# **CHAPTER I**

### INTRODUCTION

# 1.1 Background of the Study

Tourism and hospitality industries play important roles due to them being considered as an essential source of income within a country. As a result, a lot of countries competitively attempt to draw guests and tourists' attention to their destination in regard to growth and enhance their nation's life (Gardi et al., 2020 in Ali et al., 2021). Hospitality is a specific type of relationship between traveler and a host (Ali et al., 2021). In relation to this statement, it means that the hospitality industry includes providing services to guests, customers, or even travelers.

Deep diving into the hospitality industry, guest experience is one of the key factors of hotel performance, particularly in the competitive environment. It is stated in the studies of Shaw & Ivens (2002) in Godovykh & Tasci (2020) that 85% of corporate management supports the idea that, in today's market, customer/guest experience is the primary competitive advantage compared to price, product, and quality. To support this finding, experience is an essential aspect of providing a deep feeling of enjoyment that eventually establishes positive recollection (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 in Godovykh & Tasci, 2020).

Guest experience is an indispensable component of core service delivered by hotels, refers to the interactions and perceptions of the service consumed by

the guests. Guest experience is "the overall assessment of customers' interactions and observations of the services obtained at a hospitality establishment, which is part of the unique service proposition." (James & Inyang, 2023). Studied by Poria et al. (2021), physical environment is found to play a significant role in shaping guest experiences and satisfaction. Additionally, prior studies investigated variables impacting guest experiences where the physical environment has obtained the most attention in it.

Guest experience "occurs whenever a company intentionally uses services as the stage and goods as props to engage an individual" where it can be memorable in a good or bad way and engages with individual in an emotional, intellectual, physical or even spiritual level that is unique for each person (Diller et al., 2006 in Ford & Sturman, 2019). Pullman & Gross (2004) in Ford & Sturman (2019) mentioned that physical and relational are two main components of experience. The physical refers to all facilitating goods and supporting facilities that involves sights, sound, smells, feelings, etc. while the relational context refers to the interactions between service providers and customers, and interaction between customers to the other customers. Quality of standards of various services, marketing to customers, physical property, value for money, general atmosphere, brand name and reputation, personnel, quality standards at check-in and check-out, and guest room design and amenities are the key functional area of guest experience (Dube & Renaghan, 1999 in Ford & Sturman, 2019).

Furthermore, guest experience is also categorized as one of the concern areas in hospitality field as it can contribute to customer loyalty, repeat visit, and

positive word-of-mouth (Mohsin & Lengler, 2015; Padma & Ahn, 2020 in Zarezadeh et al., 2022). Creating multisensory experience may result in a "wow" moment, satisfaction, and unique experience, in which it could enhance the guest experience during their stay in the hotel (Lee et al., 2019)

Guest experience might be conceptualized as to be influenced by the physical environment. It is considered as one of the essential elements in shaping the nature of guest experience (Bitner, 1992 in Ali et al., 2023). The material or tangible surrounds of a place are referred to as the physical environment, where it consists of ambiance, decoration, and layout, such as the interior, décor, artefacts, and the furniture layout (Raghavendra et al., 2019a). It is the first element that a guest will experience after entering the hotel. In fact, a guest decided to stay in a certain hotel not only for their stay needs, but also to form a memorable experience.

According to Ali et al. (2023), the dimension of physical environment consists of ambience, layout, and furnishing. In summary, hotel ambience refers to the overall impression of a place when sitting in a certain location of people who have a particular style or décor. Hotel layout is a dimension that should be precise where the furniture and fixture arrangement should be parallel to the spacious room. Hotel furnishing refers to the furnishing and decoration that are arranged with the fulfillment of valuable and unique opportunities for cultural experiences of the guests. Additionally, due to these physical environments, it could result in enhancing guest's experience, arousal, pleasure, and emotions where they might feel satisfied and have the consideration to revisit the place again.

Cleanliness is a condition where there is no dirt and diseases which can harm ourselves and the environment in every living aspect on a daily basis (Jumarsa et al., 2020). In terms of service commitment, the cleanliness aspect is crucial, both the cleanliness of the staff itself, the staff area, and the entire hotel area. Cleanliness and tidiness of the room area are the essential things and necessary factors for personal health (Sudarmayasa et al., 2022). Based on a study conducted by Barber Scarcelli (2009) in Taştan & Soylu (2023), cleanliness is the main factor for customers to choose a certain business, visit, and spend time there. The finding of Zemke et al. (2015) in Ali et al. (2023) shows that hotel cleanliness is crucial to the guests where it enhances the guest experience and increases the level of satisfaction.

