

The Role of Online and Service Experiences in Enhancing Guest Satisfaction: A Case Study of Bali's Hospitality Industry

Ida Ayu Bellivia Nareswari^{1,*}, Nurdin Sobari²
Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia^{1,2}
Corresponding e-mail: dayunareswari@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aims to examine the relationships between online experience, service experience, and guest satisfaction in the context of five-star hotels in Bali, Indonesia, with a focus on domestic tourists.

Method: A quantitative research approach was utilized, employing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Data were gathered through an online questionnaire distributed to 245 respondents who had stayed at a five-star hotel in Bali within the past 10 months. The questionnaire assessed variables such as online experience, service experience, and guest satisfaction using Likert-scale indicators.

Result: The analysis revealed that online experience has a significant influence on both service experience and guest satisfaction. Additionally, service experience was found to significantly affect guest satisfaction. These findings underscore the critical role of digital interactions and high-quality service in shaping customer perceptions and fostering loyalty.

Practical Implications for Economic Growth and Development: This study offers valuable insights for hotel management on enhancing digital platforms and improving service quality to elevate customer satisfaction and loyalty. By prioritizing seamless online and offline experiences, hotels can gain a competitive edge in Bali's highly competitive hospitality market while contributing to the growth of the local tourism economy. Furthermore, these findings provide recommendations for policymakers to support digital transformation strategies in the hospitality sector, promoting sustainable tourism growth in Indonesia.

Keywords: *online experience, service experience, guest satisfaction, five-star hotels*

INTRODUCTION

The resurgence of Indonesia's tourism sector following the COVID-19 pandemic has become increasingly evident. Data from the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) reveals a notable 25.43% increase in international tourist arrivals during the first quarter of 2024, totaling 3,031,756 visitors (CNBC Indonesia, 2024). Bali, one of Indonesia's premier tourist destinations, continues to be a major draw for international travelers. In August 2024 alone, 616,641 international visitors arrived directly in Bali. Alongside this influx of international tourists, domestic tourism in Bali has also seen remarkable growth. Between January and September 2024, domestic tourist visits reached 7,626,442—a significant increase from the 7,109,996 visits recorded during the same period in 2023 (Dinas Pariwisata Provinsi Bali, 2024). This surge in tourist numbers has intensified competition within the tourism sector, especially in the hospitality industry. The success of hospitality businesses hinges heavily on customer loyalty, as loyal guests drive higher transaction frequency, volume, and repeat visits, thereby boosting profitability (Aljumah et al., 2022; Rather, 2020; Rather & Hollebeek, 2019). In today's digital era, customers frequently share their experiences on social media, which can profoundly influence their future behaviors and choices (Lee et al., 2019). Satisfied



customers are more likely to repurchase or reuse the same services (Wirakusuma et al., 2021).

A traveler's perception of a destination's value is shaped by the balance between the quality of experiences they receive and the price they pay (Moon & Han, 2019). Customers satisfied with service quality often perceive greater value and are willing to pay premium prices, as high-quality services enhance their perceived value (Sosianika et al., 2021). To remain competitive, hotel businesses must adopt strategic plans, cultivate competitive advantages, and deliver differentiated services that create memorable experiences for their customers (Rather & Hollebeek, 2019).

Customer experience encompasses the impressions formed through interactions with a brand (Ameen et al., 2021). These experiences involve feelings, thoughts, and actions influenced by the customer journey, which spans pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase stages. Marketing mix components—product, price, promotion, and place—also play a significant role in shaping consumer experiences (Godovykh & Tasci, 2020).

In today's multi-channel landscape, businesses must manage diverse customer touchpoints across both online and offline channels (Becker & Jaakkola, 2020). The internet serves as a crucial tool for maintaining customer relationships by providing transactional platforms and real-time service information. Most customers now rely on online resources to research hotel options, utilizing both hotel websites and price comparison platforms that display competitive offerings (Lee et al., 2020).

Online experiences extend beyond information access and entertainment to include social and sensory dimensions (Lee et al., 2020). Companies employ various communication channels—websites, email, social media, and mobile apps—to engage customers. With the growing adoption of omnichannel strategies, businesses are managing these channels synergistically to deliver seamless customer experiences across platforms, thereby enhancing overall performance (Steinhoff et al., 2019). Additionally, digital information influences consumer expectations of tourism services, subsequently shaping their travel experiences (Kar et al., 2021).

In the hospitality industry, service interactions are often prolonged, and guests' active participation is essential to fully experience the value offered. Without such engagement, guests may not realize the full potential of even the highest-quality services (Nangpiire et al., 2022). Service experience comprises a series of interactions involving the business, employees, physical services, and other customers (Kar et al., 2021).

