

A Comparative Analysis of TripAdvisor Reviews from eWOM Perspective

* Gürkan ÇALIŞKAN^a , Yakup ERDOĞAN^b , Emrah YAŞARSOY^a 

^a Kastamonu University, Faculty of Tourism, Tourism Management, Kastamonu/Türkiye

^b Kastamonu University, Faculty of Tourism, Tourism Guidance, Kastamonu/Türkiye

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Abstract

This research compares TripAdvisor data with managers' opinions from the eWOM perspective. In this study, TripAdvisor data of accommodation businesses operating in Kastamonu were determined and compared with the data obtained from the managers. Content analysis and interview techniques, which are among qualitative research methods, were used in the research. The reviews of the top 10 accommodation businesses with the most comments on TripAdvisor in Kastamonu were analyzed. Additionally, face-to-face interviews were conducted with the managers of accommodation businesses. Nine out of ten accommodation businesses agreed to the interview. Comments and interview statements were divided into themes, grouped, and coded. The MAXQDA analysis program was used to visualize the encoded data. The findings of the research revealed that negative comments are most likely on “service”, “noise”, and “food” themes, while positive comments are on “service”, “staff”, and “food” themes. Managers stated that TripAdvisor plays an important role, especially in sales/marketing, and that they regularly follow and respond to TripAdvisor's comments. The findings clearly show that accommodation businesses should take online reviews into account. In this context, accommodation businesses should include social media platforms in their strategic management processes.

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* Corresponding Author

E-mail: gcaliskan@kastamonu.edu.tr (G. Çalışkan)

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INTRODUCTION

Internet usage rates are increasing rapidly, parallel with technology development worldwide. Alongside this noticeable development, it is clear that there are changes in marketing channels (Özdipçiner, 2010; Garín-Muñoz & Pérez-Amaral, 2011). This situation also affects consumers' preferences for products and services (Yaslıdağ & Ferhadi, 2018). Before making any purchase, consumers conduct research through various channels (Gupta et al., 2004; Yanar & Yılmaz, 2017; Alan, Kabadayı & Erişke, 2018). Among these channels, the Internet is the most widely used (Ataerkil, 2019). With the widespread use of smart mobile devices and social sharing platforms, there has been an increase in online communication, also known as word-of-mouth (WoM) communication (Ceritli, 2018; Atsız et al., 2023).

Consumers influence the purchasing decisions of potential buyers by sharing their positive and negative comments about a service or product (Aydın, 2014; Mauri & Minazzi, 2013). The comments on these platforms impact purchasing decisions, either positively or negatively (Can, 2016; Hernández-Méndez et al., 2015). Opinions and comments are written by consumers on forums, blogs, social networking platforms, and comment sites (Aytekin, 2011). This type of communication is crucial for the sector, especially since service is an abstract concept (Van Dijk, 2016; Çakırkaya, 2017; Öztel, 2018). Online comments, evaluations, complaints, and feedback about accommodation businesses, evaluated within the scope of touristic products, affect the purchasing decision processes of potential customers (Stringam et al., 2010; Leung et al., 2013; Xie et al., 2016). Due to its abstract nature and the inability to be experienced in advance, services direct consumers to social networking platforms and blogs where individuals who have experienced the same facility before sharing their information (Buhalis & Law, 2008). Moreover, the Internet and social media use in tourism businesses emerges as an important marketing communication tool (Hays et al., 2013). Related studies show how effective social media platforms can be in tourism. Yadav and Arora (2012) and Armutcu et al. (2023) found that social media can enhance the destination's image. Filieri et al. (2015) determined that travelers trust shared reviews.

Online comments, evaluations, complaints, and feedback about accommodation businesses that are evaluated within the scope of touristic products affect the purchasing decision processes of potential customers (Stringam et al., 2010; Leung et al., 2013; Mauri & Minazzi, 2013; Aydın, 2014; Hernández-Méndez et al., 2015; Xie et al., 2016; Can, 2016). Opinions and comments are written by consumers on forums, blogs, social networking platforms, and comment sites (Aytekin, 2011). This type of communication is crucial for the sector as service is an abstract concept (Van Dijk, 2016; Çakırkaya, 2017; Öztel, 2018). Due to its abstract nature and inability to be experienced in advance, the service directs consumers to social networking platforms and blogs where people who have experienced the same facility before sharing their information (Buhalis & Law, 2008). Moreover, the Internet and social media use in tourism businesses emerges as an important marketing communication tool (Hays et al., 2013). Related studies show how effective social media platforms can be in tourism. Yadav and Arora (2012) and Armutcu et al. (2023) found that social media can increase the destination's image. Filieri et al. (2015) determined that travelers trust shared reviews.

In today's intensely competitive environment, accommodation businesses must understand their customers better to succeed. In this respect, accommodation establishments should benefit from all available information and communication tools (Faraj et al., 2011). Data obtained from social media are important (Bharati et al., 2015).

Accommodation businesses can contact customers directly on social media platforms and obtain customer data faster. They can improve themselves with the data they obtain. These platforms are important determinants of accommodation businesses' performance (Schuckert et al., 2015). Therefore, online platforms should be part of strategic management (Lunkes et al., 2019; Bortoluzzi et al., 2020). Businesses that correctly manage their knowledge management processes can achieve long-term competitive advantage (Bueno et al., 2008; Muhammed & Salma, 2021). For all these reasons, managers of accommodation establishments need to pay attention to knowledge-based eWOM activities. Previous studies show that eWOM affects the performance of hospitality businesses (Kim et al., 2011; Berne-Manero et al., 2020).

Although social networking platforms are significant for tourism businesses, studies have generally focused on customer complaints (Fernandes & Fernandes, 2017). The relevant literature has primarily concentrated on the consumer perspective (e.g., Camilleri and Neuhofer, 2017; Gonçalves et al., 2018; Reyes Menendez et al., 2019; Sohaib et al., 2019; Yuan et al., 2020; Golmohammadi et al., 2020; Pourfakhimi et al., 2020). The opinions and suggestions of hotel managers regarding customer complaints were not taken into account. Thus, it is useful to examine how accommodation business managers make decisions. Managers' opinions and experiences should be considered (Xie et al., 2016; Baka, 2016; Berne-Manero et al., 2020; Usai et al., 2021). The literature supports the view that more research is needed on including eWOM in business strategies (Xie et al., 2016; Baka, 2016; Shwetter et al., 2019; Pourfakhimi et al., 2020). Based on this gap, this study aims to compare customer complaints and hotel managers' opinions and experiences regarding customer complaints.