It is stated in the study of Liu et al. (2021) that physical environment is one of the manifestations that shape guest experience. Following this statement, according to Harris & Ezeh (2008) in Ali et al. (2023), cleanliness is found to be the vital aspect in establishing a positive physical environment. Furthermore, the findings from Prasad et al. (2014) in Zarezadeh et al. (2022) also support that tangible attributes like cleanliness are identified to have correlation with guest experience. Thus, having positive guests' experiences may result in the higher possibility for the guests to naturally become satisfied with the hotel and may establish strong increase to repeatedly patronized the brand for a long term (James & Inyang, 2023).

The economy of Bali heavily relies on the tourism sectors and is also supported by the large number of local communities that are involved in tourism activities. Based on Tripadvisor through the travel planning and booking site in the traveler's choice awards category, Bali is the second highest rank for the best destination for tourism in 2024 among 25 countries. The Apurva Kempinski Bali is chosen by the writer as the research object to examine the influence of physical environment on guest experience with moderation of hotel cleanliness.

The significance and originality of this research lies in the moderation of cleanliness where in several previous studies, cleanliness acts as a predictor in the physical environment dimension. Therefore, the study of cleanliness as a moderating factor is still rare and worth researching and this contributes to the novelty of the research.

The Apurva Kempinski Bali is a 5-star luxury hotel with breathtaking views of the Indian Ocean and tropical gardens that present a majestic open-air theater. It is located in the Nusa Dua area which is the most popular area of luxury hotels in Bali and takes about 30-45 minutes from Bali Ngurah Rai International Airport. The Apurva Kempinski firstly opened on 6 February 2019 and offers a total of 475 rooms, including Deluxe, Suite, and Villa rooms.

The following are the bad reviews from 2020 - 2024 at The Apurva Kempinski Bali for independent variables of hotel ambience, hotel layout, hotel furnishing, and hotel cleanliness as moderating variable.

Table 1. 1 Guest Review at The Apurva Kempinski Bali (2022 - 2024)

Guests Reviews at The Apurva Kempinski Bali	
HA: Hotel Ambience	



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### Too big and impersonal to be luxurious

I stayed in an expensive suite with a pool. The view is gorgeous and architecture as a whole quite special. But for the price, everything felt too impersonal. It is a huge hotel and when it is busy they cannot provide the expected level of service. The hotel operator takes ages to pick up the phone; the lobby, restaurants and beach are so busy and big that you feel like you are staying in a mall; the hotel drop off area gets chaotic because there is too much traffic. It was also frustrating to pay for a room with a pool only to find the water ice cold as it doesn't get enough sun.

Read less 🔨

Date of stay: August 2023

Trip type: Traveled as a couple

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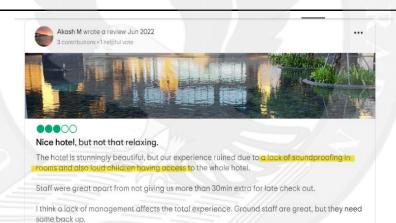
This review is the subjective opinion of a Tripadvisor member and not of Tripadvisor LLC. Tripadvisor performs checks on reviews

WS Wahyu S.

**4** 5.8 / 10

25 Mar 2023

Hotel relatif baru, tapi sudah banyak properti yang cacat dan rusak. Aroma di lift gedung 2 juga sangat tidak sedap seperti selokan. Pelayan-pelayan selain pelayan office juga tidak ramah sebagaimana hotel bintang 5 lain. Sungguh tidak sesuai dengan uang yang kita bayarkan.





Staycation

**4** 5.8 / 10

Sebenernya hotel ini bagus. Dari experience nya hingga keramahan petugas nya. Cuman sayangnya kelemahan otel ini kamar nya tidak kedap suara. Terdengar jelas kamar sebelah ngobr <mark>ıya</mark>. Saya bisa tau ngobrolin apa. Saya tinggal di kamar 3333. Kamar seharga 4 jt per malam sudah selayak nya lebih kedap daripada kamar hotel lain dengan harga dibawah itu. Apalagi suara dari lorong terdengar jelas sekali langkah kaki ataupun d buggy dibawah yang berada di ground floor. Separah itu kondisi nya. Malam pertama saya, tetangga kamar hotel saya isi nya 7 orang satu kamar dan membawa anak kecil. Berisi u tidur. Lebih baik pilih hotel lain untuk tidur lain kali.











