

# A study of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction in 3-star hotels in Auckland, New Zealand

Jiixin Li

A dissertation submitted to Auckland University of Technology in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of International Hospitality Management

2020

School of Hospitality and Tourism

Primary Supervisor: Dr Tracy Harkison

Secondary supervisor: Dr David Williamson

## Abstract

Customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the hospitality sector has been discussed by many researchers (Berezina et al., 2016; Padma & Ahn, 2020; Xu & Li, 2016). Previous studies have paid more attention to customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction in luxury hotels and budget hotels. However, according to New Zealand Trade & Enterprise (2016), the middle scale 3-star hotel is an important sector in the New Zealand hospitality industry. This dissertation, therefore, aims to study the main factors influencing customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction in 3-star hotels in Auckland, New Zealand.

The interpretivist paradigm guided this study and a qualitative methodology was applied. The method of data analysis was thematic analysis. Data on seven 3-star hotels in Auckland was collected. TripAdvisor online customer reviews were applied as the database in this study. 74 customer satisfaction reviews and 52 customer dissatisfaction reviews were posted on TripAdvisor between 2013 to 2020, during the summer peak months in New Zealand.

The main factors affecting customer satisfaction in Auckland's 3-star hotels were location, room cleanliness and room facilities. Failure to meet customer expectations regarding room facilities and cleanliness are the main factors leading to customer dissatisfaction. Poor staff performance was also an important element that caused customer dissatisfaction in 3-star hotels. The findings of this study are of benefit to hoteliers in 3-star hotels, as these findings could provide suggestions in terms of how to increase customer satisfaction and decrease dissatisfaction. The findings of this study could also contribute towards understanding customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the current field of academic research on 3-star hotels.

## Table of contents

Abstract .....	i
Table of contents .....	ii
List of tables.....	v
Attestation of authorship.....	vi
Acknowledgements.....	vii
Chapter 1 Introduction.....	1
1.1. Introduction.....	1
1.2. Background.....	1
1.3. Significance of this research.....	3
1.4. Research aims and questions.....	3
1.5. Research methodology.....	4
1.6. Dissertation structure.....	4
Chapter 2 Literature review.....	6
2.1. Introduction.....	6
2.2. The hospitality industry in New Zealand.....	6
2.2.1. The hospitality industry in Auckland.....	7
2.3. Hotel rating internationally.....	7
2.3.1. The definition of 3-star hotels in New Zealand.....	9
2.4. Customer satisfaction.....	10
2.5. Customer dissatisfaction.....	12
2.6. Hotel guest online behaviours.....	13
2.7. Hotel guest online review platforms.....	15
2.7.1. The TripAdvisor platform.....	15
2.8. Research gap.....	16
2.9. Conclusion.....	16
Chapter 3 Methodology.....	18
3.1. Introduction.....	18
3.2. Research objectives.....	18
3.3. Research philosophy.....	18

3.3.1. Research paradigm .....	19
3.3.2. Research ontology .....	21
3.3.3. Research epistemology .....	21
3.4. Methodology.....	23
3.4.1. Choice of research approach – Qualitative approach .....	23
3.5. Secondary data.....	24
3.6. Population and sample .....	25
3.7. Data collection.....	28
3.8. Thematic analysis method.....	30
3.9. Data analysis process .....	31
3.10. Summary.....	39
Chapter 4 Findings and discussion .....	40
4.1. Introduction.....	40
4.2. Customer satisfaction factors identified for Auckland’s 3-star hotels .....	40
4.3. The most common customer satisfaction themes in Auckland’s 3-star hotels ...	41
4.3.1. Location .....	41
4.3.2. Room .....	45
4.3.3. Facilities.....	47
4.4. The secondary category themes of customer satisfaction in Auckland’s 3-star hotels .....	50
4.4.1. Staff performance .....	50
4.4.2. Service .....	51
4.4.3. Food and beverages .....	52
4.4.4. Price.....	52
4.5. Customer dissatisfaction factors identified in Auckland’s 3-star hotels .....	53
4.6. The most common customer dissatisfaction themes in Auckland’s 3-star hotels .....	54
4.6.1. Facilities.....	54
4.6.2. Room .....	57
4.7. The secondary category themes of customer dissatisfaction in Auckland’s 3-star hotels .....	60
4.7.1. Staff performance .....	60
4.7.2. Service .....	61

4.7.3. Price .....	62
Chapter 5 Conclusion .....	64
5.1. Introduction .....	64
5.2. Review of the findings .....	64
5.2.1. Main factors affecting customer satisfaction .....	65
5.2.2. Main factors affecting customer dissatisfaction .....	65
5.3. Implications .....	66
5.4. Limitations .....	68
5.5. Recommendations for future study .....	69
References .....	70

## List of tables

Table 1: The sample of 3-star hotels in Auckland receiving customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction comments on TripAdvisor in the summer months over a seven-year period .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Table 2: Data highlighting and coding example .....	33
Table 3: Initial codes of customer satisfaction reviews .....	34
Table 4: Initial codes of customer dissatisfaction reviews .....	34
Table 5: Themes of customer satisfaction reviews .....	36
Table 6: Themes of customer dissatisfaction reviews .....	36
Table 7: Customer satisfaction themes review .....	37
Table 8: Customer dissatisfaction themes review .....	37
Table 9: Themes and theme descriptions.....	38
Table 10: Themes on customer satisfaction in 3-star hotels in Auckland.....	40
Table 11: Codes that influence customer satisfaction regarding location of 3-star hotels in Auckland .....	41
Table 12: Codes that influence customer satisfaction regarding their room in 3-star hotels in Auckland .....	46
Table 13: Codes that influence customer satisfaction regarding facilities of 3-star hotels in Auckland .....	47
Table 14: Themes on customer dissatisfaction in 3-star hotels in Auckland.....	53
Table 15: Codes that influence customer dissatisfaction regarding facilities of 3-star hotels in Auckland .....	55
Table 16: Codes that influence customer dissatisfaction regarding rooms in 3-star hotels in Auckland .....	57

### **Attestation of authorship**

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.”

Signature: Jiaxin Li

Date: 12 June 2020

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my deep gratitude to my primary supervisor, Dr Tracy Harkison and secondary supervisor, Dr David Williamson. Thanks for their patient guidance, enthusiastic encouragement and useful suggestions during this long dissertation writing process. I am grateful for the assistance given by Dr Tracy Harkison and Dr David Williamson who focused on every detail in my dissertation and offered many useful suggestions in the entire work period. Thanks for their encouragement when I felt confused or frustrated. It would be impossible to finish a quality dissertation without the help of my supervisors. Thank you very much.

At the same time, I would also like to thank my family and friends for their support and help throughout my study, which has greatly encouraged me. Especially, I am grateful to my mum and dad, who supported me emotionally and financially. I always knew that you believed in me and wanted the best for me. Thank you very much.

## Chapter 1 Introduction

### 1.1. Introduction

This dissertation aims to explore the main factors involved in determining customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction in 3-star hotels in Auckland, New Zealand. The introduction will describe the research background and discuss the significance of this study. The objectives and purpose of this study will then be explained. At the end of this chapter, the research methodology and the structure of this dissertation will be presented.

### 1.2. Background

As one of the largest export earners and growth industries, tourism is important to New Zealand's economy (Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, 2019). Tourism revenue has seen a marked increase from NZ\$28.6 billion in 2014 to NZ\$39.1 billion in 2018 (Smiler, 2019). Moreover, the hospitality sector is one of the key components of the tourism industry (Brondoni, 2016). In 2018, New Zealand's hospitality sector achieved record sales of over NZ\$11.2 billion, which is a growth of 3.6% over the previous year (Restaurant Association of New Zealand, 2018), while accommodation guest nights in New Zealand increased from 36 million to 40 million from 2015 to 2018 (Statistics New Zealand, 2019). With the numbers of domestic and international visitors increasing, demand for accommodation is also increasing (Horwath HTL, 2018). The hotel industry reports high occupancy and room rates so, as the key sector of hospitality, the hotel industry made a valuable contribution to tourism and hospitality revenue in 2018 (Colliers International, 2018). Previous studies have concentrated more on the luxury hotel and budget hotel sectors, and it is for this reason that this dissertation focuses on the middle-scale hotel sector (Kim et al., 2019; Xu & Li, 2016). The 3-star to 3.5-star hotel sector is significant to the New Zealand hotel industry, accounting for 23% of all hotel rooms in New Zealand (New Zealand Trade & Enterprise, 2016). International customers do not show a preference for 3-star rooms

only 33% of internationals book 3-star rooms, compared with 4-star rooms books 50% are internationals and International account for 40% of the 5-star rooms bookings (New Zealand Trade & Enterprise, 2016). However, domestic customer shows a preference for 3-star hotels (67% of bookings), 4-star rooms they account for 50% of bookings and 60% of 5-star rooms bookings (New Zealand Trade & Enterprise, 2016). Some researchers have included 3.5-star hotels in their studies (Liu et al., 2017; Madlberger, 2014). However, the actual 3.5-star hotel rating has not been clearly defined in previous international or New Zealand hotel industry literature. Since 3-star hotel is defined in New Zealand by Qualmark, while 3.5-star hotel is not defined by Qualmark (Qualmark New Zealand, n.d.). This study will therefore focus on 3-star hotels, and the 3.5-star hotels will not be discussed for reasons pertaining to academic rigour.

This dissertation research has been conducted in Auckland for two reasons. Firstly, as the largest city in New Zealand, Auckland attracts more international and domestic visitors than elsewhere in the country (New Zealand Trade & Enterprise, 2018). Secondly, Auckland has the largest number of hotels in New Zealand and, of these, 18 properties with 1,819 rooms have 3-star ratings from a total of 65 properties with 9,459 rooms in Auckland (New Zealand Trade & Enterprise, 2016). Based on the abundant sources of data in Auckland, this city could offer more data for the study than other cities in New Zealand.

The star rating of hotels is evaluated in relation to various aspects of the standard of hotels, such as service, facilities and price (Rhee & Yang, 2015). In New Zealand, the official accommodation rating system was developed in 1993, and is known as Qualmark (Qualmark New Zealand, 2017). This study has applied the Qualmark hotel rating as a statistics benchmark. 3-star accommodation represents 'good and very good' services and facilities in New Zealand (Qualmark New Zealand, n.d.). There are 88 3-star properties on the Qualmark licence-holder list in New Zealand, with seven 3-star hotels in Auckland (Qualmark New Zealand, 2017). The seven 3-star hotels have been selected for this study.

### 1.3. Significance of this research

This dissertation is significant for hoteliers as it provides suggestions in terms of how to improve customer satisfaction. It contributes to research knowledge in terms of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction in New Zealand 3-star hotels for the following reasons. Firstly, understanding and increasing customer satisfaction is beneficial for the long-term income of hotels (Lu et al., 2015). As previous studies have indicated, hotels could improve profits by reducing the number of vacancies and increasing the customer return rate (Kandampully et al., 2015; Ogbeide et al., 2017), and satisfied customers tend to return to the same hotel and maintain loyalty to the hotel (Rather & Hollebeek, 2019; Xu & Li, 2016). Secondly, previous studies have shown that, depending on the hotel's star rating, customers may have different expectations in terms of their satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Martin-Fuentes, 2016; Tefera & Govender, 2016; Xu et al., 2017). For this reason, customers in 3-star hotels may have different expectations compared with what they expect of other star rating hotels. The 3-star hotel is an important part of both Auckland and New Zealand's hotel industry (New Zealand Trade & Enterprise, 2016). However, few studies focus on the New Zealand 3-star hotel segment (Suhartanto et al., 2013; Ying et al., 2018). Hence, a study of New Zealand's 3-star hotel customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction has practical significance and benefits for hoteliers and academic research.

### 1.4. Research aims and questions

This dissertation is a study of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction factors in 3-star hotel in Auckland, New Zealand. The purpose of this study is to explore 3-star hotel customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction by analysing online reviews on TripAdvisor.

The questions posed in this study are as follows:

1. What are the main factors of satisfaction for customers of Auckland's 3-star hotels?
2. What are the main factors of dissatisfaction for customers of Auckland's 3-star hotels?

3. What practical recommendations can be made for 3-star hoteliers based on the findings of this research?

Based on the above research questions, this study will analyse the main factors that met customer expectations and the factors that caused customer dissatisfaction in 3-star hotels in Auckland, New Zealand. Suggestions for 3-star hotel management will be provided.

#### 1.5. Research methodology

This dissertation applied a qualitative methodology and was guided by the interpretive paradigm. As the largest third-party traveller platform, TripAdvisor's website provides traveller information and shares tourist experiences online (Chen & Law, 2016). For the benefit of the researcher's time efficiency and to save costs, secondary data was collected from TripAdvisor customer reviews of seven Qualmark licence-holder hotels. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data to generate findings. The population comprises of 88 Qualmark 3-star licence-holder hotels in New Zealand. By using a purposive sampling technique, data was collected from TripAdvisor customer reviews of seven Auckland Qualmark 3-star hotels. 74 satisfaction and 52 dissatisfaction reviews were collected from the period 2013 to 2020 during the summer peak months (from December to February the following year) in New Zealand. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data, manual coding was used to count the frequency of themes, and the resulting themes will be presented in tables in Chapter 4.

#### 1.6. Dissertation structure

This dissertation has five chapters: introduction, literature review, methodology, findings and conclusion. The present chapter is the introduction, providing the background, significance and aims of the study. Since the current chapter introduces the research structure, it is beneficial in clearly understanding the overall framework of the dissertation. Chapter two will review the New Zealand and Auckland hotel industry, previous literature pertaining to 3-star hotels, the definition and significance of hotel

customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and hotel guests' online behaviours. The gap in the literature that will be discussed in this chapter frames the current study's research questions. Chapter three will present the research methodology and methods used in this study. The research philosophy, paradigm, population, sample and data analysis method will be discussed. Chapter four will present the findings and discussion. The findings will be discussed and compared with the previous literature analysed in the literature review in chapter two. Chapter five, the conclusion, will summarise the key findings of this study and discuss the application that these findings might have in the Auckland/New Zealand hospitality industry. It will also point out the limitations of the research and offer suggestions for further study.

The next chapter will review the New Zealand and Auckland hotel industry, the hotel star rating system and the existing literature on customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

## Chapter 2 Literature review

### 2.1. Introduction

This chapter will describe the development and current situation of the hotel industry in Auckland and New Zealand. It will describe the hotel star rating system and the number of 3-star hotels in New Zealand. The customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction section will review the characteristics of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction with 3-star hotels. This chapter will discuss how satisfied customers can benefit hoteliers, and how dissatisfied customers can negatively affect hoteliers. This chapter will also introduce the current development and application of the Internet in the hotel industry and will review the reasons why customer online reviews are important for both customers and hoteliers. At the end of this chapter the research gap in customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction in 3-star hotels in New Zealand will be highlighted.

### 2.2. The hospitality industry in New Zealand

Hospitality is an integral part of tourism, so the hospitality industry's performance is significantly affected by tourism development (Brondoni, 2016; Corne, 2015). Tourism is one of New Zealand's most important industries economically and one of the largest export earning industries (Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, 2019). The 2018 government report from New Zealand Trade & Enterprise indicates that the number of international visitors will increase from 3.7 million in 2017 to 5.1 million by 2024 (New Zealand Trade & Enterprise, 2018). Tourism revenue has seen a marked increase from NZ\$28.6 billion in 2014 to NZ\$39.1 billion in 2018, with international visitor consumption increasing by 9.6% to NZ\$16.2 billion and domestic visitor spending increasing 6.5% to NZ\$23 billion from 2017 to 2018 (Smiler, 2019). Guest nights in New Zealand increased from 36 million in 2015 to 40 million at the end of 2018; guest night accommodation statistics include hotels, motels, backpackers, holiday parks and sharing economy platforms such as Airbnb (Statistics NZ, 2019).

3-star hotels are an important part of the New Zealand hotel industry (New Zealand Trade & Enterprise, 2016). New Zealand Trade & Enterprise (2016) found that the 3-star to 3.5-star rating hotels account for 23% of all hotel rooms in New Zealand, and account for 27% of properties in Auckland. According to New Zealand Trade & Enterprise (2016), domestic customers had a preference for 3-star hotels since they consumed 67% of all 3-star hotel rooms; this is a higher percentage than 4-star rooms (50%) and 5-star rooms (60%) in 2015. As Auckland is the largest city in New Zealand, the current situation of the hospitality industry in Auckland will be discussed in the next section.

### 2.2.1. The hospitality industry in Auckland

Auckland is the largest city in New Zealand, with more than one-third of the country's population. Over 70% of international visitors arriving in New Zealand land at Auckland International airport (New Zealand Trade & Enterprise, 2018). Thus, Auckland is a major international gateway and a growing economic centre, attracting a large number of international and domestic visitors (New Zealand Trade & Enterprise, 2018).

Auckland has the largest number of hotels in New Zealand, comprising of 65 properties with 9,459 rooms; of these, 18 properties, with a combined total of 1,816 rooms, have 3-star to 3.5-star ratings (New Zealand Trade & Enterprise, 2016). Moreover, Auckland's accommodation occupancy rate performance was one of the highest in 2017 in Asia Pacific region (New Zealand Trade & Enterprise, 2018). The definition and grading system of hotel star ratings will be explained in the following sector, to gain a clearer understanding of how a 3-star hotel is defined internationally.

### 2.3. Hotel rating internationally

The words 'rating', 'classification' and 'grading' of hotels are the same concept that can be evaluated by hotel price, service and facilities quality (Rhee & Yang, 2015). The concept of hotel star ratings is recognised worldwide, with a rating system of 1 to 5

stars being the most common (Martin-Fuentes, 2016). Even though there is no specific common evaluation standard for different hotel star ratings in different countries, the services, amenities, room facilities and size, price and public infrastructure are the main items of assessment (Martin-Fuentes, 2016; Núñez-Serrano et al., 2014; Rhee & Yang, 2015). Rhee and Yang (2015) also observed that the hotel rating system assists customers when making lodging decisions, which tends to lead to increased customer satisfaction as customers have different expectations for different star ratings.