Kastamonu province was chosen as the research setting. Kastamonu hotels were visited by individuals from 154 different regions, including cities in Turkey and countries such as China, Germany, Australia, and South Africa (Budak & Sökmen, 2022). Kastamonu province is a developing tourism region, and Kastamonu University has been selected as a university specializing in Forestry and Nature Tourism (kastamonu.edu.tr, 2018). There are studies regarding the Kastamonu region (Göktuğ & Arpa, 2015; Çoban & Aydınöz, 2016; Mızrak et al., 2017; Aydoğdu & Duman, 2017; Aktepe et al., 2017; Akkuş et al., 2019; Akkuş & Akkuş, 2019; Aydın, 2024). However, studies examining TripAdvisor and eWOM data are quite limited. Regarding the subject, Yaşar (2019) examined Kastamonu local restaurant data, while Budak and Sökmen (2022) examined TripAdvisor data of Kastamonu hotels. However, there are no studies examining manager data on the subject. Considering the tourism potential of Kastamonu province and the lack of studies on TripAdvisor customer comments, this study will provide important data for regional tourism.

The results of this study may have practical implications for hotels in developing destinations. For instance, this research identified customer complaints in developing destinations and determined how hotel managers handled these complaints and the solutions they produced. Thus, the results of this study can serve as a guide for other hotels and destinations. Simultaneously, the findings of this study can make theoretical contributions by expanding the complaint management literature in hotel management.

Theoretical Background

Social Networking Platforms

Social networking platforms, which have become more important with the development of virtual environments

or digitalization, are defined as places where individuals or masses can communicate online and interactively (Kim et al., 2008; Carminati & Ferrari, 2008; Sicilia & Palazon, 2008; Kazançoğlu et al., 2012; Peters et al., 2013; Pütter, 2017). On these sharing sites, which are web-based service providers, users can create a profile in a restricted system, share a link, and make changes to the sharing (Preece & Maloney-Krichmar, 2002; Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Brandtzæg & Heim, 2009; Gensler et al., 2013). Furthermore, these sharing sites allow following the profile of registered users and have advantages such as sending messages, voting comments, and sharing (Zúñiga et al., 2012). It is also possible to discuss the comments made on such platforms. In this way, a model based on the system in which interactive user-to-user communication comes to the forefront is formed (Zhang et al., 2010).

With the increase in online information transfer, it is feasible to compare many options regarding the accommodation businesses that tourists plan to visit (Gurran & Phibbs, 2017). These opportunities provided by the platforms shape and affect the accommodation industry and the purchasing decisions with information feedback from both businesses and users (Yuan et al., 2016; Jansson, 2018). Social networking platforms are used as a source of empirical data (Sicilia & Korfiatis, 2010). While these resources provide data for customer relations and reputation management, they are also important for determining service quality (Perez-Aranda, Vallespín, & Molinillo, 2019).

Social media platforms are tools that tourists use for various purposes before, during, and after purchasing products. They can be crucial in tourists' purchasing and decision-making processes (Chung & Buhalis, 2008; Sreenivasan et al., 2012; Edwards et al., 2017; Pabel & Prideaux, 2016). Tourists and tourism businesses widely utilize platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, TripAdvisor, Instagram, and Flickr (Abou-Shouk & Hewedi, 2016; Pabel & Prideaux, 2016). Tourists can communicate with businesses and other consumers on these platforms and make reservations. This can ensure that the communication channels of businesses are flexible and operational processes are facilitated (Nusair et al., 2012; Roult et al., 2016). Related studies demonstrate the effectiveness of social media platforms in the tourism industry. Yadav and Arora (2012) found that social media can enhance the destination's image. Armutcu et al. (2023) determined that users can display positive attitudes towards tourism destinations through social media communication. Filieri et al. (2015) determined that travelers trust shared reviews more than websites or advertisements. Chung and Han (2017) found that social platforms influence tourists' purchasing behavior. Furthermore, one of the most important aspects of social platforms is electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM).

Electronic Word-of-Mouth

eWOM in digital media has become more reliable in consumers' eyes daily (Leung et al., 2013; Proserpio & Zervas, 2014). eWOM has become one of the most important marketing products. As people look at consumer comments about many products/services, this situation has also become inevitable for the tourism sector. Consumer comments become one of the most important tools that affect tourists' purchase decisions when booking hotels online (Lee & Youn, 2009). In particular, the possibilities offered by the hotel sector involve very intangible goods, and it is often impossible to have information about the quality of these goods before actual consumption (Xie et al., 2014). Therefore, potential consumers refer to the eWOM of consumers who have experienced it before to learn about the quality of any touristic product (Wirtz & Chew, 2002). About 53% of consumers do not book a hotel without reading consumer reviews, and 77% of consumers usually read reviews about a hotel before making a decision (TripAdvisor, 2014). With the growing popularity of social media, hotels are under increasing pressure to protect their online

reputations. Since consistency in service quality is difficult to achieve, service failure is almost inevitable in the delivery of products or services (Levy et al., 2013). Online complainers, especially in the electronic era, can quickly become opinion heads (Litvin et al., 2008). Vermeulen and Seegers (2009) find that such dissatisfying comments may negatively influence subsequent consumers' (tourists) perceptions toward a hotel.

eWOM has two main impacts on hospitality businesses. The first is the comment section, which comprises the factors that prompt consumers to write comments. The second is the effects of online comments on the business (Serra & Salvi, 2014). Previous studies have demonstrated that eWOM significantly influences the performance of hospitality businesses (Kim et al., 2011; Berne-Manero et al., 2020). Online reviews significantly influence potential customers' booking intentions. Fake reviews can also mislead consumer decisions. Therefore, accommodation businesses must actively and effectively manage online platforms (Kamble et al., 2020). These platforms are crucial determinants in accommodation businesses' promotion, marketing, and reputation management activities (Schuckert et al., 2015). Therefore, online platforms should be part of strategic management (Lunkes et al., 2019; Bortoluzzi et al., 2020).

Previous studies suggest that there is a positive relationship between the adequacy of responses to online reviews and the performance of accommodation establishments (Xie et al., 2016; Raguseo & Vitari, 2017; Kamble et al., 2020; Mathews et al., 2021). For this reason, the interest of accommodation business managers in these platforms is expected to increase (Nunes & Cooke, 2020). On the other hand, some studies reveal negative opinions of accommodation businesses about managing these platforms (Burgess et al., 2015; Lui et al., 2018). Many studies have focused on the tourist perspective (Prebensen et al., 2013; Tan et al., 2013; McCabe et al., 2016; Campos et al., 2018). Usai et al. (2021) recommend that future research examine decision-making processes in accommodation businesses.

