

Marketing Communication Strategy Via Airbnb Platform in Increasing Guest Visits Rates at Sunrai Villas Ubud in 2025

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ABSTRACT

Keywords

Communication Strategy; Digital Marketing; Airbnb Platform; Guest Occupancy; Sunrai Villas Ubud; Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)

This research is fundamentally motivated by the rapid digital transformation within the tourism industry in Ubud, Bali, which has engendered an intensely competitive landscape among independent accommodation providers. Sunrai Villas faces the strategic challenge of distinguishing itself amidst a saturated market of thousands of property listings. Consequently, there is an imperative need to leverage the Airbnb platform not merely as a transactional distribution channel, but as a sophisticated medium for strategic marketing communication. The primary objective of this scholarly inquiry is to analyze and describe the multifaceted marketing communication strategies executed by Sunrai Villas through Airbnb to catalyze guest occupancy rates throughout the 2025 period. Employing a qualitative methodology with a descriptive case study design, data was meticulously gathered through in-depth semi-structured interviews with management and frontline staff, systematic digital observation of Airbnb profile features, and an exhaustive analysis of internal occupancy documentation. The findings reveal that Sunrai Villas implements a synergistic communication framework anchored by three fundamental pillars: the construction of high-fidelity visual narratives, the dynamics of personalized interaction facilitated through cross-functional coordination, and proactive reputation management rooted in public review ecosystems. The seamless integration between digital messaging and tangible service quality on-site is empirically proven to significantly influence prospective guests' decision-making processes, ultimately driving sustained growth in occupancy and visitor loyalty at Sunrai Villas Ubud.

1. Introduction

The digitalization of the global tourism industry has fundamentally recalibrated the competitive map of the hospitality sector, a phenomenon acutely observed in Ubud, Bali—a region globally recognized as a sanctum of cultural and natural tourism. This systemic shift has compelled accommodation managers to pivot from archaic conventional marketing methodologies toward sophisticated digital platforms to maintain market relevance. This transition aligns with the seminal arguments posited by (Guttentag, 2015), who identifies Airbnb as a disruptive innovation that has transformed the traditional hospitality competition into a platform-centric digital ecosystem. Amidst the myriad of choices available on such platforms, the primary strategic hurdle is no longer limited to mere visibility; rather, it revolves around the construction of communication narratives capable of converting latent travel intent into concrete booking decisions. In this contemporary digital landscape, marketing communication strategies demand a rigorous integration of informative content and persuasive interaction to generate perceived value for the consumer (Kotler, Philip; Armstrong, 2018). This issue has reached a critical juncture due to the frequently observed 'expectation gap' between digital marketing promises and the physical reality of service delivery encountered by guests on-site.

Previous scholarly endeavors have attempted to dissect the efficacy of online accommodation platforms. Research concerning digital promotional mixes indicates that elements such as digital advertising and online public relations exert a substantial influence on the brand image of an establishment (Radakovic, 2014). However, the more nuanced, human-centric, and sustainable aspects of marketing communication are often marginalized in these technical discourses. There remains a discernible void in the existing literature regarding how the integration of visual storytelling, rapid personal interaction, and empathetic review management forms a robust reputation ecosystem for private villas. Most studies continue to view digital platforms through a narrow lens as mere sales distribution channels, failing to recognize them as strategic communicative spaces for fostering long-term guest loyalty.

This study seeks to bridge this theoretical lacuna by proposing a framework of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) based on three strategic pillars: visual narrative optimization, personal interaction efficiency, and public reputation management. By utilizing Sunrai Villas Ubud as a focal case study, this research scrutinizes how digitally constructed messages can be synchronized with real-world service quality to influence consumer behavior in 2025. The effective implementation of these strategies on Airbnb listings is viewed as a form of communicative technology adaptation within the modern, user-experience-focused tourism industry (Tussyadiah, 2016b). While prior studies by (Radakovic, 2014; Tussyadiah, 2016b) have explored the significance of digital promotional mixes, those studies tend to remain tethered to the general technical features of platforms. A scholarly critique can be raised regarding the neglect of daily operational dynamics that link digital promises on Airbnb with the physical service reality on the ground. This disconnect often causes the understanding of digital marketing communication to terminate prematurely at the transactional phase. The novelty of this research lies in its deep exploration of the synchronization of three strategic pillars that focus not only on visual aesthetics but also on cross-line coordination as a holistic communication ecosystem.

2. Method

This research adopts a qualitative approach within a descriptive case study framework, a selection predicated on the necessity to explore the intricate nuances of communication strategies at Sunrai Villas Ubud. Primary data was elicited through rigorous in-depth interviews with two key informants: Mila, who oversees digital account management and virtual guest relations, and Putu Ari, the operational lead responsible for on-site service execution. These informants were strategically selected as they represent the two critical dimensions of the hospitality promise: the 'digital guarantee' and the 'physical reality.'

