



Original Article

The Impact of Online Reviews on Trip Advisor: Exploring Consumer Perceptions in the Hospitality Industry through Social Media and Online Travel Portals

Pranali Thorat¹, Shailesh Kasande²

¹Research Scholar, Suryadatta Institute of Management & Mass Communication (SIMMC) Saraswati, S.No. 342, Bavdhan, Pune, Maharashtra Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU)

²Professor, CEO, and Group Director, Suryadatta Institute of Management & Mass Communication (SIMMC) Saraswati, S.No. 342, Bavdhan, Pune, Maharashtra Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU)

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Correspondence Address:

Pranali Thorat, Assistant Professor
and Research Scholar, Suryadatta
Institute of Management & Mass
Communication (SIMMC) Saraswati,
S.No. 342, Bavdhan, Pune,
Maharashtra Savitribai Phule Pune
University (SPPU)
Email: pranali.thorat1407@gmail.com



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Abstract

In the modern era of digitalization and online platform creation, branding, and consumer engagement have witnessed a significant transformation. TripAdvisor emerges as a key player among these platforms, exerting considerable influence over consumer behavior and brand perceptions within the travel and hospitality industry. This research investigates how TripAdvisor shapes customers' choices and promotes hotel brands on various social media & travel websites through online reviews. Utilizing theoretical frameworks from marketing and consumer behavior, it aims to explain how the platform fosters brand loyalty, emotional attachment, and community affiliation among consumers. Qualitative analysis delves into the nuanced dynamics of brand-consumer interactions, while quantitative methods examine the relationships between TripAdvisor engagement metrics, brand attitudes, and perceptions of branding. The study holds significant implications for hotel managers and marketers, providing insights into using TripAdvisor as a strategic tool within the travel and hospitality industry to enhance brand loyalty and advocacy. Future research endeavors could explore the longitudinal effects of TripAdvisor engagement in the hospitality industry, examining how brand-consumer dynamics evolve.

Keywords: Trip advisor, Online Travel Websites, Online reviews, social media, Hospitality Industry.

Introduction:

Consumer behavior has developed recently due to the rise of technology, particularly within the hospitality sector. Online reviews play a vital role in influencing consumer decisions as more and more individuals depend on the internet for information and guidance. The study examines and analyzes the complex impact of online reviews on customers' decision-making process while selecting and booking the hotels with the context to the hospitality sector. Online review sites have grown rapidly, providing customers with unmatched transparency and knowledge. Potential customers now have access to an array of first-hand feedback, experiences, and opinions from other travelers when choosing a hotel. Due to the growing popularity of sites like TripAdvisor, Make My Trip and Google Reviews, these online communities have become valuable databases of user-generated content that give potential customer's information about the standard of amenities, services, and general guest happiness. The process of selecting a hotel involves a complicated interaction of components, from location and pricing to cleanliness and service quality. Online reviews have the democratizing effect of enabling customers to examine the subjective experiences of a wide range of people. The widespread availability of information creates a more open market where hotel businesses are held responsible for the quality of the services they provide, bridging the gap between customers and hotel owners. Moreover, the impact of online reviews is beyond simple information consumption. The models on social psychology that highlight the implication of expert's peer choices on a customer's decision-making process including proof of social and informational social influence. The agreement or difference in online evaluations may have a significant impact on how potential customers traverse the maze of opportunities given by the evolving hospitality landscape.

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Influencing their perceptions and final decisions. This research paper will investigate the factors influencing the trustworthiness of online reviews, the significance of sentiments and sentiment analysis, and the evolving landscape of reputation management for hoteliers as we delve into the complicated relationship between customers and online reviews in the hotel selection process. Through this comprehensive study, we intend to add to the growing body of information on the mutually beneficial link between the digital relationship of online reviews and the actual choices customers make when seeking the best hotel experiences.