11 orang menyukai review ini



tzenan wrote a review Jul 2024 Melbourne, Australia • 2 contributions



### Over priced and not cleaned - we all got sick

would not recommend staying here. We got terribly sick from this place. We have never been sick in Bali and have been here five times. First time at a resort and my son was sick for five days straight and I have never been so sick as well. The hygiene and cleaning was awful. I do not think any disinfectant has ever been used in the apartments. The toilets smelt terrible they made you want to throw up. The apartment smelt musty and unclean. It needs a good air out. The apartment we had had was over \$1000 a night and had a small pool but with no sunlight at all and builders were working next door. The Koral Restaurant was completely over priced with terrible food. Definitely not worth it. Laundry cost a small fortune. The whole place was completely over priced Read more v

Date of stay: June 2024

# **HL: Hotel Layout**



Sean W wrote a review Nov 2023

1contribution



### Poor Experience!!!

The main pool smells of stagnant water. I dare not swim in it. Many parts of the water features along the grand staircase were filled with dirty water and were visually off putting. The lifts were not well maintained with worn out panels and buttons.

The junior suite rooms we had were not well maintained also - scratches and dents on floor and on the furniture were noted. Finger prints and dirt marks were obvious on the lighting features. The tissues in the bathroom were utterly LOW quality - thin and rough! For Suite rooms, it is UNACCEPTABLE!

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### **Worst Experience**

It's been around a year since my horrible stay at kempinski Bali. It's still upsetting for me to

On July 2022. I booked Ocean front private pool suite for 2 nights. All fully paid at the time of booking and I booked directly through the hotel website.

When we checked in, the receptionist told us that we've been upgraded to 'prestige suite'. We weren't so sure but thought okay we'll see first.

The first red flag was that check in time was supposed to be at 3 PM. The room wasn't ready until it was closer to 6 PM. I kept calling them to check if the room was ready. I have a young child that I really hoped we could settle in soon.

After that long wait, only to find out that prestige suite is huge but very far from the beach and not with a sea view. I didn't want to take it, it was not suitable for my family. Having a kid with us, my family wanted to have a room that is close to the beach and have a sea view, just as the room we booked and fully paid. We asked them to place us in the ocean front room. They didn't have it available, turned out they were overbooked.

Imagine paying fully non refundable rate in such expensive hotel, only to find out they can't provide if for you.

They offered me another sea view room, but it's far, it's not ocean front. I decided to take it instead of the prestige suite. I had to wait for it another hour for the room to be cleaned.

Upon realising myself (they never took the initiative to tell me) that room is actually cheaper than the ocean front that I paid, I asked them about it and all they offered me is free dinner vouchers in their restaurant. instead of refunding the price differences.



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### Looks can be deceiving. It is a shopping mall rather than a 5 stars resort.

First impression at the entrance grand looking however it was noisy, busy because any who can come to look see aka a shopping mall. Can't sight the check in desk. No signage. When saw the service staff, been informed there's queue for check in @ despite we were late checked in. Check in process, the hotel are more keen in selling their facilities such as restaurants rather then making you feel seamless check in or extending the warmth of home away from home, Big walk to the room and have to remember how to get back. After more than 40mins checked in still no sign of luggages. Out of the blue, next connecting door room had big abusive threats and shouting

