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***DO CONSUMERS CARE ABOUT CSR IN THEIR ONLINE REVIEWS?  
AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS***

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40           **Abstract**

41           This research investigates how consumers assess hotels’ corporate social responsibility  
42           (CSR) practices when writing online reviews. The study explores the CSR discourse in  
43           online reviews over a 10-year period, highlighting how CSR’s social and environmental  
44           dimensions relate to the main hospitality topics (experience, amenities, location,  
45           transactions, value). Based on a longitudinal automated text analysis covering 480,000  
46           reviews across six European cities, the findings reveal that hotel customers have, with  
47           social and environmental factors trending in online review scores, gradually begun  
48           paying more attention to CSR dimensions. However, the aggregate results suggest that  
49           the overall CSR consumer discourse is still very limited, although it does have important  
50           implications in terms of consumer emotions and hospitality dimensions.

51  
52           **Keywords:** corporate social responsibility; consumer online reviews; hotel industry;  
53           automated text analysis; environment

54  
55           **Article classification:** Empirical paper

56  
57   **1 INTRODUCTION**

58           The hospitality and tourism realm has seen a proliferation of review platforms where  
59           consumers can connect with one another effectively, share their consumption opinions (Li et  
60           al., 2017), and find information about accommodation, restaurants, destinations, and other  
61           related products and services (Filiberti & McLeay, 2014). One of the best-known review  
62           platforms is TripAdvisor ([www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com)), which has grown from 200 million online  
63           reviews in 2014 to more than 600 million posted reviews in 2017 and 100 million registered  
64           members (TripAdvisor, 2017). In short, online reviews have become key marketing levers for

65 hospitality and tourism businesses (Leung et al., 2013, Levy et al., 2013). Their effective  
66 management affects room occupancy (De Pelsmacker et al., 2018), online booking transactions'  
67 average value (Torres et al., 2015), and consumers' willingness to pay positively (Nieto-Garcia  
68 et al., 2017). Consequently, online reviews currently play an even more critical role than before  
69 in terms of selling services and products (Schuckert et al., 2015).

70 Online reviews have therefore attracted more attention from marketing, e-commerce,  
71 and e-tourism scholars. Researchers in the hospitality and tourism field have mainly focused  
72 on how online reviews, considered an electronic version of traditional word-of-mouth (e-  
73 WOM) (Filiari & McLeay, 2014), affect travelers' information adoption practices and decision-  
74 making processes (e.g. Liu & Park, 2015; Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009; Ye, Law, & Gu, 2009).  
75 Online reviews are widely used as a tool for consumers to interact with peers, companies, and  
76 third parties. However, only a few studies have considered these reviews as data for corporate  
77 social responsibility (CSR) communication research (e.g. Brazytė et al., 2017; Ettinger et al.,  
78 2018; Lee et al., 2016; Yu et al., 2017) aimed at understanding whether and how consumers  
79 (tourists) explicitly or implicitly recognize CSR elements in their service experiences and at  
80 providing feedback about them (Ettinger et al., 2018). This is unfortunate, because consumers  
81 are increasingly paying more attention to CSR (Martínez & Del Bosque, 2013; Holcomb et al.,  
82 2007; Pomering & Dolnicar, 2009).

83 The importance of CSR has indeed grown over the last decade in several industries,  
84 including hospitality. On the one hand, hoteliers currently consider it important to pay attention  
85 to their social and environmental impact and to implement broad ranging social responsibility  
86 strategies (Brazytė et al., 2017; Randle et al. 2019). Global tourism's annual CO2 emissions  
87 increased by 15% in the 2009-2013 period (Lenzen et al., 2018) with the accommodation sector  
88 itself contributing for 20% overall (Merli et al., 2019). On the other hand, tourism and  
89 hospitality consumers are also becoming more aware of CSR (Ayuso, 2006; Han et al. 2018),

90 increasingly pushing hoteliers to report their responsible behaviors (Dodds & Kuehnel, 2010).  
91 Given the hospitality industry's growing interest in CSR and firms' strong commitment to it  
92 (Kang et al., 2010), measuring consumers' level of CSR awareness is particularly relevant for  
93 the hospitality industry (Farrington et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2017), as it has been demonstrated  
94 that it can affect customers' satisfaction and purchase intentions positively (Kim, 2017; Randle  
95 et al. 2019; Su et al. 2015).

96 Online reviews are sources that can be used to evaluate consumers' level of CSR  
97 awareness. Consumers can use such reviews to not only evaluate others' accommodation  
98 experience, but also to express their opinions about a hotel's attention to environmental and  
99 social issues.

100 This research aims to investigate how consumers assess hotels' CSR when writing an  
101 online review about their accommodation experience. We have analyzed more than 480,000  
102 TripAdvisor hotel reviews, covering 10 years (2006-2016) and the six most popular European  
103 tourist destinations (GDCCI, 2015) by means of automated text analysis. Building on e-WOM  
104 and CSR research streams, this study contributes to the hospitality and tourism domains by  
105 providing new evidence about consumers' CSR-related online discourses (DiPietro et al., 2013;  
106 Ettinger et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2014; Xu, 2014). Our findings suggest that, even though  
107 consumers are paying more attention to social issues rather than environmental ones, online  
108 reviews with environmental topics are associated with positive emotions and higher rankings.  
109 Conversely, online reviews focusing on social issues are associated with negative emotions and  
110 lower rankings. Moreover, it is possible that consumers tend to evaluate their overall experience  
111 and their location by focusing more on environmental topics than on social ones.

112 This study's contribution is fourfold: we extend prior findings about consumers'  
113 perception of CSR in their online reviews by analyzing a robust dataset covering six major  
114 European cities over a 10-year period; by combining three dictionaries to perform automated

115 text analysis, we not only analyze online reviews' content, but also their sentiment (positive  
116 and negative emotions), thus obtaining details beyond the mere review rankings; we contribute  
117 to the CSR literature from a consumer perspective, which is scarce compared to the more  
118 general company-oriented CSR literature; and we emphasize that not all CSR elements carry  
119 the same weight by contributing to the ongoing discussion. From a managerial perspective,  
120 these results give hotel managers opportunities to understand their guests' attention to social  
121 and environmental issues and to related areas of improvement.

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## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

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### 2.1 E-WOM in hospitality: Online reviews as a tool to describe a hotel experience

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The internet and user-generated content (UGC) have revolutionized the way consumers search  
for information (Buhalis & Law, 2008; Bronner & De Hoog, 2011), enabling travelers to  
interact and collaborate (Sigala, Christou, & Gretzel, 2012) and increasing the electronic word-  
of-mouth (e-WOM) phenomenon (Litvin et al., 2008). Of all UGC, online reviews, considered  
electronic versions of traditional word-of-mouth actions (Filieri & McLeay, 2014), are one of  
consumers' most popular tools (Chatterjee, 2001) for evaluating their experiences and  
connecting directly with companies.

