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An operational assessment of housekeeping services in fulfilling guest requests: A case study of Rby Bali

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Abstract - This study aims to evaluate the handling of guest requests in the housekeeping department of RbyA Bali, a five-star resort in South Kuta, Bali. The primary objectives are to analyse how guest requests are managed operationally and to identify the challenges faced by the housekeeping staff in adhering to the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). A qualitative descriptive method was employed in this research, using observation, interviews with housekeeping coordinators and staff, and documentation review as data collection techniques. The analysis followed a thematic approach to identify patterns and categories in request handling processes and challenges. The results reveal that while the hotel has a structured SOP in place, there are recurring issues in communication flow, time efficiency, and coordination between departments that affect service consistency. Some guest requests—such as extra amenities, turndown services, or special room arrangements—are not always fulfilled promptly, often due to a mismatch in workforce allocation or lack of digital coordination tools. Despite these challenges, the staff demonstrates a high commitment to guest satisfaction. The study concludes that effective handling of guest requests is crucial to enhancing service quality and maintaining a luxury brand image. Improvements are needed in administrative systems, training, and inter-departmental communication. The findings are expected to support operational refinement and serve as a reference for hospitality students and professionals seeking to improve guest service experiences.

Keywords: Housekeeping, Guest request, Hotel operations, Service quality, Hospitality management

1. Introduction

The global hospitality sector is a vital driver of tourism economics, and in Indonesia, it plays a pivotal role in national revenue and employment (Vargas-Calderón et al., 2021). Bali, often referred to as the "Island of the Gods," offers a blend of natural beauty—pristine beaches, terraced rice fields, waterfalls—and rich cultural heritage, such as temples, traditional ceremonies, gamelan music, and performance arts. Internationally, Bali was ranked among the top global destinations in 2025, further solidifying its tourism prominence.

Statistics from Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS) Province of Bali reveal a robust recovery post-COVID-19: international arrivals increased from 1,069,473 in 2020 (with approximately 82.9% decline) to 6,333,360 in 2024 (20.1% growth over 2023) (BPS Bali, 2024). Concurrently, hotel occupancy rates rebounded from around 15% in 2020 to stabilize at 78% in 2024, indicating a full industrial resurgence.

Among Bali's luxury accommodations, RbyA Bali, located in South Kuta, stands out. Since its inauguration in 2013, it offers 403 rooms, seven pools, multiple meeting venues, and six dining

outlets. Despite the resort's reputation for excellence, periodic guest complaints—especially regarding housekeeping and delayed responses to in-room requests—indicate operational friction points.

Housekeeping is central to guest satisfaction; inefficiencies in managing amenities or fulfilling requests such as extra towels, toiletries, or turndown service can diminish perceived quality. As hotel occupancy grows, so does the volume of guest requests. Without effective coordination, these small lapses can negatively impact overall guest experience.

This study advances understanding in four key ways: (1) **Academic contribution:** While research exists on housekeeping and service quality, few studies pinpoint guest-request processes within luxury resorts in Bali. (2) **Operational insight:** By dissecting RIMBA's guest-request workflow, the study may uncover procedural and communication bottlenecks affecting response times. (3) **Managerial utility:** Revealing challenges and opportunities can inform improvements in SOPs, staff training, and interdepartmental systems. (4) **Strategic advantage:** For five-star properties in Bali's competitive market, streamlined housekeeping services can become a distinguishing operational asset.

Two theoretical lenses guide the analysis, the first one is Servicescape theory, coined by Bitner (1992). *Servicescape* refers to the physical environment in which services are delivered. It encompasses ambient factors (lighting, scent), spatial layout (furnishings, signage), and décor. In hospitality, an appealing physical environment enhances guest satisfaction, encourages longer stays, and promotes repeat visits (Bitner, 1992; Balroo, 2023). Cleanliness and condition—maintained by housekeeping—are core elements of the servicescape.

The second one is Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) Model. Originating from environmental psychology, the SOR model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) suggests that environmental features (S) influence internal states (O) and shape behaviour (R). In this context, housekeeping processes and administrative systems serve as stimuli. Guests' satisfaction levels are the internal organism reactions, and their behaviour—return intentions, positive reviews—reflect the response-emotion link. Combining these models allows assessment of how housekeeping operations—particularly timely and professional handling of guest requests—shape perceptions of the room environment and overall satisfaction.

Lourdes and Hadi (2025) investigated the PrimeBiz Hotel in Kuta, finding that room cleanliness ($\beta = .48$) and public area hygiene ($\beta = .37$) had strong positive impacts on guest satisfaction ($\beta = .65, p < .01$). Balroo (2023), studying Saudi Arabian hotels, demonstrated that both physical and social servicescape features significantly enhance guest satisfaction and positive revisit intentions.

These studies confirm that transitioning cleanliness from a procedural task to a strategic service improves guest perceptions.

A qualitative study at Swiss-Belinn Medan examined guest-supply inventory control and found that a lack of formal inspection systems often creates inconsistencies in room amenities (Sembiring, 2023). Indonesian research on SOP implementation in hospitality confirms that formal procedure adoption improves guest satisfaction—but gaps remain, especially in non-core departments like housekeeping.

