

Digital Marketing Strategies in the Hotel Industry: A Bibliometric Review (1998–2025)

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Abstract

This study examines the intellectual structure and thematic evolution of digital marketing research in the hotel industry over the period 1998–2025. Using a bibliometric approach, 1,208 peer-reviewed articles indexed in the Scopus database were analysed to map key contributors, influential journals, dominant themes, and emerging research gaps. Citation analysis, co-citation analysis, bibliographic coupling, and keyword co-occurrence were conducted using VOS viewer to capture both the structural and conceptual development of the field. The findings highlight the most influential authors and journals shaping digital hospitality marketing and reveal five major thematic clusters: digital loyalty and website experience; social media and online booking experience; digital influence on hotel booking decisions; platform algorithms and market impact; and the role of visuals, responses, and online reviews. The analysis further indicates a clear shift in research focus from traditional branding and customer satisfaction models toward issues related to algorithmic trust, artificial intelligence-generated content, and cross-platform consumer engagement. By synthesising over two decades of fragmented literature across hospitality, marketing, and information systems, this study provides a comprehensive overview of the field and outlines a future research agenda that emphasises AI transparency, visual analytics, and trust formation in digital hotel platforms.

Keywords: digital marketing, hospitality industry, bibliometric review, online reviews, hotel booking.

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1. Introduction

The hospitality industry has undergone a digital transformation over the past two decades, fundamentally changing how hotels engage with consumers (Inversini & Masiero, 2014a; Xiang et al., 2017a). Digital marketing, comprising online reviews, social media engagement, search engine optimisation, influencer campaigns, and algorithm-driven listings, now plays a central role in influencing traveller decision-making and shaping brand perceptions (Bilgihan, 2016a; Ghose et al., 2012a). Within this landscape, online travel agencies (OTAs), user-generated content (UGC), and AI-assisted content personalization have become critical touchpoints across the hotel booking journey.

This proliferation of digital platforms has prompted a growing body of academic research examining constructs such as electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), platform trust, digital engagement, visual review elements, and algorithmic visibility (Ma et al., 2018a; Sparks et al., 2016). However, despite this surge in studies, the literature remains fragmented across domains such as hospitality, marketing, and information systems. Prior review papers such as (Ismagilova et al., 2020) on consumer trust in digital contexts and (Schuckert et al., 2015) Online hotel reviews have offered conceptual insights but lacked a systematic mapping of trends, themes, and intellectual foundations specific to digital marketing in hospitality.

In this context, a comprehensive bibliometric analysis is warranted to trace the evolution, scholarly influence, and thematic structure of research on digital marketing strategies in the hotel industry. This study analyses 1208 peer-reviewed articles published between 1998 and 2025, using citation-based and network-driven techniques (e.g., co-citation, bibliographic coupling, and keyword co-occurrence) to uncover dominant constructs, emerging topics, and methodological trends. By integrating this quantitative synthesis with thematic classification, the paper aims to consolidate prior knowledge and offer actionable insights for future research.

In doing so, this study aims to offer a comprehensive synthesis of the existing literature and is guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: Who are the most influential authors, institutions, countries, journals, and articles contributing to digital marketing research in the hotel industry?

RQ2: What are the key intellectual foundations based on co-citation patterns?

RQ3: What thematic clusters emerge from bibliographic coupling in the context of digital marketing and hospitality?

RQ4: What conceptual trends and evolving research themes are revealed through keyword co-occurrence analysis?

RQ5: What are the underexplored areas and future research opportunities in digital marketing within the hospitality sector?

To address these questions, the study pursues the following research objectives:

RO1: To identify the top contributing authors, journals, institutions, countries, and highly cited articles using citation analysis.

RO2: To explore the intellectual structure of the field through co-citation analysis of cited references.

RO3: To uncover major thematic clusters through bibliographic coupling of recent literature.

RO4: To examine conceptual trends and topic evolution using keyword co-occurrence mapping.

RO5: To propose future research directions based on observed gaps, emerging constructs, and technological developments.

