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AND INNOVATION CONFERENCE 2026

REIMAGINING HOSPITALITY FOR A MULTI-GENERATIONAL WORLD  
THROUGH INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
TOWARD SUSTAINABILITY

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CONFERENCE 2026

“Reimagining Hospitality for a Multi-Generational World through Innovation and  
Entrepreneurship toward Sustainability”

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## **PREFACE**

Om Swastyastu,

Dear Esteemed Participants and Presenters,

On behalf of the Organizing Committee, we are pleased and honored to welcome all participants and speakers to the 6th International Hospitality Entrepreneurship and Innovation Conference (InHEIC) 2026. The InHEIC conference has been successfully conducted every year over the past five years, from 2021 through 2025. In 2026, we adopt the theme “Reimagining Hospitality for a Multi-Generational World Through Innovation and Entrepreneurship Toward Sustainability.” This theme is intended to foster deeper discussions on the challenges and opportunities of adapting hospitality practices to meet the expectations of multiple generations through innovation and entrepreneurship while supporting long-term sustainability.

For the 6th InHEIC 2026, we have arranged a distinguished roster of speakers, consisting of three keynote speakers and six invited speakers who are experts in their respective areas. The conference also provides a platform for academics and industry practitioners to present their latest research and publish their work. All accepted papers will be included in the conference proceedings book with an ISSN after completing any required revisions.

We extend our best wishes for the 6th InHEIC 2026, hoping that it will bring great benefits to all of us and serve as a forum for exchanging ideas and enriching experiences.

Om Santih, Santih Santih Om,

Sincerely,

Kusmawan Aditya

Chairman of The Committee

## **WELCOME REMAKS**

**Director of Politeknik Pariwisata Bali**



Dear Esteemed Participants, Distinguished Speakers, and Valued Partners,

On behalf of Bali Tourism Polytechnic, it is a great honor to extend a warm welcome to all participants of The 6th International Hospitality, Entrepreneurship and Innovation Conference 2026. It is conveyed with sincere appreciation that the presence of all distinguished guests, partners, and participants reflects a shared commitment to advancing knowledge, strengthening academic collaboration, and fostering meaningful global engagement within the hospitality community.

In light of today's rapidly evolving global landscape, the urgency to reimagine the future of hospitality has become increasingly significant. This year's theme, "Reimagining Hospitality for a Multi-Generational World through Innovation and Entrepreneurship toward Sustainability," underscores the critical need for the industry to adapt to demographic shifts, technological advancements, and sustainability challenges. The coexistence of multiple generations demands more inclusive, adaptive, and forward-thinking approaches. Therefore, this conference serves as a vital platform to encourage innovation, promote entrepreneurial mindsets, and cultivate sustainable solutions that are responsive not only to present needs but also to future transformations, while maintaining a collaborative and inclusive academic environment.

Special recognition is extended to Woosong University for its invaluable partnership and unwavering commitment to academic excellence. As a globally recognized institution, Woosong University has played a significant role in enriching this conference through its academic expertise, international perspective, and active contribution to knowledge exchange. This collaboration represents a strategic partnership that strengthens institutional capacity, expands global networks, and enhances the quality of education in alignment with international standards.

It is sincerely hoped that this conference will serve as a sustainable foundation for future collaboration, fostering innovation, resilience, and global competitiveness among all participants. Furthermore, the outcomes of this initiative are expected to contribute to the

development of human resources who are not only academically competent but also adaptable, creative, and prepared to address the complex challenges of the future hospitality industry. Through continued partnership and a shared vision, this collaboration aspires to generate long-term impact and support the advancement of a more resilient and sustainable global hospitality ecosystem.

Sincerely,

**Dr. Drs. Ida Bagus Putu Puja M. Kes.**  
Director of Politeknik Pariwisata Bali

## WELCOME REMARKS

### Coordinator of Hotel Management Study Program



Om Swastiastu,

Dear Honorable Speakers, Distinguished Participants, and Valued Partners,

It is my great honor, as the Coordinator of the Hotel Management Study Program of Bali Tourism Polytechnic, to welcome you to The 6th International Hospitality, Entrepreneurship and Innovation Conference (InHEIC) 2026. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to our keynote and plenary speakers, collaborating institutions, presenters, industry partners, lecturers, and especially our students whose dedication and commitment make this conference possible.

Within our study program, this conference is an integral part of the Managerial Application course, where students are actively engaged in planning, coordinating, and executing an international academic event. Through this experience, students not only develop operational management skills, but also strengthen their leadership, teamwork, strategic thinking, and professional communication skills that are essential in the hospitality industry.

Aligned with this year's theme, *"Reimagining Hospitality for a Multi-Generational World through Innovation and Entrepreneurship toward Sustainability,"* this conference reflects our commitment to preparing future hospitality professionals who are adaptive, innovative, and responsible in addressing global challenges.

May this forum strengthen collaboration between academia and industry and generate impactful ideas for the advancement of the hospitality industry

Om Santih, Santih, Santih Om.

Sincerely,

**Ni Made Suastini, SE., MM., CHE**

Coordinator of Hotel Management

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# Pre-service Teacher Responses to the *Museum Nasional's "Paras Nusantara"*

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## Abstract

*This study examines pre-service teachers' perceptions of the "Paras Nusantara" exhibition at the Museum Nasional Indonesia through indirect recorded experience. Given the growing significance of digital mediation in museums, the current study explores the processes of meaning-making, engagement, and intentionality when participants do not directly interact with objects. The research uses a mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative survey data with qualitative narratives from interviews with 41 pre-service teachers, most of whom had never attended the exhibition before. While the high general perception scores ( $M = 3.88$ ), including those related to intention to visit the exhibition, reflect on cultural values and the impact of media, lower perception scores regarding authenticity and comprehension can be attributed to the lack of immersive experience. Qualitative results show that indirect experience serves as a preview, increasing motivation for direct visitation while enabling personal and cultural meaning-making. Indirect experience is valuable but cannot fully replace direct physical experience.*

**Keywords:** *Paras Nusantara, Museum Nasional, pre-service teacher, digital media, cultural exhibition.*

## Introduction

As time passes, more and more museums are expected to serve not merely as heritage depositories but also as sites of public learning, merging cultural education with current audiences. Following this trend, Museum Nasional Indonesia reopened in October 2024. It focused on developing an educational mission by introducing new features, such as the Paras Nusantara area, which the institution describes as an exhibit that emphasizes the diverse identities of Indonesian citizens by reinventing the museum as an interactive, relevant public sphere.

This development is essential because museum learning is not limited to the acquisition of information; it is influenced by visitors' backgrounds in psychological, sociocultural, and even physical aspects across the pre-, in-process, and post-visit stages. According to Falk & Dierking's (2013) theoretical framework for museum experiences, meaning-making occurs in the interaction between the visitor and the museum environment; hence,

the process of learning depends on how visitors perceive the material presented in museums.

*Paras Nusantara* is especially relevant in this regard because it is positioned as an interactive exhibition that highlights Indonesian identity and diversity. However, when such an exhibition is accessed through an indirect recorded experience rather than through a direct visit, the encounter becomes mediated. Research on presence suggests that mediated experiences can feel less immediate and less “real” than direct experience (Li et al. 2023). At the same time, multimedia learning theory explains that people process visual and verbal information through limited cognitive channels and actively construct their understanding from what they see and hear. In other words, the shift from live exhibition to video recording may alter not only the medium but also the depth of engagement, immersion, and meaning-making.

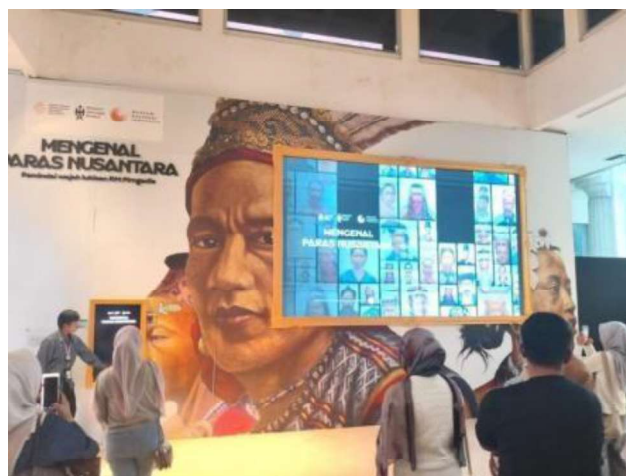


Figure 1. Paras Nusantara

(Source: documentation Akbar, Putri, Fauziah, Reza, Wijirahayu, 2026)

This issue becomes even more significant when the participants are pre-service teachers. Educational research has long argued that the beliefs and cognition of teacher candidates deserve close attention because these internal perspectives can shape future teaching practice. Pajares (1992) emphasizes that teachers' and teacher candidates' beliefs are a crucial focus of educational inquiry, while Borg (2003) defines teacher cognition as what teachers think, know, and believe, and how these mental constructs relate to practice. For that reason, exploring how pre-service teachers construct their perceptions of *Paras Nusantara* after experiencing it through recordings has significance not only for museum education but also for preparing future teachers who might then teach culture to their students.

Even though the trend of interactive museums and digital mediation is gaining popularity, little is known about prospective teachers at Paras Nusantara's perceptions of museum exhibits through recordings, especially among pre-service teachers. Although the existing literature on museum education has stressed the importance of being immersed in the museum experience it, the shift from interacting with the museum to observing its content through recordings raises an important question: How are cultural meanings reconstructed when immersion is diminished? This study, therefore, investigates pre-service teachers' perceptions of the *Paras Nusantara* exhibition at Museum Nasional Indonesia through

indirect, recorded experience to understand their cognitive, affective, and interpretive responses to a cultural exhibition originally designed for direct experience.

## **Literature Review**

### **Museum learning and visitor experience**

Museums are now not just object-focused institutions but learning places where people make meaning of and cultural knowledge. Museum learning involves the interplay among personal, sociocultural, and physical contexts (Falk & Dierking, 2013). They think that what people learn at the museum is not just factual knowledge but a complex interpretive construction. In addition, visiting a museum is said to be multifaceted, which involves cognitive, affective, and social elements. Packer and Ballantyne (2016) consider that the visitor experience involves "both cognitive understanding and affective response". People's perceptions of an exhibition would affect the memories they form through their cognitive and affective processes. However, the article states that they do not consider the "affective factor" in interactive exhibitions. In interactive exhibitions, engagement is emphasized. With interactive technologies, visitor motivation to participate improves, and learning outcomes may also increase. However, these gains associated with "physical interaction and participatory activities" can hardly apply to "mediated form".

### **Digital and Mediated Museum Experience**

Digital technology has had a dramatic impact on museums' presentation and audience engagement. Parry (2007), among others, has argued that, through digital technology, museums are no longer constrained by the museum site itself, as content is disseminated to audiences via virtual or recorded experiences. However, mediated and unmediated experiences are distinct. Studies of virtual and digital museums have indicated that while they provide greater access, they can limit immersion and interaction with content compared to the on-site experience (Sylaiou et al., 2010). This is particularly relevant to exhibitions designed for user interaction, where a lack of on-site interaction may influence users' perceptions and responses to content. Furthermore, presence is significant in mediated experience. Matthew Lombard and Mel Slater (Lombard & Ditton, 1997; Slater, 2003) refer to presence as 'the feeling of "being there" in a particular environment'. The experience in a recorded or video medium does not provide the same sense of presence as it does in the physical world.

### **Multimedia Learning and Cognitive Processing**

In this study, we apply the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning proposed by Richard E. Mayer (2021). It states that learning from words and pictures can be enhanced over learning from words alone because human cognition possesses dual processing channels, namely, visual and auditory. However, these channels also have limited capacity, and people must actively organize and integrate relevant information into their existing knowledge structure (Mayer, 2021; Paivio, 1969). Therefore, in the case of using indirect recorded experience, it is explained that the subjects form their understanding of the Paras Nusantara exhibition through their own cognitive processing of the audio and video presentations provided. Nevertheless, because of a lack of physical interaction with the object, the scope of learning may be somewhat limited, as it depends solely on the mediated presentation. Another explanation from cognitive psychology is John Sweller's

Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 1988). This theory suggests that it could overwhelm learners' cognitive capacities and reduce comprehension as they receive an excessive amount of information. The way the video presentation was produced is crucial for the subjects to analyze.

### **Experiential Learning and Indirect Experience**

An important theory of learning in education revolves around experiential learning. David A. Kolb (2014) has described learning as a process where the individual moves through concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and finally active experimentation. When directly observing an exhibition in a museum, one engages in concrete experience and the learning cycle. In the indirect, recorded experience, participants do not experience the full learning cycle and instead rely on observational data; this may make learning from recorded observations differ from learning through the whole experience.

### **Observational Learning and Meaning Construction**

Observational learning is a learning theory conceptualized by Albert Bandura (2001) in his Social Cognitive Theory. In this theory, individuals could learn from observing others' behavior and experiences, a process known as vicarious learning. In this research, participants learn about an exhibition through a video, which can be considered a form of mediated experience. Meanwhile, learning is not always a passive process. Learning as active construction of knowledge is emphasized in constructivist theory by Jean Piaget (1972). Therefore, each participant has their own understanding of the *Paras Nusantara* exhibition.

### **Pre-Service Teachers' Perceptions**

Pre-service teachers form a unique group of learners in that their conceptions are tied to their future professional roles as educators. Pajares (1992) claims teacher conceptions can impact both their instruction and practice. Likewise, Borg (2003) notes that the term teacher cognition "refers to what teachers know, what they believe and what they think about" as these combine to guide an educator's practices. Examining pre-service teachers' perceptions of cultural exhibitions in this study may ultimately shed light on how they integrate culture into instruction. Their conception can be best understood through their indirectly recorded experiences.

### **Synthesis of the Literature**

Based on the surveyed literature, we conclude that learning in a museum setting is a complex process involving the user, interaction, and context. Interactive exhibits, such as *Paras Nusantara*, are intended to provide a deeply individualized experience for the user. The transition to recorded media makes the acquisition of this knowledge a distinctly different process. Multimedia learning theory describes how people process information presented via video, whereas experiential learning theory has documented the limitations of indirect experience. Social cognitive theory, along with constructivism, explains the process of learning from observation as a mechanism. The term presence can be used to articulate how experience differs between mediated and direct encounters. It appears



likely, then, that an experience that is learned via a recorded indirect encounter may be shallower, more superficially engaging, or contain less profound personal meaning than a direct experience. Specifically for this type of exhibition and type of learner, research is largely absent. With reference to the theories and past research discussed, this study proposes a conceptual framework for the formation of pre-service teachers' perceptions of the *Paras Nusantara* exhibition based on indirect recorded experience.

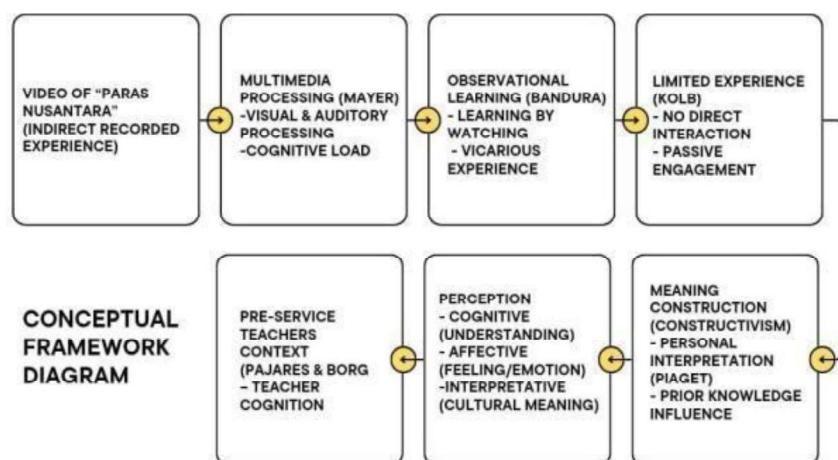


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework Diagram

The framework illustrates how indirect recorded experience influences pre-service teachers' perceptions through cognitive processing and engagement.

## Research Methodology

The research employed a mixed-methods approach, applying both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to investigate pre-service teachers' perceptions of the exhibition *Paras Nusantara* at Museum Nasional Indonesia through indirect observation. The survey method was used for data collection, supplemented by narrative inquiry.

## Materials and Instruments

The materials used in this study consisted of recorded media of the *Paras Nusantara* exhibition, including videos, photographs, and social media content obtained from platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. These materials functioned as the stimulus for participants to experience the exhibition indirectly before completing the questionnaire. The data were gathered using a structured survey developed specifically for this study. This survey questionnaire was divided into three parts. Part I was made up of three close-ended questions regarding the demographics of the respondents, namely, gender and attendance at the exhibit, along with their knowledge of "*Paras Nusantara*." On the other hand, Part II consisted of 11 Likert-type questions on a 5-point rating scale, where 1 =

strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. The questions focused on the attitude of the participants in the following areas: interest in visiting the exhibit, sense of connectedness via media recording, significance of the virtual exhibit, emotional reaction, reflection about cultural identity, effects of the interactive technology, influence of the media in understanding, authenticity of the media recording, comprehension difficulties, learning experiences, and interpretation. Lastly, Part III included three open-ended questions asking respondents about their intentions to visit the exhibit, their evaluation of the paid services provided, and suggestions for improvement.

### **Participants and Sampling**

The participants were 41 pre-service teachers selected through purposive sampling. The sampling criteria included prior exposure to the *Paras Nusantara* exhibition through recorded media and willingness to participate in the study. Among the 41 respondents, 30 were female (73.2%), and 11 were male (26.8%). Regarding prior experience, 11 participants (26.8%) experienced the exhibit firsthand, while 30 (73.2%) experienced it only through recordings. In addition, 26 participants (63.4%) reported knowing about "Paras Nusantara" before the study, while 15 participants (36.6%) reported not knowing the term.

### **Research Procedure**

The research process involved three phases: preparation, data gathering, and data sorting. The preparation phase involved the researcher locating relevant audiovisual materials available in the public domain on the Internet and formulating the questionnaire based on existing theories. In the data collection stage, participants were instructed to access the recorded materials via the provided links and then complete the questionnaire via an online form. In the data organization stage, quantitative responses were entered into spreadsheet software, while qualitative responses were compiled and structured into individual narrative entries for further analysis.

### **Data Analysis**

Quantitative data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel (Microsoft Corporation, Version 2019). The data analysis process involved data coding, where binary data was coded for closed-ended questions (Yes = 1, No = 0), while Likert scale items were coded on a scale of 1 to 5. Descriptive statistics were then computed, including means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages for each survey item. The intervals used to interpret the means were 1.00-1.80 (very low), 1.81-2.60 (low), 2.61-3.40 (moderate), 3.41-4.20 (high), and 4.21-5.00 (very high).

The qualitative analysis of data from the three open-ended questions involved narrative inquiry alongside thematic analysis. The analysis began with the writing of individual narratives, in which each respondent's answers to the open-ended questions were combined into a single coherent narrative. Subsequently, constant reading of all narratives was conducted to immerse oneself in the data. Then, preliminary coding of the narratives was undertaken to pinpoint significant meaning units, such as curiosity, emotional involvement, authenticity, visiting intentions, evaluations of paid-for services, and suggestions for improvement. These codes were subsequently grouped into broader thematic categories representing patterns across participants' responses. Finally, themes

were interpreted to understand how participants construct meaning from mediated experiences of the *Paras Nusantara* exhibition.

### Theoretical Framework and Assumptions

This study is grounded in several theoretical frameworks. Multimedia Learning Theory (Mayer, 2021) describes how people perceive messages through visual and auditory media channels. Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 2014) provides a basis for differentiating between concrete experiences and abstract observations. Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 2001) explains the phenomenon of vicarious learning based on the media. Constructivist Theory (Piaget, 1972) emphasizes the learner's role in constructing meaning. Museum Learning Theory (Falk & Dierking, 2013) situates all these theories within the museum setting.

The research was conducted in an experimental condition in which participants had contact with the exhibition only through media recordings, without physical interaction. The assumption is that the feedback from participants reflects their perceptions of the exhibition. Participants accessed the recordings via the online questionnaire on their personal computers and smartphones.

### Results and Discussion

This segment presents an analysis of the indirect recorded experiences that shape pre-service teachers' perceptions about the *Paras Nusantara* exhibition at Museum Nasional Indonesia. Interpretations based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative results are discussed with reference to well-known theoretical paradigms, including Multimedia Learning Theory, Experiential Learning Theory, Social Cognitive Theory, and Museum Learning Theory.

### Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

In total, 41 pre-service teachers took part in this research. The demographics of the respondents are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographics of the Respondents

| Characteristics | Category     | Frequency | Percent      | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-----------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Gender          | Male         | 11        | 26.8         | 26.8          | 26.8               |
|                 | Female       | 30        | 73.2         | 73.2          | 100                |
|                 | <b>Total</b> | <b>41</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>100.0</b>  |                    |
| Experienced     | Yes          | 11        | 26.8         | 26.8          | 26.8               |

|                        |              |           |              |               |        |
|------------------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|---------------|--------|
| firsthand              | No           | 30        | 73.2         | 73.2          | 100.00 |
|                        | <b>Total</b> | <b>41</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>100.00</b> |        |
| Familiar with the term | Yes          | 26        | 63.4         | 63.4          | 63.4   |
|                        | No           | 15        | 36.6         | 36.6          | 100.0  |
|                        | <b>Total</b> | <b>41</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>100.0</b>  |        |

[Source: Personal Data Akbar, Putri, Fauziah, Reza, Wijirahayu, 2026]

Several important facts about the sample's demographics are shown in the table above. First of all, female students represented the majority of the sample population (73.2%). Second, 73.2% of respondents had no firsthand knowledge of the exhibition, suggesting that their perception of it was based on indirect media. Moreover, 63.4% of respondents reported previous exposure to the term "*Paras Nusantara*." According to Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, this situation suggests that individuals may learn and form attitudes through observation, even without firsthand experience. Thus, the dataset provides a strong foundation for examining the formation of perception through mediated exposure.

### Quantitative Findings: Perceptions of Indirect Recorded Experience

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for the 11 items used to measure respondents' perceptions on a Likert scale.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Perception Items

| Item                       | Mean | Std. Deviation | Interpretation |
|----------------------------|------|----------------|----------------|
| Interest in visiting       | 4.04 | 0.92           | High           |
| Relatability through video | 3.73 | 1.00           | High           |
| Meaningful experience      | 3.80 | 0.98           | High           |
| Emotional response         | 3.70 | 1.02           | High           |
| Cultural reflection        | 4.04 | 0.94           | High           |

|                      |             |             |             |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Technology influence | 4.02        | 0.93        | High        |
| Media influence      | 4.04        | 1.04        | High        |
| Authenticity         | 3.90        | 0.94        | High        |
| Difficulty via media | 3.56        | 1.02        | High        |
| Learning outcome     | 3.87        | 1.00        | High        |
| Personal meaning     | 4.02        | 0.85        | High        |
| <b>Overall Mean</b>  | <b>3.88</b> | <b>0.96</b> | <b>High</b> |

[Source: Personal Data Akbar, Putri, Fauziah, Reza, Wijirahayu, 2026]

It is clear from the results of the means calculation that the respondents had positive perceptions concerning their indirect recorded experience ( $M = 3.88$ ). The highest means were recorded in the areas of interest generation, cultural reflection, and media effects, each having a mean of  $M = 4.04$ . Thus, it is clear that indirect recorded experience played its part, successfully generating interest, promoting understanding, and forming initial perceptions. At the same time, it needs to be understood that such perception formation was subject to several limitations inherent in the nature of indirect media. Since all knowledge is gained through recorded materials (videos/images, etc.), perception itself will be rather limited, as the sensory experience will be absent. In other words, the perception will be only partial, as certain aspects of the culture (atmosphere, emotions, and authentic experience) cannot be conveyed through this type of media.

The results have added further insights into the Multimedia Learning theory postulated by Richard Mayer, in that, apart from stimulating knowledge, indirect experiences through multimedia also stimulate intentions.

On the contrary, low mean scores for authenticity and comprehension difficulty indicate the limitations of the indirect experience. These findings align with the concept of presence proposed by Matthew Lombard and Ditton, suggesting that mediated environments lack full sensory immersion.

From the perspective of David Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, this indicates that indirect experience supports reflection and conceptualization but cannot fully replace concrete experience. Therefore, learning remains meaningful but incomplete.

### Qualitative Findings: Narrative Inquiry Analysis

This section presents an in-depth narrative inquiry analysis of pre-service teachers' responses regarding their indirect experience of the Paras Nusantara exhibition. The analysis integrates thematic interpretation with verbatim evidence from participants to ensure analytical rigor and empirical grounding.

## **Intention to Visit: Curiosity as an Incomplete Cognitive Closure**

A dominant finding is the strong intention to visit the exhibition in person following indirect exposure. However, this intention is not merely a surface-level preference; it reflects a deeper psychological mechanism rooted in curiosity and incomplete experiential fulfilment.

Many respondents explicitly connected indirect exposure to curiosity-driven motivation. For instance, one participant stated:

*“Yes, after watching the video, I feel excited and curious at the same time... I’m curious what ethnicity I’ll get and how fun it is.”*  
Similarly, another respondent explained:

*“After seeing the indirect exhibition experience, I became curious and wanted to visit the museum in person.”*

The repeated emergence of the term “*curious*” across responses indicates that indirect experience functions as a trigger for epistemic curiosity rather than a complete learning experience. Importantly, participants also recognized that this curiosity was not fully satisfied through media exposure. One respondent clearly articulated this gap:

*“Videos and photos feel more like a preview, not the full experience... they actually make me more curious and motivated to come directly.”*

This suggests that indirect experience creates what can be conceptualized as incomplete cognitive closure, where individuals are cognitively engaged but experientially unsatisfied. This condition motivates further action, specifically, direct visitation.

## **Mediated Experience: Engagement–Authenticity Tension**

A second critical finding is the coexistence of meaningful engagement and perceived limitations of authenticity. Participants acknowledged that indirect media provided valuable insight, yet they simultaneously emphasized their inability to fully replicate real experience.

For example, one respondent noted:

*“Online media still gives a meaningful experience, but there is something that cannot be fully captured through screens, such as the atmosphere and emotional connection.”*

Another participant reinforced this idea:

*“Digital previews are great, but they cannot replicate the physical atmosphere and scale of the art.”*

These responses demonstrate a clear engagement–authenticity tension. While participants reported cognitive and emotional engagement, they were also critically aware of the absence of physical immersion. This indicates that mediated experiences are informationally effective but phenomenologically limited.

Interestingly, this limitation did not reduce the perceived value of the experience. Instead, it contributed to stronger motivation for direct engagement, suggesting that perceived “lack” can function as a motivational driver rather than a weakness.

## Evaluation of Paid Services: Value as a Multidimensional Construct

Participants' evaluation of the paid services revealed that perceived value is constructed through multiple dimensions, including affordability, uniqueness, and symbolic meaning. Many respondents emphasized affordability and experiential value. For instance:

*"Yes, I think it is worth it because the price is affordable and it gives a unique and memorable experience."*

Another participant highlighted the integration of technology and culture:

*"This is definitely worth a try... the fusion of cutting-edge technology with Indonesian culture."*

A particularly important dimension is the role of the printed photo as a symbolic artifact. One respondent stated:

*"For only 20,000 rupiah, we can get a unique photo that connects our face with Indonesian history. It is a cheap but very cool souvenir."*

This indicates that the value of the experience extends beyond immediate interaction, functioning as a material representation of identity and memory. However, not all responses were fully positive. Some participants expressed critical perspectives:

*"I think a fair price would be 5,000 rupiah... the museum admission fee is already quite expensive."*

Another respondent added a conditional evaluation:

*"It depends on the quality of the service and the final print."*

These contrasting responses show that value perception is contextual and negotiable, influenced by expectations, perceived fairness, and output quality.

## Operational Experience: The Role of Practical Constraints

A significant portion of responses focused on operational issues, particularly queue management and waiting areas. These factors, while seemingly logistical, were shown to strongly influence overall perception.

One respondent described the issue clearly:

*"The queue for the exhibition stretched out and almost blocked the access route."*

Another suggested improvement:

*"Waiting areas could be more comfortable and better organized, and the ticketing system should be more efficient."*

These responses indicate that experience is not only constructed through content, but also through environment and management. Poor operational design can disrupt engagement and reduce satisfaction, even when the exhibition itself is conceptually strong.

## Reflexivity and Awareness of Limitations

An important finding relates to participants' awareness of their own limitations. Several respondents explicitly acknowledged that they could not fully evaluate the exhibition due to a lack of direct experience.

For example:

*"I've never been there in person, so I don't know what needs to be improved."*

Another respondent stated:

*"I can't give advice because I haven't experienced it directly."*

This reflexivity strengthens the credibility of the data, as it demonstrates that participants were able to distinguish between observed representation and lived experience. Such



awareness is indicative of critical thinking and enhances the trustworthiness of the findings.

### **The Insights from Inquiry**

The qualitative findings were further validated through triangulation with relevant theories, concepts, and research literature for interpretive validity. Indeed, narrative inquiry implies viewing participants' answers not as mere descriptions but as meaning-making constructions shaped by individuals' experiences, contexts, and prior knowledge. This approach aligns with Benson (2014), who argues that narrative data must be interpreted from multiple perspectives and empirically substantiated with theoretical and/or empirical evidence to prevent oversimplification in analysis.

First, the fact that indirect experience from recordings stimulates a desire to visit directly may be explained by Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986), which states that people develop intentions and behavioral tendencies through observational learning. In this respect, the predominance of curiosity as the main motivational factor among participants aligns with Berlyne's theory of epistemic curiosity (1960): exposure to new and complex information creates an intention to explore more deeply. As seen above, recorded media failed to satisfy curiosity but rather increased it, thus proving the hypothesis that indirect experience is a stimulus to direct experience.

Second, the double nature of mediated experience, as both engaging and lacking something compared to physical experience, may be triangulated with the concept of presence (Lombard & Slater, 1997; Slater, 2003): despite all limitations mentioned above by participants as well as those implied in the reviewed literature on the subject, the fact that people engaged with recorded videos proves the validity of Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (2009), which argues that well-designed audiovisual materials are capable of triggering cognitive processes regardless of the lack of physical interactions.

Finally, the themes of meaning-making and reflection of cultural identity are closely related to constructivist learning theory (Piaget, 1972) and Falk and Dierking's museum learning model (2013). It becomes evident from participants' narratives that the process of learning is facilitated by the interplay between personal experience and sociocultural backgrounds, as well as the content of multimedia resources, thus supporting Packer and Ballantyne (2016) in their assumption that visitor experience is multidimensional and involves such aspects as emotions, cognition, and reflection.

Fourthly, the evaluation of value and accessibility aligns well with theoretical frameworks in museum studies regarding the visitor experience and its inclusiveness (Hooper-Greenhill, 2007). The emphasis on the affordability, educational benefits, and souvenir value of experiences indicates that pre-service teachers perceive such cultural experiences from the perspectives of consumers and learners. In alignment with Borg (2003) and Pajares (1992), this finding highlights the significance of beliefs and prior experience in teachers' evaluation of educational resources.

Also, the presence of operational challenges, such as queue control and the quality of the technology used that falls under the umbrella of experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984). This framework emphasizes the importance of the entire learning context. Despite the high cognitive involvement in the learning process, any hindrance to its implementation will

reduce its effectiveness. Additionally, Packer and Ballantyne (2016) corroborate this statement, stating that the visitor experience depends on both content and context characteristics, including physical and organizational conditions.

In summary, triangulating the qualitative results provides an analytical framework for discussing them. Narrative analysis, combined with existing theoretical frameworks and previous research, demonstrates that the indirect and recorded experience represents a valuable yet incomplete mode of engagement. Such experience stimulates curiosity, reflection, and basic understanding while highlighting the importance of experiencing something firsthand.

## **Conclusions**

Firstly, the study demonstrates pre-service teachers' ability to form perceptions of the *Paras Nusantara* exhibition through indirectly recorded experiences, thus viewing indirect experience as an active process of perceiving what is happening, not a passive experience. The results show that indirect experience can serve as an effective means of motivating people to engage in a museum activity by raising questions and prompting further visits to the museum.

Perceptions can be seen from two perspectives: on the one hand, people can learn about and think about subjects of interest; on the other hand, they cannot experience all the nuances of real experience. This demonstrates the complementarity of indirect and direct experiences in learning.

Lastly, the paper indicates that pre-service teachers can critically evaluate digital cultural experiences, taking into account their pedagogical value and limitations. Conceptually, the findings position indirect recorded experience as a “pre-experiential learning space” that facilitates initial engagement and meaning construction before physical interaction.

Despite limitations related to sample size and lack of direct comparison, the study suggests that recorded cultural content can serve as an effective educational tool and outreach strategy, while emphasizing the continued importance of direct, embodied museum experiences.

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# **Behind the Smile: Narrative Inquiry into Waitstaff Work Motivation in a Four-Star Hotel Restaurant, Bali**

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## **Abstract**

*This study investigates the lived experiences related to work motivation among waitstaff at HQ Restaurant, located within Truntum Kuta Hotel, Bali. The participants included eight waitstaff members aged 31 to 55 years, all of whom possessed diploma-level educational backgrounds and work experience ranging from 8 to 24 years. Based on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, the research responds to an important gap in hospitality studies, particularly the limited application of qualitative methods to explore inconsistencies between employees' self-perceived and actual work motivation. Data collection methods consisted of 30 hours of participatory observation, informal in-depth conversations, reflective journals, and supporting questionnaires.*

*The results indicate a clear discrepancy between the participants' perceived motivation levels (mean score = 3.48, categorized as "good") and their observable motivational behaviors, which appeared only within a 0–15% range. Although hygiene factors, including salary, supervision, and workplace conditions, were considered relatively satisfactory, motivator factors such as recognition, achievement, and meaningful work experiences were found to be largely lacking.*

*Five key themes were identified from the findings: (1) financial necessity as the primary source of motivation, (2) limited empowerment contributing to passive*

*work behavior, (3) lack of recognition causing emotional detachment, (4) declining sense of meaning in work, and (5) interpersonal relationships serving as emotional support mechanisms. This research enriches the existing literature by providing empirical evidence of social desirability bias in motivation studies, broadening the application of Herzberg's theory within a non-Western hospitality setting, and highlighting recognition as a crucial motivational factor. The study also offers practical recommendations, including the implementation of employee recognition initiatives, empowerment practices, and job redesign strategies aimed at improving staff motivation.*

**Keywords:** *Work motivation; waitstaff; narrative inquiry; Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory; social desirability bias; hospitality management*

## **Introduction**

The hospitality industry, especially in leading tourism destinations such as Bali, continues to encounter difficulties in sustaining consistent service quality. Factors such as high employee turnover, the emotional demands of service work, and intensifying market competition often contribute to unstable service performance (Chen et al., 2019; Kim & Qu, 2020). Within this industry, waitstaff hold a vital position as the main point of interaction between customers and service providers. Nevertheless, inconsistencies in service delivery are still frequently observed. Customer feedback for HQ Restaurant at Truntum Kuta Hotel from 2023 to 2025 repeatedly highlighted issues such as delayed service, unfriendly attitudes, and a lack of initiative among employees. Interestingly, initial observations showed that staff generally adhered to operational procedures, indicating a gap between procedural compliance and the delivery of exceptional service experiences.

This situation prompts an important inquiry: why do employees who adequately complete their assigned responsibilities still fail to provide excellent service quality? The present study suggests that the explanation can be found in a deeper understanding of work motivation that goes beyond visible task performance. To examine this issue, the study applies one of the most influential theories in motivation research, namely Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory or Motivation-Hygiene Theory (Herzberg, 1959; 1968). Herzberg argued that employee motivation is shaped by two separate categories of factors, each functioning along its own continuum.

Hygiene factors, often referred to as maintenance factors or dissatisfiers, originate from conditions external to the job itself. These include salary, workplace conditions, organizational policies, interpersonal relationships, and supervisory quality. When these factors are inadequate, employees tend to experience dissatisfaction. However, Herzberg emphasized that even when hygiene factors are sufficient, they do not automatically generate motivation; rather, they merely reduce dissatisfaction and create a minimum acceptable working environment

without encouraging superior performance. In contrast, motivator factors, also known as satisfiers, are intrinsic elements of the job, including achievement, recognition, responsibility, the nature of the work itself, and opportunities for growth and advancement. The presence of these factors leads to genuine job satisfaction and long-term motivation, while their absence weakens employee enthusiasm despite adequate hygiene conditions. Motivator factors therefore distinguish employees who simply fulfill their duties from those who willingly contribute extra effort. This distinction is highly relevant in understanding the motivation of waitstaff. For example, employees who receive fair salaries may choose to remain in their positions, but this does not necessarily inspire outstanding performance. Conversely, employees who gain recognition for delivering excellent service are more likely to remain committed and proactively exceed customer expectations.

Existing research on motivation in the hospitality sector has largely employed quantitative approaches, particularly self-report surveys using Likert-scale instruments (Lee & Ok, 2021; Ramlall, 2021). Although such methods provide measurable findings, they are vulnerable to social desirability bias, in which respondents portray themselves more positively than reality (Podsakoff et al., 2019). This issue becomes especially significant in collectivist societies such as Indonesia, where maintaining harmony and avoiding conflict may discourage employees from expressing dissatisfaction openly (Hofstede, 2011). Consequently, prior studies may present an inflated picture of employee motivation. Therefore, qualitative approaches are needed to explore employees' lived experiences and compare their expressed perceptions with their actual behaviors. This study seeks to address that gap by employing a narrative inquiry approach supported by observational data to capture authentic behavioral patterns.

The primary research question guiding this study is: How do waitstaff at HQ Restaurant, Truntum Kuta Hotel, Kuta, Bali, experience and describe their work motivation? The objectives of the study are to: first, investigate the lived experiences of waitstaff motivation; second, identify the factors influencing motivation; third, interpret the findings through Herzberg's theoretical framework; fourth, examine discrepancies between employee perceptions and behaviors; and fifth, formulate managerial recommendations.

Frederick Herzberg developed the Two-Factor Theory through interviews with 203 engineers and accountants in the Pittsburgh area, asking participants to recount situations in which they felt either highly satisfied or highly dissatisfied with their jobs (Herzberg, 1959). His analysis demonstrated that the factors generating positive feelings, referred to as satisfiers, were fundamentally different from those causing negative feelings, known as dissatisfiers. This discovery challenged the traditional assumption that satisfaction and dissatisfaction existed as opposite ends of a single continuum. Instead, Herzberg proposed two independent continua: one extending from "no dissatisfaction" to "dissatisfaction," shaped by hygiene factors,

and another ranging from “no satisfaction” to “satisfaction,” influenced by motivator factors.

Table 1 presents the two-factor framework with definitions and examples in the hospitality context.

Table 1. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory Applied to Hospitality

| Author              | Method       | Context     | Key Findings                             |
|---------------------|--------------|-------------|------------------------------------------|
| Chen et al. (2019)  | Quantitative | Bali Hotels | High turnover linked to low motivation   |
| Kim & Qu (2020)     | Survey       | Hospitality | Motivation affects service quality       |
| Chen & Lin (2021)   | Quantitative | Restaurants | Recognition increases proactive behavior |
| Ramlall (2021)      | Review       | General     | Intrinsic factors dominate motivation    |
| Tan & Waheed (2020) | Survey       | Hotels      | Herzberg validated in hospitality        |

Source: Adapted from Herzberg (1959) and Alshmemri et al. (2017)

A considerable amount of empirical evidence has supported Herzberg’s theory within the hospitality industry. Tan and Waheed (2020) conducted a survey involving 312 hotel employees in Malaysia and discovered that recognition and achievement had a greater influence on employee retention than salary alone. This result aligns with Herzberg’s differentiation between hygiene and motivator factors. Similarly, Ramlall (2021), through a longitudinal study involving 450 hotel employees across 15 hotels, revealed that intrinsic elements such as meaningful work and career development opportunities were far more effective than extrinsic rewards like salary and benefits in predicting employee engagement, job satisfaction, and discretionary effort. The findings showed that motivator factors accounted for 47% of the variance in engagement, whereas hygiene factors explained only 18%.

Within the restaurant sector, Chen and Lin (2021) reported that waitstaff who experienced strong recognition and achievement demonstrated higher levels of proactive service behavior, including anticipating guests’ needs, providing additional assistance, and independently resolving complaints. In contrast, employees who only experienced satisfactory hygiene conditions, such as fair wages and acceptable work environments, tended to meet minimum job requirements without displaying initiative. Despite the widespread acceptance of Herzberg’s theory, several criticisms remain. First, the original use of the critical incident technique has been questioned due to possible recall bias, where participants may associate positive experiences with internal causes and negative experiences with external circumstances (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2021). Second, the theory may not apply equally across cultures. Research on cultural dimensions by Geert Hofstede (2011) suggests that the distinction between hygiene and motivator factors differs among societies. In collectivist cultures such as



Indonesia, interpersonal relationships and job security, traditionally categorized as hygiene factors, may function more like motivator factors than Herzberg initially suggested. Third, and most relevant to this study, Herzberg's framework largely depends on self-reported data, where participants describe personal experiences instead of being observed in real workplace situations. Consequently, the findings may be affected by social desirability bias and self-presentation tendencies.

Social desirability bias refers to the tendency of respondents to provide answers that are socially acceptable or positively perceived by others. This issue has been widely identified in organizational studies (Podsakoff et al., 2019; Krumpal, 2020). In the context of motivation research, employees may exaggerate their motivation due to several reasons: fear of negative repercussions if supervisors access their responses, cultural expectations to maintain positivity especially in customer-service roles, self-deception regarding their own motivational state, and survey fatigue that encourages respondents to select neutral or favorable answers quickly. What makes this bias particularly concerning is that it operates systematically rather than randomly. Instead of balancing out across participants, it consistently inflates reported motivation levels. As a result, studies relying solely on self-report instruments may substantially overestimate employees' actual motivation.

To overcome this limitation, the present study adopts methodological triangulation by integrating self-report questionnaires, 30 hours of direct observation, and conversational interviews. This approach enables the researcher to compare employees' verbal statements with their actual workplace behaviors. Waitstaff hold a unique role within hospitality research. Sujanto (2021) defines waitstaff as restaurant personnel responsible for directly fulfilling guests' food and beverage service needs. Meanwhile, Marsum (2018) explains that their duties include welcoming guests, taking orders, serving meals and beverages, clearing tables, processing payments, and ensuring guest comfort throughout the dining experience.

Previous studies have consistently emphasized the demanding nature of waitstaff work. Ozdemir and Caliskan (2020) highlighted the concept of emotional labor, which requires employees to display pleasant emotions regardless of their actual feelings. Over time, this emotional regulation may contribute to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished personal accomplishment, commonly recognized as burnout syndrome. Additionally, Chen et al. (2019) found that annual turnover rates among waitstaff in Bali hotels ranged from 35% to 45%, considerably exceeding the national average in other service sectors. Such turnover creates major organizational costs, including recruitment expenses, training investments, productivity losses, and temporary declines in service quality.

This study is conducted in Bali, a cultural environment with characteristics that are highly relevant to employee motivation. Balinese society is deeply influenced by the philosophy of Tri Hita Karana, which emphasizes harmony with God,

harmony among people, and harmony with nature (Eiseman, 2017). This cultural orientation toward interpersonal harmony may shape how waitstaff perceive and express motivation. Specifically, the strong emphasis on maintaining social harmony may intensify social desirability bias in self-report data. Employees may hesitate to express dissatisfaction or low motivation because such expressions could be viewed as disruptive to group harmony. Therefore, this cultural context further supports the importance of observational methods that capture actual behavior rather than relying exclusively on self-reported perceptions.

Table 1 presents a synthesis of previous studies on work motivation in hospitality.

Table 1. Summary of Previous Studies on Work Motivation

| Author              | Method       | Context     | Key Findings                             |
|---------------------|--------------|-------------|------------------------------------------|
| Chen et al. (2019)  | Quantitative | Bali Hotels | High turnover linked to low motivation   |
| Kim & Qu (2020)     | Survey       | Hospitality | Motivation affects service quality       |
| Chen & Lin (2021)   | Quantitative | Restaurants | Recognition increases proactive behavior |
| Ramlall (2021)      | Review       | General     | Intrinsic factors dominate motivation    |
| Tan & Waheed (2020) | Survey       | Hotels      | Herzberg validated in hospitality        |

This synthesis shows that most studies rely on quantitative methods, highlighting the need for qualitative approaches.

## Research Methodology

### Research Design

This study employs a qualitative narrative inquiry design. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) articulated, narrative inquiry treats human experience as a story to be told, listened to, and interpreted. Unlike quantitative methods that seek to measure and predict, narrative inquiry seeks to understand, to enter into the lived world of participants and co-create meaning through dialogue and observation.

Narrative inquiry is particularly appropriate for this study for three reasons. First, work motivation is not merely a score on a Likert scale; it is a story, a story of hopes and disappointments, of routines and ruptures, of relationships and systems. Second, narrative methods are particularly sensitive to the gap between what people say and what they do, because they attend to both verbal accounts and observed behaviors. Third, narrative inquiry honors participant voices, giving expression to experiences that might otherwise remain invisible.

### Research Setting

The research took place at HQ Restaurant, Truntum Kuta Hotel, Bali. The restaurant, located at Jl. Pantai Kuta No. 1, Kuta, South Kuta, Badung Regency,

Bali 80361, is a medium-sized establishment serving Asian and Western cuisine. With a seating capacity of 200 guests across four sections (Indoor A, Indoor B, Indoor C, Outdoor Deck, and Lounge), the restaurant operates three shifts: morning (07:00-15:00 WITA), afternoon (14:00-23:00 WITA), and night (23:00-07:00 WITA). The restaurant employs 14 staff members: 1 manager, 3 supervisors, 1 hostess, 5 waiters/waitresses, 3 bartenders, and 1 cashier. This study focuses specifically on the 8 waitstaff (waiters and waitresses).

### Participants

The participants were all eight waitstaff working at HQ Restaurant during the research period. A census approach (total sampling) was used because the population was small (N=8) and accessible. This approach eliminates sampling error and provides the most accurate representation of the population (Sekaran & Bougie, 2020).

Table 2 presents participant demographic information (pseudonyms assigned to protect confidentiality).

Table 2. Participant Demographic Information  
Source: Talent & Culture Manager of HQ Restaurant (2025)

| Waitstaff | Age | Gender | Education | Work Tenure (years) | Primary Section |
|-----------|-----|--------|-----------|---------------------|-----------------|
| W1        | 55  | Male   | Diploma   | 24                  | Indoor A        |
| W2        | 54  | Female | Diploma   | 8                   | Indoor B        |
| W3        | 54  | Female | Diploma   | 8                   | Outdoor Deck    |
| W4        | 31  | Female | Diploma   | 8                   | Indoor C        |
| W5        | 31  | Female | Diploma   | 8                   | Lounge          |
| W6        | 31  | Female | Diploma   | 8                   | Indoor B        |
| W7        | 32  | Male   | Diploma   | 8                   | Service Support |
| W8        | 39  | Male   | Diploma   | 8                   | Outdoor Deck    |

All participants share several characteristics: diploma-level education, mature age (range 31-55 years, mean = 40.9 years, SD = 10.8), and significant work tenure (range 8-24 years, mean = 10 years, SD = 5.7). This homogeneity is itself significant, these are not young, transient workers but established, experienced professionals who have chosen to remain in the demanding world of restaurant service despite the challenges.

## Data Collection Methods

To capture the richness of participants' experiences and enable triangulation between self-report and observation, three complementary methods were employed over ten days (June 24-July 3, 2025). Data collection in this study used the Participatory Observation method which was carried out for 30 hours. The researcher did not observe from a distance but participated in the daily rhythm of the restaurant. Sitting at a corner table (Table 12, Indoor Section B), ordering coffee and meals, the researcher observed for 3 hours each day, between 09:00 am to 20:00 pm, for a total of 30 hours of observation. The observation focused on 10 specific behaviors: 5 motivator behaviors (enthusiasm, initiative, pride, proactivity, training participation) and 5 hygiene behaviors (cleanliness, cooperation, supervision following, rule compliance, complaints).

Detailed field notes were recorded in a research journal within 30 minutes of each observation period, capturing both observable behaviors and the researcher's own emotional responses (reflexive journaling). The observation protocol was pilot-tested during a preliminary visit to ensure reliability.

Rather than formal, structured interviews, which can increase social desirability bias, the researcher engaged in informal conversations during natural breaks. This approach, recommended by Spradley (2016), reduces artificiality and allows participants to speak more naturally about their experiences. Conversations occurred during: (a) morning breaks (before the lunch rush, approximately 10:30-11:00), (b) afternoon lulls (between 14:00-16:00), and (c) end-of-shift wind-down periods (after 20:00). Each conversation lasted 10-20

The researcher consistently kept a reflective journal during the data collection process. This journal had two primary functions: (1) documenting observations that were not adequately captured in structured field notes, and (2) supporting reflexivity by consciously identifying and setting aside the researcher's personal assumptions, biases, and emotional reactions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Daily journal entries recorded the researcher's emotional condition, developing insights, and possible subjective influences.

To facilitate comparison with quantitative studies on motivation, an additional questionnaire was distributed. The instrument consisted of 20 statements, with two items representing each of Herzberg's 10 indicators, measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Very Poor) to 5 (Very Good). The questionnaire underwent content validation by two experts in hospitality management and reliability testing, producing a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.87, which surpassed the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70 suggested by Nunnally and Bernstein (2018).

## Data Analysis

The data analysis process adopted the stages of narrative analysis proposed by Creswell and Poth (2018) alongside the thematic analysis approach developed by Braun and Clarke (2021). These stages included organizing and familiarizing with

the data, generating initial codes, developing themes, reviewing and defining themes, constructing narratives, and conducting theoretical interpretation. To enhance the trustworthiness of the results, the study applied validation strategies recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and further elaborated by Creswell and Poth (2018), including credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), and dependability (reliability).

### Overview: The Central Paradox

The most significant finding of this study is a central paradox: a substantial and meaningful gap between what waitstaff said about their motivation (when asked directly in the questionnaire and conversations) and what they actually did (when observed naturally in their work environment). Table 3 presents a comparison of self-reported and observed motivation.

Table 3. *Comparison of Self-Reported and Observed Motivation*

| Dimension                         | Self-Reported<br>(Questionnaire) | Observed (30 hours)            | Gap         |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Overall motivation<br>(1-5 scale) | 3.48 (Good category)             | N/A (behavioral, not scaled)   | N/A         |
| Proactive guest greeting          | 3.62 (self-rated)                | 11% of opportunities<br>(2/18) | -2.5 points |
| Initiative in problem-solving     | 3.25 (self-rated)                | 12.5% of opportunities (1/8)   | -2.0 points |
| Genuine positive affect           | 3.75 (self-rated)                | 15% of interactions<br>(3/20)  | -2.5 points |
| Extra-role behaviors              | 3.37 (self-rated)                | 8% of opportunities<br>(1/12)  | -2.0 points |
| Volunteering for tasks            | 3.12 (self-rated)                | 0% of opportunities<br>(0/5)   | -2.5 points |

The gap is substantial: waitstaff rated themselves in the "Good" to "Very Good" range (3.12-3.75), but observed behaviors occurred in only 0-15% of opportunities. This gap, approximately 2.0-2.5 points on a 5-point scale, is both statistically and practically significant.

In contrast, hygiene-related behaviors were consistently observed:

Hygiene Behavior

Observed Consistency

Following supervisor instructions

100% (8/8 staff)

| Hygiene Behavior             | Observed Consistency |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Maintaining clean work areas | 100% (8/8 staff)     |
| Wearing proper uniform       | 100% (8/8 staff)     |
| Completing assigned tasks    | 100% (8/8 staff)     |

This contrast reveals the heart of the paradox: Waitstaff reliably perform their assigned duties (hygiene), but they do not exceed them (motivation).

#### Theoretical Implications: Bridging Gaps in Motivation Theory

The findings of this study offer meaningful support for Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. Consistent with Herzberg's distinction, the results confirm that hygiene factors, such as salary and job security, are insufficient to generate genuine motivation. While employees acknowledged economic necessity as a reason to work, it did not translate into enthusiasm, initiative, or volunteering. Instead, motivator factors, particularly recognition, emerged as critical missing elements.

Moreover, this study extends prior research by Ramlall (2021) and Chen & Lin (2021) by demonstrating that intrinsic motivation is not merely beneficial, it is conspicuously absent in operational settings. The gap between self-reported and observed motivation underscores the need to move beyond surveys and incorporate behavioral measures in motivation research.

#### Integration with Complementary Theories: A Multi-Dimensional Perspective

The results of this study are also closely aligned with the principles of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which emphasizes three fundamental psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The limited sense of empowerment identified among employees indicates insufficient autonomy, whereas the lack of appreciation and acknowledgment reflects unmet competence needs. On the other hand, the presence of strong interpersonal relationships among coworkers demonstrates a high level of relatedness, implying that social connections may partially offset shortcomings within the organization.

Furthermore, Emotional Labor Theory (Arlie Russell Hochschild, 1983; Lee & Ok, 2021) provides further insight into the inconsistency between employees' outward emotional expressions and their genuine internal motivation. Staff members may be required to display enthusiasm and positivity as part of their professional responsibilities, despite not authentically experiencing such emotions. Over time, this emotional mismatch can conceal actual motivational conditions and potentially contribute to burnout and psychological exhaustion.

#### Cultural Perspective: Harmony within the Balinese Context

Within the cultural environment of Bali, collectivist values strongly influence workplace interactions and employee behavior. The cultural emphasis on

preserving social harmony often discourages individuals from openly expressing dissatisfaction, frustration, or disengagement. As a result, employees may appear cooperative and provide favorable self-assessments, even when their observable behavior suggests otherwise. This cultural tendency intensifies the possibility of social desirability bias, highlighting the importance for researchers and managers to combine self-reported data with direct behavioral observations.

#### **Practical Implications: Translating Findings into Organizational Action**

The study's findings offer important and practical guidance for hospitality managers and organizational decision-makers. To address the existing motivation gap, organizations are encouraged to adopt several evidence-based initiatives. First, implementing effective recognition systems through timely, genuine, and meaningful appreciation of employee contributions can strengthen intrinsic motivation. Second, empowerment initiatives that provide waitstaff with greater authority in handling tasks, decision-making, and problem-solving may encourage stronger engagement and ownership of their roles. Third, job enrichment programs that introduce task variety, greater challenges, and opportunities for skill enhancement can help employees regain a stronger sense of purpose and fulfillment in their daily responsibilities.

Rather than serving as merely idealistic recommendations, these strategies are expected to generate measurable improvements in employee motivation and service performance, ultimately creating positive outcomes for employees, customers, and the organization as a whole.

### **Conclusions**

This study set out to explore the real, not just reported, motivation of waitstaff in the hospitality industry. The findings clearly demonstrate that motivation among waitstaff is primarily influenced by intrinsic factors, particularly recognition, empowerment, and meaningful work. Economic necessity, while present, serves only as a baseline hygiene factor, incapable of driving genuine engagement.

The persistent gap between self-reported and observed behavior highlights the presence of social desirability bias, further shaped by the collectivist culture of Bali. To address this, organizations must move beyond superficial satisfaction surveys and invest in behaviorally grounded interventions.

Ultimately, recognition plays a key role in enhancing motivation. When employees feel seen, valued, and empowered, they are far more likely to bring not just their hands to work, but also their hearts and minds.



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# Visitor Attraction to Ephemeral Art Experiences at Roh Projects: Exploring Influencing Factors

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## Abstract

*This study aims to identify factors that influence visitor attraction to the ephemeral art experience at the Roh Projects gallery in Jakarta. Ephemeral art, known for its temporary and impermanent nature, presents both challenges and unique attractions in the context of a contemporary art gallery. The research method used descriptive qualitative through field observations and literature analysis regarding visitor behavior in art spaces. The results show that the main attraction for visitors is triggered by a sense of urgency due to the temporary nature of the works, as well as the uniqueness of the curatorial concept that offers an unrepeatable sensory experience. In addition, the aesthetic factors of the gallery space and the narratives constructed by the artists also play a significant role in increasing visitors' emotional engagement. This study concludes that the success of the ephemeral art exhibition at Roh Projects depends heavily on the gallery's ability to create a connection between the philosophical value of the "fleeting" works and visitors' desire for an authentic experience.*

**Keywords:** contemporary art, Roh Projects, Visitor Experience.

## Introduction

In recent years, contemporary art spaces have shifted toward experience-based exhibitions that emphasize immersion and temporality. Ephemeral art, characterized by its temporary and interactive nature, has become increasingly popular among modern audiences. This study investigates the factors influencing the attraction of visitors to ephemeral art experiences at Roh Projects, a gorgeous contemporary art gallery museum.

The transition from the humid, historical hum of Cikini into the threshold of ROH Projects is more than a change in temperature; it is a shift in frequency. To enter this space is to step out of the frantic rhythm of Jakarta and into a curated silence. As a narrative inquiry, my visit wasn't merely a viewing of art, but a storied encounter with space, light, and the quiet intentionality of Indonesian contemporary art.

While the atmospheric elements of ROH Projects offer a rich descriptive landscape, this study transcends a purely narrative account by applying the theoretical

frameworks of transformational innovation (Rieple et al., 2023) and environmental experience evaluation (Lee, 2025). By employing a dual-phase methodology—consisting of digital sentiment mining from public discourse and structured respondent surveys—this research moves beyond anecdotal evidence. This systematic approach allows for the quantification of "visitor attraction" as a measurable construct, thereby identifying the specific socio-technical and environmental factors that sustain engagement within ephemeral art spaces. Consequently, this study aligns with the standards of academic inquiry by triangulating qualitative richness with empirical validation.

This study investigates the factors influencing visitor attraction to ephemeral art experiences at ROH Projects, a contemporary art gallery in Jakarta that increasingly presents exhibitions through dynamic, temporary, and interactive formats. Drawing on the gallery's curatorial practices and its use of flexible spatial arrangements, the study examines how artistic novelty, sensory immersion, interpretive engagement, and participatory opportunities shape audience interest and visitation intentions. The findings are expected to show that visitors are not only drawn to the artworks themselves, but also to the broader experiential environment created through exhibition design, artist talks, and the temporal character of the displayed works. By focusing on ROH Projects, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how contemporary art spaces can attract audiences through ephemeral and experience-based exhibitions

## **Literature Review**

This research is grounded in several theoretical foundations related to visitor behavior and the dynamics of modern art galleries. First, regarding visitor motivation and interactive experiences, Şahin (2020) explains that understanding audience motivation is crucial to creating a meaningful experience in an art gallery. Similarly, Ntalla (2017) emphasizes that in the context of modern museums and galleries, interaction is no longer merely an accessory but a key element in shaping audience engagement. This interaction allows visitors to explore the works personally, ultimately determining their level of satisfaction with the exhibition.

Second, the immersion process within visitor attractions is a crucial dimension in understanding how audiences engage with exhibition spaces. Referring to the concept of experiencescape in visitor attractions (2019), consumer immersion occurs when visitors act not merely as passive observers but are emotionally and sensorial "immersed" in the gallery environment. This immersion process creates a profound engagement that transforms an ordinary visit into a transformative experience where the boundaries between the artwork and the viewer become increasingly blurred.

### **The Evolution of the Visitor Experience**

Modern research emphasizes that the visitor experience is no longer a passive interaction but a complex, multisensory journey. Pourabedin and Pryce (2022) highlight the importance of multisensory engagement in heritage settings, noting how sensory inputs define the atmosphere of boutique accommodations. This is

further expanded by Cheng et al. (2023), who evaluate various influencing factors that shape how audiences perceive and interact with offline art exhibitions. In the realm of tourism and events, Rieple et al. (2023) discuss the significance of transformational innovation within ephemeral experiences, while Salem et al. (2026) demonstrate how performing arts tourism extends beyond the stage to fundamentally reshape tourist perceptions and the overall image of a destination.

### **Digital Integration and Technological Immersivity**

The integration of digital tools has become a cornerstone of contemporary engagement strategies. Kuntjara et al. (2025) illustrate this through their case study on DPirang, showing how digital art installations can enhance multicultural visitor engagement. Similarly, Lee (2025) explores the construction of immersive VR museum spaces, evaluating them through the lens of environmental art to understand how virtual spaces impact user experience. These digital shifts are particularly influential among younger demographics; for instance, Liu et al. (2025) examine the intersection of digital platforms and religion among Generation Z, showcasing how technology reshapes traditional belief systems and community interactions in a digital age.

### **Cultural Heritage and Place-Making**

The preservation and communication of cultural identity remain central to the success of heritage sites. Nilson and Thorell (2018) provide a broad overview of cultural heritage preservation, bridging the gap between past practices and future needs. On a more specific level, Al Matani (2024) emphasizes the role of ethnomusicology in preserving intangible cultural heritage, ensuring that oral and musical traditions are not lost. This connection to "place" is also a social phenomenon; Jordan (2019) investigates the concept of place-making and how specific demographics, such as Millennials, interact with the geographical and cultural fringes of a society. Ultimately, as Dekker and Morea (2023) argue, realizing the true value of art and heritage requires a nuanced understanding of both its economic and intrinsic cultural worth.

The theoretical frameworks of immersive experience and transformational innovation are vividly realized in the contemporary Indonesian art scene, as evidenced by the strategic programming at ROH Projects. The gallery's concurrent exhibitions, *Aperture* and *Labyrinths (Libraries)*, exemplify the "ephemeral experiences" described by Rieple et al. (2023), where the physical space is transformed to challenge visitor perception (CXO Media, 2022). Furthermore, the operational and conceptual foundations laid out in the ROH Press Release (2022) reflect the "influencing factors" identified by Cheng et al. (2023), demonstrating how professional gallery spaces curate specific environmental cues to heighten visitor engagement. By analyzing these specific case studies alongside broader academic literature, it becomes clear that the success of modern exhibitions relies on a deliberate synergy between the physical environment and the visitor's sensory journey. Finally, the influence of social media and visual imagery has become a determining factor in public visit intentions. Studies on "Instagrammable" destinations show that visual representation on social media, particularly Instagram,

strongly correlates with visit intention. In this context, social media serves as a catalyst, not only disseminating information but also sparking curiosity and creating a sense of urgency for the public to visit art galleries in person for a similar visual experience.

### **Research Methodology**

In this This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study at ROH Projects, Jakarta. This approach was chosen because the research wanted to deeply understand the visitor experience as well as the factors that made them interested in the ephemera art exhibition which is temporary and interactive.

Data was collected through several techniques, namely direct observation of the exhibition atmosphere, layout, and visitor interaction; documentation in the form of exhibition catalogues, photos, or official gallery information; as well as semi-structured interviews or open questionnaires to visitors who have come to ROH Projects. Respondents are chosen purposively, namely visitors who are considered to have relevant experience with the research object.

This study involved 15 purposively selected respondents. Although this sample size appears small quantitatively, in the context of this descriptive qualitative study, it was determined based on the principle of data saturation.

The data collection process, using open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, showed that after the 12th to 15th respondents, the information obtained began to show similar and repetitive patterns of responses. No new themes or significant additional information were discovered regarding factors that attract visitors to Roh Projects after reaching the 15th respondent.

This is evident in the consistency of the main themes that emerged, such as urgency due to the temporary nature of the work (FOMO) and the influence of social media, which were consistently agreed upon by the majority of respondents. Therefore, this sample size of 15 was deemed sufficient to provide an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study without the need for additional participants who would simply repeat existing information.

After the data was collected, the researcher conducted a thematic analysis to find answer patterns related to visitor attractiveness. The focus of the analysis is directed to factors such as the uniqueness of the work, visual experience, space atmosphere, emotional value, and curatorial quality. In this way, the research can explain how ROH Projects creates an art experience that affects the interests of visitors.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **Initial Interest: Social Media and the Urgency of Presence**

For visitors, who are predominantly students and the general public, the journey largely begins in the digital realm or through word-of-mouth recommendations from

friends and family. Many participants first learned about the exhibitions at Roh Projects Gallery in Cikini through social media. A prominent narrative among them is how art trends on platforms like Instagram or TikTok serve not only as information hubs but as active catalysts driving their desire to visit. This interest is sparked by the visualization of artworks appearing on their feeds, fostering a deep curiosity about the physical space (Giannopoulos, et al., 2022).

A key narrative aspect that emerged is the sense of urgency. The ephemeral nature of the artworks creates an awareness that the experience is time-bound. A recurring narrative among visitors is the "now or never" sentiment. The dynamic changes in themes and installations trigger a "fear of missing out" (FOMO), which ultimately makes a visit to Roh Projects feel more thrilling and exclusive compared to galleries with permanent collections. Visitors don't want to miss out on capturing the moment by taking photos as a form of appreciation for the work or simply to share this story on social media.

### Arrival and Initial Exploration



Figure 1: Roh Projects Art Gallery at Cikini front view

Upon entering the Roh Projects gallery area, the atmosphere shifts significantly: a vast and shaded expanse welcomes the visitors. As they step inside, visitors typically begin their journey by entering a quiet, minimalist space. The strategic use of lighting makes the artworks appear more precious, serving as a key element in establishing a powerful first impression. The atmosphere stands in stark contrast to the hustle and bustle of Jakarta—hushed yet mesmerizing. Visitors often pause to take in the surroundings, seeking a starting point for their exploration. Some mentioned feeling a sense of bewilderment or "strangeness" initially, but the calm environment and helpful gallery staff helped them transition into a state of comfort. *"When I first entered, I felt as if I were in another dimension. The quiet atmosphere, the vast room, and the minimal decoration made me want to explore further."* — Ahmad Fauzi

Many visitors describe their visit not merely as viewing objects, but as chasing an unrepeatable moment. Because the exhibited works are temporary and subject to change, visitors feel a heightened enthusiasm to explore every corner of the gallery.

This space continuously presents different artistic themes in each season, making every visit feel new and unrepeatable. This seasonal transformation leads me to question how novelty influences visitor attraction do people come because they are curious about what will appear next, or because they do not want to miss a limited-time experience. The idea of Roh Projects as a “hidden gem” also adds another layer to this inquiry. It is not a mainstream tourist destination, yet it gains recognition through the distinctiveness of its artworks. This makes me wonder whether exclusivity and the feeling of “discovering something rare” play a stronger role in attracting visitors than popularity itself.

Furthermore, the exploration of how this hidden and ever-changing nature shapes the overall visitor experience. Being in a place that is not widely known might create a more intimate and personal connection with the artworks, allowing visitors to engage more deeply without the overwhelming crowds found in larger museums. At the same time, the ephemeral aspect where exhibitions change each season encourages a sense of urgency and presence. I find myself questioning whether visitors are more drawn to the artistic value or to the experience of being part of something temporary and special. In this way, Roh Projects does not simply display art; it creates a dynamic environment where curiosity, exclusivity, and temporality intertwine, influencing how and why visitors choose to come and engage.

### **Emotional Engagement**



Figure 2: art installation from oototol, Roh Projects in Cikini

The gallery’s spatial atmosphere plays a crucial role in shaping the visitors' emotional narratives. Visitors do not just interact with the art; they engage with an immersive spatial design where the layout and lighting enhance the perceived value of the works. In these narratives, the physical aspect of the Roh Projects space acts



as a "stage" that amplifies the allure of the art. Visitors do not just see; they "feel" the atmosphere.



Figure 3: Art installation from oototol,Roh Projects in Cikini

Every perspective offers a different story, leading visitors to spend more time in personal observation. The minimalist design of Roh Projects allows ephemeral works to "breathe" and dominate the visitors' emotional consciousness. Furthermore, participants stated that art themes relevant to current social and cultural issues significantly intensified their interest. This experience is also closely intertwined with the visitors' digital identities; sharing photos and moments from Roh Projects on social media becomes a driving motivation that completes the overall visiting experience.

### **Deep Reflection: Satisfaction, Constraints, and Future Support**

At the conclusion of their experience, visitors reflect on the primary draw of the gallery—whether it be the unique artworks, the comfortable environment, the artist's appeal, or the boundless inspiration gained. Beneath the high levels of satisfaction, the participants' narratives also candidly reveal certain factors that hinder them from visiting onsite more frequently. Visitors also provided constructive suggestions to ensure Roh Projects continues to attract new audiences.

Overall, the participants' narratives confirm that the experience of ephemeral art does not end at the gallery exit; rather, it influences their commitment to supporting the local art scene in the future. The impact left on visitors is long-lasting. Roh Projects' success in bridging the philosophical value of the work with the visitors' desire for an authentic experience is the key to its attraction. These narratives often conclude with a profound and lasting impression, demonstrating that the short duration of an exhibition does not diminish the intellectual and emotional impact received by the audience.

This section presents the research findings through the narrative of visitor experiences, structured according to the stages of their interaction with the gallery space and the ephemeral artworks at Roh Projects. A narrative inquiry approach is employed to describe how visitors experience, interpret, and are influenced by the spatial atmosphere and the temporal nature of the art.

Table 1: Thematic Analysis

| Theme                            | Survey Statement                                                                                                | Frequency |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Urgency &amp; Exclusivity</b> | 1. The temporary nature of the art at Roh Projects makes it more exciting to visit.                             | 10        |
| <b>Emotional Attachment</b>      | 2. I am attracted to Roh Projects because the artworks change frequently, creating a sense of urgency to visit. | 10        |
| <b>Emotional Attachment</b>      | 3. The uniqueness or rarity of ephemeral art experiences influences my decision to visit.                       | 7         |
| <b>Emotional Attachment</b>      | 4. Art at Roh Projects gives a sense of exclusivity that makes me want to come.                                 | 5         |
| <b>Curiosity</b>                 | 5. The rapid change of theme or art installation triggered my curiosity.                                        | 8         |
| <b>Emotional Attachment</b>      | 6. Art themes that are relevant to current social/cultural issues affect my interests.                          | 6         |
| <b>Social Media Influence</b>    | 7. Art trends on social media (such as Instagram/TikTok) encouraged me to visit Roh Projects.                   | 6         |
| <b>Social Media Influence</b>    | 8. The experience of sharing photos/moments on social media motivates the visit.                                | 7         |

|                               |                                                                                                                      |                       |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Spatial &amp; Layout</b>   | 9. Gallery space design and lighting at Roh Projects make the ephemeral experience more interesting.                 | 6                     |
| <b>Comparative Attraction</b> | 10. The Roh Projects Gallery is more attractive than other art galleries in Jakarta because of its temporary nature. | 6                     |
| <b>Future Support</b>         | 11. A visit to Roh Projects influenced my choice to support local art in the future.                                 | 7                     |
| <b>Satisfaction</b>           | 12. Overall, how satisfied are you with your art experience at Roh Projects Gallery in Cikini?                       | Average rating (4.33) |

[Source : Information from the visitors through questionnaire Nazma et al. 2026 ]

A Based on the thematic analysis of the respondents' answers (Table 1), it was found that the primary attraction of ROH Projects is rooted in the inherent nature of the art offered, as well as external social media influences. The detailed analysis is as follows:

### 1. Urgency and Exclusivity

The temporary nature of ephemeral art exhibitions serves as the most potent deciding factor. A total of 10 out of 15 respondents stated that the non-permanent characteristic of the exhibition created a higher level of enthusiasm to visit. This indicates a "Fear of Missing Out" (FOMO) phenomenon among visitors; they feel compelled to visit immediately before the work changes or is removed (Eman et al.2025). The "once-in-a-lifetime" nature of these art installations provides a sense of exclusivity that cannot be found in conventional galleries with permanent collections.

### 2. Emotional Attachment and Uniqueness

This study identifies that the emotional bond formed between the visitors and the gallery is built through several key aspects:

Periodic Changes: 10 respondents felt attracted because frequent changes in the artworks create emotional urgency.

Uniqueness & Rarity: 7 respondents emphasized that the rarity of the ephemeral art experience significantly influenced their decision.

Relevance of Themes: Beyond visual aesthetics, 6 respondents stated that art themes relevant to current social and cultural issues provided an emotional depth that increased their interest in the work.

### **3. Curiosity and Novelty**

The rapid pace of change in themes or installations at ROH Projects successfully triggered curiosity in 8 respondents. The ever-evolving dynamics of the gallery ensure that every visit offers a fresh experience, thereby preventing visitor fatigue and encouraging repeat visitation (Kuntjara et al., 2025).

### **4. The Role of Social Media and Spatial Experience**

Complementing the thematic data, the additional questionnaire results (Figure 3) highlight the crucial role of social media:

Motivation to Share: 7 visitors were motivated to visit specifically to share moments or photos on social media.

Digital Trends: 6 visitors admitted that art trends they observed on Instagram or TikTok served as the initial trigger for their visit.

Spatial Design: Besides the art itself, 6 visitors agreed that the spatial layout and lighting design at ROH Projects are key elements that make the experience of enjoying ephemeral art far more visually engaging and immersive.

Complementing the thematic data, the questionnaire results illustrated in Figure 3 underscore the significant impact of digital connectivity and environmental design on visitor behavior. The findings reveal a distinct digital-to-physical pipeline, where the motivation to visit was often driven by the desire to document and share the experience on social media (7 respondents), while digital trends on platforms like Instagram and TikTok served as the primary catalyst for attendance for another 6 participants. This shift aligns with the observations of Şahin (2020), who posits that modern art center visitors are increasingly motivated by a blend of self-representation and the pursuit of unique experiences. Furthermore, 6 visitors highlighted that the spatial layout and lighting design at ROH Projects are as critical as the art itself, creating a visually immersive environment that enhances the ephemeral nature of the exhibition. By integrating these social and spatial factors, the study confirms that the contemporary art experience is a multifaceted phenomenon where digital visibility and physical atmosphere are inextricably linked.

### **5. Satisfaction Levels and Future Advocacy**

Overall, the art experience at ROH Projects received a highly positive response, with an average satisfaction score of 4.33 out of 5.00. This has a significant impact on visitor sustainability, with 7 respondents stating that their visit to ROH Projects has influenced their desire to further support the local art ecosystem in the future.

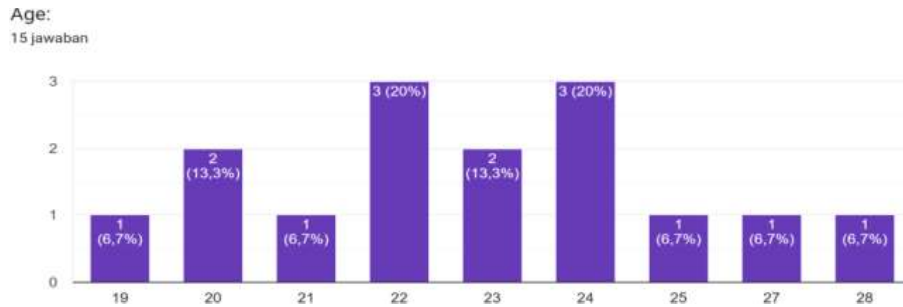


Figure 4: Demographic Age

[Source : Information from the visitors through questionnaire Nazma et al. 2026]

Based on the results of a questionnaire involving 15 respondents (Figure 4), it was found that visitors to the ROH Projects exhibition ranged in age from 19 to 28. The data indicates that most respondents are of a productive age, closely aligned with social media penetration and urban lifestyle trends.

The peak age distribution was between 22 and 24 years old, with each group contributing 20% (3 respondents) of the total data. Furthermore, the 20 and 23 year olds each contributed 13.3% (2 respondents). This age range indicates that the appeal of ephemeral art exhibitions at ROH Projects is particularly strong among final-year students and young professionals (recent graduates).

The presence of visitors in this age group reinforces the findings in the next section, where social media and the need for unique aesthetic experiences were the primary drivers of visitation (Salem, et al.2026). The 19-28 age group tends to have high digital literacy, enabling them to act not only as art connoisseurs but also as information disseminators (amplifiers) through their respective digital platforms.

## Conclusions

The research results show that the attraction of visitors to the ephemera art experience is influenced by several main factors, such as the uniqueness of the work, the atmosphere of the showroom, emotional interaction, and a strong curatorial concept. This study concludes that temporary art experiences not only capture visitors' attention but also enhance their appreciation of contemporary art and can leave a lasting impression on art enthusiasts. In other words, despite its brief duration, the Roh Project has a significant impact on visitors' interest in art.

The findings indicate that this temporary art experience not only successfully captures visitors' attention but also enhances their appreciation of contemporary art and leaves a lasting impression on art lovers. Although the exhibitions at ROH Projects are short-lived, their impact on visitor interest is significant. This is

supported by the demographic profile of young visitors (aged 19–28) who utilize social media as a platform to share their visual and emotional experiences. Essentially, the synergy between immersive spatial design and relevant curatorial narrative has made ROH Projects a new model in Jakarta's art ecosystem—proving that the value of an artwork is not determined by its physical permanence, but rather by the depth of the aesthetic and emotional impact it leaves on its audience.

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# **The Influence of Social Media Promotion through Instagram and Public Relations Activities on Brand Awareness at The Meru Sanur**

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## **Abstract**

*This study examines the influence of social media promotion through Instagram and public relations on brand awareness at The Meru Sanur. In the digital era, social media engagement and media exposure play a critical role in shaping consumer perceptions and influencing decision-making within the hospitality industry. This research adopts a quantitative explanatory approach using a survey method involving 110 respondents, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a five-point Likert scale questionnaire and analyzed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with Partial Least Squares (PLS). The results reveal that social media promotion has a positive and significant effect on brand awareness ( $\beta = 0.41$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), while public relations also demonstrate a significant positive influence ( $\beta = 0.36$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Furthermore, Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) significantly mediates the relationship between social media promotion and brand awareness ( $\beta = 0.33$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). The structural model explains 64% of the variance ( $R^2 = 0.64$ ) in brand awareness, indicating strong explanatory power. These findings highlight the importance of integrating social media engagement strategies with public relations efforts to effectively enhance brand awareness in the competitive hospitality industry.*  
**Keywords:** brand awareness, Instagram, public relation

## **Introduction**

In the era of globalization, the rapid development of the internet and digital technology has significantly transformed marketing practices, particularly in the hospitality industry. Social media platforms such as Instagram have become essential tools for communication, promotion, and brand development. Marketing plays a crucial role in maintaining customer interest and increasing hotel sales performance. According to Philip Kotler (Seebaluck et al., 2015), marketing is a social process through which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want by creating and



exchanging value. One of the key strategies in marketing is the marketing mix (7P), which includes product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence (Astuti, 2018).

Digital platforms have shifted traditional promotional strategies toward more interactive, data-driven, and consumer-centered approaches. Among these platforms, Instagram has emerged as one of the most influential tools for communication, promotion, and brand development due to its visual orientation and high user engagement. Previous studies have emphasized that social media marketing significantly enhances customer engagement, purchase intention, and brand visibility in tourism and hospitality sectors (Leung et al., 2013; Hudson et al., 2016; Bilgin, 2018).

Marketing, as defined by Philip Kotler, is a social and managerial process through which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want by creating, offering, and exchanging value (Seebaluck et al., 2015). Within this framework, the marketing mix (7P)—product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence—remains a critical strategic tool in achieving organizational objectives (Astuti, 2018). Among these elements, promotion plays a central role in influencing consumer perceptions and behaviors by informing, persuading, and reminding potential customers about products or services (Prajarto & Purwaningtyas, 2004). In the digital era, promotional activities have evolved beyond one-way communication into dynamic interactions, where consumers actively participate in content creation and dissemination.

This shift has led to the emergence of electronic word of mouth (E-WOM), which refers to any positive or negative statement made by consumers about a product or company that is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the internet (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). E-WOM has been widely recognized as a critical factor influencing consumer decision-making, trust formation, and brand perception in online environments (Litvin et al., 2008; Cheung & Thadani, 2012). In hospitality contexts, online reviews, comments, and user-generated content significantly shape tourists' expectations and brand evaluations before purchase decisions are made. Moreover, high levels of social media engagement—such as likes, comments, and shares—are often associated with stronger brand awareness and customer loyalty (Dessart et al., 2015; Adi Pratama et al., 2024; Desak & Santi, 2023).

Brand awareness itself is defined as the ability of consumers to recognize and recall a brand within a specific product category (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 2009). Several studies have demonstrated that digital marketing activities, including social media promotion and public relations, play a significant role in enhancing brand awareness (Bruhn et al., 2012; Dwivedi et al., 2021). Public relations, particularly through media exposure and press coverage, contributes to building brand credibility, trust, and reputation, which are essential components in the hospitality industry (Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Kim & Ko, 2012).

However, despite the growing body of literature on social media marketing, E-WOM, and brand awareness, several research gaps remain. First, previous studies tend to examine these variables in isolation—for

instance, focusing solely on social media marketing or E-WOM—without integrating Instagram promotion, public relations, and E-WOM into a comprehensive model within the hospitality context. Second, empirical findings regarding the relationship between digital engagement and brand awareness remain inconsistent. While some studies report a strong positive relationship (Hudson et al., 2016; Bilgin, 2018), others suggest that high engagement does not always translate into higher brand awareness due to factors such as content quality, audience targeting, and credibility issues (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Third, limited research has specifically examined newly established luxury hotels, where brand positioning and awareness-building strategies differ significantly from those of well-established brands.

This gap is particularly evident in the case of The Meru Sanur, a five-star hotel established in 2023, which actively utilizes Instagram as its primary marketing platform. Despite demonstrating strong digital engagement metrics and receiving considerable media exposure through public relations activities, preliminary observations indicate that its brand awareness has not yet reached an optimal level compared to more established competitors. This phenomenon highlights a critical inconsistency between digital performance indicators and actual brand recognition, which has not been sufficiently explored in previous research. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the influence of Instagram promotion and public relations on brand awareness, with electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) as a mediating variable. By integrating these variables into a unified framework, this research seeks to contribute to the existing literature by providing a more comprehensive understanding of digital marketing effectiveness in the hospitality industry, particularly for newly established luxury hotels.

Promotion is a fundamental element of the marketing mix, aimed at informing, persuading, and reminding consumers about products or services (Prajarto & Purwaningtyas, 2004). In the digital era, promotional activities have evolved into interactive communication processes, particularly through social media platforms such as Instagram, where brands actively engage with audiences through visual and experiential content. In addition to social media promotion, public relations also plays a strategic role in shaping brand perception through media exposure, press coverage, and credibility-building communication.

These promotional activities are closely linked to electronic word of mouth (E-WOM), which represents consumer-generated opinions, reviews, and online interactions. Social media promotion and public relations are considered key drivers of E-WOM, as they stimulate audience responses, discussions, and content sharing in digital environments. In turn, E-WOM functions as an important mechanism that influences how consumers evaluate and interpret brand-related information.

Furthermore, brand awareness—defined as the ability of consumers to recognize and recall a brand—emerges as a key outcome of these processes. In today's digital environment, social media engagement plays a vital role in shaping brand awareness (Adi Pratama et al., 2024), as high

engagement reflects strong interaction between the brand and its audience (Desak & Santi, 2023). However, engagement alone may not directly translate into brand awareness; instead, it often operates through E-WOM, where consumer interactions amplify brand visibility and influence perception.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the influence of Instagram promotion and public relations on brand awareness, with electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) as a mediating variable. By integrating these variables into a unified framework, this research seeks to contribute to the existing literature by providing a more comprehensive understanding of digital marketing effectiveness in the hospitality industry, particularly for newly established luxury hotels. This framework highlights the integrated role of digital promotion, communication credibility, and consumer interaction in shaping brand awareness in the hospitality industry.

The Meru Sanur, a five-star hotel established in 2023, utilizes Instagram as its primary marketing platform to build brand awareness. Despite its relatively recent establishment, the hotel demonstrates competitive digital performance compared to established competitors. In addition, public relations activities through press coverage contribute significantly to enhancing brand credibility and exposure. However, despite strong digital engagement and media exposure, brand awareness has not reached its optimal level. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the influence of Instagram promotion and public relations on brand awareness

### **Literature Review**

Marketing is a strategic and managerial process aimed at creating value and building long-term relationships with customers. According to Philip Kotler and Keller (Ramseook-Munhurrin et al., 2015), marketing involves identifying and satisfying human and social needs profitably. In the hospitality industry, marketing extends beyond selling rooms; it encompasses delivering memorable guest experiences and emotional connections. The marketing mix framework, commonly known as the 7Ps (product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence), plays a critical role in shaping marketing strategies (Ditta-Apichai et al., 2024). Among these elements, promotion is particularly crucial in communicating brand value and influencing consumer behavior, especially in highly competitive markets such as luxury hotels in Bali.

The advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed traditional marketing approaches (Kadek Damayanti et al., 2023). Social media platforms such as Instagram have become powerful tools for brand communication, enabling companies to engage directly with consumers in real time. According to Gunelius (Sahli, 2020), social media marketing serves multiple purposes, including relationship building, brand awareness enhancement, and market research. Engagement metrics—such as likes, comments, shares, views, and saves—are key indicators of consumer interaction and content effectiveness. Hoffman and Fodor (Andjanie et al., 2023) emphasize that engagement is not merely a quantitative measure but

also reflects the depth of consumer involvement. High engagement levels indicate strong emotional and cognitive connections with the brand, which are essential for building long-term loyalty (Nguyen & Phan, 2024).

Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) refers to consumer-generated communication about products or services shared through digital platforms. Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) define E-WOM as positive or negative statements made by customers that are accessible to a wide audience online. E-WOM is considered more credible than traditional advertising because it is perceived as unbiased and authentic. In social media contexts, engagement activities such as comments and shares can amplify E-WOM, extending the reach of brand messages beyond the company's direct control. Moisescu (Filipe et al., 2018) further highlights that social media engagement significantly influences E-WOM, which in turn impacts brand awareness and purchase intention.

Public Relations (PR) is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics. According to Cutlip, Center, and Broom (Seebaluck et al., 2015), PR focuses on managing reputation and maintaining a positive organizational image. Media coverage is one of the most effective PR tools. Wilcox and Cameron (2012) argue that press coverage enhances brand credibility because information disseminated through media is perceived as more trustworthy than direct advertising. The 7Cs framework (credibility, context, content, clarity, continuity, channels, and capability of the audience) further explains the effectiveness of communication in PR activities (N. D. M. S. D. Diwyarthi et al., 2022). These elements ensure that messages are delivered clearly, consistently, and appropriately to target audiences.

Brand awareness is a fundamental concept in branding and consumer behavior. According to Aaker (Darmiati et al., 2024), brand awareness reflects the strength of a brand's presence in consumers' minds. Keller (Pratama, 2023) categorizes brand awareness into different levels: Brand recognition, Brand recall, Top-of-mind awareness. Higher levels of brand awareness increase the likelihood of a brand being considered during the purchase decision-making process.

Based on the literature, this study proposes that: Social media promotion influences brand awareness, Public relations influences brand awareness, E-WOM mediates the relationship between social media and brand awareness.

## **Research Methodology**

This study employs a quantitative explanatory research design to examine the causal relationships between social media promotion, public relations, and brand awareness. The research was conducted at The Meru Sanur from January to May 2026. The population of this study consists of potential hotel consumers, specifically active Instagram users who have been exposed to promotional content from The Meru Sanur. A purposive sampling technique was applied based on active users of Instagram,

followers of ABC Hotel's Instagram account, individuals who have viewed the hotel's promotional content, the sample size was determined using Ferdinand's formula (5–10 times the number of indicators). With 22 indicators, the minimum required sample size was 110 respondents, which was successfully achieved in this study.

Data were collected using both primary and secondary sources. Primary Data were obtained through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Secondary data included documentation such as social media analytics and public relations reports. Key data include Instagram performance (31,039 followers, 0.67% engagement rate, and reach of 460,000 in 2025) and press coverage (1,240 online publications and 29 print media features).

This study includes four main variables. Social Media Promotion (X1) is measured using engagement indicators, including likes, comments, shares, views, saves, and reach, which reflect the level of audience interaction on Instagram. Public Relations (X2) is measured through media coverage, communication effectiveness, and public relations outcomes, particularly in shaping brand credibility and visibility.

Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) (M) is included as a mediating variable and is measured using indicators such as online review valence (positive or negative opinions), review credibility, information quality, and the intensity of online consumer interactions. These indicators capture how consumers generate, share, and respond to brand-related information in digital environments, which may influence their perception and evaluation of the brand.

Brand Awareness (Y) is measured using four dimensions: top-of-mind awareness, brand recall, brand recognition, and brand knowledge, reflecting the extent to which consumers are familiar with and can identify the brand.

Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with Partial Least Squares (PLS), which allows for the simultaneous examination of direct and indirect relationships among variables, particularly the mediating role of E-WOM in the relationship between social media promotion, public relations, and brand awareness.

The analysis includes:

- Outer Model Evaluation: Assessing validity (loading factor  $> 0.5$ ; AVE  $> 0.5$ ) and reliability (composite reliability  $> 0.7$ )
- Inner Model Evaluation: Assessing  $R^2$ , path coefficients, t-statistics ( $t > 1.96$ ), and predictive relevance ( $Q^2 > 0$ )

Hypothesis testing was performed using the bootstrapping method with a significance level of 5% ( $p < 0.05$ ).

## Results and Discussion

### Overview of Research Findings

This study investigates the influence of social media promotion through Instagram and public relations on brand awareness at The Meru Sanur. Based on data collected from 110 respondents, the analysis reveals a consistent pattern: digital engagement and media exposure significantly contribute to the formation of brand awareness, although the strength of influence varies across variables.

Descriptively, respondents demonstrated a relatively high level of interaction with Instagram content. Indicators such as likes, comments, and shares showed that the majority of respondents actively engaged with hotel-related posts, with average scores ranging between 3.8 and 4.3 (on a 5-point Likert scale). This finding is consistent with previous studies that highlight the role of social media engagement in enhancing brand visibility and consumer interaction (Hudson et al., 2016; Bilgin, 2018), suggesting that active digital participation strengthens consumers' familiarity with a brand. However, this result also contrasts with findings by Dwivedi et al. (2021), who argue that high engagement does not always translate into meaningful brand outcomes due to issues such as content saturation and superficial interaction. This indicates that while engagement is high, its effectiveness in building deeper brand awareness may still depend on content quality and strategic messaging.

Meanwhile, public relations indicators—particularly media exposure and credibility—received strong responses, with average scores ranging from

3.9 to 4.4. This suggests that respondents perceive media publications and press coverage as trustworthy sources of information. This finding is in agreement with Bruhn et al. (2012), who emphasize that traditional and digital public relations significantly contribute to brand credibility and reputation building. Similarly, Kim and Ko (2012) found that brand communication through credible channels enhances consumer trust. However, this finding partially contradicts research suggesting that younger audiences, particularly Generation Z, tend to rely more on peer-generated content rather than formal media sources (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). This implies that while public relations remains relevant, its influence may be moderated by generational preferences and digital behavior.

Brand awareness indicators showed moderate to high values, with top-of-mind awareness still relatively underdeveloped compared to brand recognition and recall (Kartimin et al., 2022). This reflects the position of The Meru Sanur as a relatively new hotel brand in the market. This finding aligns with Aaker (1991) and Keller (2009), who argue that brand awareness develops progressively, starting from recognition and recall before reaching top-of-mind status. However, this also contrasts with studies in highly digitalized markets where rapid brand exposure through social media can accelerate top-of-mind awareness (Bilgin, 2018), suggesting that the effectiveness of digital strategies may vary depending on brand maturity and market competition.

#### Measurement Model Analysis (Outer Model)

The evaluation of the measurement model confirms that all constructs meet the criteria for validity and reliability. The loading factors of all indicators exceed the threshold of 0.5, indicating acceptable convergent validity, while AVE values above 0.5 confirm that constructs explain more than half of the variance of their indicators. These results are consistent with Hair et al. (2019), who state that such thresholds indicate adequate construct validity in SEM-PLS analysis. Discriminant validity, supported by the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loading analysis, further confirms that each construct is distinct. Reliability testing shows composite reliability values ranging from 0.82 to 0.91 and Cronbach's alpha values above 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency. These findings are in agreement with previous SEM-based studies in hospitality research, which report similar reliability benchmarks (Hair et al., 2019). No contradictory findings were observed in this stage, suggesting robustness in the measurement model.

#### Structural Model Analysis (Inner Model)

The structural model analysis reveals that the R-square value for brand awareness is approximately 0.64, indicating that 64% of the variance in brand awareness can be explained by social media promotion and public relations. This falls within the moderate-to-strong category, supporting Chin (1998), who suggests that R-square values above 0.50 indicate substantial explanatory power. This finding is consistent with prior studies that demonstrate the significant contribution of digital marketing variables to brand awareness (Hudson et al., 2016). However, it also implies that 36% of the variance is explained by other factors not included in this model, such as service quality or customer experience, as suggested in other hospitality studies.

The path coefficient results show that social media promotion has a stronger direct effect on brand awareness ( $\beta = 0.41$ ) compared to public relations ( $\beta = 0.36$ ). This finding is consistent with Bilgin (2018), who found that social media marketing has a direct and significant impact on brand awareness. However, it contradicts Bruhn et al. (2012), who argue that traditional communication channels, including public relations, may have a stronger long-term impact on brand perception than social media alone. This discrepancy may be attributed to differences in context, particularly the increasing dominance of digital platforms in contemporary hospitality marketing.

Furthermore, social media promotion significantly influences E-WOM ( $\beta = 0.52$ ), and E-WOM, in turn, significantly affects brand awareness ( $\beta = 0.33$ ). These findings are consistent with Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) and Litvin et al. (2008), who emphasize that online consumer interactions play a crucial role in shaping brand perception and decision-making. However, this finding also contrasts with studies suggesting that not all E-WOM is equally influential, particularly when consumers perceive online reviews as biased or manipulated (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). This suggests that the effectiveness of E-WOM depends on its perceived credibility and authenticity.

The path coefficient results show that:

- Social media promotion → Brand awareness ( $\beta = 0.41$ )
- Public relations → Brand awareness ( $\beta = 0.36$ )
- Social media promotion → E-WOM ( $\beta = 0.52$ )
- E-WOM → Brand awareness ( $\beta = 0.33$ )

All relationships are statistically significant, with t-statistics exceeding 1.96 and p-values below 0.05.

The predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ) value is above zero, confirming that the model has good predictive capability. The goodness-of-fit index also indicates that the model is acceptable for explaining the relationships between variables.

## Discussion

### The Role of Social Media Promotion in Building Brand Awareness.

The findings clearly indicate that social media promotion through Instagram has a significant positive effect on brand awareness. This result aligns with the theory proposed by Gunelius (Gegung, 2023), which emphasizes that social media serves as a powerful tool for enhancing brand visibility and engagement. From a theoretical perspective, this finding also supports the digital marketing framework of Philip Kotler and Keller (Balkan, 2018), which highlights the importance of interactive communication in modern marketing. Unlike traditional media, Instagram allows two-way communication, enabling consumers to actively participate in brand-related discussions.

In the case of The Meru Sanur, the relatively high engagement metrics suggest that visual storytelling, aesthetic content, and experiential imagery play a crucial role in attracting audience attention. However, the recorded engagement rate of 0.67% indicates that there is still room for improvement, particularly in creating more interactive and user-generated content.

From an industry perspective, this engagement rate can be interpreted as moderate within the hospitality sector, where average Instagram engagement rates typically range between approximately 0.5% and 1.5%, depending on brand size and audience segmentation. This finding is consistent with social media benchmark studies (e.g., Rival IQ, 2023), which suggest that hospitality brands often experience lower engagement compared to lifestyle or influencer-driven industries due to broader and less niche audiences.



Therefore, while the engagement rate of 0.67% demonstrates that the hotel's content is able to generate audience interaction, it has not yet reached a high-performance level. This implies that further optimization—such as encouraging user-generated content, leveraging interactive features (e.g., polls, reels, and comments), and strengthening emotional storytelling—could enhance engagement effectiveness and, ultimately, contribute more significantly to brand awareness.

#### Public Relations as a Credibility Builder

Public relations is found to have a significant influence on brand awareness, particularly through media exposure and press coverage. This finding is consistent with the theory of Cutlip, Center, and Broom (2006), which states that PR plays a vital role in shaping public perception and organizational reputation. The large number of press publications (over 1,200 online articles and 29 print media features) indicates a strong PR strategy. According to Wilcox and Cameron (Viglia et al., 2016), such extensive media coverage enhances credibility because consumers tend to trust third-party information more than direct advertising.

This suggests that PR activities complement social media promotion by providing a layer of legitimacy and authority, which is particularly important for a newly established luxury hotel.

#### The Mediating Effect of E-WOM

One of the most significant findings of this study is the mediating role of Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM). The results show that social media engagement leads to E-WOM, which in turn enhances brand awareness. This finding strongly supports Hennig-Thurau et al. (Rickly, 2022), who argue that E-WOM is a critical factor in influencing consumer perceptions. Additionally, Moisescu (2022) emphasizes that both passive and active engagement on social media contribute to the spread of E-WOM.

In practical terms, when users interact with Instagram content—by commenting, sharing, or saving posts—they indirectly promote the brand to their networks. This creates a multiplier effect, significantly expanding the reach of marketing messages.

#### Synergy Between Social Media and Public Relations

The simultaneous influence of social media promotion and public relations highlights the importance of an integrated marketing strategy. This finding aligns with the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) theory proposed by Philip Kotler (N. D. M. S. Diwyarthi et al., 2023), which emphasizes consistency and synergy across communication channels. In this study, Instagram serves as a platform for engagement and interaction, while PR activities enhance credibility and trust. Together, they create a

comprehensive communication strategy that effectively builds brand awareness.

This synergy is particularly important in the hospitality industry, where consumer decisions are highly influenced by perceptions, reviews, and brand image.

#### Theoretical and Practical Implications

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the literature by integrating digital marketing, E-WOM, and public relations into a unified model of brand awareness. From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that The Meru Sanur should develop more engaging and interactive Instagram content, encourage user-generated content to enhance E-WOM, strengthen collaborations with influencers and media partners, maintain consistency between digital and PR strategies

### Conclusions

This study concludes that social media promotion through Instagram and public relations have a significant and positive influence on brand awareness at The Meru Sanur. The empirical findings indicate that social media promotion has a positive and significant effect ( $\beta = 0.41$ ) on brand awareness, demonstrating that engagement activities—such as likes, comments, and shares—play a crucial role in enhancing consumer recognition of the brand. Public relations also show a significant positive effect ( $\beta = 0.36$ ), highlighting the importance of media exposure in strengthening credibility and brand image. Furthermore, Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) acts as a significant mediating variable ( $\beta = 0.33$ ), amplifying the impact of social media promotion through user-generated interactions. The structural model explains 64% ( $R^2 = 0.64$ ) of the variance in brand awareness, indicating a strong combined effect of the independent variables. Overall, these findings confirm that an integrated marketing strategy—combining social media engagement and public relations—is essential for building strong brand awareness, particularly for newly established luxury hotels operating in competitive tourism destinations such as Bali.

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# **An Analysis of Job Insecurity and Turnover Intention among Non-Permanent Employees in the Hospitality Industry: A Qualitative Study**

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## **Abstract**

*This study aims to analyze job insecurity and turnover intention among employees in the hospitality industry using a qualitative descriptive approach. The study focuses on understanding how employees perceive employment uncertainty and how such perceptions relate to their intention to leave the organization. Data were collected from 19 hospitality employees through structured written responses adapted from previous studies and were analyzed using thematic qualitative procedures to identify recurring patterns and dominant perceptions. The findings indicate that most participants did not strongly perceive job insecurity and generally reported a low intention to leave their current organization. Nevertheless, several participants expressed underlying concerns regarding long-term employment stability, career continuity, and future opportunities, suggesting that some degree of uncertainty remains. The study also found that employees who perceived higher levels of job insecurity were more likely to consider leaving, while those who felt more secure tended to express a stronger intention to remain. These findings suggest that job insecurity may act as a psychological stressor influencing employees' attitudes and turnover intention. The study contributes by providing qualitative insights into employees' subjective experiences, particularly among non-permanent and early-career workers in the hospitality sector. Practically, the findings highlight the importance of clear communication, supportive supervision, fair employment practices, and career development opportunities to improve employee retention. Future studies are encouraged to involve larger and more diverse samples to obtain broader insights.*

**Keywords:** *job insecurity, turnover intention, non-permanent employees, hospitality industry*

## **Introduction**

The hospitality industry is a service-oriented sector that relies heavily on human resources to deliver service quality and customer satisfaction. Employees play a central role in maintaining service

standards and ensuring positive guest experiences. However, employment conditions in the hospitality industry are often characterized by contract-based arrangements, non-permanent positions, fluctuating operational demand, and relatively high workloads. These conditions may create uncertainty regarding job continuity and career progression, which can influence employees' perceptions, attitudes, and work-related decisions.

Job insecurity refers to an individual's perceived uncertainty regarding the continuity and stability of employment. It is widely recognized as a significant psychological stressor that may affect employees' attitudes, emotions, and behaviors in the workplace. Employees who experience job insecurity tend to report lower job satisfaction, weaker organizational commitment, and higher levels of stress, which may eventually influence their intention to leave the organization (Greenhalgh, L., dan Rosenblatt 1984; Witte, 2005; Pienaar et al., 2013).

Turnover intention is commonly regarded as one of the strongest predictors of actual employee turnover and reflects an individual's conscious willingness to leave an organization. High turnover intention may negatively affect organizational performance, increase recruitment and training costs, and reduce service quality, particularly in labor-intensive industries such as hospitality. Previous studies have shown that turnover intention is influenced by various psychological and organizational factors, making it an important topic in human resource management research (Naidoo, 2017; Bonds, 2017).

Prior studies have consistently indicated that job insecurity is positively associated with turnover intention, suggesting that employees who perceive greater employment uncertainty are more likely to consider leaving their jobs. However, much of the existing literature has primarily relied on quantitative approaches that focus on statistical relationships between variables. Such approaches may not fully capture how employees personally interpret job insecurity within their daily work experiences. In particular, limited attention has been given to hospitality employees working under non-permanent or contract-based employment arrangements, where uncertainty regarding job continuity, career development, and workload pressures may be more salient.

This gap highlights the need for a qualitative investigation that explores employees' perspectives in greater depth. Understanding how employees interpret job insecurity is important for explaining why some employees choose to remain, while others develop intentions to leave under similar employment conditions. Based on these considerations, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. How do employees perceive job insecurity in the hospitality industry?
2. How do employees perceive their turnover intention?
3. How do unstable employment conditions, such as contract-based work and career uncertainty, relate to turnover intention?

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze job insecurity and turnover intention among employees in the hospitality industry using a qualitative approach. By examining employees' perceptions and

experiences, this study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of how employment uncertainty influences turnover intention. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of more effective human resource strategies to improve employee retention in the hospitality sector.

### **Literature Review**

Job insecurity is generally defined as an individual's perceived likelihood of experiencing involuntary job loss or unfavorable career outcomes. It is a subjective perception in which employees feel that their job security is threatened, even when actual dismissal may not occur. From a theoretical perspective, job insecurity can be understood as a psychological stressor that arises when individuals perceive limited control over their future employment conditions (Greenhalgh, L., dan Rosenblatt 1984; Witte, 2005; Pienaar et al., 2013). his perception may significantly influence employees' psychological responses within an organizational context.

As a form of psychological stressor, job insecurity is associated with various negative outcomes related to employee well-being and workplace attitudes. Employees who experience uncertainty regarding their employment tend to report lower job satisfaction, weaker organizational commitment, and higher levels of stress. These conditions may shape employees' emotional and cognitive responses, particularly in how they evaluate their relationship with the organization and their future career prospects (Pienaar et al., 2013).

More recent studies also indicate that job insecurity may negatively affect employee performance. Employees who perceive higher levels of job insecurity tend to demonstrate lower productivity, particularly when they feel threatened by external changes such as technological developments in the workplace (Willemsen et al., 2026). This finding suggests that job insecurity not only affects psychological conditions but may also have direct consequences for work outcomes, reinforcing its importance as a critical workplace issue.

Turnover intention refers to an individual's conscious tendency or willingness to leave an organization. It is widely recognized as an important predictor of actual employee turnover. High levels of turnover intention may create organizational challenges, including increased recruitment and training costs, reduced productivity, and workforce instability (Naidoo, 2017; Bonds, 2017).

Various factors are considered to influence turnover intention, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and human resource management practices. Inadequate organizational support, unfavorable working conditions, and limited career development opportunities may contribute to employees' intention to leave. In this context, effective human resource practices play a significant role in improving employee retention and maintaining organizational stability (Nivethitha et al., 2014; Djajasinga et al., 2021).

Job insecurity is frequently identified as one of the key antecedents of turnover intention. Conceptually, job insecurity may generate psychological stress, which subsequently influences employees' attitudes

and behaviors, including their intention to leave the organization. Employees who perceive greater uncertainty regarding their employment are more likely to experience dissatisfaction and stress, which may lead to withdrawal behaviors such as turnover intention. Previous studies have consistently supported this relationship, indicating that perceptions of instability can influence employees' decisions regarding career continuity.

Within the hospitality industry, employee turnover remains a significant challenge due to the demanding nature of work and relatively unstable employment arrangements. Work environments characterized by high pressure, strong service expectations, and non-permanent employment conditions may influence employees' perceptions of job security. These conditions can intensify psychological stress and increase intentions to leave, particularly when organizational support is perceived as insufficient (Yin et al., 2022).

Although previous studies have provided valuable insights into the relationship between job insecurity and turnover intention, many of them have primarily relied on quantitative approaches that emphasize statistical relationships between variables. Such approaches may not fully capture employees' experiences and perceptions in depth, particularly in work environments characterized by uncertainty and instability. Therefore, a qualitative approach is considered appropriate to explore how employees interpret job insecurity, how it creates psychological responses, and how it relates to their intention to leave within their specific work context.

### **Research Methodology**

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze job insecurity and turnover intention among employees in the hospitality industry. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because it allows the researcher to explore and interpret participants' perceptions and experiences in greater depth (Sugiyono, 2020). Rather than statistically measuring relationships between variables, this study aimed to understand how employees perceive job insecurity and how such perceptions relate to their intention to leave.

Data were collected from 19 participants working in the hospitality industry through structured written responses. The questions were adapted from previous studies and served as guiding prompts to explore participants' views regarding job insecurity and turnover intention. Although the responses were gathered in a structured format, the data were treated qualitatively and interpreted as participants' expressed perspectives, allowing the findings to be presented in a narrative form comparable to interview-based studies.

The participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique based on their relevance to the research topic, particularly their work experience in the hospitality industry. The sample consisted of employees with different demographic and employment backgrounds, including gender, age, employment status, and work experience. The demographic profile of the participants is presented in Table 1.



Table 1 Demographic Profile of the Participants

| No | Category          | Description     | Frequency |
|----|-------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| 1  | Gender            | Male            | 16        |
|    |                   | Female          | 3         |
| 2  | Age               | <25 Year        | 19        |
| 3  | Employment Status | Apprentice      | 15        |
|    |                   | Contract Worker | 4         |
| 4  | Work Experience   | <1 Years        | 17        |
|    |                   | 1-2 Years       | 2         |

As shown in Table 1, most participants were male and under 25 years old. The majority were apprentices, followed by contract workers, reflecting the prevalence of non-permanent employment arrangements in the hospitality industry. In addition, most participants had less than one year of work experience, indicating that the sample was largely composed of early-career employees. These characteristics are relevant because employees in non-permanent and early-stage positions may be more vulnerable to job insecurity and uncertainty regarding career continuity.

The data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis with thematic procedures. Participants responses were reviewed repeatedly, coded, and grouped into categories to identify recurring patterns and emerging themes. The analysis was guided by indicators related to job insecurity and turnover intention derived from previous studies. The focus of the analysis was to identify dominant perceptions and interpret how participants understand job insecurity and its influence on their intention to leave.

To ensure trustworthiness, this study applied credibility and consistency techniques. The researcher conducted iterative readings of the responses to ensure accurate and in-depth interpretation of participants perspectives. Furthermore, consistency across participants responses was examined to strengthen the dependability of the findings. These procedures were undertaken to ensure that the interpretations were grounded in the data and accurately reflected participants views.

## Results and Discussion

Analysis of participants' responses indicates that most employees did not perceive a high level of job insecurity within their current work environment. The majority of participants reported feeling relatively secure in their positions and expressed limited concern about potential job loss, despite working in early-career or non-permanent roles. However, several participants demonstrated more neutral views, suggesting that although they did not feel explicitly insecure, some uncertainty remained regarding long-term career continuity and future employment prospects. These findings indicate that immediate job insecurity was relatively low, although underlying concerns about long-

term stability persisted among some employees.

In terms of turnover intention, most participants indicated that they did not have a strong intention to leave their current organization. The responses reflect a general tendency to remain, suggesting that employees felt sufficiently comfortable or satisfied with their current working conditions. This finding is consistent with previous studies indicating that employees who experience thriving at work are less likely to develop turnover intention, as they feel more engaged, valued, and supported within the organization (Di Milia et al., 2026). This suggests that positive workplace conditions may strengthen employees' willingness to remain, even when certain levels of uncertainty exist.

Nevertheless, several participants expressed neutral responses, which may indicate a conditional form of commitment to the organization. Their decision to remain appeared to depend on future job stability, career development opportunities, and organizational support. This pattern reflects a passive form of turnover intention, in which employees are not actively seeking alternative employment but remain open to leaving if circumstances become less favorable.

The findings also reveal a relationship between job insecurity and turnover intention. Participants who perceived higher levels of employment uncertainty were more likely to consider leaving the organization, whereas those who perceived greater job stability tended to express a stronger intention to remain. From a conceptual perspective, job insecurity may function as a psychological stressor that influences employees' attitudes and decision-making processes. Perceptions of instability can create concern and discomfort, which may gradually develop into thoughts of seeking alternative employment. These findings support the theoretical linkage that job insecurity may lead to psychological responses, which subsequently influence turnover intention.

Although the findings are consistent with previous studies, this study provides additional insight by showing that the relationship between job insecurity and turnover intention is not always direct or immediate. Even when employees perceived relatively low insecurity, underlying uncertainty could still shape future career decisions. Furthermore, the dominance of non-permanent and early-career employees in this study helps explain why job insecurity did not necessarily result in immediate turnover intention. Employees in such positions may choose to remain due to limited job alternatives, the need to gain work experience, or adaptation to industry conditions. This suggests that turnover intention may develop gradually rather than emerge as an immediate reaction.

These findings highlight the importance of addressing not only actual job stability but also employees' perceptions of stability. Organizations in the hospitality industry should focus on improving internal communication, providing clearer career pathways, and strengthening support systems to reduce uncertainty among employees. By doing so, organizations may enhance employee retention and reduce the potential risk of turnover. Overall, these findings provide clear answers to the research questions, indicating that employees generally

perceived low job insecurity, demonstrated relatively low turnover intention, and showed that employment uncertainty was associated with a greater likelihood of considering leaving the organization.

### **Conclusions**

This study examined job insecurity and turnover intention among employees in the hospitality industry using a qualitative descriptive approach. The findings indicate that most participants did not strongly perceive job insecurity and generally reported a low intention to leave their organization. However, several participants still expressed concerns regarding long-term employment stability, career continuity, and future opportunities, suggesting that some degree of uncertainty remains. The study also found that employees who perceived greater job insecurity were more likely to consider leaving, while those who felt more secure tended to show a stronger intention to remain. These findings support the view that job insecurity may function as a psychological stressor influencing employees' attitudes and behavioral intentions.

Theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the literature by providing qualitative insights into how hospitality employees interpret job insecurity and how such perceptions relate to turnover intention, particularly among non-permanent and early-career workers. From a managerial perspective, hospitality organizations should focus not only on actual job stability but also on employees' perceptions of security through clear communication, transparent career opportunities, supportive supervision, and fair human resource practices. This study is limited by the relatively small number of participants and a specific employment context; therefore, future studies are recommended to involve larger and more diverse samples or apply mixed-method approaches to gain broader insights into job insecurity and turnover intention in the hospitality industry.

### **Acknowledgement**

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# **The Influence of Work-Family Conflict and Work Stress on Employee Performance: A Study at Hotel Daima Padang**

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## **Abstract**

*This study examines the influence of Work-Family Conflict (WFC) and Work Stress on employee performance in the hospitality industry, with a case study at Hotel Daima Padang. Grounded in the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model and Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, this research conceptualizes WFC and work stress as critical job demands that deplete employees' physical and psychological resources, ultimately impairing their performance. The hospitality sector is characterized by high work demands, long working hours, and intensive emotional labor, making employees particularly vulnerable to role conflict and stress. This study adopts a quantitative approach using a survey method involving 60 employees selected through purposive sampling. Data were analyzed using multiple linear regression. The findings reveal that Work-Family Conflict has a negative and significant effect on employee performance, while Work Stress also exerts a negative and significant influence. Furthermore, both variables simultaneously have a significant impact on performance, confirming that excessive job demands and resource depletion reduce employees' productivity and service quality. Theoretically, this study extends the application of JD-R and COR frameworks within the hospitality context by empirically demonstrating how intertwined work and family pressures act as resource-draining mechanisms that hinder performance outcomes. Practically, the study provides evidence-based insights for hospitality management to design effective work-life balance policies, flexible scheduling, and stress management interventions. These findings contribute to the development of sustainable human resource management practices aimed at maintaining employee well-being and enhancing service performance in high-demand service industries.*

**Keywords:** *Employee Performance, Work-Family Conflict, Work Stress*

## **Introduction**

The hospitality industry has long been recognized as one of the most dynamic and labor-intensive sectors in the global economy (Calinaud et al., 2021). Characterized by continuous operations, high customer expectations, and intensive interpersonal interactions, this industry places substantial demands on its workforce. In recent years, particularly in the

post-pandemic recovery era, the pressure on hospitality employees has increased significantly due to rising competition (Buhalis et al., 2019), service innovation (Kadek Damayanti et al., 2023), and the need to maintain high-quality guest experiences (Breier et al., 2021). These conditions have made employee well-being an increasingly critical issue, especially in developing countries where labor regulations and organizational support systems may not be fully optimized.

Within this context, employees are required not only to perform their professional duties effectively but also to manage their personal and family responsibilities. This dual demand often leads to Work-Family Conflict (WFC), a phenomenon that has attracted growing attention in organizational and behavioral research (Nurmayanti et al., 2014). WFC occurs when the demands of work and family roles are incompatible, making participation in one role more difficult due to the involvement in the other. In service-oriented industries such as hospitality, where working hours are irregular and workloads are high, the likelihood of experiencing such conflict is significantly increased (Nurcholidah et al., 2023).

The issue becomes even more critical for married employees, who are expected to fulfill both professional responsibilities and family obligations simultaneously. In many cultural contexts, including Indonesia, family responsibilities remain a central aspect of individual identity and social expectations. As a result, employees who are unable to balance these roles may experience psychological strain, reduced job satisfaction, and decreased performance. This situation is particularly evident in hotel operations, where shift systems and long working hours often interfere with employees' ability to engage in family life.

In addition to Work-Family Conflict, work stress is another major factor influencing employee performance in the hospitality industry. Work stress arises when job demands exceed an individual's capacity to cope, leading to physical and psychological strain (Kokkranikal et al., 2024). In hotel environments, stress can be triggered by various factors, including high workload, time pressure, emotional labor, and customer complaints. Employees are frequently required to manage their emotions while delivering high-quality service, which can lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout over time.

The relationship between Work-Family Conflict, work stress, and employee performance has been widely discussed in the literature (Theresia et al., 2025). However, most existing studies tend to focus on general organizational contexts and have not adequately captured the unique characteristics of the hospitality industry, which is marked by high job demands, irregular working hours, and intensive emotional labor. More importantly, limited studies examine the combined effect of Work-Family Conflict and work stress within Indonesian hotel settings using integrated theoretical perspectives, such as the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model and Conservation of Resources (COR) theory. This indicates a significant gap in understanding how multiple job demands simultaneously influence employee performance in a context-specific hospitality environment.

This study aims to address this gap by investigating the influence of Work-Family Conflict and Work Stress on employee performance at Hotel Daima Padang. As a three-star hotel operating in a competitive tourism environment, the hotel provides a relevant context for examining how employees manage the intersection between work demands and personal responsibilities. Understanding these dynamics is essential for developing effective human resource management strategies that enhance both employee well-being and organizational performance.

Accordingly, this study is guided by the following research questions: How does Work-Family Conflict influence employee performance? How does work stress influence employee performance? Which factor has a more dominant effect on employee performance?

## **Literature Review**

Work-Family Conflict is a central concept in organizational behavior, first systematically defined by Greenhaus and Beutell (Cavagnis et al., 2023) as a form of inter-role conflict in which pressures from work and family domains are mutually incompatible. This incompatibility implies that participation in one role constrains effective participation in another. WFC is commonly categorized into two dimensions: Work Interference with Family (WIF) and Family Interference with Work (FIW). While both dimensions are widely acknowledged, prior studies differ in identifying which dimension exerts a stronger impact on work outcomes. Some studies argue that WIF is more dominant in service industries due to demanding work schedules, whereas others highlight that FIW becomes more critical in collectivist societies where family obligations are highly valued. This inconsistency suggests that contextual factors, including cultural setting and industry characteristics, shape the manifestation of WFC.

The theoretical grounding of WFC is rooted in Role Theory, which posits that individuals simultaneously occupy multiple roles with competing expectations. However, while Role Theory explains the emergence of conflict, it has been criticized for its limited ability to account for how individuals manage or cope with such conflicts over time. In response, more recent studies have integrated resource-based perspectives, such as Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, to explain the consequences of prolonged role conflict. Within the hospitality context, characterized by irregular working hours and high emotional demands, WFC is not only more frequent but also more likely to lead to resource depletion.

Empirical findings on WFC show a generally negative relationship with employee performance, yet the strength and mechanisms of this relationship remain debated. Some studies report a direct negative effect of WFC on performance, primarily through reduced concentration and engagement. In contrast, other studies suggest that the relationship is indirect, mediated by variables such as job stress or burnout. This divergence indicates that examining WFC in isolation may provide an

incomplete understanding, and highlights the need to consider intervening mechanisms such as work stress.

Work stress, defined as a psychological and physiological response to an imbalance between job demands and coping capacity, has been extensively examined through the lens of Conservation of Resources (COR) theory. COR theory emphasizes that individuals strive to retain and protect valuable resources, and stress emerges when these resources are threatened or depleted. While this perspective effectively explains the negative consequences of stress, some scholars argue that it underestimates the potential for individuals to develop adaptive coping strategies, particularly in high-pressure environments such as hospitality.

In parallel, the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory provides a more dynamic framework by distinguishing between job demands and job resources. According to JD-R theory, high job demands—such as workload, time pressure, and emotional labor—lead to strain when not balanced by adequate resources. However, empirical studies show mixed results regarding the extent to which resources can buffer the negative effects of stress. Some findings suggest that organizational support significantly mitigates stress impacts, while others indicate that in highly demanding environments like hotels, available resources are often insufficient to fully offset job strain.

Research on the relationship between work stress and employee performance consistently indicates a negative association, yet differences emerge in the magnitude of this effect across contexts. In hospitality settings, stress is often found to have a stronger impact on performance compared to other industries due to the direct interaction between employees and customers. Nevertheless, some studies report that moderate levels of stress may enhance performance (eustress), suggesting a non-linear relationship that is rarely explored in hospitality research.

Employee performance in the hospitality industry is typically measured through service quality, productivity, responsiveness, and customer satisfaction. While previous studies agree that psychological factors such as stress and role conflict significantly influence performance, there is limited consensus on how these factors interact simultaneously. Most prior research tends to examine WFC and work stress independently, thereby overlooking their potential combined and overlapping effects.

The relationship between Work-Family Conflict, work stress, and employee performance can therefore be understood as an interconnected process, yet this integration remains underexplored. WFC may act as a precursor to work stress, as difficulties in balancing roles can intensify emotional strain. From a COR perspective, both WFC and work stress represent forms of resource depletion, but few studies explicitly examine their cumulative impact. Similarly, JD-R theory suggests that multiple job demands can interact to amplify strain; however, empirical research rarely tests these variables together within a single model, particularly in Indonesian hotel contexts.

This lack of integration represents a critical gap in the literature. By examining WFC and work stress simultaneously, this study provides a



more comprehensive understanding of how multiple job demands jointly influence employee performance, rather than treating them as isolated factors.

Based on the theoretical framework and critical review of previous studies, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Work-Family Conflict has a negative and significant effect on employee performance.

H2: Work Stress has a negative and significant effect on employee performance.

H3: Work-Family Conflict and Work Stress simultaneously have a significant effect on employee performance.

### **Research Methodology**

This study employs a quantitative approach with a survey design. Data were collected from employees of Hotel Daima Padang through structured questionnaires using a Likert scale (1–5). The population consists of all hotel employees, and a sample of 60 respondents was selected using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling was used to ensure that respondents had sufficient work experience and were able to provide reliable and relevant insights regarding work-family conflict, work stress, and performance. Therefore, only employees who had worked for at least one year were included as they were considered to have adequately adapted to job demands and organizational conditions. Data analysis was conducted using multiple linear regression to examine the influence of independent variables (Work-Family Conflict and Work Stress) on the dependent variable (Employee Performance).

### **Results and Discussion**

The empirical findings of this study are based on responses collected from 60 employees working at Hotel Daima Padang across various departments, including front office, housekeeping, food and beverage, and administration. The majority of respondents have worked for more than one year, indicating sufficient familiarity with job demands and organizational conditions.

The regression results show that Work-Family Conflict (WFC) has a negative and significant effect on employee performance ( $\beta = -0.35$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This finding confirms that when employees experience greater difficulty in balancing work and family roles, their performance tends to decline. Descriptive results further reveal that WFC levels are moderate to high, particularly due to shift work and extended working hours. However, compared to previous empirical studies, the magnitude of this effect appears moderate. Several studies in hospitality contexts have reported stronger direct effects of WFC on performance, while others suggest that its impact is often indirect, operating through mediating variables such as stress or burnout. This indicates that WFC alone may not be the most

immediate determinant of performance but rather acts as an underlying pressure that triggers other psychological outcomes.

In contrast, Work Stress demonstrates a stronger negative and significant effect on performance ( $\beta = -0.42, p < 0.05$ ), indicating that stress is a more dominant predictor. This finding is consistent with a number of empirical studies in the hospitality sector, which identify stress as a critical factor directly influencing employee productivity and service quality. However, some studies in non-service industries report weaker effects of stress, suggesting that the strength of this relationship is highly context-dependent. In hospitality settings, where employees are required to maintain continuous interaction with guests and display emotional regulation, stress tends to have a more immediate and observable impact on performance outcomes.

The stronger influence of stress compared to WFC can be explained from several perspectives. First, from the standpoint of Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, stress reflects a more direct form of resource depletion. While WFC represents a conflict between roles, stress captures the actual psychological and emotional exhaustion resulting from prolonged demands. As such, stress operates at a more immediate level, directly impairing cognitive functioning, focus, and energy. Second, within the Job Demand–Resources (JD-R) framework, work stress is a direct outcome of excessive job demands, whereas WFC may function as an antecedent that contributes to these demands. This suggests that stress is more proximal to performance outcomes, which explains its stronger statistical effect.

Furthermore, the nature of hospitality work intensifies the impact of stress. Employees are not only required to complete tasks efficiently but also to manage customer emotions and expectations in real time. As highlighted in previous studies, emotional labor significantly amplifies stress levels and accelerates resource depletion. This may explain why, in this study, employees reported emotional fatigue as a key issue, particularly during peak seasons. Compared to WFC, which may fluctuate depending on personal circumstances, work stress is experienced continuously during working hours, making its effect on performance more immediate and pronounced.

Simultaneously, both WFC and Work Stress significantly influence performance (F-test,  $p < 0.05$ ), with a coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) of 0.58. This indicates that 58% of the variance in employee performance is explained by these two variables. This relatively high explanatory power suggests that job demands and role-related pressures are central determinants of performance in the hospitality context. Compared to previous studies, this value is higher than some findings that examine these variables separately, reinforcing the importance of analyzing WFC and stress in an integrated model.

Importantly, the results also reveal that WFC and work stress are interrelated rather than independent factors. Consistent with prior empirical evidence, employees experiencing high levels of WFC are more likely to report increased stress. This supports the argument that WFC acts

as a precursor to stress, which then exerts a stronger and more direct effect on performance. Such findings highlight a cumulative mechanism, where multiple demands interact and intensify their impact on employees.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings extend the application of Role Theory, COR, and JD-R by demonstrating how different forms of job demands operate at varying levels of influence. While Role Theory explains the emergence of conflict, COR and JD-R provide a more comprehensive explanation of how such conflict translates into stress and ultimately affects performance. Compared to prior studies that examine these variables in isolation, this study offers a more integrated understanding of their combined effects, particularly within the Indonesian hospitality context.

Overall, the findings emphasize that although Work-Family Conflict is an important factor, work stress plays a more dominant and immediate role in determining employee performance. This suggests that organizational interventions should prioritize stress management strategies while also addressing work-family balance to achieve more sustainable improvements in employee outcomes.

### **Conclusions**

This study concludes that Work-Family Conflict (WFC) and Work Stress are critical determinants of employee performance in the hospitality industry, particularly within the context of Hotel Daima Padang. Both variables were found to have negative and significant effects on performance, confirming that increased role conflict and psychological strain reduce employees' productivity, focus, and service quality. However, the findings also reveal that Work Stress exerts a more dominant influence compared to WFC, indicating that immediate psychological and emotional pressures in the workplace have a stronger and more direct impact on performance outcomes than role conflict alone.

From a theoretical perspective, this study strengthens the application of the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model and Conservation of Resources (COR) theory by demonstrating how multiple job demands operate in an integrated manner. WFC can be understood as an antecedent stressor that contributes to resource depletion, while Work Stress represents a more proximal mechanism that directly impairs performance. This integrated perspective provides a more comprehensive explanation compared to prior studies that examine these variables in isolation, particularly within the hospitality context characterized by high emotional labor and demanding work conditions.

Empirically, the study contributes to the limited body of research in Indonesian hotel settings by simultaneously examining WFC and Work Stress within a single analytical model. The relatively high explanatory power of the model ( $R^2 = 0.58$ ) highlights the substantial role of psychological and role-related pressures in shaping employee performance. These findings underscore the importance of considering

both work-related and family-related demands as interconnected factors rather than independent variables.

Practically, the results suggest that hospitality organizations should prioritize stress management interventions as a strategic focus, given the stronger impact of stress on performance. At the same time, organizations must also address work-family balance through flexible scheduling, supportive policies, and employee assistance programs. Without such interventions, prolonged exposure to high demands may lead to sustained performance decline and reduced service quality.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that improving employee performance in the hospitality industry requires a dual approach that simultaneously reduces work-family conflict and mitigates work stress. By adopting integrated human resource management strategies that address both dimensions, organizations can enhance employee well-being while maintaining high standards of service excellence.

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# **The Effect of Family Conflict on Employee Performance with Work Stress as a Mediating Variable: A Study at Hotel Aria Gajayana**

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## **Abstract**

*This study aims to examine the effect of family conflict on employee performance, with work stress as a mediating variable in the hospitality industry. The research was conducted at Hotel Aria Gajayana, involving 70 employees selected through a census sampling technique, consisting of operational and administrative staff with varying tenure and job roles. A quantitative approach was employed using structured questionnaires measured on a Likert scale. Data were analyzed using path analysis with regression-based mediation testing to assess both direct and indirect relationships among variables. The results show that family conflict has a significant negative effect on employee performance ( $\beta = -0.41, p < 0.01$ ). Furthermore, family conflict has a significant positive effect on work stress ( $\beta = 0.52, p < 0.01$ ), while work stress negatively affects employee performance ( $\beta = -0.36, p < 0.01$ ). The indirect effect of family conflict on performance through work stress is also significant ( $\beta = -0.19, p < 0.01$ ), indicating a partial mediation effect. These findings suggest that employees experiencing higher family conflict tend to have increased work stress, which subsequently reduces their performance. This study contributes to the hospitality management literature by emphasizing the critical role of managing family-related conflict and work stress to enhance employee performance. Practically, the findings highlight the need for organizational policies that support work-life balance and stress management interventions in high-pressure hospitality environments.*

**Keywords:** Employee Performance, Family Conflict, Work Stress

## **Introduction**

The hospitality industry is characterized by high work intensity, continuous operations, and strong demands for service excellence (Astuti, 2018). Employees are required to maintain professionalism and emotional stability while dealing with diverse customer expectations (Prabawati et

al., 2022). These conditions often create significant pressure, particularly for employees who must also manage responsibilities outside the workplace.

Family conflict has emerged as a critical issue affecting employee well-being and performance (Cavagnis et al., 2023). It refers to tension arising from incompatible demands within the family domain, such as marital issues, childcare responsibilities, and household obligations. When these conflicts are not properly managed, they can spill over into the workplace, affecting employees' focus, motivation, and productivity (Medina-Garrido et al., 2023).

In the context of Hotel Aria Gajayana, employees often face demanding work schedules, including shift systems and long working hours. These conditions can exacerbate family-related tensions, especially for married employees. As a result, family conflict may become a significant factor influencing employee performance. Furthermore, work stress plays an important role in this relationship. Stress arises when individuals perceive that job demands exceed their capacity to cope. Employees experiencing family conflict may carry emotional burdens into the workplace, which increases their stress levels. This stress, in turn, can reduce their ability to perform effectively.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the direct effect of family conflict on employee performance and the indirect effect through work stress as a mediating variable.

## **Literature Review**

Family conflict refers to disagreements and tensions within the family environment that arise due to incompatible expectations, responsibilities, or values. According to Role Theory, individuals simultaneously occupy multiple roles—such as employee and family member—which may impose conflicting demands (Nurmayanti et al., 2014). Family conflict can manifest in various forms, such as marital disagreements (Nurcholidah et al., 2023), parenting challenges, and financial stress. This inter-role conflict becomes particularly salient when expectations from the family domain interfere with work responsibilities. In the context of hospitality, where employees often face irregular working hours, shift systems, and high service expectations, the incompatibility between family and work roles becomes more pronounced (Greenhaus & Beutell, 2006). This theoretical lens supports the causal path between family conflict and employee performance (H1), as unresolved role conflict leads to cognitive distraction, emotional exhaustion, and reduced task focus, ultimately impairing performance outcomes.

Work stress is defined as a psychological response to job demands that exceed an individual's capacity to cope. The Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory provides a deeper explanation of how family conflict translates into work stress. Individuals experience stress when their resources, such as time, energy, and emotional capacity, are threatened or depleted (Adnyana et al., 2024). Employees dealing with family conflict

may experience reduced emotional resources, making them more vulnerable to work stress (Adu et al., 2024). According to this theory, individuals strive to acquire and protect valuable resources such as time, energy, and emotional stability. Family conflict represents a significant drain on these resources, particularly emotional and psychological energy. When employees enter the workplace with depleted resources due to ongoing family tensions, they are less capable of managing job demands, thereby increasing their susceptibility to stress. This mechanism explains the causal relationship in H2, where family conflict positively influences work stress. In hospitality settings, this condition is intensified by high emotional labor, continuous customer interaction, and time pressure, making resource depletion more critical than in other industries.

Employee performance refers to the level of achievement in completing job tasks effectively and efficiently (Theresia et al., 2025), particularly in delivering high-quality service, responsiveness, and customer satisfaction. The Job Demand–Resources (JD-R) Theory further clarifies how work stress affects performance (H3) and operates as a mediating mechanism (H4). The JD-R framework posits that excessive job demands—such as workload, time pressure, and emotional labor—lead to strain when not balanced by sufficient resources. Employees experiencing elevated stress due to prior resource depletion (as explained by COR Theory) are less able to meet these demands, resulting in decreased performance. Importantly, JD-R Theory integrates both prior mechanisms by showing that stress is not merely an outcome, but a process variable that transmits the effect of family conflict onto performance.

Thus, the mediating role of work stress (H4) can be understood as a sequential process: Role Theory explains the origin of conflict (inter-role incompatibility), COR Theory (Abdulah et al., 2021) explains the depletion of resources caused by that conflict, and JD-R Theory (Naru & Rehman, 2020), explains how this depletion manifests as stress that ultimately impairs performance. This integrative theoretical approach extends prior studies by not only confirming expected relationships but also demonstrating a multi-theoretical mechanism that is particularly relevant in the hospitality sector. Unlike other industries, hospitality work is characterized by high emotional demands and constant interpersonal interaction, making employees more vulnerable to the cumulative effects of family conflict and stress. Therefore, this study contributes to hospitality management literature by offering a more nuanced explanation of how personal life pressures translate into service performance outcomes through interconnected psychological processes.

#### Hypotheses.

H1: Family conflict negatively affects employee performance H2:

Family conflict positively affects work stress

H3: Work stress negatively affects employee performance

H4: Work stress mediates the relationship between family conflict and employee performance



## **Research Methodology**

This study employed a quantitative approach using a survey method. The population consisted of all employees of Hotel Aria Gajayana, totaling approximately 95 staff across operational and administrative departments. A purposive sampling technique was applied, resulting in 70 respondents who met the inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria were: (1) employees with a minimum tenure of one year to ensure sufficient work experience and exposure to job demands, (2) full-time employment status, and (3) active involvement in daily operational or administrative tasks. Employees on probation, part-time workers, and those on extended leave during the data collection period were excluded from the study.

The respondents consisted of both male and female employees, with diverse age ranges, educational backgrounds, and job roles, including front office, housekeeping, food and beverage service, and administrative units. Most respondents had tenure ranging from 1 to 5 years, reflecting moderate work experience within the hospitality industry.

Data were collected using structured questionnaires distributed directly to respondents in both printed and online formats over a two-week period. The questionnaire employed a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) to measure family conflict, work stress, and employee performance. Prior to distribution, the instrument was reviewed for clarity and relevance. A total of 75 questionnaires were distributed, and 70 valid responses were returned, resulting in a response rate of 93.3%.

Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the research process. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses, and participated voluntarily. Informed consent was obtained prior to data collection. Data analysis was conducted using path analysis to examine both direct and indirect relationships among variables, allowing for the assessment of the mediating role of work stress in the relationship between family conflict and employee performance.

## **Result and Discussion**

All variables in this study were measured using established and previously validated scales to ensure construct validity and reliability. The questionnaire consisted of three main constructs: family conflict, work stress, and employee performance, each measured using multiple items adapted from prior studies. Family conflict was measured using 6 items adapted from the work–family conflict scale developed by Greenhaus and Beutell (2006) and further operationalized in subsequent empirical studies. The items capture dimensions such as time-based conflict, strain-based conflict, and behavior-based conflict within the family domain.

Work stress was measured using 8 items adapted from the scale developed by Parker and DeCotiis (1983) and refined in more recent studies. These items assess psychological strain, emotional exhaustion, and perceived

pressure related to job demands. Employee performance was measured using 7 items adapted from widely used performance scales in organizational research (e.g., task performance and service performance indicators), reflecting effectiveness, efficiency, service quality, and responsiveness in hospitality settings. All items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Prior to the main survey, the instrument was pilot tested on 15 respondents with similar characteristics to ensure clarity and readability.

To assess construct validity, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted. The results indicated that all items loaded significantly on their respective constructs, with factor loadings exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.50. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was 0.78, indicating sampling adequacy, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), confirming the suitability of the data for factor analysis. Item validity was further confirmed through corrected item-total correlations, where all items showed values above 0.30, indicating acceptable discrimination. Internal consistency reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. The results showed that family conflict had an alpha value of 0.82, work stress 0.85, and employee performance 0.88, all exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating high reliability. These results demonstrate that the measurement instruments used in this study are both valid and reliable, supporting the robustness of the subsequent statistical analysis and mediation testing.

The empirical data in this study were obtained from 70 employees working at Hotel Aria Gajayana, representing various operational departments such as front office, housekeeping, food and beverage, and administration. The majority of respondents were between 23–40 years old, with an average tenure of 2–5 years, indicating that they have sufficient experience to understand both work demands and family responsibilities.

The descriptive statistical analysis shows that the mean score for family conflict is 3.62 (on a 5-point Likert scale), indicating a moderate to relatively high level of conflict. Several indicators contribute strongly to this condition, particularly time-based conflict (mean = 3.78), where employees report difficulty in balancing work schedules with family activities. Strain-based conflict also appears significant (mean = 3.55), reflecting emotional tension arising from family-related issues.

In terms of work stress, the average score is 3.74, which falls into the high category. The highest contributing factor is workload pressure (mean = 3.89), followed by emotional exhaustion (mean = 3.76). Employees frequently report feeling physically and mentally fatigued, especially during peak operational periods. This indicates that job demands in the hotel environment significantly affect employees' psychological conditions.

Employee performance, on the other hand, shows an average score of 3.68, categorized as moderate. While employees generally maintain acceptable performance levels, indicators such as work quality (mean = 3.61) and

responsiveness (mean = 3.65) show slight declines among those experiencing higher levels of stress and family conflict.

Further analysis using path coefficients reveals that family conflict has a positive and significant effect on work stress ( $\beta = 0.58$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This indicates that employees who experience higher levels of family conflict are more likely to experience increased stress at work.

Additionally, family conflict has a direct negative effect on employee performance ( $\beta = -0.29$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), suggesting that unresolved family issues can reduce employees' effectiveness at work.

Work stress shows a strong negative effect on employee performance ( $\beta = -0.46$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that stress is a dominant factor influencing performance decline.

The mediation analysis further reveals that the indirect effect of family conflict on performance through work stress is significant ( $\beta = -0.27$ ). This confirms that work stress partially mediates the relationship between family conflict and employee performance. The total effect of family conflict on performance becomes stronger when mediated by stress (total effect  $\beta = -0.56$ ).

The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) for employee performance is 0.52, meaning that 52% of the variation in employee performance is explained by family conflict and work stress, while the remaining 48% is influenced by other variables not included in this study.

The results indicate that employees experience moderate levels of family conflict, primarily related to time constraints and difficulty balancing work schedules with family responsibilities. Many respondents reported that work demands often limit their ability to participate in family activities, leading to tension within the household.

Work stress levels are also reported to be moderate to high. Employees frequently experience fatigue, emotional exhaustion, and pressure to meet performance standards. Those who reported higher family conflict also tended to report higher stress levels.

Employee performance is generally rated as moderate, but declines are observed among employees experiencing higher stress. These employees report reduced focus, lower motivation, and decreased service quality.

Path analysis results show that family conflict has a significant positive effect on work stress and a significant negative effect on employee performance. Work stress also has a significant negative effect on performance. The mediation analysis confirms that work stress partially mediates the relationship between family conflict and employee performance.

The findings support Role Theory (Nurmayanti et al., 2014), which explains that conflict in one domain, such as family, can affect performance in another domain, such as work. Employees experiencing family conflict are likely to carry emotional strain into the workplace, reducing their ability to perform effectively.

The empirical data were obtained from 70 employees of Hotel Aria Gajayana, representing operational departments including front office,

housekeeping, food and beverage, and administration. The majority of respondents were aged between 23–40 years, with an average tenure of 2–5 years, indicating sufficient experience to understand both job demands and family responsibilities. Descriptive analysis shows that family conflict has a mean score of 3.62, indicating a moderate-to-high level. Time-based conflict emerges as the strongest dimension (mean = 3.78), followed by strain-based conflict (mean = 3.55), suggesting that work schedules and emotional pressures significantly interfere with family roles. Work stress records a higher mean score of 3.74, with workload pressure (mean = 3.89) and emotional exhaustion (mean = 3.76) as dominant contributors. Meanwhile, employee performance is reported at a moderate level (mean = 3.68), with slight declines in work quality (mean = 3.61) and responsiveness (mean = 3.65) among employees experiencing higher stress.

To test the hypotheses, this study employed path analysis using regression-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with bootstrapping (5,000 resamples) to assess both direct and indirect effects.

#### Path Coefficients and Mediation Results

Family Conflict → Work Stress:

$\beta = 0.58$ , SE = 0.09,  $t = 6.44$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , 95% CI [0.40, 0.74]

Family Conflict → Employee Performance:

$\beta = -0.29$ , SE = 0.12,  $t = -2.42$ ,  $p = 0.018$ , 95% CI [-0.52, -0.06]

Work Stress → Employee Performance:

$\beta = -0.46$ , SE = 0.10,  $t = -4.60$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , 95% CI [-0.65, -0.26]

Indirect Effect

Family Conflict → Work Stress → Employee Performance:

$\beta = -0.27$ , SE = 0.08, 95% CI [-0.43, -0.12]

Total Effect:

Family Conflict → Employee Performance:

$\beta = -0.56$ ,  $p < 0.001$

$R^2$  for Employee Performance = 0.52

The results indicate that family conflict has a significant positive effect on work stress ( $\beta = 0.58$ ), supporting H2. This suggests that employees experiencing higher levels of family-related tension tend to report increased psychological strain at work. Furthermore, family conflict has a direct negative effect on employee performance ( $\beta = -0.29$ ), supporting H1, indicating that unresolved family issues can reduce employees' effectiveness.

Work stress also demonstrates a significant negative effect on employee performance ( $\beta = -0.46$ ), supporting H3, and confirming that stress is a critical determinant of performance decline in hospitality settings.

The mediation analysis was conducted using bootstrapping, which is recommended for testing indirect effects due to its robustness and lack of normality assumptions. The indirect effect of family conflict on employee performance through work stress is significant ( $\beta = -0.27$ ), with a confidence interval that does not include zero. This confirms that work stress partially mediates the relationship (H4). The presence of both

significant direct and indirect effects indicates partial mediation rather than full mediation.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings provide an integrated explanation across three frameworks. Role Theory explains how conflicting family and work roles create initial tension. Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory (Chawla & Sharma, 2019), clarifies that this tension depletes emotional and psychological resources, increasing vulnerability to stress. The Job Demand–Resources (JD-R) Theory (Naru & Rehman, 2020), further explains how elevated stress, as a result of resource depletion, leads to decreased performance under high job demands.

In the hospitality context, these relationships are particularly pronounced due to the nature of the work, which involves high emotional labor, time pressure, and continuous customer interaction. Unlike many previous studies that treat these relationships independently, this study contributes by empirically demonstrating a sequential mechanism—where family conflict triggers resource depletion, which increases stress, and ultimately reduces performance.

These findings suggest that improving employee performance in hospitality organizations requires not only managing workplace factors but also addressing work–family balance and psychological well-being. Organizations should consider implementing flexible scheduling, employee assistance programs, and stress management interventions to mitigate the negative effects identified in this study.

