

Article

The Role of Business Process Management in Hotel Innovation and Competitiveness

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Abstract

This article presents findings from an investigation into the role of business process management and performance measurement in fostering innovation and enhancing competitiveness within hotels in Slovakia. Its aim is to assess the current application of process management in these establishments and to propose a suitable system along with theoretical and practical recommendations for enhancing management systems and performance measurement using process management methodologies. The study focuses on hotels in Slovakia and tests a hypothesis suggesting that these establishments insufficiently leverage business process management and performance measurement as a strategic instrument for promoting innovation and competitiveness. Spearman's correlation coefficient is employed to analyze the relationship between hotel chain affiliation, hotel class, hotel size, and the adoption of process management. Through a combination of questionnaire surveys and structured interviews, the article provides insights into the utilization of process management and offers an overview of the current management practices, as well as the knowledge of functional and process management among hotel representatives.

Keywords: business process management; hotel; key performance indicators (KPIs)



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1. Introduction

It is increasingly recognized that management systems that were once successful in the twentieth century may no longer meet the evolving needs of today's environment, particularly within the hotel industry, both in Slovakia and beyond. As a result, tourism enterprises are under mounting pressure to adopt innovative management strategies. These approaches should enable tourism enterprises to respond more flexibly to the extreme changes in the external environment. Such approaches include process management (Fu et al., 2020).

Implementing process management can positively impact organizational leadership, performance, quality control, human resources, financial management, and broader operational areas. Various methods based on the process approach are utilized in tourism enterprises within the framework of process management.

2. Literature Review

Although the historical context of Business Process Management (BPM) is well established in the literature, a growing body of research calls for a sharper focus on its application

within the hospitality industry. To address this, our revised literature review builds on foundational knowledge while incorporating recent empirical and theoretical developments that highlight BPM's role in fostering innovation and competitiveness in hotels.

Interestingly, the specific characteristics of the tourism sector—namely its intangible nature, focus on human resources, inconsistency in service delivery, and variety of activities—support and require the use of process management (Ribeiro et al., 2019). Several authors have examined the most common and prevailing performance measurement indicators used in the hospitality and tourism sector (Atkinson & Brander-Brown, 2001; P. Phillips & Louvieris, 2005; Huang et al., 2007; McPhail et al., 2008; Guix & Font, 2020).

Notably, recent studies (e.g., Zaki, 2025; Gikutha, 2023; Krstić et al., 2015; Hoque, 2014; Sainaghi et al., 2013) emphasize the need for adaptive and agile performance measurement models that align with contemporary operational realities. These works highlight that traditional performance systems often fail to capture dynamic service environments typical of hotels, underscoring a performance measurement gap. By situating our study within this discourse, we aim to contribute by analyzing how BPM adoption, especially in smaller regional hotel contexts, can bridge this gap.

This article aims to fill a gap in the literature by empirically examining BPM in Slovak hotels—an area less explored in mainstream hospitality research—and linking this examination to innovation outcomes and competitive advantages. The literature review was therefore expanded not only to describe BPM evolution but to frame the study within recent hospitality-specific theoretical models.

The shortcomings and negative consequences of performance measurement systems (PMSs) have been discussed in the literature for more than 60 years (A. Neely & Al Najjar, 2006). In the 1980s and later, authors criticized the use of these systems and consequently, the way in which companies review their performance (Johnson & Kaplan, 1987). The historical and exclusive reliance on financial measures to assess business performance has been heavily criticized in recent decades for several reasons, on three main levels:

1. P. A. Phillips (1999) argues that financial performance metrics often fall short because they emphasize short-term results, lack actionable insights, and can be easily manipulated.
2. Financial indicators alone have been criticized for failing to support strategic improvements and innovation efforts crucial for today's competitive environment (A. Neely & Al Najjar, 2006; McPhail et al., 2008).
3. Financial measures are insufficient to manage today's businesses, especially hotels, which are increasingly customer-oriented and seek to benefit from their knowledge-based human capital (Kaplan & Norton, 2001).

