



Electronic Word-of-Mouth (E-WOM) for Hotel Ratings in London: A Quantitative Study of Reviews in the London Hotel Industry

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Abstract

The electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) is defined as consumer opinions shared online. Customer reviews have become a crucial information source, significantly influencing consumers' purchase intentions and behavior. The Internet makes these product reviews and comments easily accessible, and research confirms that consumers regard reviews and ratings as vital information sources. Indeed, roughly 93% of consumers report that online reviews affect their purchasing decisions, implying a substantial impact on the success of goods and services. It is crucial for businesses to comprehend the reasons behind these internet interactions because word-of-mouth is sometimes the most reliable source of information for service clients. The results validate a number of aspects along which online reviews have an impact. In order to lessen information overload, consumers frequently rely on heuristic signals (e.g., star ratings in reviews provide concrete, readily processed signs of quality and act as crucial availability heuristics). As social media and review platforms evolve, customers increasingly share their positive and negative experiences on demand via online review sites. Consequently, online reviews have become a crucial information resource for both prospective hotel guests and hotel managers. For instance, travelers frequently consult online reviews when booking hotels, and peer feedback is often perceived as more influential than traditional marketing communications. To shed light on these dynamics, this study analyzed online hotel ratings in London, UK, by using reviews collected from Google Travel, leveraging Google's position as the world's largest search engine. We compiled a dataset of hotel reviews and applied text-clustering techniques to identify thematic groups, which we labelled 'Food & Beverage', 'Physical Environment', 'Service', and 'Brand' based on the characteristic terms of each cluster. This method allows us to investigate the relationship between hotel rating categories and Google customer reviews.

Keywords

Awareness; Analysis; Customers; Electronic Word-of-Mouth (E-WOM); Reputation; Tourism

1. Introduction

People planned a trip to another city and need to reserve a hotel room. People were unsure how to find a place to stay

because travelers were unfamiliar with the area. The traveler could get the assistance of friends, go to a travel agency, or conduct an Internet search. According to Tursunov (2025), some business strategies have one thing in common, and that is, people frequently seek advice from others when making decisions. It is common knowledge that word of mouth, both positive and negative, influences customer purchasing decisions. For a long time, marketing experts have been fascinated by word-of-mouth communication. When planning their trips, three-quarters of travelers used online consumer reviews as a source of information (Mavitha & Kushe, 2025). In other fields, studies have shown that online user-generated reviews can have a significant impact on the sales of products such as books, films, shows, CDs, and movies. According to the study thoroughly conducted by Baquero (2025), the influence of user reviews is especially important for experience goods because their quality is frequently unknown prior to consumption. Piso (2022) mentioned in his study that client audits conducted over the Internet are a type of electronic verbal communication or electronic word of mouth. Audits are more effective at influencing buyer behavior than traditional marketing tools. They are frequently independent of advertising sales efforts, which makes them appear more trustworthy and makes them credible to buyers. Online audits are rich sources of information that can help shape the future operations of the tourism industry (Dimitrios et al., 2020). Restaurants must identify competitors and gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace because the industry is so competitive. Traditionally, rivals' information is obtained through the written media through news stories and polls (Korstanje et al., 2022). The purpose of this study is to determine how much influence Internet reputation generated by customer reviews has on hotel sector ratings.

2. Customer Online Experiences

Customer experience has long been recognized as a central determinant of success within the hospitality industry. Unlike tangible products, hospitality services are characterized by their experiential nature, meaning that customer satisfaction is largely determined by subjective perceptions of service quality, atmosphere, and overall interaction with service providers. Scholars like Boto-Garcia and Mayor (2022) have increasingly emphasized the importance of managing customer experience as a strategic tool for gaining a competitive advantage. Customer experience can be defined as *"a set of interactions that engage consumers emotionally, physically, and cognitively throughout the service consumption process"* (Boto-Garcia & Mayor, 2022). Each guest encounter, therefore, contributes to the formation of overall perceptions regarding a hotel's service quality and brand image. As mentioned in Massidda et al. (2022), the emergence of digital communication platforms has provided customers with new opportunities to express their opinions regarding hospitality services. Online review platforms allow consumers to publicly share their experiences, offering both positive and negative evaluations that can influence the perceptions of other potential guests. Consequently, online reviews have become a valuable source of feedback for organizations seeking to understand customer expectations and identify areas requiring improvement. In addition to qualitative comments, many review platforms include numerical ratings or star systems that summarize customer evaluations. These ratings provide a simplified representation of customer satisfaction, enabling travelers to quickly compare alternative accommodation options. As a result, both the content and the volume of reviews contribute to shaping the perceived reputation of hotels in the online marketplace (Tan et al., 2025).

