

Impact of Strategic Management on Innovation in Five-Star Hotels in Egypt

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Abstract

In view of the role of strategic management, the current study aims to identify the impact of three elements of strategic management on innovation practices in the hotel industry. Through applying stratified random sampling techniques, data was collected from 77 hotel managers via a structured questionnaire, and the hypothesized relationships were tested using SPSS software .

Results emphasized that each element of strategic management namely; strategy formulation, strategy implementation and strategy evaluation has a positive and significant impact on innovation practices. Despite the relevant findings, there is a future need for more in-depth research on the impacts of strategic management on innovation and how barriers can be overcome within this industry.

Indeed, such findings contribute in providing implications for hotel seniors and middle-level managers and recommend them to formulate and implement and evaluate strategies effectively at corporate level in order to gain high levels of innovation that keeping their hotels competitive.

Introduction

In nowadays, more and more organizations are facing high levels of competition, and in some cases state of uncertainty within the context of the globalized business world. As a result, enhancing the art of defining the strategic direction of the organization is an important issue (Andrews et al., 2017). Indeed, taking into account the appropriate methods that allow organizations to reach their objectives and achieve high levels of organizational performance, the role of strategic management as a managerial approach for applying insightful organizational procedures and gaining competitive advantage should be highlighted (Owich, 2017). In this regard, the concept of strategic management systemically enables the organizations to reach organizational objectives on a scientific basis, taking into consideration performing good functional tactics (Palladan and Adamu, 2018). Indeed, the concept of strategic management has become a phenomenon which constitutes one of the most important managerial theories in the field of business management (Shujahat et al., 2017). More comprehensively, there are many organizations in the field of hospitality industry aim to apply effective approaches of strategic management in order to gain high performance specifically on the part of innovation practices (Nzioka and Njuguna, 2017). Actually, applying high levels of innovation policies is a reflection of the organization's ability to implement effective managerial activities and reach the objectives (Dodokh, 2018). Effective implementation of

strategic management elements allows organizations to achieve strategic objectives and high standards of innovation (Gweh, 2018).

Since innovative practices have become an essential and insightful approach that leads to gaining competitive advantage (Zehir et al., 2015), therefore, this study aims at highlighting the basic elements of strategic management namely, strategy formulation, implementation and evaluation in five-star hotels in Egypt. It attempts to investigate the impact role of strategic management as an independent variable on innovation practices as a dependent variable in five-star hotels.

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

The Concept of Strategic Management

Strategic management can be defined as specific managerial activities that enable organization to get competitive position in the business environment (Owich, 2017). It leads to creating valuable competitive advantage and attain the company's goals. Moreover, strategic management is interested in determining the way by which the strategic objectives can be designed over the long run and the appropriate method to reach them (Primec and Belak, 2018). Basically, the purpose of strategic management is to tackle the extent by which the organization can set long term objectives and identify its ability and skills to accomplish the measurable targets through providing a road map to effective implementation of the strategies (Gweh, 2018). Also, with respect to the role of strategic management in making strategic decisions, Judge et al. (2015) indicated that it can be considered as a standardized tool that entails a set of procedures and policies which are recognized by the majority of organizations as a methodological pattern. This pattern enables organization to make strategic decisions, create long term development and strengthen core values. In addition, strategic management is considered a method that leads to replenishing the capabilities of organizations to reach their objectives and developing effective process of strategic decision making (Kitonga et al., 2016).

Several studies such as David (2011), Huiru (2011), Chepkwony (2016) and David and David, (2016) asserted that strategic management process consists of three elements; strategy formulation, strategy implementation and strategy evaluation. These elements are aiming at reaching specific strategic objectives (David and David, 2016). Moreover, formulation, implementation and evaluation of strategies are the components of strategic management that enhance sustainable competitiveness of the organizations (Owich, 2017). Within the concept of strategic management process, organizations have to be connected with an effective analysis of their business environment which leads to better strategy formulation which in turn is translated into organizational policies and procedures (strategy implementation) followed by effective strategy evaluation (Gweh, 2018).

Strategy Formulation

Obviously, Enríquez (2016) clarified that ensuring competitive success is one of the essential priorities of strategy formulation process by which all the threats and weaknesses of the organization can be transformed to strengths that eventually constitute competitive advantages. In essence, the function of strategy formulation is of great importance since it creates decisions and establishes the strategic vision of the organization. It also serves as a tool for developing several fundamentals and alternative strategies which enable the organizations to expand into new markets (Labroo and Patrick, 2008; Trope and Liberman, 2010; Tawse et al., 2019).

