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# How about "Shifting Tides: The Evolving Landscape of Consumer Choices

## Lili Suryati<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universitas IBBI Medan, Indonesia, <u>lilisuryaty@gmail.com</u>

\*Corresponding Author: Lili Suryati

**Abstract:** The purpose of this study was to determine the reasons or factors that encourage consumers to decide to buy hotel rooms at The Luxton Bandung. The research conducted is explanatory research, namely research that aims to analyze the relationships between one variable and another or how one variable affects another. Data collection methods using questionnaires and interviews. From the results of data analysis, it is known that the factors that influence consumers to stay at The Luxton Bandung Hotel consist of price, promotion, speed in providing confirmation of room reservations, ease of access to room reservations and payment methods.

Keywords: Consumer Behavior, Purchase Decision

## **INTRODUCTION**

The tourism industry is growing rapidly. This is characterized by the increasing growth of hotels and this has an impact on room sales which are now quite heavy in the midst of fierce competition.

The development of hotel occupancy rates in West Java was reported by the Central Bureau of Statistics of West Java Province No.65/12/32/Th.XXI, December 02, 2019, which said that:

- 1. The Hotel Room Occupancy Rate in West Java in October 2019 reached 50.36 percent, up 2.79 points compared to the September 2019 room occupancy rate which reached 47.57 percent. The room occupancy rate of star hotels has increased while the non-star group has decreased..
- 2. The room occupancy rate of star hotels in October 2019 was 56.07 percent, up 5.47 points compared to the room occupancy rate in September 2010 which reached 50.60 percent.
- 3. The highest room occupancy rate by star class was recorded in 5-star hotels at 39.63 percent.
- 4. Non-star hotel room occupancy rate reached 34.33 percent, down 2.18 points compared to September 2019 which reached 36.51 percent.

The highest room occupancy rate for non-star hotels occurs in hotels with room groups of 25 to 40 rooms, amounting to 36.48 percent. Meanwhile, the lowest no star hotel room occupancy rate of 20.41 percent occurred in hotels with room groups of less than 10 rooms.

Hotel growth in Bandung is very rapid, but not adjusted to the occupancy rate. This is where a strategy in capturing hotel consumers is needed. One of the things that a hotel must have and do is to carry out the right marketing strategy and hit the target consumers who will be targeted as market share in a particular hotel.

It can be said that the development of the hospitality and tourism business in Indonesia has increased significantly. This can be seen based on the increasing number of tourist visits in Indonesia and the growth of the tourism industry, including the growing number of hotels in Indonesia. Indeed, Jakarta, Yogyakarta, and Bali have been the barometer of national tourism, but actually many other regions in Indonesia are experiencing rapid tourism growth, such as North Sulawesi with Wakatobi, Papua with Raja Ampat, Bandung, Surabaya, and several other regions that have also experienced significant growth in tourism.

Based on PHRI survey results, Bandung City currently has 2,428 hotels of various classifications with a total of 21,000 rooms. From this data, it is estimated that by the end of 2019 there will be a growth of 25,000 rooms. "The number of hotels and hotel rooms, both star and non-star, in West Java continues to grow.

The development of technology and globalization today in the world of tourism in general and the world of hospitality in particular. has a rapid impact on consumer behavior in purchasing rooms. The rapid development of information and communication technology, both in terms of speed and ease of accessing the internet, has inspired the business world to utilize it as the main medium in marketing products and services.

The increasing number of internet users in Indonesia encourages the development of trade through websites or on-line business (e-commerce), and makes the internet an absolute necessity needed by consumers. Due to time constraints, consumers tend to browse (surf) complete product or service information via the internet and make purchases or transactions online. (Ani, 2009, par.2).

One of the businesses that have most adopted the benefits of the internet or online systems is the hotel industry (Caroll & Sileo, 2007, pp.36-38). The role of the internet as a medium for online reservations in several accommodation industries has shown a trend of improving marketing performance, at the same time other sources of revenue, on the other hand through reservations or bookings through travel agents, voices reservation, and walking reservation have experienced a downward trend from year to year, even globally the internet has become the main source of reservations at hotels (Nielsen, 2011). This condition causes online businesses to provide the best service, one of which is by paying attention to website quality, because web quality will affect customer satisfaction with a company. (Sadeh, 2011). Based on the results of research conducted by Google, June 2014, the internet has become the top source for tourists both business people and travelers, they even tend to do travel planning using search engines and special applications. (https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com).