Servicescape's influence on employee innovation and behavioural outcomes is well documented (Han et al., 2021; Balroo, 2023). Technological integration—like housekeeping management systems and IoT tracking—can enhance response efficiency and monitoring (Kansakar et al, 2017).

Though housekeeping service quality and servicescape effects are documented, few studies explore: (1) SOP-level processes for guest-request handling at luxury Bali resorts. (2) Communication and coordination issues between housekeeping and other departments. (3) Administrative and technological barriers within Indonesian five-star hospitality contexts.

To address these gaps, this study seeks answers to: (1) How is the guest-request management process structured within the housekeeping department at RbyA Bali? (2) What operational, communicative, and administrative challenges hinder effective handling of guest requests? These questions aim to map step-by-step processes, from request initiation (e.g., via phone or mobile app) to fulfilment and SOP compliance.

2. Method

2.1 Method of Providing Data

This research adopts a qualitative descriptive approach to explore the procedures, practices, and challenges related to the handling of guest requests in the housekeeping department at RbyA Bali. The focus is on understanding processes and human behaviour in natural settings rather than testing hypotheses (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

To gain a comprehensive understanding, the study uses three main data collection techniques: observation, documents study, and interview.

a. Observation

Direct, non-participant observation was conducted within the housekeeping department. The researchers observed how guest requests were received, processed, and fulfilled, noting interactions among housekeeping coordinators, room attendants, and other hotel divisions. This method allows the researchers to capture real-time behaviours, communication flow, and potential operational bottlenecks (Angrosino, 2007). Observations were structured using a checklist based on the hotel's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

b. Document Study

The document study involved reviewing internal SOP manuals, guest request logs, complaint records, daily housekeeping reports, and staff schedules. This method provided valuable insights into written procedures and actual service outcomes. Document analysis is essential in qualitative research for triangulating observed data and uncovering patterns or inconsistencies in operations (Bowen, 2009).

c. Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key housekeeping personnel, including the housekeeping coordinator, supervisors, and room attendants. These interviews focused on understanding staff roles, SOP implementation, common challenges, and how guest requests are prioritized and coordinated. Semi-structured interviews offer flexibility to explore both expected and emerging themes (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Interviews were audio-recorded (with permission) and transcribed for analysis.

The combination of these three techniques ensures data triangulation, which enhances the credibility and validity of qualitative findings (Patton, 2015).

2.2 Technique of Analysis

The collected data were analysed using **thematic analysis**, a method suitable for identifying, organizing, and interpreting patterns of meaning across qualitative datasets (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The process included the following steps:

- (1) **Familiarization:** The researchers reviewed observation notes, interview transcripts, and documents to gain a holistic understanding.
- (2) **Coding:** Key phrases and segments of the data were labelled with codes, such as "delayed response," "cross-departmental miscommunication," or "SOP adherence."
- (3) **Theme development:** Related codes were grouped into overarching themes, for example, "coordination challenges," "resource limitations," and "guest satisfaction impact."
- (4) **Review and refinement:** Themes were reviewed against the dataset to ensure they accurately represented the information.
- (5) **Interpretation:** Findings were interpreted with reference to the theoretical framework (SOR and servicescape theory) and research questions.

Thematic analysis enables rich, detailed exploration of organizational behavior and operational practices, particularly in service industries like hospitality (Nowell et al., 2017). This method supports the discovery of both explicit processes and implicit cultural dynamics in the housekeeping department.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

3.1.1 Overview of Guest Request Handling Process

The process of handling guest requests is a critical component of operational excellence in luxury hotels, especially within the housekeeping department. At **RbyA Bali**, a five-star resort known for its service quality, guest expectations are high and are directly tied to the promptness and

12 professionalism of service delivery. The effective management of guest requests serves as a reflection of the hotel's commitment to personalized service and operational discipline, especially within the scope of its **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)**.

Guest requests at RbyA Bali are initiated primarily through two channels: **in-room telephones** and the **mobile guest service application**. Based on observational data and interviews with housekeeping personnel, it was found that **approximately 85%** of guest requests are received directly by the housekeeping coordinators via the in-room phone system. The remaining 15% are relayed through the **front desk or guest service agents**, often when guests are away from their rooms or during check-in.

This distribution aligns with prior findings in the hospitality industry, where in-room communication systems remain the dominant method for service interactions despite the rise of digital platforms (Kansakar et al., 2017). However, the resort has made notable strides by integrating a mobile app that enables requests for housekeeping services, such as towel replacements, extra amenities, and turn-down services. While still underutilized, the app represents a growing trend in digital guest service systems, which aim to streamline request fulfilment and minimize response delays (Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2018).

