

# Listen to your customers! How hotels manage online travel reviews. The case of hotels in Lugano

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## Abstract

Given the increasing influence of online hotel reviews on travellers' decisions, hotels need to develop management strategies, in order to monitor their business' online reputation and to take advantage of customers' comments. In the paper, the communicative practices taking place in the online interaction between guests and hotels are analysed, in order to pursue a descriptive goal – that is to characterize the phenomenon –, and a prescriptive goal – that is to provide guidelines and a framework to develop strategies to effectively reply to online customers' reviews. Three kinds of analyses were performed on a sample of online reviews and the respective hotel responses: 1) a typology of the online interaction guest-hotel was elaborated and validated; 2) the arguments used by reviewers to support their recommendation were identified, to verify if and to what extent hotels address them; 3) rhetorical moves (i.e. communicative strategies used by a speaker to persuade the audience) employed by hotels to appeal to their customers were classified.

**Keywords:** online hotel reviews; online reputation; review management; rhetorical moves; arguments; typology of communicative actions; customer-hotel interaction.

## 1 Introduction

The Internet provides increasingly new sources of information to travellers, who surf the web to get an idea about the next holiday and to organize logistic aspects, as to find accommodations. The reputation of a tourism organization is influenced by a number of factors, among which an important role is nowadays being played by discourses developing online between past and future customers (Marchiori and Cantoni, 2012). There is, in fact, an overall tendency of web users to be familiar with the concept of reputation, and an overall attitude to search online for the main opinion of other web users regarding a destination. The participation in the reputation creation process (either by contributing to the word of mouth or just looking at the comments) represents the verbalization of the opinions of a group of stakeholders, and eventually influences their prior beliefs (Marchiori et al. 2013). Among the different types of User Generated Contents, a leading role in image and reputation construction is played by Online Travel Reviews (OTR) (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). OTR were calculated to have a growth rate of 800% in the last 4 years, reaching an amount of 92'870'000 in 2012 (Tapinassi, 2013). Recent studies report that 43% of people who use the Internet to plan a trip read reviews of others, that 16% declared they wrote a review, and that OTR are the form of advertising deemed more reliable, second only to recommendations from friends and relatives (Bennett, 2012). OTR are, indeed,

particularly persuasive because they have an inherent argumentative structure that is because they provide opinions on the reviewed tourism product supporting them by reasons (De Ascaniis & Gretzel, 2013).

Hotels can no longer ignore online reviews, and many of them are struggling to find a way to manage as well as to take advantage of OTR. The management of reviews implies a change in the attitude of the hotel and a greater awareness of the importance and impact that reviews can have on their business. The tangible benefits of managing OTR are widely discussed in the literature: it improves the quality of services through the active listening of what guests say, it helps benchmarking competitors by reading the reviews they receive (Tapinassi, 2013), it allows having a direct relationship with customers and, thus, enhance their confidence (Johnston and Mehra, 2002; Davidow, 2003). All these potentialities may strongly affect companies' revenues: a hotel with a good reputation can afford to raise prices, as a good reputation tends to lower the price sensitivity of customers (Farinelli, 2013). Therefore, it appears crucial for hotel managers to develop strategies to manage online reviews, considering its own characteristics and resources (Levy et al., 2013).

This study aims at understanding if and how hotels manage online reviews. The case of 3, 4 and 5-star hotels in Lugano (Switzerland) was taken; both all the positive (ranked 4 or 5) and negative reviews (ranked 3, 2 or 1) published on TripAdvisor in English, Italian and German languages were collected and three kinds of analysis were performed in order to answer to the question: which communicative practices are employed by hotels located in Lugano to respond to online reviews? First, a typology of reviews and hotels' answers was built, based on the constitutive aspects of the communicative interaction between customer and hotel. Second, an argumentative analysis allowed to point out if the point made by the customer about his/her hospitality experience was caught and addressed by the hotel in the response. Third, the rhetorical moves employed by hotels to reply to reviews were identified and classified. Contribution to the literature on hotel online reviews and managerial implications were discussed in the conclusion.