Understanding consumer behavior is absolutely necessary, especially in today's increasingly fierce business competition. The emergence of more and more new hotels makes consumers have many choices to book rooms at various hotels. By understanding consumer behavior, it is hoped that business people - especially in the tourism sector in general and in the hospitality sector in particular - can provide direction in determining room sales strategies. The Luxton Bandung analyzed by the author is a four-star hotel in Bandung that is classified as a business hotel and is located in a very strategic location as well as famous as an icon of Bandung, namely the Dago area. The hotel was established on October 30, 2008, has 114 rooms and 8 meeting rooms. When the hotel was first established, it only consisted of 98 rooms and 2 meeting rooms, but due to the market share that had a high interest in this hotel at that time,

the hotel owner decided to add more rooms and meeting rooms to 114 rooms and 8 meeting rooms.

In terms of market share, when the hotel first opened, a state-owned company owned by the Indonesian government, Pertamina, dominated the sales of rooms at this hotel. Some of the things that attracted them were the strategic location in the middle of Bandung, and the proximity to Pertamina's Bandung branch office. In addition, the spacious room size and affordable room rates are also attractive factors. In its heyday, the hotel was very well known both internally within the Pertamina company itself and externally among other hoteliers in Bandung and in the Dago area in particular.

At the beginning of the hotel's operation, the era of booking rooms was carried out directly by hotel guests by contacting the reservation division. The room booker will submit the date of stay, type of room, number of rooms needed, and the method of payment to be made, then the reservation will confirm the booking into a confirmation letter or confirmation reservation.

In general, how consumers behave is influenced by internal and external factors. Internal factors are factors that exist in the consumer itself, while external factors are factors that exist from outside the consumer.

Understanding consumer behavior is a fundamental problem when determining the marketing mix strategy. By knowing consumers, it will be understood the characteristics of how a person makes his decisions and the various factors that influence their behavior in making decisions on the use of a good or service.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Consumer Behavior**

According to Schiffman and Kanuk: consumer behavior is a process that a buyer goes through in, searching for, buying, using, evaluating and acting on the consumption of products and services or ideas that are expected to meet that person's needs.

AMA (American Marketing Association) defines the following behavior: Consumer behavior is a dynamic interaction between cognition, affection, affection, behavior and the environment in which humans carry out exchange activities in their lives.

To be able to understand more about consumer behavior, the following are the opinions of experts:

- 1. Definition of Consumer Behavior According to "The American Marketing Association": consumer behavior is a dynamic interaction process of influence and awareness, behavior and the environment in which a person exchanges aspects of his life..
- 2. Definition of Consumer Behavior According to Schiffman and Kanuk: consumer behavior is a process that a person goes through in searching for, buying, using, evaluating and will also act after the consumption of products and services, as well as those that will be expected to meet a need..
- 3. Definition of Consumer Behavior According to Engel, Blackwell and Miniard: consumer behavior is a service product action, including the decision process which will precede and also follow these actions which will be directly involved in obtaining, consuming and also disposing of a product or service, including the decision process that will precede and follow these actions..
- 4. Definition of Consumer Behavior According to Mowen: consumer behavior is a person's activity when obtaining, consuming or also disposing of goods or services..

The term behavior is closely related to objects whose study is directed at human problems. In the field of marketing, the concept of consumer behavior is continuously developed with various approaches. A briefing on consumer behavior for any marketing is something that is important in interpreting the marketing concept. The marketing concept aims to provide satisfaction to the wants and needs of consumers. This shows that a successful marketing concept is a marketing concept that is always consumer-oriented.

A simple definition of "Consumer Behavior" is an action that is directly involved in obtaining, using (using, consuming) and spending products (goods and services), including the processes that precede and follow these actions.

## **Consumer Purchase Decision**

The purchasing role when consumers make a purchase, they will go through a process before actually making a decision to make a purchase. This purchasing decision-making process occurs very quickly and without us realizing it, especially in purchasing products that are complex and to reduce incompatibility, the purchasing decision process will be very pronounced. According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2004: 554), "A buying decision process is not just knowing the various factors that will influence the buyer, but based on the role in purchasing and the decision to buy the role that occurs in the buying decision."