Additionally, such measures are retrospective and insufficient for guiding future-oriented business strategies (Kaplan & Norton, 2001). Papulová et al. (2014) identified the process-based approach as a transformative factor that greatly impacted management theory and practices during the late twentieth century. According to Lusk et al. (2005), the evolution of process management can be divided into four historical phases: the initial emphasis on division of labor during the Industrial Revolution, the formalization of operational procedures during the railway expansion era, the development of mass production and decentralized management during the early 20th century, and the post-World War II growth in corporate planning systems. These stages collectively shaped the way organizations approached process management over time.

The most recent development, often referred to as the third wave or Business Process Management (BPM), continues to evolve today. Technology, rather than driving processes, now supports them, and customer expectations have shifted from standardized mass production toward personalized, tailored solutions. Additionally, supply chain man-

agement has transformed from focusing solely on production timing to requiring deep cross-organizational process integration. By the beginning of the 21st century, businesses increasingly became aware of the importance of process management, making it a discipline (Sujová & Marcineková, 2016).

Core elements of process management include clearly assigned process owners, accountability systems, customer focus, and continuous improvement. Emphasis is placed on error prevention, downtime reduction, cost elimination, and enhancing the productivity of individual processes to improve overall enterprise performance.

In the context of process management, Závadský (2005) describes it as a systematic method focused on the identification, coordination, execution, measurement, and continuous improvement of business processes, all aligned with customer requirements and strategic objectives. Krstić et al. (2015) add that enterprises should be viewed as interconnected systems of processes and activities, where inputs such as materials, tools, or information are transformed into outputs for customers. Papulová et al. (2014) emphasize that every process has a defined start and end point and is composed of a series of activities.

Processes within organizations can be categorized into managerial, core, support, and secondary processes (Mateides & Závadský, 2005). Managerial processes oversee and guide the organization, core processes generate direct value for external customers, support processes provide necessary services to the other processes, and secondary processes, often outsourced, involve tasks for which the company lacks specific expertise (Papulová et al., 2014).

The transition from traditional functional management to a process-oriented approach typically involves several key steps. Sujová and Marcineková (2016) outline these stages as including strategic decision-making, project team formation, comprehensive analysis of current processes, creation of process maps, definition of process indicators and target values, benchmarking, simulation and optimization efforts, and the establishment of continuous self-management and improvement practices.

Performance measurement has evolved alongside these developments. Since the mid-1980s, attention has turned to creating systems that better inform managers about business operations (Elbanna et al., 2015). Among these systems are Keegan's Performance Measurement Matrix (PMM), Cross and Lynch's SMART Pyramid, and Kaplan and Norton's Balanced Scorecard (BSC). Bititci (2015) further reviews models such as the Du Pont model, Fitzgerald's Results and Determinants Framework, the EFQM Business Excellence Model, Neely's Performance Prism, and the Integrated Performance Measurement System (IPMS).

Recent studies have increasingly emphasized the role of digital technologies in reshaping performance measurement in the hospitality sector. For instance, the study by Zaki (2025) discusses how modern Property Management Systems (PMSs) integrate real-time operational data with strategic KPIs, addressing the so-called 'performance measurement gap'. These insights underscore the growing need for agile, data-driven BPM systems that can respond dynamically to changes in service environments. This literature also reinforces the relevance of our hypotheses H1–H3, which focus on the relationship between process management adoption and factors such as hotel size, class, and affiliation.

The study of Shulla et al. (2025) highlights the critical role of BPM in enhancing management efficiency within hotel and restaurant enterprises operating in a competitive market. It identifies the technological process—encompassing services in accommodation, food, and complementary offerings—as the core business process in the hospitality sector. The authors propose a classification system for business processes based on outcome and stress the need for modern performance indicators to evaluate process effectiveness. These indicators serve not only to improve operational management but also to strengthen motivation across organizational levels. Finally, the study advocates for the introduction

of a divisional organizational structure that links profit-sharing incentives to process performance, fostering innovation and competitiveness in the hospitality industry.

