



University of Wales
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**Title: Social Relationships and Online Reviews
in Hospitality: A Scoping Review**

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Abstract

Online reviews are pivotal in the hospitality industry, yet they are fundamentally shaped by social relationships-a dynamic often overlooked in existing literature. This portfolio presents a scoping review aimed at systematically mapping, categorizing and identifying gaps regarding the role of social relationships in online review behaviors within the hospitality industry from 2016 to 2026. Following the PCC framework and PRISMA-ScR guidelines, a comprehensive search across multiple databases and grey literature yielded 100 open-access studies. The analysis reveals that parasocial interaction, social influence and social identity are the most studied concepts, primarily grounded in Social Proof and Social Identity theories. Quantitative methodologies dominate the field, while qualitative and longitudinal research remains scarce. Key research gaps include the under-representation of non-Western contexts, restaurants and short-term rentals like Airbnb, alongside limited research on social ties and altruism. This scoping review contributes a foundational framework for future hospitality research and systematic reviews.

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PART 1: UNDERSTANDING THE LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Background

A literature review constitutes a fundamental element of rigorous academic inquiry, encompassing the systematic identification, critical evaluation and synthesis of scholarly works pertinent to a defined research problem (Papaioannou et al., 2016; Machi & McEvoy, 2009). In the context of examining social relationships within online review behaviors in the hospitality sector, the literature review provides the scholarly underpinning necessary to recognize prevailing debates, established theoretical perspectives, methodological approaches and areas requiring further investigation (Fisch & Block, 2018; Webster & Watson, 2002).

Online reviews have emerged as a pivotal mechanism influencing consumer decision-making within the hospitality industry. When selecting a hotel, restaurant, or peer-to-peer accommodation, consumers increasingly depend on platforms such as TripAdvisor, Booking.com and Google Reviews. Nevertheless, a critical oversight in existing research is the recognition that reviews are not generated or consumed in isolation—they are fundamentally shaped by social relationships, encompassing social influence, social identity, social ties, altruism, parasocial relationships and social support.

Multiple literature review methodologies exist, with the selection dependent upon the research objectives and the nature of the research question (Snyder, 2019; Grant & Booth, 2009). Each approach employs distinct procedures and offers varying degrees of critical analysis. Scoping reviews are particularly valuable in emerging interdisciplinary domains, as they enable researchers to map the breadth of available literature and identify knowledge gaps (Paré et al., 2015; Arksey & O'Malley, 2005).

1.2 Selected Three Literature Review Approaches

1.2.1 Narrative Literature Review

A narrative literature review, sometimes referred to as a traditional or descriptive review, represents the most conventional method for summarizing existing research on a given subject. This approach involves a subjective and frequently non-systematic collection of literature, whereby the author selects studies based on personal judgement, expertise and familiarity with the field (Baumeister & Leary, 1997). The principal aim of a narrative review is to provide a broad overview, identify key themes and present a general synthesis of current knowledge (Snyder, 2019).

Nevertheless, due to the absence of a predefined search strategy, explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria and a transparent selection process, narrative reviews are highly susceptible to selection bias—the author may unintentionally favor studies that align with their own perspective while disregarding contradictory evidence (Grant & Booth, 2009). Although narrative reviews are

valuable for introducing a topic or providing background context, they are not considered sufficiently rigorous for comprehensive evidence mapping or for informing policy and practice decisions (Grant & Booth, 2009).

1.2.2 Systematic Literature Review

The Systematic Literature Review (SLR) is widely regarded as the most rigorous and reliable approach to synthesizing evidence, distinguished by its commitment to transparency, replicability and methodological precision (Tranfield et al., 2003). Its central purpose is to comprehensively locate, critically evaluate and integrate all empirical studies that satisfy predetermined eligibility criteria in order to address a specific research question. This is achieved through the application of explicit and reproducible procedures designed to reduce bias and generate trustworthy conclusions capable of guiding practice and policy (Jpt, 2008; Paul & Criado, 2020).

The review process typically begins by establishing a tightly defined research question, most commonly structured around the PICO (Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome) framework. Prior to commencing the review, a detailed protocol is established, clearly defining eligibility criteria, search strategies and data extraction methods (Moher et al., 2010). A comprehensive search is then conducted across multiple databases, with a strong emphasis on identifying all relevant peer-reviewed published studies.

A distinguishing characteristic of the SLR is its requirement for rigorous critical appraisal, or "risk of bias" assessment, of every included study to evaluate the quality and validity of its findings (Higgins et al., 2011). The synthesis of results often takes the form of a quantitative meta-analysis or a detailed narrative synthesis, culminating in evidence-based conclusions that can directly inform practice or policy (Page et al., 2021). The primary limitation of the SLR, however, is its narrow focus: it is designed to capture depth rather than breadth, making it unsuitable for exploring broad, complex, or fragmented topics where the literature is highly heterogeneous (Munn et al., 2018).

1.2.3 Scoping Review

A scoping review is a methodological approach designed to systematically chart the existing evidence landscape on a particular subject, thereby illuminating core concepts, theoretical perspectives, information sources and areas where knowledge remains incomplete (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Peters et al., 2020). In contrast to a systematic review, which is oriented toward answering a specific question about effectiveness, a scoping review prioritizes capturing the full extent and diversity of literature available on a broader topic (Munn et al., 2018). This makes it especially suitable for investigating complex, nascent, or previously unmapped areas of research. Research questions in scoping reviews are structured using the PCC (Population, Concept, Context) framework, which supports an exploratory and flexible approach to inquiry (Peters et al., 2020). A key characteristic of this review type is the inclusion of grey literature-materials such as unpublished dissertations, government publications, conference papers and policy documents

that are not typically found in commercial databases (Levac et al., 2010). Incorporating such sources enables a more thorough and balanced representation of the evidence base. Importantly, scoping reviews do not mandate formal critical appraisal or risk of bias evaluation of the studies they include, which substantially reduces the time and methodological demands compared to a systematic review (Munn et al., 2018).

1.3 Aim and Objectives

Aim

To systematically map, categorize and identify gaps in the existing academic and grey literature regarding the role of social relationships in shaping online review behavior and its impact on consumer decision-making within the hospitality industry (hotels, restaurants and other accommodation services) over the past decade (2016–2026).

Specific Mapping Objectives

Objective 1: To identify and categorize the types of social relationships studied in hospitality online review research (e.g., social influence, social identity, social ties, altruism, parasocial relationships, social support). This will be achieved by systematically coding each included study based on the social relationship concept it investigates.

Purpose: The purpose of this objective is to systematically map the landscape of social relationship concepts that have been empirically examined in hospitality online review research. By identifying and categorizing these concepts-such as social influence, social identity, social ties, altruism, parasocial relationships and social support-this objective establishes a foundational understanding of what has been studied and reveals which social relationship types have received the most and least scholarly attention. This categorization provides a clear conceptual framework for organizing the literature and serves as the basis for identifying gaps in the field.

Objective 2: To map the theoretical frameworks used to explain the relationship between social factors and online review behaviors. This will be achieved by extracting and categorizing the specific theories cited in each study (e.g., Social Identity Theory, Social Proof Theory, Parasocial Interaction Theory) and identifying which theories are most dominant.

Purpose: The purpose of this objective is to identify the dominant and emerging theories that researchers have employed to explain how social relationships shape online review behavior in hospitality contexts. By systematically mapping the theoretical frameworks-such as Social Identity Theory, Social Proof Theory and Parasocial Interaction Theory-this objective reveals which theories are most frequently applied, which are underutilized and where theoretical integration may be needed. Understanding the theoretical landscape is essential for building a coherent knowledge base and for identifying opportunities to apply alternative or novel theoretical lenses to advance the field.

Objective 3: To identify and categorize the methodological approaches used to study social relationships in hospitality online reviews, with particular attention to how different methodologies (e.g., surveys, experiments, secondary data analysis, qualitative interviews) capture different dimensions of social relationships.

Purpose: The purpose of this objective is to examine how researchers have methodologically investigated the role of social relationships in hospitality online reviews. By identifying and categorizing the research designs employed-including surveys, experiments, secondary data analysis and qualitative interviews-this objective highlight prevailing methodological trends, strengths and limitations. It reveals whether certain dimensions of social relationships have been studied primarily through quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods and identifies methodological gaps such as the scarcity of longitudinal or cross-cultural studies. This understanding is critical for guiding future research toward more rigorous and diverse methodological approaches.

1.4 Justification for Selecting a Scoping Review

1.4.1 Why I Selected a Scoping Review

The scoping review is the ideal methodology for this proposal because my objective is to map a broad, fragmented and emerging field rather than to test a specific hypothesis or measure a precise effect. As outlined in the literature, a scoping review is designed to "map the evidence on a subject and identify key ideas, theories, sources and knowledge gaps" (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005), which directly aligns with my goal of understanding how social relationships have been studied in hospitality online reviews.

My research question follows the PCC (Population, Concept, Context) framework recommended for scoping reviews, with a primary emphasis on the Concept of social relationships (Peters et al., 2020). My objective emphasizes breadth over depth, which is precisely what scoping reviews are intended to capture. Furthermore, I intend to include grey literature such as dissertations and industry reports, a key feature of scoping reviews that ensures a more comprehensive and unbiased mapping of the available evidence (Levac et al., 2010).

Critically, this approach does not require formal risk of bias assessment, making it methodologically appropriate for a mapping exercise where the goal is description and categorization rather than effectiveness evaluation (Munn et al., 2018). In contrast, a systematic review would be unsuitable because it demands a narrow PICO question and rigorous quality appraisal, while a narrative review would lack the systematic, transparent and reproducible process required for a robust mapping exercise. Therefore, the scoping review is not only the most relevant but also the most rigorous and feasible methodology for achieving my stated objectives.

1.4.2 Justification for Rejecting Narrative Literature Review

First Reason: Lack of Systematic and Transparent Methodology

The narrative literature review relies heavily on the author's subjective judgment and personal expertise to select and interpret studies (Baumeister & Leary, 1997). It lacks a predefined search strategy, explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria and a transparent selection process (Snyder, 2019). This methodological weakness makes the narrative review highly susceptible to selection bias, where the author may inadvertently favor studies that support their own perspective while overlooking contradictory evidence (Grant & Booth, 2009). Given that my objective is to systematically map a broad and fragmented field, a narrative review would not provide the rigorous, reproducible foundation required for a comprehensive scoping exercise. Its subjective nature does not fit into the purpose of my study, which requires a systematic and reproducible mapping process. As such, a scoping review is adopted in this work.

Second Reason: Inability to Comprehensively Map the Field and Identify Gaps

Narrative reviews are designed to provide a broad overview and general synthesis of a topic, but they are not intended for comprehensive evidence mapping or systematic gap identification (Machi & McEvoy, 2009). They do not follow a structured data extraction process, nor do they typically include grey literature such as dissertations, government reports, or conference proceedings. As a result, narrative reviews often miss significant portions of the available evidence, leading to incomplete conclusions and unidentified research gaps (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). My objective is to systematically identify and categorize the types of social relationships, theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches used in hospitality online review research. This requires a methodical, transparent and comprehensive mapping process that a narrative review simply cannot provide. Therefore, the narrative review was rejected as unsuitable for achieving my research objectives.

