Drivers of Praise and Complaint in TripAdvisor Reviews from Guest Stay Experiences

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Abstract: Online reviews on platforms such as TripAdvisor have become a determinant factor in tourists' hotel selection decisions. This study aims to identify and compare the driving factors of positive and negative reviews on TripAdvisor from the perspective of hotel guests' stay experiences in Semarang City. A qualitative approach using thematic analysis method was applied to 127 reviews consisting of 64 positive reviews (rating 4–5) and 63 negative reviews (rating 1–2) from 15 star-rated hotels. The findings reveal five main themes driving positive reviews: staff service quality (90.6%), cleanliness and comfort (81.3%), perceived value (64.1%), strategic location (59.4%), and culinary experience (53.1%). Meanwhile, negative reviews were driven by facility failures (81.0%), expectation discrepancy (74.6%), cleanliness deficiency (69.8%), poor service quality (61.9%), and noise issues (44.4%). Comparative analysis identified convergent patterns in staff service, cleanliness, facilities, and expectations dimensions that function as drivers for both types of reviews. Divergent patterns were found in location and culinary aspects that exclusively appeared in positive reviews, and noise issues that only emerged in negative reviews. These findings confirm the expectancy-disconfirmation theory and provide practical implications for hotel management to prioritize staff competency development, preventive facility maintenance, and accurate expectation management.

Keywords: Hospitality Industry; Online Review; Stay Experience; Thematic Analysis; Tripadvisor.

1. Introduction

Digital transformation has fundamentally altered the way travelers search for information and make accommodation choices. Online review platforms such as TripAdvisor have become primary reference sources that shape consumer perceptions and behaviors within the hospitality industry. According to Filieri et al. (2015), user-generated online reviews exert a significant influence on tourists' decision-making processes because they are perceived as more credible than information provided directly by hotels. This phenomenon creates a new dynamic in which hotel reputation is no longer fully controlled by management but is instead co-constructed through the collective narratives of guests expressed in their published reviews.

Within the context of Indonesia's hospitality industry, the rapid growth of the tourism sector has driven an increase in the number of accommodations and intensified competition among hotels. The city of Semarang, as the capital of Central Java Province, has experienced substantial development in the hotel sector due to its strategic role as a business hub, educational center, and tourist destination. Evidence indicates that travelers visiting Semarang increasingly rely on online reviews when selecting hotels, rendering digital reputation management a critical factor for the sustainability of hospitality businesses in the city. Xie et al. (2016) emphasize that hotels with consistently positive reviews tend to achieve higher occupancy rates and room prices, whereas the accumulation of negative reviews can have a destructive impact on financial performance.

The urgency of this study is grounded in the need for a deeper understanding of the factors that drive guests to post positive and negative reviews, which has become a strategic

necessity for hospitality practitioners. Previous studies have explored the relationship between stay experiences and online review behavior. Banerjee and Chua (2016) identified service quality dimensions—such as staff responsiveness and room cleanliness—as strong predictors of review sentiment. Similarly, Zhao et al. (2019) found that guests' emotional experiences during their stay exert a substantial influence on their propensity to share experiences online. Further, Liu et al. (2017) revealed that unmet expectations (expectation disconfirmation) constitute a primary trigger for negative reviews.

Nevertheless, several research gaps remain insufficiently addressed by prior studies. The majority of research on hotel online reviews adopts quantitative approaches, employing algorithm-based sentiment analysis techniques or structured surveys. While effective in identifying general patterns and causal relationships among variables, such approaches are limited in their capacity to capture the nuances and complexity of guests' subjective experiences. Mudambi and Schuff (2010) note that quantitative approaches tend to reduce the richness of information embedded in review texts. Moreover, Kim et al. (2015); Nanulaitta&Widagdo (2024); Pinasthika&Widagdo (2025) argue that contextual understanding of why and how guests articulate their experiences requires in-depth exploration that is difficult to achieve through purely quantitative methods.

Another identified gap is the scarcity of comparative studies that systematically contrast the drivers of positive and negative reviews within a single integrated analytical framework. Most existing research focuses on only one type of review or treats positive and negative reviews separately without adequate comparative analysis. In fact, understanding both the differences and similarities in the factors driving these two types of reviews can provide more comprehensive strategic insights for hotel management. Schuckert et al. (2015) underscore the importance of a holistic approach to online review analysis in order to capture a complete picture of guest perceptions.

