

Impact of Online Reviews and Ratings on Purchase Intention with Special Reference to Boarding and Lodging in Tourist Places

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IMPACT OF ONLINE REVIEWS AND RATINGS ON PURCHASE INTENTION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BOARDING AND LODGING IN

TOURIST PLACES

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Abstract

The growth of digital platforms has transformed tourists' decision-making processes in the tourism and hospitality sector. Online reviews and ratings play a vital role in shaping tourists' perceptions, trust, and purchase intentions when selecting boarding and lodging facilities. As accommodation services cannot be assessed before use, travellers increasingly rely on feedback shared by previous customers. This study examines the influence of online reviews and ratings on tourists' booking intentions in tourist destinations. Primary data were collected from 105 respondents using a structured questionnaire, supported by secondary sources. The data were analysed using percentage analysis. The results reveal that reviews, star ratings, and user-uploaded photos strongly affect accommodation choices. Cleanliness, service quality, and value for money emerged as key influencing factors.

Keywords: Online Reviews, Online Ratings, Purchase Intention, Tourism and Hospitality, Boarding and Lodging, Electronic Word-of-Mouth

Introduction

The tourism and hospitality industry has been significantly influenced by technological progress and widespread internet usage. Tourists increasingly depend on online platforms to search, compare, and select boarding and lodging facilities. Online reviews and ratings have become an important source of information, reflecting the real experiences of previous customers. Since accommodation services cannot be evaluated before use, tourists often face uncertainty while booking. Online feedback helps reduce this uncertainty by providing details about service quality, cleanliness, location, and value for money. Positive reviews and higher ratings increase customer confidence, while negative opinions may discourage bookings. The rise of smartphones and travel applications has further increased access to online reviews. User-generated content is widely viewed as more trustworthy than traditional promotions. As a

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result, online reputation has become crucial for hospitality businesses. Understanding this influence helps service providers improve marketing strategies and customer satisfaction.

Review of Literature

A.Navitha Sulthana and S.Vasanth (2024) "Effect of Online Review Rating on Purchase Intention". The objective of the study is to find the effect of online review rating on purchase intention and to investigate the relationship between online review rating and purchase intention. The study is based on descriptive analysis. This study reveals that the online customer review ratings given by past or previous customers are a very important source to create purchase intention among online customers

Mihir Joshi and Vinod Kumar Singh (2017) "Electronic Word of Mouth and Influence on Consumer Purchase Intention". The objective of this study was to understand the relationship between Electronic Word of Mouth and purchase intention in the Indian context. Linear regression was applied to the data set to test the hypothesis using RStudio. EWOM was taken as the predictor variable and purchase intention was taken as the outcome variable. This study reveals that there is a strong relationship between EWOM and purchase intention.

Swagato Chatterjee, Arpita Ghatak, Ratnadeep Nikte, Shivam Gupta and Ajay Kumar (2022). "Measuring SERVQUAL dimensions and their importance for customer satisfaction using online reviews: a text mining approach". The objective is to develop a data-driven approach to measure airline service quality by extracting SERVQUAL dimensions from 27,052 user-generated online reviews using text mining, machine learning, and econometric techniques. The study reveals that combining qualitative and quantitative UGC provides a reliable alternative to traditional survey-based methods, offering deeper insights into service quality drivers in the airline industry.

Research Gap

Most previous studies focus on online reviews in general or on hotel bookings alone. There is limited research that examines the combined effect of online reviews, star ratings, and user-uploaded photographs on tourists' purchase intention. Very few studies have specifically focused on boarding and lodging facilities in tourist places using primary data. Emerging issues such as review credibility, visual content influence, and consumer trust are not sufficiently explored. Hence, a focused study in this area is necessary.

Objectives

1. To examine the impact of online reviews and star ratings on tourists' decision-making regarding boarding and lodging services in tourist destinations.
2. To identify the most influential factors in online reviews (e.g., cleanliness, service, location, value for money) that affect purchase intention.
3. To analyse the impact of user-shared photo reviews on tourists' purchase intention.
4. To analyse the level of consumer trust in positive online reviews.