The **workflow process** for guest request handling at RbyA Bali is both structured and systematic, designed in accordance with internal SOPs. Observations and document analysis revealed the following standardized procedure:

- (1) **Request Reception:** The request is received by a **housekeeping coordinator** through the phone system or the digital app interface. If routed through the front desk, the request is relayed to the coordinator via a walkie-talkie or internal call system.
- (2) **Request Logging:** The request is manually entered into the **housekeeping control logbook**, where time of request, room number, type of request, and priority level are documented. Notably, the system at present is **paper-based**, which introduces challenges in tracking real-time updates and may increase the potential for human error.
- (3) **Assignment to Room Attendant:** After logging, the coordinator assigns the task to an available **room attendant** using verbal communication, often supported by a two-way radio. The availability and proximity of the room attendant are considered in this step.
- (4) **Request Fulfilment:** The room attendant collects the requested item(s) from the housekeeping store or pantry and delivers it to the guest room. Items typically requested include **extra towels, bottled water, toiletries, slippers, ironing boards, or baby cribs**. Special services such as **floral arrangements, honeymoon amenities, or towel art** require collaboration with other departments such as food & beverage or florists.
- (5) **Completion Logging and Follow-Up:** Once the request is fulfilled, the room attendant verbally confirms with the coordinator, who then logs the **completion time**. If the guest is present, a follow-up confirmation is conducted on the spot. For digital requests, no automatic feedback system is currently in place, making follow-up dependent on staff initiative.

This workflow reflects a **linear, centralized model** where the coordinator functions as the hub of information and task delegation. While efficient under normal conditions, the process may suffer during peak hours or when digital coordination tools are underutilized.

Timeliness is a critical Key Performance Indicator (KPI) in hospitality services (Han et al., 2021). At RbyA Bali, the SOP outlines specific time standards for different categories of guest requests:

- Standard Requests (e.g., towels, water, toiletries): **≤ 15 minutes**
- Special Requests (e.g., floral setup, honeymoon decoration, baby amenities): **≤ 60 minutes**

The observational study conducted over a three-week period recorded 100 guest requests, with the following fulfilment data:

- **Towel Requests:** 65% delivered within 15 minutes
- **Toiletries (shampoo, lotion, toothbrush kits):** 58% delivered within SOP timeframe
- **Slippers and water:** 70% within 15 minutes
- **Special requests (honeymoon setup, floral decor, extra beds):** average delivery time was 45 minutes, with **20% exceeding** the 60-minute threshold.

These findings show a moderate level of adherence to SOPs, particularly for standard requests. The highest delays were observed in cross-departmental requests, which corroborates

previous research indicating that service delays often emerge from fragmented communication between departments (Siguaw & Enz, 1999). In interviews, staff cited **lack of real-time task tracking, manual reporting, and insufficient staffing during high occupancy** as primary reasons for delays.

The current guest request process at RbyA Bali, though fundamentally sound, reveals areas needing improvement. The manual nature of the logging system, reliance on verbal task delegation, and absence of a closed-loop feedback system limit its responsiveness. This reinforces the findings of Bitner (1992) on the importance of **service process design** within the broader **servicescape** theory, emphasizing that back-of-house efficiency is as critical as front-facing ambiance in shaping guest satisfaction.

To maintain a competitive edge in luxury hospitality, the resort may benefit from transitioning to a **digital housekeeping management system**, which can automate task assignments, monitor completion times in real time, and provide data analytics for performance evaluation (Kansakar et al., 2017). Such systems are becoming standard in leading international chains and offer measurable improvements in service speed, accountability, and guest experience.

3.1.2 Actual Performance vs. SOP Standards

In the hospitality industry, the implementation and adherence to **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** are vital to maintaining service quality, particularly in five-star properties where guest expectations are exceptionally high. SOPs act as a blueprint for delivering consistent, timely, and efficient services. In the context of **RbyA Bali**, SOPs have been developed to guide the handling of various categories of guest requests in the housekeeping department. However, the actual execution of these procedures often encounters discrepancies due to internal and external operational factors.

According to RbyA Bali's internal documentation, the established SOP standards are as follows:

- **Standard guest requests** (e.g., towels, bottled water, basic toiletries): must be fulfilled within **15 minutes** of the request.
- **Special requests** (e.g., floral decorations, honeymoon amenities, extra beds): should be fulfilled within **60 minutes** of the request.
- **Evening turndown service**: must be completed within **30 minutes**, typically after 6:00 PM when guests are at dinner or outside their rooms.

These benchmarks align with industry-wide best practices for luxury hotel operations (Siguaw & Enz, 1999; Han et al., 2021). Prompt service not only enhances guest satisfaction but also minimizes the likelihood of complaints or negative online reviews, both of which can significantly affect brand perception and customer loyalty (Ladhari, 2009).

A field observation was conducted over a three-week period, during which **100 guest requests** were documented and timed to compare actual performance with the hotel's SOP benchmarks. The data revealed considerable variation in the speed and efficiency with which requests were fulfilled:

- **Towel Requests**: 65% were delivered within the 15-minute time frame, while the remaining 35% exceeded the limit by an average of 7–10 minutes.
- **Toiletries (shampoo, dental kits, body lotion)**: Only 58% were fulfilled on time, indicating that even routine requests can experience delays.
- **Turndown Services**: Performed most efficiently, with **82%** of turndown services completed within the 30-minute SOP time window, possibly due to better scheduling during non-peak hours.
- **Special Requests**: These showed the **lowest compliance rate**, with only **35%** of requests such as flower arrangements, baby cots, and romantic setups being fulfilled within 60 minutes. The average delay ranged from 15 to 25 minutes beyond the SOP standard.

These findings underscore a **discrepancy between expected and actual service delivery**, particularly for cross-functional tasks that require input or coordination from other departments.

