 217 service firms by Martin Jr and Horne (1993) did not support this finding, as the majority of participants reported an ad hoc process of innovation. Stevens and Dimitriadis (2005) argue that both formal and informal processes are viable in implementation as long as a thought process is devoted to the plan, organisation and scheduling of the process. Van de Ven (2008) concluded that the process is better described as a nonlinear dynamic system; it does not always follow a sequence or specific order, but it is not characterised by random trial-and-error either. According to Ottenbacher and Harrington (2010), a useful path for innovation studies is to investigate differences in the formality of the process based on innovation type, as evidence is currently incomplete. The authors found that incremental innovations benefit from an informal process, due to the significant advantage of the speed that such a process offers to the launch of incremental innovations, despite the acknowledged higher risk of failure. On the other hand, radical innovations need a more formal approach to implementation. However, the authors acknowledge that their study is limited by the manager perspective in Germany, and propose that further studies need to validate results in different contexts (Ottenbacher and Harrington, 2010).

Stakeholder involvement

The involvement of multiple stakeholders in implementation is one of the engagement strategies that is shown to positively affect the implementation process as it creates trust, motivation, and appropriate interaction (Postema, Groen and Krabbendam, 2012; Lynch, O'Toole and Biemans, 2016). Manager involvement and engagement legitimises the innovation, as managers tend to be considered the organisational elite (Choi et al., 2011). Involvement also increases psychological ownership, as De Jong and Vermeulen (2003) explain: "co-workers who have considerable influence on decision-making tend to identify with an idea and perceive it to be their innovation", leading to acceptance and adoption of the innovation. Involving actors denotes a shift in service innovation capabilities from doing *for* to doing *with* customers and other actors (Kimbell, 2014). It is found that early and active front-line employee involvement enhances the innovation process (Karlsson and Skålén, 2015).

The challenge for project managers is to identify the relevant stakeholder groups and judge the right time and way to involve them in the process, while becoming aware of their interests, intentions, influential power and values (Postema, Groen and Krabbendam, 2012). Organisations are unlikely to have the time to involve all stakeholders in the process, thus a prioritisation system is advised, based on their capacity (potential influence) and intention (Postema, Groen and Krabbendam, 2012). Nevertheless, there is a recognised need to increase the variance of actors involved in the process (Kimbell, 2014).

Viewing implementation as part of the innovation journey (Van de Ven, 2008) implies that stakeholders change and evolve with time (Postema, Groen and Krabbendam, 2012). Employees and managers are internal stakeholders shown to be key in implementation. The involvement of other stakeholders such as suppliers and customers is mostly linked to idea generation and co-creation, but their involvement is also relevant in implementation. Klein and Sorra (1996) and de Jong and Vermeulen (2003) suggest that in large organisations with disperse stakeholders, the inability of local, lower level managers and front-line employees to support innovations may lie in their lack of involvement in decisions made at the corporate level. Cross-functional integration of multiple departments and communication among them are found to assist with implementation (Gatignon, Gotteland and Haon, 2016; Avlonitis and Papastathopoulou, 2001), due to the opportunities for combining knowledge and competencies in unique ways (Gallouj and Weinstein, 1997). For example, it is suggested that problem solving is more effective during implementation when employees from various functions work together. This collaboration should be truly cross-functional and not dominated by one department, usually marketing, as such monopoly increases the likelihood of projects to fail (Vermeulen and Alexander, 2001). However, the inherent diversity of cross-functional teams may pose risks to the implementation process due to the time and effort required for superordinate identity building (Sethi, Iqbal and Sethi, 2012) and conflict resolution. There is therefore a need to explore the practical implications of cross-functional teams within real implementation projects.

3.4.5. Factor Synergy

Although the factors that impact on implementation have been tested individually in variance studies, in practice they are part of a dynamic system, and have complex effects on implementation by influencing one another (Melton and Hartline, 2013). For example, empowerment associated with task autonomy (De Jong et al., 2003), "the degree to which an individual is given substantial freedom, independence, and direction in carrying out a task" (Langfred and Moye, 2004, p. 935) affects the motivation of individuals to be involved in the process (Cadwallader et al., 2009).

Similarly, knowledge about one's role in implementation is linked to self-efficacy (Bray and Brawley, 2002). For example, employees with a high level of role clarity have higher perceptions of self-efficacy and believe more in their ability to implement an innovation (Whitaker, Dahling and Levy, 2007). The degree of new knowledge required by individuals to implement the new service can also impact on perceptions of self-efficacy. Incompatibility between the old and new knowledge can lead to organisational dysfunction, such as avoidance, resistance and struggle and therefore affect the implementation process according to Mariano and Casey (2015).

Employee resistance, "the protest and defiance against an opposing pressure of force" (Klein and Sorra, 1996, p. 1067) is a likely outcome if employees are not involved in the process. Furthermore, a positive implementation climate where innovation is supported and rewarded in organisations may still prove ineffective if the innovation concept is not congruent to the adopters' values, i.e. fit to values is weak (Klein and Sorra, 1996). An innovation-systems fit means that not only can the new core service retain its integrity during implementation, but also that the needed resources are likely to be already in place; in other words, fit with existing systems relates to readiness for change where technical, capital, human and financial resources already in place are used for the new service (Cooper and De Brentani, 1991; Edgett, 1994). In its turn, readiness for change affects employee perceptions of implementation, and leads to a positive innovation climate.

The way the factors link to each other is often less than straightforward. For example, it is argued that empowered individuals provided with autonomy of decision-making will not exercise that autonomy if they do not feel confident in making decisions, i.e. their self-efficacy is low (Choi and Chang, 2009). The premise of self-determination theory (SDT), however, is that it is the very sense of choice and ability to regulate their own actions that make individuals confident about themselves and trusting of their abilities (Ryan and Deci, 2000). It can therefore be concluded that various factors interact in service ecosystems, and only complementarity between them would create an ideal implementation scenario where employees become skilled, consistent, committed and enthusiastic about the innovation. There is, however, need for further studies to clarify the direction of a cause-and-effect relationship between the factors, as well as their simultaneous effects on service innovation (Melton and Hartline, 2013).

The review of variance studies is useful in advancing implementation knowledge, but their methodological limitations need to be taken into consideration. Meta-analyses summarise the areas of concern that persist over the years: the prevalence of main effect models (in comparison to interaction models), the limited number of independent factors considered, insufficient emphasis on the context, and non-standard measures of success (Page and Schirr, 2008; Henard and Szymanski, 2001; Bowen, Rostami and Steel, 2010; Gatignon, Gotteland and Haon, 2016). There also seems to be a pre-occupation with characteristics, such as process related factors, that have been shown to have the least predictive power on implementation (Henard and Szymanski, 2001).

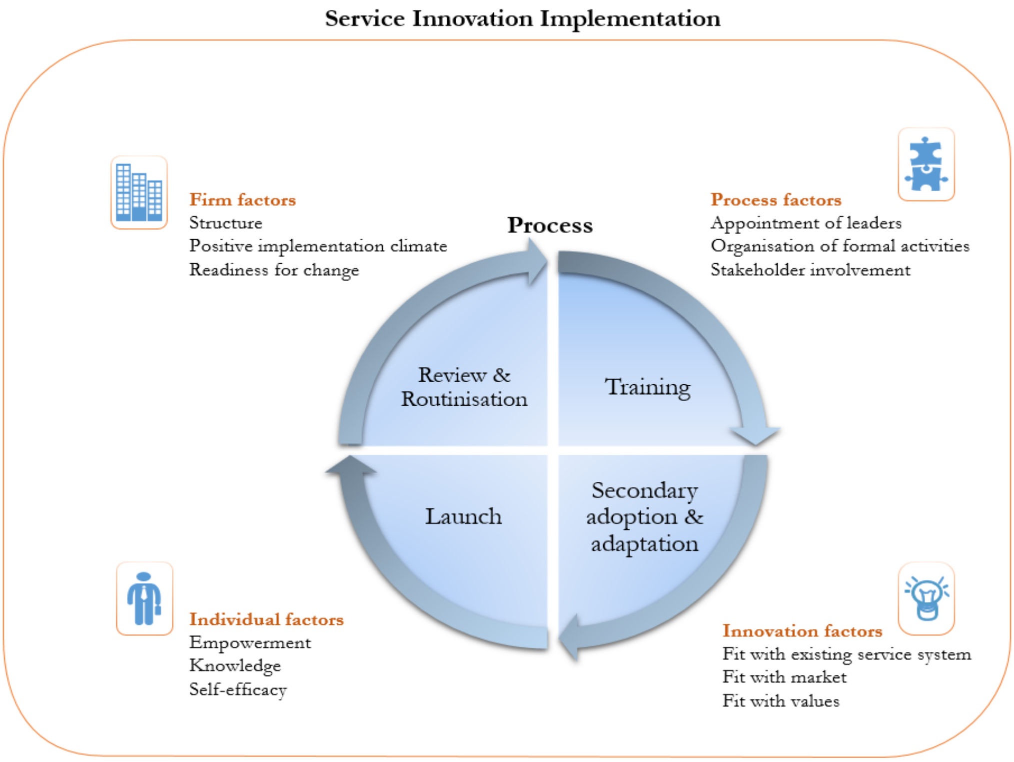
Similar factors are shown to play a significant role in both manufacturing and service contexts, and across industries, including health services, financial services and hospitality services. However, it is not clear whether this similarity is due to implementation being comparable across contexts, or due to a lack of breadth of implementation studies. The literature review demonstrates that certain innovation types (e.g. computer system implementation) and certain industries (e.g. financial services) have had disproportionate attention in research compared to other contexts (De Brentani, 2001; Avlonitis and Papastathopoulou, 2001; Johne and Storey, 1998; Hülsheger, Anderson and Salgado, 2009). This disparity is likely to impact on research findings and creates a solid need for further studies in the area, preferably on *maximally different* types of services, as proposed by Lovelock (1983) a few decades ago. For example, such a contrast appears to exist between hotel services and financial services. Comparing innovation in hospitality with previous studies in the financial sector, Ottenbacher, Gnoth and Jones (2006) concluded that service innovation success in hotels is less determined by factors related to concept advantage and process management (as in financial services), and more affected by "strategic human resource management, empowerment, training of employees, and marketing synergy" (Ottenbacher, Shaw and Lockwood, 2006, p. 344). The authors warned, however, of the study's limitations, namely the single geographical context investigated (i.e. Germany), the exclusive inclusion of managers' views, and the lack of specialisation in a single part of the process (initiation or implementation).

3.4.6. Towards a Conceptual Framework: Step 2

The review of the literature on the factors that relate to individuals, the firm, the concept and the process, and that influence service innovation implementation, helps enhance the proposed conceptual framework of this study as explained earlier (Figure 3-2).

Placed together and seen as part of an open system rather than in a closed input to output relationship, the factors may be key in describing a particular context and revealing why some firms are more successful than others in implementing service innovations. The factors are expected to affect the steps in the process, namely training, secondary adoption, launch, and review and routinisation, but the way this is done remains to be explored.

Figure 3-2 Second Step in the Conceptual Framework: Factors



3.5. Mechanisms in Service Innovation Implementation

Mechanisms are theoretical constructs that can be used to postulate plausible explanations behind observable events and experiences. They can be used to illuminate the way the various factors affect the implementation process by drawing attention not only to *what works,* but also *in what circumstances and how.* The identification and function of such mechanisms is the concern of realistic evaluation, which is preoccupied with which mechanisms work, under which conditions, for which reasons, and towards which outcomes (Easton, 2010). For Pawson and Tiley (1997) context (C) and mechanism (M) equal Outcome (O), i.e. (C+M=O). Mechanisms are contextually bound and not fixed: this explains why the same innovation may work differently in diverse situations and circumstances (Rycroft-Malone et al., 2010). By examining the literature, it can be discerned that the service innovation implementation process is underpinned by four mechanisms, namely sensemaking, organisational learning, organisational politics and emotional reactions. However, these have not been called mechanisms, nor have they been explicitly linked together in a single study. It is hoped that being able to do so will be one of the main contributions of the current study, which aims to achieve a complete picture of implementation.

3.5.1. Sensemaking

Sensemaking is the process by which individuals use retrospective interpretations of actions and events to form a scheme that guides their future behaviour (Bondarouk and Looise, 2009; Christiansen and Varnes, 2015). It is considered a primary action generator (Hodgkinson, 1997; Frees, Acker van and Bouckaert, 2015), and is achieved through a process of noticing, 'bracketing' (framing) and assigning importance (Weick, 2001). Meanings that individuals hold are called frames (Goffman, 1974), enactments (Weick, 1979), schemata or cognitive maps (Drazin, Glynn and Kazanjian, 1999), and they are influenced by the organisational context that produces unique cues (Weick, 2009). For example, employees understand the meaning of their work through interpersonal cues that convey appraisals of their job worth by other individuals (Wrzesniewski, Dutton and Debebe, 2003). Sensemaking involves conversational and social practices and occurs through both verbal and non-verbal means (Balogun and Johnson, 2005). The same situation is likely to be interpreted differently by different individuals, not least because sensemaking is performed in a unique fashion (Ciborra, 2002). For example, an employee who one day does not receive a drink as per usual when his co-worker visits the coffee shop may be surprised contrary to a third person that is not aware of the ritual between the two co-workers. Sensemaking is made through formal communications, but also through informal processes when employees share rumours, stories and gossip in their everyday life around behaviours and interventions. These informal processes have so far received far less attention in the literature than formal processes, and have not typically been involved in models of change, a promising area for future studies, according to Balogun and Johnson (2005) and Dawson and Andriopoulos (2016).

Fleck (1979, cited in Dougherty, 1992) was the first to apply interpretative schemes to innovation. Other scholars applying the concept to the general innovation process include Dougherty (1992), Dougherty (2004), Alexander and van Knippenberg (2014) and Christiansen and Varnes (2015). Only limited research has been done specifically on innovation implementation, with certain exceptions in the field of health services (Mair et al., 2012). However, sensemaking can be conceived as a mechanism that acts behind the implementation process that involves multiple stakeholders (Greenhalgh, 2005), who may form different interpretations of reality (Fellows and Liu, 2016). Sensemaking is manifested in such situations of ambiguity, and denotes a shift away from a manager-centred analysis on innovation (Fitzgerald et al., 2002). Christiansen and Varnes (2009; 2015) use the theory of sensemaking and its application in their study on product innovation; more specifically, they look at the way organisational members interpret formal structures, systems and rules, and develop a scheme that allows them to act within these structures. This creates a difference between "the rules as designed and the way in which they are actually enforced and used" (Christiansen and Varnes, 2009, p. 222), as there may be a misalignment among perspectives in everyday organisational life and what managers officially declare and describe (Christiansen and Varnes, 2009). The recognition of a sensemaking mechanism assists organisations in handling tensions in knowledge by being flexible, rather than rigidly holding on to rules (Christiansen and Varnes, 2015). According to Olin and Wickenberg (2001), breaking the rules may also be part of local adaptation in order to complete innovation projects (Olin and Wickenberg, 2001). As a result, the effects of rules are independent of rules themselves, and depend instead on how employees interpret and apply them (Christiansen and Varnes, 2015). Balogun and Johnson (2005) confirm through their findings that sensemaking processes are powerful, with interpretations made lower-down in the organisation affecting the outcomes of decisions made higher-up. For example, the innovation may be perceived as mandatory by managers, but not by employees, which has an impact on the process of secondary adoption and adaptation. On the one hand, if mandates are viewed as orders to be followed (Chae and Poole, 2005), the only choice that users have is how enthusiastically to accept the innovation (Leonard-Barton, 1988). On the other hand, if mandates are perceived as more flexible, adoption decisions may seem voluntary to the individuals involved (Brown et al., 2002). In addition, mandates can be stimuli for resistance in the implementation of innovations (Pierce, Kostova and Dirks, 2001), if they are perceived as a threat to managers' balance of power (Knights and Murray, 1994) and employees' interests (Markus, 1983). In fact, reality may be different to perceptions; Orlikowski (1996) suggests that users always have a choice to reject or avoid the rules, while Stevens and Dimitriadis (2005) found that often employees are forced to follow procedures without the opportunity to adapt them. There is therefore a need to develop shared interpretations that can be built through communication and involvement in the process of implementation (Chae and Poole, 2005).

3.5.2. Organisational Learning

Another aspect of innovation can be linked to learning, knowledge construction and distribution (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). Simon (1991) considers innovation as a classic Organisational Learning (OL) process, therefore OL can be seen as a mechanism behind the implementation process. OL is defined as "an experiential process of acquiring knowledge about action-outcome relationships and the effects of environmental events on these relationships" (Duncan and Weiss, 1979, p. 79). Much of the innovation literature acknowledges learning processes during idea generation, but their relevance to implementation is not so well documented (Bondarouk and Sikkel, 2003). Klein and Sorra (1996, p. 1058) explain that "the challenge of implementation is to change individuals' behaviour". For behaviourism learning theorists (e.g. Cyert, 1963), behavioural change is an indicator of learning by rationally adapting to environmental stimulus (Maier, Prange and Rosenstiel, 2001). For cognitive learning theorists, however, (e.g. Piaget, 1959; Huber, 1991) observable behavioural changes can be superficial and short-lived. Such changes represent an automatic change if not accompanied by change in the cognitive frame linked to learning (Leroy and Ramanantsoa, 1997). Therefore, both behaviour and cognition need to change for learning to occur.

Based on research in retail and banking services, Stevens and Dimitriadis (2004) propose an innovation model that contains the learning processes of dissonance, interpretation, testing, adaptation and routinisation (Table 3-7). The model is based on the seminal work by learning theorists Crossan, Lane and White (1999) who depict the learning process in four steps of intuiting, interpreting, integrating and institutionalising (the 4I model). The processes are described as a series of problems to which organisations need to find solutions (Gottfridsson, 2010).

Table 3-7 Service Innovation Implementation Process

Learning Process	**Implementation Process** ***How to adapt the innovation in the local organisation?***	**Level**
Dissonance	Occurrence of a Cognitive Conflict	Individual (within the implementation group)
Interpretation	Building alternative solutions	Implementation group
Testing	Refining the initial procedures	Implementation group
Adaptation	Refining the ideas	Local organisation
Adoption	Implementation of new processes/procedures/behaviours	Local organisation
Routinisation	Routinisation	Local organisation

Source: Adapted from Crossan, Lane and White (1999), Stevens and Dimitriadis (2004), Stevens and Dimitriadis (2005)

The process starts with a cognitive acknowledgment of a problem which, in the case of implementation, is how to adapt the innovation to the local organisational context. This is recognised by individuals within the implementation group. Alternative solutions to the problem are built by the group based on either previous experience or the testing of ideas. Data collection, informal conversations and formal presentations lead to a solution that amalgamates the expertise of people involved in the process and which is then shared with the organisation. With the involvement of cross-functional teams and external stakeholders in the process, organisations need to develop their absorptive capacity (Levinthal and March, 1993), which is the ability to exploit external knowledge. Such exploitation encompasses valuing, assimilating and applying new information (Kimbell, 2014). Internal communication, the information system, training programmes and customer communication then assist with the formalisation of procedures and rules designed to train and constrain individual behaviours at the local organisation. Finally, the implementation is completed with the routinisation of behaviours, where the waste of energy, time and budget on learning processes ceases and cognitive conflicts stop happening (Stevens and Dimitriadis, 2005).

Although OL actions are observed during the innovation process, the evidence appears incomplete. Research is especially warranted on the nature of learning processes in idea generation and implementation (Lam, 2005) and the different types of learning that may be needed in each case (Van de Ven, 2008). It is proposed that actions taken without clearly understanding all the possible outcomes are critical to innovative idea development; therefore, the highly ambiguous learning-by-discovery, i.e. by searching and noticing possibilities and opportunities to satisfy customers, is appropriate at this early stage (Van de Ven, 2008). On the other hand, with the concept developed and ready to be launched, the desired outcomes are more concrete during implementation, uncertainty is reduced (Thanasopon, Papadopoulos and Vidgen, 2016) and trial-and-error learning can take place (Van de Ven, 2008). The mechanism of learning is closely related to that of sensemaking as a scenario involving framing, creating, defining, operationalising and re-framing possible outcomes is required before taking any action.

Learning within innovation implementation can be differentiated for the individual and team learning. Some scholars argue that learning is an individual activity (e.g. Simon, 1991; Grant, 1996), but with much knowledge being tacit and not easily codified, collective learning becomes the foundation of organisational knowledge creation through social interactions (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995; Argyris and Schoen, 1978). In one of the few implementation-specific empirical studies Edmondson, Bohmer and Pisano (2001) point to the need of collective learning in implementation, and emphasise the role of reflection and team influences. Employees implement innovations by learning-before-doing in off-line team practice sessions, by learning-by-doing during trials of the actual behaviour required, and by reflecting in order create shared meaning and improve processes (Edmondson, Bohmer and Pisano, 2001). It is therefore suggested that team learning drives the innovation forward, however, empirical studies in different contexts need to provide more evidence on the topic. The role of team leader is crucial in on-going signalling by inviting input, providing psychological safety and acknowledging the need for help and acceptance of new team behaviours (Edmondson, Bohmer and Pisano, 2001).

Learning spans the entire implementation process. Apart from learning to achieve implementation of a specific innovation, learning around the process itself, by inspecting what went well and what could be improved, is identified as the least successful part of the process (Sundbo, 2006). In other words, the review stage is often weak in producing valuable lessons for future innovation projects.

Potential problems with learning during implementation have not received sufficient attention in innovation studies. Learning depends on previously acquired knowledge in a cumulative and path-dependent manner. Firms that mastered learning during the idea generation stage may exhibit learning myopia during implementation (Levinthal and March, 1993) meaning that they find it difficult to unlearn and turn core capabilities to core rigidities (Leonard-Barton, 1992). They may also fall into fall into competency traps and continue doing what they are good at (Rerup and Levinthal, 2014). A solution to the problem may be pursuing different kinds of learning, for example double-loop learning; this refers to thinking that precedes behaviour, and which involves focusing on whether the right tasks are done, instead of whether tasks are done in the right way (Argyris, 1977). However, organisations need to acknowledge the risks involved in each learning type and steer away from a one-sided preference towards higher orders of learning, which may not only be challenging to pursue, but also not always beneficial (Tosey, Visser and Saunders, 2012).

The realities of limited time and budget in organisations can make learning unfeasible at times, for example, when experimentation and trials are not possible (Stevens, 2002). In certain cases, efforts would be better placed in improving performance rather than applying changes (Tosey, Visser and Saunders, 2012). Due to 'bounded-rationality' (Simon, 1991) where thinking is restricted by information, cognitive and time limitations, it is very difficult to explore every possible option, and its consequences in innovation implementation, that would be ideal under organisational learning models (Stevens, 2002). As a result, certain decisions are made based on 'guiding principles' or random choice rather than learning which "is in all cases partial, fragmented, and incomplete" (Stevens and Dimitriadis, 2005, p. 194). Besides, during implementation learning may reduce as actions that are initially made rationally are justified later in their process on non-rational basis because of actors' motivational commitment to them (Brickman, Wortman and Sorrentino, 1987).

3.5.3. Organisational Politics

Organisational politics (OP) are defined as actions that contain the use of power in situations of conflicting interests in organisations (Weissenberger-Eibl and Teufel, 2013) and can be seen as a mechanism underneath service innovation implementation. The political nature of the innovation process is suggested in the literature (Frost and Egri, 1991), but rarely tested in empirical studies (Sethi, Iqbal and Sethi, 2012). The mechanism of OP can be seen as complementary, rather than antithetical, to mechanisms of organisational sensemaking and learning (Coopey and Burgoyne, 2000). OP involves sensemaking as it is a socially constructed phenomenon where the interpretation of people involved in the situation matters (Ferris et al., 2002). Frost and Egri (1991, p. 231) explain that different perspectives of people affected by innovation, and the change it involves, can cause the process to be marked by disputes. Therefore, OP should be seen as the norm in organisational behaviour rather than the exception. Innovation failure can be attributed to political activities (Frost and Egri, 1991) which are often considered "per se as corruptive or illegitimate" behaviour (Weissenberger-Eibl and Teufel, 2013, paragraph 2). However, positive behaviour can also be political. Lawrence et al. (2005) declare that power should not be seen as a "dysfunctional aspect in need of remedy but as an intrinsic part of the process that should be appreciated" (Lawrence et al., 2005, p. 188). In a similar vein, Stevens and Dimitriadis (2005, p. 194) propose that conflict and resistance should be regarded as "opportunities to progress" in implementation. A neutral definition of OP would therefore give a more accurate picture of reality

(Kurchner-Hawkins and Miller, 2006), and would potentially facilitate research in an area burdened with negative connotations and assumptions (Vigoda-Gadot and Drory, 2006).

Service innovation implementation involves change, the politicised nature of which is widely recognised (Pettigrew, 1985; Dawson, 2003; Elg and Johansson, 1997). Machiavelli, Skinner and Price (1988) state that "the innovator makes enemies of all those who prospered under the old order". Especially budget cuts and resource limitations when they are most needed is described as "the most frequent anti-innovation game" (Frost and Egri, 1990, p. 21). However, Elg and Johansson (1997) assert that innovations are not themselves necessarily supportive or disruptive of the existing order. Their efficiency, however, cannot be evaluated objectively, and dynamics in decision-making dictate their acceptance. The latter depends on the individuals who evaluate the technique being used, the abilities of people to pursue their interests and manipulation of outcomes (Elg and Johansson, 1997). Researchers agree that innovation implementation encounters several stumbling blocks on its path (Klein and Knight, 2005), which may surface due to the need for knowledge acquisition, change of roles, routines and norms, scepticism on the merits of the innovation, and limited time and financial resources (Klein and Knight, 2005).

Another area that can be the course of conflict in implementation is the comparison of the incoming innovation with organisational norms, routines and practice; what McAdam (2005, p. 375) calls "normative evaluation, multi-level and judgmental, espoused common sense or normalised knowledge, specified by recognised experts in the organisation". Too much clinging on to the existing internal norms, that is the corporate culture, may be a threat to internal change initiatives, such as innovation implementation. Existing knowledge, training, and routines reinforce normative behaviour (McAdam, 2005), as do micro-social factors, such as teamwork, socialisation and peer pressure (Westphal, Gulati and Shortell, 1997). External forces such as working towards a desired accreditation can also serve to reinforce standards and resist change. Normative evaluation also involves 'subjective' norms that impact on secondary adoption processes (Gallivan, 2001). Such norms "describe individual beliefs about the expectations of relevant others, namely co-workers, professional network, senior management, clients and subordinates, regarding their own adoption behaviour" (Gallivan, 2001, p. 61).

Lawrence et al. (2005) propose a model (Table 3-8) in response to a dearth of studies in the literature to show that power and politics are relevant to the innovation process. They link power to the Crossan, Lane and White (1999) 4I model of learning used by Stevens and Dimitriadis (2005) to demonstrate the learning mechanism of innovation. Lawrence et al. (2005) explain that the innovation process starts with intuition and interpretation as a socialisation and inherently political process (Fox, 2000), where individuals share ideas on how to implement the service innovation. Not all interpretations are, however, considered legitimate and valid. The ability of individuals to champion their ideas at opportune moments and convince the decision makers of the strength of their interpretation is likely to move an idea forward; for example, a proposed solution to the distribution mode of the service innovation to a network of organisational units. The process then continues to the integration and institutionalisation phases with the aim of achieving collective action and overcome resistance to change.

Lawrence et al. (2005) argue that different forms of power and associated tactics relate to the different phases in the process. Traditionally emphasis in discussions of OP is placed on the personal power of managers associated with controlling resources, including finances, knowledge and expertise (Pettigrew, 1973; Dougherty and Hardy, 1996). This form of power is what Lawrence et al. (2005, p. 182) call "episodic power, i.e. discrete, strategic political acts initiated by self-interested actors", and is associated with the interpretation and integration activities in the innovation process. Concentrating on personal power has been criticised for only scratching the surface of power dynamics as it means examining the discrete acts of self-interested actors that are easily identified (Lawrence et al., 2005). However, power also lies in processes, what Lawrence et al. (2005) call "systemic power" associated with institutionalisation and intuition. It is diffused through the social system rather than through individual actors, and can be mobilised in non-decision making by suppressing opposition and stimulating change (Dougherty and Hardy, 1996). It can also influence sensemaking by legitimising “decisions which are fundamentally political rather than conventionally rational” (Brown and Ennew, 1995, p. 339), especially decisions around adaptation and secondary adoption (McAdam, 2005). For Lawrence et al. (2005, p. 186) systemic power is exercised in two ways, either through discipline, i.e. manipulations of “the costs and benefits associated with actions available to organisational members”, or through domination, i.e. restriction of available actions. They argue that domination is the most effective strategy for establishing an innovation by restricting alternative behaviours through the design of the physical layout, for example a concierge desk situated in the hotel lobby, or information systems that restrict decision paths by requiring specific data.

Table 3-8 Political Face of Innovation

Process	Interpretation	Integration	Institutionalization	Intuition
Definition (from Crossan et al., 1999: 525)	The process of "explaining, through words and/or actions, . . . an insight to one's self and to others"	The process of "developing shared understanding among individuals and of taking coordinated action"	The process of "embedding learning that has occurred by individuals and groups into the organization"	The "recognition of the pattern and/or possibilities inherent in a personal stream of experience"
Key requirements	Managing ambiguity and uncertainty in the adoption of language and the construction of cognitive maps	Translating new ideas consistently across members in order to achieve collective action	Overcoming the resistance to change of organizational members	Developing organizational members with experience and identities that facilitate expert-level pattern recognition
Associated Form of Power	**Influence**	**Force**	**Domination**	**Discipline**
Mode	Episodic	Episodic	Systemic	Systemic
How it works	Affecting costs/ benefits of behaviors	Restricting available behaviors	Restricting available behaviors	Affecting costs/ benefits of behaviors
Examples	• Moral suasion • Negotiation • Ingratiation	• Agenda setting • Limiting decision alternatives • Removing opponents	• Material technologies • Information systems • Physical layout	• Socialization • Training • Team-based work

Source: Lawrence et al. (2005)

OP is a valid mechanism to explain actor behaviour in the implementation process, but empirical studies need to apply Lawrence et al.’s (2005) conceptual model in the real word. Effectiveness of the recommended actions is still to be proven in practice. The restriction of alternative options is particularly debated in the literature, with Chae and Poole (2005) arguing that actors can produce different interpretations of such options, and Orlikowski (1996) stating that users always have a choice to reject or avoid the rules anyway.

3.5.4. Emotional Reactions

Innovation implementation is viewed as a function of both cognitive appraisal and emotional reactions towards the innovation (Choi et al., 2011). Emotions are affective reactions to events that allow individuals to prepare mentally, psychologically and physically for expected outcomes (Cadwallader et al., 2009; Liu et al., 2006). They have a critical role in innovation implementation as they can directly predict innovation use and ultimate success (Choi et al., 2011). Organisational practices and systems cannot substitute the commitment of employees which is needed for implementation (Choi et al., 2011). The mechanism of emotional reactions is useful in explaining the variance in organisational outcomes outside the realm of rational criteria (Liu et al., 2006). Recognising the mechanisms of emotions is important because the existing general management and innovation literature has primarily focused on cognition and the unidimensional rational aspects of behaviour (Choi et al., 2011). More scholarly attention, however, should be placed on producing empirical evidence for the role of emotions, as the literature has largely remained theoretical (Choi et al., 2011).

Employee feelings are perceived as preceding, following or acting in parallel to cognitive appraisals (Choi et al., 2011). In most cases, scholars accept the interplay between cognition and emotions in the context of innovation implementation, and together they can provide a comprehensive view of the process by having a link to attitudes and behaviour (Choi et al., 2011). According to a study with 1150 participants in a Korean insurance company, the cognitive evaluation of innovation usefulness and ease of use affects whether responses to the innovation are positive or negative (Choi et al., 2011). In this study, positive emotions have been operationalised as feeling “delighted, pleased, happy, or comfortable” when thinking about the innovation, while negative emotions included feeling “disappointed, distressed, sad, or depressed" (Choi et al., 2011, p.115).

The factors relating to individuals, the firm, the innovation and the process that influence implementation do so by shaping employee emotional reactions to innovation (Choi et al., 2011). For example, employees may feel less uncertain about the innovation if managers are involved in the process (Choi et al., 2011). The appointment of innovation champions can serve to inform employees about the ways the innovation promotes their interest, thereby encouraging positive emotions towards the new project (Choi et al., 2011). Training on the innovation can increase positive feelings towards it by demonstrating its application to the work environment and creating an endorsing implementation climate (Choi et al., 2011). It can however also have negative effects if acquiring new competences proves to be stressful, tedious and excessively time-consuming for individuals (Klein and Knight, 2005; Aiman-Smith and Green, 2002).

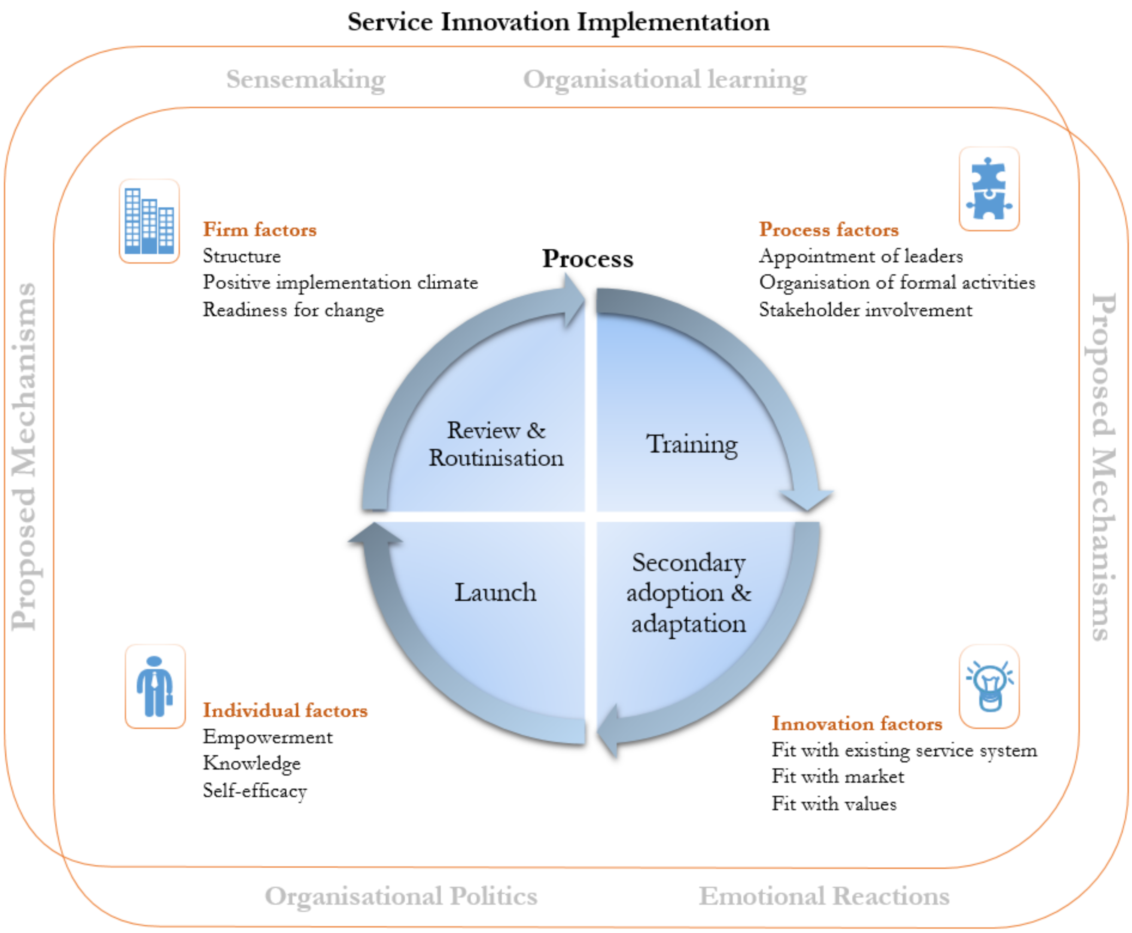
For high contact service organisations, such as hotels, the role of emotions has heightened importance for innovation implementation (Edvardsson and Gustavsson, 2003). Work in such environments entails high levels of customer interaction, and as opposed to physical work, requires 'emotional labour' (Hochschild, 2003) that calls for the coordination of rational thoughts and expressed feelings. Front-line employees may be expected to control their feelings and act as if the relationship with customers was personal (Edvardsson and Gustavsson, 2003). These 'extra' demands on employees are likely to affect implementation by shaping employee job satisfaction (Edvardsson and Gustavsson, 2003) and emotional reactions to proposed new services. The way that collective positive emotions link to innovation is through their impact on employee motivation to implement the innovation (Choi et al., 2011; Halliday, 2008). More specifically emotions affect situational motivation, which is "the desire to participate or continue to participate in a specific activity" such as the deployment of service innovation (Cadwallader et al., 2009, p. 5). Being motivated means to have the energy and stimulation to work towards an end (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p. 3), whilst being motivated implies lack of impetus or inspiration to act (Cadwallader et al., 2009).

3.5.5. Towards a Conceptual Framework: Step 3

The review of the literature in the last section helps with completing the conceptual framework of the study (Figure 3-3) by incorporating the mechanisms acting behind the activities and factors identified. The mechanisms are particularly suited to understand implementation in the hotel industry, a tacit service sector where the importance of interpersonal relationships defines the context in a unique fashion (Storey et al., 2016).

Four mechanisms have been proposed as equally valid explanations of the events taking place in the course of the innovation implementation journey: sensemaking, organisational learning, organisational politics, and emotional reactions. The mechanisms function behind the observable events, they are therefore presented as being in the background in the depiction of the conceptual framework in Figure 3-3.

Figure 3-3 Third Step in the Conceptual Framework: Mechanisms



3.6. Summary

The chapter has explored the literature on service innovation implementation justifying the need to study this specific part of the innovation process in order to advance knowledge in the service innovation field. Having set the scene by defining the relevant concepts, the literature was then broken down to three components that together informed the conceptual framework of the study in three respective steps: the implementation process, the factors that influence it, and the mechanisms acting in the background. The examination of linear and non-linear process models revealed the structured, but outdated and naïve, format of the first, and the fuzzier, but more comprehensive and realistic nature of the latter. Building on iterative process models the discussion turned to the factors that influence innovation which have been the focus of attention of a large part of the literature. The factors identified were classified as individual, firm, concept and process related, and the case was made for the need to study their interrelated nature. Finally, the review endeavoured to identify the mechanisms that, according to critical realism, operate at the domain of the real away from observable phenomena. The four mechanisms of sensemaking, organisational learning, organisational politics and emotional reactions were proposed as having the potential to explain the events and interactions among actors during implementation, which remains to be discovered in the empirical investigation of this study.

4. Methodology

4.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology adopted in the study. It contains an explanation of the ontological and epistemological positions of the researcher, the research design, the approach taken to develop theory, and the strategy employed to investigate the topic under discussion, as well as the data collection and analysis methods. The aim and objectives of this study, to explore, critically evaluate, and explain the implementation of service innovations in the hotel industry and the factors that influence such implementation, form a starting point for the justification of the methods that are subsequently employed. It is proposed that the research journey is affected by the philosophy of critical realism which underpins the study. The chapter argues for an intensive, rather than extensive, research design which will ensure a deep understanding of context and meaning-making, and which adopts a retroductive approach to capture the entire implementation journey. The case study strategy is defended as the most appropriate for the study. The chapter explores how data is collected through interviews and secondary data, and is then analysed through template analysis. The chapter concludes by highlighting the quality assessment criteria used to increase the robustness of the results in line with the critical realist paradigm, while reflecting on the role of the researcher, and stating the limitations of the methods adopted.

4.2. Research Methodology Overview

Methodology relates to "a process where the design of the research and choice of particular methods, and their justification in relation to the research project, are made evident" (King and Horrocks, 2010, p. 6). Such a process is informed by the philosophical and epistemological positions that should be outlined in any research project (King and Horrocks, 2010). These views were considered when designing the research methodology of this study. The study adopts a critical realist philosophy that reflects the researcher's views of the social world (Table 4-1). Guided by this philosophy, retroductive, or abductive reasoning, is followed where theory is built from observations, in a process of seeking to find the simplest and most likely explanations for the phenomena studied. Identifying the most appropriate methodology for a critical realist study is not straightforward, and believing that the philosophy can be applied unambiguously in practical research is a misconception (Danermark, 2002). However, there are certain useful guidelines in the literature on methods which can be appropriate for critical realist studies. Suitable methods also depend on the study's aim and objectives (Bygstad, Munkvold and Volkoff, 2016; Platenkamp and Botterill, 2013). The research follows an intensive research design due to the need to explore the process of implementation in depth and discover mechanisms that drive the process. In this design framework, the case study strategy and the use of two cases allow for constructing a holistic view of implementation-related events. Data is collected from semi-structured interviews, documents and observation in order to build a comprehensive view of people's interpretations of implementation. Finally, the data is analysed individually for each case, but also in combination, with use of template analysis techniques which allow the combination of a priori and emerging themes in the interpretation of findings.

Table 4-1 The Research Methodology in this Study

Philosophy	Approach	Design	Strategy	Data collection methods	Data analysis methods
Critical Realism	Retroduction	Intensive	Case study	Semi-structured interviews Documents Observation	Template analysis Within-case analysis Cross-case analysis

The aim of the current study is to explore, critically evaluate, and explain the implementation of service innovations in the hotel industry and the factors that influence such implementation. The exploration of extant literature has provided insights into existing knowledge; however, concrete research gaps have been identified that are to be filled by empirical evidence in this study. These gaps included the focus on the implementation part of service innovation, the comprehensive view of the process encompassing events and influencing factors, and the perspectives of employees and managers in the process. The following objectives reflect the way that this research goal is proposed to be accomplished: to apply the conceptual framework in two cases of hotel service innovation by exploring the views of multiple stakeholders, and to revise the framework in light of the findings and thus contribute to the theory and practice of service innovation implementation.