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When communicating about a company's products and services, customers become  
"objective voices" (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009), with more than 75% of consumers taking  
peer reviews into account when planning a holiday (Xie et al., 2014), which therefore inform  
their decision-making processes (Cantalops & Salvi, 2014; Mackay & Vogt, 2012). According  
to Kim et al. (2011), three main motivations encourage consumers to read online reviews while  
searching for accommodation: i) the convenience and quality, ii) risk reduction, and iii) social  
reassurance. Consumers mainly write reviews to inform peers about their accommodation  
experience (Park & Allen, 2013) and to share their level of satisfaction (Liu et al., 2014). Since

140 the quality of hotel services is often unknown before the consumption experience, consumers  
141 tend to rely more on peers' feedback (Filieri et al., 2015; Park, Lee, & Han, 2007; Wirtz &  
142 Chew, 2002) than on corporate sources.

143 Consumer reviews' main features are the rating (e.g. stars) and content. While ratings  
144 represent an important cue and are a proxy of the overall satisfaction level (Zhou et al., 2014),  
145 a review's content offers more detailed data that influences future customer demand and hotels'  
146 financial performance (Xie et al., 2014). In particular, online review text is important because  
147 it includes affective words conveying positive and negative emotions and strengthening a  
148 review's intent. Emotions are more important than customer satisfaction when customers  
149 provide WOM (Sukhu et al, 2019), especially as online reviews' emotional tone has been  
150 identified as a driver that affects the readers' purchase intentions and reviews' conversion rates  
151 (Ludwig et al., 2013).

152 Content and narrative analyses of consumer reviews have attracted considerable  
153 attention in recent studies, because they provide insight into consumption experiences (e.g. Van  
154 Laer et al., 2018; Villarroel Ordenes et al., 2018). Such analyses could highlight service features  
155 that consumers find more important and provide more detailed interpretations of their  
156 perceptions (e.g. Xiang et al., 2015; Berezina et al., 2016; Xu & Li, 2016; Zhao et al., 2019).  
157 Based on the main topics discussed in online reviews, Zhou et al. (2014) identified the key  
158 attributes that affect customer satisfaction: i) the room facilities, ii) general hotel facilities, iii)  
159 food quality and dining environment, iv) price, v) location, and vi) service and staff. Gao and  
160 Mattila (2014) found that, in the accommodation realm, the servicescape's social and physical  
161 dimensions drive customer satisfaction (Zeithaml et al., 2006), while green practices tend to  
162 reflect people's emotional needs (Kang et al., 2012; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001) rather than their  
163 functional ones. On the other hand, by using a topic discovery learning model, Mankad et al.  
164 (2016) found that hotel reviews mainly consist of five topics pertaining to the i) hotel amenities,



165 ii) hotel location, iii) the transactional mechanics of the stay, iv) perceived value for money,  
166 and v) the overall experience.

167 As mentioned earlier, a specific focus on whether and how online review content is  
168 related to CSR dimensions is still lacking, as these reviews are becoming more important in the  
169 hospitality literature.

170

## 171 **2.2 Corporate social responsibility in the hospitality literature**

172 Over the past three decades, CSR has emerged as an important construct in several academic  
173 disciplines, such as environmental studies, marketing, organizational theory, strategy (Aguinis  
174 & Glavas, 2012), and business practice. Recent evidence suggests that between 2014 and 2017,  
175 sustainability's share in terms of sales grew nearly three percentage points, while conventional  
176 products' share dropped by almost four (Nielsen, 2018). Millennials are also more likely than  
177 Baby Boomers (53% vs. 34%) to buy products that are environmentally friendly.

178 By CSR we mean "context-specific organizational actions and policies that take into account  
179 stakeholders' expectations and the triple bottom line of economic, social, and environmental  
180 performance" (Aguinis, 2011, p. 855). The economic, social, and environmental spheres are the  
181 main three areas in which CSR actions are usually implemented.

182 The *economic dimension* is crucial, because a company has to be profitable in order to  
183 execute other types of responsibilities and to manage its impact on society and on the  
184 environment (Carroll et al., 2010; Weber, 2008). The *social dimension* covers an organization's  
185 responsibility for social issues and related activities in terms of its internal (e.g. employees) and  
186 external (e.g. consumers, suppliers, or NGOs) stakeholders, as well as all actions focused on  
187 the community in which a company operates (Porter & Kramer, 2006). In their  
188 conceptualization of CSR's social dimension, scholars (Giuliani et al., 2016; Schrempf-Stirling  
189 & Wettstein, 2017) have recently started paying attention to the role of *human rights* – the

190 inalienable fundamental rights to which a person is inherently entitled simply by virtue of being  
191 a human being (World Conference on Human Rights, 1993). The *environmental dimension*  
192 deals with the organization's responsibility towards environmental and natural resources, as  
193 well as with related topics, like water, energy, certifications, waste, pollution, bio-diversity,  
194 natural gas, the greenhouse effect, and material stewardship (e.g. Babiak & Trendafilova, 2011;  
195 Welford et al., 2008).

196 CSR actions can take many forms – such as waste management programs, diversity  
197 initiatives, employee or community engagement activities, green material usage, and monetary  
198 donations to charities (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001) – which are increasingly being implemented  
199 in the hospitality industry.

200 In line with general management studies, the focus on CSR has grown in the hospitality  
201 and tourism literature (e.g. Farrington et al., 2017; Holcomb et al., 2007). Although Goldstein  
202 and Primlani (2012) traced the origins of hotel sustainability back to the 1960s, mainly as a  
203 form of companies' voluntary and philanthropic acts, the leading global chains only started  
204 implementing environmentally friendly practices and numerous CSR initiatives to serve their  
205 local communities and improve their employees' well-being from about 2000 (Butler, 2008;  
206 Chan, 2013). For instance, AccorHotels has made a commitment – the Planet 21 program – to  
207 accelerate and intensify the group's sustainable development in terms of introducing eco-  
208 friendly products and reducing its energy and water usage (Planet 21 Accor Hotels, 2018). Best  
209 Western Hotels & Resorts joined the project “Stay for the Planet,” carrying out energy-efficient  
210 actions and reducing its environmental impact (Best Western, 2018).

