

# Analysis of Online Travel Reviews

**Teton County, Wyoming**

**Key Findings | 2022**



**JACKSON  
HOLE** Travel  
& Tourism  
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Prepared by

International Institute  
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THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

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#### INTRODUCTION

Destination managers can use analyses of online travel reviews to inform decision-making about improvements of attractions, amenities, and experiences to meet visitor needs and expectations. The George Washington University International Institute of Tourism Studies analyzed online reviews for 25 tourism attractions in Teton County, Wyoming that were posted between January 2018 and October 2021 on TripAdvisor, the tourism industry's most prominent travel review site. TripAdvisor is often used among researchers as a singular source to gauge traveler online sentiment.

This study forms part of Teton County's Sustainable Destination Management Plan (SDMP). The SDMP is a yearlong participatory planning process spearheaded by the Jackson Hole Travel and Tourism Board (JHTTB) that is bringing together residents, community and tourism leaders to develop a shared vision for the future of tourism in the Tetons. This plan for sustainable tourism looks at all the ways tourism affects a local area and strives to support tourism benefits while reducing tourism drawbacks.

Taken together with resident survey analysis and stakeholder sentiment, visitor feedback creates a holistic perspective that is essential for future planning.

#### METHODOLOGY

A total of 7,392 TripAdvisor online reviews were analyzed for 25 attractions located (at least partially) within Teton County, Wyoming. The list of attractions was compiled using TripAdvisor's lists of popular attractions as well as input from the JHTTB. All attractions included in this study had a minimum of 35 reviews over the assessment period. Table 1 presents the list of attractions included in the study.

Online reviews analyzed were posted between January 2018 and October 2021 to take into account visitor perception based on seasonality and the period before and during the Covid-19 pandemic.





TABLE 1. Attractions by regions included in the study

Region	Attractions
Grand Teton Region	Grand Teton National Park Jackson Lake Jenny Lake Jenny Lake Trail Laurance Rockefeller Preserve Moose-Wilson Road String Lake
Jackson Region	Antelope Flats Antler Arches of Jackson Bridger Teton National Forest Granite Hot Springs Jackson Hole Playhouse Jackson Hole Rodeo National Elk Refuge National Museum of Wildlife Art Rendezvous Mountain Snow King Mountain Resort Town Square
Teton Village Region	Grand Targhee Ski Resort Jackson Hole Aerial Tram Jackson Hole Mountain Resort Teton Pass
Yellowstone Region	Grand Prismatic Spring Old Faithful Yellowstone National Park





Content and sentiment analyses of online reviews examined mention frequency of key themes and experience categories as well as overall sentiment.

Data was analyzed using a previously developed content analysis framework (see Table 2) that covers a wide range of tourism experiences which are classified into 21 categories under three main themes.

The Python machine learning technique was employed to calculate the frequency percentage of mentions for main themes and experience categories. Sentiment content analysis was performed on a sampling of online reviews across all four regions.

TABLE 2. Content analysis framework

Main Themes	Experience Categories
Amenities	Access/Infrastructure Facilities Food & Beverage Information/Interpretation Shopping Transportation
Environment	Cleanliness Health/Safety Scenery Visitor Density Weather/Seasonality Wildlife
Experience	Accurate Promotion Activity Accessibility Customer Service Emotional Excursion Length Guide Knowledge Interactions with Locals Interactions with Other Customers Value



OVERALL FINDINGS

**FINDING 1:** Overall, reviewer mentions fell most often into the amenities followed by experience and environment-related themes. See Table 3 for more information.

7,392 TripAdvisor reviews yielded 23,108 issues, or 3.13 issues mentioned per TripAdvisor review, indicating that visitors have strong feelings regarding multiple aspects of their experience at attractions.

- ▶ Within the amenities theme, the categories of transportation, food and beverage, and facilities were most frequently mentioned.
- ▶ In the experience categories, emotional reactions were most frequently cited, followed by guide knowledge, and value for money spent.
- ▶ Weather/seasonality, followed by scenery, and visitor density were most frequently mentioned in the environment categories.

TABLE 3. Top categories mentioned by theme

Theme / Frequency of Mentions	Top Three Mentioned Categories	Frequency of Mentions
Amenities 39%	<b>1. Transportation:</b> Public & private transportation to/from the destination and parking	34%
	<b>2. Food &amp; Beverage:</b> Restaurants at the destination	33%
	<b>3. Facilities:</b> Built infrastructure such as buildings, exhibits, and restrooms	11%
Experience 33%	<b>1. Emotional reactions:</b> Strong feelings expressed about the attraction	84%
	<b>2. Guide Knowledge:</b> Interpretation of the destination by a guide	8%
	<b>3. Value:</b> The quality of the attraction related to price paid	4%
Environment 28%	<b>1. Weather/Seasonality:</b> Weather conditions	42%
	<b>2. Scenery:</b> Beauty of the destination	38%
	<b>3. Visitor Density:</b> Volume of other travelers present	13%

**FINDING 2:** Visitor sentiment about Teton Country attractions is overwhelmingly positive.

In online reviews about Teton County, visitors report very positively about scenery, attractions and amenities, so much so that they often express strong emotions about their experience. Overall, TripAdvisor reviews revealed very high positive sentiments for each region:

- ▶ Jackson region 95%
- ▶ Yellowstone region 90%
- ▶ Grand Teton region 90%
- ▶ Teton Village region 86%



- The most frequently mentioned categories were:
- ▶ Emotional—comments expressing strong reactions to the experience
  - ▶ Transportation
  - ▶ Food and Beverage
  - ▶ Weather/Seasonality
  - ▶ Scenery

**FINDINGS BY REGION**

As seen in Table 4, the Jackson region was most frequently reviewed, followed by the Yellowstone,

Grand Teton, and Teton Village regions during the January 2018 to October 2021 timeframe.

