Uneven adoption of dialogic communication on hotel websites: evidence from Portuguese world travel award nominees

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In the context of digital communication, organizations use websites to interact with their audiences, particularly between hotel establishments and the public. This dialogue can be achieved by adopting dialogic principles, allowing greater interactivity and promoting two-way communication. The aim of this article is to study the degree of adoption of the dialogic cycle, identifying the most frequently used indicators to establish communication with customers and to build and sustain relationships. To this end, the study analyzed the websites of the Portuguese hotels nominated for the World Travel Awards 2023, both individually and by category: Best Hotel, Best Resort, and Best Boutique. The findings show that websites are a favored means of communication between hotels and the public. However, a discrepancy was observed in the adoption of dialogic indicators: while means of contact and links to social networks registered 100 per cent adoption, indicators such as questionnaires (feedback) and customer experiences sharing registered almost zero adoption. Although the differences were not significant, the "Best Hotel" category showed a higher level of adoption of the dialogue principle. This study contributes to the understanding of how dialogic cycle can enhance organizational-customer relationships, highlighting its potential to foster more meaningful and interactive communication in the hospitality sector.

KEYWORDS

dialogic communication, dialogic principles, hotel establishment, customer engagement, Portugal

1 Introduction

The emergence of the Internet contributed to revolutionary changes in the way we relate and interact with each other, and organizations were not exempt from these transformations. These advances have had a profound impact on the communication dynamics of organizations, establishing new paradigms of interaction with audiences. In this context, websites gain preponderance, as they have become prominent tools that play a key role in customer interaction, engagement, and retention. However, the transformation of communications has implications for the way companies relate to their audiences, requiring an in-depth study of the new methods of dialogue offered by these digital platforms.

In this scenario, the concept of dialogism emerges (Bakhtin, 1981), reinforcing the idea that communication is not unidirectional, but a continuous, dynamic dialogue that

involves active interaction between all participants. The theory of dialogic communication gains prominence, as it encompasses processes for forming relationships between organizations and audiences, helping to promote the company, leading to continuous interactions and bilateral communication (Pang et al., 2016; Hersted, 2017; Fadzil et al., 2019; Augusto, 2014; Taylor et al., 2001; Madichie and Hinson, 2014). The dialogical principles emerge. Kent and Taylor (1998, 2002, 2003) provide a framework for understanding how web pages can be constructed to support two-way communication. The adoption of dialogical principles on websites becomes crucial for organizations, as it fosters greater public involvement and, consequently, helps in the development of relationships between both parties (Romenti et al., 2016; Park and Reber, 2008; Kent and Taylor, 1998, 2002; Wirtz et al., 2013; Madichie and Hinson, 2014; Capriotti et al., 2021; Ibrahim, 2015; Russell, 2008).

This article studies the degree of adoption of digital dialogisms in the communication media used by the hotel industry. This area is characterized by competitiveness, where the consumer experience and customer orientation are crucial. It faces unique challenges in interacting and creating relationships with customers (Dias, 2018), and websites can help promote the image and communication processes. Websites are effective tools for establishing contact with the public and creating mediated relationships, being the most used means to interact with customers (Dias, 2018; Pang et al., 2016; Verčič et al., 2015; Kent and Taylor, 1998; Park and Reber, 2008; Augusto, 2014; Madichie and Hinson, 2014; Hinson et al., 2018). Hotel websites are a powerful means of disseminating information, setting the destination, and creating the first impression of the hotel. The research focused on one of the five dialogical principles, the dialogic cycle, as it is the most strongly advocates the integration of interactivity, enhancing bilateral communication by integrating feedback processes (Kent and Taylor, 1998; Fadzil et al., 2019; Hinson et al., 2012).

Despite the recognized importance of dialogic communication for fostering relationships between organizations and their audiences, there is still limited empirical evidence on how hotels incorporate dialogic principles into their digital strategies—particularly through the dialogic cycle. In particular, the literature lacks research analyzing how different categories of luxury hotels adopt (or neglect) these principles on their websites. This gap is especially striking given that award-winning hotels—presumably leaders in innovation and customer relations—often underutilize essential dialogic tools, such as feedback forms or spaces for sharing experiences.

To address this gap, the present study focuses on the following research problem: to what extent do hotel websites adopt dialogic cycle indicators as tools for interaction and relationship building with their customers? Accordingly, the aim of this study is to analyze the degree of adoption of the dialogic cycle on hotel websites and to identify which dialogic indicators are most frequently implemented.

The article is structured as follows: after this introduction, the literature review presents the concepts of communication and tourism, websites, the theory of dialogic communication, dialogisms, and dialogic principles, focusing on the dialogic cycle. This is followed by a materials and methods section that outlines the research, including the problem statement, objectives, the data collection instrument and analysis matrix, and the sample. After presenting the results, discussion, and conclusion sections.

2 Literature review

2.1 Websites as an element of digital action in the context of tourism

Communication plays an essential role in disseminating data, involving people and facilitating progression in general (Ashton, 2007; Fatimayin, 2018; Sousa, 2022). In this sense, communication is connected with tourism along with "share experiences, emotions, knowledge" (Jacinto, 2023, p. 14). Communication has become a crucial instrument to captivate, generate interest and retain customers and tourists, and to advertise the places (Jacinto, 2023).

With the emergence of the Internet and the simplicity of user interfaces, communication methods have become more digital. The dissemination of information and identification of customer needs have become quicker and more efficient, fostering a stronger relationship between customers and companies, leading to greater involvement of all stakeholders and allowing the customer to be more participative (Schmidt et al., 2008; Sparks and Browning, 2011; Thompson, 2011; Ahmed et al., 2019; Brigole et al., 2023). In other words, the public began to use the digital world to gather information and to share opinions, recommendations and experiences lived in hotel accommodations, making communication broader and allowing greater interaction among the public themselves (Dias, 2018; Perez-Aranda et al., 2019; Zainol et al., 2022).

The growth of tourism in recent years (UNWTO - World Tourism Organization, 2019; Mahmutovic, 2020), essentially driven by technological evolution, transformed the essence of the tourism offer, operational procedures, organizations, and competitive dynamics (Buhalis et al., 2011). In this scenario, the internet, and especially websites, have added new dimensions to the definition of communication, bringing with them different possibilities, perspectives and obstacles, transforming the means of interaction between organizations and the public (Augusto, 2014; dos Santos et al., 2020; de Oliveira et al., 2023; Zainal-Abidin et al., 2023).

