

**Exploring Relationship marketing practices in hotel institutions through user-generated reviews: An analysis of some TripAdvisor reviews in an Algerian hotel.**

استكشاف ممارسات التسويق بالعلاقات في المؤسسات الفندقية: دراسة تحليلية لمجموعة من

آراء مستخدمي موقع TripAdvisor لفندق جزائري

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**Abstract:**

This study aimed at exploring relationship marketing (RM) practices in the Algerian hotel institutions from customers point of view by analyzing their reviews in platforms dedicated to tourism content. To do so, (417) reviews of the hotel Best Western Colombe Oran were selected from TripAdvisor and analyzed in order to identify the key determinants of the RM strategy adopted by the hotel.

Findings showed the existence of several dimensions related to RM practices in this hotel namely: service quality, trust, commitment, competence and communication. The analysis also showed that hotel managers use customers reviews as a tool for continuous improvement of their customer orientation strategy.

**Keywords:** user-generated reviews; relationship marketing; hotel service; TripAdvisor; Best Western Colombe Oran Hotel.

**Jel Classification Codes:** M31, L83.

الملخص:

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف ممارسات التسويق بالعلاقات في المؤسسات الفندقية بالجزائر

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من وجهة نظر العملاء وذلك عبر تحليل آرائهم المتواجدة في المنصات المتخصصة بالمحتوى السياحي.

ولتحقيق أهداف هذه الدراسة، تم تحليل (417) رأيا لفندق Best Western Colombe Oran من موقع TripAdvisor بهدف تحديد المحددات الرئيسية للتوجه العلائقي الذي يتبناه الفندق. وقد أظهرت النتائج وجود عدة أبعاد مرتبطة بممارسات التسويق بالعلاقات في الفندق المدروس، والمتمثلة في: جودة الخدمة، الثقة، الالتزام، الكفاءة والاتصال. كما أظهر التحليل أن مسيري الفندق يستخدمون آراء الزبائن كأداة للتحسين المستمر لإستراتيجية توجههم نحو زبائنهم.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** آراء المستخدمين؛ التسويق بالعلاقات؛ الخدمة الفندقية؛ TripAdvisor؛ فندق Best Western Colombe Oran  
تصنيفات JEL: M31، L83.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Relationship marketing (RM) is an approach based on the idea of building and sustaining strong and long relationships with profitable customers in order to gain their loyalty. In the hospitality industry, it turns out that it is a difficult task for hotels' managers to build and enhance customers loyalty. Due to the specificity and the nature of the hotel services this confronts them to a double dilemma: on the one hand there is the issue of the static structures and facilities that hotels are based on and their complex position as part of a specific destination choice, from the other hand there is a desire of the majority of customers and especially tourists to change the destination - i.e the hotel- each time they travel in a different place or yet in the same place. But even if this change stems from the human nature and its love for curiosity and exploration of new destinations and places, that doesn't mean that the relationships with the customers will be over or should be terminated once they leave the hotel. A positive impression about the hotel service will generate a positive future behavior and vice versa. In both cases customers leave behind them traces of their passage: their lived experiences formulated in rates, words or phrases: the so called "user-generated reviews".

User-generated reviews found in review websites where opinions of travelers and tourists could be checked, can be considered as a reliable

source of information for both customers and hotel managers. They enable future customers to search for reviews and lived experiences of specific hotels, compare prices, service quality and other different aspects. For hotels' managers, these reviews are a source of feedback from which they can take advantage: positive or negative might they be, in order to proceed with the necessary actions to implement and/or improve their RM strategy.

### **1.1 Research problematic**

This study deals with the following main problematic :

How do hotels' managers take advantage from user-generated reviews to address their customers as part of their RM orientation?

### **1.2.Sub-questions:**

**1.2.1** Does Best Western Colombe Oran Hotel adopt a RM orientation according to its customers reviews?

**1.2.2** What are the RM key determinants adopted by Best Western Colombe Oran Hotel according to its customers reviews?

### **1.3. Research hypothesis**

**1.3.1** Analyzing the reviews reveals that the Best Western Colombe Oran Hotel adopts a RM orientation.

**1.3.2** Analyzing the reviews reveals that Best Western Colombe Oran Hotel addresses its customers through many dimensions of RM.

