

Online Reviews, Trust, and Booking Intention: Airbnb Villas in Seminyak

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Keywords:

Online Reviews, Trust, Booking
Intention, Airbnb

Abstract

This study investigates the mediating role of trust in the relationship between online reviews and booking intention for Airbnb villas in Seminyak, Bali. A quantitative descriptive approach was applied using questionnaires distributed to 140 Airbnb users who had previously booked villas in the area. Data were analyzed through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) technique in SmartPLS 4 to test direct and indirect relationships. The results indicate that online reviews significantly influence user trust but do not directly affect booking intention, while trust alone also shows no significant effect on booking intention. However, when tested as a mediating variable, trust successfully connects online reviews to booking intention. This implies that online reviews can enhance booking intention only by first strengthening user trust. Practically, the findings emphasize the importance for Airbnb managers and accommodation providers to ensure credible and transparent reviews as a strategy to build trust and encourage confident booking decisions

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed the tourism industry, reshaping how travelers search for, compare, and book accommodations. Digital transformation enables tourism businesses to enhance competitiveness through innovation, online marketing, and data-driven decision-making (Kemenparekraf, 2021). According to Kemp(2024), more than 74% of global travelers now rely on Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) such as Airbnb, Agoda, Booking.com, and Traveloka as their primary booking platforms. Similarly, AirDNA(2024) reported that Indonesia hosts over 95,000 active Airbnb properties, with approximately 35% located in Bali making it the fastest-growing Airbnb market in Southeast Asia.

The proliferation of OTAs has reshaped the accommodation landscape by introducing a Business-to-Consumer (B2C) model that directly connects service providers with consumers (Kemenparekraf, 2021). Among these platforms, Airbnb stands out for promoting personalized and local travel experiences, aligning well with the preferences of tourists visiting Bali, especially in the Seminyak area, known for its beaches, vibrant nightlife, and boutique lifestyle. In this context, Airbnb has become a preferred choice for both domestic and international tourists seeking authentic local interactions and flexible lodging options.

Bali's tourism recovery following the pandemic has shown substantial growth. Statistics from Bali's Central Bureau of Statistics (2025), reveal that international tourist arrivals increased from 2.15 million in 2022 to 6.33 million in 2024, indicating a strong post-pandemic rebound supported by enhanced accessibility and digital-based promotional strategies. This growth has been paralleled by an increase in accommodation supply, with more than 7,500 registered lodging units in 2023. Digital accommodation platforms such as Airbnb have played a vital role in this recovery

by supporting non-traditional hospitality models emphasizing flexibility, comfort, and local authenticity.

However, while Airbnb listings in Seminyak exceed 1,000 villas (AirDNA, 2024). The conversion rate from page visits to actual bookings remains relatively low. Tourists often browse listings without finalizing transactions due to uncertainty about the credibility of information, inconsistent service quality, and lack of trust in hosts. This indicates that trust serves as a crucial determinant in consumers' decision-making process. Negative reviews citing issues such as poor cleanliness, misleading photos, and malfunctioning facilities can further diminish user confidence.

Within the framework of the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) theory in Yasir (2020), online reviews act as external stimuli that influence users' internal cognition (trust) and subsequently their behavioral responses (booking intention). Trust functions as a mediating variable that bridges perceived information with action (Agyei et al., 2020). In digital contexts, trust represents the belief in the integrity, reliability, and transparency of online information (Yusuf et al., 2023). Prior studies suggest that online reviews can strengthen trust, which in turn enhances users' purchase or booking intentions (Wen et al., 2024).

Despite the abundance of online reviews, users' booking intentions remain inconsistent, particularly in highly competitive destinations such as Seminyak. This research, therefore, aims to analyze the mediating role of trust in the relationship between online reviews and booking intention among Airbnb villa users in Seminyak, Bali. Understanding this mechanism is essential for developing effective digital marketing strategies and fostering customer confidence in the sharing economy sector.

