

Redefining Luxury: Analyzing Hotel Reviews of Luxury and Masstige



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Binshad
Sujoy Bhattacharya
Sangeeta Sahney
IIT Kharagpur
(binshad@kgpian.iitkgp.ac.in)
(sujoy.research@gmail.com)
(sahney@vgsom.iitkgp.ac.in)

This study examines the distinctions between luxury and masstige hotels through a comparative analysis of online reviews. Masstige, a term that blends 'mass' and 'prestige' refers to products and services that offer premium quality at accessible prices catering to a broader audience seeking a taste of luxury with affordable cost. This research analyzes online reviews from TripAdvisor on luxury and masstige hotels in China, India, and Malaysia, focusing on amenities, services, and overall guest experiences. By employing the Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) topic modelling and sentiment analysis, the study identifies key themes and attributes that differentiate luxury and masstige hotels.

Keywords: Masstige, Luxury, Hotel, Online Reviews, Qualitative

1. Introduction

The concept of luxury has evolved significantly, moving beyond its traditional association with rare, expensive, and exclusive products for the elite (Wang, 2022). Today, luxury is also defined by exceptional quality, craftsmanship, and personalized experiences, rather than just price or rarity (Wang et al. 2024). This also extends to Masstige, which combines aspirational appeal with affordability, catering to a wider consumer base, particularly the growing middle class in emerging economies (Mansoor et al. 2024; Unnithan et al., 2024). The expansion of middle-class incomes, rising aspirational consumption, and the growth of emerging economies have led to an increasing demand for luxury that is not solely reserved for the ultra-wealthy (Atwal & Bryson, 2017; Rosendo-Rios & Shukla, 2023). The global luxury market is experiencing substantial growth, with the luxury hotel market valued at USD 94.62 billion in 2022, and projected to reach USD 156.76 billion by 2030, growing at a CAGR of 6.6% (Fortune Business Insights, 2023).

Masstige refers to services that offer luxury-like qualities (e.g., personalized experiences, premium service, or exclusivity) at a more affordable price, making high-end experiences accessible to a broader audience. This trend reflects the growing desire of middle-class consumers to access prestige without the traditional price tag, further blurring the lines between luxury and mass-market services. The hospitality industry has witnessed a significant shift in consumer expectations, driven by the growing middle class, and increasing demand for both premium and more affordable services (Munjal & Bhushan, 2017; Birdie, 2017). It has become increasingly important for hotel brands to comprehend the distinctions between luxury and masstige hotels in order to appeal to a variety of market segments, as consumers are increasingly seeking a combination of high-quality service and value.

Online reviews offer a valuable source of data for comprehending consumer preferences, sentiments, and the key factors that influence satisfaction, providing rich, real-time insights into visitor experiences (Xiang et al. 2015; Nilashi et al. 2022; Miguéis & Nóvoa, 2017). This study seeks to address the gap in understanding consumer perceptions of luxury and masstige hotels by employing the LDA topic modelling and sentiment analysis and to analyse online reviews. This study aims to explore these key distinctions through the following research questions:

1. What are the major themes in online reviews of luxury and masstige hotels ?
2. How do customers express their sentiments about their experience in luxury and masstige hotels ?
3. How do the attributes of luxury and masstige hotels differ in online reviews ?

2. Methodology

Based on the research objectives, a qualitative study was developed, with the collection of secondary data through online reviews to evaluate the satisfaction and dissatisfaction of customers with the services offered by these hotels. A comprehensive dataset comprising 13,300 reviews was obtained from TripAdvisor, a prominent platform for user-generated hotel reviews (Taecharunroj & Mathayomchan, 2019). Python was utilized as the primary tool for web scraping to expedite the accumulation of large-scale data.

The study focused on two types of hotels: Luxury and Masstige, with a total of six hotels selected—one Luxury and one Masstige hotel from each of three major cities: Mumbai (India), Shanghai (China), and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia). For the Luxury category, five-star hotels from renowned brands were chosen, as these hotels are positioned as premium accommodations offering high-end services and amenities. In contrast, for the Masstige category, hotels positioned below five-star but still marketed as premium options were selected.