**TABLE 4. Regional comparison**

Region	Total Online Reviews Analyzed / Percentage of Reviews	Themes / Frequency of Mentions	Top Categories Overall / Frequency of Mentions
Overall	7,392 reviews	Amenities: 39% Experience: 33% Environment: 28%	Emotional: 28% Transportation: 13% Food and Beverage: 13%
Grand Teton	1,743 reviews 24% of total	Environment: 38% Amenities: 35% Experience: 27%	Emotional: 24% Scenery: 21% Transportation: 17%
Jackson	2,747 reviews 37% of total	Amenities: 40% Experience: 32% Environment: 28%	Emotional: 30% Food and Beverage: 16% Scenery: 13%
Teton Village	725 reviews 10% of total	Amenities: 39% Experience: 36% Environment: 26%	Emotional: 27% Food and Beverage: 15% Transportation: 14%
Yellowstone	2,177 reviews 29% of total	Amenities: 38% Experience: 33% Environment: 29%	Emotional: 28% Weather: 14% Transportation: 13%



**FINDING 3:** The most frequently mentioned topic category in all regions was emotional.

This category refers to reactions by visitors expressed in language such as “awesome” “beautiful” “spectacular” “horrible” and “awful”. The second most frequent topic category mentioned was different region to region.”:

- ▶ Grand Teton region: Scenery 21%
- ▶ Jackson region: Food and beverage 16%
- ▶ Teton Village region: Food and beverage 15%
- ▶ Yellowstone region: Weather 14%



**FINDING 4:** Reviewers did raise some concerns, the foremost being visitor density, albeit in a low percentage of total online reviews.

Sentiment analysis revealed that visitor density was a low-performing category in three of the regions analyzed, while customer service and value were low-performing categories in two of the regions analyzed. Categories with positive sentiment of 75% or less are considered low-performing. Low performance categories by region are listed below.

- ▶ Grand Teton region:  
Value (worth the price) 70%;  
Visitor density (crowding) 55%
- ▶ Jackson region:  
Access to attractions/infrastructure 75%
- ▶ Teton Village region:  
Value 75%; Customer service 70%;  
Visitor density 65%
- ▶ Yellowstone region:  
Customer service 75%; Visitor density 70%

TABLE 5. Visitor sentiment by categories and regions

Region	Top Themes / Frequency of Mentions	Positive Sentiment	Sustainability-related Categories / Frequency percentage of mentions within region	Positive Sentiment*
Grand Teton	Amenities: 35%	94%	Cleanliness: 1%	100%
	Experience: 27%	88%	Transportation: 17%	90%
	Environment: 38%	84%	Value: 0.3%	70%
			Visitor Density: 3%	55%
Jackson	Environment: 28%	97%	Cleanliness: 0.9%	100%
	Experience: 32%	96%	Visitor Density: 3%	95%
	Amenities: 40%	92%	Transportation: 10%	85%
			Access to attractions/infrastructure: 2%	75%
Teton Village	Environment: 26%	89%	Transportation: 14%	90%
	Amenities: 39%	85%	Cleanliness: 0.5%	82%
	Experience: 36%	83%	Value: 4%	75%
			Customer Service: 1%	70%
Yellowstone	Experience: 33%	91%	Visitor Density: 2%	65%
	Environment: 29%	91%	Cleanliness: 0.7%	90%
	Amenities: 38%	88%	Transportation: 13%	85%
			Customer Service: 1%	75%
			Visitor Density: 4%	70%

\* Note: Categories with positive sentiment of 75% or less are considered low-performing.



## AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

- ▶ While visitor density (crowding) was flagged in a few number of reviews, this is an issue that merits ongoing tracking because it may be indicative of strain from resource overuse.
- ▶ Visitor studies—including those conducted by JH AIR and rapid analysis of online reviews for accommodations conducted as part of the SDMP—do corroborate that high cost/value has been a persistent issue for many years. The implications for long-term competitiveness of the destination merits further research.
- ▶ Another issue flagged is customer service in two of the four regions. This includes concerns regarding interactions with rangers, lack of service in facilities, and closures. There are opportunities to enhance quality of service and ongoing training of front-line workers.
- ▶ There is an opportunity to develop an ‘all-lands’ approach to visitor management to enhance a seamless visitor experience throughout the entire county (beyond the parks which have some visitor management strategies in place). For instance, there is a need to consider traffic flows and signage from an all-lands perspective.





**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

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