211 Several scholars have investigated CSR in the hotel industry from different points of  
212 view, revealing, for instance, how CSR actions affect hotel outcomes in terms of financial  
213 performance and consumer loyalty (Liu et al., 2014), how they create a positive social impact  
214 in the external community (Nicolau, 2008), and how hotel chains communicate about CSR on

215 their websites (Holcomb et al., 2007; Jones et al., 2016). Moisescu (2015) suggested that CSR  
216 communication can be very effective, but it can also be a “double edged sword” (Sen et al.,  
217 2006) by enhancing skepticism and the perception of greenwashing. Hotels therefore face the  
218 challenge of promoting an environmentally friendly image while avoiding accusations of  
219 greenwashing (Chan, 2013; Helen Chun & Giebelhausen, 2012). Despite a large number of  
220 studies focusing on the range of CSR practices that hotels implemented and communicated (e.g.  
221 Bohdanowicz, 2006; Bohdanowicz et al., 2011; Erdogan & Baris, 2007; Sparks et al., 2013),  
222 there is as yet little analysis of consumers’ perception of CSR actions in the hotel industry  
223 (Ettinger et al., 2018).

224

### 225 **2.3 Do hotel guests care about corporate social responsibility?**

226 Consumers are the most influential group regarding exerting pressure on hoteliers to adopt  
227 greener practices and codes of ethics (Ayuso, 2006). This is consistent with other industries in  
228 which companies adopt CSR practices to respond to external pressures and in a bid to gain  
229 legitimacy and enhance their reputation (e.g. Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Du et al., 2007). In the  
230 same vein, online reviews play a major role in CSR communication (Ettinger et al., 2018;  
231 Öberseder et al., 2011). By providing a review online, consumers can, as mentioned previously,  
232 express their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their accommodation experience, as  
233 well as the social and physical servicescape (e.g. the interior facilities, the building, and  
234 interaction with the employees), but also express how they perceive and evaluate hotels’ CSR  
235 practices, thus creating a dialogue with them.

236 To the best of our knowledge, research on this topic has been scant and fragmented.  
237 Previous research suggests that pro-environmental behavior is more common in daily activities  
238 than while traveling (Dolnicar & Grün, 2009; Miao & Wei, 2013). When consumers write an  
239 online review, do they evaluate their accommodation experience in terms of corporate social

240 responsibility? Ettinger et al. (2018) have, for instance, documented how guests comment on  
241 hotels' CSR engagement by analyzing a small sample of Austrian hotels and showing that  
242 environmental issues and supplier relations are most commented on in customer reviews. By  
243 analyzing hotel guests' willingness to report on green content in their online reviews and, in  
244 turn, the management response rates, Lee et al. (2016) investigated these guests' perception of  
245 green practices. Yu et al. (2017) analyzed online reviews to understand the relationship between  
246 green practices and customer satisfaction, although the authors' study only concentrated on a  
247 sample of 10 green hotels in the USA. Peiró-Signes et al. (2014) analyzed the impact of hotels  
248 with an ISO 14001 environmental certificate on customers' perspective, finding that guests rate  
249 hotels with an ISO 14001 certificate higher than those without it. Furthermore, Brazyté et al.  
250 (2017) focused on a small sample of Costa Rican hotels with a sustainability certificate to  
251 explore how guests respond to sustainability efforts in their online reviews. These authors found  
252 that customers who explicitly recognize a hotel's implemented sustainability measures tend to  
253 provide higher ratings in their reviews.

254         Despite the topic's growing importance, it is clear that the few contributions in the field  
255 only focused on small samples in specific contexts (e.g. the USA, Austria, and Costa Rica), or  
256 only on green hotels, where consumers who are already keen on sustainable practices will stay,  
257 thus potentially biasing the results.

258         Building on previous work, this study aims to contribute to this research stream by  
259 providing insights into consumers' overall attention to CSR in the hotel industry. We used a  
260 novel dataset comprising more than 480,000 reviews over a period of 10 years of hotels in the  
261 six most important tourist destinations in Europe, according to GDCI (2015). The study aims  
262 to answer the following research questions:

263 ***RQ1:*** Has the attention consumers pay to CSR-related factors in the hotel industry evolved  
264 over time?

265 **RQ2:** To what extent do consumers explicitly recognize and report CSR-related elements in  
266 their online reviews of their accommodation experience?

267 **RQ3a:** To what extent are the CSR dimensions discussed in online reviews associated with  
268 emotional content?

269 **RQ3b:** To what extent are the CSR dimensions discussed in online reviews associated with  
270 ratings?

271 **RQ3c:** To what extent are the CSR dimensions discussed in online reviews associated with  
272 hospitality topics?

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### 3 METHODOLOGY

275

#### 3.1 Method

276 Textual user-generated web content provides an extensive shared cognitive and cultural context  
277 (Xiang et al., 2017). We adopted a longitudinal design and analyzed the data through automated  
278 text analysis to identify and describe consumer feedback patterns over time. In particular, we  
279 employed consumer-generated online reviews to see whether and how consumers talk about  
280 CSR-related elements when they evaluate their accommodation experiences. We used  
281 Linguistic Inquiry Word Count (LIWC) (Pennebaker et al., 2007), a software package used by  
282 various scholars in different academic fields, ranging from psychology (e.g. Boyd &  
283 Pennebaker, 2017) to marketing (e.g. Hewett et al., 2016) and consumer behavior (e.g.  
284 Humphreys & Wang, 2017), to analyze consumers' reviews. In the tourism and hospitality  
285 literature, LIWC has been applied to run sentiment analyses of online reviews (Liu et al., 2019;  
286 Ma et al., 2018) and to explore the linguistic style and semantic relevance of management  
287 responses (Li et al., 2017).

288 This software allowed us to process text (e.g. an online review) and count the number  
289 of times a specific word appears compared to the total number of words in that text. Words

290 were listed in predefined repertoires, usually defined dictionaries, in which they were classified  
291 into categories of meaning (e.g. emotions, thinking styles, and social concerns). We used three  
292 dictionaries, already tested in extant hospitality, management, and marketing literature, to run  
293 the automated content analysis:

294 1. *CSR dictionary*: To identify the CSR dimensions and detect the ones consumers  
295 considered most frequently, we used the CSR dictionary developed by Pencle and  
296 Mălăescu (2016), which focuses on social and environmental CSR categories. We  
297 merged the categories “human resources,” “human rights,” and “social & community”  
298 into a broader social category by following the CSR definitions provided in previous  
299 literature (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012). Thereafter, we categorized the review texts  
300 according to two dimensions: social and environmental.

301 With the social CSR dimension we refer to social activities related to philanthropy,  
302 community projects, charities, employees’ relations, and their welfare, while the  
303 environmental CSR dimension refers to eco-friendly activities related to waste  
304 reduction, energy conservation, and environmental protection.

305 It is worth noting that we do not aim to assess the CSR practices that hotels implement.  
306 The CSR dictionary helps provide an overview of consumers’ descriptions of the social  
307 as well as environmental CSR dimensions in their online reviews, thus providing  
308 insights into the attention they pay to CSR.