### **1.4. Research aim**

The study aims first at exploring whether the selected studied hotel adopts a RM orientation by analyzing the reviews of customers from a marketing perspective, then extracting the main dimensions of the hotel's success in adopting a relational orientation. The study also puts the light on the importance of user-generated reviews as an important tool in assessing the hotels relational strategy while addressing their customers.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

### **2.1. Relationship marketing**

Today, RM is at the forefront of marketing practice and academic marketing research (Berry, 1995, p. 237). Unlike transactional marketing, which focuses on single transactions with customers, RM has its conceptual roots anchored on building and sustaining long-term relationships with

customers (Narteh, Agbemabiese, Kodua, & Braimah, 2013, p. 408). RM can be defined as "attracting, maintaining and - in multiservice organizations - enhancing customer relationships"(Berry, 2002, p. 61).

The review in the hotel sector indicates that scholars have mostly used the relationship quality model to study the antecedents of RM (Narteh et al., 2013, p. 413). When defining relationship quality the starting point is customers perception, and their evaluation of communication and behavior of the employees in a company (Radosavljevic & Borisavljevic, 2014, p. 148). Among some of the RM practices under this model are trust, commitment, conflict handling, competence, communication, and relational bonding (Narteh et al., 2013, p. 413). Sin & al. also designed and empirically tested an instrument for measuring RM orientation made up of six dimensions: trust, bonding, communication, shared value, empathy, and reciprocity (Sin, Tse, Chan, Heung, & Yim, 2006, p. 409).

## **2.2. Balancing loyalty and profitability**

Since hotels are in an ideal position to begin a relationship with customers because of the service nature of the business and resultant ease with which the industry can adopt it, and that they already possess important customer data from accommodation bookings and the registration process. It is also possible for them to retrieve other valuable information from hotel records, such as frequency of stay and spending behavior. This data can be organized in a database system and manipulated to identify and target customers directly (Gilbert & Powell-perry, 2002, p. 145). Drawing the attention to identifying and retaining the most profitable customers and improving the profitability of less profitable customers or segments is called customer relationship management (CRM), it is a concept that emerged from an array of concepts related to RM theory (Wang, 2012, p. 865), and RM is often cited as the philosophical basis of CRM (Zablah, Bellenger, & Johnston, 2004, p. 480).

As a fundamental component of its CRM strategy, an organization must establish a means of ranking customers to identify the most valuable and then servicing them differentially, however the bulk of the investment should be in the customers that can generate the greatest return on investment, measured in terms of profit (Noone, Kimes, & Renaghan, 2003,

p. 10). Yield management (also called revenue management) consists in practices to sell a fixed amount of commodities with discriminatory pricing to maximize revenues (Koide & Ishii, 2005, p. 417). It is claimed that service organizations that efficiently employs it can achieve increases in revenue of between two and five per cent and gain a competitive advantage over their competitors (Okumus, 2004, p. 66). However, prior research works have shown that, when hotel operators engage in YM, it can have adverse effects on customers' impressions and even damage customer loyalty, That impact can be attributed to the tendency for customers to perceive of YM as opportunistic behavior, which inhibits their trust and loyalty (Lin & Huang, 2014, p. 15).

### **2.3. User-generated reviews**

The arrival of so-called Web 2.0 has continued to attract large amounts of people to the internet. Many applications encourage the creation of online social networks and the distribution of user-generated content (UGC) (Van Doorn, 2009, p. 6). UGC are the online version of traditional word-of-mouth. Users share their product experiences and opinions with others on social media platforms. They can be found in all types of social media platforms, such as blogs, forums and social networks, but rating and review platforms are especially dedicated to this purpose (Wyrwoll, 2014, p. 32).

In the tourism and hospitality sector, many websites are dedicated to this kind of content, in our study we are interested in investigating how these UGC can be exploited by hotels' managers as part of their RM strategy.

### **2.4. Algerian Hotels classification**

The classification of accommodation establishments shows a prescribed and published system within which accommodation is grouped according to type (e.g. hotels, motels, inns, etc.) and conventionally arranged into classes, categories or grades according to their common physical characteristics and service. Hotel classification determines the quality of the most characteristic offer elements for specific types of hospitality establishments (Maravić, 2017, p. 236). Hotels can be classified

as one, two, three, four and five stars or diamonds, etc. These stars and diamonds are quick indicators of price/quality factors and reflect levels of services offered, quality of food and beverages offered, level of cleanliness, quality of guest rooms and bathrooms (Sufi, 2018, p. 88).

