



How online review dimensions shape booking decisions: Evidence from Traveloka users in Surabaya

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Abstract

Purpose – This study seeks to analyze the influence of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) dimensions on booking decisions for star-rated hotels in Surabaya via the Traveloka platform.

Design/methodology/approach – This study adopts a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design. Data were obtained from 100 respondents selected through purposive sampling, specifically Traveloka users who have previously booked star-rated hotels in Surabaya. The data were then analyzed using multiple linear regression techniques with the assistance of SPSS software.

Findings – The findings reveal that eWOM Quality, eWOM Quantity, and Sender's Expertise collectively exert a significant influence on booking decisions. Partially, all variables also show positive and significant effects, with eWOM Quality identified as the most dominant variable. The model explains 69.8% of the variance in booking decisions.

Research limitations – This study is limited to three eWOM dimensions and domestic tourists in Surabaya. Future research is suggested to include additional variables and broader research contexts to improve generalizability.

Implications – The results emphasize the importance of effectively managing online reviews, as review quality, quantity, and source credibility are key factors in influencing consumer trust and booking decisions on online travel platforms.

Originality – This study offers empirical insights into the collective influence of eWOM dimensions on hotel booking decisions within the context of Traveloka users in Surabaya.

Keywords: Electronic Word-Of-Mouth, eWOM Quality, Booking Decision, Sender's Expertise, Online Reviews

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism plays a significant role in promoting economic growth in Indonesia (Johanes & Takari, 2024). The sector contributes to job creation, increases community income, and stimulates broader economic development. Furthermore, tourism generates a multiplier effect by not only benefiting tourism-related businesses directly but also influencing supporting sectors such as transportation, hospitality, and other service industries (Siswahto & Muryani, 2020). Due to its strategic importance, the Indonesian government continues to promote tourism development through destination improvement, infrastructure enhancement, and the adoption

of digital technology to improve service quality and attract both domestic and international tourists.

In recent years, Indonesia's tourism industry has shown a positive growth trend. Data from BPS Indonesia (2024) indicates that domestic tourist trips reached 1.02 billion in 2024, representing an increase of 21.61% compared to the previous year. This growth has led to a rising demand for accommodation, particularly hotels, which play a central role in supporting tourism activities. Among various types of accommodation, star-rated hotels are often preferred due to their standardized facilities and service quality. However, their relatively higher cost encourages consumers to seek more comprehensive information before making booking decisions.

The rapid growth of tourism has also accelerated digital transformation in the hospitality industry. Hotels are increasingly adopting technological solutions to enhance operational efficiency and improve the overall customer experience (Ramadhan & Suharto, 2024). One of the key platforms supporting this transformation is the Online Travel Agent (OTA), which facilitates the search, comparison, and booking of accommodation services (Sitompul & Nurbaeti, 2023). Online travel agencies play a vital role in facilitating consumer decision-making by providing accessible information, price comparisons, and user-generated reviews in a single platform (Xiang et al., 2015). Among numerous OTA platforms in Indonesia, Traveloka stands out as one of the most popular, offering a range of integrated services such as hotel bookings, transportation tickets, and travel packages (Statista, 2023).

The increasing use of digital platforms has transformed tourist behavior, making online information sources a primary reference in travel planning and decision-making (Buhalis & Law, 2008). In the digital era, online promotion through OTA platforms and social media has become essential for hotels to reach a broader market. Hotels actively utilize digital content such as reviews, ratings, photos, and promotional offers to influence consumer perceptions (Soegiarto & Yuliamir, 2025). In this context, online review has emerged as a key factor influencing consumer behavior. eWOM is defined as positive or negative consumer opinions regarding products or services that are shared via the internet and can be accessed by a broad audience (Pentury et al., 2019). eWOM has been widely recognized as a critical source of information in online environments, as it enables consumers to reduce uncertainty and evaluate alternatives based on the experiences of others (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). As part of digital marketing communication, eWOM plays a strategic role in influencing consumer perceptions, shaping attitudes, and ultimately driving decision-making processes in the tourism and hospitality sectors (Yudhiasta et al., 2023).