1.4.3 Justification for Rejecting Systematic Literature Review

First Reason: Narrow Focus Designed for Effectiveness Questions

The systematic literature review (SLR) is designed to answer narrowly focused questions, typically framed using the PICO (Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome) format (Tranfield et al., 2003; Higgins et al., 2011). Its primary purpose is to synthesize empirical evidence to determine whether a specific intervention works, rather than to map a broad conceptual landscape (Munn et al., 2018). My research question is broad and exploratory-asking "What types of social relationships have been studied in hospitality online reviews?"-which does not align with the narrow, intervention-focused nature of an SLR. Adopting an SLR would force me to prematurely narrow my question and potentially exclude valuable exploratory studies, thereby limiting the breadth of my mapping exercise (Peters et al., 2020).

Second Reason: Rigorous Quality Appraisal Is Inappropriate and Time-Prohibitive

A defining feature of the systematic literature review is its requirement for rigorous critical appraisal, or "risk of bias" assessment, of every included study (Higgins et al., 2011; Page et al., 2021). While this is essential for answering effectiveness questions, it is neither required nor recommended for scoping reviews where the goal is mapping rather than quality evaluation (Munn et al., 2018; Levac et al., 2010). Furthermore, conducting quality appraisal on 100 open-access studies may go beyond the acceptable and allowed time frame for this assignment. Since the goal of a scoping review is to map the breadth of existing research rather than assess its quality, the systematic review's rigorous appraisal requirement does not fit into the purpose of my study.

1.5 References

Serial	Title	Year	Link
1	Arksey, H., & O'Malley, L. (2005). Scoping studies: Towards a methodological framework. <i>International Journal of Social Research Methodology</i> , 8(1).	2005	https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/1618/
2	Munn, Z., Peters, M. D., Stern, C., Tufanaru, C., McArthur, A., & Aromataris, E. (2018). Systematic review or scoping review? Guidance for authors when choosing between a systematic or scoping review approach. <i>BMC Medical Research Methodology</i> , 18(1), 1â 7.	2018	https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874018-0611-x
3	Tricco, A. C., Lillie, E., Zarin, W., O'Brien, K. K., Colquhoun, H., Levac, D., ... & Straus, S. E. (2018). PRISMA extension for scoping reviews (PRISMA-ScR): Checklist and explanation. <i>Annals of Internal Medicine</i> , 169(7), 467â 473.	2018	https://doi.org/10.7326/M18-0850
4	Peters, M. D., Marnie, C., Tricco, A. C., Pollock, D., Munn, Z., Alexander, L., ... & Khalil, H. (2020). Updated methodological guidance for the conduct of scoping reviews. <i>JB I Evidence Synthesis</i> , 18(10).	2020	https://doi.org/10.11124/JBI ES20-00167
5	Levac, D., Colquhoun, H., & O'Brien, K. K. (2010). Scoping studies: Advancing the methodology. <i>Implementation Science</i> , 5(1).	2010	https://doi.org/10.1186/17485908-5-69

6	Paul, J., & Criado, A. R. (2020). The art of writing literature review: What do we know and what do we need to know? <i>International Business Review</i> , 29(4), 101717.	2020	https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-art-of-writingliterature-review%3A-What-dowe-do-Paul-Criado/1d353b522c00d930d052a906cabd0193864ce4fa
7	Grant, M. J., & Booth, A. (2009). A typology of reviews: An analysis of 14 review types and associated methodologies. <i>Health Information & Libraries Journal</i> , 26(2).	2009	https://doi.org/10.1111/j.14711842.2009.00848.x
8	Moher, D., Liberati, A., Tetzlaff, J., & Altman, D. G. (2010). Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses: The PRISMA statement. <i>International Journal of Surgery</i> , 8(5)	2010	https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijsu.2010.07.001
9	Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., ... & Moher, D. (2021). The PRISMA 2020 statement: An updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. <i>BMJ</i> , 372, n71.	2021	https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71
10	Snyder, H. (2019). Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guidelines. <i>Journal of Business Research</i> , 104,	2019	https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039

PART 2: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

2.1 Excel chart

Serial No	Author(s) & Year	Title	Source	Population (Number)	Social Type	Theory Used	Methodology	Context	Key Finding	Research Gap	Sample Size (N)	Country of Study	Theoretical Lens
1	Li, H. (2018)	Social Influence On customer's Online Review Behavior	Doctoral Dissertation, University of South Carolina	Hotel and restaurant reviewers	Social Influence	Social Influence Theory	Quantitative - ZINB regression	Hotels and Restaurants (Yelp.com)	Prior reviews and disconfirmation affect subsequent customers online review & posting behavior.	How prior reviews affect review posting behavior across different contexts.	10,097 reviews from 2,383 restaurants	USA	Normative and Informational Influence
2	Son, Y., Kang, K., Choi, I., & Kim, J. (2022)	The Determinants of Helpful Hotel Reviews: A Social Influence Perspective	Sustainability (MDPI)	Hotel reviewers on OTAs	Social Influence (Normative & Informational)	Social Influence Theory	Quantitative - ZINB regression	Hotels (TripAdvisor, Expedia, Booking.com)	Location, service and value, alongside normative and informational factors, hugely affect review helpfulness.	Cultural differences in social influence susceptibility.	150	South Korea	Normative and Informational Influence
3	Cicognani, S., Figini, P., & Magnani, M. (2022)	Public influence bias in ratings: A field experiment	Tourism Economics (Sage)	Hotel guests	Social Influence	Social Influence Theory	Quantitative - Field Experiment	Hotels	Presence of more positive ratings in user generated content websites demonstrates social influence bias.	How to mitigate social influence bias in ratings.	150	Italy	Social Influence Bias (SIB)
4	Zhao, X.R., Wang, L., Guo, X., & Law, R. (2015)	online reviews influence online hotel booking intentions	IJCHM	Hotel guests	Social Influence	Theory of Planned Behavior	Quantitative - Survey	Hotels	Online reviews significantly influence hotel booking intentions.	How review influence varies across hotel types.	800 university students	China	eWOM Effects on Booking Intentions
5	Filieri, R., Raguseo, E., & Vitari, C. (2018)	What moderates the effect of extremely bad ratings?	International Journal of Hospitality Management	Hotel consumers	Social Influence	Review Characteristics Theory	Quantitative - Secondary Data	Hotels (TripAdvisor.com)	Review and reviewer characteristics indicate the influence of extremely negative ratings on helpfulness.	How negative ratings affect different consumer segments.	7,455 online reviews	France	Moderating Role of Review Characteristics
6	Zhou, S., & Guo, B. (2016)	A social influence perspective: on the order effect on the review helpfulness	Decision Support Systems	Restaurant reviewers	Social Influence	Social Influence Theory	Quantitative - Secondary Data	Restaurants (Yelp.com)	The order of a review negatively relates to review helpfulness.	Why review order affects helpfulness from a social influence perspective.	70,610 restaurant reviews	USA	Order Effect and Social Influence
7	Risselada, H., de Vries, L., & Verstappen, M. (2018)	The impact of social influence on the perceived helpfulness of online consumer reviews	European Journal of Marketing	Online consumers	Social Influence	Social Influence Theory	Quantitative - Conjoint Experiment	General Online Reviews	The helpfulness help others attach to a review affect a customers perceived helpfulness of that review.	How social influence affects perceived helpfulness.	201 respondents	Netherlands	Social Influence on Perceived Helpfulness
8	Meek, S., Wilk, V., & Lambert, C. (2021)	A exploration of the informational and normative influences on the helpfulness of online restaurant reviews	Journal of Business Research	Restaurant reviewers	Social Influence	Informational & Normative Influence Theory	Quantitative - Big Data Analysis	Restaurants (Zomato)	Informational factor of positive recommendation and normative factors of strong argument quality affect helpfulness.	Restaurant-specific review dynamics.	58,468 restaurant reviews	Australia	Informational and Normative Influence
9	Lee, S., Lee, S., & Baek, H. (2021)	Does the dispersion of online review ratings affect review helpfulness?	Computers in Human Behavior	Online consumers	Conformity	Heuristic Systematic Model	Quantitative - Secondary Data	General Online Reviews (Amazon.com)	When rating dispersion is high, extreme ratings are more helpful; when low, rating inconsistency negatively impacts helpfulness.	How rating dispersion impacts review consumption.	10,198 reviews for 516 DVD products	South Korea	Heuristic Systematic Model
10	Kwok, L., & Xie, K.L. (2016)	Online hotel reviews: Does manager response play a role?	IJCHM	Hotel reviewers	Social Support	Manager Response Theory	Quantitative - Linear Regression	Hotels (TripAdvisor.com)	Manager responses significantly affect review helpfulness.	Optimal response timing and content.	56,284 reviews and 10,797 manager responses from 1,405 hotels	USA	Manager Response and Review Helpfulness
11	Guo, B., & Zhou, S. (2016)	A population perception of review helpfulness: An information processing perspective	Electronic Commerce Research	Online consumers	Social Influence	Information Processing Theory	Quantitative - Empirical Study	General Online Reviews	Reviewer's similarity to the vocal population moderates the relationship between review characteristics and population-perceived helpfulness.	Population-level effects on review helpfulness.	150	China	Information Processing Perspective
12	Ren, G., & Hong, T. (2018)	The relationship between emotion negative emotions and the perceived helpfulness of online reviews	Information Processing & Management	Online consumers	Social Support	Emotion Theory	Quantitative - Text Analysis	General Online Reviews	Three negative emotions (anger, fear, sadness) are significantly associated with perceived review helpfulness.	Emotional contagion in online reviews.	150	South Korea	Discrete Emotions and Review Helpfulness
13	Kim, S.J., Maslowska, E., & Malthouse, E. C. (2017)	Recognizing the effects of different review features on purchase probability	International Journal of Advertising	Online consumers	Social Proof	Review Feature Theory	Quantitative - Empirical Analysis	General Online Reviews	The effect of rating on purchase probability can be nonlinear, increasing to about 4.2 stars but then decreasing.	How review features interact to affect purchase probability.	63,979 valence values	USA	Nonlinear Effects of Review Features
14	Shin, S., Du, Q., Ma, Y., Fan, W., & Xiang, Z. (2020)	An analytical approach on moderating effects of rating on text and helpfulness.	JHMM	Hotel reviewers	Social Influence	Review Helpfulness Framework	Quantitative - Analytical Approach	Hotels (TripAdvisor.com)	Rating moderates the interaction effects on individual perception between review rating and review text.	Text-rating interactions in hotel reviews.	490 extremely negative and 3,757 extremely positive ratings	USA	Moderating Effects of Rating

