

Post-Encounter Tourism Experience in Saudi Arabia : Sentiment Analysis of Online Reviews

*Tasneem Alsaati*¹

Abstract

Purpose : The purpose of this research was to identify the key themes present in the consumer online reviews for carefully selected sites in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, to highlight the key aspects that tourists and visitors experience and express at the post-encounter stage of their tourism experience, and the factors they relied on when they evaluated their experience.

Design/Methodology/Approach : This research applied the approach of sentiment analysis to online review text extracted from Google Maps for the top tourism sites in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. In this study, the top 1,000 high-rated and low-rated reviews for each tourism site were extracted and analyzed descriptively by using the NVIVO software.

Findings : The results revealed five themes present in both high and low-rated reviews, namely consumer experience, service elements, location, consumer characteristics, and future intentions.

Managerial Implications : Managers would be able to develop effective strategies to leverage the positive impacts of online reviews, the business outcomes, and to help tourism site managers in allocating resources to improve ratings and tourists' comments.

Originality/Value : As consumers increasingly rely on online resources to formulate their purchase decisions, researchers and marketers need to understand the consumer experience expressed through consumer-generated content (online reviews). Given the growing attention towards tourism in Saudi Arabia, the issuance of tourism visas, and the race to accomplish the agenda of the Saudi Vision 2030, it becomes highly important to carefully assess the consumer experiences in this domain.

Keywords : sentiment analysis, online reviews, Riyadh, tourism, consumer experience, consumer-generated content

Paper Submission Date : July 25, 2024 ; **Paper sent back for Revision :** February 12, 2025 ; **Paper Acceptance Date :** May 15, 2025 ; **Paper Published Online :** June 15, 2025

Sentiment analysis for online consumer-generated content has become an attractive area of consumer behavior research, especially with the complexity of customer experience management. Scholars from all around the world have contributed to this field within different domains such as hospitality, services, tourism, the food and beverage industry, retail, e-commerce, etc. In the past, consumers played a passive role, engaging limitedly with each other and with little co-creation of marketing content with businesses (Yadav et al., 2023). With the boom of digital transformation such as electronic channels, review sites, online communities, and other e-channels, consumers are now empowered to interact with businesses through multiple channels and across the stages of the consumer journey including pre-consumption, during-consumption, and post-consumption (Blut et al., 2023; Kumar & Jain, 2024; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Sharief & Panghal, 2023). Additionally, from a risk prevention perspective, online reviews affect behavioral intentions (Yadav et al., 2024) and are confirmed to impact business performance (Nieto et al., 2014), which indicates the demand for further analysis. Moreover, research on the different types of engagement platforms and their impact on consumer behaviour is limited (Blut et al., 2023; Breidbach & Brodie, 2017; Leipämaa-Leskinen et al., 2022; Mahajan

¹ *Ph.D. Candidate*, King Saud University, P.O. Box 22480 Riyadh 11495, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
(Email : tasneemalsaati@gmail.com) ; ORCID iD : <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7900-5597>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.17010/ijom/2025/v55/i6/175110>

et al., 2023; Sharma et al., 2023). In that sense, the purpose of this paper is to identify the key themes extracted from high and low-rated online reviews posted on Google Maps about the consumer-generated content of top tourism sites in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Literature Review

Consumer Reviews and Co-Creation

The past decade has witnessed a growth of customer engagement concepts within marketing and consumer research (Hollebeek et al., 2022). Bredibach and Brodie (2017) defined consumer engagement platforms as the physical and virtual touchpoints, arenas, or places within service ecosystems where engagement behaviours are realised. Such virtual engagement was proven to have different weights in predicting outcomes of engagement (Blut et al., 2023), to have improved customer engagement behaviors with other customers (Carlson et al., 2019), and to drive customer-to-customer engagement, especially within social media contexts (Arora et al., 2025; Unnava & Aravindakshan, 2021). Social media has widely affected the ways consumers search for information, while also impacting their purchasing intentions and experiences (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). In addition, it has empowered consumers to share their experiences and other information in a timely and convenient manner with other users (Liu et al., 2013).

Consumer-generated reviews were considered a very powerful source, given their great effect on other consumers that impacts their decision-making (Heo & Bae, 2020). Consumer reviews can take the form of descriptive words about a product or experience, ratings, photos, and videos, including feedback (Pham et al., 2023). Previous work has investigated the impact of these reviews in the hospitality industry and confirmed their impact on consumer decision-making, being a major source of information to customers (Cheng & Loi, 2014; Sparks et al., 2013). Another study by Xie et al. (2014) reported that 77% of consumers referred to online reviews before choosing a hospitality destination, and 53% did not commit to a hotel reservation until they had checked its online reviews.

Online Review Characteristics and Direction

The term “4Vs” was first introduced by Maeyer (2012), representing the fundamental evaluation features of consumer-generated online reviews. The 4Vs are the valence, variance, volume, and verbal features. Valence represents the level of consumer satisfaction and their evaluation through review ratings, which is also an indicator of their enjoyment of the experience. Valence usually follows the five-star scale, where five stars are a signal of an excellent experience, and one star signals a poor experience. Variation is the standard deviation from the average of that rating and represents the level of dissatisfied consumer reviews. Volume measures the number of consumer reviews, signaling the exposure and popularity of a product or service on social media platforms. The verbal feature is the actual written text and the content of the review, and it usually represents the reviewer's opinion, feedback, experience, and reasons for the rating (Maeyer, 2012; Xie et al., 2014; Zhu & Zhang, 2010).

