

The Influence of Reservation Agent Service Quality on Guest Room Booking Decisions at Jumeirah

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of reservation agents' service quality on guests' booking decisions at Jumeirah Bali, a five-star luxury hotel facing increasing competition from online travel agencies (OTAs). Using a quantitative descriptive approach with a causal-associative design, data were collected from 100 respondents selected through purposive sampling, and analyzed using simple linear regression supported by validity, reliability, and classical assumption tests. The results reveal that service quality significantly affects booking decisions, with a regression coefficient of 0.618 and R^2 of 0.485, indicating that nearly half of the variance in guest decisions is explained by service quality. Politeness, professionalism, and product knowledge were identified as the strongest dimensions, while responsiveness and attentiveness, though satisfactory, require further improvement. These findings underscore the strategic role of reservation agents as the first service encounter that shapes guest perceptions, enhances direct booking performance, and strengthens long-term loyalty in a competitive hospitality market.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry plays a pivotal role in driving tourism and regional economic development, particularly in globally renowned destinations such as Bali. Bali's hotel sector has consistently attracted both domestic and international tourists, supported by its cultural heritage, natural beauty, and world-class facilities. However, the rapid growth of online travel agencies (OTAs) has significantly influenced consumer booking behavior. While OTAs such as Booking.com, Agoda, and Expedia provide convenience and broad market reach, they often reduce direct bookings, which traditionally yield higher profit margins and foster stronger guest relationships [1]. This phenomenon has created a strategic challenge for luxury hotels such as Jumeirah Bali, which must balance the benefits of OTA exposure with the need to strengthen direct booking channels.

Reservation agents represent a critical touchpoint in shaping guests' perceptions prior to booking. Their communication skills, responsiveness, and accuracy of information delivery are instrumental in building guest trust and influencing purchase decisions [2]. According to Parasuraman et al. [3], service quality is a multidimensional construct encompassing reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles, all of which directly affect customer satisfaction and loyalty in the hospitality sector. Recent studies further confirm that superior service quality significantly enhances booking decisions and customer satisfaction in luxury hotels [4], [5]. Moreover, research highlights that personal interaction with reservation agents not only facilitates accurate information exchange but also fosters a sense of personalized service that digital platforms cannot fully replicate [6].

In this context, Jumeirah Bali—an iconic five-star resort inspired by Majapahit architecture—faces the dual challenge of maintaining its global reputation for premium service while simultaneously increasing direct booking rates. Despite its strong brand positioning, the dominance of OTAs in the Indonesian hospitality market has reduced the proportion of direct reservations, underlining the importance of optimizing the role of reservation agents. Previous research emphasizes that high-quality

service delivery during the reservation stage strongly influences guests' decision-making process, including their confidence in booking and willingness to recommend the hotel [7], [8]. Thus, examining the impact of reservation agents' service quality on guest booking decisions at Jumeirah Bali is not only timely but also contributes to the broader discourse on competitive strategies in luxury hospitality management.

2. METHOD

This study adopted a quantitative descriptive approach with a causal-associative design to examine the influence of reservation agents' service quality on guests' booking decisions at Jumeirah Bali. The research was conducted from July to August 2025, with the population comprising 13,092 individuals drawn from the hotel's reservation database in 2024. A purposive sampling technique was applied, and a sample of 100 respondents was determined using the Slovin formula with a 10% margin of error, which is considered sufficient for exploratory causal analysis in hospitality research [9]. Data collection was carried out through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). To ensure construct validity and reliability, all items were tested using Pearson's product-moment correlation with a threshold of $r > 0.361$ for validity, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient greater than 0.60 for reliability, which aligns with established criteria in social science research [10]. Data analysis employed simple linear regression to evaluate the effect of service quality on guest booking decisions, supported by classical assumption tests such as normality and heteroscedasticity, followed by the coefficient of determination (R^2) and F-test for hypothesis verification. Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS version 25, which is widely utilized in hospitality and tourism studies for its robustness in handling behavioral and service quality data [11].

