An Action-Systems Level Examination of Emergent Service Innovation within Multi-unit Service Organisations

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the adaptive and innovative practices required to solve the management problem of balancing service customisation simultaneously with service standardisation, in a variant of the public house or 'pub', comprising a nationally dispersed multi-site chain of community eateries. Due to the characteristics of this inter-organisational form (or multi-site structure) that includes dispersed site-level management with large numbers of front-line employees, each site must balance the routine and repetitive operationalisation of a standardised brand with adaptive practices to tailor the service to meet local needs. The thesis asks: What is the phenomenon of adaptive practice and how does it emerge at site level? Does it lead to innovative outcomes, and if so, how? And what do site-level managers need to do to develop this as an innovative capability to remain competitive in the local market? Existing contributions from the literature are fragmented, not sector specific and fail to reflect the complexity of adaptive and innovative practice leaving a research gap. This thesis establishes and operationalises an activity level perspective to capture emerging adaptive and innovative practice at site level, using a combination of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) and grounded analysis of a case study. Two different geographical sites delivering the same brand were investigated generating interview and observation data analysed in NVivo. One site was purpose built whilst the second site was an acquisition with legacy issues. Site level situations were modelled, as the activity system transitioned between calm and chaos, and the data was further interrogated to identify innovative practice adaptations embodied in an Innovation Matrix.

The research surfaced how an activity system assembles and mobilises routine practices with contingent practices as participants delivered a service experience. Innovative adaptive practice evidenced as both temporary and permanent coping responses to the evolving problem space, focused primarily on balancing productive capacity, supported by agency and social capacity, with customer requirements. The study confirms the role of contingent, situated site level informal practice-based service innovation adaptations in mitigating embedded tensions, contradictions, and inherent systemic failures within the service operation. As such practices appear as simultaneous fluid, flexible and rigid structures encompassing loose-tight activities that recursively either enable or disable innovative adaptive practice to occur.

This thesis contributes to the development of informal practice-based service innovation theory by defining adaptive capability in practice terms as a routine based dynamic capability impacted by socialisation, staff retention, informal learning and mastery, and leadership. The research makes a further contribution by proposing a framework to support and guide both site and multi-site managers to develop a dynamic adaptive capability to produce innovative outcomes. Finally, this thesis contributes to developing a novel research methodology to investigate activity systems within hospitality service-based contexts.

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Finally, I would like to dedicate this work to my wife, Joanne, and to my children, Ben and Lydia. They have inspired me, supported me with love and affection and kept me focused during difficult circumstances. I would not have completed this journey without them, thank you.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this research study is to investigate how front-line employees in the hospitality service sector contribute to developing an informal innovation capability through informal practice-based service innovation as part of the service experience of hospitality companies. The research study will then propose how service managers can better manage the development of an informal innovation capability. This purpose is considered from three managerial perspectives as follows.

Firstly, this thesis proposes that through the repetitive enactment of a branded service cycle, frontline staff recursively adapt and change practices to develop new ways of performing, motivated individually and collectively to meet organisational goals. This thesis suggests that the process of practice adaptation is largely unintentional, hidden and potentially unrecognised by both the employees who enact the repeating action patterns, and by their managers. However, this process potentially develops an evolving capability that generates new ways of doing things that are not necessarily either mandated or embedded in service brands and their accompanying pre-designed service blueprints. This thesis puts forward an argument that this capability is essential to enable a highly dispersed multi-site brand to operate successfully in its multi-faceted and localised markets. To investigate this process, the research focuses on the following key areas:

(1) The sources of variation that occurs at site level that may motivate front line staff to trigger practice adaptations.
(2) The innovative practice adaptation outcomes that stem from variation triggers.
(3) The mechanisms or processes by which (1) potentially leads to (2).

Secondly, this thesis proposes that service managers need guidance to enable them to better manage this largely unrecognised but essential capability for two key reasons: (a) that left unmanaged branded service standards may become compromised as employees adapt away from the mandated service cycle and; (b) that opportunities to improve and enhance service standards through sharing individual and collective adapted practice across dispersed sites are lost making an organisation less competitive. For these two reasons, the thesis intends to propose a framework for managerial staff that will provide guidance to enable them to better manage the development of an evolving and informal innovation capability at site and multi-site level.

Thirdly, this thesis recognises that a body of knowledge already exists to support managerial thinking that focuses on the mandated and intentional processes that are in already in play to design, develop and implement branded service cycles for example, the field of 'service design' (Stickdorn, 2010; Yu and Sangiorgi, 2018; Zomerdijk and Voss, 2010). These processes are largely based on a rational and formal

perspective of intentional activity and are recognisable as institutional structures by the participants who operate them. In contrast, this thesis' purpose is positioned to explore an organisation's informal and unintentional innovation activities with a view to consider how this can contribute to intentional service design and development. An overview of the related theoretical underpinnings is provided later in Sections 1.3 and 1.5.

In brief, this chapter will initially outline the study's context by introducing the hospitality service sector. It will then outline in more detail the inherent management problem, identifying a research gap. The chapter will then clarify the research aim, research objectives and research questions followed by proposing an initial analytical framework. An overview of the thesis structure is then outlined followed by a personal statement regarding the background and motivation of the Researcher to undertake this research study**.**

1.2 Service Sector Context

According to Ostrom (2010), 70% of gross domestic product (GDP) of the world's most advanced economies is generated from the service sector, with businesses looking for growth from the service element of their offer. In the UK, that figure increases from 70% to 80% of GDP with the service sector outperforming all other economic sectors between 2008 and 2018 (BEIS, 2022). In May 2022, the service sector's UK economic output was £59.3 billion (BEIS, 2022). As a subset of the UK service sector, the hospitality sector is broadly defined as 'food and accommodation services' and includes restaurants, bars, clubs, pubs and hotels supporting 2.53 million jobs in 2020 (House of Commons, 2022). However, some hospitality sub-sectors are in long term decline. For example, the economic trend for Public Houses (Pubs) in the UK, based on a report by the Institute of Economic Affairs, suggests the Pub sector is in long term decline largely due to changes in social norms such as improved healthy lifestyles (Snowdon, 2014).

The hospitality sector provides a wide variety of services. In this context service is defined as a "package of products and services as a customer experience enacted and performed by employees" (Pikkemaat et al., 2019: 188). Customers interact with hospitality services as service experiences, such as 'eating out' (Fox, 2003), that comprise an event, occasion, ritual, or ceremony imbued with significant social meaning (Ratcliffe et al., 2019). These inherently social events involve social exchanges which transmit cultural values such as rules, status, and fashion (Fox, 2003) within the social group, structured by social norms and conventions (Hawkins et al., 2018). Customers engage with service experiences based on specific expectations built from their personal experiences and their social and cultural backgrounds. For this reason, service experiences are highly socially complex and require front-line employees to be able to tailor and customise the service experience to the specific needs of customers (Sundbo, 2010) to co-create experiences (Gronroos and Voima, 2013). The social value of hospitality spaces to the community has also

been widely recognised, particularly for Pubs in the UK (Cabras and Mount, 2017; Muir, 2012; Orford, 2008), which are valued as a 'third place' (Goode and Anderson, 2015; Oldenburg and Brissett, 1982; Sandiford and Divers, 2019) by their local communities.

1.3 The Management Problem Context

This thesis investigates a variant of the Public House or 'Pub' as a chain of community eateries that is based on a value proposition of family food-led restaurant service with drinks and beverages, whilst still retaining a Pub (with bar) experience. Multi-unit service organisations or 'chains' are defined as geographically dispersed organisations (Garvin and Levesque, 2008) that are created from standard units such as retail shops, bars, restaurants, and hotels. Murray and Evans (2013) suggest that multi-unit organisations have very specific management characteristics particularly due to their inter-organisational form and requirements for dispersed management mirrored in more recent research by Tsolmon and Patacconi (2022). These characteristics lead to the following innovation management problems:

1.3.1 The problem of customisation versus standardisation

The inter-organisational form of dispersed multi-unit organisations focuses management to develop a standardised offer and then replicate it geographically through a centralised management system, whilst at the same time adapting and customising the offer to local contexts (customisation). In a similar vein almost 30 years earlier, Mintzberg and Waters (1985) identified the need for service firms with geographically diverse field operations to develop a strategy for building adaptive operations localised to the needs of customers. Garvin and Levesque (2008) examined the key role that the multi-unit manger plays suggesting their contribution to be one of a balancing act between the customisation and standardisation of operations. Chesbrough (2011) provides a model that depicts customisation in terms of a flexible front-end service delivered through standardised back-end internal processes, but he does not explain clearly how operational flexibility and standardisation work simultaneously together. Yet despite this ongoing discussion within the multi-unit service field of both strategy and its operational reality, there is a gap in understanding as to how this balancing capability works and how it then impacts on the performance of multi-unit organisations. For this reason, the thesis aims to provide guidance to managers on how to operate simultaneously more effective customisation and standardisation activities. To this end, three further problems follow that are defined in the following sections.

1.3.2 The problem of developing an adaptive capability

Lewin and Volberda (1999) point towards more successful firms who have developed adaptive practices to overcome their internal rigidities in the face of rapidly changing external environments. Conversely, other

scholars question how a capability built from replicable routines that may represent internal rigidities, simultaneously can be 'dynamic' suggesting the term 'dynamic capability' is a paradox (Salvato and Vassolo, 2017; Di Stefano et al., 2014). The volume of research by academics specialising in the fields of services marketing and innovation has also increased (Kupper, 2001; Kuusisto and Riepula, 2011). For example, a research study by Hertog et al. (2010) has found that successful service-based companies adopt dynamic service design and innovation capabilities. The idea that firms can achieve sustained competitive advantage through building dynamic capabilities developed from work by Barney (1991:102) who suggested that more successful firms have "rare, inimitable and non-substitutable resources". More recently, scholars such as Feldman et al. (2021) and Daronco et al. (2023), identify the antecedents and elements of a defined firm level dynamic innovation capability explored in Chapters Two and Three. These dynamic capabilities have been shown to positively impact key organisational performance metrics such as costs, revenue, customer and employee satisfaction, loyalty and brand perceptions (Ostrom et al., 2010). The process of creating dynamic capability involves combinations of routines as patterns of action (Feldman et al.,2021; Felin et.al., 2012) recursively impacted in some way by both individual and organisational learning (Aygris and Schon, 1974; Damanpour, 1991; Daronco et al., 2023; Ellström, 2010; Kodom-Wiredu et al., 2021; Pattison et al., 2016) enabling successful service organisations to continually adapt and tailor their service offer (or service standard) to optimise the customer experience journey (Kimbell, 2011; Insight, 2007). But it is not clear how this adaptation works in practice at the individual and collective levels within hospitality organisations.

1.3.3 The problem of managing informal innovation

The economic value of innovation to business and the wider economy in whatever form it takes, is widely recognised by successive UK governments who see the innovation output of UK business as an economic growth indicator (BEIS, 2021). The current government's new strategy attempts to focus and restore the UK's reputation as a leading power in science, technology, and innovation (The Prime Minister's Office, 2021). Similarly, innovation is identified as a key driver of competitiveness and economic growth by scholars (Griesmann et al., 2013; Snyder et al., 2016; Vukovic, 2019). In a report by NESTA (2007), service innovation, particularly hidden innovation, is recognised as increasingly important and similarly, research by both Christensen (2008) and Sundbo (1997) also recognise that service enterprises are innovative. Other scholars comment more specifically on the hotel and tourism industries where innovation is a source of performance improvement (De Larrea, 2021; Hjalager, 2010; Isik, 2019; Mattsson and Orfila-Sintes, 2014; Ottenbacher and Gnoth, 2005). Ostrom et al. (2010) comment on how service science is an interdisciplinary field that is evolving calling for research to stimulate service innovation. More recently, Bhat and Sharma (2022) suggest that technological innovation may be the best way to customise services to meet customer's specific needs, but Chernyak-Hai and Rabenu (2018) conversely point to technology driving lower employee status and reduced job certainty impacting on employee engagement and customer experience. However,

the important contribution of front-line employees to innovation processes is widely recognised (de Jong and Vermeulen, 2003; Kesting et al., 2010; Sundbo et al., 2015; Tonnessen, 2005). Generally, there is a scarcity of research into how the practice of adapting and tailoring the service happens informally at the service interface and how it could be incorporated into a service innovation capability (Blomkvist et al., 2010; Holmlid, 2007). Research is particularly sparse where tailoring and adapting is recognised as delivery innovation (Green et al., 2001) or innovation that is made on the fly (Sangiorgi, 2009). Similarly, Pattinson et al. (2016: 507) identify "that the place of innovation in sites of situated learning remains unclear" when researching dispersed communities of practice. Only a small number of examples of research exist on how dispersed front-line hospitality employees in multi-site situations contribute to innovation in practice, particularly regarding informal practice-based service innovation (Billett, 2012; Engen, 2016; Price et al., 2012). More fundamentally, informal practice innovation is not clearly defined in the innovation literature as a phenomenon which provides the necessary guidance and parameters for the Researcher to accurately investigate it. In Chapter Two, an attempt is made by the Researcher to define it in Section 2.4 (pages 48-50) as follows:

> Informal practice-based service innovation is way of acting which both individuals and groups perceive as new to them that recursively triggers disruption, variation and change in action patterns that become concretised in some form institutionally over time.

Based on this definition, this thesis aims to identify both localised site level variation and the consequential adaptations to practice, and then to provide site level and multi-site level managers with tools to enhance and control the practice of service cycle adaptations as way of developing an informal innovation capability.

1.3.4 The problem of managing people to support innovation

The hospitality sector is recognised as being highly labour intensive due in part to its dependence on employee-customer interactions at the service interface (de Larrea et al., 2021; Li and Hsu, 2016; Olsen, Tse and West, 2008). The sector has also been characterised with harsh working conditions which are even inhumane (Zopiatis et al., 2014). Research scholars have begun to highlight the impacts of the working environment on employees. For example, Benitez and Medina (2022) investigate the importance of wellbeing support to counter workplace exhaustion to improve service performance in the hospitality industry whilst Ballesteros-Rodríguez (2022) look at the negative impact of hospitality sector workloads on learning through reduced opportunities for training. In contrast, human resources are also recognised as a key factor in developing effective innovation capabilities (Aryanto et al., 2015; Damanpour, 1991; Feldman et al., 2021; Eliyana and Christiananta, 2020; Szeto, 2000) raising the question of how are sector working conditions reconciled with developing site level innovation capability? This thesis will explore from a managerial perspective how site level context impacts on developing an informal innovation capability

within a community of employees including their propensity for informal learning, socialisation, and their mutual development of collective practices.

In consideration of the all the factors above, this research study will focus on what is dynamic about an organisation's service innovation capability specifically looking at how informally individuals and groups within service firms learn from their experiences through the daily repetition of their service routines at service unit or site level. It will investigate the practice of contingent adaptation and customisation, examining how this practice evolves to enable organisations to (re-)shape, (dis-)integrate and (re-)configure their service offer (Hertog et al., 2010) providing a basis of building a dynamic capability in informal practice-based service innovation.

1.4 Research Aims and Objectives

Following the outline of the management problems above, the Researcher has identified the research study's aim, objectives, and research questions below.

1.4.1 Research Study Aim

The specific research study aim is:

- To build a framework for improving the effective management of localised variation-adaptation activity within the service experience and service design and development within a multi-unit service organisation.

1.4.2 Research Objectives

The specific research objectives are:

- To examine service design and innovation processes, systems, and networks in relation to service organisations.
- To investigate the relationships between sources of variation, customisation and adaptive practice and service innovation.
- To examine and develop approaches that could potentially enhance service innovation at the service interface.

1.4.3 Research Questions

Based on the research aim and objectives above, leads to two core research questions:

1. How does service innovation happen as a bottom-up phenomena in a hospitality organisation?

2. Does this process contribute to the development of institutional structures to support service innovation capability?

1.5 Research Study Analytical Framework

The Researcher has positioned this thesis within the context of a consumer-led service routine or service cycle, such as that found in a casual dining outlet, where both customers and employees take part in a service experience consisting of a series of interactions (Sundbo, 2008; Syson and Perks, 2004; Tether and Metcalfe, 2003).

The practice of service can be explained to some degree by the key concepts of situated action and situated contingency (Engeström et al., 2004) which account for human responsiveness to the environment and the improvisatory contingent nature of human activity (Lave, 1988; Suchman, 1987). Situated contingency (as action) suggests that learning occurs 'on the fly' rather than simply accessing and applying 'static' tacit or explicit knowledge (Crawford and Hasan, 2006). In recognising that human activity can be opportunistic rather than planned, Nardi (1997: 36) suggests that situated action highlights a tension between what is "emergent, contingent, improvisatory and what is routine and predictable" within an organisation. Or put another way, 'situatedness' highlights the tension between activities of standardisation (supported by more durable rigid structures and routine behaviours within a service firm) and activities of customisation (supported by situated action, opportunistic behaviour, and dynamic capability). Situated contingency becomes a potential linking concept between intentional change as strategy and unintentional practice as adaptations within the context of multi-unit service firm.

The role of context and 'situatedness' is recognised to impact the activities and actions of participants in the production of new knowledge associated with novelty and innovation (Janssen, Stoopendaal and Putters, 2015). Situatedness is made up of a number of features of the context that includes the physical features of individual service sites (such as layout, geographical position, facilities, internal ambience); the localised demography and behavioural characteristics of staff and customers; the embedded operational structures, tools and technologies used to support service environments and service interactions; the nature of staff and customer relationships and the cultural norms and rules they follow; staff expertise and their mastery of skills coupled with their individual and collective experiences; the individual and collective goals they try to achieve. Together, these features become a range of situation specific characteristics in the context that contribute to 'situatedness' which in turn potentially impacts on the emergence of localised practice innovation (Engeström et al., 2004; Kuutti, 2014). But rather than seeing these elements as causal constructs or variables in the production of an innovation outcome, this research study will take a

more holistic view of 'situatedness' to study the activity system that produces innovation. Situatedness operates at two levels. On one level, partly in alignment with the theoretical positions of Janssen, Stoopendaal and Putters (2015), Feldman and Orlikowski (2011) and Gallouj and Savona (2009), this research study views innovation as a process intertwined with complex social processes constituted through the enactment of service interactions in practice as situated actions over time (as shown in Figure 1 below). This reflects an ontological perspective that social practice constitutes social reality (Nicollini, 2012) in which social processes drive the production of new knowledge associated with the development of innovative capabilities and thus 'situatedness'. This perspective aligns with the wider practice field explored in Chapter Three, epitomised by Feldman (2011: 3) who identified two key constituents of practice theory. Firstly, that situated actions reflect 'agency' as a consequence of social life and, secondly, that interactions and relationships are mutually constitutive and therefore recursively related i.e. that "all recurrent actions constitute structures, but an enacted structure also constitutes the ongoing actions…such that actions transform structures (and vice versa) over time as an ongoing accomplishment" (Feldman, 2011: 3). In this sense identifying context, and the situatedness of actions and action systems within it, becomes one of the key research requirements for the research study. This will enable better understanding of how situatedness impacts on the social processes that produce new knowledge and thereby provides potential insights into how informal practice-based service innovation emerges. For this reason, a situational analysis that analyses 'situatedness' underpinned by Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) is justified and operationalised in this thesis as a core element of the research study's methodology in Chapter Three and Chapter Four. On another level, this thesis recognises the situatedness of the Researcher within the research process. Following the approach of Bryant and Charmaz (2010) and Thornberg's (2012) 'informed grounded theory' (outlined in Chapter Four) the researcher acknowledges he already has significant practical background and theoretical understanding of the innovation subject field and was therefore beyond doubt, sensitised with pre-conceived ideas before starting this thesis. The researcher is unable to unlearn this knowledge recognising this brings bias to the research process. The situatedness of the researcher is therefore acknowledged as another dimension of the context. For this reason a personal statement is provided in Section 1.7 and the Researcher's role in the research process is explored further in the Chapter Four.

The initial theoretical framework in Figure 1 reflects service interactions in a service experience as a series of situated interactions and relationships as a part of a system in which actors perform. The Researcher intends to investigate the relationships between actors, their actions and wider systems to develop an understanding of evolving and emerging innovative practice (Moritz, 2005; Pacenti and Sangiorgi, 2010; Segelstrom, 2010; Stickdorn, 2010). The framework embodies the idea that service interactions have the potential for front-line service employee initiative and creativity that take the

interaction into the unexpected, resulting in a novel and adapted service (Feldman et al., 2016). In-the-moment adaptations and innovative behaviour within service cycles reflects these idiosyncratic situations where value is very much "co-created, experiential, contextual, and meaning laden" and "phenomenologically determined" by the beneficiaries (Vargo and Lusch, 2004:44). This is particularly significant where this variation-adaptation activity results in contingent one-off behaviours of an innovative nature which leads to system wide impacts within a given situation. Service variability (or a related service concept, heterogeneity) is acknowledged as one of four key characteristics of services (Berry and Parasuraman, 1993). Two types of variability are generally identified within the service literature - variation in customer preferences and expectations and variations in producer delivery processes (Kannan, 2008) allied to theories of routines and capabilities (Daronco et al., 2023; Feldman et al., 2021). The research study is primarily interested in the second type of variation although it does acknowledge the role of customers as actors and subjects within the social milieu of a restaurant, Pub or other hospitality service-based offer.

In the early stage of the research process, the Researcher developed an analytical framework that highlighted how the service experience pathway and the service innovation pathway (see Figure 1 below) could be connected in some way. The descriptive framework proposed in Figure 1 was developed to depict key non-causal constructs that could provide necessary sensitising theoretical categories to investigate initially the boundary of the research study. The two pathways depict a localised model of a single organisational unit's activity (or site), via the black box, interacting with a centralised model of the controlling system activity. Figure 1 suggests that interactions and relationships between actors, that result in variation and adaptation activities at the service experience level, have the potential to affect changes at the service innovation level and vice versa – in other words, cause wider systemic changes.

The service experience activity system (Pathway 1) represents the implemented replicable value proposition of the organisation – the agreed service cycle as denoted by the organisation's brand. The service experience is essentially a pre-planned mechanistic service implemented according to an agreed service standard referred to as the 'service cycle'. Typically, in multi-unit service organisations, the service cycle is controlled at unit level by general managers who are held accountable at multi-unit level by regional and corporate actors operating through centralised systems. The development, implementation, operation, and control activities of the standard service cycle are defined initially as 'standardising activities' where the goal is to deliver a standard replicable service. These activities are embedded both within Pathway 1 at unit level and Pathway 2 at managerial level.

Figure 1: Analytical Framework
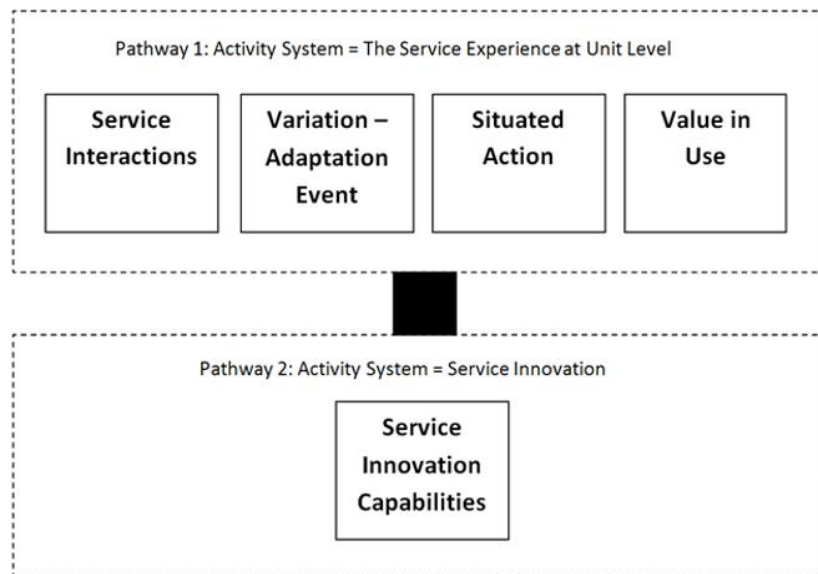
The service experience activity system is made up of a series of situated actions and operations which include 'service interactions' between actors (i.e., employee-customer interaction, customer-customer interaction and employee-employee interaction). Actor interaction may lead to 'variation-adaptation' events in which actors within the service experience, due to idiosyncratic factors (such as localised buyer behaviours) within the lived here-and-now of the experience, vary and adapt (customise) their actions and operations to achieve non-standard value in use. The analytical framework was designed to enable the Researcher to identify variation-adaptation events that trigger the emergence of change and development activities within the service innovation activity system (Pathway 2).

The service innovation activity system (Pathway 2) represents those activities focused on identifying and developing possible value propositions for the organisation through development and change activities. However, the research study focuses on the evolving and emergent practices that adapted the standard service contributing to dynamic capabilities for service innovation. Via the linking 'black box' the framework may help the Researcher surface how contingent and situated adaptive practices drive emergence of on-the-hoof or in-the-moment service innovation within a multi-unit service operation.

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is structured in six chapters. Chapter One introduces the purpose and rationale of the research study including the research aim and objectives. It seeks to articulate the problem of developing a service innovation capability that can better customise the service experience through front line employee practices in the multi-unit hospitality sector, as organisations attempt to both simultaneously standardise and customise the service experience.

In Chapter Two, a literature review of the innovation field specifically focuses on theories and frameworks related to innovation capability (IC) development (including Dynamic Capabilities [DCs] and Routine Dynamics), Innovation Management theories and the applied use of innovation theory in the service and hospitality innovation literature. The chapter outlines the challenges and complexities of identifying and defining a constantly transitioning phenomena (informal practice-based innovation) within a constantly transforming context made up of problem spaces and learning places.

In Chapter Three, a literature review of the practice field is presented, focused on theories and frameworks that account for how new and improved innovative practices emerge unintentionally through repetitive routines as patterns of actions. The literature review positions 'activity theory' as a subset of practice theory within the context of the thesis and justifies its use as a way of creating a situation analysis of practice-based innovation to better surface the micro-foundations and sub-processes of transformation and change in an organisation.

Together, Chapter Two and Chapter Three attempt to integrate a number of different fields to provide an argument for utilising both the routine-based theories of capability development and the practice-based theory of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) or more commonly known as Activity Theory (AT) (Engeström, 1987) as both theoretical and analytical frameworks to guide the research study. A theoretical framework emerges from the interdisciplinary analysis of these different subject fields to surface the temporal nature of practice and the inherent role of learning within it that supports change and development. These chapters clarify the focus of the research and the gap in understanding, establishing the lack of research on the role of front-line employees and the mechanisms by which they demonstrate informal practice-based service innovation. In addition, both chapters explore through different lens, whether informal practice-based service innovation can be considered a dynamic capability, the role of learning in an organisation and factors related to the social complexity of the situation.

In Chapter Four, a research design is created based on the Researcher's philosophical position and the evolving conceptual framework. The research design operationalises a practice rationality based on

informed grounded theory (Thornberg, 2012) using Activity Theory (Engeström, 1987), as an analytical framework to create a Situational Analysis. The research design incorporates two phases of qualitative data collection based on a case study of a multi-unit organisation from which to develop emerging substantive theory.

In Chapter Five, the research data is presented with a detailed overview of the implementation of the research design, including coding, relational coding and a comprehensive thematic analysis of the data structured around the Activity System and categories of innovation. The resulting Situational Analysis surfaces the tensions and contradictions of the activity system, resulting in the development of a 'Calm to Chaos' model. This informs the subsequent analysis of the data using an innovation lens.

In Chapter Six, a theoretical discussion of the emerging factors related to developing a capability of informal practice-based service innovation results in a revised framework that meets the aim and objectives of the research study. In the final section, the thesis is concluded with practice recommendations including recommendations for future research.

1.7 Personal Statement

It is important for me, as the Researcher, to highlight my background knowledge and motivations in the spirit of an interpretivist approach to research. I have spent 17 years in industry prior to starting this research study. I have worked both before and after this period in the Higher Education sector for a similar period resulting in around 30 years of practical work related to innovation. Practice is important to me, particularly working collectively to achieve a purpose that leads to innovative outcomes. In former roles, I particularly enjoyed working with creative teams of designers (graphic, product, interior, information, web and event designers) on innovative projects, and practising my own craft as an Industrial Designer.

I have managed large business teams through two recessions, including the 2009 financial crisis. Throughout this period, I had a growing realisation that despite the best laid plans – sometimes my own, or those of others – what was intended did not necessarily transpire and contingent decisions and actions played a significant role in professional life. The consequences of contingent action enabled hitherto unthought of ideas to be uncovered resulting in surfacing new strategic options, new planning, and new solutions. An extreme example of this was in March 2009. At the time I was presiding over a £23m 2-3 year forward planned orderbook of sales of a large-scale, high-volume contract manufacturer of wooden doors and windows. The market for these consisted of major housebuilders in the UK construction sector working on multi-plot new build sites. The market was buoyant, growing and the organisation was doing very well, but a few months later the order book reduced to £2.5M as the UK, and the rest of the world, entered the

financial crisis. Our corporate buyers disappeared, sometimes overnight, as their multi-million-pound construction sites were mothballed. Six months later we had diversified, changed our market, re-invented our offer, downscaled making redundancies, whilst those that were left in our production teams tried to figure out how to make the software and hardware produce bespoke one-off products as this was what the remaining market now wanted. We innovated, quickly, and my experience tells me that organisations must be able to have agility, flexibility, creativity and innovate to enable survival in all sorts of challenging circumstances. The simple realisation from this experience is that Plan A (intention) and Plan B (contingency) are two sides of the same coin in which the interplay between agency and structure figures in some way.

It was this situation and others much less extreme, that I have experienced that motivated me to look at what I considered to be informal innovation. What situations in business trigger informal innovative actions, practices, and behaviours? how do changes or adaptations happen in practice? and can informal innovation capability be better managed in some way – or is it just that it will always be ad-hoc? I thought I would investigate by looking at service innovation first.

As I mentioned above, I have worked on innovation research before as a Researcher on an EPSRC project (1992-94) that looked at where ideas come from at the fuzzy front-end of new product development. Our corporate sponsor was GEC Plessey Telecommunications (GPT) at a time when telecommunications companies were imagining combined voice and data products. We also went and researched Hewlett Packard and the ailing Rover Group. As part of the research team, we attempted to chart information flows and decision making across complex businesses which, in hindsight, whilst aligning with the technical rationality of the time, failed to capture the complexity of knowledge creation through practice. So, whilst I already understood some innovation theory and had experience of practicing innovation before embarking on this study, my thought processes were largely aligned with technical rationality supplemented by my contradictory experiences of doing innovation in product and service contexts. The result was that I recognised a gap between theory and practice, which triggered this study.

Chapter 2: The Innovation Lens – A Literature Review

2.0 Introduction and Overview

This chapter and the following Chapter Three discuss broadly the extant literature through two key subject fields or lenses, Innovation and Practice, as they apply to informal practice-based service innovation. The purpose of these chapters is to build an evolving analytical framework that can be further investigated empirically to support the main aim of the research study which is:

> To build a framework for improving the effective management of localised variation-adaptation activity within the service experience and service design and development within a multi-unit service organisation.

Reflecting the practice philosophy of this thesis (discussed in detail in Chapter Three), this main aim will deliver the initial outline of a practical framework that acts as guidance to organisations to better manage informal practice-based service innovation.

In addition, Chapters Two and Three specifically contribute to the first two of the stated core research study objectives which are:

1. To examine informal service design and innovation processes, systems and networks in relation to service organisations
2. To investigate the relationships between sources of variation, customisation and adaptive practice, value-in-use and service innovation.

The following two chapters develop an analytical framework on which a comprehensive methodology has been designed to answer the study's two core research questions:

1. How does informal service innovation happen as a bottom-up phenomena in a hospitality organisation?
2. Does this process contribute to the development of institutional structures to support service innovation capability?

More specifically, Chapter Two and Chapter Three attempt to integrate a number of different fields (see Figure 2 below) to provide an argument for utilising both the routine-based theories of capability development and the practice-based theory of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) or Activity Theory (AT) (Engeström, 1987) as both theoretical and analytical frameworks to guide the research study. Each field is discussed in turn to identify its contribution to understanding the research questions and to identify gaps in understanding in the extant literature.

In Chapter Three, Activity Theory (a constituent member of the family of practice theories) is introduced, including its philosophical development and the framework reviewed in detail. Examples are outlined as to how Activity Theory is used in research studies, including studies of innovation. The unit of analysis i.e., the 'activity system' as a collective activity (Engeström, 1987) is then outlined in detail, including its history and philosophical foundations of dialectic materialism.

2.1 Sources of Literature

A comprehensive review of literature began in 2011/12. Initially, this reviewed scholarly articles from 1995 onwards but then continued to encompass ongoing developments in the core and related fields to date, whilst also back tracking to earlier periods to garner and clarify the philosophical origins of some of the subject areas covered identifying seminal articles as appropriate.

For example, the 'Practice Turn' has grown in momentum and there has been a clear shift in the balance of articles espousing a practical rationality, away from a more traditional technical rationality (Schon, 2013). Technical rationality has a long heritage of a positivist epistemology of practice (Schon, 2013: 31) but since the mid 1960's, Schon suggests that:

> We have become aware of the actual importance to practice of phenomena – complexity, uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value-conflict – which do not fit the model of technical rationality (Schon, 2013: 39-40).

The Practice Turn is discussed in more detail in Chapter Three, but it is important to state that the researcher has assimilated and analysed the subject knowledge of different areas along the continuum of a practical/technical rationality as Schon (2013) puts it, from one extreme to the other.

The proposed analytic framework discussed in Chapter One requires a number of disciplinary fields to be investigated to assess their potential contribution to its development and refinement. The theories and frameworks covered in this chapter can be depicted in the following way:

Figure 2: Review of Literature to Support the Developing Analytical and Theoretical Framework
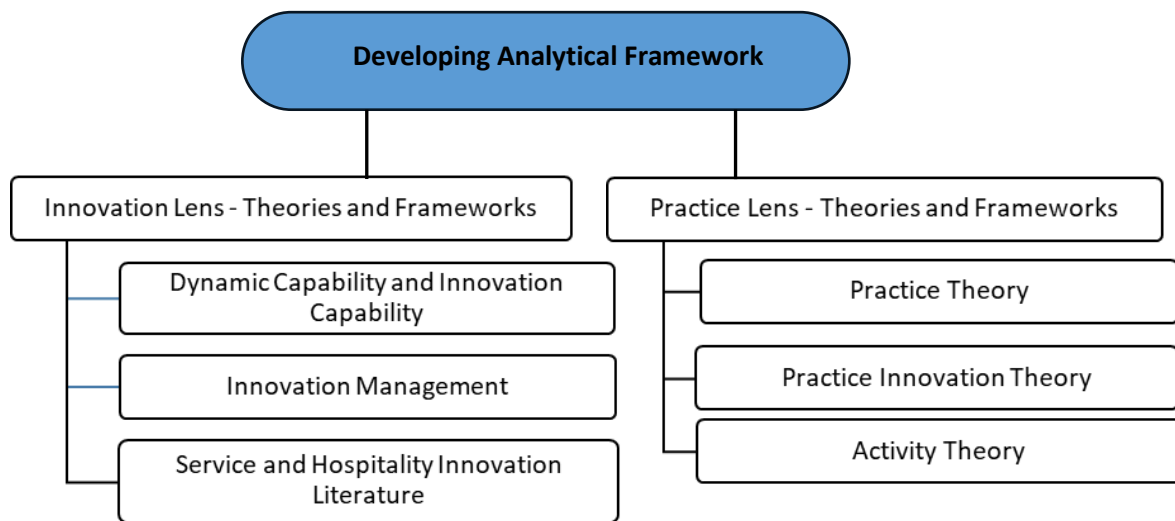
Scopus, Google Scholar, and other library databases were used to identify relevant literature. Initially, CABS (Chartered Association of Business Schools) journals were identified using the CABS database using the key words 'innovation [15]', 'service' [26], 'learning [12]', 'knowledge [6]', 'practice [16]', 'hospitality [19]' (numbers in [] denote number of journals with key words in their title). Each journal was then searched for articles that related to innovation practice either using practice-based approaches in their research design or used alternative philosophies or methodologies which directly related to innovation practice.

2.1.1 Selecting Literature

There have been challenges to investigating and synthesising practice-based studies. As Corradi et al. (2008) points out that as a group, practise-based studies has created a bandwagon effect in which a number of different types of research are carried out creating a polysemy of the term which includes; (1) "practice as a learning method" (for example 'learn-by-doing'); (2) "practice as an occupation or field of activity" or; (3) "practice as the way something is done" (Corradi et al., 2008: 279). It is this third use of the term that was used as the main selection criteria for identifying relevant literature although there were articles that overlapped into both (1) and (2) that have been included. The way something is done can be interpreted as similar in meaning to the ideas and concepts of 'routines' which provide the historical backdrop and theoretical underpinning to much of the more recent research conducted in a number of different areas but allied to concepts of capability. These include the micro-foundations of strategy (Felin et al., 2015), Routine Dynamics (Feldman and Pentland, 2022), Capability and Dynamic Capability (Ambrosini and Bowman, 2009; Salvato and Vassolo, 2017; Teece, 2018) and Innovation Capability theories (Daronco

et al., 2023) all of which are discussed and reviewed in varying degrees of detail later in both Chapter Two and Chapter Three.

Whilst 'routine' and 'practice' are viewed as potential synonyms (Ellström, 2010; Nicolini, 2012; Schatzki, 2012) and recognised to form the basis of both capabilities including innovation capabilities (both informal and formal), they come from different epistemological traditions. 'Routine' theory originated from more traditional processual and positivist theories of innovation as a system (based on input / output models), in contrast to practice theory which is derived from a tradition that ontologically acknowledges that practices are the "primary building blocks of social reality" (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011: 1241). Practice theory recognises that knowledge is created through performativity or 'the act of doing' routines in innovation through dialectic and recursive mechanisms in addition to knowledge as an input and output to the act of doing. Whilst routine-based theory (underpinning capability development) and practice-based theory are separate subject fields, both have the potential to contribute to the developing analytical framework to answer the research questions.

Thus, the literature in Chapter Two and Chapter Three are selected to demonstrate both the overlap and differences between routines, dynamic capabilities and innovation capability with innovation and practice theory. In this way, the justification for using practice as a linking concept between routines, capabilities, the innovation subject field and the practice subject field is provided, i.e. between Chapter Two and Chapter Three.

2.1.2 Limitations

Other challenges surfaced to find relevant articles for a variety of reasons related to; (a) the interdisciplinary nature of the research study (see Figure 2. above) in which scholars did not sufficiently locate their studies in specific sectors, using terms such as 'service', 'tourism' and 'hospitality' as a melting pot, interchangeably; (b) as already mentioned, the omnipresent use of the term 'practice' by large numbers of scholars who did not research practice as defined in this research study in their own research leading to large numbers of 'false positives' in the search; (c) the use of alternative names or descriptive phrases given for the term 'practice' (such as 'praxis', 'activity', 'action-orientated', 'systems', 'micro-foundations') forcing a significant widening of the original search terms to encompass a highly fragmented network of potential articles; (d) the requirement to find studies that attempted to overcome dualism and link agency and structure, and contained aspects of multi-level analysis (for example linking individual and institutional processes together such as the macro and micro levels); (e) establishing which articles were developing theory of practice and those that were applying practice theory to investigate practice in a given technical area whether it be education, health, ICT etc.; (f) balancing a significant thematic bias towards

innovation related to technology and manufacturing within the technical rationality paradigm against the practical rationality of other scholars, as an understandable reflection of the roots of innovation research to which the Researcher contributed in the 1990s (Bruce and Morris, 1994, 1996). Not-with-standing these challenges, the following sections attempt to analyse the literature from the different subject fields as per Figure 2, then synthesise these fields to conceptualise informal practice-based service innovation as an operational framework for the research study.

2.1.3 Research Questions

As outlined in Chapter One, the initial starting point of the study was service innovation based on two key research questions:

- RQ1: How does service innovation happen as a bottom-up phenomena in a hospitality organisation?
- RQ2: Does this process contribute to the development of institutional structures to support service innovation capability?

In this Chapter, the next sections review theories and frameworks related to concepts of 'capability' and then relate these to the innovation literature with a view to identifying innovation as a phenomena (which is core to this thesis), before moving onto discussing service and more specifically service innovation within the existing body of literature.

2.2 Dynamic Capability (DC)

As mentioned in section 2.1.1, as a backdrop to the ensuing detailed literature review, and a linking construct between an array of factors relevant to this research study mentioned earlier, an overview of dynamic capabilities based on 'routines' is provided below.

Dynamic capabilities are believed to provide competitive advantage and are an extension of the Resource-Based View (RBV) of the firm (Barney, 1991, 1995). The construct attempts to account for how static resources are renewed in changing environments to avoid core rigidities (Leonard-Barton, 1992) and thus maintain competitive advantage reflected in the definition of dynamic capabilities (DCs) as "the firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competences to address rapidly changing environments" (Teece et al., 1997: 537). This construct of DCs talks to the research study's initial conceptual framework of variation-adaptation events in service contexts and may therefore provide theoretical insights for further investigation. DCs may provide insights into the mechanisms by which frontline employees contribute to an organisation's competitiveness through innovation practices.

The phrase 'dynamic capability' is widely recognised to refer to the dynamic aspect between the external environment and the internally driven firm response with most studies focusing on the external competitive environment as the core dynamic trigger (Ambrosini and Bowman, 2009). However, scholars also point to the role of internal routines to produce dynamic capabilities such as Teece (2018). Similarly, example, Zollo and Winter (2002: 340) define dynamic capabilities as "a learned and stable pattern of collective activity through which the organization systematically generates and modifies its operating routines in pursuit of improved effectiveness". But if routines are based on repetitive processes and behaviours that produce capability, this leads to a paradox of how reproduceable capability can also simultaneously lead to renewal and change i.e., be 'dynamic'? For this reason, Schreyogg and Lliesch (2007: 924) advise that 'dynamic capabilities' as a phrase is a contradiction in terms suggesting repetitive routines may eventually transform existing and valuable capabilities into rigidities to change. Similarly, Salvato and Vassolo (2017: 1729) point to how dynamic capabilities are paradoxical entities that "simultaneously involve stability and change" and Helfat et al. (2009) also point to the need for firms to have capabilities that both provide reliability from routines and creativity to reconfigure resources.

Similarly, the widely cited systematic review of dynamic capability research by Di Stefano et al. (2014) points to the lack of consensus amongst scholars as to the core elements of the concept largely due to the contradictory approaches of the subject's seminal papers. For example - Teece, Pisano, and Shuen (1997) see dynamic capability as a latent ability (to be triggered when required), whilst in contrast, Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) see dynamic capability as a process or routine in constant practice.

Salvato and Vassolo (2017) suggest that an over emphasis on how dynamic capabilities emerge from organisational level routines has failed to recognise the full extent of the role of the individual level, suggesting that the adaptive nature of dynamic capability is underexplored. This view is shared by other scholars (for example Laaksonen and Peltoniemi, 2018) and has led to studies that focus on the micro-foundations of dynamic capabilities (Felin et al., 2015) to explore individual level contribution. Other scholars voice similar concerns that routines are based on past contexts and situations, thus leaving no explanation for how firms innovate by trying something new or different, with Salvato and Vassolo (2017) pointing to gaps in our understanding such as:

1. How does individual-level change skills and efforts aggregate to form an organizational-level change routine?
2. How do innovative actions of employees create a firm-level capacity for dynamism that is effective and reliable over time?
3. How does a firm's repetitive, patterned routines for innovation persist over time without curbing the creativity of individual participants, on whom the actual operation of dynamic capabilities ultimately rests?

4. How can employees' intentionality and emotions be accounted for in change processes rather than acting on habit or cold cognition alone? (Salvato and Vassolo, 2017: 1732)

These questions overlap to a degree with those of this thesis, particularly the first question which similarly surfaces the issue of how frontline employee actions, such as in a hospitality context, may impact on institutional structures, such as routines. Di Stefano et al. (2014: 312) identifies five thematic elements of dynamic capabilities linked together in their concept of an 'organisational drivetrain' in their comprehensive literature review of Dynamic Capability research which includes:

> (1) the nature of the construct (what a dynamic capability fundamentally is), (2) the agent (who exerts it), (3) the action (by doing what), (4) the object of the action (on which direct object), and (5) the aim or purpose of the construct (with which ultimate goal).

Di Stefano et al. (2014: 319-320) go on to propose that both "stable and adaptive processes are operating simultaneously" in an interlinked adaptive system (the 'drivetrain') through what they describe as a "socially complex and hard-to imitate *dynamic bundle* of resources and capabilities" (italic emphasis left for originality). Accordingly, their proposed drivetrain model represents a dynamic system that both changes existing capabilities whilst developing new ones to meet new opportunities arising. However, what is meant by 'socially complex' and 'dynamic bundle' is not fully explained, nor is how managers should operationalise and implement the dynamic system.

Dynamic capability scholars propose different levels of capabilities in the firm based on a typology. These include zero-level (or ordinary /operational) capabilities which enable an organisation to compete in the here and now (Winter, 2003), first-level capabilities which enable firms to modify zero-level capabilities, and higher-order capabilities (Collins, 1994) that relate to learning-to-learn capabilities. First level and higher order capabilities are dynamic enabling a firm to change. For example, "dynamic capabilities create opportunities for new value-creating strategies through modifying ordinary capabilities (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000 quoted in Laaksonen and Peltoniemi, 2018: 185). But Helfat and Winter (2011: 1243) point out that the distinction between zero order capabilities and dynamic capabilities is "unavoidably blurry". Laaksonen and Peltoniemi (2018: 193) attempt to clarify the distinction by saying: "zero-order resources and capabilities...[are]... the individual employees per se and their ability to take care of their daily tasks whilst dynamic capabilities…[are]…the firm's ability to change the ways in which it uses its employees' skills." But what if employees 'taking care of their daily tasks' cause new learning and adaptations to occur to their practice, creating expertise that is an enabler for change? In what way are employees not exhibiting a first order dynamic capability in this respect? As Helfat and Winter (2011: 1245) put it: "change is always occurring to at least some extent…and … some capabilities can be used for both operational and dynamic purposes.". Accordingly, this research study will investigate in detail zero-level capabilities at site level (in

the Hospitality sector) and their relationship with first-level and higher order capabilities depending on what emerges from the data.

Ambrosini and Bowman (2009: 35) propose that dynamic capabilities consist of four main processes: "reconfiguration, leveraging, learning and creative integration". Reconfiguration relates to the "transformation and recombination of assets and resources" (for example because of M&A activity); Leveraging relates to how a process or system can be replicated across other business units; learning reflects the process of experimentation and reflecting on failure and success; Creative integration relates to how new resources emerge from combinations of existing assets and resources (Ambrosini and Bowman, 2009). Of particular interest to the Research study is the role of learning, creativity and knowledge creation in dynamic capabilities. Again, Ambrosini and Bowman (2009: 31)) in their review and synthesis of dynamic capability research highlight that "the mechanisms by which firms learn and accumulate new skills and capabilities, and the forces that limit the rate and direction of this process" support the development of dynamic capabilities. In relation to knowledge creation, Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) give some insights in to these mechanisms, emphasising the significant role of practice and experience in the development of new knowledge as part of a dynamic capability. Similarly, Zollo and Winter (2002: 15) describe a "knowledge evolution cycle" that enables firms to change how they do things through transforming tacit knowledge into explicit codified knowledge. This in some ways aligns to the spiral model of knowledge management proposed by Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) referred to as the SECI model. Notions of learning cycles are recurrent themes elaborated on further in later sections of this literature review (for example see Chapter Three, Section 3.3). This thesis proposes that informal learning (i.e. learning that occurs unintentionally between individuals, teams and communities through the performance of their tasks and activities) contributes to knowledge creation and therefore could be a key mechanism in developing an informal service innovation capability.

But this creates a problem for the research study in that the vast body of extant literature focuses on dynamic capability development driven by deliberate organisational intention based on some patterned, repeatable, and persistent phenomena rather than informally through ad-hoc unintended processes (Helfat et al., 2009). As Ambrosini and Bowman (2009: 34) state, dynamic capabilities are "about one type of change, the intentional change of the resource base". However, they also acknowledge that change can occur through emergent processes and suggest that future research may want to address the extent to which new resources are created or renewed through emergent processes. Ambrosini and Bowman (2009: 36) accept that the extant literature on dynamic capabilities "by and large describe broad organizational processes; they do not delve into the detailed, micro mechanisms of how these capabilities are deployed or how they 'work' suggesting that qualitative studies may be best placed to find evidence of idiosyncratic and intangible phenomena…for …understanding the subtlety of resource creation and regeneration processes"

(Ambrosini and Bowman, 2009: 40). But they also state that in general dynamic capabilities have been poorly specified making it difficult for researchers to know what to look for, and that as a concept, 'it has thus far proven largely resistant to observation and measurement' (Kraatz and Zajac, 2001 quoted in Ambrosini and Bowman, 2009).

This thesis utilises a qualitative methodology to investigate the research questions and for reasons stated later in the methodology chapter (Chapter Four) re-affirms the requirement for qualitative approaches to unearth the intangible phenomena of informal practice-based service innovation capability.

2.2.1 Dynamic Capabilities and Routine Dynamics

One potential area that develops the concept of routines to account for the dynamic aspects of dynamic capability is routine dynamics proposed initially by Feldman (2000) as the "building blocks of an organisation's economic capabilities" (Feldman and Pentland, 2022:848) which was further developed as a field in 'The Handbook of Routine Dynamics' (Feldman, Pentland and D'adderio, 2021). Whilst routine dynamics are firmly placed in the practice field, it is useful at this point to briefly discuss the contribution of routine dynamics to the dynamic capabilities field.

Accordingly, Feldman and Pentland (2022) describe routine dynamics as "a practice perspective that sensitizes the researcher to . . . particular action patterns" …[where]… "actions (re)create structures that constrain and enable ongoing actions" (Feldman and Pentland, 2022: 848). The routine dynamics perspective proposes that the reproduction of the routine as a performance in changing social contexts, creates nuanced changes to the actions and patterns in actions, creating an emerging trajectory of routine change. In this way routine dynamics account for both rigidity and change in organisations as an evolving and recursive process.

In the hospitality sector, routines as action patterns (for example, how a group is served at a table or drinks served at a bar) not only reproduce the service experience but they also reproduce the social context (the underlying social norms and taken-for-granted social order) in which those experiences are valued by participants and thereby become normalised, embedding the action pattern in how things are done by both the service staff and the customers. Routines produce action patterns through performative cycles on which Feldman and Pentland (2022: 850) further elaborate:

> Performing refers to the actions we take in performing routines; patterning refers to the impact of patterns on actions and the ongoing creation of patterns through actions (Feldman and Pentland, 2022:850)

A practice-based routine dynamics perspective potentially provides opportunities to surface the patterns in actions and performance cycles from a practice perspective in a hospitality situation.

2.2.2 Antecedents of Dynamic Capability

A number of researchers (Damanpour, 1991; Jansen 2006; Zou et al., 2018;) identify that the ability of a firm to absorb knowledge is a determinant of the development of a dynamic capability such as innovation capability (stemming from the seminal work by Cohen and Levinthal (1990). Termed 'absorptive capacity' Cohen and Levinthal (1990: 128) define it as 'the "ability to identify, assimilate, and exploit knowledge from the environment" and argue that as a concept, absorptive capacity is "not resident in any single individual but depends on the link across a mosaic of individual capabilities" (Cohen and Levinthal, 1990: 133). As Marbabelli and Newell (2014: 480) explain:

> …the individual, based on prior knowledge, captures new external knowledge; this knowledge is subsequently 'moved about' within the firm (team/ organizational level) until it generates valuable outcomes (innovation and, in turn, organizational performance).

The literature on absorptive capacity focuses on individual learning and the associated cognitive processes such as intuition and interpretation which characterise knowledge transfer between individuals and teams through communication channels (Lane et al., 2006). But other mechanisms are also available for knowledge transfer including socialisation (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) and through communities of practice via legitimate peripheral participation as novices learn from experts (Lave and Wenger, 2011). More recently Zhao et al. (2020) propose how absorptive capacity coupled with individual creativity is a direct mediator between knowledge sharing and organisational innovation performance.

Similarly, in their review of absorptive capacity as a concept, Marabelli and Newell (2014) found that previous research overly focused on individual rather than collective approaches to knowledge sharing and transfer. Their argument suggests a historical singular focus on an epistemology of knowledge possession which can then be transferred, as opposed to concepts of knowledge being unpredictable and dynamic constituted through shared practice. They identify only one paper by Volkoff et al. (2004) that looked at the role of practical interactions i.e., communities of practice, that support knowledge sharing and transfer as a mechanism for building absorptive capacity to underpin dynamic capability. Marabelli and Newell (2014) point out that by seeing absorptive capacity as a purely cognitive process, previous studies ignore the potential of accidental processes such as informal learning through social ties based on social processes of interaction that are pervasive in the workplace and are acknowledged to be "key in facilitating the evolution of absorptive capacity" Marabelli and Newell (2014: 482). These learning mechanisms identified as part of absorptive capacity support the notion of informal learning that underpins the dynamic aspects of dynamic capability and thus the potential development of an innovation capability.

For example, the practice lens explored in detail in Chapter Three, views knowledge creation as an emergent and performative process which requires researchers to investigate everyday practice and repetitive routines, in which knowledge is not transferred but in sharing and absorbing knowledge, it is transformed and translated by individuals and groups to achieve knowledgeability in a specific context (Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2011). This is described as a "generative dance" by Cook and Brown (1999: 381). Marabelli and Newell (2014: 494) elaborate:

> …it is our interactions (individually and collectively) with the world that allow new knowledge to be acquired, assimilated, transformed and exploited, with our possessed knowledge/power being a tool that leads us to interact in particular ways.

This approach follows the model by Volberda at al., (2010) of absorptive capacity that suggests there are four basic interaction phases that support knowledge creation: recognition, assimilation, transformation, and exploitation. Accordingly, it is through these phases that the innovation process is enacted by participants who develop ideas and then exploit them, not in a sequential or smooth way, but rather a "messy unfolding of innovation in practice" Marabelli and Newell (2014: 490). They go on to outline how each phase involves not only discursive practices, but also knowing from practice through the 'hands -on' use of artefacts (and tools such as IT equipment) expanding the construct further to incorporate the absorptive capacity of things. However, Marabelli and Newell (2014) also outline how equally communities of practice, discussed earlier, develop routines through everyday practice that create potential barriers for absorbing new knowledge, limiting knowledge sharing between communities and restricting communication, and so restrict the absorptive capacity phases, concluding that routines are both conditions for and barriers to absorptive capacity. As mentioned earlier, the concept of absorptive capacity provides theoretical insights for the research study, particularly in respect of the interaction phases outlined above and how they contribute to dynamic capabilities such as the development of informal practice-based service innovation capability.

Based on the above discussion, this thesis proposes that emerging and developing routines as practices act as both the carriers and motivators for informal learning through performativity (via individual and group interaction), and that informal learning acts recursively on the emergence and development of patterns of actions as routines and practices. Thereby, routines as practices are fundamental micro-mechanisms to drive the development of informal service innovation capability. The antecedents and mechanisms of innovation capability, as a dynamic capability, are further explored in the following sections to support this view.

2.2.3 Innovation Capability (IC)

Innovation capability (IC) is acknowledged as a dynamic capability (DC) and "widely recognised in the innovation management literature" as such (Daronco et al., 2023:237; Lidija and Robert, 2014). Innovation Capability has received particular attention defined as the "capacity of an organisation to purposefully create, extend or modify a firm's product or service offerings, processes for generating and/or delivering a product or service, or customer markets" (Helfat et al., 2009, quoted in Felin et al., 2012: 10). And the role of routines there-in to support innovation is also widely recognised, for example Liao et al. (2009) state:

> The key factors to manage innovations are routines and processes that aim at developing innovations in organizations, and these routines and processes are embedded in the firm as ongoing activities that are interlocked and interdependent in workflows.

Innovation Capability is used to "explain the wide variability in firm's innovation performance" (Daronco et al., 2023: 237). Innovation capability as Hii and Neely (2000: 5) argue, is the "potential to generate new ideas, identify new market opportunities and implement marketable innovations by leveraging on existing resources and capabilities" (Cited in Breznik and Hirsrich 2014: 374). Similarly, Innovation Capability (IC) is defined as the "capacity of an organisation to purposefully create, extend or modify a firm's product or service offerings, processes for generating and/or delivering a product or service, or customer markets" (Helfat et al., 2009, quoted in Felin et al., 2012: 10).

Szeto (2000) defines IC as "the ability to continuously improve firm resources and capacities that can be used to generate innovation" (cited in Daronco et al., 2023: 240). They are also a set of characteristics that enable the firm to carry on its innovation process (Valitov and Khakimov, 2015). Other researchers emphasise the link between DCs and ICs, for example Breznik and Hisrich (2014: 374) put forward clear arguments that ICs are DCs going as far to say that "there is no difference between innovation capability and dynamic capability at all; they could even be seen as synonyms" (Breznik and Hisrich, 2014: 379). In a similar way as authors who write about Dynamic Capability, Researchers writing about IC acknowledge the IC "is a result of learning processes continuously developed over time. Indeed, learning and transforming knowledge and ideas into new or improved products, processes, and systems for the benefit of the firm is the main goal related to innovation capabilities (Birchall and Tovstiga, 2005; Lawson and Samson, 2001, cited in Brznik and Hisrich 2014: 375). The importance of learning in innovation is explored further in later sections.

Daronco et al. (2023) go further to identify a 'Propensity-ability framework' of IC where propensity characteristics include Participatory Leadership, Organisational Culture, Human Resource Management

(HRM) amongst others and (b) ability characteristics that include innovation mechanisms such as learning processes and knowledge capabilities as shown in Figure 3 below:

Figure 3: Firm-Level Innovation Capability Framework
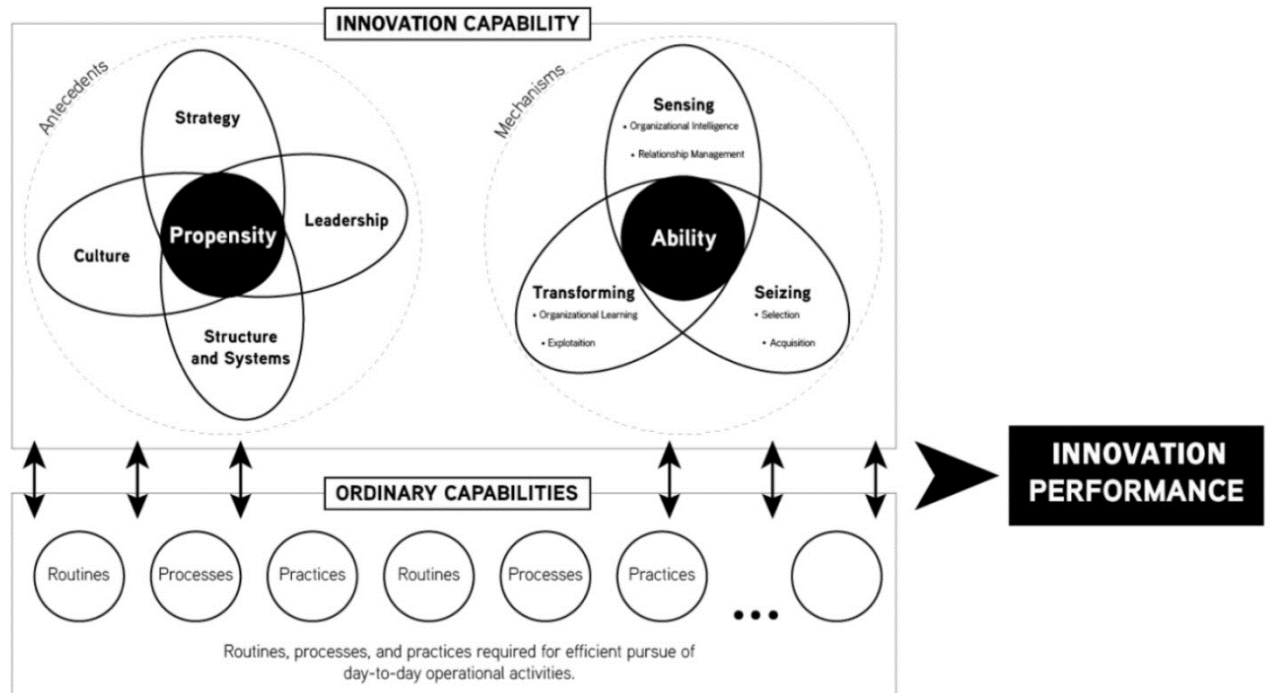
(Figure 3 adapted from Daronco et al., 2023: 242)

This model builds on earlier work by Teece and Pisano (1994: 537) which identifies the role of strategic management and leadership as key to dynamic capability development. However, as they point out, there is still no operational definition of Innovation capability due to the blurring of innovativeness as a concept that involves a "complex multi-dimensional system of interlocking elements" (Daronco et al., 2023:240).

2.2.4 Summary

The preceding sections identify routines as practices that are the building blocks of capabilities per se (whether DCs or ICs), conceptualised from a routine dynamics perspective. Routine dynamics act as a linking construct between the practice of day-to-day operational activities (ordinary capabilities), such as those conducted by front line employees, and the development of higher order capabilities of innovation (such as innovation capability). Routine dynamics brings together concepts of individual and organisational learning through performativity and develops an approach that attempts to account for the emerging

action patterns of innovation. In this way, the theory of capability development based on routine dynamics surfaces potential mechanisms that contribute to understanding this thesis' research context and may provide additional insights to support the investigation of the research questions:

- RQ1: How does service innovation happen as a bottom-up phenomena in a hospitality organisation?
- RQ2: Does this process contribute to the development of institutional structures to support service innovation capability?

In the remaining sections of this chapter, the innovation literature is reviewed and related back to capability where appropriate, followed by Chapter Three that focuses on practice theory whilst elaborating on the conceptual relationships between capability, innovation and practice.

2.3 The Innovation Lens

2.3.1 Introduction

The Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS, 2022: 11.12) part of the UK Government, recognises the innovation output of UK business as an economic growth indicator measuring innovation based on the following definition:

> The creation and application of new knowledge to improve the world… [stating that] … 'innovation is the lifeblood of businesses. Innovation turns great ideas into value, prosperity, productivity, and wellbeing. It is the mechanism by which we adapt to new opportunities and challenges. It is central to the UK's international reputation and influence.

Its predecessor, the former UK Office of Science and Technology Strategy (OSTS) some 15 years earlier stated that innovation was "the motor of the modern economy, turning ideas and knowledge into products and services" (quoted in Tidd and Bessant, 2006:7). Clearly, the UK government has identified innovation as a strategic priority for over two decades, but neither definition, then or now, provides a useful indicator of innovation output or what informal innovation is and how it contributes.

The current government's new strategy attempts to focus and restore the UK's reputation as a leading superpower in science, technology, and innovation (Prime Minister's Office, 2021). Most innovation studies consider innovation as something that is new in line with both Schumpeter (1934) and the more recent OECD /Eurostat (2018: 20) definition that states innovation is:

> A new or improved product or process (or a combination thereof) that differs significantly from the unit's previous products or processes and that has been made available to potential users (product) or brought into use by the unit (process).

Schumpeter (1911) used the concept of innovation in his book – 'The Theory of Economic Development' in which he describes innovation as including several activities such as researching, discovering, improving and commercialising new processes, products and organisational structures and procedures (Hjalager, 2002, 2010). Schumpeter (1934) defined innovation "as an activity through which inventions are carried out in the market for a commercial purpose" (Snyder et al., 2016 quoted in de Larrea, 2021: 1). Fuglsang (2010), who investigated innovation in the public sector notes that innovation must consist of "two intertwined activities: 1) inventing or identifying something new, and 2) developing this 'new' so that it becomes accepted in an organisation, on the market, or in society" (National Audit Office, 2006, quoted in Fuglsang, 2010: 72). Similarly, whilst not to be confused with invention (Roberts, 2007) which can just be a novel idea, sketch, concept or prototype, an innovation must be implemented or commercialised to benefit an organisation (Freeman, 1974). Similarly, Kanter (1983: 20) described innovation as:

> The process of bringing any new, problem-solving idea into use. Ideas for reorganizing, cutting cost, putting in new budgetary systems, improving communication or assembling products in teams are also innovations. Innovation is the generation, acceptance and implementation of new ideas, processes, products, or services. Acceptance and implementation are central to this definition; it involves the capacity to change and adapt.

Clearly, scholarly perspectives above show that there are several themes emerging about innovation which include ideas around 'newness', 'flexibility', 'change', 'adaptation' and 'acceptance' that infer increasing use of social constructs to describe not just the outcomes but the practice of innovation.

One of the challenges with defining innovation is that it can be broadly considered as both an outcome (e.g., a new or improved product or service) and a process (Crossan and Apaydin, 2010) which follows the view by Burgelman and Maidique (1996:2) that "Innovations are the outcome of the innovation process, which can be defined as the combined activities leading to new, marketable products and services, or new production and delivery systems". Crossan and Apaydin (2010: 1155) suggest innovation is:

> …production or adoption, assimilation, and exploitation of a value-added novelty in economic and social spheres; renewal and enlargement of products, services, and markets; development of new methods of production; and establishment of new management systems.

As such Innovation is considered "a highly complex social phenomenon" (Nicolini, 2012: 9) which has led both researchers and organisations to propose multiple definitions in an attempt to improve innovation

management within different sectors and contexts. Similarly, Edwards-Schachter (2016) highlights the issue of innovation as:

> …an umbrella term involving a myriad of innovation types described as "buzz words" or "container concepts." Innovation is not only "technological" but also "social," "cultural," "institutional," "inclusive," "green," "eco," "open," "user-driven," "lean," "low-cost," "grassroots," "public," and "transformative" (Edwards-Schachter, 2016: 65)

Many authors have attempted to identify and define innovation from a multi-disciplinary perspective. In their review, Bareghed et al. (2009: 1334) identified over 60 overlapping definitions of innovation across 249 papers that cover multidisciplinary subject areas concluding with a definition of their own:

> Innovation is the multi-stage process whereby organizations transform ideas into new/improved products, service or processes, in order to advance, compete and differentiate themselves successfully in their marketplace. Bareghed et al. (2009: 1334)

2.3.2 Problems with defining the Innovation phenomena

To further illustrate the shortcomings of a traditional technical rational perspective, Burgelman et al. (1996: 3) provide a comprehensive overview of process led innovation which proposes "tinkering and experimenting" as a key concept which begins to recognise the improvisatory, emergent aspects of innovation. However, only a page or so of the extensive 921-page textbook of guidance provided specifically discusses what tinkering and experimenting might consist of. Similarly, Argyris (2004) in his book 'Reasons and Rationalisations' directly criticises the structural approach to strategy formulation of Burgelman et al. (1996), which centred on a case study of Intel, instead of focusing on what Schon terms 'theory-in-use' through double loop learning that emphasises inquiry and testing. What the extensive textbook did note, albeit briefly and more usefully, was a paradox of 'continuity and chaos' in their research findings of innovation success factors:

> Some of the behavioural patterns that these companies displayed seemed to favor promoting disorder and informality, while others would have us conclude that it was consistency, continuity, integration, and order that were the keys to success… we came to realise that continued success…requires periodic shifts between chaos and continuity [American spelling left as original text] (Burgelman, 1996: 21)

The relationship between chaos and continuity, reflecting a wider philosophical debate around agency and structure, is explored in Chapters Two, Three and Four as a key constituent of informal practice-based innovation. Generally, stage-gate definitions fail to provide explanatory power in this respect, because the

assumption is that innovation is a rationale logical process when there is sufficient evidence that quite often, it is the reverse. For example, Kline and Rosenberg (2010: 173) state:

> Models that depict innovation as a smooth, well-behaved linear process badly mis specify the nature and direction of the causal factors at work. Innovation is complex, uncertain, somewhat disorderly, and subject to changes of many sorts.

This research project will specifically address the gap in understanding of innovation as an uncertain and 'somewhat disorderly' process by investigating the more informal aspects of innovation as discussed later (in section 2.3.3.5).

2.3.3 Innovation Defined

Scholarly perspectives on innovation continue to move away from processual models of innovation towards incorporating ideas of interaction, of inquiry and experimentation, tinkering and testing, of disorderly and orderly activity, of continuity and change recognised as requiring organisational ambidexterity (Tushman and O'Reilly III, 1996). In practice, Hjalager (2010: 2) notes that most scholars appear to accept that "innovation is generally characterised by everything that differs from business as usual, or which represents a discontinuance of previous practice in some sense for the innovating firm". In a similar vein Hanson and Wakonen (1997) note ''it is practically impossible to do things identically therefore anything different is innovation" (quoted in Crossan and Apaydin, 2010:1155). But what is meant by different, or for that matter what is new?

Similarly, Johannesson, Olsen and Lumpkin (2001: 20) point out – "what is new?". In their study they embraced the definition of innovation by Zaltman et al. (1973) as "any idea, practice, or material artifact perceived to be new by the relevant unit of adoption'' (quoted in Johannesson et al., 2001:22). Johannesson et al. (2001) argue that whilst generally studies of innovation concur it is something 'new', what 'new' is appears to be still unclear. Their study of innovation asked Senior Management what is 'new'? and 'how new is it?', and 'new to whom?'. The results of their study suggested that "innovation ranges across a single continuum that encompasses all three aspects" (Johannesson et al., 2001: 27). This is consistent with previous research which suggests that "the innovation construct need not be fragmented into separate categories or types" (Van de Ven, 1986: 22). However, their study pre-supposes that innovation is accessible, observable, and identifiable by senior management, however, as will be discussed in Section 2.3.3 below, informal and emergent innovation lies beneath the surface of everyday practice and is hidden (Nesta, 2007).

Some 15 years later in 2016 after Johannesson et al.'s study in 2001, the issue of 'newness' is still debated in the literature. For instance, Snyder et al. (2016: 2406) comment on how scholars frequently view 'newness' from a firm perspective concluding that services new to the firm are considered service innovations but states:

> Giving a real meaning to the concept of newness is important to position newness as a theme in the theoretical development of the service innovation concept.

The debate on 'newness' raises the problem of defining the innovation phenomena as something 'new' for research purposes – outcome measurements are clearly difficult to ascertain because definitions are unclear. This thesis requires a working definition of 'new' and 'different' in relation to informal practice-based innovation as this is the phenomenon under investigation and therefore needs to be operationalised. A working definition is developed and justified later in this chapter in Section 2.4.

In summary, innovation scholars use different definitions of innovation to suit their particular perspective leading to multiple definitions and no single definition that unifies the literature (Isik et al., 2019). Clearly, defining innovation as all-encompassing is not without its challenges to the social sciences. How then, can innovation be tracked as phenomenon in research studies if its definition is not clear? And particularly where innovation lies beneath the surface, hidden and informal rather than through sanctioned and structured processes?

Notwithstanding problems of definition, there are areas of agreement. For example, the traditional dichotomy has emerged of incremental and radical innovation as two distinct types of innovation (Crossan and Apaydin, 2010; Dewar and Dutton, 1986; Ettlie, Bridges and O'Keefe, 1984; Gopalakrishnan and Damanpour, 1997) albeit as Johannesson (2001: 25) defines below, on the same continuum of 'newness':

> Incremental innovations are any idea, practice or material artifact that is perceived to be new to the firm, but which may have been previously used by other firms. Radical innovations, by contrast, are any idea, practice or material artifact perceived to be new to the industry.

Incremental innovations can also involve revisions or alterations to existing products or service (Burgelman et al., 1996). However, the value of distinguishing between the two ends of the continuum has been debated in so far as providing explanatory power of their antecedents. A study by Avlonitis et al. (2001) found that both radical and incremental innovation appeared to share the same success factors, but again, their study only focused on rationale process-based innovation although the difference in formality of the process was acknowledged, with incremental innovation noted as far more informal than the more formal process for radical innovation.

Whilst the radical/incremental continuum appears the mostly widely used typology in innovation management research (Isik et al., 2019) there are some attempts to suggest others such as Henderson and Clark (1990) who modelled innovation into architectural, radical, incremental and modular and Christiansen (1997) defined innovation types between sustaining innovation and disruptive innovation. Several literature reviews of innovation have identified that innovation can also be broadly defined into 2 core types: (1) product/service and (2) process – with a number of other types that include organisational/managerial, marketing/position, business model, institutional and paradigm (Hjalager 2010; de Larrea, 2021; Pikkemaat, 2019; Rowley, 2011; Tidd et al., 2018). The following sections explore these types in more detail to assess whether typologies offer opportunities to better identify innovation phenomena. A short glossary is provided below:

Innovation Glossary	Definition	Section
Product or Service Innovation	"Changes directly observed by the customer and regarded as new, either in the sense of never seen before, or new to the particular enterprise or destination" (Hjalager, 2010: 2)	2.3.3.1, Page 48
Process	The "implementation of or significantly improved production or delivery method" (Pikkemaat et al., 2019: 185)	2.3.3.2 Page 48
Organisational and Managerial	These relate to applications of new organisational methods such as when organising "internal collaboration, directing and empowering staff, building careers and compensating work with pay and benefits" (Ottenbacher and Gnoth, 2005: 214-216)	2.3.3.3 Page 49
Institutional	Institutional Innovations defined as "novel, useful and legitimate change that disrupts, to varying degrees, the cognitive, normative, or regulative mainstays of an organizational field" (Raffaelli and Glynn, 2015: 407).	2.3.3.3 Page 49
Practice-based	"The processes through which more or less substantial elements of [practice] are manipulated, replaced or combined to alter the cultural, social, political, material, teleoaffective and novel outcomes. As with most definitions, not all elements of an object—social or technological—have to be replaced or altered" (Demir and Knights, 2021: 5)	2.3.3.4 Page 49
Innovation as a process	"Innovations are representations of complex social processes in which many interactions take place over time. These processes	2.3.3.4 Page 49

	constitute what innovations are and what they mean in practice [and]...Tangible innovations...are then seen as representations of processes of continuous enactment". (Janssen, Stoopendaal and Putters, 2015: 1975).	
Informal Innovation	The locally developed, small-scale, incremental innovation that often goes unnoticed, [under the radar] not only by traditional indicators but often also by many of the organisations and individuals who work in a sector (NESTA, 2007: 5).	2.3.3.5 Page 50

2.3.3.1 Product Innovation

New product or new service innovation refers to "changes directly observed by the customer and regarded as new, either in the sense of never seen before, or new to the particular enterprise or destination" (Hjalager, 2010: 2). For example, a few hospitality scholars have investigated the introduction of new elements of a service offering such as customised guest experiences using technology and social media (Sarmah et al., 2018; Cheng and Liu, 2016; Titomir and Danylova, 2018; Verma et al., 2007) and physical design such as the 'pubscape' or hotel interior (Martin et al., 2019; Ottenbacher and Gnoth, 2005). It can also be a minor modification or adaptation to an existing product or service that adds value in some way (Ottenbacher and Gnoth, 2005: 206). Definitions of product and service innovations overlap, for example Isik et al. (2019) do not refer to 'Product Innovation' as incorporating services but treats service innovation separately. Service Innovation is discussed in detail in Section 2.7.1.

2.3.3.2 Process innovation

Pikkemaat et al. (2019: 185) refer to the OECD/Eurostat, 2018 definition of process innovation as the "implementation of or significantly improved production or delivery method". The review of tourism innovation research by Hjalager (2010: 2) found that process innovation typically refers to "backstage initiatives" that have:

> ...new elements introduced into an organisation's production or service operations—input materials, task specifications, work and information flow mechanisms, and equipment used to produce a product or render a service—with the aim of achieving lower costs and/or higher product quality... (Reichstein and Salter, 2006: 653)

Similarly, Process innovation typically eliminates problems or improves an existing production method (Isik, 2019). Process innovation is particularly relevant to hospitality as many venues have kitchens which are highly process intensive places (Hjalager, 2010:3) and follow branded service cycles that require high levels of replication of service routines across multiple units.

2.3.3.3 Organisational and Managerial Innovation

These relate to applications of new organisational methods such as when organising "internal collaboration, directing and empowering staff, building careers and compensating work with pay and benefits" (Ottenbacher and Gnoth, 2005: 214-216). Thus, a core challenge for human resource management is around staff retention, improving loyalty, providing training and "nurturing internal knowledge and competence assets" (Hall and Williams, 2008 quoted in Hjalager, 2010: 4). Similarly, collaboration is noted to be essential to the development of core competencies via the effective harvesting of internal knowledge (Jansen and Sluis, 2007; Pechlaner, Fischer, and Hammann, 2005).