3. Electronic Word-of-Mouth (E-WOM)

A digital extension of conventional interpersonal communication about goods and services is electronic word-of-mouth. According to Lagioia et al. (2024), consumers can share their thoughts, suggestions, and experiences with a large number of prospective clients via online platforms. The impact and reach of customer comments have been greatly increased by this technique. The web 3.0-based applications are changing the way passengers generate trade and consume information by allowing for online user participation and collaboration. According to Arici et al. (2023), compared with traditional marketing communications, E-WOM is often perceived as more credible because it originates from independent consumers rather than organizations. As a result, online reviews frequently exert a stronger influence on consumer decision-making than advertising messages. E-WOM can involve two primary forms of consumer behavior: information seeking and information sharing. Before making a reservation, travelers often look up reviews left by past visitors, and those who have already used a service may leave their own comments to help potential clients. E-WOM has spread more quickly in the tourism industry thanks to the expansion of social media and user-generated content platforms.

4. Hotel Reputations

Client loyalty is the foundation of a hotel's reputation. It entails investigating the relationships among hotel image,

service quality, perceived value, customer satisfaction, hotel reputation, customer commitment, and customer loyalty (Baquero, 2025). It is critical to keep the hotel's reputation intact. Hotel managers and strategists should pay attention to reputation management components and use them as a guideline for their social media marketing efforts because a hotel's reputation has become increasingly dependent on what customers write online (Lagioia et al., 2024). The emergence of the AI-based theme of the Internet, known as AI-based Web 4.0, enables customers to share their experiences in over multiplatform, which includes SNS-based applications. It is one of the most influential forces that has shifted power from marketers to customers. It poses numerous challenges and opportunities for managers and marketers seeking to control the image of their hotel (Gim et al., 2025). A product rating is usually coupled with a certain number of reviews. The number of reviews increases visibility while also acting as social proof of popularity. Customers should be able to combine these two types of information while restricting or minimizing the cost of searching. The heuristic "*a large number of reviews convert a rating into a credible figure*" interacts with aggregate ratings and the quantity of reviews (Sharma et al., 2021). The social proof heuristic explains why people prefer to make decisions based on ratings (Cialdini, 2009). Today's Internet buyers must deal with a vast amount of data, new search engines, numerous gadgets, and new techniques of viewing information in order to make a purchasing decision. Internet ratings have become one of the most dependable sources for making e-commerce purchases. Consumers typically trust and believe these evaluations (Wilkesmann & Bassyiouny, 2025). As stated in Anguera et al. (2025), around 100 formal and informal hotel rating systems are in operation around the world. Hotel ratings are overseen and administered by commercial entities, government agencies, and industry organizations. In the 1960s, the World Trade Organization attempted to establish a consistent, balanced global rating system for trade domains, but despite these efforts, hotels around the world continue to use various ranking systems, which often make events become ambiguous and biased (Tan et al., 2025).