Banyeva et al. (2024) emphasizes the importance of BPM as a key factor in improving managerial performance in hotel and restaurant businesses facing strong market competition. It designates the main operational process—comprising lodging, dining, and related service activities—as central to hospitality operations. The authors introduce a system for categorizing business processes according to their results and underline the necessity of using up-to-date metrics to assess their efficiency. Such metrics not only support more effective day-to-day management but also enhance employee motivation throughout the organization. Moreover, the study recommends implementing a divisional structure that ties staff rewards to process outcomes, thereby encouraging both innovation and stronger market positioning.

3. Methodology

The focus of this article is on the management and performance measurement of hotels through process management. Active management and performance measurement can enhance the efficiency and goal attainment of hotels in Slovakia.

The aim of the study is to assess the current application of process management in hotels in Slovakia and suggest a suitable system along with recommendations for enhancing the management and performance measurement practices in these hotels.

Following this scientific objective, we test the following hypotheses (H1–H3):

H1. *We hypothesize that affiliation with hotel chains influences the use of process management.*

H2. *We hypothesize that hotel class affects the utilization of process management.*

H3. *We hypothesize that the size of the hotel correlates with the adoption of process management.*

Determining the sample set: Our sample comprises hotels in Slovakia and their management. To test our hypotheses, we approached hotels willing to participate in our survey. This formed our sample set. Given the diversity of accommodation establishments (4926 registered as of Q4/2023), we narrowed our focus to hotels (702 registered as of Q3/2023), aligning with the topic of this article.

The primary data obtained from questionnaires and structured interviews were processed in MS Excel and analyzed in IBM SPSS Statistics 25.0, applying statistical techniques such as the mode, median, and Spearman's rank correlation coefficient.

Spearman's rank correlation coefficient is a non-parametric measure used to assess the strength and direction of a monotonic relationship between two variables. Rather than relying on the raw data values, it ranks the data points (R_i and Q_i) to determine the degree of association. The coefficient r_S is calculated using the formula:

$$r_S = 1 - \frac{6}{n(n^2 - 1)} \sum_{i=1}^n (R_i - Q_i)^2$$

Spearman's rank correlation coefficient, denoted as r_S , takes values from the interval $\langle -1; 1 \rangle$, with values closer to ± 1 indicating a stronger monotonic dependence between the X and Y variables. For $r_S > 0$, we infer a monotonic direct dependence; for $r_S < 0$, we infer a monotonic indirect dependence; and for $r_S = 0$, we conclude that there is no monotonic relationship between the variables X and Y. It is important to note that both x_i and y_i are values drawn from continuous probability distributions (Kaščáková & Nedelová, 2010).

To verify the representativeness of the sample of independent and international chain hotels under study, we employed the Chi-squared (χ^2) goodness-of-fit test. Specifically, we tested the hypotheses:

H5. *The probability distribution of the sample is identical to the theoretical probability distribution.*

H6. *The probability distribution of the sample set is different from the theoretical probability distribution.*

Given the results of the test, with a p -value of 0.947, we do not reject the hypothesis, indicating that the sample can be considered representative.

4. Results

In Slovakia, as of the third quarter of 2023, according to the [Slovak Statistical Office \(2024\)](#), there were 702 accommodation establishments in the hotel category. We surveyed 598 hotels, representing 85% of all hotels, between December 2022 and November 2023. Over this period, we received 118 completed questionnaires via Google Forms online, representing a return rate of 19.73%.

4.1. Sample Characteristics

The proportion of international chain hotels participating in the survey is 4 out of 25 recorded (16% share), and the proportion of national chain hotels participating in the survey is 8 out of 38 (21% share). The share of independent hotels is almost 17%, with a total of 640 (Table 1).

Table 1. Structure of hotels by class and affiliation to a hotel chain.

Hotel Class	Hotel Affiliation with a Chain			Total
	Independent Hotel	National Chain	International Chain	
1* Hotel	8	0	0	8
2* Hotel	17	1	0	18
3* Hotel	56	3	0	59
4* Hotel	24	4	2	30
5* Hotel	1	0	2	3
Total	106	8	4	118

Note: * Class of the hotel, one to five stars hotel.