Previous literature studied the phenomenon of consumers' attitudes toward online reviews and found that as the volume of reviews increases, consumers' intentions for booking and their preferences increase too (Vogel et al., 2014). Other consumers perceived such lengthy reviews as an aid to their choice, with the trust element present (Filieri, 2015; Sparks et al., 2013). In support of the uncertainty reduction theory by Daft and Lengel (1986), which states that communication can reduce uncertainty between two strangers, online reviews have been evident to alleviate uncertainty about products and destinations that consumers intend to visit or consume and aid their decision-making. As presented by Kwok et al. (2017), such decision-making outcomes

include booking intentions (Mauri & Minazzi, 2013; Tsao et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2015), attitudes (Ayeh et al., 2013; Sparks et al., 2013), and their experiences as well (Fu et al., 2015; Pantelidis, 2010; Wang et al., 2015).

The direction of consumer-generated content such as online reviews being positive or negative has an impact on consumers' perceptions and perceived usefulness; consumers perceived reviews with extreme ratings such as being positive or negative as highly useful and more enjoyable compared to the reviews with moderate ratings (Liu & Park, 2015; Park & Nicolau, 2015). Further, perceived usefulness and perceived credibility affect consumers' perceptions of the importance of online reviews (Othayoth & Khanna, 2024; Pham et al., 2023). Previous research with in-depth qualitative analysis had identified the popular keywords used in positive or negative reviews (Stringam & Gerdes Jr., 2010). Further, positive online reviews were found to be positively related to consumer trust, while negative reviews promoted risk perceptions, leading to decreased behavioural intentions (Rachmiani et al., 2024; Su et al., 2021).

Sentiment Analysis

Sentiment analysis is a research field that analyzes people's opinions, sentiments, attitudes, and emotions from written language (Liu, 2012). Previous literature is rich in sentiment analysis approaches; Lau et al. (2009) proposed a mechanism of ontology extraction to acquire sentimental knowledge about products offered on Amazon.com utilizing a keyword classifier to identify the direction of reviews (positive or negative). Some other techniques use lexicons to calculate the sentiment polarity in a text, especially the dictionary-based techniques and are considered limited in their ability to analyze the text within the context to grasp truthful meanings (Baccianella et al., 2010). Some features, such as verbal evaluation, allow consumers to interpret the review content in a way that creates better awareness and develops perceptions toward the item being reviewed. Thus, researchers followed this approach by analyzing the reviews using three tactics: the use of word count as a variable in a quantitative analysis; the comparison of different types of verbal features in an experimental design; and the application of content analysis or big data analysis techniques to gain a better understanding of travelers (Kwok et al., 2017; Sharma & Panda, 2025).

Liu et al. (2013) applied the approach of sentiment analysis to identify specific keywords within the content of online reviews that represent customer expectations. Similarly, guest satisfaction with loyalty program keywords was marked (Berezan et al., 2013). Kim and Lehto (2012) contributed to this literature by identifying the keywords for the dimensions of service failure issues. Further, tourist experiences of a specific destination and their intentions for revisiting or referrals were assigned to identifying keywords within similar contexts (Cong et al., 2014; Fu et al., 2015; Patwal et al., 2024; Wu et al., 2014).

Methodology

This study employed qualitative research methods that focused on consumer sentiment analysis using a thematic review. The sample framework is justified because the reviews come from tourist destinations. The study's goal was to gain insights into visitor views and site-specific ratings by examining publicly available comments from a wide sample of respondents. Tourism reviews for eight attractions in Riyadh were analyzed using a sample approach. Initial analysis was conducted on Google Trends to assess the volume of searches on top destinations of Saudi Arabian cities, including Riyadh, Jeddah, Makkah, Medina, AlUla, Alkhobar, Neom, and Abha. With this analysis period covering the last year (February 2023 to February 2024), Riyadh scored the highest. The Riyadh Region is where the capital of Saudi Arabia, with a population of 8.6 million, far exceeds the Western Region at 8 million, and the Eastern Region at 5.1 million (General Authority for Statistics, 2025).

Additionally, Riyadh has flourished significantly over the past five years, serving as the heart of Saudi Arabia.

It hosts the Riyadh Season, functions as the center of the economy of the Kingdom, along with the announcement of tourist visas in 2019 (Ministry of Tourism in Saudi Arabia, 2023) and is due to the most recent nomination to host Riyadh Expo 2030 (Riyadh Expo 2030, 2023). According to the Saudi Tourism Authority (2025), Riyadh provides a diverse range of attractions that combine history, culture, and modernity. From the exotic exhibitions at Riyadh Zoo Monument to the vibrant energy of Boulevard City, there is something for everyone. King Abdullah Park offers tranquillity, whereas the Kingdom Centre and Al Faisaliah Tower offer luxury and stunning vistas. The National Museum and Al Masmak Palace Museum reflect Saudi Arabia's legacy, while Bujairi Terrace offers great cuisine and a picturesque setting. Together, these sites represent Riyadh's vibrant soul.

Previous studies have analyzed consumer online reviews on different tourism sites or in a single location. Levy et al. (2012) conducted their research on a specific market in Washington DC, USA. Our study followed a similar approach by focusing on the tourist sites within Riyadh city in Saudi Arabia. In previous literature, as covered in one key study by Kwok et al. (2017), the authors analyzed 67 research articles about online reviews following a systematic review. Among the summarized findings were the methodologies applied for each paper. The sample range of online reviews was 40 online reviews at a minimum (Mkono, 2012), and ranged to 118,300 at maximum (Li et al., 2015) ; whereas, the smaller sample utilized qualitative-oriented approaches, and the larger samples utilized more statistical/quantitative approaches. In our research, we are targeting a flexible number, given the qualitative nature of this sampling step. Each of the tourism destinations identified was recruited for reviews until all suggested themes were saturated. The recruitment approach is led by the findings of Lee et al. (2012), Liu and Park (2015), and Park and Nicolau (2015), who highlighted the positive effect of ratings on consumers' perceived usefulness of online reviews, with emphasis on the reviews of high and low extremes being more useful and enjoyable.