To validate the categorization of hotels as either Luxury or Masstige, a keyword analysis was conducted, extracting relevant terms from the reviews, and cross-checking them with the hotel descriptions provided by the hotels themselves (Tsytarau & Palpanas, 2012). The results revealed a clear distinction between the two categories: Luxury Hotels showed a higher frequency of luxury-related keywords in their reviews compared to Masstige Hotels, while all the Masstige Hotels selected in this study had a higher frequency of masstige-related keywords than luxury terms, further reinforcing their positioning within the Masstige category. Tables 1 and 2, presented later in the paper, provide a breakdown of the keyword frequencies for both hotel categories across the selected cities, highlighting the contrasting keyword trends between the two types of hotels.

Luxury keyword frequency:

$$P_L = \frac{\text{Luxury Word Count}}{\text{Total Reviews}} \times 100$$

Table 1 Luxury Hotels Keyword Review Data

Luxury Hotels	Total Reviews	Luxury Keyword Count	Luxury %	Masstige Keyword Count	Masstige %
China	590	156	26.44%	5	0.85%
India	5050	870	17.23%	78	1.54%
Malaysia	900	105	11.67%	9	1.00%

Masstige keyword frequency

$$P_M = \frac{\text{Masstige Word Count}}{\text{Total Reviews}} \times 100$$

Table 2 Masstige Hotels Keyword Review Data

Masstige Hotels	Total Reviews	Luxury Keyword Count	Luxury %	Masstige Keyword Count	Masstige %
China	1300	95	7.31%	110	8.46%
India	2700	228	8.44%	276	10.22%
Malaysia	2760	175	6.34%	461	16.7%

The study employed the LDA topic modelling to identify and analyze the major themes present in the customer reviews for both the Luxury and Masstige hotels. LDA is a powerful unsupervised machine learning technique that enables the identification of hidden topics or themes within large collections of text data (Blei et al. 2003). By applying LDA separately to the reviews of Luxury and Masstige hotels, the study was able to uncover the specific themes and aspects of hotel services that customers frequently mentioned and discussed, providing insights into what distinguishes customer experiences in these two categories. In addition to topic modelling, sentiment analysis was performed using the VADER tool in Python, designed to analyze textual data and classify the sentiment expressed as positive, negative, or neutral (Hutto & Gilbert, 2014). VADER was particularly well-suited for this study, as it is optimized for analysing short, informal texts such as online reviews.

The LDA process begins with preprocessing, which includes tokenization, removing stop words, and lemmatization (Meddeb & Romdhane, 2022). Then, LDA assumes that each document is a mixture of topics, where each topic is a mixture of words. The model involves two main distributions: a document-topic distribution θ_d and a topic-word distribution ϕ_k . The formula for LDA is based on the likelihood of the observed words given the topics

$$P(w, z | \alpha, \beta) = \prod_{d=1}^D \prod_{n=1}^{N_d} P(w_{d,n} | z_{d,n}, \beta) P(z_{d,n} | \alpha)$$

Where $w_{d,n}$ is the n th word in document d , $z_{d,n}$ denotes the topic assignment for that word, and α and β are hyperparameters for the document-topic and topic-word distributions, respectively.

Sentiment analysis involves tokenizing the text and assigning sentiment scores to words using a predefined lexicon. The scores are adjusted based on punctuation, negations, and intensifiers. The overall sentiment score for a text is calculated as

$$S = \sum_{i=1}^n \text{score}(w_i) + \text{adjustments}$$

where (w_i) represents the (i) - th word in the text.

Finally, the text is classified as positive, negative, or neutral based on the sentiment score.



Figure 2 Keywords Identified from Masstige Hotels

3.2 Sentiment Analysis

The sentiment analysis of luxury hotel reviews revealed several key positive and negative terms that offer insight into guest experiences. Positive words such as "good", "beautiful", and "great", suggest that guests generally appreciate the high quality of services and the overall atmosphere of the hotel. Terms like "special", "staff", "friendly", and "helpful" highlight that guests value attentive and personalized service, often associating a positive experience with the friendliness and professionalism of the hotel staff. "Comfortable" and "service" further reinforce the importance of guest comfort and high-quality service in shaping a positive experience, while "thank" indicates gratitude, suggesting that guests feel compelled to express their appreciation for the services provided.

On the other hand, the negative terms identified, such as "service", "staff", and "disappointed", point to dissatisfaction with certain aspects of the hotel experience. For example, negative mentions of "service" could suggest complaints about slow or unhelpful service, while "staff" may indicate issues with staff behaviour or professionalism. Words like "response", "pay", and "help" could suggest frustration with customer service, particularly in terms of delays in response or problems related to payments and assistance. Other negative keywords, such as "trouble", "forget", and "problem", highlight areas where guests faced issues during their stay, such as forgotten requests or unresolved problems, which may have affected their overall satisfaction. These terms provide valuable insight into both the strengths and areas that need attention within luxury hotels.