Based on the identified research gaps, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) What factors drive hotel guests in the city of Semarang to post positive reviews on the TripAdvisor platform? (2) What factors drive guests to post negative reviews? (3) How do these driving factors compare, and what patterns of relationships exist between the drivers of positive and negative reviews?

This study focuses on hotels in the city of Semarang that are listed on and actively reviewed on the TripAdvisor platform. TripAdvisor was selected as the data source due to its position as the world's largest travel review platform, characterized by a broad user base and established credibility. Reviews available on this platform represent authentic guest experiences with a high level of detail and diversity of perspectives, making them a rich data source for qualitative analysis.

A qualitative approach was chosen for this study in consideration of its intrinsic strengths in exploring meaning, context, and the complexity of social phenomena. Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) assert that qualitative methods enable researchers to understand experiences deeply from the participants' perspectives. In the context of online reviews, this approach facilitates thematic analysis capable of uncovering dimensions of stay experiences that may be overlooked by quantitative methods. The strength of qualitative research lies in its ability to generate rich contextual understanding and reveal emergent themes that were not previously anticipated. Braun and Clarke (2019) explain that thematic analysis, as a qualitative analytical technique, is particularly well suited for identifying patterns within textual data such as online reviews.

Nonetheless, qualitative methods also entail limitations that must be anticipated. The generalizability of findings to broader populations is inherently challenging due to the exploratory and contextual nature of the approach. Additionally, the potential for researcher interpretive bias during data analysis necessitates mitigation through rigorous validity procedures. To address these limitations, this study adopts triangulation and member checking procedures, as recommended by Creswell and Poth (2018), to enhance the credibility and dependability of the findings.

The proposed research approach involves qualitative content analysis of TripAdvisor reviews using a systematic comparative framework. Reviews will be categorized by valence (positive and negative) and then thematically analyzed to identify dominant driving factors within each category. Cross-category comparisons will subsequently be conducted to reveal patterns

of convergence and divergence. This approach is expected to generate comprehensive insights that can serve as a foundation for developing strategies to manage guest experiences and online reputation for hotels in the city of Semarang.

2. Literature Review

Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) has become a central phenomenon in consumer behavior in the digital era, particularly within the experiential hospitality industry. Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) define eWOM as positive or negative statements made by potential, actual, or former consumers about a product or company via the internet. Building on this definition, Litvin et al. (2018) further extend the conceptualization by emphasizing the role of review platforms as key mediators that shape travelers' expectations and decision-making processes.

As one of the largest review aggregators, the TripAdvisor platform facilitates large-scale information exchange among travelers. Filieri et al. (2021) found that the credibility of reviews on TripAdvisor is influenced by factors such as argument quality, information consistency, and reviewer reputation. Meanwhile, Kwok et al. (2017) identified that review volume and valence jointly affect hotel performance, with negative reviews exerting a stronger asymmetric impact than positive reviews of an equivalent volume.

Customer Satisfaction Theory and the Disconfirmation Paradigm

Expectancy-disconfirmation theory represents a dominant theoretical framework for explaining the mechanisms underlying customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Oliver (2014) explains that satisfaction arises when actual performance meets or exceeds expectations, whereas dissatisfaction results from negative disconfirmation. Within the hospitality context, this theory has been widely applied to understand guests' responses to various service dimensions.

Xu and Li (2016) demonstrated that expectation disconfirmation is a strong predictor of the intention to write reviews, whether positive or negative. Similar findings were reported by Zhao et al. (2019), who identified that extremely satisfying or highly disappointing experiences are more likely to be articulated in online reviews than moderate experiences. Park and Nicolau (2015) further incorporated an emotional dimension, finding that the intensity of emotions experienced during a hotel stay is positively correlated with the length and level of detail in written reviews.

Dimensions of Stay Experience and Drivers of Reviews

Hotel stay experiences constitute a multidimensional construct encompassing both functional and emotional aspects. Walls et al. (2011) identified four primary dimensions of hotel experience: physical environment, human interaction, situational factors, and individual characteristics. Subsequently, Kandampully et al. (2015) emphasized the importance of customer experience management as a strategy for competitive differentiation.