The hotel rating system is evaluated by local government or by national organisations, in different countries and regions (Robinson, 2012). Due to the absence of a unified star rating standard, and the fact that researchers may apply different star rating systems in their research (e.g., Blomberg-Nygaard & Anderson, 2016; Rhee & Yang, 2015), some studies have argued that the star rating systems maybe not reliable as a quality standard (e.g., Agušaj et al., 2017; Núñez-Serrano et al., 2014). However, according to Martin-Fuentes (2016), who conducted research on 14,000 hotels worldwide, the diversity of star rating systems of hotels in different countries matched customer's hotel star expectations. 3-star hotels are mid-scale hotels compare with 1-star to 2-star (budget) hotels and 4-star to 5-star (upscale) hotels, customers could expect good quality service and average amenities in 3-star hotels (Musante et al., 2009). Martin-Fuentes (2016) suggested that the star rating systems are useful and reliable as a quality standard even though there is a diversity of systems with slight differences.

Since 2009, more than 20 European countries have joined in the European Hotelstars Union, which is a non-government star rating system in Europe (Hotelstars Union, 2019). The European Hotelstars Union use a 1-5 star hotel rating, and rates 3-star hotels at a level of comfort with the following services: Reception open for a minimum of 14 hours a day and accessible by phone 24 hours; beverage, telephone, Internet access offered in the room; sewing kit, shoe polishing utensils, laundry, additional pillow and blanket are available in the hotel (Hotelstars Union, 2019). In the U.S., two

private hotel star rating systems can be referenced by customers making hotel choices and decisions, these are the Forbes Travel Guide (formerly the Mobil Travel Guide) rating and the American Automobile Association's (AAA's) Diamond hotel rating (AAA, 2015; Forbes Travel Guide, 2019). Forbes Travel Guide does not rate hotels as 3-star; instead, it provides hotel ratings on a scale of 5-star, 4-star and 'recommended' after their investigators have evaluated a hotel based on up to 900 objective criteria (Forbes Travel Guide, 2019). The AAA Diamond rating system represents the hotel rating with an approved diamond rating and three to five diamonds; three diamonds represents a level of style and comfort with comprehensive amenities (AAA, 2015).

Some countries' hotel star ratings are graded by government agencies; this occurs in, for example, the Philippines, India, Malaysia and New Zealand (*Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia*, 2020; Ministry of Tourism, 2019; Qualmark New Zealand, 2019; Simeon, 2015). New Zealand's hotel star rating system will be discussed in the following section.

### 2.3.1. The definition of 3-star hotels in New Zealand

New Zealand hotels are officially graded by Qualmark, which works with the New Zealand Government (Qualmark New Zealand, 2019). This official accommodation rating system was developed in 1993, and is a combination of several private companies operating under the national general star rating standard, such as the New Zealand Tourism Board and the Automobile Association of New Zealand (Carasuk et al., 2016; Tourism New Zealand, 2019). Qualmark grades accommodation from 1 to 5 stars, with 1 star (acceptable) meeting the minimum requirements of customers, while 5 stars (exceptional) indicates the highest standard of New Zealand accommodation. 3-star (3-star plus) accommodation represents 'good and very good' services and facilities (Qualmark New Zealand, n.d.). There are 88 3-star (3-star plus) properties on the Qualmark licence-holder list in New Zealand, with seven 3-star (3-star plus) hotels in Auckland (Qualmark New Zealand, 2017).

3-star hotels so far have attracted limited research attention and have not been recognised as one of the important components of the hotel industry (Minh et al., 2015). Few researches focused on 3-star hotels segment worldwide (Darini & Khozaei, 2016; Sirirak et al., 2011). Moreover, there are limited studies that focus on the New Zealand's 3-star hotel segment (Suhartanto et al., 2013; Ying et al., 2018). Having discussed the concept of the 3-star hotel, the customer satisfaction factors, will be discussed in the next section.

#### 2.4. Customer satisfaction

Ali (2016) defined customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry as a positive psychological and emotional state which arises when the quality of the product fulfils customer expectations. However, Sharma and Srivastava (2018) indicated that it is difficult to identify customer satisfaction in words because satisfaction is impacted by various elements, for example, the hotel service quality may satisfy one customer while failing to satisfy another. Sharma and Srivastava (2018) also suggested that when the product quality of the hotel matches customer expectations, the customer will deliver positive feedback.

Customer satisfaction with a hotel can derive from a diverse range of categories, which may include staff services, room facilities, value for money, food and beverages, business-related services, and safety and security (Liu et al., 2017). Xu and Li (2016) argued that some collateral actions such as social responsibility and sustainable practices by hoteliers can contribute to customer satisfaction, as both of these practices demonstrate to customers that the hotelier wishes to improve performance. Customer expectations and satisfaction may be affected by different star ratings, gender and a difference between the culture of the customer and that of the hotel (Sukwadi, 2017; Tefera & Govender, 2016).

Customers may have different purposes for their stay and therefore hold different accommodation expectations; for example business and leisure travellers may have

different expectations of hotels (Rajaguru & Hassanli, 2018). Leisure travellers are more concerned about security and personal interactions with hotel (Lehto et al., 2015). Rajaguru and Hassanli (2018) stated that the business travellers place more value on Internet connection quality and location while both business and leisure travellers tend to have expectations regarding value for money and quality services. The different cultural background of customers may influence their different accommodation expectations (Darini & Khozaei, 2016). According to a Rajaguru and Hassanli (2018), Asian customers tend to place greater importance on value for money than non-Asian customers. When customers speak a different language from locals, positive and effective language interaction will increase customer satisfaction (Liu et al., 2017).

Tefera and Govender (2016) argued that customers who choose hotels with different star ratings also have different expectations in terms of their satisfaction. Previous research on customers using luxury hotels found that customer satisfaction with these hotels relates to the categories of room facilities, public facilities, quality of service, quality of food and room cleanness (Lu et al., 2015; Padma & Ahn, 2020). A study of 4-star and 5-star rated hotels found that the key factors of customer satisfaction relate to room facilities, public facilities, location, price of the room, food and staff services (Zhou et al., 2014). In contrast, later studies show that customers put more value on location, food, staff performance, room and public area cleanliness and design in 3-star hotels (Darini & Khozaei, 2016; Sukwadi, 2017). Moreover, Rahimi and Kozak (2017) argued that, compared with the 4-star and 5-star upscale hotels, customers of lower star rating hotels tend to focus more on economical accommodation and value for money rather than the services. Gu and Ryan (2008) summarised seven factors for hotels at all classification levels that could influence customer satisfaction in general: bed comfort, quality and cleanliness of bathroom facilities, room size and room facilities, location, quality of food and beverage, staff services, and additional hotel services.

Studying customer satisfaction could benefit hoteliers by assisting them to improve their product, attraction and profit, thereby maintaining their strengths and avoiding

customer disappointment (Assaf et al., 2015; Rhee & Yang, 2015). Satisfied customers could maintain customer loyalty, enhance their intentions to return, and increase positive customer word-of-mouth in the competitive hospitality market (Assaf et al., 2015; Minh et al., 2015; Tefera & Govender, 2017). Rhee and Yang (2015) argued that customer disappointment could also influence whether hoteliers are successful, and this topic will be discussed in the next section.

## 2.5. Customer dissatisfaction

Failure to meet customer expectations may result in customer dissatisfaction and negative emotions (Koc et al., 2017). Moreover, an unpleasant experience can lead to customer dissatisfaction with a hotel (Kim et al., 2019). The failure to provide adequate service may lead to customer dissatisfaction resulting in the loss of customer loyalty as dissatisfied customers rarely return to the same hotel or the same brand hotel on subsequent visits (Tefera & Govender, 2017). Furthermore, dissatisfied guests may affect potential customer purchasing intentions by expressing negative emotions by word-of-mouth to other people or by posting online reviews, and these behaviours may impact hotel profitability (Hussain et al., 2015). While hoteliers who deliver customer satisfaction may benefit by keeping long-term relationships with guests, hotel service failures or the inability to satisfy customer expectations may have a negative influence on hotels (Cheng et al., 2019).

Customers may indicate both satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and by exploring dissatisfaction hoteliers may identify valuable ways to improve their product in the future (Assaf et al., 2015; Xu & Li, 2016). Compared to satisfaction studies, fewer studies relating to dissatisfaction have been carried out, but they are important because they might identify factors which differ from those relating to customer satisfaction (Kim et al., 2019). Potential safety hazards and the unsatisfactory quality of a product are the major factors that lead to customer dissatisfaction in hotels (Xu & Li, 2016). Customers may also complain when the quality of staff services, facilities and

the quality of the room do not meet their expectations (Chan et al., 2017; Hu et al., 2019). The gap between the hotel service standard and the customer's expectations may lead to customer dissatisfaction (Kátay, 2015).

Customer complaints and dissatisfaction may offer guidance for managers in terms of how to avoid service failures in the future (Ergün & Kitapci, 2018). Hoteliers could avoid and reverse service failures by identifying customer dissatisfaction which, in some cases, will benefit long-term business development (Liat et al., 2017). The following section will discuss the phenomena of guest online reviews and online behaviours in terms of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

## 2.6. Hotel guest online behaviours

Since the arrival of the age of the Internet, hotels have tended to use the Internet as a platform on which they can post advertisements and positive reviews, in order to attract customers (Rhee & Yang, 2015). Customers can browse online reviews before making a booking decision; they can also write reviews and post ratings after they check out and make suggestions for potential customers (Rhee & Yang, 2015). Even though hotel signature and brand recognition are the main factors that assist travellers in selecting the specified quality of hotel (Foroudi, 2019), over 80% of travellers will read hotel online reviews before they select a hotel (Tsao et al., 2015). Since there is reduced brand recognition for mid-scale and budget hotels, customers have less knowledge and information in terms of these hotels, and they tend to rely more on online reviews before making a hotel selection (Agušaj et al., 2017).

Online reviews can have a significant influence on customers and hoteliers (Schuckert et al., 2015). Reading previous customers' hotel reviews on online rating platforms can reduce customer uncertainty, supply information, and impact customer purchasing intentions (Kim & Park, 2017). Displaying positive reviews is beneficial to hotels to attract potential customers (Zhao et al., 2019). Customer online reviews can illustrate

customer requirements and expectations by detailing their accommodation experience (Chan et al., 2017). Improving customers' negative evaluations can reduce future customer dissatisfaction (Dinçer & Alrawadieh, 2017; Zhao et al., 2019). Positive reviews will enhance a customer's consideration of a hotel and increase online bookings (Zhao et al., 2015).

With the increased use of online booking and the development of third-party websites, people's electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) is increasing and has been used to indicate and evaluate customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction with hotels (Chen & Law, 2016; Ladhari & Michaud, 2015). eWOM is defined as customers posting their perspectives, recommendations and suggestions in online comments after their consumption (Cantalops & Salvi, 2014). The behaviour of customer posting eWOM is mainly driven by achievement, reputation, sense of belonging and enjoyment in helping others to make a purchase decision (Cheung et al., 2015). eWOM sources have been considered to be an unbiased data source (Gerdt et al., 2019), which will be applied in this study as research data source.

Hotel industry customers' online behaviours may be influenced by various elements such as gender, age and culture, and will be reflected in their online reviews (Bore et al., 2017). Rajaguru and Hassanli (2018) stated that customers with different travelling purposes or from different cultural backgrounds may have diverse accommodation expectations which may be expressed in a variety of ways on eWOM. The study of different travellers' expectations could benefit hoteliers' ability to improve their product so as to meet different customers' expectations (Rajaguru & Hassanli, 2018).

Customers from different countries may express emotions in different ways on the Internet when facing uncertain or unsatisfactory situations; for example, unlike American customers who prefer to seek solutions by way of expressing their anxiety, Asian customers tend to avoid complaints (Liu et al., 2017). According to Wang and Kubickova (2017), female guests are more active than males on social media and more interested in posting online reviews. Some researchers have indicated that younger

generations may be more willing to express their accommodation feedback than older generations (Gonçalves et al., 2018; Wang & Kubickova, 2017). Customer personalities may also need to be studied, which may benefit hoteliers' understanding of customer eWOM behaviours (Hu & Kim, 2018). The platforms on which customers share and post their online reviews will be introduced in the next section.

## 2.7. Hotel guest online review platforms

With the development of network technology, people tend to share and post their experiences on the Internet (Yen & Tang, 2019). As a result, many third-party platforms have been set up to host hospitality customers' online reviews, including Yelp, Expedia, TripAdvisor and Booking (Liu & Park, 2015; Rhee & Yang, 2015). Yelp is an online third-party customer review platform for local hotels, restaurants and other hospitality businesses, with more than 100 million reviews (Yelp, 2019). Expedia and Booking are both global travel business platforms offering travel products such as accommodation, airlines and car rental for users, and customers can post reviews after experiencing products (Booking Holdings, 2015; Expedia Group, 2019). The TripAdvisor platform was chosen for data collection for this dissertation, and the reason for this choice will be explained in the next section.

### 2.7.1. The TripAdvisor platform

TripAdvisor is the largest third-party traveller platform, offering travellers' online reviews and experiences for customers (Chen & Law, 2016; TripAdvisor, 2017). As one of the most popular platforms for online hotel reviews, TripAdvisor has been chosen as the source for data collection in numerous hotel industry studies (e.g., Cenni & Goethals, 2017; Kladou & Mavragani, 2015; Xie et al., 2016). As TripAdvisor has more than 500 million reviews of hotels and other tourism businesses, more than 300 million users worldwide, and more than five million registered users visiting the platform 30 million times per month on average, it is a suitable platform from which to collect secondary

data (Banerjee & Chua, 2016; Zhao et al., 2019). Customers not only display their satisfaction with a 5-point rating system and positive verbal comments, but also show their dissatisfaction with low ratings and negative feedback (Zhao et al., 2019). Hotels are measured by customers on a scale of 1 (terrible) to 5 (excellent) points covering five aspects in the overall satisfaction rating: hotel location, cleanliness, hotel room experience, service quality, and value for money (Chang et al., 2019; Guo et al., 2017). TripAdvisor has an enormous number of customer reviews that can be gathered and employed to study specific hotel customer-related topics (Chang et al., 2019).

## 2.8. Research gap

Even though many researchers have focused on customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction factors in hotels in the global context (Cheng et al., 2019; Pizam et al., 2016; Ren et al., 2015), and many studies have been undertaken in New Zealand (Harkison et al., 2018a, 2018b; Prayag et al., 2018), there are, in fact, few studies that focus on the New Zealand's 3-star hotel segment (Suhartanto et al., 2013; Ying et al., 2018). Given the importance of the hotel sector to the country's largest export-earning industry, and the importance of the 3-star hotel as an important part of the hotel industry, there is a considerable gap in New Zealand research regarding 3-star hotel customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

## 2.9. Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted that hospitality is one of the important industries in New Zealand and Auckland. 3-star hotels segment is an important part of this industry, and hotels with this star rating are domestic customers' preferred accommodation. According to New Zealand's official star rating organisation, Qualmark, seven hotels have been identified as 3-star rated in Auckland. Moreover, the study of 3-star hotel customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction factors is significant in theoretical and practical terms. Additionally, TripAdvisor is the largest third-party platform in the tourism

and hospitality sectors, and using this platform users can post and share their consumption experiences. The gap in New Zealand research regarding 3-star hotel customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction has been revealed by this literature review chapter. The methodology of this research will be discussed in the following chapter

## Chapter 3 Methodology

### 3.1. Introduction

This chapter will outline the methodology employed in this study. The research objectives, followed by the philosophical foundation for this study, including the research paradigm, ontology and epistemology will be explained. In order to answer the research questions of this study, qualitative and quantitative method will be discussed. Then there search data population and sample size will be explained. Finally, the process of the data collection and the data analysis will be explained.

### 3.2. Research objectives

Based on customer online reviews from TripAdvisor regarding 3-star hotels in Auckland, New Zealand, this study had three research questions:

- 1 What are the main factors of satisfaction for customers of Auckland's 3-star hotels?
- 2 What are the main factors of dissatisfaction for customers of Auckland's 3-star hotels?
- 3 What practical recommendations can be made for 3-star hoteliers based on the findings of this research?

### 3.3. Research philosophy

A research philosophy is a belief, in terms of the way in which data should be gathered and analysed during the research procedure (Wilson, 2014). Research philosophy aims to clarify the nature of common and scientific beliefs (O'Gorman et al., 2014). It is a way of discerning how the world works and how people obtain knowledge (Hughes & Sharrock, 2016; O'Gorman et al., 2014). As the critical foundation for the research, the

philosophy may influence a researcher's choice of study approach and strategy (Wilson, 2014). A clear understanding of philosophy is important, as it is beneficial in terms of the rational examination of the nature and structure of reality, resources and limits of knowledge, principles, and meanings of moral judgments (Hughes & Sharrock, 2016; O'Gorman et al., 2014). The relevant philosophical content – paradigm, ontology, epistemology and methodology – will be explained in the following sections.

### 3.3.1. Research paradigm

A research paradigm is the foundation of a philosophy. A paradigm influences a researcher in terms of what should be studied, how the study should be finished and how the results should be explained (Bell et al., 2018). The paradigm influences the worldview of the researcher by determining what beliefs to hold and how to choose a methodology and method based on their philosophical assumptions (Kumar, 2019).