To gain a deeper understanding of the role of eWOM in shaping consumer behavior, previous studies have demonstrated its significant influence in the hospitality sector. Ardiansyah & Leejoeiwara (2023) found that eWOM dimensions, including quality, quantity, and reviewer credibility, have a positive and significant effect on hotel booking intention through OTA platforms, with eWOM quantity showing the most dominant influence. Similarly, Pentury et al. (2019) revealed that eWOM significantly affects brand image and indirectly influences purchase intention in the context of hotel services. Both studies applied eWOM dimensions derived from Lin et al. (2013), emphasizing the significance of review quality, quantity, and sender's expertise in influencing consumer perceptions and decision-making processes.

Despite the rapid growth of tourism, hotel occupancy rates in East Java have remained relatively stable in recent years. Data from BPS Indonesia (2024) shows that occupancy rates were 52.78% in 2022, increased slightly to 53.56% in 2023, and marginally decreased to 53.54% in 2024. This condition indicates intense competition among hotels in attracting consumers. The competition is especially evident in urban areas such as Surabaya, which serves as the economic and business center of East Java and has a high concentration of star-rated hotels.

In a highly competitive environment, it is crucial for hotel businesses to identify the factors that influence tourists' booking decisions. Although many studies have explored the role of electronic word of mouth (eWOM), most have focused on general online platforms, and limited attention has been given to examining these dimensions simultaneously within OTA platforms such as Traveloka, particularly in highly competitive urban contexts. This highlights a research gap that warrants further investigation.

Based on prior studies and theoretical perspectives, the dimensions of eWOM are expected to influence consumer decision-making. In online contexts, trust plays a crucial role in shaping consumer decision-making, as individuals tend to rely on credible and reliable information when evaluating products or services (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). High-quality reviews provide clear and relevant information that reduces uncertainty and increases confidence in booking decisions. Information quality has been identified as a key determinant in influencing consumer attitudes, as clear, relevant, and accurate information enhances decision confidence (Filiari, 2016). A greater quantity of reviews serves as social proof, indicating popularity and credibility, while sender's expertise enhances trust in the information provided. The volume of online reviews also serves as a form of social proof, where a higher number of reviews signals greater popularity and acceptance among consumers (Park & Lee, 2009).

Based on these considerations, the following hypotheses are formulated:

- H1. eWOM Quality has a positive and significant effect on booking decision.
- H2. eWOM Quantity has a positive and significant effect on booking decision.
- H3. Sender's Expertise has a positive and significant effect on booking decision.

Therefore, this study seeks to examine how the three dimensions of electronic word of mouth (eWOM), namely eWOM quality, eWOM quantity, and sender's expertise, as proposed by Lin et al. (2013), influence the booking decision at star-rated hotels in Surabaya through Traveloka. This focus is important because Traveloka is one of the most widely used OTA platforms in Indonesia, and consumers tend to be more selective when choosing star-rated hotels due to their standardized services and relatively higher costs.

METHODS

This study adopts a quantitative approach with an explanatory design to investigate the influence of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) on booking decisions for star-rated hotels in Surabaya through the Traveloka platform. The independent variable is eWOM, which consists of three dimensions based on Lin et al. (2013): eWOM quality (X_1), eWOM quantity (X_2), and sender's expertise (X_3). The dependent variable is booking decision (Y). All variables were measured using a 1–5 Likert scale, a widely applied instrument for assessing attitudes, perceptions, and opinions in quantitative research (Sugiyono, 2024).

The population of this study comprises domestic tourists who have booked and stayed in star-rated hotels in Surabaya via Traveloka. The sample size was calculated using the Lemeshow formula for an unknown population, yielding a minimum requirement of 96 respondents; however, 100 respondents were included to enhance the reliability of the data. The study applied purposive sampling, where respondents were chosen according to predefined criteria, namely Indonesian citizens aged 19–40 years who have booked and stayed in star-rated hotels in Surabaya via Traveloka within the past two years and have reviewed online feedback before making booking decisions. Data were gathered using a structured online questionnaire administered through the Google Forms platform.