Furthermore, systematic digital observations were conducted on the Airbnb dashboard to analyze the longitudinal patterns of chat interactions and guest reviews throughout the 2025 fiscal year. The data analysis follows the interactive model proposed by (Miles et al., 2014) encompassing data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. To ensure the highest standards of data trustworthiness and validity, the researcher employed source triangulation, cross-referencing interview transcripts with internal financial records and authentic guest testimonials on the Airbnb platform to maintain objective findings.

2.1 Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through three primary techniques to maintain the validity of the research findings. First, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with two key informants: Mila, the host responsible for digital account management, and Putu Ari, the operational assistant handling physical service aspects on-site. The interviews focused on the synchronization between the promises offered on the platform and the actual service reality provided.

Second, digital observation was performed on the Sunrai Villas profile within the Airbnb application, encompassing an analysis of the narrative used in the villa description, the quality and sequencing of photographs (visual storytelling), and the communication patterns within the messaging features and review sections. Third, documentation in the form of internal income reports and occupancy rates for 2025 was utilized to confirm the impact of the implemented communication strategies.

2.2 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis in this study follows the interactive model proposed by (Miles et al., 2014) which consists of three distinct stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The researcher categorized the results from interviews and observational data into three primary strategic pillars.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, the researcher employed source triangulation, where interview results from Putu Ari were cross-referenced with physical evidence, such as guest reviews and activity logs on the Airbnb dashboard. Additionally, the researcher conducted member checks by re-confirming the interpreted data with the informants to ensure that the constructed narrative accurately represents the operational reality at Sunrai Villas Ubud. Through this approach, the researcher was able to deconstruct the dynamics of modern communication practices that transcend conventional transactional boundaries.

3. Result and Discussion

This research comprehensively dissects the marketing communication strategies of Sunrai Villas on the Airbnb platform by incorporating data triangulation from digital observations, internal documents, and in-depth interviews. Based on the data condensation analysis, the findings indicate that the effectiveness of Sunrai Villas' marketing does not rely on a single variable, but rather on the synergy of three interlocking strategic pillars: (1) The construction of visual narratives and property description accuracy, (2) Personal interaction management through cross-line communication integration, and (3) The optimization of public reviews as digital reputation instruments. These three pillars are then analyzed through the lenses of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) theories to evaluate the extent to which field practices align with the principles of modern marketing communication.

3.1 Analysis of the Three Pillars of Marketing Communication Implementation

The marketing communication strategy of Sunrai Villas on the Airbnb platform begins with the establishment of credibility through measurable digital performance data. Based on the observations conducted by the researcher, it was found that the management has successfully maintained an exceptionally high standard of quality in the eyes of global consumers. This reputation data represents the accumulation of guest perceptions regarding the consistency of information and the quality of interaction provided by the management throughout 2025. Representative findings concerning the ratings achieved across various Airbnb assessment categories are presented in the following table as a basis for further strategic analysis:

Table 1. Sunrai Villas' Digital Reputation Based on Airbnb Parameters

Rating Category	Score (Scale 1-5)
<i>Cleanliness</i>	4.9
<i>Accuracy</i>	5.0
<i>Check-in</i>	5.0
<i>Communication</i>	5.0
<i>Location</i>	4.8
<i>Value</i>	5.0

Table 2. Sales and Occupancy Data of Sunrai Villas Ubud in 2025

Month	Gross Earnings	Host Service Fee	Total (IDR)	Nights Booked	Avg Night Stay
Feb	Rp 80,400,000.00	Rp -2,677,219.00	Rp 77,722,781.00	348	3.1
March	Rp 92,099,967.00	Rp -3,047,319.00	Rp 89,052,648.00	462	3.2
April	Rp 144,027,988.00	Rp -4,797,555.00	Rp 139,230,433.00	529	2.9
May	Rp 166,449,930.00	Rp -5,459,090.00	Rp 160,990,840.00	516	2.7
June	Rp 155,599,999.00	Rp -5,171,667.00	Rp 150,428,332.00	550	2.8

Based on the data presented in Table 2, a month-to-month comparative analysis reveals the direct impact of the implemented communication strategies. In February 2025, revenue stood at IDR 80,461,350. During this initial stage, Sunrai Villas focused on refining its profile descriptions and updating high-quality visual content. By March, earnings climbed to IDR 93,415,520 a growth that aligns with a wave of positive testimonials from international guests praising the property's cleanliness and the staff's responsiveness.