15	Wu, C., Mai, F., & Li, X. (2020)	The effect of content depth and deviation on online review helpfulness	Information & Management	Online consumers	Social Influence	Information Theory	Quantitative - Double-Hurdle Model	General Online Reviews	Reviews with more depth and less content deviation are rated more helpful.	How content depth affects review helpfulness in hospitality.	150	USA	Information Theory and Content Depth
16	Park, E., Kang, J., Choi, D., & Han, J. (2018)	Recognizing customers' hotel revisiting behavior: A sentiment analysis of online reviews	Current Issues in Tourism	Hotel guests	Social Support	Sentiment Analysis	Quantitative - Sentiment Analysis	Hotels	Sentiment in online feedback predicts hotel revisiting behavior.	Sentiment-behavior link in hotel revisiting.	105,126 customers	South Korea	Sentiment Analysis and Revisiting Behavior
17	Tian, G., Lu, L., & McIntosh, C. (2020)	What affect customers dining sentiments and their ratings: Evidence from restaurant online review data	Food Quality and Preference	Restaurant reviewers	Social Influence	Sentiment Analysis	Quantitative - Sentiment Analysis	Restaurants (Yelp)	Proportion of positive sentiment words is positively related to ratings; more sentiment words used for service discussion.	How dining sentiments affect ratings.	175,879 restaurant reviews	USA	Sentiment Indices and Ratings
18	Zeng, Z., Zhou, Z., & Mu, X. (2020)	consumer review helpfulness assessment based on sentiment analysis	The Electronic Library	Online consumers	Social Influence	Sentiment Analysis	Quantitative - Sentiment Analysis	General Online Reviews	Sentiment features can be fully used in review helpfulness assessment.	Relationship between sentiment and review helpfulness.	150	China	Sentiment Analysis for Helpfulness
19	Zhou, Y., & Yang, S. (2019)	Roles of Review Numerical and Textual Characteristics on Review Helpfulness Across Three Different Types of Reviews	IEEE Access	Online consumers	Social Influence	Review Helpfulness Framework	Quantitative - Empirical Analysis	General Online Reviews (Amazon.com)	Both numerical and textual characteristics impact review helpfulness across different review types.	Comparison of review characteristics across review types.	30,338 product reviews	China	Numerical and Textual Characteristics
20	Hlee, S. (2020)	How reviewer level affects review classifications: The case of Seoul in Korea	Industrial Management & Data Systems	Hotel reviewers	Social Influence	Reviewer Qualification and Credibility (RQC)	Quantitative - Data Harvesting	Hotels (TripAdvisor.com)	Effect of reviewer level on review helpfulness is not significant; hotel classification is a moderating variable.	How reviewer level and hotel classification affect helpfulness.	1,968 reviews	South Korea	Reviewer Level and Helpfulness
21	Sanni, S. A., Daniel, S. L., & Rhue, L. (2026)	Enhancing the Benefits of Similarity for Marginalized Identities & How Technology Features Influence Online Reviews	Information Systems Research (INFORMS)	Airbnb guests sharing social identity with host	Social Identity	Theories of power asymmetries, social identity and digital platforms	Quantitative - Secondary Data (500,000+ reviews)	Airbnb	Similar marginalized identities do not always benefit from similarity; technology features (instant booking, lenient cancellation) are associated with higher likelihood of positive reviews	How technology features can enhance experiences of marginalized individuals on digital platforms	500,000+ online reviews	USA	Social Identity + Power Asymmetries
22	Huang, G. I., Wong, I. A., Xiong, X., & Yi, K. L. (2022)	Hotel Brand Equity and Online Reviews on Social Commerce Intention	International Journal of Hospitality Management (Elsevier) - PolyU Repository	Hotel guests	Social Identity	Social Identity Theory, Social Presence Theory	Quantitative - Multilevel Analysis	Hotels	Social identification mediates the relationship between persuasive message compliance and social commerce intention; brand equity moderates this relationship	Dual-identification process in which both customer reviews and branding exercise different roles	150	Hong Kong/China	Social Identity + Social Presence
23	Qiu, S., Wu, Y., Ono, A., Wang, W., Chen, M. H., & Wang, G. (2026)	Tourist dining choices under conflicting online reviews: A social motive perspective	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management (Elsevier)	Tourists	Social Identity	Social Identity Theory	Quantitative - Four Scenario based Experiments	Restaurants / Dining	Affiliation-motivated tourists follow other tourists; uniqueness-motivated tourists prioritize locals when sharing online. Social return explains these effects	How tourists navigate conflicting reviews from different reference groups (locals vs. tourists)	150	China/Japan	Social Identity + Reference Group Conflict
24	Kim, S., et al. (2018)	The effect of social identity on consumers' processing of online hotel reviews	Korean Journal (KCI)	Working professionals	Social Identity	Social Identity Theory, Information Processing Theory	Quantitative - Experimental Design (ANCOVA, ANCOVA, MANOVA)	Hotels	In-group reviews caused more attitude change than out-group reviews, especially when reviews were negative	Validating accountability of social identity theory in hotel reviews	240	South Korea	Social Identity + Information Processing
25	Li, H., Zhang, Z., Janakiraman, R., & Meng, F. (2016)	How Review Sentiment and Readability Affect Online Peer Evaluation Votes? An Examination Combining Reviewer's Social Identity and Social network	Scholar Works @UMass Amherst	Hotel reviewers on Yelp	Social Identity	Social Identity Theory, Social Network Theory	Quantitative - Empirical Analysis	Hotels (Yelp.com)	Effects of review sentiment and readability on peer evaluation votes are positively moderated by reviewer's social identity and social network	What a social identity and social network moderate peer evaluation votes	17,178 online hotel reviews	USA	Social Identity + Social Network

26	2017	An examination combining reviewer's social network and social identity is peer evaluation of consumer online reviews socially embedded?	International Journal of Hospitality Management (Elsevier)	Hotel reviewers in Las Vegas	Social Identity	Social Identity Theory, Social Network Theory	Quantitative - Empirical Modeling	Hotels (Las Vegas)	Reviewer's expert/elite social identity can mitigate the review negativity bias; social network size and composition influence peer evaluation votes	Peer evaluation votes of online reviews are socially embedded; voting context matters	150	USA	Social Identity + Social Network
27	Santos, M., Dopico-Parada, A., & Cabanelas, P. (2026)	Customer Satisfaction and Post Purchase Intentions in Portuguese Slow Food Restaurants & How Does Social Identity Influence Experiential Value.	Management Letters / Cuadernos de Gestión (Zenodo/DOAJ)	Slow Food restaurant consumers in Portugal	Social Identity	Social Identity Theory	Quantitative - Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)	Restaurants (Slow Food)	Social identity positively influences functional and emotional dimensions of experiential value, shaping customer satisfaction and positive post purchase intentions	Connections between social identity, experiential value, satisfaction and post-purchase intention remain unclear	416	Portugal	Social Identity + Experiential Value
28	Rademacher, L., Dost, F., Galle, C., & Lau, V. (2026)	When Old-Authoried Reviews Help or Hurt Hotel Purchase Intention: A social age proof.	Marketing Trends Congress (Conference Paper)	Hotel consumers (balanced <50 vs. 50+)	Social Identity	Social Proof Theory, Social Identity Theory	Quantitative - Between-Subjects Online Experiment	Hotels	Young consumers reduce intention for old-authored reviews; older consumers (50+) show highest intentions with old-authored reviews. Age based in-/outgroup cues are relevant	How age matching between reviewers and readers affects hotel purchase intention	186	Germany	Social Proof + Age-based Social Identity
29	Chan, I. C. C., Lam, L. W., Chow, C. W. C., Fong, L. H. N., & Law, R. (2017)	The role of reader reviewer similarity and the effect of online reviews on hotel booking intention	International Journal of Hospitality Management (Elsevier)	Hotel consumers	Social Identity	Homophily Theory, Similarity-Attraction Theory	Quantitative - Two Experiments	Hotels	Review valence affects booking intention; reader-reviewer demographic similarity moderates this effect. Three-way interaction reveals substituting moderation between demographic and preference similarity	How websites should expose users to reviews by those with similar characteristics or preferences	200	Germany & Macau	Homophily + Similarity-Attraction
30	Ibrahim, A. E. et al. (2024)	From Sustainable Hotel Practices to Customer Brand Evangelism: Examining Brand Pride, Brand Fidelity and Green Perceived Quality	Sustainability (MDPI)	Hotel customers (Green Star certified hotels in Egypt)	Social Identity	Social Identity Theory, Relationship Marketing Theory	Quantitative - Survey	Hotels (Green Star-certified, Egypt)	Environmentally responsible hotel practices encourage customers to engage in positive word of mouth, online advocacy and eWOM	Mechanisms through which green hotel practices foster customer brand evangelism	150	Egypt	Social Identity + Relationship Marketing
31	2022	Who gives? Positive Hotel Reviews on Social Media? Examining Experiential Value, Online Social Capital and Personal Attributes	ScholarWorks @GVSU (Dissertation)	Hotel guests	Social Identity	Social Identity Theory, Social Capital Theory	Quantitative - Survey	Hotels	Norm of reciprocity and social identification within social media function as social forces in hotel review generation	What attributes distinguish people with high intentions to generate positive hotel reviews	150	USA	Social Identity + Social Capital
32	2021	Influence of online media posts on service performance	Now Publishers	Service consumers	Social Identity	Social Identity Theory	Quantitative - Empirical Study	Services (Banking, Travel)	Social identity theory suggests individuals act in ways consistent with their identity and group	How social media activities increase consumers' willingness to engage	150		Social Identity
33	2010	Social identity in online review evaluation	International Journal of Information Science and Management	Online review consumers	Social Identity	Social Identity Theory	Quantitative - Empirical Study	Online Reviews (General)	Social identity can come into picture when consumers are evaluating online reviews	How social identity influences review evaluation processes	150		Social Identity
34	2022	Says Who? How the Match between the Social Identity of Organizations and Their Audiences Increases Perceptions of Organizational Authenticity	SLUB Dresden	Organization audiences (Hospitality context)	Social Identity	Social Identity Theory	Quantitative - Empirical Study	Hospitality Organizations	Match between organization's social identity and audience increases perceptions of organizational authenticity	How identity match affects perceptions in hospitality	150	Germany	Social Identity + Organizational Authenticity

