Article

Analysis of Online Customer Complaint Behavior in Vietnam's Hotel Industry

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Abstract: Vietnam's hospitality industry has developed significantly over the past 20 years. Therefore, it is very important to investigate customers' complaints based on their experience in Vietnamese hotels. This study aimed to examine online complaining behavior focusing on five hotel attributes (*Service, Value, Room, Sleep Quality, and Cleanliness*) to discover any behavioral pattern differences displayed by (i) Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese guests and (ii) guests experiencing different classes of hotels. A total of 1357 samples, which were representative of guests from 70 countries among five continents coming from 467 hotels in six famous tourist cities, were selected for data analysis. Then, descriptive statistics, *t*-test, and one-way analysis of variance were conducted to identify whether there was a difference in the behavioral pattern. *Service* and *Value* complaints were more evident in Vietnamese customers, while non-Vietnamese customers were more inclined to complain about *Room*. Furthermore, guests were more likely to complain about hotels in the economy class with respect to *Service*, *Cleanliness*, *Room*, and *Sleep Quality* attributes than those in the upscale class and luxury class. The research findings can aid hotel managers in making targeted proactive retention actions by categorizing regular customers into groups and also being able to meet the expectations of customers from different cultures and hotel classes. Moreover, they expand insights into the online complaining behaviors of tourists providing valuable practical information for the hotel industry and extending hospitality literature in Vietnam.

Keywords: customer satisfaction; online consumer complaining behavior; hospitality; cultural differences; TripAdvisor; Vietnam

1. Introduction

Vietnam's increasing popularity as a tourist destination [1,2] influences the rapid development of its hospitality and tourism industry [3]. In 2019, Vietnam experienced an increase of about 16.2% in its international tourist arrivals [4]. Total revenue from international and domestic tourists was valued at VND 755 trillion (USD 32.6 billion) in 2019, which played an important contribution to the GDP, accounting for 9.2%. In response to such growth, there has also been a growth in the Vietnamese hospitality and tourism services, especially hotels [5]. In 2019, out of a total of 30,000 tourist accommodation establishments, only 171 were 5-star hotels and 295 were 4-star hotels [4]. Consequently, a remarkable investment has been put forward by domestic and government-owned hotels as well as many top international chains such as Marriott International, InterContinental Hotels Group, and Accor Hotels to keep up with such demand.

With the heterogeneous nature of service encounters, customer complaint behavior is naturally expected when the service provided is dissatisfying [6,7]. Post-dissatisfaction

behaviors, especially negative word of mouth (WOM) and complaints, are an organization's nightmare [8,9]. When handled incorrectly, customers' complaints could create considerable harm to a company's reputation by increasing frustration and dissatisfaction and reinforcing negative customer reactions [10–12]. It has been suggested that the complaining behaviors of customers vary depending on demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender, and education) [13–15] and cultural backgrounds [16–18]. This difference in complaining behavior exhibited by guests from distinct cultural backgrounds complicates matters for hoteliers operating in ever-diversifying marketplaces. As such, hotel managers would do well to equip themselves with more nuanced understandings of the ways in which cultural differences may result in different forms of complaining behavior [19] so that they can design more effective marketing strategies [20] and bring service delivery behavior more in line with the cultural values of their diverse clientele [21]. Understanding the probability of customer churn at a given time assists managers in developing appropriate strategies to take effective customer retention actions [22].

Online reviews are useful to measure hotel quality based on customers' experiences. Such information is also very useful for travelers when looking for hotels [23,24] and helpful for hotel managers to improve their service quality [25,26]. Hotel managers could quickly access a wealth of data that reflect the customer's perceptions of the service in terms of satisfaction and dissatisfaction [27]. In the recent decade, human consumption behavior has changed so fast due to the rapid development of artificial intelligence, information technology, and travel community websites (e.g., Facebook, TripAdvisor) [28]. Moreover, 80% of visitors found hotels on the internet, and more than 50% of them made a reservation through online applications and websites [29]. According to Blomberg-Nygard and Anderson (2016) [25], 80% of guests booked rooms via smartphones, tablets, and websites suggesting hotel businesses must keep up with today's ever-changing technology era in order to survive. TripAdvisor is an essential platform in which tourists express their personal opinions on the quality of travel and services as well as sharing accommodation experiences [30]. It is one of the most popular and powerful travel community websites in the US as well as in other countries around the world [31].