# **RESEARCH METHODS**

## **Research Approach Perspectives**

This research uses a descriptive qualitative research approach. This research is a type of field research with a descriptive analysis approach to describe the data that can be in the field then analyse it and get conclusions from this research. The reason for choosing a qualitative approach in this study is to reveal aspects of consumer behaviour in room purchase decisions at The Luxton Bandung.

## **Parameter Operationalization**

- There are two variables used in this study:
- 1. Independent variable (X): consumer behavior
- 2. Bound variable (Y): room purchase decision

In this study, researchers took a sample of all members of the population of 30 guests staying at The Luxton Bandung during October 2019. This method is referred to as the census method or saturation method, In this study, the authors used primary data, while secondary data were obtained from literature, journals, and literature.

The data collection techniques in this research are library research, research questionnaires, and interviews to get opinions from guests at The Luxton Bandung.

In this research, the author collects related data and then studies it, examines several books and other related literature and documents. To find, study, and review various books and other documentation with the aim of completing primary data. This technique is carried out to theoretically support the research variables carried out by observing and concluding responses from guests staying at The Luxton Bandung, by conducting interviews to obtain data from this study by asking several questions related to the research.

The scale used in this study is a linkert scale. The measured variables are translated into variable indicators. Then the indicator is used as a starting point for compiling instrument items in the form of statements or questions. The answer to each statement or question that uses this linkert scale has a gradation of answers from: very positive and very negative, in the form of alternative answer words: Strongly Agree (SS), Agree (S), Disagree (KS), Disagree (TS) and strongly disagree (STS), where each answer is adjusted to the linkert scale, namely SS given a number 5, S given a number 4, KS given a number 3, TS given a number 2 and STS given a number 1.

Data collection carried out by the author to obtain and collect data used in this study are observation, interviews, documents, triangulation, field notes, daily journals, audio records, photographs, and video recordings.

In this study, the authors want to find out more about changes in consumer behavior in determining hotel room purchase decisions. Are the social factors that have been used as benchmarks as factors of consumer behavior in deciding to purchase hotel rooms?

#### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The questionnaire was addressed to all guests who stayed at The Luxton Bandung Hotel in October and November 2019 with a target of 30 resource persons. In the data collection technique, the author directly met the guests who stayed at The Luxton Bandung the next day before they left the hotel or checked out. The purpose of this activity is to get input on several matters related to room purchase considerations and decisions at The Luxton Bandung hotel.

The thirty (30) questionnaires prepared by the author were grouped into three broad categories as follows: 1) Private Employees 2) Government Employees, 3) Employees from other categories - other.

The above research data can be presented as follows:

1. The Private Employee Group reported the following factors:

- a. Access in making room reservations.
- b. Speed in confirming room reservations
- c. Ease of payment.
- 2. The Government Group presented the following factors:
  - a. Room price is an important consideration.
  - b. Speed in providing confirmation of room bookings is also considered very important.

c. Room price promotions in certain periods are a factor in deciding to buy a room at a hotel.

So it can be concluded that the group is generally very considerate:

- 1. Access in making room reservations.
- 2. Speed in confirming room reservations.
- 3. Ease of payment.
- 4. Room price
- 5. Promotion

From these groups, it is necessary to carry out the following marketing strategy:

## 1. Understanding consumer behavior in determining hotel bookings

In the purchasing decision-making process, it varies greatly. The purchasing decision process is done simply, but some are done complexly. According to Solomon (1999), consumer behavior is the study of the processes that occur when individuals or groups select, buy and use or stop using products, services, ideas or experiences in order to satisfy certain desires and desires.

The hospitality industry has other characteristics from other types of industries in general. Hotel consumers buy this service usually only in the short term which is influenced by emotional and rational feelings so that the hotel must maintain the physical environment, pricing strategy, promotion and communication with potential customers to be addressed. Variables that influence consumer decisions include product, price, promotion and location.

Hospitality business is marketing in the service sector. Businesses in the hospitality sector are currently showing very intense competition in an effort to increase room occupancy. For this reason, entrepreneurs engaged in the hospitality sector are required to be able to compete in order to survive in the midst of increasingly fierce competition.

In order for this goal to be achieved, each company must strive to produce and deliver

the goods and services desired by consumers at an appropriate or reasonable price. Thus, every company must be able to understand consumer behavior in its target market because the survival of the company as an institution that tries to meet the needs and desires of consumers depends on consumer behavior.