Two further widely acknowledged types of innovation include Marketing Innovations such as using new technology to facilitate customer relationships through CRM (customer relationship management) and Social Media (Sharma, 2016; Verma et al., 2007) and Institutional Innovations defined as "novel, useful and legitimate change that disrupts, to varying degrees, the cognitive, normative, or regulative mainstays of an organizational field" (Raffaelli and Glynn, 2015: 407). For example, sustainability goals (UN, 2015, 2019) drive the need for urban transformations (Nilssen, 2022) that better enable contributions from a wide range of stakeholders and citizens to help transform city spaces and requirements for a circular economy. Finally, business model innovation is also widely researched, for example a study by Anderson, Acur and Corney (2018) investigates how open innovation is used as a mechanism to collaborate on business model innovation via crowd sourcing.

2.3.3.4 Practice-based innovation – a missing type of innovation

One striking omittance from traditional innovation typologies mentioned earlier is the category of 'Practice-based Innovation', the focus of this thesis. Notable contributions to defining practice innovation include those by Demir and Knights (2021) who researched unsanctioned innovation. They state that practice denotes "dynamism and opportunity for continual change (Miettinen et al., 2012)…as it is neither a disposition, habit, procedural routine or some other fixed entity" (Knorr and Cetina, 2001: 196)   [resulting in] "individual elaborations, experimentation, local tastes, and amendments [which] yield localised differences from the general understanding" (Demir and Knights, 2021: 2). Using this practice lens, they define practice innovation as:

> The processes through which more or less substantial elements of [practice] are manipulated, replaced or combined to alter the cultural, social, political, material, teleoaffective and novel outcomes. As with most definitions, not all elements of an object—social or technological—have to be replaced or altered [Henderson and Clark, 1990; Miettinen, 2006b; Shove, 2012] to count as practice innovation (Demir and Knights, 2021:5)

This reflects the earlier approach taken by Feldman and Pentland (2003) and Feldman and Orlikowski (2011) in which the theory of routine dynamics is used to explain how recursively routines are generatively redefined through their own enactment or performance by people, accounting for both stability (through reproduction of a routine) and change (reproduction recursively alters the routine) in organisations. As has been previously mentioned, routines as part of their routine dynamic theory, are theorised as practices and become a linking concept between innovation as a capability and Practice theory. Thus researching 'practice innovation' is to intend to focus on the recursive mechanisms that work in practice in an organisation to produce something novel, such as a new or different routine or practice. This aligns with the work of Janssen, Stoopendaal and Putters (2015: 1975) who adopt an ontological standpoint that:

> Innovations are representations of complex social processes in which many interactions take place over time. These processes constitute what innovations are and what they mean in practice…[and] Tangible innovations...are then seen as representations of processes of continuous enactment".

Chapter Three will elaborate more extensively on the concepts of 'practice', the role of recursivity and to develop a practice lens on innovation in more detail.

2.3.3.5 Informal Innovation – a gap in understanding

In addition to the omittance of 'Practice Innovation' in standard innovation management typologies, 'Informal innovation' also appears to be overlooked as an emerging and clearly defined 'type'. For example, a report in 2007 by NESTA (National Endowment for Science, Technology, and the Arts) points to a significant amount of hidden innovation in organisations, and states that "innovation…is increasingly important, especially in services", identifying Type IV: Hidden Innovation that comprises:

> The locally developed, small-scale, incremental innovation that often goes unnoticed, [under the radar] not only by traditional indicators but often also by many of the organisations and individuals who work in a sector (NESTA, 2007: 5).

Whilst definitions of innovation continue to include innovation as a technical and rationale stepwise stage-gate process or system, it is not helpful when considering the phenomena of innovation that is informal or hidden. Various scholars refer to more informal innovation derived from processes that are: 'emergent' (Oster, 2009); 'hidden' (Abreu et al., 2010); 'dark' and "under the radar" (Martin, 2016: 434); 'unsanctioned' (Demir and Knights, 2021); 'invisible' (Fuglsang, 2010); 'ad-hoc' (Flikkema et al., 2007); or "trial and error" (Rerup and Feldman, 2011:578); in the 'in-between spaces' (Ystrom and Agogue, 2020); as improvisation enacted in everyday work routines (Ohlin, 2018; Moorman and Milner, 1998 in Dougherty, 2001: 614); as 'bricolage' (Levi-Straus, 1962); as experimentation (Leonard, 1996 in Dougherty, 2001:614);

as reflecting-in-action (Schon, 2013); as participatory through 'weaving' (Engen, 2016); or as a result of background coping strategies for problem solving (Engeström, 2006). These types of everyday practices that produce innovative outcomes in some informal way, have gone largely unnoticed in the wider innovation literature, and require a greater degree of scrutiny and understanding as to their contribution to answering this thesis' research questions as stated in Section 2.1.3.

2.4 Defining informal practice-based innovation

When researching informal practice-based innovation, innovation becomes temporal as a practice and a process so may not have occurred, or is about to start, or is in process but the signals that its 'on its way' may not be read or observable by either participants or the researcher. Such innovation, due to its intrinsic nature may not leave a forensic trail in the organisation. To 'catch' such transient and temporal phenomena may not be possible without some working definition of what informal practice-based service innovation is. But to define it is clearly important because it provides a schematic or guide to the researcher as to the type of phenomena that is being investigated in this research study. Based on the above review of the existing literature, the following working definition has been developed to support the research study:

> Informal practice-based service innovation is way of acting which both individuals and groups perceive as new to them that recursively triggers disruption, variation and change in action patterns that become concretised in some form institutionally over time.

This definition attempts to capture the evolving and emerging mechanisms of practice development by recognising action patterns that account for innovation with concepts of innovation as previously defined in other typologies.

2.5 Innovation Management

The existing innovation management literature points to various factors that suggest how innovation happens, its antecedents and success factors, with guidance on generic practices aligned with the innovation management subject field, potentially addressing the thesis' research question i.e. 'How does informal service innovation happen as a bottom-up phenomena in a hospitality organisation? Innovation Management includes a set of management tools and techniques to enable employees and their organisations to respond to internal and external opportunities (Şimşit et al., 2014). Innovation management focuses on the mechanisms of knowledge management, learning, collaboration to support learning and creativity to introduce new ideas, processes or products (Kelly and Krantzburg, 1978; Hansen and Birkinshaw, 2007).

The innovation management literature covers multiple sectors, contexts, and factors (Crossan and Apaydin, 2010). The core themes that emerge are highlighted in several recent bibliographic and literature reviews of innovation research as already highlighted in previous sections, but a summary is provided below.

Traditionally, innovation management centres around an innovation process conceived as series of steps or stages based on a 'stage gate model' (Cooper, 1990) in which market, financial and technology-based criteria are used to allow an idea to continue or not to the next stage. Generally, phases of the innovation management process include sequentially; (1) idea generation or idea search); (2) idea selection; (3) idea development (4) idea testing and (5) idea implementation or launch (Dooley and Van der Ven, 1999; Tidd and Bessant, 2005). As has already been stated previously, whilst formal product development and service development routines may follow prescriptive pathways in organisations as Standard Operating Procedures (SOPS) (Deken and Sele, 2020 in D'Addero et al., 2021), the notion of innovation as an orderly step wise process has lost credibility in the literature (Kline and Rosenberg, 2010) with a widening understanding of organisational behaviour across boundaries. For this reason, other drivers of innovation need to be considered other than procedural prescriptions in considering informal bottom-up service innovation.

2.5.1 Open Innovation and Closed Innovation

An example of more disorderly process can be seen in the way that innovation ecosystems operate within (intra) and across (inter) organisational and geographical boundaries manifested as complex networks and clusters of firms and actors (Pikkemaat et al., 2019: 185-189). Both open and closed innovation processes operate within the innovation ecosystem (Adner and Kapoor, 2010). Open innovation (Chesbrough, 2011; Bogers et al., 2018) uses extensively external knowledge outside the boundaries of the firm whereas closed innovation uses internal knowledge, traditionally generated by formal structures of research and development (Mustafa, 2020: 23). However, in service organisations, research and development is not as formalised (Randhawa and Scerri, 2015), and front-line employees are unlikely to be engaged in inter-organisational knowledge sharing, rather they will be learning and sharing their knowledge with their immediate peers through informal learning (Kodom-wiredu et al., 2022) such as "observing, reflecting, asking questions, experimenting, or interacting with experienced persons at work" (Kodom-wiredu et al., 2022: 14) and acquiring and transferring explicit knowledge through formal training (Kodom-wiredu et al., 2022). Thus, theories of open and closed innovation only partly provide insights into the research question as to how bottom-up innovation occurs in service organisations.

2.5.2 Summary

As can be seen from the above brief overview of some of the key types of innovation, the research in this area is vast, broad and deep. But recent research studies are criticised by Tidd (2021) for having skimmed the surface of the vast body of literature produced in the 1970-1990s. Tidd states:

> Subsequent studies by management disciplines and business school functional groups has largely ignored this knowledge base and instead fragmented the field to the detriment of research and practice. (Tidd, 2021: 2)

However, his paper does recognise that new themes have emerged beyond simple 'success factors' and 'best practice' that "explore sectoral diversity, project-based and complex innovations, more recently technology-enabled service innovation" (Tidd, 2021:7) and recognises that process, product, and service innovation are distinct areas but need integrating into a common management framework. Similarly, innovation management scholars acknowledge difficulties and challenges in creating categories or types of innovation (Pikkemaat, 2019: 185) due to the reciprocity between the different types. For example, value propositions can be a combination of both products and services which may require new processes and if radical and disruptive, a paradigm shift in an organisation's business model and its value proposition(s). In this situation combined innovation types occur across the typology explained earlier. This gives innovation researchers a problem as to identifying the unit of analysis and measuring impacts and outcomes. What research value is there in attempting to disaggregate the phenomena of innovation and only focus on one aspect as a silo, if actual management practice manages all innovation types holistically? Innovations can trigger organisational changes that lead to more innovation. How do such definitions and typologies of innovation enable the tracking of change and development that surfaces meaningful insights into how innovations come about for practicing managers? This thesis aims to develop a framework that will provide guidance to practicing managers to better support the management of informal practice-based service innovation.

2.6 Success Factors and Antecedents of Innovation

The ability of organisations to absorb new knowledge from their array of ecosystems is termed the organisation's knowledge management capability and relates, in part, to its 'absorptive capacity' (discussed earlier in Section 2.2.2), that impacts on the capability of an organisation to acquire new products and services (Cohen and Levinthal, 1990) or its innovation capability (Liao et al., 2009). Knowledge Management is recognised as a dynamic capability (Zahra et al., 2006) in that it enables firms to learn and thus create and deploy knowledge to build other organisational capabilities, such as innovation capability (Hurtado et al., 2022).

Knowledge management consists of the supporting structures that enable knowledge to be created, captured, stored, enhanced, reused, reconfigured, and accessed and is vital to support a learning organisation (Girard and Girard, 2015; Labatut, Aggeri and Girard, 2012). Knowledge and knowing are two different perspectives or frameworks to consider as part of the innovation process. The first is a framework centred on 'acquisition' and accumulation (in people's heads) whilst the latter is a framework focused on participation, collaboration, co-creation and learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991), through individual and group interaction. Binder (2018) identifies that inter-organisational learning is key to be successful in the tourism and hospitality industry, with their literature review of organisational learning pointing to knowledge management within external networks, and relations at the boundary of the firm, as key success factors in innovation capability, but the study does not elaborate sufficiently on how intra-organisational learning might be implicated. Some studies suggest that intra-organisation learning can be developed through collaboration and co-creation (Chen et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2017; Nieves and Diaz-Meneses, 2018) at individual, group and organisation level, through structures such as cross functional teams (Divisekera and Nguyen, 2018; Nordli, 2018; Pikkemaat et al., 2019) and it is the nature of reciprocal knowledge sharing based on trust and social factors that come to the fore (Kim and Lee, 2012; Scott, 2000; Yilmaz and Hunt, 2001) particularly in the Hospitality and Tourism sector (Hjalager, 2021). However, the exact practices of collaboration are less widely understood – what does the practice of 'knowledge sharing based on trust' actually consist of?

Ystrom and Agogule (2020) using a practice lens, identify a gap in our understanding of how innovation is created through collaboration as actors engage in in-between spaces. They examined "what ensues as different actors engage in interaction to innovate together and contribute to identifying levers to build collaborative spaces that indeed foster innovation" (Ystrom and Agogule, 2020: 141). They identified approaches such as orchestration (structuring collaboration), network reconfiguration (to regenerate relations of people and resources during the collaboration effort) and mobilising artefacts (by using physical objects such as glass doors and open plan and closed spaces) to enhance collaborative behaviours for innovation.

De Larrea's (2021) innovation literature review identifies that "knowledge-sharing behaviour…has a significant positive effect on organizational innovation capability…[such that]… knowledge sharing is a core predictor of organizational innovativeness" (Calantone et al., 2002; Lin, 2007). Various scholars have identified that inter/cross-functional co-ordination (Belloc, 2012) facilitates improved team climate, information dissemination, dynamic learning, problem solving strategies and creativity (Grinstein, 2008; Walker, 2014) because the firm is pro-actively creating, transferring and using contextual knowledge to its advantage (de Larrea, 2021), enabling the firm to adapt and respond better to change (Walker, 2014).

Trust and social interaction is supported by the 'organisational climate' in which employees have "a set of shared perceptions regarding the policies, practices and procedures that convey messages regarding what is rewarded, supported and valued in an organisation" (Dhar, 2015). Research suggests that this is thought to "emerge through social interaction processes at the group level" (Kuenzi and Schminke, 2009, quoted in Dhar, 2015: 69). Organisational cultures that support innovation, creativity and learning are flexible and "allows a balance between the order of current practices and the disorder and uncertainty of change" (Adams et al., 2006).

Overall, the extant literature suggests that mechanistic organisational structure favours product innovation (Calantone et al., 2010) whilst decentralised organisational structures tend to favour service innovation (Greenhalgh et al., 2004). Knowledge management practice, absorptive capacity, organisational climate and culture contribute to building dynamic innovation capabilities that are required by firms to integrate and apply employees' knowledge in more effective ways (Torugsa and O'Donohue, 2016).

Individual creativity can also have a significant impact on a firm's innovation efforts (Gabriel et al., 2016; Jernsand et al., 2015), and the mechanisms to intrinsically motivate, through incentives, employees to be more creative whilst also providing the time, training and development (Chen, 2017) and opportunities for progression for all employees is a key part of a firm's supporting creative climate and innovation ecosystem (Eisenberg, 1999, cited in Pikkemaat, 2019: 8). In particular Chang et al. (2011) and other scholars note the importance of pro-active human resource practices that can positively impact employee's innovative behaviours to overcome 'structural inertia' (Hannan, 1984) in the hotel and restaurant sectors, coupled with visible leadership support (Gu, Duverger and Yu, 2017). However, employee engagement relies on employee discretionary effort and goodwill which may be difficult in the context of the hospitality industry that can be unsocial and 'inhumane', with challenging working conditions, long hours and high staff turnover (Zopiatis, Constanti, and Theocharous, 2014).

Creating continuity of both a conducive culture and climate to support knowledge management and build absorptive capacity will be significantly more difficult with poor staff retention eroding the opportunity for cumulative benefits over time. Similarly, efforts to support learning and creativity in the workplace, and to then convert workplace experience into knowledge and action through professional reflective practice will also become challenging to implement as an organisational policy relegating the value of employees to just another pair of hands (Schon, 1991).

However, whether reflexivity as a behaviour is manifested with the actions of front-line employees (waiting and bar staff, team leaders) is another question. Engen (2016) doctoral thesis studied front-line employees as participants in innovation – either through top-down approaches with management approval, or bottom-up through practice-based innovation processes. Engen found that employees exercise practice agency through three aspects: "their workplace-related knowledge and skills, their interest and motivation to continuously improve their workplace and their access to resources" calling it "innovation by weaving" (Engen, 2016: 9) in line with earlier research on employee engagement and motivation and evolvement. Engen's own experiences as a waitress exemplifies this approach:

> We who worked in front, waiting tables, became a team that not only served customers, but interacted with the customers in a way that enabled us to learn from them. This resulted in a team of workers that was quite flexible, adjusting and customizing our services [so that] our regular customers experienced something new whenever they came back. As an example, we came up with the idea of introducing an element of surprise (e.g., a "drink-shot", or an [informal] gift certificate to use next time to our most regular customers when we handed them the check. In some sense, we became innovators for the firm, implementing ideas that only we, who worked in front, and the customers were aware of. (Engen, 2016: 1)

Clearly agency and reflection-in-action (Schon, 1991: 49) can happen within front-line but according to Engen's study and other scholars, there are only a small number of research study examples where workplace learning theory and agency is applied to innovation (Billett, 2012; Price et al., 2012) even though a number of scholars have identified the important contribution of front-line employees to innovation processes (de Jong and Vermeulen, 2003; Kesting et al., 2010; Sundbo et al., 2015; Tonnessen, 2005). But are such front-line contributions just temporary, transient, and individual? Or do frontline employees make more significant contributions through collective effort that change structures more profoundly at institutional level through practice?

2.7 Innovation in Hospitality and Service Sectors

Given the sector orientation of this research study, particular attention is paid to discussing the characteristics the service sector, to defining service and service innovation as a type of innovation, and to expand on the discussion in previous sections. Services are defined by Hill (1977) as "changes in the condition of a person or something in the possession of the customer" (cited in Edvardsson, Gustafsson and Roos, 2005: 108). Similarly, Quinn et al. (1987: 50) defines services as:

> …all economic activities whose output is not a physical product or construction, is generally consumed at the time it is produced, and provides added value in forms (such as convenience, amusement, timeliness, comfort, or health) that are essentially intangible concerns of the first purchaser.

Services are processes with intangible and tangible inputs and outcomes (Bruhn and Georgi, 2006), involve customers in networks and interactive relationships (Gronroos, 2007) and in basic terms are 'deeds, processes, and performances' (Zeithmal and Bitner, 2003:3) and "acts, efforts or processes" (Kayastha, 2011). With regards to the hospitality sector, service is a "package of products and services as a customer experience enacted and performed by employees" (Pikkemaat et al., 2019: 188). According to Ostrom in 2010 most of the world's most advanced economies generated 70% of their gross domestic product (GDP) from the service sector (Ostrom et al., 2010: 4) and accordingly, "companies, both service- and product-led, are increasingly seeking service-led growth" by building "value-added services and solutions" to their business (Zeithmal et al., 2014 quoted in Ostrom et al., 2015:134). This aligns with the conclusions of other scholars, for example, Fitzimmons et al. (2008) had previously identified how important the welfare of economies are now based on services suggesting "we can only eat so much food and we can use only so many goods" (Fitzimmons and Bordoloi, 2008 quoted in Mustafa, 2019:1).

With regards to the UK economy, 80% of UK GDP is accounted for by the service sector, and during the decade from 2008 to 2018, the sector has outperformed others in the UK economy (Office for National Statistics, 2019). Services are not specific to a certain type of organisation and to think of them as such is now outdated as all organisations design and deliver services as part of a combined value proposition of both products and services (Gronroos, 2007). Similarly, to consider innovation only as part of a managerially approved research and development activity is also outmoded, with most scholars accepting the premise that most innovations are incremental (Garud, Tuertscher and Van de Ven, 2013) based on a cumulative learning process (Lundvall, 2010 cited in Engen, 2016).

As a subset of the service sector, according to the UK government, (Hutton, 2022), the hospitality sector is broadly defined as 'food and accommodation services' and includes restaurants, bars, clubs, pubs, and hotels. As a sub-sector it supported 2.53 million jobs in 2020 representing 7.1% of the UK workforce (Hutton, 2022). It can also include leisure and recreational activities which overlaps significantly with the tourism industry but excludes businesses that are focused purely on providing visitor experiences for domestic and international visitors.

The hospitality sector represents a significant proportion of the United Kingdom's (UK) service sector incorporating a wide variety of businesses. According to the updated UK SIC (Standard Industrial Classification) report (2007), which aligns with the European NACE classifications (the statistical classification of economic activities in the European Community), hospitality is represented by key UK SIC groups 55 and 56. These cover accommodation Services (group 55) such as hotels, and food and beverage service activities (group 56) such as classes and subclasses of licensed and unlicensed mobile food service

activities, cafeterias, restaurants, operation of canteens and fast-food restaurants, event catering, licensed clubs (night clubs and social clubs), bars, taverns, and cocktail lounges.

In May 2022, the sector's UK Economic output was £59.3 billion, representing 3% of total UK economic output. Hospitality businesses represented 5% of businesses (Hutton, 2022) but had seen the largest declines of all sectors during the COVID 19 pandemic with the sector's share of the economy falling from 3% in 2019 to 2% during 2020 and 2021. In April 2020, the sector experienced a 90% drop in output compared with February 2019 (pre-pandemic levels) but is now recovering but with many businesses debt laden and financially precarious (Boland, 2022, Hutton 2022).

2.7.1 Service Innovation

Whilst traditional innovation research has focused on the role of technology and the manufacturing sector, with the service sector seen as simply applying technologies from these sectors rather than being innovative in its own right, it is now widely recognised that a significant amount of service innovation occurs within all organisations (Hjalager, 2010; NESTA, 2007). Ostrom et al. (2010: 5) stated that service science was "an emerging interdisciplinary field… [and suggests service innovation] …creates value for customers, employees, business owners, alliance partners, and communities through new and/or improved service offerings, service processes, and service business models". They identify ten overarching service science research priorities including "stimulating service innovation" (Ostrom et al., 2010:4). A recent bibliometric review by Viglia (2021) of the Services industry Journal demonstrates the number of publications related to service innovation has significantly increased over the last decade. The Services Industries Journal, which is CABS rated '2' with an impact factor of 6.539, with papers cited 1.375 times more than other journals in the same area exemplifies the growth in scholarly interest in services. Within its publication, the theme of service innovation has increased from less than 20 papers in 1981-2000 to 180+ papers 2011-2020. More specifically, the proliferation of hospitality and tourism innovation related publications has increased significantly (de Larrea et al., 2021) with 1 publication in 1970 growing to 63 in 2018 (Stierand and Dorfler, 2012). Both Christensen (2008) and Sundbo (1997) also recognise that service organisations are innovative but are characterised by knowledge acquisition processes that are more complex and informal manner when compared to their manufacturing counterparts.

In a similar vein to Ostrom (2010), Snyder (2016: 2401) suggests service innovation is the "engine of economic growth and pervades all service sectors". Other scholars identify that service innovation an important factor when increasing quality and productivity in organisations for example, when developing new service designs or when developing new solutions to improve operational performance (Jeong and Oh, 1998; Jian and Zhou, 2015). Similarly in a hotel service sector research study by Vukovic et al. (2019: 349),

hotel innovation "is generally perceived as one of the key drivers of development and competitiveness". Other scholars similarly comment on the Hotel and Tourism industries where innovation is a source of "performance improvements in the form of reducing manpower costs, improving service quality or improving organizational flexibility" (Mattsson and Orfila-Sintes, 2014, quoted in De Larrea, 2021: 1).

On a more pragmatic point, Coombs and Miles (2000) argue that service innovation is very different to product and manufacturing innovation because services are highly intangible and customer interactive. This aligns with views of other scholars who concur that the industry is labour intensive and highly dependent on employee-customer interactions for service delivery (de Larrea et al., 2021; Li and Hsu, 2016; Jogaratnam; Tse and Olsen, 1999;). Whilst such pragmatic issues highlight differences, other researchers suggest a philosophical difference – for example Yamauchi (2019) investigates how in service contexts, service providers and customers develop intermediated identities and roles through a dialectical struggle to create value that is not just 'customer satisfaction'. More recently there has been a movement away from defining innovation between products and services to combining both from the perspective of a value creation process that creates combinations of products and services (Carlborg et al., 2014 cited in Pikkemaat, 2019: 185) undermining traditional typologies.

Vargo and Lusch (2004, 2008) similarly put forward a bridging concept between products and services with their construct of Service Dominant Logic (abbreviated 'S-D') as an alternative to the Goods-Dominant (G-D) logic. They define 'S-D' as "the application of competences (knowledge and skills) for the benefit of another party" (Vargo and Lusch, 2008: 255). The approach was introduced primarily to assist manufacturing companies to transform towards the service economy in line with economic trends and patterns. In essence, S-D Logic suggests goods or products are 'service-provision' vehicles, making all commercial output services in some shape or form. S-D logic uses service systems as the unit of analysis defined as "value co-creation configurations of people, technology, value propositions connecting internal and external service systems, and shared information" (Maglio and Spohrer, 2008:18). Maglio and Spohrer (2008: 18) go on to explain that the "smallest service system centres on an individual as he or she interacts with others, the largest service system comprises the global economy". They point to the co-creation of value as the single motivating factor for interaction and exchange that triggers the development of competencies (Spohrer and Maglio, 2008).

However, whilst in the S-D paradigm, co-creation of value through service exchange has economic exchange as the key object (Vargo et al., 2009:35), Activity systems have objects created through tensions and contradictions as the main focus due to their potential to drive wider change, development and transformation. And whilst value from economic exchange is the co-ordinating object for most

organisations in business, it is only one of a number of objects that motivates human interaction in social settings and thus only partly explains the change and development of organisations and its subjects. For example, the profession of Chefs is not owned by one firm, but as a practice is a social structure shared across industries. The Chef profession, as such, is a source of disturbance in value creation as social values change to drive requirements for customised and experienced based value in service interactions. This is in contradiction to the deskilling and standardisation that is currently driving hospitality businesses, who utilise the profession, toward commoditisation in pursuit of its capitalist object (i.e., of maximising shareholder value (Robinson et al., 2016). Consequently, firms find it increasingly difficult to retain staff, and whilst they simultaneously attempt to promote hospitality as a long-term career, their pursuit of profit and reducing costs undermine professional competencies. This leads to scholars such as Sandoff (2005: 529) stating: "customised practice [in the Hospitality sector] is seldom found in practice" highlighting the paradox of attempts by the hospitality industry to standardise a highly socially complex and customised service experience.

Clearly, as per the definition of innovation, the definition of 'service innovation' is still widely discussed, contested and under development (Drejer, 2004; Flikkema, Jansen and Van der Sluis, 2007 cited in Hjalager, 2010). But there is some consensus in the subject field about the value of service innovation. A number of research studies that investigate the contribution of innovation to Hospitality and Tourism enterprises consistently find that innovation is a strategic issue that is critical to long term business success and growth (Gallouj and Savona, 2009). Literature reviews that focus on tourism and hospitality studies in recent years notably (Pikkemaat et al., 2019; Hjalager, 2010; Gomezelj, 2016; Marasco et al., 2018; de Larrea et al., 2021; Witell et al., 2016) identify what innovation factors and contextual conditions support organisation to be innovative as themes or clusters. Whilst the undeniable importance of innovation is widely shared amongst scholars, there are still problems with the subject field in general. Similarly, Snyder states that "Despite the considerable attention given to studying service innovation, research still struggles to answer the most basic question: What is service innovation?" (Snyder, 2016: 2401).

Hjalager (2010:1) notes that "tourism analysts seem to be late starters in transferring the theory, concepts and methodologies already known and applied in other sectors for several decades" and that "with regard to other innovation dimensions such as organisational innovations, only scarce research has started to present the drivers needed for successful innovation" (Droege and Hildebrand, 2009: 150) related to "softer and more dynamic aspects of interorganisational and intra-organisational innovation" (Mattsson and Orfila-sintes, 2013: 388). For example, De Larrea et al. (2021) in her review of innovation research in Hospitality and Tourism identified the key role of intra-organisational factors, particularly the impact that employee behaviours have on innovation outcomes. This reflects other research that has attempted to

move away from classifying innovation outcomes and types to the dynamics of the innovation process itself (Gallouj and Savona, 2009). Similarly, Droege and Hildebrand (2009: 143) note that hospitality and tourism research has tended to leave out "the perspectives of organisational learning" (citing Levinthal and March, 1993), or the knowledge-based view of the firm (citing Grant, 1996), that other scholars in other fields and sectors have acknowledged as key constituents of dynamic capabilities (Den Hertog, 2010).

Influence from other fields of theory is also expanding knowledge of the innovation 'black box'. For example, Chae (2012) discusses the NK Model by Kauffmann and Levin (1987) which is widely recognised with the field of complexity theory that establishes the logic of service innovation itself as both an emergent and an "evolutionary, ambidextrous, multifaceted process" (Chae, 2012: 814), recommending firms to initiative a carefully balanced strategy of both minor and major variation in service. Whilst this may sound contradictory, as a deliberate strategy it ensures companies are routinely recombining, reconfiguring service elements in attempt create both orderly and disorderly events, echoing the study by Burgleman (1996) that highlighted the paradox of continuity and chaos found in companies they researched. More generally organisational learning specialists have increasingly considered the individual level in research studies that accepts agency has a role to play in institutional systems and structures to better reflect the evolution of service in practice. Similarly, examples from practice underpin the developmental aspects of service innovation. In Ostrom's (2010: 19) study, the case of IDEO is highlighted – a famous design company renowned for its three principles of service design and development – Envisioning, Enabling and Evolving. The last point 'evolving' means creating a living service experience as one of its employee's explains:

> To stay relevant, service must constantly evolve as people and their expectations shift. By enabling frontline staff to notice these shifts, an organization can evolve by prototyping new ideas locally and creating mechanisms to capture them across the system. Reward critical thinking and consider doing away with standard operating protocols that do not leave room for evolution. (Ostrom, 2010: 19)

2.8 Summary of Factors that Impact on Innovation

With regards to this thesis, this literature review highlights factors to consider in relation to investigating informal practice-based service innovation (a summary is provided in Table 1 below) but this does not provide sufficient guidance to managers in the Hospitality sector. Do frontline employees day-to-day activities impact on a firm's absorptive capacity and thus its innovation capability? What is the role of informal social interaction that builds trust to enable effective knowledge sharing between front line employees to support innovation and innovative behaviours? And in what way does social interaction enable them to learn new or different things, or to collaborate and problem solve to develop new or different actions or action patterns that change their every-day routines and so potentially change

institutional structures? These sub-questions support the exploration of answers to the main research questions already stated.

Table 1: Factors that may impact on informal practice-based service innovation

Factors	Impacts on innovation
Routines, Routines as Practice and Routine Dynamics	Routines form the building blocks of capabilities that support innovation, whilst routine dynamics account for how recursively through feedback loops, routines in action create action patterns that result in routine change and trigger changes in practice (Feldman and Pentland, 2022), including zero level capabilities - i.e. the day-to-day activities of frontline staff (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000; Laksononen and Pelteneam, 2018)
Dynamic Capabilities (DCs)	DCs account for firm's competitiveness through the development of higher order capabilities based on organisational learning (Teece, 2018; Salvato and Vassolo, 2017), of which Innovation Capability (IC) is recognised as a higher order capability.
Absorptive Capacity (AC)	AC accounts for an organisation's ability to learn and supports knowledge creation, problem solving and creativity that drives the development of Innovation Capability (IC) (Marabelli and Newel, 2014)
Knowledge Management	As a dynamic capability, it supports absorptive capacity (Zahra et al., 2006) through knowledge sharing and knowledge transfer between individuals and groups (Volkoff, 2004), and supports a learning organisation and Innovation Capability (Zahra et al., 2006)
Innovation Capability (IC)	As a dynamic capability, it reflects an organisation's ability to generate new products and services, and it is supported by Knowledge Management and Absorptive Capacity (Daronco et al., 2023)
Informal Learning	It represents un-intentional knowledge transfer and knowledge creation and thus supports organisational learning (Zollo and Winter, 2002; Zahra et al., 2006) that underpins innovation capability.
Collaboration	Supports knowledge management, specifically knowledge sharing and knowledge transfer (de Larea, 2021) between individuals and groups and organisational innovativeness (Calantone et al., 2002; Lin et al., 2020).
Socialisation	Socialisation is an antecedent to collaboration between individuals and groups, thus enhances the propensity to trust others and reciprocally share/transfer new or different knowledge through cross functional teams and cross functional co-ordination, and so supports innovation capability (Belloc, 2012).
Individual Creativity	Individuals exhibit agency to change working patterns and routines, working in groups, engaging in problem solving activities that support innovative behaviours in work groups creating communities of practice which in turn impacts on institutional structures (Chang et al., 2011; Gabriel at al., 2016; Chen, 2012; Walker, 2014; Pattison, Preece and Dawson, 2016).

2.9 Summary of Gaps and Problems in the Innovation Literature

Based on Chapter Two, a number of gaps and problems (Sandberg and Alvesson, 2011) emerge in the literature, summarised in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Summary of Problems and Gaps in the Extant Literature

Problem 1	Inadequate modelling of innovation as an informal, disorderly, uncertain and complex social process (Kline and Rosenberg, 2010; Burglemann, 1996) performed at an individual level (Salvato and Vassolo, 2017)). This is addressed in relation to informal practice-based service innovation capability in Chapter Three Section 3.3 and Chapter Five, Figure 41 'From Calm to Chaos', the typology of situation statuses model.
Gap 1	Lack of identification and definition of informal practise-based service innovation or defined as types related to being either new or different (Isik et al., 2019). The thesis proposes a definition in Chapter Two Section 2.4 and a classification is identified in Chapter Five, Tables 16 and 17 to address this issue.
Gap 2	Lack of methodological guidance on how to capture the phenomenon of informal practice-based innovation in a service setting. This is addressed in more detail in Chapter Four Section 4.3.4 and Table 5, and concluded in Chapter Six, Section 6.5 and Table 23 that contributes to addressing this issue.
Gap 3	Insufficient detail as to the mechanisms that generate the development of informal practice-based service innovation capability within a hospitality service setting related to front-line employees' practices and their specific routines as practices and action patterns. This is addressed in Chapter Five, Figure 41 'From Calm to Chaos', the typology of situation statuses model.

In the next Chapter, a review of practice theory is made and related to service innovation, to justify the use of CHAT (Cultural Historical Activity Theory), one of a number of practice theories, used as the guiding framework for analysing the service context.

Chapter 3: The Practice Lens – A Literature Review

3.0 The Practice Lens

3.1 Introduction

In line with the developing analytical framework (See Figure 4 below), the next chapter will review the Practice field allied to innovation and in particular practice theory. As mentioned in the introduction to Chapter Two, a practice perspective has been increasingly adopted by scholars who refer to the work by Shatzki and others dubbed in the social sciences as the 'Practice Turn' (Schatzki, 2001) and practice-based studies have seen a resurgence as more scholars join the bandwagon (Corradi, 2010). The Practice Turn essentially attempts to re-orientate the object of social science research away from traditional technical rationality and logical choice models towards those where 'social' is embedded within practices and the actions of humans therein such that "practices are the building blocks of social reality" (Feldman, 2011:2). This practical rationality (as Schon (1991) terms it) tends to "emphasize a processual understanding of organizations as well as the world, recognizing organizations as both as the site and the outcome of work activity" (Ystrom et al., 2020:142).

Figure 4: Review of Literature to support the Developing Analytical Framework
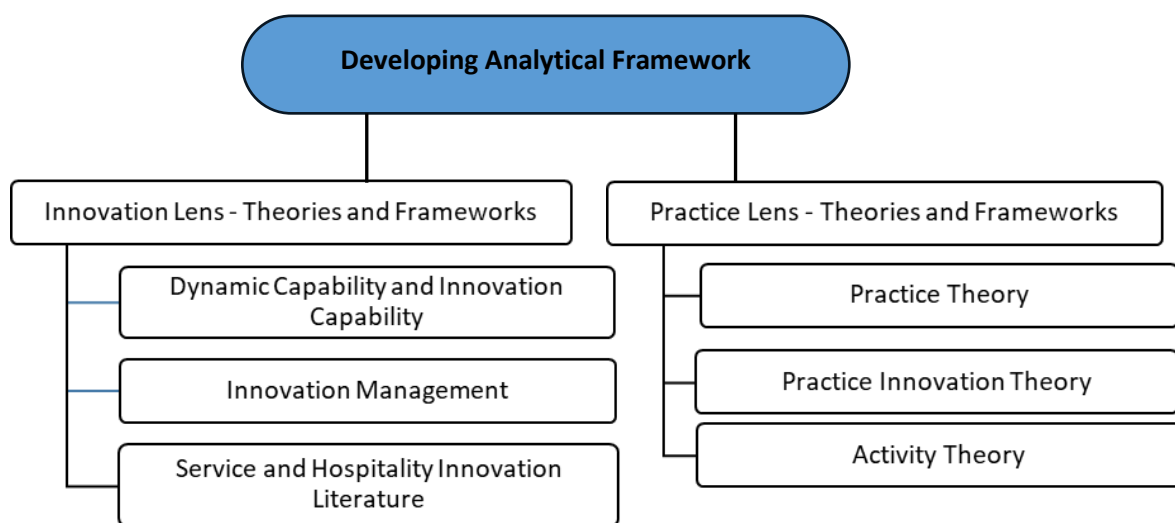
Similarly, Nicolini (2012: 7) explains that "Practice approaches are fundamentally processual and tend to see the world as an ongoing routinized and recurrent accomplishment". Wenger (1998) quoted in Nicolini, 2012: 7) states that practice is "doing, but not just doing in and of itself…it is doing in a historical and social context that gives structure and meaning to what people do". In this sense, practice is always social practice and constitutes social reality. In essence, the practice lens proposes that "social life is an ongoing production and thus emerges through people's recurrent actions" (Feldman, 2011:1). In this sense, 'Practice' combines the mind and body within a cultural context as "routines consisting of a number of

interconnected and inseparable elements: physical and mental activities of human bodies, the material environment, artifacts and their use, contexts, human capabilities, affinities and motivation" (Kuutti, 2014: 3545). In Chapter Two (Section 2.2.1), 'routine dynamics' (Feldman and Pentland, 2022) are discussed as a potential way to theorise these routines as ostensive and performative however others criticise this as an impenetrable epistemological black box that is not routed in practice and doesn't sufficiently provide an account for the interplay between the two – i.e. how 'dynamic' works between rigidity and change in organisations in practice (Wright, 2013). Similarly, contemporary organisations are experiencing unprecedented change, and so academic attention has now firmly focused on how organisations can develop capabilities, (as discussed in Chapter Two, Section 2.2) to enable them to respond to change, capabilities that are distributed, dynamic, mobile, transient, flexible and virtual. Practice theories are argued to be powerful analytical tools to help scholars to theorize about these types of "novel, indeterminant, and emergent phenomena" (Feldman, 2011: 1). Thus, the field of practice may provide greater insights to answer the research questions.

3.2 Practice Theory

The field of 'practice' is defined by Shatzki (2001: 11) as various studies that:

> (1) Develop an account of practices, either the field of practices or some subdomain thereof (e.g., science), or (2) treat the field of practices as the place to study the nature and transformation of their subject matter.

Similarly, Shatzki (2001: 11) proposes a social ontology of practice as "embodied, materially interwoven practices centrally organised around shared practical understanding". Based on the theory of routine dynamics and Innovation Capability in Chapter Two, Practice Theory may provide a suitable framework for this research study given its potential to provide explanations of practice-based service innovation – a subject field and sector characterised by value-laden interaction, process and multi-level dynamics that enact informal learning and knowledge creation through every-day accomplishment. In the next section, practice theory is reviewed to provide a justification for using it as part of this research study.

Organisations can be seen as a "bundle of practices" (Nicolini, 2012: 2) at odds with the traditional "structural mechanistic and functional-systemic view" of organisations or technical rationality as Donald Schon terms it (1991: 27) that have embedded unresolvable dualisms e.g. actor/system; structure/agency; subject/object; social/material; body/mind; theory/action; macro/micro; cause/effect (Ortner, 2005; Shatzki, 2001; Reckwitz, 2002; Rouse, 2007 cited in Nicolini, 2012: 3). As Feldman (2011: 6) elaborates, practice theory:

> …rejects the traditional dualism set up between knowledge that exists 'out there' (encoded in external objects, routines, or systems) and knowledge that exists 'in here' (embedded in human brains, bodies, or communities.

Social life is made of taken-for-granted practices that enable us to perform routinised and repetitive activities "as we make and remake our world through them" (Nicolini, 2012: 8), but under certain conditions, such as adapting to new circumstances, practices evolve requiring human agency (initiative, creativity and individual performance), generating new knowledge. 'Knowing in practice' and "reflection-in-action" have become established basis for practice theorising (Schon, 2013: 49) that propose practices have embedded uncertainty, conflict and incoherence that produces "innovation, learning and change" (Corradi, 2010: 41) in organisations. Our awareness, consciousness and intentionality is demonstrated as 'knowing in action' through practices so imbue power, interest, conflict and politics within a social milieu (McIntyre and Smith, 1989). In this context practices become meaning making, identity forming, self-renewing and order-producing activities (Chia and Holt 2008; Nicolini, 2012).

The philosophical origins of practice can be traced back to ancient Greece, and the works of Plato and Aristotle who identified three ways of knowing – episteme (scientific knowledge), techne (skills and crafts) and phronesis (or practical wisdom), and three basic activities of humans – thinking, making and finally 'doing' (or 'Praxis') (Nicolini, 2012). Phronesis and praxis have become particularly important in theorising around practice theory and inspired theories such as Kolb's (1984) Theory of Experiential Learning and earlier Bernstein's (1971) theory of the Elaborated and Restricted code. Bernstein's code proposed a three-stage approach to praxis as constituting an individual's self-awareness, critical reflection, and finally developing collective understanding resulting in subsequent actions to reconfigure themselves and their social conditions. This partly provides a theoretical account of how individual and collective activity is linked.

3.2.1 Practice and Innovation

Crossan and Apaydin (2010: 1178) refers to Whittington's (2006) theory of practice which relates practice to innovation in three ways – firstly as practice or the "espoused theories" of shared routines (i.e. reasoned norms and procedures), secondly as praxis which is "actual activity" or "theory in use" (Argyris, 2004: 9) that "constitute the fabric of innovation"…and… [thirdly] "practitioners…who actually perform praxis" (Crossan and Apaydin, 2010, :1178).

Practice has been defined as 'action informed by theory and experiences' (Zopiatis and Theocharous, 2018: 9) and recently Hospitality Scholars have taken an interest in how practice drives innovation behaviours in the Hospitality industry. For example, Zopiatis and Theocharous (2018: 11) state that praxis implies

"informed change, the essence of innovation" after investigating how organisational culture and human resource management supports innovation and an individuals' innovation actions, concluding that:

> The industry must strive to attract and retain creative risk-takers who are willing and able to challenge long-standing and deeply rooted paradigms, mentalities, and norms which have guided the industry's operations for the past 50 year… [and that]… the time has come (or it may even be overdue) for a paradigm shift in which HRM shift its focus to recognizing the individuality someone brings into the organization rather than their conformity to established norms. (Zopiatis and Theocharous (2018: 15)

The other construct - 'Phronesis' or knowledge that equates to practical wisdom (Nicolini, 2012: 27) - enables individuals and groups to utilise it more as a set of rules, summaries or guides (rather than universals or prescriptions) making it "flexible, ready for surprise and suitable for improvisation" and local contingencies, suggesting it is in the background, operating as un-reflected intelligibility ready to support intended or non-intended action. Similarly, Schon (2013: 49-50) refers to the concept of 'reflection-in-action':

> Both ordinary people and professional practitioners often think about what they are doing, sometimes even while they are doing it. Stimulated by surprise, they turn thought back on action and on the knowing which is implicit in action… there is some puzzling, or troubling, or interesting phenomena with which the individual is trying to deal… [and]…tries to make sense of it…reflects on the understandings which have been implicit in the action and embodies in further action.

As both Nicolini (2012) and Schon (1991) highlight, 'surprise' enables individuals to move from unreflective to reflective states in which phronesis, our background operating system, is enacted and itself transformed and further developed through recursive action. Heidegger (1962, cited in Chia and Holt, 2006) also provides some insight into this movement in saying it involves unreflective use of an object (tool) – for example humans only reflect (and create representations) on their practice if what they are doing doesn't work or a tool becomes unusable i.e., we are 'surprised' by a routine that stops working. Heidegger (1962) wanted to unpick normality or everydayness – the "everyday practical coping" strategies (Chia and Holt, 2006: 635) that humans employ as our background system of intelligibility (Dreyfus, 1991). Mundane everydayness is the way we interact with the world without knowing it (i.e., escapes representation in our minds). This aligns with the concept of "taken-for-grantedness" (Wittgenstein, 1953 cited in Chia and Holt, 2006) - our un-reflected grasp of the surrounding world. Heidegger's view on practice was that we are 'present', 'engaged' literally 'being' in the world, aware of our contingent reality thus routine everyday practice is 'being in the world' or existence (or 'Dasein' as Heidegger names it). Heidegger uses the term 'thrownness' to reflect this sense of being in the world versus traditional theory of durable mental representations of what we know. In this sense "being has a temporal and existential backdrop based on a horizon of projection and concerns" (called 'Besoren' by Heidegger) or "things we need to do and achieve"

(Nicolini, 2012: 36). The operating background system or institutional order thus consists of "what people do or don't do, and how they do it" Nicolini, 2012: 41).

In Nicolini's book 'Practice Theory, Work and Organisation' (2012), the roots of practice theory are identified and the elaborated, with the contributions of Nietzsche, Heidegger, Marx and Wittgenstein identified. Key Practice Theories have emerged including Gidden's structuration theory (1984), Bourdieu's praxeology and habitus (1977), Marxian rooted Cultural Historical Activity Theory (Engeström, 1987) and more generally Ethno-methodology, but as Nicolini is keen to point out "there is no such thing as a unified practice theory" (Nicolini, 2012: 8) and echoed by other practice scholars (Feldman, 2011; Schatzki, 2001). However, Feldman (2011: 3) does attempt to identify common themes across these different practice theories:

1) That situated actions are consequential in the production of social life and therefore agency is foregrounded.
2) That dualisms are rejected as a way of theorizing (particularly the traditional rationale separation of subject and object); and
3) That relationships of mutual constitution are important (i.e., phenomena are recursively related – for example all recurrent actions constitute structures, but an enacted structure also constitute the ongoing actions (Giddens, 1984) but more than this, that actions therefore transform structure (and vice versa) over time as an ongoing accomplishment.

On this last point, Feldman (2011:6) highlights that relations are not equal – "rather these are relations of power, laden with asymmetrical capacities for action, differential access to resources, and conflicting interests and norms".

3.2.2 Summary

To summarise, in general, practice theory is a justified lens to investigate the research questions for the following reasons:

1. Ontologically, practice theory focuses on the research of everyday activity which "is critical because practices are understood to be the primary building blocks of social reality" (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011)
2. It emphasises the performance of actions (performativity – acts of accomplishment) in context which aligns with the research focus on the patterns of day-to-day activities of front-line staff in hospitality (Feldman, 2003; Lounsbury and Crumley, 2007; Nicolini, 2012; Pentland and Feldman, 2022).

3. It reflects a processual based epistemology which again aligns with the reality of service cycles of hospitality that are designed to reproduce and enact repetitive routines of actions (Wright, 2013).

4. It highlights practices as recursive structures (i.e. that relations between practice phenomena are mutually constitutive) in that through practice enactment they are changed by themselves as they change the world around them so are vehicles for change and development in organisations and as such considered to be the "fabric of innovation" (Crossan and Apaydin, 2010:1178).

5. It emphasises dialectics in that practices reflect social change in motion in an attempt to resolve underlying tensions and contradictions in their context thus are an ideal lens for looking at innovation and change in organisations (discussed in more detail in Section 3.4).

6. Practices are knowledge creating, learning structures recognised to play a key role in developing dynamic capabilities, including Dynamic Innovation Capabilities (DICs) (Kelliher, Kearney and Harrington, 2018) and innovation capabilities (ICs) (Helfat et al., 2009; Daronco et al., 2023) and are "deeply embedded learning mechanisms in the social fabric of the firm" (Kelliher, Kearney and Harrington, 2018: 162).

For these reasons and those stated earlier, Practice Theory appears to provide a highly appropriate philosophical and pragmatic framework to consider how humans interact with the world and change it, and how it changes them in organisations and so potentially provides a framework to consider how new and different things, or innovativeness, occurs in organisations. But whilst the above discussion reviews the basis of a practice lens, is it appropriate to study informal practice-based service innovation? The next section looks at existing studies that employ a practice lens to review informal practice-based innovation.

3.3 Practice-Based Innovation Theory

A number of frameworks and theories to explain how practice-based innovation occurs have been put forward by various scholars with theoretical overlap underpinned by organisational learning theory. For example, there has been a change to view workplaces as problem spaces and learning places (Blackler, 2000) where knowledge is created to support innovation. However, whilst formal learning is widely understood in the field of organisational learning, the contribution made by informal learning and its role in practice innovation is less so (Ellström, 2010). Ellström (2010: 2) describes practice-based innovation as:

> The employees' or the managements' renewal of their own operations in some respect – for example by the development and use of new working methods, routines, products or services – where this renewal is based on learning in and through work processes within the operations concerned …[and that]… Innovation relates to some form of specific change that is new (at least

locally) and that leads to what is in some sense a better accomplishment of goals at the system level (the local unit or the larger organization/system of which it is a part).

Ellström (2010: 4) draws attention to the implicit practise dimension and the explicit prescribed structure. Whilst the explicit structure might be written instructions – the way it should be done in theory – or the rules, the implicit practise of the instruction is how it is actually done or performed. As discussed earlier, organisational learning theorists make a distinction between the espoused theory and 'theory-in -use (Aygris and Schon, 1978) or the ostensive theory (in-principal approaches) and performative ('in-action') aspect (Feldman and Pentland, 2003), but this creates the dualism of agency and structure that practice theory seeks to diminish. For example, this approach has been recognized as inadequate for describing patterns of action and 'patterns-in-variety' : 781 'characteristic of any live routine' (Pentland and Feldman, 2008: 244) in organisational change.

Feldman (2000) uses practise language in describing three types of activities that potentially link the ostensive and performative aspects i.e., repairing, expanding and striving. These three activities demonstrate how participants might alter routines to enable them to better accomplish their tasks and thus create new practices as institutions i.e., providing order and meaning to a set of otherwise trivial activities (Lounsbury, 2007). Feldman and Pentland (2003) outline how routines contribute to flexibility and change as repeated performances, and this is recognised by Ambrosini and Bowman (2009) from a dynamic capabilities perspective who propose that dynamic capabilities in practice (the performative aspect) would display subtle but important differences between firms, whilst the ostensive aspect might be very similar across competing firms. Thus repairing, expanding and striving may form component elements of some form of dynamic capability related to informal practise-based service innovation.

Routines are themselves an outcome of collective, experience-based learning (Barely and Tolbert, 1997) which are formed through multiple negotiations and interpretations by actors of previously defined codified structures, guidelines, and rules (Feldman and Pentland 2003). Implicit work practices naturally reflect actor's specific competencies in their performance, their degree of autonomy in their roles and the multiple interpretations of the rules and natural forgetfulness which lead to deviations and improvisation to unexpected problems as natural consequences of variation and creativity (Brown and Duguid, 1991) that happens behind the scenes (Gustafsson, 2019). As Ellström (2010: 6) puts it:

> The interface and the interplay between the explicit and implicit dimensions of work may be driving forces for learning and innovation processes. The underlying idea is that tensions and contradictions between work processes as officially prescribed (the explicit dimension) and as perceived and performed in practice (the implicit dimension) create potentials for learning and practice-based innovations in an organization.

Other scholars have also investigated how innovation occurs through practice. For example, Saari et al. (2015) investigated bottom-up and top-down processes in public innovation identifying the significant role of EDI (Employee Driven Innovation). Their study notes the key role of 'bricolage' proposed by Levi-Strauss (1966, cited in Rogers, 2012: 2) and developed further by Garud and Karnøe (2003) and Fuglsang (2010) in bottom-up innovation:

> Bricolage is the process of co-shaping an emerging path: various actors offer inputs to generate a virtuous learning circle. The gradual building of competences via learning by doing and through interaction plays a crucial role. The boundaries blur between design and implementation, and between rulemaking and rule following (Garud and Karnøe, 2003 quoted in Saari et al., 2015:328)

Fuglsang's (2010) study investigated the role of top management innovation, middle management mediated innovation and employee driven innovation (EDI) in the context of homecare for the elderly. Similarly in Baker and Nelson's study of Bricolage (2007: 330) they note that in situations of resource constraints, typical in the public and healthcare sectors, employees may find innovative solutions based on "whatever is at hand" (Baker and Nelson, 2007: 330).

In a similar vein, Ellström (2010) proposes a model of practice-based innovation as a circular process of learning in which, at an individual level, an actor may start with an explicit learned routine which through practicing it, they encounter 'disturbances or problems' (such as resource constraints) that result in developing 'new ways of understanding and handling the task or problem at hand' as an adaptive learning process (Ellström, 2010: 6-8). Ellström models this process as cyclical (see Figure 5 below):

Figure 5: Practice-based innovation (Ellström, 2010: 8)

71
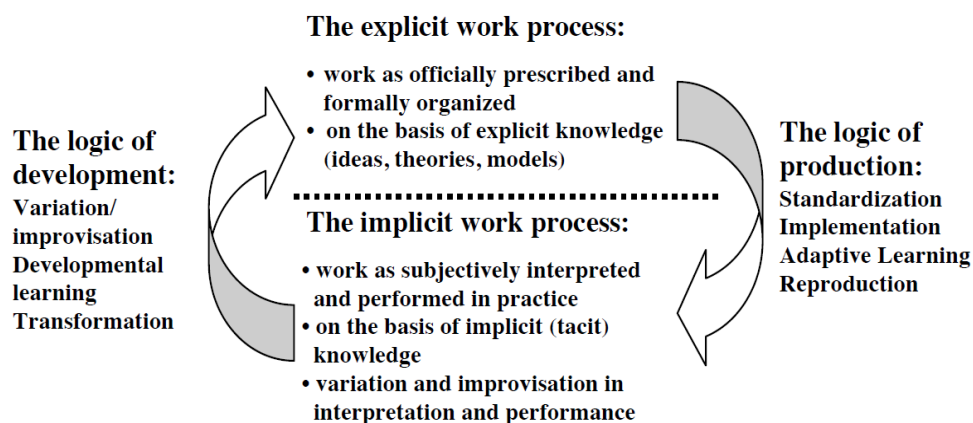
The model identifies two organisational logics: firstly, the logic of production with its emphasis on the "maintenance of established patterns and routines to avoid uncertainty" and planned change (Ellström, 2010: 7). To move from abstract explicit rules to practical action requires adaptive (reproductive) learning in which actors learn 'the code' of how to act and think "measured by low reproductive error or variation, written rules and instructions, limited autonomy and the formulation of clearly specified tasks and goals" (Ellström 2010:7). The logic of development is contrary to production as it "has a focus not on reducing variation and attaining homogeneity, but, rather, a focus on exploring variation and diversity in thought and action" to solve problems (Ellström, 2010: 8). The logic of development requires risk taking coupled with reflection and sufficient resources to experiment with different ways of acting to discover new ideas and actions that may transform the work process and incorporates largely unplanned change. Whilst the two logics appear at odds, they are complimentary. In freeing cognitive load through stable routinised practices, individuals then have capacity to engage with more creative and developmental processes leading to Ellström's question:

> What, then, are the driving forces for breaking with the 'status quo' and the maintenance of established working methods (routines), and thereby to challenge the security that follows with well-learned, routinized actions? (Ellström, 2010: 8)

In Ellström's analysis and that of others (such as Gersick and Hackman, 1990) specific turning points or driving forces include crisis situations and new demands driven by technical, customer, quality and competitive requirements. The problem from a research perspective is that activity driven by the logic of development is largely unplanned change which leaves little or no trace in the organisation and may not be directly observable. There is a clear gap in understanding what research methods might be appropriate to do this and so this will need to be carefully considered in the research design to capture the phenomena.

3.3.1 Expanding by Learning

Another perspective on the role of organisational learning and its impact on change and development in organisations is put forward by Engeström (1987). Based on Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), Engeström introduced the concept of expansive cycles of learning in his book 'Learning by Expanding' (1987). This concept provides a framework for both individual and collective learning in organisations and knowledge creation, by using an 'activity system' rather than either the individual or organisation as the unit of analysis (Daniels and Gutierrez, 2009). In the workplace, expansive cycles begin when individual subjects "question the accepted practice, and it gradually expands into a collective movement", through a learning and developmental process which together with actions form expansive learning (Engeström et al., 1999: 383-384). It is through these repetitive cycles that incorporate both internalisation and creative externalisation of knowledge that new structures can emerge (Zerubavel, 1979 in Engeström et al., 1999:

31). Repetitive cycles of actions are "not fully predictable, rational and machine-like… (and) …the most well planned and streamlined actions involve failures, disruptions, and unexpected innovations" (Engeström et al., 1999: 32). With some similarity to both bricolage and Ellström's model, expansive learning demonstrates how subjects (both individuals and groups) move their ideas from the abstract to the concrete and back again in learning cycles through practice (Engeström, 2014: 252-253).

Figure 6: Cycle of Expansive Learning (Engeström et al., 1999: 384)
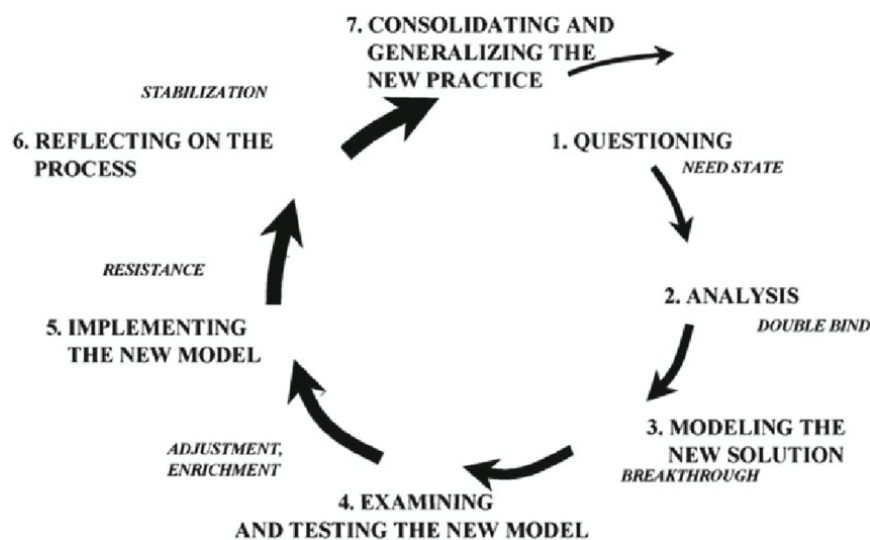
As the disruptions and contradictions of the activity system become more demanding, such as in a crisis, internalisation of knowledge increasingly takes the form of critical self-reflection and externalisation, a search for solutions, increases. Externalisation reaches its peak when a new model for the activity is designed and implemented, or the system returns to a modified version of its original state and the new model is rejected in favour of the previous one (Engeström et al., 1999: 33-34). This aligns with Ellström's view that:

> Deviations or disturbances in a work process represent opportunities for the redesign and thus renewal of the process as originally designed and implemented. Thus, incomplete implementation of a work process as formally prescribed creates scope for autonomy and variation and, thereby, also for developmental learning and renewal (Ellström, 2010: 10).

Engeström et al. (1999) compares and contrasts his 'Cycle of Expansive Learning' model to Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) innovative learning cycle or model of knowledge creation which is largely based on new product development (NPD) processes in Japanese companies. Their model depicts 4 modes of knowledge creation in a deterministic order of events (Engeström et al., 1999: 377). Engeström criticises the model for being based on "large scale processes of NPD over extended periods of time" and neglecting to account for

"small cycles of team based continuous improvement, or Kaizen, commonly seen as the basis for creative renewal in Japanese companies" (Engeström et al., 1999: 378). Engeström also criticises the knowledge spiral depicted by Takeuchi and Nonaka for failing to account for the problematizing process (the questioning step in Engstrom's Cycle of Expansive Learning model) normally encountered in innovative learning processes, confining problem definition to the black box of top-down managerial decision making as organisational intention. Finally, Engeström differentiates between large scale cycles as envisaged by Takeuchi and Nonaka's model, and miniature cycles of innovative learning, development and change noting that "a large scale, expansive cycle of organisational transformation always consists of small cycles innovative learning". Engeström continues by warning that "small cycles may remain isolated events, and the overall cycle of organisational development may become stagnant, regressive, or even fall apart" (Engeström et al., 1999: 383). This raises the issue of how such miniature cycles of learning occur and how they may or may not be linked to wider scale change in organisations reflecting elements of this research study's questions. These small-scale cycles of learning are discussed later in relation to the micro-foundations of learning and innovation in Section 3.3.3 below.

3.3.2 New Practice Innovation

As one final perspective that may provide useful explanatory power, Lounsbury et al. (2007: 996) offers a model to consider and discuss with regards to the notion of performativity to account for institutional change:

> Performativity emphasizes the fact that activity is often accomplished by skilled actors (Fligstein, 2001) who rely on practical–evaluative agency (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998) to understand and assess how practices can be altered or tailored in order to accomplish specific tasks or to cater to different audiences.

This lens takes the ontological perspective that innovations are constantly produced as part of everyday activity in organisations, rather than seeing activity, routines, or processes as stable or homogenous phenomena.

Performativity is represented by individual performances that simultaneously 'reproduce and alter a given practice through variation in its enactment' (Lounsbury and Crumley, 2007: 996; Feldman 2003). Lounsbury and Crumley (2007) investigate where new practice comes from commenting that there is a 'lack of attention paid to the role of actors in creating and promulgating innovations' (Lounsbury and Crumley, 2007: 996).

They suggest that emergence of new practice is a result of 'spatially dispersed, heterogenous activity by actors with varying kinds and levels of resources' rather than the intervention of single individuals (such as entrepreneurs) (Lounsbury and Crumley, 2007: 994) and asks a similar question raised by this research study: 'how may innovation in activities lead to the establishment of a new practice via institutionalization?' (Lounsbury and Crumley, 2007:996).

Figure 7: Model of Practice Creation (Lounsbury and Crumley, 2007: 1004)
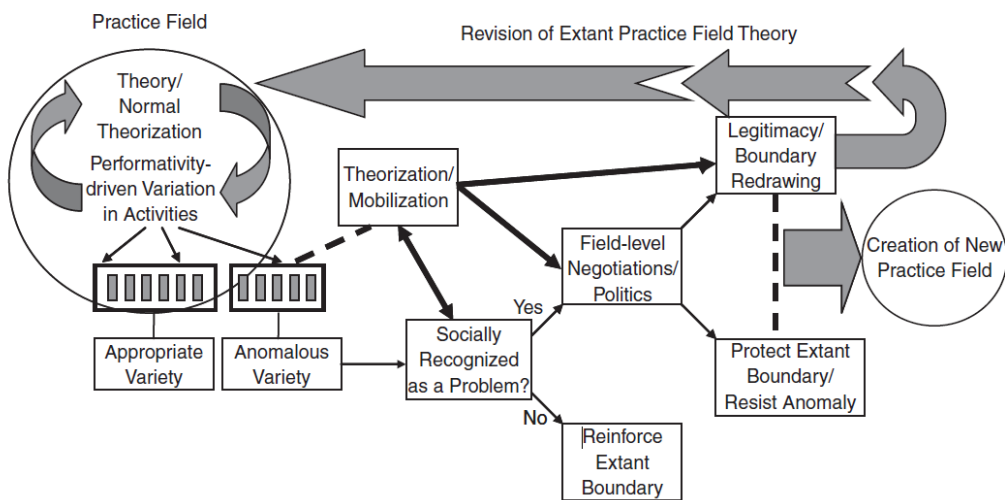
The proposed model above tracks how new practices emerge in a given organisational context. Through performativity, practice reproduction naturally creates variation. Variation or anomalies may or may not be seen as appropriate and as Lounsbury and Crumley (2007: 1005) state:

> If anomalous variation does become socially recognized as a problem, field-level political negotiations will tend to ensue, as various actors with different interests make claims about the value of counter-normative activities, and whether or how they should or should not be incorporated into an extant practice field... [and] ...the social recognition of an anomaly may require some sort of collective mobilization to make a particular innovation salient.

Whilst these models offer interesting perspectives and insights into the mechanisms of individual and organisational learning, there is clearly no universal process that fits all contexts and situations within the organisational learning literature.

3.3.3 Micro Foundations of Learning and Innovation

Another view to take on organisational learning is investigating the micro-foundations of learning that focuses on human interactions and routines as underpinning the knowledge-based firm and competitive

heterogeneity. This area was similarly touched on in Chapter Two as part of the discussion on what constitutes the dynamic aspects of dynamic capability (see Chapter Two, Section 2.2).

In relation to learning and knowledge management that supports innovation, the difference with this perspective is that it takes human interaction as "the primary source of knowledge and knowledge transfer" (Argote and Ingram, 2000, quoted in Felin, 2012: 1352) to explain "the creation and development, and the reproduction and management of collective constructs such as routines and capabilities" (Felin, 2012: 1352). Similarly, to the principles of practice, it identifies routines that are made up of "repetitive, recognizable patterns of interdependent actions, carried out by multiple actors" (Feldman and Pentland, 2003, quoted in Felin, 2012:1355). Feldman and Orlikowski (2011: 9) comment on the recursive nature of routines explaining "the consequentiality of action... [means that] …routines are created through action and do not exist without action, but also that the development of the routine occurs through the enactment of it". Routines are highly dependent on repetition and the embedded experiential learning that goes with it, and through enactment become a source of continuous change (Feldman, 2000). Similarly to previous discussion of practices, routines can be rigid or flexible depending on the situation. For example, some organisations require "efficient replication of processes across multiple units (franchises in fast food or casual dining restaurants) so these types of organisations often leverage such rigid routines" (Felin, 2012:1356). Feldman and Orlikowski (2011:10) elaborate on the mechanism of routine repetition explaining that:

> Routines have an internal dynamic that cycles among the actions people take, the ideas or ideals they hold in relation to these actions, the plans people make to enact these ideas/ideals and the outcomes they observe based on their actions. The cycle provides the possibility for both effortful and emergent accomplishments as people take different actions and create and recreate connections …enacting multiple iterations of a routine.

Similarly, to both Ellström (2010) and Engeström (1987), Feldman's model embodies a sense of a cyclical process that enables its self-renewal into something else, but importantly from an innovation perspective, accounts for how ideas and new knowledge are generated through interactions of repetitive routine enactment.

3.3.4 Summary

The preceding sections discuss proposed models that attempt to explain the foundational mechanisms of how practice innovation appears in the workplace. Following Blackler (2000), workplaces are essentially problem spaces and learning places and it's the interaction between people in the workplace based on repetitive enactment of routines that generates the potential for new knowledge and learning as tensions

and contradictions (or problems and disturbances triggered from these) are resolved (Ellström 2010, Gustafsson, 2019).

In essence, the literature suggests that experience-based learning triggers continuous renewal of working routines in which the adoption of innovation leads to better performance or performativity - and an improved capability, enabling individuals and groups to become better at achieving organisational goals. Practice-based innovation is cyclical (Ellström, 2010) as practice is enacted and as individual and groups learn to enact in the same way, whilst simultaneously 'enacting' drives variations and nuances that lead to potential practice change and development.

Workplaces are also viewed as 'activity systems' (Engeström, 1987; 1999; 2014) that reflect individual and collective learning via repetitive cycles of 'expansive learning' which forms part of Engeström's Activity Theory (AT) discussed in the following Section 3.4. Through expansive learning, ideas are externalised and then reflected on (internalised). This cycle is repeated as core disturbances or crisis points are reached. At the crisis point, externalisation (solution finding) is predominating and either the system adopts the new way of doing it, or it fails and returns back to the original state (Engeström, 1999). Similarly, Lounsbury and Crumley (2007) assert that practice reproduction naturally creates practice variation that may or may not become more widely accepted within the workplace. Other scholars such as Feldman and Orlikowski (2011), Felin (2012) and Feldman and Pentland (2003) support the view that the reproduction of practices and routines could account for how new or different things come into being through creating new knowledge and learning at individual and collective levels. However, there is insufficient research of how this works as a mechanism in Hospitality to generate new or different practices by front line employees.

3.4 Activity Theory

Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) or more widely referred to as 'Activity Theory' (AT) is a practice-based framework and is part of the family of practice theories used to investigate change and development in organisations by surfacing and identifying the tensions and contradictions that drive change and transformation there-in.

3.4.1 Advantages of Activity Theory

Activity Theory is primarily a descriptive framework rather than a causal or predictive theory as understood in terms of research in the natural sciences. It aims "to help researchers and practitioners to orientate themselves in complex real-life problems, identify key issues which need to be dealt with, and direct the search for relevant evidence and suitable solutions" (Kaptelinin and Nardi, 2006, Section 16.4) and is a

useful scheme to undertake a situational analysis (Nussbaumer, 2012). Similarly, Freeman (1994, cited in Engeström et al., 1999: 9) suggests an interactive system model is needed in studies of innovations taking into account complex interactions and Activity Theory, as part of the family of practice theories, is viewed by Feldman and Orlikowski (2011) as a strong candidate to facilitate this. Engeström et al. (1999: 9) proposes that Activity Theory creates a unit of analysis that enables research around "the concept of object-oriented, collective, and culturally mediated human activity, or activity system". An activity system is the unit of analysis used in Activity Theory research, defined as a 'collective, artefact mediated and object - orientated system seen in its network relations to other activity systems (Engeström,2001: 136). Engeström makes the case that innovative organisational learning produces new solutions, procedures, or systemic transformations in organisational practices (Engeström 1995 cited in Engeström et al., 1999: 377) and Activity Theory is 'particularly well suited for analysis of innovative learning at work' (Engeström et al., 1999: 378). Similarly, Nicolini (2012: 119) states:

> CHAT is particularly suitable for making sense of the distributed and heterogenous nature of mind and expertise, the centrality of learning, and the fluid and inherently technologically mediated nature of organised work practices in the new millennium.

Activity theory is a cultural-historical theory based on certain Marxist derived principles further developed by revolutionary Russian psychologists in the 1920s and 1930s namely Vygotsky, Leontyev, Rubinshtein and Luria (Engeström et al., 1999; Kaptelinin and Nardi, 2006; Nicolini, 2012; Rogers, 2012). Marx suggests change is neither driven by the individual (self-change) or from above (hierarchical change) but through as Marx called it 'revolutionary practice'. Marx refers to this as "practical-critical activity" (Marx and Engels, 1975 cited in Engeström et al., 1999:3) which Engeström et al. (1999:3) suggests is "potentially embedded in any mundane everyday practice". Within an activity system, actors transform their environments using artefacts and are themselves transformed by their actions. Marx defined the category of 'work' in his book 'Das Kapital' (1867) as a complex phenomenon that involved thought that leads to material action in the world i.e., the development of "concrete practice which inscribes the world" (Nicolini, 2012:104). For this reason, Activity Theory is first and foremost, from an ontological perspective, a "practice-based theory of mind and action" (Nicolini, 2012: 108) which proposes that "human consciousness is realised by what we do in everyday practical activity" (Kaptelinin and Nardi, 2006: 8). Kaptelinin and Nardi (2006) expand on the fundamental association of consciousness to activity stating that:

> Consciousness is constituted as the enactment of our capacity for attention, intention, memory, learning, reasoning, speech, reflection, and imagination. It is through the exercise of these capacities in everyday activities that we develop; indeed, this is the basis of our very existence. (Kaptelinin and Nardi, 2006: 8)

The initial origins of Activity Theory relate primarily to the developed ideas of Marx by Lev Semjonovich Vygotsky whose work from the 1930's was partly translated, edited and republished in 1978 in the book 'Mind in Society – The Development of Higher Psychological Processes'. Vygotsky defined activity as a 'dialectic relationship between "subject and object" (Kaptelinin and Nardi, 2006: 30) where the 'Subject' is a human individual or group (person or persons) and the 'Object' is defined more loosely as the purpose or "the object of the exercise" (Hasan, 2007: 3) encapsulating both the purpose, motive and intent (which can be shared by others to form an activity system) in relation to the activity(s) being performed. A person is an 'always active' subject, learning and growing "whilst the object is interpreted and re-interpreted in the ongoing conduct of the activity" (Crawford and Hasan, 2006: 50). The relationship between subject and object drives activity that is 'purposeful' within "a system of interrelationships" between people (Verenikina and Gould, 1998, quoted in Crawford and Hasan, 2006: 50) creating multi-voiced-ness that is both "a source of trouble and a source of innovation" (Engeström, 2001, cited in Sawchuk et al., 2006: 48). Humans derive meaning from the world through their activities that are mediated by tools (language, ideas, models) resulting in a process of development engendering thinking, learning and doing. Activity systems are therefore "inherently social" (Nicolini, 2012: 105) as the activity triggers relationships and intersubjective understanding of the world. Similarly, Lompscher (2006: 36) states that activity is human-world-interaction where "activity is the fundamental, specifically human form of relationships between human beings and the world", mediated by a historically developing culture. Lompscher explains further:

> In this historical process, humans gradually become aware and conscious of themselves, of their position in the world, of their potentialities and conditions as subjects of activity (Lompscher, 2006: 36).

Vygotsky's own work on the dynamics of consciousness suggests that "consciousness is essentially subjective and shaped by the history of each individual's social and cultural experiences" (Vygotsky 1978 quoted in Crawford and Hasan, 2006: 50). The Activity Theory framework is therefore anti-dualistic as it proposes bridging concepts between the internal (psychological/cognitive) and external (cultural historical environment) worlds of the individual. Or put another way, it connects mind with reality and accounts for why what is out there in reality, who we are becoming (in our minds) and why we are constantly changing and developing occurs through a process or "movement of thought" (Hegel, 1807, quoted in Wong, 2011: 242).

3.4.2 Development of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT)

Further development of CHAT was completed by Leontyev (1981) who developed Vygotsky's ideas of individual action by distinguishing between activity, action and operations related to motives, goals and conditions. To explain the distinction, Leontyev used a famously quoted example of a 'hunt' where "the

beater's activity is the hunt and the frightening of the game his actions" (Leontyev, 1981:210). Further development by Engeström (1987) lead to what is now commonly called 'Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT)' used by CHAT researchers. As Engeström states, what activity theory enables is the analysis of these "complex interactions and relationships by providing a theoretical account of the constituent elements of the system under investigation" (Engeström et al., 1999:9). From a research perspective activity theory can be used to investigate social work practices and the "temporal and developmental interaction that leads to changes in practice through collaboration and the sharing of object(s)" (Rivers et al., 2009: 312). Table 3 summarises the advantages of AT as a research framework.

3.3.1 Activity Theory Applied to Research Studies

The use of Activity Theory became popular in the late 80's and 90's and used thereafter prolifically by the HCI (Human Computer Interaction) community (Bertelsen, 2000; Engeström, 2001; Kaptelinin and Nardi, 2006; Kuutti, 1996; Rogers, 2012) stemming from a series of East-West HCI conferences in the 90's in which cognitive psychologists were brought together following the break-up of the Soviet Union (Crawford and Hasan, 2006: 53). Other researchers, such as Robinson et al. (2016: 38) have found that activity theory provides:

> …a useful framework to holistically capture the dynamics that shape [organisational] evolution… [as it] …focuses on the whole work activity...making it useful for tracking the process (rather than the outcome) of organisational transformation.

Activity Theory is used as a theory-method package (Nicolini, 2012: 7) across a wide variety of innovation-based research studies. For example, Latoski and Bulgacov (2017: 1) looked at the interface of innovation and activity theory, claiming that "the phenomenon of learning and innovation can be explained through activity theory". Yee and Aftab (2017) used Activity Theory as an analytical framework for investigating design and social Innovation in Bangkok which including a case-study of a crowd-funding project and an urban renewal project highlighting that local context can "exert considerable influence on how design and social innovation is practiced" (Yee and Aftab, 2017: 944). Canik et al. (2019) investigated coupled open innovation practices of SMEs concluding that employees are the impetus for bottom-up innovation by using both importing and exporting mechanisms in joint R&D projects. Kieliszewski and Anderson (2019) have recently used CHAT to look at service innovation from the point of view of the service team, using data that tracks team interaction. They identified that "changes in the ebb-and-flow of service team activity and the appearance of unique signals may be a starting point" (Kieliszewski and Anderson, 2019: 307) to identify innovation. This reflects the methodological challenges highlighted in earlier discussions in this chapter of tracking the emergence and impact of innovation that may be practice-based. Wiser et al. (2019) investigated the interaction of patients using information systems and system innovation in the healthcare

sector using Activity Theory. Their research work also investigated the advantages and disadvantages of Activity Theory by reviewing 152 activity theory research studies (discussed in Chapter Three in more detail). Sturkenbaum et al. (2019: 3032) investigated "framing [i.e.,] the way that digital service designers structure their beliefs, perceptions and appreciations with problem and solution spaces" such that DSI (digital service innovation) design practices are moving to develop platforms that are always in a state of transition enabling cascading effects – "innovations that strengthen other innovations". Their study quotes Air BnB as an example of how, as a new hospitality service, its disruptive effect has triggered unforeseen consequences for itself, the industry, and creating a design frame for its services that are essentially a moving target as it tries to "address the needs and competences of a heterogeneous set of actors in an open-ended network" (Sturkenbaum et al., 2019: 3033). In the education sector, Activity Theory is used extensively as a framework to investigate pedagogical practice (Bennet, 2010; Bleakley, 2020; Russell and Schneiderheinze, 2005). For example, a study by Samala (2016) that researched pedagogical innovations in the classroom using CHAT identified the importance of the social support system to support teacher's pedagogical innovation such as family, community, school staff, and students. The study also identified that the structural regulation of the school system was found to "hinder teachers' pedagogical innovation… [for example] lack of and/or limited for learning, inadequate professional development for teachers, impassive curriculum, and poor student attendance" (Samala, 2016: i).