It is evident that a gap exists in understanding the relationships among customer online complaints, the different elements of hotel attributes, and the cultural background of the guests when experiencing hotels, especially in Vietnam's hotel industry. Previously, a study in Vietnam mainly analyzed visitors' hotel satisfaction or dissatisfaction [32]. Similarly, Minh et al. (2015) [33] analyzed the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction in Vietnamese hotels. Other research focused on only luxury hotels [34], or the studies were only conducted in one city with a small number of hotels [33,35,36]. So far, there have been no studies on online complaint behavior in Vietnam's hotel industry. Hence, this study analyzed complaints regarding important attributes of the hotel experience in Vietnam. After considering the limitations of the previous studies, this study included two main goals:

i.　　To investigate the differences in online complaints of Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese guests concerning the following attributes (a) *Service*, (b) *Value*, (c) *Room*, (d) *Sleep Quality*, and (e) *Cleanliness* after experiencing a Vietnamese hotel;

ii.　　To investigate the differences in online complaints among customers experiencing different hotel classes in Vietnam for the five attributes mentioned above.

The main contribution of this paper lies in the study's novelty of relevant differences in online complaints of Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese guests when staying at different hotel classes. This research first reviews the literature with respect to electronic word of mouth and differences in complaint behavior based on cultural background and hotel classes, then explores and further proposes respective hypotheses. The research proceeds by targeting different online complaining behavior concerning five hotel attributes. Finally, the research provides recommendations for its application in the hotel industry, especially in management.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Influences of Social Networks (WOM and eWOM)

Vietnamese hotels have adapted to this era of technology whereby internet access and smart devices are indispensable. Rapid response to societal events and instantaneous evaluation of events by a group of users are the specific features of social services of internet communication [37]. This in turn makes social media marketing a priority in order to engage with the increase in guests' usage of numerous social networks. As mentioned by Grant Thornton (2019) [38], almost all participants made use of this effective channel for a better apprehension of social network users. Moreover, hotel and customer data collection through online assessments provided managers with an accurate psychological analysis of customers' experiences from which to make sound business decisions [39–41]. These reviews or comments shared online are now referred to in related literature as electronic word of mouth or eWOM [42]. eWOM is different from WOM in several ways. One of the main dissimilarities is that it is not limited by the size of a social network [43]. According to Litvin et al. (2008) [44], eWOM reaches far past WOM's conventional readers and producers due to its influence in virtual relationships and communities. Fast response rate and a wide reach of many people without requiring face-to-face contact, are the main advantages of eWOM [45]. However, its negative word-of-mouth information seriously affects the hotel's reputation as the hotel service provider receives complaints from customers from a variety of backgrounds [46,47].

2.2. Influence of Cultural Background on Consumer Complaint Behavior

Customer complaint behavior is heavily influenced by their own culture. It is known that culture influences the formation of preferences and customer satisfaction with products and services [48,49]. A study by Hsieh and Tsai, 2009 [20], showed that American customers are less concerned with overall service quality than Taiwanese visitors. Liu et al. (2000) [50] argued that the difference in customers' culture has a direct correlation with the values they assign to the services they experience. For instance, Japanese tourists are more concerned about personalized services (such as butlers) and security than American tourists [51]. In addition, it has been suggested that Western travelers are more concerned with the physical environment when judging service quality [49]. In addition, culture may affect how some customers may react to the manner or ability in which services are provided. For example, Indonesians believe that services can be provided at a given pace and rush is a sign of impatience; while punctuality according to South Koreans and Australians is a sign of professionalism [52]. Consequently, customers from particular cultures may be easily disappointed when experiencing services from hotels with such flaws.

2.3. Influence of Hotel Class on Consumer Complaint Behavior

The hotel rating system is a useful tool for hotels to evaluate themselves and a way of communicating quality standards to their customers [53]. However, countries often build their hotel rating systems with a total of more than 100 global rating systems [54]. Studies have established refined scale measures for website evaluation based on similarities and differences across hotel classes (e.g., economy, upscale, and luxury) for generalizability [7]. According to the concept of Ren et al. (2016) [55] and Peng et al. (2015) [56], economy hotels are modestly priced, ranging from "0 to 3-star" and with a minimum of 50 rooms. In contrast, upscale (4-star) and luxury (5-star) hotels are known to include elaborate decor and high value with personalized service as well as exercise facilities, swimming pools, restaurants, and gift shops [56–60].