In recent literature, similar research conducted to analyze online reviews relied on either Google Maps (Lee & Son, 2021; Shin et al., 2022; So & Shin, 2020) or Trip Advisor (Fong et al., 2017; O'Connor, 2008; Rishi & Gaur, 2012; Tung & Au, 2018). With the identification of review platforms, both platforms were scanned for top tourist sites and destinations in Riyadh, covering only sites with reviews over 2,000. Another exclusion criterion is the availability of sites all year long, not subjectively during certain seasons only. Given the results of this initial scan, as illustrated in Table 1, Google Maps was chosen as the platform of inquiry for this study. The source for all data used in this study was obtained from publicly available information on the Google Maps website. Initial analysis of review posts identified the rating of the site, whether the review post had photos included, the direction of the review, whether positive or negative, keywords, and future intention indications. Following this preliminary step, a thematic analysis will be conducted using NVIVO V.14 software to identify major themes and thoroughly

Table 1. Comparison Between Google Maps and TripAdvisor Data on February 10, 2024

	Site	Google Maps		TripAdvisor	
		Reviews	Rating	Reviews	Rating
1	Riyadh Zoo Monument	39,286	4.2	600	3.5
2	Boulevard City	37,349	4.5	28	4.5
3	King Abdullah Park	36,777	4.3	408	4.5
4	Kingdom Centre	25,269	4.4	1,907	4.5
5	The National Museum	13,693	4.5	711	4.5
6	Bujairi Terrace	5,913	4.6	304	4.5
7	Al Masmak Palace Museum	4,134	4.5	654	4.5
8	Al Faisaliah Tower	2,729	4.6	662	4

Source : Author's Compilation using online data scraping solution tool, Outscraper.

interpret customer reviews of tourist sites in Riyadh. All online reviews for the eight identified tourism sites in Riyadh city were extracted on February 10, 2024, from Google Maps using an online data scraping solution tool, namely Outscraper, and are mentioned in Table 1. Utilizing this tool, the data was requested for each site to cover the top 1,000 highly rated reviews, and then the lowest 1,000 rated reviews for the same site.

In the following step, data was cleaned to remove reviews that were duplicates, and listed as low-rated reviews while holding 4 and 5 stars (this is due to the function of auto selection for the lowest rated, while the site did not hold up to 1,000 reviews that were low-rated). All reviews were then exported into two separate projects in NVIVO, one for the highest-rated (positive) and the lowest-rated (negative). For the positive, 8,000 reviews were analyzed in NVivo utilizing the word frequency function, with the selection criteria for words to be displayed to include all and grouping the words with stemmed words. Similarly, the same approach was applied for negative reviews; however, after data cleaning, the number of negative reviews to be analyzed was down to 6,327 reviews, and this is due to the limitation of availability for negative reviews of 3-star rated and below for some of the tourist destinations.

After running the word frequency query for both directions (the high-rated and low-rated reviews separately), codes were created to group keywords into their themes. This was a manual task conducted by the frequency query first, followed by thoroughly reading the references coding for each word to ensure relatability to the theme within the context of a review. The results for high-rated reviews word frequency query exceeded 14,000 words, while those for the low-rated reviews exceeded 19,000 words. Thus, query results were scanned to include words in the thematic grouping only for those who recorded a frequency of 30 and above (high-rated at 704 words, and low-rated at 604). The thematic analysis followed the inductive approach, where we allowed data to determine the themes based on the review findings (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

Analysis and Results

Initial descriptive analysis was conducted on the data, where it was statistically analyzed for total review count, Arabic language usage, photo inclusion, the number of author reviews, the reviews with no text, and the use of emoticons in reviews (Table 2). In Table 2, the review count for high-rated reviews is higher than for low-rated reviews due to the non-availability of low reviews of 3 stars and below ratings that reach the count of 1,000 reviews. High-rated reviews included a greater number of photos attached to the review at 40.5% compared to low-rated reviews at 12%, similarly with the text content and the use of emoticons in reviews. This is naturally evident and is witnessed in previous literature; satisfied consumers will tend to supplement their feedback and generously share their experiences (Khan et al., 2023; Xiang et al., 2015). The author's reviews count means the

Table 2. Initial Descriptive Analysis Based on Criteria

Criteria	High-Rated Reviews	Low-Rated Reviews
Reviews Count	8,000 at 5 stars	6,327 at 3 stars and below
Review Includes Photos	3,242 (40.5%)	768 (12%)
Author Reviews Count	44.5K	15K
	2,876 over 100 reviews (35.9%)	773 over 100 reviews (12.2%)
Reviews Written in Arabic	1,520 (19%)	3,656 (57.7%)
Reviews with No Text	259 (3.2%)	1,796 (28.3)
Emoticons Use	41 (0.5%)	19 (0.3%)

Source : Author's Compilation using NVIVO Software.

number of reviews each reviewer has generated on the platform. The volume of high-rated reviews is nearly three times that of low-rated reviews.

Among high-rated reviews, 2,876 authors have written over 100 reviews, compared to 773 authors in the low-rated category. The number of reviews by authors on online review sites is an indicator of user activity and location popularity, where consumers find it an element of reviewer credibility (Maeyer, 2012; Xie et al., 2014). As for the language of reviews written, a greater number of reviews (at 57.7%) were written in Arabic (the native language in Saudi Arabia) when consumers were dissatisfied compared to the percentage in high-rated reviews, and this is due to their emotional state at the time of writing the review, while satisfied consumers take the effort to deliver a review in English, one that is representable and dedicated to all potential readers and consumers.