A study by Carmargo-Henriquez and Silva (2022) uses Activity Theory to investigate how software designers can design contexts for their software to ensure, for example, software requirements are captured holistically. Grigoryan and Babayan (2017) review of the use of AT in studying innovations across a range of contexts and situations to demonstrate the versatility of the framework including education and technology. Similarly, Oliveros et al., 2010 used activity theory to model the service encounter in the Higher Education sector to explain how power and political behaviours impact on value creation. Whilst activity theory has been used to study innovation across sectors, only the Kieliszewski and Anderson (2019) study begins to address the research questions posed by this research study using Activity Theory as a framework.

Table 3: A Summary of the Advantages of Activity Theory (AT)
In addition to the advantages of practice theory summarised in Section 3.3.2 earlier, as a member of the family of practice theories, AT has the following additional advantages:

1.	AT is a practice-based theory-method package that accounts for change and development in organisations appropriate for studying innovation (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011; Nicollini, 2012) by recognising

	processes that reflect connections between things, not only dealing with particular facts or isolated ideas but also the general connections in which they inhabit – the context.
2	Ideally suited to study and analyse innovative learning at work (Engeström, 1999; Nicolini, 2012) and provides a better structure for the design of appropriate research methods to surface change phenomena than other practice theories. For example, alternative theories of practice such as Bourdieu's Habitus is recognised as being methodically challenging (Costa, Burke and Murphy, 2019), and lacking a clear analytical toolbox (Pula, 2020).
3	Based on Hegelian philosophy, adapted by Marx and Engels (published 1975) to encompass Dialectic Materialism to specifically reveal tensions and contradictions in context through human-world experiences and interactions, that triggers change and development in organisations and acknowledges the recursive aspects of routines and practices through expansive learning (Engeström, 1999).
5	Orients researchers in complex real-life problems by effectively navigating the movement or trajectory of change providing researchers with a unique understanding of context (incorporating the past, present and motives that drive future scenarios) using a structured situation analysis (Nussbaumer, 2012).
6	Enables researchers to identify the collective multi-voiced-ness that can be a source of innovation by using a multi-perspective framework via Engeström's "Triangle" (Engeström, 1999: 65) - See Figure 8.
7	Used by a wide variety of researchers to investigate learning and innovation in organisations (Latoski and Bulgacov, 2017; Social Innovation (Yee and Afleb, 2017); Social innovation and design (Canile et al., 2014); Service Innovation (Keliszewski and Anderson, 2019); Information Systems Innovation (Wise et al., 2018); Digital Service Innovation (Sturkenbaum et al., 2019); Educational Pedagogy Innovation (Oliveros et al., 2010).

3.4.3 The Activity Theory Framework

Based on the developments of Vygotsky and Leontyev, Engeström (1987) further developed activity theory defining the unit of analysis as the 'Activity system' consisting of Subject (human), Object (purpose), Tools (signs, language, artefacts), Community (wider stakeholders), Rules (including norms and conventions) and Division of Labour (See Figure 6). Engeström (1987) suggests that "it is the internal tensions and contradictions of such an activity system, which includes both historical continuity and locally situated contingency that are the motive for change and development" (Engeström, 1987, quoted in Crawford and Hasan, 2006: 51). For this reason, Engeström et al. (1999: 10) suggests that research conducted using activity theory as its basis, needs to have "complementarity of the system view and the subject view… [so that the research] …constructs the activity system as if looking at it from above, whilst incorporating the near view of the subject" (zooming in and out between the two) enabling a "collective, multi-voiced construction of its past, present and future zones of proximal development" (Engeström et al., 1999: 10).

Figure 8: Human Activity System (adapted from Engeström, 1987: 78)
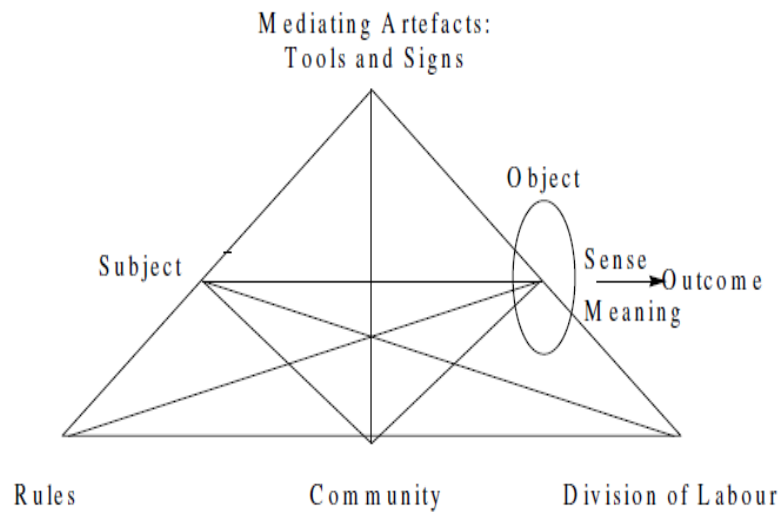
3.4.4 The Philosophy of Activity Theory and Dialectics

Activity theory is both a development from the philosophies of German Idealism (such as Kant, Hegel and Fichte (Stepelevich, 1990, cited in Wong, 2006: 241) but also different from it, whilst being neither traditional realism (realist philosophy), constructivism (subjectivist philosophy) or constructionism (socially constructed reality) (Engeström, 2000: 302). These three epistemologies, as Engeström argues, are based on 'methodological individualism' which makes individuals "helpless in the face of social reality undergoing transformation" (Engeström, 2000: 302).

Engeström views individuals as part of the world, not separate from it, reflecting the philosophy of Hegel, whose basic proposal was that the world reflects the mind which in itself is 'real' to the self. Hegel's dialectic suggests that the development of ideas from these reflections form the basis of societal change as one idea is not so much replaced but overcome or subsumed (or sublated translated from 'Aufhebung' cited by Wong, 2006: 241) by another in a constant cycle of what he termed 'negation' that leads to 'totality'. Totality is not so much a process of stages, but a structure that leads to a 'total' outcome encompassing all previous ideas. Sublation has been used by Hegel in three senses of the word: (1) to raise, to lift up, (2) to abolish, to destroy, and (3) to maintain, to preserve (Wong, 2006). These three seemingly contradictory meanings of the word 'Aufhebung' demonstrate the essence of the dialectic process which describes a movement of thought to a higher level through a simultaneous process of destruction and preservation originally proposed in Hegel's 'The Phenomenology of Spirit' (1807, cited in Wong, 2006: 243). The dialectic process reveals contradictions in the developing system that through resolution form the basis of movement in society, people and nature. This contrasts starkly with the step wise and facile idea of 'thesis-antithesis-syntheses' proposed later by Fichte and has been confusingly attributed to Hegel who

never outlined such process (Bubner, 1980, cited in Wong, 2006: 242). In addition to movement, Hegelian dialectical thinking also attempts to capture the development between self and world where the person interacts with the world such that the 'self' gains insights and returns transformed ready to be renewed again by the world through further activity. It is through "this dialectical process, the boundary between the ever-changing world and the ever-changing self is transcended" (Wong, 2006: 243).

Marx and Engels (1975) developed a similar but opposing view to this Hegelian philosophy on a fundamental point – that is that ideas, as products of the mind, arise from the interaction of humans with their material world (the world of production and economic activity). For example, Marx (1893) writes:

> In production, men enter into relation not only with nature. They produce only by co-operating in a certain way and mutually exchanging their activities. In order to produce, they enter into definite connections and relations with one another and only within these social connections and relations does their relation with nature, does production, take place. (Marx, 1893, cited in Liu and Lao, 2017: 433)

It is human interaction with the material world that creates change. Engels (1886) develops the idea of this interaction explaining:

> The great basic thought [is] that the world is not to be comprehended as a complex of readymade things, but as a complex of processes, in which things apparently stable, no less than their mental images in our heads, concepts go through an uninterrupted change of coming into being and passing away. (Engels, 1886: 11).

3.4.5 Summary

Activity systems as basic processes are "artifactually mediated, pragmatic, objectively motivated, situated, historically developing and more or less contested" problem spaces (Blackler, 1995: 1021). Activity Theory is based on the notion that social change, development and transformation is inherent in the nature of human activity, and that knowledge is derived and socially acquired from practical activity through the dialectic process there-in as a collaborative effort or collective endeavour.

The dialectic approach, that underpins Activity Theory, does not fit with the natural sciences' narrow positivist and meta-physical approach that uses facts, logic and propositions in which reality exists unchanged to be discovered, with humans discovering and interpreting reality through a veil of perception (Rogers, 1975:210). In this view, the material world contains characteristics and values that are perceived through sense perception, whilst in dialectics, it's the system and processes through which the world is perceived, and the changes and transformation of subjects and objects therein that is the focus. Traditional logic seeks to identify contradictions or imperfections in a system so that they can be removed from the

system to create a system that requires no further change or development – traditional logic is typically not concerned with development. Dialectical logic recognises that systems are in constant development and therefore, some deep contradictions are inevitable and unresolvable, and as such are a fundamental characteristic of systems. Rather than remove them, dialectical logic requires contradictions to be part of the development of the system. This is in some way similar to Argyris (2004) double loop learning model, second order change model (Watzlawick, Weakland and Fisch, 1974) and open systems thinking approach and the learning organisation (Senge, 1992). Kaptelinin (2006) refers to Carroll's (1991) Task-Artefact Cycle (TAC) where the perfect balance between tasks and artefacts cannot be achieved because, as an open loop system, a task creates a new artefact which then changes the task for which it was designed, which then requires a new artefact and so on.

The more positivist scientific research approaches lose the ability to fully account for change by not sufficiently recognising processes that reflect connections between things. Dialectic philosophy not only deals with the facts or isolated ideas – 'the particular' – but also the general connections in which they inhabit – the context. This dialectic approach is particularly suited to the study of innovation (discussed earlier) and influences the choices and decisions taken in the research methodology chapter (Chapter Four).

3.4.6 The Development of Activity Theory

Activity Theory has been referred to as having three generations of development although there is some disagreement amongst CHAT scholars whether this is accurate. For example, Lompscher (2006: 39) disagrees with Engeström (1987) regarding whether they exist as actual discernible 'generations' and similarly, Kaptelinin (2006) throws doubt on the linear development from first to third generation suggested by Engeström (1987). However, the three generations are described and analysed in the following sections.

3.4.7 First Generation – Vygotsky

Broadly, the first generation of CHAT stems from Lev Vygotsky (1978) as previously mentioned. Vygotsky's concept of the mediated activity surfaces the link between the subject and object with psychological tools or cultural artefacts that mediate the relationship between self and reality, visualised as a triangle to represent the 'mediated act' (See Figure 7 below) in relation to its socio-cultural environment.

Figure 9: First Generation CHAT (adapted from Vygotsky, 1978: 40)

(Fig 7A)   (Fig 7B)
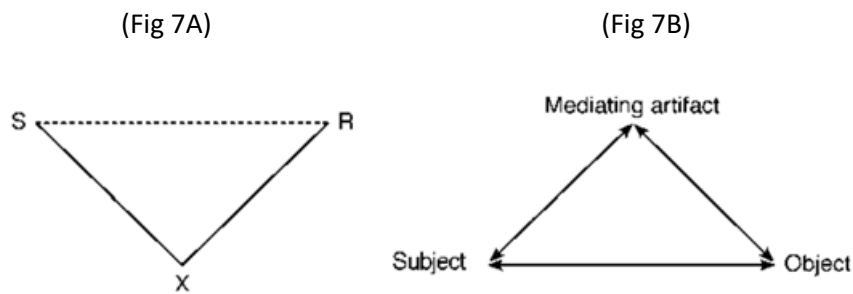
In Figure 7B the S-Stimulus and R-Response are affected by 'X' – the mediated activity – now shown commonly as Fig 6B (Engeström, 2001:134). In addition, Vygotsky developed the now highly cited theory of cognitive development – Zone of Proximal development (ZPD) (Eun, 2017) defined by Vygotsky (1978: 86) as:

> The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers.

ZPD derived from Vygotsky's ideas on how mental functions emerge as initially distributed between the individual and others (i.e., 'inter-psychological') and through mastering functions by the individual such that cognitive development is socially guided and constructed (Daniels, Cole and Wertsch, 2007, Wertsch 1991; Wells 1999). Thus, Vygotsky surfaced the importance of the social, cultural and historical environment not as being acted on by the individual but acting on the individual in a generative and developmental process to 'produce' the mind (Kaptelinin and Nardi, 2006: 19) through activity.

Vygotsky's triangle effectively links cognitive theory ('in the head') with the socio-cultural environment via mediated means and establishes that activity must be understood in its cultural and historical context whilst recognising the role of human agency and artefacts (language, signs, symbols etc.,) in the ongoing development of objects.

This approach was supported by Russian psychologists like Sergey Rubinshtein whose psychological concepts attempted to unify consciousness and activity in which the internal and external world are closely linked and inter-determinant, supporting the dialectic underpinning of Activity Theory's subject - object relationship (Rubinshtein, 1946 cited in Kaptelinin and Nardi, 2006: 178-179). For example, overtime a subject may see improvements in a particular skill (such as the object of learning to play a musical

instrument, such as a guitar). The activity of playing the guitar transforms them, as much as their skill level determines how well they can play the instrument such that the activity of playing 'produces them'. As Kaptelinin and Nardi (2006: 50) put it:

> Human beings develop their own meanings and values not by processing sensory inputs but by appropriating the meanings and values objectively existing in the world… the border between the mind and the physical world, between the individual and other people, is not closed. It is being dynamically redefined on a moment-to-moment basis…. [and]…meanings and values can cross these borders and…are creatively transformed along the way.

The limitation of this initial development or generation of activity theory was that the unit of analysis which was focused on the individual. The next generation of CHAT inspired by Leontyev expanded the concept of action to collective activity reflecting historical and cultural changes in the division of labour (Engeström, 1987: 5).

3.4.8 Second Generation

In a sublation of Vygotsky's approach, Leontyev (1978, 1981) focused on defining a broader collective activity rather than focusing on individual higher level psychological processes of the mind. He proposed three key levels in a hierarchy: (a) 'activities' are made of (b) 'actions' and actions require (c) 'operations' (Leontyev, 1978: 8). Accordingly, an action is a conscious process directed at achieving a goal undertaken to fulfil the object. In Leontyev's proposed hierarchy, all activities have 'motives' (or hidden motives if not immediately apparent) and all actions are 'goal' orientated, enabled by operations dependent on 'conditions' (see Figure 8 below). Objects and goals are different and remain relatively stable over time whilst actions and operations change according to changing conditions, including changes in the object(s) (Engeström, 1999).

Figure 10: Second Generation - Leontyev's Activity Hierarchy (in Wilson, 2006: 6)
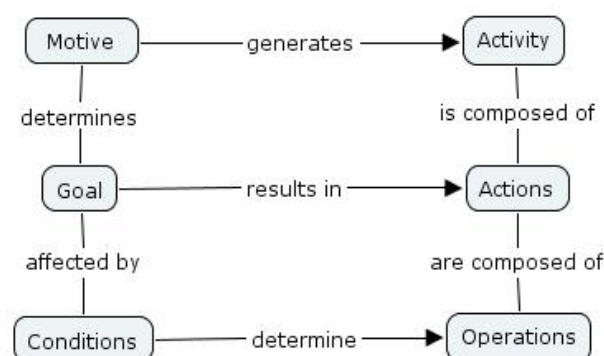
This model has advantages over other frameworks such as GOMS ([sets of] Goals/Operators/Methods) in the HCI field (Bødker, 1989) as it has greater flexibility in being influenced by activity, actions and operations within the same system. An example is driving a car (Leontyev, 1978, cited in Hasan and Kazlauskas, 2014). The act of gear shifting starts as a highly cognitive led action which overtime becomes an automatic operation. Actions become routinised, habituated by the subject as the actions are developed into unconscious operations with practice – similarly, using cutlery, preparing food, cleaning tables etc. are other examples in hospitality where work activity becomes routinised. Only when conditions change is the subject forced to consciously reconsider their routines – but the object remains the same. Leontyev later expands his ideas on activity using a now famously quoted example of a 'primeval collective hunt' (Kaptelinin, 1996: 12) as a way of demonstrating the differences between individual action and collective activity. However, as noted by Engeström et al. (1999: 25): "Leontyev did not elaborate on how the triangular model of action should be developed or extended in order to depict the structure of a collective activity system" which led to Engeström's contribution of an extended triangle discussed next.

Inspired by Vygotsky and Leontyev, Engeström proposed a visual representation of Leontyev's and Vygotsky's contributions (See Figure 9) in what has become known as 'Engeström's Triangle' (Nicolini, 2012: 110-11). By adding the third tier of rules, community and the division of labour, Engeström wanted to specifically emphasise the interaction of the micro level and the macro level of the social community and collective activity. Engeström also drew on the work by Ilyenkov and the concept of the 'Ideal' – (Ilyenkov, 1977: 81) which identifies internal contradictions as the "driving force of change and development in activity systems" (Engeström, 2001:133). The oval in the diagram indicates how object orientated activity is (implicitly and/or explicitly) "characterised by ambiguity, surprise, interpretation, sense making and potential for change" (Daniels et al., 2007:5).

Figure 11: Second Generation Activity Theory (Engeström, 1987: 78)
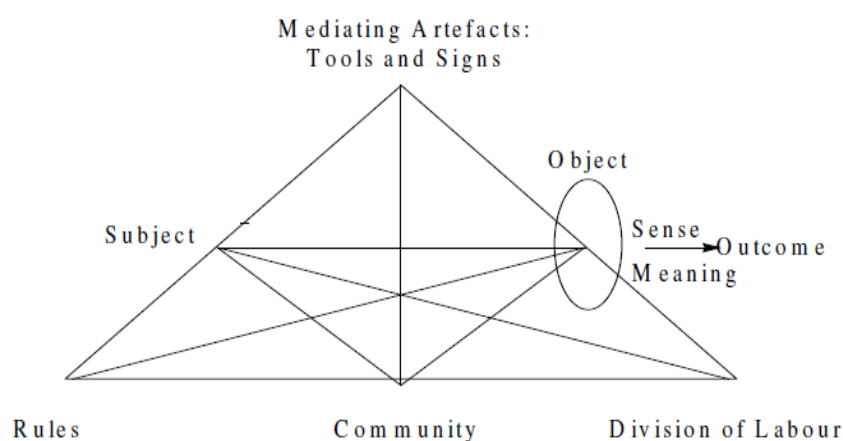
In essence, each element contributes to an understanding of the whole, and the tensions and contradictions that surface between each element generate change within the whole system as collective participation and agency defines and redefines the object through action. Multiple activity systems can exist simultaneously and interact causing contradictions and tensions to surface between them. Different elements of the framework are discussed below in more detail.

3.4.8.1 The Subject

The Subject is people, or a person engaged in the 'doing'. The person or group holds an object (internally or externally) that creates a purpose and motivation for the activity that engenders self-determination, agency and intention (Engeström et al., 1999). The agency demonstrated through the interaction of subjects with themselves, and the object (defined below) is a fundamental principle of an activity system where interaction is "acting in the world" producing mutual effects (Kaptelinin and Nardi, 2006:33). Activity Theory suggests that externalisation occurs when we want to interact our ideas with our real world, to test them out for instance, whilst internalisation (mental simulations, imaginings, considering alternative plans, etc.) enables humans to interact with a cognitive world without having to use real objects or interact with real people. For example, children use their fingers to count (external) that with practice is internalised as higher mental functions are developed. This internalisation/externalisation is used by Engeström et al. (1999: 34) to describe how novices become experts:

> Creative externalisation occurs first in the form of discrete individual innovations. As the disruptions and contradictions of the activity become more demanding, internalisation increasingly takes the form of critical self-reflection – and externalisation, a search for solutions increases.

3.4.8.2 The Object

The use of the term 'object' in activity theory is used broadly to describe things that exist objectively in the world which can include both physical things but also things that exist socio-culturally (such as concepts, ideas etc.) to create object-orientedness. Whilst translations of Russian text have caused some confusion with the meaning of 'object' originally translated from 'Predmet' (Kaptelinin, 2005: 6) generally in so far as object as concept, 'object' relates to a collective purpose (Raeithel and Velichkovsky, 1996) usually contextualised with a shared problem space (Engeström, 1987) that is modified through mediation and results in an outcome. During an organisation's activities, evolving problem spaces appear in which subjects share and negotiate objects to achieve outcomes that resolve these problem spaces. The object is 'held by the subject and motivates activity, giving it a specific direction' or 'object-goal' or 'directionality' (Nicolini, 2012: 111), and "behind the object there always stands a need or a desire, to which [the activity] always answers" (Leontyev 1981 quoted in Kaptelinin and Nardi, 2006:163) e.g., an "objectified motive" (Christiansen, 1996). Objects can be shared within a collective activity thereby causing relationships to

occur between the different elements, and so objects may only become more or less apparent through activity itself, which are themselves a "moving target" or "horizon of possibilities" as they evolve (Nicolini, 2012: 111). Objects organise activity systems, in the moment, but they are themselves emergent, fragmented and evolving. Objects are socially constructed (through negotiated means) and 'socially contested' and whilst might be the focus of one activity system, might also be the element of another causing a "thick web of interdependencies" generating "circuits of discursivity" and "knotworking" reflecting a never ending and reciprocating process of adaptation and change (Nicolini, 2012:113-114). Activity systems are "disturbance producing systems" (Blackler et al., 1999). Other scholars comment on how objects exist in the mind only as intentional inexistence (Bretano, 1874, cited in Crane, 2006: 30-31) meaning that in the moment objects feel real only to then appear transient or irrelevant on reflection due to changing conditions and states of mind as the dialogical self (Hermans, 2001). Similarly, Husserl's concept of the "intentional object" reflect how we can believe in non-existent ideas such as Father Xmas and then not depending on the implicit object at a point in time – to believe to receive presents as a child, to disbelieve to show rationality, knowledge, and maturity reflecting a move to adulthood (Husserl, 1901 cited in Crane, 2006: 32).

By identifying the object, researchers can distinguish between different interacting activity systems, but in addition, activity researchers, also need to be 'in the moment' within the activity system in order to fully understand subject-object relations. However, Nardi (2006) acknowledges difficulties in the application of Activity Theory in defining which activity system (the unit of analysis) and which object[s]) can be difficult to distinguish in a setting. Engeström further elaborates how objects have value (Engeström, 2006:202):

> Human labour transforms the object into 'use-value' whilst the activity of commoditization defines the exchange value of the object. Objects are 'sold and bought'. Value is embedded in objects.

The distinction reflects Marxist thinking on the role of commodities in which money reflects exchange value or the 'Ideal value' (Ilyenkov, 1977). Engeström (2006:194) further elaborates:

> Objects are contradictory unities of use-value and exchange-value, generated materially, mentally, and textually. Thus, in medical work, the use-value of illness as object generates the motive of healing, whereas the exchange-value of illness generates the motives of treatment-for-profit and cost-cutting.

Objects can be either transient, of value in use / 'in circulation', 'rubbish' i.e., of no value, out of use and out of sight or 'durable' i.e., have become of value again (Thompson, 1979: 199-200). In summary, embedded within multiple activity systems at the same time, objects resist "goal-rational attempts at control and predictions…[and]...move through different steps in their life cycles" (Engeström, 2006:194).

3.4.8.3 Mediation

Vygotsky (1974) suggests humans never interact directly with their environment – the theory identifies artefacts or tools as mediating objects in the process of change and development of both the individual, society and context environment in which subjects are situated. Artefacts are human made 'things' (tools, symbols) that have embedded cultural value that transmit social knowledge. Tools are used by humans to mediate with the external and internal environment (for example language, clothes, equipment etc.) based on a historical set of experiences that require the tool to do a set of jobs and how it should be used. It both reflects the external environment and influences how subjects think. As Maslow (1966) states "it is tempting, if the only tool you have is a hammer, to treat everything as if it were a nail" (Maslow, 1966, cited in Kaptelinin, 2006). Mediation is a social exchange process that produces meaning for subjects (Lompscher, 2006) such that artefacts are cultural resources of the subjects within the activity. Artifacts and tools become internalised in subjects who develop competencies (Nicolini, 2012: 106-107) that:

> …are in a very real sense distributed and anchored in the social milieu in with they were developed and learned. Mind and being [in the world] cease to be the property of the individual and become inherently social and cultural historical phenomena.

Such distributed artefacts as culture become persistent structures that shape activity systems, codify and control human behaviour (Nardi, 1996) to create a distributed cognition discussed in more detail later.

3.4.8.4 Role of Contradictions

Contradictions are integral to activity systems. Contradictions arise in the system from a variety of dimensions: (a) the multi-voicedness of collective activity - literally disagreements about what the object is, what the tools are, how they are used to mediate etc.; (b) the introduction of new elements – such as new rules; (c) the interconnectedness of different activity systems that become 'out of sync' due to changes in one and; (d) the impact of capitalism in which contradictions arise in the 'use value' and 'exchange value' (Nicolini, 2012). Activity Systems are seen as accumulating contradictions, conflicts and tensions over time "triggering dialectal processes of resolution" (Nicolini, 2012: 115) and account for the process of development and change in Activity Systems. Engeström uses the metaphor of expansion (Engeström 1987) to express how attempts to resolve contradictions evolve the object to incorporate a wider horizon of possibilities triggering new actions and practices:

> It is through this process that the local and invisible 'innovation germ cells' are taken up by others and become the universally accepted as new forms of activity (Nicolini, 2012: 116)

Similarly, As Lompscher (2006: 48) states:

> Activities are open systems. When an activity system adopts a new element (for example, a new technology, or a new object), it often leads to an aggravated secondary contradiction… [that]… generate disturbances and conflicts, but also innovative attempts to change the activity.

The importance of contradictions to research work is that by identifying them, surfaces objects and their related developmental trajectory, so act as a 'compass' (Nicolini, 2012: 116) to researchers. But more importantly, by feeding back research results to the participants enables further surfacing of deeper contradictions and triggering the resolution through "remediatory forms of mediations - such as new instruments [artefacts], rules and division of labour" (Engeström, 2001, quoted in Nicolini, 2012: 117).

3.4.8.5 The Division of Labour and Rules

The concept of the division of labour stems from a variety of historical and philosophical positions (Adam Smith, Emile Durkheim and Kant amongst others). In relation to Karl Marx, the division of labour would lead to specialisation and repetition and what Marx termed 'alienation' (Morrison, 2009: 121) – such that workers skills would be reduced to the level of simple machines, turning their skills into commodities subservient to capital. From an activity perspective, Activity Theory takes Marx's thinking by acknowledging the importance of status and balance of power relationships in the division of labour, rather than it being some technical necessity, reflecting the reality that divisions of labour are socially constructed. Finally, Activity theory incorporates the idea that all activities imply "a set of rules, norms, and conventions that regulate actions and interactions within the community" (Nicolini, 2012: 110).

3.5 Third Generation Activity Theory

In the third iteration of Activity Theory, Engeström develops the idea of multiple interacting activity systems which attempts to resolve a criticism by Griffin and Cole (1984) of how activity systems interact whilst also incorporating concepts such as the 'Dialogical Self' (Hermans, 2001) in which our self is multiply positioned within different activities ('Self' as daughter, wife, mother, grandmother, professional etc. as explained earlier). Figure 10 shows how different objects of different activity systems interact to create a potential third object that may then reciprocally evolve the original objects. Engeström et al. (1999) elaborated on how new forms of post-industrial organisational development have emerged through highly open-networked, contingent localised models of production termed 'knotworking':

> [activity systems] are based on the weaving together of different activities around the emergence of a partially shared object of work which keeps them together whilst also making them distinct. Co-configuration and knotworking emphasise how activity systems are

never isolated from each other, and consequently provide a continuous and never-ending process of change within activity systems (Nicolini, 2012:114).

Figure 12: Third Generation CHAT Theory (Engeström, 2001:136)
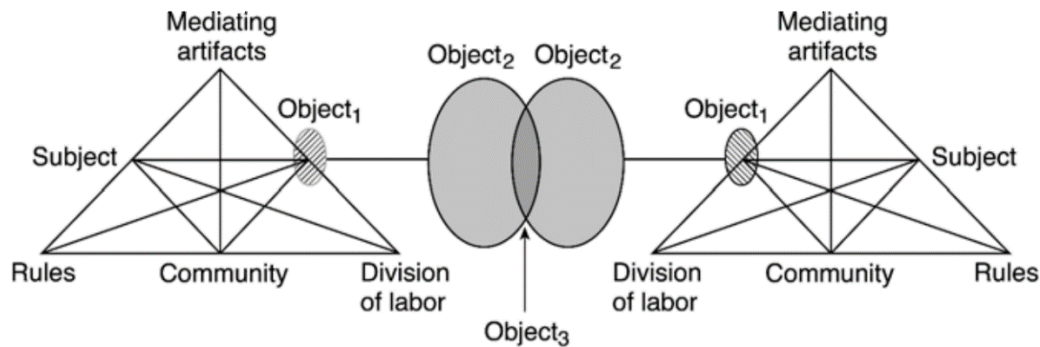
Previously in his second-generation approach, Engeström had developed his activity system view further with his idea that actions within activities within activity systems have a transformative effect, creating expansive 'cycles of transformation' that can change whole societies and therefore reciprocally the nature of the activity and actions themselves.

Although discussed earlier from the perspective of organisational learning theory it is useful to revisit this concept at this point and elaborate further. Expansive cycles are equivalent to the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Engeström takes Vygotsky's original definition of ZPD to reflect collective activity:

> It is the distance between the present everyday actions of the individuals and the historically new form of the societal activity that can be collectively generated as a solution to the double bind potentially embedded in the everyday actions (Engeström, 1987: 174)

Cole and Engeström further define 'expansive cycles':

> An expansive cycle is a developmental process that involves both the internalisation of a given culture of practice and the creation of novel artifacts and patterns of interaction. The creation of a new activity system requires the reflective appropriation of advanced models and tools that offer ways out of the internal contradictions (Cole and Engeström, 1993: 40).

Engeström suggests that "one must know and learn what one wants to transcend" (Engeström et al., 1999:33) through reflective action (and the associated cycles of internalisation and externalisation) enabling a developmental process at both individual and group level. This reciprocating development cycle advances to produce a revised or new model of activity to gain momentum as it overcomes the activity system's tensions and contradictions (or instabilities). This then fuels the cyclical nature of externalisation

and internalisation, changing patterns of behaviour leading to evolving activity systems. Other streams of practice theory have since stemmed from the concept of ZPD such as Lave and Wenger's "situated learning' concept, legitimate peripheral participation, and modelling of communities of practice" (Lave and Wenger, 1991: 114) that evoke the widely commented on continuity-displacement contradiction ('newcomers-become-old-timers' subject replacement cycle. This cycle contributes to disturbances that question the common cognitive framework (of the norms and practices established) through expansive collaborative activity resulting in change and renewal. Recently Engeström and Sannino have identified the development of a fourth generation of activity theory to reflect concepts of open networks fuelled by virtual organisations, cloud computing and online collaborative spaces (Engeström and Sannino, 2021).

3.6 Situated Learning, Situated Action and Distributed Cognition

Situated learning is a concept that was initially developed by Lave and Wenger (1991). It is a social learning theory, proposing learning in context of a social situation instead of being focused on purely processes of an individual's cognition such as the internalisation and assimilation of knowledge, placing emphasis on learning communities in a social and historical context. The concept of situated learning largely builds on Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Engeström's learning by expanding theory (as discussed earlier). Engeström extended Vygotsky's concept of ZPD by including collective activity, defining ZPD as the "distance between the everyday actions of individuals and historically new form of the societal activity that can be collectively generated as a solution to the double bind potentially embedded in…. everyday actions" (Engeström, 1987: 174).

Situated Learning attempts to account for how collective practices transmit knowledge through the activities that define them based on the situation in which it takes place. Originally developed to underpin learning theories of apprenticeships, and how practices are transmitted between old timers and newcomers (as previously mentioned), Situated Learning is seen to have wider implications for organisational learning theorists to investigate knowledge transformation in communities of practice as individuals move from peripheral to "full participation" through learning by doing (Patel, 2017: 12) in a specific place and time. But more than this, the concept attempts to account for learning as it occurs in a specific community (i.e., 'situated') that has an inherent contradiction in its attempt to reproduce itself (and its embedded social order), i.e., that old-timers are replaced by newcomers as they become fully participative (Lave and Wenger, 1991: 57).

Two other related concepts are worth mentioning in that they provide a slightly different account of how knowledge is shared through activity within organisations. Firstly, situated action models "emphasize the emergent, contingent nature of human activity, the way that activity grows directly out of the

particularities of a given situation" (Nardi, 1996: 71). Supported by both Lave and Wenger (1991) and Suchman (1987), the approach is used by researchers to investigate moment-by-moment interaction of actors in their environments. Whilst situated action focuses on improvisation and response to contingency in a single setting, Nardi criticises it for deemphasising the durable structures that remain between situations - i.e., the wider context (Nardi, 1996).

In contrast, another concept called Distributed Cognition (Salomon, 1993) similarly looks at how knowledge is represented in individuals and is situated within organisations but focuses on "the propagation of knowledge between different individuals and artefacts… [and] …the transformations which external structures undergo when operated on by individuals and artifacts" (Flor and Hutchins, 1991: 37). External structures relate to anything that contains task relevant information, such as routine competencies and practices, software, spreadsheets, lists and spoken words (language) and relate to persistent durable structures that span situations that situated action models struggle to account for (Nardi, 1996: 84).

Consequently, distributed cognition theory suggests that cognition is not solely an individual phenomenon occurring in their heads but sits externally. This approach recognises the "social, physical and artefactual surroundings in which cognition takes place…" and where "…people appear to think in conjunction or partnership with others with the help of culturally provided tools and implements" (Salomon, 1993:xiii) – the unit of analysis being the individuals of the cognitive system and the tools they use (Nardi, 1996:77). As discussed in earlier sections, mediation through tools is a key principle of Activity Theory and so distributed cognition provides further underpinning theory of the Activity Theory model.

Distributed cognition makes the assertion that viewed together (tasks, external structures, actors) as a complex cognitive system that sits outside of the head, it is the system that performs the tasks, not the individuals who act within it. According to Hutchins (2000:2068-2069), distributed cognition occurs in three forms of cognitive processes:

> Cognitive processes may be distributed across the members of a social group, cognitive processes may be distributed in the sense that the operation of the cognitive system involves coordination between internal and external (material or environmental) structure, and processes may be distributed through time in such a way that the products of earlier events can transform the nature of later events.

Taken together, both situated action and distributed cognition provide insights into the dynamic aspects of situated learning. In considering situated learning within the research study, multi-site organisations have challenges in transmitting and reproducing external structure across disparate and fragmented sites that are dispersed geographically. These challenges include the extent of change through significant mergers

and acquisitions activity which is at a historical high (Otterburn, 2021) with sites bought, sold and rebought by different organisations with different modus operandi, cultures and ways of doing things over a long period. The sector has significant staff churn and is even deemed by some as 'inhumane' (Zopiatis, Constanti and Theocharous, 2014). What then is the potential for situated learning in such places that appear to be antithesis of an environment conducive to learning? How does legitimate peripheral participation or zones of proximal development operate if there are mainly only newcomers, and only a small number of old-timers? How do structures persist? But if the evidence points to substantial service innovation taking place as identified earlier, what then is the cause and what factors are supporting it?

Researching the underlying phenomena that supports informal practice-based service innovation will need to identify 'situatedness' of participants, in particular the collective activity in which they participate. The methodology employed for the study is specifically designed to address this, using situational analysis discussed in more detail in Chapter Four.

3.7 Criticisms of Activity Theory

Bakhurst (2009) wonders whether a theory that covers 'Activity' per se (every type of activity including "eating, playing, thinking, exercising, imagining, blaming, reading, breathing, lecturing, conversing, fighting, etc.') becomes "so general as to be utterly useless?" (Bakhurst, 2009: 198). Bakhurst does acknowledge that Activity theory is a framework in part that enables the modelling of organisational change, but it is not predictive, and therefore should not be a 'theory'. But as Scholars of Activity Theory have noted many times previously (such as Bennett, 2010; Kaptelinin and Nardi, 2012) that Activity theory is not a general or grand theory in the conventional sense. Engeström (2015) provides a strong rebuttal to Bakhurst's criticism in his book 'Learning by Expanding' suggesting that Bakhurst is confused about the category differences between actions and activity, conflating the two without understanding the philosophical differences. However Wiser et al. (2019) in their literature review of Activity Theory in Healthcare settings similarly identify a general problem with the term 'activity' and how this is scoped in research studies suggesting that Bakhurst may not be the only scholar struggling with this issue.

Bakhurst (2009: 198) also criticises other aspects of Activity Theory, including the lines on the triangular model which "say almost nothing about the relation that the various components bear to one another", vagueness in defining 'contradictions' (supported by other scholars such as Langemeyer and Roth, 2006: 37) and confusion regarding the 'object' (Bakhurst, 2009: 208; Wiser, 2019: 886). For example, some activity theory scholars state that the 'object' is defined as purpose, others as 'what is trying to be achieved' (incorporating a developmental perspective) and finally as acting on something, or all three. One solution is to develop objects along a time dimension (an activity timeline) to reflect the transitional and

dynamic nature of objects as they are transformed (Chen et al., 2013). In this research study in Chapter Four, a similar approach emerged from the data to provide better insights into the hospitality activity system as they unfolded as a live experience.

Others such as Langemeyer and Roth (2006: 29) criticise how Engeström can suggest that Activity theory as a model can "simultaneously represent a 'germ cell' [the initial genetic abstraction of the totality under investigation i.e., the inner contradiction of the system under scrutiny] and reduce the complexity of the whole in a manageable way" when the activity system incorporates the intricate social complexities of the workplace. They also question whether the framework promotes a third person view (e.g., the Researcher as neutral observer) as opposed to a participant view i.e., how can multiple viewpoints be surfaced by referencing a generic 'subject' and 'object'? Nicolini (2012: 119) points to two potential issues with CHAT as espoused by Engeström (1987). Firstly, that whilst the strength of the model is in its simplicity and its defined structural elements, this can lead "to an analytical 'system-ness' with attention to boundaries, elements, and interdependencies". This reflects some of the criticisms levelled by Bakhurst (2009) and Wiser (2019). Consequently, other aspects are ignored such as "the poietic, improvisational, uniquely-performed and uniquely experienced nature of practice" (Nicolini, 2012: 120). Secondly, Nicolini points to the object-oriented-ness of Activity Theory as its strength, but with the counter problem of foregrounding "teleological collaborative activity" over others such as "conflict, opposition, resistance" and sources of activity that include "desire, fear and passion" (Nicolini, 2012: 120). For this reason, the Researcher has attempted to consider multiple objects from multiple perspectives in this research study, resisting the temptation to revert to 'system-ness' by keeping a more balanced perspective on the relative importance of factors that emerged during data collection.

Whilst not adopted to structure this research study, the researcher does recognise that there are significant similarities between frameworks based on Service Systems and the adopted CHAT framework of this research study that uses 'Activity Systems' as the unit of analysis discussed earlier in this chapter.

The idea of service systems was originally introduced and developed by several different scholars (for example Katzan, 2009; Glushko, 2013) with recent contribution by Frost, Cheng and Lyons (2019) who develop their Multilayer Service System Framework for service system analysis (MLSSF). Another example is by Kieliszewski and Anderson (2019) who compare the service systems frameworks with CHAT in their investigation of people and social interaction as drivers of service innovation, identifying how Activity Theory provides a good fit for studying service innovation as "analysis can be done on multiple levels of system abstraction [so] it is a powerful tool to examine a complex service system" (Kieliszewski and

Anderson, 2019:313). Activity systems are anti-reductionist and deliberately avoid the technical rationality of 'system-ness' found in service systems literature.

3.8 Summary

Based on the review of the extant literature as depicted in Figure 11 below, research studies are moving from a technical rationality to a practical rationality, and this has grown in momentum since the 'Practice Turn' (Shatzki, 2001) and accelerated since Ostrom's review in 2010. Traditional innovation theories and frameworks have singularly failed to adequately encompass innovation practice that sufficiently reflects informal practice-based innovation such as bricolage, trial and error, improvised, unsanctioned and below-the-radar innovation that potentially contribute to new institutional structures and organisational change and transformation.

Organisational learning theorists have made a greater contribution to understanding informal learning and its contribution to innovation but have only recently recognised the need to connect agency and structure through multi-level research studies. Tidd (2019) criticises sector-based studies for failing to build on the vast body of knowledge that is already there and similarly, Hospitality and Tourism scholars have been criticised for being slow in applying existing practice-based theories and frameworks to their own sector leading to a fragmented approach. In response, the researcher has attempted a detailed review of relevant practice and service-based literature that encompass ideas of innovation, innovation capability development with new practice development and learning theory recognising that epistemologically everyday practices are the building blocks of social reality.

Figure 13: Review of Literature to support the Developing Analytical Framework

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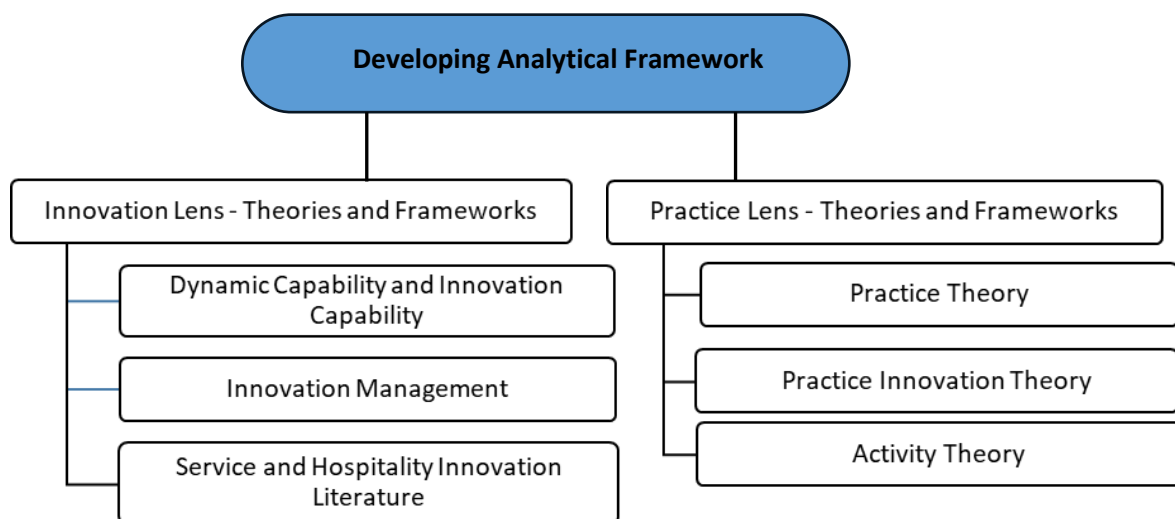
Generally, service science scholars have contributed to systems thinking, but also to understanding value co-creation at the interface with insights provided on service design that reflect an intentional and planned approach to service innovation. However, against this backdrop, the literature clearly points to learning and knowledge creation through relationships and interaction as the cornerstone of innovative and dynamic capabilities. In this chapter, the interplay between learning and knowledge creation is discussed and debated by scholars across different industries and functions, professions, and practices. Research studies point to learning that is located inside, outside and at the boundary of organisations through interaction at Individual, team, group, community, and organisational levels. However, the level of analysis has predominately been either individual or organisational with collective and community-based practices largely under researched or not linked together to form a cohesive model of how innovation and change occurs in organisations.

Organisations are problematised as problem spaces and learning places and models such as knowing-in-practice (Schon, 1991), situated learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991) and expansive cycles (Engeström, 1987) appear to account to some degree for learning in organisations. Through adaptive activities and practice, disturbances, crisis and changing circumstances that create disorder, surprise and even chaos, at individual and group levels, lead to outcomes that may result in something that is either new or different, or simply may return the organisation back to its original status quo.

The service industry is recognised as being particularly specialised because of its inherent requirement on heterogenous labour to deliver its value propositions but service actors occur across all types of industry, not just the service industry. People introduce heterogeneity in value co-creation through social interaction – variation is not just inevitable but is the norm and embedded in routine recurrent practices. Practices appear to be always in transition, developed through repetitive, cyclical, and recursive systems of activities as people interact, that drive change and development of both those acting and the enacted practice itself. People's background operating systems or systems of intelligibility are engaged based on reflection-in-action leading to the accomplishment of their work.

The interweaving and prioritising of the logic of development rather than production is in line with the antecedents and success factors identified for innovation capability within the innovation literature. These include a focus on employees, their innovation ecosystem, their capacity to absorb and share knowledge through trust, and the collective development of their skills and competencies. The extent to which employee creativity leads to convergent or divergent thinking is reflected in the propensity of the organisation to exhibit ambidexterity - either rigidity or flexibility in the face of change, which in part is a function of its culture, climate, power relationships and politics.

It is clear, that from an organisational development perspective, informal practice-based service innovations are evidence of change and renewal of everyday practice of frontline staff but there is insufficient evidence from the Hospitality industry to explain how this occurs.

3.8.1 The Research Gap

According to this literature review, the hospitality sector is characterised by interactive relationships, in socially complex situations characterised by high work intensity and potentially harsh working conditions (Zopiatis, Constanti, and Theocharous, 2014). A paradox appears between the situation requirements for customisation to manage social complexity against the exchange value of the situation in which Hospitality firms require standardisation to maximise efficiency and profits. In addition, dialectic processes in theory appear to generate variation, change and development of routines as interaction occurs in the service cycle, changing practices as micro cycles of learning occur, potentially expanding to wider system changes.

These factors collectively create a tension in the sector that identifies the research gap - whether expansion creates opportunities for customisation and new value through informal practice-based innovation in such paradoxical and challenging situations potentially reducing tension, or whether such variation and adaptations conversely increase tension i.e. accelerate activity systems towards greater disruption and crisis.

To explore how to close this gap, this chapter's analysis of the literature helped to explore the two research questions posed by the research study:

- RQ1: How does informal service innovation happen as a bottom-up phenomena in a hospitality organisation?
- RQ2: Does this process contribute to the development of institutional structures to support service innovation capability?

Regarding the role of frontline employees in informal practice-based Innovation (Q1), this literature review identifies that there is a lack of sector-specific research that sufficiently explains the role of frontline service employees in the service innovation process in the hospitality sector (Billett, 2012; Price et al., 2012; Engen, 2016; Engen and Magnusson, 2015) despite a number of scholars recognising the role of frontline employees in service innovation (de Jong and Vermeulen, 2003; Kesting and Ulhøi 2010; Sundbo et al., 2015; Tonnessen, 2005). More specifically, the analysis has surfaced the lack of understanding of how informal service innovation that is practice based – i.e., that is derived from adaptations to existing

practices by front-line staff – occurs in practice. This discussion supports answering RQ1 above of the research study.

There is an identified lack of clarity in the literature as to whether unintentional innovation, in whatever form it takes, can be construed as a capability impacting on RQ2. For example, Innovation capability is identified by scholars as a potential dynamic capability (Helfat et al., 2009; Winter, 2003; Felin, 2012). In this respect, the review of the dynamic capability literature is 'unavoidably blurry' in clarifying the differences between what is a zero-order routine and what is a dynamic capability given "capabilities can be used for both operational and dynamic purposes" (Helfat and Winter, 2011:1245). This leads to a gap in understanding of whether informal processes used operationally such as ad-hoc, on-the-hoof problem solving, experimentation, improvisation, and bricolage, as they are not considered as reproduceable capabilities, constitute a dynamic capability? This research study seeks to clarify whether these types of informal practice-based behaviours constitute or contribute to what 'dynamic' means in 'dynamic capability' related to the understanding of innovation capability. More specifically, it is not clear what the relationship is between zero order routines and first order routines from an innovation perspective or what types of innovation capability can be operational across the two levels, and if so, how? Scholars who research dynamic capabilities ask similar questions, for example Salvato and Vassolo (2017: 1732) ask: "How does individual level change skills and efforts aggregate to form organisational level change routines?" and "how do innovative actions of employees create a firm-level capacity for dynamism that is effective and reliable over time?"

This chapter's theoretical review does uncover the role of recursive routines that are the micro-foundations of capabilities. The insights provided by Eisenhardt and Martin (2000), Helfat and Winter (2011) and Zollo and Winter (2002), outline how the enactment of practice becomes a self-changing cycle as inevitable variations in the repetition of routines and practices cause changes to occur in the routine and practices themselves. Similarly, there are important perspectives from activity theory regarding the role of dialectic processes that trigger not just change, but development and evolution of practice. But there is insufficient research to substantiate how this happens in practice within the Hospitality sector particularly how firms break free from their current 'status quo' (Ellström, 2010: 29). Researching this issue supports answering Q2 of the research study.

It is apparent from the literature review that social complexity plays some role in developing innovative practice. Di Stefano et al. (2014: 319-320) points to an adaptive system (the 'drivetrain') that operates through a "socially complex…and …dynamic bundle of resources and capabilities", but they do not sufficiently define 'what is socially complex?' Similarly, Nicolini, (2012) describes innovation as a highly

complex social phenomenon. This surfaces a lack of understanding regarding the social complexities inherent in developing dynamic capability that may provide further insights about the mechanisms that create the 'right' social conditions, interactions, and relationships to support innovative practice. Whilst some scholars point to how social interaction drives knowledge absorption, knowledge sharing and informal learning to underpin innovative behaviours (Marabelli and Newell, 2014), how this works in a hospitality context is not sufficiently researched. Similarly, there is insufficient hospitality sector-based research that investigates the relationship between innovative behaviours, social complexity and organisational learning, particularly intra-organisational learning (Droege and Hildebrand, 2009) based on trust and knowledge sharing through collaboration (Calantone et al., 2002; Belloc, 2012; de Larrea, 2021). This discussion supports answering both Q1 and Q2 of the research study.

The literature review has highlighted several problems identified by scholars in defining 'innovation' (Edwards-Schachter, 2018; Isik et al., 2019; Rowley et al., 2011) and 'service innovation' (Hjalager, 2010; Snyder, 2016) leading to no clear definitions. Similarly, a number of different types of informal practices related to innovation were identified in the literature review (Engen, 2016; Flikkema et al., 2007; Oster, 2009; Fuglsang, 2010; NESTA, 2006) leading to a problem of defining the phenomena. This gap in understanding is both a problem for the research study, but also an opportunity for the research study to contribute to the ongoing debate from a practice-based perspective.

The Researcher identifies a lack of research studies that utilise a combined methodology of activity theory and grounded theory that investigates innovation in the hospitality sector with the exception of Kieliszewski and Anderson (2019). Similarly, there is a lack of research in the Hospitality sector that utilises a practice-based epistemology when investigating practice-based innovation. The literature review has surfaced a lack of understanding as to how to effectively operationalise this type of combined approach and epistemology and proposes a potential research design in Chapter Three. This provides a further opportunity to contribute to the subject field through developing an innovative methodology.

3.8.2 Summary of Research Gaps identified in Chapter Three

In addition to the research problem and gaps identified in Chapter Two (Table 3), further gaps have emerged from the review of literature in Chapter Three as stated above and summarised in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Research Gaps from Chapter Three

Gap	Description
1	There is a lack of sector-specific research that sufficiently explains the role of frontline service employees in the practice innovation process in the hospitality sector (Billett, 2012; Price et al., 2012; Engen, 2016; Engen and Magnusson, 2015) contributing to RQ1.
2	The extant practice literature does not sufficiently answer whether variation by frontline employees through informal practice-based innovation will either reduce or increase tensions and contradictions in the service context to either resolve problems and create calm or accelerate the activity system towards crisis contributing to RQ1.
3	The literature review has surfaced a lack of understanding of how informal service innovation that is practice based – i.e., that is derived from adaptations to existing practices by front-line staff – actually occurs in practice. What are the patterns in action embedded in the daily repetitive tasks of staff that create new or different practices to occur? This supports answering RQ1 of the research study.
4	Despite the development of understanding around Routine Dynamics and Innovation Capability (ICs) there continues to be a lack of clarity in the literature as to whether unintentional innovation, in whatever form it takes, can be construed as a capability (Salvato and Vassolo, 2017). This leads to a gap in understanding of whether informal processes used operationally such as ad-hoc, on-the-hoof problem solving, experimentation, improvisation, and bricolage, as they are not deemed as reproduceable capabilities, constitute a dynamic capability? This contributes to RQ2.
5	Whilst some scholars point to how social interaction drives knowledge absorption, knowledge sharing, and informal learning (Ellström 2010) to underpin innovative behaviours (Marabelli and Newell, 2014; de Larrea, 2021) how this works in a hospitality context through cycles of learning is not sufficiently researched by the scholars in the Organisational Learning subject field. This contributes to RQ1 and RQ2.
6	There is an identified lack of research studies that utilise a combined ontology based on practice with a methodology that operationalises activity theory to investigate innovation in the hospitality sector except a study by Kieliszewski and Anderson (2019). This contributes to both RQ1 and RQ2 and the overall aim of this thesis.
7	There is a lack of clear guidance from a research methods perspective as to how to track unplanned, unintentional change by front-line employees that results in informal practice-based innovation.

3.8.3 Conclusions

The Researcher has reviewed the extant literature and surfaced core concepts across a number of different fields to provide an integrated analytical framework that provides operational constructs for research purposes. The original research questions were:

- RQ1: How does informal service innovation happen as a bottom-up phenomena in a hospitality organisation?
- RQ2: Does this process contribute to the development of institutional structures to support service innovation capability?

Regarding RQ1, the extant literature suggests that informal service innovation as a phenomena does occur but there is only ad-hoc research studies in the Hospitality sector to demonstrate it and these are not based on a practice-based philosophy. Theoretical models that do exist are generalised and not specific to Hospitality that as a sector exhibits unique characteristics, such as its multi-site structures of value delivery, reliance on interaction for value co-creation and labour focused heterogenous delivery through geographically dispersed sites.

Regarding Q2, generalised learning theories suggest that practice communicates and disperses cognitive capability to create new knowledge as part of organisational learning, but this is not substantiated within the hospitality sector. For these two key reasons, a gap emerges around the extant literature to account for how informal practice-based service innovation occurs, addressed in the following chapters by utilising a novel methodological approach applied to a hospitality-based case-study.

Analytical Framework

In the initial research proposal, an analytical framework was developed to provide a starting point for the study (see Figure 12). On further investigation of the extant literature, a large number of other theories and frameworks have been reviewed and the framework revised in light of this. The Researcher specifically criticises the initial framework for the following reasons:

1. The visual representation of the model artificially structured activity into two pathways, one on top of the other in a vertical relationship that suggested that activity occurred at two discrete levels, reflecting a hierarchy normally found in multi-site organisations. However, it is now clearer that this is purely arbitrary in relation to the learning and development structures that are weaved into the fabric of an organisation. In effect the model reinforces a dualistic approach - that of individual and organisational levels – contrary to the developed philosophy based on the ontology of practice.

2. The framework suggests that in some way service innovation capabilities are a feature of an organisation, whereas in fact, the literature suggests that 'innovation capabilities' are not just organisational, but are characteristics of a community, a team and an individual. The model under-estimated the particularity of the phenomenon.

3. That each element identified is 'bound' as a variable rather than processual element. The Researcher is aware of their own bias at the time, in that 'systems thinking' dominated the initial creation of the analytical framework.

Figure 14: The Existing Analytical Framework

Pathway 1: Activity System = The Service Experience at Unit Level

| Service Interactions | Variation – Adaptation Event | Situated Action | Value in Use |

Pathway 2: Activity System = Service Innovation

Service Innovation Capabilities
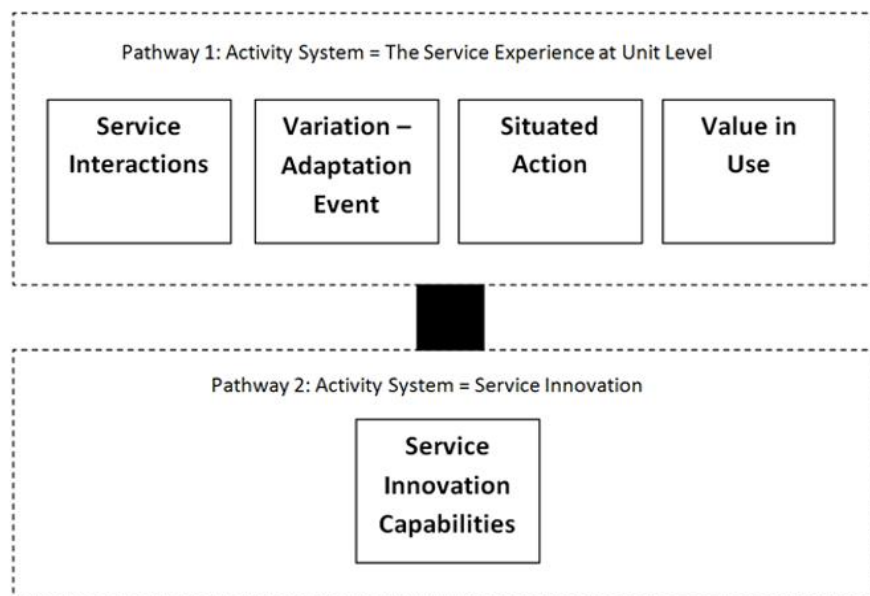
3.8.4 Adapted Analytical Framework

An adapted analytical framework has been produced (see Figure 13 below) to counter some of the criticisms identified by the Researcher:

1. By foregrounding the learning and development processes as the central part of the framework it ensures that these processes become the focus for developing a suitable methodology to capture the phenomena.

2. Pathways are still contained in the framework but remodelled to show the activity system in operation via objects that the organisational space to account for particularity, rather than some

notional generalised structural hierarchy.

3. The developed model reflects a movement away from technical rationality towards practical rationality in the spirit of the emerging philosophical framework.

Figure 15: The Adapted Analytical Framework
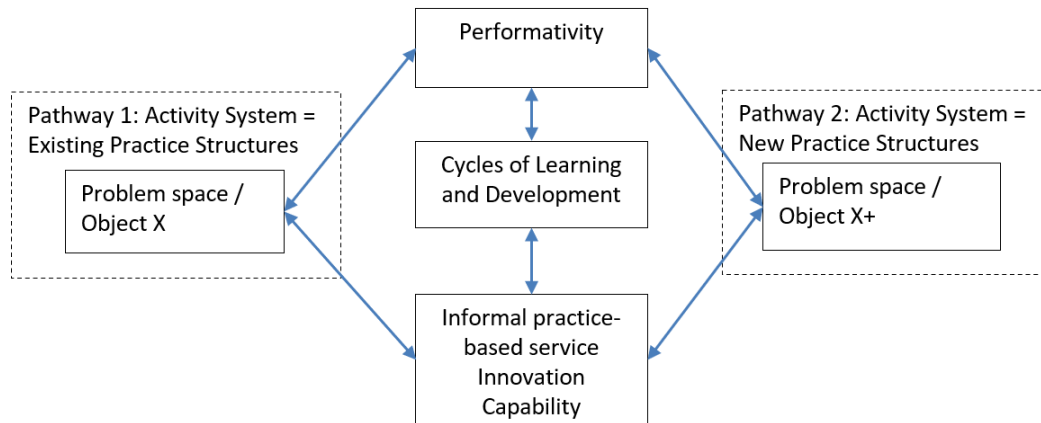
3.8.5 Methodological Research Implications

Several methodological implications have been highlighted throughout the theoretical discussion in this chapter, with three key considerations summarised here:

1. The research study needs to ensure a balance is struck in the data collection procedures between capturing bottom-up interaction and its contingent, emergent, and improvisatory aspects that enacts learning and knowledge creation with the more teleological system-ness of top-down knowledge 'production'.

2. That the situatedness, particularity and heterogenous characteristics of informal practice-based service innovation is captured through appropriate research methods and techniques that are fit-for-purpose.

3. That any research method employed will also capture the essence of the messy process of innovation captured through Burgleman's (1996) comments on continuity and chaos that epitomised the innovation management dilemmas in their research studies.

To reflect both the importance of the particularity and anti-dualistic notion of the research, it is worth noting two last contributions from the extant literature. Firstly, Felin and Foss (2005: 441) argue that:

> To fully explicate organizational anything – whether identity, learning, knowledge, or capabilities– one must fundamentally begin with and understand the individuals that compose the whole,

specifically their underlying nature, choices, abilities, propensities, heterogeneity, purposes, expectations and motivations.

Crossan and Apaydin (2010: 1178) suggest that future research should provide a bridge between the organisational and individual perspectives, proposing that using a practice-based view might be a "promising way of combining micro and macro levels of theorising". The Researcher demonstrates how this could be operationalised through a unique methodological approach in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines an integrated ontological, epistemological, and methodological research design for the research study utilising activity theory with grounded analysis of case-study data based on in depth interviews and direct observations of two working pub sites in the UK hospitality sector.

In line with the objectives of the research study, the methodology enabled the researcher to conduct an exploratory qualitative study that surfaces the relationships between sources of variation, customisation, and adaptive practice through informal practice-based service innovation.

The objectives of the chapter are to demonstrate the philosophical underpinning that supports the research design, whilst providing a sufficient level of transparency of the methods and techniques employed used to generate acceptable knowledge of how informal practice-based service innovation emerges in action. The two core research questions that the research design addresses are:

1. How does service innovation happen as a bottom-up phenomena in a hospitality organisation?
2. Does this process contribute to the development of institutional structures to support service innovation capability?

4.1 Philosophy

This initial section will provide the justification of the research philosophies employed. Research philosophies fall into research paradigms (Saunders et al., 2009: 106) that outline basic belief systems or worldviews to guide research investigations. As a branch of metaphysics, if epistemology is about how we know what we know, then ontology must be about what we know and so is concerned with the nature of being in the world or existence (Williams, 2016; Paul, 2021), or how the world is independently of how we conceptualise it (Saunders et al., 2009: 110). According to Cardinal et al. (2006: 106-107) there are three main ontologies in the social sciences - materialism (all things are derived from matter and reality is fully mind independent – a realist perspective), dualism (all things are either matter or spirit/mind as two separate entities) and idealism (all things are ideas – matter does not exist outside the mind). As Cardinal asks: "How much of what we perceive is a feature of the world, and how much is a feature of our minds?" (Cardinal, et al., 2006: 85).

As a pragmatist, Dewey believed that 'knowing' is dependent on practice i.e., "knowing is literally something which we do" (Dewey, 1916, quoted in Russell, 1919: 14). In other words, knowing comes through action with the world which creates knowledge of reality. However, Dewey is criticised for focusing on individual knowledge which fails to account for knowledge generated through collective practice

(Engeström et al., 1999). Engeström argues that knowledge is also created through our interaction with others. Similarly, in Glaser and Strauss's (1967) seminal article on the discovery of grounded theory, they identify the importance of seeing actions and activity within a network of shared activities, that came to be associated closely with symbolic interactionism (Chamberlain-Salaun et al., 2013). Likewise, Lave and Wenger (1991) discuss communities of practice where individuals develop knowledge through interaction with experts. But Lave and Wenger are criticised for failing to account for innovation – how practices change (Engeström et al., 1999) which embraces the contingent aspect of human agency and its transformative effect on shared practice. If knowledge is derived from something that we do our selves or with others, then clearly 'practice' is a key phenomenon for this study. If it is accepted that knowledge of reality is literally derived through the actions and practices of the participants and those they share their activities with, then it also follows that each participant has experience of their own reality shared with others. How we know reality exists is because of our (sub conscious) awareness of the similarity of our interpretation of it through our sense-based information with that of other people's interpretation of it through theirs. Kant termed this interplay of shared cognition about the world through cognitive judgements 'intersubjective' knowledge.

Therefore, the philosophical position of this thesis is that we know 'what' by how we relate to others through practice. This position does not go as far to say that there are definitive human universals (an anthropological and ontological argument (Brown, 1991) but rather loose rules (both explicit and implicit) specific to a community of practice. This approach follows in the traditions of common-sense philosophy (Cuneo et al., 2004) acknowledging that there is a single common-sense reality (a realist epistemology), but then also acknowledges that there can never be any absolute knowledge of it (a relativist epistemology) (Gomm, 2009). This realist/relative dualism creates a tension for the study's epistemological approach. On the one hand, a realist would acknowledge that there is an objective reality, whilst a relativist would argue that there are only multiple perceptions of it, in which case all perceptions are equally valid (and therefore realists would say none are legitimate for identifying 'truth').

In practice, the approach adopted in this thesis followed the middle ground between realism and relativism and accords with the notion of 'Subtle Realism' proposed by Hammersley (1992) which is to adopt neither position but one midway between the two. The researcher recognised that knowledge is constructed socially of an objective reality. Thus, the researcher acknowledged that there is a construct of activity 'out there' that could account for innovation, but it is socially contested or intersubjectively constructed.

Therefore, the research design focused on the construction process of knowledge, rather than on trying to prove that an objective reality exists because of it. Subtle Realism is grounded in the interpretative tradition

of Sociology and Social Constructionism (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). The social constructionist approach has gathered momentum over the last two decades within the academic research sector (Engeström, 1999: 8). Constructionism takes the view that: ''knowledge in some area is the product of our social practices and institutions, or of the interactions and negotiations between relevant social groups'' (Gasper, 1999: 855) and sustained by social processes (Martin and Sugarman, 1999). It focuses on the artefacts that are produced in human interaction (e.g., objects of consciousness or social phenomena that develop in social contexts such as social etiquette, collective goals, shared practice structures) foregrounding human relationships (Gergen, 1995). Unlike constructivism which focuses more on the individual and their cognitive processes, constructionism focuses on the 'social' as the source of knowledge (Young and Collin, 2004).

Thus, the study did not view innovation as an input/output linear model that has a series of variables with causal relationships on which to base truth, but instead innovation was treated as a progressive change and developmental process (or transformative process) of the participants and of their activities within a social, cultural and historical context, through enactment or 'activity' or performativity.

This approach reinforced the epistemology of the thesis i.e., 'being in the world' and practicing innovation was investigated from multiple perspectives as a social phenomenon, in a social world, in which social actors perceive the world as their reality and act accordingly through their social interactions through knowing-in-action. This approach recognised the role of the researcher in the interpretive process and positioned the research as potentially phenomenological. However, because the thesis operationalised Activity Theory it eschews phenomenology in favour of dialectic materialism (Peim, 2009: 170):

> At its most abstract, activity is the subject's ongoing relations with an always already constituted context that is at the same time being transformed by that relation.

In essence, Activity Theory proposes that activity itself has a forward-looking goal directed object oriented-ness which engages actors in a process of development that has movement and expansion in time and space, in which subjects are transformed through activity simultaneously with their social worlds. Whilst the researcher investigated the lifeworld and lived experiences of participants in line with a phenomenological approach (Husserl, 1936 cited in Luft, 2004: 198), the focus of the investigation was on the interaction between participants and their worlds and their causal relationships to theorise from the ground up, and "lift data to a conceptual level" (Suddaby, 2006:634). The unit of analysis was not the individual as in phenomenology, but the activity system in which they enact practices, thus elevating the importance of identifying and conceptualising the causal relationships there-in.

The position of the researcher was that informal practice-based service innovation was produced through recursive permutations of social interaction and therefore the phenomena was itself in perpetual change as per the working definition developed in Chapter Three:

> Informal practice-based service innovation is any idea, practice or artefact which both individuals and groups perceive as new to them which triggers disruption, variation and change in their situation and through cumulative adaptations becomes concretised in some shared structure.

New ideas, artefacts and practices, therefore, cannot come into being without human interaction during activities. This reflects the heterogenous nature of innovation as being highly particular, emphasising "the details of the local situation to understand the reality or perhaps the reality working behind them" (Remenyi et al., 1998, quoted in Saunders:111). The researcher investigated the meanings and motivations of human-world interaction through activities – i.e., 'doing' and 'practicing' - that enabled the surfacing of informal practise-based innovation in a hospitality organisation.

Only knowledge derived from activity through local informal practice, constructed and interpreted through multiple perspectives to reflect the subjective reality of practice-based innovation (the phenomena) was valid. This reflected the social constructionist perspective discussed earlier and was reflected in how the researcher worked "bottom-up" (Blackie, 2007) by deriving theory and concepts from the particulars of the situation in line with a grounded approach to data collection and analysis (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007).

4.2 Methodology

Based on the evolving theoretical framework outlined in Chapters Two and Three, the methodology assumed that innovation was based on a combination of processes, routines, practices and behaviours which were accomplished through their continuous performance (Strauss, 1993). Action formed part of everyday activity in organisations by individuals and groups to accomplish a central purpose. In short, innovative practice was highly variable, seen as unstable and as heterogenous as the innovation it produced and therefore to study informal practice-based innovation required an in-depth, highly context specific method to surface the underlying tensions and contradictions that drove it.

The particularity of practice-based phenomena (i.e. context specific and localised) required a focus on capturing experiences and meanings (including motivations, opinions, and emotions) from participants' perception of their interactions and their behaviours. From this perspective, a case study based qualitative approach to data collection was implemented as the most effective research method. Justification of using a case-study approach is discussed in more detail in Chapter Four, Section 4.5.

Qualitative data had advantages over quantitative data in this respect as it allowed the researcher to explore experiences with participants using open-ended and flexible questioning techniques (such as through interviews) and enabled the researcher to modify lines of inquiry based on participant responses in real time. This was supported with observation data of behaviours in their natural settings, i.e., during a live experience of a branded service cycle. The study assumed that the phenomena was only available in a live experience of the service cycle. A more detailed rationale for the research design implemented follows and is summarised in Figure 14 below.

The research design involved collecting and analysing data from a single organisation through interviews and unobtrusive observations to create a case-study of informal practice-based service innovation, from which substantive theory was developed as per Figure 17 below.

Figure 16: Research Design Summary
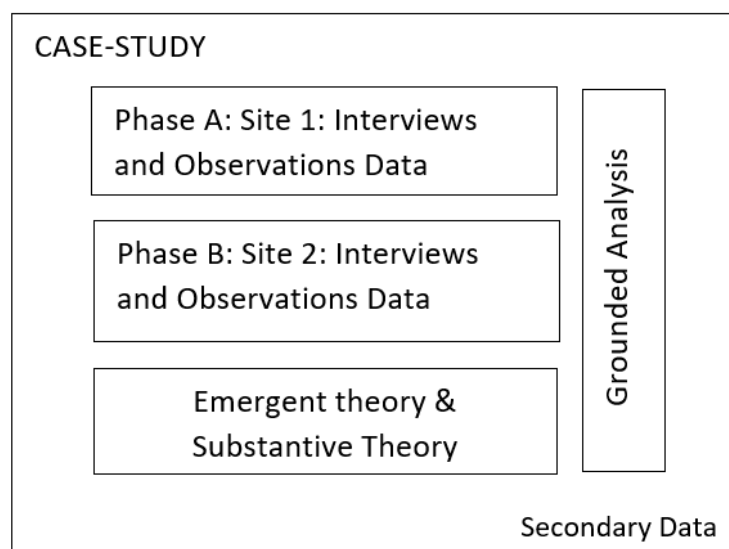
The Research Design was exploratory but used an experimental methodology by incorporating grounded theory with activity theory in line with the philosophical traditions outlined earlier. The design did not seek to investigate cause and effect or prove/disprove hypothesis. Instead, it aimed to understand why informal practice-based service innovation arose through interaction of participants with their life worlds with a view to developing concepts and theories that surfaced how this happened in a hospitality context.

This study's research design did not enable the researcher to identify some universal grand theories (Creswell, 2002), but instead attempted to generate an emerging conceptual understanding as a baseline of 'substantive theory' (Saunders 2009:40) that potentially has fit, relevance and 'grab' (Glaser, 1998) for participants related to their specific context and time. This fitted with the skills of the Researcher and their

previous experience of research methods and techniques through involvement as a Research Associate in the early 90's on quantitative and qualitative EPSRC and ESRC funded research projects.

4.3 Grounded theory and grounded analysis

Given the conceptual underpinnings and epistemology of the thesis that focuses on how knowledge is socially constructed, the methodology for this research study stemmed, but was not entirely based on the tradition of humanistic qualitative case study-based research generally referred to as 'Grounded Theory'.

Grounded Theory is a theory/method package from Sociology and is recommended when investigating social problems or situations that become adapted through human interaction. Grounded data collection and analysis techniques are strongly recommended by research scholars for developing theoretical accounts of human interaction (Birks and Mills, 2015; Bryant and Charmaz, 2007; Nicolini, 2012; Strauss and Corbin, 1997), and for these reasons and others elaborated on further in later sections, they were adopted for the methodology of this research study.

According to Charmaz, Grounded Theory has an "interpretative, constructionist epistemology" (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007: 27). It aims to show "how social circumstances could account for the interactions, behaviours and experiences of the people being studied" (Benoliel, 1996: 413). This includes any approach that is "grounded in data" (Goulding, 2002) and refers to research originated inductively by studying the data and finding theory from it (Gomm, 2009:152). This approach was highly suited to exploring the 'why' of complex interrelationships such as those found in a service experience and innovation processes, highlighting the causal nature of those interrelationships but not attempting to prove or disprove those relationships by developing a universal grand theory, as highlighted previously. Barney Glaser (2016, online) took the view that many grand theories were "conjectural, that is reified and not relevant to the area or the participants" and therefore wanted to develop a methodology so that the developed "concepts in the theory should have fit and relevance" or 'Grab'. Grab means the developed concepts and theories have "to be based on data in the field and be relevant to the participants" i.e., grounded (Glaser, 2016, paragraph four).

Grounded theory stems from work by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1997) and is "routed in symbolic interactionalism, social constructivism and constructionism" (Gomm, 2009: 78). Grounded theory suggests that reality is seen from the point of view of the participant or actor. A Constructionist would argue that if reality is constructed through perception, then it follows that we (as researchers) are active and implicated in that process and therefore act as the primary research tool.

Grounded theory does not discover the truth but identifies how a social reality has been created from the multiple realities of participants examined through its methodology.

Glaser and Strauss' approach sought to overcome what can be termed as the 'Chicago School' which was based on a "pragmatist, symbolic interactionist, and ethnographic traditions" (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007: 32). Their objective was to provide a clear foundation for systematic qualitative research. A key strength of their approach was to surface and give transparency to the "processes and procedures of qualitative investigation" (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007: 33). This is particularly relevant in exploratory studies as it provides the evidence to justify the emerging theory, whist simultaneously demonstrating an ethical approach.

Substantial disagreement between the original authors of the approach, Anselm Strauss and Barney Glaser, have led to a wide debate about the best approach to take with Grounded Theory (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007: 4). Glaser's approach to Grounded Theory differs from Strauss on some key points. Glaser believes in an objective truth of reality (Classic Grounded Theory or CGT) whilst Strauss is a pragmatist and a symbolic interactionist. More recently Charmaz (2008) has developed 'constructionist grounded theory' whilst also stating her constructivist roots, to overcome the more objective approach taken by Glaser of Classic Grounded Theory. Similarly, Clarke, Washburn and Friese (2015) build on the approach by Charmaz, stating that Grounded Theory methods have deep roots with symbolic interactionism and a pragmatist philosophy, with Clarke developing a sophisticated situational analysis technique discussed later as a supplementary technique to the theory/method package already developed (Clarke, 2005:xxxiii). This research study followed the grounded data analysis techniques outlined and recommended by Bryant and Charmaz (2010) and others detailed in the following sections.