## 2. How are consumer considerations in booking a room

The pre-purchase stage includes all consumer activities that occur before the purchase and use of services. Consumer considerations in determining hotel room reservations are price, location and facilities..

## 3. Room sales at The Luxton Bandung hotel

Room sales at The Luxton Bandung hotel are currently carried out directly and in collaboration with outside parties in room sales, currently known as OTAs or online travel agents. In managing the room sales, the management of The Luxton Bandung applies the room price and room allocation that will be distributed by the online travel agent.

Based on the results of the research that the author conducted and has found the presentation of data, the data analysis that is the subject of discussion is to answer the problem formulation that has been applied in the study as follows :

- 1. Resource Group from Private Employees
- 2. The above resource persons consider it good to factor in price, promotion, ease of booking rooms, a complete website for getting hotel information and payment factors that make it easier for consumers when booking rooms.
- 3. Resource Group of Government Employees
- 4. The sources above give the opinion that the access factor in booking rooms is number one. While promotions and payment methods are in second place and the website is in third place.
- 1. Resource Group from Other Sectors
- 5. From the interviewees in the group of employees from other sectors, it was found that price and promotion were ranked first, confirmation of the room booking and then access to the room booking.

From the data described above and from the formulation of the problems presented earlier, several things can be conveyed as follows :

- 1. To be able to understand consumer behavior in determining room reservations is characterized by several factors, namely, price and promotion.
- 2. Consumer considerations in making room reservations are characterized by several factors that they consider, namely, ease of access in making room reservations, payment methods and also the speed and accuracy of confirmation of room bookings made.
- 3. Room sales at The Luxton Bandung are currently still done through conventional or direct room reservations directly from guests and also accept reservations from online. From the room booking received, the reservationist will provide confirmation of the room booking and explain the payment method.
- 4. In terms of room sales policy, The Luxton Bandung has implemented an allocation of the number of rooms to be sold for online and offline channels.

In accordance with the description presented in the background of the problem above, the authors formulate the problem as follows:

- 1. How to understand consumer behavior in determining hotel room reservations.
- 2. How are consumer considerations in making room reservations.
- 3. How are room sales at The Luxton Bandung hotel.

# **Discussion of Research Results**

1. To be able to understand consumer behavior, practitioners in the tourism sector in general

and in the hospitality sector in particular should be able to know the internal and external factors expected by a consumer in determining the purchase of a hotel room. From the current phenomenon, with the birth of an online room booking platform or what is commonly called an online travel agent or abbreviated as OTA, changes in consumer behavior are evident. The room booking method is something that is highly considered by consumers in determining room purchase decisions. The online room booking method has advantages from several sides, namely because of regular promotions, competitive or even cheaper room prices, the ease of accessing hotel sites in booking rooms and payment methods that are also easy to do when booking a room. This can be seen from the opinions of the resource persons researched by the author with the questionnaire submitted to the resource persons mentioned earlier. To be able to understand consumer behavior, some opinions from the internal team at The Luxton Bandung convey the following:

- a) According to Mr. Deo Marten, as the Front Office Manager, said that, "understand the needs of each guest that makes them choose and decide to stay at The Luxton Bandung, whether because of location, service, facilities or room rates and promotions. By understanding these needs, the internal team of The Luxton Bandung will be easy to provide services according to the needs of these guests..
- b) Meanwhile, Mr. Malwi Turmuzi, as Finance Controller, said that if price is very influential on hotel room purchase decisions, then sales and marketing should see this as a reference for implementing a "pricing strategy" tailored to market demand.
- c) Mr. Chandra, as the General Manager is very focused on the service factor in understanding consumer behavior. According to him, each guest must be considered what they need when they stay at the hotel, what habits they expect when they stay at the hotel and what factors make them choose to decide to stay at The Luxton Bandung.
- 2. Consumer considerations in booking hotel rooms are assumed to be due to technological factors that are developing rapidly so that room reservations can be made very easily and get a quick response or response. Booking a room in the current era can be done in the palm of a finger and consumers can receive confirmation a few moments after booking a room. This opinion was obtained from the results of interviews with resource persons using a closed questionnaire form obtained from three categorized groups of guests, namely: guests from private groups, guests from government groups and guests from other sector groups others.
- 3. Room sales at The Luxton Bandung before the era of sophisticated technology, all room reservations were made offline, namely the room booker contacted the room reservation division or reservation division by providing complete data on the booking he made, namely the full name, date of stay and date of return (check in and check out), type of room, number of rooms, room payment method then after that the reservation will send a confirmation letter or confirmation letter for the booking. In fact, most hotels will impose a condition, that if no payment has been received by the reservation, then the guest cannot get confirmation of the room booking. Room sales are currently felt very tough and tight, considering the online room booking platform is increasingly stretched up.