METHODS

This study focuses on Airbnb users who have previously booked or are considering booking villas in Seminyak, Bali, examining the effect of online reviews (X) on booking intention (Y) with trust (M) as a mediating variable. The Seminyak area was selected because of its high density of villa listings and travelers' heavy reliance on online reviews when assessing service quality. Data collection was carried out online using a Google Form questionnaire distributed to 140 respondents selected through purposive sampling (criteria: aged 18 or above, having used or searched for accommodations on Airbnb Seminyak, and having read online reviews). The research was conducted between January and August 2025, covering instrument design, validity and reliability testing, questionnaire distribution, data collection, and statistical analysis. The instrument consisted of a five-point Likert scale questionnaire, adapted from prior studies online reviews and trust by Wen et al., (2024), and booking intention by El-Said (2020) and supported by secondary data from documentation studies.

Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4, testing both direct and indirect relationships. The outer model evaluation covered *convergent validity* (outer loading ≥ 0.70 ; AVE ≥ 0.50 , or 0.50–0.60 acceptable for scale development), *discriminant validity* (Fornell–Larcker criterion and cross-loadings), and reliability (*Composite Reliability* and *Cronbach's Alpha* ≥ 0.70). The inner model evaluation included R^2 (≈ 0.19 weak, 0.33 moderate, 0.67 strong) and Q^2 (*predictive relevance*; ≈ 0.02 weak, 0.15 moderate, 0.35 strong). Hypothesis testing employed bootstrapping with 5,000 sub-samples, with significance determined by $t > 1.96$ and $p < 0.05$. Mediation analysis followed the criteria of Hair et al. (2021): *complementary partial mediation* (both direct and indirect effects significant and aligned), *competitive partial mediation* (significant but opposite directions), and *full mediation* (only indirect effect significant).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of Respondents

The respondents of this study consist of 140 Airbnb users who have booked or considered booking accommodations in the Seminyak area of Bali. All participants confirmed that they had used Airbnb, regularly read online reviews before booking, and had at least once decided not to proceed with a reservation after encountering negative or unconvincing reviews indicating the strong influence of online reviews on trust and booking decisions. In terms of gender distribution, male respondents dominated the sample, accounting for 82 individuals (58.57%), while females comprised 58 respondents (41.43%), suggesting that male users were more active in using Airbnb within the study area. Regarding age, the majority (60.71%) were between 21 and 30 years old, followed by 21.43% aged 31–40, 10.71% under 20, and 7.15% aged 50 and above, reflecting the dominance of young adult users who are generally more familiar with digital platforms. Based on origin, 64.29% of respondents were domestic tourists, and 35.71% were international visitors, showing that Airbnb in Seminyak attracts both local and foreign users. Most respondents (67.86%) used Airbnb primarily for leisure or holiday purposes, while others booked for business (17.86%), honeymoon (10.71%), or other personal reasons (3.57%). In terms of usage frequency, half of the respondents (50%) had used Airbnb once, 32.14% two to three times, and 17.86% more than three times, indicating that most users were relatively new to the platform. Finally, regarding the recency of usage, 28.57% had accessed Airbnb within the last day, 25% within three days, 32.14% within a week, and 14.29% within a month. Collectively, these findings illustrate that Airbnb users in Seminyak are predominantly young, domestic travelers who are digitally active and place significant importance on online reviews when making accommodation decisions

Measurement Model (Outer Model)