**HF: Hotel Furnishing** 



### Lavish, but overpriced with 3-4 star service. Avoid unless getting a cheap deal.

We ate at the hotel a year ago and it was exceptional and that persuaded us to book a 2 night stay at the end of a 4 week holiday in Asia. We wanted a luxurious, 5 star experience to finish our holiday on a high. We booked a large lagoon access room for around \$USD550 per night. We had to change rooms due to poor cleaning and a terrible smell in our first room. Food and beverage services are very expensive and the quality is highly variable and we had very long waits (despite reservations), and had to return drinks that were poorly made etc. Staff are keen to resolve issues, but for arguably one of the best 5 star hotels on the island, training, attention to detail, quality and consistency is a significant issue. The lagoon p full of garden debris - not at all inviting for a swim. This was resolved once we pointed out the problem, but again for a hotel of this standard and price, it should never have happened in the first place. The decor and lobby area are sumptuous and lovely, but a bit soulless at night without live entertainment, - evening candles and hurricane lamps are not working properly or continuous and sevening candles and hurricane lamps are not working properly or continuous and sevening candles and hurricane lamps are not working properly or continuous and sevening candles and hurricane lamps are not working properly or continuous and sevening candles and hurricane lamps are not working properly or continuous and sevening candles and hurricane lamps are not working properly or continuous and sevening candles and hurricane lamps are not working properly or continuous and sevening candles and sevening candles and sevening candles are not working properly or continuous and sevening candles are not working properly or continuous and sevening candles are not working properly or continuous and sevening candles are not working properly or continuous and sevening candles are not sevening etc. All in all, there is a lack of attention to detail about creating the right experience and sphere for guests. Compared with our visit a year ago, service standards and the luxurious quality vibe is lacking. The gardens look unhappy, plants need pruning and some TLC, gardens need weeding around the lagoon access rooms. I would NOT recommended a lagoon access pool, the drain around the infinity pool edge is full of rotting leaves and has a strong musty smell you



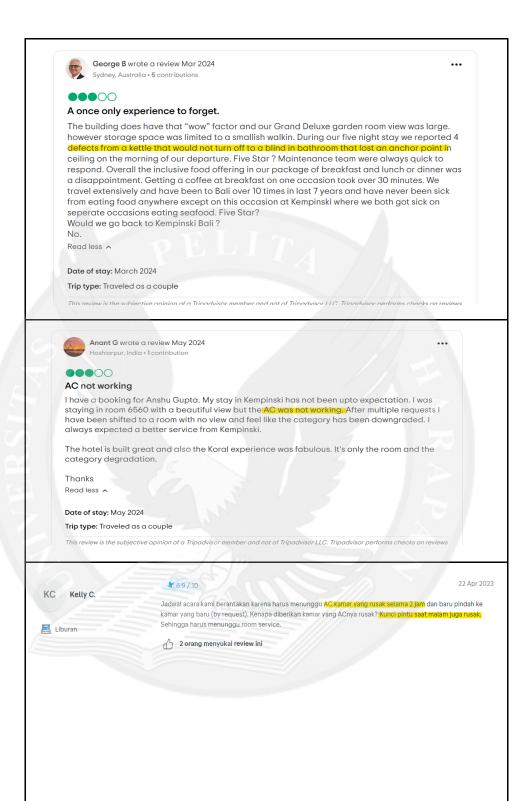
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### This hotel is not what is seems

We were here 2 nights. The hotel space and the hardware was gorgeous with stunning swimming pools, a roof top bar, white sand beach and several restaurants. There are unfortunately some deficiencies that may need to be addressed.

- 1. On arrival, no one came to collect luggages until on request to inform we were checking in.
- 2. Room accommodation was spacious but the switches for light controls were poorly marked.
- 3. At breakfast, staff were courteous but more coordinations required. We ordered tea and coffee but they did not arrived until after the main course. Choices of bread were seriously limited to plain and rye only. Cereals were limited, muesli was missing. There was no soy milk except on request. Table seatings between tables too close.
- 4. Before departure, I requested an extension of I hour for check out and was given only 30 minutes. Given the hotel was not full, I experienced a total lack of hospitality of Kempinski. This hotel is one I will not recommend to my best friends but for the less well travelled would seem like paradise.

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### 5 star hotel? Not so sure