This structured set of research questions and objectives provides the analytical foundation for mapping the scope, depth, and evolution of digital marketing strategies in the hotel industry. The following sections detail the methodology, analytical results, and insights drawn from this bibliometric investigation.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study adopts a bibliometric research design systematically examine the intellectual, thematic, and conceptual development of digital marketing research in the hospitality sector. Bibliometric analysis is increasingly employed in management and marketing disciplines to explore publication patterns, author influence, and knowledge structures (Donthu et al., 2021). The present study applies four primary science mapping techniques: citation analysis, co-citation analysis, bibliographic coupling, and keyword co-occurrence analysis to derive a comprehensive understanding of scholarly trends and emerging research areas. These techniques help identify intellectual foundations, evolving research communities, and conceptual clusters across time. (Zupic & Čater, 2015).

2.2 Data Source and Search Strategy

The bibliographic data used for this study was sourced from the Scopus database, which is considered a reputable and widely used indexing platform for peer-reviewed academic literature (Falagas et al., 2008). The search was conducted on July 17, 2025, using a carefully structured Boolean query applied to the TITLE-ABS-KEY fields to ensure precision and thematic relevance. The search terms encompassed two core domains: digital marketing (e.g., “online marketing,” “e-marketing,” “influencer marketing”) and hospitality (e.g., “hotel booking,” “lodging,” “Airbnb,” “online travel agency”). The query targeted titles, abstracts, and keywords to ensure the inclusion of studies with substantive thematic alignment. This search yielded an initial dataset of 2,437 documents published between 1998 and July 2025.

2.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure rigor and relevance, a systematic filtering process was undertaken based on specific inclusion and exclusion criteria (see Table 1). First, documents were restricted to the subject areas of Business, Management and Accounting, Social Sciences, Economics, and Arts and Humanities, resulting in the exclusion of 698 records. Only journal publications

that were peer-reviewed and published as full research articles or review papers were retained, eliminating 423 documents. English-language articles were prioritized to maintain linguistic consistency in content analysis, leading to the exclusion of 48 non-English records. Additional filtering excluded 7 documents not published in journals, 49 records not at the final publication stage, and 4 documents with missing author information. After these steps, a refined dataset of 1,208 documents was finalized for bibliometric mapping (Table 1).

2.4 Data Analysis Procedure

The final dataset was exported from Scopus in CSV format and analysed using VOS viewer (van Eck & Waltman, 2010), a specialized tool for constructing and visualising bibliometric networks. The data analysis followed four key techniques. First, a citation analysis was conducted to identify the most influential articles, authors, and journals based on the number of citations. Second, co-citation analysis explored the intellectual structure by examining how frequently two documents were cited together. Third, bibliographic coupling grouped documents based on shared references, offering insights into current thematic clusters and recent research streams. Lastly, keyword co-occurrence analysis was applied to explore conceptual patterns and emerging themes by examining frequently co-occurring keywords in titles and abstracts. The visual outputs from VOS viewer, such as network visualisations and cluster maps, enabled a nuanced interpretation of interconnections among themes, authors, and keywords, thereby enhancing the analytical depth of the study.

Table 1

Document Search and Inclusion Criteria

Search Criteria and Article Selection		
Filtering Criteria	Exclude	Include
Search Criteria	-	-
Search Date: July 15, 2025	-	-
Database: Scopus	-	-

Search Term: (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("digital marketing" OR "online marketing" OR "social media" OR "e-marketing" OR "internet marketing" OR "influencer marketing" OR "digital advertising" OR "online promotion" OR "digital strategies") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("hotel" OR "hotel industry" OR "hotels" OR "hotel booking" OR "hotel management" OR "lodging" OR "hospitality industry" OR "hospitality sector" OR "hospitality marketing" OR "resort" OR "resorts" OR "motel" OR "accommodation" OR "hospitality services" OR "luxury hotels" OR "budget hotels" OR "online travel agency" OR "OTA" OR "Airbnb" OR "property listing" OR "digital travel platforms"))	-	2437
Period of Publications: 1998–July 17, 2025	0	2437
Subject Area: Business, Management and Accounting, Social Sciences, Economics, Econometrics and Finance, Arts and Humanities	698	1739
Publication Type: Article, Review	423	1316
Article Selection	-	-
Language Screening: include documents published in English only	48	1268
Source Type: Journal	7	1261
Publication stage: Final	49	1212
Erroneous records screening: Include documents with valid author information only	4	1208

