6-SHO‘BA: TRANSPORT, REKREATSIYA VA TURIZM GEOGRAFIYASI: ZAMONAVIY TENDENSIYALAR VA INNOVATSION YONDASHUVLAR

INTERNATIONAL REVIEW MARKETS AND THE GEOGRAPHY OF HOTEL QUALITY IN SAMARKAND

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Abstract: *This investigation examines the relationship between the hotel quality on Booking.com and the geographical pattern of Samarkand, and evaluates the opinions of international markets expressed in foreign reviews. The August 2026 data include 128 hotel listings and 22,171 review records; after composite-key deduplication, 22,101 reviews and 75 one-to-one geocoded addresses remain. The hotels are significantly clustered (nearest-neighbour index 0.827, z = -2.86, p = 0.004), but ratings show no significant global spatial autocorrelation (Moran’s I = -0.033, p = 0.557) or distance gradient. Russia contributes 20.1% of the reviews, Uzbekistan 13.2%; positive reviews focus on rooms, breakfast, location and service, while negative ones mention room and cleanliness problems. About 24.5% of the reviews receive management responses, with higher response rates for top-scoring than for low-scoring reviews.*

Keywords: *Hotel Quality; Management Response; Spatial Econometrics; Samarkand.*

Introduction. Booking offers a different perspective on Samarkand. Its review files record reviewers' nationalities, travel types, length of stay, language, individual positive and negative comments, and hotel responses. These attributes allow research to analyze not only the hotel's location but also how internationally experienced guests rate it and how managers engage in the review conversation. Booking.com is now an established data source in hospitality research, but its scoring system departs from conventional scales, which must be considered when interpreting its ratings [1].

Booking aggregates data on accessibility, focusing on whether hotels are clustered near attractions to determine if heritage proximity has a stronger organizational effect on hotel quality than on supply. Ratings also incorporate hotel-specific factors such as cleanliness, staff behavior, breakfast, noise levels, amenities, and value for money. The platform's ratings are characteristically left-skewed, and their distribution varies with hotel class [2]; since 2019-2020, the scoring system has used a conventional 1-10 scale [3]. Because online reviews shape hotel booking intentions and perceived trust [4,5], spatial inference must be combined with an understanding of the platform's rating mechanism.

This article answers the following questions: How clustered are hotels in Samarkand on Booking.com in the surrounding Registan area? Does the rating exhibit spatial autocorrelation or a heritage distance gradient? Which nationalities and travel types dominate the review market? Do the positive, negative, and administrative response fields reveal systemic service remediation priorities?

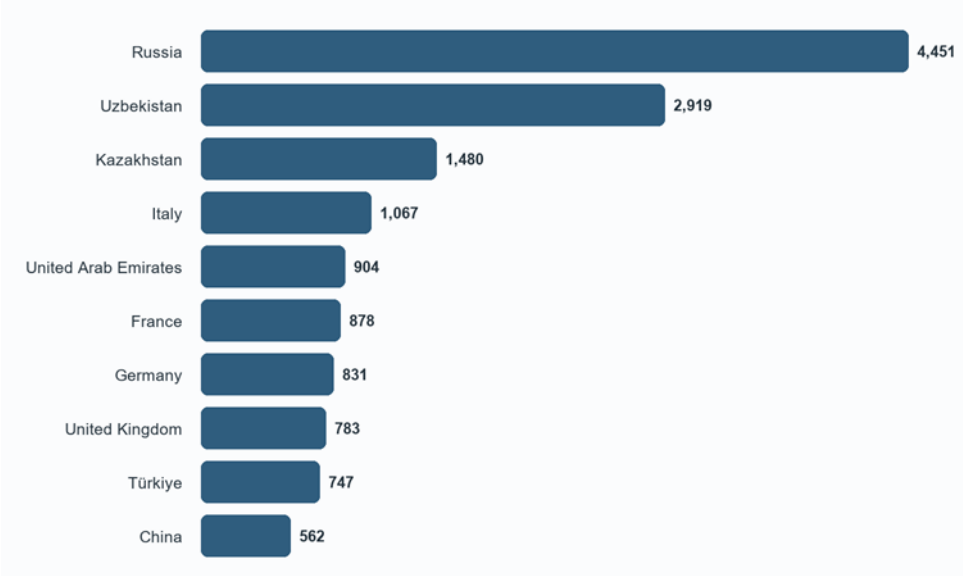
Material and Methods. The dataset comprises 128 Samarkand accommodations (126 rated) and 22,171 review rows. After removing 21 exact duplicates and 70 composite duplicates identified by hotel, reviewer, check-in and posting dates, rating and review text, 22,101 observations remain; deduplication does not affect nationality, theme or response-rate calculations. Because address fields contain only the city name, coordinates were reconstructed from hotel names via OpenStreetMap [7], keeping the best name match and excluding outliers beyond 12 km, yielding 75 unique locations. This conservative one-to-one sample may favour internationally visible hotels.