Before conducting the analysis, the instrument was evaluated for validity using Pearson product-moment correlation and for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha. The data were analyzed using SPSS software, followed by classical assumption tests—including normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity—to ensure the appropriateness of the regression

model. Hypothesis testing was conducted using multiple linear regression analysis, incorporating t-tests to evaluate partial effects, F-tests to examine simultaneous effects, and the coefficient of determination (R^2) to assess the model's explanatory power.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics by Age

No.	Age of Respondents	Number	Percentage
1.	19-25 Years Old	86	86%
2.	26-30 Years Old	5	5%
3.	31-35 Years Old	1	1%
4.	36-40 Years Old	8	8%
	Total	100	100%

Source: Researcher, 2025

Table 2. Respondent Characteristic by Gender

No.	Gender	Number	Total
1.	Man	38	38%
2.	Woman	62	62%
	Total	100	100%

Source: Researcher, 2025

The characteristics of respondents indicate that the majority are aged 19–25 years (86%), followed by 36–40 years (8%), 26–30 years (5%), and 31–35 years (1%). In terms of gender, most respondents are female (62%), while male respondents account for 38%. These findings suggest that the sample is dominated by young travelers, particularly from Generation Z.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 3. Descriptive Statistic

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
eWOM Quality (X1)	100	18	30	25.91	3.226
eWOM Quantity (X2)	100	18	30	26.33	2.885
Senders Expertise (X3)	100	17	30	26.21	3.102
Decision to Stay (Y)	100	24	40	35.37	3.786
Valid N (listwise)	100				

Source: SPSS 30, 2025

Descriptive statistical analysis indicates that the eWOM Quality variable (X1) has a mean value of 25.91, with scores ranging from 18 to 30 and a standard deviation of 3.226. The eWOM Quantity variable (X2) records a mean of 26.33, with a minimum of 18 and a maximum of 30, and a standard deviation of 2.885. Similarly, the Sender's Expertise variable (X3) shows a mean value of 26.21, ranging from 17 to 30, with a standard deviation of 3.102. Meanwhile, the Decision to Stay variable (Y) has a mean of 35.37, with values ranging from 24 to 40 and a standard deviation of 3.786. Overall, the relatively high mean scores across all variables indicate that respondents tend to exhibit favorable perceptions toward eWOM on Traveloka and demonstrate a strong inclination toward booking star-rated hotels in Surabaya.

Instrument Testing

1. Validity Test

Table 4. Validity Test

Variabel	Sub Variabel	Indikator	r. count	r.tabel	Result
Electric Word of Mouth (X)	eWOM Quality (X1)	X1.1	0.731	0.1966	Valid
		X1.2	0.716	0.1966	
		X1.3	0.777	0.1966	
		X1.4	0.801	0.1966	
		X1.5	0.744	0.1966	
		X1.6	0.768	0.1966	
	eWOM Quantity (X2)	X.2.1	0.661	0.1966	Valid
		X.2.2	0.728	0.1966	
		X.2.3	0.690	0.1966	
		X.2.4	0.745	0.1966	
		X.2.5	0.728	0.1966	
		X.2.6	0.706	0.1966	
	Sender's Expertise (X3)	X.3.1	0.659	0.1966	Valid
		X.3.2	0.754	0.1966	
		X.3.3	0.748	0.1966	
		X.3.4	0.757	0.1966	
		X.3.5	0.705	0.1966	
		X.3.6	0.726	0.1966	
Booking Decisions (Y)		Y1	0.774	0.1966	Valid
		Y2	0.698	0.1966	
		Y3	0.789	0.1966	
		Y4	0.647	0.1966	
		Y5	0.678	0.1966	
		Y6	0.788	0.1966	
		Y7	0.726	0.1966	
		Y8	0.648	0.1966	

Source: SPSS 30, 2025

The validity test results show that all measurement items for eWOM Quality (X1), eWOM Quantity (X2), Sender's Expertise (X3), and Booking Decision (Y) are valid. All items have correlation coefficients (r-calculated) greater than the critical value of 0.1966 (df = 98; $\alpha = 0.05$) and significance values below 0.05. These findings indicate that each item is appropriate and capable of measuring its respective variable accurately.