5. Research Explorations

5.1 Dataset Exploration

Macro data has ushered in a new age of data mining and application, driven largely by the rapid expansion of digital data sources and the continuous generation of online information by individuals worldwide. As a result, the growth of big data has significantly increased the demand for advanced statistical and analytical capabilities. Big data technologies provide unprecedented opportunities for conducting statistical inference using extremely large datasets; however, they also present substantial analytical challenges, particularly when compared with the analysis of smaller datasets (Wilkesmann & Bassyiouny, 2025). In general, big data refers to datasets that are too large, complex, or diverse for conventional data-processing tools to capture, manage, and analyze effectively. Big data analytics encompasses a range of techniques, including data mining, web mining, reputation mining, social mining, cluster analysis, and reality mining. These analytical approaches are typically employed to extract meaningful insights from large-scale transactional and behavioral data (Denizci & Chu, 2021). Within this analytical framework, the present study employed text mining and semantic network analysis to examine patterns in customer-generated hotel reviews. Text mining techniques were first used to calculate word frequencies and identify key phrases within the unstructured textual data. Subsequently, convergence of iterated correlations analysis was applied to identify clusters of frequently co-occurring keywords and to explore the structural relationships among them. The method used to present and visualize these relationships is crucial for understanding the semantic network of words, as visual representations allow researchers to quickly identify network structures and associations among nodes. In this study, the semantic network analysis and visualization were conducted using SOcNETV 3.4 version (Mavitha & Kushe, 2025).

Table 1. Number of reviews according to the 2024 Hotel ranking

Rank	Locations	No. of Reviews
1	Hilton Hotels & Resorts, London	1122
2	The Crowne Plaza, London	2195
3	London Marriott Hotel, London	6675
4	The Art'otel London	1365
5	Conrad London St. James Hotel	1719

The data for this study were collected from Google Travel, which is one of the world's largest online search and travel information platforms. Google hotel reviews typically include several components, such as the selected hotel brand, reviewer identification, the date of the review, textual comments, rating scores, and the type of trip undertaken. Figure 1 illustrates an example of Google online reviews. Reviews were collected from five hotels in London that were recommended by Google as among the best hotels in 2024. Table 1 presents the selected hotels and the number of reviews associated with each property. Initially, a total of 6,200 reviews were collected from five London-based hotels. After removing entries that were illegible or contained only rating scores without textual comments, 5,330 valid reviews remained for analysis. The 14,811 words in these reviews served as the foundation for the semantic network and text mining investigations. The timeframe of data gathering was from March of 2024 until March of 2025. The most important themes in the dataset were found by performing a frequency analysis using keywords that were taken from the Google reviews. The distribution of hotel evaluation scores was used to look at overall customer satisfaction with the hotel experience, in addition to the textual analysis.

5.2 Qualitative Exploration

As shown in Figure 1, the following approach was employed in this study's analysis to assess the frequency of frequent favorable or negative evaluations. The first stage would be to obtain online review data and refine the wording that was gathered. In terms of data analysis, SOcNETV 3.4 version includes a sketch of the network. It is primarily concerned with the semantic network analysis of the top 52 commonly used keywords extracted from raw data.

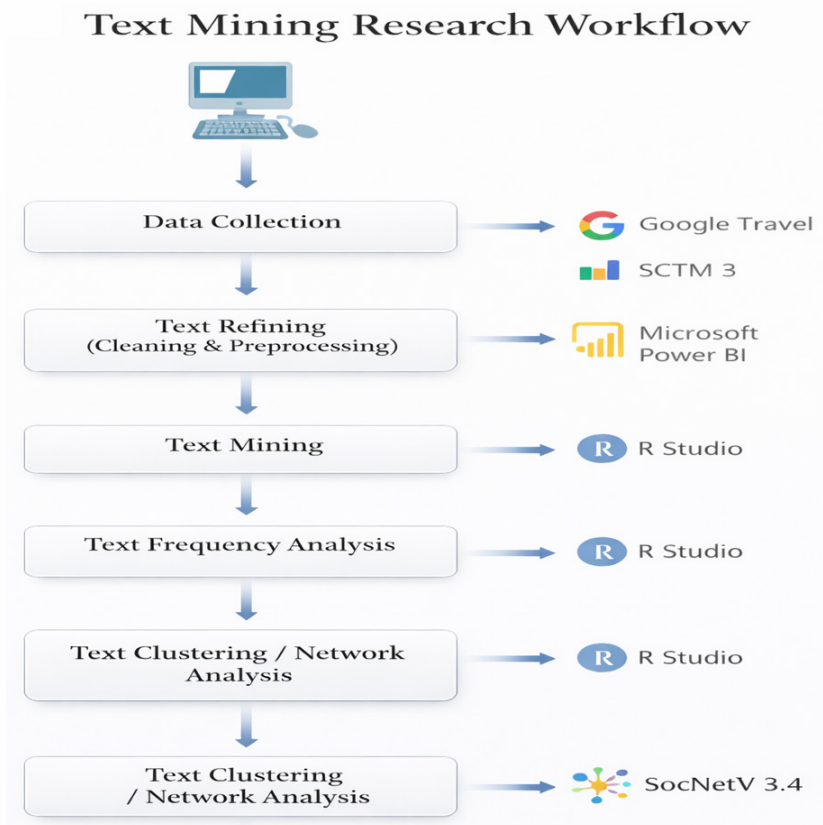


Figure 1. Qualitative procedure.