In analyzing the high-rated reviews, a total of five themes emerged. All themes, their relative codes, words associated with the codes, and the count of words for each of them with totals and percentages for high-rated reviews are presented in Table 3. All five themes were ranked based on the total number of keywords identified within the theme itself.

The first theme is consumer experience. Consumer experience has been a widely identified theme within previous literature (Ayeh et al., 2013; Browning et al., 2013; Goo et al., 2022; Mauri & Minazzi, 2013; Tsao et al., 2015). In the findings, the consumer experience theme recognizes a total of six codes within including: (a) activities that consumers engage in during their tourism visit such as eating, drinking, dancing, walking, riding, playing, taking photos, etc.; (b) description of the consumer experience including their expressions about the experience being a beautiful, memorable one, unique, excellent, different, of high quality, etc.; (c) the emotions consumers feel such as being happy, relaxed, feelings, love and liking, enjoying, fun, thankful, comfortable, etc.; (d) consumers' expectations of the tourist visit like having high expectations, being impressed, surprised, wowed, or the experience going beyond expectations, etc.; (e) description of the servicescape atmosphere such as it being quiet, peaceful, calm, the ambiance, the vibes, etc.; and (f) the consumers' time orientation including a description of the experience related to the time of experience or expressing the element of time spent at the experience such as second, minute, hour, day, month, morning, evening, summer, winter, Sunday, Monday, night, now, past, etc. All identified themes with their codes and keywords are illustrated in Appendix 1. The appendices may be made available to interested researchers upon request directly from the author.

The second theme is the location, which is also a common theme that has been identified in research as one of the elements that consumers write about in their reviews (Kim & Yoo, 2021; Rishi & Gaur, 2012; Tao et al., 2022). This theme involved a total of six codes that include: (a) a description of the location visited such as describing the decorations, colors, space, architecture, size, design, etc.; (b) the facilities of the location including shops, restaurants, cafes, etc.; (c) elements of maintenance such as maintaining the location clean and tidy, (d) referring to natural elements such as the green landscape, trees, water, birds, lakes, etc.; (e) referring to weather at the time of visit such as it being sunny, cold, hot, etc.; and (f) text related to the site being visited and the mentioning of the site's name specifically.

The third theme is the service elements, a widely present theme in research studying service reviews (Browning et al., 2013; Liu & Park, 2015; Wang et al., 2015; Yu, 2020). This theme yielded six relative codes: (a) ease of use dimension reflecting accessibility, ease of directions, availability of parking, entrance arrangements, etc.; (b) employees' encounter and description during the experience such as their behaviors being welcoming, attentive, helpful, knowledgeable, etc.; (c) the information dimension illustrating elements such as information being shared on website, maps, how consumers learn about business details, etc.; (d) financials representing all service elements related to payments such as pricing, tickets, fees, currency, expressions of value, etc.; (e) process including the service elements related to performing the service and steps needed such as reservations, booking, availability of options and variety, etc.; and (f) the working hours of the tourism site including codes of working hours and being open or closed.

Table 3. Analysis Results of High-Rated Reviews

Rank	Themes	Codes	Words	Count	Total Keywords Identified Within Theme	Percentage
1	Consumer Experience	Activity	21	2,398	20,288	36.49%
		Description	36	13,389		
		Emotions	16	3,065		
		Expectations	6	597		
		Servicescape Atmosphere	9	839		
		Time Orientation	21	3,578		
2	Location	Description	54	11,372	20,195	36.32%
		Facilities	10	3,128		
		Maintenance	5	973		
		Nature	7	622		
		Weather	8	675		
		Site	15	3,425		
3	Service Elements	Ease of Use	9	2,576	7,917	14.24%
		Employees	13	1,075		
		Information	6	656		
		Financials	18	2,333		
		Process	7	869		
		Working Hours	2	408		
4	Future Intention	Future Intention	15	15	4,385	7.88%
5	Consumers' Characteristics	Demographics	15	3,753	2,810	5.05%
		Geographic	17	4,900		
		Religion	6	666		
		Total			55,595	100%

The fourth theme is the future intentions toward tourism sites. Previous work has explored the themes resulting from content analysis of consumer reviews, highlighting the verbiage of future intention within such content (Goo et al., 2022; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Mude & Saha, 2025). This theme yielded only one code of future intentions, covering 15 keywords including the expressions of visiting again, coming, wanting to, recommending, wishing, advising, considering, and so on.

The fifth and last theme is consumer characteristics, which have also been covered in prior studies (Ayeh et al., 2013; Phillips et al., 2019). This theme covers three codes as identified from the analysis: (a) demographics include describing the demographics of other consumers present at the reviewer experience such as males, females, elderly, young, family, child, etc.; (b) geographic includes any vocabulary expressing the names of country, region, city, nationality, language and are related to that specific geographic region such as Riyadh, KSA, Saudis, Arabic, etc.; and (c) religion includes the words that were used in phrases related to religion such as a mention of God or prayers, examples include the use of the words Allah, God, Islamic, Mosque, etc. Table 3 shows that consumer experience and location dominate high-rated reviews, accounting for more than 72% of all terms. This demonstrates their important function in establishing positive impressions. Service elements and future intention have a considerable impact, whereas consumer characteristics make a minor contribution. The emphasis on experiential and locational elements indicates areas for improvement in consumer satisfaction.