With these transformations, new types of relationships emerge. Kent and Taylor (1998) state that websites have become crucial for the creation, adaptation, and modification of relationships between organizations and consumers. However, there is still limited adherence to methods for informing the public and improving interactions with them. According to Schmidt et al. (2008), only a few hotel websites are exploring ways to improve communication with customers, with most offering a limited number of features. Thus, there are two ways of perceiving websites: the visual aspect (their characteristics, format, and information) and the subjective perception aspect (opinions, expectations), with scholars emphasizing the importance of design and how it can increase the responsiveness of stakeholders (Kent et al., 2003; Moorhouse, 2017; Santos et al., 2021). In this sense, the main features that a website must have to captivate the public are ease of use, relevant information (such as contact and updated content), attractive design, and interactivity (Kent and Taylor, 2003). A captivating, easy-to-navigate website with interactive mechanisms can overcome communication barriers, engage consumers directly, and increase their purchasing desire (Stephanie et al., 2019; Gilbert et al., 1999; dos Santos et al., 2020). That is why creating bonds and relationships with customers is one of the key points a company must focus on to stand out from its competitors. It reinforces the importance of developing a

customer-oriented service system and maintaining a database with relevant information from all stakeholders (Grönroos, 2016).

Recent research has further advanced understanding of hotel websites, yet important gaps remain. Şanlıöz-Özgen et al. (2024) developed a comprehensive 107-item audit framework to assess hotels' direct online booking competence across web and mobile platforms. While this checklist aligns closely with dialogic principles such as usefulness, ease of interface, and conservation, it does not connect feature adoption to engagement or booking outcomes. Parallel studies continue to emphasize the influence of website quality, functionality, and credibility on consumer behavior. For example, Saha and Biswas (2025) and Chan et al. (2025) demonstrate that credible reviews and secure, functional websites foster trust and encourage bookings, whereas de Vries and Poelhuis (2024) emphasize the importance of ease of use, price comparison, and mobile-friendliness in motivating bookings on brand websites. At the same time, Pant and Kumar (2025) reveal ongoing tensions between hotel websites and online travel agencies (OTAs), pointing to personalization and user experience as decisive factors in driving direct reservations. The quality of websites-including functionality, security, and credibility—directly influences consumer booking behavior (Chan et al., 2025). These elements not only affect booking intent but also reflect indicators of the dialogic cycle, such as the presence of interaction channels (chat, FAQs, feedback forms) and response mechanisms. Thus, the adoption of such tools should not be seen merely as a matter of usability but as part of a dialogic strategy that promotes engagement and customer relationships.

Following this logic, a study on the quality of hotel websites in the context of online booking (Stephanie et al., 2019), based on the concepts of "subjective flow," "consumer satisfaction," and "online purchase intention," concluded that while all three positively influence website quality, the latter two factors were the most significant. The authors emphasize that, to foster a desire to purchase, it is important to consider factors such as customer loyalty, willingness to pay more, and the expectations consumers have regarding the products. Considering that hotel companies aim to reach the widest possible audience and that the relationship with customers is paramount in this environment, establishments should not rely solely on websites with well-structured and appealing designs. While this approach helps create a positive image, they should also focus on building websites that facilitate communication and interaction with consumers. Consequently, it becomes clear that hotels must focus on the image and design of their websites and on the relationships and interaction processes with the public. In short, they should invest in websites that are attractive, well-structured, and up-to-date, present complete and accurate information, and provide means to communicate with customers and ensure a positive customer experience. This approach can help them stand out from the competition and attract more visitors.

2.2 Dialogic communication and dialogisms: a perspective on hotel websites

2.2.1 Conceptual basis for dialogic interaction in hotel communication

Dialogic communication has become a key to building relationships between organizations and the public, promoting

organizations and creating trust between the two parties (Pang et al., 2016). Therefore, websites have become highly effective means for developing these interactions, allowing for the dissemination of information, contact with various stakeholders, and promotion of organizations (Verčič et al., 2015; Pang et al., 2016; Sueldo, 2024).

From a tourism perspective, hotel websites can significantly influence travelers' choice of destination. They provide the first impression of the hotel, serve as a source of information about the hotel and the destination itself, differentiate the hotel from its competitors, and enhance its reputation.

Through online dialogue, organizations can reach a larger audience, establish interactions with customers, and solidify relationships with them (Ayob and Manaf, 2016; Cillo et al., 2019; Yaşarsoy et al., 2022). In this environment, organizations that build positive relationships with consumers and potential customers through the web are the ones that succeed. To achieve this, they need to pay attention to specific behaviors, such as establishing dialogical relationships with their customers through the web (Taylor et al., 2001).

In the context of dialogical relationships, the discourse between organizations and their audiences takes place in the form of dialogue. This is understood as a bilateral exchange of information capable of promoting a relationship, a conversation, and a multiplicity of factors that influence and shape its expression and meaning. This repetition of communications involves mutual understanding, trust, and discernment (Flores, 2009; Faraco, 2009; Richards and Schmidt, 2010; Faïta, 2013; Kent and Theunissen, 2016). Dialogical relations are not limited to their broad meaning; they are "objects of metalinguistics" and also "extralinguistic," meaning "they must be personified in language, become enunciations, become positions of different subjects expressed in language" to give rise to dialogical relations (Bakhtin, 2013, pp. 215–217). Dialogical communications go through various processes and are not limited to conversation and spoken words. Thus, the goal of dialogical relationships between organizations and the public is to develop true, communicative, interpersonal, and mutually rewarding connections (Kent, 2017). In this context, the relevance of dialogical relations and the impact of digital interactions between organizations and the public are recognized (Bruning and Ledingham, 1999; Schmidt et al., 2008; Kent and Taylor, 1998; Atli, 2019). Therefore, the key to achieving mutual and beneficial relationships between organizations and customers is not exclusively about improving the organization's image, but rather the creation of long-term relationships with its main stakeholders, which may involve adopting dialogical principles such as the dialogic cycle.

2.2.2 Dialogic principles: the dialogic cycle

The dialogic approach gains prominence in academic studies, as it covers not only the processes for creating relationships but also provides an opening for more fluid interactions (Hersted, 2017; Fadzil et al., 2019; Augusto, 2014; Atli, 2019; Pereira, 2023).

Kent and Taylor (1998, 2002, 2003) present five dialogical principles that an entity should focus on to establish effective relationships with the public through communication channels, specifically websites, that are: the dialogic cycle, usefulness of information, visit interaction, interface intuitiveness/simplicity, and permanence on the website. The dialogic cycle involves a flow of

information that promotes feedback (Johnson, 1997). The usefulness of information refers to the details on the websites and their relevance. Visit interaction highlights the importance of the website's design and features. Interface intuitiveness/simplicity refers to the ease of navigation through the website. Finally, permanence on the website pertains to the time users spend on the web page (Kent and Taylor, 1998).