According to the Slovak Business Agency (SBA), in the accommodation and catering sector (SK NACE), 99.94% of enterprises (only legal entities) belonged to small and medium-sized enterprises in 2022 (source: www.monitoringmsp.sk, [Slovak Business Agency, 2023](#)). Across all business sectors in Slovakia, 99.76% of enterprises were SMEs in that year.

The enterprise size categories applied by the SBA are derived from the European Commission Recommendation No 2003/361/EC of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises and Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 Annex I. Under this definition, the group of small and medium-sized enterprises includes business entities employing fewer than 250 persons, with an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million.

We classify all enterprises participating in our survey as micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises based on the number of employees. Based on this classification, the surveyed sample included 17 micro hotels (14%), 73 small hotels (62%), and 28 medium-

sized hotels (24%). No large hotels with 250 or more employees participated in the survey (Table 2).

Table 2. Structure of hotels by size—number of employees/hotel class.

Number of Employees	Hotel Class					Total
	1*	2*	3*	4*	5*	
Micro Hotel—up to 9 employees	3	8	6	0	0	17
Small Hotel—from 10 to 49 employees	5	10	46	11	1	73
Medium Hotel—from 50 to 249 employees	0	0	7	19	2	28
Large Hotel—250 or more employees	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	8	18	59	30	3	118

Note: * Class of the hotel, one to five stars hotel.

We also included the classification of hotels by size, based on the number of beds, in the survey for comparison. Of the participating hotels, there were 64 small hotels, accounting for 54% of the total, 48 medium hotels, representing 41%, and 6 large hotels, comprising 5% (Table 3).

Table 3. Structure of hotels by size—number of beds/hotel class.

Number of Beds	Hotel Class					Total
	1*	2*	3*	4*	5*	
Fewer than 99 beds	8	11	32	12	1	64
100 to 249 beds	0	7	27	13	1	48
More than 250 beds	0	0	0	5	1	6
Total	8	18	59	30	3	118

Note: * Class of the hotel, one to five stars hotel.

4.2. Process Management Implementation

The process approach is one of the approaches that influenced the development of management theory and practice in the late 20th century. Its growing importance and application can be understood as a consequence of the exhaustion of other possibilities for developing functionally oriented management (Papulová et al., 2014).

Within the framework of a questionnaire survey, we aimed to obtain information about the current use of process management in the hotel industry. Following a set of questions on the measurement and evaluation of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), from which it could be indirectly inferred (using the inference method) whether, or to what extent, a given enterprise employs process management or its elements, we directly asked the respondents a series of questions about process management. The differentiating question was whether they applied process management, and we further divided the sections based on the respondents' answers to this question—namely, for the group applying process management and the group not applying it.

Overall, 12% of the respondents reported applying process management in the hotels they operate, while 88% reported applying functional management. Additionally, regarding the factor of belonging to a national or international company/network in relation to independent hotels, only 5% of independent hotel respondents (5 out of 106 overall) reported applying process management. However, for members of national companies/networks, 63% of respondents (5 out of 8 overall) applied process management, and all respondents (4 out of 4 overall) indicated belonging to an international company/network applied

process management according to the survey. For the sake of comprehensiveness, we also included a breakdown based on hotel class under hotel company/network affiliation (Table 4).

Table 4. Application of process management in hotels in Slovakia—breakdown by hotel affiliation with a chain and by hotel class.

Hotel Affiliation with a Chain and Hotel Class	Application of Process Management			
	N		%	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Independent Hotel	5	101	5%	95%
1* Hotel	0	8	0%	100%
2* Hotel	0	17	0%	100%
3* Hotel	1	55	2%	98%
4* Hotel	4	20	17%	83%
5* Hotel	0	1	0%	100%
National Chain	5	3	63%	38%
2* Hotel	0	1	0%	100%
3* Hotel	2	1	67%	33%
4* Hotel	3	1	75%	25%
International Chain	4	0	100%	0%
4* Hotel	2	0	100%	0%
5* Hotel	2	0	100%	0%
Total	104	14	12%	88%

Note: * Class of the hotel, one to five stars hotel.