Several studies have explored specific factors driving online reviews. Schuckert et al. (2015) found that room quality, cleanliness, location, and value for money are the most frequently discussed attributes in hotel reviews. Using big data analysis, Xiang et al. (2015) revealed that service and staff-related dimensions exert a dominant influence on review sentiment. Furthermore, Vu et al. (2020) identified factors such as bed comfort and breakfast quality as key differentiators between positive and negative reviews.

From the perspective of negative reviews, Sparks and Browning (2011) found that poorly handled service failures constitute a primary trigger. Balaji et al. (2016) added that perceptions of injustice in service recovery processes intensify guests' propensity to disseminate negative eWOM. Meanwhile, Gao et al. (2018) identified a temporal pattern whereby negative reviews tend to be written more quickly after a stay compared to positive reviews.

Research Gaps

Despite the substantial insights provided by existing literature on hotel online reviews, several research gaps remain. First, most studies adopt quantitative approaches employing text mining techniques or automated sentiment analysis, which, according to Tussyadiah and Zach (2017), are limited in their ability to capture contextual nuances and the deeper meanings of guest experiences. Second, systematic comparative studies that examine the drivers of positive

and negative reviews within a single integrated framework remain scarce. Third, the geographical context of existing research is dominated by Western and East Asian settings, while studies focusing on Indonesia—particularly secondary cities such as Semarang—are still limited.

Lu and Stepchenkova (2015) emphasize the importance of contextual sensitivity in online review research, as cultural differences and tourist expectations can significantly influence review patterns. Marine-Roig and Clavé (2015) support this argument by demonstrating substantial variation in review themes based on destination characteristics. Therefore, a qualitative study that deeply explores the drivers of positive and negative reviews within the specific context of Semarang has the potential to address these gaps and provide meaningful theoretical and practical contributions.

3. Method

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a qualitative content analysis design. This approach was selected due to its capacity to explore meanings, contexts, and patterns embedded in textual data in depth. According to Schreier (2012), qualitative content analysis is a systematic and flexible method for describing the meaning of qualitative data through processes of coding and categorization. Creswell and Poth (2018) further assert that qualitative approaches are particularly well suited for research aiming to understand phenomena from participants' perspectives within their natural contexts.

An interpretivist paradigm serves as the philosophical foundation of this study, wherein reality is viewed as a social construction that can be understood through the interpretation of individuals' subjective experiences. In the context of online reviews, each review represents an articulation of a hotel stay experience that is uniquely constructed and interpreted by each guest.

Conceptual Research Model

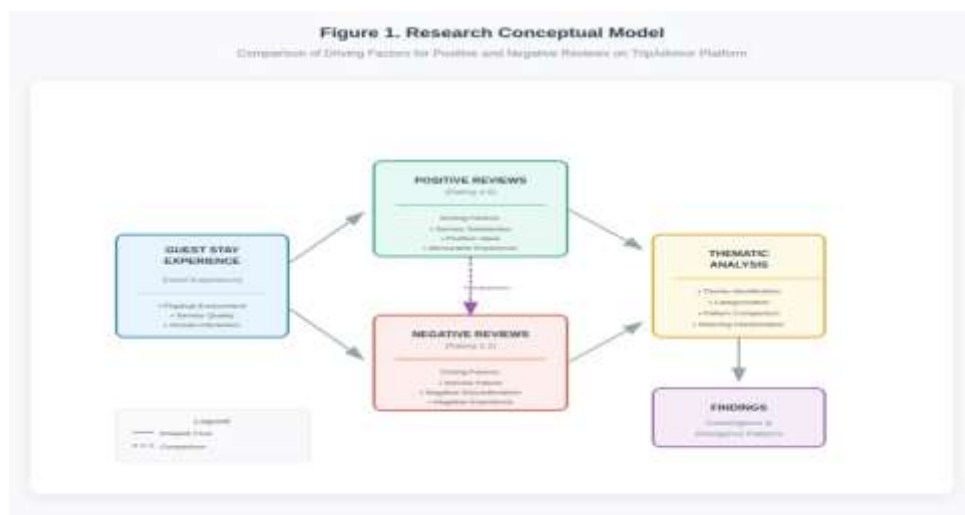The conceptual model of this study is presented as follows:

Figure 1. Research Conceptual Model.