Although previous research has examined customer experience across various domains, much of it has focused either on online customer experiences (Ameen et al., 2021; Bleier et al., 2019; Kar et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2020) or service experiences (Alnawas & Hemsley-Brown, 2019; Lee et al., 2019; Ouma et al., 2019). However, studies that integrate online and service experiences and examine their combined impact on guest satisfaction in Indonesia's hospitality industry remain limited. This study aims to fill that gap by focusing on Bali's hospitality sector. As a leading global tourist destination, Bali's unique characteristics provide fresh insights into the integration of online and offline experiences within a rapidly evolving tourism context. Unlike earlier research by Lee et al. (2020), which overlooked specific hotel attributes, this study emphasizes five-star hotels in Bali, exploring how online and offline experiences contribute to premium service contexts with high customer expectations. Additionally, the study focuses on domestic tourists, an increasingly significant market segment, providing valuable insights into their preferences and behaviors.

This study aims to analyze the relationships between online experience, service experience, and guest satisfaction in Bali's five-star hotels. By integrating these elements, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of how digital and service experiences shape customer perceptions and behaviors. These findings offer practical implications for both academics and practitioners in the hospitality industry.

METHOD

This study adopts a quantitative research approach, employing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to analyze the relationships between online experience, service experience, and guest satisfaction in the context of five-star hotels in Bali. Data were collected via an online questionnaire distributed to 245 respondents who met the eligibility criteria of having stayed at a five-star hotel in Bali within the past 10 months.

Purposive sampling was used to target domestic tourists aged 17 years and older. To ensure clarity, a structured questionnaire was prepared in Bahasa Indonesia. It included five-point Likert scale questions related to the study's key variables, as well as demographic questions and screening criteria to confirm respondent eligibility.

Data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS 4.0. The measurement model's reliability and validity were assessed through Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). For the structural model, path coefficients, R-squared values, and the significance of hypothesized relationships were evaluated using bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples.

Table 1. Variable Measurement

Variables	Dimensions	Codes	Statements
Online Experience (Lee at al., 2020)		OE.1	I searched for information about this hotel on the internet before deciding to stay.
		OE.2	I reviewed the hotel's webpage prior to my visit.
		OE.3	I encountered no difficulties finding information about this hotel before making my decision to stay.
		OE.4	The information provided on the hotel's webpage was very helpful.
		OE.5	The information shared on the hotel's social media platforms was very helpful.
		OE.6	The hotel's webpage was easy to locate.
		OE.7	The hotel's webpage was user-friendly.
		OE.8	I enjoyed browsing the internet for information about this hotel.
Service Experience (Lee at al., 2020)	Physical environment	SL.1	The hotel's environment was clean.
		SL.2	The hotel's architecture was impressive.
		SL.3	The hotel's color scheme was visually appealing.
		SL.4	The colors within the hotel were well-coordinated.
		SL.5	The hotel's lighting was appropriate.
	Interaction with staff	SS.1	The staff provided thorough service.
		SS.2	The staff delivered satisfactory service.
		SS.3	The staff were reliable.
		SS.4	The staff were professional.
	Interaction with customers	ST.1	Other guests were not loud.
		ST.2	Other guests behaved courteously.
		ST.3	Other guests were not problematic.
		ST.4	Other guests did not cause disturbances.
Guest Satisfaction (Kim et al., 2020)		SF.1	I am satisfied with choosing this hotel.
		SF.2	I am satisfied with staying at this hotel.

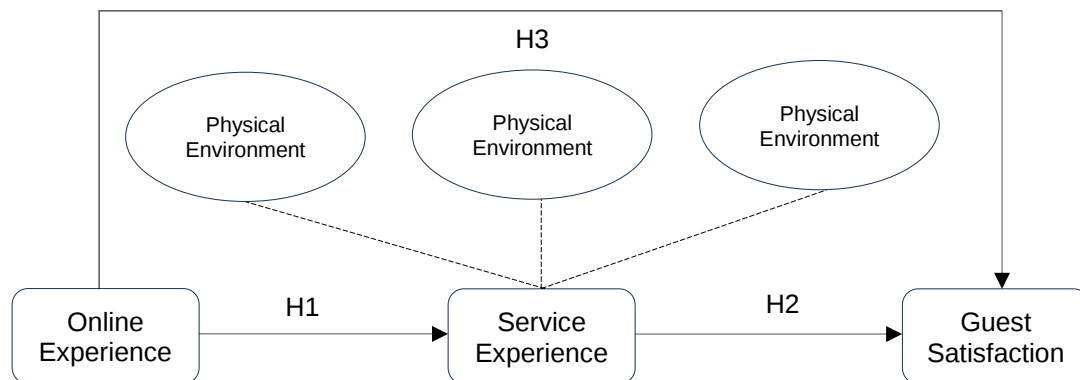
Variables	Dimensions	Codes	Statements
		SF.3	I am satisfied with the menu offered by this hotel.
		SF.4	I am satisfied with the atmosphere of this hotel.
		SF.5	I am satisfied with the service environment of this hotel.
		SF.6	I am satisfied with the price of this hotel.