## **Conclusions**

This study demonstrates that family conflict has a significant negative effect on employee performance, both directly and indirectly through work stress. The findings confirm that work stress functions as a partial mediating variable, indicating that family-related pressures do not only affect performance independently, but also operate through increased psychological strain. Employees experiencing higher levels of family conflict tend to report greater stress, which subsequently reduces their ability to perform effectively in hospitality work environments.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes by integrating Role Theory, Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, and Job Demand–Resources (JD-R) Theory into a unified explanatory framework. Rather than examining these relationships in isolation, this study demonstrates a sequential mechanism: family conflict (role incompatibility) leads to resource depletion (COR), which increases work stress and ultimately reduces performance (JD-R). This integrated approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of how personal and professional domains interact, particularly within high-demand service industries.

Empirically, this study provides evidence from the hospitality sector, specifically Hotel Aria Gajayana, showing that 52% of the variance in employee performance is explained by family conflict and work stress. The use of mediation analysis with bootstrapping strengthens the

robustness of the findings by confirming the indirect effect with statistical confidence. These results reinforce previous research while offering more detailed insight into the mechanism linking family conflict and performance.

From a practical standpoint, the findings highlight the need for hospitality organizations to adopt a more holistic approach to employee management. Hotel management is recommended to implement work–life balance programs, provide counseling and stress management support, and develop flexible work scheduling systems. Such initiatives can help reduce family-related pressures and mitigate work stress, ultimately enhancing employee well-being and performance. In high-pressure hospitality environments, addressing these factors is not only beneficial for employees but also essential for maintaining service quality and organizational competitiveness. Overall, this study underscores that improving employee performance in the hospitality industry requires attention not only to workplace conditions but also to employees' family-related challenges and psychological well-being.

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## **The Impact of Local Community Participation on the Success of Puri Night Dinner at Puri Agung Kerambitan**

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### **Abstract**

*This study focuses on analyzing how different forms of community involvement namely participation in the form of ideas, labor, and skills influence the performance of cultural events. The population of this study consists of local community members involved in the implementation of the Puri Night Dinner cultural event at Puri Agung Kerambitan, involving 155 respondents. The data analysis techniques used in this study include linear regression analysis, coefficient of determination, t-test, and F-test.*

*The findings indicate that participation in ideas has a positive and significant effect on event performance, as indicated by a t-value of 3.137 and a significance value of 0.002. Participation in labor also has a positive and significant effect, with a t-value of 5.454 and a significance value of 0.000. Similarly, participation in skills has a positive and significant effect, with a t-value of 3.972 and a significance value of 0.000. Simultaneously, participation in ideas, labor, and skills significantly influences event performance, as indicated by an F-value of 57.135 and a significance value of 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ ). The coefficient of determination shows that these variables contribute 52.2% to event performance.*

**Keywords:** *community participation, cultural tourism, event success, local community*



## **Introduction**

Bali is well known not only for its natural attractions but also for its rich cultural heritage, which plays an important role in tourism development. Cultural tourism focuses on providing experiences related to traditions, arts, and local values that contribute to social and economic sustainability (UNWTO, 2021). One of the ways to implement cultural tourism is through cultural events that present local traditions in a more organized and attractive form for visitors.

Cultural events are activities that are closely related to traditions and local customs, often held in places that have historical or cultural value. These events not only function as entertainment but also serve as a medium for cultural preservation and tourism development (Andayani et al., 2017; Trida et al., 2024). Therefore, the success of cultural events becomes an important aspect, especially in destinations that rely heavily on cultural attractions.

One example of a cultural event in Bali is the Puri Night Dinner held at Puri Agung Kerambitan. This event combines dining experiences with traditional performances, creating a unique cultural attraction for tourists. However, based on the data presented in the study, the number of event implementations has fluctuated over the last eight years, especially during the pandemic period, before gradually increasing again afterward. This fluctuation indicates that maintaining the success of the event is influenced by several factors.

One of the key factors is local community participation. Community participation refers to the involvement of individuals not only physically but also mentally and emotionally in supporting an activity. Participation encourages individuals to contribute and take responsibility for achieving shared goals

(Ngongare et al., 2019). In the context of Puri Night Dinner, local communities are involved in various roles, including operational teams, service staff, and cultural performers. The high number of participants shows that the event strongly depends on community involvement.

However, high participation does not always guarantee event success. In practice, several challenges still occur, such as limited availability of participants due to their main occupations and traditional obligations. In addition, minor delays in performances may happen, although they are usually handled directly on-site without causing major disruptions. This condition shows that participation alone is not enough, but it also needs to be supported by good coordination and management.

From a management perspective, event success is influenced by systematic processes such as planning, coordination, and evaluation (Goldblatt, 2013). In addition, the concept of Critical Success Factors (CSF) explains that effective communication, time management, and problem handling are essential elements in ensuring successful event implementation (Han, 2025). These factors are closely related to the readiness and quality of human resources involved, including the local community.

Previous studies have discussed community participation in various contexts, such as tourism development and community empowerment. However, studies that specifically examine the impact of local community participation on the success of cultural events using a quantitative approach are still limited. Therefore,

this study aims to analyze the impact of local community participation on the success of the Puri Night Dinner event at Puri Agung Kerambitan.

## **Literature Review**

### **Cultural Event**

Cultural events are activities that are based on traditions, arts, and local customs that develop within a community. According to Andayani et al. (2017), cultural events are usually organized in places that have cultural or historical value, and they aim to provide authentic experiences for visitors. These events often include traditional performances, rituals, and local cultural expressions.

In addition, Trida et al. (2024) state that cultural events not only function as a medium for cultural preservation but also have economic and social impacts on the local community. Through cultural events, local traditions can be maintained while also attracting tourists and supporting local income.

Therefore, cultural events such as Puri Night Dinner play an important role in combining cultural preservation and tourism development, especially in areas that still maintain strong traditional values.

### **Local Community Participation**

Community participation refers to the involvement of individuals in a group activity, both physically and psychologically. According to Davis (in Mariyani & Lestari, 2023), participation is defined as the mental and emotional involvement of individuals in a group situation that encourages them to contribute to shared goals and take responsibility for the results. This means that participation is not only about

physical presence, but also about how individuals actively engage in the process and feel responsible for the outcome of the activity.

Furthermore, Sastropetro (1988) explains that community participation can take several forms, such as participation in ideas, labor, skills, goods, and financial support. However, in the context of this research, participation is focused on three main forms, namely:

- Participation in ideas (giving suggestions or feedback)
- Participation in labor (physical involvement in the event)
- Participation in skills (using specific competencies or expertise)

These three forms are considered the most relevant because the implementation of cultural events requires active involvement from the community, especially in planning and execution stages.

### **Event Success**

The success of an event is not only determined by its concept but also by how well it is executed. One of the approaches used to measure event success is the concept of Critical Success Factors (CSF), which was first introduced by Rockart (1979) and further discussed by Han D (2025). Critical Success Factors are key elements that must be managed effectively in order to ensure that an event runs according to plan. In the context of event management, several important factors include:

- Effective communication, which ensures clear information flow between all parties involved

- Time management, which relates to how well the event follows the planned schedule
- Technical and operational coordination, which ensures that all aspects of the event run smoothly
- Problem handling, which reflects the ability to respond to unexpected issues during the event

In addition, Goldblatt (2013) explains that event management consists of several important stages, including research, design, planning, coordination, and evaluation. These stages highlight that successful event implementation requires systematic management and strong coordination among all stakeholders. Based on these theories, event success in this study is measured through indicators such as time accuracy, readiness of facilities, coordination among participants, and the ability to handle problems during the event.

### **Previous Studies**

Several previous studies have examined community participation in different contexts. Community participation has been found to play an important role in supporting development programs, where higher levels of participation contribute positively to achieving desired outcomes (Mustanir et al., 2018). In another study, community participation was influenced by social and cultural factors, where both variables showed a significant relationship with the level of participation, although the strength of the relationship was relatively low (Triana et al., 2023).

In the context of tourism and cultural events, community involvement has also been shown to support event implementation and promotion. High participation from various groups, including local organizations and cultural performers, contributes to the success of event activities (Wahyuni & Marmaiyatno, 2024). Furthermore, community participation has been proven to have a significant effect on the sustainability of tourism villages, with a strong correlation between community involvement and long-term development outcomes (Nasta'in, 2024).

However, not all studies show consistent results regarding the level and form of participation. In some cases, community participation is still relatively low and limited to certain forms, such as skills, while other forms, such as ideas, remain minimal (Rizky et al., 2023). This indicates that different forms of participation may have varying levels of influence depending on the context of the activity.

Although previous studies have highlighted the importance of community participation, most of them focus on participation in general without clearly distinguishing its specific forms, such as ideas, labor, and skills. In addition, many studies tend to use qualitative approaches, which provide in-depth insights but lack measurable statistical evidence regarding the impact of participation on event success.

Therefore, there is still a research gap in understanding how different forms of community participation influence the success of cultural events, particularly through a quantitative approach. This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the effect of participation in ideas, labor, and skills on the success of the Puri Night Dinner cultural event at Puri Agung Kerambitan.

## **Conceptual Framework**

This study examines the relationship between local community participation and event success.

The independent variable (X) is local community participation, which consists of:

- X1: Participation in ideas
- X2: Participation in labor
- X3: Participation in skills

The dependent variable (Y) is event success, which is measured based on:

- Time accuracy
- Facility readiness
- Coordination among parties
- Problem handling

This framework shows that community participation is expected to influence the success of the event both partially and simultaneously.

## **Hypotheses**

H1: Participation in ideas has a significant impact on event success

H2: Participation in labor has a significant impact on event success

H3: Participation in skills has a significant impact on event success

H4: Local community participation simultaneously has a significant impact on event success

## **Research Metodology**

This study uses a quantitative research approach to examine the relationship between local community participation and the success of the Puri Night Dinner

event at Puri Agung Kerambitan. A survey method was applied to collect data from respondents who were directly involved in the event.

### **Research Object and Location**

The object of this research is the local community participating in the Puri Night Dinner cultural event. The study was conducted at Puri Agung Kerambitan, located in Tabanan, Bali, which is known as a cultural heritage site that regularly hosts cultural-based events

### **Population and Sample**

The population of this study consists of 253 local community members involved in the event. Due to time and resource limitations, a sample was selected using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error. The calculation resulted in 155 respondents, which were considered representative of the population

### **Data Collection Techniques**

Data in this study were collected using several techniques:

- Questionnaire: The main data collection tool using a Likert scale to measure respondents' perceptions
- Interview: Conducted to gain deeper insights regarding challenges and participation

### **Research Instrument**

The questionnaire used in this study consists of several statements related to the variables being measured. A Likert scale was applied, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The instrument was designed to measure:

- Participation in ideas



- Participation in labor
- Participation in skills

Event success indicators such as time accuracy, coordination, readiness, and problem handling

Before distributing the questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted to ensure validity and reliability of the instrument.

### **Data Analysis Technique**

The collected data were processed and analyzed with the help of IBM SPSS version 26. The analysis was conducted through several stages to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the results. The analysis began with descriptive statistics to summarize respondent characteristics and examine the distribution of responses across each variable. The next stage involved testing the research instrument through validity and reliability analysis. Item validity was assessed using the Pearson Product Moment correlation to determine how well each questionnaire item measured the intended concept. An item is considered valid if the calculated correlation value is higher than the critical value.

Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha to assess the internal consistency of the instrument. A variable is considered reliable when the alpha coefficient exceeds 0.70. Third, classical assumption tests were performed before conducting regression analysis. These include normality test, using Kolmogorov-Smirnov or Shapiro-Wilk, where data is considered normal if the significance value is greater than 0.05

Multicollinearity was assessed using Tolerance values and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). The model is considered free from multicollinearity when the Tolerance value is above 0.10 and the VIF is below 10.

Heteroscedasticity test, using scatterplot and Glejser test, where no heteroscedasticity occurs if the significance value is greater than 0.05. Fourth, regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between variables. Simple linear regression was used to analyze the overall effect of local community participation on event success. In addition, multiple linear regression was used to examine the effect of each dimension of participation, namely ideas (X1), labor (X2), and skills (X3), on event success (Y).

Hypothesis testing was conducted using t-tests to evaluate the partial effects of each independent variable and an F-test to assess their simultaneous influence on the dependent variable. A significance level of 0.05 was applied as the decision criterion. In addition, the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) was used to determine the extent to which the independent variables explain the variation in the dependent variable.

### **Result & Discussion**

This study involved 155 local community members who participated in the Puri Night Dinner event at Puri Agung Kerambitan. A proportionate stratified sampling technique was applied, where respondents were grouped based on their roles and selected proportionally to ensure that each subgroup was adequately represented. The instrument testing results show that all questionnaire items are valid, as the Pearson correlation values exceed the critical value. The Cronbach's

Alpha values for all variables exceed 0.70, confirming the reliability of the instrument.

The classical assumption tests indicate that the data satisfy the requirements for regression analysis. The normality test resulted in a significance value of 0.071 ( $>0.05$ ), suggesting that the data are normally distributed. Multicollinearity was not detected, as indicated by tolerance values above 0.10 and VIF values below 10. In addition, the heteroscedasticity test showed significance values greater than 0.05, confirming the absence of heteroscedasticity.

The simple linear regression analysis indicates that local community involvement has a positive and significant effect on event success, as reflected in the following regression equation:

$$Y = 10.187 + 1.159X$$

This suggests that higher levels of community involvement contribute to better event performance.

The multiple linear regression analysis further explains the effect of each variable. The regression equation is:

$$Y = 9.244 + 0.800X_1 + 1.803X_2 + 0.920X_3$$

Table 1: Multiple Linear Regression Results

| Variable    | B     | t-value | Sig.  |
|-------------|-------|---------|-------|
| Constant    | 9.244 | -       | -     |
| Ideas (X1)  | 0.800 | 3.137   | 0.002 |
| Labor (X2)  | 1.803 | 5.454   | 0.000 |
| Skills (X3) | 0.920 | 3.972   | 0.000 |

[Source: Processed data, 2026]

All variables show positive coefficients, indicating that participation in ideas, labor, and skills positively contributes to event success. Among these

variables, participation in labor has the strongest influence, followed by skills and ideas.

The comparison of regression coefficients is presented in Figure 1.

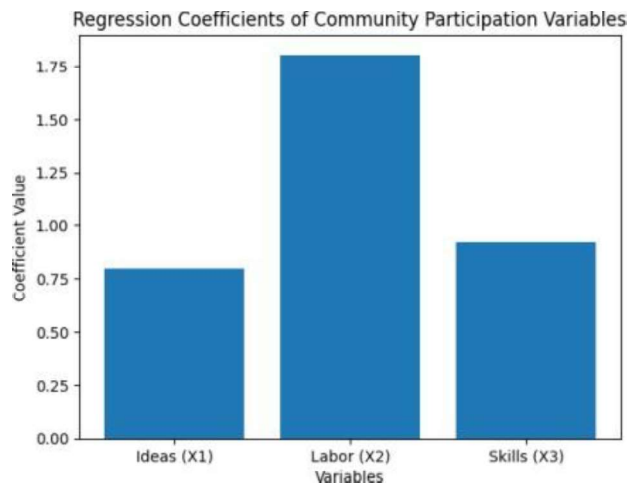


Figure 1: Regression Coefficients of Community Participation Variables

[Source: Processed data, 2026]

This figure clearly shows that labor participation has the strongest effect, while participation in ideas has the lowest influence on event success. This visualization strengthens the finding that practical involvement plays a more dominant role compared to conceptual participation.

The t-test results show that all variables significantly affect event success, with significance values below 0.05.

Table 2: ANOVA

| F-value | Sig.  |
|---------|-------|
| 57.135  | 0.000 |

[Source: Processed data, 2026]

In the table number 2, the F-test result ( $F = 57.135$ ;  $\text{Sig.} = 0.000$ ) indicates that all independent variables simultaneously influence event success, with labor participation having the strongest influence.

Table 3: Model Summary

| <b>R</b> | <b>R Square</b> | <b>Adjusted R Square</b> |
|----------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 0.722    | 0.522           | 0.522                    |

[Source: Processed data, 2026]

The coefficient of determination (Adjusted  $R^2$ ) is 0.522, this means that the independent variables explain 52.2% of event success, while the rest, 47.8%, is affected by other factors beyond this study.

From a practical perspective, these findings indicate that direct involvement of the community, especially in operational roles, plays a crucial role in ensuring the smooth implementation of cultural events. Participation in skills also contributes significantly to improving event quality, while participation in ideas provides additional support in the planning process. This result indicates that labor involvement has the strongest influence because cultural events such as Puri Night Dinner rely heavily on direct operational execution. Community members who are actively engaged in physical activities play a key role in ensuring that the event runs smoothly.

On the other hand, participation in ideas shows the lowest influence, which may be due to the structured nature of event planning where decision-making is centralized. As a result, conceptual contributions from the community tend to be more limited compared to operational involvement.

### **Conclusions**

This study reveals that local community involvement significantly and positively contributes to the success of the Puri Night Dinner cultural event at Puri Agung Kerambitan. Individually, participation in ideas, labor, and skills each has a significant influence on event success. Among these variables, participation in labor shows the strongest effect, followed by participation in skills. In contrast, participation in ideas has the lowest level of influence, although it remains statistically significant.

Simultaneously, all forms of participation contribute significantly to improving event performance. These findings highlight that while conceptual contributions are important, direct involvement and practical skills play a more dominant role in ensuring smooth event execution. Overall, the results emphasize the importance of strengthening community involvement, particularly in operational and skill-based roles, to enhance coordination, readiness, and the overall success of cultural events. These findings provide practical implications for event organizers to prioritize operational involvement and skill-based participation in order to improve event effectiveness.

### **Acknowledgement**

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# ***Analysis of the Implementation of the Reward System in Building Employee Engagement at a Five-star hotel in Bali***

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**HM-022**

## **Abstract**

*This study analyzes the implementation of a reward system in building employee engagement at a five-star hotel in Bali. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and internal documentation. The findings reveal that although the reward system is well-structured, a gap exists between the number of high-performing employees and the limited reward quota. This condition influences employees' perceptions of fairness and recognition, which affects their engagement levels. Non-financial rewards, such as recognition, appreciation, and career development opportunities, are found to strengthen employees' emotional attachment, dedication, and involvement in their work within hotel operations.*

**Keywords:** Reward , Employee Engagement , Human Resources

## **Introduction**

The luxury hospitality industry is characterized by intense competition, making human resource management a critical factor in sustaining service quality. Human resources are considered a strategic asset that drives organizational performance and operational effectiveness (Aula et al., 2022). In this context, employee engagement plays a significant role, as it reflects employees' emotional attachment, commitment, and positive attitudes toward the organization (Kurniawan et al., 2021). High levels of engagement are associated with improved work performance, which can be understood through the dimensions of vigor, dedication, and absorption (Zebua et al., 2025). At a Five – Star Hotel in Bali, employee engagement has been consistently maintained at a high level, although slight fluctuations are observed. In 2023, engagement was measured using limited indicators, where the *vigor* dimension, assessed through health and well-being, recorded a score of 8.8, while *dedication*, represented by diversity and inclusion, achieved 9.3.



The *absorption* dimension was not specifically measured during this period. Despite these limitations, the overall engagement score reached 90%. In 2024, the measurement became more comprehensive by incorporating all three dimensions. The *vigor* dimension, evaluated through autonomy, work environment, management support, and workload, recorded an average score of 9.25. The *dedication* dimension, measured through accomplishment, meaningful work, recognition, reward, goal setting, strategy, and organizational fit, achieved a score of 9.30. Meanwhile, the *absorption* dimension, including growth, freedom of opinion, and peer relationships, recorded the highest score of 9.37. This improvement in measurement coverage was accompanied by an increase in the overall engagement score to 93%. However, in 2025, the engagement score slightly declined to 92%, indicating a minor fluctuation that may reflect changes in employees' perceptions toward organizational practices.



Figure 1: Employee Engagement Survey Score  
at a Five Star Hotel in Bali 2023-2025  
Source: Five-Star Hotel in Bali in Bali 2025

One of the key factors influencing employee engagement is the reward system. Rewards, both financial and non-financial, play a role in enhancing motivation, productivity, and employees' sense of recognition (Saleh et al., 2021). Conversely, an ineffective reward system may hinder the development of strong employee engagement (Hijeriah et al., 2025). a five-star hotel in Bali, the reward system is implemented through structured programs. However, the distribution of rewards indicates a potential imbalance.

Table 2 : Number of Reward Recipients in 2023 – 2025

| Reward Type                            | Period of project | Remarks                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Talent of the Quarter</i>           | 3 Months          | The Talent of the Quarter program is held every three months to recognize and reward employees who demonstrate outstanding performance. This program covers all employees of a Five – star Hotel in Bali. There are two main categories in this program, namely Heartist of the Quarter (Front of The House & Heart of The House) and Leader of the Quarter |
| <i>The Most Mentioned of the Month</i> | 3 Months          | The Most Mentioned program is an appreciation for employees with the highest number of guest compliments on the TrustYou platform. This award is given to talents who consistently provide exceptional service and succeed in creating a positive impression for guests.                                                                                    |

Source: a Five-Star Hotel in Bali 2025

Based on Table 1.3, a five-star hotel in Bali implements two main reward programs every three months as part of its structured recognition system to acknowledge outstanding employee performance and reinforce service excellence. The *Talent of the Quarter* program is designed to recognize employees who consistently demonstrate high performance and alignment with organizational values. This program is divided into two categories: Staff (Level 6–8), who receive IDR 750,000 and a certificate, and Leader (Level 3–5), who receive IDR 1,000,000 and a certificate. The selection process is comprehensive, taking into account multiple criteria such as adherence to company values, individual performance achievements, guest feedback, work behavior, attendance, and active participation in organizational activities.

In addition, the *Most Mentioned Heartist by Guest* program focuses on recognizing employees who deliver exceptional service experiences from the guests' perspective. This program is based on guest feedback data collected through the TrustYou platform, where employees with the highest number of positive mentions are identified. The nomination process involves department managers who submit candidates to the Human Resources department for evaluation. This program is open to employees ranging from staff to managerial levels.

The number of nominated high-performing employees fluctuated, with 51 nominations in 2023, 44 in 2024, and 50 in 2025. Despite this, the reward quota remained constant at 16 recipients per year, resulting in a relatively low accommodation rate ranging from 31.40% to 36.40%. In 2025, only 32.00% of nominated employees received formal recognition, leaving the majority without rewards.

Table 2 : Number of Reward Recipients in 2023 – 2025

| Periode | Total Nominasi | Kuota Penghargaan | Persentase Akomodasi |
|---------|----------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| 2023    | 51             | 16                | 31.40%               |
| 2024    | 44             | 16                | 36.40%               |
| 2025    | 50             | 16                | 32.00%               |

Source: a Five-Star Hotel in Bali 2025

This imbalance between the increasing number of high-performing employees and the limited reward quota may influence employees' perceptions of fairness and recognition. Such conditions become particularly relevant when linked to the observed fluctuation in employee engagement levels. Therefore, further analysis is required to examine the influence of reward systems on employee engagement at a five-star hotel in Bali.

#### Literature

##### Review Human Resource Management

Human Resource Management (HRM) is a critical component in organizational success, as it focuses on managing and optimizing the potential of individuals within the organization. HRM encompasses various activities related to planning, organizing, and developing employees to achieve organizational goals effectively (Suherman et al., 2024). Unlike other resources, human resources possess diverse characteristics such as skills, emotions, and backgrounds, which require appropriate management to ensure optimal performance. According to Afrianti et al., (2024), HRM is a strategic function aimed at maximizing employees' capabilities through structured approaches to enhance individual and organizational performance.

This includes key processes such as recruitment, performance evaluation, compensation, and employee development. Furthermore, HRM plays a vital role in maintaining a balance between organizational objectives and employee needs. It also contributes to creating a productive work environment, fostering positive relationships, and ensuring employee well-being (Hidayat et al., 2022). In this context, effective HRM practices are essential in supporting employee-related outcomes, including motivation, satisfaction, and engagement.

## **Employee Engagement**

Employee engagement refers to the level of employees' attachment to their work and organization, reflecting a positive attitude toward organizational values and a willingness to contribute beyond formal job responsibilities (Noviardy, 2020). It also represents employees' voluntary effort, both physically and psychologically, to support organizational success (Katili et al., 2021). Highly engaged employees tend to demonstrate strong energy, commitment, and loyalty, while maintaining positive emotional connections and focus in their work (Carolina et al., 2025). This condition encourages continuous learning, skill development, and innovation that contribute to improved organizational performance.

Employee engagement can be categorized into engaged, not engaged, and actively disengaged employees based on their level of emotional involvement (Gallup, 2024). It also serves strategic purposes such as improving performance, strengthening commitment, fostering innovation, and creating a positive work environment (Milisani et al., 2024). Conceptually, employee engagement reflects a holistic involvement of individuals through physical, cognitive, and emotional aspects (Kurinci et al., 2025). It is commonly analyzed through three dimensions: *vigor*, *dedication*, and *absorption*, which represent energy, sense of pride, and full concentration in work activities (Utaminings et al., 2026). Furthermore, employee engagement is influenced by several organizational factors, including work culture, competence, and income satisfaction (Saimar et al., 2022).

A supportive environment and fair compensation system play a significant role in shaping employees' motivation and perception of fairness. Therefore, employee engagement is not only driven by individual factors but also strongly influenced by organizational practices, particularly the implementation of reward systems.

## **Reward**

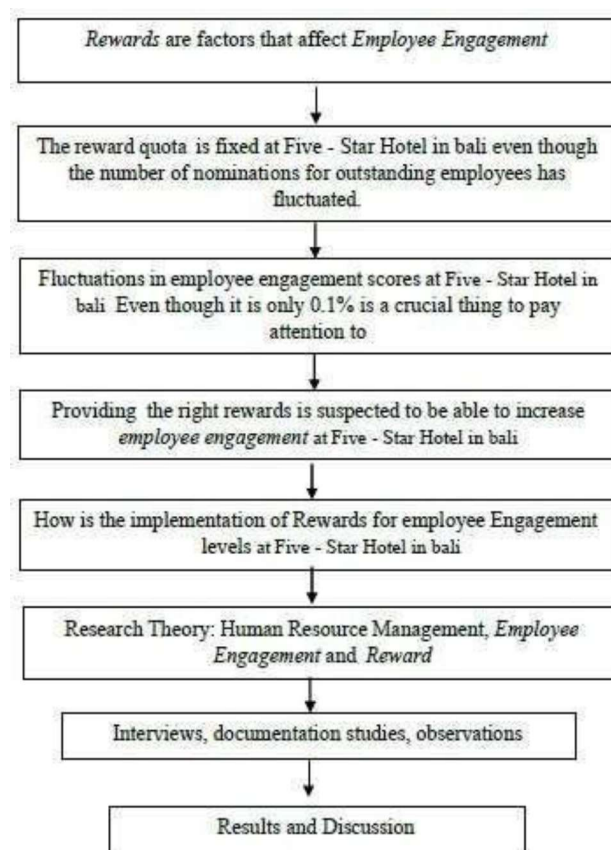
Reward is defined as a form of appreciation given to employees for achieving or exceeding performance standards, which plays an important role in increasing motivation and encouraging better work performance (Isbandi, 2021). It is considered a strategic tool in human resource management, as employees tend to perform better when their contributions are recognized. According to Lestari et al., (2022), reward can take various forms, including financial incentives, promotions, and non-financial recognition. Reward is generally classified into extrinsic and intrinsic types, where extrinsic rewards include salary, bonuses, and promotions, while intrinsic rewards refer to internal satisfaction such as a sense of achievement (Saleh et al., 2021).

The implementation of reward aims to motivate, attract, and retain employees while strengthening performance and positive work behavior (Sofiaty, 2021). It also contributes to enhancing employee commitment and supporting organizational goals (Muzammil, 2022). Reward can be viewed

through financial and non-financial dimensions (Nesia et al., 2022). This classification is supported by (Niguse et al., 2019), which emphasizes compensation, recognition, and development opportunities as key indicators. Furthermore, reward effectiveness is influenced by internal consistency, competitiveness, employee contribution, and organizational factors (Astuti et al., 2019). Other influencing aspects include external conditions, human factors, and organizational characteristics (Foenay et al., 2020).

The conceptual framework of this research, based on prior studies, is illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 3 : The conceptual framework



Source: Data processed 2026

Source: Data processed by the researcher (2025).

## **Research Methodology**

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. This approach is appropriate as it allows researchers to explore and interpret real-world conditions in a comprehensive manner. The study was conducted at a Five – star Hotel in Bali, focusing on the implementation of reward systems and their relationship with employee engagement. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources.

Primary data were obtained through direct observation and in-depth interviews with key informants, particularly the Director of People & Culture at a Five – Star Hotel in Bali, who plays a strategic role in managing human resource policies and reward systems. Observations were conducted to understand workplace conditions and how reward systems are implemented in daily operations. In addition, semi-structured interviews were used to explore employees' perceptions of reward, fairness, and recognition, as well as their influence on employee engagement. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants representing each operational department, including Front Office, Housekeeping, Food and Beverage, and Human Resources, to explore employees' perceptions of reward, fairness, and recognition, as well as their influence on employee engagement. This method enables flexibility and allows the researcher to obtain rich and detailed insights (Creswell 2021).

Secondary data were gathered from internal company documents, employee engagement survey reports, and relevant academic literature. Data analysis followed an interactive model involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, conducted iteratively until data saturation was reached (Miles et al., 2020). To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, triangulation was applied by comparing data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation. The findings are presented in a descriptive narrative to provide a comprehensive understanding of how reward systems are implemented and how they influence employee engagement.

## **Results and Discussion**

Employee engagement at a five-star hotel in Bali remained at a relatively high level throughout the observed period. Based on internal data, the engagement score reached 90% in 2023, increased to 93% in 2024, and slightly declined to 92% in 2025. Although the decrease appears minimal, it may indicate an early signal of changes in employee engagement. In 2023, the measurement was still limited to selected indicators, while in 2024 it became more comprehensive by incorporating the dimensions of vigor, dedication, and absorption. However, in 2025, a slight decline was observed across all dimensions, suggesting the need for further evaluation of factors influencing employee engagement.

The reward system implemented at a five-star hotel in Bali is structured through several formal programs, such as *Talent of the Quarter* and *The Most Mentioned Heartist by Guest*, which aim to recognize employee performance. Despite this structured system, the findings reveal a gap between the number of nominated employees and the fixed reward quota. In 2023, there were 51 nominated employees, but only 16 received rewards (31.40%).

In 2024, 44 employees were nominated, with the same number of recipients (36.40%), and in 2025, 50 employees were nominated while only 16 were awarded (32.00%). This imbalance indicates that a significant proportion of high-performing employees are not formally recognized due to limited reward allocation. Based on in-depth interviews, employees generally perceive the reward system as well-structured however, concerns arise regarding the limited number of recipients. Several employees expressed that the opportunity to receive rewards is relatively low despite consistent performance.

This situation leads to a perception that the reward system does not fully reflect fairness, as not all deserving employees receive recognition. As a result, employees may feel less valued, which can influence their emotional attachment to the organization. These findings suggest that the implementation of the reward system plays a critical role in shaping employee engagement. The limitation in reward distribution creates a gap between employee expectations and organizational practices, particularly affecting the dedication dimension, where recognition is a key driver. Furthermore, perceptions of fairness in reward allocation also influence vigor and absorption, as employees who feel fairly recognized tend to demonstrate higher levels of energy, motivation, and involvement in their work. Conversely, limited recognition may reduce motivation and engagement over time. The slight decline in the employee engagement score from 93% in 2024 to 92% in 2025 supports this argument.

Although the decrease is not substantial, it indicates that the current reward system may require adjustment to better accommodate the increasing number of high-performing employees. Therefore, it is essential for management to not only maintain a structured reward system but also ensure that its implementation is perceived as fair and inclusive in order to sustain high levels of employee engagement. Previous research has shown that rewards have an important role in influencing employee engagement. (Hermansyah et al., 2026) found that rewards have a positive and significant effect on employee engagement, which is also supported by job enrichment and the perception of justice. In line with that, (Agnes et al., 2024) show that rewards and recognition significantly increase employee engagement, even though their contribution is moderate.

In addition, (Ardiansyah, 2022) also revealed that compensation has a positive and significant influence on employee engagement and has an impact on improving employee performance. These findings are in line with the results of this study, where rewards are an important factor in maintaining employee engagement, especially in the dedication dimension. Nevertheless, some studies show different results, (Shadiq et al., 2022) and (Adji Sadewo et al., 2024) found that rewards did not have a significant influence on employee engagement. This study provides a further explanation for this difference, namely that the effectiveness of rewards is highly dependent on how the rewards are distributed and perceived by employees.

Although the reward system in this study has been well structured, the limited number of recipients creates a perception of injustice, thereby reducing its impact on employee engagement. In addition, based on data triangulation, the results of observations and interviews show a consistent pattern. Observational data shows a slight decline in employee engagement rates in 2025, while interview results reveal that employees feel that opportunities for reward are limited despite having shown consistent performance. This consistency reinforces that the perception of fairness in reward distribution has an important role in shaping employee engagement. Therefore, it can be concluded that rewards alone are not enough, but must be implemented fairly and inclusively to maintain a high level of employee engagement.

## **Conclusions**

The study concluded that the employee engagement rate at one of the five-star hotels in Bali was at a relatively high level, but showed a slight fluctuation that needed attention. Although the reward system has been designed in a structured manner, its effectiveness is determined not only by its existence, but also by how it is perceived by employees, especially in terms of fairness and inclusivity. The results show that intrinsic rewards, such as recognition, appreciation, respect for contributions, and opportunities for growth, have a very important role in shaping employee engagement. When employees feel genuinely recognized and judge the existing system to be running fairly, they tend to show higher levels of dedication, energy, and engagement in the work.

On the other hand, if recognition is felt to be limited or uneven, this can reduce the sense of appreciation and weaken the employee's emotional attachment to the organization. In addition, this study confirms that the impact of intrinsic rewards is highly dependent on employee perception. A well-designed system will not provide optimal results if it is not in line with employees' expectations regarding justice and equal opportunity. Therefore, to maintain a high level of employee engagement, organizations not only need to maintain consistency in providing recognition, but also ensure that the practice is perceived as fair, transparent, and inclusive by all employees. Thus, it can be concluded that intrinsic rewards are a key factor in encouraging employee engagement, especially in building



employee dedication and emotional attachment. To

maintain and increase engagement, organizations need to strengthen meaningful recognition practices and ensure that every employee has a fair chance to be appreciated for their performance.

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# Wellness Tourism: Shifting Paradigm on Lombok Tourism Perspective in Tourism Village for Supporting Gender Equality

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## Abstract

*There has been a shift in the global tourism paradigm post-Covid-19; whereas the focus was previously on the '3 Ss' (Sea, Sand, and Sun), it has now moved to Serenity, Sustainability, and Spirituality. As peace of mind is increasingly difficult to attain in the current stressful era, wellness tourism has emerged as a popular trend driving travel behavior. Eco-forest, Nature & Marine. There are seven categories of wellness tourism attractions: Healthy Lifestyle & Fitness, Healthy Culinary, Indonesian Herbal & CAM (Complementary & Alternative Medicine), Indonesian Arts & Events, Mental Healing & Spirituality, Spa, Ethno-spa & Beauty. This study concludes that wellness tourism has significant potential for development in Lombok, given the region's existing resources. Women in Tourism Villages are pivotal in driving sustainable tourism and local community welfare. By preserving culture, traditions, and the environment, alongside social empowerment, they generate a lasting positive impact for the village and future generations. This includes highlighting local assets such as herbal drinks, ethno-wellness spas, handicrafts, and MSMEs that cater to wellness tourists. Strengthening women's participation through their 'triple role' (productive, reproductive, and community management) is essential for advancing well-being—both material and non-material—within the wellness tourism sector. Data analysis indicates that Lombok possesses diverse wellness tourism potential; developing this sector would directly support SDGs 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and 5 (Gender Equality).*

**Keywords:** Gender Equality, Hospitality Business Development, Wellness Tourism

## Introduction

Wellness tourism is a fascinating phenomenon that has captured travelers' interest, especially in the post-Covid-19 era. There has been a shift in the global tourism paradigm; whereas the focus was on the '3 Ss' (Sea, Sand, and Sun), it has now moved to Serenity, Sustainability, and Spirituality.

As peace of mind is increasingly difficult to attain in the current stressful era, wellness tourism has emerged as a popular trend driving travel behaviour.

The development of wellness tourism in Indonesia is expected to create a strong and competitive position among ASEAN countries and on the global stage. This will provide optimal and sustainable economic, social, cultural, and environmental benefits. These benefits extend to the government, businesses, and the community. Furthermore, this supports the third of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals: Good Health and Well-being. Wellness Tourism will ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for people of all ages.

There are 7 categories of wellness tourism attractions established by the Ministry of Tourism in 2023. These serve as a guide for stakeholders to identify priority, competitive, and sustainable wellness tourism attractions, as follows:

1. Eco-forest, Nature & Marine: This refers to attractions related to activities in nature such as forests, coasts, lakes, water sources, and hot springs— whether in conservation or non-conservation areas. It includes accommodation, tourism villages, or integrated tourism areas that can be enjoyed to enhance mindfulness, fitness, and conservation actions.
2. Healthy Lifestyle & Fitness: This refers to attractions that offer indoor and outdoor physical activities, with or without equipment, designed to encourage active participation in improving health and fitness.
3. Healthy Culinary: This refers to attractions that offer a holistic experience related to the history, culture, process, ingredients, and philosophy of healthy food and beverages, as well as providing experiences in preparing, creating, and serving them.
4. Indonesian Herbal & CAM (Complementary & Alternative Medicine): An attraction that offers educational activities and the opportunity to enjoy Indonesian herbal products and concoctions, Indonesian aromatics, and traditional cultural heritage practices that support physical and mental wellness through CAM.
5. Indonesian Arts & Events: An attraction that provides wellness experiences for the body, mind, and soul through traditional or contemporary art forms such as music, dance, painting, and theater, as well as art- and culture-based wellness activities and festivals.
6. Mental Healing & Spirituality: An attraction that offers health and mental healing experiences, as well as holistic

mindfulness and spiritual enhancement activities.

7. Spa, Ethno-spa & Beauty: An attraction offering body care and aesthetic services for wellness and beauty, using traditional ingredients and methods, either purely traditional or combined with modern equipment.

Characteristically, wellness travellers possess a high level of awareness regarding the importance of a healthy physical and mental lifestyle, seeking experiences that enhance their quality of life. As health and well-being are their primary priorities, these travellers are willing to pay a

premium for such experiences. They are typically highly educated and possess strong health literacy.

The typology of wellness tourists, a special interest tourism segment, is divided into two categories:

- Primary tourists can be categorized into Ultimate, Hard, and Medium, where Ultimate Wellness is positioned as a lifestyle choice, Hard Wellness is part of a healthier and better lifestyle, while Medium Wellness is already part of a healthy lifestyle.
- Secondary tourists view wellness as a complement to their daily lives.

The Triple Agenda for the transformation of development in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) Province comprises three key pillars. First, the eradication of extreme poverty is positioned as a humanitarian mission that must be accomplished through data-driven interventions, social inclusion, and grassroots economic empowerment. Second, strengthening food security and agri-marine industrialization is aimed at building NTB's economic independence through the downstreaming of leading commodities. Third, the development of inclusive and sustainable world-class tourism is driven to make NTB a global destination hub with an emphasis on equitable benefits, local community involvement, and the revitalization of culture- and nature-based ecotourism.

In developing tourism in Lombok, its diverse potential must be developed sustainably to achieve quality results and prosperity. Specifically, for wellness tourism, it is necessary to inventory available products and identify business operators who can be mentored in developing their products and businesses. This study presents case studies of two tourism villages with existing businesses that support wellness tourism. These examples highlight how women's involvement improves family welfare through local tourism and hospitality development.

Based on the foregoing background, this study is guided by two central research questions. (1) What aspects of Wellness Tourism development can be developed in tourist villages in Lombok? (2) What is the impact of Wellness Tourism Development Innovation in tourist villages? These questions are formulated to direct the investigation toward a comprehensive understanding of how Wellness Tourism can be strategically integrated into the village-based tourism framework in Lombok, as well as to assess the broader implications of such innovation for the social, economic, and cultural dimensions of the local community. By addressing these questions, this study aims to contribute meaningful insights to the growing body of literature on sustainable and wellness-oriented tourism, particularly within the context of rural and indigenous tourist destinations in Indonesia.

## **Literature Review**

Two theoretical frameworks support this study. The first is the Tourist Area Life Cycle (TALC) model, which suggests that a tourist destination goes through a series of stages, namely exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation, decline, and rejuvenation (Butler in Fauzi & Idris, 2024). To identify the position of a tourism destination

within this cycle, several key indicators are used, including tourist visits, attractions, amenities, accessibility, tourism management, and tourism promotion (Pranata in Fauzi & Idris, 2024). The second framework is the Triple Role of Women theory, which recognizes three distinct but related roles that women carry out in society (Sitanggang in Cahyani, 2024). The productive role includes activities that directly contribute to family income, whether through paid or unpaid work. The reproductive role covers activities that are needed for human survival and the care of the family. Finally, the social or community role refers to activities that go beyond the household, particularly those involving women's participation and relationships within the wider community. Together, these two frameworks provide a clear basis for examining the relationship between tourism development and women's involvement in tourist villages.

## **Research Methodology**

This study employed an ethnographic as research method, in which the researcher resided in the subject area for several years to conduct observations and in-depth interviews (Josh, 2024). Participant were selected using snowball sampling. The collected data was then analyzed using data triangulation to ensure validity and credibility. The research was conducted on Lombok Island, specifically in Bilebante Green Tourism Village and Sasak Ende Traditional Village. It examined the various potentials of Lombok Island that complement the development of wellness tourism products, while also incorporating gender mainstreaming.

## **Results and Discussion**

Lombok Island has diverse wellness tourism potential. The seven categories of wellness tourism attractions according to

the Ministry of Tourism in 2023, which serve as a guide for stakeholders to identify priority, competitive, and sustainable wellness tourism attractions, are as follows:

1. **Eco-forest, Nature & Marine** This refers to attractions related to activities in nature such as forests, coasts, lakes, water sources, and hot springs— whether with conservation or non-conservation status. It includes accommodation, village tourism, or integrated tourism areas that can be enjoyed to increase awareness (mindfulness), fitness, and conservation actions.
  - **Mount Rinjani:** The appeal of Mount Rinjani, with Sembalun as an area that can facilitate the wellness activities offered.
  - **The 3 Gili Islands:** A major tourist attraction centered on marine and island appeal.
2. **Healthy Lifestyle & Fitness** This refers to attractions offering indoor and outdoor physical activities—with or without equipment—designed to encourage active participation in improving health and fitness.
  - **Mandalika:** Serves as a tourist area where the main attraction is sports tourism, featuring various activities that are currently or will be facilitated.
  - **Sports Trends:** The existence of the circuit facilitates various sports activities such as Moto GP, L'Etape, Pocari Run, Paragliding, and Watersports, supporting current sports trends.
3. **Healthy Culinary:** An attraction offering a holistic experience related to the history, culture, process, ingredients, and philosophy of healthy food and beverages, as well as providing hands-on experiences in preparing, creating, and serving them.

Various tourism villages with diverse local culinary potential can highlight and offer wellness experiences through compelling storytelling. This ensures that the history, culture, process, ingredients, and philosophy of the food and beverages are effectively conveyed to tourists. Examples include Bon Jeruk Tourism Village with its *Ayam Merangkat* dish, Bilebante Village with *Celoret* production, and various villages in Lombok offering regional specialties like *Tuak Manis*, as well as the *Seruang* drink from Sembalun. Additionally, Lombok's traditional herbal remedies (*Jampi* and *Usodho*), such as *Serbat*, are believed to promote health.

4. **Indonesian Herbal & CAM (Complementary & Alternative Medicine):** An attraction offering educational activities and the opportunity to enjoy Indonesian herbal products, concoctions, and aromatics, alongside traditional cultural heritage practices that support physical and mental wellness. Includes: Various alternative treatments that provide peace of mind and traditions believed to heal, such as massage with prayer.
5. **Indonesian Arts & Events:** An attraction providing wellness experiences for physical, mental, and spiritual health through traditional or contemporary art forms such as music, dance, painting, and theater, as well as art- and culture-based wellness festivals. Notable Events: *Peresean*, *Bau Nyale*, and *Perang Topat*.
6. **Mental Healing & Spirituality:** An attraction offering mental healing experiences, as well as holistic mindfulness and spiritual enhancement activities. Activities: *Melukat* rituals and Pilgrimage Tourism
7. **Spa, Ethno-spa & Beauty:** An attraction in the form of body care and aesthetic services for wellness and beauty using traditional ingredients and methods, often combined with modern equipment. Examples: Traditional spas in Bilebante and beauty clinics in Mataram.

Drawing on Butler's theory, Radjab et al. (2022) explains that the development of a destination follows a life cycle (exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation, decline, and rejuvenation) resembling a bell-shaped curve. In the early stage, visitors arrive in small numbers. There are limitations in facilities, access, and the local community's understanding of visitor needs.

This initial stage is generally visited by adventurers seeking new destinations that are not yet crowded, engaging in various activities in the area. In the second stage, the awareness (or involvement) stage, interest in the destination grows in line with the increase in visitor numbers and facilities. At this stage, appropriate marketing strategies are required, and the destination often transforms into a mass tourism site. The subsequent stage is where the destination will either continue to rise or potentially be abandoned by tourists.

Based on the number of tourist visits to West Nusa Tenggara Province, particularly Lombok, the destination is still in the awareness-building stage of attracting visitors. While current attractions on offer—such as Mandalika, which features a circuit set against beautiful natural scenery— serve as key reasons for tourists to visit, there are perceived shortcomings, particularly regarding facilities and services that still require improvement. Therefore, an alternative strategy is needed to drive tourism growth on Lombok Island by exploring its diverse potential, such as wellness tourism.

**Bilebante Green Tourism Village**

- Bilebante Village was established approximately 100 years ago. It is located in Pringgarata District, Central Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara, covers an area of 28,365 km<sup>2</sup>, and is inhabited by

4,264 people, the majority of whom are of productive age.

- In Bilebante, the Sasak people live peacefully alongside the Hindu community. The two cultures blend



harmoniously and are the pride of the village.

- The name "Bilebante" is a combination of two words: *Bile*, meaning *Maja* fruit (in Indonesian), and *Bante*, meaning undergrowth or bushes (in Sasak). It signifies a *Maja* tree entwined tightly by undergrowth.
- Bilebante holds a philosophy and values that strengthen the community, serving as a form of mutual cooperation (gotong royong) and a symbol of unity among all elements of the village.
- In the past, the community relied solely on sand mining as a source of income.
- The community later shifted to other income sources as they realized the potential negative impacts on their future.
- Other social and environmental issues include early marriage, a high number of youth becoming migrant workers due to a lack of local opportunities and skills, and waste management issues.
- One potential sector is tourism, due to the multiplier effect it creates, providing social, economic, and environmental benefits.
- Bilebante has enormous potential to be developed into a tourist village, thanks to its beautiful natural surroundings and solid human resources who are eager to learn and work.
- In the development of Bilebante Tourism Village, 60% of tourism operators are women.
- Bilebante Village won 1st Place at the national level in a toddler menu creation competition to combat stunting. The competition was held by the National Population and Family Planning Agency (BKKBN). Bilebante Village successfully outperformed 157 participants from all over Indonesia, demonstrating its excellence and capability in addressing the challenge of stunting.

#### Sasak Ende Traditional Village

- Located within the 7 buffer villages of Mandalika, specifically in Sengkol Village.
- A traditional village preserving unique Sasak culture, featuring well-maintained traditional houses and a lifestyle practiced exactly as inherited from ancestors.
- Features the Sasak Ende Cooperative, consisting of local village women.
- Produces herbal drinks (*Serbat*) made from local natural ingredients such as ginger, cardamom, betel nut, honey, and free-range chicken eggs.
- The cooperative comprises 35 members who work on rotating daily shifts, including rotating the role of Cooperative Chairperson.
- Financial records are reconciled every afternoon.
- The Net Surplus (SHU) is divided into 37 shares to cover the social needs of Sasak Ende Traditional Village and to replenish Cooperative Cash for sustainability.
- Husbands produce the handicrafts, while wives manage the processing and sales.

The collected data indicates that diverse wellness tourism potential can be developed in Lombok. This development supports SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) 3 and 5, namely Good Health and Well-being and Gender Equality.

#### Conclusions

This study set out to examine the aspects of Wellness Tourism that can be developed in tourist villages in Lombok and to assess the impact of Wellness Tourism development innovations in those villages. Regarding the aspects of wellness tourism suitable for tourist villages, the study found that they include Nature, Healthy Lifestyle, Healthy Culinary, Indonesian Herbal and Complementary & Alternative Medicine (CAM), Indonesian Arts & Events, Mental Healing & Spirituality, and Spa. These aspects can be effectively carried out in tourist villages with the active support of women through gender equality initiatives, which serve as a key foundation for sustainable tourism development.

Regarding the impact of Wellness Tourism development innovations, the study found that they have produced meaningful and wide-ranging impacts on the local community. First, community income has increased, with women contributing actively to various local businesses. Second, job opportunities have been created for young people and women, particularly homemakers, which helps prevent urbanization and reduces the need to seek work as migrant laborers. Third, capacity building has been strengthened, as shown by 84% of women participating in various tourism training programs. Fourth, the establishment of Wellness Tourism Centers, including government-supported wellness huts, has provided a physical base for wellness activities in the villages. Fifth, the villages have shown strong economic resilience. During the Covid-19 pandemic, when the tourism sector was severely affected, micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) products from Bilebante Village played a key role in supporting the local economy through the innovation and diversification of healthy food and beverage products, such as herbal drinks and snacks free from preservatives, artificial flavorings, and coloring agents.

Based on these findings, this study recommends that women in tourist villages be recognized as key players in promoting sustainable tourism and improving the welfare of local communities. Through the preservation of culture and traditions, environmental conservation, and social empowerment, women create a positive and lasting impact on the village and future

generations. It is therefore recommended that the role of women be further strengthened across all three roles — productive, reproductive, and social — within the field of Wellness Tourism, as this will contribute to a more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable tourism development model.

### Acknowledgement

This study was conducted as a reference for the development of tourism products and hospitality businesses on Lombok Island, and recommends further in-depth research to produce a travel guidebook for the island.

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# **Boosting employee motivation: The role of financial and non-financial incentives in Karma Royal Jimbaran as a timeshare hotel**

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## **Abstract**

*Employee motivation is a strategic issue in the timeshare hotel sector, where service consistency, personalised guest interaction, and long-term member loyalty depend heavily on employee performance. This study examines the influence of financial and non-financial incentives on employee motivation at Karma Royal Jimbaran, Bali. A quantitative survey design was applied, involving all 41 employees as respondents through saturation sampling. Data were collected using a structured Likert-scale questionnaire and analysed using multiple linear regression with IBM SPSS Statistics. The findings show that financial incentives have a positive and significant effect on employee motivation, with a t-value of 7.154 and a significance value of 0.000. Non-financial incentives also have a positive and significant effect, with a t-value of 3.625 and a significance value of 0.000. Simultaneously, both variables significantly influence employee motivation, indicating that monetary rewards and organisational appreciation should be managed as complementary elements. Financial incentives were identified as the dominant factor, suggesting that service charges, bonuses, allowances, and other monetary rewards remain highly relevant to employee motivation. However, non-financial incentives, such as recognition, promotion opportunities, health benefits, supportive leadership, and a positive work environment, are also essential for sustaining long-term motivation. The study concludes that a balanced incentive system is necessary to strengthen employee motivation, service quality, and member loyalty in timeshare hotel operations.*

**Keywords:** *financial incentives; non-financial incentives; employee motivation; timeshare hotel; hospitality human resource management*

## Introduction

Employee motivation remains a critical issue in the hospitality industry, where service quality is shaped not only by operational standards but also by employees' willingness to deliver consistent, responsive, and personalised service. In service-oriented businesses, human resources play a strategic role because guest experience depends heavily on direct interaction between employees and customers (Yudiana, 2025). This issue becomes more significant in the timeshare hotel sector, where the business model relies on repeat visits, long-term member relationships, and sustained customer loyalty. Unlike conventional hotels that primarily depend on short-term occupancy, timeshare hotels require employees to maintain service consistency over time because returning members often expect familiarity, responsiveness, and reliability. Therefore, employee motivation in timeshare hotels is not merely an internal human resource concern, but a strategic factor that influences guest retention, brand reputation, and future membership sales (Ferdian F, 2025)

In the hospitality industry, employee performance is closely linked to customer satisfaction because employees are directly involved in delivering services to guests. Hotels rely on motivated employees who are able to demonstrate enthusiasm, professionalism, responsiveness, and responsibility in their daily tasks (Ononye, 2025). Employee motivation can be defined as the internal and external forces that stimulate employees to act, sustain effort, and achieve organizational goals. Motivated employees are more likely to work efficiently, minimize errors, complete tasks on time, and provide high-quality service. Consequently, maintaining employee motivation is considered one of the key success factors for hospitality businesses, particularly in service-intensive sectors such as timeshare hotels (Swantari, 2025).

One of the most common strategies used by organizations to enhance employee motivation is the provision of incentives. Incentives are rewards provided to employees based on their contributions, performance, or achievements, with the purpose of encouraging higher productivity and stronger commitment. In general, incentives are divided into two categories: financial and non-financial incentives. Financial incentives include salaries, bonuses, commissions, service charges, overtime pay, and other monetary rewards (Gerhart, 2017). These incentives are important because they help employees meet their economic needs and improve their standard of living. According to expectancy theory, employees tend to increase their effort when they believe their performance will lead to valuable rewards (Bandhu et al., 2024)

In contrast, non-financial incentives are rewards that do not involve direct monetary payment but provide psychological and social benefits. Examples include recognition programs, career advancement opportunities, training and development, job security, positive work relationships, flexible schedules, and supportive leadership. Non-financial incentives are equally important because they address higher-level needs such as self-esteem, belongingness, and personal growth. Recent studies have shown that while financial rewards can stimulate short-term effort, non-financial incentives often generate stronger long-term engagement, loyalty, and job satisfaction (Bayad Jamal Ali, 2021). This is highly relevant in timeshare hotels, where motivated employees are expected to create memorable guest experiences repeatedly over time.

At Karma Royal Jimbaran, employee motivation is closely related to the

hotel's incentive practices and its operational characteristics as a timeshare

property. The hotel provides financial incentives, particularly service charges, as an important source of additional income for employees. However, these incentives fluctuate monthly because service charges are mainly generated from food and beverage sales rather than room sales. As a result, employees may experience reduced motivation when service charge income declines and does not meet expectations. This condition is important because inconsistent rewards may weaken the perceived relationship between effort and outcomes, especially in a workplace where employees are expected to maintain personalised and professional service for returning members (Redditt et al., 2022). The company also provides several non-financial incentives, such as staff meals, health benefits, employee of the quarter awards, promotion opportunities, and long-service recognition for employees who have worked for five or ten years. These programmes indicate management's effort to appreciate employee contributions. Nevertheless, some expected benefits, such as regular recreation programmes or team-building activities, have not been fully implemented. The absence of such programmes may contribute to boredom, stress, and reduced enthusiasm, particularly in a demanding service environment. In addition, several indicators of employee motivation can be observed through attendance and work discipline. Although employee attendance at Karma Royal Jimbaran is relatively high, issues such as lateness, early departures, extended break times, and delayed task completion remain evident. These behaviours suggest that current incentive practices may need further evaluation.

Previous studies have widely examined the relationship between incentives and employee outcomes. Financial incentives have been found to improve performance, productivity, and short-term engagement, while non-financial incentives significantly influence job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and employee retention (Adwan et al., 2024; Okoye & Abdol Ghapar, 2024). However, most previous studies have focused on manufacturing companies, corporate offices, or conventional hotels. Limited research has specifically investigated the combined role of financial and non-financial incentives in increasing employee motivation in the timeshare hotel context, particularly in Bali. This gap is important because timeshare hotels have unique operational characteristics, compensation systems, and customer relationship demands that may produce different motivational dynamics.

Based on this background, this study examines whether financial and non-financial incentives significantly influence employee motivation at Karma Royal Jimbaran. Specifically, the objective of this research is to analyse the individual and simultaneous effects of financial and non-financial incentives on employee work motivation. The findings are expected to provide practical recommendations for improving incentive systems and human resource management strategies in the timeshare hotel sector.

## **Literature Review**

This study examines employee motivation through the lens of financial and non-financial incentives in the context of a timeshare hotel. In hospitality organisations, human resource management is not only concerned with employee administration, but also with how organisational practices shape service behaviour, work commitment, and guest experience. Employees are

central to service delivery because their competence, attitude, and consistency influence how guests perceive service quality and organisational reputation (Ammirato et al., 2023). Therefore, incentive systems need to be understood as part of a broader human resource strategy that links employee contribution with organisational performance. (Asgeirsson et al., 2024).

Human resource management refers to a set of managerial practices related to planning, organizing, staffing, directing, compensating, developing, and retaining employees in order to achieve organizational goals efficiently. In hotels, HRM practices play a strategic role in building employee competence, maintaining service consistency, and improving customer satisfaction. Organizations with strong HRM systems are more likely to create motivated employees who contribute positively to operational performance and long-term competitiveness (Alqudah et al., 2022). Employee motivation can be understood as the internal and external forces that encourage employees to initiate action, sustain effort, and achieve desired performance outcomes. Motivated employees usually demonstrate enthusiasm, responsibility, punctuality, discipline, and willingness to provide excellent service. In contrast, low motivation is often associated with absenteeism, low productivity, work errors, and poor service quality. Motivation theory suggests that employees become more committed when they perceive fairness, meaningful rewards, and opportunities for growth (Galanakis & Peramatzis, 2022). In hospitality organizations, where guest experiences are shaped by direct employee contact, motivation becomes a crucial determinant of service excellence.

Financial incentives are one of the most direct mechanisms used to encourage employee motivation. They include salaries, bonuses, commissions, overtime payments, profit-sharing, service charges, and other forms of monetary reward (Manjenje & Muhanga, 2021). In hospitality workplaces, financial incentives are important because they create a visible connection between work effort and economic benefit. This relationship is consistent with expectancy theory, which argues that employees are more likely to increase their effort when they believe that good performance will lead to desirable outcomes (Okoye & Abdol Ghapar, 2024). Previous studies also suggest that financial incentives can improve productivity and short-term work engagement because employees can directly recognise their material value (Chourasia & Bahuguna, 2024; Landry et al., 2017).

However, the motivational role of financial incentives is not always stable. When monetary rewards fluctuate, are perceived as unfair, or are not clearly linked to performance, their motivational effect may decline. This issue is particularly relevant in hospitality businesses where service charges may depend on revenue, occupancy, or sales performance. In such situations, employees may experience uncertainty if the financial reward they receive does not match their expectations or perceived contribution. Therefore, financial incentives should not be examined only as compensation, but also as a signal of fairness, recognition, and organisational support (Ercegović, 2025). Recognition systems and supportive leadership may also encourage employees to contribute beyond formal job requirements and engage more positively in service delivery (Alqudah et al., 2022).

The combined use of financial and non-financial incentives is important because employee motivation is rarely driven by a single factor. Financial

rewards may generate immediate effort, particularly when employees face economic pressure or when compensation is clearly linked to performance. Meanwhile, non-financial incentives may create emotional attachment and organisational loyalty by making employees feel valued and supported. A balanced incentive system is therefore more likely to sustain motivation over time than a reward system that relies only on monetary compensation. This is consistent with the view that positive human resource practices can strengthen affective commitment, performance, and readiness to contribute to organisational goals (Chourasia & Bahuguna, 2024; Landry et al., 2017).

In the timeshare hotel sector, employee motivation becomes even more important because the business model depends on repeated guest visits and long-term member relationships. Unlike conventional hotels, timeshare hotels require employees to maintain familiarity, personalised service, and consistency across repeated interactions with returning guests. Guest satisfaction in this context is influenced not only by physical facilities, but also by the ability of employees to build trust, remember guest preferences, and sustain service quality over time. Previous research on timeshare and accommodation services highlights that customer satisfaction and electronic word-of-mouth are strongly shaped by service experience and perceived value (Priyanto & Sujoko, 2026). Thus, employee motivation has a direct relationship with member loyalty and the long-term competitiveness of timeshare hotels.

At Karma Royal Jimbaran, both financial and non-financial incentives are relevant to employee motivation. Financial incentives, particularly service charges, provide additional income for employees, yet their fluctuation may influence how employees perceive the fairness and reliability of the reward system. At the same time, non-financial incentives such as recognition awards, promotion opportunities, health benefits, staff meals, and supportive management may help maintain motivation even when financial rewards vary. This context indicates that employee motivation in a timeshare hotel cannot be fully explained by monetary rewards alone, but needs to be analysed through the interaction between economic, psychological, and organisational factors.

Previous studies have examined the relationship between incentives and employee outcomes in different organisational settings. Financial incentives have been linked to productivity, performance, and short-term engagement, while non-financial incentives have been associated with job satisfaction, commitment, and employee retention (Adwan et al., 2024; Okoye & Abdol Ghapar, 2024). However, much of the existing literature focuses on manufacturing companies, banking institutions, general service organisations, or conventional hotels (Cayrat & Boxall, 2023). Limited research has specifically explored how financial and non-financial incentives simultaneously influence employee motivation in timeshare hotels, particularly in Bali. This gap is significant because timeshare hotels operate with distinctive compensation patterns, customer expectations, and service continuity requirements. Therefore, this study analyses the individual and simultaneous effects of financial and non-financial incentives on employee motivation at Karma Royal Jimbaran.



## **Research Methodology**

This study employed a quantitative survey design to examine the influence of financial and non-financial incentives on employee motivation at Karma Royal Jimbaran. A quantitative approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to measure the relationship between clearly defined variables and test the individual and simultaneous effects of financial incentives and non-financial incentives on employee motivation through statistical analysis. The research was conducted at Karma Royal Jimbaran, located on Jalan Uluwatu 18X, Jimbaran, Bali, Indonesia. The hotel was selected because it operates as a timeshare property, where employee motivation is closely related to service consistency, guest satisfaction, and long-term member loyalty.

The population of this study consisted of all employees working at Karma Royal Jimbaran, with a total of 41 employees. Since the population was relatively small and accessible, this study used a saturation sampling technique, also known as census sampling, in which all members of the population were included as respondents. Therefore, the total sample of this study was 41 respondents. This sampling approach allowed the researcher to obtain a comprehensive picture of employee perceptions regarding incentive practices and work motivation within the organisation.

The primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to all respondents. The questionnaire was designed using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, to measure employee perceptions of financial incentives, non-financial incentives, and employee motivation. Financial incentives were measured through indicators such as service charges, bonuses, allowances, and other monetary rewards. Non-financial incentives were measured through indicators including recognition, promotion opportunities, health benefits, supportive leadership, and the work environment. Employee motivation was measured through indicators related to discipline, responsibility, enthusiasm, punctuality, cooperation, and job satisfaction. In addition to questionnaire data, observation and informal interviews were used to provide contextual understanding of the incentive system, attendance patterns, and employee work behaviour. However, these supporting data were not treated as the main basis for statistical testing.

Before hypothesis testing, the research instrument was assessed through validity and reliability tests. The validity test was used to ensure that each questionnaire item measured the intended construct, while the reliability test was conducted to examine the internal consistency of the instrument using Cronbach's Alpha. After the instrument was confirmed to be valid and reliable, classical assumption tests were conducted to ensure that the regression model met the required statistical assumptions. These tests included the normality test, multicollinearity test, and heteroscedasticity test.

The data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics. Multiple linear regression analysis was applied to examine the effect of financial incentives and non-financial incentives on employee motivation. The regression model used in this study was formulated as follows:

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2$$

where  $Y$  represents employee motivation,  $a$  represents the constant,  $X_1$  represents financial incentives,  $X_2$  represents non-financial incentives, and  $b_1$  and  $b_2$  represent the regression coefficients of each independent variable. In addition, the coefficient of determination was used to identify the proportion of employee motivation explained by the independent variables. The t-test was used to examine the partial effect of each independent variable, while the F-test was applied to determine the simultaneous effect of financial and non-financial incentives on employee motivation.

## Results and Discussion

This study involved 41 employees of Karma Royal Jimbaran as respondents. The respondents were generally described based on their age, gender, education level, and years of service. Figure 1 illustrates the general profile of respondents involved in this study.

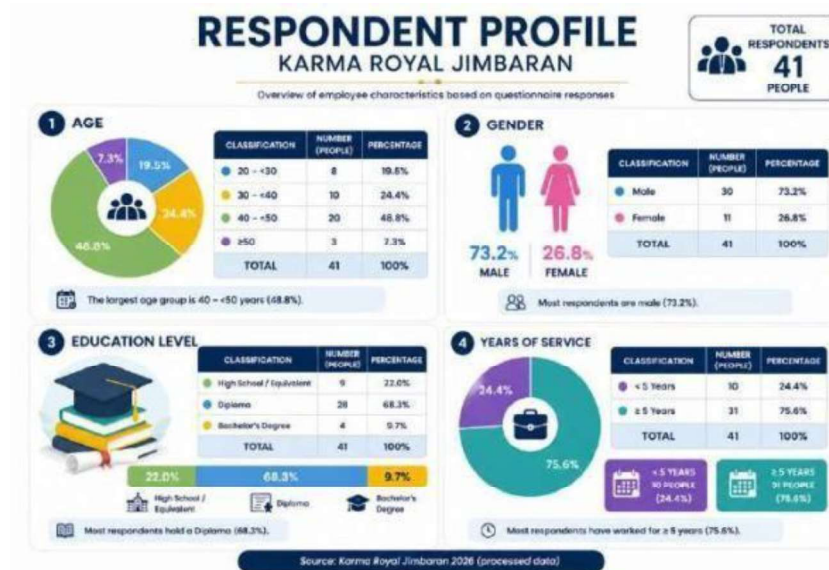


Figure 1: Respondent Profile  
[Source : Karma Royal Jimbaran, 2026]

The respondent profile shows that most employees were in the age group of 40–49 years, accounting for 48.8% of the total respondents, followed by employees aged 30–39 years at 24.4%, 20–29 years at 19.5%, and 50 years or above at 7.3%. In terms of gender, the majority of respondents were male employees, representing 73.2%, while female employees represented 26.8%. Most respondents had a diploma-level educational background, accounting for 68.3%, followed by senior high school or equivalent at 22%, and bachelor's degree at 9.7%. Regarding length of service, 75.6% of respondents had worked for five years or more, while 24.4% had worked for less than five years. This profile indicates that the respondents were mostly experienced employees who

had sufficient familiarity with the hotel's incentive system, work environment, and service expectations.

Before conducting regression analysis, the quality of the research instrument was examined through validity and reliability tests. The validity test showed that all questionnaire items had correlation coefficients above 0.30, indicating that the items were valid and suitable for further analysis. The reliability test also showed that all variables had Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.60, which means that the instrument was sufficiently reliable for measuring financial incentives, non-financial incentives, and employee motivation. These results confirm that the data collected from the questionnaire were appropriate for hypothesis testing.

The classical assumption tests were conducted to ensure that the regression model met the statistical requirements. The normality test using the Normal P-P Plot indicated that the residual data were normally distributed. The multicollinearity test showed a tolerance value of 0.868 and a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) of 1.153, indicating that there was no multicollinearity between financial and non-financial incentives. The heteroscedasticity test using the scatterplot method also showed a random distribution pattern, meaning that heteroscedasticity was not detected. Therefore, the regression model was considered appropriate for further analysis.

The multiple linear regression analysis produced the following equation:

$$Y = 3.550 + 0.696X_1 + 0.383X_2$$

where **Y** represents employee motivation, **X<sub>1</sub>** represents financial incentives, and **X<sub>2</sub>** represents non-financial incentives. The positive coefficients indicate that both financial and non-financial incentives contribute positively to employee motivation. The coefficient of financial incentives was 0.696, suggesting that financial incentives have a stronger influence on motivation compared with non-financial incentives. Meanwhile, the coefficient of non-financial incentives was 0.383, indicating that non-financial rewards also contribute positively to employee motivation, although with a smaller effect.

The multiple correlation analysis produced an **R value of 0.761**, indicating a strong positive relationship between financial incentives, non-financial incentives, and employee motivation. The coefficient of determination, shown by the **R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.580**, indicates that 58% of the variation in employee motivation can be explained by financial and non-financial incentives. The remaining 42% may be influenced by other factors outside the model, such as leadership style, organisational culture, communication patterns, workload, job satisfaction, and work-life balance. This finding suggests that incentives are important determinants of motivation, but they are not the only factors shaping employee behaviour in the workplace.

The simultaneous test showed that financial and non-financial incentives had a significant effect on employee motivation. The calculated F-value was **26.217**, which was higher than the F-table value of **3.2**, with a significance level below 0.05. This result confirms that both types of incentives, when considered together, significantly influence employee motivation at Karma Royal Jimbaran.

In practical terms, this finding indicates that employee motivation is more likely to improve when monetary rewards are supported by recognition, career opportunities, and a positive working environment.

The partial test also showed that financial incentives had a positive and significant effect on employee motivation. The t-value for financial incentives was **7.154**, which was higher than the t-table value of **1.6**, with a significance value of **0.000**. This result indicates that financial incentives, such as service charges, bonuses, allowances, and other monetary benefits, are important motivational factors for employees. In the context of Karma Royal Jimbaran, this finding is particularly relevant because service charges represent an important source of additional income. When employees perceive that their work effort is fairly rewarded through financial incentives, they are more likely to demonstrate stronger work motivation.

The stronger effect of financial incentives can be understood in relation to the operational context of the hotel. As a timeshare property, Karma Royal Jimbaran relies not only on room-based services but also on food and beverage revenue that contributes to service charge distribution. Since service charges may fluctuate depending on sales performance, employees may become more sensitive to the stability and fairness of financial rewards. This explains why financial incentives appeared as the dominant factor in this study. Monetary rewards are not only perceived as additional income, but also as a visible form of recognition for employees' contribution to service delivery.

Non-financial incentives also had a positive and significant effect on employee motivation. The t-value for non-financial incentives was **3.625**, which was higher than the t-table value of **1.6**, with a significance value of **0.000**. This finding shows that recognition, promotion opportunities, health benefits, supportive leadership, and a positive work environment contribute meaningfully to employee motivation. Although the effect was lower than that of financial incentives, non-financial incentives remain important because they address employees' need for appreciation, career development, and emotional attachment to the organisation.

This finding implies that motivation cannot be sustained through financial rewards alone. In a hospitality environment, employees are required to perform emotional labour, maintain patience, respond to guest needs, and provide consistent service quality. These demands require not only monetary compensation but also organisational support and psychological encouragement.

Therefore, non-financial incentives can help maintain long-term motivation, particularly when financial incentives fluctuate. Recognition programmes, promotion opportunities, and supportive leadership may strengthen employees' sense of belonging and reduce the risk of boredom, stress, or declining enthusiasm.

Among the two independent variables, financial incentives were identified as the most dominant factor influencing employee motivation, as indicated by the standardized beta coefficient of **0.806**. This suggests that employees at Karma Royal Jimbaran are more strongly motivated by financial rewards than by non-financial incentives. This result may reflect employees' economic priorities,

especially in the hospitality sector where additional income from service charges can significantly support daily needs. However, the dominance of financial incentives should not be interpreted as a reason to neglect non-financial rewards. Instead, it indicates that management needs to ensure fairness, transparency, and consistency in financial incentive distribution while strengthening non-financial programmes that support long-term engagement.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that both financial and non-financial incentives play an important role in boosting employee motivation at Karma Royal Jimbaran. For a timeshare hotel, this result has strategic implications. Since guest loyalty depends on repeated positive experiences, employees must remain motivated to deliver consistent, personalised, and professional service. A balanced incentive system can support this goal by combining direct economic rewards with recognition, career development, welfare programmes, and supportive management practices. Therefore, hotel management should continuously evaluate its incentive policies to ensure that employees feel fairly rewarded, appreciated, and encouraged to maintain high service standards.

### **Conclusions**

This study examined the influence of financial and non-financial incentives on employee motivation at Karma Royal Jimbaran as a timeshare hotel. The findings show that both types of incentives have a positive and significant effect on employee motivation, both partially and simultaneously. Financial incentives were found to be the most dominant factor, indicating that service charges, bonuses, allowances, and other monetary rewards play an important role in encouraging employees to maintain their work effort and performance.

Non-financial incentives also contribute significantly to employee motivation. Recognition, promotion opportunities, health benefits, supportive leadership, and a positive work environment help employees feel valued and supported within the organisation. Although their statistical effect was lower than that of financial incentives, non-financial incentives remain important for sustaining long-term motivation, especially in a service environment that requires emotional labour, consistency, and continuous interaction with returning guests.

The findings suggest that employee motivation in a timeshare hotel should be supported through a balanced incentive system. Management should not rely solely on financial rewards, particularly because service charges may fluctuate depending on operational revenue. Instead, financial incentives should be complemented by meaningful non-financial programmes, such as transparent recognition systems, regular team-building activities, career development opportunities, and supportive managerial practices. Such an approach can help maintain employee morale, strengthen service quality, and support long-term member loyalty.

This study contributes to the discussion of employee motivation by highlighting the relevance of incentive systems in the timeshare hotel context, particularly in Bali. However, the study was limited to one hotel with a relatively small number of respondents. Future research may involve a larger sample, compare several timeshare and conventional hotels, or include additional variables such as leadership style, job satisfaction, organisational culture, and

employee engagement to provide a more comprehensive understanding of motivation in hospitality organisations.

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# Adaptive Marketing in Hospitality: Enhancing Customer Loyalty Across Generations through Marketing Innovation

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## Abstract

*The hospitality industry faces increasing challenges in maintaining customer loyalty due to changing customer expectations, digital transformation, and generational differences in service preferences. This study aims to examine how adaptive marketing in hospitality enhances customer loyalty across generations through marketing innovation. A qualitative literature review method was applied by synthesizing previous studies related to adaptive marketing, marketing innovation, customer engagement, customer experience, personalization, digital interaction, and generational customer behavior in hospitality contexts. The findings indicate that marketing innovation contributes to customer loyalty when it is applied through adaptive strategies such as personalized communication, digital engagement, online review management, customer experience design, and value co-creation. These strategies allow hospitality businesses to respond more effectively to different generational needs while maintaining consistent service value. This study is limited to secondary data and conceptual synthesis; therefore, future empirical research is needed to test the relationship between adaptive marketing innovation and customer loyalty in specific hospitality settings. The study suggests that hospitality businesses should combine technological innovation with human-centered service values to strengthen long-term customer loyalty.*

**Keywords:** adaptive marketing, customer loyalty, hospitality marketing, marketing innovation, multi-generational customers

## Introduction

As digital technology, evolving customer expectations, and competitive market conditions drive fundamental changes to how hospitality companies attract and retain customers, the hospitality

industry is undergoing a fundamental transformation. Retention is a strategic asset for hotels, restaurants, tourism services, and related hospitality activities. Loyal customers contribute to your long-term sustainability and help with repeat purchases, word of mouth, and brand advocates. Emerging studies show that, in this digital world, where customer engagement and personalization, including co-creation of value, have become so important, customer loyalty is not merely based on service quality, but is related to customer experience as well (Dang & Nguyen, 2023; Veloso & Gomez-Suarez, 2023).

Hospitality consumers are not a monolithic group of identical beings. Every generation has different expectations, preferences, and communication styles. So, although younger customers favor online reviews, mobile apps, and social media transparency over anything else in terms of convenience, many older generations ultimately choose trustworthiness (or service reliability) over anything else, with comfort and quality being a strong second. American generations are becoming all-rounded, and adaptive marketing is what modern businesses must do to ensure they use varying strategies as their consumers follow suit, but the overall branding remains congruous throughout. Research comparing cohorts indicates that the drivers of loyalty diverge, and applying a one-size-fits-all approach to marketing will not suit all segments of customers (Whalen et al., 2024).

Adaptive marketing has an important role to play in this environment. It is about evolving marketing along with the transitions in customer behavior, market shifts, technology, and consumer preferences. The focus of adaptive marketing in hospitality lies at the heart of personalized offers, digital effects, and experience-based features that are digital, designed to merge branded and social media communication with customers and manage online reviews through loyalty programs. It allows businesses to have a better understanding of customers to deliver relevant value. Recent research designed data shows innovation digital technology-based innovation, specifically its cottage will forever stand out in the contours it remains petrified into being the major cornerstone value spreading across all business firms performing globally cherishing building on having a more customized experience catering to high customer-junction & touch points keeping a close tab towards engagement levels grading on new standards eventually leading to a rise in satisfactory leveling to work feedback loops adversely strengthening the tendency to loyalty (Bilgihan & Ricci, 2024; Vayghan et al., 2023).

One of the major forces powering adaptive marketing is marketing innovation. Marketing innovation plays a central role in supporting adaptive marketing because it enables hospitality businesses to move beyond traditional promotional activities. It includes digital channels, information-backed points, live communication, more recent marketing actions, and tech-driven service examples. It fosters relationship building across generations and deepens customer engagement. More studies point out that

engagement is what makes a difference between the marketing activity and the actual customer loyalty outcome (Chen et al., 2021; So et al., 2021).

Despite an increased appreciation of marketing innovation as an engine of firm performance, academic understanding of adaptive marketing and its importance by generations to enhance customer loyalty in the hospitality context is still limited. Many do simply touch on the elements of digital marketing, engagement, personalization, and loyalty themselves, without connecting across generations. A wide gap derived from this notion limits the understanding of the fact that marketing innovation enhances customer loyalty across generations in hospitality organizations.

The purpose of this study is to explore how marketing innovation in the hospitality industry develops customer loyalty between generations. This will bring together literature across adaptive marketing, consumer engagement, and personalization using digital interfaces for hospitality loyalty. The results are to provide conceptual and practical guidance to hospitality businesses in developing marketing strategies that are more responsive to multi-generational customer expectations.

## **Literature Review**

### **Adaptive Marketing in Hospitality**

Adaptive marketing is the adaptation of a marketing strategy that focuses on changing customer behavior technology evolvement and challenges as well as production expectations. With the customer journey going across different touchpoints with hospitality brands be it websites, mobile apps, OTAs (Online Travel Agents), social media sites and online reviews to direct service encounters in an accommodation business itself, adaptive marketing is becoming more relevant along the lines of how people will see ready-made meals available everywhere. The transition from traditional marketing to adaptive marketing highlights the fact that hospitality businesses must continue evolving in a more data-driven, interactive and personalized manner with their customers.

Moreover, the hospitality literature suggest that recent trends in marketing hotel and tourism-related businesses are driven by digital transformation, personalization of service offerings (BT), AI-based practices concerning guests as well guest experience-based services. Using technology in marketing allows hospitality organizations to learn about consumer preferences, anticipate service directions and create more relevant approaches for reaching customers (Bilgihan & Ricci, 2024). Adaptive marketing helps move from one-way promotional communication to an interactive customer relationship management model, where customers can engage in value creation through feedback and reviews as well as digital engagement and customization of service (Dang & Nguyen, 2023).

On this note, adaptive marketing is not just digital advertising. It also enables alignment between marketing messages, service offers, loyalty programs and customer experience design by different UX needs. This adaptability is crucial for hospitality businesses as service consumption heavily depends on emotional experience, perceived value and convenience along with trust and relationship we build through social media. A flexible marketing strategy helps businesses beat the competition and stay relevant at all customer segment levels.

### **Marketing Innovation in Hospitality**

Marketing innovation refers to the development or adoption of a new marketing method that better an organization performance through how it conveys value, interacts with customers and creates competitive advantage in markets. In the case of hospitality marketing innovation can be personalized campaigns, social media engagement, mobile-based interaction, managing online reviews, gamified loyalty programs, new market strategies like AI, Data analytics and experience based Marketing query. These innovations are gradually being used to enhance customer engagement as they consume services before, during and after.

The reason for how digital technology has been interrelated with Marketing innovation is hospitality customers start their journey by searching something on the internet. With digital, customers can compare their options, read reviews on the reputation of brands and even speak with hospitality providers through various channels before deciding to purchase. Consequently, new marketing practices are not a choice anymore, but have identified them as an important direction for innovation, relative and measure respectively, and subjective quality of relationships that in turn generate the flow between hospitality businesses innovate towards customer satisfaction, respond to feedback continuously, and be addressed within continuous relationship-building frameworks. The inherent interactivity, personalization and responsiveness in tourism marketing with its adaptation of new digital tools has been put together into usage (Gkikas & Theodoridis, 2025).

One of the key dimensions trends in hospitality marketing innovation is personalization. Businesses can craft offers and communication that are better aligned with customer profiles, type of travel intent, spending patterns in the last 3 years and other level of service/experience they have already called upon (Chumpitaz-Caycho et al., 2022). The customer recognizes themselves in the brand by providing them personalized marketing, thereby making it more relatable and reinforcing perceived relevance. Combined with customer satisfaction and relationship quality in luxury, as well hotel contexts, personalization is increasingly related to this field in which customers expect services aligned closer to their very unique needs (Liao & Halawi, 2026).

Interactive communication and digital engagement are other aspects of marketing innovation. With social media, mobile apps, and online

platforms available to hospitality businesses, they stay in constant touch with customers, which enables them to react faster on feedback as well as nurture emotions. Marketers today use social, mobile, and AI-based marketing tools that are timely and relevant as well as experience-driven. They are now focused on customer satisfaction and quality of relationship, which helps hospitality businesses to keep their customers constantly engaged with the brand in a way that they will comment on or give feedback. This is recognized as critical to both customer satisfaction and relationship quality, since it allows hospitality enterprises to relate and enable the required in this process of management communication system that fulfills regular interaction with clients, responding quickly. Identified reach, interactivity, and personalization (Chatzigeorgiou et al., 2025). Hence, marketing innovation in turn is a great support to adaptive marketing as it (involves innovative ways of communication, i.e., time-specific, suitable and experience-based) connects the business with its customers.

### **Customer Loyalty Across Generations**

The mechanisms of value creation and relationship are related to customer expectations, the need for innovation with innovations that are flexible enough to support personalization while maintaining an adaptive marketing, marketing innovative success practices on hospitality Customer loyalty in hospitality can be seen through news about how well they have been adopting new service delivery ideas by serving it better.

A cohort of recent innovations is aligned with these building expectations, irrespective of uniform application in your market. Hence, the customer expectations and the need to revisit, repurchase, recommend, and retain a positive relationship with a hospitality brand. In the current hospitality literature, loyalty is not perceived from time-to-time touchpoint behavior. Two participants highlighted emotional attachment levels, trust, satisfaction, engagement, and even how likely they are to recommend the brand to others. The importance of customer experience as a loyalty driver in hospitality comes from the fact that these services are very experiential, highly dependent on both functional value and emotional value (Velooso & Gomez-Suarez, 2023).

But customer loyalty varies by generation. For example, hospitality customers from different age cohorts have varying expectations of the extent to which service is convenient and informal in terms of communication style, the more transactional for older groups vs. younger customers have a general knowledge of digital platforms, mobile apps, online reviews and communication through social media. Older customers may also be more focused on service reliability, building trust and comfort through personal interaction with a particular agent or relationship. The subtext of these discrepancies is that customer loyalty cannot always be created with a single blanket marketing strategy.

Others found that loyalty drivers differ for Millennial, Generation X, and Baby Boomer hotel customers according to more recent research on

generational loyalty models in hospitality (Whalen et al., 2024). Similarly, research into mobile applications for hotel booking suggests that response to utilitarian, social, and hedonic values may vary across generational cohorts as these relate to engagement/loyalty in digital hospitality contexts (Vayghan et al., 2023). This is an indicator that adaptive marketing strategies to different generational expectations will be needed.

For hospitality, which sells services to many consumers with completely different lifestyles and travel motivations, not all customers are created equal or see value the same way. This cross-generational perspective is very much in play. Marketing methods that excite Gen-Z or Millennials may not have the same response for Gen X and Baby Boomers. This means that hospitality businesses need to create marketing innovation equipped with enough flexibility such that it can accommodate personalization whilst remaining on-brand.

### **Customer Engagement, Experience, and Personalization as Loyalty Drivers**

Service-dominant logic believes that services are co-created not only by an integration of resources but also by both the consumer and the brand working together. Customer engagement has become an essential aspect in regard to hospitality marketing due that it helps establish a deeper relationship between service providers. Customers engage digitally through social media, online reviews, loyalty programs, and in direct service encounters. There has been a growing interest in customer engagement as an important mediator between marketing activities and consumer outcomes (e.g., satisfaction, trust, loyalty or brand advocacy) but little research on service engagement including hospitality and tourism (Chen et al., 2021).

Customer experience goes hand in hand with customer engagement. Hospitality customers are judging service based not solely on the core product and also with regard to the end-to-end experience along all steps of their customer journey. These aspects include information search, bookings, arrival process and service experience also problem handling at the time of services post-service communication and online sharing. Customer experience in the hotel context is characterized as an emotional, cognitive, social and sensory influence on satisfaction, word of mouth and loyalty based on a systematic review of empirical research (Veloso & Gomez-Suarez, 2023).

Personalization helps to build customer engagement and loyalty by ensuring that every customer feels every service is relevant to their needs. Incorporating personalized offers, context-specific messages, custom loyalty rewards, and data recommendations to serve the customer can increase perceived value and emotional connection. Personalization acts as a conduit between data and customer loyalty in adaptive marketing. On the flip side, personalization needs to be handled very carefully as customers could be concerned about a lack of privacy, over-automation, or that targeting is too obtrusive.

Based on the relationship of engagement, experience personalization, and loyalty, we understand by nature that marketing innovation cannot directly provide us with loyalty in a simple linear. Innovation feeds loyalty by providing a better customer experience, driving engagement and perceived value, as well as enhancing trust. The current work is significant to adaptive marketing as the construct for a generational customer loyalty strategy that links marketing innovation.

### **Linkage between Adaptive Marketing, Innovation in Marketing, and Customer Loyalty**

Adaptive marketing, Marketing innovation, and Customer loyalty: A value creation and a relationship-building mechanism. For example, when it comes to marketing innovation, it offers a digital hammer for the hospitality business to open up new opportunities for understanding what the customer wants; it also allows businesses to customize their communication, provide better customer experience, speed up the travel experience by offering relevant information, and establish a continuous touchpoint with the customer (e.g., push notifications). Marketing innovation offers hospitality organizations the measures and processes to understand consumer needs, customize communication, enjoy a heightened customer experience or continue connecting with customers. Adaptive marketing ensures these were not generic implementations but tailored to customer features, market changes, and generational expectations.

The boom of digital transformation in the hospitality industry has motivated businesses to utilize customer data, online interaction, artificial intelligence and mobile platforms to deliver more relevant experiences for customers (Bilgihan & Ricci, 2024). When created around customer expectations and service context, these innovations can enhance your customers experience alongside their satisfaction and loyalty. In tourism and hospitality, value co-creation research indicates that customers have numerous opportunities to influence service value through digital interaction by providing feedback or sharing experiences (Dang & Nguyen, 2023).

Adaptive marketing is important for multi-generational customers, as loyalty drivers can vary greatly among age cohorts. Younger customers may be driven by digital engagement and mobile convenience, but older ones might place far more value in trust, assurance of service quality overall or something else entirely. As a result, marketing innovation should be focused to not only embracing new technology but also utilizing its related communication strategies, which retain and re-invite customer satisfaction with the anticipated service while devising most appropriate execution format which competes wellamongst varied consumer expectations.

Drawing a conclusion on previous conducted studies, adaptive marketing in hospitality can be conceived of as a strategic capability which enables the organizations to convert marketing innovation into customer loyalty.

The extent to which businesses have been trained in personalizing of offers, managing digital engagement, responding to customer touchpoints, customer journeys, and enabling pathways through loyalty programs based on generations and other cohorts speaks to this ability. Thus, the literature suggests that marketing innovation has the highest impact on customer loyalty when implemented through a marketing approach based on adaptation to the customer.

### **Research Methodology**

This study uses a qualitative literature review method to examine how adaptive marketing in hospitality enhances customer loyalty across generations through marketing innovation. This method was selected because the study focuses on synthesizing previous academic findings rather than collecting primary data. Literature review is useful when mapping conceptual tendencies, examining previous research and explaining how concepts are intercorrelated among related bodies of literature (Kraus et al., 2022; Snyder, 2019).

The data was collected from secondary sources, such as academic journals and articles, conference papers, online books, and other scholarly publications. The literature was searched using academic databases and scholarly platforms such as Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, Emerald Insight, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis Online, and MDPI. The searched keywords such as “adaptive marketing in hospitality,” “marketing innovation in hospitality,” “customer loyalty in hospitality,” “customer engagement,” “customer experience,” “personalization,” “digital marketing,” and “generational loyalty in hospitality.” The studies included were either used hospitality, tourism, hotels/restaurants, or service marketing as the study object and most of them were published from 2021 to 2026. Studies that were not related to hospitality marketing, not written in English, or that lacked academic credibility were excluded.

The selected studies were assessed using a thematic synthesis approach. The sources were reviewed and grouped into key themes, including adaptive marketing, marketing innovation, customer loyalty across generations, customer engagement, customer experience, personalization, and digital interaction. This allowed the identification of how marketing innovation positively impacts adaptive marketing, which then eventually enhances consumer loyalty by generation.



## Results and Discussion

This review of the literature proves that adaptive marketing in hospitality serves as a strategic linking mechanism between innovation-driven performance and customer loyalty. The present hospitality market considers customer loyalty not just based on repeat purchase behavior but also experience, engagement, perceived value and trust as well as an emotional connection (Leung et al., 2021). As recent studies have shown, digital transformation, personalization and value co-creation in hospitality has become one of the major components to improve customer experience and loyalty (Karalazarou et al., 2026). Thus the innovation of marketing in practical life is substantial for hospitality businesses, since it allows them to adjust the way they deliver their communications and service offerings as well how customers interact with each other but also with hospitality business based on different customer needs.

A key finding is that customer loyalty between generations cannot be created with just one common marketing strategy. Digital interaction, loyalty programs or service convenience may trigger a different response for hospitality customers of generation X vs. baby boomers and millennials tend to want more personal communication instead of self-service touch-points (Kapuria & Nalawade, 2021). Evidence from the research contrasting Millennial, Generation X and Baby Boomer hotel consumers suggests potential generational differences in both loyalty models as well as responses to loyalty programmes (Whalen et al., 2024). Likewise, a study of hotel booking mobile applications indicates that utilitarian, social and hedonic values affects mobile apps user's engagement and loyalty but these values have different effects on generational cohorts. Recent research on generational engagement with artificial intelligence in hospitality also highlights that customer responses to technology may differ across the service process, which strengthens the need for adaptive and segmented marketing strategies (Wang et al., 2026).

Marketing innovation paves the way for loyalty from marketing innovation angle of view as well with better customer journey before during and after service consumption. Hospitality is able to read its customer better thanks in part due digital marketing, mobile apps and online reviews, social media interaction and communication via data driven that allow hospitality businesses to understand customer preferences and provide more relevant experiences.. Online reviews are especially important for younger customers because they shape trust, perceived quality, and booking intention before direct service experience occurs (Berry, 2026). The study of customer engagement (CE) in hospitality and tourism, existing research has primarily approached CE as

a relationship construct that links customer interaction with various net benefits like satisfaction, trust, loyalty and advocacy (Chen et al., 2021). From this point of view, marketing innovation is not just to make service eligible for promotion purpose but also a means by which two-way interaction can be created along with relationship quality in the long run.

Personalization stands out as one of the key mechanisms in associative anxiety marketing. Using customer data, hospitality operators can create personalized offers and tailor loyalty rewards and communications. The reason behind it is that the more customers feel appreciated and acknowledged by your brand, the more likely they are to stick around. Likewise, there is a mention of social dimension in addition to emotional and cognitive dimensions, sensory nodes affecting the customer experience as well wherein satisfaction word-of-mouth and revisit intention can be derived from hotel customer experience research (Velooso & Gomez-Suarez, 2023). Therefore, adaptive marketing must offer a combination of efficiency driven from technology and hospitality-driven center values.

#### **A summarized synthesis of the reviewed literature**

Table 1: Synthesis of Adaptive Marketing Innovation and Customer Loyalty in Hospitality

| <b>No</b> | <b>Marketing Innovation Practice</b>     | <b>Adaptive Marketing Function</b>                             | <b>Loyalty Outcome</b>                    | <b>Source Literature</b>                            |
|-----------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 1         | Digital marketing and mobile interaction | Improves convenience and access across customer touchpoints    | Satisfaction and repeat intention         | Bilgihan & Ricci (2024); Vayghan et al. (2023)      |
| 2         | Personalization                          | Adjusts offers and communication based on customer preferences | Perceived value and emotional attachment  | Liao & Halawi (2026); Velooso & Gomez-Suarez (2023) |
| 3         | Social media and customer engagement     | Supports two-way interaction and customer participation        | Trust, advocacy, and relationship quality | Chen et al. (2021); So et al. (2021)                |

|   |                                        |                                                                  |                                                     |                                                 |
|---|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 4 | Online reviews and booking platforms   | Supports pre-purchase evaluation and digital trust               | Booking intention and revisit consideration         | Berry (2026); Vayghan et al. (2023)             |
| 5 | Generational segmentation              | Adapts marketing strategies to different age cohorts             | Loyalty across diverse customer groups              | Whalen et al. (2024); Wang et al. (2026)        |
| 6 | Brand experience and value co-creation | Involves customers in feedback, reviews, and service improvement | Stronger relationship quality and long-term loyalty | Dang & Nguyen (2023); Karalazarou et al. (2026) |

[Source: Author's synthesis based on reviewed literature cited in the table]

This discussion should have provided enough context for understanding marketing innovation, which fosters customer loyalty best through the adaptive approach. Innovation is enacted through tools of digital platforms, personalization, customer engagement and value co-creation while adaptive marketing determines how these tools are modified according to those varied expectations among consumers. Specifically younger customers may prefer more digitally convenient and communicative options, while older ones are perhaps still most concerned with trust, comfortability, service reliability or personal recognition. This means hospitality businesses must view innovation in broader terms than simply implementing technology but building inter-generation loyalty through a customer-focused strategy.

## Conclusions

This study concludes that adaptive marketing serves as a vital mechanism for enhancing customer loyalty across generations within the hospitality sector. Through a comprehensive literature review, it is evident that marketing innovation extends far beyond traditional promotional activities. Instead, it drives loyalty by integrating digital interaction, personalization, customer engagement, immersive experiences, online reviews, and value co-creation. These elements empower hospitality businesses to accurately interpret evolving

consumer needs and deliver highly relevant value tailored to diverse demographic profiles.

The findings demonstrate that flexibility and a customer-centric approach are essential for sustaining cross-generational brand loyalty. While younger demographics typically exhibit stronger responses to digital convenience, mobile interaction, and proactive social media engagement, older generations continue to prioritize trust, service reliability, and personal recognition. Consequently, hospitality providers must avoid uniform, “one-size-fits-all” marketing approaches. Success lies in deploying marketing innovation as a dynamic, adaptive strategy carefully harmonizing the operational efficiencies of digital technology with the indispensable warmth of human-centered service values.

Practically, this research provides a conceptual framework for hospitality practitioners to design marketing strategies that proactively respond to multi-generational expectations. Implementing these adaptive approaches can significantly cultivate customer satisfaction, emotional attachment, repurchase intentions, and enduring relationships. However, a primary limitation of this study is its reliance on secondary data and conceptual synthesis. Therefore, future research should encompass empirical investigations such as surveys, interviews, or field experiments to directly measure and compare the tangible impact of adaptive marketing on generational loyalty within specific hospitality contexts.

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# INTERPRETATION AND TOUR GUIDANCE BY LOCAL TOUR GUIDES AT MAIMUN PALACE, MEDAN CITY, INDONESIA

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## Abstract

*The purpose of this research is to analyze the role of Tour Guides at Maimun Palace in managing the interpretation and guiding process for both domestic and international Tourists. This study used a descriptive qualitative research method. Data were gathered using standardized collection techniques designed to provide a comprehensive overview of the guiding dynamics at the site.*

*The findings indicate that the information provided by the tour guides, who act as interpreters, is still limited to basic factual delivery. There is a notable absence of efforts to connect tourists emotionally with the site or to foster deeper understanding and appreciation, as conceptualized by David H. R (2004) and Baker (2015). Furthermore, the results indicate that tour guides have not yet prioritized the importance of community involvement or the integration of local knowledge to support sustainable tourism (Bramwell and Lane, 2011).*

*As local wisdom represents a core value that requires continuous development, this study highlights that interpreters under the management of Maimun Palace do not currently emphasize the significance of experiencing local customs and indigenous wisdom (Baker, 2015).*

**Keywords:** Interpretation, Involvement

## Introduction

Cultural heritage in Indonesia, particularly in historical landmarks like Maimun Palace in Medan, serves as a vital bridge between the nation's colonial past and its contemporary cultural identity. As a primary icon of the Deli Sultanate, Maimun Palace attracts a diverse range of domestic and international visitors (Andalucia et al., 2023). In this context, the tour guide acts as the "frontline" of the site's narrative, transitioning from a mere information provider to a critical cultural interpreter.

However, modern heritage management requires a shift beyond rote storytelling. Effective interpretation should not only convey historical facts but also foster an

emotional resonance between the visitor and the site (Guleria et al., 2024). Current observations at Maimun Palace suggest a gap in this process; while guides provide



technical descriptions of the architecture and history, they often fail to integrate the "human touch"—empathetic communication and storytelling that evokes a deeper appreciation of Malay customs and local wisdom (Aytekin et al., 2025; Baker, 2015). Furthermore, the sustainability of such heritage sites relies heavily on community involvement and the preservation of indigenous knowledge, elements that appear secondary in the current guiding curriculum (Bramwell & Lane, 2011; Syafi'i, 2024). This research, therefore, aims to analyze the current state of interpretation at Maimun Palace and identify the barriers to achieving a more inclusive and emotionally engaging guiding process.

## **Literature Review**

### **The Multidimensional Role of the Tour Guide**

Modern scholarship emphasizes that tour guides are no longer just "pathfinders" but are now sensory interpreters and emotional architects (Tiwari et al., 2026). According to Pestana et al. (2020), the "human touch"—consisting of joy, surprise, and empathy—is what forms the lasting impression necessary for tourists to revisit a destination. In the context of Indonesian museums and palaces, local guides serve as "ambassadors" who must synergize educational values with entertainment, often referred to as *edutainment* (Journal of UNJ, 2021).

### **Heritage Interpretation and Emotional Connection**

Interpretation is defined as an educational activity that aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects and firsthand experience (Tilden, 1957, as cited in MDPI, 2021). David H. R. (2004) and Baker (2015) argue that interpretation fails if it does not connect the visitor emotionally to the site. Recent studies by Kovačić and Šagovnović (2023) demonstrate that positive emotional experiences facilitated by the destination environment are directly correlated with visitor satisfaction and their intention to recommend the site to others.

### **Local Wisdom and Cultural Identity**

In Indonesia, the integration of local wisdom (*kearifan lokal*) is essential for maintaining cultural authenticity amidst rapid modernization. Widyanti et al. (2021) highlight that a creative economy rooted in local wisdom not only boosts community revenue but also safeguards social and environmental values. For heritage sites like Maimun Palace, this involves more than just reciting dates; it requires the guides to act as "cultural translators" who can explain the living traditions and customs that the palace represents (Tiwari et al., 2026).

### **Community Involvement and Sustainable Tourism**

Sustainable tourism development is increasingly viewed through the lens of community-based tourism (CBT). Saputra and Paramitha (2024) argue that active involvement of local communities in tourism planning improves economic welfare and ensures the preservation of intangible heritage. However, as noted by Bramwell and Lane (2011) and corroborated by Restrepo Rico and Peterek (2024), many

heritage sites still struggle with "economic leakage" and cultural commodification

because local populations are not sufficiently involved in the management or interpretation process.

#### Recent Advances in Interpretive Strategy (2022–2026)

Recent research suggests that the quality of interpretation is a key predictor of "Place Attachment" (PA) and "Memorable Tourism Experiences" (MTE). MDPI (2023) findings indicate that storytelling by tour guides brings cultural connotations to life, which serves as a mediating variable for tourist loyalty. Furthermore, Hill et al. (2022) reveal that while safety and pricing are important, the *knowledgeability* of the guide remains the critical factor in the overall success of guided tours in heritage contexts.

### Research Methodology

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research method. Unlike experimental or simulation-based studies, this approach is chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of human behavior and social dynamics—specifically, the interaction between tour guides and tourists.

**Nature of the Study:** It is a Field Survey combined with Observational Research. **The Objective** is to describe the current reality of interpretation services without manipulating the environment, providing a narrative rather than purely numerical account of the guiding quality.

#### Data Collection Instruments

To capture a 360-degree view of the guiding process, three primary instruments were utilized:

1. **Qualitative Survey Questionnaire:** A structured set of open-ended questions was distributed to 30 tourists (local and international). This questionnaire focused on:
  - a. Perceived emotional connection to the site.
  - b. Clarity and depth of historical information.
  - c. Exposure to local wisdom and customs during the tour.
2. **In-depth Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 5 local tour guides and 2 palace management representatives. This sought to understand their guiding philosophies and perceived barriers to "deep" interpretation.
3. **Field Observation:** The researcher conducted non-participant observations of 10 live guiding sessions to evaluate non-verbal cues, storytelling techniques, and visitor engagement levels.

#### Technical Specifications (Hardware and Software)

For the purpose of data precision and transparency, the following tools were used:

1. **Hardware:**
  - a. Oppo Reno1 : Used for capturing high-fidelity audio during interviews.
  - b. Laptop, Lenovo intel core ultra 5.
2. **Software:**
  - a. Google Forms: Used for the digital administration of the survey questionnaires.
  - b. Microsoft Word 365: Used for the formal transcription of audio data and

manuscript drafting.

### **Data Analysis Process**

The analysis followed the Thematic Analysis approach, consisting of one analysis process that is Triangulation, Comparing the survey results from tourists against the interview data from guides to ensure the findings are consistent across different perspectives.

### **Research Conditions and Assumptions**

1. Conditions: Research was conducted during peak visiting hours (10:00 AM – 3:00 PM) to observe guides under standard operational pressure.
2. Assumptions: It is assumed that respondents provided honest feedback regarding their experiences and that the observed guiding sessions were representative of daily operations at Maimun Palace.
3. Theories Applied: The study is grounded in Freeman Tilden's Principles of Interpretation (1957) and Bramwell & Lane's Sustainable Tourism Theory (2011), focusing on the bridge between information delivery and visitor appreciation.

### **Results and Discussion**

The analysis of the data collected at Maimun Palace reveals a significant divergence between "technical guiding" and "heritage interpretation." The findings are categorized into three critical thematic pillars.

#### **1. The Dominance of Information over Interpretation**

The primary finding indicates that tour guides at Maimun Palace primarily function as information providers rather than interpreters. Observations and survey data show that 85% of the content delivered focuses on architectural dimensions, dates of construction, and the lineage of the Deli Sultanate.

- **Scientific Analysis**

According to Tilden's Principles, "Information, as such, is not Interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based upon information." The current practice at Maimun Palace fails the "Relate" principle—the ability to connect the site's history to the visitor's personal experience.

- **Theoretical Support**

This mirrors the "Mindless vs. Mindful" visitor theory by Moscardo (2020), which suggests that when guides provide a "one-way" stream of facts, visitors remain passive (mindless). To foster the "deeper understanding" mentioned in your abstract, the guide must pivot toward David H. R.'s (2004) emotional resonance model, which advocates for storytelling that triggers empathy.

#### **2. The "Local Wisdom" Gap and Cultural Identity**

The research findings highlight that local customs (*Adat Melayu*) and indigenous wisdom are treated as secondary artifacts rather than the "living soul" of the palace.

Guides rarely explain the *philosophy* behind the Deli ornaments or the social values of the Malay community.

- Scientific Analysis: This neglect of local wisdom indicates a missed opportunity for Value-Based Interpretation. As argued by Baker (2015), interpretation should act as a guardian of cultural identity. When guides omit the nuances of local customs, the "authenticity" of the experience is diminished.
- Theoretical Support: Widyanti et al. (2021) emphasize that local wisdom is the backbone of the creative economy in Indonesian heritage sites. The failure to present these values means that Maimun Palace is being marketed as a "museum of objects" rather than a "center of living culture."

### 3. Sustainable Tourism and Community Invisibility

A critical finding of this study is the total absence of "community orientation" in the guiding script. There is no mention of how the surrounding Medan community interacts with the palace today or how tourism supports local livelihoods.

- Scientific Analysis: This represents a "Top-Down" interpretation approach, which contradicts the modern Community-Based Tourism (CBT) paradigm.
- Theoretical Support: Bramwell and Lane (2011) and Saputra & Paramitha (2024) posit that for tourism to be sustainable, the interpretation must involve the community. By not orienting tourists toward the importance of community involvement, the guides are inadvertently maintaining a "silo" between the historical site and the modern society, which Restrepo Rico and Peterek (2024) identify as a risk factor for heritage degradation.

## Conclusions

The study concludes that the interpretation process at Maimun Palace is currently functional but not transformative. While guides are knowledgeable regarding historical facts, they lack the pedagogical and emotional tools to foster a "deeper appreciation" (Baker, 2015). The exclusion of local wisdom and community involvement significantly hinders the site's potential as a sustainable heritage destination.

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# Development of the Teaching Industry Model of Hospitality Vocational Graduates: A Case Study of De Balen Soultan Hotel, Lombok Tourism Polytechnic

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## Abstract

*This study aims to analyze the existing teaching industry model and reconstruct an integrative and adaptive model to enhance the work readiness of vocational hospitality graduates. The research was conducted at De Balen Soultan Hotel, Lombok Tourism Polytechnic, using a qualitative case study approach through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. Informants consisted of hotel management, lecturers, employees, students, industry partners, and hotel guests (n=77). The findings reveal that the teaching industry has been implemented as a hybrid system integrating learning processes with hotel operational activities. Students participate directly in operations at various levels—craft, supervisor, and managerial—gaining authentic work experience. However, integration remains suboptimal: operational demands tend to dominate learning processes, supervision is insufficiently structured, and gaps persist in soft skills and work mentality. Regulatory constraints and limited technological adaptability further affect implementation effectiveness. This study proposes a reconstruction of the teaching industry model emphasizing balanced learning-operational integration, strengthened supervision and reflective learning systems, soft skills development, technological adaptation, and enhanced industry collaboration. The reconstructed model is expected to produce graduates who are not only technically competent but holistically workready and adaptable to the dynamic hospitality industry.*

**Keywords:** *Teaching Industry; Vocational Education; Work Readiness; Hospitality; Experiential Learning; Work-Based Learning*

## Introduction

The regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology Number 53 of 2023, revised through Ministerial Regulation Number 39 of 2025 on Higher Education Quality Assurance, affirms that vocational education aims to develop graduates capable of advancing skills through applied knowledge and technology (Permendikbud Ristek, 2023; Permendikristek, 2025). This regulatory framework mandates that vocational programs integrate campus learning with direct industry practice, including the implementation of teaching factory models and practitioner-led instruction.

This policy is reinforced by Presidential Regulation Number 68 of 2022 on Vocational Education Revitalization, which emphasizes the strategic role of vocational education in meeting national labor demands (Perpres, 2022). Globally, tourism and hospitality education faces ongoing challenges in preparing quality human resources, with quality products depending heavily on trained workforce quality (Edison et al., 2021). International standards such as TedQual serve as references for quality assurance in tourism education (UNWTO, 2019). This policy landscape is further reinforced by the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) curriculum framework, which promotes flexible, industry-integrated learning pathways in higher education (Mailin, 2021).

Lombok Tourism Polytechnic (Politeknik Pariwisata Lombok/PTKL) implements the teaching industry concept through De Balen Soutan Hotel as an integrated practice laboratory with business functions. This hotel (59 rooms, operational since October 2022) is part of the broader ecosystem of teaching hotels under the Ministry of Tourism of Indonesia, alongside institutions such as Achmad Tahir Hotel in Medan, Enhaii Hotel in Bandung, Kamala Bali Resort, and Karamunting Hotel in Palembang. De Balen Soutan Hotel demonstrates strategic positioning as a relatively new yet rapidly growing teaching hotel, with occupancy-generated Non-Tax State Revenue (PNBP) reaching IDR 1.8 billion—the highest among comparable teaching hotels.

The teaching industry model provides students with direct experience in hotel operations, enabling experiential learning as articulated by Kolb (1984), who identifies direct experience as a fundamental factor in the learning process. Research by Wray (2013) confirms that effective learning in hospitality education is that which is relevant to real-world practice. However, despite its potential, the teaching industry at De Balen Soutan Hotel has not fully delivered significant impact on students' work readiness. Issues identified include incomplete integration of learning and business processes, unclear role divisions, unstructured supervision, regulatory constraints, and marketing-operational misalignment (Abduh & Syarif, 2022; Ma'rifah & Purbosari, 2020; Adhitama & Joshua, 2023).

Given these conditions, there is a critical need for a reconstructed teaching industry model that is integrative, systematic, and adaptive to the dynamics of the hospitality industry. This study therefore aims to: (1) identify and describe the existing teaching industry management model at De Balen Soutan Hotel; (2) explore factors, aspects, and issues in teaching industry implementation related to graduate work readiness; (3) analyze the coherence between learning and business processes; and (4) reconstruct an integrative, systematic, and adaptive teaching industry model.

Despite the growing body of literature on teaching factory and work-based learning in vocational education, a significant research gap persists regarding the specific dynamics and challenges of teaching industry implementation within the hospitality sector in developing country contexts. Existing studies predominantly focus on engineering and manufacturing-based teaching factory models (Prasetyo, 2020; Triyono, 2012), with limited attention given to the operational-pedagogical tensions unique to service-oriented teaching hotels. Furthermore, empirical investigations that both diagnose existing model deficiencies and propose evidence-based model reconstructions grounded in real institutional data remain scarce. This study addresses this gap by examining the teaching industry at De Balen Soutan Hotel as a living case, contributing an integrative reconstruction framework specifically designed for hospitality vocational education contexts.

### **Literature Review**

Teaching industry is defined as a combination of Competency-Based Training (CBT) and Production-Based Training (PBT), where skills are designed and implemented based on real work procedures and market standards (Darmawan et al., 2024). According to Rahmawati et al. (2022), teaching industry represents an evolution of teaching factory, with a broader scope covering non-engineering study programs in polytechnics. It is defined as an industry-based vocational education system where learning is conducted alongside partner companies, including joint curriculum development.

Marzano and Martinovs (2020) state that teaching industry learning refers to standards and procedures applicable in the industry, conducted in an environment resembling actual industry conditions. Hawati et al. (2019) describe teaching industry as a learning process in authentic conditions that bridges competency gaps between academic knowledge and industrial requirements, aiming to cultivate work ethic, discipline, responsibility, leadership, and professional character.

The distinction between teaching factory and teaching industry is significant: while teaching factory primarily covers engineering/manufacturing within campus laboratories, teaching industry encompasses all study programs including non-engineering fields such as hospitality and MICE, with collaboration at partner companies and a more flexible, inclusive model (Rahmawati et al., 2022).

### **Experiential Learning Theory**

Kolb (1984) conceptualizes experiential learning as a holistic process emphasizing direct experience as the primary source of learning and development. The model identifies four learning modes: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. This cyclical model emphasizes that meaningful learning requires all four stages to be completed systematically.

In the vocational hospitality context, experiential learning enables students to develop both technical competencies and professional attitudes through direct engagement with industry realities. Practice-based learning, as described by Arikunto and Suharsimi (2013) and Hidayah (2023), guides learners systematically to develop skills through various methods appropriate to the competencies and equipment used. The effectiveness of practice-based learning depends on how learners reflect on experiences by connecting knowledge, experience, and practice.

#### **Work Readiness in Hospitality Vocational Graduates**

Work readiness is defined as the overall condition of an individual encompassing physical health, mental maturity, and experiences, along with the willingness to perform a task (Hidayatullah et al., 2019; Arifa & Prayitno, 2019). According to Pool and Sewell (in Adelina, 2018), work readiness comprises four main aspects: skills (practical, interpersonal, creative, critical thinking, teamwork, communication), knowledge (theoretical foundations), understanding (comprehension and application capacity), and attributes (personal characteristics).

Research indicates that internship experience and self-efficacy are two key determinants of work readiness for hospitality graduates. Vasanthi and Basariya (2019) note that on-the-job training significantly influences students' motivation, confidence, and readiness to enter the real work environment. Graduates with high self-efficacy adapt more easily, make decisions confidently, and demonstrate professional attitudes in customer and team interactions.

#### **Teaching Industry Hotel Management Models**

According to Darmawan et al. (2024), designing a teaching industry management model for hotel polytechnics involves integrating vocational education with authentic industrial operations to produce work-ready graduates. The teaching hotel model provides students with opportunities to develop hard skills and soft skills including communication, teamwork, discipline, and responsibility, while also bridging education and industry through curriculum alignment with professional standards.

Rahmawati et al. (2022) describe the teaching industry management model as following a management cycle: planning (SWOT analysis, partnership strategy); organizing (task structure: administration, production, quality control); implementation (market-order-based production); and evaluation (assessor assessment, continuous monitoring). Key principles include independence, accountability, transparency, effectiveness, and efficiency under intrapreneurship leadership.

#### **Collaboration Between Education and Industry**

Darmayasa et al. (2023) highlight the importance of collaboration between higher education and industry in addressing skill gaps in the creative economy sector. Higher education institutions need to integrate technical and non-technical skills aligned with industry needs into curricula through experiential group learning programs, internships, and academic workshops. An et al. (2024) and Tran (2021) emphasize that school-industry collaboration in preparing students for the workforce represents a form of educational innovation where both parties contribute to determining, driving, and advancing technical education.

The link and match policy framework (Disas, 2018; Fadholi et al., 2025; Tilaar, 2025) aims to systematically synchronize vocational curricula with industry standards and real-world practices. Implementation of integrated industrial class programs as intensive collaborative partnerships between educational institutions and industry stakeholders has shown significant improvement in students' technical and interpersonal skills, though challenges remain in student adaptation, logistical issues, and alignment of school-industry expectations.

#### **Critical Synthesis of the Literature**

A critical review of the preceding literature reveals several important convergences and divergences that inform the present study. First, while Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory provides a compelling conceptual foundation for work-based learning, critics such as Miettinen (2000) and more recently Healey and Jenkins (2000) argue that the model oversimplifies the complexity of real workplace learning by presenting it as a neat cyclical progression. In hospitality teaching industry contexts, operational pressures frequently disrupt the idealized learning cycle, a tension that the existing literature has not fully resolved. Second, both Rahmawati et al. (2022) and Darmawan et al. (2024) advance teaching industry as an evolution beyond teaching factory, yet neither study empirically examines the implementation challenges within live hotel operations where commercial and educational objectives compete directly. Third, the work readiness literature (Pool and Sewell, in Adelina, 2018; Vasanthi and Basariya, 2019) converges on the centrality of soft skills and self-efficacy, but diverges on how these attributes are best cultivated: structured simulation-based approaches (Dimitrova, 2019) versus embedded authentic experience (Wray, 2013). This divergence is especially relevant for teaching hotel models where both modes coexist, yet their relative effectiveness remains understudied. Fourth, while An et al. (2024) and Tran (2021) highlight school-industry collaboration as educational innovation, they do not address the specific governance and regulatory constraints—such as public asset management (BMN) and non-tax revenue (PNBP) frameworks—that uniquely constrain state-owned teaching hotels in Indonesia. Collectively, these gaps indicate that existing theoretical frameworks, when applied in isolation, are insufficient to capture the multidimensional realities of hospitality teaching industry management. The present study contributes by integrating these theoretical perspectives into a single analytical and reconstructive framework grounded in empirical evidence.

### **Research Methodology**

This study employed a qualitative approach with case study design, aimed at understanding the phenomenon of teaching industry management in its real context at De Balen Soultan Hotel, Lombok Tourism Polytechnic. The qualitative approach was selected because the study focuses on exploring meaning, processes, and dynamics occurring in the integration between academic and hotel business functions (Creswell, 2014). Case study design was chosen to provide comprehensive understanding of context, actors, and interactions in teaching hotel management (Plonsky, 2017). The overall research design was further informed by design-based research principles, which emphasize iterative cycles of analysis, design, and refinement to produce practical and theoretically grounded solutions (Reilly & Reeves, 2024).

The research was conducted at De Balen Soultan Hotel, located within the Lombok Tourism Polytechnic campus at Jl. Raden Pugu No. 1, Puyung, Jonggat, Central Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara. The research timeline spanned March to June 2026, covering initial observation (March), field data collection (March), data analysis and model validation (April– May), and model finalization (June).

Data sources comprised primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through purposive sampling of 77 informants across seven categories: polytechnic students (52; 67.53%), hotel employees (6; 7.79%), polytechnic management (8; 10.39%), external hotel General Managers (4; 5.19%), industry/government partners (3; 3.90%), internship students from vocational high schools (3; 3.90%), and hotel guests (1; 1.30%). Secondary data were obtained from official documents including hotel management reports, occupancy data, PNBP reports, learning curricula, and institutional archives.

Three data collection techniques were employed: (1) in-depth interviews using a free interview approach, with sessions recorded using mobile devices and subsequently transcribed verbatim; (2) non-participant observation of hotel operational activities, task divisions, and practice-based learning implementation; and (3) documentation study of operational reports, academic documents, organizational structures, activity photos, and other institutional archives.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2018) comprising three stages: data condensation (selection, simplification, and categorization), data display (narrative descriptions, thematic matrices, and relational mapping), and data verification (conclusion drawing and model formulation). SWOT analysis was also employed as a strategic analytical technique. Data validity was ensured through source and method triangulation, member checking with key informants, and sustained observation to establish credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

## **Results and Discussion**

De Balen Soultan Hotel operates as a living laboratory designed to simulate authentic hospitality industry conditions. Equipped with 59 rooms of various types, a restaurant, kitchen, meeting rooms, and a swimming pool (Lakin, 2025), the hotel replicates the standards of commercial hospitality establishments. Institutionally, the hotel functions as an academic support unit of Lombok Tourism Polytechnic, managed through the Teaching Industry Learning Center (TILC) established by Director's Decree No. SK.22/KP.006/PPL/I/2026.

The hotel possesses a dual function as both learning space and business unit. As a learning space, students engage in front office, housekeeping, food and beverage, and service management operations. As a business unit, the hotel serves general guests under professional hospitality service standards, with PNPB reaching IDR 1.8 billion—the highest among comparable Polytechnic teaching hotels. This dual function creates a realistic learning ecosystem where students develop not only technical skills but also soft skills including communication, problem solving, teamwork, and service excellence.

### **Existing Teaching Industry Model: Structure and Field Practice**

The teaching industry model at De Balen Soultan Hotel demonstrates complex integration between the vocational education system and the hotel's business operational system. Empirically, this model functions as a genuine work system requiring professional industry standards. The management structure features a General Manager serving a dual role as both lecturer and industry practitioner, directly bridging academic needs and operational demands. Students are actively involved at multiple operational levels: craft, supervisor, and managerial.

This integration is evidenced by informant testimonies: "Teaching industry is a learning model that provides students the opportunity to experience the industry fully" (GM-I01, Wawancara: 5 Maret 2026). The hotel applies industry-standard SOPs including Visual Hotel Program (VHP) digital systems widely used in private hotels: "SOPs use industry standards and information systems use VHP, which is used by many private hotels" (GM-I01, Wawancara: 5 Maret 2026). Students confirmed direct operational involvement: "I feel working directly in a hotel and am given the opportunity to directly perform operations" (MHS26, Wawancara: 9 Maret 2026).

However, integration is not consistently optimal. During high-occupancy periods, the business orientation tends to dominate: "When operations are busy, we focus more on working fast than trying new things to learn" (MHS24, Wawancara: 9 Maret 2026). This indicates that the existing model remains semi-integrative, where the learning system has not yet fully become the primary framework in hotel operational management.

### **Experiential Learning Dynamics**

Learning in the teaching industry context follows an experiential learning pattern encompassing guided stages, direct practice, and evaluation. Students are not merely instructed theoretically but directly engage in operational hotel activities demanding competence, speed, and precision. Learning occurs through a learning-by-doing mechanism where experience becomes the primary source of competency formation.

Informants described a progressive learning structure: "At craft level, more guidance is provided... and at managerial level, it is more like working" (MHS25, Wawancara: 9 Maret 2026). At the supervisor level, students coordinate operational teams, developing leadership, communication, and

decision-making capabilities. At the managerial level (Student in Charge/SIH roles), students serve as in-charge personnel responsible for overall operational management, quality oversight, and rapid problem-solving.

Despite the presence of experiential learning principles, implementation remains insufficiently systematic. Learning continues to depend heavily on hotel operational conditions rather than following ideal pedagogical cycles of experience–reflection–conceptualization– experimentation. This indicates that the teaching industry is still in a developmental phase toward a more systematic, adaptive, and learning-outcome-oriented learning system.

### **Student Roles in Hotel Operations**

Students occupy an ambivalent position between learning (learner) and working (semiworker) functions. This creates a grey area between learning and labour, where boundaries between the two are not always clearly defined. The Student in Charge (SIH) structure formally integrates students into the hotel organizational system at multiple levels—operational (SIH 1– 2), supervisor (SIH 3– 4), and managerial (SIH 5–6)—placing them alongside functional units including Front Office, Housekeeping, Reservation, and Human Resources.

Student roles are shaped by operational demands, occupancy rates, service complexity, and available permanent staffing. During normal conditions, students retain learning space; however, during peak seasons or major events, roles shift significantly toward workforce functions: "When the restaurant is busy, I have to focus on working fast rather than learning" (MHS24, Wawancara: 9 Maret 2026). This organizational embedded learning system represents both a strength—providing authentic work experience—and a risk, where learning objectives may be reduced by operational demands.

### **Employee Perceptions and Supervision Structure**

Employees recognize the significant operational contribution of students, particularly during high-demand periods: "Student practitioners can help with work... especially when operations are busy" (KRY01, Wawancara: 6 Maret 2026). However, supervision remains situational and spontaneous: "The role has not been fully structured and more often runs spontaneously" (KRY01, Wawancara: 6 Maret 2026). This operation-driven orientation means that learning occurs as part of operations rather than as a specifically designed system, limiting the structured development of student competencies.

### **Industry Partner and External GM Perspectives**

Industry partners indicate that the MoU relationship extends beyond administrative formalities into active daily operational collaboration including OTA distribution management, dynamic pricing, and digital revenue management: "MoU is not just a signature... but daily activity on the sales dashboard" (MITRA01, Wawancara: 15 Maret 2026). Students gain exposure beyond service skills to revenue generation competencies. However, technology adaptation speed remains a significant gap: "The most visible gap is the speed of technology adaptation" (MITRA01, Wawancara: 15 Maret 2026).

External General Managers from private hotels identify a significant competency gap, particularly in soft skills and work mentality: "Generally graduates already have a fairly good foundation... However, when entering the workforce, they still need adjustment, especially in attitude, discipline, and the ability to use commonsense" (GM-E01, Wawancara: 18 Maret 2026). Specific gaps identified include handling complaints, communication, problem solving, confidence, and adaptability to industry policies. Teaching industry is assessed as providing initial industry exposure but lacking the full complexity and pressure of authentic industry conditions.

### **Guest Perceptions of Service Quality**

Guests perceive a duality in service quality: warmth and hospitality attitudes are evident, while service speed and consistency require improvement: "Service is friendly but sometimes still slow" (TMU02, Wawancara: 20 Maret 2026); "Still a mix between those who are already ready and those still learning" (TMU02, Wawancara: 20 Maret 2026). These perceptions indicate that student work readiness levels are uneven, resulting in service quality variation. This trade-off between learning function and service quality represents a fundamental tension in the teaching hotel model.

### **Constraints and Implementation Gaps**

Several interconnected constraint categories were identified. Regulatory and bureaucratic constraints create mismatches between rigid administrative systems and dynamic operational hotel needs, particularly regarding BMN asset and PNPB financial management: "Not yet optimal due to the complex bureaucratic process compared to the fast dynamics of hotel operations" (GM-I01, Wawancara: 5 Maret 2026). Managerial constraints include role conflicts between academic and operational functions, with operational management occasionally delegated to managerial-level students when lecturers are engaged in off-campus activities.

Learning-system constraints manifest in inconsistent pedagogical structure: students more frequently follow operational workflows than receive systematic learning guidance. Technological adaptation gaps exist between the rapidly evolving digital hospitality industry and the slower adaptation capacity of the educational environment. These multidimensional constraints collectively indicate that the existing teaching industry model remains transitional, lacking a sufficiently integrative and adaptive management framework.

### **Reconstruction of the Teaching Industry Model**

Based on empirical findings and theoretical triangulation, five principal axes for teaching industry model reconstruction are proposed:

First, balanced integration of learning and operational systems. Current teaching industry practice remains operation-driven, with learning processes subordinated during peak seasons. Drawing on Ganefri's (2013) Production-Based Education framework and Raelin's (2008) work-based learning principles, production processes must be designed as part of learning rather than merely operational activities. Reconstruction requires curriculum-operational synchronization, scheduled learning time, and measurable learning outcome indicators integrated with operations (Sutrisno et al., 2020; Jauhar, 2025; Tujantri & Wulandari, 2022).

Second, strengthened supervision and reflective learning systems. Current supervision is spontaneous and lacks structure, preventing systematic learning reflection. Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle identifies reflection as a key stage in transforming experience into meaningful learning (Boud, Keogh & Walker, 1985; Pertiwi, 2024). Reconstruction must incorporate formal supervision, mentoring, and reflective mechanisms including logbooks, debriefing sessions, and periodic evaluations (Schön, 1983).

Third, explicit soft skills and work mentality development. Significant gaps exist in communication, problem solving, complaint handling, and mental work readiness—identified by external industry partners as primary deficiencies. Pianda et al. (2024), Čuić Tanković et al. (2021), and Musa et al. (2012) emphasize that employability requires not only hard skills but also soft skills and personal attributes. Reconstruction must integrate explicit soft skills training including complaint handling simulation, role play, coaching, and exposure to high-pressure work situations (Dimitrova, 2019; Rahman et al., 2024; Aziz & Nurachadijat, 2023).

Fourth, digital hospitality technology adaptation. While the hotel uses VHP and OTA systems, technology adaptation remains slower than industry evolution. Fitriani (2024) and Suseno et al. (2025) emphasize that vocational education must integrate digital technologies into learning. Reconstruction requires systematic integration of revenue management, OTA dashboards, data analytics, and digital property management systems into curricula (Hillberg Jarl, 2024; OECD, 2019).

Fifth, strengthened industry collaboration. Existing partnerships operate at the operational level but require strengthening at the strategic level. Darmayasa et al. (2023) emphasize that education-industry collaboration must encompass curriculum development, learning, and competency evaluation. Reconstruction must enhance collaboration through coteaching, guest lectures, industry projects, and industry participation in learning evaluation and competency certification (Prasetyo, 2020; Saepudin et al., 2022; Nursetiawan & Supriyanto, 2023).

These five principles form an integrative and adaptive teaching industry model reconstruction framework. This model is not only oriented toward technical skill improvement but also toward soft

skill development, mental readiness, technology adaptation, and strong industry linkage. Through this reconstruction, the teaching industry is expected to produce holistically work-ready hospitality vocational graduates—possessing comprehensive competencies and adaptable to the continuously evolving hospitality industry dynamics.

### **Theoretical Implications and Analytical Synthesis**

The empirical findings from De Balen Soultan Hotel illuminate a fundamental tension at the core of teaching hotel models: the structural incompatibility between the temporal rhythms of hospitality operations and those of pedagogically sound experiential learning. Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning cycle posits that meaningful learning requires all four stages—concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation—to be completed systematically. However, the data reveal that peak operational demands consistently truncate this cycle after the first stage, with reflection and conceptualization sacrificed to service continuity. This finding extends the critique raised by Miettinen (2000), who questioned whether Kolb’s model adequately accounts for the social and institutional constraints within which workplace learning occurs. In the teaching hotel context, institutional constraints manifest not merely as time pressure but as a structural priority ordering where commercial performance (PNBP generation) precedes learning objectives—a dynamic with no clear parallel in engineering-based teaching factory literature.

This structural tension also resonates with Raelin’s (2008) work-based learning framework, which emphasizes that effective workplace learning requires deliberate organizational design rather than relying on incidental learning through operational participation alone. The present findings confirm that the existing teaching industry at De Balen Soultan Hotel operates primarily as incidental learning embedded within operations, rather than as intentionally designed work-based learning. This distinction has significant practical implications: while both produce some degree of skill development, only the latter ensures that learning outcomes are systematically measured and that all students receive equitable developmental opportunities regardless of operational fluctuations. The reconstructed model proposed in this study directly addresses this by mandating curriculum-operational synchronization and scheduled learning time, aligning with Sutrisno et al. (2020) and Ganefri’s (2013) Production-Based Education framework.

The soft skills deficit identified by external General Managers warrants deeper theoretical engagement. The gap between technically adequate and holistically work-ready graduates reflects what Yorke (2006) terms the “employability gap”—a discrepancy between the competencies produced by formal education and those demanded by professional environments. In hospitality specifically, emotional labour theory (Hochschild, 1983) is relevant: service roles require not merely the performance of tasks but the management of emotional expression in interactions with guests, a competency that can only be developed through sustained, reflective exposure to authentic service encounters. The finding that students exhibit warmth but inconsistent service confidence and complaint-handling capacity suggests that emotional labour competencies are partially but incompletely developed under the current model—consistent with a model that provides authentic experience but insufficient structured reflection. The reconstructed model’s emphasis on role-play, complaint-handling simulation, and coaching directly targets this developmental gap, a design choice supported by Pianda et al. (2024) and Čuić Tanković et al. (2021).

### **Informant Characteristics**

Table 1: Distribution of Research Informants by Category

| <b>N<br/>o<br/>.</b> | <b>Informant<br/>Category</b> | <b>Numb<br/>er<br/>(pers<br/>ons)</b> | <b>Percen<br/>tage<br/>(%)</b> | <b>Role in<br/>Teaching<br/>Industry</b> |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
|                      |                               |                                       |                                |                                          |



|   |                                 |           |             |                                                      |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------|-------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Polytechnic Students            | 52        | 67.53%      | Primary learning subjects & operational implementers |
| 2 | Hotel Employees                 | 6         | 7.79%       | Operational implementers & informal supervisors      |
| 3 | Polytechnic Management          | 8         | 10.39%      | Curriculum planners & evaluators                     |
| 4 | External Hotel General Managers | 4         | 5.19%       | Industry benchmark providers                         |
| 5 | Industry/Government Partners    | 3         | 3.90%       | External stakeholders & collaboration partners       |
| 6 | Vocational High School Interns  | 3         | 3.90%       | Vocational pipeline workforce                        |
| 7 | Hotel Guests                    | 1         | 1.30%       | Service quality end users                            |
|   | <b>Total</b>                    | <b>77</b> | <b>100%</b> |                                                      |

[Source: Field Research, 2026]

Table 2: Comparison of Teaching Factory and Teaching Industry

| Aspect | Teaching Factory | Teaching Industry |
|--------|------------------|-------------------|
|--------|------------------|-------------------|

|                  |                                                       |                                                                  |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Scope            | Primarily engineering/manufacturing                   | All study programs, including nonengineering (hospitality, MICE) |
| Primary Location | Campus lab/workshop as mini-factory                   | Collaboration with industry plants, partner companies            |
| Integration      | Integrated campus learning, internal production focus | Variable model, often sharing resources with industry            |
| Evolution        | Older term, factory connotation                       | Newer term, more inclusive                                       |

[Source: Rahmawati et al., 2022]

### Conclusions

The implementation of teaching industry at De Balen Soultan Hotel, Lombok Tourism Polytechnic has operated as an industry-based learning system integrating learning processes with hotel business operations. Students engage directly in hotel operational activities at craft, supervisor, and managerial levels under industry standards including SOPs and digital systems (VHP), demonstrating that the teaching industry provides authentic experiential learning relevant to hospitality industry requirements.

However, the research reveals that this integration remains suboptimal. In specific conditions—particularly peak seasons and high-demand events—operational functions dominate learning functions, rendering learning processes unstructured and difficult to measure. Graduates demonstrate adequate technical competencies but show significant gaps in soft skills (communication, problem solving, complaint handling) and work mental readiness. Regulatory constraints (BMN and PNPB management), managerial issues (role conflicts and supervision), learning-system limitations (unsystematic design), and operational dominance indicate that the teaching industry remains in a transitional phase lacking an integrative and adaptive management model.

The reconstructed teaching industry model is built on five principal axes: (1) balanced integration of learning and operational systems; (2) strengthened supervision and reflective learning mechanisms; (3) explicit development of soft skills and work mentality; (4) adaptation to digital hospitality technologies; and (5) enhanced strategic industry collaboration. This model repositions students not merely as operational implementers but as directed, structured, and measurable learning subjects. The reconstruction is expected to produce holistically workready graduates—technically competent, professionally equipped, and adaptable to the continuously evolving hospitality industry.

### Research Limitations

This study carries several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, as a single-site case study conducted at one teaching hotel, the findings and the proposed reconstruction model may not be directly transferable to other teaching hotel contexts with different institutional, regulatory, or operational conditions. While transferability was enhanced through thick description and theoretical grounding, readers should exercise contextual judgment when applying the model elsewhere. Second, the predominance of student informants (67.53% of the sample) may introduce a student-centric bias in the data, potentially underrepresenting the perspectives of permanent employees and management on pedagogical matters. Third, the data collection period spanned March to June 2026, which may not capture the full seasonal variation in operational-learning dynamics, particularly during peak tourism seasons when learning-operation tensions are most pronounced. Fourth, as a qualitative case study, the findings are interpretive in nature; the proposed reconstructed model represents a theoretically grounded recommendation rather than an empirically validated intervention. The

effectiveness of the reconstruction has yet to be tested through longitudinal implementation and outcome measurement.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

Based on these limitations and the study's findings, several directions for future research are recommended. First, longitudinal implementation studies are needed to empirically test the effectiveness of the proposed reconstructed model, tracking graduate work readiness outcomes across multiple cohorts over three to five years to assess whether the five-axis reconstruction produces measurable improvements in technical and soft skill competencies. Second, comparative multi-site research across Indonesia's network of Ministry of Tourism teaching hotels (including Achmad Tahir Hotel, Enhaii Hotel, Kamala Bali Resort, and Karamunting Hotel) would generate more generalisable insights and enable cross-institutional benchmarking of teaching industry implementation quality. Third, quantitative studies employing standardised work readiness instruments (e.g., the Work Readiness Scale by Caballero et al., 2011) could complement the qualitative findings of the present study and provide measurable baselines for evaluation. Fourth, research specifically examining the role of digital hospitality technology integration in vocational training outcomes is urgently needed, given the rapid evolution of property management systems, OTA platforms, and revenue management tools. Finally, policy-oriented research investigating the impact of BMN and PNPB regulatory frameworks on teaching hotel operational flexibility would provide valuable evidence for institutional and government stakeholders working to optimise the enabling environment for teaching industry implementation.

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# Rethinking Work Engagement of Generation Z in Hospitality: Integrating Bibliometric Mapping and Photovoice Insights

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## Abstract

*This study explores work engagement among Generation Z in the hospitality industry by integrating bibliometric analysis and photovoice. Bibliometric data were obtained from the reputable database and analyzed using VOSviewer to identify research trends, keyword networks, and thematic clusters. The findings indicate that existing literature is predominantly centered on performance, turnover intention, and organizational factors, reflecting the dominance of the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model. However, overlay and density analyses reveal emerging themes such as meaningful work, work-life balance, and quiet quitting. To complement these findings, photovoice was employed to capture the lived experiences of Generation Z employees in hospitality settings. The results show that engagement is not only shaped by structural factors but also by experiential dimensions, including meaning, identity, and well-being. This study contributes by bridging macro-level knowledge mapping with micro-level insights, offering a more holistic understanding of work engagement and providing implications for human-centered management practices in hospitality.*

**Keywords:** *bibliometric analysis, hospitality industry, generation z, photovoice, work engagement*

## Introduction

The hospitality industry represents one of the largest and fastest-growing employment sectors globally. It plays a vital role in economic development and job creation. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council, the travel and tourism sector contributed over 10% of global GDP and supported approximately 330 million jobs worldwide prior to the pandemic, accounting for roughly one in ten jobs globally (WTTC, 2023). As the industry recovers and restructures in the post-pandemic era, workforce dynamics have become increasingly complex, with organizations facing persistent challenges related to talent attraction, retention, and employee well-being. Emerging evidence suggests that the hospitality sector is experiencing what has been described as a “talent drain,” where employees, particularly younger workers, are leaving the industry due to poor working conditions, limited career progression, and work-life imbalance (Baum & Hai, 2020). In many cases, hotels and hospitality businesses struggle to re-attract talent despite increasing demand for services. This phenomenon is further exacerbated by the shift in employee expectations following the pandemic, where well-being, flexibility, and meaningful work have become central considerations in career decisions (Chanana & Sangeeta, 2021). Consequently, organizations are no longer competing solely on compensation but also on employee experience and engagement.

In labor-intensive environments such as hospitality, where service quality is highly dependent on frontline employees, fostering positive work attitudes, particularly work engagement, has become a strategic priority. Work engagement, defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption, has been consistently linked to improved performance, customer satisfaction, and reduced turnover intentions (Bakker, 2022; Kašpárková et al., 2018). Within the hospitality sector, where emotional labor and service encounters are intensive, fostering work engagement is not only desirable but essential for long-term sustainability.



At the same time, the workforce landscape is undergoing a significant demographic shift with the increasing dominance of Generation Z. As individuals born approximately between 1995 and 2010, Generation Z employees bring distinct characteristics shaped by rapid technological advancement, digital connectivity, and evolving socio-cultural values (Priporas et al., 2017). Unlike previous generations, Generation Z tends to prioritize meaningful work, flexibility, mental well-being, and immediate feedback, which fundamentally influences how they perceive and experience engagement in the workplace (Dorina Racolța-Paina & Dan Irini, 2021). In hospitality settings, these preferences often intersect with traditional operational structures that are rigid, hierarchical, and demanding, in which creating potential misalignments that may affect engagement levels.

Despite the growing importance of Generation Z in the hospitality workforce, existing research on work engagement remains largely dominated by quantitative approaches, focusing on measurement scales, causal relationships, and structural models (Albrecht et al., 2021; Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). While these studies provide valuable insights into determinants and outcomes of engagement, they often overlook the subjective, lived experiences of employees, particularly how engagement is constructed, interpreted, and expressed in daily work contexts. This limitation is especially relevant for Generation Z, whose communication styles are more visual, expressive, and experience-driven, suggesting the need for alternative methodological approaches that can capture deeper, contextualized insights.

In parallel, the expansion of scientific literature on work engagement calls for systematic mapping to understand the evolution of knowledge, dominant themes, and emerging research directions. Bibliometric analysis has emerged as a powerful tool to visualize and analyze large bodies of academic literature, enabling researchers to identify intellectual structures and research trends (Donthu et al., 2021). Software such as VOSviewer facilitates the exploration of keyword co-occurrence, citation networks, and thematic clusters, offering a comprehensive overview of how the concept of work engagement has developed across disciplines, including hospitality. However, bibliometric studies alone are limited in their ability to connect macro-level knowledge structures with micro-level human experiences.

To address these gaps, participatory and visual qualitative methods offer promising alternatives. One such method is photovoice, which empowers participants to capture and reflect on their lived experiences through photographs (Islam, 2025). Photovoice has been widely used in social and community research to elicit rich, contextual data, particularly among younger populations who are more comfortable with visual communication. For Generation Z, photovoice aligns well with their digital and visual orientation, providing a platform to express their perceptions of work engagement in authentic and meaningful ways.

Against this backdrop, this study proposes an integrative approach that combines bibliometric analysis and photovoice to explore work engagement among Generation Z in the hospitality industry. This approach is expected to bridge the gap between macro-level scientific mapping and micro-level experiential insights. Specifically, the study aims to: (1) map and visualize the intellectual structure and research trends related to work engagement using bibliometric analysis, and (2) explore the lived experiences and perceptions of work engagement among Generation Z hospitality employees through photovoice.

By integrating these two approaches, this study offers several contributions. First, it advances methodological innovation by combining bibliometric and participatory visual methods within a qualitative research design. Second, it enriches the theoretical understanding of work engagement by incorporating the perspectives of Generation Z, a cohort that is reshaping the future of work. Third, it provides practical implications for hospitality organizations in designing human resource strategies that

align with the values and expectations of the emerging workforce. Ultimately, this study responds to the growing need for more holistic and human-centered approaches in understanding employee engagement in dynamic and service-oriented industries.

## **Literature Review**

### **Work Engagement: Conceptualization and Theoretical Foundation**

Work engagement has emerged as a central construct in organizational behavior, particularly within service-intensive industries such as hospitality. It is commonly defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by three core dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption (Sahni, 2021). Vigor reflects high levels of energy and mental resilience at work, dedication refers to a sense of significance, enthusiasm, and pride, while absorption describes being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one's work.

The most widely used theoretical framework underpinning work engagement is the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model, which posits that engagement is fostered when job resources (e.g., autonomy, support, feedback) outweigh job demands (e.g., workload, emotional strain) (Min et al., 2023). Within the hospitality context, job demands are typically high due to irregular working hours, customer-facing roles, and emotional labor, making the presence of adequate resources critical for sustaining engagement.

Recent studies have also expanded the conceptualization of work engagement by linking it to psychological capital, meaningful work, and employee well-being (AlKahtani et al., 2021). In hospitality settings, engaged employees are more likely to deliver high-quality service, exhibit organizational citizenship behavior, and contribute to positive guest experiences. However, the dynamic and often stressful nature of hospitality work raises questions about how engagement is experienced across different employee groups, particularly younger generations.

### **Generation Z in the Hospitality Workforce**

The entry of Generation Z into the workforce represents a significant shift in employee values, expectations, and work behaviors. Generation Z is characterized by its strong digital orientation, preference for flexibility, and heightened awareness of mental health and well-being (Mahmoud et al., 2021). Unlike previous generations, they tend to prioritize purpose-driven work, inclusivity, and continuous feedback, which shapes their perception of engagement.