There are four main research paradigms: positivism, post-positivism, interpretivism and critical inquiry (Gray, 2019). Positivism and post-positivism are objective epistemological paradigms, based on the ontological perspective and belief that the world and truth do not change (Veal, 2017; Wilson, 2014). They are the basis of studies in which the quantitative approach employed by researchers will apply the methods of natural sciences to explore a study of social science (Veal, 2017; Wilson, 2014). Interpretivism and critical inquiry are subjective epistemological paradigms which hold the view that beliefs about the world and truth are changing and developing (Gray, 2019; Veal, 2017). Interpretivist and critical inquiry paradigms are mainly applied for qualitative research (Mohajan, 2018).

The interpretive paradigm is an approach that respects the differences between people and the objects of natural science, so it requires social scientists to understand the subjective meaning of social behaviour (Bell et al., 2018). Ryan (2018) argued that, under the interpretive approach, truth and knowledge are subjective and based on

individual experiences. Ryan (2018) stated that truth and knowledge could not be separated from researchers' values and beliefs during data collection and the analysis process in the interpretive paradigm. The interpretive paradigm aims to explore the meanings and motives behind individual or group activities in a society and a culture (Chowdhury, 2014). In addition, the society and culture could be understood by studying people's behaviours (Chowdhury, 2014). The interpretive paradigm mainly applies to the use of interviews, group studies, case studies and analysis of text and materials (O'Donoghue, 2006).

Based on the features outlined above, and the purpose of this research, an interpretivist paradigm was applied, for the following reasons. Firstly, this dissertation is based on the researcher's understanding of the factors concerning customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction. This knowledge was verified by literature review and continued in the data collection and analysis process (Ryan, 2018). It is in accordance with the characteristics of interpretivism that this knowledge could not be separated from researcher's values and beliefs that were generated from previous literature (Ryan, 2018). Secondly, this study features a focus on the analysis of customers' online reviews of 3-star hotels in Auckland, New Zealand. In the interpretivist paradigm, researchers tend to obtain an understanding of social behaviours in diverse ways through different individuals instead of a superficial comprehension of the whole population (Creswell, 2009; Hammersley, 2012). As members of guest groups in the hotel industry of New Zealand and worldwide, 3-star hotel customers may have different expectations from customers of other star rating hotels (Sukwadi, 2017; Tefera & Govender, 2016). Thirdly, the purpose of this research is to investigate the main factors of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction through online reviews. Customer online reviews are the representation of individual opinions (Ali, 2016), and are related to various subjective factors, such as customer experiences and expectations (Felbermayr & Nanopoulos, 2016; Kostyra et al., 2016). Ryan (2018) explained that, under interpretivism, truth and knowledge are subjective and based on individual experiences. Analysis of a specific group – 3-star hotel guests in Auckland, New

Zealand – the customer online review eWOM revealed the main factors of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Hu & Kim, 2018). Since the interpretivist paradigm is applied in qualitative research, the qualitative methodology will be discussed further in section 3.4. Veal (2017) stated that ontology, epistemology, and methodology are frequently mentioned in the discussion of a research paradigm. McNabb (2015) argued that it is essential to consider the ontological and epistemological foundation of any research. Therefore, these topics will be discussed in the following sections.

### 3.3.2. Research ontology

As a branch of philosophy, ontology is the science that studies the types and structures of objects, events, processes, and relationships in various areas of reality (Munn & Smith, 2013). Ontology is the study of the nature of world reality, and can address problems in terms of existing phenomena and the external factors that extend beyond human behaviours (Bell et al., 2018). It is the nature of the world 'out there' that people can experience (McNabb, 2015). Social phenomena become 'real' through human activity and the meanings that humans attach to the phenomena (Bell et al., 2018; Wilson, 2014).

### 3.3.3. Research epistemology

Epistemology is the understanding of what reality is and how people gain knowledge of reality (Bell et al., 2018). It aims to resolve questions concerning how people can understand the reality and how to make certain that the knowledge of reality is true (McNabb, 2015). Epistemology is related to ontology in that it explains how knowledge is gained by studying the nature of world reality (Crotty, 2003). Hence, Crotty (2003) offered a perspective to link ontology to specific epistemologies such as objectivism, subjectivism and constructivism. The perspective that Crotty (2003) put forward has been employed and developed by many other researchers (e.g., Fung & Liang, 2019; Poni, 2014; Tech, 2018). The same perspective that Crotty (2003) employed has been

used in this study, and will be introduced and explained in the following sections.

Objectivism is defined as social phenomena and world reality being independent and beyond that of human activity, with human knowledge and values being determined by the nature of reality (Bryman, 2016). Since objectivist epistemology reflects the opinion that reality exists independently of human consciousness, researchers should not include their own perspectives and values in a study (Gray, 2019).

In contrast, constructivism holds that the social phenomena and the meaning of the world are accomplished continuously by human activities, and that the real world is produced through social interaction (Bryman, 2016). Within constructivism, truth and meaning are constructed during human interactions with the world; they do not exist in the nature world (Gray, 2019; Scotland, 2012). Hence researchers could build meaning and truth in different ways (Gray, 2019). Multiple, conflictive perspectives of the same phenomenon can exist (Gray, 2019).

In contrast with constructivism, subjectivism holds that internal subjective values being imposed on the external objective world means that reality is dependent on the consciousness of a community or individual, such as social, cultural, religious beliefs or dreams (Gray, 2019). Subjectivism reflects claims that research questions are based on human experiences and perspectives, and researchers should understand and explain these questions through scientific methods and scientific words (Denzin, 2017). To maintain consistency with the interpretivist paradigm applied in this study and explained in section 3.3.1., the subjectivist epistemology was used for this study (Ryan, 2018). Methodology is a strategy that translates ontological and epistemological principles as guidelines for research (Sarantakos, 2012). It will be explained in next section.

### 3.4. Methodology

Methodology is the procedure which ensures that a study is conducted in a scientific and systematic way (Brown, 2006). Methodology is the research approach understood in terms of how to establish research through reality, knowledge and understanding (O’Gorman et al., 2014; Veal, 2017). It is a philosophical framework that allows researchers to apply an appropriate method by critical evaluation (Brown, 2006; Taylor et al., 2015). Quantitative and qualitative approaches are the two main research approaches (Quinlan et al., 2019).

#### 3.4.1. Choice of research approach – Qualitative approach

Quantitative methodology aims to present objective statistics, data analysis, and measurement, using quantifiable measures of variables and inferences from a population sample (Litosseliti, 2018; Quinlan et al., 2019). A qualitative methodology intends to understand subjective reality in terms of individual and group experiences, emotions, feelings, behaviours and attitudes (Queirós et al., 2017). A qualitative methodology could generate new concepts and develop theories by focusing on the viewpoint of the individual or a group within the population to describe social phenomena systematically (Mohajan, 2018). The reasons why this study applied a qualitative approach will be explained by comparing the characteristics of quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Quantitative research focuses on ‘facts’ and the objectivist position that the reality of the world exists independently of researchers, and gathers data based on numbers (Gray, 2019). A qualitative approach is used to collect and analyse data for an in-depth and socio-contextual presentation of the findings which will include explanation and discussion (Riley & Weiss, 2016). It holds a subjectivist position to value non-numerical data and focuses on the meanings of the words (Gray, 2019).

Firstly, this study targets online customer reviews from TripAdvisor. Customers' reviews are their own viewpoints, represented in text form, based on their expectations and experiences (Felbermayr & Nanopoulos, 2016). Customer reviews are eWOM and are not numerical data (Hu & Kim, 2018).

Secondly, a customer review study requires the researcher's unbiased understanding of a specific social field which then assesses customers' viewpoints based on the researcher's experiences (Bore et al., 2017). This meets the interpretivist view that truth and knowledge cannot be separated from researchers' values and beliefs during the data collection and the analysis process of a study within the interpretive paradigm (Ryan, 2018). An interpretivist paradigm was selected for this study, as discussed in section 3.3.1., and it was therefore appropriate to take a qualitative approach to the study (Mohajan, 2018).

Overall, the purpose of this study is to evaluate customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction through their online social behaviours. Qualitative research is suitable for exploring the variation and diversity of social life, such as values, beliefs, meanings and understandings (Kumar, 2019). The research process reported in this dissertation aimed to explore 3-star hotel customer experiences by analysing their verbal data rather than numerical data. Considering the interpretivist paradigm applied and the research purpose, this study adopted a qualitative method. The qualitative methodology has been applied in various social areas, such as sociology, hospitality marketing, management, education, nursing, and information systems (Lugosi et al., 2016; Mohajan, 2018). The data collection method, population and sample will be explained in the following sections.

### 3.5. Secondary data

There are two types of data used in research, primary data and secondary data (Cheng & Phillips, 2014). Primary data refers to the sources collected by researchers to study

original proposed hypotheses or research questions (Cheng & Phillips, 2014), and the sources of primary data could be interviews, observations and questionnaires (Kumar, 2019). Secondary data analyses data which was collected by other people for another primary purpose and it is useful for researchers who may have limited time and resources (Johnston, 2017). Due to the time constraints of this dissertation (a period of 17 weeks from February to June), and also the cost constraints, this study has used secondary data.

Online customer reviews have become a new secondary data source to resolve research problems in the hospitality and tourism industry (Xiang et al., 2018). As one of the largest independent third-party online customer review platforms worldwide, TripAdvisor information has been applied by numerous researchers as a secondary data source in hospitality and tourism (Banerjee & Chua, 2016; Casaló et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2015; Martin-Fuentes et al., 2018; Xiang et al., 2018). TripAdvisor has been used as the source of secondary data collected for this research.

### 3.6. Population and sample

In qualitative research, the individuals or groups who are participating in a specified activity with an in-depth understanding of the research topic are known as the research population (Hennink et al., 2020). This study explores 3-star hotel customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction in New Zealand. The 3-star licence-holder hotels in New Zealand, identified through Qualmark, New Zealand's official star rating organisation (Qualmark New Zealand, 2019), have therefore been selected as the population of this research. A total of 88 hotels hold Qualmark 3-star (3-star plus) licences in New Zealand (Qualmark New Zealand, 2017).

Since qualitative research aims to examine social reality, the depth of the sample is more important than a large sample size (Boddy, 2016). A qualitative study normally has a small sample that is selected to achieve particular research purposes (Hennink

et al., 2020). Unlike the large sample requirement of quantitative research, a qualitative research sample contains more value through the rich content of the sample than the volume of the sample (Flick, 2018; Hennink et al., 2020).

The decision about sampling strategy should be determined by research questions and goals (Padgett, 2016). There are various qualitative research sampling strategies, including purposive sampling, probability sampling, convenience sampling, theoretical sampling, and snowball sampling (Flick, 2018; Hennink et al., 2020; Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Probability sampling is a sampling technique whereby researchers randomly select samples from a large population based on the guide of probability (Patten & Newhart, 2017). Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling in which the sample is taken from close by or through the convenience of a contact group of participants (Howitt, 2019). Theoretical sampling is a strategic approach that researchers use to select new cases to help develop or refine an existing theory, and it is commonly used to guide participant selection for interviews (Taylor et al., 2015). Snowball sampling is a method that targets difficult-to-access or hidden populations (Tracy, 2019). Researchers can select several participants who meet the criteria then ask those participants to recommend more people who also fit the criteria (Tracy, 2019).

Purposive sampling is the most commonly used approach in qualitative research (Hennink et al., 2020). Purposive sampling is a strategy that allows the sample to evolve during the sample collection process through the choice of sample participants with an in-depth understanding of the research topic (Hennink et al., 2020). In other words, the sample is selected purposefully by researchers to meet an information-rich requirement (Green & Thorogood, 2018). In an online information-gathering field, a purposive sampling strategy has become increasingly popular among researchers with limited funds and time (Barratt et al., 2015; Robinson, 2014).

A purposive sampling strategy is suitable for this study for the following reasons. In this

study, efficiency and timeliness must be considered when gathering information because of the cost and time limits on this dissertation. The questions posed for this study focus on customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The goals of this research therefore aim to explore which factors hoteliers could improve in order to satisfy customers. The research questions can be answered, and the research goals can be achieved by selecting a purposive sample.

Hence, this dissertation used a purposive sampling strategy to gain 3-star hotel customer TripAdvisor reviews for studying customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction factors in Auckland, New Zealand. Auckland was selected for this study sample for the following reasons. In accordance with a qualitative approach and purposive sampling strategy, a small and rich information sample should be selected. Auckland, as a major international gateway and a growing economic centre attracting a large number of international and domestic visitors, has the most hotels in New Zealand (New Zealand Trade & Enterprise, 2018). New Zealand Trade & Enterprise (2016) found that the 3-star to 3.5-star rating hotels account for 27% of properties in Auckland. Due to Auckland having the largest number of hotels and attracting the most visitors in New Zealand (New Zealand Trade & Enterprise, 2018), this city offered a rich selection of customer online reviews for researchers. Auckland has seven 3-star (3-star plus) Qualmark licence-holder hotels (Qualmark New Zealand, 2017), as Table 1 shows. These hotels were this study's sample.

Qualitative researchers argue that there is no specific answer to the question of how large the sample size should be (Taylor et al., 2015). To conduct this study efficiently, considering the time and cost constraints, the sample was gathered by following the purpose sampling strategy. A sample should be valued more for rich information rather than a large size (Green & Thorogood, 2018). In purposive sampling, the sample should focus on being in-depth rather than large, but the sample size should be large enough to address the research question (Boddy, 2016). This study's sample size was therefore focused on the quality rather than the quantity of the data, with a sufficient

amount of data being collected. The data collection process will be explained in the next section.

### 3.7. Data collection

TripAdvisor uses a 5-bubble traveller rating system to evaluate the degree of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Banerjee & Chua, 2016). When a hotel product satisfies or fails to satisfy a customer, attitudes towards the hotel will be reflected in the traveller's rating. Customers express their polarity (positive or negative) emotion, the proportion of positive (compared with negative) emotion, and neutral emotion by online rating scores (Zhao et al., 2019). The rating scale could be seen as extremely positive, positive side of the scale, neutral, negative side of the scale, and extremely negative (Schoenmueller et al., 2020). A satisfied customer tends to award a higher bubble grading, whereas a dissatisfied customer tends to give a lower bubble rating (Banerjee & Chua, 2016). Customers tend to rank a hotel at 5 (excellent) to express their extreme satisfaction and positive feedback, but use a 1 (terrible) bubble to display their extreme dissatisfaction and negative feedback (Banerjee & Chua, 2016; TripAdvisor, n.d.).

This study collected 1-bubble customer reviews to represent dissatisfaction data and 5-bubble customer reviews to represent satisfaction data. As discussed above, 1-bubble samples (reviews indicating dissatisfaction) and 5 bubble samples (reviews indicating satisfaction) were collected. That generated 321 satisfaction reviews and 212 dissatisfaction reviews in total from the seven hotels from January 2004 to March 2020 – the entire period for which the seven hotels have been on the TripAdvisor website and from which the collection of the data for this study could be made.

In order to have an adequate sample size, data has been collected between 1<sup>st</sup> December and 29<sup>th</sup> February (a three-month period) each year. Due to the guest occupancy rates being higher in the New Zealand summer (December to February) than other months (Statistics NZ, 2019), more online reviews are posted during this time. For this study, summer peak customer reviews were collected from TripAdvisor

and this selection justifies the sample size. It should be noted that some hotels received only a few reviews in one summer peak (December 2019 to February 2020). For example, the Auckland Rose and Park Hotel, received only one excellent review in January 2020 and the Takapuna Motor Lodge received only one excellent review in December 2019. In order to gain the rich information sample needed to answer the research questions, the data collection was extended to include a few more years of peak period summer reviews.

Based on the guidance of purposive sampling strategy that the sample is selected purposefully by researchers to meet an information-rich requirement (Green & Thorogood, 2018). This study has chosen a seven-year summer peak period size sample (from 2013 to 2020), for the following reason. There was 321 satisfaction reviews and 212 dissatisfaction reviews in total from the seven hotels on TripAdvisor website. As a purposive sample, the seven-year period has a large enough data set to address the research questions and achieved the research goals. In the seven-year summer peak period, 74 satisfaction reviews and 52 dissatisfaction reviews in total were collected, as shown in Table 1. As the translation process among different languages can possibly lead to misunderstanding and inaccuracy (Campbell, 2014), only English customer reviews will be taken as the research sample. The data analysis method and process will be discussed in next section, after data generation.

Table 1: The sample of 3-star hotels in Auckland receiving customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction comments on TripAdvisor in the summer months over a seven-year period

<b>Hotels</b>	<b>Number of 'excellent' reviews</b>	<b>Number of 'terrible' reviews</b>
Admirals Landing	20	0
Airport Garden Inn Hotel	0	4
Ascotia off Queen	26	23
Auckland Rose Park Hotel	13	6
Formosa Golf Resort	0	12
Howick Motor Lodge	3	0
Takapuna Motor Lodge	12	7
Total: 7	Total: 74	Total: 52

### 3.8. Thematic analysis method

Various techniques are available to analyse qualitative data samples; content analysis, thematic analysis, narrative analysis, discourse analysis and grounded theory are the methods commonly used in qualitative research (Mayan, 2016; Riley & Weiss, 2016). Content analysis is the process of analysing the content of texts, media, pictures or interviews to identify the main codes that are revealed from those contents (Kumar, 2019). Narrative analysis is a method whereby a researcher studies the participants' stories and asks a given question of the narrative 'texts' for a given study purpose (Mayan, 2016). Discourse analysis is a method used to explore the meanings that are generated by verbal, vocal or sign language use or communication; the aim of discourse analysis is to understand the meanings in the ways in which different types of language are used in social life (Gee, 2014; Johnstone, 2018). Grounded theory is a method concerned with the generation or construction of theories by collection and analysing of data (Noble & Mitchell, 2016; Silverman, 2016).