Point-pattern analysis applied the nearest-neighbour index, kernel density, mean centre, standard-deviation ellipse and Registan-centred distance rings. Global Moran’s I used an 8-nearest-neighbour row-standardised matrix with 999 permutations [1]. A maximum-likelihood spatial lag model [3] regressed ratings on the standardised logarithm of review counts, distance to the Registan and reported formal star classification. Review topics were coded by multilingual dictionary terms; themes are non-exclusive and denominators differ by field availability.

Results. The average hotel rating is 9.00 (SD 0.65); the average review score is 9.04 (SD 1.63), median 10. Guests average 2.16 nights. Couples account for 34.8% of stays, solo travellers 24.7%, families 21.4% and groups 19.1%.

Russia contributes the most reviews (4,451; 20.1%), followed by Uzbekistan (2,919; 13.2%) and Kazakhstan (6.7%); the top ten also include Italy, the UAE, France, Germany, the UK, Turkey and China (Figure 1). Russian is the leading review language (40.4%), English second (20.9%) — a structure favouring multilingual rather than single-market destination management [8].

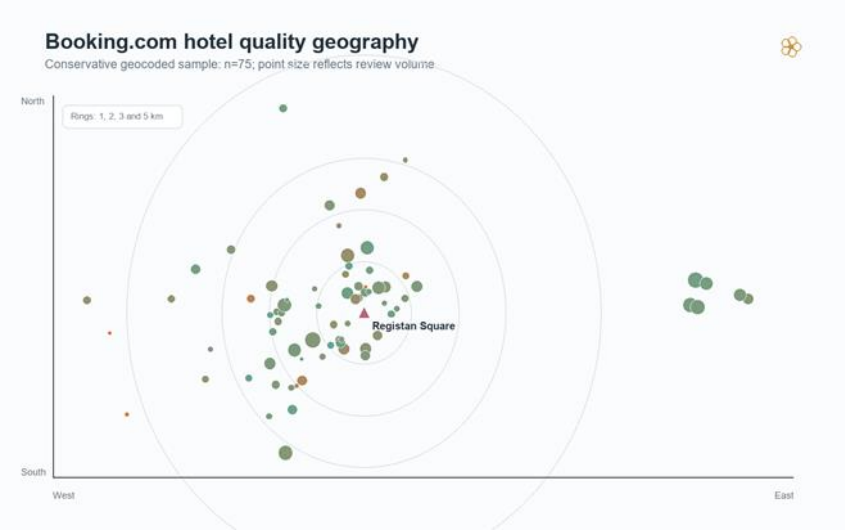
Figure 1. Leading reviewer nationalities on Booking.com