Data Sources and Data Collection Techniques

The primary data for this study were obtained from guest reviews on the TripAdvisor platform for hotels located in the city of Semarang. TripAdvisor was selected due to its position as a leading travel review platform, offering a substantial volume of data and high accessibility for research purposes. Xiang et al. (2017) confirm that TripAdvisor provides rich and representative user-generated content suitable for the analysis of tourist experiences.

A purposive sampling technique was applied in selecting the reviews based on the following criteria: (1) the reviews were written in Indonesian or English; (2) the reviews contained a minimum of 50 words of textual content to ensure sufficient informational depth; (3) the reviews were published within the 2020–2024 period; and (4) the reviews included explicit

descriptions of the hotel stay experience. Patton (2015) emphasizes that purposive sampling enables researchers to select information-rich cases for in-depth study.

The number of reviews collected followed the principle of theoretical saturation, whereby data collection was discontinued when no new themes or categories emerged. Guest et al. (2020) suggest that saturation in thematic analysis studies is typically achieved within a range of 20–30 units of analysis per category. Accordingly, this study targeted a minimum of 100 reviews, consisting of 50 positive reviews (ratings of 4–5) and 50 negative reviews (ratings of 1–2).

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis employed a thematic analysis approach as developed by Braun and Clarke (2019). The analytical procedure was conducted through six systematic stages, as illustrated in Figure 2.

The first stage involved data familiarization, during which the researcher repeatedly read all reviews to gain a holistic understanding of the content. The second stage entailed the generation of initial codes by identifying meaning units within each review that were relevant to the research questions. Nowell et al. (2017) emphasize the importance of researcher openness to codes that emerge inductively from the data.

The third stage consisted of searching for themes, whereby the identified codes were grouped based on conceptual similarities to form potential themes. The fourth stage involved reviewing the themes to ensure internal coherence and clear differentiation between themes. The fifth stage focused on defining and naming the themes precisely, while the sixth stage involved writing the analytical report.

A systematic comparative process was conducted by comparing themes emerging from positive and negative reviews to identify patterns of convergence and divergence. This comparison utilized an analytical matrix that facilitated the identification of both universal factors and factors specific to each review valence.
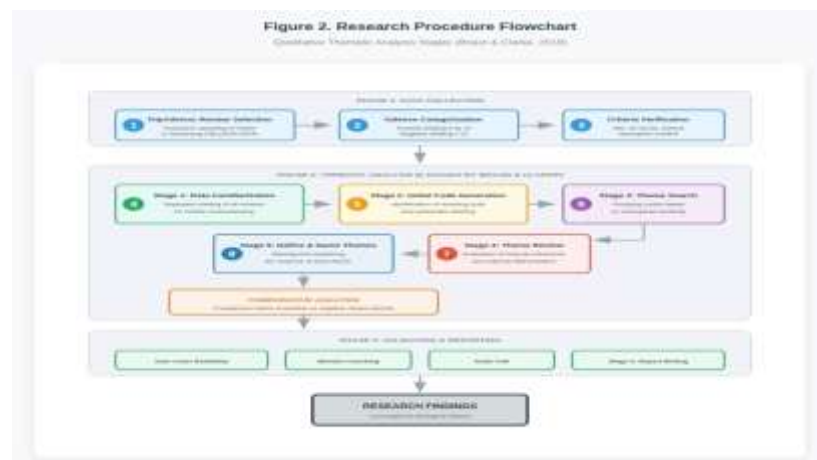

Figure 2. Research Procedure Flowchart.

Validity and Reliability

The quality of this qualitative study was ensured through the application of trustworthiness criteria, encompassing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Lincoln and Guba (2013) assert that these criteria constitute standards of rigor in qualitative research.