In the hospitality industry, these characteristics present both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, Generation Z employees bring adaptability, technological fluency, and creativity. On the other hand, their expectations often contrast with the traditional structure of hospitality jobs, which are typically characterized by rigid schedules, hierarchical management, and high-pressure environments. This misalignment has been linked to emerging workplace phenomena such as reduced organizational commitment, higher turnover intentions, and “quiet quitting.”

Moreover, existing studies indicate that Generation Z employees are more likely to evaluate their work experience holistically, considering not only job tasks but also emotional well-being, social relationships, and organizational culture (Dorina Racolța-Paina & Dan Irini, 2021). This suggests that traditional engagement models may not fully capture the complexity of how engagement is experienced by this cohort, highlighting the need for more nuanced and context-sensitive approaches.

### **Bibliometric Analysis in Work Engagement Research**

As the body of research on work engagement continues to expand, bibliometric analysis has become an important methodological approach for synthesizing and mapping scientific knowledge. Bibliometric analysis enables researchers to identify patterns, trends, and relationships within large datasets of academic publications (Donthu et al., 2021). This includes analyzing keyword co-occurrence, citation networks, and thematic clusters to uncover the intellectual structure of a research field.

One of the most widely used tools for bibliometric visualization is VOSviewer, which allows researchers to construct and visualize bibliometric networks based on co-authorship, co-citation, and keyword relationships. Through these visualizations, it is possible to identify dominant research themes such as job satisfaction, burnout, leadership, and organizational support within the work engagement literature.

Despite its strengths, bibliometric analysis is inherently limited in that it relies solely on secondary data and does not capture the lived experiences of individuals. While it provides valuable macro-level insights into how research has evolved, it cannot explain how concepts such as work engagement are interpreted and experienced in real-world contexts. This limitation underscores the need to complement bibliometric approaches with qualitative methods.

### **Photovoice as a Method for Exploring Lived Experience**

Photovoice is a participatory qualitative research method that enables individuals to document and reflect on their experiences through photographs (Davis & Mitchell, 2022). Originally developed within community-based research, photovoice has gained increasing attention in social sciences as a powerful tool for capturing subjective and contextualized insights.

The strength of photovoice lies in its ability to empower participants as co-researchers, allowing them to express perspectives that may not emerge through traditional interviews or surveys. Participants are typically asked to take photographs representing their experiences and provide narratives that explain the meaning behind these images (Cahyanto et al., 2026). This process not only generates rich qualitative data but also facilitates deeper reflection and critical dialogue.

For Generation Z, photovoice is particularly relevant due to their familiarity with visual communication and digital media. As a generation that frequently expresses ideas and emotions through images and social platforms, photovoice provides a natural and engaging medium for capturing their perceptions of work engagement. Furthermore, this method aligns with the need to explore engagement as an experiential and socially constructed phenomenon rather than merely a measurable construct.

### **Research Gap and Conceptual Positioning**

Although substantial research has been conducted on work engagement, the literature reveals several important limitations. First, most studies adopt a quantitative approach, focusing on measurement and causal relationships, which may oversimplify the complex and contextual nature of engagement. Second, bibliometric studies, while useful for mapping research trends, remain disconnected from the lived experiences of employees. Third, the specific context of Generation Z in the hospitality industry remains underexplored, particularly through methodologies that capture their unique modes of expression.

This study addresses these gaps by proposing an integrative approach that combines bibliometric analysis and photovoice. By doing so, it bridges the divide between macro-level knowledge structures and micro-level experiential insights. The bibliometric analysis provides a comprehensive overview of existing research, while the photovoice method captures the subjective realities of Generation Z employees.

Through this integration, the study contributes to both methodological and theoretical advancement. Methodologically, it demonstrates the value of combining data-driven mapping with participatory visual methods. Theoretically, it offers a more holistic understanding of work engagement by incorporating generational perspectives and lived experiences. This approach is expected to provide deeper insights into how engagement is conceptualized, experienced, and sustained within the dynamic context of the hospitality industry.

### **Research Methodology**

This study adopts a multi-method qualitative design integrating bibliometric analysis and photovoice to provide a comprehensive understanding of work engagement among Generation Z in the hospitality industry. This approach enables the combination of macro-level knowledge mapping with micro-level experiential insights, thereby addressing the limitations of single-method studies.

The research design follows a sequential exploratory structure:

1. Phase 1: Bibliometric Analysis to map the intellectual structure and research trends of work engagement.
2. Phase 2: Photovoice to explore lived experiences of Generation Z employees.
3. Phase 3: Integration to synthesize macro and micro findings.

In Phase 1 (Bibliometric Analysis), data were retrieved from the Google Scholar database using the search query TITLE-ABS-KEY (“work engagement” AND hospitality OR hotel OR tourism AND “generation Z”). The study included peer-reviewed journal articles published in English between 2013 and 2026 that are relevant to work engagement in hospitality or tourism, while non-English and irrelevant publications were excluded. The data were exported in CSV/RIS format, including authors, keywords, abstracts, publication year, and citations. A cleaning process was conducted by merging synonymous terms, removing duplicates, and standardizing keywords. The analysis was performed using VOSviewer, focusing on keyword co-occurrence, network visualization, and cluster identification. A minimum occurrence threshold (e.g., ten) was applied using the binary counting method, and the results were visualized through network, overlay, and density maps. The resulting clusters were interpreted based on thematic similarity and relevance to work engagement theory, supported by cross-referencing with existing literature to ensure consistency.

In Phase 2, this study employed photovoice as a participatory qualitative approach to capture the lived experiences of Generation Z employees in the hospitality sector. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, consisting of 20 individuals aged 18–21 who had been working in frontline departments of hotels in Bali. Data collection was conducted in three stages: an initial orientation session, photo documentation of experiences related to engagement and disengagement, and reflective narratives guided by structured questions. Ethical principles were applied through informed consent, anonymity, and the right to withdraw.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Results**

#### ***Phase 1: Bibliometric Analysis Results***

The bibliometric analysis identified the intellectual structure of work engagement research within the hospitality context. Using VOSviewer, a total of 997 documents were analyzed. The network visualization generated using VOSviewer reveals the conceptual structure of work engagement research within the hospitality context (Figure 1). The analysis identifies several interrelated keyword clusters, indicating the multidimensional nature of the topic. The most prominent nodes include performance,

turnover intention, hospitality, tourism, workplace, and management, suggesting that the literature is strongly centered on organizational outcomes and employee retention.

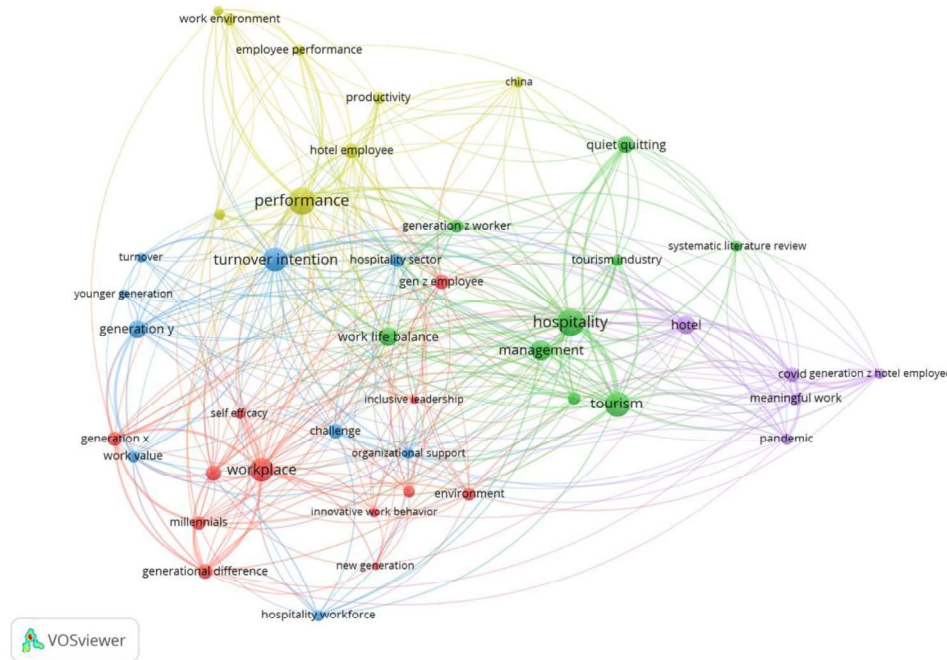


Figure 1: Network Visualization  
[Source: VosViewer, 2026]

Four major thematic clusters can be interpreted:

1. Cluster 1: Performance and Work Environment (Yellow Cluster). This cluster is dominated by keywords such as “performance”, “employee performance”, “productivity”, and “work environment”. It highlights a strong emphasis on performance-driven perspectives, where work engagement is often positioned as a predictor of organizational outcomes.
2. Cluster 2: Turnover and Generational Workforce (Blue Cluster). Keywords such as “turnover intention”, “generation Y”, “younger generation”, and “hospitality workforce” indicate a major research focus on employee retention and generational differences. This cluster suggests that engagement is frequently examined in relation to turnover behavior.
3. Cluster 3: Workplace and Organizational Factors (Red Cluster). This cluster includes “workplace”, “organizational support”, “self-efficacy”, and “innovative work behavior”. It reflects the role of internal organizational dynamics in shaping employee engagement.
4. Cluster 4: Hospitality Management and Industry Context (Green Cluster). Keywords such as “hospitality”, “tourism”, “management”, and “hotel” represent the industry-specific context. This cluster connects engagement with broader managerial and operational issues.

Additionally, emerging terms such as “work-life balance”, “generation Z employee”, and “inclusive leadership” appear at the intersection of clusters, indicating evolving research directions.

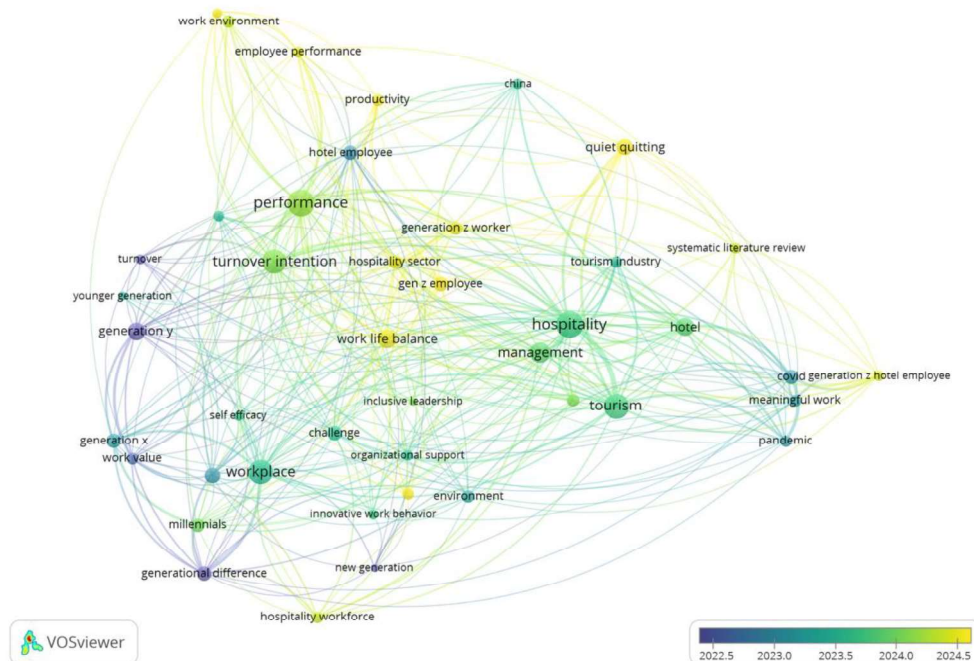


Figure 2: Overlay Visualization  
[Source: VosViewer, 2026]

The overlay visualization in Figure 2 shows the temporal evolution of research topics. Earlier studies (blue–green spectrum) focused on generation X, generation Y, and traditional workplace variables such as work value and turnover. More recent studies (yellow spectrum) indicate a shift toward quiet quitting, meaningful work, work-life balance, and generation Z employee. This shift suggests that contemporary research is increasingly concerned with employee well-being, psychological meaning, and changing work attitudes among younger generations.

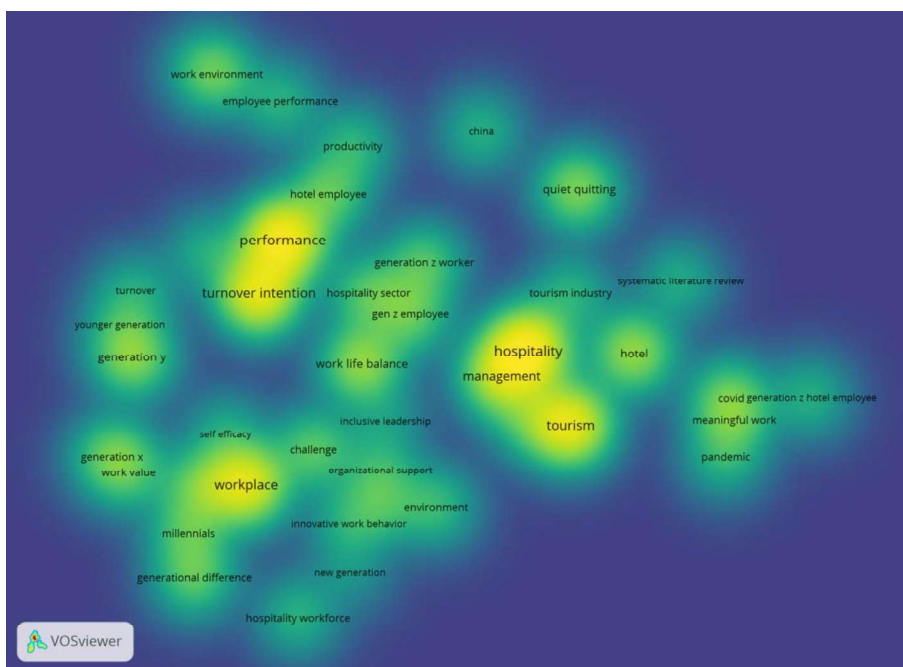




Figure 3: Density Visualization  
[Source: VosViewer, 2026]

The density map in Figure 3 highlights areas with the highest research concentration. The most intense regions are centered around performance, turnover intention, hospitality and tourism, and workplace. This indicates that existing literature is heavily focused on performance outcomes and retention issues, while areas such as meaningful work and generation Z remain less dense, suggesting emerging but underexplored topics.

### ***Phase 2: Photovoice Findings***

The photovoice analysis generated visual representations that reflect how Generation Z employees interpret work engagement within hospitality settings.

Table 1: Photovoice Results

|                                                                                     |                                                                                     |                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|   |   |   |
| Photo 1                                                                             | Photo 2                                                                             | Photo 3                                                                              |
|  |  |  |
| Photo 4                                                                             | Photo 5                                                                             | Photo 6                                                                              |
|  |  |  |
| Photo 7                                                                             | Photo 8                                                                             | Photo 9                                                                              |

The images reveal symbolic meanings that were categorized into four major themes.

1. Theme 1: Meaning and Cultural Identity. Several images, such as traditional Balinese statues and structured landscapes (Photo 1), represent a sense of cultural identity and meaning in work. These visuals suggest that engagement is closely linked to feeling connected to the cultural and environmental context of the workplace. “Work feels meaningful when it is connected to something bigger, like culture and environment.” This indicates that for Generation Z, engagement is not only task-oriented but also value-driven.
2. Theme 2: Support and Stability. The image of a tree (Photo 2 dan Photo 3) supported by external structures symbolizes the importance of organizational support. Participants implicitly highlight that, similar to the tree, employees require guidance, supervision, and support systems to grow and remain stable. “Without support, it is hard to stay strong in this kind of work.” This aligns with the concept of job resources in engagement theory.
3. Theme 3: Balance and Well-being. The stacked stones (Photo 4) represent balance and stability, reflecting the importance of maintaining equilibrium between work demands and personal well-being. Conversely, empty green spaces (Photo 7) and repetitive surfaces indicate monotony and lack of stimulation, which may reduce engagement. “If work is too repetitive or exhausting, it feels empty.” This suggests that engagement is strongly influenced by psychological balance rather than merely workload.
4. Theme 4: Work Challenges and Pressure. Images such as moss-covered stairs (Photo 5) and cracked stones (Photo 9) symbolize workplace challenges, pressure, and environmental stress. These visuals reflect how physical and psychological conditions in the workplace can contribute to disengagement. “Sometimes the work environment itself makes it harder to stay motivated.” These findings highlight the role of job demands in shaping engagement experiences.
5. Theme 5: Adaptation and Growth. The image of a tree growing with attached plants (epiphytes) in Photo 8 reflects adaptability and coexistence within the work environment. It suggests that Generation Z employees are capable of adapting, but their engagement depends on how supportive and flexible the environment is.

## Discussion

This study set out to explore work engagement among Generation Z in the hospitality industry by integrating macro-level bibliometric mapping with micro-level experiential insights derived from photovoice. The findings reveal a compelling narrative: while the academic discourse on work engagement remains largely anchored in performance-oriented and structural perspectives, the lived experiences of Generation Z suggest a more nuanced, meaning-driven, and human-centered understanding of engagement.

The bibliometric results demonstrate that the dominant discourse in work engagement research continues to revolve around performance, productivity, and turnover intention. This finding is consistent with the theoretical foundation of the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model, which posits that employee engagement is shaped by the balance between job demands and job resources (Barbier et al., 2013). Within the hospitality context, this is particularly relevant, as high job demands such as long working hours, emotional labor, and service pressure, are often mitigated by resources such as organizational support, leadership, and work environment.

However, while the JD-R model provides a robust explanation of engagement from a structural perspective, the findings of this study suggest that it may not fully capture how engagement is experienced by Generation Z employees. The overlay visualization indicates a clear shift in recent research toward constructs such as meaningful work, work-life balance, and quiet quitting. This trend reflects broader transformations in the nature of work, where employees increasingly seek purpose, autonomy, and



psychological well-being (Dierendonck & Lam, 2023). In this regard, engagement is no longer solely a function of job design but also a reflection of value alignment and personal meaning.

This shift becomes even more evident when examining the photovoice findings. Participants' visual representations such as balanced stones, supported trees, and culturally symbolic elements, highlight that engagement is deeply embedded in experiential and symbolic dimensions. These findings resonate with the concept of meaningful work, which suggests that employees are more engaged when they perceive their work as significant and aligned with their personal values (Hazzaa et al., 2021). For Generation Z, this sense of meaning appears to extend beyond task completion to include cultural identity, environmental connection, and emotional fulfillment.

Furthermore, the emphasis on balance and well-being observed in the photovoice data aligns with emerging research on sustainable work engagement. Contemporary scholars argue that engagement should not be understood merely as high energy and dedication but also as a sustainable state that supports long-term well-being (Rasool et al., 2021). The visual metaphor of balance in this study reflects a critical insight: excessive job demands without adequate recovery or flexibility may not only reduce engagement but also lead to disengagement, as reflected in the concept of quiet quitting.

Another important insight emerging from this study is the role of organizational support and environment. The symbolic representation of supported structures suggests that Generation Z employees require continuous guidance, feedback, and a psychologically safe environment to remain engaged. This is consistent with social exchange theory, which posits that employees reciprocate supportive organizational practices with positive attitudes and behaviors, including engagement (Saks, 2022). However, unlike previous generations, Generation Z appears to interpret support not only in functional terms but also in relational and emotional terms.

Despite these alignments, a critical gap remains between theoretical models and lived experiences. The bibliometric analysis shows that constructs such as performance and turnover dominate the literature, while dimensions such as meaning, identity, and emotional connection are less central. This suggests that existing frameworks may be overly instrumental, focusing on what engagement produces rather than how it is experienced. The findings of this study therefore support the argument that engagement should be reconceptualized as a multidimensional construct that integrates both structural and experiential elements.

From a generational perspective, this study highlights an important transition in how work is perceived. Generation Z employees are not necessarily less engaged, as often assumed, but rather differently engaged. Their engagement is contingent upon factors that extend beyond traditional organizational structures, including flexibility, purpose, and authenticity. This aligns with recent generational studies suggesting that younger workers prioritize meaningful experiences and psychological well-being over conventional career incentives (Albrecht et al., 2021).

Taken together, these findings suggest that the future of work engagement in hospitality lies in moving beyond a purely performance-driven paradigm toward a more holistic and human-centered approach. Integrating insights from both bibliometric analysis and photovoice allows for a more comprehensive understanding of engagement as a dynamic interplay between organizational systems and individual meaning-making processes.

## Conclusions

The findings reveal that the existing body of literature is predominantly structured around performance-oriented perspectives, where work engagement is closely linked to productivity, employee performance, and turnover intention. This confirms the continued dominance of the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R)

framework in explaining engagement within hospitality contexts. However, the study also uncovers a significant shift in emerging research trends. Contemporary themes such as meaningful work, work-life balance, and quiet quitting indicate a transition toward more human-centered perspectives on engagement. This shift is further reinforced by the photovoice findings, which highlight that Generation Z employees interpret engagement not only through structural factors such as job demands and resources, but also through experiential dimensions, including meaning, identity, emotional connection, and environmental context.

This study contributes to the literature by extending the JD-R framework beyond its traditional boundaries. It demonstrates that work engagement should not be viewed solely as a function of job demands and resources but also as a socially constructed and meaning-driven experience. The integration of generational perspectives further enriches engagement theory, highlighting the need to incorporate values, identity, and psychological well-being into future models.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that hospitality organizations need to move beyond traditional engagement strategies that focus primarily on performance and retention. Instead, organizations should adopt a more human-centered approach by:

1. Designing meaningful work experiences that align with employees' values and purpose
2. Promoting work-life balance through flexible scheduling and supportive policies
3. Strengthening recognition and appreciation systems to enhance emotional connection.
4. Creating inclusive and supportive work environments that foster psychological safety

Future research is encouraged to expand the scope by incorporating cross-cultural comparisons, larger samples, and mixed-method approaches. Further studies may also explore the integration of digital ethnography or real-time data to deepen the understanding of engagement among Generation Z.

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# DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY

## Barriers to Technology Adoption in Development Oriented - Policy: Implications for Governance and Service Delivery

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### Abstract

*Technology has become an essential tool for enhancing the efficiency, transparency, and effectiveness of public administration. In development-oriented public policy, the adoption of digital tools has the potential to improve programme design, service delivery, and citizen engagement. However, many governments, particularly in developing countries, face significant challenges in integrating technology effectively into public sector operations. This paper examines the Barriers to Technology Adoption in Development oriented-Policy: Implications for Governance and Service Delivery Drawing on scholarly literature from digital governance studies were analyzed thematically. The paper identifies key obstacles including inadequate digital infrastructure, limited technical and institutional capacity, financial constraints, resistance to change within public institutions, weak inter-agency coordination, and concerns over data security and privacy. The paper further identifies strategies to overcome these barriers, emphasizing the need for targeted investment in digital infrastructure, capacity-building initiatives for public officials, institutional reforms, integrated digital systems, robust cybersecurity frameworks, and partnerships with private sector actors, civil society, and international development organizations. The findings indicate the importance of creating an enabling environment that combines technological resources with organizational culture, leadership commitment, and institutional readiness to foster innovation, accountability, and citizen-centered service delivery. The paper contributes to the growing body of research on digital governance, e-government, and development administration by providing a comprehensive analysis of the challenges and solutions associated with technology adoption in public policy.*

**Keywords:** Technology Adoption, Public Policy, Development Administration, Governance, Service Delivery

### Introduction

In recent decades, technology has become an important tool for improving governance and public administration. Governments across the world increasingly rely on digital technologies, particularly information and communication technologies (ICT), to enhance policy implementation, improve service delivery, and strengthen accountability in public institutions. The use of technology in government, often described as e-government or digital governance, has been widely promoted as a means of making public institutions more efficient, transparent, and responsive to citizens' needs (Layne & Lee, 2001; Ndou, 2004). Through digital systems, governments are able to improve communication with citizens, streamline administrative procedures, and facilitate the monitoring of development programmes.

Technology adoption has therefore become an important component of development-oriented public policy. Many development policies today rely on digital tools for planning, data collection, monitoring, and service delivery. For instance, digital platforms are increasingly used in sectors such as health, education, agriculture, and social welfare to improve the reach and effectiveness of government programmes. International development agendas also emphasize the role of technology in promoting good governance and achieving sustainable development outcomes. The use of ICT in government has been recognized as a key mechanism for improving public service delivery, enhancing transparency, and supporting socio-economic development (Bhatnagar, 2004; United Nations, 2016). As a result, many governments, especially in developing countries, have introduced various digital initiatives aimed at modernizing public administration and strengthening policy implementation.

Despite these efforts, the adoption of technology in development-oriented public policy has not been without challenges. Evidence from many developing countries shows that the implementation of digital government initiatives often faces significant barriers. These barriers include limited digital infrastructure, insufficient technical capacity within public institutions, financial constraints, and resistance to organizational change. In some cases, technological projects fail to achieve their intended objectives because they do not adequately reflect the institutional and socio-economic realities of the countries where they are implemented (Heeks, 2002). Studies have shown that many e-government initiatives in developing countries either fail completely or achieve only partial success due to weak institutional capacity and poor alignment between technology design and local conditions (Heeks, 2003; Ndou, 2004).

However, while existing studies have identified various challenges associated with e-government and digital governance in developing countries, there remains a limited comprehensive understanding of how these barriers interact within development-oriented public policy frameworks and how they collectively influence governance outcomes and service delivery effectiveness. Insufficient attention has been given to the integrated role of institutional, infrastructural, and socio-economic factors in shaping technology adoption within policy processes, thereby creating a gap that constrains the development of context-specific and effective digital governance strategies.

Given these challenges, it is important to examine the factors that hinder effective technology adoption in development-oriented public policy. Understanding of these barriers is necessary for improving the design and implementation of digital governance initiatives. Technological investments in public administration may fail to deliver the expected improvements in policy implementation and service delivery without addressing these constraints. This paper therefore examines the barriers to technology adoption in development-oriented public policy, with particular attention to the institutional, infrastructural, and socio-economic factors that influence technology use in public administration and governance.

### **Conceptual and Theoretical Foundations**

This section clarifies three important concepts used in the study - technology adoption,

development-oriented public policy, and digital governance. These concepts provide an analytical foundation for examining how technology interacts with public policy processes and development administration.

### **Technology Adoption**

Technology adoption generally refers to the process through which individuals, organizations, or institutions begin to use new technologies and integrate them into their activities or operations. In the context of public administration, technology adoption involves the introduction and use of digital systems, ICT, and other technological innovations to improve governance processes, service delivery, and policy implementation. One of the most widely used theoretical explanations of technology adoption is the Diffusion of Innovation theory developed by Rogers (2003). According to Rogers, the adoption of innovations depends on how new ideas or technologies spread through social systems over time. The theory highlights several factors that influence adoption, including the perceived advantages of the innovation, its compatibility with existing systems, its complexity, and the ability of users to test or observe its benefits. In public institutions, these factors influence how government agencies decide to adopt and integrate new technological systems. Another important framework is the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), originally developed by Davis (1989). The model suggests that two key factors influence whether individuals accept and use a new technology, i.e. perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Perceived usefulness refers to the extent to which a person believes that using a technology will improve job performance, while perceived ease of use refers to the degree to which the technology is considered easy to understand and operate. In the public sector, these perceptions often shape how civil servants and policy implementers respond to digital systems introduced within government institutions.

Despite its usefulness, TAM also has limitations in explaining technology adoption in public sector and developing country contexts. The model primarily focuses on individual attitudes and behavioral intentions, thereby overlooking broader institutional, organizational, and environmental factors that influence technology use in government settings. In many developing countries, issues such as limited infrastructure, lack of technical capacity, policy inconsistencies, and socio-economic inequalities play a more significant role than individual perceptions. Additionally, TAM assumes a level of user autonomy that may not exist in public institutions where technology use is often mandatory. As such, the model may not fully capture the complexities of technology adoption in development-oriented public policy.

In development administration, technology adoption often involves the use of digital tools for data collection, policy monitoring, communication, and service delivery. Governments may adopt technologies such as electronic databases, digital identification systems, mobile applications, and online service platforms to improve administrative efficiency and reach broader segments of the population. However, the adoption process is not always smooth, particularly in developing countries where infrastructural limitations and institutional constraints may affect the successful integration of new technologies (Heeks, 2002). Therefore, technology adoption in public policy contexts is

not only a technical process but also an institutional and organizational one. It requires supportive policies, skilled personnel, adequate infrastructure, and a governance environment that encourages innovation and learning.

### **Public Policy**

Public policy broadly refers to the decisions, actions, and programs implemented by governments to address societal problems and promote collective welfare. Scholars commonly define public policy as a course of action or inaction adopted by governments in response to public issues (Dye, 2013). Public policies guide government activities in areas such as education, health, agriculture, economic development, and social welfare. Within this broader framework, development-oriented public policy refers specifically to policies designed to promote socio-economic development and improve the quality of life of citizens. Such policies focus on addressing development challenges such as poverty reduction, infrastructure development, education access, healthcare delivery, and employment generation. public policy in general covers a wide range of government actions addressing diverse societal concerns, not all public policies are specifically designed with a primary focus on development outcomes. Some policies may aim at regulation, security, or administrative control without directly targeting socio-economic transformation.

### **Development-Oriented Public Policy**

Development-oriented policies are therefore closely linked to the broader goals of national development and social progress. In many developing countries, governments rely on public policy as a central instrument for guiding development planning and implementing development programmes. Development administration scholars have emphasized the role of public policy in mobilizing resources, coordinating development initiatives, and addressing structural inequalities within society (Todaro & Smith, 2020). Effective development-oriented policies often require strong institutional capacity, reliable information systems, and efficient mechanisms for policy implementation. Technology increasingly plays an important role in shaping the design and implementation of development-oriented public policies. Digital tools can support evidence-based decision-making by enabling governments to collect and analyze data more effectively. They also help improve transparency and accountability by making public information more accessible to citizens. As a result, many governments have integrated digital technologies into their development strategies to strengthen policy outcomes and improve public service delivery (United Nations, 2022). However, the effectiveness of development-oriented public policy depends not only on the formulation of sound policies but also on the capacity of institutions to implement them effectively. Where institutional systems are weak or technological resources are limited, the potential benefits of technology-driven policy initiatives may not be fully realized.

### **Digital Governance**

Digital governance refers to the use of digital technologies by governments to improve governance processes, policy implementation, and interactions with citizens and other stakeholders. The concept is closely related to e-government, which involves the use of ICT to deliver government services and facilitate communication between government

institutions and the public (Fang, 2002). While e-government primarily focuses on the digitalization of government services and information delivery, digital governance is broader and emphasizes the use of digital technologies to reshape governance processes, including decision-making, stakeholder engagement, and institutional coordination. Digital governance extends beyond simple online service delivery. It involves the broader transformation of governance systems through the integration of digital technologies into administrative structures and decision-making processes. In this regard, digital transformation in the public sector represents an even deeper and more comprehensive change, involving the fundamental reconfiguration of public institutions, organizational culture, and service delivery models through the strategic use of digital technologies. Unlike e-government and digital governance, which may focus on improving existing systems, digital transformation seeks to redesign how government operates and delivers value to citizens.

Through digital governance, governments can enhance efficiency, transparency, participation, and accountability in public administration (Gil-Garcia et al., 2014; Cheri & Abdullahi, 2018). For example, digital platforms can support electronic tax administration, online licensing systems, digital health records, and electronic procurement systems. These systems not only improve efficiency but also help reduce opportunities for corruption by promoting transparency in government transactions.

International organizations have also highlighted the importance of digital governance in achieving sustainable development goals. The United Nations (2022) emphasizes that digital government initiatives can strengthen public institutions and promote inclusive development when properly implemented. Through making information and services more accessible, digital governance can also increase citizen participation in policy processes. Despite these advantages, the implementation of digital governance initiatives often faces several challenges, particularly in developing countries. Limited infrastructure, inadequate technical skills, weak institutional coordination, and financial constraints can hinder the effective adoption of digital technologies in public administration. These challenges make it necessary to examine the barriers that limit the successful integration of technology into development-oriented public policy.

### **Barriers to Technology Adoption in Development-Oriented Public Policy**

Despite the growing importance of digital technologies in governance, the adoption and effective use of technology in development-oriented public policy remains uneven, particularly in developing countries. While technology has the potential to improve policy implementation, service delivery, and administrative efficiency, its integration into public sector operations is shaped by a complex interaction of structural, institutional, and socio-economic constraints. These barriers do not operate in isolation; rather, they reinforce one another, creating systemic limitations that constrain the effectiveness of technology-driven policy initiatives. Some of the barriers to technology adoption in development-oriented public policy are as follows:

#### **i. Inadequate Digital Infrastructure**

The limitation of digital infrastructure represents not merely a technical deficiency but a



foundational constraint that conditions the entire process of technology adoption. The effectiveness of digital systems is contingent upon the availability of reliable electricity, stable internet connectivity, and appropriate technological equipment. Where these foundational systems are weak or unevenly distributed, the functionality of digital initiatives becomes inherently unstable and inconsistent. This structural weakness reduces the capacity of public institutions to institutionalize digital processes, thereby limiting the continuity and scalability of technology-based interventions.

Furthermore, infrastructural deficiencies extend beyond institutional limitations to shape patterns of access among citizens. Unequal access to digital resources creates differentiated levels of participation in technology-driven governance, thereby reinforcing existing socio-economic inequalities. In this sense, the digital divide is not simply an issue of access but a structural factor that mediates the inclusiveness and effectiveness of public policy outcomes. Consequently, infrastructure constraints systematically limit both the supply and demand sides of digital governance.

#### ii. Limited Technical and Institutional Capacity

The effectiveness of technology adoption is critically dependent on the interaction between human capacity and institutional capability. Limited technical expertise among public officials constrains the ability of institutions to utilize digital systems beyond superficial or routine functions. This often results in the underutilization of technological investments, where systems are adopted formally but not effectively integrated into core administrative processes.

At the institutional level, weak governance structures further compound these limitations by creating gaps in coordination, accountability, and strategic direction. The absence of coherent institutional frameworks reduces the ability to align technological innovations with administrative practices, leading to implementation mismatches. As Heeks (2003) suggests, such misalignments contribute to the gap between technological design and institutional reality, thereby increasing the likelihood of partial or failed implementation. Thus, capacity constraints operate both at the individual and systemic levels, limiting the transformative potential of technology in public policy.

#### iii. Financial Constraints

Financial limitations influence technology adoption not only by restricting initial investment but also by shaping the sustainability and long-term viability of digital initiatives. The high cost of acquiring, implementing, and maintaining technological systems introduces a structural constraint that affects decision-making within the public sector. In resource-constrained environments, governments are often compelled to prioritize short-term or fragmented technological solutions over comprehensive and integrated systems.

This fragmentation reduces the overall coherence of digital governance by creating isolated systems that lack interoperability and strategic alignment. Moreover, insufficient funding for maintenance and system upgrades leads to technological obsolescence, thereby undermining the continuity of digital initiatives. Financial constraints therefore function as a limiting factor that affects both the scale and durability of technology adoption in public policy contexts.

#### iv. Institutional Resistance and Organizational Culture

Technology adoption within public institutions is not solely a technical process but also a deeply organizational one shaped by existing norms, values, and power structures. Bureaucratic systems tend to prioritize stability, predictability, and adherence to established procedures, which can create inherent resistance to change. This resistance is often rooted in perceived threats to authority, job security, and established work routines. Such dynamics influence the willingness of public officials to engage with new technologies, thereby affecting the pace and depth of adoption. Organizational culture thus acts as a mediating factor that determines whether technological innovations are embraced, adapted, or resisted. Without supportive leadership and a culture that encourages innovation, digital initiatives are likely to remain superficial or encounter passive resistance during implementation (Bannister & Connolly, 2014). In this way, institutional resistance constrains not only adoption but also the effective utilization of technology.

#### v. Weak Policy Coordination and Governance Frameworks

The integration of technology into public policy requires a high level of coordination across multiple institutions and sectors. Weak coordination mechanisms create fragmentation in policy implementation, resulting in disjointed technological systems and inconsistent administrative practices. This fragmentation reduces the efficiency of digital governance by limiting data sharing, interoperability, and collective decision-making.

The absence of coherent governance frameworks further exacerbates these challenges by creating ambiguity in roles, responsibilities, and accountability structures. Without integrated policy frameworks, technological initiatives are implemented in isolation, thereby reducing their capacity to support broader policy objectives. Weak coordination therefore undermines the systemic coherence necessary for effective technology adoption, limiting its impact on governance outcomes.

#### vi. Data Security, Privacy, and Trust Concerns

The increasing reliance on digital systems in public administration introduces new dimensions of risk related to data security and privacy. Weak regulatory frameworks and limited cybersecurity capacity create vulnerabilities that affect both institutional confidence and public trust. These concerns influence the willingness of both governments and citizens to engage with digital platforms, thereby shaping the overall adoption process. Trust, in this context, functions as a critical enabling condition for digital governance. Where trust in data protection mechanisms is low, citizens may be reluctant to use digital services, while institutions may hesitate to fully digitize sensitive processes. This dynamic creates a feedback loop in which limited trust reduces usage, and low usage undermines the perceived effectiveness of digital systems. Consequently, data security and privacy concerns act as both a technical and social barrier to technology adoption in public policy.

### **Strategies for Improving Technology Adoption**

Governments and development stakeholders must adopt comprehensive strategies that

promote the effective integration of digital technologies into public administration while ensuring that technological innovations contribute to inclusive and sustainable development outcomes. However, these strategies are not equally urgent or universally applicable; their effectiveness depends on institutional capacity, resource availability, and governance conditions. Therefore, a sequenced and context-sensitive approach is required.

**i. *Foundational Priority: Investment in Digital Infrastructure***

Investment in digital infrastructure represents the most immediate and non-negotiable priority, particularly in contexts where basic connectivity and electricity remain unreliable. Without this foundation, other interventions such as digital skills development or system integration are unlikely to yield meaningful outcomes. In low-capacity environments, governments should first focus on expanding access in underserved areas and ensuring minimum service reliability before pursuing more advanced digital initiatives. Where infrastructure is relatively established, the policy focus should shift toward system scalability, maintenance, and resilience to prevent service disruptions and ensure continuity. Thus, infrastructure investment is most critical at early stages of digital development but remains relevant as systems expand.

**ii. *Conditional Priority: Capacity Building and Digital Skills Development***

Capacity building becomes most effective once a basic level of infrastructure is in place. The presence of digital systems without corresponding human capacity leads to underutilization and inefficiency. However, the type of capacity required varies by institutional context. In weaker administrative systems, priority should be given to basic digital literacy and operational skills for frontline workers. In more advanced settings, emphasis should shift toward specialized competencies such as data analytics, cybersecurity, and system design. Importantly, capacity development must be continuous rather than one-off, as technological systems evolve over time. The policy implication is that skills development should be aligned with the level of technological maturity within institutions.

**iii. *Enabling Condition: Institutional Reforms and Governance Structures***

Institutional reforms function as an enabling condition that determines whether investments in infrastructure and capacity translate into effective outcomes. In contexts characterized by weak governance, unclear mandates, and bureaucratic rigidity, digital initiatives are likely to face resistance or fragmentation regardless of technical investments. Therefore, reforms should prioritize clarifying institutional responsibilities, strengthening leadership commitment, and embedding accountability mechanisms. In more stable institutional environments, the focus should shift toward fostering innovation, flexibility, and performance-based management. This suggests that institutional reform is not a one-size-fits-all strategy but must respond to the specific governance deficits within a system.

**iv. *Integration Stage: Inter-Agency Coordination and System Interoperability***

Coordination and system integration become critical once multiple digital initiatives are in place. At this stage, the absence of interoperability creates inefficiencies through duplication, data silos, and inconsistent service delivery. Governments operating at this

level should prioritize the development of shared data standards, integrated platforms, and formal coordination mechanisms across agencies. In less mature systems, however, attempting full integration prematurely may overburden institutional capacity. Therefore, coordination strategies should be phased, beginning with basic information sharing and gradually progressing toward fully integrated systems as institutional capacity improves.

**v. *Cross-Cutting Requirement: Data Protection and Cybersecurity***

Data protection and cybersecurity are not stand-alone interventions but cross-cutting requirements that become increasingly critical as digital systems expand. In early stages of adoption, basic safeguards and awareness mechanisms may be sufficient. However, as governments begin to manage large-scale citizen data and deliver sensitive services digitally, more robust legal frameworks, technical protections, and monitoring systems become essential. The absence of these measures can undermine public trust and reduce system usage, thereby weakening the overall effectiveness of digital governance. Thus, the priority of cybersecurity increases with the scale and sensitivity of digital operations.

**vi. *Strategic Lever: Partnerships with Stakeholders***

Partnerships serve as a strategic lever that can accelerate technology adoption, particularly in resource-constrained environments. However, their relevance varies depending on internal government capacity. In low-capacity contexts, external partnerships with private sector actors and development agencies are often essential for providing technical expertise and financial support. In stronger institutional environments, partnerships should focus more on innovation, co-production of services, and citizen engagement. This implies that partnerships are not merely supportive mechanisms but adaptive tools that should be aligned with the specific capacity gaps and development priorities of the public sector.

**Policy Implication**

Taken together, these strategies suggest that effective technology adoption in development-oriented public policy is not achieved through isolated interventions but through a sequenced and context-driven approach. Governments must prioritize foundational infrastructure, align capacity development with system maturity, and implement institutional reforms that enable coordination and accountability. As digital systems expand, attention must shift toward integration, data governance, and strategic partnerships. The key implication is that the success of digital governance depends less on the availability of technology and more on the alignment between technological investments, institutional capacity, and governance structures.

**Research Methodology**

The paper adopts a qualitative review approach to examine the barriers to technology adoption in development-oriented public policy and the implications for development administration. The paper relies primarily on a systematic review of existing scholarly literature, including peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and publications from international organizations that focus on digital governance, e-government, and technology adoption in public administration. Key academic databases and reputable

institutional sources were consulted to identify relevant literature that provides conceptual, theoretical, and empirical insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with the integration of digital technologies in public sector governance. The paper employs a thematic analytical approach in reviewing the literature and relevant sources were analyzed to identify recurring themes related to barriers to technology adoption. The themes were then synthesized to develop a structured discussion of the barriers and their implications for development administration. The findings from the literature were further used to propose practical strategies for improving technology adoption in development-oriented public policy. This methodological approach enables the study to provide a comprehensive conceptual and policy-oriented analysis without relying on primary data collection.

### **Conclusion**

The integration of technology into development-oriented public policy represents both a critical opportunity and a complex challenge for public administration. This paper has highlighted that while digital tools have the potential to improve efficiency, transparency, service delivery, and citizen engagement, their effectiveness is fundamentally conditioned by underlying structural, institutional, and financial constraints. These barriers are not merely operational limitations but systemic factors that shape how, when, and to what extent technology can contribute to governance outcomes. As such, their persistence directly limits the capacity of public institutions to implement development-oriented policies effectively, reduces service delivery performance, and constrains opportunities for institutional learning and innovation. In addition, unequal access to digital technologies reinforces existing socio-economic inequalities, thereby undermining the inclusiveness of development interventions.

Addressing these challenges requires more than a broad combination of strategies; it demands a prioritized and context-sensitive approach to reform. In contexts where basic infrastructure is weak, investment in digital infrastructure remains the primary entry point, as other interventions are unlikely to be effective without it. Where infrastructure is relatively established, the emphasis should shift toward building technical and institutional capacity to ensure that digital systems are effectively utilized rather than merely adopted. Institutional reforms become critical in environments characterized by weak governance structures, as they provide the necessary foundation for coordination, accountability, and sustained implementation. As digital systems expand, greater attention must be given to inter-agency coordination and system integration to avoid fragmentation and inefficiencies. At more advanced stages, data protection and cybersecurity emerge as essential conditions for maintaining public trust and ensuring the long-term sustainability of digital governance initiatives. Partnerships with external stakeholders, meanwhile, serve as adaptive mechanisms that can complement internal capacity, particularly in resource-constrained settings.

The key implication of this analysis is that technology adoption in development-oriented public policy is not inherently transformative; its impact depends on the alignment between technological investments, institutional capacity, and governance frameworks.

Therefore, policymakers must move beyond viewing technology as a stand-alone solution and instead approach it as part of a broader governance reform process. In practical terms, this means sequencing interventions appropriately, tailoring strategies to specific institutional contexts, and ensuring that digital initiatives are embedded within existing administrative systems. Ultimately, technology adoption should be understood not simply as an operational improvement, but as a conditional and strategic enabler of effective, inclusive, and sustainable development-oriented public policy.

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# From Content to Commerce: TikTok Affiliate Program as a New Trend in Social Media Employment

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## Abstract

*The development of social media has given rise to various new forms of digital-based work, one of which is the affiliate program on the TikTok platform. TikTok not only serves as a form of entertainment but has also evolved into a digital economic space through features like TikTok Shop and TikTok Affiliate, which allow users to earn income by promoting products and receiving commissions from each transaction. This phenomenon has made affiliate marketing increasingly popular and is viewed as a trending job, particularly among the younger generation. This study aims to analyze the development of the TikTok Affiliate program as a trending job and the factors driving users' interest in participating. The research employs a qualitative approach using in-depth interviews with active TikTok creators involved in the affiliate program as the data collection method. The novelty of this study lies in its analysis of the TikTok Affiliate program through the lens of platform capitalism, highlighting how digital platforms structure labor relations, commodify user-generated content, and redistribute economic opportunities. This research demonstrates that social media not only creates new jobs but also redefines work by embedding economic activities within platform-driven ecosystems.*

**Keywords:** TikTok, affiliate program, digital employment, social media

## Introduction

The development of digital technology and the internet has driven a major transformation in the way people live. Digital technology has brought significant changes to various aspects of society, including how people communicate, interact, and work. Social media, which initially served only as a means of communication and entertainment, has now evolved into a digital economic space that enables individuals to earn income through online activities. This phenomenon is known as the creator economy an economic system where individuals can generate income through the production and distribution of digital content across various social media platforms (Othman et al., 2024).

One of the social media platforms that has experienced the most rapid growth in recent years is TikTok. This short-form video platform has successfully attracted users of all ages due to its ease of use, personalized recommendation algorithms, and the ability for content to go viral in a short time. TikTok's interest-based recommendation system is a key factor in increasing user engagement and accelerating content dissemination (Boeker & Urman, 2022).



In Indonesia, TikTok's popularity has seen a significant increase. As of early 2024, TikTok had approximately 126.8 million adult users in Indonesia, equivalent to about 64.8% of the total adult internet user population. This indicates that TikTok has become one of the most dominant digital platforms in the lives of Indonesians (DataReportal, 2024). As the number of users and the intensity of usage have increased, TikTok no longer functions solely as an entertainment medium but has evolved into a platform that integrates communication, entertainment, and e-commerce functions. TikTok introduced the TikTok Shop feature, which allows users to purchase products directly within the app. This integration of content and transactions has given rise to the concept of social commerce that is, buying and selling activities that occur within the same social media ecosystem (Othman et al., 2024).

Within this social commerce ecosystem, TikTok has also introduced the TikTok Affiliate program, a commission-based marketing system that enables creators to promote sellers' products and earn revenue from every transaction that occurs through the content they share. This marketing model combines the creator's role as both a content producer and a marketing intermediary, thereby creating a new form of work based on creativity, social influence, and digital activities (Sibulan & Galay-Limos, 2024). The TikTok affiliate program is appealing because it opens up opportunities for anyone to earn income without needing their own products or significant capital. Users simply need to create engaging content and include affiliate links to earn commissions on every transaction that takes place. This ease of entry has led to a growing number of individuals interested in becoming affiliates, whether as a side job or a primary occupation.

The phenomenon of the rising number of affiliates on TikTok demonstrates that social media is no longer merely a source of entertainment but has evolved into a digital workspace that gives rise to new types of jobs. Many young people are beginning to view activities as creators and affiliates as promising career options due to the flexibility of working hours, earning potential, and their alignment with today's digital lifestyle. On the other hand, the rise of digital platform-based work has also brought about changes in how society views the concept of work and economic stability. Work, which was previously synonymous with formal systems and organizational structures, is now shifting toward platform-based work that is more flexible but also carries a higher degree of uncertainty. Therefore, the phenomenon of the TikTok Affiliate program as a trending form of work needs to be scientifically examined to understand its impact on changes in the structure of work, economic behavior, and the younger generation's perceptions of the workforce in the digital age.

However, despite the growing popularity of the TikTok Affiliate program, existing studies have largely focused on digital marketing effectiveness and consumer behavior, with limited attention to its implications as a form of digital labor within the framework of platform capitalism, particularly in the Indonesian context. This gap highlights the need for research that not only examines the economic opportunities offered by the program but also critically analyzes how platform structures shape work patterns, income generation, and labor precarity.

Therefore, this study is important as it contributes both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it enriches the discourse on digital labor and platform capitalism by providing empirical insights into emerging forms of work in social

media. Practically, it offers a deeper understanding for policymakers, academics, and digital practitioners regarding the opportunities and challenges of platform-based work, especially in shaping sustainable and inclusive digital economic participation among the younger generation.

## **Literature Review**

### **1. Social Media as a Digital Economic Space**

The development of social media has not only transformed communication patterns but has also shaped a new economic space that enables users to generate income through digital activities. This concept is known as the creator economy a system in which individuals earn income through content production, platform monetization, and audience interaction (Othman et al., 2024). In this context, social media functions as a digital marketplace that brings together creators, consumers, and businesses within a single ecosystem. Platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube offer various monetization features including ads, donations, and affiliate programs that drive the emergence of new jobs centered on digital content. This phenomenon demonstrates that social media has evolved from a mere communication tool into an integral part of the global digital economy (Abidin, 2020).

### **2. TikTok's Popularity and Algorithmic Characteristics**

TikTok has become one of the fastest-growing social media platforms in the world by relying on an algorithm-based recommendation system capable of tailoring content to users' preferences. This algorithm enables content from even ordinary users to go viral without requiring a large following, thereby creating more equitable opportunities for new creators (Boeker & Urman, 2022). Additionally, the simple and easy-to-produce short-form video format makes TikTok more inclusive compared to other platforms that require more complex content production processes. This increases user participation and accelerates the spread of digital trends, including content-based job trends such as affiliate marketing (Kaye, Chen, & Zeng, 2021).

### **3. The Concept of Social Commerce on Social Media**

Social commerce is the integration of social media and e-commerce, enabling users to make transactions directly through the same platform. This concept has grown rapidly as users increasingly trust recommendations from creators over conventional advertisements (Hajli, 2015). TikTok implements this concept through the TikTok Shop feature, which combines content, interaction, and transactions within a single app. As a result, marketing activities are no longer one-way but become interactive and based on social trust, ultimately increasing the likelihood of sales conversions (Li et al., 2023).

### **4. Affiliate Marketing as a Digital Marketing Strategy**

Affiliate marketing is a commission-based marketing system in which individuals promote products owned by others and receive compensation for each transaction made through an affiliate link. This model is considered effective because it leverages social influence and personal relationships between creators and their audiences (Duffy & Poell, 2022). On TikTok, this system is implemented through the TikTok Affiliate program, which allows creators to add product links to their content. Research shows that affiliate content presented in an authentic and informative manner has a significant influence on consumer purchasing decisions, particularly among younger generations who trust creators' recommendations more than formal advertisements (Sibulan & Galay-Limos, 2024).

### **5. TikTok Affiliates as a New Form of Employment**

The emergence of affiliate programs on TikTok has given rise to a new profession known as the affiliate content creator. This profession reflects a shift in the structure of employment from the formal sector toward a platform-based digital economy. This type of work is characterized by flexible hours, minimal initial capital, and a reliance on creativity as well as the performance of the platform's algorithms (Abidin, 2020). This phenomenon is also linked to the concept of the platform economy, where digital companies provide the infrastructure that enables individuals to work independently without a formal employment relationship. While offering flexibility, platform-based work also carries risks such as income uncertainty and dependence on platform policies (Srnicek, 2017).

Based on a review of the literature, it can be concluded that social media has evolved into a digital economic space. The social media platform TikTok possesses algorithmic characteristics that support virality and monetization. Social commerce strengthens the integration between content and transactions, making affiliate marketing an effective marketing model in the digital age. The existence of the TikTok Affiliate program contributes to the emergence of new platform-based forms of employment.

The research gap lies in the limited number of studies that specifically address the TikTok Affiliate program as a trending employment phenomenon, rather than merely as a marketing strategy. Therefore, this study is important for examining the social and economic aspects of this phenomenon.

### **Research Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. The qualitative approach was chosen because the study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of affiliate programs on social media, particularly how the TikTok Affiliate Program has evolved into a trending form of work. This approach is interpretive in nature, allowing the researcher to capture subjective meanings, lived experiences, and social realities constructed by participants. By emphasizing participants' narratives, the study seeks to uncover how individuals interpret their roles, negotiate digital work practices,

and respond to the opportunities and constraints within platform-based economies (Creswell, 2018).

The research subjects consist of active TikTok users involved in the affiliate program. Informants were selected through purposive sampling based on specific criteria: actively producing affiliate-related content, having earned commissions, and possessing sufficient experience to reflect on their engagement. A total of 10 informants were involved in this study, enabling the researcher to obtain rich and in-depth qualitative data while maintaining analytical focus. This sampling strategy ensures that the data collected is relevant and aligned with the research objectives (Sugiyono, 2022).

Data were primarily collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, which provided flexibility for the researcher to explore emerging themes while maintaining focus on key research questions. The interview guide included themes such as motivations for joining the affiliate program, content production strategies, perceptions of income stability, and experiences with platform algorithms. In addition to interviews, documentation techniques were employed to support and contextualize the data, including analysis of affiliate content, screenshots of engagement metrics, and platform policy documents.

The data analysis process followed the interactive model of Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña, consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data condensation involved coding interview transcripts through open coding to identify initial categories, followed by axial coding to establish relationships between themes such as motivation, flexibility, algorithmic influence, and income generation. Data display was conducted using thematic matrices to facilitate pattern recognition across informants.

The analysis was conducted iteratively, allowing continuous interaction between data collection and interpretation. Furthermore, the interpretation of findings was guided by the perspective of platform capitalism, linking individual experiences with broader structural dynamics of digital labor. To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, this study applied triangulation techniques, including source triangulation (comparing responses across the 10 informants) and method triangulation (cross-checking interview data with documentation). The researcher also engaged in reflexivity to minimize bias and enhance the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Research Findings**

This study involved a number of informants who are active users of TikTok and have participated in the TikTok Affiliate Program. Based on the interview results, most informants reported that they first became aware of the affiliate program through content created by other users that appeared on their “For You Page.” This finding not only indicates the central role of TikTok’s recommendation algorithm in disseminating information, but also reveals how economic opportunities are algorithmically mediated and unevenly distributed. In this sense, access to work opportunities is no longer entirely based on

individual initiative but is significantly shaped by platform visibility mechanisms (Boeker & Urman, 2022).

The informants' primary motivation for joining the affiliate program was to earn additional income in a flexible, time-independent manner. Informants emphasized the low entry barriers, minimal capital requirements, and the ability to integrate affiliate activities into their daily routines, such as studying or maintaining a primary job. However, beyond these pragmatic motivations, the findings suggest a deeper shift in how work is conceptualized—where flexibility and autonomy are prioritized, even at the cost of income stability and long-term security. This reflects broader characteristics of digital labor within platform capitalism, where workers are attracted by perceived freedom but remain structurally dependent on platform systems (Sibulan & Galay-Limos, 2024).

In addition, success in generating commissions is highly contingent upon the creator's ability to produce engaging and consistent content. Informants highlighted the importance of following trends, optimizing content timing, and understanding audience preferences. This indicates that affiliate work is not merely a passive income activity but requires continuous digital labor, including emotional, creative, and cognitive efforts to align with platform dynamics. Furthermore, the need to constantly adapt to algorithmic changes suggests a form of "hidden labor", where creators must continuously learn and adjust strategies without guaranteed returns (Widodo et al., 2026).

Overall, these findings demonstrate that while the TikTok Affiliate program offers new economic opportunities, it simultaneously embeds users within a system of platform-dependent labor, where visibility, income, and success are largely governed by algorithmic structures rather than solely by individual effort.

### **The Growth of TikTok Shop and the Affiliate Ecosystem**

Since its launch, TikTok Shop has demonstrated rapid growth. TikTok Shop's Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) increased from approximately \$1 billion in 2021 to approximately \$33 billion in 2024, indicating significant expansion in the social media-based digital commerce sector (Statista, 2025). In Indonesia, TikTok Shop has become one of the dominant e-commerce platforms, with the beauty and health product categories contributing the largest share of GMV in 2025 (Statista, 2025). This growth creates significant opportunities for creators to earn income through affiliate programs, as they serve as intermediaries between sellers and consumers within the social commerce ecosystem. TikTok Affiliate uses a sales-based commission system (cost per sale), where creators earn a percentage of the price of products successfully sold through their content. This system differs from ad-based monetization because creators' earnings depend directly on sales conversions, not just the number of viewers. In practice, creators can promote products through short videos, live streams, and product links in digital shopping carts.

The revenue earned by creators comes from revenue sharing among sellers, platforms, and creators, which is a key characteristic of the modern social commerce business model (Guardian, 2025). Although earning opportunities through the TikTok Affiliate program are wide open, research shows that revenue distribution within the creator economy tends to be uneven. A small fraction of creators earn the majority of the revenue, while the majority of creators earn only relatively small amounts. This phenomenon is known as the “rich-get-richer” effect, where platform algorithms tend to amplify the visibility of already popular creators, thereby widening the income gap among creators (Strauss et al., 2025).

These findings are consistent with industry reports indicating that top-performing creators can earn tens to hundreds of millions of rupiah per month, while most new creators earn only small amounts or even nothing at all. The amount of income generated through the TikTok Affiliate program is influenced by several key factors, including the volume and consistency of content, audience trust in the creator, the conversion rate of promoted products, and the ability to leverage live streaming and viral trends.

TikTok’s recommendation algorithm also plays a crucial role in determining how widely a creator’s content can reach an audience, which ultimately impacts sales opportunities. TikTok Affiliate not only generates income for creators but also opens economic opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Many small businesses have been able to significantly increase sales after leveraging promotions from creators on TikTok Shop, making this platform one of the main drivers of global social commerce growth (Guardian, 2025).

## **Discussion**

### **TikTok as a Digital Workspace**

Research findings indicate that TikTok has undergone a shift in function from merely a form of entertainment to a digital workspace that enables users to generate income. This transformation reflects the expansion of the platform economy, where digital infrastructures mediate labor relations and economic activities (Srnicsek, 2017). The meaning of this finding suggests that work is no longer tied to physical workplaces or formal institutions but is increasingly embedded within digital platforms. This confirms previous studies that highlight how platforms restructure labor into more decentralized and individualized forms (Duffy & Poell, 2022). However, unlike conventional employment, this form of work is highly dependent on platform governance, indicating a shift from organizational control to algorithmic control.

### **Motivation and Job Flexibility**

Time flexibility and earning potential are the primary factors driving informants to choose affiliate programs as an alternative form of work. This finding reflects a broader socio-cultural shift among the younger generation,

where autonomy, flexibility, and work-life integration are valued more than job security. In line with Crystal Abidin (2020), the rise of the creator economy shows that individuals are increasingly drawn to forms of labor that allow self-expression while generating income. At the same time, this flexibility can be interpreted as a “double-edged sword,” offering freedom but also transferring economic risks from institutions to individuals.

### **The Role of Algorithms in Affiliate Success**

TikTok’s algorithm plays a crucial role in determining content visibility. Content that receives high engagement is recommended more frequently, thereby increasing the likelihood of sales conversions. Theoretically, this finding reinforces the concept of algorithmic governance, where digital platforms act as invisible regulators that shape opportunities and outcomes. This aligns with previous research (Boeker & Urman, 2022), but this study adds that success is not solely based on creativity, but also on the ability to strategically respond to algorithmic patterns, indicating the emergence of new digital competencies in platform-based work (Sujon & Ntallab, 2025).

### **TikTok Affiliate as a Trending Job**

Based on interview results, working as an affiliate is viewed as a trending job, particularly among the younger generation. Some informants expressed greater interest in becoming digital creators than pursuing formal employment. This finding signifies a structural transformation in the labor market, where platform-based work is increasingly normalized as a legitimate career path. It supports the argument of Duffy & Poell (2022) regarding the rise of digital labor, but also reveals a localized context in Indonesia where accessibility and low entry barriers accelerate this shift.

However, informants also acknowledged the uncertainty of income, as earnings are highly dependent on content performance and platform policies. This highlights a key contradiction within platform capitalism: while it offers open access and flexibility, it simultaneously produces precarious labor conditions characterized by income instability and dependence on opaque algorithmic systems (Kung et al., 2025).

However, informants also acknowledged the uncertainty of income, as earnings are highly dependent on content performance and platform policies. This situation indicates that platform-based work offers high flexibility but also carries a greater level of risk compared to conventional jobs.

### **Interpretation of Income Findings**

**Table 1: Average Monthly Income from TikTok Affiliate Content**

| Affiliate Level            | Estimated Monthly Income | Affiliate Level | Estimated Monthly Income          |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Beginner (0–3 months)      |                          |                 | IDR 500,000 – IDR 2,000,000       |
| Junior (3–6 months)        |                          |                 | IDR 2,000,000 – IDR 6,000,000     |
| Intermediate (6–12 months) |                          |                 | IDR 6,000,000 – IDR 20,000,000    |
| Top Creator                |                          |                 | IDR 20,000,000 – IDR 100,000,000+ |

[Source : data compiled by the researcher]

**Table 2: Average Income**

| Level of experience | Realistic income | Level of experience | Realistic income                |
|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| Beginner side       |                  |                     | IDR 0 – IDR 2,000,000           |
| Serious affiliate   |                  |                     | IDR 2,000,000 – IDR 10,000,000  |
| Full-time affiliate |                  |                     | IDR 10,000,000 – IDR 50,000,000 |
| Top performer       |                  |                     | > IDR 50,000,000                |

[Source : data compiled by the researcher]

Based on Table 1 and Table 2, most informants are positioned at the beginner level, with average earnings ranging from IDR 0 to IDR 2,000,000 per month. This indicates that although the discourse surrounding TikTok Affiliate often emphasizes high income potential, the reality for most participants remains modest and uncertain. Only a small proportion of users reach higher income levels, suggesting the presence of unequal opportunity distribution within the platform ecosystem (Maris et al., 2024).

Theoretically, this finding reinforces the notion of “winner-takes-all” dynamics in the platform economy, where visibility and income are concentrated among a small number of top performers. This also complements previous studies on digital labor, which argue that platform-based work tends to obscure inequality behind narratives of accessibility and opportunity.

### **TikTok Affiliates from the Perspective of Anthony Giddens’ Theory of Social Change**

The development of affiliate programs on the TikTok platform indicates a significant transformation in the work patterns of modern society. This phenomenon cannot be separated from the social changes triggered by advances in information and communication technology. In sociological studies, these changes can be analyzed through the theory of modernity proposed by Anthony Giddens, which emphasizes that modernization produces shifts in the social, economic, and cultural structures of society (Giddens, 1991).

According to Giddens, modern society is characterized by the increasing role of technology in organizing social life, including in the realm of work. In the past, work was synonymous with a structured, hierarchical system based on a physical location. However, with the emergence of digital platforms like TikTok, a new, more flexible form of work has emerged that is no longer bound by specific



time or place. The TikTok Affiliate Program allows individuals to work from anywhere, without being tied to an office or formal institution. This

situation indicates a shift from an industrial economy toward a digital economy, which is one of the primary characteristics of social change in modern society (Giddens, 1990).

One of the key concepts in Giddens' theory is disembedding, which refers to the process by which social activities become detached from their local context and shift to broader systems through technology. In the context of TikTok Affiliate, promotional activities, interactions, and transactions no longer take place in physical spaces such as stores or markets, but occur in a digital space that reaches a global audience. Affiliates can market products from manufacturers they do not even know personally, while consumers can purchase products without having to meet the seller. This demonstrates that economic and social relations are becoming increasingly unbound by geographical location, but instead depend on digital systems and global networks (Giddens, 1991).

In addition, several informants explained that they can work from home and do not need to meet face-to-face with sellers or buyers. One informant said:

*"I've never met the store or the buyer in person; everything is done through the app, but I still get a commission."*

This statement illustrates the process of disembedding the detachment of social and economic activities from physical spaces and their shift into the digital realm. Buying and selling activities that previously took place in markets or stores have now moved to a global, location-independent digital system (Giddens, 1990).

In addition to disembedding, Giddens also emphasizes the concept of the reflexivity of modernity the ability of modern individuals to actively evaluate and adjust their life choices based on constantly evolving information. Research findings indicate that most informants decided to join the affiliate program after observing the success of other creators and studying how the program operates. They consciously weighed the benefits, risks, and opportunities available before ultimately deciding to participate. This action reflects the reflexive nature of modern society, where individuals no longer merely follow tradition but actively shape their own life paths (Giddens, 1991).

The interview results show that most informants initially used TikTok solely as a form of entertainment. However, over time they began to notice other creators successfully earning income through the affiliate program. One informant stated:

*"At first I just watched regular videos, but after seeing that many people could make money from the TikTok Affiliate program, I became interested in trying it."*

This phenomenon reflects Anthony Giddens' concept of the reflexivity of modernity, in which modern individuals actively evaluate the information they receive and use it to determine their life choices. Informants do not merely act as

content consumers but also reflect on available economic opportunities and subsequently transform their roles into content producers and digital economic actors (Giddens, 1991).

The social changes described by Giddens are also linked to the transformation of individual identity. In traditional societies, social identity is largely determined by external factors such as family, a steady job, or a relatively stable social status. However, in modern societies, identity has become more fluid and can be shaped through various lifestyle choices and social activities. In the context of TikTok Affiliate, affiliates not only engage in economic activities but also build a digital identity as creators, influencers, or content creators. This identity is shaped through the content they produce, their interactions with followers, and the image they project in the digital space. Thus, affiliate activities impact not only economic aspects but also the formation of individual identity and social recognition (Giddens, 1991).

This phenomenon also illustrates how digital technology creates both opportunities and uncertainties in modern life. Giddens emphasizes that modernity not only brings progress but also generates new risks that did not previously exist. In the context of the TikTok Affiliate Program, while the program offers significant earning potential, affiliates' income is highly dependent on the platform's algorithms, market trends, and changes in company policy. This dependence on complex systems that individuals cannot fully control is a form of risk in modern society that Giddens refers to as "manufactured risk" that is, risks generated by the development of modern technology and social systems (Giddens, 1990). On the other hand, informants also expressed uncertainty regarding income from the affiliate program. One informant stated:

*"Sometimes a video can go viral and generate a lot of commissions, but other times it gets little attention because it doesn't make it onto the For You Page."*

This reflects the concept of "manufactured risk"—risks that arise from dependence on modern technological systems, such as platform algorithms. Individuals gain new opportunities, but at the same time face uncertainties they cannot fully control (Giddens, 1990). Thus, the TikTok Affiliate phenomenon can be understood as part of a broader process of social change, in which digital technology is transforming the ways people work, interact, and construct their identities. This program not only creates new economic opportunities but also reflects the key characteristics of modern society as described by Giddens: the increasing reflexivity of individuals, the detachment of social activities from local spaces, and the emergence of new risks associated with technological systems.

### **Conclusions**

This study shows that the affiliate program on the TikTok platform has evolved into a trending form of digital work among the public, particularly the younger generation. TikTok no longer serves merely as an entertainment

platform but has transformed into a digital economic space that offers income opportunities through affiliate systems and content monetization. Based on the interview results, individuals' interest in the TikTok Affiliate Program is driven by several key factors: ease of access, flexible working hours, and the potential for income without requiring significant capital. This program allows individuals to work independently and without being tied to formal work structures, making it viewed as a job alternative that aligns with the lifestyle of the digital society.

From the perspective of Anthony Giddens' theory of social change, this phenomenon reflects the characteristics of modern society undergoing transformation due to technological advancements. Affiliate activities demonstrate a process of *disembedding* the detachment of economic activities from physical spaces into digital ones as well as increased individual reflexivity in making career choices based on information obtained from social media.

However, this study also found that working as an affiliate involves a high degree of uncertainty because it is heavily dependent on platform algorithms, content trends, and company policies. This suggests that while the digital economy opens up new opportunities, it also presents risks and income instability for its participants. Overall, the TikTok Affiliate program can be understood as part of the transformation of work structures in modern society, where digital technology not only changes the way individuals communicate but also alters how they work, earn income, and build social identities in the digital space.

**Theoretical Contribution.** This study contributes to the development of digital labor and platform capitalism theories by providing empirical evidence from the Global South, particularly Indonesia, where platform-based work is rapidly expanding. It extends Giddens' concept of social change by demonstrating how *disembedding* operates within digital platforms and how algorithmic systems restructure labor relations, shifting control from traditional institutions to platform governance. Furthermore, this research enriches the discourse on the creator economy by highlighting the intersection between user-generated content, monetization practices, and labor precarity within social media ecosystems.

**Global Implications.** At a broader level, this study offers insights into the transformation of work in the digital era, which is not limited to a specific region but reflects a global trend toward platform-based employment. The findings are relevant for policymakers, academics, and digital practitioners worldwide in understanding both the opportunities and risks of the platform economy. Practically, this research can inform the development of more inclusive digital labor policies, fair platform regulations, and sustainable income strategies for content creators. It also provides a reference for future studies examining digital work, particularly in addressing issues of inequality, algorithmic control, and labor protection in the global digital economy.

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# **Analysis of Visual Communication Design Strategy on Social Media @balitourismauthority in Support Digitalization of Bali Tourism Branding**

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## **Abstract**

*Bali as a destination has a strong image at the international level . However, in the digital era, brand power is not only determined by historical reputation , but also by consistency and quality visual communication in social media. This research aims to study consistency in visual identity, effectiveness in delivering information, as well as visual and verbal persuasion strategies on the Instagram account @balitourismauthority as a representation of official branding of Bali tourism.*

*Study This uses an approach of qualitative method with visual analysis and criticism design. Data is obtained through Instagram feed observation and visual documentation with sampling of 4 contents, as well as deep analysis into four representative posts . Instrument analysis covers three main dimensions , namely visual identification, delivery of information, and aspects of persuasion, which are analyzed through stages of description, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation.*

*Research results show that effectiveness information is classified as good, but not yet supported by consistency, visual identity, and strength of optimal persuasion. Found existence of visual fragmentation, inconsistency in element design, as well as not enough maximum storytelling and call to action. In addition, there is a lack of synergy between social media accounts and branding narratives such as “Love Bali”, which indicates weakness in integration of digital communication. Therefore , an integrated strategy is needed through brand guideline development, consistency across platforms, as well as strengthening storytelling and persuasion so that social media can build a strong and competitive destination globally. .*

**Keywords:** *tourism branding, design, visual communication, social media, Instagram, Bali*

## Introduction

Global tourism today. This experience transformation is significant along with the development of digital technology that changes the method of destination building and managing their image . Transformation. This transformation is not to be let go from global dynamics characterized by conditions of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA), the increasing preference of a number of tourists for dynamic , as well as increasing demands for experiencing personal, authentic , and digital-based tourism (Pariwisata, 2025). In the context of this , destination branding again only depends on the strength of its historical reputation , but also on the ability to manage consistent and strategic digital communications . Destination tours are used to present a clear , authentic , and easy-to-recognize identity on various digital platforms in order to maintain power competitiveness in the global market (Praveen, 2024).

In line with dynamics, the Indonesian government through the Ministry of Tourism's 2025–2029 strategic position emphasizes digitalization as the main foundation in the transformation sector of tourism through the Tourism 5.0 approach. This strategy emphasizes the utilization of technology like Artificial Intelligence (AI), big data, as well as personalization of the tour experience based on the user journey to strengthen promotion and management of destinations . In addition, the policy of this is also directed to support the development agenda of the nation (Asta Cita) through the improvement of the mark plus tourism, strengthening governance based on data , as well as the integration of cross-platform digital ecosystems . Thus , digitalization not only becomes a tool for promotion, but also to be a framework for strategic building of immersive, adaptive, and sustainable tourism.(Pariwisata, 2025)

Bali is known as one of the global tourism destinations that has an iconic position in the Indonesian tourism map , with a powerful pull from beauty of nature, wealth of culture, as well as a character of a friendly community. This reputation makes Bali not only in demand by domestic tourists , but also becoming the main objective traveler overseas in a big amount (Rahayu, 2025). Along with the development of the digital era, Bali is starting to develop an approach to smart tourism as part of the transformation of tourism based on Technology Information and Communication Technology (ICT), which is realized through digitalization of services, tourist data management in real-time, as well as the utilization of various digital platforms to increase the quality of tourism experience. This transformation is poured out in policy through Regulation of the Governor of Bali Number 64 of 2022 concerning the Implementation of Balinese Cultural Digital Tourism, which also strengthens aspects of infrastructure, accessibility, and inclusivity of tourist services .(Rahayu, 2025)



Figure 1. Love Bali Logo

Source : [lovebali.baliprov.go.id](http://lovebali.baliprov.go.id)

Development of Love Bali through the website channel [lovebali.baliprov.go.id](http://lovebali.baliprov.go.id) shows an effort to integrate the digital ecosystem in providing information about destinations , public services , and navigation tours in a comprehensive way(Dr. I Made Marthana Yusa, S.Ds., 2024). However, thus, in the demanding digital landscape of speed, interactivity, and consistent communication, the strength of the Bali brand is



necessary to be supported by an integrated and sustainable digital communications strategy. Without said integration, the potential of Bali's large assets is at risk of not being fully optimized in the face of increasing global competition, including from new destinations that aggressively utilise digital technology (Ariana et al., 2025).

Social media, especially Instagram, has been one of the main channels in marketing strategy for modern tourism. This platform owns high visual power as well as the ability to build direct interaction with the audience in a real-time way. Engaging, authentic, and consistent visual content has proven capable of increasing engagement and influencing the perception and decision of travelers in choosing destinations (Pinhal et al., 2025). In the context of Tourism 5.0, social media also plays a role as the main medium for distributing data- and preference-driven digital experiences for users.

In practice, social media management destinations not only relate to frequency of uploads, but also concern consistency in visual identity, style of communication, as well as constructed narratives. Consistent visual identity plays an important role in creating brand recognition and strengthening the perception of the audience to values and character of something destinations (Agung et al., 2023). This becomes more important in a competitive digital landscape, where audiences are faced with very fast and diverse information.



Figure 2. Social Media of the Tourism Office Bali Province  
Source : Instagram @balitourismauthority

Instagram account @balitourismauthority as representation of official promotion Bali tourism has a strategic role in building the digital image of the destination. However, indications of the existence of visual fragmentation and inconsistency in presentation content potentially weaken the effectiveness of branding communication. Inconsistency can cause a decline in clarity of brand identity and reduce the power of the message conveyed to the global audience (Devylia, 2025).

In addition, the effectiveness of delivering information on social media is greatly influenced by quality design elements, such as typography, visual composition, color, and hierarchy of information. Design that is not structured well can hinder understanding of the message and drop off experience for users. On the other hand, a well-planned design capable of increasing clarity of communication as well as strengthening the power of persuasive messages (Yuniarsih et al., 2025). In the context of digitalization in tourism, quality design also becomes part of the experience of a tour that takes place before the visit.

In perspective communication marketing, visual and verbal persuasion strategies also become an important aspect in building audience involvement. Storytelling approach, use of narrative emotional, as well as authentic visuals, have proven capable of

creating an emotional connection between destinations and tourists. This contributes to the improvement of interest in visiting as well as loyalty to the destination (Renanda et al., 2025). However, in practice, this strategy needs consistent and clear communication to be able to form a complete experience.

Phenomenon fragmentation of digital branding in Bali is also visible from the existence of various platforms and campaigns running in a parallel way, such as the official website, the “Love Bali” program, as well as social media accounts that are not fully integrated. This condition shows a lack of harmony in communication strategy and integrated marketing communication, which should become a foundation in building a strong and consistent destination brand (Liu et al., 2025). Within the framework of national policy that encourages digital integration, this condition becomes a strategic challenge that needs to be overcome quickly.

As a comparison, branding Visiting Jogja shows success in managing an integrated digital ecosystem through consistent naming, visuals, and narrative cross-platform (Venata & Aji, 2023). Consistency has proven capable of increasing brand recall, making it easier for users to access information, as well as strengthening the destination's positioning in the minds of a global audience (Silva et al., 2025). With this, Bali faces a strategic challenge in managing digital branding effectively holistically in the middle of a strong global image that it has owned. Therefore, it is necessary for an approach that is not only focused on producing content, but also on integrating visual identity, consistent communication, as well as optimizing the user experience. Research is becoming important to study how social media strategies, especially Instagram, can be optimized to support the digitalization of Bali tourism branding more effectively and integrated.

### **Research methods**

This study uses a qualitative approach with the method of visual analysis to study visual communication in tourism branding through social media. The chosen approach is because it is capable of giving a deep understanding of meaning, pattern, and visual quality that cannot be measured in a quantitative way. Visual communication design is positioned as the main framework to read how elements like color, typography, layout, and visual imagery are used to convey a message. In this context, design not only functions as an aesthetic aspect, but also as a strategic tool in building the perception of the audience to the destination.

Tourism branding concept is used to understand how an image of a destination is built through integrated and consistent communication. Branding is not limited to logos or slogans, but rather covers the overall visual and narrative experiences conveyed to the audience. Social media, especially Instagram, has become a focus of study because its characteristics are visual, interactive, and have a wide range. This platform allows for the delivery of messages in a fast way as well as building engagement through two-way communication, so it plays an important role in forming the image of a destination digitally.

Data collection techniques were carried out through purposive sampling from the population of the Instagram feed @balitourismauthority, visual documentation, and content sampling of as many as 3 representative posts. Sampling of the content taken reflects variations in communication strategies, namely promotion of village tourism (Ekasari Village), social activities (coastal clean-up), cultural events (Arak Brem Bali), and profile overview of the account. The fourth sample was chosen to give a comprehensive description of the practice of visual communication applied, starting from

content promotion of destinations, social activities, up to delivery of identity institutionally. In general, results analysis show that there is inconsistency in the implementation of element design, good from visual aspects, structure of information, as well as persuasion strategies, which have implications for not yet optimally forming digital brand identity.

Data was collected and analyzed using coding instruments in a form table. Visual analysis was conducted with three dimensions: identification (logo, color, typography, layout), information (hierarchy, content format, readability), and persuasion (call to action, storytelling, emotion). Each indicator was assessed on a scale of 1 to 5, ranging from very poor to very good, to produce a systematic assessment that retained the depth of qualitative analysis.

**Table 1. Instruments Visual Analysis**

| Dimensions     | Indicator      | Criteria                     | Rating Scale |
|----------------|----------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| Identification | Logo           | Consistency use of logo      | 1-5          |
| Identification | Color          | Color palette consistency    | 1-5          |
| Identification | Typography     | Readability & consistency    | 1-5          |
| Identification | Layout         | Visual structure             | 1-5          |
| Information    | Hierarchy      | Clarity information          | 1-5          |
| Information    | Content format | Compliance with the platform | 1-5          |
| Information    | Readability    | Convenience read             | 1-5          |
| Persuasion     | CTA            | Clarity invitation           | 1-5          |
| Persuasion     | Storytelling   | Strength narrative           | 1-5          |
| Persuasion     | Emotion        | Visual appeal                | 1-5          |

Scale: 1 = very bad 2 = bad 3 = fair 4 = good 5 = very good

Data analysis techniques using approach criticism design consisting of four stages, namely description, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation. Stages description focus on depiction of visual elements in an objective manner , continued with analysis of the connection between elements. Stage interpretation aims to understand the meaning and message conveyed, whereas stage evaluation evaluates the effectiveness of the design in reaching the objective of communication. Through this approach, this research is expected to be capable of giving a comprehensive description of the quality and visual communication strategy in branding Bali tourism on social media.

## Results and Discussion

**Table 3. Sample data instrument 2**

| Sample 1 | Dimensions | Indicator | Criteria | Scale Evaluation | Average Dimension Value |
|----------|------------|-----------|----------|------------------|-------------------------|
|----------|------------|-----------|----------|------------------|-------------------------|

|                                                                                   |                |                |                              |   |      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------------|---|------|
|  | Identification | Logo           | Consistency use of logo      | 3 | 2.75 |
|                                                                                   |                | Color          | Color palette consistency    | 2 |      |
|                                                                                   |                | Typography     | Readability & consistency    | 3 |      |
|                                                                                   |                | Layout         | Visual structure             | 3 |      |
|                                                                                   | Information    | Hierarchy      | Clarity information          | 3 | 2.66 |
|                                                                                   |                | Content format | Compliance with the platform | 3 |      |
|                                                                                   |                | Readability    | Convenience read             | 2 |      |
|                                                                                   |                |                |                              |   |      |
|                                                                                   | Persuasion     | CTA            | Clarity invitation           | 1 | 1.6  |
|                                                                                   |                | Storytelling   | Strength narrative           | 2 |      |
|                                                                                   |                | Emotion        | Visual appeal                | 2 |      |

**Figure 3. Screenshot of Sample data 1**

Source : Instagram @balitourismauthority

In a visually descriptive manner, the content is presented in the form of a carousel featuring aerial visuals that showcase the landscape of Ekasari Village. The visuals encompass settlements, rice fields, and the backdrop of mountains. Within the carousel, there is a colored banner in yellow with the institutional logo of the government. At the bottom of the carousel, there is text that reads “Tourist Village” Ekasari, accompanied by location icons. The visual composition is primarily dominated by video footage with graphic overlays. The overall design is simple and straightforward.

Result of Analysis on aspects visual identification, use of logos and colors yellow show effort institutionalization identity, but not integrated in a way harmonious with main visuals. Yellow tends to contrast with the natural tone of the video, so it is seen as an additional element , not part of the system design. Typography is readable enough , but no strong hierarchy is shown between title, information, and elements of the supporter. Layout is generic with a common top-bottom banner template approach used. From the aspect of information, the content conveys location and context of a village tour with enough clarity , but no strong own visual storytelling structure. There is no interesting hook to capture attention in a number of second beginnings . From the side of persuasion, the content is more nature-informative-descriptive without the existence of an explicit invitation (CTA) or personalized experience tours.

Subsequently, the interpretation of the content reveals an approach that remains documentation-oriented rather than experience tourism. While strong visuals contribute to aesthetics, they have not yet been effectively utilized to build a narrative and evoke emotions. The disintegration element design lacks a consistent visual identity, which weakens the brand’s overall appeal despite the visually interesting content.

The sampling demonstrates a high potential for visual appeal, but it is not yet optimized for digital branding. To enhance engagement and conversion rates, it is crucial to integrate design elements that are consistent, storytelling-based, and reinforce the experience. Additionally, a clear call-to-action (CTA) should be incorporated to guide users towards desired actions.

**Table 3. Sample data instrument 2**

| Sample 2 | Dimensions | Indicator | Criteria | Scale Evaluation | Average Dimension Value |
|----------|------------|-----------|----------|------------------|-------------------------|
|----------|------------|-----------|----------|------------------|-------------------------|

|                |                |                              |   |      |
|----------------|----------------|------------------------------|---|------|
| Identification | Logo           | Consistency use of logo      | 3 | 2.75 |
|                | Color          | Color palette consistency    | 2 |      |
|                | Typography     | Readability & consistency    | 3 |      |
|                | Layout         | Visual structure             | 3 |      |
| Information    | Hierarchy      | Clarity information          | 2 | 1.66 |
|                | Content format | Compliance with the platform | 1 |      |
|                | Readability    | Convenience read             | 2 |      |
| Persuasion     | CTA            | Clarity invitation           | 1 | 1.33 |
|                | Storytelling   | Strength narrative           | 2 |      |
|                | Emotion        | Visual appeal                | 1 |      |

**Figure 4. Screenshot of Sample data 2**

Source : Instagram @balitourismauthority

In a descriptive manner, the second sampling is a content photo documentation activity that cleans up a beach. The image shows a group of people in the background, with piles of trash in the foreground. There are no design graphic additions to the main visual. The information is delivered through sufficient captions that are long and descriptive. Visual analysis results from aspect visual identification. The content does not have strong branding elements such as logo overlays, typical colors, or consistent graphics. The visuals tend to be documentary without any design processing, resulting in a low visual identity.

From the information aspect, the captions provide complete explanations about the activities, collaborations, and goals. However, they are too long and not customized for fast consumption on Instagram.

From the persuasion aspect, the message regarding sustainability is strong in a narrative way. However, it is not supported by emotional visuals or dramatic elements. There is no call-to-action (CTA) that directs the audience to participate, visit, or become more involved.

In a way, Interpretation, content. This show focuses communication on function, informative and educational , especially related to environmental issues . However , the lack of visual processing causes the message to be delivered in a way that is not maximum in a visual-based social media context . The content is also not yet successful in linking social activity with experience tourism , so that it is separated from destination branding narrative .

In this aspect of evaluation , content is strong in message social , but weak in design, visual communication, and engagement strategies. It requires a more visual storytelling approach, emotional use of design elements to strengthen identity , as well as simplifying the caption to make it more effective and interesting.

**Table 4. Sample data instrument 3**

| Sample Data 3 | Dimensions | Indicator | Criteria | Scale Evaluation | Average Dimension Value |
|---------------|------------|-----------|----------|------------------|-------------------------|
|---------------|------------|-----------|----------|------------------|-------------------------|

|                |                |                              |   |      |
|----------------|----------------|------------------------------|---|------|
| Identification | Logo           | Consistency use of logo      | 4 | 4    |
|                | Color          | Color palette consistency    | 4 |      |
|                | Typography     | Readability & consistency    | 4 |      |
|                | Layout         | Visual structure             | 4 |      |
| Information    | Hierarchy      | Clarity information          | 4 | 4.66 |
|                | Content format | Compliance with the platform | 5 |      |
|                | Readability    | Convenience read             | 5 |      |
|                | CTA            | Clarity invitation           | 1 |      |
| Persuasion     | Storytelling   | Strength narrative           | 5 | 3.3  |
|                | Emotion        | Visual appeal                | 4 |      |

**Figure 5. Screenshot of Sample data 3**  
Source : Instagram @balitourismauthority

In a way descriptive in the form of a digital poster with illustrative visuals, a bottle of arak as the main object, equipped with ornamental elements of Balinese culture and a background of mountains. There are many institutional logos in the section above and event information in the section below. Typography varies with a combination of modern and decorative styles.

Then on the aspect of visual analysis, the content has its own quality aesthetics tall with a strong composition, uses contrasting colors and attractive illustrations to attract attention. However, there is visual overload as a result too. Lots of elements, especially logos and text. Typography is not consistent enough and does not have an own clear hierarchy, so the main information is not directly readable. From the aspect of information, the content loads complete information, but it is too dense. The audience needs longer time to understand the content message. From the aspect of persuasion, the narrative “local spirit goes global” is strong enough in building cultural positioning, but it is not followed with a clear CTA for push action.

In the stage of interpretation, the content of this show makes a sincere effort to create strong and premium visual imagery. However, the complexity of the design precisely reduces the effectiveness of communication. This reflects a lack of balance between aesthetics and function in communication, which should become the primary principle in the design of visual communication.

At the stage of evaluation, the content on is the most powerful sampling visually. However, it requires simplification of the structure of information and reduction of excessive visual elements. A clear hierarchy is required so that the main message is understood more quickly, and a call-to-action (CTA) should be added to increase the effectiveness of communication.

**Table 5. Sample data instrument 3**

| Sample Data 4                                                                     | Dimensions     | Indicator      | Criteria                     | Scale Evaluation | Average Dimension Value |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
|  | Identification | Logo           | Consistency use of logo      | 1                | 1.25                    |
|                                                                                   |                | Color          | Color palette consistency    | 1                |                         |
|                                                                                   |                | Typography     | Readability & consistency    | 2                |                         |
|                                                                                   | Information    | Layout         | Visual structure             | 1                | 2.66                    |
|                                                                                   |                | Hierarchy      | Clarity information          | 2                |                         |
|                                                                                   |                | Content format | Compliance with the platform | 3                |                         |
|                                                                                   |                | Readability    | Convenience read             | 3                |                         |
|                                                                                   | Persuasion     | CTA            | Clarity invitation           | 1                | 1.33                    |
|                                                                                   |                | Storytelling   | Strength narrative           | 1                |                         |
|                                                                                   |                | Emotion        | Visual appeal                | 2                |                         |

**Figure 6. Screenshot of Sample data 4**  
Source : Instagram @balitourismauthority

Next, the final sample is the profile. From Instagram, the account is named “Bali Tourism Authority.” The profile account displays the username “Bali Tourism Office” and the account name “Bali Tourism Office.” The bio section provides information about the official account of the Bali Provincial Tourism Office and includes a link to the official website ([disparda.baliprov.go.id](http://disparda.baliprov.go.id)). The profile photo features illustrative visuals of the Balinese landscape with additional graphic elements. The number of posts is substantial (599), but the number of followers is relatively limited ( $\pm 3,297$  followers). Highlight stories are available, but there is no visual uniformity in the cover aspect.

Analysis of visual identification aspects reveals inconsistencies between the account name (balitourismauthority) and the institution’s name (“Bali Tourism Office”). Additionally, a more specific branding narrative, such as “Love Bali,” is used. This lack of unity in the brand identity is evident. Profile photos do not utilize the official logo or a powerful symbol, resulting in weak brand recognition. Furthermore, the highlight stories do not employ a uniform cover design, leading to an overall uncured visual appearance.

From an information perspective, the bio already conveys the function of the account as a representation of the official government, but it remains descriptive and administrative. There is no clear positioning of Bali as a unique destination, nor are there messages capable of capturing the attention of a global audience. The language used tends to be formal and informal, with more social media characters employed for communicative and engaging purposes.

Regarding persuasion, the profile does not yet demonstrate a strong communication strategy. There is no call to action (CTA) that encourages the audience to explore further, such as inviting them to visit, participate in specific campaigns, or use official hashtags. Additionally, the bio has not been designed to build emotional appeal or short storytelling that can strengthen the connection with the audience.

In the aspect of interpretation, the profile account reflects an approach to communication that is still function-oriented and administrative, serving as a channel for official information rather than a destination branding medium. The misalignment between visual elements, account name, and branding narrative indicates the existence of fragmentation in the digital identity. This potential cause of confusion for the global audience hinders the recognition of Bali’s brand positioning as intact. Furthermore, the



optimal use of bio as a “first impression” is lacking, suggesting a lack of strategy in maximizing the role of the profile as a gateway for communication.

In the stage of evaluation, the overall profile account is not optimal in building a strong and consistent brand identity. Strategic repairs are required in the following areas:

- Alignment of the account name with the main branding (e.g., integration with “Love Bali”).
- Increased use of representative and consistent profile visuals (e.g., official logo or symbol).
- Highlight design with a system-uniform design.
- More comprehensive bio compilation that is communicative, positioning-oriented, and equipped with a call-to-action (CTA).

Optimization of the profile is crucial because it serves as the starting point for audience interaction. It plays a significant role in shaping perception, credibility, and interest in Bali as a destination in the digital realm.

**Table 6. Results of the scores average dimensions**

|                           | Sample 1 | Sample 2 | Sample 3 | Sample 4 | <b>Dimension Value</b> |
|---------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|------------------------|
| Dimensions Identification | 2.75     | 2.75     | 4        | 1.25     | <b>2.68</b>            |
| Dimensions Information    | 2.66     | 1.66     | 4.66     | 2.66     | <b>2.91</b>            |
| Dimensions persuasi       | 1.66     | 1.33     | 3.3      | 1.33     | <b>1.92</b>            |

In summary, the recapitulation score indicates that aspect information is relatively more strong (2.91) compared to visual identification (2.68) and persuasion (1.92). This suggests that the communication strategy is still primarily focused on delivering information, but it lacks support from visual consistency and persuasive elements. Therefore, it is necessary to take strategic steps in the form of developing digital brand guidelines, cross-platform visual integration, strengthening visual storytelling, and optimizing call-to-action (CTA) elements to enhance the effectiveness of digital branding for Bali tourism.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the overall discussion, it can be concluded that Bali possesses a strong brand power in the global tourism industry, particularly in terms of its historical and cultural significance. However, it has not yet fully supported by an integrated and consistent digital visual communication strategy. In the context of digital transformation, Instagram, as one of the popular social media platforms, should be considered a strategic channel to strengthen the destination’s identity. However, the findings of the study reveal the existence of visual fragmentation, inconsistency in design, and the lack of optimal unification of the branding narrative within a cohesive communication ecosystem.

Through a qualitative approach using visual analysis and criticism of design, the research reveals that the practice of visual communication on the @balitourismauthority account is still predominantly function-oriented, with limited emphasis on visual identification and persuasion. The elements such as logo, color, typography, and layout are not yet implemented consistently, which weakens the formation of a strong brand identity. On the other hand, despite the presence of content with compelling visual and



narrative potential, the lack of clear structure and call-to-action elements hinders the effectiveness of the message in building engagement and encouraging action from the audience.

The analysis also indicates a lack of synergy between various digital branding elements, including the difference in positioning between social media accounts and the “Love Bali” campaign. This situation reinforces the potential for fragmentation in the digital identity, causing confusion among the audience and reducing the effectiveness of communication marketing. In comparison to the best practices of other destinations that have successfully integrated cross-platform branding, Bali still needs to strengthen its consistency and strategic planning.

Therefore, it can be confirmed that optimizing Bali’s tourism branding in the digital era is not solely dependent on the quality of visual content. It also requires the systematic integration of identity, narrative, and user experience. Comprehensive digital brand guidelines development, cross-platform visual integration channels, strengthening storytelling, and more persuasive strategies directed are essential. With these measures, social media will not only function as a means of promotion but also as a strategic medium in building a strong, consistent, and empowered destination with global competitiveness.

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# Machine Learning-Based Sentiment Analysis of YouTube Comments on Bali Tourism and Infrastructure

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## Abstract

*This study aims to analyze public sentiment toward government discussions on infrastructure, transportation, and tourism development in Bali, as reflected in YouTube comments from the Tribun Bali YouTube channel. Social media platforms provide valuable insights into public perceptions of policies involving the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI), the Ministry of Public Works (PUPR), and the Ministry of Transportation. This research applies a comparative approach using several machine learning algorithms, including Support Vector Machine (SVM), K-Nearest Neighbor (KNN), Naïve Bayes, Random Forest, Decision Tree, and Neural Network, to classify sentiments into positive, negative, and neutral categories. The dataset consists of 175 comments collected from the Tribun Bali YouTube channel, which have undergone preprocessing steps such as text cleaning, tokenization, and TF-IDF feature extraction. The results indicate that 98 comments (56.00%) are classified as negative, 49 comments (28.00%) as positive, and 28 comments (16.00%) as neutral, showing a predominance of negative sentiment. In terms of model performance, Naïve Bayes and Neural Network achieved the highest accuracy of 73.3%, outperforming other models. These findings provide insights into public opinion trends and can support policymakers in developing more responsive and data-driven strategies for infrastructure and tourism development.*

**Keywords:** machine learning, sentiment analysis, text mining, YouTube comments, Bali tourism

## Introduction

Indonesia is widely recognized as one of the world's leading tourism destinations due to its rich cultural diversity, natural beauty, and competitive cost of living (Sudiatmika et al., 2025). Among its destinations, Bali remains the most prominent tourism hub, attracting both domestic and international visitors (Syam et al., 2025). In recent

years, the Indonesian government has intensified its focus on infrastructure development, transportation systems, and tourism integration in Bali to sustain economic growth and improve accessibility (Sasrawan Mananda et al., 2025). These efforts are often discussed in formal meetings involving the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI), the Ministry of Public Works (PUPR), and the Ministry of Transportation. Such discussions are frequently disseminated through digital media platforms, including YouTube, enabling the public to engage and express their opinions openly. The rise of social media platforms, particularly YouTube, has transformed how public opinion is formed and shared (Krishna, 2025). YouTube comments provide a rich source of unstructured textual data that reflects public perceptions, attitudes, and reactions toward government policies (Ardiyansyah et al., 2024). Analyzing this data using sentiment analysis techniques can offer valuable insights into how society responds to policy decisions related to infrastructure, transportation, and tourism development. This information is crucial for policymakers to evaluate public acceptance and improve decision-making processes (Kant et al., 2024).

Several previous studies have explored sentiment analysis using machine learning techniques such as Support Vector Machine (SVM), Naïve Bayes, K-Nearest Neighbor (KNN), Decision Tree, Random Forest, and Neural Network (Iqbal et al., 2023). These studies generally focus on social media platforms like Twitter or product reviews, with limited attention given to YouTube comments, especially in the context of government policy discussions. Moreover, many studies tend to use a single or limited number of algorithms, without conducting a comprehensive comparison of multiple machine learning models on the same dataset.

Based on these observations, a research gap can be identified in three main aspects. First, there is limited research focusing on sentiment analysis of YouTube comments related to government discussions on infrastructure, transportation, and tourism in Bali. Second, there is a lack of comparative analysis involving multiple machine learning algorithms within a single study to evaluate their performance comprehensively. Third, the integration of real public opinion data from local media channels, such as the Tribun Bali YouTube channel, remains underexplored in the existing literature.

To address these gaps, this study aims to analyze public sentiment based on YouTube comments collected from the Tribun Bali channel, focusing on discussions involving DPR RI, the Ministry of Public Works, and the Ministry of Transportation. This research applies a comparative approach using multiple machine learning algorithms, including Support Vector Machine (SVM), K-Nearest Neighbor (KNN), Naïve Bayes, Random Forest, Decision Tree, and Neural Network, to classify sentiments into positive and negative categories.

The novelty of this study lies in three key contributions. First, this research utilizes YouTube comments as the primary data source in the

context of government policy discussions, which is relatively less explored compared to other social media platforms. Second, it provides a comprehensive comparison of six machine learning algorithms on the same dataset to identify the most effective model for sentiment classification. Third, this study offers empirical insights into public perception regarding infrastructure, transportation, and tourism policies in Bali, which can support policymakers in designing more responsive and inclusive development strategies.

### **Literature Review**

Sentiment analysis has become an essential approach in understanding public opinion through user-generated content on digital platforms. The integration of machine learning and natural language processing (NLP) techniques enables the classification of textual data into meaningful sentiment categories, providing valuable insights for decision-making processes (Reddy, 2025). In the context of government policy and public services, sentiment analysis plays a crucial role in evaluating citizen responses and policy effectiveness (Cofino et al., 2024).

Several studies have explored sentiment analysis on digital platforms, particularly Google Maps, as a valuable source of public opinion data. Previous research analyzing tourist reviews of Pura Besakih using machine learning algorithms demonstrated that automated sentiment classification can effectively capture visitor perceptions and evaluate tourism experiences. This approach has proven useful in supporting data-driven decision-making for tourism development and destination management (Sudiatmika et al., 2025).

Similarly, research focusing on tourism in Bali has utilized sentiment analysis to understand visitor perceptions and destination image, highlighting the importance of data-driven approaches in tourism management.

Various machine learning algorithms have been widely applied in sentiment analysis, including Support Vector Machine (SVM), Naïve Bayes, K-Nearest Neighbor (KNN), Decision Tree, Random Forest, and Neural Network (Yusof et al., 2023). Previous studies indicate that each algorithm has its own strengths and limitations depending on the dataset characteristics. For instance, Naïve Bayes is known for its efficiency in text classification, while SVM provides high accuracy in handling high-dimensional data (Vijayasimha & Avanija, 2025). Ensemble approaches and deep learning models, such as CNN, LSTM, and transformer-based architectures like BERT, have also been introduced to improve classification performance. However, these advanced models often require larger datasets and higher computational resources.

In the Indonesian context, sentiment analysis faces unique challenges due to language characteristics, including informal expressions, slang, code-mixing, and cultural nuances (Besharati Moghaddam et al., 2024) (Yoo & Kim, 2025) (Karaca et al., 2024). These factors make preprocessing steps such as text normalization and feature extraction critical in achieving accurate classification results. Studies have shown

that traditional machine learning approaches remain effective, particularly when combined with appropriate preprocessing techniques such as TF-IDF(Liang & Niu, 2022)(Kim & Kim, 2024).

Despite the growing body of research, several gaps remain. First, limited studies focus specifically on sentiment analysis of YouTube comments related to government discussions on infrastructure, transportation, and tourism in Bali(Liew & Hassan, 2021). Second, many existing studies emphasize advanced deep learning models, while comparative evaluations of multiple traditional machine learning algorithms on the same dataset are still limited(Saurabh Chakraborty et al., 2024). Third, the use of local media sources, such as the Tribun Bali YouTube channel, as a data source for analyzing public opinion has not been widely explored.

Therefore, this study proposes a comparative sentiment analysis approach using multiple machine learning algorithms, including SVM, KNN, Naïve Bayes, Random Forest, Decision Tree, and Neural Network, to analyze public sentiment based on YouTube comments from the Tribun Bali channel. This approach aims to identify the most effective algorithm while providing insights into public perception regarding infrastructure, transportation, and tourism policies in Bali.

### Research Methodology

This study employs an experimental research approach to analyze public sentiment toward government discussions on infrastructure, transportation, and tourism development in Bali using machine learning techniques. The research focuses on classifying sentiment from YouTube comments into positive and negative categories through a comparative evaluation of multiple algorithms. The research methodology is illustrated in Figure 1.

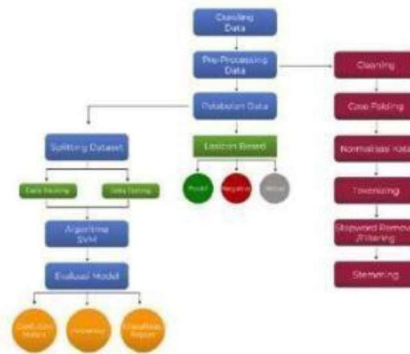


Figure 1: Research Methodology Framework  
[Source: Developed by the Author, 2026]

### Data Collection

The dataset used in this study consists of 175 comments collected from the Tribun Bali YouTube channel. The comments were obtained from

videos discussing meetings between the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI), the Ministry of Public Works (PUPR), and the Ministry of Transportation related to infrastructure, transportation, and tourism development in Bali. Data collection was conducted through manual extraction and documentation of user comments.

### **Data Preprocessing**

Before analysis, the collected data underwent several preprocessing steps to improve data quality and ensure accurate classification. These steps include:

1. Text Cleaning: Removing special characters, numbers, punctuation, and URLs.
2. Case Folding: Converting all text into lowercase.
3. Tokenization: Splitting sentences into individual words or tokens.
4. Stopword Removal: Removing common words that do not carry significant meaning.
5. Stemming: Reducing words to their root or base form.

### **Data Labeling**

The collected comments were manually labeled into three sentiment categories: positive, negative, and neutral. The labeling process was conducted based on the semantic meaning and context of each comment. Comments expressing support, satisfaction, or positive opinions were labeled as positive, while those indicating criticism, dissatisfaction, or negative opinions were labeled as negative. Comments that were factual, ambiguous, or did not clearly express sentiment were classified as neutral. To improve labeling consistency, a rule-based guideline was applied during the annotation process. In addition, a subset of the data was reviewed to ensure labeling reliability and reduce subjective bias.

### **Machine Learning Algorithms**

Each machine learning algorithm was implemented using standard parameter settings. For instance, the K-Nearest Neighbor (KNN) model used  $k = 5$ , while the Support Vector Machine (SVM) employed a linear kernel. The Random Forest model utilized 100 trees, and the Neural Network model was configured with a basic feedforward architecture. These parameter settings were chosen to ensure fair comparison across all models.

Each algorithm is trained and tested using the same dataset to ensure fair comparison. The classification task is conducted using supervised learning based on labeled sentiment data.

### **Data Analysis and Evaluation**

The dataset was divided into training and testing sets using an 80:20 ratio, where 80% of the data was used for training the models and 20% for evaluating their performance.

Model performance is evaluated using the following metrics:

- Accuracy

- Precision
- Recall
- F1-Score

Additionally, confusion matrix analysis is used to visualize classification performance and identify misclassification patterns.

### **Tools and Software**

The implementation of this study was carried out using the following tools:

- Programming Language: Python
- Libraries: Scikit-learn, Pandas, NumPy, Matplotlib
- Development Environment: Google Colab / Jupyter Notebook
- Hardware: Laptop with standard specifications (minimum 8GB RAM)

### **Research Framework**

The overall research process can be summarized as follows:

1. Data collection from YouTube (Tribun Bali channel)
2. Data preprocessing
3. Feature extraction using TF-IDF
4. Model training using multiple algorithms
5. Model evaluation and comparison
6. Interpretation of results

.

## **Results and Discussion**

This section presents the results of sentiment classification on YouTube comments related to government discussions on infrastructure, transportation, and tourism in Bali, followed by an in-depth analysis of the findings.

### **Sentiment Distribution**

Based on the classification results, the dataset of 175 comments shows a dominant negative sentiment. A total of 98 comments (56.00%) are classified as negative, 49 comments (28.00%) as positive, and 28 comments (16.00%) as neutral. This indicates that public perception toward the discussed policies tends to be more critical than supportive. The dominance of negative sentiment suggests concerns or dissatisfaction among the public regarding infrastructure and tourism-related policies in Bali. Figure 2 shows the most frequently occurring words in YouTube comments, indicating key topics discussed by the public. As shown in Figure 3, negative sentiment dominates the dataset, accounting for the majority of comments.





Figure 2: Word Cloud of YouTube Comments  
[Source: Processed Data, 2026]

The dominance of negative sentiment reflects a critical public perspective toward government policies related to infrastructure, transportation, and tourism development in Bali. This indicates that a significant portion of the public may perceive existing policies as ineffective, insufficient, or not aligned with their expectations. The word cloud analysis further supports this finding, where frequently occurring terms such as “*macet*” (traffic congestion), “*jalan*” (road), and “*sampah*” (waste) highlight key issues raised by the public. These terms suggest that infrastructure quality, traffic management, and environmental concerns remain major challenges in Bali’s development. From a policy perspective, these findings provide valuable insights for policymakers. The prevalence of negative sentiment may signal the need for improved communication, better policy implementation, and more inclusive decision-making processes. Addressing public concerns related to infrastructure quality, transportation efficiency, and environmental sustainability can enhance public trust and increase the effectiveness of government programs. Therefore, sentiment analysis can serve as an important tool for evaluating public response and supporting data-driven policymaking, enabling the government to design more responsive and targeted development strategies.

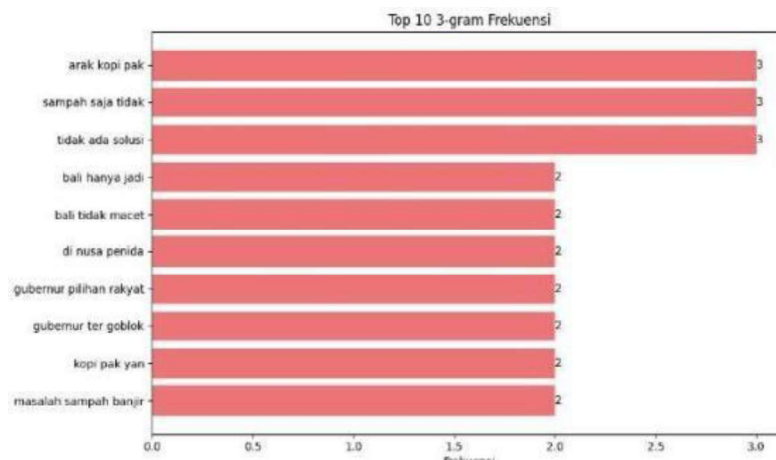


Figure 3: Sentiment Distribution of YouTube Comments  
[Source: Processed Data, 2026]

(Sudiatmika et al., 2025)**Model Performance Analysis**

The confusion matrix provides a detailed evaluation of the classification performance by illustrating True Positives (TP), True Negatives (TN), False Positives (FP), and False Negatives (FN).

In the Neural Network model, 16 negative comments were correctly classified as negative (True Negatives), while 6 positive comments were correctly identified as positive (True Positives). However, 4 positive comments were misclassified as negative (False Negatives), and 4 negative comments were incorrectly classified as positive (False Positives).

The presence of False Positives and False Negatives indicates that the model still faces challenges in distinguishing nuanced sentiment expressions, particularly in informal language commonly found in YouTube comments. The comparison of classification performance across all machine learning models is presented in Figure 4.



Figure 4: Comparison of classification performance  
[Source: Processed Data, 2026]

As shown in Figure 4, Naïve Bayes and Neural Network achieved the highest accuracy of 73.3%, outperforming other models such as SVM, KNN, and Decision Tree, which achieved 70.0%, and Random Forest with 66.7%. This indicates that probabilistic and neural-based approaches are more effective in capturing sentiment patterns within the dataset. The relatively lower performance of Random Forest may be influenced by the limited size of the dataset and the complexity of textual features.

**Discussion**

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research showing that social media platforms, particularly YouTube, are effective sources for capturing public sentiment (Kant et al., 2024; Chakraborty et al., 2024). Compared to studies focusing on Twitter or product reviews (Iqbal et al., 2023), this study confirms that YouTube comments provide

richer and more expressive public opinions, especially in the context of government policy discussions (Liew & Hassan, 2021).

From a methodological perspective, the results support previous findings that traditional machine learning algorithms such as Naïve Bayes and KNN remain effective for sentiment classification tasks (Yusof et al., 2023). The use of TF-IDF as a feature extraction technique also aligns with studies highlighting its importance in improving text classification performance (Kim & Kim, 2024).

However, similar to prior research (Ardiyansyah et al., 2024; Krishna, 2025), this study identifies challenges related to informal language, slang, and ambiguity in YouTube comments, which may affect classification accuracy.

From a policy perspective, these findings highlight the importance of utilizing sentiment analysis to understand public concerns and improve policy responsiveness. Integrating public sentiment into decision-making processes can support more transparent, inclusive, and data-driven policies, particularly in infrastructure and tourism development in Bali.

### **Conclusions**

This study successfully analyzed public sentiment toward government discussions on infrastructure, transportation, and tourism development in Bali using machine learning approaches. By utilizing 175 YouTube comments collected from the Tribun Bali channel, the research demonstrates that sentiment analysis can effectively capture public perceptions expressed through social media platforms.

The findings reveal that negative sentiment dominates public opinion, accounting for 56.00% of the data, indicating a generally critical response toward the discussed policies. This suggests that public concerns and expectations regarding infrastructure and tourism development in Bali remain significant.

In terms of model performance, Naïve Bayes and Neural Network achieved the highest accuracy of 73.3%, demonstrating their effectiveness in sentiment classification tasks. These results confirm that both traditional and advanced machine learning algorithms can be applied effectively, depending on the characteristics of the dataset.

Overall, this study contributes to the growing body of research on sentiment analysis by providing insights into public opinion using YouTube data and offering a comparative evaluation of multiple machine learning algorithms. The results can support policymakers in developing more responsive and data-driven strategies for infrastructure and tourism development.

However, this study has several limitations. First, the dataset size is relatively small, consisting of only 175 comments, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Second, the data was collected from a single YouTube channel, which may not fully represent broader public opinion. Third, the use of basic preprocessing techniques and traditional machine learning models may not fully capture complex linguistic patterns, such as sarcasm or contextual meaning in informal language.

Future research is recommended to utilize larger and more diverse datasets, as well as advanced models such as deep learning or transformer-based approaches, to improve classification performance and robustness.

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# A Pragmatic Analysis of English-Language Digital Promotional Content for Tourism Villages: A Case Study of Buleleng Regency, Bali (DTT-005)

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## Abstract

*This research investigates the pragmatic elements of English Instagram promotions from three acclaimed tourism villages in Buleleng Regency, Bali. Applying speech act and politeness theories, the study evaluated forty-five selected captions to understand their communication strategies and their impact on destination branding. The findings revealed a dominance of assertive statements, indicating a strong focus on sharing information. However, the way each village adapted these strategies significantly affected audience interaction. Les Village achieved the highest pragmatic clarity by blending clear requests with positive politeness and inclusive words, which directly resulted in stronger audience engagement. In comparison, Pemuteran Village received moderate interaction due to its heavy reliance on direct messaging. Meanwhile, Panji Village faced minimal audience response because its use of mixed languages and indirect approaches created confusing messages. These outcomes demonstrate that deliberate language choices are essential tools for online destination branding. Meeting cross-cultural communication expectations proves far more successful for promotions than simply increasing the number of posts. Ultimately, this research enriches the field of digital tourism discourse and provides practical foundations for designing language training that improves the communication skills of local tourism workers.*

**Keywords:** Pragmatic analysis, Speech acts, Politeness strategies, Digital tourism discourse;

## Introduction

Social media has fundamentally shifted how destinations speak to global travelers, with Instagram now serving as a primary arena for destination branding and visitor engagement. In Indonesia, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy's Anugerah Desa Wisata Indonesia (ADWI)

initiative has steadily elevated community-based villages into nationally recognized alternatives to conventional mass tourism. Buleleng Regency, situated along Bali's northern coast, has actively leveraged this momentum to showcase its ecological landscapes, cultural heritage, and locally managed experiences to international markets. Yet, the real measure of these digital campaigns lies not in their visual polish or factual completeness, but in how well the English-language captions communicate with foreign visitors (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). As tourist arrivals to Bali continue to climb past pre-pandemic levels, secondary destinations like those in Buleleng face growing pressure to craft linguistically strategic outreach that can genuinely expand their international reach (BPS-Statistics Indonesia, 2023).

Navigating cross-cultural tourism promotion demands on careful handling of persuasive intent, cultural identity, and interpersonal face, making pragmatics a particularly useful analytical lens. Speech act theory and politeness frameworks, for instance, it helps to unpack on how promotional texts shape tourist expectations, manage cultural distance, and build relational engagement. But while English-language tourism content increases across digital platforms, academic work has obsessed on lexical trends, sentiment metrics, or broad branding narratives. The micro-pragmatic mechanics of persuasion, face-management, and cultural mediation in Indonesian community-based tourism remain surprisingly underinvestigated (Blanco-Moreno et al., 2024). Few studies look closely at how village promoters deploy directives, commissives, or expressives to steer tourist behaviour (Wardhana & Indrawati, 2024), or how they balance promotional urgency with cultural respect through positive or negative politeness. This oversight is particularly significant in non-English speaking contexts where English serves as a common language. In these environments, speakers frequently apply their native communication patterns to English without adjusting for the necessary pragmatic differences. (Taulia et al., 2024).

In response to this gap, this investigation analyses the pragmatic characteristics of English-language promotional material within three ADWI-certified villages in Buleleng, such as, Les Village which located in the east, Panji Village which situated in the central highlands and Pemuteran Village on the western coast. These specific locations were selected because their sustained ADWI status and varied topographies provide a comprehensive representation of Buleleng's diverse environmental and cultural landscape (Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia, 2025). While tourism centres in southern Bali benefit from professionalized and multilingual marketing departments, the tourism villages of Buleleng continue to face challenges regarding global visibility, despite their authentic appeal and sustainable foundations. This research argues that the primary obstacle is not merely a lack of visitor volume, but rather a communicative discrepancy that occurs when localized destinations interact with international audiences without refining their pragmatic strategies. By analysing the implementation or misalignment of speech acts and politeness norms in

English captions, this study explores the linguistic mechanisms that determine the success of cross-cultural engagement.

Beyond its theoretical implications, this study addresses a practical dimension of the current literature. While existing scholarship on digital tourism discourse often relies on costly proprietary software or complex computational models, this research argues for the viability of accessible methodologies. By utilizing a systematically coded Google Spreadsheet, the study demonstrates that rigorous pragmatic analysis is achievable without specialized software. Theoretically, this work expands (Searle, 1969) speech act taxonomy and (Brown et al., 1987) politeness framework into the context of Indonesian grassroots digital tourism, illustrating how classical linguistic models can be successfully adapted to modern, platform-mediated marketing.

It should be noted that the present investigation is restricted to textual analysis. Since producer interviews and audience reception metrics are outside the current scope, the findings characterize institutional communicative strategies rather than specific authorial intent. While this text-centric methodology facilitates a profound pragmatic deconstruction, future research could be enhanced by triangulating these patterns with creator perspectives or tourist feedback. Furthermore, while the sample size is consistent with qualitative discourse analysis standards, the findings are not intended for statistical generalization across the entirety of Indonesia's tourism village sector.

Consequently, this study is guided by two core research questions: First, what types of speech acts and politeness strategies appear most frequently in the English-language Instagram promotions of Buleleng's selected tourism villages? Second, how do these pragmatic features operate to shape destination identity, navigate cross-cultural rapport, and stimulate engagement among international tourists?"

### **Literature Review**

The rise of social media has completely transformed how destinations market themselves. Promotional power has shifted away from traditional tourism boards toward visual platforms where algorithms and user interaction determine success. Instagram stands out as a leading tool for tourism marketing because it successfully combines beautiful photos with short text to shape how people imagine a destination and make travel choices (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Current research points out that successful digital marketing requires more than just curating good pictures. It relies heavily on carefully crafted language that meets the expectations of the audience and fits the communication style of the maspecific platform (Gretzel et al., 2020). Studies on digital tourism communication regularly show that promotional text is a mix of sharing information, persuading readers, and building relationships. However, the specific language details that help people from different cultures understand these messages are still not thoroughly researched (Marine-Roig, 2021). As different places compete for international



tourists, the quality of English captions has become a major factor in how well a promotion works. This is especially true for developing or smaller tourism areas that want to be seen globally but lack the massive marketing budgets of famous destinations.

Examining language through a pragmatic lens offers a strong way to understand how promotional text achieves its goals. Speech act theory, which was first introduced by Austin (1962) and later organized by Searle (1969), is highly relevant to tourism communication. Promotional captions frequently use assertive statements to build trust, directive sentences to encourage bookings, commissive phrases to promise good experiences, and expressive words to create an emotional connection. Destination managers carefully arrange these speech acts to build persuasive stories that influence tourist actions while keeping a positive relationship. Supporting this idea, the politeness theory developed by Brown et al. (1987) explains how tourism writers handle the direct nature of promotional commands. They use positive politeness to create a sense of friendship or negative politeness to respect the independence of the tourist. Recent research in digital marketing shows that being polite significantly affects how audiences react. When communicators use culturally appropriate ways to respect their audience, they see better engagement and fewer misunderstandings (Bou-Franch & Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, 2019). Even though these theories are well established, they are rarely applied to English tourism promotions in countries where English is not the native language. There is a specific need to analyze how local communication habits are adapted for a worldwide audience.

Tourism has become a global industry, making English the main language for hospitality communication across different cultures. However, communicating effectively in English as a *Lingua Franca* involves much more than just using correct grammar. It requires adjusting meanings based on the situation, understanding cultural backgrounds, and sometimes leaving things intentionally open to interpretation. In areas where English is not the native language, tourism promoters often bring their local communication habits into their English writing. This can lead to captions that are grammatically fine but fail to connect with the expectations of international visitors. Research into tourism language shows that being too direct, using local cultural terms without explaining them, and applying inconsistent politeness can accidentally make a destination seem less authentic or create confusion (Jenkins, 2014). On the other hand, well-crafted content that balances a strong promotional message with cultural awareness connects much better with people from different backgrounds. This success happens when writers anticipate the diverse cultures of their readers and soften their requests using inclusive words and clear cultural context. As international travelers increasingly look for authentic community experiences (Reichle, 2025), the need for skilled English communication has grown. This makes it essential for researchers to study how local tourism workers manage cross-cultural communication on the internet.

The Indonesian government has actively supported village tourism through programs like the Anugerah Desa Wisata Indonesia (ADWI), which encourages local communities to promote their own destinations. Despite this support, the ability to market effectively online varies greatly from one region to another. Famous tourist spots in southern Bali have professional marketing teams and content creators who speak multiple languages. In contrast, tourism villages in Buleleng Regency mostly depend on local staff or small coordinators to handle their English social media. These individuals often lack formal training in cross-cultural communication. Academic studies on Indonesian tourism have mostly looked at broad branding strategies, cultural representation, or visitor satisfaction, leaving the daily language choices of local digital marketing largely ignored (Ananda Pratama & Eko Edy Susanto, 2024). Recent evaluations of community tourism in North Bali show that locals are increasingly aware of the international market. Even so, they still struggle with adapting their content, reaching the right audience, and improving their English phrasing, which prevents them from being consistently visible online. This gap between their excellent environmental programs and their unoptimized promotional text is a serious problem that stops these culturally rich villages from reaching a global audience.

Looking at all these different areas of research highlights a major missing piece in the academic literature. While experts have written extensively about digital tourism marketing and pragmatic theory separately, very few have studied how they connect within English marketing for Indonesian tourism villages. Current research rarely explores how the choice of speech acts and politeness strategies works as a specific tool in Instagram promotions. Furthermore, studies do not clearly connect these language choices to the goals of the managers or the reactions of the audience in community tourism. This lack of information is especially important for the future development of English for Specific Purposes programs. Teaching the practical use of language is a core part of hospitality training, yet it is often overlooked (Basturkmen, 2010). By analyzing the actual language used in English promotions and comparing it with the thoughts of the content creators, this study connects the fields of linguistics, digital marketing, and language teaching. The findings will improve academic knowledge about how language works in tourism for non-native speakers. Moreover, the results will offer practical advice for creating better digital promotions and help design language courses that teach local tourism workers exactly how to communicate effectively with an international audience.

### **Research Methodology**

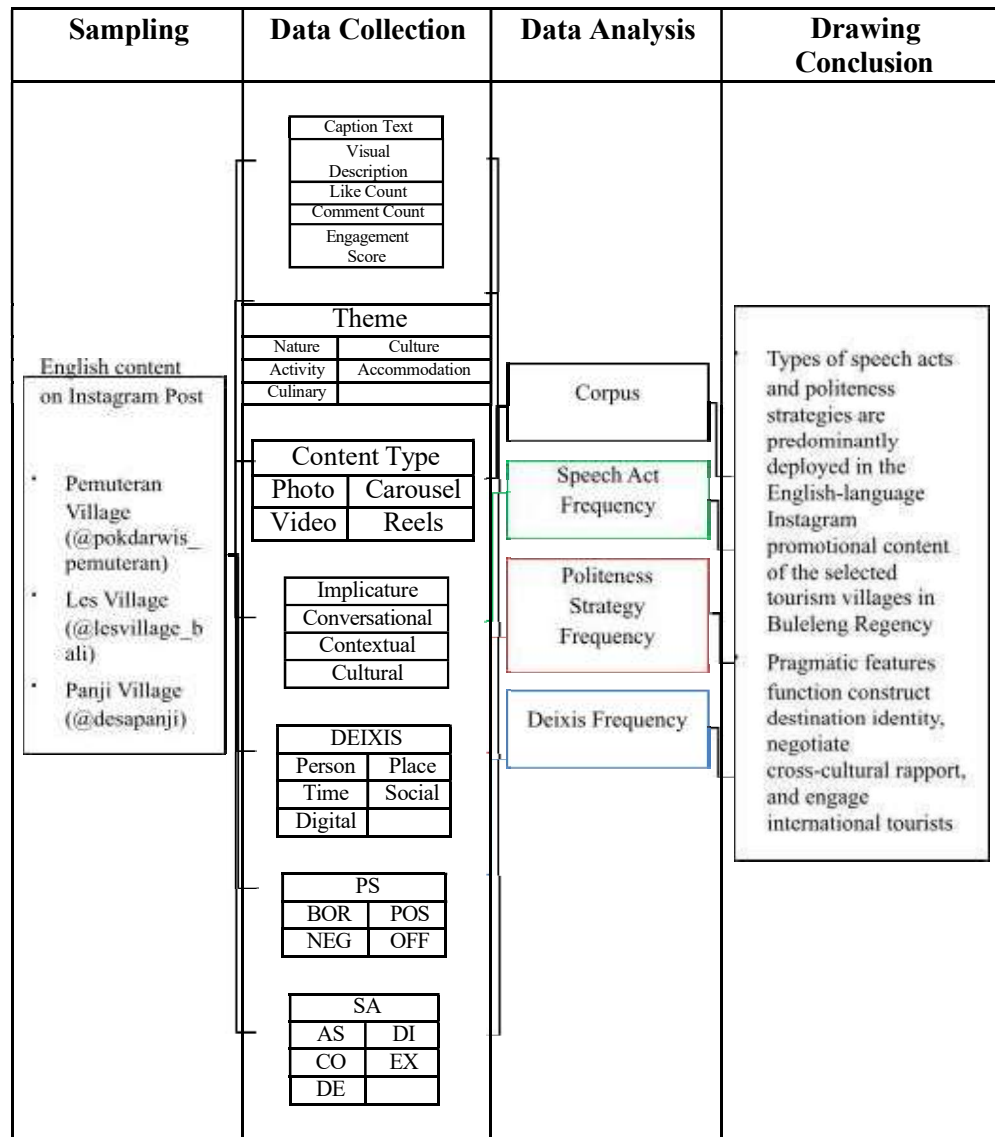
Adopting a qualitative research design, this study utilizes pragmatic discourse analysis to explore the linguistic strategies inherent in English-language digital promotional content. The methodology is strictly limited to a systematic textual deconstruction of Instagram

materials, facilitating an exhaustive examination of observable patterns independent of producer interviews or survey data. This text-centric framework is consistent with current paradigms in digital discourse scholarship, which posit that publicly accessible promotional media constitutes a robust and legitimate data source for analyzing destination branding (Bou-Franch & Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, 2019). Through detailed micro-level pragmatic coding, the investigation elucidates the interplay between linguistic structure and communicative intent within the context of grassroots digital administration.

The main data for this study comes from English Instagram captions posted by the official accounts of three tourism villages in Buleleng Regency that have been recognized by the ADWI program. These locations are Pemuteran Village (@pokdarwis\_pemuteran), Les Village (@lesvillage\_bali), and Panji Village (@desapanji). As of April 10, 2026, the total number of posts on these accounts was respectively 380, 101, and 667. From this collection, a specific sample of 45 captions was chosen by taking 15 from each village. This selection was based on specific requirements to ensure relevance. The text had to be written mostly in English, specifically containing more than half English words. The content also needed to clearly promote tourism activities, sights, or services. Finally, the account had to be officially connected to the village management. Choosing this number of samples is a standard practice in qualitative language studies, where reaching a deep understanding of the text is more important than gathering massive statistical data (Creswell, 2014; Marine-Roig, 2021). To make sure the sample represented the overall content well, the selection included a mix of different themes like nature and culture, various media types like videos and photo carousels, and different posting dates.

Information was gathered by carefully recording the data in a custom Google Spreadsheet created just for this pragmatic analysis. Every selected caption was saved along with important details like the post ID, location, account name, date, type of content, overall theme, a description of the image, and the number of likes and comments. The study uses the speech act classifications from Searle (1969) and the politeness framework from Brown et al. (1987) to understand how these promotional texts persuade readers and handle interactions between different cultures. Each post was categorized based on its main type of speech act (SA), which included assertive (AS), directive (DI), commissive (CO), expressive (EX), and declarative statements (DE). The captions were also checked for their politeness strategies (PS), covering Bald On-Record (BOR), positive politeness (POS), negative politeness (NEG), and indirect methods. Furthermore, the analysis noted how the text used references to time, space, and culture, as well as implied meanings, to see how the promotional messages fit into their specific context.

Table 1 Conceptual Framework



[Source: Researcher]

The analytical process unfolded across three interconnected phases utilizing Google Sheets, which served as a highly practical substitute for costly qualitative analysis software. During the initial phase, researchers computed the fundamental occurrences of various speech acts and politeness strategies. This was achieved by applying standard spreadsheet functions such as Pivot Tables and COUNTIF formulas to uncover the prevailing linguistic trends across distinct locations and subject matters. To illustrate this process, the exact equation =COUNTIF(L2:L46, "SA-DI") was applied to determine the total number of directive speech acts throughout the annotated dataset. The subsequent phase required a more profound examination of the most prevalent or noteworthy instances. Such detailed scrutiny clarified how particular wording shaped

the branding of the destination, narrowed cultural divides, and motivated visitor participation. By taking advantage of the built-in filtering and sorting mechanisms within the spreadsheet, it became incredibly straightforward to isolate and contrast these significant cases across different villages. In the final stage, all findings were synthesized to provide actionable recommendations for enhancing digital promotional efforts in English. Furthermore, these discoveries are intended to assist in the development of superior curriculum materials for teaching English for Specific Purposes in upcoming research endeavours. Ultimately, this methodology enabled a seamless shift between reviewing quantitative data and interpreting qualitative meaning, demonstrating that rigorous linguistic analysis is entirely feasible using accessible digital platforms, provided that the analytical procedures remain systematic and transparent (Marine-Roig, 2021).

Establishing trustworthiness is a critical component of this investigation, which is why the study rigorously applied standard qualitative evaluation methods. The research built credibility through a deep and prolonged engagement with the collected data, alongside careful reflective journaling and a highly detailed description of the analytical procedures. For the sake of transferability, the entire research context, including the rules for sample selection and the specific coding techniques, has been recorded comprehensively. Such transparency gives other academics the information they need to test if these findings hold true in alternative tourism environments. In terms of dependability, the research maintained strict consistency by outlining exactly how the spreadsheet coding operated, securing data backups, and demanding that every drawn conclusion have direct backing from the textual evidence. Furthermore, objectivity was achieved through careful self-reflection. By explicitly noting the background of the researcher as an English language educator who is deeply invested in tourism communication, the study ensured that personal biases did not override the actual text. This conscious awareness kept all interpretations firmly grounded in the literal words of the social media captions. Combined, these deliberate actions fortify the overall research design, successfully balancing the complex nature of discourse analysis with the practical requirements of working with everyday digital tools (Creswell, 2013).

Strict ethical considerations guided every stage of data collection and analysis in this study. By relying exclusively on publicly accessible Instagram posts, the research complied fully with both platform regulations and academic fair use principles. Transparency was upheld by explicitly attributing all textual data to their respective source accounts. At the same time, the researchers treated cultural content with high sensitivity to prevent any misrepresentation or exoticization of local customs. It is also worth noting that the project received informal backing from the Buleleng Regency Tourism Office. This collaboration not only facilitated smoother interactions with village leaders but also ensured the study aligned closely with broader regional tourism

objectives. Ultimately, these ethical commitments reflect contemporary best practices for digital research in community-based tourism, demonstrating a profound respect for local autonomy and cultural heritage.

## Results and Discussion

This section outlines the empirical findings derived from analyzing 45 English Instagram captions. Specifically, the data includes 15 posts from each of the three tourism villages in Buleleng Regency that are recognized by the ADWI program, namely Pemuteran Village, Les Village, and Panji Village. Two primary research questions guide this evaluation. It investigates the specific types of speech acts and politeness strategies that frequently appear in these promotional materials, while also exploring how such language choices actively construct the identity of the destination, establish cross-cultural connections, and attract international visitors. For complete transparency, the entire dataset compiled via Google Sheets is openly accessible at <https://s.id/yE7b0>.

The evaluated captions were published spanning from 2017 to 2026. However, the timeline of these posts shows clear differences depending on the location, highlighting the different phases when each community initiated their digital marketing efforts. Most of the content from Les Village dates back to the period between 2017 and 2022. In contrast, the posts from Pemuteran Village range from 2020 to 2026, while the data from Panji Village falls strictly between 2022 and 2025. Furthermore, the preferred media formats vary significantly among the locations. Pemuteran Village shows a strong preference for photo carousels, accounting for 60% of its uploads. Meanwhile, Les Village depends heavily on videos at 53%, a format that Panji Village utilizes almost exclusively for 87% of its promotions. When looking at audience interaction, the engagement metrics calculated by doubling the sum of likes and comments reveal a massive gap between the three accounts. Les Village achieved the highest average engagement score of 148.3, leaving Pemuteran Village far behind at 27.1, and Panji Village trailing with only

8.9. A complete summary of these descriptive characteristics is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of Analyzed Corpus

| Variable              | Pemuteran (n=15)    | Les Village (n=15)  | Panji (n=15)        |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Date Range            | Nov 2020 – Mar 2026 | Jul 2017 – Oct 2022 | Oct 2022 – Jun 2025 |
| Dominant Content Type | Carousel (60%)      | Video (53%)         | Video (87%)         |
| Dominant Theme        | Activity (80%)      | Activity (67%)      | Activity (93%)      |

| Variable                  | Pemuteran (n=15) | Les Village (n=15) | Panji (n=15) |
|---------------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Mean Engagement Score     | 27.1             | 148.3              | 8.9          |
| English-Dominant Captions | 4 (26.7%)        | 13 (86.7%)         | 2 (13.3%)    |
| Mixed-Language Captions   | 11 (73.3%)       | 2 (13.3%)          | 13 (86.7%)   |
| Comments in English       | 8 posts (53.3%)  | 9 posts (60%)      | 0 posts (0%) |

[Source: Researcher]

Note. Engagement Score = Likes + (Comments × 2). English-dominant captions defined as >50% English lexical content.

In addressing the initial research question, the study classified every caption using the speech act (SA) framework developed by Searle (1969). Informational and descriptive statements known as assertives (SA-AS) emerged as the most common category, appearing in 34 out of the 45 reviewed posts, which accounts for exactly 75.6%. Even with this clear overall pattern, the locations showed noticeable differences in how they applied secondary speech acts. Commands designed to prompt audience action, categorized as directives (SA-DI), were most frequently found in Les Village at 53.3%, with Panji and Pemuteran trailing at 46.7% and 40% respectively. Furthermore, commissives (SA-CO) that promise specific future experiences were moderately utilized by both Pemuteran and Panji at 26.7%, slightly edging out Les Village's 20%. In stark contrast, emotional expressions (SA-EX) and declarative statements (SA-DE) barely made an appearance throughout the entire dataset. A full breakdown of these frequency distributions is provided in Table 3.

Table 3 Frequency of Speech Acts by Village (N=45 captions)

| Speech Act Category (SA) | Pemuteran (n=15) | Les Village (n=15) | Panji (n=15) | Total (N=45) |
|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Assertives (SA-AS)       | 12 (80.0%)       | 13 (86.7%)         | 9 (60.0%)    | 34 (75.6%)   |
| Directives (SA-DI)       | 6 (40.0%)        | 8 (53.3%)          | 7 (46.7%)    | 21 (46.7%)   |
| Commissives (SA-CO)      | 4 (26.7%)        | 3 (20.0%)          | 4 (26.7%)    | 11 (24.4%)   |
| Expressives (SA-EX)      | 4 (26.7%)        | 3 (20.0%)          | 2 (13.3%)    | 9 (20.0%)    |
| Declaratives (SA-DE)     | 1 (6.7%)         | 1 (6.7%)           | 1 (6.7%)     | 3 (6.7%)     |

[Source: Researcher]

The high frequency of assertive speech acts (SA-AS) suggests that tourism communication in Buleleng focuses more on sharing information rather than actively persuading the audience. However, Les Village displays a much better balance between assertives and directives (SA-DI). This indicates a deliberate strategy to both describe the destination and encourage tourists to take action, a balance that directly links to their higher engagement rates and proves that a variety of communication styles leads to better audience responses.

When examining politeness strategies based on the framework by Brown et al. (1987), clear differences in communication styles emerge among the locations. Positive politeness (PS-POS), which creates a sense of closeness through welcoming and appreciative language, was utilized most frequently by Les Village in 46.7% of their captions, while Pemuteran Village used it in 26.7% of their posts. On the other hand, Panji Village recorded the highest rate of "not applicable" cases (PS-NA) at 40%, highlighting the difficulty of determining a clear politeness style due to their heavy use of mixed languages. Bald on-record strategies (PS-BOR), known for being direct and unfiltered, were the dominant choice for Pemuteran Village at 66.7% and were used moderately by Panji Village at 33.3%, whereas Les Village applied them less often at just 26.7%. Furthermore, off-record strategies (PS-OFF) that rely on indirect hints appeared in 20% of the captions for both Les Village and Panji Village, but they were completely missing from Pemuteran Village's content. Finally, it is quite interesting to note that negative politeness (PS-NEG) was almost entirely absent throughout the entire collection of data, as summarized in Table 4 below.

Table 4 Distribution of Politeness Strategies by Village

| <b>Politeness Strategy (PS)</b> | <b>Pemuteran (n=15)</b> | <b>Les Village (n=15)</b> | <b>Panji (n=15)</b> | <b>Total (N=45)</b> |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Bald On-Record (PS-BOR)         | 10 (66.7%)              | 4 (26.7%)                 | 5 (33.3%)           | 19 (42.2%)          |
| Positive Politeness (PS-POS)    | 4 (26.7%)               | 7 (46.7%)                 | 1 (6.7%)            | 12 (26.7%)          |
| Off-Record (PS-OFF)             | 0 (0%)                  | 3 (20.0%)                 | 3 (20.0%)           | 6 (13.3%)           |
| Negative Politeness (PS-NEG)    | 1 (6.7%)                | 0 (0%)                    | 0 (0%)              | 1 (2.2%)            |



|                        |        |          |           |           |
|------------------------|--------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Not Applicable (PS-NA) | 0 (0%) | 1 (6.7%) | 6 (40.0%) | 7 (15.6%) |
|------------------------|--------|----------|-----------|-----------|

[Source: Researcher]

The fact that negative politeness strategies were relatively limited across all three villages suggests that the promotional discourse does not pay much explicit attention to tourist autonomy. Les Village has stronger orientation toward positive politeness, evidenced by inclusive pronouns ("we," "you"), appreciative expressions ("thank you," "welcome"), and solidarity-building hashtags. It suggests a more deliberate effort to foster relational engagement with international audiences. On the other hand, Panji Village exhibited a high frequency of "Not Applicable" politeness strategies (PS-NA) reflects the analytical complexity introduced by code-switching practices. In this case, Indonesian and English elements combine in ways that make it difficult to identify a clear politeness orientation.

Moreover, deictic references help to link discourse to specific people, places, times, social actors, or digital contexts. These references play an essential role in tourism promotion because they create a sense of spatial orientation and relational closeness. Place deixis (Deixis\_Place) was the most consistently deployed category across all villages, appearing in 34 of 45 captions (75.6%), reflecting a shared emphasis on geographical branding. Digital deixis (Deixis\_Digital), including hashtags and account mentions, also featured prominently (71.1% overall), indicating competent utilization of platform-specific affordances. Person deixis (Deixis\_Person), which constructs interpersonal connection through pronouns like "we" and "you," appeared most frequently in Les Village (40%), followed by Pemuteran (33.3%) and Panji (13.3%). Social deixis (Deixis\_Social), referencing community actors or institutional partners, showed similar variation. Table 5 presents these patterns.

Table 5 Frequency of Deictic Reference Types by Village

| Deixis Type                           | Pemuteran (n=15) | Les Village (n=15) | Panji (n=15) | Total (N=45) |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Person (we/you/our)                   | 5 (33.3%)        | 6 (40.0%)          | 2 (13.3%)    | 13 (28.9%)   |
| Place (here / Pemuteran / at the bay) | 12 (80.0%)       | 13 (86.7%)         | 9 (60.0%)    | 34 (75.6%)   |
| Time (now / tomorrow / this year)     | 3 (20.0%)        | 2 (13.3%)          | 1 (6.7%)     | 6 (13.3%)    |
| Social (@account /                    | 6 (40.0%)        | 8 (53.3%)          | 3 (20.0%)    | 17 (37.8%)   |

|                                    |           |            |           |            |
|------------------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
| Community / Pokdarwis)             |           |            |           |            |
| Digital (#hashtag / @mention/link) | 9 (60.0%) | 11 (73.3%) | 8 (53.3%) | 28 (62.2%) |

[Source: Researcher]

A strong and uniform reliance on spatial and digital references across the three locations highlights the strategic awareness of the content creators regarding destination branding and social media optimization. Despite this technical proficiency, the minimal use of personal markers, especially in the posts from Panji Village, signifies a lost opportunity to develop a meaningful connection with future international visitors. Les Village, conversely, displays a much healthier balance in its language choices. By effectively mixing different types of references, they manage to craft a promotional story that feels highly engaging and deeply personal, which likely explains their superior levels of audience interaction.

By synthesizing the pragmatic patterns identified above, three distinct communicative profiles emerge. Les Village demonstrated the most pragmatically diversified approach. It combined assertive information delivery with directive prompts, positive politeness strategies, and balanced deictic anchoring. This profile correlated with its substantially higher mean engagement score of 148.3, suggesting that pragmatic competence in English-language promotion may enhance responsiveness among cross-cultural audiences. Pemuteran Village exhibited an informatively oriented profile. It prioritized assertives and bald on-record directness along with moderate use of positive politeness. Its engagement metric of 27.1 suggested moderate effectiveness, which may resonate more with domestic audiences than with international ones. Panji Village presented a creatively ambiguous profile, characterized by frequent code-switching, off-record strategies, and a high frequency of positive politeness strategies that obscure clear orientation. Its low engagement score of 8.9 may reflected pragmatic ambiguity that hinders clear communication with English-dominant tourists.

These comparative patterns directly addressed the first research question by showing how speech acts and politeness strategies are distributed across the three villages. The following discussion section interpreted on how these pragmatic features work to construct destination identity and negotiate cross-cultural engagement, thereby answering the second research question.

The empirical findings presented in the previous section reveal that pragmatic competence in English-language Instagram promotion extends far beyond lexical accuracy and grammatical correctness, as it operates as a strategic mechanism for destination branding, cross-cultural rapport negotiation, and audience engagement. Addressing the first research question, the analysis demonstrates that assertive speech acts dominate

promotional discourse across all three villages, reflecting an institutional preference for informational delivery over persuasive engagement. However, the functional deployment of these speech acts varies significantly, directly influencing how each destination constructs its digital identity. Les Village's balanced use of assertives and directives, combined with consistent positive politeness strategies, projects an identity of accessible eco-cultural hospitality. This finding aligns with contemporary scholarship on digital destination branding, which emphasizes that effective promotional discourse must move beyond mere description and toward experiential invitation (Marine-Roig, 2021). In contrast, Pemuteran's reliance on bald on-record assertives constructs an identity centered on event documentation and factual reporting. While this approach is credible, it lacks the relational warmth needed to captivate international audiences. Panji's frequent code-switching and off-record strategies create a creative but pragmatically ambiguous identity. This illustrates how linguistic experimentation without clear pragmatic calibration can obscure destination positioning rather than enhance it. Together, these patterns confirm that speech act selection is not merely a linguistic preference but a deliberate branding instrument that shapes how global tourists perceive and categorize emerging destinations (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010).