## **2 Literature review**

### **2.1 Online Travel Reviews as decision-making drivers**

As an emerging massive phenomenon in the eTourism field, in the last few years OTR have been investigated under different respects. One of the first extensive study on the role and impact of OTR dates to 2007 (Gretzel, Yoo & Purifoy) and received financial support from TripAdvisor. It came out that looking at consumers' comments or other posted materials is the activity that people using the Internet take part the most in during their trip planning. Studies on when and how OTR are used by travellers in their trip planning process, then, pointed out that they inform different stages, with different aims: at the beginning of the trip planning for getting ideas, in the middle of it to narrow down choices, later on to confirm decisions, and even after the trip to compare and share experiences (Yoo & Gretzel, 2008; Lee, Law & Murphy, 2011; Zhang, Pan, Smith & Li, 2009;).

Consumers' reviews are perceived as trustworthy and reliable because they are written from a consumer's perspective, and as more credible than information provided by marketers (Dickinger, 2011; Arsal, Woosnam, Baldwin & Backman,

2010), because mostly produced for a benevolent reason, that is for spreading an information which is thought to be beneficial for the reader. In the case of travel related products, reviewers' credibility is perceived to be based, above all, on the fact that they personally had the travel experience and have no reason to lie. If compared with the information provided by travel service providers, then, information posted online are considered more up-to-date, enjoyable and reliable (Gretzel, Yoo & Purifoy, 2007). The arguments used by the supply side to promote a product may often differ from those which might be selected by a consumer (Fedele, De Ascaniis & Cantoni, 2011). The prominent motivation driving people to write reviews seems to be the need to reciprocate positive experiences provided by travel and tourism companies, followed by the concern for other consumers (altruistic reason) and the wish to share personal experiences and show expertise (hedonistic reason) (Yoo & Gretzel, 2008).

People writing OTR propose a reasoning chain to the reader, to support the recommendation they make. OTR, thus, can be seen as invitations by the reviewer to reason in a certain way, leading this way the reader to form an opinion about a tourism product/service and, hence, make a travel decision.

## **2.2 Online hotel reviews**

Considering the impact of online reviews on travellers' decisions concerning accommodation, both the academy and the industry have investigated the phenomenon, with an understanding as well as a managing aim.

Vermeulen and Seegers (2009) conducted an experimental study to assess the role and impact of online hotel reviews (OHR) on decision-making. Results showed that exposure to either positive or negative OHR increases consumer awareness that is the possibility a consumer recalls the hotel under given circumstances. An increased awareness enhances, in turn, hotel consideration, that is the probability that a hotel is included in the small set of options a person is willing to consider. Positive reviews proved to enhance positive attitudes toward hotels and, also, it came out that reviewer expertise has only a minor influence on review impact. Why, then, some reviews are rated by users more helpful than others? Lee, Law and Murphy (2011) crossed "Review Helpful" ratings of OTR from TripAdvisor.com related to top-ranked hotels with reviewers' socio-demographic attributes and behavioural factors, to understand if the authors of helpful reviews share similar characteristics. The identity of the helpful reviewer outlined a person who travels to many destinations and who tends to continue posting as the number of her reviews increases. Readers, from their side, tend to perceive reviews with a low rating as more helpful than reviews with a high rating, and to consider more helpful those reviews, which do not provide personal information. The two studies point out that OHR, no matter if positive or negative, enhance the visibility of a hotel, and because visibility enhances customers' awareness, they need to be systematically monitored.

Suggestions and models to manage OHR come both from scholars and from the industry. The most of them agree on that the management strategy should be divided in two parts: first monitoring and listening, second respond to comments. For each of these two moments, lists of elements to be considered or steps to go through are suggested (Levy et al., 2013; Rivera, 2013; ReviewPro, 2011), the most reported comprising the following ones:

- allocate dedicated internal resources to monitor reviews and to respond to them;
- interact with guests and solicit those who had a good experience to write a review;
- acquiring automated listening systems to monitor what is being said of the hotel online (not only on OTR, but also on other types of social media);
- answer in a customized fashion, but not to all the comments in order to avoid creating a sense of little authenticity;
- pay particular attention to negative comments, to demonstrate that guests' opinion is worth to the hotel;
- engage into actions to improve the service accordingly.