Literature Review

In the hotel industry the intricate connection between critical variables including satisfaction, engagement, loyalty, and online guest reviews. Online reviews have a significant influence on customer satisfaction and engagement. Loyalty and user commitment are strongly connected to the importance of the value of adapted and engaging customer experiences. Negative reviews more strongly impact user satisfaction than favorable ones. Positive evaluations are a powerful resource for hotels to improve total visitor experiences and strengthen marketing efforts. Increasing customer loyalty and repeat business may be achieved by promoting engagement through interactive platforms and individualized offerings. It is essential to promptly address unfavorable reviews to minimize any harm to one's reputation and improve general satisfaction (VO Et AL., 2022) the focus of current research has gradually shifted to interesting content analysis methods for gleaning insightful information from online review sites like Trip Advisor. Researchers have looked at several approaches, such as sentiment analysis, to reveal underlying themes and patterns in user-generated content. Through the content-based analysis some researchers have found substantial elements shaping the customers happiness and discontent, highlighting topics such as service quality, cleanliness, and facilities. Studies on the linguistic aspects of reviews have also revealed linguistic cues that indicate favorable or negative sentiments. Additionally, there is growing interest in examining the impact of content-based insights on managerial decision-making in the hospitality sector (Ameur et al., 2023). The complex aspects of brand identity, brand image, and the strategic process necessary for successful branding via a careful analysis and summary of the literature. Some of its standout key features are the skillful integration of several branding perceptions and the integration of classic ideas with fresh thoughts. It skillfully examines the evolution of branding concepts, demonstrating how conventional models gave way to the complex modern brand ecosystems of the digital era (Sammuto-Bonnici, 2015).

A comprehensive analysis of how brand identity is evolving in the hospitality industry can be found in the complex interactions that exist between social capital, brand identity, and hotel performance. This interaction closely examines how a hotel's brand identity—which has both material and immaterial components—affects the hotel's overall performance. Using a mixture of theoretical frameworks and practical research, a distinctive and appealing brand identity must be established to increase competitiveness in the constantly changing hospitality sector. By incorporating social capital into the analysis and showing how a hotel's brand identity can impact its functioning and financial results, either positively or negatively, through its networks and interpersonal relationships, social capital has a moderating effect on the relationship between brand identity and hotel performance (Fan & Hsu, 2023). Current brand research trends testify to the dynamic character of the subject, which is influenced by multifaceted areas, advances in technology, and shifts in consumer behavior. The wide range of methodologies employed in recent research shows how insightful forecasts and suggestions for brand research's future beyond a backward-looking perspective (Oh et al., 2020)

How the context of influencer marketing is changing and how their important contributions to the hospitality sector are plotted is an important development that has influenced the discussions surrounding influencer marketing. Influencer marketing is a complex and sophisticated field that has been the focus of many studies, ranging from empirical studies to theoretical frameworks. For hotel business managers and marketers, influencer selection, campaign design, and performance monitoring are useful tools. It is an essential tool for academics and industry professionals trying to understand the dynamic world of influencer marketing (Ye et al., 2021). The current trends that are changing the hotel industry internationally, draw an array of sources to provide an overview of the variables affecting the sector. The macro level is affected by changes in consumer purchasing habits, socio-cultural dynamics, and advancements in technology. The advantages and challenges presented by globalization show how closely local and global factors have interacted to form the hotel sector. Digital platforms, big data, and artificial intelligence are working together to change customer experiences and service delivery, showcasing the remarkable innovative change through power of technology Developments and evolving customer tastes that will continue to influence the hospitality industry in the future. The global reach explains how these changes appear in different regions of the world. Sophisticated approaches of hospitality management are required, ones that take into consideration of local differences by accepting various points of view. As eco-friendly and community-focused operations have become crucial components of successful hotel enterprises, the industry has acknowledged its social and environmental obligations (Aksoy et al., 2022). Internet travel websites have a huge impact on conventional travel agencies, with an emphasis on foreign travelers within the framework of the tourism business.