Research Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive research design and is based on both primary and secondary data through online platforms. A total of 105 respondents were selected using convenience sampling. Secondary data were collected from journals, research articles, books, and relevant websites. The data were analysed using percentage analysis and presented through tables and charts for better interpretation.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The analysis reveals that online reviews play an important role in tourists' accommodation booking decisions, with a majority of respondents stating that reviews influence them either very much or somewhat. Cleanliness emerged as the most influential factor while selecting boarding and lodging facilities, followed by customer service, location, and value for money. User-uploaded photos were widely referred to during booking, as most respondents reported always or often checking photos to assess accommodation quality. Trust in positive reviews was mainly built through the inclusion of real photos, detailed review content, and verified reviewer badges. Overall, the findings indicate that online reviews, ratings, and visual content significantly shape tourists' purchase intention and booking behaviour.

The findings are further illustrated in the Figures given below.

Figure 1: The figure shows the role of online reviews in the decision to book accommodation by the respondents

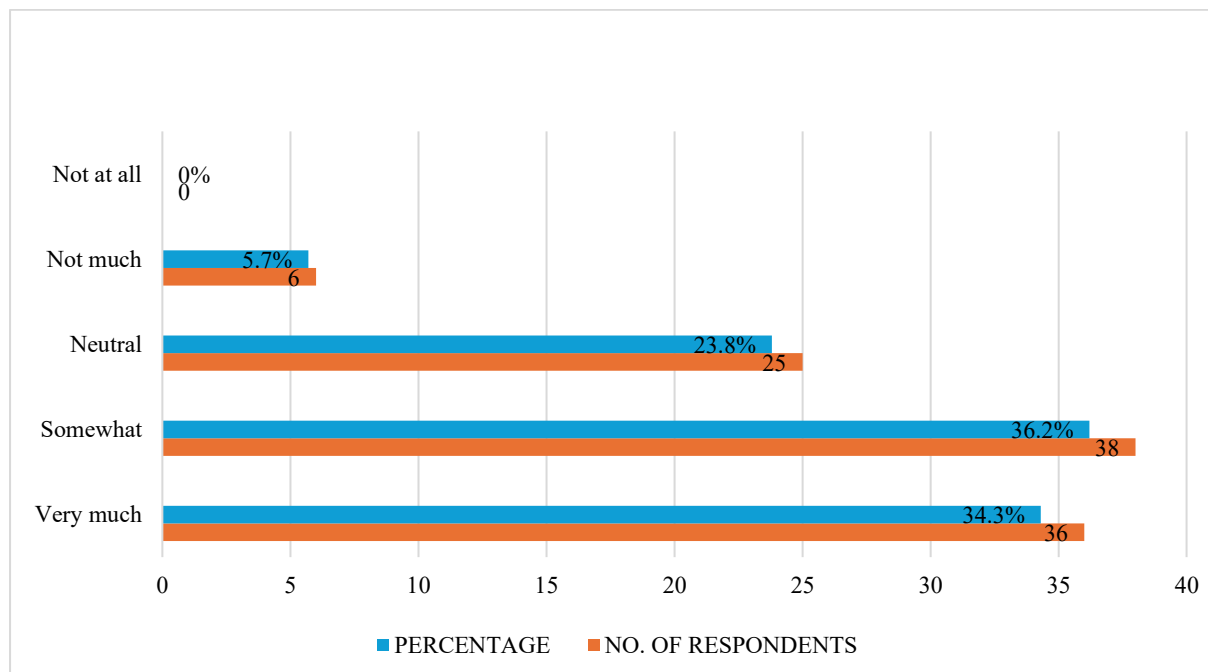


Figure 1 shows that the distribution of responses specifies a strong positive perception of the measured variable among the sample respondents. A majority of participants reported either “Somewhat” (36.2%, n = 38) or “Very much” (34.3%, n = 36), collectively accounting for 70.5% of the responses. This suggests that a considerable level of influence of the factor under study. In addition, 23.8% (n = 25) of respondents remained neutral, indicating a moderate level of indifference. Only a small proportion (5.7%, n = 6) selected “Not much,” and none of the respondents (0%) chose the opinion of “Not at all,” demonstrating the absence of strong negative perceptions. Overall, the findings reflect a predominantly favourable orientation toward the variable, with minimal resistance or disagreement, thereby supporting the assumption that the factor is meaningfully relevant to the target population.