### 3 Research design

In order to create a response strategy to online hotel reviews, the dialogue between the two actors (hotel managers and online customers) needs to be considered, and the strategy to be developed accordingly. The response strategy should be able to give both a personalized answer to customers by hotel managers, and to preserve the hotel reputation in the public online arena. In order to do so, the constitutive elements of the hotel-customer online interaction have to be outlined.

A sample of online hotel reviews was collected, with the double aim of analysing the response practices adopted by hotels and developing response guidelines. The sample comprised reviews and the respective responses of 3, 4 and 5-star hotels located in Lugano (Switzerland) and posted on TripAdvisor between 1<sup>st</sup> February 2013 and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2014, in English, Italian and German languages.

The study comprised three stages:

- 1) construction and validation of a *typology of the online interaction guest-hotel*, where the aspects of the travel experience stressed by the guest in his/her review were outlined, to allow a classification of reviews into types and, consequently, an assessment of hotels' responses. The typology was based on the constitutive factors of a communicative event, according to Jakobson's Model of Communication (1960);
- 2) *argumentative analysis*, where the main argument put forward by the reviewer supporting his/her evaluation of the hotel was identified, in order to see if it was addressed in the hotel response and to which extent;
- 3) *rhetorical analysis*, where the rhetorical moves employed by the hotel were annotated and classified, to provide a base for considering their adequacy to the different types of responses. Rhetorical moves are communicative strategies used by a speaker to make his/her point or to strengthen its persuasive effect.

#### 3.1 Construction and validation of a typology of guest-hotel online interaction

According to Jakobson, "language must be investigated in all the variety of its functions" (Jakobson, 1960, p. 66). The model of communication he proposed is, in fact, based on a functional idea of language: to communicate needs language, and communication is a complex event, which arises in order to accomplish a certain function, like to describe an aspect of reality, to make sure to be understood by the interlocutor, to explain the meaning of a word. The model starts from an identification of the constitutive factors in any speech event, and each factor is then associated with a proper communicative function. Since Jakobson wanted to discuss the function of

poetics among other functions of language, core of the model was poetics. If the model is applied to analyse online hotel reviews as communicative interactions between customers and hotels, the constitutive factors can be described as follows:

- *addresser*: the customer who wrote the review, on the base of a personal hospitality experience at the hotel;
- *message*: the review itself posted online, constituted by textual and pictorial elements (e.g. pictures and rating);
- *addressee*: the hotel receiving the review and possibly responding to it, which is deemed responsible for the reviewer's experience;
- *context*: the customer's experience at the hotel, which fulfilled or not fulfilled his/her expectations;
- *channel*: the review platform, which allows hotels to reply to customers' reviews;
- *code* : a natural language.

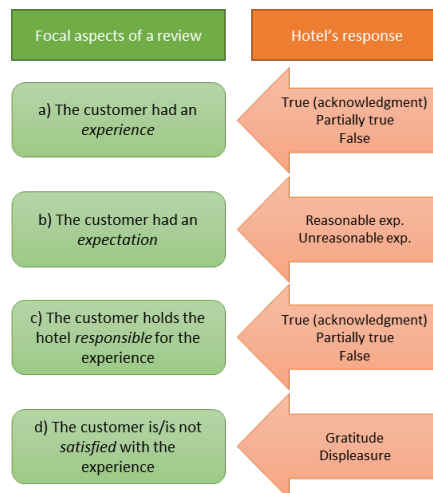
On this base, a *typology* of reviewers' communicative actions and respective hotels reactions can be outlined.

The main aspects of a tourism experience the reviewer can speak about/can refer to in his/her review, are: a) the *experience* in the hotel, b) the *expectations*/he had about the hotel, c) the *responsibility* of the hotel for the experience s/he had, d) and the *satisfaction* (that is the ratio between experience and expectation).

On its turn, the hotel may either 1) acknowledge what the guest reported or 2) deny it.

1) In case of acknowledgement of a positive comment or praise, the hotel might reinforce it, or just show gratitude/pleasure. In case of acknowledgement of a negative comment or a complaint, the hotel might just regret, or give justifications.