2.4. Research Hypothesis

Hofstede (2009) [61] indicated that cultural differences are comprised of four prominent dimensions, namely power distance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, and uncertainty avoidance. Among these, "individualism versus collectivism" was particularly related to the primary distinctions in consumer behaviors from

Eastern and Western cultures [62,63]. Power distance is also prominent in Vietnam as evident in Vietnamese families, organizations, and society due to strong influence from Chinese Confucian values [64–67]. Similarly, collectivism, a major principle of Confucianism, is also still evident in present-day Vietnamese culture [64,67–69]. Ngai et al. (2007) [17] claimed that Asian guests are afraid of disgrace and "loss of face" if they complain and are therefore unfamiliar with the means of making complaints. The concept of "losing face" is deeply embedded in Vietnam's collectivist culture and even described as unbearable [65]. Thus, Vietnamese customers are less likely to complain despite receiving inferior service. Hence, with consideration given to the way in which distinct cultural backgrounds of Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese can lead to differences in customer attitudes and complaining behaviors, the following hypotheses were suggested:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): *Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese guests will demonstrate significantly different online complaining behavior toward hotel attributes of (a) Service, (b) Value, (c) Room, (d) Sleep Quality, and (e) Cleanliness.*

According to the official report of Vietnam's Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MOCST) [70], TCVN 4391:2015 is a national standard for hotel classification using star ranking that is similar to the French standard. These two standards make reference to Accor standard classification, which is divided into general requirements and specific requirements. TCVN 4391:2015 classification is based on five general requirements: location and architecture, facilities, service quality, manager and staff, and environmental friendliness, health, and safety. According to the Vietnamese hotel classification system in 2015 TCVN 4391:2015 [70], economy hotels (1- to 3-star) have an architectural design in accordance with business requirements in which service areas are arranged reasonably and conveniently. The interior and exterior are designed and decorated to ensure accessibility for disabled people and a soundproof sleeping area. In addition, the number of rooms is usually less than 50. The requirements for upscale (4-star) and luxury hotels (5-star) include a beautiful unique interior and exterior architectural design with luxurious decoration, covering the front of the reception hall, good-quality building materials, and a luxurious hotel front view with a beautifully designed small landscape, access road, and sidewalk, and the number of rooms should surpass 50.

Studies have shown that the different classes of hotels could create differences in perceptions and expectations among hotel guests. For instance, guests of an economy-class hotel are more concerned about the hotel website's user-friendliness in order to ensure the best deal possible [71]. Conversely, guests of a luxury-class hotel care more about user security and privacy when using their websites. In this respect, linguistic and/or cultural backgrounds also play a role. Schuckert et al. (2015) [72] illustrated that English-speaking travelers preferred luxury-class hotels with bigger rooms, while non-English-speaking guests had a preference for economy-class hotels and demanded higher service quality. In terms of expectations and evaluations of the service quality among economy-, upscale-, and luxury-class hotels, patrons from different cultures have been shown to exhibit some significant differences. For instance, Chinese guests are less likely to complain and are more accommodating to pricing issues than non-Chinese guests in top luxury hotels, suggesting that the traditional face culture also exists in the online Chinese community [62].

Hypothesis 2 (H2): *There will be significant differences in the online complaining behavior of guests among economy-class (2-star and 3-star), upscale-class (4-star), and luxury-class hotels (5-star) regarding the hotel attributes of (a) Service, (b) Value, (c) Room, (d) Sleep Quality, and (e) Cleanliness.*

This study focused on examining online complaint behavior based on five hotel properties on TripAdvisor between Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese guests as well as among guests experiencing different hotel classes in Vietnam. The research model constructed based on the aforementioned argument is depicted in Figure 1.
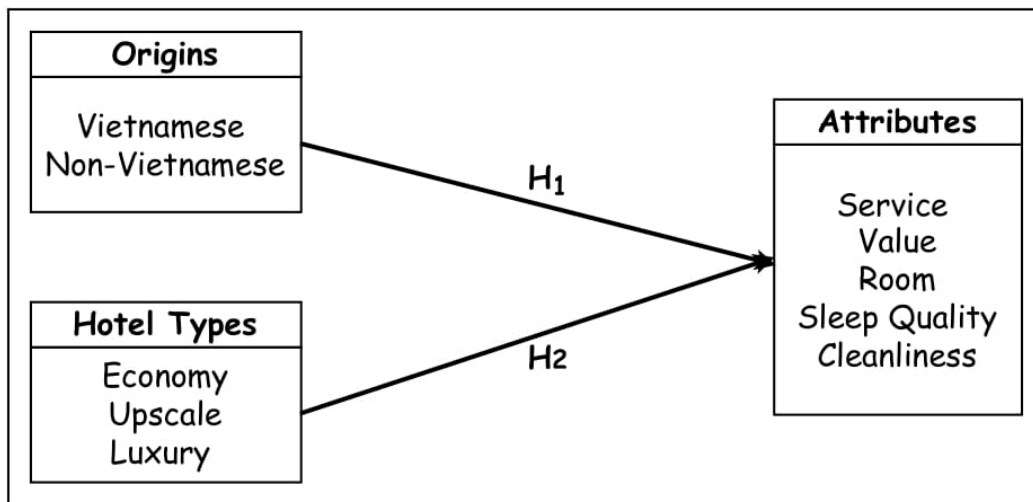
Figure 1. Research conceptual model.