Credibility was achieved through prolonged engagement with the data and investigator triangulation, in which two independent researchers conducted separate coding processes and subsequently compared their results. Inter-coder reliability was calculated using Cohen's Kappa, with a target minimum value of 0.70, indicating substantial agreement. Transferability was ensured through thick description, enabling readers to assess the applicability of the findings to other contexts. Dependability was maintained through the documentation of an audit trail that recorded all methodological decisions, while confirmability was achieved through researcher reflexivity documented in analytic memos.

Ethical Considerations

This study utilized publicly available data from the TripAdvisor platform. Nevertheless, ethical principles were upheld through the anonymization of reviewer identities and hotel names in the reporting of findings to protect privacy. Townsend and Wallace (2016) emphasize the importance of ethical considerations in research utilizing social media data, even when such data are publicly accessible.

4. Results and Discussion

This study analyzed a total of 127 reviews obtained from the TripAdvisor platform, representing 15 star-rated hotels in the city of Semarang. The dataset consisted of 64 positive reviews (ratings of 4–5) and 63 negative reviews (ratings of 1–2) published between 2020 and 2024. The thematic analysis reached data saturation at the 112th review; however, data collection was extended to 127 reviews to ensure category saturation. The inter-coder reliability score achieved a Cohen's Kappa value of 0.78, indicating substantial agreement between two independent researchers during the coding process.

Table 1. Hotel Reviews.

Hotel Category	Positive Reviews	Negative Reviews	Total
Five-star	18	12	30
Four-star	24	21	45
Three-star	22	30	52
Total	**64**	**63**	**127**

Drivers of Positive Reviews

The thematic analysis of 64 positive reviews identified five main themes that drive guests to post positive reviews on the TripAdvisor platform. Table 2 summarizes these themes along with their frequencies of occurrence.

Table 2. Themes Driving Positive Reviews.

No.	Main Theme	Sub-themes	Frequency	Percentage
1	Staff Service Quality	Friendliness, responsiveness, professionalism	58	90.6%
2	Cleanliness and Comfort	Room cleanliness, bed comfort, tranquil atmosphere	52	81.3%
3	Perceived Value	Price–quality congruence, adequate facilities	41	64.1%
4	Strategic Location	Accessibility, proximity to destinations	38	59.4%
5	Culinary Experience	Breakfast quality, menu variety, food taste	34	53.1%

Staff service quality emerged as the most dominant driver of positive reviews, with a frequency of 90.6%. Guests consistently articulated appreciation for positive interactions with hotel staff through expressions such as "the staff were very friendly and helpful," "fast and professional service," and "a warm welcome." The human interaction dimension thus proved to be a crucial element motivating guests to share positive experiences.

Cleanliness and comfort ranked second, with a frequency of 81.3%. Positive reviews frequently emphasized clean room conditions, comfortable beds, and an atmosphere conducive

to rest. Expressions such as "the room was clean and fragrant," "the bed was very comfortable," and "I slept soundly" were commonly found.

Drivers of Negative Reviews

The analysis of 63 negative reviews identified five main themes driving guests to post negative feedback. These findings are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Themes Driving Negative Reviews.

No.	Main Theme	Sub-themes	Frequency	Percentage
1	Facility Failures	Broken air conditioning, no hot water, slow Wi-Fi	51	81.0%
2	Expectation–Reality Mismatch	Photos not reflecting reality, misleading descriptions	47	74.6%
3	Cleanliness Deficiencies	Dirty rooms, unpleasant odors, stained linens	44	69.8%
4	Poor Service Quality	Unresponsive staff, unfriendly attitudes	39	61.9%
5	Noise Disturbances	External noise, thin walls, construction noise	28	44.4%

Facility failures dominated negative reviews, with a frequency of 81.0%. Guests expressed dissatisfaction with malfunctioning in-room equipment such as ineffective air conditioning, non-functioning hot water, and poor Wi-Fi connectivity. Frustrated expressions such as "the AC was completely broken," "there was no hot water at all," and "the Wi-Fi was extremely slow and unusable for work" reflect the significant impact of facility failures on the stay experience.

The expectation–reality mismatch theme, with a frequency of 74.6%, highlights the importance of accurate hotel representations on online platforms. Guests frequently compared actual conditions with photos or descriptions displayed on TripAdvisor, and discrepancies triggered strong negative responses.