By integrating these guidelines into a web page, an entity shifts from unilateral communication (simply providing information) to bilateral communication, whereby all parties interact (organization, stakeholders) (Taylor et al., 2001; Madichie and Hinson, 2014). In this context, the dialogic cycle is considered one of the most important factors to adopt on a website because it promotes interactivity.

From these premises, the question arises: how can hotel entities achieve the maximum potential of their websites through dialogic communication theory? As previously observed, dialogical principles maximize communication between organizations and stakeholders (Schmidt et al., 2008; Bruning and Ledingham, 1999; Kent, 2017; Pang et al., 2016). Kent and Taylor (1998) also emphasize that a web page that does not adopt the characteristics of the dialogic cycle is merely a non-interactive, unidirectional, and individualistic form of communication. The key to achieving effective communication is dialogue; however, there are no easy answers for implementing dialogic systems in organizations. Dialogue is a complex and multifaceted process' (Kent and Taylor, 2002, p. 33).
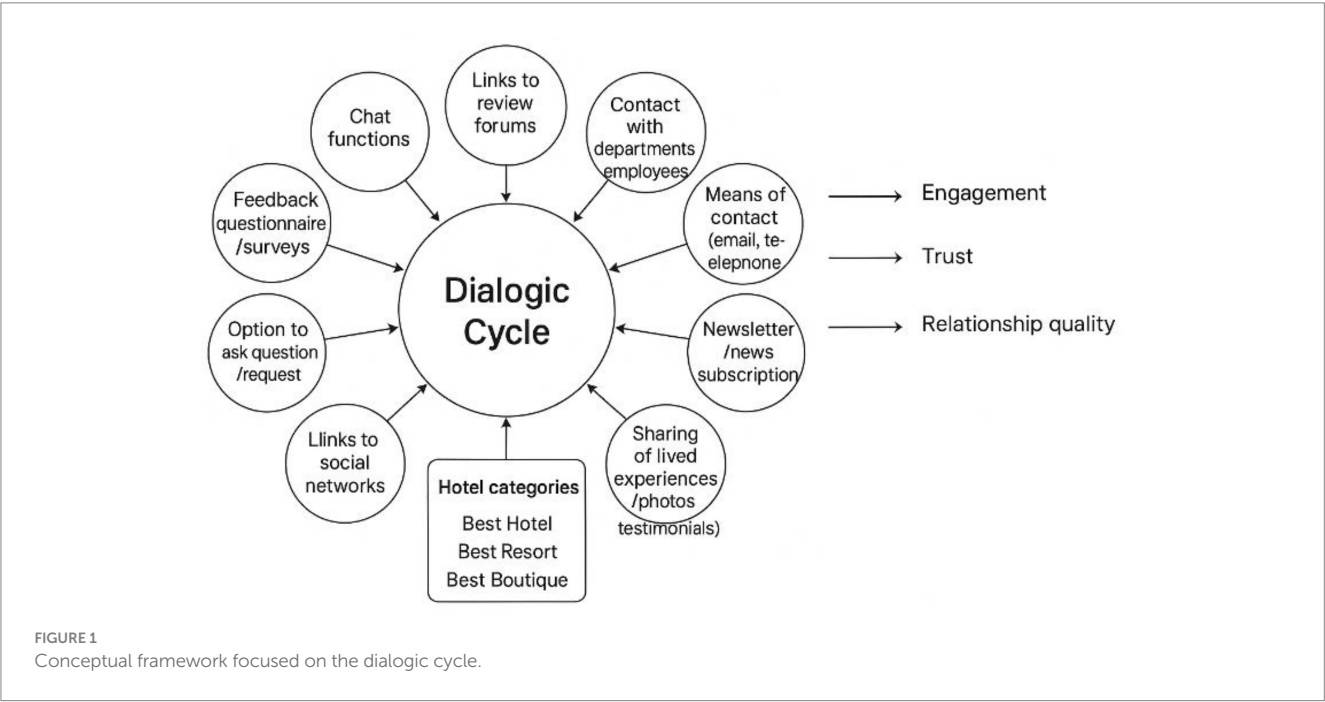
These aspects represent the idealization of the relationships that an entity and its stakeholders must maintain and support the idea that dialogic communication is not just an interaction, but a sharing of ideas, thoughts, and experiences (Eray, 2016). Additionally, Fadzil et al. (2019) state that although there are several formats and models of interaction, dialogic communication

is the most efficient and, therefore, the best for organizations to adopt.

2.3 Conceptual framework for effective communication via hotel websites

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework that guides this study, positioning the dialogic cycle as the central mechanism through which hotel websites create meaningful interaction with audiences. In this model, dialogic communication principles—particularly reciprocal information exchange, interactivity, and responsiveness—are operationalized through concrete website features such as contact tools, inquiry forms, chat functions, social media integration, and feedback channels. These digital elements enhance the user's sense of mutuality and involvement, encouraging visitors not only to consume information but also to participate in a two-way communicative process. In parallel, broader website quality dimensions—such as clarity of information, ease of navigation, credibility, personalization, and mobile usability—reinforce the conditions under which dialogic interactions can occur.

Recent evidence demonstrates that these features are not merely aesthetic or functional attributes: they directly shape customer engagement, trust, and booking intention (Chan et al., 2025; Pant and Kumar, 2025). As such, the framework underscores that the dialogic cycle is not an isolated construct but a structuring principle that links website design, user interaction mechanisms, and behavioral outcomes. By focusing on the degree to which hotels adopt dialogic-cycle indicators, the study examines how effectively these establishments translate dialogic theory into digital communication practices capable of fostering stronger organizational–customer relationships.

FIGURE 1
Conceptual framework focused on the dialogic cycle.

3 Materials and methods

3.1 Problem and objectives

According to the literature review, digital media have become increasingly important and impact the way we communicate across various sectors of society, including hotel establishments. One way to identify customer expectations and interests is to establish means of communication and interaction with the audience, particularly by adopting interactive channels between the entity and the public (Pang et al., 2016). It is important to adopt dialogical principles on websites, both for promoting the organization and its products/services and for enabling more efficient communication with stakeholders (Eray, 2016; Pang et al., 2016).