3. Methodology

3.1. Sample and Data Source

In line with prior study by Sann et al. [73], data from this study were collected from TripAdvisor—a platform with the advantage of providing a large sample without prejudice and a high level of external validity [74]. It is also coupled with an integrated multi-language interface and provides the assessor's nationality [75]. The TripAdvisor assessors' reviews range from "Terrible" (1 point) to "Excellent" (5 points) [73,76]. According to Ho (2018) [77], an overall rating of 1 or 2 points means that the customers are not satisfied with the hotel. Moreover, customers are able to express their comments through the evaluation system regarding hotel attributes, including "*Service*", "*Value*", "*Room*", "*Cleanliness*", and "*Sleep Quality*".

3.2. Data Collection and Sample Characteristics

This study targeted customer reviews of TripAdvisor-listed Vietnamese hotels between 2015 and 2020 [78] (TripAdvisor, 2020). The selected hotels ranged from 2 to 5 stars according to the Vietnam hotel classification system (TCVN 4391:2015). A total of 467 hotels that met the above-mentioned requirements were randomly selected from among thousands of hotels located in six famous tourist cities that attract and welcome a large number of international and domestic tourists every year. The six cities were from the three main regions of Vietnam: Northern Region (Hanoi City, $N = 105$), Central Region (Da Nang City, $N = 118$; Da Lat City, $N = 40$; Nha Trang City, $N = 18$), and Southern Region (Ho Chi Minh City, $N = 174$; Phu Quoc City, $N = 12$). Therefore, the sampling method applied in this study provides more elaborate and comprehensive results compared to previous studies in which data collection was conducted in only one city.

The sample collection was performed manually for each sample and encoded subjectively. Samples were taken only for unsatisfied guests with a negative rating equivalent to an overall score of 1 and 2 with details of the complaint in writing [54]. As a result, 33 hotels were excluded from the 500 selected hotels due to the insufficiency of information provided. Finally, 1357 unsatisfied guest samples from 467 hotels between 2015 and 2020 were obtained.

The 1357 online complaint samples were representative of guests from 70 countries in 5 continents. Overall, Vietnamese tourists accounted for the highest percentage of 31.39% ($N = 426$), followed by the United States of America ($N = 106$, 7.81%) and Australia ($N = 93$, 6.85%). Among Asian countries, Vietnam was at the top with 31.39% ($N = 426$), followed by Japan ($N = 64$, 4.72%), Singapore ($N = 54$, 3.98%), South Korea ($N = 51$, 3.76%), China ($N = 37$, 2.73%), and Thailand ($N = 30$, 2.21%). In addition, countries from Europe with a large number of samples included United Kingdom ($N = 72$, 5.31%), France ($N = 57$, 4.20%),

Germany (*N* = 45, 3.32%), and Spain (*N* = 32, 2.36%). Africa was the continent with the lowest number of samples with only 1.18% (*N* = 16). Other countries accounted for 17.76% (*N* = 41). More supplementary details of the dataset are described in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondents' characteristics.

| Category	Respondents (*N* = 1357)	Percentage (%)
Guest Origins		
Vietnamese	426	31.4
Non-Vietnamese	931	68.6
Types of Hotels		
Economy	892	65.7
Upscale	275	20.3
Luxury	190	14
Regions		
Africa	16	1.7
America	144	10.6
Asia	757	55.4
Australia	104	7.6
Europe	336	24.7
Types of Travel		
Business	204	15.0
Couples	413	30.4
Families	273	20.1
Friends	204	15.1
Solo	137	10.1
N/A	126	9.3
Star Classification		
2-Star	101	7.4
3-Star	791	58.3
4-Star	275	20.3
5-Star	190	14
Size of Hotels		
Small (<99 rooms)	811	59.8
Medium (100–299 rooms)	431	31.7
Large (>300 rooms)	115	8.5

3.3. Measurements and Data Analysis

The study adopted 5 measurement variables from Sann et al. [79] and measured all variables according to a single item scale. To evaluate the relationship between the guest experience and the quality of the hotel, this study conducted five-point Likert scale evaluations [80] of the variables of *Service*, *Value*, *Room*, *Cleanliness*, and *Sleep Quality*. The scale ranged from 1 point for strong dissatisfaction to 5 points for strong satisfaction. Cronbach's alpha was used to evaluate the reliability of the scale. The alpha values of all the attributes were of recommended value of 0.65; thus, all the attributes met the criteria as recommended by Melián-González and Bulchand-Gidumal [81]. The variables are presented and categorized in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of hotel attributes.