4.3. Critical Realism Philosophy

Two branches of philosophy are relevant to any research study: ontology, the nature of being, and epistemology, the nature of knowing (Cardinal, Hayward and Jones, 2005). Some scholars argue that, since philosophy does not usually concern people in their everyday lives, it should not concern social researchers either (Cardinal, Hayward and Jones, 2005). However, although researchers rarely consciously start with philosophy when embarking on studies in the social sciences, Crotty (1998) explains that attention needs to be placed on the research process that scholars engage in; the process should be laid out for the scrutiny of the observer, and defended as a form of inquiry that should be taken seriously.

Ontological views have implications on the way knowledge about the social reality can be acquired; this is where epistemological questions, which are not only appropriate, but also necessary, arise (Holden and Lynch, 2004; Bryman and Bell, 2011); Crotty, 1998; Fleetwood, 2005). In the case of the social world, the extreme positions in the debate on its nature are realism and idealism, the first accepting a reality outside the mind, and the second proposing a mind-dependent reality that is shaped by everyone's interpretation of the world (Cardinal, Hayward and Jones, 2005). However, as Gibbs (2002, p. 13) explains, "even idealists, in the end, want to make realist claims about the multiple views of the world they are reporting on". This is so that certain conclusions can be reached about the way things are despite the multiple interpretations of individuals. In recognition of these limitations, this study adopts a critical realist perspective, which combines a realist ontology and an interpretivist epistemology. The view on knowledge shapes the research question that the researcher aims to answer and the kind of theories that can be constructed as part of the research (Fleetwood, 2005). It also affects the research methodology and techniques (Fleetwood, 2005; Lincoln and Denzin, 2003), as well as the view on the role of the researcher as the principal investigator .

Critical realism sits between positivism and interpretivism (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016) (Table 4-2). Positivism posits that, similarly to the natural sciences, we can learn about the world around us, as it really is, through observation (Crotty, 1998), the role of social researchers being the discovery of universal laws of human behaviour and society (Bhaskar, 2009). Theory is constructed by generating testable hypotheses that allow explanations to be assessed (Bryman and Bell, 2007) in a value-neutral manner (Crotty, 1998). The strong claims of positivism that knowledge is utterly objective, and the only valid, certain, accurate knowledge (Crotty, 1998), as well as the fact that it negates sense-making and value-bound rationality, led to its fierce criticism (Suppe, 2000).

Interpretivism posits that we can learn about the world as it is viewed by individuals through their feelings and experience (subjective realities), the role of social science being to discover multiple interpretations which are "culturally derived and historically situated" (Crotty, 1998, p. 67). It rejects epistemic privilege and claims the existence of multiple realities and truths (Krauss, 2005), which presents challenges for the systematic progress of collective knowledge through research (Mingers, 2004). Fleetwood (2005) states that a strong commitment to a socially constructed ontology encourages ambiguity and error. The assertion that organisational reality lacks any objectivity can be confronted for example when dealing with the implementation of product or service innovation in organisations, as they are real projects that can be objectively recognised by everyone involved (Easton, 2010).

Table 4-2 Comparison of Philosophies in Research

Philosophy	Positivism	Critical Realism	Interpretivism
Ontology and Epistemology	World exists independently from human actors	World exists independently from human actors	World is constructed through conceptual systems
	Reality can be known as it is	Reality can be known through conceptualisation	Only individual realities can be known
	Flat ontology (no distinction between empirical and ideal)	Stratified ontology (empirical, actual, real)	Flat ontology (empirical is real)
Role of social science	To discover universal laws of human behaviour and of society	To "invent theories to explain the real world and test theories by rational criteria" (Robson and McCartan, 2015, p. 31)	To discover different interpretations of the world by multiple individuals
Research	Experimental/ quasi-experimental theory validation	Explanation deals with mechanisms that produce events and the associated circumstances	The search for meaningful relationships and the discovery of their consequence for action
Research methods	Quantitative	Mixed	Mostly qualitative
Explanations	Must demonstrate causality	Can show trends, and how mechanisms produce events, and under which circumstances	Aims to increase understanding of situations
	Deductive	Retroductive	Inductive

Source: Bhaskar (2009); Danermark (2002); Easterby-Smith et al. (2008); Zachariadis, Scott and Barrett (2010); Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009); Easton (2010); Thistleton (2008); Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012); Robson (2002); Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016); Robson and McCartan (2015)

In summary, positivism conflates ontology and epistemology and ignores epistemology (what is observed is what exists), while interpretivism conflates ontology and epistemology and ignores ontology (multiple realities constructed through conceptual systems) (Bhaskar, 2009). Innovation studies that follow a positivist approach tend to concentrate on main-effect studies that correlate antecedents to performances measures, often overlooking the wider context of investigation. On the other hand, interpretivist studies that focus on multiple interpretations render inconclusive results due to the proliferation of individual views of the process. However, combining elements of positivism and interpretivism is useful for this study as the following section explains.

Critical realism is a philosophy that gained prominence during the last three decades as a strong alternative to positivism and interpretivism, by combining elements of both (Fleetwood and Ackroyd, 2004), while being in line with the complexities of organisation and management studies in a constantly changing social world (Fleetwood, 2005; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). It is useful in the study of innovation implementation as it overcomes the issues of positivism and interpretivism and allows the development of theory that can be tested in other contexts, through collection, comparison and contrast of multiple interpretations in specific cases. This is done by attempting to move beyond events in a specific innovation project to mechanisms that can potentially explain events occurring in other projects.

Key figures in critical realism are Sayer (1984) and Bhaskar (1986), who detail its philosophical stance and associated assumptions. Ontologically, critical realism holds a realist view of the world and accepts an objective reality. It posits that an entity can "exist independently of our knowledge of it, i.e. without someone observing, knowing, or constructing it" (Fleetwood, 2005, p. 198). A real entity is one that "has an effect on behaviour, makes a difference" (Fleetwood, 2005, p. 199). In that sense, even an idea is real, provided that it impacts on behaviour. Reality can take various modes: material, ideal, artifactual and social (Fleetwood, 2005). This is an ontological pluralism whereby four modes of reality are accepted (Fleetwood, 2005):

1. *Materially real* modes include entities like the moon, the weather and the

oceans. In an innovation project, materially real entities include the training materials and the promotional documents for employees and customers.
2. *Ideally real* or discursive entities are entities such as "language, genres, signs, meanings, understandings, explanations, opinions, concepts, theories" (Fleetwood, 2005, p. 200). Knowledge, innovation and service are examples of ideally real entities.
3. *Artifactually real* modes are entities such as cosmetics, computers and musical instruments. They have a synthesis of materiality, ideation (a word for them), and a social construction (their accepted purpose). In contrast to product innovation, a new service may not be associated with any artifactually real entity making it difficult to communicate it to customers.
4. *Socially real* modes are entities such as practices or state of affairs, for example being unemployed, caring for children, social structures that constitute organisations. They are social, i.e. they depend on human activity for their existence, but do not need human identification to exist, i.e. they have an existence independent of our knowledge (Fleetwood, 2005). Customer service and service innovation are socially real entities at the centre of service innovation studies.

In stark contrast to naive realism, critical realists recognise that individuals' access to the world, their way of knowing, is mediated through their conceptual resources. Individual resources (beliefs, opinions) and social or inter-subjective resources (accepted theory, perspective, social norm) are used to "interpret, make sense of, and understand entities and take appropriate action" (Fleetwood, 2005, p. 199). In short, critical realism accepts an interpretivist epistemology, admitting that knowledge of the world is fallible and open to adjustment (Danermark, 2002, p. 16). Nevertheless, not all knowledge is equally fallible, the role of the researcher being to strive to come closer to an objective reality, however unattainable in its full extent, or uncertain that reality might be. In this endeavour, researchers are required to assess the versions of individual participants, who may have inconsistent or incomplete representations of reality, achieve an understanding beyond the conversations and come close to the truth (Fleetwood, 2005). Critical realism therefore, although unable to remove the individual biases inherent in social enquiry, strives for a theoretical development of concepts grounded in the ability of researchers to choose the better ones among competing theories. Contrary to grounded theory, for example, that abandons the notion of prior conceptual schemes, and in so doing loses the advantage of building on previous theory (Layder, 1998), critical realist research incorporates the notion of "adaptive theory" (Layder, 1998, p. 133), whereby social theory and on-going empirical research inform and advance each other. Particularly, the topic of innovation implementation can benefit from theoretical development, since substantial research is "undertaken from a pragmatic rather than an academic perspective and presented in grey literature reports" (Greenhalgh et al., 2004, p. 620). Sayer (2000) explains that, for critical realists, social science is neither nomothetic (law-seeking) nor idiographic (concentrating on the unique). Instead, it recognises that any explanations proposed (tendencies rather than laws) are context-bound. Mirroring everyday language, causal language can also be used by social researchers to explain phenomena (Sayer, 2000), albeit through thoughtful and rigorous analysis (Easton, 2010).

Critical realism, as a mechanism seeking paradigm, has underpinned an increasing yet modest number of empirical management and organisation studies (Miller, 2015). The paradigm has specifically been applied to case studies on customer relationship management system implementation (Easton, 2010) and ICT-based service innovation (Bygstad, 2010; Zachariadis, Scott and Barrett, 2010). The literature suggests that innovation initiatives cannot be expected to have identical implementation or impact wihin organisations due to differences in settings, processes and stakeholders involved (Pawson et al. (2004). Therefore, the contextually bound and fluid mechanisms of explanation offered in critical realist studies are useful in illuminating the innovation-context interaction in organisations (Greenhalgh, 2005), and they help understand what makes organisations apply an innovative concept differently (Rycroft-Malone et al., 2010), especially so in the underreseached implementation part of the process (Ettlie and Rosenthal, 2011).

4.4. Retroductive Approach

The approach to theory development is a fundamental element of any research study as it affects its design and analysis methods (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). Typically, two contrasting approaches to reasoning are adopted in social research: induction and deduction, the first using known premises to generate untested conclusions and the second starting with theory and testing it in practice (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). Critical realists support an alternative approach to reasoning, that of retroduction, "a mode of inference in which events are explained by postulating and identifying mechanisms which are capable of producing them" (Sayer, 1992, p. 107). Central to this mode of reasoning is the emphasis on explanation, which is not based on links at the level of events, but on connections between events and mechanisms that have the potential to generate the events. In a retrospective fashion the researcher is led by the question of what must be true, in order for particular events to occur (Easton, 2010), with the aim of the research being to generate as accurate mechanisms as possible to be tested in future studies. This study has adopted the retroductive approach because it allows the postulation of mechanisms that can explain the implementation process. This way a truly comprehensive model of implementation can be built, that contains not only the events and factors that influence the process but that also offers suggestions on how these are materialised in real life.

4.5. Intensive Research Design

Critical realism studies formulate their design away from the qualitative-quantitative research division, recognising both methods as appropriate, depending on the object under investigation and its nature (Sayer, 2000; (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010). Instead, the distinction between intensive and extensive research designs is advocated by scholars such as Sayer (1992) and Danermark (2002). Intensive research studies aim at qualitatively discovering relations in a limited number of organisational cases by delving deep into their context, whilst extensive studies intend to quantitatively grasp the extent to which patterns are present in a given population (Sayer, 2000). Often in practice, the research undertaken has greater variation than the dichotomy suggests (Ackroyd, 2009). Since the experience of multiple stakeholders in a service innovation implementation process is an under-researched innovation topic, an intensive design is considered appropriate for the research aims and objectives in this study, so that a deeper analysis can be made.

4.6. Case Study Strategy

The case study strategy, one of the most prevalent forms of social science research (Ellinger, Watkins and Marsick, 2005), is regarded as a suitable choice for this study due to its compatibility with the critical realist philosophy, the nature of the research aim of this study, and the allowance for multiple data collection instruments (Table 4-3). Yin (2014, p. 18) defines a case study as "an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident". The definition points to the compatibility of the strategy with the premises of critical realism (Morais, 2011; Zachariadis, Scott and Barrett, 2010) that a phenomenon is always embedded to its context (Bygstad and Munkvold, 2011) and plausible explanations should be offered in relation to that context (Easton, 2010; Marschan-Piekkari and Welch, 2011; Morais, 2011). Critical realism supports the study of a limited number of cases which are commonly used in case study strategy to delve deep into understanding of why things are as they are (Easton, 2010) by integrating multiple interpretations in the explanation (Yin, 2009; Benbasat, Goldstein and Mead, 1987). Additionally, a case study design allows comparison between cases which can enhance the quality and strength of explanations sought by critical realists (Bergene, 2007). It is also suggested that objective theory building can be achieved through case studies (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007, p. 25) in line with aspirations of critical realists.

Table 4-3 Justification for the Case Study Strategy

Features of case study research	Relevance to this study
Compatible with critical realist philosophy (Morais, 2011)	Critical realism adopted in the current study
Can be explanatory and not just exploratory (Morais, 2011)	This study aims to explore, critically evaluate, and explain the implementation of service innovations in the hotel industry and the factors that influence such implementation.
Focus on contemporary events (Yin, 2009)	Service innovation is a contemporary topic relevant both to services and manufacturing firms, in need of further study
Researchers need to demonstrate integrative powers to present results (Bendasat, 1987)	Integration is based on collection of subjective accounts of actors involved with a view to discover the best explanation behind the phenomena, and use of other data sources to triangulate the findings
A limited number of cases can be examined and compared to each other (Morais, 2011)	Two innovation projects are used in this study
Allowance for more than one source of data collection (Yin, 2009)	Semi-structured interviews, documents, observation, and internet sources are employed in this study

Case studies allow the researcher to examine a phenomenon in depth (Yin, 2014), and to study associations of different aspects within a broader environment (Easton, 2010). This opportunity is valuable, given the aim of this study to explore, critically evaluate, and explain the implementation of service innovations and the factors that influence such implementation. The case study strategy allows the exploration of contemporary phenomena in their own setting (Yin, 2014), which is ideal for the study of predefined phenomena such as innovation, without requiring explicit control or manipulation of variables (Cavaye, 1996). The strategy has indeed been used in the past for exploring organisational change in general (Pettigrew, Woodman and Cameron, 2001;

Yin, 2009) and innovation processes within service organisations (Hill, 2004), including implementation. The case study strategy encourages more than a single source of data collection; this offers the opportunity to triangulate the data and strengthen the research design (Patton, Patton and research, 2002).

4.6.1. Nature of the Research and Case Study Types

Case studies can serve various purposes, and a close observation of the nature of the research question can help to identify the most appropriate case study type to pursue (Easton, 2010). Yin (2014) distinguishes among exploratory, descriptive and explanatory (or causal) case study types. Broadly 'what' questions require an exploratory design, whereas 'how' and 'why' questions call for an explanatory approach. This study aims to explore, critically evaluate and explain the implementation of service innovations. Thus, an explanatory case study is considered the most appropriate type to employ, as it aligns with the goal of the study and the adopted critical realist philosophy. However, it should be noted that the type of explanation pursued in critical realist research is not of the traditional predictive nature, but is rather underpinned by the logic of retroduction (Dobson, Myles and Jackson, 2007; Jeppesen, 2005; Sharpe, 2005). This is because retroduction supports the postulation of possible mechanisms that can explain the phenomenon under investigation, recognising that absolute prediction and identification of causality are unattainable in an ever complicated, multi-interacting world (Dobson, 1999).

4.6.2. Definition and Territory of Cases

Two tasks are important when embarking on a case study research project: defining the cases and bounding the territory around them, in order to set limits to the investigation (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The issue of case definition is considered complicated in case study research and a point of struggle for researchers (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The difficulties often stem from confusion around the unit of analysis. On the one hand, it is possible to conceive multiple individuals, groups, and organisations as units of analysis (Kuzel, 1999; Yin, 2014). On the other hand, common misconceptions in case study research include the belief that the empirical unit is the unit of analysis, and that the unit of analysis is clear cut (Fletcher and Plakoyiannaki, 2011). The overall purpose of a study should guide the process of selecting units of analysis; the researcher should reply to the question "what is it you want to be able to say something about at the end of the study?" (Patton, 1980, p. 100) in order to identify the focus of the study. In this project, the service innovation project is the unit of analysis as the implementation process is the focus of the study. Yin (2014) distinguishes between two kinds of designs based on the unit of analysis; the embedded type, containing multiple units of analysis within the same case, and the holistic type that has one unit of analysis per case (Yin, 2014). There are also two kinds of design based on the number of cases; the single case and the multiple case design. This study is a holistic multiple case design as one unit of analysis (the innovation project) is used in each of the two cases in the study.

It is important to set boundaries to cases studied in any research project with a finite end. In qualitative research, boundaries serve to indicate what will and will not be studied in the scope of a research project, in a similar fashion that inclusion and exclusion criteria are used in quantitative sampling (Baxter and Jack, 2008). Bounding the territory of a study can be done by asking a specific research question, building a conceptual framework and deciding on sampling techniques (Miles and Huberman, 1994). A common pitfall in case studies is the tendency for researchers to attempt to answer a question that is too broad, or to investigate a topic with too many objectives for one study (Baxter and Jack, 2008). This is avoided in this study by applying emphasis to the implementation process of service innovation projects and detailing realistic objectives towards the goal at the beginning of the study. The conceptual framework based on the literature review also helps with setting boundaries to the data collection part of the research process. Finally, the setting of the research serves to set necessary boundaries. Suggestions that exist in the literature on the ways to bind a case include, for example,

- by time and place (Creswell, 2009);
- by time and activity (Stake, 1995);
- by definition, context, and planning for within-case and multiple-case sampling (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The boundaries selected for this study include the service innovation definition, timing, industry, organisation type and location. Based on the definition of service innovation adopted in this study, both radically and incrementally changed service concepts, client interaction channels, service delivery systems and technological concepts have been considered valid candidate cases for inclusion in the study. In addition, selected innovation projects needed to have been completed up to a year prior to data collection, in order for the implementation to be fresh in participants' minds. Due to time and resource constraints such a retrospective approach to exploring the implementation process was selected. International hotel groups were approached for participation, as innovation projects in those groups are likely to be extensive and substantial enough to produce information-rich research material. In addition, the hotel portfolio of those groups includes a variety of contract types (managed and franchised properties), which may have a distinct effect on the way innovations are implemented. Only European hotels were invited to participate for practical reasons of ease of travel and facilitation of data collection within a limited budget.

4.6.3. Sampling

Sampling refers to the selection of cases in a study, an important decision that affects theory building and testing (Fletcher and Plakoyiannaki, 2011), especially so in intensive research designs where a limited number of cases are involved (Danermark, 2002). The sampling choices made in this study are congruent with critical realist research in the quest for theory development without decontextualising the objects under investigation (Yeung, 1997). Non-probability sampling is adopted where the subjective judgement of the researcher rather than probabilistic methods guide sample selection. The sampling technique followed can be further characterised as purposive sampling, where cases are carefully selected based on how informative they are likely to be in relation to the research aim (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016), and instrumental sampling, which can provide insights on a defined issue, in this case the implementation process and can be used to refine theory (Stake, 2000).

Fletcher and Plakoyiannaki (2011) stress that, in practice, the selection of cases is a process rather than a single decision. Initially in this study, the participation of three cases was considered appropriate. The limited number of cases would allow deep investigation of the meaning, source and effects of the innovation implementation process (Fletcher and Plakoyiannaki, 2011). Compared to a single case, three cases would give greater opportunity to build better grounded, more accurate and more generalisable theory (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). The multiple case decision has not been based on quantitative thinking advocating that a bigger sample is better, but on the opportunity multiple cases provide for cross-case comparisons, contrasts and theoretical elaboration (Yin, 2009). Once the research was underway, information gathered on the willingness of hotel groups to participate in the study, and on projects that fulfilled the case selection criteria, led to a revised decision to include two main cases in the study, and to use a smaller-scale case of incremental innovation as a pilot study (Table 4-4). The pilot case explored the project of Before-During-After, implemented in a limited number of hotels belonging to a group of 13 hotels in four countries. The first main case (Case A) is the innovation project of Brain Food, initiated in the Nordic countries of the Carlson-Rezidor hotel group, spanning 81 countries and comprising 1319 hotels at the time of the study. 27 participants from five Norwegian hotel properties and the regional office from this company participated in the study. All the hotels were managed by the Carlson hotel group. The second main case (Case B) is the Stay Real – Be You innovation initiative, implemented in Holiday Inn and Holiday Inn Express hotels, part of the Intercontinental Hotel group, one of the world's largest international hotels chains. In case B, 22 participants from five European hotels in the UK, France and Greece as well as the European regional office were interviewed in this case. Four of the participating hotels were franchised properties while one managed hotel in the UK took part in this study. 14 interviews were done in English, six in French and two in Greek language. The two main cases in the study differ in the type of innovation explored but they share a similar setting with the innovations being implemented in hotels; the first case is a more radical new-to-the-market innovation project with direct participation of customers, whereas the second case constitutes a more introvert incremental innovation, with less visibility to external customers. This distinction is thought to allow the discovery of any implementation differences in the two types of innovation. The majority of interviews were organised with the help of an insider assistant that was introduced to the researcher through a senior member of the company, the gatekeeper, that the researcher met during her PhD study. Interviews with participants of the hotel in the north of Norway were organised following recommendations in previous interviews.

Table 4-4 Overview of Cases

Case	Innovation project	Innovation type	Size of hotel group
Pilot	Before - During - After	Incremental	13 hotels 4 countries
Main Case A	Brain Food	Radical	1,319 hotels 81 countries
Main Case B	Stay Real - Be You	Incremental	4,150 hotels 100 countries

Access negotiation and research ethics

Major difficulties have been encountered in the effort to obtain access to hotels for the purpose of the study, a persistent issue for empirical studies in this context (Okumus, Altinay and Roper, 2007; Okumus, 1999; Okumus, 2004; Okumus, 2008). More than 20 individuals in senior roles within marketing, development or operations were initially contacted by email or LinkedIn and invited to participate in the study; most communication attempts remained unanswered, while many replies received were negative on the basis of lack of time and busy operations. Other potential reasons for access denial may have been a lack of perceived value to the organisation, concerns about confidentiality, and perceptions about the researcher credibility (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). In an effort to overcome the access barrier, emphasis was placed on confidentiality, gains to the organisation and adherence to Oxford Brookes university's ethical code in subsequent communication to potential participants. Access to hotel companies was eventually achieved through contacts of colleagues at the Oxford School of Hospitality Management approached during networking events organised by the school. Initial access was established through the gatekeepers at the corporate level; in the pilot study the gatekeepers were the training managers, in the first case the Director of Responsible Business, and in the second case the Director of Brands and Operations Training. A range of information was shared with the gatekeepers, both verbally and in written form, to establish the terms of collaboration in the framework of the study. In line with recommendations by King and Horrocks (2010) such information included an overview of the project, summary of aims, methods and anticipated outcomes, and confidentiality and anonymity issues for participants and time commitments. The gatekeepers pointed to the projects that could serve the purpose of the study, but actual participation of individuals was arranged through an 'insider' assistant at the local hotel level. The assistants were briefed on the project and regularly contacted throughout the project, while their help proved invaluable in accessing timetables and assisting the researcher to arrange interviews from a distance (King and Horrocks, 2010). However, certain risks associated with the use of insider assistants should also be acknowledged; insiders may exclude people from the study or exert pressure on people to participate, meaning that effectively participants would be denied genuine, free informed consent despite the researcher's intentions (King and Horrocks, 2010). Therefore, it was requested from the assistant to clearly communicate to participants the voluntary nature of involvement in the project and their right to withdraw from the study at any time if they wished. This request was in line with the ethical guidelines of the university that permeated the entire research project. Prior to the start of the study, the Research Ethics Committee had agreed that issues of research ethics, confidentiality, and data protection were given sufficient thought by the researcher. During the study the researcher followed the guidelines outlined in the ethics approval form; participants received a participant information sheet (Appendix 4-1), and were invited to complete a consent form (Appendix 4-2), while every effort was made to safeguard their anonymity and to securely store research-related documentation. At the end of the interviews, participants were thanked for their contribution verbally and with a written letter by which they were invited to share additional information relevant to the project investigated. So, in summary, the study was conducted following the principles of informed consent, with no deception, the right to withdraw, a debriefing, and confidentiality ensured (Willig, 2008).

4.7. Data Collection and Analysis Methods

According to the aim and design of the empirical study, the researcher needs to decide on appropriate ways to collect data in the field. Data can be primary or secondary, depending on whether they have been produced for the purpose of the study or for other purposes. Techniques used to collect data include surveys, interviews, focus groups and secondary data analysis (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). A critical realist case study supports the use of multiple data collection techniques, in order to be able to identify and represent as accurately as possible the phenomenon under investigation; in other words, triangulate the findings (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Different sources of information also help with appreciating the context in which innovation projects are implemented and accruing sufficient knowledge for theory development. This study has employed semi-structured interviews as the main data collection technique assisted by collection of secondary data.

4.7.1. Semi-structured Interviews

Due to the intensive nature of this study and the desire to tap into multiple interpretations of individuals (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015), interviews with key stakeholders were considered the most appropriate data collection technique. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) assert that interviewing is powerful for data gathering and knowledge production. Interviews are especially useful for critical realists, as a tool to unearth mechanisms in the real domain through the amalgamation of experiences in the empirical domain (Zachariadis, Scott and Barrett, 2010). However, what is shared in an interview cannot be taken for granted, but when the information is compared and contrasted with different sources, it can help to create meaning behind utterances and actions (Danermark, 2002).

Several types of interviews can be employed in a study depending on the degree of structure that needs to underpin data collection (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Semi-structured rather than structured interviews were selected in the study, due to the flexibility they provide to deviate from the original interview plan, and the opportunity they offer to introduce new questions based on the research context (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). The semi-structured format also allows the researcher to follow participants' cues, develop personal and flowing conversations (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008) and clarify responses (Larkin, Dierckx de Casterlé and Schotsmans, 2007), whilst still being guided by prepared questions and the overall resarch aim. In this study the interviews explored several pre-identified issues pertaining to the implementation process in a consistent way to aid comparability, but remained an open-ended communication event (Miller and Crabtree, 1999) where interesting lines of inquiry where followed based on participants' narratives.

Efforts were made in the study to overcome limitations of the interview technique, including potential bias due to poorly articulated questions and the choice of respondents, inaccuracies due to failing memory, and the reflexivity of interviewees providing answers that the researcher wants to hear (Yin, 2009). An interview guide was prepared in advance and tested with individual participants in the hotel industry, and also within a pilot case prior to the data collection in the main cases. Feedback on the interview questions with regards to the aim of study and the clarity of questions was collected and used to amend the guide accordingly Interview data was gathered from a large group of participants in order to overcome memory lapses of individual interviewees and develop a comprehensive view of the process by combining the narratives of individuals. Finally, assurances of confidentiality and anonymity were provided in order to nurture honest communication with participants.

Preparation and content of interview guides

Grounded in the themes identified in the conceptual framework of the study, the interview guide and data requirements table were compiled to include the questions to be asked during data collection, as well as the aims and measurement of each question (See Appendix 4-3 for the final version of the interview guide, changes applied shown in Appendix 4-6). At the interview stage the focus is on meaning-making, experiences and perceptions of research participants, rather than on establishing causal relationships or generalised patterns of behaviour (King and Horrocks, 2010). The preparation of the interview guide drew the researcher back to the research aim and objectives of the study, the underpinning critical realist philosophy and the existing knowledge in the field of service innovation implementation. One of the key decisions to be made in the interview guide preparation relates to the extent to which specific questions match topics in the developed conceptual framework (King and Horrocks, 2010). A comprehensive guide may not leave sufficient opportunity for participants to bring up unanticipated, but important perspectives to the study, while a minimalist guide may fail to address important questions (King and Horrocks, 2010). In this study a balanced approach was adopted, where the conceptual framework was reflected in the interviews, but participants were encouraged to elaborate on other topics they considered important.

The translation of critical realism philosophy into practical methods, such as interview questions is difficult, given that such application remains rare in practice (Morais, 2011). In addition, a "distinctively critical realist conception of case study research remains underdeveloped" (Elger, 2010, p. 256). Nevertheless, the critical realist research journey, described by Sayer (2000), and applied by Easton (2010), in a real life case study suggests the collection of data around events, entities and mechanisms. Events are defined as "the external and visible behaviours of people, systems and things as they occur, or as they have happened" (Easton, 2010, p. 120). Entities can be "tangible or intangible, social or physical, dormant or active" beings (Easton, 2010, p. 125). Mechanisms are concepts used in the analysis of events and entities; mechanisms serve to explain how entities interact with each other for events to take place. Following the critical realist journey, the interview guide was formulated and split into three sections, an icebreaker, a few general questions on the innovation project, and questions on the process of implementation (events) and influencing factors (entities). The icebreaker includes questions on age range, role and time in the organisation, in order to facilitate the flow of the conversation. The second section revolves around the process of implementation, and, specifically, the four main activities of training, secondary adoption and adaptation, launch, review and routinisation, as identified in the literature review, have been central in the discussions. Specific events that were expected to occur were the appointment of project leaders, the delivery of training sessions, the change of standard operating procedures, the trialling of the innovation, the official launch to internal and external customers, and the gathering of feedback. The third section deals with the identified factors relating to individuals, the firm, the concept and the process. Specific questions were dedicated to the exploration of the organisational context. Questions such as "Could you tell me about how it is to work for this hotel (company) and what is the climate for introducing new services?" invited participants to talk about the organisational culture, the politics, modes of communication, the structure and autonomy in their work environment. Finally, the mechanisms of sensemaking, organisational learning, organisational politics and emotional reactions were expected to surface as possible explanations for the events in implementation during the data analysis.

Questions in the interview guide are worded in neutral terms in order to avoid bias, and to allow participants to express themselves in their own way (Bryman and Bell, 2015). As per Patton (1990), questions were asked which related to experience and behaviour, opinions and values, feelings, and knowledge in order to identify both cognitive and emotional responses to the innovation projects. A few leading questions were occasionally employed, especially during conversations later in the data collection process, to ensure that answers were reliable and interpretations verified (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Probes were prepared to encourage participants to share more in a professional but friendly way (McBurney and White, 2010). The interview guide was prepared in the English language and translated to French and Greek for the purpose of the study (Appendices 4-5 and 4-6). Translated interview guides were used with native Greek and French participants as a way to build rapport and gain maximum benefit from the interviews. Conducting the interviews in languages other than English was a challenge for the researcher despite her fluency in those languages. The use of additional languages was accompanied by risks associated with linguistics and translation that needed to be addressed in order to protect the validity of the study (Van Nes et al., 2010). Traditional methods of forward and backward translation by outsiders have been criticised for weak conceptual equivalence which is of crucial importance in multilingual research (Larkin, Dierckx de Casterlé and Schotsmans, 2007). The translation was therefore done by the researcher with help from other researchers who were native speakers of the two languages. The translated versions were carefully checked against the original English version in order to ensure accurate representation of the themes of the study, and to avoid misconceptions due to the different languages used.

At the start of the interview that lasted an hour on average and took place in the hotel properties the researcher introduced herself to participants, talked about the research project and the purpose of the interview, and explained the procedures around confidentiality and anonymity. The consent form was signed and the tape recorder was setup following permission. During the interview the interview guide was employed and the interviewer used written documentation, such as promotional leaflets and training notes, as a probing tool to facilitate the discussion in the few occasions that was needed. In the closing part of the interview, participants were invited to comment on innovation in the hotel industry in general and to add any relevant information not covered in the interview. They were also prompted to suggest documents that the researcher should see, and were thanked for their time and contribution to the project. Finally, the contact details of the researcher were offered to all participants.

The researcher endeavoured to apply sound interview skills, as suggested in the literature, in order to maximise the benefit from the interviews with participants (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015; Bryman and Bell, 2015). Prior to the interview she used publicly available sources, such as videos and online presentations to build knowledge on the innovation projects. During the discussion she tried to be gentle and sensitive by allowing people to complete their answers and by being a good listener, allowing for pauses and for silences where needed. The participants were encouraged to talk for the majority of time, with the researcher only intervening to ask questions and actively demonstrate understanding through positive body language, nodding, and appropriate attentive responses. Although the interview guide was generally followed, the researcher was vigilant in remembering what was said, leaving out questions already covered in responses, and encouraging participants to expand on relevant lines of thought. The researcher was open to ideas presented by participants, and showed interest in what was important to interviewees. She demonstrated critical skills by paying attention to inconsistencies during interviews, and politely challenged participants in order to achieve greater accuracy and avoid misinterpretation. By being actively engaged in the discussion she sought to clarify meaning by repeating what was said in her own words.

<u>Trialling the interview guide with individual participants</u>

Trialling of the interview guide in an actual interview format served two main purposes: to assess the quality of the questions themselves, and to assess the conversation flow in the context of an actual case. The initial version of the interview guide was piloted in six interviews between March and April 2011 that took place in London with participants working in different hotel properties and a food service consultancy. Participants were selected for convenience, accessibility, geographical proximity to the researcher (Yin, 2009) and their link to the hotel industry. Only the interview guide in English was piloted prior to the main case data collection. The job titles of the interviewees were director of operational innovation, food service consultant, guest experience manager, hotel restaurant waiter, brand communications officer and hotel manager. The diversity of participant roles allowed a feasibility check of the questions across different employee levels and different organisations. Participants were asked to draw on a specific service innovation project they had experienced in the past when answering the questions. Feedback on their experience of the interview overall and the content of questions was sought verbally at the end of each interview, and in writing afterwards.

In general, positive reactions to the interview questions were received during the trial. All but one participant could easily draw on an innovation project implemented in their work environment, and were able to remember details about the project. Participants felt, in the majority, that information relevant to the implementation was covered in the discussion, and they did not have any information to add at the end of the interview. At a technical level, the trial highlighted the importance of running interviews in a quiet environment for the purposes of recording, given that noisy backgrounds make the transcription a much lengthier process. Moreover, interviews typically took more than an hour, which was the suggested interview time. It was noted that during the main studies accurate information should be provided to participants with regards to the use of their time, especially important in a busy hotel context which places limits to the time of participants available for an interview. Since it was considered inappropriate to request interviews that were more than an hour long, it was decided to try to keep participants on track as much as possible during the interview. At a content level, the discussions revealed the need to revise the order of questions for a better flow of conversation, and to reword a few questions to be more open-ended. For example, the question 'how long ago was the innovation project introduced?' was replaced by 'could you tell me a little bit about the innovation project?'. Rephrasing was also need for questions not understood as intended, in an effort to increase their clarity. For example, the question 'are you clear about your role? was replaced by 'tell me about your role in the organisation?'. Finally, repetition among questions needed to be eliminated, and probes used instead to cover missing elements when appropriate. For example, two separate questions enquired about efficiency, service quality and innovation benefits; this was considered excessive and they were reduced to a single question. Changes in the interview guide are summarised in Appendix 4-6.

Trialling the interview guide in the context of a case

In the second trialling phase the interview guide was applied to the context of an actual case of service innovation implementation. The pilot case was intended to be one of the main cases of the study, but the small scale of the project and limited number of participants did not warrant an extensive investigation. So the decision was made to use the collected data in order to assess the analytical strategy of the study. The project explored was an incremental service innovation called During, Before and After (DBA), introduced in a limited number of London properties of a small international hotel group, in order to strengthen relationships with American-based travel agents. The project arose from a concern that rapport with travel agents was lost after the guests' departure from the hotel. Building a continuous relationship with travel agents was considered an important goal for the hotels and the DBA idea received considerable attention and thought by key individuals. Interviews were conducted with six individuals: the executive director of the hotel group, four managers in various front of house roles, and the personal assistant to the general manager of one hotel (Table 4-5). The participants' role in implementation varied from decision maker, to leader, champion and implementer. The nature of the innovation project meant that the responsibility for implementation lay with managers rather than with lower-level employees; this is why five managers and only one employee were included in the sample, a limitation of the pilot with regards to differentiating perceptions at different levels in the organisation.

Table 4-5 Participants in the Pilot Case

Role in the Organisation	Work Place	Role in Implementation	Level
Executive director	Group	Decision maker	Manager
General manager	Hotel A	Decision maker	Manager
Resident manager	Hotel B	Leader	Manager
Front Office manager	Hotel C	Leader	Manager
Guest services manager	Hotel D	Champion	Manager
PA to General Manager	Hotel C	Implementer	Employee

The pilot case provided the opportunity to relate a real case to the conceptual framework of the study (Yin, 2014) and practically assess whether the research instrument would lead to identification of events, entities and mechanisms. Indeed, the interviews identified events in the implementation of BDA that belonged in the four phases of training, secondary adoption and adaptation, launch, and review and routinisation. Examples of events included the general managers' weekly meeting, where the group director announced the implementation of the project, formal drafting of procedures with regards to incorporating the project in everyday activities, internal recording of actions in customer profiles, and recording of emails to travel agents. Key entities, including factors relating to individuals, the firm, the project and the process, were also identified in the pilot case. For example, the hotels demonstrated a positive implementation climate and resources were in place to accommodate the necessary changes to everyday tasks. Finally, the mechanisms of sensemaking, organisational learning, organisational politics and emotional reactions were at play during the project. Different interpretations on issues, such as the mandatory aspect and outcome of the project, were observed. For example, one individual characterised the project as 'a bit of trial and error with the unknown', whereas for others it was considered a certain success. Participants also differed in their feelings about the project: a few participants felt disappointed by the low number of travel agent responses, whereas other interviewees did not perceive that the project was failing. Overall, the pilot case provided confidence to the researcher that the interview guide was fit for purpose as a means to fulfil the study's aim and objectives.

Interviews in the main cases

Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) propose the use of as many interview subjects as necessary to achieve what you need to know; in this study a total of 49 individuals participated in the study from the main innovation cases, the two innovation projects studied. 41 interviews were undertaken in the English language, six in the French language and two in Greek. Participants were representatives from different levels in the organisational hierarchy and were split into three groups: senior managers, managers and employees in this study. The identification of levels was done in order to observe any differences in the perceptions of people that belonged to different groups and in order to be more inclusive than previous studies that focused exclusively on managers. By including the voice of lower-ranked employees in the implementation process also allowed the researcher to offer more well-rounded managerial recommendations at the conclusion. The classification was done based on the discussions rather than their job title per se. Participants were also split into different functions they acquired in the innovation project, including decision-making, steering group member, follower, leader, and implementer. In case A, 27 participants, five senior managers, ten managers, and 12 employees from five Norwegian hotels and the regional office were interviewed in 2011 and 2012 (Table 4-6). In case B, 22 participants, three senior managers, seven managers and 12 employees from five European hotels and the corporate office were interviewed in 2012 and 2013 (Table 4-7).

Table 4-6 Participants in Case A - Brain Food in Radisson Blu Hotels

Informants	Work place	Role in Implementation	Level
General Manager/Regional Director	Region	Decision maker	Senior manager
Regional Purchasing Manager	Region	Steering group	Senior manager
PR & Communications Manager	Region	Steering group	Senior manager
Regional Director of Marketing	Region	Decision maker	Senior manager
Director of Sales	Hotel A	Steering group	Manager
Executive Chef	Hotel A	Steering group	Manager
Executive Sous-chef	Hotel A	Implementer	Manager
Chef de Partie	Hotel A	Implementer	Employee
M&E Manager	Hotel A	Implementer	Manager
M&E Sales Manager	Hotel A	Implementer	Employee
M&E Operations Manager	Hotel A	Implementer	Employee
F&B Supervisor	Hotel A	Implementer	Employee
M&E Hostess	Hotel A	Implementer	Employee
M&E Manager	Hotel B	Implementer	Manager
F&B Manager	Hotel B	Implementer	Manager
Waitress	Hotel B	Implementer	Employee
F&B Service Manager	Hotel B	Implementer	Employee
Executive Chef	Hotel C	Implementer	Manager
Executive Chef	Hotel D	Implementer	Manager
M&E Manager	Hotel D	Implementer	Manager
F&B Operations Manager	Hotel D	Implementer	Employee

General Manager	Hotel E	Implementer	Senior manager
Conference & Banqueting Supervisor	Hotel E	Implementer	Employee
Waitress	Hotel E	Implementer	Employee
Conference & Banqueting reservations	Hotel E	Implementer	Employee
Executive Chef	Hotel E	Leader	Manager
Food & Beverage Manager	Hotel E	Implementer	Manager

Table 4-7 Participants in Case B - Stay Real Be You in Holiday Inn & Express Hotels

Informants	Work place	Role in Implementation	Level
Brand service consultant	Region	Trainer	Manager
Training Co-ordinator	Region	Trainer	Employee
Brand Training Director	Region	Leader	Senior Manager
General Manager	Hotel A	Leader	Senior Manager
Front Office Manager	Hotel B	Implementer	Manager
Operations Manager	Hotel C	Champion	Manager
Food and Beverage employee	Hotel C	Implementer	Employee
Housekeeping Team Leader - Deputy Manager	Hotel C	Implementer	Manager
Food and Beverage employee	Hotel C	Implementer	Employee
Head Chef	Hotel C	Implementer	Manager
Receptionist	Hotel C	Implementer	Employee
Deputy General Manager	Hotel D	Leader	Manager
Accounts Assistant	Hotel D	Implementer	Employee
Receptionist	Hotel D	Implementer	Employee
Head Housekeeper	Hotel D	Implementer	Manager
Maintenance Manager	Hotel D	Implementer	Employee
Deputy General Manager	Hotel E	Champion	Manager
General Manager	Hotel E	Leader	Senior Manager

Meeting and Events Agent	Hotel E	Implementer	Employee
Reservation Agent	Hotel E	Implementer	Employee
Reception Manager	Hotel E	Implementer	Manager
Receptionist	Hotel E	Implementer	Employee

In the presentation of findings participants are identified with two letters and a unique identifier. The first letter indicates the case they belong to and the second their seniority, where S stands for Senior Manager, M for manager, and E for employee. For example, participant AS10 is a Senior Manager in Case A.