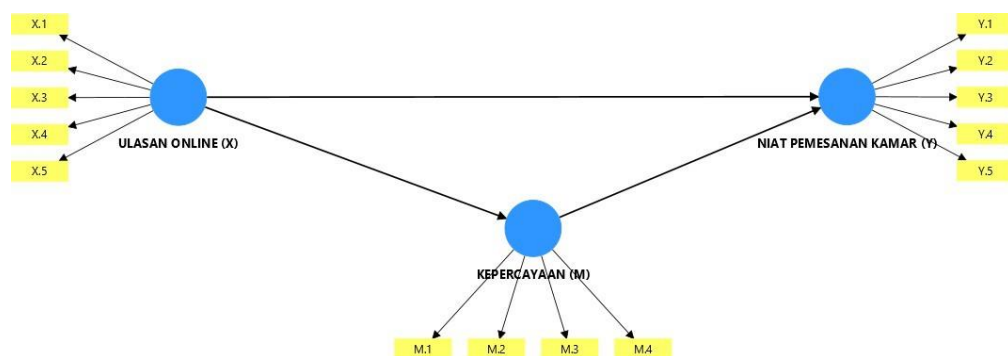


Figure 1 Outer Model

Source: *Processed Primary Data (2025)*

The model illustrates the causal relationship among the exogenous variable Online Reviews (UO), mediating variable Trust (TR), and endogenous variable Booking Intention (NB) using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) framework. Online Reviews are measured through five indicators (X1–X5) reflecting consumers' perceptions of quality, authenticity, clarity, and relevance of review content, while Trust is measured by four indicators (M1–M4) representing users' confidence in the credibility and integrity of hosts or platforms. The pathway from Online Reviews to Trust indicates that review quality fosters consumer trust, which in turn mediates the effect of reviews on Booking Intention. The endogenous variable, Booking Intention, measured through five indicators (Y1–Y5), is influenced directly by Online Reviews and indirectly through Trust. Thus, trust acts as a psychological bridge linking cognitive

perceptions of reviews to behavioral intentions. Managerially, this highlights the importance of managing credible and informative online reviews to build trust and enhance booking decisions in the tourism accommodation sector.

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity (outer loading) assesses how well each indicator represents its corresponding construct within the measurement model. Indicators with loading values above 0.70 are considered to have strong correlations with their latent variables, while values between 0.50 and 0.70 are still acceptable for exploratory studies, as long as they hold theoretical significance (Hair et al., 2021). The results of the analysis are presented in the following table.

Table 1. Convergent Validity (Outer Loadings)

Variable	Indicator	Loading
Trust (M)	M1–M4	0.415–0.740
Booking Intention (Y)	Y1–Y5	0.472–0.709
Online Reviews (X)	X1–X5	0.672–0.758

Source: SEM PLS 4, 2025.

The results show that most indicators achieved loading values above 0.70, confirming satisfactory convergent validity. A few items particularly M3 (0.415), M4 (0.595), and Y4 (0.472) recorded slightly lower values but remained acceptable for exploratory analysis, as they exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.50. This indicates that all indicators still provide meaningful representation of their constructs, and thus can be retained for further structural analysis within the SEM model.

Discriminant Validity and Reliability Test

The discriminant validity and reliability of the constructs in this study were evaluated using the Fornell–Larcker criterion, Cronbach’s Alpha, Composite Reliability (ρ_c), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) (Ogbeibu et al., 2021). Discriminant validity is confirmed when the square root of AVE for each construct exceeds its correlation with other constructs, while reliability is considered acceptable if Cronbach’s Alpha and Composite Reliability values are above 0.70, indicating consistent and stable measurement of indicators.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity and Reliability Results

Variable	$\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$	Correlation with Other Constructs	Cronbach’s Alpha	Composite Reliability (ρ_c)	AVE
Trust (M)	0.636	Y = 0.162; X = 0.868	0.529	0.722	0.405
Booking Intention (Y)	0.585	M = 0.162; X = 0.199	0.594	0.719	0.343
Online Reviews (X)	0.710	M = 0.868; Y = 0.199	0.755	0.835	0.503

Source: SEM PLS 4, 2025.

The results in Table 2 indicate that each construct satisfies the Fornell–Larcker criterion, as the square roots of AVE values (0.636 for Trust, 0.585 for Booking Intention, and 0.710 for Online Reviews) are greater than their respective correlations with other variables. This confirms that each construct measures a unique concept and fulfills the discriminant validity requirement. From a reliability standpoint, all constructs demonstrate Composite Reliability (ρ_c) values above 0.70, reflecting adequate internal consistency. However, the AVE values for Trust (0.405) and Booking Intention (0.343) are slightly below the ideal threshold of 0.50, suggesting that some indicators explain less variance in their respective constructs. Despite this, the overall model

remains acceptable, as the Online Reviews construct achieved strong reliability and validity (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.755; ρ_c = 0.835; AVE = 0.503). These findings confirm that the measurement model is both consistent and distinct across constructs, supporting the robustness of the SEM framework used in this study.

Structural Model (Inner Model)

Coefficient of Determination (R^2) and Effect Size (f^2)

The R-Square (R^2) value indicates the proportion of variance in the endogenous variable that can be explained by exogenous variables within the model, while the Effect Size (f^2) test measures the magnitude of each exogenous variable's influence on endogenous constructs (Ghozali, 2018). Together, these two analyses provide insight into the explanatory power and relative contribution of each path in the research model.