Attribute	N	Period	Mean	Std. Dev.	Skewness	Kurtosis
Service	1.341	2015–2020	1.91	1.02	0.91	0.11
Value	575	2015–2020	1.92	0.91	0.83	0.29
Room	584	2015–2020	2.09	1.05	0.65	−0.33
Sleep Quality	573	2015–2020	2.33	1.17	0.37	−0.90
Cleanliness	607	2015–2020	2.52	1.21	0.25	−0.90

SPSS 24.0 software was used to test hypotheses through the analysis of mean and standard deviations. The mean value of the comparison of 5 hotel attributes influenced by Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese guests, along with differences in hotel class and star ranking, was determined according to the Vietnamese rating system; this study applied the accompanying Scheffe's test to analyze the different hotel classes. The study framework for obtaining online complaint reviews from TripAdvisor is shown in Figure 2.
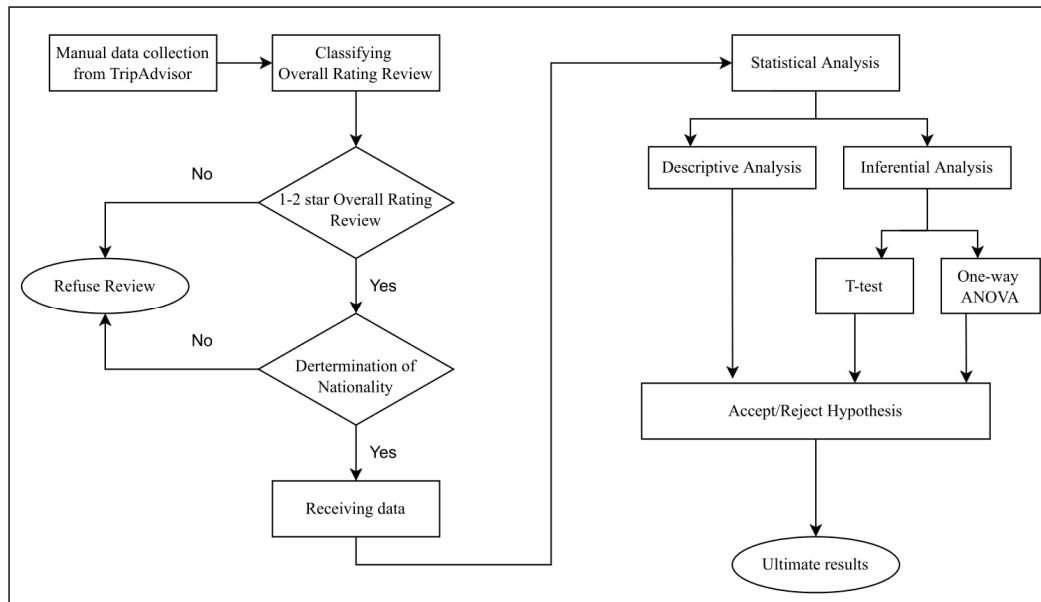
Figure 2. Collection and analysis framework for online complaint reviews from TripAdvisor.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. Hotel Frequency Distributions

This study only selected samples of customers who were considered as naturally complaining, that is, with overall ratings that were 1-point and 2-point. The majority of these were 2-point ratings that accounted for 57.92% ($N = 786$) while the remaining (42.08%; $N = 571$) were 1-point ratings. Service was the attribute that received the highest number of 1-point ratings ($N = 614$) followed by *Value* ($N = 220$), *Room* ($N = 211$), *Sleep Quality* ($N = 188$), and *Cleanliness* ($N = 165$).

4.2. Descriptive Statistics

The mean value of the hotel size was 104.09, meaning that most travelers wrote complaints about medium-sized hotels (100–299 rooms). The results also suggest that customers that traveled as couples ($N = 413$ samples, 30.43%) were most likely to make online complaints about their hotels, which is consistent with those of Sann and Lai's (2019) [82] study in which complaints were mostly from couples. Table 2 provides details of the descriptive values of the hotel attributes. The ratings of Cleanliness ($M = 2.52$), Sleep Quality ($M = 2.33$), and Room ($M = 2.09$) were indicative of medium-low-level complaints, implying that these three attributes carried similar importance to hotel guests [83]. On the contrary, the lowest mean ratings of 1.91 and 1.92 were evident in *Service* and *Value* attributes, respectively. This suggests that customers were not satisfied with what they paid for [79]. According to Chang et al. (2019) [84], despite results indicative of negative overall ratings, it is vital to note the changes in complaining patterns when dealing with various hotel attributes.