Explicitly, Chepkwony (2016) stated that the concept of strategy formulation can be defined as creating innovative ways of thinking and brainstorming that leads to identifying the overall organizational orientation. It also includes setting clear strategic objectives and pursuing the

appropriate organizational policies through effective environmental analysis. Strategy formulation also can be applied within the context of three levels of the organization's hierarchy (corporate level, business level and functional level). Similarly, one of the innovative tools to formulate strategy is taking advantage of the available business models in order to scan the business environment and exploit the available opportunities (Gweh, 2018).

Strategy Implementation

Siddique and Shadbolt (2016) stated that formulated strategies cannot gain any attention if they are not put into action. Strategy implementation can be defined as putting the formulated strategies into action through creating harmonization between the strategy's purpose and the methodological approach of implementing strategies (Tawse et al., 2019). In particular, all the organizations must have the intention to implement their strategies at all organizational levels and harness all resources to enhance organizational outcomes (Gweh, 2018).

In addition, Wheelen and Hunger (2012) explained that the institutional framework by which strategies can be implemented includes adopting precise procedures to reach the organizational goals and performing the predefined tasks of each department. Indeed, it cannot be denied that strategy implementation is an integral part of the strategic management process providing several theoretical and practical implications for organizational development (Hourani, 2017). Meanwhile, Wołczek (2018) indicated that the aim of strategy implementation is about allowing strategies formulated by managers and decisions made by executive managers to be a part of the daily business operations. Strategy implementation also entails specific tasks and procedures such as effective allocating of resources, allowing organizational structure to be flexible, developing mechanisms that create communication channels among all organizational departments and support strategic leadership.

Strategy Evaluation

According to Slevin and Covin (2010), strategy evaluation can be defined as the way by which organizational strategies are assessed through comparing the actual results of the strategy with the expected ones. Tesot (2013) clarified that the element of strategy evaluation in the strategic management process is of great importance in both profit and non-profit organizations since it improves the strategic efficiency of the organization. In this regard, due to the vital role of strategy evaluation, it has gained a huge attention among all strategic managers as a tool used to forecast the future of the changeable business environment. It also assists in investigating whether the implemented strategies are relevant to the intended organizational success. It also enhances the organization's ability to achieve the predetermined objectives raise the organizational performance and gain competitive advantages (Zhang et al., 2018).

In essence, Hill and Jones (2012) indicated that a wide participation by all managers in the organization must be provided through evaluating the practices of each strategy. Managers also have to take the appropriate actions and respond to any issues that may rise in the stage of implementing the strategy to obtain their goals. In addition, at the functional level, all employees must be empowered to take the responsibility of tracking and detecting any deficiencies in the organization's strategy together with all managers as an essential part of the strategy evaluation (Aliewi et al., 2017).

Innovation

The concept of innovation can be defined as a state of creating new ideas, approaches and perspective and allowing it to be put into action and constitute reality at both tangible and intangible level, in parallel with developing the current ones (Tajuddin et al., 2015). Besides, Dodokh (2017) defined innovation as “*the process of translating and transforming a new idea into a new product or service with a high value to get to a better organizational performance*”. Noteworthy, Kogabayev and Maziliauskas (2017) stated that, through effective organizational communication among all departments of the establishment, high level of innovation can be achieved which represents the main essence of performance.

In addition, the concept of innovation also revolves around spreading the culture of being the one thinking out of the box among employees (Odumeru, 2013). Meanwhile, strengthening the level of implementing innovative approaches in organizations leads to increasing the efficiency of knowledge distribution and the effectiveness of using information technology capabilities (Dodokh and Al-Maaitah, 2019). Particularly, Gürlek and Çemberci (2020) revealed that innovation enables managers to work on developing the organizational structure and make continuous updates in it in order to be in line with the changing business environment. In essence, the concept of innovation assists in raising the levels of organizational learning which leads to enhance competitiveness in the business environment (Sciarelli et al., 2020).