The process of verbal content analysis is one of several typical qualitative approaches (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Thematic analysis is one of the classified methods used in qualitative verbal content analysis, and is a systematic process of encoding, examination, and description of the meaning of the social reality carried out by the creation of themes (Riley & Weiss, 2016). A group of data themes will be produced through the process of identifying, organising and analysing the research sample (Nowell et al., 2017). Thematic analysis could be applied to explore individual views, opinions, knowledge, experiences and values through interview, social media profiles or surveys (Smith, 2015). Thematic analysis has been extensively employed in online review studies and hospitality research (Bardach et al., 2016; Kwok et al., 2017; Yu, 2020). This research encoded and created themes from customer online reviews to seek answers to the research questions that are posed in this study. The comments indicating satisfaction or dissatisfaction were examined, coded and generated as themes. This is a theme-generating process, therefore thematic analysis was applied.

Thematic analysis can be considered in three different forms, which are inductive, deductive and semantic thematic analysis (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Nowell et al., 2017a). With an inductive thematic analysis, the themes generated are directly linked to the content of the data, rather than existing theories and concepts (Smith, 2015). Inductive analysis is a process of encoding the data without an existing coding frame as a guideline (Nowell et al., 2017a) and is a data-driven analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In contrast, deductive thematic analysis generates themes from existing theoretical concepts or develops themes from prior research (Smith, 2015). Semantic analysis is based on the surface meanings of the data, and does not explore the meanings of the words beyond what a participant has written or said (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

Inductive thematic analysis was used in this study for the following reasons. This study has explored the meanings behind the data and without a coding frame as a guideline (Nowell et al., 2017a). For example, if a customer wrote, "The location could not be better", the researcher could discuss and encode the depth of meaning behind the words. This customer review could be encoded to "the customer is satisfied with the hotel location". As discussed in the literature review, previous researchers have different perspectives on the factors concerning customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction (e.g. Gu & Ryan, 2008; Xu & Li, 2016; Zhou et al., 2014), so this dissertation did not use an existing theoretical frame as a basis for the study of 3-star hotel customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction in Auckland, New Zealand. The details of the thematic analysis process will be explored in next section.

### 3.9. Data analysis process

Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested the implementation of a six-phase approach to code and edit qualitative data. This six-phase approach has been applied and developed by many researchers since it was published (Nowell et al., 2017a; Smith, 2015; Willig & Rogers, 2017). The six phases are: familiarising oneself with the data,

generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report (Nowell et al., 2017a; Smith, 2015). This study will follow this six-phase guideline.

In qualitative research, researchers can employ a manual or an electronic software approach to analysing data (Richards, 2014). A manual approach may need more time and labour, whereas an electronic approach has the characteristics of time efficiency and low cost in research utilising a large sample (Zamawe, 2015). However, an electronic approach may lead to loss of a researcher's creativity or in-depth understanding of the data during the creation and exploration of the coding process (Richards, 2014). A small data sample has been collected in this study, and so a manual data analysis approach is suitable and has been applied in this small sample qualitative study (Richards, 2014).

#### Step 1: Become familiar with the data

The first step is useful in qualitative analysis. It requires reading and re-reading the research sample in order to become familiar with the data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). In this step, the researcher aims to become familiar with data content and to consider the content that might be relevant to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Reading data is not simply reading the surface meaning of words, but is also a critical thinking process in order to understand the in-depth meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2013). For this study, the sample is from TripAdvisor's seven 3-star hotel reviews. 74 positive reviews and 52 negative reviews, as displayed in Table 1, have been analysed.

#### Step 2: Generate initial codes

This is a systematic process to identify and label data relevant to the research question (Smith, 2015). In this step, data is organised in a meaningful and systematic way, and the coding process builds a foundation for thematic analysis (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Smith, 2015). As discussed in section 3.7, this study followed an inductive analysis process. Inductive analysis has the feature that there are no existing

theoretical frameworks or encoding instructions for the study (Smith, 2015). In this situation, the researcher can use ‘open coding’, which means there are no prior codes used as guidelines, and the researcher can develop and modify the codes through the coding process (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). The coding process is the beginning stage of data analysis that splits a large quantity of data into small chunks of meaning (Saldana, 2015).

After the researcher had become familiar with the data, this step highlighted all the phrases and sentences from every review that were relevant or potentially relevant to the research questions (Saldana, 2015). They were then be matched to those phrases and sentences in the codes that could describe their content (Saldana, 2015). The codes were generated through the customer online review highlight process, and there was no limit or number requirement for codes (Smith, 2015).

A data highlighting and coding example is shown in Table 2. All the codes were then be collected and explained. The initial customer satisfaction codes generated from positive customer reviews are displayed in Table 3. Initial customer dissatisfaction codes generated from negative reviews are displayed in Table 4.

Table 2: Data highlighting and coding example

Data highlighting	Coding
<p><i>“We arrived at 8 am after an overnight flight. Our hosts, Joy and Howard, happily welcomed us with great coffee and set us up despite the early arrival time. After other guests left, we were upgraded to the Waterfront Suite. There was a wonderful view, cool breeze, nicely ironed linens, comfy king bed, lots of pillow choices, bar frig, microwave, French press, coffee/tea and milk, a modern bathroom, free laundry service, fresh flower daily, chocolates on my pillow and the most amazing and knowledgeable hosts. What more could anyone ask for?”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– welcoming and greeting</li> <li>– upgraded service</li> <li>– room with a view</li> <li>– facilities and amenities</li> </ul>

Table 3: Initial codes of customer satisfaction reviews

<b>Initial codes</b>	<b>Description</b>
Property	Guests describe the property
Service	Service that guests received from the hotel
Personality service	Service that a hotel offers to meet a guest's specific requirements
Friendly staff	Staff displayed a kind attitude towards guests
Helpful staff	Staff provided willing assistance to guests
Welcoming/greeting	How the hotel welcomed/greeted arriving guests
Upgraded	Having a room upgrade without paying extra for it
Hosting/host	How the guests were hosted by the hotel host/owner when the managers were the host/owner
Check-in procedure	A guest described check-in process
Location	Where the property is located
Activities	What was available for guests to do in the vicinity of the hotel
Facilities/amenities	A variety of equipment available in a hotel to meet the needs of guests
Room with a view	Describing the views from the window of the room
Quiet room	A room with a quiet environment ensuring that guests can have quality relaxation
Cleanliness	A room being regularly cleaned to a high standard
Spacious room	Room size larger than guest's expectation
Food and beverages	Describing the food and beverages that guests had in the hotel
Reasonable price	A price that guests believe is fair to themselves
Value for money	The accommodation experience is worth the money that guests spent on it
Car parking	Describing the car parking situation
Free cancellation	Can cancel a booking without any charge
Safe	A positive comment where a guest feels safe while enjoying privacy

Table 4: Initial codes of customer dissatisfaction reviews

<b>Initial codes</b>	<b>Description</b>
Property	Guests describe the property
Service	Service that guests received from the hotel
Unfriendly staff	Unfriendly staff
Unhelpful staff	Staff could not assist a guest to resolve problems
Communication failure	Ineffective communication between guests and hotel staff
Lack of organising ability	Hotel lacks the ability to organise events
Poor management	Hotel displays poor staff management skills
Staff lack of training	Staff unable to carry out tasks properly through lack of training

<b>Initial codes</b>	<b>Description</b>
Facilities and amenities	All kinds of equipment in a hotel to meet guests' residential need unsuccessfully
Noise	Describing an unpleasant level of noise in the hotel environment
Safety issues	A guest felt unsafe or lacked privacy in the hotel
Uncleanliness	Describing a hotel as not clean or tidy
Cramped room	Room space is too small for the guest
Unreasonable price	Guests believed they overpaid for the accommodation experience
Charging for booking cancellation	Hotel asked a guest to pay a fee to cancel a reservation
Parking issue	No free parking or difficult to find a car park space
Food and beverages	Describing the food and beverages that guests had in the hotel
Inconvenient location	The location of a hotel is not convenient for guest activities
Misleading advertisements	Guest believed that a hotel used misleading information to advertise products to consumers
Not responding to customer complaints	Hotel did not respond or resolve the guest complaint

### Step 3: Search for themes

A theme is a set that represents significant and similarly characterised codes (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). A code could reflect one aspect of a perspective but a theme is broader than a code (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A theme has a central organising concept that contain lots of related different perspectives (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This step is not the simple searching for themes but, rather, a step intended to create a coherent thematic map or table from the codes that were generated in step 2 (Smith, 2015). To identify themes, the researcher needs to review the codes and re-read the related data to distinguish the similarity and overlap between codes (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Some codes may be large, rich and complex enough to become the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2013). At the end of this step, the similar codes should be clustered and organised into broader themes that relate to a specific aspect of the study questions (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Smith, 2015).

Thematic tables developed for this study are displayed in Table 5 and Table 6, where the relevant codes for each theme are collected together (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Table 5: Themes of customer satisfaction reviews

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Dimensions from codes</b>
Manager/owner performance (21)	Welcoming/greeting, hosting/host
Staff performance (30)	Friendly staff, helpful staff
Facilities (42)	Facilities/amenities, car parking, property
Service (26)	Service, personality service, upgraded, check-in procedure
Location attraction (53)	Location, activities
Room (44)	Room with a view, quiet room, cleanliness, spacious room
Food and beverages (23)	Food and drinks
Value for money (21)	Reasonable price, value for money
Security (3)	Safe
Cancellation policy (1)	Free cancellation

Table 6: Themes of customer dissatisfaction reviews

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Dimensions from codes</b>
Advertising (6)	Misleading advertisements
Staff performance (25)	Unfriendly staff, unhelpful staff, communication failure
Service (18)	Service, not responding to customer complaints
Facilities (41)	Facilities/amenities, parking issue, property
Security (10)	Safety issues
Room (40)	Noise, uncleanliness, cramped room
Food and beverages (6)	Food and drinks
Management ability (4)	Lack of organising ability, poor management, lack of staff training
Location attraction (2)	Inconvenient location
Cancellation policy (3)	Charging for booking cancellation
Price (15)	Unreasonable price

#### Step 4: Review themes

During this step, the researcher reviews, modifies and develops the prior themes that have been identified in step 3. This is an essential step for quality control in the data analysis process, to check whether the themes fit with the coded data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In this step, it is useful to examine all the relevant data that has been gathered for each theme (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). In this study all the codes were first

reviewed to judge whether the codes fit with the relevant themes (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Next, the researcher re-read all the un-coded data and related it to the study questions to ensure that the themes represented the meaning of the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The final themes were generated and the data represented statistically as shown in Table 7 and Table 8.

Table 7: Customer satisfaction themes review

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Count (n=74)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Dimensions from codes</b>
Staff performance	30	41%	Friendly staff, helpful staff
Service	26	35%	Service, personality service, upgraded, check-in procedure
Manager/owner performance	21	28%	Welcoming/greeting, hosting/host
Facilities	42	57%	Facilities/amenities, car parking, property
Room	44	59%	Room with a view, quiet room, cleanliness, spacious room
Food and beverages	23	31%	Food, drinks
Price	22	30%	Reasonable price, value for money, free cancellation
Location attraction	53	72%	Location, activities
The sense of security	3	4%	Safe

Table 8: Customer dissatisfaction themes review

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Count (n=52)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Dimensions from codes</b>
Staff performance	25	48%	Unfriendly staff, unhelpful staff, communication failure
Service	18	35%	Service, not responding to customer complaints
Management skills	4	8%	Lack of organising ability, poor management, lack of staff training
Facilities	42	79%	Facilities/amenities, parking issue, property
Room	40	77%	Noise, uncleanliness, cramped room
Food and beverages	7	13%	Food, drinks

Themes	Count (n=52)	Percentage	Dimensions from codes
Price	18	35%	Unreasonable price, charging for booking cancellation
Location attraction	2	4%	Inconvenient location
The sense of security	10	19%	Safety issues
Advertising	6	12%	Misleading advertisements

#### Step 5: Define themes

During this phase, researcher needs to identify and explain each theme so that readers understand the meaning of the theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher should consider how each theme relates to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A solo researcher could ask advice from outside experts as to whether the themes are comprehensively and successfully answering this study's questions (Nowell et al., 2017), the data was checked by the dissertation's supervisors. At the end of this step for this study, the themes have been clearly defined in Table 9.

Table 9: Themes and theme descriptions

Themes	Descriptions
Staff performance	How staff behave in the hotel and how well they perform when they serve to customers
Service	Any kind of service that guests received from the hotel
Manager/owner performance	How the manager or hotel owner behave at work
Management skills	It is a collection of hotel owner/manager abilities that include decision-making, problem-solving, staff training, and event organising
Facilities	The variety of equipment available in a hotel to meet the needs of guests
Room	Describing the experience of staying in the room
Food and beverages	Describing the food and beverages that guests had in the hotel
Price	Customer descriptions of the hotel price
Location attraction	Where the property is located and what was available for guests to do in the vicinity of the hotel
The sense of security	Customer descriptions of whether or not they feel safe
Advertising	Customer descriptions of whether the hotel advertising is misleading

### Step 6: Producing the report

Braun and Clarke (2013) suggested following the guidance of the qualitative research process in writing up a thematic analysis. For this dissertation, previous literature has been reviewed to explain the study questions and aims. It is followed by the introduction of the philosophy underpinning the methodology and an explanation of how the thematic analysis approach was chosen. After the analysis which produced the themes set out in the above section, the next chapter will discuss the findings relating to these themes, and these findings will be used to answer the research questions.

### 3.10. Summary

This study has followed the guidance of the qualitative method and it has taken the interpretive paradigm as the basis of the research. A sample of 74 customer satisfaction reviews and 52 customer dissatisfaction reviews from TripAdvisor has been collected by means of purposive sampling strategy for studying the main factors of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction in 3-star hotels in Auckland, New Zealand. Inductive thematic analysis and a manual approach have been used to generate themes in terms of identifying the main factors influencing customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The findings and discussion will be presented in the next chapter.

## Chapter 4 Findings and discussion

### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to illustrate the main findings arising from the data analysis, compare the findings with previous literature and discuss them in that context. This chapter will identify the main themes and codes describing customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction with 3-star hotels in Auckland. The frequency of occurrence and percentage of the total will also be displayed in table form for each theme and code.

### 4.2. Customer satisfaction factors identified for Auckland's 3-star hotels

Data analysis revealed that nine themes influence customer satisfaction with 3-star hotels in Auckland. They are location, room, facilities, staff performance, service, food and beverages, price, manager/owner performance and the sense of security. These themes are displayed in Table 10. The findings identified that three categories, location, room, and facilities were the most common influences on customer satisfaction.

Table 10: Themes on customer satisfaction in 3-star hotels in Auckland

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Count (n=74)</b>		
<b>Themes</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Ranking</b>
Location	53	72%	1
Room	44	59%	2
Facilities	42	57%	3
Staff performance	30	41%	4
Service	26	35%	5
Food and beverages	23	31%	6
Price	22	30%	7
Manager/owner performance	21	28%	8
The sense of security	3	4%	9

The customers were most satisfied with the hotel location, and this accounted for 72% of feedback. Additionally, 59% of satisfaction comments mentioned the room. 57% of customer comments mentioned the hotel facilities. The first three themes were

mentioned in over half of the comments in this study, and these are seen as the main themes of customer satisfaction in 3-star hotels in Auckland. Staff performance (41%), service (35%), food and beverages (31%), and price (30%) were themes mentioned in 30% or above of comments. Hence, these factors will be thought of as secondary category themes, which may influence customer satisfaction to some extent. These findings are similar to the results found by Darini and Khozaei (2016) in a study of Dubai 3-star hotels. They identified that customer satisfaction is mainly influenced by hotel location, food management, cleanliness, facilities, and staff behaviours (Darini & Khozaei, 2016). The themes of manager/owner performance and the sense of security had less influence in customer reviews, accounting for 28% and 4%. These two themes were rarely mentioned in the comments, and so will not be discussed in this study. This study focuses on the main factors that influence customer satisfaction. Hence, the codes of location, room and facilities themes will be discussed in detail next, in section 4.3. Staff performance, service, food and beverages, and price themes will be discussed briefly in section 4.4.

#### 4.3. The most common customer satisfaction themes in Auckland's 3-star hotels

##### 4.3.1. Location

The data in Table 10 shows that location is the theme that contributes to the highest customer satisfaction percentage (72%) in this study. The codes affecting customer satisfaction regarding location include tourist attractions, nearby facilities, transportation and proximity to the city centre (see Table 11).

Table 11: Codes that influence customer satisfaction regarding location of 3-star hotels in Auckland

<b>Count (n=53)</b>		
<b>Different codes in the location theme</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Tourist attractions	25	47%
Nearby facilities	20	38%
Transportation	18	34%
City centre proximity	16	30%

Table 11 demonstrates that 47% of reviews indicated satisfaction with the access to tourist attractions in the location. 38% of reviews described satisfaction with nearby facilities, 34% of reviews mentioned that they were satisfied with the transportation in the location, and 30% of reviews were satisfied with the proximity to the city centre. According to Table 11, customer satisfaction with location has been identified as referring to accessibility to tourist attractions, activities, transportation and city centre proximity.