Among the five principles, the dialogic cycle is particularly notable as one of the most important and widely used in communication contexts. Thus, the following research question arises:

> *What is the degree of adoption of dialogic cycle indicators on hotel websites, and how does this vary across different types of hotel establishments?*

To address this question, four objectives have been formulated. Organizations have tools for dialoguing with their audiences, such as websites (Muckensturm, 2013; Garrido-Moreno et al., 2018; Shen et al., 2020). However, dialogue extends beyond mere interaction. Since the approaches adopted are entirely digital, it is crucial to study whether these tools enhance the formation of relationships between hotels and consumers based on mutuality, proximity, empathy, risk, and commitment (Kent and Taylor, 2002). Therefore,

> *Objective 1 is to analyze whether websites are used by hotels to establish communication with their audience in the digital context.*

The state of the art has also shown that the adoption of dialogical principles in the digital context promotes broader, more efficient communication, fluid interaction, and greater engagement between organizations and customers (Romenti et al., 2016; Kent and Taylor, 1998, 2002; Wirtz et al., 2013; Madichie and Hinson, 2014; Capriotti et al., 2021; Ibrahim, 2015; Russell, 2008; Fadzil et al., 2019; Uysal, 2018). However, there is a discrepancy in the adoption of dialogic principles on websites, with some studies showing the dialogic cycle as the least used (Augusto, 2014; Akwari, 2017; Owoche, 2019; Eray, 2016; Olinski and Szamrowski, 2017) and others showing the dialogic cycle as one of the most used (Ibrahim, 2015; Hinson et al., 2018; McCorkindale and Morgoch, 2013; Muckensturm, 2013). Based on these premises,

> *Objective 2 was established to study the degree of adoption of the dialogic cycle principle on hotel websites, namely the items that are part of the principle.*

The literature review revealed that the adoption of the dialogic cycle involved the use of various indicators, with some being utilized more frequently than others (Eray, 2016; Olinski and Szamrowski, 2017; Owoche, 2019). Based on these observations,

> *Objective 3 was defined to identify the degree of adoption of dialogic cycle indicators on hotel websites.*

The state of the art also highlighted a variation in the application of dialogical principles across websites (Augusto, 2014; Akwari, 2017), noting that more prestigious and representative organizations exhibited a higher degree of adoption of these principles (Akwari, 2017; Wirtz et al., 2013). This insight led to the formulation of.

> *Objective 4 aims a comparative analysis of the adoption of dialogic indicators on hotel websites, categorized accordingly.*

3.2 Data collection and analysis matrix

The study employed a quantitative research design based on content analysis of hotel websites. The content analysis was operationalized through a predefined matrix of dialogic indicators, allowing the evaluation of communication strategies and the assessment of differences in adoption levels among the sampled hotels.

So, based on the literature review, an analysis matrix was constructed to clearly and objectively outline the data to be collected to address the research objectives. Kent and Taylor's framework (Kent and Taylor, 1998, 2002, 2003) identifies five dialogic principles that organizations can adopt on their websites: dialogic cycle, usefulness of information, visit interaction, interface intuitiveness/simplicity, and permanence (return visits). The five dialogical principles, along with the associated items, were analyzed.

While all five principles are relevant to understanding online communication, this study focuses exclusively on the dialogic cycle. The research was focused on the dialogic cycle principle because it is considered the most pertinent in the context of communication, as it enables two-way communication and promotes interaction between the organization and the public through the sharing of information and feedback. Additionally, it is regarded as one of the most important elements to be implemented on websites (Kent and Taylor, 1998, 2002; Fadzil et al., 2019; Hinson et al., 2012). Accordingly, Table 1 presents only the dialogic cycle and its indicators, which were operationalized for the content analysis.

Using the matrix as a reference, a grid was built in Excel for data collection. The first column included the names of the analyzed hotels, and the first row included the 10 selected dialogical indicators. After creating the grid, it was filled in, with "1" indicating the existence of the indicator and "0" indicating its non-existence. To ensure accuracy and coherence, the data were collected and analyzed between May and June 2023. The same content was analyzed at three different times to ensure consistency, authenticity, and objectivity. After data collection, a statistical analysis was conducted using the SPSS program. The data were imported into SPSS and encoded, followed by a frequency analysis and descriptive statistics to determine the presence or absence of each indicator on the hotel websites. Subsequently, to address the fourth specific objective, the hotel sample was divided into three categories: Best Hotel, Best Resort, and Best Boutique. Three separate statistical analyses were conducted to determine the values and percentages of the presence of items in each group.

To ensure the reliability and clarity of the coding procedure, the analysis matrix was pre-tested before the formal content analysis. Two independent coders reviewed the matrix and applied it to a pilot

TABLE 1 Analysis matrix.

Dialogic principle	Indicators	Authors
Dialogic cycle	Chat	Hinson et al. (2018), Kim et al. (2014), Xu (2016), McLean and Osei-Frimpong (2019), Mclean and Osei- Frimpong (2017), and Lockwood (2017)
	Links to review forums	Golchevskiy and Yermolenko (2021), Dohse (2013), and Zainol et al. (2022)
	Possibility of contact (departments, employees)	Wirtz et al. (2013), McAllister-Spooner and Kent (2009), Reber and Kim (2006), Kim et al. (2010), and Augusto (2014)
	Means of contact (email, telephone, address)	Naab and Kuchler (2023), Pang et al. (2016), Eray (2016), and Safitri et al. (2022)
	Possibility to subscribe to newsletters and news	Karkin and Janssen (2014), Wirtz et al. (2013), and Eray (2016)
	Sharing of lived experiences by customers (photos)	Augusto (2014), Tang et al. (2022), and Santos et al., 2021
	Links to social networks	Bonsón et al. (2012), Palacios-Marqués et al. (2015), Garrido-Moreno et al. (2018), and Aluri et al. (2015)
	Texts in response to audiences (FAQ's)	Pang et al. (2016), Kim et al. (2014), Ip et al. (2012), and Safitri et al. (2022)
	Possibility for users to ask questions/requests for information	Kim et al. (2014), Kent and Taylor (2003), Pang et al. (2016), and Waters et al. (2011)
	Questionnaire/Surveys (feedback)	Madichie and Hinson (2014), Pang et al. (2016), Eray (2016), and Kim et al. (2014)

subset representing 20% of the sample. This pre-test served to verify the operational definitions of each indicator, assess the usability of the coding scheme, and identify potential ambiguities or borderline cases. The coders compared their interpretations, and items that generated inconsistent or uncertain classifications were refined, with additional examples added to the coding guide. Inter-coder reliability was then calculated using the pilot results, yielding an agreement rate of 88%. Following this calibration phase, the coders independently analyzed the full set of websites. Any discrepancies encountered during coding—whether due to ambiguous website features, overlapping indicators, or atypical interface structures—were discussed and resolved by consensus, ensuring consistency, methodological rigor, and transparency in the final dataset.