The relationship Between Strategic Management and Innovation

According to Zehir et al. (2015), innovation is thought to be heavily but not exclusively dependent on the selection and implementation of strategies. It should also be clarified that, the relationship between strategy formulation and performance is interrelated and needs to be examined by considering all possible related practices of innovation (Fernandes and Solimun, 2017). Meanwhile, strategic management is a collection of management actions and decisions used by an organization to achieve increased innovation and retained a competitive edge over competitors (Liu and Atuahene-Gima, 2018). In this regard, Alosani et al. (2020) recommended that business organizations should pay a huge attention to strategic management as it is a critical success factor for improving innovation practices.

According to Tutar et al. (2015), strategic management is about the most important basic features in the success of any organization, projects or business, and it helps to build a base essential to develop and raise innovativeness. Moghadam et al. (2018) added that the assets of the firms and their strategies have a greater influence on innovation than industry forces do. Further, the process of strategic management not only raises the competitiveness of the firms but also positively affect their profitability and innovativeness (Adams et al., 2019). Moreover, Zhou et al. (2021) clarified that organizations should provide a good strategic management to their organizations that will improve their innovation policies, taking into consideration the internal and external factors that can influence the actual performance. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are formulated (Figure 1):

H1: Strategic management positively influences innovation in five-star hotels in Egypt.

H1a Strategy formulation positively influences innovation in five-star hotels in Egypt.

H1b Strategy implementation positively influences innovation in five-star hotels in Egypt.

H1c Strategy evaluation positively influences innovation in five-star hotels in Egypt.

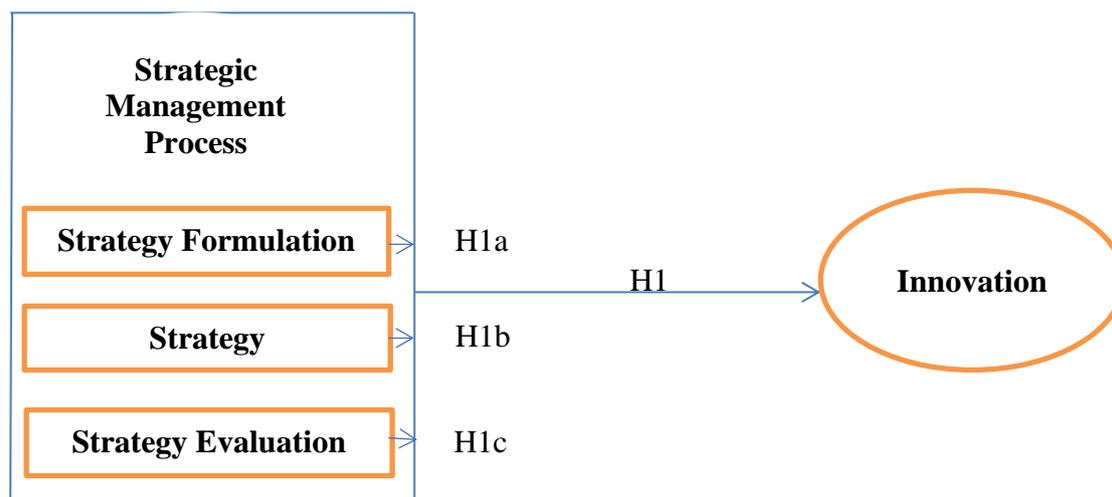


Figure (1): The research framework

Methodology

Sampling and Data Collection

The population of this study included all five-star hotels in Egypt which are about 153 hotels as clarified in The Egyptian Hotel Guide (2019). The techniques of stratified random sampling were applied in this study in order to survey the population of the study. The aim of stratified random sample is to allow each element of the population to be represented. In this regard, West (2016) indicated that, the usage of stratified random sampling as a surveying technique makes it easy for all members of the population to have equal chance of being included in the sample. It also facilitates the generalization of the study results.

Clearly, the concept of random selection is a crucial factor that enables such type of sample to acquire credibility. Furthermore, stratified random sampling is preferred when there are stratum that entail listed members of the population. It also allows researcher to gain precise information regarding these stratum (Saunders et al., 2016). As a result, 92 five-star hotels in Egypt were selected as a representative sample which is about 60% of the entire population. This percentage enables the researcher to survey the majority of hotels in light of specific period of time and predetermined budget (See table 1).