#### 4.3.1.1 Tourist attractions

Table 11 shows that the code influencing customer satisfaction with location in Auckland's 3-star hotels that has the highest frequency percentage is tourist attractions (47%). Three examples collected from TripAdvisor's satisfaction comments are as follows:

*"The Bed and Breakfast is conveniently located close to the ferry to Auckland and with a beautiful view to Auckland's skyline." (Christian, 2017)*

*"We left our cases and went for a walk around Devonport, including the Navy museum which is well worth a visit." (Colin, 2015)*

*"Devonport is a beautiful Victorian styled village with nice walks, beaches." (Shirley, 2014)*

In their comments, customers used words such as 'beautiful village', 'Navy museum', and 'with a beautiful view' to describe tourist attractions. The results of this study show that the proximity to tourist attractions is the top attribute affecting customer satisfaction. Tourist attractions can be recognised as nature, scenery or significant human-made structures that could attract individuals to visit (Jensen et al., 2017). In this study, proximity to a tourist attraction has been recognised as affecting customer satisfaction. Previous studies, such as Dong et al. (2014) and Yang et al. (2018) had highlighted that customer satisfaction with location could be affected by the tourist

attractions (e.g. being close to beach or hiking trail). The current findings of this study show that tourist attractions contribute to the most significant factor affecting customer satisfaction in 3-star hotels; this has not been discussed as the most important factor in previous literature. Hence, this finding could be seen as an important contribution to customer satisfaction studies in the 3-star hotel sector.

#### 4.3.1.2. Nearby facilities

According to Table 11, 38% of comments mentioned nearby facilities when customers indicated satisfaction with the hotel location. Three examples collected from TripAdvisor's satisfaction comments are as follows:

*"Everything you could want is a short walk- the waterfront, beach, groceries, restaurants, ferry, bus, liquor store, shopping district, hiking trails and museums. Walk across the street to grab the ferry to Auckland, other islands or hiking excursions." (Betty, 2020)*

*"Admirals Landing is conveniently placed to explore Devonport. The shops and restaurants are all within a short walk. If you like craft beer, try Tiny Triumphs bar." (Colin, 2015)*

*"Highland Park shops, supermarkets etc are about a 5-10 minute walk away." (Allan, 2014)*

Customers described the nearby facilities around the hotel that they could visit, such as 'shopping from stores', and 'dining at a restaurant'. The findings of this study indicate that customers were satisfied in terms of the location to nearby facilities. Darini and Khozaei (2016) suggested that shops, restaurants and other nearby facilities are highly valued in the customer location satisfaction categories for 3-star hotels. The current finding is in agreement with Darini and Khozaei (2016). It is also supported by Xu and Li (2016), who stated that convenient nearby facilities are important in customer satisfaction as it can save time for customers to find and visit them.

#### 4.3.1.3. Transportation

The code for transportation accounted for 34% of the location theme comments reported in Table 11. Three examples collected from TripAdvisor's satisfaction comments are as follows:

*"The Skybus from the airport stops just outside their door." (Upai, 2018)*

*"The Bed and Breakfast is conveniently located close to the ferry to Auckland." (Christian, 2017)*

*"The location of this B&B is fabulous. Its right on the harbour front with a ferry taking you to Auckland's Business District and shops every 30 mins." (Jim, 2016)*

The words customers mentioned in their reviews regarding transportation included 'close to the ferry' and 'the Skybus stop outside the door'. The current findings indicate that customers gained satisfaction when their hotel was located close to a transport hub. The same results were highlighted by Lu and Stepchenkova (2012). They stated that customers prefer a hotel close to convenient transport, the business centre, and entertainment, and with an attractive view (Lu & Stepchenkova, 2012). These results are also consistent with Yang et al. (2018), who reported that transportation satisfaction relates to two aspects: firstly, it is a measurement of how convenient it is for customers to access various types of transportation to and from the hotel; and secondly, it is related to how the hotel's location may reduce customers' transportation costs and save transportation time.

#### 4.3.1.4. City centre proximity

City centre proximity accounted for 30% of the location theme comments reported in Table 11. Three examples collected from TripAdvisor's satisfaction comments are as follows:

*“This is a highly recommended place to stay in Auckland’s CBD.” (Kurt, 2020)*

*“Located on the main street, Queen St.” (Upai, 2018)*

*“Booked for 5 days, great location, can walk into the centre city easily.” (Ozlad, 2018)*

Relevant words that customers mentioned in their comments regarding the city centre proximity included ‘Auckland CBD’ and ‘Queen Street’. These findings indicate that city centre proximity increased customer satisfaction. Many previous studies found that city centre proximity is one of the key factors concerning customer satisfaction with hotel location (Dong et al., 2014; Herjanto et al., 2017; Yang et al., 2018), which were strongly supported in the current study. This research result was consistent with Li et al. (2015), who found that hotel customer satisfaction with a city centre location is due to various services and facilities being available for the convenience of customers. Additionally, Yang et al. (2014) stated that luxury 4-star and 5-star hotels’ customers prefer a city centre hotel location but, considering the issue of value for money, a location at the edge of the city could be conducive to customer satisfaction in budget hotels. Since the findings of this research do not reveal differences in 3-star hotel customer satisfaction with regard to specific locations in the city, the current study has a different emphasis to Yang et al. (2014).

#### 4.3.2. Room

The data displayed in Table 10 shows that the standard of the room is the second highest customer satisfaction theme (59%). As one of the core products in hotels, room quality has been found in previous studies to contribute to customer satisfaction (Bodet et al., 2017; Radojevic et al., 2015; Xiang et al., 2015). This research yielded the same results. The codes affecting customer satisfaction regarding room satisfaction include cleanliness, room with a view, room size and quiet room (see Table 12).

Table 12: Codes that influence customer satisfaction regarding their room in 3-star hotels in Auckland

Different codes in the room theme	Count (n=44)	
	Frequency	Percentage
Cleanliness	34	77%
Room with a view	10	23%
Room size	8	18%
Quiet room	7	16%

As the data in Table 12 shows, cleanliness has the highest percentage. 77% of customer reviews mentioned cleanliness when indicating satisfaction with the room. In light of this high percentage in customer reviews, the following section will discuss cleanliness. The three other codes: room with a view (23%), room size (18%) and quiet room (16%) were less likely to impact on customer satisfaction and therefore will not be discussed due to the limited number of mentions in customer reviews.

#### 4.3.2.1. Cleanliness

Table 12 demonstrates the codes influencing customer satisfaction. Room cleanliness in Auckland's 3-star hotels scored the highest frequency percentage (77%). Three relevant examples collected from TripAdvisor's satisfaction comments are as follows:

*"The room was very clean, comfortable bed, clean towels and sheets."*

*(Moana, 2020)*

*"I stayed there last month with my family, I gave this hotel 5 star because the washrooms were very clean. Bedsheets and pillows were very clean and organized."* (Kaddy, 2019)

*"We booked the top room in a separate cottage next door. It was very clean and modern."* (Snknight, 2017)

In their comments, customers used words such as 'clean room', 'spotless room', and 'tidy room' to describe room cleanliness. The results of this study show that cleanliness is the top attribute affecting customer satisfaction with their room. This result is

consistent with Bodet et al. (2017), who found that cleanliness is the most significant attribute of hotel room quality. This study is also in agreement with Radojevic et al. (2015) who reported that cleanliness of the room is one of the main determinants of hotel customer satisfaction. If room cleanliness is at or beyond guest expectations, it will positively affected guest satisfaction (Park et al., 2019). Customer evaluations regarding satisfaction experiences are influenced by the cleanliness of the room (Prasad et al., 2014).

#### 4.3.3. Facilities

The data in Table 10 shows that the facilities theme ranks as the third highest factor in customer satisfaction percentages (57%). The codes affecting customer satisfaction regarding facilities include room facilities, bed and public facilities (in table 13).

Table 13: Codes that influence customer satisfaction regarding facilities of 3-star hotels in Auckland

<b>Count (n=42)</b>		
<b>Different codes in the facilities theme</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Room facilities	32	76%
Bed	16	38%
Public facilities	14	33%

According to the data analysis, customer reviews show that 76% of customers are satisfied with the hotel room facilities. 38% of customers stated that they were satisfied with the bed, while 33% customers were satisfied with the public facilities. Table 13 shows that customers are more concerned with room facilities than public facilities in regard to their accommodation experiences, and this is evident in fewer reviews mentioning public facilities. These three codes in the facilities theme will be discussed in the following sections.

#### 4.3.3.1. Room facilities

Table 13 shows that the code with the highest percentage of comments reported, and the greatest influence on customer satisfaction with regard to facilities in Auckland's 3-star hotels, is room facilities (76%). Three examples collected from TripAdvisor's satisfaction comments are as follows:

*“Cool breeze, nicely ironed linens, lots of pillow choices, bar fridge, microwave, French press, coffee/tea and milk, a modern bathroom.” (Betty, 2020)*

*“I had booked the 3 bedroom apartment which had a well equipped kitchen, a large lounge area plus a balcony.” (James, 2016)*

*“It has every amenity that you would expect to find in a first class hotel bedroom. The bathroom has one of the finest showers to be found anywhere!” (Alan, 2014)*

In their comments, customers used words such as ‘bar fridge’, ‘French press’ and ‘lovely shower’ to describe their satisfaction with room facilities. Darini and Khozaei (2016) suggested that room facilities are not considered to affect customer satisfaction, which contradicts this study. Pervious research on limited-service hotels have shown that room facilities meeting customer expectations is a core attribute of customer satisfaction (Rahimi & Kozak, 2016; Xu & Li, 2016). The data in this research adds to the evidence that room facilities can also influence customer satisfaction in 3-star hotels, findings of this research are supported by Khozaei et al. (2016), who found that the room facilities affect customer satisfaction in 3-star hotel.

#### 4.3.3.2. Bed

The bed satisfaction accounted for 38% of the facilities theme comments reported in Table 13. Three examples collected from TripAdvisor's satisfaction comments are as follows:

*“The room we stayed in was excellent, with great hard bed making for a great sleep.” (Lise, 2018)*

*“Had a very good night sleep in a comfortable bed.” (Chris, 2018)*

*“We can honestly say that we had a very comfortable bed and slept well.”  
(Paul, 2017)*

Relevant words that customers mentioned in their comments were ‘comfy king bed’, ‘bed is comfortable’, and ‘great hard bed’ to describe the level of bed comfort. In this study, bed comfort has been shown to affect to customer satisfaction. The current study is supported by Albayrak and Caber (2015), who stated that bed comfort was significant in contributing to customer satisfaction in their study. Previous studies of budget hotels have indicated that bed comfort is an important element that influences customer satisfaction (Albayrak & Caber, 2015; Rahimi & Kozak, 2017). The findings of this study provided further evidence that the bed affects customer satisfaction in 3-star hotels.

#### 4.3.3.3. Public facilities

Satisfaction with public facilities accounted for 38% of the comments reported under the facilities theme in Table 13. Three examples collected from TripAdvisor’s satisfaction comments are as follows:

*“They offer breakfast with reasonable price, sauna and gym was a plus!”  
(David, 2020)*

*“Really enjoyed the Pool BBQ as well.” (Chris, 2015)*

*“The added bonus of a nice swimming pool which our family love when they visit us at the motel.” (Rob, 2014)*

From the reviews, satisfied customers used the words like ‘gym’, ‘swimming pool’, and

'sauna' to describe the public facilities. According to Table 13, public facilities may have less influence in terms of customer satisfaction than the room facilities. The findings in this study show the same results as previous studies which stated that public facilities are not considered to be one of the important aspects of customer satisfaction in budget hotels (Rahimi & Kozak, 2017; Ren et al., 2015). Moreover, the current study is supported by the 3-star hotel customer satisfaction study by Darini and Khozaei (2016), which showed that public facilities are not considered to be an important factor in terms of customer satisfaction.

#### 4.4. The secondary category themes of customer satisfaction in Auckland's 3-star hotels

##### 4.4.1. Staff performance

The data in Table 10 shows that 41% of satisfaction reviews mentioned that they were satisfied with the staff performance in 3-star hotels. Three examples collected from TripAdvisor's satisfaction comments are as follows:

*"I appreciate all the staff for being attentive and helpful all the time." (David, 2020)*

*"Arrived in this hotel and was greeted by a friendly receptionists Ethel and Emily." (Chelsea, 2020)*

*"Front office staff was very helpful as I did a late check-in." (Rash, 2019)*

Staff performance could be identified as staff attitudes towards customers and professional knowledge that the staff demonstrate regarding their work (Berezina et al., 2016). Since customers first contact with the hotel is with the staff, staff performance is reflected in both positive and negative online reviews (Berezina et al., 2016).

Customers tend to use "friendly staff" and "helpful staff" to describe their satisfaction with hotel staff performance in this study. Darini and Khozaei (2016) noted that staff performance is one of the significant elements influencing customer satisfaction.

However, in this study, staff performance is not one of the most important elements affecting customer satisfaction, which in contrast with Darini and Khozaei (2016). These findings also in disagreement with previous studies where staff were considered to be one of most important factors of customer satisfaction in budget and 4-star to 5-star hotels (Ren et al., 2015; Zhou et al., 2014).

#### 4.4.2. Service

The data in Table 10 shows that 35% of customer satisfaction was influenced by service. Three examples collected from TripAdvisor's satisfaction comments are as follows:

*"The receptionists are exceptional, wonderful service from the moment I arrived to the moment I left." (Jenry, 2020)*

*"Due to a misunderstanding on our part with the ferry schedule on a holiday we could have missed a 7am connection in Auckland- well Howard drove us to where we needed to be! It was 6:30 am!!!" (Qaxcvdee, 2020)*

*"Check in was easy, we were expected and documentation was ready to sign." (Michael, 2018)*

Customers described satisfaction of service as including 'good service', 'easy check-in and check-out' and 'upgraded our room'. According to this study's findings, service is not one of the significant items affecting customer satisfaction in 3-star hotels. This is supported by previous studies by Darini and Khozaei (2016), Ren et al. (2016) and Xu and Li (2016) who found that service is not an important influence on customer satisfaction in budget hotels but it is important in full service hotels. This study provided results consistent with Ren et al. (2016) who indicated that hotel service may slightly influence customers but is not one of the key factors.

#### 4.4.3. Food and beverages

As the data shows in Table 10, food and beverages is one of the themes that affected customer satisfaction in this study, accounting for 31% of comments. Three examples collected from TripAdvisor's satisfaction comments are as follows:

*"The breakfast was plentiful, tasty and timed to meet our daily plans." (Betty, 2020)*

*"Outside our room was a table with a variety of teas, coffee and fresh fruit." (Colin, 2015)*

*"Food in the restaurant is good." (Xquizit, 2014)*

According to the satisfaction comments, 31% customer reviews mentioned that they were satisfied with breakfast, food choice diversity and tea/coffee. Food and beverages, therefore, could be considered to have some limited influence on customer satisfaction. Hence, this study disagrees with some literature where the authors have stated that customers were significantly affected by food and beverages in all star classification hotels (Darini & Khozaei, 2016; Gu & Ryan, 2008; Padma & Ahn, 2020; Zhou et al., 2014). Additionally, Xu and Li (2016) stated that customer satisfaction with food and beverages is more prevalent in different types of hotels. In full-service hotels, customers may expect high-quality food and a pleasant restaurant environment, but in limited-service hotels, customer tend to be satisfied with good food and beverages or a good complimentary breakfast (Xu & Li, 2016). The findings of this study indicate that 3-star hotel customer satisfaction with food and beverages is mainly focused on breakfast and beverages, which is supported by Xu and Li (2016).

#### 4.4.4. Price

To some extent, the price affects customer satisfaction, as shown in Table 10, accounting for 30% of comments. Three examples collected from TripAdvisor's

satisfaction comments are as follows:

*“Great services at reasonable rates.” (Scorpio, 2019)*

*“Not a luxury hotel, but good value for the money paid.” (Upai, 2018)*

*“You also have up to 2 days to cancel a booking without being charged.”*

*(Kiwionatrip, 2014)*

According to the satisfaction comments, customers described their price satisfaction with words such as ‘reasonable price’, ‘free cancelation’ and ‘value for money’. Darini and Khozaei (2016) stated that hotel price is not considered to be a significant factor influencing customer satisfaction, and this view was supported by this study. However, Rahimi and Kozak (2016) stated that customers who prefer mid-scale and lower star rating hotels pay more attention to price than occupants of 4-star and 5-star star hotels. In this study, it has been shown that price may slightly influence customer satisfaction, but it is not a main factor; therefore, this finding is not in agreement with Rahimi and Kozak (2016).

#### 4.5. Customer dissatisfaction factors identified in Auckland’s 3-star hotels

Data analysis revealed that ten themes influenced customer dissatisfaction with 3-star hotels in Auckland. They are: facilities, room, staff performance, service, price, a sense of security, food and beverages, advertising, management skills, and location. These themes are displayed in Table 14. The findings identified that two categories, facilities and room, were the most common influences on customer dissatisfaction.

Table 14: Themes on customer dissatisfaction in 3-star hotels in Auckland

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Count (n=52)</b>		
<b>Themes</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Ranking</b>
Facilities	41	79%	1
Room	40	77%	2
Staff performance	25	48%	3
Service	18	35%	4

Categories	Count (n=52)		
Themes	Frequency	Percentage	Ranking
Price	18	35%	5
The sense of security	10	19%	6
Food and beverages	7	13%	7
Advertising	6	12%	8
Management skills	4	8%	9
Location	2	4%	10

All data are ranked from high to low by percentage in Table 14. The most common complaints from customers were about the facilities, which accounted for 79% of all complaints. Additionally, 77% of dissatisfaction comments mentioned the room. The first two themes were mentioned in over half of the comments in this study, and are seen as the main themes of customer dissatisfaction in 3-star hotels in Auckland. Staff performance (48%), service (35%), and price (35%) were themes mentioned in more than 30% of comments. Hence, these factors are thought of as secondary category themes, which may contribute to customer dissatisfaction to some extent. The themes regarding the customer's sense of security (19%), food and beverages (13%), advertising (12%), management skills (8%) and location (4%) have less influence in customer reviews. These five themes were rarely mentioned in the comments, and so will not be discussed in this study. There are few published studies that have referred to customer dissatisfaction with 3-star hotels (Hu et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2016). This dissertation focuses on the main factors that influence customer dissatisfaction. Hence, the codes of the facilities and room themes will be discussed in detail. Staff performance, service, and price themes will be discussed briefly in the following sections.