2) If the hotel denies what the guest stated, it may advance one of the following counter-statements: a) doubt that the reviewer actually stayed at its place (i.e. the reviewer never had the experience), b) hold that the reviewer's expectation was improper or unreasonable, c) reject the accusation of being responsible for the reviewer's experience. Satisfaction cannot be denied, in that it is a personal feeling, but it can be attributed to an unreasonable expectation.



**Figure 1.** Typology of the online interaction guest-hotel.

The sample was analysed to validate and refine the typology, classifying each communicative exchange between the guest and the hotel according to the types just mentioned, as represented in Figure 1.

### **3.2 Argumentative analysis**

Argumentation is an attempt to reasonably persuade a person about an opinion with the support of arguments. Arguments are a particular type of information, that is opinionated information based upon the arguer's reflection on his/her experience (De Ascaniis & Gretzel, 2013).

Argumentative analysis consists in identifying the *standpoint* and *arguments* put forward by a speaker to make his/her point. 'Standpoint' is the analytical term used to indicate the position taken by a party in a discussion, for whose acceptance by the addressee the speaker intends to argue (Eemeren, 2001).

In the study presented here, the argumentative analysis was apt to understand if and to what extent the hotel paid attention to the main argument put forward by the reviewer to make his/her point about the hospitality experience. Each review in the sample was analysed to identify the main *argumentative move*, that is the unity of standpoint and arguments used by the customer as the core of his/her report. Most of the times, argumentation is not explicitly expressed in all its elements, so that the reconstruction of its deductive schema is left to inference. It needed, therefore, to make explicit the unstated parts of the inference, that might be either the standpoint or part of the argument (see Cantoni et al., 2008 for an extended presentation of the types of logical inference – i.e. syllogism). In a second step, the response by the hotel was considered to see if there was a clear reference to the main argumentative move of the review text, and what was exactly said. The assumption, in this kind of analysis, was that if the hotel does not deal in a focused way with the main reviewer's argument, the overall online perception of the hotel might be strongly influenced, given the persuasiveness of arguments as opinionated information.

To do that, all the responses have been carefully read and the main argument were identified. Then, hotels' answers were analysed to see if the main argument was recalled and addressed or ignored. The hotel category was taken into account, to see if it influences the level of attention paid to reviewers' arguments.

### **3.3 Rhetorical analysis**

Rhetoric is the art of conveying a message in a convincing, eloquent, and effective way. The study of rhetoric allows to point out the techniques employed by a speaker to make his/her discourse effective and persuasive (Bitzer, 1968).

Concerning the kind of communicative interaction considered here, a rhetorical analysis of hotels' responses was apt to highlight the practices adopted, and assess their appropriateness/effectiveness to reach the communicative goal. The goal of a hotel in the online environment is to keep a good image of its business and to promote it. The rhetorical analysis consisted in the identification of the rhetorical moves used by hotels to respond to guest's reviews. The different parts of each response were classified, according to the communicative function they played with respect to the text communicative goal, that is, each statement or group of statements were asked the question: how does this piece of text contribute to give an answer to the customer's comment, which safeguards the hotel's image and/or promote it?

Following a saturation approach, every time that a new rhetorical move was recognized, it was classified in a new category, until no new categories were found. The final list of rhetorical moves was not suggested a priori by the literature (and then tested on the sample), but emerged empirically from the analysis.

## 4 Results

The data collection resulted in 27 hotels, which received at least one review during the considered period. Table 1 shows the number of reviews divided by hotels' category, the number of responses given by the hotel, and the ratio between the total number of responses and the total number of reviews received (the percentage was been calculated taking into account also the 16 hotels that never answered, in order to get an idea of the overall behaviour of the different categories).

Of the 27 hotels identified, 11 answered to at least one review, distributed as follows: 3 out of 4 5-star hotels; 4 out of 8 4-star hotels; 4 out of 15 3-star hotels. The total number of responses is 259, which constitutes the sample of analysis.