One of the critical insights from this study is that delays were **most frequent** when the request required **collaboration across departments**, such as coordination with the **front office, concierge, or food and beverage** teams. For example, honeymoon setup packages typically require floral arrangements, cake delivery, towel art, and room scenting, which involve at least three departments. Staff interviews indicated that such tasks are often delayed due to **lack of a unified**

task management system, miscommunication, or the unavailability of specialty items at the time of request.

This challenge aligns with previous studies that highlight interdepartmental communication as a key barrier to SOP compliance in hotel operations (Kansakar, Munir, & Shabani, 2017). According to Siguaw and Enz (1999), when departments operate in silos, the efficiency of service delivery declines significantly, especially in properties that offer high levels of customization or themed experiences.

The data suggest that while **standard requests** are generally fulfilled within reasonable time limits, **complex or collaborative tasks** tend to fall short of SOP expectations. This gap can be attributed to:

- Manual coordination and lack of real-time alerts;
- Insufficient staffing during peak occupancy;
- Ambiguities in responsibility for multi-departmental tasks.

To improve alignment with SOPs, the hotel can benefit from adopting **digital housekeeping platforms** that allow real-time task assignment, status tracking, and automated reminders (e.g., HotSOS, Knowcross). These tools have been proven to reduce response time by up to 40% in similar five-star environments (Han, Lee, & Jung, 2021).

In summary, while RbyA Bali demonstrates a relatively strong adherence to SOPs for routine tasks, performance for more complex guest requests is inconsistent. Strengthening communication across departments and modernizing task management infrastructure are recommended for improving overall SOP compliance and enhancing guest satisfaction.

3.1.3 Communication and Coordination Bottlenecks

Efficient communication and coordination are the foundation of successful operations in the hospitality industry, particularly in the housekeeping department, where service delivery is time-sensitive and highly guest-centred. However, qualitative data gathered through interviews with staff at RbyA Bali revealed several systemic communication bottlenecks that hinder timely and effective responses to guest requests. These bottlenecks affect service speed, consistency, and, ultimately, guest satisfaction.

One of the most frequently cited issues by housekeeping staff and supervisors was the **delay in internal task handoffs** between housekeeping coordinators and room attendants. After a guest request is received and logged in the paper-based control log, coordinators often take an additional **5 to 10 minutes** before verbally notifying a room attendant. This delay is usually due to competing priorities, such as attending to simultaneous requests or updating manual reports. Such time gaps, although seemingly minor, are critical in the context of luxury hospitality, where expectations for fast, seamless service are high. According to Siguaw and Enz (1999), even small internal delays can compound and result in negative guest perceptions if not addressed proactively. Delayed handoffs also reflect a lack of automation and streamlined workflow, which are essential for efficiency in high-demand environments (Kansakar, Munir, & Shabani, 2017).

The second major bottleneck arises from the **absence of a real-time tracking system** for guest requests. Currently, all requests at RbyA Bali are **logged manually** in a **paper-based housekeeping journal**, which lacks instant visibility or system-generated alerts. As a result, once a request is assigned, there is no structured method to track the progress of the fulfilment or to trigger automatic reminders if deadlines are missed.

In an age where most luxury hotels are transitioning to digital housekeeping platforms (such as Knowcross or HotSOS), RIMBA's continued reliance on manual logs presents an operational risk. Research by Han, Lee, and Jung (2021) emphasizes the importance of **real-time communication and mobile-enabled systems** to reduce human error, accelerate service delivery, and improve cross-department accountability. Without real-time tracking, coordinators must rely solely on verbal updates from staff, which is prone to miscommunication and loss of service data.

Perhaps the most complex challenge lies in the **siloed nature of departmental communication**, particularly for **specialty guest requests** that require coordination with departments like front office, food & beverage, or spa services. For example, a romantic turndown service may involve floral arrangements (handled by the concierge), a customized cake (from F&B), and room decoration (from housekeeping). According to interview data, this interdepartmental

workflow often adds an **average of 18 minutes** to the total delivery time, particularly when departments are not informed simultaneously or fail to confirm receipt of tasks.

This breakdown in coordination is a classic case of **organizational siloing**, where departments operate independently with limited visibility into one another's workflows. Bitner (1992) argued that seamless service requires a back-stage infrastructure as polished and integrated as the front-stage experience. Cross-functional collaboration is increasingly recognized as a determinant of service quality, especially in complex service environments like hotels (Law et al., 2014).

The communication and coordination bottlenecks identified in this study significantly impact the hotel's ability to meet its SOP targets and maintain service excellence. To address these issues, several strategies are recommended:

- Implementing **digital housekeeping platforms** for task assignment and progress tracking;
- Introducing **multi-department notification systems** for specialty services;
- Conducting regular **interdepartmental briefings** to align service timelines and expectations;
- Training staff on **cross-functional communication** and task prioritization.

Without addressing these communication gaps, even the most experienced housekeeping teams may struggle to deliver consistent, high-quality service.

3.1.4 Staff Perceptions and Challenges

The quality and consistency of guest service delivery in hospitality, particularly in housekeeping departments, are heavily influenced by the perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of frontline staff. At **RbyA Bali**, staff interviews conducted with ten housekeeping employees—including coordinators, room attendants, and supervisors—revealed both strengths and persistent challenges within the department. These insights provide a nuanced understanding of the human factors that underpin operational performance and service outcomes.