Table (1): Five-Star Hotels Distribution in Egypt

Area		Location	Population		Sample Size	
			No	%	No	60%
1	Cairo	Cairo	29	18%	17	18%
2	North West cost	Alexandria (8), Marsa Matrouh (3), El Alamein(2)	13	9%	8	9%
3	Canal zone and Sinai	Port Said (1), Arish (2), Fayoum (1), Dahab (2), Sharm (43), Taba (8).	57	37%	34	37%
4	Red sea	El Gouna (3), Hurghada (25), Safaga (7), Quesier (2), Marsa Alam (3), Ain Sokhna (3).	43	28%	26	28%
5	Upper Egypt	Luxor (7), Aswan (5).	12	8%	7	8%
Total			153	100%	92	100%

Source: The Egyptian Hotel Guide, 34th Edition, Egyptian Hotel Association, 2018/2019

The data was collected through using structured questionnaire. In order to ensure that the questionnaire was valid, the researcher paid a huge attention to the concept of piloting. As a

result, the researcher communicated with a group of hotels managers in order to complete the questionnaire, provide comments towards its questions, give a whole impression about the questionnaire as a total and rank the importance of each item in the questionnaire. As a result, this stage enabled the researcher to make modifications on the questionnaire as a whole including deleting unnecessary items, modifying vague questions and using easy terminology. The final structured questionnaire was distributed to general managers, executive managers, resident managers or other managerial positions. There were 77 valid responses out of 92 which represent a response rate of 79 %.

Measures

In order to measure the three elements of strategic management process, 24 items were adopted from Owich (2017). Further, innovation practices were measured through using 5 items adopted from the scale of Dodokh (2017). Actually, all responses to the items rated on five-point scales ranging from (1 strongly disagree) to (5 strongly agree). Additionally, demographic information such as educational background, position, experience and number of the hotel rooms were included in the questionnaire. All measures are cleared in table 2.

Table (2): Measures of the Variables

Dimensions	Measure items
Strategy formulation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Managers are actively involved in creating hotel mission and vision. 2. The managers act as change enabler or drivers in the hotel. 3. Managers are actively involved in making major decisions during the strategy formulation. 4. The hotel uses an operating budget which summarizes how managers are supposed to use hotel resources. 5. The hotel has aligned its budget with the hotel strategy through good communication, enhanced responsibility, and improved feedback flows. 6. The hotel always makes decisions that are based on the budget. 7. The hotel makes use of tools such as PESTEL, Porter's Five Forces, and SWOT Matrix to analyze the external and internal business environments. 8. The hotel incorporates environment concerns while making strategic decisions, evaluating strategic development alternatives and issuing guiding principles. 9. The strategic decisions of this hotel are based on the prevailing business environment context.
Strategy implementation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Departmental memos and managerial decisions are communicated all through my hotel and to every individual. 2. All employees in my hotel align their regular tasks with the overall hotel strategy. 3. The hotel engages in a more democratic and participative way of working by allowing employees to offer views and involving employees more in making organizational decisions. 4. In my hotel, there is no ambiguity on who makes particular decisions. 5. The hotel structure is aligned with new strategies and with what the new strategies call for . 6. The hotel has proper communication channels, monitoring and incentive systems, and performance measuring systems. 7. The hotel's policy is properly communicated to the staff and is clearly understood by employees. 8. The hotel motivates its employees with both financial and non-financial incentives to enhance their job performance. 9. Employees in my hotel are emotionally attached to the hotel and exhibit high levels of commitment to the organization.

Strategy evaluation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The hotel regularly analyses its INTERNAL capabilities to determine its strengths and weaknesses using tools of analysis such as SWOT, PESTEL and Porter's Five Factor 2. The hotel regularly analyses its EXTERNAL environment to determine its opportunities and threats using tools of analysis such as SWOT, PESTEL and Porter's Five Factor 3. The hotel emphasizes on market research focused on entering new markets 4. The managers of this hotel make allowances for the unpredictable future and dynamic business environment in the strategic plan. 5. The hotel has in place strategies that are used to cope with unforeseen circumstances in the business industry. 6. The hotel has appropriate technology that helps manage the changing business climates.
Innovation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The hotel is characterized by innovation in production methods. 2. The hotel applied new innovative methods in advertising their products and services. 3. The hotel is always looking for new innovative ways to deliver their products/ services ways. 4. The hotel decided to change the aspects of the product/ service and its quality on the basis of a new innovative idea. 5. The hotel encourages new innovative ideas.