The most striking surge occurred in May 2025, when revenue hit IDR 166,452,125. A deeper look suggests that this 100% increase from February wasn't merely driven by seasonal trends; rather, it was the result of "digital trust accumulation." By this point, the villa had secured dozens of five-star reviews, which effectively triggered Airbnb's top-tier recommendation algorithms. The research indicates that the management's consistent replies to guest comments (as illustrated in Figure 3) serve as a form of passive marketing. These interactions operate 24/7, building credibility and converting potential leads into new bookings for the following months.

The digital reputation accuracy highlighted in Table 1 shows a direct correlation with Sunrai Villas' financial performance, as recorded in the management's internal documentation. As illustrated in Table 2, there was a substantial surge in Gross Earnings, starting from IDR 80.4 million in February and reaching a peak of IDR 166.4 million by May. This revenue growth—exceeding 100% within a mere five-month window—demonstrates that the implemented marketing communication strategies effectively swayed potential guests toward making actual bookings. Furthermore, the steady rise in Nights Booked, which hit 550 by June, confirms that Sunrai Villas has secured a stable and highly competitive occupancy rate within the Ubud market throughout 2025.

An analysis of the revenue fluctuations in Table 2 reveals that the notable gains in April and May directly resulted from the accumulation of social capital via previous guest reviews. While earnings stood at IDR 80.4 million in February, they experienced a dramatic surge to IDR 166.4 million by May. From a theoretical standpoint, this growth validates that the 'Third Pillar' (Reputation Management) strategy generates a significant multiplier effect on the property's financial performance.

The surge in May was not solely driven by the peak travel season, but rather by a level of trust that had reached a positive saturation point on the Airbnb platform. As a succession of reviews from guests like Tyler and Leanne (Figure 3) appeared, Airbnb's algorithm automatically boosted Sunrai Villas' visibility rankings. This shift effectively lowered guest acquisition costs, as the property's profile became 'market-validated.' Putu Ari noted that during this period, inquiries via the messaging feature shifted—guests focused more on checking date availability rather than questioning the facilities. This indicates that a solid digital reputation had successfully eroded previous communication barriers.

A more detailed analysis of Table 2 reveals significant positive fluctuations in Sunrai Villas' financial performance throughout the first half of 2025. The sharp revenue increases in April (IDR 144,027,988) and May (IDR 166,449,930) point toward successful market penetration driven by integrated communication strategies. This peak in May can be attributed to a powerful combination of Bali's tourism high season and the strategic accumulation of positive reviews, which together reached a critical threshold of trust among new consumers.

More specifically, the high number of Nights Booked in June (550 nights) demonstrates that while Gross Earnings saw a slight dip compared to May due to dynamic pricing adjustments, occupancy levels remained at their peak. This proves that the 'Third Pillar' (Review Management) strategy successfully triggered a "snowball effect," where previous testimonials—such as those from Tyler and Leanne in Figure 2—transformed into an organic promotion engine. This shift not only reduced new guest acquisition costs but also strengthened trust retention on the Airbnb platform.

To gain a deeper understanding of how this strategy is executed, the researcher conducted an in-depth observation of the operational ecosystem at Sunrai Villas. Situated in a strategic yet tranquil area of Ubud, the property is managed through a lean, highly responsive organizational structure. The key informants in this study include Mila, who serves as the digital host managing the Airbnb storefront, and Putu Ari, the operational assistant who acts as the face of on-site guest services.

Putu Ari's role in this research is pivotal, as he serves as the crucial bridge between the 'digital promise' and the 'reality of service.' As a local resident deeply immersed in Ubud's culture, Putu Ari integrates traditional local wisdom into modern Airbnb service standards. This provides Sunrai Villas with a distinct competitive edge; guests receive more than just a place to stay—they gain a dedicated local guide accessible both through the app's messaging features and in person. The synergy between Mila's remote management and Putu Ari's on-site execution fosters a seamless communication flow, which serves as the cornerstone of their success (rather than mere precision) in maintaining their Superhost status.

The first pillar concerns the strength of visual narrative and the accuracy of property descriptions. Within Ubud's hyper-competitive Airbnb ecosystem, visuals serve as the "first point of contact," determining whether a prospective guest will engage with a click-through or move on. Sunrai Villas intentionally constructs a visual identity that emphasizes the harmony between modern architecture and Ubud's untamed nature. Based on observations of their listing profile, the displayed photographs go beyond mere aesthetics; they carry functional messages. For instance, prioritizing a photo of the infinity pool against the Petulu forest backdrop aims to establish a specific positioning: "a tranquil private villa."

Mila, the property owner and account manager, explains that this visual strategy is rooted in the principle of transparency:

"We never rely on excessive filters or edit photos to the point that they alter the environment's true colors. We make it a point to update our photos regularly—even for minor changes like new sofa cushions or overgrown plants. Visual honesty is absolutely critical; if guests feel misled by a photo, they are likely to leave negative feedback. For us on Airbnb, five-star reviews are the 'currency' that ensures the long-term survival of our business." (Interview, February 19, 2026).