Comparative Analysis of Review Drivers

A systematic comparison between the drivers of positive and negative reviews revealed notable patterns of convergence and divergence. Table 4 presents a comparative matrix of both review categories.

Table 4. Comparative Matrix of Drivers of Positive and Negative Reviews.

Dimension	Positive Reviews	Negative Reviews	Pattern
Staff Service	Friendly, highly responsive staff	Unfriendly, slow responses	Convergent (mirror)

Dimension	Positive Reviews	Negative Reviews	Pattern
Cleanliness	Clean, fresh-smelling rooms	Dirty, unpleasant-smelling rooms	Convergent (mirror)
Facilities	Complete, well-functioning facilities	Broken, non-functioning facilities	Convergent (mirror)
Expectations	Exceeded expectations	Far below expectations	Convergent (mirror)
Location	Strategic, accessible	–	Divergent (positive only)
Culinary	Tasty, varied breakfast	–	Divergent (positive only)
Noise	–	Noise disturbances, lack of tranquility	Divergent (negative only)

The analysis identified four dimensions exhibiting convergent (mirror) patterns, where the same factors drive positive reviews when performance is strong and negative reviews when performance is poor. These dimensions include staff service, cleanliness, facilities, and expectation fulfillment. This pattern suggests that these dimensions function as *hygiene factors*—they must be adequately fulfilled to prevent dissatisfaction and can become sources of satisfaction when delivered at an excellent level.

In contrast, three dimensions demonstrated divergent patterns. Strategic location and culinary experience tended to be mentioned only in positive reviews as value-adding attributes and rarely appeared as primary complaints in negative reviews. Conversely, noise issues emerged exclusively in negative reviews, indicating that tranquility is a basic expectation that is seldom acknowledged when fulfilled but triggers strong negative reactions when disrupted.

5. Dissucion
Dominance of Human Interaction in Positive Reviews

The finding that staff service quality constitutes the most dominant driver of positive reviews corroborates theoretical propositions regarding the centrality of human interaction in the hospitality industry. Walls et al. (2011) emphasize that human interaction is a fundamental dimension shaping the hotel experience. In the context of the city of Semarang, the friendliness and warmth demonstrated by hotel staff appear to be highly valued by guests and serve as a strong motivation for sharing positive experiences.

This finding is consistent with the study by Xu and Li (2016), which identified service quality as the primary predictor of positive sentiment in hotel reviews. Furthermore, Torres et al. (2014) found that personal interactions with staff that exceed expectations can generate customer delight, which in turn stimulates advocacy behaviors, including the posting of positive reviews. The emotional dimension of staff–guest interaction thus emerges as a significant differentiating element in creating memorable stay experiences.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings can be explained through the service-dominant logic proposed by Vargo and Lusch (2016), which posits that value is co-created through interactions between service providers and customers. Hotel staff function as value co-creators who actively shape guests' perceptions of the overall stay experience.

Facility Failures as the Primary Trigger of Negative Reviews

The dominance of facility failure themes in negative reviews indicates that functional aspects of hotels constitute critical hygiene factors. Herzberg's two-factor theory, as adapted to the hospitality context by Albayrak and Caber (2015), suggests that certain factors do not generate satisfaction when present but cause strong dissatisfaction when absent or when they fail.

This finding aligns with the study by Li et al. (2020), which revealed that malfunctions of basic facilities such as air conditioning, hot water, and Wi-Fi are among the most common complaints in negative hotel reviews. In the era of digital connectivity, slow or non-functioning Wi-Fi exerts a particularly significant impact on guest satisfaction, especially for business travelers. Berezina et al. (2016) confirm that in-room technology has become a basic expectation of modern hotel guests.

The practical implication of this finding is the critical importance of preventive maintenance and rapid responses to facility failures. Sparks and Browning (2011) emphasize that service failures that are not handled effectively increase the likelihood of negative reviews and intensify their negative valence.

Asymmetric Patterns in Expectations and Responses

The findings regarding divergent patterns in the drivers of positive and negative reviews reveal intriguing asymmetrical dynamics. Strategic location and culinary experiences tend to be appreciated as bonuses in positive reviews but rarely emerge as primary sources of complaint. This phenomenon is consistent with prospect theory proposed by Kahneman and Tversky, which posits that individuals process gains and losses differently.