Most interviews were organised with the help of the insider assistant, but a small number of interviewed were arranged following recommendations from participants to include individuals from suggested locations and workplaces in the sample. This snowball effect increased the diversity of the sample, allowed for comparisons between viewpoints and helped to achieve data saturation. Few interviews with lower-level employees did not provide rich data, due to difficulties with spoken English, or lack of elaboration in interview questions, and, as a result, were not particularly useful in advancing knowledge on the implementation process. The type of interviews used to collect data included face-to-face (43 interviews) and telephone interviews (six interviews), each type having its own advantages and drawbacks. Telephone interviews benefit from the advantages of access, speed, and lower costs, but they also carry potential disadvantages (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). Personal contact is more difficult to establish than in face-to-face situations due to the lack of visual cues; this issue may explain why the phone interviews in this study were typically shorter than the rest. Rapport and trust are more difficult to establish in those circumstances, which may reduce the reliability of findings; extra effort was therefore placed in establishing a friendly connection on the phone, with the use of verbal cues and feedback provided during the conversation.

Recording and transcribing interviews

In line with university ethical guidelines, participants were offered the choice of having the interview recorded or not. Audio recording can be the source of anxiety for participants, and effort was required to reassure all participants of confidentiality protection; in this study only one participant opted out of having the interview recorded, and written notes were kept instead. Audio files from the interviews were loaded into version 10 of the qualitative data analysis NVivo software. The interviews in English were transcribed verbatim remaining faithful to the grammar and language used by participants as suggested in the literature (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). The interviews in French and Greek were coded directly from the audio files; however, notes of key points were also kept while listening to the interviews and key phrases were transcribed fully for quoting purposes. Transcribing proved to be a very time-consuming process (Bryman, 2008), with six to ten hours of transcribing needed per hour of interview (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). It is advisable to transcribe as soon as possible after the interview, and to continue transcribing and interviewing activities alongside each other (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). This practice allows the researcher to become more aware of the issues around the implementation, compile missing or unclear information by remaining close to the collected data, and use probing more effectively in subsequent interviews. However, with travel arrangements and large number of interviews completed in a short space of time, transcribing one interview at a time was not always possible. Professional transcription software Express Scribe was used to perform the transcriptions and the functions of pausing, rewinding and bookmarking interview passages were found particularly useful. The use of Dragon Naturally Speaking speech recognition software was also employed to turn interview content into written words through dictation. However, time was also spent training the software to recognise the voice of the researcher and revisiting the text where mistakes had been made. Interviews conducted in noisy hotel environments proved substantially more difficult to transcribe; the software Audacity was used to reduce background noise in these cases and facilitate accurate transcribing. Once the transcripts were prepared, the audio files were not forgotten however. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) warn of the danger of conceiving the interviews as transcripts, once the transcription is completed; instead interviews should be viewed as living conversations where data are co-produced and co-authored between the people interacting (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Having the audio files and transcripts side-by-side allowed the researcher to re-listen to the interviews while reading the transcripts, which helped with recollecting memories from the interactions (Rapley, 2007).

Interviews in French and Greek were coded directly from the audio files without a transcript. This is a possibility offered by NVivo without losing the rigour of a transcript. Naturally, the use of the technology in this way raises questions about the epistemological and sensorial differences between written and audio interpretation and analysis (Wainwright and Russell, 2010). Due to the convention of transcribing the interviews, there is a tendency to think that interviews only become legitimate when they are transformed into text (Wainwright and Russell, 2010). However, identifying themes within the original source of spoken language allows the researcher to remain close to the medium in which the data were collected (Hutchinson, 2005), appreciate the context and respect coherence and narrative flow. Due to these benefits, coding from audio files was considered an opportunity worth exploring that proved beneficial for the analysis and interpretation of interview findings.

4.7.2. Secondary Data

Parallel to the primary data collection, secondary data, i.e. data collected initially for purposes other than the study (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016), have been used in this research. Secondary data help to put findings from different sources into a dialogue (Fielding, 2012) and assess the complementarity of multiple data sets (Jackson et al., 2013); in other words, they assist with "convergent validation" (Fielding, 2012, p. 127) and triangulation. Therefore, they can be useful in strengthening findings and increasing reliability of the study. However, it is important to remember that secondary data are produced with a specific audience in mind, different to that of the investigator in the study, have multiple intended purposes and should not be taken out of context (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Also, secondary data quality is difficult to evaluate, and researchers should be resourceful, systematic, and honest in acknowledging bias in secondary sources (Marshall and Rossman, 2011).

Secondary sources in this study were useful in acquiring a feel and understanding of the innovation project prior to the interviews. The following secondary sources were collected.:

- grey and published documentation including
  - administrative documents such as business plans for internal implementation
  - media reports, including online press releases
  - promotional leaflets and brochures for customers and employees
  - photographs taken in events, and motivational speeches on the innovation project
  - online information on the innovation projects
  - online corporate videos about the project
- observation of food presentation in Case A and participation in training exercises in Case B

The secondary sources had multiple purposes, including planning for implementation, internal and external promotion, employee training and motivation, and they were accessed in different ways. For example, one participant spontaneously shared photographs of a motivational speech during the interview to illustrate employee feelings about the project and the positive atmosphere in the hotels; a customer promotional video on the innovation played in the background during one interview at the hotel lobby; an online search by the researcher revealed press releases and promotional clips associated with the innovation in Case A. Secondary sources assisted not only as an additional data source, but also during the interviews as an icebreaker, a probing tool and an illustrator of the researcher's preparation and interest in the innovation projects.

4.7.3. Template Analysis

Analysing data in a rigorous manner is a crucial step towards producing meaningful conclusions and addressing the goals of any research study. Such analysis should be in line with the overall research design and the underpinning ontology and epistemology (Goulding, 2002). There are three broad approaches to data analysis: Thematic Analysis, Grounded Theory Method, and Narrative Analysis (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). In this study

Template Analysis is adopted; it is a type of thematic analysis, the strongest advocate and expert of which is Nigel King (2016) due to his extensive writing on the subject and his website devoted to Template Analysis. Multiple reasons make Template Analysis the most appropriate analysis method for this study. Template Analysis is a structured and accessible approach (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016) that can handle a large volume of data from interviews and documents in a systematic and logical manner (Ray, 2002). It does so by assigning codes to parts of the data and aggregating codes into higher order categories, thereby building a template. Template Analysis is also flexible and allows greater autonomy compared to highly prescriptive techniques, such as grounded theory and interpretivist phenomenological analysis (King, 2004). This is because it considers coding as work-in-progress and allows the review of the template in the course of analysis. It also encourages identification of a priori codes developed in relation to prior empirical research or existing theory (Crabtree and Miller, 1999a). A certain pre-dermination of codes with the ability to alter codes as the analysis progresses makes Template Analysis in line with the tenets of critical realism (Au, 2007). Finally, this type of analysis is particualy well suited for studies wishing to compare perspectives of multiple stakeholders within a specific context (King, 2004), as in the case of the current study where views of employees, managers and corporate staff are compared.

Despite the strengths of the method, there is a lack of substantial literature on the application of this technique to guide the novice researcher (King, 2012), particularly in business studies (Waring and Wainwright, 2008). Template analysis is mostly applied in the context of healthcare (for example, Kent, 2000; McDowall and Silvester, 2006), but practical examples can be found in studies in psychology (e.g. Gollop et al. (2004); Poppleton, Briner and Kiefer (2008)) and management (e.g. Ray (2002); McDowall and Saunders (2010)). Recommendations from these studies and from King (2012); (King, 2016) were followed in order to conduct Template Analysis in this study.

Central to the Template Analysis method is the creation of a template, an aggregation of codes (Crabtree and Miller, 1999a) used to divide statements in the data around the same topic (Chambers, 2004). Coding is an exercise that should be approached with caution, with too much or too little not serving the purposes of research. In this study the coding was done initially from the data collected by assigning pieces of the transcribed text or audio to codes created to describe what participants mentioned. Often the codes created were the exact words of participants as they succinctly described emotional states and opinions e.g. confident, driven, proactive, powerful, happy, and proud. Researchers should also look beyond the codes (Crabtree and Miller, 1999) and achieve a balance between selectivity and openness, in order to remain within the scope of the research while accommodating emerging relevant information not considered prior to data collection (King, 2004). In this study coding was done from participants' narratives by creating new codes despite the codes deriving from the conceptual framework that was previously built. With a closer look at the coding structure the codes that emerged from the data were merged with the pre-existing codes where there was a shared meaning. This way the researcher ensured that the data could lead to additional codes and not coded to suit the pre-existing framework. Codes can be descriptive and interpretative (or analytical) (King, 2012). Descriptive coding is a data reduction exercise where pieces of transcribed text are placed under a descriptive heading based on what the participant is saying, whereas analytical coding refers to interpretation of the phenomena and the grouping of ideas with links to theoretical constructs based on what the participants mean. Although these types of coding seem to be distinct, in reality their distinction is not clear cut, since all coding attempts to entail a degree of interpretation (King, 2016).

In line with King's (2016) guidelines and McDowall and Saunders' (2010) application, the template in this study is structured in a hierarchical manner from broader higher-order meaningful themes to narrower lower-order codes. One of the difficulties with coding involved decisions around the segregation of the data and the grouping of lower-order codes created to more generic categories in order to start making sense of the data and allow meaningful comparisons between groups of participants. Following the initial coding exercise the codes that contained a very small number of quotes were revisited in order to assess whether they could be assigned to different, more frequently used, codes with a similar meaning, moving away from the exact words of participants if necessary. For example, 'given authority' and 'being autonomous' were merged with 'empowerment'. The initial template comprised of seven meaningful themes broken down to second, third and fourth level codes based on the participants' narratives (Table 4-8).

Table 4-8 Extract from Initial Template

First level (meaningful themes)	Second level (codes)	Third level (sub-codes)	Fourth level (sub-sub codes)
Events in implementation	Training	Delivery	Learners type important Innovation rationale Exercises worked Dynamic - no concrete answers Positive style Classroom-style training preferred Actions needed between sessions Action-centred learning activities
		Challenges	Personalise training Non trainers to train No time for training delivery Logistics in training Lack of teamwork Keeping training standards Employees afraid of school-like environment Employees phobia with technology Delivery in local language Cultural differences Budget restrictions

Codes were kept in the English language for consistency, despite some data sources being in French and Greek. Following the conceptual framework of the study these meaningful themes were (1) Events in implementation, (2) Entities in implementation, (3) Individual-related factors (4) Firm-related factors, (5) Innovation-related factors, (6) Process-related factors and (7) Mechanisms in implementation. Second-level codes under the first meaningful theme were training, secondary adoption and adaptation, launch, and review and routinisation. Building the template should not be seen as a static representation of coding, but as a dynamic process. As the analysis progresses, groupings within the template may be inserted, deleted or changed in scope (King, 2004; Miller and Crabtree, 1999). Multiple versions of the template can be created until the last version is reached, when all data are collected, repeatedly read and coded (King, 2004). In this study the initial template was built during the analysis of findings in Case A and revised with findings from Case B.

4.7.4. Use of NVivo

The Template Analysis in this study is performed with the assistance of purpose-built qualitative analysis software. The software was only used for the examination of interview data, while secondary data was analysed separately due to their different format and accessibility issues. Although the expertise of the researcher and methodological choices may be more critical in determining the quality of analysis than the use of specific software (Gilbert, Jackson and Gregorio, 2014), technology can prove invaluable for specific tasks, including the organisation of large amounts of data (Gilbert, Jackson and Gregorio, 2014). In addition, software can provide equal exposure to all themes arising from the data, instead of relying on the researcher's memory and selectivity, and it can alleviate threats inherent in qualitative data analysis, such as biased transcription and interpretation, overemphasis on the positive and the ignoring of negative ideas and unwarranted generalisation (Gibbs, 2002). The NVivo software programme was selected, due to the training and support provided at the university and the prior experience of the researcher, as well as for its significant strengths and few weaknesses (Table 4-9).

Table 4-9 Strengths and Weaknesses in the Use of NVivo

Strengths	Weaknesses	Steps to overcome weaknesses
- Speeds up coding and retrieval process - Handles large amount of data in one place and facilitates an audit trail -Enhances the transparency of the process of analysis -Allows hierarchical representation of codes -Combats anecdotalism by revealing spread of codes	-Can lead to inappropriate quantification of codes -Can result in over-fragmentation of text and de-contextualisation -Can take unnecessary researcher's time in training -Can lead to trivial and uninteresting results due to over-description and lack of interpretation	Coding was used for theme identification rather than quantification -Avoided excessive segregation of text/audio source -Listened to the audio file frequently in order to keep in touch with the source -Used unique features of the programme such as memos, queries, and attributes -Used the programme as an analytical tool and not merely for data management

Source: Bryman and Bell (2015); Kelle (2007); Gibbs (2002)

Audio files from all the interviews and transcripts of the interviews in English were loaded into NVivo with unique participant identifiers. Interviews were organised in groups of Case A and Case B, and were assigned attributes of gender, workplace, level, organisation (hotel group) and role in implementation. The attributes helped with interrogating the data and comparing views of meaningful groups, for example employees and managers. The software was used to produce the coding structure as per the Template Analysis (See Appendix 4-7 for a sample of node structure); freestanding nodes (term used for codes in NVivo) were divided into parent and child nodes mirroring the meaningful themes and sub-codes of the template. In addition to the loading of data sources, the memo functionality of NVivo has been used as a digital notebook to record details around data collection and analysis that would have otherwise been forgotten. Memos included observations on the atmosphere in the hotels, interesting incidents during the researcher's visit, and the logic behind node structure and data interpretation (Table 4-10). Memos were re-visited during the analysis as a reminder of the research journey.

Table 4-10 Examples of Memos Recorded in NVivo

Memo name	Memo content
Location of interview	This interview took place in the general manager's office. This was a more intimidating setting than the meeting room where the rest of the interviews took place. It also meant that there were some interruptions to deal with operational issues.
Partnerships: Definition	This parent node contains all passages on partnerships of the organisation mentioned by participants – including franchisees, franchisors, suppliers, academics and other professionals.
Case overall	Interviews were arranged by the secretary of the organisational gatekeeper. Although it was explicitly mentioned in the information sheet that participation is voluntary, the extent to which participants really volunteered to take part cannot be established with certainty. All participants were encouraged to be honest and open about their views. One interesting comment came from a participant who thought I was journalist when we first met. I have explained my role as a researcher at Oxford Brookes and reassured all participants about confidentiality. During the interviews most participants were very positive about the innovation. It was not easy to figure out whether there was a degree of glossiness of the project or whether the innovation was truly problem-free. However, certain negative aspects were emphasised much more by certain individuals than others, probably due to impact on particular work tasks. Dissatisfaction was expressed with certain communication aspects but I felt that barriers to implementation were seen as challenges to overcome rather than real issues. A lot of initial problems in implementation seem to have been sorted out by the time of the interview.

The query functionality of NVivo also proved useful in interrogating data sources for specific words, e.g. support, communication, strategy and filter per selected attributes, e.g. participants of one hotel property versus another. In addition, word trees (Appendix 4-8) were an interesting visual tool used to ground specific words used by multiple participants within their narratives, and thus to compare interpretations of the same concept. Querying the data from a combination of transcribed and audio data sources was a challenging, but not unattainable, task; for example, running queries based on nodes rather than transcribed text was a way to include all relevant sources in the results.

NVivo was used to source verbatim quotations for the purposes of providing evidence for the points made in the thesis, to provide explanation for the observed phenomena, to illustrate specific points, to give voice to participants, and to increase readability and invite the reader into the story of the projects investigated. Due to space constraints and the nature of interviews, quotations were only used sparingly in the thesis; they therefore serve more as an illustration of the points made rather than as hard evidence of the extent of the themes mentioned. Besides, it is mentioned that in a series of interviews a researcher can potentially find at least one quotation supporting a point they wish to make. Effort was made to ensure that the quotations used were representative of the majority of participants, unless mentioned otherwise. The quotations were spread throughout the chapters on the presentation of findings in order to avoid overemphasising some themes over others. Quotations were woven in the researcher's narrative where possible in order to assist the reader instead of being used as stand-alone blocks of text with little explanation. There was an effort to pinpoint the relevance of every quotation used in the text and illustrate its take-away message. The quotations used in the thesis were often selected because it was felt that the researcher could not replicate the meaning in a better way; especially when describing emotions, it was felt that using the participants' own words creates a more authentic way of presenting the findings. Finally, quotations provided frank, direct, and sincere words to the presentation of findings making the relevant chapters interesting and to the point.

4.8. Research Quality

Criteria for research quality should be applied to every study that strives for credibility and to be a contribution to knowledge in the field. In critical realist research three criteria are put forward as valid evaluative mechanisms: analytical generalisation, methodological trustworthiness and construct validity (Bollingtoft, 2007) (Table 4-11). These mechanisms can be used to overcome the limitations of case study research in particular (Healy and Perry, 2000; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2014).

Table 4-11 Research Quality Criteria and Limitations of Case Studies

Quality criteria	Limitations of Case Studies	Strategies to overcome limitations	Section(s) where issue is addressed
Analytical generalisation	-Result in overly complex theories -Difficult to conduct due to overwhelming amount of data to analyse -Time-consuming	-Have specific aim and objectives and build on prior theories -Use theoretical replication logic -Compare evidence with existing literature -Use case study protocol and a systematic fieldwork process	Ch. 2 & 3 Literature review (Conceptual framework) Ch. 5 & 6 Findings Appendix 4-3 Interview guide Section 4.6. Case study strategy
Methodological trustworthiness	-Produce researcher bias and lack rigour -Confirm researchers' preconceived ideas	-Research instrument construction and findings publicly shared in academic conferences and input sought after -External input received in the research process	Section 4.6. Case study strategy
Construct validity	-Insufficient for theory development - Do not add to scientific development	-Use multiple sources of evidence -Establish a chain of evidence	Section 4.7. Data collection

Sources: Flyvbjerg (2006), Stehle (2004), Eisenhardt (1989)

<u>Analytical generalisation</u>

In contract to statistical generalisation where inferences are made from data to a population, analytical generalisation refers to the process of comparing the findings in a study with existing theories, in order to advance theory in a subject area (Danermark, 2002; Bollingtoft, 2007). Analytical generalisation is close to the widely-accepted evaluation criterion of external validity (Yin, 2014). In order to be able to build theory on the subject of the implementation process in service innovations, the review of the literature has concentrated on the existing theory in the field. Then, based on identified research gaps, specific aims and objectives were formulated for this study. The conceptual framework has amalgamated findings from previous studies, and has been used as the starting point to guide the data collection which nevertheless allowed the emergence of additional themes from the data. In a process of 'enfolding the literature', the researcher used past findings to understand the results of this study (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). In order to offer explanations of phenomena in other instances, the researcher has provided a detailed description of the cases' context. As a result, this study has a clear focus on its contribution to theory, and does not endeavour to capture everything, thereby overcoming the issue of the limitation of resulting in overly complex theories that case studies often encounter (Eisenhardt, 1989).

Methodological trustworthiness

Methodological trustworthiness refers to the degree to which the method adopted in a study can be audited by an external observer, or similar results would be drawn if different researchers analysed the data (Gibbs, 2002). This concept is close to, but broader than, reliability (Bollingtoft, 2007). Case studies are criticised for allowing the researchers' subjective feelings to influence the findings and to distort the view of conclusions (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Researchers are warned of bias and lack of rigour in the methodological approach within case study research (Yin, 2014). In addition, there is the risk of "bias towards verification, the tendency to confirm the researcher's preconceived notions" (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 220). To increase trustworthiness and overcome the limitations, the thesis provides a detailed description of method and analytical steps undertaken at each stage of the study. In addition, the literature review and the analysis of the findings chapters are similarly organised in order to allow direct comparisons of findings with previous studies to be made. Results are firmly grounded in collected data proven through the use of template analysis. Individuals outside the study have been involved in reviewing the results and checking the researcher's understanding.

Construct validity

Construct validity is the third criterion used to assess the quality of critical realist research (Bollingtoft, 2007). It refers to the degree to which a sufficiently operational set of measures is used in the study (Yin, 2014) to ensure that what is measured reflects reality. Multiple sources of evidence and a chain of evidence can be useful tactics towards achieving construct validity (Yin, 2014). For example, the researcher can ask the question: is the concept of innovation used in the literature as in this study? Or 'do participants understand innovation as it is understood in this study?' Several sources have been used in the literature review to define the concept of innovation, and special care has been placed in distinguishing it from relevant concepts such as NSD. Participants have been invited to provide their own definition of the concept and have been explicitly asked about their views on key concepts used in this study.

4.9. Reflections on the Research Process

Performing a qualitative study at the PhD level invariably involves a great deal of learning and small steps towards building social research expertise. In this section I use the first person to describe my personal experience as a researcher. Despite excellent academic results in my previous degrees the PhD experience taught me that different skills are needed for a study at that level. The PhD journey was challenging for me primarily due to time-related issues: the need to self-manage the time available to conduct the research, the lack of university-imposed deadlines, the need to strike a balance between time devoted to initial literature review and research path-finding and actual decision-making and writing, the time required to negotiate access to relevant projects, and the time needed to analyse the sheer volume of data that a qualitative study produces. For anyone considering to pursue a PhD degree I would suggest to build the necessary skills and think well about the reasons behind the choice rather than being guided by past performance in academia.

Compared to a quantitative study conducting qualitative research places the researcher in the spotlight as there is more interaction between researcher and participants. This raises questions about the role of the researcher and the impact of that role on the outcomes of the study. During the interview stage of the study one challenge for me as a researcher was concentrating on each interview with a clear mind given that a large number of interviews took place at the same or consecutive days. Persevering on each question and not allowing memory bias was also difficult given the repetition in participants' narratives. I had to consciously try not to allow my accumulative knowledge to distract me from the purpose of the interview and to encourage participants that were interviewed towards the end of the interview schedule to express themselves as fully as the first participants interviewed. In addition, as the order of questions adapted to the flow of conversation I had to ensure that all topics were covered during each interview and avoid mixing up different interviewees' comments in my follow up questions, which was a challenge given the back-to-back nature of the interview schedule. If I was allowed more time I would spread the interviews to more days in order to have a fresher perspective and complete concentration during each interview.

Naturally during the interviews, I tried to build rapport with the participants in order to encourage them to disclose their honest views on the projects investigated. As a researcher I realised that creating a pleasant atmosphere takes more time with some participants than others and I had difficulty stopping participants from going off the topic in their narratives due to fear of appearing uninterested in what they had to say. As a result, certain interviews overrun which may have been a problem for busy hotel operations. Being a good listener but also tactfully bringing participants back to the topic is a skill that I developed through my research journey. Another challenge arose from the low English language skill level of certain participants that prevented them from fully understanding the questions asked. In these occasions, I tried to pose the questions in plain English format and in a different way that initially in order not to make participants feeling awkward or embarrassed about their lack of understanding. Despite some being more talkative than others, all participants shared aspects of their experience of the innovation process. The interviews were accessed in their recorded version during data analysis in order to remain close to what was said by participants rather than my interpretations.

4.10. Summary

The chapter has justified the methodology used in this study in relation to the stated aim to explore, critically evaluate and explain the implementation of service innovations. The philosophy of critical realism, grounded in a unique fusion of a realist ontology and an interpretivist epistemology has been shown to affect all methodological decisions in the study. As a result, theory is expected to be built through a retroductive approach where explanation entails linking observable events to hypothetical mechanisms. An intensive research design allowing close examination of the context is needed for the retroductive logic to be put into practice. The case study strategy adopted in the research supports exploration of the implementation process in natural organisational settings. Two contrasting cases of service innovation, an incremental and a radical project have been selected in the study based on clearly defined selection criteria. Methodological decisions extended to the data collection and analysis phases of the study. The use of semi-structured interviews has been valued as a flexible data collection tool combining the employment of a priori codes, as recorded in the conceptual framework of the study, and the instruction of new themes emerging from the data. Finally, the research quality criteria of analytical generalisation, methodological trustworthiness and construct validity are used in the study to demonstrate its credibility, and as a means to overcome the limitations of research.

5. Case A - Background and Analysis of Findings

5.1. Introduction

This chapter examines the implementation of the Brain Food innovation project in Radisson Blu Hotels and Resorts, one of the brands of the Rezidor international hotel group. The chapter presents the background of the innovation and the organisational context, in order to set the scene of the implementation. In line with the conceptual framework of the study, the findings are arranged into events, entities and mechanisms. Firstly, the trajectory of implementation takes the reader through the chronological order of activities during the introduction of the innovation to the hotels. Detailed explanation on the influence of key factors is provided, alongside an assessment of their relative importance, based on the participants' narratives and analysis of secondary data. Finally, the mechanisms of sensemaking, organisational learning, organisational politics and emotional reactions are evaluated on their ability to explain the events of implementation.

5.2. Background to the Innovation Project

Brain Food is an innovative food product that aims at providing better service to customers attending meetings at the brand's hotels, by keeping them energised and mentally active throughout the meeting day. It is food "that is good for you" (AS10)[1], by providing a healthier alternative to the traditional heavy hotel food provision during meeting breaks. Brain Food is marketed by Radisson Blu as "an innovative and responsible food & beverage solution developed by skilled chefs and nutritionists" (Radisson Blu, 2013a). Six core principles of sourcing and preparing food have been put in place in cooperation with the company's fruit and vegetable supplier Bama: (1) Primarily fresh, locally-sourced ingredients, (2) Pure ingredients with minimal processing, (3) Predominantly wholegrain products, fruit and vegetables and fish, (4) Less meat and lower fat content, (5) Natural sweeteners and low levels of added sugar, and (6) Always with great taste and multi-sensory delight

[1] Participants are identified with two letters and a unique identifier. The first letter indicates the case they belong to and the second their seniority, where S stands for Senior Manager, M for manager, and E for employee. For example, participant AS10 is a Senior Manager in Case A.

(Radisson Blu, 2015). The project was part of the responsible business strategy of Radisson Blu hotels, and was seen as an opportunity for the brand to be a pioneer in the conference sector. With the project, the chain strived to transform their meetings' food provision that was in need of a "new and fresh wave" (AM19), according to the food and beverage manager in one hotel. Brain Food was conceived as a result of observations about lifestyle changes across the Norwegian population who were turning to healthier food and leading active lives. It was not however an idea sourced from customers, as, according to the regional director, customers did not know that they wanted Brain Food prior to the launch.

As per the definition adopted in this study, Brain Food can be characterised as a service innovation (Appendix 5-1.). It is a new service concept that has led to increased value for both guests and employees in the hotels by caring for their well-being, and that has required the application of specialised cooking skills and nutritional expertise in its implementation. Classifying the project within the innovation typology, it can be argued that Brain Food is better placed towards the more radical end of the spectrum. It is a first-in-market innovation, conceived, developed and launched in Radisson Blu hotels before any other hotel chain. Regardless of competitors copying the project in the future, the original idea remains the property of the chain, as one participant asserts: "We developed it. So the Brain Food concept […] belongs to Rezidor or Radisson Blu" (AS10).

Multiple benefits for the hotels, the employees and the customers have derived from the implementation of Brain Food. It was indeed a "win-win" situation according to both employees and managers (AE18, AM19, and AE24). The hotels have benefited from the unique service proposition that enabled them to attract more customers, upsell hotel rooms and other services to their conference guests, and build their reputation through customer word-of-mouth (AS8). Hotels saw their profits, return-on-investment and volume of corporate client bookings increase as a result of Brain Food implementation as per participants AS11 and AM19. In addition, they were able to forge solid relationships with external stakeholders, such as the local university-based nutritionist, who provided valuable knowledge and endorsed the project, adding credibility and purpose: "you need to have a profile person saying that this is actually true(!), it is more healthy for you" (AE26). Finally, the pioneers of the project at the regional level were recognised internally for the implementation of Brain Food: "in our own Carlson-Rezidor conference, we received an innovation award for this concept here. This is an example of how this has been acknowledged internally" (AS11).

Different aspects of the innovation project, which were not always obvious, presented gains for both employees and managers at the hotels. Content-wise, employees had the opportunity to benefit from Brain Food, as it was served in the staff canteen: "it's for the wellness of the guest and the wellness of our employees. And we've also implemented in our actual canteens, most of our employees eat in the hotels […] they also get Brain Food for their lunch" (AS10). Employees, particularly chefs, enjoyed the challenge and learning opportunities that accompanied the Brain Food project: "it was new for me when I started with it, but it's fun to learn, to learn that also, how you can use other stuff instead of the sugar, instead of the fat. So I think it's very fun" (AE22). Finally, customers saw a tangible positive change in their alertness and energy levels throughout the long meeting day, and meeting organisers had an easier task of assigning speakers to the after-lunch period, a session which was usually avoided by conference speakers due to low levels of attention.

5.3. Background to the Organisation

The background to the hotel group, and the brand where Brain Food has been implemented, is important in obtaining a view of the context and its potential impact on the implementation of the project. The Radisson Blu brand belongs to the Rezidor hotel group, which, since 2012, has been in a strategic partnership with Carlson Hotels. Carlson-Rezidor is one of the largest and fastest growing hotel companies, with more than 1300 hotels in 100 countries (Carlson-Rezidor, 2016). Rezidor's headquarters are in Brussels; four regional teams are responsible for the regions split for the purposes of the hotel group into (1) the Nordics, (2) the rest of western Europe, (3) eastern Europe, Russia and CIS and (4) Middle East and Africa. Brain Food has been implemented in the Nordics, with a view to expanding in the rest of Western Europe. This year Rezidor has been awarded the world's most ethical hotel company for the 7th consecutive year by US-think tank Ethisphere for leadership in ethical business standards and practices (Rezidor, 2016b). Corporate responsibility is strong in the group's agenda, tied in with projects such as Brain Food, which was proposed for examination in this study by the group's Director of Responsible Business. Brain Food and other innovation projects demonstrate the commitment of the brand to innovation, as reflected in the extract from the positioning statement: "[a brand with] a culture of innovative thinking, developed to meet the very specific needs of our guests" (Rezidor, 2016a).

5.4. Events in Implementation Process

Although the implementation journey is, by nature, context- and time-specific to the innovation case, detailing the events during the process allows comparisons to be made between the findings in this case and the conceptual framework of the study. This process partially fulfils the fourth objective of the study, that is to apply the framework in a real-world case. The launch is used as a landmark event to split the presentation of specific-to-case events in pre-launch, launch, and after launch periods, before making the link to the conceptual framework and the periods of training, secondary adaptation and adoption, launch and review and routinisation.

5.4.1. Pre-launch (2010-2011)

Initially, 'Brain Box' was considered an appropriate label for the innovation concept, but Brain Food prevailed as it was deemed a more suitable and easy-to-communicate term. Brain Food was first launched in 2010 in three Danish Radisson Blu properties in Copenhagen and Aarhus, under the auspices of celebrity nutrition expert Christian Bitz. Aarhus is the second largest Danish city, situated 300km northwest of the capital. Coincidentally, a worldwide survey of 30,000 meeting delegates run by Radisson Blu while the implementation of Brain Food was underway, revealed that meeting guests are interested in healthy, energising food, which is not necessarily organic (AS11). Implementation was considered successful in Denmark (AS11), and the decision was made to replicate the success in Norway.

In September 2010, a project team, called the steering committee, led by the Regional Director in Norway, started planning the implementation of Brain Food in Norway. Apart from the Regional Director and the General Manager of the flagship hotel in Oslo, the committee also included the Regional Director of Marketing, the Purchasing manager, the PR and Communications manager, and three Executive Chefs from hotels in the Oslo area. The committee decided that the concept should be customised to the Norwegian context and developed by chefs of the hotels in cooperation with Bama, the largest supplier of fruit and vegetables in the country, and partner of the brand at the time. The task was expected to be more complex than the Danish project, due to the larger number of hotels in Norway and their wider geographical spread (AS8), which could be as much as 2,000 km apart. Initially, the idea was to launch Brain Food in both the Radisson Blu and Park Inn brands of the company, but the project only proceeded in Radisson Blu properties in order to provide a clear competitive edge to the brand. A business plan was formulated, and a project team of seven Executive Chefs from all parts of Norway was assigned the development of the concept. It was important to create a "new and fresh" concept without increasing costs for the hotels (AM13). In October 2010, and under the supervision of nutritionist Gunn Helene Arsky from Bama, the menu planning began. 22 ambassadors were selected to champion the programme in each hotel of the brand in Norway.

5.4.2. Internal and External Launch (2011)

In order to fully support the concept, it was decided to prepare an internal launch, a grand external launch in Oslo, and further external launches in other hotels. In January 2011, the Food and Beverage Director of the group visited Norway from Brussels in order to keep up to speed with Brain Food developments. The role of the corporate office was a monitoring, rather than a directing one. The internal launch took place over the period January 18th-20th, 2011 and comprised of a cook-off of selected recipes. It was organised in the culinary academy in Oslo, where all the Executive Chefs in Norway had the opportunity to showcase the food to General Managers, Directors of Sales, Meeting and Events Managers, and Food and Beverage Managers, as well as the partner organisation Bama. At this event, a manual with all the recipes and menu templates was distributed to all Executive Chefs in the country. Half of the three-day event was dedicated to discussing the business plan in detail and to speeches by the Regional Director, the nutritionist, chefs and motivational speakers. The other half was spent into trying out new recipes. Prior to the external launch, the project team visited hotels in Stavanger, Bergen, and Trondheim to discuss Brain Food locally.

The grand external launch took place in Oslo on April 9th 2011. Key account customers, competitors and press were invited to what was described as a "huge launch" (AM21) in the ballroom of the Radisson Blu in Oslo. In order to create an element of surprise and keep momentum in the press coverage, sharing of information on Brain Food was not allowed before the event. On the day of the launch, large display banners featured in major Norwegian airports. Careful timing of the external launch was considered crucial in order to achieve first-in-market competitive advantage. Government initiatives to support healthy lifestyles were coincidentally launched at the same time as Brain Food, which helped the project gain media coverage and become popular with guests as this senior manager explains:

> Huge strength there, is obviously the timing of introduction of Brain Food. In Norway [it] was unbelievable, because the government had made a statement on healthy living, healthy eating, exercise, fresh air, all this sort of things. So it's very much in the public top of mind at the present (AS8)

Despite the extensive customer large launch in Oslo, Radisson Blu hotels in other Norwegian cities of Stavanger, Bergen, and Trondheim were encouraged to host local launches, and were provided with the tools to organise the events. This assistance provided the opportunity for local customers to experience the concept, and for hotels to create a celebratory environment for the innovation in each location.

5.4.3. Second Phase (from May 2011 onwards)

In August 2011, it was decided to roll out Brain Food to all Nordic hotels outside Norway. On September 28th 2011, the concept was introduced to Sweden, with Finland pending, with the view to expand in the UK, Iceland, Germany, Austria and Switzerland. On October 20th 2011, a second phase, or re-launch, took place in Norway in order to re-new interest in the project and bring hotel representatives from different parts of the country together: "we (in Oslo) had a meeting with them (hotels outside Oslo), when we had the re-launch, and they were ecstatic and happy, a good feedback for the guests" (AM20). The emphasis of the re-launch was on consistency in the Brain Food provision, diversification of sales techniques to customers and routinisation: "is actually with the re-launch that I felt that 'okay, now we are actually getting somewhere" (AM20). In November 2011, Rezidor was a finalist in the Worldwide Hospitality Awards in Paris for Brain Food competing in the category of Best Client's Experience Programme (Hospitality On, 2011). Criteria that applied for the selection of finalists included the scale and ambition of the programme, the quality of the tools used to implement the programme, its positive impact on the company, and the performance in terms of brand loyalty, quality measures and effect on the turnover (Hospitality On, 2011). In December 18th 2011, another gathering of chefs from all over Norway was organised in order to encourage involvement, share information and show appreciation, according to this senior manager:

> We are investing quite a lot in these gatherings, we're having a new one [to] touch down with the chefs just to get them secure that they are on board and everything, that we are able to provide them more information or, give us new information, and everything, just to get them to know that they are important (AS9)

A competition on recipes organised as part of the re-launch helped with bringing chefs to the forefront of the change: "We (chefs) also had a competition lately about the best Brain Food recipes, so that they (chefs) are getting involved as much as possible" (AM9).

The events that took place during the implementation of Brain Food broadly reflect the process as amalgamated in the conceptual framework of the study, including the periods of training, secondary adoption and adaptation, launch, and review and routinisation. However, differences to the framework are also noted, notably the planning period, the span of secondary adoption and adaptation, and the extensive follow-up included in the review and routinisation period. Implementing Brain Food occurred in a cycle of activity which ranged from the regional level to that of local hotel units.

5.4.4. Planning

Planning was an integral part of the implementation process that took time, effort, coordination and resources, but a stage that was considered particularly important: "We make quite good planning before and that actually was a key to implementation" (AM7). More management-level participants than employees mentioned initial planning activities during the interviews, perhaps due to their involvement later in the process, but, once trained, employees were also included in planning for the official launch (AE26).

At the regional level, and central to planning activities, was the production of the Business Plan by the steering committee (Radisson Blu, 2011). The business plan included "times and dates and follow ups" (AM13) as well as a SWOT analysis of the project, outlining its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Strengths outlined in the business plan were: the unique nature of the innovation, the good timing of the launch in line with government initiatives, the local ownership and pride in the project, the strong partnership with the supplier, the ability to keep the food cost under control, the project being in line with the values and ethical stance of Rezidor as a responsible business, and Brain Food providing a platform for PR and communication for the brand (Radisson Blu, 2011). The project also created opportunities to strengthen the relationship with the supplier, to benefit both employees and customers, to expand the project in other areas of food provision outside meetings and events, and to replicate the innovation in other countries. Weaknesses concentrated on the inconsistency of the innovation across the brand in terms of presentation, motivation, knowledge, ownership, commitment, sales approach, and operational standards, such as taste, buffet layout and signs. Controversial points were also considered the lack of a regular Executive Chefs meeting platform and a high kitchen and F and B staff turnover, which consequently increased training needs for the replacement staff. Finally, competition activities copying the project were seen as a threat at the time of the creation of the business plan. Given the identified points in the business plan, the implementation was steered towards exploiting the strengths and opportunities, and overcoming weaknesses and threats. There seemed to be two main purposes of the planning stage. Firstly, it served to achieve an equal level of readiness at all hotels before the launch: "It was a lot of work before launch. So everybody was ready and we started at the same time, boom" (AM21). Secondly it served to provide guidelines on deadlines. Coordinating planning activities was a difficult task, given the remote location of some hotels and the logistics and financial burdens associated with bringing everyone together.

5.4.5. Training

Training was organised in order to allow employees to develop the necessary knowledge requirements specific to their role, and was one of the main ways to share information on Brain Food. This approach means that training addressed the different needs of the people involved. The implementation of the project required the acquisition of new skills, primarily by the chefs responsible for food production. Employees selling the product to customers needed to be aware of the principles of the new offering and become confident in convincing customers of its benefits. Finally, all employees in the hotels, regardless of their department (food and beverage, housekeeping, concierge), were expected to have a high level of understanding about Brain Food: "when you launch something new you need to have people aware of this, the people working with it, but also the people who are not directly working with it all the time" (AE26). This was in order to be able to support Brain Food and respond to customers' queries: "they (leaders) wanted everyone to be able to answer about the principles, and how it's working, and why people should support Brain Food" (AE26).

Training comprised of formal and informal activities, including special events: "two different times where they held the presentation of all the food, and where you got to see recipes, you were told about the background for it, you were told about how they wanted to implemented it, also a bit of the cost" (AE26). Activities also included one-to-one sessions spread over a period of about a month: "they (chefs) get trained by another chef, basically that is done within three-four weeks" (AM16). Efforts were made to deliver training in familiar environments, and in ways that employees were encouraged to share ideas and concerns. For example, chefs had the opportunity to meet at the culinary academy in Oslo where they were able to cook with new recipes and work collaboratively in the discovery of Brain Food. Providing training outside the hotel premises involved a large expense: "We had quite a lot of training actually. We had a session when we rented the culinary academy up here in Oslo" (ASB8). In fact, a substantial proportion of the overall budget for the project was spent on training, including costs for travelling, renting facilities, printing and event organising.

Apart from acquiring new skills, training was used to share the rationale of the project across the hotels, giving the opportunity for employees to learn what senior managers had known since the planning stage. Depending on the remit of their work, the rationale would be interpreted differently by different people. Senior managers were able to associate the project with the strategy and character of the organisation, whereas, for others, it was a matter of understanding the fit with customer needs. It was seen as important that the rationale was explained simply enough for all employees to understand and be able to communicate it to others "why we think Brain Food is important" (AE26). So, during training, the reason behind Brain Food was portrayed from the organisational point of view as "to get more clients, to secure existing clients, and to offer them something special, something that they need, something that they want, something that of course we make money of" (AM19).

Training took place in all the hotels that implemented the project. However, the hotel size seemed to affect the formality of the process, with larger properties having already established ways of training new staff as part of formal induction processes, and smaller properties adopting a more informal, learn on-the-job approach to training. This difference is explained by this participant from a large hotel: “they (chefs) get training; but in the same way as they did before. Yes, we have a new concept now, but before you always had to train the chefs, even though we didn't have Brain Food, because it's a big hotel, there is no hotel like this in Norway” (AE25). It can therefore be concluded that various types of training provided the opportunity for employees to acquire knowledge and skills on Brain Food, and become aware of the rationale behind the project, benefits that were achieved at a considerable cost in terms of both money and time dedicated to training organisation.