Source: Compiled by the authors (2024)

Hypotheses Development

This research investigates the relationship between online experience, service experience, and guest satisfaction in the hotel industry. The following figure illustrates the hypotheses tested in this study.

Figure 1. Research Framework



Source: Developed by the authors based on Lee et al. (2020)

Online Experience on Service Experience

Online experience refers to the interaction customers have with digital platforms, such as hotel websites or mobile applications, which shapes their expectations of the service they will receive. A seamless, user-friendly, and informative online experience can foster positive perceptions of service quality. Digital information obtained online helps form consumer expectations of tourism services, which in turn influences the service experience they have during their stay (Kar et al., 2021). Furthermore, accessible, clear, and helpful online platforms reduce consumer uncertainty and strengthen their perception of the quality of services provided (Lee et al., 2020).

H1: Online experience positively influences service experience

Online Experience on Guest Satisfaction

Guest satisfaction is an emotional evaluation of the overall experience with a service or product. A positive online experience, characterized by ease of use, clarity of information, and responsiveness, can enhance customer satisfaction by meeting or exceeding expectations even before physical interaction with the hotel. This aligns with the idea that online platforms offering clear and helpful information reduce uncertainty and improve customer satisfaction (Lee et al., 2020).

H2: Online experience positively influences guest satisfaction

Service Experience on Guest Satisfaction

Service experience encompasses the interactions customers have with the hotel's physical environment, staff, and other guests. High-quality service experiences—such as professional and friendly staff, clean facilities, and a pleasant atmosphere—directly contribute to guest satisfaction. When customers perceive that their needs are being met or exceeded, they are more likely to be satisfied overall (Ouma et al., 2019). This aligns with the idea that the physical and social environment, as well as the functional quality of services provided, strongly influence customer evaluations (Lee et al., 2020).

H3: Service experience positively influences guest satisfaction

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Demographic of Respondents

The data show that female respondents make up the majority, accounting for 136 individuals, or 55.1% of the total sample. Meanwhile, male respondents represent 109 individuals, or 44.1% of the total. This gender distribution suggests that female guests may be slightly more represented in evaluating their experiences with five-star hotels. Since gender can influence perceptions of online and service experiences, as well as overall satisfaction, it is important to consider potential differences in expectations and evaluations between male and female guests. For instance, female guests may prioritize certain aspects of the online booking process, service quality, or hotel amenities differently than male guests, which could affect overall satisfaction scores and provide valuable insights for targeted improvements in five-star hotel offerings.

Table 2. Demographic Data of Respondents' Gender

Gender	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Male	109	44.1%
Female	136	55.1%

Source: Processed data (2024)

The survey data also reveals a significant distribution of hotel types among respondents, highlighting the dominance of independent hotels and international chains. Independent hotels account for the largest share, representing 48% of the total respondents, indicating a strong presence of locally owned or standalone properties that cater to travelers seeking unique and personalized experiences. Meanwhile, international chain hotels closely follow with 46%, showcasing their substantial market penetration and appeal to customers who prioritize brand recognition, standardized services, and global reputations. Together, these two categories dominate the market, accounting for 94% of the total respondents, while national chain hotels hold a minimal share of only 6%. This suggests that national chains may face challenges competing with the strong presence of both global brands and independent establishments.

Table 3. Demographic Data of Respondents based on Hotel Type

Hotel Type	Number of Respondents	Percentage
International Chain	112	46%
National Chain	15	6%
Independent	118	48%

Source: Processed data (2024)

Construct Reliability and Validity

The table below presents the results of a reliability and validity analysis for several constructs: Online Experience (OE), Service Experience (SE), and Guest Satisfaction (SF). The analysis includes key statistical measures such as factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE).