Source: Authors Compilation

3. Findings

3.1 Citation Analysis

3.1.1 Leading Authors, Institutions, and Countries: A Citation-Based Perspective

Understanding the landscape of scholarly influence is essential for mapping the intellectual structure of any research domain. In the context of digital marketing within the hospitality sector, citation-based performance analysis offers valuable insights into the individuals, institutions, and countries that have shaped and sustained academic inquiry in this field. By examining total citation counts, this study identifies the most prominent contributors whose work has significantly impacted key areas such as online consumer behavior, e-WOM, digital engagement, and technology adoption in hotel marketing. The following section presents the top-ranked authors, organizations, and countries, highlighting the breadth and depth of their contributions to the evolving discourse on digital hospitality marketing.

Top Authors

In terms of total citations, Zheng Xiang ranks as the most influential author in the domain of digital marketing and hospitality, with 2,288 citations across 8 publications. His work has significantly advanced scholarly understanding of online review platforms, digital content analytics, and travel decision-making in the hospitality sector. Following him is Rob Law, whose contributions have garnered 1,841 citations from 24 publications, demonstrating his consistent and long-term impact on areas such as hotel service quality, consumer satisfaction, and the integration of technology in tourism research. Tied for the third position are Weiguo Fan, Qianzhou Du, and Yufeng Ma, each with 1,075 citations across 5 publications, reflecting their joint involvement in influential studies exploring big data, social media analytics, and digital strategies in the hospitality context. (See Table 2).

Top Organizations

The Pamplin College of Business at Virginia Tech emerges as the most impactful institution in this domain, accumulating 1,639 total citations from just three publications. This exceptional citation-to-

publication ratio highlights the college's concentrated research excellence in areas such as online review analytics, digital consumer behavior, and algorithmic hospitality marketing. Closely following is Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, with 1,017 citations from three publications, reflecting the broader university's continued leadership in shaping the field of digital marketing strategies within the hotel industry. (See Table 2).

Top Contributing Countries

The United States leads the global research landscape in digital marketing and hospitality studies, with an impressive 17,083 citations across 251 publications. This reflects the country's robust academic ecosystem, early adoption of digital platforms in tourism, and continued leadership in online review analytics, consumer trust, and hospitality technology. Ranking second is China, with 5,333 citations from 93 publications, underscoring its rapidly growing influence in the field. Chinese researchers have increasingly contributed to topics such as platform-based decision-making, big data applications, and consumer behavior in digitally mediated travel environments, establishing China as a rising knowledge hub in hospitality marketing research. (See Table 2).

Table 2

Top Author, Organisation, Country

TC	Author	TP	TC	Organization	TP	TC	Country	TP
2288	Xiang, Zheng	8	1639	Pamplin College of Business, Virginia Tech, United States	3	17083	United States	251
1841	Law, Rob	24	1017	Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, United States	3	5333	China	93
1075	Fan, Weiguo	5	947	Pamplin College of Business, Virginia Tech, United States	2	4691	United Kingdom	85
1075	Du, Qianzhou	5	947	Pamplin College of Business, Virginia Tech, United States	2	3402	Hong Kong	54
1075	Ma, Yufeng	5	927	University of Central Florida, United States	9	2758	Spain	81
1059	Bilgihan, Anil	4	692	University of Delaware, United States	1	2359	Australia	46
897	Schuckert, Markus	6	692	University of South Carolina, United States	1	1994	South Korea	37
756	Schwartz, Zvi	2	659	The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong	10	1506	India	53
699	Kim, Woo Gon	5	631	Harbin Institute of Technology, China	3	1284	Taiwan	26
692	Gerdes, John H.	1	501	The University of Florida, United States	1	1131	Italy	21
692	Uysal, Muzaffer	1	501	Virginia Tech, United States	1	1107	Malaysia	29

Source: Authors Compilation

The findings of this performance analysis illustrate a clear pattern of concentrated academic influence, led by a select group of researchers, institutions, and nations that have consistently driven high-impact scholarship in digital hospitality marketing. The prominence of U.S.-based contributors reflects a well-established research infrastructure and early leadership in hospitality technology adoption, while the growing presence of Chinese scholarship signals an important shift toward a more globally distributed research community. Together, these insights not only underscore the maturity and diversity of the field but also offer a valuable reference point for future collaborations, research benchmarking, and the continued advancement of knowledge in this dynamic area of study.