5.4.6. Secondary Adoption and Adaptation

Looking at the trajectory of events in the implementation of Brain Food, various activities pertaining to secondary adoption and adaptation can be observed. For example, launches that took place in hotels after the main customer launch in Oslo involved Brain Food being tailored to local customers. However, in contrast to the conceptual framework, placing the stage of adoption neatly between training and launch, participants' narratives show that secondary adoption and adaptation decisions are made throughout the process of implementation, and cannot be confined in time limits. Therefore, secondary adoption and adaptation should be expected to be continuous and to take place during planning, training, launch, and review and routinisation.

Local adaptation started from the moment the decision was taken to implement Brain Food in Norway after the encouraging performance of the project in Demark. The steering committee was clear that the transfer of the project needed a different approach to implementation than that of the Danish context. It was proposed that hotel chefs should lead the process in collaboration with the fruit and vegetable supplier, instead of an external consultant dictating the changes: "I've heard about the idea from Denmark, and we sort of just took it and run with it, and developed our own 'Norwegification' of it, in a much larger scale. I didn't want an external consultant, and that sort of thing, wanted to do it ourselves with a partner" (AS8). Adaptation to local context involved changes to the concept of Brain Food, as well as to the way of its presentation, guest communication and training delivery.

The diverse customer mix and size of the properties meant that a one-size-fits-all approach would not work in practice, "every property is different, size-wise, guest-wise, what you get, so something what maybe works here Brain Food wise for 600, doesn't mean is going to work for a smaller hotel with 50 rooms or 100 rooms" (AE25). Especially, different guest needs were noted in the north of the country, compared to the south: "I'm sure everyone had to adapt to the local market in a sense, because people up in north you know maybe they don't eat the same as we do down here south" (AM13). Therefore, local adaptation was necessary, albeit relying on the chefs' creativity: "I think they (chefs) can get creative with their own menus" (AE25). In general, the chefs' extensive work experience provided them with the confidence and ability to experiment and produce different food tailored to location, facilities, and guest needs: "the head chefs are experienced enough to adapt it to their hotel, to the kitchen, to what the guests want or need". However, the chefs' active contribution and approach to learning differed: "Others don't walk in the first line or so. So they like to see a little bit what is going on, or they use their manual. Others are filling up the manual" (AM16). Whatever their approach, chefs seemed to have had the freedom to adapt: "(chefs) have quite a freedom to do it their way" (AM16). However, adherence to the core principles of Brain Food needed to be safeguarded during adaptation: "apply the same principles yes, the same health principles, the same reasons to having Brain Food for meetings, but also respect in local adaption" (AS8).

In general, employees were receptive to Brain Food, and their response was mainly positive, despite a delayed acceptance from those "reluctant to change" (AS8). Longevity in the role and an inability to personally experience the product before its launch were presented as reasons for the initial negative stance: "We have staff that worked here for so long and willingness to change is not always very easy for them. And I think a lot of people were negative before they actually got to see it, before they tasted it, and smelled it" (AM13). Allowing time to pass was seen as a solution to the problem by participants as "to change it mentally takes time" (AM20).

Although problems with adoption did not seem to affect the implementation of Brain Food, it was not clear from the discussions whether hotels had the opportunity to opt out of the project. However, participants from all levels of the hierarchy mentioned that the project was mandatory: "Brain Food is not an option. Brain Food is the standard" (AS11), "mandatory as [Brain Food] is for us, Radisson Hotels" (AM19) and "Brain Food is policy" (AE26). It was recognised that the project could only have the desired impact by being applied across the board: "if you should launch it, you should have it over the whole country, not just one hotel" (AM20). The importance of implementing the project in the entire brand has been reflected in the extensive press coverage received (Harmer, 2012).

5.4.7. Launch

During the implementation of Brain Food, launching the project was not confined to one activity, as suggested in the conceptual framework of the study. Instead, several launches took place: an internal launch, a grand external launch, local hotel launches and a re-launch for customers. Apart from the organisation of the event, the main concern for the grand customer launch was secrecy the purpose of which was to achieve a major impact with the press coverage on the subject:

> We really really made sure that it went out as one major launch. Because it's such small country, that if it leaks out, then it loses its momentum for press. Everybody was like 'don't say anything until the day that we

> launch', and it was the right thing to do because we do get a lot of press out of it and that was really good (AS10).

The hotels had assistance for their launch from the regional office: "we just didn't launch it in one big city, so what we did is we launched it in the main cities that we have for each country, but then locally we encouraged them and gave them all the tools on how to have their local launch" (AS9). It was important that the local launches were at different times so that they could be efficiently supported: "one individual launch in each hotel, not set at the same date, not set at the same time. So if they needed help, or wanted help, then they could get [it]" (AS10).

5.4.8. Review and Routinisation

Reviewing the project and embedding Brain Food into everyday practices were two important steps in order to reap the benefits of implementation. Formally, customer feedback on Brain Food was indirectly collected through assessment of the meeting experience overall. Employees mentioned that it would be beneficial if specific questions on Brain Food could be part of evaluation questionnaires sent to customers:

> Did you enjoy the Brain Food?" should be in the customer survey but they are not because this is more worldwide feedback, the use of questionnaires for the whole chain. Since […] Brain Food is only Scandinavia, there will probably be some time before they answer these questions (AS10).

Informally, employees actively pursued feedback, and gleaned customer reactions through conversations and their own observation: "we don't have any feedback systems where we specifically ask the customer 'Did you recognise Brain Food anywhere? ', 'Did you feel more fresh or awake?', the only thing we have as a feedback is that we can see it, our customers they love it" (AE26). So overall, feedback was received, but was not specifically measured: "The feedback from the customers is positive but is not particularly measured" (AS1). Apart from the purpose of evaluating the project, feedback from employees and customers was used for improving Brain Food: "feedback from the guests was one, and operational itself was two. Those are the two main reasons for changing the menus" (AE24).

With regards to routinisation, participants emphasised the need to allow time for the new concept to be embedded in everyday practices: "spend the time to implement this well and communicate it well, so that it stays and becomes a natural concept for us. And that doesn't happen in six months, you've got to give it a little time to breathe" (AS10). So, although bringing the new idea to market before competitors did was important, it was also considered important that time should be given for the programme to mature, in order to produce the expected outcomes.

Apart from review and routinisation, crucial in the implementation of Brain Food was the follow-up part of the process. Follow-up included keeping the concept current in customers' minds, but also renewing and developing the provision: "keep it vibrant and live, unless you can do that, you fall off and go down. That's one of the most important part with every concept" (AS9). Follow-up is missing from the conceptual framework of the study, as it is does not feature in the majority of existing innovation models. The emphasis on follow-up activities was unanimous among the participants. It was recognised that, due to the intensity of operations, if the project was not continuously supported for a long time after the launch, it was likely to produce only short-term benefits, with some participants asserting that, without follow-up, the concept would die. With that in mind, a re-launch activity took place, which was regarded by the majority of participants as a good way of keeping the concept alive and at the 'top of the minds' of guests and employees alike. Marketing communications also changed, in order for Radisson Blu to keep the leading position in the market: "we see Brain Food all the time, we change the footers on the signature all the time. It's important for us to keep the first place, the leading role. Not to sit back and just enjoy it" (AM19). Actively following up and avoiding complacency was therefore perceived as one of the most important factors for successful implementation in the long run: "it's important that we have the development, the launch, and the activities that follow afterwards so it continues to live" (AS10).

Brain Food was not considered a complete project with a termination of planned activities. Instead, the hotels were encouraged to continuously develop the concept. Re-invention was part of the follow-up: "You cannot get the same stuff each time because then they will get sick and bored, I think the revitalisation is important, can be new for three to five years, if you just do it the right way […] this is a young concept, and there are areas to work with" (AS9). Therefore, the concept entered into a continuous cycle of renewal: "Brain food is a not a manual that is on the shelf in the kitchen. Brain food is something that you put to life through recipe competitions, through smartphone apps, through new photo sessions with the chefs" (AS11). In the course of time, more recipes were added to the manual and chefs mentioned that they were keen to see Brain Food move into beverages and other areas of food provision in the hotels. Brain Food is now part of a wider "Experience Meetings' initiative introduced in Radisson Blu hotels in 2012 (Radisson Blu, 2013b).

5.5. Entities in the Implementation Process

As with all implementation processes, Brain Food has been influenced by entities belonging to the four modes of reality (materially real, ideally real, artifactually real and socially real) mentioned in Chapter 4. The factors identified in the conceptual framework of the study can be characterised as entities in critical realist studies. In line with the literature review, four sets of factors (or entities) are identified within Case A, relating to individuals, the firm, the innovation and the process (Table 5-1).

Table 5-1 Factors in Brain Food Implementation

Individual-related	Firm-related	Innovation-related	Process-related
Empowerment	Structure	Fit with existing service system	Appointment of leaders
Knowledge*	Positive implementation climate*	Fit with market*	Organisation of formal activities*
Self-efficacy	Readiness for change	Fit with values	Stakeholder involvement

*Most important factor

5.5.1 Individual-related Entities

Empowerment, knowledge and self-efficacy were factors that influenced the implementation of Brain Food, with knowledge being the most important individual-related factor, according to participants. The most important factor is selected in each case based on the emphasis that was placed on it by participants and the fact that it was mentioned by every participant. Having enough autonomy to perform their duties and work independently were mentioned as positive aspects of implementation, primarily by senior managers. According to them, chefs were encouraged to conceive ideas on recipes and to take responsibility for producing Brain Food. However, the introduction of Brain Food also meant a move towards standardisation that entailed a number of restrictions not welcomed by all: “Not all chefs like it… Because we're not allowed to do whatever we want any more. Before it was your choice what you want to make for lunch. Now it has to be more healthy and you have to stick to the menus” (AM21). For these chefs, implementing Brain Food meant less freedom than they had had previously. However, other chefs approached the project as a challenge, and as an opportunity to develop professionally: I think it's positive, because you have to develop yourself, and you have to push yourself to actually get there” (AM20).

The size of the hotels seemed to affect the autonomy provided. It was mentioned that “in a huge hotel like this we don't want all the chefs to do what they want, because it's going to be a lot of mess” (AM21). Consistency was not only a matter of concern within hotels but also across the brand. In fact, it was important to associate the Radisson Blu brand with a unique proposition regarding energising food in meetings and events. Therefore, keeping the quality of the food provision consistent throughout the brand was considered one of the most important goals during the project towards brand awareness:

> Same materials, same logo, same signage in all the buffets, and so that the guests who travel from Bergen to Tromso, to Oslo, they will start going 'Ah this is a Radisson thing right?' and that's why we used the same logo obviously in English, also in Sweden, and now as you see here for further rollouts. So you recognise it and you get the consistency (AS9).

Knowledge on the rationale behind Brain Food was demonstrated at all levels of the organisational hierarchy, with the majority of participants mentioning higher levels of concentration as the main benefit to customers. It was also important to have evidence on the claims made in promotional videos that "eating the right food in the right time improves our ability to learn" and that "Brain Food optimises your thinking process" (Brokop, 2013). So deep knowledge of the benefits was needed: "I don't think that you can go launching a concept this big, without really knowing if it IS good for you. We can't just go round and say 'oh wow we got Brain Food, but we really don't know what it is'. 'And it might work for you'. But we know that this works, this is good for you!" (AS11).

Knowledge on the product was gained through practice and access to a digital book of references dedicated to Brain Food: "(chefs) get all the information about the Brain Food, they have access to all the data which is also stored on the computer, they get trained by another chef" (AM16). However, outside the kitchen, not all participants agreed that they had sufficient level of knowledge to perform their duties, especially with regards to the implementation process: "As far as I am concerned I didn't have knowledge of the progress of it. What happens when, when we get this, when can we do this" (AE24). Knowledge on the product presentation was also lacking: "I know that the items themselves are like this small, the muffins, or muesli bars or…, but I don't know how many they are per person. Some say two, some say 2 1/2, some say three, some say one. So we should have that" (AE24). Nevertheless, managers recognised the need for a staggered approach to information dissemination, an issue which was attributed to the large size of the company: "when you're working for such a big company as the Radisson, everyone don't get the information at the same time. It's on need-to-know basis" (AM19). Outside the kitchen, Meetings and Events employees would like to have better knowledge of the timing of the launch: "the information flow could have been a little bit better at times […] they were uncertain when it was going to be launched" (AM13). Information on the menu content was also not available on time, which impaired the ability of sales managers for example to perform their duties: "I need the menus. For me, not having a break menu in English is a catastrophe […] because then I don't have anything to send to them (customers)" (AE24).

Self-efficacy, the belief in one's own abilities to execute a task, was recognised as a contributor to the programme, as, in the kitchen, for example, it increased the attempts to experimentation. The principles of Brain Food were the input of an external collaboration with a nutritionist working for the brand's supplier, but importantly for the implementation of the concept, chefs felt able and willing to concoct and execute recipes around the Brain Food principles and showcase their talent. Professional experience was seen as a source of confidence in their own capabilities. Rewards were used as an incentive to encourage chefs to be creative, produce imaginative recipes, compete with other chefs and build self-belief: "we had some awards, we had a competition in all the kitchens in Norway, come up with the best recipe for Brain Food. Because that's motivational for all the chefs" (AS8). However, self-efficacy was impaired at times when information was not readily available: "it's more from my perspective, and my ability to sell it to them (customers). So that I KNOW that they are three pieces, I KNOW that there are this, and if they don't ask, I would still know it" (AE24).

5.5.2. Firm-related Entities

The three firm-related factors of structure, positive implementation climate and readiness for change, as identified in the conceptual framework of the study, were found to impact on the implementation of Brain Food. Among the three factors, positive implementation climate weighed the most in participants' narratives, and structure was mentioned the least.

The structure of the hotel units was associated with their size, with hierarchical segregation of job roles being more prominent in larger properties. Larger properties favoured a top-down approach to implementation, as it proved more practical, but also time-consuming: "one negative is that the process of getting a decision for something is very long, everything takes a little bit of time" (AE24); in smaller properties, with a flatter structure, decision making was more flexible. The need to combine a bottom-up approach was mentioned by senior managers, but the way to achieve this in implementation was not explicitly mentioned: "It's got to be bottom up as well. I mean the ideas that pop up down in the organisation are in many case the best ones. Because they're also the people actually fronting our guests, seeing [what] the guests actually want, what they actually do. And finding solutions to that" (AS8). A larger hotel size was typically associated with better facilities for larger meetings, and having more guests who need to be served at the same time during meeting breaks and lunch. This, in turn, meant that there was a greater impact with the introduction of Brain Food and that there were different problems to be dealt with.

The positive implementation climate in the hotels was demonstrated by the participants' perceptions that the project was rewarded and reinforced in the organisation, and that innovation was expected in the hotels: "the nice thing about Radisson is that it's very open for ideas, it's a very young culture, it feels very young, even so you have all ages, but they are very nice, fresh hotels, very new hotels most of them, and Brain Food I think adds to what Radisson is trying to do, a little bit of trendsetter in certain directions" (AE25).

Participant narratives demonstrated that the organisation was largely ready for the changes required as a result of the Brain Food implementation, although there were areas of discontent with regards to preparation, notably menu availability and accurate translation. The managers supported the move towards the alternative food provision, resources were available and dedicated to the project, and information was disseminated through events and tailored communication material. The behaviour of managers was particularly instrumental in securing the commitment of employees to the implementation: “You have to be behind it, you have to support it, then everybody will see, the staff will see that you are really supporting the concept and develop the concept” (AS1). Support from leaders also came in the form of providing feedback: “in this hotel we have a fantastic management group, strong leaders, competent leaders which were pulled together and gave some great feedback to this project” (AM13).

Financial resources assigned to Brain Food originated both from the regional office and the hotels participating in the project. These costs were substantial, and they were another reason to provide strong justification for the project: “It's expensive in that matter, marketing costs money, and also takes time in training” (AM20). Hotels were responsible for covering travel expenses during training and even a part of the overall costs: “The different hotels pay for it. They pay their own travel and they pay certain amount to chip in” (AS8). The regional office assisted with covering some of the cost: “We also subsidised the development cost from the regional office” (AS9). The vegetable supplier, a partner in Brain Food implementation, acted as a sponsor: “We have some amount paid off by Bama as well, sponsored in” (AS8). Other resources needed during the project were not always available on time for the participants to do their job effectively:

> In general, is that we may have a very good idea, like for instance Brain Food, and it's like this wow factor, but then we invite all our customers, and big customers, to have a taste and everything, we have nothing to send out. No menus, no nothing. It hasn't been translated, so you can only send it to Norwegians, we cannot send it to English-speaking, and it's frustrating to have this new concept and not being able to distribute it, because the material hasn’t been produced beforehand. And then when it’s produced, it's just not been corrected, so mistakes in it and bad translations (AE24).

5.5.3. Innovation-related Entities

Entities related to the innovation concept are bound to affect the implementation process. The conceptual framework of the thesis pointed at three factors that play a role in implementation, all of which applied in the case of Brain Food: fit with the existing systems, fit with the market and fit with the values. The fit to market was considered most important among the three innovation-related factors.

Although Brain Food required a new set of recipes, the essence of the chefs' responsibility to produce food for meetings did not change. In many ways the concept fitted the existing service system in the kitchen: "It was in a way like doing a new à la carte menu" (AS9). It also fitted the existing system outside the kitchen: "we did not change the concept of serving. We still have buffets, we still do our way of serving, we do for lunch. We still do coffee breaks, and it didn't actually change anything from that perspective, what it did change was just the way how we talk to our guests and communicate our food, and how we sometimes present things" (AE25). Recruiting new members of staff was not considered necessary as the required resources were already in place: "resources we have. The manpower we have. So that's not really, we didn't have to add any extra staff" (AS1).

One of the most important aspects for service innovation that targets external customers is the fit between the innovation and the market. Brain Food was considered particularly suited to existing meeting customers, but also sustainable in the long-term: "(Brain Food) was starting from the market and to wanting to do something new, something edgy for the customers in the market. And getting a concept that we also saw that could be something that was vibrant over a period of time" (AS9). According to this participant, fit to the market does not necessary mean that the customers knew they wanted Brain Food: "it was innovative, I thought 'Oh, this is a deficiency in the market', i.e. something they don't know they want yet, but once we introduce it they will know, 'ah that's great'" (AS8). Another participant mentioned however: "everyone is concerned by health and being healthy and all that, so it's sort of jumping on the trend" (AE25). Indeed, the timing of the launch coincided with the publication of government guidelines for the promotion of healthy lifestyles. Such directions demonstrated that the move towards healthy eating with the introduction of Brain Food reflected the needs of the society at large: "Two or three weeks after we provided and launch the concept, a new nutritionist advice for Norway came out, and they're quite in line with that" (AS9). Implementation improved from sound knowledge of customer perceptions, once the process had started. Communication processes were seen as most effective when based on market research: "I just had to do my own research to be sure how is it that this reads to communicate. Do they like the word energy?" […] The same goes with environmental. You know 'do they believe in it?', 'Do they not believe in it?', 'What's happening?' So I had to do a lot of research to understand" (AS10). The fit with the market was particularly strong with Brain Food because the initiative was tailored to the meetings' market, which represented a high proportion of existing business, especially in the Oslo-based hotels, and had high growth potential, according to the company strategy.

Finally, the innovation was a close fit with the company's values as an ethical corporation: "(Brain Food) ties in to our responsible business in the very end if you really think about it, because it's for the wellness of the guest and the wellness of our employees" (AS10). Indeed, the project was showcased in the company's website in the responsible business section (Rezidor, 2014).

5.5.4. Process-related Entities

Three process-related entities were included in this study's conceptual framework and found to affect the implementation of Brain Food: appointment of leaders, organisation of formal activities and stakeholder involvement. An important finding was that, according to participants, a perfectly good innovation could not be implemented without a well-conceived and executed process, and, even if it was an initial hit, could not be sustained without continuous effort and support.

Three types of leaders, as per Damschroder et al. (2009) typology, were found to play a key part in the implementation of Brain Food: champions, formally appointed implementation leaders and external change agents. The Regional Director acted as a champion of the programme, openly supporting Brain Food from the beginning and by being the main driver of the project in Norway: he was "more or less the Godfather of Brain Food" (AM16). The role of this individual was pivotal for the project; participants stated that the project would not be the same or as extensive without him. He gave the project elevated importance and priority over other initiatives, with his continuous efforts to keep it current and reinforced. He was also the General Manager at the flagship hotel of the group in Oslo. In this hotel, the strong support for Brain Food was attributed to this individual: "a good reason for that [support] is [this individual]" (AM20).

Executive Chefs were the formally appointed as implementation leaders. They were called ambassadors in the programme, but very few participants recognised this term in the interviews. Not all chefs embraced the ambassador role from the start however; in some cases, chefs needed time to endorse the project.

A key external change agent in the implementation of Brain Food was the nutritionist who worked for Bama, the supplier of fruits and vegetables to the hotels. She was able to influence decisions on principles that were backed by scientific evidence, that is knowledge that chefs did not have: "It wouldn't be the same without her and Bama, because they were having the expertise that our chefs did not have. Because a chef is a chef, is not the nutritionist" (AM20).

The organisation and timing of formal activities was the most important process-related factor in the implementation of Brain Food. In the description of events that took place during implementation, it can be seen that a lot of effort and resources were dedicated to special events, such as training in a separate location to the hotels, grand customer launches, and competitions on the programme. Timing of the activities, such as the launch, was crucial for implementation. One of the most important features of the Brain Food initiative was the ability of Radisson hotels to be first in the market to offer an energising alternative to conference delegates, compared to the "same old" provision that is an industry norm (AM21). Once the customer need was identified, considerable effort was put into ensuring the first-to-launch position in the market: "The purpose is that it is a new concept that no one else has"

(AM7). Competitive advantage was gained by being the first to launch Brain Food: "We have seen now that the competition, our competitor hotels are trying to go in the same way (laughs). Develop their own sort of Brain Food or similar things, but the first one is always the most successful one. The other one is just copy paste" (AS1). Speed-to-market was related to the desired first-in-market position: "can be quite stupid if we went out as number two. We need to make it quite fast because you need to have an edge, and if somebody knows what you are doing, they might find out and steal it" (AS9).

Nevertheless, it was essential to take time to prepare and organise these activities as well: "we ask our customers, we ask our employees, what works best for us, sometimes it might take a little bit longer time, but when we do it, we do it right and we do it well" (AS10). At the same time, it was essential to have a schedule and monitor the progress of implementation: "a calendar for us to when things are going to happen, and it also gives you checkpoints to be sure that these things are followed through" (AS10). Deadline setting was part of the Business Plan: "we have the business plan. Then we had deadlines we had to deliver" (AM16). Adherence to timelines was seen as a way of showing professionalism and efficiency, and an area where a balance between perfection and feasibility needed to be struck: "we had to delay our photo shooting for ten days. We still don't have the knives with the Brain Food on it. But the main things like the presentations, the press release, the PR, and everything we were in the deadlines" (AM16). As the time went by "the process has become even more formal" (AS11). Accountability worked in favour of meeting deadlines: "You have follow ups and it's quite embarrassing every time when you haven't done your stuff" (AS9). Timing issues were, however, the source of frustration at times, and led to inter-departmental conflict in Brain Food. Problems with incorrect timings highlighted the need for better coordination in the project and the presence of a dedicated person in charge of the implementation process:

> It takes a lot of time to get things through to the people, they need to have a look at it, they need to correct it, and back and forth, because of the fact that they are in operations, they have another job to do. So should we do this all over again, I would have a project position for someone, one or two, who for a

> couple months only has this as their job to sort this Brain Food launch out (AE24)

One of the important aspects in implementation was the active involvement of multiple stakeholders in the process. Inclusivity and the approach to achieve it were key in that respect: "if you send out a memo from the GMs' office you won't be able to implement it, you need to be consistent, you need to involve everybody within the organisation" (AS9). Employee involvement across the hotels was considered particularly important for the implementation of Brain Food: "so the management here decided that everyone was to attend presentations on Brain Food, whether you were working in housekeeping, or AV technician, or if you were working on the sky bar in the evening" (AE26). Particularly engaging the local hotel units was recognised as important, given that the decision to implement was made at the regional level: "it's pretty important that it (the implementation) comes from local engagement" (AS11).

The implementation of Brain Food required the involvement and collaboration of teams in the hotels, particularly the food and beverage, and kitchen departments. The customer-facing individuals took the responsibility to pass the feedback of the guests to chefs, and were involved in the improvement of the product by providing innovative ideas for presentation, a step which was initially reported as a weakness: "the kitchen goes out, and sets it up, one of us is there as well […] we work on this very close together" (AE25).

Due to the nature of the project, involvement of chefs in the implementation process was essential. Involvement of chefs was associated with higher usage level: "we are using it more than others, that's also I think is because of our executive chef, he was involved in a lot of things" (AM6). Involvement in the production of recipes meant that chefs from the entire country had the chance to meet and exchange ideas, which was seen as an exceptional opportunity. However, chefs' involvement was not confined to the traditional remit. Chefs were included in the promotional material of Brain Food, including the creation of banners and brochures for customers: "It's not so often you see chefs in the newspaper or magazines or in the public" (AM16). It was an unusual but welcomed move from a back office to front-of-house role: and such exposure filled them with confidence and pride: "Those in the kitchens who have been involved in this, they are, without any doubt, they are proud because they have been a part of developing something that is innovative" (AS11).

Stakeholder involvement was not confined to internal individuals and groups. As indicated previously a decision was made to collaborate with the fruit and vegetable suppliers of the firm, Bama, and a nutritionist working for Bama for the production of Brain Food. This decision was made in recognition that the project required access to resources residing outside the organisation: "we needed a partner to drive the process with us, otherwise we wouldn't be able to drive it" (AS9). The collaboration was considered a win-win situation, where Radisson acquired access to useful expertise, and Bama had the opportunity to sell more vegetables. Involving an expert nutritionist gave the project legitimacy in the eyes of employees and customers, because of the scientific evidence supporting the guidelines for nutritionally-balanced and energising food. The search for external stakeholder involvement did not stop with involving Bama: "we are looking into other partners in Norway that can be engaged into this. We have received a couple of requests from partners, suppliers, who would like to see their brands somehow implemented, or somehow being part of this" (AS11).

5.6. Mechanisms in the Implementation Process

Based on the objective of the study to propose mechanisms that drive service innovation implementation, evidence on the deeper theoretical constructs that can propose explanations behind observable events is presented. The researcher here looks at what may have caused the events in the implementation to happen (Easton, 2010). The review of the literature led to the identification of four mechanisms that have the potential to enlighten the process: sensemaking, organisational learning, organisational politics and emotional reactions. The function of these mechanisms is illustrated with examples in the case of Brain Food.

5.6.1. Sensemaking

Sensemaking processes can be identified throughout the implementation process, as individuals used formal and informal communication to understand the events, and their role in implementation, in order to take appropriate actions. Sensemaking was based on what the participants have previously experienced. For example, sensemaking took place around the rationale of the project, which was considered a challenge:

> We still have a challenge to get everybody to understand it, that's one of our biggest biggest challenges and goals, not just externally but internally [...] There is also a lack of true, true understanding, cause it's a conception, perception versus reality kind of thing, but also cultural wise, healthy means one thing to Norway, healthy means different (elsewhere) (AS10).

Although awareness of the rationale behind the project was demonstrated at all levels of the organisational hierarchy, it was described differently at each level. At the senior management level, Brain Food was explained as: "a solution for the meeting and events sector developed by Radisson Blu hotels. The main benefit for Brain Food for guests is stable blood sugar levels, which increase concentration, and reduce fatigue levels" (AS8). A manager mentioned that Brain Food "is supposed to keep your sugar level neutral, so that you don't fall asleep after lunch, or you know keep you more awake and balanced" (AM23). An employee described the benefit more simply: "the guests win because they get more concentration" (AE25).

Besides different interpretations at particular points in time, sensemaking evolved as the project progressed: "there are like two stages, *now* Brain Food is pulling us forward because we see the results of the people, but *then*, before we knew what it was, I think it was more the feeling of finally getting a proper profile, something you could stand in for, it was interesting" (AE26). Initially, certain employees were more sceptical about the concept than others, and were not convinced before they had the opportunity to experience the product: "we have staff that worked here for so long and willingness to change is not always very easy for them. And I think a lot of people were negative before they actually got to see it, before they tasted it and smell it, but they did come around and are very positive today" (AM13). The different viewpoints show that individuals make sense of ideas in different ways, for example, by looking at the project results, rather than being convinced of its potential. Providing information on the concept can make some individuals more susceptive to innovation, but at times being knowledgeable may not be enough in securing buy-in to a project.

5.6.2. Organisational Learning

Learning actions occurred throughout the implementation process of Brain Food where an issue was identified; learning affected the presentation, process of implementation and content of Brain Food. The presentation of the food was one of the challenges and was subject to much improvement in the project. Feedback collected was a means to learn "if we do get one [feedback card], which is "Ah the presentation wasn't as good on that day", we go straight back, which meeting was it, what has happened, how can we improve this that it doesn't happen again. So we are trying to work on it all the time" (AE25). In the case of the process, learning was achieved formally in meetings where employees tried the food themselves, and discussed plans and ways of selling. The content of Brain Food was subject to learning: "there has been a lot of changes, back and forth, after the launch as well" (AE24).

Learning orientation in individuals contributed to organisational learning: "A chef is always the person who strives for more, who wants to learn, and wants to develop. And for many of..., or all of the chefs, it was 'Ooh, something new and something fresh, you can always use your own mind, and make your own recipe as long as it is within the six principles'"(AM20). Learning involved cycles of review, which were considered beneficial in larger properties: "it's a large company, so the routines are usually very good because they have been through so many channels in order to improve, when it comes back to us to implement it, is usually very good" (AE24). Learning from the project was transferred to other areas. For example, the compilation of a Business Plan was considered a significant move in project management which carried over to other projects: "everything has its little business plan now. So it's really quite fun, because you can really SEE, you can see the steps" (AS10).

5.6.3. Organisational Politics

Political actions were part of Brain Food implementation demonstrated in the effort to sell the project, influence employees and achieve targeted objectives, such as secondary adoption. Such actions were not easily identified in participants' narratives, perhaps due to their negative connotations, but they were nevertheless part of the implementation. For example, the issue of cost for implementing the project sparked debates within the organisation, especially between the corporate and regional offices, but also internally. The champions of the programme had to convince individuals that costs would not increase: "it should be a potential savings area at the end of the day. Shouldn't be negative, we were quite confident when we got the discussion with our headquarters, they say probably you will ruin your food costs and this and that, no...no way, this will be" (AS9).

Political actions primarily targeted the desired buy-in and commitment needed by the local hotel units: "The challenge is obviously buy-in and commitment. Securing that everywhere since there are 20 hotels, it's a long, long country" (AS8). Buy-in was achieved by concentrating decision-making to the regional and local hotel level. Secondary adoption was indeed underpinned by power dynamics:

> I think that having done this regionally is MUCH better than having Brussels instruct us in how to do it. And one of the reasons for that is ingredients, for instance. I would not have the Brussels decide what we are to serve here, when one of the terms here is local produce, local food. So having done this regionally really helped" (AE25)

Apart from local decision-making, other actions assisted the regional senior management team to attain buy-in. One of them was the support of the Director of Corporate Responsibility at the corporate office, who realised how the initiative fitted with the strategic aspirations of the company. Having the support of this high-ranked individual was very significant for the main driver of the project regionally, even though this individual was not close to operations, or the actual implementation work. Another key role was that of Regional Director of Marketing who had the power to devote resources to the project and make it happen: "Since I am involved, I think we have put resources into this, to put it live" (AS11). The impact of the involvement of high-ranking individuals in the project was only mentioned by senior managers in the interviews, possibly because, for lower-level managers and employees, the role of these individuals was not immediately obvious.

There were a number of areas influencing skills that were perceived as necessary in achieving desired outcomes. Use of emotions, justification and persistence played a key part in the process of influencing. Senior managers aimed for emotional engagement: "we had to sell it to them to own it. And that's why we did all the pre-launches internally before we went external" (AS10). Another example of influence was around new ideas. It was mentioned that new ideas were welcomed, with the condition that they were justified and well-defined: "every time we have ideas and we want to go through things, it's well-received as long as we can show that it works, it makes sense and there's a win for the guest, for the staff, for the shareholders" (AE25). In some cases, achieving one's goals was a matter of persistence: "I still don't have it (information on the number of items in the menu). I'm sure I could have pushed a bit harder on it, just to know" (AE24). It was also a matter of asking the right people: "I tried (to raise my concern), but again the people I ask are in operations. So it gets forgotten 'yes I'll check', or 'Yes I'll do that', and then if I don't follow up it's not, most probably it won't be done" (AE24).
Power struggles were initialised by the involvement of external agents in the process. From the perspective of the supplier, it was mentioned that "This is bitter sweet for them. They cannot take this and give it away to other customers, we'd have war" (AS9). The message from Radisson Blu was powerful, and it was a condition of collaboration that, despite the contribution of Bama, the concept belonged to the brand, and other clients of the supplier should not be assisted in reproducing the same concept. In addition, having an external person providing expertise on their own territory was bound to be met by resistance from certain chefs: "People would have their attitudes, especially

chefs; some of them are prima donnas in a way. They will go 'what the hell is this?' I mean I've never heard of this before, it's rubbish, it's bullshit, what is this?" (AS8). The way to manage the behaviour was by paying attention to power dynamics, by using resistant chefs' colleagues in persuading them:

> You need to turn them around! and that can take some time and it takes convincing, and I don't think sending a regional director to tell them what they should do is the right approach, I think sending a colleague of them, a fellow executive chef, saying you know listen here, this is the way forward and you should this, you should do that, you should consider this (AS8).

It was also important to remember that the intermediary between the firm and meeting guests, and the decision maker, was the meeting organiser. This was the person that needed to be convinced of the Brain Food benefits in order to choose Radisson Blu for their meeting: "your participants will feel more awake, it will keep the blood sugar up, it's healthier, and people are really into health aspects always" (AE26).

5.6.4. Emotional Reactions

Emotional reactions were an important mechanism behind the events during Brain Food implementation. The way participants felt about the process featured in the discussions in this study. Particularly, feelings of pride leading to the motivation to implement were mentioned by participants: "we have our own chefs, we should be proud of them. And also that creates maybe the most important thing, the internal motivation to actually do this" (AS8). Chefs felt proud of their organisation because it was innovative, proud of themselves because of their ability to implement the project, and proud of the project because it originated from within the establishment. Developing something new was exciting: "(chefs) are proud because they have been a part of developing something that is innovative" (AS11). Chefs themselves seemed to feel confident in their abilities to implement the concept: "(chefs) are so proud about what they are, their own capabilities, so they want to deliver (AS11). Finally, pride originated from ownership: two chefs answered me: 'we didn't look into what they developed in Denmark, we developed our own things" (AS11). Brain Food seemed to have been an enjoyable experience for chefs:

“making a nice plate or dish, is where I find my peace. If it is successful, it is personally also very.., I enjoy it” (AM16).

Pride was not only coming from chefs but from the entire hotel: “I wanted the full power of the whole thing, yeah. Exactly, 100% ownership. Otherwise for so many hotels, it would just boil out” (AS8). The involvement of employees, and the whole inclusive process, resulted in participants’ feeling integrated and valued in implementation: “one of the strengths in this is that it actually born among those who need to deliver it” (AS11). Pride was also associated with the outcomes of the process: “I am quite confident that we made it very well. I am very proud of what we have done” (AM19).

The lively and cheerful atmosphere in the hotels helped in implementation, as it created motivation and inspiration: “You can see the climate here, is really ownership, it's motivation and it's high spirits, and lots of pride” (AS8). Positive feelings were also reported about the culture of the company: “The culture is good, it is demanding but I like it. It fits to where I am as a person” (AM7). The professionalism of the people involved in the project was also reported: “(employees) are all very professional, they all know what they are doing, but they are eager to contribute to a fantastic brand”. Employees identified with the brand: “Rezidor is a very good company to work for, very good company to be part of” (AE25). It was also felt that the brand fitted employees’ personality:

> When I started working here I found that Radisson was one the brands that represented me, the way I wanted to be, I liked it bit more the business look of the hotels, the international feeling when you are approaching or walking around in the hotels, the profile of how they want to develop and design the meeting and events, it kind of just, how can I say, felt right for me” (AE26).

The positive feelings of employees about the brand seemed to transfer to their attitude towards the innovation project: “I think it's positive, because you have to develop yourself, and you have to push yourself to actually get there” (AM20). Feelings of enthusiasm were reported among participants: “there's huge enthusiasm, there's a lot of focus, the whole communication that we have developed, everything about it has been highly recognised, has been a lot of creativity" (AS11). Working with something new was an appreciated opportunity which provoked positive feelings: "you need to see how the enthusiasm is being within the organisation, by doing this, because it hasn't been done in quite a long time, and the joy that people have with working with something new, is fresh, is vibrant, is cool and is in time" (AS9).

In contrast to the enthusiasm expressed by participants, certain negative feelings were reported about the implementation of Brain Food during the interviews. For example, due to the risk of introducing something new, there was a degree of uncertainty and scepticism around customer reactions to Brain Food and its fit with the market: "we were also afraid about you know, consumer understanding and behaviour. But we found that just disappeared like that" (AS8). Uncertainty was also reported about the lack of information: "M&E and the consultants, during the process they felt that they don't have all the information and they were uncertain when it was going to be launched" (AM13). Finally, for a number of employees the presentation of Brain Food did not feel right at the beginning: "(chefs) felt that the old china that we had just didn't have that specific look we were looking for" (AE26).

5.7. Formation of the Initial Thematic Template

The reality of the implementation of Brain Food reflects the majority of elements in the conceptual framework of this study. However, the analysis of this case led to discoveries that provide a richer picture of the implementation process, and which advance knowledge in the field. The case provided evidence for four stages of training, secondary adoption and adaptation, launch, review and routinisation. However, planning and follow-up were missing from the framework. It was also evident that the period of secondary adoption and adaptation was not confined to a particular time, but pertained to the entire process. Four mechanisms were found to act behind the events: sensemaking, organisational learning, organisational politics and emotional reactions. These findings helped to develop the initial thematic template of this study (Table 5-2) that contains three tiers of coding, starting with meaningful themes at the higher level, broken into codes and sub-codes at lower levels.

Third level codes originated from the data in this case. They were then grouped to second level codes and further into first level codes that derived partly from the conceptual framework of the study and partly developed to account for missing elements in the conceptual framework. The second level codes associated with the mechanisms were added to the framework after the data collection in an effort to revisit the literature in search for these themes.

Table 5-2 Initial Thematic Template

First Level (Meaningful Themes)	Second Level (Codes)	Third Level (Examples of Sub-codes)
Events in the Implementation Process	Planning	Abstract Difficulties Initial Development
	Training	Preparation Challenges Delivery Outcomes
	Secondary adoption and adaptation	Mandates Local reaction
	Launch	Emphasis on presentation Local launch Pilot Challenges
	Review and routinisation, and Follow up	Outcomes Continuous Relaunch
Entities in the Implementation Process	Empowerment	Autonomy Control Initiative Reward
	Knowledge	Customer Product Practice
	Self-efficacy	Belief in self Positive
	System fit	Essence of service unchanged No new recruitment necessary
	Market fit	Identified gap High-growth market Government guidelines Customer needs
	Values fit	Ethical Responsible business
	Structure	Flat Title heavy
	Positive implementation climate	Innovation expected Innovation rewarded
	Readiness for change	Leadership support Resource availability
	Appointment of leaders	Champions Opinion leaders External change agents

First Level (Meaningful Themes)	Second Level (Codes)	Third Level (Examples of Sub-codes)
	Stakeholder involvement	Everyone included Team collaboration Chefs Supplier
Mechanisms behind innovation implementation	Sensemaking	Different interpretations Formality
	Organisational Learning	Learning-before-doing Conflict Resistance
	Organisational Politics	Conflict Resistance Negotiation Influence Agenda setting
	Emotional Reactions	Feelings Motivation

5.8. Summary

This chapter has explored the findings from Case A in this study, the implementation of the Brain Food concept in Radisson Blu hotels in Norway. The results were presented in line with events, entities and mechanisms according to the critical realist tradition, and in comparison to the conceptual framework of the study. The periods of training, secondary adoption and adaptation, launch, and review and routinisation were found to be part of the implementation of Brain Food in line with the literature; the findings also included evidence of planning and follow-up activities, including a re-launch. Entities that were related to individuals, the firm, the innovation and the process played an important role in implementation. Significant factors were found to be the following: knowledge, market fit, positive implementation climate and organisation of formal activities, including correct timing to achieve first-in-market position. Participants felt well-informed about the content and rationale behind Brain Food, although information on timings and menu content could have been improved. Speed to launch meant that the project outperformed competitors and differentiated the brand in the meeting and events market, a market of high-growth potential for the hotels. Building a good relationship with suppliers and having an expert nutritionist provided the necessary resources, including sponsorship and legitimacy, for the project. Decisive efforts were made by leaders to develop the concept internally, and owning the project proved key in making employees fully believe in the project and feel proud of their achievement. The proposed mechanisms of sensemaking, organisational learning, organisational politics and emotional reactions were useful in explaining the events that occurred in the process of implementation. They did this by shedding light on different interpretations of the process by the people involved, on learning, by providing solutions to problems, on the use of power dynamics and on feelings about the project that drive the process forward.

6. Case B - Background and Analysis of Findings

6.1. Introduction

This chapter examines the implementation of the Stay Real - Be You innovation project that took place over the period of 2010 to 2012 at Holiday Inn and Holiday Inn Express, both brands of the InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG). The chapter starts with providing information on the background to the innovation and the organisation, in order to embed the project in the organisational context. Findings of the case are then organised into events, entities and mechanisms, and discussed in turn. Firstly, the events during implementation are presented, in order to understand the path of the implementation process. Then the focus turns to entities that influence the process, highlighting the most important ones, according to participants. Finally, the proposed mechanisms of sensemaking, organisational learning, organisational politics and emotional reactions are used to explain the events that occurred during implementation.