This pillar demonstrates that visual communication at Sunrai Villas serves as a vital tool for expectation management. By providing an accurate yet aesthetically pleasing representation, the management establishes a brand promise that can be authentically fulfilled on-site. The strategic use of strong visual elements aims to minimize information asymmetry between the host and the guest within the digital tourism landscape (Buhalis & Law, 2008).

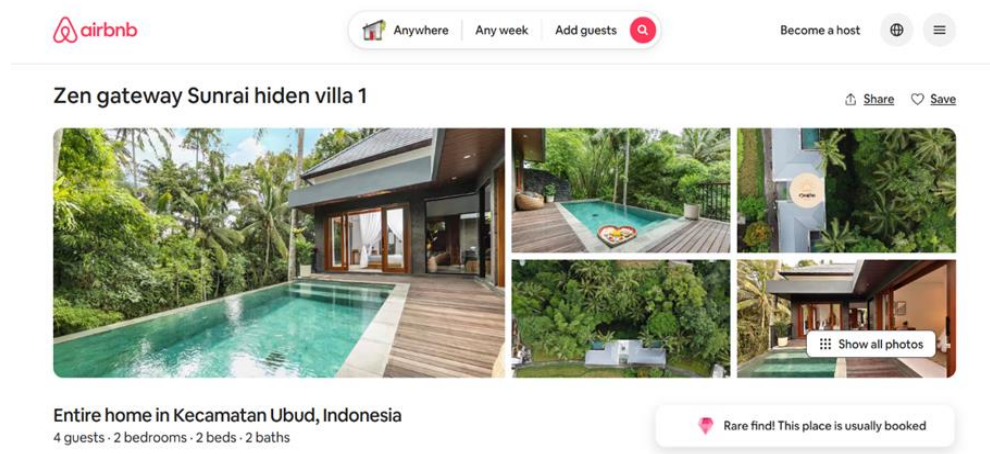


Figure 1. Visual Presentation of Sunrai Villas Property on the Airbnb Platform

As illustrated in Figure 1, the use of a wide-angle photograph featuring the infinity pool overlooking the Petulu forest landscape serves as a practical implementation of the product positioning strategy. This visual element functions not only as an aesthetic draw but also as a testament to the information transparency promised by the management to potential guests. Through high-definition image quality and natural lighting, Sunrai Villas effectively communicates values of exclusivity and tranquility without relying on excessive digital manipulation—an approach that aligns perfectly with the perfect score in the Accuracy category shown in Table 1.

Theoretically, within the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) framework proposed by Kotler and Armstrong, the initial stage in attracting consumers is through cognitive stimulation. The infinity pool photograph set against the Petulu forest backdrop in Figure 1 serves as a strategic communication instrument to cultivate perceptions of luxury and tranquility in the minds of prospective guests. This visual approach is not merely an aesthetic choice; it functions as a deliberate form of expectation management. By presenting accurate visuals devoid of excessive manipulation, Sunrai Villas establishes a brand promise that guests can personally validate upon arrival thereby maintaining the integrity of its Accuracy score at a perfect 5.0.

In the practical context of Airbnb, the sequence of the first five photographs acts as the primary determinant of whether a prospective guest continues reading the description or exits the profile page—a phenomenon known as the bounce rate. Sunrai Villas strategically positions the infinity pool photo overlooking the Petulu forest valley as its central 'hook.' From an IMC (Integrated Marketing Communication) perspective, this represents a deliberate effort to trigger the 'AIDA' (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) effect.

The image avoids extreme color manipulation because, as Mila noted, visual honesty serves as the essential 'currency' on Airbnb. A deep analysis of Figure 1 reveals that natural lighting is utilized to evoke a sense of domestic warmth, rather than the sterile ambiance of a standard hotel room. This strategy aims to foster an emotional connection. By 2025, prospective guests have become increasingly wary of 'over-edited' properties due to past negative experiences involving discrepancies between photos and reality. By maintaining a perfect 5.0 score in the Accuracy category, Sunrai Villas effectively employs an "under-promise but over-deliver" strategy, ensuring that the on-site reality consistently meets or even exceeds the visual expectations established within the app.

The visual narrative strategy at Sunrai Villas extends far beyond mere photographic aesthetics; it functions as a digital social contract between the management and prospective guests. Amidst the widespread trend of excessive filtering commonly found on social media, Sunrai Villas intentionally adopts a minimalist and honest approach. This is a deliberate move to prevent the expectation gap phenomenon, which frequently triggers negative reviews on the Airbnb platform.