3.1.2 Leading Journals Publishing Research on Digital Hospitality Marketing

An analysis of source journals reveals that research on digital marketing within the hospitality sector is concentrated in a few high-impact outlets. The International Journal of Hospitality Management leads with 3,626 citations across 35 publications, followed closely by the International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, which accounts for 3,360 citations and 44 publications. Tourism Management also features prominently, with 3,160 citations from 22 publications, reflecting its role in bridging tourism and digital research. The majority of impactful articles have been published between 2012 and 2025, indicating growing academic interest in recent years. Emerging journals like Sustainability (Switzerland) and Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology have gained traction, particularly in the last decade, aligning with broader themes of digital innovation and responsible tourism. This distribution highlights that hospitality-focused journals dominating the citation landscape in this domain (See Table 3).

Table 3

Top Leading Journals

Journals	TP	TC	1998-2005	2006-2011	2012-2017	2018-2025
International Journal of Hospitality Management	35	3626	1	0	12	22
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	44	3360	0	0	17	27
Tourism Management	22	3160	1	2	5	14
Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management	27	1768	0	1	10	16
Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing	22	1693	2	3	9	8
Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology	31	1429	0	2	15	14
Cornell Hospitality Quarterly	16	1428	0	2	10	4
Sustainability (Switzerland)	34	1010	0	0	1	33
Computers in Human Behavior	5	973	0	0	2	3
International Journal of Information Management	6	637	0	0	3	3

Source: Authors Compilation

3.1.3 Most Influential Articles in Digital Hospitality Marketing

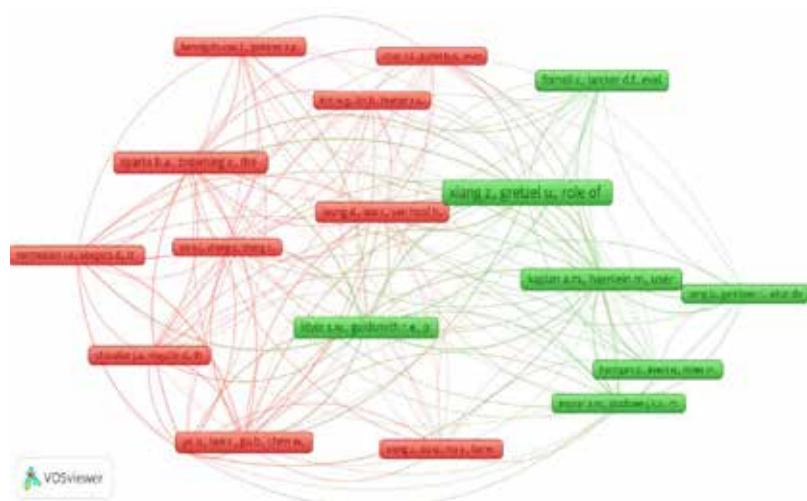
An analysis of the most highly cited articles reveals key intellectual milestones in digital hospitality marketing research. Leading the list is Xiang et al. (2017), with 719 citations, offering “a comparative analysis of online review platforms that has become foundational in understanding social media analytics in tourism”. This is followed by two other influential studies by Xiang et al. (2015) one exploring the potential of big data and text analytics (692 citations) and the other examining consumer behavior in travel planning (501 citations). Schuckert et al. (2015) also ranks highly, with 487 citations, offering a comprehensive review of online hotel reviews and emerging trends. Other significant contributions include Ghose et al. (2012) on hotel ranking systems (454 citations) and Berezina et al. (2016) on customer satisfaction via text mining (464 citations). These articles collectively highlight the central themes of user-generated content, trust, review management, and technology adoption in shaping consumer perceptions and hospitality strategies. Their high citation counts reflect their enduring relevance and foundational status within the literature. (See Table 4).