309 2. *Positive/negative emotions*: We used the LIWC to assess the level of affective content  
310 in terms of positive and negative emotions. These categories appear in the marketing  
311 and management literature (e.g. Hewett et al., 2016; Ludwig et al., 2013).

312 3. *Hospitality topics*: We relied on the Mankad et al. (2016) classification of the hospitality  
313 topics discussed in online reviews. This dictionary provides detailed semantic areas for

314 different hospitality topics in online reviews, namely the amenities, location,  
 315 transactions, value, and experience.

316 Table 1 summarizes the structure of the dictionaries used for the analysis:

317

318

**Table 1. Dictionaries used in the analysis**

<i>Category</i>	<i>N° of words</i>	<i>Examples</i>
<i>CSR – Social</i>	623	Healthcare, employees, equal opportunities, respect, charity, local development, philanthropic, social policy
<i>CSR – Environmental</i>	451	Clean energy, waste reduction, air filtration, carbon emission, sustainable, green building, eco-system, water purification
<i>LIWC – Positive emotions</i>	620	Love, nice, sweet
<i>LIWC – Negative emotions</i>	744	Hurt, ugly, nasty
<i>Hospitality 1: Amenities</i>	30	Breakfast, bar, food, bed, comfort, wifi
<i>Hospitality 2: Location</i>	30	Center, walk, location, station, shop, restaurant
<i>Hospitality 3: Transactions</i>	30	Check, booking, reception, front, desk, service
<i>Hospitality 4: Value</i>	30	Price, better, business, star, standard, need
<i>Hospitality 5: Experience</i>	30	Great, excel, recommend, perfect, view, love
<i>*stemmed words</i>		

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### **3.2 Data**

323 The database consisted of hotel guests' reviews of a popularity index's (GDCl, 2015) list of the  
 324 six top European destinations, namely Amsterdam, Barcelona, Istanbul, London, Paris, and  
 325 Rome. This index ranks the top travel destinations worldwide based on the overnight incoming  
 326 visitor volume and expenditure. We decided to focus on Europe, as it is the main tourist  
 327 destination area worldwide (UNWTO, 2018), thereafter selecting popular destinations in  
 328 different countries to ensure a certain degree of variety in the sample. Using a web crawler, we  
 329 retrieved the total number of hotel reviews from TripAdvisor, the most frequently used data  
 330 source in the hospitality context (Ma et al., 2018; Mkono & Tribe, 2017). We collected more  
 331 than two million consumer reviews written in English from 2006 to 2016 concerning the  
 332 selected cities. For the purpose of this study, we excluded reviews with incomplete information.  
 333 The final sample yielded 487,100 reviews (Table 2).

334

335

**Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the sample**

<i>City</i>	<i>n° of reviews</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>London</i>	184,584	37.9%
<i>Paris</i>	88,048	18.1%
<i>Rome</i>	63,492	13.0%
<i>Barcelona</i>	57,205	11.7%
<i>Amsterdam</i>	53,316	10.9%
<i>Istanbul</i>	40,455	8.3%
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b>487,100</b>	<b>100%</b>

336

337 For this study, we selected all the reviews listed on TripAdvisor as originally written in English,  
338 since translations from other languages may lead to data loss or misinterpretation and to allow  
339 us to apply the dictionaries, which were developed for texts in English.

340

341

## 4 FINDINGS

342

### 4.1 The evolution of the CSR discourse in online hotel reviews

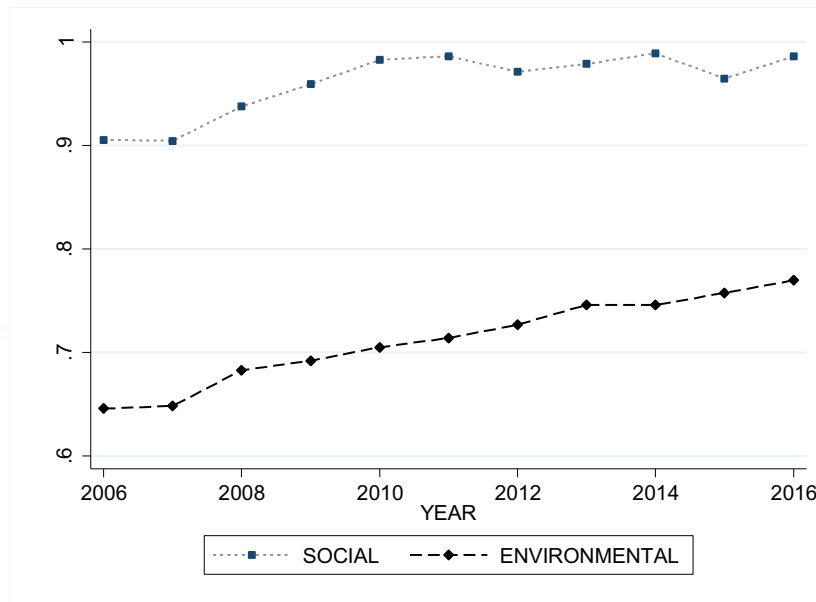
343 To answer the first research question, we used automated text analysis to measure whether and  
344 how consumers evaluate CSR elements in their online reviews over time. By using the LIWC,  
345 each review received a score for the environmental category and one for the social category.  
346 These scores represented the percentage of words related to these categories in the relevant  
347 reviews compared to the total word count. Figure 1 shows the aggregate level of the main CSR  
348 dimensions' evolution in consumers' online reviews.

349



350

**Figure 1. The trend in CSR dimensions over time**



351

352 These findings show that although consumers' attention to CSR dimensions started at a  
353 low level, it has increased since 2006. Interestingly, customers seem to be more involved in the  
354 social aspects of CSR than in the environmental ones. By running an ANOVA test, we  
355 compared the cities in our dataset and found significantly different levels of CSR elements in  
356 the online reviews' content ( $F_{\text{SOCIAL}(5)} = 205.60, p < 0.05$   $F_{\text{ENVIRONMENT}(5)} = 841.00, p < 0.05$ ).  
357 After a post hoc analysis, with the exception of Amsterdam and Rome in respect of the social  
358 dimension, all the differences were statistically different.

359 London hotels revealed the highest scores in terms of the social dimension, followed by  
360 Istanbul, while Barcelona took the last place. Amsterdam hotels had the highest levels in terms  
361 of the environmental dimension, followed by Barcelona, while London and Paris had the lowest  
362 levels (Figure 2). This is consistent with Amsterdam being the greenest city of those considered  
363 (Boes et al., 2015; Dameri, 2014). These results indicate that the social dimension's general  
364 predominance over the environmental one is confirmed at the individual city level, even if the  
365 difference between the two dimensions is negligible in Amsterdam and Barcelona, while the  
366 difference is bigger in London, Paris, and Rome.