The complexity of hotel quality programs, which is influenced by the diverseness of the hotel sector in terms of supply and demand may create confusion regarding consumer perception of hotel quality. Different countries and regions can choose different approaches depending on the features of the classification system (number of levels, symbol used, etc.) and the nature of the program (public, private). Moreover, new electronic distribution channels and their ratings have become a new way to gather information about a hotel and its quality (Minazzi, 2010, p. 66) .

The main differences between classification schemes are (Maravić, 2017, p. 237): Graphic symbols (stars, diamonds or other symbols); Whether they are mandatory or voluntary; Purpose of the classification (quality improvement, taxation level, etc.); Similarity, comparability and connection with other systems, bodies that are involved in classification (state, national tourism organizations, private experts); Level (national, regional/local or wholly private, or a combination of these); Control and verification (state, local, branch or independent inspection); period of classification validity (from one to five years).

The Algerian accommodation structures were named in the Executive Decree N° 2000-46 of March 1st, 2000 as "hotel institutions" and were defined as "any company that exercises a hotel activity. The latter is any use in return of a fee for infrastructures primarily intended for accommodation and the provision of associated services"(Executive Decree,N° 2000-46 of March 1st, 2000, Official Journal, 2000). These structures were classified by the (Executive Decree, N° 2000-130 of June 11th, 2000, Official Journal, 2000) as follows: Hotels (from one to five stars); Holiday villages, Tourist residences, Camp sites, (from one to three stars); Motels and relays, Inns, Chalets (from one to two stars); Pensions, furnished accommodations, step lodgings (no category).

### **3. Research methodology**

To show how user-generated reviews can be useful for hotels'

managers to address their customers efficiently through a RM orientation, we have proceeded with the following steps:

- Review website selection: For the purpose of the study which treats RM practices it was more suitable for us to choose TripAdvisor, since it provides hotel replies to the customers reviews.

- Hotel selection: We selected randomly one hotel among the most popular Algerian hotels rated by TripAdvisor according to the number of customer reviews and ratings. The selection came up with "Best Western Colombe Hotel Oran" (BWCHO)

Best Western Hotels & Resorts is a hotel chain founded in 1946 . Today, it includes over 4100 hotels throughout the world. ('Best Western® Hotels & Resorts: a few words', 2018). BWCHO is installed in Algeria since 2004. With its 23 rooms including 3 suites, a step away from the city center and 10 minutes by car from the international airport of Oran. Close to major roads, Best Western Colombe is ideal for business trips (close to the major companies of the Oran agglomeration) as well as "discovery" stays of the city of Oran ('Le Best Western Colombe, Le plaisir de vous recevoir', 2018). Since the hotel exists since 2004 and the oldest review in TripAdvisor dates from July 2010, all the elements show the possibility of finding RM practices in this hotel.

- Data acquisition and translation: We transcribed all the data of 417 reviews (until 12/12/2018) of real customers who stayed in BWCHO. We had to standardize them into one language in order to facilitate the analysis process. We translated using Google translation all the reviews into French.

#### **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In the following table, the rates given by the customers about the different aspects of BWCHO, these aspects were predefined by the website TripAdvisor, and represent in fact some dimensions of the service quality. These rates are facultative, a customer can rate all the six aspects as he can rate none of them, the only rate available in all the reviews is the global one, which corresponds also to the total number of retrieved reviews.

**Table 1.** statistics about the customers' rates about the hotel service

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<b>Hotel service</b>	<b>Number of rates</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Rank</b>
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<b>aspect</b>	<b>(%)</b>	<b>rate</b>		
Location	175 out of 417 (41,97%)	3,86/5	0,90	6
Cleanliness	175 out of 417 (41,97%)	4,71/5	0,62	1
Service	277 out of 417 ( 66,43%)	4,65/5	0,68	2
Room	169 out of 417 (40,53%)	4,58/5	0,65	3
Value for money	177 out of 417 (42,45%)	4,43/5	0,78	5
Bedding	156 out of 417 (37,41%)	4,56/5	0,64	4
Global rate	417 (100%)	4,56/5	0.71	/