4.3. Effect of Cultural Background on Hotel Attributes

An independent-sample *t*-test was applied to evaluate whether a statistical difference exists between hotel attributes and differences in the culture of origin. Based on the results,

hypotheses $H_{1(a)}$, $H_{1(b)}$, and $H_{1(c)}$ (which assumed that "Vietnamese visitors and non-Vietnamese visitors will demonstrate significantly different online complaint behavior toward *Service*, *Value*, and *Room*") were valid, with $p < 0.01$. Similarly, Truc (2019) [85] found that service, staff, and value are the three most important factors affecting customer satisfaction in Vietnamese hotels.

The significantly lower mean value of Vietnamese guest reviews on the *Service* attribute compared to non-Vietnamese guests ($M_{Vietnamese} = 1.74 < M_{non\text{-}Vietnamese} = 1.99$) indicates that Vietnamese visitors are more likely to complain about the *Service* they received than non-Vietnamese visitors. Such difference could be explained by two reasons. Firstly, Vietnamese cultivate higher expectations with respect to service, characterized by high-context communication and large power distances (extent to which status differences are expected and accepted within a culture) [21,86] due to the strong influence of Chinese Confucian values [87]. The establishment of Confucian hierarchical structures within their societies to maintain order and stability is still deeply embedded in Vietnamese families, organizations, and society [64–67,88]. Schmitt and Pan (1994) [89] also proposed that Asian consumers paying for low-cost services expect a relatively high level of service. Therefore, the gap between Vietnamese guest expectations and hotel service performance leads to negative disconfirmation.

Secondly, differences in staff attitudes toward customers, particularly discriminatory attitudes, are the cause of the difference in the Service rating between Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese guests. Major et al. (2002) [90] defined discrimination as "an unjustified negative or harmful action toward the members of a group, simply because of their membership in that group". Smith and Bolton (2002) [91] concluded that discrimination in service leads to the customer's negative emotions and feedback. This study found that hotel employees tend to treat non-Vietnamese guests better than Vietnamese guests probably due to two reasons. First, non-Vietnamese customers' complaints would lead to a huge loss in hotel revenue [92]. For instance, 17.48% of international visitors in 2019 contributed to 55.7% of Vietnam's tourism industry revenue [4]. Unlike Vietnamese guests, non-Vietnamese guests often do not neglect service failures, are more likely to complain to hotel management to resolve problems, and are not reluctant to share experiences or warnings on international travel forums and with family or friends [16,18]. In contrast, Vietnamese guests are concerned about their collectivist-derived "face loss" concept if they complain to the hotel management; hence they are less willing to complain [17,65,87]. The second reason is Westerners' "tipping etiquette", especially toward service staff as a cultural feature; however, only a few Vietnamese customers do that. Therefore, it is not surprising that service staff have a warmer attitude toward non-Vietnamese guests [92]. This could be illustrated by the following online complaints: "Impolite with Vietnamese guests"; "Receptionists are not friendly to Vietnamese customers. Receptionists had bad attitudes and didn't smile once when we checked in"; "They show very bad attitude to local people who pay them the same rate as foreigners".

The results also show that Vietnamese visitors were more likely to complain about the *Value* attribute than non-Vietnamese visitors ($M_{Vietnamese} = 1.77 < M_{non\text{-}Vietnamese} = 1.99$). The differences in income and price sensitivity of those two groups could be the possible reasons. It is known that income is positively related to the decision to travel [93–96], and income elasticity is an influencer of tourism expenditures [97]. The difference in the currency exchange rates and income between Vietnamese and most non-Vietnamese guests makes the latter feel that hotel prices in Vietnam are cheap compared with developed countries. Travelers can experience luxury hotels for an average cost in Asia of USD 416 per night and 5-star hotels in Europe for an average of USD 716 [98] while in Vietnam they only spend an average cost of USD 83.4 [38]. The average annual income of Vietnamese people is still low with the GDP per capita around USD 2715.3 per year in 2019 [99]. Moreover, over 80% of customers in Vietnam notice when a product's price changes and the price elasticity of demand is −2 percent, making it one of the most price-sensitive marketplaces in Southeast Asia [100]. Vietnamese customers are easily disappointed when the hotels

do not live up to their expectations. This is evident from complaints such as: "Not worth the price. I paid more than VND 3 million per night, expecting at least five-star standard, but realized it is a four-star hotel. I think a more reasonable rate should be near to VND 2 million"; "This hotel is vastly over-hyped and over-priced"; "I don't pay USD 60 for 5 cocktails to be treated in the way they did".