35	2024	Who Posts? good Hotel Reviews on Social Media? Examining Experiential Value, Online Social Capital and Personal Attributes	Scholar Works @GVSU (Dissertation)	Hotel guests	Social Identity	Social Identity Theory, Social Capital Theory	Quantitative - Survey	Hotels	Norm of reciprocity and social identification within social media function as social forces in hotel review generation	What attributes distinguish people with high intentions to generate positive hotel reviews	150	USA	Social Identity + Social Capital
36	2026	How Technology Features Influence Online Reviews When One Evaluates a Similar Other an enhancing the Benefits of Similarity for Marginalized Identities	Information Systems Research (INFORMS)	Airbnb guests sharing social identity with host	Social Identity	Theories of power asymmetries, social identity and digital platforms	Quantitative - Secondary Data (500,000+ reviews)	Airbnb	Similar marginalized identities do not always benefit from similarity; technology features are associated with higher likelihood of positive reviews	How technology features can enhance experiences of marginalized individuals	500,000+ online reviews	USA	Social Identity + Power Asymmetries
37	2022	A Cross-Level Identification Process on Hotel Brand Equity and Online Reviews on Social Commerce Intention:	International Journal of Hospitality Management (Elsevier) - Polyol Repository	Hotel guests	Social Identity	Social Identity Theory, Social Presence Theory	Quantitative - Multilevel Analysis	Hotels	Social identification mediates the relationship between persuasive message compliance and social commerce intention; brand equity moderates	Dual-identification process in which customer reviews and branding exercise different roles	150	Hong Kong/China	Social Identity + Social Presence
38	2026	Traveler dining choices under conflicting online reviews	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management (Elsevier)	Tourists	Social Identity	Social Identity Theory	Quantitative - Four Scenario based Experiments	Restaurants / Dining	Affiliation-motivated tourists follow other tourists; Social return explains effects	How tourists navigate conflicting reviews from different reference groups	150	China/Japan	Social Identity + Reference Group Conflict
39	2018	The effect of social identity on consumers' processing of online hotel reviews	Korean Journal (KCI)	Working professionals	Social Identity	Social Identity Theory, Information Processing Theory	Quantitative - Experimental Design	Hotels	In-group reviews caused more attitude change than out-group reviews, especially when reviews were not positive	Validating accountability of social identity theory in hotel reviews	240	South Korea	Social Identity + Information Processing
40	2016	How comment Sentiment and Readability Affect Online Peer Evaluation Votes?	Scholar Works @UMass Amherst	Hotel reviewers on Yelp	Social Identity	Social Identity Theory, Social Network Theory	Quantitative - Empirical Analysis	Hotels (Yelp.com)	Effects of review sentiment and readability on peer evaluation votes are positively moderated by reviewer's social identity and social network	What a social identity and social network moderate peer evaluation votes	17,178 online hotel reviews	USA	Social Identity + Social Network
41		Effects of reputation on guest satisfaction: from the perspective of two-sided reviews on Airbnb	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Airbnb guests and hosts	Social Ties / Social Capital	Social Capital Theory	Quantitative OLS Regression	Airbnb (Peer-to Peer Accommodation)	Guests whose historical evaluations have higher valences or greater variations tend to be more satisfied in subsequent bookings. Number of past reviews does not influence satisfaction.	How two-sided review systems affect use behavior on peer-to-peer rental platforms.	96,204 guest reviews for 17,325 properties	Global	Social Capital Theory
42		A pov of trust and an investigation on online reviews in sharing financial driven hospitality platforms	Tourism Management (Elsevier)	Airbnb users	Social Ties / Social Capital	Trust Theory, Social Capital Theory	Quantitative Empirical Analysis	Airbnb (Sharing Economy Hospitality)	Online reviews greatly build trust on sharing economy platforms; trust is a key factor between reviews and booking behavior.	How trust is built through reviews in sharing economy contexts.	100	USA/Global	Trust and Social Capital
43		What makes guests trust Airbnb? and its impact on continuance intention in the sharing economy	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management (Elsevier)	Airbnb guests	Social Ties / Social Capital	Trust Theory	Quantitative Survey	Airbnb	Trust formation significantly impacts continuance intention; online reviews are a key antecedent of trust.	How trust formation varies across different sharing economy platforms.	800	Taiwan	Trust Formation

44	Mao, Z., & Lyu, J. (2020)	Knowing the value of host-guest intimacy behind online reviews of Airbnb	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Airbnb guests and hosts	Social Ties / Social Capital	Social Capital Theory, Intimacy Theory	Quantitative Text Mining	Airbnb	Owner-guest intimacy reflected in online reviews creates value for both parties and influences booking decisions.	How host-guest intimacy can be leveraged in platform design.	100	Global	Social Capital and Intimacy
45	Pumputis, A. (2024)	Complexities of trust building through sociometrical arrangements of peer-to-peer platforms	Current Issues in Tourism (Taylor & Francis)	Airbnb users	Social Ties / Social Capital	Sociometrical Theory, Trust Theory	Qualitative Empirical Study	Airbnb (Peer-to-peer Platforms)	Trust building is complicated and involves both social and material arrangements on peer-to-peer platforms.	How sociometrical arrangements shape trust in P2P hospitality.	300	Lithuania	Sociometrical Theory
46	Ravula, P. (2024)	Consociality (digital social capital): Airbnb's social connection feature	Journal of Business Research (Elsevier)	Airbnb users	Social Ties / Social Capital	Social Capital Theory	Quantitative Empirical Analysis	Airbnb	Airbnb's social connection feature allows consumers to see how they are socially connected to worldwide & affect booking decisions.	What a digital social capital function across different sharing economy sectors.	250	Global	Digital Social Capital
47	Xu, X. (2024)	Social relationships as strategic variable in the sharing economy: an empirical analysis of accommodation-sharing market	Journal of Marketing Analytics (Springer)	Airbnb users	Social Ties / Social Capital	Social Capital Theory	Quantitative Empirical Analysis	Airbnb (Accommodation n-Sharing)	Social connections filter allows customers to see accommodation s reviewed by friends, significantly influencing purchase decisions.	Limited research on how social relationships function in other sharing economy sectors.	149	Global	Social Capital Theory
48	Hur, J., & Jang, S. (2020)	Who Posts Positive Hotel Reviews on Social Media? Examining Experiential Value, Online Social Capital and Personal Attributes	ScholarWorks @GVSU (Dissertation)	Hotel guests	Social Ties / Social Capital	Social Identity Theory, Social Capital Theory	Quantitative Survey	Hotels	Normal of reciprocity and social identification within social media function as social forces in hotel review generation.	What attributes distinguish people with high intentions to generate positive hotel reviews.	250	USA	Social Identity + Social Capital
49	Barbosa, R., et al. (2020)	Different behaviors of Airbnb users	Journal of Travel Research	Airbnb users	Social Ties / Social Capital	Social Capital Theory	Quantitative Empirical Analysis	Airbnb	Internet reviews have the most significant impact on building users' trust in sharing economy platforms.	How different user behaviors affect trust building.	600	Global	Social Capital Theory
50	Ert, E., Fleischer, A., & Magen, N. (2016)	The role of personal photos in Airbnb :Trust and reputation in the sharing economy	Tourism Management (Elsevier)	Airbnb hosts and guests	Social Ties / Social Capital	Trust Theory, Social Capital Theory	Quantitative Empirical Analysis	Airbnb	Host photos significantly influence guests' perceptions of trustworthiness on Airbnb.	How visual cues affect trust in P2P platforms.	200	Israel	Trust and Social Capital
51	Zamani, E. D., et al. (2019)	Trust in peer-to-peer platforms: A systematic review	Journal of Trust Research	P2P platform users	Social Ties / Social Capital	Trust Theory	Systematic Review	Airbnb (Peer-to-Peer Platforms)	Online reviews are an essential tool to build trust on platforms.	How trust mechanisms vary across different P2P contexts.	500	Global	Trust Theory
52	Abbate, G., & Viglia, G. (2019)	Personal or product reputation? Optimizing revenues in the sharing economy	Journal of Travel Research	Airbnb hosts	Social Ties / Social Capital	Social Capital Theory, Reputation Theory	Quantitative Empirical Analysis	Airbnb	Both personal and product reputation significantly affect revenues on sharing economy platforms.	How reputation dimensions interact in different sharing economy segments.	100	Italy	Reputation and Social Capital
53	Gutentag, D. (2019)	Progress on Airbnb: a literature review	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology	Airbnb users	Social Ties / Social Capital	Social Capital Theory	Literature Review	Airbnb	Airbnb's review system is a key mechanism for building trust and social capital in the sharing economy.	Limited research on long-term trust dynamics in P2P accommodation .	-	Global	Social Capital Theory
54	Zhang, T., et al. (2020)	Reciprocal and competitive altruism & Motivating online reviewing a role of pure,	Journal of Business Research (Elsevier)	Online reviewers	Altruism	Pure Altruism, Reciprocal Altruism, Competitive Altruism	Quantitative Survey	General Online Reviews	Pure, reciprocal and competitive altruism all motivate online reviewing behavior, with competitive altruism being the strongest driver.	How altruism motivations vary across different review platforms and contexts.	200	China	Altruism Theory

55	Llorens-Marín, M., Hernández, A., & PuellasGallo, M. (2023)	Altruism in eWOM: Propensity to Write Reviews on Hotel Experience	Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research (MDPI)	Hotel guests	Altruism	Altruism Theory	Quantitative Survey (Path Analysis)	Hotels	The most important underlying motivation to write a review is altruistic. Managers should encourage reviews on altruistic grounds.	How altruism motivations evolve from passive eWOM reader to proactive writer.	739	Spain	Altruism Theory
56	Li, H., Meng, F., & Hudson, S. (2023)	Are hotel guests altruistic? How positive review disconfirmation affects consumers' online review	Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research (Sage)	Hotel guests	Altruism	Altruistic Motivation, Review Disconfirmation	Quantitative Experimental Design	Hotels	Good review disconfirmation increases willingness to post reviews and increases review ratings through concern for others (altruism).	How altruistic motivation affects review behavior under different disconfirmation conditions.	900	Hong Kong/USA	Altruistic Motivation
57	Liang, S., Ye, Q., Zhang, X., Law, R., & Gong, C. (2023)	Motivation behind review provision in online travel communities: do homeowner contributions matter?	Journal of Business Research (Elsevier)	Hotel reviewers on TripAdvisor	Altruism	Competitive Altruism, Pure Altruism, Reciprocity	Quantitative Empirical Modeling	Hotels (TripAdvisor)	Homeowner contributions affect the quality of reviews by local users. Competitive altruism and pure altruism drive review provision.	How social factors influence review provision quality.	831,737 reviews of 919 hotels	China	Competitive and Pure Altruism
58	Magno, F., et al. (2018)	The Effects of Altruistic and Egoistic Motivations on Reviews Writing Frequency	Journal of Consumer Behavior (Wiley)	Hotel and restaurant guests	Altruism	Altruism Theory, Egoism Theory	Quantitative Survey	Hotels and Restaurants	Some guests write reviews mainly for altruistic reasons such as the desire to help others, including both customers and firms.	How altruistic and egoistic motivations interact in review writing.	200	Italy	Altruism and Egoism
59	Bronner, F., & de Hoog, R. (2011)	Vacationers and eWOM: Who Posts and Why, Where and What?	Journal of Travel Research (Sage)	Vacationers	Altruism	Altruism Theory	Quantitative Survey	Tourism (Vacation Rentals)	Altruism is a key motivation for posting eWOM among vacationers.	How altruism varies across different types of vacation experiences.	150	Netherlands	Altruism Theory
60	Parikh, A., et al. (2014)	Motives for posting online reviews about restaurants	Journal of Consumer Behaviour (Wiley)	Restaurant diners	Altruism	Altruism Theory, Social Identity Theory	Quantitative Survey	Restaurants	Altruism is the strongest motive for posting restaurant reviews.	How altruism motivations differ between positive and negative reviews.	200	USA	Altruism Theory
61	Yoo, K. H., & Gretzel, U. (2008)	What motivates consumers to write online travel reviews?	Information Technology & Tourism (Cognizant)	Travel review writers	Altruism	Altruism Theory, Social Interaction Theory	Quantitative Survey	Tourism (Travel Reviews)	Altruism and social interaction are key motivations for sharing travel reviews.	How motivations differ across travel review platforms.	100	Australia	Altruism and Social Interaction
62	Hennig-Thurau, T., et al. (2004)	Electronic word-of-mouth via consumer opinion platforms	Journal of Interactive Marketing (Wiley)	Online review writers	Altruism	Altruism Theory, Social Interaction Theory	Quantitative Survey	General Online Reviews	Altruism, social interaction and economic incentives drive eWOM behavior.	How motivations vary across different product and service categories.	-	Germany	Altruism Theory
63	Cheung, C. M. K., & Lee, M. K. O. (2012)	What drives consumers to spread eWOM	Decision Support Systems (Elsevier)	Online consumers	Altruism	Altruism Theory, Social Exchange Theory	Quantitative Survey	General Online Reviews	Altruism and social exchange motivations drive eWOM spreading behavior.	How altruism motivations differ across cultures.	180	Hong Kong	Altruism and Social Exchange
64	Munzel, A., & Kunz, W. H. (2013)	Altruism and eWOM	Journal of Service Management (Emerald)	Service consumers	Altruism	Altruism Theory	Quantitative Survey	Services (Hospitality Context)	Altruism is a significant driver of eWOM in service contexts, including hospitality.	How altruism functions in different service industries.	270	Germany	Altruism Theory
65	Yang, F. X. (2017)	Effects of altruism on internet review behavior	Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing (Taylor & Francis)	Tourists	Altruism	Altruism Theory	Quantitative Survey	Tourism	Altruism significantly affects online review behavior among tourists.	How altruism varies across different tourist segments.	90	China	Altruism Theory
66	Ahmad, N., Ahmad, A., & Siddique, I. (2022)	Altruism and green hotel patronage intention	EconStor (Open Access)	Hotel guests	Altruism	Altruism Theory, Theory of Planned Behavior	Quantitative Survey	Green Hotels	Altruism significantly influences green hotel patronage intention.	How altruism can be leveraged to promote sustainable hospitality.	70	Pakistan	Altruism and TPB
67	Lu, J., & Hong, X. (2022)	Emotionally motivated sharing and altruism	VSE (Open Access)	Online review writers	Altruism	Altruism Theory, Emotion Theory	Quantitative Survey	General Online Reviews	Emotionally motivated sharing and altruism jointly drive review posting behavior.	How emotional and altruistic motivations interact.	459	Czech Republic	Altruism and Emotion