2. Reliability Test

Table 5. Reliability Test

Variabel	Cronbach's Alpha	Standar Reliabel	Keterangan
eWOM Quality (X1)	0.844	0,60	Reliable
eWOM Quantity (X2)	0.802		
Sender's Expertise (X3)	0.814		
Decision to Stay (Y)	0.866		

Source: SPSS 30, 2025

The reliability test results indicate that all variables meet the acceptable reliability threshold, with Cronbach’s Alpha values exceeding 0.60. The eWOM Quality (X1), eWOM Quantity (X2), Sender’s Expertise (X3), and Booking Decision (Y) variables obtained Cronbach’s Alpha values of 0.844, 0.802, 0.814, and 0.866, respectively. These results demonstrate that all measurement items have good internal consistency and are reliable for further analysis.

Classical Assumption Test

1. Normality Test

Table 6. Normality Test
One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Unstandardized Residual		
N		100		
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}		Mean	.0000000	
		Std. Deviation	2.08110104	
Most Extreme Differences	Extreme	Absolute	.063	
		Positive	.063	
		Negative	-.061	
Test Statistic		.063		
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) ^c		.200 ^d		
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed) ^e	Sig. (2-tailed)	Sig.	.428	
		99% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	.415
			Upper Bound	.441

- a. Test distribution is Normal.
- b. Calculated from data.
- c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.
- d. This is a lower bound of the true significance.
- e. Lilliefors' method based on 10000 Monte Carlo samples with starting seed 2000000.

Source: SPSS 30, 2025

The results of the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test show that the residual data are normally distributed. As indicated in Table X, the test statistic value is 0.063 and the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.200, which is above the 0.05 threshold. Moreover, the Monte Carlo significance value of 0.428, with a 99% confidence interval between 0.415 and 0.441, further supports this conclusion. Thus, the regression model satisfies the normality assumption and can be used for subsequent analysis.

2. Multicollinearity Test

Table 7. Multicollinearity Test
Coefficients^a

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
1 X1	.605	1.652
X2	.424	2.358
X3	.486	2.056

a. Dependent Variable: Y

Source: SPSS 30, 2025

The results of the multicollinearity test show that all independent variables meet the required criteria. Specifically, eWOM Quality (X1) has a tolerance value of 0.605 and a VIF of 1.652, eWOM Quantity (X2) has a tolerance value of 0.424 and a VIF of 2.358, and Sender’s Expertise (X3) has a tolerance value of 0.486 and a VIF of 2.056. Since all tolerance values exceed 0.10 and all VIF values are below 10, it can be concluded that no multicollinearity exists among the independent variables. Therefore, the regression model is considered appropriate for further analysis.

3. Heteroscedasticity Test

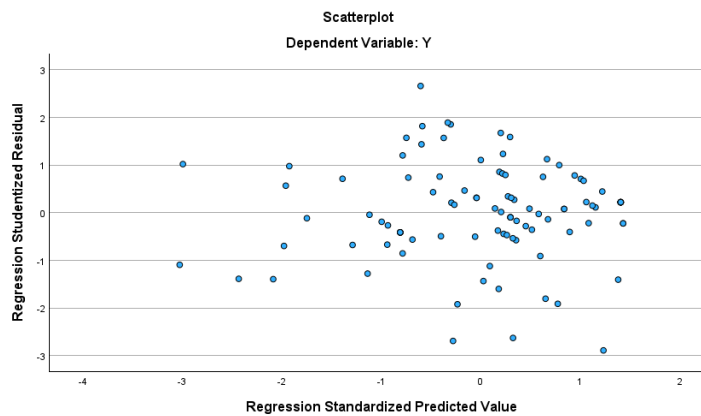


Image 1. Scatterplot Test
Source: SPSS 30, 2025

The results of the heteroscedasticity test indicate that the regression model is free from heteroscedasticity. The scatterplot of standardized predicted values and studentized residuals demonstrates a random distribution of data points without any discernible pattern, as they are dispersed both above and below the zero line. Furthermore, the Glejser test shows that all independent variables have significance values greater than 0.05, confirming the absence of heteroscedasticity. Therefore, the model meets the homoscedasticity assumption and is appropriate for further analysis.