This study followed the procedures of Cranach's alpha measurement in order to evaluate the reliability of the questionnaire items. Indeed, a great attention was paid to the insights of Saunders *et al.* (2016) who indicated that, when the value of Cronbach's alpha is more than 0.60, the reliability of the data collection instrument and the findings are on the right way and can be accepted. Noteworthy, the values of Cronbach's alpha in this study extend from 0.895 to 0.900 which represent high levels of reliability.

Results

Description of the Samples' Characteristics

Characteristics of the sample confirm that different respondents participated in this study as shown in Table 2. The highest percentages of respondents were males (88%), the majority (92%) had bachelor degree while 8% of them had master or doctorate degree. The positions of the respondents were grouped into three categories; general managers (55%), resident manager (35%), and other managerial positions (10%). Respondents were asked if they had any academic course in management development programs, Most of them (87%) answered "Yes" while 13% answered "No" did not. Also, the sample involved hotels with different sizes as shown in table 3.

Table (3): Characteristics of the Hotels and Respondents (77 hotels and 77 respondents)

Respondents' Characteristics	Number	%	Number of rooms	Number	%
Gender			>100	0	0
▪ Male	68	88	100-199	6	8
▪ Female	9	12	200-299	40	52
Educational Background			300-399	16	21
▪ High school	0	0	400-499	7	9
▪ Bachelor degree	71	92	<500	8	10
▪ Master degree	5	7			
▪ Doctorate degree	1	1			
▪ Others	0	0			
Position					
▪ General manager	42	55			
▪ Resident manager	27	35			

▪ Other managerial positions	8	10
Management Courses		
▪ Yes	67	87
▪ No	10	13

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics of the study variables are represented in Table 4. The element of "Strategy Formulation" recorded the highest mean of 4.43 while the element of "Strategy Implementation" recorded the lowest mean of 4.11. On the other side, "Innovation" as a whole variable recorded a high mean of 4.13. The high mean scores of the study variables clarifies that they are highly achieved in these hotels.

Table (4): Summary of Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Dimensions	Mean	S.D.
Strategic management	1-Strategy Formulation	4.43	0.31
	2-Strategy Implementation	4.11	0.28
	3-Strategy Evaluation	4.12	0.29
Innovation	-----	4.13	0.35

Testing Hypotheses and Discussions

The data collected was analyzed through using SPSS software (version 26) in order to test the hypotheses. The degree of relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable were analyzed using multiple regression analysis and the results were presented in table 5 and table 6.

Table (5): Regression of strategic management process against innovation – Goodness- of- fit

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate
Strategic Management	0.525a	.275	.266	.30553
Strategy Formulation	0.369a	.136	.124	.33363
Strategy Implementation	0.399a	.159	.148	.32916
Strategy Evaluation	0.590a	.348	.339	.28977

With respect to H1, the individual regression results (Table 6) reveal statistically significant positive linear relationship between strategic management process and innovation ($\beta = 0.773$, P-value = 0.000) which means that innovation practices are influenced by the strategic management process. Hence, H1 is accepted. Results indicated that innovation was influenced by strategic management process as it accounted for 27.5% percent of its variability (R square = 0.275). These results are in line with the study of Liu and Atuahene-Gima (2018) who indicated that the process of strategic management leads to creating a state of proactive market orientation and technology orientation. It also enables organizations to attain a framework for decision making, improved productivity, and increased competitiveness that are positively related to raising innovation capabilities.

Table (6): Regression Coefficients (Individual significance) Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)					
Strategic Management	.773	.145	.525	5.338	.000
Strategy Formulation	.419	.122	.369	3.435	.001
Strategy Implementation	.514	.137	.399	3.764	.000
Strategy Evaluation	.733	.116	.590	6.329	.000

Regarding H1a, the individual regression results (Table 5) reveal statistically significant positive linear relationship between strategy formulation and innovation ($\beta = 0.419$, P-value = 0.001) which means that innovation practices are influenced by the process of strategy formulation. As a result, H1a is accepted. Findings revealed that innovation is influenced by strategy formulation as it accounted for 13.6% percent of the variability of change in the hotels performance (R square = 0.136). These findings are in consistent with the study of Tutar et al. (2015) who clarified that organizations must try new approaches during the stage of formulating strategies, which leads to gaining high levels of innovation. Also, Prajogo (2016) indicated that analyzing strengths and weaknesses of the organization is crucial for formulating effective strategies which enable the establishments to reach the desired level of innovation