Interestingly, Vietnamese visitors were less likely to complain about the Room attribute than non-Vietnamese visitors ($M_{Vietnamese}$ = 2.30 > $M_{non-Vietnamese}$ = 2.01). Studies suggest that ethnicity is related to preferred room amenities [58], and environment familiarity makes customers more compliant with their stay and understanding of issues encountered [62]. As a result, Vietnamese guests would easily be satisfied with the *Room* attribute due to being familiar with the room's decoration and amenities. In contrast, non-Vietnamese customers come with room expectation standards familiar to them in their own country such as room decorations, toilet equipment, or other devices in the room. Moreover, culture shock while staying in a new environment might also play a role [101,102].

With respect to the *Cleanliness* and *Sleep Quality* attributes, Vietnamese guests exhibited no significant difference in online complaining behavior when compared to non-Vietnamese guests; therefore hypotheses $H_{1(d)}$ and $H_{1(e)}$ were invalid, with *p* values of 0.198 ($p > 0.05$) and 0.930 ($p > 0.05$), respectively (Table 3).

Table 3. Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese guests' reviews of 5 hotel attributes.

Variables	Vietnamese (1)		Non-Vietnamese (2)		*t*-Value	*p*-Value	Comparative
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.			
Service	1.74	0.97	1.99	1.03	−4.14	0.000	(1) < (2)
Value	1.77	0.91	1.99	0.91	−2.74	0.006	(1) < (2)
Room	2.30	1.16	2.01	0.98	2.95	0.003	(1) > (2)
Sleep Quality	2.43	1.23	2.29	1.14	1.29	0.198	None
Cleanliness	2.51	1.22	2.52	1.20	−0.09	0.930	None

4.4. Effect of Hotel Class Experience on Hotel Attributes

Findings from one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests revealed that guests of the economy class (2 and 3 stars) exhibit significant differences in online complaining behavior when compared to guests of the upscale class (4-star) and luxury class (5-star) concerning four out of five hotel attributes: hypothesis 2 was supported regarding *Service*, *Cleanliness*, *Room*, and *Sleep Quality* at $p < 0.01$ (Table 4). Hypothesis $H_{2(b)}$ (which assumed that there would be significant differences in the online complaining behavior of guests among economy class (2-star and 3-star), upscale class (4-star) and luxury class (5-star) regarding the hotel *Value* attribute) was invalid, with a *p* value of 0.763 ($p > 0.05$).

Table 4. Guests' reviews of 5 hotel attributes according to hotel classification.

Variables	Economy (1)		Upscale (2)		Luxury (3)		*F*-Value	*p*-Value	Scheffe's
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.			
Service	1.86	0.96	2.10	1.12	1.87	1.06	6.34	0.002	(1) < (2)
Value	1.90	0.91	1.94	0.92	1.98	0.93	0.27	0.763	None
Room	1.87	0.91	2.33	1.11	2.78	1.16	30.63	0.000	(1) < (2) < (3)
Sleep Quality	2.09	1.06	2.76	1.24	2.59	1.19	20.48	0.000	(1) < (2), (3)
Cleanliness	2.34	1.15	2.78	1.23	2.88	1.26	11.67	0.000	(1) < (2), (3)

Scheffe's multiple-comparison analysis showed that guests experiencing economy-class (2-star and 3-star) hotels were more likely to complain about *Service*, *Cleanliness*, *Room*, and *Sleep Quality* than those in upscale-class (4-star) and luxury-class (5-star) (Table 4). Sann et al. (2020) [79] also concluded that guests of low-class hotels are more likely to complain about *Cleanliness*, *Room*, and *Sleep Quality* compared to guests of high-class hotels.