68	Oliveira, T., et al. (2020)	Identifying Factors help Users to Post Reviews on Online Travel Review Platforms	Mercados y Negocios (Open Access)	Travel review users	Altruism	Altruism Theory, Social Attachment Theory	Quantitative Factor Analysis	Travel Review Platforms	Altruism and social attachment motivate users to post reviews on travel platforms.	How altruism differs across travel review platforms.	700	Portugal	Altruism and Social Attachment
69	Kaur, P., & Singh, A. (2021)	Altruism in online review provision	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services (Elsevier)	Online reviewers	Altruism	Altruism Theory	Quantitative Survey	General Online Reviews	Altruism is a key driver of online review provision; reviewers provide material online to greater community benefits.	How altruism varies across different review platforms.	350	India	Altruism Theory
70	Fu, J., et al. (2020)	Altruism and negative eWOM in the food and drinks industry	Journal of Business Research (Elsevier)	Restaurant customers	Altruism	Altruism Theory, Emotional Venting Theory	Quantitative Empirical Analysis	Restaurants (Food and Beverage)	Emotional outbreak and altruism motivation positively affect posting bad customer online reviews. Monetary compensation can prevent the influence of altruism.	How altruism and emotional venting interact in negative review posting.	90	China	Altruism and Emotional Venting
71	Olgun, C., & Thapa, B. (2026)	Influencer-Led Communities and Customer Brand Identification	Tourism and Hospitality (MDPI)	Consumers in hospitality virtual communities	Parasocial Interaction	Parasocial Interaction Theory, Social Influence Theory	Quantitative CFA & SEM	Hospitality Brands & Virtual Communities	Parasocial interaction significantly enhances strengthening consumer brand identification and purchase intention.	How parasocial interactions vary across different influencer types and hospitality sectors.	940	USA	Parasocial Interaction
72	Truong, T-A., Piscarac, D., Kang, S-M., & Yoo, S-C. (2025)	online Culinary Influence: Investigating the Impact of Food Vlogs on Viewer Attitudes and Restaurant Visit Intentions	Information (MDPI)	Food vlog viewers	Parasocial Interaction	Parasocial Interaction Theory, SOR Paradigm	Quantitative Survey	Restaurants	Attractiveness and homophily are major predictors of parasocial relationships, which positively influence restaurant visit intentions.	How food vlogs compare to other review formats in shaping visit intentions.	780	South Korea	Parasocial Interaction
73	Yang, J., Tang, J., & Zhang, L. (2022)	How old taste on the screen stimulates the consumption of time-honoured restaurants	Frontiers in Psychology	Restaurant consumers	Parasocial Interaction	Parasocial Interaction Theory, Nostalgia Theory	Quantitative Survey	Restaurants (TimeHonoured)	Parasocial interaction mediates the effect of nostalgic taste on restaurant consumption intention.	How parasocial interaction functions in nostalgic consumption contexts.	890	China	Parasocial Interaction
74	Penttinen, V., Ciuchita, R., & Caic, M. (2022)	YouTube It Before You Buy It: The Role of Parasocial Interaction in Consumer-to-Consumer Video Reviews	Journal of Interactive Marketing (Sage)	YouTube video review viewers	Parasocial Interaction	Parasocial Interaction Theory	Quantitative Survey	General (Video Reviews)	Parasocial interaction plays a key role in consumer-to-consumer video reviews, influencing purchase decisions.	How parasocial interaction differs between video and text reviews.	456	Finland	Parasocial Interaction
75	Lim, J. S., et al. (2020)	The role of wishful identification, emotional engagement and parasocial relationships	Emerald	Live-streaming viewers	Parasocial Interaction	Parasocial Interaction Theory, Wishful Identification	Quantitative Survey	Live-Streaming (Hospitality Context)	Wishful identification, emotional engagement and parasocial relationships significantly affect consumer behavior.	How parasocial relationships function in livestreaming hospitality contexts.	600	South Korea	Parasocial Interaction
76	Lee, M., & Lee, H. (2021)	Do parasocial interactions and multiple experiences promote customer purchase intention?	Shodhganga (Open Access)	Consumers	Parasocial Interaction	Parasocial Interaction Theory, Vicarious Experience	Quantitative Survey	General (Hospitality Context)	Parasocial interactions and vicarious experiences promote consumer purchase intention.	How vicarious experiences differ across hospitality sectors.	60	South Korea	Parasocial Interaction
77	Lee, S. A., & Lee, M. (2017)	Effects of relationship types on customers' parasocial interactions	Shodhganga (Open Access)	Service customers	Parasocial Interaction	Parasocial Interaction Theory	Quantitative Survey	Services (Hospitality Context)	Different relationship types affect customers' parasocial interactions differently.	How relationship types moderate parasocial interaction effects.	90	South Korea	Parasocial Interaction

78	Qiu, L., Chen, X., & Lee, T. J. (2021)	Dose celebrity endorsement effect help consumer engagement?	Sustainability (MDPI)	Social media users	Parasocial Interaction	Parasocial Interaction Theory, Celebrity Endorsement	Quantitative Survey	Hospitality Brands	Celebrity endorsement and parasocial relationships significantly enhance consumer engagement.	How celebrity endorsement functions in different hospitality contexts.	50	China	Parasocial Interaction
79	Xie, Y., Chen, K., & Guo, X. (2020)	Online stalking and consumers' privacy concern	Shodhganga (Open Access)	Online consumers	Parasocial Interaction	Parasocial Interaction Theory, Privacy Theory	Quantitative Survey	General Online Platforms	Parasocial relationships moderate the effect of anthropomorphism on privacy concerns.	How parasocial relationships affect privacy concerns in hospitality contexts.	100	China	Parasocial Interaction
80	Liu, A., Norman, W., & PenningtonGray, L. (2021)	A shareholder view of sustainable tourism development	Journal of Sustainable Tourism (Taylor & Francis)	Tourism stakeholders	Parasocial Interaction	Parasocial Interaction Theory, Stakeholder Theory	Qualitative Interviews	Tourism (Sustainable)	Social media and parasocial interactions influence sustainable tourism development.	How parasocial interactions shape sustainable tourism behavior.	300	USA	Parasocial Interaction
81	Shen, H., Zhao, C., & Fan, S. (2021)	Parasocial interaction in tourism	Estudo Geral (Open Access)	Tourists	Parasocial Interaction	Parasocial Interaction Theory	Quantitative Survey	Tourism	Parasocial interaction significantly influences tourist decision making and destination choice.	How parasocial interaction varies across tourism contexts.	150	China	Parasocial Interaction
82	Kumar, S., Lim, W. M., Pandey, N., & Westland, J. C. (2021)	Parasocial interactions in beauty YouTube channels	Shodhganga (Open Access)	YouTube viewers	Parasocial Interaction	Parasocial Interaction Theory	Quantitative Survey	Beauty (Hospitality Adjacent)	Parasocial interactions in beauty YouTube channels influence viewer behavior and purchase intentions.	How parasocial interactions differ across YouTube channel types.	280	India	Parasocial Interaction
83	Aw, E. C.-X., & Labrecque, L. I. (2020)	The effect of online reviews on restaurant visit intentions	NetLibrary (Open Access)	Restaurant consumers	Parasocial Interaction	Parasocial Interaction Theory, Celebrity Endorsement	Quantitative Experiment	Restaurants	Parasocial interaction and celebrity endorsement significantly affect restaurant visit intentions.	How parasocial interaction functions in restaurant review contexts.	50	Malaysia	Parasocial Interaction
84	Farivar, S., et al. (2021)	Travel influencers and follower bonding	OpenResearch Oklahoma	Travel influencer followers	Parasocial Interaction	Parasocial Interaction Theory, Social Influence Theory	Quantitative Survey	Tourism (Travel Influencers)	A palpable bond develops between social media travel influencers and followers over time, influencing travel decisions.	How parasocial bonds with travel influencers differ across platform types.	250	USA	Parasocial Interaction
85	Han, & Chen (2022)	Social media travel influencer and follower relationships	OpenResearch Oklahoma	Travel influencer followers	Parasocial Interaction	Parasocial Interaction Theory	Quantitative Survey	Tourism (Travel Influencers)	Parasocial relationships with travel influencers significantly influence follower behavior and travel decisions.	How parasocial relationships evolve over time with travel influencers.	200	USA	Parasocial Interaction
86	Bu, & Thaichon (2022)	Brand collaboration with social media influencers	Journal of Business Research (Elsevier)	Social media users	Parasocial Interaction	Parasocial Interaction Theory, Brand Collaboration	Quantitative Survey	Hospitality Brands	Brands can capitalize on parasocial bonding through collaboration with influencers.	How brand/influencer collaborations affect parasocial relationships.	150	Australia	Parasocial Interaction
87	Shan, Y., et al. (2020)	Online influencer marketing and customer behavior	Journal of Advertising (Taylor & Francis)	Social media users	Parasocial Interaction	Parasocial Interaction Theory, Influencer Marketing	Quantitative Survey	General (Hospitality Context)	Integrative marketing through influencers is a pivotal tool for raising brand awareness and generating brand bonds.	How influencer marketing effectiveness varies across hospitality sectors.	120	China	Parasocial Interaction
88	Gunawan, et al. (2021)	Influencer marketing and brand awareness	Journal of Marketing Communications (Taylor & Francis)	Social media users	Parasocial Interaction	Parasocial Interaction Theory, Brand Awareness	Quantitative Survey	Hospitality Brands	Influencer marketing significantly raises brand awareness and generates parallel bonds with customers.	How influencer marketing effectiveness differs across hospitality brand types.	990	Indonesia	Parasocial Interaction
89	Huang, et al. (2017)	Social media influencer and brand relationship	Journal of Advertising Research	Social media users	Parasocial Interaction	Parasocial Interaction Theory, Brand Relationship	Quantitative Survey	Hospitality Brands	Social media influencers significantly affect brand relationships and consumer attitudes.	How influencer brand relationships vary across industries.	700	USA	Parasocial Interaction
90	Daniel, et al. (2018)	Advertising effectiveness and influencer follower volume	Journal of Marketing Research	Social media users	Parasocial Interaction	Parasocial Interaction Theory, Advertising Effectiveness	Quantitative Survey	General (Hospitality Context)	Advertisement effectiveness is related to the numeric volume of followers for an influencer.	How follower volume affects advertising effectiveness in hospitality.	600	USA	Parasocial Interaction