The tourist sector is evolving as a consequence of digital advances. By studying customer preferences and their decision-making processes, online travel websites have an impact on the travel decisions of customers. The study highlights the connections between offline travel agencies and internet travel markets. Travel websites that attract customers from overseas may offer advantageous services. Additionally, there is a need to promote a more collaborative and sustainable atmosphere or the connection between online platforms and traditional agencies to understand the range of traveler preferences and the challenges faced by conventional travel agencies (Vikram Singh & Ranjan, 2019). Scholarly interest in the growing subject of user-generated content within the framework of consumer interaction has increased recently. Some research emphasizes how intricacy of User Generated Content and its effects on customer behavior and brand engagement. Scholars have found several forms of user-generated content such as social media postings, online reviews, and discussion forums, which are trusted to influence customer attitudes, perceptions, and purchase intentions. Research has explained the approaches by which user-generated content affects customer engagement metrics, including advocacy, satisfaction, and brand loyalty. however, there are still difficulties in completely utilizing, such as problems with validity, privacy, and information overload (Zhao et al., 2015).

Social media marketing has profited greatly from the connections between user-generated content and customer engagement on different online social media platforms such as Facebook pages. The complex connection between user-generated content and customer interactions, and their influence on the overall brand experience. The finer details of Facebook's consumer engagement analytics provide an in-depth understanding of the many kinds of user-generated content and their differing impacts. Additionally, it's essential to stress the practical usage of user-generated content on Facebook for businesses to increase their online visibility and customer contact (Yang et al., 2019). Hoteliers are using an array of computational techniques, such as machine learning algorithms and natural language processing tools, to extract sentiment polarity and emotions expressed in textual hotel reviews. Sentiment analysis useful in hotel reviews has emerged as a noteworthy area of analysis within the hospitality industry. \

In the hotel business, sentiment analysis includes reputation management, service delivery improvement, and competitive positioning. Drivers of good and negative emotions within evaluations include service quality, amenities, and location of the hotel. Sentiment analysis continues to encounter, nevertheless, including sarcasm identification, context dependency, and linguistic complexities. Notwithstanding these advancements, there are still issues, such as the dynamic landscape of digital platforms, ethical issues, and the generation of biased or fake material. Integrating sophisticated techniques, such as deep learning, increases the accuracy and reliability of sentiment analysis algorithms (Naab & Sehl, 2017). The basis for how online reviews influence consumers' propensity to book hotels online. It sheds light on how user-generated content influences consumer behavior by creating connections between online evaluations of reviews and reservation intentions. In the digital age of technology, consumer behavior is more educated due to the important role that reviews play in the decision-making process. The findings demonstrate the benefits that may derive from using this kind of content by emphasizing the positive relationship that happens between UGC and increased customer interaction (Chowdhury & Deshpande, 2020)

Research Methodology:

Data Collection

To examine the impact of online reviews on Travel websites like Trip Advisor and explore consumer perceptions in the hospitality industry, data was collected from various sources including online travel portals, social media platforms, and direct surveys from Trip Advisor users. The data collection process was divided into the following phases.

Online Surveys: Surveys were distributed to frequent travelers who use Trip Advisor and other online travel portals. The surveys were designed to gather information about their demographics, frequency of using online reviews, and their perceptions of the reviews' reliability. **Social Media Analysis:** Data was extracted from social media platforms where users frequently discuss their travel experiences and review hotels and other hospitality services. This analysis focused on identifying patterns in consumer sentiments and the influence of social media on their booking decisions. **Review Analysis:** A large dataset of online reviews from Trip Advisor was compiled, including reviews for various hotels and hospitality services. The reviews were categorized and analyzed to understand common themes, ratings distribution, and the language used by reviewers.