**Source:** Elaborated by the authors from TripAdvisor

All the customers who stayed in BWCHO gave a global average rate of (4.56) out of 5, this rate was calculated by the authors from the detailed rates of 417 reviews. It corresponds to the global rate assigned to this hotel which was (4.5) out of 5. The rest were calculated from the available rates given by the customers. And because the choice of the six hotel service aspects was facultative, the rates cannot be fully interpreted. All these rates allowed the hotel to gain the first place among 33 hotels in Oran and the third among 152 in Algeria (registered in TripAdvisor). The hotel was also ranked 13 from 25 Top best hotels with the best value for money (quality/price) in Africa by TripAdvisor. It also received the Excellence Certificate for five consecutive years since 2014. TripAdvisor gives this Certificate to accommodations, attractions and restaurants that consistently earn top rates from travelers.

#### **4.2. Qualitative analysis**

In order to analyze the reviews, we used the software "Tropes VF8.5" in its French version. This software is designed for semantic classification, keyword extraction, linguistic and qualitative analysis. It is a tool for content analysis research in the information science, market research, sociological analysis, scientific and medical studies fields ('Introduction to Computer-aided Text Analysis (CATA)', n.d.).



### 4.2.1. Analyzing Reviews' titles

First, We analyzed the content of the reviews' titles because they provide us with the general impression left after the stay in the hotel and summarizes the experience in a word or phrase, which enables us to explore whether the general tendency is positive or negative, and find specific aspects from the hotel service that stayed in customers' minds. Only the most significant References are shown.

**Table 2.** Analysis from the titles of the (417) reviews

Type	Associated terms N° *	Examples from the titles reviews
Value judgm ent and opinio ns (Positi ve / Negat ive)	Pleasant	11 <i>"Pleasant stay", "pleasant hotel", "pleasant staff".</i>
	Nice	47 <i>"Nice address", "nice value for money", "nice hotel", "nice service".</i>
	Excellent	54 <i>"Excellent hotel", "excellent stay", "excellent service".</i>
	Exceptional	6 <i>"Exceptional service", "exceptional stay".</i>
	The best	10 <i>"Best hotel in Oran", "best value for money", "best service".</i>
	Wonderful	3 <i>"Wonderful stay", "wonderful place".</i>
	Perfect	7 <i>"Perfect cleanliness", "perfect stay", "perfect hotel".</i>
	Sympathetic	11 <i>"Very sympathetic staff/team", "Sympathetic stay", "irreproachable service".</i>
	Irreproachable	2 <i>"Feels like home"</i>
	Like home	10
Bad Catastrophic Feelings (Positi ve/ Negat ive)	Bad	2 <i>"Bad location", really bad location".</i>
	Catastrophic	1 <i>"Catastrophic location"</i>
	Happiness	2 <i>"A week of happiness", "excellent and friendly service", "Pleasantly surprised", "Proud of a hotel with international standards in my beautiful country", "what a pleasure to have stayed in this hotel", "all the elements that make you love Algeria".</i>
	Friendly	1
	Surprise	6
	Proud	1
	Pleasure	2
	Love	1
	Conviviality	3
	disappointment	1 <i>"Big disappointment"</i>
Behav iors (Positi ve)	Thanking	15 <i>"Thank you", "thank you for everything", "thanks to all the staff", "highly recommended", "wonderful, I recommend".</i>
	Recommendation	11

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**Source:** Elaborated by the authors from Tropes VF8.5

\* Represents the number of occurrence in the reviews titles.

We summarized titles analysis into categories, most of the customers impressions about the hotel, the service, the staff and other aspects related to their stay were positive. However there were a few negative reviews associated to the hotel location that we will investigate in the next section.

#### **4.2.2. Analyzing reviews' texts from a RM approach**

By referring to the reviews' titles analysis we noticed the presence of a general positive impression about the hotel, we will analyze next customers reviews texts which represent in fact the efforts of hotel's managers in adopting a RM orientation. We Will try to highlight the main key factors in their success or failure in doing so following the RM dimensions related to former researches and literature in the hotel industry.