One of the most consistent themes from the interviews was a **strong sense of teamwork** within the housekeeping department. Staff members frequently praised their colleagues for being supportive and collaborative, particularly during high-pressure situations such as back-to-back room turnovers or special guest request surges. Several coordinators highlighted that informal peer support and mutual task assistance were key in ensuring guest satisfaction during peak hours.

This finding aligns with prior research emphasizing the importance of teamwork in hospitality operations. As noted by Kim et al. (2015), effective collaboration among housekeeping staff enhances both operational efficiency and morale. Furthermore, strong interpersonal relationships in housekeeping departments can mitigate the impact of external stressors, such as understaffing or unexpected guest demands (Jang et al., 2016).

Despite the strong teamwork culture, **staff shortages during peak occupancy periods** emerged as the most pressing operational challenge. Interviewees consistently reported feeling overwhelmed during high-season events, such as holidays or wedding weekends. According to several attendants, the standard ratio of attendants to rooms was frequently exceeded during peak periods, forcing them to rush tasks or delay guest requests.

These conditions contribute to service inconsistencies and heightened stress levels. In line with this, previous studies have documented the direct relationship between inadequate staffing and reduced service quality in hospitality settings (Siguaw & Enz, 1999). Not only do labor shortages delay guest request fulfilment, but they can also increase employee burnout and turnover, further aggravating the staffing issue (Lu & Gursoy, 2016).

Another key challenge raised by supervisors and coordinators was **inconsistent digital literacy**, particularly among senior or older employees. With the gradual shift towards mobile apps, QR code-based service requests, and digital log systems, staff unfamiliar with these technologies often require additional time or assistance, thereby slowing down the request response process. Digital transformation in hospitality has brought substantial benefits, but it also creates a **knowledge divide** if proper training and onboarding are not provided. According to Law, Buhalis, and Cobanoglu (2014), staff competence in digital tools is essential for leveraging technology in guest service delivery. Inadequate training or unfamiliarity with digital systems may undermine even the most advanced technological solutions.

Lastly, interviews revealed **ambiguities in SOP documentation**, especially concerning the classification and prioritization of guest requests. Some coordinators mentioned that there are “grey areas” in SOPs, such as unclear definitions for high-priority vs. standard requests, or whether certain amenities (e.g., baby cots, towel art, humidifiers) fall under specialty or routine services.

These ambiguities often lead to hesitation or inconsistent handling of requests. Staff members may either delay fulfilment while seeking clarification or fulfill a lower-priority task prematurely, disrupting workflow. Clear, comprehensive SOPs are critical for service standardization (Kandampully, Zhang, & Jaakkola, 2018). When frontline employees are uncertain about service categories or delivery expectations, the quality and timeliness of service inevitably suffer.

Overall, while the housekeeping department at RbyA Bali benefits from a robust culture of teamwork, several operational challenges persist. These include understaffing during peak seasons, unequal levels of digital literacy, and unclear SOP guidelines. Addressing these issues through strategic staffing, digital literacy training, and SOP revision will be vital to maintaining the hotel's high service standards.

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 Timeliness and Guest Satisfaction

Timeliness is widely recognized as one of the most critical dimensions of **Service Quality (SQ)**, especially in the hospitality industry. Prompt service delivery not only fulfills functional expectations but also signals attentiveness, efficiency, and professionalism—all of which contribute significantly to **guest satisfaction and loyalty** (Ganie & Raina, 2024; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). In luxury hotels such as RbyA Bali, the **expectation for promptness is amplified**, as guests associate premium pricing with seamless, immediate service experiences.

The findings from field observations at RbyA Bali illustrate that while the hotel performs moderately well in fulfilling standard guest requests within the established SOP timelines, there is a **notable gap in delivering specialized or complex services** on time. Specifically, data show that only **65% of towel requests** and **58% of toiletries** were fulfilled within the 15-minute SOP threshold. These are relatively routine requests that ideally should approach near-total compliance, especially given the ease of access to these amenities in hotel pantries.

Furthermore, for evening turndown services—a semi-standardized luxury service—compliance was higher, with **82% completed within the SOP time frame** of 30 minutes. This may be due to better time planning and fewer variables involved. However, for **special requests** such as floral decorations, honeymoon amenities, or extra beds, **only 35% were fulfilled within the stipulated 60-minute window**, highlighting a critical gap in managing more complex service workflows.

These delays, even if they appear minor from an operational standpoint, can have **outsized effects on guest perceptions**. According to Han et al. (2021), **perceived service delays in luxury settings**—even of just 10 to 20 minutes—are often interpreted as a lack of attentiveness or respect, thereby reducing trust in the hotel's service promise. This is particularly true in situations where guests are preparing for special events (e.g., honeymoons, anniversaries), and expectations for flawless service are at their peak.

The correlation between **service promptness and satisfaction** is well-established in hospitality literature. Ganie and Raina (2024) argue that **speed of service delivery ranks among the top three determinants of guest satisfaction**, alongside courtesy and cleanliness. Moreover, Lourdes and Hadi (2025) emphasize that even when service quality is high in other areas, untimely service can overshadow positive aspects and lead to negative reviews or reduced guest loyalty.