**Table 1.** Response behaviour of 3, 4 and 5-star hotels in Lugano.

Hotel category	N° of reviews received between 01.02.2013 and 31.01.2014	N° of answers to reviews given between 01.02.2013 and 31.01.2014	Relation between answers given and reviews received
5* hotels	264	113	42.8%
4* hotels	657	72	10.9%
3* hotels	561	74	13.2%
Total	1482	<b>259</b>	17.5%

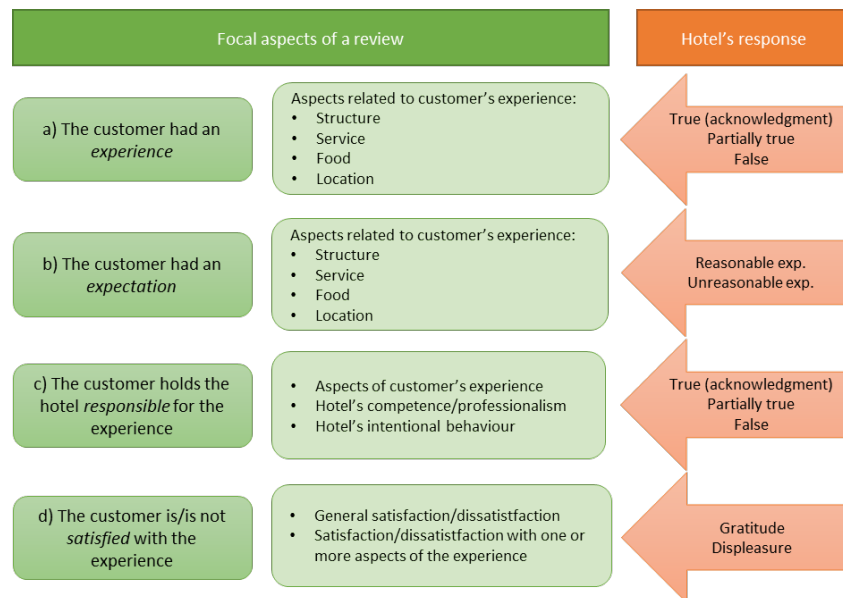
A closer look at the data suggests that five star hotels are the most concerned about visitors' online comments. Indeed, nearly half of them (42.8%) provided response to online comments. The ratio between the total number of reviews received by the three categories of hotel and the total number of answers (17.5%), shows that reviews management is still an uncommon practice.

### 4.1 Construction and validation of a typology of guest-hotel online interaction

Goal of the first analysis was to validate and refine the typology proposed in session 3.1, which derived from the characterization of the online communicative interaction between customers and hotels, based on Jakobson's Model of Communication. The analysis confirmed that the interaction can be characterized according to four main categories: a) the *experience* in the hotel, b) the *expectation* the customer had about the hotel, c) the *responsibility* of the hotel for the customer's experience, d) the customer's *satisfaction* (that is the ratio between experience and expectation). The analysis allowed, then, to further elaborate on the categories, specifying sub-types of communicative actions used by guests in their reviews, and types of communicative reactions used by hotels in the respective response. Figure 2 presents the refined typology of the online interaction guest-hotel. The occurrence in the sample of each type of interaction is reported below, and examples are given.

a) The customer had an *experience*: only in 4 responses out of 259 (1.5%) hotels denied the veracity of what the reviewer had stated. For instance: [review] "...room

was clean but without A/C”; [response] “Please note that all rooms in our hotel are provided with Air-Conditioning”. The aspects of the hospitality experience tackled were, in the sample analysed: price, air conditioning and censorship of accessible websites.