Table 4*Top Articles*

Authors	Title	TC
Xiang et al. (2017)	"A comparative analysis of major online review platforms: Implications for social media analytics in hospitality and tourism"	719
Xiang et al. (2015)	"What can big data and text analytics tell us about hotel guest experience and satisfaction?"	692
Xiang et al. (2015)	"Information technology and consumer behavior in travel and tourism: Insights from travel planning using the internet"	501
Schuckert et al. (2015)	"Hospitality and Tourism Online Reviews: Recent Trends and Future Directions"	487
Berezina et al. (2016)	"Understanding Satisfied and Dissatisfied Hotel Customers: Text Mining of Online Hotel Reviews"	464
Ghose et al. (2012)	"Designing ranking systems for hotels on travel search engines by mining user-generated and crowdsourced content"	454
Wu et al. (2023)	'Assessing the role of competitive intelligence and practices of dynamic capabilities in business accommodation of SMEs"	395
Sparks et al. (2016)	"Responding to negative online reviews: The effects of hotel responses on customer inferences of trust and concern"	392
Bilgihan (2016)	"Gen y customer loyalty in online shopping: An integrated model of trust, user experience and branding"	387
Gu & Ye (2014)	"First step in social media: Measuring the influence of online management responses on customer satisfaction"	360

Source: Authors Compilation

3.2 Co-Citation Analysis

Figure 1*Co-citation Analysis (Cited Reference)*

Source: Vos viewer

The co-citation analysis identified two distinct clusters that reflect the intellectual structure of digital marketing research in the hotel industry. Cluster 1 (Red) comprises 11 highly co-cited references that primarily focus on electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), online reviews, and their influence on hotel performance and consumer behavior. Foundational works by (D. J. Kim et al., 2007; Sparks & Browning, 2011) emphasize the importance of online review valence and management response on consumer trust and booking intentions. Likewise, Chevalier and (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Ye et al., 2009) demonstrate how review quality and quantity influence sales and booking behavior. These studies collectively build a strong theoretical foundation linking user-generated content to hotel marketing effectiveness (See Figure 1).

Cluster 2 (Green) comprises 7 references that emphasize social media engagement, platform dynamics, and methodological rigour. Influential works by (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010) frame the role of social media in shaping tourism decisions. (Harrigan et al., 2018; Litvin et al., 2008) contribute engagement-based models within hospitality contexts. Furthermore, (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) provide a methodological base for evaluating structural models in hospitality marketing research. Together, both clusters illustrate a dual emphasis: consumer influence through reviews and brand influence through social media engagement capturing the evolving landscape of digital marketing strategies in hospitality (See Figure 1).

3.3 Bibliographic Coupling of Documents

The bibliographic coupling analysis was performed on 67 highly cited documents (with at least 120 citations), yielding eight clusters. Of these, the five most substantial clusters were selected for detailed thematic analysis due to their greater conceptual density. Specifically, Cluster 1 (Red) consists of 17 items, Cluster 2 (Green) includes 12 items, Cluster 3 (Blue) has 11 items, Cluster 4 (Yellow) comprises 9 items, and Cluster 5 (Purple) contains 7 items. These clusters reflect the dominant intellectual streams in digital marketing research within the hotel and hospitality sector. Each cluster is discussed below, with a focus on its top three most-cited documents, offering insight into the evolving themes and scholarly priorities over the past two decades. (See Table 5).