TripAdvisor

One of the areas where eWOM is used the most is TripAdvisor (Öğretmenoğlu et al., 2023). At a time when Web 2.0 is in full swing and travel agencies have made their first successful attempt to move to online tourism, the idea of creating a social networking site where consumers can share their objective and well-grounded views on their travel experiences laid the groundwork for TripAdvisor. Seventeen years after its establishment, it has become a multinational company that has created the world's largest traveler community despite competition with sites such as Booking and Expedia (Miguens et al., 2008). However, the fact that it looks like a blog, a virtual community, and a social network makes classifying the TripAdvisor site complex (O'Connor, 2010).

As stated on its website, TripAdvisor guides 463 million tourists each month to make their travel choices. Participants from different countries visited the platform and examined nearly 860 million comments about 8.6 million accommodation facilities, restaurants, and airline companies. The TripAdvisor site mainly serves in 28 languages for price comparison, reservation, and travel planning (TripAdvisor, 2023). One of the most important features of TripAdvisor is the support of user-generated comments with photos, videos, and ratings (Law, 2006; Vasquez, 2011; Milano et al., 2011). With the addition of feedback from the businesses on the platform, everyone can access qualitative and quantitative results (Friend & Ayyıldız, 2020).

Online travel platforms are utilized by researchers as data sources (Sicilia & Korfiatis, 2010; Atsız et al., 2023;

Ogretmenoglu et al., 2023). Furthermore, these platforms have become a significant source of information for tourists before traveling to destinations. Consequently, such sources are also considered important for complaint and reputation management (Pabel & Prideaux, 2016). For this reason, scientific studies involving data from TripAdvisor are still being conducted in the literature.

Although there have been many studies on the topic recently, it is observed that there are few studies that conduct a comparative analysis of the managers' opinions. For instance, some studies have investigated the impact of responding to consumers' opinions, particularly negative opinions or complaints. Gu and Ye (2014) argued that the satisfaction levels of consumers who complain on these platforms increase after receiving management responses. On the other hand, Xie et al. (2014) determined that the number of responses given by the management to consumers' comments positively impacts hotel performance.

Some studies have determined that evaluations on the platform significantly impact business performance. Online reviews also play a crucial role in determining the business's success. Luca (2016) found that a 1-point increase in customer reviews led to a 5% to 9% increase in revenues. Yang et al. (2018), Nieto-Garcia et al. (2019), and Sayfuddin and Chen (2021) discovered that the financial performance of hotels is influenced by the number and degree of reviews. With these comments, the number of reservations can increase, and positive brand attitudes can develop (Baniya et al., 2021; Pike et al., 2021). While positive comments enhance business performance, negative comments have the opposite effect (Anderson, 2012; Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006). More comments have been observed to lead to better job performance (Kim et al., 2016; Zhu & Zhang, 2010; Amblee & Bui, 2007; Liu, 2006). Ye et al. (2009) found that the number of reviews positively influences online hotel reservations, while Kim et al. (2015) reported that the number of reviews significantly impacts hotel revenues.

Based on previous studies, it is understood that the topic is current and important. There is still a gap in the handling of consumer complaints in the field of tourism and hospitality. It remains a topic that requires further research. Therefore, this study contributes to the relevant literature by comparing customer complaints and hotel managers' solutions to these complaints.

Kastamonu

Kastamonu was selected as the research setting (Figure 1). Kastamonu is a province located in the Western Black Sea region of Turkey. The reason for choosing Kastamonu province is that it is a developing destination, and there is a need for such studies. There are deficiencies in research that make a comparative analysis of TripAdvisor data and managers' opinions. From this point of view, the research differs from others and can present unique and valuable data for the sector.



Figure 1. Location of Kastamonu, Türkiye (Source: Tanrısever et al., 2022).

Kastamonu is a prominent region in nature tourism, encompassing various types of tourism such as winter tourism, skiing opportunities, swimming, nature tourism, gastronomy tourism, botanical tourism, and faith tourism opportunities (Göktuğ & Arpa, 2015; Çoban & Aydınöz, 2016; Mızrak et al., 2017; Aydoğdu & Duman, 2017; Aktepe et al., 2017; Akkuş et al., 2019; Akkuş & Akkuş, 2019). There are many tourism values within the provincial borders, such as Valla Canyon, Horma Canyon, Ilgaz Mountain National Park, Küre Mountains National Park, and İstiklal Yolu Historical National Park. Additionally, there are Abana Yeşilyuva Nature Park, Tosya Dipsiz Lake Nature Park, Şehit Şerife Bacı Nature Park, and Küre Ersizlerdere Canyon Nature Park in the province (Tanrısever et al., 2016; Şen & Erkan Buğday, 2015; Çalışkan et al., 2021).

The city has various accommodation opportunities, including nature hotels, boutique hotels, historical mansion hotels, and four-star hotels. Kastamonu hotels were visited from 154 different regions, including cities in Turkey and countries such as China, Germany, Australia, and South Africa (Budak & Sökmen, 2022).

Studies regarding the Kastamonu region exist. Oktay et al. (2016) and Zengin et al. (2019) conducted interviews with stakeholders in tourism in the province. In the study by Oktay et al. (2016), it was concluded that Kastamonu was not as successful as the Eastern Black Sea region in terms of nature tourism, that its tourism image and regional resources needed improvement, and that there was a shortage of personnel in terms of quality and quantity. Entrepreneurship and the lack of nature tour guides were other important findings. However, studies examining TripAdvisor data are quite limited.

Regarding the subject, Yaşar (2019) examined Kastamonu local restaurant data, while Budak and Sökmen (2022) examined TripAdvisor data of Kastamonu hotels. Yaşar (2019) examined the negative comments of restaurants serving local food in Kastamonu. The most prominent complaints are food, service, price, service, and staff. Budak and Sökmen (2022) examined TripAdvisor comments about hotels in Kastamonu and found basic services to be the inference with the highest degree of importance. Other prominent words include room/rooms, hotel, breakfast, staff, politeness, cleaning, and Kastamonu. However, there are no studies examining managers' perspectives on the subject. Kastamonu is a province with different accommodation options. However, customer reviews may be important in choosing which accommodation establishment to stay in for a tourist not knowing this province. Thus, this research compares TripAdvisor data with managers' opinions from the eWOM perspective.

Methodology

Two types of data were obtained in the research. The first is the TripAdvisor comments of the top 10 accommodation businesses in Kastamonu, and the second is the interview data obtained from the managers. The reviews of the top 10 accommodation businesses with the most comments on TripAdvisor in Kastamonu were analyzed. All comments made to TripAdvisor until August 2022 (including July) are included in the research (except 3-star reviews). The data was analyzed in August-September 2022. Within the scope of the research, 987 reviews were analyzed. 1 and 2-star comments were evaluated under the heading of negative comments, and four and five-star comments were evaluated under the heading of positive comments. Since the research is based on positive and negative opinions, 3-star reviews were not included.