Table 4. Construct Reliability and Validity

Construction	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
OE		0.848	0.887	0.568
OE.2	0.718			
OE.4	0.805			
OE.5	0.729			
OE.6	0.764			
OE.7	0.785			
OE.8	0.717			
SE		0.882	0.927	0.809
SL.2	0.848			
SL.3	0.834			
SL.4	0.814			
SS.2	0.800			
SS.3	0.786			
SS.4	0.857			
ST.1	0.778			
ST.2	0.821			
ST.3	0.797			
ST.4	0.831			
SF		0.735	0.850	0.654
SF.1	0.775			
SF.3	0.833			
SF.5	0.818			

Source: Processed data (2024)

The table above shows that Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs are above 0.7, indicating good internal consistency and reliability of the measurement items. For example, the Online Experience (OE) construct has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.848, while Service Experience (SE) and Satisfaction (SF) have values of 0.882 and 0.735, respectively. Similarly, the composite reliability (CR) values for all constructs exceed the 0.7 threshold, confirming their reliability. The AVE values for OE (0.568), SE (0.809), and SF (0.654) are all above the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.5, indicating that the constructs explain a sufficient amount of variance in their respective items.

The factor loadings for individual items within each construct are also satisfactory, with most values exceeding 0.7, demonstrating strong correlations between the items and their respective constructs. For instance, in the OE construct, items such as OE.4 (0.805) and OE.7 (0.785) show high factor loadings, contributing to the construct's reliability. Similarly, in the SE construct, items like SL.2 (0.848) and SS.4 (0.857) exhibit strong loadings, further supporting the construct's validity. Overall, the data indicate that the measurement model is both reliable and valid, making it suitable for further analysis in structural equation modeling or other statistical techniques.

Discriminant Validity

The table below presents the discriminant validity analysis of five constructs: Online Experience (OE), Physical Environment (SL), Interaction with Staff (SS), Interaction with Customers (ST), and Satisfaction (SF), using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The diagonal values in the table represent the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct, while the off-diagonal values represent the correlations between the constructs.

Table 5. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	OE	SF	SL	SS	ST
OE	0.754				
SF	0.641	0.809			
SL	0.683	0.676	0.832		
SS	0.591	0.691	0.644	0.815	
ST	0.587	0.602	0.700	0.646	0.807

Source: Processed data (2024)

The table above indicates that the square root of the AVE for each construct (e.g., OE = 0.754, SF = 0.809, SL = 0.832, SS = 0.815, and ST = 0.807) is higher than the correlations between the constructs, suggesting that each construct is more strongly related to its own items than to those of other constructs. This confirms that the constructs exhibit good discriminant validity, meaning they are distinct from one another. The correlations between constructs, such as the relationship between OE and SF (0.641) or SL and ST (0.700), indicate moderate to strong relationships, suggesting that while the constructs are distinct, they are still interrelated. For instance, the relatively high correlation between SL and ST (0.700) may imply some conceptual overlap or mutual influence within the model. Overall, the data demonstrates that the constructs are both valid and distinct, making them suitable for further analysis using structural equation modeling or other multivariate techniques.

R-Square Test

The table below shows the R-squared and adjusted R-squared values for two constructs, Service Experience (SE) and Guest Satisfaction (SF), indicating the proportion of variance in the dependent variables explained by the independent variables in the model.

Table 6. R-Square Test

Construct	R-square	R-square Adjusted
SE	0.513	0.511
SF	0.601	0.598

Source: Processed data (2024)

The table above indicates that the R-squared value for SE is 0.513, meaning that 51.3% of the variance in SE is explained by the independent variables in the model. Similarly, the R-squared value for SF is 0.601, indicating that 60.1% of the variance in SF is accounted for by the predictors. These values suggest that the model demonstrates moderate to strong explanatory power for both constructs, with SF being slightly better explained by the independent variables compared to SE. This highlights the effectiveness of the predictors in capturing the variability of the dependent variables.

The adjusted R-squared values (SE = 0.511, SF = 0.598) are slightly lower than the R-squared values, as expected, since the adjusted R-squared accounts for the number of predictors and adjusts for potential overfitting. The small difference between the R-squared and adjusted R-

squared values suggests that the model is well-fitted and not overly complex. Overall, the data suggests that the independent variables are effective in explaining the variance in SE and SF, making the model reliable and suitable for further analysis and interpretation.

Hypotheses Testing

The table below outlines the results of a path analysis examining the relationships between Online Experience (OE), Service Experience (SE), and Guest Satisfaction (SF).