This was the second leg of our three week honeymoon holiday in Bali. The first week we stayed at a smaller Balinese owned resort, Kayon Jungle in Ubud which set the tone for our holiday. The service was impeccable primarily because they managed to anticipate our every need before we knew we had them. We were hoping for the same level of service and care at Kempinski. The grounds were beautiful, stunning, until we reached our room. We initially wanted an upgraded room but were told there was none available. However, when I went on the official Kempinski website, a plunge pool room was available (which we were more than willing to pay for). Our room had a faulty AC unit, leaking vent, and poor airflow despite the maintenance team attempting to fix three different times. To rectify, front staff management kindly apologized for the inconvenience and gifted us Rose (wine) and a pastry dish. Sadly, we could hear the the inconvenience and gifted us Rose (wine) and a pastry dish. Sadly, we could hear the plumbing from our neighbors toilet and shower through our room, which was the same for ours. Every time we flushed the toilet we can hear it running beneath the bathroom floor. Overall, a poor design plan for plumbing. The in room service staff were phenomenal. They always greeted us with respect, removed their shoes before entering our room (most likely as a custom) and always made sure we weren't in need of anything else. I can not say the same primarily for the staff at Pala and The Reef pooliside service. We added the breakfast at check in, understanding that we would sign for the bill to then be charged to our room. Every morning, we were told that we did not have the breakfast included in our stay which we were aware of upon check in. However, each morning we were embarrassingly told we did not have the breakfast package. Front staff should have relayed to the Pala team that our daily breakfast were to be charged to our room as agreed to check in. Overall staff seemed disingenuous. Smiling courteously when approached but immediately "annoyed" as if we weren't watching. My husband and I have never felt so uncomfortable as we did staying here, as if we were a bother, or quite frankly, they did not want to serve us. The beach is subpar, always murky but they do try to keep the lounging areas clean. We went to two different beach clubs in the area and the water was clear and enjoyable. Understanding that this is a family resort, there should be an area designated for adults only. The pool near the Reef was a prime spot to keep adults only but this was not the case. Cocktails and drinks were sub par, Koral Restaurant was underwhelming. Out of all the restaurants, we thoroughly enjoyed Izakaya by Oku and the Pala Rooftop Bar. We expected top tier service for such a grand "5-star" resort which was not met. Even upon checkout, we weren't gifted anything

# **HC:** Hotel Cleanliness



Simonna G wrote a review Jun 2024

2 contributions



### Not live up for the standard for such high price

Coffee machine smells of coffee stain

Shower area smell of urine

Towel looks five years old n stained

Spa service is so so expecting lots of "break" during the massage Overall over priced fur this standard of room, food etc.

Read less A



Eddy wrote a review Dec 2022

### 00000

### Unexpected service and SOP from a 5 star hotel

It's a big disappointment to find the "hospitality" is not as good as expected. Staff passing by don't give greetings to guests. The housekeeping operator don't say the magic word "sorry" when I report the mug in the room still have lipstick stain. And the housekeeping staff bringing the replacement mug without cover or at least put inside a seal bag. But he do say sorry for the

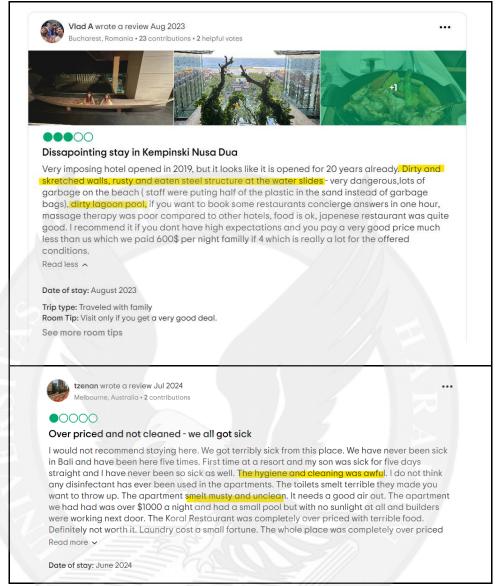
Shampoo and conditioner is provided in the bath tub instead of foam bath or bath salt. Bit weird for a 5 star hotel

Date of stay: December 2022

Trip type: Traveled with friends

This review is the subjective opinion of a Tripadvisor member and not of Tripadvisor LLC. Tripadvisor performs a as part of our industry-leading trust & safety standards. Read our <u>transparency report</u> to learn more.

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Source: Prepared by writer (Guest feedback and review from TripAdvisor & Traveloka, 2024)

From the table above, it is shown that there are several issues with the hotel ambience where the guests seem dissatisfied with the ambience of the hotel where it is loud, crowded, and has bad smell in the bathroom area. The problems of hotel layouts are characterized by the number of bad reviews where the guests complain about the distance from their room to the beach or restaurant areas, low bath amenities, or even lack of signage within the hotel. Hotel furnishing as seen,

customers are dissatisfied with the furniture after spending quite a high price for the hotel stay. Some of the furniture/facilities that tend to have problems are the air conditioner, toilet, room key access, and water boiler. For hotel cleanliness aspect, reviews above proves that The Apurva Kempinski Bali needs to raise their concerns in terms of cleanliness of the rooms more properly as it results in dissatisfied guest who expect good experience while staying at The Apurva Kempinski Bali.