Table 5

Thematic Clusters through Bibliographic Coupling

Theme	Author(s)	Title	Cited by
Digital Loyalty & Website Experience	Bilgihan (2016)	“Gen Y customer loyalty in online shopping: An integrated model of trust, user experience and branding”	387
	Baloglu & Pekcan (2006)	“The website design and Internet site marketing practices of upscale and luxury hotels in Turkey”	210
	Bilgihan et al. (2014)	“Online experiences: Flow theory, measuring online customer experience in e-commerce and managerial implications for the lodging industry”	144
Social Media & Online Booking Experience	Inversini & Masiero (2014)	“Selling rooms online: The use of social media and online travel agents”	145
	Kim & Park (2017)	“Social media review rating versus traditional customer satisfaction: Which one has more incremental predictive power in explaining hotel performance?”	138
	Kim et al. (2016)	“Analysis of satisfiers and dissatisfiers in online hotel reviews on social media”	128

Digital Influence on Hotel Bookings	Gu & Ye (2014)	"First step in social media: Measuring the influence of online management responses on customer satisfaction"	360
	Gavilan et al. (2018)	"The influence of online ratings and reviews on hotel booking consideration"	307
	De et al. (2018)	"Digital marketing strategies, online reviews and hotel performance"	233
Platform Algorithms and Market Impact	Ghose et al. (2012)	"Designing ranking systems for hotels on travel search engines by mining user-generated and crowdsourced content"	454
	Ghose et al. (2014)	"Examining the impact of ranking on consumer behavior and search engine revenue"	176
	Geissinger et al. (2020)	"Digital Disruption beyond Uber and Airbnb Tracking the long tail of the sharing economy"	137
Visuals, Responses, and Review Impact	Ma et al. (2018)	"Effects of user-provided photos on hotel review helpfulness: An analytical approach with deep learning"	228
	Chang et al. (2019)	"Social media analytics: Extracting and visualizing Hilton hotel ratings and reviews from TripAdvisor"	174
	Kwok & Xie (2016)	"Factors contributing to the helpfulness of online hotel reviews: Does manager response play a role?"	146

Source: Authors Compilation

Cluster 1: Digital Loyalty & Website Experience: This cluster centers around hotel website design, flow experience, and generational differences in digital engagement. The most cited paper is (Bilgihan, 2016b) (387 citations), which explores Gen Y customer loyalty using generational and flow theory. (Baloglu & Pekcan, 2006) (210 citations) highlight the importance of hotel website design in enhancing marketing effectiveness. (Bilgihan et al., 2014) (144 citations) develop a framework to measure online flow experiences in hospitality. Collectively, these studies emphasize how digital design and user experience drive engagement and loyalty in hospitality marketing. (See Table 5, Figure 2).

Cluster 2: Social Media & Online Booking Experience: This cluster explores the role of social media platforms, online review systems, and customer satisfaction in hotel bookings. The most cited work is (Inversini & Masiero, 2014b) (145 citations), which investigates how social media content influences consumer decisions across hotel types and price ranges. (B. Kim et al., 2016) (128 citations) identify key satisfiers and dissatisfiers in user reviews using Herzberg's theory, offering actionable insights for hotel reputation management. (W. G. Kim & Park, 2017) contribute by analyzing online travel agencies (OTAs) and hotel visibility in digital booking environments. These papers collectively underscore the growing strategic importance of reviewing analytics, platform presence, and consumer voice in shaping hotel performance. (See Table 5, Figure 2).

Cluster 3: Digital Influence on Hotel Bookings: Cluster 3 focuses on how digital strategies such as online reviews, management responses, and platform trust affect consumer booking decisions in the hotel industry. Highly cited works include (Gu & Ye, 2014) who explored the role of management responses on social media and its influence on customer satisfaction (360 citations), and (Gavilan et al., 2018) who analyzed how online ratings shape booking intentions through trust, risk, and perceived value (307 citations). Additionally, (De Pelsmacker et al., 2018) emphasized the link between digital marketing strategies and hotel performance (233 citations), reinforcing the centrality of review-based engagement in digital hospitality marketing. (See Table 5, Figure 2).