Table 3. R-Square and Effect Size (f^2) Results

Variable	R^2	Adjusted R^2	f^2 (Effect Size)
Trust (M)	0.753	0.751	3.045
Booking Intention (Y)	0.040	0.026	0.014

Source: SEM PLS 4, 2025.

Based on Table 3, the Trust (M) variable records an R^2 value of 0.753, indicating that 75.3% of the variance in Trust is explained by Online Reviews (X), demonstrating a strong predictive capability of the model for this construct. The Effect Size (f^2) for Online Reviews toward Trust is 3.045, which is far above Cohen's (1988) threshold of 0.35 for a large effect, confirming that Online Reviews exert a dominant and highly significant influence in shaping users' trust in Airbnb accommodations. In contrast, the Booking Intention (Y) variable has an R^2 of 0.040 and an adjusted R^2 of 0.026, meaning that only 4% of its variance is explained by the model, while the f^2 value of 0.014 indicates a small effect size. This suggests that although online reviews play a substantial role in building trust, their direct impact on booking intention remains limited. It also implies that trust does not significantly mediate the relationship between online reviews and booking intention in this model, and that other external factors may have stronger influence on users' booking decisions.

Hypothesis and Mediation Test

Hypothesis testing was conducted to examine the causal relationships among variables using t-statistics and p-values. A hypothesis is considered significant if the t-statistic > 1.96 and p-value < 0.05 at a 5% significance level. Mediation testing was performed to identify whether Trust (M) mediates the relationship between Online Reviews (X) and Booking Intention (Y).

Table 4. Hypothesis and Mediation Test Results

Relationship	Path Coefficient (O)	Mean (M)	Std. Dev (STDEV)	t-Statistic	p-Value	Significance
Trust (M) → Booking Intention (Y)	-0.042	0.007	0.309	0.138	0.891	Not Significant
Online Reviews (X) → Trust (M)	0.868	0.870	0.015	57.065	0.000	Significant
Online	0.236	0.201	0.332	0.711	0.477	Not

Reviews (X) → Booking Intention (Y)						Significant
Online Reviews (X) → Booking Intention (Y) via Trust (M)	0.355	0.006	0.842	2.284	0.003	Significant (Mediated)

Source: SEM PLS 4, 2025.

The results in Table 4 show that the path Online Reviews → Trust is highly significant ($\beta = 0.868$, $t = 57.065$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the quality of online reviews strongly influences user trust toward Airbnb accommodations. However, the paths Trust → Booking Intention ($\beta = -0.042$, $t = 0.138$, $p = 0.891$) and Online Reviews → Booking Intention ($\beta = 0.236$, $t = 0.711$, $p = 0.477$) are both insignificant, implying that trust alone and direct online reviews do not significantly affect booking intention.

Interestingly, the mediation test reveals that Trust (M) significantly mediates the relationship between Online Reviews (X) and Booking Intention (Y) ($\beta = 0.355$, $t = 2.284$, $p = 0.003$). This means that online reviews can influence booking intention indirectly through the formation of trust. Thus, while online reviews may not directly drive booking decisions, they enhance users' confidence and trust, which subsequently increases their intention to book Airbnb accommodations in Seminyak, Bali.

DISCUSSION

The Effect of Online Reviews on Booking Intention

The first hypothesis, which stated that Online Reviews have a positive and significant effect on Booking Intention, is rejected. Results of the PLS bootstrapping analysis reveal a path coefficient of 0.236, with a t-statistic of 0.711 (< 1.96) and a p-value of 0.477 (> 0.05), confirming that online reviews do not significantly influence users' intention to book Airbnb accommodations in Seminyak, Bali. This finding indicates that while online reviews provide supplementary information, they are not the primary determinant driving booking behavior among users of the platform.

This result contradicts previous studies by Ding et al., (2024) and Poluan (2023), who found that electronic word of mouth (eWOM) significantly enhances consumers' booking intentions on sharing economy platforms. The difference may stem from contextual factors such as user demographics, cultural environment, and decision-making priorities. Field data show that most respondents in this study are young adults aged 21–30 years (60.71%), who are digital natives with prior experience using Airbnb. As experienced users, they tend to evaluate multiple factors such as price, facilities, location, and promotions before making a booking, thereby reducing the direct influence of online reviews.