4.3.1 Data coding and analysis overview
Qualitative data analysis generally follows a process of 'coding the data', reflecting on the data, sorting the data, "identifying patterns in data… [and] …moving towards generalisations and developing theories/ conceptualising" (Sandiford and Seymore, 2007:728). This can be visually represented using the module developed by Saldana (See Figure 17).

Figure 17: Codes-to-theory model qualitative inquiry (Saldana, 2009: 12)
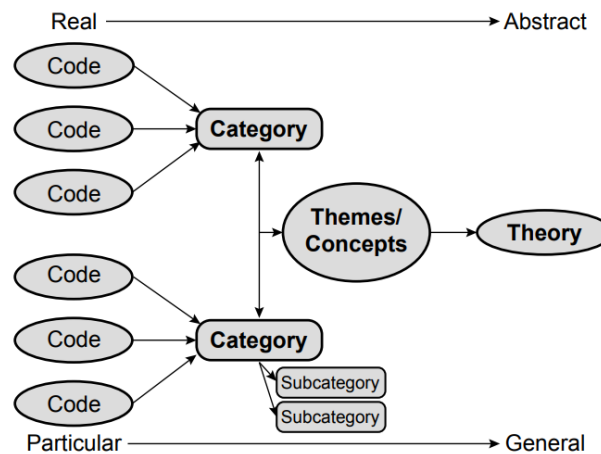
However, Grounded Theory employs a number of key differences compared to other qualitative data analysis approaches to research. The most significant difference is that data collection and analysis happen side by side in parallel (in constant comparison) as the research study progresses:

> Researchers refine their analysis by constantly testing their interpretations they have developed so far against new data and refining their ideas if necessary (Dye and Schatz, 2000:49).

In this study, the researcher followed the guidelines for the "constant comparative method" (Gomm, 2009). Within this method the researcher coded and analysed data in alternating sequences comparing new data with the latest findings and emerging ideas to help guide the investigation and focus the next stages of data collection. The researcher compared data with data, data with emerging codes, and then existing codes with new codes to find similarities and differences to identify patterns. Whilst the initial codes were descriptive, the researcher moved to interpretative codes using gerunds (verbal nouns) as labels for codes (e.g., 'being busy', working hard, feeling stressed etc.) to bring to life the emerging analysis (Flick, 2022).

This research study specifically followed the use of gerunds that enabled code and category labels to reflect active processes or activities in the data. This can be seen in the code and category descriptors shown in Figure 33. Saldana's (2009) describes this as process coding, and it is utilised by other grounded theory researchers such as in Carmichael's (2017) study that identifies coaching practice by senior executives. Carmichael (2017: 62) advises that using gerunds in process coding should reflect "both observed action and conceptual action such as change, emergence and growth'… [and] … notions of strategies, practices, and adaptation over time".

Using the logic of comparison between data from different respondents, the researcher found "interchangeable indicators" that may demonstrate a "grounded pattern" (Glaser, 2016). Codes were compared and clustered into a focused code to enable further filtering of the data which captured, summarised and synthesised elements of the data. Based on focused codes, categories were constructed that form the elements of an emerging theory through a process called 'theoretical sampling' where the Researcher decided where to collect data next based on the emerging pattern, effectively directing 'sampling' in an iterative process.

Through theoretical sampling, the researcher raised the level of analytical abstraction from the data to higher level concepts of relationships, to emerging theories. Glaser refers this stage to developing a range of relationships that are social processes with related issues, concerns, contexts, phases, goals, etc. (Glaser,2016).

4.3.2 Theoretical Sensitivity

In addition to coding approach above, the researcher adopted the concept of "informed grounded theory" espoused by Thornberg (2012). Thornberg identifies problems with the original spirit or dictum of grounded theory, which suggests researchers should delay the literature review so as not to be contaminated by pre-existing concepts thereby enabling them to adopt a truly ideal, purely inductive neutral position for developing emerging theory from the data. But as Thornberg points out, researchers cannot unlearn what they already know and therefore pure induction is a naive position. Bryant and Charmaz (2010: 22) similarly identify problems with this naïve position:

> Adhering to [the concept of the no preconceptions method] is difficult in a culture where research aims and objectives have to be submitted for vetting to research boards, funding committees, and ethical approval procedures in advance of the research being undertaken; and where once approval is granted, any deviation from the proposal requires further formal approval.

Similarly, Jones et al. (2005) suggest that researchers must check the scope of prior research in order to ensure that their study will add to the body of knowledge (Jones et al., 2005, Stebbins, 2001). Thornberg (2012: 249) proposes that "an informed grounded theorist sees the advantage of using pre-existing theories and research findings in the substantive field in a sensitive, creative and flexible way". Thornberg (2012:250) proposes theoretical agnosticism in which the research works cumulatively, building on earlier work without being uncritical or "taking previous theories for granted" coupled with theoretical pluralism, in which the researcher entertains explanations of differing theories and frameworks to keep an open mind and to avoid forcing of pre-conceived concepts on the data. However, Glaser (2016, paragraph nineteen) maintains that by being sensitised to theory before collecting data creates a false set of conjectured

problems rather than what he calls 'emergence' of problems by surfacing the key concerns of participants directly with them. Similarly, Holton (2010: 269) argues that "the researcher should enter the domain with no preconceived problem statement, interview protocols or extensive review of literature" because they will force these preconceived ideas on the data. Coffey and Atkinson (1996:157) conversely state "It is after all, not very clever to rediscover the wheel, and the student or researcher who is ignorant of the relevant literature is always in danger of doing the equivalent".

Alternatively, Thornberg (2012) suggests that a literature review could be viewed as 'data' so that "researchers use the literature as a possible source of inspiration, ideas, 'aha!' experiences, creative associations, critical reflections and multiple lenses, in line with the logic of abduction" (Thornberg, 2012: 250). Similarly, Thornberg (2012) advocates an informed approach at the beginning of a research study, as the researcher will discover "new concepts, ideas or explanations by finding surprising events which cannot be routinely explained by pre-existing knowledge. Thus... the researcher goes beyond data as well as the pre-existing theory or theories" (Thornberg, 2012: 248).

Following the approach of Bryant and Charmaz (2010) and Thornberg's (2012) 'informed grounded theory', the researcher undertook a literature review on the basis that he already had significant practical background and significant theoretical understanding of the innovation subject field and was therefore beyond doubt, sensitised with pre-conceived ideas. The researcher spent 17 years in industry working on product and service innovation projects prior to starting his PhD. He worked both before and after this period in the Higher Education sector for a similar period of time and conducted research as part of innovation research project teams for the EPSRC and ESRC. The researcher is unable to unlearn this knowledge and as part of acknowledging his role in the research process recognised this brings theoretical and practical 'baggage' that he identified as a potential source of bias. The researcher saw this research study as an opportunity to compare his practical and theoretical knowledge with other perspectives from the extant literature. This helped to open his mind, gain fresh perspectives and provide inspiration as Thornberg suggests above, whilst also identifying gaps. The alternative was to deceptively engage in the principles of Grounded Theory as if "tabula rasa" (Thornberg, 2012: 247), to pretend to be purely inductive and not acknowledge bias in their interpretations which is contrary to the validity of qualitative data analysis. By being informed of the literature and the inherent bias this brings, the researcher situated their study "in the current knowledge base of the field but will also contribute to it by extending, challenging, refining, or revising it" (Thornberg, 2012:255) to improve its validity.

4.3.3 Inductive, Deductive, Abductive Logic and Theory Development

According to Hussein (2014) the objective of Grounded Theory is to account for human behaviour through inductive logic and discovery, rather than from starting with an existing hypothesis to test. Inductive logic implies the researcher starts by collecting data whilst also analysing and generating concepts from it, which is in sharp contrast to deductive logic where hypothesis and/or theories are tested and either proven or disproved requiring the extant literature to be reviewed a priori. Notwithstanding the issue of theoretical sensitivity discussed already, Reichertz (2009) proposes the issue of a priori knowledge is overcome partly through utilising abductive logic with-in Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM) which he defines as:

> Assembling or discovering, on the basis of an interpretation of collected data, such combinations of features for which there is no appropriate explanation or rule in the store of knowledge that already exists (Reichertz, 2009: 6).

Reichertz suggests abduction can be surprising which causes 'a genuine shock' triggering the search for new explanations and the development of a new 'type'. Reichertz refers to Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggesting this is line with their grounded theory approach:

> Creativity is also a vital component of the grounded theory method. Its procedures force the researcher to break through assumptions and to create new order out of the old. Creativity manifests itself in the ability of the researcher to aptly name categories; and also, to let the mind wander and make the free associations that are necessary for generating stimulating questions and for coming up with a comparison that leads to discovery (Strauss and Corbin, 1990 quoted in Reichertz, 2009: 11)

Abduction is recognised by proponents of Grounded Theory to support the co-creation of theory between the researcher and the respondent (Bryant and Charmaz, 2010; Charmaz, 2006; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). This supported the use of face-to-face interviews as a key data collection method in the research design and was used extensively by the researcher in this study.

Successful Grounded Theory is achieved by balancing 'grounding in' and 'distancing from' the data (Bryant and Charmaz, 2010: 15). To only be "grounded in" can lead to criticisms of mere description whilst overly focused "distancing from" can lead to the accusation of "immaculate conception" (Glaser, 2016) i.e., the creativity that generates new insights is not clearly linked and grounded in the data, so that insights just 'appear' with no scientific relationship or clearly explicit actions that relate to interpreting context. In Grounded Theory methods it involves not just processing information but 'making sense' of it to generate meaning:

In GTM, the relationship between data, however defined and grasped, and the researcher is one founded on action, interaction, and interpretation (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007: 15).

For this reason, the data collection and analysis phase of research was blurred through iterations as the researcher was embedded within the process, not objective and distant from it (as in a positivist tradition).

4.3.4 Unit of Analysis

As previously mentioned in Chapters Three and Four, which provided an extensive overview of the unit of analysis, Engeström's framework is reproduced here in Figure 18 for clarity as the unit of analysis for the study.

Figure 18: Unit of Analysis: The Activity System (Adapted from Engeström, 1987)
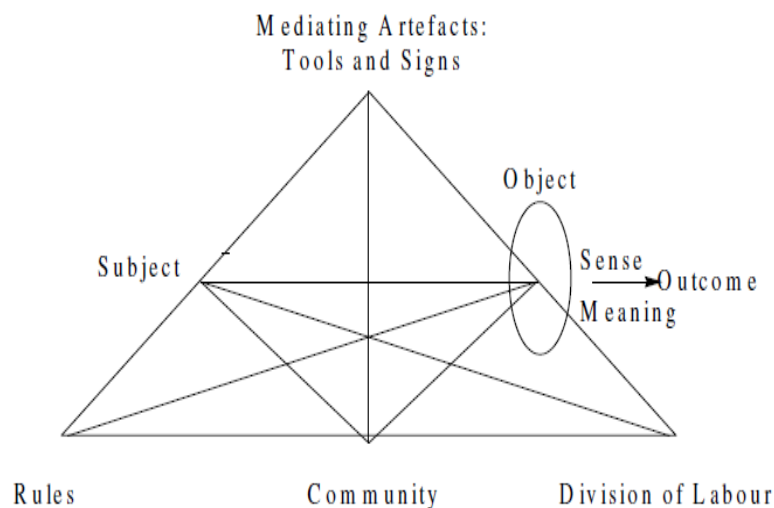
In Chapter Three (Section 3.4.1) the advantages of using Activity Theory was extensively discussed and justified as a framework for investigating informal practice-based service innovation (and summarised in Table 3). Whilst the typical procedures outlined so far were adopted for grounded analysis of the data, the question that arose was how to integrate activity theory as an analytical framework within the overall data collection and analysis scheme of grounded theory, or vice versa?

To operationalise Activity Theory with Grounded Theory, the researcher took the approach espoused by Clarke (2005) of a situational analysis and substituted Clark's schema and that of Strauss and Corbin's Conditional Consequential matrix (see Figure 19 below), with Engeström's activity theory framework discussed in the earlier Chapters. This approach was also proposed by Seaman (2008) who produced methodological guidelines to do this (see Table 5 below).

Clarke's (2005) proposed approach stemmed from an effort to 'reground' grounded theory by utilising a supplementary concept of 'Situational Analysis' in which actual maps are used (Situational, Social Worlds/Arena Maps, Positional Maps) as analytical exercises (Clarke, 2005: xxiii). Clarke's situation analysis sits after the coding process espoused by Grounded Theorists (as elaborated earlier). As Mathar (2008: 15) put its': "Her [Clarke's] suggestion is to construct a model on the nature of the field by using grounded theory in order to later deconstruct it—or at least incorporate heterogeneities, complexities, contradictions, etc.—with situational analysis". In a similar way to Activity Theory and its activity system, Clark's situational analysis encompasses agency, action, structure, image, text, context and history to analyse complex situations. Clarke (2005: xxiii) states:

> The outcomes of situational mappings should be thick analyses…[that]… take into account the full array of elements in the situation and explicate their interrelations". Clarke's proposed situational maps are intended to capture and discuss the messy complexities of the situation in their dense relations and permutations… [laying out]… particular axes of variation and difference, focus, and controversy found in the situation… fully allowing multiple positions and even contradictions within both individuals and collective activities to be articulated.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) also advocate the use of a conditional/consequential matrix for research studies (cited in Clarke, 2005: 71) – see Figure 19 below as an example.

Figure 19: Conditional/Consequential Matrix (Clarke, 2005: 69)
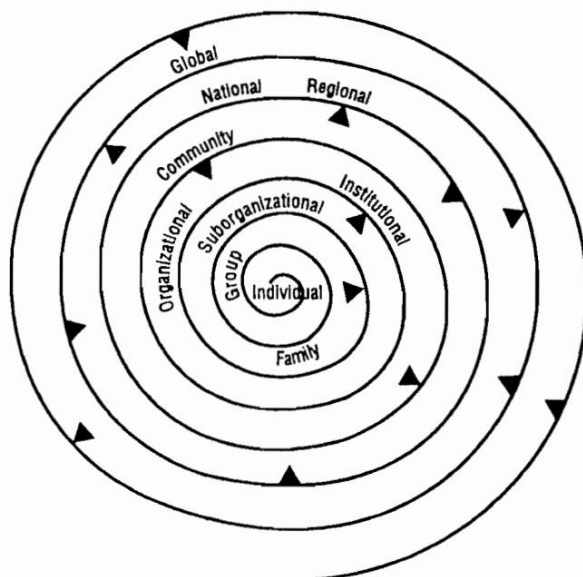
The matrix represents constant interplay and inter/action (process) with conditions/consequences (structure) and the dynamic evolving nature of events.

Dark Lines = Evolving interaction

Spaces between = Sources of conditions/consequences that make up structure or context

Arrows = Intersection structure with process

(Adapted from Strauss and Corbin, 1998)

Putting philosophical issues aside for the moment, the key difference between; (1) Activity Theory as an analytical framework; (2) Clark's situation analysis and (3) Strauss and Corbin's consequential matrix is the treatment of the 'situation'. All three approaches surface contradictions and social structures as 'conditions' that drive change. Philosophically, both Activity Theory and Grounded Theory centre analysis

on social phenomena and the process of social change that surfaces "difference as a range of variation" (Clarke, 2005: 9). Clarke makes it very clear that epistemologically "interactionist constructionism is a materialist social constructionism" (Clarke, 2005: 7-9) that allows the framing of collective action orientating grounded theory towards action. Similarly, Charmaz (2006: 189) also states that "Symbolic interactionism is a constructionist perspective because it assumes that meanings and obdurate realities are the product of collective processes".

But the key difference is that whilst the unit of analysis in Activity Theory is dependent on an existing construct called 'activity', albeit in a dialectic process, that is predetermined and 'out there', there is no unit of analysis in grounded theory as it is reliant on the emerging pattern from the data to construct reality and is bounded by theoretical sampling. The Researcher was aware that using Engeström's model of the Activity System could result in forcing data to align to an existing framework. However, by delaying application of the Activity Theory framework until after coding, the researcher ensured that data was not forced so that codes reflected data and remained grounded, preserved but utilised in the framework.

Clarke's approach goes well beyond the framework proposed by Engeström (1987) in terms of the procedures of data analysis and demonstrating theory emergence, but the intent is similar. The advantage of Activity Theory is its focus on local goal directed activity; zooming in to the individual and zooming out to the activity system is more bounded, but not exclusively, to the local community compared to Clarke's analysis that goes to a global level. Similarly, Mathar (2008: 4) criticises Clarke for not clearly explaining the limits of the 'situation' in her situational analysis concept suggesting her approach will not be sufficiently ethnographic by not engaging in 'small range analysis'. Whilst Clark's position is more towards a holistic view of all macro and micro processes, activity theory is more geared towards the micro process. Thus, Activity Theory has the benefit of reducing complexity according to the activity level in question and being less prescriptive in its approach. Whilst there are differences as highlighted, Seaman (2008: 6) proposes:

> Given the historical and cultural emphasis within activity theory, the up-close analytic procedures of grounded theory, and the mutual interest in social processes of change, a combined approach might help the researcher analyse the multi-layered nature of individual, institutional, societal, cultural, and historical change in varying settings.

Seaman (2008) goes on to produce some guidelines for combining the two approaches as detailed in Table 5.

Table 5: Constructing a Grounded Theory of Activity (Seamans, 2008:13)

Key Methodological Guidelines
• From activity theory: Historical analysis will play an important part in understanding the activity under study. What are its origins? How did it arrive at its current state? What major events helped shape it? How does its history influence the way in which it is carried out locally? • From grounded theory: Withholding conceptual commitments will help facilitate the development of fuller categories and processes. • From grounded theory: Engaging in frequent and ongoing memo-ing will help track and work with the inevitable conceptual tensions that will arise throughout the research project. • From activity theory: Being sensitive to the way in which action is mediated by culture will help maintain a broad focus. • From both: Engaging in a dynamic process of looking broadly at the activity and your emerging conceptual framework while also attending to participants' views. • From both, together: Embrace the tensions that are involved as your ideas are challenged with new data and with existing theories. Probe these tensions in memos. How are the patterns in your data similar or dissimilar to patterns described in the literature? Where do they intersect, and where do they separate?
Methods and Strategies for Data Collection
• Ask process-oriented questions aimed at respondents' views of activity elements. • Record participants' talk in naturally occurring situations (i.e., noting when they talk, in what order, how they describe things and each other). • Observe how they use conceptual or material tools to solve the problems at hand, when these tools break down, and how they might be put to use to solve new problems. • Analyse the history of the primary organizations involved in the activity (the institutional locus). What norms are emphasized or enforced? How are these taken up or modified? • Conduct a historical analysis of the primary conceptual and material tools that are used to coordinate local action: Which tools are figured prominently? Where did they come from? Who introduced them? What was their original purpose? Is that purpose still relevant? • Use theoretical sampling to refocus on elements of the activity system that are underrepresented in the data. Has anything been overlooked? Do you need to return to any of the elements and get a different perspective, perhaps at a "higher" conceptual level?

Analytic Methods and Strategies
- Use initial coding as a way to sketch out the elements of the activity system, begin to grasp your subjects' views of it, and generate emergent themes. Use higher level theoretical or axial coding to elaborate the nature and extent of their relationship under different circumstances.   - Look for contradictions between naturally occurring talk and actions, historical ways of doing things, and participants' descriptions of events; raise these contradictions with participants.   - Code with an action emphasis to preserve the dynamic flow of events.   - Return to specific elements of the activity system based on questions raised during analysis and based on the reshaping of your emerging conceptual system.   - Memo frequently, especially when you recognize a pattern in the data either emergently or because it looks like something you have read about elsewhere. Does drawing on an extant concept make sense here? What doubts linger about its fit?

The researcher attempted to follow these guidelines, as outlined in this Chapter, in the implementation of the situation analysis using the activity theory framework.

4.4 Data Coding Process

The main sources of data were generated using different data collection methods (as per Figure 16: Research Design Summary), listed for clarity in the table below:

Table 6: Sources of Data

Sources of Data	Description	Detailed Overview and Justification of the Method	Summary of contribution
Case Study	Constructed from multiple sources of data including interviews, observations, secondary data and memos (as detailed below).	See Section 4.5	The overall case-study data provided a holistic view (enabling the researcher to zoom out) of the movement of change and development emerging from the data via the performance of participants in the activity system as they went about their daily routines. This led to the development of the 'Calm to Chaos' typology and Innovation Matrix model developed in Chapter Five.

Interviews	Interviews with staff using text-based transcripts of interview recordings.	See Section 4.6	Interviews in two phases in two sites operationalised the thesis' constructionist philosophy by providing a multi-perspective view of the reality of informal practice-based service innovation. The data provided thick description of the participants, their own contexts and their experiences with change and development on-site, grounding the data and enabling the researcher to 'zoom in'.
Observations	Observations recorded using text-based notes made in-situ.	See Section 4.7	Observations enabled the phenomena of informal practice-based service innovation to be observed in the lived experience of participants, surfacing the performativity aspects of practice and its contribution to the development of the 'Calm to Chaos' model developed in Chapter Five, whilst providing internal validity of the case-study data through cross referencing with interview data.
Secondary	Secondary text based-data – collected prior to, during and subsequently after the main phases of interview and observations.	See Section 4.8	Supplementary secondary data provided the historical context of the organisation, its development and current situation, and of its goals and objectives, providing a background trajectory of its intended change and development against the actual observed experience of the activity system in practice.
Memos	Memos – reflective text-based notes generated from interviews and observations.	See Section 4.8.1	Memos enabled the researcher to reflect on the data, to explore thoughts and feelings on data patterns, and their own research practice, and support the emergence of concepts and theories as part of the grounded analysis of the data.

The process of data coding involved the researcher assigning a label to a feature of the text-based data in order to index it – the code effectively set up a relationship and asked; "What is this an example of?" (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007: 81). Based on the seminal work by Glaser and Strauss (1967), Holton and Walsh (2017: 81-89) provide guidance on three types of coding which were adopted by the Researcher:

1. Open Coding (or line by line coding) is where the researcher looks for categories in the data. In the context of hospitality service activities, the data may suggest all sorts of phenomena for example 'service friendliness'. These conceptual labels are attached line by line, and if they reflect participants own words are called 'in Vivo' and highly grounded. Themes emerge as data analysis progresses.

2. Selective coding involves the researcher reviewing and refining the coding to further refine the analysis to produce categories that appear across a range of participant's data. These codes are 'tests' of whether the categories have fit and relevance beyond more than one or two participants contribution to an evolving theoretical scheme.

3. Theoretical Coding is where the researcher creates higher level abstractions that provide a framework for enhancing explanatory power (Birks and Mills, 2015) but Charmaz (2021) suggests these are not essential to employ Grounded Theory successfully.

Axial Coding (Corbin and Strauss, 2008) is another potential coding method to identify the relationships between the categories (such as the classification of events in the service experience – who, what, when, where). However, Charmaz (2006) recommends avoiding Axial Coding or sees it as optional, as her view is that it is too rigid and formal. Axial coding normally takes place after open coding and "involves re-assembling large amounts of open-coded data into more abstract conceptual categories" (Scott and Medaugh, 2017: 1). Axial coding was not adopted in this research study.

These data collection and analysis principles formed the basis by which the researcher implemented the research methods to incorporate the grounded analysis of data in the case-study and the Researcher used NVivo as the main software tool to achieve this, described in greater detail in the next section.

4.4.1 Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS) and NVivo

The advantages and disadvantages of using QDAS has been widely debated in the literature for some time, for example, Winsome and Johnson (2000: 393) point to the advantages as:

> …an ability to deal with large amounts of qualitative data, reducing the amount of time needed for manual handling tasks, increased flexibility and thoroughness in handling data, providing for more rigorous analysis of data, and providing a more visible audit trail in data analysis.

Some scholars advocate for data coding to be conducted using QDAS but for the data analysis itself to be conducted manually so as not to become too close or inhibit creativity (Roberts and Wilson, 2002). In the experience of the researcher, which aligns with wider views of other researchers, QDAS gives greater flexibility in coding, recoding, managing larger amounts of data and making it easier to see emerging patterns and links. The researcher used NVivo because they had received training and support as part of their Post Graduate Certificate in Research Practice, and because the University provided technical support in the use of the programme.

4.4.2 Coding and Data Analysis Process in NVivo

An overview of the data capture and coding process is provided in Figure 20 below to provide an overview of the iterative steps taken by the researcher.

STEP ONE

NVivo was used primarily for open coding, selective and/or focused coding (Fig 28: Step 1). The researcher had previous experience of manually coding interview data from research conducted in the early 1990s and found the software intuitive and significantly faster. It helped with establishing coding structures (codes, sub codes, grouping codes into categories), identifying duplication, and links, and enabled the organisation, re-organisation and reattribution of phenomena to codes to facilitate the emergence of theory and mapping to the Activity Theory framework.

Coding took place by highlighting phrases, lines, sentences, or segments of text. In some cases, more than one code was attributed to the highlighted text so that coding overlapped. Whilst Charmaz (2006) identifies benefits to line-by-line coding, specifically the exhaustive identification of every instance of a phenomenon, other scholars note that highlighting segments and large sections may make identifying codes easier and make the process, and the researcher, more reflexive and less mechanistic (Roberts and Wilson, 2002). In practice, the Researcher found that in some instances only attributing a code to a phrase was necessary because the conveyed meaning was clear in that instance, whilst in other situations, the researcher highlighted larger sections of text because, for example, the participant may have conveyed a similar meaning over a longer response.

STEP TWO AND THREE

During the coding process, the Researcher was aware of repeated codes appearing in the data creating an emerging pattern that created categories. Once the researcher reached saturation (i.e. he was unable to develop new codes from the data), the Researcher then re-aligned codes and categories within the Activity Framework – affectively using the 6 elements of the framework as "super categories". This maintained the integrity of the original coding process and enabled the Researcher to revisit and reconsider a small number of the original categorising decisions in light of surfacing the emerging patterns based on the tensions and contradictions in the data. The Researcher was able to explore further relationships between the Activity Theory elements, (See Figure 20 below and the Open Code Map provided in the Appendix C) as codes and categories were added to each element through an iterative process of refinement. Auto coding was avoided in line with advice by other scholars (Humble, 2012: 132), as were other automated processes on the basis that this would distant the researcher from the data.

STEP FOUR

Categories were developed by the researcher using printouts of codes from NVivo and then re-considering the relations of codes in NVivo, or via using post-it notes through a manual process (see image below in Figure 20: Step 3/4). Similarly, theorizing the relationships between categories was also completed manually using visual representations, building models such as matrices to conceptually explore relations of codes, categories and the activity theory elements, and then returning to NVivo to establish if there was sufficient evidence to support the links between codes, and at a higher level of abstraction between developed categories.

Figure 20: The data analysis process
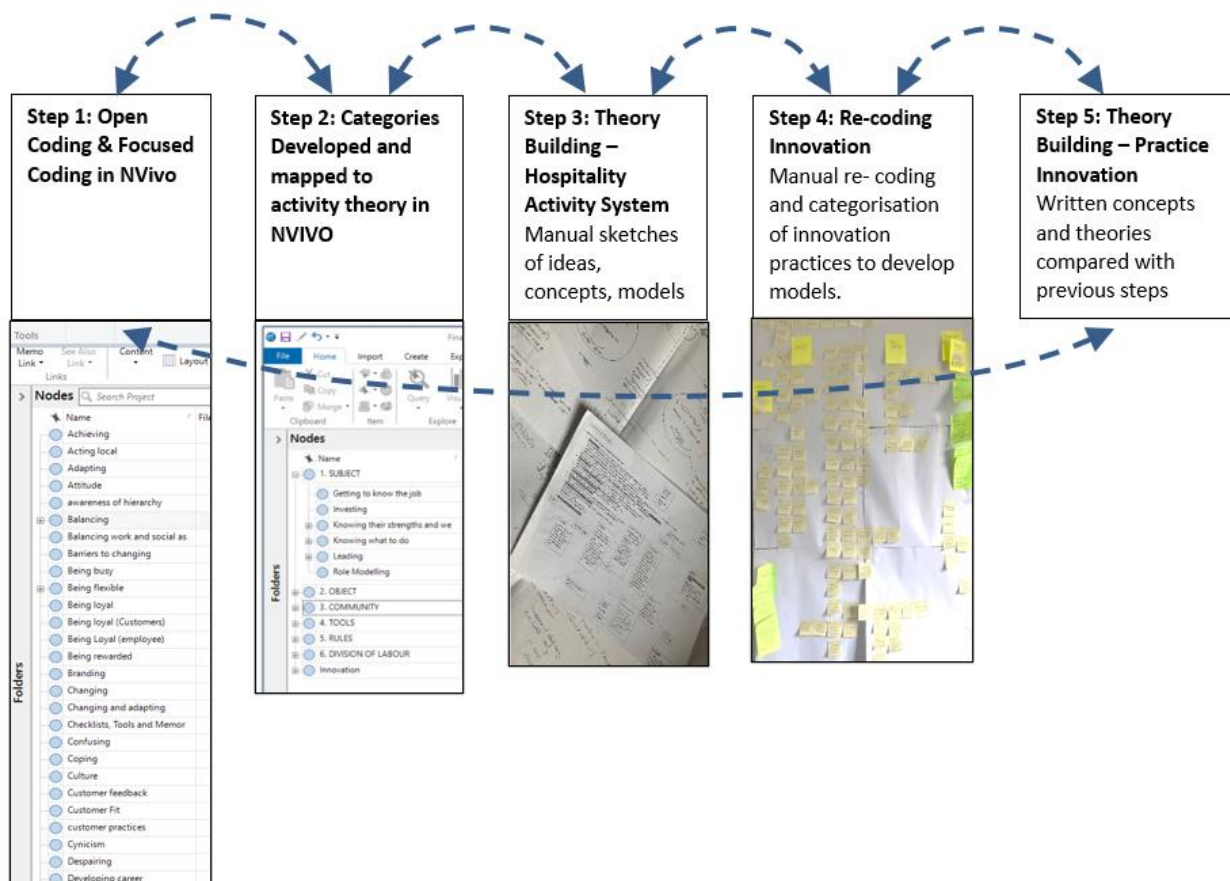
STEP FIVE

In the first four steps the Researcher attempted to interpret 'the situation' from the data. In Step 5 the focus changed to surfacing innovation in the data. The Researcher used the Activity System (as the unit of analysis) to reconsider the evidence to surface informal practice-based innovation to enable the emergence of theory and eventually the creation of substantive theory discussed in detail in Chapter Five. The Activity System and its relationship to codes is shown in Figure 21.

Figure 21: Relational Codes and Categories Mapped to the Activity System

Mediating Artefacts

Category A:
Finding their way

Category B:
Using technology

Remembering
what to do

Deskilling &
Automating

Using language

Subject

Category A
Knowing what to do

Category B
Showing what to do

Developing themselves

Supporting development

Knowing themselves
(Confidence)

Learning from others

Object

Category A:
Outcomes

Category B:
Coping with problems

Meeting Goals

Feeling motivated

Being measured

Rules

Category A:
Doing it our way

Rules for Employees

Rules for Customers

Community

Category A:
Forming relationships

Category B:
Working Environment

Investing in relationships

Staff morale

Balancing Practices

Division of Labour

Category A:
Allocating work

Category B:
Leading

Sensing fairness

Power and Influence

Being flexible

129

4.4.3 Research Study Data Collection Phases, Stages of Data Analysis and Theory Development

The phases and intersection of data collection, coding process, grounded analysis and theory development are shown in Figure 22 below based on data collection at two sites. The phases of research, are elaborated on in detail in subsequent sections with justifications as necessary.

Figure 22: Research Study Overview
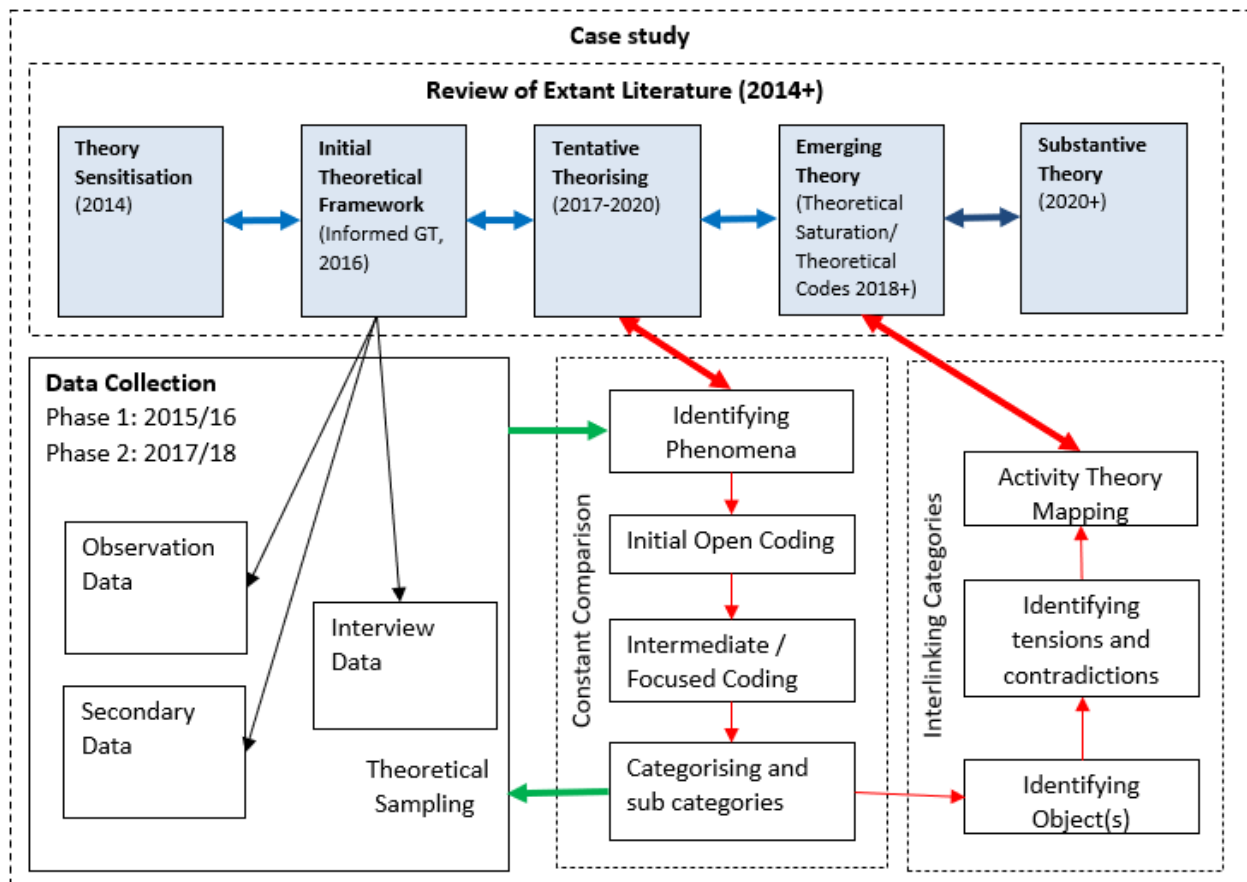
4.4.4 Phase 1 and Phase 2 Stages

As outlined in Table 6, a combination of interview data, on-site observation data and secondary data was analysed using grounded theory methodology in NVivo in a cyclical process.

Phase 1 enabled the researcher to explore the research field and scope Phase 2 in more detail. Effectively Phase 1 & 2 acted as two significant cycles in data collection and analysis. The gap between the phases supported the coding process and development of a situational analysis and enabled the Researcher to have sufficient time for theorising and developing an emerging set of concepts.

During the process and between Phase 1 and Phase 2, some codes were re-used, whilst others were re-coded to reflect the researcher's widening understanding of the emerging pattern and to re-attribute

phenomena to additional codes and higher-level concepts. For example, 'being busy' was an in vivo code identified in Phase 1, which was used identically in Phase 2 as a re-occurring phenomena of the hospitality activity system. 'Being busy' then became part of a higher-level category called 'Balancing' (associating value and meaning to a lower-level concept) in Phase 2 as participants re-affirmed through their data, a link between the two (Saldana, 2009:12). In this way, the coding structure developed as relationships between phenomena were established, leading to higher level concepts discussed in Chapter Five around, for example developing competencies and capabilities.

Finally, categories were mapped to the Activity System framework loosely in Phase 1, and then stronger links to the framework were made in Phase 2 as relationships between categories strengthened as data was aggregated between the two sites. The advantages and disadvantages of mapping codes to the Activity Theory framework are discussed later in the thesis. As the analysis progressed, concepts and ideas emerged about the patterns in the data, which were then compared with the existing literature, or provided the grounds to investigate other areas of literature in more detail to make theoretical comparisons (highlighted specifically in Chapter Five).

Comparisons between aggregated data from Phase 1 and Phase 2 highlighted both similarities and differences between the two sites and the advantage of aggregated data in the data analysis enabled the researcher to establish a core of continuity in practice against which deviation and change could be seen more clearly by the end of Phase 2. This reflects reaching saturation as part of the Grounded Theory methodology.

4.5 Case Study Research Design

Cakar and Aykol (2021: 21) in their review of the use of case study research design for Hospitality research, suggest that case-studies are used primarily for "unexplored or underexamined topics for which little or scare empirical evidence exists". Oke and Goplakrishnan (2009: 169-170) state "where existing knowledge is limited… it generates in-depth contextual information which may result in a superior level of understanding". Similarly, Stake (1995) suggests case studies are "the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances" (Stake, 1995, quoted in Flick, 2022: 400). The particularity relates specifically to those elements that define the problem space or object, effectively forming the analytical frame of the research design. Elements may include, but not exclusively people, processes, policies, events, decisions and in the case of this research study 'sites' as instances of the larger institution. In all cases, the case must be both bounded (in its natural setting to reflect reality), be holistic (Thomas, 2011) and "explicate a particular phenomenon of interest" (Flick, 2022: 400).

As a research method, the use of case studies is widespread across a variety of disciplines (Flick, 2022) including law, social work, health, business/management. However, as Flick (2022: 408) advises "doing a case-study, as with any form of research, can be a messy and confusing business, with, for example, data collection and analysis taking place more or less simultaneously, and research questions being altered to better fit emerging findings." Yin (2009) recommends that ultimately the purpose of a case-study is to investigate a context in depth and compare it to the existing body of knowledge on the topic and/or area to draw out lessons that may be learned (Yin, 2009 cited in Flick, 2022: 410).

The case study in this thesis embodied strong internal validity because by using multiple sources of data the researcher was able to triangulate via cross comparison and pattern matching data as the depth of detail and thick description increased during the research study (Cakar and Aykol, 2021).

The case study provided opportunities for the researcher to seek confirmation from the participants that the data was accurate and reflected their realities, and in so doing, provided a chain of evidence that demonstrated a transparent process of emerging concepts (Riege, 2003: 78), particularly when developed in conjunction with the technique of theoretical sampling through grounded analysis (explained earlier).

4.5.1 Case Study Sampling

The criteria identified for selecting the case-study organisation and selection of sites included:

1. Value propositions incorporated the opportunity for service variations at the service interface.
2. Multi-unit organisations which require a degree of corporate alignment through service standardisation.
3. There was a practice of formal and/or informal service system processes – it was envisaged that by identifying a continuum of approaches allowed for comparative analysis.
4. Service propositions were subject to a combination of either/or radical and incremental/emergent developments.
5. Customers and employees were accessible as participants in the study.
6. The sites were in a practical working distance from the Researcher.

The rationale for using a large-scale multi-site company enabled the researcher to access a larger potential sample whilst developing a more robust theoretical model as the phenomena was studied in two instances (two sites) or more, to create opportunities for cross-Site 1nalysis of contexts and practices through the use of aggregated data (Dooley, 2002). However, this research study was not comparative case study research and does not claim 'analytic generalisation' can be performed (Yin, 2009) because it was fundamentally a

single case-study of one organisation. Whilst generalisable knowledge may be the aim of other scholars, in this research study, the researcher aimed to produce 'exemplary knowledge' (Thomas, 2011: 33).

Equally, by employing grounded theory in conjunction with a case-study approach, the researcher designed the research study to develop a substantive theory. The specific sampling for interviewing and observation is dealt with in separate sections later related to each technique.

4.5.2 The Case Study Organisation – Servicetime Corporation

Blue-chip multi-site organisations in the hospitality sector were identified and approached to take part in the study based on previous interaction and engagement in research (but not in the specific subject field of this research study) whilst meeting the sampling criteria outlined above. Birmingham City Business School, for whom the Researcher was an employee, had a track record in working with some of the largest hospitality organisations in the UK and Servicetime Corporation (anonymised) agreed to take part.

Servicetime Corporation had a long track record of pub ownership in the UK growing through a series of significant acquisitions between 1995 and 2015. Servicetime Corporation had two key divisions – one that encompassed pubs that were leased and tenanted to independent operators, and a second division that had pubs directly managed by Servicetime Corporation. The company was one of the largest and most responsible employers in its sector, with tens of thousands of employees and thousands of sites dispersed across the UK. The company had a significant apprenticeship scheme and was active with local community support initiatives. It managed a portfolio of sub-brands to cater for different customer segments in the market including its value focused brand, Full House Ltd (anonymised). Full House Ltd had a combined drinks and food offer, was largely located in working class areas on the edges of towns and villages and offered large plates of straightforward no-nonsense food at low cost. Due to mergers and acquisitions mentioned earlier, sites consisted of both purpose-built sites to meet the service cycle of the brand, and legacy sites acquired and recently converted to fit the service cycle.

Servicetime Corporation was also acutely aware of the community value of a pub (Cabras and Mount, 2017; Muir, 2012; Orford et al., 2009), understanding it as a 'third place' (Goode, 2015; Oldenburg and Brissett, 1982; Sandiford and Divers, 2019) that has significant social value. In the past the company had previously received bad press when closing a local pub or changing the pub significantly, as had other competitors, and consequently always sought to involve the local community in making such decisions.

4.5.3 The Case Study Sites – Full House Ltd

In line with the methodology, the next sections provide an overview of the two sites of Full House Ltd investigated by the researcher, including their similarities and differences. A detailed overview of participant data is provided in Table 9 (with each participant given a standard code 'RES' and a number or letter identifier i.e. 'RES 2 or RES B' which accompanies any direct quotes featured in the text).

Full House Ltd was a sub-brand purchased in the mid 1990's by Servicetime Corporation. It was a multi-unit brand meaning that it had over 200 geographically dispersed units or 'sites' in the UK that were designed to be similar to each other, unified around a single value proposition but which allowed site managers to develop a degree of customisation to the requirements of the locality. The brand was essentially a pub that centred around a community eatery that was local and convenient. Pub sites were usually positioned on the periphery of conurbations ('Community Pubs") or based further out in the countryside ("Destination Pubs") to which customers made a special trip. The brand was value orientated with an offer that was described by its CEO as 'no-nonsense', doing exactly what it promised. It was specifically designed to attract customers on a budget who wanted to see value on the plate with large portion sizes. The brand used imagery of large plates of food stacked high for promotional purposes.

The brand was designed internally and externally to provide a pub experience for families and celebratory social gatherings for groups. The value proposition was very child friendly with specific elements designed to entertain children whilst they ate which included table booths with TVs, colouring in pads, balloons, sweets, sweet machines, game consoles, face painting and other seasonal activities as appropriate.

4.5.4 Use of Images

It should be noted that the Researcher was fully intending to supplement the context and narrative of the case-study with a significant number of images taken by the Researcher using his own camera. However, all well-known social media sites contain thousands of images of the brand at both sites and due to the recent introduction of the reverse image search function in Google, the Researcher has not provided images in this submission as search tests using this function revealed these would make the brand, Sites and its employees highly identifiable. For ethical reasons of anonymity agreed at the outset of the project with the corporate sponsor and research participants, internal and external images cannot be shown in this thesis.

4.5.5 Purpose Built (Site 1)

The first site investigated was purpose built against a brand specification in 2008 on the outskirts of a large conurbation, in a mixed industrial and residential area in an area classified as 'C2/D/E' by the National

Readership Survey (NRS) (2022) socio-economic grading system:

Table 7: Summary of NRS Grade (Site 1)

Grade	Description	% of pop.
C2	Skilled manual workers	20
D	Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers	15
E	State pensioners, casual and lowest grade workers, unemployed with state benefits only	10

The layout of the pub consisted of a separate small bar room with pool table for those customers who just wanted to order drinks (called the 'drinkers' area by employees), and then a much larger room (which was 'L' shaped) with large bar and seating/tables with an area approximately 4 times the size of the smaller 'drinkers' room (See Figure 23 for layout and scale). The pub bordered a main road, with local green park opposite, whilst nestled in amongst an industrial park and a residential area. Access was off the main road with a parking area for around 50 cars, and a medium sized beer garden at the rear of the property with small play area. The site had one entrance/exit facing the car park and industrial estate, which was convenient and easy to access, and another entrance on the opposite side facing a busy road. Most guests arrived by car, so this entrance was rarely used being on the opposite side to the carpark. Because of its proximity to the road, the roadside entrance had two sets of double doors which were difficult to open and close, were not pram friendly and acted as a barrier to the busy road for young children who lacked the strength to open them. The double doors were noisy when used so created a disturbance when guests entered and exited. Most families entered the building through the car park side entrance.

Employees consisted of a mixture of permanent full and part time staff, plus casual workers (mainly students) there for a holiday job. Compared to Site 2, there were significantly more permanent staff than casual staff – the exact figure varied due to staff churn. Many staff lived locally within walking distance. The site manager lived on site. The total staff count varied between 30 -35 during the data collection period due to staff churn and seasonality.

The site opened at 11.00am and closed at 11.00pm, but employees would arrive before opening time, depending on their duties and leave between 11.30 - 12.00pm. Weekday cover turn was much lower than weekends. Special promotions to incentive customers to come during the week were affective in trying to manage troughs during the week but added significant demand at peak times as well. Lunchtime and evening meals were the busiest periods, particularly on the weekend. Occasionally, bank holidays or celebration days

would find staff overstretched particularly in the kitchen, with long wait times on food orders. Overall, it regularly achieved Trip Advisor and Google Review ratings in line with the average for the brand mirrored in the company's own 'Mystery Guest' scores relative to other sites.

The layout of the pub enabled some segregation of customers, with the longest part of the 'L' at ground level with more room for prams, access to child seats, sweet vending machines and was generally more accessible to younger families. The shorter part of the 'L' was on a raised area (two steps high) with more screening in the elbow of the 'L' for older families and couples. Those that didn't want to order food could access the 'drinkers' room with a bar that was clearly more orientated to adults.

Figure 23: Site 1 Site Plan*
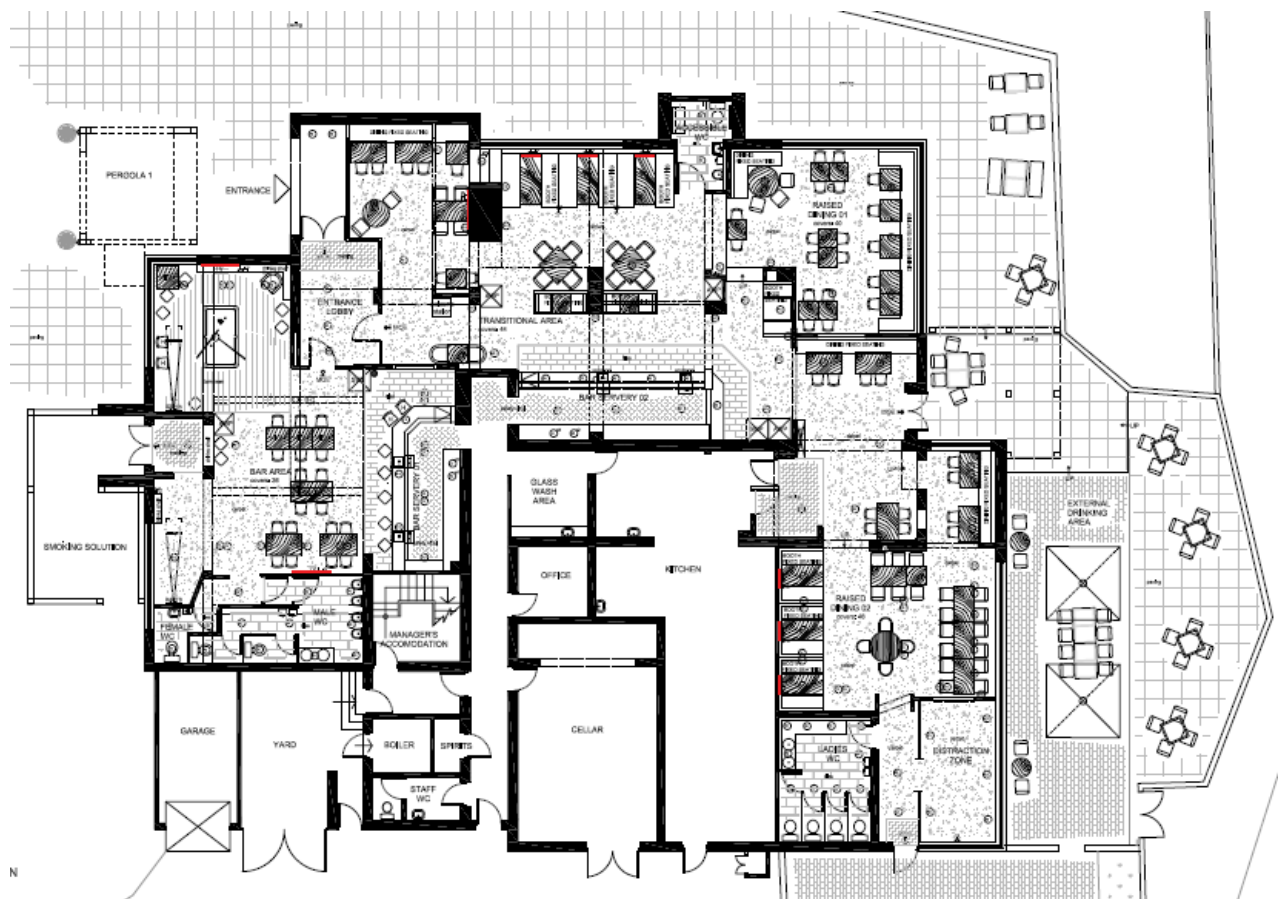
Figure 24: Site 1 Location Plan*
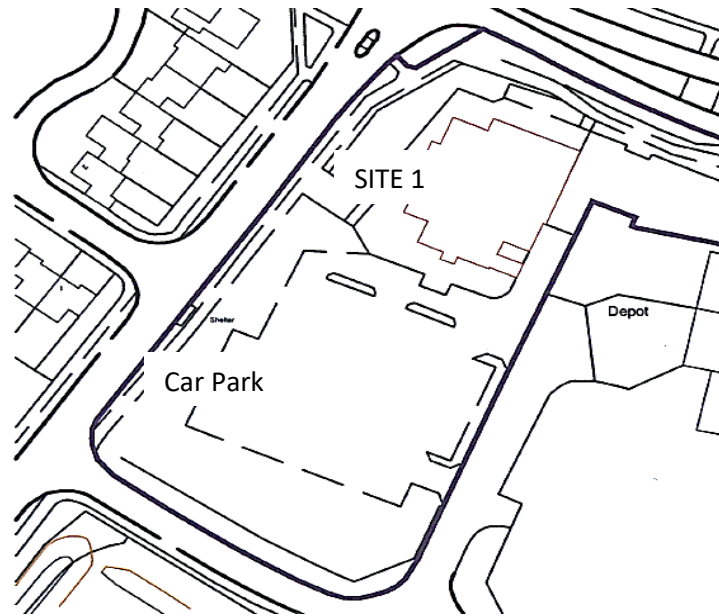
*Site Plans and Location Plans are provided by Servicetime Corporation

4.5.6 Legacy Site (Site 2)

The second site investigated was originally owned by a large brewer that was acquired by Servicetime Corporation and rebranded as Full House Ltd. Located in a semi-rural setting, close to open countryside with walks, the pub had an expansive beer garden with play area. Within the grounds of the beer garden, there was a separate play barn franchise that provided fun for kids of all ages. Many young families visited the play barn first, and then returned to Full House Ltd for a meal. Most customers did not come from the immediate local area, but had travelled from other places, such as satellite conurbations in and around the nearby city and reflected the C2/D/E social grade of customers who similarly visited Site 1.

Site 2 was approximately twice the size of Site 1 in terms of cover numbers and over three times the size in terms of footprint. It had one main entrance, but due to the proximity of the play barn, had two other secondary entrance and exit points, and a large car park to take circa 100+ cars. During the summer months, customers were serviced outside across a wide area posing significant problems for tracking customer locations, orders, and payment. A mobile drinks bar operated in the summer months outside to try and better service drinks demand, which was partly successful, but also created further service delivery problems discussed later in Chapter Four.

Figure 25: Site 2 Site Plan*
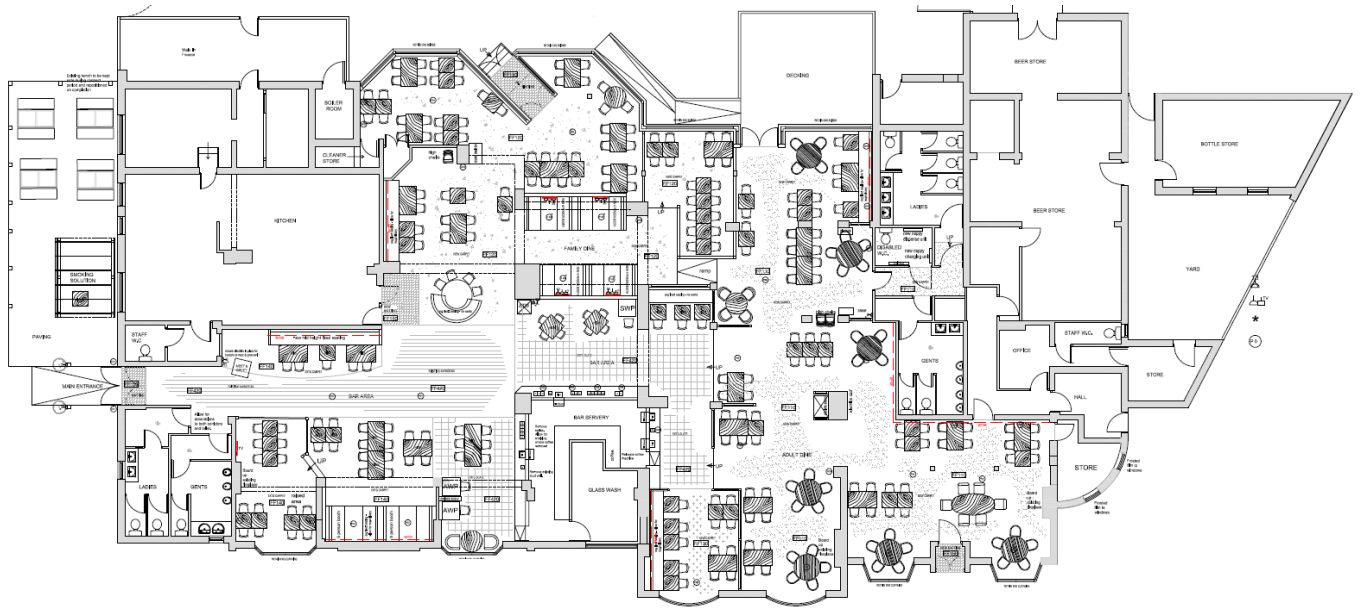
Figure 26: Site 2 Location Plan*
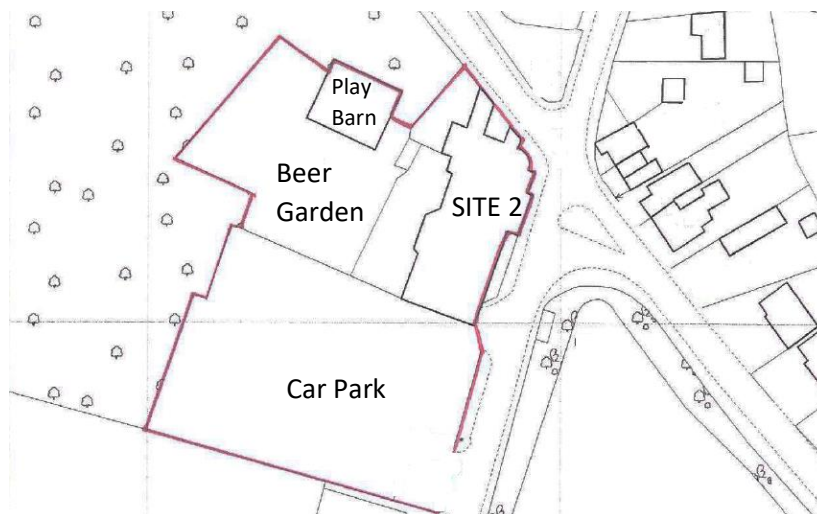
*Site Plans and Location Plans are provided by Servicetime Corporation

Similarly, to Site 1, employees at Site 2 consisted of a mixture of permanent full and part time staff, plus casual workers (mainly students) there for a holiday job. Compared to Site 1, there were significantly more casual and part-time staff in Site 2.

Many staff found it difficult to travel to the site due to poor public transport links and lived some way away from the site, relying on lifts from fellow workers, family and friends which played a major part in their

decision making to work there. Many staff were quite young, inexperienced, and working on specific days. The total staff count was 50-55 during the period of data collection. They operated a staff Facebook page to communicate rotas, cover issues and other work-related issues (such closures due to snow, bad weather, local flooding etc.).

The site was very large, with 'hidden' cover areas, so at non-peak periods it presented as a quiet site, despite having a significant number of customers to serve. At peak periods, the site experienced significant problems meeting demand leading to in some instances the need to shut the kitchen and turn customers away reported on in detail in Chapter Four.

Unlike the compact nature of Site 1, the layout of Site 2 was more fragmented, with areas that were not immediately visible, creating 'zones' off a significant open plan space. The large open plan aspect of the layout led to informal zoning. A raised area at the main entrance, away from the main area was sign-posted dog friendly as many customers were dog walkers particularly on the weekend given the rural location and access to popular local walks. Smaller high tables and bar stools covered areas closer to the bar for adult drinkers. Another zone specifically contained TV/Table bench seated booths for young families. An area around a corner was set up for smaller groups of 2-4 customers that tended to be used by adults or families with older children only. Other semi-annexed 'rooms' and booths were ideal for large groups for birthday celebrations. Apart from the dog friendly area, none of these zones were signposted but the colour co-ordinated design and layout suggested zones. Employees were aware that regular customers tended to prefer the same tables to either mix with young families or to avoid them.

In addition to informal zoning, front-stage staff were briefed to work to a more formal zoned process consisting of 7 work zones, to enable them to divide the workload between the shift members. The process of work allocation and the division of labour is discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

4.5.7 Data Collection Process

Data from 24 interviews and 22 observations was collected in two phases across two hospitality sites, located geographically in two distinct areas between 2015 and 2018:

- Phase 1: SITE 1 'Purpose Built' – (2015/16) – 10 interviews / 10 observations.
- Phase 2: SITE 2 'Legacy' – (2017/18) - 14 interviews / 12 observations.

The sites were in a practical working distance from the Researcher – Site 1 was a one-hour drive, whilst Site 2 was a 15-minute drive. The initial phase was specifically designed to establish the efficacy of the research design. In line with the research design outlined, the data collected consisted of:

1. Combined Interview data consisting of transcribed audio recordings embellished with notes and observations taken at the time then transcribed (24 interviews in total) and imported into NVivo
2. Observation data (22 instances) made as a series of digital notes made in the moment on site, developed and imported into NVivo.
3. Historical secondary data from corporate archives and published online data pertaining to the organisation and sites identified.

As already discussed in detail in earlier sections and chapters, informal practice-based service innovation is by its nature transient potentially leaving no trail to follow. For this reason, the initial phase enabled the researcher to adjust the methodology in Phase 2 or reconsider the feasibility of the research objectives and research design. In the initial phase, Practice Diaries were employed with participants in an attempt to capture additional data about new or different practices, however it became apparent quickly that due to staff churn and workloads, participants did not engage, or engage for long enough to produce sufficient data. Data that was produced was not sufficiently detailed for it to be usable. For this reason, practice diaries were withdrawn as a data collection tool midway in Phase 1.

It should also be noted that staff were only contactable whilst on shift and due to their temporary nature, most did not have standard company emails or business phones. This meant that the only way to contact staff to organise an interview had to be done whilst they were on shift, face to face. Shift patterns changed week to week and staff swapped shift patterns regularly which led to challenges in scheduling interviews and observations and tracking staff. Due to staff churn, some staff left the organisation before the research study finished. Some key learning from Phase 1 included:

1. Developing contact with the Site Manager initially to gain trust and rapport.
2. Providing a detailed diarised schedule of research activity to ensure participants were available and on shift at the time of visiting the site, and that different times of the day/week/month were sampled (peak time/off peak time/ special holidays etc).
3. Agreement with the site manager and team leaders that would include the Researcher in the distribution of shift patterns, or in the case where these were not digitised but pinned to corkboards on site walls, that the Researcher had permission to access them, or access to social media sites (mainly Facebook and WhatsApp) where these were distributed.

4. Agreement with the site manager and their team leaders to time data collection when staff were on break or were at the beginning or end of their shifts, or if the site was sufficiently quiet that a staff member could be made available for interview purposes.

5. A group meeting, timed with the manager's own team meeting to introduce the Researcher and the research study to establish rapport and to familiarise staff with the rationale of the study, gain ethical informed consent and enable them to know the researcher as they went about their activities.

6. To reconsider staff as a segmented population – particularly to generate distinguished data between temporary/permanent and newcomers/old timers, and to ensure a broad spread of times during the week were covered particularly combinations of peak (weekend)/off peak (weekday) times.

Secondary data was compiled during these phases and grounded data analysis continued in line with the principles of grounded theory (outlined later) resulting in substantive theory as presented later in the thesis. The following sections deal the specific research methods employed. Firstly, the use of interviews is discussed, followed by observations, secondary data and memos as techniques and sources of data in their own right.

4.6 Interviews

The Interview as a method for data collection is cited as one of 'most often' and most widely used qualitative data methods in the Social Sciences research (Dornyei, 2007: 132). Accordingly, it is also recognised that the advantage of the interview method is that it allows the investigation of participants behaviours, experiences and understanding in depth, "linking actions to beliefs" (Alshenqeeti, 2014: 39) particularly whilst also exploring the construction and negotiation of meanings in a natural setting (Cohen et al., 2007: 29) and described as "the main road to multiple realities" (Stake, 1995: 64). Charmaz describe interviewing as:

> An open-ended, in-depth exploration of an aspect of life about which the interviewee has substantial experience, often combined with considerable insight (Charmaz, 2008: 29).

Constructionists believe that "knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between the interviewer and the interviewee" (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015: 4). More pragmatically interviews are conversations (Kvale (1996: 174) in which validity and ethics are advantaged by recognising them as "encounters between human beings trying to understand one another" (Silverman, 1996: 95). Interviews are interactive, enabling the researcher to improve validity by probing and exploring issues as they emerge following an informant centred approach (Roberts, 2020). Unlike more structured methods, in an interview the researcher can rephrase, clarify or simplify questions if interviewees mis-understand, or are confused to ensure mutual understanding is

achieved (Dornyei, 2007:1 43). However, interviews are acknowledged also to be time consuming to conduct, transcribe and analyse (Alshenqeeti, 2014).

4.6.1 Interview Data Collection Procedures

Interview data was collected as part of the research study. The interviews took place on-Site 1s more unstructured (Saunders, 2009:321) and open ended (Denzin, 1970) than structured which gave three main advantages:

1. It allows respondents to use their unique ways of defining the world.
2. It assumes that no fixed sequence of questions is suitable to all respondents.
3. It allows respondents to 'raise important issues not contained in the schedule'
   (Saunders, 2009: 125)

The interviews were not simply used to 'collect data' by asking for descriptive accounts. The researcher asked the 'what' and 'how' and 'what if' to get behind the descriptive responses, analysing the data in the moment and exploring theories with the respondent in line with the constant comparative approach.

The interviews were recorded using two methods, a voice memo app on a mobile phone and where background noise was not an issue, an Echo smartpen was used to take notes and provide a back-up audio file in addition. In all cases, notes were taken during the interview to enable the Researcher to cross check their interpretation and feelings in the moment with what was actually said by the participant and to ensure non-verbal gestures or other observations that could not be captured on the audio file were noted, improving internal validity. Interviews were transcribed by the researcher, coded in NVivo shortly after the interview and combined with notes and other observations to ensure memory loss did not impact on the data quality. Recording enabled the Researcher to relisten at a later date as patterns in data emerged, and to use verbatim quotes.

Memo-ing helped to capture reflections on the efficacy of the research method (line of questioning, data, emerging patterns and themes) as each interview progressed and helped to shape the questioning for subsequent interviews.

The Researcher attempted to put interviewees at ease to ensure the conversation flowed naturally so that the participant was likely to be more willing to explore the details in depth and their own inner beliefs and values were surfaced (Ho, 2006: 11).

4.6.2 Interview Themes

The interviews were designed to surface the phenomena of informal practice-based service innovation from the perspective of service employees. The semi-structured interviews followed a basic pattern of exploratory themes in areas of interest to the researcher, mapped to the theoretic framework developed in the earlier chapters as depicted in Figure 27 below.

Figure 27: Interview Themes

The interview protocol or guide developed by the researcher was as follows:

Table 8: Interview Protocol / Guide

Agenda	Description
1.	Purpose of the research, interview agenda, opportunity for questions (unrecorded).
2.	Establishing their informed consent, identity and role (s), and when they joined the organisation (unrecorded contextual data).
3.	Discussing what they do – the particulars of their role in the context of the service cycle, how it differs or is the same to others, how they feel about their role and their sense of accomplishment.
4.	Establishing their motivations for working in the hospitality sector, and the organisation/site.
5.	Exploring their work experiences, particularly challenges, problems, turning points and issues they face and how they have solved them individually or as a team, exploring what stands out in their experiences to date.
6.	Surfacing new and different things they or their team do whilst at work (past, present and future), including new skills, technologies, use of artefacts, people, processes etc. and establishing a timeline of when these things happened.
7.	Surfacing their learning – what they have learnt both formally and informally at work over the course of their experiences and how they have developed their role.

Agenda	Description
8.	Exploring how the organisation supported them with training, policies, procedures, resourcing, communications, targets*.
9.	Open-ended opportunity for the interviewee to ask questions (validity).
10.	Summing up of key points (validity and reliability)
11.	Thanking for contribution, reassuring use of data, anonymity and confirming next steps

Questions started with words such as "I'm interested in…." or "Can you tell me about…" or "Can you walk me through how…" or "Could you describe in detail how…" or "Tell me what happened first/next/when…" or "What do you think about…". The questioning was designed to start with broad questions based on areas the participant was sure about to build rapport, moving to more focused questions (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015), but also followed the advice of Roberts (2020: 3192):

> Although a study might be guided by an approved interview guide, the interview process itself should remain flexible and allow the researcher to ask follow up questions based upon what the research participant communicates within the interview.

The researcher recognised how their own input could potentially influence, lead or manipulate the participant's responses (Roberts, 2020: 3199), and was sensitive to being the data collection instrument, actively engaged in the process and outcome of the interview. The researcher accepted they may hold personal assumptions and biases about the topic and context under investigation and employed techniques to keep these in check (Charmaz, 2008). This included memo-ing (as described earlier) particularly to reflect on each interview, and during the interview the researcher attempted to avoid confirmatory or affirmatory language that may reinforce a participant's particular point of view. The approach taken aligns with Roberts (2020) interview techniques cycle (Roberts, 2020: 3200):

1. Adopt a qualitative attitude
2. Craft the interview questions with oversight
3. Develop the interview guide/protocol
4. Pilot and practice
5. Review, reflect and refine attitude.

If a particular experience stood out or was used repeatedly in the interviewees responses as an example, the researcher attempted to delve more deeply into the particulars of that instance to understand why it was important to the participant.

4.6.3 Interviewing in practice

In practice, the Researcher noted that respondents saw the opportunity to discuss the agenda from different perspectives and valued the conversation from various standpoints. Many respondents were given extended breaks to enable the interview to be up to 1 hour (Barbour, 2005), which some saw as an advantage and would speak freely. Others saw it as an inconvenience – i.e., not a break but extra work, and were challenging for the Researcher to 'open up' and discuss issues. Some saw it as an opportunity to voice grievances about other colleagues and management or work-related concerns, such as health and safety. The Researcher had to ensure participants stayed focused whilst also acknowledging they needed to be heard – i.e., to have a voice.

In line with the methodology, the Researcher used themes as an agenda for interviews. For example, in Phase 2, the organisation introduced a significant formalised change to the service cycle called 'table service' which the participants raised in their responses and enabled the researcher to skew the questioning to use this as an example of change.

4.6.4 Interview Sampling

The research design operationalised sampling in two ways. Firstly, a non-probability purposive sample was constructed as a starting point only (Saunders, 2009: 234). This approach is commonly used in Grounded Theory, in exploratory studies when the sample size is very small, and the Researcher's judgement is used to identify which participants are best to answer the research question and objectives (Saunders, 2009: 239). This then changed to theoretical sampling using a Grounded Theory approach (Strauss and Corbin, 1997).

Each site determined the staff population. Site 1 had circa 33 staff, whilst Site 2 had circa 52 staff (which included part-time, seconded, full-time and temporary staff involved in four functional areas – Management, Kitchen, Bar and Floor). The participant sampling was carried out by agreement with the site manager in line with purposive sampling. This entailed the Researcher and the Site Manager discussing the characteristics of the employee cohort at their site in some detail, covering their roles, years of service, areas of expertise and availability. The Researcher used his judgement based on the profile presented by the Site Manager, to identify an initial a pool of 5 – 6 employees, with the agreement from the Site Manager that this could expand as the research study developed using theoretical sampling. The Researcher used the first few 2 interviews as a pilot in line with the methodology.

Some staff were not available (sickness absence, extended leave, secondments to other sites etc.). Age ranged from 18 (such as serving staff called 'table-runners') through to staff approaching retirement age. In terms of role, there were more front-stage than back-stage staff, and only a small number of supervisory and

managerial staff, so the final sample reflected this. A detailed overview of who was interviewed is provided later in this chapter.

4.6.5 Interview Process and Ethical Considerations

Firstly, the research method was approved by the Researcher's supervision team and the Faculty Research Ethics Committee at the time as part of the approval of the PhD research study. All employee participants provided written informed consent. The researcher ensured that the sponsor organisation provided informed consent by the Site Manager and by the organisation's internal strategic sponsor. Anonymity and confidentiality are embedded in the informed consent process (as defined by the Faculty's Research Ethics Committee's guidelines). This chapter provides the evidence to demonstrate the transparency and integrity of the data collection, analysis and reporting process required by the ethics approval process. Brinkmann and Kvale, (2005: 157) highlight the ethics of interviews as a contended issue outlining the problem:

> The qualitative research interview probes human existence in detail. It gives access to subjective experiences and allows researchers to describe intimate aspects of people's life worlds. The human interaction in qualitative inquiry affects interviewees and informants, and the knowledge produced through qualitative research affects our understanding of the human condition… Consequently, qualitative research is saturated with moral and ethical issues.

In work by Kvale (2004), the asymmetric power relation of the interview is highlighted as one of the key concerns in which the interviewer's monopoly of interpretation leads to the interviewer as the 'big interpreter' reporting what the interviewee really meant. In this sense the interviewer has a responsibility to report on what was said accurately and truthfully, whilst also reducing the opportunity for manipulation and coercion to ensure an inductive approach. The Researcher was fully aware of these issues and ensured they followed best practice.

Prior to data collection, the researcher provided an opportunity to meet with all the participants to explain the purpose of the research as part of the ethics process of informed consent. Participants were invited to a group meeting by their site supervisor/manager at a time mutually agreed to coincide with a tasting session or 'cook-off' of a new menu. It is custom and practice in the hospitality industry to engage staff with the new menu by getting them to try it for themselves. The group briefing took around 15-20 minutes, and a participant information pack was provided explaining the rationale for the study and how they would be involved. Subsequently, all staff were asked to complete and sign a consent form to be observed. Those that were interviewed also signed an interview consent form (an example is provided in the Appendix B).

In the briefing meeting, the Researcher and Site Manager clearly communicated that this was a voluntary arrangement. Staff were told that they could contribute and would be given a break time, or it could be done

before or after shifts, but in essence they would be given time to take part as part of their shift without loss of pay. Each participant was full briefed and informed and provided with a consent form that required a signature before proceeding with the interviews and observations with the option to refuse at any point without fear of penalisation or victimisation. All participants were signposted to alternative research study contacts for additional information or support (such as members of the supervisory team).

Anonymity and confidentiality were embedded in the informed consent process (as defined by the Faculty's Research Ethics Committee's guidelines). The risks and benefits were clearly communicated to all employees on both sites. The researcher made sure, via the site manager, that new employees were briefed by the researcher as part of their site induction. All data has been anonymised, to the extent that any personally attributable detail has been removed including verbal phrasing or described behaviours that might single out an individual if verbatim quotes are used.

Participants were interviewed on-site in quiet areas but on a few occasions, this was not always possible as most sites did not have offices – most management staff used the front-stage areas ('The Floor') as their office. Each interview was timestamped and a note of when, where and who was recorded made separately to ensure anonymity.

Transcription involved listening to the audio recording and transcribing to MS Word verbatim. Each transcript was then reviewed, and any notes taken during the interview added to capture non-verbal cues and meanings (facial expressions etc.). Due to the locations of interviews, distractions or interruptions were also identified and recorded. Similarly contextual information (name of respondent, age, gender etc.) were added to the transcript. NVivo adds a time/date stamp to all entries, including the creation of codes and allocation to text, which helped track the development of codes later for further analysis.

By exploring the themes in Figure 27 with participants, the Researcher was enabled later in the process to complete a situational analysis using the Activity Theory framework (subject, object, rules, artefacts, community, division of labour), whilst also trying to surface potential tensions and contradictions. The questions were designed to support the Researcher to establish the developmental (time and space) aspects of the activity system and explore the process of informal learning. The Researcher surfaced the tensions and contradictions in the activity system, and as they emerged, adapted, and tweaked the line of questioning from exploratory to confirmatory. For example, if a respondent had not mentioned an issue whilst others had, the researcher asked the question about the issue to see if it had just been overlooked or forgotten by the participant. The researcher took care not to lead the participant but instead, where appropriate, sought confirmation of issues and meanings raised by others through subtle prompting.

Initially, to provide the context of the responses provided by participants (or respondents), a list of interviewed participants by site is provided below with details of their general areas of responsibility, experience, and role. It is not possible to provide detailed data on each individual participant due to maintaining anonymity, with some details left blank for this reason.