**Figure 2.** Revised typology of the online interaction guest-hotel.

b) The customer had an *expectation*: the reasonableness or appropriateness of a customer's expectation was called into question by the hotel in 12 responses out of 259 (4.6%). The expectations reported in the analysed reviews argued mainly about the following topics: room, lake view, price, service and breakfast. Regarding the hotel doubts towards the reasonableness of the customer's expectation presented in the reviews, four main reasons emerged. These reasons were: the hotel clearly stated beforehand that guests shouldn't expect certain services (e.g. "I noticed you booked a Quality room (...) and it's useful to precise that tea/coffee facilities, as also clearly explained on our website, are only included in the upper categories."); the hotel category did not include certain services (e.g. "It's a pleasure to read that you would like us to be ranked as a 5 star hotel. We wish to remind you, however, that we are a 3 star hotel.") the expectation was unreasonable if compared to the competitors (e.g. "As I'm quite used to travel a lot in Europe for business reasons, I would appreciate if you could let me know where to find, at the mentioned rate of Euro 75.00 or less, hotels located in the very heart of the old cities and with similar facilities."); the expectation was unreasonable at all (e.g. "Unfortunately, after many searches, the object was not found in the room. Thus, it must have been forgotten somewhere else hotel").

c) The customer holds the hotel *responsible* for his/her experience: hotels were deemed responsible for a positive hospitality experience in 188 reviews out of 259 (72.5%), because of the hotel's competence/ professionalism, because certain actions were undertaken which pleased the customer (like giving upgrades), or because of the



excellence of specific services which enhanced the experience. The responsibility of the hotel for the customer's experience was declined in 11 negative reviews (22%). In most of the cases – that is 48 out of 259 (18.5%) – the rejection concerned specific aspects of the experience, such as the dimension of the room or the noise. In the other cases, it concerned a lack of capacity or expertise (23 reviews, i.e. 8.8%, made this accusation, which was rejected 6 times), or a supposed intentional behaviour of providing a negative experience (the accusation was made in 4 reviews and was rejected 3 times).

d) The customer is/is not *satisfied* with the experience: since satisfaction is a personal perception, it cannot be deemed true or false by hotel managers, but it can only be attributed to something else, in this case, to unreasonable expectations.

#### **4.2 Argumentative analysis**

The argumentative analysis revealed that in most of the cases hotel's response: i) either completely ignored the main argument advanced by the customer in the review, ii) or supplied a generic thanks for the review, iii) or even report a generic apology for the unsatisfactory performance.

The tendency of 5-star hotels was to pay a higher attention to the main customer's argument in negative reviews. In fact, they gave a direct response to the main argument in 56 out of 113 cases (49.5%), and of these 41 responses concerned positive reviews (91 in total, that makes 45% of the cases), while 17 responses concerned negative reviews (22 in total, that makes 77.3%). The 4-star hotels referred precisely to the main argument in 35 responses out of 72 (48.6%). For this category, there was a tendency to respond more precisely to negative reviews. The same trend can be seen in 3-star hotels: they referred directly to the main argument in the response to 9 negative reviews out of 11 (81.9%), and only in 7 positive reviews out of 63 (11.2%).

It has to be noted, however, that in many cases it was difficult to identify one main argument, since reviewers reported different aspects of their experience, which were valuable to them and could not be ranked just reading the text. In negative reviews, on the contrary, one main argument usually clearly emerged, in that the complaint or disappointment of a guest generally related to a specific service provided by the hotel or to a specific event. Therefore, hotels tended to tackle the main argument in a more structured form when responding to negative reviews.

#### **4.3 Rhetorical analysis**

Table 2 shows the 13 types of rhetorical moves that have been found to be used by hotels to answer to customers' reviews, which are characterized through exemplary statements (second column in Table 2), together with the respective occurrence for positive and negative reviews.

When answering to positive reviews, Lugano hotels, with no distinction according to their category, in more than half of the cases used 6 main rhetorical moves. The most frequent rhetorical moves were: allocution (97.4%), which usually consisted of a not-customized greeting; invitation to return (92.7%); gratitude (92.2%), which were usually referred to a general "thanks" for posting the review. The following rhetorical moves were: salutations, acknowledgment of the reported good service of the hotel, integration, where the hotel attempted to point out its hospitality approach.

6 rhetorical moves dominated the responses to negative reviews: allocation occurred almost always (in 66 cases out of 67), and was usually expressed with a standard statement (e.g. “Dear guest”); integration (89.5%) was used mostly to highlight the goal of the hotel and its hospitality approach; hotels tended, then, to thank customers for the time they spent writing the review (86.6%). Other frequently occurring moves were: salutations, invitation to return, apology.