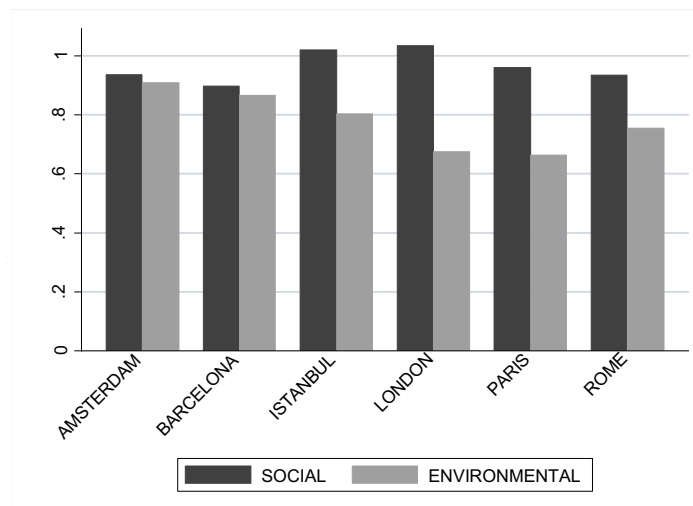
367 A possible explanation might be that hotel guests prefer to report their “social” experiences to  
368 highlight their relationship with hotel employees or when explaining the facilities available for  
369 disabled guests. These topics appear to have a more immediate impact in terms of actual guests’  
370 satisfaction when they report on their experiences. Although environmental issues are growing  
371 in importance, they do not have an immediate impact on the accommodation experience and  
372 might only be considered key in terms of green-oriented customers.

373 All in all, it is important to understand whether social and environmental topics are  
374 discussed in positive or negative terms in reviews. In the following section, we will delve deeper  
375 into this topic.

376

377

**Figure 2. CSR dimensions relating to different cities**



378

379

#### 380 4.2 The relationship between CSR dimensions and sentiment

381 We subsequently analyzed the correlation level between the emotional tone of reviews’ content  
382 and the two CSR dimensions by running automated text analyses with LIWC. The results show  
383 a significant, although moderate, positive correlation between the environmental dimension and  
384 positive emotions ( $r=0.072, p<0.01$ ), while there is a negative correlation regarding the negative  
385 emotions ( $r=-0.045, p<0.01$ ). Consequently, when customers review their experience and are

386 focused on environmental elements, they tend to express positive emotions and do not mention  
387 the negative ones much. It seems that online reviewers appreciate the environmental dimension  
388 of their experience with a hotel. The social dimension presents a different pattern in that it is  
389 positively correlated with negative emotions ( $r=0.108$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and slightly positively  
390 correlated with positive ones ( $r=0.007$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). The more reviewers write about the social  
391 dimension, the more they express negative emotions, with virtually negligible effects on  
392 positive ones. In this case, it seems that the reviewers were disappointed with issues related to  
393 the social dimension of their experience. These relationships are further confirmed when  
394 examining the ratings, a result suggesting that hotel managers should be aware of reviews with  
395 lower scores and lower rankings, because they might provide useful areas of improvement in  
396 the social dimension.

397

### 398 **4.3 The relationship between CSR dimensions and rating**

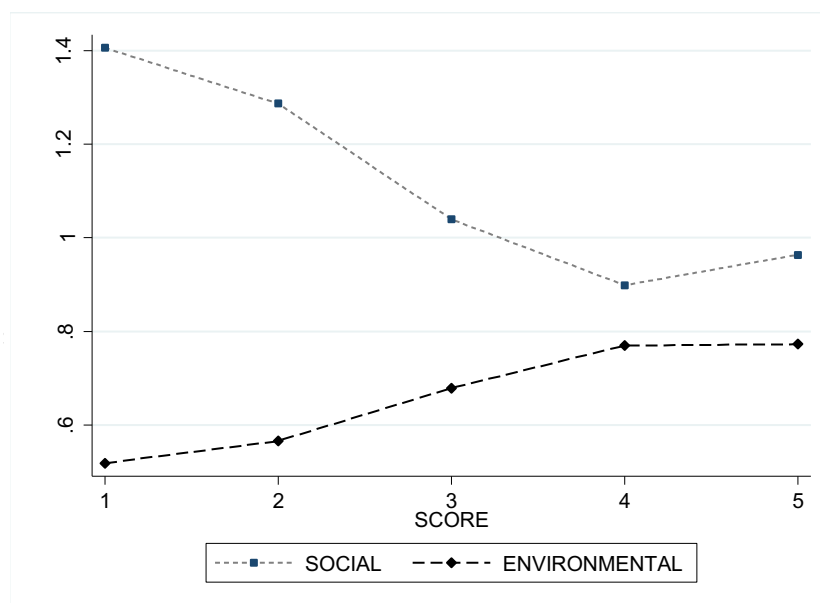
399 We measured the relationship between CSR dimensions and review scores with an ANOVA  
400 test and found that consumers' environmental and social attention in online reviews differ  
401 greatly in terms of their review scores ( $F_{\text{SOCIAL}(4)} = 1282.80$ ,  $p < 0.05$   $F_{\text{ENVIRONMENT}(4)} =$   
402  $542.81$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). After a post hoc analysis, all the differences were statistically different, with  
403 the exception of levels 4 and 5 in the environmental dimension. Figure 3 shows that the  
404 environmental dimension was higher in reviews with higher review scores, indicating a positive  
405 relation between the two dimensions. On the other hand, the social dimension was lower in  
406 reviews with high scores, following a negative relation with the review score. This finding  
407 suggests that satisfied consumers evaluate the environmental elements positively when they  
408 review their experience. This is in line with previous research, which suggested that the  
409 environment, as part of the tourism product, affects tourists' satisfaction with their experience  
410 (Ettinger et al., 2018; Frey & George, 2010; Rodríguez & Cruz, 2007). At the same time, as

411 evidenced by the analysis conducted in the former section, we found that satisfied consumers  
412 mentioned the social CSR elements less than dissatisfied ones. In general, social issues are more  
413 frequently mentioned in negative reviews, as environmental issues are more frequently  
414 mentioned in positive reviews. Consequently, corporate responsibility's social dimension  
415 satisfies tourists in our dataset less than the environmental dimension in their hotels. Hotel  
416 managers should therefore improve their efforts in terms of social responsibility and their  
417 related communication. Examples of suggested activities in the social domain of CSR are  
418 provided in the managerial implications section.