"To me, an Airbnb photo is a promise. Guests often message me asking, 'Putu, is the pool really as clear as it looks in the photos?' I don't just say yes; I'll send them a fresh photo or a short video of the current conditions directly through the Airbnb chat. I want them to know that what they see on their screen is exactly what they'll experience when they arrive in Ubud. We aren't chasing a fake sense of luxury; we are striving for 'authentic comfort.' If guests trust us from the start, they'll be more relaxed during their stay—and that is the secret to earning a five-star rating." (Interview, February 19, 2026).

The second pillar focuses on the excellence of personal interaction through the integration of cross-channel communication. Research findings indicate that Sunrai Villas' marketing communication relies heavily on the synchronization between the digital host and the on-site operational staff. The communication established during the pre-booking stage via Airbnb's messaging feature provides more than just technical information; it marks the beginning of active relationship building. Mila's rapid response as a host cultivates an immediate impression of professionalism and high-level attentiveness.

However, the added value of this strategy lies in its remarkably robust internal coordination. Putu Ari, serving as the guest service staff, explains how digital messages from the Airbnb app are translated into tangible service actions:

"I don't just wait for guests to arrive; I constantly monitor their conversations with Mila on the app. My job is to bridge that digital dialogue into the real world. For instance, if a guest mentions a preference for vegetarian breakfast options in the app, I make sure to have that menu ready by the time they reach the villa—without them needing to ask again. We have a dedicated coordination group where Mila consistently shares specific details about each guest's needs." (Interview, February 19, 2026).

This evidence confirms that personal interactions at Sunrai Villas operate through a seamless communication model. This Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) serves as a vital key in establishing trust within the sharing economy (Tussyadiah, 2016b). The information gaps frequently encountered in larger accommodation businesses—where on-site staff are often unaware of promises made by the marketing team—are effectively eliminated through this pattern of direct communication and internal group integration.

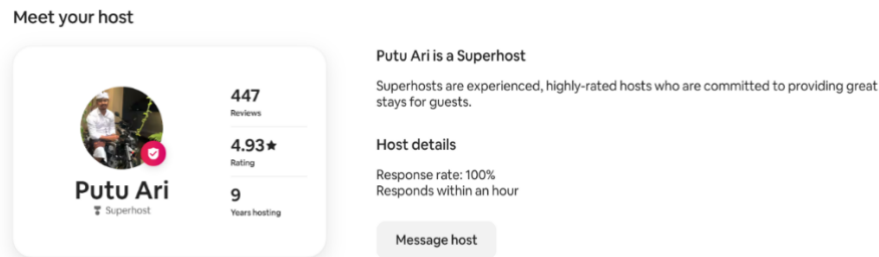


Figure 2. Management Profile of Sunrai Villas as an Airbnb Superhost

The management's credibility in digital interaction is evidenced by the Superhost status held by Putu Ari, as illustrated in Figure 2. With a 100% response rate and a response time of less than one hour, Sunrai Villas successfully meets guest expectations for rapid and efficient communication—a critical factor in driving booking conversions.

The 100% response rate illustrated in Figure 2 reflects the management's dedication to maintaining a consistent communication rhythm. In the world of digital hospitality, time serves as a decisive variable for conversion. Putu Ari reveals that every incoming notification on his smartphone is treated as if it were a "guest knocking on the villa's front door."

"When I hold my phone, it's as if I'm holding the keys to the villa. If a message comes in at 2 AM from a guest in America asking about airport transfers, I make every effort to respond immediately. Why? Because over there, it's the middle of the day, and they're in the peak of their hotel search. If I wait until the next morning in Bali time to reply, they've likely already booked somewhere else. Communication on Airbnb is like a race; whoever is the fastest and most welcoming wins the guest. We simply cannot let a guest wait in a state of uncertainty." (Interview, February 19, 2026).

Putu Ari's narrative confirms that the success of Sunrai Villas' marketing communication stems from a mindset that positions technology as an extension of hospitality, rather than a mere administrative tool.

This interaction process represents a practical application of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) theory. When Putu Ari, as the operational staff, responds to guest inquiries with a 100% response rate and a response time of under one hour (Figure 2), he is effectively establishing a social presence within the digital space. In a sharing economy model like Airbnb, such mediated communication is crucial for reducing the uncertainty of prospective guests. The direct coordination between Mila as the digital host and Putu Ari as the on-site executor ensures that personalized guest information—such as vegetarian requirements—is accurately addressed. This demonstrates that responsive personal interaction serves as the fundamental key to converting inquiries into actual bookings.

Marketing communication at Sunrai Villas relies heavily on an uninterrupted flow of information from the digital realm to the physical sphere. According to Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) theory, a primary challenge of digital communication is the loss of non-verbal cues. However, Sunrai Villas compensates for this limitation through remarkably detailed internal coordination within their cross-functional coordination groups.