The reasons for such findings are directly related to Vietnam's hotel registration system, management level, and re-evaluation of different hotel classes in Vietnam. According to Article 50 of Law No. 09/2017/QH14 [103], often known as Vietnam's Tourism Law, dated 19 June 2017, tourist accommodation service providers may willingly register their establishments' rating with competent state agencies. For economy-class (1-star, 2-star, and 3-star) hotels, the application only needs the appraisal of the Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism at provincial level, which is very flexible. In addition, economy-class hotels in Vietnam are often established by individuals or families without professional training. According to Tuan and Dang (2020) [104], only 43% of Vietnam's tourism and hotel industry workforce was well trained. Therefore, the quality standards and requirements may not be balanced between provinces and may not meet the needs of guests. The other issue of concern is the lack of inspection in the Vietnamese system, which influences hotel innovation in regard to detecting the advantages and disadvantages of a hotel [3,105]. TCVN 4391:2009 [106] and other TCVN standard documents follow the pre-inspection system, and establishments that already have a business license do not need to be re-inspected unless they want to change their hotel classification. As a result, hoteliers are not proactive regarding innovation or even refurbishing of their establishments while retaining their license for decades despite degradation [107]. In contrast, upscale- and luxury-class hotels (4-star and 5-star hotels) must be approved by the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism which is stricter and transparent. Moreover, upscale and luxury hotel investors involve large corporations and international companies that hire well-trained employees and keep their facilities well maintained. The hypotheses of the investigation are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Summary of the research hypotheses.

Hypotheses	(a) Service	(b) Value	(c) Room	(d) Sleep Quality	(e) Cleanliness
H_1	Supported	Supported	Supported	Rejected	Rejected
H_2	Supported	Rejected	Supported	Supported	Supported

5. Conclusions and Implication

This study aimed to extend hospitality literature in Vietnam by analyzing the differences in online complaints between Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese guests as well as among hotel classes. The results show that there are differences between Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese customers in relation to *Service*, *Value*, and *Room* attributes in online complaints. Moreover, guests were more likely to complain about hotels in the economy class (2-star and 3-star) with respect to *Service*, *Room*, *Sleep Quality*, and *Cleanliness* than in the upscale class (4-star) and luxury class (5-star).

It is important for hotel managers to have a better understanding of the impacts of cultural differences on guest complaint behavior [19]. With that in mind, hotel managers need to provide professional training for staff so that discrimination between Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese customers can be eliminated and also to be able to meet the expectations of customers from different cultures and languages. It is also vital to take into consideration the customers' language differences when training staff, especially on English, and impression management, covering non-verbal aspects such as body language, posture, and behavior so that customers may feel that their concerns are being adequately addressed [17,21,108]. Furthermore, cultural training should be conducted for staff that have one-on-one contact with customers such as frontline staff.

The literature demonstrates that the customer's revisit intentions are influenced by the "*Value*" attribute. Hence hotel managers may add value through the enhancement of perceived quality or the lowering of perceived price [109]. Consumers have also been found to perceive comparable value over a range of price levels in hotels, which indicates that guests may adjust their expectations of service quality as the price fluctuates [110]; however, this adjustment in expectations does not eliminate service quality from the perceived value

equation. Consequently, hotel managers could offer promotional packages suitable for Vietnamese customers' income as well as value-added service strategies. Hotel managers could provide free shuttle services from hotels to areas of interest to Vietnamese guests in hopes of reducing the likelihood of them choosing to speak out of grievances through online channels.

The "*Room*" attribute is also a key influencer in customer dissatisfaction [111]. Thus, hotel managers should ensure that the quality of rooms is continuously maintained and/or improved. Hoteliers should also distinguish travelers' cultural backgrounds when understanding customers' preferences and satisfaction in order to make necessary room adjustments based on tourism trends such as wellness tourism and healthy hotels. Nowadays, travelers always want to stay healthy leading to their higher requirements for the *Room* attribute, especially, travelers from developed countries [58].

Finally, the root cause of customer complaints among different hotel classes is the lack of a strict Vietnam hotel rating system. Many hoteliers of the economy class are concerned about the rating more for legal purposes than for attracting customers [3]. The Vietnamese hotel ranking system must be improved, especially for economy-class hotels through regular and stricter inspections on behalf of the government. This would allow customers to regain confidence in the system. In turn, it would motivate the hoteliers to regularly maintain and upgrade facilities to meet customer expectations. Another alternative would be the adaptation of successful private-sector models of a hotel rating system in order to save resources. However, such a suggestion would require further research.

6. Limitation and Future Research

The limitations encountered in this study could be the basis for future research. Firstly, the online reviews in this study were collected from a single platform, TripAdvisor. For further studies, Agoda and Booking—two other most popular hotel booking platforms in Vietnam—should be considered. Second, further research needs to be conducted to compare customer complaint behavior in different countries with similar Asian cultural backgrounds and Confucian values to Vietnam such as China, Japan, and Korea. Moreover, possible generation gaps among customers through specific age group data analysis could be included in future studies but would require the use of other data collection methods.

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