In the context of digital engagement, timeliness also affects **online feedback and brand reputation**. With the rise of review platforms such as **TripAdvisor** and **Google Reviews**, guests are more empowered to share detailed narratives about their service experiences. Delays in room service or failure to fulfil requests in a timely manner are among the most frequently cited complaints in negative reviews of luxury hotels (Xie et al., 2014). Thus, improving timeliness is not only about satisfying current guests but also about preserving the long-term brand image.

To improve guest satisfaction through timeliness, several strategies can be considered:

- **Digital request tracking:** Implement mobile-based platforms to automatically log, assign, and time-stamp guest requests.

- **Performance monitoring:** Use key performance indicators (KPIs) focused on fulfilment time by request category.
- **Staff allocation planning:** Deploy additional staff during high-occupancy periods to ensure rapid task fulfilment.
- **Cross-training:** Train staff across departments to reduce bottlenecks in fulfilling multi-department requests.

In summary, while RbyA Bali demonstrates a moderate level of efficiency in handling standard requests, there is **clear room for improvement** in terms of ensuring **timely delivery of special services**. In a competitive luxury hospitality market, consistent adherence to service timelines can be a key differentiator that significantly enhances the guest experience.

3.2.2 Communication Gaps: Servicescape & S-O-R Framework

Effective communication is the backbone of seamless guest service in the hospitality industry. At RbyA Bali, observed communication bottlenecks—such as delayed handoffs between coordinators and attendants, and lack of real-time tracking—are not just operational concerns, but **key influencers of guest experience**. These challenges can be analysed through the theoretical lenses of Bitner's Servicescape Model (1992) and the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Framework by Mehrabian and Russell (1974).

Bitner's Servicescape model emphasizes how the physical and procedural environment influences customer perceptions, particularly in service industries where experiences are co-produced. The "servicescape" includes ambient conditions (e.g., cleanliness, sound), spatial layout, signage, and communication systems that facilitate service delivery. In RIMBA's context, **inefficient internal communication structures**—evident in verbal-only task assignments, manual logging, and lack of integrated alerts—undermine the effectiveness of both tangible and intangible service elements. For example, a guest may perceive the room as physically luxurious, but **a delay in delivering extra towels or honeymoon decorations** creates dissonance, lowering the perceived service quality (Bitner, 1992).

Applying the S-O-R (Stimulus-Organism-Response) model, **communication inefficiencies act as a negative stimulus**. The "Organism" in this case is the guest, who processes this delayed service mentally and emotionally, leading to frustration or disappointment. The "Response" is then behavioural—manifesting in a **lower likelihood of positive actions**, such as rebooking, recommending the hotel, or leaving favorable online reviews (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974; Han et al., 2021). Even a luxurious physical environment cannot compensate for **service process failures**, emphasizing the importance of aligning front-stage ambiance with back-stage efficiency.

In hospitality research, this alignment between servicescape quality and process efficiency is critical. According to Han and Hyun (2017), inconsistencies between service promises (e.g., five-star status) and delivery realities (e.g., poor communication or delayed responses) create a "servicescape incongruence" that diminishes guest satisfaction and brand trust. For luxury hotels like RbyA, where expectations are elevated, these gaps are particularly damaging to long-term loyalty.

3.2.3 Administrative Systems and Technology

The **absence of a digital task-tracking system** at RbyA Bali is another major barrier to timely and coordinated service delivery. Currently, all guest requests are manually logged on paper by housekeeping coordinators, with assignments made verbally or over internal phone lines. While this system has historically sufficed in low-volume periods, it is **inefficient and error-prone**, particularly during peak occupancy or when multi-departmental coordination is required.

This finding resonates with Kansakar et al. (2017), who argue that manual administrative systems in hospitality hinder visibility, delay task delegation, and lead to poor accountability. Their study concluded that **hotels using digital task-tracking platforms**—such as HotSOS, Knowcross, or custom-built apps—achieve faster request fulfilment, more accurate service logging, and better staff coordination. These systems not only timestamp tasks in real time but also **generate alerts and reminders**, preventing delays and reducing reliance on human memory.

Implementing even a **lightweight mobile application** or **cloud-based dashboard** could greatly enhance RIMBA's internal communications. Such tools allow coordinators to assign requests instantly, track fulfilment progress, and monitor time-to-completion against SOPs. In addition,

analytics dashboards can help identify recurring bottlenecks, allowing for strategic staffing and task prioritization (Law et al., 2014).

Moreover, **digital systems support staff training and evaluation**, offering performance logs that can be used for continuous improvement initiatives. As Lu and Gursoy (2016) note, transparent task tracking improves staff accountability and morale by establishing clear expectations and reducing ambiguity in roles and responsibilities.

Transitioning to digital systems also aligns with guest expectations in the **post-COVID hospitality landscape**, where **contactless service, digital convenience, and rapid responsiveness** are highly valued. According to Tan and Lau (2021), hotels that invest in operational technology not only increase efficiency but also appeal more strongly to younger, tech-savvy guests who expect real-time responsiveness.

Of course, implementing new technology is not without challenges. As noted in staff interviews at RIMBA, **digital literacy varies**, particularly among older employees. To overcome this, change management strategies should include **comprehensive training, role-based interfaces, and peer mentoring**. As Bitner (1992) suggested, employee comfort with service tools is a key factor in shaping the overall service environment.