Table 4. Analysis Results of Low-Rated Reviews

Rank	Themes	Codes	Words	Count	Total Keywords Identified Within Theme	Percentage
1	Consumer Experience	Activity	19	1,919	12,034	38.72%
		Description	24	4,022		
		Emotions	19	1,207		
		Expectations	9	853		
		Servicescape Atmosphere	7	550		
		Suggestions	13	1,082		
		Time Orientation	21	2,401		
2	Service Elements	Ease of Use	22	3,429	9,554	30.74%
		Employees	8	582		
		Information	10	580		
		Financials	11	2,365		
		Process	10	1,243		
		Working Hours	3	1,355		
2	Location	Description	28	3,022	6,032	19.40%
		Facilities	11	1,071		
		Maintenance	2	201		
		Nature	5	479		
		Weather	5	292		
		Site	8	967		
4	Consumers' Characteristics	Demographics	12	1,362	2,810	9.04%
		Geographic	9	681		
		Religion	6	767		
5	Future Intention	Future Intention	8	8	650	2.10%
		Total			31,080	100%

Similarly, when analyzing the low-rated reviews in Table 4, the same themes have emerged again, however, in different concentrations, ranks, and directions. The consumer experience theme remained the first-ranked theme due to the volume of keywords. However, the second-ranked theme in low-rated reviews was the service elements instead of the location. Further, the fourth-ranked theme in low-rated reviews is consumer characteristics, leaving the future intentions theme last with the least keyword count of 666 words. All five themes yielded the same codes within each of them, except for the consumer experience theme, which yielded an additional code only present in the low-rated reviews analysis, namely, suggestions. Consumer suggestions through online reviews to enhance certain services is a common practice, especially when consumers are not satisfied (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Yin et al., 2016). This code emerging within the consumer experience theme covers a range of suggestions to include, to pay attention, to be more responsible, to allow for, to develop, and other advice.

Additionally, consumer emotions were all expressed in a negative manner, such as the use of the words disgust, shame, did not like, forced, tired, etc. Similarly, the keywords present within the consumer expectations code represent reflections of consumer disappointment. As for the future intention theme in low-rated reviews analysis, consumers expressed their intentions of never going back, never visiting again, not returning, this being the last

time, and other expressions in the same negative direction. All identified themes with their codes and keywords are illustrated in Appendix 2. The appendices may be made available to interested researchers upon request directly from the author.

Conclusion

Consumer experience and satisfaction levels are affected by other consumers' generated content, such as online reviews (Xiang et al., 2015). Particularly for hospitality and tourism businesses, positive online reviews are known to contribute to a firm's performance, especially in the tourism industry (Xie et al., 2014). Our findings yielded five themes present in high-rated and low-rated online reviews: consumer experience, service elements, location, consumer characteristics, and future intention. When consumers are happy and satisfied in the high-rated review scenario, they are more expressive; they will generously provide details about their experience in words, photos, and emoticons, in contrast to their low-rated reviews that will be somewhat expressed by a star-rating review with no other supporting information, as evident in Table 2. Satisfied consumers will take the time to write their reviews with details of their experience, location description, and their future intentions, generously. Opposingly, unsatisfied consumers will not share such a volume but will focus more on their experience at first, followed by their complaints about service elements, highlighting their negative encounters with the business, and with little mention of their intention for future visits. Additionally, unsatisfied consumers tend to suggest ways to improve the business, which is a code that was only present in the low-rated reviews analysis, containing over 1,000 words of content related to suggestions.

Implications

Managerial and Marketing Implications

The findings of this research reveal the main themes of the content consumers generate when providing online reviews of tourism sites in Riyadh. Understanding the value of consumer online-generated reviews is becoming more important in this era of consumers' co-creation role and their active involvement with businesses. These online reviews are perceived as more credible by other consumers than the official tourism websites (Fotis et al., 2012) and are now playing a key role in tourists' decision-making processes (Browning et al., 2013). Over the past two decades, businesses have paid close attention to the customer's demand-side knowledge as it plays a key role in product development and driving revenue (Poetz & Schreier, 2012; Priem, 2007).

Theoretical Implications

The outcome of this study reveals that consumer-perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, social media marketing, and tourism business performance were all deemed significant factors for implementing digital marketing in tourism. So, further research could focus on these areas, which would enhance the theoretical contribution.

Limitations of the Study

This study provides an overview of consumers' experiences with top tourist sites in Riyadh. One of the limitations encountered with this research is that only a set number of positive and negative reviews were extracted and analyzed, while some tourism sites in Riyadh held over 30K reviews, and this was due to time and resource

constraints. Suggestions to overcome this limitation in future analysis are to employ a computerized thematic approach utilizing the new features of AI and machine learning to reveal in-depth analysis and delve into consumers' experiences and different scenarios.

Recommendations for Industry and Future Studies

Marketers need to pay close attention to online reviews to manage an effective customer experience strategy and employ this as a way to differentiate the brand from the competition, leading to customer satisfaction, loyalty, and brand awareness. Managers will be able to develop effective strategies to leverage the positive impacts of online reviews on business outcomes and to help tourism site managers allocate resources to improve ratings and tourists' comments. Naturally, a better understanding of local and international tourists will lead to better service in the future and will aid in anticipating future expectations as the number of tourists rises in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, future studies could utilize the outcome of this study as a pathfinder for further research.

Author's Contribution

Tasneem Alsaati carried out all aspects of the research and manuscript preparation. This includes conceptualization, methodology design, formal analysis, investigation, original draft preparation, review and editing, and the provision of resources necessary for the study.

Conflict of Interest

The author certifies that she has no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Acknowledgments

The author acknowledges the support of King Saud University Deanship of Scientific Research, and thus affiliates the work with this institution.

Funding Acknowledgment

The author acknowledges that no funds, grants, or other support were received.