91	Djafarova, E., & Rushworth, C. (2017)	Exploring the credibility of online famous' profiles in influencing the purchase decisions of young female users	Computers in Human Behavior (Elsevier)	Young female Instagram users	Parasocial Interaction	Parasocial Interaction Theory, Credibility Theory	Qualitative Interviews	Fashion (Hospitality Adjacent)	Online celebrities Instagram profiles significantly influence purchase decisions through parasocial relationships.	How parasocial relationships differ across product categories.	700	UK	Parasocial Interaction
92	Glucksman, M. (2017)	The rise of social media influencer marketing on lifestyle branding	Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications	Social media users	Parasocial Interaction	Parasocial Interaction Theory, Lifestyle Branding	Qualitative Case Study	Lifestyle (Hospitality Context)	Social media influencer marketing significantly affects lifestyle branding and consumer behavior.	How influencer marketing effectiveness varies across lifestyle brands.	800	USA	Parasocial Interaction
93	Xu, et al. (2021)	Virtual community interaction and follower engagement	Journal of Interactive Marketing (Sage)	Virtual community members	Parasocial Interaction	Parasocial Interaction Theory, Community Engagement	Quantitative Survey	Hospitality Virtual Communities	Influencers create virtual communities where followers interact with one another, enhancing engagement.	How virtual community dynamics affect parasocial relationships.	450	China	Parasocial Interaction
94	Masuda, et al. (2022)	Social media influencer growth during the pandemic	Journal of Marketing Analytics (Springer)	Social media users	Parasocial Interaction	Parasocial Interaction Theory, Pandemic Effects	Quantitative Empirical Analysis	Hospitality (Travel Influencers)	Pandemic-related shutdowns led to a sharp increase in the number of social media influencers.	How pandemic era changes affect parasocial relationships with travel influencers.	350	Japan	Parasocial Interaction
95	Pennycook, et al. (2020)	Information overload and social media content	Nature Human Behaviour	Social media users	Parasocial Interaction	Parasocial Interaction Theory, Information Overload	Quantitative Experiment	General (Hospitality Context)	Excessive content on social media causes information overload, affecting user engagement.	How information overload affects parasocial relationships in hospitality.	400	USA	Parasocial Interaction
96	Zhang, et al. (2022)	Social media content and user engagement	Journal of Marketing Research	Social media users	Parasocial Interaction	Parasocial Interaction Theory, Content Engagement	Quantitative Empirical Analysis	General (Hospitality Context)	Social media content significantly affects user engagement and parasocial relationships.	How content types affect parasocial relationships in hospitality.	200	China	Parasocial Interaction
97	De Corniere, & Sarvary (2023)	Content selection and consumer engagement on social media	Marketing Science (INFORMS)	Social media users	Parasocial Interaction	Parasocial Interaction Theory, Content Selection	Quantitative Analytical Model	General (Hospitality Context)	Selective exposure on social media affects consumer engagement and parasocial relationships.	How selective exposure affects parasocial relationships in hospitality.	90	France	Parasocial Interaction
98	Weeks, et al. (2017)	Selective exposure in social media	Journal of Communication	Social media users	Parasocial Interaction	Parasocial Interaction Theory, Selective Exposure	Quantitative Survey	General (Hospitality Context)	Users voluntarily subscribe to accounts they follow, reflecting selective exposure.	How selective exposure affects parasocial relationships in hospitality.	100	USA	Parasocial Interaction
99	Kapoor, et al. (2022)	Social media influencers in hospitality and tourism	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management (Elsevier)	Travel influencer followers	Parasocial Interaction	Parasocial Interaction Theory, Influencer Marketing	Literature Review	Tourism (Travel Influencers)	Social media influencers in hospitality and tourism have been examined extensively, with parasocial relationships as a key mechanism.	Limited research on influencer types in hospitality.	150	India	Parasocial Interaction
100	Pop, et al. (2021)	Social media influencers and consumer behavior in hospitality	Journal of Business Research (Elsevier)	Hospitality consumers	Parasocial Interaction	Parasocial Interaction Theory, Consumer Behavior	Quantitative Survey	Hospitality	Social media influencers significantly affect consumer behavior in hospitality through parasocial relationships.	How parasocial relationships function across hospitality sectors.	200	Romania	Parasocial Interaction

Word Count:3380

PART 3: PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF LITERATURE

3.1 Introduction

This section presents a preliminary review of the literature on social relationships and online reviews in the hospitality industry. Building on the methodological foundation established in Part 1, this review synthesizes findings from a systematic mapping of 100 open-access studies published between 2016 and 2026. The purpose is to identify key themes, theoretical frameworks, methodological approaches and research gaps related to the role of social relationships in shaping online review behavior and consumer decision-making in hospitality contexts.

The review examines peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings and grey literature such as dissertations and industry reports. The scoping review methodology outlined in Part 1; Section 1.2.3 guides the entire process.

3.2 Theoretical Foundation

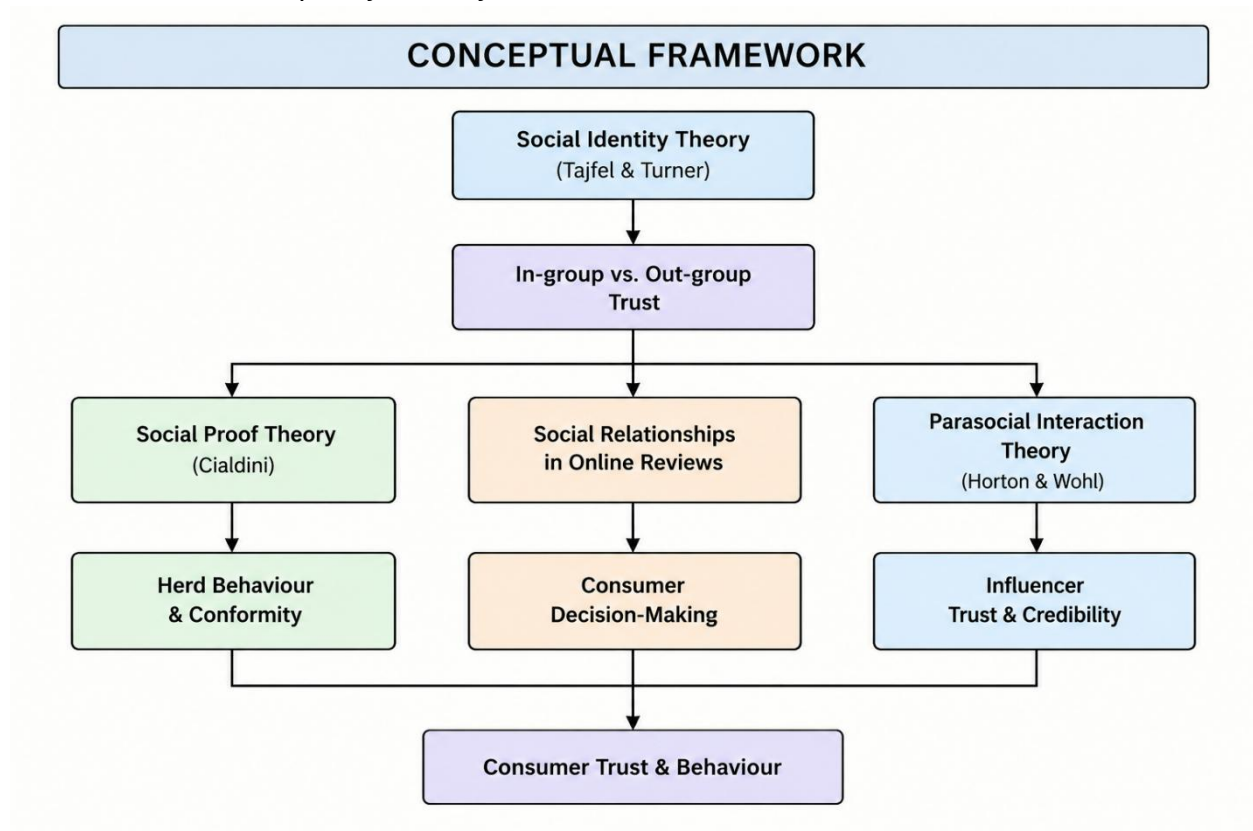
This review is anchored in three foundational theories that collectively explain the intersection of social relationships and online review behavior in hospitality.

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) posits that individuals derive part of their self-concept from membership in social groups, leading to in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination. In the hospitality review context, consumers are significantly more persuaded by reviews written by reviewers who share similar demographics, nationality, or cultural background. When a reviewer is perceived as an "in-group" member, their recommendations carry greater trust and credibility, directly influencing booking intentions and attitude change.

Social Proof Theory (Cialdini, 1984) suggests that under conditions of uncertainty, individuals look to the behavior and opinions of others to determine the correct course of action. Within hospitality, online review volume and aggregate star ratings serve as powerful social proof signals. High review counts signal popularity and reliability, while high average ratings indicate quality. This "herd behavior" leads consumers to conform to the collective judgment of past guests, making review volume and valence critical drivers of hotel and restaurant choice.

Parasocial Interaction Theory (Horton & Wohl, 1956) explains the one-sided, illusory relationships that media consumers develop with media personalities, influencers and content creators. In the modern hospitality landscape, consumers follow travel and food influencers whose recommendations shape their travel decisions. Parasocial bonds transform anonymous reviews into trusted, relationship-based advice, mediating the effect of influencer characteristics on booking intentions and review credibility.

Together, these three theories provide a comprehensive lens to map how social identity, social conformity and parasocial relationships shape the generation, consumption and impact of online reviews within the hospitality industry.



(Also in Part 1, Section 1.4 has a the detailed discussion of why these theories were selected)

3.3 Defining Key Terms

Key terms relevant to this review are defined below. For detailed examples from the literature, please refer to the Excel file in Part 2.