Statistical Analysis

To evaluate the hypotheses, various statistical tests were employed:

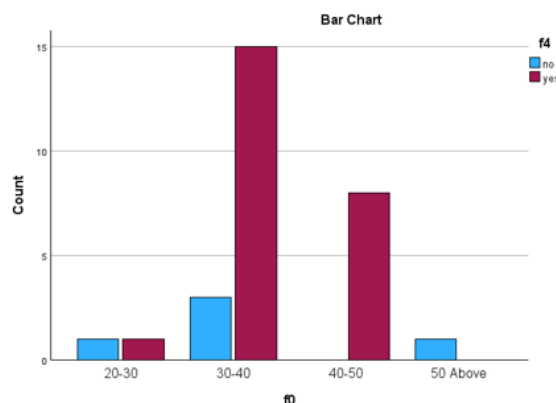
Chi-Square Tests: The tests were used to investigate the relationships between categorical variables such as age and the frequency of checking online reviews, hotel booking mode, and the preferred booking channel.

P-Value Analysis: The significance of the relationships between variables was determined using p-values. A p-value less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant, indicating that the null hypothesis could be rejected.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1:

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.975 ^a	3	.047
Likelihood Ratio	7.669	3	.053
N of Valid Cases	29		
a. 6 cells (75.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .17.			



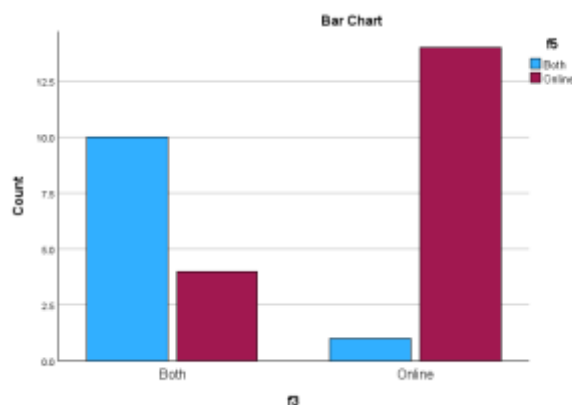
Null Hypothesis (Ho): There is no association between age and online review checks from the online travel websites.

Alternative Hypothesis (Ha): There is a association between age and online review checks from the online travel websites.

Results: The p-value was 0.047, demonstrating a meaningful relationship between age and the frequency of checking online reviews. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis 2:

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.900 ^a	1	<.001		
Continuity Correction ^b	10.296	1	.001		
Likelihood Ratio	14.397	1	<.001		
Fisher's Exact Test				<.001	<.001
N of Valid Cases	29				
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.31.					
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table					



Null Hypothesis (Ho): There is no relation between hotel booking mode and the most preferred channel.

Alternative Hypothesis (Ha): There is a relationship between hotel booking mode and the most preferred channel.

Results: The p-value was less than 0.001, representing a meaningful relationship between hotel booking mode and the preferred booking channel. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Interpretation of Results

The statistical analysis identified important relationships connecting the tested variables, providing insights into consumer behavior in the hospitality industry.

Specifically:

Age and Online Review Checks: Age and the frequency of using online reviews have a significant link, which indicates that different age groups have varying degrees of trust and confidence on online evaluations. This could assist marketers develop more successful marketing strategies that target various age groups.

Hotel Booking Mode and Preferred Channel: It is essential to understand customer preferences for booking methods, as shown by the strong close connection found between the selected booking channel and the hotel booking mode. This knowledge could help hospitality industry in streamlining their online presence and reservation process to better meet customer demands.

With everything considered, the results demonstrate how significant social media and internet reviews are affecting the opinions and choices of customers in the hotel sector. Hotels may use this information to increase customer happiness, boost their online reputation, and motivate room reservations through their preferred channels.

Demographics:

- The majority of the people surveyed are in their 30s to 40s.
- The percentage of male and female responders is about equal.
- Although annual incomes vary, a large percentage of them fall between 5 and 10 lacs.

Booking Behavior:

- Most respondents reserve accommodations online.
- All responders look up online feedback before making a reservation.
- Well-known sites for booking include Trip Advisor, Make My Trip and booking.com.
- Before making a reservation, most people browse one to three travel websites.
- The most well-known travel websites are Trip Advisor, Make My Trip and booking.com.
- Price breaks, information trustworthiness, and ease of use are factors that affect reservations.