Table 8. Glesjer Test
Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	4.517	1.588		2.845	.005
1 X1	.038	.059	.081	.649	.518
X2	-.096	.084	-.172	-1.134	.260
X3	-.046	.074	-.088	-.618	.538

a. Dependent Variable: ABS_RES

Source: SPSS 30, 2025

The Glejser test results show that all independent variables have significance values exceeding the 0.05 threshold. Specifically, eWOM Quality (X1), eWOM Quantity (X2), and Sender’s Expertise (X3) have significance values of 0.518, 0.260, and 0.536, respectively. These results indicate that the regression model is free from heteroscedasticity, meaning that the homoscedasticity assumption has been fulfilled.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 9. Multiple Linear Regression Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	4.403	2.116		2.081	.040
eWOM Quality	.512	.085	.436	6.045	<.001
eWOM Quantity	.326	.113	.248	2.880	.005
Senders Expertise	.349	.098	.286	3.551	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: Decision to Stay

Source: SPSS 30, 2025

The multiple linear regression results produce the following equation: $Y = 4.403 + 0.512X_1 + 0.326X_2 + 0.349X_3 + \epsilon$. All independent variables have positive and significant effects on the booking decision. eWOM Quality (X_1) shows the strongest effect ($\beta = 0.512$; $p < 0.01$), followed by Sender's Expertise (X_3) ($\beta = 0.349$; $p < 0.001$) and eWOM Quantity (X_2) ($\beta = 0.326$; $p = 0.005$). These results indicate that higher levels of eWOM dimensions are associated with increased booking decisions.

Hypothesis Test

1. Partial test (T-Test)

Based on Table 9, the T-test results show that all independent variables have a significant effect on the booking decision. eWOM Quality (X_1) has a significance value of less than 0.001, eWOM Quantity (X_2) has a significance value of 0.005 ($p < 0.05$), and Sender's Expertise (X_3) also shows a significance value of less than 0.001. Therefore, all variables significantly influence the booking decision.

2. Simultaneous Test (F-Test)

Table 10. Simultaneous Test ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	990.543	3	330.181	73.927	<.001 ^b
Residual	428.767	96	4.466		
Total	1419.310	99			

a. Dependent Variable: Decision to Stay

b. Predictors: (Constant), Senders Expertise, eWOM Quality, eWOM Quantity

Source: SPSS 30, 2025

The F-test results indicate that the regression model is statistically significant, with an F-value of 73.927 and a significance level below 0.001. As the p-value is less than 0.05, it can be inferred that eWOM Quality (X_1), eWOM Quantity (X_2), and Sender's Expertise (X_3) simultaneously exert a significant influence on booking decision (Y). Therefore, the regression model is deemed appropriate.

3. Coefficient of Determination (R²)

Table 11. Coefficient of Determination
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.835 ^a	.698	.688	2.11337

a. Predictors: (Constant), Senders Expertise, eWOM Quality, eWOM Quantity

Source: SPSS 30, 2025

The results of the coefficient of determination show that the model yields an R² value of 0.698 and an adjusted R² of 0.688. This indicates that eWOM Quality (X₁), eWOM Quantity (X₂), and Sender's Expertise (X₃) collectively account for 69.8% of the variation in booking decision (Y), while the remaining 30.2% is explained by other factors beyond the scope of this study.

Discussion

Before discussing the hypothesis testing result, it is important to consider the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The sample is dominated individuals aged 19-25 (86%), indicating a relatively homogeneous age distribution. This concentration may influence the study findings, as younger consumers tend to be more familiar with digital platforms and more actively engaged with online reviews. Consequently, their perceptions of eWOM may be stronger compared to other age groups, which may limit the generalizability of the results to be a broader population. Therefore, the findings of this study should be interpreted with caution.

1. The Simultaneous Effect of eWOM Quality (X₁), eWOM Quantity (X₂), and Sender's Expertise (X₃) on Booking Decision (Y)

The F-test results demonstrate that eWOM Quality (X₁), eWOM Quantity (X₂), and Sender's Expertise (X₃) simultaneously exert a significant influence on booking decision (Y). This indicates that the three dimensions of eWOM collectively play a crucial role in shaping tourists' decisions when choosing star-rated hotels in Surabaya through the Traveloka platform.