419

420

**Figure 3. CSR dimensions vs. reviews' rating**



421

422

423 In order to delve deeper into this topic, we provide examples of online reviews with  
424 high scores and attention focused more on environmental issues. For instance, a woman  
425 reviewed her experience in a 5-star Amsterdam hotel in June 2017:

426 *“I'm guessing that you've never stayed in a hotel that wanted to have a personal*  
427 *relationship with you. [...] Outside on the street the hotel greets you and across from the front*  
428 *door a sign asks you to respect the protected area where bicycles congregate and breed. This*

429 *will sound either cute and quirky or too twee for words, but it grows on you. The serious*  
430 *message of the Conscious Hotel is sustainability and general eco-friendliness. The breakfast*  
431 *food tends to be organic and one wall of the lobby is covered with ferns and moss. [...]*  
432 (original review in the appendix).

433 In July 2016, another customer released a detailed review about a hotel in Barcelona:  
434 *“Another place that made my stay priceless was the eco-friendly hotel I spent my nights at:*  
435 *Hostal Grau. [...] Just for you to get an idea, the room I stayed at was called the “OFF Room”*  
436 *and it took sustainability to the next level! The minute I opened my room’s door I was surprised*  
437 *with 1) an eco-mattress made from coconut fibre, recycled denim and other natural fibres (so*  
438 *comfy it left me in awe!) 2) sheets made from organic cotton 3) furniture made from recycled*  
439 *wood 4) Eco wifi, which reduces the radiation effect [...] As if that were not enough, every*  
440 *furniture piece in the hotel was recycled and visitors could rent bikes to drive around the city!*  
441 *Cutest eco-friendly boutique hotel in town!”* (original review in the appendix)

442 In these cases, the consumers evaluate their accommodation experience by mainly  
443 focusing their attention on environmental issues, such as organic breakfasts, dedicated areas for  
444 bikes, or furniture made from recycled materials, which improved their overall experience.  
445 Conversely, when consumers perceive a service failure in terms of the social elements during  
446 their stay, this is also reflected in the review’s score, which is then negative. For example, a  
447 customer reviewed a 1-star hotel (London, August 2014), complaining about the poor facilities  
448 for disabled people: *“Went to a wedding at the Cumberland with my disabled mum. Disabled*  
449 *access very poor—toilet for disabled nowhere near the hall and through 2 heavy doors! My son*  
450 *had an accident while there (not the hotel's fault) but waited 20 mins for a first aid kit which*  
451 *was incomplete and they had no first aider on duty. [...]*” (original review in the appendix).

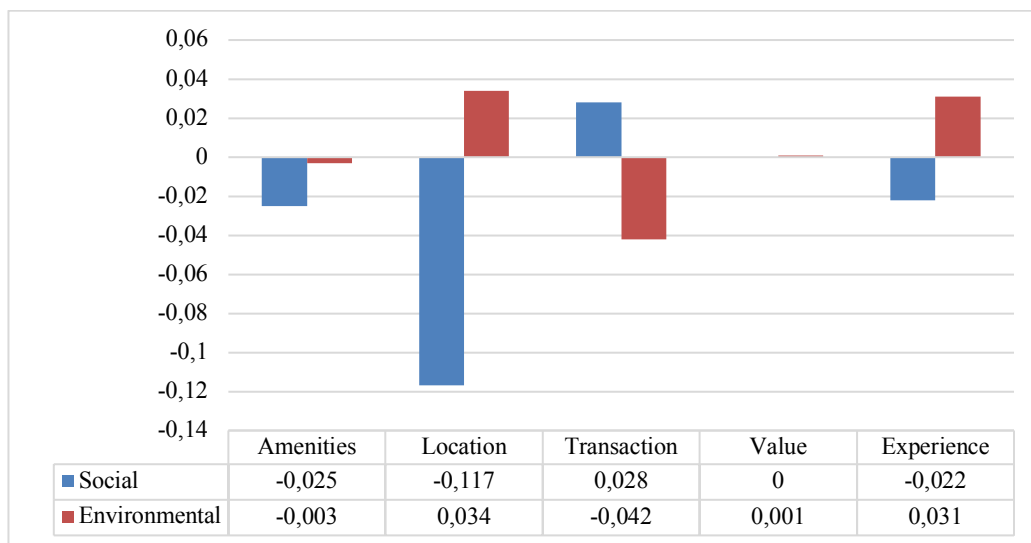
453  
454 **4.4 The relationship between CSR dimensions and hospitality topics**

455 When examining the correlations between the social and environmental dimensions and the  
 456 five key hospitality areas identified by Mankad et al. (2016), the main finding shows a positive  
 457 correlation between the environmental dimension and the overall experience and location, but  
 458 a negative one with transactional aspects (Table 3). The environmental dimension, experience,  
 459 and location have a positive and linear correlation with ratings, while the transactional aspects  
 460 have a negative and linear correlation.

461 Satisfied consumers therefore report on their hotel stay by writing about their overall experience  
 462 and about the location by focusing on environmental issues. This is in line with results provided  
 463 by Xiang et al. (2015), who found that guests' experience and the hotel location are highly  
 464 associated with guest satisfaction and, in turn, with reviews' ratings.

465

466 **Table 3. Correlation matrix between CSR dimensions and hospitality dimensions**



467  
 468  
 469

All correlations are significant, except those related to the value dimension

470 The social dimension, on the other hand, is negatively correlated with the location and  
 471 the experience, but positively with the transactional aspects for basically the same reasons,  
 472 although in the opposite direction. The correlation with the location appears particularly intense  
 473 and negative, as if people who focus on a hotel location's attractiveness do not report on the

474 social issues, positive or negative. Likewise, people who report on the social issues do not focus  
475 on the location. The same applies to the hotel's amenities, although less so.

476 The category "experience" contains words related to positive topics and feelings like  
477 "love," "fun," and "enjoy." The positive/negative association between experience and either  
478 the environmental or social dimension confirms our previous findings regarding emotions and  
479 CSR dimensions, further validating our previous results. The result of the category "location"  
480 is interesting. It seems that consumers also appreciate hotels' location (e.g. the walking distance  
481 from the city center or whether it is close to a train station) from an environmental perspective,  
482 suggesting that hotel managers should emphasize these aspects in their communication  
483 strategies. For example, a customer reviewed a 4-star hotel (Amsterdam, July 2012) showing  
484 his excitement with the green hotel's location and the possibility of enjoying the city on foot or  
485 by public transport, and reducing pollution while saving money:

486 *"[...]this is a conveniently located, green property that engages in ethical and*  
487 *environmentally friendly business practices ... tree trunks for bedside tables, a desk made out*  
488 *of recycled coffee cups, and energy saving shower [...]*A great location[...]*The Schiphol*  
489 *Airport public transportation bus stops right across the street. Take the red bus numbered 197*  
490 *from the Airport and get off at the Concert Hall stop, when you get off the bus, cross the street*  
491 *and go right, the hotel is number 7. Could not be easier and only 4 Euros one way and fast too.*  
492 *[...]*". (Original review in the appendix).