Discussion:

Managers in the hotel business may take benefit from number of practical insights derived from the study of Trip Advisor online reviews and customer opinions in the sector. These effects have the potential to raise overall corporate

performance, increase consumer engagement, and improve service quality. The results provide several useful takeaways to the hotel managers.

Targeted Marketing: Managers can develop more successful marketing strategies that target specific age groups by knowing the demographics and interests of their audience.

Enhanced Online Presence: Managers can increase customers trust and attract additional reservations by monitoring online reviews proactively and keeping up a strong online presence.

Streamlined Booking Procedures: Offering a smooth and simple to operate booking process through all channels helps increase client happiness and loyalty.

Personalization: By offering tailored service experiences based on customers data, hotel businesses may greatly increase customer happiness and foster repeat business.

Making the Best use of social media: A carefully planned-out social media strategy could boost brand engagement and favorably affect customer views.

Continuous Improvement: Analyzing customer's feedback frequently can assist in pinpointing areas that want improvement.

Managerial Implications:

The significant impact of online reviews on consumer choice in the hotel industry has major implications for hotels, who are trying to survive in a more competitive climate. Hotel managers need to understand the importance of these implications if they want to enhance all aspects of the customers experience while managing the digital world. First, it becomes obvious that maintaining one's online reputation is an essential component of contemporary hotel management. Since more and more consumers rely on online reviews to guide their decisions, hoteliers must carefully manage and supervise their digital presence. By swiftly reacting to both positive and negative online reviews, hotels may show that they are responsive to their customers' needs and that they value their business. This increases the standard of the experience for visitors.

In addition, the influence of online evaluations goes beyond specific businesses to encompass a wider aspect of destination management. To improve a destination's online image, hotel managers need to collaborate with other stakeholders, particularly local tourist boards. Favorable online reviews about a place can increase demand, attracting more discriminating tourists and having a beneficial effect on the entire economic environment. Adopting focused marketing strategies that take advantage of favorable online reviews may increase a hotel's presence in the competitive digital market, which in turn affects potential customer's decision-making processes.

Limitation and study forward

The findings of the research provide an array of directions for further investigation and practical applications in the hospitality sector. It requires ongoing research to keep up with evolving customer expectations as they adapt to new technology and shifting market conditions. Through the continuous observation in the change in customers' usage of social media and online reviews, longitudinal studies can clarify on long-term developments. Relative analysis of social media sites like Instagram as well as online travel websites like Tripadvisor, Make My Trip and Booking.com can highlight engagement-boosting strategies specific to each platform. Studying modern technologies like AI and VR may also provide fresh approaches to enhance customer experiences, while cross-cultural studies can address regional differences in the use of reviews and booking habits. Studying how reviews are influenced by visual content and using behavioral economics. CRM solutions that incorporate review insights promise more tailored encounters and improved services.

Conclusion:

In summary, the research has explored the complex dynamics related to customers' use of online reviews while selecting a hotel. The results demonstrate how digital platforms have a significant transformational influence on potential visitors' decision-making processes, influencing their perceptions, expectations, and decisions. Online reviews have broadened access to information, empowering customers, and escalating competition in the hotel sector. The presented paper contributes to the body of literature on customer behavior and hospitality management among academics while offering practical guidance to business professionals. Hotel operators must accept, understand, and strategically use online evaluations as the digital landscape changes. This is crucial for long-term success in an extremely competitive industry. The report highlights how social media, and online reviews have an important effect on customer behavior in the hotel sector. The trends seen among age, booking preferences, and online review checks highlight the necessity of implementing targeted strategies that address a range of customer demographics. With the utilization of this information, hospitality industry can improve their service regulation, enhance customer's happiness, and eventually drive commercial expansion. To sum up, the ever-changing landscape of consumer behavior needs continues observation and adjustment. Hospitality managers must be attentive and sensitive to the shifting preferences and trends of their customers, as social media and online reviews continue to have a major impact on how consumers perceive hotel services. In an increasingly digital environment, this proactive approach will ensure continuous competitiveness and develop everlasting customer connections.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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