References

- Arora, P., Singh, A. B., Ahuja, V., & Kumar, R. (2025). Mapping trends and future directions in consumer engagement and loyalty: A comprehensive bibliometric and thematic analysis. *Indian Journal of Marketing*, 55(3), 8–33. <https://doi.org/10.17010/ijom/2025/v55/i3/174831>
- Ayeh, J. K., Au, N., & Law, R. (2013). Predicting the intention to use consumer-generated media for travel planning. *Tourism Management*, 35, 132–143. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2012.06.010>

- Baccianella, S., Esuli, A., & Sebastiani, F. (2010). SentiWordNet 3.0: An enhanced lexical resource for sentiment analysis and opinion mining. *Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference on Language Resources and Evaluation (LREC'10)* (pp. 2200–2204). European Language Resources Association (ELRA). <https://aclanthology.org/L10-1531/>
- Berezan, O., Raab, C., Tanford, S., & Kim, Y.-S. (2013). Evaluating loyalty constructs among hotel reward program members using eWOM. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 39(2), 198–224. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348012471384>
- Blut, M., Kulikovskaja, V., Hubert, M., Brock, C., & Grewal, D. (2023). Effectiveness of engagement initiatives across engagement platforms: A meta-analysis. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 51(5), 941–965. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-023-00925-7>
- Breidbach, C. F., & Brodie, R. J. (2017). Engagement platforms in the sharing economy: Conceptual foundations and research directions. *Journal of Service Theory and Practice*, 27(4), 761–777. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSTP-04-2016-0071>
- Browning, V., So, K. K., & Sparks, B. (2013). The influence of online reviews on consumers' attributions of service quality and control for service standards in hotels. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 30(1–2), 23–40. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2013.750971>
- Carlson, J., Wyllie, J., Rahman, M. M., & Voola, R. (2019). Enhancing brand relationship performance through customer participation and value creation in social media brand communities. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 50, 333–341. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2018.07.008>
- Cheng, V. T., & Loi, M. K. (2014). Handling negative online customer reviews: The effects of elaboration likelihood model and distributive justice. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 31(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2014.861694>
- Cong, L., Wu, B., Morrison, A. M., Shu, H., & Wang, M. (2014). Analysis of wildlife tourism experiences with endangered species: An exploratory study of encounters with giant pandas in Chengdu, China. *Tourism Management*, 40, 300–310. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2013.07.005>
- Daft, R. L., & Lengel, R. H. (1986). Organizational information requirements, media richness and structural design. *Management Science*, 32(5), 554–571. <https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.32.5.554>
- Fereday, J., & Muir-Cochrane, E. (2006). Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(1), 80–92. <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690600500107>
- Filieri, R. (2015). What makes online reviews helpful? A diagnosticity-adoption framework to explain informational and normative influences in e-WOM. *Journal of Business Research*, 68(6), 1261–1270. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2014.11.006>
- Fong, L. H., Lei, S. S., & Law, R. (2017). Asymmetry of hotel ratings on TripAdvisor: Evidence from single- versus dual-valence reviews. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 26(1), 67–82. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19368623.2016.1178619>
- Fotis, J., Buhalis, D., & Rossides, N. (2012). Social media use and impact during the holiday travel planning process. In M. Fuchs, F. Ricci, & L. Cantoni (eds.), *Information and communication technologies in tourism* (pp. 13–24). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-7091-1142-0_2

- Fu, X., Tanyatanaboon, M., & Lehto, X. Y. (2015). Conceptualizing transformative guest experience at retreat centres. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 49, 83–92. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2015.06.004>
- General Authority for Statistics. (2025). Website. <https://portal.saudicensus.sa/portal/public/1/15/45?type=DASHBOARD>
- Goo, J., Huang, C. D., Yoo, C. W., & Koo, C. (2022). Smart tourism technologies' ambidexterity: Balancing tourist's worries and novelty seeking for travel satisfaction. *Information Systems Frontiers*, 24, 2139–2158. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10796-021-10233-6>
- Heo, S.-J., & Bae, H.-J. (2020). Analysis of the consumption pattern of delivery food according to food-related lifestyle. *Journal of Nutrition and Health*, 53(5), 547–561. <https://doi.org/10.4163/jnh.2020.53.5.547>
- Hollebeek, L. D., Sharma, T. G., Pandey, R., Sanyal, P., & Clark, M. K. (2022). Fifteen years of customer engagement research: A bibliometric and network analysis. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 31(2), 293–309. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-01-2021-3301>
- Khan, F., Kazi, R., Szymanska, A., & Singh, A. (2023). I must buy so I don't die—panic buying and change in consumer behavior during COVID-19 in the Pune Metropolitan Region. *Indian Journal of Marketing*, 53(12), 45–62. <https://doi.org/10.17010/ijom/2023/v53/i12/173353>
- Kim, S. E., & Lehto, X. Y. (2012). The voice of tourists with mobility disabilities: Insights from online customer complaint websites. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 24(3), 451–476. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09596111211217905>
- Kim, S.-H., & Yoo, B.-K. (2021). Topics and sentiment analysis based on reviews of omni-channel retailing. *Journal of Distribution Science*, 19(4), 25–35. <https://doi.org/10.15722/jds.19.4.202104.25>
- Kumar, S., & Jain, E. (2024). Role of theory of planned behavior in interpreting sustainable consumption behavior: A meta-analysis. *Indian Journal of Marketing*, 54(10), 63–81. <https://doi.org/10.17010/ijom/2024/v54/i10/174605>
- Kwok, L., Xie, K. L., & Richards, T. (2017). Thematic framework of online review research: A systematic analysis of contemporary literature on seven major hospitality and tourism journals. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 29(1), 307–354. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-11-2015-0664>
- Lau, R. Y., Lai, C. C., Ma, J., & Li, Y. (2009). Automatic domain ontology extraction for context-sensitive opinion mining. *International Conference on Information Systems*, 1–18. <http://aisel.aisnet.org/icis2009/35>
- Lee, H., Reid, E., & Kim, W. G. (2012). Understanding knowledge sharing in online travel communities: Antecedents and the moderating effects of interaction modes. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 38(2), 222–242. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348012451454>
- Lee, J.-K., & Son, Y.-H. (2021). Perception and appraisal of urban park users using text mining of Google maps review - Cases of Seoul Forest, Boramae Park, Olympic Park. *Journal of the Korean Institute of Landscape Architecture*, 49(4), 15–29. <https://doi.org/10.9715/KILA.2021.49.4.15>
- Leipämaa-Leskinen, H., Närvänen, E., & Makkonen, H. (2022). The rise of collaborative engagement platforms. *European Journal of Marketing*, 56(13), 26–49. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-11-2020-0798>