493

## 494 **5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

495 This study provides an overview of the CSR dimensions in consumers' online reviews  
496 between 2006 to 2016, showing how the attention paid to these dimensions in the hospitality  
497 industry has evolved (Figure 1). Despite governments, companies, and other stakeholders  
498 showing a keen interest in sustainability and CSR, hotel customers do not to respond with the

499 same commitment when reviewing their stay. With a decade-long longitudinal sample covering  
500 more than 480,000 reviews across six European cities, we provide evidence that consumers'  
501 level of awareness of CSR activities is still scant, although it has grown significantly over this  
502 period.

503 Furthermore, this research highlights how CSR elements relate to reviews' sentiment  
504 and their rating. Interestingly, experiencing environmental elements during a stay leads to  
505 subsequently higher positive emotions and ratings in consumers' reviews. Conversely, the  
506 social dimension of CSR presents more controversial findings. Specifically, consumers who  
507 discuss these aspects more are associated with more negative ratings and emotions. When  
508 investigating how the different hotel attributes relate to CSR elements, we find that  
509 environmentally satisfied customers tend to focus on the location and their overall experience  
510 in their judgment. However, a focus on CSR's social dimension presents a rather different story,  
511 as consumers who mention this are keener to focus on transactional areas.

512

### 513 **5.1 Theoretical implications**

514 This study contributes to existing literature in four ways. First, we extend prior findings  
515 by focusing on consumers' perceptions of CSR in online reviews (e.g. Ettinger et al., 2018;  
516 Brazyté et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2016; Yu et al., 2017). By using a large sample of reviews from  
517 six major European cities and in a longitudinal timeframe, we provide a more detailed picture  
518 of CSR in the hotel industry from the consumer perspective.

519 Second, we contribute to the more general CSR literature from the consumer point of  
520 view (e.g. Pomeroy and Dolnicar, 2009; Sen et al., 2006). Most of the literature focuses on the  
521 company point of view in order to assess the level of CSR implementation and communication.  
522 However, research on consumers' attention to CSR is still growing, which is mainly due to  
523 assessing consumers' actual evaluation of CSR not being an easy task. The literature has long



524 established that there is gap between consumers' asserting that they are "green-oriented" and  
525 their actual consumption of green products (e.g. Auger et al., 2003; Auger & Devinney, 2007;  
526 Devinney et al., 2010). Consequently, surveys of or interviews on consumers' attention to CSR  
527 activities can lead to biased results. Analyzing the raw data in online reviews can provide a far  
528 more truthful picture, as well as useful and actionable suggestions for managers. Our findings  
529 show that the online review content referring to CSR elements increased from 1.55% in 2006  
530 to 1.76% in 2016, meaning that consumers' level of attention to hotels' CSR activities has  
531 grown, but is still low. This finding is in line with previous findings by Lee et al. (2016), who,  
532 despite in a small sample, show that guests tend not to mention hotels' green practices in their  
533 reviews, even after staying at top green hotels.

534 Third, this research also contributes to the ongoing discussion suggesting that not all  
535 CSR elements carry the same weight (Ettinger et al., 2018). We provide evidence that the two  
536 main emerging CSR dimensions (*social* and *environmental*) are growing. We also present  
537 different trends over time and different patterns across six cities' cultural and geographical  
538 settings. As we have seen, consumers frequently use topics related to the *social* category in  
539 their reviews, which are associated with negative emotions and – more importantly – with lower  
540 ratings. The *environmental* elements, which are associated with positive emotions and higher  
541 ratings, are also growing in terms of citations in online reviews.

542 Fourth, we contribute to the extant literature by integrating three dictionaries used in the  
543 automated text analysis into the same study in order to not only assess the content of online  
544 reviews (CSR and hospitality), but also their sentiment (positive and negative emotions).  
545 Previous studies mainly analyzed how reviews' content was related to their ratings without  
546 delving deeper into the emotional style of online reviews.

547

## 548 **5.2 Managerial implications**

549 From a managerial standpoint, this research offers the following three actionable levers  
550 for managers: First, since consumers generally consider negative reviews more useful (Racherla  
551 & Friske, 2012; Ahluwalia & Shiv, 1997), hotel managers should carefully consider initiating  
552 and improving appropriate initiatives and related communication in corporate responsibility's  
553 social dimension (e.g. donating a proportion of the yearly income to local charities, using  
554 renewable indigenous materials, helping to educate local communities to be more self-  
555 sufficient, helping the long-term unemployed find work through custom-made training  
556 programs, helping refugees find permanent work).

557 Second, hotels should make their CSR commitment known. A possible activity could  
558 include customers' reviews with CSR content in corporate CSR communication strategies. This  
559 would enhance two-way interactive communication, which has been shown to be more effective  
560 than one-way communication, such as CSR industry reports or static communication on the  
561 corporate website (Morsing & Schultz, 2006). As previously pointed out, consumers tend to  
562 rely more on peers' feedback, because they regard it as a more trustworthy source (e.g. Filieri  
563 et al., 2015). Specifically, when dealing with international hotel chains, consumers are often  
564 confused, because they cannot determine whether and to what extent the hotels have  
565 implemented CSR activities (De Grosbois, 2012). Consequently, frontline employees (such as  
566 receptionists and service staff) need to be properly trained to explain CSR programs and  
567 stimulate consumers to become involved in CSR initiatives (Wang et al., 2016).

568 Third, hotels should begin engaging customers actively to co-create CSR value.  
569 Platform use experience is an important starting point in value co-creation (Zhang et al., 2018).  
570 Showing consumers that the savings from some of the implemented activities, such as towel  
571 recycling, are shared with them would be an effective way of attracting their attention. In this  
572 sense, Dolnicar et al. (2017) suggest that including tangible benefits for consumers will have  
573 positive implications in terms of e-WOM.

574 Finally, as previously suggested, it is worth noting that pro-environmental behavior is  
575 more common in daily activities than while traveling (Dolnicar & Grün, 2009; Miao & Wei,  
576 2013). Consequently, new government policy incentives should raise awareness and drive a  
577 change in guests' behavior, (e.g. higher taxes for non-green hotels).