Based on the background study mentioned above, the writer decides to investigate whether physical environment includes hotel ambience, hotel layout, and hotel furnishing could influence the experience of the guests with moderation of hotel cleanliness. "THE INFLUENCE OF PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT ON GUEST EXPERIENCE WITH MODERATION OF HOTEL CLEANLINESS AT THE APURVA KEMPINSKI BALI" is the title of this thesis in which the writer will present the further findings of this analysis.

# 1.2 Problem Limitation

For this research, the writer would like to confine the variables of the independent variables to physical environment (hotel ambience, hotel layout, hotel furnishing), with the dependent variable being guest experience to which the moderating variable is hotel cleanliness. The final limitation is that the research object will focus on The Apurva Kempinski Bali and limited to the period of September 2024.

### 1.3 Problem Formulation

Based on the observation, background study, and title that is conducted by the writer, the writer prepares the following problems identification as follows:

- 1. Does hotel ambience influence guest experience at The Apurva Kempinski Bali positively?
- 2. Does hotel layout influence guest experience at The Apurva Kempinski Bali positively?
- 3. Does hotel furnishing influence guest experience at The Apurva Kempinski Bali positively?
- 4. Does hotel cleanliness act as moderator between hotel ambience and guest experience at The Apurva Kempinski Bali positively?
- 5. Does hotel cleanliness act as moderator between hotel layout and guest experience at The Apurva Kempinski Bali positively?
- 6. Does hotel cleanliness act as moderator between hotel furnishing and guest experience at The Apurva Kempinski Bali positively?

# 1.4 Objective of the Research

The objectives of the research are as follows:

- To identify whether hotel ambience influences guest experience at The Apurva Kempinski Bali positively.
- 2. To identify whether hotel layout influences guest experience at The Apurva Kempinski Bali positively.
- To identify whether hotel furnishing influences guest experience at The Apurva Kempinski Bali positively.
- 4. To identify whether hotel cleanliness acts as moderator between hotel ambience and guest experience at The Apurva Kempinski Bali positively.
- 5. To identify whether hotel cleanliness acts as moderator between hotel layout and guest experience at The Apurva Kempinski Bali positively.
- 6. To identify whether hotel cleanliness acts as moderator between hotel furnishing and guest experience at The Apurva Kempinski Bali positively.

# 1.5 Benefit of the Research

There are 2 (two) types of benefits as a result of the research of The Influence of Physical Environment on Guest Experience with Moderation of Hotel Cleanliness at The Apurva Kempinski Bali are as follows.

### **1.5.1** Theoretical Benefits

The aim of conducting this research is to answer and explain the phenomenon that occurs based on the explanation that happened in reality. In this research, the writer focuses more on the variables that influence guest

experience at The Apurva Kempinski Bali. Additionally, the findings of the research are anticipated to hold academic value and reference for fellow researchers, particularly with the variable employed in this study.

### 1.5.2 Practical Benefits

The practical benefits of conducting this research are as follows:

### 1. For the Writer

As this research requires the writer to collect data, analyze data, and do academic writing, the outcome of this research towards the writer is to gain valuable comprehensive insights and knowledge regarding the influence of physical environment (hotel ambience, hotel layout, and hotel furnishing) on guest experience with moderation of hotel cleanliness in the hotel sector. In addition, the writer will broaden her understanding of how to improve guest experience within a business or hotel industry.

# 2. For the Company

The result of this research is expected to become valuable insights and recommendations for the company to understand about the influence of physical environment (hotel ambience, hotel layout, and hotel furnishing) on guest experience with moderation of hotel cleanliness in the hotel sector. Thus, the

hotel can further increase the rate of good experience of the guests as well as raise the popularity of the hotel in the community.

# 3. For the Researcher

The output of this research is anticipated to be other researchers' references on topics related to hotel ambience, hotel layout, hotel furnishing, hotel cleanliness, and guest experience in the hospitality industry.