Selecting only the hotel class factor independently of hotel company/network affiliation, none of the 1* hotel respondents (0 out of 8 overall) and none of the 2* hotel respondents (0 out of 18 overall) indicated that they apply process management. However, 5% of the 3* hotel respondents (3 out of 59 overall) apply process management, while 30% of the 4* hotel respondents (9 out of 30 overall) and 67% of the 5* hotel respondents (2 out of 3 overall) apply process management (Table 5).

Table 5. Application of process management in hotels in Slovakia—breakdown by hotel class.

Hotel Class	Application of Process Management			
	n		%	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
1* Hotel	0	8	0%	100%
2* Hotel	0	18	0%	100%
3* Hotel	3	56	5%	95%
4* Hotel	9	21	30%	70%
5* Hotel	2	1	67%	33%
Total	14	104	12%	88%

Note: * Class of the hotel, one to five stars hotel.

We then compared the factor of hotel size by the number of beds and the application of process management. In hotels with fewer than 99 beds, 5% of respondents (3 out of

64 overall) reported that they apply process management. In hotels with 100 to 249 beds, 15% of respondents (7 out of 48 overall) apply process management, while in hotels with more than 250 beds, 67% (4 out of 6 overall) apply process management, according to the survey (Table 6).

Table 6. Application of process management in hotels in Slovakia—breakdown by hotel size based on number of beds.

Number of Beds	Application of Process Management			
	<i>n</i>		%	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Fewer than 99 beds	3	61	5%	95%
100 to 249 beds	7	41	15%	85%
More than 250 beds	4	2	67%	33%
Total	14	104	12%	88%

Comparing the factor of hotel size by the number of employees and the application of process management, 5% of respondents in micro hotels with fewer than 9 employees (4 out of 73 total) reported that they apply process management. In small hotels with 10 to 49 employees, none of the respondents (0 out of 17 total) apply process management, while in medium hotels with 50 to 249 employees, 36% of the respondents (10 out of 28 total) apply process management. None of the respondents indicated the level of large hotels with more than 250 beds in the questionnaire survey (Table 7).

Table 7. Application of process management in hotels in Slovakia—breakdown by hotel size based on number of employees.

Number of Employees	Application of Process Management			
	<i>n</i>		%	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Micro Hotel—up to 9 employees	4	69	5%	95%
Small Hotel—from 10 to 49 employees	0	17	0%	100%
Medium Hotel—from 50 to 249 employees	10	18	36%	64%
Large Hotel—250 or more employees	0	0	0%	0%
Total	14	104	12%	88%

Based on hypotheses H1–H3, we hypothesized that the affiliation to hotel chains, hotel class, and hotel size could influence the use of process management and the Balanced Scorecard method. Through Spearman's correlation coefficient, we examined the correlation between hotel classifications and the application of process management (Table 8).

Table 8. Correlation coefficients—application of process management/hotel classifications.

Application of Process Management	Classification of Hotels			
	OT1	OT2	OT3	OT4
OT10	0.665	0.394	0.303	0.381
<i>p</i> -value	0.000d	0.000d	0.001d	0.000d
Scale of Correlation Coefficient	very low 0.0–0.01	weak 0.1–0.3	moderate 0.3–0.5	high 0.5–1.0

4.3. Comparison of Hotels with vs. Without Business Process Management Application

The application of process management shows a strong direct correlation with hotel company/network affiliation (OT1) and a medium direct correlation with hotel class (OT2), hotel size by the number of beds (OT3), and by the number of employees (OT4). Comparing the correlation coefficients allows us to assess that while the application of process management is most strongly influenced by hotel company/network affiliation, the other classifications mentioned also influence the application of process management itself.

Respondents who reported applying process management (14 out of 118 companies) were asked more detailed questions about their experience with this management approach. Gradually, we obtained answers regarding the duration of the application of this approach, revealing that six enterprises have been applying this approach for 4–5 years, followed by three enterprises for 6–9 years and more than 10 years, respectively. Only two respondents reported applying this approach for less than 3 years (Table 9).