"Mila is our 'eyes' in the digital world, and I am the 'hands' that execute those visions at the villa. There was a time when a guest briefly mentioned in the Airbnb chat that they were celebrating an anniversary. Mila immediately shared that small detail with me. Consequently, when they checked

in, I had already prepared a swan towel arrangement and flowers on the bed—without them having to ask. The guests were genuinely surprised because they felt we truly paid attention to the details of our conversation in the app. This is what I mean by transforming a digital chat into an emotional experience. We aren't just selling rooms; we are selling attentiveness." (Interview, February 19, 2026).

The competitive advantage of Sunrai Villas lies in what the researcher identifies as the 'Seamless Communication Path.' In CMC theory, digital communication is frequently perceived as cold and impersonal. However, Sunrai Villas deconstructs these boundaries through the synchronization between Mila (the digital host) and Putu Ari (on-site operations). When a guest inquires via the Airbnb chat feature regarding 'breakfast operating hours,' Mila does not merely provide a text-based answer; she immediately shares the guest's profile with the internal coordination group. The implications are significant: upon arrival at the villa, Putu Ari greets them by name and is already aware of their specific preferences.

This process exemplifies a 'High-Tech, High-Touch' approach. Airbnb's technology is utilized for data capture (High-Tech), while Putu Ari executes the service with authentic Balinese hospitality (High-Touch). The 100% Response Rate is far more than a statistical figure; it serves as a symbol of Sunrai Villas' 24-hour virtual presence, guiding prospective guests. This social presence is vital for establishing trust, particularly for first-time visitors to Bali who may harbor concerns regarding safety or the authenticity of the location. This explains why the Superhost status held by Putu Ari acts as a powerful magnet in driving repeat orders.

The third pillar is reputation management through the active administration of public reviews. In the context of digital tourism, guest reviews are no longer merely passive feedback; they have evolved into organic marketing content with persuasive power that often exceeds paid advertising. This is reinforced by the findings of (Priani&Giantari, 2020) in their study of Airbnb users in Bali, which state that trust acts as the primary mediator between online reviews (e-WOM) and guest purchase intention. Sunrai Villas treats every review as a digital asset that must be meticulously managed. The management consistently responds to reviews using a personal and appreciative tone, rather than relying on generic templates. This practice cultivates an image of Sunrai Villas as a communicative entity that values individual experiences, which in turn fosters a sense of security for prospective guests deciding to book amidst the intense competition of private villas in Ubud.

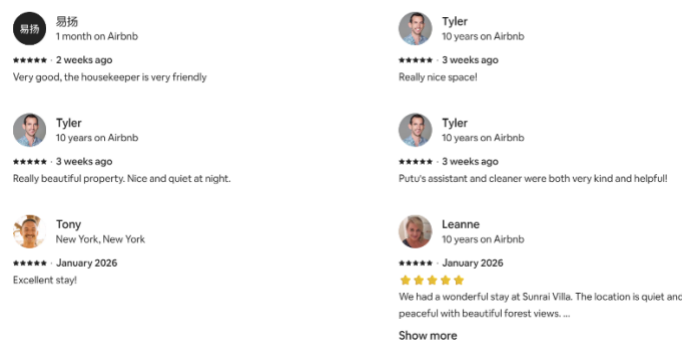


Figure 3. Guest Testimonials and Reviews of Sunrai Villas on the Airbnb Platform

As illustrated in Figure 3, reviews from guests such as Tyler, Tony, and Leanne consistently provide five-star ratings, with a particular emphasis on staff service and the property's ambiance. Tyler's review, which mentions that "Putu's assistant and cleaner were both very kind and helpful," validates the accuracy of the cross-functional coordination discussed in the second pillar. Furthermore, Leanne's remark regarding the "beautiful forest views" reinforces the evidence that a truthful visual narrative strategy has successfully met guest expectations. Active and responsive management of such testimonials functions as Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM), mitigating perceived risks for prospective guests and establishing a robust digital reputation for Sunrai Villas. Online reviews, or e-WOM, represent the most significant decisive factor influencing a guest's intention to stay, as they are perceived to be more objective than traditional hotel advertising (Litvin, Goldsmith, 2008).

Reviews from guests such as Tyler, Tony, and Leanne (Figure 3) operate as Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM), possessing a persuasive power that far exceeds conventional advertising. Within the digital ecosystem, positive reviews serve as a risk-mitigation mechanism for prospective consumers. The success of this reputation management has a direct impact on the financial performance of Sunrai Villas. As presented in Table 2, the accumulated trust from these reviews triggered a significant surge in revenue, peaking at Rp 166,449,930 in May 2025. This data confirms that the synergy between physical service quality and digital review management creates an organic marketing cycle that exponentially increases the property's economic value.