Customer data were obtained and analyzed through comments posted on TripAdvisor. Later, an interview was

held with the managers. The aim is a comparative analysis of the opinions of customers and hotel managers. In this research, purposive sampling was preferred. Purposive sampling involves selecting the sample group most appropriate to the research problem (Sencer, 1989). TripAdvisor data was analyzed and coded one by one. In this respect, an inductive approach was adopted. The prominent positive and negative aspects of the accommodation services in Kastamonu province were identified, and a comparative content analysis was conducted based on the opinions of the hotel managers. The flow chart for data collection is shown in Figure 2.

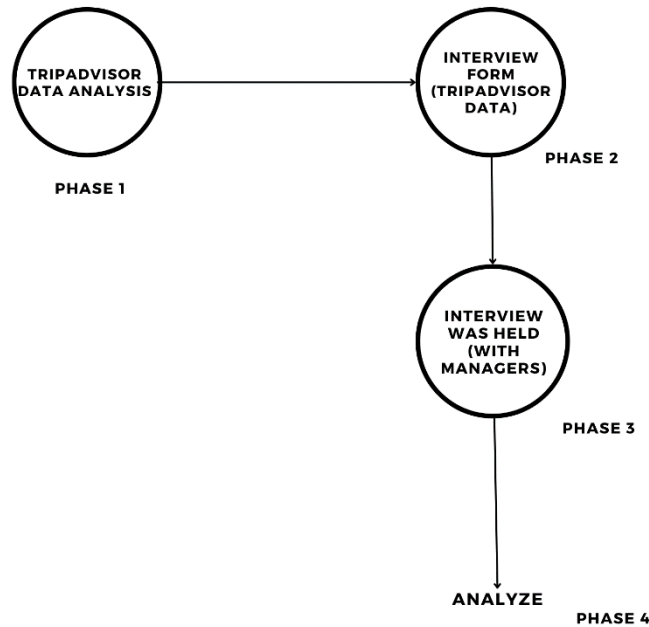


Figure 2. Flow Chart (Obtaining Data)

Source: Author's own creation

There are 26 Ministry Tourism Management-certified accommodation businesses in Kastamonu province. There are two accommodation businesses with four stars, ten with three stars, and two accommodation businesses with two stars. Other provincial accommodation businesses include hotels, hostels, mansions, and historical accommodation businesses. Among the businesses interviewed in this research are three 3-star hotels, five mansions, and one historical accommodation business. In the research, face-to-face interviews were held with the managers of accommodation businesses. 9 out of 10 accommodation businesses agreed to interview. Qualitative research methods were used in this context, such as content analysis and interview techniques. With the permission of the participants, the interviews were recorded. The interviews were held on January 11-18, 2023, and each interview lasted almost 25 minutes. The interview questions were prepared using the literature (Molinillo et al., 2016; Özdal & Bardakoğlu, 2017; Nicoli & Papadopoulou, 2017). In the sixth and seventh questions in the form, statements are obtained from TripAdvisor data. Three academicians were consulted for clarity regarding the interview questions, and it was stated that the questions were understandable. No questions were removed from the research. The questions asked of the participants in the semi-structured interview form are as follows:

1. What kind of impact does TripAdvisor have on your hotel?
2. What do customers often complain about your hotel and why?

3. How do you deal with negative complaints? What challenges and opportunities do you face in this situation?
4. Do you follow customer reviews on TripAdvisor? How do you evaluate this information for your target market?
5. Do you respond to TripAdvisor review complaints? Do you think the answers given for complaint management and customer satisfaction are sufficient?
6. When TripAdvisor comments on Kastamonu accommodation businesses are examined, service, staff, and food themes are appreciated. What are the prominent values of Kastamonu accommodation businesses and your business?
7. When the TripAdvisor reviews of Kastamonu accommodation businesses are examined, it is seen that they are mostly criticized for service, sound insulation/noise, and food themes. What are the shortcomings of Kastamonu accommodation businesses and your business?

Content analysis was applied during the data analysis. Comments and interview statements were divided into themes, grouped, and coded. Content analysis is a method used to divide data into themes and categories (White & Marsh, 2006). MAXQDA analysis program was used to visualize the coded data. MAXQDA is a coding and analysis program for qualitative research (Gizzi & Rädiker, 2021). Hierarchical code-subcode model mapping and Document Portrait features were used in the MAXQDA analysis program. These visuals provide data on the frequencies of expressions. "Document Portrait" is used to visualize the comments. The codes determined in the Document Portrait are depicted in colors, and their densities are visualized.

Research Findings

The findings are discussed under two headings. The first of these are the findings related to the TripAdvisor data, while the second is the managers' evaluations.

Findings on TripAdvisor Data

Within the research scope, 1050 comments were reached, and 63 3-star comments were not included in the analysis. In this case, 987 of the comments were analyzed. The ratings and number of comments by year are as follows:

Table 1. Year-Based Distribution of the Scores of the Top 10 Accommodation Businesses in Kastamonu

YEAR	1 Star Reviews	2 Star Reviews	3 Star Reviews	4 Star Reviews	5 Star Reviews	TOTAL
2022	3	1	-	2	7	13
2021	9	2	2	6	26	45
2020	3	6	1	10	42	62
2019	5	9	12	48	125	199
2018	20	2	7	40	134	203
2017	2	3	15	42	67	129
2016	4	1	11	34	99	149
2015	-	6	7	28	79	120
2014	-	-	5	10	31	46
2013	2	1	3	13	30	49
2012	2	3	-	11	15	31
2011	-	-	-	2	2	4
TOTAL	50	34	63	246	657	1050

Source: (TripAdvisor, 2022)

As shown in Table 1, it is understood that the customer comments about the accommodation businesses are

generally positive. The average score is 4.3. It is possible to talk about an accommodation service with high customer satisfaction.

The analyzed number of reviews and average scores of the 10 accommodation businesses with the most reviews in Kastamonu are as follows:

Table 2. Top 10 Accommodation Businesses in Kastamonu and the Average Ratings

Accommodation Business	Number of Comments	Average Rating
Uğurlu Konakları	305	4,5
İksir Resort Town	214	4,5
Şahmeran Konak Butik Otel	106	5
Kurşunluhan Hotel	106	4
Kastamonu Kadioğlu Konak	87	4,5
Mütevelli Otel	63	4
Amorium Wooden & Stone House	53	4
Sadibey Çiftliği	52	4
Gölköy Yaşam Resort	33	4
Ballık Konak	31	4,5

Source: (TripAdvisor, 2022)

Considering the number of comments, it is understood that Uğurlu Konakları and İksir Resort Town are the businesses that have the highest impact level.