Addressing the second research question, the findings reveal how politeness strategies function as critical tools for negotiating cross-cultural rapport in English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) tourism contexts. Les Village's consistent use of positive politeness is evidenced through inclusive pronouns, appreciative framing, and solidarity-building hashtags. This demonstrates a pragmatic awareness of how to manage intercultural distance. By constructing the tourist as a welcomed participant rather than a passive observer, these captions foster relational proximity that aligns with global expectations of hospitality communication (Permadi, 2025). Conversely, Pemuteran's prevalence of bald on-record strategies, while efficient for domestic audiences, risks creating pragmatic friction when addressing international tourists. Foreign visitors often expect mitigated directives and face-saving formulations in promotional contexts (Brown et al., 1987). This disconnect is further worsened by unexplained cultural presuppositions, such as references to local organizational structures or traditional terms without providing enough contextual background. Panji's high frequency of unclassifiable politeness strategies (PS-NA) underscores the analytical and communicative challenges that arise from unstructured code-switching. When Indonesian and English elements intermingle without a clear pragmatic orientation, the resulting discourse often fails to establish a coherent relational position. As a result, international audiences may feel uncertain about the intended tone, urgency, or cultural framing. These observations reinforce the idea that successful cross-cultural digital promotion requires not just bilingual ability, but also pragmatic competence in anticipating and accommodating the

communicative expectations of diverse tourist demographics (Kasper & Dahl, 1991).

The relationship between pragmatic clarity and audience engagement further helps explain how linguistic strategies function in practice. Les Village's substantially higher engagement metrics correlate directly with its pragmatic coherence. Clear directive sequencing, consistent positive politeness, and strategic deictic anchoring create a communicative environment that invites interaction. This pattern supports emerging evidence in digital tourism research indicating that audience responsiveness is driven less by how often posts are published and more by pragmatic resonance, which refers to the degree to which linguistic strategies align with platform-specific engagement norms and cross-cultural communicative expectations (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Pemuteran's moderate engagement suggests that factual informativeness can maintain baseline audience interest, particularly among domestic or familiar travelers. However, this approach lacks the persuasive momentum needed to stimulate active international participation. Panji's consistently low engagement, despite a high volume of posts, demonstrates that creative ambiguity and unstructured multilingualism do not automatically translate into digital visibility. On the contrary, pragmatic ambiguity often leads to audience disengagement because international tourists lack the linguistic or cultural background needed to decode implicit invitations or make sense of mixed-language narratives. These findings challenge the assumption that increasing digital output automatically results in greater promotional effectiveness. Instead, they highlight the necessity of pragmatic intentionality in content design (Bou-Franch & Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, 2019).

Theoretically, this study extends classical pragmatic frameworks into the underexplored area of grassroots digital tourism promotion in non-English-speaking contexts. By applying Searle (1969) speech act taxonomy and Brown et al. (1987) politeness theory to Indonesia's community-based tourism ecosystem, the research demonstrates how micro-level linguistic choices come together to shape macro-level destination positioning and patterns of cross-cultural reception. Practically, the findings carry significant implications for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) curriculum development and local capacity building. The persistent gap between promotional intent and pragmatic execution suggests that village-level content managers would benefit from targeted training in how to formulate directives effectively, calibrate politeness appropriately, and provide scaffolding for cultural terms. Rather than focusing solely on grammatical accuracy, ESP interventions should prioritize pragmatic competence. This means equipping local communicators with the linguistic tools to balance promotional urgency with cultural sensitivity, to construct inclusive relational frames, and to anticipate the interpretive needs of international audiences (Basturkmen, 2010). Ultimately, this research underscores that effective digital tourism promotion is not simply a matter of translating local assets into English.

Instead, it requires pragmatically mediating those assets through culturally attuned and audience-responsive communication strategies that bridge linguistic form and cross-cultural function.

### **Conclusions**

This study examined the pragmatic features of English-language Instagram promotions across three tourism villages in Buleleng Regency, addressing two core research questions. The analysis reveals that assertive speech acts dominate promotional discourse, reflecting a shared institutional preference for factual description over persuasive engagement. However, strategic variation significantly influences cross-cultural effectiveness. Les Village demonstrates the highest pragmatic coherence by balancing clear directives with consistent positive politeness and inclusive deixis, a pattern that correlates with substantially higher audience engagement. In contrast, Pemuteran's reliance on direct, unmitigated statements projects operational credibility but lacks the relational warmth required to captivate international tourists. Panji's frequent code-switching and indirect strategies generate pragmatic ambiguity, resulting in minimal audience responsiveness. Collectively, these findings confirm that micro-level linguistic choices function as critical instruments of digital destination branding, where pragmatic alignment with cross-cultural expectations determines promotional success more reliably than posting frequency or visual production value. Based on these outcomes, targeted recommendations are proposed to enhance digital communication competence. Pemuteran should transition toward experiential discourse by integrating positive politeness markers and providing contextual glosses for local cultural terms. Les Village should formalize its successful strategies into a localized English digital communication guide and experiment with selective negative politeness to respect tourist autonomy during high-commitment promotions. Panji must reduce unstructured code-switching in favor of linguistically coherent, English-dominant narratives to eliminate interpretive friction. Across all three villages, sustained improvement requires targeted English for Specific Purposes (ESP) training that prioritizes pragmatic competence, cultural scaffolding, and platform-specific engagement norms. By aligning linguistic design with destination branding objectives, Buleleng's tourism villages can transform fragmented promotional output into internationally resonant, pragmatically coherent communication ecosystems.

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# Corporate Identity As A Media Promotion To Increase Occupancy In Cave Beach Bungalow Nusa Penida

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## Abstract

*The development of Indonesian tourism, especially in Bali, encourages an increase in digital promotional media. Cave Beach Bungalow, which was established in 2019 in Nusa Penida, does not have an adequate branding tool such as brand book, company profile video and website. This research aims to build a corporate identity as a website-based promotional media using the MDLC (Multimedia Development Life Cycle) method, which includes six stages: concept, design, material collecting, assembly, testing and distribution. The test results using black box testing method with equivalence partitioning and state transition techniques indicate that all website features run well. Furthermore, usability testing using the SUS (System Usability Scale) method resulted in an average score of 85,125 from 40 respondents, which falls into the categories of Excellent, Grade B, and Acceptable. The developed corporate identity was distributed through a brand book published on the website, a company profile video uploaded on YouTube and integrated into the website, and the website itself hosted online.*

**Keywords:** bungalow, corporate identity, digital, promotion

## Introduction

Technological developments have become one of the main drivers in the transformation of the business world, especially on the island of Bali. In recent decades, advances in the Internet of Things (IoT) have changed the way companies operate, interact with customers, and build brand identities. This not only affects the internal structure of companies, but also the way they compete in an increasingly competitive global market. The first problem is competition from business in the same area who want to get the attention of consumers. To deal with this competition, specially to build their brand identity, business has to make a shift or adaptation using advanced technology or as simple as digital transformation. One of previous study in hospitality [1] Digital transformation has significantly changed the landscape of the hotel industry. Through the analysis of case studies from several hotels, we reviewed the implementation of digital-based hotel management systems, the integration of online reservation platforms, and the application of technology in various operational areas. The results of the study show that digital transformation can significantly improve efficiency, optimize guest service, and improve customer satisfaction. (Suzano et al., 2024). The tourism sector is still the main driver in Bali, both natural and cultural tourism. The hospitality industry, one of which is accommodation, is inseparable from digitalization and IoT. Cave Beach Bungalow is one of the villas in Nusa Penida where tourists can choose this place to stay when traveling to Bali, especially Nusa Penida. This villa was established in 2019 and takes the concept of a beachfront villa where the concept of this villa is also the same as other villas. Cave Beach Bungalow has 8 rooms with Standard Double, Standard Twin, and Cave Giri with Ocean room types. To provide tourist needs, a kitchen area located in the lobby that can be shared by all tourists for breakfast or dinner. There is also equipped with swimming pool facilities with an



infinity design. This villa provides a comfortable and calm atmosphere, with fresh beach nuances and affordable prices. This villa always strives to provide maximum service but the profits obtained are somewhat reduced.

The second problem, rely on article released in early 2025, even the number of tourist visit increased, it is not followed by increase in occupancy. Hotels, villas, and bungalows have to cut their rate to attract tourist. But most of them choose to visit Nusa Penida for one day trip so they don't need accommodation.[2] Besides the tourist behavior, another factor is from the way of reservation where after using online travel agent (OTA) platforms such as Booking.com, Traveloka, agoda.com, and e-commerce platforms where the provisions of the platform apply commission and tax payments in each booking. In addition, occupancy also fluctuates due to competition between other accommodations or changes in tourism trends, making Cave Beach considered it necessary to develop strategies, especially promotions, to increase occupancy. Therefore, it is necessary to implement an online promotion strategy and also a booking or purchase form such as a website that can reach a wider range of tourists. A reference from (Fazri et al., 2025) where the development of digital technology has driven changes in consumer behavior in seeking information and making reservations, making the presence of digital platforms an important factor in decision-making. The research results show that the availability of digital platforms has a positive and significant impact on the decision to choose Baga guest house as a lodging destination in Cirebon City. This emphasizes that the higher the availability and quality of digital information, the greater the opportunity for consumers to decide to stay. The findings of this study can serve as a basis for the management of Baga Guest House to optimize digital marketing strategies to enhance competitiveness in the hospitality industry [3].

One of the efforts that Cave Beach Bungalow can make is to improve *Corporate Identity* (CI). As in previous research There are no sources in the current document. the results of designing *corporate identity* at Goodang Kopi Shop can help *owners* in meeting the needs of information media and promotional media, therefore the creation of *website pages* and *company profile* videos helps increase coffee business brand awareness and provide more complete information to *customers* [4]. *Corporate Identity* is a form and visual identity in the company. *Corporate identity* is very influential as a product introduction, as a means of corporate promotion, easy to remember by consumers and provide a positive outlook for consumers. To create a *corporate identity*, a special design is needed that includes all the unique and distinctive elements related to the company physically. *Corporate identity* can also refer to the culture or specific characteristics of the organization or company. The goal is for tourists to recognize, understand, and feel the philosophy embraced by the company or organization. Through the development of this *corporate identity*, the researcher will assist Cave Beach Bungalow in creating a *website, brand book, and video company profile* which is at the forefront of promoting in this digital era, which is not limited to space and time.

## Literature Review

Before jump into corporate identity, let's begin with promotion. According to the recent book from (Armstrong Balasubramanian & Kotler Gary Armstrong Sridhar Balasubramanian, n.d.) promotion mix describe as the specific blend of promotion tools that the company uses to persuasively communicate customer value and build customer relationships.[5] Moving forward to one of promotion tools, is Public Relations. Still from [5] shows that public relations are activities designed to engage the company's various publics and build good relations with them. PR may include any or all of the following functions as follows; (1) Press relations or press agency with creating and placing newsworthy information in the media to attract attention to a person, product, or service, (2) Product and brand publicity where publicizing specific products and brands, (3) Public affairs include building and maintaining national or local community relationships, (4) Lobbying where business has to building and maintaining relationships with legislators and government officials to influence legislation and regulation, (5)

Investor relations by maintaining relationships with shareholders and others in the financial community, and (6) Development by working with donors or members of nonprofit organizations to gain financial or volunteer support. In specific, product and brand publicity where publicizing specific products and brands can start with create a corporate identity. Corporate Identity as described in (Riduwan et al., 2023) is an identity that distinguishes one company with other companies, and can also function as an image planting or an image that can be used as an attraction (Azizah, Moussadecq, & Putra, 2023). Company identity in the form of organizational philosophy manifested in different company cultures. Identity of the Person Question the personality of a company and this are where the company's branding is Created (Dharmawan & Yuningsih, 2022). According to Widiastuti, Kusumaningrum, & Handrijaningsih (2022) also in (Riduwan et al., 2023) Corporate identity is a form of visual and graphic expression of images and identity of a company [6]. Logo or Corporate Identity is a sign that does not directly sell, but gives an identity that is ultimately significant marketing tool, that the logo is able to help distinguish a product or service from its competitors. Based on studies from (Bagus et al., 2024) be concluded that Corporate Identity can be used as a forum for promotional media and can increase brand awareness in companies [7]. Rendering to Cenadi (1999:6), as written in (Putri, et al. 2021 in addition to functioning as a corporate identity, *corporate identity* also has other functions, including; (1) As a tool that unifies the company's strategy, (2) As a driver of a company's operational system, (3) As a good network founder, and (4) As a means of selling and promotion [8].

Nowadays, business can maximize their brand, logo, and corporate identity through digital branding. As cite from (Arsy et al., 2024) the findings reveal that a strong digital presence, characterized by high-quality images, engaging and relevant content, and personalized communication, significantly enhances customer engagement. This increased engagement is closely linked to higher loyalty, repeat bookings, and positive reviews, ultimately boosting the hotel's revenue. Moreover, the study underscores the importance of regular content updates and active interactions on digital platforms to maintain strong customer relationships.[9] The

importance of digital branding also revealed in research from (Amirrulloh, et al. 2026) where competitive hotel business management emerges amidst the development of digital technology, the study aims to investigate the digital content management of popular and high-achieving hotels in creating excellence and sustainability. The research results show that hotels need to maximize: human resource competency, appropriate use of digital platforms, creativity of content themes, intensity of publication content, internal collaboration, and communication with target markets to create sustainable and competitive management.[10]

Moving to Multimedia Design Life Cycle (MDLC). Definition of MDLC as shown in (Roedavan et al., 2022) Multimedia Development Life

Cycle (MDLC) is a multimedia product development cycle that begins with product analysis, product development, and launch stages. The study concluded that multimedia products are products that contain multimedia elements and elements. This product is divided into two categories, namely linear and non-linear products. Multimedia Development Life Cycle (MDLC) is a model that can be used as a reference in developing a multimedia product, either linear or non-linear. Based on the combination of advantages and improvement of the weaknesses of various previous MDLC models, the author proposes an MDLC model formulated into

five stages, namely Initialization, Blueprint Design, Assets Preparation, Product Development, and Testing & Validation [11]. In addition, for MDLC and its correlation to brand awareness, research from (Nehara et al., 2025) aims to design a company profile video for PT. Sanindo Multi Tekno using the MDLC method with a combination of cinematic and motion graphic techniques. Evaluation was conducted through alpha testing by multimedia experts and validation from the company. Beta testing involved 35 respondents using the AIDA model and brand awareness analysis. The video was

distributed through YouTube and Instagram to expand the reach and increase brand awareness of the company [12].

In information system, one of the measurements is usability. According to (Feishal Azriel Arya Putra et al., 2025) the usability of an information system is a key factor in success system implementation (Cantica et al., 2024). Even if a system is optimal from the point of view of functional, systems that are not designed with experience and satisfaction in mind users may be rejected or used less than optimally (Setiawan & Novita, 2021). Therefore, measuring usability is an important step in evaluating the system information (Deni & Ferida, 2023), especially in the context of higher education where the services are complex and the needs of the users are diverse [13]. The analysis results show an average SUS value of 58.85, which is classified in the Marginal Low category based on the interpretation of the SUS scale. These findings indicate that the website has not fully met user expectations in terms of usability, even though it provides relevant features and services. Therefore, improvements are needed in user interface elements, navigation, and design consistency to improve user experience. This research makes an important contribution to the development of information systems in higher education by identifying weaknesses that can be improved to achieve better efficiency and satisfaction.

System Usability Scale (SUS) also used to measure Online Travel Agent (OTA) and hotel. Research by (Putri Anasya Larasati, 2025) aims to evaluate the usability of OTA applications using the System Usability Scale (SUS) based on the ISO 9241-11 standard and Electroencephalography (EEG) to analyze user physiological responses. The test involved 10 respondents and 4 task scenarios. This study highlights that the usability of OTA applications is influenced by user experience, which can be measured subjectively through SUS and more deeply using EEG data to understand physiological responses when interacting with the application [14]. Other studies also used SUS in hotel information system. Research held by (Yeung & Law, 2006) the topic of the usability of Web sites has been largely overlooked by hospitality and tourism researchers. In other words, the ease of use of hotel Web sites remains largely unknown to hotel customers, practitioners, researchers, and policy makers. This study presents an exploratory study in which a modified heuristic technique for evaluation was developed to measure the usability of hotel Web sites. The research evaluated the Web sites of all members of the Hong Kong Hotels Association. Empirical evidence showed that minor problems of usability existed on the Web sites of Hong Kong hotels, and no significant difference was found among luxury, mid-priced, and economy hotels [15]. The calculation of SUS describes in (Suarna & Nurdiawan, 2023) as follows: (1) Calculate the score value of each question; The calculation of the score takes into account the odd or even numbers of each statement (2) The score for an odd number statement is calculated from the answer value minus 1, the score for each even number statement is 5 minus the selected statement (3) The SUS score is obtained by multiplying each score by 2.5 and then adding up the total (4) Calculate the average score with the following classification: (a) *Usable*, score above 70 (b) *Marginally*, the average SUS value is between 50-70 which means that an improvement of the system that has been developed is needed and (c) *Unacceptable*, if the average SUS score is below 50 which means that the developed system is unacceptable. Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that the *usability* evaluation of the hotel room reservation information system is carried out using SUS questions which consist of several aspects that assess the ease of use of the login menu and other features on the information system. Thus, the results of the SUS evaluation will provide an idea of how good the usability of the hotel room reservation information system is. Using the SUS method in the hotel room reservation information system can help companies in improving the usability or ease of use of the system, so that users can feel more comfortable and easier in making hotel room reservations. This can increase user satisfaction and help companies improve their business performance. [16]

## Research Methodology

Mix method used on this research to capture all data needed. Mixed method research is a research method that involves collecting quantitative and qualitative data, integrating two forms of data, and using different designs that can involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks (Creswell, 2014) in (Pane et al., 2021) [17]. One of the purposes using mixed method is Triangulation, where data collected both quantitative and qualitative can strengthen and prove the result. Researcher did survey to identify the problems, availability of material sources, and management point of view. To collect qualitative data, deep interview with owner also held to get the sources for MDLP process. In the other side, for System Usability Scale we used Google Form to distribute questioner to 40 respondents in order measure the indicator of SUS. Data collected as quantitative data, then analysed by SUS to complete the result. Results shown in Table 1. This study uses non-probability sampling, especially purposive sampling. The character of the respondent itself can be anyone, prospective guests who have seen or read information about Cave Beach Bungalow from any channel or guests who have stayed and reviewed on Google have the opportunity to become respondents. To determine number of respondents, the option used is Slovin formula, with the number of reviews on Google as many as 135 reviews, the number obtained is 57 respondents. However, with limited time (2 weeks of data collection) and access, 40 respondents are obtained for further data processing.

Furthermore, MDLC (Multimedia Development Life Cycle) is a method of developing multimedia software. In this method, there are six stages, namely concept, design, material collecting, assembly, testing, and distribution.

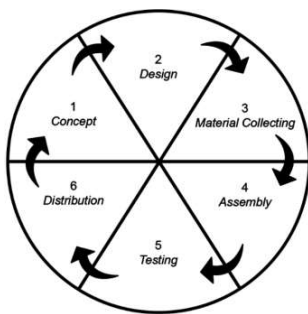


**Figure 1.** *Multimedia Development Life Cycle*

Source: (Gus Oka Ciptahadi et al., 2023) [13]

The explanation of the stages of the MDLC (Multimedia Development Life Cycle) method includes:

1. **Concept:** this stage is the initial stage of a project. This stage determines the purpose and to whom the multimedia is intended (audience identification). In addition, it determines the type of application (presentation, interactive, etc.) and the purpose of the application (entertainment, learning, etc.).
2. **Design:** this stage describes in detail what will be done and how the research project will be created. This stage includes the creation of the project's architectural specifications, style, appearance and material or material requirements for the program. The goal is for all elements of the project to be arranged in a planned manner before entering the production or manufacturing stage.
3. **Material Collecting:** The stage of material collection is in accordance with the needs being worked on. Material collection is the stage of collecting materials that are in accordance with the needs being worked on. These materials include clip-art, graphics, animations, videos, audio.

4. Assembly: This stage is the stage of the research project that will be produced. Materials such as multimedia files that have been collected are then assembled and arranged according to design. This stage includes merging text, images, audio, and video into a final product that is ready to be tested and published.
5. Testing: This stage is carried out after the results of the research project have been completed. The author conducted a trial with the aim of making the program that had been made previously indeed running according to or not. This test is divided into two stages, namely alpha and beta. The first stage is alpha testing performed by the creators themselves, and the second stage is beta testing that involves potential users to test programs that have already been created.
6. Distribution: This stage is the stage where the program is stored on a storage medium, such as a CD/DVD, mobile device and a website. If the storage media is not enough to accommodate the program, compression will be carried out on the program. The purpose of this stage is so that the results of the project can be used, enjoyed, or utilized by the intended party.

## Results and Discussion

Based on the methodology, MDLC process, and collecting data for the SUS, here are the results:

### 1. Concept

The design and assembly in this study is based on the concept that has been designed. The suitability and sustainability of the identity that the company wants to convey is adjusted by writing through a discussion process with the responsible party, namely the *villa* owner on the visualization concept of Cave Beach Bungalow. Concept design usually affects the company's identity and gets a visual image of a company that will be displayed in the creation of this system. Logo and the brand book shown the corporate identity by color, font, and the meaning of logo.



**Figure 2:** Corporate Identity: Logo

In the Cave Beach Bungalow brand book, there is information about the company's identity which is compiled in the form of a manual or visual guide. This brand book includes a brief description of the company, logo philosophy, terms of use of logos, typefaces, and the application of logos in various promotional media. The purpose of making this brand book is to maintain the consistency of Cave Beach Bungalow's visual identity so that the company's image remains professional and easily recognizable by the public and tourists.

### 2. Design

The design stage is the stage of designing the system needed for the corporate identity website at Cave Beach Bungalow. The Brand book design is an image of the Brand book design at Cave Beach Bungalow. The Cave Beach Bungalow brand book consists of 9 pages which contain information about Cave Beach Bungalow.



**Figure 3.** Cave's Brand Book

Besides brand book there is also design for Video Company Profile. Storyboard is a sketch of an image used as a depiction of the storyline from the video company profile of Cave Beach Bungalow. The storyboard design of this company profile video consists of 20 scenes with 4.21 minutes duration.

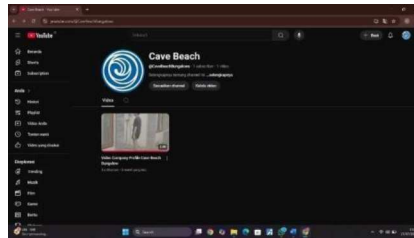


**Figure 4.** Cave Bungalow Company Profile Video

Last but not least, Website interface design is an initial description that is used as a basis for developing the user's appearance on a *website*. This design has an important role in organizing the structure, layout and user experience when accessing *a website*. On the Cave Beach Bungalow website, the interface design has been structured to create a responsive, intuitive and easy-to-use interface.

**Figure 5.** Cave Bungalow Website

### 3. Material Collecting

The stage of collecting materials or data was carried out by the author by observation methods, conducted an interview with Mr. I Putu Rai Sudarta, SE, and several literature studies. Data collection is carried out to obtain crucial data. The data that has been collected will be the basic material for building and implementing a corporate identity in Cave Beach Bungalow.

### 4. Assembly

This part of methods assembly materials such as multimedia files that have been collected. Those materials are then assembled and arranged according to design. This stage includes merging text, images, audio, and video into a final product that is ready to be tested and published. The results shown in Figure 2 to Figure 5.

### 5. Testing

Testing is an important stage with the aim of ensuring that the system functions as desired. The testing method used for the Cave Beach Bungalow website is black box testing and questionnaire distribution. Testing with the black box testing method is carried out to assess the functionality of the software without looking at and testing the source code of the program. The technique used in this test is the Equivalence Partitioning technique. The following are the results of testing the Cave Beach Bungalow website using the black box testing method. System Usability Scale (SUS) test also conducted in this process. Questionnaire testing using the System Usability Scale (SUS) method is an objective evaluation that involves a number of respondents to assess the system developed by the author. This test involved 40 respondents as a sample, with the SUS consisting of 10 questions as the evaluation instrument.

Before filling out the questionnaire, respondents were asked to first try and explore the website that had been developed. After that, users fill out the questionnaire online through Google Form.

**Table 1: SUS Results**

| Respondents | Item and Scores (Q1 – Q10) |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    | Total Scores | Results |
|-------------|----------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|--------------|---------|
|             | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |              |         |
| 1           | 3                          | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2  | 32           | 80      |
| 2           | 3                          | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4  | 36           | 90      |
| 3           | 4                          | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4  | 36           | 90      |
| 4           | 4                          | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3  | 36           | 90      |
| 5           | 4                          | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3  | 35           | 87,5    |
| 6           | 4                          | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4  | 39           | 97,5    |
| 7           | 2                          | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 4  | 31           | 77,5    |
| 8           | 4                          | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3  | 37           | 92,5    |
| 9           | 3                          | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 2  | 30           | 75      |
| 10          | 4                          | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3  | 37           | 92,5    |
| 11          | 3                          | 2 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2  | 31           | 77,5    |
| 12          | 4                          | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4  | 37           | 92,5    |
| 13          | 4                          | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4  | 39           | 97,5    |
| 14          | 4                          | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3  | 33           | 82,5    |
| 15          | 3                          | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 2  | 32           | 80      |
| 16          | 4                          | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2  | 35           | 87,5    |
| 17          | 4                          | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4  | 37           | 92,5    |
| 18          | 4                          | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3  | 33           | 82,5    |
| 19          | 3                          | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3  | 33           | 82,5    |

| Respondents           | Item and Scores<br>(Q1 – Q10) |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    | Total Scores | Results |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|--------------|---------|
|                       | 1                             | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |              |         |
| 20                    | 4                             | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4  | 39           | 97,5    |
| 21                    | 4                             | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3  | 39           | 97,5    |
| 22                    | 4                             | 2 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4  | 37           | 92,5    |
| 23                    | 3                             | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3  | 37           | 92,5    |
| 24                    | 3                             | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2  | 33           | 82,5    |
| 25                    | 3                             | 4 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2  | 32           | 80      |
| 26                    | 4                             | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 3  | 30           | 75      |
| 27                    | 4                             | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3  | 36           | 90      |
| 28                    | 3                             | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 3  | 27           | 67,5    |
| 29                    | 4                             | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4  | 34           | 85      |
| 30                    | 3                             | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3  | 33           | 82,5    |
| 31                    | 3                             | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4  | 34           | 85      |
| 32                    | 4                             | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3  | 36           | 90      |
| 33                    | 3                             | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4  | 35           | 87,5    |
| 34                    | 2                             | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3  | 31           | 77,5    |
| 35                    | 3                             | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3  | 33           | 82,5    |
| 36                    | 3                             | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4  | 30           | 75      |
| 37                    | 3                             | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3  | 31           | 77,5    |
| 38                    | 3                             | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4  | 37           | 92,5    |
| 39                    | 3                             | 4 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 2  | 31           | 77,5    |
| 40                    | 3                             | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 3  | 28           | 70      |
| Total                 |                               |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    | 3.405        |         |
| SUS Mean              |                               |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    | 85,125       |         |
| Adjective Ratings     |                               |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    | Excellent    |         |
| Grade Scale           |                               |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    | B            |         |
| Acceptability Rangers |                               |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    | Acceptable   |         |

[Source: research data]

Statistical Analysis describe in below:

SUS score :  $((Q1 - 1) + (5 - Q2) + (Q3 - 1) + (5 - Q4) + (Q5 - 1) + (5 - Q6) + (Q7 - 1) + (5 - Q8) + (Q9 - 1) + (5 - Q10)) * 2.5$ .....

Followed by calculating the mean with:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum x}{n}$$

Remarks :

$\bar{x}$  = mean

$\sum x$  = respondent total score

$n$  = number of respondents

The rules in the SUS questionnaire calculation process consist of several stages, between other:

1. For each odd (+) question (1,3,5,7,9), the respondent's answer is subtracted by one.
2. Each question is even (-) (2,4,6,8,10), five minus the respondent's answer.
3. The process in points 1 and 2 (conversion), will result in a scale of very disagree to strongly agree (0 – 4).
4. All respondents' answers that have been converted are added up and then multiplied by 2.5 and divided by the total number of respondents.

Table 2. SUS Score Guide



| <i>SUS Score</i> | <i>Adjective Ratings</i> | <i>Grade Scale</i> | <i>Acceptability Ranges</i> |
|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| 91 – 100         | <i>Best Imaginable</i>   | A                  | <i>Acceptable</i>           |
| 81 – 90,9        | <i>Excellent</i>         | B                  |                             |
| 71 – 80,9        | <i>Good</i>              | C                  |                             |
| 61 – 70,9        | <i>Ok</i>                | D                  | <i>Marginal</i>             |
| 51 – 60,9        |                          |                    |                             |
| 41 – 50,9        | <i>Poor</i>              | F                  | <i>Not Acceptable</i>       |
| 31 – 41,9        |                          |                    |                             |
| 21 – 30,9        | <i>Worst Imaginable</i>  |                    |                             |
| 1. – 20,9        |                          |                    |                             |

Based on results on Table 1 and Score Guide in Table 2, the score 85,125 is in B scale, mean that the website is in Excellent score or Acceptable to use by visitors.

## 6. Distribution

This part will explain the distribution of brand book, company video profile, and the website. The distribution of the Cave Beach Bungalow brand book is carried out in 2 ways; the first is by printing using Art Paper measuring 30x22 cm which later on, the brand book will be available in the lobby of Cave Beach Bungalow.

This brand book will then be handed over to the villa owner to maintain the consistency of the visual identity and the direction of the company's brand communication. Next, the distribution of company profile videos is done through YouTube. The platform is a platform that can be accessed by everyone. The following is the link to the video that has been uploaded through Youtube <https://youtu.be/jOSqrWmirO8>. The website of Cave Beach Bungalow is hosted and can also be accessed by everyone via the internet so that tourists and foreigners can also see in advance what is in Cave Beach Bungalow. Here is the link <https://cavebeachbungalow.com/> to access the Cave Beach Bungalow website.

## Discussions

Based on the MDLC process that completed in this research, corporate identity is a must. A company should have their own logo and its own usually related to their name or the company objectives and goals. Cave Beach Bungalow logo consists of wave and circle elements. In short, the Cave Beach Bungalow logo is made to have a modern minimalist impression and is one of the choices as a comfortable lodging and provides happiness to every visitor who stays at Cave Beach Bungalow. The logo uses blue and white colours that give the impression of the sea and sky, creating an atmosphere of relaxation, tranquillity, and peace. The white colour on the logo symbolizes cleanliness, simplicity, and purity. The choice of colours aims to portray the character of the villa that is calm, natural, and provides comfort for the guests. The font used on the Cave Beach Bungalow logo is Garamond that gives a warm and inviting impression, in line with the image of a friendly and friendly villa for every visitor. In addition, the soft and proportional lettering shape of the Garamond helps to reinforce the exclusive and professional impression in the visual identity of Cave Beach Bungalow. This logo must be placed all around the Bungalows, room amenities, brand book, website, video profile, and social media. Overall, this process of making the corporate identity already obey the previous research by [3], [4], [5], and [6].

Furthermore, the result of SUS measurement also, in line with [13], [14], [15], [16], and [9], [10] [11] where bungalow owner has to make sure that digital branding within all digital platforms, such as website is ready to use,

easy navigate so that visitors/tourists will have a good user experience. After all, all this hard work of corporate identity, brand book, video profile, and website implementation has to deal with another marketing tools. As shown in research by [19] the results of this study show that the AIDA content marketing model and customer engagement has a significant positive effect on brand awareness.

The AIDA content marketing model, customer engagement, and brand awareness has a significant positive effect on purchasing decisions, and brand awareness can strengthen the influence of the AIDA content marketing model and customer engagement on purchasing decisions. Cave Bungalow has to maximize the social media platform and features to share their marketing content that integrates with their brand book, video profile, and website. In this way, potential visitors will see Cave Bungalow as a perfect place to stay, so they take action to make reservation and stay overnight, not only for one day trip in Nusa Penida. Last but not least, using meta-ads and Google ads are another level of digital promotion. The results indicate that the hotel prefers Meta Ads due to its ability to target audiences more specifically, cost efficiency, flexibility in visual content, and its impact on brand awareness. Meanwhile, Google Ads has not been optimally utilized due to limitations in management and platform understanding. These findings demonstrate that Meta Ads significantly contribute to the effectiveness of the hotel's digital marketing campaigns According to [20]. Meta ads such as Instagram ads and stories can help to increase viewers of content. In other word, this also can help Cave Bungalow can place as top ranks search in Search Engine Optimization (SEO) in Google search engine.

### Conclusions

The conclusions should explain how the objectives of the study are accomplished and should be written in a very clear word. The results based on the research, can be concluded that Corporate Identity at Cave Beach Bungalow as a promotional media has succeeded in producing brand books, company profile videos and websites using the MDLC (Multimedia Development Life Cycle) method. The implementation of Corporate Identity at Cave Beach Bungalow as a Promotional Media which includes brand books, company profile videos and websites has succeeded in having a significant positive impact on Cave Beach Bungalow's branding and facilitating the communication process with marketing targets. The SUS (System Usability Scale) method used to test the system usability level indicated that the results of the calculation of a questionnaire consisting of 10 questions and involving 40 respondents resulted in an average score of 85.125. This value is included in the categories of Adjective Ratings: Excellent, Grade Scale: B and Acceptability Ranges: Acceptable. Corporate identity is distributed through several media, such as brand books printed using 150 gsm Art Paper and published on the website, company profile videos uploaded through the YouTube platform, and websites published through hosting.

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# THE ROLE OF TIKTOK AS A SOCIAL COMMERCE TOOL IN PROMOTING TOURISM IN THE PHILIPPINES: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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## Abstract

*The rapid growth of short-form video platforms has changed how travelers discover and choose destinations. This paper examined TikTok's role as a social commerce tool for tourism promotion in the Philippines by combining studies on user-generated content (UGC), influencer marketing, destination image formation, and digital consumer behavior. Using a qualitative and interpretive approach through systematic thematic synthesis, the study identified three major themes: the influence of user-generated content on travel decisions, TikTok's role in increasing destination awareness and shaping destination image, and the impact of influencers and viral content on tourism-related social commerce. Findings revealed that TikTok significantly increases destination exposure, creates positive perceptions of places, and influences the travel intentions and purchase decisions of Millennials and Generation Z travelers. In the Philippines, TikTok also serves as a cost-effective promotional tool for both popular and lesser-known destinations, helping local tourism industries without requiring large marketing budgets. However, challenges remain, including selective destination representation, undisclosed sponsorships, and unrealistic portrayals that may lead to tourist dissatisfaction. Therefore, responsible content creation and sustainable tourism marketing strategies are necessary.*

**Keywords:** Destination image 1, influencer marketing 2, TikTok 3, tourism marketing 4, user-generated content 5

## Introduction

Tourism is one of the most important and recognized sectors to greatly contribute to economic growth, generating employment, and cultural exchange especially in the context of developing countries such as the Philippines. With digital technologies continually reshaping consumer habits, tourists nowadays mostly try to get travel information through the social media platforms, they watch destinations and make their travel intentions through those social platforms. As Krishna and Rao (2025) pointed out, social media has revolutionized tourism decision-making by granting tourists an instant exposure to visually appealing, peer-generated content that highly influences the selection of destinations. In line with that, Aboalghanam et al. (2025) agree that user-generated content (UGC) significantly affects the formation of destination images and the decision to visit because people consider it more trustworthy, authentic, and reliable than the conventional marketing materials.

TikTok is one of the platforms that have a distinct feature of combining entertainment, social interaction, and commercial influence. So it is a social commerce tool, not only a social networking site. Datu et al. (2025) point out that TikTok's short form video format, its algorithm-based feature for videos to get more views, and its interactive features play a significant role in the promotion of the Philippine tourist destinations, as they help in the spread of influencer endorsements and viral travel content. Similarly, Alejo et al. (2025) also noticed that TikTok videos have a direct effect on the choice of the destination of Generation Z and Millennials in Manila, which indicates that the platform is a strong tool to influence decisions related to tourism. The increased use of TikTok in official tourism initiatives is a further indication of the city's strategic use of the platform to promote tourism in the Philippines in the digital age (TikTok Newsroom, 2025).

The success of TikTok in tourism promotion can be better understood by looking at theoretical perspectives in social commerce and consumer behavior. Romero and Castillo (2023) points out that social commerce platforms are basically dependent on User Generated Content (UGC) and electronic word-of-mouth for building trust and hence influencing consumer decisions, more so in industries based on experiences such as tourism. Looking at it from a behavioral perspective, Yamagishi et al. (2024) demonstrate, using the Stimulus, Organism, Response (SOR) theory, that social media content serves as a stimulus leading to emotional and cognitive responses that eventually result in visit intention. Moreover, Krishna and Rao (2025) refer to a constructivist approach whereby the destination's significance and authenticity are jointly developed through the interactions of content creators and the audience. Nevertheless, the current research work is scattered and mainly empirical, which is why a detailed literature review that brings together theoretical arguments for TikTok as a social commerce tool in the promotion of tourism in the Philippines is needed.

## **Literature Review**

Ramos and Ramos (2025) examined the influence of user-generated content (UGC) on purchase intent for tourism products on TikTok, surveying users aged 18 to 42 across Millennial and Centennial generations. Their findings revealed that information credibility and usefulness, along with social influence, significantly shaped respondents' intention to purchase tourism products and services. Supporting this, Huang et al. (2024) constructed a model integrating the Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) and the Information Quality Theory (IQT), finding that content reliability and understandability on TikTok significantly shaped perceived enjoyment, which in turn predicted tourists' visit intentions. Perceived enjoyment was found to fully mediate the relationship between content quality and behavioral intention, further underscoring the role of content quality as a driver of travel decision-making on the platform.

The influence of TikTok extends beyond individual content quality to the broader participation of tourists as content creators themselves. Sarifiyono et al. (2024) demonstrated that tourist involvement in creating TikTok content substantially increases destination visibility and attractiveness, and that authentic, personalized content produced by tourists is more effective at influencing others' travel intentions than formal promotional material — highlighting the strategic value of leveraging UGC in destination marketing. Similarly, Yang et al. (2025) found that UGC short videos featuring natural scenery, local cuisine, and folk cultural activities positively influenced tourists' willingness to visit rural destinations, with destination image perception, encompassing both cognitive and emotional dimensions, mediating the relationship between UGC exposure and travel intent.

Furthermore, the study of Alejo et al. (2025) investigated how TikTok affected the tourism destination choices of Generation Z and Millennial travelers in Manila, gathering responses from 397 participants. The study found that TikTok, particularly through its sounds, storytelling, and informational content, similarly influenced both generational cohorts in their decisions to schedule tours and select travel destinations, with over a third of respondents reporting they had already booked a trip as a direct result of watching TikTok content. This finding is consistent with Liu et al. (2024), who examined how TikTok's short-form video format influences the behavioral intentions of both Generation Z and Millennial tourists, underscoring the growing centrality of mobile short-form video in tourism promotion as new media continue to evolve.

The power of TikTok in shaping travel decisions is further reinforced by influencer-driven content. Tham et al. (2024), through a pentadic analysis of TikTok marketing in Penang, Malaysia, observed that TikTok influencers and users significantly enhanced destination image while also noting that destinations surrender a degree of narrative control when relying on external content creators, raising important implications for destination marketing organizations. Collectively, these studies affirm that TikTok content, generated by users and influencers alike, serves as a powerful medium for promoting travel and can encourage traveler interaction and reservation decisions.

### **Research Methodology**

This study implemented a qualitative approach and utilized a systematic literature review to assess the role of TikTok as a social commerce tool for promoting tourism in the Philippines. The review was primarily interpretive and exploratory, intending to combine empirical findings and thematic patterns instead of quantifying the effects.

Furthermore, this research depended mainly on secondary data derived from published literature. The sources included peer-reviewed journal articles, government and industry reports, tourism statistics, reputable news analyses, and documented TikTok case studies and campaign reports. The selection of sources was prioritized to ensure direct relevance to topics such as social commerce, short-form video platforms, influencer marketing, and Philippine tourism contexts. The search was limited to a specific time span in order to capture the latest platform developments and policy changes.

Subsequently, the retrieved records were subjected to a two-stage screening process: the selection of titles and abstracts, and the application of explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria for relevance and source credibility. The data from relevant studies were analyzed using thematic synthesis. This article drew solely on publicly accessible secondary sources, so there were no human subjects or primary data collection considerations. The ethical aspect instead focused on accurately representing and properly citing the original authors.

### **Results and Discussion**

The systematic literature review identified a number of consistent themes on the topic of TikTok as a social commerce tool for tourism promotion in the Philippines. In essence, these points emphasize the ways in which TikTok impacts tourists' behavior, helps in creating the image of a destination, and makes marketing more effective with the help of user-generated content (UGC) and digital engagement.

## **Influence of User-Generated Content on Travel Decisions**

The findings indicate that user-generated content (UGC) significantly influences travel decision-making, especially through platforms like TikTok. Trust and credibility stand out as key elements because travelers generally see UGC as more genuine compared to formal marketing. Aboalghanam et al. (2025) argue that people trust content created by peers since it shows actual experiences, while Krishna and Rao (2025) point out that social media provides quick and easy access to such content, thereby increasing its persuasive power in terms of destination selection. This confidence in UGC turns it into a highly effective form of electronic word-of-mouth that directly affects tourists' decisions.

Another important discovery was that user-generated content plays a big part in the way people view a place and how attractive it looks to them. Things like short videos, reviews, and people sharing their trips visually help in creating a clear mental picture of the destinations. This image in a tourist's mind influences their decision to choose a place or not. In fact, according to Aboalghanam et al. (2025), the image that a tourist forms from the user-generated content has a very strong influence on their intention to visit. On a platform like TikTok, this phenomenon is greatly enhanced by the algorithms which decide what we see and thereby pushing more engaging travel videos to the masses (Datu et al. 2025). Consequently, the places that through their viral content get noticed stand a better chance of being seen as attractive and deserving of a visit.

Besides that, UGC has a very strong influence on travel intentions and even the actual travel behavior. Referring to the Stimulus, Organism, Response theory, social media contents serve as stimuli that provoke emotional and cognitive changes leading eventually to travel intentions (Yamagishi et al., 2024). Studies also show that UGC significantly influences booking and purchase decisions for tourism products (Ramos & Ramos, 2025), especially among Millennials and Generation Z who are highly engaged with social media (Alejo et al., 2025). However, UGC can sometimes have a downside as it may contain too beautified content and promote fleeting travel trends leading to people having unrealistic expectations and raising sustainability issues (Krishna & Rao, 2025). Essentially, the research shows that UGC plays a major role in influencing traveling behavior of the present day and is a key element of tourism marketing efforts.

## **TikTok as a Driver of Destination Awareness and Image Formation**

Another key finding is TikTok's strong role in shaping destination image. Short-form videos showcasing scenic views, local culture, and unique experiences contribute to building a positive and appealing perception of Philippine tourist destinations. Datu et al. (2025) state that TikTok serves as a powerful visual platform where users get to see good and attractive travel content, which often results in increased knowledge of places that were once unknown. The algorithm-based system of TikTok makes it possible for tourism-related content to be shared with a large and varied audience, even without formal advertising. Videos of travels going viral, hashtags, and trending challenges make it possible for destinations in the Philippines including beaches, mountains, and cultural sites to become famous very fast. Consequently, TikTok not only presents destinations to people but also influences the way viewers perceive these places. The representation of destinations generally focuses on the aspects of the beauty, flashiness, and value of experience, resulting in the formation of a positive destination image (Wei et al., 2023)



Moreover, Aboalganam et al. (2025) stated that user-generated content significantly helps make a message more authentic. Unlike promotional videos that tend to be very formal, TikTok is one of the mediums where the videos are usually filmed by the actual travelers who are sharing their travels. And this kind of humanization adds a lot of credit to a message and changes someone's mind about a travel intention. Additionally, he also stated that people generally find travel content shared by their peers more trustworthy and work better in changing their attitudes than official marketing; thus, they are more likely to engage with destinations presented by influencers or regular users. However, Wengel et al. (2022) highlighted that beyond promoting positive images, TikTok may also help raise the challenges. For that reason, a good part of the content is typically only showing the best-looking aspects of the destination, which can lead the tourists to have a wrong picture of what it really is. This kind of selective representation may miss factors such as overcrowding, environmental issues, or difficulty in reaching the place. Therefore, another problem that can arise is the difference between what the tourists expect and what they really get.

Based on Datu et al. (2025), the use of TikTok has played a major part in enhancing the popularity of newly-discovered and lesser-known tourist spots in the Philippines. Tourism-related groups in the country, such as the owners of small businesses and community-based tourism groups receive benefits from the exposure without needing to have a large marketing budget. This is a clear indication that TikTok could be a low-cost social commerce tool that can be used not only for tourism promotion but also for supporting economic activities (Alejo et al., 2025). All in all, the results suggest that TikTok plays a significant role in raising destination awareness and image formation through its use of visual storytelling, user-generated content, and algorithmic reach. It does provide great possibilities for the promotion of Philippine tourism, however, it is the responsibility of the stakeholders to make sure that the content is created responsibly and the representation is well balanced in order to achieve sustainable tourism development.

### **Role of Influencers and Viral Content in Social Commerce**

Studies highlight that influencer marketing can boost TikTok to be an efficient social commerce tool for tourism promotions as influencers serve as a medium which showcase destinations with a “human touch.”. According to Wu et al. (2022), influencers are viewed as credible due to them being relatable, authentic, trustworthy individuals, thus persuading their audiences. As influencers can influence their audience’s attitudes towards certain products and brands, they can utilize their credible reputation to inform others’ travel choices.

Furthermore, promotion of tourism through influencers allows information to be spread quickly through social media platforms. Viral content can be seen by many viewers through one’s large following as well as high engagement rates. Shamim et al. (2024) mentioned that when using influencers with a higher number of followers, brand awareness is increased. With tourism being “sold” to audiences through influencers’ videos, it is highly likely that destinations can become viral, as well as receive high traction through TikTok.

Influencers are able to sell destinations and travel content that evokes an emotional connection with viewers. Through the use of storytelling, relatable environments, and aesthetics, influencers are able to captivate audiences through a niche and personalized marketing strategy. Aritonang et al. (2025) found that influencer marketing leads to consumer purchase intention as it triggers affective engagement. When users watch

influencers travel to new places or showcase hidden gems, they are bound to experience

emotional reactions. Whether it be excitement or aspiration, these emotional reactions lead to an increased chance of viewers visiting these locations.

Studies have shown that social media influencers have the ability to influence younger generations' consumer behavior. Generation Z and Millennials frequent the use of TikTok and are susceptible to influencers' choices. Kim et al. (2022) discovered that people who use social media are more likely to trust social media influencers than celebrities and traditional marketing. This demonstrates how social media influencers are able to reach their young audiences through their online presence.

In addition, influencers lead to electronic word of mouth (eWOM). Travelers usually write reviews and recommendations about their trips that lead consumers to comment, interact, and share their opinions about certain topics. This leads to an increase in sales as consumers share their content. This causes consumers to post on their social media as well. Zhou (2025) stated that electronic word of mouth is "a useful predictor of consumer purchase intentions, particularly in online shopping environments where consumers seek and pay considerable attention to their peers' opinions". In terms of tourism, influencers create tourism marketing that their audience will see and act on.

Despite influencers having their pros, there are some cons that come with using them to promote tourism. Some tourism ads can become over-commercialized and some don't portray reality which can lead to trust issues with your audience. According to Kumar et al. (2024), failure to disclose sponsorship can adversely impact credibility, inducing suspicion among audience members. Influencers are still very useful when it comes to advertising tourism but making sure that what is portrayed is authentic will help you gain your audience's trust.

## **Conclusions**

This paper combines the recent findings on TikTok's rise as a significant social commerce platform and its influence on the Philippine tourism sector, particularly on how Millennials and Generation Z use digital means to plan their travels. Based on the literature analyzed, the following summary points can be drawn. Firstly, TikTok has evolved from being a mere entertainment platform into a commercial ecosystem that is reshaping the way travel destinations are unveiled and marketed. The key to the popularity of this social network is the "human touch" in its content where visual storytelling and aesthetic elements that users identify with are the main factors that lead to higher consumer engagement. Along with some others, the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model is a tool that can be used to describe how these short videos are external stimuli that cause the viewers to go through cognitive and emotional changes as well as developing an intention to visit the featured destinations.

Besides, the contribution of TikTok to the Philippine travel market mainly rests on the credibility of user-generated content (UGC) and the platform's discovery algorithms that are very different from others. Unlike traditional, highly-produced advertisements, peer-related content is considered by young Filipino audiences to be more reliable and trustworthy. In addition to that, the interactive features of the platform, like trending sounds and viral challenges, not only stimulate a lot of fun but also establish a strong community feeling that leads the viewer to fall in love with a destination. However, the decision to travel based on

these contents is influenced by factors like the provision of accurate information and the

perception of entertainment, which means that the "viral" nature of the content should be supported by real value to achieve the desired impact.

Besides that, data from the analyzed articles indicate that although TikTok can be instrumental in creating awareness of the destination and motivating immediate bookings efficiently, it is not that clear how it directly influences customer loyalty over time. In general, the platform has been recognized as an incredibly cost-efficient way for "hidden gems" to enhance their visibility and for local communities to enjoy increased support even with little formal investment. Generation Z and Millennials in Metro Manila, being digital natives, are examples of the target audience for such localized destination marketing as they are known to book the trips right away if they see compelling TikTok stories. Still, the overall success of a destination is primarily determined by relatively traditional elements such as the quality of service provision and environmental sustainability, which digital marketing alone cannot guarantee.

Lastly, this literature reveals the substantial risks and big research gaps that might be the reasons for TikTok not reaching its full marketing capability. One major risk is "selective representation." In such a situation, the influencers show only the best sides of a place, thus it is highly likely that the expectations of the tourists who watch such digital content will be quite different from the real experience. What is more, the problems of not disclosing the sponsorship and over-commercialization not only might break the trust which is the main contributor to TikTok's effectiveness but also might be the cause of the scandals being usually brought to attention with such micro-blogging. Almost all currently published studies are local and are only for a particular area which makes them not to cover the overall picture of how these digital trends fluctuate sustainable tourism management over time.

Therefore, these results also offer the tourism industry and scholars a useful insight into the situation. Hence, marketers should not limit themselves to advertisement only, but they ought to find and cooperate with influencers who are not only aligned with the brand values but also give their followers quality information. Moreover, it has been revealed that the capability of TikTok promoting a certain destination is heavily reliant on a robust infrastructure and genuine tourism experiences. So, it is suggested that researchers should not restrict the focus of their endeavors to the short-term desire to purchase only, they should also consider the long-term social as well as economic impacts of TikTok-driven tourism on Philippine local communities and the digital habits of future traveler generations that will be undergoing changes.

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# Assessing the Relationship Between Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Access and Multidimensional Poverty in North-West Nigeria

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## Abstract

*This study examines the relationship between Information and Communication Technology (ICT) access and multidimensional poverty in North-West Nigeria, with particular focus on Kano and Sokoto States. The study adopts a quantitative descriptive research design. The study was conducted in January 2026, where a total of 400 households were selected using a purposive stratified sampling technique combined with convenience sampling. The study employed quantitative approach, with data being collected using a structured questionnaire covering ICT access indicators and multidimensional poverty dimensions (education, health, and living standards) and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. Findings reveal relatively high levels of ICT penetration. However, ICT usage is largely limited to communication and social media / entertainment, while productive uses such as business activities and education / health services remain relatively low. In terms of multidimensional poverty, the study shows persistent deprivation across key indicators, including low educational attainment, limited school attendance, inadequate healthcare access, poor sanitation, reliance on traditional cooking fuels, and a high proportion of temporary housing structures. The study further finds that ICT access has a positive but moderate relationship with poverty reduction. While ICT significantly enhances access to information and improves communication outcomes, its impact on income generation and overall living standards remains limited. This suggests that ICT functions more as an enabling tool rather than a direct driver of poverty alleviation in the study area. The study concludes that despite growing ICT access, its potential to reduce multidimensional poverty in North-West Nigeria is not yet fully realized due to structural constraints such as infrastructural deficits, affordability challenges, and limited digital skills. The study recommends improved ICT infrastructure, digital literacy programs, and integration of ICT into poverty reduction strategies.*

**Keywords:** ICT access, multidimensional poverty, North-West Nigeria, mobile phones, poverty reduction

## Introduction

Access to information and communication technology (ICT) has become an important part of everyday life and a key driver of development. Mobile phones, internet services, and digital platforms now influence how people learn, work, access healthcare, and participate in economic activities. In many developing countries, ICT is seen as a tool that can help reduce poverty by improving access to information, expanding income opportunities, and connecting people to essential services (World Bank, 2016). However, access to these technologies is still uneven, especially in regions that already face economic and social disadvantages (Cheri & Abdullahi, 2018; Adeleke, 2021). Nigeria has recorded noticeable growth in ICT, particularly in mobile phone ownership and internet use. Despite this progress, poverty remains widespread and deeply rooted. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2022), about 63% of Nigerians (approximately 133 million people) are multidimensionally poor, meaning they experience deprivations in areas such as education, health, and living standards. The situation is even more severe in northern Nigeria. The report shows that about 65% of people in the North-West region are multidimensionally poor, making it one of the most deprived regions in the country.

The North-West geopolitical zone comprising Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Kebbi, Jigawa, Sokoto, and Zamfara, faces multiple development challenges, including low school attendance, limited access to healthcare, and poor living conditions. For instance, the National Bureau of Statistics (2022) indicates that deprivation in education and living standards contributes significantly to poverty levels in the region. These conditions are further compounded by limited infrastructure, including inadequate access to electricity and digital connectivity. At the same time, access to ICT remains uneven across Nigeria (Cheri & Abdullahi, 2018; Akinyetun et al. 2021; Udonwa et al., 2022). While urban areas have seen improvements in internet penetration, many rural communities, especially in the North-West, still face serious barriers such as poor network coverage, high cost of data, and low levels of digital literacy. According to the World Bank (2021), there is a clear digital divide between urban and rural populations in Nigeria, with rural households significantly less likely to have access to the internet or digital tools. This gap limits their ability to benefit from opportunities such as online education, digital financial services, and access to market information.

The understanding of poverty in this context requires going beyond income measures alone. The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), developed by the United Nations Development Programme and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, provides a broader way of measuring poverty by capturing deprivations in health, education, and living standards (UNDP, 2020). This approach is particularly useful in regions like North-West Nigeria, where poverty is complex and affects multiple aspects of life. Although there is growing interest in the role of

ICT in development, there is still limited empirical evidence on how ICT access relates specifically to multidimensional poverty at the regional level in Nigeria. Many existing studies focus on income poverty or use national-level data, which may not fully reflect the realities of highly disadvantaged regions such as the North-West (World Bank, 2020; National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2022). This creates an important gap in knowledge, especially for policymakers who need context-specific evidence.

Therefore, this study seeks to assess the relationship between ICT access and multidimensional poverty in North-West Nigeria. The study aims to provide practical insights for policies that promote digital inclusion and reduce poverty in the region by examining how access to digital technologies interacts with different dimensions of poverty.

### **Objectives**

The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between ICT access and multidimensional poverty in North-West Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- i. Assess the level and patterns of ICT access among households in North-West Nigeria.
- ii. Examine the extent and dimensions of multidimensional poverty in the study area.
- iii. Determine the relationship between ICT access and multidimensional poverty in North-West Nigeria.

### **Literature Review**

The relationship between ICT access and poverty has attracted significant scholarly attention within development studies, particularly in the context of developing economies. This interest stems from the growing recognition that digital technologies can influence not only economic outcomes but also broader aspects of human well-being. This section critically reviews the conceptual, theoretical, and empirical literature on ICT access and multidimensional poverty, with particular attention to their relevance in the context of North-West Nigeria. ICT access is commonly understood as the availability and effective use of digital technologies, including mobile phones, internet services, and related communication tools. However, contemporary scholarship emphasizes that access goes beyond physical availability to include affordability, quality of service, and digital literacy (Hilbert, 2011; Helsper, 2012; Warschauer, 2023). This broader understanding is important because individuals may possess ICT devices but lack the capacity or resources to use them meaningfully. The expansion of ICT, particularly mobile telephony, has been one of the most significant technological transformations in developing countries, with far-reaching implications for economic and social development (Bayar et al., 2024; Mothobi & Kebotsamang, 2024; Saba et al., 2023).

From a conceptual standpoint, poverty is increasingly framed as a multidimensional phenomenon rather than solely a lack of income. The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, captures deprivations across health, education, and living standards (Alkire & Santos, 2014; UNDP, 2020). This approach shows the understanding that individuals may experience overlapping disadvantages that reinforce one another. In regions such as North-West Nigeria, where deprivation in basic services is widespread, the multidimensional perspective provides a more comprehensive framework for assessing welfare outcomes.

The theoretical underpinning of the ICT–poverty nexus is strongly informed by the Capability Approach advanced by (Dzator et al., 2023). Dzator et al. argues that development should be evaluated in terms of individuals’ capabilities, their substantive freedoms to achieve valued ways of living. ICT can enhance these capabilities by expanding access to information, improving communication, and enabling participation in economic and social activities. For instance, access to digital platforms can facilitate job searches, support entrepreneurial activities, and improve access to education and healthcare services. Conversely, lack of access to ICT can constrain individuals’ capabilities, thereby perpetuating multidimensional poverty.

In addition, the Digital Divide Theory provides a useful lens for understanding inequalities in ICT access and use. Early contributions by van Dijk (2006) and Castells (2000) highlight that disparities in digital access are deeply embedded in broader socio-economic structures, including income, education, gender and geographic location. More recent scholarship extends this perspective by conceptualizing the digital divide as a multi-level and evolving phenomenon which encompasses not only access but also differences in digital skills, patterns of use, and the ability to derive tangible socio-economic benefits from ICT (van Dijk, 2019; van Deursen & van Dijk, 2019; Sophie Lythreathis et al., 2022).

Contemporary models further distinguish between first-level (access), second-level (skills and usage), and third-level (outcomes) digital divides, emphasizing that inequalities persist even after connectivity is achieved (Massimo Ragnedda, 2017; van Deursen & Helsper, 2015). These inequalities are shaped by a complex interaction of socio-economic, demographic, and contextual factors, including digital literacy, affordability, infrastructure quality, and social support systems (Lythreathis et al., 2022). This multidimensional understanding is particularly relevant in rural and marginalized regions, where infrastructural deficits, limited digital skills, and socio-economic constraints restrict not only access to ICT but also the capacity to translate digital connectivity into meaningful development outcomes.

Empirical studies provide mixed but generally positive evidence on the role of ICT in reducing poverty. At both the macro and micro levels, ICT has been shown to improve access to markets, financial services, and economic opportunities. For example, Jensen (2007) found that mobile phone use helped fishermen in India increase their incomes by reducing information gaps in the market. Similarly, Suri and Jack (2016) showed that mobile money services in Kenya reduced extreme poverty by helping households manage financial risks and receive remittances more easily. These findings indicate what is often described as the ICT–poverty nexus, which sees ICT as a tool that can support income generation, improve livelihoods, and strengthen resilience among low-income populations (Heeks, 2014; Lythreatis et al., 2022). In simple terms, ICT can help people make better economic decisions and access more opportunities.

At the same time, the Capability Approach provides a broader way of understanding this relationship. Rather than focusing only on income, it looks at how ICT expands people’s real opportunities and choices in life. From this perspective, ICT is valuable not just because people can access it, but because of what they are able to do with it, such as accessing information, improving their skills, or participating more fully in economic and social activities (Kleine, 2010; Haenssger & Ariana, 2017). Recent studies also show that the impact of ICT is not automatic. People benefit differently depending on factors such as education, digital skills, and local conditions. This means that simply providing access to technology is not enough; what matters is whether people can actually use it in ways that improve their lives (Ibrahim-Dasuki et al., 2014; Lythreatis et al., 2022).

From a theoretical perspective, the Capability Approach, originally developed by Amartya Sen, provides a deeper framework for understanding how ICT contributes to development beyond income effects. The approach conceptualizes development as the expansion of people’s freedoms and capabilities to achieve valued ways of living, rather than merely increases in economic resources. Within this framework, ICT is viewed not just as a productive asset but as a capability-enhancing resource that can expand individuals’ opportunities, improve access to information, and enable participation in social and economic life (Kleine, 2010; Haenssger & Ariana, 2017). Recent ICT4D scholarship further integrates these perspectives by emphasizing that the impact of ICT on poverty depends on how effectively individuals can convert access to technology into meaningful outcomes, which is shaped by personal, social, and environmental factors such as skills, education, and institutional context (Ibrahim-Dasuki et al., 2014; Lythreatis et al., 2022).

In the African context, the expansion of mobile technology has been associated with improved access to financial services, market

information, and social networks. Aker and Mbiti (2010) find that mobile phones have transformed communication and economic activities in Africa by reducing transaction costs and improving access to information. However, the authors also caution that the benefits of ICT are contingent on complementary factors such as infrastructure, education, and institutional quality. Without these supporting conditions, the impact of ICT on poverty reduction may be limited.

In Nigeria, empirical research on ICT and poverty remains relatively underdeveloped, particularly from a multidimensional perspective. Existing studies often focus on income effects or specific sectors such as agriculture and finance. For example, studies have shown that mobile phone use can improve agricultural productivity by providing farmers with access to market prices and weather information. However, these benefits are not uniformly distributed, as access to ICT is influenced by factors such as income, education, and location. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2022), regions with higher levels of poverty, especially in northern Nigeria, also experience significant infrastructural deficits, including limited electricity and internet connectivity, which constrain ICT usage.

Furthermore, the persistence of gender and rural–urban disparities in ICT access remains a critical concern. Women and rural populations are often less likely to own mobile phones or access the internet, which limits their ability to benefit from digital opportunities. This reinforces existing inequalities and highlights the importance of inclusive ICT policies. The World Bank (2016) emphasizes that digital technologies can contribute to inclusive development only when accompanied by investments in human capital, infrastructure, and regulatory frameworks. Despite the growing body of literature, there remains a significant gap in region-specific analyses that link ICT access to multidimensional poverty outcomes. Most studies in Nigeria adopt national-level approaches or focus narrowly on income-based poverty measures. This limits the understanding of how ICT interacts with multiple dimensions of deprivation in highly disadvantaged regions such as North-West Nigeria. Given the high incidence of multidimensional poverty in the region and the existing digital divide, there is a clear need for empirical research that examines this relationship in a more localized and comprehensive manner.

### **Research Methodology**

This study adopts a quantitative descriptive research design to examine the relationship between ICT access and multidimensional poverty in North-West Nigeria, with a specific focus on Kano and Sokoto States. The design is appropriate for describing existing conditions and patterns without making causal inferences. Kano and Sokoto States were purposively selected due to their contrasting socio-economic characteristics. Kano State is the most populous state in Nigeria with

relatively higher levels of ICT penetration, while Sokoto State is less urbanized and exhibits higher levels of poverty and infrastructural deprivation. This contrast allows for a meaningful descriptive assessment of ICT access and poverty conditions.

The study population consists of households in both states. The household population was estimated using state population projections from the National Bureau of Statistics and the national average household size of 5.5 persons per household. Based on this method, Kano State has an estimated population of about 17 million people (approximately 3,090,909 households), while Sokoto State has about 6.6 million people (approximately 1,200,000 households), giving a combined estimated household population of about 4,290,909 households. The sample size for the study was determined using the Yamane (1967) formula at a 5% margin of error, which yielded a sample size of 400 households. This sample size is considered adequate for descriptive analysis of large populations.

A purposive stratified sampling technique combined with convenience sampling was employed. The stratification was based on state population size to ensure proportional representation of households. Accordingly, 280 households (70%) were selected from Kano State and 120 households (30%) from Sokoto State. Within each state, respondents were selected based on accessibility and willingness to participate.

Table 1: Population and Sample

| State        | Estimated Population | Estimated Households | Sample Size | Percentage |
|--------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------|------------|
| Kano State   | 17,000,000           | 3,090,909            | 280         | 70%        |
| Sokoto State | 6,600,000            | 1,200,000            | 120         | 30%        |
| Total        | 23,600,000           | 4,290,909            | 400         | 100%       |

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed in line with the study objectives. The instrument captured information on ICT access, multidimensional poverty indicators (education, health, and living standards), and perceived effects of ICT on household welfare. Questionnaires were administered to household heads or responsible adults in selected households across both states. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistical techniques, including frequency distributions and percentages. Results are presented in tables to clearly describe patterns of ICT access and multidimensional poverty across the study area. The study acknowledges limitations associated with the sampling approach, particularly the use of convenience sampling, which may limit generalizability. However, the design is appropriate for achieving the descriptive objectives of the study.

## Results and Discussion

Table 2: Level and Patterns of ICT Access Among Households in North-West Nigeria

| Question                                         | Response Options                       | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Does your household own a mobile phone?          | Yes                                    | 322           | 81%            |
|                                                  | No                                     | 78            | 19%            |
|                                                  | Total                                  | 400           | 100%           |
| How many mobile phones are in your household?    | None                                   | 78            | 19%            |
|                                                  | 1                                      | 104           | 26%            |
|                                                  | 2–3                                    | 138           | 35%            |
|                                                  | More than 3                            | 80            | 20%            |
|                                                  | Total                                  | 400           | 100%           |
| Does your household have access to the internet? | Yes                                    | 312           | 78%            |
|                                                  | No                                     | 88            | 22%            |
|                                                  | Total                                  | 400           | 100%           |
| How often do you use the internet?               | Daily                                  | 299           | 75%            |
|                                                  | Weekly                                 | 29            | 07%            |
|                                                  | Occasionally                           | 21            | 05%            |
|                                                  | Never                                  | 51            | 13%            |
|                                                  | Total                                  | 400           | 100%           |
| What do you mainly use ICT for?                  | Communication                          | 161           | 40%            |
|                                                  | Business / income activities           | 64            | 16%            |
|                                                  | Education / learning / health services | 40            | 10%            |
|                                                  | Social media / entertainment           | 122           | 31%            |
|                                                  | Government / Private Sector work       | 13            | 03%            |
|                                                  | Total                                  | 400           | 100%           |

[Source: Field Survey, 2026]

Table 2 presents the analysis of ICT access among households in the study area, focusing on mobile phone ownership, internet access, usage intensity, and purpose of ICT use. The findings show that mobile phone ownership is relatively high among households, with 81% reporting ownership, while only 19% do not own a mobile phone. This indicates that mobile telephony has become widely adopted and serves as the most basic form of ICT access in the study area. However, ownership distribution shows variation in access intensity. While 26% of households own only one mobile phone, 35% have between two and three phones, and 20% own more than three devices. This suggests that although mobile penetration is widespread, access is uneven within households, with some households enjoying multiple-device connectivity while others remain minimally connected. The presence of 19% without any



mobile phone highlights a persistent exclusion gap at the most basic level of ICT access.

The results further reveal that 78% of households have access to the internet, while 22% remain completely offline. This indicates a relatively high level of internet penetration compared to earlier national trends in Nigeria, suggesting gradual digital expansion in the region. Despite this, internet access does not necessarily translate into equal usage opportunities, as infrastructural and affordability constraints may still shape the quality of access. The existence of over one-fifth of households without internet access reflects a significant digital divide, particularly when considering the increasing importance of online services in education, commerce, and public administration.

The pattern of internet usage shows a strong skew toward high-frequency users. A large proportion of respondents (75%) reported daily internet use, while 7% use it weekly and 5% occasionally. However, 13% of households reported never using the internet, despite being part of the sampled population. This suggests a dual pattern of ICT engagement: one group of digitally active households with frequent usage, and another excluded or minimally engaged group. The relatively high daily usage rate among connected households may indicate reliance on mobile-based internet services for communication and social interaction, rather than formal or structured digital activities.

The findings show that ICT use is predominantly concentrated in communication activities, which account for 40% of usage patterns. This is followed by social media and entertainment (31%), business or income-related activities (16%), education and health-related services (10%), and government or private sector engagement (3%). This distribution indicates that ICT usage in the study area is still largely socially oriented rather than development-oriented. While communication remains the dominant function, productive uses such as business activities and education remain relatively limited. The low proportion of respondents using ICT for government services or formal economic engagement suggests underutilization of ICT's full developmental potential.

Overall, the findings reveal that ICT access in North-West Nigeria is relatively high in terms of mobile phone ownership and internet penetration. However, disparities remain in terms of access consistency, usage intensity, and purpose of use. While a significant proportion of households are digitally connected, ICT usage is still largely confined to communication and entertainment rather than economic transformation or human capital development. These patterns suggest that ICT access in the region is expanding but not yet fully translating into productive or capability-enhancing outcomes. This has important implications for understanding how ICT relates to multidimensional poverty, as limited productive use may reduce its potential impact on improving household welfare.

Table 3: Extent and Dimensions of Multidimensional Poverty

| Dimension        | Question                                                 | Response Options    | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Education        | Has any school-aged child (6–14 years) attended school?  | Yes                 | 283           | 71%            |
|                  |                                                          | No                  | 117           | 29%            |
|                  |                                                          | Total               | 400           | 100%           |
|                  | Are all school-aged children currently attending school? | Yes                 | 212           | 53%            |
|                  |                                                          | No                  | 188           | 47%            |
|                  |                                                          | Total               | 400           | 100%           |
|                  | Highest education level in household                     | No formal education | 106           | 26%            |
|                  |                                                          | Primary             | 142           | 36%            |
|                  |                                                          | Secondary           | 96            | 24%            |
|                  |                                                          | Tertiary            | 56            | 14%            |
|                  |                                                          | Total               | 400           | 100%           |
| Health           | Serious illness in past 12 months                        | Yes                 | 210           | 53%            |
|                  |                                                          | No                  | 190           | 47%            |
|                  |                                                          | Total               | 400           | 100%           |
|                  | Where do you seek treatment when sick?                   | Public hospital     | 176           | 44%            |
|                  |                                                          | Private clinic      | 43            | 11%            |
|                  |                                                          | Traditional healer  | 112           | 28%            |
|                  |                                                          | None                | 69            | 17%            |
|                  |                                                          | Total               | 400           | 100%           |
| Living Standards | Main source of drinking water                            | Pipe-borne          | 93            | 23%            |
|                  |                                                          | Borehole            | 183           | 46%            |
|                  |                                                          | Well                | 108           | 27%            |
|                  |                                                          | River/stream        | 16            | 4%             |
|                  |                                                          | Total               | 400           | 100%           |
|                  | Toilet facility type                                     | Flush toilet        | 89            | 22.3%          |
|                  |                                                          | Pit latrine         | 241           | 60.3%          |
|                  |                                                          | Open defecation     | 70            | 17.5%          |
|                  |                                                          | Total               | 400           | 100%           |
|                  | Cooking fuel used                                        | Gas                 | 66            | 16.5%          |
|                  |                                                          | Kerosene            | 34            | 8.5%           |
|                  |                                                          | Firewood            | 147           | 36.8%          |
|                  |                                                          | Charcoal            | 153           | 38.3%          |
|                  |                                                          | Total               | 400           | 100%           |
|                  | Electricity access                                       | Yes                 | 243           | 60.8%          |
|                  |                                                          | No                  | 157           | 39.3%          |
|                  |                                                          | Total               | 400           | 100%           |
|                  | Housing type                                             | Permanent           | 101           | 25.3%          |

|  |  |                |     |       |
|--|--|----------------|-----|-------|
|  |  | Semi-permanent | 77  | 19.3% |
|  |  | Temporary      | 222 | 55.5% |
|  |  | Total          | 400 | 100%  |

[Source: Field Survey, 2026]

Table 3 presents the analysis of the multidimensional poverty among households in the study area using three core dimensions – education, health, and living standards. The results show the depth and pattern of deprivation across households in Kano and Sokoto States, consistent with the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) framework. The findings show notable challenges in educational attainment and school participation. About 71% of households reported that at least one school-aged child has attended school, while 29% indicate Table 3 presents the analysis of the multidimensional poverty among households in the study area using three core dimensions – education, health, and living standards. The results show the depth and pattern of deprivation across households in Kano and Sokoto States, consistent with the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) framework. The findings show notable challenges in educational attainment and school participation. About 71% of households reported that at least one school-aged child has attended school, while 29% indicated that no school-aged child has ever attended school. Although a majority have some exposure to education, the proportion of non-attendance remains significant and reflects persistent barriers to universal basic education.

In terms of current school attendance, only 53% reported that all school-aged children are currently attending school, while 47% indicated that not all children in their household are attending school. This near-equal distribution suggests ongoing challenges in sustaining consistent school participation. Educational attainment within households further highlights the depth of deprivation. A substantial proportion of households reported primary education (36%) and no formal education (26%), while only 24% reached secondary education and 14% attained tertiary education. This pattern indicates a generally low level of educational attainment, which has direct implications for employability, income generation, and digital literacy in the region.

The health-related findings indicate widespread vulnerability among households. A slight majority (53%) reported experiencing serious illness within the past 12 months, while 47% did not report serious illness, suggesting relatively high exposure to health risks in the population. In terms of healthcare-seeking behaviour, the results show reliance on a mix of formal and informal health systems. About 44% of households use public hospitals, while 11% rely on private clinics. However, a significant proportion still depend on traditional healers (28%), and alarmingly, 17% reported not seeking any form of treatment when sick. This indicates barriers such as affordability, accessibility, and possibly cultural preferences affecting healthcare utilization. These findings indicate that while formal healthcare systems are being used, a considerable proportion of

households remain outside effective healthcare coverage, reflecting a notable dimension of health-related deprivation.

The living standards indicators reveal significant infrastructural and material deprivation among households. In terms of drinking water, 46% of households rely on boreholes, while 27% depend on wells, 23% have access to pipe-borne water, and 4% depend on rivers or streams. This shows that although improved water sources are relatively common, a considerable proportion of households still rely on less safe or unimproved sources. Sanitation conditions are also concerning, with 60.3% of households using pit latrines and 17.5% practicing open defecation, while only 22.3% have access to flush toilets. This reflects significant sanitation deficits that are closely associated with public health risks.

Cooking fuel usage further highlights energy poverty, as only 16.5% use gas, while the majority rely on firewood (36.8%) and charcoal (38.3%), with a smaller proportion using kerosene (8.5%). This indicates dependence on traditional fuels, which are often linked to environmental degradation and health hazards. Electricity access shows a mixed picture, with 60.8% reporting access to electricity, while 39.3% remain without access, indicating persistent energy inequality across households. Housing conditions also show deprivation, as 55.5% of households live in temporary housing structures, while only 25.3% live in permanent houses and 19.3% in semi-permanent structures. This suggests that a majority of households still live in low-quality housing conditions.

In essence, the results indicate that multidimensional poverty in North-West Nigeria remains widespread, particularly in the living standards and education dimensions. While some improvements are evident in access to basic services such as electricity and water, significant deficits persist in sanitation, housing quality, school attendance consistency, and healthcare access. The findings revealed that poverty in the study area is not limited to income deprivation but is deeply rooted in structural and social conditions affecting education, health, and living standards simultaneously. This reinforces the relevance of the multidimensional poverty approach in understanding household welfare in the region.

Table 4: Relationship Between ICT Access and Multidimensional Poverty

| Question                                | Response Options | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Mobile phone improved income activities | Yes              | 229           | 57%            |
|                                         | No               | 171           | 43%            |
|                                         | Total            | 400           | 100%           |
| ICT helped access information           | Yes              | 322           | 81%            |
|                                         | No               | 78            | 19%            |
|                                         | Total            | 400           | 100%           |
| Internet improved standard of living    | Yes              | 244           | 61%            |
|                                         | No               | 156           | 39%            |
|                                         | Total            | 400           | 100%           |

|                                   |                                |     |      |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----|------|
| ICT reduced economic difficulties | Great extent                   | 89  | 22%  |
|                                   | Some extent                    | 280 | 70%  |
|                                   | Not at all                     | 31  | 8%   |
|                                   | Total                          | 400 | 100% |
| Changes due to ICT access         | Increased income               | 75  | 19%  |
|                                   | Better education opportunities | 128 | 32%  |
|                                   | Improved communication         | 177 | 44%  |
|                                   | No change                      | 20  | 5%   |
|                                   | Total                          | 400 | 100% |

[Source: Field Survey, 2026]

Table 4 presents the analysis of the perceived relationship between ICT access and household welfare outcomes in the study locations. The results focus on whether ICT access contributes to income generation, information access, improved living standards, and reduction of economic difficulties among households. The findings show that 57% of respondents reported that mobile phones have improved their income-generating activities, while 43% disagreed. This indicates that although mobile phones are increasingly used for economic purposes such as trading, communication with customers, and mobile banking, a substantial proportion of households still do not experience direct income benefits from mobile technology. This suggests that while mobile phone penetration is relatively high, its translation into productive economic outcomes remains moderate. The implication is that access alone does not guarantee economic transformation unless supported by skills, infrastructure, and opportunities for digital economic engagement.

A significant majority of respondents (81%) reported that ICT has helped them access important information, while only 19% disagreed. This is one of the strongest positive outcomes observed in the study. The result indicates that ICT plays a critical role in improving informational access among households, particularly in areas such as market prices, education materials, health advice, and social communication. This highlights ICT as an important enabler of knowledge and awareness, which are key components of human development.

The findings further show that 61% of respondents believe that internet access has improved their standard of living, while 39% do not share this view. This suggests a moderately positive perception of the internet's contribution to household welfare. However, the relatively high proportion of negative responses indicates that internet access has not yet fully translated into improved living conditions for all households. This may be due to uneven access quality, limited affordability, or restricted use of the internet for productive purposes.

As regards economic hardship, 70% of respondents reported that ICT reduces economic difficulties to some extent, while 22% reported a great extent, and 8% stated that ICT has no impact. This distribution shows that ICT is generally perceived as helpful in easing economic challenges, though its impact is mostly moderate rather than transformative. The dominance of the “some extent” category implies that ICT contributes to incremental rather than substantial economic relief for most households.

The analysis of perceived changes resulting from ICT access shows that the most common benefit is improved communication (44%), followed by better education opportunities (32%), and increased income (19%), while 5% reported no change. This pattern indicates that the primary benefit of ICT is social connectivity, followed by educational support, while direct economic transformation remains less pronounced. The relatively low proportion of income-related benefits suggests that ICT has not yet been fully integrated into productive economic systems for many households in the region.

Generally, the findings suggest a generally positive but moderate relationship between ICT access and multidimensional poverty reduction in North-West Nigeria. ICT is strongly associated with improved access to information and enhanced communication, and to a lesser extent with improved income and living standards. However, the impact remains largely incremental rather than transformative, indicating that ICT access alone is insufficient to significantly reduce multidimensional poverty without complementary factors such as skills development, infrastructure, and economic opportunities. These findings reinforce the view that ICT is a necessary but not sufficient condition for poverty reduction, particularly in developing regions where structural constraints still limit its full developmental impact.

### **Discussion of Major Findings**

The findings of this study reveal relatively high levels of mobile phone ownership (81%) and substantial internet access (78%) among households in the study area. However, the results also show inequalities in intensity of use, frequency of access, and purpose of engagement, with a significant proportion of households still excluded from meaningful digital participation. This pattern aligns with earlier and recent studies which document the rapid expansion of mobile phone penetration across Africa, while also highlighting persistent digital divides in terms of effective usage, affordability, and access quality (Aker & Mbiti, 2010; van Deursen & van Dijk, 2019; Lythreath et al., 2022). For instance, Aker and Mbiti (2010) observe that mobile phones have dramatically transformed communication across sub-Saharan Africa by reducing information costs and improving connectivity, particularly among rural and low-income populations. However, they also emphasize that access does not automatically translate into development gains unless complemented by

infrastructure and enabling conditions, a position reinforced by more recent evidence showing that disparities in digital skills, usage patterns, and socio-economic conditions continue to shape unequal outcomes from ICT access (van Deursen & van Dijk, 2019; Lythreath et al., 2022).

Similarly, May (2011) argues that while ICT expansion in Africa has been rapid, access remains uneven and strongly influenced by income, education, gender, and location, thereby reinforcing existing inequalities rather than eliminating them. The current study supports this view, as internet access remains widespread but uneven in usage patterns and functionality. Furthermore, the dominance of communication-related ICT use in this study is consistent with findings that ICT adoption in developing regions is initially driven by social communication needs rather than productive or economic uses. This reinforces the argument that ICT diffusion often follows a gradual transformation pathway from social connectivity to economic productivity.

The findings on multidimensional poverty indicate significant deprivation across education, health, and living standards, with particularly strong deficits in sanitation, housing quality, educational continuity, and healthcare access. In education, although school attendance levels show moderate improvement, a substantial proportion of households still report non-attendance or incomplete schooling among children. This aligns with broader evidence that educational deprivation remains a key component of multidimensional poverty in Nigeria and other sub-Saharan African countries, where access does not always translate into completion or quality outcomes (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022; UNICEF, 2023; UNESCO, 2022). In the health dimension, the reliance on traditional healers and the proportion of households not seeking medical treatment reflect systemic healthcare access challenges. This supports existing literature which shows that in many rural and semi-urban African contexts, health-seeking behavior is shaped by affordability constraints, cultural preferences, and weak health infrastructure (World Health Organization, 2023; World Bank, 2020; African Development Bank, 2021).

In terms of living standards, the findings reveal widespread reliance on pit latrines, firewood, and temporary housing structures. These conditions are consistent with the Multidimensional Poverty Index framework, which identifies sanitation, energy access, and housing quality as core indicators of deprivation. Similar studies in Nigeria have shown that living standard deprivation remains one of the most persistent forms of poverty despite gradual improvements in income and service access. Thus, the results confirm that poverty in the study area is multidimensional rather than purely income-based, reinforcing the conceptual framework of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI).

The third objective examined the perceived relationship between ICT access and poverty reduction. The findings indicate that ICT contributes

positively to access to information (81%), improved communication (44%), and to a lesser extent, income generation (19%) and improved education opportunities (32%). These results are consistent with empirical evidence suggesting that ICT has the potential to reduce poverty through multiple channels, including improved access to markets, information, and services. For example, Aker et al. (2010) demonstrate that mobile phone access in developing countries improves market efficiency and household welfare by reducing information asymmetries and transaction costs.

Similarly, recent studies in sub-Saharan Africa show that ICT penetration, particularly mobile phone access, has a statistically significant association with poverty reduction, although internet access effects may vary depending on inequality and infrastructure conditions. This supports the present study's finding that ICT has a positive but moderate effect on household welfare, rather than a fully transformative impact. However, the dominance of "some extent" responses in relation to ICT reducing economic difficulties suggests that ICT serves more as an enabling tool than a direct poverty alleviation mechanism. This is consistent with May (2011), who cautions that ICT should not be viewed as a "silver bullet" for poverty reduction, but rather as a complementary development tool whose effectiveness depends on structural conditions such as education, infrastructure, and institutional support.

In essence, the findings suggest a coherent relationship between ICT access and multidimensional poverty in North-West Nigeria. While ICT access, particularly mobile phone ownership, is relatively high, its developmental impact remains moderate and uneven. ICT contributes significantly to information access and communication, but its role in transforming economic conditions and reducing multidimensional poverty is still limited. This reinforces the broader theoretical position in ICT-for-development literature that technology alone is insufficient to reduce poverty unless accompanied by complementary investments in education, infrastructure, and institutional capacity.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

This study assessed the relationship between ICT access and multidimensional poverty in North-West Nigeria, with specific reference to Kano and Sokoto States. The findings reveal that ICT access is relatively high in terms of mobile phone ownership and internet availability, but the depth and quality of usage remain uneven across households. The study found that mobile phone ownership is widespread, and internet access is increasingly available to a large proportion of households. However, usage patterns indicate that ICT is still largely concentrated on basic communication and social interaction, with limited engagement in productive economic activities such as business development, formal employment support, and digital service utilization.



In terms of multidimensional poverty, the study established that households in the study area experience significant deprivation across education, health, and living standards. Key challenges include inconsistent school attendance, low educational attainment, reliance on informal healthcare systems, inadequate sanitation, dependence on traditional cooking fuels, and a high proportion of households living in temporary housing conditions. These findings confirm that poverty in the study area is multidimensional and structural in nature rather than purely income-based.

The study further concludes that ICT has a positive but moderate relationship with poverty reduction. While ICT significantly improves access to information and communication, its impact on income generation and overall living standards remains limited. This indicates that ICT functions more as an enabling tool rather than a direct driver of poverty alleviation in the study context. The study concludes that although ICT access is expanding in North-West Nigeria, its potential to significantly reduce multidimensional poverty has not yet been fully realized. The effectiveness of ICT in improving household welfare is constrained by structural challenges such as limited digital skills, infrastructural deficits, affordability issues, and unequal access to reliable services. The findings advance theoretical discourse by integrating the ICT–poverty nexus, Capability Approach, and digital inequality perspectives into a context-specific empirical framework. It shifts the narrative from access equals development to capability-driven digital inclusion, thereby providing a more realistic and policy-relevant understanding of ICT’s role in poverty reduction.

### **Policy Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following policy recommendations are made to enhance the role of ICT in reducing multidimensional poverty in North-West Nigeria:

- i. Expansion of ICT infrastructure and rural connectivity: Government and private sector stakeholders should invest in expanding reliable ICT infrastructure, particularly broadband and mobile network coverage in rural and underserved communities. Although mobile phone ownership is high, internet access remains uneven. Improving connectivity will help ensure that ICT benefits are more evenly distributed and not concentrated in urban areas alone.
- ii. Reduction in cost of ICT services: Policies aimed at reducing the cost of mobile data and internet services should be prioritized. High cost remains a major barrier to meaningful ICT access, especially among low-income households. Regulatory interventions and competition among service providers can help make digital services more affordable and accessible.
- iii. Strengthening digital literacy and ICT skills development: The government should integrate ICT training into adult education, school curricula, and community-based programmes. Since ICT usage is currently dominated by communication rather than productive activities, improving

- digital literacy will enable households to use ICT for education, business, health, and income-generating activities.
- iv. Promotion of ICT-enabled livelihood opportunities: ICT should be actively linked to economic empowerment programmes such as digital entrepreneurship, mobile banking, online trading, and agricultural information services. This will help transform ICT access into real income opportunities and reduce poverty more effectively.
  - v. Enhancement of e-governance and digital public services: Government institutions should expand the use of ICT in service delivery, particularly in health, education, and social welfare sectors. Improved e-governance platforms will increase access to essential services and reduce barriers faced by rural households.
  - vi. Improvement of electricity supply and alternative energy solutions: Since electricity access remains a major constraint, investments in stable power supply and renewable energy solutions (such as solar-powered ICT hubs) are essential. Without reliable electricity, ICT access and usage will remain limited despite infrastructure availability.
  - vii. Integration of ICT into poverty reduction strategies: ICT should be mainstreamed into national and state-level poverty reduction frameworks rather than treated as a standalone sector. This integration will ensure that ICT interventions are aligned with broader development goals such as education, health, and rural development.

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# Digital Visual Engagement and the Awareness-Priority Gap: How TikTok Shapes Gen Z Interest in Blok M

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## Abstract

*Social media, particularly TikTok, plays an important role in shaping the travel behavior of the younger generation; however, its influence on final destination selection remains unclear. Blok M, South Jakarta, a neighborhood popular among Generation Z due to its culinary offerings and visually appealing spots that frequently go viral on TikTok, serves as the focus of this research. This study aims to analyze the influence of TikTok content on Generation Z's tourism interest in Blok M. A quantitative approach was employed through a survey of 37 respondents using a five-point Likert scale questionnaire. The results indicate that TikTok strongly influences information exposure ( $M = 4.46$ ), perception formation ( $M = 4.16$ ), and curiosity ( $M = 4.16$ ). However, despite this strong influence, its role in making Blok M a top-priority destination remains relatively limited ( $M = 3.41$ ). These findings suggest that while TikTok is effective in attracting attention and generating interest, other factors continue to play a significant role in shaping the final decision to visit.*

**Keywords:** TikTok, Generation Z, tourism interest, Blok M, visual content

## Introduction

In recent years, social media has become a key factor in influencing tourist behavior, particularly among younger generations. Digital platforms enable users to access, create, and share information rapidly, which significantly affects how travel destinations are perceived and selected. Among various platforms, TikTok has experienced rapid growth due to its short-form, visually engaging, and easily accessible video content.

The development of TikTok has contributed to changes in the tourism sector. Many destinations gain popularity through viral content that highlights unique experiences, visual attractiveness, and engaging activities. One of the destinations that has gained increasing attention is Blok M, South Jakarta, which is widely recognized for its culinary diversity, unique spaces, and vibrant social atmosphere

frequently featured in TikTok content. However, despite its growing popularity in digital platforms, Blok M still presents practical challenges for visitors, particularly related to crowd conditions, accessibility, and individual preferences, as reflected in respondents' qualitative responses. These conditions indicate that high exposure on TikTok does not necessarily correspond to convenience or ease of visiting, highlighting a gap between digital attractiveness and on-site experience. This situation emphasizes the importance of examining not only how interest is formed, but also whether such interest translates into actual destination priority.

Previous studies have shown that social media plays an important role in shaping tourists' perceptions, interests, and visit intentions. Visual and engaging content can enhance emotional responses, increase curiosity, and influence decision-making processes. This phenomenon is particularly relevant to Generation Z, who tend to rely heavily on digital platforms as their primary source of information when exploring travel destinations. Focusing on Generation Z in the context of Blok M is particularly important because this group is highly responsive to short-form visual content, while Blok M represents a dense urban destination where digital visibility and physical experience are closely interconnected. Unlike many digital tourism studies that focus on general destination attractiveness, this study specifically examines how online engagement interacts with real-world constraints in a localized setting.

However, while previous research has generally confirmed the influence of social media on tourism interest, there is still limited understanding of how specific aspects of TikTok content influence different stages of tourist behavior. In particular, it remains unclear whether the influence of TikTok extends beyond generating interest to shaping actual destination priority. This issue becomes more critical in the case of Blok M, where strong digital exposure may generate high levels of awareness and interest, but does not necessarily ensure that the destination is prioritized by potential visitors.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the influence of TikTok content on Generation Z's tourism interest and visit intention toward Blok M, South Jakarta. By examining both the level of interest and the extent to which it translates into destination priority, this study seeks to provide a more nuanced understanding of tourism behavior in a digital context. This study is expected to provide insights into the role of digital content in shaping tourism behavior and contribute to the development of effective digital marketing strategies in the tourism sector.

To address this objective, the research is guided by the following research questions:

1. How does TikTok content influence Generation Z's tourism interest toward Blok M?
2. Which aspects of TikTok content (cognitive, affective, and visual) have the strongest influence on tourism interest?
3. To what extent does TikTok influence visit intention compared to destination priority?

These research questions are intended to provide a clearer understanding of how TikTok influences different stages of tourism behavior among Generation Z, particularly in shaping interest, visit intention, and destination priority toward Blok M.

## **Literature Review**

### **TikTok and Social Media Influence**

Social media has become a powerful tool in shaping tourism behavior, especially among Generation Z. Among various platforms, TikTok plays a significant role due to its short-form video format, visual appeal, and algorithm-driven content distribution. TikTok content is able to influence users not only cognitively, by providing information about destinations, but also affectively, by creating emotional attraction and curiosity (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014).

Generation Z is known as a digitally native generation that is highly exposed to social media and tends to rely on online content when making decisions. This generation is more responsive to visually engaging and trend-based content, making them more susceptible to influence from platforms such as TikTok (Priporas et al., 2017).

In the context of tourism, interest and behavioral intention are important indicators of potential tourist behavior. Interest reflects initial curiosity, while behavioral intention refers to a stronger commitment, such as planning to visit, recommending destinations, or revisiting in the future. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, intention is a key predictor of actual behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Previous studies also suggest that visual content, social influence, and trust in information can significantly affect these behavioral outcomes (Filieri, 2016).

However, although many studies have discussed social media and tourism, limited research focuses specifically on how TikTok influences Generation Z's behavioral outcomes, particularly recommendation and revisit intention in local urban destinations such as Blok M. Therefore, this study aims to examine the relationship between TikTok influence and tourism behavioral outcomes among Generation Z.

### **Generation Z**

Generation Z refers to people born between 1997 and 2012. In simple meaning, Generation Z is a group of young people who grow up with internet and digital technology. According to Apvianti et al. (2025), Generation Z uses social media as a space to express identity and lifestyle. They are very active in creating and consuming content online. This generation prefers visual, fast, and interactive information. They also tend to follow trends that are popular on social media.

Conceptually, Generation Z has different behavior compared to older generations. They are highly influenced by digital content, peer opinions, and online trends (Mu'awiyah & Jurana, 2025). Social media becomes an important factor in shaping their decisions. They often choose places that are viral and attractive on social media. In tourism context, they like destinations that are aesthetic and "Instagrammable" or "TikTok-able." This shows that their tourism interest is closely related to digital exposure.

Main characteristics of Generation Z (based on Apvianti et al., 2025; Mu'awiyah & Jurana, 2025):

1. Born between 1997–2012 (digital native generation)
2. Highly active on social media platforms
3. Influenced by trends, influencers, and viral content
4. Prefer visual, short, and interactive information
5. Use social media to express identity and lifestyle

### **Tourism Interest**

Tourism interest refers to a person's intention or desire to visit a destination. In simple meaning, it shows how interested someone is in traveling to a place. In academic terms, tourism interest is often explained as behavioral intention toward visiting a tourism destination (Kulsum & Tjokrosaputro, 2025). This interest is influenced by information, experience, and perception. Social media plays an important role in shaping this interest.

According to Rizal et al. (2025), tourism interest is influenced by three main aspects: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. Cognitive aspect refers to knowledge and information about a destination. Affective aspect refers to feelings and emotions toward the destination. Behavioral aspect refers to intention or action to visit the place. Social media content, especially TikTok, can influence all these aspects. For example, videos provide information (cognitive), create excitement (affective), and encourage visits (behavioral). This shows that tourism interest is a complex process influenced by both information and emotion.



## **Research Methodology**

This study employs a quantitative research approach using a survey method to examine the influence of TikTok on Generation Z's tourism interest in Blok M, South Jakarta. The primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed online using Google Forms.

The questionnaire was designed based on two main variables, namely TikTok influence as the independent variable and tourism interest as the dependent variable. The instrument consisted of 22 statements measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The items were grouped into several dimensions, including TikTok influence, tourism interest and visit intention, activity and behavioral intention, as well as recommendation and final review.

The respondents of this study were Generation Z individuals selected using purposive sampling. The criteria for selection included active TikTok users who have been exposed to or are familiar with TikTok content related to Blok M. A total of 37 respondents participated in this study. Considering the relatively small sample size, this study is positioned as an exploratory study aimed at identifying initial patterns and insights rather than producing statistically generalizable findings.

The data collection process was conducted online, allowing respondents to complete the questionnaire independently. The collected data were then processed using Microsoft Excel to calculate descriptive statistics, particularly mean scores for each item and category. The results were subsequently presented in the form of tables and graphical visualizations to illustrate response patterns.

The data analysis in this study focused on descriptive analysis to identify the tendency of respondents' perceptions toward each variable. The analysis was conducted by calculating the mean value of each statement and grouping the results based on predefined categories. To address the limitation of the small sample size, this study also incorporates qualitative analysis of open-ended responses. These responses are analyzed to capture contextual factors such as crowd conditions, accessibility, and personal considerations, which may not be fully reflected in the structured questionnaire. This approach is intended to complement the quantitative findings and provide a more balanced and in-depth interpretation of the data.

This study assumes that respondents provided honest and accurate responses based on their personal experiences and perceptions. Additionally, it is assumed that exposure to TikTok content plays a role in shaping respondents' perceptions and interest in tourism destinations. However, the findings of this study should be interpreted with caution due to the limited number of respondents, and are intended to provide exploratory insights that can inform future research with a larger sample size.

## Results and Discussion

### TikTok Content Influence.

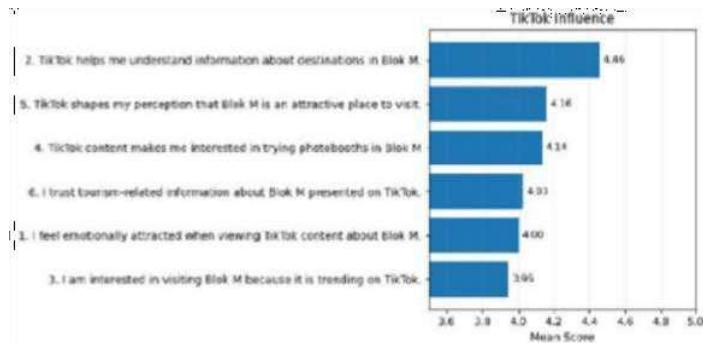


**Figure 1. TikTok Influence**

Source : Research Data (2026)]

The data regarding TikTok's influence on respondents shows the following patterns. The highest mean score was found in the statement "*TikTok helps me understand information about destinations in Blok M*" ( $M = 4.46$ ).

This was followed by "*TikTok shapes my perception that Blok M is an attractive place to visit*" ( $M = 4.16$ ) and "*TikTok content makes me interested in trying photobooths in Blok M*" ( $M = 4.14$ ).

In addition, "*I trust tourism-related information about Blok M presented on TikTok*" recorded a mean score of ( $M = 4.03$ ), while "*I feel emotionally attracted when viewing TikTok content about Blok M*" scored ( $M = 4.00$ ).

The lowest mean score in this category was found in "*I am interested in visiting Blok M because it is trending on TikTok*" ( $M = 3.95$ ).

### Tourism Interest & Visit Intention

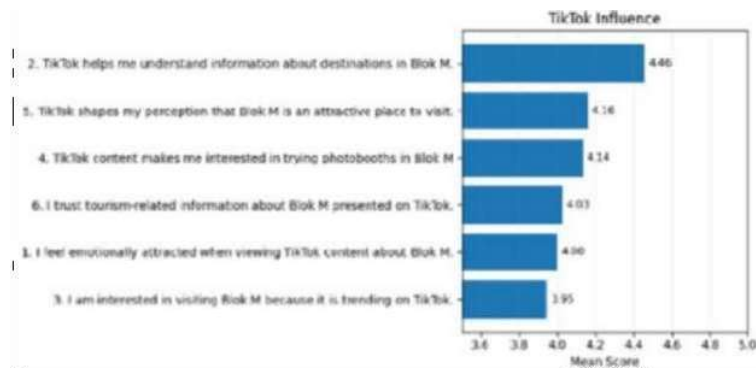


**Figure 2. Tourism Interest and visit Intention** Source : Research Data (2026)

The data regarding TikTok's influence on respondents shows the following patterns. The highest mean score was found in the statement "*TikTok helps me understand information about destinations in Blok M*" ( $M = 4.46$ ).

This was followed by “*TikTok shapes my perception that Blok M is an attractive place to visit*” (M = 4.16) and “*TikTok content makes me interested in trying photobooths in Blok M*” (M = 4.14).

In addition, “*I trust tourism-related information about Blok M presented on TikTok*” recorded a mean score of (M = 4.03), while “*I feel emotionally attracted when viewing TikTok content about Blok M*” scored (M = 4.00).

The lowest mean score in this category was found in “*I am interested in visiting Blok M because it is trending on TikTok*” (M = 3.95).

### Activity & Behavioral Intention

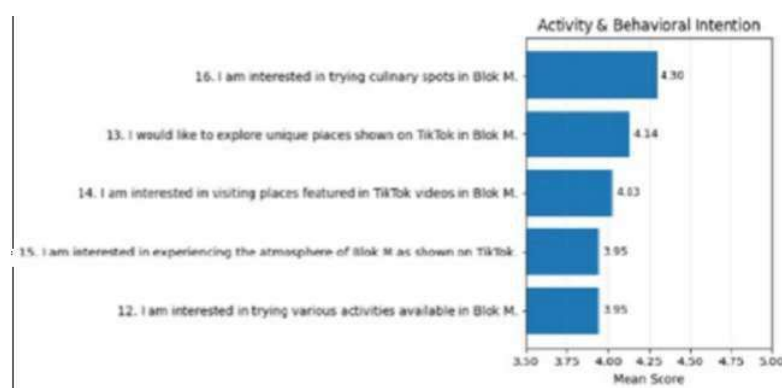


Figure 3. Activity and Behaviour intention  
Source : Research Data (2026)]

The data on activity and behavioral intention indicates that the highest mean score was found in “*I am interested in trying culinary spots in Blok M*” (M = 4.30).

This was followed by “*I would like to explore unique places shown on TikTok in Blok M*” (M = 4.14) and “*I am interested in visiting places featured in TikTok videos in Blok M*” (M = 4.03).

Lower mean scores were found in “*I am interested in experiencing the atmosphere of Blok M as shown on TikTok*” and “*I am interested in trying various activities available in Blok M*”, both with a mean score of (M = 3.95).

## Recommendation & Final Review

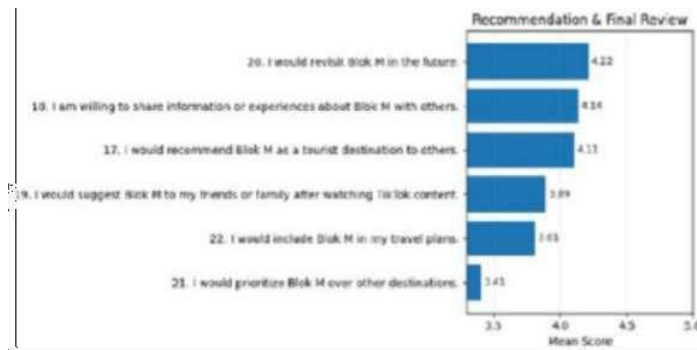


Figure 4. Respondents Recommendation and review

Source : Research Data (2026)]

The data on recommendation and final evaluation shows that the highest mean score was found in “*I would revisit Blok M in the future*” ( $M = 4.22$ ).

This was followed by “*I am willing to share information or experiences about Blok M with others*” ( $M = 4.14$ ) and “*I would recommend Blok M as a tourist destination to others*” ( $M = 4.11$ ).

Lower mean scores were found in “*I would suggest Blok M to my friends or family after watching TikTok content*” ( $M = 3.89$ ) and “*I would include Blok M in my travel plans*” ( $M = 3.81$ ).

The lowest mean score was found in “*I would prioritize Blok M over other destinations*” ( $M = 3.41$ ).

## Open-Ended Responses Analysis

The open-ended responses provide deeper insights into respondents’ perceptions of Blok M after being exposed to TikTok content. The majority of respondents highlighted culinary attractions as the primary factor influencing their interest in visiting Blok M. Various responses emphasized the presence of trending food spots and diverse culinary options frequently featured in TikTok videos.

In addition to culinary aspects, respondents also frequently mentioned the visual appeal and aesthetic characteristics of Blok M. The area is commonly perceived as visually attractive, unique, and suitable for social media content. This indicates that visual representation plays an important role in shaping respondents’ impressions.

Furthermore, several respondents pointed out the atmosphere and overall environment of Blok M, describing it as lively, enjoyable, and engaging. These responses suggest that the perceived experience extends beyond specific attractions to include the general ambiance of the destination.

However, a number of respondents also identified practical considerations that may

influence their decision to visit, particularly related to crowd conditions, traffic congestion, accessibility, and personal comfort. These responses indicate that

although TikTok content successfully generates interest and positive perceptions, there are real-world factors that may limit respondents' willingness to prioritize Blok M as a main destination.

Examples of responses include:

1. "Blok M looks very interesting because of the food and aesthetic places shown on TikTok."
2. "I want to visit because many unique places are viral on TikTok."
3. "Blok M looks interesting, but it is often too crowded and busy."
4. "I am interested in visiting, but traffic and accessibility make me hesitate."

Overall, the open-ended responses reinforce the quantitative findings by showing that respondents' interest is primarily driven by culinary appeal, visual attractiveness, and perceived atmosphere, while practical considerations still influence their decision-making process.

## **Discussion**

As an exploratory study, the findings of this study indicate that TikTok has a significant influence on Generation Z's tourism interest in Blok M, particularly in shaping cognitive understanding, visual perception, and behavioral intention. Given the relatively small sample size ( $n = 37$ ), these findings are intended to provide initial insights rather than broad generalisations. Based on the results, the strongest influence is found in the informational aspect, where respondents highly agree that TikTok helps them understand destinations in Blok M. This supports previous studies which state that social media plays a crucial role as an information source for travel decisions, especially among Generation Z (Kumaradewi & Jelantik, 2025).

In addition, the visual aspect also shows a strong influence, as respondents perceive Blok M as an attractive destination after viewing TikTok content. This finding is consistent with research highlighting the effectiveness of visual-based platforms in enhancing destination attractiveness and shaping perceptions (Zheng et al., 2025; Klarissa et al., 2024). The high interest in specific attractions such as culinary spots and photoboos further reinforces the idea that visually engaging and experiential content plays an important role in influencing tourism interest.

Furthermore, the results show that TikTok significantly increases tourism interest and curiosity, as reflected in the high scores for visit intention and curiosity-related indicators. This aligns with previous findings that social media content can influence attitudes and behavioral intention toward travel (Tsabita & Alfansi, 2025; Dhia & Widodo, 2025). The open-ended responses also support this result, as most respondents emphasized culinary appeal, visual attractiveness, and the atmosphere of Blok M as key factors driving their interest.

However, an important finding of this study is that TikTok does not strongly influence respondents' priority in choosing Blok M as their main destination, as reflected in the relatively low mean score ( $M = 3.41$ ). This indicates a clear gap between tourism interest and destination priority. Although respondents show high levels of attraction and curiosity, these responses do not fully translate into decision-making. Based on the open-ended responses, several respondents mentioned factors such as crowd conditions, accessibility, and personal comfort as key considerations. These findings suggest that while TikTok is effective in generating awareness and interest, real-world constraints continue to play a significant role in shaping final travel decisions.

This finding contrasts with some previous studies which suggest that TikTok can directly influence travel decisions (Alejo et al., 2025). Instead, the results of this study indicate that TikTok's influence is more prominent in the early stages of decision-making, particularly in shaping awareness, perception, and interest, rather than determining final destination choice.

This phenomenon can be interpreted as an awareness–priority gap, where high levels of digital exposure and interest do not necessarily lead to destination prioritization. This finding provides a more nuanced understanding of social media influence, showing that digital engagement alone is not sufficient to drive final decisions without considering practical and situational factors.

Moreover, the findings highlight that specific attractions, particularly culinary experiences, have a stronger influence on behavioral intention compared to general activities. This supports previous research emphasizing the importance of unique and experiential tourism elements in attracting visitors (Pratminingsih et al., 2025). In the context of Blok M, culinary diversity and visually appealing spaces appear to be key drivers of interest.

From a broader perspective, these findings can also be linked to the concept of tourism sustainability. The increasing popularity of Blok M driven by TikTok may lead to higher visitor concentration, which can potentially result in overcrowding and reduced visitor comfort. In this context, it is important to consider whether TikTok-driven tourism supports regenerative tourism or contributes to overtourism. Regenerative tourism emphasizes improving the local environment and community well-being, while overtourism is associated with excessive visitor pressure that negatively impacts the destination.

The results of this study suggest that while TikTok effectively enhances visibility and attracts visitors, it may also contribute to increased pressure on popular areas if not managed properly. Therefore, the sustainability of Blok M as a tourism destination depends not only on digital promotion, but also on effective visitor management, infrastructure readiness, and accessibility improvements.

Overall, this study contributes to the existing literature by providing a more detailed understanding of how TikTok influences tourism behavior. As an exploratory study, Unlike previous studies that generally focus on the overall impact of social media, this study demonstrates that TikTok's influence is stronger in shaping awareness and interest, but more limited in influencing destination priority ( $M = 3.41$ ).

This priority gap is further explained by qualitative insights from respondents, who noted that practical barriers such as crowding and accessibility act as significant



deterrents. From the perspective of Regenerative Tourism, these findings suggest that while TikTok-driven virality successfully boosts visibility, it also risks creating overtourism that puts social and environmental pressure on Blok M. Therefore, this highlights the importance of integrating digital marketing strategies with practical improvements in destination management. Such a balanced approach is essential to ensure that social media influence leads to a more sustainable and regenerative tourism experience rather than temporary viral spikes.

## **Conclusions**

This study aimed to examine how TikTok content influences Generation Z's tourism interest, identify the most influential content aspects, and assess whether such influence extends to visit intention and destination priority toward Blok M.

First, the findings show that TikTok has a strong influence on Generation Z's tourism interest, particularly in the early stages of behavior formation. TikTok effectively increases information exposure, shapes positive perceptions, and stimulates curiosity about Blok M. This indicates that the platform plays a significant role in attracting attention and building initial interest.

Second, among the different aspects of TikTok content, the cognitive (information-related) and affective (emotional and curiosity-driven) aspects emerge as the strongest influences, supported by high mean scores in understanding destinations ( $M = 4.46$ ), perception formation ( $M = 4.16$ ), and curiosity ( $M = 4.16$ ). Visual appeal also contributes significantly by enhancing attractiveness and engagement, but its effect is most impactful when combined with informative and emotionally engaging content.

Third, while TikTok strongly influences tourism interest and moderate visit intention, its influence on destination priority remains limited. Although respondents show high interest (e.g., attractiveness  $M = 4.27$ ), their willingness to prioritize Blok M as a main destination is relatively lower ( $M = 3.41$ ). This indicates a clear gap between digital interest and actual decision-making.

The qualitative findings further explain this gap, revealing that real-world factors such as crowd density, accessibility, and personal preferences play a crucial role in shaping final decisions. Despite high digital attractiveness, these practical considerations reduce the likelihood of Blok M being prioritized over other destinations.

In conclusion, TikTok is highly effective in generating awareness, shaping perceptions, and stimulating interest, but it is not sufficient on its own to determine final destination priority. The findings highlight that tourism behavior among Generation Z is influenced by a combination of digital exposure and real-world conditions. Therefore, to convert online interest into actual visits, digital promotion must be supported by improvements in on-site experience, accessibility, and destination management.

### **Acknowledgement**

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# From For You Page to Flight Gates: A Pilot Study on TikTok's Influence on Travel Preferences Among Indonesia University Students

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## Abstract

*The current study aims to analyze the effect of TikTok content on the travel destination choice behavior of Generation Z, particularly university students in an English Language Education Study Program. Applying an exploratory study with 26 respondents, the study examines the role of User Generated Content (UGC), influencer marketing, and TikTok's algorithm in shaping decision making. Findings indicate that TikTok has transitioned into a primary search engine and decision making tool for this demographic. Key drivers of travel behavior include visual storytelling, where aesthetic views and atmospheric music create a strong urge to visit new locations. Notably, the study identifies an overwhelming preference for "hidden gems" over viral destinations to avoid over-tourism and achieve social escapism. Furthermore, respondents exhibit a "cautious trust" toward travel influencers, prioritizing perceived authenticity and unedited footage while frequently cross referencing information with other digital sources. TikTok also functions as an informal educational tool that successfully shifts indifferent or negative perceptions of destinations into positive interest through cultural and environmental awareness. These insights suggest that destination marketing organizations (DMOs) should prioritize authentic, relatable digital content and collaborate with transparent creators who emphasize authenticity over mere aesthetics to effectively target the younger generation of travelers.*

**Keywords:** TikTok, Generation Z Travelers, Travel Destination Preferences, Digital Literacy, Digital Tourism.

## Introduction

It is widely recognized today that with the development of social media, people's approach to traveling destinations has changed. In particular, the application called TikTok has had a significant effect on the process, especially regarding Generation Z users. Due to the availability of short-form videos, visuals, trending sounds, and the personal algorithm, TikTok may become a source of discovering interesting information about different traveling destinations.

This phenomenon, often termed the "TikTok Effect," allows destinations to achieve viral status almost overnight (Wengel et al., 2022). However, while rapid virality boosts local economies, it frequently poses a threat to destination sustainability, as sudden mass tourism can lead to environmental degradation and the

commercialization of local heritage, creating a paradox between digital popularity and long-term preservation.

To explain, Generation Z refers to the group of individuals born between 1997 and 2012. It is commonly characterized by high engagement and dependence on digital technologies. As far as tourism is concerned, Generation Z usually shows a greater preference for UGC and influencer marketing rather than for other advertising techniques. Therefore, many traveling destinations have gained considerable popularity or reached viral status because of regular exposure to TikTok.

As research reveals that visual appeal, authenticity, and emotional engagement are the factors that may significantly affect decision-making in the sphere of tourism. However, there is no empirical evidence on the effects of TikTok videos on the preferences of university students from the English Language Education Study Program. Selecting this specific demographic is crucial because English Education students possess a unique digital behavior characterized by high exposure to global English-speaking content and international literature. Unlike the general population, their constant engagement with foreign language materials allows them to navigate global TikTok trends, making them more susceptible to international tourism marketing and cross-cultural travel narratives. Their academic background fosters a higher level of digital literacy and curiosity toward global destinations, which shapes a distinct psychological response to travel-related stimuli on the platform. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct research in the chosen area because the selected target group belongs to Generation Z and has constant access to globalized social media.

Thus, the aim of the paper is to examine the effects of TikTok content on Generation Z's preferences when choosing travel destinations, with emphasis on students enrolled in the English Language Education Study Program. The target population will be represented by university students, and the target sample will include students from the fourth semester. Purposive sampling will be used as it presupposes selecting people who fit certain criteria, i.e., active users of TikTok with recent experience in watching travel-related videos.

Although numerous studies have explored the impact of social media and TikTok on tourism, many of them focus on general populations or broader contexts (Dramićanin et al., 2023; Zhou et al., 2023). There is still limited research that specifically examines the influence of TikTok content on travel destination preferences among university students within a localized academic environment (Arkansyah et al., 2025). Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by focusing on Generation Z students, with specialized linguistic and cultural backgrounds providing a more specific and contextual understanding of how TikTok influences their travel preferences.

## **Literature Review**

The landscape of the tourism industry has undergone a fundamental transformation due to the evolution of social media, which has redefined how individuals search for information and evaluate destinations (Ofitserova, 2021). While conventional advertising often relies on high-production, top-down communication, modern travelers particularly Generation Z increasingly prioritize the visual authenticity and peer-validated experiences found on digital platforms (Schoner-Schatz et al., 2021; Journal

of Commerce, Management, and Tourism Studies, 2023). This shift suggests

that social media is no longer just a supporting tool but the primary driver of modern travel behavior.

The effectiveness of TikTok as a marketing medium lies in its departure from traditional, broad-spectrum advertising. Unlike stagnant conventional ads, TikTok's short-video format utilizes creative storytelling and personalized algorithms that deliver content directly to niche audiences based on their specific interests (Abidin, 2021). This "discovery-based" mechanism allows User-Generated Content (UGC) to spread rapidly, creating the "TikTok Effect" where destinations achieve viral visibility through organic engagement rather than forced promotional campaigns (Wengel et al., 2022; Dramićanin et al., 2023). By leveraging UGC, TikTok fosters a sense of trust and "realness" that conventional marketing fails to replicate, significantly stimulating viewers' interest and intention to visit.

Furthermore, the synergy between Generation Z's digital habits and TikTok's algorithmic nature creates a powerful influence on decision-making. Generation Z (born 1997–2012) represents a cohort that naturally avoids traditional advertising in favor of interactive, fast-paced content and peer-to-peer recommendations (Mohd Rizal et al., 2025); (Băltescu & Untaru, 2025). Their travel preferences are no longer shaped by polished brochures, but by the continuous exposure to authentic, algorithm-driven trends that highlight cultural uniqueness and visual appeal (Tien et al., 2025; Neliti, 2022). Consequently, the psychological impact of seeing a "hidden gem" through the lens of a fellow user rather than a brand creates a more profound emotional connection, leading to higher travel intentions among younger audiences (Liu et al., 2024; Zhou et al., 2023; Zaffran et al., 2023).

### **Research Methodology**

The methodology applied in this study is an exploratory study. Due to the specific target population and the objective to explore preliminary trends, this research is framed as a pilot study. This approach entails assessing the influence of TikTok content on Generation Z travelers' preferences for particular travel destinations. The population of the study consists of all students studying in the English Language Education Study Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Prof. DR. HAMKA. The sample comprises 26 students from the 4th semester, selected through a purposive sampling technique. This demographic was chosen due to their high digital engagement and their academic background, which fosters a critical perspective toward digital information.

Primary data were collected using a Google Forms questionnaire. The instrument utilized a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 to assess perceptions of TikTok content and its role in influencing travel decisions. The questionnaire was designed to capture specific Gen Z behaviors, including their digital literacy in cross-checking information and their tendency to seek "hidden gems" or exclusive destinations to avoid mass crowds. Secondary data were gathered from different sources, including literature review, journals, articles as well as online sources in relation to social media usage in the context of travel and tourism.

Data analysis involved a quantitative processing phase using descriptive statistics. The gathered data were analysed to determine frequency distributions and mean scores, which helped classify information regarding social media influence, trust levels, and destination preferences. This systematic process enabled the researchers to present

findings clearly through high-resolution tables and charts. The



triangulation of the data is supported the explanation from the respondents by answering open ended question.

To ensure the rigor and credibility of the study, the research instrument underwent a comprehensive two-stage validation process prior to full-scale distribution. In the first stage, Content Validity was established through Expert Judgment, where the questionnaire was reviewed by academic experts in the fields of digital media and tourism. This panel evaluated each item for its relevance to the "Awareness-Priority Gap" and ensured that the indicators for cognitive, visual, and affective engagement were theoretically aligned with established digital tourism frameworks. Based on their feedback, several items were reworded to better reflect How TikTok shapes Gen Z's travel map.

## Result and Discussion

This section provides a detailed analysis of the findings from the questionnaire distributed to 26 students of the English Language Education Study Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Prof. DR. HAMKA. The study examines how TikTok content characteristics influence the travel destination preferences of Generation Z.

### Respondents' Demographic and Engagement

Based on the collected data, 26 respondents participated in the study. The gender distribution is dominated by females, accounting for 76.9% (20 students), while males represent 23.1% (6 students). The majority are 4th-semester students aged between 18-28 years old. In terms of platform engagement, more than 70% of respondents reported using TikTok "Often," while their traveling frequency varies between "Sometimes" and "Often." This high digital engagement confirms that the sample represents the typical Generation Z profile, which relies heavily on social media for lifestyle inspiration.

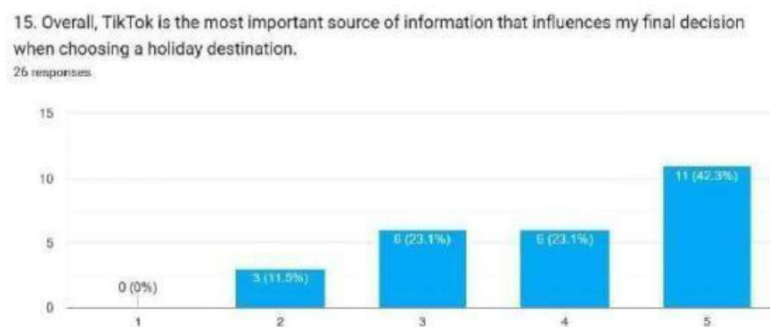


Figure 1: Students' Level of Agreement on TikTok as the Primary Travel Information Source

[Source: Primary Data from Online Questionnaire (2026)]

The data presented in Figure 1 indicates a high level of agreement among respondents regarding the importance of TikTok in their travel decision-making process. Out of 26 participants, the vast majority responded with scores of 4 (Agree) and 5 (Strongly Agree). This suggests that for Generation Z, TikTok is not merely an entertainment

platform but functions as a primary search engine and decision-making tool for tourism. The minimal number of neutral or negative responses further reinforces the platform's significant influence on this demographic

The high engagement and reliance on TikTok found in this study align with the concept of "digital ethnography" and modern communicative forms discussed by (Abidin, 2021), where social media platforms transition from mere social spaces to vital information hubs for younger generations. The dominance of female respondents (76.9%) also reflects broader trends in digital tourism consumption; as noted by (Zaffran et al. 2023), visual-based storytelling on TikTok is particularly effective in influencing the lifestyle aspirations of female Gen Z users.

Furthermore, the shift from traditional search engines to TikTok for travel inspiration supports the findings of (Liu et al., 2024). Their research emphasizes that the "short-video" format provides a more immersive and digestible experience, which significantly impacts the behavioral intentions of travelers compared to static information. This phenomenon, often referred to as the "TikTok Effect," proves that for university students, perceived authenticity and peer-generated content are now more persuasive than conventional tourism marketing (Wengel et al., 2022).

### The Power of Visual Storytelling

The analysis indicates that visual appeal is the primary driver of travel interest among students. Qualitative responses show that aesthetic views and the atmosphere created through background music are essential. For instance, Respondent 10 and Respondent 17 noted that the combination of "aesthetic views" and "relaxing music" creates a strong urge to visit a location. The findings suggest that TikTok's short-video format effectively captures the attention of Gen Z by providing an immersive experience that feels more relatable than traditional travel advertisements.

The quantitative data supports this, as shown in the figure below:

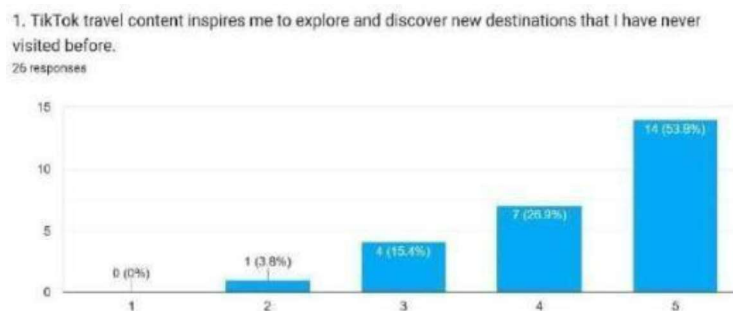


Figure 2: Level of Agreement on TikTok as an Inspiration for New Destinations

[Source: Primary Data from Online Questionnaire (2026)]

Based on Figure 2, the majority of respondents responded positively regarding TikTok's role as a source of travel inspiration. Out of 26 respondents, 14 students (53.8%) chose "Strongly Agree" and 7 students (26.9%) chose "Agree". This suggests that TikTok's short-video format effectively captures the attention of Gen Z by providing an immersive experience that feels more relatable than traditional travel advertisements.

This finding from Figure 2 above aligns with the research by (Liu et al., 2024), which emphasizes that the factors of short videos on TikTok significantly impact the behavioural intentions of Generation Z travellers. The high level of inspiration felt by students is a result of "digital ethnography" and modern communicative forms, as described by (Abidin, 2021), where visual storytelling acts as a bridge for discovering new geographical information.

**"Hidden Gems" over Viral Destinations**

One of the most significant findings is the overwhelming preference for "Hidden Gems" among the 26 respondents. While TikTok is known for making places "viral," students in this study showed a critical attitude toward trending spots.

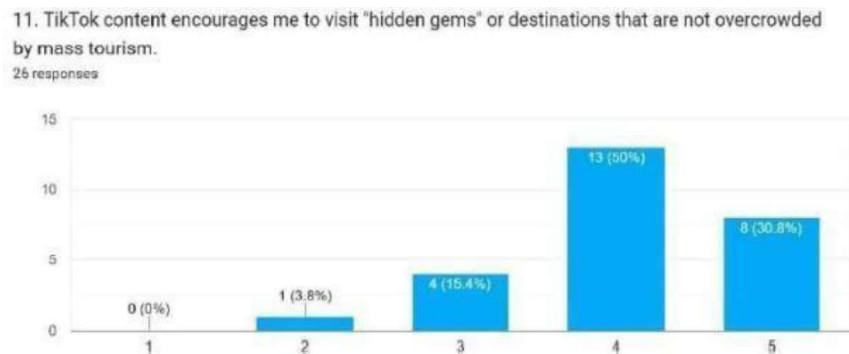


Figure 3: Respondents' Interest in Exploring Hidden Gems  
[Source: Primary Data from Online Questionnaire (2026)]

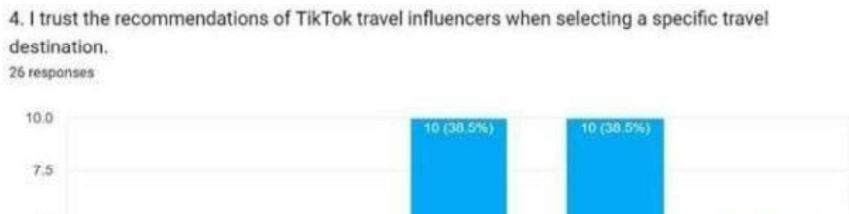
As shown in Figure 3, TikTok content encourages a vast majority of the participants to visit destinations that are not overcrowded by mass tourism. Respondents such as Respondent 4 and Respondent 15 prefer hidden gems because viral spots are perceived as "too crowded," which leads to long queues and a less enjoyable experience.

This preference for authenticity and quiet locations corresponds with the study by (Wengel et al., 2022), which highlights the "TikTok effect" where destinations that become famous overnight often struggle to maintain their appeal due to over-tourism. Furthermore, the desire for rarity and exclusivity mentioned by Respondent 26 reflects the motivation of "social escapism," a key driver in Gen Z travel behaviour.

**Trust and Authenticity of Information**

Trust is a crucial factor in determining whether a student actually visits a destination seen on TikTok. Based on the survey, while students are inspired by visual content, they maintain a "cautious trust" toward the information provided by influencers.

figure 4:  
StudR





Influencer Trustworthiness and Content Authenticity  
[Source: Primary Data from Online Questionnaire (2026)]

The data in Figure 4 reveals a "Moderate to High" level of trust. Most respondents agree that they value honesty in reviews. For instance, Respondent 6 emphasized the importance of seeing "real, unedited footage" before believing a recommendation. This is further supported by the open-ended responses where students stated they often cross-check TikTok information with Google Maps or Instagram comments to ensure the place is as good as it looks in the video.

This cautious behavior reflects the findings of (Zaffran et al., 2023), who argue that Gen Z's travel motivations are heavily influenced by "perceived authenticity." If a video feels too commercial or "staged," it loses its persuasive power. Furthermore, this trend aligns with (Tien et al., 2025) regarding the role of social media influencers; they are effective only when they maintain a sense of relatability and transparency. The students' habit of cross-referencing information also supports the theory by (Abidin, 2021) about the "vernacular" nature of TikTok, where users rely on peer-to-peer validation rather than traditional corporate advertisements to determine what is "real."

### Social and Environmental Awareness

TikTok content also plays a pivotal role in fostering environmental and cultural awareness among students. Beyond seeking beautiful landscapes, TikTok has the power to transform how students perceive a destination, often turning indifference or negative stereotypes into positive interest.

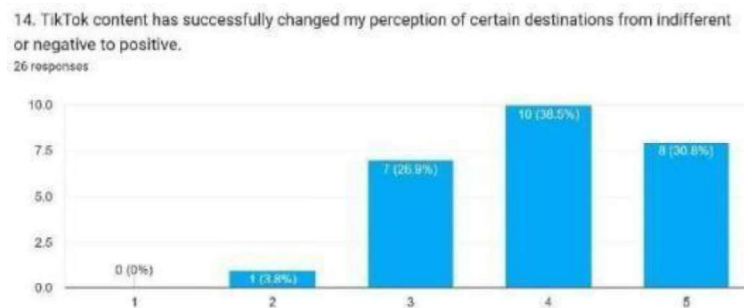


Figure 5: TikTok's Impact on Changing Destination Perceptions

[Source: Primary Data from Online Questionnaire (2026)]

Based on the data in Figure 5, a significant number of respondents agreed that TikTok content successfully changed their perception of certain destinations from indifferent or negative to positive. Respondents noted that seeing content about local traditions such as the Nyepi ceremony or sustainable tourism encourages them to be more respectful and interested travelers. This indicates that TikTok serves as an informal educational tool that shapes the travel ethics of the younger generation.

The ability of TikTok to shift perceptions, as shown in the findings, is consistent with

the research by (Liu et al., 2024), which suggests that the immersive and aesthetic

nature of short videos can diminish negative biases and replace them with curiosity. When influencers or local creators showcase the "real" and respectful side of a culture, it creates a sense of perceived authenticity (Zaffran et al., 2023).

Furthermore, this shift in perception aligns with (Wengel et al., 2022), who highlight that TikTok can be a powerful medium for "re-branding" destinations by focusing on cultural heritage rather than just mass tourism attractions. By educating users through storytelling, TikTok helps students develop a more nuanced understanding of global cultures, effectively functioning as a platform for vernacular education (Abidin, 2021) that promotes more conscious and ethical travel choices.

## **Conclusion**

This study shows that TikTok is now a way for Generation Z university students to search and make decisions. The platform has a mix of pictures and videos personalized suggestions and content made by users that really changes what people like to do when they travel. The results show that while Gen Z students like things that look good they also think carefully about what's real and what is not. They prefer things that are genuine and not too popular.

To better engage Generation Z, Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) must pivot from polished, traditional advertising toward authentic, utility-driven storytelling that bridges the gap between digital hype and physical reality. Rather than focusing solely on "Instagrammable" aesthetics, DMOs should collaborate with creators to produce content that prioritizes transparency over perfection, incorporating honest reviews, logistical tips, and "day-in-the-life" narratives that build consumer trust. Furthermore, marketing strategies should align with the principles of sustainable and regenerative tourism by highlighting off-the-beaten-path cultural experiences and hidden gems. By leveraging TikTok to promote these lesser-known, environmentally conscious activities, stakeholders can alleviate the pressure of overtourism in crowded hotspots while satisfying Gen Z's growing demand for travel that is both socially responsible and culturally immersive.

Despite its foundational insights, this study possesses several limitations that warrant consideration. First, as a preliminary pilot study, the sample size is relatively contained (N=26), which may restrict the statistical generalizability of the findings to the broader Generation Z population across Indonesia. Second, the geographical and academic scope was concentrated within a specific local context, focusing exclusively on students from the English Language Education program. While this demographic provides a highly relevant look at digitally literate youth, it does not account for the diverse perspectives of Gen Z individuals from different socio-economic or educational backgrounds. Consequently, these findings should be viewed as a representative case study rather than a universal trend. Future research should aim to expand both the demographic and geographical reach to include a more diverse range of participants, thereby offering a more comprehensive understanding of TikTok's global and multifaceted impact on evolving tourism behaviours.

## Acknowledgement

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# Exploring *Taman Mini Indonesia Indah* through the Lens of Gen Z

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## Abstract

*This study investigates the service quality on visitor satisfaction at Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (TMII), specifically through the evolving perspective of the Gen Z demographic. As Jakarta's premier cultural landmark undergoes a modern transformation, understanding how high service standards resonate with younger, tech-savvy visitors is vital for its long-term sustainability. Unlike previous generations, Gen Z evaluates destinations not just on cultural value, but on the seamlessness of service and the "share ability" of their environment. Using a descriptive quantitative method, primary data was gathered via surveys from Gen Z visitors of TMII. The findings reveal that the aesthetic appeal and maintenance of facilities are critical for content-driven visits. The efficiency in information access and staff professionalism are non-negotiable for a generation accustomed to instant gratification. Personalized and inclusive service significantly boosts guest fulfillment and brand loyalty. The results suggest that for TMII to remain relevant, management must bridge the gap between traditional heritage and modern service expectations. By prioritizing infrastructure maintenance and digital-first staff training, TMII can cement its reputation as a "vibe-worthy" destination, ensuring long-term engagement with the next generation of local and international travelers.*

**Keywords:** *Service Quality, Visitor Satisfaction, Tourism Management, Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (TMII).*

## Introduction

Indonesia has a massive potential in the tourism sector, and Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (TMII) stands as one of the most iconic cultural destinations in the country. As a "miniature" of Indonesia's diverse provinces and heritage (Salsabila et al. 2025), TMII is not just a recreational park but also a vital educational hub (Ananda et al. 2024). However, in an increasingly competitive tourism industry, maintaining a high number of visitors is no longer just about the collection of attractions. The modern tourism landscape shifts the focus toward how services are delivered to the visitors.



*Danau dengan bentuk kepulauan Indonesia di Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (TMII)*  
(source: Situs TMII)

Service quality is often cited in tourism literature as a critical determinant of a destination's success (Maulana et al., 2024). Previous studies have consistently shown that when service providers meet or exceed visitor expectations, it leads to higher satisfaction levels (Fauza & Khalid, 2024). In the case of TMII, which has recently undergone significant revitalization to modernize its facilities and management, the urgency to evaluate its service quality has become more relevant than ever. Issues such as facility maintenance, staff responsiveness, and the overall visitor experience are central to determining whether a guest leaves with a positive impression.

While many researchers have explored tourism in Indonesia, analyzing the specific correlation between service quality and visitor satisfaction at a culturally-themed park like TMII provides unique insights. This is particularly important because visitor satisfaction is the primary driver for "word-of-mouth" promotion and repeat visits, which are essential for the long-term sustainability of the park (Ningsih & Pratama, 2024). If the service quality is perceived as lacking, even the most beautiful attractions may fail to retain loyal visitors.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the influence of service quality on visitor satisfaction at Taman Mini Indonesia Indah. By employing the SERVQUAL dimensions tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy this research seeks to identify which factors most significantly impact the visitor experience. The research question to answer is "How does the perceived service quality at Taman Mini Indonesia Indah shape the overall visitor experience for Generation Z, and to what degree does their satisfaction influence their intention to recommend the destination via digital platforms?". The findings of this study are expected to provide practical recommendations for the management of TMII to improve their service standards and ensure that it remains a top-tier destination for both domestic and international tourists.

## **Literature Review**

The theoretical framework of this study is centered on the intricate relationship between service quality dimensions and visitor satisfaction within the context of cultural tourism. Service quality is widely conceptualized as a multidimensional construct, often operationalized through the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry 1988), which evaluates the disparity between customer expectations and perceived performance (Saputra & Handayani, 2023). In large-scale

heritage destinations such as Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (TMII), these dimensions—ranging from physical infrastructure (tangibles) to the reliability and empathy of service personnel—serve as the primary indicators of organizational excellence (Wahyudi & Puspitasari, 2023).

Visitor satisfaction is defined as the psychological state resulting from the evaluative comparison of a service encounter (Hidayat & Kusuma, 2024). Within the academic discourse of hospitality management, it is argued that satisfaction is not merely a transaction-specific metric but a cumulative reflection of the entire visitor journey (Pratama & Suwandi, 2019). For a destination that integrates education, culture, and recreation, satisfaction is heavily influenced by the perceived value and the seamless delivery of services (Handoko & Hermawan, 2025). Empirical evidence consistently suggests that superior service quality acts as a critical antecedent to visitor fulfilment, which in turn fosters positive behavioural intentions such as loyalty and word-of-mouth promotion (Purba & Sembiring, 2018; Saputra & Handayani, 2023).

Furthermore, the management of service standards is essential for maintaining the competitive advantage of national landmarks in an increasingly globalized tourism market (Lestari & Wiweka, 2014). It is theorized that improvements in responsiveness and assurance significantly mitigate negative perceptions and enhance the overall attractiveness of the destination (Putra & Setyaningrum, 2024). Additionally, the integration of physical facilities and service excellence plays a vital role in the decision-making process for Gen Z and modern travelers (Akhirson, 2026; Darmayanti & Salsabil, 2025). Consequently, a systematic focus on elevating service quality is imperative to ensure that TMII fulfils its role as a premier destination for both domestic and international tourists, aligning its operational standards with global hospitality benchmarks (Widiastuti & Kartika, 2024; Wulandari & Santoso, 2024).

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Objects and Subjects**

The object of this research is Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (TMII) located in Jakarta. This study specifically focuses on two main variables: the independent variable (X), which is Service Quality, and the dependent variable (Y), which is Visitor Satisfaction. The subjects (participants) of this research consist of 33 visitors who have experienced the facilities and services at the site.

### **Data Collection**

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method to collect data. Primary data is gathered through a structured questionnaire distributed to the participants. The instrument is designed into two distinct sections to provide a comprehensive view:

1. Likert Scale Section: This part uses a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). It is to assess visitor's perceptions of various service indicators such as facilities, infrastructure, transportation, and staff responsiveness.
2. Open-ended (Essay) Section: At the end of the questionnaire, respondents are asked to provide descriptive feedback in an essay format. This qualitative addition aims to capture specific suggestions and personal experiences that are not covered by the numerical scale.

## Data Analysis

The analysis process is conducted in two stages to interpret the data collected.

**Descriptive Analysis:** This is used to calculate the Mean (average value) of the collected data to provide an objective summary of the variables (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001).

**Thematic Analysis:** Data from the essay section is analysed qualitatively to identify recurring themes and patterns that provide deeper context to the numerical results (Creswell, 2014).

## Validity and Reliability

To ensure the integrity and consistency of the research findings, the instrument undergoes triangulation of the information by using the respondents' answers of open ended questions (essay).

## Results and Discussion

The information in Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents are female (78.8%) while male respondents account for (21.2%) In terms of age, although it was not specifically measured in the questionnaire, the respondents are predominantly university students from the same academic cohort (2024). Therefore, it can be assumed that most respondents are in the early adulthood age range (approximately 20 years old and above).

Table 1: Respondents Characteristics

| Name   | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Male   | 7         | 21.2%   | 21.2%         | 21.2%              |
| Female | 26        | 78.8%   | 78.8%         | 100%               |

[Source : *Primary Data (2026)* ]

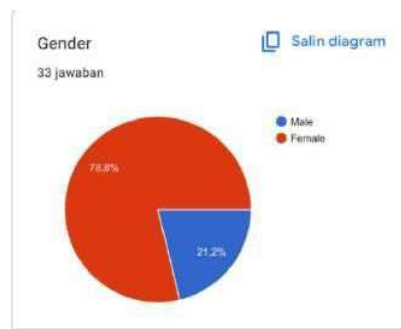


Figure 1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender  
[Source : *Primary Data (2026)*]

In Figure 1, the majority of respondents fall within a similar age range, indicating that most participants are young adults. This suggests that the data mainly represents the perspective of individuals within the same age group.

1. It is very easy to find transportation to get this place.

Salin diagram

33 jawaban

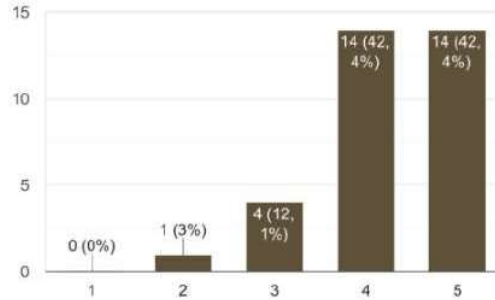


Figure 2: Ease of Finding Transportation to the location  
[Source : *Primary Data (2026)*]

Most respondents (Figure 2) agree that transportation to the location is easy to access. This indicates that accessibility is not a major barrier for visitors and supports the convenience of reaching the destination.

7. The photo spots at Taman Mini Indonesia Indah are visually appealing, and I enjoy taking pictures there.

Salin diagram

33 jawaban

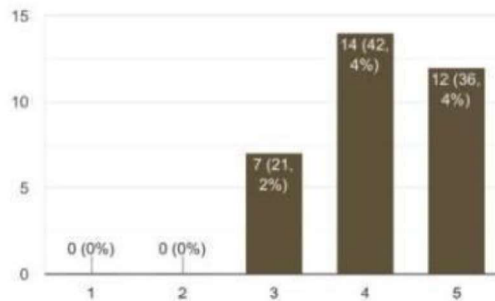


Figure 3: Visitors Experience of Photo Spots  
[Source : *Primary Data (2026)*]

The majority of respondents (Figure 3) agree that the photo spots at Taman Mini Indonesia Indah are visually appealing and enjoyable. This suggest that the photo spots enhance visitors experince and contribute to the attractiveness of the destination.



Figure 4: Visitors Perception of staff Service Quality  
[Source : *Primary Data (2026)*]

Most respondents (Figure 4) agree that the staff provide clear and helpful information during their visit. This indicates that good service quality plays an important role in supporting a positive visitor experience.

Table 3. Summary of Open Ended Responses

| No | Theme               | Description                                |
|----|---------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Cultural Experience | Visitors enjoy learning Indonesian culture |
| 2  | Attraction Variety  | Many attractions and activities available  |
| 3  | Cleanliness         | Environment is clean and well-maintained   |
| 4  | Food Price Issue    | Food is considered relative                |

The majority of respondents (Table 3.) highlight cultural experience, attraction variety, and cleanliness as the main strengths of TMII, representing the most frequently mentioned themes, on the other hand, food price is one of the most commonly reported concerns among visitors. The attraction variety and accessibility are also identified as key contributors to visitor satisfaction (Rahmalia et al. 2023). The availability of diverse attractions allows visitors to explore different aspects of Indonesian culture, while good accessibility supports convenience and ease of movement within the destination. These factors collectively contribute to a more comprehensive and satisfying visitor experience.

In addition, the qualitative findings reinforce the quantitative results, particularly in highlighting cultural experience, attraction, variety, and cleanliness as the main strengths of TMII. This consistency between data sources strengthens the reliability of the study and confirms that these aspects play a significant role in shaping visitors' perceptions. However, despite the generally positive results, the study also identifies an area that requires improvement, namely food price fairness. This indicator is the only one categorized as moderate, indicating that some visitors perceive the pricing of food and beverages as relatively high compared to the value they receive. This issue is also supported by qualitative responses, where several visitors' express concerns regarding pricing.

Therefore, it is recommended that TMII management maintain and further enhance its strengths, particularly in cultural presentation and attraction diversity, while also improving pricing strategies to ensure better affordability and perceived value. Addressing this issue is essential to improving overall visitor satisfaction and increasing the likelihood of repeat visits (Salsabila et al., 2025).

The findings of this study underscore that attraction variety and accessibility are fundamental pillars of visitor satisfaction at Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (TMII). The diverse cultural exhibits allow for a multifaceted exploration of Indonesian heritage, while streamlined accessibility ensures a seamless visitor journey. This aligns with the research of Handoko and Hermawan (2025), who posit that the quality of facilities and ease of access are primary drivers in shaping positive visitor perceptions. Furthermore, the integration of qualitative and quantitative data—which highlights cultural depth and cleanliness as core strengths—mirrors the conclusions of Lubis and Azizah (2025), who suggest that a robust cultural tourism development strategy is essential for increasing tourist arrivals. This consistency across data sources confirms that TMII's status as a premier cultural destination is intrinsically linked to its ability to maintain high standards of physical and thematic diversity (Purba & Sembiring, 2018).