6.2. Background to the Innovation Project

Stay Real - Be You, called Be You from now on, is a brand service behaviour programme that aims to change employee behaviour so that a more personable, high-quality service is provided to hotel customers. Four core behavioural attributes of employees that should underpin the interaction with guests constitute the pillars of the Be You programme: (1) Be You, (2) Get Ready, (3) Show You Care, and (4) Take Action. The innovation programme was introduced in 2011 and was meant to build on an earlier project, named simply Stay Real, which was launched in the hotels, in parallel to the re-launch of the hotel brands in 2010. Stay Real was a heavily promoted programme with a multi-million-dollar global advertising campaign inviting Holiday Inn and Express customers to relax and be themselves during their hotel stay (Parsons, 2010). Be You was developed in line with the strategy of IHG to build 'Great Hotels Guests Love', and with the aspirations of the group to 'become one of the world's best companies'. It was believed that this goal would be achieved with a service-profit mind-set, whereby the employee experience, satisfaction, and behaviour all impact positively on customer experience, satisfaction, behaviour and loyalty, and, subsequently to profitability and growth: “when we’ve looked at Stay Real it's kind of service profit chain, it's some of the latest techniques in terms of trainings” (BM6). In addition, it was an initiative supporting the value of ‘Aim Higher’ that encouraged employees to continuously learn and improve their practices.

As per the definition adopted in this study, Be You can be characterised as a service innovation (Appendix 6-1.). It was a new service culture that increased value for both employees and managers by creating a relaxed and welcoming environment for hotel guests, and engaging employees in the service process. The project helped to build competencies, such as pro-activeness and decision-making, for hotel employees. When classifying the programme within the innovation typology, it can be characterised as a service modification, an incremental rather than a radical innovation: “(Be You) is building on the Stay Real, it’s a modification of the Stay Real” (BM22) by providing a “refreshing change” (BM1) to established behaviours.

Despite its incremental nature, Be You provided clear benefits for the hotels, the employees and the hotel customers. The hotels benefited from a rise in customer satisfaction scores, as measured in the guest engagement survey: “[guest engagement] is on the rise, and it has been since last October” (BM22). For employees, the programme provided the opportunity to develop new skills, discover areas in need of improvement, connect with guests and build stronger team spirit. The innovation also helped employees understand the guests: “From that activity we understand okay, how we can understand the people” (BE3), and appreciate that guests are influenced, not only by the hotel’s tangible goods, but also by the employees’ attitude: “especially the attitude of staff towards the guests, customers, we noticed that is changing. Maybe the staff were thinking about it, how they can affect the business, it's not only about the product we sell but it's also about us, about the attitude” (BM18). As a result, they saw the link between their behaviour and guest satisfaction: “it’s very behavioural training, it’s a skill set in itself” (BM18), it can “make (customers) feel good” (BE5). Training activities revealed weak elements in current service provision, such as communication: “about our communication skill we find out that is not really clear, so we found out on this training" (BE21). For customers, the implementation of the programme brought positive feelings and satisfaction: "we have better comments from the guests, they are happier here, they are feeling better, they're happy with service" (BM18).

6.3. Background to the Organisation

Presenting an overview of the background to the hotel group and the brands that implemented the Be You programme can help an understanding of the impact of context on implementation. Holiday Inn and Holiday Inn Express, named simply Express from now on, are two brands of IHG, the largest hotel company in the world, with more than 700 thousand rooms in 5000 hotels, located in nearly 100 countries (IHG, 2015). Holiday Inn is the largest hotel brand worldwide which had over 223 thousand rooms in June 2015 (IHG, 2015). IHG has its global headquarters in Denham, UK and is divided into four regions: Europe, the Americas, Asia, Middle East and Africa (AMEA), and Greater China. In Europe, where this study was concentrated, the Be You programme was implemented in 81 Holiday Inn hotels, 23 of which were franchised, 57 managed, and one owned and leased, and 16 Express hotels, nine of which were franchised and seven were managed properties (IHG, 2014). Four franchised properties, located in the UK, France and Greece, and one managed hotel in the UK, took part in this study; differences between the hotels are noted in the findings, especially with regards to secondary adoption and adaptation, and power dynamics. The location of the hotels partly affected the approach of individuals to innovation, however, notable differences existed among individuals working in the same country.

6.4. Events in the Implementation Process

The events that took place in Case B are presented in chronological order, and are juxtaposed to the activities presented in the conceptual framework of the study. Analysis of the events and other findings relates to the fourth objective of the study, that is to apply the framework to a real-world case. Due to the nature of the Be You innovation concept being service behaviour, the innovation went practically 'live' with the completion of the training. However, the periods of training, secondary adoption and adaptation, launch, and review and routinisation can still be applied in this case.

6.4.1. Pre-launch (2009-2011)

The process of implementation started in 2009, with the team in charge of the brand standards of the Holiday Inn and Express brands, based in the United States, putting together the content of the Be You programme, and a professional writer compiling the training material in English (US). The material was then formally translated into six local languages, namely English (UK), French, Italian, German, Spanish and Portuguese, but, occasionally, translation was done on the spot during training. Training was then delivered in two phases; firstly, at the regional level, where trainers trained representatives from each hotel, typically the General Manager (GM), Guest Experience Champions (GECs) and occasionally the HR manager; secondly, at the local hotel level, where the representatives trained employees, and were responsible overall for programme dissemination. During the first phase, Train the Trainer sessions included the development of skills, which were not only related to knowledge of the Be You programme, but also related to how to train others, given the responsibility of representatives to deliver training locally. Train the Trainer sessions were delivered by trainers from the corporate office, or by local trainers who had the necessary language skills. However, the temporary status of local trainers meant that they could not contribute to the consultancy work that was scheduled to take place after training. This created difficulties, as others had to take on this follow-up: "They won't do their own consultancy, we need to pick it up from them, and this adds lot of work, that is preventing us from doing other things that are better and more useful" (BE7). The completion of training was associated with the unlocking of the People Tools, a set of recruitment tools made available to the hotels, provided that they had completed the necessary programme training. The tools added value to the programme, as it allowed the hotels to align their recruitment with the desired serviced behaviours.

6.4.2. Internal Launch (2011-2012)

The rollout in the hotels was completed in 2013 after a year from its start. GMs and GECs organised training for all employees, which was typically divided into four sessions matching the four principles of Be You, with a group of around 20 employees at a time. Although there was not an official external launch, by putting the principles of Be You into action, hotel customers were affected by the implementation. With the completion of training, hotels were provided with access to the People Tools, a set of recruitment tools available online that included job descriptions, recognition cards and interview guides. The tools were intended for profile matching of job applicants to advertised roles based on the principles of the Be You programme as hotels needed to "recruit people with the right attitude for the brand as well as the right technical skills for the role" (IHG, 2013).

6.4.3. After Launch (from April 2012 onwards)

The internal launch was followed up by a four-stage consultancy process, whereby a consultant remained in contact with the hotels to monitor their progress with the implementation, over a twelve-month period after training. The first contact between consultant and general manager was used to set specific goals for each hotel. The second contact was a conference call scheduled for about two to three weeks after training to ensure the programme was still high on the hotels' agenda. The progress of implementation and challenges faced by the hotels were discussed during this call. The third and fourth contacts were used to ensure that all the training was delivered in the hotels.

The events in the Case B implementation broadly match the process as described in the conceptual framework of the study, including the periods of training, secondary adoption and adaptation, (internal) launch, and review and routinisation. Different to the framework were the planning period and the repetition of stages, such as the training, as the implementation cascaded from the regional to the local hotel level.

6.4.4. Planning

The implementation of Be You involved extensive planning activities, especially with regards to training; a large number of hotel representatives needed to enrol and attend training at a convenient location, which proved to be a logistical challenge: "the hotel down the road has got 400 odd people to get through, all on different shift patterns, to try and organise that, is a logistical challenge, and if you've only got twelve people, is a logistical challenge as well" (BM6). Coordination of activities depended on many interrelated variables, which increased the complexity of the project; for example, the enrolment of the hotels in training, the timetables of trainers and trainees, the availability and translation of training materials.

6.4.5. Training

According to participants, the emphasis on training was significant in the implementation of Be You. Training aimed at disseminating skills for behaviour change: "you are trained now, so you have to change your behaviour […] you have to like be punctual, be calm, be ready" (BE3). Considerable effort was put into providing training in the local language, which was considered necessary for local acceptance: "I just feel quite passionately that if you don't understand it because it's not local language, you're not going to embrace it, so it's a little bit of waste of time" (BS8). Positive aspects included the quality of training materials and the format of the training, as well the unique opportunity it provided to bring employees from different hotel departments together and increase team spirit and motivation. External help was used in the production of training materials, a decision that produced positive results: "very professional, lots of activity, big messages are clear, it's in a well written format, just very easy to work with" (BM6).

Training was delivered through an activity-based format rather than a traditional classroom teaching setup, which appealed to the people involved: "because if you have like these little games with simple message which everybody understands, then they will take more and they will associate the message with the game" (BS18). Participants preferred activities to reading information in a book: "You can say the books, somebody written on that, and you can just read read and read. But here you get the live experience, when you get the live experience you'll be more, I can say, more attracted to" (BE3). Trainees also appreciated the opportunity for peer-discussion and the sharing of personal experiences, which were valuable, accessible and convincing: "The trainer used to ask us, like give your experiences, so when we used to share our experience, we used to tell 'yeah, it was really nice', we actually learned today this thing" (BE2).

The style of training delivery was informal and relaxed: "I think the nature of the material and the message and the deliverers, and if you met all of us, our style is pretty informal, so I'd say in terms of style of communication to get it going, it's pretty informal, but we don't deviate from the message" (BM6). The group-based discussion created a relaxed, non-threatening atmosphere which encouraged participants to contribute: "we didn't feel like we are having in training, we're laughing, we're playing, and in the same time we are learning so many things, which is good!" (BE5). Finally, group training allowed hotel team members to become closer to each other, especially to people from other departments, to enjoy the camaraderie and have a good time while not-on-duty: "everyone has been pretty excited. Definitely brought the team together, that's being a good thing […] I think we are more gelled and motivated now" (BM1). Training also helped with team work and communication: "This training actually helped us out, how [to] work together as a team" (AE2). Due to the shift-working pattern of hotel operations, teamwork and communication were pointed out as key in service delivery: "There has to be communication, there should not be any communication gap, so we have to help each other out as a team, so obviously because the hospitality industry is like that [shift work]" (BE2).

6.4.6. Secondary Adoption and Adaptation

Due to the structure of implementation, the Be You programme cascaded down from the regional office to hotel and then employee level; adoption decisions were made each time another level was reached. From the point of view of the corporate office, adoption was not optional, either for managed hotels or franchised properties, provided that they wished to continue being part of the brands. However, use of supportive material, such as the People Tools, was at the discretion of the franchisees; a few franchises rejected the use of People Tools because they belonged to franchisor groups which, operating a portfolio of different brands, used their own proprietary HR tools: "So you (a franchisee) might not want to take our People Tools because actually what you want is an unbranded set of tools" (BS8). Rejection of the tools also came from hotels in countries where legislation required different formats (e.g. job descriptions in Germany). Franchises occasionally expressed concerns about the value of Be You given the large expense, and questioned the need for a programme so close to the previously implemented Stay Real programme. However, all hotels proceeded with training, and with adopting the innovation.

Adoption and adaptation activities spread throughout the implementation process of the Be You programme. For example, even after attending the training, the hotel representatives may have chosen not to introduce it to the hotels. Adoption at the hotel level was monitored by the corporate office; follow-up consultancy calls served to assess progress in training delivery, and tracking of online activity gave a picture of the use of People Tools: "Every time you download a job description is recorded and says it's downloaded there, so then we can quite easily follow up and say, right "you haven't downloaded any People Tools, why not?" (BM6). Adoption was therefore checked and expected within a required timeframe. However, even after training, the programme may not have reached the customers if the employees chose to ignore it. It was difficult to assess true adoption in this way; nevertheless, it was mentioned that the implementation had positive outcomes, and the behavioural changes were actually accepted in the hotels: "The girls [housekeeping employees] they realise that basically all the changes are benefiting our team and they accepted it".

Adaptation processes were reported by participants in the way of delivering the programme at the hotels, rather than in relation to its content. Local hotel training delivery was tailored to the context of the hotel or the country. For example, one property decided that the GM and GECs who attended the Train the Trainer sessions should train department heads, who then trained employees in their departments. This was not a recommended approach by the corporate office, but was adopted on the basis of lack of time, lack of desire to train, and lack of knowledge of the employee language, particularly important in the housekeeping department where English was not necessarily well understood. The same hotel also decided for two department heads to collaborate in training delivery. Different countries required personalised training content and delivery attuned to cultural preference, such as greater emphasis on facilitation and ways of feeding back: "In France, the culture wants that it's really hard to get…, we don't get feedback, we don't give feedback. When it's good, we say it's not bad [...] getting feedback is really delicate" (BE7).

6.4.7. Launch

Putting Be You into action at the hotel level started with the completion of training. External promotional campaigns addressed to customers incorporated the principles of the programme, but an external launch day was not appropriate for this type of innovation.

From the corporate office point of view, launching meant rolling out the programme to the hotels. Rolling out started with a pilot run to which significant effort was dedicated: "I think we pilot everything to death in IHG, I've got to be honest, and that's a GOOD thing, I don't mean that in a nasty way, in a really good way, because if you don't test things, you just don't know how it's going to work. It's really important" (BS8). The pilot for Be You was completed in 12 properties, in order to identify and rectify issues in implementation: "we brought them over to London, and we did a pilot training programme, and then they fed back obviously on the training experience, and then the rollout from the hotels' point of view", "the actual training and the four books-modules were absolutely piloted" (BS8). The pilot was used to make sure that both the weaker and the stronger hotel performers were going to benefit from the programme: "we just wanted to make sure that […] it wasn't just going to be a 'it's not going to make any difference to those hotels', so we had some really, really strong hotels, and we also invited a very weak hotel" (BS8).

6.4.8. Review and Routinisation

Reviewing the project and making Be You part of everyday practices were essential steps to ensure that the potential benefits of the innovation were realised. However, the intangible nature of the project rendered assessment of the true outcomes of the programme a difficult endeavour. Feedback was nevertheless collected formally in the employee engagement survey (IHG, 2013) and guest satisfaction survey, which were used for evaluating the programme: "All our key measurements are in line, our employee engagement went up five points last year" (BM22). Guest satisfaction was monitored in HeartBeat, an online survey system, introduced in 2011 parallel to the Be You programme, to make it easier and quicker for hotel managers and owners to obtain and compile guest feedback (IHG, 2013). HeartBeat score target setting was part of post-training consultancy sessions between the trainer/consultant and the hotel manager; higher scores were considered evidence of an effective Be You implementation, and led to strong belief of the value of the programme: "we know that the GSTS, HeartBeat were going up after the hotels were trained, like significantly" (BE7). Specific questions in the survey were used to assess improvements attributed to Be You implementation. Open comments by guests on HeartBeat and on the Trip Advisor website were also used for review of the Be You implementation. HeartBeat scores allowed the use of standardised measures for benchmarking purposes, and sharing of results was used to motivate hotels to compete with each other and aim higher: "They have 100 rooms, we have 108, the rates of the rooms are usually the same, the breakfast, all that, so yeah it's very easy to compare ourselves to them" (BM1). Merlin, the intranet system of IHG was a powerful tool in sharing performance results, including HeartBeat scores with stakeholders, meaning that they were also involved in the review of the Be You programme.

Review of the programme did not mean only assessing the results of implementation; consultancy sessions after the centralised training helped with building a relationship with the hotels and with local training delivery:

> In brand trainings the important thing is to keep a relationship with the hotels. Trainers they know the hotels, they really know them, cause we have this special relationship that you can start while you know them, so where are you standing, what did you

> do, what did you implement, did you need help, what are you facing, are you facing any difficulties (BE7)

Hotels received consultancy from the same trainers who delivered their Train the Trainer sessions; where this was not possible, due to local area trainers being involved, the corporate office was responsible for consultancy. However, this meant breaking the strong relationship developed during training (BE7).

At the hotels, training delivery continued after the launch of the programme to allow new employees to become familiar with the desired behaviours; in this way Be You materials were used as part of the employee induction to the hotel, and the programme became routine, as participants mentioned: “I think that Stay Real is now part of the language in Holiday Inn” (BS8) and “I think it's part of everyday now” (BM20). Finally, the need to follow up with a further innovation programme was recognised by participants, but was not done at the same time as the interviews: “we've done great, we don’t want to go down, and so we are going to start again. With new services, new behaviour, new cycle, we're going [to] fresh it up” (BE7).

6.5. Entities in the Implementation Process

The entities or factors that influenced the implementation of Be You are found to be in line with the ones identified in the conceptual framework of the study; they are related to individuals, the firm, the innovation and process (Table 6-1).

Table 6-1 Factors in Stay Real - Be You Implementation

Individual-related	Firm-related	Innovation-related	Process-related
Empowerment	Structure	Fit with existing service system	Appointment of leaders
Knowledge*	Positive implementation climate	Fit with market*	Organisation of formal activities*
Self-efficacy	Readiness for change*	Fit with values	Stakeholder involvement

*Most important

6.5.1. Individual-related Entities

Empowerment, knowledge and self-efficacy were the factors that influenced the implementation of Be You. Knowledge was seen by participants as the most important individual-related factor. The implementation of the Be You programme revealed cultural differences with regards to the degree that individuals value empowerment. Although the outlining of general guidelines and allowing for autonomy in applying their own initiative fitted with the values of individuals in most of the European territory, people in Eastern countries seemed to prefer a more authoritative approach to implementation:

> Those [training] books do not provide the answers how you do it, it provides the framework and the end result. That fits for most of our territories, apart from the Eastern Bloc countries, because I think what I am learning is…, that style is still a generation away, to be confident in using their own initiative and making their own decisions. They've often said to me "just tell us what we should do", "give us ten steps", I will do it. And I said it doesn't kind of work like that. So that will be an interesting set of results to look at, but I think that can be quite a positive challenge for us (BM6)

During the implementation of Be You, employees were encouraged to take control of their interaction with customers, given that there is an impact of their behaviour on the guest experience: "now I think they (employees) are thinking more that everything I do is affecting the guests, his comments, and his feelings and his experience. So I think they're starting to think more about how my behaviour is affecting my work" (BM18).

Knowledge about general ideas of Be You was demonstrated by the majority of participants; it seems that many elements of the previously implemented Stay Real programme were re-enforced in the Be You implementation. However, the exact behaviours and four principles were not always recalled during the interviews, and differences between the programmes were not always well understood:

> (Stay Real) was when the rebranding happened so we were changing the brand image and everything, so most of the employees were taking as it's coming with this rebranding, so it was changing. And this one it was more about, I think, more about Great Hotels Guest

> Love and Be BrandHearted, and more about this. So the second one wasn't so much about the change of the brand (BM1).

Although most interviewees appeared confident in their knowledge about the desired behaviours in Be You, they also recognised that busy operations made the application impractical at times:

> In a perfect world, you know what I mean, you DO want to be knowledgeable and you DO want to be completely prepared, but sometimes they arrive… (laughs), guests arrive and everything goes wrong, and the systems 're crashing, and the keys aren't working, and that sort of thing, so... I think that's good to know the ultimate goal, and where you're heading, but I think it's also…, the discussion was also like…, you have to be able to adapt to the real world conditions, and that not everything is going to be 100% perfect, and being able to cover yourself for that (BM1)

The degree of knowledge was not always satisfactory, according to participants. It was mentioned that information was often not shared freely in the hotel, and that individuals would prefer to know more about what was happening rather than being informed on the need-to-know basis: "it's not a totally open business, so they will only tell you when they think it's time we knew […] which I don't quite agree, I've never have, I think it'd be nice to know not everything, because we don't need to know everything, but there's some things that, at times, that you think "why can't they tell us?" (BE17).

Three material artefacts, key to the distribution of knowledge on the Be You programme were the training packs, display material for the hotels and the People Tools. They included written explanations of the concepts discussed in training and instructions for practical exercises, games and posters. With the exception of People Tools, these were provided to the GMs and GECs at the end of training. As the behaviours were an intangible concept, employees welcomed tangible supporting material that could help them in their role as trainers, and which assisted in the dissemination of key messages: "that makes our job as the implementers, facilitators, much much easier rather than sitting there with a blank piece of paper, they got something to fiddle with and play with, and they LOVE, our guys love taking a box away, they love walking out the door with something" (BM6). A review of the training packs by the researcher revealed that the style used was informal and succinct, with instructions for activities well detailed. It was clear that the Holiday Inn and Express brand identity was carried throughout with the use of green colour. Contemporary graphics were employed to catch the reader's attention and maintain interest.

Belief in their abilities to implement Be You was reported by participants in the interviews; in other words, self-efficacy was high: "it was a task that was given to us and we just got on with it. Just trained it out there and we were the people who absolutely were the face of People Tools and Stay Real" (BS8). Be You was a project that the team owned, and they were proud of its implementation: "It was our baby […] I think we made it happen. I really do. We won an award last week" (BS8).

6.5.2. Firm-related Entities

Structure, positive implementation climate and readiness for change were the three firm-related entities that were found to influence the implementation of Be You, in line with the conceptual framework of the study. Readiness for change seemed to be the most important factor in this case.

<u>Structure</u>

According to participants IHG operated in a hierarchical model of job roles; however, this did not prevent employees to be listened to and ideas to be appreciated regardless of origin in the organisation:

> the company, even though we have like a hierarchy, like a pyramid hierarchy, it's everyone on the same, when it comes to brainstorming, get ideas and get the job done, no matter what you are, if you are director, vice-president, co-ordinator, whatever, as soon as you have something to say, something that may add value, or you have a good idea, you will be heard (BE7)

In the hotels there was a segregation of levels to GM, department heads and employees. However, according to participants, managers were close to employees, particularly in the UK: "we are very hands-on people [...] We're not just standing there, we get involved in the team. So the team know we're in this together. And that makes a difference" (BM22).

Participants' perceptions about the project painted a picture of a positive implementation climate: they believed that implementing the innovation was rewarded, supported, and expected in the organisation. IHG was seen as a company supporting regional initiatives and one which was continuously looking for opportunities to innovate and improve customer service. Due to its large size and resources it could afford extensive market research into customer segmentation and targeting. Dedicated brand teams also helped build a strong brand identity and provide direction to hotel properties. For franchises, signing up to the Holiday Inn and Express brands meant that innovation initiatives were part of expectations. Being innovative, and implementing programmes such as Stay Real and Be You, were seen as a good return on investment. A BrandHearted award, in recognition of "putting the brand in the heart for everything you do" (BS8) was awarded by the corporate office to the team that organised the European rollout of Be You: "we won a brand-hearted Star award on the back of introducing all of this stuff" (BS8). Employees also felt that implementing the innovation was supported and rewarded, starting with small steps such as training completion: "they know that they get a nice certificate when they finish the training" (BS8). Most importantly, employees were rewarded when displaying the Be You behaviours with the use of 'Recognise' cards, awarded for service excellence during employee events.

Leadership support and resource availability are indicators of an organisation being ready for change. Overall, these two elements were in place in the Be You project; however, resources that could be enhanced included financial resources at the hotel level, translations of materials on time and multilingual trainers.

Both at the hotel level and corporate office level, financial resources were limited, and solutions to overcome issues had to be found. For some hotels, the financial crisis meant that the cost of running the programme was considered too high: "it's only may be a couple of big groups, there's been some challenge with the cost […] Ideally they would love to have it [the training] for free, but on the whole they accepted that, you know, it's good value" (BM6). At the corporate office, resources were not unlimited either: "we didn't have the budget to do it (the translation), cause we don't have lots of hotels in Poland" (BE7). Solutions to budget shortcomings were found, however, by sharing the financial burden with the other party, the hotels or the corporate office.

Problems with translating the training material to a number of languages, which was considered necessary for implementation, were identified by participants. The time needed for translation was underestimated, mainly due to the low quality of translations that required extensive reviewing; this was due to companies unrelated to the industry being hired for the task: "the company we were using for the translation were not hospitality-focused company, so we had some really weird translations, they had to be corrected" (BE7).

Finally, the implementation could have been better resourced with staff; particularly, multilingual hotel trainers were missing from the project: "a more diverse team in terms of languages, I think that's really missing. Because when we want to do something in […] Italy, I don't speak Italian, I don't write Italian, it's impossible for me to do it" (BE7). However, the corporate office viewed the recruitment of more trainers as an ideal rather than a realistic scenario: "In an ideal world I probably would have couple of more trainers to be able to do things...more of it, you know, but that's not..., I think they've done a really good job considering the resources we've got" (BS8).

6.5.3. Innovation-related Entities

Innovation-related entities were reported as being important in the implementation of the Be You programme. The concept fitted with the existing service system, the market served by Holiday Inn and Express brands, and the values of the organisation. Most important innovation-related factor was the fit to market in this case.

The changes expected with the introduction of Be You involved new behaviours that could be displayed within the established service system. Most employees agreed that the programme was valuable in reminding them of the right ways to approach the guests, but it was also mentioned that the behaviours were applied prior to the Be You training: “I didn't really change much, because I was doing all the things before anyway, but it helped me to..., just make me realise how I am affecting the business as well, not just the product, but the behaviour as well” (BE3). A few operational changes were introduced in everyday practices to assist employees with their tasks: “we’ve now decided they [services dropped beforehand] need to be done because we have to stick to the Stay Real principles” (BM1); these changes however were not considered ground-breaking or excessively demanding by the employees. For example, the allocation of rooms was done the day before guests checked in. Some hotels were already following the standards highlighted by the Be You programme: “I think we were pretty close to the standards anyways, we have been doing a lot of the things, which was nice to know” (BM1). The content of the programme was seen as a natural continuation of the earlier launch of Stay Real: “[It] is NOW part of the operation, the first one was a huge revolution, this one (Be You) is a follow up” (BE7). Certain participants expected a more radical innovation, and criticised Be You for being too similar to the Stay Real, and therefore not worth the effort and expense. However, Be You still meant a move away from standards in the sense that is followed the predecessor programme: “they removed all the standards, do whatever, Be Yourself, be professional, was everything we’re asking […] when they explained to me the concept, I was like, ‘wait I am coming from Accor, everything is about SOP (standard operating procedure)’” (BE7).

Be You was a service innovation that fitted with the target market of Holiday Inn and Express hotels. The customer profile was revealed by an extensive market survey:

> we brought in an agency to look at that, and they spoke to guests, in hotels, airport lounges, in their homes, we went out to speak to people to find out why they choose each of our brands, not just Holiday Inn, but what’s your key motivation when you are in a hotel, what do you want, what’s the service behaviour, the

> style that you want to be delivered in, how do you want to be spoken to (BS8)

The results of the survey became the principles used to build the Be You programme: "we know that a guest is really friendly, down-to-earth, warm, and welcoming they need somebody serving them who is friendly, down-to-earth, warm, and welcoming" (BS8). In essence, the type of guest attracted by the brands wanted to deal with employees who are themselves whilst on duty, thus the Be You message: "being yourself, that's what it's Be You about. To be yourself, and you already do that every day and day out, but that's what we expect, that's the new expectation that the guest is looking for" (BM20). Participants believe that despite the lack of direct customer involvement, customers care about the displayed behaviours that Be You encouraged: "I think the interpretation is done from the comments online" [...] "Subconsciously they (customers) do [care] and don't notice we're doing it" (BE17).

Evidence from the study showed that the Be You innovation was in line with the values of the organisation, and those of the employees. IHG was characterised as an open and accommodating place to work where employees were encouraged to keep their individuality and flair, while remaining professional. This was reflected in the Be You project: "it's all about being yourself, brining your own personality to the business, bringing your passion" (BE7). Celebrating difference was at the heart of the Be You project: "we are really promoting the cultural diversity, respect difference, it's cultural awareness" (BE7). Activities were run with these principles in mind; for example, the need for delivering the training in local languages was not only a matter of comprehension, but also one of showing respect for individuality: "we need to be personalised. Because once again we want to lead by example. Be personalised, be natural, be you. Sorry I am speaking to you in another language, doesn't make sense" (BE7).

The importance given to values fit at the organisation is exemplified by the fact that certain employees left the company as a result of Stay Real and Be You implementations: "(the GM) was telling us, when we did Stay Real we had to cut some trenches from the trees, cause 'Sorry but you're not the right fit finally'. You're not fitting, go to a hotel where the mentality would fit you, you are not fitting Holiday Inn" (BE7). The focus on service behaviour in Be You exposed the unsuitability of staff members who would rather work for a brand following prescribed service standards than display behaviours like "be themselves", "show they care", and "take action". For other employees, the Be You programme was in line with their personality: "it is getting us [in a] place that we can still be ourselves [...] I am every day quite friendly, smiling and stuff like that, and at work they expect that as well, so it's quite, no I don't have to play every day that I am someone else" (BE21).

6.5.4. Process-related Entities

The entities related to the process that were found to affect the implementation of the Be You programme were the appointment of leaders, the organisation of formal activities and the stakeholder involvement. Organisation of activities was considered the most important factor according to participants' views.

Two types of leaders were found to play a key part in the implementation of Be You: formally appointed implementation leaders and champions. One of the formally appointed implementation leaders at the corporate office was the Brand Training Director. This individual was responsible for overviewing the training preparation and delivery, as well as carrying out the follow-up consultancy work in Europe, Middle East and Africa, and was one of the first contacts for and influencers of the hotel owners who had to authorise the implementation and approve the expenditure on the programme.

Another formally appointed implementation leader was the coordinator who was based at the corporate office, and who was responsible for coordinating implementation activities at a large number of hotels, including registering trainees in Train the Trainer sessions and producing training schedules. This person also acted as trainer and as a consultant during the follow-up period. Unlike other trainers, this person could speak multiple languages which helped with delivering training in local European hotels, building rapport and understanding the challenges around the translation of materials.

The GMs, or their deputies at the hotels, were formally appointed implementation leaders, as they often had the responsibility of project management at the hotels. Although they received the training, they did not always have the time to deliver it at the hotels; it was hoped however, that they were at least opening the sessions: "we like to think that they are there at least open it and give their endorsement of the programme" (BS8). Managers often acted as 'invisible' facilitators of the conditions necessary for implementation, for example by tracking the progress, arranging training schedules, booking meeting rooms and covering shifts.

The GMs had significant influence internally and acted as role models for staff, but they did not have the same level of contact with employees as the Guest Experience Champion, who seemed to hold the key to implementation by offering maximum support: "He (the GEC) is one of our part-time, but he's been here for five years! So (the GM) sent him on the training to do it, and then he's been leading that. He's been really good" (BM1). GECs were individuals that accompanied the GMs in the Train the Trainer sessions, and proved to be inspiring for the hotel teams by showing their belief in the new service culture: "GECs had to be people who were truly branded, understood the brand, or Stay Real" (BS8). They also saw their involvement as an opportunity to develop within the organisation: "The reception manager of one the hotels, who is Polish and she was kind of, eager for development, and she's a GEC, and she is all into it and everything, so we thought we can give her that to do, she will do a great job, and she did" (BS8). Not all champions embraced their role however, as their appointment was, in cases, made haphazardly, and without much thought by the GMs: "the GEC was selected, she phones in sick, so the GM just brought the first person with them. So the intention was good. They wanted to have someone with them, and they did the right thing, but they didn't, cause the person they brought with them was absolutely terrified" (BS8).

Another champion of the programme was the trainer and consultant sitting in the regional office who was instrumental in the implementation, due to his exceptional training skills and knowledge of the process: "[He] was absolutely critical in rolling out the programme. He did probably 90% of the training. So he was absolutely instrumental in making it happen from a delivery point of view" (BS8).

The organisation of formal activities was the most important process-related factor influencing Be You at all levels of its implementation. In general, the process was organised and well-defined in stages. Progress was measured against deadlines, and the process itself was structured: "it's a very structured process […] we don't deviate from the target dates in terms of roll out" (BM6). However, timing challenges were encountered along the implementation journey and presented bottlenecks for the process, often attributed to the number of actors involved in putting everything together, and the chain of events that needed to follow a logical order: "it wasn't that fluid at the beginning, because everything was planned, we were really prepared, but we had lots of issues with the translations that really stopped us and was an issue" (BE7).

At the regional level, difficulties rose from the need for hotels to register for Train the Trainer sessions: "it was hard to get some people to register, some hotels, the beginning I mean it went like this, like mountain style, roller coaster style, the beginning it got so much time to take off and we were like 'Oh my God, we tried everything, to call you'" (BE7). This delay accentuated the problem of having enough participants at each training session for it to run effectively. Delays in the translation of training material also meant that training timetables had to be reviewed: "in those countries (e.g. Germany) we had to postpone most of the classes, because we weren't ready in terms of translation. We did not anticipate at all the fact that it would take ages" (BE7). This delay was attributed to a lack of knowledge of the materials: "I think the mistake we did is that we wanted to implement right after having the Train the Trainer, when we didn't really know the training materials" (BE7). Delays also occurred with the availability of People Tools, due to unanticipated technical difficulties: “the People Tools website, getting everything uploaded, that was a challenge for us. But that was a first; it was the first time we've done anything as big as that” (BS8). As a result, the hotels felt disappointed with the regional office: “From the hotels’ side of things they might have felt that sometimes there were a little bit bumpy for them, you know, when you look on the website and something not there that you want is not really what you signed up for” (BS8).

Organisation of consultancy sessions after the training was also challenging, due to lack of time and prioritisation: “Generally we aim for two to three weeks after attending the programme. We will be honest we've not hit the timescales on this one. Only because we wanted to push it out, and some other projects came online” (BM6).

At the hotel level, allowing people to be released from their day-to-day duties for training purposes was not straightforward. Firstly, for the GM and GEC to leave their posts was considered difficult: “you have to remove two top persons from the hotel for two days!” (BE7). Then, the hotel employee training presented a number of challenges. Training in the hotels was not done in one session, but purposefully divided into four meetings, spread over five weeks, in order to allow participants to absorb and internalise the key messages before moving to the next level:

> It really worked, because I think we also did the different modules, so that we can give ample time to get... Because we do have a multicultural staff as well, so obviously some will take quickly, some will take time to understand it, so you have to slow down a bit as well. So we have divided into different modules, and giving ample times, and giving as much leeway as well, so if it has to take a bit extra but the message has gone across, it's done that as well (BM20)

The separation of activities meant that the same group of employees needed to be released from their shifts for an hour on four separate occasions; this was a difficult task to accomplish in hotels running on a 24-hour schedule, with the need to coordinate employees on different shifts including night shifts, part-time duty and annual leave. Creativity around logistics was therefore necessary, particularly in Express hotels where staff levels are minimal: “I think an Express I really have to take my hat off, cause they have to be a little bit more creative and inventive” (BS8). Inevitably, certain training sessions were missed and employees waited for future re-runs in order to catch up. Finding time for training delivery was an additional challenge in busy periods: “There is never a good time. There is always, and that's a good thing, cause it usually means your hotel’s business is profitable, and you've got a business. So I always say to them 'Just start it, make it happen, just try and get it out there'. And if you slip by a couple weeks, fine” (BS8). To overcome this problem, training delivery was carefully timed to fall on the days that the hotel was less busy: “when we know which days in the week are easier dates, like Tuesday Wednesdays we have most of the guests are staying over, so it's a bit easier, so we have a bit more time [...] so we planned all the trainings in advance” (BM18). In between the four sessions, informal 10-15 minute activities were put together by the regional office to be used during the hotel team meetings or coffee breaks. The activities were timed to be short and punchy, but serve the purpose of keeping the momentum going in between the sessions. Timing of events, particularly running fewer and longer training sessions, as well as shorter gaps between session is mentioned by participants as one thing they would change, were they able to revisit the implementation: “rather do two sessions but make them an hour long, that would be my suggestion” (BM1).

A number of specialists, including brand message developers, writers, translators and trainers have been involved in the implementation of the Be You, but they were not necessarily stakeholders in the process:

> We got a global team who write the material predominantly, and a writer who works for the global team to design the programme, so that’s one sort of side to it, then we’ve got the brand teams, so these are the people who are very much in charge of the brands, the brand standards, so they are a kind of another group of people who are involved, and obviously there’s the training team which is obviously what we do, and our extended partners, I mean my manager has four direct reports (BS8)

In general, the implementation was done in a top-down approach from the regional office to the hotels. Participants were involved when they needed to perform specific actions, such as registering for training and attending training session. Naturally, the implementation itself needed the active engagement of employees in the hotels.

6.6. Mechanisms in the Implementation Process

The four mechanisms of sensemaking, organisational learning, organisational politics, and emotional reactions are proposed to explain the events in the Be You implementation, in order to fulfil the relevant objective in this study.

6.6.1. Sensemaking

Sensemaking processes are evident in the course of the Be You implementation; especially as different levels are involved in the process, different interpretations of events manifest themselves. Sensemaking was an important element in the communication between the regional office and the external company in charge of translations. In the process of translating the material from English to five European languages, it was considered crucial to accurately transfer the meaning of key terms, in order to ensure that consistent messages are conveyed to employees, and that the core tenets of the programme are not compromised. Therefore, hotel employees collaborated with the translator in this endeavour to validate key words:

> We used an external company, the process was quite strict, it sounds a bit detailed, but it's not just a straight translation, when you're doing behavioural stuff, because [...] words sometimes aren't literally one for one. [...] We picked out the keywords within any piece within the training, so Stay Real, Be You, advocate, all those kind of keywords, job descriptions, all of those, those words really integral, and we put together a validation sheet, so we actually got a validator to actually do those words first. So we needed to sort of derive that we had a very CLEAR understanding of what each of those words were, and because we needed somebody who was expert, and understood the business meaning of it, the hotel, we used internal people for that, so we used people from the hotels who had an understanding of brand, an understanding of HR, to be able to do that for us, so we really sort of partnered with internal people (BS8)

Another area where sensemaking occurred was around identity building: how employees understood themselves to be in relation to the world around them. The job roles of individuals and their employer provided cues to help frame their employee identity. At the regional office, employees were closer to the brand and the company as a whole, thus they were identifying with IHG first and foremost. At the hotel level, informants were influenced more by their immediate hotel environment rather than the hotel group. In franchised properties, employees were identifying more with the franchisor group, rather than the Holiday Inn or Express brands, and understood that directions to the hotels derive from belonging to this group: “if they [Redefine franchisor group] didn't want us to do that, we would have not done that, but they wanted asked to organise this thing, they probably had informed the manager that you have to get this training done, that is how obviously Redefine is our company, so they are doing this for us” (BE2).

Sensemaking also took place in the interactions between the regional office and the hotels. Although hotels generally welcomed the innovation, the appropriateness of timing for implementation was subject to debate; some owners felt that the Be You programme was introduced too closely after the Stay Real launch, having been implemented just one year earlier. Therefore, a larger gap was preferred between the two programmes, especially due to the large expense in excess of 100 thousand Euro that the re-launch of the brands and Stay Real programme entailed. At the regional office however, the impression was that the hotels expected a follow-up, given that every year they were asked for a specific budget allocation towards service behaviour training in the spirit of “if you don’t entertain things [referring to Stay Real], they just go down”. According to them, the hotels would be feeling abandoned without a follow-up programmes, such as Be You: “we had some grunt from GECs and GMS, ‘you did it, and now you just let us down’”(BE7).

6.6.2. Organisational Learning

Learning processes occurred in the entire implementation period of the Be You programme and were manifested in the exploitation of external and internal knowledge. Learning was realised through training that had to be provided continuously to accommodate new recruits: “we don't stop training it, is even though the initial rollout happened, we're constantly doing refresher classes and picking up people who’ve left, or you know, turnover and natural ways, or whatever it is, you have to keeping the training go, and otherwise it dies” (BS8). The organisation went through learning cycles and feedback loops as the training pack, which was developed in the USA, was reviewed in the European context with feedback from the European team, translated by an external agent, and reviewed by local trainers and employees and piloted:

> We'll review it [the training material], give some feedback, we may put it into some pilot schemes to get some feedback at the hotel, that then gets fed back to the design team, it's effectively finalised, there might be another stage in between doing the same thing (BM6).

Organisational learning activities were also reported by transferring knowledge from previous projects to the Be You implementation: "we knew from the first Stay Real that we needed to translate, at least French, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian, we needed, we knew that. but even in English, it was UK English and US English is really different" (BE7).

6.6.3. Organisational Politics

Political activity was particularly prominent in the narratives of participants in the case of Be You as the innovation moved down the layers of organisational hierarchy from the regional to the local hotel level. There were many efforts made to 'sell' the project in the organisation, negotiate between stakeholders, and influence employees. An area rife with political actions was around the compulsory nature of the project. The programme was going to be invalid if the hotels did not implement it. From the regional office point of view, the implementation was not optional, and every hotel had to follow the programme, either because it was a managed property, or as per the contractual rules of Holiday Inn and Express as a franchise. However, in franchises, the message was tailored to the audience; the hotel owners and the hotels managers received different messages despite the same goal: "there is a way we communicate with hotels not saying it's mandatory but kind of pushing them, and then there is the communication with owners, then we say it's mandatory (BE7).