Table 9: Phase A Participant Interviews (Site 2)

Site 1 Participants				
REF	**Subjects***	**Sampling****	**Gender**	**Age Range**
RES A	Waiter. Part-time permanent. Started with Full House Ltd 12 months ago. Currently working 50+ hours per week.	PS	Male	<20
RES B	Waitress /Kitchen line/Desserts. Part-time permanent (previously full time). Joined Full House Ltd 2.5 years ago.	PS	Female	20-30
RES C	Waitress. Part-time permanent. Joined Full House Ltd 3 years ago, prior to that had worked in other industries and roles.	PS	Female	-
RES D	Site Manager. Full-time permanent. Joined Servicetime Corporation 8+ years ago, worked in other Full House Ltd sites for 4 years and was allocated to Site 2 6 months ago.	PS	Female	-
RES E	Chef / Barman. Full-time permanent. Joined Full House Ltd 12 months ago.	PS	Male	20-30
RES F	Manager. Joined Full House Ltd 7+ years ago and works across sites.	PS	Male	-
RES G	Customer. Regular of 2 years	TS	Male	-
RES H	Customer. Recently visited two or three times.	TS	Male	-
RES I	Waitress. Full-time permanent	TS	Female	30-40
RES J	Manager	TS	Male	-

Table 10: Phase B Participant Interviews

REF	Subjects*	Sampling**	Gender*	Age Range*
RES 1	Team Leader / Kitchen Line. Full time permanent. She has worked since 18 in other pubs previously and has been with Full House Ltd for 4+ years. She had worked 10am-12pm shifts consecutively for 10 days.	PS	Female	20-30
RES 2	Team Leader / Expo / Barwoman. Full time permanent. She had worked at a fast-food franchise for 12 months before joining Full House Ltd. She has been with Full House Ltd for 18+ months, initially as Bar staff and then became Team Leader 6 months ago.	PS	Female	20-30
RES 3	Waitress / Food Runner. Part time casual worker. She left school after completing her 'A' levels. She joined Full House Ltd 12 months ago. Whilst wanting to be part-time, due to staff shortages, she is working 40+ hours per week.	PS	Female	<20
RES 4	Barman. Part time permanent. He has experience working in other industries before coming to work for Full House Ltd for the last 5+ years. Due to staff shortages, he is working 40+ hours per week.	PS	Male	-
RES 5	Waitress / Food Runner. Part time casual worker. She left school after completing her 'A' levels. She started working for Full House Ltd 12 months ago. Whilst wanting to be part-time, due to staff shortages, she is working 40+ hours per week.	PS	Female	<20
RES 6	Waitress. Part time casual worker. She started working for Full House Ltd 6 months ago and sees this job as a stop gap in between University and her intended career. She has worked at other Servicetime Corporation pub brands previously.	TS	Female	20-30
RES 7	Chef. Full time permanent. She joined Full House Ltd 8 months ago initially on pot-wash, then became a trainee Chef and was recently promoted to Chef. She works 60 hours a week due to staff shortages.	PS	Female	<20
RES 8	Team Leader / Kitchen Line. Full time permanent. She joined Servicetime Corporation 4+ years ago	TS	Female	20-30

	working on other pub brands, but only recently was allocated to work at Full House Ltd Site 2.			
RES 9	Team Leader. Full time permanent. She joined Servicetime Corporation 10+ years ago working on other pub brands, then joined Full House Ltd 5+ years ago and only recently started work at Site 2 six months ago.	TS	Female	-
RES 10	Waitress. Part time casual worker. She started working for Full House Ltd 12 months ago whilst finishing University. She has worked at other bars and cafes part-time before Full House Ltd.	TS	Female	20-30
RES 11	Waitress. Part time casual worker. She has worked part time for Full House Ltd since she was a teenager, and to supplement her income during University. She intends to leave shortly to start her career.	TS	Female	20-30
RES 12	Barman. Part time permanent. He joined Full House Ltd 2 years ago.	TS	Male	20-30
RES 13	Site Manager / Chef	PS	Male	-
RES 14	Team Leader. Part-time permanent. She joined Full House Ltd 6+ years ago and was only allocated to Site 2 six months ago.	TS	Female	20-30

*Please note that times and durations have been modified to ensure anonymity and reflect what was provided at the time of the interview, without destroying the overall integrity of the data from a case-study perspective. Not all data provided is disclosed in this table to ensure anonymity.

**As stated in this chapter, the original Purposive Sampling (PS) was adapted through Theoretical Sampling (TS) as part of Grounded Theory as indicated as above.

4.6.6 Pilot Interviews

The Researcher created a small pilot of the first 3 interviews (in line with advice given by Creswell, 2009) to see if the agenda and themes produced the data that is expected. The Researcher modified the themes and line of questioning according to the issues that emerged with each participant. As not all phenomena were directly observable, the research design provided the Researcher, by using a combination of both interviews and observation, a greater opportunity to gain a fuller picture of reality from participant perspectives. In addition, as Walford (2007: 147) states "interviews alone are an insufficient form of data to study social life" because respondents will only "reveal what they perceive is required by the interviewer, or have memory

faults, or lie and therefore data may be highly subjective and may not reflect reality" (Walford, 2007: 147). For this reason, the Researcher compared interview data with responses from other participants for confirmation or contradictory data, and observation data of interviewed participants was used to compare and contrast it with their answers in interviews similarly to check for internal validity.

4.7 Direct Observations

According to Saunders (2009: 289) participant observation involves "the systematic observation, recording, description, analysis and interpretation of people's behaviour". Observation enabled the researcher to potentially understand the context of the activity in far greater detail and from a holistic perspective to explain the behaviours observed than other distanced methods such as questionnaires or interviews. The researcher used a semi-structured descriptive approach to observations to capture the physical environment, the sequence of service activities and those involved and their behaviours. This is in line with the exploratory nature of the research design.

Direct observation has been used in a variety of different research studies in the Hospitality sector, for example Papargyropoulou et al. (2016) used observation of food wastage in the Hospitality sector identifying wastage of 56% during restaurant food service, successfully linking the socio-cultural context for food consumption with food waste generation, integrating grounded theory with ethnography suggesting the methodology links the social with the material aspects of food waste. In Biaett's 2018 study of on-site guest behaviour at events and festivals, participant observation was used to observe 'what is going on?' by being immersed to gain an insider view to observe authentic behaviour (versus what they may have failed to report on or remember if interviewed). Biaett (2018: 160-161)) advises that "recording everything that happens will not be possible and that is acceptable… wherever you activate the observation process, the goal is to blend in, interact with others and the environment only as needed, and not dynamically influence the behaviour of other attendees" so as not to impact the natural setting. The role the researcher took with employees was as 'participant as observer' (Johnson and Gill, 2010) in which the subjects were fully aware of the researcher's role in fieldwork. The researcher did not take part in the activity observed. The role the researcher took with customers is as a complete observer through unobtrusive means. Similarly in Sandiford and Semour's study (2007) of employees in public houses, they undertook a combination of interviews and participant observation to establish the emotional labour of employees in service interactions, in which employee-customer interaction played an important role in understanding the key construct of emotional labour.

As per the research design, the researcher undertook observations at both sites according to an agreed schedule with the Site Manager, timed to coincide with those due to be interviewed on the same day but subject to theoretical sampling as required.

Initially, the Researcher conducted the first two observations taking a broad unstructured approach to immerse in the experience, learn from it and then progress to a more focused series of structured observation schedules based on definitive events or steps in the service cycle (i.e., 'order taking', 'serving drinks', 'serving food', 'bill payment', 'clearing tables' etc.). It became apparent quickly that in the live environment it was impractical to focus on definitive steps because there was no one single 'event' – multiple events took place simultaneously and overlapped. It was also extremely in-efficient to specifically wait for each of these events to happen, table by table, order by order. On occasions both employees and customers would use both bar and table simultaneously leading to a requirement to attempt to observe both areas at the same time. As planned, the researcher took notes using an iPad or Laptop of 'what was going in' at both sites (and an example is provided in the Appendices). It soon became apparent that it was common behaviour for participants to bring such devices into the public space, so the Researcher was not obtrusive in the live experience, and therefore reducing their impact on what was going on.

In both sites, peculiarities of the floor plan (as shown earlier) meant that the researcher had to move position at least twice during an observation to be able to observe the activity, whilst also having to respond to the level of activity in the site itself at peak and off-peak times to where most of the activity occurred (bar/tables or both). Detailed floor plans showing observed areas are shown earlier. Multiple participants were observed at the same time in the observations going about their activities. These included, as the focus, employee-employee and employee-customer interaction. To a lesser extent, customer-customer interaction was also observed, but only because of the other two main focuses.

During the first two observations, the researcher had to respond to the situation – if the bar was quiet, the researcher would switch observation, and reposition, if necessary, nearer to the tables and vice versa. A pragmatic approach was adopted by the researcher to observe what happened, as it happened, wherever the researcher sat. The researcher then subsequently coded these service cycle steps separately in NVivo to enable aggregating and analysis later. The researcher found that attempting to provide a blow-by-blow account as observation notes of activity was impossible, instead the researcher's observations answered the question 'what is going on' at a more holistic level, using observed details to provide the narrative or story where it mattered at the time. After two observations, a semi-structured schedule was drawn up more formally as follows:

1. Front-stage employee interaction (all)

2. Back-stage employee interaction (all)

3. Front-stage Bar

4. Front-stage Tables

5. Back-stage Kitchen

This was to ensure that there was an equal balance of data across all aspects, driven by the emerging pattern within the data.

4.7.1 Observation Data Collection Procedures

Observation fieldnotes were recorded using a laptop on MS Word or using a keyboard enabled tablet (such as an iPad) unobtrusively. The researcher was able to touch type and so was able to generate typed text quickly whilst simultaneously observing what was going on. This improved the data accuracy and reliability (as opposed to interpreting hand-written notes) and made the researcher less obtrusive in the live experience. However, because of the scope and scale of activity occurring in the live experience at peak times, the Researcher made brief notes to trigger memory later using key words and phrases to capture what was happening – and a more detailed account was written up shortly afterwards to avoid data loss from memory recall error. Observations were typically conducted for 60 minutes or more.

4.7.2 Observation Pilot and Sampling

Observations were undertaken at two sites. The Researcher observed multiple participants at the same time going about their activities. This included employee-employee and employee-customer interaction. To a lesser extent, customer-customer interaction was also observed, but only as a consequence of the other two main focuses.

The Researcher undertook two broad unstructured observations as a pilot to be immersed in the experience, learn from it and then progress to a more focused series of structured observation schedules to ensure that definitive events or steps in the service cycle were covered (i.e., 'order taking', 'serving drinks', 'serving food', 'bill payment', 'clearing tables' etc.). A list of the observations is provided below in Table 11:

Table 11: Observations

Ref No.	Day	Time	Site	Phase
OBSA	Thursday	12:00	1	A
OBSB	Wednesday	14:00	1	A
OBSC	Friday	12:00	1	A
OBSD	Tuesday	11:30	1	A

OBSE	Tuesday	15:00	1	A
OBSF	Saturday	15:00	1	A
OBSG	Saturday	18:00	1	A
OBSH	Wednesday	13:00	1	A
OBSI	Saturday	19:00	1	A
OBSJ	Wednesday	14:00	1	A
OBS1	Sunday	17:00	2	B
OBS2	Wednesday	20:00	2	B
OBS3	Tuesday	19:00	2	B
OBS4	Friday	14:00	2	B
OBS5	Monday	17:00	2	B
OBS6	Monday	19:00	2	B
OBS7	Thursday	20:00	2	B
OBS8	Saturday	20:00	2	B
OBS9	Monday	17:00	2	B
OBS10	Monday	17:00	2	B
OBS11	Saturday	15:00	2	B
OBS12	Tuesday	14:00	2	B

4.7.3 Observations - Validity and Reliability

The researcher improved observation data validity and reliability through the following means:

1. Observer Bias – the researcher attempted to put themselves in the shoes of the participants and avoid subjective interpretations of what was happening, to be as inductive as possible.

2. Reflexive memos – the researcher reflected on each observation to surface issues that may be cause for bias, such as overly focusing on an event, area or participant or the unintended inclusion of cultural and social prejudices.

3. Triangulation – interview and observation data was conducted in parallel to coincide with visits to each site. As the observation data grew, simultaneously with the interview data, it was possible for the researcher to compare and contrast the patterns emerging from both sources of data, and to introduce observations into interview questions where relevant, asking for example; 'I saw this happen, what does this mean?' Or 'Why did that happen?' Similarly, interview data informed interpretations of the observation data – providing explanations of what could be happening enabling the researcher to make informed interpretations based on grounded data, rather than their own uninformed and subjective opinion.

4. To reduce the possibility of interaction with participants and thereby affect the authenticity of the live experience, the researcher sat some distance away from the main areas of activity and avoided eye contact (Saunders, 2009: 309).

4.7.4 Observations - Ethical Considerations

Firstly, the research study was approved by the Researcher's supervision team and the Faculty Research Ethics Committee at the time as part of the approval of the PhD. All employee participants observed were asked to sign informed consent forms as the main focus of the research study. Permission to observe employees and customers on-site was approved by both the site manager and Corporate sponsor. Public houses are legally defined in the UK as public spaces under the Criminal Justice Act 1972 (Part 3, Section 33):

> Public place includes any highway and any other premises or place to which at the material time the public have or are permitted to have access, whether on payment or otherwise.

In such spaces it has been accepted traditionally to conduct observation research without consent (Dewalt and Dewalt, 2002:199). The guidance at the time of data collection from the British Psychological Society (2010: 25) stated:

> Studies based on observation in natural settings must respect the privacy and psychological wellbeing of the individuals studied. Unless those observed give their consent to being observed, observational research is only acceptable in public situations where those observed would expect to be observed by strangers. Additionally, particular account should be taken of local cultural values and of the possibility of intruding upon the privacy of individuals who, even while in a normally public space, may believe they are unobserved.

This view was supported elsewhere, for example Price et al. (2017: 121) stated that ethically**,** disguised naturalistic observation is "considered to be acceptable if the participants remain anonymous and the behaviour occurs in a public setting where people would not normally have an expectation of privacy" (American spelling used for accuracy). However, Spicker (2011:7) also argues that the private and public spheres overlap as it is possible to do private things in a public space and so argues it is the nature of the act that determines whether it is public or private. In this case study, customers were freely engaged in public acts in a very busy public bar and restaurant. Spiker (2011) argues that whilst consent is not required on ethical grounds in public spaces, the researcher should ensure safeguards are in place, rather than ethical consent, that maintain the rights of the individual to privacy.

The researcher took a number of steps to ensure that guest or customer experience and privacy was respected i.e., that guests had a level of intimacy and access to privacy normally expected within a public space. For example, the researcher did not make recordings or notes of any conversations of customers close by on the basis that it would be considered contrary to social etiquette to 'listen in' or eavesdrop in such social situations. The researcher chose seats away from the main areas of activity to maintain distance whilst still being able to make observations of the activity system. Whilst this may limit what can be heard and

seen, the researcher attempted to balance the rights to intimacy and privacy with their need for high quality research data.

Whilst observations of strangers will, by their nature, collect only non-personally attributable data, the researcher attempted to stand back from individual perspectives in line with the constructionist epistemology of the research, and instead focused on creating narrative around the activities in the activity system as whole, which was the unit of analysis. Individual observation data was aggregated to inform an activity level perspective in line with the concepts and frameworks employed in the theoretical framework.

From a methodological perspective, the need to remain unobtrusive relates to the need to observe behaviour that is authentic and natural in line with a qualitative, inductive method. The ESRC advise:

> Covert research may be undertaken when it may provide unique forms of evidence or where overt observation might alter the phenomenon being studied (ESRC guidance in the Framework for Research Ethics, 2010: 21).

Spiker (2011: 3) agrees quoting the Australian NHMRC (National Health and Medical Research Council):

> In participant observation studies it is virtually impossible to obtain consent from all observed individuals. … Obtaining consent would interfere with the strength of the 'naturalist' approach of ethnography. Seeking consent from participants in these situations may lead to behavioural changes that would invalidate the research (Australian NHMRC, 2001, in Spiker, 2011: 3).

The researcher took the view that the nature of the phenomena is highly nuanced and relates directly to informal processes of a creative, improvisatory and contingent nature that would be heavily impacted by a formal consent process. All data was anonymised, and data was reviewed to ensure descriptions of behaviour in personally attributed contexts could not provide recognisable facts that identified any one individual.

4.8 Secondary Data

The use of secondary data involved sourcing existing corporate information from the corporate sponsor. The Researcher accessed data on corporate brand standards or service cycle standards where they existed, corporate reports (such as year-end accounts) provided by the sponsor and accessed online sources such as publicly available websites and social media sites. This information was used as supplementary information only to provide a background to the development of the organisation, positioning the individual sites historically in the development of the Brand and the organisation whilst contextualising the interview and observation data. It is not standard practice to code secondary data in grounded theory for a variety of

reasons related to quality, ethics, data 'fit' and the nature of the relationship between the researcher and the data (Whiteside et al., 2012:506). In practice, compared to other sources of data, the extent of secondary data collected was limited and did not warrant the use of using software to manage its integration into the overall data analysis scheme.

4.8.1 Memo Writing

According to Bryant and Charmaz (2010: 245), memo writing is "the methodological link, the distillation process, through which the researcher transforms data into theory" and was adopted as a technique in the research design of this research study. By writing down the researcher's thoughts on relations between data, patterns emerged that were abstracted to higher level thoughts and ultimately substantive theories.

Memos were written as a reflective narrative i.e., they were designed to capture the inner thoughts of the Researcher about the research data. This extended beyond just reflections on the phenomenon, but into how the researcher reflected on their conduct and their understanding of what was emerging during the research study. As Bogdan and Biklen (1992) explain, memos record "speculation, feelings, problems, ideas, hunches, impressions, and prejudices" (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992 quoted in Biaett, 2018: 161). The researcher implemented memo writing using memos in the NVivo software but used other tools (such as emails, and online note taking apps for phone use) to enable memo writing whenever and wherever they find themselves, which were then consolidated in NVivo for coding purposes at a later date. The Researcher found visual representations (lists, boxes, graphs, axis, continuum, matrices) coupled with memo narrative the most effective way of distilling down and reflecting on the research data, or as Bryant and Charmaz (2010:258) puts it – "integrating" memos to look for "cumulative patterns in the analyses".

4.8.2 Conclusions

This chapter outlines the integrated ontological, epistemological, and methodological research design employed by the Researcher for the research study utilising activity theory with grounded analysis of case-study data based on in-depth interviews and observations of two working pub sites in the UK hospitality sector.

The research design reflected the requirement to investigate informal practice-based service innovation defined as (a working definition):

> Informal practice-based service innovation is any idea, practice or artefact which both
> individuals and groups perceive as new to them which triggers disruption, variation and
> change in their situation, and through cumulative adaptations becomes concretised in some
> shared structure.

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The two core research questions that the research design addressed were:

RQ1:   How does service innovation happen as a bottom-up phenomena in a hospitality organisation?

RQ2:   Does this process contribute to the development of institutional structures to support service innovation capability?

Figure 28: Research Design Summary
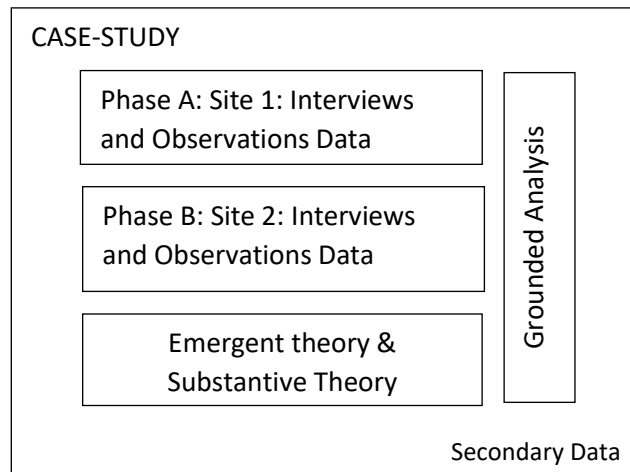
The methodology enabled the researcher to explore the adapted theoretical framework developed in earlier Chapters Two and Three, shown below in Figure 29 in line with Thornberg's (2012) informed grounded theory approach. The methodology integrated a constructionist epistemology with subtle realism (Hammersley, 1992) whilst also recognising the dialectic materialism embedded in the philosophical roots of Marx and Engels. Essentially, the methodology surfaced that truth of reality was enacted through recursive practice that potentially enabled innovation capability to emerge.

Figure 29: Adapted Theoretical Framework
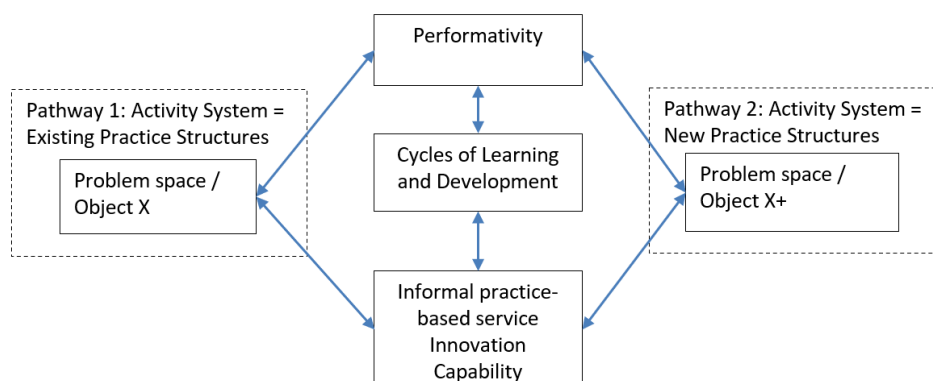
The framework above outlines the nature of the phenomena which centres on the concept of cycles of learning and development that potentially characterises informal practice-based service innovation. The language in the framework used, acts as signposts for the phenomena around which the data collection method was focused i.e. on activities that are performed and are observable to the researcher, and can be recollected by the activity system participants in interviews. The framework provided the researcher with an initial set of interview and observation themes:

Figure 30: Interview Themes
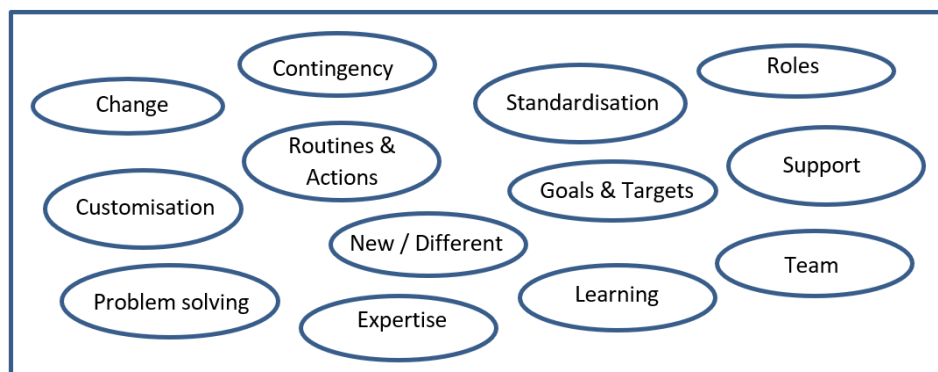
In line with the objectives of the research study, the methodology enabled the researcher to conduct an exploratory qualitative study that surfaced the relationships between sources of variation, customisation, and adaptive practice generating informal practice-based service innovation.

In conclusion, this Chapter has met its objective i.e., to demonstrate the philosophical underpinning that supports the research method designed, whilst providing a sufficient level of transparency of the methods and techniques employed to generate acceptable knowledge of how informal practice-based service innovation emerges in action. In addition, the methodology chapter has outlined:

1. The integration of Grounded Theory, the steps taken to code and then produce grounded analysis of the data and the integration of Activity Theory (AT) within that analytical process.

2. The specifics of how AT was used to provide a situation analysis (or context) as a backdrop to surfacing change and development within that context.

3. The operationalisation of different research methods and techniques to generate data that contributed to an emerging theory regarding informal practice-based service innovation.

4. An account of how theory was developed from the data.

In the next Chapter, the Results and Analysis are reported on to reflect the operationalised methodology outlined above, including detailed analysis of interviews and observation data.

Chapter 5: Data and Findings

5.0 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to provide a detailed account of the findings based on the data collected, culminating in a focus on informal practice-based innovation data and findings in order to answer the research questions:

1. How does service innovation happen as a bottom-up phenomena in a hospitality organisation?
2. Does this process contribute to the development of institutional structures to support service innovation capability?

The research design as detailed in Chapter Four involved collecting data from a single organisation through interviews and on-site observations to create a case-study of informal practice-based service innovation, from which substantive theory could be developed as per Figure 31 below.

Figure 31: Research Design Summary
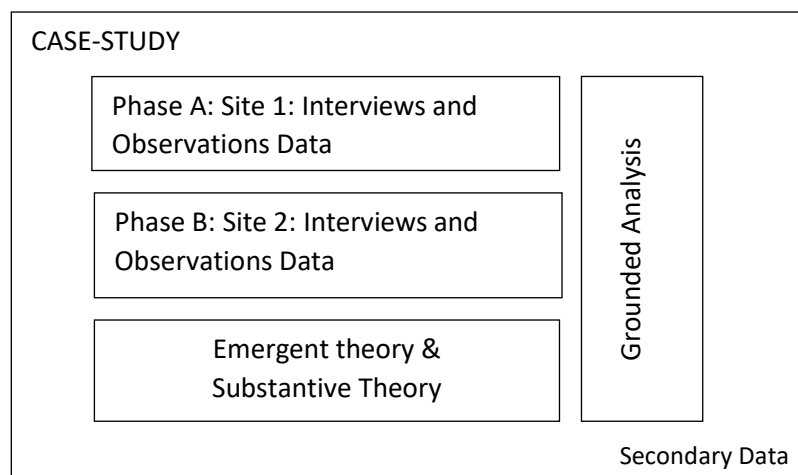
It is worth re-iterating the purpose of using Activity Theory at this point. The goal in using it to organise findings, is to reach an understanding of the overall activity system or, in this case the activity of a service system, from a holistic perspective in both Site 1 and Site 2 as per Figure 31. In so doing, movement or change and development should be surfaced and explored to uncover potential adaptations in practices that could signal or represent informal practice-based service innovation, including its antecedents and outcomes. Using Activity Theory as a situational analysis provides a baseline for applying the innovation lens later in the process.

The findings are generated from data consisting of 24 interviews and 22 observations collected in two phases across two hospitality sites, located geographically in two distinct areas between 2015 and 2018:

- Phase 1: SITE 1 'Purpose Built' – (2015/16) – 10 interviews (RESA- RESJ) / 10 observations (OBSA – OBSJ)
- Phase 2: SITE 2 'Legacy' – (2017/18) - 14 interviews (RES1-RES14) / 12 observations (OBS1 – 12)

As previously explained in Chapter Four, the initial grounded coding process of the data identified codes (based on the development of nodes in NVivo). As the results and analysis progressed, selected codes were then elevated to a category, based on a higher-level interpretation of the overarching practice that sub codes suggested had a greater significance based on the prominence in the data, and the importance given to it by participants. In this process, code labels were tweaked as relationships between categories were established during the constant comparison process in conjunction with theoretical sampling. Finally, as shown, codes and categories were allocated to the elements of the activity theory framework (See figure 33 below). These elements are shown in's (1987) triangle below (Figure 32) i.e. Subject, Object, Rules, Community, Division of Labour and Mediating Artefacts: Tools and Signs:

Figure 32: Second Generation Activity Theory (Engeström, 1987: 78)
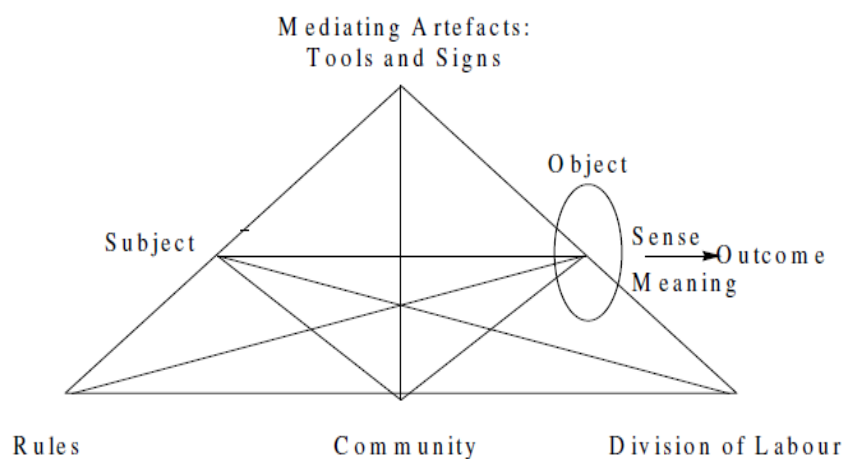
**Figure 33: Relational Codes and Categories
Mapped to the Activity System**

Mediating Artefacts

Category A:
Finding their way

Category B:
Using technology

Remembering
what to do

Deskilling &
Automating

Use of language

Subject

Category A
Knowing what to do

Category B
Showing what to do

Developing themselves

Supporting
development

Knowing themselves
(Confidence)

Learning from
others

Object

**Category A:
Outcomes**

**Category B:
Coping with problems**

Meeting Goals

Feeling
motivated

Being measured

Rules

Category A:
Doing it our way

Employees

Customers

Community

Category A:
Forming relationships

Category B:
Working Environment

Investing in
relationships

Staff morale

Balancing
Practices

Division of Labour

Category A:
Allocating work

Category B:
Leading

Fairness

Power and Influence

Being flexible

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5.1 Element 1: SUBJECT

5.1.1 Introduction

As previously identified in Chapter Three, as part of the unit of analysis, the 'subject' consists of the people or person engaged in the doing. The person or group holds an object (internally or externally) that creates a purpose and motivation (Engeström et al., 1999). Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) scholars suggest that activities and social practices can be studied as an 'activity system' and the first principle of Activity Theory is that a "collective, artefact mediated and object -orientated activity system, seen in its network relations to other activity systems, is taken as the prime unit of analysis" (Engeström 2001:136).

In this instance, subjects were primarily either customers or employees interacting to produce the hospitality experience as observed. The initial approach to studying the subject was to look at their interaction within the primary activity system based on the following subject phenomena:

- Employee with employee activities and interactions
- Employer with customer activities and interactions
- Customer with customer activities and interactions

Occasionally other subjects appeared that supported the primary subjects (OBS– for example sub-contractors (vending machine engineers, face painters for children's parties on special days such as bank holidays, the Police and the Ambulance service for more serious incidents, and friends and family (for example when dropping off or picking up employees or customers).

The code and category map for 'Subject' is as per Figure 34. Each depicted circular element is a code or a category based on gerunds developed from the data excluding the top-level title 'subject'.

Figure 34: Identified Codes and Categories for Subject
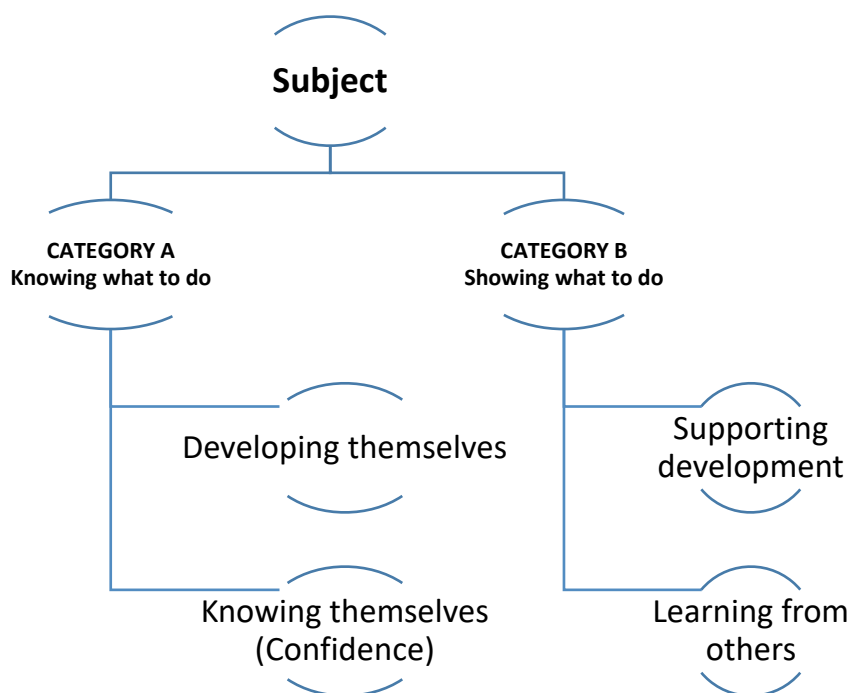
5.1.2 Subject Group – Employees

Based on participant interviews from both sites (specifically RESD/F/J and RES8&9) all sites in the brand are managed sites i.e. owned and operated in their entirety by Servicetime Corporation. All employees are directly recruited, supported, and employed through Servicetime Corporation. And whilst designated to an individual site, employees can work on other sites close by depending on the needs of Servicetime Corporation. The interplay of staffing between sites is particularly important where management needs cover due to sickness for example, either for themselves or because of staff shortages.

Based on a combination of both Interview data and observation data, it was apparent that employees consisted of a mixture of part time permanent, full time permanent, hourly paid casual workers and those brought in temporarily from other sites for cover purposes. Casual workers were predominately younger members of the team who were at university or had finished and were taking a year out before embarking on their chosen carer. Full-time permanent staff had committed to hospitality as their career, and were ambitious to progress, coming from a variety of backgrounds with and without formal qualifications. Part-time permanent staff tended to be either mothers (with young children at school age) so short flexible hours suited them or were much older (male and female) heading towards retirement with a varied career history.

Table 12: Site 1 and Site 2 Employee Differences (based on interview data)

SITE 1 Employees	SITE 2 Employees
Circa 25 employees	Circa 50 employees
More permanent staff, and more 'old-timers'. Lower staff churn during the period of observation.	Less permanent staff, more newcomers. Higher staff churn during the period of observation.
Local staff, many able to walk to Site 1.	Some local staff, with others travelling in by car, or from other sites. Site 2 was not accessible to most on foot due to its rural location.
Generally, a more cohesive team with a longer track record of working together, a greater sense of engagement and commitment to their work.	A more fragmented team, with small groups forming, less cohesion and more disengagement and commitment with their work, with less experience of working together.
Lower levels of sickness absence.	Higher levels of sickness absence.

Using participants' own descriptors from the interview data for two subject segments, participants were clear that there were 'old staff' and 'newbies' (or 'newcomers') across both sites (discussed in more detail later). Old staff were those that had worked at the site for approximately 3 or more years and perceived as 'part of the furniture', whilst newcomers tended to be casual workers, but not in every case. The main differences between Site 1 and Site 2 subjects are summarised above in Table 12.

5.1.3 Subject Group - Customers

Based on the observation data, Customers were predominately family groups. Either parent(s) with their children, some with grandparents, or extended family. Children were typically quite young but occasionally older children (in their teens) accompanied if there were younger siblings. Pensioners were another significant group that frequented the pubs. Occasionally there might be two adults together, potentially friends or couples who tended to be more mature.

According to both site's employees interview data, there was a customer expectation gap, but it was noticeably more significant at Site 2. For example, a team leader in Site 2 reported customers saying it wasn't as good as 'Miller and Carter', a much more up-market restaurant, and comments: "We have people who come in expecting 5-star service and we sell 4 meals for £15! With a dessert! What do you expect?" (RES 1)

Similarly, employees at Site 2 reported in the interview data an unusually high expectation for value with customers complaining about small portion sizes exaggerating issues and/or claiming food had not been served, when CCTV footage showed it had or that portions were too small. When interviewed, employees, particularly at Site 2, talk about the rude customer behaviour where customers "wave their money at you… or click their fingers" (RES9). Whilst at Site 1, typifying other comments from this site, another waitress comments:

> I love customers. They look after me. They get me [food]… last week I had a Chinese meal and Thai meal. I'm really spoilt. I get loads of little gifts off the customers… I must be doing something right! (RES C)

Observation data at Site 2 coupled with a pattern of staff comments in the interview data support the notion that Site 2 customers appeared to complain more than Site 1. One significant issue, reported by Site 2 employees was the impact of the co-located play barn on customer behaviours. Their belief was that Site 2 was, from the customer's perspective, an extension of the play barn. Based on observation data, the flow of customers was predominately one-way (observation data OBS13 S2) – i.e., customers visited the play barn with their young children, and then moved to the dining areas in Site 2: As a waitress comments, after visiting the play barn "people continue to play up here so…. sometimes it doesn't feel like a restaurant. They say if you came in at the weekend…with all the children, it's almost as if it's still the play area" (RES 11). Weekend observations (OBS1/8/11/12) supported this view with children using the restaurant floor area as a playground, with furniture (chairs, tables, and privacy dividers between tables) being used as climbing equipment leading to significant damage to the interior space. In one instance, a child managed to cable tie their wrists to an external fence using cable ties from leftover from an event the previous day left (RES3, OBS10). As one employee put it: "Basically, this place is a child day care centre where the parents can come in and get tanked up and their kids can run riot" [RES 9]. Further details on customer behaviours are provided in other sections.

5.1.4 Data Findings and Analysis - Subject

Against this backdrop, further data is presented below relating to the codes and categories in Figure 34 for 'Subject'.

5.1.4.1 Category A: Knowing What to Do

This category is derived from a general pattern that emerged around how subjects know what to do in the activity system, including customers and employees. 'Knowing what to do' appeared to stem from three key codes in the data:

A. Developing themselves – which involved how they learnt to do their work.

B. Knowing themselves – how they were aware of their strengths and weaknesses, particularly the employees, and how they saw themselves changing to become better at their work, or at least better at coping with the problems and challenges they faced.

In essence, this reflects an evolving process of inexperienced subjects moving towards being more experienced, more competent, but also more self-aware individuals, and of where they were positioned in relation to others in the workplace in terms of skills, competencies, and personal attributes. The sense that there were novices and experts, akin to apprentices, reflects the theory of communities of practice proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991) that involves legitimate peripheral participation, and Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development or ZPD. The following data provides examples to support the development of the codes above.

5.1.4.2 Developing Themselves - Employees

Evidence that the activity system has changed the subjects is a key theoretical element of Activity Theory in that activities and their subjects mutually determine one another (Nardi, 1996) such that subjects are produced by the activities they perform aligning with concepts espoused by Rubinshtein (1946, cited in Kaptelinin and Nardi, 2006).

There was significant evidence of the 'subject' being transformed by their interaction within the activity system. This reflects the dialectic process identified within the theoretical framework. The experience was different for everyone. For example, a waiter in Site 1 states: "I like being busy here…. I think it changes you in a lot of ways really, but I can't pinpoint what it is. I think it's just being thrown into the deep end." (RES 10).

Another employee, a Chef in Site 2 states: "…when I first started, you got support all the time, but then when you've been there a week, you're put in the deep end, and you just rely on yourself sort of thing" (RES 7). Similarly, a Chef (RES E) from Site 1 talks about his learning: "It was a struggle really, when you start in the kitchen, they always put you down the bottom end of the kitchen on the salads rather than just throw you straight on the grill…" (RES E). A waitress at Site 1 remembers her experience when she first started:

> I had only been here about 3 or 4 days, I'll never forget it, it was a Friday night and no staff turned up and no-one was here. And [pointing to John, the Manager] said 'I didn't think you would cope', but I just did, and I just got on with it (RES C).

A team leader from Site 2 relates her experiences from another pub and how she feels about her development:

> I'm a lot more confident within this pub. In the smaller ones, as bad as it sounds, you can hide more. There's less custom, you know the custom that comes in, here you are thrown into the deep end. You don't know who's coming through that door and you don't know what they are going to be like. You just don't know. I wasn't really a people person before. I like knowing who was going to be there, I've got used to the unknown with people now (RES 8).

The word 'deep end' re-occurs above, but also as a general concept there is sense from interview data of employees being thrown into situations emerging as a clear theme. There was also a sense of the initial few days or weeks on the job being critical turning points for people as specific events in their development – i.e., sink or swim moments, as if challenges they face in their tasks and activities, create the necessary conditions – whether it be crisis, workload pressure, of just learning new things - that are the impetus for personal transformation and change. For example, the Site Manager at Site 2 recalls his experience of learning on the job when he first started in hospitality:

> I got put on the [cooking production] line, and I wouldn't have the confidence normally to go on the grill. It's only because [the kitchen manager] said you have got the confidence; 'we'll get you on the grill'. So, on a busy Saturday, one of the chefs gave me about half an hour training – 'this is how you do it', 'this is how you do the grill.' That's it and left me! And from then, I've just got my confidence so when I go to plate up, I can be in charge of that line, and I can shout! Which I probably wouldn't have done before. I used to be 'oh no, I can't do it!' [and now] I'm a different person (RES 13).

But being thrown into a situation does not necessarily end with positive results. For example, a Team Leader at Site 2 explains:

> So, you would literally start them [new recruits] on a Friday night right in it and they would leave because it is just too much. Especially if they just wanted a part time waitressing job because they are at college (RES 9).

The pattern emerging for newcomers appears to be initially recruitment, with minimal training, followed by a challenging initial period of a few weeks with a steep learning curve. This reflects a recent industry report by Deputy Data that identifies "42% of new employees joining the hospitality industry leave their jobs in the first 90-days… [and]… the hospitality sector has an employee turnover rate of 30% – double that of the UK average" (Deputy Data, 2019).

The comments from managers and employees about being 'thrown in' suggest that it is not unexpected but appear to be contrary to widely accepted best practice (Kalargyrou and Woods, 2011) such as providing training to novices before exposing them to significant problems and challenges. This reflects research

referred to previously that identifies the hospitality industry as being a harsh and even 'inhumane' sector to work in (Zopiatis et al., 2018). The challenging workload of the service environment was a common thread in the observation data and most noticeably at peak times (OBS D/G/I and OBS 8/11). But as a senior manager states:

> The problem is the staff churn, is it a lack of training that causes people to leave? Or is it staff churn rates causing the business not to invest because they will leave anyway so what's the point [of training them]? (RES J).

The other factor that managers mention in the interview data are labour costs and budgets, with Full House Ltd capping budgets at the time of the research. Another senior manager laments:

> I think the biggest challenge of this business is the cost of doing it, the wage constraints versus the top line of what the costs of top talent are. The service culture of the business is driven by those factors to some degree… We don't need skilled staff we need someone to do a job… [and]… you are not recruiting and paying X £s per hour for a skill you don't actually need…. So, we need to train them to do it and that takes time and money – but we don't have the training budget to do it (RES F).

If a recruit does survive the first few weeks of employment, they can develop relationships with their fellow work colleagues. As a waitress states at Site 1: "When you're doing 50 hours and spending so much time with them people you can't not have a bond with them" (RES I). But more significantly was the pattern emerging that as people found themselves in challenging circumstances, so they appeared to be motivated to form relationships with others, as if forming relationships was a social coping strategy with their circumstances. The importance and impact of social relationships or 'social ties' (Aubke, 2014) at work is discussed in more detail aspects of the element: 'Community'.

But relationships can also pose difficulties later as employees progress into managerial roles. For example, a waiter comments on how in one role he is still seen as a waiter, but was given the opportunity to transition via a trainee supervisor:

> I'm still really new on the management team, so I'm struggling to be in control with certain members of staff. I think if I went to a different pub they wouldn't know me and they would see me as a supervisor whereas people here around me just see me as [Tim]…If I'm honest, I have struggled with being one of them [management] (RES A).

This waiter's social role whilst an advantage in one situation, becomes a disadvantage in another situation reflecting the issues of the dialogical self (Hermans, 2001). However, a Barman from Site 1 (RESA) does see how through developing his relationship with his Site Manager (RES D), enables him to progress commenting: "Over the past three months I have taken on more responsibility, so I feel like she is trusting me

more ", later stating in the interview that he hopes that by demonstrating a wider role he will achieve the transition to supervisor with the approval of his manager. The impact of social relationships at work, and with customers, is discussed and analysed in greater detail under the activity system element 'Community'. Further along the management development track, a team leader at Site 2 talks about their experience:

> In this company, to get the pay rise they put you in busy pub….so what they do is they start you in a little pub to begin with. What they used to do is have three bands of pubs, so they would give you a small one to begin with, and then move you up to middle one, and then move you up to a higher end one like this and so on, so if you do good at it then they move you up that's how you get your pay rise as you keep moving up (RES 9).

Another related issue is how employees become integrated with how Full House Ltd operate. For example, the site manager at Site 2 recently recruited a new kitchen manager from a competing company mentioning that "[the new recruit] is getting used to the way of Full House Ltd" (RES13). Similarly, the team leader at Site 2 explains how she recently joined the team at Site 2 but will be shadowing "another manager until I get their way of doing it here" (RES 8). This reflects the idea of how employees need to find how they fit into the culture and background systems in order to make sense of their situation, but also that the industry standard job role (i.e., 'chef' or 'waitress' or 'team leader') is tweaked to the needs and requirements of the person, company and the site.

5.1.4.3 Knowing Themselves

One of the personal attributes that many staff talk about developing is confidence when they first start in their job. Many employees talk about how little confidence they had at the beginning, and how this has grown. A waitress in Site 2 states: "When I first started, I wasn't as confident...[but] now I can just be like "I'm really sorry" and deal with it, but a lot of the younger staff struggle with that" (RES 11). Similarly, other staff at Site 2 comment:

> I wasn't very confident when I started working here and now, I'm more confident and that is what I like. [Its] given me better people skills (RES14).

> I don't know, I like the fact that it has changed me as a person because before I would never ever, do this, like talk to a complete stranger, I don't know I just got this burst of confidence (RES A).

Confirming that this may be a key attribute required by employees, another experienced waitress states:

> I will talk to anyone. I think that's why I'm best suited to a job like this is because you have to be able to talk to anyone and everyone. You can't go all shy and scared of that table. I'm just going to go up to them (RES 10).

The role of confidence and its importance to the activity system and wider issue of innovation is discussed in the analysis section later.

5.1.4.4 Category B: Showing What To Do

The data suggests that staff receive both informal and formal training. This is reflected in the two key codes below:

A. **Learning from others** – one of the mechanisms that supported how they informally learnt about their work.
B. **Supporting Development** – formal training provided by the organisation.

5.1.4.5 Learning from others – informal training

All staff at all levels helped each other learn about their work, so a strong theme in both the interview and observation data (such as OBS A/D and OBS 1/8/9) was learning from others, but also showing others what to do, although this was less pronounced in Site 2 data compared with Site 1. There was a mix of individuals with different levels of experience, skills, and abilities across the two sites. Most were learning on the job, largely due to the use of casual labour, many of whom were either young or inexperienced or both (RES A/E and RES 3/5/6/7). This was particularly prevalent at Site 2 compared with Site 1. Only one member of staff was engaged on a formal apprenticeship out of the circa 75 staff across the sites. An inexperienced waitress at Site 2, who had worked for only a few months talked about her training needs:

> I think I need more help on the drinks. I was one of the only people who hadn't got a clue. I'm only just starting to get it. When someone asks for a Carling Shandy, I'm just starting to get what they mean by that (RES 5).

Other staff, who have worked longer, have become more skilled and are starting to support their colleagues in getting to know the job. One waitress mentions "I've been helping new people that have joined, training them up a little bit" (RES 3). Similarly, another more experienced waitress comments:

> The person had only just started so I suppose there's that but pouring an ale… you know how you pour an ale, you put it down and you pull it slowly. Pouring an ale at a 45-degree angle like this [demonstrates]. I was just there like 'oh god, stop pouring the IPA like that' and it carried on for about a month and then I said something. Then it was the point where I was like 'dude, come on, that IPA's not settling for anyone (RES 10).

Another waitress interviewed comments: "I didn't know how to do desserts so I'd ask people to do them for me so I could see… [and] … I've learned how to carry more plates" *(*RES3). Some of the more experienced members of the team comment on how they learnt on-the-job. For example, the Site Manager interviewed at Site 1 comments: "I actually started off in pot wash, I was sixteen… and then I started doing a bit in the kitchen, and a bit out front and one thing led to another really and I just worked my way up." Similarly, a

waitress in Site 1 explains: "I started off as bar staff and then moved on to do the kitchen, so now I pretty much do everything, bar work, waitressing, kitchens and puds", RES B. Similarly, a waitress at Site 2 in an interview talked about her experience stating: "I know for a fact I have picked up things along the way that I thought I wouldn't do." (RES 6). Many staff comment on how they have 'picked things up', and have learnt from others, for example Waitress B comments:

> it's just the little things where you see someone, and you think 'I'd have done that' and then someone goes 'why are you doing it like that? Do it like this' and you're like 'oh god yeah, why am I not doing it like that?' – it's just little things (RES 10)

Staff are also trained purely through circumstances, as a senior manager comments about front of house team members who "by default one day ended up stocking up the fryer and never got out [of the kitchen]! (RES F).

5.1.4.6 Supporting Development – Formal Training

The extent of informal training, or learning on-the-job through, for example, social learning (Bandura, 1986) is supported by formal training that staff receive from their employer. There are differences in the interview data between Site 1 and Site 2 in this respect. Initially it appears that training was carried out face-to-face and involved visiting other sites, being trained at a training pub (local to both venues) coupled with on-site training and mentoring. Managers had a tick sheet that enabled them to track which areas staff had completed. But in Site 2, training appears to have been moved online as a team leader explains:

> All our training is online, so you do it and you log in, and all you seem to do now is chase people to fill stuff, and a lot of the kids don't want to do it or don't understand it so do it in their own time…[but]… we haven't got the wages to pay them to do it either and we haven't got the budget to pay extra so it doesn't get done – there used to be a kitchen of excellence in the area… where if you had any newbies you would send them there and they would come back and they would have more knowledge, but they don't do that no more…[So]… you can hire them but you can't train 'em (RES 9).

Lack of training is noted by interviewed participants, but particularly by those working in Site 2 versus Site 1. For example, a waitress in Site 2 explains the training she initially received: "I followed someone around for about an hour and then that was it. They kept walking off and I was like okay, I'll just carry on" (RES3). Another waitress, at Site 2 talks about her day at a training pub that she was sent to (RES 6), where as a Chef at Site 2 talks about the progressive on-the-job training she experienced: "I had to start on hot wash, learn how to clean plates, and then you started going on to starters, then fryers, then plating up, then up to the grill" (RES 7).

According to an interview with a senior manager (RES J), initially Full House Ltd had a high-profile training initiative that was widely communicated. The training ensured that staff knew what the brand stood for, its

values and involved activities to develop team bonding, as a waiter interviewed at Site 1 explains - "when we did our last one, we had to solve a murder, so everyone had to work together [and] obviously how the pubs are run, rules and regulations, fire safety, stuff like that." (RES A). Similarly, the Site Manager for Site 1 comments: "they have always been supportive of the training I wanted and gave me everything I needed to do to get my own pub" (RES D). Employees recognise the value of being trained, for example, a more experienced team leader in Site 2 states:

> It helps the customers because you have more knowledge… Mystery Guests have to ask us questions so if you don't know what the deals are because you don't look at the menu and you are on the till it's a problem! So, getting lots of people trained on a lot of things [means] they can be universal in their job (RES 2).

A manager explains in one interview (RES 14) that new pubs (those that have been recently acquired and converted to the Full House Ltd format) have 'dry runs' where staff from other sites are invited as a trial to experience the service before opening it to the public. This enables the staff in the new site to practice delivering the service cycle whilst other staff are effectively guinea pigs. It benefits all concerned, as lessons learnt from the dry run are shared between sites, and staff get to see the service from a customer perspective.

5.1.5 Theoretical Comparisons

Kanapathipillaii (2021) in their study of the impact of training and innovation on firm performance in the Hospitality sector in Malaysia, conclude that job satisfaction plays an important role in innovative capability. Similarly, Marsick and Watkins (2003, quoted in Kanapathipillaii, 2021:94) state that "employees who are satisfied with their jobs are more eager to get involved and contribute to innovation, leading to organisational performance". Overall training and job satisfaction was positively correlated to innovative behaviours and firm performance in the literature. In another study by Zopiatis et al. (2018), which looked at the relationship between an organisation's level of employee support and innovative actions, concluded that: "knowledge, skills, abilities, talents, attitudes, behaviours and competencies of employees - the human capital of an organisation - are key to innovation practices." Their study suggests that a supportive environment should:

> Motivate employees to innovate by providing them the comfort zone and the creative freedom to reflect, identify needs or areas of improvement, visualize potential solutions, externalize thoughts, make proposals, experiment, make mistakes, request and receive support and resources, take autonomous decisions, and be recognized and acknowledged (Zopiatis et al., 2018: 15).

Accordingly, socialisation, as mentioned earlier, has been shown to be largely dependent on trust and confidence in the workplace producing sufficient self-efficacy (Lunenburg, 2011). Whilst other commentators

have investigated the role of trust in service encounters (Halliday, 2004), confidence can be considered as two separate types - epistemic confidence (self-assurance in one's level of expertise) and social confidence (knowledge of one's credibility in a social group) (Dekker et al., 2010). Overall, the interview and observation data points to a more pronounced lack of job satisfaction stemming from a less supportive environment and lower levels of confidence exhibited by participants in Site 2 compared with Site 1, which may begin to account for the greater number of unresolved problems occurring in Site 2.

A study by Newman et al. (2018), identifies the creative self-efficacy is a key driver of employee's creative behaviour defined as "the belief one has the ability to produce creative outcomes" (Tierney and Farmer, 2002 quoted in Newman, 2018: 1). This approach largely follows Bandura's (1986) self-cognitive theory which suggests that "human functions are influenced by 'people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances' " (Bandura, 1986 in Newman, 2018: 2). In these ways confidence and self-efficacy are linked to developing innovative behaviours and capabilities (Newman et al., 2018) but requires employees to feel supported at work, for example through training and social ties at work. Scott and Bruce (1994: 581-582) suggest the innovative behaviour of employees is usually characterised by variously recognising problems, generating ideas and solutions, seeking support and attempting to institutionalise them in some way. A study by Getz and Robinson (2003: 134) suggests that "in practice, 80% of improvement ideas come from employees and only 20% come through planned improvement activities".

This goes some way to explain perhaps why a study by Chen (2017:476) notes that human resource management is widely recognised as "one of the most influential factors for the success of service innovation" by supporting knowledge-sharing behaviours and improved team culture. Similarly, a study by Chang et al. (2011) showed that "extensive training of frontline employee is of particular importance in encouraging innovations" (Chang, 2011, quoted in Chen, 2017: 477). Chen's 2017 study investigated the link between organisational training, personal job fit, work schedule flexibility and service innovation performance in the Hotel Sector. Chen proposes that when there is a good congruence between the job and the employee's knowledge, skills and ability (i.e., personal job fit), coupled with training and flexible working, they are more likely to be motivated in their work, have higher job satisfaction and are less likely to leave. But more importantly they are more likely to contribute to solving work-related problems if they feel supported at work whilst being given more autonomy due to their developing competencies. Chen also points to the role of job standardisation to provide continuity in work routines a source of stability by clearly identifying what competencies are required to be successful in the workplace, whilst simultaneously communicating shared meanings of what work is that can be transferred to newcomers thus supporting employee confidence.

Based on the above ostensive theory, it appears that in both sites, there is a lack of training of employees, with the organisation relying more on informal training to support individuals, but due to the noted lack of social ties in Site 2 compared with Site 1, Site 2 is struggling to perform as well, with a higher level of staff and customer dissatisfaction noted in both the interview and observation data. This may be because staff shortages at Site 2 precipitated a lack resources for formal training, reduced informal learning from practice role models and lower job standardisation leading to lower staff confidence, self-efficacy and motivation to contribute to problem solving, increasing fire-fighting activity to resolve emergent problems and issues.

5.1.6 'Subject' Conclusions

Activity theory has surfaced the social complexity inherent in the activity system – the role of socialisation, social ties and social learning and the impact on self-efficacy and confidence. In line with its underpinning philosophy, the activity system appears to have 'produced' changes in people through interaction with it, suggesting change and development is occurring as employees build experience, competencies, and skills. The relationship between knowing what to do and being shown what to do surfaced the importance of both formalised training and informal learning on self-efficacy. From an innovation perspective, these factors may provide the antecedents to employee problem solving and thereby support emerging practice adaptations as they seek to resolve the problem space and the tensions and contradictions within it.

5.2 Element 2: OBJECT

5.2.1 Introduction

As stated in Chapter Three, the 'object' is defined generally as a collective purpose that attempts to resolve a problem space in an organisation created through the contradictory unity of use-value and exchange-value (Engeström, 2006: 194). In hospitality, the use-value of gathering socially as 'object' generates the motives for social interaction and developing relationships, whereas the exchange-value of gathering socially generates the motives of service-for-profit and cost-cutting. As mentioned previously in earlier chapters, hospitality is characterised by interaction through labour between employees and customers but that presupposes that the core elements of the meal have been provided – i.e., that the food has been produced to a good standard, on time and to specification. The provider seeks to reduce inherent service costs (costs of ingredients, equipment, and labour) to a point where it can maximise profit without causing significant reductions in service quality, whilst the expectation of customers is to maximise these elements to ensure an optimum experience is obtained. This creates the main tension in the problem space, i.e., an expectation/ performance gap. The object can also be interpreted in a wider sense of the purpose of the organisation in its cultural and historical context as a community hub and third space and this was discussed at the beginning of this thesis in Chapter One and Chapter Two but will be built upon in subsequent sections.

From interview data with Senior Management (RES F/J) and secondary data, other activity systems interface with the site level activity system, for example Full House Ltd is itself an activity system that sits within the Servicetime Corporation activity system. The object of each of these levels is different. Servicetime Corporation, at the time of research, was a Public Limited Company with shareholders. The object was maximising shareholder value through return on their investment based on a short term 12-month forward plan. Subsequently the company was acquired by a private company that had an investment portfolio that looked much longer term resulting in a change of strategy. At the level of Full House Ltd, decision making included assessing the portfolio of 200+ pubs branded as Full House Ltd and their geo-demographic and economic fit, coupled with the financial management of the property asset. At site level, both Site 1 and Site 2 operationalised the strategy through the same value proposition but in a slightly different way accounting for the idiosyncratic aspects of each Site but were measured using the same key performance indicators – mainly labour cost, income generation and brand quality. But the brand owners, Full House Ltd, recognise that brand quality is fluid due to the diversity of property, customers, and geographical locations. As a senior manager states: "I think there is an understanding of what good looks like. Our internal change programme tells us what the brand should look and feel like… but that is driven by its own identity and dictated to some degree by style of business and manager, a number of factors drive that – there is not a golden nugget or silver bullet for that" (RES F). The same senior manager goes on to explain:

> We… flex the sites that we use. So Full House Ltd is split into two types – Community and Destination, so we have two styles of business… [but] in reality we have about six styles. [RES F]

Since its acquisition in the mid-1990s, the brand has evolved. As another senior manager puts it:

> We have a basic value food menu still - the motto back then was just all about huge plates and that was about it… [however]… the challenge is now I suppose to [start] feeling like 200 individual pubs rather than a brand, whilst still wanting to being a brand, that is the Full House Ltd challenge at the minute, probably one of our biggest. [RES J]

The strategy from a brand perspective was to evolve Full House Ltd into more localised offers whilst still retaining a family feel of a unified brand:

> There's a need to be this big brand because that is what makes us busy but equally, we are not destination like [other brands in the market], we are a pub. [RES F]

At the time of research, the Full House Ltd brand was going through a further evolution:

> We have got some innovation going on….in [the new year] we have got what 'New Full House Ltd' is going to look like. So, we are going to evolve it again… So, in the most recent one…Its more 'shabby chic' I suppose, I hate the word trendy, but probably a bit trendier, contemporary, a bit more upmarket. So that's the idea, but not to overdo it, but just take it up a notch [RES F]

Because of acquisitions, many sites bring a legacy – both in terms of the site reputation within the local

community, which forms expectations about what its experience is, and its social contribution as a meeting place. There is also a legacy in terms of the physical layout and how it either complies or deviates from the brand standard. Based on the interview data (RES F/J and RES 13/14), Full House Ltd and Servicetime Corporation are particularly aware of local sentiment around pub development and any changes to the pub experience or layout can be a source of significant community disturbance that can attract local and national publicity. For this reason, legacy sites are treated differently to purpose-built sites, in that changes are introduced slowly over time.

5.2.2 Data Findings and Analysis - Object

The codes and categories developed from the data are provided in Figure 35 below and discussed in the following narrative.

Figure 35: Identified Codes and Categories for Object
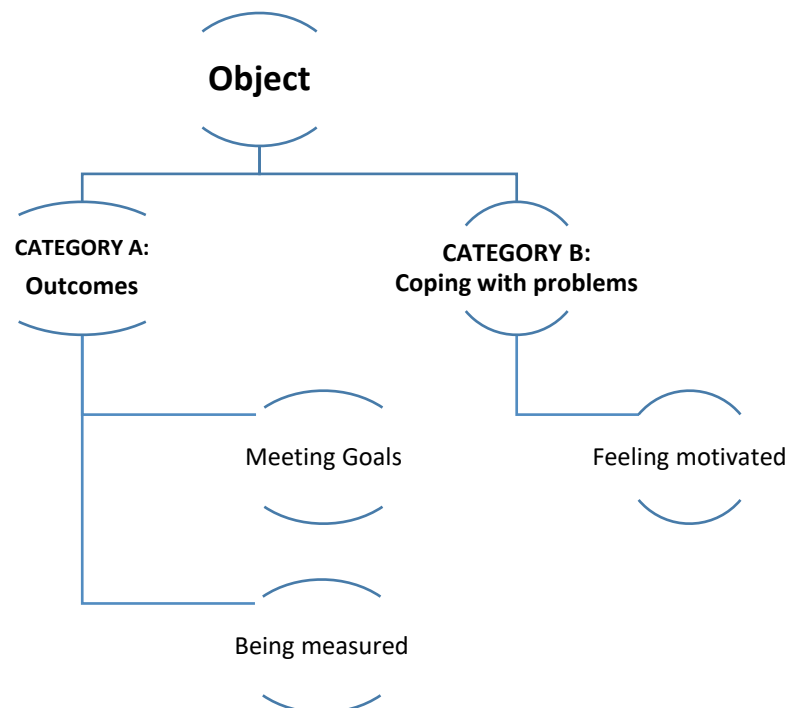
5.2.2.1 Meeting Goals and Being Measured

From the service provider's perspective, as already stated, the exchange value drives the tensions and contradictions in the problem space. The exchange value is managed by a management team that set their team goals at site level as one manager interviewed explains:

> Depending on their job role, with the managers I tend to try and do them [reviews] every 3-6 months to make sure their refreshed and set them targets, with the other staff I do them yearly… With the Bar Staff I usually set them targets more to do with selling more, whilst with the floor staff I set them targets around the customers and how they can improve our scores and ratings, so stuff like that."
> And concluded: "I'm supposed to worry about the money (RES D).

Targets include a monthly 'mystery guest' rating for the site. As an experienced Team leader explains:

> To get a perfect mystery guest score your food has to come out within 15/16 mins, you will lose a couple of marks if it comes out within 20-22 mins which I don't even class as a wait at the bar…" and …" mystery guests have got so strict it is impossible to get 100% on them. Other pubs do it and I'm like how do you do it? The size of this pub is ridiculous, there are so many little hidey-holes and it's difficult to see when they [the customers] have finished and you are supposed to say hello and goodbye to the customer, so how is that supposed to happen? (RES 2).

In addition to the indicators above, customers can provide feedback through either a survey form on site or online, which employees feel is more representative and fairer than the mystery guest process. In an interview with the manager at Site 1 outlined the formal process of NPS (Net Promoter Score) implemented through an external third party. "Since I've been here everyone has been either 8, a 9 or a 10, so we are doing alright, and they do work hard towards it." (RES D), whilst at Site 2, the site manager was struggling to achieve an NPS of 7 or more.

Site management teams have to process every complaint related to their Site 1s one team leader says, "as a manager you know if you screw up you have to deal with the complaints – it all comes back on to you." RES 2. Based on the interview data, customers can complain online direct to Servicetime Corporation which are then cascaded back to specific site managers and their teams who are tasked and measured on responding to every complaint within a certain timeframe. But clearly customers also complain directly to staff. For example, a waitress at Site 1 explains: "Customers can be not very nice…we have to stay polite and say, 'yeah, we will sort that out for you now' and they will still say something and swear at you and all sorts". (RES B)

Customer complaining behaviours are another feature of customer-employee interaction. Issues occur between staff and customers when there is service breakdown. Based on both the observation data and interview data, there was significant difference between Site 1 and Site 2 in the treatment of staff by customers who tended to be very negative and sometimes aggressive. For example, a waitress at Site 2 comments: "I mean this lot [staff] work their arses off when they get here and they get spoken to like they are on the floor [intimates people talk down to them], and you get people like "You only work behind the bar…." (RES 4).

One team leader in Site 2 is particularly vocal about this issue: "I don't like this job, coming here has been so bad…I've worked in a few pubs, but I've never worked with customers who are so rude who come in here. I can't wait to move. And I've only been here [a few months]" (RES 8). Other staff at Site 2 also mention customers being rude to them frequently. A team leader at Site 2 suggests it might be to do with customer expectations commenting: "Here, it's cheap, but they expect Miller and Carter… and you're having two [meals]

for £9.49…[so] this steak is going to be a bit gristly because it's not matured for how many months or whatever" (RES 1).   At Site 1, one waitress suggests customers complain because they keep getting different portion sizes depending on who is in the kitchen (RES B). Ownership of the problem is another factor to consider. In an interview with one site manager (RES 13), they explained how they tried to develop a culture of empowerment amongst staff to allow them to make decisions about how to handle staff complaints, and training had been provided in the past. But a waitress at Site 2 suggests this seems to be an excuse for management not to get involved referring to a busy Sunday situation where despite customers requesting to see the manager: "they [the managers] refused to leave the kitchen to deal with complaints - they just refused" (RES 5). But an experienced waiter at Site 1 thinks: "its good have people come in and be picky, because if you have people who are nice all the time you won't know if you are going wrong". RES A.

What is apparent from both the interview and observation data is that there appears to be more problems and therefore complaints from both staff and customers at Site 2, compared to Site 1, but across both sites, lack of sufficient labour, and trained labour is causing most of the problems, particularly at peak periods.

According to interviews with site managers and team leaders in both sites, specific income and labour targets are set for special celebration days such as Mother's Day (RES D) as significant opportunities, but targets create pressure for the team (See Table 13 below). Site 1's site manager is aware they are not quick enough on food timings (to brand standard). A senior managers comments that "two years ago before we put some effort into it, 50% of food when out to spec but now today it's more like 80%." (RES F). However, at site level, Site 1 site manager remarks "My [customers] don't seem to mind waiting that bit longer to get something a bit nicer" (RES D), pointing out that in the rush to meet targets, food is also not going out to a high standard.

Table 13: Summary of Performance Indicators

No.	Indicator	Description
1	Net Promoter Score	Extent to which a guest would recommend a site to someone they know
2	Mystery Guest	Range of indicators (including those below), once per month
3	Time to table	Time from order to plated food delivered to table
4	Food delivered to specification	Plates of food are as per menu specification and guest requirements
5	Guest welcome	Guests are welcomed on entry.
6	Table Checkback	Waiting staff to check customers are satisfied with their meals.

7	Selling up	Requirement for staff to suggest more expensive meal and drink combinations.
8	Customer Complaints	Online feedback form that enables guests to leave comments and complaints.
9	Recognised Person	Online feedback form that enables guests to identify a member of staff for good service.

5.2.2.2 Coping with Problems

The problem space has been outlined in Section 5.2.1 earlier – essentially consisting of the tensions and contradictions produced between the exchange value and use value of the activity system. Problems were found everywhere in the data and participants were able to articulate some of the coping strategies they employed to overcome these. A much more detailed analysis is provided later in Section 5.3 as part of the Innovation lens as some of the problems and related coping strategies warrant more than a brief mention here.

This initial review of the findings from both the interview and observation data identifies generic problems affecting both sites. An initiative introduced at Site 2 called 'Table Service' is dealt with separately later because as a defined change its impact caused disruption that took the existing service cycle out of equilibrium, triggering a whole range of specific problems and adaptations in addition to those identified below, that warrant much closer inspection separately. The emerging problem themes found in the observation and interview data that were apparent (in no particular order) were in the following key areas:

1. Customer behaviours
2. Labour (resourcing)
3. Servicescape (the physical internal and external service environment)
4. Food and Service Quality
5. Technology

Customer behaviours
- Misbehaviour - aggressive or rude customers (including, in one case, violent behaviour)
- Customers failing to follow health and safety rules (such as smoking inside, failing to look after children safely).
- Child misbehaviours that caused harm or distress to themselves, others or damage to property.

- Customers who bill skipped, tried to falsify claims about food quality and service to reduce bills or threatened to complain to managers (and be vocal online) to get extra food or drinks.

- Customers failing to read menus correctly, mis-ordering, or failing to understand food conventions (for example 'medium rare' for steak).

- Customers who accidentally provided the wrong table number causing problems with orders and bill payments, or customers who insisted on split bills on payment.

- Customers who ordered food but were not at the table (possibly outside playing with their children) when it was ready causing rework, reheating, or refusal to pay.

Labour (Resourcing)

A key problem observed (for example OBS G/I and OBS 1/4/8) and reported on by employees in the interview data (for example RES D/F and RES 1/8/14) was that wait times for food increased at peak periods causing long delays, queuing, and dissatisfaction, particularly on Sunday lunchtimes or on bank holiday weekends largely due to a lack of well-trained chefs or kitchen staff:

- High levels of sickness absence (particularly Site 2), staff 'no shows' for shifts, or staff running late
- Insufficient breaks for staff on shifts due to cover requirements
- Extended shifts or additional shifts to cover shortfalls in staff to cover busy periods
- Working in multiple areas or covering in areas with insufficient training
- Reductions in wage budgets
- Difficulties recruiting (Site 2)
- Waitresses not able to get tips due to customer dissatisfaction with wait times, due to lack of appropriate staff or experienced staff in the kitchen, or due to insufficient clarity of zoning front of house
- Menu changes without training staff on the new deals or options
- Insufficient training causing work to take longer or rework to occur, or time spent learning-on-the-job due to high levels of new recruits and inexperienced staff
- Impact of regulations on productive time (GDPR, H&S etc.)

Servicescape
- Tables that are dirty, sticky or have not been cleared in time.
- Toilets that are out-of-order or in a poor state of repair, or have not been cleaned often enough, or not cleaned to a sufficient standard, particularly at peak times.
- Confusing layout that fails to signal basic process, such as where and when to order, or where to pay for drinks and food.

- Noisy environment at peak times causing problems with communication (staff and customers), or problems between customers.

- Staff unable to have a full line of sight on all tables due to the fragmented nature of covers (mainly Site 2), failing to identify early visual and audible clues of customer dissatisfaction behaviours (such as customer signals for drinks, orders, bill payment or other problems).

- Decking area lacks sufficient maintenance, causing harm to employees.

- Lack of sufficient clarity in outside areas as to which tables enable order taking, or where meals can be taken to outside or inside.

- Poor state of decoration internally, including leaking roof in places

- Car park security out-of-hours (with car park used for anti-social purposes)

- A beer garden during the summer months causing confusion regarding service cycle, particularly the numbering of tables allied to efficient ordering processes and timely waitering.

- Promotions (on menus or signage) that were too complicated for both staff and customers to understand, or use of coupons and vouchers that were no longer valid.

Food and service quality
- Inconsistent portion sizes.

- Cold food that had not been heated/cooked/reheated correctly.

- Drinks that were not hot enough (tea and coffee).

- Beer that was cloudy.

Technology
- Insufficient iPad ordering devices or iPads that did not work, or lost orders requiring the rekeying of orders, or requiring customers to repeat orders - Many staff reverted to using pen and paper to write down orders if the technology (either the till or the iPad system failed.

- Broken kitchen equipment that was not fixed slowing the cooking line.

- General problems with technology failing, or staff not able to use technology due to insufficient training, or not being provided appropriate admin/access rights.

The primary problem identified in the interview and observation data was insufficient labour which precipitated many of the other problems identified above. In so much as it would not be unexpected for an activity system in Hospitality to encounter any number of the problems above, the lack of labour to rectify problems as they emerged, to provide resources for contingent actions or necessary improvisation exacerbated what was already a challenging situation. For example, in some instances observed (OBS 2/3/4/8) if the ordering system failed (iPads or tills) and staff reverted to pen and paper, this then had an

accumulative effect on wait time because the information of the order had to be rekeyed on tills, taking time, or could not be presented on screen in the kitchens. Lack of expertise due to deskilling meant that staff did not have the skills or time to manage a manually based workflow leading to further errors of production and drop in service quality and more customer complaints.

Staff exhibited several coping practices to overcome some of the problems above (detailed further in the element 'Community'). The core coping practice commented on by many interviewed and observed (for example RES 2/9/14), largely driven by management, was to work extremely hard at pace without breaks. Some staff interviewed had deliberately become multi-skilled across Bar, Floor and Kitchen areas to enable multi-tasking to increase productivity (for example RES 2), but this was not an intentional strategy implemented by management, rather a coping practice evolved by individuals to cope with a demanding situation. Many interviewed participants talked about how service quality suffered at peak points as staff also 'cut corners'. For example, failing to sufficiently heat food to reduce production time, or not maintaining the Floor (leaving dirty tables and uncleared dishes, dirty floors etc.) as time was focused on just meeting production of food orders (for example RES D and RES 11). There was a clear sense in the interview and observation data that in Site 2 staff were regularly and repetitively unable to keep up with demand on Weekends (for example RES D/F and RES 1/8/14). Again, practices are explored in more detail in the next element: 'Community' and extensive coverage of problem-solving actions and activities are covered in the section on Innovation later, rather than dealt with in detail at this point.

Other problems identified in the data are linked to a lack of investment in infrastructure and facilities, such as a lack of maintenance (RES D and RES 5/9). The problem of a leaking roof was identified in 2016 (and was still unrectified in 2018) as it was not classified as a sufficient risk to the business but creates problems for staff to manage such as wet floors (Health and Safety issue), unsightly décor (impacting the servicescape perception by customers) and staff morale. The problems identified above were linked to the overwhelming tension between use and exchange value of the situation, with the service provider pushing the activity system to its limits of efficacy to maximise profit and cut costs, particularly in Site 2.

5.2.2.3 Feeling Motivated

Motivation is an important feature of activity theory (Engeström, 1987). Motivation is created as subjects engage with the object of the activity system to resolve the tensions and contradictions created there-in. From a purely economic perspective, staff engage with work to earn income, and in both sites, based on the interview data, staff stated that they sought to maximise their income. Some staff mentioned they were the main wage earner, so work was a necessity (for example RES 3), whilst others saw it as extra income to supplement other sources. There are a number of ways staff sought to increase their income:

1. Via tipping – behaviours around customers as observed were particularly prominent in Site 2 due to the introduction of table service. Staff become defensive of their zones in many cases. Some waitresses were making around £70 per week in tips alone (RES 10). In Site 2, table zoning was implemented to enable waiters to own their zones, and the tips generated from customers they serve within them. But if the hosting, as mentioned earlier, and thus distribution of customers and tips was not properly organised and co-ordinated, this led to disputes between waiting staff as one comments:

   > The week it was half term, we were absolutely 'chock-a' in here, and she's [waiter] got four tables, and we've got no tables. And I was like; 'can't you give us a table?' and she was like, 'no because I lose money', but we were going to lose money because people were walking out the door! (RES 3).

2. Extra Hours – staff leveraged their social ties with decision makers (site managers and team leaders) to gain opportunities for extra hours. As a waitress in Site 2 states: "I've been pretty much doing 12-10 every day. It was a nice pay day last month. Very nice. It was the most I've ever been paid" (RES 1).

3. Developing cross-disciplinary skills / developing flexibility – staff made themselves more flexible by learning skills across the bar, floor and kitchen areas, making it easier for them to work shifts and provide cover for sickness absence. Flexibility is discussed in more detail under the element 'Division of Labour'. Others saw their skill development as an opportunity for career progression.

Interview and observation data suggested that there were also benefits from creating social ties with customers, particularly those who were classed as regulars. In Site 1, one waitress regularly received gifts from various customers (RES C). Staff also reported a feeling of community at their sites which they enjoyed being part of (RES H). It became an emerging theme, that for staff to develop a social life at their site was also an important motivating factor for being there – this theme is developed in more detail in the next element covering 'Community'.

Interviewed staff also noted that being recognised for their contribution that also triggered feeling of achievement and developed their self-confidence. This included, for example in Site 1, managers allowing staff who have worked hard to have a drink after a challenging shift, or customers mentioned their name in online feedback surveys or forms, and via a formal 'employee of the month' process where managers nominated staff who had gone the extra mile. But also, recognition was driven by peers acknowledging their input and expertise.

Another theme in 'feeling motivated' stemmed from interview data in which staff reported the impact of good leadership associated with learning new things, developing themselves and their careers, particularly for permanent staff who were ambitious (for example RES D/F/J and RES 8/9).

5.2.3 Theoretical Comparisons

As stated earlier, high levels of employee motivation at work have also been linked to innovative work behaviours (Chen, 2017). If employees have a good personal job fit (moderated by supportive training) and a strong sense of achievement, they have a higher level of job satisfaction and are more likely to use discretionary good will to solve work related problems. Similarly, Gonzalez-Gonzalez and Garcia-Almeida (2021) found that staff need to be motivated to make suggestions for improvement, and that motivating factors were largely related to the task at hand such as solving problems using their skills and expertise in line with Bandura's (1986) self-cognitive theory.

5.2.4 'Object' Conclusions

Using Activity Theory has enabled the Researcher to qualify the underlying contradiction that is pervasive across all capitalist endeavours – i.e. the contradictory unity of use-value and exchange-value (Engeström (2006:194).   In hospitality, the use-value of gathering socially as 'object' generates the motives for social interaction and developing relationships, whereas the exchange-value of gathering socially generates the motives of service-for-profit and cost-cutting.

Targets epitomise aspects of this contradiction. Targets set the desired activity system equilibrium point from the provider's perspective (i.e., an equilibrium that enables sufficient profit whilst still providing a quality service to customers). Targets drive problem solving when they are not met in the sense that not meeting targets drives the activity system to put right problems to return the system to an equilibrium point in favour of the provider. Problem solving endeavours tended to reinforce the service cycle rules and ways of doing things with emphasis on the ostensive process, rather than exploring issues or concerns that were raised by staff that questioned whether the desired equilibrium point set by the brand's service cycle was achievable.