With respect to H1b, the individual regression results (Table 5) reveal statistically significant positive linear relationship between strategy implementation and innovation ($\beta = 0.514$, P-value = 0.000) which means that innovation practices are influenced by the practices of strategy implementation. As a result, H1b is accepted. The study results showed that strategy implementation had explanatory power on innovation as it accounted for 15.9% percent of its variability (R square = 0.159). These findings are supported by the study of Adams and Freitas (2019) who revealed that the allocation of resources, policies, procedures and the adaptation to changes of the company's environment are important tools in implementing strategies. These techniques also allow organizations to attain the perfect innovation practices

Regarding H1c, the individual regression results (Table 5) reveal statistically significant positive linear relationship between strategy evaluation and innovation ($\beta = 0.733$, P-value = 0.000) which means that innovation practices are influenced by the practices of strategy evaluation. As a result, H1c is accepted. Findings clarified that, innovation is influenced by strategy evaluation as it accounted for 34.8% percent of the variability of change in the hotels performance (R square = 0.348). These findings are in consistent with the study of Moghadam et al. (2018) who indicated that the senior management must apply the practices of strategy evaluation such as monitoring operational systems, taking corrective actions and reviewing strategic plans periodically in order to reach effective innovation.

Implications

The findings of the current study present insightful recommendations regarding strategic management process and innovation. Academics, board of directors and managers can greatly benefit from these recommendations. With respect to the main hypothesis represents the relationship between strategic management process and innovation, it was supported. In this regard, the hotels' managers must develop corporate strategies that pursue reaching proactivity and uniqueness in providing their service products. Strategic alignment among all departments of the hotel can be applied which leads to making strategic decisions that serve as a tool for raising innovativeness.

With respect to the first sub-hypothesis that supposed the relationship between strategy formulation and innovation, the sub-hypothesis was supported. In essence, a huge attention must be placed on the role of hotel's vision as an integral part of strategy formulation which facilitates innovativeness through specific actions. These actions include applying the concept of strategic business analysis that facilitates using the scientific method in formulating strategies and innovative plans. Moreover, actions like considering current events in the business environment can be implemented through the stage of strategizing.

Regarding the second sub-hypothesis that assumed the relationship between strategy implementation and innovation, it was supported. So, the research recommends hotel managers to support the activities of research and development through applying effective incentive

systems that encourage generating and implementing innovative strategies. Additionally, the perfect allocation of resources must be gained through creating a link between senior management and research and development department. Besides, the procedures of strategy implementation must be operationalized efficiently through implementing new ideas that leads to business development. Further, hotel managers have to benchmark innovative business models applied in other organizations in the service sector including effective strategic management techniques that facilitates reaching innovativeness.

Finally, with respect to third sub-hypothesis that assumed the relationship between strategy evaluation and innovation, it was also supported. Hence, hotels' managers should monitor the operational systems periodically through applying the concept of periodical monitoring. They also have to evaluate all managerial actions smoothly in order to improve innovation practices. It also includes providing information about the employees' tasks and achievements in light of effective feedback mechanisms. Furthermore, the role of information technology and its involvement in evaluating strategies in five-star hotels must be considered. Corrective actions can be taken depending on technological applications that tackle the regulative measures in a computerized way.

Limitations and Future Research

Despite the relevant findings, the results highlight the need for more in-depth research on the impacts of strategic management on innovation and how barriers can be overcome within this industry. Actually, this study highlighted variables that are related to the corporate level of the hotels. Therefore, senior management were exclusively involved while other managerial positions were excluded. On the other hand, this study provides several insights which can inspire researchers to conduct a lot of researches in the future such as investigating the elements of strategic management process from the perspective of 3 or 4 star hotels. Further, the role of strategic management techniques such as core competences and strategic alliances in applying strategic management can be investigated in the future.

Conclusion

This research highlighted the impact of strategic management on innovation in five-star hotels. In essence, the findings indicated that strategic management process has a positive and significant influence on innovation. Furthermore, the results clarified that each element of strategic management including strategy formulation, strategy implementation and strategy evaluation has a positive and significant impact on innovation. From the perspective of the researcher, both senior managers and middle-level managers must highlight the importance of designing effective strategies at corporate level in order to gain high levels of innovation. Moreover, the concept of strategic alignment must be circulated among all members of the hotels in order to achieve all organizational objectives.

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