Table 7. Direct Effect

Direction	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Conclusion
OE → SE	0.716	0.703	0.081	8.874	0.000	Accepted
OE → SF	0.192	0.187	0.064	3.000	0.001	Accepted
SE → SF	0.626	0.617	0.065	9.614	0.000	Accepted

Source: Processed data (2024)

The relationship between OE and SE is strong and highly significant, with a path coefficient of 0.716, a T-statistic of 8.874, and a p-value of 0.000. This indicates that a positive online experience significantly enhances the service experience. It highlights the importance of ensuring seamless and user-friendly online interactions, as they play a crucial role in shaping customers' perceptions of the service experience.

Additionally, the path coefficient from OE to SF is 0.192, with a T-statistic of 3.000 and a p-value of 0.001, showing a weaker but still statistically significant positive relationship. This suggests that while online experience directly impacts customer satisfaction, its influence is not as strong as its impact on service experience. This finding implies that although the quality of online interactions contributes to satisfaction, it may not be the primary driver compared to other factors like service experience.

The strongest relationship in the analysis is between SE and SF, with a path coefficient of 0.626, a T-statistic of 9.614, and a p-value of 0.000. This demonstrates that service experience has the most substantial and significant positive effect on customer satisfaction. This finding underscores the central role of service experience in determining customer satisfaction.

Overall, the results suggest that online experience indirectly enhances satisfaction by improving service experience, while service experience itself is the most critical factor influencing satisfaction. These insights emphasize the need for businesses to focus on both online and service-related interactions to effectively maximize customer satisfaction.

Discussion

The results show that online experience has a positive and significant effect on service experience, meaning that a positive interaction with online platforms contributes to a better perceived quality of service. These findings align with previous studies that demonstrate how customers' initial interactions with online platforms significantly influence their perception of service quality in the company or hotel (Kurniawan, 2020; Lee et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2024). A positive online experience—such as easy website navigation, fast service, and convenience in obtaining information—contributes to an overall better service experience.

The results also indicate that online experience positively and significantly affects guest satisfaction, suggesting that the quality of the online experience can directly improve customer satisfaction levels. These findings are consistent with previous research showing that online

experience has a significant positive effect on guest satisfaction (Lee et al., 2020; Mainardes et al., 2023; Saha et al., 2023). A positive online experience shapes customers' expectations for the services they will receive in person, and a good online experience can significantly enhance their satisfaction. Therefore, it is essential to ensure that every customer interaction point with online platforms—such as hotel websites, booking applications, social media, or other digital communication channels—is well-designed to provide a positive experience.

Lastly, the results demonstrate that service experience has a highly significant positive effect on guest satisfaction. This indicates that the quality of service received by customers plays a strong role in increasing their satisfaction. These findings are supported by previous studies showing that service experience has a significant positive effect on guest satisfaction (Alnawas & Hemsley-Brown, 2019; Kusumawati & Rahayu, 2020; Lee et al., 2020). In this context, the experiences guests have with hotel services—from check-in to the provided facilities—greatly influence how they evaluate their overall experience at the property. A good service experience is closely tied to guest satisfaction, which in turn increases the likelihood of guests returning to the hotel or recommending it to others.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the relationships among online experience, service experience, and guest satisfaction in the context of five-star hotels in Bali, focusing on domestic tourists. The findings highlight the critical role that both digital and service experiences play in shaping customer satisfaction within the hospitality industry. Specifically, the results show that online experience has a strong impact on both service experience and guest satisfaction. This suggests that seamless, user-friendly digital platforms enhance perceptions of service quality and contribute to higher overall satisfaction. Additionally, service experience plays a significant role in determining guest satisfaction, with high-quality service interactions positively influencing customer experiences.

The study underscores the importance of integrating digital and service strategies to enhance customer experiences, which directly impact satisfaction. Hotels should prioritize creating seamless and informative online platforms that align customer expectations with the services they receive. Furthermore, maintaining excellent service quality through well-trained, professional, and responsive staff is essential for boosting guest satisfaction. Creating aesthetically pleasing, clean environments and fostering positive interactions between guests and staff also elevate the overall customer experience. These practical insights are particularly relevant in the competitive hospitality industry, where customer loyalty is a key competitive advantage.

While this study provides valuable insights using a quantitative approach, it leaves room for further research incorporating mixed methodologies. Combining both quantitative and qualitative methods could offer richer insights into the subjective and emotional aspects of customer satisfaction, which are challenging to capture through structured questionnaires alone. Additionally, future research could explore the impact of emerging technologies—such as artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR), or augmented reality (AR)—on customer experiences. Investigating how technologies like AI-driven chatbots or VR hotel tours influence customer expectations and satisfaction could offer valuable strategies for enhancing digital interactions and personalizing guest experiences. Expanding research in these areas could provide a more comprehensive understanding of customer behavior and decision-making in the hospitality industry.

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