Within the scope of the research, positive (4-5 star scoring) and negative (1-2 star scoring) comments were analyzed. The codes formed from 84 negative comments are in blue in the histogram graph, while codes formed from 903 positive comments are in orange.

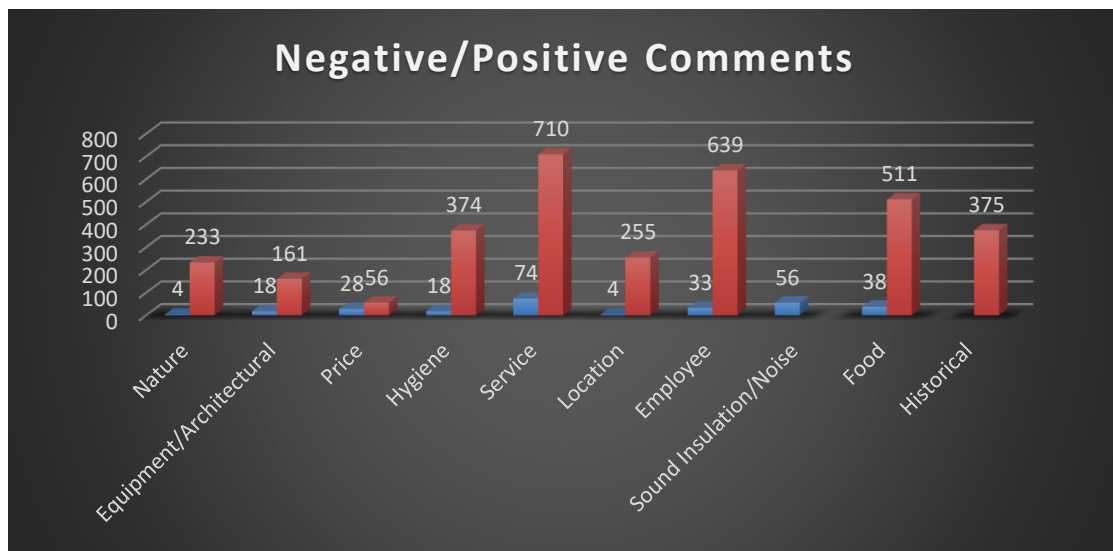


Figure 3. Histogram Graph of Codes

Source: (TripAdvisor, 2022)

As indicated in Figure 3, the theme of “service” (74 codes) in negative comments, the “sound insulation/noise” theme (56 codes), and the “Food” theme (38 codes) are the most expressed themes. The “Document Portrait” of negative comments is located in Figure 4.

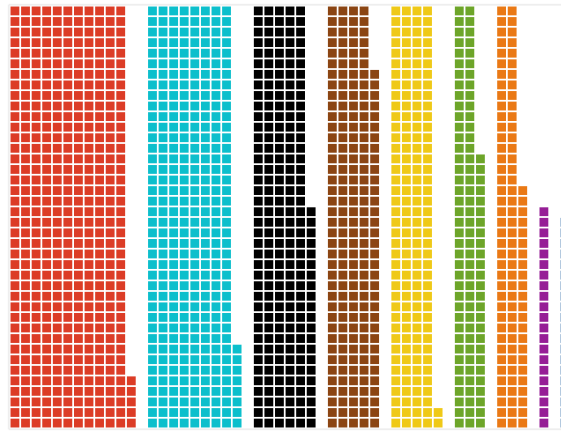


Figure 4. Document Portrait (Negative Comments)

Source: (TripAdvisor, 2022)

The negative interpretation of the colors given in Figure 4 is expressed as follows: “Service” (74 codes) theme with red, “Sound Insulation/Noise” (56 codes) theme with turquoise, “Food” with black (38 codes), “Staff” (33 codes) theme with brown, “Price” (28 codes) theme with yellow, “Equipment/Architecture” (18 codes) with green, “Hygiene” (18 codes) theme with orange, “Nature” (4 codes) with purple and “Location” (4 codes) with blue. The most intensive coding is in the "Service" theme. It is understood that Kastamonu accommodation businesses may have deficiencies in the themes of "Service", "Sound Insulation/Noise" and "Food". The negative thoughts of the guests on this issue come to the fore. One comment that can be given as an example of negative comments is as follows:

“I would have preferred it to be comfortable and quiet rather than historical. They praised it so much. The bed we slept in for the first 2 nights had a lot of creaking. We moved to another room, it was better, but the floors were too noisy while someone was walking. There is not even a glass in the bathroom, they are afraid to give shampoo, the food is bad, the music that starts with breakfast does not keep you awake, and there was a program on Friday evening. We were very disturbed by the sound of music in our room.” (Service/Sound Insulation-Noise/Food)

As shown in Figure 3, the most frequently mentioned themes are "Service" with 710 codes, "Staff" with 639 codes, and "Food" with 511 codes in positive comments. The "Document Portrait" of positive comments is shown in Figure 5.

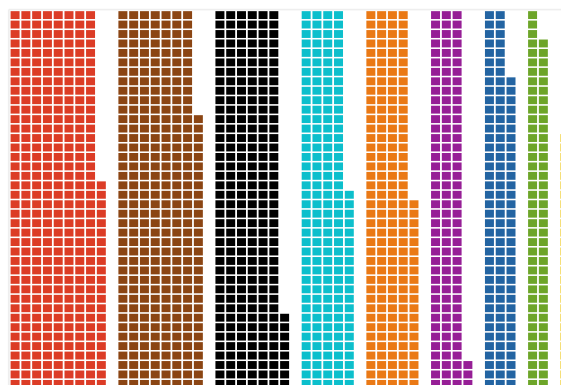


Figure 5. Document Portrait (Positive Comments)

Source: (TripAdvisor, 2022)

The positive interpretation of the colors given in Figure 5 is expressed as follows: “Service” (710 codes) in red, “Staff” (639 codes) in brown, “Food” in black (511 codes), “History” in turquoise color (375 codes), “Hygiene” (374 codes) in orange, “Location” (255 codes) in purple, “Nature” (233 codes) in blue, “Equipment/Architecture” in green (161 codes) and “Price” (56 codes) in yellow color. It is understood that Kastamonu accommodation businesses may have developed themselves in the themes of "Service", "Staff" and "Food". The positive opinions of the guests stand out in this regard One comment that can be given as an example of a positive comments is as follows:

"It is an incredible privilege for me to discover a corner of paradise where I have accumulated great memories with incredible nature, wonderful service, hospitality and hygiene, 100% organic products grown in their farms, local delicacies, the most beautiful canyons in the world, and unspoiled nature. Endless thanks... Hope to experience these beauties soon again." (Nature/Service/Staff/Hygiene/Food)

As summarized in comments, it can be said that "Service", "Staff", and "Food" themes are the most expressed themes in both positive and negative comments. The “Sound Insulation/Noise” theme is another prominent negative statement. The average score of the comments is 4.3 out of 5. This very high score can show the satisfaction of the guests. In this context, it is considered that the most prominent values of Kastamonu accommodation businesses are similar in positive and negative meanings. However, considering that the scoring averages are high, it is possible to talk about consumer satisfaction in general.