5.3 Frequency Exploration

Tables 2, 3, and 4 present the 52 most frequently occurring keywords associated with the hotel experience, along with their corresponding frequency percentages. These keywords help to identify the terms most commonly used in customer evaluations and provide insight into the main attributes that shape guests' perceptions of hotel services.

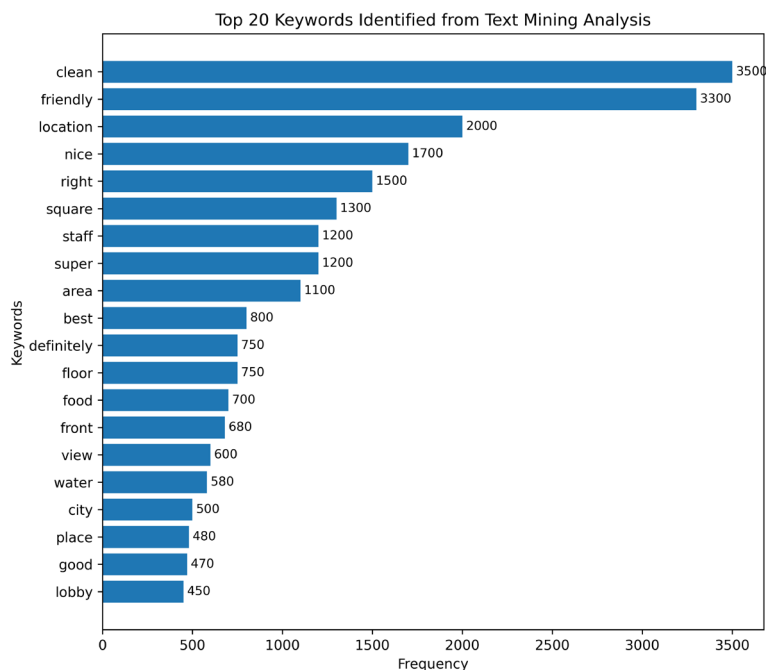


Figure 2. Distribution of the frequency of the 20 major words.

The identified keywords reflect various aspects of the hotel experience described in the reviews. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the distribution of the most prominent keywords, highlighting the relative importance of the upper-ranked terms. In addition, the semantic network visualization demonstrates the frequency relationships among the keywords, allowing the structural patterns of the review data to be observed more clearly. The last step of the analysis, which was used to identify clusters of related keywords and to reveal the underlying thematic structure within the semantic network.

Table 2. Top Keywords Identified from Text Mining Analysis

Rank	Word	Frequency	Percentage %	Rank	Word	Frequency	Percentage %
1	clean	3530	9.61%	2	friendly	3316	9.03%
3	location	1994	5.43%	4	nice	1726	4.70%
5	right	1563	4.26%	6	square	1292	3.52%
7	staff	1292	3.37%	8	super	1222	3.33%
9	area	1086	2.96%	10	best	820	2.23%
11	definitely	740	2.01%	12	floor	739	2.01%
13	food	712	1.94%	14	front	677	1.84%
15	view	615	1.67%	16	water	592	1.61%
17	city	510	1.39%	18	place	500	1.36%
19	good	493	1.34%	20	lobby	478	1.32%
21	price	471	1.28%	22	room	463	1.26%
23	service	452	1.22%	24	beautiful	449	1.21%
25	door	434	1.15%	26	sleep	432	1.13%
27	arrive	427	1.11%	28	washroom	415	1.11%