These results imply that booking decision is not determined by a single dimension of eWOM, but rather by the combined influence of multiple aspects. Consumers tend to evaluate online reviews comprehensively by considering the quality of information provided, the volume of reviews available, and the credibility of the reviewers. High-quality reviews help reduce uncertainty, a greater number of reviews signals popularity and reliability, and credible reviewers enhance trust in the information presented.

Conceptually, these findings are consistent with the notion that consumer decision-making in online environments is influenced by both informational and social factors, which jointly shape attitudes and behavioral intentions (Kotler & Keller, 2015). In this context, eWOM quality represents informational factors, while eWOM quantity and sender's expertise reflect social influence and credibility cues. The integration of these elements strengthens consumers' confidence in evaluating hotel options. As a result, these factors jointly contribute to the formation of booking decisions in the digital environment.

Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R² = 0.698) shows that the model accounts for a considerable proportion of the variance in booking decisions, while the remaining variance is explained by factors outside the scope of this study. This underscores the significance of eWOM as a key factor influencing consumer behavior, particularly in the context of online hotel booking through OTA platforms.

These findings are consistent with previous studies, such as Ardiansyah and Leejoeiwara (2023) and Pentury et al. (2019), which demonstrate that eWOM significantly influences

consumer intentions and decisions. These findings are further supported by prior research indicating that online reviews play a significant role in shaping consumer purchase decisions and behavioral intentions in digital environments (Filiari & McLeay, 2014). Therefore, the model applied in this study is relevant in explaining the behavior of domestic tourists in selecting accommodation services.

2. The Effect of eWOM Quality (X1) on Booking Decision (Y)

The t-test results indicate that eWOM Quality (X1) has a positive and significant effect on booking decision (Y). This finding suggests that higher-quality reviews on the Traveloka platform increase the likelihood of domestic tourists choosing star-rated hotels in Surabaya.

In this research, eWOM quality is reflected through indicators such as clarity, ease of understanding, relevance, completeness of information, and perceived trustworthiness of reviews. The results show that respondents generally perceive online reviews as clear, relevant, and reliable sources of information. This indicates that consumers rely on review content as a primary reference in evaluating hotel options rather than merely as supplementary information.

From an analytical perspective, high-quality reviews help reduce uncertainty by providing detailed and understandable descriptions of hotel experiences. Information related to key aspects such as facilities, cleanliness, and service quality enables potential customers to form clearer expectations. In addition, the perceived credibility and consistency of reviews with actual experiences strengthen consumer trust, thereby reducing perceived risk in the booking process.

These findings are consistent with prior studies demonstrating that eWOM quality significantly influences consumer decision-making. This result supports the eWOM framework proposed by Lin et al. (2013), which highlights information quality as a critical factor in shaping consumer attitudes and decisions in digital environments.

In addition, this finding is reinforced by Fan et al., (2013), who found that the quality of online reviews significantly affects perceived credibility and influences consumers' adoption of eWOM information. This suggests that higher-quality information not only enhances trust but also strengthens consumers' decision-making processes. Furthermore, prior research by Chevalier & Mayzlin, (2006) also indicates that online reviews play a significant role in shaping consumer purchase intentions in digital environments.

3. The Effect of eWOM Quantity (X2) on Booking Decision (Y)

The t-test results indicate that eWOM Quantity (X2) has a positive and significant effect on booking decision (Y). This finding suggests that a higher number of reviews on the Traveloka platform increases the likelihood of domestic tourists choosing star-rated hotels in Surabaya.

In this study, eWOM quantity is reflected through indicators such as the number of reviews, the frequency of updates, and comparisons with competing hotels. The findings show that respondents perceive a larger volume of reviews as providing more comprehensive and diverse information regarding previous guests' experiences. This allows potential customers to form a more informed evaluation of hotel quality.

From an analytical perspective, the number of reviews functions as a form of social proof, where consumers interpret a higher volume of feedback as an indication of popularity and credibility. In addition, frequently updated reviews enhance confidence by signaling that the information reflects the hotel's current condition. This demonstrates that consumers consider not only the quantity but also the timeliness of reviews in their decision-making process.

These findings are consistent with prior research, such as Ardiansyah and Leejoeiwara (2023), which highlights eWOM quantity as a significant and even dominant factor influencing booking intention. Therefore, eWOM quantity serves as an important signal of trust and popularity, ultimately strengthening consumers' confidence in making booking decisions.