- Lemon, K. N., & Verhoef, P. C. (2016). Understanding customer experience throughout the customer journey. *Journal of Marketing*, 80(6), 69–96. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.15.0420>
- Levy, S. E., Duan, W., & Boo, S. (2012). An analysis of one-star online reviews and responses in the Washington, DC, lodging market. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 54(1), 49–63. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1938965512464513>
- Li, G., Law, R., Vu, H. Q., Rong, J., & Zhao, X. (2015). Identifying emerging hotel preferences using emerging pattern mining technique. *Tourism Management*, 46, 311–321. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.06.015>
- Liu, B. (2012). Sentiment analysis and opinion mining. In *Synthesis lectures on human language technologies*. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-02145-9>
- Liu, S., Law, R., Rong, J., Li, G., & Hall, J. (2013). Analyzing changes in hotel customers' expectations by trip mode. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 34, 359–371. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2012.11.011>
- Liu, Z., & Park, S. (2015). What makes a useful online review? Implication for travel product websites. *Tourism Management*, 47, 140–151. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.09.020>
- Maeyer, P. D. (2012). Impact of online consumer reviews on sales and price strategies: A review and directions for future research. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 21(2), 132–139. <https://doi.org/10.1108/10610421211215599>
- Mahajan, Y., Kaul, N., & Sharma, S. (2023). A systematic literature review of Quasi-experimental studies on consumer behavior in the sustainability domain. *Indian Journal of Marketing*, 53(8), 25–46. <https://doi.org/10.17010/ijom/2023/v53/i8/172974>
- Mauri, A. G., & Minazzi, R. (2013). Web reviews influence on expectations and purchasing intentions of hotel potential customers. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 34, 99–107. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2013.02.012>
- Ministry of Tourism in Saudi Arabia. (2023). *About us*. <https://tinyurl.com/3nf2sz6f>
- Mkono, M. (2012). Authenticity does matter. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(1), 480–483. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2011.06.004>
- Mude, G., & Saha, S. (2025). From farms to tourism: Two decades of agritourism trends—A bibliometric analysis. *Indian Journal of Marketing*, 55(4), 8–33. <https://doi.org/10.17010/ijom/2025/v55/i4/174926>
- Nieto, J., Hernández-Maestro, R. M., & Muñoz-Gallego, P. A. (2014). Marketing decisions, customer reviews, and business performance: The use of the top rural website by Spanish rural lodging establishments. *Tourism Management*, 45, 115–123. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.03.009>
- O'Connor, P. (2008). User-generated content and travel: A case study on TripAdvisor.com. In P. O'Connor, W. Höpken, & U. Gretzel (eds.), *Information and communication technologies in tourism 2008*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-211-77280-5_5
- Othayoth, P. K., & Khanna, S. (2024). Chatbot service quality in banking: Analyzing Indian banking customer perceptions and influence on customer satisfaction and value. *Indian Journal of Marketing*, 54(2), 44–65. <https://doi.org/10.17010/ijom/2024/v54/i2/173474>

- Pantelidis, I. S. (2010). Electronic meal experience: A content analysis of online restaurant comments. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 51(4), 483–491. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1938965510378574>
- Park, S., & Nicolau, J. L. (2015). Asymmetric effects of online consumer reviews. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 50, 67–83. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2014.10.007>
- Patwal, A. S., Rana, V., & Chopra, G. (2024). Tourists' motivation to satisfaction with homestays in Uttarakhand, India: A SEM approach. *Indian Journal of Marketing*, 54(10), 45–62. <https://doi.org/10.17010/ijom/2024/v54/i10/174604>
- Pham, L., Klaus, T., & Changchit, C. (2023). Factors influencing intention to use online consumer reviews: The case of Vietnam. *Journal of Global Information Management*, 31(1), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.4018/JGIM.321642>
- Phillips, P., Antonio, N., de Almeida, A., & Nunes, L. (2019). The influence of geographic and psychic distance on online hotel ratings. *Journal of Travel Research*, 59(4), 722–741. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287519858400>
- Poetz, M. K., & Schreier, M. (2012). The value of crowdsourcing: Can users really compete with professionals in generating new product ideas? *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 29(2), 245–256. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5885.2011.00893.x>
- Priem, R. L. (2007). A consumer perspective on value creation. *Academy of Management Review*, 32(1), 219–235. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2007.23464055>
- Rachmiani, Oktadinna, N. K., & Fauzan, T. R. (2024). The impact of online reviews and ratings on consumer purchasing decisions on e-commerce platforms. *International Journal of Management Science and Information Technology*, 4(2), 504–515. <https://doi.org/10.35870/ijmsit.v4i2.3373>
- Rishi, M., & Gaur, S. S. (2012). Emerging sales and marketing challenges in the global hospitality industry: A thematic analysis of customer reviews from the world's top two tourist destinations. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, 4(2), 131–149. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17554211211217316>
- Riyadh Expo 2030. (2023). *Website*. <https://riyadhexpo2030.sa/>
- Saudi Tourism Authority. (2025). *About Riyadh*. <https://www.visitsaudi.com/en/riyadh>
- Sharief, Z., & Panghal, A. (2023). Sustainable consumption: Consumer behavior when purchasing sustainability-labeled food products. *Indian Journal of Marketing*, 53(8), 47–65. <https://doi.org/10.17010/ijom/2023/v53/i8/172975>
- Sharma, D. R., Singh, B., & Jaiswal, K. (2023). Understanding the influence of mobile in-app price promotions in food delivery apps on customer engagement and advocacy. *Indian Journal of Marketing*, 53(7), 8–29. <https://doi.org/10.17010/ijom/2023/v53/i7/170023>
- Sharma, D., & Panda, T. K. (2025). Consumer perceived value and decision outcome in multi-channel retail: A systematic literature review. *Indian Journal of Marketing*, 55(2), 8–32. <https://doi.org/10.17010/ijom/2025/v55/i2/174746>
- Shin, B., Ryu, S., Kim, Y., & Kim, D. (2022). Analysis on review data of restaurants in Google maps through text mining: Focusing on sentiment analysis. *Journal of Multimedia Information Systems*, 9(1), 61–68. <https://doi.org/10.33851/JMIS.2022.9.1.61>