An analysis of Table 2 reveals that the revenue surge—from Rp80.4 million to Rp166.4 million—coincided directly with the increasing volume of five-star reviews on the Sunrai Villas profile. This demonstrates that guest reviews are far more than passive feedback; they function as 'liquid assets' that can be directly converted into revenue. Tyler's review, which describes Putu's assistant as "kind and helpful," serves as a form of third-party validation that no amount of paid advertising can buy. In the 2025 digital ecosystem, prospective guests place significantly higher trust in the experiences of fellow travelers like Tyler, Tony, and Leanne than in the descriptions provided by the management itself. Consequently, Sunrai Villas' strategy of responding to every review personally—rather than using automated replies—breathes life into their profile. Each management response is essentially a subtle marketing message directed at future guests, signaling that the villa is managed by attentive human beings rather than mere app algorithms.

Overall, the findings of this research confirm that the synchronization of the three pillars—Visual, Interaction, and Reputation—creates a resilient communication ecosystem. Sunrai Villas successfully demonstrates that geographical challenges or small property sizes can be overcome through professionally managed information sovereignty on Airbnb. This success provides a tangible contribution to the literature on marketing communication, specifically regarding how small and medium-sized accommodation enterprises (SMEs) can leverage sharing economy platforms to compete globally without losing their personal touch or local identity.

3.2. Theoretical Implications of IMC and CMC Synchronization in Digital Accommodation

Based on the data in Table 1, Sunrai Villas achieved a perfect score (5.0) in crucial categories such as Accuracy, Check-in, Communication, and Value. Data gathered from the Airbnb platform indicates that Sunrai Villas has successfully maintained an exceptionally high digital reputation, as evidenced by these perfect scores. The 5.0 rating in the Check-in category serves as tangible proof of achieving a service excellence standard; it demonstrates that the physical welcoming procedures performed by the staff (Putu Ari) successfully met the expectations established through digital communication on Airbnb. This success proves that the synchronization between the visual promises on the platform and the reality of on-site service is the fundamental key to guest satisfaction.

In contrast to Radakovic's (2014) study, which tends to focus on the technical features of digital advertising in general, this research suggests that the emotional aspects of personal interaction (Pilar 2) actually have a greater impact on guest loyalty in the post-pandemic era. The perfect score in Communication proves that by 2025, guests are no longer merely seeking systemic speed, but rather the depth of human connection provided by the management.

A scholarly critique that can be raised against several previous studies is the neglect of daily operational dynamics as an integral part of marketing communication strategy. While (Tussyadiah, 2016a) emphasizes macro-level platform user behavior, the findings at Sunrai Villas provide a sharper micro-perspective: that review management (Pilar 3) is not merely a public relations tool, but a risk-mitigation mechanism for prospective guests. The integration of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) theories in this research reveals that trust is built through visual transparency (Pilar 1), which is socially verified by other guest reviews. The strategic integration at Sunrai Villas proves that Airbnb's operational success relies heavily on the reputation built through the accumulation of reviews over time (Belarmino & Koh, 2020).

The theoretical implications of this synchronization confirm that within the Airbnb ecosystem, marketing communication is no longer a one-way street from owner to guest. Instead, a "digital

dialogue" occurs where the Superhost profile (Figure 3) and guest testimonials (Figure 2) collaborate to establish brand credibility. This expands the boundaries of traditional IMC theory by incorporating elements of the human touch and social validation as dominant decisive variables, far outweighing mere paid promotional content. Consequently, this study fills a literature gap regarding how accommodation SMEs in Bali can remain competitive through narrative originality and communication responsiveness amidst the automation of the Tourism 4.0 industry.

3.3. Practical Implications: Operational Strategy and Reputational Sovereignty

From a practical standpoint, the empirical evidence gathered from this research serves as an actionable framework for independent accommodation providers in Bali navigating the increasingly volatile digital landscape. The field findings at Sunrai Villas demonstrate a pivotal shift in hospitality management: the sovereignty and longevity of a villa brand do not solely hinge on expansive advertising budgets. Instead, success is predicated on the rigorous integrity between digital narratives and the tangible reality of on-site service delivery. The first major practical implication derived from this study is the paramount importance of visual accuracy as a strategic instrument for conflict mitigation. Managers must recognize that transparency in photography is not merely an aesthetic choice; it is a vital communication tool used to manage guest expectations and preemptively neutralize dissatisfaction during the check-in process.

This philosophy is echoed by Putu Ari, who emphasizes that honesty in the initial digital phase is far more valuable than aesthetic manipulation, which carries the high risk of catastrophic rating devaluations. As he pointedly noted during the interview: *'There were times when guests said, "Putu, how come the reality is even better than the photos?". To me, that is a communication victory. It is far better for them to be pleasantly surprised by the reality than for them to complain because the photos were deceptive.'* This insight suggests that modern hospitality practitioners must invest in 'honest digital assets' to cultivate long-term consumer trust, rather than chasing short-term booking spikes through misleading visuals.