From the franchisee point of view, the compulsory nature of the mandate was less clear. Firstly, issues with communication meant that hotels were not informed: "nobody said that it was mandatory in Germany" (BE7). Secondly, the implications of non-attendance were not always clearly understood. For example, hotels could only have access to People Tools after they had attended the trainings, but this was not mentioned in the discussions with managers and employees when the implications were discussed. Finally, there was the issue of cost; communication problems occurred with informing the hotels on time so they could anticipate the cost: "we were supposed to tell them the year before for them to anticipate the cost. and I am not quite sure..., I can't say 100%, the thing that happened was…, first of all this hasn't been said for last year" (BE7). In addition, running hotels in the midst of a financial crisis meant that training, which involved a training fee per delegate and travel costs to another country, could simply not be afforded by certain owners; participants stated that as a result "we weren't going to attend" (BM19). Negotiation with the regional office led to solutions being found, with compromises on both sides; in general, the hotels mentioned that "as a family IHG is open to discussion" (BM10). Train the Trainer sessions were delivered locally, so that the travel cost was reduced, and all hotels paid the necessary attendance fee. Workarounds towards further reducing the costs involved the GM also adopting the GEC role, so that only one person instead of two could be sent to training. It was mentioned that free training provision for more people would be preferable: "it would be better if training would cost half the price, so more people could attend; or better still, if it was free but compulsory for more than two individuals, like that more people could attend and hotels could spread the word more easily" (BM10). Costs were subject to negotiation, not only on the hotel side, however; the regional office too had to run its activities on a tight budget. So, training material translation needs were met in certain countries by a middle-of-the-road approach: "all the Polish hotels have the same owners, all franchised under the same owners, so we negotiated with the owners we paid 400 they paid 400 for the translation" (BE7).

Persuasion skills had to be employed, even after the programme was accepted in principle for the implementation to be truly effective. Employees had to enact the behaviours in order for the programme to have the desired effects on customers:

> It's a different mentality from the managed than the franchises, franchisees even if they attend the training, even if

> they cascade they don't have to enhance it, they don't have to believe it, they don't have to live it. And doing it is an option, while the managed anyway they don't have choice, we are managing them. What we say they do. So I think it's a bigger success when we get the franchise to do it and to enjoy it than the managed (BS7)

The use of the People Tools was another matter of persuasion between the regional office and the hotels, despite its non-compulsory nature: "(Franchisee): 'I actually don't want Be You People Tools, because it doesn't fit all of my other brands' So that's interesting, you know, how can we really support those hotels moving forward to think about 'hey, this is really important to our brand identity', getting them to adopt those (BS8).

At the hotel level, the programme met resistance at different times due to the language used for communication: "it's always in English, we don't really understand, we have like ten thousand emails a day, and we don't care" (BE7). Hotels did not always appreciate the purpose of Be You and resisted its implementation. Especially in France, it was mentioned that hotels did not appreciate the difference between Be You and Stay Real: "why do we have to do the second one?" I mean at the end of the training they know why, obviously, but before they were like "I don't want to do it..." We had a lot of difficulty with this to get people register" (BE7). In Greece the hotel managers mentioned that "if you present Be You – or Stay Real before that – as something new, you have lost the game". Instead they presented it to employees as "a reminder of things they already knew from academic or experiential education" (BM10). Still, few department heads were reluctant to attend the training, debating its relevance to them, which created problems in cascading the programme to lower level employees.

6.6.4. Emotional Reactions

A mechanism that can provide useful insights into the events that occurred during the implementation of the Be You programme is related to emotional reactions. Feelings about aspects of the process were mentioned throughout the interviews. For example, dealing with different stakeholders, appointing champions, being involved in relaxed training sessions and putting Be You into practice were all actions associated with positive or negative emotions.

The collaboration of people from different countries in the project highlighted cultural differences and approaches, and the emotions that accompanied the experiences: "she pulls hair out sometimes with the Americas cause..., I think we are very pragmatic, and we just want to get things sorted and done, whereas my impression sometimes some of the team is, they just don't get it sometimes, whereas we feel we are a little bit more driven and proactive" (BM6). Different cultures also required personalised training: "I just feel quite passionately that if you don't understand it because it's not local language, you're not gonna embrace it, so it's a little bit of waste of time" (BS8).

Being provided with the opportunity to become a GEC provided confidence and motivation to employees: "if you are selected to be a GEC, and you get through that two days, that gives you confidence" (BS8). For some people this opportunity went even further to improve their well-being, as it provided a sense of satisfaction to the leaders in charge of the programme:

> One of our GECs was manic depressive, and his GM gave him the chance, gave him an opportunity to come and be the GEC, and his confidence has rocketed, is not on the medication he was on before, he's got kudos in the hotel, and again you can't shout about these things because it's personal, very personal, very sensitive, but those to me are sometimes the reasons that we do this as well. There's two levels (BS8).

Negative reactions were reported in association with people being forced to become GECs when they didn't want to:

> You can instantly see if somebody is really not the right person for this, it's not fair to set them up to fail in front of their peers in the hotel, and we had instances when we pulled people to the side and said "look, this really isn't for you, do you think?", and "No, I hate, I don't want to…, I've been told to come", and you know, we've been able to say to the general manager, look, this isn't gonna help this person to be successful, so let's have a rethink (BS8).

Positive emotions were reported around the training style: "it was nothing that they pushed us so much, so it was relaxing, and I did enjoy it" (BE21) and its content: “they are all excited, they all know what to do, they have new ideas now” (BS1). The informal setup also helped with employee contributions and feelings of accomplishment:

> If you had a poor experience, people in training absolutely terrified, you know, not in this job in my previous job, terrified cause they just feel that sitting around tables, with a flipchart is like school and they’ve had a bad experience at school […] it’s really tough for them, and if they can go away from these sessions [Be You training] thinking they’ve contributed, even if they just said one or two words I think that’s a huge step for some people, you know, to get them to open up and says something is powerful (BS8).

Evidence of positive emotions was found in the way training took place in a supportive and non-forceful environment:

> You want to learn something, you don't want them to force you to learn, the main thing is that, you know, if you want to learn, you will automatically learn. But if they are forcing you to learn, you can only sit there and take some points, but you will forget it later on. And you don't feel like implementing then that, too often, because it's not going to be there in your mind, it has to be there in your heart (BE2).

Finally, the very concept of Be You encapsulated in messages, such as ‘Show you care’, essentially relates to customer feelings, which in turn affect employees’ reactions: “This is not our job, this is not my job. It's not necessary to give him a plate and these things. But I do it, just to make him feel great and happy, because put yourself in his place, if I go to somewhere and they do that to me, I will feel happy, I will feel good “oh they are caring about me”, which is good (BE5).

6.7. Formation of Second Thematic Template

The elements of the conceptual framework of this study are reflected in the events and entities in this case; there are, however, some differences that are worth pointing out. The four stages of training, secondary adoption and adaptation, launch, review and routinisation were observed in the Be You implementation; extensive planning activities were also reported, and the stages were repeated at the different levels in the journey from the regional office to hotels. Four mechanisms were found to act behind the events: sensemaking, organisational learning, organisational politics, and emotional reactions. Political actions and emotional reactions were most prominent due to the top down approach to implementation and emotions being part of the programme's content. The findings from this case assisted in the development of the second thematic template of this study (Table 6-2).

Table 6-2 Updated Thematic Template

First Level (Meaningful Themes)	Second Level (Codes)	Third Level (Examples of Sub-codes)
Events in the Implementation Process	Planning	Translations Difficulties
	Training	Preparation Challenges Delivery Outcomes
	Secondary adoption and adaptation	Mandates Local reaction
	Launch	Emphasis on internal customers Start at end of training Pilot Challenges
	Review and routinisation, and Follow up	Outcomes Continuous Consultancy
Entities in the Implementation Process	Empowerment	Autonomy Control Initiative Reward
	Knowledge	Customer Product Practice
	Self-efficacy	Belief in self Positive
	System fit	Essence of service unchanged Follow up to Stay Real
	Market fit	Fit with customer profile Relaxed atmosphere
	Values fit	Great Hotels Guests Love Respect difference
	Structure	Top-down Informal training
	Positive implementation climate	Innovation expected Innovation rewarded
	Readiness for change	Leadership support Resource availability
	Appointment of leaders	Champions Formal implementation leaders
	Stakeholder involvement	Hotels Owners
	Sensemaking	Different interpretations Formality

First Level (Meaningful Themes)	Second Level (Codes)	Third Level (Examples of Sub-codes)
Mechanisms behind innovation implementation	Organisational Learning	Learning-before-doing Learning from past projects
	Organisational Politics	Conflict Resistance Negotiation Influence Agenda setting
	Emotional Reactions	Feelings Motivation

6.8 Summary

This chapter has examined the implementation of the second innovation project explored in this study, that of the Be You service behaviour programme implemented in Holiday Inn and Express brands of IHG. The discussion incorporated the background to the innovation project and to the organisation, which set the scene for the presentation of events, entities and mechanisms. The critical realist interpretation and the conceptual framework of the study guided the organisation of evidence, and led to the template presented at the end of the chapter. Key steps in the process were found to be planning, training, secondary adoption and adaptation, review, routinisation and follow-up. Training was particularly important in this implementation due to the intangible nature of the innovation project, whilst an external customer launch was not applicable, as the innovation was addressed to internal customers. Entities relating to the individuals, the organisation, the innovation, and the process have been shown to have a substantial influence on events. Guided by IHG's vision to create "Great hotels Guests love", the Be You programme made sense to employees who were already familiar with the Stay Real behaviours that came hand-in-hand with the large scale re-launch of the brands completed a year earlier. The programme invited participants to Be themselves, Show they care, Get ready and Take action, behaviours that the setup and run of the programme tried to reflect. Sensemaking, organisational learning, organisational politics and emotional reactions were the mechanisms proposed to explain the events in the implementation process that proved to be in action. Examples from the case have highlighted the explanatory power of these mechanisms, especially the political and emotional drivers that orchestrated events in the implementation journey.

7. Cross-Case Analysis and Discussion

7.1. Introduction

This chapter compares the findings from the two cases examined in the study with the aim of uncovering similarities and differences in the implementation processes of the Brain Food and Be You concepts. The differences are often attributed to the kind of innovation being implemented, a radical one in the case of Brain Food and an incremental one in the case of Stay Real Be You. The cross-case analysis builds on the separate templates that resulted from the within-case analyses. The findings in this study are juxtaposed to discoveries made in past studies in a process of enfolding the literature (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007) in the discussion. For consistency, they are also presented with a focus on the events, entities and mechanisms that exist around the implementation process. The findings reveal that service innovation implementation in hotels is affected by the unique role that interpersonal relationships play in the customer experience. As a result, innovation in other service industries may exhibit different characteristics, that remain to be addressed in future studies. The discussion fulfils the final objective of the study which is to revise the framework in light of the findings, and contribute to the theory and practice of service innovation implementation by proposing the explanatory mechanisms which drive the process. Thus, the outcome of the chapter is a revised conceptual framework that is supported by the conclusions in this study, and one that can be tested in other contexts.

7.2. Events in the Implementation Process

Comparing the events in the cases of this study, six stages are identified as components of the service innovation implementation process: (1) planning, (2) training, (3) secondary adoption and adaptation, (4) launch, (5) review and routinisation, and (6) follow-up. Findings on four of these six phases lend support to previous studies' findings (Scheuing and Johnson, 1989; Alam and Perry, 2002; Shostack, 1984). However, this study has revealed that there are two additional phases in the process, those of planning and follow-up. The additional steps are important for both preparing the group of people involved in the implementation process for the steps that follow, and for ensuring that the innovation remains current and that the organisation is able to achieve long-term benefits from it.

In line with findings from recent studies (Gottfridsson, 2010) findings of this study suggest that the process of implementation is a non-linear and iterative process containing feedback loops and parallel activities. This realisation should not be confused with an outright dismissal of any form of planning, as the feeding-back mechanism can be incorporated into planning activities. The results in both cases reveal that in large organisations the need to have a structured approach to implementation is imperative, and its structure is often dictated by the complexity of the tasks and by the large number of people involved. This finding is in congruence with those of scholars who emphasise the formality of the service innovation process (Oke, 2007; Menor and Roth, 2007), and with the highly formal new product development process (Lightfoot and Gebauer, 2011). Therefore, an ad hoc approach is not considered as effective in achieving the goals of such projects, and a systematic approach is often attributed as an ingredient for effective implementation. Having detailed business plans and timelines helped to reduce uncertainty around the projects in this study and provided a concrete platform for communication with the hotels.

7.2.1. Planning

Evidence from both cases in this study suggest that extensive planning not only takes place at the beginning of implementation, but also throughout the process, as the innovation moves through different channels, from the regional office to the hotels. In the literature, planning is usually placed at the beginning of the idea generation stage of the process, and is associated with strategic plans rather than operational execution (Booz and Hamilton, 1982; Scheuing and Johnson, 1989; Alam and Perry, 2002). Both the radical innovation (Case A) and the incremental innovation (Case B) in the study required careful planning. Plans contained the activities of assembling a project team, outlining the tasks for stakeholders, assessing potential risks, developing training plans, organising the launch, and following up. These activities were accompanied by tight deadlines, and they had been given a budget allocation within the plans.

Interestingly, planning activities for the incremental innovation seemed to be more important than those for the radical one, in contrast to statements in the literature that incremental innovations are smaller endeavours (O'Sullivan and Dooley, 2009). One explanation of this difference may be because Case B required the coordination of more actors in the process, such as the hotel owners, the regional office, the translation company, the hotel managers, champions and the hotel employees, when compared to Case A that needed the regional office, hotel managers, champions, and employees. As a result, according to participants, better planning was one of the key learning points of the projects' implementation. Assigning time for planning was considered important in both cases in the study; however, in practice more time was devoted to planning in Case A, despite the explicit desire for a speedy implementation in order to be first-in-market. Taking time to plan seems to have paid off in Case A, as the implementation had fewer problems associated with insufficient planning than that in Case B. It was also noted by participants that, in Case B, the organisation's philosophy is to take time, but ensure that the process goes smoothly. Many authors consider linearity as one of the main success factors in the development process (Conner and Prahalad, 1996; De Brentani, 1989), Alam and Perry (2002), and have shown in their study that concurrent activities can be used to fast tract the innovation process. However, in contrast, the findings in this study reveal that initial planning is an activity that benefits from a linear approach in relation to the rest of the process, even if the remaining tasks are performed concurrently. In addition, different planning activities are needed, as the innovation is cascaded from the higher organisational levels to the hotels. For example, in Case B, planning initially involved training the European brand training team and translating the training materials for the rollout in the European region, by speaking to hotel owners and encouraging hotel representatives to register for training. Following this training, the trainers had to plan the local implementation in the hotels. In Case A, multiple planning occurrences were also reported; initial planning involved the production of a business plan at the regional office, which detailed the steps to be followed in the process of implementation alongside agreed deadlines. Chefs in the hotels had then to plan their local launches after the central grand launch to customers.

7.2.2. Training

Evidence from the two cases in this study revealed that training was a crucial part in both innovation processes; it was particularly important to the implementation of Be You as it involved a new service culture compared to Case A, where chefs were trained on the principles of Brain Food, but experimentation was extensive in the kitchen outside a formal training setup. In both cases, training included formal and informal events that required a high level of organisation and considerable financial resources, mainly at the hotels' expense. Training was disseminated in a rolling pattern in both cases, whereby a few individuals were trained initially, who subsequently trained others at different organisational levels. For instance, in Case A, the executive chefs from around Norway that were trained at the culinary academy in Oslo, trained their teams on returning to their hotels. In Case B, a longer chain of Train the Trainer sessions and local hotel training events took place; first the Director of Brands and Operations Training was trained in the USA, then he delivered training to the regional office team in Denham, who, together with regional trainers, delivered training workshops to hotel representatives. The representatives then either directly trained employees, or trained the hotel department heads, who had to train employees in their department. Some form of training was received by all hotel employees in both innovations; however, in Case A, training for all served as information sharing, whereas in Case B, training involved the acquisition of new skills by all involved. The findings of this study did not suggest a preference for employees with regards to the timing of training provision, unlike the study by Lin and Rohm (2009) who discovered that close timing between training and launch makes employees happier. An explanation for this may be because the launches in both cases in this study occurred close in time to the training. In line with suggestions by Lin and Rohm (2009), however, it was found that universal training provision for all employees presents challenges for organisations that have to balance units with different performance levels, implying that different training needs exist at the different hotels. This problem was solved by Holiday Inn's approach to include both low and high hotel performers in the pilot of the programme to ensure that all benefited. Finally, the findings of the study support the findings by Edmondson, Bohmer and Pisano (2001), albeit in a technological innovation context, that there is a need to make employees feel safe when sharing experiences, and encourage them to admit errors during the time taken to build the necessary competencies to participate in the innovation.

7.2.3. Secondary Adoption and Adaptation

Both cases in this study revealed that adoption and adaptation decisions were taken during the process of implementation in support of the literature which questions a dichotomous adoption-rejection decision (Postema, Groen and Krabbendam, 2012). The findings of the study provide insights into the way adoption is achieved in practice, thus advancing knowledge in innovation models that, previously, have simply declared that the stage of secondary adoption exists Zaltman, Duncan and Holbek (1973), without much explanation about the ways that this is accomplished. Findings have shown that adoption in Case B was authority-based, compared to being consensus-based in Case A, according to Gallivan (2001) typology of adoption. The People Tools accompanying the implementation of the Be You programme were subject to optional adoption decisions by franchises of the Holiday Inn and Express brands, but were authority-based in managed hotel properties.

Multiple adaptation processes were reported during the implementation processes in both cases. In Case A, adaptation at the regional level meant that a different sponsorship arrangement was made in Norway, compared to the previous deployment in Denmark. Norway decided form a partnership with the supplier and a nutritionist, in contrast to Denmark, which employed a celebrity consultant. This adaptation was supported in order to achieve buy-in and commitment at the hotels. Similarly, Case B's transferring of the programme to different cultures meant that adaptation to training delivery and style was necessary. Adaptation to the delivery of the innovations also meant that implementation of the project itself was not jeopardised; for example, in Case B, training was organised in-situ for hotels with financial constraints in order to minimise travel expenses, thus differing from the initial plan. This finding stands in line with findings by Gustaffson et al. (2003), which demonstrate the increased success probabilities deriving from adaptation processes.

Adaptation with regards to the innovation concept itself relates to two elements: the key messages, or core principles, and the adaptable periphery, i.e. elements that are subject to adaptation (Damschroder et al., 2009). Emphasis on consistency in core principles is emphasised in the brand literature (Lanseng and Olsen, 2012), but not explicitly mentioned in innovation theory. However, both cases in this study placed emphasis on the consistency of core principles across the hotels: at the core of Case A there were six principles for food preparation, and at the core of Case B there were nine behaviours expected in the employee-customer interaction, organised into four clusters. The six Brain Food principles were (1) Primarily fresh, locally-sourced ingredients, (2) Pure ingredients with minimal processing, (3) Predominantly wholegrain products, fruit and vegetables and fish, (4) Less meat and lower fat content, (5) Natural sweeteners and low levels of added sugar, and (6) Always with great taste and multi-sensory delight (Radisson Blu, 2015). For Be You, the four core attributes were (1) Be You, (2) Get Ready, (3) Show You Care, and (4) Take Action. These principles were to be the foci guiding the implementation efforts. Adaptation allowance for the hotels was more pronounced in the radical innovation case compared to the incremental case. However, this difference may be because the adaptable periphery of the radical innovation project was smaller compared to the periphery in the incremental case, or, in other words, the non-adaptable core elements were more precise in the case of Brain Food compared to the Be You innovation. This is due to the nature of the innovations, the first being about a food product, for which calories and fat content, for example, could be specified precisely, whereas the second was related to behaviours, a more abstract entity. The findings in the study provide evidence in support of Rogers (2003) assertion that adaptation processes explain why the same innovation is applied differently according to the specific context. In Case A, chefs exchanged recipes an activity which abided by the Brain Food principles, but each hotel adapted the innovation according to their customer preferences, space limitations of conference facilities and service setup, i.e. buffet versus plated service. In addition, although Brain Food was offered to all meetings' organisers, certain properties still offered the traditional, non-Brain Food provision if their customers requested it, meaning that the overall meeting food provision was adapted to local context. Similarly, in Case B, the hotel's circumstances, which were associated with minimal staff levels in Express hotels for example, required adaptations to be made to the innovation programme. Participants in the Express hotels recognised that the behaviours were more difficult to put in practice compared to the Holiday Inn counterparts. The location of the hotels also dictated the format of the adaptation process based on cultural differences and customers' perceptions of good quality of service, which led to different ways of applying the principles of 'Be You, Get Ready, Show You Care, and Take Action'. For example, Holiday Inn guests in France and the UK had different expectations in terms of service formalities; in general, informal conversations were more acceptable in the UK than in France.

7.2.4. Launch

In both cases in the study, the launch was the link between the concept and its delivery. However, due to the nature of the innovation in Case A, which was addressed to external customers, the launch for Brain Food was a much larger customer-facing event than in Case B. In contrast, in the case of Be You, the launch was an internal affair, and started with the completion of the training at the hotels. The differences in the cases suggest that the formality of the launch depends on the innovation type, rather than being a universal success factor as indicated in the literature. However, in support of previous studies, both organisations benefited from a full-scale, well-coordinated and targeted launch. Promotion to internal customers was also high on leaders' agenda for both innovations, thus supporting findings that the co-creation of value in services, and especially experiential services, means that employee engagement is imperative. The two cases in this research revealed that the launch of the innovation was a significant event that participants eagerly anticipated in both organisations. However, the nature of the innovation affected the way the programmes were launched in the market. In the case of Brain Food, an official customer launch was organised, whereas for Stay Real - Be You, the start of the programme was an internal affair.

In both cases, one of the most important aspects of the launch was its timing; past innovation studies also stress the significance of timing for a launch (Carlborg, Kindström and Kowalkowski, 2014). Speed of entrance to the market was considered essential for different reasons in each case. In the case of Brain Food, the motivation for a speedy launch was to achieve competitive first mover advantage in the meetings' and events' market. In the case of Be You, timing of the launch was related to the desire to keep the implementation of the programme close to the previous implementation of Stay Real, in order to create the feeling of following up on the previous innovation, and in order for the regional office to be able to move on to other projects that were lined up. The findings in the study did not support, however, the claim that incremental innovations benefit more from a speedy launch, compared to radical projects (van der Panne, van der Beers and Kleinknecht, 2003); it seems that effective timing is equally important in managing the project, but the reasons for this may differ. Also, the implementation showed that both cases included well-refined innovation concepts prior to the launch and, contrary to literature suggestions, did not opt for a strategy of 'launching a clumsy solution and learn' (Kimbell, 2014). In the case of Be You, it was reported, however, that, because of the peak and off-peak nature of hotel operations, emphasis should be placed on the time of the year when an innovation should be launched rather than a speedy launch per se, in order for hotels to have the time to manage the process more effectively. This aspect of timing issues is not, however, given much attention in the current innovation literature, and is worth exploring further in a similar context to the hotel business, where demand is highly differentiated from season to season.

7.2.5. Review and Routinisation

A review period has been present in both cases in the study, and served to teach valuable lessons for future projects in both organisations. Assessing performance in both cases occurred through customer and employee feedback, but was not the focus of a feedback mechanism dedicated to the innovation. Both organisations used customer surveys to gather customer reactions, but such surveys related to reactions to the service overall rather than to the specific innovation projects. Not including questions specific to the innovation in the customer survey was understandable in Case B where customers had less direct exposure to the innovation; however, in Case A where customers were able to taste new food, they could be asked directly about their experiences of the new service. Instead, assumptions regarding satisfaction were made in both cases which linked the improved performance in relevant departments to the implementation of the specific innovation projects; the hotels suggested that, given that other factors remained unchanged, differences in performance had to be attributed to the implementation of the new projects. However, the hotels could not be certain that the projects made the difference. Review procedures were not restricted to feedback, but to the monitoring of innovation use in the hotels through tangible means. In Case A, hotel visits were used to make sure that Brain Food was indeed implemented in every property, and, in Case B, consultancy sessions were organised to monitor the progress of the training and the application of behaviours, as well as the use of available People Tools, exemplified in the number of "downloads" from the central database. In summary, both breadth (diffusion) and depth (infusion) of innovation implementation were part of the review process (Choi et al., 2011; Gallivan, 2001). It was also noted by participants that reviewing the concepts should at least always involve anticipating teething problems that are inevitable and that should be corrected by allowing time for the innovation to improve; in other words, judging the innovation outcomes should not be done immediately after launch. The importance of this time allowance is not explicit in previous studies describing the innovation process models.

With regards to routinisation, the cross-case evidence supports claims by researchers, such as Gallivan (2001), that coordination and synchronisation of work groups becomes the focus of attention after the innovation launch. In both cases in this study, it was stressed by participants that implementation benefits could only be achieved with consistent use of the innovation across the hotel estate, and through the cooperation of departments within the hotels. Especially in the case of Be You, where every employee was expected to enact the new service culture, it was important that the customer felt the difference in every service encounter during their stay.

An interesting finding from both cases was the negative connotation perceived of the term 'routinisation' in interviews; many participants, when asked about the innovation being part of the routine were keen to stress that, although the concept became part of their everyday practices, there was still a need to work on the innovation, to revitalise it and keep it fresh. In other words, they perceived being routinised as an indication of the end of the process, when, in reality, a new cycle of development needs to start at the end of the project. This indicates that terminology in innovation models may need to be steered away from routinisation to a more positive term such as embeddedness or standardisation, and not be portrayed as a definite end to implementation.

7.2.6. Follow up

Participants in both cases in this study mentioned that following-up was exceptionally significant for the long-term resilience of the innovation for the hotels. The needs for follow-up are met by a process of continuous improvement, a cycle which is missing from current innovation models that mostly describe the process with a finite beginning and end (Alam and Perry, 2002). Although following-up was most explicit in Case A where a re-launch of Brain Food was organised, the entire Be You project can be perceived as a follow-up to the earlier implementation of the Stay Real project at Holiday Inn.

7.3. Entities in the Implementation Process

A comparison of the entities that influenced events in the cases of this study revealed that nine factors, relating to individuals, the firm, the innovation and the process, influenced implementation in both cases. However, in contrast to previous studies in the field, this study has added detail to the debate about which of the factors were more important in each case; participants' accounts of challenges in implementation concentrated on issues associated with the process of implementation, which implies that process-related factors are most important for implementation overall.

7.3.1. Individual-related Entities

Evidence in both case studies revealed that factors relating to the individuals involved in implementation are exceptionally important in the context of hotels, due to the inseparability of production and consumption. This finding supports claims in the literature that implementation is affected by the inseparability characteristic of services (Storey et al., 2016). It should be noted, however, that, since the cases in this study were not self-services, individual characteristics relate to those of the employees of the organisation delivering the service. In instances of self-services, the attention would be on customers' individual characteristics, as the innovation is delivered by them. So, a differentiation between types of innovated services may produce the different individual characteristics needed, depending on who is the implementer, an element of research missing from the current literature.

In this study, three individual-related factors were found to influence implementation in both cases: empowerment, knowledge and self-efficacy, which were together thought to contribute to the motivation of employees at the local organisational level, a key ingredient of implementation. Knowledge was considered the most important element in both cases. This finding provides strong support to the conclusions from the meta-analysis of success factors by Storey et al. (2016), which differentiated success factors between explicit services, that is those delivered with the aid of technology, and tacit services, delivered by personal interaction. Storey et al.'s (2016) findings reveal that absorptive capacity, the value assigned to knowledge and its use (Levinthal and March, 1993), is the top influencer among 37 factors in the service innovation development of tacit services. Therefore, individual-related factors play an important role in implementation, although they are in certain studies viewed as attributes of teams or organisations instead of individuals.

Empowerment

The empowerment of employees played an important role in both cases in this study according to participants in contrast to findings by Ottenbacher and Harrington (2010), who suggests that incremental service innovations benefit more from empowered individuals; the radical innovation in this study has demonstrated greater emphasis on empowerment. This may be explained by the consensus-based approach adopted in Case A. In addition, contrary to the views of Gustafsson and Johnson (2003), who suggests that employees prefer being in control and being empowered, participants in this study mentioned that such attitudes are culture-specific, and that certain cultures, such as those of Eastern Europe, prefer a more authoritarian management approach, compared to the rest of Europe's employees. This finding indicates that the cultural context also influences implementation and innovations are likely to be implemented differently in different countries.

Empowered individuals made the difference in both cases in the study. In Case A, chefs had the autonomy to present Brain Food the way they saw fit for their organisations. In Case B, the regional trainers, and to a lesser degree the Guest Experience champions, were trusted to design the sessions according to the needs of participants and hotels. In both innovation cases, reward systems were devised in an effort to promote empowerment, a procedure which supports findings that link strategic human resource practices to perceptions of autonomy (Ottenbacher, Gnoth and Jones, 2006). A lack of feeling empowered led to bottlenecks in the process in both cases. In Case A, a few chefs decided to take a back position and follow the lead of others in Brain Food recipe preparation. In Case B, department heads, feeling uncomfortable in training others, or unprepared, were reluctant to demonstrate their own initiative and take control. As a result, where lack of empowerment was reported in the two cases it was seen as an inhibiting factor to commit to the project and fully support the innovation.

Knowledge

Knowledge was found to be the most important individual-related factor that influenced the implementation of innovations in this study. This finding is in line with many studies in the literature (Damschroder et al., 2009; Storey et al., 2016; Lam and Lambermont-Ford, 2008), but, unlike previous research that emphasised knowledge in relation to the idea generation stage of the process, this study conveys its importance to the later stage of implementation. The acquisition and dissemination of knowledge in both cases were achieved through a variety of means, as the literature suggests (Skålén et al., 2015) mainly through formal training, but also through local organisation gatherings, documentation in the form of posters, banners, and manuals, informal conversations, handover and online knowledge depositories. Findings from this study suggest that the nature of the innovation dictates the ways in which knowledge is shared. In Case A, learning-by-doing was the most appropriate tactic, as the project involved the introduction of new food that had to be trialled. In Case B, on the other hand, learning occurred through group-based activities illustrating the behaviours at the core of the Be You service culture. Most participants in this study were able to demonstrate their knowledge on the innovation projects, especially with regards to articulating the reasons for implementing the new concepts. However, the core elements of the innovation, the six principles in Case A, and the nine behaviours in Case B, were not recalled by participants. In other words, people were more confident in describing 'what the innovation is for' than 'what exactly it involves'. In addition, in both cases, not all available knowledge sources were used by the hotels, despite encouragement of their use. In Case A, all chefs did not always use the available recipe manual at their disposal, but, instead, some decided to create their own recipes. In Case B, the People Tools available for recruitment were not always adopted. This finding indicates that knowledge sharing does not automatically imply its acquisition; the reasons behind non-adoption may be more complex than a simple rejection of available knowledge. Karlsson and Skålén (2015) suggests that three types of knowledge of front-line employees constitute the service, and are a particularly important contribution of employees to implementation: *customer* knowledge, concerning the requirements and needs of customers, *product* knowledge, concerning the methods through which organisations can realistically accomplish the innovation, and *practice* knowledge related to the know-how of procedures and routines used in service creation. Evidence in this study supports the value of customer knowledge in implementation that can be imparted to other employees as Melton and Hartline (2013) suggests; such knowledge sharing was powerful during training sessions in Case B, where employees illustrated the expectations of their hotel customers to colleagues, and this knowledge was used in action during implementation. However, participants' narratives could not be used to demonstrate the contribution of employees' product and practice knowledge in implementation. Such contributions remain to be discovered in future studies focusing on implementation.

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy, referring to the belief in one's personal ability to implement service innovation, was found to be associated with the implementation in both cases in the study; however, it was more pronounced in the narratives of participants implementing the radical innovation. This may indicate that self-efficacy is needed more in cases where the departure from the existing norms is greater than when incremental innovations are implemented. However, this will need to be explored in further implementation studies. Findings of this study support claims of previous research that self-efficacy leads to committed innovation use (Damschroder et al., 2009). Participants showed a high degree of confidence in their ability to put the innovations to use. In Case A, employees largely believed that they had the necessary skills and abilities to implement the innovations and were willing to embrace the change. In Case B, it was mentioned that a large part of what was required within the Be You innovation was already in place in the hotels, implying that employees were confident in their capabilities to implement the new project. As a result, the previously applied innovation had nurtured feelings of self-efficacy and assisted the implementation process.

7.3.2. Firm-related Entities

The cross-analysis of findings in the two cases of this study provided evidence that factors relating to the firm affected the implementation of service innovation projects, albeit in a more indirect fashion than the rest of the factors. Three firm-related factors are found to impact on the process in both cases: structure, a positive implementation climate and readiness for change. These entities concern the context in which innovations have been implemented and, as such, are responsible for the activation of the mechanisms that explain the events in the implementation. A positive implementation climate was considered the most important factor in Case A, whereas readiness for change was the driving factor for Case B. This finding is somewhat different to the literature, which did not find a significant link between innovation resources and innovation performance (Storey et al., 2016), but which is in line with studies pointing out the significance of senior management support and reward structure in innovation performance (Storey et al., 2016).

Structure

The structure of the firms implementing innovation projects is expected to affect the process. Structure is related to the complexity of organisations and the degree of centralisation of decision making. The organisational hierarchy of the firms in the study was similar in that they were both arranged with a corporate office, regional teams and local hotel units. In both cases, the regional offices were overseeing the implementation; the Nordics regional team was responsible for implementation in Case A, and the EMEA regional team for that in Case B. However, in Case A, the relationship with the corporate office was much more pronounced in participants' narratives, deriving from the fact that the innovation was invented in the region, rather than in the corporate office, and the fact that the regional and corporate team were based at different locations, Oslo and Brussels respectively. In contrast, in Case B, the regional team did not seem to differentiate from the corporate office, as the innovation was applied worldwide, and the regional team was based at the international corporate office in the UK.

Centralisation of decision making was evident in both cases in this study, but was more apparent in Case B compared to Case A; however, it is important to note that centralisation in this study is used to describe decisions about the ways of implementing the project, rather than on whether to adopt the project in the first place, which was non-negotiable. There is mixed evidence in the literature with regards to the positive or negative effects of centralisation on innovation projects (Damanpour, 1996; Damanpour and Daniel Wischnevsky, 2006); therefore, it is important to understand which decisions are involved in a discussion of the centralisation versus de-centralisation case. Centralising decision making in Case B was done with a pragmatic approach in order to handle the large scale of implementation in the regions of Europe, Middle East and Africa; a decentralised function would not work in practice. On the other hand, Case A was implemented in fewer hotel properties, and, although large events, such as the grand customer launch, were centralised in order to attract media attention and the most important customers, a degree of de-centralisation was allowed in the hotel implementation stage. Despite this pragmatic approach, the implementation of Case A had more elements of bottom-up implementation, when compared to Case B; the leaders mentioned the manifold need for a bottom-up approach to achieve the buying-in that was needed, primarily from the chefs in the hotels. However, there was no indication in this study that Case A experienced more problems than Case B by following a more top-down approach to implementation. There may therefore be a place for both approaches, depending on the innovation context, in line with what contingency theorists such as Burns and Stalker (1961) suggest, that is that there is not one best way to organise innovation projects. Similarly, assertions made by scholars, such as Kimbell (2014), that organisations are moving away from top-down strategies, would need more empirical evidence to be fully supported.

Positive implementation climate

The impact of the climate on the firm where the service innovation was introduced was evident in both cases in the study, but was found to be the most important firm-related factor only in Case A; readiness for change was the most important factor in the Be You project. Having a positive implementation climate refers to the innovation being perceived as rewarded, supported and expected within organisations (Klein and Sorra, 1996). Managing such perceptions was more at the focus of attention of leaders in the implementation of Brain Food compared to the Be You project. Both organisations introduced incentives and rewards associated with implementation as a way of heightening the importance of the innovations; however, the mix of managed and franchised hotel estate in Case B made it more difficult to create such a positive climate throughout the organisation. In Case A, competitions were used to invite chefs to compete in recipe invention, whereas in Case B, the use of Recognise cards issued to employees displaying exceptional performance in Be You behaviours was implemented. However, Recognise cards were only mentioned by regional level managers in Case B, probably because they belonged to the People Tools that the franchised hotel estate did not have to adopt. In both cases, participants agreed that the innovation was supported in the hotels, which contributed to a positive implementation climate. The consultancy sessions in Case B, and the organisation of events and communication channels between chefs in Case A, helped build perceptions of support. Employees were allowed to experiment with the service innovations and encouraged to share experiences with colleagues; these techniques are related to organisational learning, and have been pointed out in the literature as being useful in nurturing a positive implementation climate (Edmondson, Bohmer and Pisano, 2001; McLean, 2005). However, the findings in this study do not point to a definitive list of policies and practices that promote innovation use, thus corroborating Helfrich et al. (2007)'s assertion that such policies are context-specific and different among innovation cases, rather than a best practice approach.

Readiness for change

The extent to which the organisation is ready for the change that the service innovation entails is the most explicitly linked factor to implementation in the literature. Readiness to change is translated to leadership support and resource availability (Choi and Chang, 2009). Evidence from both cases reveals that both organisations were largely ready for change; however, this factor was identified as the most important firm-related factor in Case B, particularly in relation to resource availability that was the greatest implementation challenge for the hotels in this case. In Case A, leadership support was demonstrated through providing feedback on performance and showing belief in the innovation value; however, the chefs responsible for Brain Food were themselves in a leadership role in contrast to Case B where the innovation was materialised at the front-line hotel employee level. It is therefore not surprising that in Case B leadership support was considered more essential compared to Case A. Resource availability is another element that demonstrates readiness for change (Carlborg, Kindström and Kowalkowski, 2014); substantial financial, human capital and time resources were devoted to implementation in both cases. Expenditure for the implementation was shared between the regional teams and the hotels; however, challenges from resource constraints were more pronounced in Case B compared to Case A; for Brain Food the concern was more on the effect on of the actual innovation on costs, whereas for the Be You project cost-related issues surfaced around the process of implementation rather than the concept. Financial issues were the biggest challenge in the process according to participants in Case B both for hotels but also for the regional team that was organising the implementation. Human resources were reported missing in both cases but was mentioned by more participants in Case B; participants mentioned the need for a coordinator in Case A that would be responsible for overviewing the process and multilingual trainers that would be able to deliver training in local languages in Case B. This finding confirms previous studies' findings (Vermeulen and Alexander, 2001) that confirm the value of dedicated job roles to large innovation programmes. However, such recruitment needs proposed by employees were either not mentioned by managers in Case A or not considered realistic by managers in Case B. The hotels in the Be You implementation also mentioned that the role of GEC was assigned to individuals on top of their existing duties but without time allowance for execution of implementation-specific tasks which resulted in an additional burden to their already heavy workload. Interestingly, innovation resources or dedicated human resources are not found to impact on the performance of service innovation according to a recent meta-analysis by Storey et al. (2016). This indicates that the implementation process may be impeded by lack of such resources but the innovation still achieves its goals once implemented.

7.3.3. Innovation-Related Entities

Evidence from the two cases involved in this study suggests that three factors related to the impact of the innovation concept on implementation: the fit of the innovation with the existing service system, with the market and with the values of the organisation. In both cases the fit with the market was considered the most important innovation-related factor in implementation.

<u>Fit with existing service system</u>

In contrast to previous studies suggesting a smoother implementation for incremental innovations that are positioned close to the existing service systems, one that is constituted of processes, skills and knowledge, and physical facilities in organisations (Tax and Stuart, 1997), this study finds that resistance can arise in both radical and incremental cases for different reasons. In Case A, resistance surfaced from Brain Food's differentiation to the previous food provision, indicating the need for new skills and knowledge, whereas in Case B, resistance was related to feelings of sameness and proximity between the Be You and the previously implemented Stay Real project. In other words, one was a case of too much change and the other a case of too little change in the eyes of participants. However, in both cases, the innovations were considered overall to fit with the existing systems in the hotels, in terms of processes and physical facilities; Brain Food was served in place of the different food served in the past, and employees in the Be You had to serve customers in the same way as previously. Changes in the food presentation had to be made in certain hotels in Case A to make the look and feel of the provision attractive to customers; this adjustment was associated with the cost of buying the necessary china for individual portion presentation. In Case B, practices were enhanced in the spirit of the Be You behaviours, and employees produced plans of behaviour change every week.

Fit with market

The fit of the innovation with the customer needs was found to impact on the implementation in both cases in the study; participants recognised the way that the innovation projects were improving customer satisfaction by fulfilling their needs. Particularly in Case A, it was acknowledged that the innovation solved an identified customer problem, that of the low energy and concentration levels that delegates felt after lunch during business meetings. This finding is in line with the meta-analysis findings by Storey et al. (2016) that identified a significant link between market fit, or market responsiveness as the authors call it, and innovation performance. Interestingly however, in Storey et al. (2016) paper, this significance was found to be more pronounced in tacit services compared to explicit services, further strengthening the argument that different factors impact on different types of services.

In addition, in agreement with previous studies, such as those by Victorino et al. (2005), participants in this study reported that different types of customers expressed different degrees of appreciation of the service innovation, although overall both projects were well received by customers. Corroborating Trott (2011) suggestions, assessing the market fit, by monitoring customer reactions and collecting feedback, was found to be crucial in the innovation projects. The perceptions of customers were used to evaluate the innovation and the service overall, and positive feedback convinced employees of the projects' value. In both cases, the customers were both internal and external customers; however, the benefits to internal customers were more apparent in Case B, where one of the main benefits of the innovation implementation was considered to be the value that is given to each individual at the hotel in providing exceptional customer service, regardless of their position in the hotel. Findings in this study indicate that market fit should be discussed, not only in relation to external customers, but also in relation to the employees involved in the implementation process.

With regards to the way the fit with the market is discovered, for example with the use of consumer research or by internal brainstorming (Trott, 2011), this study revealed that both approaches are valid, as long as the proposed new service is shaped to solve an identified customer problem or fulfil an unknown need. Comparing the cases in this study suggests that customers are more likely to contribute with ideas for incremental changes rather than radical innovations. Thus, the Be You project was introduced on the backcloth of an extensive market research survey, whereas with Brain Food, the concept was not based on customer feedback, but on the firm's choice to focus on a problem encountered by conference participants, and supported by the success of the concept in Denmark. It is therefore true that asking customers to articulate what services they want may not always be the best approach in innovation (Gustafsson and Johnson, 2003).