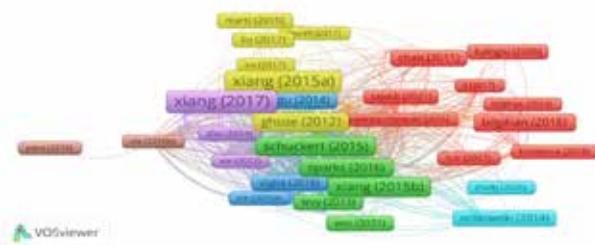
Cluster 4: Platform Algorithms and Market Impact: Cluster 4 addresses the algorithmic architecture and platform-driven dynamics shaping digital hospitality. The seminal work by (Ghose et al., 2012b), with 454 citations, demonstrates how ranking systems on OTAs impact consumer choice by leveraging crowdsourced content. Their subsequent study in 2014 examined behavioral responses to algorithmic sorting, reinforcing

the psychological effect of listing positions (176 citations). Expanding this platform-based view, (Geissinger et al., 2020) explored how services like Airbnb represent digital disruption and platform capitalism, accumulating 137 citations. Together, these studies highlight the critical role of algorithm transparency, platform dominance, and listing design in shaping digital marketing effectiveness within the hotel sector. (See Table 5, Figure 2).

Cluster 5: Visuals, Responses, and Review Impact: Cluster 5 explores the design and perception effects of digital content in hotel marketing, emphasizing how visuals and analytic responses impact review credibility and booking behavior. The study by (Ma et al., 2018b) (228 citations) highlights that user-provided photos significantly boost trust and booking intentions, particularly when paired with detailed textual reviews. Meanwhile, (Chang et al., 2019) utilized social media analytics and natural language processing to extract hotel customer sentiments (174 citations), showing the power of AI in decoding guest experience. (Kwok & Xie, 2016) examined the helpfulness of reviews, revealing that manager-consumer interaction and review depth enhance social capital and influence (146 citations). These studies collectively point to the rising influence of AI, imagery, and review structure in shaping digital hospitality engagement. (See Table 5, Figure 2).

Figure 2

Bibliographic Coupling



Source: VOS viewer

3.4 Co-Occurrence Analysis of Author Keywords

To identify dominant themes in the digital marketing literature within the hotel industry, a co-occurrence analysis of author keywords was conducted using VOS viewer (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). A minimum

threshold of 10 keyword occurrences was applied, resulting in 43 out of 2,998 keywords meeting the criterion. These were classified into five clusters, each representing a conceptual area within the field (See Figure 3).

Cluster 1 presents as a red node (11 items): This cluster includes keywords such as brand, consumer behaviour, digital marketing, hospitality, hotels, innovation, and internet marketing, reflecting the foundational discourse on branding, consumer response, and technology adoption in service marketing. The constructs align with classical marketing theories and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (See Figure 3).

Cluster 2 presents as green node (11 items): With terms like China, COVID-19, customer engagement, customer satisfaction, e-WOM, hotel industry, online marketing, and online reviews, this cluster captures research examining how the pandemic context, digital engagement, and electronic word-of-mouth influence customer behavior and trust restoration (See Figure 3).

Cluster 3 presents as blue node (9 items): Keywords such as accommodation, big data, content analysis, e-marketing, Facebook, Instagram, social media, sustainability, and Twitter emphasize the use of platform-specific strategies and big data tools to enhance marketing decision-making, sustainability efforts, and consumer sentiment analysis (See Figure 3).

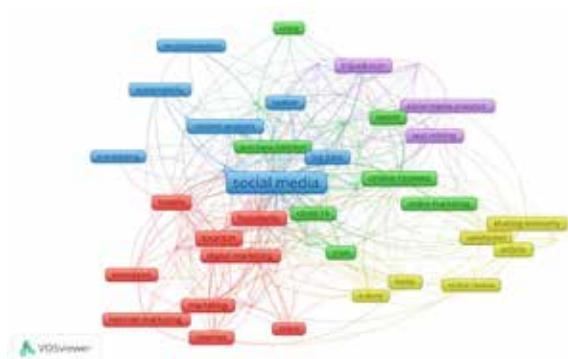
Cluster 4 presents as yellow node (7 items): This cluster revolves around Airbnb, peer-to-peer accommodation, sharing economy, satisfaction, and e-WOM, representing research into collaborative consumption models and their disruption of traditional hotel marketing strategies (See Figure 3).