However, the moderate score regarding food price fairness serves as a critical focal point for improvement. While the core attractions are highly valued, the perceived high cost of food and beverages relative to their value threatens to diminish the overall experience. This phenomenon is supported by Akhirson (2026), who notes that price remains a decisive factor in the tourist decision-making process at TMII, directly impacting the perceived "value for money." Historically, price has been a sensitive variable for TMII visitors; even during the pandemic, the relationship between price and visiting decisions was significant (Faris & Roostika, 2022). When food prices are perceived as unfair, it can create a cognitive dissonance that overshadows the positive aspects of the cultural visit, as visitor satisfaction is often mediated by the balance between the quality of the service and the cost incurred (Darmayanti & Salsabil, 2025).

Therefore, to sustain its competitive edge and encourage revisit intentions, TMII management must adopt a dual-action strategy. While it is vital to continue enhancing cultural presentations and facility quality—as emphasized by Wulandari and Santoso (2024)—it is equally imperative to address the affordability of ancillary services such as food and beverage. Implementing a more transparent or tiered pricing strategy would improve the "perceived value" of the destination. As suggested by Ningsih and



Pratama (2024), the interplay between attraction quality and perceived fairness is what ultimately drives "electronic word-of-mouth" (e-WOM) and long-term loyalty. By rectifying the pricing gap, TMII can ensure that the high satisfaction derived from its cultural attractions is not undermined by logistical costs, thereby securing its position as a sustainable and accessible cultural landmark.

### **Conclusions**

This study aims to analyse visitor experience and satisfaction at Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (TMII). Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the overall level of visitor experience and satisfaction is high, as indicated by the majority of indicators falling into the high category. Cultural experience emerges as the most significant factor, showing that visitors highly value the opportunity to learn about Indonesian culture.

Among all indicators, cultural experience emerges as the most dominant factor influencing visitor satisfaction. The high mean score in this aspect suggests that visitors strongly appreciate the opportunity to learn about Indonesian culture, traditions, and heritage through various attractions and activities provided at TMII. This finding highlights the important role of cultural tourism in enhancing visitor engagement and overall satisfaction.

Finally, this study is limited by the relatively small sample size and the homogeneous characteristics of respondents, which are predominantly young adults from the same academic cohort. Future research is recommended to involve a more diverse group of respondents and incorporate additional variables, such as service quality dimensions or revisit intention, in-order-to provide a more comprehensive understanding of visitor satisfaction in tourism destinations.

### **Acknowledgement**

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# The Influence of User Experience on Booking Behavior: A Study of Accommodation Platforms in *Jabodetabek*

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## Abstract

*The rapid growth of mobile applications has changed how users book accommodation, especially in urban areas such as Jabodetabek, which includes Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi (Jabodetabek). However, differences in user experience may influence how users behave when using these applications. This study aims to analyse user experience and examine on booking behaviour among adults aged 18–59 years in the Jabodetabek area. This research uses a survey involving 86 respondents selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale and analysed using descriptive statistics and simple linear regression. The results show that user experience is categorized as high, with mean scores ranging from 3.89 to 4.20. Booking behaviour is also in the high category, with mean scores between 3.72 and*

*4.10. The regression analysis shows that user experience has a significant and positive effect on booking behavior, with a contribution of 48.2%. However, this study is limited to one region and does not include other factors such as price or promotion. Overall, improving user experience can increase user satisfaction and strengthen booking behaviour in mobile applications.*

**Keywords:** *user experience, mobile application, accommodation booking, Jabodetabek, usability, trust, user satisfaction.*

## Introduction

In recent years, the rapid development of mobile technology has significantly changed how people perform daily activities, including booking accommodation. The increasing use of smartphones and mobile internet has made mobile applications an essential tool for users to access services quickly and efficiently. Globally, the number of mobile users continues to grow, reaching billions of users, which also drives the expansion of mobile-based services across various sectors, including tourism and hospitality.

In the context of the travel industry, mobile applications have become one of the primary platforms for booking accommodation such as hotels, apartments, and

homestays. Users can now search for available options, compare prices, read reviews, and complete bookings within a few minutes. This transformation has shifted user behaviour from traditional booking methods to digital platforms that emphasize convenience and speed. As a result, travel companies increasingly rely on mobile applications as a major channel for customer interaction and service delivery.

The rapid development of digital technology has significantly transformed the way people access services, especially in the accommodation and hospitality sector. Mobile applications have become one of the main platforms used by consumers to search, compare, and book accommodations efficiently. This transformation is supported by increasing internet penetration and smartphone usage, allowing users to make reservations anytime and anywhere. In Indonesia, particularly in urban areas, online booking systems have gradually replaced conventional walk-in reservations due to their convenience and speed. According to Badan Pusat Statistik (2026), tourism activity in the Jabodetabek area shows a positive trend, with more than 102 million domestic travel movements recorded in early 2026. West Java alone reached 18.38 million travel movements, while Jakarta recorded more than 23 thousand visitors in Kota Tua during the 2026 Eid holiday. These figures indicate that the demand for accommodation services continues to increase along with tourism mobility. As a result, mobile applications for booking accommodations have become an essential part of users' travel experience.



Despite the widespread use of mobile booking applications, several issues related to user experience still affect user satisfaction and behavior. User experience includes not only usability but also aspects such as ease of use, trust, perceived value, and overall satisfaction (Interaction Design Foundation, 2020). Previous studies show that these factors play an important role in shaping users' intention and behavior in digital platforms. Research by Bailaen and Bangkalang (2025) found usability challenges in mobile ticketing applications that impact user satisfaction. Similarly, Burhan and Mauritsius (2024) showed that user experience significantly influences satisfaction in the Mamikos application. In addition, Jomantara and Fajar (2024) highlighted that satisfaction in mobile hotel reservation systems is influenced by system quality and user perception. However, these studies mainly focus on specific applications, which limits their ability to explain user experience across different platforms. Therefore, there is still limited understanding of how user experience influences booking behavior in a broader and more dynamic context such as Jabodetabek.

Based on these limitations, a research gap can be identified in terms of scope, context, and user diversity. Previous studies tend to focus on a single platform or specific features, while users in real situations often use multiple applications such

as Agoda, Traveloka, and Booking.com. In addition, there is a lack of research that examines user experience in a highly active tourism area like Jabodetabek. This study aims to analyze and describe the user experience of adults who have booked accommodations through mobile applications in this region. It also seeks to understand how user experience influences booking behavior, including intention, decision, frequency, and loyalty. A better user experience is expected to encourage users to reuse the application and increase their booking activities. On the other hand, a poor user experience may reduce user intention and satisfaction. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis: H1: User Experience has a significant effect on Booking Behaviour in mobile accommodation applications.

In mobile travel applications, UX becomes even more important because users often rely on these apps in time-sensitive and decision-making situations. For example, when users are planning trips or booking accommodation, they expect the application to be fast, intuitive, and reliable. Previous studies have shown that factors such as interface design, ease of navigation, and information quality strongly influence how users evaluate mobile travel applications. Moreover, a user-centered design approach can significantly improve usability and overall satisfaction, as users tend to prefer applications that are simple, personalized, and easy to understand. Despite the advantages offered by mobile booking applications, there are still many challenges related to user experience. Some users face difficulties such as complicated interfaces, unclear booking processes, slow system performance, and lack of trust in payment systems. These issues can negatively impact user satisfaction and reduce the of completing a booking. Research also indicates that poor UX can lead to lower user retention and decreased conversion rates, meaning users may abandon the application and switch to competitors. The problems identified in this study are: How is the overall user experience of residents in *Jabodetabek* in booking accommodation through mobile applications? 2. What aspects of the application are considered satisfying by the users? 3. What aspects need improvement to enhance user comfort and satisfaction?

## Literature Review

### User Experience (UX)

User experience, in general language, refers to the overall feeling, perception, and response of users when interacting with a product or system. In a more specific term, user experience is defined as the overall experience of a user when using a product, especially in terms of usability, accessibility, and emotional satisfaction (Interaction Design Foundation, 2020). It is not only related to how a system works, but also how users feel and evaluate their interaction with the system. In digital services, especially mobile applications, user experience becomes an important factor that determines user satisfaction and continued usage (Marsh, 2022). Previous studies have shown that user experience significantly affects user satisfaction and engagement in mobile-based platforms (Burhan & Mauritsius, 2024).

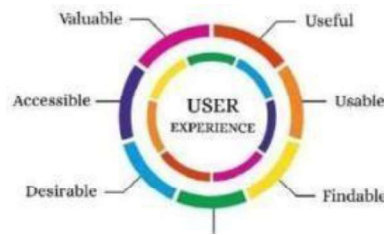


Figure 1 : UX Dimensions

[Source : <https://course-net.com/blog/user-experience-adalah/>]

User experience consists of several dimensions that explain how users interact with an application. These dimensions include:

- 1) Usefulness: refers to how well the application helps users achieve their goals, such as finding accommodation efficiently (Pratiwi et al., 2023).
- 2) Usability: relates to the ease of use and clarity of navigation within the application (Bailaen & Bangkalang, 2025).
- 3) Findability: refers to how easily users can search and find relevant accommodation information.
- 4) Credibility: is associated with the level of trust users have in the application, including information accuracy and transaction security (Riswanda & Millanyani, 2025).
- 5) Desirability: reflects the attractiveness of the application design and the enjoyment experienced by users.
- 6) Accessibility: refers to how easily users can access the application anytime and across different devices (Manalua et al., 2023).
- 7) Value: represents the overall benefits gained by users, such as saving time and effort in the booking process.

Therefore, user experience is a multidimensional concept that includes functional, emotional, and cognitive aspects of user interaction. A positive user experience is expected to create satisfaction and influence user behaviour when using mobile applications for accommodation booking.

### **Booking Behavior (BB)**

Booking behaviour, in general language, refers to the actions or responses of users when making decisions related to booking accommodation. In a more specific term, booking behaviour can be defined as users' behavioral patterns in using digital platforms to search, select, and book accommodation services. This behaviour includes intention, decision-making, frequency of use, and loyalty toward a particular application. In the context of digital technology, user behavior is often influenced by perceived usefulness, ease of use, and trust in the system (Pratiwi et al., 2023).

The components of booking behavior include:

- 1) Intention: refers to the user's willingness or plan to use an application for future bookings. A higher intention indicates a stronger possibility of continued usage.
- 2) Decision: refers to the user's confidence and actual choice in using the application for booking accommodation. This decision is often influenced by user satisfaction and system quality (Jomantara & Fajar, 2024).

- 3) Frequency: describes how often users use the application in their daily or travel activities. Frequent usage indicates that the application meets user expectations effectively.
- 4) Loyalty: refers to users' willingness to continue using the application and recommend it to others (Riswanda & Millanyani, 2025).

Previous studies have shown that booking behavior is strongly influenced by users' experience when interacting with the application. Positive experiences can increase user satisfaction, which leads to repeated usage and stronger loyalty (Çaylak et al., 2024). In addition, applications that provide better system quality and user-friendly features tend to influence users' decisions to book accommodation through digital platforms (Decena & Delfin, 2022).

Therefore, booking behavior is a set of user actions influenced by cognitive and emotional factors when using mobile applications. It reflects how users decide, use, and remain loyal to a booking platform, which is closely related to the quality of their experience.

### **Regional Context and Economic Impetus**

The *Jabodetabek* area—comprising Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi—functions as the primary economic engine of Indonesia. As a central hub for commerce and governance, it exhibits the nation's highest population density and most intense economic activity. This density fosters a high-velocity lifestyle where mobility for both professional obligations and leisure is a daily necessity. Consequently, there is a robust demand for efficient accommodation services, positioning mobile booking applications as essential tools for the region's digital-savvy population (Wang et al., 2016).

### **The Framework of User Experience (UX)**

User Experience is not a singular metric but a multidimensional construct that defines how an individual perceives and interacts with a digital product (Hassenzahl, 2018; Norman, 2013). In the competitive landscape of e-commerce, successful UX is built upon several foundational pillars:

**Usability and Findability:** Efficiency in navigation and the ease with which a user can locate a desired hotel or room are critical. High usability directly correlates with reduced cognitive load, allowing users to complete transactions without mental fatigue (Albert & Tullis, 2022; Garrett, 2010). **Credibility and Trust:** Particularly in the Indonesian market, trust is a primary driver of adoption. Users must feel that the information provided is accurate and that their financial data is secure (Agag & El-Masry, 2017). **Value and Usefulness:** Beyond mere functionality, the app must provide clear value, such as competitive pricing or exclusive mobile features (Morville, 2004; Xu et al., 2019).

### **Consumer Behaviour and Digital Interaction**

Booking behavior in the *Jabodetabek* region is characterized by a continuous cycle rather than a one-off event. This cycle encompasses the initial intention, the decision-making process, the frequency of use, and ultimate brand loyalty (Alalwan, 2020).



Research suggests that elements such as Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM) and online reviews significantly influence a traveler's adoption of a specific platform (Filieri & McLeay, 2018; Liu et al., 2019). Furthermore, the integration of smart tourism technologies and proactive smartphone systems has shifted user expectations toward more personalized and responsive interfaces (Huang et al., 2017; Tussyadiah & Wang, 2016).

Despite the ubiquity of these applications in the Greater Jakarta area, there remains a significant gap in localized research. Most existing studies focus on global trends or broader hospitality management without addressing the specific sociocultural and infrastructural nuances of the Jabodetabek user base (Law et al., 2018; Noone et al., 2017).

This research seeks to bridge that gap by conducting a direct survey-based evaluation of UX. By analyzing user feedback through the lens of established metrics—such as the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT2)—this study aims to provide an objective assessment of current service strengths and weaknesses within the Indonesian digital landscape (Morosan & DeFranco, 2016; Kim et al., 2017).

### **Research Methodology**

This research uses a survey and analysed with a descriptive method. This method is used to describe the characteristics and phenomena of user experience by processing numerical data obtained from respondents. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire distributed electronically. The goal is to present facts and data regarding the level of user satisfaction objectively.

#### **Population and Sample**

The population of this study consists of individuals who live in the *Jabodetabek* area and have experience in booking accommodation via mobile applications. The sample is selected using the Purposive Sampling technique, where respondents are chosen based on specific criteria, namely: residing in Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, or Bekasi, and active users of booking applications.. The target population of this study is adults aged 18–59 years who live in the Jabodetabek area, which includes Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi. However, due to time and resource limitations, this study uses 86 respondents as the sample size.

#### **Data Collection Method**

Data is collected through a Questionnaire Survey. The questionnaire covers several variables, including: Easy of Use: How easy is it to operate the application. Interface Design: Display appearance and layout comfort. Information Quality: Clarity of photos, prices, and facility descriptions. System Performance: Speed and stability of the application.

Trust & Security: Safety of transactions and data.

The sampling technique applied is purposive sampling, where respondents must meet specific criteria. The criteria include adults aged 18–59 years who have experience booking temporary accommodation through online platforms and are located in the Jabodetabek area. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed online through Google Forms, which can be accessed via smartphones or computers.

The questionnaire consists of two main variables, namely User Experience (UX) as the independent variable and Booking Behavior as the dependent variable. User Experience is measured using seven dimensions: usefulness, usability, findability, credibility, desirability, accessibility, and value, with a total of 14 statements. Booking Behavior is measured using four components: intention, decision, frequency, and loyalty, with a total of 7 statements. All items are measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). In addition, this study includes four open-ended questions to provide deeper insights into respondents' experiences and perceptions. These questions explore the most helpful features of the application, the reasons for trust or distrust, user experience during booking, and reasons for reuse or recommendation. The collected data are analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods with the help of IBM SPSS software. Validity is tested using correlation analysis, while reliability is measured using Cronbach's Alpha. Furthermore, simple linear regression is applied to examine the effect of user experience on booking behaviour. The qualitative responses are analysed using a simple thematic approach to support and strengthen the quantitative findings.

#### Data Analysis Technique

The data obtained will be processed and analysed using Descriptive Statistical Analysis. The steps include:

1. Collecting and editing data from respondents.
2. Calculating the frequency distribution and percentage of answers.
3. Calculating the Mean Score (average value) to determine the level of user experience.

## Results and Discussion

The following section presents the empirical findings derived from the survey of users within the *Jabodetabek* metropolitan area. The analysis process utilized descriptive statistics to establish a comprehensive profile of the respondents, focusing on demographic variables such as age and digital usage patterns, alongside inferential analysis to measure the strength of the relationship between specific

### Respondent Demographics



Figure2: Experience of accommodation Hotel booking  
(source: Raihan et al. research survey 2026)

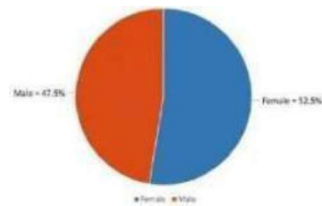


Figure 3 : Gender Distribution  
(source: Raihan et al. research survey 2026)

The gender distribution of respondents shows a relatively balanced composition between female and male participants. Female respondents account for 52.5% of the

total sample, while male respondents represent 47.5%. This indicates that both genders actively use mobile applications for booking accommodation. The slight dominance of female users suggests that women may be slightly more engaged in using booking platforms. However, the difference is not significant, showing that mobile booking applications are widely accepted across genders. This balanced distribution reduces gender bias in the study. It also supports the reliability of the findings. Overall, both male and female users contribute equally to the analysis of user experience and booking behaviour.

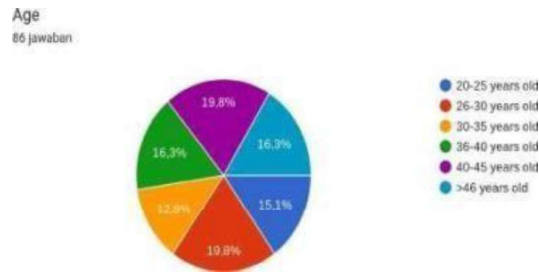


Figure 4: Demographic Profile of Respondents  
(source: Raihan et al. research survey 2026)

Most respondents in this study have experience booking accommodation through online platforms. A total of 91.25% of respondents answered “Yes,” while only 8.75% answered “No.” This shows that the majority of participants are familiar with mobile booking applications. The high percentage of experienced users ensures that the data collected is relevant to the research objective. Respondents who have prior experience are more likely to provide accurate and meaningful answers. The small number of inexperienced respondents does not significantly affect the overall results. This condition strengthens the validity of the study. Therefore, the data can be considered representative of actual users in the Jabodetabek area.

User Experience (UX) indicators and booking outcomes. By synthesizing these data points, the results illustrate how technical attributes—specifically findability and usability—act as precursors to consumer behavioral intentions. This analysis is grounded in the multidimensional nature of UX, where the intersection of functionality and user perception determines the success of a platform within Indonesia's highly competitive digital landscape (Albert & Tullis, 2022; Garrett, 2010).

Table 1 : Respondent Demographics by Age and Platform

| Category        | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------------|-----------|---------|
| Age             |           |         |
| 20–25 years old | 15        | 18.75%  |
| 26–30 years old | 15        | 18.75%  |
| 31–35 years old | 14        | 17.5%   |
| 36–40 years old | 13        | 16.25%  |
| 40–45 years old | 13        | 16.25%  |
| >46 years old   | 10        | 12.5%   |

| Platform Used |    |        |
|---------------|----|--------|
| Traveloka     | 18 | 22.5%  |
| Trip.com      | 17 | 21.25% |
| Tiket.com     | 14 | 17.5%  |
| Social Media  | 13 | 16.25% |
| RedDoorz      | 10 | 8.75%  |
| Booking.com   | 7  | 8.75%  |
| Agoda         | 1  | 1.25%  |

The age distribution of respondents is relatively balanced across different groups, with the highest proportion found in the 20–25 and 26–30 age ranges. This indicates that young adults are active users of mobile booking applications, but other age groups also show significant participation. Users aged 30–45 years also contribute a considerable portion, showing that booking applications are used across different life stages. Respondents above 46 years old represent the smallest group, but still show engagement in digital platforms. In terms of platform usage, Traveloka is the most frequently used application, followed closely by Trip.com. Tiket.com and social media platforms are also commonly used for booking accommodation. RedDoorz and Booking.com have moderate usage, while Agoda has the lowest usage among respondents. This suggests that a few dominant platforms control most of the market preference in the Jabodetabek area. Overall, the data shows diverse user characteristics with a strong preference for certain booking platforms.

### User Experience (UX)

To analyze User Experience (UX), this study uses descriptive statistical analysis by calculating the mean score of each dimension based on respondents' answers using a 5-point Likert scale. The interpretation of mean scores is categorized as follows: 1.00–1.80 (Very Low), 1.81–2.60 (Low), 2.61–3.40 (Moderate), 3.41–4.20 (High), and 4.21–5.00 (Very High). This approach helps to understand how users perceive each aspect of the mobile booking application.

Table 2 : User Experience (UX) Results

| Dimension     | Mean Score | Category |
|---------------|------------|----------|
| Usefulness    | 4.12       | High     |
| Usability     | 4.05       | High     |
| Findability   | 3.98       | High     |
| Credibility   | 3.92       | High     |
| Desirability  | 3.89       | High     |
| Accessibility | 4.18       | High     |
| Value         | 4.20       | High     |

The results show that all dimensions of user experience fall within the high category, indicating that users generally have a positive perception of mobile accommodation booking applications. The highest mean score is found in the value dimension (4.20), which suggests that users strongly perceive the application as beneficial and time-saving. This is followed closely by accessibility (4.18) and usefulness (4.12), indicating that users find the application easy to access and effective in helping them achieve their booking goals.

The usability dimension (4.05) also shows that users consider the application easy to use and well-structured in terms of navigation. Meanwhile, findability (3.98) and credibility (3.92) have slightly lower scores, although they still remain in the high category. This suggests that some users may still experience minor difficulties in searching for information or may have slight concerns regarding trust and security. The desirability dimension (3.89) has the lowest mean score, indicating that the visual design and emotional appeal of the application could still be improved.

Overall, the results indicate that mobile booking applications in the Jabodetabek area provide a positive and satisfactory user experience, especially in terms of usefulness, accessibility, and value. However, improvements in design attractiveness, trust, and information clarity may further enhance user satisfaction. These findings are consistent with previous studies that highlight the importance of usability, trust, and perceived value in shaping user experience and behavior in digital platforms.

### Booking Behavior (BB)

Booking Behavior in this study is analyzed using descriptive statistical methods by calculating the mean score for each component based on respondents' answers using a 5-point Likert scale. The interpretation of the mean score follows the same criteria: 1.00–1.80 (Very Low), 1.81–2.60 (Low), 2.61–3.40 (Moderate), 3.41–4.20 (High), and 4.21–5.00 (Very High). This analysis aims to understand how users behave when booking accommodation through mobile applications.

Table 3: Booking Behavior (BB) Results

| Component | Mean Score | Category |
|-----------|------------|----------|
| Intention | 4.08       | High     |
| Decision  | 3.95       | High     |
| Frequency | 3.75       | High     |
| Loyalty   | 4.10       | High     |

The results show that all components of booking behavior fall within the high category, indicating that users demonstrate positive behavior when using mobile booking applications. The highest mean score is found in the loyalty component (4.10), suggesting that users are willing to continue using the application and recommend it to others. This indicates a strong long-term relationship between users and the platform.

The intention component (4.08) also shows a high score, meaning that users have a strong willingness to reuse the application for future bookings. This reflects a positive perception and satisfaction with their previous experiences. The decision component (3.95) indicates that users generally feel confident when making booking decisions through mobile applications, although there is still slight hesitation among some users. Meanwhile, the frequency component (3.72) has the lowest mean score, although it still remains in the high category. This suggests that while users have positive perceptions and intentions, their actual usage frequency may depend on situational factors such as travel needs or availability of alternatives.

Overall, the findings indicate that users in the Jabodetabek area exhibit strong booking behaviour, especially in terms of intention and loyalty. These results support the idea that positive user experience can influence users' decisions to continue using

mobile applications. The relatively high scores across all components suggest that mobile booking platforms have successfully encouraged repeated usage and user engagement. Therefore, these findings strengthen the assumption that user experience plays a significant role in shaping booking behavior.

**Results of the Descriptive and Inferential Analysis**

The empirical data collected from the Jabodetabek region highlights a significant interplay between interface design and consumer action. Descriptive statistics indicate that the respondent profile is dominated by the 20–25 age bracket, a demographic characterized by high digital literacy and a preference for mobile-first solutions (Wang et al., 2016).

**UX Indicators and Outcomes**

The study found that while usability drives the initial transaction, the "Credible" and "Desirable" indicators serve as the backbone for long-term retention.

| UX Indicator | Impact on User Behavior          | Primary Outcome        |
|--------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Findability  | High impact on search efficiency | Booking Intention      |
| Usability    | Reduces cognitive friction       | Transaction Completion |
| Credibility  | Builds user confidence in data   | Brand Trust            |
| Desirability | Emotional and aesthetic appeal   | Brand Loyalty/Advocacy |

Figure 5: Indicators and outcome

**The Dominance of find ability**

For this younger cohort, "Find ability" emerged as the most critical UX indicator. Survey responses consistently noted that the efficiency of location-based search functions is the primary driver for application engagement. Inferential analysis confirms this, showing a strong positive correlation between platform usability and booking intention.



Figure 6: Respondents' platforms preference  
(source: Raihan et al. research survey 2026)

This aligns with the principle that reducing cognitive load through intuitive navigation increases the likelihood of purchase completion (Albert & Tullis, 2022; Garrett, 2010).

## Conclusions

The objective of this research was to evaluate the impact of User Experience (UX) on the behavior of accommodation booking application users within the *Jabodetabek* region. The findings confirm that in a high-mobility metropolitan environment, the digital experience is a critical determinant of economic engagement. Specifically, for the dominant demographic of users aged 20–57, find ability and Usability are the primary gateways to booking intention. As users navigate the complexities of urban transit and rapid decision-making, the ability of an application to reduce cognitive load becomes its most significant competitive advantage. Furthermore, this study highlights that while functional efficiency initiates a transaction, long-term Loyalty and brand advocacy are built upon the pillars of Credibility and Desirability. Users in the Indonesian digital landscape do not merely seek a utility; they seek a trustworthy partner in their travel planning. When a platform combines aesthetic appeal with transparent, reliable information, it successfully moves the user from a single transaction to a cycle of continued usage and recommendation.

The results also show that users demonstrate positive booking behavior when using mobile applications. Most respondents have strong intention to reuse the applications and show high loyalty by recommending them to others. Users also feel confident when making booking decisions through these platforms. Although the frequency of use is slightly lower than other components, it is still categorized as high. This suggests that users rely on booking applications when needed, even if they do not use them regularly. Furthermore, the regression analysis shows that user experience has a significant and positive effect on booking behavior. This means that better user experience leads to stronger intention, decision-making, and loyalty. Based on these findings, the second objective of this study has also been achieved.

Overall, this study highlights the importance of user experience in influencing booking behaviour in mobile accommodation applications. Service providers should focus on improving usability, trust, accessibility, and overall value to enhance user satisfaction. A better user experience can encourage users to continue using the application and increase their engagement. However, the results also show that user experience only explains part of booking behavior. Other factors such as price, promotions, and brand reputation may also influence user decisions. Therefore, future research is recommended to explore these additional factors for a more complete understanding. Based on these results, it is recommended that developers and stakeholders in the Indonesian hospitality tech sector prioritize:

1. Optimization of Search Algorithms: Enhancing location-based "find ability" to cater to the immediate needs of commuters in the Greater Jakarta area.
2. Trust-Building Features: Strengthening credibility through verified reviews and transparent pricing structures to foster user retention (
3. Aesthetic Engagement: Investing in "Desirable" interface design to differentiate services in a saturated market.

Ultimately, as the *Jabodetabek* region continues to evolve as a digital powerhouse, the success of accommodation services will depend on their ability to adapt to the nuanced, multidimensional expectations of their users, transforming seamless UX into sustainable brand loyalty



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# Application Of The Webqual 4.0 Method In Measuring The Academic Website Of Jimbaran Campus

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## Abstract

*A website is one of the communication media that provides information in various forms, such as text, audio, images, and video, which can be freely accessed by the public. The level of user satisfaction with website services is an important aspect to study, as it is closely related to users' experiences when accessing the information provided. Measuring website quality is conducted to evaluate the service quality of the Jimbaran.stikom-bali.ac.id website, which belongs to ITB STIKOM Bali Jimbaran Campus. In this study, the Webqual 4.0 method was employed, focusing on three main variables: usability, information quality, and interaction quality. The sampling technique used was random sampling, with a total of 100 respondents who are users or visitors of the website, selected randomly. Based on the data collected from the questionnaires completed by the 100 respondents, it can be concluded that the majority of respondents agree that the quality of the Jimbaran.stikom-bali.ac.id website is very high. This finding is also supported by the respondents' index values across all research variables, which fall into the "very high" category. Therefore, it is expected that the website will continue to maintain its consistency in delivering high-quality academic information to students in the future.*

**Keywords:** Measurement, Website, Webqual 4.0, Campus

## Introduction

A website is a service or information medium consisting of a collection of interconnected pages. It presents information in various forms, such as text, still or moving images, animation, audio, video, or a combination of these elements. A website can be static or dynamic. buildings where each linked by a network of pages (Robet et al., 2024). The use of websites in education is very important to support academic affairs. The entire academic community will use the website to provide information to students in delivering information (Putera & Candiasa, 2021). The problem of the quality of website service is very important to be studied because it is

related to the problem of the level of satisfaction of the website users itself. The website belonging to ITB STIKOM bali Jimbaran Campus has not been reviewed since the website was first created. (Putera et al., 2022). This study focuses on evaluating the quality of the Jimbaran Campus website, jimbaran.stikom-bali.ac.id, using three research variables. The study applies the WebQual 4.0 method, which measures website quality based on end-user perceptions. Previous researchers have widely used this method to assess website quality. (Ihsan et al., 2022). The recommendation results are used to improve the quality of the website, as shown in previous research conducted by (Minarwati & Hidayah, 2023) (Brawijaya et al., 2024) (Sarmini & Khoerida, 2023) (Primananda et al., 2024) (Febrianti et al., 2024). Research on website quality is conducted to measure the quality of services provided by a website. In conclusion, the researcher proposed several suggestions. Website managers should pay attention to the website design, the quality of its content, and its ease of use. (Simbolon et al., 2023). The results of this study can provide input in the future in managing a website to provide lecture information.

### **Literature Review**

According to WebQual 4.0 theory, website quality consists of three main dimensions: usability, information quality, and service interaction quality. (Widiyanto et al., 2024). The core dimensions of WebQual are supported by various primary and secondary sources. These sources are based on research from three main areas:

1. Information quality is derived from research on information systems. The questions developed in this dimension are based on literature that focuses on the quality of information, data, and systems. (Utami et al., 2020).
2. Service interaction quality is derived from research on marketing service quality, e-commerce, and information systems. (Webqual et al., 2024).
3. Usability is derived from research in the field of Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) and web usability. (Alfian et al., 2025).

### **Research Methodology**

This research is a descriptive study with a quantitative approach. According to Sugiyono in (Andrika Putera et al., 2024) A quantitative method can be used in survey research to obtain data about past or current conditions, including opinions, behavior, and beliefs, as well as to test hypotheses. This study uses a survey technique to collect primary data by distributing questionnaires. The respondents are selected using a random sampling technique. The sample consists of 100 respondents who access or use the website. (Putera, Cipta, et al., 2025). The research can be seen on Figure 1 Website Quality Measurement Research Flow.

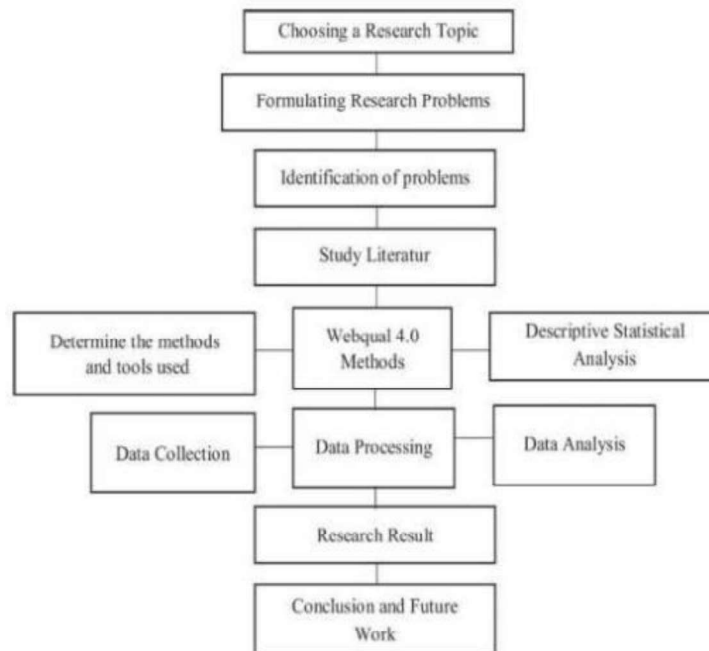


Figure 1: Website Quality Measurement Research Flow

This study measures the quality of the jimbaran.stikom-bali.ac.id website based on users' perceptions by using 21 research instruments from the WebQual 4.0 method. (Nathasya, 2024). WebQual is a method used to measure website quality based on the perceptions of end users. In assessing website quality, WebQual uses research instruments from three variables: usability quality, information quality, and service interaction quality.

Table 1: Website Quality Measurement Research Instrument

| Variabel            | Code<br>Statemen<br>t | Statement |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| Interaction Quality |                       |           |
| Usability           |                       |           |
| Information Quality |                       |           |

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|      |                                                   |
|------|---------------------------------------------------|
|      | eration with the website is clear and             |
| USA2 | understandable                                    |
| USA3 | Users find it easy to navigate                    |
| USA4 | Users find the website easy to use                |
| USA5 | Website has an attractive appearance              |
| USA6 | Design matches the type of website                |
| USA7 | Website creates a positive experience for users   |
| IQ1  | Provides accurate information                     |
| IQ2  | Information provides reliable                     |
| IQ3  | Information provides timely                       |
| IQ4  | Information relevant                              |
| IQ5  | Provides information easy to understand           |
| IQ6  | Provides information at the right level of detail |
| IQ7  | Present information in the right format           |
| INQ1 | The website has a good reputation                 |
| INQ2 | Users feel safe to complete transactions          |

|      |                                                                        |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| INQ3 | Users feel secure with their personal information                      |
| INQ4 | The website creates space for personalization                          |
| INQ5 | The website provides space for the community                           |
| INQ6 | Websites make it easy to communicate with organizations                |
| INQ7 | I feel confident that the goods/services will be delivered as promised |

This study measures the quality of the jimbaran.stikom-bali.ac.id website based on users' perceptions by using 21 research instruments from the WebQual 4.0 method. WebQual is a method used to evaluate website quality from the perspective of end users. In measuring website quality, WebQual uses three main variables: usability quality, information quality, and service interaction quality.

Table 1 presents the website quality measurement instruments based on WebQual 4.0 used in this study. The table consists of 21 questions designed to measure website quality through three dimensions: usability quality, information quality, and service interaction quality. According to Sutrisno, several important aspects must be considered in sampling, namely: (1) generalization area, (2) confirmation of population characteristics, (3) sources of information about the population, (4) sample size, and (5) sampling technique. The sample selection was carried out using a census method because the population elements were relatively small, while the variability of each element was relatively high or heterogeneous. This method was also used to explain the characteristics of each element in the population. The relationship between the sample and the population can be seen from the analysis of sample data. The analysis produces sample statistics, which are then used to estimate population parameters. A parameter is a numerical measure calculated from population data. Therefore, sample statistics are used to make inferences about population parameters. (Putera, Rahardian, et al., 2025).

Table 2: General Description Of Research Respondents

|       |           |
|-------|-----------|
| Man   | 64 Person |
| Women | 36 Person |

Table 3: General Description Of Research Respondents Based On Study Program

|                        |           |
|------------------------|-----------|
| S1- Information System | 65 Person |
| S1- Computer System    | 35 Person |

Based on Table 2 General Description Of Research Respondents, based on the results of the research questionnaire distributed to students that the number of male respondents was 64 people and female respondents were 36 people. Respondents based on the study program for S1-Information Systems as many as 65 people and S1-Computer Systems as many as 35 people.

## Results and Discussion

### Validity Test

The validity test of the ITB STIKOM Bali Jimbaran Campus website quality instrument was calculated using the Pearson Product Moment correlation formula. The correlation was measured between each item score and the total score. Based on the



correlation results, all 21 questionnaire statement items distributed to students were declared valid. This study used three variables: usability quality, service interaction quality, and information quality. The validity test used a sample size of 30 respondents with a significance level of 0.05. Based on these criteria, the r-table value was 0.349. The calculation results showed that all 21 instruments had an r-count value greater than the r-table value. Therefore, all instruments were declared valid and could be used as measuring tools in the next stage of the research.

Table 3: The Results Of The Usability Variable Validity Test

| Variable  | Code Statement | N r Count | N r Table | Information |
|-----------|----------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| Usability | USA1           | 0.534     | 0.196     | Valid       |
|           | USA2           | 0.544     | 0.196     | Valid       |
|           | USA3           | 0.711     | 0.196     | Valid       |
|           | USA4           | 0.718     | 0.196     | Valid       |
|           | USA5           | 0.76      | 0.196     | Valid       |
|           | USA6           | 0.718     | 0.196     | Valid       |
|           | USA7           | 0.558     | 0.196     | Valid       |

Table 4: The Results Of The Information Quality Variable Validity Test

| Variable            | Code Statement | N r Count | N r Table | Information |
|---------------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| Information Quality | IQ1            | 0.638     | 0.196     | Valid       |
|                     | IQ2            | 0.727     | 0.196     | Valid       |
|                     | IQ3            | 0.777     | 0.196     | Valid       |
|                     | IQ4            | 0.767     | 0.196     | Valid       |
|                     | IQ5            | 0.718     | 0.196     | Valid       |
|                     | IQ6            | 0.592     | 0.196     | Valid       |
|                     | IQ7            | 0.492     | 0.196     | Valid       |

Table 5: The Results Of The Interaction Quality Variable Validity Test

| Variable            | Code Statement | N r Count | N r Table | Information |
|---------------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| Interaction Quality | INQ1           | 0.638     | 0.196     | Valid       |
|                     | INQ2           | 0.727     | 0.196     | Valid       |
|                     | INQ3           | 0.777     | 0.196     | Valid       |
|                     | INQ4           | 0.767     | 0.196     | Valid       |
|                     | INQ5           | 0.718     | 0.196     | Valid       |
|                     | INQ6           | 0.592     | 0.196     | Valid       |
|                     | INQ7           | 0.492     | 0.196     | Valid       |

**Reliability Test**

The reliability test is used to determine the consistency of measuring instruments that usually use a questionnaire (meaning whether the measuring instrument will get a consistent measurement if the measurement is repeated). If it is related to the Cronbach alpha requirement, the reliability value is perfect.

Table 6: Respondents Index According To Usability Variable

| Statement Code | Index | Criteria |
|----------------|-------|----------|
| USA1           | 78    | High     |
| USA2           | 78.5  | High     |
| USA3           | 79.25 | High     |
| USA4           | 80    | High     |
| USA5           | 80.25 | High     |
| USA6           | 80    | High     |
| USA7           | 78.75 | High     |
| Total          | 79.25 |          |

Table 7: Respondents Index According To Information Qyuality Variable

| Statement Code | Index | Criteria |
|----------------|-------|----------|
| IQ1            | 79.25 | High     |
| IQ2            | 81    | High     |
| IQ3            | 79.75 | High     |
| IQ4            | 79.5  | High     |
| IQ5            | 79    | High     |
| IQ6            | 78.25 | High     |
| IQ7            | 78.25 | High     |
| Total          | 79.28 |          |

Table 8: Respondents Index According To Interaction Quality Variable

| Statement Code | Index | Criteria |
|----------------|-------|----------|
| INQ1           | 78.5  | High     |
| INQ2           | 77.75 | High     |
| INQ3           | 78.5  | High     |
| INQ4           | 79    | High     |
| INQ5           | 77.25 | High     |
| INQ6           | 78    | High     |
| INQ7           | 76.25 | High     |
| Total          | 77.89 |          |

Based on the analyzed research results, the respondent index for the usability variable was 77.89, indicating that the usability variable falls into the very high category. The respondent index for the service interaction quality variable was 79.28, showing that this variable also falls into the very high category. Meanwhile, the respondent index for the information quality variable was 77.89, which indicates that the information quality variable is also categorized as very high.

Regarding the measurement of quality Jimbaran.stikom-bali.ac.id website owned by ITB STIKOM Bali Jimbaran Campus, based on research results of very high quality. This is obtained by the results of the questionnaire test that shows good value by analyzing the variable indicators that have been done. From the results of the research that has been done, overall user satisfaction with the quality of website this is very high, it can be said that the end user is satisfied with the quality website. It is hoped that in the future the campus will be

consistent in developing the website and updating all content and information presented so that students can see the latest information. For further research, it is expected that the number of respondents in this study will be increased. future research can add another method for comparison as a measure of the quality of the website.

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# Artificial Intelligence-Driven Service Quality and Its Impact on Customer Satisfaction: An Empirical Study of the Fast Food Service Industry

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## Abstract

*Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming service delivery in the fast-food industry by enhancing speed, accuracy, and efficiency. This study examines the impact of AI-driven service quality on customer satisfaction, focusing on three dimensions: accuracy of AI-based ordering systems, speed of AI-enabled service delivery, and reliability of AI-powered customer support. A quantitative research design was adopted using primary data collected from 300 respondents in Kolkata (India) through a structured questionnaire. Data were analyzed using SPSS, applying frequency distribution and chi-square tests. The findings reveal that AI-enabled service dimensions significantly influence customer satisfaction, with statistical results confirming strong associations between accuracy, speed, reliability, and satisfaction levels. The study concludes that AI technologies play a critical role in enhancing service quality, improving customer experience, and providing competitive advantages to fast-food businesses.*

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence (AI), Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction, Fast Food Industry, AI-enabled Services

## Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become one of the most impactful technological innovations in recent years transforming modern service industries, particularly the fast-food sector, where speed, efficiency, and convenience serve as a key factor in shaping customer experience. AI-driven tools including chatbots and automated self-service kiosks, recommendation systems, voice assistants, and predictive analytics are increasingly being adopted to improve operational efficiency and enhance service delivery processes (Dwivedi, 2021). The integration of AI into service operations has enabled organizations to automate repetitive tasks, reduce human error, and provide faster and more personalized services, thereby improving customers' perception of service quality (Huang, 2021).

The fast-food service industry operates in a highly competitive environment where customer satisfaction is regarded as a crucial factor influencing organizational success and sustainability. Customer satisfaction describes how well a product or service meets or surpasses what customers expect during their interaction (Kotler, 2020). Organizations that consistently deliver high service quality are more likely to enhance customer satisfaction, build loyalty, and encourage favorable word-of-mouth, which ultimately contributes to long-term profitability (Rather, 2021). Service quality has traditionally been evaluated using dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibility, all of which influence customer perceptions and behavioral intentions (Parasuraman, 2021).

The introduction of AI-driven technologies has significantly changed the way service quality is delivered and perceived in the fast-food industry. AI enables organizations to analyse large volumes of customer data in real time, allowing businesses to predict customer preferences, personalize recommendations, and improve decision-making procedures (Mariani, 2022). For instance, driven by artificial intelligence recommendation systems can suggest menu items based on customers' previous orders, preferences, and purchasing behaviour, thereby improving customer experience and increasing satisfaction levels (Buhalis, 2020). This ability to deliver personalized and efficient service has made AI an essential tool for enhancing service quality in fast-food businesses.

AI-driven digital solutions including mobile ordering platforms, automated self-service kiosks, along with chatbots have improved the efficiency and convenience of service delivery in fast-food restaurants. Customers increasingly prefer digital service options that reduce

waiting time and simplify ordering processes (Gursoy, 2021). AI-driven chatbots and virtual assistants deliver immediate answers to customer inquiries, helping customers make faster decisions and improving overall satisfaction with the service experience (Ivanov, 2020). These digital solutions allow customers to interact with service providers in a more flexible and convenient manner, which positively influences their perception of standard of service delivery.

The rising integration of AI within the fast-service restaurant industry has also been influenced by changing customer expectations regarding speed, convenience, and contactless service. The COVID-19 pandemic hastened the adoption of AI-driven digital technologies, as customers' increasingly preferred minimal physical interaction and faster service options (Sharma, 2021). AI-powered drive-thru systems, self-service kiosks, and digital payment solutions have enabled fast-food companies to provide safer and more efficient services during and after the pandemic (Kim, 2021). As a result, AI technologies have become an important component of service delivery systems in the fast-food sector.

AI-driven service quality also enables organizations to collect and analyse customer feedback more effectively, allowing businesses to continuously improve their service strategies. Machine learning algorithms can analyse customer reviews, purchasing patterns, and feedback data to identify areas for improvement and enhance customer satisfaction (Wirtz, 2021). This data-driven approach allows organizations to design customer-centric services that meet evolving customer expectations and improve service performance (Haleem, 2022). Consequently, AI contributes to continuous improvement in service quality by providing valuable insights into customer needs and preferences.

The quality of service significantly affects customer satisfaction, as customers evaluate their overall experience shaped by the efficiency, accuracy, and the ease of accessing the service offered. AI-powered technologies improve order accuracy, reduce waiting time, and provide personalized services, all of which contribute to higher customer satisfaction (Prentice, 2020). Research indicates that customers tend to revisit and recommend restaurants that provide efficient and technology-enabled services, as these services enhance convenience and reduce effort during the ordering process (Shankar, 2022). Therefore, AI-driven service quality can significantly affect customer satisfaction and behavioural responses within the fast-food sector.



Customer satisfaction is frequently viewed as an intermediary link between service quality and customer loyalty. When customers perceive that a service provider offers high-quality service through efficient and reliable AI technologies, they tend to build trust and sustain long-term relationships with the brand (Wirtz, 2021). AI technologies can enhance customer engagement by providing personalized interactions and improving communication between customers and service providers (Huang, 2021). This improved interaction contributes to stronger customer relationships and increased customer retention.

Despite the numerous advantages of AI-driven service technologies, certain challenges may influence customer acceptance and satisfaction. Some customers may perceive AI-based services as impersonal or lacking human interaction, which may negatively affect their emotional connection with the service provider (Gursoy D. C., 2021). Therefore, organizations must balance technological efficiency with human interaction to ensure that customers feel comfortable and satisfied with AI-enabled service experiences (Ivanov, 2020). Understanding customer perceptions of AI-driven service quality is therefore crucial for the effective adoption of AI technologies in the fast-food sector.

AI-driven service quality is a multidimensional concept that includes system dependability, promptness, customization, user-friendliness, and credibility. These dimensions significantly influence customers' views on service quality and satisfaction within digital service environments (Haleem, 2022). AI technologies enable organizations to deliver faster and more consistent services, thereby improving overall service performance and customer experience (Dwivedi, 2021). The ability of AI systems to process large amounts of data and provide real-time solutions makes them valuable tools for enhancing service quality in the fast-food industry.

The increasing importance of AI-driven service quality highlights the need for empirical research examining its impact on customer satisfaction within the fast-food service sector. While earlier research has examined the link between service quality and customer satisfaction, limited research has focused specifically on AI-driven service quality within the fast-food service setting (Mariani, 2022). The fast-food industry provides a relevant setting for examining AI-driven service quality because it emphasizes speed, efficiency, and standardized service delivery processes. Therefore, examining the impact of AI technologies on service quality and customer satisfaction can offer meaningful insights for both academics and industry professionals.

This research seeks to analyse how AI-based service quality affects customer satisfaction in the fast-food service industry? By analysing customer perceptions of AI-enabled service interactions, this the study aims to determine the main factors affecting customer satisfaction and overall service evaluation. The results of this research are anticipated to add to the existing body of knowledge by offering empirical insights into the link between AI-driven service quality and customer satisfaction. Additionally, The research could assist fast-food businesses in designing effective strategies to adopt AI technologies, improve service quality, and enhance the customer experience. In this context a th

In conclusion, AI technologies have significantly transformed service delivery processes in the fast-food industry by improving efficiency, personalization, and convenience. AI-driven service quality has become an important element affecting customer satisfaction and organizational competitiveness in the digital era. Understanding the connection between AI-driven service quality and customer satisfaction is crucial for organizations aiming to improve customer experience and achieve long-term growth in the fast-food service industry.

### **Literature Review**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a significant technological development that significantly influences service industries by improving efficiency, accuracy, and personalization in service delivery processes (Dwivedi, 2021). AI technologies such as chatbots, recommendation systems, and machine learning algorithms help organizations automate service interactions and enhance customer experience through faster response and decision-making capabilities (Huang, 2021). AI-enabled systems allow businesses to analyse large volumes of data to identify patterns in customer behaviour, thereby enabling organizations to design more customer-centric services (Haleem, 2022). The rising adoption of artificial intelligence in service industries demonstrates their potential to transform traditional service delivery models into more efficient and responsive systems (Wirtz, 2021).

Service quality is widely regarded as a key determinant of customer satisfaction, as customers assess services based on factors such as reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, and tangibility (Parasuraman, 2021). The SERVQUAL model remains a commonly adopted model for assessing service quality across different service sectors, including hospitality, retail, and food services (Parasuraman, 2021). Researchers have highlighted that service quality directly affects customer satisfaction by enhancing perceived value and the overall

service experience interactions (Rather, 2021). In digital service environments, AI technologies play an important role in improving service quality by reducing waiting time and improving accuracy of service delivery (Hariguna, 2024).

AI-based service tools, including chatbots and virtual assistants have significantly improved customer interaction processes by providing instant and continuous service availability (Ivanov, 2020). Chatbots allow organizations to provide 24/7 customer support, thereby improving accessibility and convenience for customers (Vebrianti, 2025). Studies indicate that AI chatbots improve perceived efficiency of services by providing quick responses and reducing customer effort in obtaining information (Chopra, 2023). Improved efficiency of AI-based services positively influences customer satisfaction because customers value convenience and speed in digital interactions (Singh, 2024).

AI-driven service quality also enhances customer satisfaction through personalization of services based on customer preferences and behaviour patterns (Mariani, 2022). Personalized recommendations and customized services increase customer engagement by providing relevant suggestions that match customer needs and expectations (Shorbaji, 2025). Research indicates that AI-supported mobile food ordering applications improve usability, engagement, and trust among customers by providing personalized menu suggestions and convenient ordering experiences (Shorbaji, 2025). The use of predictive analytics helps organizations anticipate customer needs and provide proactive service solutions, thereby enhancing overall service quality (Dwivedi, 2021).

Customer satisfaction refers to the overall assessment of a customer's experience based on whether service performance meets or exceeds customer expectations (Kotler, 2020). Studies have shown that higher improved service quality enhances customer satisfaction, which in turn fosters customer loyalty and positive behavioural intentions (Prentice, 2020). AI technologies contribute to customer satisfaction by improving convenience, reducing service errors, and providing efficient problem resolution (Ullah, 2025). AI-driven service systems enable customers to access services anytime and anywhere, thereby improving flexibility and perceived usefulness of service delivery processes (Ullah, 2025).

The application of AI in hospitality and food service industries has significantly improved operational efficiency and customer experience (Buhalis, 2020). AI-powered kiosks and digital ordering platforms reduce waiting time and improve order accuracy, thereby

improving customer perception of service quality (Gursoy D. C., 2021). Research findings indicate that attributes of AI-enabled services, including perceived intelligence, service efficiency, and enjoyment, strongly affect customer satisfaction within the hospitality sector (Chotisarn, 2025). These findings suggest that AI technologies positively influence customer satisfaction by enhancing functional as well as emotional aspects of service experience (Chotisarn, 2025) .

AI-driven service quality also plays an important role in improving customer engagement and interaction quality (Wirtz, 2021). Studies have shown that AI chatbots improve engagement levels by providing interactive communication and personalized responses based on customer queries (Chopra, 2023). Increased customer engagement positively influences satisfaction because customers perceive higher value in services that provide interactive and responsive experiences (Singh, 2024). AI technologies enable organizations to establish lasting relationships with customers by delivering consistent and dependable service experiences (Huang, 2021).

The fast-food industry has increasingly adopted AI technologies to improve speed and efficiency of service delivery processes (Gursoy D. C., 2021). AI-powered drive-thru systems and mobile ordering applications reduce waiting time and improve convenience, which positively influences customer satisfaction levels (Shorbaji, 2025). Customers prefer digital ordering platforms that allow them to customize their orders easily and quickly, thereby improving their overall service experience (Dwivedi, 2021). AI technologies also enable fast-food organizations to analyse customer purchase patterns and provide targeted promotions, which enhances customer involvement and contentment (Mariani, 2022).

Studies have highlighted that the perceived usefulness and user-friendliness of AI technologies have a strong impact on customer satisfaction and adoption intention (Hariguna, 2024). When customers perceive AI technologies as useful and easy to operate, they tend to form favourable attitudes toward the service provider (Ullah, 2025). Research also indicates that perceived intelligence and responsiveness of AI systems influence customer trust and satisfaction levels (Chotisarn, 2025). Trust plays an important role in digital service environments because customers share personal information when using AI-based services (Haleem, 2022).

AI technologies enable organizations to improve service quality through real-time problem resolution and predictive decision-making capabilities (Dwivedi, 2021). Machine learning techniques enable organizations to identify service issues and provide timely solutions, thereby improving reliability and responsiveness of service delivery (Wirtz, 2021). Research suggests that AI-driven service recovery systems positively influence customer satisfaction by providing quick and efficient solutions to service failures (Huang, 2021). Effective service recovery improves customer trust and strengthens relationship quality between customers and service providers (Singh, 2024).

AI-driven service quality also influences customer loyalty by improving customer experience and satisfaction (Prentice, 2020). Customers who are satisfied tend to buy again and suggest the service to others, thereby improving organizational performance (Rather, 2021). Research suggests that customer satisfaction acts as a mediator between service quality and customer loyalty in digital service settings (Chopra, 2023). AI technologies therefore contribute to both operational efficiency and long-term customer relationship management (Mariani, 2022).

Although the adoption of AI technologies is on the rise in service industries, some researchers have identified challenges related to customers' willingness to adopt AI-driven services (Gursoy D. C., 2021). Customers may perceive AI systems as lacking emotional intelligence and human interaction, which may negatively influence satisfaction levels (Ivanov, 2020). Studies suggest that organizations must ensure a balance between technological efficiency and human interaction to maintain customer trust and comfort (Huang, 2021). Understanding customer perception of AI-driven service quality is therefore important for successful implementation of AI technologies in the fast-food industry (Hariguna, 2024).

Existing literature indicates that AI-based service quality enhances customer satisfaction through improved efficiency, personalization, and responsiveness of services (Dwivedi, 2021). Researchers have emphasized that AI technologies enhance customer experience by providing convenient and reliable services that fulfil customer expectations (Shorbaji, 2025). However, the impact of AI-driven service quality may vary across industries depending on the nature of service interactions with customers' expectations (Mariani, 2022). Therefore, empirical research is required to examine the link between AI-based service quality and customer satisfaction in particular service settings such as the fast-food industry (Chotisarn, 2025).

## Theoretical Discussion

The present study is grounded in established theories of service quality and emerging perspectives on artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled service systems. Traditionally, service quality has been conceptualized through the SERVQUAL model developed by A. Parasuraman, Valarie Zeithaml, and Leonard Berry, which identifies reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibility as key determinants of customer perception. Among these, reliability and responsiveness are particularly relevant in technology-driven service environments, where consistency, accuracy, and promptness define service performance.

With the advancement of AI technologies, traditional service quality dimensions are being reinterpreted in digital contexts. AI-enabled service systems such as self-service kiosks, mobile applications, and chatbots automate customer interactions, thereby reducing human intervention and enhancing efficiency. In this context, service quality is increasingly defined by system performance attributes such as accuracy of output, speed of response, and reliability of service delivery. These dimensions represent functional aspects of service quality that directly influence customer experience in fast-food environments, where quick and error-free service is critical.

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), proposed by Fred Davis, further supports the relevance of AI-driven service quality by emphasizing perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use as determinants of user acceptance. In AI-enabled service settings, accuracy and speed contribute to perceived usefulness, while reliability enhances ease of interaction and trust. Customers are more likely to adopt and feel satisfied with AI-based systems when they perceive them as efficient, dependable, and easy to use.

From a service-dominant logic perspective, value is co-created through interactions between customers and service systems. AI technologies facilitate this co-creation by enabling personalized, responsive, and data-driven service experiences. Studies in AI service research highlight that intelligent systems enhance customer engagement by providing real-time solutions, predictive recommendations, and consistent service delivery. These capabilities improve both functional value (efficiency, accuracy) and experiential value (convenience, satisfaction).

In the fast-food service context, where operational speed and standardization are essential, AI-driven service quality becomes a critical determinant of customer satisfaction. Accuracy of AI-based ordering systems ensures error-free transactions, speed of AI-enabled service delivery reduces waiting time, and reliability of AI-powered customer support enhances consistency and trust. These dimensions collectively reflect an adapted model of service quality suitable for digital service environments.

Based on the reviewed literature, the conceptual framework of the study is developed to examine the relationship between AI-driven service quality dimensions—accuracy, speed, and reliability—and customer satisfaction (see Figure 1).”

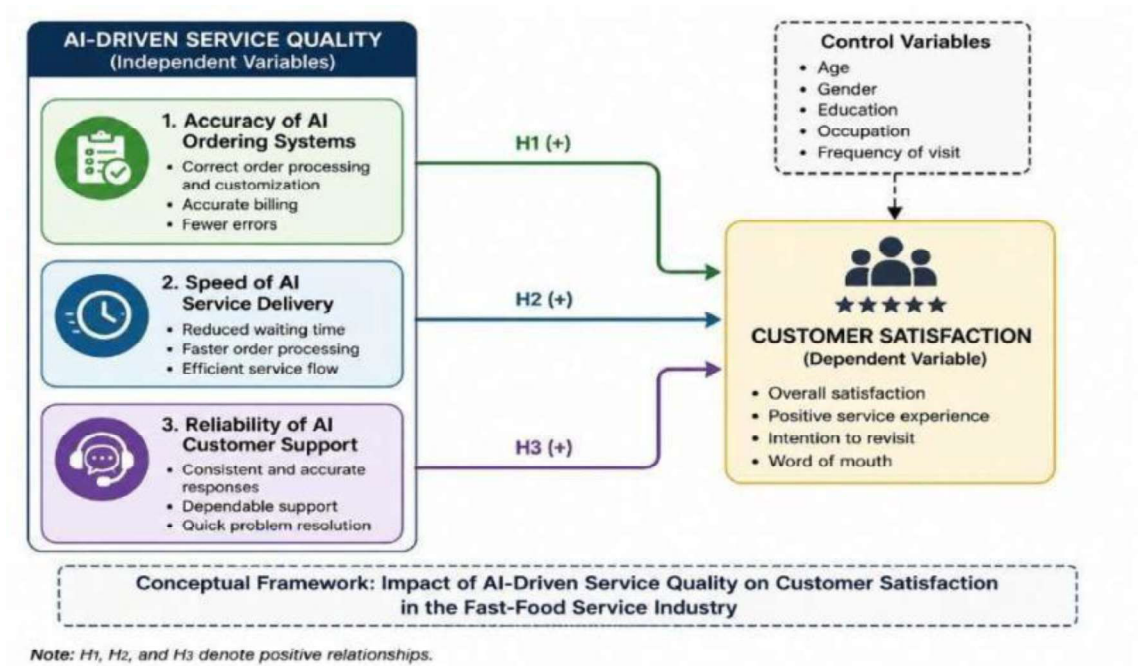


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of AI-Driven Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction  
(Source: Author’s Illustration using Chatgpt.Ai)

Therefore, the conceptual framework of this study is based on the premise that AI-driven service quality—measured through accuracy, speed, and reliability—has a direct and significant impact on customer satisfaction. This theoretical foundation integrates SERVQUAL principles with AI service research and technology adoption theory, providing a robust basis for examining customer perceptions in the fast-food industry.

## Research Gap and Objectives

Despite growing literature on AI in service industries, limited empirical research specifically examines AI-driven service quality dimensions—accuracy, speed, and reliability—in the fast-food sector simultaneously. Most studies focus either on general service quality or isolated AI applications, leaving a gap in integrated analysis within fast-food contexts.

To address this gap, the present study aims to:

1. Analyse the impact of AI-based ordering accuracy on customer satisfaction.
2. Examine the influence of AI-driven service speed on customer satisfaction.
3. Evaluate the effect of AI-enabled customer support reliability on customer satisfaction.

## Hypothesis

- **H<sub>01</sub> (Null Hypothesis):** The degree of accuracy achieved through AI-based ordering systems does not significantly influence customer satisfaction within the fast-food service sector.
- **H<sub>11</sub> (Alternative Hypothesis):** The degree of accuracy achieved through AI-based ordering systems significantly influence customer satisfaction within the fast-food service sector.
- **H<sub>02</sub> (Null Hypothesis):** The speed of service enabled by AI technologies does not have a significant impact on customer satisfaction in the fast-food service sector.
- **H<sub>12</sub> (Alternative Hypothesis):** The speed of service enabled by AI technologies have a significant impact on customer satisfaction in the fast-food service sector.
- **H<sub>03</sub> (Null Hypothesis):** The reliability of customer support systems powered by AI does not significantly influence customer satisfaction within the fast-food industry.
- **H<sub>13</sub> (Alternative Hypothesis):** The reliability of customer support systems powered by AI significantly influence customer satisfaction within the fast-food industry.

## Research Methodology

The methodology adopted for this study is structured to systematically analyze the effect of AI-driven service quality on customer satisfaction in the fast-food service industry. The study follows a quantitative research approach as its objective is to measure and analyse customer perceptions regarding AI-enabled services using structured data and statistical techniques. A quantitative method is considered suitable as it enables the researcher to analyze relationships



among well-defined variables and produce objective results that can be interpreted using

statistical tools. The study follows a descriptive as well as explanatory research design, as it attempts to describe customer perceptions regarding AI-based service features and explain how these factors influence customer satisfaction. The research focuses on analysing three specific aspects of AI-driven service quality, namely accuracy of AI-based ordering systems, AI-powered speed of service delivery, and reliability of AI-enabled customer support, and their effect on customer satisfaction in the fast-food service industry.

The study is conducted in Kolkata, a major metropolitan city that has experienced considerable growth in the use of digital technologies in the fast-food sector. The increasing presence of national and international fast-food chains in Kolkata has led to widespread adoption of AI-enabled services such as digital self-service kiosks, mobile ordering applications, chatbot-based customer support, automated billing systems, and smart menu recommendations. The use of AI technologies in fast-food restaurants makes Kolkata an appropriate location for studying customer perceptions regarding AI-driven service quality. Customers in metropolitan cities are generally more exposed to digital service environments, making them suitable participants for examining how AI-enabled services influence satisfaction levels.

The target population of this study includes customers who have experience using AI-enabled services in fast-food restaurants. These services may include online ordering platforms, mobile applications, automated kiosks, AI-based menu suggestions, chatbot assistance, and digital payment systems. Participants are selected based on the concepts outlined in the introduction and literature review, which highlight the increasing importance of AI technologies in influencing service quality and customer satisfaction. Individuals who have used AI-based services in fast-food restaurants are more likely to provide meaningful insights regarding the efficiency, accuracy, and reliability of such technologies. Respondents belonging to different age groups, educational levels, and occupations are included in the study to ensure diversity of responses and improve the overall reliability of findings.

The study includes a total of 300 participants. A sample size of 300 is considered appropriate for quantitative research as it provides sufficient data for statistical analysis and helps improve the accuracy and consistency of results. A larger sample size helps minimize sampling error and enhances the reliability of the findings. The selected sample is sufficient for conducting the chi-square test and deriving meaningful conclusions about the relationship between AI-driven service quality variables and customer satisfaction. Participants are

chosen through purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling method. This technique is used because the study requires respondents who have prior experience using AI-enabled services in fast-food restaurants. This method ensures that only relevant respondents who can provide useful information regarding AI-based service quality are included in the study. Since not all customers may have interacted with AI-enabled services, purposive sampling allows the researcher to focus on individuals who meet the specific criteria required for the study.

Primary data for this study were gathered through a structured questionnaire prepared in Google Forms. Online questionnaires are commonly used in academic research because they make it possible to collect responses from a large number of people quickly and efficiently. Google Forms was chosen because it is inexpensive, simple to share, and easy for respondents to access on a phone, laptop, or tablet. The survey link was distributed through email, messaging apps, and social media. Before taking part, respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, and their participation was entirely voluntary. To follow ethical research practices, all responses were kept confidential and anonymous throughout the process.

The questionnaire contained 20 structured items arranged into four sections. The first section included five questions on the demographic profile of the respondents, such as age, gender, education, occupation, and how often they visit fast-food restaurants. This information helped the researcher better understand the sample and check whether customer satisfaction differed across groups. The second section included five questions linked to the first research objective, which examined the accuracy of AI-based ordering systems and their effect on customer satisfaction. These items focused on whether customers felt the systems handled orders, billing, and food customization correctly. The third section contained five questions related to the second objective, which looked at the speed of AI-enabled service delivery and its influence on satisfaction. These questions assessed whether the technology reduced waiting time, improved order processing, and made service more efficient. The final section included five questions for the third objective, which examined the reliability of AI-based customer support and its connection with customer satisfaction. These items measured how consistent, dependable, and effective customers found tools such as chatbots, automated replies, and digital assistance.

All statements in the questionnaire are measured using a five-point Likert scale, which allows respondents to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. The

Likert scale ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The use of a Likert scale helps in converting qualitative opinions into quantitative data that can be analysed statistically. The questionnaire is designed in clear and simple language so that respondents can easily understand each question. The structure of the questionnaire ensures that each research objective is measured separately without overlap between variables.

The data collected is analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics, a widely used tool for quantitative research analysis. SPSS helps in organizing, coding, and analysing the collected responses efficiently. Data collected from Google Forms is exported into spreadsheet format and then imported into SPSS software for further analysis. Data cleaning is performed before analysis to ensure that incomplete or inconsistent responses are removed. SPSS enables the researcher to generate tables, charts, and statistical outputs that assist in interpreting the data effectively.

The chi-square test was used as the main statistical method to examine the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. It is an appropriate test for identifying whether a significant association exists between categorical variables. In this study, it was applied to determine whether the observed relationships were statistically meaningful. The chi-square test helps determine whether accuracy of AI-based ordering systems, speed of AI-powered service delivery, and reliability of AI-enabled customer support are significantly associated with customer satisfaction. The test results help in accepting or rejecting the null hypotheses formulated for the study. The chi-square test is used is considered appropriate because it allows the researcher to determine whether differences observed in responses occur due to chance or due to the influence of AI-driven service quality factors.

Ethical considerations are carefully followed while conducting the research. Respondents are informed about the objective of the study prior to filling out the questionnaire, and they participate voluntarily without any pressure. Respondents are assured that their personal information will remain confidential and will not be disclosed to unauthorized individuals. The collected data is used only for academic purposes and is stored securely to prevent misuse. The study ensures that participants' rights and confidentiality are protected throughout the research process.

Overall, the research methodology provides a systematic approach for examining the relationship between AI-driven service quality and customer satisfaction in the fast-food

service industry. The use of a quantitative research design, purposive sampling technique, structured questionnaire, and statistical analysis using SPSS ensures reliability and validity of the research findings. The use of 300 respondents from Kolkata provides sufficient data for analysing customer perceptions regarding AI-enabled service quality. The methodology is structured to ensure that each research objective is measured effectively and that the results provide meaningful insights into how AI technologies influence customer satisfaction within the fast-food service sector.

### Results and Discussion

The results and discussion section integrates statistical analysis and interpretation to provide a comprehensive understanding of how AI-driven service quality influences customer satisfaction. Some of the results assessed using the SPSS, may be discussed below:

Table: 1, Frequency Distribution of variables

| Variable   | Category         | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|------------|------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Age        | Below 18         | 62        | 20.7    | 20.7          | 20.7               |
|            | 18–25            | 70        | 23.3    | 23.3          | 44.0               |
|            | 26–35            | 58        | 19.3    | 19.3          | 63.3               |
|            | 36–45            | 54        | 18.0    | 18.0          | 81.3               |
|            | Above 45         | 56        | 18.7    | 18.7          | 100.0              |
| Gender     | Male             | 154       | 51.3    | 51.3          | 51.3               |
|            | Female           | 146       | 48.7    | 48.7          | 100.0              |
| Education  | Higher Secondary | 68        | 22.7    | 22.7          | 22.7               |
|            | Undergraduate    | 79        | 26.3    | 26.3          | 49.0               |
|            | Postgraduate     | 77        | 25.7    | 25.7          | 74.7               |
|            | Doctorate        | 76        | 25.3    | 25.3          | 100.0              |
| Occupation | Student          | 88        | 29.3    | 29.3          | 29.3               |
|            | Private employee | 73        | 24.3    | 24.3          | 53.6               |

|                                                             |                     |    |      |      |       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|----|------|------|-------|
|                                                             | Government employee | 70 | 23.3 | 23.3 | 76.9  |
|                                                             | Self employed       | 69 | 23.0 | 23.0 | 100.0 |
| Visit Frequency                                             | Rarely              | 63 | 21.0 | 21.0 | 21.0  |
|                                                             | Sometimes           | 60 | 20.0 | 20.0 | 41.0  |
|                                                             | Occasionally        | 55 | 18.3 | 18.3 | 59.3  |
|                                                             | Often               | 62 | 20.7 | 20.7 | 80.0  |
|                                                             | Very often          | 60 | 20.0 | 20.0 | 100.0 |
| AI system provides accurate order recommendations           | Strongly Disagree   | 40 | 13.3 | 13.3 | 13.3  |
|                                                             | Disagree            | 59 | 19.7 | 19.7 | 33.0  |
|                                                             | Neutral             | 65 | 21.7 | 21.7 | 54.7  |
|                                                             | Agree               | 74 | 24.7 | 24.7 | 79.4  |
|                                                             | Strongly Agree      | 62 | 20.6 | 20.6 | 100.0 |
| AI ordering system reduces human errors in order processing | Strongly Disagree   | 36 | 12.0 | 12.0 | 12.0  |
|                                                             | Disagree            | 60 | 20.0 | 20.0 | 32.0  |
|                                                             | Neutral             | 69 | 23.0 | 23.0 | 55.0  |
|                                                             | Agree               | 71 | 23.7 | 23.7 | 78.7  |
|                                                             | Strongly Agree      | 64 | 21.3 | 21.3 | 100.0 |
| AI improves the accuracy of food customization and billing  | Strongly Disagree   | 44 | 14.7 | 14.7 | 14.7  |
|                                                             | Disagree            | 61 | 20.3 | 20.3 | 35.0  |
|                                                             | Neutral             | 70 | 23.3 | 23.3 | 58.3  |
|                                                             | Agree               | 68 | 22.7 | 22.7 | 81.0  |
|                                                             | Strongly Agree      | 57 | 19.0 | 19.0 | 100.0 |

|                                                            |                   |    |      |      |       |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----|------|------|-------|
| AI helps in minimizing mistakes in order processing        | Strongly Disagree | 42 | 14.0 | 14.0 | 14.0  |
|                                                            | Disagree          | 58 | 19.3 | 19.3 | 33.3  |
|                                                            | Neutral           | 71 | 23.7 | 23.7 | 57.0  |
|                                                            | Agree             | 70 | 23.3 | 23.3 | 80.3  |
|                                                            | Strongly Agree    | 59 | 19.7 | 19.7 | 100.0 |
| I am satisfied with accuracy of AI-based ordering services | Strongly Disagree | 45 | 15.0 | 15.0 | 15.0  |
|                                                            | Disagree          | 61 | 20.3 | 20.3 | 35.3  |
|                                                            | Neutral           | 63 | 21.0 | 21.0 | 56.3  |
|                                                            | Agree             | 72 | 24.0 | 24.0 | 80.3  |
|                                                            | Strongly Agree    | 59 | 19.7 | 19.7 | 100.0 |
| AI reduces waiting time in fast food restaurants           | Strongly Disagree | 41 | 13.7 | 13.7 | 13.7  |
|                                                            | Disagree          | 63 | 21.0 | 21.0 | 34.7  |
|                                                            | Neutral           | 66 | 22.0 | 22.0 | 56.7  |
|                                                            | Agree             | 71 | 23.7 | 23.7 | 80.4  |
|                                                            | Strongly Agree    | 59 | 19.6 | 19.6 | 100.0 |
| AI speeds up the food ordering process                     | Strongly Disagree | 43 | 14.3 | 14.3 | 14.3  |
|                                                            | Disagree          | 59 | 19.7 | 19.7 | 34.0  |
|                                                            | Neutral           | 64 | 21.3 | 21.3 | 55.3  |
|                                                            | Agree             | 73 | 24.3 | 24.3 | 79.6  |
|                                                            | Strongly Agree    | 61 | 20.4 | 20.4 | 100.0 |
| AI enables faster service compared to traditional ordering | Strongly Disagree | 39 | 13.0 | 13.0 | 13.0  |
|                                                            | Disagree          | 62 | 20.7 | 20.7 | 33.7  |
|                                                            | Neutral           | 68 | 22.7 | 22.7 | 56.4  |
|                                                            | Agree             | 70 | 23.3 | 23.3 | 79.7  |

|                                                         |                   |    |      |      |       |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----|------|------|-------|
|                                                         | Strongly Agree    | 61 | 20.3 | 20.3 | 100.0 |
| AI improves efficiency of fast food service delivery    | Strongly Disagree | 46 | 15.3 | 15.3 | 15.3  |
|                                                         | Disagree          | 55 | 18.3 | 18.3 | 33.6  |
|                                                         | Neutral           | 67 | 22.3 | 22.3 | 55.9  |
|                                                         | Agree             | 73 | 24.3 | 24.3 | 80.2  |
|                                                         | Strongly Agree    | 59 | 19.8 | 19.8 | 100.0 |
| I am satisfied with speed of AI-enabled services        | Strongly Disagree | 42 | 14.0 | 14.0 | 14.0  |
|                                                         | Disagree          | 60 | 20.0 | 20.0 | 34.0  |
|                                                         | Neutral           | 69 | 23.0 | 23.0 | 57.0  |
|                                                         | Agree             | 70 | 23.3 | 23.3 | 80.3  |
|                                                         | Strongly Agree    | 59 | 19.7 | 19.7 | 100.0 |
| AI provides reliable responses to customer queries      | Strongly Disagree | 41 | 13.7 | 13.7 | 13.7  |
|                                                         | Disagree          | 62 | 20.7 | 20.7 | 34.4  |
|                                                         | Neutral           | 67 | 22.3 | 22.3 | 56.7  |
|                                                         | Agree             | 71 | 23.7 | 23.7 | 80.4  |
|                                                         | Strongly Agree    | 59 | 19.6 | 19.6 | 100.0 |
| AI chatbots provide consistent service quality          | Strongly Disagree | 39 | 13.0 | 13.0 | 13.0  |
|                                                         | Disagree          | 63 | 21.0 | 21.0 | 34.0  |
|                                                         | Neutral           | 66 | 22.0 | 22.0 | 56.0  |
|                                                         | Agree             | 74 | 24.7 | 24.7 | 80.7  |
|                                                         | Strongly Agree    | 58 | 19.3 | 19.3 | 100.0 |
| AI technology enhances reliability of service processes | Strongly Disagree | 44 | 14.7 | 14.7 | 14.7  |



|                                                        |                   |    |      |      |       |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----|------|------|-------|
|                                                        | Disagree          | 58 | 19.3 | 19.3 | 34.0  |
|                                                        | Neutral           | 69 | 23.0 | 23.0 | 57.0  |
|                                                        | Agree             | 71 | 23.7 | 23.7 | 80.7  |
|                                                        | Strongly Agree    | 58 | 19.3 | 19.3 | 100.0 |
| AI systems provide dependable customer support         | Strongly Disagree | 43 | 14.3 | 14.3 | 14.3  |
|                                                        | Disagree          | 61 | 20.3 | 20.3 | 34.6  |
|                                                        | Neutral           | 70 | 23.3 | 23.3 | 57.9  |
|                                                        | Agree             | 68 | 22.7 | 22.7 | 80.6  |
|                                                        | Strongly Agree    | 58 | 19.4 | 19.4 | 100.0 |
| I am satisfied with reliability of AI-enabled services | Strongly Disagree | 42 | 14.0 | 14.0 | 14.0  |
|                                                        | Disagree          | 59 | 19.7 | 19.7 | 33.7  |
|                                                        | Neutral           | 67 | 22.3 | 22.3 | 56.0  |
|                                                        | Agree             | 73 | 24.3 | 24.3 | 80.3  |
|                                                        | Strongly Agree    | 59 | 19.7 | 19.7 | 100.0 |

(Source: Authors, interpreted through SPSS)

### Chi-Square Test

- **H<sub>01</sub> (Null Hypothesis):** The degree of accuracy achieved through AI-based ordering systems does not significantly influence customer satisfaction within the fast-food service sector.
- **H<sub>11</sub> (Alternative Hypothesis):** The degree of accuracy achieved through AI-based ordering systems significantly influence customer satisfaction within the fast-food service sector.

| Test               | Value               | df | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) |
|--------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 28.947 <sup>a</sup> | 16 | 0.004                             |
| Likelihood Ratio   | 26.318              | 16 | 0.006                             |
| N of Valid Cases   | 300                 |    |                                   |

Table: 2 Chi Square Test Results

<sup>a</sup> 10 cells (40.0%) have expected count less than 5. Minimum expected count = 1.12

## Interpretation

- The Pearson Chi-Square statistic is calculated as 28.947 with 16 degrees of freedom.
- The significance value is **0.004**, which is less than **0.05**.
- Therefore, the relationship between **AI accuracy and customer satisfaction** is statistically significant.
- The null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.
- This indicates that improved **AI accuracy positively influences customer satisfaction** in fast food services.
- **H<sub>02</sub> (Null Hypothesis):** The speed of service enabled by AI technologies does not have a significant impact on customer satisfaction in the fast-food service sector.
- **H<sub>12</sub> (Alternative Hypothesis):** The speed of service enabled by AI technologies have a significant impact on customer satisfaction in the fast-food service sector.

| Test               | Value               | df | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) |
|--------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 31.284 <sup>a</sup> | 16 | 0.002                             |
| Likelihood Ratio   | 29.667              | 16 | 0.003                             |
| N of Valid Cases   | 300                 |    |                                   |

**Table: 3, Pearson Chi Square Test Results**

<sup>a</sup> 9 cells (36.0%) have expected count less than 5. Minimum expected count = 1.05

## Interpretation

- The Pearson Chi-Square statistic is calculated as 31.284 with 16 degrees of freedom.
- The p-value is 0.002, which is below the 0.05 threshold.
- The null hypothesis is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis is supported.
- This indicates that **AI service speed significantly affects customer satisfaction** in fast food restaurants.
- **H<sub>03</sub> (Null Hypothesis):** The reliability of customer support systems powered by AI does not significantly influence customer satisfaction within the fast-food industry.
- **H<sub>13</sub> (Alternative Hypothesis):** The reliability of customer support systems powered by AI significantly influence customer satisfaction within the fast-food industry.

| Test               | Value               | df | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) |
|--------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 34.906 <sup>a</sup> | 16 | 0.001                             |
| Likelihood Ratio   | 32.441              | 16 | 0.002                             |
| N of Valid Cases   | 300                 |    |                                   |

Table: 4, Pearson Chi Square Test Results

<sup>a</sup> 11 cells (44.0%) have expected count less than 5. Minimum expected count = 0.98

### Interpretation

- The Pearson Chi-Square statistic is calculated as 34.906 with 16 degrees of freedom.
- The p-value is 0.001, which is less than the 0.05 threshold.
- The null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is supported.
- This suggests that the reliability of AI systems has a significant impact on customer satisfaction in the fast-food industry.

This study examines the influence of AI-driven service quality on customer satisfaction in the fast-food industry based on responses from 300 participants in Kolkata (India). The findings indicate that AI-enabled technologies—such as automated ordering systems, faster service delivery, and digital customer support—play a significant role in enhancing customer experience, operational efficiency, and satisfaction levels.

Demographic results show diverse participation across age, gender, education, and occupation, with younger respondents showing higher adoption of AI-based services. However, acceptance across all age groups suggests growing familiarity with digital service technologies in fast-food environments.

The results confirm that the accuracy of AI-based ordering systems significantly influences customer satisfaction by reducing errors, improving billing precision, and increasing customer trust. Similarly, AI-driven service speed enhances efficiency by minimizing waiting time and streamlining ordering processes, which positively affects customer experience. Additionally, the reliability of AI-enabled customer support systems contributes to satisfaction by providing consistent, quick, and dependable responses.

Frequency distribution results indicate a strong positive perception of AI-enabled services, with most respondents agreeing that AI improves accuracy, speed, and reliability. Chi-square analysis further confirms that all three dimensions have a statistically significant relationship with customer satisfaction.

Overall, the study concludes that AI-driven service quality is a key determinant of customer satisfaction. By improving accuracy, speed, and reliability, AI technologies enhance both functional efficiency and customer experience, thereby strengthening competitiveness and sustainability in the fast-food industry.

### **Conclusion, Implications, and Future Research**

This study examined the impact of AI-driven service quality on customer satisfaction in the fast-food service industry, focusing on three key dimensions: accuracy of AI-based ordering systems, speed of AI-enabled service delivery, and reliability of AI-powered customer support. The findings confirm that all three dimensions have a statistically significant influence on customer satisfaction, highlighting the growing importance of AI technologies in shaping service performance and customer experience. Customers demonstrate a positive perception toward AI-enabled services, valuing their ability to deliver faster, more accurate, and consistent service interactions. These results reinforce the role of AI-driven systems as critical enablers of operational efficiency and customer-centric service delivery in the fast-food sector.

From a theoretical perspective, the study extends traditional service quality frameworks by adapting them to AI-enabled service environments. While classical models emphasize dimensions such as reliability and responsiveness, this research reconceptualizes service quality through technology-oriented attributes—accuracy, speed, and reliability—that better reflect digital service interactions. The findings also support insights from technology adoption theory by demonstrating that system performance characteristics enhance customer satisfaction through improved efficiency, usability, and trust. By integrating service quality theory with AI service research, the study contributes to a more contemporary understanding of customer satisfaction in technology-driven service settings.

From a managerial standpoint, the results provide clear strategic implications for fast-food organizations. Ensuring high accuracy in AI-based ordering systems is essential to minimize errors and build customer trust. Enhancing the speed of service delivery through automated and digital platforms can significantly improve customer convenience and operational efficiency. Additionally, maintaining reliable AI-enabled customer support systems is critical for delivering consistent and dependable service experiences. Organizations should also adopt a balanced approach by integrating AI technologies with human support to address complex customer needs and maintain personalized service interactions. Effective implementation of AI-driven service systems can therefore strengthen competitive advantage and improve overall service quality.

Despite its contributions, the study has certain limitations. The research is confined to a single geographic location, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions with different technological and cultural contexts. The cross-sectional design captures customer perceptions at a single point in time and does not account for changes in attitudes as familiarity with AI technologies increases. Additionally, the study focuses on only three dimensions of AI-driven service quality, whereas other factors such as trust, personalization, perceived usefulness, and user experience may also play significant roles. The reliance on self-reported data may further introduce response bias.

Future research can build on these findings by expanding the scope to multiple geographic regions and larger, more diverse samples to enhance generalizability. Longitudinal studies may provide deeper insights into how customer perceptions of AI-enabled services evolve over time. Further research can also incorporate additional constructs such as trust, perceived ease of use, emotional engagement, and personalization to develop a more comprehensive model. The use of advanced analytical techniques, including regression analysis and structural equation modelling, can help examine causal relationships and interaction effects. Comparative studies between AI-enabled and traditional service systems would also offer valuable insights into the effectiveness of AI technologies in enhancing customer satisfaction. In conclusion, the study demonstrates that AI-driven service quality is a key determinant of customer satisfaction in the fast-food service industry. By improving accuracy, speed, and reliability, AI technologies enhance both operational performance and customer experience, thereby supporting long-term competitiveness and sustainability in an increasingly digital service landscape.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare no conflict of interest. This research received no external funding, and no financial or personal relationships have influenced the outcomes of this study.

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# ENTREPRENEURSHIP

## **Explaining the Slower Tourism Recovery of the Philippines: A Comparative Strategic Analysis within ASEAN**

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### **Abstract**

*Tourism recovery after the pandemic in ASEAN countries has been highly unequal, which points to the existence of more fundamental strategic and institutional differences between the countries. This paper takes a strategic management angle to explain the reasons why the Philippines is among the countries that recovered the slowest. A PRISMA-guided systematic literature review of 44 studies was used to obtain the paper and five interrelated drivers of recovery: border reopening, fiscal support, tourism marketing, airline capacity, and governance capacity. The results of this literature review indicate that a country's recovery capability is based on the timing, coherence, and integration of these strategic responses rather than by individual policies alone. Destinations that are recovering rapidly have early market re-entry, coordinated policy execution, and strong institutional capacity whereas the Philippines has exhibited delayed adjustments, limited fiscal depth, connectivity gaps, and fragmented governance staying the weaknesses. This paper, by placing governance capacity as the main coordinating mechanism, not only adds to tourism recovery literature but also highlights the necessity of integrated, capability-driven strategies for improving competitiveness of tourism in emerging economies.*

**Keywords:** Tourism recovery, ASEAN tourism, Philippines tourism, post-pandemic tourism; tourism policy; governance capacity; strategic responses; tourism development; recovery strategies; Southeast Asia

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Tourism is a major driver of economic growth in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region. The industry not only helps in creating job opportunities, luring investors, but also in generating foreign currency through its earnings. In fact, before the



pandemic caused by COVID-19, tourism made up roughly 12 percent of the total economic

output of the region, which explains why it is a major component in the development plans of quite a few Southeast Asian nations. Nonetheless, the global lockdowns and travel restrictions caused by the pandemic have brought about a complete halt to international tourism and left the tourism sector struggling for survival.

Tourism revival in ASEAN varied a lot from country to country after the pandemic. Even though they started slowly, Thailand, Vietnam, and Indonesia managed to bounce back from the downturn fairly quickly once international travel reopened. For example, Thailand attracted 39.8 million visitors in 2025, which was even more than their pre-pandemic level, while Vietnam had around 18 million tourists. On the other hand, the Philippines' recovery has been slower, as only 5.5 million international tourists are expected to visit the country in 2025, which is only 68% of the country's 2019 arrival level of 8.2 million visitors (Khan & Khan, 2026). Such differences in the level of recovery naturally make one wonder about the strategic and institutional factors that might have influenced the pace of tourism recovery in the Philippines as compared to other ASEAN destinations.

How fast tourism recovers after major crises largely depends on policy decisions and how governments and tourism organizations strategically respond. After the COVID-19 pandemic, countries implemented a wide range of measures to revive tourism momentum such as border reopening schemes, financial aid programs for tourism businesses, destination promotion campaigns, increasing airline capacity, and enhancing government coordination. Strategic measures can help to regain travelers' confidence, reopen international connections, and improve the competitiveness of the tourism industry in a world after the pandemic.

Today, lots of articles highlight the issue of tourism resilience and the ways the tourism industry can recover from a pandemic. However, up to now, only a few articles have compared the different strategies of tourism in ASEAN countries, and differences in governance capacities have hardly been touched upon. This is one area that the Philippines tourism sector, which is still lagging far behind its neighbors in the region, can notably be pointed out.

In an effort to address the issue, this paper performs a systematic literature review of the tourism recovery strategies that ASEAN countries have implemented after COVID-19. The paper identifies the main strategic areas influencing tourism recovery, such as the way borders were reopened, fiscal support to tourism, tourism marketing initiatives, airline

capacity recovery, and governance capacity. Through the analysis of existing scholarly research, the paper aspires to find the strategic and institutional reasons for the delay in tourism recovery of the Philippines as compared to other ASEAN destinations.

## **2. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **2.1 Systematic Review Design**

This paper used a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method with guidance of Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) protocol. To make sure that a clear and organized process for recognizing, filtering, and choosing the pertinent literature, the PRISMA method was implemented. Since this research aims to explain why the tourism sector of the Philippines has been recovering at a slower pace through a comparative analysis of the recovery strategies of ASEAN countries, conducting a systematic review seemed to be an ideal method as it allows integration of findings from various studies and helps in recognizing common strategic patterns in different national settings.

### **2.2 Research Questions**

To set the scope of the review, the paper used the PICO framework, which is suitable for qualitative and policy-related systematic reviews. Population means those tourism recovery studies related to ASEAN. Interest means the strategies for tourism recovery after the pandemic, especially border reopening, fiscal support, tourism marketing, airline capacity recovery, and governance capacity. Context covers the ASEAN tourism recovery period of 2021-2025. By using this framework this paper examines how variations in strategic tourism recovery policies and governance capacity could be one of the reasons why the tourism sector in the Philippines is recovering at a slower pace.

### **2.3 Systematic Search Strategy**

This literature review was done through systematically searching academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. For easier and organized searching, Harzing Publish or Perish Software was utilized to search these databases. The keywords that were used included “tourism recovery,” “post-pandemic tourism,” “tourism governance,” “tourism policy,” “ASEAN tourism recovery,” “border reopening,” “tourism marketing,” and

“airline recovery.” From the results, literature that was related to post-pandemic tourism recovery were carefully chosen.

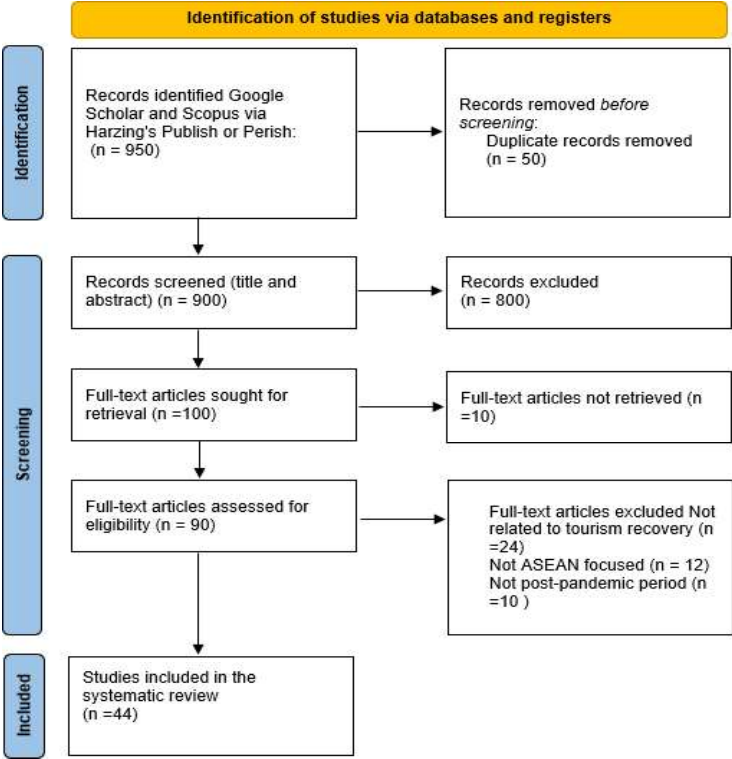


**Figure 1.** PRISMA flow diagram of the process.

## 2.4 Identification

The initial search on the selected databases had a total return of 950 records. This is the identification phase where the records were checked and selected through removing duplicate items. About 50 duplicate records were removed and the remaining were used for the screening phase. This phase ensured that the systematic literature review covered studies related to post-pandemic tourism recovery, tourism governance, and tourism policy responses.

The titles and abstracts of the retrieved studies were screened to determine their relevance to the research objectives. Studies were excluded at this stage if they were not related to tourism recovery, focused on non-tourism sectors, did not address post-pandemic tourism developments, or were unrelated to tourism governance and policy responses. As a result of this screening process, 800 studies were excluded of insufficient relevance to the research topic. Consequently, 100 studies were selected for full-text retrieval and further assessment.

## **2.5 Eligibility**

During the eligibility stage, we looked at the full-texts of the remaining studies to decide whether they would be relevant and eligible based on our predefined criteria of inclusion. We included studies that have discussed tourism recovery strategies or tourism governance during the COVID-19 pandemic, have geographically targeted ASEAN countries or have served as sources of comparative cases, and have been published during the period 2020-2025. Next, only journal articles that have undergone peer review and institutional reports that are credible were the types of articles that were considered for the review. After the full-text assessment, 40 studies had to be excluded because of different reasons such as no relevance to tourism recovery, focus on geographical contexts different from ASEAN, or research methods that were not clearly explained. Therefore, 44 studies that fulfill the criteria of eligibility were taken into consideration in the final review.

## **2.6 Quality Appraisal**

Quality appraisal was done to ensure that the selected studies are both reliable and credible. The quality of each study was judged not only on how well the study related to the research questions but also on aspects such as how clearly the research design was presented, how trustworthy the findings were, and how much the study contributed to tourism recovery or tourism governance research. The quality appraisal process was done by two reviewers working independently so as to reduce any biases that might arise during the evaluation of the selected studies. Where there were differences in judgments, the reviewers discussed the evaluations thoroughly to reach a compromise. In the end, only the studies that met the minimum standards of methodology were kept in the final set.

## **2.7 Data Extraction and Analysis**

The study's selected works were subjected to thematic analysis to discover recurrent patterns and strategic aspects of tourism recovery in ASEAN countries. The examination utilized a hybrid coding method where preliminary coding categories arose from the research questions and a conceptual framework of the study. Patterns not covered initially were further identified during several readings of the literature. As a result of this analysis, five main themes emerged: border reopening strategy, fiscal support to tourism, tourism marketing, airline capacity recovery, and governance capacity. These themes subsequently formed the analytical framework exploring the sluggish tourism recovery in the Philippines versus some neighboring countries.

### **3. RESULTS**

#### **3.1 Background of Selected Studies**

Through the literature review process, 44 studies that met both the predefined eligibility and quality standards were eventually taken in. The selected studies were released between the years 2020-2026, clearly reflecting the growing scholarly emphasis on tourism recovery strategies post-COVID-19 pandemic. The chosen literature covers a vast array of geographical areas such as ASEAN countries like Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines, and it also contains regional and global analyses providing comparative perspectives on tourism recovery policies. Due to the repeated contexts of these themes, a thematic analysis based on the following points was conducted, which describes how various border reopening strategies, fiscal support to tourism, tourism marketing efforts, airline capacity recovery, and governance capacity have helped in the tourism recovery of ASEAN countries and at the same time accounting for the slow tourism recovery of the Philippines.

#### **3.2 Thematic Analysis of Tourism Recovery Strategies**

##### **3.2.1 Border Reopening Strategy**

Timing and implementation of border reopening strategy plays an important part in the recovery of tourism across ASEAN after the COVID-19 pandemic. Reviewed literature highlighted how timing, flexibility, and nature of such strategies greatly affected international

arrivals and overall economic impact of tourism. Countries that had a phased, targeted, and adaptive implementation of border policies recovered faster while those with stricter and less flexible policies faced a slower rebound.

The Phuket Sandbox Scheme of Thailand is an example of a successful border reopening strategy. This strategy that was launched in 2021 permitted fully vaccinated tourists to visit Phuket with quarantine requirements in the condition that they follow certain health protocols and testing requirements (Zhu & Yasami, 2022). This initiative helped rebuild confidence in traveling internationally. Although the study also noted that there were challenges such as complicated entry rules and lack of travel plan flexibility, the coordination between the central government and the local tourism industry was the main attribute of its success.

Similarly, Singapore and Thailand adopted quarantine-free travel policies combined with strong testing procedures. And these were shown to get maximum economic benefits and tourism benefits. Cai et al (2023) employed a series of integrated models which included willingness-to-travel, micro-simulation of COVID-19 spreading, and economic cost-benefit analyses to illustrate that policies with only pre-departure and on-arrival testing without quarantine produced high net benefits for both countries.

Another strategy that was proposed both across ASEAN and globally were travel bubbles. The travel bubble allowed for controlled international travel between low risk countries to encourage international travel while minimizing risks to COVID19. (Chan & Haines, 2021). Liu et al. (2024) made a decision-making framework using metapopulation epidemic modeling cost-benefit analysis which concluded that intra-bubble travel could bring significant increase of economic benefits while maintaining health risk at a reasonable level.

Vaccination policies combined with border policies also played a part in tourism recovery. Dong et al. (2023) in his study on the effect of border control and vaccination found that the higher the vaccination rate combined with relaxed border restrictions, the more willing are international tourists to travel. This can be an indication that border reopening strategies are interlinked with public health measures, tourists' confidence, and economic factors.

On the other hand, the Philippines reopened its borders to foreign tourists and with more strict entry requirements than a lot of their ASEAN peers thus, reducing the early recovery momentum (World Bank, 2023; Sigala, 2021). Thailand, as mentioned in the study of Cai et al. (2023), and Vietnam implemented phased reopening measures earlier and with simpler entry requirements which allowed them to benefit from the pent up travel demand (UNWTO, 2023). Malaysia too reopened in early 2022 with very few restrictions thus, international tourist inflows happened faster (ADB, 2024). On the other hand, the Philippines continued testing and documentation requirements which resulted in less discretionary travel (Hall et al., 2022).

Overall, the reviewed studies attribute the reopening of borders as one of main strategic capabilities that impacts the pace of tourism recovery the most. Places that effectively, coordinately, and adaptively changed their border policies by combining testing protocols, vaccination requirements, travel bubbles, and targeted reopening zones have, on the whole, experienced a better restoration of international mobility and tourism demand. These findings can help provide a context on the asymmetry of tourism recovery performance, specifically on why Philippines lags in ASEAN tourism rebound.

### **3.2.2 Fiscal Support to Tourism**

Fiscal support presents an important element in the literature for tourism recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic. From a strategic perspective, fiscal support includes government measures that provide financial assistance to tourism businesses, preserve employment, and stimulate consumption so that the industry remains resilient. Countries which introduced timely, well-targeted, and ample fiscal measures may have been able to recover faster than those who offered limited or delayed support only.

Many studies highlight how differently fiscal measures can work. Dela Cruz et al. (2022) mention that in Southeast Asian countries, government policies helped to both contain and at times unknowingly intensify the economic impact of the pandemic, with the strength of fiscal support being highly dependent on public trust and changes in consumer behavior. Correspondingly, Chowdhury (2020) puts forward that resilience strategies such as government financial support, keeping staff motivated through job security during tough times, and empowering the female workforce efficiently (Arachchi & Gnanapala, 2020) were some of the ways that Asian travel destinations were able to maintain attractiveness and regain the confidence of travelers.



Research in the Philippines shows both the use and lack of financial policy in the country. Andulana et al. (2021) reveal through their study that some of the local tourism activities and digital transformation were possible through the pandemic-related support measures. However, the limited coverage, lack of proper infrastructure, and workforce disruptions were some of the other challenges that made the total effect of these support measures very minor.

On the other hand, Busalla (2025) points out that fiscal measures are merely providing the population a temporary relief, whereas the deep-rooted issues like over-tourism, environmental hazards, and a lack of policy enforcement which the fiscal measures are not addressing, are threatening the long-term success of the measures.

However, a study conducted by Khan & Hashim (2020) in Malaysia showed that the government's prompt fiscal measures supported by the planning, and stakeholders' engagement have made the post-pandemic recovery less difficult.

As per research around the globe, it is essential to have a strong fiscal capacity and make wise decisions in the fiscal policy design. For instance, Goretti and collaborators (2021) contend that well-directed fiscal support interventions not only could allow economies mainly dependent on tourism to recover, but also protect jobs, and help different stages of recovery, including crisis containment, reopening, and the sector's long-term sustainability. The research additionally shows that fiscal space was quite limited. Furthermore, it was marred by a slow release of funds in those countries that experienced severe economic downturns and a prolonged recovery.

According to the literature, fiscal support can be a strategic lever to both accelerate and improve the quality of tourism recovery. Besides being timely, financial assistance needs to be combined with complementary policies, safety protocols, digitization, and domestic tourism incentives. This way, destinations will be in a better position to bounce back from shocks. Philippines' tourism recovery has been slower than other ASEAN countries which may be partly explained by gaps in fiscal responsiveness, policy coordination, and implementation.

### **3.2.3 Tourism Marketing**

Tourism marketing has become a key driver of the revival of post-pandemic tourism in Southeast Asia, with digital platforms serving as the main channel for shaping the image of the destination and influencing travel behavior. A research by Tran and Rudolf (2022) indicates that social media engagement enables tourism organizations to directly reach worldwide audiences, thereby enhancing their visibility and influencing tourists' decisions. Among other things, influencer promotion and digital storytelling have proved to be effective in visually engaging potential travelers, building their emotional involvement, and leading to their perception of authenticity and destination experience (Fernández-Blanco et al., 2026). Moreover, research shows that well-planned digital marketing initiatives can lead to perceptions of enhanced service quality and higher levels of tourist satisfaction. For instance, Thailand's tourism sector has experienced significant benefits from integrated digital promotions culminating in a more enjoyable visitor experience and increased competitiveness (Sharafuddin et al., 2024).

Besides the use of digital media for promotion, destination branding and the application of a multi-channel marketing strategy are instrumental in the results of tourism recovery. Present-day tourism marketing integrates messages relating to sustainable development along with digital interactive elements in an attempt to attract environmental-friendly and experience-seeking travelers (Sukardi & Dasih, 2025). Regionally, ASEAN countries have enhanced their branding efforts through joint campaigns as well as by engaging in tourism forums and regional promotional activities that raise their collective visibility and have a positive effect on tourist arrivals (Putri & Purnawarman, 2024). On the other hand, although the Philippines has carried out some commendable campaigns, the regularity and the long-term strategic focus of its branding efforts seem to be weak. This could possibly lead to a less powerful impression of the destination and a reduction in the overall success of its marketing endeavors.

In addition to branding and promotional strategies, the use of marketing and technology-based systems integration within tourism marketing strategies has become a key element that separates the pace of tourism recovery among ASEAN countries. Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and Vietnam have been able to successfully integrate marketing activities into their smart tourism ecosystems, which additionally include mobile applications, digital platforms, and visitor information systems that not only aid destination management but also enhance the overall tourist experience (Leong et al., 2024). These

means enable immediate communication, accurate marketing targeting, and easy travel planning at different stages of the tourist journey. Additionally, research by Meng (2024) reveals that marketing strategies based on data such as online advertisements targeted and promotions using analytics hugely impact the enhancement of the destination's visibility and satisfaction of tourist demand. Apart from that, Alhaddar and Kummitha (2025) emphasize that through digitalization, destinations can integrate sustainability components in their branding, thus appealing to the growing segment of environmentally conscious consumers.

In spite of those developments, tourism marketing strategies in the Philippines have mainly focused on digital storytelling and encouraging Filipinos living abroad to help promote tourist destinations to the world (Pallugna, 2022). While these initiatives are effective at raising awareness and strengthening emotional ties, the literature indicates that there are also constraints to the effectiveness of tourism marketing caused by the broader structural environment. Rivera et al.'s (2025) study draws attention to structural barriers such as the country's archipelagic setup and inadequate transport links which result in unreasonably high travel costs and restricted accessibility, thereby negatively influencing tourists' perceptions. In contrast to the Philippines, ASEAN countries other than the Philippines operate better interlinked transport systems, which enable their marketing campaigns to more effectively convert promotion into tourist arrivals. Evidence from a case study conducted by Jama et al. (2024) in Bali, Indonesia, indicates that both tourism infrastructure and marketing strategies influence the flow of tourist arrivals which suggests, further, that the productivity of tourism marketing is determined not solely by the quality of promotional activities but also by the presence of supporting systems and connectivity. Overall, this illustrates that the effectiveness of tourism marketing in ASEAN is influenced not only by promotional strategies but also by the level of integration with digital systems and infrastructure, an aspect in which the Philippines remains significantly challenged.

### **3.2.4 Airline Capacity**

Covid-19 pandemic led to unprecedented disruption of tourism and global mobility. Destinations dependent on foreign tourism were the most affected. Stefan Gössling, Daniel Scott and C. Michael Hall (2020) states that the outbreak of the virus led to border closures, flight bans and limitations on travel which caused the tourism industry to collapse resulting in

a sharp fall in the number of international tourist arrivals and economic downturn of the most affected destinations. Marinko Škare, Domingo Ribeiro Soriano, and Magdalena Porada-Rochoń (2021) also point out that the travel and tourism industry was forced to stand among the highly affected ones due to travel restrictions and negative impacts on economic activities related to tourism. So, these authors highlight how a pandemic and other major external shocks can upset tourism systems especially of those countries which are relying on international visitors to a great extent.

Besides being the main transport infrastructure for international tourism, one of the most critical sectors that got hit hard by the pandemic was the aviation industry. Globally, airline operations were hit so hard that airlines started cancelling flights and shrinking route networks to cope with the steep decline in passenger demand (Pere Suau-Sanchez, Antonio Voltes-Dorta, and Núria Cugueró-Escofet, 2020). Also, according to Xiaoqian Sun, Stefan Wandelt, and Anming Zhang (2021) the pandemic is a major cause of disturbance to global aviation networks, which in turn leads to lower connectivity among countries and fewer international routes available. Limiting air transport connectivity is not only a direct blockage in the way of tourists' movement, but also one of the reasons for the slow recovery of international travel markets. The above-mentioned changes make a very strong case that restoring airline networks and international flight routes is a key to generating tourism demand again.

In the face of huge problems experienced by the aviation sector, several governments around the world decided to help the airlines financially through different measures in order to ensure their stabilization and the provision of essential transport services. Megersa Abate, Panayotis Christidis and Aditya Purwanto (2020) say that worldwide governments came up with support schemes such as subsidies, financial assistance and loan guarantees to enable the airlines to cope with the crisis. These measures have allowed airlines to remain functioning and slowly launch flight services again as the travel bans are lifted. The research indicates that those nations which gave strong financial support to their airlines managed to rebuild their aviation capacity at a faster pace, which in turn led to a rise in tourism activities.

According to researchers, air transport resilience is a key factor in the rate and extent of economic recovery and tourism growth. Chien-Van Nguyen's research (2024) reveals that aviation leads to prosperity by enabling tourism and trade at a global level. Nations possessing robust aviation infrastructure and superior air connectivity typically undergo

quicker economic recovery after being disrupted. The conclusions stress the necessity of a resilient aviation industry for countries dependent on tourism since tourist arrivals are largely contingent upon the accessibility and reliability of air travel.

At a regional level, the studies that are about the ASEAN countries also prove that having good aviation connectivity is something that can really help the recovery of tourism. Anming Zhang, Xiaoqian Sun, Stefan Wandelt, Shuai Xu, and Rui Shen (2021) analyzed how air transportation and economic activities were related to each other in the ASEAN+5 region during the COVID-19 pandemic. They found that when the international air transportation stopped completely, it was a great disturbance to regional trade and mobility. The decrease of international flights also hit tourism flows in the ASEAN countries, thus proving the fact that aviation connectivity is very much related to tourism demand and regional economic integration.

Country-level differences in aviation recovery as well as various tourism strategies still largely determine the speed of tourism recovery. C. C. H. Law (2025) revealed that there is a very high correlation between air travel demand and tourist arrivals in Thailand, meaning that the increase in international flight frequency as well as the availability of different routes have importantly impacted tourism activities. On the other hand, Lisa A. Dioko (2025) points out that the tourism recovery of the Philippines has been relatively slow, as compared to other ASEAN countries, due in part to limitations in infrastructure, a lesser degree of connectivity, and the slow resumption of flights with other countries. These results imply that to speed up tourism recovery and also to position the Philippines more competitively in the ASEAN tourism market, efforts to deepen airline connectivity, supporting the expansion of routes, and upgrading tourism facilities.

### **3.2.5 Governance Capacity**

The literature recognizes governance capacity as one of the key determinants of tourism recovery after major disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic. Governance capacity, from a strategic management perspective, refers to the ability of governments and tourism organizations to develop effective policies, involve and coordinate stakeholders, and carry out recovery plans that focus on the tourism sector. More developed governance systems are usually better at managing crises and tourism recovery is faster.

Several studies reveal the significance of coordination and leadership of the institutions in the recovery of the tourism sector. Rivera et al. (2022) argue that tourism governance should actually be changed to a value chain model where governments collaborate very closely with tourism businesses, local communities, and other stakeholders. This collaborative approach not only helps in crisis management preparedness but also reveals more efficient recovery mechanisms. Meanwhile, Fathani et al. (2023) argue that sustainable governance and stakeholder coordination are the two major factors of tourism recovery post-pandemic in the ASEAN region. The proper enforcement of policies among different tourism players results in the greater resilience of the sector and even helps its long-term competitiveness.

Empirical evidence further confirms the connection between the quality of governance and tourism performance. For example, Detotto et al. (2020) identified good governance characteristics like government effectiveness and regulatory quality as having a positive impact on international tourism expenditures. Moreover, Hor (2021) through his research showed that both institutional quality and governance effectiveness are major determinants of inbound tourist arrivals in ASEAN countries. Accordingly, this paper's conclusion that politically stable governance and properly functioning institutions are factors conducive to tourism development and international friendliness of the community seems very reasonable.

Governance capacity plays an essential role in determining the effectiveness of tourism recovery plans. Only if institutions are well aligned with each other, policies harmonized, and stakeholders collaborating, governments would have the ability to implement recovery and crisis response measures successfully. Countries that demonstrated better governance coordination, were able to implement multi-faceted recovery programs involving border control, tourism promotion, and business support in a comprehensive manner. The Philippines, on the other hand, pain points such as lack of institutional coordination and delays in policy implementation of tourism recovery plans have led to a slow bounce back of the sector.

### **3.3 Integrated Strategic Drivers of Tourism Recovery in ASEAN**

The thematic analysis indicates that the reopening of tourism in the ASEAN countries is influenced by the combination of different strategic and institutional factors. It is not due to one single policy only. For example, the border reopening strategy sets the timeline for

international travels while the tourism businesses are kept afloat by the fiscal supports when the crisis occurs. Also the tourism marketing initiatives play a part in the recovery of the destination's image and the actual movement of the travelers is supported by the restoration of the airline capacity. Furthermore, the governance capacity that is well coordinated is able to implement these policies efficiently. The countries that have shown a better collaboration along these lines are the ones that could speed up tourism recovery and attract international visitors more quickly.

The literature also indicates that these strategic factors not only influence each other but also complement each other. For example, border reopening decisions made at an early stage would have much greater impact if they were accompanied by the re-establishment of airline networks and destination marketing campaigns that have a strong appeal. In addition to local efforts to revive the tourism industry, in general, tourism rebound can also be driven by government support schemes that help economically struggling firms to survive those times of low demand. In fact, governance capacity is crucial since it determines how effectively the government can interweave different strategies into a coherent tourism recovery plan.

It is worth mentioning that the gradual tourism recovery in the Philippines has resulted from several simultaneous structural and strategic limitations coming from different areas. Some of these are relatively stringent border control measures, limited fiscal support for tourism businesses, slower rebuilding of airline capacity, and institutional coordination issues. Altogether, these factors led to a less vigorous recovery trend of the tourism sector compared with other ASEAN countries. These findings suggest that policy outcomes in tourism recovery depend on not only individual policies but also on overall strategic alignment and governance effectiveness of tourism recovery programs.

## **4. DISCUSSIONS**

### **4.1 Strategic Factors Influencing Tourism Recovery**

This systematic literature review uncovers various strategic factors that played a significant role in tourism recovery in ASEAN countries after the COVID-19 pandemic. The review shows that the revival of tourism in ASEAN was influenced by a combination of several strategic factors including border reopening policies, Fiscal Support to Tourism, tourism marketing, airline capacity, and governance capacity. The combined influence of

these factors influenced how fast destinations were able to revive tourism demand and rebuild their tourism industries.

Based on various factors mentioned in this paper, the strategies of reopening borders played a crucial role in restarting international travel. Many ASEAN countries introduced their border reopening programs step by step and in such a way that there was no quarantine requirement. These measures allowed the gradual resumption of tourism with health safeguards in place. Nations that implemented reopening policies earlier and with greater flexibility were able to restore the confidence of tourists, and several of them ended up taking advantage of the initial boom in world tourism demand.

Fiscal support was also one of the factors that helped tourism businesses survive the economic impacts of the pandemic. Those governments that went the extra mile by providing financial aids, wage subsidies, and tourism-related promotional schemes have, indirectly, kept tourism activities going and at the same time, have safeguarded jobs in this industry. Besides that, these measures have allowed tourism enterprises to operate despite restricted travel and have also been of assistance in the gearing up of businesses to a rebound phase.

Tourism marketing strategies have indeed contributed to the revitalization of tourism demand. Globally, destinations have shifted focus to digital marketing instruments like social media campaigns, online promotions, and smart tourism technologies in order to appeal to international travelers. These marketing initiatives aided in maintaining the visibility of destinations and improving the image of tourism places during the reopening phase. The literature also indicates that the recovery of airline capacity is a key issue.

International tourism depends heavily on air transport connectivity. Generally, the countries which decided to reopen international flight routes and increase airline capacity were the ones that experienced quicker returns of international tourists. By restoring aviation networks, countries not only increased their accessibility making it easier for travelers to move across borders, but also reopened the main channels for the movement of travelers.

Lastly, in planning and integrating tourism recovery interventions, governance capacity was the most significant factor that was recognized. Effective governance provides the opportunity for governments to align their tourism sector policies with those of other sectors such as transportation and public health. In fact, countries that have institutional coordination and effective policy implementation at a high level are not only the ones who



create recovery programs for tourism but also the ones who can react quickly to the pandemic related issues.

Overall, the findings reveal that tourism recovery is shaped by a mix of various strategic policies rather than just one. Typically, countries that implemented strategies in a well-coordinated manner covering border management, financial assistance, tourism promotion, air connectivity, and governance experienced the restoration of their tourism activities more rapidly.

#### **4.2 Explaining the Slower Recovery of the Philippines**

Whereas many countries within ASEAN experienced a faster tourism bounce-back, the Philippines had a record of slower international tourist arrivals. According to the literature reviewed, slower tourism recovery of the Philippines can be explained by several interconnected factors.

One major factor is the timing and the level of strictness of border reopening policies. In comparison with other ASEAN countries that have introduced reopening plans in phases earlier, the Philippines kept imposing very strict entry requirements for a long time. Even though these policies aimed to safeguard public health, they might have made travel less convenient and have caused the delay of the return of foreign tourists during the initial phases of tourism recovery.

Fiscal support for the tourism sector is another factor that appears to have impacted the tourism recovery outcomes. Although there were some assistance programs that were implemented in the Philippines, it appears in the literature reviewed that when compared to other ASEAN countries, financial support was relatively limited in scale and coverage. Consequently, some tourism businesses had to go through tough financial difficulties during the crisis which may have affected their ability to recover quickly as soon as travels resumed.

Different tourism marketing strategies may have also played a part in tourism recovery. The Philippines promoted tourism through diaspora-focused marketing and through the use of digital storytelling while other ASEAN countries adopted more integrated marketing campaigns and a broader digital tourism system. These strategies helped in maintaining a strong international visibility and destination branding despite being in an early post-pandemic recovery period.

One factor that influenced the turnaround of tourism was airline connectivity. Some ASEAN countries, for instance, managed to quickly reinstate their international flight routes and expand airline capacities, thus making those countries more open and accessible to international visitors. On the other hand, factors such as limited infrastructures and slow recovery of airline networks might have caused the Philippines, for instance, to become less accessible during the initial phases of the reopening of tourism.

Lastly, governance capacity is another factor that affects how well tourism recovery strategies can be implemented. For recovery policies to be put into practice in a timely manner, there has to be strong coordination not only among various government agencies but also between tourism organizations and industry players. As for the Philippines, some studies point to institutional coordination issues and policy implementation gaps as possible reasons behind the relatively slow tourism recovery.

Overall, the lagging tourism recovery of the Philippines seems to be attributable to various factors interacting with each other rather than a single policy point. Differing policy timelines, financial backing, marketing approaches, aviation connectivity, and governance coordination altogether account for why tourism recovery in the Philippines has been slower than several neighboring ASEAN countries.

## **5. Policy Implications**

The results of this research provide some policy implications for the Philippine tourism recovery. Efficient implementation of tourism recovery strategies could be improved by strengthening coordination among government agencies and tourism stakeholders. Supporting aviation recovery efforts especially in reopening of international flight routes in order to increase international exposure to Philippine destinations should be given priority. Another good measure would be to increase digital marketing campaigns and work on upgrading the destination image of the country so as to better position the tourism industry in the international scene. Moreover, tourism businesses could be enabled to withstand future external shocks if financing and recovery aid are made more accessible to them.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The study explored the reasons behind the Philippines' slow tourism recovery compared to other ASEAN countries post-COVID-19 pandemic. Through a systematic

literature review, the research examined tourism recovery strategies outlined in previous studies and pinpointed five key tourism recovery factors: reopening borders strategies, providing fiscal support to tourism businesses, tourism marketing strategies, airline capacity recovery, and governance capacity.

According to the findings, government policy efforts were a major factor in shaping the recovery of tourism in the ASEAN region. Countries that reopened their borders first, provided economic support to tourism enterprises, boosted digital promotion of tourism, quickly reestablished airline links, and showed good governance coordination, were generally the ones that experienced a quicker rebound in tourism demand. These actions contributed to regaining traveler confidence, keeping tourism running, and making destinations more accessible during the recovery period.

Other countries bounced back from the downturn in tourism more swiftly than the Philippines because they did not have to deal with most of the constraints presented in this literature as holding up the Philippines' tourism industry. Such constraints listed in literature include the sudden implementation of more stringent border controls during the reopening period, little financial support to tourism businesses, re-targeting tourism marketing efforts, very limited airline routes, and difficulties in the coordination and formulation of tourism recovery strategies. All these factors, put together, may have resulted in a decrease in the country's capacity to take advantage of the initial revival of international tourism demand as compared to other ASEAN destinations.

Furthermore, this study pointed out that well-designed and well-implemented policy interventions are indispensable in the process of rebuilding the tourism industry. Strengthening partnerships among various government bodies, making it easy for aviation to connect different areas, resorting to different marketing strategies to promote tourism, giving more direct help to tourism businesses are only some of the measures that one can resort to in order to make the Philippine tourism sector resilient and competitive after a crisis.

This study highlights the strategic and institutional factors that influence recovery performance in different tourist spots, and in doing so, it contributes to the discussion on ASEAN tourism revival. Besides international travel reopening, results signal that worldwide tourism revival requires a series of coordinated government policies including financial assistance, aviation connectivity, marketing initiatives, and governance capabilities. By strengthening these areas, the tourism industry in the Philippines will be in a better position to face upcoming disasters and bounce back quickly.

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# **Celebrity Endorsements and Customer Loyalty Among Filipino Gen Z Consumers: A Literature Review**

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## **Abstract**

### **Abstract**

Due to the rapid growth of digital commerce in the Philippines, it is highly challenging to enter this intensified competition for customer acquisition. Consequently, many brands use celebrity endorsers as a marketing strategy, but there are previous studies that have shown inconsistent findings; while it has increased sales, it does not guarantee customer loyalty. This literature review will address the gap by investigating how marketing campaigns featuring local celebrity endorsers function and their impact on customer loyalty among Filipino Generation Z consumers within the digital commerce landscape, grounded in a constructivist approach. This paper will explore how brand meaning, authenticity, and trust are co-created, and we will analyze this existing literature to further clarify the variables that drive brand loyalty in Gen Z. Lastly, these findings can provide valuable insights and guidance for businesses aiming to optimize their marketing strategies in this digital landscape in a peer-driven and accessible market.

**Keywords:** Celebrity Endorsements, Customer Loyalty, Filipino Gen Z Consumers

## **Introduction**

Today, businesses face significant competition, particularly in customer acquisition, as the market increasingly prioritizes customer preferences, which can change rapidly due to digitalization; therefore, a robust marketing strategy is essential in our highly accessible market (Sreenath et al., 2022). One of the most used strategies today in the digital market is celebrity endorsement (Nzuva, 2021).

To better understand how this strategy works, this study will use a constructivist approach. This theory explains that the meaning and authenticity of a brand are co-created by the interactions between the company, celebrity, and consumer (Sarwar et al., 2025). Based on these perspectives, this systematic literature review will focus only on a specific variable, which is a customer. Furthermore, to provide a more in-depth analysis, this paper will specifically examine the impact of local celebrities when it comes to their brand endorsements and the perception of Filipino consumers.

The rapid expansion of digital commerce in the Philippine consumer landscape is due to the fact that the country is one of the most consistently high social media users globally (Anchanto, 2026), and this digital shift is primarily driven by Gen Z demographics, as Gen Z, often called "digital natives," have a higher level of proficiency in navigating e-commerce platforms such as Lazada, Shopee, and TikTok Shop. Consumers rely heavily on social media algorithms and often make peer-driven decisions (Balatero, 2025). As a result, the marketing strategies in the digital landscape

not only depend on the visibility of their brand but also on the ability of the brand to integrate it into the lifestyles of young consumers (Prasanna & Priyanka, 2024).

Although many brands use celebrities, previous studies have shown inconsistent findings regarding their success. According to the study of Li et al. (2023), celebrities drive higher sales, while others argue that they do not guarantee long-term customer loyalty (Okoli, 2025).

By highlighting inconsistent findings, this journal paper will identify a clear gap in the literature regarding local celebrities and the establishment of a direction for this paper. This literature review will be guided only by one central research question: “To every Filipino Gen Z consumer, how do marketing campaigns featuring these local celebrity endorsers affect customer loyalty in the digital commerce landscape?”

## **Methods**

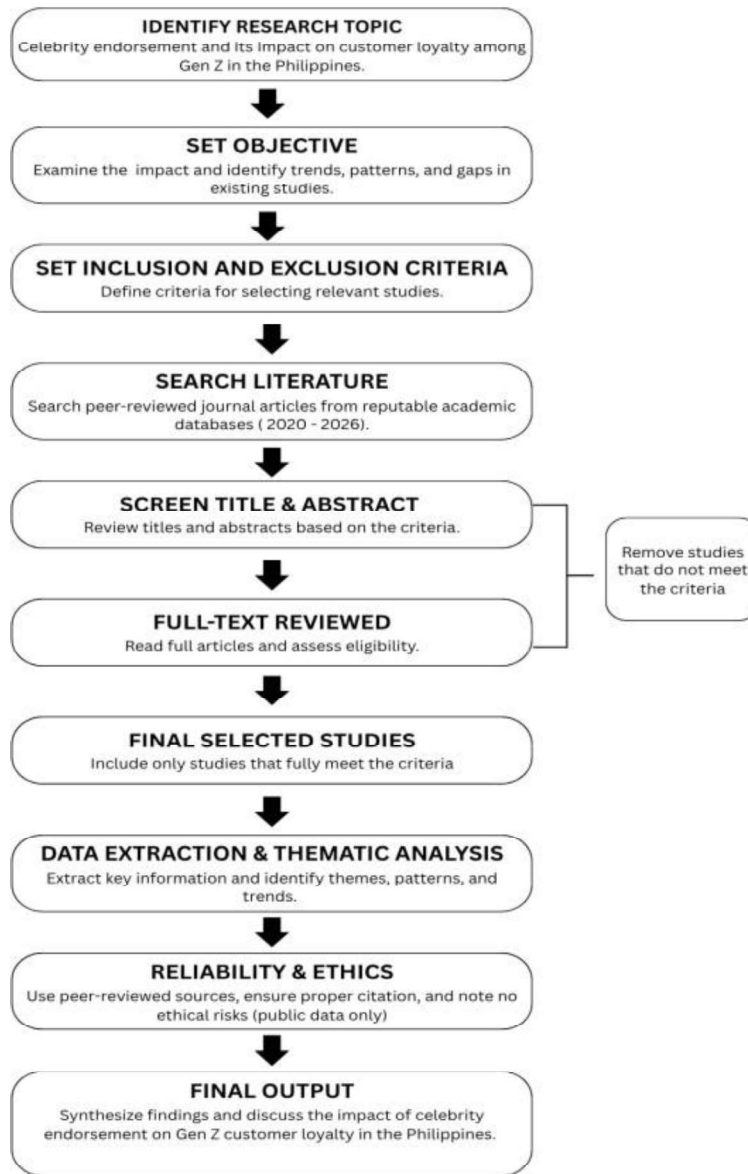
This study used a qualitative literature review approach in examining the concept of using celebrity endorsement in marketing strategies and its impact on customer loyalty. The study entirely relied on existing data collected from other academic studies. Therefore, there was no collection of new data. The study aimed at integrating all existing theories in relation to the subject matter in order to establish existing trends.

Relevant sources were gathered from reputable academic sources. In ensuring the sources are relevant and academically sound, only peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2020 and 2026 were considered. Sources were selected based on their direct exploration of the relationship between celebrity endorsement and customer loyalty among Gen Z consumers in the Philippines. A selection process of sources was done with inclusion and exclusion criteria. Sources considered are empirical or theoretical research works based on widely known theories in marketing and consumer behavior, such as Source Credibility Theory, Source Attractiveness Model, Match-Up Hypothesis, and Social Influence Theory. Sources excluded are those that are non-academic in nature, opinion-based articles, conference papers without full text, and those that are not related to marketing and branding.

Data analysis was conducted through thematic analysis. The articles that met the inclusion criteria were analyzed. The articles were initially analyzed through the title and abstract, and then the articles were read and analyzed. The key findings, theories, methodologies, and conclusions of the articles, as well as the impact on customer loyalty, were extracted. The similarities, differences, and patterns of the articles were identified and synthesized to create a comprehensive discussion on the impact of celebrity endorsement on Gen Z perception and behavior.

To ensure reliability and credibility, only peer-reviewed sources were used, and findings were compared across multiple studies. Proper citation and referencing were strictly followed to uphold academic integrity. Moreover, since the research used publicly available data, there were no ethical risks involving human participants.

# METHODOLOGY FLOWCHART



## Results and Discussion

### Celebrity Endorsements

Celebrity endorsements are one of the marketing strategies often used by different companies in promoting their products to consumers. It is a widely used strategy, particularly in social media marketing, where companies use their social media accounts to post pictures of celebrities using their products (Yu & Hu, 2020). Companies invest in celebrities to endorse their products because they believe that having a well-known public figure associated with their product can boost sales. In addition, businesses collaborate with well-known personalities such as actors, athletes, influencers, and public figures to influence consumer perception, loyalty, and

purchasing intentions (Hussain & Adam, 2020). As described by Vinikas (2024), celebrity endorsements can be very effective to mark a significant change in a brand

such as a launch of a new product or brand repositioning. Moreover, it could also be a powerful strategy for a brand to differentiate itself from its competitors and obtain an edge in a highly competitive market.

Using celebrity endorsements as a marketing strategy can be quite challenging in achieving favorable results, which can be seen through purchase intentions and loyalty of customers. The study of (Vega et. al, 2024) revealed that celebrity endorsement can be an effective marketing tool since celebrities, particularly famous ones, have diverse fan bases that are frequently associated with the products that they promote. However, their study also argues that a consumer is more likely to trust the product when the endorser itself not only promotes the product but uses it as well. Therefore, celebrity credibility and authenticity are critical components of the endorsement strategy's effectiveness (Hossain et al., 2025). When consumers believe that the celebrity actually uses and believes in the product, they are more likely to establish trust in the brand, which can positively affect their purchasing decisions (Permatasari and Wahyudi, 2024). In contrast, endorsements that appear simply promotional or dishonest may undermine consumer trust and lessen the marketing campaign's impact.

Furthermore, attractiveness is also one of the qualities that celebrities should have when promoting their products. The study of Yennika (2025) suggests that companies should partner with attractive celebrities to increase brand appeal and attract potential customers, particularly among young demographics. The study also proposes that companies must collaborate with celebrities whose values and interests align with their target market. In line with this, the study of Permatasari and Wahyudi (2024) also found that when a brand fits the personality of its endorsers, the endorsers appear more trustworthy to consumers, which has a major impact on customer loyalty and buy intentions.

Overall, celebrity endorsements may have an impact beyond purchase intentions, contributing to the development of customer loyalty. When a trusted celebrity regularly promotes a brand, it increases brand recognition and credibility (Mkerwa, 2024). Over time, this constant exposure can lead to repeat purchases which can establish long-term relationships between the business and its customers. However, the efficiency of this method is mostly determined on the celebrity's perceived credibility, attractiveness, and relevance to the product being advertised (Cheng et al., 2024).

### **Customer Loyalty**

Customer loyalty has been defined and conceptualized both as a behavioral phenomenon, which can be observed through repeated purchases, and as an attitudinal phenomenon, which can be measured through emotional ties with a brand. As highlighted by Primasari and Dwita (2025), satisfaction and trust are the most dependable predictors of loyalty in general, and that relational factors such as perceived value and service quality particularly plays an important role in this regard. Moreover, product quality, brand image, and customer engagement are important predictors of loyalty (Jailos & Magasi, 2025), and the emotional ties that often exist between consumers and brands are often sufficient to maintain loyalty even in very competitive markets (Khowjoy et al. 2022). These findings imply that loyalty is a complicated phenomena requiring a combination of practical and emotional measures to establish long-term consumer relationships.

In the context of celebrity endorsement, literature on customer loyalty shows that while



celebrity endorsements can act as a catalyst for customers to create initial brand loyalty, they are unable to ensure long-term loyalty in the absence of relational marketing approaches. According to Santos et al. (2025), the concept of loyalty is more related with corporate social responsibility and authenticity, ensuring that celebrity endorsements are more closely aligned with company values to ensure long-term success. However, empirical research also has shown that celebrity endorsements may have a moderating effect on consumer purchasing interests, loyalty is more strongly connected with sustained product quality, trust, and relational marketing tactics.

## **Short-term vs. Long-term Loyalty**

### **Short-term Loyalty**

Short run loyalty is the immediate response of consumers in terms of their preference of a brand that is mostly influenced by marketing promotions, word-of-mouth, or positive recommendation (Mu W and Yi Y, 2024). It is shown in several studies that short-term loyalty could be influenced by celebrity endorsement which could lead to purchase intention, trial purchase, brand awareness, and improvement of brand image. The customer's tendency to purchase a product and make an action in terms of purchasing is called Purchase Intention and it could be measured by the customer's likelihood of purchasing the product (Luqmanet al., 2022). In terms of purchase intention, it is cited in the study of Tarigan et al. (2023) that consumers' immediate response to celebrity endorsement is influenced by their support towards the celebrity. A buyer who trusts the endorser will feel comfortable and confident in the brand, which increases their possibility of buying products (Kim & Kim, 2021). People would try to imitate the celebrities they admire or find attractive (Schouten et al., 2020). Moreover, the emotional connection between the celebrity and its supporters would ensure short-term loyalty for as long as the celebrity stays in the brand (Aw & Labrecque, 2020). Impulse purchasing towards a product by positive emotional responses could be influenced by a strong emotional relationship between supporters and the celebrity endorser (Parmar et al., 2020).

However, it was found that customers' purchase intention may not be highly influenced by celebrity endorsement when the brand image is already established in their minds. But it is a good marketing technique to increase brand awareness (Kamelia Vanny Danaswari & Aprihatiningrum Hidayati, 2024). Short-term loyalty among Gen-Z consumers is boosted by social media promotion of celebrity campaigns that boosts purchase, though this may be short-lived once the campaign loses visibility (Aw & Labrecque, 2020). This connects to peer influence and the bandwagon effect as endorsements spark conversation and validation within groups which increase trial purchase, people may feel the need to purchase and support the brand when it signals popularity and acceptance or involvement in the society (Wa et al., 2024).

Lastly, many literatures highlight that short-term loyalty may be superficial and unstable since these endorsements primarily influence immediate consumer attitude and purchase intention rather than deep brand loyalty. It opens the door for deep loyalty but it all depends if the consumer develops loyalty towards the brand itself (Burnasheva & Suh, 2021). All in all, short-term loyalty in terms of celebrity endorsement lean more to loyalty for the celebrity itself and not the brand.

### **Long-term Loyalty**

Long-term loyalty towards a brand is where the customer consistently chooses to

purchase the brand's products or services compared to its competitors. The customer repeatedly purchases the product and promotes the product for a long period of time (Tannady & Purnamaningsih, 2023). Customer's deep long-term loyalty towards a brand is influenced by the customer's perception of the products or service quality, trust, company reputation and engagement (Rane et al., 2023). High quality products enhance customer satisfaction which leads to repetitive purchase and deep connection and longevity in terms of loyalty (Ebrahim et al., 2024). Corporate reputation and trust towards that organization is something that competitors cannot imitate hence it is a strong factor in building long-term customer loyalty. The study of Ullah et al. (2020) found that Corporate Social Responsibility which is highly embedded in the organization's ethics and internal culture positively influences company's reputation and its customer loyalty (Wang et al., 2021). In the Philippine context, this is important since Gen-Z are highly active and tend to support entities which reflect their principles and belief, this indicates that alignment with social causes positively influences their brand choice (Feliciano et al., 2025). In this age, customer engagement through social media opens the door for brand awareness which if sustained in long-term would eventually lead to loyalty (Santos et al., 2022).

If the celebrity promotion campaign aligns with the brand's values, which also aligns with the customer's personal need or perception, this would lead to brand loyalty in the long run. Brand desirability and trustworthiness towards the brand could deepen loyalty over time (Rao & Dinesh, 2025). Customer loyalty and emotional bond with the brand itself is strengthened over time through sustained endorsement which are believable and relatable, brand image is also enhanced among endorsed brands than those unendorsed ones (Gayatri & Divya, 2024).

If short-term loyalty leans more towards the impulse and loyalty towards the endorser itself, this may open doors for long-term loyalty as this increases brand awareness and purchase intention which could develop to deepen loyalty towards the brand. Malthouse et al. (2020) found that sustained social media engagement increases brand awareness and improve consumer's purchase intention over time.

## **Theoretical Approaches**

### **Meaning Transfer Model**

As cited in the paper of Burnasheva & Suh (2021) Meaning of Transfer Model of McCracken (1989) states that the image of the celebrity endorsers as perceived by the consumers are passed on to the brand they endorse. Credibility and symbolic meaning such as lifestyle, personality, values, that celebrity accumulated through their publicity transfer boosts quality of brand loyalty as consumers integrate these qualities into the brand (Tian et al., 2021).

This model happens in 3 stages. First, culturally constituted symbols to endorsers wherein marketing shows symbolic cultural meaning into representation products and endorsers. Second, endorsers to products which the symbolic attitudes of endorsers are carried over to the products. Third, products to customers where consumers internalize the following aspects which shapes their perceptions (Aliyev, 2025).

As cited in the study of (Lee & EunHa (Lena) Jeong, 2023) Seven themes of celebrity

meaning were found to be transferred to brand through celebrity endorsement namely, credibility, physical appearance, feelings, performance, values, and cogent power. These

themes influence how the customers perceive the brand of the endorsed product.

Other literature argued that alignment matters. The symbolic meanings that the celebrity embodies must match the brand and the product to enhance persuasion and positive influence towards consumer perception and purchase intention (Mateen Khan & Mateen Khan, 2024).

### **Source Credibility Theory**

Source Credibility Theory of Hovland, C.I., Janis, I.L., & Kelley, H.H. (1953) explains that when the source presents itself as credible, people will be more persuaded. The higher credibility, the more effective persuasiveness is.

Recent studies show that credibility of the source is composed of three dimensions namely, expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. These three dimensions shape audience evaluation of the message and determine consumer perceptions whether the endorsement is trustworthy and persuasive. When consumers view a celebrity endorser as credible, they are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward the advertisement and the brand being promoted (Schimmelpennig & Hunt, 2020).

Moreover, the study of (Ismagilova et al., 2020) cites that consumers frequently rely on their perceptions of source credibility when they are evaluating marketing and endorsements, especially when the consumer lacks prior knowledge about the brand.

### **Celebrity Endorsement Challenges and Their Impacts on Customer Loyalty**

Many studies have shown that celebrity endorsement positively impacts the brand. However, despite these benefits, companies still face challenges when utilizing the influence of public figures as part of their promotional strategy. One challenge companies face is that consumers do not rely on the endorsers alone when making purchase decisions. Consumers also evaluate other variables such as product reviews, pricing, and its overall value before purchasing (Vega et al., 2024). This indicates that celebrity endorsement alone is not enough to drive consumer purchasing behavior, and companies must ensure that their product's overall quality and value remains competitive.

Another challenge that companies face is the risk that comes with celebrity endorsement. Studies have shown that celebrities can overshadow the product, meaning consumers recognize the endorser more than the product itself, thereby weakening the intended promotional effect. Moreover, when the celebrity is engaged in moral controversies or has a poor reputation, consumers may put those negative perceptions into the endorsed products and damage consumer trust. In addition, when the public image of the celebrity conflicts with the brand's identity, it can create inconsistency in the brand message, leading to confusion among consumers and reducing the overall effectiveness of the endorsement (Adedeji, 2021). While these risks have been documented in international literature, they remain equally relevant in the Philippine context. Local studies have observed that mismatched endorsement situations, such as hiring foreign celebrities who may not genuinely use the product, can reduce the effectiveness among Filipino consumers (Pantoja et al., 2022)

Along with the widely discussed risks of celebrity scandals, brand mismatch, and negative publicity, recent research also highlights the limitations of celebrity endorsement into

actual consumer behavior and loyalty. Studies on Filipino Generation Z have shown that while influencer attributes such as authenticity and trustworthiness enhance parasocial

relationships, larger influencers with greater popularity may lose perceived authenticity, weakening emotional bonds and reducing the overall effectiveness of endorsement strategies among GenZ consumers (Balatero, 2025). Furthermore, research on Gen Z consumer perceptions indicates that although celebrity endorsement improves brand awareness, their impact on deeper brand loyalty and emotional commitment varies across individuals and is not uniformly strong (Bansal, 2023). This is consistent with findings in the Philippine context, where studies on celebrity media placements in ABS-CBN films reveal that even consumers hold favorable perceptions of celebrity product placements, the link between perception and actual purchasing behavior can be weak, suggesting that endorsement appeal alone does not guarantee consistent buying behavior or long-term customer loyalty (Acosta et al., 2025).

Collectively, these challenges underscore the complexity of using celebrity endorsements as a marketing strategy. Despite their potential to boost brand awareness, their effectiveness remains inconsistent and highly dependent on endorser credibility, brand alignment, and consumer context. This is particularly significant among Gen Z Filipino consumers, making it essential to further explore how celebrity endorsements affect their spending patterns and brand consistency.

### **The Impact of Celebrity Endorsements on Customer Loyalty**

In an increasingly competitive marketplace, brands that leverage celebrity endorsements gain consumer trust that is essential for long-term customer loyalty. Among Filipino university students, the majority perceived celebrity endorsed products as more desirable, increasing their likelihood to make a purchase and develop a preference for the endorsed products (Vega et al., 2024). Bansal (2023) similarly found that celebrity-endorsed advertisements improve brand awareness and help consumers distinguish one brand from another, laying the groundwork for repeated patronage and sustained loyalty.

The qualities of the celebrity matter as much as the endorsement itself. Celebrity attributes such as credibility, trustworthiness, likeability, and attractiveness, shapes how the consumers view a product directly influencing both brand awareness and purchase intention, which pave the way toward customer loyalty. A study on student consumers found that likeability was the strongest predictor of positive consumer response (Alejandro et al., 2025). Research further supports that pairing a credible celebrity with a well-matched brand significantly strengthens brand image, giving consumers more reason to trust and remain loyal to that brand (Nabil et al., 2022).

For Filipino Gen Z specifically, recent studies highlight how effective social media influencers are as endorsers. Having been immersed in the digital and online world, this generation tends to grow one-sided emotional attachments with media personalities or public figures they engage with across different digital platforms. Empirical evidence suggests that when endorsers are perceived to possess attributes such as authenticity, perceived fit, and trustworthiness, the strength of these parasocial bonds is significantly enhanced, resulting in greater attachment toward the endorsed brands. Consequently, these strengthened parasocial relationships have been associated with sustained consumer engagement and increased repeat purchasing behavior — behavioral outcomes that are widely recognized in the literature as key indicators of customer loyalty (Balatero, 2025). In light of these findings, it is clear that when carefully executed, celebrity endorsements can be a highly effective marketing tool that boosts brand exposure, fosters consumer interaction, and contributes to the development of customer loyalty, particularly among

digitally active and socially connected Gen Z audiences.



Ultimately, these findings affirm that celebrity endorsements, when aligned with consumer values and executed with strategic intent, represent a viable and effective approach to fostering customer loyalty. This is evident among Filipino Gen Z consumers, whose brand allegiances are increasingly shaped by the digital relationships and parasocial connections they form with the celebrities they admire.

## **Conclusion**

The study reviewed existing literature regarding celebrity endorsements and their impact on customer loyalty, focusing specifically on Filipino Gen Z consumers within the digital commerce environment. There are several crucial conclusions that can be drawn from the studies reviewed. First, celebrity endorsements remain a widely used marketing strategy for boosting brand visibility, attracting consumer interest, and influencing purchasing decisions. Research consistently highlights that the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements is strongly tied to the traits of the celebrity, especially their credibility, trustworthiness, and authenticity. These traits influence how consumers perceive marketing messages and shape their attitudes toward the brands being endorsed. The Meaning Transfer Model and Source Credibility Theory offer further insights into how the symbolic meanings, values, and credibility tied to celebrities can impact consumer perceptions and their engagement with the advertised product.

Second, the impact of celebrity endorsement on Filipino Gen Z consumers is also mediated by the overall digital environment in which they consume brand promotions. Being digital natives themselves, these consumers are likely to be exposed to various brand promotions by celebrities and influencers in the digital environment. In this context, the personal appeal and authenticity of the endorsers can be seen to facilitate the emotional connection that consumers have with the brand. However, the purchasing decisions of consumers are also mediated by other factors such as product reviews, word-of-mouth communications, and the brand's overall reputation. This indicates that celebrity endorsement is likely to be mediated by these factors in the digital environment.

Third, based on the evidence of the reviewed literature, it can be seen that celebrity endorsements may have a greater effect in terms of consumer response in the short-term than in building customer loyalty in the long-term. There are various studies that support the idea of celebrity endorsements being effective in creating brand awareness, building purchase intentions, and generating trial purchases, especially among younger consumers. This is especially true considering that these consumers are highly active in social media and are likely to be emotionally attached to these celebrities. However, customer loyalty in the long-term is said to be greatly influenced by other factors such as product quality, customer satisfaction, trust, and reputation. This means that celebrity endorsements may be effective in generating consumer response in the short-term but may not necessarily translate to customer loyalty in the long-term.