Comments of Managers

The second title of the findings is about managers’ comments. 9 out of 10 accommodation businesses were interviewed. The obtained data were coded, processed, and mapped. The maps prepared using the Hierarchical Code-Sub Code Model were strengthened with the directly transferred interview data. The coding process was carried out by grouping the most repeated themes by taking the opinions of three authors. The first image shown in Figure 6 is related to the impact of TripAdvisor comments on the accommodation businesses.



Figure 6. The Impact of TripAdvisor Comments on Accommodation Business

As given in Figure 6, the effect of TripAdvisor on sales/marketing comes to the fore. According to all participants, thanks to Tripadvisor, an important online channel, sales and marketing activities are positively or negatively affected. Participant (P3) emphasized the importance of the Tripadvisor platform.

P3: "We see that many of our guests review the comments before they travel to Kastamonu. Based on the information we received in our chat or the introduction, Tripadvisor has a great impact on us and people read it one by one. Many questions like how can you guide us, sometimes there was a problem in this room or they recommended this place, actually come from the comments. We focus on the question of how we can improve ourselves within the framework of these comments. It's actually a foresight." (Sales and marketing)

Two questions were asked of the managers of the accommodation businesses about complaint tracking and response (Figure 7).



Figure 7. Complaint Tracking and Response of Accommodation Businesses

As emphasized in Figure 7, it is concluded that accommodation businesses follow up and respond to complaints. These data show that accommodation businesses care about TripAdvisor reviews. P6 and P9 stated that they follow and respond to TripAdvisor comments as follows:

P6: “We do not follow the comments daily. We follow up monthly. Of course, we thank them for the positive comments, but we try to go over the bad comments so that it does not happen again. Our system works as follows. Our headquarters do this. They read comments and notify us. They inform us that there is a complaint about a specific issue, and we reply and fix the problem as soon as possible.” (Following/Replying)

P9: “I was very interested in comments before the pandemic. After the pandemic, I care less. But, our reviews are generally good. When there is a comment that bothers me very badly, I get back to the customer and talk to him. I am contacting one-on-one and trying to resolve the issue. Believe me, I have guests who come. We never give evasive answers to customers. We tell them what we can do in line with the customer's wishes. We have good relations with our customers.” (Following/Replying)

Another question posed to the managers of accommodation businesses is how they handled the complaint (Figure 8).

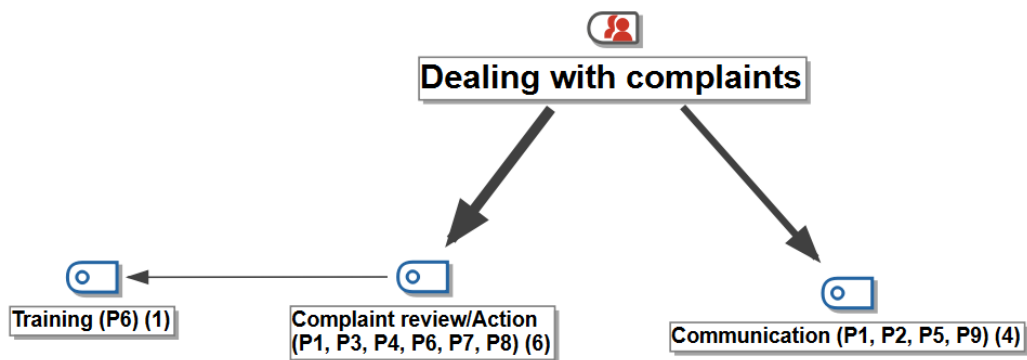


Figure 8. Complaint Overcoming Methods

As indicated in Figure 8, the attempts of the managers of accommodation businesses to resolve the complaints are grouped under two headings: complaint review/action (6 participants) and communication (4 participants).

P6 and P7 emphasized that it is valuable to get down to the root of the problem and take precautions to overcome the complaints, while P6 stressed that training is given to the employee:

P6: "We examine the complaints and improve ourselves in this regard. Our restaurant manager gives training to our staff. In the sections related to accommodation, we pay a little more attention to spraying if there is a problem with hygiene. In terms of cleaning, the department chiefs train the personnel again, and we fix it that way." (Complaint Review/Action - Training)

P7: "Every complaint shows us our shortcomings. We try to fix all our deficiencies by dealing with the deficiencies

as much as we can. This is an advantage for us. It is not negative. Let me give an example, we did not have trash cans in the rooms after we got some complaints, so we put trash cans in each room. The guests like it very much." (Complaint Review/Action)

Accommodation business managers gave different answers to the types of complaints (Figure 9).

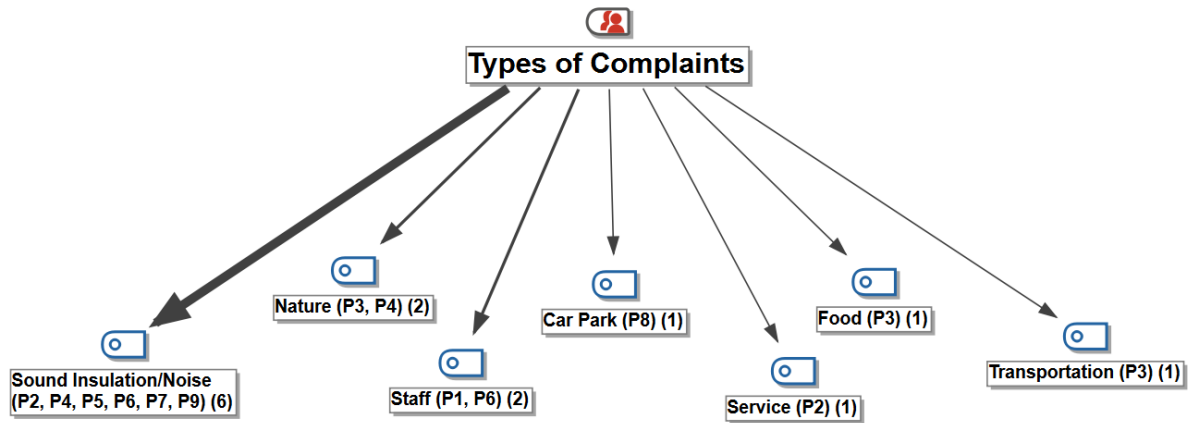


Figure 9. Types of Complaints

As can be seen in Figure 9, it is understood that the complaints are mostly related to the “Sound Insulation/Noise” (6 participants) theme. When the participants' opinions are examined, it is mentioned that the reason for this is the mansion structures in Kastamonu. P4 stated that they developed a new project to solve the problem related to the "Sound Insulation/Noise" theme:

P4: “In our facility, guests mostly complain about the sound insulation. Therefore, taking this into account, we will implement 100% sound insulation in our new project. After we move to our new building, we will solve this sound insulation.” (Sound Insulation/Noise)

The last question directed to the managers of the accommodation businesses is about the prominent positive and negative aspects of the accommodation businesses (Figure 10).