The second practical implication concerns the necessity of 'humanized responsiveness' in an era dominated by automation. While many properties are pivoting toward the use of automated chatbots to reduce overhead, the persistent presence of a responsive human figure behind the screen emerges as a significant Unique Selling Point (USP). The seamless coordination between the digital host (Mila) and the ground operational lead (Putu Ari) provides empirical proof that technology functions merely as a distribution channel. The ultimate winners in this competitive ecosystem are the managers who demonstrate the highest level of care toward the nuanced, personal needs of their guests.

This synergy was further validated by Putu Ari's operational ethos: *'If my service on the ground does not synchronize with the promises Mila makes on the app, then even the most expensive advertisement becomes futile. We must ensure that the "promise" and the "proof" are delivered as a single, unified package.'* For Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) within the tourism sector, this research strongly suggests that digital reviews should not be treated as static displays. Rather, they must be viewed as liquid assets that dictate the future viability of the business. Effective review management fosters a self-sustaining marketing cycle, which fundamentally reduces reliance on conventional, high-cost promotional expenditures and builds a resilient digital reputation.

3.4 Discussion

These findings directly address the primary objective of this study: to describe Sunrai Villas' communication strategy in boosting guest visits throughout 2025. Substantially, the results indicate that success on Airbnb is driven by more than just platform algorithms; it hinges on message consistency that fosters trust. This aligns with the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) principles proposed by Kotler and Armstrong, where the synchronization of visual content, rapid interaction, and review management creates a cohesive brand image.

Viewed through the lens of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC), the personal interactions facilitated by Mila bridge the gap in digital communication, which is often perceived as 'cold.' These findings complement Tussyadiah and Pesonen's research regarding the heavy reliance

of peer-to-peer accommodation users on social trust. A unique element discovered at Sunrai Villas is the 'cross-line communication path,' which links in-app chats directly to physical service provided by Putu Ari. This effectively resolves the information gaps that frequently plague conventional hospitality management. As noted by (So,Oh, 2018), consumer motivation for choosing Airbnb extends beyond pricing; it is deeply rooted in the desire for authentic local experiences and social interaction with the host.

Furthermore, the management of public reviews as Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) at Sunrai Villas proves that feedback is not merely passive data, but a vital risk-mitigation tool for prospective guests. The host's empathetic responses boost the villa's credibility exponentially compared to traditional paid advertising. This offers a fresh 'scientific truth' for the 2025 digital era: consumers prioritize social validation over a property owner's unilateral claims.

Overall, this discussion highlights that Sunrai Villas has successfully filled a 'gap' in previous literature—specifically, how human-centric communication remains the key ingredient amidst increasing digital automation. While this research focuses on a small-scale private villa, the patterns identified here can be replicated to enhance the competitiveness of similar accommodations in other tourist regions.

However, this study has several limitations that must be acknowledged for scientific integrity. First, the scope is confined to a single digital distribution platform, Airbnb. Consequently, the results may not fully represent marketing communication dynamics on other platforms like Booking.com or direct social media bookings. Second, the data is highly specific to the private accommodation market in Ubud, Bali, where guest profiles may differ from other tourist hubs. These limitations present opportunities for future research to conduct comparative studies across different platforms or geographical regions to test the consistency of these communication pillars within the broader digital tourism ecosystem.

4. Conclusion

The findings of this research demonstrate that Sunrai Villas' marketing communication on Airbnb plays a pivotal role in establishing credibility, fostering trust, and ultimately influencing guest booking intentions. By consistently integrating three main pillars—accurate visual storytelling, streamlined personal interactions through cross-departmental coordination, and proactive reputation management—the management has shifted their communication from a purely transactional model to a more relational one. This strategy works because it bridges the gap between digital expectations and the actual service experience, allowing the villa to stay competitive in Ubud's crowded market. Using a descriptive qualitative lens, this study successfully unpacks these modern communication patterns while addressing the core research objectives.

From a conceptual standpoint, this study strengthens the existing literature by highlighting that the 'human touch' remains indispensable even in a digital-first landscape. It proves that relationship-based communication is a strategic asset that automation alone cannot replicate. By doing so, this research offers a more nuanced view of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) in the digital age, moving beyond the technicalities of the platform to emphasize the necessity of operational synchronization on the ground.

Practical implications suggest that hospitality managers should prioritize authentic visual content and personal interaction as the bedrock of their digital reputation. Looking ahead, future studies could employ a mixed-methods approach to quantify how these strategies impact guest satisfaction, occupancy levels, and brand loyalty. Additionally, expanding the scope to other tourist destinations would help validate these findings in the broader context of sustainable tourism marketing.

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