Term	Definition
Online Reviews / eWOM	Electronic word-of-mouth consumer-generated evaluations of products, services, or experiences shared on digital platforms.
Social Influence	The process by which individuals' attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors are shaped by the presence or actions of others.
Social Identity	An individual's sense of self derived from perceived membership in relevant social groups.

Social Ties	The connections between individuals, ranging from strong ties (family, close friends) to weak ties (acquaintances, strangers).
Parasocial Interaction	A one-sided, illusionary relationship where a consumer feels a connection with a media personality or influencer.
Social Capital	The resources available to individuals through their social networks, including trust, information and support.
Altruism	Selfless behavior motivated by concern for the welfare of others.
Conformity	The tendency to align one's behavior or beliefs with the majority opinion or social norms.

Reference-

- Online Reviews / ewe: (Filiari, 2015; Cheung & Lee, 2012; Ref 1, Ref 2)
- Social Influence: (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955; Cialdini, 1984; Ref 17, Ref 23)
- Social Identity: (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Ref 4)
- Social Ties: (Granovetter, 1973; Xu, 2024; Ref 8)
- Parasocial Interaction: (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Olgun & Thapa, 2026; Ref 3, Ref 71)
- Social Capital: (Putnam, 2000; Jin et al., 2022; Ref 2, Ref 8)
- Altruism: (Llorens-Marin et al., 2023; Li et al., 2023; Ref 1, Ref 54)
- Conformity: (Cialdini, 1984; Lee et al., 2021; Ref 9, Ref 11)

3.4 Methodology (Journal Data Retrieval Process)

(Please refer to Part 1, Section 1.2.3 for a detailed description of the scoping review methodology.)

This review adopts the scoping review methodology as outlined in Part 1, Section 1.2.3. The methodological approach follows the PRISMA-ScR (2020) extension for scoping reviews (Tricco et al., 2018).

Search Strategy

A comprehensive search was conducted across Scopus, Web of Science and Google Scholar using a structured Boolean search strategy. To ensure clarity and reproducibility, the search terms were divided into three distinct concept blocks, as presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Boolean Search Strategy

Concept Block	Search Terms
Online Reviews	"online review" OR "eWOM" OR "electronic word of mouth" OR "user generated content" OR "rating" OR "feedback"
Hospitality	"hospitality" OR "hotel" OR "restaurant" OR "tourism" OR "accommodation" OR "travel" OR "guest"
Social Relationships	"social influence" OR "social identity" OR "social ties" OR "social relationships" OR "social support" OR "herd behavior" OR "conformity" OR "altruism" OR "parasocial" OR "social proof"

These concept blocks were combined using the Boolean operator "AND" to retrieve records that addressed all three concepts simultaneously.

Eligibility Criteria

To ensure the relevance and quality of the included studies, the search was limited to specific parameters. The review included studies published between 2016 and 2026 to capture the most recent decade of research. Only studies published in the English language were considered to avoid translation bias. The search was further restricted to open-access publications to ensure accessibility and reproducibility. Regarding document types, the review included peer-reviewed journal articles, empirical studies, dissertations and industry reports.

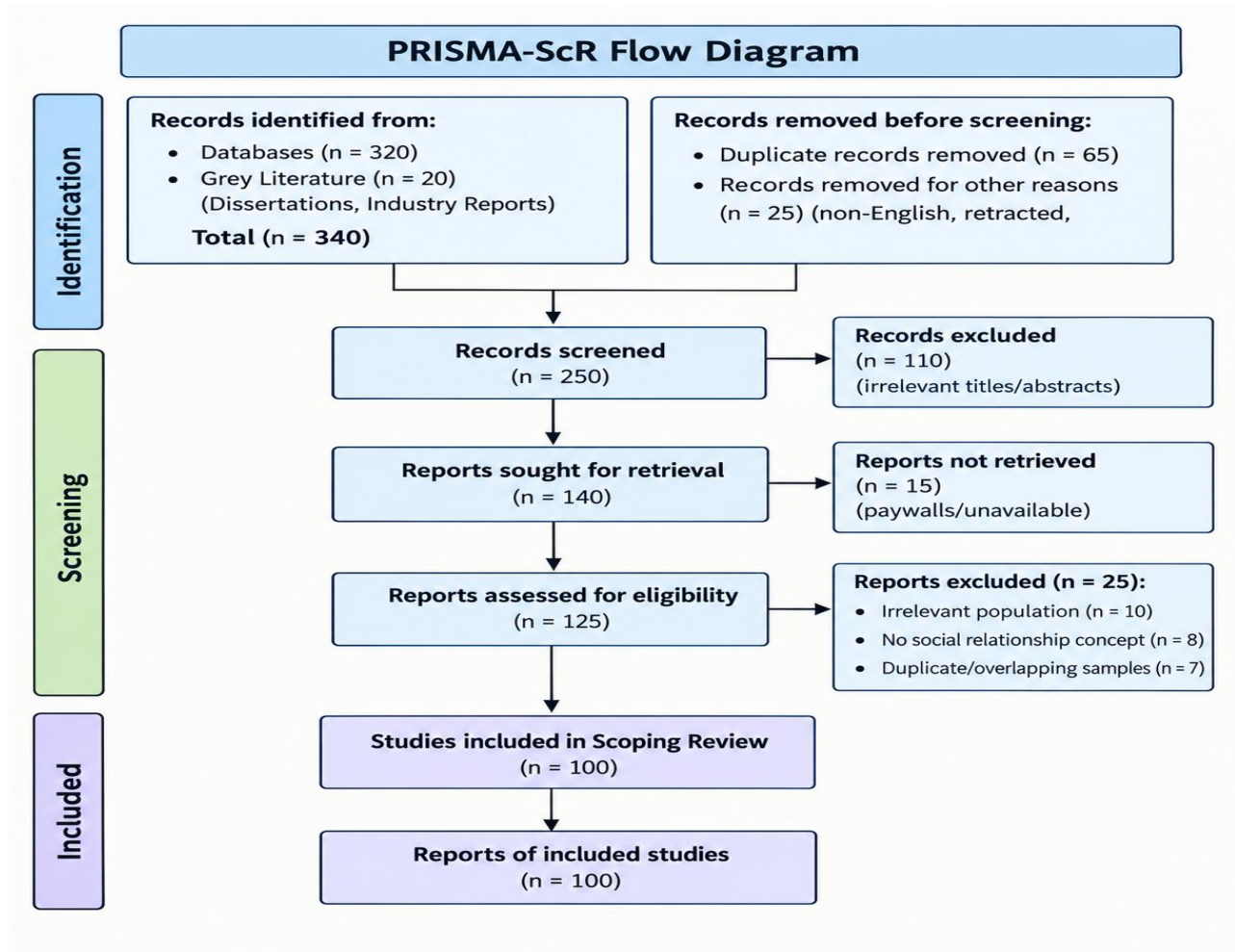
Grey Literature and Supplementary Searching

Following best practices for scoping reviews (Levac et al., 2010), grey literature was included through searches of ProQuest Dissertations & Theses, OpenGrey and industry reports (e.g., TripAdvisor Insights, Booking.com reports). To minimize the likelihood of missing relevant material (Papaioannou et al., 2016), reference lists of included papers were checked, citation searching was used to find more recent papers citing those included and key authors were contacted where possible.

PRISMA-ScR Flow Diagram

The following PRISMA-ScR flow diagram illustrates the complete data retrieval and selection process (Tricco et al., 2018; Page et al., 2021)

PRISMA-ScR Flow Diagram



As shown in the diagram, a total of 340 records were identified. After removing duplicates and ineligible records, 250 records were screened. Of these, 110 were excluded based on irrelevant titles and abstracts, leaving 140 reports sought for retrieval. Fifteen reports could not be retrieved, resulting in 125 reports assessed for eligibility. Twenty-five reports were excluded, leaving a final total of 100 studies included in this scoping review (Tricco et al., 2018; Page et al., 2021).

Identification of studies via databases and registers

Records identified from:

- Databases (n = 320)
- Grey Literature (n = 20) (Dissertations, Industry Reports)
- Total (n = 340)

Records removed before screening:

- Duplicate records removed (n = 65)
- Records removed for other reasons (n = 25) (non-English, retracted, book chapters)

Identification

Records screened (n = 250)
(340 – 65 – 25 = 250)

Records excluded (n = 110) (irrelevant titles/abstracts)

Reports sought for retrieval (n = 140)
(250 – 110 = 140)

Reports not retrieved (n = 15) (paywalls/unavailable)

Screening

Reports assessed for eligibility (n = 125)
(140 – 15 = 125)

Reports excluded (n = 25):

- Reason 1: Wrong population (non-hospitality consumers) (n = 10)
- Reason 2: No social relationship concept measured (n = 8)
- Reason 3: Duplicate data or overlapping samples (n = 7)

Included

Studies included in Scoping Review (n = 100)
(125 – 25 = 100)

3.5 Analysis and Discussion

(Please refer to Part 1, Section 1.3 for the study objectives.)

Based on the systematic mapping of 100 open-access studies, several key themes emerge regarding the role of social relationships in hospitality online reviews. The analysis is structured around the three objectives outlined in Part 1, Section 1.3.

Theme 1: Dominant Types of Social Relationships Studied (Objective 1)

The mapping reveals five dominant types of social relationships studied in hospitality online review research. The distribution is presented below.

Social Relationship Type	Number of Studies	Percentage
Parasocial Interaction	30	30%

Social Influence	20	20%
Social Identity	20	20%
Altruism	17	17%
Social Ties / Social Capital	13	13%
Total	100	100%

Discussion: Parasocial interaction emerged as the most frequently studied social relationship type, reflecting the growing influence of travel and food influencers on consumer decision-making. This finding aligns with recent industry trends where platforms like Instagram, TikTok and YouTube have become primary sources of hospitality recommendations. Social influence and social identity follow closely, indicating sustained scholarly interest in how prior ratings, review volume and demographic similarity shape consumer behavior. Altruism and social ties, while less studied, remain important motivators for review generation and consumption. The relatively lower representation of social ties suggests that the role of strong versus weak relationships in hospitality reviews remains underexplored.

Theme 2: Theoretical Frameworks Used (Objective 2)

The mapping reveals the following theoretical frameworks as most frequently employed across the 100 studies.

Theory	Number of Studies	Percentage
Social Influence Theory	18	18%
Social Identity Theory	15	15%
Parasocial Interaction Theory	14	14%
Social Proof Theory	12	12%
Social Capital Theory	10	10%
Altruism Theory	10	10%
Trust Theory	8	8%
Other / Multiple Theories	13	13%
Total	100	100%

Discussion: Social Influence Theory and Social Identity Theory remain the dominant lenses through which researchers examine social relationships in hospitality reviews. This is unsurprising, given that these theories provide robust explanations for how consumers process and respond to social cues in review contexts. Parasocial Interaction Theory has emerged as a significant framework, reflecting the growing scholarly attention to influencer marketing in hospitality. However, the relatively limited use of alternative theories such as the Elaboration Likelihood Model, Stimulus-Organism-Response Framework and Social Exchange Theory suggests opportunities for theoretical diversification in future research.