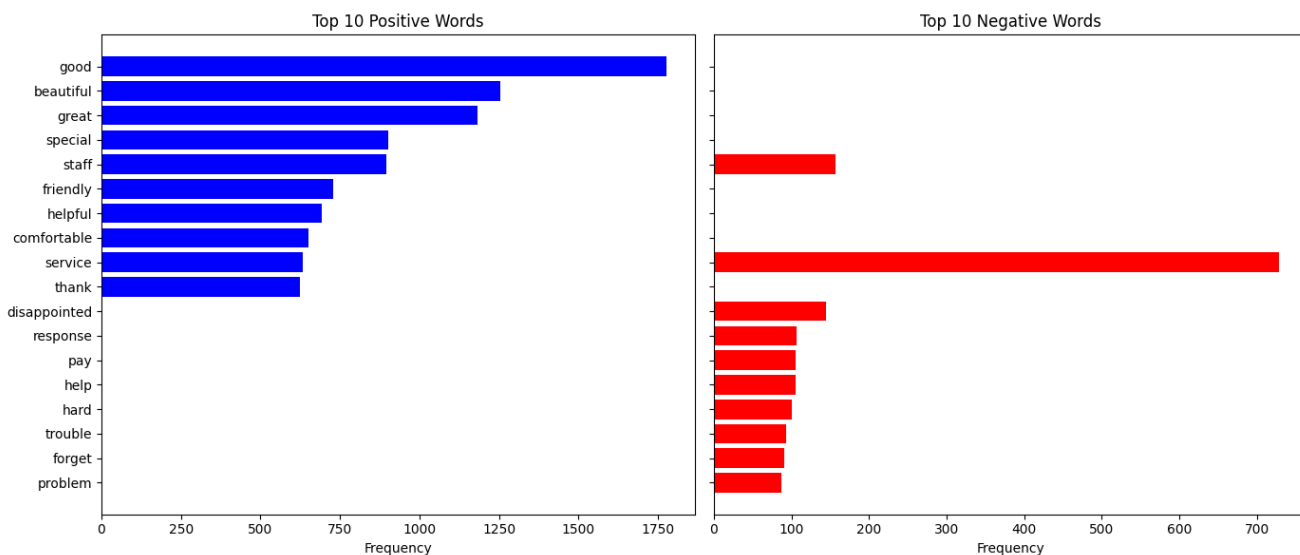


Figure 4 Top Positive and Negative Words Derived from Luxury Hotel Reviews

The sentiment analysis of customer reviews for masstige hotels reveals key insights into customer perceptions and areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Positive sentiments are predominantly associated with terms such as "good," "facilities," "location," "clean," and "friendly." These words indicate that customers value the overall quality, convenience, and cleanliness of the hotels, along with positive interactions with the staff. Terms like "value," "comfortable," and "recommend" further suggest that many guests feel their experience is worthwhile and are likely to endorse these hotels to others. On the other hand, the analysis highlights significant areas of concern. The term "disappointed" is the most frequently mentioned negative word by a substantial margin, reflecting a common feeling of unmet expectations. Other negative terms, including "bad," "service," "problem," and "delay," suggest specific dissatisfaction with customer service, communication, and operational inefficiencies.