3.3 Sample

The study examines the degree of adoption of the dialogic cycle principle on the websites of Portuguese hotels nominated for the 2023 World Travel Awards. Websites were chosen because they are one of the main means of communication with customers. Their efficient use enhances beneficial interaction for both parties, providing greater interactivity and, positively impacting the relationship between the entity and the public (Verčič et al., 2015; Park and Reber, 2008; Kent and Taylor, 1998; Augusto, 2014; Madichie and Hinson, 2014; Sueldo, 2024). "Websites, for better or for worse, are the windows through which organizations are observed" (Kent and Taylor, 2003, p. 14).

The World Travel Awards 2023 were chosen because they award annual prizes that distinguish and reward excellence in various tourism-related areas, providing a comprehensive overview of industry highlights and emerging trends. Thus, this is a renowned and prestigious award in the tourism sector, and hotels applying for these awards are considered high-level establishments.

The study sample is grounded in representativeness and relevance. The World Travel Awards is one of the most prestigious recognitions in the global hospitality sector, and nominated hotels are widely regarded as industry leaders in service quality and customer

TABLE 2 Categorization of hotels.

Best Hotel	Best Resort	Best Boutique
- Belmond's Reids Palace;	- You and the Sea;	- Vila Joya;
- Vila Gale Sintra;	- Vila Vit Parc;	- Verride Palácio Santa Catarina;
- Savoy Palace;	- Vale do Lobo;	- Vermelho Melides;
- Quinta da Pacheca;	- Ria Park Hotel & Spa;	- Valverde Hotel;
- Pousada Palácio de Estoi;	- Pine Cliffs;	- Sublime Comporta;
- Olissipo Lapa Palace Hotel;	- Pestana Troia Eco-Resort;	- The Vine Hotel;
- Myriad by SANA;	- Penina Hotel & Golf Resort;	- Porto Royal Bridges Hotel;
- L'AND Vineyard;	- Martinhal Sagres Beach Family Resort;	- Intercontintal Cascais
- Jupiter Marina Hotel;	- Conrad Algarve;	
- Inspira Liberdade Boutique Hotel;	- Hotel Quinta do Lago.	
- Hotel Quinta da Serra;		
- Hilton Porto Gaia.		

engagement. These establishments are expected to implement advanced digital communication strategies to maintain their competitive position, making them appropriate cases for studying the adoption of dialogic principles. Furthermore, the award structure, which distinguishes between categories, enables comparative analysis across different types of hotels while ensuring a consistently high standard of communication practice. Although the research focuses on a specific group, the findings can provide insight into best practices and broader trends, since leading hotels often set benchmarks that others in the industry subsequently follow.

To ensure methodological consistency and feasibility, a total of 30 hotels were selected from the list of Portuguese nominees for the 2023 World Travel Awards (see Appendix A1). Although the awards include a broader set of nominees, the sample was determined based on two criteria: (1) the exclusion of hotels that shared the same website or whose webpages represented multiple

establishments, and (2) the requirement that each unit possessed an active, independent website suitable for content analysis. Applying these criteria resulted in a coherent set of 30 unique, self-contained websites that could be examined using the dialogic cycle indicators. This number also reflects a balance between analytical depth and operational viability, as content analysis of websites requires item-by-item manual coding at three different time points. Therefore, the selected sample offers both representativeness—capturing the diversity of luxury hotel categories within the Portuguese nominees—and methodological manageability, allowing for reliable comparative analysis across hotel types.

To ensure a strategy that considered the distinctive qualities and varied profiles of the selected hotels, the establishments were grouped based on the awards for which they were nominated, allowing for differentiation by category and typology. Thus, three categories were defined: Best Hotel (12 hotels), Best Resort (10 hotels), and Best Boutique (8 hotels). The Best Hotel category includes hotels nominated for "Best Luxury Hotel," "Best Wine Hotel," and "Best Reference Hotel." The Best Resort category groups candidates for "Best Beach Resort," "Best Family Resort," and "Best Lifestyle Resort." The Best Boutique category includes nominees for "Best Luxury Boutique Hotel," "Best Boutique Hotel," and "Best Boutique Resort" (see Table 2).

4 Results

4.1 Degree of adoption of each indicator on hotel websites

The data show a discrepancy in the adoption of the indicators, specifically the items "Chat," "Sharing of lived experiences by customers (photos)," and "Questionnaire/Surveys (feedback)," which exhibited very low application rates compared to other items. The items "Links to review forums" and "Texts in response to audiences (FAQ's)," although not highly adopted (<30%), demonstrate some attempt at application (see Figure 2).

Regarding other indicators such as "Possibility of contact (departments, employees)," "Possibility to subscribe to newsletters and news," and "Possibility for users to ask questions/requests for information," a very reasonable application was observed, especially for newsletter subscription, which reached nearly 80%.

This scenario indicates a variation in approach. On the one hand, the most present dialogical items tend to include means of contact, links to social networks, and the possibility of subscribing to newsletters and news. The high presence of these last two indicators, being completely digital, suggests that the hotels in the sample possibly follow a more technological approach, prioritizing digital interactions over traditional ones. On the other hand, the chat indicator, which is a completely automated system responding to customers, shows very low adoption. A possible explanation may be that while the hotels in the sample attempt to integrate technological tools into their websites, they do not follow a strategy entirely focused on the digital world. This is evidenced by the significant importance given to items such as "Possibility for users to ask questions/ requests for information" and "Possibility of contact (departments, employees)," demonstrating an orientation toward the more dialogical aspect (see Figure 2).

4.2 Adoption of the dialogic cycle

4.2.1 "Best Hotel" category

The analysis of the websites for hotels in the "Best Hotel" category revealed a strong adoption of dialogic cycle elements, with a rate of 53.3% (see Table 3).

Apart from the means of contact and links to social networks, the second most implemented item by hotels in the "Best Hotel" category was the possibility to subscribe to newsletters and news, with a high adoption rate of 83.3%. This suggests a strong emphasis on keeping customers informed and engaged.

Another notable indicator with a high percentage of adoption was the possibility for users to ask questions/requests for information (75%), demonstrating that hotels in this group recognize the importance of giving their customers a space to request information and receive personalized responses. Conversely, the items "Chat," "Links to review forums," and "Texts in response to audiences (FAQ's)" all had the same adoption rate of 33.3%, indicating that these features are less commonly implemented in this category, though there is some attempt at their inclusion.