Fit with values

The fit of the innovation with the values of the people implementing it and the values of the firm (Klein and Sorra, 1996) was an influencing factor in both implementations in this study. In Case A, the importance of innovation-values fit is exemplified by the fact that employees reported themselves willing to try the recipes created in their own time, and that they valued the healthy and balanced diet that the project promoted for guests attending meetings and events. In Case B, employees regarded the behaviours endorsed within the project as desirable, and in congruence with their beliefs about high quality customer service with a friendly and personable touch. Employees in this case also appreciated the freedom to be themselves in the service delivery encouraged by the Be You innovation programme. At the organisational level, the implemented innovations were in line with the organisations' values of adopting an ethical responsibility towards customers in Case A, and creating Great Hotels Guests Love in Case B. The findings in this study provide some clarification of the results of previous studies that report difficulties stemming from the diverse set of values among individuals in the organisation (Kabanoff, Waldersee and Cohen, 1995). It is found that employees may hold personal values that affect their view of innovation, but that they also recognise the values of the group and the organisation they work for, which shape their reaction to the innovation project.

7.3.4. Process-related Entities

Factors relating to the process are naturally expected to influence implementation. In fact, the process-related group contains the most factors significantly impacting on innovation performance in tacit services, compared to explicit services (Storey et al., 2016). The process-related factors that impacted on the cases in this study included the appointment of leaders, the organisation of formal activities and the stakeholders' involvement. According to a comprehensive meta-analysis by Storey et al. (2016), launch proficiency, efficiency of the development process, the formal development process, and predevelopment task proficiency are the factors most correlated to innovation performance, with launch proficiency the number one factor for service innovation overall. In this study the process-related factors of the appointment of leaders, organisation of formal activities and stakeholder involvement have been found to influence implementation, with organisation being the most important factor in both cases.

<u>Appointment of leaders</u>

Evidence from the two cases in the study reveals that a number of different types of leaders played a key role in implementation, in line with previous research findings (Damschroder et al., 2009); in Case A, formal implementation leaders, champions, and external agents influenced the process, whereas in case B, the first two types were identified. Champions played the most significant role in implementation, as predicted in the literature (Damschroder et al., 2009), but their influence seemed to be stronger in Case B. Both cases highlighted the fact that champions were usually enthusiastic about the innovation, and worked to convince others of its worth; the few cases where champions did not play the expected advocate role occurred because they had doubts about the project themselves, as in Case A., or they were badly chosen by general managers, as in Case B. This finding indicates that champions need to be selected with care, ideally volunteer for the role, and truly support the innovation project. In contrast to past studies (Helfrich et al., 2007), it was found in this study that champions do not necessarily need to be in a position of authority in order to influence others. For example, one of the most inspirational champions in Case B was a part-time receptionist who acted as a trainer. This person spent much of his own time dealing with the preparation of training in the hotel and was able to motivate his colleagues to apply the Be You principles by providing examples from their everyday work life. Participants felt close to this champion and appraised his training skills. It can therefore be seen how any person can become a champion as long as they have the desired attitude towards the innovation rather than the skills that can be learnt.

Another type of leader in implementation was the external change agent. Although organisations in both cases benefited from external help, with the use of a supplier in Case A and an external translation company in Case B, only for Brain Food the external agent was in a leadership position. In this case, the leader was the fruit and vegetable supplier of the hotels, and an academic nutritionist working for the supplier who enhanced the credibility of the programme in the eyes of participants, and who sponsored the innovation programme.

Organisation of formal activities

Both cases in this study reported a formal implementation process that was key to implementation, according to participants. Formality has been found to be significantly correlated to innovation performance (Storey et al., 2016). However, the degree of formality needed in the implementation process has divided scholars in the past, with a number of studies linking strict formality to successful implementation (Menor and Roth, 2007), while others argue against this conclusion (Martin Jr and Horne, 1993). The findings in this current study suggest a combination of approaches in implementation: a highly formal development and planning process driven by the regional team, followed by a relatively less formal and flexible style at the local organisational level. This finding is in line with Stevens and Dimitriadis (2005), who advocates the viability of both processes, and can explain the ambiguity around formality as reported in previous studies (Martin Jr and Horne, 1993). Findings in this study do not support claims in the literature by Ottenbacher and Harrington (2010) that incremental innovations need a more informal process, compared to radical innovations that benefit from formal processes; in this study, a more structured approach was followed in the case of the incremental innovation rather than the radical. Therefore, this study suggests that the formality decision can be made on a case-by-case basis, where formal processes are followed at specific times during implementation, and less formality is adopted on other occasions. The context and timing constitute strong indicators of the level of formality needed on each occasion. Experiences of participants in the two cases illustrate that an innovation project implemented in hundreds of hotels, as in Case B, is unlikely to do well with an informal process of implementation; therefore, the structured approach that was followed was a pertinent choice in this case. However, for smaller-scale implementation, as in Case A, more flexibility can be allowed in the process, and can contribute to feelings of empowerment in the hotels.

Timing was an integral part of process formality and was mentioned by a large number of participants in both cases, not only in relation to the launch, but also to the entire implementation process. However, the study could not find support for the link between the efficiency of the development process, i.e. lower than expected development time/cost, and innovation performance

(Storey et al., 2016). Finishing earlier than planned did not seem to be a realistic aim in the implementation, where efforts concentrated on minimising delays instead. Such delays that influenced the process were reported in both cases. In Case A, sales managers pointed out the negative effects that late translations of menus from Norwegian to English had on their ability to fulfil their duties and attract customers. In Case B, late registration for training, translation errors, technical issues and busy hotel operations contributed to delays in the process, at both the regional and local hotel level. The findings in this study therefore suggest that issues with timings are to be expected in the implementation of both incremental and radical innovations.

Stakeholder involvement

Involvement of multiple stakeholders, such as hotel owners, managers, translators, trainers and employees in the implementation occurred in both cases in this study, and influenced implementation as expected, according to earlier innovation studies (De Jong and Vermeulen, 2003). However, the timing of involvement varied; in both cases the hotel owners and managers were involved earlier in the process, with employees and front-line staff being involved much later. In Case A, local hotel involvement started earlier than in Case B, where a more staggered approach to implementation was followed. However, findings in this study revealed that studies advocating the involvement of stakeholders need to specify the nature of involvement, for example involvement in training, designing or decision-making, in the service innovation. In this study, all employees were involved in information-sharing sessions in Case A, and in training in Case B, which increased ownership feelings in the hotels. However, involvement in implementation did not necessarily mean involvement in decision- making but involvement due to their function as customer-facing individuals.

In summary, the following table compares the entities reviewed above in the two cases of this study.

Table 7-1 Comparison of Entities in the Two Cases

Entity	Case A	Case B
Empowerment	Consensus-based approach meant that chefs felt autonomous to act Few cases of lack of empowerment where chefs preferred to follow others' lead	More authoritarian view to management but employees still exhibited autonomy to perform tasks Few cases of lack of empowerment with trainers feeling uncomfortable to deliver training
Knowledge	Learning-by-doing on individual basis through experimentation Learning aid in the form of recipe manual not always adopted	Learning in a group through shared training sessions Learning aid in the form of recruitment tools not always adopted due to hotels' proprietary tools
Self-efficacy	Confident employees in putting the innovation to use by believing in own's skills and abilities	Employees confident in their capabilities to implement the innovation as part of it already in place
Structure	Regional team responsible for implementation, clearly differentiating from corporate office and willing to show regional initiative Mostly bottom-up implementation	Regional team responsible for implementation but following directions from the corporate office, higher level of centralisation Mostly top-down implementation
Positive implementation climate	Positive climate built through competitions to create recipes and follow Brain Food principles	Positive climate built through rewards given in employee events, achievement in following the innovation was celebrated together
Readiness for change	Leadership support was strong and provided through feedback on performance directly related to the innovation Concern over innovation impacting negatively on costs that turned out to be unfounded Human resources dedicated to the project could enhance coordination and organisation of activities	Leaders' role very important as employees looked at the leaders as role models Resource constraints were a challenging issue for implementers Human resources needed to support the multi-cultural environment where the innovation was implemented (trainers needed with better language skills)
Fit with existing service system	Resistance due to the different food provision that Brain Food dictated	Resistance related to the timing of the project (too close to previous

Entity	Case A	Case B
	Few customers did not like the new provision	implementation) and the lack of originality in the project
Fit with market	Strong fit with what the customers wanted Brain Food solved the problem of customers feeling tired after lunch partly due to an unhealthy lunch In line with government's push towards healthier living	Strong fit with the customers' need assessed through customer surveys Be You behaviours solved problems of the guests feeling distanced and receiving a formal rather than warm welcome during their hotel visits
Fit with values	Fit of innovation with the values of the employees, who often mentioned that they were personally interested in following a Brain Food type of diet Fit of the innovation with the company values as a responsible business by sourcing local, seasonal food therefore reducing impact to the environment	Great fit of the innovation with the values of the employees who felt that they could provide a better customer service as a result of implementing the Be You behaviours Fit of the innovation with the company values of creating hotels that guests love
Appointment of leaders	Formal implementation leaders, champions and external agents influenced the implementation process External change agent used in the form of an external translation company	Great influence of champions who were enthusiastic about the innovation and inspired their co-workers External change agent used in the form of the fruit and vegetable supplier in a win-win situation whether the supplier provided the expertise and received advertising rights in the brochures about the innovation
Organisation of formal activities	Structured approach to implementation but flexibility allowed at the hotel level Timing issues created friction when menus were not available on time and sales employees had difficulties communicating with customers	More structured process than in Case A deemed necessary due to the large number of hotel implementations Timing issues created delays in the implementation, primality relating to late registration, and translation errors

Entity	Case A	Case B
Stakeholder involvement	Local stakeholder involvement started earlier than in Case B All employees involved in sessions sharing information on Brain Food	Staggered approach to stakeholder involvement All employees involved in training on the innovation

7.4. Mechanisms in the Implementation Process

The comparison of the two cases of service innovation implementation suggests that the four proposed mechanisms of sensemaking, organisational learning, organisational politics, and emotional reactions provide valid explanatory power for events in the process. Although they have been used individually in past studies, albeit not described as mechanisms, this study brings them together to build a comprehensive view of implementation. It should be noted that the mechanisms are presented here in comparison to the literature review that preceded the presentation of the findings in the structure of the thesis. However, in reality the process of research was more iterative with the identification of the mechanisms being a combination of pre-set themes in the literature and deriving from the collected data in this study. This meant that the literature review was revisited after the data collection in order to achieve a complete theoretical background of the identified mechanisms and specify where the contribution to knowledge lies in this study.

7.4.1. Sensemaking

Evidence from both cases in this study supports the view that a variety of sensemaking processes taking place in service innovation implementation guided the actions of participants (Christiansen and Varnes, 2015). Both formal and informal communications were used for sensemaking, but informal communications, such as discussions among employees were reported by more participants in Case B than in Case A. This could be explained by the intangible nature of the innovation being associated with behaviour change. In line with suggestions in the literature, multiple stakeholder interpretations surfaced during sensemaking (Fellows and Liu, 2016), often based on the fact that knowledge was available at the employee level on a need-to-know basis. Differing degrees of knowledge among participants meant that different sensemaking processes were at work. Findings in the study are in congruence with previous research which concluded that sensemaking mechanisms are powerful in linking decision-making made at a higher organisation level to lower level interpretations of individuals, and adoption. In Case A for example, certain hotel chefs trusted their experience of the product more than the managers who suggested its benefits. In Case B, not all hotels interpreted the training as mandatory, as was intended by the regional team. Hotel managers pointed out that email communication on the issue was not clear, resulting in different interpretations of messages by the sender and recipient. The different levels in language skills of the communicator and the recipient may also have played a role in misunderstandings. Findings with regards to sensemaking are in line with studies such as those by Chae and Poole (2005) that indicate the importance of communication in implementations where many stakeholders are involved, in order for shared interpretations to be created by the teams.

7.4.2. Organisational Learning

Evidence from the two cases involved in this study offers strong support to the application of organisational learning as a mechanism in explaining the events in the process. Findings support previous studies' claims that learning is not exclusive to the idea generation stage of innovation projects, but applies to implementation as well (Bondarouk and Sikkel, 2003). Participants' narratives suggest that implementation involves both behaviour and cognition changes (with learning taking place in the mind and sensemaking processes leading to actions), therefore confirming that cognitive learning theory can be applied in innovation implementation (Leroy and Ramanantsoa, 1997). For example, in Case A, chefs learned through becoming familiar with the principles of Brain Food, and then putting them into action by creating the recipes and cooking the food. Learning in Case B took place in training sessions that created images in participants' minds about the way to better serve the customers through the application of Be You behaviours, which they then applied when encountering customers in the hotels, in a process of moving from cognition to action.

The cases revealed that the events in the entire implementation process can be understood as a series of learning steps; this study therefore provides empirical evidence in support of the learning model of implementation proposed by Stevens and Dimitriadis (2004). The steps of dissonance, interpretation, testing, adaptation, adoption and routinisation were observed in the process of adapting the innovation to the local organisational context. Indeed, this procedure exemplifies how implementation seemed to be about dealing with a series of problems that can create cognitive conflict. Such concerns were reported by leaders in both cases. A collection of alternative solutions was also reported, especially in Case A, where previous experience from the Danish implementation was used to justify the different approach to the innovation adopted in Norway. The adopted solutions demonstrated the organisations' absorptive capacity with which they showed their ability to exploit external knowledge from the supplier in Case A, and from the translation company in Case B. The events that followed reflect a refinement of procedures and ideas, with adoption being achieved at the local hotel level. Finally, the behaviours were routinised with the application of Brain Food and Be You in everyday practices. It is therefore shown how the process of implementation was indeed a learning process which was initiated with providing a solution to the issue of adoption. Other micro-processes of learning also took place during the implementation starting with the identification of problems that had to be solved. Not all decisions, however, were permeated by a learning approach, as time limitations and bounded rationality (Simon, 1991) meant that, in certain cases, decisions were made without weighing up all the alternative solutions.

The findings in the study provide an insight into the types of learning that take place during implementation; at later stages of the innovation journey active experimentation, for example trial-and-error learning by doing, was found to be more common in line with Van de Ven (2008) observations, rather than reflective observation, for example, learning-by-discovery learning by thinking (Kolb, 1984). Piloting the projects is one of the learning-by-doing techniques used in both cases to test the innovation prior to the launch. Evidence in this study, however, was not sufficient in providing answers on whether learning was an individual or a collective process, or whether firms exhibited signs of learning myopia, when organisations continue doing what they are good at, and turn capabilities into rigidities (Levinthal and March, 1993). Participants in both studies mentioned that behaviour change originates from the individuals, but that working as a team is required to execute the innovation; however, emphasis is placed on teamwork because it is needed to provide customer service in hotels, rather than because it proves that learning takes place at the team rather than the individual level. Further studies would have to investigate such processes in the context of implementation to clarify the level at which learning occurs.

7.4.3. Organisational Politics

The two cases in this study deliver evidence on the organisational politics mechanism proposed to explain the events that occur in the implementation of the innovation projects. Political activities reported by participants in both cases included efforts by leaders to sell the projects to the rest of the organisational members, to negotiate and influence practices around implementation, to overcome resistance, and to handle power struggles. In line with propositions by Elg and Johansson (1997), evidence in this study showed that, because of the difficulty in evaluating the efficiency of innovation projects objectively, prior to their launch, decision-making around secondary adoption, for example, is subject to power dynamics. Scepticism on the merits of innovation was evident in both cases in this study, and, surprisingly so, was more evident in the case of the incremental innovation compared to the radical one. Conflict did not only occur around adoption decisions however; it was also related to the process of implementation, for example in the areas of the preparation of translations, errors in communication, and lack of information needed to perform the job roles. The comparison of the innovation to existing routines and practices, called normative evaluation by McAdam (2005), created tension in the organisation, especially with regards to the restriction on practices that the new innovation imposed in Case A. As per Gallivan (2001), such subjective norms have a large impact on implementation, with employees affected by the expectations of others, their colleagues, senior managers and customers. Recognising this impact made implementation leaders decide to recruit the help of co-workers, i.e. other chefs in Case A, instead of managers, to act as role models for the adoption of Brain Food.

Evidence was also found in the study about the use of both episodic and systemic power as stated by Lawrence et al. (2005). In the first case, the personal power of managers was manifested in instances such as control of resources and management of expertise. For example, in Case A, it was mentioned that the hotel group would be 'at war' with the supplier should they choose to collaborate with competitor hotels on a concept similar to Brain Food. In Case B, the head of the programme in the region made it clear in the interview that it was her decision not to allocate resources for the recruitment of additional trainers due to budget limitations, despite suggestions to do so from the team. The demonstration of episodic power was made differently in the two cases in the study. Case A participants reported a domination approach to implementation where restrictions of available actions were applied. Hotels had to follow the Brain Food principles in their meeting and event menus. In Case B, a disciplined approach to implementation was followed, in which the organisation steered the costs and benefits associated with the desired action, for example, the adoption of the innovation at the local organisational level. In this case, participants mentioned that there were penalties associated with non-adoption in the form of restricted access to the People Tools, or a negative evaluation of the hotels during their review. Participants also emphasised that the benefits to the hotels were enhanced employee engagement and customer satisfaction scores. Evidence in this study suggests that, in contrast to suggestions in the literature (Cohn and Turyn, 1980), the use of authority and centralisation does not necessarily harm implementation. On the contrary, and in line with Enz (2012), this study suggests that intervention and edict strategies, exemplified by hotel benchmarking and formal review processes respectively, are successful in implementation processes, as shown in Case B. Case A on the other hand followed an implementation by persuasion strategy, where internal public relations efforts, networking, and training were used as the primary means of selling the innovation to employees and convince them of its benefits.

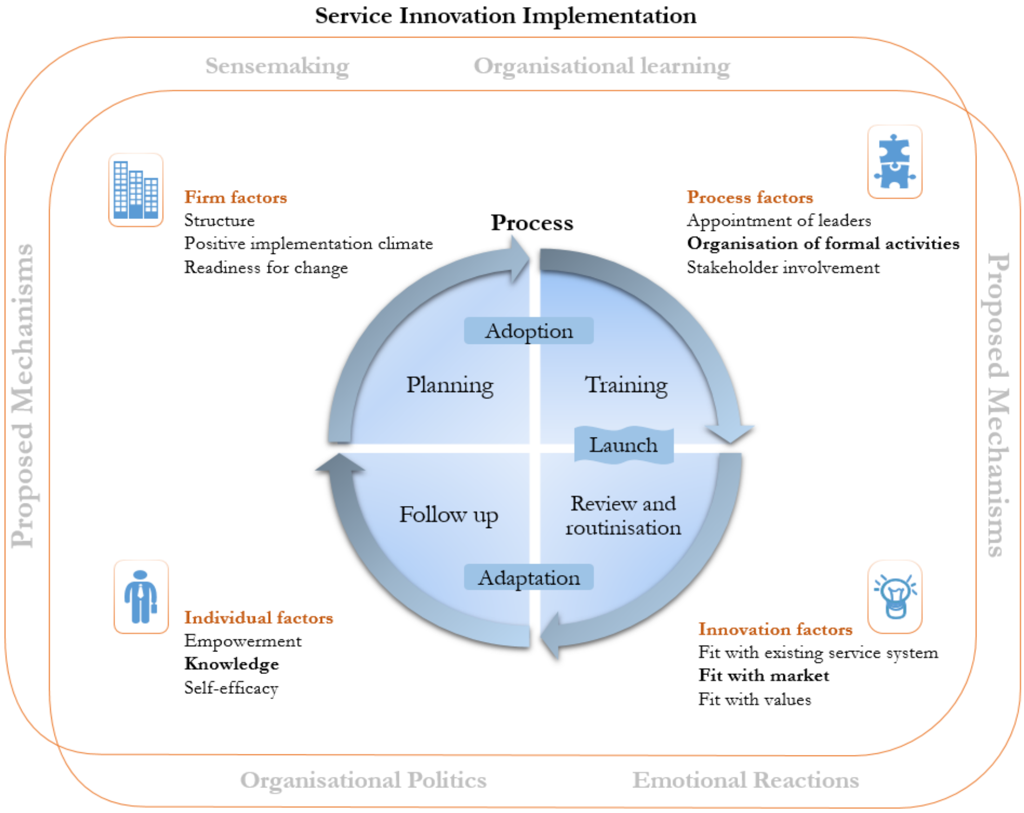
7.4.4. Emotional Reactions

Evidence from both cases in this study suggests that emotional reactions can provide useful explanations for events in the implementation process. Being involved in the implementation process made participants express different kinds of emotions in each case. The majority of participants reported that positive feelings derived from their participation in the training. They valued the opportunity to meet colleagues from different hotel functions who came together during training, and they learned from each other. The implementation of the projects required unprecedented levels of cooperation and togetherness in different teams, from the organisation of training sessions, the training attendance, to the inter-departmental feedback. The opportunity to be unified under a common goal was mentioned by participants as a valuable team-bonding exercise and a positive side-effect of the implementation. Allowing for elasticity and personal expression in recipe creation and project execution was noticed and appreciated by employees in Case A. Being allowed flexibility to add their own touch also increased the perceived ownership of the projects in the hotels, which was found to positively impact on the implementation by creating feelings of pride and a sense of achievement. In Case B, the involvement of employees in training, particularly non-customer contact employees, empowered them and made them feel important with regards to customer service and confident in customer interaction. In line with previous research (Choi et al., 2011), this study found that cognitive evaluation of the usefulness of the innovation impacted on employees' emotions. In Case A, employees in general considered the innovation to be useful to customers and reported positive feelings towards the innovation. Most negative feelings in this case were stated around the process of implementation, such as with delays in the delivery of menus or with a disappointing presentation, as well as restrictions that the innovation posed on previously unrestricted food production. In Case B, employees considered that the innovation was useful as a reminder of the previously implemented programme of Stay Real. Negative feelings were reported with aspects of the process such as the delayed production of training material and the stressful scheduling of training in the hotels.

7.5. Review of the Conceptual Framework

The findings in this study lead to the revision of the conceptual framework of service innovation implementation (Figure 7-1) developed in Chapter 3 based on the review of the literature. The way that data was analysed, using the interview data as the starting point in the analysis, put the fieldwork at the centre of the framework development, thereby avoiding simply corroborating existing literature suggestions. In other words, the researcher remained true to the data and open to new themes rather than being biased towards the pre-existing themes. It can be seen that the process of implementation contains more steps than originally proposed with the addition of planning and follow up periods, and a continuous secondary adoption and adaptation phase. Evidence from this study has also shown that the proposed factors in the conceptual framework, or entities as they are called in a critical realist study, influence implementation although they may have not been explicitly linked to this part of the innovation process before. Finally, this study has demonstrated that the mechanisms of sensemaking, organisational learning, organisational politics and emotional reactions constitute valid explanations of the implementation process, which can also be tested in future studies.

Figure 7-1 Conceptual Framework Informed by Findings



7.6. Summary

This chapter has examined the findings of a comparison of the two cases involved in this study and offered a critical evaluation in relation to the literature on each element of the study. The findings, presented alongside the lines of events, entities and mechanisms in service innovation implementation, revealed an implementation process that is composed of six elements: planning, training, launch, review and routinisation and follow-up, and a parallel adoption and adaptation period. Entities related to four facets of implementation, namely the individuals, the firm, the innovation concept and the process, were found to influence implementation, but, major keys for implementation were found to be the knowledge of individuals, the fit of the innovation with the market, and, most importantly, the organisation of formal activities. The outcome of the chapter is a revised conceptual framework of service innovation implementation that amalgamates the findings in this study, and that can be tested in other contexts.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1. Introduction

This chapter concludes the thesis by outlining the main contributions to knowledge that this research study offers to the field of service innovation. The aims and objectives of the study are reviewed, and the degree to which they are met is explained. Implications for theory and practice in the service innovation domain are discussed, and managerial recommendations are offered to practitioners. Finally, the chapter pinpoints the limitations of the research and highlights fruitful avenues for future research studies in the field.

8.2. Review of Aim and Objectives

This study has achieved its contribution to knowledge guided by the gaps in the service innovation literature and to pursue the aim to explore, critically evaluate and explain the implementation of service innovations in the hotel industry and the factors that influence such implementation.

In order to achieve the stated aim, the objectives of this study were:

1. To review the extant literature on service innovation and new service development in order to identify and evaluate existing models of innovation implementation;
2. To enrich the innovation models by identifying the factors that play a significant role in implementing service innovations, and to propose mechanisms that can explain the implementation process;
3. To offer a conceptual framework which depicts the events occurring during service innovation implementation, the entities influencing the process and the proposed explanatory mechanisms;
4. To apply the conceptual framework in two cases of hotel service innovation by exploring the views of multiple stakeholders;
5. To revise the framework in the light of findings, and thus contribute to the theory and practice of service innovation implementation.

The way that these objectives have been fulfilled in this study is shown in the chapters of the thesis. Firstly, Chapter 1 set the scene of the study, and provided a justification for the overall research aim while Chapter 2 provided clarifications on the definitions and typologies that provided the boundaries of the study. Chapter 3 addressed the first three objectives and ended with a presentation of the conceptual framework of this study. Chapters 5 and 6 addressed the fourth objective, with the application of the framework to the real world in two cases of service innovation implementation respectively. Chapter 7 offered a cross-case analysis and discussion, and concluded with a revised conceptual framework based on the study's findings. The final chapter completes the thesis by summing up the contributions that can be offered to knowledge, implications for theory and practice, the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

The findings in this study suggest that innovation implementation in services can be distinct from the implementation of product innovations, due to the unique characteristics of service provision. Due to the heterogeneity of the service sector, however, service innovation can be as different between different types of services as between services and products (Storey et al., 2016; Kuester et al., 2013). This study, focusing on hotel services, a tacit type of service where experiences are delivered by interpersonal interactions, offers unique insight into a process that has been primarily studied in the context of explicit services, such as the financial sector (Barrett et al., 2015; Randhawa et al., 2015). The inseparability and heterogeneity which characterises tacit services alter implementation by reducing the ability to clearly distinguish the steps in the process and to communicate the benefits to customers. This study found that innovations are not necessarily implemented in response to direct customer demand (Barrett et al., 2015; Damanpour and Gopalakrishman, 2001; Evangelista and Sirilli, 1997). Nevertheless, innovation should be seen from the perspective of the customer rather than the firm, in terms of the value proposition and value creation with customers. Confirming the service systems approach (Spohrer and Maglio, 2008), participants in this study stressed how service innovation fits within a larger customer experience that is shaped by all the individual events and encounters that occur during the hotel stay, and even by events and experiences occurring before the arrival, and after the departure, of customers. The encounters forming the customer experience do so through the creation of value constellations (Normann and Ramirez, 1994), where value is co-created by the customer and the service provider in line with the service-dominant logic (Lusch and Nambisan, 2015).

8.3. Contributions to Knowledge

Three main contributions to knowledge are made through this study by focusing on implementation, the impact of the context in the process, and the mechanisms that can explain the events in the process (Table 8-1).

Table 8-1 Contribution of this Research Study to Knowledge

Contribution	Evidence in the literature	Evidence in this study
Iterative, non-linear nature of the innovation implementation process	Concurrent steps in process in certain occasions (Alam and Perry, 2002)	Process of service innovation implementation: four main periods of planning, training, review and routinisation, and follow up operating in an iterative form Continuous adaptation and adoption
Combination of factors that impact on implementation related to individuals, the firm, the innovation and the process Identification of most important factors (knowledge, innovation fit with market, organisation of formal activities)	Variance studies Mainly managers used in data collection in the past Positivist stance	Evidence of all the factors proposed in the conceptual framework Organisational context effects on implementation
Identification of mechanisms that explain the implementation process	Sensemaking (Fitzgerald et al., 2002) Organisational learning (Stevens, 2002) Organisational politics	Four mechanisms in innovation implementation Sensemaking, Organisational learning,

Contribution	Evidence in the literature	Evidence in this study
Activation of mechanisms contingent on context Critical realist philosophy and implied methods	(Lawrence et al., 2005) Emotional reactions (Edmondson, Bohmer and Pisano, 2001) Critical realist studies in information systems research (Mingers, Mutch and Willcocks, 2013; Wynn and Williams, 2012)	Organisational Politics, Emotional reactions Investigation of service innovation in a tacit service industry: hotels

The first main contribution of this study is on the nature of the implementation process. Contrary to the majority of the literature in service innovation which focuses on stage-gate process models or antecedents of innovation and expected outcomes, such as customer satisfaction, quality, profitability and competitive advantage (Barrett et al., 2015), this study concentrated on service innovation implementation, making it one of the first studies to address the identified research gap (Stewart, 2014). The findings in this study revealed an iterative, non-linear process of implementation that includes the stages of planning, training, launch, review and routinisation, and follow-up, permeated by a continuous process of adaptation and adoption. These findings stand in contrast to the linear process models proposed in the literature, for example by Shostack (1984), Scheuing and Johnson (1989) and Bitran and Pedrosa (1998), that advocate distinct steps in implementation. The process was found to be contextually situated and performative (Barrett et al., 2015), meaning that outcomes were realised through the enactment of the service with customers present. It was also similar in the radical and incremental cases in the study; differences were observed based on the nature of the implemented innovation rather than its degree of newness.

The second key contribution of this study to the service innovation paradigm is on enriching the innovation process model with contextual information, in the form of factors influencing the process. Identifying factors that impact specifically on implementation, as opposed to the idea generation part of the process, has been recognised as being in urgent need of research in the literature (Hsu, Lin and Wang, 2015). Evidence in this study provides support to previous research in the field with the identification of nine factors organised into four categories in relation to individuals, the firm, the innovation and the process. However, this study has uniquely demonstrated through the findings how these factors can influence the process through illustrations in the participants' narratives, instead of a quantitative main-effects study based on correlation. The impact of context differences in the two cases has enriched the explanation by pointing out, for example, differences in implementation between the managed and franchised hotels, or between the regional team and local hotel contexts. This study also indicated that three factors were considered most important to implementation, according to participants: individuals' knowledge, innovation's fit with the market and the organisation of formal activities, which applied in both the radical and incremental innovation cases.

The third contribution of this study lies in the adopted critical realist approach and the results deriving from following this perspective. This contribution is twofold: a methodological input to research practice, with this study being among the first to apply the critical realism philosophy to service innovation implementation (Bygstad, Munkvold and Volkoff, 2016). It was shown that in cases of innovation implementation the researcher needs to expect multiple interpretations of reality especially in large organisations where knowledge is often disseminated on the need to know basis. However, it is useful to strive to understand how things really are for the purposes of carrying some lessons over to future projects and ameliorate the innovation success rate. Secondly, there is a theoretical contribution to innovation theory with the identification of key mechanisms that can explain the process of implementation, not previously attempted in this setting. Four proposed mechanisms have been found useful in explaining the events in the implementation journey in the cases of this study. These mechanisms were sensemaking, organisational learning, organisational politics and emotional reactions. Although they have previously been mentioned in the innovation literature, their function as a mechanism explaining the events was not previously attempted in innovation studies, nor have they ever been used in combination to understand innovation processes, probably due to a bias towards innovation implementation as an unquestionably positive experience that leads to better organisational performance (Mariano and Casey, 2015; Higgins, Mirza and Drozynska, 2013). This study has shown how the mechanisms work best in combination, as separately they are limited in their ability to explain all events in the process. Sensemaking was undertaken throughout the process but cannot alone explain what motivated participants to create new materials, make changes, such as improving the presentation of food items, or acquire new behaviours. These signify a desire for advancing and improving that could be better explained by an organisational learning mechanism. Learning was evidenced in the entire innovation process and was associated with a positive way of moving forward; however, certain decisions were clearly political, and were made in response to resistance and struggle. For example, decisions around the choice of the innovation project, the choice of pilot run locations, and the degree of flexibility in training delivery, illustrate the operation of the organisational political mechanism, which explains actions of influencing, persuasion, domination and discipline. Finally, emotional reactions are a valid mechanism in the explanation of actions driven by positive or negative feelings, rather than by purely rational appraisals of work situations. Feelings impacted on employee motivation, enthusiasm and determination in making the innovation succeed. Through the participants' narratives it was shown that the mechanisms can be activated at different stages in the process, especially as the innovation cascades down through organisational levels. Similarly to the findings of Bygstad, Munkvold and Volkoff (2016), this study showed that the activation of mechanisms depends on the organisational context. Innovation activities, as in any social activity, are open processes that do not occur in a vacuum. By illustrating the role of the context, i.e. the hotel environment and wider brand setting, this study offered significant analytical insight into innovation research. In addition, the study revealed that the unique hotel industry characteristics affected the implementation process. For example, participants explained how the 24-hour hotel operation, the traditional nature of the services and high turnover affected the strategy, planning and execution of innovation. In addition, the type of the hotel contract had an impact on implementation, especially with regards to managed or franchised hotel properties handling the mandate to use the innovation. The power of leaders to impose the adoption of the innovation project or the need to persuade hotel owners of its intended benefits created different dynamics in hotels with different contract types.

8.4. Managerial Recommendations

From a practitioner perspective, a conceptual framework is only valuable when it turns into a guide for practice. This section provides managerial recommendations derived from the findings in this study. Previous research in the area has been criticised for the prescriptive, one-size-fits-all approach to innovation. Although recommendations, such as the inclusion of all stakeholders or provision of communication, appear valid for any change, including an innovation, it is evident from the high failure rate of implementations that either they are not applied correctly (Michaelis, Stegmaier and Sonntag, 2010), or the do not reflect the organisational reality. This study aims to offer the following practical recommendations to practitioners:

1. Service innovation implementation should be seen as a dynamic process rather than a standardised process with a linear set of steps. This means that evaluation points should be placed along the journey of implementation, not only at the end of the process. Adoption and adaptation activities span the entire process, and training can take place both formally before the launch, and informally on-the-job afterwards. Although a plan is a sound starting point in the implementation process, deviations from the plan should be expected and factored in when estimating completion times. Dealing with problems that can occur throughout the process is likely to be a continuous requirement and learning opportunity. Therefore, managers should anticipate such problems and, accordingly, decide on a different course of action based on scenario planning.
2. Together with providing logical justification for the projects, managers need to tap into the emotions and feelings exhibited by participants towards the innovation, as they are shown to impact on employee motivation to implement the projects. Employee motivation to participate in implementation is particularly important in service innovations, as they materialise during employee-customer contact. Managers also need to encourage task authority and be culturally aware;

for example, they should offer flexibility in the application of the innovation if it motivates individuals to embrace it.

3. Innovation projects alongside other changes may occur concurrently in participating units and busy service operations. It is important to recognise how the running of projects simultaneously, and at peak times, affects the employee workload, and also to recognise the signals that may be received on the importance of such projects. Implications for implementation, such as allocation of resources and space and time constraints, should also be thoroughly examined.
4. The organisational context plays an important role in the implementation of innovation by allowing or hampering the activation of underpinning mechanisms. It is for this reason that, when implementing innovation in a large number of units, one should expect the project to be more successful in some hotels than others. Managers should be supported to focus on the specificities of their environment during implementation, in order to allow the innovation to work for their establishments; for example, different sizes of facilities and locations may restrict innovation implementation. Organising a support network with a sister organisation may help with brainstorming suitable solutions to problems.
5. Although formulation of individual skills and competences is required during service innovation implementation, team building should also be part of the process. In service organisations, and particularly in hotels where the guest experience is likely to include encounters with staff from various departments, the work of the team has greater impact on innovation implementation than the work of individual employees. Therefore, managers should create the necessary conditions for employees to interact and exchange viewpoints. For example, they can organise informal events where news on the innovation progress can be shared, or they can repeat training sessions after the initial launch.
6. Finally, the conceptual framework in this study, presented in Figure 7-1, can provide practical cues as to what aspects are important in successful implementation, and can help organisations follow a

balanced and effective service innovation implementation process. The mechanisms can be seen as drivers that can unlock the desired behaviours for implementation and make innovation happen. It is important to bear in mind that given the resources required, undertaking innovation projects has to be justified in terms of value to customers. Implementers should be provided with leadership direction and with rewards linked to performance. Finally, the innovation concept should be continuously reinforced after the initial implementation, in order to maintain the enthusiasm, drive, and determination to make it "stick" and become the norm in the organisation.

8.5. Limitations of the Research study

Having a focus on the hotel sector is a unique feature of this study that delved deep into the implementation of hotel innovation projects like no study has done before. Although the findings of this study provide a useful insight into such implementation in international hotel groups, the conclusions should be interpreted in the light of certain limitations. The research was conducted in only two hotel groups, only one project was studied in each case, and less than 15 hotel properties participated in the study. As a result, the generalisability of the findings across the entire hotel market, or indeed in other service organisations, is limited. However, certain steps have been taken to address the identified case study limitations. The study was designed in an effort to minimise researcher bias, and underwent design tests for construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability (Yin, 2009).

In order to achieve a more comprehensive view of service innovation activities, the mechanisms identified in this study should be tested in future research that could comprise a more extensive sample of individuals, including, for example, owners and customers from different size organisations. In addition, a limited number of hotels from those contacted had voluntarily agreed to participate in the study, and perhaps those that agreed to participate were the most successful properties, or the ones with a deeper interest in the projects discussed. Interviews with employees from other hotels could perhaps lead to a different picture of the implementation of such projects. Secondly, this study is limited by the retrospective stance adopted in the exploration of the innovation projects. The field would benefit from rigorous longitudinal research tracking changes over the course of time. It is therefore recommended that studies in the future adopt a real time approach, where possible, in order to capture the process as it unfolds over time. Thirdly, although the objective was to examine the entire implementation process in this study, the scale of selected projects required a longer time-frame and more plentiful resources than were available for this study. As a result, when the researcher completed the interviews, parts of the process, notably the follow-up elements, were still on-going. Besides, it became apparent that the implementation process did not have a definite deadline, and it was considered work-in-progress for a considerable amount of time after the launch.

8.6. Recommendations for Future Research

Several areas of further research can be proposed in order to advance the field of service innovation. Firstly, further studies could test the conceptual framework developed in this research in other projects, in order to compare and contrast the findings and advance knowledge on the subject. Secondly, since open innovation is seen as an increasingly valuable method of innovation (Chesbrough, 2011), further investigations could shed light on the specificities of implementing innovation in this fashion, which is likely to require greater emphasis on intellectual property rights and the considerate management of contributors. Thirdly, a longitudinal approach based on a variety of data collection methods could address the limitations of this study and track the trajectory of service innovation implementation, particularly of larger projects. Fourthly, studying multiple projects within a limited number of organisations could shed light on what does or does not work, while the context stays relatively constant. It can also reveal how knowledge is transferred from one project to another. Finally, further studies in industrial sectors other than the hotel industry (or a combination of service and manufacturing firms) could assist in identifying more clearly the similarities and differences of service innovation implementation in various contexts. Findings from these studies can collectively contribute to a stronger argument for the existence of a grand unifying innovation theory applied in both services and manufacturing, or of theories specific to such attributes as industry, sector and organisational size.

8.7. Summary

This chapter concluded the thesis by showing that this study has contributed to knowledge in the service innovation implementation field. The research journey covered the objectives in the study, and fulfilled the aim of exploring, critically evaluating, and explaining the implementation of service innovations. The theoretical advances made in this study concern the exploration of the implementation process that was found to contain the key periods of planning, training, launch, review and routinisation, and follow-up, as well as being shaped by various adaptation and adoption actions. It was shown that during the process, a variety of factors relating to the individuals, the organisation, the innovation and the process come into play and affect the outcomes of implementation. Taking into consideration the process and its associated factors, this study proposed four mechanisms that can be used to explain the course of implementation. The findings can form the basis for further studies into new contexts such as smaller organisations, different cultures, and other services besides the hotel industry. The chapter has proposed practical managerial recommendations that can be used in day-to-day management of innovation implementation. These recommendations illuminate issues in need of attention in implementation, and can help to build leaders' confidence in pursuing an innovation strategy and executing a successful implementation process. Finally, the chapter pinpointed the limitations of the research study and highlighted fruitful avenues for future research studies in a field that is only at the beginning of its development.

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Appendices

Appendix 1-1 Inclusion Criteria and Reasoning for Literature Review

Inclusion criteria and reasoning	
Principles	**Explanation for chosen standards**
All industries and sectors	To gain a wide picture of the factors that affect innovation implementation
All countries	For a cross-cultural view on implementation
Obstacles to innovation implementation in organisation	For identification of what inhibits innovation in organisations
Drivers/Antecedents/Determinants/Success-Failure factors in innovation implementation	For identification of what encourages innovation implementation in organisations
Obstacles and drivers to NSD process with distinction of implementation-related factors	For identification of the factors influencing the implementation part of the NSD process
Obstacles and drivers to NSD process in the hotel industry	Hotel industry focus

Exclusion criteria and reasoning	
Criteria	**Explanation for rejected studies**
National systems of innovation	Not in the organisational context
Implementation of innovation as a programme	Not specific to an innovation project but innovation strategy

Appendix 4-1 Participant Information Sheet

The service innovation implementation process and its influencing factors: employee perspectives in hotel chains

I would like to invite you to take part in my research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

Purpose of the study

The aim of this study is to explore the perceptions of employees of the implementation of new hotel services, and make recommendations to hotel chains regarding the management of people during the innovation implementation process. New services constitute a valuable avenue through which hotel companies gain competitive advantage in the global marketplace and produce superior service quality. Despite priority given to research in services by the European Union and the academic community, there is a scarcity of research in this area. As a result, the current study will contribute to knowledge by gaining insight into the personal experience of employees when new services are introduced in their organisation. Employees at different organisational levels take part in the implementation process and are included in this study for their unique perspective of the process. The hospitality industry constitutes an ideal context for such exploration since the contact with customers is intense and the industry is labour-intensive. Implications from this study will contribute to both theory and practice.