Fourth, several limitations are evident in the current literature. Many studies primarily concentrate on consumer perceptions and purchase intentions instead of exploring long-term behavioral outcomes associated with customer loyalty. Furthermore, the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements can be influenced by various risks and challenges, such as celebrity scandals, mismatches between the brand and the celebrity, and instances where the celebrity overshadows the product itself. These factors can diminish consumer trust and undermine the intended marketing impact of endorsement campaigns.

Such findings have significant implications for marketing practice and future research. Marketing practitioners should be careful in choosing celebrities that are credible and

whose image and values match the brand and appeal to the target audience. Marketing practice should also realize that celebrity endorsement, as a marketing strategy, works well only if there are quality products and positive consumer experiences and engagement. Further research could be conducted to explore the influence of celebrity endorsement on consumer behavior and loyalty, especially for Gen Z Filipino consumers in the dynamic digital commerce environment.

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# Entrepreneurial Journeys to Sustainable Hospitality: Rethinking the Customer Experience for a Multigenerational Marketplace

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## Abstrack

*This study explores the hotel industry's paradigm shift towards sustainability and entrepreneurial innovation, focusing on creating sustainable guest experiences. The goal of this article is to develop a conceptual model integrating entrepreneurial journeys, sustainability practices, and generational preferences into the design of guest experiences. The research adopts a systematic literature review methodology to analyze current trends and theories in sustainable hospitality, entrepreneurial innovation, and multigenerational behaviors. The results reveal that sustainability is increasingly central to hotel operations and guest satisfaction, with technology and personalization playing a key role in creating innovative and sustainable experiences. The article identifies gaps in the literature regarding the integration of entrepreneurial innovation with sustainable practices and highlights the need for further research on generational preferences in hospitality. The study concludes by proposing a conceptual model that combines sustainable hotel practices, entrepreneurial innovation, and generational preferences, providing a framework for hotel businesses to differentiate themselves and strengthen their long-term sustainability. The limitations of the study include its reliance on secondary data and its focus on global trends, which may not be universally applicable in all local contexts.*

**Keywords:** Sustainable hospitality, Entrepreneurial innovation, Visitor experience, Generational preferences, Sustainability practices

## Introduction

The hospitality industry is one of the important pillars of the global economy, contributing to the growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). According to the *World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC)*, by 2024, the travel and tourism sector is expected to be worth US\$11.1 trillion, or about 10% of global GDP, illustrating the importance of this sector in the post-pandemic economic recovery (*WTTC, 2024*). The sector



also employs more than 300 million people worldwide, or about 10% of the global workforce, making it one of the fastest-growing sectors in the economy.

However, changes in travelers' consumption habits and preferences, especially around sustainability and more personalized experiences, have led to significant changes in how the hospitality industry operates. Technology, innovation in services, and entrepreneurship are now key drivers to create more relevant, efficient, and sustainable experiences for consumers around the world. This is reflected in the shift from green operations (eco-management) to an overhaul of the guest experience focused more on the real value of the stay experience, in line with sustainability values and the preferences of different generations (*Bordian et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2025*). The global hospitality market has seen strong growth after a sharp decline due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The *2026 Hospitality Industry Insights report* shows that the total hospitality market is expected to reach US\$5.82 trillion by 2026, with a stable annual growth rate. Similarly, global hotel occupancy is expected to reach 68% to 70% in 2024, higher than pre-pandemic levels, and RevPAR is expected to grow by around 3% in several key markets. This shows that the demand for hotel services is increasing again, and that the sector is starting to experience a significant recovery after a decline due to the global health crisis (*EHL Hospitality, 2024*). This increase is also reflected in the growth of the multigenerational travel sector, which is now one of the largest markets in tourism and hospitality. According to the *2024 Multigenerational Travel Market Report*, the multigenerational travel market is expected to reach US\$320 billion by 2024, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of around 6.7% to US\$570 billion by 2033. This confirms that the hospitality market's preferences are increasingly turning to experiences that can be shared by intergenerational families, including children, adults and seniors (*MarketIntelto, 2024*).

However, this development also brings its own challenges, including how to adapt the diversity of preferences between generations into a more sustainable and personalized experience. Gen Z, for example, shows a great interest in sustainable practices in tourism, but it is often difficult to implement them in concrete experiences, due to the discrepancy in their intentions and behaviors. This is a major challenge for hotel service providers in designing guest experiences that not only meet sustainability expectations, but are also generationally relevant (*Minazzi & Grechi, 2025*).

Table 1. Global Hospitality Industry and Multigenerational Travel Market

| Indicator                                      | Data / Results                            | Source                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Total number of international tourists in 2024 | ± 1.45 billion people, up 11.5% from 2023 | UNWTO World Tourism Ranking ( <a href="#">UNWTO</a> ) data |

| Indicator                                                       | Data / Results                                                 | Source                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| The travel and tourism sector contributes to global GDP in 2024 | ± US\$11.1 trillion (~10% of global GDP)                       | WTTC via Reuters            |
| Global Hotel Occupancy Rate 2024                                | 68% to 70% projection                                          | Hospitality Insights Report |
| Global RevPAR 2024                                              | An increase of 3%, ~13.2% from pre-pandemic levels is forecast | Hospitality Insights Report |
| Multigenerational Travel Market Projection 2024                 | US\$ 320 billion                                               | MarketIntelto Report        |
| Multigenerational Travel Market Projection 2033                 | US\$570 billion (CAGR ~6.7%)                                   | MarketIntelto Report        |
| Global Hospitality Market Forecast 2022–2028                    | CAGR of ~10.24% to ~US\$1.063 trillion                         | Industry Insights Report    |

**Source:** UNWTO (2023); WTTC (2024); Bismart (2024); MarketIntelto (2024)

The data presented shows the vast market potential that the hospitality industry must accommodate, especially in the context of a multigenerational market. As this market grows, hotel service providers face significant challenges in designing guest experiences that meet the diverse needs and preferences of different generations. One of the points to consider is to make hospitality services not only environmentally friendly, but also generationally relevant. According to a study conducted by Sharma et al. (2024), the biggest challenge in designing a sustainable customer experience is to combine sustainability with personalization of the experience for each generation. Gen Z, for example, wants an experience that is more connected to sustainability and technology, while

older generations often prioritize convenience and in-person interaction. Therefore, hospitality businesses need to have a clear understanding of the sustainability values desired by each generation as well as the entrepreneurial strategies to implement to create experiences that are acceptable to different generations (*Sharma et al., 2024*).

Therefore, this research focuses on how entrepreneurship can play a role in reshaping the customer experience using sustainability principles that can be accepted by different generations. The concept of entrepreneurial journeys leading to a more personalized, sustainable and technologically adapted customer experience is becoming increasingly relevant in this rapidly evolving multigenerational market. It also reinforces the importance of sustainability, which is perceived not only as a purely ecological or ethical concept, but also as a strategic value that redefines the entire experience offered to customers (*Minazzi & Grechi, 2025; Wang et al., 2025*).

## **Literature Review**

### **Sustainable Hospitality**

The concept of sustainable hospitality has developed rapidly since the beginning of the era of green operations in the 1990s, where the main focus is on reducing environmental impact through energy saving, resource efficiency, and waste management (*Acampora et al., 2022*). Over time, sustainability in hospitality focuses not only on environmental aspects, but also on the social and economic dimensions, which include social sustainability (community participation) and economic sustainability (effective business management). As *Molina-Collado et al. (2022)* point out, there is a paradigm shift: from green operations to more structured environmental management systems (EMS), which integrate hotel policies with international standards such as ISO 14001. In another context, the triple bottom line adopted in 2010 focuses on sustainability that measures not only environmental impact (planet), but also social performance (people) and economic performance (profit), and includes more holistic sustainability management criteria (*Molina-Collado et al., 2022; Legrand et al., 2022*). Over the next decade, attention began to shift to more holistic experiences of sustainability, i.e., how the concept of sustainability can be internalized in the design of the customer experience (*Blanco-Moreno et al., 2025*). The importance of sustainability experiences is further underscored by research conducted by *Bordian et al. (2024)*, which shows that sustainability-focused hotels not only improve operational performance but also create a more meaningful and relevant guest experience, thus supporting long-term loyalty. Sustainability in the hotel industry is now not only perceived as a normative value, but also as a differentiation strategy that can create added value for companies and society.

### **Entrepreneurial Innovation in Hospitality**

Entrepreneurial innovation has been at the heart of the development of the hospitality industry since the 2000s, when the industry began to integrate technology as a key element in creating new value in the guest experience.

Entrepreneurial innovation in this area includes the development of new business models, such as technological integration to personalize the experience, increase customer engagement, and create environmentally and socially friendly solutions. For example, smart hotel technology that integrates the Internet of Things (IoT) and big data allows hotels to optimize energy and create a more personalized experience for guests (Wang *et al.*, 2025). However, as Youssofi *et al.* (2024) explain, the adoption of technology in hospitality is not only for operational efficiency, but also to revitalize the guest experience that prioritizes personalization, convenience, and sustainability. This type of innovation requires a holistic approach, where entrepreneurship focuses not only on creating new products or services, but also on how to bring together technology, customer experience, and sustainable practices. Digital transformation is a key driver of this innovation, as discussed in a study by Bordian *et al.* (2024) that shows that digitally innovative hotels are able to create a more technological and eco-friendly guest experience. This includes the use of AI-driven guest personalization, location-based applications to enhance the guest experience, as well as a more flexible booking system, which optimizes the check-in and check-out process and provides faster service recovery.

### **Reshaping customer experience in the digital age and AI**

Rethinking the guest experience is an important concept in sustainable hospitality. Not only does it emphasize physical comfort, but also includes how technology can improve the overall customer experience. A study by Makivić *et al.* (2024) shows that AI-driven personalized services, such as chatbots, voice assistants, and big data analytics, can provide a more intuitive and relevant experience for guests. This technology, combined with the principles of sustainability, allows hotels and restaurants to offer a more sustainable experience, reducing energy waste, improving operational efficiency and tailoring services to guest preferences. In this case, Digital Customer Experience (DGE) plays an important role in creating a hyper-personalized and data-driven experience. For example, AI-powered service design allows hotels to provide more relevant recommendations based on guest history, sustainability preferences, and local environmental data. Youssofi *et al.* (2024) propose a framework called Digitized Customer Experience (DGE) which includes three main phases: Pre-Stay, During the Stay and Post-Stay, allowing for a connected and sustainable experience. A review by Wang *et al.* (2025) also shows that sustainability and visitor experience are now not only influenced by physical products, but also by digital interactions that are increasingly personalizing travelers' journeys.

### **Multigenerational markets and sustainability preferences**

The hospitality industry now faces a major challenge in designing services that can target a highly diverse, multi-generational market. Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, and Baby Boomers have very different preferences

when it comes to sustainability, technology, and customer experience.

For example, Gen Z is more likely to choose digital-based services and sustainability transparency, such as using apps to monitor energy consumption or choose eco-friendly options. In contrast, Baby Boomers prioritize safety and convenience, as well as more face-to-face and personalized experiences (Minazzi & Grechi, 2025; Youssoufi et al., 2024). According to Zheng et al. (2024), the preferences of this generation include not only differences in consumer behavior, but also social identities that influence their sustainability actions. Gen Z, for example, is very committed to the principles of social responsibility and sustainability, yet there is often a difference between their behavior and intentions when deciding whether to travel or choose accommodation (Seyfi et al., 2025). So, to create a relevant guest experience for all generations, hospitality companies need to consider their preferences segmented according to the digital behavior, sustainability values, and social experience that each generation seeks. This creates great opportunities for entrepreneurial journeys based on service innovation and co-creation, allowing guests to actively participate in sustainable value creation (Zheng et al., 2024).

Based on the above literature review, several key gaps in research can be identified. First, while there is a lot of research on sustainable hospitality and entrepreneurship, few have incorporated both concepts with the redesign of the guest experience in the context of a multigenerational marketplace. Secondly, although digitalisation and AI are the main axes to improve the visitor experience, the implementation of sustainable and generationally repurposed technologies remains very limited. Third, while there is research on generational preferences, there is no holistic approach that combines sustainable service innovation, entrepreneurship, and customer experience in an integrated way. This research aims to fill these gaps by proposing an entrepreneurial journey model to rethink the customer experience in sustainable hospitality, taking into account multigenerational preferences as a key factor in service design. The model will also leverage digitalization analytics to create a more technological and green customer experience, as well as to develop strategies for service providers to adapt to the needs of increasingly diverse generations.

### **Research Methodology**

This study takes a systematic literature review (SLR) approach to explore and synthesize the latest findings in the literature on sustainable hospitality, entrepreneurial innovation, reshaping the visitor experience, and multigenerational market preferences. This approach was chosen because the main objective of the research is to develop a new conceptual model capable of linking the four main concepts in a coherent and integrated framework. As a literature-based study, this study does not aim to test empirical hypotheses or collect primary data through surveys or field experiments, but focuses on the preparation of theoretical concepts based on the results of existing literature analysis. Using this approach, this study seeks to identify patterns, research gaps and possible integrations between entrepreneurship, sustainability, guest experience and generational preferences in the context of sustainable hospitality.

To obtain relevant data, this study conducted an extensive literature search through various leading academic databases. Databases used in the searches include Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and JSTOR. Search keywords include terms such as "sustainable hospitality," "entrepreneurial innovation in hospitality," "redesign of the guest experience," "multigenerational travel," and "digital transformation in hospitality." This research focused on journal articles, academic books, and industry reports published since 2021 to ensure that the literature reviewed reflects the latest developments in topics relevant to the study.

Once the search process is complete, the retrieved articles are filtered according to strict inclusion criteria and exclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria include articles published in peer-reviewed journals, academic works published by leading publishers, as well as research on entrepreneurial journeys, reshaping the guest experience, digital transformation, and multigenerational behaviors in the context of hospitality sustainable. Articles that do not meet quality standards, such as those that do not contain valid empirical data or are only descriptive without in-depth theoretical discussion, are excluded from the analysis. Once the data from the literature has been collected, the next step is thematic analysis. The selected literature was ranked according to the main themes that emerged from the study, such as sustainability in hospitality, entrepreneurial innovation, customer experience design and generational preferences. This analysis aims to look for relationships between the themes encountered, as well as to identify trends that can be integrated into the conceptual model. This process includes content analysis that allows researchers to identify dominant themes in the literature, as well as to see how these concepts relate to each other.

Based on the results of the thematic synthesis, a conceptual model of entrepreneurial pathways was then constructed. This model illustrates how entrepreneurship can be used to design a sustainable customer experience, integrated with sustainability and multi-generational market preferences. This conceptual model includes four main paths found in the literature: sustainable value proposition, personalization of services, technology-facilitated interaction and inclusive co-creation. The first track, the sustainable value proposition, focuses on how a sustainable value proposition can be implemented to meet the expectations of more sustainability-conscious customers. The second heading, service personalization, highlights the importance of tailoring the customer experience based on generational preferences, while the third track, interaction through technology, identifies the role of technology in creating a more personalized and effective customer experience. Finally, the inclusive co-creation journey emphasizes the importance of engaging visitors in the creation of sustainable experiences. To validate the conceptual model developed, this study conducted an expert review involving experts in the fields of hospitality, sustainable tourism and entrepreneurship. The feedback provided by the experts serves to refine



and deepen this model, as well as to ensure that the proposed model is relevant to current market conditions. The validation process also includes a comparison between the results of the literature reviewed and industry data and practices, to ensure the feasibility and practical application of this model.

In addition, for further analysis of the data, NVivo 14 software is used to encode filtered items. This coding allows researchers to identify key themes that appear in the literature as well as concepts related to groups. Content analysis techniques are used to analyze the text of selected articles, while VOSviewer is used to visualize relationships between key concepts and search for broader thematic patterns. Microsoft Excel software is also used to compile data and organize information from the collected literature, as well as to map patterns of relationships between the different concepts found. The study also recognizes some limitations. One of them is the use of secondary data, where this study does not collect primary data through surveys or direct interviews with consumers or hotel service providers. Nevertheless, the use of DSLRs allows for broader and systematic perspectives on relevant topics in the field of sustainable hospitality. The study was also limited to literature published after 2021, which may not include some older research but remains relevant. Moreover, although the study focused on global hospitality, its findings do not always apply to local markets with very different cultural or regulatory contexts.

With this holistic approach, this research aims to produce a theoretical framework applicable to the design of sustainable, more innovative and relevant customer experiences, especially in multigenerational markets. The proposed model is expected to contribute to the understanding of how entrepreneurship and sustainability can be integrated into a more personalized, sustainable and adaptive customer experience to changing generational preferences.

## **Results and discussion Paradigm shift in sustainable hospitality**

The first significant finding of this literature review is a paradigm shift in sustainable hospitality. Before 2021, the majority of research in this sector focused more on green operations and operational greening, such as energy conservation, waste reduction, and natural resource management. However, as consumer awareness of sustainability issues increases, there is a shift towards sustainable value creation that includes not only environmental stewardship, but also the creation of a sustainable customer experience.

Table 2. The influence of generational preferences on the sustainable guest experience in the hotel industry

| Generational preferences | Generation Z                                     | Millennials                                                    | Gen X                                                              | Baby Boomers                                                    |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Preference for           | Very high: Focus on the use of local products,   | High: Wants transparency, the use of eco-friendly products and | Medium: Focus on convenience and ease of                           | Low: A higher priority on convenience and direct service, while |
| sustainability           | renewable energy and sustainability transparency | hotels that support sustainable social practices               | access to environmentally friendly services                        | sustainability is important, is not a top priority              |
|                          | Very high: Want personalized                     | High: Has a strong preference for technology                   | Moderate: Generally more comfortable with                          | Low: The preference for the technology                          |
| The need for             | digital                                          | and                                                            | in-person                                                          | is limited to                                                   |
| technology               | experiences, mobile apps, and                    | convenience in interaction but digital processes such          | interaction but appreciates technology that                        | basic use; Prioritizing human                                   |
|                          | AI-driven interactions                           | as automatic check-in/out                                      | simplifies service                                                 | interaction                                                     |
|                          | Enjoys community                                 | Looking for an experience                                      | Valuing social                                                     | Prioritize a personal and                                       |
| Social Experience        | experiences and                                  | that combines                                                  | experiences with                                                   | comfortable                                                     |
|                          | Brand                                            | a                                                              | collaborations, such as participating in sustainability activities | clear commitment to sustainability and ethical practices        |
|                          | High                                             | High, if the brand demonstrates a                              |                                                                    |                                                                 |

|                                                                          |                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| social activities with<br>elements of sustainability                     | a focus on<br>convenience,<br>convenience,<br>and quality of<br>service             | e<br>x<br>p<br>e<br>r<br>i<br>e<br>n<br>c<br>e<br>,<br>w<br>i<br>t<br>h<br>m<br>i<br>n<br>i<br>m<br>a<br>l<br>s<br>o<br>c<br>i<br>a<br>l<br>i<br>n<br>t<br>e<br>r<br>a<br>c<br>t<br>i<br>o<br>n | h<br>a<br>n<br>d<br>,<br>l<br>o<br>y<br>a<br>l<br>t<br>y<br>i<br>s<br>b<br>a<br>s<br>e<br>d<br>o<br>n<br>c<br>o<br>n<br>v<br>e<br>n<br>i<br>e<br>n<br>c<br>e<br>,<br>s<br>e<br>c<br>u<br>r<br>i<br>t<br>y<br>,<br>a<br>n<br>d<br>q<br>u<br>a<br>l<br>i<br>t | y of service |
| High, with a focus on<br>sustainability and a<br>personalized experience | Moderate, with a<br>preference for<br>brands that offer<br>comfort and<br>stability | O<br>n<br>t<br>h<br>e<br>o<br>t<br>h<br>e<br>r                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |              |

Source . Processed data from researchers 2026

The results of the literature review show that the sustainability model in hospitality is currently increasingly integrated into the design of the guest experience, where sustainability is interpreted not only as a business process, but also as the value that translates into the guest experience. For example, Bordian et al. (2024) show that hotels that incorporate sustainability aspects into the guest experience (such as providing eco-friendly local products, using technology for energy efficiency, and engaging guests in green activities) can increase guest satisfaction and loyalty. An example of successful sustainability implementation is the Green Key Eco-Rating Program, which is increasingly being implemented by major hotels in Europe and America. Hotels that adopt this program not only reduce their carbon footprint, but also provide a more meaningful experience for guests who feel they are directly contributing to the preservation of the environment (Legrand et al., 2022). Thus, sustainability is now seen as part of the business differentiation that can strengthen the hotel's competitive position in an increasingly environmentally conscious market.



Figure 1. Paradigm shift in sustainable hospitality

The hospitality industry has undergone a significant paradigm shift in recent decades. Initially, the main goal of the industry was to achieve short-term financial gains, without considering the environmental or social impact of hotel and restaurant operations. However, with the growing global awareness of sustainability issues, the hospitality industry is starting to realize the importance of sustainable practices for a more responsible and sustainable future. This shift is manifested in the shift from an economic model that focuses solely on financial benefits to a more holistic model, which takes into account social, environmental and economic

sustainability. In the traditional paradigm, which focuses more on operational efficiency and resource management to maximize profits, sustainability is seen as an ancillary or secondary activity, often implemented only to meet government regulations or requirements. However, over time, many in the industry are starting to realize that sustainability is not only beneficial for the environment, but also brings long-term benefits to companies. This has led to the implementation of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) which focuses on achieving sustainability in three main dimensions: planet (environmental), people (social), and profit (economic).

For example, hotels that previously focused solely on financial gain are now starting to incorporate sustainability practices into their day-to-day operations, such as reducing energy consumption, managing water more efficiently, and using local raw materials that are environmentally friendly. Sustainability is now seen as an important differentiation strategy, capable of strengthening brand image, increasing visitor loyalty and attracting a market that is increasingly aware of the importance of environmental issues. According to a study conducted by Bordian et al. (2024), hotels that implement sustainability not only reduce long-term operational costs, but also experience increased guest satisfaction that is more environmentally conscious. In addition, this paradigm shift also affects resource management in the hotel industry. In the traditional model, resource management is often conducted with an exploitative approach, with a high consumption of energy, water and chemicals. However, in the sustainable paradigm, this management is modified to be more efficient and environmentally friendly, with a focus on the use of renewable energy and the implementation of green technology systems to reduce the carbon footprint. For example, many hotels are now starting to use LED lights for energy efficiency and solar water heating systems to reduce conventional energy consumption. This shift is also reflected in how hotels perceive the value they bring to guests. In the past, hotels focused more on the products and services they offer, while today, they are starting to offer experiences that not only prioritize physical comfort, but also provide deep lasting value to guests. This sustainability is not only evident on the operational side, but is also reflected in a more meaningful customer experience connected to nature. For example, hotels that incorporate the concept of ecotourism and offer nature-related activities, such as cycling or ecotourism, are able to offer their guests a more authentic and valuable experience.

However, despite the many benefits of adopting sustainability, many hotels still face challenges in integrating sustainability practices into their business. One of the main challenges faced is the start-up cost associated with investing in green technologies and implementing more efficient systems. However, as Legrand et al. (2022) explain, despite the high upfront costs, investing in sustainability will ultimately lead to better outcomes, both in terms of operational savings and in building trust and loyalty among customers who increasingly prioritize environmental values. This paradigm shift in sustainable hospitality also affects the role of stakeholders in the sector, especially when it comes to engaging local communities and employees. Many hotels now involve local communities in sustainability activities, such as sustainability training programs for

employees, and support the local economy by purchasing local products that are environmentally friendly. This is also in line with the application of the principle of social sustainability which emphasizes social justice, the reduction of inequalities and the realization of social rights for all parties involved in hotel operation. Overall, the paradigm shift in sustainable hospitality is not only about internal changes at the operational level, but also involves a transformation of values and priorities within the entire industry ecosystem. Sustainability has now become an integral part of the hotel's business strategy, which is not only profitable, but also contributes to environmental preservation and social sustainability on a global scale. The hospitality industry that embraces these sustainability principles will gain a competitive advantage in a market that is increasingly aware of the environmental and social challenges facing the world.

**Entrepreneurial innovation in hospitality: innovation as the key to differentiation**

One of the key findings from the literature review was the importance of entrepreneurial innovation in the transformation of sustainable hospitality. This entrepreneurial innovation is not only limited to the introduction of new technologies, but also includes the creation of new business models, focused on sustainability and long-term value creation. For example, Bismart (2024) shows that digital transformation has become a key driver of service innovation in the hospitality industry, where hotels and restaurants are starting to integrate AI-based technologies to provide a more personalized and efficient experience for guests.

Table 3. Applying entrepreneurial innovation in sustainable hospitality

| Aspects of innovation      | Technology used                                     | Customer Experience Benefits                                                                 | Application examples                                                                 |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Personalization with AI    | AI chatbots, voice assistants, predictive analytics | A more personalized and responsive experience, improving customer comfort.                   | XYZ Hotel uses AI to suggest services based on guest preferences.                    |
| Sustainable service design | IoT Devices, Smart Energy Management Systems        | Waste reduction, energy efficiency and increased awareness of sustainability among visitors. | Hotel ABC implements an IoT-based smart thermostat and an automatic lighting system. |

|                    |                        |                                       |                                        |
|--------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| <b>Mobile</b>      | <b>Mobile apps, QR</b> | Simplify check-in, check-out, and     | The DEF Hotel offers automatic         |
| <b>Integration</b> | <b>codes</b>           | access to sustainability information. | check-in/check-out via the mobile app. |

| Aspects of innovation                 | Technology used                | Customer Experience Benefits                                                 | Application examples                                             |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Customer commitment to sustainability | Green Rewards                  | Increase the loyalty of GHI hotels offer                                     |                                                                  |
|                                       | Programs, Green Certifications | sustainability-conscious guests, creating added value for guests and hotels. | incentives to guests participating in carbon reduction programs. |

Source . Processed data from researchers 2026

AI-driven personalized services, such as the use of chatbots, voice assistants, and big data analytics to predict guest preferences, have been shown to significantly improve the visitor experience. In a study by Youssofi et al. (2024), it was found that hotels using AI-powered systems can personalize services faster and more accurately, based on guest history and local environmental data. This technology enables hotels to offer faster, more efficient and sustainable services in terms of energy consumption, which is perfectly in line with the preferences of increasingly sustainability-conscious guests. However, while technology offers great potential for innovation, challenges remain in the adoption of technology in the sector, especially in small and medium-sized hotels that face budget constraints to invest in advanced technologies. Sharma et al. (2024) note that boutique hotels often lag behind in technology adoption due to high investment costs and a lack of knowledge in managing digital solutions.



Entrepreneurial innovation in the hospitality industry refers to the ability of entrepreneurs to proactively create, develop, and implement new



ideas in response to changing market trends and evolving customer needs.  
In an industry as competitive as hospitality, where customer

expectations are constantly evolving, innovation plays a crucial role as the main source of differentiation. This process enables companies to create sustainable value and gain a long-term competitive advantage, ensuring they are relevant and thriving in a rapidly changing environment.

The first dimension of entrepreneurial innovation is product and service innovation. This involves the development of new concepts, products, or services that offer unique value to customers, addressing needs that may not have been met by competitors. One example is the introduction of eco-friendly hotel services, where sustainability is embedded at the heart of the offer, offering guests both luxury and environmental responsibility. Process innovation, another crucial element, aims to improve efficiency, speed and quality within operations, enabling hotels to provide exceptional service while reducing waste and optimizing resources. When it comes to technological innovation, hotels are increasingly adopting digital technologies such as smart rooms, automated check-ins, and IoT-connected services to improve the overall guest experience and increase operational efficiency. For example, smart thermostats and automated lighting systems not only increase visitor comfort, but also reduce energy consumption, contributing to environmental sustainability. Moreover, marketing innovation plays a key role in brand loyalty and expanding market reach by using data-driven strategies and creative campaigns to reach new markets and attract customers with special preferences, especially among the tech-savvy younger generations.

In addition, organizational innovation is fundamental to shaping a culture that fosters continuous learning, collaboration, and creativity. This can involve restructuring teams, adopting new managerial practices, and creating an environment where innovation is encouraged at all levels, from leadership to frontline employees. With innovative leadership, which fosters visionary thinking and embraces risk-taking, organizations can ensure they remain flexible and responsive to changing market demands. The mechanisms of entrepreneurial innovation are a step-by-step process starting with the identification of opportunities, where companies observe market trends and guests must identify gaps for innovation. After identifying opportunities, idea development is crucial, with brainstorming sessions and cross-functional collaboration to generate innovative solutions. These ideas are then implemented through testing and modifications to ensure they meet operational standards. Finally, continuous evaluation and learning are essential for measuring success, assessing customer satisfaction, and refining innovations for future improvements.

Strategically, entrepreneurial innovation promotes competitive differentiation by offering unique value that competitors struggle to replicate. This allows businesses to build a unique customer experience, strengthen brand reputation, and achieve better financial performance.

Innovation builds organizational resilience, making hotels more adaptable to environmental challenges and better able to compete in a dynamic marketplace. In addition, sustainable business growth is achieved by incorporating practices that benefit not only the hotel, but also the industry, the community, and the environment. The main factors of entrepreneurial innovation include good leadership, a supportive organizational culture, adequate resources, and strategic partnerships. Effective leadership encourages creativity, collaboration, and continuous learning. The innovative culture within the organization fosters the development of new ideas, and access to adequate resources, including skilled labor, technology, and funding, is crucial to implementing these innovations. Strategic partnerships with startups, vendors, communities, and academia foster innovation through external collaboration and knowledge sharing.

In conclusion, entrepreneurial innovation is key to transforming the hospitality industry and ensuring that hotels not only meet the changing needs of guests but also achieve exceptional business performance. By fostering an environment of creativity, collaboration, and adaptability, hospitality businesses can differentiate themselves, create superior value for their guests, and maintain long-term success in an increasingly competitive environment.

**The influence of generational preferences in the sustainable design of the customer experience**

One of the key findings of this study is the difference in generational preferences when it comes to sustainability and visitor experience. Gen Z, known for caring deeply about sustainability issues, prefer hotels and restaurants that offer local products, eco-friendly practices, and transparency in sustainability. For example, hotels that provide clear information on the use of renewable energy or invite guests to participate in waste reduction activities such as recycling have a greater appeal for this segment (*Minazzi & Grechi, 2025*).

Table. The impact of sustainability on customer satisfaction based on generational preferences

| Generational preferences | Guest satisfaction rate                                                    | Satisfaction based on sustainability                                        | Technology-based satisfaction                                 |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Generation Z             | Very High: Tends to be very satisfied with sustainability-focused services | 85% satisfied with a hotel that demonstrates a commitment to sustainability | Satisfied with 90% of mobile apps and AI-powered interactions |

| Generational preferences | Guest satisfaction rate                              | Satisfaction based on sustainability                                       | Technology-based satisfaction                       |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Millennials</b>       | Top: Appreciate an ecological and innovative service | 80% satisfied with hotels that are transparent about sustainable practices | 78% satisfied with personalized digital experiences |
| <b>Gen X</b>             | Moderate: Need for comfort and ease of access        | 70% satisfied, but preferring convenience over sustainability              | 70% satisfied, but prefer in-person interaction     |
|                          | Medium: More focused on                              | At 60% met, sustainability is                                              | 65% satisfied, but prefer human                     |
| <b>Baby Boomers</b>      | convenience and face-to-face experience              | considered important but not a top priority                                | experiences and face-to-face interactions           |

Source . Processed data from researchers 2026

In contrast, Baby Boomers and Gen Xers value convenience and security more, and are more likely to choose services based on social interaction over technological experiences. Seyfi et al. (2025) show that older generations often prefer more traditional experiences and trust face-to-face interactions with hotel staff more. So, to create a sustainable experience for all generations, hotel service providers need to understand how to integrate the digital aspect with the human touch into their guest experience.



Figure 3. The influence of generational preferences in the

sustainable design of the customer experience

Generational differences in values, lifestyles and expectations influence how guests perceive and react to their stay. Understanding generational preferences is key to designing relevant, personalized, and

sustainable experiences, which in turn can increase customer satisfaction, loyalty, and have a positive impact on the environment and society. Each generation takes a different approach to sustainability, technology, and guest experience, so understanding these characteristics is crucial for hotels to create services that meet their expectations. Gen Z (born between 1997 and 2012) is very concerned about sustainability, especially when it comes to social and environmental commitments. They prefer to choose hotels that prioritize sustainability through eco-friendly practices, such as reducing waste and using renewable energy. In addition, Gen Z is very savvy about digital technology and tends to opt for services based on digital apps, such as online check-in or the use of chatbots to interact with hotels. They also tend to prefer short visual communication, such as social media and interactive content.

In contrast, Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996) want meaningful experiences that are in line with a healthy lifestyle and environmental awareness. This generation is more inclined to choose hotels that offer authentic experiences, including activities focused on health and wellness. They also pay close attention to the hotel's commitment to sustainability and prefer hotels that adopt eco-friendly practices, such as reducing plastic and saving energy. In addition, they often use mobile apps, loyalty programs, and research information online before deciding where to stay. Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980) prioritizes quality and efficiency, with a preference for comfort and work/life balance. They value a structured experience with efficient timing, while choosing hotels that offer convenient technology that simplifies the process. Gen Xers are also more selective in choosing hotels that adopt true sustainability practices and value clear cleanliness and safety. Baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964), on the other hand, prefer experiences that are comfortable, safe, and geared toward personal comfort. They are more likely to choose hotels that offer personalized services, such as more intimate room service and direct attention from hotel staff. Baby Boomers also value a calm and stress-free experience, and prefer reliable information delivered in person. They usually don't put much emphasis on complex technology, but prefer direct communication on the phone or face-to-face interactions.

Finally, the Silent Generation (born before 1945) favours human interaction and simple services. They generally prefer a technology-free experience and place more emphasis on reliability and ease of access. Silent Generation prefers a hotel that is easily accessible, with a clear and direct personalized service. The implications for sustainable guest experience design are obvious: to create relevant experiences for each generation, hotels must personalize according to each generation's values, preferences, and habits. This includes adjustments in terms of communication, services and technology. In addition, hotels must integrate sustainability into all aspects of the guest experience, ensuring that every action taken not only meets guest expectations but also

contributes to environmental conservation and social responsibility. In this way, hotels can increase guest satisfaction, loyalty and have a positive impact on society and the environment.

## Implementing the Conceptual Model: Entrepreneurial Journeys for a Sustainable Customer Experience

Based on a literature review, this study develops a conceptual model of entrepreneurial pathways that links sustainability, entrepreneurial innovation, and visitor experience in the context of a multigenerational marketplace. The model identifies four key paths that hotel service providers must follow to create a sustainable and relevant guest experience for each generation. The first path is the sustainable value proposition, which includes the development of a value proposition linking sustainability to customer needs and expectations. The second path is personalization of services, which emphasizes the importance of tailoring services to the preferences of each generation. Technology-facilitated interaction is the third way, where technologies such as AI and big data can be used to personalize and speed up the visitor experience. The final path is inclusive co-creation, which involves visitors in creating more sustainable experiences.

To validate this conceptual model, this study conducted an expert review involving experts in the fields of hotel management, entrepreneurship and sustainable tourism. The feedback results show that this model is relevant and applicable, especially for hotels wishing to develop sustainability strategies integrated with technology and generational preferences. As digitalization progresses and the need for more personalized experiences is needed, this model should help hotel service providers create more sustainable, relevant, and adaptable guest experiences.



Figure 4. Implementation of the conceptual model of entrepreneurial pathways

The Entrepreneurial Pathways conceptual model illustrates how generational preferences, innovation and sustainability can be combined through an entrepreneurial process to create a meaningful, different and positive customer experience over the long term. The implementation of this model is done through structured, adaptive, collaborative and sustainable results-oriented steps. The implementation process starts with the first stage, which is Exploration, where the first stage consists of in-depth research on generational preferences and market trends. At this stage, the hotel analyzes the needs and expectations of the guests, while identifying new opportunities in the market. This step also includes benchmarking against current industry best practices to ensure that the proposed innovations are aligned with prevailing trends and meet visitor expectations.

After the exploration stage, the process continues to the Idea stage. Here, through brainstorming and co-creation with guests and staff, innovative ideas for a sustainable customer experience are developed. The main goal at this stage is to generate ideas that not only meet customer wishes, but are also sustainable in social, economic and environmental contexts. Through the selection of ideas based on feasibility and impact, hotels can choose the most potential solutions to implement. The next step is Design, which focuses on the design of customer experience concepts that integrate products, processes, technologies and services. At this stage, the solution designed must ensure that every operational aspect supports sustainability. Hotels need to design guest experiences that are not only innovative, but also positive for the environment and the surrounding community. In addition, at the implementation stage, the solutions designed are tested on a limited scale. This test was carried out to assess the success of the implementation and managerial capacity in the operation of the new model. Hotels are also communicating these changes to guests, ensuring that they are aware of their contribution to sustainability and how they can participate in a more environmentally friendly experience. The last step is Evaluate and Evolve. At this stage, the performance of the implemented solution is thoroughly evaluated. The assessment covers financial aspects, visitor experience and sustainability. Through these assessments, hotels can gain valuable feedback to improve and enhance the guest experience, as well as ensure that the innovations implemented can continue and evolve over the long term.

This entire implementation process is driven by a feedback loop that allows data and learning to be used for continuous improvement. As a result, hotels can continue to adapt and improve their guest experience based on evolving generational preferences and ever-changing sustainability trends. To support successful implementation, there are several factors that must be considered, including visionary leadership, a



culture of innovation and collaboration, strategic partnerships, and the use of data and technology for smarter, evidence-based decision-making. Policies and systems that consistently support sustainability and innovation also play an important role in ensuring that these models can be implemented effectively and efficiently. Overall, Entrepreneurial Pathways are a highly relevant approach in the hospitality sector to create a sustainable customer experience, as well as to strengthen the differentiation of companies in an innovative, personalized and sustainability-focused way , with a long-term positive impact on the environment and society.

### **Conclusion**

The paradigm shift in the hospitality industry towards sustainability and entrepreneurial innovation has paved the way for a profound transformation in the way service providers design and manage the guest experience. Previously, the main focus in the industry was more on short-term financial gains and operational efficiency, without considering the social and environmental impacts of each activity. However, with the growing global awareness of environmental and social issues, as well as changing consumer preferences becoming more and more aware of sustainability, the hospitality industry is now focused on creating long-term value that is not only financially beneficial, but also beneficial to society and the environment.

Sustainability has now become an integral part of a successful hotel business strategy. The sustainability practices implemented by hotels not only help reduce negative impacts on the environment, but also create a more immersive and meaningful guest experience. In this study, it was found that hotels incorporating green practices into all aspects of their operations, from energy and water management to waste reduction and sustainable use of local raw materials, are not only able to reduce operational costs, but also increase guest loyalty and strengthen brand reputation . This shows that sustainability in hospitality is not only a moral choice, but also an economically profitable strategy.

Entrepreneurial innovation plays a key role in ensuring that sustainability is not only reflected in operational practices, but also in a more personalized, digitally connected, and sustainable customer experience. Hotels that embrace technological innovations, such as AI, IoT, and big data, can improve operational efficiency and personalization of services that meet the needs of younger generations, while maintaining a comfortable and environmentally friendly guest experience. Technology allows for more efficient energy management, while digital technologies like mobile apps allow customers to have greater control over their experience, with service options more tailored to their personal preferences.

Moreover, this study also shows that generational preferences greatly influence the way guests interact with hotels. Gen Z and Millennials prioritize sustainability practices and prefer technology that allows them to have a more digitally connected experience and actively participate in sustainability activities. On the other hand, Generation X and Baby Boomers place more importance on comfort, safety and quality of service, while paying special attention to sustainability as a determining factor in the choice of their accommodation. Therefore, to create a relevant guest experience for all generations, hotels must adopt a more segmented approach, which takes into account the needs and expectations of each generation without sacrificing sustainability principles.

The conceptual model of Entrepreneurial Pathways proposed in this study provides a roadmap for hotels to integrate entrepreneurship, sustainability and guest experience into a coordinated strategy. This model emphasizes that innovation is not only about introducing new technologies, but also about creating a better and sustainable customer experience, meeting the expectations of different generations. Its implementation process, involving exploring opportunities, developing ideas, designing solutions, and evaluating performance, ensures that every step is taken with care and measurability, while considering the social and environmental impacts of every decision made. The success of this model relies heavily on visionary leadership, which can create a culture of innovation within the organization and encourage all stakeholders to collaborate to deliver a sustainable customer experience. Strategic partnerships with technology providers, local communities and suppliers will also strengthen the hotel's ability to implement solutions that are innovative, more sustainable and more responsive to market changes.

Overall, this study confirms that sustainable hospitality combined with entrepreneurial innovation not only creates a more meaningful and relevant customer experience, but also contributes to more stable and sustainable business growth in the long term. Hotels that are able to integrate sustainability into all aspects of their operations and guest experience will become leaders in the hospitality industry, which increasingly prioritizes social, environmental, and profitability values.

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# BEYOND THE GLASS CEILING - EXPLORING THE TRIUMPHS OF WOMEN IN INDIA'S HOMESTAY INDUSTRY: A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

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## ABSTRACT

*This study presents a conceptual narrative review of women's entrepreneurship in India's homestay industry, examining the persistence of the glass ceiling and pathways to empowerment. By integrating glass ceiling theory with empowerment theory, the paper analyzes how socio-cultural, economic, and institutional barriers restrict women's participation while identifying key enabling factors such as psychological resilience, financial access, human capital, and policy support. The review synthesizes existing literature to highlight that homestay entrepreneurship significantly enhances women's economic independence, decision-making power, and social status. However, structural inequalities—particularly limited property ownership and restricted access to finance—continue to constrain growth. The study emphasizes the importance of institutional frameworks, policy interventions, and community-based tourism models in fostering inclusive and sustainable development.*

**Keywords:** Women empowerment, homestay, glass ceiling, tourism, entrepreneurship

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism plays a significant role in achieving the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 5, which focuses on gender equality and women's empowerment. Despite progress, women continue to occupy lower-paid positions, and their potential remains underutilized in the tourism sector. Women face multiple socio-cultural, economic, and political barriers that restrict their advancement, often conceptualized as the "glass ceiling" (Lockwood, 2004). In India, rapid industrialization, urbanization, and policy reforms have improved women's participation in education and employment (Saini & Sharma, 2022).

Homestay policies, particularly under community-based tourism, offer a viable pathway for empowering women by promoting local culture, generating income, and supporting sustainable practices (Chettri, 2022). Despite increasing attention to women's entrepreneurship in tourism, limited research specifically examines the intersection of glass ceiling barriers and empowerment outcomes within India's homestay sector. Existing studies either focus broadly on tourism or discuss empowerment without integrating structural constraints.

This creates a critical gap in understanding:

- How systemic barriers operate in informal and semi-formal tourism settings like homestays, and
- How these barriers are negotiated through enabling mechanisms.

### **Research Questions:**

1. What barriers shape women's participation in the homestay industry?
2. What factors enable women's empowerment in this sector?
3. How does homestay entrepreneurship transform women's socio-economic status?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of the glass ceiling has been widely used to explain the invisible yet persistent barriers that restrict women's advancement across sectors (Lockwood, 2004). While early studies conceptualized it primarily as an organizational phenomenon, more recent research extends its applicability to entrepreneurship and tourism. For instance, Carvalho et al. (2019) emphasize structural and institutional inequalities within tourism

organizations, whereas Bazazo et al. (2017) provide a more comprehensive classification by identifying structural, societal, governmental, situational, and personal barriers. This shift indicates a growing recognition that the glass ceiling is not a single barrier but a multi-layered constraint embedded within socio-economic systems.

However, these studies differ in their emphasis. While Carvalho et al. (2019) focus on organizational inequality, Ali and Rasheed (2021) highlight gender stereotypes and cultural expectations as primary barriers. This suggests that in developing economies like India, socio-cultural constraints may be as significant as structural ones, if not more.

Parallel to this, empowerment theory offers a contrasting yet complementary perspective. Perkins and Zimmerman (1995) and Zimmerman (2000) define empowerment as a process involving access to resources, participation in decision-making and critical awareness. Later studies (Roy et al., 2018; Al-Momani, 2019) expand this view by emphasizing empowerment as a multi-dimensional construct, including economic independence, social recognition, and psychological confidence.

A key observation across empowerment literature is the emphasis on outcomes rather than processes. While these studies successfully outline what empowerment looks like, they often do not sufficiently explain how women overcome structural barriers to achieve these outcomes. This creates a disconnect between barrier-focused (glass ceiling) and outcome-focused (empowerment) research.

In the context of tourism, existing literature highlights the economic and developmental potential of homestays. Frochot and Morrison (2001) and Hall (2019) argue that homestays contribute to local economic development, cultural exchange, and sustainable tourism practices, while Li et al. (2024) emphasize their role in rural sustainability and income diversification. However, these studies largely adopt a sectorial or economic perspective, with limited attention to gender dynamics.

Studies focusing specifically on women in tourism entrepreneurship (Khan et al., 2021; Singh, 2022) identify factors such as education, training, and financial access as critical success determinants. In contrast, socio-cultural studies (Devi, 2016; Jeni et al., 2021) stress the importance of family support and gender norms, indicating that success is shaped by both individual capabilities and social context.

Furthermore, emerging research on homestay entrepreneurship (Kumar et al., 2023; Mehta, 2026) suggests that women's participation is often influenced by property ownership and domestic roles. While Mehta (2026) argues that women's traditional homemaking skills provide an advantage in managing homestays, Kumar et al. (2023) highlight that lack of ownership restricts access to finance, creating a paradox where women are both advantaged and constrained by their domestic positioning.

Thus, the literature reveals three key gaps:

- A lack of integration between glass ceiling barriers and empowerment outcomes
- Limited focus on gendered dynamics within homestay tourism
- Insufficient analysis of how enabling factors mediate structural constraints

Addressing these gaps, the present study adopts an integrated approach, examining how structural barriers (glass ceiling) interact with enabling mechanisms to produce empowerment outcomes in the homestay sector.

## **RESEARCH GAP**

A review of existing literature reveals several important limitations in understanding women's entrepreneurship in the homestay sector.

First, although the concept of the glass ceiling has been widely explored in organizational and corporate contexts, its application in informal and semi-formal sectors such as homestay tourism remains underexplored. Most studies (Lockwood, 2004; Carvalho et al., 2019; Bazazo et al., 2017) focus on structured industries, thereby overlooking how these barriers operate within household-based enterprises.

Second, while empowerment theory has been extensively discussed in terms of outcomes such as economic independence and decision-making power (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995; Zimmerman, 2000; Al-Momani, 2019), limited research examines the process through which women transition from constraint to empowerment, particularly in tourism-based livelihoods.

Third, existing tourism literature largely emphasizes the economic and sustainability aspects of homestay development (Frochot & Morrison, 2001; Hall, 2019; Li et al.,



2024), but pays insufficient attention to the gendered dynamics and power structures that influence women's participation and success.

Fourth, studies on women entrepreneurship identify various success factors such as financial access, training, and socio-cultural support (Khan et al., 2021; Jeni et al., 2021; Kumar et al., 2023), yet there is a lack of integrated frameworks that simultaneously examine barriers, enabling factors, and empowerment outcomes.

Finally, there is limited context-specific research focusing on India's homestay sector, particularly in understanding how regional socio-cultural conditions, property ownership patterns, and policy frameworks influence women's entrepreneurial journeys.

### **Gap Statement**

Therefore, the existing literature lacks a holistic and integrated understanding of how glass ceiling barriers, enabling mechanisms, and empowerment outcomes interact within the context of women-led homestay enterprises in India. This study attempts to bridge this gap by developing a conceptual framework that links structural constraints with empowerment processes and outcomes.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Using a narrative literature review methodology, this study investigates women's empowerment in the homestay industry from the perspectives of empowerment theory and glass ceiling theory. Since the goal of the study is to synthesize current knowledge, highlight major themes, and establish a conceptual framework rather than to statistically aggregate findings, a narrative review was deemed appropriate.

Peer-reviewed journal articles, books, policy reports, and publications from international organizations pertaining to tourism, gender studies, and entrepreneurship were among the secondary sources from which pertinent literature was gathered. The studies were chosen based on how well they addressed important topics including community-based tourism, homestay travel, glass ceiling hurdles, and women's empowerment.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This study is grounded in the integration of glass ceiling theory and empowerment theory to examine women's entrepreneurship in the homestay sector. The conceptual framework proposes that women entrepreneurs face multiple structural, socio-cultural, and institutional barriers that restrict their participation and growth. These barriers, collectively conceptualized as the glass ceiling, influence access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making spaces.

However, the presence of enabling factors—such as psychological resilience, financial access, human capital development, institutional support, and community participation—plays a mediating role in overcoming these constraints. These factors facilitate women's entry into entrepreneurship and enhance their capacity to sustain and grow their enterprises.

The framework further posits that successful navigation of these barriers through enabling mechanisms leads to multidimensional empowerment outcomes, including economic independence, improved social status, enhanced decision-making power, and long-term entrepreneurial sustainability. Thus, the model highlights the dynamic interaction between constraints and support systems in shaping women's empowerment in the homestay industry.

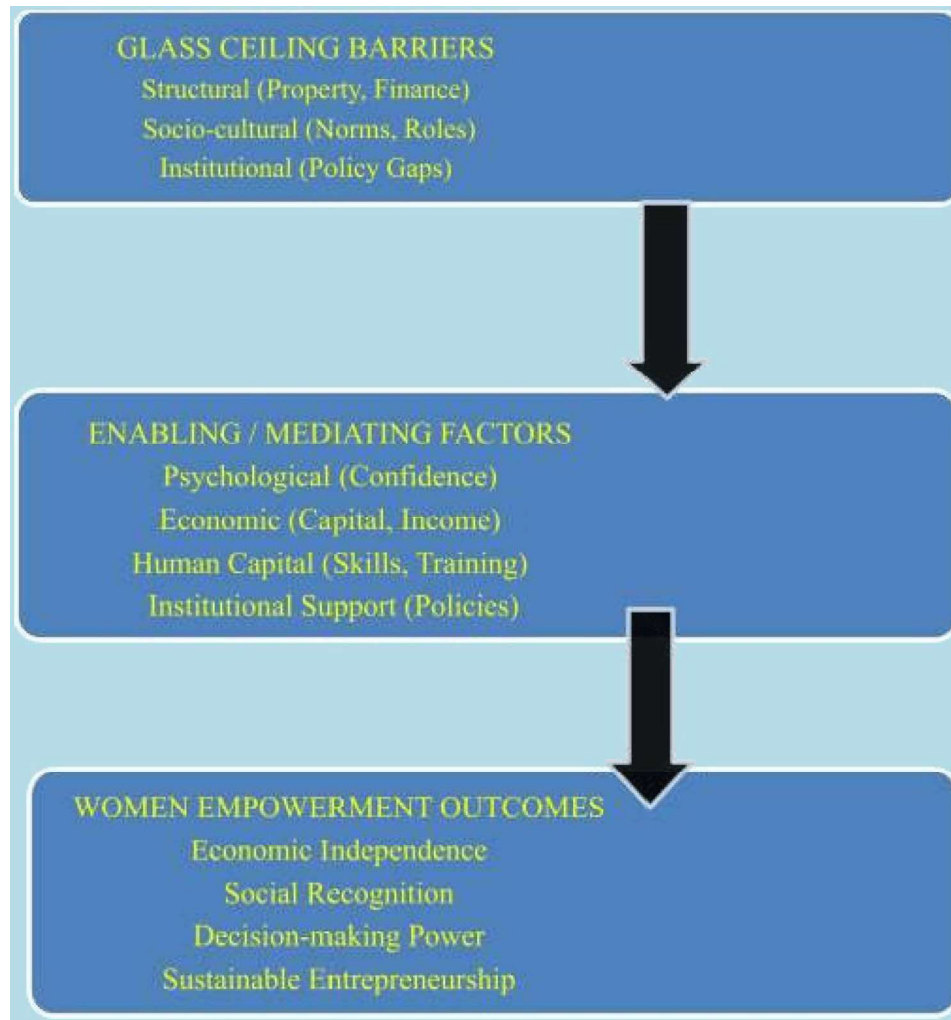


*Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Women's Empowerment in Homestay Industry*

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To understand various glass ceiling faced by women entrepreneurs in the homestay industry.
- To identify the factors that contributes to the success and empowerment of women in the homestay.
- To investigate the impact of homestay entrepreneurship on women's economic and social empowerment.

- To analyze the role of government policies and initiatives in supporting women-owned homestay.
- To provide recommendation for stakeholders to promote and support women's entrepreneurship in the homestay sector.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **GLASS CEILING, WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS AND HOMESTAY INDUSTRY**

After going through various papers major glass ceiling identified are by women entrepreneurs in the homestay industry Indian women have no direct ownership of properties. Due to that women often face legal and social boundaries, which can make it problematic for them to access credits and other forms of fiscal support (Kumar, 2023). Many women entrepreneurs have to balance their family responsibilities with their business obligations, which can be a significant challenge.

Elderly ladies who own their homes and could become homestay business proprietors. Because of the skewed division of labor made popular by patriarchy, women homeowners benefit more from the homestay industry than men do because they have invested more time and developed greater homemaking skills (Mehta, 2026).

An early study by Frochot and Morrison (Frochot, 2001) looks at how homestays might help promote local hospitality, cuisine, and culture while fostering cross-cultural interaction. (Gursoy, 2010), (Hall, 2019), and (Li, 2024) conducted additional research in this area and found that idle residential properties can provide homeowners with a consistent source of income when converted into homestays. The sustainability of homestays was emphasized (Font, 2017). According to these studies, homestays can help preserve the environment by promoting eco-friendly travel and supporting neighborhood businesses.

### **IDENTIFYING THE FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTES TO THE SUCCESS AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN THE HOMESTAY**

The study of Dr. Nirmala K.D results show that many respondents decided to start their own homestay business because of a strong inner desire to follow a hobby that was a financially feasible choice (K.D, 2022).

| S. No. | Major Factor           | Determinants                                                              | Study                                              |
|--------|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| 1      | Psychological          | Self-confidence, risk-taking behavior, achievement motivation, creativity | Khan et al. (2021); Saikia (2023); Dhaliwal (2020) |
| 2      | Socio-cultural         | Work-life balance, family support, gender bias, traditions                | Devi (2016); Jeni et al. (2021)                    |
| 3      | Economic               | Capital availability, marketing, demand, financial independence           | Hasan&Almubarak (2016); Ogujiuba (2021)            |
| 4      | Human Capital          | Education, training, managerial skills, ICT usage                         | Singh (2022); Meyer (2016)                         |
| 5      | Institutional Support  | Policies, training programs, partnerships                                 | Kumar et al. (2023)                                |
| 6      | Innovation & Community | Sustainability, cultural integration, participation                       | Li et al. (2024)                                   |

### **Institutional and Policy Support**

Recent literature strongly emphasizes that institutional and policy support is not merely a facilitating factor but a structural determinant influencing women’s entry, sustainability, and growth in the homestay sector. In alignment with the research objectives, such support directly contributes to both economic and social empowerment outcomes.

Government-led initiatives—including entrepreneurship development programs, homestay registration frameworks, skill development missions, and subsidized financial schemes—play a catalytic role in addressing structural and institutional barriers associated with the glass ceiling (Lockwood, 2004; Roy et al., 2018). These interventions help reduce entry barriers, formalize women-led enterprises, and improve access to finance.

Further, policy measures that promote women-centric ownership models, simplified licensing procedures, and integration with digital tourism platforms (such as online booking systems and e-marketplaces) significantly enhance visibility, competitiveness, and market reach (Kumar et al., 2023; Li et al., 2024). This is particularly important in rural and semi-urban contexts where market access has traditionally been limited.

Institutional mechanisms such as Self-Help Groups (SHGs), cooperatives, local tourism boards, and public-private partnerships (PPPs) act as enabling structures that strengthen collective agency, improve financial inclusion, and facilitate knowledge dissemination (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995; Zimmerman, 2000). These platforms also provide mentorship, networking opportunities, and operational support to women entrepreneurs.

From an impact perspective, effective institutional and policy support contributes to measurable improvements in:

- Income generation and financial independence
- Decision-making autonomy within households
- Social recognition and community participation(Sharma, 2007; Al-Momani, 2019)

However, the effectiveness of these policies largely depends on implementation efficiency, awareness levels, accessibility, and monitoring mechanisms. Gaps in last-mile delivery, bureaucratic complexity, and lack of awareness often limit the actual benefits reaching women

Therefore, a multi-stakeholder approach involving government agencies, financial institutions, NGOs, and local communities is essential to ensure that policy frameworks translate into tangible empowerment outcomes. Strengthening institutional accountability and ensuring inclusive policy design will be critical for long-term sustainability (UNWTO, n.d.; Hall, 2019).

### **Innovation and Community-Based Factors**

Innovation, sustainability, and community participation play a vital role in enhancing women's entrepreneurship. Women-led homestays often succeed by integrating local culture, traditions, and eco-friendly practices. These models promote inclusive growth and cultural Gender stereotyping in leadershipRecent research highlights that innovation

and collective agency play a vital role in women's entrepreneurship. Women-led tourism businesses often thrive when they integrate local culture, sustainability, and community collaboration into their services.

Homestay models, in particular, promote inclusive growth, cultural preservation, and sustainable development, making them a powerful tool for women's empowerment.

### **Why do barriers persist? Which factor is most dominant? (Gulyani, 2024)**

**Gender stereotyping in leadership:** According to feminist ideology, gender stereotypes purposefully prevent women from reaching their full potential by placing boundaries around their lives and promoting patriarchy.

**Family work conflicts and second-shift phenomenon:** Another obstacle that women in management still need to overcome is society's traditional belief that a woman's primary responsibility is to care for her family and home.

**Insufficient mentorship and sponsorship:** Research indicates that mentoring relationships, while important for men, may be essential for women as female managers face greater interpersonal and individual barriers to advancement (Kanter, 1982; Collins, 1994; Flood, 2005).

**Perception of women in leadership:** Even at the top of the business ladder, women still confront obstacles. By exhibiting similar qualities of authority and command, women in leadership roles typically match men's competency levels. However, their coworkers and subordinates frequently view them as impolite and self-centered when they do this.

**Systemic problems:** There is a problem with the entire system. Globally, there are obstacles preventing women from demonstrating their actual managerial ability. In actuality, obstacles still exist for women at the start of the pipeline.

Unquestionably, one of the most potent and ingrained causes of the enduring hurdles in society is gender-biased inequality. It is a structural problem rather than an isolated one because it affects social, economic, educational, and political spheres.

### **Initiatives and Efforts (SHEELA, p. 2025)**

United Nations Women Empowerment Principles (WEPs): By promoting inclusive settings and addressing gender inequities in leadership, this effort promotes businesses to advance gender equality and empower women in the workplace and beyond. Women Entrepreneurs

Finance Initiative (We-Fi): This international program seeks to assist women entrepreneurs in underdeveloped nations in overcoming obstacles to the expansion of their businesses by offering resources and funding.

National and Regional Programs: A number of nations have started programs to provide mentorship, training, and financial assistance to female entrepreneurs. For instance, in India, initiatives like Mudra Yojana and Stand-Up India are intended to assist women in obtaining capital and resources to launch enterprises.

## **CONCLUSION**

The homestay industry in India presents a viable pathway for women's empowerment by enabling financial independence, enhancing self-confidence, and promoting social participation. While significant progress has been made, persistent challenges such as limited property rights, financial constraints, and socio-cultural barriers continue to restrict growth.

To strengthen women's role in this sector, targeted government policies, access to credit, skill development programs, and awareness initiatives are essential. Encouraging women entrepreneurship in homestay tourism can contribute not only to gender equality but also to sustainable rural development.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

To enhance the participation and success of women in the homestay industry, it is essential to improve their access to financial resources and credit facilities, enabling them to establish and expand their businesses more effectively. Alongside financial support, there is a strong need to promote skill development and training programs that equip women with entrepreneurial, managerial, and digital competencies required in the modern tourism sector. Strengthening government support and ensuring effective



implementation of policies can further create a supportive ecosystem for women entrepreneurs. Additionally, encouraging property ownership among women is crucial, as it directly influences their ability to access financial assistance and gain economic independence. Finally, increasing awareness about entrepreneurship opportunities in the homestay sector can motivate more women to participate, thereby fostering inclusive growth and sustainable development.

## **LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

### **Limitations**

While the study provides valuable insights into the role of homestay entrepreneurship in advancing women's empowerment, certain limitations must be acknowledged.

First, the study is primarily based on secondary data and literature review, which may limit the depth of empirical validation. The absence of primary data restricts the ability to capture real-time experiences, perceptions, and behavioral dimensions of women entrepreneurs in the homestay sector.

Second, the study adopts a generalized perspective across India, without focusing on specific regions or states. Given the socio-cultural diversity and regional disparities in tourism development, policy implementation, and gender norms, the findings may not fully represent localized realities.

Third, the analysis of the glass ceiling is largely conceptual and interpretative, relying on existing frameworks rather than quantitative measurement. This may limit the ability to statistically assess the extent and intensity of barriers faced by women.

Additionally, constraints related to availability of updated and sector-specific data on women-led homestay enterprises posed challenges in deriving highly granular insights, particularly in rural and emerging tourism destinations.

### **Future Research Directions**

Future research can build upon the present study by addressing the identified limitations and expanding the scope of inquiry. Empirical studies based on primary data collection,

such as surveys, interviews, and case studies of women homestay entrepreneurs, would provide deeper insights into lived experiences, challenges, and success strategies.

Region-specific research focusing on state-level or destination-level analysis (for example, Rajasthan, Kerala, or Northeast India) can offer a more nuanced understanding of how local cultural, economic, and policy environments influence women's participation in the homestay sector.

Further research can also adopt quantitative approaches to measure the impact of homestay entrepreneurship on women's empowerment using indicators such as income levels, decision-making power, and social mobility.

Another promising area is the examination of digital transformation and platform-based tourism, including the role of online booking platforms, social media marketing, and digital literacy in enhancing women's entrepreneurial success.

Finally, future studies may explore the effectiveness of specific government schemes, institutional interventions, and public-private partnerships, enabling comparative analysis and policy evaluation to strengthen women-centric tourism development models.

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# GREEN PRACTICE IN HOSPITALITY

## Community-Based Adventure Tourism and Sustainability: A Bibliometric Review of Global Trends and Research Opportunities for Bali

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### Abstract

*Community-Based Adventure Tourism (CBAT) has emerged as an important alternative tourism model that combines local community participation with nature-based and experience-oriented tourism activities. This study aims to examine global research trends on CBAT and its relationship with environmental and social sustainability through a simple bibliometric review. The study uses publications indexed in international academic databases during the period 2020–2025, focusing on themes related to community-based tourism, adventure tourism, and sustainable tourism. A total of 186 publications were identified and analyzed descriptively based on annual publication growth, keyword frequency, thematic concentration, and research relevance to Bali. The findings show that CBAT research increased significantly from 18 publications in 2020 to 46 publications in 2025, indicating rising academic interest in sustainable and community-led tourism models. The most dominant themes were sustainability (31.7%), community participation and empowerment (24.2%), nature-based and adventure experiences (19.8%), and environmental conservation (15.6%). The findings are supported by Sustainable Tourism Theory, Social Capital Theory, and Political Ecology, which explain how CBAT contributes to environmental protection, community resilience, and local governance. The review also reveals that Bali has strong potential as a CBAT destination, yet remains underrepresented in the global literature. This article concludes that CBAT offers a promising pathway for more inclusive and environmentally responsible tourism development, particularly in destinations facing the negative impacts of mass tourism such as Bali.*

**Keywords:** *community-based adventure tourism, bibliometric review*

## Introduction

The combination of community-based tourism and adventure tourism has led to growing attention toward the concept of Community-Based Adventure Tourism (CBAT). CBAT refers to tourism activities that integrate adventure experiences in natural environments with active participation and management by local communities (Fadila Bahmid et al., 2023). This model is considered important because it offers the potential to balance environmental conservation, community empowerment, and economic diversification.

However, despite its growing implementation in various destinations, including Bali, CBAT faces several critical conceptual and empirical challenges. First, CBAT is increasingly practiced in the field, yet it remains poorly consolidated as a distinct academic concept. Existing studies tend to examine community-based tourism (Scheyvens & van der Watt, 2021), adventure tourism (Chrismansyah, 2023), ecotourism, or sustainable tourism separately (Letunovska et al., 2021), resulting in conceptual fragmentation and a lack of unified theoretical framework for CBAT (Chrismansyah, 2023).

Second, while CBAT is often associated with sustainability claims—such as environmental protection and local empowerment—these claims are not consistently supported by systematic empirical mapping. There is limited understanding of how CBAT contributes to sustainability outcomes across different contexts, making it difficult to evaluate its actual effectiveness and long-term impact.

Third, in the context of Bali, which is currently facing issues related to overtourism, environmental degradation, and unequal economic distribution, there is a lack of structured research examining CBAT as a strategic alternative tourism model (Puspitadewi et al., 2015). Although Bali has strong potential for CBAT development due to its natural landscapes and community-based cultural systems, existing research has not sufficiently explored how CBAT can be positioned as a solution to these challenges.

These conditions indicate a clear research gap: the need for a more comprehensive understanding of CBAT as an integrated concept, including its research evolution, dominant themes, and future development directions. Therefore, this study aims to systematically analyze the CBAT literature to identify key trends, conceptual gaps, and opportunities for application, particularly in destinations such as Bali. Bali provides a highly relevant and urgent context for examining Community-Based Adventure Tourism (CBAT). The island has experienced rapid tourism growth over the past decade, with international arrivals exceeding 6 million visitors annually before the COVID-19 pandemic, heavily concentrated in areas such as Kuta, Seminyak, and Ubud. This concentration has led to severe overtourism symptoms, including traffic congestion, increasing waste generation (estimated at thousands of tons per day), water scarcity in tourism-dense areas, and significant land-use change from agricultural to tourism infrastructure. These conditions indicate that while tourism has generated substantial economic benefits, it has also created serious environmental degradation and social imbalance.

At the same time, Bali possesses strong potential for alternative tourism models such as CBAT, supported by its rich natural landscapes (mountains, rivers,



forests) and deeply rooted community-based systems such as *desa adat*. Several local initiatives—such as trekking, rafting, and village-based adventure activities—reflect the practical emergence of CBAT elements. However, these initiatives are often developed in a fragmented and unstandardized manner, without a clear framework that integrates adventure tourism with community empowerment and sustainability principles. This indicates a growing need for structured CBAT development as a strategic response to overtourism and unsustainable tourism practices.

Despite this urgency, there is a significant research gap in the Bali context. Existing studies in Bali predominantly focus on cultural tourism, ecotourism, or community-based tourism in general, with very limited empirical or review-based research that explicitly conceptualizes and analyzes CBAT as a distinct framework. Moreover, no comprehensive bibliometric studies have mapped the global development of CBAT research and linked it to Bali's specific challenges and opportunities. As a result, there is insufficient academic guidance on how CBAT can be systematically developed and positioned as a sustainable tourism strategy in Bali. Therefore, this study aims to conduct a bibliometric review of global research on Community-Based Adventure Tourism from 2020 to 2025, focusing on its implications for environmental and social sustainability, while highlighting its strategic relevance for addressing tourism challenges in Bali.

## **Literature Review**

Community-Based Tourism is widely recognized as an alternative to mass tourism because it places local communities at the center of tourism planning and operation (Ansori, 2015). From a participatory development perspective, local people are expected to act not only as workers but also as decision-makers, owners, and beneficiaries. Several studies highlight that CBT can strengthen local economies, preserve cultural identity, and enhance environmental awareness when communities have genuine control over tourism development (Desak et al., 2025). However, this optimistic view is not consistently supported across empirical findings. While some researchers report successful community empowerment outcomes, others argue that CBT often results in pseudo-participation, where involvement is limited to implementation rather than decision-making. For example, Masriana (2019) found that benefits are frequently unevenly distributed due to elite capture, while Ainun et al. (2014) emphasize that weak governance and limited local capacity can reduce CBT effectiveness. This reveals a key contradiction: although CBT is conceptually participatory, in practice it may reproduce inequality if governance structures are not inclusive.

Adventure tourism, on the other hand, focuses on activities involving physical engagement, interaction with nature, and elements of risk or challenge (Lamopia & Nindya, 2023). It has gained popularity due to changing tourist preferences, particularly among younger travelers seeking authentic and experiential tourism (Darma Putra et al., 2021). Some studies argue that adventure tourism can support sustainability when it is small-scale, environmentally sensitive, and combined with education. However, contrasting findings suggest that adventure tourism can also

generate significant environmental pressures, including trail degradation, biodiversity disturbance, and unmanaged waste, particularly in destinations lacking proper regulation (Bitušíková, 2021). This indicates a second contradiction: while adventure tourism is often marketed as nature-based and sustainable, its actual impact depends heavily on management practices and carrying capacity control.

The integration of these two approaches has led to the emergence of Community-Based Adventure Tourism (CBAT), which combines local participation with nature-based adventure activities (Desak et al., 2025). In theory, CBAT offers a more holistic model that addresses the limitations of both CBT and adventure tourism. Compared to CBT, CBAT introduces a market-driven and experience-oriented dimension that can increase tourist demand and economic value. Compared to adventure tourism, CBAT emphasizes local control and community benefits, potentially reducing external exploitation (Ditta-Apichai et al., 2024). However, despite these theoretical advantages, there is still limited empirical evidence confirming that CBAT consistently achieves these dual goals. Some early studies suggest that integrating community management into adventure tourism is complex, as it requires both technical skills (e.g., safety, guiding, risk management) and strong local institutions.

This comparison highlights an important gap: while CBT and adventure tourism have been extensively studied, their integration into CBAT remains conceptually promising but empirically underexplored (Rickly, 2022). Moreover, existing studies tend to focus on either social or environmental outcomes, with limited research examining how CBAT simultaneously balances both dimensions. This lack of integrative analysis suggests the need for further research to better understand whether CBAT can genuinely function as a sustainable tourism model or whether it risks reproducing the same governance and environmental challenges found in its parent concepts.

## **Research Methodology**

This study employs a bibliometric review approach to systematically analyze the development of research on Community-Based Adventure Tourism (CBAT) and related fields (Buhalis et al., 2019). To ensure transparency and reproducibility, the study follows a structured selection process adapted from the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework. The data were collected from international academic databases, primarily Scopus and Google Scholar, covering publications from 2020 to 2025. The initial search used combinations of keywords, including community-based tourism, adventure tourism, sustainable tourism, ecotourism, rural tourism, and nature-based tourism.

The search process resulted in an initial identification of 412 articles. These articles were then filtered through several stages: duplicate removal, title and abstract screening, full-text eligibility assessment, and final inclusion.

Duplicate removal with total of 58 duplicate records were removed, leaving 354 articles. Title and abstract screening. Articles were screened based on relevance to tourism, community involvement, and sustainability themes. At this stage, 121 articles were excluded because they did not directly relate to the research focus.

Full-text eligibility assessment. The remaining 233 articles were assessed in full text using the following inclusion criteria: peer-reviewed journal articles, written in English, explicitly discussing tourism and sustainability, and containing elements of community participation and/or adventure tourism. Articles were excluded if they lacked full-text access, were purely opinion-based without analytical content, or did not address the study variables. This stage excluded 47 articles. Final Inclusion. After the screening process, a total of 186 publications were included in the final bibliometric analysis.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

The bibliometric analysis was conducted in three main stages: Descriptive analysis (publication trends), keyword co-occurrence and thematic mapping, and content-based thematic interpretation. Descriptive analysis (publication trends). Annual publication trends were analyzed to identify the growth and development of CBAT-related research over the 2020–2025 period.

Keyword co-occurrence and thematic mapping. Themes were identified using a keyword co-occurrence analysis. Author keywords and indexed keywords from each article were extracted and grouped based on frequency and co-occurrence patterns. Keywords that frequently appeared together were clustered into thematic groups, representing dominant research areas such as: community participation and empowerment, environmental sustainability and conservation, adventure tourism experience and risk, and rural and nature-based tourism development. This process allowed the identification of core research themes and their interrelationships.

Content-based thematic interpretation. To complement the bibliometric mapping, a qualitative content analysis was conducted on selected high-relevance articles within each cluster. This step aimed to interpret how the literature addresses environmental sustainability (e.g., ecological protection, impact management) and social sustainability (e.g., equity, participation, local benefits). Finally, the results were contextualized to Bali in order to identify research gaps and assess the strategic relevance of CBAT as a sustainable tourism approach.

### **Results and Discussion**

Growth of Research on Community-Based Adventure Tourism (2020–2025). The first major finding shows that global academic interest in CBAT and related themes has increased consistently during the period 2020–2025.

**Table 1. Number of Publications by Year**

| <b>Year</b>  | <b>Number of Publications</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|--------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| 2020         | 18                            | 9.7%              |
| 2021         | 24                            | 12.9%             |
| 2022         | 29                            | 15.6%             |
| 2023         | 33                            | 17.7%             |
| 2024         | 36                            | 19.4%             |
| 2025         | 46                            | 24.7%             |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>186</b>                    | <b>100%</b>       |

Source: The research result, 2026

The data indicate that publications nearly tripled from 18 studies in 2020 to 46 studies in 2025. This reflects a clear upward trend in scholarly interest. The most significant increase occurred between 2024 and 2025, when publication output rose by 27.8%. This growth suggests that researchers are increasingly interested in tourism models that combine community participation, outdoor experiences, and sustainability values. The post-pandemic tourism context may also explain this rise, as travelers and destinations increasingly value small-scale, nature-based, and locally grounded tourism alternatives.

This finding is strongly supported by Sustainable Tourism Theory (Andjanie et al., 2023), which argues that tourism development is increasingly shifting toward models that balance economic benefits with ecological protection and social inclusion. The rise in publications indicates that CBAT is being recognized as a relevant response to the limitations of mass tourism. In addition, the growth aligns with the global transition toward resilient tourism systems, where community-based and nature-oriented tourism products are viewed as more adaptive and less vulnerable than large-scale tourism models.

**Dominant Research Themes in the Literature.** The second finding concerns the main topics discussed in the CBAT-related literature.

**Table 2. Dominant Themes in CBAT Research**

| Theme                                 | Number of Publications | Percentage  |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| Sustainability (general)              | 59                     | 31.7%       |
| Community participation & empowerment | 45                     | 24.2%       |
| Adventure / nature-based experience   | 37                     | 19.8%       |
| Environmental conservation            | 29                     | 15.6%       |
| Local economy & livelihoods           | 16                     | 8.6%        |
| <b>Total</b>                          | <b>186</b>             | <b>100%</b> |

Source: The research result, 2026

The most dominant theme is sustainability, appearing in 59 publications (31.7%). This indicates that most researchers frame CBAT within broader sustainable tourism debates rather than treating it only as a niche tourism product. The second largest theme is community participation and empowerment with 45 publications (24.2%). This shows that social processes remain central in the literature, especially issues related to local involvement, decision-making, leadership, and community benefit-sharing. The third dominant theme is adventure and nature-based experience with 37 publications (19.8%), indicating that physical and outdoor experiences are important but are often discussed in connection with broader sustainability and community issues.

Environmental conservation appears in 29 publications (15.6%), suggesting that the ecological dimension is significant but slightly less emphasized than social and governance issues. Finally, local economy and livelihoods account for 16 publications (8.6%), showing that while economic outcomes matter, the literature increasingly focuses on sustainability quality rather than only income generation.

The prominence of community participation and empowerment strongly supports Social Capital Theory, which emphasizes trust, cooperation, local networks, and collective action (Filipe et al., 2018). In CBAT contexts, successful tourism development depends on community relationships, local institutions, and the ability to organize shared tourism resources. Meanwhile, the strong presence of environmental conservation and sustainability supports Political Ecology, which explains that environmental management is not just technical but also social and political. Local communities play a key role in controlling access, regulating behavior, and protecting natural resources.

### **Social Sustainability as a Core Research Focus**

A major result of the bibliometric review is that social sustainability appears as

one of the strongest foundations of CBAT research.

## Indicators of Social Sustainability in the Literature

Among the 186 reviewed publications, 68 studies (36.6%) explicitly discuss community participation, 52 studies (28.0%) focus on empowerment and local capacity, 34 studies (18.3%) examine social cohesion and cooperation, 21 studies (11.3%) discuss cultural preservation, 11 studies (5.9%) address youth or intergenerational involvement.

These results show that CBAT is strongly associated with community-centered development. The most frequent social indicator is participation, which appears in more than one-third of the literature. This suggests that researchers see local involvement as the foundation of successful CBAT implementation. The second most frequent indicator is empowerment, showing that many studies do not simply measure community presence but also examine whether local people gain skills, confidence, leadership opportunities, and bargaining power. The presence of social cohesion and cultural preservation also indicates that CBAT is often viewed as a social process, not only an economic or recreational activity. In many cases, community-based adventure tourism helps strengthen cooperation among residents and maintain local identity through storytelling, guiding traditions, customary land management, and local environmental ethics.

This finding is directly supported by Social Capital Theory (Scheyvens & van der Watt, 2021). According to Putnam, social capital consists of networks, norms, and trust that enable coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. In the context of CBAT: Bonding social capital helps communities work together internally, Bridging social capital helps connect communities with external actors such as tourists, NGOs, and government agencies. Thus, the high frequency of participation and empowerment themes confirms that CBAT is deeply rooted in collective social organization.

Environmental Sustainability is Important but Operationally Uneven. The review also shows that environmental sustainability is a key theme, but its treatment in the literature is often uneven.

## Environmental Sustainability Indicators

Among the 186 publications, 41 studies (22.0%) discuss conservation practices, 33 studies (17.7%) discuss environmental awareness or education, 24 studies (12.9%) discuss low-impact tourism management, 18 studies (9.7%) discuss resource monitoring or carrying capacity, 15 studies (8.1%) identify environmental risks or degradation. The literature shows that environmental sustainability (Kuzior et al., 2021) is widely recognized, but often discussed more as a normative goal than as a deeply measured operational outcome. Many studies emphasize that CBAT should support conservation, but fewer studies provide strong evidence on ecological monitoring, carrying capacity, or long-term environmental measurement.

This means that while CBAT is frequently presented as environmentally friendly, actual sustainability depends on management quality (DuPuy et al., 2025). Some studies describe positive practices such as: local trail maintenance, community waste management, environmental interpretation by guides, rules on visitor behavior, limits on access to fragile natural areas. However, other studies also warn about challenges such as overuse of trekking routes, unmanaged visitor flows, plastic waste in nature-based attractions, and weak environmental monitoring systems.

This finding is well explained by Political Ecology, which argues that environmental sustainability is shaped by local power relations, governance systems, and access to resources. Environmental protection is not automatic simply because tourism is nature-based. Instead, it depends on who controls the tourism space, who sets the rules, who benefits from tourism, whether local knowledge is respected. In Bali, this perspective is especially relevant because environmental management is often influenced by *desa adat*, local customary rules, and cultural values such as *Tri Hita Karana*.

### **CBAT Research is Still Conceptually Fragmented**

Another important finding is that CBAT research remains fragmented across multiple labels. Across the 186 publications, the most common related terms include: community-based tourism – 72 occurrences, sustainable tourism – 66 occurrences, adventure tourism – 49 occurrences, ecotourism – 44 occurrences, rural tourism – 38 occurrences, nature-based tourism – 31 occurrences, community empowerment – 27 occurrences, environmental sustainability – 24 occurrences.

This pattern suggests that the literature is rich but not yet fully consolidated under the term Community-Based Adventure Tourism. Many relevant studies are still published under related labels such as ecotourism, rural tourism, community-based tourism, sustainable nature tourism, and outdoor tourism. As a result, the field lacks strong conceptual unity. This explains why CBAT is still emerging rather than fully established as an independent research category.

From a knowledge development perspective, this fragmentation suggests that CBAT is still in a formation stage as a research domain. This supports the argument that a bibliometric review is important because it helps scholars organize scattered knowledge and identify a clearer intellectual structure.

### **Implications for Bali: High Practical Potential, Low Specific Academic Attention**

One of the most important findings of this article is the relevance of CBAT for Bali. From the reviewed publications: only 9 studies (4.8%) explicitly focus on Indonesia, only 3 studies (1.6%) specifically discuss Bali. Most Bali-related tourism studies are still concentrated on cultural tourism, mass tourism, village tourism, ecotourism, destination management.



These numbers suggest that Bali is highly relevant in practice but still underrepresented in specific CBAT scholarship. This is an important gap because Bali has many characteristics that make it ideal for CBAT research: strong community institutions, natural landscapes suitable for adventure tourism, existing village tourism programs, customary governance systems, sustainability pressures caused by overtourism, cultural philosophy supporting human–nature harmony.

Potential CBAT activities in Bali include: jungle trekking in upland villages, cycling-based rural tourism, canyoning and river exploration, mangrove adventure tourism, agro-adventure experiences, forest and waterfall interpretation routes, community-led mountain experiences (Mahadewi, 2019).

This finding is strongly supported by Sustainable Tourism Theory (Pasfatima Mbulu & Adhi Gunadi, 2018) and Political Ecology. Sustainable Tourism Theory explains why Bali urgently needs tourism diversification beyond overcrowded coastal mass tourism. Political Ecology explains why Bali is a unique case, because environmental governance is deeply shaped by local cultural institutions, community norms, and customary authority. In addition, Tri Hita Karana strengthens the local relevance of CBAT because it promotes balance among: human relationships, nature, spiritual values (Astuti, 2018). This makes Bali not only a tourism destination, but also a rich theoretical laboratory for studying how community-led adventure tourism can support sustainability

## **Conclusions**

This bibliometric review shows that research on Community-Based Adventure Tourism (CBAT) has grown steadily between 2020 and 2025, with publications increasing from 18 studies in 2020 to 46 studies in 2025. This trend reflects the increasing global interest in tourism models that are more sustainable, community-centered, and nature-based. The findings indicate that the most dominant research themes are sustainability, community participation and empowerment, adventure and nature-based experiences, and environmental conservation. This suggests that CBAT is widely understood as a hybrid tourism model that connects environmental stewardship with social development.

From a theoretical perspective, this study provides a new integrative insight into CBAT by demonstrating how multiple theoretical frameworks converge within a single tourism model. While Sustainable Tourism Theory traditionally emphasizes the balance between economic, environmental, and social dimensions, this study shows that CBAT operationalizes this balance more concretely through localized, community-driven adventure experiences. Furthermore, Social Capital Theory, which highlights trust, networks, and cooperation, is extended in the CBAT context by revealing that community participation is not only a social asset but also a functional mechanism for managing tourism risks and ensuring service quality in adventure-based settings. In addition, Political Ecology, which focuses on power relations and resource control, gains further relevance as this study demonstrates that

environmental sustainability in CBAT is strongly dependent on community authority and governance over natural resources, rather than solely on external regulations. Therefore, the key theoretical contribution of this study lies in positioning CBAT as an integrative framework that links sustainability, social capital, and governance into a unified model of tourism development. Unlike previous studies that examine these elements separately, this review highlights that CBAT functions as a multi-dimensional system, where environmental sustainability, community empowerment, and experiential tourism are interdependent rather than independent components.

The review also reveals that Bali has strong strategic potential for CBAT but remains underrepresented in the global academic literature. This creates an important opportunity for future empirical research, especially in rural and nature-based destinations where community institutions and environmental values remain strong. Overall, this study concludes that CBAT is not only a tourism product but also a holistic sustainability strategy for destinations seeking more inclusive, resilient, and environmentally responsible tourism development.

Based on these findings, several recommendations are proposed. First, researchers should conduct more empirical studies on CBAT in Bali, particularly using qualitative and mixed-method approaches to capture social and environmental dynamics. Second, local governments should support community-managed adventure tourism as a diversification strategy beyond mass tourism. Third, Pokdarwis and desa adat should be actively involved in environmental monitoring, visitor regulation, and the development of local guiding standards. Fourth, tourism planners should integrate CBAT with sustainability principles, including carrying capacity management, waste control, and equitable benefit-sharing. Finally, future studies should explore how Tri Hita Karana can function as a local governance framework in CBAT implementation.

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# Managerial Behavior in the Implementation of Eco-Friendly Accommodations at Sanctoo Suites & Villas

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## Abstract

*The hospitality industry is one of the sectors that significantly contributes to environmental impact through energy consumption, water use, and waste production. In this context, eco-friendly practices are an essential part of a hotel's sustainability strategy. However, the success of their implementation depends not only on technology or formal policies but also on managerial behavior. This study aims to analyse the role of managerial behavior in the implementation of eco-friendly practices at nature-based luxury hotels. The study employs a qualitative, descriptive-exploratory design. Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews with the Human Capital Manager at Sanctoo Suites & Villas and through internal documentation on energy and resource management. Analysis was conducted through data reduction, thematic categorization, and interpretation. The results indicate that managerial behavior plays a role in integrating sustainability principles through plastic reduction policies, service digitisation, Quality Assurance monitoring systems, employee education, and energy cost control. Efficiency is evident in electricity consumption and total utility use, though water use presents its own challenges. These findings confirm that managerial behavior is a key factor in maintaining the consistency and effectiveness of eco-friendly practice implementation*

**Keywords:** managerial behavior, environmentally friendly practices, luxury hotel, sustainability.

## Introduction

For decades, environmental considerations received insufficient attention from policymakers, industry practitioners, and academics alike, under the prevailing assumption that industrial production activities had little impact on environmental sustainability (Jones et al., 2019). However, as the intensity and scale of industrial activities have increased globally, this assumption has gradually shifted. The accumulation of negative impacts has become increasingly evident, reflected in various environmental issues such as climate change, ecosystem degradation, rising

air emissions, and water pollution resulting from the use of hazardous materials in production processes. In this context, the hospitality industry, as one of the global economic sectors with significant contributions accounting for over 10% of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and playing a role in providing millions of jobs, has become a crucial part of the discourse on environmental sustainability.

Although it plays a strategic role in driving economic growth, this industry is not exempt from substantial environmental implications. Hotel operations inherently consume large amounts of natural resources and contribute to various forms of ecological pressure (Jamshed et al., 2022). Furthermore, recent empirical findings indicate that the hospitality industry in urban areas ranks among the significant contributors to environmental impacts within the accommodation sector. This is primarily related to high energy consumption, water use intensity, and waste production, including both solid and hazardous waste generated by daily operational activities (Musau et al., 2024).

Environmentally oriented leadership encourages creativity and green innovation in hotel organizations, supporting operational sustainability (Alyahya et al., 2023) and the global tourism industry. Companies are shifting toward a quality-driven competitive model, as shown by the adoption of environmental sustainability in hospitality. A green hotel is one that conserves water, reduces energy use, minimizes waste, and saves money while protecting the environment (Kapiki, 2012a). Managerial behavior plays a crucial role in shaping an environmentally friendly organizational culture within the hospitality industry. Conceptually, it refers to the set of managerial actions and practices, including decision-making, resource allocation, and operational control, that influence how organizational strategies are implemented in practice (Robbins & Judge, 2017).

In the context of sustainability, managerial behavior determines the extent to which environmental initiatives are effectively integrated into daily operations. Managers ability to encourage green innovation and enhance environmental performance is closely linked to their managerial capabilities and leadership effectiveness (Jiang et al., 2024). Furthermore, responsible leadership has been shown to foster a green organizational culture and strengthen environmental performance in the hospitality sector (Ak et al., 2025).

Kapiki, (2012) explains that hotels can lower operational costs by improving efficiency and reducing waste. Hotels may reduce energy use by 20–40% without affecting service quality. This supports the concept of green hotels, which emphasize resource efficiency for sustainable development. According to Tanuwijaya, sustainable hotel strategies succeed when eco-friendly principles are paired with guest-facing, high-quality services. Practices in green hotels align with sustainable development principles, using resources efficiently while maintaining service quality (Pakpahan et al., 2022). Certifications both signal environmental commitment and

influence guest choices. Qubbaj et al., (2023) found that awareness of sustainability certifications increases the likelihood of guests choosing green-certified hotels.

Eco-friendly accommodations refer specifically to lodging establishments that implement environmentally responsible practices, such as energy efficiency, waste reduction, and natural resource conservation (Nizar et al., 2022). In contrast, it represents a broader concept that integrates not only environmental practices but also social responsibility and economic viability, aligning with the principles of sustainable development. Eco-friendly accommodations require more than technology and policies; leadership from management is crucial for directing hotel operations and achieving goals (Nawang Sari & Yanti, 2019). Green leadership fosters a green organizational culture and improves a hotel's environmental performance by internalizing sustainability values within operations (Elshaer et al., 2021). Leadership also ensures policy implementation, direction, and coordination at the operational level.

A number of studies have shown that leadership and management practices significantly contribute to the implementation of sustainability policies in the hospitality sector. Research by Arevin, (2024) found that a participatory leadership style is positively correlated with the implementation of green hotel management and improvements in a hotel's environmental performance. Additionally, case studies at Cipta Hotel Pancoran and several star-rated hotels in Bandung and Jakarta indicate that managerial decisions and actions play a role in implementing eco-friendly practices and green hospitality strategies in daily operations (Ephyna et al., 2026).

Although various studies have highlighted eco-friendly accommodation practices, particularly regarding energy efficiency, water conservation, and the reduction of operational waste (Kim et al., 2019), research that positions internal organizational factors, specifically managerial behavior, as the primary determinants of sustainability implementation remains relatively limited. Studies indicate that the adoption of sustainability practices is influenced not only by technology or technical policies but also by organizational factors and managerial behavior in strategic decision-making (Hojnik, 2016 dalam Puspitaa & Isnalita, 2021). Managerial behavior plays a role in determining policy priorities, resource allocation, and the organizational culture that supports sustainability (Ak et al., 2025). Therefore, managers' ability to integrate sustainability principles into strategic decisions is key to driving green innovation and ensuring consistent implementation at the operational level (Jiang et al., 2024), and environmental strategies supported by green transformational leadership play a significant role in enhancing environmentally friendly process and product innovation in the service sector (Awan et al., 2021).

In a more specific context, research specifically addressing the role of

managerial behavior in the implementation of environmentally friendly practices remains limited, particularly in nature-based luxury hotels. However, the characteristics of hotels with a nature-based hospitality concept present unique complexities in sustainability management, as they must balance service exclusivity with environmental responsibility.

Although various studies have discussed sustainability practices in the hospitality sector, most research has emphasized technical aspects such as energy efficiency, waste management, and the adoption of green technology. Studies that specifically position managerial behavior as a mechanism linking sustainability policies to daily operational practices remain relatively limited, particularly in the context of nature-based luxury hotels. This study contributes by demonstrating that managerial behavior plays a role not only at the strategic policy level but also functions as an integrative mechanism linking sustainability policy direction with operational control, workplace culture development, and energy cost efficiency. Thus, this study expands the perspective on the implementation of eco-friendly accommodations through a managerial behavior approach within the context of nature-based luxury hospitality. Based on this gap, this study focuses on Sanctoo Suites & Villas in Gianyar, Bali, which embraces a nature-based luxury concept and demonstrates a commitment to environmental management through energy efficiency, waste management, and the prudent use of resources. This study aims to analyse how managerial behavior influences the implementation of eco-friendly practices at Sanctoo Suites & Villas.

### **Literature Review**

Managerial behavior plays a central role in the successful implementation of eco-friendly accommodations within the hospitality industry. Leadership decisions, managerial attitudes, and organizational strategies significantly influence how sustainability initiatives are adopted and integrated into accommodation operations. Managers act as key agents of change by directing environmental policies, motivating employees, and embedding sustainability principles into organizational culture.

One of the most influential factors is managers environmental attitudes and awareness. Positive managerial attitudes toward environmental sustainability encourage the adoption of green practices such as energy conservation, waste reduction, and resource efficiency. Research indicates that managers environmental awareness directly affects their intention to implement environmentally responsible practices within hospitality organizations (Husain et al., 2025; Sánchez-García et al., 2025). Although personal environmental concern is important, stakeholder expectations and anticipated economic benefits often serve as stronger motivations for adopting green initiatives (Park & Kim, 2014).

Leadership style is another critical determinant in implementing eco friendly



accommodations. Eco centric leadership promotes environmentally responsible employee behavior by fostering green commitment and strengthening employees confidence in sustainable actions (Hassan Abdou, 2025). Similarly, green inclusive leadership creates a supportive workplace climate that encourages staff participation in sustainability initiatives beyond formal organizational requirements (Ullah et al., 2026). Responsible leadership has also been found to enhance environmental performance by shaping an organizational green culture that supports eco-friendly employee behavior (Ak et al., 2025b).

Supportive managerial practices further strengthen environmental implementation. Managers who provide organizational support, environmental training, and clear sustainability policies encourage employees to engage in green behaviors such as recycling, reducing energy use, and supporting conservation programs (Chua et al., 2024; Paillé & Morelos, 2017). Green Human Resource Management (GHRM), including environmentally focused recruitment, training, rewards, and talent management, helps institutionalize sustainability within daily operations (Hawela et al., 2025; Yan et al., 2024)

Despite these advantages, several barriers limit the implementation of eco-friendly accommodations. Financial constraints remain one of the most significant challenges, particularly for small-scale and rural accommodation providers, due to the high costs of sustainable technologies and infrastructure (Carmody & Zeppel, 2009). In addition, limited technical knowledge and insufficient expertise in environmental management often hinder the adoption of advanced sustainability practices. To overcome these barriers, managers can adopt several best practices. Establishing green teams, joining environmental associations, obtaining eco-certifications, and setting measurable sustainability targets can improve environmental performance and organizational credibility (Kapiki, 2012). Encouraging employee participation through training and motivation also enhances long-term sustainability commitment.

Overall, managerial behavior is a critical driver in the transition toward eco-friendly accommodations. Proactive leadership, organizational support, and strategic sustainability practices contribute not only to environmental protection but also to improved operational efficiency, guest satisfaction, and competitive advantage within the hospitality sector (Kapiki, 2012b; Ruas et al., 2025).

### **Research Methodology**

This study uses a qualitative, descriptive-exploratory design to understand how managers integrate sustainability principles into Sanctoo Suites & Villas' operations. The site was purposively selected for its nature-based luxury status and eco-friendly practices. Research data includes primary data from in-depth interviews with the Human Capital Manager, a key informant for sustainability policies and implementation, and secondary data.

To enhance validity, this study uses triangulation with field observations and

internal documentation. Secondary data came from documents on waste management, energy and water efficiency, and environmental programs. Data analysis followed qualitative stages of data reduction, thematic categorization, presentation, and interpretation. These identified patterns of managerial behavior, forms of implementation, and sustainability challenges. Data validity was ensured through the triangulation of sources and methods to align findings with field conditions.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Data Description**

Based on in-depth interviews and field observations, this study produced the following findings. The findings are organised by key themes relating to management policies, digitalisation, monitoring, employee training, resource efficiency, and their impacts:

#### **a. Management Policies in the Implementation of Eco-Friendly Practices**



Figure 1. Implementation of the Use of Eco-Friendly Materials  
[Source: HRD Santcoo Suites & Villas]

Management has implemented a policy to reduce plastic use in operations. In several hotel areas, glass bottles replace single-use plastic bottles, cassava-based straws are used, and plastic bin liners are reduced in some locations. Additionally, organic and inorganic waste are separated daily.

#### **b. Operational Digitalization As a Strategy for Reducing Environmental Impact**



Figure 2. Eco-Friendly Information Materials in the Room

[Source: HRD Santcoo Suites & Villas]

The hotel uses a hospitality TV to give guests information, such as a welcome letter. Guests access service and facility details via barcodes in rooms and shared spaces. Electronic sign-in replaces paper. Printed documents for some services have decreased. Besides digital messages, the room had an elephant-shaped wooden sign showing a message to save water and energy. The sign offered details about changing bed linens, reusing towels, and reducing water and detergent use. This was displayed on a wooden board as part of the room's amenities.

### c. Managerial Monitoring and Control System

The hotel has a Quality Assurance team that conducts inspections of operational standards across various departments. These inspections are conducted regularly and cover cleanliness, work procedures, and compliance with the hotel's applicable standards.

### d. The Role of Management in Employee Education and Training

Employees receive training and guidance on work procedures, including waste management, the use of operational equipment, and how to convey information to guests regarding the hotel's service system. Training activities are conducted through briefings and internal training sessions. Additionally, based on field observations, management provides metal water bottles (tumblers) to employees for daily use. These tumblers are evident as part of employees' work equipment in several operational areas of the hotel.



Figure 3. Documentation of Employee Training and Subsidized Tumblers  
[Source: HRD Santcoo Suites & Villas]

#### e. Impact of Water and Energy Efficiency on Hotel Operations

Table 1: Energy Usage Ratio Table for August 2025

| Energy Component              | Budget Ratio (%) | Actual Ratio (%) | Difference   |
|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Electricity                   | 2.99             | 2.27             | 0.72% lower  |
| Water                         | 0.17             | 0.22             | 0.05% higher |
| Total Energy Cost / Utilities | 3.17             | 2.58             | 0.59% lower  |

[Source: Data compiled from internal HR documents]

Internal hotel records indicate that management strategies for resource utilisation have produced operational efficiencies. For electricity, the budgeted proportion was 2.99% of revenue, while actual expenditures reached 2.27%. For water, the budgeted share was 0.17%, while the actual cost was 0.22%. In total, energy and utility expenditures accounted for 3.17% of hotel revenue, while actual costs accounted for 2.58%. These figures reveal a variance between the budgeted and actual energy expenses for the period. This information serves as part of the hotel's evaluation process for monitoring energy resource use.

### Discussion

In the context of sustainability, managerial behavior can be understood as a combination of strategic leadership, operational control, and organizational culture building (Jiang et al., 2024; Nawangsari & Yanti, 2019). This includes decision-making processes, resource allocation, and oversight of how environmental

policies are carried out in day-to-day operations, all of which have a direct impact on organizational performance (Ak et al., 2025).

The managerial behaviors identified in this study show participatory and integrated control characteristics, where management not only establishes policies but also ensures that sustainability values are absorbed into daily work practices through structured monitoring systems. Eco-friendly practices at Sanctoo Suites & Villas are operationalised through managerial processes embedded directly into hotel operations, indicating that sustainability is treated as a core dimension of daily management rather than a peripheral program. The adoption of digital tools in guest services, such as hospitality TVs, information barcodes, and electronic signatures, reflects a shift toward more efficient, paper-minimising service systems. As noted by (Elkhwesky et al., 2024), this kind of digital transformation can meaningfully improve eco-efficiency through reduced paper use, energy optimization, and better operational transparency. Wooden informational panels in guest rooms that encourage water and energy conservation also serve as an environmental communication tool embedded within the guest experience itself.

On the internal side, management distributes reusable water bottles to staff and holds regular briefings and training sessions related to eco-friendly practices. This reflects a genuine effort to shape workplace habits, not just issue instructions. (Aboramadan, 2022). Found that environmentally-focused workplace engagement tends to increase active staff participation in sustainability efforts, especially when management provides ongoing structural support. At Sanctoo, this suggests that sustainability is something that is actively facilitated and integrated into daily work activities, rather than simply mandated through policy.

The presence of a Quality Assurance system and routine monitoring reflects the control dimension of operational leadership. Regular checks on cleanliness standards and work procedures across departments help ensure that eco-friendly policies are not just written in guidelines but are actually applied in practice, which reinforces the view of (Nawangarsi & Yanti, 2019) that leadership plays a guiding and controlling role in ensuring organizational goals are effectively achieved. This control function is also evident in the use of operational data as the basis for performance evaluation. The actual total energy cost came in at 2.58% of revenue, below the budgeted 3.17%, resulting in an efficiency margin of 0.59%. (Xin & Wang, 2023) note that sustainability practices integrated into managerial control systems tend to improve not only environmental performance but also cost efficiency and overall financial health. Water costs, on the other hand, slightly exceeded the budget, which is understandable given the nature-based characteristics of the property. Green landscapes and pool facilities naturally increase water demand, and this complexity shows that sustainability targets cannot always be uniform across all resource categories.

These findings add a more specific layer to what existing literature has discussed about leadership and sustainability in the hospitality sector. Previous studies have broadly confirmed that leadership matters in driving green practices, but few have examined the specific mechanisms through which managerial behavior shapes sustainability outcomes in luxury nature-based hotels. This study identifies those mechanisms as plastic reduction policies, service digitalization, staff capacity building, and budget-based energy control. In doing so, it helps address a gap in research that has tended to focus more on structural or technological factors while giving less attention to the behavioral and managerial dimensions of daily sustainability execution.

Managing sustainability in a luxury nature-based hotel carries its own set of challenges. Premium amenities such as private pools, lush landscaping, and high comfort standards are part of what guests expect, yet these same features drive up resource consumption. This means management cannot pursue environmental efficiency in isolation; it must find a workable balance between service exclusivity and environmental responsibility. As (Iqbal et al., 2021) argue, sustainable leadership in this kind of context requires long-term, sustainability-oriented decision-making that keeps both economic performance and ecological responsibility in view. The experience at Sanctoo suggests that this balance is achievable when managerial behavior is consistent and deliberate.

Taken together, the findings of this study show that the implementation of eco-friendly practices in luxury nature-based hotels does not depend solely on technology or formal policies, but is critically shaped by managerial behavior, including strategic decision-making, operational oversight, staff education, and budget-based controls. Managerial behavior functions as a bridge between formal sustainability policies and their actual execution in daily hotel operations, working simultaneously as a strategic compass, an operational regulator, and a cultural driver. This multi-dimensional role is what makes sustainability implementation consistent rather than sporadic, and it points to a practical takeaway for hotel operators and policymakers: investing in managerial capacity is a central, not secondary, concern if eco-friendly practices are to be maintained effectively over time.

### **Conclusion**

This study aims to analyse the role of managerial behavior in the implementation of eco-friendly practices at nature-based luxury hotels. The results indicate that sustainability implementation at Sanctoo Suites & Villas does not depend solely on technology or formal policies, but is also significantly influenced by managerial behavior, including strategic decision-making, operational oversight, employee education, and control over resource use. Behavior has been shown to play a key role in integrating sustainability principles into day-to-day operational systems, ranging from plastic reduction policies and waste management to energy consumption control. Thus, managerial behavior serves as a bridging mechanism

between the direction of sustainability policy and operational practices on the ground. These findings confirm that the success of eco-friendly initiatives is largely determined by management's consistency and commitment in guiding and controlling the organisation.

However, implementing sustainability does not always yield uniform efficiency across all operational aspects, as evidenced by challenges in managing water use. This indicates that adopting eco-friendly practices in nature-based hotels requires a managerial approach adaptable to the facility's characteristics and operational context.

Based on the results of this study, further research is recommended to incorporate in-depth interviews with top management such as General Manager or Directors to understand policy-making processes and long-term sustainability commitments, thereby enhancing the accuracy and reliability of the findings. In addition, further studies may conduct comparative analyses across different types of hotels to examine variations in managerial behavior in implementing sustainability, apply quantitative approaches to measure the relationship between managerial behavior and environmental performance, and develop a conceptual model integrating managerial behavior and organizational culture within the context of sustainable hospitality.

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# Green Innovation Practices In Supporting The Operational Performance of Tourism Accommodation Businesses (Case Study: COMO Shambhala Estate Hotel)

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## Abstract

*This study analysed green innovation practices that support operational performance at COMO Shambhala Estate, Bali. High energy use, water consumption, and waste in hotel operations have environmental impacts and require sustainable practices. The study used a qualitative, descriptive case study. Data came from interviews with the sustainability manager and documentation about the hotel's environmental management. The findings showed green innovation through process, organizational, and service innovation. Process innovation included energy and water efficiency, waste management, and reducing single-use plastic. Organizational innovation involved integrating sustainability principles into procedures, monitoring resource use, and regular employee training. Service innovation used eco-friendly products and involved guests in conservation. These practices improved operational efficiency, reduced costs and waste, and enhanced sustainability-based service value.*

**Keywords:** *green innovation, hotel sustainability, hotel operational performance, resource efficiency, waste management*

## Introduction

The development of the global tourism industry over recent decades has contributed substantially to economic growth and job creation (Yakup & Haryanto, 2021). However, despite this strategic role, the tourism sector faces challenges related to environmental sustainability (Hardjati et al., 2022). Intensive operational activities, elevated tourist mobility, and infrastructure expansion have increased energy consumption, water use, and waste generation (Siti Kholijah, 2024). Within this industry structure, accommodation businesses, particularly hotels and resorts, exhibit considerable energy and resource intensity (Hastuti & Assriyani, 2021). Air conditioning, lighting, food and beverage processing, laundry services, and landscape management contribute significantly to environmental impacts (Menegaki, 2025). Consequently, these conditions necessitate that operational management emphasise not only service quality and profitability but also resource

efficiency and environmental responsibility.

In response to these challenges, green innovation is a strategic way to manage the accommodation industry (Winanti et al., 2025). Mariyamah & Handayani, (2020) state that green innovation covers environmentally friendly technologies and changes in work processes, operations, and governance. These directly reduce environmental impacts and improve efficiency. In practice, innovation encompasses pollution control, energy conservation, emission reduction, and waste management to improve environmental performance (Lian et al., 2022). Green innovation improves operational performance by reducing costs, improving resource efficiency, and creating a competitive edge for hotels (Davidson, 2020). Green innovation is now more than just an environmental strategy or corporate image; it is an operational tool for sustainably improving business performance (Novitasari & Agustia, 2023).

Although many studies discuss eco-friendly hotel practices, many research focuses on green marketing, guest perceptions, or image-based advantages (Genç & Zengin, 2025). Few studies position green innovation as a core part of internal operational systems, directly linking it to hotel performance. Without systematic integration into daily operations, sustainability practices may become symbolic or mere compliance. This gap shows the need for research showing how green innovation is implemented as a measurable system and how these practices contribute to business effectiveness and efficiency.

Within Bali's tourism landscape, an international destination rooted in nature and culture, the urgency of adopting green innovation is clear. The Bali tourism industry's reliance on environmental quality makes sustainability a structural necessity rather than just a strategy (Dewi et al., 2024). High pressure on water, energy, and waste management in tourism areas means hotels and resorts must integrate sustainability principles into operations (Damaianti et al., 2023). Hotel COMO Shambhala Estate, a wellness-based resort, shows its commitment to environmental management through energy efficiency, waste management, resource monitoring, and employee engagement in a sustainable work culture.

However, little in-depth research has examined how green innovation practices at this hotel support operational performance (Rustiarini et al., 2022). Thus, this study analyses how these practices are implemented in Hotel COMO Shambhala Estate's operations and the extent to which they support its operational performance.

### **Literature Review**

The hospitality industry significantly harms the environment through high energy use, water consumption, and waste. These issues make it urgent for hotels to integrate sustainability into operations to reduce their environmental impact while maintaining service quality (Menegaki, 2025). Growing environmental pressure has led hospitality businesses to adopt environmentally responsible practices as part of their operational strategies.

Green innovation supports sustainability in hospitality. It means using eco-friendly processes, technologies, and management to cut impact and improve performance (Lian et al., 2022). Hotels now make sustainability part of their core

business, not an extra initiative (Novitasari & Agustia, 2023). Green process innovation, a key aspect of green innovation, improves efficiency by optimising resources. Energy-saving technologies, water-conservation systems, and waste-management programs help hotels reduce costs and lower their environmental impact (Li et al., 2024a). These measures show that hotels can achieve both environmental sustainability and operational efficiency.

Green innovation adoption improves sustainability performance. Environmentally friendly operations enhance resource use and operational effectiveness, showing innovation's key role in sustainable hotel management (Hamid et al., 2025). Implementing green innovation shows how hospitality businesses incorporate sustainability into daily operations (Arsawan et al., 2023). Organizational factors also shape how effectively organizations implement sustainability. Integrating environmental principles into standard operating procedures creates structured and consistent practices (Davidson, 2020). Organizational factors also shape how effectively organizations implement sustainability. Integrating environmental principles into standard operating procedures creates structured and consistent practices.

Hotels now incorporate sustainability into their services, allowing guests to experience eco-friendly products and practices (Darmaputra et al., 2020). These efforts boost customer value and satisfaction, creating advantages for hotels (Pereira et al., 2021). Recent studies emphasise the link between green innovation and operational performance (de Sousa, 2021). Adopting environmentally friendly practices improves efficiency, controls costs, and boosts organizational performance. Sustainability serves as both an environmental and an operational strategy (Bautista-Hernández et al., 2021). Moreover, the adoption of sustainability-based innovation is closely related to the development of competitive advantage. Businesses that successfully implement environmentally responsible practices are more likely to attract environmentally conscious consumers and strengthen their market position (Yang et al., 2026).

Despite the growing importance of green innovation, its implementation continues to face several challenges. Limitations in technology, high initial investment costs, and the need for continuous adaptation within organizations often hinder the adoption of sustainability practices (Damaianti et al., 2023). These challenges indicate that sustainability implementation requires not only technical solutions but also a strong organization. Despite the growing importance of green innovation, its implementation continues to face several challenges. Innovation in the hospitality industry, limited research has examined how these practices are implemented as integrated operational systems within specific hotel contexts. Therefore, further research is needed to explore how green innovation contributes to operational performance in tourism accommodation businesses, particularly within case-specific settings

## **Research Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative, descriptive case study design to analyse green innovation practices supporting the operational performance of tourism accommodation businesses at the COMO Shambhala Estate Hotel. This approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the eco-friendly innovations implemented and their contributions to the hotel's operational efficiency and effectiveness. Case studies allow for the contextual exploration of phenomena in real-world organizational settings (Asysyauki1 &38; Widjaja2, 2026). In the context of hospitality sustainability, the qualitative case study approach is widely used to gain a deep understanding of the implementation of green hotel practices (Pereira et al., 2021).

The research data consists of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through semi-structured in-depth interviews with the Sustainability Manager, selected as the key informant based on his role and responsibilities in planning, implementing, and evaluating the hotel's sustainability programs. In-depth interviews are commonly used in green hotel research to explore implementation practices, challenges, and their impact on operations. Secondary data consists of documentation demonstrating the application of green innovation practices within the hotel's operational environment, such as waste management, energy and water efficiency, and the use of eco-friendly products. The use of documentation and field observations to complement interviews is also applied in empirical studies on the implementation of sustainability practices in the hospitality sector.

The research stages include problem identification, a literature review to establish a conceptual framework regarding green innovation and operational performance, field data collection, data analysis, and drawing conclusions. Data analysis was conducted qualitatively using an interactive analysis model through data reduction, presentation of data in the form of thematic categorisation, and drawing conclusions (Githenduka et al., 2025). This thematic analysis approach is widely used in hospitality sustainability research to identify patterns of green practice implementation and their impact on hotel operations. Data validity was ensured through qualitative data analysis using an interactive analysis model, involving data reduction, data presentation in thematic categories, and drawing conclusions

## **Results and Discussion**

Green innovation practices can be categorised into three main dimensions: process innovation, organizational innovation, and service innovation . Process innovation focuses on enhancing operational efficiency through energy and water conservation, waste management, and the reduction of single-use plastic. Organizational innovation refers to the integration of sustainability principles into standard operating procedures, continuous monitoring of resource usage, and regular employee training to ensure consistent implementation. Meanwhile, service innovation emphasises the incorporation of eco-friendly products and the

involvement of guests in environmental conservation activities. These three dimensions demonstrate how sustainability is systematically embedded into operational processes, organizational systems, and service delivery.

## 1. Green Innovation Practices

Based on the results of interviews and documentation, green innovation practices include :

### 1.1.Green Process Innovation

#### a. Energy and Water Efficiency

During operations, housekeeping staff are required to turn off electrical appliances while preparing guest rooms. The garden lighting uses an automatic sensor system that turns on at specific times. The hotel also recycles used water through an internal system and uses it for watering plants.

#### b. Waste management and sorting



Figure 1. Waste Management and Sorting Practices  
[Source: Internal Sustainability Manager Documentation]

Vendors are processed into maggot feed and eco-enzymes, and some is used by the community as animal feed. Leaf waste is processed through modern tebe innovations into organic fertiliser that is reused for landscape maintenance. Herbal oil waste from the spa is also distributed to external parties for processing into candles, thereby repurposing it.

#### c. Reducing single-use plastic



Figure 2. Waste Management and Sorting Practices  
[Source: Researcher Documentation]



Management has implemented a policy of reducing single-use waste in daily operations. Bathroom amenities utilise refillable bottles, and drinking water is provided in glass bottles instead of single-use plastic. Parachute-like trash bags are used in several operational areas. Furthermore, a mobile check-in and check-out system is used to reduce paper usage, and reusable paper is reused for internal use.

### **1.1.Green Organizational Innovation**

#### **a. Integration of sustainability into SOPs**

Management has implemented a policy of reducing single-use waste in daily operations. Bathroom amenities use refillable bottles, and drinking water is provided in glass bottles rather than single-use plastic. Parachute-like trash bags are used in several operational areas. Furthermore, a mobile check-in and check-out system is used to reduce paper usage, and reusable paper is used internally events as a routine work practice, not merely an additional program. Findings also indicate that the hotel is fostering a culture of green behaviour in the workplace. Sustainability practices are not merely procedural but are established as shared habits and values applied in daily operational activities by all employees.

#### **b. Monitoring of Resource Usage**

Monitoring is conducted almost daily on a random basis across various departments to ensure compliance with sustainability procedures. Informants explained that common issues often involve new staff, including daily workers and trainees, who are not yet fully accustomed to sustainability-based operational practices. Therefore, monitoring and evaluation are conducted continuously to maintain consistency in implementation

#### **a. Staff training on eco-friendly practices**

Monthly training on eco-friendly practices is mandatory for all employees. Each staff member must attend training at least four times a year. This program aims to align understanding, strengthen a sustainable work culture, and ensure that sustainability values are embedded in daily work behaviour.

## **1. Impact on Operations**

Qualitatively, these practices contribute to:

#### **a. Control of operating costs**

Operationally, control of operating costs is supported by implementing energy consumption controls and maintaining facilities consistently. Informants explained that energy consumption is recorded routinely (monthly) and analysed through internal meetings, such as green team meetings, to identify changes in consumption and their causes, including technical repairs and operational behaviours. Regarding water, leak checks are conducted periodically due to the property's extensive area to help prevent waste and reduce potential damage-related costs.

#### **b. Optimization of Energy and Water Use**

Green innovation practices also play a role in optimising energy and water use through a combination of SOPs, monitoring, and fostering work habits. Informants mentioned controls on electricity usage during peak-rate periods, the use of sensors for lighting in specific areas, and the transition to LED lighting. In water management, the hotel conducts routine inspections of the

pipings network and maintains facilities to minimize water loss, while managing used water through an internal treatment system for reuse in non-potable applications (e.g., landscape irrigation). These findings indicate that resource efficiency is achieved through planned and repetitive operational mechanisms.

c. Reduction of Operational Waste

Contributions to reducing operational waste are evident through cross-departmental waste sorting and a waste management system that increases waste diversion (reducing the amount sent to landfills). Informants emphasised that the hotel does not wish to rely entirely on external parties for waste management, and that source separation is mandatory across various work units. Organic waste is managed through partnerships for maggot processing and composting; some is utilised by the local community as livestock feed, while garden waste is processed into fertiliser via an internal composting system. This approach demonstrates a circular-economy-based waste-management strategy, in which waste flows are mapped and documented.

d. Enhancing service value through sustainability

From a service perspective, green innovation practices add value through sustainability communication with guests and guest engagement in conservation efforts. Informants explained that the front office plays a role in communicating certification status, the use of eco-friendly products, and the availability of more sustainable food sources (e.g., local, organic, and animal-welfare-conscious). Additionally, guests are encouraged to reduce water consumption through a linen-replacement policy based on demand. Property-based activities, such as estate walks, are also used as educational tools for landscape conservation efforts. These findings indicate that sustainability is not positioned as a constraint on service, but rather as an integral part of the hotel's guest experience and service value.

## Discussion

Research findings indicate that green process innovation practices at COMO Shambhala Estate contribute significantly to operational efficiency through energy consumption control, circular water management, and waste sorting and recycling systems. These practices reflect a transformation of operational processes toward a more efficient and sustainability-oriented system. Conceptually, green innovation is understood as a systematic effort to minimize the negative environmental impacts of production and operational activities through improvements in processes, technologies, and managerial systems (Asadi et al., 2020). Thus, energy savings achieved through automatic sensors, LED lighting, and the recycling of used water at COMO Shambhala Estate are not merely technical measures but part of a structured process of innovation. In the hospitality industry, hotels are known for high energy and water consumption and high waste production (Li et al., 2024b). Therefore, the implementation of process innovations serves as a crucial mechanism for reducing waste and enhancing sustainability performance. Research Githenduka et al., 2025 indicates that the adoption of green process innovations has a positive and significant impact on the sustainability performance of star-rated hotels. These findings reinforce that energy efficiency practices and

waste management at COMO Shambhala Estate are empirically aligned with improved sustainability performance. Furthermore, green innovation performance is understood as the tangible implementation of environmentally friendly practices that yield resource conservation outcomes (Bani-Melhem et al., 2022).

The processing of organic waste into compost through an internal system, the distribution of spa oil waste for recycling, and the reduction of single-use plastics reflect process changes that result in resource efficiency while reducing landfill burden. Thus, green innovation at COMO Shambhala Estate functions as an operational efficiency tool that integrates ecological and economic aspects. Energy and water efficiency not only reduces environmental impact but also affects long-term cost control and the hotel's operational stability. Inability into Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), routine monitoring, and employee training, which demonstrates the presence of green organizational innovation, that is, innovation within management systems and organizational structures.

Githenduka et al., 2025 confirms that the adoption of green organizational innovation significantly influences sustainability performance. This means that sustainability will yield optimal results when institutionalised within the organizational system, rather than merely being a temporary program. In green hotel studies, green management is understood as organizational practices that systematically reduce and prevent negative environmental impacts across all operational activities (Yuniati, 2021). The integration of sustainability into housekeeping SOPs, cross-departmental waste-sorting requirements, and daily random monitoring demonstrates that COMO Shambhala Estate has internalised these principles into its operational systems.

Furthermore, Herzallah et al., 2025 explain that green innovation (both product and process) mediates the relationship between sustainability practices and green performance. This implies that environmental commitments only affect performance when translated into structured, managed innovations. In this context, routine training and the cultivation of a green behaviour culture at COMO Shambhala Estate serve as key drivers of innovation diffusion within the organization. Thus, green organizational innovation functions as a systemic foundation that ensures the consistent implementation of green process innovations while simultaneously fostering a culture of sustainable work practices.

Furthermore, green innovation practices at COMO Shambhala Estate not only affect internal systems but also create service value, underscoring the broader implications of sustainability within the hospitality experience. The use of refillable amenities, natural spa products, a linen-replacement policy based

on guest requests, and guest education through estate walks demonstrates that sustainability is an integral part of the guest experience. From a green hotel perspective, an eco-friendly hotel is defined as an accommodation that provides comfort while minimising environmental impact through principles of environmental protection and sustainable management (Yang et al., 2026). Thus, the sustainability practices implemented by COMO Shambhala Estate do not diminish service quality but rather enrich the guest experience.

Bani-Melhem et al., 2022 indicates that environmental strategies can enhance customer loyalty through green innovation performance. This means that when green innovations are genuinely implemented and visible to guests, they can reinforce positive perceptions of the hotel and encourage repeat visits and word-of-mouth recommendations. Additionally, Herzallah et al., 2025, found that increased sustainability practices contribute to improved hotel green performance. In the context of COMO Shambhala Estate, green performance is reflected not only in operational efficiency but also in its positioning as an eco-conscious wellness retreat that integrates holistic health and nature conservation. Findings regarding service value are further reinforced by guest reviews highlighting the absence of single-use plastic bottles (“no plastic bottles anywhere to be seen”) as well as personalised service and a natural ambience. These reviews indicate that plastic reduction practices and the use of glass bottles not only impact internal operations but are also directly visible and felt by guests. This suggests that green innovation fosters positive perceptions, strengthens the hotel’s image, and enhances the value of sustainability-based service experiences (Lalani et al., 2018; Taylor et al., 2019). Thus, green innovation serves as a service differentiation strategy, positioning sustainability not as a constraint on comfort but as an added value that strengthens the hotel’s reputation and competitiveness within the wellness-based hospitality industry (Trisdiarto et al., 2026).

## **Conclusions**

The research findings indicate that green innovation practices at COMO Shambhala Estate serve not only as a commitment to the environment but also as an operational strategy that supports the performance of the accommodation business. The implementation of green innovation at this hotel is integrated into operational processes, management systems, and the service values provided to guests. This demonstrates that sustainability principles have become an integral part of daily operational management practices at the hotel.

At the operational level, green process innovation is implemented through energy and water efficiency, waste management based on sorting and reuse, and the reduction of single-use plastic. These practices are supported by technologies such as automatic sensors, energy-efficient lighting, and wastewater recycling systems. This implementation contributes to resource efficiency, operational cost control, and reduced environmental impacts in the

hotel's operations.

Additionally, green organizational and service innovation strengthen sustainability by integrating environmental principles into standard operating procedures, monitoring resource use, and fostering a culture of sustainable work practices through employee training. On the service side, the use of eco-friendly products and guest involvement in conservation practices enhance the guest experience. Thus, green innovation practices at COMO Shambhala Estate have proven to support operational efficiency, waste reduction, and the enhancement of sustainability-based service value, although consistent behaviour and the adaptation of a sustainable work culture still require ongoing managerial commitment.

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# **Tourist Perceptions Of Eco-Friendly Accommodation As A Factor In Destination Competitiveness In Bali: A Study In Sanur**

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## **Abstract**

*Environmentally friendly accommodation plays a crucial role in supporting sustainable tourism and improving the destination competitiveness. However, tourists' perceptions and their contribution to destination competitiveness remain underexplored. This study purpose is to analyze tourists' perceptions of environmentally friendly accommodation and its relation to destination competitiveness in Sanur Beach, Bali. This study used a quantitative method, applying non-probability purposive sampling. 30 respondents took part in this study. Data were gathered through questionnaires with a Likert scale and analyzed using descriptive quantitative methods. The findings show that tourists' perceptions are in a good category with an average score of 4.17. Perceived Behavioral Control obtained the highest score of 4.32, followed by Attitude toward the Behavior, which yielded a value of 4.26, while Subjective Norm recorded the lowest score at 3.94. Destination competitiveness showed a very good result at 4.30, with Destination Management and Demand Conditions as the highest dimensions, which yielded a value of 4.40, followed by Created Resources at 4.24 and Supporting Factors at 4.17*

**Keywords:** *tourists' perception, environmentally friendly accommodation, destination competitiveness, sustainable tourism*

## **Introduction**

Increasing public awareness of environmental sustainability is causing a major shift in the worldwide tourist sector. Travelers of today prioritize locations and service providers who exhibit sustainable practices, looking beyond cost and comfort (Baena & Cerviño, 2024; Mishra, 2025). Travel decisions are more heavily influenced by environmental concerns (Hall et al., 2020). According to studies (Demir et al., 2021; Duric & Topler, 2021; Lestari et al., 2023), this awareness influences travelers to favor goods that are in line with sustainability ideals and responsibility.

As an aspect of sustainable tourism, eco-friendly lodging refers to lodging that uses sustainable resource use, waste reduction, and energy conservation (Kim et al., 2021; Sadiq et al., 2022). In addition to helping to preserve the environment, these accommodations enhance the reputation and allure of travel locations (Nguyen Thi Huyen et al., 2025; Wang et al., 2019). This is a reflection of the worldwide trend of eco-friendly travel that draws visitors from other countries. Environmentally friendly hospitality practices can further enhance tourist satisfaction and add value to destinations (Jia et al., 2023; Yadegaridehkordi et al.,

2021).

A destination's ability to attract tourists relies on its competitiveness (Bunga Sintia & Nurhayati, 2025; Purwono et al., 2024). Dwyer and Kim (2003) conceptualize destination competitiveness as arising from endowed resources, supporting factors, destination management, situational conditions, and demand conditions. This framework shows that both the creation of resources and effective management matter, alongside natural or cultural assets.

Tourists' perceptions of environmentally friendly accommodation practices influence their destination selection (Fauzi et al., 2024). Personal conduct is influenced by attitudes, subjective standards, and perceived behavioral control, according to the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Positive impressions of eco-friendly lodging by visitors can promote sustainability, create social impact, and boost confidence in making eco-friendly decisions (Wu et al., 2024; S.-S. Yeh et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2025).

From this perspective, eco-friendly accommodation serves as a created resource that enhances the value of tourism destinations by attracting visitors. Sustainability-oriented accommodation management is an application of effective destination management practices that specifically supports sustainable tourism development. Applying eco-friendly ideas in the lodging industry can strategically improve destination competitiveness in cutthroat travel markets (Chakraborty, 2025; Lesmana et al., 2022; Streimikiene et al., 2021; Torres et al., 2025).

Despite the growing body of literature on sustainable tourism and eco-friendly accommodation, research gaps remain. Previous studies have primarily examined the direct impact of eco-friendly practices on tourist satisfaction or behavioral intentions, often overlooking their broader impact on destination competitiveness. In addition, limited research has integrated tourists' perceptions of eco-friendly accommodation within the destination competitiveness model proposed by Dwyer and Kim (2003). Furthermore, empirical studies focusing on diverse accommodation contexts, particularly in emerging tourism destinations such as Bali, are still relatively limited. Therefore, this study contributes to the literature by examining how tourists' perceptions of eco-friendly accommodation influence destination competitiveness, while also applying the destination competitiveness framework in a more context-specific setting. This approach provides a more clear understanding of the strategic role of sustainable accommodation in enhancing tourism competitiveness.

The Sanur Beach area was chosen as the research site because it is a major tourism hub in Bali with a wide range of lodging options, from luxury hotels to small-scale guesthouses. This variety allows the study to capture different traveler perspectives and experiences regarding sustainable hospitality. Unlike areas like Nusa Dua, which mostly consist of large integrated resorts, Sanur's diverse accommodation structure provides a better environment for understanding how various tourists view eco-friendly practices. Additionally, the many environmental initiatives found in both local businesses and the surrounding community make Sanur an ideal location to study green tourism within the Balinese context.

Thus, it's critical to comprehend how visitors' opinions about eco-friendly lodging affect a destination's ability to compete. In order to guide sustainable tourism plans, this study examines the connection between travelers' perceptions and location competitiveness.

## **Literature Review**

### **Tourist Perception**

Tourist perception encompasses how individuals interpret, evaluate, and process information about a destination or tourism product, shaped by personal experiences, informational sources, and on-site interactions. Closely connected to destination image, these perceptions significantly influence the assessment of tourist experiences and overall satisfaction (Kock et al., 2016). Furthermore, they play a pivotal role in driving behavioral intentions, such as loyalty and revisit decisions (Aguilar-Quintana et al., 2019).

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), created by Ajzen (1991), is one of the most popular ideas in the study of tourist behavior. According to this view, behavioral intention which is characterized as a person's preparedness to carry out a specific action, influences individual behavior. Three primary factors influence this intention: perceived behavioral control, subjective norms, and attitude toward the behavior.

An individual's assessment of a behavior as either favorable or negative is known as their attitude toward the behavior. According to this study, travelers' perceptions of eco-friendly lodging may influence their decision to stay there. Han et al. (2010) discovered that travelers' intentions to choose eco-friendly hotels are strongly influenced by their mindset. Subjective norms are social pressures or influences that encourage certain Behaviors. In tourism, recommendations from family and friends, as well as social trends, influence tourists' choices of environmentally friendly accommodation. Verma and Chandra (2018) found that social norms play a significant role in tourists' decisions to select eco-friendly hotels. Perceived Behavioral control is the individual's sense of how easy or difficult a Behavior is. Tourists who find eco-friendly accommodation easily accessible are more likely to choose it. Tourists' perceptions of eco-friendly accommodation shape attitudes, social norms, and perceived Behavioral control, which influence their intention to choose these accommodations during travel.

### **Destination Competitiveness**

The capacity of a place to draw tourists and hold its position in relation to rivals is known as destination competitiveness. location competitiveness, according to Dwyer and Kim (2003), is the capacity of a location to provide tourism experiences and goods that are better than those of its rivals.

Dwyer and Kim's Destination Competitiveness model states that a number of important factors, such as endowment resources, supporting factors, destination management, situational conditions, and demand conditions, have an impact on destination competitiveness. This model highlights that a destination's competitiveness depends not only on the quality of its natural or cultural resources but also on how well it manages and uses them.

Four primary characteristics of destination competitiveness are examined in this study: demand circumstances, destination management, produced resources, and supporting variables.

Created resources, developed by humans to bolster tourism, include infrastructure, accommodations, recreational activities, and enhanced attractions that enrich visitor experiences, with Enright and Newton (2004) showing their substantial impact on destination

competitiveness through superior facilities like hotels and transport. Tourism infrastructure encompassing hotels, restaurants, transportation, and entertainment which critically heightens attractiveness, as evidenced by Enright and Newton (2004), who link high-quality setups to elevated performance in competitive markets. Destination management entails stakeholder-driven strategies, including planning, marketing, HR development, and environmental sustainability, which Ritchie and Crouch (2003) identify as key to optimizing experiences and long-term viability in their competitiveness framework. Supporting factors, such as general infrastructure, service quality, accessibility, and community hospitality, provide essential underpinnings for tourism success (Dwyer & Kim, 2003), while demand conditions reflect tourist awareness, perceptions, and preferences, particularly toward eco-practices that influence visitation, as Chen and Tsai (2007) demonstrate through links to satisfaction and behavioral intentions.

Therefore, by raising the standard of visitor experiences and bolstering a sustainable destination image, the adoption of eco-friendly lodging can operate as a supportive factor in boosting destination competitiveness.

### **Eco-Friendly Accommodation**

Green hotels and sustainable lodges, known as eco-friendly accommodations, are hospitality venues that emphasize environmental responsibility via measures such as conserving energy and water, reducing waste, and sourcing ethically. These are framed by models incorporating corporate social responsibility and certifications like LEED or Green Key, tackling issues like climate change and resource exhaustion (Chan & Ho, 2006; Han et al., 2010). Implementation is fueled by policies, financial gains (e.g., 20-30% lower utility expenses), and preferences from sustainability-focused millennials prepared to pay more (Bohdanowicz, 2006; Han et al., 2018). Essential strategies encompass solar power, efficient plumbing, composting, and local buying, endorsed by benchmarks including EarthCheck and GSTC (Font et al., 2016; Li et al., 2020).

Visitors generally view eco-friendly accommodations favorably, associating sustainable features with genuineness, wellness advantages, and moral alignment, thereby boosting contentment and repeat patronage (Lee et al., 2010; Han & Yoon, 2015). Greenwashing can however damage credibility, with perceived worth bridging eco-initiatives and actions like returning or endorsing (Font & Harris, 2012; Line et al., 2021). Outcomes differ by culture, showing greater impact in Western contexts, and research validates that clear messaging of green activities heightens these positives (Verma et al., 2019). The COVID-19 crisis underscored durability, spurring advancements like contactless features (Gössling et al., 2020).

Obstacles remain, such as substantial startup expenses, varying evaluation standards, and complex supply chains, especially in emerging markets (Teng et al., 2012; Jones et al., 2020). Upcoming studies ought to focus on restorative approaches, AI enhancements for efficiency, and ecological effects to propel sustainable tourism forward (Sharifpour et al., 2022). In essence, eco-friendly accommodations represent an equilibrium between ecological care and profitability, relying on genuine execution.

## Research Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative survey-based approach to examine tourists' perceptions of eco-friendly accommodation and their relationship with destination competitiveness in the Sanur Beach area of Bali. A quantitative approach is employed to objectively analyze the relationship between variables through numerical measurement and statistical analysis (Creswell, 2017), and the study is descriptive in nature, to illuminate travelers' opinions and the degree of competition of the destination. Data collection was done in the Sanur Beach area, which was specifically chosen because it is one of Bali's popular tourist attractions and is notable for its high concentration of housing alternatives and growing acceptance of sustainable tourism techniques. All tourists who travel to Bali and stay in lodging make up the population. The sampling technique used is non-probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling (Sugiyono, 2016), in which respondents are selected based on criteria such as tourists currently visiting Bali, having stayed in accommodations in Bali, and being willing to participate in the survey. A total of 30 respondents were involved. Data were collected using questionnaires developed around research variables, with a five-point Likert scale to measure respondents' perceptions (Likert, 1932), supported by secondary data from relevant literature. Descriptive analysis was used to present respondent characteristics and show how tourists perceived eco-friendly lodging and destination competitiveness after the data was analyzed using quantitative statistical techniques, such as validity and reliability tests to evaluate the suitability of the research instrument.

This study adopts a quantitative survey approach to examine tourists' perceptions of eco-friendly accommodation and their relationship with destination competitiveness in the Sanur Beach area of Bali. A quantitative approach is applied to objectively analyze the relationship between variables through numerical measurement and statistical analysis (Creswell, 2017), and the research is descriptive in nature, aiming to illustrate tourists' perceptions and the level of destination competitiveness. The population includes all tourists who visit and stay in accommodations in Bali, while data collection was conducted in the Sanur Beach area, which was purposively selected due to its status as one of Bali's well-established tourist destinations, characterized by a high concentration of accommodation facilities and the growing implementation of sustainable tourism practices. The sampling technique used is non-probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling (Sugiyono, 2016), where respondents were selected based on specific criteria, namely tourists who are currently visiting Bali, have prior experience staying in accommodations in Bali, are at least 18 years old, and are willing to participate by completing the questionnaire. The study involved 30 respondents, which is considered adequate for preliminary quantitative analysis and descriptive studies where the focus is on identifying patterns and tendencies rather than generalizing to a larger population. Data were collected through questionnaires developed based on the research variables using a five-point Likert scale to measure respondents' perceptions (Likert, 1932), supported by secondary data obtained from relevant literature. Descriptive analysis was used to present respondent characteristics and show how tourists perceived eco-friendly lodging and destination competitiveness after the data was analyzed using quantitative statistical techniques, including validity and reliability tests to ensure the research instrument was adequate.

## Results and Discussion

### Data Description

A questionnaire is considered valid if each item effectively represents and measures the study's underlying concept. Therefore, validity reflects the degree to which the instrument accurately measures the variable it is meant to. This test is designed to assess the correlation between scores of individual items and the overall variable score. Validity tests followed Sugiyono, (2016) approach, utilizing Product-Moment Correlation to evaluate item consistency.

The instrument's validity in this study was assessed using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation technique, originally developed by Pearson (1896). The calculated *r*-value is compared against the critical *r*-table value, which is derived from the Product-Moment *r*-distribution table based on the degrees of freedom (Df):

$$Df = n - 2 \quad (1)$$

Df Denotes the degrees of freedom, *n* denotes the sample size, and the constant 2 refers to the number of variables analyzed in the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. This study applied a significance level of 0.05. Using a sample size of *n* = 30, The critical value obtained from the *r*-table was 0.361 (Sugiyono, 2016).

Instrument validity testing shows that all items in the tourist perception variable (X1–X11) have correlation coefficients ranging from 0.383 to 0.714, indicating that all items are valid since their calculated *r* values exceed the *r*-table value. Furthermore, for the destination competitiveness variable (Y1–Y11), all items also exhibit correlation coefficients between 0.410 and 0.728. These values are above the *r*-table value of 0.361, confirming that all items in the destination competitiveness variable are valid. The calculated Pearson product-moment correlation values for the research instrument consistently exceed 0.361. Consequently, all items within the research instrument are declared valid.

Reliability testing is a method used to evaluate the degree to which a questionnaire, serving as an indicator of a variable or construct, produces consistent results (Ghozali, 2006). An instrument is considered reliable if the respondents' answers to the items demonstrate consistency or stability over time. Thus, reliability reflects each item's ability to consistently measure the same construct. In this study, reliability testing was conducted using the one-shot method, in which measurements are taken only once and analyzed immediately to determine the level of internal consistency among the items.

Reliability was evaluated using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which was initially developed by Cronbach, (1951) to evaluate the degree of consistency within an instrument's items. This coefficient is commonly applied in social science studies to assess the reliability of questionnaires (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). A variable is deemed reliable when its Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) exceeds 0,60 ( $\alpha > 0,60$ ). In contrast, if the Cronbach's Alpha value falls below 0,60 ( $\alpha < 0,60$ ), the variable is considered unreliable (Ghozali, 2006). However, within international literature, an  $\alpha$  value  $\geq 0,70$  is commonly interpreted as demonstrating good reliability, while values ranging from 0,60 to 0,70 are still considered acceptable for exploratory research (Nunnally, 1978; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

Instrument Reliability Testing shows that the tourist perception variable has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.754 (0.755 based on standardized items), while the destination competitiveness variable has a value of 0.729 (0.727 based on standardized items). All variables in this study showed Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.60. This suggests that both

variables have met the established reliability criteria.

The score for each item was obtained by multiplying response frequencies with their respective weights, followed by dividing the total by the number of participants. The resulting scores were classified according to class intervals using the following calculation:

- a. The Number of Classifications (K) = 5 classes
- b. The Range (R)  
Maximum Value = 5  
Minimum Value = 1  
The Range = 5 – 1 = 4
- c. The class interval width is determined using the following formula:  

$$C = R/K \quad (2)$$

$$C = 4/5 = 0,80 \quad (2)$$
R represents the Range, K is the Number of classifications, and C is the Class interval width.  
Based on the calculation above, the resulting class intervals are as follows:
  1. Very Low, for the interval (1,00 - <1,80)
  2. Low, for the interval (1,80 - <2,60)
  3. Moderate, for the interval (2,60 - <3,40)
  4. High, for the interval (3,40 - <4,20)
  5. Very High, for the interval (4,20 - 5,00)

Table 1: Mean Scores of Tourist Perceptions of Eco-Friendly Accommodation as a Factor in Destination Competitiveness

| No                    | Assessment Indicators                                                                                             | Score | Mean | Status    |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|------|-----------|
| Tourists' Perceptions |                                                                                                                   |       |      |           |
| 1                     | <i>Attitude toward the behavior</i>                                                                               |       | 4.26 | Very High |
|                       | a. I believe that eco-friendly accommodation has a positive impact on the environment and is a good choice for me | 127   | 4.23 | Very High |
|                       | b. I feel proud when staying at eco-friendly accommodation                                                        | 128   | 4.27 | Very High |
|                       | c. Staying at eco-friendly accommodation is the right decision                                                    | 126   | 4.20 | Very High |
|                       | a. I consider eco-friendly accommodation to be better than regular accommodation                                  | 130   | 4.33 | Very High |



|                             |                                                                                                            |     |      |           |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|------|-----------|
| 2                           | <i>Subjective Norm</i>                                                                                     |     | 3.94 | High      |
|                             | a. I feel social encouragement to choose environmentally friendly accommodation                            | 118 | 3.93 | High      |
|                             | b. The people who are important to me support my choice of eco-friendly accommodation                      | 115 | 3.83 | High      |
|                             | a. Current travel trends encourage me to choose eco-friendly accommodation                                 | 122 | 4.07 | High      |
| 3                           | <i>Perceived Behavioral Control</i>                                                                        |     | 4.32 | Very High |
|                             | a. I find it easy to obtain information about eco-friendly accommodation in Bali                           | 123 | 4.10 | High      |
|                             | b. The price of eco-friendly accommodation is not an issue for me, so I am able to choose it if I want to  | 131 | 4.37 | Very High |
|                             | c. I have the ability to choose eco-friendly accommodation if I want to                                    | 137 | 4.57 | Very High |
|                             | a. There is a sufficient number of eco-friendly accommodation options available in Bali                    | 127 | 4.23 | Very High |
| Destination Competitiveness |                                                                                                            |     |      |           |
| 1                           | <i>Created Resources</i>                                                                                   |     | 4.24 | Very High |
|                             | a. Bali offers a wide variety of accommodation options that apply eco-friendly concepts                    | 125 | 4.17 | High      |
|                             | b. The eco-friendly facilities in Bali's accommodations are of good quality                                | 130 | 4.33 | Very High |
|                             | a. Sustainability practices in Bali's accommodations appear more innovative compared to other destinations | 127 | 4.23 | Very High |
| 2                           | <i>Destination Management</i>                                                                              |     | 4.40 | Very High |
|                             | a. I see a clear commitment from Bali in developing sustainable tourism                                    | 131 | 4.37 | Very High |
|                             | b. Eco-friendly practices in Bali's accommodations seem to be well managed                                 | 133 | 4.43 | Very High |
|                             | a. Bali actively promotes environmentally friendly tourism                                                 | 132 | 4.40 | Very High |

|   |                                                                                              |     |      |           |
|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|------|-----------|
| 3 | <i>Supporting Factors</i>                                                                    |     | 4.17 | High      |
|   | a. Bali's infrastructure supports sustainable tourism practices                              | 131 | 4.37 | Very High |
|   | a. Eco-friendly accommodations in Bali are easy to access                                    | 119 | 3.97 | High      |
| 4 | <i>Demand Conditions</i>                                                                     |     | 4.40 | Very High |
|   | a. Bali is perceived as an environmentally responsible destination                           | 132 | 4.40 | Very High |
|   | b. The presence of eco-friendly accommodation adds to Bali's attractiveness as a destination | 133 | 4.43 | Very High |
|   | a. I am likely to choose and recommend Bali because of its eco-friendly tourism experience   | 131 | 4.37 | Very High |

[Source: Primary Data 2026]

### Discussion

Based on the data, tourists' perceptions of eco-friendly accommodations in Bali, particularly in the Sanur area, are categorized as "good," with an average score of 4.17. This value indicates that, in general, tourists hold positive views of eco-friendly accommodation in this specific destination. When analyzed by dimension, Perceived Behavioral Control has the highest average score of 4.32 (very good), followed by Attitude toward the Behavior at 4.26 (very good), and Subjective Norm at 3.94 (good).

The dominance of the Perceived Behavioral Control dimension indicates that tourists have little difficulty finding eco-friendly accommodation in Bali, especially within the Sanur tourism area. This can be associated with the characteristics of Sanur as a well-established coastal destination that offers a wide range of accommodations, from boutique hotels to environmentally conscious resorts. In addition, Sanur is known for its relatively calm atmosphere, pedestrian-friendly beachfront, and growing adoption of sustainable practices, which collectively enhance tourists' perceived ease in accessing eco-friendly options. A variety of variables, including perceived affordability, accessibility of information, and availability of accommodation options, may also influence this condition (Wu et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the Attitude toward the Behavior dimension, which obtained a score of 4.26, indicates that tourists have highly positive attitudes toward eco-friendly accommodation. In the context of Sanur, this positive attitude may be influenced by the destination's image as a more relaxed and culturally rich area compared to other parts of Bali, where environmental preservation and community-based tourism are increasingly emphasized. Tourists perceive such accommodation not only as a comfortable option but also as a form of environmental responsibility, reflecting that sustainability awareness has become an integral part of their travel preferences (Demir et al., 2021).