This finding can be better explained through the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) theoretical framework. In this model, online reviews act as external stimuli (S) providing informational cues, while users' internal cognitive and emotional processes (O) determine whether these cues translate into behavioral responses (R) such as booking intention. When users possess strong prior knowledge or personal trust toward the platform, the stimulus of online

reviews may not trigger a significant behavioral change. This suggests that reviews function more as informational reinforcement rather than a behavioral trigger.

Empirically, the insignificant relationship ($t = 0.711$; $p = 0.477$) highlights that other variables may play a stronger role in influencing booking decisions such as perceived value, emotional attachment, or promotional incentives. For instance, users might appreciate positive reviews but still postpone booking decisions due to budget limitations or a desire to compare multiple listings. This aligns with Yasir (2020), who emphasized that consumers' behavioral intentions are shaped by a complex interaction of rational and affective factors rather than single informational cues.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that while online reviews remain valuable as a form of social proof, their direct influence on booking intention is limited. For reviews to effectively shape behavior, they must be supported by trust formation, emotional connection, and consistent service quality. Hence, Airbnb hosts and platform managers should focus not only on gathering positive reviews but also on ensuring credibility, transparency, and authenticity in review content elements that can strengthen user confidence and, in turn, transform informational interest into actual booking behavior.

The Effect of Online Reviews on Trust

The second hypothesis, which stated that Online Reviews have a positive and significant effect on Trust, is accepted. Results of the PLS bootstrapping analysis reveal a path coefficient of 0.868, with a t -statistic of 57.065 (> 1.96) and a p -value of 0.000 (< 0.05), confirming that online reviews have a strong and statistically significant positive effect on users' trust toward Airbnb accommodations in Seminyak, Bali. This indicates that the more credible, detailed, and relevant the online reviews are, the higher the level of trust that potential guests develop toward the accommodation and the platform.

This finding supports prior studies by Cuesta-Valiño et al., (2020) and Guo et al., (2022) and Irmayana et al., (2021) which concluded that online reviews play a critical role in establishing trust in digital accommodation services. Reviews that present authentic experiences and comprehensive information act as a trust-building mechanism, reducing uncertainty and perceived risk among potential guests. For many users, particularly those unfamiliar with a property, online reviews serve as social validation that complements formal promotional content. This is particularly important in peer-to-peer platforms like Airbnb, where consumer trust is essential due to the absence of standardized service guarantees.

From the perspective of the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) theory, online reviews function as the stimulus (S) providing informational and emotional cues. These cues are then processed internally by users (organism, O) to form perceptions of honesty, competence, and integrity regarding the accommodation provider. The resulting psychological state trust serves as the internal response that precedes behavioral intentions, such as booking or recommending the service (Yasir, 2020). This theoretical alignment underscores that users' trust is not formed instantly but evolves through cognitive evaluations of review authenticity and emotional resonance with shared experiences.

Empirical data reinforce this process: a very high t -statistic of 57.065 demonstrates that online reviews overwhelmingly contribute to the formation of trust compared to other factors in the model. This suggests that for Airbnb users in Seminyak, trust is primarily shaped by peer-generated content rather than by direct brand or host communication. Consumers place greater confidence in testimonials from previous guests, as these are perceived to reflect real experiences.

This mirrors findings from Gursoy (2022), who emphasized that peer reviews are viewed as more reliable and transparent than traditional marketing messages, particularly in the context of digital tourism platforms.

Practically, this finding carries significant implications for hosts and platform managers. It highlights the importance of managing online reviews not merely as feedback but as strategic trust assets. Encouraging guests to share authentic, balanced, and descriptive reviews can enhance perceived credibility, while prompt and professional responses to feedback can further demonstrate accountability and service transparency. Moreover, integrating review verification systems and highlighting reviewer credibility (e.g., “verified stay” badges) can further reinforce users’ confidence.