##### **4.2.2.1. Positive reviews - high rates -**

- *Delivered service quality*

The importance of service quality is well recognized in the hospitality industry, since hotels cannot survive intense competition without satisfying their customers with quality service (Narangajavana & Hu, 2008, p. 39). Before we present our analysis following service quality dimensions according to (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1990), we checked for the frequency of occurrence of the term "quality" used by customers to refer to any aspect of the service being accomplished adequately according to them. We found that the term " quality" was used (120) times in the 417 reviews, which allows us largely to explore the significant associations between this term and others. We found significant relationships between quality and service, cleanliness, reception, employees, breakfast, hotel and living space. Service was the closest term to quality in this graph which means that it was the most often cited by customers compared to the other terms, but service is a vast term that could underlie many meanings and that also differs from one customer to another. That is why we will go further in the analysis by extracting the service quality dimensions according to SERVQUAL scale, it is a survey instrument which measures the service quality in any type of

*Exploring Relationship marketing practices in hotel institutions through user-generated reviews*

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service organization on five dimensions which are tangibles, reliability, assurance, responsiveness and empathy (Akbaba, 2006, p. 174). To be noted that service was rated (4.65/5) by (66.43%) of the customers (refer to table 3.).

Being unable to present detailed results of all the reviews, we will settle for a small sample of examples around each (SQD) (table 5.)

**Table 3.** some service quality dimension (SQD) retrieved from the reviews texts.

<b>SQD</b>	<b>Example from the reviews</b>
<b>Tangibles</b> (physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel)	<i>"Spacious room", "very clean room and bathroom", "beautifully decorated room", "relaxing color of the walls and curtains", "impeccable, modern bathroom", "perfect bed sheets", "comfortable bed", "very good smell", "good wifi quality", "care taken in the decoration of the reception", "large, varied meal and breakfast", "very clean restaurant". "charming hotel".</i>
<b>Reliability</b> (ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.)	<i>"This zero defect hotel...", "My personal thanks to the General Manager for his efforts to resolve a problem with my booking", "Congratulations to this team of housekeepers and catering who have a very meticulous way of cleaning".</i>
<b>Responsiveness</b> (willingness to help customers, prompt service)	<i>"responsiveness to the slightest concern", "the staff is always there to help you", "smiley professional helpful staff".</i>
<b>Assurance</b> (knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence)	<i>"You can park your vehicle safely, a security guard is constantly there.", "the hotel invested a lot on security and hospitality", "high level of professionalism and courtesy".</i>

**Empathy** (caring and individualized attention to customers)

*"I went full of apprehension, Once arrived at the hotel Colombe (recommended by a friend) all dissipated to thanks to the exceptional reception of the director and of all his team.", "I was touched by the generosity of the manager of the establishment. Indeed, faced with the difficulty of finding a meeting room of small capacity in Oran, the manager graciously put at my disposal one of the restaurant rooms for this purpose and this of his own initiative", " restaurant was opened for us after the closing hours".*

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**Source:** Elaborated by the authors from the reviews

Customers didn't miss to mention the different tangible aspects of the hotel, in fact the term "building parts" referring to room, bathroom, toilets, floor, hall .etc were mentioned (584) times and were associated with positive adjectives and descriptions. Same for the restaurant cited (107) times along with meals (163) times which were praised for their quality, diversity and cleanliness. In a service context, and during the time of manufacturing and service consumption, the client makes contact with all components of the service delivery system including the physical elements known as physical environment. Kotler divided it by a sensory way into visual factors (color, light, size, shape); sound factors (music, noise); olfactory factors (smell, chills) and tactile factors (temperature, materials, quality of the area) (Abbas & Cova, 2015, p. 49).

The next four dimensions of service quality are related to the employees seen their importance in the service delivery. Past studies found that the interactions between first-line service personnel and customers positively affect the customer's perception of the hotel's service quality (Wen-jung & Mei-liang, 2014, p. 81). And this was observed in the customers reviews who mentioned the term "employee, staff, team" (319) times with positive mention: generosity (55), professionalism (35), sympathy (26), sociability (22), including terms like hospitality and politeness. Not to mention that in many reviews the employees were cited by their names, either the staff working in the hotel or in the restaurant. Finally, the personalization degree was noticed even in the replies to customers reviews where replies to some Spanish and German customers

were in their native language.

We conclude that the hotel succeeded to address its customers from the different aspects of perceived service quality by analyzing it through SERVQUAL model. Another point should be highlighted is that most customers are foreigners having visited and stayed in hotels with international standards and that their judgment of service quality despite being subjective remains largely unanimous, and this is confirmed by the rates mentioned in table 3. related to some service quality aspects namely: cleanliness (4.71/5), room (4.58/5) and bedding (4.56/5).