Figure 2: This figure shows the importance of influential factors in booking accommodation by the respondents

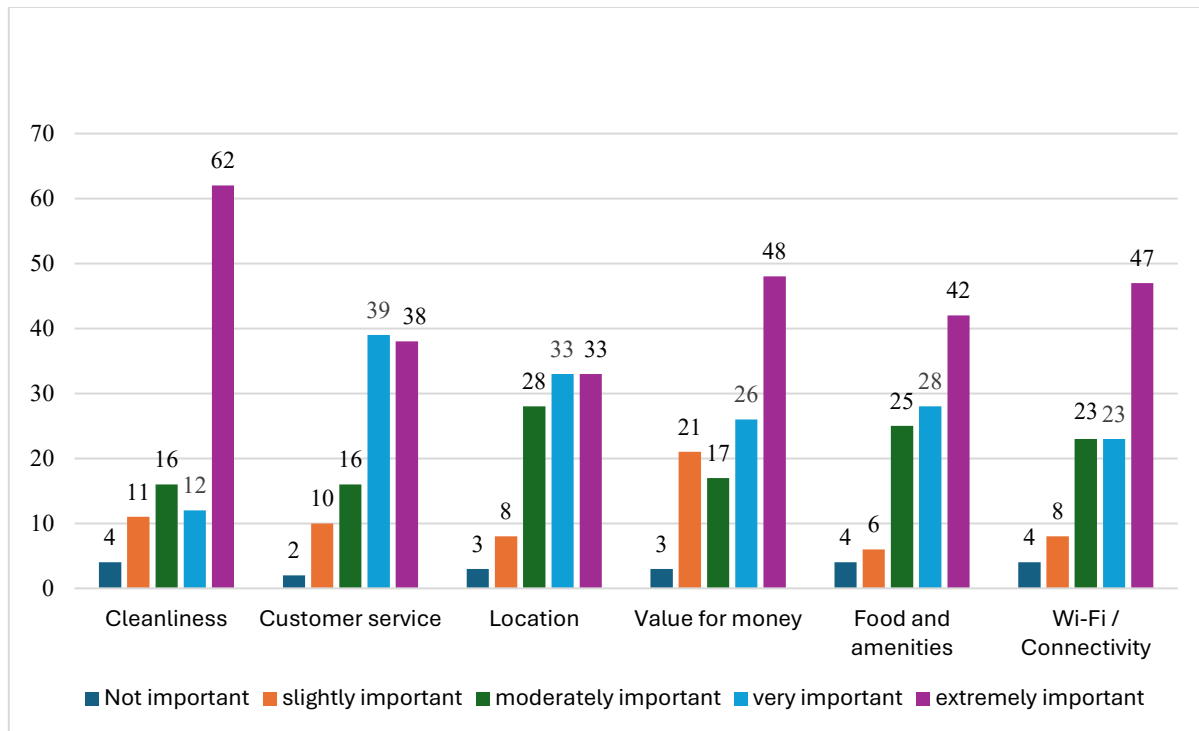


Figure 2 portrays that respondents assign importance to all six service attributes, with “extremely important” emerging as the dominant response category across dimensions. Cleanliness received the highest level of emphasis, with 62 respondents rating it as extremely important, followed by Wi-Fi/Connectivity (47), Value for Money (48), and Food and Amenities (42). Customer Service also recorded strong importance ratings, with 38 respondents indicating it as extremely important and 39 as very important, suggesting consistently high expectations in this area. Correspondingly, Location demonstrated balanced high-level importance, with 33 respondents each rating it as very important and extremely important. Across all attributes, the proportion of respondents selecting “not important” or “slightly important” remains comparatively low, indicating minimal indifference perception. Altogether, the results establish that respondents prioritise core service quality dimensions—particularly cleanliness, value for money, connectivity, and customer service—highlighting their critical role in shaping overall evaluation and decision-making behaviour.