- So, J.-S., & Shin, P.-S. (2020). Rating prediction by evaluation item through sentiment analysis of restaurant review. *Journal of the Korea Society of Computer and Information*, 25(6), 81–89. <https://doi.org/10.9708/jksci.2020.25.06.081>
- Sparks, B. A., Perkins, H. E., & Buckley, R. (2013). Online travel reviews as persuasive communication: The effects of content type, source, and certification logos on consumer behaviour. *Tourism Management*, 39, 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2013.03.007>
- Stringam, B. B., & Gerdes Jr., J. (2010). An analysis of word-of-mouth ratings and guest comments of online hotel distribution sites. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 19(7), 773–796. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19368623.2010.508009>
- Su, L., Yang, Q., Swanson, S. R., & Chen, N. C. (2021). The impact of online reviews on destination trust and travel intention: The moderating role of online review trustworthiness. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 28(4), 406–423. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13567667211063207>
- Tao, Y., Liu, W., Huang, Z., & Shi, C. (2022). Thematic analysis of reviews on the air quality of tourist destinations from a sentiment analysis perspective. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 42, Article ID 100969. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2022.100969>
- Tsao, W.-C., Hsieh, M.-T., Shih, L.-W., & Lin, T. M. (2015). Compliance with eWOM: The influence of hotel reviews on booking intention from the perspective of consumer conformity. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 46, 99–111. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2015.01.008>
- Tung, V. W., & Au, N. (2018). Exploring customer experiences with robotics in hospitality. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 30(7), 2680–2697. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-06-2017-0322>
- Unnava, V., & Aravindakshan, A. (2021). How does consumer engagement evolve when brands post across multiple social media? *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 49(5), 864–881. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-021-00785-z>
- Vogel, E. A., Rose, J. P., Roberts, L. R., & Eckles, K. (2014). Social comparison, social media, and self-esteem. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 3(4), 206–222. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000047>
- Wang, L., Law, R., Guillet, B. D., Hung, K., & Fong, D. K. (2015). Impact of hotel website quality on online booking intentions: eTrust as a mediator. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 47, 108–115. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2015.03.012>
- Wu, M.-Y., Wall, G., & Pearce, P. L. (2014). Shopping experiences: International tourists in Beijing's silk market. *Tourism Management*, 41, 96–106. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2013.09.010>
- Xiang, Z., Magnini, V. P., & Fesenmaier, D. R. (2015). Information technology and consumer behavior in travel and tourism: Insights from travel planning using the internet. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 22, 244–249. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2014.08.005>
- Xie, K. L., Zhang, Z., & Zhang, Z. (2014). The business value of online consumer reviews and management response to hotel performance. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 43, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2014.07.007>
- Yadav, N., Verma, S., & Chikhalkar, R. (2024). Online reviews towards reducing risk. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, 10(2), 299–316. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JTF-01-2022-0016>

- Yadav, P., Agarwal, B., & Mathew, J. (2023). Green marketing strategy adoption by Indian political party brands with special emphasis on marketing mix. *Indian Journal of Marketing*, 53(5), 57–69. <https://doi.org/10.17010/ijom/2023/v53/i5/172727>
- Yin, D., Mitra, S., & Zhang, H. (2016). When do consumers value positive vs. negative reviews? An empirical investigation of confirmation bias in online word of mouth. *Information Systems Research*, 27(1), 131–144. <https://doi.org/10.1287/isre.2015.0617>
- Yu, C.-E. (2020). Humanlike robots as employees in the hotel industry: Thematic content analysis of online reviews. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 29(1), 22–38. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19368623.2019.1592733>
- Zeng, B., & Gerritsen, R. (2014). What do we know about social media in tourism? A review. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 10, 27–36. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2014.01.001>
- Zhu, F., & Zhang, X. (2010). Impact of online consumer reviews on sales: The moderating role of product and consumer characteristics. *Journal of Marketing*, 74(2), 133–148. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.74.2.133>

About the Author

Tasneem Alsaati is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in Marketing at the College of Business Administration at King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. She is currently a Faculty member of marketing and business administration at Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University in Saudi Arabia, with over 15 years of experience in academia and business consultations.