Studies also found that there is a link between the perception of quality by the customer and the practices of Yield Management (Capiez & Kaya, 2004, p. 21), thus hotel managers should be careful when applying Yield management. For instance perceived reliability can be bad due to some of its practices such as an overbooking policy or offering confusing information about the actual prices (Capiez & Kaya, 2004, p. 22).

- ***Trust and commitment***

A review of current literature shows that trust has frequently been mentioned as one of the most important underpinnings of relationship marketing (Narteh et al., 2013, p. 414). Trust is primary to all relational exchanges between a firm and its various partners because it brings out RM success with a firm's efficiency, productivity, and effectiveness (Lee, Jeong, & Choi, 2014, p. 303). While commitment is a useful construct for measuring the likelihood of customer loyalty (Narteh et al., 2013, p. 414). It is the desire to continue the relationship and to work to ensure its continuance (Rafiq, Fulford, & Lu, 2013, p. 501). Morgan and Hunt (1994) considered commitment and trust as "keys" to a successful RM (Abdullah, Putit, & Teo, 2014, p. 373).

In the process of hotel booking, a lot of information pertaining to travelers' personal and corporate information may be disclosed, and assuring peoples' confidence on its privacy policy is indispensable, it is seen as one step move towards adding more value to its hotel product and make it as part of commercial strategy of satisfying customers (Tinggi, Jakpar, Chin, & Shaikh, 2011, p. 352).

Globally reviews show signs of trust from the side of customers even before the relation with the hotel was established by trusting the rating and the reviews of the hotel, and after the stay by confirming the will and the integrity of the hotel in delivering the best services for them. This is also confirmed in the replies of the hotel to customers reviews, where they always remind them with their commitment and determination towards them, as cited in this reply: "*...with your testimony, you are helping us deliver a superior experience for you and other guests in the future...*"

- **Competence**

Within the hospitality sector, Kim and Cha (2002) explained that competence means professional training and development of staff, deploying knowledgeable staff capable of identifying customer needs, having adequate knowledge of the hotel's products and services, and providing quality and professional services to clients (Narteh et al., 2013, p. 416).

In the section that addressed the service quality many aspects of staff's competence were highlighted, the term employee appeared (319) times along the reviews. We will analyze it per category and from a competence approach in the following points:

- **The reception staff:** the first contact with the hotel is the front line reception staff, the interaction with them can give a first impression about the hotel. As it appeared in the graph 3., reception was strongly associated with quality, it appeared (148) times in the reviews. We cite: "royal, warm, very nice, fabulous.." terms describing how the customers were received.

- **The cleaning staff:** cleanliness is a determinant criteria for the choice of any hotel, its importance is noticed in reviews websites where it is always included as one of the rating aspects of the stay. In this hotel cleanliness was ranked the first among all the other six criteria (table 3.) , it was also strongly associated to quality and appeared (83 times) in the reviews. These achievements are the result of the devotion of the staff in charge with cleaning the rooms and the hotel, they have been greeted many times for their professional job.

- **The catering staff:** restaurant was mentioned (107) times in many situations describing the quality of the meals, the cleanliness, the courtesy

and rapidity of their chef and employees. All the elements were there for customers to choose the hotel restaurant instead of going outside. These positive reviews were observed in all the period of our analysis (2010-2018).

– **The manager and his team:** It was interesting to notice that many reviews mentioned the hotel manager, indeed we crossed this term (74) times, in most of them he was mentioned by his name. We cite here some of the most noticeable reviews : *"I also had the chance to meet the manager of the establishment, a very friendly gentleman and attached to the smile of his customers"; "The concern for continuous improvement is very noticeable in the young general manager of the hotel"; "We can also easily meet the manager who is without ceases to check that everything is perfect".* The manager's assistant at that time and who is now the hotel's customer relationship manager was also mentioned: *"Sincerely surprised me by her great professionalism, her strong commitment to the customer and her accessibility".* As a whole ritual of integration in order to make the guests feel at home (Aubert-Gamet & Cova, 1999, p. 42), the hotel's manager showed a noticeable sense of sociability and personal care towards his guests which appeared in their reviews and showed their gratitude and positive impression not only about him, or the hotel but also about the country.