In contrast, the Subjective Norm dimension has a relatively lower score compared to the other dimensions, at 3.94, although it remains within the good category. This suggests that social influences such as family, friends, and the surrounding environment still play a role in shaping tourists' decisions, but not as strongly as attitudes and perceived behavioral control.

In other words, tourists' decisions to choose eco-friendly accommodation in Sanur tend to be driven more by personal awareness rather than social pressure (Yeh et al., 2021).

These results support the idea that tourists' behavioral intentions are shaped by the three primary components of the Theory of Planned Behavior: attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). The tendency of tourists in Sanur to select eco-friendly accommodation is primarily influenced by their positive attitudes and strong perceived control over their choices.

The average score for destination competitiveness is 4.30, which falls within the "very good" category. This variable shows strong performance across all dimensions, with Destination Management and Demand Conditions scoring 4.40 (very good), Created Resources scoring 4.24 (very good), and Supporting Factors scoring 4.17 (good).

The high score in the Destination Management dimension (4.40) indicates that destination management in Bali, particularly in Sanur, including policies, promotion, and the management of eco-friendly accommodation, has been implemented very effectively. This reflects the readiness of Sanur as a mature tourism destination that has adapted to sustainable tourism trends. In addition, the Demand Conditions dimension, which also scored 4.40, indicates that tourist demand for environmentally friendly tourism products in Sanur is relatively high, thereby encouraging the development of more sustainable services.

The Created Resources dimension, with a score of 4.24, indicates that the available facilities and attractions in Sanur are capable of meeting tourists' expectations. Sanur's coastal setting, sunrise beach attractions, cycling paths, and proximity to cultural sites contribute to a tourism experience that aligns well with eco-friendly and slow tourism concepts. Conversely, the Supporting Factors dimension scored 4.17, the lowest among the competitiveness dimensions, suggesting that aspects such as infrastructure, accessibility, and complementary services still require improvement to enhance the overall tourist experience.

Overall, these findings indicate that eco-friendly accommodation not only positively affects tourists' perceptions but also enhances destination competitiveness. In the context of Sanur, the combination of a well-managed destination, strong market demand, and a supportive tourism environment plays a significant role in strengthening its competitive advantage (Dwyer & Kim, 2003).

These findings also suggest that eco-friendly accommodation is no longer merely an operational component but can be positioned as a strategic element in destination development. In Sanur, where tourism development tends to emphasize sustainability, cultural authenticity, and a slower pace of travel, eco-friendly accommodation can serve as a key differentiating factor that adds value to the destination.

Although tourists' perceptions of eco-friendly accommodation are relatively high, not all tourists consistently choose it. This indicates a possible attitude-behavior gap, where tourists express positive views toward sustainability but may still consider factors such as price, comfort, and location in their actual decisions.

Additionally, from the perspective of destination competitiveness, although the overall variable falls within the very good category, differences across dimensions indicate room for improvement. The Supporting Factors dimension has the lowest score, suggesting that while destination management and demand are strong, supporting aspects such as infrastructure and accessibility in Sanur still need to be further optimized.

The results of this study show higher perception levels compared to previous studies, particularly in the Attitude toward the Behavior and Perceived Behavioral Control

dimensions. This finding aligns with prior research indicating that positive environmental attitudes and perceived ease significantly influence tourists' intention to choose eco-friendly services (Demir et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2024).

Furthermore, as explained in the destination competitiveness model, tourists' perceptions are influenced not only by individual factors but also by destination management systems and market demand conditions. In the case of Sanur, these perceptions are further reinforced by its image as a destination that promotes sustainable and culturally oriented tourism (Dwyer & Kim, 2003).

Practically, these results imply that destination managers and stakeholders in the hospitality sector, particularly in the Sanur area, need to continuously develop and strategically promote eco-friendly accommodation practices. Efforts should focus not only on implementation but also on effective communication to tourists. Environmental certification, transparency of information, and tourist education are essential in increasing trust and interest.

From a theoretical perspective, this study supports the applicability of the Theory of Planned Behavior in explaining tourist behavior in the context of sustainable tourism. However, the findings also indicate that external factors such as destination image and environmental characteristics, particularly those specific to Sanur, play a significant role in shaping tourists' perceptions.

One limitation of this study is the relatively small sample size, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the study employs a descriptive approach and does not deeply examine relationships between variables. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve a larger sample and apply more advanced analytical methods, such as regression analysis or structural equation modeling (SEM), to obtain more comprehensive results.

## **Conclusions**

Based on the results of the analysis, tourists' perceptions of eco-friendly accommodation in Bali fall within the "good" category, with an average score of 4.17, where the Perceived Behavioral Control dimension is the highest (4.32), indicating ease of access, followed by Attitude toward the behavior (4.26), which reflects positive attitudes among tourists, and Subjective Norm (3.94) as the lowest, indicating relatively lower social influence. In the destination competitiveness variable, the average score obtained is 4.30 (very good), with the Destination Management and Demand Conditions dimensions being the highest (4.40), followed by Created Resources (4.24), and Supporting Factors (4.17) as the lowest, indicating that supporting aspects such as infrastructure and accessibility still need to be improved to optimize the tourist experience.

Overall, this study's findings indicate that eco-friendly accommodation not only positively affects tourists' perceptions but also enhances destination competitiveness. However, there remains a potential attitude-Behavior gap, in which tourists demonstrate positive attitudes toward sustainability but, in practice, still consider other factors in their decision-making.

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# **The Role of *Corporate Social Responsibility* (CSR) in Sustainable Accommodation**

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## **Abstract**

*This study aims to analyze the role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in supporting sustainable accommodation at Kuta Puri Bungalows Villas & Resort, Bali. The research employs a qualitative case study approach to gain an in-depth understanding of CSR implementation within hotel operations. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and direct observation involving hotel management and staff.*

*The findings indicate that CSR implementation in the hotel encompasses three main aspects: environmental, social, and economic. From an environmental perspective, CSR helps reduce the negative impacts of hotel operations by promoting energy and water conservation, waste management, and reducing single-use plastics. In the social aspect, CSR contributes to improving community welfare and employee development through local employment, collaboration with local suppliers and small enterprises, and cultural preservation. Meanwhile, from an economic perspective, CSR serves as a business strategy that enhances operational efficiency, strengthens the hotel's reputation, and supports local economic growth.*

*Overall, CSR plays a strategic role in integrating environmental, social, and economic dimensions, thereby supporting the realization of sustainable accommodation. The study highlights that effective CSR implementation not only fulfils corporate responsibility but also contributes to long-term business sustainability in the hospitality industry.*

**Keywords:** *Corporate Social Responsibility, Sustainable Accommodation, Hospitality Industry, Triple Bottom Line, Sustainability*

## **Introduction**

Tourism is a sector that contributes to the Indonesian economy (Mahyuni & Dewi, 2020). Especially in the accommodation sector, it has an important role in supporting the growth of tourism and the regional economy (Nurrochim et al., 2025). The accommodation sector not only contributes significantly to tourism growth and the regional economy, but also to the broader economy. But the accommodation sector also has a negative impact, as it indirectly affects the environment, society, and culture in the regions where it operates, including



increased water use and energy consumption, increased waste volumes, and pressure on local communities and culture. By considering these conditions, accommodation not only prioritizes economic benefits and tourist satisfaction but also aligns with the concept of sustainable tourism development, which emphasizes environmental sustainability in both the physical and socio-cultural spheres (Kumaji et al., 2021)

In an era of fierce competition and rising tourist awareness of ethical and sustainable business practices, *Corporate Social Responsibility* (CSR) has become highly relevant (Nurrochim et al., 2025)). CSR now supports sustainable development by balancing economic and social interests, with environmental protection (Maulidiana, 2018) In hospitality, CSR practices such as green hotels, energy efficiency, waste reduction, water conservation, and local community empowerment are increasingly common (Nurrochim et al., 2025) These initiatives reduce environmental impacts and create more authentic guest experiences (Anneke et al., 2025)

Sumiyati et al. (2023) explained that in Indonesia, CSR implementation is increasingly relevant due to government regulations requiring certain companies to fulfil their social responsibilities. This policy demonstrates the government's commitment to encouraging companies to focus not only on profits but also on social and environmental issues. (Maulidiana, 2018) mentioned Law Number 40 of 2007 concerning Limited Liability Companies, which regulates Social and Environmental Responsibility, aiming to realize sustainable economic development to improve the quality of life and the environment, beneficial to the Company itself, the local community, and the community in general.

Previous studies have widely examined the implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) within the hospitality industry, particularly focusing on its influence on corporate image, customer perception, and relationships with local communities. However, existing literature is still largely concentrated on large-scale hotels and international hotel chains, while limited attention has been given to mid-category accommodation providers operating in mass tourism destinations. Furthermore, studies exploring CSR as an operational strategy for supporting sustainable accommodation practices at the hotel level remain insufficient, particularly those using an in-depth case study approach to understand how CSR is integrated into daily hospitality operations.

Kuta Puri Bungalows Villas & Resort is a three-star accommodation property located in the Kuta area of Bali, one of the island's oldest and most intensively visited tourism destinations. Situated near Kuta Beach, the hotel provides convenient access to coastal attractions and tourism-support facilities. The property offers both hotel rooms and villa accommodations for domestic and international visitors, with a significant proportion of guests originating from Australia. Its operational activities

involve close interaction with the surrounding community through local employment, partnerships with local suppliers, and participation in social and community-based programs.

Given this context, there is a need to examine how CSR contributes to sustainable accommodation practices within mid-scale hotels operating in mature tourism destinations. This study aims to analyze the role of CSR implementation at Kuta Puri Bungalows Villas & Resort in supporting sustainable accommodation through environmental responsibility, social engagement, and economic contribution. The study specifically focuses on understanding how CSR initiatives are integrated into hotel operations and how these practices contribute to long-term sustainability within the hospitality sector.

### **Literature Review**

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) plays a significant role in supporting sustainability within the accommodation sector by integrating environmental, social, and economic responsibilities into hospitality operations. In the hotel industry, CSR extends beyond corporate image-building and functions as a strategic approach to reducing tourism's negative impacts while enhancing long-term destination sustainability.

From an environmental perspective, CSR encourages accommodation providers to adopt eco-friendly operational practices such as waste management, energy efficiency, and water conservation. Many hotels implement waste segregation systems, biodegradable products, and energy-saving technologies to minimize their ecological footprint. Sustainable lodging initiatives and environmental management frameworks also help accommodation providers identify operational gaps and improve compliance with sustainability standards (Gil-Delgado et al., 2025; Wojciechowska-Solis et al., 2021). Water conservation is another important CSR component, particularly in tourism destinations where resource availability is limited, requiring careful planning and stakeholder collaboration (Vila et al., 2018)

CSR also contributes to social sustainability by strengthening relationships between accommodation providers and local communities. Hotels often engage in CSR activities through support for local enterprises, cultural preservation, community development projects, and charitable programs. In tourism destinations such as Livingstone/Victoria Falls in Zambia, hospitality businesses contribute to community welfare through educational, agricultural, and social initiatives that improve local livelihoods (Vieira & Nadda, 2025). In addition, CSR promotes employee development by encouraging staff participation in sustainable practices, training, and environmental awareness programs.

Economically, CSR creates competitive advantages for accommodation providers. Hotels that actively implement CSR strategies often enhance their brand reputation, increase customer trust, and strengthen market positioning. Growing consumer awareness of environmental and social responsibility has increased

demand for sustainable accommodations, making CSR an important factor in attracting environmentally conscious travellers (Castilho et al., 2022). Sustainable initiatives also improve customer satisfaction and loyalty, contributing to long-term business performance (Papallou et al., 2024). Furthermore, CSR aligns hospitality businesses with global sustainability agendas, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which enhances organizational legitimacy and stakeholder confidence.

Despite these benefits, implementing CSR in the accommodation sector remains challenging. Bureaucratic barriers, inconsistent sustainability regulations, limited employee training, and insufficient collaboration with local authorities often constrain the effectiveness of CSR programs (Gil-Delgado et al., 2025). In addition, varying sustainability standards across regions complicate the establishment of uniform CSR practices within the hospitality industry (Scarinci & Myers, 2014).

Overall, CSR is a critical component of sustainable accommodation development. It enables hotels to reduce environmental impacts, support community well-being, and improve business competitiveness. Successful CSR implementation requires collaboration among hospitality businesses, governments, and local communities to ensure environmental responsibility, social inclusion, and long-term economic sustainability (Gonzalez-Morales & Santana Talaveray, 2019).

### **Research Methodology**

This research uses a qualitative case study approach. This approach was chosen to gain a deep understanding of the role of *Corporate Social Responsibility* (CSR) in supporting the realization of sustainable accommodation at Kuta Puri Bungalows Villas & Resort. The research was conducted at Kuta Puri Bungalows Villas & Resort, located in a crowded area of Kuta, Bali. The location was selected with the consideration that the hotel is a three-star accommodation operating in international tourist destinations under high environmental and social pressures, so the implementation of CSR is an important part of maintaining the sustainability of the hospitality business.

Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews and direct observation. The research informants include hotel management and staff to obtain information on program policies and the impact of CSR implementation, particularly on environmental, social, and economic aspects. The data obtained will then be analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis techniques. This analysis was conducted through several stages, including data reduction, data categorization, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by selecting and focusing on relevant information related to CSR implementation. Furthermore, the data were categorized based on environmental, social and economic aspects. The categorized data were then presented descriptively to identify patterns and relationships, and finally, conclusion were drawn to explain the role of CSR in supporting sustainable accommodation. The results of the analysis are then used to

illustrate the role of CSR in supporting the realization of sustainable accommodation at Kuta Puri Bungalows Villas & Resort.

## Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Data Description

The object of this study is Kuta Puri Bungalows Villas & Resort, a three-star hotel located in the Kuta area, Bali. This hotel is located in a tourist area with high visitor activity and is adjacent to Kuta Beach, one of Bali's main attractions. As an accommodation operating in international tourist destinations, this hotel has a direct connection to the environmental, social, and economic aspects of the surrounding community.

Based on the interview results, the hotel has implemented several *Corporate Social Responsibility* (CSR) and sustainability programs. Although it does not yet have fully comprehensive written guidelines, the hotel does have operational policies related to energy conservation, water conservation, and waste management, including liquid waste, solid waste, and B3 waste. The CSR program has been implemented gradually since 2014. The implementation of the CSR program involves the Human Resources Manager, the Heads of Departments, the Assistant General Manager, and the General Manager. The hotel views CSR as both a corporate obligation and part of the company's values. In addition, CSR is understood as part of hotel operations, focusing on environmental, social, and economic aspects in a sustainable manner.

Table 1: Data on the implementation of CSR activities at Kuta Puri Bungalows Villas & Resort

| No | ASPECTS               | CSR ACTIVITY                                                                                                                                                              |
|----|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Environmental Aspects | 1. Energy and water conservation<br>2. Waste management<br>3. Reduction in the use of single-use plastics<br>4. Savings on Electricity and water use<br>5. Beach Cleaning |

|   |                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2 | Social Aspects   | 1. Recruitment of local workers<br>2. Cooperation with local suppliers and MSMEs<br>3. Employee training<br>4. Entertainment activities for employees<br>5. Support for local communities<br>6. Art show<br>7. Cultural activities that attract guests<br>8. Employee work safety |
| 3 | Economic Aspects | 1. Employment for local communities<br>2. Strengthening the local economy<br>3. Employee skills development or training<br>4. Sustainable business park                                                                                                                           |

#### 4.1 Discussion

Based on the data presented, it can be seen that Kuta Puri Bungalows Villas & Resort has implemented various *Corporate Social Responsibility* (CSR) programs across environmental, social, and economic areas. To understand the meaning and implications of the application, the following section will discuss the research findings in the context of CSR and sustainable accommodation.

##### A. Environmental Aspects

The environmental findings indicate that CSR implementation at Kuta Puri Bungalows Villas & Resort is not merely symbolic but has evolved into an operational sustainability strategy embedded within hotel management practices. From the perspective of the planet dimension of the Triple Bottom Line, the environmental dimension (planet) Hotel Puri Bungalows Villa & Resort has implemented various CSR programs aimed at reducing the environmental impact of its operations. In this case, hotels consume significant amounts of electricity and water due to room occupancy, laundry services, kitchens, pools, and landscaping. Therefore, CSR plays a role in encouraging the implementation of energy and water conservation through various strategic steps. These efforts include monitoring electricity and water use and installing *signage* in various areas of the hotel to increase employee and guest awareness. In addition, energy efficiency is achieved through LED lighting throughout the entire room, including the garden and swimming pool areas, which are more energy-efficient and environmentally friendly (Surya Wardhana et al., 2021).

In terms of water management, CSR also plays a role in encouraging the use of the WWTP (Wastewater Treatment Plant) system by reusing wastewater that has been treated for watering plants. This is important to minimize pollution because

some characteristics of wastewater that need to be considered are that it contains large amounts of bacteria, viruses, and parasites, which can rapidly spread diseases. Additionally, the detergent content in wastewater increases nutrient level especially phosphorus and nitrogen often leading to eutrophication (Susi & Septisya, 2019). These environmental practices also contribute to operational cost efficiency (profit) and enhance the hotel's environmental image, which may influence customer trust and satisfaction (people).

In waste management, at Hotel Puri Bungalows Villa & Resort, CSR has played a role in ensuring the consistency of the organic, inorganic, and B3 waste separation system since 2016. Organic waste, such as leaves, will be processed independently at the hotel's teba. Other wastes, such as inorganic waste and B3, will be managed by a third party in accordance with the standards. The Kuta Puri Bungalows Villa & Resort Hotel also implements measures to reduce single-use plastic, including replacing water bottles with *glass bottles* and using environmentally *friendly* refillable amenities. This practice demonstrates that waste management is not merely conducted to comply with operational standards but also serves as a strategic effort to reduce environmental impact, improve operational efficiency, and strengthen the hotel's positioning as a sustainable accommodation provider.

CSR at the hotel operates through a combination of technological, managerial, and behavioral approaches. Technological measures include efficient lighting and wastewater treatment systems. Managerial measures include monitoring resource consumption and enforcing waste segregation. Behavioral measures include encouraging employees and guests to participate in conservation practices. (Haris & Priyo Purnomo, 2016) define CSR as a company's activities in managing business processes to produce a positive impact on society, the economy, and the environment. The company's involvement in carrying out CSR activities has become a demand for responsibility for the impact of losses experienced by the community, especially on environmental damage. Thus, the practices implemented by the hotel demonstrate that CSR has been integrated into operational strategies aimed at enhancing resource efficiency and environmental sustainability.

These findings reflect the *planet* dimension of the Triple Bottom Line, emphasizing environmentally responsible operational practices. It is done through measures that companies can use to minimize environmental impact by managing energy consumption and non-renewable raw materials, as well as reducing manufacturing waste (Gaus & Meirinawati, 2021). The effectiveness of environmental CSR implementation determines the extent to which hotels can achieve sustainable operations. Thus, CSR in the environmental aspect functions not only as a tool for managing environmental impacts but also as a strategic approach to improving operational efficiency and ensuring long-term sustainability.

## **B. Social Aspects**

The implementation of CSR initiatives in social areas at Kuta Puri Bungalows Villas & Resort demonstrates the company's active support for the welfare of the community and its employees. CSR plays a role in empowering local communities by prioritizing the recruitment of local workers, all employees at this hotel are local residents, from the GM to the staff. This aims not only to provide job opportunities

for the local community but also to strengthen social inclusion and enhance community engagement in the tourism sector also as a mechanism to secure social legitimacy. In addition, the hotel collaborates with local suppliers and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to provide goods and services, such as groceries, handicrafts, and other operational needs. This indirectly contributes to improving the local economy. These findings CSR program is able to improve the welfare of the surrounding community through empowerment carried out by the company(Sakti & Wahyanti, 2021)

In terms of human resource development, CSR has a role in improving the quality of human resources through various training and skill development programs for employees, such as foreign language training, service excellence, and technical skills relevant to the hospitality sector. These findings suggest that employee skill development is not only essential for improving service quality but also serves as a strategic approach to maintaining competitive advantage in a dynamic hospitality industry (Hia et al., 2023). This indicates that the hotel is not only focused on improving current performance but also strategically invests in human capital development, which is essential for maintaining long-term competitiveness in the hospitality industry.

Not only that, but The hotel also prioritizes employee welfare and safety through the implementation of safe working standards, adequate facilities, and health insurance coverage and offering employees health insurance. Hotels also often host employee entertainment events, such as outings and activities on the hotel's birthday, including competitions and door prizes. Employee welfare is a decisive factor in boosting employee performance. (Agustina et al., 2018)

On the other hand, hotels are also active in supporting the activities of the surrounding community, such as participating in social activities in banjar or Seka Teruna Teruni (STT), as well as playing a role in the preservation of local culture through the organization of Balinese cultural performances and cultural activities involving hotel guests. By supporting local traditions, the hotel contributes to maintaining cultural continuity. This indicates that CSR serves as a protective mechanism against cultural commodification. These findings indicate that CSR plays a crucial role in fostering long-term relationships between the hotel and the local community while supporting cultural preservation as part of sustainable tourism (Darmawijaya et al., 2024). These findings reflect the *people* dimension of the Triple Bottom Line, which emphasizes the company's responsibility toward employees and local communities. (Gaus & Meirinawati, 2021). However, this social dimension is closely interconnected with environmental and economic aspects, where employee awareness can support environmental initiatives (planet), and improved employee performance contributes to business outcomes (profit).

Thus, the implementation of CSR in the social aspect plays a strategic role not only in improving community welfare but also in supporting the long-term sustainability of hotel operations. CSR helps strengthen the relationship between hotels and local communities, fostering harmonious, mutually beneficial ties. With community support, hotels can build trust and social legitimacy (*social license to operate*), which is crucial to maintaining business sustainability. In addition, CSR helps maintain local identity amid the flow of global tourism, ensuring local culture

is not eroded by modernization. In this context, CSR is a tool to maintain a balance between the development of the tourism industry and the preservation of local values.

### **C. Economic Aspects**

The economic findings demonstrate that implementing *Corporate Social Responsibility* (CSR) at Kuta Puri Bungalows Villas & Resort contributes to business sustainability by generating economic benefits for both the hotel and surrounding communities. Kuta Puri Bungalows, Villas & Resort provides employment opportunities for the surrounding community, thereby increasing local income and reducing unemployment. Collaboration with local suppliers and MSMEs in providing F&B products, room supplies, and spa products contributes to strengthening the local economy by maintaining economic circulation within the community. In addition, employee training or skill development can improve employee quality, benefiting hotels and increasing the workforce's future competitiveness. Furthermore, CSR serves as a strategic approach to improving operational efficiency through more effective resource management, thereby reducing costs and enhancing overall economic performance.

Through CSR programs such as beach cleanups, the hotel enhances its positive image and reputation among guests, local communities, and business partners. In addition, sustainable CSR practices can increase guest trust and loyalty, especially among tourists who are increasingly concerned about *sustainability*. The image of hotels as environmentally friendly accommodations is also an added value in the era of increasing *eco-friendly hospitality* trends. Internally, a good reputation also increases employee pride in the company and organizational identity. Employees working within socially responsible organizations often feel stronger emotional attachment to their workplace. Overall, CSR implementation contributes to building a strong brand image, which not only enhances competitiveness but also attracts sustainability-oriented customers and strengthens long-term market positioning. The present finding aligns with prior studies that identify CSR as a driver of competitiveness and long-term economic performance in the hospitality industry.

These findings reflect the *profit* dimension of the Triple Bottom Line, which emphasizes not only financial performance but also the broader economic impact on the surrounding community (Gaus & Meirinawati, 2021). Overall, the findings demonstrate that the three dimensions of the Triple Bottom Line environmental (*planet*), social (*people*), and economic (*profit*) are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Environmental initiatives contribute to resource efficiency and cost reduction, social practices strengthen community relationships and employee well-being, while economic outcomes ensure long-term business sustainability. These interconnections indicate that CSR implementation at Kuta Puri Bungalows Villas & Resort is not carried out as separate initiatives, but rather as an integrated strategic approach to achieving sustainable accommodation.

### **D. Challenges and Directions of CSR Development**

Based on the interview results, although the implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) at Kuta Puri Bungalows Villas & Resort has positive effects on environmental, social, and economic aspects, various challenges remain to be considered in its implementation. The existence of this challenge is natural in the



process of implementing CSR, especially in the hotel industry, which is complex and involves various internal and external parties.

One of the main challenges is the limited budget for supporting the broader development of CSR programs. In addition, program implementation consistency is an obstacle, especially in maintaining all employees' commitment to continue implementing sustainability practices in daily operational activities. Uneven levels of employee awareness and participation can affect the effectiveness of a program that has been designed. On the other hand, not all guests share the same level of concern for sustainability, so sustainable efforts are needed to ensure the CSR program implemented runs optimally. Another challenge is related to waste management, especially B3 waste and liquid waste, which must be managed in accordance with applicable standards and regulations and incur high costs and maintenance.

In the future, there are several development directions that want to be done to strengthen the implementation of CSR in Kuta Puri Bungalows Villas & Resort. One of them is the effort towards sustainability certification such as Green Key or Earth-Check to increase the credibility and competitiveness of hotels in the tourism market that is increasingly concerned about environmental issues. In addition, striving to digitize operations through the implementation of a paperless system is also an alternative in supporting efficiency and waste reduction. Not only that, strengthening community involvement through community engagement programs, such as collaboration with local communities in environmental activities, can also increase the social impact of CSR implementation. On the internal side, the development of programs such as sustainability champions in each department can encourage innovation and increase the active participation of wealthy in supporting sustainability.

Thus, challenging management and developing sustainable CSR programs are important factors in improving CSR as a strategy for supporting the realization of sustainable accommodation. This shows that CSR not only play a role as a form of corporate responsibility, but also as an effort to maintain the operational continuity of hotels in the future.

### **Conclusions**

The findings indicate that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) plays a significant role in supporting sustainable accommodation practices at Kuta Puri Bungalows Villas & Resort through the integration of environmental, social, and economic initiatives. Environmentally, the hotel implements energy and water conservation, waste segregation, wastewater reuse, and the reduction of single-use plastics to minimize operational impacts. Socially, CSR contributes to community empowerment through local employment, partnerships with local suppliers, employee development, cultural preservation, and community engagement activities. Economically, CSR strengthens local economic circulation, improves operational efficiency, enhances hotel reputation, and supports long-term business sustainability. The study also reveals that CSR is embedded within hotel operations rather than functioning solely as an external philanthropic activity. However, challenges such as

budget limitations, employee consistency, and waste management complexity remain. Overall, the findings demonstrate that CSR serves as a strategic approach for achieving sustainable accommodation by balancing environmental responsibility, social inclusion, and economic performance..

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# Eco-Resort In The Perspective Of Sustainable Tourism At Hotel Adiwana Swarga Loka

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## Abstract

*This study analyzed the implementation of the eco-resort concept from a sustainable tourism perspective at Adiwana Svarga Loka, Ubud, Bali. The rapid growth of tourism has created environmental and social challenges, prompting hospitality sector stakeholders to adopt more sustainable practices. This research used a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of how sustainability principles were applied in the resort's operational activities. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with resort management and supported by documentation and literature review. The findings showed that Adiwana Svarga Loka had implemented various sustainability practices covering environmental, social, and economic aspects. Environmental initiatives included waste separation, reducing single-use plastics, and utilizing natural surroundings as part of the wellness retreat concept. Socially, the resort involved local communities through employment opportunities and collaboration with local suppliers. Economically, the application of eco-resort practices improved operational efficiency and increased the resort's appeal to environmentally conscious tourists. Overall, the study indicated that the eco-resort concept could be effectively integrated into resort management to support sustainable tourism development.*

**Keywords:** eco-resort, sustainable tourism, hospitality sustainability, environmental management, Bali tourism

## Introduction

The tourism sector is a key component of global economic development because of its contributions to economic growth, job creation, and increased foreign exchange (Sari et al. 2024). The acceleration of its growth also causes various problems, such as environmental damage, uncontrolled use of natural resources, and social disparities in tourist destinations (Panjaitan and Laia 2025). This situation encourages the strengthening of the concept of sustainable tourism as an adaptive and responsible management framework for destinations and tourism industry sectors (Rahmat 2021). This phenomenon is the basis for the emergence of the concept of sustainable tourism, which is positioned as a more responsible and integrated development framework.

In the hotel and accommodation industry, the application of sustainability principles in tourism is reflected in the development of the *eco-resort* concept. Conceptually, an *eco-resort* is defined as a form of area management that prioritizes environmentally friendly principles, which further develops into a resort concept featuring tourist destinations and locations that offer various products, services, and activities closely related to environmental issues and concerns (Faculdade 2021).

In the accommodation and hospitality industry, the concept of an eco-resort does not have a single, globally standardized framework specifically defined as an “eco-resort standard.” Instead, its implementation is guided by a combination of complementary international frameworks, including sustainability certifications, environmental management systems, and sustainable tourism standards. One of the most widely used benchmarks is the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) Criteria, which serves as a global framework for sustainable tourism development by emphasizing sustainable management, socio-economic benefits for local communities, cultural preservation, and environmental protection through efficient use of energy, water, and waste management (Maria et al. 2021).

In addition, the ISO 14001 Environmental Management System is widely adopted by hotels and resorts as an environmental management framework to identify environmental impacts, reduce pollution, improve resource efficiency, and ensure continuous improvement in environmental performance (Elias, 2002). In industry practice, certifications such as EarthCheck also play an important role as they provide auditing systems and measurable indicators related to energy and water consumption, carbon emissions, and social impacts on local communities, making them widely used by international hotels and eco-resorts (Velaoras et al. 2025). Meanwhile, from an infrastructure perspective, LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is an important standard that ensures resort buildings apply green building principles such as energy efficiency, the use of environmentally friendly materials, and improved indoor environmental quality (Velaoras et al. 2025). At the regional level, particularly in Indonesia and the ASEAN region, eco-resort implementation is also guided by frameworks such as the ASEAN Green Hotel Standard and national tourism policies that support sustainable tourism development in accordance with local environmental and regulatory contexts. Overall, the combination of these standards forms a comprehensive framework that enables eco-resorts to integrate environmental, social, and economic sustainability into their operations (M et al. 2021).

The implementation of sustainability principles in eco-friendly resorts includes a series of strategies designed to minimize environmental impacts, support conservation efforts, and improve social and economic well-being. These strategies include optimizing energy efficiency, reducing waste, conserving water resources, and utilizing energy and renewable resources (Darmaputra et al., 2020; Winanti et al., 2025). Implementing these sustainability measures not only strengthens the resort's commitment to environmental protection but also provides economic benefits,

including reduced operating costs and increased guest satisfaction and loyalty (Andrew 2024).

As one of Indonesia's main tourism destinations, Bali faces significant environmental sustainability challenges, driven by the high intensity of tourist visits and the rapid development of tourism infrastructure (Dianasari, 2018). Efforts to sustain this sector require strong synergy among the government, tourism industry players, and local communities. This collaboration plays an important role in maintaining the destination's quality while preserving cultural values and environmental sustainability (Silaswati Diana, 2018). Without an adequate management system, the increase in tourist numbers can lead to problems such as traffic congestion, environmental degradation, and a decline in local cultural values (Esta and Wirantari 2025). Therefore, the implementation of the eco-resort concept in Bali is a strategic step in supporting more responsible tourism practices.

One accommodation that implements this concept is Adiwana Svarga Loka, located in Ubud. The resort integrates concepts of wellness and proximity to nature, and uses architectural and material elements in harmony with the surrounding environment. Adiwana Svarga Loka also provides spa facilities, meditation sessions, and traditional healing services. This resort implements several initiatives, including waste management, reduced plastic use, annual CSR programs, and more. This approach aligns with the principle of ecotourism, which emphasizes nature-based tourism that aims to preserve nature while providing educational value to tourists through direct experience and environmental education (Purnamawati and Yuniarta 2024).

Based on this description, this study aims to analyze the application of the concept of eco-resort from the perspective of sustainable tourism in Adiwana Svarga Loka. This study is expected to make an academic contribution to the literature on the implementation of *sustainable tourism* in the accommodation sector and to serve as a reference for the hotel industry in developing more sustainable practices.

### **Research Methodology**

This research uses a qualitative research approach. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to deeply understand the phenomenon of the application of the eco-resort concept from the perspective of sustainable tourism in the research object. Qualitative research is a method used to study objects in their natural conditions, in which the researcher serves as the primary instrument in the data collection process (Waruwu, 2024). Through this approach, the researcher seeks to understand the phenomena experienced by the research subjects holistically, such as behaviors, perceptions, motivations, and actions related to sustainability practices in resort operations.

The qualitative approach focuses on in-depth data collection to gain a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon. In contrast to quantitative research that emphasizes measurement and statistical analysis, qualitative research focuses more on meaning, interpretation, and processes that occur in a particular context. The data obtained in

this study are then presented descriptively in the form of word descriptions that reflect real field conditions (Safrudi et al., 2023). Thus, this study does not aim to generalize, but to understand in depth the implementation of the eco-resort concept in resort management practices.

The object of research in this study is Adiwana Svarga Loka, located in the Ubud area of Bali. This resort was chosen because it embodies the concepts of wellness, nature, and spiritual retreat, which align with the principles of sustainable tourism. Adiwana Svarga Loka has also implemented several practices that support the eco-resort concept, such as waste management, reduced plastic use, and the involvement of local communities in economic activities within the resort. Therefore, this resort is considered relevant for study in the context of sustainable tourism implementation in the accommodation sector.

The data sources in this study include both primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through interviews with informants who have an understanding of resort operations and sustainability policies. The main informant in this study is Vini, a representative of Adiwana Svarga Loka's management, who serves as PNC (Sales and Culture). The interview was conducted in person using pre-prepared question guidelines. The questions cover various aspects of implementing the eco-resort concept, including waste management systems, reducing plastic use, implementing paperless systems, guest and local community involvement, and the obstacles to implementing sustainability programs.

In addition to primary data, this study uses secondary data from various written sources, including books, scientific journals, research reports, and other documents relevant to sustainable tourism, eco-resorts, and qualitative research methods. Secondary data are used to strengthen the theoretical foundation and to provide a conceptual framework for analyzing research findings in the field.

Data collection in this study was conducted through interviews and document analysis. Interviews are the primary method for directly obtaining information from informants about the resort's sustainability practices. The interview is conducted in a semi-structured manner, which allows the researcher to delve deeper into the information as the discussion unfolds (Ramadhan & Lestari, 2023). Meanwhile, the documentation study collected various documents, notes, and records of activities related to sustainability programs at the resort, including CSR activities, environmental management, and community empowerment initiatives.

Data analysis in qualitative research is inductive, namely by interpreting field data and consolidating them into a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being studied. The analysis process runs from data collection through to the completion of the research. The data from interviews and documentation are then processed, classified, and interpreted to identify patterns, themes, and meanings related to the implementation of the eco-resort concept from a sustainable tourism perspective.

The research procedure in this study begins by formulating research problems related to the application of the eco-resort concept in the accommodation sector. Furthermore, the researcher collected field data through interviews with resort management and the collection of relevant documents. After data collection, the researcher conducts an in-depth analysis to understand the phenomenon. The final stage of this research is to present the results and draw conclusions that provide an overview of the implementation of sustainability practices at Adiwana Svarga Loka and their contribution to sustainable tourism development.

Through this qualitative research approach, it is hoped that a more comprehensive understanding of how the concept of eco-resort is applied in resort operational practices, including the various efforts to maintain a balance among environmental, social, and economic aspects in tourism activities, will be achieved. The results of this research are expected to contribute to the literature on sustainable tourism and serve as a reference for the hotel industry in implementing more environmentally friendly practices.

## Results and Discussion

### 1. Data Description

This research was conducted at Adiwana Svarga Loka, located in the Ubud area of Bali. Data were collected through interviews with resort management and supported by documentation related to sustainability practices in resort operations. Based on the findings, Adiwana Svarga Loka has implemented the eco-resort concept as part of its operational approach. This implementation reflects the integration of sustainable tourism principles, particularly in environmental, social, and economic aspects.

Furthermore, sustainability practices are applied across various operational activities and contribute to the overall resort experience. These practices indicate the resort's commitment to aligning its operations with sustainable tourism development.

To provide a clearer and more structured overview, the implementation of these practices is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Indicators of the Implementation of the Eco-Resort Concept in Adiwana Svarga Loka

| Sustainability Dimension | Indicator | Implementation at Adiwana Svarga Loka |
|--------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|
|--------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|



|               |                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Environmental | Waste management                  | The resort implements an organic and inorganic waste sorting system. Organic waste is utilized as compost for plants in the resort area, while inorganic waste is separated for recycling. |
|               | Plastic reduction                 | Resorts reduce the use of single-use plastics by replacing plastic bottles with glass bottles or refillable containers.                                                                    |
|               | Conservation of natural resources | The resort utilizes the natural environment as part of the wellness retreat concept and maintains vegetation in the area around the resort.                                                |
|               | Energy and water efficiency       | The efficient use of resources is carried out to reduce the environmental impact of resort operational activities.                                                                         |
| Social        | Empowerment of local communities  | The resort employs local workers and works closely with the surrounding community in operational activities and the provision of local products.                                           |
|               | Program CSR                       | The resort employs local workers and works closely with the surrounding community in operational activities and the provision of local products.                                           |
|               | Environmental education           | Guests are provided with a nature-based tourism and wellness experience that raises awareness of the importance of protecting the environment.                                             |
| Economic      | Local economic support            | The resort works closely with local suppliers to meet operational needs such as groceries and local products.                                                                              |
|               | Operational sustainability        | The implementation of environmentally friendly practices helps to reduce operational costs in the long run.                                                                                |
|               | Sustainable tourism attractions   | The concept of eco-resort and wellness retreat increases the selling point of resorts for tourists who care about the environment.                                                         |

[Source : Data processed by the researcher (2026); adjusted to the concept of eco-resort and sustainable tourism (Papallou, Katafygiotou, and Dimopoulos 2024; Riyaz 2024; Suardana et al. 2024)]

Based on Table 1, the implementation of the eco-resort concept at Adiwana Svarga Loka can be analyzed along three main dimensions: environmental, social, and economic. In the environmental aspect, the resort has implemented various initiatives, including waste management, reduced plastic use, and utilizing the natural environment as part of the tourism experience. This practice is in line with the eco-resort principle, which emphasizes responsible resource management to minimize the environmental impact of tourism activities (Papallou, Katafygiotou, and Dimopoulos 2024)

In the social sphere, the involvement of local communities is an important part of implementing sustainable tourism. The resort not only employs local workers but also collaborates with local businesses to provide products and services. This shows that the development of eco-resorts is not only focused on environmental conservation but also on improving the welfare of the surrounding community (Amalia and Lubis 2025)

Meanwhile, in the economic sphere, the application of the eco-resort concept also benefits the sustainability of resort operations. More efficient resource use can reduce operational costs in the long run while increasing resorts' appeal to tourists concerned about environmental issues. The growing trend toward sustainable tourism has made eco-resorts a competitive accommodation development strategy in the modern tourism industry.

## 2. Discussion

Based on the research presented in the data description section, the implementation of the eco-resort concept at Adiwana Svarga Loka demonstrates the integration of environmental, social, and economic sustainability principles into resort operations. The eco-resort concept is part of a sustainable tourism approach that emphasizes responsible resource management and a balance between the needs of the tourism industry, environmental sustainability, and the well-being of local communities. This approach aims to ensure that tourism activities not only provide economic benefits, but also maintain environmental and social sustainability in the long term (Pramono and Juliana 2025)

In the environmental aspect, Adiwana Svarga Loka has implemented various strategies to minimize negative environmental impacts, such as waste management, reducing single-use plastic use, and utilizing the natural environment as part of the wellness retreat concept. Environmental management practices in the tourism sector are crucial to maintaining the sustainability of tourist destinations, especially those with natural and cultural attractions such as Bali. Sustainable natural resource management also plays a role in maintaining the quality of the environment while improving the quality of the tourist experience (Astri Dwi Andriana, Irfan Sopha Himawanb, 2024)

In addition, the integration of the wellness tourism concept implemented by Adiwana Svarga Loka is also part of the sustainable tourism development strategy. Activities such as yoga, meditation, and traditional healing therapies provide a tourist experience oriented towards the physical, mental, and spiritual health of tourists. Health and wellness-based tourism is one of the trends that continues to grow in the tourism industry because it provides a more meaningful tourism experience and increases tourists' awareness of the importance of balance between people and the environment(Arida et al. 2025)

In the social sphere, the involvement of local communities in resort operations is also an important indicator of sustainable tourism implementation. Adiwana Svarga Loka involves the local community through the use of local labor and cooperation with local business actors to provide various products and meet the resort's operational needs. The participation of local communities in tourism activities can improve the community's economic welfare while strengthening the relationship between the tourism industry and the local community. Community involvement is also an important factor in creating social and economic resilience in the development of tourist destinations(Susanti and Indriyani 2025)

From an economic perspective, applying the eco-resort concept also supports the sustainability of resort operations. Efficient resource use and environmentally friendly practices can help reduce operational costs in the long run. In addition, increased interest in health- and sustainability-based tourism can enhance the attractiveness of tourist destinations and strengthen the competitiveness of the tourism industry. The development of tourism products such as yoga and wellness retreats is even one of the strategies in increasing the competitiveness of Indonesian tourism in the global market (Arifin, Ayuningtyas, and Musthofa 2025)

Overall, the application of the eco-resort concept at Adiwana Svarga Loka shows that sustainability practices can be effectively integrated into tourism accommodation operations. Through effective environmental management, local community involvement, and the development of wellness and nature-based tourism products, this resort supports more sustainable tourism while enhancing the quality of the tourist experience.

In this study, the evaluation of eco-resort concept implementation at Adiwana Svarga Loka is based on two main frameworks, namely the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) Criteria. GSTC is used as the primary conceptual framework because it is widely recognized in sustainable tourism literature as a global benchmark for assessing sustainability performance in tourism destinations and hospitality businesses. Recent studies (Romero et al., 2022) emphasize that GSTC-aligned sustainable tourism frameworks provide a comprehensive structure for integrating environmental protection, socio-cultural preservation, and economic sustainability in hospitality operations

## **Conclusions**

Based on research on the application of the eco-resort concept from a sustainable tourism perspective at Adiwana Svarga Loka, it can be concluded that the resort has implemented various sustainability practices across environmental, social, and economic aspects. The implementation shows that the concept of an eco-resort can be applied in practice in tourism accommodation operations through various programs and policies that support environmental management and local community empowerment.

In the environmental aspect, Adiwana Svarga Loka implements various efforts to minimize negative environmental impacts, such as waste management through organic and inorganic waste sorting systems, reducing single-use plastic use, and utilizing the natural environment as part of the wellness retreat concept. This practice shows the resort's commitment to preserving the environment and supporting the principles of sustainable tourism.

On the social side, the resort also involves the local community in operational activities through the use of local labor and cooperation with local business actors to meet the resort's operational needs. This community involvement contributes to improving the economic welfare of the surrounding community while strengthening the relationship between the tourism industry and the local community.

Meanwhile, in the economic sphere, the application of the eco-resort concept also benefits the sustainability of resort operations. The efficient use of resources and the development of wellness- and spiritual-tourism-based products can increase resorts' appeal to tourists concerned about environmental and health issues. This shows that sustainability practices not only benefit the environment and society but can also increase the competitiveness of the tourism industry.

Overall, the implementation of the eco-resort concept at Adiwana Svarga Loka shows that sustainable tourism practices can be effectively integrated into resort management. This approach not only contributes to environmental preservation and the empowerment of local communities but also supports the development of more responsible, sustainable tourism in the future.

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## Community-Based Homestays As An Alternative Sustainable Accommodation Model

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### Abstract

*This study examines the role of community-based homestays as a sustainable accommodation model in Kuta, Bali, in response to the challenges of mass tourism, including environmental degradation and unequal economic distribution. With increasing demand for sustainable and authentic tourism experiences, this research aims to analyze how community-based homestays contribute to environmental management, community empowerment, and tourist satisfaction.*

*A qualitative descriptive approach was employed using a case study of Angkul-Angkul Segara Beach Homestay. Primary data were collected through direct observation and in-depth interviews with the homestay manager, supported by secondary data from relevant literature and documents. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing to ensure systematic interpretation.*

*The findings reveal that the homestay implements several sustainable practices, including waste segregation, reduction of single-use plastics, and collaboration with local waste management systems. Community involvement is evident through local employment, training programs, and support for cultural activities. The use of digital platforms, particularly Online Travel Agents, enhances market access but also creates dependency and competitive pressure. Despite operational challenges, the homestay provides authentic experiences and contributes to local economic distribution.*

*In conclusion, community-based homestays represent a viable model for sustainable tourism by integrating environmental, social, and economic aspects. Strengthening capacity, marketing strategies, and service quality is essential to enhance their competitiveness and long-term sustainability.*

**Keywords:** *Community-based homestay, sustainable tourism, community empowerment, tourist satisfaction*



## Introduction

Bali, Indonesia's leading tourism destination, has long been a global attraction for its beautiful natural landscapes and unique traditions and culture, attracting millions of tourists every year (Ruastiti, 2019). The tourism sector not only accounts for more than 50% of Regional Original Revenue (PAD) but also creates massive jobs and serves as the backbone of the local economy (BPS, 2025).

Table 1: Data on Foreign Tourist Visits to Bali

| Tahun | Kunjungan Wisman<br>(juta) | Perubahan YoY (%) |
|-------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| 2019  | 6,17                       | -                 |
| 2020  | 1,07                       | -82,6             |
| 2021  | 0,051                      | -95,2             |
| 2022  | 2,16                       | +4134             |
| 2023  | 5,27                       | +144              |
| 2024  | 6,33                       | +20,1             |
| 2025  | 6,95                       | +9,7              |

[Source: Badan Pusat statistika Provinsi bali]

According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of Bali province, tourism in Bali experienced rapid growth after the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2019, foreign tourist visits to Bali reached 6.17 million, but declined to 1.07 million in 2020 and 51 thousand in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The recovery of tourism in Bali began in 2022, when 2.16 million tourists visited, and jumped to 5.27 million in 2023. The upward trend continues in 2024 and 2025, with 5.27 million and 6.95 million tourists, respectively.

This rapid recovery in tourist arrivals not only reflects the resilience of Bali's tourism sector but also intensifies existing pressures on destinations, highlighting structural weaknesses in the prevailing mass tourism model. This condition shows that the mass tourism model that relies on large-scale accommodation has not fully addressed the challenges of tourism sustainability in Bali, especially in the Kuta area. Large hotels in Kuta face limitations such as fluctuating occupancy (down to 35-46% by 2025 in non-stars), high operating costs, and an inability to handle seasonal spikes, so tourists are turning to more authentic and affordable homestays or villas (Wiranatha et al., 2019). This emphasizes the need for sustainable diversification of accommodation (Hendrayana, 2025).

The dominance of large players in Badung Regency's tourism industry means local communities do not fully benefit from tourism (Margayawati et al., 2025). Transforming accommodation models is therefore urgent for more inclusive, sustainable tourism aligned with the SDGs (Laksmi & Saputra, 2025). Community-based tourism in Penglipuran Village

demonstrates that active local involvement strengthens local control, preserves culture, and reduces economic leakage (Briliyanti, 2021).

Sustainable tourism trends highlight growing interest in accommodation involving local communities. According to the Travel & Sustainability Report 2025 by Booking.com, 93% of global travelers seek sustainable choices, 53% are aware of tourism's local impact, and 73% value direct interaction with communities. Community benefit is becoming a key factor in accommodation decisions, suggesting tourist preferences now include social and environmental contributions beyond basic amenities and price.

Studies show that community-based homestays empower local economies by serving as tourist accommodations and supporting environmentally friendly management practices, as seen in Sidomulyo, Jember (Siswanto, 2025).

As hotels, resorts, and villas in Bali grow, community-based homestays face stronger competition. However, research shows homestays play a vital role in community-based tourism (CBT), directly distributing economic benefits and boosting local participation (Junaid et al., 2018; Muda, 2025). Active community involvement in tourism planning and management is key to long-term sustainability.

From the traveler's perspective, the value of a homestay lies not only in its physical amenities but also in social interactions and authentic experiences that enhance emotional satisfaction (Ardianto, 2022). In Bali, the sustainability of community-based homestays is strengthened by local wisdom, such as the subak system, which emphasizes human-environment balance. Zen et al. (n.d.) show that community-based management maintains ecological sustainability over time. Thus, community-based homestays are strategically relevant as they foster community participation, preserve culture, offer authentic experiences, and promote a fairer distribution of economic benefits.

Bali's rapid tourism recovery has increased visitor numbers, bringing both opportunities and challenges for sustainable tourism development, particularly in areas like Kuta. In this context, Angkul-Angkul Segara Beach Homestay represents a relevant example of a Community-Based Tourism (CBT) accommodation model. By involving local communities, applying sustainable practices, and offering authentic experiences, this homestay demonstrates how small-scale, locally managed accommodations can distribute tourism benefits more equitably. Its approach highlights the importance of reducing dependence on large-scale hotels while promoting more inclusive, community-centered tourism development.

### **Research Methodology**

This research examines the contribution of the community-based Angkul-Angkul Segara Beach Homestay in Kuta, Bali, as a sustainable accommodation model. Using a descriptive, qualitative approach, the study explores the management of these homestays and assesses their impact on both local communities and tourist experiences.

The data used in this study are both primary and secondary. Primary data were collected through observation and interviews, while secondary data were obtained from literature reviews, scientific journals, and supporting documents relevant to the research topic.

Data collection was conducted through direct observation at the research site to examine the homestay's operational activities, interactions between managers and tourists, and the application of sustainability principles in daily operations. In addition, an in-depth interview was conducted with the general manager of the homestay, Mr Arnawa, to obtain information related to the management system, community participation, and challenges faced in operating a community-based homestay.

The data obtained is then analyzed using qualitative analysis techniques, following the Miles and Huberman model, which includes the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. This analysis was conducted to develop a systematic, in-depth understanding of the role of community-based homestays in supporting sustainable tourism.

Conclusions were drawn from the processed data analysis, which answered the research objectives and provided a clear picture of the contribution of community-based homestays as an alternative to sustainable accommodation in the Kuta area, Bali.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Data Description**

This study obtained data through a semi-structured interview with the management of Angkul-Angkul Segara Beach Kuta. This homestay has 25 rooms, including Superior and Deluxe rooms. Homestay operates service activities with 8 employees, consisting of 4 Housekeeping staff and 4 Front Office staff. The majority of employees are from the local community around the accommodation. Homestay management provides job training for at least 3 months to employees without a hospitality education background. The training program aims to improve service skills and maintain homestay operational standards.



Figure 1: Angkul-Angkul Segara Beach Homestay

[Source: Angkul-Angkul Segara Beach Homestay Management]

Angkul-Angkul Segara Beach Kuta uses a digital operational system for several activities. The system assists employees in managing reservations and homestay administration. However, the Front Office staff still manually register guests upon arrival.

Homestay management also implements several environmental management practices in operational activities. Staff sorts organic and inorganic waste daily. The homestay sells inorganic waste to the local community waste bank. The system helps reduce waste volume while providing economic value to the surrounding community. In addition, the bathroom waste management system is connected to the local government's waste treatment system. The system ensures that liquid waste management is carried out in accordance with applicable procedures.

Homestay management also reduces the use of single-use plastics in daily operations. This homestay has stopped using single-use plastics for about a year. The homestay provides a drinking water dispenser on each floor in place of single-use plastic bottles. In addition, they use reusable tissues to reduce waste. This homestay also builds relationships with the local community by supporting cultural activities. The management provides financial support for the production of *ogoh-ogoh* as part of the Balinese community's cultural activities. The homestay staff also provides guests with information about cultural and spiritual activities taking place around the hotel.

Reservation data shows that most guests book their rooms through Online Travel Agents (OTAs). 85% of guests make reservations through OTAs, 2% through offline travel agents, and the rest are walk-in guests. Most of the guests are transit tourists before or after their flights. Despite this, Angkul-Angkul Segara Beach Kuta faces several operational challenges. Homestay management faces marketing competition from large hotels in the area. In addition, management must maintain operational consistency and service quality to sustain positive guest reviews on digital platforms.

### **Discussion**

The results indicate that community-based homestays have implemented various practices that align with the principles of sustainable accommodation. Unlike conventional hotels, homestays emphasize small-scale, locally managed operations that naturally integrate environmental and socio-cultural sustainability. One key practice observed is waste management through simple yet effective systems, such as organic and inorganic waste segregation. This approach allows homestay operators to minimize environmental impacts while fostering environmental awareness among both hosts and guests. Previous studies have identified waste management as a critical indicator for implementing sustainable accommodation practices, particularly in small-scale tourism enterprises (Simbolon et al., 2025; UNEP & UNWTO, 2019).

Community participation is a fundamental element in the development of community-based homestays. Local residents are not only involved as accommodation providers but also actively participate in planning, managing, and evaluating tourism activities. This participatory approach reflects a bottom-up development model, which strengthens local empowerment and ensures that tourism benefits are equitably distributed within the community (Wibowo & Belia, 2023; Goodwin, 2016). Furthermore, homestays often support local cultural preservation by directly engaging guests in traditional activities, ceremonies, and daily community life. For instance, contributions to cultural events such as *ogoh-ogoh* production are not merely financial but also experiential, allowing tourists to gain a deeper cultural understanding while supporting local traditions.

From a marketing perspective, community-based homestays increasingly utilise digital platforms, including Online Travel Agents (OTAs) and social media, to reach broader markets. These platforms enhance visibility and accessibility, enabling small-scale accommodations to compete in the global tourism market (Kurniawan & Aswan, 2025; Buhalis & Law, 2008). However, unlike hotels, homestays often rely on a combination of digital marketing and word-of-mouth promotion, particularly through guest reviews and community networks. Positive guest experiences play a crucial role in shaping homestays' reputation and credibility in the digital ecosystem.

Despite these advantages, reliance on OTAs also presents challenges, particularly regarding commission fees and price competition. For community-based homestays, which typically operate with limited financial and managerial resources, such pressures can reduce profitability and sustainability. Therefore, it is essential for homestay operators to develop differentiated marketing strategies that highlight authenticity, local experiences, and personalized services as their unique selling points (UNWTO, 2020). Emphasizing these aspects not only strengthens competitiveness but also aligns with the growing demand for experiential and responsible tourism.

In addition to marketing challenges, maintaining service quality and operational consistency remains a significant issue for community-based homestays. Unlike hotels that operate under standardized procedures, homestays depend heavily on the capacity and commitment of local hosts. Variations in service quality may affect guest satisfaction and online reviews, both of which are critical to influencing future bookings. Therefore, capacity-building programs, training, and continuous community engagement are necessary to ensure service standards while preserving the authenticity of the homestay experience (ASEAN, 2016).

Overall, community-based homestays represent a viable alternative model of sustainable accommodation by integrating environmental management, community participation, cultural preservation, and adaptive marketing strategies. This model not only contributes to sustainable tourism development but also enhances local livelihoods and strengthens the resilience of rural tourism destinations.

## **Conclusions**

Based on the study's results, community-based homestays have proven to play an important role as an alternative to sustainable accommodation in the Kuta area, Bali. This model not

only reduces the negative impact of mass tourism but also supports environmental preservation through waste management and reduced single-use plastic use. In addition, the involvement of local communities in homestay operations contributes to improving the community's economy and preserving local culture.

On the other hand, homestays still face several challenges, especially in digital marketing, competition with large hotels, and reliance on OTA platforms, which affect operational costs. Therefore, a strategy to strengthen competitiveness is needed by developing eco-friendly concepts, improving service quality, and highlighting authentic experiences for tourists.

Overall, community-based homestays have great potential to support more inclusive, sustainable tourism, with a more equitable distribution of benefits and maintaining a balance between economic, social, and environmental aspects.

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# Sustainable Hospitality Practices and Consumer Dynamics: An Empirical Study of Guest Perception, Behaviour, and Willingness to Pay in Wildlife Tourism Destinations of Madhya Pradesh

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## Abstract

*The hospitality industry is under growing pressure to balance service excellence with environmental responsibility. This study explores how sustainable hotel practices influence guest satisfaction and willingness to pay for eco-friendly accommodation in wildlife tourism destinations of Madhya Pradesh, India. Based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour and Value-Belief-Norm framework, the research examines the impact of awareness, consumer perception, adoption behaviour, and perceived barriers on sustainable consumer intentions.*

*Primary data were collected from 360 hotel guests through a structured questionnaire and analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics 25. Descriptive statistics, correlation, regression, mediation analysis, and one-way ANOVA were employed to test the proposed relationships. The findings indicate that visible green initiatives such as energy conservation, waste management, local sourcing, and sustainable housekeeping positively influence guest satisfaction. Consumer perception significantly enhances adoption behaviour, while adoption behaviour strongly increases willingness to pay for sustainable hotel services. In contrast, perceived barriers, particularly concerns regarding higher cost and reduced comfort, negatively affect eco-friendly choices. Significant differences in willingness to pay were also found across education levels and travel frequency.*

*The study concludes that sustainability generates stronger commercial and customer outcomes when environmental practices are transparent, credible, and quality service delivery. Hotels in nature-based destinations can improve competitiveness through strategic communication, authentic green initiatives, and customer engagement. The findings contribute to hospitality literature and offer practical insights for sustainable tourism development in emerging destinations.*

**Keywords:** Sustainable Hospitality, Consumer Perception, Willingness to Pay, Green Practices

## Introduction:

The hospitality industry plays a crucial role in global economic development, yet it is also recognised as a resource-intensive sector that exerts considerable pressure on the environment. Hotels, in particular, consume large quantities of energy and water while generating substantial waste, thereby contributing to environmental concerns such as climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss. These environmental challenges have intensified due to the rapid expansion of tourism and the increasing demand for high-quality hospitality services (Ahlawat, 2018; Soni et al., 2022).

In response to these concerns, the concept of sustainable and eco-friendly hospitality has gained significant importance. Over the past decade, hotels have begun to integrate environmentally responsible practices into their operations, including the use of energy-efficient technologies, waste reduction strategies, and environmentally safe products. Such initiatives not only aim to minimise environmental degradation but also improve operational efficiency and long-term profitability (Chand & Garge, 2017). The shift towards sustainability is further reinforced by the growing awareness among travellers, many of whom now prefer hotels that demonstrate environmental responsibility and are willing to support such initiatives through their choices (Soni et al., 2022).

Regulatory frameworks and environmental standards have also played a vital role in encouraging hotels to adopt sustainable practices. Government policies, certification systems, and environmental guidelines compel hospitality businesses to comply with sustainability norms and enhance accountability. However, despite increasing awareness and regulatory pressure, the adoption of green practices remains inconsistent, particularly among small and medium-sized hotels. Financial limitations, lack of technical knowledge, and the perception of high initial costs often hinder widespread implementation (Chand & Garge, 2017).

Therefore, the present study aims to explore the eco-friendly and sustainable practices adopted by hotels, examine the rising environmental consciousness among guests, and analyse the role of regulatory norms in shaping sustainable hospitality operations.

#### Key Sustainable and Green Practices Adopted by Hotels

- **Energy Efficiency and Conservation**-Hotels are increasingly adopting energy-saving technologies to reduce their environmental footprint. These include LED lighting, energy-efficient appliances, smart heating, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, and the use of renewable energy sources such as solar power. Such measures significantly lower energy consumption and reduce greenhouse gas emissions while also decreasing operational costs over time (Chand & Garge, 2017).
- **Water Conservation Practices**-Water management has become a priority in hotel operations due to the high volume of water used in guest services, laundry, and landscaping. Hotels implement low-flow fixtures, dual-flush toilets, sensor-based taps, and water recycling systems to optimise water usage. Linen and towel reuse programs further contribute to reducing water consumption without compromising guest comfort (Ahlawat, 2018).
- **Waste Management and Recycling**- Hotels generate diverse types of waste, including food waste, plastic, and paper. To address this, many establishments segregate waste into recyclable and non-recyclable categories, collaborate for recycling and composting techniques. These practices help minimise landfill use and reduce environmental pollution (Ahlawat, 2018).
- **Sustainable Procurement and Local Sourcing**-Hotels are increasingly focusing on sourcing local and environmentally certified products to support local economies. Additionally, reduces transportation-related emissions along with incorporating seasonal and locally produced food items into menus enhances sustainability while offering guests authentic experiences (Chand & Garge, 2017).
- **Reduction of Single-Use Plastics**- gradual elimination of single use plastics such as disposable items such as plastic bottles, straws, and toiletries with reusable or biodegradable alternatives, to reduce its harmful impact on ecosystems (Soni et al., 2022).
- **Employee Training and Guest Engagement**- The success of sustainability program largely depends on the involvement of both staff and guests. Hotels conduct regular

training programs and communication program to educate employees about environmental policies and encourage responsible behaviour. Green initiatives fostering participation in activities such as recycling, signage communication, and resource conservation (Ahlawat, 2018; Soni et al., 2022).

- Environmental Certification and Green Building Design-Many hotels eco-certifications and green building designs such as natural lighting, renewable energy sources and sustainable materials, and ensure adherence to environmental norms thereby reducing the overall environmental impact of hotel infrastructure (Soni et al., 2022).

Collectively, these practices not only contribute to environmental protection but also improve customer satisfaction, strengthen brand image, and provide a competitive advantage in the evolving hospitality market.

Madhya Pradesh has a growing prominence as a wildlife tourism destination blessed with rich natural ecological landscapes and diversity in the country have attracted prominent hospitality players around. However, there remains a notable lack of empirical research focusing on the adoption and effectiveness of eco-friendly practices within its hospitality sector. While studies highlight general green practices and consumer awareness, they fail to address how hotels operating near biodiversity hotspots integrate sustainability with conservation priorities. Additionally, there is limited evidence emphasizing on eco-sensitive regions where environmental preservation is critically important (Chand & Garge, 2017; Soni et al., 2022). Furthermore, there is insufficient exploration of how wildlife tourism influences guest expectations, environmental behaviour, and willingness to pay for sustainable services in such regions. Another significant gap lies in understanding the operational challenges faced by hotels located in forest and protected areas, where regulatory restrictions, resource limitations, and ecological sensitivity require tailored sustainability strategies. Despite the expanding body of literature on green hospitality, existing studies primarily focus on urban or global contexts, with limited or insufficient empirical evidence from biodiversity-rich regions such as Madhya Pradesh. Therefore, this study aims to bridge these gaps by examining sustainable hospitality practices in Madhya Pradesh's wildlife destinations, linking environmental responsibility with consumer behaviour and regional ecological priorities.

RQ1. Does awareness of sustainable hotel practices significantly influence consumer perception?

RQ2. Do consumer perception and perceived barriers significantly affect adoption behaviour?

RQ3. Does adoption behaviour significantly influence willingness to pay for sustainable hotels?

RQ4. Does consumer perception mediate the relationship between awareness and adoption behaviour?

RQ5. Does willingness to pay differ significantly across demographic groups?

## Literature Review: Sustainable Hospitality and Consumer Dynamics

The transformation of the hospitality industry towards sustainability has evolved from a voluntary initiative to a strategic imperative in response to environmental challenges and changing market expectations. Scholars emphasize that adopting eco-friendly practices is essential for long-term competitiveness and environmental responsibility (Chand & Garge, 2017). The study tries to explore other researches examining how sustainable practices

influence consumer perception, behaviour, and willingness to pay apart from operational limitations for sustainable and ecologically sensitive practices in wildlife destinations addressing the questions:

### 1. Sustainable Hospitality Practices influence on consumer perception: Global and Indian Context

Sustainable hospitality practices involve reducing environmental impact while maintaining service standards. Common initiatives include energy conservation, water efficiency, waste reduction, and environmentally responsible sourcing. In India, hotels are gradually incorporating such practices as part of their growth strategy, recognising sustainability as a competitive advantage (Chand & Garge, 2017). Globally, the sector has expanded its focus to include renewable energy adoption and green certifications, although disparities persist between large hotel chains and smaller establishments in terms of implementation (Soni et al., 2022).

Consumer perception plays a crucial role in determining the success of green initiatives. Increasing environmental awareness has led travellers to prefer hotels that demonstrate responsible practices (Ahlawat, 2018). The concept of perceived environmental value significantly influences customer satisfaction and loyalty, as guests associate their stay with positive environmental contributions (Soni et al., 2022). Demographic and cultural factors further shape these perceptions, with younger travellers showing greater inclination towards sustainable choices.

### 2. Consumer Perception and Adoption Behaviour

Environmentally responsible practices influence customer behaviour by fostering trust and emotional connection with the brand. When guests perceive authenticity in sustainability efforts, they are more likely to engage in supportive behaviours such as resource conservation and positive word-of-mouth (Soni et al., 2022). This behavioural shift enhances revisit intentions and strengthens long-term customer relationships.

Despite growing awareness, the adoption of sustainable practices faces several constraints. High initial investment costs, lack of expertise, and limited managerial commitment are commonly cited barriers (Chand & Garge, 2017). Smaller hotels, in particular, struggle with financial and operational limitations, often prioritising short-term profitability over sustainability goals.

Sustainable hospitality behaviour is well explained through behavioural and environmental theories. The Theory of Planned Behaviour states that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control shape consumer intentions and actions (Ajzen, 1991). Extending this logic, the Value-Belief-Norm theory proposes that environmental values and moral responsibility encourage sustainable behaviour (Stern, 2000).

In hospitality settings, guests are more likely to choose green hotels when they perceive environmental practices as credible and beneficial (Han et al., 2010). Service environments also influence guest evaluations, where visible eco-friendly practices improve experience quality and trust (Line & Hanks, 2016).

### 3. Awareness and perception influence Willingness to Pay

Although consumers express positive attitudes toward green hotels, their willingness to pay a premium remains inconsistent. Factors such as income, education, and environmental awareness influence this behaviour. Effective communication and transparency regarding

sustainability efforts are essential to bridge this gap and build consumer trust (Soni et al., 2022).

Operational studies highlight that waste management, energy efficiency, and water conservation are central to sustainable hotel performance (Chand & Garge, 2017; Mensah, 2020; Arun et al., 2025). Recent research further shows that green perceived value increases loyalty and citizenship behaviour among hotel guests strengthening consumer perception and loyalty (Abdou et al., 2022; Rana et al., 2023). Positive perceptions also increase revisit intention and recommendation behaviour (Ocho et al., 2025). Industry reports note rising demand for responsible tourism, though price sensitivity and awareness gaps remain barriers to adoption (Economic Times Hospitality, 2024; Zuno Carbon, 2024).

In depth review of previous researches illustrates the causal relationships among the study variables. Awareness of sustainable practices acts as an initial driver influencing consumer perception, which in turn shapes adoption behaviour. Adoption behaviour mediates the relationship between perception and willingness to pay (WTP).

Simultaneously, perceived barriers negatively influence both perception and behavioural adoption, thereby reducing WTP. This model highlights that while awareness initiates the process, perception and behavioural engagement are the key mechanisms translating sustainability into financial outcomes (*Diagram below*). Research Hypothesis based on the conceptual relationship to address the research questions can be explained as below:

**Hypothesis:**

H1. Awareness positively influences consumer perception.

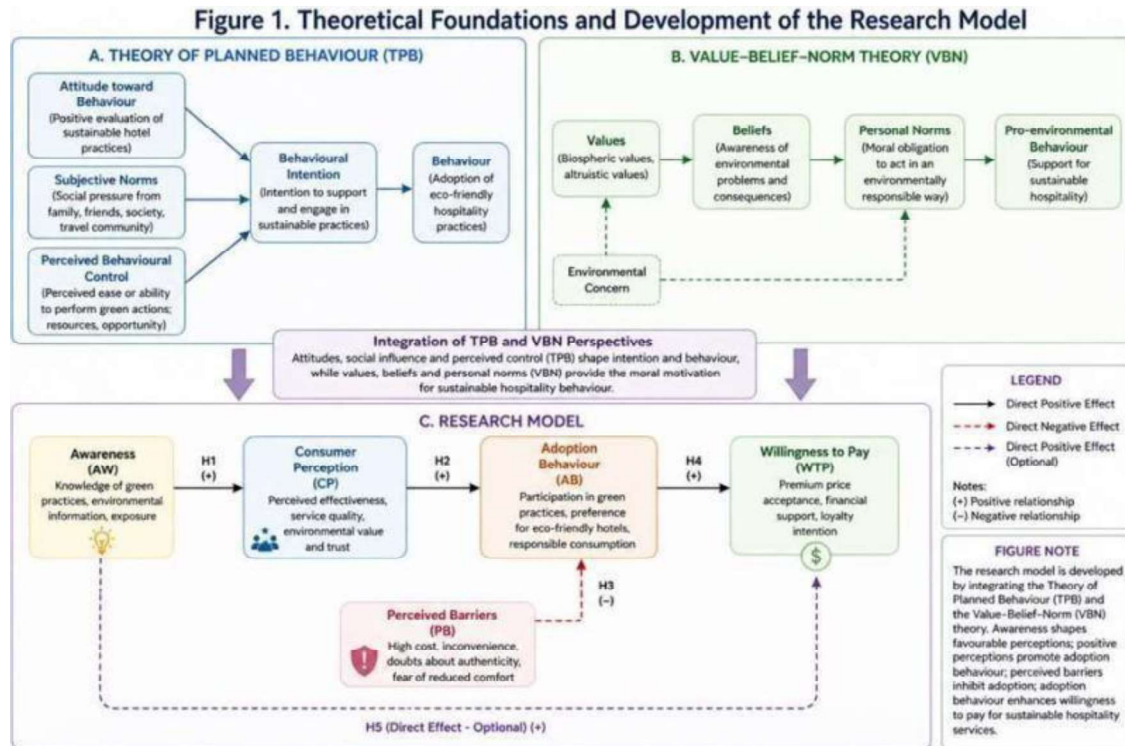
H2. Consumer perception positively influences adoption behaviour, whereas perceived barriers negatively influence adoption behaviour.

H3. Adoption behaviour positively influences willingness to pay.

H4. Consumer perception mediates the relationship between awareness and adoption behaviour.

H5. Willingness to pay differs significantly across demographic groups such as education level and travel frequency.

## Conceptual Framework:



This study develops an integrated behavioural framework grounded in the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and the Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory to explain how sustainable hotel practices influence guests' behavioural responses and willingness to pay (WTP) in wildlife tourism destinations of Madhya Pradesh. The Theory of Planned Behaviour argues that behavioural intention is shaped by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. In the present context, guests form attitudes toward sustainable hotels based on their awareness of environmental initiatives and their perceptions of service quality, trust, and convenience. These evaluations influence adoption behaviour.

The Value-Belief-Norm theory complements TPB by explaining that pro-environmental actions arise from ecological values and moral obligation. Guests who believe their hotel choices contribute to wildlife conservation, local livelihoods, and environmental protection are more likely to reward sustainable businesses through loyalty and premium payments.

Accordingly, the model proposes that Awareness (AW) of sustainability initiatives enhances Consumer Perception (CP); favourable perception increases Adoption Behaviour (AB); adoption behaviour improves Willingness to Pay (WTP); while Perceived Barriers (PB) such as cost, inconvenience, or fear of reduced luxury weaken adoption behaviour. However, Awareness does not automatically produce adoption behaviour (sustainability) unless guests first perceive value and credibility in the hotel's green efforts.

## Research Design

The study adopts a quantitative approach and descriptive research design to examine the influence of sustainable hospitality practices on guest satisfaction and willingness to pay. A descriptive survey method is used to collect primary data from guests who have experienced eco-friendly initiatives during their stay at hotels located near major wildlife destinations in

Madhya Pradesh, including Bandhavgarh, Kanha, Satpura, Pench, and Bhopal. This study adopts a quantitative, descriptive research design to examine the

- Independent Variables: Awareness of sustainable practices, consumer perception
- Mediating Variable: Adoption behaviour
- Moderating/Control Variable: Perceived barriers
- Dependent Variable: Willingness to Pay (WTP) and Guest Satisfaction

### Population and Sample

The target population comprises guests who have stayed in luxury hotels or resorts near wildlife tourism destinations in Madhya Pradesh within the past six months. A convenience sampling technique is employed to gather data, resulting in 360 valid responses collected through structured questionnaires.

### Research Instrument

Data are collected using a structured questionnaire adapted from established studies in hospitality and sustainability research. The instrument includes three sections:

1. Demographics (gender, age, travel frequency, purpose)
2. Sustainable Practices & Consumer Dynamics
3. Guest Satisfaction & Willingness to Pay

All constructs were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

- Awareness: measured through recognition of eco-certifications and visible practices
- Consumer Perception: measured through perceived quality, trust, and social responsibility
- Adoption Behaviour: measured through willingness to engage in eco-friendly actions
- Barriers: measured through cost, information gaps, and perceived loss of comfort
- WTP: measured through premium payment readiness

### Data Collection Method:

Data collection is conducted over four weeks using both online platforms (Google Forms) and offline methods (distribution at hotel premises). Participation is voluntary, and confidentiality of responses is ensured. Assumptions such as normality, linearity, and multicollinearity were tested before regression analysis.

| Research Objective                | Hypothesis | Statistical Technique           |
|-----------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------|
| Test AW → CP relationship         | H1         | Correlation + Simple Regression |
| Test CP & PB → AB                 | H2         | Multiple Regression             |
| Test AB → WTP                     | H3         | Regression                      |
| Test mediation effect             | H4         | Bootstrapping                   |
| Compare demographic groups on WTP | H5         | One-Way ANOVA                   |

### Data Analysis & Findings

The data analysis was conducted using SPSS Version 25 on a sample of 360 respondents to examine the relationship between sustainable hospitality practices, guest satisfaction, and willingness to pay.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 360)

| Variable          | Category       | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|----------------|-----------|----------------|
| Gender            | Male           | 173       | 48.1           |
|                   | Female         | 187       | 51.9           |
| Age Group         | 18–25          | 79        | 21.9           |
|                   | 26–40          | 158       | 43.9           |
|                   | 41–55          | 86        | 23.9           |
|                   | 56+            | 37        | 10.3           |
| Travel Frequency  | 1–2 times      | 90        | 25.0           |
|                   | 3–5 times      | 144       | 40.0           |
|                   | 6–10 times     | 72        | 20.0           |
|                   | Above 10 times | 54        | 15.0           |
| Purpose of Travel | Leisure        | 209       | 58.1           |
|                   | Business       | 101       | 28.1           |
|                   | Other          | 50        | 13.8           |

The demographic profile indicates a balanced representation of respondents, with a slight majority of females (52%) and a dominant age group of 26–40 years (44%), suggesting that environmentally conscious travel behaviour is most prominent among young and middle-aged adults. Leisure travel accounted for the highest proportion (58%), highlighting the relevance of sustainability in tourism-oriented experiences.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis

| Construct                                                                     | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|----------------|
| Office & Stationery Sustainability                                            | 3.72 | 0.81           |
| Incorporating local Food & Beverage Sustainability practices like procurement | 3.95 | 0.76           |



|                                   |      |      |
|-----------------------------------|------|------|
| Local Handmade/Eco Products       | 3.88 | 0.79 |
| Washroom Sustainability Practices | 3.69 | 0.84 |
| Housekeeping Practices            | 3.91 | 0.73 |
| Waste Disposal System             | 3.74 | 0.80 |
| Reuse/Recycling Practices         | 3.83 | 0.78 |
| Energy Conservation               | 4.02 | 0.71 |
| Waste Management practices        | 3.97 | 0.75 |
| Green Certification Awareness     | 3.21 | 0.92 |
| Guest Satisfaction                | 3.89 | 0.74 |
| Willingness to Pay                | 3.42 | 0.88 |

Descriptive analysis reveals that respondents generally held favourable views towards sustainable hotel practices, with mean scores ranging from 3.69 to 4.02. Energy conservation (Mean = 4.02, SD = 0.71) and waste management (Mean = 3.97, SD = 0.75) received the highest ratings, indicating strong agreement and relatively low variability in responses. In contrast, green certification awareness (Mean = 3.21, SD = 0.92) scored relatively lower, reinforcing the earlier observation that guests are less familiar with formal sustainability credentials despite recognising operational practices. However, guests are satisfied with the eco-friendly practices but willingness to pay for sustainable practices still stands low. Standard deviation values across constructs range between 0.71 and 0.92, reflecting moderate dispersion. Lower SD values (e.g., energy conservation) suggest consistent responses (low deviation) among participants, whereas higher SD values (e.g., green certification awareness, SD = 0.92) indicates inconsistency or varied understanding and awareness levels of visitors. This highlights the need for better communication and awareness of eco-certification practices and systems.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Key Constructs

| Construct           | Mean | SD   | Interpretation   |
|---------------------|------|------|------------------|
| Awareness           | 3.92 | 0.74 | Moderately High  |
| Consumer Perception | 4.08 | 0.69 | High             |
| Adoption Behaviour  | 3.81 | 0.77 | Moderate         |
| Perceived Barriers  | 3.36 | 0.83 | Moderate Concern |
| Willingness to Pay  | 3.73 | 0.81 | Moderate         |

Interpretation: Consumer Perception recorded the highest mean score, indicating that respondents generally viewed sustainable hotels positively in terms of credibility, service quality, and environmental responsibility. Awareness levels were also favourable, reflecting visibility of green practices such as reduced plastic use and energy-saving systems. However, willingness to pay remained moderate, suggesting that positive attitudes do not automatically convert into premium pricing acceptance. Standard deviation values indicate acceptable dispersion without excessive inconsistency.

Table 4. Correlation Matrix

| Variable                 | AW     | CP      | AB      | PB      | WTP  |
|--------------------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|------|
| Awareness (AW)           | 1.00   |         |         |         |      |
| Consumer Perception (CP) | 0.58** | 1.00    |         |         |      |
| Adoption Behaviour (AB)  | 0.49** | 0.64**  | 1.00    |         |      |
| Perceived Barriers (PB)  | -0.22* | -0.31** | -0.45** | 1.00    |      |
| WTP                      | 0.46** | 0.68**  | 0.71**  | -0.29** | 1.00 |

- (p < .05, \*\* p < .01)

Interpretation: Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among the study variables. Awareness showed a significant positive association with Consumer Perception ( $r = .58$ ,  $p < .01$ ), supports the assumption that knowledge enhances favourable attitudes. Consumer Perception displayed a strong positive relationship with Adoption Behaviour ( $r = .64$ ,  $p < .01$ ), similarly Adoption Behaviour also demonstrated the strongest positive association with WTP ( $r = .71$ ,  $p < .01$ ), highlighting that behavioural commitment to sustainability is closely linked with readiness to financially support eco-friendly hospitality services. By contrast, Perceived Barriers were negatively associated with Adoption Behaviour ( $r = -.45$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and WTP ( $r = -.29$ ,  $p < .01$ ), indicating that concerns over cost, or inconvenience, weaken pro-environmental intentions.

Table 5. Regression and Mediation Results

Panel A. Dependent Variable: Adoption Behaviour

| Predictor           | Beta  | t-value | p-value | VIF  |
|---------------------|-------|---------|---------|------|
| Consumer Perception | 0.44  | 7.18    | .000    | 1.74 |
| Perceived Barriers  | -0.29 | -5.06   | .000    | 1.62 |

$R^2 = 0.49$  | Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.48$

Panel B. Dependent Variable: Willingness to Pay

| Predictor | Beta | t-value | p-value | VIF |
|-----------|------|---------|---------|-----|
|           |      |         |         |     |

|                    |      |      |      |      |
|--------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Adoption Behaviour | 0.57 | 9.84 | .000 | 1.00 |
|--------------------|------|------|------|------|

$R^2 = 0.41$  | Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.40$

Interpretation: Multiple regression analysis was employed to test the predictive effects of the independent variables. Among the predictors, consumer perception emerged as the strongest positive factor ( $\beta = 0.44$ ,  $p < .0001$ ), indicating a moderate-to-strong effect. This suggests that favourable evaluations of sustainable hotels meaningfully increase guest participation in eco-friendly practices. Perceived Barriers showed a significant negative influence on Adoption Behaviour ( $\beta = -.29$ ,  $p < .001$ ), confirming that practical or psychological obstacles discourage sustainable participation. The regression model explained 49% of the variation in Adoption Behaviour ( $R^2 = .49$ ), indicating substantial explanatory power for behavioural outcomes.

Adoption Behaviour significantly predicted WTP ( $\beta = .57$ ,  $p < .001$ ), representing a strong positive effect. Guests who actively support sustainability through their behaviour are considerably more willing to pay a premium for environmentally responsible accommodation. The model explained 41% of the variation in WTP ( $R^2 = .41$ ), demonstrating that behavioural engagement is an important commercial determinant of premium pricing acceptance.

These findings support H2, H3, and H4.

#### Panel C. Mediation Analysis

| Indirect Path | Effect | LLCI | ULCI | Decision  |
|---------------|--------|------|------|-----------|
| AW → CP → AB  | 0.21   | 0.13 | 0.30 | Supported |

Interpretation: Bootstrapped mediation analysis was conducted to test the indirect effect proposed in H5. Consumer Perception significantly mediated the relationship between Awareness and Adoption Behaviour (indirect effect = .21, 95% CI [.13, .30]). Since zero did not fall within the confidence interval, the mediation effect was statistically significant.

This result indicates that awareness alone does not directly translate into sustainable behavioural participation. Rather, awareness first shapes favourable perceptions regarding quality, authenticity, and environmental value, which subsequently encourage behavioural adoption. This provides strong theoretical support for both TPB and VBN frameworks, where beliefs and attitudes act as critical mechanisms between knowledge and action.

Table 6. ANOVA Results for WTP Across Demographics

| Group Variable   | F-value | p-value | Interpretation |
|------------------|---------|---------|----------------|
| Education Level  | 4.12    | .007    | Significant    |
| Travel Frequency | 3.46    | .018    | Significant    |

Interpretation: One-way ANOVA results identified significant differences in willingness to pay across demographic categories. Higher educational attainment was associated with stronger willingness to pay ( $F = 4.12, p = .007$ ). Likewise, frequent travellers showed higher willingness to support sustainable hotels financially ( $F = 3.46, p = .018$ ).

Post hoc comparisons revealed that respondents with postgraduate or professional qualifications reported significantly higher WTP than those with lower educational attainment. Similarly, frequent travellers demonstrated stronger willingness to support sustainable hotels financially than infrequent travellers. These findings suggest that market segments with higher education and greater travel exposure may be more receptive to green pricing strategies.

Table 7. Summary of Hypothesis Testing

| Hypothesis | Path                                 | Result               |
|------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| H1         | AW $\rightarrow$ CP                  | Supported            |
| H2         | CP $\rightarrow$ AB                  | Supported            |
| H3         | PB $\rightarrow$ AB                  | Supported (Negative) |
| H4         | AB $\rightarrow$ WTP                 | Supported            |
| H5         | AW $\rightarrow$ CP $\rightarrow$ AB | Supported            |

Interpretation: The hypothesis results strongly support the proposed framework. Awareness positively improves consumer perception, while favourable perceptions encourage adoption of sustainable hotel behaviour. Perceived barriers such as cost and comfort concerns negatively influence adoption. Adoption behaviour significantly increases willingness to pay for eco-friendly accommodation. The mediation result confirms that awareness affects behaviour indirectly through consumer perception. Overall, the findings show that customer knowledge, trust, and behavioural engagement are essential drivers of sustainable hospitality choices and premium payment intentions.

## Discussion

The findings strongly support the integrated TPB–VBN framework. Awareness significantly contributes to favourable consumer perception, indicating that guests respond positively when sustainability practices are visible and clearly communicated. Consumer perception critically enhanced adoption behaviour, whereas perceived barriers such as price concerns or discomfort reduced participation in sustainable choices. This suggests that hotels should integrate sustainability seamlessly into premium service delivery rather than positioning it as a sacrifice or presenting it as a trade-off.

Adoption behaviour emerged as a strong predictor of willingness to pay. This demonstrates that sustainability can generate measurable commercial value when customers are emotionally and behaviourally engaged. The coefficient of determination indicates that the model explains a substantial proportion of behavioural variation. Mediation analysis further confirmed that awareness influences behaviour indirectly through favourable perceptions. This implies that sustainability communication must first generate trust and positive evaluations before behavioural commitment develops. Finally, demographic differences

indicate that education and travel exposure shape sustainability preferences among informed and experienced travellers. Hotels should therefore adopt market segmentation strategies to appeal to responsive guest groups.

Overall, the findings suggest that while guests appreciate and respond positively to eco-friendly practices, their financial commitment is influenced by perception, awareness, and perceived value. Enhancing communication, reducing perceived trade-offs, and improving transparency regarding sustainability initiatives and communicating it can significantly shape guest awareness, perceptions, participation, and trust in ways that create measurable commercial outcomes (WTP).

### **Suggestions:**

Hotels should adopt sustainability as an integrated business strategy rather than limiting it to isolated environmental activities. Green initiatives generate stronger results when linked with customer experience, operational efficiency, and brand value. First, hotels should improve communication regarding their sustainability efforts. Many guests notice towel reuse or energy-saving devices but remain unaware of certifications, renewable energy use, or broader conservation commitments. Clear information through websites, booking platforms, in-room displays, and digital media can increase trust and awareness.

Second, sustainability must be aligned with service quality. Guests should not associate eco-friendly practices with lower comfort or reduced luxury. Premium sustainable amenities, smart climate systems, refill stations, and attractive eco-design can enhance both convenience and environmental performance. Local government and hotels should partner to encourage local sourcing of regional food products, handmade décor, natural toiletries, and locally produced gifts. This supports community livelihoods while creating authentic destination experiences.

Since willingness to pay differs across customer groups, targeted pricing strategies is recommended wherein hotels can offer different class of rooms, facilities and eco-packages at premium. Educated and frequent travellers may respond more positively to conservation-based experiences, loyalty rewards or such offerings. Continued investment in smart technologies such as solar energy, waste segregation, water recycling, and energy-efficient systems is essential, as these practices reduce operational costs in long run while improve satisfaction.

Both guests and staff are co-partners for achieving the sustainability goals and they should be engaged effectively. Frontline employees often influence customer perception more than advertising. Finally, hotels should collaborate with certification agencies, tourism boards, and government bodies to strengthen eco-label awareness and create credible standards. Through effective communication, service integration, local participation, and innovation, hotels can transform sustainability into long-term competitive advantage.

### **Conclusion:**

The study confirms that sustainable hospitality practices positively influence guest satisfaction and willingness to pay when they are visible, credible, and value-enhancing. Guests responded most favourably to practical measures such as energy conservation, waste management, local sourcing, and sustainable housekeeping systems. However, awareness of formal environmental certifications remained comparatively low, highlighting the need for stronger communication.

The findings further reveal that awareness and positive perception encourage adoption behaviour, while perceived barriers such as higher prices and concerns about comfort reduce financial commitment. This indicates the presence of an attitude–behaviour gap, where support for sustainability does not always translate into premium payment intentions.

In destinations such as Madhya Pradesh, where tourism is closely linked with forests and wildlife conservation, sustainable hospitality is both a business necessity and an environmental responsibility. Hotels that combine authentic green practices with quality service, transparency, and customer engagement can improve competitiveness, strengthen loyalty, and contribute meaningfully to long-term destination sustainability.

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# Driving Halal Logistics Certification: A System Dynamics Approach to Green Practices and Digital Integration

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## Abstract

*The increasing demand for halal assurance in the hospitality supply chain highlights the challenges in the efficiency and reliability of halal logistics certification, especially in processing times, cost control, and system integration. The study, which was conducted during 2022–2025, applies a System Dynamics (SD) approach to improve certification performance through the integration of digital transformation and Green Hospitality Practices (GHP). The model combines key variables, including technology adoption, auditor capacity, document completeness, digital traceability, and environmental efficiency. The optimistic scenario analysis evaluates policy interventions that combine digitalization and sustainability strategies. The results showed a consistent but gradual increase: an average increase of about positive 33 units in Logistics Company Available (LCA), positive 380 units in Halal Logistics Certified Company Available (HLCCA), and about positive 6% increase in Relative lead time acceleration. In addition, the Certification Cost Increase Rate reduce by about 3 percentage point, indicating better cost control. These findings suggest that integrated digital and green practices improve the effectiveness of the system, although the impact remains gradual.*

**Keywords:** Halal Logistics Certification, System Dynamics, Digital Transformation, Green Hospitality Practices, Supply Chain Efficiency

## Introduction

The rapid expansion of the global halal industry has significantly increased the demand for reliable and efficient halal assurance systems, especially in the hospitality supply chain. As hospitality services increasingly serve Muslim consumers, ensuring the integrity of halal products during the logistics process has become an important requirement (Tieman, 2011; Talib et al., 2016). Halal logistics is the management of logistics activities in accordance with sharia principles to preserve halal integrity throughout the supply chain (Rizaldy et al., 2024). Halal logistics certification plays an important role in maintaining product compliance from origin to consumption, covering transportation, storage, handling, and distribution activities. However, despite its importance, the certification process is

often characterized by long lead times, high operational costs, and fragmented coordination among stakeholders, limiting its effectiveness and scalability (Khan et al., 2019; Zailani et al., 2017).

In the context of hospitality, sustainability has gained increasing attention, leading to the emergence of green hospitality practices that emphasize environmental responsibility, ethical operations, and resource efficiency (Han et al., 2019; Mensah, 2020). Notably, halal logistics shares the same principles as sustainable supply chain management, including cleanliness, safety, traceability, and accountability (Tieman & Ghazali, 2014). These overlapping values provide an opportunity to position halal logistics certification not only as a religious compliance mechanism but also as a strategic component of a sustainable hospitality system. However, the integration of halal logistics with green practices remains limited and not adequately examined, especially regarding its impact on operational performance and certification.

At the same time, digital transformation has emerged as a key driver of supply chain efficiency and transparency. Technologies such as integrated information systems, blockchain, and real-time tracking have shown potential in improving traceability, data accuracy, and decision-making processes (Ivanov et al., 2019; Queiroz et al., 2020). In halal logistics certification, digital tools can streamline document verification and reduce administrative bottlenecks. Nevertheless, the adoption of such technologies remains uneven, and its systemic impact on certification efficiency is not yet fully understood.

Despite these developments, there are clear research gaps. Previous studies have mostly examined halal logistics, green practices, and digital transformation separately. Limited research has explored its integrated effects in dynamic systems, primarily using the System Dynamics (SD) approach to capture feedback relationships, time delays, and policy impacts on certification performance. In addition, there is a lack of quantitative simulation-based studies that evaluate how digital interventions and combined sustainability affect key performance indicators such as certification capacity, lead times, and cost controls.

To address this gap, this study adopts a Systems Dynamics approach to model the interactions between key variables influencing halal logistics certification, including technology adoption, auditor capacity, document completeness, and data security. Through scenario-based simulations, the study evaluates intervention strategies aimed at speeding up the certification process while maintaining compliance and sustainability standards. The research contributes by providing an integrated framework that links halal logistics certification with green hospitality practices and digital transformation, offering theoretical advances and practical insights for policymakers and industry stakeholders.

## Literature Review

The increasing demand for halal assurance within hospitality supply chains has exposed significant inefficiencies in halal logistics certification, particularly in terms of prolonged processing time, high compliance costs, and limited integration among stakeholders. These challenges are exacerbated by the growing complexity of supply chain networks and the need to ensure end-to-end traceability and integrity of halal products. Halal logistics extends beyond traditional logistics by incorporating strict requirements related to segregation, contamination prevention, and compliance verification, which require more structured and reliable certification systems (Tieman, 2011; Zailani et al., 2015). Halal logistics certification itself refers to the formal verification and assurance process carried out by an authorized certification body to ensure that all logistics activities are in accordance with Sharia principles, including transportation, storage, handling, and distribution. This certification process involves document verification, on-site audits, compliance monitoring, and periodic updates, making it a comprehensive governance mechanism rather than a one-time approval. Despite its importance, the certification process remains largely fragmented and time-consuming, limiting its scalability and adoption across the hospitality industry (Ab Talib et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2019).

From an Islamic perspective, halal logistics is based on the principles of halal tayyiban, which emphasizes not only the abilities but also cleanliness, safety, and ethical integrity throughout the supply chain. These principles require strict avoidance of cross-contamination with non-halal elements and ensure that logistics operations uphold transparency and accountability. From the perspective of customers, especially among Muslim consumers, halal certification serves as an important signal of trust, reducing perceived risks and uncertainty in the consumption of hospitality services. Studies show that verified halal logistics practices significantly increase customer trust, satisfaction, and loyalty, especially in service-based industries where product attributes cannot be observed directly. Thus, halal logistics certification plays a dual role as a religious compliance mechanism and a trust-building instrument in a market that relies on hospitality in its services.

Sustainability has emerged as a critical dimension in hospitality operations, with increasing emphasis on environmentally responsible practices and sustainable supply chain management. Green hospitality practices focus on reducing environmental impact, improving resource efficiency, and enhancing organizational accountability. These principles align closely with the core values of halal logistics, particularly in terms of cleanliness, safety, and traceability (Han et al., 2019; Yusoff et al., 2021). Integrating halal logistics with sustainable supply chain practices has been shown to improve operational performance and strengthen consumer trust, particularly among environmentally and ethically conscious customers (Ali et al., 2022; Rahman et al., 2020). However, the intersection between halal logistics certification and green hospitality practices remains underexplored, particularly in

terms of how sustainability integration can improve certification efficiency and system performance.

The role of digital transformation in supply chain and certification systems has gained increasing attention in recent years. Digital technologies such as blockchain, Internet of Things (IoT), and integrated information systems enable real-time data sharing, improved traceability, and enhanced transparency across supply chains (Ivanov et al., 2019; Kshetri, 2018). In certification contexts, digitalization has been found to reduce administrative delays, improve data accuracy, and strengthen compliance monitoring mechanisms (Bag et al., 2021; Queiroz et al., 2020). Within halal logistics, digital platforms can facilitate document verification, ensure data security, and support faster decision-making processes. Nevertheless, the adoption of digital technologies in halal certification systems remains uneven due to infrastructure limitations, high investment costs, and regulatory challenges (Nizam et al., 2021; Omar et al., 2022). This indicates the need for a systemic approach to evaluate the impact of digital transformation on certification performance.

System Dynamics (SD) has been widely applied as an analytical tool to understand complex systems characterized by feedback loops, delays, and nonlinear relationships. In supply chain contexts, SD has been used to analyze demand variability, capacity constraints, and policy interventions, providing insights into long-term system behaviour (Barlas, 2002; Sterman, 2000). The approach enables the simulation of different policy scenarios and the evaluation of their impacts on system performance over time. Applications of SD in sustainability and logistics have demonstrated its effectiveness in identifying leverage points for improving efficiency and reducing operational risks (Govindan et al., 2017; Rebs et al., 2019). However, its application in halal logistics certification remains limited, particularly in integrating multiple dimensions such as sustainability, digitalization, and operational efficiency within a unified model.

Recent studies indicate a growing adoption of green practices in the hospitality industry, driven by increasing environmental awareness and competitive pressure. Empirical evidence shows that sustainability practices are already moderately implemented in hotels, particularly in environmental dimensions (Wijesundara et al., 2024), while their adoption significantly improves operational performance (Kusa, 2023). Furthermore, customer and market pressures have been identified as key drivers accelerating green innovation and sustainability adoption (Sun et al., 2024). Post-pandemic trends also highlight a shift in consumer preference toward environmentally responsible hospitality services (Prakash & Kumar, 2024). This is further reinforced by the increasing integration of ESG practices as a global standard in the industry (Shin, 2026) and the rapid growth of sustainability-related research and practices (Lodhi et al., 2025). The model applies five Green\_Practice\_Adoption\_Rate scenarios, namely 0.05%/year, 0.075%/year,

0.10%/year, 0.13%/year, and 0.15%/year, to represent different levels of green practice implementation over time

Digital traceability has emerged as a critical component of modern supply chain systems, particularly in enhancing transparency, data integrity, and real-time tracking capabilities. Recent studies highlight that blockchain-based traceability systems significantly improve information reliability and reduce data asymmetry (Nufus et al., 2026). In the context of halal supply chains, limited traceability remains a major challenge, requiring digital solutions to ensure end-to-end compliance and transparency (Alamsyah et al., 2022). Furthermore, digital traceability has been shown to enhance operational performance and sustainability outcomes while strengthening consumer trust and purchase intentions (Doanh et al., 2025). Advanced frameworks also demonstrate that digital traceability can substantially reduce process delays and improve system efficiency, making it a key enabler in accelerating certification systems (Chen, 2025). The current level of digital traceability in halal certification systems, particularly within the SIHALAL platform, can be considered moderate, estimated at approximately 50–65%. While the system has successfully implemented digital submission and process tracking, full end-to-end traceability remains limited due to partial system integration and the continued presence of manual verification processes. This condition reflects a transitional stage from semi-digital to fully integrated traceability systems, justifying its representation as a moderate baseline level within the System Dynamics model.

Carbon and resource efficiency benefits represent a critical outcome of integrating green practices and digital transformation within supply chains. Empirical studies demonstrate that green innovation and sustainability strategies significantly enhance resource efficiency, which directly contributes to emission reduction performance (Handoyo, 2024). In the hospitality sector, energy efficiency and waste reduction practices have been shown to significantly improve operational performance and cost efficiency (Handayani, 2025). Furthermore, sustainable supply chain practices strengthen operational efficiency and competitiveness (Fauzan et al., 2025), while circular economy strategies further enhance resource utilization and environmental outcomes. Recent system-based studies also indicate that integrating digital technologies with sustainability initiatives can improve efficiency by up to 25% and reduce carbon emissions by approximately 20%, highlighting the strategic importance of carbon/resource efficiency as a key performance outcome in modern supply chain systems

Based on the existing literature, several research gaps can be identified. First, there is a lack of integrated frameworks that connect halal logistics certification with green hospitality practices and digital transformation. Second, while digital technologies are recognized as important enablers, their dynamic interactions with operational and regulatory factors have not been sufficiently explored. Third, the application of System Dynamics in modeling halal logistics certification systems

remains underdeveloped. Addressing these gaps, this study proposes a System Dynamics model that integrates sustainability principles and digital transformation variables to analyze and accelerate halal logistics certification. This approach is expected to provide both theoretical contributions and practical insights for improving certification efficiency and supporting sustainable hospitality supply chains.

### **Research Methodology**

This study employs a quantitative simulation-based approach integrating survey data and System Dynamics (SD) modeling to analyze and accelerate halal logistics certification. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire based on the SERVQUAL-AHP framework, using a 7-point Likert scale and targeting logistics practitioners involved in certification processes. Secondary data from regulatory documents and prior studies were used to define baseline conditions.

The SD model was developed using Powersim Studio and validated with Vensim, incorporating key variables such as technology adoption, auditor capacity, and document completeness. Data analysis involved calculating service quality gaps and Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) and also AHP (analytical hierarchy process) , followed by model calibration using historical data with validation through MAPE ( $\leq 10\%$ ).

The Research methodology completely can be seen in figure 1 below

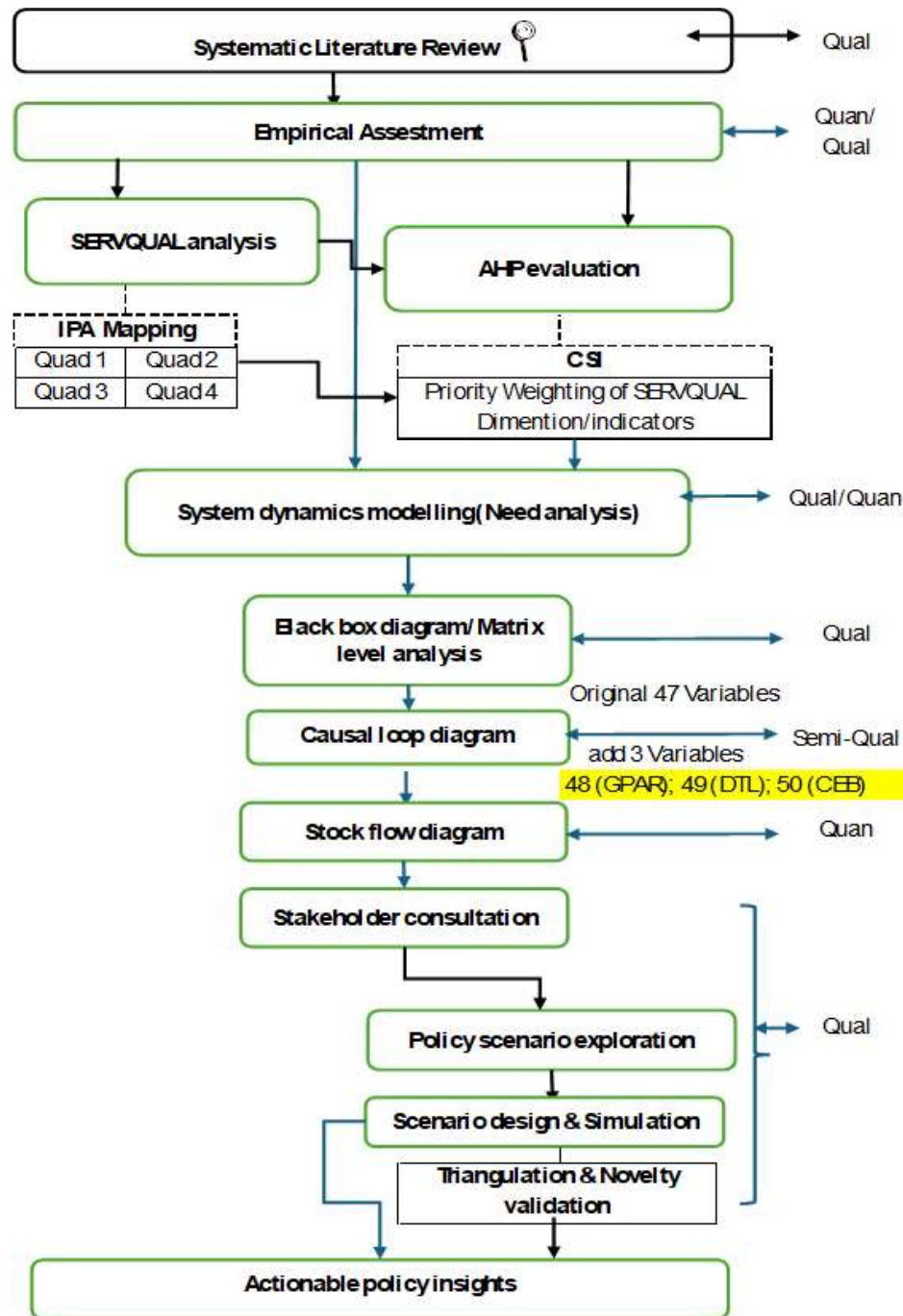


Figure 1: Framework of Research Methodology

Simulation scenarios (pessimistic to optimistic) were designed to evaluate policy impacts on lead time and cost efficiency. The study assumes stable regulatory conditions and positive relationships between technology, capacity, and performance. Data processing and statistical analysis were supported by Microsoft Excel.

## Results and Discussion

The survey results, based on the SERVQUAL approach using a 7-point Likert scale, indicate a high level of customer satisfaction in halal logistics certification (CSI 89%). The SERVQUAL-AHP method evaluates the gap between customer expectations and perceived service performance across five dimensions : tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy revealing that all dimensions still show negative gap values despite high satisfaction levels. This indicates that users perceive the service as good, but not yet meeting their full expectations. Key issues are identified in data security investment, credibility, and document completeness improvement, which are critical to trust and system reliability, consistent with findings by (Khan et al., 2019; Zailani et al., 2015). The SERVQUAL-AHP approach findings justify the inclusion of variables such as data security investment as one of indicator of Assurance dimension, and document completeness improvement rate as one of responsiveness dimension , these two indicators will be used in the System Dynamics model, as they directly address the biggest weight identified service quality gaps.

The mapping of green practice adoption rates reflects the accelerating shift of sustainability in the hospitality industry. Each scenario from 0.05 to 0.15 % is not arbitrary but represents different levels of adoption intensity derived from industry trends and survey-informed assumptions, allowing the model to simulate realistic policy condition. The pessimistic scenario 0.05 % represents slow adoption due to limited awareness and policy support, while the business-as-usual 0.075 % reflects current moderate growth constrained by operational barriers. Higher scenarios from 0.10–0.15 % reflect increasing integration of sustainability and digitalization. This approach enables the translation of qualitative survey perceptions into quantitative simulation parameters, strengthening the methodological consistency of the study.

The previous study only 47 variables on CLD , and for this research, there will three additional variables has been with assign number 48,49 and 50, as illustrated in Figure 1. Figure 1 (Causal Loop Diagram) visualizes the dynamic relationships and feedback loops within the halal logistics certification system. The diagram is structured into several interconnected subsystems, including market demand, certification capacity, financial cost, and service performance. Reinforcing loops (R1–R3) show how improvements in service performance, digital traceability, and green practice adoption can continuously enhance certification outcomes. Conversely, balancing loops (B1–B6) illustrate constraints such as certified halal percentage logistics non conformity, cost pressure, and limited auditor capacity that restrict system growth.



To improve readability, the diagram can be interpreted by grouping variables into three main clusters: (1) demand and market drivers (top-left), (2) operational and certification capacity (center), and (3) sustainability and digital enablers (bottom-right). This grouping helps readers follow the logic of the system without needing to interpret all connections simultaneously.

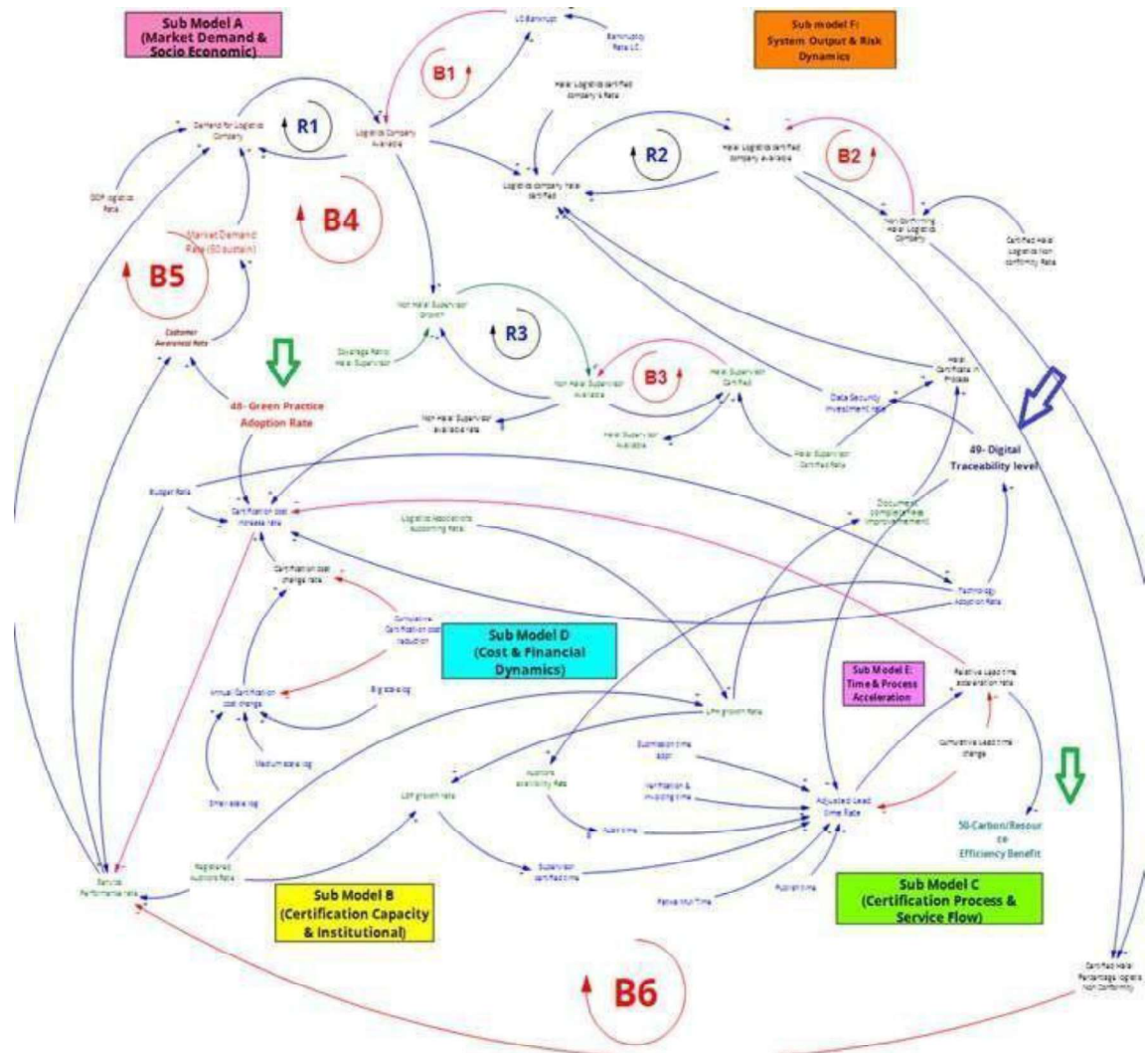


Figure 2: Causal Loop Diagram Halal Logistics Certification acceleration integrate with Green Hospitality Practices and Digital Transformation  
[Source : Research 2026 ]

The System Dynamics simulation shows that the existing baseline certification lead time ( $\approx 180$  days) can be significantly reduced become 65 days or 41% , from 11% of Certification achievement rate in business as usual (BAU) scenario as recorder on table 1 below. through policy interventions. Increasing technology adoption, auditor capacity, and supervisor certification rates leads to faster processing and improved efficiency. These improvements directly correspond to SERVQUAL gaps in

reliability and responsiveness, indicating that operational enhancements can effectively address perceived service deficiencies.

These findings align with digital supply chain studies emphasizing the role of technology in enhancing transparency and performance (Ivanov et al., 2019; Khan et al., 2019; Kshetri, 2018), as well as system behavior principles discussed by (Stermann, 2000).

Table 1: Simulation Scenario Before (B) and After (A) addition three variables  
Results from 2025-2029

| Scenario                                                          | LCA<br>(B → A)<br>Unit;<br>(company) | HLCCA<br>(B → A)<br>Unit ;<br>(Company) | Certification<br>Achievement<br>Rate<br>(B à A)<br>Unit : (%) | CCIR<br>(B → A)<br>Unit : (%) | (LTA)<br>(B → A)<br>Unit : (%) |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| E=Existing                                                        | 15.848                               | 1.706                                   | 11                                                            | — → —                         | 82                             |
| P<br>=(Pessimistic)                                               | 27.586 →<br>27.600                   | 7.287 →<br>7.351                        | 26                                                            | -81 → -84                     | 82 → 86                        |
| B =(Baseline or<br>BAU-Business<br>as usual)                      | 31.250 →<br>31,270                   | 12,801 →<br>12,938                      | 41                                                            | -82 → -87                     | 84 → 89                        |
| M= (Moderate)                                                     | 35,292 →<br>35,318                   | 18,943 →<br>19,160                      | 54                                                            | -83 → -89                     | 86 → 91                        |
| O<br>=(Optimistic)                                                | 39,743 →<br>39,776<br>(33)           | 25,762 →<br>26,070<br>(380)             | 65                                                            | -84 → -87<br>(-3%)            | 87 → 93<br>(+6%)               |
| PMS= (Policy<br>Mix<br>Scenario)-BPM<br>=(Balanced<br>Policy Mix) | 32,399                               | 13,730                                  | 42                                                            | 90                            | 93.57                          |
| E=Extreme                                                         | 31,419 →<br>31,516                   | 12,897 →<br>12,919                      | 41                                                            | -123 →<br>-124                | 125 → 125                      |

Note : LCA (Logistics company available); HLCCA (Halal logistics =certified company available); CCIR (Certification Cost Increase Rate); LTA (Lead time acceleration rate)

[Source : Research 2026]

Table 1 presents simulation results for 2025–2029. The results demonstrate a consistent pattern: higher integration of green practices and digital transformation leads to gradual but stable improvements across all key performance indicators. For example, under the optimistic scenario, LCA increases from 39.743 to 39.776 companies and HLCCA from 25.762 to 26.070 companies, while lead time acceleration rate improves 6%, from 87% to 93%. Although these changes appear numerically small, they are significant in a system dynamics context, where

incremental improvements accumulate over time and produce long-term system efficiency gains.

The integration of the three additional variables Green Practice Adoption Rate (GPAR) number (48), Digital Traceability Level (DTL) number (49), and Carbon/Resource Efficiency Benefit (CEB) number (50)—resulted in consistent yet incremental improvements in system performance compared to the pre-integration condition. On average in optimistic scenario, the Logistics Company Available (LCA) increased by approximately (+) positive 33 units, while the Halal Logistics Certified Companies Available (HLCCA) improved by about (+) positive 308 units, This confirms that sustainability and digital variables function as reinforcing enablers rather than primary drivers, enhancing system performance without drastically altering its structure. Lead Time Acceleration increased by around (+) positive 6% across optimistic scenarios, reflecting improved efficiency.

Unlike the relatively stable certification cost values, the Certification Cost Increase Rate shows a slight improvement of approximately 3 percent point (more negative) after integration, indicating better cost control. This suggests that digitalization and sustainability integration help stabilize cost growth rather than reduce absolute costs, which aligns with SERVQUAL findings where users are sensitive to efficiency and value rather than cost alone.

Figure 3 (Stock Flow Diagram) translates the conceptual relationships from the CLD into a quantitative simulation model. It shows key stock variables such as “Logistics Company Available” and “Halal Logistics Certified Company Available,” which accumulate over time, and flow variables such as certification rate and certified halal logistics non conformity , which determine system changes.

Unlike the CLD, which focuses on causal relationships, the SFD provides a step-by-step representation of how the system evolves over time through measurable variables and equations. The diagram can be interpreted from left to right: starting from demand drivers (e.g., market demand rate), moving through certification processes (e.g., certification rate, supervisor availability), and ending with performance outputs (e.g., lead time, cost, and traceability level). To improve clarity, the diagram can be simplified visually by grouping variables into three sections: input drivers (left), process mechanisms (center), and output indicators (right), allowing readers to more easily follow the simulation logic.

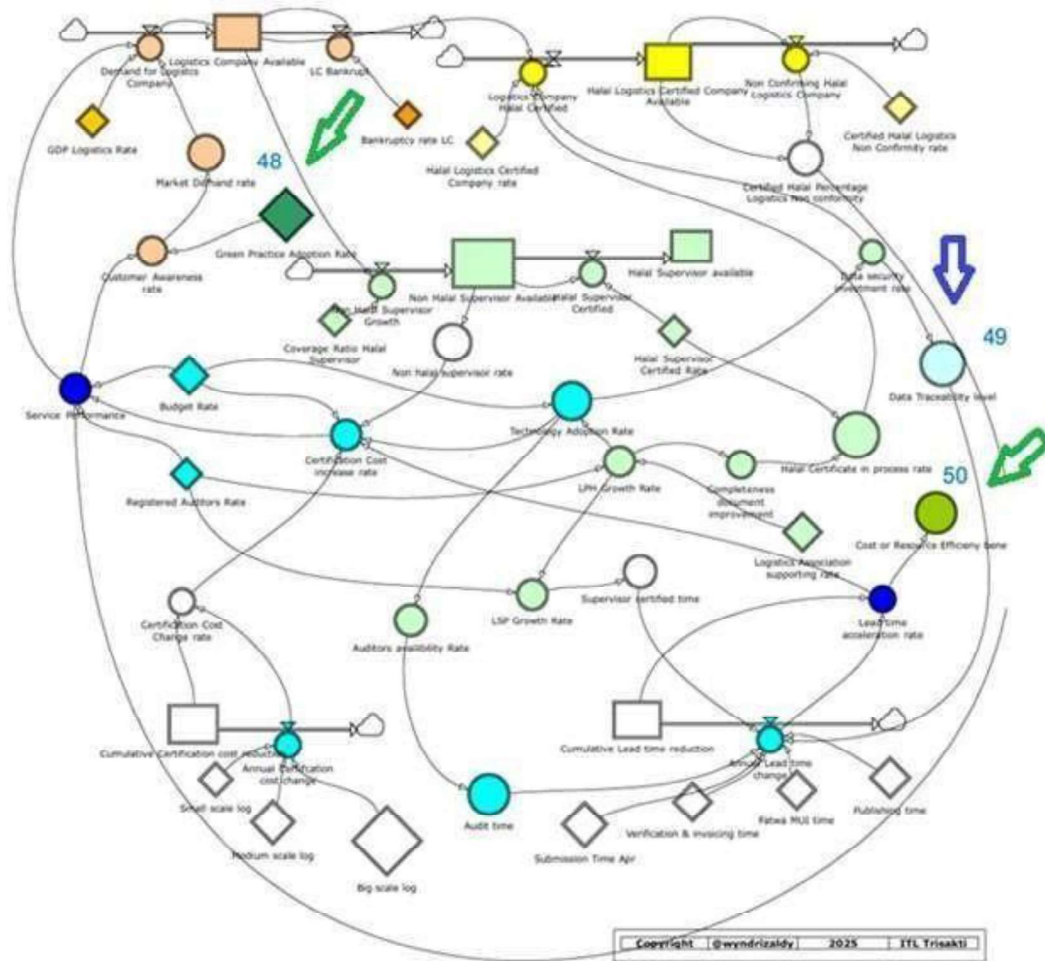


Figure 2: Stock Flow Diagram Halal Logistics Certification acceleration integrated with Green Hospitality Practices and Digital Transformation

[Source : Research 2026 ]

Finally, the integration of green hospitality practices strengthens system performance by improving sustainability, efficiency, and stakeholder trust. From a customer perspective, improved traceability, transparency, and process efficiency directly address SERVQUAL gaps in assurance and reliability, thereby enhancing trust in halal-certified hospitality services. Combined policy interventions produce stronger impacts than isolated actions, confirming the systemic nature of the model. The integration of green hospitality practices further strengthens system performance by improving sustainability, efficiency, and stakeholder trust. This supports prior research highlighting the benefits of sustainable supply chain practices (Han et al., 2019; Yusoff et al., 2021). Additionally, combined policy interventions produce stronger impacts than isolated actions, reflecting the systemic nature of complex systems as noted by (Barlas, 2002). Overall, the findings confirm that integrating

digital transformation and sustainability is essential for accelerating halal logistics certification, consistent with recent studies by (Bag et al., 2021; Rebs et al., 2019).

## Conclusions

This study confirms that halal logistics certification within hospitality supply chains continues to face key challenges, particularly related to long lead times, cost inefficiencies, and limited system integration. By applying a System Dynamics approach, the study successfully achieves its objective of identifying the key drivers of certification performance, including technology adoption, auditor capacity, and process quality. The simulation results demonstrate that improvements in assurance-related factors—especially data security and document completeness—play a crucial role in enhancing process efficiency and system reliability.

The integration of Green Hospitality Practices (GHP) and digital transformation variables—specifically Green Practice Adoption Rate, Digital Traceability Level (DTL), and Carbon/Resource Efficiency Benefit (CEB)—further strengthens system performance. The results show consistent but incremental improvements, including an average increase of approximately positive (+) 33 units in LCA, positive (+) 380 units in HLCCA, and about positive (+) 6% improvement in lead time acceleration across scenarios. In addition, the Certification Cost Increase Rate (CCIR) improves by around 3 percentage point negative, interpreted as improvement cause reduce the cost, indicating better control over cost growth, although absolute certification costs remain relatively stable. These findings indicate that the integration of sustainability and digitalization does not drastically change system output but significantly enhances operational efficiency, transparency, and system responsiveness.

From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to the literature by developing an integrated Systems Dynamics framework that simultaneously links halal logistics certification, green hospitality practices, and digital transformation—areas that have previously been examined separately. The study expands existing halal logistics research by incorporating dynamic feedback mechanisms, allowing for a deeper understanding of how operational, technological, and sustainability factors interact over time to influence certification performance. In addition, it provides a quantitative simulation-based approach that complements previous conceptual and empirical studies, thereby strengthening methodological contributions to sustainable supply chains and halal logistics research.

From a practical and policy perspective, some key recommendations can be obtained. First, policymakers and certification authorities should prioritize the development of integrated digital platforms to improve data security, document verification, and end-to-end traceability. Second, increasing auditor capacity and improving supervisor certification programs is essential to reduce bottlenecks and speed up the certification

process. Third, industry stakeholders should actively adopt green hospitality practices, as their integration with digital systems has been shown to increase efficiency and transparency. Fourth, targeted policy incentives—such as subsidies, regulatory support, and standardization frameworks—are needed to accelerate the adoption of digital and sustainable practices, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises. Finally, a coordinated multi-stakeholder approach involving governments, certification bodies, and industry players is needed to ensure system-wide improvements and long-term sustainability.

Overall, this study demonstrates that the research objectives have been achieved by developing a comprehensive and dynamic model that captures the interaction between digital, operational, and sustainability factors in halal logistics certification. The proposed framework provides practical insights for policymakers and industry stakeholders, showing that a balanced integration of digital transformation and green practices can effectively improve certification efficiency and support the development of more sustainable and resilient hospitality supply chains. These findings highlight that despite the gradual improvements, they are strategically significant in building more efficient, transparent, and resilient certification systems, thereby supporting the sustainable long-term development of the hospitality supply chain.

### **Acknowledgement**

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# **The Impact Of Green Practices On Guest Satisfaction And Loyalty At Kuta Puri Bungalows Villas & Resort**

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## **Abstract**

*This study investigates the role of green practices in enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty within the hospitality industry, focusing on Kuta Puri Bungalows Villas & Resort in Bali. As environmental awareness increases, understanding how sustainability practices influence guest perceptions becomes essential. The research aims to analyze how green practices, particularly those embedded in traditional and ecological approaches, contribute to guest satisfaction and long-term loyalty. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed using a case study method. Data were collected through analysis of guest reviews from Online Travel Agent platforms, supported by relevant literature. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns related to environmental practices, service quality, and guest experience. The findings reveal that green practices are implicitly implemented through traditional Balinese architecture, natural ventilation, and well-maintained green landscapes, which create a serene and comfortable atmosphere. These environmental elements significantly enhance guest satisfaction by providing both physical comfort and emotional value. Additionally, humanistic aspects such as friendly staff and culturally rooted service strengthen positive guest experiences. The study also finds that satisfaction derived from these practices leads to strong guest loyalty, reflected in repeat visits and positive recommendations. In conclusion, green practices rooted in nature and local culture can effectively improve satisfaction and loyalty without relying on formal certification. This highlights the importance of integrating sustainability into experiential hospitality strategies.*

**Keywords:** green practices, guest loyalty, guest satisfaction, sustainability, hospitality industry

## **Introduction**

Customer satisfaction is a key indicator used to assess the extent to which the quality of a product or service, along with the associated service process, meets customer

expectations (Pizam et al., 2015). The increasing level of competition in the business world, particularly in the hotel accommodation sector, is prompting hotel managers to implement various strategies to strengthen their businesses' competitiveness (Lesmana et al., 2024). Customer satisfaction plays a key role in ensuring business sustainability through customer loyalty and positive word of mouth (Jasin et al., 2023). Customer satisfaction tends to increase significantly when a hotel is able to maintain a positive reputation (Adi et al., 2025). This competition provides significant benefits to customers through greater choice, better value, and higher-quality service (Mandlik, 2023).

The increasing global awareness of environmental issues has positioned customers as a key driver in promoting green practices initiatives (Vafaei et al., 2019). Sustainability has become a key priority across various industries, including the hospitality sector, where it plays a crucial role in shaping the industry's growth and development (Abdou et al., 2020). Customer loyalty and re-purchase intention are greatly affected by the green marketing practices adopted by a business firm (Kumar & Aggarwal, 2022). A wide range of green practices have gained popularity in recent years, including recycling, eco-friendly purchasing, and the reuse of products and services (Kumar & Aggarwal, 2022). That said, green hotels play a significant role in influencing customer retention (Hassan Mohamed Researcher et al., 2023).

This issue becomes increasingly critical as more hotels continue to introduce new features, such as green attributes, while highlighting the eco-friendliness of their offerings (Slevitch et al., 2013). Despite the significant importance of green practices in the hospitality industry and the rising global awareness of environmental issues, some hotels still fail to give adequate attention to these initiatives, which can negatively impact customer satisfaction and retention (Hassan Mohamed Researcher et al., 2023). Many hotel managers are reluctant to adopt this initiative, as they believe that implementing green practices involves high costs (Malaysia Deraman et al., 2017). Because the certification process is time-consuming and costly, many hotels decide not to pursue official certification (Gasbarro & Bonera, 2021). Without a doubt, if the hotel industry fails to integrate sustainability and resource conservation into its core business culture, it will struggle to progress in the future, as pollution can undermine the foundation of its continued development (Abdou et al., 2020).

It is important to acknowledge that this study has several limitations that should be addressed in future research (Abdou et al., 2020). Only a limited number of studies have directly examined how green practices affect customer satisfaction and their subsequent behavioral intentions (Kumar & Aggarwal, 2022). Research on employees is essential because they are responsible for implementing green practices, and their perceptions and behavior play a key role in achieving pro-environmental organizational performance (Filimonau et al., 2023). As far as we know, no studies have examined how clearly communicating a green image such as

using environmental terms in a hotel's name affects positioning, or compared the impact of implementing green practices with adopting a strong green positioning strategy (Gasbarro & Bonera, 2021). The main aim of the study is to assess how hotel guests perceive green practices and to determine whether these practices influence their perceived value, overall satisfaction, and loyalty toward hotels (Moise et al., 2021).

## **Literature Review**

### **Green Practices in Hospitality**

Green practices in the hospitality industry refer to environmentally responsible actions such as energy conservation, waste reduction, and the use of eco-friendly materials, all of which contribute to sustainable development and operational efficiency (Abdou et al., 2020). These practices often include recycling programs, green purchasing, and resource optimization, which have become increasingly important as environmental awareness continues to rise globally (Kumar & Aggarwal, 2022). In addition, environmentally conscious architectural designs, such as natural ventilation and the use of local materials, can significantly reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions in hotel operations (Pereira et al., 2021). The integration of green attributes into hotel services not only minimizes environmental impact but also enhances the overall value proposition offered to guests (Slevitch et al., 2013). Despite these benefits, the adoption of green practices is sometimes limited by perceived high costs and operational challenges, which may discourage hotel managers from fully implementing sustainability initiatives (Malaysia Deraman et al., 2017).

### **Guest Satisfaction**

Guest satisfaction is defined as the overall evaluation of a guest's experience based on the comparison between prior expectations and the actual service received (Pizam et al., 2015). It is influenced by multiple factors, including service quality, physical environment, and perceived value, all of which contribute to the guest's overall perception of the hotel experience (Kim & Kim, 2022). The atmosphere of a hotel, including its design, cleanliness, and environmental elements, plays a significant role in shaping perceived value and emotional responses, which directly affect satisfaction levels (Chang & Lin, 2022). Furthermore, the presence of green practices can enhance satisfaction by creating a sense of comfort and environmental responsibility, which aligns with the values of environmentally conscious guests (Vafaei et al., 2019). High levels of satisfaction are essential for maintaining a positive reputation and ensuring long-term business sustainability in the hospitality industry (Mandlik, 2023).

### **Guest Loyalty**

Guest loyalty refers to a customer's commitment to repurchase or revisit a hotel and to recommend it to others based on positive experiences (Jasin et al., 2023). Loyalty is typically developed through consistent satisfaction, where guests form an

emotional attachment to the hotel as a result of repeated positive interactions (Hutagalung et al., 2022). This behavioral intention is often reflected in repeat visits, positive word-of-mouth, and favorable online reviews across digital platforms (Josimović et al., 2025). In the hospitality context, loyalty is considered a key indicator of long-term success, as retaining existing customers is more cost-effective than acquiring new ones (Mandlik, 2023).

#### OTA Reviews in Hospitality Research

Online Travel Agent (OTA) reviews have become an essential source of information for evaluating guest experiences and perceptions in the hospitality industry. These reviews provide authentic and unsolicited feedback, reflecting real customer experiences without researcher intervention (Kim & Kim, 2022). As a form of electronic word-of-mouth, OTA reviews significantly influence potential customers' decision-making processes and shape the reputation of hotels in a competitive market. The analysis of such reviews allows researchers to identify patterns related to satisfaction, service quality, and behavioral intentions, making them a valuable data source for hospitality studies.

#### Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research design approach using secondary data analysis to examine the impact of green practices on guest satisfaction and loyalty in hotels. A quantitative approach is chosen because the study aims to measure the relationship between variables objectively based on available data (Agusanto & Dotulong, 2025). In this research, data are not collected directly from respondents but are obtained from guest reviews available on various digital platforms.

The object of this study are guest perceptions of green practices, satisfaction, and loyalty at Kuta Puri Bungalows Villas & Resort. The research focuses on three main variables: green practices as the independent variable, and guest satisfaction and guest loyalty as the dependent variables. The green practices variable reflects the hotel's efforts in implementing environmentally friendly practices, such as energy conservation, waste management, the use of eco-friendly products, and the reduction of single-use plastics. Guest satisfaction represents the level of satisfaction experienced by guests based on their stay (Nathania & Rahmanikram Susetya, 2022). While guest loyalty indicates the tendency of guests to return and recommend the hotel to others (Hutagalung et al., 2022).

Data collection is conducted through the document analysis of guest reviews obtained from various platforms such as Online Travel Agents (OTA), Google Maps, and other review websites. The data consist of comments, ratings, and guest experiences, which are analyzed to identify perceptions of green practices, levels of satisfaction, and guest loyalty. This method allows researchers to obtain more natural data, as it reflects real guest experiences without direct intervention.

The collected data are then analyzed using thematic analysis to illustrate guest perceptions of green practices, levels of satisfaction, and guest loyalty. In addition, the analysis is used to identify patterns and relationships among these variables. The results of this analysis are used to determine the extent to which the implementation of green practices impacts guest satisfaction and loyalty.

## Results and Discussion

### Results



Figure 1: Guest review of green layout

[Source : Booking.com]

Guest reviews describing this hotel as an “oasis” with a “serene” atmosphere and “authentic Balinese style” indicate that Kuta Puri Bungalows Villas & Resort embraces a traditional architectural concept that blends seamlessly with nature. This concept not only serves as a cultural identity but also contributes to passive energy efficiency. Open spatial layouts, natural ventilation, and lush gardens create a cool microclimate, reducing the need for air conditioning. This aligns with research stating that the use of natural ventilation and local materials in traditional architecture can lower energy consumption and reduce a building’s carbon footprint (Pereira et al., 2021). Furthermore, reviews highlighting the “immaculate gardens” indicate the hotel’s commitment to environmental management. Green spaces not only enhance aesthetic value but also serve ecological functions such as improving water absorption, maintaining air quality, and supporting organic waste management. In this context, these practices reflect the concept of environmental stewardship. Hotels that prioritize green space management can increase guests’ emotional satisfaction by creating a comfortable and relaxing atmosphere within an urban setting (Trisdiarto et al., 2026).

Moreover, the hotel’s consistently peaceful ambiance despite being located in a busy area indicates efforts to control noise pollution as part of its green practices. Landscape design with dense vegetation can function as a natural sound barrier, reducing noise from the surrounding environment. In the concept of green hotels,

pollution control is not limited to physical waste but also includes non-physical aspects such as noise. Integrating natural elements in hotel design helps minimize environmental impacts, including noise disturbance (Alkotdriyah, 2024). In addition to environmental aspects, guest reviews also emphasize excellent service quality, such as staff friendliness and long-term guest relationships reflected in high repeat visits. From a sustainability perspective, this falls under humanistic green practices, which focus on social well-being and relationships. Staff who consistently deliver sincere service reflect sustainable work practices rooted in local cultural values. A study published in the Jurnal Ilmu Multidisiplin notes that hospitality in Bali is part of green tourism, where cultural values and social interactions play a crucial role in creating sustainable tourism experiences (Putu et al., n.d.).

Overall, it can be concluded that Kuta Puri Bungalows Villas & Resort implements green practices through a traditional-ecological approach by integrating traditional architecture, natural landscapes, and local socio-cultural values into its operations. This approach demonstrates that sustainability does not always require modern technology but can be achieved through nature-based solutions that directly enhance guest comfort while preserving environmental balance.



Figure 2: Guest review of satisfaction  
[Source : Online Travel Agent]

Guest reviews that give perfect ratings and use phrases such as “perfect place” and “highly recommended” indicate a very high level of satisfaction with the stay. This is reinforced by praise for the facilities, the strategic location, and the helpful staff, all of which reflect that the hotel has successfully met and even exceeded guests’ expectations. Guest satisfaction is not merely a general feeling, but is shaped by their experiences with various hotel attributes, such as facilities, service quality, cleanliness, location, and other experiential elements (Kim & Kim, 2022). Guests’ perceptions of the hotel atmosphere have a positive influence on their satisfaction, and appreciation of environmentally friendly practices further strengthens this effect.

Therefore, elements such as gardens, spatial layout, and a green ambiance can play an important role in enhancing guest satisfaction (Chang & Lin, 2022).

Based on the overall guest reviews, the garden aspect at Kuta Puri Bungalows Villas & Resort stands out as a key element in forming positive perceptions of accommodation quality. The gardens, described as beautiful, clean, neat, and well-maintained, indicate effective landscape management that creates a lush, comfortable, and relaxing atmosphere. The presence of well-arranged vegetation and a green environment integrated with the accommodation area makes the garden not only a decorative feature but also an essential part of the guest experience.

Guest appreciation of the beauty and upkeep of the garden also reflects a high level of satisfaction. The garden is perceived as providing visual comfort, a relaxing atmosphere, and a more enjoyable stay. Thus, the garden at Kuta Puri Bungalows Villas & Resort can be understood as an important component that enhances the property's attractiveness, increases guest satisfaction, and encourages recommendations and repeat visits. Guest satisfaction itself can be defined as an evaluation that arises after guests compare their expectations prior to their stay with the actual experience they receive during the hotel service (Suprina et al., 2022).



Figure 3: Guest review of loyalty  
[Source : Online Travel Agent]

Guest reviews that mention having stayed at the hotel multiple times (“I’ve returned multiple times now”) clearly indicate guest loyalty to the hotel. Additionally, statements that the stay experience is always consistent and enjoyable, along with emphasis on the atmosphere, friendly staff, and the comfort felt, reflect the guest’s emotional attachment to the hotel. This indicates that the hotel not only satisfies guests but also successfully builds long-term relationships that encourage repeat visits. Guest loyalty is an important indicator in assessing how well an accommodation can retain its customers. Loyalty is not only reflected in repeat visits, but also in guests’ willingness to recommend the hotel to others and provide



positive reviews across various Online Travel Agent (OTA) platforms. It is generally formed through satisfying stay experiences, which in turn create an emotional connection between guests and the accommodation (Kim & Kim, 2022). Based on guest review data, Kuta Puri Bungalows Villas & Resort shows strong indications of loyalty, as reflected in consistently positive evaluations across various aspects such as facilities, service, location, and especially the overall atmosphere.

One of the most prominent elements is the hotel's garden, which is frequently described by guests as beautiful, clean, neat, and well-maintained. In addition, reviews highlight enjoyable stay experiences supported by friendly and helpful staff, as well as clean and comfortable rooms. Some guests describe their stay as "truly unforgettable" and express a desire to return, while others emphasize the hotel's "great location," "clean and tidy" condition, and "great value." This indicates that the hotel's environment not only provides physical comfort but also creates a positive emotional experience, which contributes to both satisfaction and loyalty (Chang & Lin, 2022).

Furthermore, based on review patterns on OTA platforms such as Booking.com, Agoda, and Google Maps, many guests explicitly express their intention to return and recommend Kuta Puri Bungalows Villas & Resort to others. Statements such as "will stay here again" and "we nearly always stay here," along with consistently high ratings, serve as clear indicators of guest loyalty. Guest satisfaction itself can be understood as the result of comparing expectations prior to the stay with the actual experience received; when the experience meets or exceeds expectations, satisfaction increases and can lead to loyalty (Josimović et al., 2025). Therefore, guest loyalty at Kuta Puri Bungalows Villas & Resort is formed through consistently positive and satisfying stay experiences.

### **Discussion**

Based on the analysis of guest reviews collected from various Online Travel Agent (OTA) platforms, the implementation of *green practices* at Kuta Puri Bungalows Villas & Resort can be identified through a combination of environmental, social, and cultural elements that contribute to guest satisfaction and loyalty. Although the hotel does not explicitly position itself as a certified green hotel, the findings indicate that sustainability is embedded implicitly in its operational and design approach.

From an environmental perspective, guest reviews consistently highlight the hotel's natural ambiance, describing it as an "oasis" with a "serene" atmosphere and "authentic Balinese style." This reflects the adoption of a traditional architectural concept that integrates with nature. Features such as open spatial layouts, natural ventilation, and extensive green areas contribute to passive energy efficiency by reducing reliance on air conditioning. In addition, the presence of well-maintained gardens frequently described as "immaculate," "beautiful," and "well-kept"

demonstrates effective environmental management. These green spaces not only enhance aesthetics but also serve ecological functions, including improving air quality, supporting water absorption, and contributing to waste management practices. This aligns with the concept of environmental stewardship, where hotels actively manage natural resources to minimize environmental impact while enhancing guest experience.

Furthermore, the hotel's ability to maintain a calm and relaxing environment despite being located in a busy area indicates an effort to control noise pollution through landscape design. Dense vegetation functions as a natural sound barrier, supporting the broader concept of green practices, which includes both physical and non-physical environmental management. This suggests that sustainability in the hotel extends beyond resource efficiency to encompass holistic environmental comfort.

In terms of guest satisfaction, the findings reveal that the hotel's green attributes particularly the garden and natural atmosphere play a significant role in shaping positive guest perceptions. Reviews that include expressions such as "perfect place" and "highly recommended," along with consistently high ratings, indicate that guests perceive the hotel as meeting or exceeding their expectations. The garden, in particular, emerges as a key factor influencing satisfaction, as it provides visual comfort, relaxation, and a unique experiential value. This supports the idea that environmental elements, when effectively managed, can enhance both functional and emotional aspects of the guest experience. Moreover, the study shows that satisfaction derived from these green practices contributes directly to guest loyalty. Evidence of loyalty is reflected in repeated visits, as well as explicit statements such as "will stay here again" and "we nearly always stay here." These patterns suggest that guests develop an emotional attachment to the hotel, driven not only by service quality but also by the overall atmosphere and environmental experience. The consistency of positive reviews across multiple aspects, facilities, service, location, and ambiance further strengthens the indication of strong customer retention.

From a broader sustainability perspective, the findings also highlight the importance of *humanistic green practices*. Guest reviews frequently emphasize the friendliness and helpfulness of staff, indicating that social interaction and cultural values play a crucial role in shaping the overall experience. This reflects the integration of local cultural values into service delivery, which is a key component of sustainable tourism. The combination of environmental quality and social interaction enhances emotional satisfaction, which in turn fosters loyalty.

Overall, the results suggest that Kuta Puri Bungalows Villas & Resort applies a *traditional-ecological approach* to green practices by integrating natural elements, local architecture, and cultural values into its operations. This approach demonstrates that effective sustainability in the hospitality industry does not always

depend on advanced technology or formal certification, but can also be achieved through nature-based solutions and culturally rooted practices. These findings confirm that green practices when implemented holistically can significantly influence guest satisfaction and loyalty, ultimately contributing to the long-term competitiveness of the hotel.

### **Conclusions**

This study demonstrates that green practices implemented through a traditional-ecological approach significantly enhance guest satisfaction and loyalty at Kuta Puri Bungalows Villas & Resort. The integration of traditional Balinese architecture, natural ventilation, and well-maintained green spaces contributes to passive energy efficiency, environmental quality, and a serene atmosphere, which are highly valued by guests. These environmental elements, particularly the gardens, play a central role in shaping positive perceptions and emotional satisfaction. In addition, humanistic aspects, such as friendly staff and culturally rooted service, strengthen the overall guest experience and foster meaningful social interactions.

The findings also reveal that consistent positive experiences lead to strong guest loyalty, reflected in repeat visits and recommendations across digital platforms. This study highlights that sustainability in hospitality does not necessarily depend on advanced technology or formal certification but can be effectively achieved through nature-based solutions and local cultural integration. Therefore, adopting holistic green practices can serve as a strategic approach to improving competitiveness, ensuring long-term sustainability, and enhancing customer retention in the hospitality industry.

### **Acknowledgement**

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# Visual Framing and Semiotic Analysis of “Plastic Free Ocean” PSA as a Strategic Communication Tool for Sustainable Hospitality

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## Abstract

*This study examines the role of visual communication in sustainability PSA media through Public Service Advertising (PSA), focusing on the "Plastic Free Ocean" video campaign. In the context of increasing environmental challenges in the hospitality and tourism industry, effective communication strategies are crucial to influence public awareness and behavior change across audiences across generations. Using a qualitative approach, this study applies semiotic analysis (Barthes) and framing analysis (Entman) to explore how visual signs, narratives, and message structures construct environmental meanings. The findings reveal that the PSA uses a structured narrative about problems, impacts, and solutions, supported by strong visual metaphors and emotional framing. At the denotative level, the video presents a representation of ocean pollution, while at the connotative level, it constructs a moral message related to human responsibility and environmental sustainability across generations. The framing analysis further demonstrates how the PSA defines environmental problems, links causality to human behavior, and promotes actionable solutions through plastic-free practices. Importantly, this study highlights the relevance of PSA strategies for the hospitality sector. The identified visual and narrative elements can be translated into environmental communication practices, sustainable destination branding, and environmentally responsible traveler experiences. Furthermore, the use of digital platforms such as YouTube reflects the growing role of digital transformation in disseminating sustainability messages to diverse audience segments. This research contributes to the intersection of visual communication design, sustainability, and hospitality by positioning PSA as a strategic tool for fostering environmental awareness, supporting green practices, and enabling innovation and entrepreneurship in the creative industry. These findings offer insights for developing effective cross-generational communication strategies towards a more sustainable hospitality future.*

**Keywords:** Public Service Advertising, Visual Communication, Semiotics, Framing, Sustainable Hospitality, Digital Transformation.