The possibility to contact departments or employees was present on 50% of the websites, showing a preference for direct and personalized communication. However, with only 6 out of 12 hotels featuring this tool, there is potential for broader adoption.

Finally, there was a low application of the indicators "Sharing of lived experiences by customers (photos)" (8.3%) and questionnaire/ surveys (16.7%). These findings suggest that there is still room for improvement, as these items are very important tools for customer engagement and help in interaction processes. By adopting strategies to promote the sharing of experiences and gathering customer feedback, hotels can enhance their online presence and foster stronger engagement with potential visitors.

4.2.2 "Best Resort" category

In the "Best Resort" group, the adoption rate of dialogic items was 48%, slightly lower than the previous group(see Table 4). Disregarding the means of contact and links to social networks, the second most frequently implemented feature was the possibility to subscribe to newsletters and news (70%), similar to the "Best Hotel" category. However, in this category, unlike the previous one, the possibility to contact departments and/or employees (60%) gains more weight than the possibility for users to ask questions/requests for information (50%), suggesting that hotels belonging to this category give more importance to direct interaction with customers (see Table 4).

Conversely, the "Best Resort" group exhibits a proactive approach to addressing visitors' questions. Despite this, the low adoption rate of the chat feature (10%) suggests that this tool is not a priority for these hotels. However, a significant portion of the hotels provides links to review forums (40%), acknowledging the importance of consumer reviews in building customer trust. To offer clear and visual information, the sharing of lived experiences through photos (20%) and texts in response to audiences (30%) are notably implemented. Unexpectedly, none of the websites in this group utilize surveys for collecting feedback (0%), which represents a missed opportunity to gage guest preferences and opinions.

4.2.3 "Best Boutique" category

In the "Best Boutique" category, the adoption of dialogic items experienced a slight decrease compared to the other two groups, with
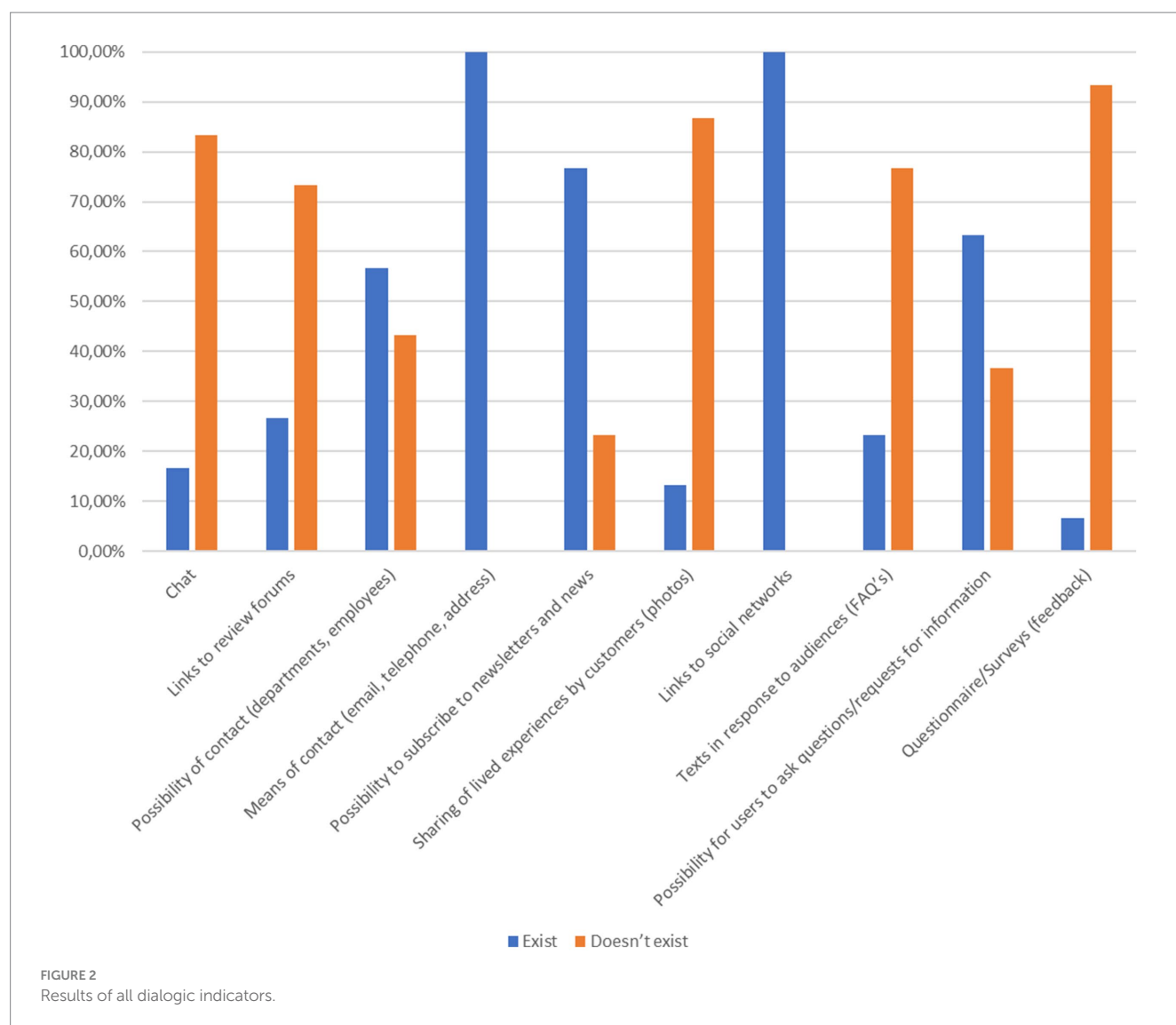
FIGURE 2
Results of all dialogic indicators.

TABLE 3 Results of the "Best Hotel" category.

Dialogic indicators present in the category "Best Hotel"	Exist		Does not exist	
	N	%	N	%
Chat	4	33.3%	8	66.7%
Links to review forums	4	33.3%	8	66.7%
Possibility of contact (departments, employees)	6	50%	6	50%
Means of contact (email, telephone, address)	12	100%	0	0%
Possibility to subscribe to newsletters and news	10	83.3%	2	16.7%
Sharing of lived experiences by customers (photos)	1	8.3%	11	91.7%
Links to social networks	12	100%	0	0%
Texts in response to audiences (FAQ's)	4	33.3%	8	66.7%
Possibility for users to ask questions/requests for information	9	75%	3	25%
Questionnaire/Surveys (feedback)	2	16.7%	10	83.3%
Total average	6.4	53.3%	5.6	46.7%

TABLE 4 Results of the "Best Resort" category.