Table 9. Time spans of application of the process management approach in hotels.

Response	Hotel Class					Total	
	1*	2*	3*	4*	5*	<i>n</i>	%
Less than 3 years	0	0	1	1	0	2	2%
4 to 5 years	0	0	2	4	0	6	5%
6 to 9 years	0	0	0	3	0	3	3%
More than 10 years	0	0	0	1	2	3	3%

Note: * Class of the hotel, one to five stars hotel.

Multiple-choice respondents identified the biggest benefits of implementing process management as the development of a functional measurement and evaluation system, directly linked to key performance indicators. This was followed by a reduction in administration and bureaucracy, as well as improved relationships with external and internal customers. At the more significant end of the spectrum, enterprises rated the streamlining of the organizational structure highly. The group focused on optimization (quality, time, and cost) fell in the middle of the spectrum, as did the group relating to employees and company culture. It is important to note that the relative number in % is from all 118 companies that we asked (Table 10).

Table 10. Benefits of introducing and applying process management in hotels.

Benefits of Introducing and Applying Process Management in Hotels	Total	
	<i>n</i>	%
Development of a functional measurement and evaluation system	10	8%
Reduction of administration and bureaucracy	9	8%
Improvement of relationships with external customers and internal customers (employees)	8	7%
Increasing the level of awareness among management personnel	6	5%
Increase in employee motivation and satisfaction	6	5%
Optimization of quality	6	5%
Time optimization	6	5%
Cost optimization	5	4%
Establishment of a new corporate culture with a team spirit	4	3%
Increasing competitiveness	4	3%
Streamlining the organizational structure	3	3%

Conversely, businesses identified significant challenges or disadvantages, including initial communication hurdles, training costs for employees and managers, and increased time demands at work. It is important to note that the relative number in % is from all 118 companies that we asked (Table 11).

Table 11. Complications/disadvantages of introducing and applying process management in hotels.

Complications/Disadvantages of Introducing and Applying Process Management in Hotels	Total	
	<i>n</i>	%
Initial communication complications	9	8%
Costs of employee and managerial training	7	6%
Initial increase in time demands at work	5	4%
Personnel changes—proactive departures or employee layoffs	2	2%
No complications	2	2%

In summary, based on the survey, it can be assessed that more than four-fifths of the enterprises that implemented process management apply it in the long or medium term. At the same time, a significant proportion evaluates their level of application positively, along with the streamlining of work. As many as 93% of respondents applying process management (representing 10% of the total) retrospectively evaluated the implementation as either a good solution or a necessity. They identify the establishment of a functioning measurement and evaluation system as the most significant advantage, while initial communication complications and training costs were the most significant disadvantages.

In the subsequent questions, respondents who do not apply process management (104 out of 118 companies) were asked whether they have encountered the concept of process management, their interest in introducing it, what discourages them from doing so, and what would motivate them to adopt it. Given the significantly larger sample size of these respondents and their potential interest in the introduction and application of process management, motivational and demotivational factors, in particular, will provide valuable information for the design phase (Table 12). Among the respondents who do not apply process management, 32 indicated that they have encountered the concept, while 72 stated that they have not yet encountered it. Interestingly, among hotel classes, the proportion of respondents who have encountered the concept is significantly higher for 4- and 5-star hotels (67% and above).

Table 12. Familiarity with the concept of process management.

Familiarity with the Concept of Process Management	Hotel Class					Total	
	1*	2*	3*	4*	5*	<i>n</i>	%
Yes	1	5	11	14	1	32	27%
No	7	13	45	7	0	72	61%
Total	8	18	56	21	1	104	Out of 118
Market share in the hotel class	13%	28%	20%	67%	100%	31%	

Note: * Class of the hotel, one to five stars hotel.