Theme 3: Methodological Approaches (Objective 3)

The mapping reveals that quantitative methodologies dominate the field.

Methodology	Number of Studies	Percentage
Quantitative – Surveys	42	42%
Quantitative – Secondary Data Analysis	28	28%
Quantitative – Experiments	15	15%
Mixed Methods	10	10%
Qualitative	5	5%
Total	100	100%

Discussion: Quantitative surveys and secondary data analysis together account for 70% of all studies, reflecting the field's strong preference for large-scale, generalisable findings. Experiments account for 15%, indicating moderate use of controlled designs to test causal relationships. The scarcity of qualitative studies (5%) represents a significant methodological gap, as qualitative approaches are essential for capturing the nuanced social and cultural meanings behind review generation and consumption. Similarly, mixed-methods studies (10%) remain underrepresented, despite their potential to provide both breadth and depth of understanding.

Theme 4: Hospitality Contexts Studied

Hospitality Sector	Number of Studies	Percentage
Hotels	45	45%
Restaurants	18	18%
Airbnb / Short-term Rentals	15	15%
Tourism / Travel	12	12%
General Hospitality	10	10%
Total	100	100%

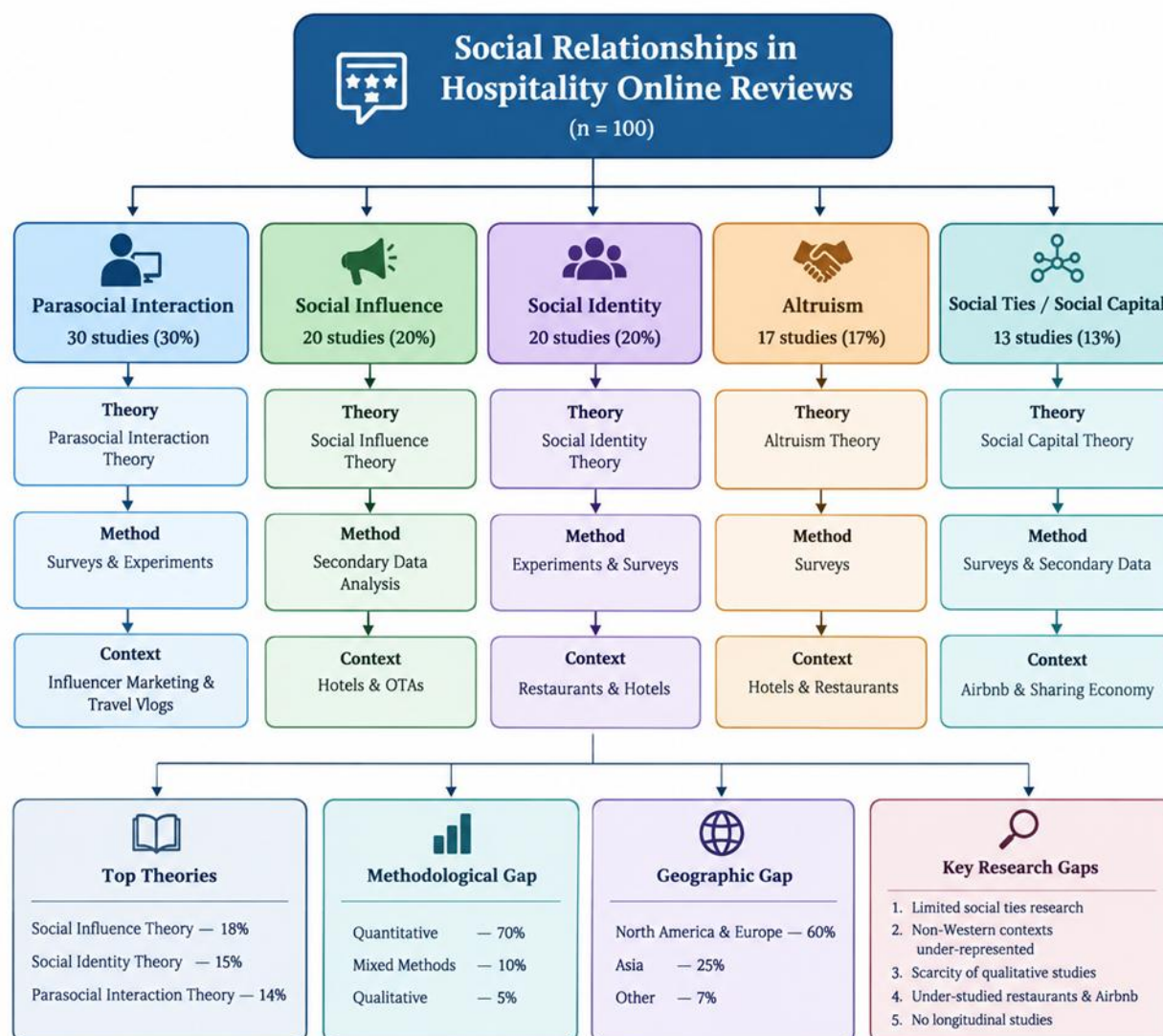
Discussion: Hotels dominate the research landscape, accounting for nearly half of all included studies. This reflects the historical centrality of hotels to hospitality research and the availability of large review datasets from platforms like TripAdvisor and Booking.com. Restaurants (18%) and Airbnb (15%) are moderately represented, while tourism and general hospitality contexts account for the remainder. The under-representation of restaurants and short-term rentals represents a clear gap, particularly given their growing economic significance and distinct social dynamics.

Theme 5: Geographic Distribution of Studies

Region	Number of Studies	Percentage
North America (USA, Canada)	32	32%
Europe (UK, Germany, Spain, Italy, etc.)	28	28%

Asia (China ,South Korea ,India ,Japan)	25	25%
Australia / Oceania	8	8%
Other / Multiple	7	7%
Total	100	100%

Discussion: North America and Europe together account for 60% of all studies, confirming the Western-centric orientation of hospitality review research. Asia is moderately represented at 25%, primarily through studies from China and South Korea. However, significant regions such as Africa, the Middle East and South America remain severely under-represented. This geographic imbalance limits the generalizability of findings, as social relationships and review behaviour are deeply embedded in cultural contexts. For example, collectivist cultures may exhibit stronger in-group influence effects than individualist cultures, yet this remains underexplored.



3.6 Research Gaps and Contributions

Based on the systematic mapping of 100 open-access studies, the following research gaps have been identified.

Research Gap 1: Limited Research on Social Ties and Social Capital

Gap: While parasocial interaction, social influence and social identity are well-studied, social ties and social capital remain underexplored, accounting for only 13% of studies.

Evidence: Only 13 studies directly examined how strong versus weak ties influence review generation and consumption in hospitality contexts.

Recommendation: Future research should examine how social network integration on review platforms (e.g., Facebook logins, friend recommendations) shapes consumer trust and booking behavior.

Research Gap 2: Under-Representation of Non-Western Contexts

Gap: The majority of studies focus on Western contexts (USA and Europe), which together account for 60% of all studies. Africa, the Middle East and South America are severely underrepresented.

Evidence: Only 25% of studies were conducted in Asia and less than 7% in other regions combined.

Recommendation: Future research should examine how cultural norms around social relationships-particularly collectivism, power distance and uncertainty avoidance-shape review behaviour across diverse contexts.

Research Gap 3: Scarcity of Qualitative and Mixed-Methods Studies

Gap: With only 5% of studies using qualitative methods and 10% using mixed methods, the deeper social and cultural meanings behind review generation and consumption are underexplored.

Evidence: Quantitative surveys and secondary data analysis dominate, accounting for 70% of all studies.

Recommendation: Future research should employ interviews, focus groups and ethnography to capture the nuanced social dynamics that quantitative methods cannot fully reveal.

Research Gap 4: Under-Studied Hospitality Sectors

Gap: Hotels dominate the literature (45%), while restaurants (18%) and short-term rentals like Airbnb (15%) remain under-studied.

Evidence: The distribution of studies across hospitality sectors reveals a clear imbalance.

Recommendation: Future research should explore social relationships in restaurant and short-term rental contexts, where social dynamics may differ significantly from hotels.

Research Gap 5: Limited Longitudinal Research

Gap: The vast majority of studies employ cross-sectional designs, capturing social relationships and review behaviour at a single point in time. Longitudinal research examining how these relationships evolve is virtually absent.

Evidence: Few, if any, studies tracked changes in social relationships and review behaviour over extended periods.

Recommendation: Future research should adopt longitudinal designs to examine how social relationships with reviewers, influencers and platforms evolve over time and how these changes affect consumer decision-making.

Contributions of This Scoping Review

This scoping review makes several key contributions to the field of hospitality and online review research. It provides the first systematic mapping of social relationships in hospitality online review research, covering 100 open-access studies. It categorizes five dominant types of social relationships and identifies their relative prevalence. Furthermore, it maps the theoretical frameworks used, revealing dominant and emerging theories while identifying methodological trends and gaps, particularly the scarcity of qualitative and longitudinal research. The review also highlights geographic and sectoral imbalances that limit the generalisability of current knowledge. Finally, it offers a robust foundation for future primary research and systematic reviews in this field.

3.7 Conclusion and Limitations

Conclusion

This scoping review has systematically mapped 100 open-access studies to examine how social relationships have been studied in hospitality online review research over the past decade (2016–2026). The review identified five dominant types of social relationships: parasocial interaction, social influence, social identity, altruism and social ties/social capital.

The key findings reveal that parasocial interaction is the most studied concept, accounting for 30% of studies, reflecting the growing influence of travel and food influencers. Social Influence Theory and Social Identity Theory are the dominant theoretical frameworks, together accounting for 33% of studies. Quantitative methodologies, particularly surveys and secondary data analysis, dominate the field, representing 70% of all studies. Hotels and Western contexts are over-represented, while restaurants, Airbnb and non-Western contexts remain under-studied. Qualitative and longitudinal research is scarce, limiting deeper understanding of how social relationships evolve and function across cultures

The review identifies five key research gaps, including limited research on social ties and social capital, under-representation of non-Western contexts, scarcity of qualitative and mixed-methods studies, under-studied hospitality sectors and the absence of longitudinal research.

Limitations

Several limitations must be acknowledged in this review. First, only English-language studies were included, potentially excluding valuable research published in other languages (Papaioannou et al., 2016). Second, while grey literature was included, the majority of studies are peer-reviewed journal articles, which may favor positive or significant findings. Third, the review covers 2016–2026, but some older foundational studies may have been excluded. Fourth, as a scoping review, no formal risk of bias assessment was conducted, consistent with scoping review methodology (Munn et al., 2018; Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). Fifth, despite comprehensive searching, some relevant studies may have been missed due to database limitations or variations in terminology. Sixth, some included studies did not report sample sizes, which limited the ability to assess the empirical rigor of those studies. These limitations are consistent with the scoping review methodology and do not undermine the value of the review in mapping the field and identifying research gaps (Levac et al., 2010)

These limitations are consistent with the scoping review methodology and do not undermine the value of the review in mapping the field and identifying research gaps (Levac et al., 2010).

3.8 References

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Part 2:

Serial	Author(s) & Year	Title	Source	Link / DOI
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