Figure 3: This figure shows the reference to user-uploaded photos while booking accommodation by the respondents

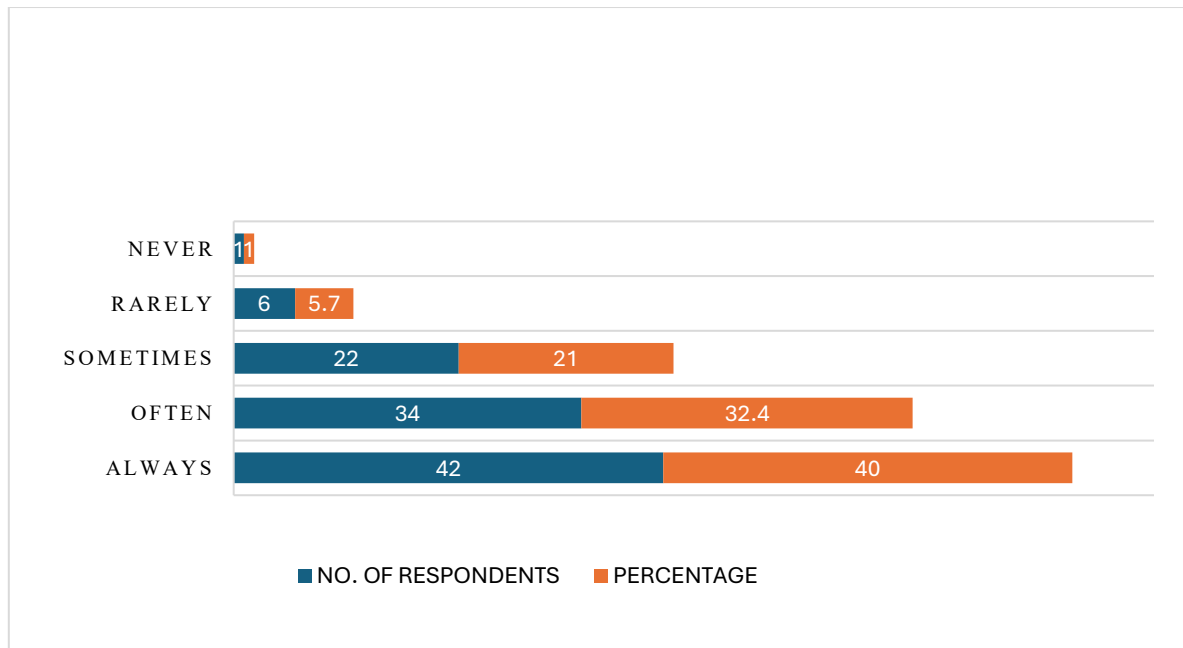


Figure 3 explains that the distribution of responses reveals a strong tendency toward frequent engagement in the behaviour under study. A substantial proportion of respondents reported “Always” (42 respondents; 40%) and “Often” (34 respondents; 32.4%), collectively accounting for more than two-thirds of the sample, indicating a consistently high level of occurrence. Additionally, 22 respondents (21%) selected “Sometimes,” reflecting moderate participation. In contrast, only a small fraction indicated “Rarely” (6 respondents; 5.7%), while virtually none reported “Never” (1 respondent; approximately 1%). The minimal representation in the lower-frequency categories and the dominance of the higher-frequency responses suggest that the behaviour is regularly practised by the majority of respondents, underscoring its significance within the studied context.