Some of these conditions were felt and conveyed to the internal management team of The Luxton Bandung, namely :

 Mr. Chandra Maulana, General Manager of The Luxton Bandung, said that: with the online travel agent (OTA), the level of room sales is divided into the OTA market segment where room sales in this channel have an influence on room sales in the offline segment that previously existed. In terms of price, the OTA channel sells rooms at room prices below the price of hotel rooms. The OTA also has an effective sales strategy by issuing room sales promotions in certain periods, such as Traveloka which usually issues an "epic" promo where room prices are reduced by up to 80%. Mr. Chandra Maulana, added, how to get guests who usually book rooms online to return to offline, a good strategy is needed because hotels cannot be as flexible as online parties in pricing and promotion policies.

- 2. From the Marketing & Communication Manager, The Luxton Bandung, Ms. Jenila Ikavita said that with the online platform, the hotel can get information about the opinions of guests who stay at the hotel easily. They can share their experience when staying at a hotel. If the guests' opinions are good, it will have a positive impact on the hotel concerned but vice versa..
- 2. In the opinion of Mr. Feby, Reservation Manager, that the competition generated by the birth of online platforms will not be able to match offline platforms. Due to promotional factors, dynamic prices, ease of payment and ease of access in making room reservations that are very easy and fast. For this reason, a strategy is needed in selling rooms offline by providing something different, for example given additional services such as: free shuttle to and from the station or airport, given a dinner voucher at the time of the guest's stay, given a souvenir from the hotel and even better given a price that is very competitive with the price they get from the online platform.
- 3. Opinion from Mr. Prana, as Director of Food & Beverage, the online platform provides an opportunity to be able to sell food & beverage more broadly, for example, dinner reservations can already be made through the online platform.
- 4. While the opinion of the Executive Chef of The Luxton Bandung, said that with the new era of easy sales, food sales, promotion of new menus and opportunities to get business opportunities are more open..

According to Hani Pramudyawati, as Director of Sales & Marketing, said that in today's digital era, it presents a huge challenge in hotel sales, especially in terms of room sales. Fierce competition makes the price factor very sensitive for guests or tourists. So a very effective marketing strategy is needed in order to compete..

# **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

# Conclusion

- 1. Consumer behavior at The Luxton Bandung in the current era has mostly tended to book rooms online compared to offline.
- 2. Consumer considerations in booking rooms online rather than offline are based on several considerations, namely price, promotion, speed of access in booking rooms, speed and accuracy in presenting confirmation of room reservations and easy payment method factors.
- 3. Room sales at The Luxton Bandung are currently carried out by providing room allocation policies for the online and offline segments. Where the room prices applied for online and offline are different, so that the level of room sales through online channels is getting higher...

# Recommendation

- 1. Business people in the hotel sector in particular should be able to understand the underlying factors that make guests switch in booking rooms from offline to online, where room sales in the online segment are increasing.
- 2. The room pricing policy should be reviewed to be able to apply competitive room prices in online and offline channels because consumers are very focused on the price of rooms sold in online and offline channels.
- 3. The strategy for implementing room prices should be accompanied by an understanding of the demand level in each period, where the room price applied will result in a good room sales level or equivalent to the demand level.
- 4. The hotel can provide a "gimmick" to guests who book rooms via offline by giving

souvenirs or something in the form of a complimentary free dinner, upgrading rooms from standard rooms to the category above, or providing special prices on their next visit.

- 5. Hotel management can also improve the hotel website to highlight hotel facilities with a more attractive image at an attractive price and access to make reservations through the website easily and quickly.
- 6. The hotel can make more pro-active revenue by giving surprises or gifts on special days for its guests, for example giving a surprise on their birthday.
- 7. Engagement of front liners (hotel staff) and management with guests should be prioritized to provide increased business conversion.

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