Addressing communication gaps and modernizing administrative systems are **interconnected priorities**. While a luxurious servicescape can attract guests, **sustained satisfaction depends on invisible but essential systems**—like timely communication, digital task management, and departmental coordination. RbyA Bali stands to benefit significantly from upgrading its internal infrastructure to ensure that the high expectations associated with its brand are consistently met.

3.2.4 SOP Adherence and Staff Training

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are central to ensuring consistent, high-quality service in hospitality operations. In the context of **RbyA Bali**, SOPs exist for various housekeeping services, such as response time standards, request prioritization, and service tier classification. However, field observations and interviews revealed that **SOP adherence is inconsistent**, largely due to **uneven staff training** and a lack of standardized interpretation tools.

This inconsistency was especially evident in how staff classified and responded to different types of guest requests. For instance, while towels and toiletries were treated as routine requests by most coordinators, amenities such as extra beds or honeymoon room setups were variably categorized—some considered them "special requests" requiring extended lead times, while others attempted immediate service. This lack of **uniform classification** led to service delays and confusion, particularly when requests were made during high-occupancy periods.

Amir Bin Ahmad (2023) emphasizes that **rigorous and repeated training in SOPs** significantly improves uniformity in service delivery. SOPs should not be viewed as static documents but as **living tools** that evolve alongside operational needs. Frequent **refresher sessions** help reinforce standards, correct misinterpretations, and integrate staff feedback into procedural improvements. Moreover, SOP education should be tailored to all levels of staff—from room attendants to coordinators—ensuring that everyone shares the same understanding of service tiers, time standards, and escalation protocols.

One effective tool proposed by supervisors is the creation of a **visual classification chart** or decision matrix to guide staff in real-time. This would allow quick identification of service types and their corresponding response expectations, reducing ambiguity and allowing faster decision-making. The need for visual learning aids is supported by the findings of Kandampully et al. (2018), who argue that visual SOP tools enhance recall, especially in fast-paced environments where verbal instructions can easily be forgotten.

Additionally, the presence of **generational differences** in the workforce means that training strategies must be adaptive. Older staff may prefer in-person workshops and printed manuals, while younger employees often engage better with digital microlearning or video-based content (Lu & Gursoy, 2016). Addressing this diversity in learning preferences can foster stronger SOP adherence and help bridge service quality gaps.

3.2.5 Cross-Departmental Synergy

Another key factor influencing guest service quality at RbyA Bali is the **level of collaboration between departments**, especially for complex or customized guest requests. Services such as **floral arrangements, honeymoon room setups, or VIP turndown experiences** often require input from

multiple departments, including housekeeping, front office, food and beverage (F&B), and sometimes concierge.

Despite each department having its internal SOPs, the **absence of shared protocols or a unified dashboard** results in fragmented workflows. Interview data revealed frequent coordination delays, particularly when departments operated on different timelines or lacked confirmation procedures. For example, a floral decoration requested by a guest might be delayed because housekeeping was unaware that the front office had not yet confirmed flower delivery or room readiness. Such gaps are indicative of a **siloed organizational structure**, where departments operate independently without an overarching communication framework.

Balroo (2023) highlighted the importance of **integrated workflows** in luxury hospitality, noting that service failures often occur not because of individual incompetence but due to a lack of **interdepartmental synergy**. Embedding cross-functional SOPs—where each task owner and deadline is predefined—can significantly reduce errors and improve service flow. These SOPs should be developed collaboratively across departments and include **trigger points**, such as who initiates, who confirms, and who delivers each component of a multi-step service.

The adoption of **shared digital dashboards** is another best practice that can enhance coordination. These dashboards, accessible by all departments involved, can display real-time updates on guest request statuses, upcoming special events, or pending confirmations. This eliminates the guesswork and reliance on phone calls or emails, streamlining task delegation and accountability. According to Law et al. (2014), digital collaboration tools lead to **faster service delivery, fewer mistakes, and greater staff satisfaction**, especially in large-scale operations.

Furthermore, **cross-departmental training sessions** can foster understanding of each team's constraints and workflows. When housekeeping staff are aware of the processes and limitations of the F&B or concierge teams, they are more likely to coordinate proactively and manage guest expectations accurately. Similarly, cross-training encourages empathy and reduces the blame culture often associated with interdepartmental service breakdowns (Jang et al., 2016). In conclusion, addressing SOP inconsistencies and fostering cross-departmental synergy are essential steps toward improving service efficiency and guest satisfaction. Through enhanced training, visual tools, shared SOPs, and digital coordination platforms, RbyA Bali can strengthen its operational backbone and ensure that luxury is reflected not just in the aesthetics, but also in the precision of its service.

3.2.6 Practical Implications

The findings from the evaluation of guest request handling at RbyA Bali underscore a clear need for operational improvements to **bridge the gap between luxury brand positioning and actual service delivery**. While the resort offers world-class amenities and a compelling physical environment, certain backend inefficiencies—such as delays, communication breakdowns, and inconsistent SOP adherence—undermine guest satisfaction. To address these gaps, several practical interventions can be implemented, drawing from industry best practices and empirical evidence from hospitality research.