If the rhetorical moves employed to reply to the main reviewer’s argument are considered, it comes out that Lugano hotels, in general, used mainly acknowledgement when answering to positive reviews, while they used above all integration and clarification when replying to negative reviews.

**Table 2\***. Rhetorical moves used by hotels to answer to customers’ reviews.

Rhetorical move	Exemplary statement	Occurrence in positive OTR (192)	Occurrence in negative OTR (67)
Allocation	Dear guest	187 (97.4%)	66 (98.5%)
Gratitude	Thank you for your review	177	58
Acknowledgment	We are happy that you liked your stay at our hotel	149 (77.6%)	12 (17.9%)
Invitation to return	Looking forward to host you again	178	51 (76.1%)
Salutation	Your sincerely	149	56
Integration	I inform you that our hotel is provided with service x at guests’ free disposal	96 (50%)	60 (89.5%)
Clarification/correction	The price is in line with Swiss category standards	23	31 (46.3%)
Apology	We regret for the inconvenience	33 (17.2%)	44 (65.7%)
Request for more details	We kindly ask you to contact us to better explain what happened	2 (1%)	6
Compensation	We will be happy to offer you an extra service on your next visit	0	1
Notify to the proper person	We will relate your praises/complaint to the addressed person	18 (9.3%)	9
Denial	The fact you are reporting cannot be due to our service	0	7
Understanding	We understand that a hotel located in x might make transfers more difficult	1	7

\* In the table only percentages, which are significant for the discussion of the results are reported.

## 5 Discussion

The study analyzed the online interaction between customers and hotels published on the most popular platform for hotel reviews: TripAdvisor.com. The analysis was conducted using a communicative approach, where three kinds of analysis were performed on a sample of online hotel reviews about 3, 4 and 5 star hotels of a Swiss city, in order to pursue a descriptive as well as a prescriptive goal on the communication practices among customers and hotels online interactions.

[*descriptive goal*] The practices characterizing this type of communicative interaction were described in terms of:

a) the types of actions performed by customers and hotels when reporting about, respectively replying to, hospitality experiences. A typology was built, which classifies communicative actions according to four aspects: customer's experience, customer's expectation, hotel's responsibility to fulfil the expectation, customer's satisfaction;

b) the tendency of hotels to address the main argument advanced by the reviewer to support his/her opinion. Results of this study show that only 5-star hotels were found to take care of this aspect;

c) the rhetorical moves employed by hotels to reply to customers. Allocution, that is the greeting opening almost all the responses, resulted to be rarely customized, rather to make use of generic and standard formulas, like "dear guest". Giving thanks (expressions of gratitude) for having written the review constitutes also a common polite move. In the responses to positive reviews, then, often an invitation to return is made, while in the responses to negative reviews, integrations are given to point out additional services and best practices of the hotel, or to underline the hotel's approach to hospitality.

[*prescriptive goal*] On the base of these results, guidelines can be derived to develop management strategies for online hotel reviews. Therefore, the following suggestions are foreseen for hotel managers' interest to manage their response to online customers' review:

- monitoring: it is suggested to constantly monitor and classify reviews, following the typology proposed, in order to have a snapshot of the hotel online reputation;

- identification of the main argument: it is suggested to identify the main argument expressed in the review, in order to address it in the response in a more efficient way;

- create standard reply formats: it is suggested that hotel managers take advantage from the identified rhetorical moves, to reply to the type of communicative action dominating the review. For example, to answer to a complain regarding an expectation that was not fulfilled, adequate rhetorical moves are suggested to be *integration* and *clarification*, which allow the hotel to point out its hospitality characteristics and justify its choices;

- customize standard reply formats: it is suggested that hotel managers adapt the content of rhetorical moves according to their own business. For instance: stating the customer's name in the allocution.

Finally, this study intended to contribute on literature on online contents analysis in the hospitality sector, providing a powerful framework to reply to online customers' review. Future research should consider to enlarge the sample in order to validate the proposed framework. Moreover, hotel manager's perspective should be further investigated, in order to better understand hotels' actual strategies, and internal management when it comes to reply to online customers' review.

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