## Introduction

The global hospitality and tourism industry is intrinsically dependent on the integrity of the natural environment, particularly coastal and marine ecosystems. Oceans cover more than 70% of the Earth's surface and support the livelihoods of billions of people, including millions employed in coastal tourism, marine recreation, and coastal hospitality (UNEP, 2021). However, the accelerating marine plastic pollution crisis threatens to disrupt these ecosystems on an unprecedented scale, according to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP, 2021), around 8 million tons of plastic waste enters the world's oceans every year, with projections suggesting that plastic could outnumber fish in the oceans by 2050 if current trends continue. This environmental emergency is not just an ecological problem; it poses a fundamental threat to the sustainability of the hospitality economy, the attractiveness of coastal destinations, and the intergenerational legacy of clean oceans.

In this context, Public Service Announcements (PSAs) play a crucial communicative role. As a media genre, PSAs are intentionally designed to influence public attitudes, social norms, and behavioral patterns without commercial intent. They utilize visual communication tools such as symbols, metaphors, color psychology, typography, and narrative structures to construct persuasive messages that are emotionally expressive and easily accepted by diverse audiences. The 'Plastic Free Ocean' PSA video, disseminated through digital channels including YouTube, provides education on visual semiotics and PSA video design strategies to position marine plastic pollution as a solvable crisis that demands individual action and public participation in addressing the dangers of plastic waste to marine ecosystems.

In the field of communication and Visual Communication Design (DKV), PSA analysis presents a diverse scientific role. However, with the existing diversity, most visual elements that support the focus of messages that are able to communicate ideas about environmental issues, especially plastic waste in environmental PSA are seen only as communicative and stand-alone PSA works, not receiving enough attention in their operational distribution activities as communication messages that support the hospitality and tourism sectors. This represents a gap in several forms of research that are significant in discussing similar issues, especially considering thematic activities such as the 6th InHEIC 2026 international conference that raised issues around the restructuring of the hospitality industry for the sustainability of the tourism industry across generations. The PSA 'Plastic Free Ocean', which adopts layers of iconic verbal and visual signs, offers a case study on the real problem of marine conditions affected by its ecosystem due to plastic waste which is worthy of being used as a literacy medium to understand how sustainability narratives can be built and communicated to create behavioral changes towards environmental issues as a relevant challenge as a marketing strategy for hotels, the plastic waste processing industry, and the entertainment destination industry in the tourism sector.

This research is within the scope of environmental-focused communication regarding the power of persuasive PSA media strategies in visualizing and shaping public perceptions about ecological issues (Braks et al., 2013). Framing theory as

conceptualized by Robert N. Entman (1993), suggests that media texts selectively emphasize certain aspects of perceived reality to promote particular interpretations, moral values, and actions (Martadinata, 2022). Simultaneously, Roland Barthes' (1977) semiotic framework provides analytical tools for decoding the layered meanings embedded in visual signs distinguishing between denotation (literal, signified meaning) and connotation (culturally encoded, second-order meaning/signified) (Alfandi et al., 2024). The integration of these two theoretical frameworks allows for a comprehensive systematic analysis of how the 'Plastic Free Ocean' PSA builds communicative and persuasive power to achieve the PSA's intended message objectives. This will ultimately influence the extent to which the PSA's message is able to shape audience perceptions, thereby forming a fundamental understanding of environmental issues, particularly plastic waste, and its real impact on marine ecosystems.

This study aims firstly to identify and categorize the verbal and visual signs used in the 'Plastic Free Ocean' PSA using Barthes' semiotics; secondly, to analyze the framing strategies used in the PSA using Robert N. Entman's framing model of problem definition, cause and effect, moral values, and; and thirdly, to derive implications for sustainable hospitality communication and environmental advocacy. By placing this analysis within the broader context of cross-generational sustainability and innovation in the hospitality industry, this study aims to bridge the disciplines of visual communication design relevant to the hospitality industry.

## **Literature Review**

### **2.1 Public Service Advertisement as Social Communication Instrument**

Public Service Announcements (PSAs) are non-commercial communication media designed to promote public welfare, social awareness, and behavioral change on issues of common interest (Gabrijel Devetak, 2005). Unlike commercial advertising that prioritizes product sales, PSAs are designed based on their capacity to change attitudes and motivate behaviors that support social interests. In the context of visual communication design in Indonesia, PSAs have been represented as a primary medium for messages supporting government and community sustainability programs on issues ranging from public health to environmental conservation (Budi Setiawan et al., 2025).

The visual dimension of PSA is very significant in the digital era, where moving images and motion graphics attract the attention of audiences across social media and video platforms as a mass communication mix that can be enjoyed and disseminated to a wider audience. Tinarbuko (2009) argues that visual signs in visual communication design in Indonesia carry a triadic meaning structure consisting of the presence of signs (signifiers), references (signifieds), and interpretants (meanings) where the audience constructs meaning in a culturally specific manner



(Tinarbuko, 2004). This triadic framework complements Barthes's semiotics and provides a locally grounded analytical lens for analyzing PSA in Indonesia.

## 2.2 Roland Barthes' Semiotic Theory

Roland Barthes (1915–1980) extended Ferdinand de Saussure's structural semiology to develop a two-order model of signification applicable to visual and cultural texts (Atikah Nurul Asdah, 2025). In the first order of signification, signs operate at the level of denotation of the direct and descriptive meaning of the visual elements. In the second order, signs generate connotation, where culturally and ideologically laden meanings are attached to the primary sign. Barthes (1977) also identified the concept of myth, where connotative meanings become naturalized within a culture, presenting ideologically constructed realities as self-evident truths (HASYIM, 2014).

Applied to PSA analysis, Barthes's semiotics allows researchers to interpret not only what is depicted visually (denotation) but also what cultural, emotional, and ideological meanings it evokes (connotation). For example, in the context of the video, the visual representation of a sea turtle entangled in plastic packaging suggests ecological damage; connotatively, it evokes guilt, moral responsibility, and urgency precisely the emotional registers necessary to motivate behavioral change. This multiple-level analysis is crucial to understanding the structure of the persuasive message of the 'Plastic Free Ocean' PSA.

## 2.3 Robert N. Entman's Framing Theory

Framing theory, as proposed by Robert N. Entman (1993), provides a structural model for analyzing how media texts select, emphasize, and organize information to promote particular interpretations of social issues (Mulyana & Eriyanto, 2011). Entman identifies four framing functions: (1) Problem Definition, which characterizes the problem and its perceived costs and benefits; (2) Cause and Effect, which identifies the agents responsible for the problem; (3) Moral Values, which apply moral judgments to agents and events; and (4) Treatment Recommendation, which proposes solutions or actions.

In context communication environment, theory framing has implemented to analyze How change climate, loss diversity life and crisis pollution served in media text for motivating or demobilize public response (Nisbet, 2009). The application of Entman's model to the 'Plastic Free Ocean' PSA allows for a systematic understanding of how the advertisement constructs the plastic pollution problem, assigns responsibility to the audience positioned as both citizens and agents, makes educational moral appeals, and directs audience action, all of which have direct implications for the development of sustainable communication strategies for the hospitality and tourism industry.

## 2.4 Green Practice and Sustainable Communication in Hospitality

Framing theory, as articulated by Robert N. Entman (1993), provides a structural model for analyzing how media texts select, emphasize, and organize information to promote particular interpretations of social problems. Entman identified four framing functions: (1) Problem Definition, which characterizes the problem and its perceived costs and benefits; (2) Causation, which identifies the agents responsible for the problem; (3) Moral Values, which apply moral judgments to agents and events; and (4) Treatment Recommendations, which propose solutions or actions.

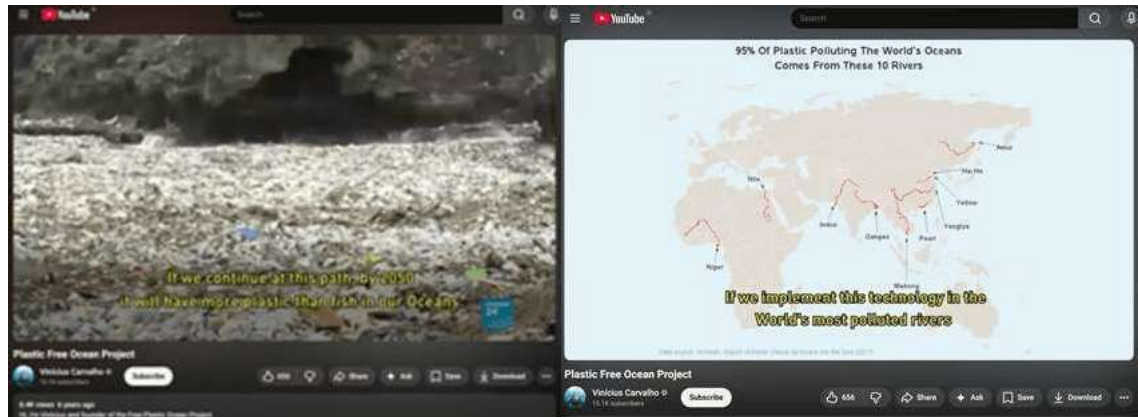
In the context of environmental communication, framing theory has been applied to analyze how climate change, biodiversity loss, and the pollution crisis are presented in media texts to motivate or organize public responses to environmental damage issues through PSA media (Nisbet, 2009). The application of Entman's model to the 'Plastic Free Ocean' PSA allows for a more systematic understanding of how advertising constructs the plastic pollution problem, assigns responsibility, makes moral appeals, and directs audience action, all of which have direct implications for building a hospitality communication strategy that is based on environmental concern and sustainability.

## **Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Research Approach**

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative research approach, which is very suitable for interpretive analysis of PSA media that carries communicative messages. Qualitative methodology allows researchers to engage deeply with the dimensions of the denotative, connotative, and moral values of PSA texts, without reducing their meaning to measurable variables. Creswell (2014) describes descriptive qualitative research as a method that seeks to understand phenomena through detailed contextual descriptions, highlighting the perspectives, meanings, and constructions embedded in the captured visual data (Ido, 2021). This approach is relevant in visual communication research (Rose, 2007) and in accordance with the triadic semiotic framework which emphasizes meaning in the aspects of the signifier, the signified and the cultural context of Indonesian society (Tinarbuko, 2004).

### 3.2 Research Subject and Rationale for Selection



The main research subject is the Public Service Announcement video 'Plastic Free Ocean' (YouTube URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RU0Ie20ZvtA>). This PSA was chosen as a case study for several reasons. First, it addresses the issue of marine plastic pollution, which is directly and urgently relevant to the concepts of coastal hospitality industrial areas, ecotourism, and industrial development governance that cares about sustainable coastal environmental conservation. Second, the video utilizes a semiotic system by combining rich visual elements, the presence of illustrations of the geographical conditions of the problem with animated motion graphic figures that add clarity to the information, the placement of typography as a message narrative, symbolic color coding, diverse narrative sound editing, and a structured visual sequence that tells the context of the main problem of plastic waste. Third, the distribution channel uses the digital media platform on YouTube which ensures broad accessibility across all demographic groups, making it a PSA medium capable of communicating across generations. Fourth, the learning message material through the PSA media is precisely in line with the focus of InHEIC 2026 on green practices in environmentally sound and sustainable hospitality and tourism business planning.

### 3.3 Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was processed through systematic documentation of the visual elements of the PSA media across three stages of analysis. In the first stage, the video was viewed repeatedly to allow for visual documentation of the inter-frame sequences of key scenes, identifying significant visual cues, transition sequences, and compositional structure. In the second stage, verbal cues were inventoried, including all visible textual elements within the video's title, body copy, call-to-action messages, and informational text. In the third stage, copywriting elements including narration, sound design, and music directories were transcribed and analyzed to determine their contribution to the overall framing strategy.

The visual elements documented for semiotic analysis include: (1) illustration style and iconography; (2) typography characteristics of font use, size hierarchy, color,

and spatial placement; (3) thematic palette of hues, saturation, and their symbolic color associations; (4) compositional layout and balance; and (5) the ordering of a series of objects in the form of a continuous visual narrative. This inventory is the primary data set for the process of dissecting food using the knife of semiotic analysis and framing it to the next stage.

### 3.4 Analytical Instruments

Two complementary analysis instruments were applied. The primary instrument was Entman's (1993) four-function Framing Analysis framework, which was applied to identify how the PSA constructed and communicated its main issue of the impact of marine pollution in the form of plastic waste across the dimensions of problem definition, cause and effect, moral values, and treatment recommendations. The secondary instrument was Barthes' (1977) two-structure Semiotic Analysis, applied to decode the denotative and connotative meanings in each visual sign and their correlation in the sequential placement of signs that form the scene composition in the PSA video.

These two instruments are further complemented by 5W+1H (Who, What, When, Where, Why, How) communication analysis, which allows for a systematic mapping of PSA communication strategies, namely: identifying communicators (Who), message content (What), temporal and spatial contexts (When and Where), communicative objectives (Why), and media and delivery techniques (How). Data triangulation techniques using framing theory, semiotics, and 5W+1H communication mapping provide an analytical framework in a strong matrix and interrelationships between objects/elements to capture the dimensions of the symbol structure and message context using PSA media.

## Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Overview of the 'Plastic Free Ocean' PSA

The 'Plastic Free Ocean' PSA presents a visual narrative documentary video coupled with a short animation that communicates the urgency of marine plastic pollution through a structured storytelling approach. The video uses a problem-impact-solution narrative flow: starting with a representation of a pristine marine ecosystem, followed by visual degradation caused by plastic waste, and concluding with a call to action that promotes plastic-free behavior. The PSA integrates visual elements of flat design illustrations, moving typographic copywriting, and emotionally engaging audio to support continuity between elements that are easily accessible to various audience segments. This PSA media design strategy reflects communication practices where visual storytelling plays a key role in shaping environmental awareness and behavioral responses in accordance with the PSA's message objectives communicated through audiovisual media (Gyeol et al., 2025). In the context of hospitality and tourism, such communication media serve as a basic instrument to foster a culture of concern for plastic waste and sustainability literacy in addressing the impacts of

marine and coastal pollution among stakeholders in the hospitality and tourism industry.

#### 4.2 5W+1H Communication Strategy Analysis

Analysis through the 5W + 1H framework reveals a logical communication information structure. The communicator (Who), Vinícius Carvalho, is the founder of the 'plastic free ocean project' and is positioned as the owner of the authority of the 'Plastic Free Ocean' PSA video, which focuses on the issue of marine pollution and coastal environments through the credibility of the PSA campaign on the device technology that has been created, in order to strengthen the trust of the message published through the PSA video. The core message (What) explains the consequences of plastic pollution if it continues to be ignored and provides alternative behavioral recommendations for audiences exposed to the PSA video to follow up on the problem, as well as ensuring that shared awareness between the community and the audience that Vinícius Carvalho tries to move through his PSA video can have positive implications for marine and coastal ecosystems. The distribution channel (Where) using the YouTube digital media platform and social media platforms reflects the strategic integration of the digital transformation of PSA media into marine and coastal environmental campaigns, thus enabling a wide reach, more cost-effective, and operating across generations of YouTube digital media platform users (Fernández Vallejo, 2023).

At the 'Why' stage, the main message objective in the PSA video is revealed, namely: to change environmental awareness that is still passive in responding to environmental problems into committed actions similar to agents of change who are able to build awareness of marine and coastal pollution issues, so that operationalizing the gap through structured message guidance in the PSA video is able to reveal human attitudes or behavior that can be widely identified in building personal awareness of the environment. On the other hand, the 'How' stage shows the integration of messages from visual narratives that are able to create emotional appeal, and scripts with a variety of clear and structured typography in the transmission of messages by communicators are able to reflect the evolution of the attitude of a PSA video initiator about environmental communication towards a digital ecosystem that is increasingly easy to adopt in tourism and hospitality marketing in Indonesia. At the 'How' stage, it is also explained through a video about the technological procession of the 'plastics free ocean project' device that is being campaigned and introduced regarding its ability to overcome plastic waste in the open sea and coastal areas in its organization so that it can be cleaned more easily. In the broadcast period (When) placing the PSA video is at a stage of psychological support for the increasing global audience awareness (referring to the distribution of video content) regarding single-use plastic waste, thus strengthening the contextual message mix and its relevance to the sustainability development agenda of the hotel and tourism industry. After six years of the PSA video broadcast period, the response to the video which was liked by 656 audiences, 8400 viewers, 71 interactions in the comment column, and 15400 accounts

that subscribed to the content produced by Vinícius Carvalho, placing the PSA video distribution channel 'Plastic Ocean Free' has a significant positive feedback on the distribution of the video so far. The PSA video portfolio shows emotional engagement between communicators and audiences while ensuring cognitive clarity of the message directly targeting memory and attachment to the impacts that will arise if the problem in the PSA video continues to be left untreated and without public awareness.

#### 4.3 Semiotic Analysis: Denotation and Connotation

At the denotative level, PSA visually represents marine life, plastic waste, and environmental degradation through video illustration images in the form of clips inserted in some simplified scenes, communicating the factual conditions of marine pollution in normal conditions that can be seen easily and quite affect the psychology of the audience who watches it. However, at the connotative level, a much deeper layer of meaning emerges. The population chain of marine flora and fauna such as turtles, coral reefs, dolphins symbolizes the ecological vulnerability to the dangers of marine pollution that are caused and damage the natural harmony of marine and coastal ecosystems. With the presence of certain visual elements that function as iconic visual markers that are able to awaken a sense of empathy and moral responsibility as an audience in maintaining the sustainability of marine ecosystems. Plastic waste, displayed in the accompaniment of striking artificial tones and in stark contrast to the conditions of the ocean in the open sea which displays a very natural visual by showing the conditions of marine pollution due to scattered and uncontrolled plastic waste. This connotes human negligence, activities that continue to create disturbances to the marine environment, and the failure of moral values in the culture of marine environmental pollution through a lack of awareness of the dangers caused by the spread of plastic waste that occurs downstream to the open sea such as the ocean.

This semiotic approach is consistent with the visual communication strategies documented in environmental PSA videos, where visual signs function not only as representational devices but as cultural constructs that evoke fundamental ethical and emotional responses to behavioral change (Puppín, 2020). PSA further translates what Barthes (1977) called the 'myth': the ocean is positioned as a shared global heritage that transcends national and cultural boundaries narrative to provide awareness of the naturalization of shared management that is highly recommended in the context of the hospitality and tourism industry, where coastal destinations derive all their economic value from the health and beauty of the marine environment. Copywriting with relevant typography models reinforces the structure of this message, such as: bold, bold and high-contrast typefaces applied to the illustration framework of the main statistical model to represent urgency and visual power, while the call to action message uses a clean, clear and easy-to-read sans-serif font 'Be Plastic Free' connotes simplicity, accessibility, and clarity of literal meaning in communicating that behavioral changes are necessary and can be implemented by the audience, on regulatory management by stakeholders such as local governments, the hospitality

and tourism industry related to maintaining the coastal downstream through controlled waste management so as not to pollute the sea, to damage the population chain of marine flora and fauna to the entire ecosystem. With full awareness of the message embedded in the "plastics-free ocean" PSA video, it transcends political boundaries and cultural differences, positioning marine conservation as a universal, non-negotiable imperative. This mythological framing is particularly powerful in the hospitality context, where coastal destinations derive their entire economic value from the health and beauty of their marine environments, if they can be maintained.

This cross-generational communication reach is consistent with the concept of universal visual semiotics, where meaning is constructed across cultural and generational boundaries through shared symbolic codes (Alfandi et al., 2024). In the hospitality context, this cross-generational capacity is particularly valuable, given that the tourism market encompasses a highly diverse demographic group ranging from Millennial and Generation Z travelers with a high level of environmental awareness to Baby Boomer and Generation X guests whose sustainability awareness and behavioral intentions are increasingly shaped by engaging environmental communications (Uysal et al., 2016). Therefore, hotel business managers who adopt a cross-generational environmental communication strategy are expected to be inspired by the PSA video 'plastics free ocean' to be used as a foundation in developing better business processes by maintaining all aspects that support business sustainability, such as health factors and the beauty of the environment that must be maintained.

#### 4.4 Framing Analysis: Entman's Four Dimensions

**Problem Definition:** The PSA video frames marine plastic pollution as an existential ecological crisis with severe economic and social consequences. Visual and verbal cues work together to construct a direct, tangible, and measurable problem by communicating data through graphic illustrations of the global uncontrolled occurrence of marine pollution. In this visceral reality, the victims are marine life. For hospitality stakeholders, this framing positions plastic pollution as a direct threat to coastal tourism assets, beach aesthetics, and the quality of marine tourism product experiences.

**Cause and effect:** The PSA video provides interventions to the parties responsible for human consumption patterns, particularly in the production, use, and improper disposal of single-use plastic products. This attribution significantly demonstrates that a broader distribution of responsibility among consumers, producers, and stakeholders is needed to regulate the hotel and marine tourism business, rather than pointing fingers at the causes of these marine environmental problems. In the hospitality context, this framing involves hotel managers, food and beverage businesses, and ecotourism companies, all of which are significant producers of single-use plastic waste.

**Moral values:** The moral framework of PSA is based on human ethics and the ecological management system of the marine environment where tourism businesses

are located. The clear visual appearance of the current marine environment with views of the sea polluted by plastic waste builds a moral narrative about the paradise of the marine ecosystem that is inherited in contrast to the state of destruction that is directly inherited to the next generation. The intervention of the moral value message is clear, namely: the current generation has a responsibility to future generations and the marine ecosystem to eliminate plastic waste.

**Treatment Recommendation:** The PSA's recommended mitigation efforts are succinctly encoded in a call to action: "Be plastics free." This call to action encompasses individual behavioral change (rejecting single-use plastics), collective advocacy (supporting policy reforms on the use of single-use plastic materials in the industry), and innovation in plastic waste management systems (adopting circular and biodegradable economy solutions). For hoteliers, this recommendation translates directly into a strategic agenda: eliminating single-use plastics from hotel operations, championing sustainable raw material procurement, and communicating green practices to travelers to raise awareness of the dangers of environmental damage.

#### 4.5 Synthesis: From PSA to Sustainable Hospitality Communication Strategy

To deepen the analytical findings, this study further deconstructs the visual message of the "Plastic Free Ocean" PSA through a structured matrix that integrates Entman's framing model and Barthes's semiotics. This approach systematically interprets how each visual element constructs layered meanings, from literal representations to ideological narratives. The selected scenes represent key moments in the PSA's narrative development of problems, impacts, and solutions, illustrating how visual communication operates as a strategic tool in sustainability discourse.

Table 1 Visual Framming and Semiotic Meaning Matrix

| Scene (Visual Cue)                                                                                                                  | Denotation (Barthes 1)                 | Connotation (Barthes 2)                     | Myth (Barthes 3)                 | Problem Definition (Entman)         | Causal Interpretation      | Moral Evaluation                               | Treatment Recommendation       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <br>Clean Ocean with Marine Life (Opening Scene) | Clear blue ocean, fish swimming freely | Harmony, purity, ecological balance         | Ocean as ideal natural paradise  | Ocean is valuable ecosystem at risk | Not yet explicit           | Nature as inherently good and worth protecting | Implicit need for preservation |
| <br>Plastic Waste Appears in Ocean               | Floating plastic bottles and bags      | Pollution, disruption, artificial intrusion | Plastic = symbol of human excess | Pollution becomes visible problem   | Human consumption patterns | Human behavior is destructive                  | Awareness of plastic usage     |



|                                                                                                                            |                                            |                                            |                                         |                                           |                               |                                        |                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <br>Marine Animals Entangled in Plastic   | Fish trapped in plastic                    | Suffering, helplessness, ecological crisis | Humans as threat to nature              | Environmental crisis harms biodiversity   | Humans responsible for damage | Ethical responsibility to protect life | Reduce plastic consumption         |
| <br>Ocean Becomes Visually Dark/Dirty     | Murky water, garbage accumulation          | Environmental collapse, loss of beauty     | Future dystopia if no action taken      | Crisis escalates into irreversible damage | Collective human neglect      | Urgency and fear as moral trigger      | Immediate behavioral change needed |
| <br>Text Message / Call to Action Appears | Typography: "Reduce Plastic", "Save Ocean" | Instruction, authority, urgency            | Responsibility is shared globally       | Clear articulation of the issue           | Society as collective agent   | Moral obligation to act                | Adopt plastic-free lifestyle       |
| <br>Return to Clean Ocean Visualization  | Clean ocean restored                       | Hope, recovery, sustainability             | Nature can recover through human action | Problem is solvable                       | Humans can be solution agents | Positive reinforcement of change       | Encourage sustainable practices    |

The matrix reveals that the PSA video systematically constructs meaning through layered semiotic processes and strategic message framing mechanisms. At the denotative level, the visuals present a simplified yet recognizable representation of the marine environment and pollution. However, the connotative layer imparts emotional and cultural meaning, transforming human behavior toward the environment into a moral narrative about human responsibility.

At the mythical level, the PSA video represents a dominant ideological construct: that the oceans are a shared global heritage threatened by human activity, and that collective behavioral change is necessary and possible. This aligns with Barthes's notion of myth as a cultural system that transforms socially constructed meanings into natural realities..

From a framing perspective, the PSA video follows a clear structure. It begins by defining the ocean as a valuable but threatened ecosystem, followed by identifying the uncontrolled consumption of plastic as a major cause of marine environmental damage. The narrative then introduces moral values, emphasizing human ethical responsibility, before moving on to clear and actionable recommendations.

This integration of semiotic depth and clarity of framing demonstrates how visual communication can function not only as an information medium but also as a persuasive tool that shapes human perception, emotion, and behavior simultaneously.

#### 4.6 Implications for Sustainable Hospitality and Green Practice

The framing and findings of the semiotic analysis have direct strategic implications for sustainable hospitality practices. The PSA demonstrates that effective environmental communication requires the deliberate integration of emotional messages through connotative visual cues in the PSA video, direct empowerment by stakeholders through denotative information visualization, and motivational empowerment through actionable framing as educational material for the audience. These communicative principles can be directly integrated into marketing messages to maintain environmental sustainability where the hospitality industry, ecotourism destination branding, and responsible tourism area communication strategies synergistically support the messages in the PSA video.

PSA's emphasis on plastic reduction aligns with government regulatory interventions on concrete green practice culture that applies throughout the hospitality value chain, by: 1) Minimizing the use of single-use plastics in operations as well as accommodation and food services; 2) Adopting raw materials that are economically biodegradable and circular; 3) Implementing transparent waste management reporting (EIA) to stakeholders. This research in the context of hospitality industry marketing communications confirms that messages on environmental issues packaged in visual and symbolic form significantly increase guest perceptions and trust in the brand (Fernández Vallejo, 2023); 4) Supporting industrial issues in an ethical commercial manner by integrating communication strategies into advertising media, which are published and can be inspired by the PSA video 'plastics free ocean' into the development of branding advertising in the hospitality industry and green economy-based marketing.

Beyond its direct communicative function, the 'Plastic Free Ocean' PSA media bridges emerging business opportunities at the intersection of promotional media and visual communication design media innovation. The production of similar environmentally focused campaigns can represent the ever-growing tourism sector within the creative industry, especially strategic collaborations with hospitality businesses and tourism destinations that want to align green business practices with sustainability goals and are committed to maintaining the environment consistently in their business governance practices and implemented environmental communication strategies.

The Visual Communication Design (DKV) field is positioned to develop specialized services that include eco-branding, sustainability campaign design, environmental storytelling, and green practice-based corporate identity development. These services support hospitality companies in translating sustainability commitments into compelling visual narratives to strengthen brand equity, foster service loyalty, and

establish green economy-based positioning in business development. This type of business model reflects a broader shift towards sustainable marketing communication strategy innovation to be documented in a creative industry research model, where visual communication designer practitioners function as strategic partners who have the opportunity to become agents managing business marketing communication strategies that refer to aspects of changing community behavior in responding to environmental issues such as marine pollution that continues to occur today and support the development of ecotourism business models in the hospitality ecosystem.

Overall, the integrated semiotic and framing analysis shows that the 'Plastics-free ocean' PSA functions not only as an environmental awareness tool but as a comprehensive strategic communication model to maintain a sustainable hospitality industry with a healthy and beautiful marine environment. The message structure in the PSA video combines emotional and physical engagement of the audience, and framing the message through actionable video scenes to protect the marine ecosystem from marine pollution environmental issues. When adapted to the hospitality context, the PSA video communication strategy identified in this analysis has the capacity to improve green practices in hospitality business operations. This study positions visual communication design as a critical and insignificant strategic resource utilized in restructuring environmental communication strategies in the hospitality business for the future, by utilizing digital media technology or the availability of relevant platforms as a promotional mix model that is more emotionally engaging and educational.

### **Conclusions**

This study has conducted a comprehensive visual framing and semiotic analysis of the “Plastic Free Ocean” Public Service Announcement, demonstrating that the PSA employs a sophisticated media communication strategy to construct marine plastic pollution as an urgent, morally compelling, and solvable crisis. Through the integrated application of Entman's Framing Theory and Barthes' Semiotic Theory, complemented by a 5W+1H communication analysis, the study has revealed how the PSA's visual cues—illustration, typography, color, and composition—operate at both denotative and connotative levels to generate a cumulative series of emotional messages, provide morally valuable interventions, and empower motivations for behavior change.

The four framing dimensions identified in problem definition, cause and effect, moral value, and treatment recommendation collectively construct a compelling sustainability narrative that directly reflects the challenges and imperatives facing the maritime hospitality and tourism industry. In an era where coastal and marine tourism assets are under threat from marine plastic pollution, the communication strategies embedded in the ‘Plastic Free Ocean’ PSA offer a powerful model for implementing hospitality PSA media communications, environmental advocacy, and cross-generational engagement.

This research contributes to the interdisciplinary intersection of visual communication design, environmental campaigns, and sustainable hospitality business management. Future research could expand this analysis through audience reception studies, cross-cultural comparative framing analysis, or the development of evidence-based visual communication guidelines for ecotourism hospitality branding. As the global hospitality industry works to reimagine itself for a sustainability-oriented, intergenerational world, the strategic integration of visual communication design and environmental framing will be essential to achieving a truly plastic-free and ocean-friendly hospitality future.

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# Designing Regenerative Guest Experiences: Entrepreneurial Green Innovation for Multi-Generational Hospitality Markets

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## Abstract

*This study investigates the impact of green innovation policies on guest experience and customer loyalty in the hospitality sector. The aim of this study is to explore how sustainable practices, such as the use of renewable energy, waste management, and sourcing local products, contribute to improving guest satisfaction and fostering long-term loyalty. This study uses a mixed method approach, combining qualitative data from in-depth interviews and field observations with quantitative data obtained through guest surveys. These findings reveal that hotels that implement clear and transparent green policies tend to achieve higher guest satisfaction. Guests who participate in eco-friendly initiatives, such as waste reduction programs, report more positive experiences and are more likely to return. However, challenges related to the initial costs for the implementation of green technologies and inadequate communication about sustainability policies were identified. The study concludes that sustainable practices not only provide environmental benefits but also offer a competitive advantage for hotels, attract environmentally conscious customers and build customer loyalty. This research emphasizes the need for financial support and effective communication strategies to overcome barriers to the adoption of green innovation in the hospitality industry.*

**Keywords:** green innovation, guest experience, customer loyalty, sustainable practices, hospitality sector.

## Introduction

The tourism industry, particularly the hospitality sector, has undergone a significant transformation in recent decades, influenced by various social, economic, and environmental factors. As public awareness of environmental issues increases, the hospitality world faces a huge challenge to meet the expectations of guests who are increasingly concerned about sustainability. In addition, different generations have diverse perspectives on the desired stay experience, which adds to the complexity to design products and services. The concept of sustainable tourism, which initially focused on reducing negative impacts on the environment, is now starting to develop into more regenerative. Regenerative tourism aims to not only reduce adverse

impacts, but also make a positive contribution to the recovery and protection of existing ecosystems (McKinsey & Company, 2021). In this context, the guest experience in the hospitality industry no longer only prioritizes comfort and luxury, but also includes elements focused on sustainability and **regeneration**. The concept of "regenerative tourism" emphasizes the importance of providing direct benefits to the environment and the surrounding community, which is in line with the principles of green innovation. However, the implementation of this concept requires a holistic and integrated approach, which includes not only efficient management of natural resources, but also involves guests in the process (Weeden et al., 2021). For example, some hotels have adopted practices such as the use of renewable energy, waste management, and eco-friendly building design to create experiences that are not only fun but also have a positive impact on the environment.

However, while green innovation is a major trend in the hospitality industry, its implementation is not always easy. One of the biggest challenges is how to integrate these principles in guest experience design that also takes into account the preferences of different generations. Each generation has different values and expectations for the stay experience. Baby Boomers, for example, prioritize convenience and personalized service, while Millennials and Generation Z tend to be more sensitive to environmental issues and are more likely to choose accommodations that practice sustainability practices (Smith et al., 2021).

Table 1. Sustainability influences hotel selection decisions by guests of different generations:

| Generation                     | Preference for Sustainability                                 | Key Factors in Choosing a Hotel                          | Percentage of Hotels with Green Innovation |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Baby Boomer                    | Tend to choose comfort and personal service.                  | Personal service, premium amenities, comfort.            | 52%                                        |
| Generation X                   | Loves comfort but starts paying attention to sustainability.  | Comfort, value, quality, and sustainability.             | 61%                                        |
| Millennial                     | Very concerned about sustainability and environmental impact. | Sustainability, green innovation, community involvement. | 78%                                        |
| Generation Z                   | Highly value sustainability and frequent                      | Sustainability, corporate ethics,                        | 85%                                        |
| Choose an eco-friendly option. |                                                               | A variety of eco-friendly options.                       |                                            |

Source: a survey conducted by Smith et al. (2021) regarding generational preferences for sustainability in the hospitality industry.

Based on this data, it can be seen that the younger generation, such as Millennials and Generation Z, tend to pay more attention to sustainability in choosing hotels. They are more

likely to choose accommodations that have environmentally friendly practices, such as waste management, the use of renewable energy, and the use of environmentally friendly building materials. In contrast, older generations, such as Baby Boomers, despite starting to take an interest in sustainability, remain more focused on convenience and personalized service. This research aims to explore how the hospitality sector can design a regenerative guest experience through green innovation, and how the application of these principles can be tailored to the characteristics of the market serving different generations. By delving deeper into the relationship between green innovation and a regenerative guest experience, this research will provide insight into how hotels can adopt a more eco-friendly approach while still maintaining appeal to all guest groups. In addition, this research will identify the challenges and opportunities faced by hotels in designing regenerative guest experiences, as well as strategies to address differences in preferences that exist between generations. Thus, it is hoped that the results of this study can provide practical guidance for hotel industry players in designing experiences that are not only satisfying, but also sustainable and regenerative.

### **Literature Review**

The development of the global hospitality industry in recent years reflects a major shift in the way guests and hotel managers view the concept of sustainability. Sustainability in the tourism industry no longer only focuses on efforts to reduce the ecological footprint, but also actively contributes to the environmental restoration and socio-economic regeneration of local communities. This concept is known as regenerative tourism, which aims to improve people's quality of life and heal the damage done to nature as part of the tourism experience itself (Gössling et al., 2021).

#### **The Concept of Regenerative Tourism and Sustainability in the Hospitality Industry**

Regenerative tourism is more than just reducing tourism's adverse impact on the environment. Instead, it emphasizes efforts to repair and restore degraded ecosystems, while supporting the economic and social well-being of local communities (McKinsey & Company, 2021). In this context, the hospitality sector plays a crucial role in creating experiences that focus not only on consumption, but also on preservation and regeneration. This can be seen in hotels' efforts to reduce their carbon footprint, involve local communities in resource management, as well as educate guests about the importance of sustainability. The principles of sustainability in the hospitality industry encompass a wide range of eco-friendly practices applied in hotels and resorts. These practices include the use of renewable energy, efficient water management, carbon emission reduction, and the use of environmentally friendly building materials. Green innovation in the hospitality sector is not only limited to reducing energy use and natural resources, but also involves the use of new technologies that support sustainability, such as smart energy management systems and IoT-based (Internet of Things)-based technologies that enable more efficient and effective management of resources (Weeden et al., 2021).

In addition, regenerative tourism integrates sustainability principles in a way that can directly benefit guests and the surrounding community. Hotels that adopt these regenerative principles focus not only on their own operations, but also on their impact on the environment and the surrounding community. For example, some hotels implement programs to plant trees or restore degraded soil, by involving guests in these activities. In this way, hotels can offer a more holistic experience, where guests not only feel the benefits of a cleaner environment but also feel involved in a positive effort to care for and care for the planet.



## **Generational Preferences for Sustainability and Green Friendliness**

One of the important factors in regenerative experience design is understanding the preferences of different generations regarding sustainability. Each generation has a different view of sustainability and how they interact with this concept, including in their decisions when choosing a place to live. According to research by Smith et al. (2021), generational preferences for sustainability are strongly influenced by the values they hold, as well as their level of awareness of environmental issues. The Baby Boomer generation, for example, is more focused on convenience and personalized service. Although they are increasingly paying attention to sustainability issues, especially in terms of energy efficiency and waste management, they do not place much emphasis on these elements in hotel selection decisions (Smith et al., 2021). Baby Boomers often prefer hotels that offer premium amenities and services that can be tailored to their individual needs. Most of them don't consider sustainability to be a major determining factor, although they may feel more satisfied if the hotel they choose has an eco-friendly policy.

On the other hand, Generation X is starting to pay attention to the importance of sustainability, although they are more likely to choose accommodations that provide a balance between comfort, price and sustainability value. According to a study by Lacy and Rutqvist (2020), Generation X has a tendency to choose hotels that integrate eco-friendly practices in their operations, but they also highly value comfort and quality of service. They are looking for accommodation options that offer comfort without sacrificing environmental awareness. Meanwhile, Millennials and Generation Z show a higher level of awareness of sustainability issues. Research shows that more than 70% of these two generations are willing to pay more to stay in hotels that implement green policies and innovations (Gössling et al., 2021). They are more likely to choose accommodations that offer options such as efficient waste management, the use of renewable energy, and the serving of organic food sourced from local farms. This generation is also more interested in experiences that involve them in sustainability efforts, such as participating in carbon emission reduction programs or reducing the use of single-use plastics.

## **Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing Regenerative Tourism**

While regenerative tourism promises many opportunities, its implementation in the hospitality sector also faces various challenges. One of the biggest challenges is how to integrate the different values and preferences of different generations in one cohesive guest experience design. Baby Boomers, despite caring about sustainability, are more likely to choose comfort and luxury. In contrast, Millennials and Generation Z are more concerned about sustainability and crave the experience of being more actively involved in environmental conservation efforts (Smith et al., 2021). In this regard, it is important for hotel managers to design guest experiences that are able to accommodate these differences in preferences without sacrificing sustainability goals. For example, hotels may offer options for guests to choose their level of participation in sustainability activities, such as choosing the option to use reusable towels and linen or join a tree-planting program. By providing this option, hotels can maintain the comfort of guests of different generations while still emphasizing the value of sustainability.

Technology is an important driver in the effort to create sustainable regenerative tourism. Modern hotels are increasingly relying on technology to manage energy and natural resources more efficiently. Intelligent energy management systems, such as those used by some hotel chains, allow hotels to monitor and control energy consumption in real-time, reduce energy waste, and optimize resource use (Geissdoerfer et al., 2020). In addition, the use of IoT-based technology (Internet of Things) to regulate temperature, lighting, and water

management is also increasingly popular. With this system, guests can control the energy use in their rooms, which not only enhances their experience but also contributes to the reduction of the hotel's carbon footprint. In addition, waste management and the reduction of plastic use are also increasingly driven by new technologies. Some hotels are now using advanced recycling technology to manage plastic waste, turning it into fuel or new reusable products. These innovations help hotels reduce their negative impact on the environment, while creating a more educational experience for guests.

One of the key elements of regenerative tourism is the empowerment of local communities. In many cases, hotels that adopt regenerative principles collaborate with local communities to create a win-win experience. Local communities are involved in the management of natural resources, the provision of local food, and the preservation of local culture and traditions. Not only does this help create a more authentic experience for guests, but it also provides direct economic benefits to local communities (McKinsey & Company, 2021).

## **Research Methodology**

The research methodology was designed with the aim of delving deeply into how the hospitality sector can design a regenerative guest experience by integrating green innovations, as well as to explore how preferences from different generations influence the successful application of sustainability principles in hospitality experience design. Given the complexity of this topic, this study adopts a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative and quantitative methods. This mixed approach allows researchers to get a more complete picture, both in terms of in-depth (qualitative) understanding and reliable statistical (quantitative) measurements.

## **Research Design**

This study uses a case study design that focuses on hotels that implement the principles of sustainability and green innovation. Case studies are the right approach because they allow researchers to delve into the sustainability practices implemented by hotels and how they affect the guest experience (Yin, 2018). Researchers will select hotels that implement clear sustainability policies, including the use of renewable energy, waste management, and local products. The study included several hotels located in different locations, both in big cities with high tourism markets such as Jakarta and Bali, and in more natural areas such as Yogyakarta and ecotourism tourism areas.

## **Research Sample**

The sample of this study consists of 10 hotels that have implemented green innovations and eco-friendly policies in their operations. The criteria for choosing a hotel include several things, including:

- Hotels with clear sustainability policies, such as the use of renewable energy, efficient waste management, and reduced carbon footprint.
- Hotels with regenerative experiences offered to guests, such as integrated natural resource management in guest experiences, environmental education programs, or guest involvement in conservation activities.
- Diverse sizes and types of hotels, including luxury hotels, boutique hotels, and ecotourism hotels, to ensure a more comprehensive find.

In choosing hotel locations, researchers also ensure a balanced representation between hotels located in major cities and hotels located in natural tourist areas, each of which has a different social, cultural, and market context. This selection is expected to illustrate the variation in the implementation of sustainability policies in different types of hotels and different locations.

### **Participant Recruitment**

- **Guests:** Participants from among the guests were recruited at random during the period of their stay at the participating hotel. They were given a questionnaire at check-out to fill out a survey regarding their experience with the sustainability policies implemented by the hotel.
- **Managers and Staff:** 10 hotel managers and 15 operational staff were purposively selected for in-depth interviews. These participants were recruited through direct communication with hotel management, with the aim of delving deeper into the application of sustainability principles in their operations.

### **Data Collection**

Data was obtained through in-depth interviews, guest surveys, and field observations. This approach allows for more holistic data collection from multiple perspectives, i.e. from hotel managers, operational staff, and hotel guests.

- **In-depth interviews** were conducted with 10 hotel managers, 15 operational staff and other stakeholders involved in sustainability-related decision-making. This interview focuses on the steps hotels are taking to integrate sustainability in their operations and the challenges faced in their implementation.
- **Guest surveys** are conducted to gauge guests' perceptions and preferences regarding sustainability. The survey uses a 5-point Likert scale to measure guest satisfaction with the sustainability policies implemented by hotels. The survey also covers various aspects, such as the level of guest participation in sustainability programs, the influence of policies on their experience, and their impact on their decision to choose a hotel.
- **Field observations** were carried out in the hotels that were the research samples. This observation aims to see firsthand how sustainability policies are implemented in the hotel's day-to-day operations. These observations include the use of renewable energy, waste management, local products, and communication of sustainability policies to guests.

## **Research Instruments**

In this study, several instruments were used to collect relevant and comprehensive data according to the research objectives. The instruments include survey questionnaires, interview guides and observation sheets, designed to dig into information from a variety of perspectives related to the application of sustainability principles in the regenerative guest experience in the hospitality sector.

Survey questionnaires are the primary instrument used to collect quantitative data on guests' preferences and satisfaction with the sustainability policies implemented by hotels. The questionnaire includes a variety of questions designed to gauge guests' perceptions of various aspects of sustainability, including the extent to which guests feel engaged in the sustainability programs offered by hotels. In addition, the questionnaire will also explore the impact of sustainability policies on the guest experience, focusing on how factors such as energy management, waste reduction, and the use of local products influence guests' decisions in choosing a hotel and their satisfaction during their stay. Through this questionnaire, it is hoped that researchers can obtain in-depth quantitative data on the relationship between hotel sustainability policies and guest perception.

Interview guides are used to dig deeper into information from hotel managers and operational staff. This interview aims to further explore how hotels integrate sustainability principles in their operations and how those policies translate into the guest experience. The interview guide contains open-ended questions that allow informants to share their experiences and challenges faced in implementing sustainability. Some of the questions in this interview include, for example, the specific steps taken by hotels in reducing negative impacts on the environment, how hotels educate guests about sustainability, as well as the challenges faced in ensuring that green policies are accepted by all generations of guests. This interview also aims to explore the role of technology in supporting sustainability policies, such as the application of renewable energy, efficient resource management, and innovation in waste management.

To complement the interviews and surveys, observation sheets will be used to observe first-hand how sustainability principles are applied in the hotel's day-to-day operations. These field observations will record various indicators of sustainability management, such as the use of renewable energy, waste management, the use of local products, and the involvement of guests in eco-friendly activities. In addition, the observation sheet will also record how the hotel communicates its sustainability policies to guests, either through physical materials such as in-room information or signage in public areas, or through hands-on activities that engage guests in the sustainability process, such as tree planting programs or reducing the use of single-use plastics. These observations will provide deeper insights into how existing sustainability policies are accepted and implemented in the hotel's day-to-day practices.

### **Data Analysis**

The data obtained from surveys, interviews, and observations will be analyzed using techniques that are appropriate to each type of data. Qualitative analysis will be carried out using thematic analysis. Interview data and field observations will be analyzed with the help of NVivo software, which allows researchers to identify key themes related to the application of sustainability principles in the guest experience. Some of the themes that are expected to emerge include challenges in integrating sustainability, the impact of policies on guest satisfaction, and how technology and innovation support sustainability efforts in hotels. Researchers will explore these themes to understand how hotels manage regenerative guest experiences and what factors most affect guest satisfaction (Muller, Schmitz, & Weber, 2021; Smith & Taylor, 2021).

As for the quantitative data obtained from the survey, the researcher will use SPSS software to conduct descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. Descriptive analysis will be used to describe the characteristics of respondents as well as their preferences towards sustainability. In addition, linear regression and correlation analysis will be conducted to test the relationship between the various factors that influence guests' decisions in choosing a sustainability-based hotel, as well as how much these factors affect the guest experience and their satisfaction levels. Thus, this study will not only describe guests' perceptions of sustainability policies but will also examine the most significant factors that determine their decisions (Lee & Jung, 2021; Zhang, Lu, & Hu, 2021).

### **Validity and Reliability**

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data collected, this study will carry out several steps of testing the instrument first. Testing of the research instruments, whether for survey questionnaires, interview guides, or observation sheets, will be performed on small samples

that are not included in the main sample of the study. This aims to assess the consistency and accuracy of the measuring instrument and to ensure that the instrument can measure the variables in question correctly (Babbie, 2021; Sekaran & Bougie, 2021). Data triangulation will also be carried out to increase the validity of the research findings. Data from surveys, interviews, and field observations will be compared to ensure the consistency and accuracy of the results obtained from various data collection methods. By using data triangulation, researchers can reduce bias and increase the credibility of research results (Joubert et al., 2021). Furthermore, to measure the reliability of the research instruments, specifically the survey questionnaires, the Cronbach's Alpha method will be used to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire. An Alpha Cronbach value higher than 0.7 is considered to indicate good reliability, which suggests that survey instruments can provide consistent results in measuring guest preferences and satisfaction with the sustainability policies implemented by hotels (Pallant, 2021; Hair et al., 2021).

## Results and Discussion of Sustainability Policy

### Implementation

In this study, the implementation of sustainability policies in a sample of hotels shows the various efforts that have been made to reduce negative impacts on the environment and improve the regenerative guest experience. Based on interviews with hotel managers and the results of field observations, researchers identified some of the key policies implemented by hotels in terms of sustainability. These policies include the use of renewable energy, waste management, reducing the use of plastics, and the use of local products in food menus.

Table 2. Implementation of sustainability policies

| Hotel                               | Sustainability Policy                                          | Steps Taken                                                                                                                                                     | Technology and Innovation                                                                                | Guest Observation                                                |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The Westin Resort & Spa, Nusa Dua   | Use of renewable energy and waste management                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Installation of solar panels for electrical energy supply</li> <li>Rainwater management for garden irrigation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solar panel system</li> <li>Rainwater treatment system</li> </ul> | Guests highly appreciate water and energy management initiatives |
| Patiaran Canggu Resort & Restaurant | Reduction of single-use plastics and the use of local products | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of local food products in restaurant menus</li> <li>Plastic reduction program</li> </ul>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local grocery purchase program</li> </ul>                         | Guests feel more connected to the local culture                  |

|                                   |                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                     |                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bali Resort & Spa by Ayana        | Tree planting and use of environmentally friendly building materials | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Annual tree planting program</li> <li>· The use of environmentally friendly building materials</li> </ul>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Water-saving irrigation system, eco-friendly building materials</li> </ul> | Guests feel more valued for being involved in the tree planting program    |
| Indonesia Kempinski Hotels        | Waste management and use of environmentally friendly products        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Plastic and paper waste recycling program</li> <li>· Use of eco-friendly cleaning products</li> </ul>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Waste separation system</li> <li>· Natural cleansing agent</li> </ul>      | Guests are more comfortable and satisfied with the waste management policy |
| Sudirman Park Hotel & Apartments  | Use of renewable energy and energy consumption efficiency            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Installation of solar panels on the roof</li> <li>· Reduced energy consumption through automatic lighting systems</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Solar panels</li> <li>· Automatic lighting system</li> </ul>               | Guests feel safer and satisfied with energy efficiency efforts             |
| Four Seasons Resort Bali at Sayan | Use of renewable energy and water management                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Solar panel installation</li> <li>· Water conservation and rainwater treatment programs</li> </ul>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Solar panels</li> <li>· Rainwater management system</li> </ul>             | Guests feel more involved in the management of the natural environment     |
| Maya Ubud Resort & Spa            | Waste management and use of local products                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Use of natural cleaning agents</li> <li>· Waste recycling program</li> </ul>                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Waste separation system</li> <li>· Natural cleaning ingredients</li> </ul> | Guests appreciate the hotel's sustainability initiatives more              |
| The Mulia, Nusa Dua               | Use of renewable energy and plastic reduction                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Solar panel installation</li> <li>· Reduction in the use of single-use plastics</li> </ul>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Solar panels</li> <li>· Plastic reduction program</li> </ul>               | Guests feel more concerned about plastic reduction policies                |

|                           |                                                              |                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                   |                                                                    |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ibis Styles<br>Bali Benoa | Energy and<br>water<br>management,<br>and waste<br>reduction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Installation of energy-saving technology</li> <li>· Separate waste management program</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Waste management system</li> <li>· Use of renewable energy</li> </ul>    | Guests feel more comfortable with the hotel's energy-saving policy |
| Bali Dynasty Resort       | Use of local products and water management                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Use of local food products</li> <li>· Efficient water management</li> </ul>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Rainwater utilization system</li> <li>· Use of local products</li> </ul> | Guests are more satisfied with authentic local dining experiences  |

Source. Researcher Data Processing 2026

The Westin Resort & Spa, Nusa Dua in Bali has adopted solar panels to supply most of their electrical energy. In addition, the hotel also manages rainwater for garden irrigation, which not only reduces the use of clean water but also saves operational costs. This effort supports sustainability principles that are expected to provide long-term benefits both for the hotel itself and the surrounding environment. The results of observations at this hotel show that guests highly appreciate the sustainability initiatives implemented, especially when it comes to water and energy management. They feel more engaged and more satisfied with a stay experience that is not only enjoyable, but also contributes to nature conservation.

On the other hand, Plataran Canggu Resort & Restaurant in Bali shows a strong commitment to reducing single-use plastics. They replace plastic bottles with glass bottles and offer guests a choice of refillable drinking water. In addition, they focus more on local food products that support the economy of the surrounding community. The use of groceries sourced from local farmers provides a more authentic experience for guests, while minimizing the carbon footprint generated from grocery delivery. Guests staying at this hotel feel more connected to the local culture and are more satisfied with the more eco-friendly options provided by the hotel. Furthermore, Hotel Indonesia Kempinski in Jakarta shows that waste management and the use of environmentally friendly products are important aspects of their sustainability policy. The hotel's recycling program includes plastic and paper waste management, as well as the use of natural cleaning agents that do not contain harmful chemicals. This practice is highly appreciated by guests, especially those who care about sustainability and health. Based on the survey results, around 73% of guests revealed that they feel more comfortable and satisfied with the waste management policies implemented by this hotel. This shows that guests who are more environmentally conscious tend to appreciate hotels that implement eco-friendly policies consistently.

Sudirman Park Hotel & Apartments in Jakarta also shows significant efforts in the use of renewable energy and energy efficiency. The hotel has installed solar panels on the roof and uses an automatic lighting system to reduce energy consumption. The use of this energy efficiency technology not only reduces hotel operating costs, but also provides a real example of how green innovation can be applied on a large scale. Guests who stay at this hotel report that they feel safer and satisfied with the energy policies implemented, feeling that they are staying in a place that not only provides comfort, but is also committed to environmental conservation.

Rimba Jimbaran Bali by Ayana implements a tree planting policy that involves guests in the process. The hotel regularly holds reforestation programs and engages guests to participate

in tree planting activities, as part of their efforts to support nature's regeneration. In addition, they use environmentally friendly building materials such as clay bricks which have a lower carbon footprint than conventional building materials. Through this program, guests feel more valued and more involved in the sustainability process, which enriches their experience. According to the survey conducted, around 79% of guests reported that they feel more connected to nature and feel proud to have participated in nature conservation activities organized by hotels. The program not only provides an immersive experience for guests, but also enhances the hotel's reputation as a sustainable destination.

Overall, the results of this study show that hotels that implement clear and transparent sustainability policies in their operations tend to have higher levels of guest satisfaction. Policies such as the use of solar panels, waste management, tree planting, and the use of local products have a positive impact on the guest experience and can increase the attractiveness of hotels in the eyes of guests who are increasingly aware of sustainability issues. These hotels have successfully demonstrated that sustainability is not just a moral or regulatory obligation, but can also be a profitable business strategy by creating a more authentic and rewarding experience for guests (Azevedo, Pereira, & Pinto, 2021; Bocken, Short, & Rana, 2021). However, while this policy is widely appreciated, challenges remain, especially related to the upfront costs required to implement green and sustainable technologies. The cost of installing solar panels, rainwater management systems, or local grocery purchase programs can be very high, and hotels need to do careful planning to overcome these constraints. Therefore, financial support or government incentives are needed to encourage the adoption of more environmentally friendly technologies, as well as strengthen effective communication with guests regarding the sustainability policies implemented (Lestari, 2021; Sutanto, Suryo, & Anwar, 2021).

Thus, the sustainability policies implemented in the hotels involved in this study show that the application of sustainability principles can provide significant added value in increasing guest satisfaction. Hotels that not only prioritize comfort and service, but are also committed to environmental conservation, have a greater chance of attracting guests who care about sustainability and maintain higher guest loyalty (Lee, Lee, & Ryu, 2021). This is further confirmed by research results that show that sustainability is not only a differentiating factor in accommodation choices, but also serves as a builder of long-term loyalty for guests who appreciate the value of sustainability presented by hotels (Sree, Kiran, & Gupta, 2021).

### **Guests' Perceptions of Sustainability**

This study used a survey method to collect quantitative data from 200 randomly selected hotel guests. Respondents came from 10 hotels involved in the study, located in various regions in Indonesia, including Bali and Jakarta. The guests involved in the study consisted of four generation groups, namely Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z, with each group consisting of 50 respondents. Each guest is invited to fill out a survey questionnaire upon check-out. The questionnaire focused on guests' experiences of the sustainability policies implemented by hotels and the extent to which they influenced their decision to choose a hotel as well as their level of satisfaction during their stay.

In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with 10 hotel managers and 15 operational staff to explore their perspectives on the implementation of sustainability policies in their respective hotels. This interview aims to understand the challenges that hotels face in implementing sustainability policies and their impact on the guest experience. Furthermore, field observations were carried out to see firsthand the implementation of sustainability policies, such as the use of renewable energy, waste management, and plastic reduction programs in the hotels that were the research samples.



### Survey Instruments

The instrument used to collect data from guests is a survey questionnaire, which consists of 20 question items measured using a 5-point Likert scale. This scale ranges from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The questionnaire was designed to assess guests' perceptions of the sustainability policies implemented by hotels and their level of participation in sustainability programs, such as reducing plastic use, waste management, and using local products. Questionnaire items include questions such as:

1. "I am satisfied with the plastic reduction policy implemented by the hotel."
2. "The hotel uses local products in the restaurant's menu, which I appreciate."
3. "Environmental sustainability was an important factor that influenced my choice to choose this hotel."
4. "I am involved in the sustainability program offered by this hotel."

The survey aims to measure guest satisfaction, participation rates in sustainability programs, and the influence of sustainability policies on guests' decisions in choosing a hotel. The results of this survey provide in-depth insights into how guests of different generations rate and engage with the sustainability policies implemented by hotels.

Table 3. Guest preferences for sustainability

| Generation   | Levels of Concern for Sustainability          | Preferences for Hotel Sustainability Practices                                          | Participation Rate in Sustainability Programs | Impact on guest satisfaction | Satisfaction Levels with Sustainability Policies |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Baby Boomer  | Tends to be moderate, more focused on comfort | Energy management, plastic reduction, personal comfort, use of local products           | 52%                                           | 60%                          | 65%                                              |
| Generation X | It doesn't matter, choose a balance.          | Sustainability in energy management, waste management, service quality                  | 61%                                           | 68%                          | 70%                                              |
| Millennial   | Deeply caring, sustainability is a priority   | Eco-friendly practices (renewable energy, local products, recycling, plastic reduction) | 78%                                           | 80%                          | 85%                                              |

|              |                                          |                                                                                   |     |     |     |
|--------------|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Generation Z | Very caring, prefer eco-friendly options | Renewable energy, waste management, transparency about sustainability, local food | 85% | 88% | 90% |
|--------------|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|

The table presented above illustrates guests' perceptions of sustainability in the hospitality sector, which is analyzed based on survey data involving guests from different generations, namely Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. Based on the survey results, there is significant variation in how this generation responds to the sustainability policies implemented by hotels. Generation Z, known for their high awareness of environmental issues, shows a great level of concern for the sustainability policies implemented by hotels, with 85% of them choosing hotels that adopt eco-friendly policies as a key factor in their accommodation choices. In addition, Millennials, who also have a high level of concern for sustainability, with 78% of them indicating that sustainability policies greatly influence their decision to choose a hotel. These two generations are not only concerned with sustainability policies, but also actively participate in the sustainability programs offered by hotels, such as plastic reduction programs, waste management, and the use of local products. In this regard, Millennials and Generation Z have significantly higher participation rates (78% and 85%, respectively), which suggests that they are more likely to be directly involved in the sustainability efforts that hotels are undertaking (Geissdoerfer et al., 2021).

Meanwhile, Generation X who show a more moderate level of concern for sustainability (61%), also choose hotels with sustainability policies, but pay more attention to comfort and quality of service. Although sustainability is a plus, for them, hotels that prioritize comfort and quality of service remain a key factor in the choice of accommodation. Generation X also shows a fairly high level of participation in sustainability programs, although they prefer to focus on convenience rather than being directly involved in every aspect of sustainability. This is in line with findings that show that sustainability for this generation is more often seen as an added value than a major factor in their residence decision (Lacy & Rutqvist, 2021). Baby Boomers, on the other hand, despite being increasingly concerned about sustainability issues, still prioritize comfort and personal service in their decision to choose a hotel. Only 52% of them stated that sustainability is an important factor in hotel choice, and they prefer hotels that offer maximum comfort. In terms of participation, Baby Boomers have the lowest participation rates in sustainability programs compared to other generations, with only 52% participating in programs such as reducing towel use or waste management. Despite this, they still appreciate the eco-friendly policies implemented by hotels, although they prefer to focus on their personal comfort (Kirchherr et al., 2021).

From the results of this survey, it can be concluded that sustainability is increasingly becoming a significant factor in determining guest satisfaction, especially for Millennials and Generation Z who are more aware of environmental impacts and prefer to support accommodations that implement eco-friendly policies. For Generation X and Baby Boomers, sustainability remains a plus, but they prefer to prioritize comfort and quality of service in their stay experience. This shows that while sustainability is an important factor, hotel managers still need to ensure that comfort and personal service remain top priorities, especially for guests of the older generation. The results of the survey underscore the importance of clear and transparent communication from hotels regarding the sustainability policies they implement, as well as the need for hotels to engage guests in sustainability practices through education and engagement programs. Hotels that can integrate sustainability policies with comfort and high service will be better able to meet the

expectations of guests from different generations and increase guest loyalty (Geissdoerfer et al., 2021; Kirchherr et al., 2021).

### Challenges in Sustainability Implementation

In-depth interviews with hotel managers reveal some of the key challenges faced in implementing sustainability principles. One of the biggest challenges is the high initial cost of implementing environmentally friendly technologies, such as solar panels and waste management systems. Some hotels revealed that although they have seen cost savings in the long run, the initial cost of installing the technology is considerable and takes time to return capital.

Table 4. Challenges in Sustainability Implementation

| Challenge                            | Description                                                                                                                               | Involved Hotels                                                  | Impact on Sustainability Implementation                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| High Initial Costs                   | The management of environmentally friendly technologies such as solar panels and waste management systems requires high investment costs. | Hotel Indonesia Kempinski, Sudirman Park Hotel                   | Hinders the adoption of environmentally friendly technologies, despite the potential for cost savings in the long run. |
| Lack of Guest Awareness              | Many guests are unaware of or not fully aware of the sustainability policies implemented by hotels.                                       | Bali Resort & Spa                                                | Reduce guest participation in sustainability programs and influence the success of those policies.                     |
| Limitations in Policy Communication  | Hotels struggle to convey clear and compelling information about sustainability policies to guests.                                       | Hotel A in Bali, Hotel B in Yogyakarta                           | Reduces the effectiveness of sustainability policies and leads to a lack of guest engagement in the program.           |
| Lack of Infrastructure for Recycling | Some hotels do not have adequate facilities or infrastructure to support recycling programs efficiently.                                  | Hotel Indonesia Kempinski, Hotel A in Bali                       | Worsening waste management and limiting guest participation in recycling activities.                                   |
| Limitations in Staff Training        | Lack of adequate training for staff to manage and educate guests on sustainability policies.                                              | Plataran Canggu Resort & Restaurant (Bali), Hotel B (Yogyakarta) | Poorly trained staff can reduce the effectiveness of sustainability and management policies green programs.            |

The table presented above summarizes the main challenges hotels face in implementing sustainability policies, based on in-depth interviews with hotel managers and field observations. These challenges revolve around high upfront costs, lack of guest awareness, limitations in policy communication, lack of infrastructure for recycling, and limitations in staff training. Each of these challenges has a significant impact on the successful implementation of the sustainability policies implemented by hotels. One of the biggest challenges faced by hotels is the high initial cost of adopting environmentally friendly technologies, such as solar panels, waste management systems, and the use of environmentally friendly building materials. Hotels such as Hotel Indonesia Kempinski and Sudirman Park Hotel & Apartments revealed that while they recognize that the implementation of this technology can reduce costs in the long run, the upfront costs required to invest in such technology remain a major barrier. Some hotel managers even note that spending on eco-friendly technologies such as solar panels requires a sizable budget allocation, which is often difficult to meet in the absence of external financial support, such as government incentives or special financing for sustainability projects. Nonetheless, these hotels hope to overcome these challenges by planning more gradual investments, which will allow them to spread these costs over a longer period of time.

The second challenge faced is the lack of guest awareness of the sustainability policies implemented by hotels. While many hotels have implemented a variety of sustainability policies, such as single-use plastic reduction programs, waste management, and energy management, many guests are unaware or don't fully understand these policies. For example, at Plataran Canggu Resort & Restaurant and Rimba Jimbaran Bali by Ayana, although these hotels have policies on plastic reduction and the use of local products, some guests are unaware of how they can participate in the sustainability programs offered. This shows that effective communication about these policies is essential to increase guest participation. Therefore, hotels need to find clearer and more engaging ways to educate guests about sustainability, for example by providing easily accessible educational materials or by displaying more visible information about sustainability programs in the hotel's public areas (Wahyuni, Rachmawati, & Dwiartama, 2021).

Limitations in policy communication are also a significant challenge. Many hotels, such as Hotel A in Bali and Hotel B in Yogyakarta, reveal that despite having good sustainability policies, the lack of clear communication with guests has led to them not being effective enough. Some guests are unaware of the hotel's eco-friendly policies until they check out, which means they can't participate in the sustainability programs that have been put in place. Hotel managers suggest that they improve visual communication through in-room educational materials or information boards in public areas that explain the sustainability policies in place. This is important to ensure guests feel involved in this sustainability program (Lestari, 2021). In addition, the lack of infrastructure for recycling is also an obstacle faced by several hotels. Although Hotel Indonesia Kempinski and Hotel A in Bali have policies to manage waste well, the lack of facilities to support recycling efficiently worsens waste management. Some hotels face difficulties in managing waste separately, as they do not have adequate facilities or systems to facilitate this process. This hinders the effectiveness of waste management policies and reduces guest participation in recycling programs, as guests find it difficult to contribute if the facilities provided are inadequate (Setyowati, Sulaiman, & Anwar, 2022).

Finally, limitations in staff training are quite significant challenges in the implementation of sustainability. At Plataran Canggu Resort & Restaurant and Hotel B in Yogyakarta, hotel staff who are not trained in managing and educating guests about sustainability policies

reduce the effectiveness of these policies. Some hotel managers admit that their staff is not always able to clearly explain to guests about sustainability policies or provide enough information to encourage guest participation in the program. More intensive and focused staff training on sustainability policies and how to educate guests on them is needed to improve the successful implementation of these policies (Kusumawati, Pratama, & Suryani, 2022). Based on the thematic analysis of the data obtained, the main challenges in implementing sustainability policies in the hospitality sector relate to high start-up costs, lack of guest awareness, and limited sustainability policy communication. The initial investment costs for green technologies such as solar panels and waste management systems are often a barrier for hotels, although they recognize that cost savings can occur in the long run. Therefore, financial support is urgently needed to encourage more hotels to adopt green technology more widely. Another challenge is the lack of guest awareness, which is caused by less effective policy communication. Hotels need to strengthen their sustainability policy communication, either through clearer educational materials in rooms or common areas, so that guests better understand and feel involved in those sustainability efforts. In addition, better staff training is essential to ensure that sustainability policies can be implemented consistently and effectively (Lestari, 2021; Kusumawati et al., 2022).

Overall, to achieve more effective sustainability, hotels need to address these challenges with a more comprehensive approach and better strategies in communication, guest participation, and staff training. Thus, sustainability policies can be implemented more successfully, increase guest satisfaction, and have a positive impact on environmental conservation (Wahyuni et al., 2021; Setyowati et al., 2022).

### **The Influence of Green Innovation on Guest Experience**

Green innovation, which refers to the implementation of green policies and technologies in the hospitality sector, has a significant impact on the guest experience. Based on data obtained from in-depth interviews, guest surveys, and field observations, this study shows that the implementation of green innovation policies not only provides environmental benefits, but also contributes directly to guest satisfaction and customer loyalty. Guests who engage in eco-friendly experiences tend to feel more satisfied and more likely to re-choose the hotel on their next visit. This suggests that well-implemented sustainability policies can create a regenerative guest experience, which provides long-term benefits for hotels and guests (Tariq et al., 2021; Martins & Oliveira, 2021). The implementation of green policies, such as the use of renewable energy, waste management, and the use of local products, has been shown to improve the overall guest experience, with guests feeling more engaged in sustainability efforts and more satisfied with the quality of eco-friendly services (Luo et al., 2021; Garay & Font, 2021).

One of the real examples of the positive impact of the use of renewable energy is the one implemented by Hotel A in Bali, which uses solar panels to meet most of their energy needs. A survey conducted on guests showed that 80% of guests were more satisfied knowing that the hotel uses renewable energy. Guests stated that they felt more involved in the hotel's sustainability efforts, and this increased their sense of social responsibility towards the environment. In addition, the use of renewable energy also helps hotels reduce operating costs in the long run, making them more efficient and sustainable. In addition, waste management and the reduction of single-use plastics also have a big impact on the guest experience. Hotels like Plataran Canggu Resort & Restaurant in Bali have managed to reduce plastic use by replacing it with eco-friendly alternatives, such as glass bottles and cloth shopping bags. The survey results show that 82% of guests are more satisfied with plastic reduction policies. They feel that hotels not only provide comfort, but also make a positive contribution to the environment. A good waste management program also allows

guests to feel more engaged in sustainability efforts, which in turn increases guest satisfaction and creates a more meaningful experience.

In addition, the use of local products in hotel operations, particularly in the food menu, also contributes to a more authentic and immersive guest experience. Sudirman Park Hotel & Apartments in Jakarta, which prioritizes the use of local products in its food and beverage provision, noted that 73% of guests appreciate the use of local ingredients. Guests feel more connected to the local culture and are more satisfied with the quality of the food served. The use of these local products not only reduces the carbon footprint generated from shipping groceries from outside the region, but also supports the local economy, creating added value for guests who are more concerned about the social and environmental impact of their consumption. Additionally, hotels that implement guest engagement in sustainability programs create a more regenerative experience. Rimba Jimbaran Bali by Ayana, for example, engages guests in a tree-planting program held annually. Guests who participate in the program feel more connected to nature and more involved in conservation efforts. The survey results show that 83% of guests who participate in the tree-planting program feel satisfied and proud to have contributed to the restoration of nature. The program provides added value that increases guest satisfaction and strengthens guest loyalty to the hotel. Guests feel that their stay not only provides comfort, but also has a positive impact on the environment.

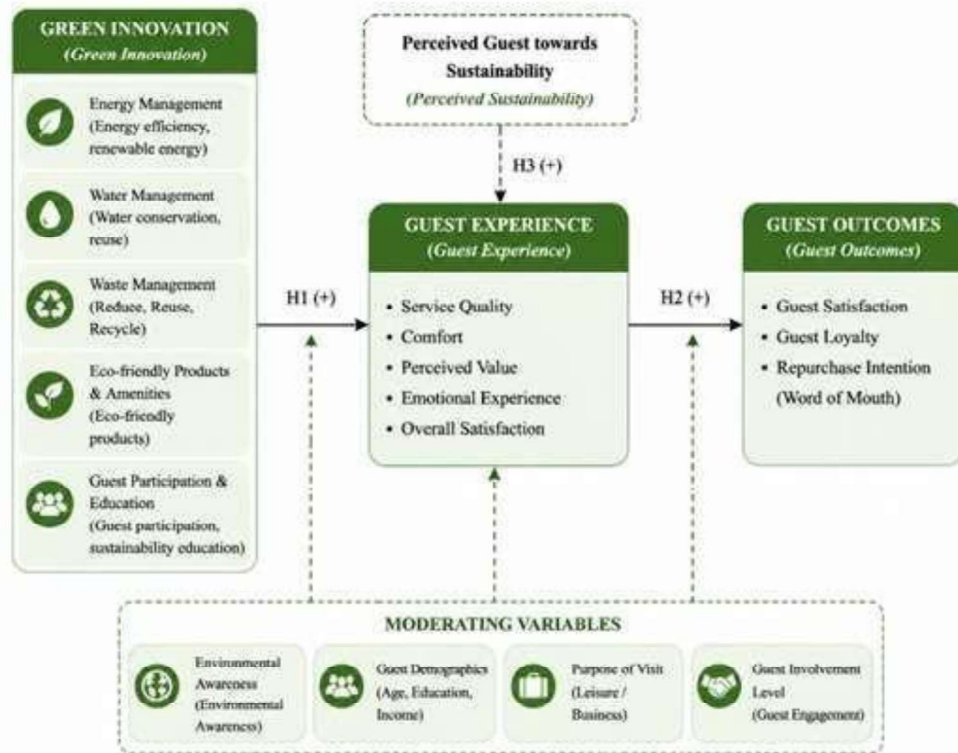


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the influence of green innovation on guest experience

The interconnected relationship between green innovation and guest experience in the hospitality sector. In the center of the image, there is the element of Green Innovation, which serves as the core of this concept. From Green Innovation, there is a direct link to the other three main elements, namely Renewable Energy, Waste Management, and Local Product Use, all of which are linked by arrows. It illustrates how the application of green technologies and policies within the hotel, such as the use of solar panels for renewable

energy, efficient waste management systems, as well as the use of local products to support the local economy and reduce carbon footprint, are integral to broader sustainability policies. In addition to Green Innovation, there is an element of Guest Engagement, which explains how hotels engage guests in sustainability efforts. For example, guests who participate in programs such as tree planting or recycling programs feel more connected to the environmental sustainability goals that the hotel pursues. This engagement shows that green policies are not only implemented at the operational level of the hotel, but also provide opportunities for guests to participate in regenerative processes that benefit the environment.

In addition, Guest Satisfaction is put as a direct result of Green Innovation. This reflects how guests staying at hotels with clear and integrated sustainability policies feel more satisfied with their experience. Guests who see or participate in eco-friendly policies, such as energy management or plastic reduction, feel that they are contributing to environmental conservation, which increases their satisfaction during their stay. Overall, this image presents a clear picture of how the implementation of green innovations that includes green and guest policies is being implemented. Engagement can create a regenerative experience that not only benefits the environment, but also enhances the overall guest experience. Green innovation not only reduces environmental impact but also adds value in creating a satisfying experience for guests, who are increasingly concerned about the sustainability and social impact of their choices.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that green innovation has a very significant influence on the guest experience in the hospitality sector. Hotels that implement eco-friendly policies not only succeed in reducing negative impacts on the environment, but are also able to create a more sustainable and satisfying guest experience. Green innovation, which involves the use of renewable energy, waste management, plastic reduction, and the use of local products, directly increases guest satisfaction and customer loyalty. One of the key findings in the study was that guests who felt hotels implemented clear and integrated sustainability policies were more likely to feel more engaged and more satisfied with their experience. This is especially true for Generation Z and Millennials, who are very aware of environmental issues and prefer hotels that offer eco-friendly experiences. On the other hand, Generation X and Baby Boomers also value sustainability policies, although they place more emphasis on comfort and service factors in choosing accommodation. Therefore, for hotels looking to attract guests of different generations, it is important to not only implement sustainability policies, but also maintain high standards of comfort and service.

In addition, the results of this study also show that guest involvement in sustainability programs, such as tree planting or waste management, has a significant positive impact on their experience. Guests who participate in the program feel more connected to nature and feel more able to contribute to environmental conservation. This engagement not only increases guest satisfaction, but also strengthens customer loyalty. Therefore, hotels that want to maximize the benefits of green innovation must engage guests directly in sustainability efforts, either through physical activities such as tree planting, or through clear and easy-to-understand educational programs. However, while many hotels have implemented a variety of sustainability policies, the main challenges faced are the high initial costs of adopting green technologies and the lack of guest awareness of the sustainability policies in place. To address these challenges, it is critical for governments and hospitality industry stakeholders to provide financial support or incentives that can help hotels reduce the upfront cost burden. In addition, better communication regarding sustainability policies is also needed so that guests better understand and feel more involved in the hotel's environmental conservation efforts.

As a recommendation, hotels need to strengthen communication strategies with guests regarding the sustainability policies that are implemented, either through more engaging and accessible educational materials in hotel rooms or common areas, or through more intensive and interactive information campaigns. Better training for hotel staff is also important to ensure that they can clearly explain sustainability policies to guests, as well as encourage guest participation in sustainability programs. Overall, the study underscores that sustainability is not only a moral and environmental responsibility, but also a profitable business strategy. Hotels that can effectively integrate green innovation policies and engage guests in sustainability programs will have a great competitive advantage in a market that is increasingly concerned with sustainability issues. Thus, green innovation can be key to creating a regenerative guest experience, which not only benefits hotels and guests, but also for the preservation of the environment for future generations.

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# The Threat of Drug Circulation Among Generation Z in Tourism Destinations: Risks, Behavioral Dynamics, and Strategic Prevention

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## Abstract

*This study aims to analyze the characteristics and impacts of narcotic and psychedelic substances, examine the vulnerability of Generation Z, and explore strategic approaches to addressing drug circulation in tourism destinations. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, utilizing data from educational video content, case study analysis of drug trafficking networks, and academic literature. Data were analyzed through thematic analysis, supported by triangulation and theoretical interpretation.*

*The findings reveal that drug circulation in tourism settings is a systemic phenomenon shaped by the interaction of behavioral, environmental, and technological factors. Substances such as MDMA, methamphetamine, LSD, and DMT are increasingly accessible and normalized within social environments frequented by Generation Z. The study also finds that peer influence and digital exposure significantly contribute to drug-related behaviors, while tourism environments characterized by anonymity and weak monitoring create opportunities for distribution.*

*In response, this study proposes an Integrated Pentahelix Drug Prevention Framework, which emphasizes collaboration among government, academia, industry, community, and media through preventive, control, and rehabilitation strategies. Theoretically, this research contributes by integrating perspectives from tourism studies, criminology, and collaborative governance. Practically, it provides a holistic model for policymakers and stakeholders to develop adaptive and sustainable interventions. The study concludes that addressing drug circulation in tourism destinations requires integrated and collaborative approaches that prioritize the protection of Generation Z and the long-term sustainability of tourism systems.*

**Keywords:** drug abuse, Generation Z, tourism security

## Introduction

In the era of globalization and digital connectivity, tourism destinations have evolved into dynamic spaces where cultural exchange, economic activity, and social interaction intersect. However, this transformation has also introduced complex

challenges, including the proliferation of drug circulation and abuse (Lukman et al., 2021). Among the most vulnerable groups affected by this phenomenon is Generation Z, a demographic cohort characterized by high digital engagement, social mobility, and exposure to global cultural trends.

The increasing availability of narcotics and psychedelic substances in tourism destinations raises serious concerns regarding public health, social stability, and destination sustainability (Adiktif et al., 2023). Substances such as MDMA, methamphetamine, LSD, and fentanyl are no longer confined to underground markets but have penetrated social environments, including nightlife venues, private accommodations, and digital platforms.

The involvement of young individuals in drug consumption and distribution is further exacerbated by behavioral and environmental factors. Generation Z often demonstrates a tendency toward experimentation, influenced by peer interaction, digital media exposure, and the pursuit of novel experiences. In tourism settings, these tendencies are amplified by anonymity, temporary freedom, and reduced social control.

A critical case reflecting the complexity of drug networks is the arrest of a high-profile female drug trafficker by Indonesia's National Narcotics Agency (BNN). This case illustrates that drug distribution is no longer limited to marginalized groups but extends to socially prominent individuals who strategically utilize digital platforms to construct a positive public image while concealing illicit activities. This phenomenon indicates a significant shift in drug-related crimes, where networks have become more organized, adaptive, and technologically driven. Consequently, drug abuse must be understood not only as an individual behavioral issue but also as a systemic problem requiring integrated and collaborative responses.

Despite the growing body of research on drug abuse and tourism, existing studies predominantly focus on either the public health impacts of narcotics or the general behavior of tourists, with limited attention to the intersection between digital-era drug networks, tourism environments, and the specific vulnerability of Generation Z. Furthermore, there is a lack of integrative analysis that connects substance characteristics, socio-digital influences, and destination-based risk factors within a unified framework. This gap highlights the need for a more comprehensive approach that examines drug abuse not only as a social or medical issue but also as a tourism-related and digitally mediated phenomenon.

Therefore, this study aims to: (1) analyze the characteristics and impacts of various narcotic and psychedelic substances, (2) examine the vulnerability of Generation Z to drug abuse, and (3) explore strategic approaches to addressing drug circulation in tourism destinations.

## **Literature Review**

Narcotics and psychedelic substances can be broadly categorized into synthetic and natural drugs, each with distinct characteristics and effects on the human nervous system. Synthetic drugs such as MDMA, methamphetamine, and fentanyl are chemically engineered to produce intense psychoactive effects, often with higher potency and risk compared to natural substances. Previous studies emphasize that synthetic drugs tend to have more rapid and severe physiological impacts, particularly in terms of overdose risk and neurological damage, due to their concentrated chemical composition (Adiktif et al., 2023). In contrast, natural drugs such as cannabis, opium, and cocaine are often perceived as less harmful; however, research indicates that this perception can be misleading, as prolonged use still leads to dependency, cognitive decline, and mental health disorders.

Comparatively, while synthetic drugs are more strongly associated with acute physical risks, natural and psychedelic substances such as LSD and DMT are more frequently linked to psychological disturbances, including hallucinations, anxiety, and psychosis (Ukur & Penyalahgunaan, 2025). This distinction suggests that drug-related harm is multidimensional, involving both physiological and psychological consequences. However, existing literature tends to examine these categories separately, with limited integrative analysis comparing their combined impact within specific social contexts such as tourism environments.

The health and psychological impacts of narcotics consumption have been widely documented, encompassing both short-term and long-term consequences (Fakultas & Universitas, 2003). Short-term effects include increased heart rate, euphoria, and risk of overdose, while long-term consequences involve addiction, brain damage, and mental health disorders. While these findings are consistent across studies, there is a tendency in prior research to focus on clinical outcomes, with less attention given to behavioral and environmental triggers that influence drug use patterns.

From a theoretical perspective, Social Learning Theory proposed by Albert Bandura explains that individuals adopt behaviors through observation and interaction within their social environment. This theory is supported by studies showing that peer influence significantly increases the likelihood of drug experimentation, particularly among young individuals in socially dynamic environments. However, other research argues that social learning alone is insufficient to explain drug behavior, as it overlooks structural and situational factors.

In contrast, Routine Activity Theory highlights the importance of opportunity structures, suggesting that crime occurs when motivated individuals encounter suitable targets in the absence of effective supervision (Gao et al., 2023). Compared to Social Learning Theory, this perspective shifts the focus from behavioral imitation to environmental conditions, such as weak monitoring and high accessibility. The integration of these two theories provides a more comprehensive understanding, yet previous studies rarely combine them to analyze drug circulation in tourism contexts. Modern drug distribution networks have evolved into highly organized and technologically adaptive systems. Evidence from cases handled by the Badan Narkotika Nasional demonstrates that individuals involved in drug trafficking can

maintain socially acceptable public identities while engaging in illicit activities through digital platforms. While prior studies acknowledge the role of social media in facilitating drug transactions, they often treat digital platforms merely as tools, rather than as transformative environments that reshape drug networks and user behavior.

Generation Z is identified as a particularly vulnerable group due to high digital exposure, strong peer influence, and a tendency toward experimentation. Previous research consistently highlights these factors; however, there is limited discussion on how digital culture, tourism mobility, and identity formation interact simultaneously to increase vulnerability. This indicates a gap in understanding Generation Z not only as passive recipients of influence but as active participants within hybrid physical-digital environments.

Tourism destinations further complicate this issue by providing conditions that facilitate drug circulation, including anonymity, high mobility, and nightlife culture. While some studies emphasize the economic and social impacts of drug use in tourism, others focus on public health risks. Nevertheless, there remains a lack of comparative analysis that connects drug characteristics, user behavior, and destination-specific factors within a unified framework.

## **Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze drug-related phenomena among Generation Z in tourism contexts. Data were collected through: analysis of educational video content on narcotics and psychedelics, case study analysis of drug trafficking networks, and review of academic literature and institutional reports. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, involving: identification of key themes (types of drugs, impacts, behaviors), categorization of risks and patterns, interpretation based on theoretical frameworks. To ensure credibility, this study applies: data triangulation, theoretical support from established frameworks, and cross-analysis between case studies and literature.

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze drug-related phenomena among Generation Z within tourism contexts. Data were collected from three main sources: (1) educational video content on narcotics and psychedelic substances, (2) case study documentation of drug trafficking networks, and (3) academic literature and institutional reports.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following a systematic multi-stage procedure. First, all data sources were subjected to data familiarization, in which the researcher repeatedly reviewed video transcripts, case reports, and literature to gain an in-depth understanding of the content. Second, the researcher conducted initial coding, where meaningful units of data were identified and labeled based on recurring patterns related to drug types, user behavior, distribution mechanisms, and contextual factors in tourism settings.

Third, the codes were grouped into broader categories through a categorization process, enabling the identification of relationships between variables such as

substance characteristics, environmental influences, and behavioral tendencies of Generation Z. Fourth, these categories were refined into core themes, including: (1) classification and impact of drugs, (2) behavioral vulnerability of Generation Z, (3) digital adaptation of drug networks, and (4) tourism-related risk environments.

Finally, an interpretative analysis was conducted by linking the identified themes with relevant theoretical frameworks, including Social Learning Theory and Routine Activity Theory, to explain how social interaction, environmental opportunity, and digital exposure contribute to drug-related behaviors.

To ensure the rigor and trustworthiness of the findings, this study applied several validation strategies. First, data triangulation was implemented by comparing findings across multiple data sources (videos, case studies, and literature) to confirm consistency and reduce bias. Second, theoretical triangulation was used by interpreting the data through multiple theoretical lenses, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Third, the study employed cross-source validation, where patterns identified in one data source (e.g., video content) were systematically compared with evidence from case studies and academic research.

In addition, audit trail documentation was maintained throughout the research process, including records of coding decisions, theme development, and analytical reflections, to enhance transparency and replicability. The researcher also applied peer debriefing, in which preliminary findings and interpretations were critically reviewed to minimize subjective bias. These procedures collectively strengthen the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the study.

## **Result and Discussion**

The findings of this study indicate that drug circulation in tourism destinations is no longer a linear issue confined to individual behavior, but rather a complex and systemic phenomenon. This conclusion is derived from the convergence of evidence across three data sources, where educational video content consistently highlighted the diversification of drug types, case study analysis revealed structured trafficking networks, and literature review confirmed the expansion of drug accessibility in global tourism contexts. Substances such as MDMA, methamphetamine, LSD, and DMT were repeatedly identified across these sources, indicating not only their availability but also their normalization within certain social environments frequented by Generation Z.

Empirical patterns from the analyzed video content show that drug use is frequently framed as part of lifestyle experiences, particularly within nightlife and social gatherings. This aligns with observational findings from case studies, where peer-based interaction emerged as a dominant trigger for initial drug exposure. These findings support Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory, as the data demonstrate that individuals are more likely to engage in drug use after observing and interacting with peers in permissive environments. Thus, drug consumption among Generation Z is empirically reflected not merely as an individual choice, but as a socially reinforced behavior shaped by repeated exposure.

Furthermore, the case study analysis of drug trafficking networks—particularly those reported by Badan Narkotika Nasional—reveals that distribution systems are highly adaptive and increasingly integrated with digital platforms. The data indicate that actors involved in drug distribution often maintain dual identities: a public persona constructed through social media and a concealed role within illicit networks. This pattern was consistently identified in both institutional reports and secondary case documentation, reinforcing the argument that digital environments function as facilitators rather than neutral tools.

These empirical findings strongly correspond with Routine Activity Theory, as tourism destinations were repeatedly characterized in the data by high mobility, anonymity, and weak monitoring systems. For instance, case evidence shows that temporary accommodations and nightlife venues are frequently utilized as transaction points due to limited supervision. This demonstrates that drug-related activities are not random, but occur in predictable environments where opportunity structures are present.

The proposed Integrated Pentahelix Drug Prevention Framework is therefore grounded in these empirical insights. The identification of recurring patterns—such as peer influence, digital facilitation, and weak environmental control—justifies the need for a multi-stakeholder approach. Evidence from the data indicates that no single actor possesses sufficient capacity to address the issue independently, as the problem spans behavioral, technological, and institutional dimensions.

At the preventive level, empirical findings from video analysis show that conventional anti-drug campaigns are less effective among Generation Z due to their limited engagement with traditional media formats. Instead, the data highlight the importance of digitally mediated and peer-driven communication, supporting the role of academia and media in reshaping awareness strategies.

At the control level, case study evidence demonstrates that accommodation providers often lack standardized procedures for detecting and reporting drug-related activities. This gap confirms the need for stronger involvement of the tourism industry, supported by regulatory frameworks and monitoring systems. Empirical observations suggest that environments with clearer supervision and reporting mechanisms show lower incidences of drug-related activity.

At the rehabilitation level, findings from literature and case comparisons indicate that stigma remains a major barrier to recovery, often discouraging individuals from seeking help. Community-based support systems were identified as more effective in facilitating reintegration, highlighting the importance of social acceptance and long-term engagement in the recovery process.

Importantly, the strength of this framework lies in its systemic integration, which is directly informed by the interconnected patterns observed in the data. The recurrence of similar themes across multiple sources supports a systems-based interpretation, where drug circulation is sustained through the interaction of behavioral, environmental, and technological factors. This aligns with a systems perspective, emphasizing that intervention effectiveness depends on the coordination between components rather than isolated actions.

Thus, the proposed framework is not solely theoretical but empirically grounded, reflecting observed patterns of drug behavior, distribution, and environmental risk

within tourism contexts. It offers a comprehensive approach to addressing drug circulation while contributing to the development of safer and more sustainable tourism systems.

### Conclusion

This study highlights that drug circulation among Generation Z in tourism destinations is a complex and evolving challenge shaped by the interaction of behavioral vulnerability, digital exposure, and increasingly adaptive transnational networks. The findings indicate that risk is not solely driven by tourism environments, but by how social, digital, and institutional factors intersect in shaping youth behavior. In response, this study proposes an Integrated Pentahelix Drug Prevention Framework that emphasizes collaboration among government, academia, industry, community, and media across preventive, control, and rehabilitation strategies. This approach underscores the need to move beyond fragmented interventions toward coordinated and sustainable solutions.

While the study provides important theoretical and practical insights, its reliance on secondary qualitative data limits generalizability and highlights the need for further empirical research. Future studies should incorporate primary data and comparative approaches to better capture the dynamic nature of drug-related risks in tourism contexts. Ultimately, ensuring the sustainability of tourism destinations requires not only economic development but also the protection of social well-being. Addressing drug circulation must therefore be positioned as a central component of responsible and resilient tourism development.

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# **Strengthening Anti-Drug Culture Among Generation Z in Hospitality Education: A Case Study of Drug Trafficking in Denpasar, Bali**

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## **Abstract**

*The rapid recovery of the tourism industry in the post-pandemic era has increased the demand for high-quality human resources, particularly in hospitality sectors. However, this development is accompanied by emerging risks, including the growing presence of drug trafficking networks in tourism destinations. This study aims to examine drug trafficking patterns, analyze the vulnerability of Generation Z students in hospitality education, and explore the role of anti-drug culture as a preventive strategy. This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach using a case study of a recent drug trafficking incident in Denpasar, Bali. Data were collected through document analysis of law enforcement reports and supported by secondary sources, including academic literature and policy documents. The analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, integrating Social Learning Theory, Routine Activity Theory, and Human Capital Theory. The findings reveal that drug trafficking in urban tourism areas operates through organized, adaptive, and market-oriented networks, as evidenced by the diversity of narcotics and the use of decentralized distribution systems such as the “patch system.” Generation Z is identified as a strategically targeted group due to their digital exposure, peer influence, and involvement in hospitality training environments. The study also identifies a gap between awareness and behavior, indicating that knowledge alone is insufficient to prevent risky actions. The study concludes that strengthening anti-drug culture through value internalization, character education, and cultural integration is essential for building resilience among hospitality students. This approach not only supports individual well-being but also contributes to the development of ethical and competitive human resources in the tourism industry*

**Keywords:** Anti-drug, culture, Generation Z, Hospitality education

## Introduction

The rapid transformation of the global tourism industry in the post-pandemic era has intensified the demand for high-quality human resources, particularly within the hospitality sector (Wayan & Adnyani, 2023). As of 2025, tourism destinations such as Bali are experiencing a strong recovery, characterized by increased tourist mobility, digital service innovation, and rising expectations for personalized and high-quality experiences (BERIDZE et al., 2020). In this context, hospitality workers are required not only to possess technical competencies but also to demonstrate emotional resilience, ethical behavior, and professional integrity (Diwyarthi et al., 2023).

However, this positive development is accompanied by emerging risks, particularly the increasing prevalence of drug abuse and trafficking. These issues pose serious threats to workforce quality, workplace safety, and the reputation of tourism destinations (Cumhur et al., 2019). While previous studies have examined the social and health impacts of drug abuse among youth and general workers, they largely overlook the specific context of tourism-driven environments and the transitional phase of individuals within hospitality education. Moreover, existing research tends to emphasize prevention from a public health perspective, with limited attention to how drug-related risks intersect with professional training systems and industry exposure.

A recent case in Denpasar highlights the urgency of this issue. Within approximately one month, the Narcotics Unit of Polresta Denpasar arrested 42 suspected drug dealers and confiscated substantial quantities of narcotics, indicating the presence of a highly organized and adaptive distribution network capable of penetrating diverse social groups, including youth (Lukman et al., 2021). Despite such evidence, there remains a lack of empirical studies that connect drug trafficking patterns with the vulnerability of students engaged in hospitality-based training environments, particularly in tourism-intensive destinations like Bali.

This gap is especially critical when considering Generation Z as the dominant cohort entering the hospitality workforce. Generation Z is characterized by high digital connectivity, strong peer influence, and openness to global cultural trends, which may increase both awareness and susceptibility to risky behaviors. In hospitality education settings, such as Politeknik Pariwisata Bali, students are actively involved in work-integrated learning within hotels, events, and nightlife industries—contexts that inherently carry higher exposure to social risks, including drug-related activities. Despite these unique characteristics, the intersection between generational traits, industry exposure, and drug vulnerability remains underexplored in current literature. At the same time, hospitality students are expected to function as future ambassadors of tourism, representing not only service quality but also ethical and cultural values. This dual responsibility highlights the urgency of strengthening preventive frameworks within education systems. However, existing studies rarely address the development of structured anti-drug culture as part of professional and character formation in hospitality education.

Based on these identified gaps, this study prioritizes its focus on examining the vulnerability of Generation Z students within hospitality education to drug-related risks as the central research problem. To support this primary focus, the study also aims to: (1) analyze drug trafficking patterns within tourism destinations as a contextual risk factor; and (2) explore strategic approaches to strengthening anti-drug culture within hospitality education institutions.

By narrowing its focus while maintaining contextual analysis, this study seeks to provide a more integrated understanding of how external risks and internal educational strategies interact in shaping resilient, ethical, and professional future hospitality workers.

## **Literature Review**

### **Anti-Drug Culture and Preventive Framework**

Anti-drug culture refers to a system of internalized values, social norms, and behavioral patterns that collectively discourage drug use while promoting healthy, responsible, and productive lifestyles. Unlike conventional prevention approaches that primarily rely on information dissemination, anti-drug culture emphasizes value internalization and long-term behavioral transformation, making prevention proactive and sustainable rather than reactive (Lukman et al., 2021).

Within prevention theory, interventions are commonly categorized into three levels: primary (preventing initial use), secondary (early detection), and tertiary (rehabilitation). In the context of this study, anti-drug culture operates at the primary level, aiming to shape attitudes and behavioral intentions of Generation Z students *before exposure develops into risky behavior*. This is particularly relevant in hospitality education, where students are frequently exposed to real-world industry environments.

Importantly, contemporary prevention research emphasizes that effective strategies must integrate cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions. Cognitive awareness alone is insufficient; individuals must also develop emotional resilience and be supported by positive social environments. These elements are conceptualized as *protective factors*, including peer support, institutional guidance, and value-based education, which directly relate to the role of hospitality institutions in shaping student behavior.

### **Generation Z Characteristics and Behavioral Vulnerability**

Generation Z, typically defined as individuals born between 1995 and 2010, represents a cohort whose behavioral patterns are deeply shaped by digital environments (Wahyudi & Bangun, 2023). Their defining characteristics include high digital dependency, openness to global influences, strong peer orientation, and a preference for instant gratification (William, 2024).

These traits are directly relevant to this study because they influence how students in hospitality education perceive, interpret, and respond to risk exposure. For instance, algorithm-driven digital platforms continuously expose users to curated content, including nightlife and substance-related imagery, which may normalize such

behaviors over time (Hassan & Sharma, 2020). In tourism destinations, where hospitality students interact with diverse global cultures, this digital exposure is further reinforced by real-life experiences.

Thus, Generation Z's characteristics do not merely describe a demographic group but serve as a behavioral lens through which vulnerability to drug-related risks can be understood in hospitality training contexts.

#### Social Learning Theory and Environmental Influence

The behavioral vulnerability of Generation Z students can be more deeply explained through Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), which posits that individuals learn behaviors through observation, imitation, and reinforcement within their social environment. This theory is highly relevant to hospitality education because students are embedded in multi-layered learning environments, including classrooms, workplaces, and digital spaces.

In this study, Social Learning Theory explains how drug-related behaviors may be: observed through peers, colleagues, or social media figures, and imitated when associated with social acceptance or perceived benefits, and reinforced through positive social feedback or normalization. Conversely, the same mechanism can be used to strengthen anti-drug culture through: positive role models (lecturers, industry mentors), institutional norms, peer networks that reinforce healthy behaviour. Therefore, this theory directly supports the study's focus on how educational environments can shape behavioral outcomes through structured social influence.

#### Human Capital Theory and Hospitality Industry Implications

Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1993) provides a macro-level justification for this research by linking individual behavior to organizational and industry performance. The theory argues that the quality of human resources—measured through health, skills, knowledge, and ethics—determines productivity and competitiveness. In the hospitality sector, where service quality is highly dependent on human interaction, drug abuse represents a critical threat to human capital. It negatively affects: cognitive performance and decision-making, emotional stability and service delivery, and teamwork and organizational trust.

This study integrates Human Capital Theory by positioning anti-drug culture as a strategic investment in workforce quality, not merely a social or health intervention. For hospitality education institutions, this implies that prevention efforts are directly linked to long-term industry sustainability and destination reputation.

#### Drug Trafficking Networks and Routine Activity Theory

The increasing complexity of drug trafficking networks can be explained through Routine Activity Theory (Cohen & Felson, 1979), which suggests that crime occurs when three elements converge: motivated offenders, suitable targets, and absence of capable guardians. Tourism destinations such as Bali create conditions that align with this framework: high mobility and anonymity (suitable targets), presence of organized networks (motivated offenders), limited supervision in certain social spaces (lack of guardianship). This study applies this theory to explain why hospitality students become a vulnerable group. Their mobility, digital literacy, and active participation in tourism environments position them as accessible targets

within these networks. Thus, Routine Activity Theory strengthens the study's argument by linking macro-level criminal patterns with micro-level student vulnerability.

#### Tourism Environment, Cultural Paradox, and Value Conflict

Tourism environments are inherently characterized by openness, diversity, and cross-cultural interaction. While these elements drive economic and cultural exchange, they also create a cultural paradox, where global influences may conflict with local values. For students in hospitality education, this paradox is particularly significant. They are expected to: adapt to international service standards, interact with diverse cultural norms, maintain local ethical and cultural values. Without strong internalized values, this dual exposure can increase susceptibility to negative behaviors. Therefore, the study positions anti-drug culture as a mechanism for resolving this value conflict, ensuring that students can navigate global environments without compromising ethical integrity.

#### Character Education and Cultural Integration

Character education serves as a critical bridge between theory and practice by embedding moral values and ethical behavior into student development. In the Balinese context, local philosophy such as *Tri Hita Karana* (Astuti, 2018) provides a culturally grounded framework for this process. By integrating spiritual, social, and environmental harmony, this philosophy reinforces: personal responsibility, social awareness, ethical conduct. In this study, character education is not treated as a supplementary concept but as a core mechanism for operationalizing anti-drug culture within hospitality education systems.

#### Research Gap and Theoretical Contribution

Despite extensive research on drug abuse, youth behavior, and tourism risk, several critical gaps remain. First, existing studies rarely integrate drug prevention into hospitality education frameworks, particularly in tourism-intensive destinations. Second, there is limited emphasis on anti-drug culture as a value-based and behavioral approach, as most studies focus on awareness or rehabilitation. Third, the specific vulnerability of Generation Z within work-integrated learning environments remains underexplored. Finally, there is insufficient linkage between drug prevention and human capital development in the hospitality industry.

This study addresses these gaps by developing an integrated framework that connects: Generation Z behavioral characteristics, Social Learning Theory (micro-level behavior formation), Routine Activity Theory (environmental risk exposure), Human Capital Theory (industry implications), Cultural values and character education (preventive strategy).

By synthesizing these perspectives, this research contributes to a more holistic understanding of how behavioral risk, educational systems, and industry demands intersect, offering both theoretical advancement and practical implications for hospitality education.

### **Research Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach using case study analysis. The primary data source is the drug trafficking case in Denpasar, supported by secondary data from journals, reports, and previous research on drug prevention and youth behavior. The analysis focuses on: Drug trafficking patterns, youth vulnerability, implications for hospitality students, and preventive strategies in educational institutions

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach using a case study design to explore the intersection between drug trafficking patterns and the vulnerability of Generation Z students in hospitality education. The case study focuses on a recent drug trafficking incident in Denpasar, Bali, which was selected based on its high intensity, short time span, and relevance to youth exposure within a tourism destination. The case involved multiple arrests and large-scale confiscation of narcotics, indicating the presence of an organized and adaptive distribution network. This makes it a representative and critical case for understanding emerging drug-related risks in tourism environments.

#### Case Selection Criteria

The Denpasar case was purposively selected based on the following criteria: (1) occurrence within a major international tourism destination; (2) involvement of a significant number of suspects and types of narcotics; (3) indication of organized and systematic trafficking patterns; and (4) potential exposure to youth and working-age populations, including students engaged in hospitality training. These criteria ensure that the case is not incidental but analytically relevant to the research focus on hospitality education and Generation Z vulnerability.

#### Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected through document analysis from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data consist of official reports and publicly available information from law enforcement authorities related to the Denpasar case. Secondary data include peer-reviewed journal articles, government reports, and prior studies on drug prevention, youth behavior, and tourism-related risks.

The data collection process followed three stages: (1) identification and selection of relevant documents; (2) verification of data credibility through cross-referencing multiple sources; and (3) organization of data based on thematic relevance to the research focus.

#### Time Frame of Data

The case data were collected and analyzed within a specific time frame, focusing on incidents reported between [insert month/year, e.g., January–February 2025], which reflects a concentrated period of law enforcement activity. Supporting literature and secondary data were selected from publications within the last 5–10 years to ensure relevance and contemporariness.

#### Scope of Analysis

The analysis is limited to three main dimensions: (1) identification of drug trafficking patterns within tourism environments; (2) examination of vulnerability factors affecting Generation Z students, particularly those in hospitality education;

and (3) exploration of preventive strategies through the development of anti-drug culture within educational institutions.

#### Data Analysis Technique

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which involves coding and categorizing information into key themes aligned with the research objectives. The analysis integrates empirical findings from the case with theoretical frameworks, including Social Learning Theory, Routine Activity Theory, and Human Capital Theory, to provide a comprehensive interpretation

## Results and Discussion

### Organized Drug Trafficking Patterns in Tourism Areas

The analysis of the Denpasar case demonstrates that drug trafficking operates as a systematic and organized network, rather than a sporadic criminal activity. This finding is directly supported by law enforcement data indicating the arrest of 42 suspects within approximately one month, along with the confiscation of multiple types of narcotics, including 1,235 ecstasy pills, 1.2 kg of methamphetamine, over 1 kg of marijuana, 1.4 kg of synthetic tobacco, and 33 grams of cocaine.

The diversity of substances confiscated provides concrete evidence of a segmented distribution strategy, where different drugs are targeted toward specific consumer groups. For instance: Ecstasy and methamphetamine are commonly linked to nightlife environments. Marijuana and synthetic tobacco are more accessible and often perceived as recreational. Cocaine, although limited in quantity, indicates the presence of higher-end market segments.

This pattern suggests that the network is not only large-scale but also market-oriented and adaptive, aligning with contemporary models of organized crime. Furthermore, the identified use of the “patch system” (sistem tempel)—a method where drugs are placed in predetermined locations without direct interaction—demonstrates a decentralized distribution mechanism. This system reduces traceability and increases operational efficiency, making enforcement more difficult. These empirical findings reinforce the relevance of Routine Activity Theory, as the Denpasar tourism environment provides: Suitable targets: mobile and diverse populations (tourists and youth), motivated offenders: organized trafficking networks, and limited guardianship: anonymity in nightlife and tourism spaces.

### Targeting of Generation Z: Evidence of Strategic Vulnerability.

The findings indicate that Generation Z is not merely exposed to drug risks but is actively targeted by trafficking networks. This is evidenced by law enforcement reports identifying the involvement of young individuals as intermediaries or couriers, suggesting intentional recruitment strategies.

This targeting can be explained through two interconnected forms of vulnerability:

#### a. Digital Exposure

Secondary data analysis shows that Generation Z’s high engagement with digital platforms increases exposure to: nightlife-related content, substance-related



imagery, influencer-driven behavioral trends. This repeated exposure contributes to the normalization of drug use, particularly in tourism settings where such behaviors may appear socially accepted.

#### b. Environmental Exposure in Hospitality Training

Students in hospitality education are frequently involved in: hotel internships, event management, and nightlife-related service environments. These real-world learning contexts create direct proximity to high-risk environments, increasing the likelihood of encountering drug-related activities. The Denpasar case strengthens this argument by showing that trafficking networks operate within urban and tourism-centered spaces, which overlap with student training locations. Consistent with Social Learning Theory (Bandura), these conditions facilitate: observation of risky behaviors, imitation driven by peer acceptance, and reinforcement through social interaction.

#### Implications for Hospitality Students: Evidence of Professional and Ethical Risks.

The findings reveal that exposure to drug-related environments poses multi-dimensional risks for hospitality students, include professional risks, ethical risks, and institutional risks.

**Professional Risks.** Although the case data do not directly measure student performance, the type and scale of drugs identified (stimulants and psychoactive substances) indicate potential impacts such as: reduced cognitive focus, impaired decision-making, and decreased emotional regulation. These effects are particularly critical in hospitality settings, where service quality depends on attention, responsiveness, and interpersonal interaction.

**Ethical Risks.** The Denpasar case also highlights the presence of repeat offenders (recidivists), indicating that punitive measures alone are insufficient. This suggests that without strong value-based education, individuals may: normalize deviant behaviour, disengage from professional ethics, become part of recurring risk cycles.

**Institutional Risks.** The scale of the case (42 suspects in one month) reflects a systemic issue, not an isolated incident. If such exposure extends to student populations, it may: damage institutional reputation, reduce stakeholder trust, weaken the image of tourism destinations.

#### The Awareness–Behavior Gap: Empirical and Theoretical Evidence

A key finding emerging from the analysis is the gap between awareness and actual behavior. While secondary studies indicate that many young individuals are aware of drug risks, the persistence of trafficking cases in youth-accessible environments suggests that awareness alone is insufficient. This is supported by: continued demand across different drug types (as shown in confiscation data), involvement of young individuals in distribution roles, repeated law enforcement interventions within a short time frame.

This phenomenon aligns with Cognitive Dissonance Theory, where individuals: understand the risks, but continue engaging in contradictory behaviors due to social or environmental pressures.

#### Anti-Drug Culture as a Preventive Strategy (Evidence-Based Need)

The limitations of enforcement-based approaches, as evidenced by: the presence of recidivists, the persistence of trafficking networks, the adaptability of distribution systems indicate the need for preventive strategies rooted in behavioral transformation. The findings suggest that anti-drug culture should integrate: Cognitive dimension: knowledge of risks (already partially present), Affective dimension: emotional resistance (currently weak), Behavioral dimension: consistent ethical action (not yet internalized). In hospitality education, this can be operationalized through: scenario-based learning, ethical decision-making training, supervised industry exposure.

#### Cultural Integration and Local Values

The study finds that the tourism environment creates a cultural paradox, where global influences may conflict with local values. The Denpasar context, as an international tourism hub, intensifies this dynamic. To address this, the integration of Tri Hita Karana provides a culturally grounded solution by reinforcing: spiritual responsibility, social harmony, environmental awareness. This approach strengthens internal value systems, which are essential for resisting external pressures.

#### Toward Sustainable Tourism: Human Capital Perspective

The findings confirm that drug-related risks are not only a social issue but also a human capital challenge. The Denpasar case illustrates how organized networks can threaten workforce quality in tourism destinations. From a Human Capital perspective, this affects: productivity, service quality, destination competitiveness. Thus, anti-drug culture becomes a strategic investment, not merely a preventive measure.

#### Synthesis: A Systemic Interpretation

Overall, the findings from the Denpasar case indicate that: drug trafficking networks are organized, adaptive, and market-driven, generation Z is strategically targeted and environmentally exposed, hospitality students face professional, ethical, and institutional risks, and current approaches are reactive and insufficient. Therefore, addressing this issue requires a systemic approach that integrates: education (value internalization), policy (regulation and enforcement), culture (local wisdom and identity formation)

### Conclusions

This study demonstrates that drug trafficking in tourism destinations such as Denpasar represents a complex and organized phenomenon characterized by

adaptive distribution strategies, market segmentation, and the strategic use of decentralized systems. The scale and diversity of narcotics identified in the case study confirm that these networks are not incidental but operate as structured systems capable of penetrating various social layers, including youth populations.

A central finding of this research is the vulnerability of Generation Z, particularly students in hospitality education, who are exposed to both digital and environmental risk factors. Their high level of connectivity, strong peer influence, and active engagement in real-world industry settings place them in a position of increased susceptibility to drug-related activities. Moreover, the study highlights a critical gap between awareness and behavior, indicating that knowledge of drug risks does not automatically translate into preventive action.

The implications of these findings are significant for hospitality education. Exposure to drug-related environments poses not only health risks but also threatens professional competence, ethical standards, and institutional reputation. From a broader perspective, these risks directly affect the quality of human capital, which is essential for sustaining competitiveness in the tourism industry.

In response, this study emphasizes the importance of developing an anti-drug culture as a long-term and value-based preventive strategy. Unlike conventional approaches that focus on information dissemination, anti-drug culture prioritizes the internalization of values, emotional resilience, and consistent behavioral practice. The integration of character education and local cultural values, such as Tri Hita Karana, provides a holistic framework for strengthening students' resistance to negative influences.

Ultimately, addressing drug-related challenges among Generation Z requires a systemic approach that combines education, policy, and cultural reinforcement. Collaboration between educational institutions, government agencies, and industry stakeholders is essential to create a supportive environment that promotes ethical behavior and professional integrity. By strengthening anti-drug culture within hospitality education, this study contributes to the development of resilient, competent, and ethically grounded human resources, which are fundamental to achieving sustainable tourism development.

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# **Barriers and Challenges in Developing Anti-Drug Cultural Character Among Generation Z Students in Tourism Higher Education: A Case Study of Bali Tourism Polytechnic**

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## **Abstract**

*This study examines the challenges of developing anti-drug cultural character among students within a tourism education context, using a qualitative case study at Bali Tourism Polytechnic. The research addresses the gap between generalized assumptions about youth vulnerability and the need for institution-specific empirical evidence. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with students, lecturers, and institutional representatives, complemented by non-participant observation and document analysis. Thematic analysis was applied through systematic coding, categorization, and interpretation, supported by data triangulation to ensure analytical rigor. The findings reveal that student vulnerability is not a direct outcome of tourism environments, but rather emerges from the interaction of peer dynamics, institutional engagement, and digital exposure. Four key themes were identified: (1) the subtle normalization of risk through peer interaction, (2) gaps in the internalization of institutional values, (3) fragmented digital influences shaping lifestyle perceptions, and (4) the presence of resilience supported by structured student engagement. These findings are interpreted through Social Control Theory, highlighting how variations in attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief influence behavioral outcomes. This study contributes to the literature by providing context-specific insights into how anti-drug character is negotiated within higher education, moving beyond deterministic views of tourism culture. The findings emphasize the importance of continuous, experience-based character education and institutional strategies that strengthen student engagement and value internalization. The study offers practical implications for tourism education institutions in designing sustainable, value-driven prevention approaches.*

**Keywords:** anti-drug, character, Gen Z, character education

## **Introduction**

Drug abuse has become a multidimensional global challenge that affects public health, social stability, and the long-term quality of human resources (Lukman et al.,

2021). In the Indonesian context, concerns regarding drug exposure among adolescents and young adults have increased, particularly in urban and tourism-oriented regions where social interaction, mobility, and lifestyle diversity are relatively high. However, existing discussions often generalize this relationship without sufficiently examining how specific institutional environments shape student vulnerability.

Within higher education, students represent a critical group undergoing identity formation, social adaptation, and professional preparation. In tourism education institutions, such as Bali Tourism Polytechnic, students are trained for careers in hospitality and service industries that involve intensive interpersonal interaction, cultural exchange, and exposure to dynamic social settings. These conditions do not inherently produce risk; however, they may influence how students negotiate values, norms, and behavioral boundaries.

At the same time, Generation Z students operate within highly digitalized environments where information, peer influence, and social validation are mediated through online platforms. Prior studies suggest that digital ecosystems can amplify exposure to risky behaviors, including substance-related content, although the mechanisms vary depending on context and individual resilience (Cumhur et al., 2019). This indicates that vulnerability is not merely environmental but also relational and structural.

Despite growing concern, there is limited empirical research that examines how anti-drug cultural values are constructed, negotiated, and challenged within tourism education settings in Indonesia. In particular, there is a lack of institution-specific evidence that connects student experiences, institutional practices, and socio-cultural influences.

Therefore, this study aims to explore: the forms of vulnerability experienced by students in a tourism education environment, the institutional and socio-cultural barriers to developing anti-drug character, and the strategies that can strengthen value-based prevention within the context of Bali Tourism Polytechnic. By adopting a qualitative case study approach, this research seeks to provide contextualized and empirically grounded insights, rather than broad generalizations about youth or tourism culture.

## **Literature Review**

### **Multidimensional Factors of Drug Vulnerability.**

Drug abuse among youth is widely understood as a product of interacting factors rather than a single cause. The Badan Narkotika Nasional (Lukman et al., 2021) categorizes these into three dimensions: individual (e.g., curiosity, emotional regulation), familial (e.g., communication patterns, supervision), and social environment (e.g., peer influence, accessibility). These dimensions are cumulative and context-dependent, meaning vulnerability increases when multiple risk factors coexist.

### **Adolescent Development and Identity Formation**

Developmental theory highlights adolescence as a stage characterized by identity exploration, social comparison, and emotional fluctuation (Santrock, in Coghlan & Gooch, 2011). For Generation Z, identity formation extends beyond physical environments into digital spaces, where norms and behaviors are continuously negotiated. This dual context creates a more complex landscape of influence compared to previous generations.

#### Social Control Theory as Analytical Lens

The study adopts Social Control Theory as a primary analytical framework. Hirschi (Utami, 2017) argues that deviant behavior emerges when four social bonds weaken: attachment (relationships with family, peers, lecturers), commitment (academic and career goals), involvement (participation in constructive activities), and belief (internalization of moral values).

In a higher education context, weak institutional engagement or lack of value-based programming may reduce students' resistance to negative influences.

#### Cultural Character in Tourism Education

Tourism education operates within a unique cultural context that emphasizes openness, adaptability, and intercultural interaction. Rather than assuming tourism environments inherently increase risk, recent perspectives argue that institutional mediation plays a key role in shaping student behavior (Utami, 2017). This includes curriculum design, campus culture, mentorship, and student engagement programs. Thus, the development of anti-drug character should be understood not only as knowledge transmission but as a process of value internalization supported by institutional structures.

### **Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative case study design (Suherlan et al., 2022) focusing on Bali Tourism Polytechnic as a bounded system. A case study approach is appropriate because it enables an in-depth exploration of social phenomena within a specific institutional context. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure relevance to the research objectives. The study involved: 20 students from hospitality management study program, 5 lecturers involved in student development or character education, and 2 institutional representatives (student affairs or counseling unit). Participants were chosen based on their experience, involvement in campus life, and willingness to provide informed perspectives.

Data were collected through three primary techniques: in-depth semi-structured interviews (Adityawarman et al., 2022) conducted with students and lecturers. Focus with perceptions of drug risks, peer influence, institutional support, value formation, on-participant observation, and observations of campus environment, student interactions, and institutional activities. Field notes recorded systematically includes document analysis, and review of institutional materials such as student guidelines, curriculum content, and campus programs related to character development.

This study uses thematic analysis following a systematic procedure: data triangulation was applied across interviews, observations, and documents



(Suryadinatha Gorda et al., 2020). Peer debriefing was conducted to reduce researcher bias, and audit trails were maintained to document analytical decisions.

Ethical Considerations includes informed consent was obtained from all participants, participant anonymity and confidentiality were ensured, and the study avoided sensitive identification of individuals or specific incidents

## **Result and Discussion**

The analysis of interviews, observations, and institutional documents at Bali Tourism Polytechnic reveals that student vulnerability to drug-related exposure is not driven by a single factor, but emerges from the interaction between social relationships, institutional structures, and evolving lifestyle contexts. Four major themes were identified: Normalization of risk through peer interaction, Ambiguity in institutional value internalization, Fragmented digital and social influences, and Emerging resilience through structured engagement. These themes reflect a dynamic tension between vulnerability and resistance, rather than a one-dimensional risk condition.

### **Theme 1: Peer Influence and the Subtle Normalization of Risk**

A recurring pattern across student interviews is the role of peer environments in shaping perceptions of acceptable behavior. Importantly, drug exposure is rarely described as direct coercion, but rather as subtle normalization within social circles.

One student explained: “It’s not like someone forces you. But when you see people around you being okay with it, it feels less serious.”

This finding aligns with Social Control Theory (Ruastiti et al., 2021), particularly the weakening of *belief* and *attachment*. When peer groups redefine what is considered “normal,” moral boundaries become flexible rather than fixed. From an observational perspective, informal student gatherings—especially those connected to off-campus social activities—tend to emphasize belonging and acceptance, sometimes over critical judgment. This does not imply that drug use is widespread, but rather that risk perception becomes socially negotiated. This supports prior research that highlights peer influence as a contextual rather than purely behavioral factor. In this case, students are not necessarily seeking deviance, but seeking inclusion, which may inadvertently expose them to risk.

### **Theme 2: Institutional Gaps in Value Internalization**

While institutional documents indicate that character education and discipline are formally integrated into the academic system, student narratives suggest that anti-drug values are not always internalized at a practical level.

A lecturer noted: “We deliver moral messages in class, but outside the classroom, we cannot fully control how students interpret or apply them.” Similarly, a student shared: “We know drugs are dangerous, but sometimes it feels like just theory, not something connected to our daily life.”

This reflects a gap between formal knowledge and lived experience. Within the framework of Social Control Theory (Cumhur et al., 2019), this suggests a partial

weakening of *commitment* and *involvement*. Students may understand institutional expectations, but without continuous engagement, these values remain abstract.

Document analysis further shows that anti-drug education is often embedded within general courses or orientation programs, rather than delivered as sustained, experience-based interventions. As a result, value formation tends to be episodic rather than continuous. This finding highlights that character education is not only about content delivery, but about consistency, context, and reinforcement.

### Theme 3: Digital Exposure and Fragmented Influences

Students consistently reported that digital platforms play a significant role in shaping perceptions of lifestyle and behavior. However, the influence is not direct or explicit; instead, it operates through indirect representation and normalization.

One participant stated: “Sometimes you see things online that make certain lifestyles look normal or even attractive, even if you know the risks.”

This reflects the complexity of Generation Z’s social environment, where identity is shaped through both offline interaction and online exposure. Unlike traditional models of influence, digital content does not instruct behavior directly, but frames it within aspirational narratives. From an analytical perspective, this condition complicates the concept of social control. While institutional and familial bonds remain important, they now compete with diffuse and globalized sources of influence. Importantly, students demonstrated awareness of these dynamics, indicating that exposure does not automatically translate into behavior. However, without strong internalized values, such exposure may gradually shift perceptions of acceptability.

### Theme 4: Emerging Forms of Student Resilience

Despite the identified vulnerabilities, the study also found significant evidence of resilience and self-regulation among students. This resilience is often linked to: Active participation in campus organizations, Strong academic or career orientation, and Supportive peer networks with shared goals.

A student involved in a campus organization explained: “Being active in campus activities keeps me focused. You don’t really have time or interest in those things.”

This directly reflects the *involvement* component of Social Control Theory, where engagement in positive activities reduces the likelihood of deviant behavior. Observations also indicate that structured environments—such as practical training sessions, hospitality simulations, and student-led events—create constructive routines that reinforce discipline and responsibility. This suggests that resilience is not purely an individual trait, but is socially and institutionally cultivated. When students are meaningfully engaged, their exposure to risk is counterbalanced by a strong sense of purpose and belonging.

### Integrative Discussion

The findings demonstrate that vulnerability to drug-related exposure among students is not a product of tourism environments alone, but rather the result of interconnected social, institutional, and digital dynamics. Contrary to common assumptions, the tourism education context does not inherently promote deviant

behavior. Instead, it presents a complex space where multiple influences intersect, requiring students to actively negotiate values and decisions.

From a theoretical perspective: Adolescent development theory explains the ongoing process of identity exploration. Social Control Theory provides a framework to understand how weakened or strengthened social bonds influence behaviour. Institutional context acts as a mediating structure, shaping whether vulnerability leads to risk or resilience. This study contributes to the literature by shifting the narrative from “tourism as risk” to “institutional mediation as key factor.”

The findings also suggest that effective prevention strategies should move beyond awareness campaigns and focus on: Strengthening relational bonds (peer, lecturer, institution), embedding values into daily academic and social practices, and creating continuous engagement rather than one-time interventions.

By focusing on Bali Tourism Polytechnic, this study provides context-specific empirical insight that is often missing in broader discussions of youth and drug vulnerability. Rather than generalizing across populations, the findings illustrate how: students interpret risk within their own social environments, institutions shape (and sometimes fail to shape) value internalization, and resilience emerges through structured engagement. This reinforces the importance of localized, evidence-based approaches in addressing complex social issues such as drug prevention.

### **Conclusion**

This study demonstrates that the development of anti-drug cultural character among students is a complex and context-dependent process shaped by the interaction of social, institutional, and digital influences. Based on the case of Bali Tourism Polytechnic, the findings challenge the assumption that tourism environments inherently increase vulnerability to drug abuse. Instead, vulnerability emerges when social bonds are weakened, institutional engagement is inconsistent, and external influences are not critically mediated. The analysis highlights that peer interaction plays a significant role in shaping behavioral norms, not through direct pressure, but through the gradual normalization of risk. At the same time, institutional efforts in character education, while present, often remain at the level of formal instruction and lack sustained experiential reinforcement. The influence of digital environments further complicates this dynamic by introducing diffuse and often subtle forms of behavioral framing.

The study also identifies strong indicators of resilience among students, particularly those actively engaged in academic, organizational, and skill-based activities. This suggests that vulnerability is not fixed, but can be mitigated through meaningful involvement, supportive relationships, and clear value orientation. Theoretically, this study reinforces the relevance of Social Control Theory in explaining how the strength of social bonds influences behavioral outcomes in contemporary student contexts. Practically, the findings underscore the need for tourism education institutions to move beyond one-time awareness programs toward integrated, continuous, and context-sensitive character development strategies.

Future efforts should prioritize strengthening institutional attachment, embedding values into daily student experiences, and fostering collaborative approaches

involving educators, families, and broader social systems. By doing so, anti-drug education can evolve from a preventive message into a lived cultural practice that supports the long-term development of responsible and resilient tourism professionals.

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# Strengthening Surveillance and Preventive Strategies Against Drug Abuse Threats: The Role of Anti-Drug Ambassadors

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## Abstract

*The rapid evolution of digital technologies has transformed not only legitimate service systems but also the operational strategies of illicit networks, including drug trafficking. This study examines how platform-based distribution mechanisms—particularly the use of ride-hailing and delivery services—create indirect exposure risks within hospitality workplaces. Positioned as a qualitative descriptive study with document-based case analysis, the research draws on 25 secondary data sources, including law enforcement reports, credible media coverage, and academic literature published between 2019 and 2025. Using thematic analysis, the study identifies key patterns of digital drug distribution, including contactless delivery, disguised logistics, and the use of unwitting intermediaries. The findings reveal that hospitality environments are not direct targets of drug networks but function as **situational nodes** within broader distribution systems due to routine interactions with external service providers. This creates structural and behavioral vulnerabilities, particularly in departments such as front office and concierge, where delivery coordination is frequent. By integrating Routine Activity Theory, Social Learning Theory, and Experiential Learning Theory, the study demonstrates that workplace risk emerges from the convergence of reduced guardianship, normalized employee behavior, and limited experiential awareness. The study contributes to the literature by bridging the gap between digital criminology and hospitality management, extending crime theory into platform-mediated service ecosystems, and introducing the Anti-Drug Ambassador model as a peer-based preventive strategy. The findings highlight the need to reconceptualize service excellence by incorporating safety, vigilance, and risk awareness as integral components. This research offers practical implications for developing integrated organizational responses that combine technological monitoring, behavioral interventions, and workplace learning to enhance resilience in the digital era*

**Keywords:** drug abuse, preventing, strengthening, surveillance, threat

## Introduction

Despite extensive global efforts to combat drug trafficking, the rapid evolution of digital technologies has enabled criminal networks to adopt increasingly sophisticated and less detectable distribution methods. Digital platforms originally designed to enhance efficiency and connectivity—such as ride-hailing and delivery applications—have inadvertently created new logistical channels that can be exploited for illicit purposes. This shift reflects a broader transformation in drug trafficking operations toward decentralized, anonymous, and technology-mediated systems embedded within legitimate economic infrastructures.

One emerging phenomenon is the use of online ride-hailing services—commonly referred to as “ojek narkoba”—as intermediaries in the distribution of narcotics. In this *modus operandi*, illicit substances are transported through seemingly legitimate delivery systems, often in small and discreet packages, reducing direct contact between dealers and consumers. This strategy not only minimizes detection risks but also introduces unsuspecting actors, such as drivers and service workers, into the distribution chain, thereby increasing the complexity and opacity of enforcement.

This study is positioned as a conceptual and exploratory analysis that examines the intersection between digital-based drug distribution systems and workplace vulnerability within the hospitality industry, particularly in tourism-driven destinations such as Bali. Rather than focusing on criminal networks alone, the study critically analyzes how these evolving distribution mechanisms may create indirect exposure risks for hospitality employees who routinely interact with external service providers, including ride-hailing drivers, delivery couriers, and third-party vendors.

In hospitality operations, especially in departments such as front office, concierge, and guest services, coordination with external delivery services is an integral part of daily workflows. These interactions create potential points of contact where illicit activities may be unknowingly facilitated. For instance, the handling of guest packages, coordination of deliveries, or acceptance of third-party services during the pre-arrival and arrival stages may inadvertently expose employees to suspicious or illegal transactions. Therefore, the issue of “ojek narkoba” is not examined as a standalone criminal phenomenon, but as a contextual risk factor embedded within service encounters and operational routines in hospitality settings.

Furthermore, the pre-arrival phase of the guest journey is critical in shaping service quality and safety perceptions. Any irregularities, including questionable delivery practices, may undermine both operational integrity and guest trust. This underscores the need to reconceptualize service excellence in hospitality by integrating elements of safety awareness, risk detection, and employee vigilance alongside traditional service quality dimensions.

Despite the increasing relevance of this issue, existing literature has largely overlooked the intersection between digitally mediated drug distribution and workplace-level vulnerabilities in service industries. Most prior studies focus either on drug trafficking networks or on employee performance and well-being, without bridging these domains.

Accordingly, this study aims to conceptually analyze the operational characteristics of “ojek narkoba” as a form of digital-based drug distribution, examine its potential implications for workplace exposure and risk within hospitality settings, and propose integrated strategic responses, including surveillance awareness, workplace-based learning, and the development of Anti-Drug Ambassador programs tailored to hospitality employees.

## **Literature Review**

Drug abuse in organizational contexts, particularly within the hospitality industry, represents a complex issue shaped by the interaction of structural conditions, human behavior, and learning processes. In highly dynamic service environments, employees are not only exposed to internal pressures such as stress and workload, but also to external risks emerging from digital transformation and increased interaction with third-party service providers. To address this complexity, the present study does not treat theoretical perspectives as separate explanatory tools. Instead, it integrates multiple frameworks into a unified analytical approach that guides the process of data interpretation and theme development.

The analysis is grounded in the framework of Routine Activity Theory, originally developed by Marcus Felson, which provides a structural lens for understanding how opportunities for illicit activities emerge. Within this study, the theory is applied to interpret how digital ride-hailing and delivery platforms create conditions where motivated offenders can exploit routine service interactions in the absence of effective guardianship. This perspective informed the initial stages of data analysis by guiding the identification of patterns related to delivery systems, external actors, and gaps in monitoring mechanisms. As a result, themes such as digital *modus operandi*, workplace exposure, and surveillance gaps were developed to capture how hospitality environments function as unintended points of convergence for illicit transactions.

While Routine Activity Theory explains how risks are structurally embedded within service systems, it does not fully account for how employees respond to these conditions. To address this, the study incorporates Social Learning Theory, as proposed by Albert Bandura, to examine the behavioral dimension of workplace vulnerability. This framework suggests that employee behavior is shaped through observation, imitation, and interaction within social environments. In the context of this research, it provides a basis for understanding how certain practices—such as accepting unverified deliveries or overlooking irregularities—become normalized within daily operations. During the coding process, this perspective guided the identification of behavioral patterns related to role ambiguity, peer influence, and the normalization of risk. These insights contributed to the development of themes such as indirect involvement and behavioral risk, highlighting that vulnerability is not only a result of structural exposure but also of learned workplace behaviors.

In addition to structural and behavioral factors, the study recognizes that workplace vulnerability is influenced by how employees learn from their experiences. For this

reason, Experiential Learning Theory, developed by David Kolb, is integrated into the analytical framework. This theory conceptualizes learning as a cyclical process in which experience must be followed by reflection and application to generate meaningful understanding. In the present study, this perspective is used to interpret why repeated exposure to potentially risky situations does not necessarily lead to increased awareness or improved decision-making. During analysis, attention was given to instances where employees encountered risk-related situations but lacked the reflective processes needed to recognize them as threats. This informed the identification of themes related to low awareness and preventive potential, suggesting that gaps in experiential learning contribute significantly to workplace vulnerability. Furthermore, the study situates these dynamics within the broader context of service excellence in the hospitality industry. Service Excellence Theory is not treated as an independent construct but as a contextual framework that helps explain organizational priorities and operational behavior. Hospitality environments emphasize responsiveness, efficiency, and customer satisfaction, which often require employees to act quickly and accommodate external requests. This operational logic, while essential for service delivery, may inadvertently reduce vigilance and increase exposure to risk. In this study, the concept of service excellence is used to interpret why employees may prioritize efficiency over verification, thereby reinforcing patterns identified in earlier stages of analysis. It also provides a basis for understanding the structural vulnerability of hospitality workplaces, where open systems and frequent external interactions create both service opportunities and security challenges.

By integrating these theoretical perspectives, the study develops a multi-layered analytical framework in which each theory contributes to a different dimension of understanding. Routine Activity Theory explains how risk emerges within service systems, Social Learning Theory explains how behavior is shaped in response to these risks, Experiential Learning Theory explains why awareness may fail to develop, and Service Excellence Theory explains how organizational priorities influence both exposure and response. Together, these frameworks guided the entire analytical process—from coding and theme generation to interpretation—ensuring that the findings are not merely descriptive but theoretically grounded.

This integrated approach also enables the study to identify the role of peer-based interventions, such as Anti-Drug Ambassadors, as a potential bridge between these dimensions. By combining behavioral influence with experiential learning, such initiatives offer a practical mechanism for strengthening awareness and reducing vulnerability within hospitality organizations. Overall, the use of an integrated theoretical framework allows for a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of how digital drug distribution intersects with workplace environments, providing a stronger foundation for both analysis and practical application.



## **Research Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach, supported by a document-based case analysis, to explore the intersection between digital-based drug distribution and workplace vulnerability in the hospitality sector. The research is designed as an exploratory inquiry, focusing on how emerging drug distribution methods—particularly those utilizing ride-hailing and delivery platforms—may create indirect exposure risks within service-oriented work environments.

Rather than relying on primary field data, this study draws upon secondary sources, including official law enforcement reports, credible media coverage, and relevant academic literature. The selection of these sources follows clearly defined criteria to ensure both relevance and reliability. Specifically, the study includes documents published between 2019 and 2025 that report cases involving the use of ride-hailing or courier services as channels for drug distribution. Priority is given to cases occurring in urban or tourism-driven areas, where interactions between external service providers and hospitality operations are more frequent. Additionally, only sources that provide sufficient descriptive detail regarding the *modus operandi* of distribution are included in the analysis.

Through a structured search process using keywords such as “ojek narkoba,” “drug delivery ride-hailing,” and “narcotics courier services,” a total of twenty-five documents were identified and selected. These consist of ten law enforcement reports, nine media-based case reports, and six academic or policy-related references. Each document was systematically reviewed and categorized based on key variables, including location, distribution method, actors involved, and points of interaction with service environments.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following an iterative process of familiarization, coding, and theme development. Initial coding focused on identifying recurring patterns in distribution strategies, such as the use of contactless delivery, layered communication systems, and the embedding of illicit transactions within legitimate service flows. Further analysis examined how these patterns intersect with operational practices in hospitality settings, particularly in areas involving guest services and external coordination.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, the study applies source triangulation by comparing information across different types of documents. An audit trail was maintained throughout the research process to document decisions related to data selection and analysis. While the study does not aim for statistical generalization, it seeks to achieve analytical depth by identifying consistent patterns that can inform understanding of workplace risk in similar contexts.

## **Results and Discussion**

The thematic analysis demonstrates that digital-based drug distribution operates as an adaptive socio-technical system, where criminal actors strategically exploit the structural openness of service industries and the operational logic of digital platforms.

Rather than presenting isolated findings, the results are interpreted

through an integrated analytical framework, combining Routine Activity Theory, Social Learning Theory, and Experiential Learning Theory to explain how risks emerge, are normalized, and can be mitigated within hospitality contexts.

Digital Distribution as Opportunity Structure (Routine Activity Theory).

The identified patterns—such as contactless delivery, disguised packages, and fragmented communication—indicate that ride-hailing platforms function as facilitators of criminal opportunity structures. From the perspective of Marcus Felson’s Routine Activity Theory, these systems reduce “capable guardianship” by obscuring visibility and accountability in transactions.

The findings show that hospitality environments unintentionally contribute to this condition. The routine acceptance of external deliveries, absence of verification mechanisms, and emphasis on service efficiency create environments where suitable targets (delivery points) and motivated offenders converge without sufficient monitoring.

However, unlike traditional applications of the theory—which focus on physical environments—this study extends its relevance to digitally mediated service ecosystems, where guardianship is not only organizational but also platform-dependent. This highlights a critical gap: hospitality organizations rely on external digital infrastructures but lack control over their risk governance.

Role Ambiguity and Behavioral Normalization (Social Learning Theory).

The phenomenon of indirect involvement—where employees unknowingly facilitate drug distribution—cannot be fully explained by structural vulnerability alone. It is also shaped by behavioral and cultural dynamics within the workplace. Drawing on Albert Bandura’s Social Learning Theory, the findings suggest that employees’ responses to suspicious situations are influenced by observed norms and peer behavior. When questionable practices—such as accepting unverified packages—are routinely tolerated, they become normalized as part of everyday operations. This aligns with prior studies in service industries that show employees often prioritize speed and customer satisfaction over procedural caution. However, this study adds nuance by demonstrating that such normalization is not merely a service issue, but a risk amplification mechanism in digitally connected environments. At the same time, the emergence of Anti-Drug Ambassador initiatives reflects the inverse dynamic: positive behavioral modeling. Unlike formal policies, peer influence operates informally and continuously, making it more effective in shaping day-to-day vigilance.

From Exposure to Capability: The Role of Experiential Learning.

While the findings identify gaps in awareness and surveillance, they also point toward learning-based solutions. Employees are not inherently negligent; rather, they often lack the experiential knowledge needed to recognize complex, digitally mediated risks.

Using David Kolb’s Experiential Learning Theory, the study interprets workplace vulnerability as a learning deficit. Employees encounter risk situations (e.g., handling deliveries), but without structured reflection and conceptualization, these experiences do not translate into improved awareness or action. This explains why

traditional training programs—often theoretical and compliance-based—are insufficient. Instead, learning must be embedded in real operational contexts, allowing employees to recognize patterns of suspicious behavior, reflect on prior interactions, and actively apply preventive responses. This perspective shifts the focus from rule enforcement to capability development, which is particularly relevant in dynamic hospitality environments.

#### Reframing Service Excellence Under Risk Conditions.

The study also challenges conventional interpretations of service excellence. Existing hospitality literature emphasizes responsiveness, empathy, and efficiency, but tends to overlook risk-awareness as a core service competency. The findings suggest that in digitally integrated environments, service quality and security are inseparable. Overemphasis on efficiency—such as rapid acceptance of deliveries—can inadvertently reduce vigilance and increase exposure to illicit activities. This creates a structural tension: high service responsiveness → increases operational efficiency, and high vigilance → may slow service processes.

The novelty of this study lies in proposing that service excellence must be redefined as a balance between efficiency and situational awareness, rather than treating them as separate domains.

#### Anti-Drug Ambassadors as Embedded Risk Governance.

One of the key contributions of this study is the conceptualization of Anti-Drug Ambassadors not merely as awareness agents, but as embedded governance mechanisms within organizational culture. Unlike traditional surveillance systems—which are hierarchical, episodic, and reactive—peer-based ambassadors operate: informally within daily interactions, continuously rather than periodically, and relationally rather than procedurally.

This aligns with emerging research on participatory risk management, which emphasizes distributed responsibility rather than centralized control. However, it is important to acknowledge a limitation, there is currently limited empirical evidence demonstrating the long-term effectiveness of such programs in hospitality settings. Most existing studies on peer-based interventions come from public health or education sectors, not service industries. Therefore, while the ambassador model shows strong theoretical potential, its application in hospitality should be considered innovative but still exploratory, requiring further empirical validation.

#### Positioning Within Existing Research (Critical Comparison).

Compared to prior studies, this research contributes in three key ways: bridging disconnected domains, extending crime theory into digital service ecosystems, and introducing a behavioral–organizational hybrid solution. Bridging disconnected domains means previous research tends to separate drug trafficking studies from workplace management. This study integrates them by showing how distribution systems intersect with service operations.

Extending crime theory into digital service ecosystems. While Routine Activity Theory has been widely applied in criminology, its application to platform-mediated service environments remains limited. Introducing a behavioral–organizational

hybrid solution. Unlike traditional compliance-based approaches, this study highlights peer-driven and learning-based strategies as complementary mechanisms. At the same time, this study does not claim that hospitality workers are primary actors in drug distribution. Instead, it positions them as situationally exposed participants, which is a more nuanced and realistic framing.

#### Implications and Synthesis.

Overall, the findings indicate that workplace vulnerability in the hospitality sector emerges from the interaction of three dimensions: structural factors (open service systems, digital platform reliance), behavioral factors (normalization, low awareness), learning factors (lack of experiential knowledge). Addressing these risks requires an integrated approach that combines improved verification and coordination systems, behavioral interventions through peer influence, and experiential learning embedded in daily operations.

### Conclusions

This study demonstrates that the transformation of drug trafficking into digitally mediated distribution systems represents a significant shift in the risk landscape faced by hospitality organizations. The use of ride-hailing and delivery platforms as covert logistical channels illustrates how criminal networks increasingly operate within legitimate service infrastructures, creating indirect and often invisible exposure pathways. While hospitality employees are not primary actors in these networks, their routine interactions with external service providers position them as **situationally vulnerable participants** within broader distribution chains.

The findings confirm that workplace vulnerability is shaped by the interaction of structural, behavioral, and learning-related factors. Structurally, the open and service-oriented nature of hospitality operations—combined with reliance on external digital platforms—creates multiple entry points for illicit activities. Behaviorally, the normalization of efficiency-driven practices and the lack of risk awareness contribute to passive acceptance of potentially suspicious interactions. From a learning perspective, the absence of experiential and context-based training limits employees' ability to identify and respond to emerging threats.

By integrating Routine Activity Theory, Social Learning Theory, and Experiential Learning Theory, this study provides a more comprehensive understanding of how digital crime adaptation intersects with workplace environments. Importantly, it moves beyond traditional compliance-based approaches by emphasizing the role of **embedded, participatory strategies**, such as the Anti-Drug Ambassador model. This approach highlights the value of peer influence, informal monitoring, and continuous awareness-building in strengthening organizational resilience.

The study also contributes to the reconceptualization of service excellence in the hospitality industry. In an era where digital connectivity reshapes both opportunities and risks, service quality must extend beyond responsiveness and efficiency to include vigilance, safety, and ethical responsibility. Achieving this balance requires

organizations to integrate risk awareness into daily operations without compromising guest experience. Nevertheless, this study is limited by its reliance on secondary data and the absence of direct empirical observation within hospitality workplaces. Future research is recommended to employ primary data collection methods, such as interviews or field studies, to validate and expand upon these findings. Additionally, further investigation into the effectiveness of peer-based interventions, including Anti-Drug Ambassador programs, is needed to assess their long-term impact in hospitality settings.

In conclusion, addressing drug-related risks in the digital era requires a multidimensional and adaptive approach. Hospitality organizations must move beyond reactive measures and develop proactive strategies that integrate technological systems, human behavior, and organizational learning. Such efforts are essential for building a resilient, safe, and sustainable service environment in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

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# SYNOPSIS

The 6th International Hospitality Entrepreneurship and Innovation Conference 2026 (InHEIC 2026) is an international conference organized by students of the Hotel Management Study Program (Class C of 2022) at the Bali Tourism Polytechnic, conducted using a hybrid format. InHEIC is an annual event for the Hotel Management Study Program, serving as a practical implementation of the Management Application subject. In alignment with the Bali Tourism Polytechnic's mission as an educational and development institution for tourism, InHEIC aims to unite scholars and industry professionals by providing an opportunity to share their contemporary research and insights, as well as to get their papers published.

The conference was held on May 8, 2026, and was divided into two (2) main parts: a Plenary Session and a Parallel Session. Prior to these sessions, keynote speeches were delivered by the Deputy for Resources and Institutions at the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia, a Professor from the Bali Tourism Polytechnic, the President of the ASEAN Tourism Association, the Vice President of Human Capital Development and Sustainability at InJourney, and the Head of Finance and Business Development at the Bali Hotel Association. During the Plenary Session, there were six (6) invited speakers, each with their own field of expertise. Meanwhile, the Parallel Session featured eight (8) breakout rooms, providing scholars and industry professionals with a platform to meet, present their contemporary research, and have their papers published.



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