In Full House Ltd, the equilibrium point between the use value and exchange value appears to be firmly weighted in the organisations' favour in that managers were tasked to make cost savings in spite of evidence that customers were unhappy. Staff felt significant feelings of unfairness due to measures and targets failing to account for the impact this was having on their working environment, which then impacted in some cases on staff motivation, staff sense of achievement, staff satisfaction, discretionary good will and contributing to problem solving and making improvements at work. Accordingly, activity theory has helped the Researcher

to reveal these factors that may be the antecedents of problem-solving behaviours and therefore, impact on adaptive practices that demonstrate informal practice-based service innovation.

5.3 Element 3: COMMUNITY

5.3.1 Introduction

The concept of 'community' has already been extensively explored in the literature review chapter. Essentially, 'community' is created through 'collective activity' in the sense that communities only exist through shared activities that are based on agreed practices. Practice therefore defines the community, not the other way round. In the context of describing the activity system of Hospitality, 'collective activity' covers all those who share the same object of work. Work is an economic transaction involving customers and workers in an emerging practice that transforms them and the world around them, creating a community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991). However, community is also a shared understanding of how things are done that emphasises "stability, commonality, reciprocity, what can be shared, boundaries, and rules of inclusion/exclusion" and promotes a "common bond" (Nicolini, 2012: 89), requiring recognition of "some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group that create 'identity'" (Rubin, 1983, citied in Nicolini, 2012: 89). Thus, shared practice defines boundaries of communities and practice creates identity and thus community. Practice involves mutual engagement, communally negotiated joint enterprise, shared repertoire and shared histories of learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

Coping practices have already been covered to some degree in 'Element 2: Object', by way of illustrating how the object drives practice within a community. But other important themes are now explored in this section that have emerged from the data. The data for 'Community' comes from the codes and categories, identified in Figure 36 below.

Figure 36: Identified Codes and Categories for Community
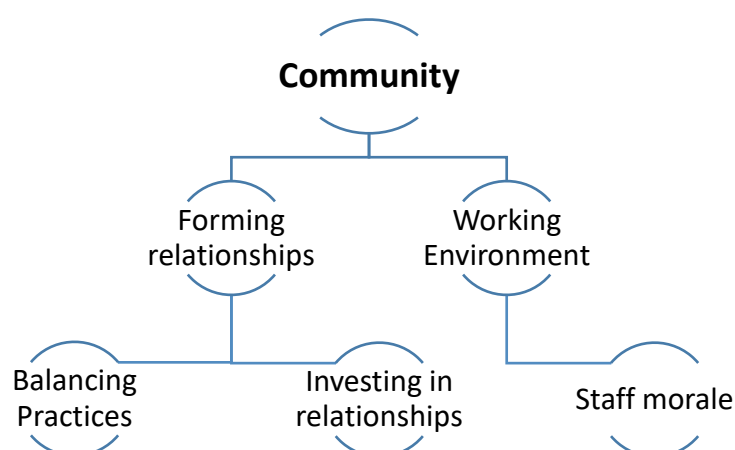
5.3.1.1 Forming Relationships

Many of those interviewed talked about their community from a social perspective with a team leader in Site 2 expressing how they developed a "really close group of friends" commenting that: "Even though I'm at work all the time, we're all friends, so it's not just work-colleagues." (RES 1). Another team leader at the same site expressed how it felt to work at their site saying, "it just feels less like a job, more like a hobby or more like you're going out to the pub yourself." (RES 8). Another waitress at Site 2 comments: "It doesn't feel like work to be honest; it feels friendly. Everyone gets along really well so it doesn't feel like work." (RES 14). Similarly, a waitress at Site 2 comments on their work colleagues: "They're a good bunch, friendly and welcome you in." (RES 6). A Chef at Site 2 agrees saying "I like the social side. On days off, you can meet up with them [other staff] and go somewhere else, not at work. The banter is good" (RES 7) and goes on to say: "I'm more talkative now, I never used to speak and [now] I've made friends".   Despite the high staff churn rate evidenced in both sites of casual staff the general comments from those interviewed aligned that sites were places where staff were generally friendly to each other. This also appears to be true for 'old timers' – for example RES 11 comments: "when you come in everyone's lovely. I mean, even obviously being here for the [so many] years, I've seen loads of staff come and go, but all though the staff turn around, everyone's really nice. Especially [when I'm] coming back from Christmas, there will be new people."

A team leader at Site 2 was clear that their motivation for working there was primarily income but also for a 'social life' (RES 1). Similarly, a waitress at Site 1 stated that they "love the work…I don't know why. I think it's because I've got less hours now, I've gone part time and its interacting with people, they make my day. Yeah, I do enjoy my work" (RES B). RES B also saw themselves as the 'mum of the group' stating; "I'm the Agony Aunt – they all come to me." At Site 2, a team leader describes her feelings about being part of the team: - "like settled in and part of the furniture" (RES 1).

Whilst the data clearly pointed to the importance of socialising, finding friends, developing relationships, and interacting together there were contradictory views, albeit in a minority. For example, in one interview with a Team Leader contrasted their experience from working at another smaller pub with her experience at Site 2 stating that: "you usually get staff who would come in for a drink but here they don't really socialise out of work I mean here you finish work, and you finish work, that's it" (RES 9). Similarly, a waitress referred to the "new people" who "don't seem to fit in" even though they are "being nice to them" (RES 3). In Site 2 there were clearly more cliques and factions because of the size and scale of the pub and number of staff operating that explained some of these contradictory comments.

Many staff had become employed at both sites through their own social networks of friends and family, as a waiter in Site 1 pointed out how he introduced a friend: "my best friend has started working here and I have

known her since we were in primary school, and we are getting on fine" (RES A). A waitress in Site 2 mentioned that: "My mum said, 'well as you drink there, and you have friends there why don't you work there'?" (RES 14). Similarly, another waitress comments that two staff were: "very close, they were best friends before they joined here" (RES 3) and a team leader comments: "I met my boyfriend here, and then when we got together, he takes me a lot of the time because where he works, he drives past here, and he was one of the reasons why I stayed here". RES2.

5.3.1.2 Investing in Relationships

The Researcher made notes during observations of interactions (when audible) which could be broadly categorised into those that were either primarily directed to enable the service cycle or social e.g., impromptu, not specifically service led, between staff and customers. For example, some conversations started with functional requests (Can I order…) ending with more social exchanges (Has it been busy? / You work hard don't you etc.). From the observation data, some interactions were clearly more than polite conversation. Conversations edged towards flirtation in some cases, or the tone was more assertive, even aggressive where service breakdown occurred both between staff and between staff and customers. Both the interview and observation data suggested that some relationships had strong bonds (staff forming friendships with other staff, or staff forming friendships with regular customers) whilst others created an illusion of friendship to leverage benefits from the activity system itself, such as extra value (drinks, food, speedier service etc.).

As a general theme, the interview data reflects the recognition by staff of the social aspects of their work. For example, RES8 talks about the sense of belonging from a customer perspective: "In that pub no one is alone. You can walk in that pub as a loner, but you won't be alone in there, everyone will talk to you. Yes, there are the little groups that segregate themselves but at the end of the day everyone knows each other, everyone will talk to each other, you know everyone's life". But similarly, staff are acutely aware of their own values and identify aspects of their work that are incongruous with these. RES8 comments on the TV booths where families can sit, eat, and watch TV at the same time: "I never had T.V. with my dinner, I just didn't, but there we are quite literally showing them T.V. and dinner at the same time. Too much of that goes on at home, we're not socialising our kids in the right way anymore, we're forcing them into that."

The importance of customer interaction was also a clear and a definite theme emphasised throughout all interviews and supported by the observation data. As a team leader states in Site 2: "I like to have a good old natter with them [customers] at the tables. I think it makes them [customers] feel more comfortable and makes them want to come back and they get to know you." (RES 14)

Similarly, a team leader comments that "happy staff make happy customers. If you are in a foul mood and you serve customers, then your customers will think the service is terrible and staff are rude". (RES 8)

The interview data from staff from both sites mention that they like working with and interacting with people, both staff and customers, or as previous evidence has shown, have changed their approach to be more accepting of it. For example, a waitress at Site 2 expresses their contentment with their role: "I love people, I do love the interaction. Tonight, I've had some lovely customers…I just love being around people, so I think I fit quite well into it. I like being on the bar chatting." (RES 11). Another waitress compares her previous retail sales experience with working at Site 2: "you can talk to people in a pub, whereas if you work in a clothes shop, it's just 'where's this t-shirt?', whereas here you can have conversations with people. You meet the regulars, you get to know all of them, I think it's just more of a friendly environment." (RES 13). Another waitress at Site 2 also comments:

> Obviously, it's the same day in day out but it's different as well because there's different customers. Then you have the aspect as well where you have your regular customers so the social aspect of its always a bonus (RES 6).

As previously mentioned, 'regulars' (repeat customers) were mentioned as a positive affecting their working experience. The Site 2 manager mentioned that "I like working with people and it's a nice atmosphere when you get the old customers that come in" (RES 13). But most remarks about regulars came from Site 1, suggesting this was more of a feature. For example, the Site 1 Manager stated: "we get a lot of repeat trade and that is when you know you have got something right. If they come back again and again and again, then you know you are doing something right" (RES D). Similarly, an experienced waitress at Site 1 mentioned how she would "get all the old people in and have a dance" (RES C).

Regulars appear to represent a source of continuity and repetition, a persistent order creating feature in the activity system. It is interesting that in Site 1 there were significantly more regulars (cited by a senior manager as 'strange' [REF F]) compared to Site 2. This clearly contributed to community cohesion at Site 1, whilst due to a higher staff churn rate and lower levels of repeat trade, there was less relationship continuity at Site 2 which may have contributed to the site's poor performance on a variety of metrics (RES 13).

5.3.1.3 Balancing Practices

Balancing was one of the themes that emerged as a universal practice identified and grounded in both the interview and observation data within the element 'Community'. Balancing is a practice seen at every level and community group, individual and collective, employee and employer, suggesting it was a core category in the data. 'Balancing' was evident as both individual and collective acts of attempting to achieve

equilibrium between productive capacity and demand, between staff satisfaction and customer satisfaction, between profit and loss and thus created community cohesion unifying the activities of the subjects. 'Balancing' covered a multiplicity of actions by subjects to achieve it and acts of 'balancing' increased as the system become more unbalanced (and far from equilibrium).

Activity Theory enabled the researcher to establish that 'balance' as an outcome of the activity system represented the coping strategies or agency of participants to try to resolve tensions and contradictions within the activity system, and the arising problems that emerge from them, to affect their situations for the better.

Activity Theory is designed to surface the tensions and contradictions that are inherent in the problem space or 'object' being observed to identify the drivers of change and transformation in a given context (Engeström, 1987). In so doing learning, development and change can be distinguished from the 'everydayness' (Heidegger, 1962) or 'totality of background coping strategies' (Dreyfuss 1991). Everydayness is non-reflexive activity so "only when the object becomes unusable do we question what we are doing" (and become reflective) (Nicolini, 2012: 35). Problems arising in practice triggers agency – seen as problem solving behaviour and the resulting coping strategies results from employees questioning what they are doing, precipitating the reflective actions of agency. The importance of agency and autonomy is expressed within theories of individual and organisational learning (Engeström, 1987; Feldman and Pentland, 2003; Felin, 2012; Lounsbury and Crumley, 2007) that lead to new practice capabilities. For example, Lounsbury and Crumley (2007) suggest that:

> Performativity emphasizes the fact that activity is often accomplished by skilled actors who rely on practical–evaluative agency to understand and assess how practices can be altered or tailored in order to accomplish specific tasks or to cater to different audiences.

'Balancing' is positioned as a developing capability in this thesis. As a capability, 'balancing' represents a collective problem-solving capability that formed a community of practice. 'Balancing' can be further subdivided into coping practices such as 'cutting corners', 'multi-tasking', 'jumping in', 'scanning and keeping busy' that seek to resolve the unbalancing caused by excessive orders of food and drinks (at peak points), complaining and deviant acts (as identified in the problems above) and significant customer complaints.

As part of the balancing act, staff used a number of coping strategies to deal with the emerging difficulties and challenges that they faced. As the Site 2 Manager so resolutely put it: "We just have to cope; if it gets busy, we just… have to go on" (RES 13).

From observations and interviews with staff, the data suggests that the service cycle became a repetitive assembly of practices that spurned and accelerated ways of coping through problem solving as the activity system headed towards peak activity and further into chaos. Examples of contingent behaviours/coping strategies included:

1. **"Multi-tasking"**

Staff had to do several things at the same time, with many enjoying being busy. As a waitress put it: "When I've got 5 things to do at once, there's 4 different tables asking me for 5 things, I'm like 'yes!' I do prefer it, definitely. Running around is my thing. I don't know why". (RES 10) Employees talk about the pressure they felt when working the service cycle and how they have coped:

> The main pressure is on the floor. As much as the bar is constant, on the floor you are having to hold in your head that [table] 40 wants desserts but you need to do the check back on 9, but then 52 want to order and you haven't even taken the order for 49 who sat down first – you have to think of so many things (RES2).

Similarly, in the early stages of implementing the brand, one manager described how staff; "juggled loads of balls and muddled through and did what was necessary with tinpot bits of kit that they might have found" (RES F). The importance of being able to multi-task in hospitality is also recognised in other hospitality-based research studies (Bani-Melhem, 2021).

Many staff overcame their lack of their work/task/job understanding by asking for help from their colleagues, forming social ties, or by deliberately asking to be put on different areas so they got to know enough about each area (bar, floor, and kitchen).

2. **"Cutting Corners"**

In an effort to deliver the service, many staff explained they cut corners to save time. A senior manager comments in an interview: "Without doubt on a Saturday night if you go into any business, under pressure the meal sneaks out not looking like it is supposed to" (RES F).

3. **"Jumping in"**

Whilst it has always been a discretionary option for staff, including managers and team leaders, to 'jump in' to a situation to retrieve it from potential chaos, it was clear that this had become a necessity rather than a choice for many. A waiter at Site 1 comments 'that all the managers seem to be jumping in and helping' (RES A) as if it wasn't the norm. Similarly, the Site 2 Manager mentions how "if it gets busy, we [himself and his deputy] just both have to go on the line [kitchen] and then one of us will jump onto pot wash". Similarly, staff were 'thrown in' to maintain service (as has been mentioned before). Across both sites, many staff in

interviews used the words 'jump or jumping' to sort out problems (RES 2/3/6/11/13 & RES A/C/E). The physicality of jumping reflects the metaphorical nature of the activity system, in that staff must react mentally and physically in the moment to emerging situations and problems.

4. "Being Busy"

The overwhelming theme from the observation data (all observations) was that staff were observed 'being busy' – scanning for/looking for work to do for customers or doing preparation, or housekeeping tasks if it became quiet to keep themselves occupied. Scanning for work on the floor involved looking from table to table to identify tables and customers that were close to finishing their meals, or needed clearing, to assess the position of the table in the service cycle. Similarly, in all interviews, the theme of a strong work ethic, keeping busy and working hard was mentioned. For example, various staff mentioned busy periods 'keeps you on your toes' (RES B), or that '… it is just hard work, every shift is just hard work' (RES 9), and that as a team 'when its busy they know it's time to work and they focus' (RES D). But staff also mention that they prefer it when its busy commenting that time feels as if it goes quicker. For example, a waitress at Site 2 states: "I do enjoy it when it's busy because I feel like I'm not standing around. I feel like I'm actually doing something even though I'm running around everywhere, I think it's great." (RES 10). Similarly, staff talk about 'fitting in' and getting to know one another. This theme is developed further in the next element of the activity framework under 'Community'.

5.3.1.4 Working Environment

Linked to the theme of 'forming relationships' is the working environment. As covered earlier in the literature review chapter, the hospitality industry has a reputation for being harsh and inhumane with high levels of employee burnout (Harjanti and Todani, 2019). Yet, despite the evidence in the data of staff being busy, working hard and working long hours, staff still get enjoyment. For example, in Site 1, the manager points out:

> [since I have started] staff turnover has gone down, loads. If anything, I can't get rid of them [smiles], they all want to stay. It's just getting the balance right, it's not too much about having a laugh and a joke whilst still getting the job done. (RES D)

It appears that whilst this may reflect the reality, forming social ties and relationships have become coping mechanisms for staff engaged within the activity system to modify and cope with the work in the working environment.

The working environment is significantly affected by problems which have been covered in 'Object' as part of the problem space, but it is worth noting again that problems drive problem solving behaviours. For

example, the evidence does suggest that lack of sufficient labour has created a strong narrative in the community for working together. As a Chef in Site 2 comments:

> Since we've been so understaffed, we've had to become more of a team, not single people. Where before, when there were more of us, we were just individual people. So, we've had to work round each other, work rotas out, make sure we're all happy with what we're doing (RES 7).

Effectively, the working environment produced social ties, in the same way that social ties also reciprocally produced the working environment. This recursive aspect of the hospitality activity system is explored as a potential foundation of innovative behaviour later in the thesis.

5.3.1.5 Staff Morale

It is also worth pointing out the lack of sufficient labour had an impact on the team in the longer term. For example, during an interview a waitress at Site 2 expresses concern, stating:

> …we've still yet to hit rock-bottom before someone…I don't think… head office just doesn't take us seriously at all. They really do not take us seriously. I don't know what we have to do to hit rock bottom for them to actually help… I don't know whether to laugh or cry! we are all going to end up having a breakdown together. Something drastic is going to happen here (RES 1).

Similarly, other employees demonstrate a sense of despair and lack of control. For example, even the Site 2 managers states: "On busy Saturdays, it's terrible! It is really bad. And that's what it's been like since I've started. We just cheer each other on, going 'come on' we can't stress or anything. That's it really." (RES 13)

It is worth noting that the Site 1 manager had inherited their site from a previous manager who disciplined staff for talking to customers. Social interaction with customers was minimised against a backdrop of cost cutting and service-for-profit. As Site 1 manager comments, 'the attitude they (her staff) had was to serve food and walk off… and…I think staff morale was quite bad when I got here". In contrast, her approach was "if they [the staff] want to have a chat with them [the customers], as long as they are not stood there chatting for half an hour and they can cut it off, its fine." (RES D). Employees at Site 1 all reported improvement in their working environment since the new Site manager arrived.

5.3.2 Summary

The comments above reflect the social milieu of each Site and in combination with the wider evidence from other interviews and observations it appears that staff are more integrated and social in Site 1 but in Site 2 there is less of a sense of staff community. This may be due to several factors. Site 1 is firmly placed geographically in a local community already, within walking distance of large recruitment pool. Whilst at Site 2, it is in a rural setting, isolated from a community and only accessible by road. There are twice the number

of staff at Site 2 compared with Site 1 naturally making staff community cohesion more complex. Site 2 has a much larger proportion of 'newer' staff and younger staff who may not have the social capital to provide support to build resilience at work. As already mentioned, Site 2 is difficult to access by staff leading to a wider pool of recruits from a more diverse and fragmented area. This may account for a greater predominance of staff inviting friends to work with them at Site 2 compared with Site 1, as this partly resolves issues of staff sharing the burden of travelling to and from work (as was the case in at least 7 of those interviewed at Site 2). At Site 2, due to high workloads and shortfall in recruitment, bringing in friends is both a lifestyle choice but also a coping mechanism or strategy to resolve the lack of staffing and therefore enable them to endure the environment with greater emotional support, more flexible working by sharing/swapping shifts with friends and provides a solution for the site managers regarding resourcing which potentially puts them in a better position to negotiate and influence shift managers. However, this has led to staff disaggregating into smaller groups who do not socialise with others outside their immediate social network whilst at work, thus the contradictory employee views in the data seen at Site 2.

5.3.3 Theoretical Comparisons

Staff churn and newcomers were more prevalent in Site 2 than Site 1, although both sites had more newcomers than old timers. it is widely recognised that new employees find joining organisations challenging as they "encounter uncertainties in their novel work surroundings" (Allen, 2006, quoted in Chen and Lin, 2015: 476). Chen and Lin (2015) investigate the relationship between 'newcomers' in the Taiwanese Hotel industry, the effectiveness of their socialisation through emotional bonding with peers, their attitudinal and behavioural adaptations, and the development of their self-esteem. They suggest that without effective socialisation, staff are more likely to become disengaged from the norms and culture of their organisation, show less commitment to their work and are more likely to leave, or have low self-esteem or job satisfaction.

A key paradigm that is used to investigate workplace relationships is Social Exchange Theory (SET) that claims, 'social relationships are based on the trust that gestures of goodwill will be reciprocated' (Chernyak-Hai and Rabenu, 2018: 458). According to Chernyaki Hai and Rebunu (2018) the theory stems from work by Blau (1964) and Homans (1958) that sets out how past activities and behaviours that are rewarded, are more likely to be repeated in the future.

A study by Aubke (2014) that uses Social Network Theory to look at hospitality businesses, suggests that social ties or networks create social capital, leverage power and influence and provide support (such as mental and physical). Similarly, a study by Oksanen et al. (2008) links social ties and social capital to general improvements in employee health. Another study by Bandiera et al. (2010: 418) suggests that "the interplay between social relations and worker behaviour has long been studied in the organisational behaviour and

sociology literatures". Their study researched whether friendship between workplace colleagues affected individual performance and the performance of the organisation based on a study of a Fruit Farm that employed seasonal casual workers at peak periods, similarly to Hospitality organisations. The research questions were:

> Does the presence of friends make work 'more enjoyable, generate contagious enthusiasm, or generate incentives to compete to be the best in the group? Or does it generate contagious malaise, or the establishment of low effort norms, that cause workers to be less productive in the presence of friends? (Bandiera et al., 2010: 418)

Their research concluded that "workers are on average significantly less productive when they work with friends who are less able than them and are significantly more productive when they work with friends who are more able than them" (Bandiera et al., 2010: 418). This may be down to a few factors, including the exchange or reciprocity of good will or peer pressure (Kandel and Lazear, 1992). This may account for the better performance of Site 1 versus Site 2 – where staff at Site 1 had a higher level of experience overall and were more friendly to each other than Site 2.

In another study, related to studying the development of innovative and creative behaviours, Huang et al. (2015) found that social ties enabled access to greater levels of heterogenous knowledge and therefore enhanced creativity in the workplace. Other studies that investigate the role of socialisation at work (Chen, 2015, 2017) point to how social ties improve self-esteem, self-efficacy, and innovative behaviours. For example, it is recognised that "during socialization, new workers learn what behaviours, perspectives, and values are appropriate and which ones are not" (Van Mannen and Schein, 1979 in Chen, 2015:471) and adjust to a specific role in an organization. Similarly, understanding one's role through job standardisation and following prescribed routines enables employees "to have confidence in their knowledge and skills in order to generate and implement ideas at work" (Newman et al., 2018:2), suggesting that social networks and social ties improve problem solving. It is interesting to note that Site 1 appeared to experience considerably less problems than Site 2. However, Site 2 was impacted by a new initiative called 'table service' which may have had a greater impact than other differences, explored later in this section.

5.3.4 'Community' Conclusions

Using Activity Theory reveals a complex problem space that drove employee behaviours that sought to resolve the arising tensions and contradictions of insufficient labour and investment in the site whilst reconciling difficult customer behaviours that reflected problems with service delivery. Shared practices were clearly demonstrated across the different disciplines of Bar, Floor and Kitchen and within the management teams – these included jumping in, multi-tasking, cutting corners and being busy. These

practices were more prevalent in Site 2 in response to a more challenging problem space. These signal potential development of collective capability emerging in response to the situation.

Social ties were formed as a coping mechanism to address failures in the service cycle but only worked to a point. In Site 2, the systemic lack of resources was beyond the community to resolve. As Engeström (1999: 32) puts it: "failures, disruptions and unexpected innovations" characterise activity systems, and the data suggests the extent of these increased as the activity system approached peak demand and, sometimes, beyond into chaos, particularly at Site 2. As the data become more aggregated and patterns emerged, Site 1 had a different community of practice to Site 2, in that Site 1 had a denser network of social bonds or ties and presented more cohesively as a team compared to Site 2, with Site 1 employees appearing better able to cope with the demands of the working environment.

5.4 Element 4: DIVISION OF LABOUR

5.4.1 Introduction

The division of labour sets out the allocation of tasks and roles within the activity system whilst acknowledging that asymmetric relationships exist, reflected in the power and status of individuals and groups.   The codes and categories that emerged from the data are show below in Figure 37. As shown, the element 'Division of Labour' is split into two key categories – 'Allocating work' and 'Leading'. These themes dominated much of the conversations with staff either implicitly or explicitly.

This section begins with identifying the main roles and tasks that are in the activity system which include the following Role Types:

1. Official – technically a prescribed 'job' e.g., 'Team leader'
2. Official – functionally prescribed by the situation e.g., 'Floaters'
3. Informal – Social – prescribed by the social situation e.g., 'Agony Aunt' or 'Mother'

The roles and tasks identified in Table 14 below are based on secondary data from the organisation related to officially designated job descriptions and roles and interview data. The roles are split between back-stage and front-stage roles. This is not an exhaustive list, nor does it attempt to break down every role into sub-tasks. Rather it identifies what respondents have explained, and what has been observed. Back-stage roles are usually in the kitchen, whilst front-stage are usually bar staff and waitresses, however certain staff 'jumped' between them depending on circumstances. For example, the management roles – mainly Site

Manager (and deputy) and Team Leaders will do both front and back-stage work if appropriate, during peak periods or for emergency staff cover.

Figure 37: Identified Codes and Categories for Division of Labour
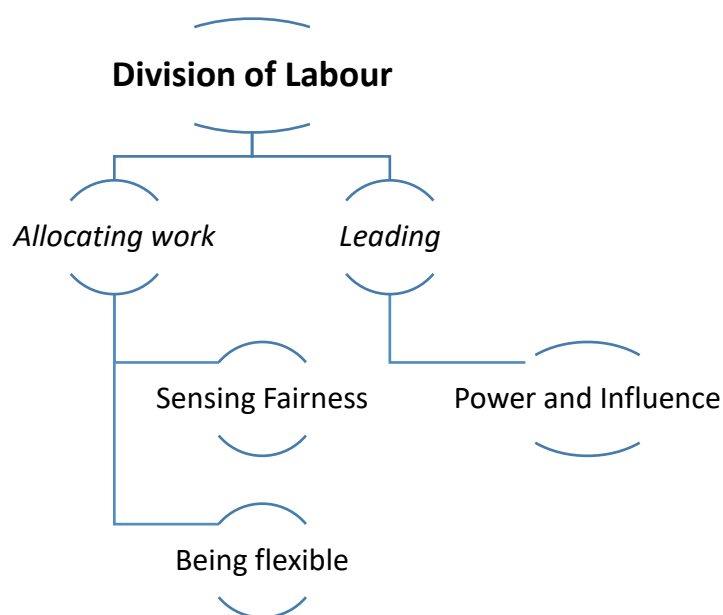
5.4.1.2 Allocating Work

Before describing the roles in more detail, it is worth noting that subjects were recruited to formal roles by the organisation, through a recruitment process supported centrally by Full House Ltd but driven by Site Managers. In an interview, a Senior Manager at Full House Ltd comments on the process:

> We don't interview anymore we audition…it is about recruiting behaviours and personalities not ability. So you can train anyone to pull a pint but you can't train anyone to sit and have a conversation or good social skills – well you can, you can grow and nurture, but if you looking for 'I need it tomorrow' – 'I need you to get behind that bar - you can't train that quickly so to speak, so we audition rather than interview (RES F).

Dependent on the day of the week, a wide variety of roles are required to operate the activity system at both sites. Friday, Saturday, and Sunday see all roles in operation if staff are available, or staff having to fulfil multiple roles. This could equate to circa 25 staff to operate Site 2 during the weekend with less during off-peak periods.

The role descriptors reflect the language of hospitality. For example, 'Food Runner' aptly describes the practice because at peak periods, staff are so busy that they are literally moving very quickly to keep up with the demand – not running, but clearly rushing. This was particularly noticeable at Site 2 because of the size and scale of the site. Based on the observation data from Site 2, particularly those at peak times

(Friday/Saturday/Sunday [OBS 1/4/8/11]), it took typically 25-30 seconds for a waitress to walk quickly and safely from one-side of the unit, to the other carrying plates of food whilst dodging customers and their children, assuming they were not stopped by customers with requests along the way. A large table of eight guests could take one person up to three minutes to deliver food – and for large tables, two food runners would be used to get food from the kitchen 'Pass' to table. Customers want to be served at the same time (on the same table), and want their food to be hot, so the efficiency of food running impacts on customer satisfaction considerably. For this reason, the 'event' of taking food from the pass to table is managed carefully and co-ordinated by the 'Expo' with the food runners usually timed to the minute at a given point. It is particularly complicated for very large celebratory customer groups where 3 or 4 staff maybe involved in bringing plates to table.

Table 14: Roles and tasks in the Activity System

Division of Labour	Staff Area / Role Type	Description
Food Runner	Floor staff / 2	Food runners take plates of food from the kitchen pass to the customer's table. This task is usually subsumed into the waiting staff's role or split out depending on demand.
Food Runner – Desserts	Floor staff / 2	Works in the kitchen focused on just making desserts and 'running' the desserts to the customer table.
Expo (Expediter)	Floor staff / 2	'Expo' co-ordinates between the kitchen and front of house (frontstage) quality checking plates of food at the "pass" before the food runners take them to the table. They check for options, choices, sauces etc. and decide the order the food is going to the table. In a fine dining restaurant, this would be managed by an Executive Chef. At a casual dining restaurant this responsibility is given to an experienced member from the front-stage staff. They also ensure check-backs happen, trigger table 'checks and preps', particularly when its busy. As a waitress states: "it goes in and just runs a lot smoother because there's one person making sure all the food's perfect. Say you're busy and you're trying to get a big ticket out and there's no expo - you could miss coleslaw, or they could run sweetcorn instead of peas and you've got to bring it all the way back. So, it's just, and it's just really important on a weekend because… everything is so much smoother." (RES 11).
Floater	Floor staff / 2	These are staff who can be floor, bar or kitchen staff depending on the peak loading at any given point. Many floaters are Managers/Assistant Manages because they have the training and experience to be flexible. A team leader at Site 2 comments: "there are a few people here who know every single position so you could put them on bar, or you could put them on expo or you could put them in the kitchen, so they are useful to have

Division of Labour	Staff Area / Role Type	Description
		because if you are not entirely sure where you are going to need them so you can put a couple of floaters on [shift] and they will go where they need to be.." (RES 8)
Preps and Checks	Floor staff / 2	During busy periods, particularly bank holiday weekends or special days (Mother's Day/ Father's Day) a person will be purely focused on table preparation. According to a team leader at Site someone on 'Preps and Checks' will: "prepare the tables, clean them and take the cutlery bucket over and then checkback with the table after the food has been taken and also help the desserts by also running them to the table or if there is loads of food to go, will grab a couple of plates and go out there with the food runner anyway." (RES 2). This task is usually subsumed into the waiting staff's role or split out depending on demand.
Table clearer	Floor staff/ 2	Staff purely devoted to clearing tables and cleaning them. This task is usually subsumed into the waiting staff's role or split out depending on demand. New staff are sometimes given this task at the beginning as part of their induction.
Waiter/ Waitress	Floor staff / 1	In Site 2, five were required to manage zones with 2-3 for Site 1. The front-of-house or 'Floor' is in theory split into zones and each waiter/waitress is responsible for that zone which includes, according to a barman at Site 1: "taking orders, running the food, checking on the tables, prepping the tables with cutlery, clearing the tables away, making sure the customers are happy" (RES E).
Bar Staff	Bar Staff / 1	Usually, on a weekend shift, at least 3 are required behind the bar in Site 2 responsible to deliver drink orders for customers, whether they have queued at the bar or via table service orders (RES11).
Kitchen Manager	Kitchen Staff / 1	Equivalent to the team leader front-of-house, this person.
Pot washer	Kitchen staff / 2	This is usually covered by a kitchen team member but when the line gets very busy at peak periods, a member of the floor staff may be called into the kitchen to do this.
Starters	Kitchen staff / 2	Someone in the kitchen is given the specific task just to create the starters for meals (RES 11). This role is subsumed into other roles and when required.
'On the line'	Kitchen staff / 2	Someone in the kitchen who just plates up food (assembles each element of the meal on the plate) ready for the Expo to co-ordinate with food runners" (RES 11).

This role is subsumed into other roles and when required. |

Division of Labour	Staff Area / Role Type	Description
'Chef'	Kitchen staff / 1	This person works behind the cooking line – i.e., behind the food hotplate line and in the cooking area. They usually take control of cooking meat and fish dishes and co-ordinating the rest of the team to ensure each food element is cooked to order at the right time to be plated up. The role of 'Chef' has posed recruitment problems for both sites. For example, in Site 2 a team leader highlights that they only have 4 of the 8 possible Chefs employed (RES 1) due to recruitment problems. The role is described as 'tough', kitchen staff as 'very hard working' where they 'sweat their arses off' (RES 1). A senior manager echoes this by describing recruitment as 'tough' saying "I have never known it, in 20 years of working the trade, where getting kitchen staff is becoming increasing difficult." (RES F). But they also acknowledge that they have "deskilled the business so they are not really Chefs…50% if it is automated…[and]… The Chefs that were chefs don't really see themselves as chefs so don't want to be chefs in our business. We don't put them through Cheffing qualifications we train them to do a job." (RES F)
Supervisor	Management / 2	Used colloquially as a synonym for 'Team Leader' (see next entry).
Team Leader	Management / 1	The role of team leader covers a variety of different elements according to a Team Leader at Site 2: "I manage the shifts, so I make sure that everyone is doing their role. I'm also in charge of dealing with complaints, and we get a lot of them! The younger ones get scared of it. So, complaints from the floor or emails and we have to monitor the emails every morning. Cashing up – that's making sure all the tills are correct [i.e., that the value of goods paid for with cash by customers equates to the value of cash in the till]. Training new staff - you used to get a sheet – but I haven't trained anyone recently here. Checking the hygiene standards – making sure everything is defrosted for the next day hygiene wise" (RES 14).
Host	Floor staff / 2	This person welcomes and seats customers as they arrive, co-ordinating seating zones with the waiting staff who take customer orders. This role was part of a Table Service initiative (detailed later during data collection at Site 2) but due to cuts in labour budgets, was unable to be resourced.
Assistant / Deputy Manager	Management / 1	This person is the deputy for the site manager but will also provide cover for other roles as and when needed on the site.
General Manager	Kitchen / 1	Oversees the kitchen working with the Kitchen Manager making sure everyone is doing what they are supposed to, "manage the stocks, the cash, the staff, general day to day running of the business" (RES D).

Division of Labour	Staff Area / Role Type	Description
		Manages stock and receives food deliveries, maintains equipment, manages the kitchen team shift rota, works behind the line (of cooking equipment/pass) usually on the Grill. Both Site 1 and Site 2 had problems with recruiting or training up staff to this role
Site Manager	Management / 1	Each site has one site manager who is responsible for the performance of the entire site, overseeing the co-ordination between the frontstage and backstage activities with their Deputy and General Kitchen Manager whilst liaising with the Area Manager and Business Development Manager (BDM). Their role is also to flag issues with the site itself, such as maintenance issues and work with the local community. For example, in Site 2, there were ongoing problems with the roof (leaking), décor (painting) outside decking area (cleaning and fixing), upkeep of the play area (health and safety), carparking security (used for anti-social activity on occasion). This role is dealt with in more detail in a later section.
Area Manager	Management / 1	This person oversees a geographical territory, with potentially 30+ sites in their portfolio. Their role is to monitor the key performance indicators of Full House Ltd across sites.
Duty Manager	Management / 2	The Duty Manager is responsible for issues such as governance of cash (and will sign-off cash received at the end of the night after tills have been cashed up). Sometimes this role is subsumed in other management roles.
BDM	Management / 1	The Business Development Manager (BDM) is responsible for developing the site through growth initiatives, marketing, setting the vision etc. in conjunction with the site manager, accessing resources (Capital Expenditure - CapEx) to develop the site (including funding refurbishments, adding new services etc etc.,).
Customers	Customers / 3	Whilst it might seem odd adding 'Customers' as a role or task in this table, it is widely recognised that customers have a job to do (Osterwalder et al., 2014) and co-create their experience with service staff (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). Customers must arrive and walk to a table, queue for, order and eat their food, use the facilities (outside and inside), pay, and look after/interact with their family and friends to ensure they enjoy their experience, and provide feedback to staff. Observations of customers across both sites identified core groups that included family and extended families / Couples / Singles / Parties / Ladies / Groups / Societies (organised groups such as 'the Badminton Club', the Medieval Re-enactment Club) / Retirees. 'Regulars' were also identified. For example, a waitress at Site 1 comments: "we've got a little old lady that comes in, sweet she is, her and her husband, and all they have is chicken wings and a portion of chips between them and every week they come in and have the

Division of Labour	Staff Area / Role Type	Description
		same thing." (RES C). A waiter at the same site comments on how they get more regulars during the week, but at the weekend there is far greater range of people who have travelled from further afield. Whilst at Site 2, a special designated area has been signposted for dog lovers away from the main area.
Mystery Guest	External / 1	An external independent agent who visits the site once per month at a random time and date to measure the site on various agreed performance indicators. They do not announce who they are to staff, and report back findings to the Servicetime Corporation. The Area Manager for Full House Ltd is provided with performance reports for all their sites for their area.
Head Office / The Director	Management / 1	This role or task is identified but not expanded based on responses in interviews. 'Head Office' or 'the Director' is a general construct referred to when employees attempt to outline issues that are strategic, prescribed, mandatory, top-down or relate to the design of the brand.
Agony Aunt / Mother	Staff / 3	Someone employees go to informally for help and support, to share their problems whether work related or personal.
Friend and/or partner	Staff / 3	Many staff had very strong relationships with other members of the team either as close family, or as friends or as partners (boyfriend, girlfriend, wife, husband etc.). Social ties were clearly evident in Site 1, but less so in Site 2, albeit in fragmented groups.

5.4.1.3 Workload

Based on the interview data with team leaders and managers (RES 1/2/8/13/14 & RES D/F/J), identifying workloads for shift rotas is a judgement call made by the site management team. Much depends on whether the demand materialises and the available monthly labour budget as to what roles are required. The site's 'Day Diary', a physical A4 handwritten diary that is kept by the site management team, documents what happens each day which enables the Site Manager to look back at previous years to help them calculate the shift's labour allowances and so put a shift rota together.

The shift rota is a significant bona contention for staff as it identifies, for those on zero-hour contracts such as casual workers, whether they are required to work or not, at what times and on what days and thus impacts on their income. Permanent staff (PT or FT) will expect continuity and may have agreed regular days and times with the site manager, however due to demand fluctuations and sickness cover, this may not always be possible. In Site 1 there were less fluctuations and less illness cover, resulting in greater continuity of shift patterns for staff. In Site 2, there were significant fluctuations and significant staff sickness which

snowballed during the second phase of interview data collection (RES 1/2/4/9/13/14) exacerbating the problems on site (RES .

Some of the management team in Site 1 and Site 2 commented on an evolving process of successive staffing cuts that was highly challenging. For example, an experienced Team Leader at Site 2 who has worked at Servicetime Corporation for many years comments:

> It used to be that you had enough staff for each shift… [but now] … you are still doing the same job for… the same money but you are having to do it with less staff. Because they cut the budgets, so yeah, you get a wage budget of so much % and you must fit everyone in that so kitchen, floor and bar and [play bar] n in that. You can't go over, some people do, but you really can't go over (RES 9).

5.4.1.4 Being Flexible

Whilst there were clearly defined roles and functional tasks that need to be completed in each shift, managers have the option to flex who is responsible for what area or task depending on the skills of the shift workers. Similarly, based on interview data, staff are aware that they may be asked to do tasks that are outside of their normal working duties or are prepared to do whatever is asked because they built up skills in all areas (Bar, Floor and Kitchen), enabling them to be flexible. For example, at Site 1, an experienced waitress describes her role as follows: "As you know I do anything really, you know my job role, well I don't really got one. I'll do whatever I feel is needed to be done." (RES C). Similarly, another waitress at Site 2 during a quiet evening shift state: "I've either been on the bar or helping clear the floor. I think it benefits everyone if you're a bit of an all-rounder" (RES 6). The idea of flexibility is mirrored in comments from managers and team leaders. The manager at Site 1 states: "[John] is a supervisor, and he is also one of the line chefs as well but has had previous experience out front, so it has been quite good because I've got a manager in the kitchen who can see things from both sides which is very handy" (RES D). Similarly, in the kitchen in Site 1, one of the Chefs talks about the benefits of flexibility amongst the kitchen team but there is also a hierarchy: "We all sort of take it in turns [to be Lead Chef]. Then there is [Tim], the kitchen manager, who whenever he is on, he is on the grill" (RES E). Another experienced team leader at Site 2 explains:

> …if you didn't know everything you couldn't work here. So, let's say if there was two people on, you needed to be able to make a dessert for me, you needed to jump off the bar if there were no customers and come help me make a dessert. So, the people who have been here for a while have just picked it up….and if you know all of the positions then you are more likely to get more hours (RES 2).

Another waitress at Site 1 also explains her understanding of flexibility; "I pretty much do everything, bar work, waitressing, kitchens and puds, but I won't do cooking!" (RES B). The idea of flexibility manifests in many ways within the Hospitality working environment. Firstly, through the concept of multi-tasking and building a workforce that is flexible and skilled enabling management to better resource peaks and troughs

in demand. As a senior managers states:

> Working both front and back-stage… that happens and that's actually the solution. That is the silver bullet. And that is what I keep telling my boss but that requires investment. It requires a lengthier training period and retraining of team members (RES F).

Flexibility is also recognised in terms of the individual and their fit to a specific site. When legacy sites are acquired, it can take months or even years before the site is fully operational as a branded Full House Ltd. Chefs are expected to work creatively with whatever tools at hand to deliver the brand's service cycle as best they can, and subsequently, when investment permits for upgrading, the kitchen is repurposed. In these evolving situations, as a senior managers states:

> "we need them [Chefs] to flex, but the frustrating thing is that in some places we retrofit a template kitchen but they [the chef] still revert back to the old way of doing it despite giving them the tools to do the job." (RES F).

Chefs are empowered to be creative but then subsequently be process driven which requires a different set of skills.

5.4.1.5 Sensing Fairness

Based on interview data, it was apparent that the work ethic was generally valued very highly amongst both Site 1 and Site 2 Staff, with some employees occasionally singling out individuals who did not do their fair share of work whilst on shift. For example, a waitress at Site 2 comments on their team leaders:

> We're like, where have they gone? We don't have a clue. They leave us. Me and [Jane], I personally don't think we get paid enough. We do a lot more than other people do but they get paid more than us because they're team leaders. They leave me and [Jane] to do it all (RES 3).

Employees are very aware of the hours they work, particularly casual workers who are on zero-hour contracts. The afternoon shift pattern is generally 12-5.00pm or 12-6.00pm, and then evenings tended to be 5-10pm or 6pm-close. A team leader at Site 2 explains how she creates the shift rota:

> I try to rota people to where they want to be and where they feel most comfortable, but if say someone comes in and says, I don't feel that great today, can I just go on the bar I'll say 'ok' then you can go on the bar as long as I can cover the shift, so there is room for manoeuvre. We have 'floaters' who can swap so if they say I don't want to speak to people today, I'll say well you can just clear plates today - so it changes it every day (RES 2) .

Occasionally cover managers, who may not know the site staff, create shift rotas that ignore local needs and requirements which can upset staff considerably, or show no flexibility because they have no social relationships with those on shift.

Another staff member comments on how, as shifts swap over (between 5-6pm) if staff are late, it can create cover problems: "… if they are 10 mins late then ok, but if they are half an hour later, then they don't get paid. To them it's just half an hour, but if someone stops at 5 and the next person is half an hour late then there's a problem and someone has to cover, which isn't fair" (RES 14). Breaks are also a contentious issue. For example, a waitress at Site 2 comments:" if we can't fit in everyone to have breaks it's not fair…if you have one and other people don't" (RES 6).

Secondly, in terms of sharing workload. At Site 2 there were clearly significant resourcing problems that led to long hours that drove the requirement for role flexibility – the usual division of labour was not operational because there were not enough people to do all the roles individually. The situation forced the need for flexibility in staff roles and sharing practice amongst team members (as stated in earlier elements of the framework. For example, in Site 2, cost-cutting on labour led to a key role not being resource appropriately:

> We are meant to have a host between 12 and 3, and 5 and 8 every day. We can't do that. But then they're expecting the host to clear tables as well. But when you've got that host stand there [points to a physical hosting lectern], people just walk past it. So, someone has to be there all the time… you can't have that person cleaning up tables as well (RES1).

The host role co-ordinated the allocation of tables to zones, and the table zones required customers to be evenly distributed across them, to ensure the allocated waiting staff have equal workloads, but also that waiting staff knew when customers needed to order and thus manage the service cycle correctly.

Lack of staff also occurred due to sickness absence but as a waitress at Site 1 comments: "There's no point moaning and groaning like, the situation is that nobody's come in and you've just got to get on with it" (RES C). Similarly, a team leader at Site 2 comments: "We've had 8 chefs behind the line before, but at the moment, we've got 3 or 4 chefs and they're having to do all of everything, so it's pretty much all day every day there's never any time to do nothing" (RES 1). The issue of workload is reflected in other staff comments, for example the site managers at Site 2 states:

> We were all struggling this weekend. Because obviously there wasn't enough staff either and it got busy especially when the weather was nice as they [customers] all want to go in the garden (RES 13).

Many staff that their treatment by customers was also unfair. For example, one employee at Site 2 makes the remark:

I'm human, I'm getting paid minimum wage and I'm trying to do my job... and the way they speak to you is just absolutely appalling and they think they can because the customer always right and the customer's not always right (RES1).

Overall, the consensus appeared to be that workloads were excessive, and unachievable at peak points, but more importantly, that management were seen to be taking their fair share as much as the work was spread equally amongst the team. Staff appeared to me more critical of other staff who didn't shoulder their fair share than they were of management.

5.4.1.6 Leading

During interviews, many staff commented on the impact that Site Managers make on the performance of both sites. Senior managers similarly commented that a poor match between the manager and the site led to poor performance (RES 13 & RES D/E/F). When Senior Managers talked about matching, this related to the site manager and their match to the team, the customers and the physical location and characteristics of the site itself. For example, one senior manager described how in one pub that regularly had problems with aggressive customer behaviour in the bar, he removed a site manager because the individual was to brusque, physically imposing, and confrontational becoming a target behind the bar. Instead, another manager was put in place who had much less of a presence, and this diffused the situation instantly (RES F). Other employees comment on the different ways managers manage sites:

> ...each manager works different... They try to make it so everywhere works the same, but that's not what happens, every manager works in a different way, they have their own style of working and the way they do it (RES 9).

In the same way, a senior manager comments on the importance of matching the skills and attributes of the site manager to the site: "You know we have to be careful, because some of our managers are plate carriers and some are natural barman" (RES F). The term "Plate carriers" refers to individuals who are reliable rule followers, consistent and do the "heavy lifting" but lack creativity (RES F). Some sites require creativity, particularly legacy sites, because they are by their nature, unable to fit the brand and service cycle, so are more complex and require a slightly different skill set compared to those that are purpose built.

The impact of good leadership through the site manager can be seen in the interview comments from employees. Site Managers act as role models for work behaviours, as a waiter comments from Site 1: "when I first started, they [the managers] just used to sit in the office and smoke fags" (RES A). Others comment on the differences they see in leadership. For example, at Site 1, a manager left to be replaced by another one with a waiter commenting: "it's not until you get a good manager that you realise just how sh*t they were...[and]... "it's great to have a manager who wants to do something with the pub instead of just running it..." (RES B). These judgements on management at Site 1 were shared by other staff. For example,

commenting on a previous manager, a waitress at Site 1 states: "she's left now, she was hopeless. She would do nothing. And you've got to work with this person, and you're doing everything, and she is just stood there" (RES C). Similarly, another waitress at the same site comments:

> Like the manager before, everybody wanted to leave. We went down to six staff at one point. Looking back, she was a b*tch. Nothing was her fault; it was always the staff. She went on leave and decided not to come back which was what she had done before, and we threw a big party (RES B).

But the new manager at Site 1 is making a very different impression: "She tells us what to do and we do what she says. We have done a lot better since she came here" (RES B). Another waitress at Site 1 describes the new manager as follows:

> She's not a 'you do this, you do that manager', she does it in way that is personal and doesn't make you feel, it's hard to explain really. She's not one of these strict bosses, you know, it's amazing how much of an impact she had made (RES C).

The churn of site managers is also interesting to note at Site 1 as a waitress explains in an interview: I've been through two managers, [the new manager] is my third, I've been through two assistant managers so [Emily] is my third, and I went through three supervisors as well" (RES A). AS RES 9 comments:

> We've got four managers off… at the minute, all off with stress or work-related stress… it should send alarm bells when you've got four managers off with the same kind of thing at the same time. Surely, they should have someone coming in looking at why this is happening.

Dissatisfaction with management is also evident in the interview data for Site 2. For example, a team leader at Site 2 has serious reservations about their site manager: "I don't think he [site manager] cares. He doesn't care about the pub" (RES 1). Another waitress at Site 2 comments on the mood of her managers and the impact this has: "They have very good days, and there can be very, very bad days. If you catch him on a bad day, it just brings the whole mood down for everyone. But when he's happy, it's fine" (RES 5). Based on observation data (OBS G/6/7) Site Managers live on site, usually upstairs above the pub and occasionally, if there is a problem, may be asked to support the team despite it being a non-working day for them. But recently, due to leave, managers have not been there to provide cover. As a team leader at Site 2 mentions:

> We normally have two other managers upstairs who could always come down and help but they couldn't, and it was half term, because they had gone away for half term it meant they couldn't come down and help us whenever we needed it and [we] really suffered - the complaints got really bad again then (RES 2).

Employees felt they were not supported by their managers at Site 2. A team leader outlines an example:

> I'm like 'there's a table, they're [customers] shouting at us to our faces, saying they want to speak to the manager, and we're not good enough because we're only team leaders' and [the manager] is like 'I don't care. Deal with it, sort it out, I'm not coming out the kitchen (RES 1).

Towards the end of the data capture period, two managers left Site 2 to be replaced by a new site manager. The immediate impact can be seen in comments from two of the staff. The first is an experienced waitress who talks about how 'strict' it has become due to the new site manager implementing a professional closedown list stating: "it made me feel as if I was doing an actual job" (RES 14). Similarly, a team leader comments: "Since [New Managers Name]'s come in, she's like the mum of the group. She's showing us more about how to progress. There was no progression with [the old manager] whatsoever" (RES 1).

Given the importance placed on leadership by Full House Ltd, staff churn within the management team is clearly having an impact on staff attitudes towards their employer. Based on both the observation and interview data, in Site 2 there were 3 different site managers employed, with a significant amount of cover management put place at various points due to manager sickness absence. Whilst the same manager was at Site 1 for the duration of the data collection, they left shortly afterwards.

5.4.1.7 Power and Influence

As in other organisations, there were asymmetric structures set up to provide a chain of command. In the case of Full House Ltd, based on secondary data of organisational structures and interviews with staff, the hierarchy consisted of the Business Development Manager and Regional Manager to whom the site manager reported, then team leaders and supervisors through to the delivery teams for Bar, Floor and Kitchen. Whilst the ostensive structure was in place, in practice it didn't always operate effectively. For example, a new team leader at Site 2 comments:

> I'm a team leader on paper, they say but from what I've seen the team leaders that are already here very much have the run of the way, so to speak. They don't share the control. As team leader you're meant to run the shifts, but I find myself asking [permission] - can I go on my break? It isn't the dynamic that it [the role] should have (RES 8).

Another team leader comments on how the organisation has become more bureaucratic:

> ...back then you kind of had the freedom to manage your pub, but now it's more 'you have to do this' you have to do that, it's all part of a tick box thing now (RES 9)

Based on interview data, it was apparent that there were different styles of management between the site

managers themselves. By coincidence, the Site 1 manager moved to Site 2 temporarily and had since moved on to another site sometime before Site 2 was investigated by the Researcher. So, some Site 2 staff had experienced both Site 1 and Site 2 managers and could compare them:

> [Site 1 manager] was more about the staff… giving incentives, and praising them, and saying thank you, whereas [the Site 2 manager], you get nothing. You don't even get a thank you, which makes it really hard to do your job [RES 1].

Another member of staff comments about the Site 2 Manager:

> I don't think he cares. He doesn't care about the pub. I've worked here with 3 different managers, and at the moment, it's being run into the ground majorly. I've tried to ask to speak to someone about it but at the moment, it's… because I've worked for different managers [RES 2].

Generally, there was a greater sense of 'us and them' – for example, a more experienced waitress comments: "This place could work a lot better if [Servicetime Corporation] was to listen" (RES 10). Another member of staff laments: "They just think money, how are you going to make money if you've got no staff?" (RES 1).

A senior manager takes a slightly different perspective – a recent initiative has focused on empowerment which he believes "has enhanced the business full stop - it's not just 'my manager said this, my manager said that' (RES F). Another manager also similarly comments:

> Behaviour breeds behaviour, we all know that! It's true, I mean I go into businesses of mine with managers that have quite strong personalities and I talk their team members and it becomes apparent that they have been brainwashed into being like them – I guess that is where I come in to nudge them, and to build the right teams around them, not just clone twenty of them (RES J)

5.4.2 Summary

Full House Ltd have pursued three different strategies to implementing roles. Firstly, they have followed the industry in identifying key roles such as Bar, Floor and Kitchen staff. Secondly, they have identified specialised tasks that are disaggregated from the more complex role, routine or procedure (such as 'food running' or 'preps and checks') whilst thirdly simultaneously pursuing an agenda that requires staff to multi-task across disciplines (bar, floor, and kitchen). The last two approaches – specialisation through deskilling and disciplinary flexibility enable Full House Ltd to optimise labour at any given point to deliver the brand's service cycle.

During such a cycle (for example, a busy day such as a Saturday), a site may be exposed to varying peaks and troughs in demand, with lunchtimes and evening meals being peaks, and early morning and mid-afternoon

being troughs. As demand increases, more specialised labour is required as the scale of demand can only be achieved through task efficiency – or specialisation. For example, table churn requires one person to clear tables in a busy restaurant, but at low peak periods, that same person can also run food, take orders and take payments – thus flexibility is also important. The situation that the team are trying to avoid is where at peak times, as demand outstrips the efficiency of the process to deliver it, queue times and waiting times start to increase.

The skill of the management team is to sense this situation in advance. If not, the situation results in an increase in customer complaints (long wait times), increased rework (replacing plates of food due to reduced kitchen service quality under pressure from the floor to serve quickly), adding additional tasks to manage and resource, thus reducing available labour to deliver the service. This demand/production tension can quickly spiral into chaos.

Interview data (for example RES G/H) at Site 2 suggests that whilst they are recognising the spiralling situation, their system is designed to continue to accept new orders when the team lacks the resources to deliver them because they are targeted on performance – income generation and profit. In these situations, one might expect that customers decide not to place orders given long wait times, but despite being warned, because of the highly discounted promotions offered and the commitment already made to travel to the site, they become more tolerant of longer wait times balancing cost against inconvenience, and instead place orders thus, the system continues to spiral. In terms of the floor and Bar, it is at this point where they move into chaos, and the observation data (RES 2/3/6/11/13 & RES A/C/E) demonstrates how specialisation reverts to multi-tasking across roles as a reactive measure to customer complaints.

5.4.3 Theoretical Comparisons

Regarding the role and power of Leaders, Schucker et al. (2018: 177) identify a link between leadership and innovation. Their research study initially defines service innovation behaviour as "an active behaviour where employees take the initiative to improve existing, and develop new, products, processes and markets or to deliver organizational innovations and quality assurance". Their study then links innovation behaviour with leaders who demonstrate 'Authentic Leadership' (AL). AL provides followers with psychological safety and support so that "followers feel free to take risks...and encourages employees to voice unusual ideas or freely express any opinion without fear" (Schucker et al., 2018: 781). Their study describes an 'Authentic Leader' as someone who can positively foster an increase in 'followers' self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience' (Schucker et al., 2018: 779) and may lead to followers showing greater discretionary behaviour in suggesting innovative ideas.

Alzyoud et al. (2017) looked at the issue of psychological safety as an antecedent of innovative behaviour in the hospitality industry. Given that doing new things involves a degree of risk and uncertainty (Kark and Carmeli, 2009), the study by Alzyoud et al. (2017) suggests that the degree to which employees think their actions are perceived either positively or negatively, impacts on their behaviours such as "speaking up, asking questions, providing feedback, or suggesting new ideas" (Alzyoud et al., 2017:3). Their study proposes a conceptual model that includes a range of factors that drive innovative behaviour including management support, strong social ties with co-workers, employee perception of autonomy, expectation of their role to be creative, their personality traits and a challenging (but not overwhelming) working environment. (Alzyoud, 2017: 16). Based on observations and interview data, the concept of authentic leadership was more apparent in Site 1 than in Site 2. Staff descriptions of their working environment, including treatment both by management and customers clearly pointed to a greater degree of psychological safety in Site 1 than in Site 2.

5.4.4 'Division of Labour' Conclusions

Activity Theory has surfaced several factors related to the working environment including workload planning, staff's sense of fairness, issues of asymmetry and the role of leadership. In both sites, the issue of role flexibility driven by the need to be productive at peak demand points was apparent - at Site 1, the development of a flexible capability was supported by more visible leadership and more formal training, whilst at Site 2 staff were given significantly less support in this respect. Instead, Site 2 employees appeared to rely more on social ties and informal learning as a coping mechanism, but overall, the Site 2 team presented as less socially cohesive which may account for why many staff struggled to cope with the challenging situation. Activity Theory has revealed that staff have attempted to modify their roles, as an adaptive response, to become more flexible in the face of a challenging activity system, and this in turn, reflects an informal practice-based innovation evident in both sites.

5.5 Element 5: RULES

5.5.1 Introduction

According to activity theory, the 'rules' consist of the 'norms, conventions and customs that regulate the actions and interactions within the community' (Nicolini, 2012:110). The data provides evidence to support elements of these. The codes and categories that emerged from the data are shown in Figure 38 below.

5.5.1.1 Doing it Our Way

Based on secondary data provided by RES F and interviews with Senior Management (RES 13 & RES D/F/J), Full House Ltd has a clearly identified service cycle i.e., a template for what the brand is, its values, and its performance in all aspects, but as mentioned previously these 'rules' are guides which are flexed according to the type of site and its situation. Rules were followed or not depending on the site, the manager, the employee or the customer. For example, as identified in the element 'Object' customer misbehaviour was a feature of the activity system. But similarly, employees also 'mis-behaved' by being late, not wearing their uniform, or even stealing from their employer (RES 1 & RES D). Evidence suggests both rule following and rule breaking occurred at all levels of employees.

Figure 38: Identified Codes and Categories for Rules

Rules

Category A:
Doing it our way

Rules For Employees

Rules For Customers
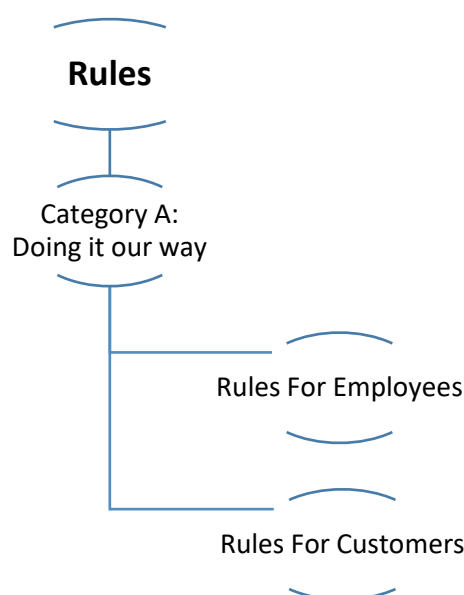
5.5.1.2 For Employees

During the period of data collection across the two sites, there was change in the operation of Full House Ltd from Site 1 to Site 2, in part driven by external legislation, but also in terms of tighter controls on budgets. A team leader at Site 2 reflects:

> So back then [a few years ago] you kind of had the freedom to manage your pub, but now it's more 'you have to do this' and 'you have to do that', it's all part of a tick box thing now. You can't do anything unless you tick that box…so you can't breathe unless it's noted on a bit of paper. So, it's become more difficult because you have to do more, not that we didn't back then, but back then there was more leeway but now you've got like deadlines and stuff (RES 9)

Based on interview data with staff, budget reductions lead, in some cases, to managers delaying salary payments to balance overspend months against underspend months. For example, overspend in Month 1,

would be then transferred into month 2. This practice, whilst meeting organisation targets, resulted in some staff reporting that they were not getting paid on time regularly in both sites. Whilst some managers appeared to follow the rules, others took a different stance. For example, the new manager in Site 2 was described by one of the team leaders as: "…not by the book, but she knows what she's doing". (RES 1)

There is some interview evidence that different managers interpreted and implemented the guidance differently or just failed to implement it all. For example, the manager in Site 1 (RES D) implemented tick sheets for 'closes' i.e., a list of tasks that needed to be completed before the team closed the Site 1 at the end of the evening. This was part of the brand standard. At Site 2, the Site Manager did not operate these, and it wasn't until the manager left, that the replacement manager put these in place again (RES 14). However, it was also observed that during weekdays (Monday to Thursday) it was normal for demand to drop significantly after 9.00pm in both sites, and both site managers would ask staff to start the 'close down' routines earlier than the standard ruling would suggest on these days to enable staff to leave early (OBS G/I & OBS 2/3/7/8).

Breaks during shifts, including days-off, are driven by mandatory employment legislation, but it was apparent across both sites that sometimes staff did not receive breaks. Whilst some staff did not mind this (as they weren't paid for breaks and would rather get paid for the extra time working), others felt this was unfair at peak periods (RES 1).

Practices around work allocation, roles, rotas, and other methods of work allocation have already been dealt with, but these are important customs and practices within the employee subject group. In Site 2, due to the resourcing issues, it appears from the interview data that high workloads became the norm or were 'normalised'. For example, a team leader in Site 2 states; "I'm running around like a headless chicken … and that's just a normal Sunday" (RES 1).

Similarly, the practices around formal and informal training has already been covered in earlier sections, but it is worth noting that Full House Ltd routinely changed the menu as the season changed and to reflect changes in food fashions. Major menu changes were made every six months (RES A) and it is traditional for the site teams to be invited to a 'cook off' as a senior manager states:

> We have introduced this approach over the last three menu changes and made it a brand standard…there has always been a 'cook-off' – so you get the team in to try the food – but it's a huge amount more time, energy, focus, cost actually, to do that now, but the output as a result is a significantly improved (RES F).

However, due to the cost of this practice, these didn't always happen. For example, a team leader at Site 2 recalls:

> I remember the menu changing because I had to put all the menus out. That went into the Chefs, and they were like 'when are we having a cook off?' and they [the managers] went 'we're not'. They literally had to bodge everything that was going out for a week until they learnt the menu themselves. There was no cook-off (RES 1).

Another area of custom and practice observed was the use of more extreme language. Many staff used swear words in their descriptions of what was going on at their places of work related to other staff and customer behaviours. For example, phrases such as "deep end" (RES 7), "hell for leather" (RES F), "feel like sh*t" (RES A), plus other expletives colour the language of staff at all levels.

Similarly, observations and interview comments from staff suggest that at both sites there were extremes of emotion, expression, and behaviour – for example a waitress comments on staff behaviour generally: "There is the odd tantrum here and there, but I think that's just normal in this line of work" (RES 6). The word 'tantrum' related in this example to an instance of an employee using threatening behaviour to another member of staff.   Customers were sometimes aggressive as observed by the Researcher, but significantly more so at Site 2, and occasionally behaviour led to calls to the Police at both sites because of unruly customer behaviours (for example OBS 14 & RES 9/10).

Other custom and practices included the use of the bar as an interim staging point for dirty glass collection before being taken to the rear glass wash area at both Site 1 and Site 2 (OBS D/E & 2/5). In their interview, the manager at Site 2 (RES 13) disliked this practice as it was in their view unsightly for customers who were queuing for orders at the bar, (whilst the team leaders continued the practice because it was the quickest method given the level of demand, lack of labour and met the rate of turnover required for clean glasses demanded by the Bar staff). The same manager, in their interview, stated how they insisted on the consistent wearing of supplied uniforms that include a 'pinny' and trouser set contrary to previous management practice where, as the Chef at Site 1 pointed out, 'they [the staff] got away with it' (RES E).

Based on observation data, it was normal for staff to be allowed to have a soft drink after the end of a shift, or during the 'close', pay for a drink from the bar once customers have left. But according to interview data, this rule was at the discretion of the site manager. For example, at Site 1, the previous manager had 'lost' a significant amount of drinks stock and the new manager (RES D) temporarily made it a 'dry house' and banned eating on the premise. However, after a short period the rule was relaxed and "sometimes [the new manager] put drinks through on 'staff' [staff expense on the till]" (RES E) if a team member had worked particularly hard that shift.

5.5.1.3 For Customers

Unsurprisingly, the observations of customers (all observations) identified an event commonly referred to as 'eating out' (Fox, 2003) and the related social expectations and norms related to it (Hawkins et al., 2018). Families tended to follow an expected process, such as sitting at a table (and not sharing it with others), ordering food and consuming it in a sequence, paying for it, and interacting socially during the process in line with socially expected norms and behaviours. But there was a difference between Site 1 and Site 2.

Data has already been presented regarding some of the observed behaviours of customers at both Site 1 and Site 2, particularly related to complaining behaviour and misbehaviour. It was clearly normal for young families to allow their kids to use the restaurant as a playground (for example OBS 5/13). The use of TV booths, brightly coloured decoration, slot machines, games areas, free supply of paper and colouring pencils and free balloons and sweets (as a parting gift for younger children), added to the fun atmosphere and excited behaviours observed. As mentioned previously, the impact of the Play Barn was significant on the customer profile of Site 2. It drew a skewed demographic of younger families from a wider catchment. As a waitress points out in an interview at Site 2:

> It's a nice area to be in. There is a lot of well-off people, but the [Play Barn] seems to draw out all the bad people…you get people who are not even from this area… They say, 'why can't you be like Miller and Carter, they don't do this at Miller and Carter?' (RES 2).

In addition, queuing and queue behaviour was observed at both sites, but more so at Site 2 due to the size and scale of the site, but also because there were greater levels of service failure (for example OBS 1/10 & OBS D). From the observation data, it appears that sometimes queuing appeared to be a free for all, mainly around the bar in the evening, whilst at other times, people naturally queued to the left of the tills to order food, mainly during day or early evening for meals.

In Site 1, where table service was not in operation and customers had to pay in advance for their meals, it was common to find one customer going to the till to order, then having to shout across the restaurant to their group if something needed to be changed, or options they were not aware of had not been considered fully (for example OBS A/B). Customers regularly used a combination of shouting, waving and sign language to get their message across when ordering food or drinks at the till, particularly at Site 2 because it was busier and nosier so difficult to be heard or seen (for example OBS 1).

Based on observations at both sites, it was apparent that new customers were not sure what to do when entering –either going to a table first and ordering at the till or going to the till first and then finding a table or go to a table assuming table service was in operation and ordering from waiting staff. Staff universally commented on this confusion across both sites. Due to issues at Site 2 with the implementation of table

service (covered later), there was an inconsistent approach. A team leader at Site 2 explains in an interview:

> Some people think its full table service… but when it's down [Wi-Fi for iPads], or we haven't got any staff, they're sat at their table waiting [and] some of them are like, you did full table service last week, so I come sat at my table, is someone going to come take my order? Well, no…! (RES 1)

Other rules were in play at Site 2 due to the large outside space. For example, food was only allowed to be served outside on the decked area, but this was not made clear to customers, with many taking food to picnic tables some way away, making it difficult for staff to take payments (due to Wi-Fi limits) or monitor emerging requirements such as drink orders, or to clear tables quickly.

Common courtesy was observed in both sites but also lack of courtesy shown by both customers and employees.   A waitress at Site 1 sums up her attitude:

> Customers are how you treat them really aren't they. IF you are rude to them, they will be rude back but if you are polite, they will be nice back (RES B)

5.5.2 Summary

The data suggests that the working environment of Full House Ltd changed from Site 1 to Site 2 as financial restrictions on budgets were imposed leading to a drop in service quality and an increase in complaints and problems creating a challenging working environment. Different managers used different approaches and methods to achieve organisational goals, and this behaviour was mirrored in staff with both managers and staff 'cutting corners' or rule breaking. In Site 2, the impact of the play barn on behaviours that were contra to the behavioural norms associated to pubs and restaurants resulted in greater levels of customer misbehaviour that escalated. Staff were unable to resolve the problems inherent in the activity system and this led to significant sickness absence at Site 2 compounding the resourcing issue. The activity system at Site 2 failed regularly at peak times, with the kitchen being shut down many times to enable the service cycle to be reset. Site 2 appeared to be in a spiralling situation that could not be resolved, whilst Site 1 appeared to be able to deliver a good level of service quality and maintain customer satisfaction.

5.5.3 Theoretical Comparisons

As has been mentioned before, the hospitality industry is recognised as being labour intensive, with harsh working conditions, high staff turnover and burnout (Harjanti, 2019). Burnout is defined as "prolonged stress demand in the workplace that burdens or exceeds the resources owned by individuals" and "support from colleagues can help employees to cope with stress and reduce the chances of experiencing burnout" (Buick, 2001 in Harjanti, 2019: 16-17). It is interesting to note that in Site 2 there was high levels of stress related sickness absence amongst managers and high levels of sickness absence of staff generally. Similarly, Ghosh

(2022) states that "Work overload and exhaustion are otherwise a common feature found among employees engaged in hospitality firms" largely due to the variety of their tasks and pace of work without adequate training (Ghosh, 2022: 102). As a result, it is widely recognised that employees may exhibit rule breaking behaviours to meet organisational goals of work efficiency, defined as "volitional rule breaking" (Ghosh, 2022: 103). Employees who exhibit this behaviour deliberately break the customs, practices, conventions, and norms associated with their job to benefit their organisation rather than as an act of deviant or deceptive behaviour (Morrison, 2006). From an innovation perspective, rule bending, and breaking is seen as a subset of problem solving (Slatten and Mehmetoglu, 2011) and is intentional activity by pro-active employees who set out to achieve targets and goals set by their organisation.

As highlighted in the data, work-related stress is significantly correlated to employees exposed to high levels of 'jay customer behaviour' (Kim et al., 2014) i.e., customers who "act in a thoughtless or abusive way, causing problems for the firm, its employees, and other customers" (Lovelock, 2001, quoted in Kim et al., 2014: 396). In the study by Kim et al. (2014) their research looked at customer incivility and customer aggression as two key customer behaviours and their impact on job stress and job satisfaction, concluding that managers need to provide training, standardised procedures, and social support systems to reduce work related stress and improve job satisfaction.   Whilst training was evident in Site 1, it was not as apparent in Site 2. Kleestra et al. (2020: 179) studied the impact of work pressure and staff shortages on the Danish Hotel industry concluding that "learning, especially formal learning, is one of the first things to be left behind." This may account for the lack of training at Site 2.

In Site 2 there was clear evidence that management placed responsibility on front-line staff through an 'empowerment' initiative to deal with significant jay customer behaviours which was interpreted by staff negatively as unsupportive whilst other studies have shown empowerment to be strongly correlated with job satisfaction (Slatten and Mehmetoglu, 2011).

The study by Kim et al. (2014:397) also highlighted that key sources of motivation of jay customer behaviour were "a customer sense of entitlement, dissatisfaction with the service, and a low level of perceived risk" – all of these motivating factors were present at both sites, but more so at Site 2. Entitlement was driven by the use of promotions and incentives provided by the organisation, poor service delivery was evident due to the organisation failing to adequately resource the service, and due to targets set for customer satisfaction, staff were quick to offer compensatory value without question leading to low levels of perceived risk by customers to complain. Their study also concludes that jay customer behaviours negatively influence other customers in the social servicescape (Line, 2021; Lin et al., 2020), and observational evidence at both sites supports that customer behaviours increasingly became more negative as more customers complained. This aligns with other studies, such as Albrecht et al. (2014) who investigated how social norms determine

customer unfriendliness in hospitality settings. Their study concluded that there should be clues or signals in the servicescape that tell customers how to behave and deploy resources (such as a rapid response to customer complaints) to diffuse potentially problematic situations before other customers respond with similar behaviours believing it to be the norm.

5.5.4 'Rules' Conclusion

Activity Theory analysis has revealed the underlying significance of rules and norms that impact on employee behaviour. What is surprising is how staff have normalised high intensity working environments in both Site 1 and Site 2 as a community, although the data clearly points to the work becoming overwhelming in Site 2. Similarly, it is also interesting to note that there was significant evidence of volitional rule breaking across both sites suggesting staff were able to improvise, and problem solve on-the-hoof leading to evidence of informal adaptations being made in an effort to resolve their 'double bind' situation and resolving the tensions and contradictions therein.

These innovative behaviours may signal the antecedents of informal practice-based innovation, which along with other practices mentioned in earlier elements, such as flexibility, jumping in, being busy, multi-tasking begin to form a coherent set of practices that are collectively a capability in a hospitality context.

5.6 Element 6: MEDIATING ARTEFACTS

5.6.1 Introduction

Mediating Artefacts are human made 'things' (tools, symbols, practices) that have embedded cultural value that transmit social knowledge. Artefacts are used by humans to mediate with the external and internal environment (for example language, clothes, equipment, physical spaces etc.). Mediation is a social exchange process that produces meaning for subjects (Vygotsky, 1978; Leontyev, 1997) such that artefacts are cultural resources of the subjects within the activity. The data for Element 6 is presented in the following sections with the identified codes and categories shown in Figure 39 below.

Figure 39: Identified Codes and Categories for Mediating Artefacts

```
                    Mediating Artefacts
              ┌──────────┴──────────┐
       Finding their way      Using technology
              │                      │
        Reminders of what      Deskilling &
            to do              Automation
              │
        Using language
```
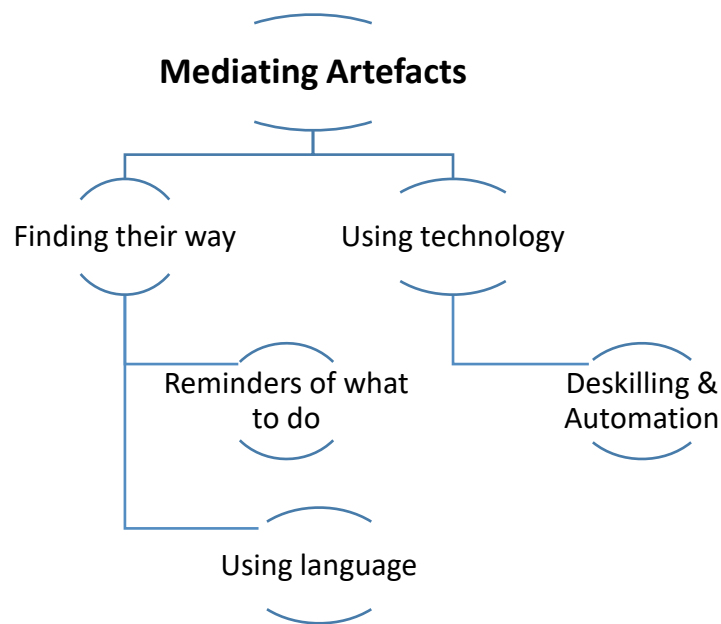
5.6.1.1 Finding their way – physical location

Restaurant layout and interior design should provide clear signals and signposts to affect its use to the benefit of the users in the space. For example, the design of the "servicescape" (Booms and Bitner, 1981, in Arifin et al., 2022) or physical environment, including factors such as colour, music, scent and layout is recognised to influence consumer behaviour in variety of ways during a service encounter, such as positively affecting customer emotion and satisfaction (Lin and Mattila, 2010). Servicescape is one of four core factors that impact on customer experience, with the other three being service, price and food quality (Ahmadi and Akbay, 2022).

In effect, the physical environment acts as a visual language or guide for both staff and employees to use the activity system for their benefit, but can also affect behaviours (Hung et al., 2019). As has been previously mentioned Full House Ltd has designed the servicescape to cater for families and groups who use the servicescape according to their needs. For example, when questioned in an interview about the customer use of different places, a waitress comments:

> I think that [area] looks more kiddie, because it's got the windows so you see the garden, so you can keep an eye on your kids [whilst they are playing outside]. And the booths have got TVs [for families], And this area [points] is quieter so you can exclude yourself… Sometimes you want to eat without loads of people looking at you. And this area is used by families because it's contained [sitting in a big booth] and it's got a big table so you can have a bigger party (RES 14).