Source: nationality field in 22,101 composite-deduplicated reviews

Hotels are significantly clustered: the observed mean nearest-neighbour distance is 0.338 km versus 0.408 km expected, NNI = 0.827 (z = -2.86, p = 0.004). Kernel density peaks 0.45 km from the Registan, and a well-reviewed eastern resort cluster shows that international visibility extends beyond the Old Town (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Booking.com hotel quality geography



Source: conservative geocoded sample n=75; point size reflects hotel review count and color reflects rating

Quality, however, does not mirror supply. Moran’s I is -0.033 (p = 0.557) and the distance–rating correlation -0.043 (p = 0.715). Inner-ring hotels average 9.12, but ring means do not decay monotonically (Table 1): centrality brings choice, not higher scores.

Table 1. Spatial profile by Registan distance

Ring	Hotels	Share	Meanscore	Reviewtotal
0–1 km	28	37.3%	9.12	5,275
1–2 km	18	24.0%	9.05	5,466
2–3 km	12	16.0%	8.75	2,601
3–5 km	8	10.7%	8.94	1,680
>5 km	9	12.0%	8.80	4,865

Source: author calculations from the platform files supplied for this study

Of 16,250 positive and 9,279 negative comments, “rooms” (37.5% of positive) and “cleaning” (21.3% of negative) dominate; “breakfast” (35.5%) and “location” (35.1%) follow in positive fields, while every other negative theme falls below 10%. The overall management-response rate is 24.5% — 21.3% for scores of 1–7 versus 28.4% for scores of 10 — indicating weak service recovery rather than systematic handling of failures. Review volume peaks in April–May and September–October; because review histories span unequal years, these are shares of reviewed stays, not occupancy.

Discussion. Clustering preserves the historic concentration of supply, while the absence of spatial autocorrelation shows that high and low ratings are evenly distributed: hotels cannot rely on location for reputation, and neighbourhood spillovers are absent. With one third of reviews from Russia and Uzbekistan and substantial shares from Western Europe, the Gulf, East Asia and Central Asia, pre-arrival information, payments, breakfast and check-in communication must be adapted to each source market — with Russian-language arrival

guidance, Uzbek-language domestic information and multilingual escalation beyond English as bridge language. Operationally, priority lies in room cleanliness, bathroom equipment, breakfast consistency, staff responsiveness and a documented procedure that responds to low-score complaints on cleaning, safety, billing and maintenance rather than chiefly thanking top-score reviewers [2; 9].

The study is limited by address fields without street data, left-skewed platform scores, dictionary coding that cannot capture multilingual sentiment, and unequal review histories [4; 5; 6; 8]. Future work should obtain verified coordinates and capacity, maintain repeated cross-sections, estimate hierarchical multilingual sentiment models, test whether responses improve subsequent ratings, and compare the same hotel’s outcomes across platforms [8].

Conclusion

Booking.com presents Samarkand as a clustered but quality-diverse market with an internationally recognised rating system. Ratings show no significant spatial autocorrelation, distance gradient or spatial-lag effect; attention should therefore shift to operations — rooms and cleaning, breakfast, multilingual service and efficient complaint handling. The 24.5% response rate and its bias toward positive reviews identify clear improvement areas.

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FROM “TRANSIT POINT” TO “DESTINATION”: MECHANISMS FOR ENHANCING SERVICE EFFICIENCY AND GEOGRAPHICAL RESTRUCTURING OF TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE IN UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract: *Focusing on Uzbekistan and adopting the “origin-corridor-destination” framework, this paper examines the mechanisms for enhancing tourism infrastructure service efficiency and the resulting spatial transformations as the country transitions from a transit zone to a tourism destination. It proposes a coupled mechanism comprising four interconnected components: accessibility efficiency, node carrying capacity efficiency, length-of-stay conversion efficiency, and governance synergy efficiency. The analysis further notes that the system is constrained by a "weakest link" effect among these components. The study further suggests that efficiency improvements will drive the transformation of the “Tashkent-Samarkand-Bukhara-Khiva” corridor*