Exactly half of the 52 out of 104 respondents who do not currently apply process management indicated their interest in implementing it, while the same proportion expressed a lack of interest. Interestingly, when linking this interest to the previous question regarding familiarity with the concept of process management, it was found that 28% (20 out of

72 respondents) belonged to the group that had not encountered the concept before. This suggests that despite the lack of awareness, almost one-third of respondents are willing to consider changing their current management approach in their enterprise (Table 13).

Table 13. Survey of interest in the introduction or longer-term application of process management in hotels.

Interest in the Application of Process Management	Hotel Class					Total	
	1*	2*	3*	4*	5*	N	%
Yes	1	6	27	18	0	52	44%
No	7	12	29	3	1	52	44%
Total	8	18	56	21	1	104	Out of 118
Market share in the hotel class	13%	33%	48%	86%	0%	50%	

Note: * Class of the hotel, one to five stars hotel.

When asked about the factors that discourage hotel managers from introducing process management, the response indicating a lack of prior encounter with this type of management resonates in up to 48 cases, followed by a more negative attitude towards change (39 enterprises) and satisfaction with functional management (37 respondents). Lack of support from management/owners is reported by only 24 enterprises. The remaining responses stem from the text completion option and relate to financial costs or time commitment, each comprising 2% of the responses (Table 14).

Table 14. Disincentives for the introduction and application of process management in hotels.

Disincentives for the Introduction and Application of Process Management in Hotels	Total	
	N	%
You have not encountered process management yet and do not have enough information about it	48	41%
A negative attitude towards change	39	33%
Satisfaction with functional management	37	31%
Lack of support from management/owners	24	20%
Financial costs associated with it	2	2%
Time commitment	2	2%

When asking about the benefits that respondents not applying process management anticipate from its introduction, we utilized the same range of options as in the question posed to respondents applying process management (OT15).

Businesses that do not currently apply process management would be motivated to introduce it by a set of optimization factors, namely cost optimization for 42 respondents, time optimization for 21 respondents, and quality optimization for 18 respondents, respectively.

Moreover, the next expected benefit is the reduction in administration and bureaucracy, cited by 38 enterprises (given the open-ended choice of factors). Simultaneously, the second-largest group of cited factors pertains to employees (32 respondents), company culture fostering team spirit (25 respondents), and managers (8 respondents). Another significant factor, with 23 responses, is increasing competitiveness (Table 15).

Table 15. Motivational factors for the introduction and application of process management in hotels.

Motivational Factors for the Introduction and Application of Process Management in Hotels	Total	
	N	%
Cost optimization	42	36%
Reduction in administration and bureaucracy	38	32%
Increase in employee motivation and satisfaction	32	27%
Establishment of a new corporate culture with a team spirit	25	21%
Increasing competitiveness	23	19%
Time optimization	21	18%
Optimization of quality	18	15%
Improvement in relationships with external customers and internal customers (employees)	15	13%
Development of a functional measurement and evaluation system	12	10%
Increasing the level of awareness among management personnel	8	7%
Streamlining the organizational structure	6	5%
N/A	2	2%

If we compare these factors with the benefits already reported by companies that have introduced and mostly applied process management for 4 or more years, which accounts for 86% of the cases, we find some interesting contrasts. In both cases, the reduction in administration and bureaucracy ranks second, and the optimization of quality and time ranks in the 6th to 7th positions. Cost optimization appears to be the most crucial factor for potential users, but for those who have tested it through practice, it ranks as high as 8th place. Conversely, lower-ranked factors for potential users, such as the creation of a functioning measurement and evaluation system and the increase in the level of awareness of managers, are considered by companies with several years of real experience as the most highly ranked benefits (1st and 4th place).

5. Discussion

The study of process management, including the application of the Balanced Scorecard method, has garnered attention across sectors beyond tourism. However, within the tourism industry, there is relatively limited evidence regarding its design and implementation (McPhail et al., 2008; Sainaghi et al., 2013; P. Phillips & Moutinho, 2014; Hoque, 2014). While performance measurement systems have been explored in the literature for over six decades, recent criticisms emphasize the inadequacy of relying solely on financial indicators to evaluate business performance (Kaplan & Norton, 1996; P. A. Phillips, 1999; A. Neely & Al Najjar, 2006; McPhail et al., 2008; Papulová et al., 2014).