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Result

3.1.1. Description of Respondents' Characteristics

The demographic analysis reveals that the majority of respondents were male (61%), with females comprising 39%, indicating a slightly higher male dominance among guests engaging with reservation agents at Jumeirah Bali. In terms of age distribution, the largest group was 25–34 years (53%), followed by 35–44 years (22%), while younger respondents aged 17–24 accounted for 8% and older guests above 54 years represented only 4%. This suggests that the hotel primarily attracts young to middle-aged adults who are generally more responsive to digital promotions and direct booking initiatives. Regarding educational attainment, most respondents possessed higher education qualifications (70% Diploma/Bachelor's degree and 9% Master's degree), whereas 21% had secondary education. These findings imply that Jumeirah Bali's guest profile is dominated by relatively well-educated individuals with strong decision-making abilities and higher expectations toward service quality, aligning with prior studies that emphasize the influence of demographics on customer perception and booking behavior.

Table 1. Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Category	Frequency (n=100)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	61	61%
	Female	39	39%
Age (years)	17–24	8	8%
	25–34	53	53%
	35–44	22	22%
	45–54	13	13%
	>54	4	4%
Education Level	Secondary (High School)	21	21%
	Diploma/Bachelor's	70	70%
	Master's	9	9%

3.1.2. Respondents' Achievement Level on Research Variables

The results indicate that both variables—service quality ($M = 4.18$) and guest decision ($M = 4.07$)—were evaluated positively by respondents, falling within the “Good” category. For service quality, the strongest dimensions were politeness, professionalism, and product knowledge of reservation agents, which were consistently rated as “Very Good,” while service speed and attentiveness were rated lower, signaling potential areas for improvement. Meanwhile, in guest decision-making, respondents emphasized rational and information-driven behaviors, with the highest ratings observed in comparing hotels and seeking online information. However, the relatively lower scores on willingness to return ($M = 3.70$) and confidence in decision-making ($M = 3.81$) suggest that long-term loyalty and assurance in booking require further strategic interventions. These findings emphasize that while Jumeirah Bali's service quality and booking decisions are generally perceived favorably, enhancing responsiveness, service efficiency, and guest retention should remain a managerial priority.

Table 2. Summary of Respondents' Achievement Levels on Research Variables

Variable / Indicator (selected items)	Mean	Category
Service Quality (X)		
Agents' politeness and professionalism in handling guest data	4.38	Very Good
Agents' product knowledge	4.28	Very Good
Responsiveness to guest inquiries	4.25	Very Good
Use of polite and professional language	4.27	Very Good
Service speed in handling reservations	3.91	Good
Attentiveness to guest needs	4.05	Good
Overall Mean (Service Quality)	4.18	Good
Guest Decision (Y)		
Comparing hotels based on available information	4.41	Very Good
Searching for information online or via social media	4.40	Very Good
Recognizing the need for accommodation during travel	4.25	Very Good
Considering facilities, price, location, and guest reviews	4.20	Good
Confidence in making final booking decision	3.81	Good
Willingness to stay again or recommend	3.70	Good
Overall Mean (Guest Decision)	4.07	Good

3.1.3. Validity and Reliability Testing

The validity test was conducted using Pearson's product-moment correlation with a critical value of 0.361 at the 5% significance level. The results showed that all items had correlation coefficients greater than the required threshold, confirming that the questionnaire items were valid in measuring the intended constructs. Furthermore, the reliability test using Cronbach's alpha coefficient indicated that all variables achieved values above 0.60, demonstrating acceptable internal consistency. These results confirm that both the service quality and guest decision variables met the criteria for validity and reliability, ensuring that the measurement instruments were appropriate for further statistical analysis.

Table 3. Validity and Reliability Testing Results

Variable	No. of Items	Validity Test Result ($r > 0.361$)	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability Status
Service Quality (X)	11	All items valid	> 0.60	Reliable
Guest Decision (Y)	10	All items valid	> 0.60	Reliable

3.1.4. Assumption Testing

Before conducting regression analysis, classical assumption tests were carried out to ensure the accuracy of the model. The normality test using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov method produced a significance value of 0.200, which is greater than 0.05, indicating that the data were normally distributed.

Furthermore, the heteroscedasticity test was examined using a scatterplot between standardized residuals and predicted values. The results showed that the data points were randomly distributed above and below zero without forming a specific pattern, confirming the absence of heteroscedasticity problems. These findings suggest that the dataset met the key assumptions required for regression analysis, thereby ensuring the robustness of subsequent hypothesis testing.