#### 4.6. The most common customer dissatisfaction themes in Auckland's 3-star hotels

##### 4.6.1. Facilities

The data in Table 14 shows that the facilities theme has the highest customer dissatisfaction percentage (79%) in this study. Kátay (2015) stated that the gap

between the hotel product's standard and the customer's expectations may lead to customer dissatisfaction. In this study, the facilities theme can be thought of as the most significant failure to meet customer expectations. Fernandes and Fernandes (2018) and Hu et al. (2019) stated that hotel facilities not meeting customer expectations is one of the most important factors leading to customer dissatisfaction, which is consistent with the results of this study. The codes affecting customer dissatisfaction regarding facilities include room facilities, public facilities, and bed (see Table 15).

Table 15: Codes that influence customer dissatisfaction regarding facilities of 3-star hotels in Auckland

<b>Count (n=41)</b>		
<b>Different codes in the facilities theme</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Room facilities	34	83%
Public facilities	19	46%
Bed	4	10%

As Table 15 shows, 83% of reviews revealed that customers were dissatisfied with the room facilities under the facilities theme. 46% of reviews indicated dissatisfaction with the public facilities. The bed (10%) was least likely to cause customer dissatisfaction in this study and it will not be discussed due to the limited number of mentions in customer reviews.

#### 4.6.1.1. Room facilities

Table 15 displays the codes influencing customer dissatisfaction with facilities in Auckland's 3-star hotels of which room facilities were the highest, being mentioned in 83% of review comments. Three examples collected from TripAdvisor's dissatisfaction comments are as follows:

*"No soundproofing between rooms, no microwave, sketchy neighborhood, not clean, very old furniture, no fan so they gave me the one behind reception,*

*broke 2nd day.” (CWW, 2020)*

*“And the towel rack kept falling off the wall. The shower water smelt like wood smoke (we weren’t the only ones who noticed), and dribbled more than showered. The tiny little fridge in the room was leaking water.” (Julia, 2017)*

*“Windows had to be opened as there was no air con apart from small fan.” (QueenofHappyTravels, 2017)*

Based on the data in Table 15, poor room facilities were the most significant cause of customer dissatisfaction. From the reviews, dissatisfied customers used words like ‘no microwave’, ‘very old furniture’, and ‘no air conditioning’ to describe the room facilities that had not met their expectation. This study produced the same findings as the previous research of Xu and Li (2016) in limited-service hotels. They also found that customer complaints in limited-service hotels are associated with poor quality room facilities (Xu & Li, 2016). The results in the current study prove that dissatisfaction with room facilities can lead to customer complaints in 3-star hotels. This claim is also supported by Kim et al. (2016), who noted that customer expectations with room facilities in any classification hotel (limited-service and full-service) generate dissatisfaction if hoteliers fail to offer room facilities corresponding to the hotel star level.

#### 4.6.1.2. Public facilities

Public facilities dissatisfaction accounted for 46% of the comments under the facilities theme in Table 15. Three examples collected from TripAdvisor’s dissatisfaction comments are as follows:

*“Pool not great and not very safe for our small children, due to chipped tiles and the cover over the steps.” (Shelley, 2017)*

*“The parking area was super cramped and nearly impossible to park.” (Simon, 2016)*

*“The sliding door opening toward the golf course was completely stuck and could not be opened at all.” (Shadanbaz, 2015)*

Based on the information displayed in Table 15, public facilities that do not meet customer expectation will negatively influence customer reviews. In the reviews, dissatisfied customers used the words like ‘broken outdoor table’, ‘pool not great’, and ‘parking was an issue’ to describe the public facilities that had not met their expectations. The findings are consistent with Hu et al. (2019), who found that, in budget hotels, customer complaints are mainly related to facilities issues, and the complaints generally involve the failure of public facilities to meet customer expectations (Hu et al., 2019). The current study adds to mounting evidence that public facilities do not meet customer expectations and may to some extent increase customer dissatisfaction in 3-star hotels.

#### 4.6.2. Room

The data shown in Table 14 indicates that the standard of the room is the next highest percentage of customer dissatisfaction comments (77%) in this study. As one of the core products of hotels, customers may complain when the quality of the room does not meet their expectations (Chan et al., 2017; Hu et al., 2019). The findings in Table 14 shows results consistent with Xu and Li (2016) regarding the unsatisfactory quality of a hotel product causing customer dissatisfaction. The codes affecting customer dissatisfaction regarding room include uncleanliness, room size, and noise (see Table 16).

Table 16: Codes that influence customer dissatisfaction regarding rooms in 3-star hotels in Auckland

<b>Count (n=40)</b>		
<b>Different codes in the room theme</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Uncleanliness	22	55%
Room size	19	48%
Noise	16	40%

The data in Table 16 shows that uncleanliness has the highest percentage with 55% of customer reviews. Their dissatisfaction with the room was reflected in the reviews. Cramped or noisy rooms are also potential issues which can lead to a customer feeling dissatisfied and these accounted for 48% and 40% of the dissatisfied reviews. These three different codes pertaining to room dissatisfaction will be discussed in the following sections.

#### 4.6.2.1. Uncleanliness

The customer complaints regarding uncleanliness accounted for 55% of the room theme in Table 16. Three examples collected from TripAdvisor's dissatisfaction comments are as follows:

*"The walls were dirty with lots of dents, towels we hard and crusty, stains all on carpet." (Mon, 2018)*

*"Room smelled like mouldy damp carpets and the sheer curtain end were spotted with mould spores." (Candice, 2015)*

*"The sheet on our bed had been previously soiled by a blood stain obviously from a period." (Petal, 2015)*

The data in Table 16 shows that customer dissatisfaction in terms of room theme was mainly generated by uncleanliness. In the reviews, dissatisfied customers used words like 'not clean', 'dirty', and 'mouldy' to describe the room hygiene not meeting their expectations. The current findings were consistent with Park et al. (2019) who observed that when room hygiene is worse than customer expectations it could cause complaints on customer reviews (Park et al., 2019). The results of this study agree with Bodet et al. (2017) and Hu et al. (2019) who observed that uncleanliness is one of the negative factors that strongly influences customer dissatisfaction throughout the full classification range of hotels (Bodet et al., 2017; Hu et al., 2019).

#### 4.6.2.2. Room size

Dissatisfaction with room size accounted for 48% of the comments referring to the room theme in Table 16. Three examples collected from TripAdvisor's dissatisfaction comments are as follows:

*“Arrived and went to the room which was supposed to be a queen room it was that small one had to sit down while the other went around the bed.” (Mike, 2020)*

*“The room is too small that you cannot even open the shower door properly without opening the bathroom door.” (Zenith, 2017)*

*“The rooms were tiny with hardly any storage so I had to keep my suitcase in the bathroom.” (Tracy, 2016)*

In this study, a room size that does not meet customer expectations has a negative influence on customer experiences. In the reviews, dissatisfied customers used words like ‘too small’, ‘claustrophobic’, and ‘tiny’ to describe the room size that did not meet their expectation. Failure to meet customer expectations in terms of this element could lead to customer dissatisfaction. The findings of this study show that customers hold expectations of a reasonably sized room in 3-star hotels. Moreover, the findings of this study agree with Kim et al. (2016) who noted that, in all star rating hotels, room size is one of the significant factors contributing to customer dissatisfaction.

#### 4.6.2.3. Noise

The noise complaints accounted for 40% of the room theme in Table 16. Three examples collected from TripAdvisor's dissatisfaction comments are as follows:

*“I was there New Year eve so didn't think much about the fireworks noise and loud music noise around the property all night, that was understandable. BUT then it continued every day after too.” (CWW, 2020)*

*“We had been kept up till 4am this morning with a party noise and screaming and yelling from your neighbor's.” (Smtimh, 2019)*

*“No sleep every night thanks to the tow and garbage trucks! Unbelievable noise.” (QueenofHappyTravels, 2017)*

According to the data shown in Table 16, a noisy accommodation environment could lead to customer dissatisfaction. From the reviews, dissatisfied customers used words like ‘party noise’, ‘construction noise’, and ‘room was not sound proof’ to describe the noise that led to customer dissatisfaction. Xu and Li (2016) stated that noise causes customer dissatisfaction due to the negative influence that disturbed sleep has upon customers. Moreover, they found that noise is the most influential factor relating to customer dissatisfaction in limited-service hotels (Xu & Li, 2016). With the same results as Xu and Li (2016), the current study goes some way to proving that a noisy environment can also cause customer complaints in 3-star hotels. This study also agrees with many previous studies which claimed that noise is one of the major issues pertaining to customer complaints (Au et al., 2014; Fernandes & Fernandes, 2018; Hu et al., 2019).

#### 4.7. The secondary category themes of customer dissatisfaction in Auckland’s 3-star hotels

##### 4.7.1. Staff performance

The data in Table 14 shows that customer dissatisfaction is affected by staff performance in 3-star hotels in Auckland. 48% of dissatisfaction reviews mentioned that customers were dissatisfied with staff performance. Three examples collected from TripAdvisor’s dissatisfaction comments are as follows:

*“It is extremely outdated, not particularly clean and lady on reception very unfriendly could do with a smile.” (Mon, 2018)*

*“A lot of the staff barely speak any English.” (Polarbearpies, 2016)*

*“On entering and talking to reception I gradually got the feeling that the staff were not very helpful or enthusiastic.” (Won, 2015)*

According to the data shown in Table 14, instances where staff performance does not meet customer expectation can lead to customer dissatisfaction. Customers used words such as ‘unfriendly staff’, ‘unhelpful staff’ and ‘staff can’t speak fluent English’ to describe their dissatisfaction with hotel staff performance in the reviews. The current findings were supported by Berezina et al. (2016) who indicated that hotel staff performance can be seen as one of the main categories to result in customer complaints (Berezina et al., 2016). Criticisms may include misbehaviour, bad attitude or lack of skills or passion (Berezina et al., 2016). This study’s findings are also consistent with Gu and Ryan (2008) and Ren et al. (2016), who noted that staff performance to be one of the elements which can cause customer dissatisfaction in all star rating hotels. Additionally, Darini and Khozaei (2016) noted that hotel staff performance was considered to be one of the main factors affecting customer satisfaction. The findings in this study show that disappointment with staff performance can also result in 3-star hotel customer complaints in online reviews, and can contribute to 3-star hotel customer dissatisfaction.

#### 4.7.2. Service

The data in Table 14 demonstrates that, in this study, 35% of customer dissatisfaction was caused by hotel service. Three examples collected from TripAdvisor’s dissatisfaction comments are as follows:

*“I am disgusted at the service and quality of your hotel.” (Smtimh, 2019)*

*“We wrote twice to the hotel expressing our concerns and they never replied to us.” (Jordan, 2016)*

*“Not convinced that they have parking available & not that great with customer*

*service either.” (Carrie, 2015)*

According to the data in Table 14, this study shows that service is not the main theme regarding customer complaints, but it might slightly affect customer dissatisfaction. Kim et al. (2016) found that customers made complaints when service quality failed to meet their expectations in full-service hotels but service is not one of the key issues that cause limited-service hotel customer dissatisfaction. The current study confirms the findings of Kim et al. (2016) to some extent, in showing that customers consider service as a cause of dissatisfaction in 3-star hotels. However, Darini and Khozaei (2016) did not consider service to be a main factor of influence in customer satisfaction. The findings of this study support the views of Darini and Khozaei (2016) as service was also found not to be a main factor affecting customer dissatisfaction in 3-star hotels.

#### 4.7.3. Price

The data in Table 14 shows that, in this study, 35% of customer dissatisfaction comments were about 3-star hotel prices. Three examples collected from TripAdvisor’s dissatisfaction comments are as follows:

*“But when I checked in and found my client had been charged \$599 for one night in this hell hole, I was truly disgusted.” (Elizabeth, 2018)*

*“1-2 star hotel charging 4-star prices!” (Greg, 2018)*

*“We cancelled our second night two hours after their deadline, and they refused to even part refund us.” (Shelley, 2017)*

According to comments, customers used words like ‘unreasonable price’ or ‘extra charge to cancel the booking’, to describe their dissatisfaction with the hotel price. Based on the findings shown in Table 14, price was not a main factor influencing customer attitudes towards 3-star hotels. Hence, this study is in disagreement with Rahimi and Kozak (2016) and Xu and Li (2016) who found that, compared to

customers of 4-star and 5-star hotels, lower star hotel customers were more price sensitive. Additionally, Darini and Khozaei (2016) stated that price is not a significant factor regarding customer satisfaction in 3-star hotels. This study supports Darini and Khozaei (2016), who found that price is not significant in affecting customer dissatisfaction in 3-star hotels.

## Chapter 5 Conclusion

### 5.1. Introduction

This dissertation has explored the main factors that influence satisfaction and dissatisfaction in 3-star hotels in Auckland, New Zealand. This chapter will summarise the significant findings of this study and the implications and suggestions for 3-star hotel hoteliers. To conclude, this chapter will discuss the limitations of the research and will make suggestions for future research.

### 5.2. Review of the findings

This research took online reviews from TripAdvisor as secondary data and analysed 72 positive and 54 negative comments to explore the main factors influencing customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction with 3-star hotels in Auckland, New Zealand. The findings were as follows. The location, room and facilities were found to be the most important contributors to customer satisfaction. The facilities and room factors were the main categories causing customer dissatisfaction in 3-star hotels. Staff performance, service, price and food and beverages were the main secondary categories contributing towards customer satisfaction. Staff performance, service, and price were found to be the main secondary categories that lead to customer dissatisfaction. Manager/owner performance and a sense of security were less-frequently mentioned in customer reviews and were seen to have the lowest impact on customer satisfaction. A sense of security, food and beverages, advertising, management skills, and location were all less-frequently mentioned in the customer reviews and had the lowest impact on customer dissatisfaction with 3-star hotels in Auckland, New Zealand. The next section will discuss the main factors impacting customer satisfaction.

### 5.2.1. Main factors affecting customer satisfaction

The most significant factor to influence customer satisfaction was identified as the location of Auckland's 3-star hotels. Customers were satisfied with the locations that were close to tourist attractions, nearby facilities, transportation and the city centre. In previous literature, for 3-star to 5-star hotels, location is one of the main factors to influence customer satisfaction (Darini & Khozaei, 2016; Sukwadi, 2017; Zhou et al., 2014). Hotel location could therefore be considered as an important strategic marketing resource for hoteliers due to the fact that an ideal hotel location ensures higher accommodation demand, customer satisfaction and lower business failure risk (Xiang & Krawczyk, 2016). The room was found to be next most important category affecting customer satisfaction in this study. Room cleanliness made a significant impression on customers and this was reflected in the positive feedback through the TripAdvisor platform. The room is the core product of the hotel business, and meeting a certain standard of customer expectation was a major contribution to customer satisfaction (Albayrak & Caber, 2015). The standard of cleanliness is the most significant attribute regarding hotel rooms in this study. Additionally, hotel facilities was another major category contributing towards customer satisfaction. Room facilities and public facilities significantly affect customer satisfaction (Zhou et al., 2014). However, customers are found to have different expectations of different star rating hotels (Xu & Li, 2016). In this study, the standard of the room facilities is seen as a major contribution towards customer satisfaction in Auckland's 3-star hotels.

### 5.2.2. Main factors affecting customer dissatisfaction

The main factors contributing to customer dissatisfaction with Auckland's 3-star hotels included the facilities and room categories. From the findings, it can be seen that most customer complaints were about the facilities. Hotel facilities has been seen as a key factor leading to customer dissatisfaction in different star rating hotels (Xu & Li, 2016). The current study found that in 3-star hotels customer complaints in relation to facilities

were focused on room facilities. Room facility standards not meeting customer expectations was the main reason that customers complained about facilities. Additionally, the findings showed that the hotel room category was another main issue that resulted in customer dissatisfaction comments. Customer expectations are linked to hotel star ratings and customers expect a higher standard of room in higher star rated hotels. At the same time, customers also expect a reasonable standard of room in all classes of hotels (Kim et al., 2019). This study found that, in 3-star hotels, customer complaints regarding the room were focused mainly on uncleanliness. Where the standard of room cleanliness does not meet customer expectation, the situation could be considered to be one of determining issues that causes customer dissatisfaction in all star rating hotels (Xu & Li, 2016).

### 5.3. Implications

This dissertation has explored and discussed the factors affecting customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction in 3-star hotels in Auckland, New Zealand. Hence, the practical and theoretical implications should be considered. According to the findings, hotel location has been identified as the most important category within customer satisfaction reviews but was not considered as an important factor regarding customer dissatisfaction. Location was barely mentioned in customer complaints in this study. This result may be because customers have made location choices before they decided stay in a hotel (Xiang & Krawczyk, 2016). Customer satisfaction with the tourist attractions, nearby facilities, transportation, and city centre proximity, could be offered as suggestions for 3-star hoteliers deciding on a new hotel location. Yang et al. (2018) suggested that current hotel owners could provide an efficient shuttle service to improve their competitiveness. Hoteliers could benefit from their decision to address customer satisfaction.

Moreover, based on the findings, room and facilities were the main categories with significant influence on customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction. In these two

categories, positive reviews indicated that customers were satisfied with the room facilities and room cleanliness while the negative reviews indicated dissatisfaction with the room facilities and the standard of cleanliness. The complaints indicated that these categories have significant influence over customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Xu and Li (2016) found that customers have certain expectations of hotel facilities in different star rating hotels. This study indicated that customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction with facilities mainly revolved around room facilities. This indicates that 3-star hoteliers should pay more attention to maintaining and enhancing the quality of room facilities. Room cleanliness has much influence over hotel customer satisfaction (Rahimi & Kozak, 2017). In contrast, a dirty room would lead to customer complaints (Xu & Li, 2016). Hence, maintenance of room cleanliness will greatly contribute to customer satisfaction and reduce customer complaints.