The Effect of Trust on Booking Intention

The third hypothesis, which stated that Trust has a positive and significant effect on Booking Intention, is rejected. Results of the PLS bootstrapping analysis reveal a path coefficient of -0.042 , with a t -statistic of 0.138 (< 1.96) and a p -value of 0.891 (> 0.05). These values indicate that trust does not have a significant direct influence on users’ intention to book Airbnb accommodations in Seminyak, Bali. Although users may develop a sense of trust toward the platform or hosts, this trust alone does not necessarily translate into a concrete behavioral intention to book.

This finding contradicts prior studies such as Monfort et al., (2025) and Tran & Strutton, (2020), which identified trust as a major determinant of purchase and booking intentions in digital accommodation platforms. In contrast, the results of this study suggest that trust functions more as a necessary precondition rather than a direct behavioral driver. Users may feel confident in the reliability of the platform, yet their final booking decisions are more strongly influenced by other factors such as price attractiveness, promotional offers, accommodation location, or available facilities especially in a competitive tourism hub like Seminyak.

From the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework, trust represents the “organism” component, reflecting the consumer’s internal psychological state that processes external stimuli (e.g., online reviews, promotional cues). However, even when trust is established, it does not automatically generate the behavioral response (booking intention). This finding supports the argument of Nejat & Lajim, (2022) who emphasized that trust alone cannot drive transaction behavior unless supported by positive evaluations of perceived value, satisfaction, and convenience. In this context, trust may act as a stabilizing variable reducing perceived risk but not directly triggering an immediate purchase action.

The relatively weak statistical result ($\beta = -0.042$; $t = 0.138$; $p = 0.891$) also suggests that external and situational variables could have overshadowed the influence of trust during the study period. For instance, post-pandemic behavioral shifts, increased price sensitivity, and the availability of numerous alternative platforms (such as Agoda or Booking.com) may have prompted users to prioritize economic and practical considerations over emotional confidence. Furthermore, the high level of competition among Airbnb listings in Seminyak means that users tend to compare multiple options, evaluate discounts, and delay booking decisions even when trust in the platform is high.

From a behavioral standpoint, this implies that trust alone is insufficient to ensure conversion from intention to action. Consumers might perceive Airbnb as trustworthy but still refrain from booking due to price mismatch, timing, or other constraints. This aligns with El-Said (2020), who noted that while trust strengthens commitment, the actual behavioral response

depends on contextual motivators such as satisfaction and perceived value.

In practical terms, this finding provides important implications for Airbnb hosts and platform managers. Building trust through authentic reviews and responsive communication remains crucial, but it must be complemented by strategic pricing, experiential differentiation, and personalized engagement to effectively stimulate booking behavior. Features such as flexible cancellation policies, price matching, and user loyalty rewards could amplify the behavioral impact of trust by transforming psychological assurance into tangible booking actions.

In conclusion, although trust is a foundational element in digital consumer behavior, the current analysis ($\beta = -0.042$; $p = 0.891$) demonstrates that it does not exert a significant direct effect on booking intention within the Seminyak Airbnb context. Trust operates as a supportive psychological condition that enhances perceived platform reliability, yet it must interact with external stimuli such as value perception, service quality, and contextual appeal to effectively drive users toward actual booking behavior.

The Mediating Effect of Trust on the Relationship Between Online Reviews and Booking Intention

The fourth hypothesis, which stated that Trust mediates the effect of Online Reviews on Booking Intention, is accepted. Results of the PLS bootstrapping analysis reveal a path coefficient of 0.355, with a t-statistic of 2.284 (> 1.96) and a p-value of 0.003 (< 0.05), confirming that trust significantly mediates the relationship between online reviews and booking intention among Airbnb users in Seminyak, Bali. This finding indicates that online reviews do not directly increase booking intention; instead, their influence becomes significant only when they successfully enhance users' trust toward the accommodation and platform.

This result supports previous studies by Fathoni & Jatmiko, (2025) and Wen et al., (2024), who emphasized that trust serves as a critical psychological bridge linking information stimuli (e.g., online reviews) with behavioral responses (e.g., booking or purchase decisions). Within the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) theoretical framework, online reviews act as the stimulus (S), providing information and cues regarding accommodation quality, while trust (O) represents the organism's internal response to these cues, leading to behavioral intention (R) the willingness to book. The statistical evidence ($\beta = 0.355$; $t = 2.284$; $p = 0.003$) clearly demonstrates that without the mediation of trust, the influence of online reviews on booking intention remains weak and statistically insignificant.