4. The Effect of Sender's Expertise (X₃) on Booking Decision (Y)

The t-test results indicate that Sender's Expertise (X₃) has a positive and significant effect on booking decision (Y). This finding suggests that the credibility and competence of reviewers play an important role in influencing travelers' decisions when selecting hotels.

In this research, sender's expertise is reflected through indicators such as the reviewer's perceived experience, verified guest status, and the quality of arguments presented in the reviews. The findings show that respondents tend to rely more on reviews written by experienced or verified users, as these are perceived as more credible and authentic. The presence of verification features further strengthens trust, as it signals that the review is based on actual experience.

From an analytical perspective, reviews that provide detailed, logical, and well-structured explanations are considered more persuasive than brief or vague comments. This indicates that consumers evaluate not only the content of the message but also the credibility of the source and the way the information is communicated. Higher perceived expertise enhances trust in the information, thereby reducing uncertainty in the decision-making process.

This finding is supported by Pentury et al. (2019), who found that eWOM has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention in the context of hotel booking through Online Travel Agents (OTAs). This suggests that reviews written based on personal experience and knowledge can enhance consumers' trust and encourage them to make booking decisions. In other words, the more credible and experienced the reviewer is perceived, the stronger the influence on consumers' intention to purchase.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that electronic word of mouth (eWOM) significantly influences booking decisions for star-rated hotels in Surabaya through the Traveloka platform. Simultaneously, eWOM Quality (X₁), eWOM Quantity (X₂), and Sender's Expertise (X₃) have a significant effect on booking decision, indicating that these dimensions collectively shape domestic tourists' accommodation choices.

Partially, all independent variables; eWOM Quality (X₁), eWOM Quantity (X₂) and Sender's Expertise (X₃) are found to significantly influence booking decision, highlighting the importance of review volume and reviewer credibility in shaping consumer trust and evaluation. In addition, eWOM Quality (X₁) emerges as the most dominant factor, as indicated by the highest t-value ($t = 6.045$), demonstrating that the clarity, relevance, and reliability of review content are the strongest determinants of booking decisions.

Furthermore, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.698$) indicates that the model explains a substantial proportion of the variance in booking decision. These findings support the eWOM framework proposed by Lin et al. (2013), which emphasizes the role of information quality, quantity, and source credibility in shaping consumer decision-making. Overall, this study reinforces the importance of online reviews in influencing consumer behavior in the context of online hotel booking.

Limitations

This research has certain limitations. Primarily, it only examines three dimensions of electronic word of mouth (eWOM), specifically eWOM quality, eWOM quantity, and sender's expertise, while excluding other factors that may also influence booking decisions, including price, promotions, brand image, and service quality. Secondly, the study involves a sample of 100 respondents who are Traveloka users with experience booking star-rated hotels in Surabaya, potentially limiting the generalizability of the results. Furthermore, the use of a quantitative approach may not adequately explore deeper aspects of consumer behavior.

Accordingly, future research should consider including additional variables, extending the study to other locations or accommodation types, and utilizing mixed or qualitative methods to achieve a more comprehensive understanding.

Research Implications

The findings of this study provide both practical and theoretical implications. Practically, the results suggest that hotel managers and online travel agent (OTA) platforms such as Traveloka should pay greater attention to the management of online reviews. Improving the quality of review content by encouraging detailed, clear, and relevant feedback from customers can enhance consumer trust and reduce uncertainty in the booking process. In addition, increasing the number of reviews and ensuring the credibility of reviewers, for instance through verification systems, can strengthen the perceived reliability and popularity of hotel services. Therefore, hotels are encouraged to actively engage with customer feedback and maintain service quality to generate positive and trustworthy reviews.

Theoretically, this research validates and expands the eWOM framework introduced by Lin et al. (2013) by confirming the significant influence of eWOM quality, eWOM quantity, and sender's expertise on consumer decision-making. In addition, it enriches the literature by presenting empirical insights in the context of OTA platforms, especially Traveloka, within a competitive urban destination such as Surabaya. The results enhance understanding of the interaction among eWOM dimensions in shaping booking decisions in the digital hospitality sector.

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