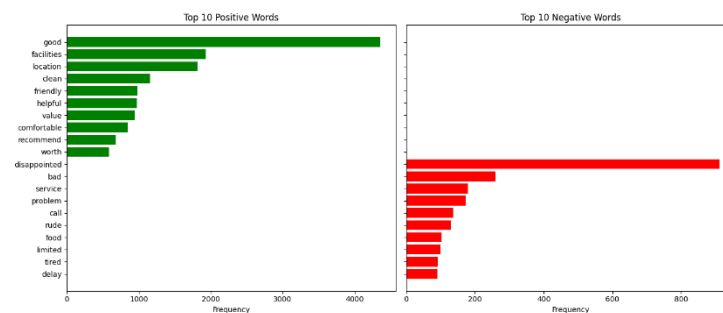


Figure 5 Top Positive and Negative Words Derived from Luxury Hotel Reviews

The comparison of sentiment analyses for luxury and masstige hotels reveals both shared strengths and distinct challenges in meeting customer expectations. For both types of hotels, positive sentiments are commonly associated with quality, comfort, and staff interactions. Words like "good," "comfortable," and "friendly" highlight guests' appreciation for high standards and welcoming environments, emphasizing the importance of service quality in shaping positive experiences. However, notable differences emerge in areas of dissatisfaction. While guests of both luxury and masstige hotels expressed frustration with "service" and "staff," indicating room for improvement in customer service and responsiveness, the frequency and nature of complaints differ. Luxury hotel guests frequently mention issues with "response" and "help," implying that delays or insufficient assistance with special requests are significant pain points. In contrast, masstige hotel reviews reveal more frequent dissatisfaction related to operational inefficiencies, such as delays and communication issues, as reflected by words like "problem" and "delay." The prevalent mention of "disappointed" among masstige hotel guests suggests a gap between expectations and actual experiences, highlighting the need for consistent quality management. Overall, while both luxury and masstige hotels excel in certain service aspects, improvements in service responsiveness, communication, and operational consistency could enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty across both categories.

4. Findings and Discussion

The analysis of online reviews for both luxury and masstige hotels reveals distinct differences in the attributes that influence guest satisfaction. The findings indicate that while both hotel categories share some commonalities, such as the importance of service quality and comfort, there are notable differences in the focus of their offerings and the expectations of their guests.

4.1 Attributes of Luxury Hotels

Luxury hotels are primarily defined by their exclusive services, high-end amenities, and premium experiences. In reviews of luxury hotels, guests consistently highlight the importance of personalized service, with terms like "helpful", "friendly", and "attentive" frequently appearing. These hotels are seen as places where guest needs are met with meticulous attention, often going above and beyond to provide a unique and tailored experience. Reviews also emphasize the luxurious gourmet dining, wellness options such as spas, and the premium quality of accommodations. Ambiance is another key factor, with guests often commenting on the classy and artistic designs of the hotels. Overall, the sentiment in luxury hotel reviews revolves around a high level of service, exclusive experiences, and comfort that justifies the premium price.

4.2 Attributes of Masstige Hotels

In contrast, masstige hotels cater to a broader audience by offering a balance between luxury and affordability. The reviews of masstige hotels consistently highlight comfort, spaciousness, and value for money. Keywords like "comfortable", "convenient", and "value for money" are indicative of guests' appreciation for practical, cost-effective accommodations that do not compromise on comfort. While the service quality is still important, the emphasis is on efficiency and helpful staff, rather than the personalized, exclusive service found in luxury hotels. Reviews also reflect the importance of location, with masstige hotels being praised for their proximity to attractions and transportation, making them a convenient option for travellers. Aesthetic elements such as stylish and welcoming environments are highlighted, but the design is often seen as practical rather than opulent.

5. Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study support the masstige theory, which bridges the gap between premium and affordable luxury segments by offering quality experiences at a lower price (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). Additionally, the differing importance of location for luxury and masstige hotels, underscores the role of spatial consumption behaviour, where location impacts both convenience and perceptions of exclusivity. These insights contribute to the literature on utilising online reviews for actionable insights into customer experiences, offering a framework for future research in the hospitality industry.

6. Practical Implications

This study provides practical insights for hotel industry in both luxury and masstige segments. Guest satisfaction and loyalty can be improved by emphasizing personalized service and exclusive experiences in luxury hotels. Exceptional service and

investments in high-end amenities are essential. In order to satisfy guests' expectations while simultaneously maintaining affordability, masstige hotels must prioritize convenience, comfort, and value for money. Moreover, employing sentiment analysis and topic modelling to examine online reviews can yield significant insights for enhancing guest experience and fine-tuning hotel offerings in present (Yu et al. 2022).

7. Conclusion

This study offers significant insights into the characteristics of luxury and masstige hotels as shown by online reviews, emphasizing the primary distinctions in customer expectations and experiences between these two segments. Luxury hotels prioritize exclusive experiences, customized service, and high-end amenities, whereas masstige hotels highlight value for money, convenience, and comfortable, accessible experiences. The study enhances the field of tourism and hospitality research by establishing a basis for additional research into customer sentiment and experience within the hotel industry. Furthermore, subsequent research may integrate advanced machine learning models, including deep learning algorithms, to enhance the accuracy of sentiment classification and better capture detailed customer experiences (Mehraliyev et al. 2022). A further opportunity exists in broadening the analytical scope to encompass other social media channels, where informal and instantaneous visitor feedback can yield significant insights into customer experiences. Researchers may perform comparison assessments among distinct hotel categories across several geographical regions to distinguish region-specific service inadequacies and strengths (Luo et al. 2021).

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