One of the most critical interventions is the **introduction of a digital task-tracking system**. A tablet- or mobile-based housekeeping application with **real-time notifications and time-stamped logging** would streamline request fulfilment and ensure accountability. Tools like HotSOS or a custom in-house app can automate the entire guest request cycle: from initial logging, assignment, fulfilment, to follow-up.

According to Kansakar et al. (2017), hotels that transition from manual logs to digital systems experience up to **30% faster service delivery** and significant reductions in miscommunication between staff. In the RIMBA context, where delays were most prominent for specialty services, having a **centralized task dashboard** can reduce manual handoffs and help prioritize time-sensitive tasks.

Daily **team briefings or “huddles”** can improve role clarity and help staff prepare for anticipated workloads, especially during peak seasons. These briefings should cover **forecasted occupancy, special events, VIP arrivals, and unusual guest requests**. They also serve as a platform for sharing quick updates on procedural changes or digital system usage tips.

Bitner (1992) emphasized the importance of internal servicescapes—how the work environment shapes employee behavior. Briefings contribute to this by creating a **shared mental model** of

service expectations and reducing cognitive load during operational hours. This aligns teams toward a common goal and minimizes confusion around responsibilities, especially when requests involve cross-departmental coordination.

Sustained improvements require ongoing **training programs focused on digital tools, SOP interpretation, and cross-functional collaboration**. Interviews revealed discrepancies in SOP comprehension and varying levels of digital proficiency among staff, particularly among older employees. To address this, training should be **tiered by role** and **customized by learning style** (e.g., video tutorials, peer demonstrations, hands-on workshops).

Han et al. (2021) found that staff empowerment through training directly correlates with higher guest satisfaction scores. Training also boosts morale, particularly when staff feel competent in using new tools and clearly understand service expectations. Reinforcing the importance of consistent SOP application—especially in classifying request tiers and prioritizing fulfilment—ensures more predictable and responsive service.

To drive accountability and improvement, the hotel should monitor **key performance indicators (KPIs)** related to request handling, such as:

- Average response time per request type (standard vs. special)
- Percentage of requests fulfilled within SOP timeframes
- Volume of delayed tasks per shift or department

These KPIs should be visualized on **digital performance dashboards** accessible to department heads and supervisors. Sharing real-time performance data encourages **healthy competition**, promotes transparency, and helps managers identify bottlenecks quickly. Law, Buhalis, and Cobanoglu (2014) argue that visibility into performance metrics leads to **proactive behavior and continuous improvement**, particularly when combined with recognition or incentives.

Ultimately, these operational upgrades should be viewed not as technical fixes, but as **strategic enablers of luxury positioning**. In luxury hospitality, time is not just a metric—it is part of the experience. The ability to anticipate and fulfill guest requests rapidly and flawlessly differentiates premium hotels from standard service providers. As Bitner (1992) and Balroo (2023) assert, every touchpoint—both visible and invisible—must align with the brand promise of elegance, efficiency, and exclusivity.

RbyA Bali already possesses the physical attributes of a luxury resort. By integrating digital systems, empowering staff through targeted training, and institutionalizing performance accountability, it can also deliver **consistently premium guest experiences** across all service dimensions.

4. Conclusion

This study set out to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of guest request handling by the Housekeeping Department at RbyA Bali. The core focus was to understand how well guest requests are processed and fulfilled in alignment with the hotel's established Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), to identify operational bottlenecks, and to propose strategic improvements that align with luxury hospitality standards.

Based on a mixed-methods approach combining **observations, interviews, and document studies**, the study reveals that although the Housekeeping Department demonstrates strong commitment and a sense of teamwork, several areas require enhancement to meet the expectations associated with a five-star resort. The most frequently cited challenges include **delays in task execution, manual and fragmented communication, limited use of digital tracking systems, and inconsistencies in SOP adherence**. These findings were particularly evident in special or complex guest requests that required cross-departmental coordination, such as honeymoon setups or VIP floral arrangements.

The study finds that **timeliness remains a critical weakness**, with only 65% of towel requests and 58% of toiletry requests fulfilled within the required SOP timeframe of 15 minutes. Similarly, specialty services often exceeded the 60-minute SOP threshold. The lack of a real-time tracking system and the use of paper-based logs contribute significantly to these delays.

Additionally, manual coordination across departments creates communication bottlenecks, further extending service fulfillment time.

Another key finding relates to **staff training and SOP literacy**. Although SOPs exist, inconsistent understanding and application—especially regarding request categorization and prioritization—leads to varying interpretations among staff. This is compounded by generational differences in digital literacy, making it difficult to implement tech-based solutions without tailored training.

From a theoretical standpoint, these operational gaps can be explained through **Bitner's (1992) Servicescape Model**, which highlights the importance of aligning physical environments with service delivery processes, and the **Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model** (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), where operational inefficiencies act as stimuli that negatively affect guest satisfaction and behavioral responses.

To improve service quality and align operational delivery with the resort's luxury positioning, the study recommends: (1) Implementing a **digital guest request tracking system** with real-time updates and alerts. (2) Conducting **regular team briefings** to align expectations and clarify roles. (3) Enhancing **SOP training and digital literacy programs** for all housekeeping staff. (4) Developing **cross-departmental SOPs** and integrated dashboards to support coordination. (5) Tracking and sharing **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** to encourage accountability and continuous improvement.

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