### 578 579 **5.3 Limitations and future research**

580 This study has several limitations. It was undertaken from a consumer perspective and  
581 we did not investigate whether and how hotels respond to reviews. It is worth noting that by  
582 considering their hotel choice as a funnel process, guests may not mention CSR in online  
583 reviews, but they might go to hotels they perceive as sustainable from the beginning. Customers  
584 may self-select sustainable hotels in line with their preferred decision mode, which Kim et al.  
585 (2019) recently suggested. Scholars do indeed assume that decision modes (choice vs. rejection  
586 mode) affect travelers' preferences for a sustainable option over a less sustainable one.  
587 Customers in the choice decision mode pay more attention to their option's positive features in  
588 order to justify their choice, whereas customers in rejection mode focus on their option's  
589 negative features to justify their rejection. As a consequence, a CSR-friendly brand image  
590 should help facilitate consumers' choice at the initial stage. A CSR accreditation that indicates  
591 the sustainable hotels on TripAdvisor would also help. Future studies should examine the  
592 funneling process by checking the way consumers select sustainable hotels based on their brand  
593 image and how they report their experiences in online reviews. Our approach aimed to provide  
594 a perspective on a topic that is still largely unexplored. A design that examines causal  
595 relationships, testing the impact of CSR awareness actions (activities developed by hotels) on  
596 the online consumer CSR discourse can overcome this limitation. Although this study considers  
597 the six most popular European destinations, cultural differences and reviewers' profiles may  
598 affect the results. Future steps in this line of research should take these elements into  
599 consideration to better understand how they impact consumers' CSR awareness. Hotels' rating,

600 image (chain vs. independent), and branding should also be considered. Future research could  
601 also investigate the CSR discourse in peer-to-peer environments (e.g. Airbnb) to determine  
602 whether consumers who choose that type of accommodation integrate CSR elements in more  
603 detail in their reviews. Lastly, it would be interesting to study customers' willingness to book  
604 a room depending on hotels' CSR commitment through an experimental design (Matute-  
605 Vallejo et al., 2011).

606

607

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898 **Appendix**

899 **Online reviews with high environmental attention (score 5)**

 Reviewed 27 June 2017




### Quirky but endearing


I'm guessing that you've never stayed in a hotel that wanted to have a personal relationship with you. The towels address little billets doux to you, the shower tells you it's saving water, your room door features a large flirtatious message. Outside on the street the hotel greets you and across from the front door a sign asks you to respect the protected area where bicycles congregate and breed. This will sound either cute and quirky or too twee for words, but it grows on you. The serious message of the Conscious Hotel is sustainability and general eco-friendliness. The breakfast food tends to be organic and one wall of the lobby is covered with ferns and moss. The rooms are spacious with big windows, a fine shower, and very comfortable beds. Note: the rooms on the top (4th) floor are air conditioned.

[Show less](#)

**Room Tip:** The top floor rooms are air conditioned.  
[See more room tips](#)

**Stayed:** June 2017, travelled solo


 Value  Cleanliness  Service



[See all 22 reviews by Sarah L for Amsterdam](#)  
[Ask Sarah L about Conscious Hotel Museum Square](#)

[Thank Sarah L](#)

900




 Reviewed 14 September 2016


### Cutest eco-friendly boutique hotel in town!

Another place that made my stay priceless was the eco-friendly hotel I spent my nights at: Hostal Grau. This little piece of green heaven portrays everything I imagine my future home to look like. Just for you to get an idea, the room I stayed at was called the "OFF Room" and it took sustainability to the next level! The minute I opened my room's door I was surprised with 1) an eco mattress made from coconut fiber, recycled denim and other natural fibers (so comfy it left me in awe!) 2) sheets made from organic cotton 3) furniture made from recycled wood 4) Eco wifi, which reduces the radiation effect 5) Eco switch that turns everything off when you're not using it (lights, water, AC) 6) eco-friendly non-toxic paint used on walls + a coat of organic carbon paint to reduce electromagnetic frequencies 7) organic herbs (rosemary & basil) in the bathroom 8) natural & cruelty-free bath products. As if that were not enough, every furniture piece in the hotel was recycled and visitors could rent bikes to drive around the city! Cutest eco-friendly boutique hotel in town!

[Show less](#)

**Stayed:** July 2016, travelled solo

 Rooms  Cleanliness  Service



[Ask valehino about Hostal Grau](#)

[Thank valehino](#)

901

902

903 **Online reviews with high social attention (score 1)**


 Reviewed 12 August 2014

**Health & Safety issues and Poor Disabled facilities**

Went to a wedding at the Cumberland with my disabled mum. Disabled access very poor - toilet for disabled no where near the hall and through 2 heavy doors!  
 My son had an accident while there (not the hotel's fault) but waited 20 mins for a first aid kit which was incomplete and they had no first aider on duty.  
 The hall had been newly refurbished and was lovely but despair at their attitude.  
 Also upstairs, in the foyer, young children running about and shouting at about 12 at night!  
[Show less](#)

**Stayed:** August 2014, travelled with family


 Service

See all 8 reviews by Judith K for London  
 Ask Judith K about The Cumberland


 4 Thank Judith K


904


905 Online reviews with high environmental attention (score 4) and correlation with location


 bluesonwhyte wrote a review Jul 2012

Brandon, Canada • 308 contributions • 218 helpful votes

 Follow





**Ethical traveling can be hot**

"We stayed for three nights at the Conscious Hotel in Amsterdam. First the good and the great - this is a conveniently located, green property that engages in ethical and environmentally friendly business practices. Our room was of good size and well appointed - tree trunks for bedside tables, a desk made out of recycled coffee cups, and energy saving shower. The hotel is across from the Concert Hall and adjacent to the Van Gough and other museums. A great location. The staff were incredibly friendly and helpful - above and beyond really, with good advice of travel, accessing local amenities and orienting oneself. The front desk operates in five languages - Dutch, English, French, German and Spanish (if you get the right people). The Schiphol Airport public transportation bus stops right across the street. Take the red bus numbered 197 from the Airport and get off at the Concert Hall stop, When you get off the bus, cross the street and go right, the hotel is number 7. Could not be easier and only 4 Euros one way and fast too.

The down side, there is no air conditioning or even a fan. So you have a choice, leave the doors/windows open and endure the street noise (that goes on until about 3 then starts up again at 5:30) or bake. We did both at various points. We get the ethical side of no air, but no fan in the summer, well that just makes for a still, hot and uncomfortable room. Organic breakfast is very expensive as an add on - if you want it, ensure it is included in your booking price for on site purchase is incredibly pricey. Better can be had for less nearby."







[Read less](#)

**Date of stay:** July 2012

**Trip type:** Travelled as a couple

**Room Tip:** A few rooms have a small balcony - ask for one if you like such things.

[See more room tips](#)

 Value	 Rooms
 Location	 Cleanliness
 Service	 Sleep Quality

*This review is the subjective opinion of a TripAdvisor member and not of TripAdvisor LLC*

906