Dialogic indicators present in the category "Best Resort"	Exist		Does not exist	
	N	%	N	%
Chat	1	10%	9	90%
Links to review forums	4	40%	6	60%
Possibility of contact (departments, employees)	6	60%	4	40%
Means of contact (email, telephone, address)	10	100%	0	0%
Possibility to subscribe to newsletters and news	7	70%	3	30%
Sharing of lived experiences by customers (photos)	2	20%	8	80%
Links to social networks	10	100%	0	0%
Texts in response to audiences (FAQ's)	3	30%	7	70%
Possibility for users to ask questions/requests for information	5	50%	5	50%
Questionnaire/surveys (feedback)	0	0%	10	100%
Total average	4,8	48%	5,2	52%

TABLE 5 Results of the "Best Boutique" category.

Dialogic indicators present in the category "Best Boutique"	Exist		Does not exist	
	N	%	N	%
Chat	0	0%	8	100%
Links to review forums	0	0%	8	100%
Possibility of contact (departments, employees)	5	62.5%	3	37.5%
Means of contact (email, telephone, address)	8	100%	0	0%
Possibility to subscribe to newsletters and news	6	75%	2	25%
Sharing of lived experiences by costumers (photos)	1	12.5%	7	87.5%
Links to social networks	8	100%	0	0%
Texts in response to audiences (FAQ's)	0	0%	8	100%
Possibility for users to ask questions/requests for information	5	62.5%	3	37.5%
Questionnaire/surveys (feedback)	0	0%	8	100%
Total average	3.3	41.3%	4.7	58.8%

an average adoption rate of 41.3% (see Table 5). As with the previous categories, the possibility of subscribing to newsletters remained the second most implemented item. Notably, there was a tie between the indicators for contacting the organization (62.5%) and asking questions/requests for information (62.5%), a distinction not observed in the other categories. These results suggest a successful strategy in enhancing interaction between the organization and its audience, reflecting a customer-centric approach. Most hotels in this category demonstrate a commitment to offering various direct communication methods, thereby improving engagement and interaction.

Regarding the sharing of lived experiences by customers (photos) (12.5%), the adoption rate is low, indicating only a tentative

implementation compared to other indicators. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the items for chat (0%), links to review forums (0%), texts in response to the public (FAQ's) (0%), and questionnaire/ surveys (0%) were absent from the websites in this category. This lack of these interactive elements highlights a significant gap in direct customer engagement and feedback mechanisms.

Although the results reveal differences in the adoption of dialogic indicators across the three categories, these variations should be interpreted as descriptive rather than statistically significant. Due to the small sample size within each category and the exploratory nature of the study, inferential statistical tests were not applied. Therefore, the percentages reported illustrate trends in the adoption of dialogic indicators but should not be generalized as statistically validated differences between groups. Nonetheless, the descriptive patterns provide meaningful insights into how different types of hotels prioritize distinct forms of online interaction.

5 Discussion

According to the results, all hotels have functional, active, and easily accessible websites equipped with interactive tools. This confirms that these websites are used to establish communication channels with customers, facilitating information sharing, communication with various parties, and organizational dissemination (Pang et al., 2016). This approach enhances the potential for greater customer involvement and interaction, thereby breaking down communication barriers (Gilbert et al., 1999). Consequently, organizations align with the perspectives of authors who underscore the significance of websites as communication tools and interaction channels with customers (Verčič et al., 2015; Park and Reber, 2008; Muckensturm, 2013; Garrido-Moreno et al., 2018).

A deeper analysis of these results through Bakhtin's dialogism reinforces the idea that communication is fundamentally relational and shaped by continuous exchanges of meaning. Bakhtin's view that dialogue emerges from mutual responsiveness and the interdependence of voices helps explain why the partial adoption of dialogic cycle tools constrains genuine interaction between hotels and their audiences. While many of the analyzed websites offer channels for contact initiation, they do not fully facilitate reciprocal exchanges that allow customers to "respond back" in meaningful ways. This limitation becomes more visible when contrasted with Kent and Taylor's dialogic communication model, particularly the principles of mutuality, proximity, and commitment. Mutuality requires organizations to acknowledge stakeholders as partners in meaning-making; proximity involves facilitating interpersonal understanding and responsiveness; and commitment demands an authentic willingness to sustain dialogue. The low adoption of feedback mechanisms, chats, or user-generated content suggests that many hotels stop short of enabling the reciprocal, open-ended interactions that these principles advocate.

The adoption patterns observed across indicators can be better understood when framed within dialogic communication theory. Features such as chat tools, feedback questionnaires, and opportunities for user-generated content directly contribute to the dialogic loop by enabling reciprocal information exchange—a core pillar of the dialogic cycle as proposed by Kent and Taylor (1998, 2002). The low adoption of these elements across all categories suggests that most hotels

continue to privilege unilateral communication strategies focused on information dissemination rather than mutuality, proximity, and commitment. Conversely, the widespread presence of contact information, social media links, and newsletter subscriptions reflects a partial orientation toward dialogic principles, as these features enable contact initiation but do not fully support feedback integration or sustained dialogue. As such, the descriptive differences across categories—while not statistically significant—illustrate varying degrees of alignment with dialogic communication, with "Best Hotels" showing the strongest tendency to adopt tools that promote proximity and commitment, and "Best Boutique" hotels exhibiting more selective implementations aligned with personalized service approaches.

Regarding the adoption of dialogic cycle indicators, out of the 10 items analyzed, only five showed adoption rates above 50%, with an overall presence of 48.3% on the hotels' websites and 51.7% not being observed. These results indicate that although there is adoption, it varies significantly. Thus, the study's findings do not align entirely with other research suggesting the dialogic cycle as one of the most widely adopted principles (Ibrahim, 2015; Hinson et al., 2018; McCorkindale and Morgoch, 2013; Muckensturm, 2013). Instead, they are consistent with studies that acknowledge the adoption of these characteristics but highlight variations in their implementation (Augusto, 2014; Akwari, 2017). This suggests that communication between organizations and their audiences may lack quality, potentially undermining interaction and impacting the organization's image and objectives.