Based on observation data, the decor is clearly bright, colourful, and designed to create the impression of fun and entertainment in line with the Full House Ltd's brand values. The TVs that are located into panels

within booths have a channel run by Full House Ltd specifically for children. Tables, chairs, menus, the physical Bar (including its backdrop of glasses and bottles), prominent cash tills (for payment and ordering), plus the uniforms worn by staff to identify them as service providers, all provide the clues that customers need to mediate their experience and interactions with each other.

5.6.1.2 Reminders of What To Do

In a similar vein, the physical space and situated activity creates clues for staff to deliver the service. As has been mentioned previously, the observation data identified how staff scanned the situation for clues to help them make decisions about what they did next, what work was required in the sequence of the service cycle. Tables may need clearing, customers may be signalling for help, technology (screens) may be sequencing meals to help staff prioritise work. Based on both the observation and interview data, the servicescape brought order to the activity, providing support for the activity, whilst training and experience enabled subjects to interpret those clues and signals in the situation to understand and decide what activities happened next. An example of this can be seen in the way in which zones operated within the servicescape. According to team leader at Site 2, there were seven zones and floor staff were allocated to zones. So, for example a waiter might have all the '20s' i.e., tables with numbers ranging from 20-29). However, at peak periods, sometimes during a shift a different instruction was given, as the team leader elaborates: "[the instruction was]

> If you see someone coming, you go to that table and you try to focus on the tables you picked [irrespective of the zone], but then… You can't do that because then if someone else has got that zone, and you've done that table, they don't know if they've been served or what stage they're at in their visit. It's just complete and utter chaos (RES 1).

Site 2 there was a significant difference with regards to the site layout. Seating areas were more fragmented, with blind corners and cubby holes where customers were not visible. There were also special areas for large groups which were not immediately obvious. The site could appear to be quiet, but in fact be very busy, giving a false sense of status and occasion. At peak times, when all tables were full, staff struggled to walk around all areas to check on customers and it was observed many times that tables were 'forgotten' simply because, with so few staff on, there were unable to sufficiently scan all tables for work and requirements (for example OBS 8/11). It was observed at Site 2 that customers were more likely to complain of slow service, with customers hunting for staff to ask for things (with some getting out of their seats). A further complication was the ability of customers to walk in from two entrances and as has been mentioned in earlier sections, this had an impact on the hosting arrangements of table service that cause further issues in the service cycle.

The servicescape clearly structured the experience for both staff and customers alike, signalling the performative aspects that were required, the sequencing of them, and gave stability and routine to the activity system.

5.6.1.3 Using Language

As has been mentioned, the physical location provided a visual language to support all the service participants understand the activity and their position within it. Verbal language and communication also had a significant impact on the efficacy of the activity. Observation data suggested that at both sites, both customers and employees used hand gestures (such as using fingers to denote numbers of guests, table numbers or for pointing) and head movements (to agree or disagree) and facial expressions (to show satisfaction or other emotions) were far more effective at communicating instructions and information across large spaces that were crowded and noisy than speech. In interviews on both sites, staff mentioned that shouting instructions within the setting could be viewed by others as impolite, even socially inept in a public setting, and contra to the etiquette expected. The data suggests that this visual language was an essential part of the activity system.

Based on the interview data and observation data, generally staff were very expressive with each other and not afraid to say what they felt about others or their situation. The culture appeared to support this – the researcher observed expressive and emotional language being used by many staff and customers and it was clearly normalised within the setting.

In addition, the interview and observation data suggested that subjects had developed their own 'language' - specific terms were used to describe the world by those in it – for example the role titles in the division of labour, elements of the servicescape (e.g., the 'floor', 'back-stage') and events such as 'Opens' and 'Closes' which were used to describe the start and end of each day.

5.6.1.4 Using Technology

It was evident from both the interview and observation data that technology played a significant role in the activity system. Firstly, electronic tills were used to facilitate payment and ordering behind the Bar. Secondly, a software package linked tills to the cooking line in the kitchen, enabling orders to be visually identified as a timestamped list by chefs and linked to screens depicting orders in pictures of plated food in each cooking area which were divided into 'salads', 'the grill' [Burgers/Chicken], 'The fryer' [Chips], Desserts or the Pass (Plating area including vegetables). The software split each order up for each section and based on standard timings would prioritise the food in time-order to affect different food elements with different prepping and cooking times coming together at the pass at the same time. According to REF F, this software effectively removed traditional paper tab grabbers used at the pass behind the cooking line that would have normally

been managed by the Expo. The new system automated the process, making it more accurate and efficient. Adoption by Chefs at Site 2 took time as one waitress comments:

> It took a lot of getting used to. We were just used to a ticket going through and then the Chefs would put that next to the plates that have to be taken out. Whereas it's all [about] selecting buttons (RES 6).

Similarly, a senior manager reflects on how difficult some kitchen staff found the new system:

> We are training these guys at the minute on the new systems, and they are just like whoa! What do we do with that then?! (RES F).

5.6.1.5 Deskilling and Automation

According to a staff member (RES F), technology had automated the production of drinks and food, that meant that a plate of food was assembled by a variety of different people with low skill levels. As previously mentioned, Senior managers had commented on how this has reduced the cost of labour (RES 13 & RES D/F/J). A Chef explained the process of how a plate of food could be put together by three different people:

> In terms of the actual order itself, that comes up on screen, we've got a starter screen, a pass screen, and a grill screen. One goes on the starter screen, which is then [to] put everything in the fryers, like chips, breaded stuff. Pass screen is for your plating up, like your peas, your normal plate-up. And then grill is your burgers, and that's this screen[pointing] (RES 7)

It was observed that shorthand descriptions were used on the screens to explain what was required such as 'CH' to denote Chips, or 'BUR' to denote Burger. Technology had also simplified order and payment processes using an advanced cash register or 'till'. Staff comment in interviews that mentally calculating change from a bank note can be a source of error and lead to incorrect change being given. The new tills had buttons with visual markers for common denominations (£10/£20/£50 notes) to improve accuracy when payment is made by cash. But it also allowed greater complexity to enable customers to be given more tailored and customised orders according to their tastes and preferences. As a waitress laments:

> You know I think I had so much on learning where everything is [on the cash register] because there is so much on there. And obviously, [customers will say] I don't want that, I don't want this, can I have this instead [when customers order] and oh my god! That's why I don't mind going in the bar to serve because it's just drinks! (RES C).

Another example of technology was when table service was introduced at Site 2 and iPads were used to take orders at the table rather than using the tills at the Bar. Based on observation and interview data due to lack of Wi-Fi strength, iPad connectivity, poor battery durations, lack of maintenance, and insufficient numbers of

iPads and other user related factors, iPads were highly unreliable and caused significant ordering errors, particularly with larger groups. The impact is discussed in more detail later. Nether-the-less, it resulted in waiting staff resorting to pen and paper in many cases observed (for example OBS 8/10).

From the interview data, staff explained another system linked to a paper ticket printer behind the bar, enabled waiting staff to take drinks only orders at tables and trigger order tickets to be printed. These paper tickets would be picked up by Bar staff who would then make the drinks whilst also serving customers at the bar. Table based drinks orders would be put on tray ready for collection by Bar staff (OBS 2/12). Other technology existed to support staff – kitchen equipment for example. In interviews, staff also mentioned that Full House Ltd operated a staff loyalty card system that tracked purchases and provided discounts to staff and their families (for example RES 9).

In interviews, Managers and Team leaders used other supporting tools. A physical site day diary was used by both sites to track site issues, events, activities, and advance bookings (RES D). It enabled different members of the management team to access a single point of information to identify what was happening on their shift, or what had happened. As the Site Manager for Site 1 states:

> It's especially good for trainee managers, so like [Tim] on a morning, he knows that there are ticks in the boxes and the pub is ready to open. So, it's like a diary. We've got space for bookings as well. Handover notes, so if you're handing over to another manager you can make notes if you are not going to cross paths. So, we can write in any refunds that we have done, any customers that have come in and make notes of any feedback we've received. It's really very helpful (RES D).

The use of tick sheets (lists of tasks that should be done, such as 'closes' at the end of a night, or to track training completed for an individual, were also used (mentioned in interviews with RES 7/9/14 and RES D/E). In Site 2, it was observed that the staff rota was provided as a physical printout and taped to the back of the bar for floor staff, but also published online via the site's Facebook page.

It was also observed that for customers, sweets, lollipops, balloons, and colouring books with coloured pencils were provided as tools for parent to keep young children occupied, or to reward them for good behaviour at the end of the meal (for example OBS 4/5). A senior manager comments that lollipops and sweets were introduced by him because he had seen it work well in other industries:

> When I used to work in nightclubs in London, quite rough ones, we used to give lollipops to everyone on the way out because a big burly guy with a lollipop stuck in his mouth isn't going to present a threat to anyone, so it's changed peoples behaviours (RES J).

5.6.2 Theoretical Comparisons

The use of technology to automate, standardise and deskill the occupation of Chefs is widely commented on in the literature (Robinson and Barron, 2007). The extent to which this has been as a reaction to skill shortages in the industry is also debated (Pratten, 2003) but what is recognised is that "deskilling and standardisation inherently conflict with chefs' notions of creativity, artistry and exercise of technical skill." (Robinson and Barron, 2007:919). This may account for why some kitchen staff struggled with the automation of the kitchen across both sites. But the benefits of technology in hospitality are acknowledged by several authors. For example, in a review of hospitality research by Khatri (2019) regarding the use of IT technology in the Tourism and hospitality industry, the industry has widely adopted technology to enhance information sharing, process design, production efficiency, EDI (electronic data interchange) to facilitate better interoperability of systems, and the innovation process (such as online ordering) to benefit customers. The situation at Site 2 highlights the dependency of staff and customers on artefacts and tools to mediate their relationships with each other and their situation, in line with the concept of distributed cognition and situated action (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

5.6.3 'Mediating Artefacts' Conclusions

Using Activity Theory, the analysis has identified the important mediating impact of the pubscape on the service interactions and relationships between staff, and between staff and customers. Similarly, the role of technology plays a major role in co-ordinating the division of labour or supporting community (such as through the use of online social networks) or monitoring the adherence to rules including targets. But by using the Activity Theory analytical framework, it has also identified the unintended consequences of strategies to improve the exchange value of the system in favour of the organisation, such as automation that deskill roles that is at odds with employee's occupational aspirations, potentially accounting both recruitment difficulties to roles in the Kitchen and more generally for high staff churn rates in the hospitality sector.

5.7 Summary of Findings from the Situational Analysis

As stated earlier in this Chapter, the 'object' is defined as a collective purpose that attempts to resolve a problem space in an organisation created through the contradictory unity of use-value and exchange-value (Engeström, 2006:194). This leads to the main tension in the problem space, i.e., an expectation/performance gap. The service provider attempts to maximise profit in the performance through efficiencies (the exchange value) whilst the customer expects the provider to maximise the experience (the use value).

Two UK based pub sites were investigated and both locations delivered the brand called Full House Ltd. They both had the same menus, decoration, offers and promotions, job roles (covering the 3 areas of Bar, Floor and Kitchen), utilising the same technologies and equipment, delivering the same service cycle, providing ostensibly the same meal and drinks service – in other words the same value proposition.

But there were some significant notable differences in the employee and customer profile, in site location and in site design layout. Site 1 was a purpose-built and employed circa 25 staff, set on the outskirts of a town with customer capacity for 150. Site 2 was a legacy site purchased through a recent acquisition of a competitor and employed circa 50 staff, set in a rural location with a customer capacity of 250. Site 2 also had a significant outside space and a play barn attached that operated separately. As mentioned previously, the impact of the play barn was to attract a skewed demographic of younger families from a wider catchment, whilst Site 1 predominately drew from the local area.

Site 1 was investigated first, and then two years later Site 2 was investigated. The situational analysis surfaced significant similarities and variations in service delivery because of situational factors summarised below.

Firstly, a major feature of both sites was the repetition of the service cycle. This fundamentally underpinned the activity system shown in Figure 40 below. Every day, employees attempted to enact the service cycle in the same way exhibiting similar methods, routines, processes and practices. This major characteristic is embedded in all the observation data on both sites and sits as a foundation on which variation could then be observed.

During the observation of Site 2 a major service initiative called 'Table Service' was introduced causing a significant disruption to the existing modus operandi of the brand and this was simultaneously timed with what was voiced by management as a move to cut costs, budgets and labour. The two initiatives appeared contradictory, given that Table Service required greater levels of labour and investment against actual cuts in budget. Management appeared to be confused as to how this could work in practice.

Compared to Site 1, Site 2 had greater location and site-specific complexity than Site 1 due to legacy issues. The manager for Site 2 was unable to manage the and the disruption caused by the introduction of table service. However, customer complaints were prevalent at both sites, but more so at Site 2 where service failure led on many occasions to the kitchen service being closed. Customers at Site 2 appeared to misbehave more, have greater cause to complain or were ruder to staff, particularly during the weekend shifts, with either Sunday lunchtime usually being the worse time or bank holiday weekends or both. In Site

1, there was clearly greater customer loyalty and repeat trade with staff receiving better treatment by customers.

Across both sites, staff were predominately younger and inexperienced, temporary or casual workers, but this was accentuated at Site 2 due to the location of the site. Site 2 had more novices who had received less training and experience due to budget cuts than those at Site 1. This was compounded because there was less opportunity for learning the brand correctly from experts through informal learning at Site 2 despite there being more staff. Social ties and relationships were more fragmented at Site 2 with no support from management to enable socialisation other than a Facebook site, used largely to co-ordinate rotas and shift patterns. Due to higher staff churn at Site 2, and high levels of sickness absence, staff were 'thrown in' to the situation compounding poor retention rates and difficulties with recruiting. Staff turned to their friends and peers at work for support when faced with challenges at work as a coping mechanism. There was clearly a culture of helping each other in both sites as a coping mechanism to make their jobs work.

Those with experience recognised the need to fit in and integrate, and to understand the way of doing hospitality at PuB4 You. Building confidence was a key factor stated by most employees. Some staff were motivated to continue working because of other benefits, such as the opportunity to work extended hours and increase their income, accrue tips from customers, and develop their career competencies to get promotion.

Staff developed generic coping skills to deal with the hard work they faced daily but the core practice, driven by management, was to work extremely hard at pace without breaks. Other important coping strategies included becoming flexible (able to work across Bar, Floor and Kitchen), multi-tasking (to cope with the complexities that arose in service); cutting corners (breaking rules, or not following agreed routines) to save time; jumping in (and out) of tasks and processes to support others; being busy – constantly looking for work. This reflected a team-based approach and data supported that strong social bonds were formed as teams in both sites, although Site 1 appeared to operate more effectively as a team, and greater levels of employing these skills was seen in Site 2. The working environment produced social ties, in the same way that social ties also reciprocally produced the working environment. In all respects, the culture in both sites supported acceptance of the harsh workloads in the situation as normal, and this was particularly evident in Site 2.

Formal training appeared to be through 'dry runs' prior to new pubs opening, access to training pubs, initiatives designed to reinforce brand values and shadowing/mentoring at site level. But whilst many employees at Site 1 were able to talk about these, Site 2 were less likely to refer to them or simply deny training happened.

Research studies mentioned earlier (i.e., Newman et al., 2018; Aubke, 2014; Oksanen, 2008; Bandiera, 2010; Chen, 2015, 2017) suggest that training is linked to innovative behaviour because it creates epistemic confidence, builds social confidence (through social ties and socialisation) whilst also motivating staff and improving staff engagement with their work. Socialisation enables interpersonal trust, good will and knowledge sharing behaviours, particularly the sharing of heterogenous knowledge, and this in turn is linked to building creative self-efficacy, enhancing the willingness of employees to engage with problem solving and contributing ideas for improvements at work, such as those associated with process innovation and practice innovation.

Similarly, other research studies (i.e., Robinson and Barron, 2007; Pratten, 2003) suggest that job standardisation and routine repetitive work increases continuity and stability at work, whilst also reducing employee anxiety, reducing cognitive load, and facilitates a higher level of shared meanings that can be more easily transferred to newcomers.

Targets within the activity system impacted on the 'problem space' i.e., asking employees to deliver the service at a quality level that is acceptable whilst making a profit. But this changed in Site 2 to a new object (Object #2) to deliver at an even higher quality level through table service whilst continuing to make cost reductions and higher levels of profit. This triggered greater levels of stress and anxiety in the working environment at Site 2 evidenced by higher levels of sickness absence at Site 2 than at Site 1, greater staff dissatisfaction with the working environment, with many commenting on the unfairness of targets and higher levels of customer complaints.

Problems related to resourcing were recursive, in that additional labour was required to problem solve with resolving customer complaints and putting things right, reducing the available pool of labour to deliver the service. This became a vicious spiral during shifts particularly in Site 2. In Site 2, there was a repeating cycle of similar problems observed at peak times on weekends that seemed to be unresolvable by the available staff on shift suggesting that the issue was systematic.

Shifts and rotas had special significance for all subjects as it determined the available labour pool and thus the working environment on the shift. Staff had a strong sense of fairness related to workloads and were very vocal when other staff, as one employee put it 'did not pull their weight' during shifts. Management attempted to offset a harsh working environment and appease staff, where breaks were sometimes not possible, by flexing the shift pattern or type of work to the preference of the individual but this was not always possible and, in some instances, it was interpreted as favouritism and became divisive.

Leadership was voiced by many staff as a significant factor in site operation and the impact of a manager can be seen in the higher levels of staff pro-active attitude towards work, morale, self-efficacy (trust, confidence) in Site 1 compared to Site 2. But also, in the professionalisation of operations with stronger adherence to rules and regulations, policies and procedures offset by a more personal and supportive approach to staff in Site 1. Whilst at Site 2, the manager appeared overwhelmed with the complexities of the site, the additional bureaucracy imposed by the organisation and the implementation of 'table service' leading to a spiralling situation with insufficient labour budget to resolve it. A comment by a senior manager (RES J) suggests the Site 2 manager lacked experience of food service in conjunction with Bar work and this was self-evident in the data.

Role specialisation through deskilling and disciplinary flexibility enabled Full House Ltd to optimise labour at any given point to deliver the brand's service cycle. Typically, staff may be multi-tasking on quiet shifts, and become more specialised on busy shifts. When shifts become highly intensive and even chaotic, staff moved back to multi-tasking to address the escalating issues and additional work from complaints.

The servicescape supported the structuring of the routines and practices that underpinned the hospitality activity system. For example, task relevant information was embedded in the technologies (kitchen screens, cash tills, iPads), table layouts, table settings, menus and other artefacts demonstrating the importance of distributed cognition (Flor and Hutchins, 1991) in the system. In Site 2, teams appeared to be unable to sense the tipping point which signalled the potential ensuing chaos. This may be due to the design of the physical layout of Site 2 as mentioned earlier which was fragmented and failed to provide support for staff to action issues quickly, or for staff to be able to assess or track quickly, the extent of work required and the building of workload overtime in a given shift.

The activity system is summarised in Figure 40 below. The figure shows two activity systems interacting in line with third generation Activity Theory (Engeström et al., 1999). The main large triangle is the activity system that represents Full House Ltd. The small triangle is the activity system of Servicetime Corporation. The arrows show how the original Object#1 at Site 1 was modified because of disturbances emerging later by interacting with the Servicetime Corporation activity system (such as Table Service and cost-cutting) resulting in Object#2 at Site 2. This interaction of activity systems is shown as the blue line between the two objects of the respective activity systems. Some of these disturbances were later resolved or withdrawn, thus the arrows show how the Object moved from Object#1 to Object#2, and then to Object#3 which is the new equilibrium point reached by Full House Ltd, reflecting the change and development of the organisation during the on-site data collection period.

The data clearly demonstrates that action was 'situated' and drove the development of coping strategies as the activity system moved and evolved from Object #1 to Object #2 to eventually, Object #3 (see Figure 40 below). Using activity theory enable the researcher to surface situated learning that led to developing capabilities to cope with the tensions and contradictions of the problem space as it evolved. In the final part of this chapter, the adaptations and innovations that occurred in the movement from Object #1 to Object #2, and finally Object #3 will be discussed in more detail.

Figure 40: Full House Ltd Activity System

Object #3
A social experience for customers for profit – with adapted practices (Site 2)

Object #2
A social experience for customers for profit WITH table service (Site 2)

Object #1
A social experience for customers for profit (Site 1)

Mediating Artefacts
Site Layout (covers, décor), Equipment, Technology, language

Subjects
Customer (Families), Employee (Bar/Floor/Kitchen), Partner, Manager

Servicetime Corporation Activity System

Rules,
Norms and conventions in social gatherings and mealtimes. Workplace norms, including standards to deliver the value proposition.

Community
Shared practices amongst customers, and staff. Includes suppliers, locals and wider social networks of friends and families, community support (police, ambulance, public transport), regulatory stakeholders (licensing, H&S, GDPR etc.), Head Office.

Division of Labour
Roles (informal, formal), role flexibility, subject skills, tasks, competencies, and power asymmetry

5.7.1 Tensions and Contradictions

The purpose of activity theory is to surface the tensions and contradictions that are the driving force of change in an activity system impacting on the object, enabling the 'germ cell' of an activity system to be identified (Engeström et al., 1999) from which all activity stems. Other scholars apply this approach when using Activity Theory as their analytical framework (Karanasios et al., 2017; Murphy and Rodriguez-Manzanares, 2008; Witkop et al., 2021).

'Tension' is a state of stretch. Elements that make up an activity system such as costs, time, staff and expertise (skill, experience and practice etc.) are all potentially 'stretched' to enable the system to operate to meet the object of the activity. A contradiction is defined as a 'situation in which inconsistent elements are present' (Oxford Languages, 2022). This is not the same as tension as in this instance, the contradictory elements can include the objects of the activity systems, of which there can be multiple ones. Contradictory ideas, objects, concepts and actions are present in all activity systems and contradictions create tension within the activity system. Engeström (2001: 137) states that tensions and contradictions are 'historically accumulating structural tensions within and between activity systems' that trigger 'innovative attempts to change the activity' rather than just conflicts or problems.

Based on the analysis, the core underlying tensions and contradictions identified in the case study are depicted in Table 15 below. This is not an exhaustive list - a number of tensions and contradictions are identified in the preceding situational analysis - but an attempt has been made here to provide an overall summary.

Table 15: Tensions and Contradictions in the Hospitality Activity System

1: Balancing staff satisfaction and customer satisfaction	To what extent should a business prioritise customer satisfaction over staff satisfaction? Are these mutually compatible objects or contradictory elements? Within this, there are number of further sub-tensions and contradictions:
	- Tension 1a: Balancing resources with demand - Tension 1b: Balancing productive capacity with staff capacity to cope - Tension 1c: Balancing staff's social capacity (the value of social ties to create a self-supporting community) with the resourcing capacity of the site
2: Balancing rules versus agency	To what extent should a business place value on rules versus the agency of subjects? Are these mutually compatible objects or contradictory elements? Within this, there are further sub-tensions and contradictions: - Tension 2a: Balancing standardisation (including automation and routines) to achieve consistency of service experience with potential for variation, adaptation, and customisation to meet specific situational needs. - Balance staff progression with deskilling and automation.

These tensions, as defined above, surface the main problem space or 'objects' around which the Hospitality activity revolves and evolves and are the main drivers of innovation in the activity system – evidence of this is identified in later sections.

Tension 1: Balancing staff satisfaction and customer satisfaction

The tension of balancing staff and customer satisfaction at the same time is clearly a key driver of the activity system and triggers decision making as to how best cope with customer demand. In low non-peak periods, the business model is not sustainable (too few customers and insufficient orders), so this is offset by profit derived from peak periods. Essentially high peak periods subsidise off-peak periods, but in high-peak periods the potential for chaos within the activity system is significant if not managed carefully and can result in significant customer complaints and a difficult working environment for staff.

Tension 1a: Balancing resources with demand

At both sites, the labour content of the service was insufficient at peak times to cope with customer demand which clearly drove the activity towards chaos each time the service cycle was enacted, seen most visibly at peak points (weekends – Friday/Saturday evenings, Sunday Lunch and any special promotion day such as St Patricks Day/ Valentine's Day etc.). This was particularly evident in Site 2 as it had a significant beer garden that increased its cover capacity by 25%, as a waitress at Site 2 comments:

> We were all struggling that weekend…there wasn't enough staff…it got really busy especially [as] the weather was nice. They all want to go in the garden. The customers are getting pXXXXX off with us (RES 10).

All those interviewed commented on the lack of sufficient staff to meet demand. Some commented on how food (orders) was stopped on a regular basis to manage this issue. For example, a team leader at Site 2 comments:

> …this place was full. Every single table was full and near enough half of them were moaning that they're having to wait an hour and a half [so] he [the manager] stopped food for 2 hours. He [the manager] said 'we're just going to stop it [to] get back on track (RES 1).

The staff dissatisfaction can be seen in the emotion and frustration of this waitress' further
Comments about the ongoing situation at Site 2:

> It's a joke. It's killing us all. No word of a lie, we Are all at breaking point at the moment. Literally, we're all so tired… I reckon we all would have walked out if it got any worse (RES 1)

Similarly, a Barman at Site 2 comments that:

> "We're honestly too busy at the weekend. It [Table service] works in the week and is enough, it's good. You've only got a few [customers]…but you come in on the weekend, you've got a table of 12, you've got a table of 18, you've got a table of 14. One person trying to take an order, drinks as well, for a table of 14 doesn't work." (RES 4)

The issue of staff capacity and its impact is neatly summarised by a waitress at Site 2, where she comments on when there was sufficient staff to meet demand:

> Recently we've had loads of staff on as well, so you haven't felt like you're doing the job of four people because there's only three members of staff on. Even today when we were rammed earlier, although we were all running around doing a lot, it wasn't as much to do. It felt like a lot less pressure in that sort of sense (RES 10).

Tension 1b: Balancing productive capacity with staff capacity to cope

Constant repetition of the same issue has led to staff leaving, staff wellbeing issues - increased sickness absence (in some cases, long term), staff (and customer) deviance (work avoidance, lack of loyalty, loss of good will and discretionary effort, stealing, bill runners etc.), breakdown in relationships between staff/customers and increases in the number of customer complaints (significant at Site 2).

This suggests a systemic issue with the implementation of the service cycle, and more recently exemplified by the attempt at implementing table service in Site 2. As will be outlined later, the initiative ultimately failed at Site 2 because it attempted to impose an increase in the labour requirement of the service without sufficiently addressing the shortfall in resources, technical and site-specific layout issues, and legacy of underlying staff and customer behaviours to make it successful.

As profit and cost objectives drive decisions that result in labour content reduced to a bare minimum, the outcome generates problem solving behaviours (or coping strategies) in staff and management which includes coping approaches that short cut service standards in a whole raft of areas, but also undermine the received wisdom (the overall sense of intelligibility, the 'background operating system' of the hospitality world by its participants). This then generates both staff and customer complaints and dissatisfaction. As the quotes above suggest, the working environment became toxic for both staff and customers as both experience sub-standard experiential conditions.

Tension 1c: Balancing staff's social capacity (the value of community and culture) with the resourcing capacity of the site

As has been mentioned previously, it is widely recognised that staff/customer interactions drive the experience and process of delivery in Hospitality contexts. The Full House Ltd value proposition is predicated on these interactions being positive. For example, customers look for both assurance and friendliness in the service experience (Berry and Parasuraman, 1993). Yet at Full House Ltd "chatting to customers" becomes unproductive and unachievable as demand intensifies and staff look for methods and ways to save time. The data suggests that some managers view 'chatting to customers' as unproductive, whilst others see it as beneficial. Similarly, the opportunity and time for socialisation (creating social bonds and ties between staff) significantly reduces during shifts if there is insufficient labour to meet demand. Lack of socialisation impacts on teamworking by reducing trust, mutual respect, communication and self-efficacy resulting in lower productivity.

Social culture is an embedded element of the social context of hospitality (staff/staff and staff/customer and customer/customer) – yet managers are incentivised by financial reward systems and organisational targets to optimise staff productivity, with the consequence for significantly reducing important expected social touchpoints for customers and staff.

Tension 2: Balancing rules versus agency

The activity system at both sites uses rules to deliver consistency and reduce variation but the evidence shows that despite this, due to reasons stated earlier, both staff and customers appear to cut corners and/or misbehave (selectively breaking some rules to meet other rules, such as targets). There is also evidence of adaptations in practise outlined earlier, and on-the-hoof problem solving, improvisation and creativity evidenced in later sections, suggesting that agency is an embedded element in the activity system. The evidence is that in a recursive fashion, some rules that drive standardisation appear to produce agency in order to follow them, with staff varying their performativity in the activity system to meet the object. Creating rules generates variation either directly as action or as unintended agency somewhere else in the activity system.

Tension 2a: Balancing standardisation (including automation and routines) to achieve consistency of service experience with potential for variation, adaptation, and customisation to meet specific situation needs.

Full House Ltd had specified brand standards for hundreds of sites to adhere to yet there is quite clear evidence that the site itself generates situations in which brand standards need adapting (as acknowledged

earlier by senior managers who recognise there are many 'types' of the brand 'Full House Ltd'). For example, at Site 2, it had several key variations including:

- Multiple entry and exit points which did not support the role of 'Host' – a key trigger point for the service cycle leading to dis-order.
- Technology failure (such as Wi-Fi and iPad technology) because the site's legacy layout does not support Wi-Fi access in all areas.
- That the physical location of the site in a rural setting did not support sufficient access to the local labour market restricting the available labour supply
- More significantly, the ration of novices to experts was higher resulting in greater opportunity for mis production; customers were less knowledgeable of the service (with lower customer loyalty than Site 2) that challenged novice staff who lacked experience.
- The repetition and routine were less embedded in Site 2 due to all the previous issues mentioned resulting in poor exampling of good practice in action.
- The management team lacked the skills and competencies to manage the complexity of the site demonstrating a lack of practice leadership.
- Social ties and bonds were weaker in Site 2 leading to loss of socialisation and a more fragmented culture.

Tension 2b: Balancing customer experience with deskilling and resource flexibility.

From the staff perspective, those that enter the hospitality sector for a career, look to progression and promotion as a motivating factor to continue working in the sector. However, there is a tension between staff progression and deskilling. The 'Chef' role is an example of this tension where the tasks required to be a Chef have been disaggregated in a cooking line (or production line) within the kitchen, and menu's simplified, to enable deskilling. This widens the pool of potential recruitment as skills are simplified whilst simultaneously reducing costs. A senior manager made it very clear that they "don't want to pay for pre-madonna's" (RES F) who cost too much money. But this has made the role less attractive to those wishing to pursue the Chef occupation which is a construct not owned by Servicetime Corporation. The result is that Full House Ltd struggle to recruit to the roles in the kitchen.

As has previously been outlined, management require staff to be able to work in all areas (bar, floor, kitchen) – effectively functional flexibility. Simultaneously, they also need staff to be able to specialise at points in the service cycle, particularly at peak demand points. Whilst functional flexibility makes work allocation and rota management easier, the rewards and recognition for functional flexibility are not explicitly identified as a vehicle for progression within the organisation, and the perception is that occupational expertise is

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discouraged given the evidence of lack of importance in practice attributed to training in occupational roles and the significant use of inexperienced staff.

5.7.2 Typology of Situation Statuses – From Calm to Chaos

The data suggests that the activity system repeatedly proceeds through a possible series of steps between calm and chaos, each one dependent on the one before or after depending on the actions of the participants. The cycle is not processive, i.e., it does not suggest that each status happens in an order. The cycle depicted attempts to combine several different observed situation statuses with a trajectory of practice development. The typology is scalable, in the sense that it may represent a typical day, or week or period of the year. For example, it is widely established that the weeks leading up to Christmas in the UK are some of the busiest weeks of the year. Bank holiday weekends are also busy periods, as are most Sunday lunchtimes.

The Researcher was aware that at each observation, the sites were exhibiting elements of each stage. At first, it was difficult to make sense of what was happening because each observation occurred at different points in the cycle, but after analysis of the observation data in conjunction with questioning in interviews, specific steps emerged as detailed below.

Prepping: For example, at the end of each shift in the evening, the 'close' process ensured that the site was ready for the shift the following day. In the mornings, kitchen staff prepared for the day's work by pre-paring ingredients, so they were to hand for the day ahead in order to save time later. Staff went about ensuring the bar was prepped with glasses, drinks were stocked in fridges, and tills contained cash. Tables were 'prepped and checked'. But there was also a sense of 'prepping' for larger events, for example planning ahead for traditional celebratory days or traditionally busy weeks.

Calm: The initial step in demand at the 'calm' stage signifies, for example the opening of the site to customers or a dip in activity at various points during a typical day. Mornings were quiet times across both sites. The atmosphere was relaxed. Mid-afternoons were also quiet times, as were late evenings on weekdays. In these periods, staff were given non-mission critical tasks such as re-organising stock, deep cleaning chores, re-organising merchandise displays (on bars for example) in lieu of work related directly to fulfilling customer orders. Similarly, the first two weeks in January are typically 'calm'.

Managed: As demand increases towards the next busy occasion, such as mid-morning coffee, lunch or evening meal, the service cycle routines become more pressured and a 'managed' atmosphere ensues, in which staff operate more efficiently. The organisation of labour is focused on and redirected to fulfilling customer orders.

Coping: Depending on demand and the available labour, the site moves from 'managed' to 'coping'. Coping reflects that staff are delivering service at pace, with few breaks. This stage is a tipping point where increases in demand may push the service into chaos. Based on observation, typically management step in and fulfil customer facing roles to ensure the service does not become chaotic. By adding to the available labour pool, management are 'floating' between roles depending on the demands of the service cycle.

Figure 41: From Calm to Chaos – A Typology of Situation Statuses
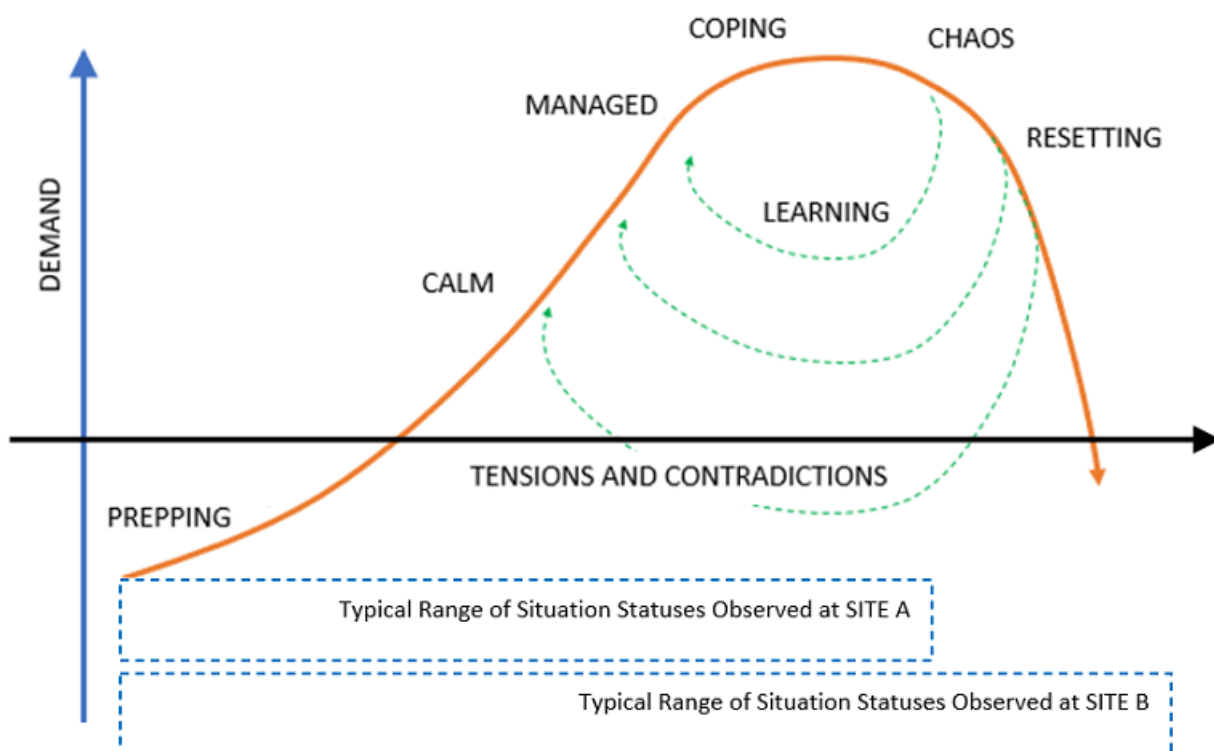
Chaos: If the cycle moves into chaos, staff are no longer in control. This stage is characterised by significant service failure and customer complaints. Management is consumed by addressing and resolving dissatisfied customers. Front-line staff are unable to retrieve the situation resulting in excessive waiting times for meals and other services. Site 2 regularly moved to 60-90 min wait times for food orders, and in some cases longer resulting in the next status of 'resetting'. 'Chaos' can relate to an instance during a week or a longer period. For example, the introduction of table service at Site 2 introduced a propensity for 'chaos' for a period of almost 5 months until, as will be touched on later, it was withdrawn.

Resetting: With all staff fully committed and no further capacity, the only option is to close elements of the service. At Site 2, the management team closed the kitchen for 1-2 hours on a few occasions turning customers away, reducing orders to try and allow staff to catch-up. In this instance, the service cycle is

essentially 'reset' mid shift and moves to another status depending on the demand on site when opened again. Resetting also occurs during a change of site management. During the data collection stage at Site 2, one management team left to be replaced by another interim manager who 'reset' expectations of staff by re-introducing standards through a different management style.

From an activity theory perspective, the 'Y' axis reflects demand as it increases, with the 'X' axis signifying the internal tensions and contradictions that generate more problems, that eventually become unresolvable as the system moves towards chaos. The two axes represent the driving forces of the activity system.

5.7.3 Practice Development

As a repeating feature of the activity system, the typology in Figure 41 generates an evolving problem space that changes due to experience and learning. Employees engage with the activity system on a repetitive basis. They build experience of each of the stages and, through doing it, learn and understand the impact of their activities on the trajectory of possibilities that can unfold. Through these experiences, they build competencies that enable them to sense and understand the signs and clues as they move through each status. Depending on their competencies, they employ coping strategies to avoid the potential for chaos. These practices have been identified previously and include multi-tasking, cutting corners, jumping in, flexibility and being busy. The subjects learn about the impact of their agency on the object (shown as 'learning' via green dotted lines in Figure 41), reflect on their learning and adapt what they do in the next cycle. In communities with high levels of socialisation, practice is transferred quickly, and the community learns how to resolve the object more effectively next time.

In Site 2 the activity system repeatedly entered the situation status of both 'chaos' and 'resetting'. Staff were clearly aware of what was happening and employed coping strategies, but despite this, the team were unable to resolve the issues. This led to observable frustrations (staff and customers), staff dis-engagement, high levels of sickness absence and eventually the Site Manager leaving the situation.

5.7.4 Underlying Features of the Typology

Other significant factors contribute to the movement of the activity system from one status to another:

1. **Allocation of Labour –** as the status of the situation changes from calm to chaos, the deployment of labour becomes more specialised, and then reverts to multi-tasking across many fronts to address problems. Lack of sufficient labour (as in Site 2) contributes to the inevitable movement towards chaos.

2. **Staff Expertise** - experience of situations by staff develops and transforms them from novices to experts. 'Experts' can be highly specialised (experts at one discipline) or experts as 'experienced

generalists' i.e., cross-disciplinary. However, a high novice to expert ratio on a shift (as seen in Site 2) may contribute to the movement towards chaos. Novices are not able to read the signs of the situation, may not have the expertise to multi-task, or the self-efficacy to deal with challenging problems. They may mimic the wrong behaviours without good role models to follow or in the absence of practice leadership.

3. **Customer expertise** – customers who have not used the service before contributing to the workload of staff. A high proportion of regulars, who provide structure, continuity, and stability during a shift, and will tolerate greater levels of service failure, will reduce the likelihood of the movement towards chaos.

4. **Social Capacity** – social ties support the development of a collaborative and supportive culture. The development of social capacity – the extent to which a community is self-supportive through strong social ties – can reduce the likelihood of moving towards chaos because teams are more likely to evolve good practice through problem solving by sharing knowledge based on trust and mutual respect.

Based on this typology, the Researcher then proceeded to investigate the innovation outcomes in the form of specific adaptations made by staff in their attempts to reconcile the inherent tensions and contradictions in the activity system. Adaptations occurred at every step of the 'Calm to Chaos' model as will be elaborated further in the next section.

5.8 Innovation Data and Findings

5.8.1 Introduction

In the initial coding process in Phase 1 and Phase 2, data was coded very broadly based on the working definition developed as part of the research study's theoretical framework in Chapter Two i.e.:

> Innovation is an idea, practice or artefact, or any combination there-of, which both individuals and groups perceive as new to them which triggers disruption, variation and change that through adaptation becomes concretised in some form institutionally over time

Based on the theoretical framework, the Researcher was aware that simply looking for 'an innovation' or 'an adaptation' as an outcome measure would be insufficient. The researcher also looked for a process of innovation and adaptation based on theoretical learning cycles (as defined in the theoretical framework) that demonstrated development of new knowledge, new or adapted routines, new practices and competencies and were otherwise were linked to the identified antecedents of innovation from the

literature. At the start of the research phase, the researcher was aware to look for responses that signalled innovative behaviours, processes outcomes, such as the following:

- Learning new things (including informal and informal training) and/or learning how to do something differently that led to developing competencies.
- Identifying new knowledge or insights that came about in their everyday activity.
- Examples of explicit / implicit knowledge developed as part of routine practice.
- Identifying new behaviours that developed from the repetitive routines of everyday activity.
- Finding turning points/driving forces in the experiences of staff that triggered a change in some way, or triggered reflection that led to a change in how service happened.
- A collective movement of one situation to another that might suggest a change in practice, for example from having recruitment problems, to that problem being resolved.
- Evidence of generating solutions to problems through problem solving activity, such as suggesting ideas, or experimenting, or putting ideas into practice. The researcher was particularly interested in surfacing problems that held a collective responsibility to resolve it whether in processes, procedures, or other concerns.
- New and different things that were not part of a corporately mandated solution.

The Researcher viewed the data as a series of 'slices' of time in which the phenomena was transient – coming in and out of focus depending on where the innovation and adaptation process was at any given point in time. Based on the above, the Researcher's coded data soon became quite fragmented, but it did enable a pattern to emerge. The data codes were then developed into the structure below using post it notes to try and sort out and make sense of what was being seen in the data. Categories were then developed to simplify the adaptation types in the data to reduce complexity.

Table 16: Innovative Matrix

<div align="center">

Informal Adaptations

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Multi-site	Enhanced Capabilities (Incl. Informal learning)	TYPES B1 & B2 (Shared) or TYPES B2 – B4 (Individual)	**Single Site**
	TYPE A1 (Incl. Formal Learning)	TYPE A2 (Optional)	

<div align="center">

Formal Adaptations

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As shown in the Innovation Matrix in Table 16 above, the main adaptation categories are based on two basic criteria: (1) Whether the adaptation was a corporately mandated formalised adaptation to the brand as a standard across all sites (a multi-site decision) e.g., Types A1 & A2, or; (2) Whether it was an informal adaptation made independently of the mandated brand at site level e.g., Types B1 and B2 / or whether it was an individual adaptation only e.g., Types B2, B3 or B4. In the final upper left quartile, which represents multi-site informal adaptation, the data suggests enhanced capabilities are evident including shared practices that have developed independently but based on similar site-based situations i.e., enhanced multi-tasking, cutting corners, jumping in and being busy (as identified and defined in earlier sections). The matrix provides a linking representation of the development of innovativeness across Full House Ltd by attempting to measure adaptation outcomes based on the classifications in Table 17 below.

Table 17: Adaptation Classifications

Adaptation Category	Adaptation sub-category and No. of adaptations identified in ()	Description
Type A: Formal Multi-site	**A1: Corporate brand-led (12)**	Adaptations to a brand standard and implemented across all sites.
	A2: Corporate brand-led optional (10)	Changes to a brand standard that are optional across all sites based on situational characteristics.
Type B: Informal Single Site	**B1: Single site practice adaptations (11)**	Adaptations to practice* at team level and site level usually with informal supervisory agreement. This reflects mechanisms associated with communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991), situated learning and legitimate peripheral participation, and social learning (Bandura, 1986; Noe and Marand, 2014; Rendell, 2010)
	B2: Individual or team-based problem solving (7)	Acting to resolve a problem or improving their skill in the moment through performativity of the service experience, usually without supervisory agreement. This aligns with concepts discussed in Chapter Two such as reflecting-in-action (Schon, 2013), improvisation enacted in everyday work routines (Ohlin, 2018; Moorman and Milner, 1998 in Dougherty, 2001:614). Innovation that is hidden (NESTA, 2006; Abreu et al., 2010), dark and under the radar (Martin, 2016:434), unsanctioned (Demir and Knights, 2021), invisible (Fuglsang, 2010), as bricolage (Levi-Straus, 1962) that involves resourcefulness i.e. making do with whatever is at hand.
	B3: Individual experimentation of improvement ideas tested in practice (1)	Implementing pre-conceived ideas for improvements based on personal learning, experiences and understanding. This aligns to concepts of experimentation, for example Leonard (1996) cited in Dougherty, (2001: 614)
	B4: Individual discovery-based adaptations (1)	Discovering different ways of doing things through unexpected situation-based consequences of other adaptations.

*To be 'brand' they must be implemented through a corporately approved and mandated decision-making process.
*To be a 'practice' at site level, there must be evidence of sharing a practice across employees.

5.9 The Innovation Data

The following Tables (Tables 18 – 20) use the structure developed in Table 17 above to re-arrange the data into Type A and Type B phenomenon. The data is presented in table format below. Comments are provided to give a background to each identified element. Following the presentation of the data, further analysis and data are provided along with comparison to relevant theories and frameworks.

5.9.1 Type A: Multi-Site Formal Adaptations

Table 18: Type A Adaptation Category and Examples from the Data

Adaptation Category	Adaptation sub-category	Description
Type A: Multi-site formal	**A1: Corporate brand changes**	Changes to a brand standard and implemented across all sites.
	A2: Corporate brand optional changes	Changes to a brand standard that are optional across all sites based on situational characteristics.

Type	Adaptation	Site	Description and Data (if applicable)
A1: Promotions	Brand-led promotions such as: "Golden Years" (OAP Discounts), "Free Dessert or Free Starter" (Thursdays), "Mums Eat Free Fridays", "Double Up for £1", "Kids Each Eat for £1" (bank holidays)	A&B	Whilst these are mandated adaptations to the service a manager comments: "We get some rigid promotions, so with Mother's Day 'Mums Eat Free' after 4, we don't get a say and we have to do it. But I can be careful how much I advertise it, so I can choose not to put any posters up, but if a customer came in and said I have to honour it, I would. So, I can choose not to advertise and that's how you can get away with" (RES D). Some of these promotions caused overwhelming demand to spike on certain days and weekends, promoting differences in consumer behaviour, so staff and management at site level did not always welcome them.
A1: Bigger Menus	Increase in the physical size of the menu to create greater presence on table.	B	Introduced during Site 2 observations.
A1: Managing Staff budget	Movement towards zero-hour style contracts.	B	Introduced in Site 2. Staff are not paid for breaks, time spent after the official end of a shift and casual workers are not given guaranteed minimum hours.

Type	Adaptation	Site	Description and Data (if applicable)
A1: Table Service	Significant change to service cycle with order and payment now provided at the table, instead of at the bar.	B	Introduced during Site 2 observations. Payment is made at the end of the meal, not at the beginning. This precipitated a significant number of adaptations and changes and was eventually withdrawn as a process innovation (see later section).
A1: Staff Tipping	Frontline waiting staff collect their own tips from their own zone (of tables)	B	Previously, staff would aggregate tips and share them between both frontstage and backstage staff. With the introduction of table service, tips from a table become 'owned' by the waiting staff who serviced it. This was to offset staff's objection that table service increased work with an increase in pay. But the consequence of this policy led to splits in the team.
A2: Ice cream display	Introduction of a false ice cream display	A&B	As a senior Manager states: "There is a bank of products that the managers can choose from, but the ones they pick should be done consistently. So, the ones they pick should all look the same, but the reality is they don't. The brand should be the same, but we have not enforced the brand as well as we could on that" (RES F).
A1: Planograms	Use of shelf management technique from the retail sector to enhance merchandising displays behind bars.	A&B	This was introduced just prior to Site 1 observations.
A2: Location specific servicescape design	Interior design (carpets, wallpaper), Use of screens/table dividers, use of steps, different levels, placement of music speakers, bar position, entrances, and customer flow.	A&B	Each legacy location had site specific constraints that meant brand format had to flex. As a Senior Manager explains: "So, you've got to keep within some brand parameters, but you have also got to have the autonomy. And then we learn and when customers say: 'we love that wallpaper', we go and put it in 20 pubs [or] 'Oh, I like that carpet'. So, we will do it on customer feedback. There is no big ego at the top saying this is how it is" (RES J).
A1: Kitchen Management system (Screens/ order control)	Implementation of digital 'tab grabber' screen system in the kitchen (shows orders – split into a 'starter' screen, 'Pass' Screen, 'Grill' Screen)	A&B	Implementation work was in progress during the Site 1 data collection phase. A senior manager states: "It was a system designed in the states and worked its way over here. In my day it was tickets and bits of paper in tab-grabbers, and it just evolved from that. [The company] that we have just bought are still on that old system and we are training these guys at the minute on the new systems" (RES F).

Type	Adaptation	Site	Description and Data (if applicable)
A2: Kitchen Design	Site specific changes to accommodate brand standard cookline and technology	B	A senior manager explains: "We build…template kitchens so every brand-new business that we now build there is a template square footage, with a cookline that is 8ms long that will have equipment that is A-Z on it exactly the same that costs £150,000 for arguments sake. But the [Site X] kitchen is a 30-year-old pub that has [its kitchen] shoehorned in a corner in a business that was built on butties, bacon rolls and pies. So that looks completely different to the [Site Y] down the road that was built 'fit for purpose' [RES F]. The design of the kitchen changes the extent to which cooks are required to have autonomy in delivering the brand standard – those that are unable to have the 'template' need more skill and experience than those that operate in a purpose-built site. This may have had an impact at Site 2 which was a legacy site.
A1: TV Booths	Tables in TV booths so kids can watch TV while they eat incorporating a branded TV Channel for Kids	A&B	Introduced just prior to Site 1 data collection as a permanent feature in every site. All sites have TVs – for example showing sports events – but it was only recently that booths were made to have table specific TVs with the brands own TV channel of cartoons.
A2: Kids Facilities	Mini Ball Pool / Computer Gaming area / Sweet Vending / Toy Vending	A&B	Introduced just prior to Site 1 data collection as options for each site. Site 1 had a mini ball pool and computer gaming area, whilst Site 2 did not due to the location of the Play Barn next door.
A1: Hosting	Introduced as part of the Table Service initiative	B	A team leader at Site 2 explains the issue with Hosting: 'We are meant to have a host between 12-3pm, and 5-8pm every day. We can't… we can't do that' (RES1). Due to labour cuts, the host is expected to clear tables as well, but this then means at peak times they are unable to host (welcome guests and allocate tables/staff) effectively.
A2: 'Cakes'	This was a concept to provide a takeaway option of slices of cake for customers – introduced as free standing large, refrigerated glass cabinets to promote indulgent cakes.	A&B	Some managers viewed this initiative as time consuming for staff to implement. A regional senior manager explains: 'I put [it] in every business - other regions think it's a pain…and don't want to do it. So, there is still that element of flex' (RES J)
A1: Tall fridges and cabinets	Use of countertop taller glass fronted fridges and cabinets to display drinks	A&B	A Senior Manager gives their view of this initiative: "Our Retail Director has a passion for having a tall countertop tall bottle bar fridge

Type	Adaptation	Site	Description and Data (if applicable)
	and food as a merchandising concept.		behind every bar. Since he came on board everyone pub has to have one. Whether it's the right thing to do or not is debatable. I quite like them to be fair, but whether they will improve sales is another thing" (RES J).
A2: Auditions	Use of an auditioning approach to recruit staff rather than "interviews"	A&B	The approach to recruitment introduced by a regional manager.
A2: 'Smokehouse'	Introduction of smoked food via a 'smokehouse' concept like barbecuing	N/A	A pilot was introduced to a small number of sites towards the end of the research study but was later withdrawn as an option. Neither site took part in the pilot, but the Site 2 manager was aware of the option.
A2: Sweets for kids	Children are given free sweets (if they eat all their food) – parents discretion.	A	Available at Site 1 but not at Site 2
A2: Balloons for kids	Children are given a choice of balloon and pick their preferred colours.	A	Available at Site 1 but not at Site 2
A1: Cook offs	All staff involved in new menu tasting activity	A	For each menu change (circa twice per year) a senior manager explains: "We have introduced this approach over the last three menu changes and made it a brand standard…there has always been a 'cook-off' – so you get the team in to try the food – but it's a huge amount more time, energy, focus, cost actually, to do that now, but the output as a result is significantly improved (RES F). Adopted at Site 1 but not at Site 2 due to staff shortages and cost.
A1: Table settings	Changes in table setting layout to make the table settings easier to clean and manage	A&B	The position of the table elements was changed just prior to Site 1 data collection. A waiter explains: "The way you set it up, you know, so the menus are like this [points], the salt and pepper are here, everything is very particular and the same – and they have got to be in the middle of the table" (RES A).
A2 Cutlery buckets / boxes	Previously, each table was set out with place settings, which was changed to a metal bucket with more settings than needed, then	A	At Site 1 this was introduced as an adaptation just prior to the data collection phase as a Type A1 brand standard adaptation. As cutlery needed to be constantly replaced on table settings due to customers using cutlery from prepped tables – it was quicker to provide a bucket and let

Type	Adaptation	Site	Description and Data (if applicable)
	changed to two wooden boxes – one for cutlery and one for sauces.		customers select the cutlery they need. However, the "buckets" used by Site 1 were small wooden boxes and were replaced with metal buckets that were easier to clean and maintain, thus moving to a Type B1 adaptation.
A1: Closing the site	Use of physical check/tick sheets to help with managing site closes in the evening.	A&B	Implementation of a variety of close down sheets for different areas (Bar, tables, kitchen, play area, outside etc.) by staff. Used at Site 1, but not used at Site 2 until a replacement manager arrived at the end of the data collection period.

5.9.2 Type B: Informal Single Site Adaptations

Table 19: Type B1 Adaptations and Examples from the data

Adaptation Category	Adaptation sub-category	Description
Type B: Informal	B1: Single site practice adaptations	Adaptations to practice at team level and site level with informal managerial agreement.

Type	Adaptation	Site	Description and Data (if applicable)
B1 Customer paying process	Asking large groups to pay at the Bar Till, not at the table, or to insist bill separation is done individually at the Bar Till.	B	Contrary to the brand standard, it was common practice for waiting staff to circumvent service cycle touchpoints at busy times to achieve customer flow. For example, a waitress at Site 2 explains: "If they are larger tables and they pay separately, it's not worth us doing table service because they will just get more confused... [so if we]… have a [table of] 25 when they've all wanted to pay separately… we've said, go to the bar because it's a lot easier, for them and for us. Then we can serve other people instead of getting other people to wait ages while we're doing the bigger tables" (RES 5).
B1 Cooking to order	Cooking food items to order (for example, previous practice was to cook sausages in one batch, and then reheat to order)	B	Staff at Site 2 viewed a range of food items were inedible pre-cooked and reheated and customer feedback confirmed this. Time wasted reheating was avoided and customer complaints about food reduced.

Type	Adaptation	Site	Description and Data (if applicable)
B1 Customer ordering	Change in the positioning of menus closer to the entrance to change customer ordering behaviour	A&B	Menus were provided by the tills as standard. However, it was agreed at Site 1 to position them at the entrance as well. As a waitress explains at Site 1: "If a customer walked in and saw it with the menus all the way over here [points at the Bar tills] the new way kinda makes more sense and the customers feel it is more welcoming" (RES A). Independently Site 2 also did the same, but this was to speed up the ordering process at peak times (so that customers know what their order was before being asked by waiting staff) and to give queuing customers something to do.
B1 Customer ordering	Introduction of a mobile outside bar to enable customers to order quicker	B	Due to the size and scale of the beer garden at Site 2, during the summer months, a cash only outside mobile bar was created to sell a limited selection of drinks (larger, soft drinks, wine).
B1 Communicating with staff	Use of social media page to communicate with staff	B	At Site 2, the Site Manager created a Facebook page just for the site to enable better communication between staff and management regarding shifts, rotas, and to flag potential cover requirements and other information.
B1 Managing orders outside	Wooden spoon system used for tables outside (that don't have numbers)	A	Site 1 introduced a wood spoon system as external tables were not numbered. It enabled waiting staff to quickly identify tables outside with food orders.
B1 Customer queuing and ordering process	Practice to allocate tills on a bar either specifically for just drinks or specifically for food orders, with a view to create a split queuing system for customers.	B	At Site 2, the bar was 'L' shaped. To speed up ordering, food orders were taken 'around the corner' because there were two tills compared to one on the other side. A team leader explained the rationale: "We keep drinks at the front of the bar because there is one till at the front of the bar and two tills at the side [where food orders are taken] so more people order food and its more time consuming so it's easier to keep the orders coming through that way… On a weekday you wouldn't need to keep it separate but we try to do it at the weekend. [Our site manager] doesn't really like the sign that we have put on the front - you know we've put a sign saying, 'food orders around there'" (RES 2).
B1 Customer paying process	Tables cleared after payment	B	At Site 2, to identify if a customer (or table) has paid, waiting staff agreed not to clear a table until the payment had been made. This was to ensure that all staff knew that a table that wasn't

Type	Adaptation	Site	Description and Data (if applicable)
			cleared, but had finished, were probably due to pay. It also helped with 'bill runners' – i.e., customers who would try to leave before paying, which would be obvious to waiting staff if they tried to leave an uncleared table.
B1 Clearing tables	Staff use kitchen trolley to aid more efficient table clearance	B	At Site, due to the scale and size of the location, waiting staff used a table clearing trolley to quickly clear tables. The trolley was a piece of kitchen equipment and not meant for this purpose.
B1 Staff / Customer interaction	Unspecified in the brand standard but seen as a core attribute of any hospitality staff member, staff exercise discretion and competence in building rapport and relationships with customers.	A&B	At Site 1, a previous site manager had seen this as unproductive and warned staff not to talk to customers other than functionally, whilst the new Site 1 manager saw 'being friendly' as an integral part of the brand standard, possibly recognising the importance of repeat custom at the site, allowing staff to chat to customers. In Site 2, due to labour shortages, this was only observed in 'calm' periods.
B1 Managing Customer Flow	Temporary closure of table areas and/or tables during peak periods or due to staff shortages.	B	At Site 2, due to staff shortages, staff resorted to closing areas down, resorting to using furniture and false table reservation signs to act as barriers to customer areas to indicate they are closed in an attempt to manage customer demand.

Table 20: Type B2-B4 Adaptations and Examples from the Data

Adaptation Category	Adaptation sub-category	Description
Type B: Informal	**B2: Individual or team-based problem solving**	Acting to resolve a problem or improving their skill in the moment through performativity of the service experience.
	B3: Individual experimentation of improvement ideas tested in practice	Implementing pre-conceived ideas for improvements based on personal learning, experiences and understanding.
	B4: Individual discovery-based adaptations	Discovering different ways of doing things through situation-based consequences of other adaptations.

Type	Adaptation	Site	Description and Data (if applicable)
B2 Manually re-prioritising orders	Kitchen staff override order of incoming orders to increase efficiency back-stage or to appease customers. Agreed between kitchen staff and waiting staff.	A&B	This practice occurred particularly on split ordering or where due to food production timings and access to stock, it was better to plate one type of food first than another: As a Chef at Site 1 states: 'if you want to jump a table it's up to you, you might think well that's a salad but you've got a steak below [pointing to a screen], so you might change the order around to keep the flow of food going' (RES E)
B2 Free 'extras'	Staff give-away extras to customers to avoid or modify complaining behaviours and/or to demonstrate good will.	A&B	At Site 1, free extras were being given to customers who showed repeat purchase and loyalty (for example larger portions). At Site 2, the practice was used to appease customer complaining behaviours.
B2 Labour budget averaging	Management transferring salary budgets to meet targets between months.	B	Practice entailed managers using extra staff in Month A (and overspending) to meet peak demand but paying the salary in Month B were there was an underspend and low demand. This resulted in some casual staff not receiving payments in the month they were supposed to.
B2 Non-menu meals	Chefs produce meals that are not on the menu.	A	In Site 1, there was occasion where, if able to do it from frozen stock and time permitting, kitchen staff would cook non-menu meals to customer requirements.
B2 Portioning	Staff alter food portioning on plates using their discretion.	A	Staff estimate portion sizes ignoring portion control procedures, which is faster but does lead to variations depending on the rota, and who is estimating as a waitress explains: 'So with desserts, you have to make sure that there are so many marsh mallows in a glass so stuff like that, I don't bother with it, I don't have the time to weigh it out. I just go: 'well I need 10 of that and 12 of this and other times I just chuck my hand in and hope for the best…' (RES C). Some staff favour young families, increasing food portions for kids particularly on desserts.

B2 'Pass' practices	Kitchen staff review plating pictures onscreen at the pass and adapt to their own style and preference.	A&B	Arrangement of elements on the plate will change according to their own expertise, tools, equipment to hand etc.

B2 Fixing servicescape issues	Management team engage in fixing servicescape and equipment issues on-site	B	In Site 2, due to either budget cuts or because of time, management staff would take on small fixes and repairs themselves to avoid loss of service rather than using the official maintenance person which took longer and was an above-the-line cost.
B2 Using friends	Staff use friends onsite to help with certain tasks	B	In Site 2, for example, there were instances where staff friends would come at the end of a busy shift for a social drink and help clear up so staff could leave on time. This practice also extended to friends of team leaders and supervisors.
B3 Bar bottle display	Re-organisation of bar bottles in zig-zag fashion	B	At Site 2, during a period of calm, a barman re-organises his bar display to enable full product merchandise to be displayed where shelf footprint is a problem using a zigzagged pattern of bottles. This idea was quite severely rejected by the site manager as the Barman explains: '[The manager] has come in today [and said] … 'You can't have the bottles like that because they all have to be block and in line!!'… When [the manager] is in a bad mood [they] will just moan at you… for nothing!' (RES 1)
B4 Voiding orders	Enabling the voiding of orders without supervisory or management approval.	B	With the introduction of table service, by payment being taken at the end of the process, the "order" on the system is not paid which enables staff to void items without recourse to management - 'voids' usually require supervisor approval (to stop ordered items being delivered without payment which has consequences for income and could signal deviant behaviour). This benefitted waiting staff by speeding up the resolution of problems at point of payment - for example mistakes, undelivered items, or items of food customers have complained about.

Further detailed analysis is provided in later sections. One particular 'Type A' adaptation – 'Table Service' is highlighted as a particular disturbance and discussed below as a special case.

5.9.3 Table Service

Before analysing the innovation and adaptation data further in this thesis, the Researcher encountered evidence of a major change to the Brand standard detailed above as 'Type A1 – Table Service'. Whilst the

initiation of the change to Table Service was corporately mandated, the variation caused a series of informal practice adaptations that were of interest to the research study.

Table Service was an attempt to take the value proposition of Full House Ltd more up-market better reflecting changing consumer requirements in the wider casual dining sector. Table service simply involves moving the order taking and customer payments from the Bar (which used traditional cash tills as order input and payment devices), to the table using handheld Wi-Fi enabled iPads. But in so doing fundamentally changed the way the service operated as detailed in Table 21 below.

Table 21: Table Service – the main differences

Service cycle element	Full House Ltd Old Service	Full House Ltd NEW Table service
Finding a table	Customers found their own table, noted the table number and went to the bar to order and pay	Customers were met by a host*, allocated a table, taken to the table and seated, and asked for their order.
Ordering food and drinks	At the Bar via Barman using a cash till	At the table via waiting staff using Wi-Fi enabled iPads.
Payment	Paid in advance based on the order at the cash till at the same time as ordering food	Paid at the end of the meal using Wi-Fi enabled iPads, bill printed and taken to the table by waiting staff. Customers given time to check the bill before paying.
Food delivery	Brought to the table by Food Runners	Brought to the table by Food Runners.
Drinks	Customers collected their drinks from the bar, prepared by Bar Staff	Brought to the table by Floor staff*, prepared by Bar Staff.
Additional orders (extra drinks, food etc.)	Customer orders and pays at the bar	Waiting staff take orders at the table using Wi-Fi enabled iPads, with payment at the end of the meal at the table.

The profound impact this had on Site 2 was in part due to the initiative's ripple effect on a wider variety of the service cycle's sub processes and routines as can be seen in the table above. The initiative changed key experiential touchpoints, changing the nature of the relationships between customers and employees, and between frontline staff and their management.

Initially staff were told that additional labour would be brought in to ensure the launch went well and the service adaptation was properly embedded into the cycle. Staff were told that it would generate significant tips, and these could be kept and shared amongst the shift staff rota. Reactions to the introduction varied amongst staff with a variety of opinions expressed as follows:

> With allowing more staff on and stuff like that…because of this new table service, it's been fantastic. It's been absolutely great. Such less stress. I do think it's a good thing. Even today when we were rammed earlier, although we were all running around doing a lot, it wasn't as much to do. It felt like a lot less pressure in that sort of sense. (RES 10)

> It's alright now we've adjusted. It's just a lot of change to try and get used to in a short space of time. (RES 6)

> I think it will take a while for that [table service] to get around because, of all the years I've been in here, people know it is just literally you just go to the bar and order. So, table service isn't really a given…(RES11)

> I think the route they're trying to go down with table service [is] to create it a bit more up-market. That's a big thing. Obviously, I love it here, but without downgrading, it is food for a tenner. It's what it is really…it works. (RES12)

As the service continued into the following months, it became apparent during interviews with staff and on-site observations, that the table service initiative was causing staff distress and anxiety for a variety of reasons. These problems have already been covered in previous sections but for clarity they included:

1. Lack of hosting ability to control orders and table allocations impacting on staff's ability to manage the service cycle effectively.
2. Issues with Wi-Fi connectivity and iPad software that caused waiting staff to resort to pen and paper to take orders.
3. Increasingly competitive behaviours between waiting staff incentivised by customer tipping behaviour causing unbalanced loading in table zones. However, due to growing customer dissatisfaction, the volume of tips subsequently reduced, which then disincentivised waiting staff to perform the service.
4. Seated customers bypassing waiting staff to buy drinks or food at the bar caused confusion with orders and payments.
5. Labour budgets were subsequently cut in later months making it highly challenging to deliver the labour content of table service.

These problems changed the working environment of Site 2 – it became highly intensive, and staff were overwhelmed with customer demand, particularly at peak periods. As a member of the waiting staff comments:

> "The customers are getting p*****d off with us, and it's like what do you want me to do?... If I don't laugh, I'm going to cry. It's literally one of them…We are all laughing at the moment, but we are all going to end up having a breakdown together. Something drastic is going to happen here (RES1)

Another employee at Site 2 comments on the problems of the physical layout in supporting the initiative:

> It worked in new builds because they have only got one door, so you could have one person [hosting], making sure everyone has paid because you have only got one door, but here it's just too big. We have to close off areas and put reserve signs everywhere, so we only had one area (RES 9).

The key problem was the reduced labour content of the service made it very difficult to deliver without a full team in place. A member of the waiting staff in Site 2 explains:

> We're honestly too busy at the weekend. It works in the week and is enough, it's good. You've only got a few [customers]... but you come in on the weekend, you've got a table of 12, you've got a table of 18, you've got a table of 14…[it] …doesn't work (RES 4).

Site 2 continued to suffer significant problems with implementing the new initiative resulting in high levels of staff sickness absence in all areas and management. Cover for site management was brought in several times but, cover management decisions for rotas reduced staff trust. The initiative was withdrawn across all sites, six months after launching it, suggesting the problems encountered by staff at Site 2 were widespread. Management failed to resolve the problems (as has been discussed earlier) and focused instead on delivering the service cycle as planned despite the evidence it was failing. The Researcher saw repetition of service failure on a number of occasions. Staff frustrations boiled over into some of the comments in the interviews and in their interactions with other staff and their customers.

As a Type A adaptation to an existing service, implemented corporately, table service triggered a whole series of further adaptations as staff sought to cope with consequences in their workplace. Those staff who were able to work flexibly and were more confident appeared to embrace the initiative, but eventually Site 2 staff became overwhelmed.

5.9.3.1 Table Service - Reflection

From a theoretical perspective, this was a first order routine change to a zero-order routine that failed, and the system reverted to the original zero-order routine. From an activity system perspective, the activity

system at site level was momentarily disturbed by a change in the activity system at organisational level, causing the object to change (as discussed earlier) with the repercussions discussed above. The zero-order routine was able to be adapted initially, but subsequent first order reductions in labour causing staffing issues were not resolvable by frontline staff. From a dynamic capability perspective, the first order decision to move to table service triggered staff to demonstrate an enhanced level of practice-based capabilities as defined earlier, but the rigidities in the first level routines (i.e. adherence to the service cycle, adherence to budgets, diminished opportunities for training support, situation specific rigidities such as poor Wi-Fi, multiple entrance points and table layout complexity) increased the double-bind that management found eventually unmanageable in Site 2. As the first level adaptation was eventually withdrawn six months later across the whole brand, it suggests similar issues were represented in other sites. The enhanced capabilities identified demonstrate change and development of site employees in a variety of ways reflecting how the situation produced them to become more flexible, creative, and improvisatory in their behaviours.

5.9.4 Summary

The data in the tables above suggest that there is both formal and informal innovation manifesting as employee attempts at problem solving that lead to adaptations in practices undertaken at different levels in the organisation (individual, team, site and multi-site). The data also points to differences occurring to the level of adaptive activity between Site 1 and Site 2 driven by situational differences as identified in the Situational Analysis such as cost cutting, the introduction of table service, the human capital available, and physical layout of the servicescape. On balance, the adaptations enforced as Type A compared to those that are Type B suggest that Site 2 faced a significantly more complex problem space.

Many of the identified adaptations are to cut corners aimed at delivering labour and time savings, particularly in the kitchen of Site 2 which had the greatest staff shortages. Similarly, kitchen staff were most likely to adapt processes based on their own discretion possibly reflecting their higher levels of self-determination (Deci and Ryan, 1985) based on their intrinsic motivation and personal self-efficacy (Cetin and Askun, 2018) developed through more formal training and technical expertise (as part of their professional development embedded in the 'chef' occupation). However, Bar and Floor staff also exercised some discretionary judgements such as when they appeased complaining customers with compensatory food items, or treated kids to extras on desserts, and made other adaptations as noted in Type B1-B4 above.

Staff also showed creativity in developing ideas, testing ideas, and putting them into practice. For example, the use of wooden spoons in Site 1 to manage customer orders outside, the unofficial zoning and closing of different areas to manage demand at Site 2, the production of non-menu-based meals by Chefs in Site 1 to reward customer loyalty, and the attempt to redesign a bar merchandising display in Site 2. Similarly,

employees used whatever "was at hand" reflecting the concept of bricolage (Levi-straus, 1962) for example using trolleys to clear tables. Not least, the evidence of rule bending and breaking by many staff at all levels demonstrates the propensity of staff to be creative when tasks and situations demand it.

5.9.4.1 Theoretical Comparisons

The problem solving exhibited by staff reflects research studies in the literature that investigate employee's innovative work behaviours. For example, innovative work behaviour is defined by Janssen (2000:288) as "the intentional creation, introduction and application of new ideas within a work role, group or organisation, in order to promote role performance, the group, or the organisation". Similarly, Alzyoud et al. (2017:4) defines employee innovative behaviour as an "employee's deliberate behaviour to generate and/or implement new and creative ideas into his or her workplace that can improve work or solve problems". Eliyana and Christiananta (2020) researched innovative work behaviours in the Spanish hotel industry after the 2009 global financial crisis concluding that innovative work behaviours impact positively on medium to long term firm performance. Similarly, Campo et al. (2014) identified that the innovative work behaviour of hospitality employees is recognised as an important factor to organisational success and long-term performance. Slatten and Mehmetoglu (2011) researched the innovative behaviours of frontline staff in the hospitality industry. Their study reviewed the link between innovation and individual creativity and its antecedents, identifying staff empowerment, clear company vision and employee commitment as potentially linked with employee creativity, concluding that "frontline employees not only produce novel and useful creative ideas in their interactions with customers, but they also clearly put these ideas into real action in their work role" (Slatten and Mehmetoglu, 2011: 265). In Gonzalez-gonzalez and Garcia-Almeida's (2021: 93) research study of employee driven innovation in hospitality firms, they identified that the role of employee suggestions for improvement and new ideas are a key source of innovation, suggesting that "the creative ideas put forward by employees… contribute to innovation, productivity and the long-term success of hospitality companies". Their study also highlighted how the leading French hotel chain, Accor, developed an online tool to capture innovation from its employees implementing over 2000 ideas suggested by employees. They note that previously a study by Amabile (1983) identified that staff need to be motivated to make suggestions – and that skills in creativity per se, skills in a discipline and task motivation (such as task-based problem solving and task success) were significant drivers. Yet researchers have not demonstrated how these collective practices come about, or the mechanisms by which they may impact on a firm's dynamic capabilities.

Whilst the Type A innovations are predominately process led, they result in practice-based adaptations as the system attempts to return to the status quo or equilibrium point. For example, table service was a key disruption with ensuing process and practice-based adaptations by staff. However, there were no accompanying organisational or managerial innovations apparent to support the implementation for

example, the only change in 'benefits' was to allow staff with their zones to accept tips – but this disincentivised collaboration and was divisive within the team structure. Whilst staff thought this was a good idea at first, it soon became apparent that it had unintended consequences in Site 2. The impact of tipping on food service restaurant staff motivation was investigated by Clotildah and Charity (2017: 1) and their study concluded that "tipping is a two barrelled tool where it can be a motivational tool to those who are tipped and a demotivator to those who are not tipped". Their study highlighted different types of tipping approaches. Where servers (or waiting staff) were the sole recipients of the customers gift or tip, it not only discriminated against those (such as backstage kitchen staff) who are not in direct contact with customers but also simultaneously fails to provide all members of a team with recognition of their contribution impacting on morale and staff retention. This is also noted in other studies – for example McAdams and von Massow (2017) note the resentment caused by the inequality of tip sharing or tip ownership, the negative impact on teamwork and the rivalry amongst servers for customers at peak points (McAdams and von Massow, 2017).   Similarly, recognition for problem solving at work is exemplified by the example of where an employee reconfigured a merchandising display to solve problems related to space for bottles but, was then actively discouraged from using their initiative again by management.

In addition to the informal practice-based innovation observed at Site 1 and Site 2, there were also organisational and managerial innovations. These relate to applications of new organisational methods such as when organising "internal collaboration, directing and empowering staff, building careers and compensating work with pay and benefits" (Ottenbacher and Gnoth, 2005: 214-216). Typically, research studies have identified that organisational and managerial innovations revolve around human resource management in the hospitality industry that are created to nurture employee engagement, commitment, loyalty and collaboration enhancing core competencies (Flikkema, Jansen and Sluis, 2007; Pechlaner, Fischer, and Hammann, 2005). But the evidence in the data suggests that whilst 'nurturing' was exemplified in Site 1, with better feedback about the site management from frontline employees, this was in stark contrast to Site 2. It should be noted that employee's dissatisfaction in Site 2 was largely focused on site management, rather than corporately, reinforcing the impact that site-based leadership and management has on staff engagement.

5.9.4.2 'Innovation' Findings – Concluding Remarks

Adaptations fall into four primary areas as identified in Table 11 split between informal and formal, multi-site or single site. Despite the fact this is a sample of only two sites out of a possible 200+, the use of activity system analysis, coupled with an innovation lens, reveals a significant amount of adaptation occurring and similarities in adaptations across the two sites. The adaptations are triggered by either a response to mandated system changes, or through a response to improve existing practices, or as coping mechanism in

response to overwhelming challenges due to peaks in demand. In effect, management's performance management of the site, by focusing on cost reduction, generates adaptations in practise by employees in an attempt to mitigate the challenges they face, which may or may not support the sanctioned definition of service quality. This creates a double bind situation that appears unresolvable in Site 2. Innovative behaviours are more pronounced in Site 2 partly due to the additional change of operationalising Table Service, but also due to the idiosyncratic servicescape issues mentioned before, creating a social milieu not seen in Site 1 that was purpose built. Adaptations to the service cycle (as process changes) were also supplemented with adaptations to the community of practice, (as practice changes) with the addition of increased role flexibility, multi-tasking, jumping-in, cutting corners, and being busy as enhanced practices in Site 2. Taken together as a toolkit of adaptive practices used in the moment to improve employee and customer experiences, these demonstrate potentially, an enhancement and developing reconfiguration of existing resources forming an important innovative capability to operationalise the activity system around the object.