Figure 4: This figure shows the factors that build trust in respondents about positive reviews

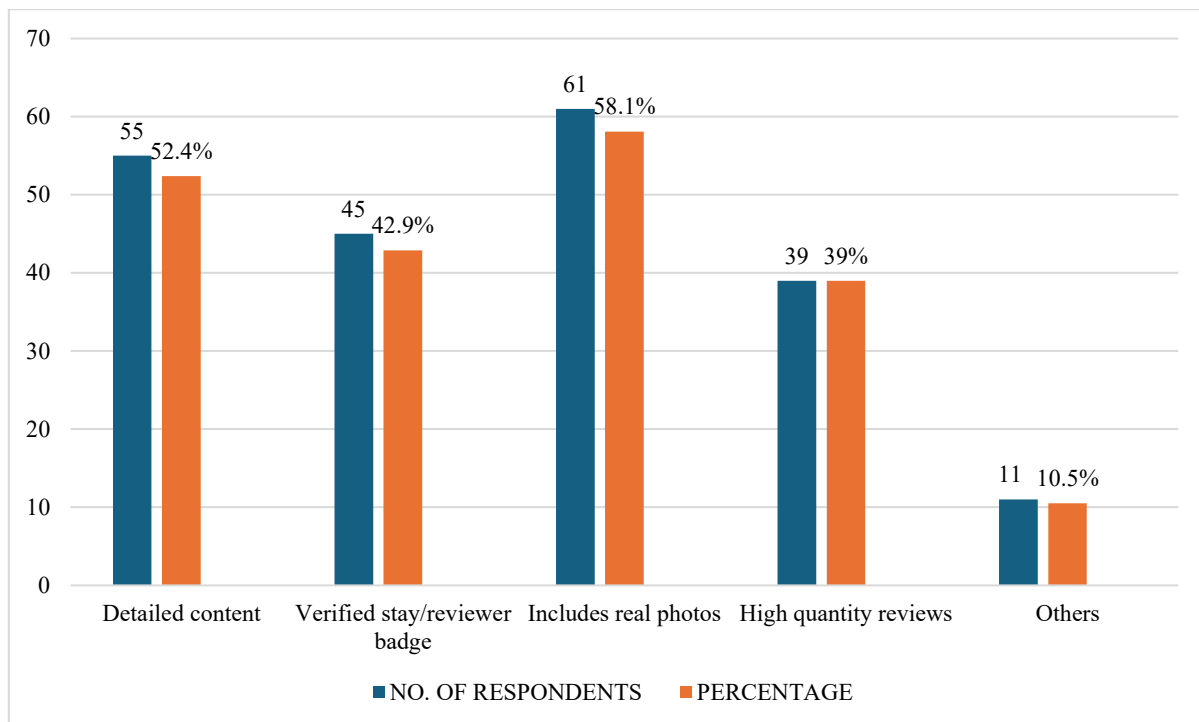


Figure 4 indicates that respondents prioritise authenticity and detailed information in online reviews. Reviews with real photos (58.1%) and detailed content (52.4%) are considered most important, followed by verified reviewer badges (42.9%) and a high number of reviews (39%). Only a small proportion (10.5%) cited other factors. Overall, authenticity, credibility, and comprehensive information emerge as the key drivers influencing respondents' perceptions and decision-making.

Discussions

The study shows that tourists increasingly rely on online reviews and ratings when choosing accommodation. Written reviews and user-uploaded photos strongly influence booking decisions by providing authentic information. Higher ratings are generally associated with better service quality and increased purchase intention. At the same time, concerns about fake reviews indicate growing consumer caution. Therefore, hospitality providers should promote genuine feedback and manage online reviews effectively to build trust and customer satisfaction.

Scope For Future Research

The study is limited to a selected group of tourists and uses convenience sampling. Future studies can be conducted with a larger sample size and across different tourist destinations. Comparative studies between different types of accommodation and advanced statistical techniques can provide deeper insights into the long-term impact of online reviews on customer loyalty and satisfaction.

Conclusion

The study concludes that online reviews and ratings play a vital role in influencing tourists' purchase intention towards boarding and lodging facilities in tourist places. Tourists rely heavily on digital feedback to evaluate service quality and reduce uncertainty before

booking accommodation. Factors such as cleanliness, service quality, and value for money strongly affect booking decisions. While positive reviews and high ratings encourage bookings, concerns about review credibility highlight the need for transparency. Overall, effective management of online reviews is essential for hospitality businesses to remain competitive and build long-term customer trust.

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