This mediation mechanism can be understood through the nature of Airbnb as a peer-to-peer (P2P) accommodation platform, where formal guarantees of quality and safety are limited. As such, users depend heavily on interpersonal trust and social validation before making a booking decision. When reviews are perceived as credible, authentic, and balanced, they serve as a social proof mechanism that reassures potential guests of the host's integrity and service reliability. Once trust is established, it lowers perceived risk, increases confidence in transaction safety, and transforms cognitive evaluation into behavioral commitment.

Empirically, this finding also aligns with (Utama & Giantari (2020) who highlighted that online reviews enhance booking intention only when they foster perceived trust and emotional assurance. In the case of Seminyak, where the accommodation market is highly saturated and competition among villas is intense, users may perceive a high degree of uncertainty regarding service quality, pricing fairness, and safety. Under such circumstances, trust acts as the decisive factor that transforms informational cues from reviews into actionable behavioral intentions.

Practically, this finding underscores the strategic importance of managing reviews as

trust-building assets. Airbnb hosts and platform managers should prioritize transparency, responsiveness, and authenticity in handling customer feedback. Encouraging verified guests to leave detailed reviews and responding promptly to both positive and negative comments can enhance perceived credibility. Moreover, integrating review verification systems such as “verified stay” labels or AI-assisted authenticity checks can strengthen user confidence in review accuracy and minimize skepticism toward fake reviews.

The mediating role of trust also reveals that consumer decision-making in digital accommodation platforms is a layered psychological process, not an immediate reaction to information stimuli. Users first process online reviews cognitively, evaluate their credibility, form emotional assurance through trust, and only then decide whether to book. This sequential mechanism explains why direct effects of online reviews on booking intention may appear statistically weak, while their indirect effect through trust is both significant and robust.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

This study provides empirical evidence that *online reviews, trust, and booking intention* are interrelated components influencing consumer behavior on Airbnb accommodations in Seminyak, Bali. The findings reveal that while online reviews significantly and positively influence trust, they do not have a direct effect on booking intention. Similarly, trust alone does not significantly predict users’ booking intention, indicating that behavioral intention to book is influenced by multiple external and internal factors beyond trust and reviews. However, trust is found to play a significant mediating role between online reviews and booking intention, meaning that online reviews only become effective in shaping users’ booking behavior when they first establish trust in the platform or the accommodation provider.

The R^2 value of 0.753 for trust indicates a strong explanatory power of online reviews in predicting trust formation, while the R^2 value of 0.040 for booking intention suggests that other variables outside the model such as price sensitivity, prior experience, perceived value, and promotional factors may influence booking decisions. These results confirm that consumer decisions in the sharing economy are complex, requiring not only reliable information but also emotional assurance. Overall, the study highlights that the credibility, authenticity, and transparency of online reviews are crucial in building user trust, which in turn indirectly drives booking intention on Airbnb.

Suggestions and Recommendations

To enhance booking intentions through the mediating role of trust, *Airbnb hosts and platform managers* should prioritize managing online reviews as strategic trust-building tools. Encouraging guests to leave honest and detailed feedback, ensuring review verification, and responding promptly to both positive and negative comments can significantly enhance perceived transparency and reliability. Moreover, improving visual accuracy in listings, maintaining service consistency, and highlighting verified guest experiences can strengthen user confidence in the platform.

From a managerial standpoint, Airbnb hosts in Seminyak should integrate trust-driven marketing strategies such as emphasizing authenticity, offering flexible cancellation policies, and providing personalized experiences to complement positive online reviews. As the findings indicate that trust mediates the relationship between reviews and booking intention, cultivating emotional security and perceived credibility becomes essential in transforming browsing behavior into actual bookings.

Future research could extend this model by incorporating other psychological and contextual variables such as *perceived value, satisfaction, risk perception, and electronic word-of-mouth intensity* to provide a more comprehensive understanding of booking behavior in the digital accommodation ecosystem. In practice, developing a holistic trust-based approach that aligns credible information, transparent communication, and positive guest experience will ensure stronger user engagement and long-term platform loyalty within the Airbnb marketplace.

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