Table 2 Continued

Rank	Word	Frequency	Percentage %	Rank	Word	Frequency	Percentage %
29	dirty	373	1.11%	30	helpful	362	0.88%
31	people	358	0.88%	32	customer	350	0.87%
33	backside	348	0.87%	34	comforter	337	0.86%
35	trip	320	0.86%	36	desk	316	0.86%
37	London	306	0.86%	38	pretty	300	0.86%
39	hotels	300	0.85%	40	night	280	0.80%
41	stayed	274	0.80%	42	extremely	273	0.80%
43	big bang	271	0.78%	44	station	268	0.77%
45	looks	267	0.76%	46	excellent	266	0.75%
47	bad	264	0.74%	48	old	263	0.73%
49	bar	262	0.72%	50	exciting	260	0.69%
51	grand	248	0.66%	52	star	247	0.66%

Table 3. Descriptive statistical analysis of keywords

Variable	No.	Mean	Mode	Median	SD	Skewness	Variance	Kurtosis
Keyword Frequency	52	582.75	191	350.0	646.72	3.07	418,241.66	10.01

Table 4. Top 10 outlier analysis (Z-Score) of keywords

Word	Frequency	Z-score
clean	3530	4.59
Friendly	3316	4.29
Location	1994	2.27
Nice	1726	1.99
Right	1563	1.57
Square	1292	1.12
Staff	1239	1.08
Super	1222	1.04
Area	1086	1.02
Rooftop	191	0.78

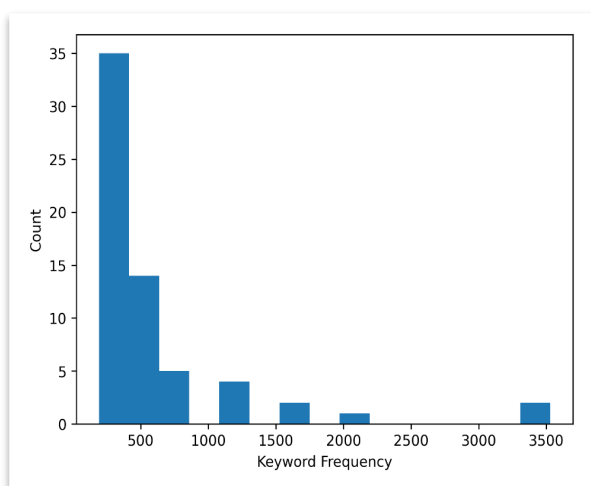


Figure 3. Keyword frequency distribution bar graph.

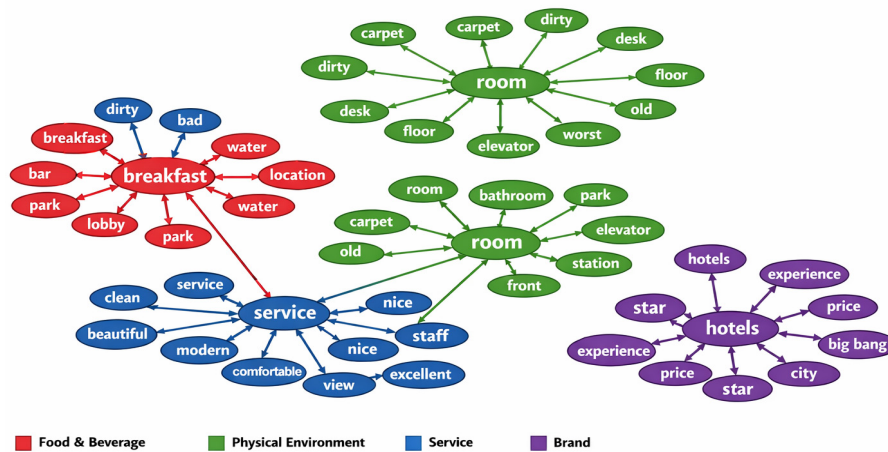


Figure 6. Characterization of word extraction from SOcNETV 3.4 version.