Park and Nicolau (2015) found that negative reviews exert a greater asymmetric impact on consumer decision-making than positive reviews of an equivalent volume. The present study corroborates this pattern by demonstrating that negative reviews tend to be longer and more emotionally charged, indicating stronger motivation to articulate unfavorable experiences.

The exclusive emergence of noise-related issues in negative reviews can be explained through the concept of taken-for-granted expectations proposed by Zeithaml et al. (2018). Tranquility represents an implicit expectation that remains unnoticed when fulfilled but triggers strong negative reactions when disrupted.

Expectation Disconfirmation and Managerial Implications

The high frequency of expectation–reality mismatch themes in negative reviews underscores the importance of expectation management in the digital era. Oliver (2014) asserts that negative disconfirmation—when actual performance falls below expectations—constitutes a primary antecedent of dissatisfaction. In the context of online platforms, hotel-provided photos and descriptions shape pre-arrival expectations that serve as benchmarks for evaluation.

This finding is consistent with Filieri et al. (2021), who found that information accuracy is a critical determinant of platform credibility. Hotels that present misleading visual or descriptive representations not only disappoint individual guests but also erode trust in the platform as a whole.

Kim et al. (2020) recommend a realistic service preview strategy, whereby hotels provide accurate and even conservative representations to manage guest expectations. Such an approach can reduce negative disconfirmation and increase the likelihood of positive disconfirmation that fosters favorable reviews.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, this study confirms the applicability of expectancy-disconfirmation theory in the context of hotel online reviews, enriched by specific contextual nuances. The identified convergent and divergent patterns enhance understanding of the complexity of factors shaping online review behavior. The findings also support the multidimensional conceptualization of hotel experiences proposed by Kandampully et al. (2015).

Practically, the study offers guidance for hotel management in the city of Semarang regarding the prioritization of investments and managerial attention. Developing staff competencies in delivering friendly and responsive service, ensuring consistent facility maintenance, and managing expectations accurately emerge as key strategies for enhancing positive reviews and minimizing negative ones.

Furthermore, insights into the textual characteristics of negative reviews—which tend to be longer and more emotionally intense—can inform the development of effective review monitoring systems. Xie et al. (2017) found that prompt and empathetic managerial responses to negative reviews can mitigate adverse effects and even positively reshape guest perceptions.

6. Conclusion

This study successfully identified and compared the drivers of positive and negative reviews on the TripAdvisor platform within the context of hotels in the city of Semarang. The thematic analysis of 127 reviews revealed five principal themes for each review category. Positive reviews were predominantly driven by staff service quality (90.6%), cleanliness and comfort (81.3%), perceived value (64.1%), strategic location (59.4%), and culinary experience (53.1%). In contrast, negative reviews were primarily triggered by facility failures (81.0%), expectation–reality mismatch (74.6%), cleanliness deficiencies (69.8%), poor service quality (61.9%), and noise-related issues (44.4%).

The comparative findings reveal a convergent pattern across four dimensions—staff service, cleanliness, facilities, and expectations—which function as drivers of both positive and negative reviews depending on performance conditions. Divergent patterns were identified in strategic location and culinary experience, which appeared exclusively in positive reviews, and noise issues, which emerged solely in negative reviews. These findings confirm the applicability of expectancy-disconfirmation theory and enrich the understanding of asymmetric dynamics in online review behavior.

The practical implications of this study provide strategic guidance for hotel management in prioritizing staff competency development, preventive facility maintenance, and accurate expectation management through honest visual and descriptive representations. Theoretically, this research contributes to the electronic word-of-mouth literature by offering empirical evidence of convergent–divergent patterns in review drivers within the context of a secondary destination in Indonesia.

The limitations of this study include its geographic focus on the city of Semarang, which constrains the generalizability of the findings, and the reliance on secondary data, which precludes deeper exploration of underlying motivations through direct interaction with reviewers. Future research is encouraged to adopt mixed-methods approaches incorporating in-depth interviews with hotel guests, expand the geographic scope to other destinations, and examine the influence of demographic characteristics and travel types on online review patterns.

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