Furthermore, according to the findings, the food and beverages category has a positive influence on customer satisfaction but may not lead to customer dissatisfaction. Based on the reviews, customers were satisfied with a wholesome breakfast. Padma and Ahn (2020) stated that food and beverage quality could affect customers' accommodation experiences. In order for guests to have better experiences in 3-star hotels, hoteliers could offer a wider variety of breakfast options for customers (Leite-Pereira et al., 2019).

Additionally, based on the findings, other customers satisfaction comments and dissatisfaction complaints were focused on the same categories, which were staff performance, service and price. Firstly, as this study illustrated, customers were satisfied with friendly and helpful staff but complained about hotel staff who were unfriendly and unhelpful, or who lacked communication skills. As Padma and Ahn (2020) suggested, it would be essential for hoteliers to improve staff training in a variety of aspects, such as cultivating the right attitude towards customers and cross-cultural communication skills. Secondly, some customers expressed their satisfaction with hotel service such as fast and easy check-in and check-out procedures, personal service,

and room upgrades. Conversely, some customers complained that the service was “terrible” in 3-star hotels. As Luo and Qu (2016) suggested, hotel service delivery should meet guests expectations in order to reduce guest dissatisfaction and also to increase guest loyalty. The results of this study of 3-star hotels agrees with Luo and Qu (2016) in suggesting that hoteliers should deliver a certain standard of service for guests. Thirdly, previous studies have stated that, in 3-star and budget hotels, customers may be more sensitive to price (Darini & Khozaei, 2016; Rahimi & Kozak, 2016). This study found that hotel price does influence guest’s positive and negative reviews. Some customers were satisfied with a reasonable price but some customers complained that the hotel price was unreasonable. The current study suggests that hoteliers should price the hotel at the same level as its star rating and service.

On the theoretical side, the most significant contribution of this study is that the findings provide the main factors on customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the 3-star hotel sector in Auckland, New Zealand from TripAdvisor customer online reviews. This research may contribute to the work of current hospitality researchers in the use of TripAdvisor as a database for the analysis of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction factors in the 3-star hotel sector. Furthermore, hospitality researchers could use this research as a reference point to develop a more in-depth study regarding the main factors of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction in order to further explore other factors.

#### 5.4. Limitations

Although this dissertation has made contributions on practical and theoretical aspects of the study of 3-star hotel customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction, three limitations of this study has been identified. Firstly, this research applied secondary data from TripAdvisor online reviews. Since hospitality online review websites may attract more younger people than elderly (Amaro et al., 2016), it may be more popular among younger people than older people to search and comment on this online platform.

Compared to interviews, questionnaires and other primary data, online secondary data may omit the reviews of some groups of customers, such as elderly people. Secondly, customer online comments could be affected by various elements such as gender, age, and culture (Bore et al., 2017). This study only included English-language customer comments, and may have missed customer reviews in other languages. Other groups may generate different findings compared with the findings of this research. Thirdly, this research collected data from a seven-year New Zealand summer peak period. The results may be influenced by seasonality. Hence the sample size may be a limitation.

#### 5.5. Recommendations for future study

Future studies could use primary data to extend the sample diversity and cover a richer population for comments on customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction in 3-star hotels. Additionally, the sample collection period in the present study may have led to limited results because of the selected summer peak. Future studies could be conducted on a longer time-period sample so that the results would be more solid. Finally, since previous literature has stated that customers may have different expectations about hotels, depending on their different travelling purposes (e.g., business, or leisure) (Rajaguru & Hassanli, 2018), future research could explore these different customer groups, their accommodation expectations and the similarities and differences in their expectations of 3-star hotels.

## References

- Agušaj, B., Bazdan, V., & Lujak, Đ. (2017). The relationship between online rating, hotel star category and room pricing power. *Ekonomska Misao i Praksa*, 1, 189–204.
- Albayrak, T., & Caber, M. (2015). Prioritisation of the hotel attributes according to their influence on satisfaction: A comparison of two techniques. *Tourism Management*, 46, 43–50. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.06.009>
- Ali, F. (2016). Hotel website quality, perceived flow, customer satisfaction and purchase intention. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, 7(2), 213–228. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTT-02-2016-0010>
- Amaro, S., Duarte, P., & Henriques, C. (2016). Travelers' use of social media: A clustering approach. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 59, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2016.03.007>
- American Automobile Association. (2015). *Diamond rating definitions*. <https://newsroom.aaa.com/diamond-ratings/diamond-rating-definitions/>
- Assaf, A. G., Josiassen, A., Cvelbar, L. K., & Woo, L. (2015). The effects of customer voice on hotel performance. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 44, 77–83. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2014.09.009>
- Au, N., Buhalis, D., & Law, R. (2014). Online complaining behavior in Mainland China hotels: The perception of Chinese and non-Chinese customers. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, 15(3), 248–274. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15256480.2014.925722>
- Banerjee, S., & Chua, A. Y. K. (2016). In search of patterns among travellers' hotel ratings in TripAdvisor. *Tourism Management*, 53, 125–131. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2015.09.020>
- Bardach, N. S., Lyndon, A., Asteria-Peñaloza, R., Goldman, L. E., Lin, G. A., & Dudley, R. A. (2016). From the closest observers of patient care: A thematic analysis of online narrative reviews of hospitals. *BMJ Quality & Safety*, 25(11), 889–897. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjqs-2015-004515>
- Barratt, M. J., Ferris, J. A., & Lenton, S. (2015). Hidden populations, Online purposive sampling, and external validity: Taking off the blindfold. *Field Methods*, 27(1), 3–21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X14526838>
- Bell, E., Bryman, A., & Harley, B. (2018). *Business research methods*. Oxford University Press.

- Berezina, K., Bilgihan, A., Cobanoglu, C., & Okumus, F. (2016). Understanding satisfied and dissatisfied hotel customers: Text mining of online hotel reviews. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 25(1), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19368623.2015.983631>
- Blomberg-Nygaard, A., & Anderson, C. K. (2016). United Nations World Tourism Organization study on online guest reviews and hotel classification systems: An integrated approach. *Service Science*, 8(2), 139–151. <https://doi.org/10.1287/serv.2016.0139>
- Boddy, C. R. (2016). Sample size for qualitative research. *Qualitative Market Research*, 19(4), 426–432. <https://doi.org/10.1108/QMR-06-2016-0053>
- Bodet, G., Anaba, V., & Bouchet, P. (2017). Hotel attributes and consumer satisfaction: A cross-country and cross-hotel study. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 34(1), 52–69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2015.1130109>
- Booking Holdings. (2015, February 19). *Factsheet*. <https://www.bookingholdings.com/about/factsheet/>
- Bore, I., Rutherford, C., Glasgow, S., Taheri, B., & Antony, J. (2017). A systematic literature review on eWOM in the hotel industry: Current trends and suggestions for future research. *Hospitality & Society*, 7, 63–85. [https://doi.org/10.1386/hosp.7.1.63\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/hosp.7.1.63_1)
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*. SAGE.
- Brondoni, S. M. (2016). Global tourism management. Mass, experience and sensations tourism. *Symphonya. Emerging Issues in Management*, 0(1), 7–24. <https://doi.org/10.4468/2016.1.02brondoni>
- Brown, R. B. (2006). *Doing your dissertation in business and management: The reality of researching and writing*. SAGE.
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods*. Oxford University Press.
- Bryman, A., & Bell, E. (2011). *Business research methods* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Campbell, S. (2014). *Translation into the second language*. Routledge.
- Cantalops, A. S., & Salvi, F. (2014). New consumer behavior: A review of research on eWOM and hotels. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 36, 41–51. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2013.08.007>

- Carasuk, R., Becken, S., & Hughey, K. F. D. (2016). Exploring values, drivers, and barriers as antecedents of implementing responsible tourism. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 40(1), 19–36.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348013491607>
- Casaló, L. V., Flavián, C., Guinalú, M., & Ekinci, Y. (2015). Do online hotel rating schemes influence booking behaviors? *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 49, 28–36. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2015.05.005>
- Cenni, I., & Goethals, P. (2017). Negative hotel reviews on TripAdvisor: A cross-linguistic analysis. *Discourse, Context & Media*, 16, 22–30.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2017.01.004>
- Chan, G. S. H., Tang, I. L. F., & Sou, A. H. K. (2017). An exploration of consumer complaint behavior towards the hotel industry: Case study in Macao. *International Journal of Marketing Studies*, 9(5), 56–76.
- Chang, Y.-C., Ku, C.-H., & Chen, C.-H. (2019). Social media analytics: Extracting and visualizing Hilton hotel ratings and reviews from TripAdvisor. *International Journal of Information Management*, 48, 263–279.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2017.11.001>
- Chen, Y.-F., & Law, R. (2016). A review of research on electronic word-of-mouth in hospitality and tourism management. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, 17(4), 347–372.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15256480.2016.1226150>
- Cheng, B. L., Gan, C. C., Imrie, B. C., & Mansori, S. (2019). Service recovery, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty: Evidence from Malaysia's hotel industry. *International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1108/IJQSS-09-2017-0081>
- Cheng, H. G., & Phillips, M. R. (2014). Secondary analysis of existing data: Opportunities and implementation. *Shanghai Archives of Psychiatry*, 26(6), 371–375. <https://doi.org/10.11919/j.issn.1002-0829.214171>
- Cheung, C. M. K., Liu, I. L. B., & Lee, M. K. O. (2015). How online social interactions influence customer information contribution behavior in online social shopping communities: A social learning theory perspective. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 66(12), 2511–2521.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.23340>
- Chowdhury, M. F. (2014). Interpretivism in aiding our understanding of the contemporary social world. *Open Journal of Philosophy*, 4, 432–438.  
<https://doi.org/10.4236/ojpp.2014.43047>

- Colliers International. (2018, February). *Tourism fatigue among 2018 hotel sector trends*. <https://www.colliers.co.nz/en-nz/news/tourism-fatigue-among-2018-hotel-sector-trends>
- Corne, A. (2015). Benchmarking and tourism efficiency in France. *Tourism Management, 51*, 91–95. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2015.05.006>
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative and mixed methods approaches*. SAGE.
- Crotty, M. (2003). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. SAGE.
- Darini, M., & Khozaei, F. (2016). The study of factors affecting customer's satisfaction with the three star hotels in Dubai. *International Journal of Advanced Engineering, Management and Science, 2*(2), 21–24.
- Denzin, N. K. (2017). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods*. Transaction Publishers.
- Dinçer, M. Z., & Alrawadieh, Z. (2017). Negative word of mouse [sic] in the hotel industry: A content analysis of online reviews on luxury hotels in Jordan. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management, 26*(8), 785–804. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19368623.2017.1320258>
- Dong, J., Li, H., & Zhang, X. (2014). Classification of customer satisfaction attributes: An application of online hotel review analysis. In H. Li, M. Mäntymäki, & X. Zhang (Eds.), *Digital services and information intelligence* (pp. 238–250). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-662-45526-5\\_23](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-662-45526-5_23)
- Ergün, G. S., & Kitapci, O. (2018). The impact of cultural dimensions on customer complaint behaviours: An exploratory study in Antalya/Manavgat tourism region. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research, 12*(1), 59–79. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCTHR-01-2017-0010>
- Expedia Group. (2019). *About*. <https://www.expediagroup.com/about/>
- Felbermayr, A., & Nanopoulos, A. (2016). The role of emotions for the perceived usefulness in online customer reviews. *Journal of Interactive Marketing, 36*, 60–76. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2016.05.004>
- Fernandes, T., & Fernandes, F. (2018). Sharing dissatisfaction online: Analyzing the nature and predictors of hotel guests negative reviews. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management, 27*(2), 127–150. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19368623.2017.1337540>
- Flick, U. (2018). *An introduction to qualitative research* (6th ed.). SAGE.

- Forbes Travel Guide. (2019). *About—Forbes Travel Guide*.  
<https://www.forbestravelguide.com/about>
- Foroudi, P. (2019). Influence of brand signature, brand awareness, brand attitude, brand reputation on hotel industry's brand performance. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 76, 271–285.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2018.05.016>
- Fung, D. C.-L., & Liang, T. W. (2019). Research design: A mixed methods approach with a three-theme investigation and pedagogical intervention. In D. C.-L. Fung & T. W. Liang (Eds.), *Fostering critical thinking through collaborative group work: Insights from Hong Kong* (pp. 35–68). Springer.  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-2411-6\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-2411-6_3)
- Gee, J. P. (2014). *An introduction to discourse analysis: Theory and Method*. Routledge.
- Gerdt, S.-O., Wagner, E., & Schewe, G. (2019). The relationship between sustainability and customer satisfaction in hospitality: An explorative investigation using eWOM as a data source. *Tourism Management*, 74, 155–172.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2019.02.010>
- Gonçalves, H. M., Silva, G. M., & Martins, T. G. (2018). Motivations for posting online reviews in the hotel industry. *Psychology & Marketing*, 35(11), 807–817.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21136>
- Gray, D. E. (2019). *Doing research in the business world*. SAGE.
- Green, J., & Thorogood, N. (2018). *Qualitative methods for health research*. SAGE.
- Gu, H., & Ryan, C. (2008). Chinese clientele at Chinese hotels - Preferences and satisfaction. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 27(3), 337–345.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2007.10.005>
- Guo, Y., Barnes, S. J., & Jia, Q. (2017). Mining meaning from online ratings and reviews: Tourist satisfaction analysis using latent dirichlet allocation. *Tourism Management*, 59, 467–483. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2016.09.009>
- Hammersley, M. (2012). *What is qualitative research?* A&C Black.
- Harkison, T., Hemmington, N., & Hyde, K. F. (2018a). Creating the luxury accommodation experience: Case studies from New Zealand. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 30(3), 1724–1740.  
<https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-05-2017-0247>
- Harkison, T., Hemmington, N., & Hyde, K. F. (2018b). Luxury accommodation – significantly different or just more expensive? *Journal of Revenue and Pricing Management*, 17(4), 231–243. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41272-017-0085-1>

- Hennink, M., Hutter, I., & Bailey, A. (2020). *Qualitative research methods*. SAGE.
- Herjanto, H., Erickson, E., & Calleja, N. F. (2017). Antecedents of business travelers' satisfaction. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 26(3), 259–275. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19368623.2017.1234954>
- Horwath HTL. (2018). *New Zealand tourism & hotel market overview*. <https://www.hospitalitynet.org/file/152008466.pdf>
- Hotelstars Union. (2019, May 15). *Hotelstars Union adopted new catalogue of criteria for hotel classification*. <https://www.hotelstars.eu/news/news-detail/hotelstars-union-adopted-new-catalogue-of-criteria-for-hotel-classification/>
- Howitt, D. (2019). *Introduction to qualitative research methods in psychology: Putting theory into practice*. Pearson UK.
- Hu, N., Zhang, T., Gao, B., & Bose, I. (2019). What do hotel customers complain about? Text analysis using structural topic model. *Tourism Management*, 72, 417–426. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2019.01.002>
- Hu, Y., & Kim, H. J. (2018). Positive and negative eWOM motivations and hotel customers' eWOM behavior: Does personality matter? *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 75, 27–37. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2018.03.004>
- Hughes, J. A., & Sharrock, W. W. (2016). *The philosophy of social research*. Routledge.
- Hussain, R., Nasser, A. A., & Hussain, Y. K. (2015). Service quality and customer satisfaction of a UAE-based airline: An empirical investigation. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 42, 167–175. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jairtraman.2014.10.001>
- Jensen, Ø., Li, Y., & Uysal, M. (2017). Visitors' satisfaction at managed tourist attractions in Northern Norway: Do on-site factors matter? *Tourism Management*, 63, 277–286. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2017.06.025>
- Johnston, M. P. (2017). Secondary data analysis: A method of which the time has come. *Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Libraries*, 3(3), 619–626.
- Johnstone, B. (2018). *Discourse analysis*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Kandampully, J., Zhang, T. (C.), & Bilgihan, A. (2015). Customer loyalty: A review and future directions with a special focus on the hospitality industry. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 27(3), 379–414. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-03-2014-0151>
- Kátay, Á. (2015). The causes and behavior-altering effects of hotel guests' dissatisfaction. *Journal of Tourism & Services*, 6(11), 28–47.