Cluster 5 presents as purple node (5 items): Focusing on sentiment analysis, text mining, social media analytics, TripAdvisor, and user-generated content, this cluster represents a computational approach to interpreting consumer perceptions and decision-making, increasingly powered by AI-based tools (See Figure 3).

These thematic clusters reveal how literature has evolved from traditional brand and behavior studies to platform-specific analytics, pandemic-driven engagement, and AI-assisted content interpretation. They also highlight emerging intersections such as sustainability and social media, or peer-to-peer lodging and consumer trust which remain underexplored and offer valuable directions for future research.

Figure 3

Co-Occurrence Analysis of Author Keywords



Source: Vos viewer

4. Future Research

The evolution of digital hospitality marketing opens multiple pathways for future research. First, while substantial studies have focused on e-WOM and textual reviews (Ghose et al., 2012c; Xiang et al., 2017b), future work could explore how visual review elements, such as user-uploaded images, influence booking decisions, especially in AI-curated content environments (Ma et al., 2018b). Second, as the algorithmic sorting of hotels on OTAs becomes more sophisticated, research should investigate algorithmic bias and consumer trust, building on frameworks suggested by (Ghose et al., 2012a) and emerging empirical works such as (Schuckert et al., 2015) Liu et al. (2023), which examines spatiotemporal booking behaviour. Additionally, future inquiries could examine cross-platform consumer engagement patterns, comparing OTA interfaces and social media integration strategies (De Maio et al., 2023). The rise of peer-to-peer platforms like Airbnb also invites a closer look into trust mechanisms in non-traditional lodging, a theme observed in recent works on consumer loyalty and sharing economies (Fan et

al., 2023). Lastly, longitudinal studies could assess the post-COVID shift in digital trust and hygiene expectations, aligning with green cluster themes like digital recovery and pandemic-induced engagement strategies (Chang et al., 2019; Litvin et al., 2008).

5. Theoretical and Practical Implications

The insights from this bibliometric analysis carry substantial theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, the findings affirm the continued relevance of classical frameworks such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Flow Theory in explaining digital engagement (Baloglu & Pekcan, 2006; Bilgihan, 2016a). However, emerging concepts such as AI-generated reviews, ranking system design, and review visuality suggest that existing models must evolve to account for algorithmic and interface-driven influences (Chang et al., 2019; Ghose et al., 2012a). Empirically grounded studies such as (Baber & Baber, 2023) emphasise the role of e-loyalty and social media marketing efforts, pointing to multidimensional engagement metrics beyond satisfaction or trust. From a managerial standpoint, hotel brands must recognise the growing importance of proactive content management, particularly on OTAs and third-party platforms, where response behaviour and review formatting can shape brand perceptions (Gu & Ye, 2014; Sparks et al., 2016). Recent contributions by (Issa et al., 2023) stress the integration of organisational memory and social media, providing a valuable model for digital reputation building. This convergence of technological and psychological factors highlights a critical junction for hospitality marketing: one that blends data intelligence with human-centred design.

6. Conclusion

This study offers a comprehensive bibliometric review of digital marketing strategies in the hotel industry, synthesising insights from 1208 peer-reviewed articles published between 1998 and 2025. Using citation analysis, co-citation networks, bibliographic coupling, and keyword co-occurrence methods, the paper identifies foundational themes including e-WOM, digital trust, social media influence, platform design, and AI-assisted content curation (Sparks & Browning, 2011; Xiang et al., 2015; Ye et al., 2009). Over time, scholarly interest

has shifted from traditional loyalty and branding theories toward algorithmic ranking systems, visual analytics, and pandemic-era recovery strategies (Chang et al., 2019; Geissinger et al., 2020). Key journals such as "International Journal of Hospitality Management, Tourism Management", and "Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management" have led the dissemination of these insights. The field has also seen increasing diversification in geographic and institutional contributions, with recent work by (De Maio et al., 2023) reflecting global engagement with digital hospitality transformation. This review not only consolidates what is known but also lays the groundwork for the next generation of research, where AI, sustainability, and personalisation will shape the future of digital hospitality marketing.

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