• **Communication:**

Sin et al. (2002) defined communication as the formal as well as informal exchanging and sharing of meaningful and timely information between buyers and sellers (Kucukkancabas, Akyol, & Ataman, 2009, p. 443). In hotels the communication starts with the booking operation, goes on during the stay and continues after leaving the hotel. Some reviews are cited: *"An email contact is always available to answer you as soon as possible", "quick answer by email", " a listening staff from the switchboard operators, girls and boys, to the housekeepers".* And finally, the worry of the hotel in replying to every single review with precise and personalized answers.

**4.2.2.2 Negative reviews - low rates -**

The low rates correspond to (2%) of the total reviews, which represents 8 reviews from which we eliminated two, one of them was rated 1 out of 5 by mistake seen that both the title and the text were positive, the other review was also rated 1 out of 5 and referring to the manager's reply this supposed customer doesn't exist in the customer file of the hotel. The remaining low rates were unanimous about two matters: the location of the hotel and the parking issue which is in front of the hotel entrance and doesn't seem secure according to them. The general manager as well as the customer relationship manager argued that for the location it is not very decentered from the main attractions of the city, and that the parking is monitored by a security agent and surveillance cameras.

#### 4.2.3. Analyzing hotel's replies to the review

we proceed with the same method regarding our content analysis of hotel's replies. Results are presented in the next table:

**Table 4.** Example of some hotel's replies

<b>Terms (N°)</b>	<b>Examples from the replies</b>
Time (331)	<i>"Thank you for taking the time to share your opinion", "your</i>
Satisfaction (326)	<i>satisfaction is our best reward for which we work every</i>
Experience (187)	<i>day", "with your testimony you are helping us deliver a</i>
Quality (120)	<i>superior experience", "to offer you in the future a superior</i>
Employee (112)	<i>service quality", " me and the whole team thank you for</i>
TripAdvisor (308)	<i>choosing our hotel", "our hotel was rewarded for the fourth</i>
Loyalty (44)	<i>consecutive year with the excellence TripAdvisor</i>
Improvement (43)	<i>certificate", "thank you for your loyalty to our hotel", "Being</i>
	<i>in a process of constant improvement, the objective opinions</i>
	<i>of our customers are welcome and very important for us"...</i>

**Source:** Elaborated by the authors from the reviews

The replies of the hotel turned around thanking their customers for sharing their experience on the website, for their satisfaction about the hotel services and for their loyalty, hotel's manager and his team highlighted their concern about the continuous improvement of the quality of their service, reminding in this way their customer orientation. All the hotel's replies turned around the RM dimensions we retrieved from customers reviews



which proves that they are following an intended RM strategy, which enables us to confirm our two sub-hypothesis :

**H1:** Customers reviews reveal that BWCHO adopts a RM orientation.

**H2:** Customers reviews reveals that BWCHO addresses its customers through many dimensions of RM

## **5. Conclusion**

This study investigated the RM orientation and practices in an Algerian hotel named Best Western Colombe Oran based on its customer reviews in TripAdvisor website. The content analysis conducted on 417 reviews of this hotel over eight years proved that its owned rank and awards are owed to a customer oriented strategy that showed the existence of several underpinnings of relationships marketing practices in this hotel, starting with the service quality, trust, commitment, competence of the staff and communication. As a result, many regular and loyal customers were spotted in the reviews, several others who visited the hotel for the first time reported positive e-word of mouth by expressing in their reviews their satisfaction and gratitude to the caring staff and manager. While recommending the hotel to future potential customers, as well as stating their intention to book in this hotel in the future. Despite The fact that some elements were not unanimous for all the customers -like its location-, the hotel knew how to provide the customers with a pleasant stay orchestrated by the meticulous manager and his professional staff.

Finally BWCHO must constantly assess and improve its already adopted RM orientation. This will consolidate the long term positive consequences such as: enhancing customers retention, satisfaction and loyalty, generating continuous positive e-word of mouth and recommendations, improving the hotels' image as "top of mind" traveler's choice, maximizing its profitability through the efficient use of YM techniques, and thus maintaining its competitive advantage in the market.

This study was limited to only some of the main RM practices mentioned in literature, other dimensions can be explored. Also, only one top ranked hotel in TripAdvisor was analyzed, future studies may put the light on a larger sample of hotels and from different reviews platforms.

Also, on hotels that are not registered in the reviews websites, and on low rated hotels in order to diagnose and suggest strategies that can allow them - as a start - to improve their delivered service quality and performance.

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