Reason for your selection

You are invited to participate in this study as an employee directly involved with implementing a new or altered customer service. Approximately thirty persons from your organisation will be asked to participate. It is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. **Please do not feel obliged to take part because your organisation has granted access for this study, or because your colleagues decide to take part.** If you decide to take part you will be given an information sheet to keep, and be asked to sign a consent form. You will also be free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

Data collection process

A face-to-face interview with the researcher lasting approximately one hour will take place in the premises of the hotel property, head office or other place of your convenience. The interview will be audio recorded, unless you wish otherwise. In order to participate, you are only asked to give up your time for this interview. You will have the option to review the interview summary and retract any comments that, on reflection, you might wish to withdraw. In case the interview takes place during the early stages of implementation, you may be asked whether you would like to participate in a follow-up interview that will take place within two months of the initial interview. The purpose of the follow-up interview would be to collect your views after the launch of the service to customers. If you agree on a follow-up interview, your contact details will be kept in file and you will be contacted at a later stage to arrange the second interview. At this time, you will again have the options to take part or not. The follow-up interview may be arranged on the phone or face-to-face at the researcher's expense. The research programme commenced in September 2008 and will run for approximately four years. Interviews will take place in 2011 and 2012.

If you would like to take part or have any queries, please contact the researcher Akrivi Papadaki by phone on +44 (0) 77 3253 8037 or by email on apapadaki@brookes.ac.uk

Benefits for taking part

Participation in this study will help your department gain a better understanding of your perceptions regarding the implementation of new services and your role in the process. It will be a way of communicating your ideas on the improvement of the process in a confidential and anonymous manner. In a broader sense, better understanding the views of employees will enhance theory and practice of service innovation.

Confidentiality

All information collected about you will be kept strictly confidential (subject to legal limitations) and confidentiality, privacy and anonymity will be ensured in the collection, storage and publication of research material. The data generated in the course of the research will be kept securely in paper or electronic form for a period of five years after the completion of a research project according to Oxford Brookes' policy of academic integrity. The data collected will be immediately de-identified and real participant names (and hotel locations as necessary) will be replaced by codes to ensure anonymity.

This project will be focusing on the implementation process rather than details about the service or product. The researcher will not make public any proprietary confidential product or service information.

Results of the study

The results of the research will be used in the researcher's thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy and may form the basis for published papers in academic journals and conference presentations. Pseudonyms will be used on all occasions to safeguard anonymity of participants. A copy of the thesis will be held with Oxford Brookes University library after the completion of the study. A more concise report of the findings will be available for participants should they wish to receive it by contacting the researcher by phone on +44 (0)77 3253 8037 or by email on apapadaki@brookes.ac.uk.

Funding and review of the study

Akrivi Papadaki is conducting the research as a student at Oxford Brookes University, Department of Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism Management, Business School. The research is funded by a scholarship provided by Oxford Brookes University and is approved by the Research Degrees Committee and by the Research Ethics Committee of the university.

Contact for further Information

Should you require further information please contact the researcher Akrivi Papadaki by phone on +44 (0) 77 3253 8037 or by email on apapadaki@brokes.ac.uk, or the Director of Studies Professor Levent Altinay on laltinay@brookes.ac.uk. If you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted, you can contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee on ethics@brookes.ac.uk.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet.

Date: 11 June 2010

Appendix 4-2 Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

Full title of Project: The service innovation implementation process and its influencing factors: personnel perspectives in international hotel chains

Name, position and contact address of Researcher:
Akrivi-Angeliki Papadaki
PhD Research Student
Headington Campus, Gispy Lane, Oxford, OX3 0BP, UK

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. ☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason. ☐

3. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

Please tick box

4. I agree to the interview being audio recorded. ☐ ☐

5. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications. ☐ ☐

6. I agree that my data gathered in this study may be stored (after it has been anonymised) in a locked cabinet at Oxford Brookes University accessed only by the researcher and may be used for future research. ☐ ☐

____________________ ____________ ____________________

Name of Participant Date
Signature

Akrivi-Angeliki Papadaki
____________________ ____________ ____________________

Name of Researcher Date
Signature

Appendix 4-3 Interview Guide & Data Requirements Table		
INVESTIGATIVE QUESTIONS	**VARIABLES REQUIRED**	**DETAIL IN WHICH DATA IS MEASURED**
ICEBREAKER		
Age, gender? ☐ 16-25 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 56-65 ☐ Male ☐ 26-35 ☐ 46-55 ☐ >65 ☐ Female	Age and gender of employee.	To nearest 5-year band (youngest 16, oldest 65+).
Role in the organisation?	Employee title and department.	Employee, manager, senior manager, head office employee.
Time in the company?	Months/Years.	To nearest 2-year band (minimum 0-2 years, maximum: 10+ years).
Time in the current role? (attribute)	Months/Years.	To nearest 2-year band (minimum 0-2 years, maximum: 10+ years).
Could you tell me about how it is to work for this hotel (company) and what is the climate for introducing new services? Probe: culture, politics, communication, structure, autonomy?	Description of the organisational climate.	Qualitative description of the culture, politics, communication style, flat/tall structure, autonomy/direction.
Could you tell me a little bit about Alpha[2]? Probe: What is it? How is it used? For how long is it used? Specialists involved?	Description of the new service/Fit within existing service.	Descriptive features of the new service; e.g. in relation to interaction with the guests, atmosphere, products, etc.
In your opinion, what is the rationale behind introducing new services and why was this particular service selected for implementation?	Reasons for implementing Alpha.	Nominal; e.g. strategic, economical, quality reasons, cost, utility, acceptability, fit with organisation.
PROCESS AND INFLUENCING FACTORS		
Could you tell me about the implementation process of this project; what	Steps in the implementation	Steps or activities such as: training, adaptation,

[2] Alpha stands for the new service (to be replaced in the conversation by the name of the service innovation in each case)

happened from the beginning up to now? *Probe*: communication, training, evaluation, timings, distinction of phases	process.	communication, testing, launch, institutionalisation, routinisation.
How would you characterise the process of implementation? Probe: informal, sequential, formal, random, trail-and-error, experimental, managed, straightforward.	Degree of formalisation of the process.	Degree of sequential or iterative activity.
To what extent were you involved in the Alpha project? Probe: what was the nature of your involvement?	Opinion of managers on their role in the Alpha project.	Ways of participation in the project (advisor, contributor of ideas, co-ordinator, champion, driver of the project etc.) Manifestations of employee involvement: participation in decision-making, responsibility to solve problems, sharing of information on strategic direction, rewards associated with participation.
Who (else) was involved in the implementation of the project? Probe: what was their role?	Names/roles of individuals in the project.	Names if mentioned will be disguised. Role division as above. Depending on respondents' knowledge, this may be contextualised to hotel, cluster, and regional levels.
Could you tell me about the collaboration with others in the project?	Exploration of the multifunctional team put together to develop Alpha.	Qualitative descriptions of the collaboration e.g. open, easy, with equal input, with obstacles, difficult.
Could you tell me about the communication process around the project? Probe: between the corporate office and the hotel and within the hotel, expectations of the innovation shared	Exploration of communication processes.	Qualitative description of communication e.g. open, flowing, limited
Could you describe any training activities around the new service and their purpose? Probe: who was responsible for training, who attended, what type of training, purpose of training	Exploration of the competency fit.	Degree of close fit between the organisation's skills at the time and skills required for the project

Could you tell me about any pilot run of Alpha before the launch? Probe: purpose of the pilot? Evaluation of results?	Distribution of Alpha to the hotel units.	Specific to the step of distribution/adaptation above. Reasons for participating in pilot (e.g. hotel size, location, market segment mix, franchises, etc.)
Could you tell me about the organisation around the full roll-out of Alpha? Probe: official launch day? Preparation?	Preparation for launch.	Activities around the launch of the new service, organisation in launch day.
Can you tell me about any changes to your role resulting from the implementation of Alpha? Probe: How did you feel about these changes?	Role clarity and impact on current role.	Strong feelings of change, weak feelings of change. Type of change (relationship with guests, colleagues, managers; administrative changes) Knowledge of what is expected of the employees. Clear explanations of what has to be done. Clear, planned goals and objectives exist. Belief in own abilities. Supportive environment.
To what extent do you believe that it was possible to modify the innovation to local circumstances?	Perceptions on the mandated used of the innovation; possibility to change and adapt to hotels' needs.	Degree of flexibility in adoption: optional versus compulsory.
Were there any challenges in the implementation process of Alpha overall? Probe: how did you receive the change? Have feelings changed over time? Did the implementation cause disruption in the hotel?	Opinion on challenges.	Nominal (e.g. resistance to change, time constraints, scarce resources etc.).
Can you tell me about any positive aspects of the implementation process?	Opinion on positive aspects	Nominal (e.g. speedy process).
Can you tell me about any feedback that you shared about the effectiveness of the implementation process?	Evaluation of the pilot (if applicable) and the roll-out.	Activities following the pilot (e.g. revision of technological aspects, local requirements, learning) and full roll-out (e.g. feedback on the project administration).
Follow up if not covered above: To what extent do you believe that necessary resources were available for this project?	Opinion on availability of resources.	Degree of availability of resources.

To what extent do you believe that the implementation of Alpha is a team or individual effort? Probe: what was the role of the team? Which teams are involved?	Perceptions on team role/team power structure that influence the implementation.	Degree of team influence on implementation.
Do you believe that any particular individuals were instrumental in the implementation of Alpha? Probe: team members, managers, champion	Opinions on leaders' and champions' roles for training, support, encouragement.	Degree of assistance from other individuals.
To what extent is Alpha now considered as something new?	Time of use of the new service Perception of routinisation of the innovation.	Introduced more than 1 year ago, 6-12 months ago, 1-5 months ago, less than one month ago. Degree of which innovation is embedded in operating procedures.
How similar or different was the implementation process of Alpha compared to that of previous projects?	Opinion on similarities/differences and possible reasons Implementation.	Nominal (similarities/differences: e.g. training method used, roll-out decisions, strategic intent). Possible reasons for similarities/differences.
GENERAL QUESTIONS		
To what extent do you consider Alpha to be successful? Do you think that the original objectives were met? Probe: for guests, employees.	Opinion on the impact of the innovation and measures of success.	Nominal (customer satisfaction, market share growth, loyalty, sales objectives, percentage of profits, operational efficiency etc.).
How was this feedback shared in the hotel(s)? Probe: Results evaluated? Any problems rectified? Support?	Evaluation of the new service.	Activities to share results about the new service.
Do you consider your organisation to be innovative and what do you consider innovation to be?	Perception on organisation's innovative strategy and organisational climate.	Degree of organisational innovativeness. Type of organisational climate.
Anything else you would like to add to our discussion? Any relevant document I should see?	Opportunity for participants to comment on something not covered in previous questions.	
A summary of our conversation could be produced for you. Would you like to		

receive such a copy for your reference and where should I send it? ☐ Yes ☐ No Contact details: ☐ No		
Thank you for your time. All the information provided in this conversation will be kept confidential and will be used in order to draw conclusions for this study. If need be, would you be happy to be contacted again for any clarification, or a follow up interview at a later stage in implementation? What would be the best way to contact you? ☐ Yes ☐ No Contact details:		

Appendix 4-4 Interview Guide in French

Âge, sexe?

o 16-25	36-45	56-65	o Homme
o 26-35	46-55	> 65	o Femme

Fonction dans l'organisation? Ancienneté dans l'entreprise? Combien de temps vous travaillez dans cette place?

Pourriez-vous décrire si vous êtes satisfait de travailler pour cet hôtel (la société)?

Quel est le climat pour l'introduction de nouveaux services?
[Partie de la stratégie de l'innovation?]
Sonde: la culture, la politique, la communication, la structure?

Pourriez-vous m'en dire un peu plus sur Alpha?
Sonde: Qu'est-ce que c'est? Comment est-il utilisé? Pour combien de temps est-il utilisé? Spécialistes en cause? Spécialités impliquées ?

À votre avis, quel raisonnement préside à l'introduction de nouveaux services et pourquoi a-t-on choisi ce projet-là?

LE PROCEDURE ET LES FACTEURS

Pourriez-vous m'expliquer la méthode de mise en œuvre de ce projet; ce qui s'est passé depuis le début jusqu'au présent?
Sonde: communication, formation, évaluation, espacement du temps, journal, séparation en phase

Comment s'est faite la mise en œuvre?
Sonde: informelle, séquentielle, formelle, aléatoire, essai-erreur, expérimentale, gérée, simple, compliquée

Comment avez-vous participé au projet Alpha?
Sonde: Quelle était la nature de votre participation?

Qui (d'autre) a été impliqué dans la mise en œuvre du projet? Quel étaient leur rôles ?
Sonde: Quel était leur rôle?

Pourriez-vous me parler de la collaboration avec d'autres personnes dans le projet?

Pourriez-vous décrire comment s'est faite la communication pour ce projet?
Sonde: entre l'entreprise mère et l'hôtel et à l'intérieur de l'hôtel, les objectifs attendus ?

Pourriez-vous décrire toutes les activités de formation autour de ce nouveau service et que leur but?
Sonde: qui était responsable de la formation, qui a assisté, le type de formation, le but de la formation

[Les employés ont-ils été encouragés à participer au projet?]

[Est-ce que la structure d'entreprise a aidé ou pas dans la mise en œuvre?]

[Les clients ont-été impliqués? Est-ce qu'ils ont proposé des idées? Qu'est-ce qu'ils ont pensé de ce projet?]

Pourriez-vous me parler de testes pilotes d'Alpha avant le lancement?
Sonde: Raisonnement pour la sélection hôtel? But du projet pilote? Évaluation des résultats?

Pourriez-vous parler de l'organisation du ploiement définitif d'Alpha, de son déroulement ?
Sonde: le jour du lancement officiel? Préparation?

Pouvez-vous me parler des changements apportés à l'organisation du travail, aux fonctions, aux emplois suite à la mise en œuvre d'Alpha? Sonde: Comment avez-vous vécu ces changements?

Dans quelle mesure croyez-vous qu'il était possible d'adopter l'innovation selon vos propres conditions ?

Y a-t-il des défis dans la procédure de mise en œuvre d'Alpha dans son ensemble?
Sonde: Comment les employés et les gestionnaires des unités ont reçu le changement? Est-ce que les perceptions ont changé au fil du temps?

Pouvez-vous me parler des aspects positifs de l'organisation de ce projet?

Pouvez-vous me parler des réactions exprimées quand l'efficacité de la procédure de mise en œuvre?

Suivi s'ils ne sont pas couverts ci-dessus:
Dans quelle mesure croyez-vous que les moyens nécessaires étaient mis à disposition pour ce projet?

Dans quelle mesure croyez-vous que la mise en œuvre d'Alpha est plutôt un effort collectif ou plutôt un effort individuel?
Sonde: Quel était le rôle de l'équipe? Quelles équipes étaient impliquées?

Croyez-vous qu'il y a des individus qui ont joué un rôle prépondérant dans la mise en œuvre d'Alpha?

Dans quelle mesure Alpha est-il désormais considérée comme quelque chose de neuf?

En quoi la mise en œuvre d'Alpha était-elle similaire ou différente de celle des projets précédents ?

QUESTIONS GÉNÉRALES

Pensez-vous que l'alpha est une réussite? Les objectifs initiaux ont-ils été atteints ?

Sonde: pour la clientèle, les employés.

Quel a été le retour d'expérience en inter dans l'hôtel ?

Probe: Résultats évalués? Tous les problèmes corrigés? Adhésion ? Quel critique en avez-vous fait ?

Pensez-vous que votre organisation est innovante? Qu'est-ce que l'innovation pour vous?

[Comment est-ce qu'on peut trouver des idées novatrices ? Comment naissent les idées novatrices ?]

L'innovation des services: vraiment radicale? Quelque chose de vraiment nouveau? Ou juste de petits changements? Quel est son potentiel ?]

Souhaitez-vous ajouter quelque chose à notre discussion?

Pensez-vous à un document que serait utile pour moi?

Pensez-vous à quelqu'un en particulier à QUI je devrais parler?

Un résumé de notre conversation pourrait être produit pour vous. Aimeriez-vous recevoir une telle copie pour votre référence et où devrait-il être envoyé?

o Oui

Coordonnées:

o Non

Je vous remercie pour le temps que vous m'avez accordé. Toutes les informations fournies dans cette conversation ont confidentielles et seront utilisées dans le but de tirer des conclusions de cette étude et pourront être utilisé dans des publications académiques appropriées. Si besoin est, accepteriez d'être contacté à nouveau pour tout éclaircissement ou une entrevue de suivi à un stade ultérieur de la mise en œuvre? Quel serait le meilleur moyen de vous contacter?

o Oui

Coordonnées:

o Non

Appendix 4-5 Interview Guide in Greek

Ηλικία, φύλο?

o 16-25	36-45	56-65	o Ανδρας
o 26-35	46-55	> 65	o Γυναίκα

Μπορείτε να μου πείτε πώς είναι να εργαζεστε για αυτό το ξενοδοχείο (εταιρεία);

Ποιο είναι το κλίμα για την εισαγωγή νέων υπηρεσιών; [Αποτελεί η καινοτομία μέρος της στρατηγικής;]
[Βοήθητικές ερωτήσεις: Μπορείετε να μου πείτε για την κουλτούρα, την πολιτική, την επικοινωνία, τη δομή;]

Μπορείτε να μου περιγράψετε την καινοτομία?
[Βοήθητικές ερωτήσεις: Τι είναι αυτό; Πώς χρησιμοποιείται; Για πόσο καιρό χρησιμοποιείται; Συμμετέχουν ειδικοί;]

Κατά τη γνώμη σας, ποια είναι η λογική πίσω από την εισαγωγή νέων υπηρεσιών και για ποιο λόγο επιλέκτηκε αυτή η συγκεκριμένη υπηρεσία;

ΔΙΑΔΙΚΑΣΙΑ ΚΑΙ ΠΑΡΑΓΟΝΤΕΣ ΕΠΙΡΡΟΗΣ
Μπορείτε να μου πείτε σχετικά με τη διαδικασία εφαρμογής του εν λόγω έργου? Τι συνέβη από την αρχή μέχρι τώρα;
[Βοήθητικές λέξεις: επικοινωνία, εκπαίδευση, αξιολόγηση, ωράρια]

Πώς θα χαρακτηρίζατε τη διαδικασία εφαρμογής; [Πόσο επίσημη ήταν αυτή;]
[Βοήθητικές λέξεις: Άτυπη, επίσημη, τυχαία, διαδρομή δοκιμής-και-λάθους, πειραματική, απλή]

Σε ποιο βαθμό έχετε εμπλακεί στο έργο της Alpha;
[Βοηθητική ερώτηση: Ποια ήταν η φύση της συμμετοχής σας;]

Ποιος (άλλος) ενεπλάκη στην υλοποίηση του έργου;
[Βοηθητική ερώτηση: Ποιος ήταν ο ρόλος τους;]

Μπορείτε να μου πείτε σχετικά με τη συνεργασία με άλλους στο έργο;

Μπορείτε να μου πείτε σχετικά με τη διαδικασία της επικοινωνίας γύρω από το πρόγραμμα;
[Βοηθητική παρατήρηση: Ανάμεσα στα κεντρικά της εταιρίας και το ξενοδοχείο, εσωτερικά μέσα στο ξενοδοχείο]

Θα μπορούσατε να περιγράψετε οποιεσδήποτε δραστηριότητες κατάρτισης γύρω από την νέα υπηρεσία και ο σκοπός τους;
[Βοηθητικές ερωτήσεις: ποιος ήταν υπεύθυνος για την εκπαίδευση, ποιοι την παρακολούθησαν, ποιο ήταν το είδος της εκπαίδευσης;]

[Οι εργαζόμενοι ενθαρρύνονται να συμμετέχουν στο πρόγραμμα;]

[Η εταιρική δομή βοηθά ή όχι στην εφαρμογή;]

[Συμμετείχαν οι πελάτες; Πώς προσφεραν ιδέες; Πώς ξέρεις ότι θα δούμε το έργο;]

Μπορείτε να μου πείτε για κάθε πιλοτική εφαρμογή του προγράμματος πριν την εφαρμογή;
[Βοήθητικές ερωτήσεις: ποιό ήταν το σκεπτικό πίσω από την επιλογή του ξενοδοχείου για την πιλοτική εφαρμογή; Σκοπός της εφαρμογής αυτής; Αξιολόγηση των αποτελεσμάτων;]

Μπορείτε να μου πείτε για την οργάνωση γύρω από την πλήρη εφαρμογή του προγράμματος;
[Βοήθητικές ερωτήσεις: Υπήρχε μια επίσημη ημέρα έναρξης του προγράμματος; Ποιά ήταν η προετοιμασία;]

Μπορείτε να μου πείτε για τυχόν αλλαγές στο αντικείμενο της εργασίας που προκύπτουν από την εφαρμογή του προγράμματος;

[Βοηθητική ερώτηση: Πώς βρίσκετε αυτές τις αλλαγές;]

Σε ποιο βαθμό πιστεύετε ότι ήταν δυνατόν να τροποποιήσουν τα ξενοδοχεία την καινοτομία σύμφωνα με τα δικά τους δεδομένα;

Υπήρξαν τυχόν προβλήματα στη διαδικασία εφαρμογής του προγράμματος;
[Βοηθητικές ερωτήσεις: Πώς εξέλαβαν οι εργαζόμενοι/managers του ξενοδοχείου την αλλαγή; Έχει κάτι αλλάξει με την πάροδο του χρόνου;]

Μπορείτε να μου πείτε σχετικά με τις θετικές πτυχές της διαδικασίας εφαρμογής;

Μπορείτε να μου πείτε αν ανταλλάσετε πληροφορίες σχετικά με την αποτελεσματικότητα της διαδικασίας εφαρμογής;

Περαιτέρω ερωτήσεις αν δεν εχουν καλυφτεί προηγουμένως:
Σε ποιο βαθμό πιστεύετε ότι οι απαιτούμενοι πόροι ήταν διαθέσιμοι γι αυτό το έργο;

Σε ποιο βαθμό πιστεύετε ότι η εφαρμογή του προγράμμτος είναι ομαδική ή άτομική προσπάθεια;
[Βοηθητικές ερωτήσεις : Ποιος ήταν ο ρόλος της ομάδας; Ποιες ομάδες εμπλέκονται;]

Πιστεύετε ότι υπήρξαν κάποια άτομα που έπαιξαν ιδιαίτερο ρόλο στην υλοποίηση του προγράμματος;

Σε ποιο βαθμό είναι το πρόγραμμα θεωρείται πλέον ως κάτι νέο;

Πόσο διέφερε η διαδικασία υλοποίησης του προγράμματος σε σύγκριση με άλλα προγράμματα;

ΓΕΝΙΚΑ ΘΕΜΑΤΑ
Σε ποιο βαθμό θεωρείτε ότι το πρόγραμμα ειναι επιτυχές; Εκπληρώθηκαν οι αρχικοί στόχοι; Για τους πελάτες, τους εργαζόμενους;

Πώς έγινε η αξιολόγηση του προγράμματος στο ξενοδοχείο;
[Βοηθητικές ερωτήσεις: Αξιολογήθηκε το αποτέλεσμα; Διορθώθηκαν τυχόν προβλήματα; Υπήρξε στήριξη από τα κεντρικά;]

Πιστεύετε ότι η εταιρία είναι καινοτόμα και τι θα χαρακτηρίζατε ως καινοτομία;

[Πώς υλοποιούνται οι καινοτόμες ιδέες; Ενθαρρύνει η ηγεσία τις ιδέες των εργαζομένων;]

[Υπάρχει η δυνατότητα για ριζική καινοτομία στο χώρο των ξενοδοχείων; Κάτι πραγματικά νέο; Ή μιλάμε για μικρές αλλαγές στις υπηρεσίες;]

Υπάρχει κάτι άλλο που θα θέλατε να προσθέσετε στη συζήτησή μας;
Κάποιο σχετικό έγγραφο που θα ήταν ιδιαίτερα ενδιαφέρον να δώ;
Κάποιος πληροφοριοδότης που θα προτίνατε;

Θα επιθυμούσατε αντίγραφο της συζήτησης μας; Πού θα πρέπει να γίνεται η αποστολή;

o Ναι   Στοιχεία επικοινωνίας:
o Όχι

Σας ευχαριστώ για το χρόνο σας. Όλες οι πληροφορίες αυτής της συζήτησης είναι εμπιστευτικές και θα χρησιμοποιηθούν προκειμένου να εξαχθούν συμπεράσματα για την παρούσα μελέτη. Υπάρχει το ενδεχόμενο να χρησιμοποιηθούν σε ακαδημαϊκές δημοσιεύσεις. Αν χρειαστεί παρακαλώ επικοινωνείστε μαζί μου για οποιαδήποτε διευκρίνιση.

Appendix 4-6 Changes in the Interview Guide after Testing

-Age, gender?

☐ 16-25	☐ 36-45	☐ 56-65	☐ Male
☐ 26-35	☐ 46-55	☐ >65	☐ Female

-Role in the organisation? Time in the company? Time in the current role?

-Could you tell me about how it is to work for this hotel (company)?

-What is the climate for introducing new services? [innovation part of strategy?]
Probe: culture, politics, communication, structure?

-**Before**: How long ago was Alpha introduced?

After: Could you tell me a little bit about Alpha?
Probe: What is it? How is it used? For how long is it used? Specialists involved?

-**Before**: In what way do you think that Alpha impacts on the service provided to guests?

After: In your opinion, what is the rationale behind introducing new services and why was this particular service selected for implementation?

PROCESS AND INFLUENCING FACTORS

Could you tell me about the implementation process of this project; what happened from the beginning up to now?
Probe: communication, training, evaluation, timings, distinction of phases

How would you characterise the process of implementation? [how formal was it?]
Probe: Informal, sequential, formal, random, trail-and-error, experimental, managed, straightforward

-Before: Were you part of the team that developed Alpha? Could you tell me about the collaboration with the other parties?

After: To what extent were you involved in the Alpha project?
Probe: What was the nature of your involvement?

-Who (else) was involved in the implementation of the project?
Probe: What was their role?

-Could you tell me about the collaboration with others in the project?

-Could you tell me about the communication process around the project?

Probe: between the corporate office and the hotel and within the hotel, expectations of the innovation shared

-**Before**: Were the skills necessary in place to develop and implement Alpha? How were any shortcomings addressed?
After: Could you describe any training activities around the new service and their purpose?
Probe: who was responsible for training, who attended, what type of training, purpose of training

[Employees encouraged to participate in the project?]

[Is the corporate structure helping or not in the implementation?]

[Were the customers involved? Did they offer ideas? How do you know they would see the project?]

-**Before**: On what basis were the pilot hotels selected? How were the franchisees handled?
After: Could you tell me about any pilot run of Alpha before the launch?
Probe: Reasoning behind hotel selection? Purpose of the pilot? Evaluation of results?

-Could you tell me about the organisation around the full roll-out of Alpha?
Probe: Official launch day? Preparation?

-What are the media used for training and why? Can you tell me about any assessment of the training provided?

-Can you tell me about any changes to job roles resulting from the implementation of Alpha? Probe: How did you feel about these changes?

-Before: Are the hotels flexible in adopting Alpha or is it part of the brand requirements? To what extent is the implementation prescribed? Do hotels have the opportunity to adapt the change to their needs? Was the use included in new Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)?

After: To what extent do you believe that it was possible to modify the innovation to local circumstances?

-Were there any challenges in the implementation process of Alpha overall?
Probe: How did the employees/managers of the units receive the change? Have feelings changed over time? Did the implementation cause disruption in the hotel?

-Can you tell me about any positive aspects of the implementation process?

-Can you tell me about any feedback shared about the effectiveness of the implementation process?

Follow up if not covered above:

-To what extent do you believe that necessary resources were available for this project?

-To what extent do you believe that the implementation of Alpha is a team or individual effort? Probe: What was the role of the team? Which teams are involved?

-Do you believe that any particular individuals were instrumental in the implementation of Alpha?

-Before: To what extent the speed of Alpha to the market is seen as important and how is this monitored for this and other projects?
After: -

-To what extent is Alpha now considered as something new?

-How similar or different was the implementation process of Alpha compared to that of previous projects?

GENERAL QUESTIONS
-**Before**: To what extent do you believe that Alpha improves organisational efficiency?
To what extent do you believe that Alpha improves service quality?

After: To what extent do you consider Alpha to be successful?
Were the original objectives met?
Probe: for guests, employees.

Before: What, in your opinion, could be different/better in this project's implementation? Whose responsibility do you think that is?
After: -

-How was this feedback shared in the hotel(s)?
Probe: Results evaluated? Any problems rectified? Support?

-Do you consider your organisation to be innovative and what do you consider innovation to be?

[How do innovative ideas come to life? Leaders encouraging employee innovation?]

[Hospitality innovation: potential for radical? Something really new? Or incremental, small changes?]

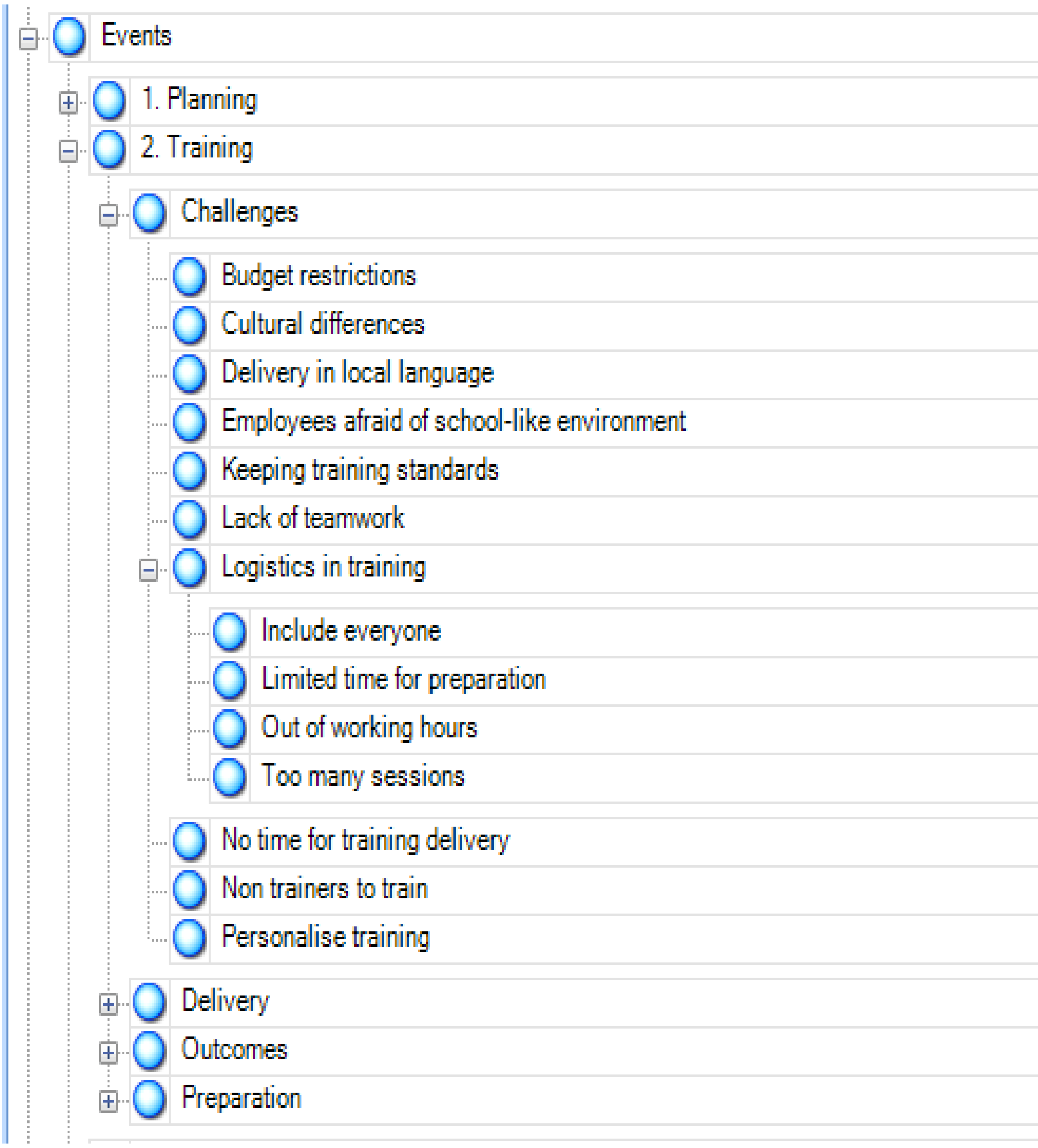
-Anything else you would like to add to our discussion?
Any relevant document I should see?
Any key informant I should talk to?

A summary of our conversation could be produced for you. Would you like to receive such a copy for your reference and where should that be sent?

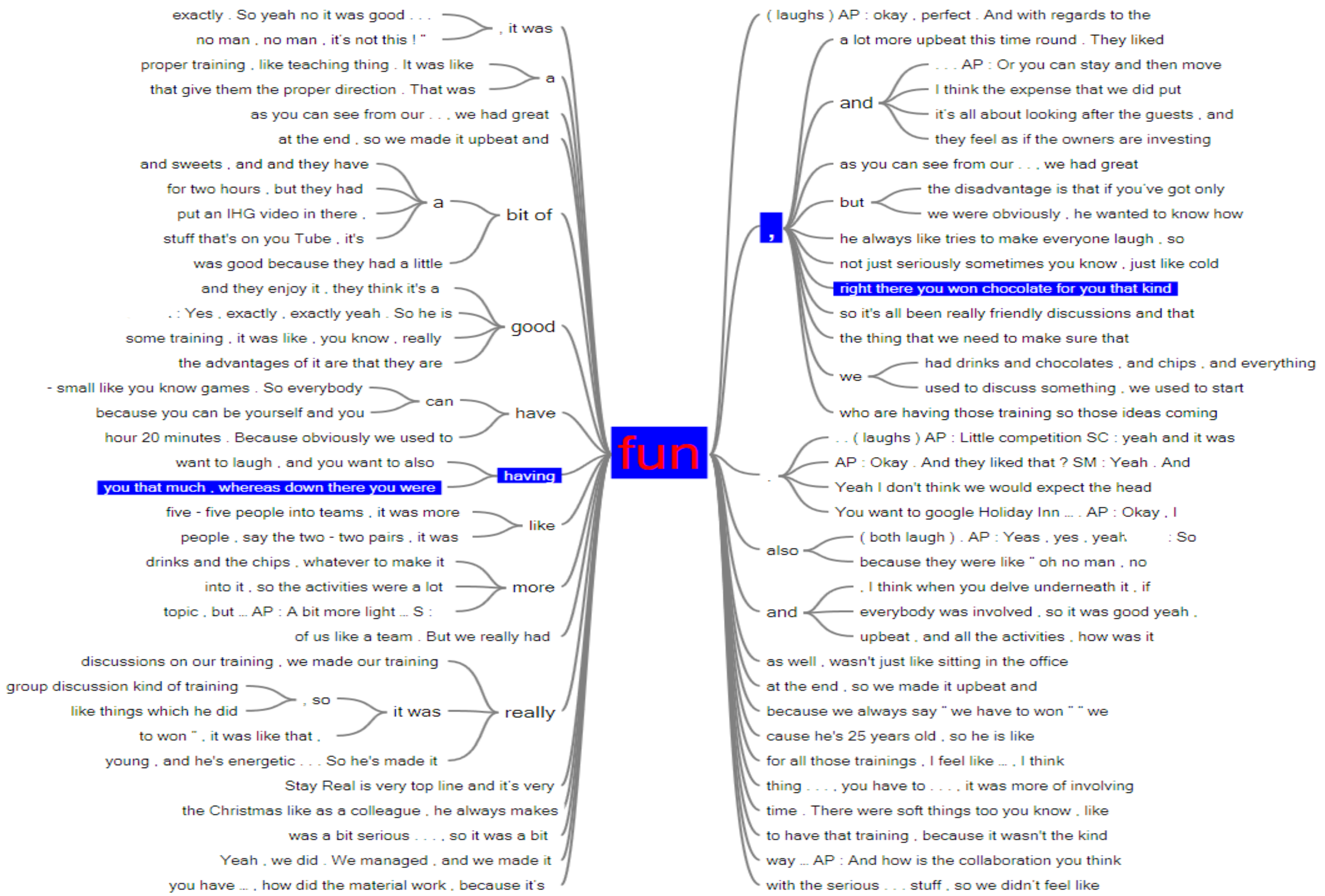
☐ Yes Contact details:
☐ No

Thank you for your time. All the information provided in this conversation will be kept confidential and will be used in order to draw conclusions for this study and may be used in appropriate academic publications. If need be, would you be happy to be contacted again for any clarification, or a follow up interview at a later stage in implementation? What would be the best way to contact you?

Appendix 4-7 Part of Node Structure in NVivo



Appendix 4-8 Word Tree in NVivo



Appendix 5-1 Brain Food defined as Service Innovation

Innovative attributes	Indicative Interview Quotes
New service concept	"obviously it was innovative, I thought 'Oh, this is a deficiency in the market', i.e. something they don't know they want yet, but once we introduce it they will know, 'ah that's great'" (AS8) "the start was to make something new and to innovate our buffet areas" (AS9) "I think innovation is absolutely a key word. Because this is a market which have been laying quite low for the past 15 years, I think it's been finger food and cakes in most of meeting and events, so having this is a new and fresh wave coming to the meeting and events break out food, I think it's been really good. And I think our customers see that as innovative, wanting to do something about the meeting and events market, and the thing it's also being a breath of fresh air for a lot of staff and employees working with it" (AE26) "it's a trending concept, that we fortunately picked up first and develop it to what it has become" (AS1)
Value creation	"this being a differentiator, and making us stand out from the crowd, stand out from the competitive hotel chain sets" (AS8) "we think so, that this will give value, […] it will give you value for your money, where you're at a course will get good nutritious food that will help you improve and get more out of your conference and banqueting" (AS9) "The feedback has been very positive" (AS10) "Our goal is that we will give meeting delegates optimal conditions for a successful meeting experience. Brain Food helps optimize energy, concentration and information retention, therefore resulting in better end results for their companies" (AS8) "I think the main reason why Brain Food is working and is going to work is because everyone wins" (AE25) "The purpose is that […] our customer gets more value for meetings because the idea behind Brain Food is to make all the people who are in a meeting more awake" B7 -"they see that it is something the guests actually want" (AM7) "The need to create a profile, to have something that draws you in. for these guys i think it was more to create a profile that was selling to the customer, create a catchy name, draw people in, more customers, and in the long run actually present it as something that would give profit and benefits for everyone" (AE26)
Specialised Knowledge – Skills - Expertise	"Based on food, nutrition, they've written books, so that it gives that a bit of validity in that it's not that just we as a hotel, with our chefs, decided to go out and say that is Brain Food" (AS10) "[the] physician, she has been closely with the recipes, primarily working with the recipes in order to make sure that it underlines the principles, that we stick within the boundaries of them, also it is very positive when you're implementing and presenting such a huge concept that you have people who have, what you say, like specific competence within. And you need

	to have a profile person saying that this is..., this is actually true!, the way it is, it is more healthy for you, and just being really into the...” (AE26)
Target internal & external customers	“But that's innovation, that's knowing the market, that's also be wanting to stay, and we are one of the top brands, if you do that you have to be innovative, you have to constantly see what they need out there, what the market needs. And also these guys into responsible business, and at the very end if you really think about it, because it's for the wellness of the guest and the wellness of our employees. And we've also implemented where our actual canteens eat, most of our employees eat in the hotels, you know they have their breakfast, lunch and dinner, depending on your hours, that they also get Brain Food for their lunch” (AS10)

Appendix 6-1 Stay Real - Be You defined as Service Innovation

Innovative attributes	Interview Quotes
New service culture	"(Stay Real) it's all about being yourself, bringing your own personality to the business, bringing your passion" (BE7) "To be a bit a more vigilant, (…) To be more focused on the guest, so they have a nice experience and come back again" (BE19)
Value creation	"the attitudes definitely changed, which is good" (BM1) "I honestly think that this hotel is different to what it was a year ago. It was very very clicky. I think it's a lot less of that now" (BM22) "it was good for me because I found lots of information, I knew about the hotel, but specially kind of introduced me to the town and other bits as well, so it was quite good for me" (BM20) "Yes, after the implementation was done as well, yeah, so we see a lot of improvement and a different approach as well" (BM20) "The guest engagement is still not where it needs to be. But it is on the rise, and it has been since last October. And is not flown up is gone up by 1% each time" (BM22) "I think now they also are all.., they all trust each other more, so they all going to help each other out, you know that sort of thing, which is good, more teamwork (laughs)" (BM1)
Specialised Knowledge – Skills - Expertise	"that was really a partnership, part of the re-launch. And then Be You really came out of.., evolved from that and some of the behaviours" (BS8) "So I think that this time round it wasn't about doing it different, it was about really going back recapping, and also introducing them to the People Tools, which we've never had before, so that the really…, that was the new part" (BS8) "they are world-class tools, you know, we've tried and tested them in the managed estate, we know they've got really great impact on employee engagement, getting really good people through your door, they are obviously very branded towards the hotel brand that you've chosen to have" (BS8) "Because it's not like teaching people to polish tea spoons or anything, it's very behavioural training, it's a skill set in itself, so…" (BM18)

Target internal and external customers	"it will make the guests more happier. And they will always use us if we are perfect with the, so.., which is good for the hotel as well, for the business, because we're making business with them, so it's good if we give them like a good picture of our place" (BE5) "So we can be better, so they can come back again. To be the best hotel, you know" (BE19) "Especially the attitude of staff towards the guests, customers, we noticed that is changing maybe the staff they were thinking about it, how they can affect the business, it's not only about the product we sell but it's also about us, about the attitude" (BM18)