5.9.5 Chapter Summary and Conclusions

The following table (Table 22) has been developed to summarise both the data and theoretical analysis using Activity System elements as a structure, stemming from the theoretical comparisons presented in earlier sections of the chapter.

Table 22: Summary of Factors

SUBJECT	
Factor	**From Theoretical Comparisons**
Formal Training	Provides evidence of shared practice and gives routines to follow, reduces errors and variations in service delivery, and increases propensity for employees to problem solve by transferal of cognitive load from everyday tasks to consider improvement opportunities leading to increase in innovative behaviours. Supports self-confidence, self-esteem and self-efficacy at work, develops credibility with peers.
Informal learning	Employees learn through communities of practice, legitimate peripheral participation (novice/expert), learning through observing, imitation, role models, increasing confidence.
Job Satisfaction	Increases for employees with greater self-efficacy, strong social ties and are rewarded fairly for their work, working in a supported working environment.
Socialisation	Social ties and relationships with peers supporting informal learning. Requires opportunities in the workplace for social interaction that drives trust and mutual respect, and better communication. Employees recruit friends and partners as a coping mechanism.

Human Resource Management	Role of HRM is foregrounded in Hospitality sector to support innovative behaviours and innovation.

OBJECT	
Factor	**From Theoretical Comparisons**
Employee Motivation	Role of targets and goals in generating motivation for skill development such as role flexibility but also demotivating (i.e., tip sharing practices).
Workloads	High intensity workloads motivate and trigger coping strategies at work.

COMMUNITY	
Factor	**From Theoretical Comparisons**
Social Capacity	Development of social capacity through social interaction, relationships, and social ties support employees at work, increasing staff morale creating social capacity for change, linked to staff retention, loyalty, self-esteem and employee health and wellbeing. Increases propensity for reciprocity at work. Particularly more important for 'new-commers' who need to 'fit in' and integrate into work routines quickly.
Knowledge Sharing	Improved knowledge absorption, provides greater diversity of viewpoints and improves problem solving at work, leading to knowledge creation, and improved creative self-efficacy and creativity at work.

DIVISION OF LABOUR	
Factor	**From Theoretical Comparisons**
Leadership	Authentic leadership linked to increased innovative behaviours, reduces psychological fear, improves self-efficacy, increases propensity for freedom to express ideas and opinions, empowers employees to explore and take risks.
Flexibility	Disciplinary flexibility supports competency building leading to self-efficacy and self-esteem at work.
Working environment	Challenging work environment supports innovative behaviours, but overwhelming high intensity workloads reduce innovative behaviours, creativity and problem solving at work, and reduces employee's sense of fair treatment.

RULES	
Factor	**From Theoretical Comparisons**
Volitional Rule Breaking	Challenges and 'double bind' situations generate volitional rule breaking increasing innovative and adaptation behaviours.
Jay customers	Customer rule breaking becomes normalised within the customer community and increases employee work related stress and anxiety.

Normalised high intensity work loads	High workloads are normalised, leading to regular 'burnout', higher staff sickness absence and more extremes of behaviours exhibited by staff and customers.

MEDIATING ARTEFACTS	
Factor	**From Theoretical Comparisons**
Technology	Automation of routines reduces skill requirements of tasks, required competency levels and task complexity.

Based on the Table 22 above there appear to be related factors that could be potentially linked to provide a better explanation of what is driving innovative behaviours and the development of innovative practice capabilities in the workplace. These elements are identified below, linked together based on a combination of research-based factors identified by scholars in their respective fields (as identified in the theoretical comparisons of each activity system element) and the data from the case study that surfaced relational links.

1. **Leadership factors**

Leadership	Budgets, Targets and Goals	Workloads	Management Support	Employee Motivation	Job satisfaction	Leadership Style - Risk taking, Rule Breaking	Freedom to explore and experiment

2. **Socialisation and Social Capacity Factors**

Socialisation and Social Capacity	Interaction and working relationships	Trust, Confidence, Communication, Self-esteem, and Self-efficacy	Work related stress and anxiety / social support at work	Goodwill and reciprocity at work	Psychological Fear	Coping Practices

3. **Learning and Development Factors**

Learning and Development	Formal Training	Informal Learning	Knowledge Sharing	Creative self-efficacy	Problem solving capability

4. **Innovation Factors**

Innovation	Deskilling	Awareness of problems, errors and failure	Opportunity for problem solving	Role of reward and recognition systems	Leadership style

Innovation outcomes are as a result of knowledge creation through practice development reflecting the ontological perspective of this thesis that innovative outcomes are constantly produced as part of everyday activity in organisations, rather than seeing activity, routines, or processes as stable or homogenous phenomena (Lounsbury et al., 2007). The researcher proposes that the data presented in this chapter supports this view. In addition, factors to support staff's innovative behaviours have also been surfaced. Firstly, based on the factors above, socialisation and social capital generate social capacity to cope with the working environment. The importance of social interaction to support coping practices at work is evidenced in the data presented. Leadership can provide staff with appropriate signals that they have the freedom to explore and experiment by reducing psychological fear of failure. Learning processes support the development of creative self-efficacy and problem-solving skills and collectively, social capital, leadership and learning all support developing innovative behaviours at work and innovation capability. The Researcher proposes that in a Hospitality environment learning, leadership and socialisation are the more significant 'dynamic' aspects of innovation as a process, discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

This Chapter provides a consolidating discussion of informal practice-based service innovation as the concluding part of the thesis highlighting the thesis' contribution to theory and practice. In addition, the Chapter provides a discussion of the limitations of the thesis and explores the implications and recommendations for future research.

In Chapter One, the defined management problem(s) triggered the initial impetus of this thesis, which was to explore how multi-unit organisations with significant inter-organisational complexity due to geographically dispersed locations adapt and customise a standardised brand experience to meet local level needs whilst also providing a tailored experience at individual level (Tsolmon and Patacconi, 2022). Limited research exists that looks at how this happens in practice. For example, service experiences are considered socially complex events imbued with social meaning (Ratcliffe et al., 2019) and as such front-line employees are required to tailor and customise the service experience to the specific needs of individual customers (Sundbo, 2010). This leads to employees innovating beyond the brand standard (Engen, 2016) and often on-the-fly (Sangiorgi, 2009). But this innovative activity is largely unsanctioned (Demir and Knights, 2021) and highly improvised (Ohlin, 2018). Whilst the extant literature recognises customisation and adaptation happens in practice resulting in service innovations (Holmlid, 2007, Blomkvist et al., 2010), how this happens through the actions of frontline-employees, their team leaders and their unit managers is largely unresearched as is the potential to harness this as an innovation capability to better service the needs of the organisation. Thus, the research aims and objectives of this thesis were:

Research Study Aim:

To build a framework for improving the effective management of localised variation-adaptation activity within the service experience and service design and development within a multi-unit service organisation.

Research Objectives:

- To examine service design and innovation processes, systems, and networks in relation to service organisations.
- To investigate the relationships between sources of variation, customisation and adaptive practice and service innovation.

- To examine and develop approaches that could potentially enhance service innovation at the service interface.

In order to fulfil those objectives, the Researcher undertook a case-study of a multi-unit hospitality company across two sites, one purpose-built and the other a legacy site. The Researcher collected data on informal service innovation, its antecedents, the context for it, and innovation outcomes whilst investigating two key questions:

1. How does informal service innovation happen as a bottom-up phenomena in a hospitality organisation?
2. Does this process contribute to the development of institutional structures to support service innovation capability?

The researcher used Activity Theory and an Activity System perspective (Engeström, 1987) to analysis the data creating a structure that surfaced the tensions and contradictions in the data. The Researcher then reviewed data through two key lenses, practice and innovation, in line with the research focus of the study. The Researcher uncovered a number of factors that were related to the phenomena as outlined in the previous chapter proposing a 'calm to chaos' model that included situation statuses or phases of the activity system. Further concluding remarks now follow to answer the research questions to build a framework that meets the requirement of the research study aims and objectives.

6.2 Research Question 1 (RQ1)

RQ1: "How does informal service innovation happen as a bottom-up phenomena in a hospitality organisation?"

6.2.1 Discussion

The data clearly surfaced how frontline employees (waiting and kitchen staff, team leaders and site managers) employ wide ranging coping practices to simultaneously: (a) put into practice mandated processes at work aligned with the brand standard and; (b) mitigate the expansive variation generated as a consequence of (a) within the confines of their workplace, solving problems on the hoof either incrementally improving or developing their existing service practices and/or creating new ways of doing things. The basic premise of the brand standard was that it applied in all geographically dispersed situations as a 'standard' but the evidence of the activity of the organisation simultaneously contradicted this premise.

Through the mundane repetition of service cycles, practices emerged that had the potential to become institutionalised as structures embedded in the employee context. The interplay between (a) and (b)

demonstrated recursivity in action i.e. in employing (a) and (b) the activity system was changed through its enactment by frontline employees reflecting on the effectiveness of their actions individually or collectively, generating a movement of change and development in the context and for themselves. As identified in the literature review (Chapter Two), recursivity is recognised as a building block of routine dynamics (Feldman and Pentland, 2022) and directly linked to innovation capability (Daronco et al., 2023), and it is also recognised as part of the conceptual building blocks of service ecosystem design manifesting as 'recursive feedback loops that can influence the self-adjustment of service ecosystems and forms of value co-creation' (Vink et al., 2020: 172; Chandler et al., 2019).

Thus, in researching 'informal practice-based innovation' the grounded data points towards a focus on the recursive mechanisms that work in practice in an organisation to produce something novel, such as mundane everyday routines and practices embedded in activity systems. In essence, the activity system acts as a recursive mechanism to enable change and transformation on-the-hoof in an organisation – service cycle processes and systems are enablers of innovation and change causing variation and adaptation, rather than just representing standardising institutional structures. This is clearly demonstrated by the innovation outputs of repeated routines that emerged in the data of this thesis captured by Table 16 (the Innovation Matrix) whilst the activity system's performance of mundane routines is captured according to Figure 41, 'The Calm-to-Chaos Model'. This thesis concludes that when viewed together, the proposed Innovation Matrix and the Calm-to-Chaos Model provide part of a framework for exploring the recursivity of activity in action and its resultant impact on informal practice-based service innovation outputs in hospitality organisations.

The specific antecedents and impacting factors that enhance the potential to generate informal practice-based service innovation were highlighted in Chapter Four. In summary, these included significant variation in both the physical environment (servicescape) and social processes of the workplace which when coupled with leadership effects, caused ripples of practice variation within and between geographically dispersed staff communities in the same organisation. Variation was generated as a consequence of variable employee self-efficacy applied in a problem-solving context. This is driven in part by social ties at work and informal learning, staff training and their experience as individuals and teams within the activity system as they utilise feedback from the system on the consequences of their coping strategies. This feedback either signalled that problems were resolved so maintaining or improving the equilibrium position of an activity system, or that actions took the system further out of balance towards chaos. Mundane repetition further informed cycles of activity as people and teams performed their roles. This exemplifies recursivity (a self-referencing enacted activity, process or routine, that changes itself in its enactment) and the force of dialectic change that drives employees attempts to resolve underlying tensions and contradictions (Vink et al., 2020, Chandler et al., 2019). Whilst some variation was adopted, other variation was rejected with leadership decision making

impacting on the potential adoption and rejection of variation. The outcome is a matrix of change incorporating overt and subtle enhancements to practice that vary in scale and type (as per the Innovation Matrix identified in Table 16). In responding to RQ1 this thesis also addresses its first research objective i.e. to examine service design and innovation processes, systems, and networks in relation to service organisations from an informal practice-based perspective.

6.2.2 Addressing the Research Problems and Gaps from Chapter Two: Innovation Theory

This thesis makes a contribution to addressing the three gaps identified in Table 3 in Chapter Two. Firstly, this thesis identifies a categorisation for informal practice-based service innovation (See the Innovation Matrix, Table 16) to address Gap 1 via the categories B2-B4 adding to the work of other innovation theorists who have categorised types of hidden or informal innovation (for example Demir and Knights, 2021; Ohlin, 2018).

Secondly, this thesis provides a methodological contribution by providing guidance to enable other researchers to identify informal practice-based service innovation (addressing Gap 2) through the Calm-to-Chaos model (Figure 41) of activity system phases within a hospitality setting. These phases provide a road map to identify activity patterns in service contexts and therefore enable service researchers to better navigate the innovation data within these phases from service contexts allied to activity systems.

Thirdly, the thesis addresses Gap 3 through the Calm-to-Chaos model (See Fig 41) by identifying the activity patterns of frontline staff that contribute to a movement of change and transformation in context. These patterns are embedded in the activity of balancing the implementation and operationalisation of a brand standard with local requirements that triggers the enactment of coping strategies such as multi-tasking and being flexible, cutting corners and rule breaking, jumping in and being busy, developing social ties, role modelling and copying behaviours through social learning.

Finally, the thesis addresses the problem identified by Salvato and Vassolo (2017) that innovation is not sufficiently modelled as an informal, disorderly, uncertain and complex social process by consolidating research in this area, investigating and surfacing the micro-mechanisms that fuel variation and adaptation whilst simultaneously providing guidance to managers as to how better manage informal practice-based service Innovation as shown later in this Chapter in Section 6.6.4.

6.3 Research Question 2 (RQ2)

RQ2: Does this process [of bottom-up informal service innovation] contribute to the development of institutional structures to support service innovation capability?

6.3.1 Discussion

In addressing this question, the extant literature is summarised and reflected on in light of the research analysis as follows. In Chapter Three the seminal papers from the extant literature suggested that routine dynamics, dynamic capability, and innovation capability constitute practices as structures of recurrent repeatable actions (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011), but fail to sufficiently account for how rigidity and change are able to occupy the same 'space' in organisations at the same time (Wright, 2013) and/or fail to explain how frontline staff are implicated in the development of these structures. As Salvato and Vassolo (2017: 1732) conclude and then ask, similarly, to Research Question 2, "how does individual level change skills and efforts aggregate to form organisational level change routines?".

In Chapter Three, Practice theory was proposed as a strong contender to support researchers to theorize around the development of capability from practices as order producing activities (Nicolini, 2012) loosely defined as types of 'novel, indeterminant, and emergent phenomena' by Feldman (2011: 1). This thesis views custom and practice as institutional structure. Therefore, in part contrast to the view proposed by Feldman (2011) but supporting the perspective of Nicolini (2012) the data in this thesis points to emerging but similar activity patterns occurring simultaneously in two different geographically dispersed sites to create order in response to enacting imposed brand standards that simultaneously also create a degree of disorder due to the requirement for their local adaptation and change.

Practice theory utilises the concept of 'reflection-in-action' (Schon, 2013) where in doing, individuals encounter troubling phenomena that forces them to make sense of it, to deal with it in the here-and-now, and then put in practice resolving actions as everyday practical coping strategies (Chia and Holt, 2006). In this thesis, data demonstrated participants 'externalised' (tested out ideas) to resolve problems in their context, as they enacted changes in routines, and then reflected on their success (internalised) through 'acting in the world' (Kaptelinin and Nardi, 2006:33). The data surfaced 'novices' in frontline staff engaging with both adaptive and developmental learning (Ellström, 2010) to become experts and utilising their developing skills in practical evaluative agency (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998) to varying degrees. These ideas of reflection driving agency is embodied in the cyclical characteristics of the calm-to-chaos model (Figure 41) where at each phase, staff practices changed according to circumstances based on their learning through their experience of doing.

The evidence demonstrates relationships of mutual constitution (i.e. phenomena are recursively related) – 'actions' transform structure (and vice versa) over time as an ongoing accomplishment. This can be seen in that in two different sites in two different contexts drove the development of practices, through mobilising practical coping strategies, that resulted in an emerging informal innovation capability. As each site attempted to implement brand standards, including the major change in standards to table service, it became apparent through mobilising new ideas to cope with the changing context that there was an unresolvable problem or problems (or contradictions). This shared understanding both individually and then collectively that it was unresolvable led to the withdrawal of the 'troubling phenomena' (i.e. table service) recursively returning the situation operationally to the original point of equilibrium (prior to the introduction of table service). However, the equilibrium point had moved because in attempting to cope, teams had transformed their skills and experience learning how to do things in different ways leaving a legacy capability in the sites that were affected.

This thesis proposes based on the evidence, that the process of bottom-up informal innovation only contributes to the development of institutional structures such as capabilities if patterns of routines and practices that underpin the capability are retained. In this thesis, due to higher levels of staff churn in part due to context and less effective leadership at Site B, learning and experience was lost giving no lasting advantage, as opposed to Site A which demonstrated evidence of more effective staff retention and leadership. Within the service context, particularly the Hospitality sector, this thesis supports the idea that innovation capability is not wholly retained in prescribed brand structures (signs, symbols, tools, environments and processes) but in the emerging practice structures of front-line staff that develop out of the routine and repetitive enactment and performance of service delivery. Thus, in site B, staff seemed ill equipped to escape the calm to chaos cycle which persisted.

In considering the literature from Chapter Two and Chapter Three, the above process reflects structures of organisational learning i.e. adaptive, developmental and expansive learning that co-exist within in communities of practice (Ellström, 2010; Engeström, 1999). In this instance in Site B, adaptive learning (the mastery of existing tasks and maintenance of routines) was insufficient to resolve the issues because the problems were beyond the experience of the community to resolve them effectively and there was insufficient space given to allow developmental learning (to develop new practices) due lack of social ties to generate social capacity, a high staff churn rate, a significant staff absence rate and poor leadership. In Site A, due to better working conditions, leadership, social capacity and staff retention, teams were better equipped and resourced to engage with expansive learning associated with creativity and innovation (Ellström and Nilsen, 2014) reflecting Ellström's 'logic of development' – the production of variation, improvisation, developmental learning and transformation at work (Ellström, 2010). The evidence supports Daronco et al., (2023) research findings that leadership and human resource management are propensity characteristics of innovation capability. In line with Salvato and Vassolo (2017) and Laaksonen and

Peltoniemi (2018) this thesis has explored the way in which a dynamic capability – Innovation Capability – as an organisational structure, has emerged from organisational level routines at both an individual and a collective level accounting for how stability and change (Helfat et al., 2009) occur simultaneously.

The data confirms aspects of Di Stefano et al.'s (2014) drive train model as it highlights the social complexity of resources and capabilities and the dynamic system of movement and its recursively driven impact. The thesis identified zero order, first order and higher-level capabilities (in line with Helfat and Winter, 2011) clarifying how collective activity moderated by social complexities generates discretionary social effort that enhances productive capacity enabling greater opportunity for exploring problems and resolving them. The thesis supports the work of Feldman and Pentland, (2022) and Feldman et al. (2021) in that it identifies the reproduction of the routine, as a performance in changing social contexts, creates nuanced changes to the actions and patterns in actions, creating new knowledge and an emerging trajectory of routine change (Hurtado et al., 2022). These performative cycles epitomise the service industry (Pikkemaat et al., 2019) and its subset, the hospitality sector (Hutton, 2022) which is why cyclical repetition is an enabler of innovation in these contexts.

The thesis supports the concept of routines as structures that produce action patterns generating a performative cycle (Feldman and Pentland, 2022), as depicted in the Calm to Chaos model for a hospitality organisation. These are not standard operation procedures or SOPs (D'Addero et al., 2021) but micro mechanisms within performative cycles that drive informal learning primarily through unintentional but reciprocated knowledge sharing (Kodom-wiredu et al., 2022) via collaborative interpersonal and team orchestration (Ystrom and Agogule, 2020) that has embedded dialectical, social and proximal learning mechanisms in a context of significant social interaction (Zhao et al., 2020; Marabelli and Newell, 2014) both frontstage and backstage. The activity system within this context becomes the primary recursive environment, in which participants generate informal service innovation outcomes (as shown in the Innovation Matrix and Calm to Chaos model). This is particularly significant because hospitality is highly labour intensive and dependent on interactions for service delivery (de larrea et al., 2021).

Effectively innovation capability is derived from frontline employees' potential to moderate through their practices, like a self- governing mechanism, the impact of new developments to ensure they are consistent with the existing system but only if the new developments are within the scope of their existing experience, skills, and resources. And where the moderation fails, front line employees may be able to develop alternative practices through developmental learning, if given the opportunity to do so, that have the potential to avoid chaos. This thesis effectively provides a framework to consider complex contexts of activities and how underlying practices in these activity systems can either reinforce or overcome core rigidities in structures to resolve problems on-the-hoof. In responding to RQ2 this thesis also addresses its second research objective i.e. to investigate the relationships between sources of variation, customisation

and adaptive practice and service innovation by highlighting how underlying practice development links variation, adaptation, and innovative outcomes together.

6.3.2 Addressing the Research Problems and Gaps from Chapter Three: Practice Theory

With reference to the gaps identified in Chapter Three (Table 4), this thesis contributes to closing gaps 1-7 in a variety of ways as follows.

This thesis has clearly identified how frontline employees individually and collectively develop their practices to build capability that results in innovation outcomes, reducing Gap 1. This is most observable in the way in which staff gain mastery through repetition of their routines which builds self-efficacy and problem-solving capability, which in turn drives discretionary effort to develop ideas and find solutions on the hoof as explained in Section 6.3.1 above. This impacts collectively on how situations become moderated by the balance of skill and effort across a community of employees to hold the activity system at a specific equilibrium point or status, rather than degrading towards chaos.

With regards to Gap 2, assuming employees work towards an object that is within their capability, with the support of leadership and their wider employee community (underpinned with high levels of socialisation that builds social ties, enabling peer-to-peer informal learning), variation is more likely to reduce tensions and contradictions by resolving problems to create calm than the reverse. But if employees experience activity systems that contain unresolvable problems (because they are well beyond their inherent capability) variation is more likely to increase tensions and contradictions and lead to chaos.

Accordingly, the thesis also contributes to closing Gap 3 in identifying pre-cursory informal patterns in actions and routines that contribute to the development of informal service innovation. These patterns include the enactment of coping strategies to mitigate the expansive variation generated because of change such as multi-tasking and being flexible (working across tasks and functional areas), cutting corners and volitional rule breaking, jumping in and being busy, developing social ties, role modelling and copying behaviours through social learning. By repetitively enacting cycles of performance, individuals collectively recognise marginal gains or losses resulting from their coping strategies that create a movement of change and transformation in the activity system.

Regarding Gap 4, Innovation per se has been referred to as a dynamic capability (Helfat et al., 2009; Felin, 2012) that involves the organisation intentionally extending or modifying a firm's service offering. But how does unintentional innovative activity at individual, team and site level adapt and change services, and is this a dynamic capability? Unintentional informal innovation capability in whatever form it takes cannot be a

dynamic capability because it is, by definition, not formalised and therefore not reproduceable. However, the importance of this point, in responding to Research Question 2, is that the evidence demonstrates the reverse, i.e. that lasting institutional structures were created through informal innovation that supports the development of a dynamic service innovation capability. The evidence from this research suggests that where participant behaviours are mirrored across two distinct geographical locations independently to produce a similar result a reproduceable capability is in play as has already been outlined above in the earlier discussion to answer Research Question 2.

More specifically, the innovative work behaviours and practices identified in Site 1 and Site 2 do not have a processual timeline or logical trajectory of incremental improvement if viewed as instances in time by zooming in, but when zooming out and viewing the development timeline as a whole across both sites, the evidence does demonstrate that each time an event happened (such as a brand adaptation or a change in manager occurred for example) there were innovative adaptations made by frontline staff. The Type A data shows that specific changes were made that were new at local site level in a response to a system level change or in principle approaches as described by Feldman and Pentland (2003). The Type B data demonstrates that irrespective of Type A change events, informal adaptations were happening as part of staff's everyday practices because of informal site driven change to resolve situational characteristics reflecting theory-in-use (Argyris and Schon, 1978).

There was also evidence of data that fits with Pentland and Feldman's (2008: 244) practice-based theories of repairing, expanding, and striving routines. The data aligns with the idea of 'repairing' – that is 'making good' practices, across both Site 1 and Site 2. A more recent research study by Maag-Merki et al. (2022: 2) in the education sector looked at what happens if "routines performed by school staff fail to deal successfully with current challenges". They asked the question: "What strategies help teachers and school teams adapt dysfunctional routines so that they can, without delay, improve the fit between what they normally do and what needs to be done in the face of a challenging situation?" Maag-Merki et al. (2022: 3).

Their research specifically looked at the repairing routine put forward by Feldman and Pentland (2003) that help actors reduce unintended and undesirable outcomes when adapting to challenging situations returning a routine to stability. Their study points to both self-regulated and socially regulated theories of learning to explain the mechanism by which adaptation is successful or not. They suggest that school management teams need to implement a monitoring process that reviews and assesses how they make decisions and how they aggregate their understanding, not just whether decisions are successful or not. Whilst in a different sector, this may point towards opportunities for hospitality managers to alleviate systemic problems in their sector (for which recommendations are provided later in this Chapter).

The evidence presented in this thesis supports that there was a development of a dynamic capability in line with Ambrosini and Bowman (2009: 36) definition i.e., "repeated processes that have evolved through time" that impact upon the firm's resource base causing it to be altered, modified, renewed or changed in some way. Similarly, according to the innovation management literature identified in Chapter Two, innovation should deliver performance improvements in the form of "reducing manpower costs, improving service quality or improving organizational flexibility" (Mattsson and Orfila-Sintes, 2014: 389). Whilst the table service initiative was withdrawn there is evidence of 'improving organisational flexibility' between Site 1 and Site 2 in line with these definitions, specifically the balancing practices identified such as 'flexibility'.

The data suggests that flexibility as a capability emerged in Full House Ltd for a variety of reasons. In high intensity workspaces with significant labour specialisation, employees are motivated to ensure the service cycle tasks are undertaken productivity by all team members not only to reduce individual workload (a form of self-preservation), but also to reinforce a sense of workload fairness whilst also maximising tips to off-set low wages.

In addition, individuals show empathy for new colleagues to ensure they learn and integrate quickly recognising that by supporting them, the team meets organisational goals more effectively. This suggests that knowledge sharing is an inherent and embedded practice of transference that naturally occurs, particularly in intensive work settings such as hospitality, and employees will gravitate to buddying and mentoring as a humanistic coping response via their social relationships rather than necessarily see structured training as a solution, in lieu of support from their organisation. Those employees who are invested in the sector as a career path or who are pro-active in problem solving due to high levels of self-efficacy, identify that flexibility and multi-disciplinary understanding (working across Bar, Floor and Kitchen) resolves problems of an inadequate skill mix in the labour pool, demonstrates engagement to their managers, whilst also solving problems related to sickness/absence cover requirements. It also develops a wider range of capabilities that may enable them to develop and achieve promotion, or simply increase their propensity to be added to shifts to maximise working hours and income.

The ability to multi-task or switch between tasks is called polychronicity (Ashgar et al., 2021) and is linked to increased job satisfaction, staff engagement and retention and can increase stress tolerance at work where there is good person-organisation fit (Kaufman-Scarborough, 2017). Polychronic individuals are better "able to withstand interruptions and adapt to unexpected situations" (Ashgar et al., 2021: 129). Similarly, the act of individuals changing their role to better suit their circumstances has been identified as job crafting by Noe, Clarke and Klein (2014: 258) which "emphasizes the active role employees play in the design of their jobs by shaping the physical, emotional, relational, and/or cognitive aspects of their job tasks". Individuals who are job crafting experience "mastery feelings" (Petrou et al., 2012: 1122) leading to enhanced learning and

development, helping employees "to cope with job demands". This reflects comments from staff in Site 2 who saw benefits from learning about the different areas and actively tried to get experience in each area developing flexibility in their roles, either with or without the support of their managers.

When viewed together with the other balancing practices identified, this forms a coherent set of skills and practices to form a flexible capability and resource in the hospitality industry that can react to the changing activity system as it cycles from calm to chaos. Given that this flexibility was exhibited at both sites, and then enhanced at Site 2, this suggests that the capability is 'dynamic' (i.e., exemplifies 'resource reconfiguration'), rather than being non-reproduceable, or transient or ad-hoc. This thesis proposes that in gaining mastery of their roles, some individuals had a greater propensity to develop social ties, problem solve, reflect, mentor and share practices across their practice community and in so doing hold the service cycle at its tipping point before it descended into chaos.

The research study has identified that informal practice-based innovation as an emergent process does meet the requirements of 'dynamism' as specified by scholars in the field. Further, the research points to dynamic capabilities as having greater levels of adaptive characteristics than suggested by the extant literature. Salvato and Vassolo (2018: 1730) suggest that dynamic capabilities thinking underestimates the adaptive potential of dynamic capabilities because the prevailing interpretation is that they emerge from organisation-level routines ascribing only a limiting role to individuals. This premise has caused other scholars to suggest that researchers need to explore the individual level foundations of dynamic capabilities (Felin et al., 2015). This research study directly contributes insights and understanding to closing Gap 4 by highlighting the role of individuals who contribute recursively to changes and adaptations of practices.

In terms of Gap 5, it is important to highlight the original unique context of community eateries as identified in Chapter One. These locations facilitate complex social processes and require staff to tailor their service to meet specific customer's social needs. The shopfloor or 'front-of-house' environment acts as stage for social interaction, demonstrating to participants in a highly visual way, instantaneously, the efficacy of ways of doing things in practice. In turn, this facilitates informal learning between staff and between staff and customers, mainly through observation by peers, peer role modelling and peer-to-peer copying behaviours. In parallel, social ties are formed that increase interaction and learning, generating a propensity for individual and collective problem solving. The combination of social interaction and visual affirmation of practice efficacy in the moment drives, in cycles, informal learning that underpins innovation behaviours. In Site 2, visual affirmation of practice was impaired due to physical layout, leadership failed to adequately role model good practice, and the staff community was too large, with a high churn and sickness absence rate, resulting in poor socialisation, lack of informal learning and lower levels of innovative behaviours than Site 1.

6.4 Research Design and Analytical Frameworks – Gap 6 and Gap 7

With reference to the gaps identified in Chapter Three (Table 4), this section reports on closing Gap 6 and Gap 7. Except for a study by Kieliszewski and Anderson (2019) this thesis has combined Activity Theory and grounded analysis within a practice-based epistemology and contributes to methodological considerations outlined below primarily to enable research that can track unplanned, unintentional adaptations by front-line employees. This thesis contributes to methodological considerations specifically on the efficacy of the research design and use of Activity Theory as an analytical framework for 'situatedness' and suggests recommendations for researchers using this approach. The use of activity theory was recommended by Nicolini (2012: 119) as "particularly well suited for analysis of innovative learning at work". Similarly, Latoski and Bulgacov (2017:1) claimed that "the phenomenon of learning and innovation can be explained through activity theory". Activity Theory has surfaced the work intensive culture that structures relationships in the activity system, but also how this was an enabler in Site 1 and provided employees in Site 2 with resources that were not available institutionally.

The operationalisation of the activity system has enabled the Researcher to take a multi-perspective view in line with the philosophy of the research study, surfacing different viewpoints of the subjects participating in different roles and disciplines. The data supports how actors attempt to transform their situations and are transformed by them through everyday work practices. The data shows individuals becoming different people – in many cases, more confident, more flexible, and more skilled gaining mastery of their craft. As per the theories espoused by Rubinshtein (1986), the activity system produces them. The analysis has surfaced a process of development through social interaction reinforcing the fact that activity systems are inherently social (Nicolini, 2012: 105). But it also suggests that in overwhelming situations with high workload intensity, it can also lead to withdrawal exemplified in Site 2's higher sickness absence rate. Engeström's (1986) activity system highlights the role of a collective activity system in which people share objects through collaborative work practices reflecting the dialectic philosophy that knowledge is derived and socially acquired from collaborative effort or collective endeavour. Again, the formation of teams in both sites, reinforcing the role of collaboration (Rivers et al., 2009) as a coping mechanism to adapt practice, underpinned by social relationships, is in line with activity theory and surfaced in the data analysis. Similarly, according to Lompscher (2006: 48), Full House Ltd was exhibiting as an open system such that the introduction of table service led to "an aggravated secondary contradiction" generating "disturbances and conflicts, but also innovative attempts to change the activity".

Activity theory has enabled the Researcher to take a multi-level, (at individual, team, site and multi-site perspective) multi-subject view but also from a role and discipline perspective, both zooming into the particular and zooming out to take a holistic view. Activity Theory has provided the researcher with a

detailed narrative of 'what is going on' but also, surfaced the 'germ cell' (the inner contradiction of the activity system – (Nicolini, 2012: 115) that is driving change and transformation. As has been identified earlier, the case study of Full House Ltd has been interrogated by Activity Theory and shown, as the theory suggested, that it has been between Site 1 and Site 2, 'accumulating contradictions, conflicts and tensions over time triggering dialectal processes of resolution' (Engeström et al., 2001:137) that eventually led to a return to stability by withdrawing changes made previously. At first sight, this would suggest that whilst individual sites attempted to transform and develop, the system itself remained intact and unchanged. This is in line with dialectic logic that recognises that some deep contradictions are inevitable and unresolvable, and as such are a fundamental characteristic of systems. However, dialectic logic also sees contradictions as forces of change and transformation. In the case of Servicetime Corporation, the brand is due to be replaced at Site 2 by Service Corporation with another (to be confirmed) as it was realised that the brand did not fit with the local circumstances. Effectively this reflects a wider system change that stems from practice-based activity at site level. Many of the management staff at both Site 1 and Site 2 have since moved on, either to different industries or via promotion to different levels or brands within Service Corporation reflecting wider change and developments within the organisation's resource base. Activity Theory has provided the Researcher with an effective analytical method as a Situational Analysis (Clarke, 2005), supported by its underpinning philosophy. On this basis the Researcher recommends this as an analytical tool following the grounded analysis of data as per this study's research design.

6.5 Reflection on Epistemic Structures and Exemplary Knowledge – Gap 7

In Table 23 below, the researcher has made an attempt to summarise the ontological classes and epistemic elements of informal practice-based service innovation based on the theoretical review in Chapter Two. This is an evolving attempt to answer Saunders questions: What is acceptable knowledge in a particular field of study? (Saunders et al., 2009:112). This also party addresses Ambrosini and Bowman's (2009) criticism of dynamic capability research in that dynamic capabilities have so far been poorly specified as a phenomenon so difficult to track and measure from a research perspective.

Table 23: Epistemic Summary

Phenomena: Informal Practice-Based Service Innovation	
Ontological principle	**Activities that embody recursive structures of movement, behaviours and outcomes**
Ontological class	**Epistemic Elements [surfaced in data]**
Activity Movement	**Actions / Operations and movement [zooming in] through continuums of**:

	Order<>disorder, stability<>instability, rigidity<>flexibility, inertia<>progression, uncertainty<>certainty, ambiguity<>clarity, similarity<>uniqueness, simplicity<>complexity, disruption<>continuity, novelty<>sameness, misunderstanding<>understanding, confusion<>sense making, disagreement<>agreement, planning<>improvisation, deviation<>reproduction, rule-making<>rule breaking, unpredictability<>predictability, success<>failure, duplication<>permutation. **Turning points / driving forces / renewal [zooming out]** Crisis, discovery, institutional re-order, new techniques and technology, customer insights, competitive responses, leadership changes, staff churn and absence. **Learning cycles [zooming out]** Experimentation, trying new things, problem solving, reflection, training, mentoring, buddying. **Development of competencies [zooming out]** People: individuals / teams / communities.				
Activity Behaviours [Gerunds]	adapting altering attempting anxiety autonomy avoiding boundary - spanning building challenging co-creating collaborating	concerning connecting co-operating creating crossing discomforting discretionary distributing Engaging Expanding experimenting exploring	flexing showing-goodwill helping improvising initiative - taking interacting Isolating learning mobilising motivating open-ness	partnering problem-solving reflecting repairing resolving risking sharing socialising striving supporting	surprising tailoring taking tinkering training trusting understanding trying.
Activity Outcomes	**Things** Innovations (noun) that are new or different - ideas, artifacts (materials, symbols, language), practices / practice competencies (goal/tasks, operations) - i.e., are new to the individual or group who are using them - can be adaptations and minor modifications. **Success and Failure** Reproductions, duplications, variations, errors, problems. **Asymmetry** Movements in power and politics / status and control / disturbances and conflicts **Practices** Changes in routines, actions, operations				

6.6 Proposed Practice-Based Managerial Framework

The following section specifically addresses the overall aim of the thesis which was:

> To build a framework for improving the effective management of localised variation-adaptation activity within the service experience and service design and development within a multi-unit service organisation.

This section also addresses the third research objective which was to develop approaches that could potentially enhance service innovation at the service interface. As identified in Chapter One, due to the specific context of multi-site hospitality organisations this thesis aimed to resolve the problem for multi-site hospitality management of how to balance standardisation and customisation at the service interface, through providing a framework to better develop and manage an adaptive informal service innovation capability. The proposed framework consists of 5 elements that work together as parts of a holistic approach to solving the management problem:

1. Situation Phasing (Figure 41: Calm to Chaos Model)
2. Innovation outcome identification (Innovation Matrix as per Table 16)
3. Developmental adaptation tracking (the Epistemic Framework proposed as per Table 23)
4. Managerial Practice Implications (as detailed below in Section 6.6.4)
5. Revised Theoretical Model (as detailed below in Figure 42).

The ensuing sections explain the role of each element in the framework.

6.6.1 Element 1: Situation Phasing

The Calm to Chaos model as shown in Chapter Four (Figure 41), specifically identifies the phasing of cycles of activity (as previously explained) within a service setting. This thesis proposes that this phasing provides a typology to enable service managers to navigate their local activity environment and identify tipping points in their service cycle based on the activity at hand. More simplified measures to identify these tipping points are required to support tracking and monitoring processes which may be the subject of a future research study. The purpose of measurement provides managers with insights into the adaptive, developmental and expansive learning that may or may not be happening in the cycle and provides insights into coping practices in play by front line employees, in turn giving potential evidence of a developing practice-based service innovation capability.

6.6.2 Element 2: Innovation Outcome Identification

The Innovation Matrix enables tracked adaptations to be mapped and identified. In monitoring and tracking adaptations, in conjunction with the situation phasing, service managers at multi-site level can assess the extent of explicit and implicit/hidden coping and problem solving at hand and thus the efficacy of practice as mandated and embedded in a brand standard versus the adaptations being made by frontline employees to make the mandated brand 'work' and to enhance and improve it.

6.6.3 Element 3: Developmental Adaptations Tracking

The epistemic elements of movement, behaviours and outcomes as identified in Table 23 in this chapter, provide a common vocabulary for informal practice-based service innovation, reflecting innovation as a process, so that it is more easily identifiable and communicable. Further research is required to provide simpler indicators of informal practice-based service innovation to enable managers to support the development of this capability.

6.6.4 Element 4: Managerial Practice Implications to Support Informal Practice-based Service Innovation

The research study provides the basis for a number of potential practice recommendations for management within hospitality organisations related to informal practice-based service innovation. These recommendations are considered in relation to the complexity of developing and supporting adaptive and innovative practice. These recommendations assume that customisation is an inevitable consequence of service delivery, and that management should consider how to utilise this as an opportunity rather than see it as a threat to service quality. This requires management to consider the hospitality problem space as series of practices with situational characteristics and resource idiosyncrasies.

Managerial Practice Implication 1: Managing hospitality situations

Managers need to identify a dashboard of indicators that has predictive power for site failure or success related to staff skills and expertise. This could include:

1. A performance ratio of novice-to-expert staff as a measure of site level 'mastery' that enables minimum standards of quality to be delivered that can be shift specific. For example, a training matrix coupled with a work experience tracker would enable managers to better mitigate risk at peak periods by balancing workforce capability.
2. Enable staff to engage with a process of questioning and reflecting on working practices, and to put forward ideas, to garner support and try them in practice, for continuous improvement purposes, that increase productivity and add value to customer experiences – tracking adaptations and mapping to site performance.

3. Use on-the-hoof demand data to spot the potential for workload spikes and have strategies in place to manage cover demand to alleviate long wait times, or that temporarily reduce demand to ensure service quality is maintained.

Managerial Practice Implication 2: Socialisation

Management should consider how to support socialisation at work, to accelerate informal learning against a required competency standard as a community of practice:

1. Utilise social media to develop a site-level group to support both social and work-related communications between employees.
2. Create opportunities for employees to interact with each other socially (for example a shared break space that supports conversations, or opportunities to interact inter-site) to enhance staff networks.
3. Consider how to develop communities of practice within the working environment that enable a degree of empowerment and autonomy.

Managerial Practice Implication 3: Learning and Development

Management should consider person-organisation fit on an ongoing basis, tracking competencies to ensure staff have opportunities to develop:

1. Introduce buddy/mentor/shadowing schemes that monitor and reward informal training opportunities that can be portfolio evidenced to enable progression in the organisation.
2. Promote practice leadership that includes recognition of Flexibility (polychronic ability) or Occupational Excellence (In either Bar, Floor or Kitchen) or both.
3. Utilise online forums and meetings to support communities of practice at front-line employee level.
4. Identify a range of novice, intermediate and expert levels to show progression to staff and introduce tiered learning challenges that ensure staff experience sufficient complexity at work depending on their level of competency and preferred career track (as per '2').
5. Enable staff to learn different disciplinary areas according to their practice approach (flexibility and/or occupational excellence).

Managerial Practice Implication 4: Rewards

Management should develop reward schemes that build teams and support collaborative effort:

1. The research study suggests that tip sharing is a divisive process. Reward systems should be geared so that tipping is not seen as a significant supplement to wages and instead recognise individual/team contribution to continuous improvement. Tips collected could be used to reward staff who demonstrate innovative behaviours.
2. Reward staff according to their competencies developed through learning and development.

Managerial Practice Implication 5: Multi-site Innovation Management

Management should review the opportunities to develop inter-site learning and development:

1. Consider how to develop a mechanism that tracks site level adaptations and shared knowledge of practice across sites developing a community of practice at management level.

2. Assess sites for brand fit and specify the degree of practice variation required based on resources and location.

3. Match the leadership stye of the site manager to the specific needs of the site. For example, intrapreneurial skills are needed where brand fit is poor to enable greater contingency, whilst a process orientation that focuses on adaptive rather than developmental or expansive learning and skills is needed where brand fit is good, and efficiencies can be maximised.

4. Recruiting criteria needs to reflect the requirements for specific skills such as polychronic ability.

These recommendations are suggested to support the development of adaptive and innovative practice in hospitality organisations, specifically informal learning, socialisation and communities of practice and to provide a bottom-up feedback loop to management.

6.6.5 Element 5: Revised Theoretical Model

In Chapter Three a number of different practice theories were reviewed including: Ellström (2010) learning cycle of practice-based innovation, Engeström (1987) expansive learning cycle, Lounsbury and Crumley (2007) process model of practice creation, Feldman's (2000) theory of recursive routines, Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) spiral of learning and knowledge creation and Argyris's (2006) double loop learning theory. In both Site 1 and Site 2 the service cycle, with its written instructions and clearly specified tasks and goals, acted as both a stabilising feature and a source of change. From a stability perspective there was evidence of attempts to standardise and reproduce (the logic of production – Ellström, 2010) where staff tried to fit in, and become integrated through repetition of routines. But employees were also improvising through problem solving (the logic of development – Ellström 2010) when asked to follow routines that did not work or found ways of working that reduced workload in the face of highly intensive workloads. As has been previously mentioned, in both sites, employees were transformed by their situation and through the enactment of planned routines, implemented coping strategies from which their emergent accomplishment became evident. In some cases, routines changed demonstrating the recursivity of routines as espoused by Feldman (2000). This account aligns closely with Lounsbury and Crumley (2007: 996) views that performativity or performance through action simultaneously "reproduce and alter a given practice through variation in its enactment". But whether this is sufficient to drive systemic change in an organisation is still questioned by other academics. For example, Ellström (2010: 8) asks 'what are the driving forces for breaking with the 'status quo?' and taking risks? Whilst challenging situations such as intensive workloads

may be a trigger, the data also suggests that such driving forces could also include:

1. Strong social ties that provide social capacity for support for informal learning for novices and high levels of individual self-efficacy.
2. Supportive leadership and a working environment that enables employees to innovate and adapt.
3. Planned actions that are implemented which do not work in practice are allowed to continue causing systemic failure.

In a similar vein, Engeström's model (See Figure 6) provides further explanatory power for the learning cycle in Site 1 and Site 2. The data demonstrates employees were 'questioning' (step 1 of Engeström's model) particularly in Site 2. The 'analysis' step (double bind) is more explicit – errors are not hidden because of the observability of the workplace and as a result solutions had to be considered (modelled), examined and implemented on-the-hoof. Other adaptations demonstrated a more nuanced development as they were 'hidden' for example, the B2 Labour Budget Saving adaptation identified, demonstrates the double bind of how managers must keep to a shift wage budget that is insufficient to deliver a quality service at peak periods, resulting in artificially transferring labour costs to non-peak periods.

From a formal innovation perspective, the introduction of table service was implemented quickly. Full House Ltd front-end loaded labour costs in recognition that staff would need time to adapt and learn the new service cycle, working with new technology, systems, and processes. But as the initiative become integrated, labour was cut quickly and significantly leaving staff with a more labour-intensive process to deliver, and the situation become highly challenging resulting in the withdrawal of the initiative some months later. This again aligns with the seven-step model proposed by Engeström et al. (1999: 33-34) which suggests that "as the disruptions and contradictions of the activity system become more demanding, internalisation of knowledge increasingly takes the form of critical self-reflection" (as evidenced in the data by anxiety and high levels of sickness absence amongst employees), and "externalisation, a search for solutions increases" as evidenced by the significant attempts to resolve the problems arising from its implementation. According to Engeström, externalisation reaches its peak when the system resolves the challenge or returns to a modified version of its original state and the "new model is rejected in favour of the previous one" (Engeström et al., 1999:33-34). The theory demonstrates good 'fit' as a model with the data presented and links to the learning cycles depicted in Figure 41, the 'Calm to Chaos' model (presented in Chapter 5) and potentially provides a mechanism for the identified situation statuses.

In light of the research findings, the adapted analytical model depicted in Chapter Three (Figure 15) has been revised as follows:

1. A cyclical aspect has been added to demonstrate the relationships between the object, performativity and innovation outcomes reflecting the cyclical nature of learning. In essence the object drives activity (performativity as per the Calm-to-Chaos model) that through cycles of learning and development drives innovative capability, leading to a revised object. But recursively the revised object then becomes the engine that drives regeneration of the innovative capability and the cycle repeats to reflect the routine and repetitiveness inherent in hospitality businesses' service cycles.

2. The model now recognises the role of factors related to socialisation and leadership in supporting performativity (both individual and related to site-level mastery), learning and innovation capability within a Hospitality context. The central box becomes the Learning Place whilst the two Pathway boxes represent more conceptual Problem Spaces, with the cycle within the Learning Place showing a developmental movement between the two. The Learning Place changes in relation to the Problem Space and vice versa reflecting the dialectic and recursive aspects of the hospitality activity system.

The model contributes to the research study aim by providing some explanatory power as to where variation comes from (i.e., cycles of learning and development), what supports this process (socialisation and leadership and other factors identified in this chapter), how innovative adaptations are then developed, and how the trajectory of objects then changes recursively. From a brand perspective, the model suggests to management, that in implementing a mandated brand standard, the inherent practices that pre-exist and the capability inherent in front lint staff to adapt, determine the efficacy of implementation. But in the routine and repetitive cycles of service, there is also an inherent trajectory of development that customises standards to the local situation. In summary, the degree of collective mastery of the situation leads to innovative outcomes that reflect both customisation and standardisation as situated action occurring simultaneously.

Figure 42: Adapted Theoretical Model – Dynamic Problem Spaces and Learning Places

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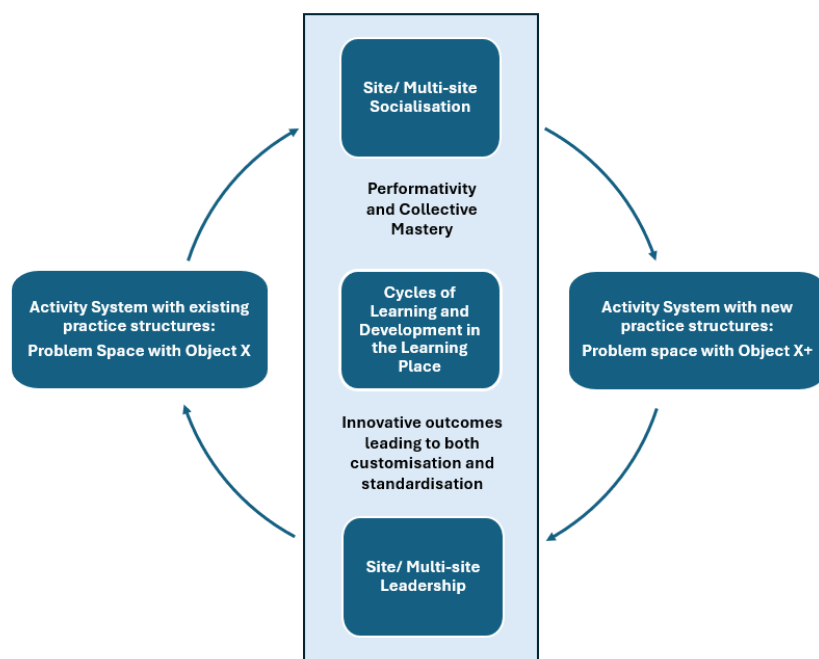
6.7 Further Research

There are a number of potential areas for future research on informal practice-based service innovation, some of which has already been briefly identified in earlier sections.

6.7.1 Socialisation and Innovative Practice

The data has allowed the researcher to explore the 'socially complex' mechanisms (Di Stefano et al., 2014; Nicolini, 2012) of how innovation works in practice, by highlighting the importance of a network of social ties in both sites that create an informal learning capacity to support task related efforts as employees attempt to resolve the tensions and contradictions of the object of the activity system. The Researcher concludes that social interaction at work partly enables the aggregation of skill-in-practice effort to form a contingent response to cope with the situation at hand, whilst also simultaneously, through experience-of-practice, enabling teams to develop multi-site capabilities, such as the balancing practices identified in earlier chapter. As such, social interaction may also be a propensity characteristic for social learning that may be one of the forces that limit the rate and direction of the accumulation of new skills and capabilities that support the development of dynamic capability as an emergent process in line with the views of Ambrosini and Bowman (2009).

Evidence in both Site 1 and Site 2 of adaptations through problem-solving, creativity and experimentation suggests staff are learning informally. Earlier evidence located in the situation analysis demonstrates that staff were not just making changes informally to processes (as shown in Type B) but also to their behaviours and competencies – developing confidence in themselves and their skills, despite the lack of organisational support through formal training, as per Site 2.

Kleefstra et al. (2020: 174) studied workplace learning and organisational performance in the Danish hotel industry, suggesting that there is too much focus on formal training because "informal learning processes, such as experimentation, learning through, reflection or from colleagues, is often not seen, or ignored by the HRD department". Their study references research by Arets and Heijnen (2011: 3) that states "80% of what we learn takes place informally and 20% formally… but about 80% of the budget is made available for formal learning compared to 20% for informal learning" leading to a paradox where organisations spend money where it will have the least impact. Noe, Clarke and Klein (2014: 259) highlight that through social exchange, "Employees often learn through interacting with others (e.g., peers, mentors, supervisors, and customers)" and identified the importance of socialisation through social networks, contributing to psychological safety. Hannah and Lester (2009: 42) suggest that "dense and well-defined learning networks" are needed to facilitate the diffusion of knowledge "to promote creativity, innovation, and exploration". Other scholars link learning to growth and innovation in organisations (Janssen, 2000; Noe, Clarke and Klein, 2014).

The literature points to the role of social learning (as espoused by Bandura (1962)) that occurs through "observation, imitation, and reinforcement" (Noe, Clarke and Klein 2014:250). Social learning is an adaptive process (Rendell et al., 2010) occurring through either "the adoption of explicit behavioural innovations or new behaviour having resulted from error" (Noe, Clarke and Klein, 2014: 250). However, the study by Noe, Clarke and Klein (2014) highlights that the mechanisms of social learning enable errors (in practice) to be imitated and passed on, remaining in the employee population. They emphasize the importance of managers to support and maintain communities of practice, mirroring research by Kirkman et al. (2011). Staff churn is a well-documented issue in the Hospitality sector with a significant skewed employee cohort ratio towards more novices than experts, suggesting that Site 2 suffered from the effects of social learning to enable effective imitation and reinforcement of good practice in their community.

The learning cycles proposed by a number of scholars in Chapter Two propose that employee knowledge moves from tacit to explicit forms and from internalisation to externalisation through a reflective process. The evidence in the data suggests that informal learning takes place through unreflective social interaction as mentioned previously, via social learning mechanisms. The data clearly demonstrates how employees exhibit actions and behaviours as they go about their learned routines, which are highly observable and explicit through doing and practising (rather than explicitly through a solely discursive process) within the hospitality space in line with concept of Social Learning (Bandura, 1962). The combination of highly observable practice and social interaction (with other staff and customers) suggests an immediacy of this informal mechanism, contributing to adaptations of employee practice in their wider community. Staff can engage with informal and social learning adapting practice cyclically because of the repetitive service structures in place in highly observable and socially complex spaces. With regards to learning from observable behaviours, there is extensive research in other sectors on the impact of open plan office work and workplace spatial design on employee learning and creativity, such as research by Fuzi, Clifton and Loudon (2014), Martens (2008) and Ystrom and Agogue (2020) that looks at how co-working and in between spaces support social interaction that leads to creativity and innovation in the workplace. But there appears to be a gap in research on how this works in practice specifically in hospitality organisations on the 'shop floor' which is a combined office space, production space, and experience space for staff and customers to interact in.

6.7.2 Knowledge Absorption and Sharing

With regards to absorptive capacity which is linked to innovation as discussed in Chapter Two, new knowledge assimilated by employees that creates adaptations in practice is hidden because it resides in the adapted methods employed by staff in practice. Through practice, staff may apply their learning from others in an unreflective process, simple because they are mastering a technique or skill through repetitive routines and processes, or problem solving in the moment. The Researcher notes that generally interviewed employees struggled to articulate their learning process or differentiate what was new or different to them in their everyday working lives. The researcher speculates that this may be because the act of repetition and routine through practice "overwrites" previous learning making the act of recall more difficult at both individual and collective levels. In this sense, as employees enact routines they absorb knowledge through practice, and through micro processes of sublation both the employee and their practices are slowly transformed as a series of imperceptive micro steps, leaving no developmental trace from the previous practice to the adapted practice. The research proposes that these micro-steps are replicated across teams, learning similar ways of doing in similar problem spaces, or learning from each other, leading to improvements in capabilities that are simultaneously developed commonly, situationally, and idiosyncratically at the same time leaving a ghosted development path for the researcher to follow. Therefore, this study proposes that further research should be undertaken to investigate the micro-steps of practice across multiple sites over a longer period of time to capture the traces of practice development in frontline employee communities.

Knowledge sharing is a core predictor of organisational innovativeness (de Larrea et al., 2021). In this research study, knowledge sharing occurred at site level predominately informally with some codified knowledge shared via formal training. The organisation was clearly codifying tacit knowledge by developing automated routines and sub routines embedded and/or supported by technology to reduce complexity and service skill requirements through planned adaptations. But there was little evidence of how the organisation was incorporating a bottom-up feedback loop from individuals and teams at site level to inform ongoing knowledge management practices. Moving training content online coupled with cost-saving measures to reduce labour costs at site level resulted in lower consumption of these codified knowledge products by staff in Site 2. Despite staff efforts to resolve problems at Site 2, akin to the single loop feedback in Argyris's concept of Double Loop Learning (2006), errors were not resolved, and systemic failure persisted in Site 2. Servicetime Corporation were fully aware of the problems with their imposed table service initiative, at both sites and at multi-site level, but deliberately persisted with the adaptation before the initiative was withdrawn after six months following two financial quarters of poor performance. The original motivation driven by first order routines to establish higher returns, led to the system reverting to its original service cycle as practice feedback determined the strategy was ineffective. In essence, practice determined

strategy. But it should be noted that whilst the original routine of Local Service was reinstated, the data suggests that in the sites observed, the organisation had developed enhanced underpinning practices and capabilities. This reflects the expansive nature of learning cycles as espoused by Engeström (1987). Further research should be conducted on how site level changes might impact on strategic brand decision making and subsequently on the impact of mandated brand changes across multiple sites.

6.7.3 Employee to Employee Interaction

The researcher suggests that due to the spatial considerations of hospitality businesses at site level, observable behaviours and practices coupled with social interaction play a greater and more significant role in supporting informal learning at work. However, in situations with high staff churn, this can lead to the amplification of poor practices as well good practices in the absence of sufficient role modelling or practice leadership that is observable. In addition, whilst informal learning may constitute the greatest proportion of learning at work, structured learning acts as a catalytic ingredient that ensures informal learning supports good practice and the identification of poor practice. Employee-employee social interaction is potentially underestimated as a tool by management in hospitality businesses to drive learning in the workplace. The hospitality environment consists of highly intensive working routines, automated by technology, fuelled by budget saving and cost-cutting targets. These strategies appear to largely undermine the organisation's collective efforts to achieve its object, providing an environment in which overwhelming workloads reduce opportunities for socialisation, informal learning and structured learning at work. In essence, workload intensity is a potential predictor of innovative behaviours and the development of an innovation capability. High intensity workloads that are overwhelming will reduce innovation, whilst workloads that are intensive but achievable may increase innovative behaviours in line with Ashgar et al. (2021). The researcher suggests that further research could be conducted on the relationships between employee-employee social interaction, workload intensity and innovation capability.

6.8 Limitations

This research study has adopted a qualitative methodology incorporating grounded analysis of a single case study for theory building (Yin, 2018; Creswell, 2009) resulting in substantive theory. However, the Researcher does identify the following limitations and potential improvements.

As stated in Chapter Two, the limitation of the research study is that it cannot claim analytic generalisation (Yin 2009) as it is a case-study of one organisation, with a small sample size. In so far as two sites of the same organisation were researched, the study is not a cross comparison, and the data has not been presented as a complex comparative analysis. To improve the study, the Researcher suggests increasing the number of sites (that include a mix of both purpose built and legacy sites), research resources (logistics, time etc.) and

another alternative case study organisation. This would enable a more robust comparative analysis to justify analytic generalisation of the framework elements. However, the Researcher points to the strength of this study's research design in that by employing grounded analysis in conjunction with activity theory with a case-study approach, the researcher has designed the research study to develop a substantive theory. A further limitation of the study is, in part, due to the changing world context in which the hospitality sector is located, most recently impacted by COVID which occurred sometime after the period of data collection. At first sight, the Researcher acknowledges that COVID presents an interesting disruption that created significant dis-order and so presents opportunities for researching informal practice-based service innovation. But it should be noted that during COVID the case-study organisation was on furlough and therefore primary research at site level would have been impossible, and subsequently unlikely in a recovery phase for it to sponsor research of this nature. The Researcher recommends that a greater longitudinal study might be beneficial to capture a greater variety of disruptions that impact on the development of informal practice-based service innovation.

Another potential limitation was that the research design was wholly qualitative and other sources of quantitative data were not considered to support theory building – for example if access was possible, EPoS (Electronic Point of Sale) data could provide real-time demand data that supports evidencing the 'Y' axis of the 'Calm to Chaos' model. Therefore, an improvement to the research design, would be to consider a mixed methods approach for data collection. For example, if in addition to EPoS data, performance measures could be developed for quantitatively identifying the situation statuses of the 'Calm to Chaos' model. This may entail measuring other factors such as the interdisciplinarity of front-line employees, their experience level, tracking of shift rotas that mapped skill and competency mixes of shift teams, the tracking of adaptation outcomes identified in the Innovation Matrix (Table 16), or other factors related to socialisation, informal learning and leadership. If these types of factors can be sufficiently measured and isolated as propensity factors, it might be possible to statistically test for informal practice-based service innovation levels at brand level as a future research study. This would reflect a move away from an exploratory phase of research to an explanatory phase of research.

Whilst limitations and recommendations for future research have been identified above, the Researcher points to this research study's research design that was created to specifically surface the phenomena of informal practice-based service innovation as justified in Chapter Two. Case studies, coupled with grounded analysis of interview and observation data are widely recognised for providing data that has strong internal validity and reliability (Cakar and Aykol, 2021) through data cross comparison and pattern matching using thick description. This approach has developed unique insights into how front-line employees adapt their practice to develop informal practice-based service innovation, and therefore this study has contributed to the extant subject knowledge.

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Practice Diary

What is a Practice Diary?

You have been asked to complete a Practice Diary on a daily basis as part of a research study. Practice diaries are used by many companies to enable employees to make a note of their activities during the day and then to help them reflect (note down thoughts and feelings) on how they think their day went.

This diary is designed to cover around 6-8 weeks of work activity and it will take 5 minutes to complete each day. Some days there may be very little to write, whilst on other days there may be more.

What should be written in the diary?

Each page has sections for you to make some brief notes. But generally you should follow these three steps:

STEP 1: Make a note of the date and then briefly list what you did that day.

STEP 2: Then consider making a note of anything in your daily activities that...

> ... is **new** to you, your colleagues or to your workplace.

> ...has **involved changes** or **challenges** in your daily work activities, of those that you work with (including customers) or in the physical environment (such as changes to decor, tables, menu etc).

> ...is **unexpected** by you or others (including customers) which is **different** to the norm but on the whole a good experience. It may have made you reconsider what you do or made others change the way they act or behave.

Don't forget that this is not just about 'xxxxxxxx' and the way 'they' do service, but equally about **your practice** and **the way you do it**.

Things that might help you consider what to put...

NEW	CHANGES AND CHALLENGES	UNEXPECTED, DIFFERENT
E.g. uniforms, menu choices, promotions, products, technology, tasks and activities etc. For you it is 'new'.	E.g. opening times, decor, table layout, meet and greet script. It can be a small change, a tweak or something more significant. Maybe a solution to a problem. This might be something instigated by you for yourself, or by others, such as customers, your colleagues or your managers.	E.g. customer requests, complaints, new tasks, praise from someone, a 'situation' that was not expected.

STEP 3: Request a follow-up conversation

If you think you have something you would like to talk about in more detail but don't have the time or inclination(!) to write it down then make a brief note of it in the final section and the Researcher will contact you in due course for a brief conversation.

Your Name	
Today's date	
Shift start time	
STEP 1: What did you do today at work? (Make brief list of the key things, tasks, activities you spent your time doing today either by yourself or with other people)	

STEP 2: What happened today that was NEW, DIFFERENT, UNEXPECTED or INVOLVED CHANGES and/or CHALLENGES that were not the norm to your usual experience? To either you, your colleagues or your customers or your environment?

STEP 3: Request a follow-up conversation

(Are there any events or situations you would like to discuss in more detail?)

Would you like to make any other comments about what happened today?

Completed? Just post it in the Project Box provided on site, thank you!

Informed Consent

Research Study Title: Service Innovation Project

Project Contact: Mr Barny Morris (email: XXXX.XXXX @bcu.ac.uk)
/ Mob 07828 XXXXXXX/ Office XXXXXXX)

Research Study Description:
The study investigates how service employees adapt to changing circumstances within their service environment. The focus is on:

(a) How service employees deliver the 'service cycle' or 'service format' on a day-to-day basis
(b) What unplanned changes occur 'on-the-hoof' that cause employees to adapt the service cycle
(c) What adaptations **add value** to the customer experience

The study is not focused on things that go wrong UNLESS they add value to the customer experience. From a pure research perspective, the study aims to understand how and why innovative service practice happens 'on the hoof' and how a multi-site company develops service innovation capability.

Study Benefits and Outcomes

- Documented multi-site / site level comparison of service innovation practice
- Report on emergent service innovation capability within XXXXXXX
- Recommendations on emergent service innovation management

Procedure and Risks:
This form covers all interviews (including meetings) held as part of this study with Barny Morris, The Researcher. I would like to record the interview, if you are willing, and use the tapes to contribute data towards my research materials. I will record the interview only with your written consent. Please feel free to say as much or as little as you want. You can decide not to answer any question, or to stop the interview any time you want. The tapes and transcripts will become the property of Barny Morris.

If you so choose, the recordings and recording-transcripts (or copy of notes taken) will be kept anonymous, without any reference to your company's identity, your identity, and your identity will be concealed in any reports written from the interviews. For example, your name will be replaced with a fictitious name. There are no known risks associated with participation in the study.

Confidentiality:
All information collected during the study period will be kept strictly confidential until such time as you sign a release waiver (see the Final Consent Form). No publications or reports from this study will include identifying information on any participant without your signed permission, and after your review of the materials. If you agree to join this study, please sign your name on the following page.

INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERVIEWS, OBSERVATIONS AND PRACTICE DIARIES

Research Study Title: Service Innovation Project

I, _____, agree to be take part in the study entitled above which is being produced by Barny Morris.

I certify that I have been told of the confidentiality of information collected for this study and the anonymity of my participation; that I have been given satisfactory answers to my inquiries concerning study procedures and other matters; and that I have been advised that I am free to withdraw my consent and to discontinue participation in the study or activity at any time without prejudice.

I agree to participate in one or more recorded interviews, observations or practice diaries for this study and agree to contribute practice evidence via a variety of different mediums (web, phone application, paper records). I understand that such participation and related materials of evidence will be kept completely anonymous, and that the research materials and results of this study may be published in an academic journal, conference paper, online publication, thesis or book.

_____ Date _____

Signature of Interviewee

If you cannot obtain satisfactory answers to your questions or have comments or complaints about your treatment in this study, contact:

Dr First Name Last Name, Faculty of Business, Law and Social Sciences, G106 Galton Building, Birmingham City University, City North Campus
Tel: XXXXXX / email: XXX.XXXX@bcu.ac.uk

Cc: signed copy to interview.

Final Consent Form

Research Study Title: Service Innovation Project

**Study Contact: Mr Barny Morris (email: barny.morris@bcu.ac.uk
/ Mob 07828 XXXXXXX / Office XXX XXX XXXXX)**

Dear Participant:

This form gives Barny Morris, The Researcher, final authorisation to use data and other research material from your interview or practice evidence in the study (study title named above). A draft of these materials should have been presented to you for your review, correction, or modification. You may grant use rights for this draft "as is," or with the modifications you specify, if any. See "Conditions" at the bottom of the form

I, _____, hereby grant the right to use information from recordings and or notes taken in interviews of me, or evidence provided through other means by me to the Researcher, Barny Morris, and as presented to me as a draft copy. I understand that the interview records or practice evidence will be kept by the Researcher and the study, and that the information contained in the interviews may be used in materials to be made available for public dissemination.

_____ Date:_____

Signature of Interviewee

_____ Date:_____

Signature of The Researcher, Mr Barny Morris

The following conditions limit the release of information, as agreed between the interviewer and the interviewee:

_____ None needed

_____ Material may be released once corrections I specified have been made

_____ Material may be released once it has been edited by a third party (please specify)

If you have complaints about your treatment in this study, contact: Dr First Name Last Name, Faculty of Business, Law and Social Sciences, G106 Galton Building, Birmingham City University, City North Campus Tel: XXX XXXX / email: XXXX. XXXX@bcu.ac.uk

Appendix C: Open Code Summary

This is a list of the code formation in NVivo from which the Researcher then developed the Categories as shown in Figure 21.

Affecting others	Leaving and arriving (staff and customers)
Atmosphere, noise, environment	Loving technology, hating technology
Balancing work and social aspects	Meeting targets and being measured
Barriers to change	Motivation to achieve
Being busy	Moving on, planning next steps
Being told what to do (hierarchy)	Ordering and paying
Changing things	Overcoming challenges
Confused	Pragmatism
Coping	Problems and solutions
Culture	Promoting
Customer feeding back	Realisation of or reflection on change
Customer Fitting	Regulars
Customer knowhow	Rewards
Customer practices	Risks at work
Cutting corners	Roles
Cynicism	Rota
Dealing with customers	Scanning
Despair, anxiety, fear	Sense of familiarity, routine and stability
Doing it the right way	Sharing practice
Doing things differently	Socialising with customers
Eating and drinking	Socialising with staff
Employee loyalty	Stress
Employees feeding back	Supporting each other
Employer supporting	Table service
Empowerment	Tasks and work
Feeling of achievement	Teamworking
Fitting in with lifestyle	Telling what to do, role modelling
Flexibility	Tension
Getting to know the job	Time, timing, no time
Having fun, enjoying work	Training on the job, learning on the job
Ideas for change	Transitioning - sense of moving on
Improvising	Us and them
Investing in relationships	Using power and influence
Jumping in and out	Work loading
Knowing their strengths and weaknesses	Working environment
Language	Working flexibly and multi-tasking
Leading	Working hard, working too hard
Learning something new	Workload and sense of fairness

Appendix D: Memo Examples

Memo Example 1

Stating the obvious, there was evidence of people enjoying working today. There was lots of banter. Having fun or at least a sense of enjoyment, appears to be important to them when at work. Also is this somehow linked to my other idea of being busy - i.e., being busy is not being bored although repetition can be. Being busy makes the time go quickly so is better than being bored. Positive busy 'ness requires co-operation (social, professional) between employees which is 'fun' whilst negative busy 'ness - i.e., being busy because there is no co-operation or not enough employees to do the work is the opposite. So positive busy 'ness and negative busy 'ness.

Is this potentially some kind of capacity? Social capacity? How do fun and friendly interactions lead to good outcomes for both staff and customers? Is this why in some situations, that lacked "social capacity", systems were still operating but not coping. Social capacity is perhaps some kind of positive community capacity to support productive capacity possibly? Does a sense of work enjoyment create a more innovative culture?

Memo Example 2

A focus on problems - a quick summary to date. So, there was clearly a problem with table service but before then there were more fundamental problems to do with labour supply. Previously there were issues with insufficient staffing at peak times to enable the service to be delivered to a satisfactory standard, which was further exacerbated by the move to table service.

The data suggests that there was
- insufficient staffing on the line to meet orders at peak times, inadequate kitchen facilities that were working to enable the line to be efficient (broken equipment etc) and lack of staff who want to work in the kitchen
- a growing sense of work unfairness at the site that caused staffing to suffer from sickness absence - as the team broke down individuals become responsible for more and were 'left to cope' with an impossible situation without sufficient support from the manager (line manager not dealing directly with customer complaints).
- a spiralling level of customer dissatisfaction leading to abusive behaviours from customers on staff who felt trapped.
- A customer segment that had raised expectations about the value added of the brand
- A huge number of covers that could not be adequately served with the staff available
- A lack of management engagement with the worsening situation and lack of flexibility to move outside of the brand rules to solve the problems, including listening to staff who had solutions
- Family behaviours that extended from the Whacky Warehouse into the restaurant area that in a normal context would not be accepted but had become normalised adding to the 'chaos'.
- 'parachute' managers brought into deal with the situation with insufficient knowledge of the complexity of the site, staff and customers who did not have any buy in or tried their best in the short time they had but could not solve the long-term problems.

So lots of problems! And evidence of attempts by staff to solve them, but no resolution. Suggests this is a systemic issue – an unresolvable tension and contradiction?

Appendix E: Observation Notes Example (Partial)

SITE 2: OBSERVATION 6

Evening (Open Observation / Timeline - what is going on?)

7.00 - Customer buys drink from [JANE] behind the bar. She is still sounding unwell from last observation – customer notices and comments (empathy) but she admits she had been out over the weekend so customer's initial sympathy unfounded – both laughed. She said it [weekend shift] was 'dead busy' and understaffed staff (emphasis) she says loudly – team leader is in earshot but doesn't respond.

7.15 - Its suddenly become a lot busier / car park looking fuller. Smokers outside - young couple chatting, relaxed - waitress comes out to tell them their table is ready. Food has not arrived, but the table is clear. Cigarettes are stubbed out and customers return inside and appear happy.

7.20 – Customer reacts to promotional offer loudly "double up for a pound! A pound yeah" ("why wouldn't you" – aside to partner). Family have been at the bar for just over 10 mins now deciding what to order. Various members of the family have come to the bar and gone; this is a very big group - possibly three young families. Kids are running around excited. Lots of noise from conversations. Parents still at the bar negotiating with kids what to eat whilst ordering. At ease. Smiling. For some reason they are not ordering at the table? **Check with Team leader** why not.

7.25 - Customers being asked to go round the corner to order. Is Wi-Fi down again? The couple that smoking outside are now ordering. They had been offered a drink first. They are clearly checking to see when the large group clears the bar before ordering. Wi-Fi must be down again because customers are ordering at the bar, not the table - **check with site manager**

Assistant Site Manager is in conversation with a customer. It appears to be quite 'heated' – body language suggests customer is very unhappy. Not sure of the issue but it appears to be around a missed table booking for a bigger party. I think they have ended up on separate tables. The customer is clearly upset – a party of 14 separated. She tells me later that the weekend shift forgot to note the group booking in the day diary – they were understaffed!

7.29 – Waiting staff have to navigate around a group of young children playing 'it' full laden with food. Waiter not happy – near disaster – children are a trip hazard! Parents appear happy that food has arrived – calling for kids to return. "Where have they gone?" shouts one adult – points and grabs one as they run past.

Note to self: need to focus observations on social aspects of meal occasion? Consider literature / focus of research first.

[It's busy because it's Easter week (good Friday this Friday). But interesting they didn't mention this last Monday in the interviews – check Rota to see if staff are rota'd this weekend]

Difficult to focus on a single issue such as ordering because it happens at different times in different places and so I may catch only a little at a time. Is this a problem?

7.40 Other families have appeared – large group of children now playing hide and seek – counting down very loudly. Staff are very busy. Queues forming at bar. Floor staff struggling to run all the

food orders. Words being spoken between Expo and assistant team leader. Signs of anxiety suggested in body language / facial expressions. One table becoming bored – food wait time?

7.43 Music seems to have quietened. Table in far corner – A couple. Keeping out of the way and quietly eating their meal. Some customers start to leave after finishing their meal. Significant amount of food still left on their plates. This seems to be the norm? Why?

**Note to self: Ask Site Manager about food waste. Causes? Are portions too big or is the food not very nice? Or is it so cheap people don't value it?

7.50 Decide to move to the other end to the bench seating as my end has gone quiet. Inadvertently a waiter I am due to interview next week starts a conversation with me whilst clearing tables close by. He tells me he is an ex [XXXXXXXX] and changed because he only lives down the road. Thinks the change to table service is fine but iPads are slow so not good for large parties. It's easier to write it down. Laughs, shrugs his shoulders, goes back to bar.

7.53: Large family arrived – ignore hosting and seat at a table. Waiter smiles at them and welcomes them, doesn't seem to be a problem. Table must be available. One adult is smoking eCigs inside but trying to hide it. Starting to order. Kids disappear with mum.

7.55. W2 brings out burger laden plates, services customers. W2 showing great skill in balancing plates on arms whilst simultaneously talking to customers and avoiding playing kids. They look pleased with the food. Body language suggests they are pleased with the portion sizes. W2 returns to the kitchen laden with dirty dishes. Kitchen entrance doors swing in and out almost hitting young child. Parent scoops them up.

7.56 - Three tables leave almost at the same time. Adult says 'put your coat on time to go' – pointing at coat on back of chair. Mum is packing up buggy, Dad keeps young children occupied. Adults walk over to bar to pay – they want to pay. Sizzling plates and smells pass by as W1 takes plates over to another table. Sound of broken glass from Kitchen. Music in the background sounds louder again.

8.02 - Mum clearly frustrated as young child runs off again - partner has to chase. "Have you got my bags."? She shouts after him. All leave. Staff say goodbye – waving at the children. Smiles. Staff return to clearing tables.

8.04 - Mum suddenly re-appears and searches table – finds something under the table and then leaves again.

8.07 - Lots of sound of clinking glasses and bottles come from the Bar. 'Clearing up' time. Prep process started early? **Check with site manager**

8.10 - Dad returns this time with child looking for something - clearly lost something. They leave.

8.11 - The space is becoming quieter. Maybe only 3 covers left in play. Definitely a feeling of 'clearing up' – W1 and W2 and bar staff focused on clearing up.

(Reflection provided in memos).