Within the framework of process management, this study examined key performance measurement systems proposed by Keegan et al. (1989), Oakland (1989), Cross and Lynch (1989), Fitzgerald et al. (1991), Kaplan and Norton (1996), Bititci (2015), and A. D. Neely et al. (2002). The formulated hypotheses (H1–H3) were tested by comparing correlation coefficients. The findings from our questionnaire survey reveal that respondents who have implemented process management predominantly apply it in the long or medium term. A significant majority, over 83%, positively evaluated their application level and recognized improvements in work streamlining. Respondents viewed the introduction and implementation of process management as either a positive step or a necessity. Establishing a

functional measurement and evaluation system was considered the most notable advantage, while initial communication difficulties and training costs were identified as challenges.

Among businesses that have not adopted process management, approximately two-thirds had no prior exposure to the concept, with this proportion notably higher among 1- to 3-star hotels. Nonetheless, about half of the respondents expressed interest in introducing process management, with up to 86% of 4-star hotels indicating interest. Despite this promising split, the most significant barrier identified, cited by 46% of respondents, was a lack of information and exposure to process management. Other barriers included resistance to change and satisfaction with traditional functional management approaches.

6. Conclusions

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism stood out as one of the largest and most dynamic sectors of the global economy, contributing approximately 10% of global GDP since the turn of the millennium (Statista, 2021). Furthermore, over the decade from 2009 onwards, the tourism sector witnessed consistent growth, with revenues from visitor spending growing at a pace exceeding that of the world economy (UNWTO, 2019). Between 2009 and 2019, international tourism receipts increased by 54% in real terms, surpassing the growth in world GDP (44%) during the same period. By 2019, tourism had become the world's third-largest export category, following fuels and chemicals but preceding automotive products and food (UNWTO, 2020). However, the 2020 coronavirus pandemic dealt a severe blow to various sectors of the economy, with the tourism industry bearing one of the heaviest burdens due to a sharp decline in international and domestic mobility. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2021), global tourism experienced its worst year on record in 2020, with international arrivals plummeting by as much as 74%.

Regrettably, a similar scenario unfolded in 2021. While few industries emerged unscathed from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic during these 2 years, the tourism sector suffered disproportionately. As a relatively more promising 2022 began to emerge, still amidst the lingering effects of COVID-19, a military conflict erupted in Ukraine in February 2022, marking the largest conflict in Europe since World War II. This conflict has brought about further extensive complications for international tourism, particularly in the Central European region but not limited to it. These complications primarily stem from the disruptions in international tourism travel and the subsequent surge in energy prices, leading to inflation rates in Slovakia that are significantly higher than the EU member state average (Slovak Statistical Office, 2024).

Operating a successful and resilient business in the present environment poses formidable challenges. Amidst the post-pandemic era and ongoing repercussions of military conflicts, the task becomes even more daunting. The evolving landscape, characterized by changing consumer needs, rapid advancements in information technology, and globalization, creates a highly dynamic and turbulent business environment.

In the tourism industry, adapting to these extraordinary changes has become increasingly challenging. Hotels must navigate through these turbulent waters to maintain operational efficiency and retain or attract guests. Consequently, there is growing pressure on tourism businesses to be more innovative and to strengthen their competitiveness not only on a global scale but also within local markets. In this context, the role of business process management in hotel innovation and competitiveness becomes crucial, offering a structured approach that enables greater flexibility, operational agility, and strategic responsiveness to extreme external changes.

Our research identifies the primary factors influencing the adoption of process management in Slovakia. By analyzing the Spearman's correlation coefficient, we uncover the key constraints hindering the implementation and adoption of this management sys-

tem within hotels. The findings of our study offer practical insights for comparison and benchmarking. This research represents the first of its kind conducted in Slovakian hotels and can be replicated on a larger scale, during different periods, or in other countries for comparative analysis of survey results.

Future research endeavors should seek to validate or challenge the aforementioned assertions for a more comprehensive understanding and generalization.

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