6. Conclusion

This study’s main goal was to investigate how internet reviews affect hotel ratings in London, UK. A text mining technique was initially used to find pertinent terms in the review data in order to analyze customer-generated hotel reviews. The most frequently used phrases in the dataset were then identified using frequency analysis. Through this procedure, 52 high-frequency keywords were selected, giving a summary of the primary characteristics that guests prioritized while assessing their hotel stays. After that, frequency analysis was used to find connected keyword clusters and investigate the underlying structure of consumer opinions as they were expressed in online reviews. This analytical approach enables the grouping of keywords based on their relational patterns within the semantic network. The results of the analysis revealed four major thematic categories: “Food and Beverage,” “Physical Environment,” “Service,” and “Brand.” Among these four categories, “Service” and “Physical Environment” emerged as the most dominant themes, accounting for more than 70% of the total 5,330 customer reviews analyzed in this study. This finding indicates that service quality and the physical environment of a hotel represent the primary factors influencing customers’ evaluations. Customers tend to prioritize hotels that offer high-quality service in a comfortable and aesthetically pleasing environment. Consequently, many frequently occurring keywords are associated with service-related attributes, including beautiful, super, clean, great, best, helpful, and friendly. In addition, several keywords related to the hotel environment and facilities were identified, such as station, park, arrival, elevator, and front, reflecting customers’ attention to accessibility and physical infrastructure. The remaining two categories, “Food and Beverage” and “Brand,” were also found to be important factors in shaping customer perceptions, although they were mentioned less frequently than service and environmental attributes. The relationships among these keywords and thematic clusters were visualized through semantic network analysis using the SOcNETV 3.4 version software application, which allowed the structural connections among nodes and clusters to be clearly illustrated. Overall, the results point to a high correlation between hotel ratings, reputation, and online reviews. Electronic word-of-mouth, or E-WOM, is a key factor in determining how consumers view the value of a brand and the quality of services in today’s digital marketplace. Consumers frequently voice strong opinions on internet platforms based on their individual experiences, and prospective guests might use these comments as useful information when making reservations. Benefit-cost theory states that consumers’ evaluation processes and decision-making behavior are influenced by customer satisfaction and discontent conveyed through online platforms (Gim et al., 2025). When individuals intend to book a hotel, they typically rely on available online information, particularly review ratings, to guide their choices. Previous research also suggests that the number of reviews can influence perceived credibility and ratings, as higher volumes of reviews tend to strengthen consumer confidence in the evaluation of a hotel (Sharma et al., 2021). Because this study focused specifically on hotels in London, the review data were collected from Google, where customer reviews were analyzed to evaluate the importance of online feedback in shaping hotel ratings. Despite these contributions, the study has several limitations. First, the dataset was relatively limited, as it was not possible to include all available reviews. Second, the analysis relied mainly on keyword frequency analysis, which may limit the ability to interpret the contextual meaning of specific words within the reviews.

7. Academic and Operational Implications

By identifying the main terms that customers use most frequently when assessing their hotel experiences, the study's findings offer significant information for hotel management. These terms usually refer to parts of the customer experience, including food, facilities, and service quality. In order to improve service quality and overall customer happiness, hotel managers can concentrate on enhancing the qualities that are most commonly highlighted in customer reviews. In the end, these enhancements might lead to better reviews and consumer evaluations on social media and online travel portals. The study's graphical analysis incorporates the terms that appear and are repeated the most in customer ratings. The correlations between important review characteristics and the structural patterns found in the semantic network of hotel-related reviews are better understood thanks to these representations. Electronic word-of-mouth, or E-WOM, is becoming a more significant factor in determining the perceived value of goods and services in today's digital world. Online reviews are now a crucial source of comparison for prospective customers and have a significant impact on a hotel's rating and reputation. Thus, utilizing review data from Google, this study investigated the impact of internet reviews on hotel ratings and reputation. Through this analysis, the study sheds light on how customer-generated online reviews affect how hotels are ranked and evaluated on digital platforms. Notwithstanding these advantages, the study contains a number of shortcomings that present chances for further investigation. In order to examine consumer review patterns across various tourism marketplaces, more study could be carried out in various cities or nations. The impact of both favorable and bad reviews on hotel booking intentions should be investigated in future studies. Customer decision-making may be significantly influenced by elements including the quantity and quality of reviews, hotel location, amenities offered, brand familiarity, and the property's overall internet presence. A more thorough understanding of how internet review information affects customer behavior in the hotel business might result from looking into these issues.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest in research, authorships, locations, dates, or any subjective matters.

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