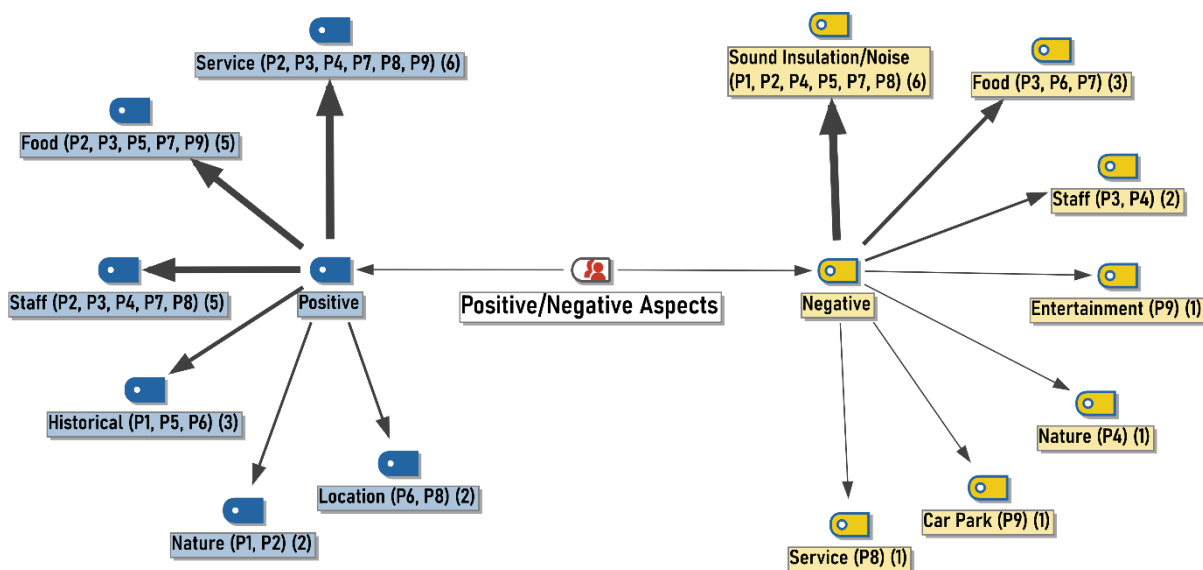


Figure 10. Managers' Opinions on Positive/Negative Aspects of Kastamonu Province and Accommodation Businesses

As indicated in Figure 10, it is assumed that the shortcomings and positive aspects of the managers are similar to the customer comments on TripAdvisor. In this context, it appears that the most positive aspects are "Service" (6 participants), "Food" (5 participants), and "Staff" (5 participants), while "Sound Insulation/Noise" (6 participants), "Food" (3 participants) and "Staff" (2 participants) stand out as negative aspects.

P1 and P2 expressed the prominent positive and negative aspects of Kastamonu province and accommodation businesses as follows:

P1: "Kastamonu is primarily a city with unspoiled and undestroyed unique natural beauties, and it is one of the reasons for preference because its history and mystical texture are also at the forefront. Likewise, our facility is a business that can attract and fascinate people with its nature and experience. In short, Kastamonu is a city where you can feel the green and live nature to the fullest." (Positive-Historical/Nature)

P1: "As Kastamonu cannot be a perfect destination region, there are definitely many cons. Almost the same problems arise in all facilities and go on and on as long as they are not resolved, but it should not be forgotten that most of the facilities in this city serve as mansions and are wooden. When it comes to insulation, unfortunately wooden buildings cannot be insulated like reinforced concrete buildings. If the guests are aware of this, this situation may not be too much of a problem for them." (Negative-Sound Insulation/Noise)

P2: "Service, staff, and food are definitely the most liked themes. Because this is a local place, those who come are guests in that profile. Our facility is also a nature hotel. Guests evaluate the service they receive. Friendliness is very important to them. If not, it will not. Many people write about my staff. In general, children enjoy staying very well. Because we have horses, an outdoor pool and a sports facility. We have room to move." (Positive-Service/Staff/Food/Nature)

P2: "When there is live music, some of our guests feel disturbed. We end live music at around 12:15 pm so that our customers do not complain. There can be complaints about this aspect in the sound/noise section." (Negative-Sound Insulation/Noise)

P5 mentioned that the "Sound Insulation/Noise" problem is a problem that cannot be solved alone:

P5: "The issue of sound insulation is also valid for us. Sound insulation is a process that should be done jointly with the Ministry of Culture. Fixing this sound insulation can be a very long process." (Negative-Sound Insulation/Noise – Food)

To sum up, managers will likely evaluate the TripAdvisor channel as an effective channel for sales and marketing. It is seen that they follow and reply to the comments on this channel. In this context, attempts to question and prevent the causes of their complaints and communicating with guests are among the methods they use to overcome complaints. While sound insulation noise is the most common complaint, service, staff, and food themes are the most prominent positive aspects. The opinions of the managers and the TripAdvisor comments show parallelism. In this context, the managers of accommodation businesses are aware of the requests and expectations of the guests. Considering the high average of TripAdvisor points, it is possible to talk about consumer-oriented service production and delivery.

Discussion and Conclusions

Social media platforms influence almost every aspect of life (Mujahid & Mubarik, 2021; Goktepe & Ogretmenoglu, 2023). While these platforms are sometimes used for business purposes, sometimes they are known as places where individuals share various posts under the name of purely socializing. One of the most prominent social platforms that have an essential place in the tourism sector is the TripAdvisor application (Ogretmenoglu et al., 2023).

In this research, besides the comments about the touristic product or service experienced, the opinions of the accommodation business managers were also a matter of curiosity. The authors of this research tried to determine this situation in Kastamonu.