- Khozaei, F., Nazem, G., Ramayah, T., & Naidu, S. (2016). Factors predicting travelers' satisfaction of three to five star hotels in Asia, an online review. *International Journal of Research in Tourism and Hospitality*, 2(2), 30–41. <https://doi.org/10.20431/2455-0043.0202004>
- Kim, B., Kim, S., & Heo, C. Y. (2016). Analysis of satisfiers and dissatisfiers in online hotel reviews on social media. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 28(9), 1915–1936. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-04-2015-0177>
- Kim, B., Kim, S., & Heo, C. Y. (2019). Consequences of customer dissatisfaction in upscale and budget hotels: Focusing on dissatisfied customers' attitude toward a hotel. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, 20(1), 15–46. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15256480.2017.1359728>
- Kim, W. G., & Park, S. A. (2017). Social media review rating versus traditional customer satisfaction. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 29(2), 784–802. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-11-2015-0627>
- Kladou, S., & Mavragani, E. (2015). Assessing destination image: An online marketing approach and the case of TripAdvisor. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 4(3), 187–193. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2015.04.003>
- Koc, E., Ulukoy, M., Kilic, R., Yumusak, S., & Bahar, R. (2017). The influence of customer participation on service failure perceptions. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, 28(3–4), 390–404. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14783363.2015.1090290>
- Kostyra, D. S., Reiner, J., Natter, M., & Klapper, D. (2016). Decomposing the effects of online customer reviews on brand, price, and product attributes. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 33(1), 11–26. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2014.12.004>
- Kumar, R. (2019). *Research methodology: A step-by-step guide for beginners*. SAGE.
- 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>
- Ladhari, R., & Michaud, M. (2015). EWOM effects on hotel booking intentions, attitudes, trust, and website perceptions. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 46, 36–45. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2015.01.010>
- Lehto, X. Y., Park, O.-J., & Gordon, S. E. (2015). Migrating to new hHotels: A comparison of antecedents of business and leisure travelers' hotel switching intentions. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 16(3), 235–258. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1528008X.2014.925787>

- Leite-Pereira, F., Brandao, F., & Costa, R. (2019). Role of breakfast in hotel selection: Systematic review. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 13(2), 204–217. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCTHR-03-2019-0048>
- Li, G., Law, R., Vu, H. Q., Rong, J., & Zhao, X. (Roy). (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>
- Liat, C. B., Mansori, S., Chuan, G. C., & Imrie, B. C. (2017). Hotel service recovery and service quality: Influences of corporate image and generational differences in the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty. *Journal of Global Marketing*, 30(1), 42–51. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08911762.2016.1262932>
- Litosseliti, L. (2018). *Research methods in linguistics* (2nd ed.). Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Liu, B., Pennington-Gray, L., Donohoe, H., & Omodior, O. (2015). New York City bed bug crisis as framed by tourists on Tripadvisor. *Tourism Analysis*, 20(2), 243–250. <https://doi.org/10.3727/108354215X14265319207597>
- Liu, Y., Teichert, T., Rossi, M., Li, H., & Hu, F. (2017). Big data for big insights: Investigating language-specific drivers of hotel satisfaction with 412,784 user-generated reviews. *Tourism Management*, 59, 554–563. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2016.08.012>
- 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>
- Lu, C., Berchoux, C., Marek, M. W., & Chen, B. (2015). Service quality and customer satisfaction: Qualitative research implications for luxury hotels. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 9(2), 168–182. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCTHR-10-2014-0087>
- Lu, W., & Stepchenkova, S. (2012). Ecotourism experiences reported online: Classification of satisfaction attributes. *Tourism Management*, 33(3), 702–712. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2011.08.003>
- Lugosi, P., Robinson, R. N. S., Golubovskaya, M., & Foley, L. (2016). The hospitality consumption experiences of parents and carers with children: A qualitative study of foodservice settings. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 54, 84–94. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2016.01.012>
- Luo, Z., & Qu, H. (2016). Guest-defined hotel service quality and its impacts on guest loyalty. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 17(3), 311–332. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1528008X.2015.1077185>
- Madlberger, M. (2014). Through the eyes of the traveler: Consumer evaluation of hotels in Eastern European capitals compared with Western, Southern, and

- Northern Europe. *Journal of Eastern European and Central Asian Research (JEECAR)*, 1(2), 9–9. <https://doi.org/10.15549/jeecar.v1i2.65>
- Maguire, M., & Delahunt, B. (2017). Doing a thematic analysis: A practical, step-by-step guide for learning and teaching scholars. *All Ireland Journal of Higher Education*, 9(3). <https://ojs.aishe.org/aishe/index.php/aishe-j/article/view/335>
- Martin-Fuentes, E. (2016). Are guests of the same opinion as the hotel star-rate classification system? *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 29, 126–134. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2016.06.006>
- Martin-Fuentes, E., Mateu, C., & Fernandez, C. (2018). Does verifying uses influence rankings? Analyzing Booking.Com and Tripadvisor. *Tourism Analysis*, 23, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.3727/108354218X15143857349459>
- Mayan, M. J. (2016). *Essentials of qualitative inquiry*. Routledge.
- McNabb, D. E. (2015). *Research methods for political science: Quantitative and qualitative methods* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Minh, N. H., Ha, N. T., Anh, P. C., & Matsui, Y. (2015). Service quality and customer satisfaction: A case study of hotel industry in Vietnam. *Asian Social Science*, 11(10), 73–85. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v11n10p73>
- Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia. (2020, May 14). *Rated tourist accommodation premises*. <http://www.motac.gov.my/en/check/hotel>
- Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment. (2019). *Tourism New Zealand report*. <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/6974-the-tourism-new-zealand-report>
- Ministry of Tourism. (2019, January 14). *Hotels & restaurants*. <http://tourism.gov.in/hotels-restaurants>
- Mohajan, H. K. (2018). Qualitative research methodology in social sciences and related subjects. *Journal of Economic Development, Environment and People*, 7(1), 23–48.
- Moser, A., & Korstjens, I. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 3: Sampling, data collection and analysis. *European Journal of General Practice*, 24(1), 9–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375091>
- Munn, K., & Smith, B. (2013). *Applied ontology: An introduction*. Walter de Gruyter.
- Musante, M. D., Bojanic, D. C., & Zhang, J. (2009). An evaluation of hotel website attribute utilization and effectiveness by hotel class. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 15(3), 203–215. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1356766709104267>

- New Zealand Trade & Enterprise. (2016). *Regional hotel market analysis & forecasting*.  
<https://www.nzte.govt.nz/about/news/news-and-features/-/media/01339B01B28943788C2D92F51BEEA48D.ashx>
- New Zealand Trade & Enterprise. (2018). *Hotel investment In New Zealand*.  
<https://www.nzte.govt.nz/-/media/NZTE/Downloads/Investment-and-funding/Hotel-Prospectus-2018-Final.pdf?la=en&hash=E9CFF3358A7BB1D82C38CAB60D7D731F4ADA59EF>
- Noble, H., & Mitchell, G. (2016). What is grounded theory? *Evidence-Based Nursing*, 19(2), 34–35. <https://doi.org/10.1136/eb-2016-102306>
- Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847>
- Núñez-Serrano, J. A., Turrión, J., & Velázquez, F. J. (2014). Are stars a good indicator of hotel quality? Assymetric information and regulatory heterogeneity in Spain. *Tourism Management*, 42, 77–87.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2013.10.004>
- O'Donoghue, T. (2006). *Planning your qualitative research project: An introduction to interpretivist research in education*. Routledge.
- Ogbeide, G.-C. A., Böser, S., Harrinton, R. J., & Ottenbacher, M. C. (2017). Complaint management in hospitality organizations: The role of empowerment and other service recovery attributes impacting loyalty and satisfaction. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 17(2), 204–216.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1467358415613409>
- O'Gorman, K., Lochrie, S., & Watson, A. (2014). *Research methods for business and management*. Goodfellow Publishers.
- Padgett, D. K. (2016). *Qualitative methods in social work research* (3rd ed.). SAGE.
- Padma, P., & Ahn, J. (2020). Guest satisfaction & dissatisfaction in luxury hotels: An application of big data. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 84, 102318. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2019.102318>
- Park, H., Kline, S. F., Kim, J., Almanza, B., & Ma, J. (2019). Does hotel cleanliness correlate with surfaces guests contact? *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 31(7), 2933–2950. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-02-2018-0105>
- Patten, M. L., & Newhart, M. (2017). *Understanding research methods: An overview of the essentials*. Taylor & Francis.

- Pizam, A., Shapoval, V., & Ellis, T. (2016). Customer satisfaction and its measurement in hospitality enterprises: A revisit and update. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-04-2015-0167>
- Poni, M. (2014). Research paradigms in education. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 4(1), 407. <https://doi.org/10.5901/jesr.2014.v4n1p407>
- Prasad, K., Wirtz, P. W., & Yu, L. (2014). Measuring hotel guest satisfaction by using an online quality management system. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 23(4), 445–463. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19368623.2013.805313>
- Prayag, G., Hall, C. M., & Wood, H. (2018). I feel good! Perceptions and emotional responses of bed & breakfast providers in New Zealand toward Trip Advisor. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 27(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19368623.2017.1318731>
- Qualmark NZ. (n.d.). *How Qualmark works*. Retrieved February 24, 2020, from <https://www.qualmark.co.nz/en/learn-about-us/how-qualmark-works/>
- Qualmark NZ. (2017). *Find Qualmark businesses*. <https://www.qualmark.co.nz/en/find-qualmark-businesses/>
- Qualmark NZ. (2019). *Qualmark – New Zealand tourism’s official mark of quality*. <https://www.qualmark.co.nz/>
- Queirós, A., Faria, D., & Almeida, F. (2017). Strengths and limitations of qualitative and quantitative research methods. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 3(9), 369–387. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.887089>
- Quinlan, C., Babin, B., Carr, J., & Griffin, M. (2019). *Business research methods* (2nd ed.). South Western Cengage.
- Radojevic, T., Stanisic, N., & Stanic, N. (2015). Ensuring positive feedback: Factors that influence customer satisfaction in the contemporary hospitality industry. *Tourism Management*, 51, 13–21. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2015.04.002>
- Rahimi, R., & Kozak, M. (2017). Impact of customer relationship management on customer satisfaction: The case of a budget hotel chain. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 34(1), 40–51. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2015.1130108>
- Rajaguru, R., & Hassanli, N. (2018). The role of trip purpose and hotel star rating on guests’ satisfaction and WOM. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 30(5), 2268–2286. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-01-2017-0044>

- Rather, R. A., & Hollebeek, L. D. (2019). Exploring and validating social identification and social exchange-based drivers of hospitality customer loyalty. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 31(3), 1432–1451. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-10-2017-0627>
- Ren, L., Qiu, H., Wang, P., & Lin, P. M. C. (2016). Exploring customer experience with budget hotels: Dimensionality and satisfaction. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 52, 13–23. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2015.09.009>
- Ren, L., Zhang, H. Q., & Ye, B. H. (2015). Understanding customer satisfaction with budget hotels through online comments: Evidence from home inns in China. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 16(1), 45–62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1528008X.2015.966299>
- Restaurant Association of New Zealand. (2018). *2018 hospitality report*. [https://img.scoop.co.nz/media/pdfs/1809/2018\\_Hospitality\\_Report.pdf](https://img.scoop.co.nz/media/pdfs/1809/2018_Hospitality_Report.pdf)
- Rhee, H. T., & Yang, S.-B. (2015). Does hotel attribute importance differ by hotel? Focusing on hotel star-classifications and customers' overall ratings. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 50, 576–587. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.02.069>
- Richards, L. (2014). *Handling qualitative data: A practical guide*. SAGE.
- Riley, R., & Weiss, M. C. (2016). A qualitative thematic review: Emotional labour in healthcare settings. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 72(1), 6–17. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.12738>
- Robinson, O. C. (2014). Sampling in interview-based qualitative research: A theoretical and practical guide. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 11(1), 25–41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2013.801543>
- Robinson, P. (2012). *Tourism: The key concepts*. Routledge.
- Ryan, G. (2018). Introduction to positivism, interpretivism and critical theory. *Nurse Researcher*, 25(4), 41–49. <https://doi.org/10.7748/nr.2018.e1466>
- Saldana, J. (2015). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. SAGE.
- Sarantakos, S. (2012). *Social research* (4th ed.). Macmillan International Higher Education.
- Schoenmueller, V., Netzer, O., & Stahl, F. (2020). The Polarity of Online Reviews: Prevalence, Drivers and Implications. *Journal of Marketing Research*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022243720941832>
- Schuckert, M., Liu, X., & Law, R. (2015). Hospitality and tourism online reviews: Recent trends and future directions. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 32(5), 608–621. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2014.933154>

- Scotland, J. (2012). Exploring the philosophical underpinnings of research: Relating ontology and epistemology to the methodology and methods of the scientific, interpretive, and critical research paradigms. *English Language Teaching*, 5(9), 9–16. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n9p9>
- Sharma, S., & Srivastava, S. (2018). Relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in hotel industry. *TRJ Tourism Research Journal*, 2(1), 42–49. <https://doi.org/10.30647/trj.v2i1.20>
- Silverman, D. (2016). *Qualitative research*. SAGE.
- Simeon, L. M. (2015, September 10). *New star rating system launched for hotels, resorts*. Philstar.Com. <https://www.philstar.com/business/2015/09/10/1498280/new-star-rating-system-launched-hotels-resorts>
- Smiler, J. (2019). *NZ tourism—State of the industry 2018*. Wellington Institute of Technology. <https://tia.org.nz/assets/Uploads/81f2d9575d/State-of-the-industry-2019-compressed-final.docx.pdf>
- Smith, J. A. (2015). *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods*. SAGE.
- Statistics New Zealand. (2019). *Accommodation*. <https://www.stats.govt.nz/topics/accommodation>
- Suhartanto, D., Clemes, M., & Dean, D. (2013). Analyzing the complex and dynamic nature of brand loyalty in the hotel industry. *Tourism Review International*, 17, 47–61. <https://doi.org/10.3727/154427213X13649094288106>
- Sukwadi, R. (2017). The moderating role of service innovation on the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer value: A case of 3-star hotels in Jakarta. *International Journal of Services, Economics and Management*, 8(1–2), 18–34. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJSEM.2017.084480>
- Taylor, S. J., Bogdan, R., & DeVault, M. (2015). *Introduction to qualitative research methods: A guidebook and resource*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Tech, R. P. G. (2018). *Financing high-tech startups: Using productive signaling to efficiently overcome the liability of complexity*. Springer.
- Tefera, O., & Govender, K. K. (2016). Hotel ratings, service quality, customer satisfaction and loyalty: The perception of guests at Ethiopian Hotels. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 5(3). [http://www.ajhtl.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/article\\_28\\_vol\\_5\\_\\_3\\_\\_final.pdf](http://www.ajhtl.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/article_28_vol_5__3__final.pdf)
- Tefera, O., & Govender, K. K. (2017). Service quality, customer satisfaction and loyalty: The perceptions of Ethiopian hotel guests. *African Journal of Hospitality*,

- Tourism and Leisure*, 6(2).  
[http://www.ajhtl.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/article\\_2\\_vol\\_6\\_2\\_2017.pdf](http://www.ajhtl.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/article_2_vol_6_2_2017.pdf)
- Tourism New Zealand. (2019, May 14). *Qualmark—A trusted guide*.  
<https://www.tourismnewzealand.com/tools-for-your-business/qualmark-a-trusted-guide/>
- Tracy, S. J. (2019). *Qualitative research methods: Collecting evidence, crafting analysis, communicating impact*. John Wiley & Sons.
- TripAdvisor. (2017). *About Tripadvisor*. <https://tripadvisor.mediaroom.com/US-about-us>
- TripAdvisor. (n.d.). *How does the popularity index differ from the overall bubble rating?*  
<http://www.tripadvisor.com/hc/en-us/articles/200614027-How-does-the-Popularity-Index-differ-from-the-overall-bubble-rating->
- Tsao, W.-C., Hsieh, M.-T., Shih, L.-W., & Lin, T. M. Y. (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>
- Veal, A. J. (2017). *Research methods for leisure and tourism*. Pearson UK.
- Wang, C. (R.), & Kubickova, M. (2017). The impact of engaged users on eWOM of hotel Facebook page. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, 8(2), 190–204. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTT-09-2016-0056>
- Willig, C., & Rogers, W. S. (2017). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research in psychology* (2nd ed.). SAGE.
- Wilson, J. (2014). *Essentials of business research: A guide to doing your research project*. SAGE.
- Xiang, Z., Du, Q., Ma, Y., & Fan, W. (2018). Assessing reliability of social media data: Lessons from mining TripAdvisor hotel reviews. *Information Technology & Tourism*, 18(1), 43–59. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40558-017-0098-z>
- Xiang, Z., & Krawczyk, M. (2016). What does hotel location mean for the online consumer? Text analytics using online reviews. *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 2016*, 383–395. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-28231-2\\_28](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-28231-2_28)
- Xiang, Z., Schwartz, Z., Gerdes, J. H., & Uysal, M. (2015). What can big data and text analytics tell us about hotel guest experience and satisfaction? *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 44, 120–130. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2014.10.013>

- Xie, K. L., Chen, C., & Wu, S. (2016). Online consumer review factors affecting offline hotel popularity: Evidence from Tripadvisor. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 33(2), 211–223. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2015.1050538>
- Xu, X., & Li, Y. (2016). The antecedents of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction toward various types of hotels: A text mining approach. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 55, 57–69. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2016.03.003>
- Xu, X., Wang, X., Li, Y., & Haghghi, M. (2017). Business intelligence in online customer textual reviews: Understanding consumer perceptions and influential factors. *International Journal of Information Management*, 37(6), 673–683. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2017.06.004>
- Yang, Y., Luo, H., & Law, R. (2014). Theoretical, empirical, and operational models in hotel location research. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 36, 209–220. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2013.09.004>
- Yang, Y., Mao, Z., & Tang, J. (2018). Understanding guest satisfaction with urban hotel location. *Journal of Travel Research*, 57(2), 243–259. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287517691153>
- Yelp. (2019). *Investor relations*. <https://www.yelp-ir.com/>
- Yen, C.-L. A., & Tang, C.-H. H. (2019). The effects of hotel attribute performance on electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) behaviors. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 76, 9–18. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2018.03.006>
- Ying, T., Wen, J., & Wang, L. (2018). Language facilitation for outbound Chinese tourists: Importance–performance and gap analyses of New Zealand hotels. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 35(9), 1222–1233. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2018.1487902>
- 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>
- Zamawe, F. C. (2015). The implication of using NVivo software in qualitative data analysis: Evidence-based reflections. *Malawi Medical Journal*, 27(1), 13–15. <https://doi.org/10.4314/mmj.v27i1.4>
- Zhao, X. (R.), Wang, L., Guo, X., & Law, R. (2015). The influence of online reviews to online hotel booking intentions. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 27(6), 1343–1364. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-12-2013-0542>
- Zhao, Y., Xu, X., & Wang, M. (2019). Predicting overall customer satisfaction: Big data evidence from hotel online textual reviews. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 76, 111–121. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2018.03.017>

Zhou, L., Ye, S., Pearce, P. L., & Wu, M.-Y. (2014). Refreshing hotel satisfaction studies by reconfiguring customer review data. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 38, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2013.12.004>