Table 4. Assumption Testing Results

Test	Criteria	Result	Conclusion
Normality (K–S test)	Sig. > 0.05	0.200	Data are normally distributed
Heteroscedasticity	No specific scatterplot pattern	Random distribution	No heteroscedasticity detected

3.1.5. Hypothesis Test

The regression analysis revealed that service quality had a positive and significant effect on guest booking decisions at Jumeirah Bali, with a regression coefficient of 0.618 ($p < 0.001$). The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.485$) indicates that 48.5% of the variation in guests' booking decisions can be explained by service quality, while the remaining 51.5% is attributable to other factors not included in the model. The F-test result ($F = 92.254$, $p < 0.001$) further supports the model's significance. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that service quality has a positive influence on guest decisions to book rooms at Jumeirah Bali is accepted.

Table 6. Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Sig.	Conclusion
Constant	12.243	–	–
Service Quality (X)	0.618	0.000	Significant

Table 7. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Model	R Square	Interpretation
Service Quality → Guest Decision	0.485	48.5% of guest decisions explained by service quality; the remaining 51.5% influenced by other factors

Table 8. ANOVA (F-Test)

Model	F	Sig.	Conclusion
Regression	92.254	0.000	Significant; hypothesis accepted

3.2. Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that service quality provided by reservation agents has a positive and significant influence on guests' booking decisions at Jumeirah Bali. This result emphasizes that the reservation stage is a critical service encounter shaping customer perceptions and trust in the hospitality industry. With a regression coefficient of 0.618 and R^2 of 0.485, the analysis indicates that nearly half of the variance in guest decisions can be explained by the quality of services delivered by reservation agents, highlighting their strategic role in enhancing direct booking performance.

This outcome aligns with prior studies in the hospitality domain which emphasize that high-quality interactions with service staff significantly increase customer confidence and influence purchasing intentions. Sirgy and Su [12] argue that congruity between customer expectations and perceived service enhances decision-making processes in hospitality contexts. Similarly, Park and Jang [13] found that demographic characteristics and service encounters strongly shape guests' selection and satisfaction with hotels, underlining the importance of personalized, accurate, and responsive service.

The present findings further corroborate the argument that service quality dimensions—particularly responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—are central in influencing customer behavior. Foroudi et al. [14] confirmed that service quality and brand image are key determinants of satisfaction

and loyalty in the hotel industry. Additionally, Alananzeh et al. [15] demonstrated that improving service encounters at early stages, such as reservations, significantly impacts guests' willingness to book and return. These results are consistent with our evidence showing that indicators such as politeness, professionalism, and product knowledge were rated highly, while responsiveness and attentiveness, though satisfactory, remain areas requiring improvement.

Another critical implication of this study is that while service quality positively impacts booking decisions, long-term guest loyalty—such as willingness to recommend or repeat bookings—scored relatively lower in comparison to information-seeking behaviors. This is in line with Raza et al. [16], who noted that service quality strongly influences initial satisfaction but requires reinforcement through consistent experience to sustain long-term behavioral intentions. Fawzy [17] also highlighted that the reservation encounter is not merely administrative but a strategic touchpoint that shapes guest perceptions of reliability and trust before the stay even begins.

Taken together, the findings of this study contribute to the growing body of literature emphasizing that service encounters, particularly in the reservation stage, are central to hotel performance in the era of intense competition with online travel agencies. By strengthening the competencies of reservation agents in responsiveness, accuracy, and empathy, hotels such as Jumeirah Bali can enhance direct booking rates, foster customer trust, and secure competitive advantage in the luxury hospitality market.

4. CONCLUSION

This study confirms that service quality delivered by reservation agents has a positive and significant impact on guests' booking decisions at Jumeirah Bali. The regression results indicate that 48.5% of the variance in guest decisions can be explained by the quality of service, with politeness, professionalism, and product knowledge being the strongest contributing factors. Nevertheless, responsiveness and attentiveness were identified as areas requiring further improvement. These findings highlight the critical role of reservation agents as the first point of contact in shaping guest perceptions, influencing booking decisions, and supporting direct booking strategies in a competitive hospitality market. From a managerial perspective, continuous training and performance monitoring of reservation staff are essential to enhance responsiveness, build trust, and ultimately strengthen guest loyalty.

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