This research discussed the 10 accommodation businesses that received the most comments in Kastamonu. Considering the average score of 10 businesses, it was identified that the average was 4.3 out of 5. It was determined that "service", "sound insulation/noise" and "food" themes came to the fore the most among the negative comments made to the aforementioned accommodation businesses. In contrast, "service," "staff," and "food" took first place in the positive comments. In this case, considering that Kastamonu has a rich cuisine and that the food and beverages belonging to a region will not suit every person's taste, it is considered normal to evaluate the food issue both positively and negatively. In the manager evaluations section, interviews were conducted with 9 out of 10 accommodation businesses. Managers stated that TripAdvisor plays a key role, especially in sales/marketing, and that they regularly follow and respond to TripAdvisor comments. It is stated in the literature that social media platforms have an impact on sales, marketing, and business performance. Customers are affected by the comments and may change their purchasing decisions (Yadav & Arora, 2012; Filieri et al., 2015; Chung & Han, 2017; Armutcu et al., 2023). In this respect, the findings are similar to the literature.

Furthermore, managers emphasized that they examine the complaints about their businesses, take measures in this direction, and try to make them more competent in guest relations by providing internal training to their employees. The literature emphasizes that managers should implement complaint management processes successfully. In this context, social media platforms need to be included in strategic management processes (Schuckert et al., 2015; Xie et al., 2016; Raguseo & Vitari, 2017; Lunkes et al., 2019; Bortoluzzi et al., 2020; Kamble et al., 2020; Mathews et al., 2021). These findings of the research are similar to those of the literature.

When TripAdvisor data and the opinions of business managers were compared, it was seen that the complaints - positive and negative- concentrated on the same themes. The most prominent negative aspects are sound, food, staff, and service. The most prominent positive aspects are service, food, and staff. The literature mentions the variety of Kastamonu dishes. It is said that it comes to the fore with local dishes (Mızrak et al., 2017; Aydoğdu & Duman, 2017; Akkuş et al., 2019). The research findings differ from the literature in that complaints and negative thoughts about food exist. There are also complaints about personnel. The literature mentions the lack of qualified personnel in Kastamonu province (Oktay et al., 2016; Zengin et al., 2019; Yaşar, 2019; Budak & Sökmen, 2022). In this respect, it is similar to the literature.

Moreover, it was determined that there are some differences and similarities between this research and previous research in the literature. At the same time, much previous research focused on negative comments generally and

offered solutions (Gu & Yu, 2014; Xie et al., 2014). In this research, positive-negative TripAdvisor data and manager opinions were taken, and a comparative analysis was made. This research will likely contribute to the literature in this respect. The research differs from others in this aspect. Furthermore, much research has examined comments about businesses on social media platforms such as TripAdvisor (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Liu, 2006; Amblee & Bui, 2007; Zhu & Zhang, 2010; Anderson, 2012; Kim et al., 2016). In this respect, the research has similarities with the aforementioned studies.

Theoretical Contributions

This research fills some gaps in the literature and contributes theoretically. First, in this research, TripAdvisor data was examined from the perspective of both managers and customers. It is stated in the literature that social media platforms affect consumers' purchasing decisions. Social media platforms have many positive or negative effects on the performance of businesses. Therefore, these platforms need to be managed within the framework of a strategic management approach (Schuckert et al., 2015; Lunkes et al., 2019; Bortoluzzi et al., 2020; Kamble et al., 2020; Mathews et al., 2021). In this context, the opinions of managers are important. Studies that obtain managers' opinions will help reveal the impact of eWOM on the business. However, it is stated that the literature generally focuses on consumers (e.g., Camilleri and Neuhofer, 2017; Gonçalves et al., 2018; Reyes Menendez et al., 2019; Sohaib et al., 2019; Yuan et al., 2020; Golmohammadi et al., 2020; Pourfakhimi et al., 2020). Studies need to examine managers' views on this issue (Xie et al., 2016; Baka, 2016; Berne-Manero et al., 2020; Usai et al., 2021). It is necessary to examine how managers will manage eWOM processes (Xie et al., 2016; Baka, 2016; Shwetzzer et al., 2019; Pourfakhimi et al., 2020).

Another contribution is related to studies on the Kastamonu region. Kastamonu is a region with significant tourism potential. It has many alternative tourism types (Göktuğ, & Arpa, 2015; Çoban, & Aydınözü, 2016; Mızrak et al., 2017; Aydoğdu, & Duman, 2017; Aktepe et al., 2017; Akkuş et al., 2019; Akkuş, & Akkuş, 2019). It welcomes visitors from different countries (Budak & Sökmen, 2022). However, studies on TripAdvisor data are limited in Kastamonu province. Yaşar (2019) and Budak and Sökmen (2022) studied this issue. However, among these studies, Yaşar (2019) examined local restaurants, and Budak & Sökmen (2022) examined TripAdvisor reviews. There is no study examining the issue from the eWOM perspective of managers. The literature talks about the importance of the eWOM concept in accommodation businesses. Therefore, this research can provide valuable data for tourism in the region.

Practical Contributions

This research contributes theoretically to the literature and provides practical benefits. For instance, it has been revealed what opportunities businesses can obtain from coping with complaints. In addition, this research provides practical benefits in terms of being able to recognize the deficiencies and outstanding values of accommodation businesses. The accommodation businesses' paying attention to consumer comments and taking constructive steps in this direction will reflect positively on the enterprise's profitability, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. For example, if customers are unsatisfied with the accommodation business's food, they can add different food options to their menus. If they are unsatisfied with the cleanliness, they can take the necessary measures and talk to the staff. In this way, they can understand customer feedback and improve and change their business processes. Following customer feedback and adopting a sustainable improvement perspective can increase customer satisfaction rates over

time.

The findings clearly show that accommodation businesses should take online reviews into account. In this context, accommodation businesses should include social media platforms in their strategic management processes. In this way, they can better understand the customer's wishes and expectations. Additionally, effective use of these platforms should be ensured and monitored. Customer complaints must be resolved quickly and effectively.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

This research was conducted exclusively on the TripAdvisor platform. Future researchers can apply this research to other online travel platforms such as Expedia, Booking, and Trip. Another suggestion for future research is to expand the sample to include other cities to gain broad coverage and understand whether the results are valid in different cities or regions worldwide. Additionally, this research is limited to only 10 accommodation businesses in Kastamonu. Different types of tourism businesses, such as all accommodation businesses or food and beverage businesses, can be examined in other research. Finally, the data included in the research consists of data collected until the seventh month of 2022. Data covering a more exhaustive process may reveal more specific results.

Declaration

All authors of the article contributed equally to the article process. The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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