Studies such as Chan et al. (2025) and de Vries and Poelhuis (2024) show that website credibility, responsiveness, and interactive features significantly influence booking intentions. At the same time, emerging work on AI-mediated communication (e.g., conversational agents, automated chats, and intelligent recommendation systems) indicates that customers increasingly expect immediate and dialogic forms of interaction during their decision-making process. Against this backdrop, the low adoption of chat tools and the near absence of structured feedback channels in the analyzed hotel websites represent a competitive disadvantage. Leading hotels worldwide are beginning to employ AI-driven chats to simulate relational dialogue, enhance personalization, and reduce friction in the information search process. The Portuguese nominees analyzed in this study, despite their prestige, appear to rely primarily on traditional, one-way communication tools, suggesting a lag in adopting more advanced dialogic technologies that could strengthen customer engagement.

It is worth noting that the items "means of contact" and "links to social networks" are universally adopted, with a 100% presence across all websites. The high adoption of these two indicators aligns with results from other studies (Akwari, 2017), which identified them as the most commonly applied elements in the dialogic cycle dimension. The possibility to subscribe to newsletters and news also showed high representativeness (76.7%). However, low adoption rates were observed for components such as questionnaires (6.7%) and "sharing of lived experiences (photos)" (13.3%), which contrasts with other studies (e.g., Eray, 2016) that identified the possibility for users to ask questions/requests for information as the most significant item. This discrepancy may stem from the varying goals and methods hotels use to interact with guests and gather feedback.

From a managerial perspective, the limited implementation of feedback instruments such as surveys, chats, and customer experience sharing has direct implications for trust-building and relationship quality. Dialogic communication theory emphasizes that sustained relationships depend on organizations demonstrating openness to feedback and responsiveness to stakeholder needs. When hotels do not provide clear channels for customers to express concerns, ask questions in real time, or share experiences, they risk weakening the relational foundation on which trust is built. Furthermore, the absence of visible feedback mechanisms can signal a lack of transparency or willingness to engage, potentially reducing perceptions of credibility. Hotels that integrate dialogic tools—particularly those that allow timely and bilateral interactions—are better positioned to understand customer expectations, personalize communication, and resolve issues proactively. Therefore, enhancing dialogic features on hotel websites is not merely a technical upgrade; it is a strategic investment in relational quality, customer satisfaction, and long-term loyalty.

Therefore, it is crucial to explore these dialogue opportunities further to gain a more detailed understanding of consumer preferences and demands, which could improve communication. Regarding newsletter subscriptions, our research shows that most hotels adopt this indicator (76.7%), contradicting studies in which this indicator is among the least present (e.g., Owoche, 2019).

Only five websites included the "Chat" feature (16.7%), and 13.3% adopted the feature for sharing experiences (photographs). Since dialogic communication implies a continuous flow of information that enables feedback from audiences and responses from organizations (Johnson, 1997), it is evident that the lack of these features can lead to scenarios of unilateral communication, where direct responses are absent. The interaction between hotels and their customers is not only mediated by digital tools but also shaped by emotional and social factors. For example, studies of emotional labor during COVID-19 highlight the strain and adaptation of hospitality workers in different sociocultural contexts, underscoring the complexity of customer-service relationships in times of crisis (Lavie and Mayer, 2025).

No less reduced is the presence of "links to review forums" (26.7%), which may result in missed opportunities to understand the criteria and preferences that customers consider when choosing a destination (Perez-Aranda et al., 2019; Zainol et al., 2022). On the other hand, the indicator associated with the possibility of contacting departments and employees (56.7%), while not reaching 100% adoption like "Means of contact (email, telephone, address)," still maintains a notable online presence.

Additionally, the study's results provide important new insights into the use of the dialogic cycle on hotel websites. The high usage of traditional contact methods (email, telephone, and address) suggests an orientation toward direct communication with the public, corroborating previous studies (e.g., Olinski and Szamrowski, 2017). This emphasis on traditional methods facilitates contact and indicates a preference for straightforward communication. Greater adoption of components such as customer experience sharing (photographs) and feedback questionnaires offers an opportunity for hotels to enhance public connection and involvement through more comprehensive practices. These two indicators are noted as powerful tools for interactivity, contributing significantly to organizational growth (Gilbert et al., 1999; Dias, 2018; Kent and Taylor, 2003; Gupta and Utkarsh, 2014; Perez-Aranda et al., 2019; Stephanie et al., 2019; Zainol et al., 2022; Tang et al., 2022).

Regarding the adoption results in the "Best Hotel," "Best Resort," and "Best Boutique" categories, a higher rate of dialogical element presence was observed in the "Best Hotel" group (53.3%), followed by "Best Resort" (48%), and "Best Boutique" (41.3%).

This diversity may stem from the different communication techniques employed by each type of establishment. Although the "Best Hotel" group has the highest adoption rate, it is crucial to remember that there are still ways to improve the availability of dialogic indicators on hotel websites in all categories. This indicates that even the most reputable hotels can enhance their dialogic communication strategy by adopting more indicators related to the dialogic cycle.

It is important to note that the items "means of communication (email, telephone, address)" and "links to social networks" show a strong dialogical presence, being the most present indicators in the three groups, with a 100% application rate. There is also significant adoption regarding the possibility of subscribing to newsletters and news: "Best Hotel" at 83.3%, "Best Boutique" at 75%, and "Best Resort" at 70%. The prominence of this indicator in all three categories underscores the importance of ongoing interaction with customers. Although the "Best Hotel" has the highest percentage, the difference is not very significant compared to the other two. These results emphasize the potential for keeping customers informed and suggest a concerted effort to notify audiences of possible events, offers, and news.

Equally important is the indicator "possibility for users to ask questions/requests for information," with adoption rates of 75% for "Best Hotel," 62.5% for "Best Boutique," and 50% for "Best Resort." This highlights the importance of providing two-way communication. The "Best Hotel" stands out with the highest percentage of adoption, followed by the "Best Boutique." The high adoption rate in the "Best Boutique" category aligns with its service-oriented, individualized approach.

Thus, while there is a solid foundation of dialogic elements in place, there remains ample opportunity for all categories to enhance their interactive and dialogical features to foster better customer engagement and satisfaction. In reality, the differences between the three groups are not very high, but they are significant. The "Best Hotel" and "Best Resort" categories show greater application of dialogic indicators, suggesting that hotels in these groups better exploit the advantages of dialogic communication compared to hotels in the "Best Boutique" group. However, the websites of the hotels in the "Best Boutique" category demonstrated significant results in indicators such as the possibility for users to ask questions/requests for information, the possibility of contact (departments, employees), and the possibility of subscribing to newsletters and news. This indicates a higher quality of dialogical communication, with a focus on providing personalized service and strengthening relationships with their audiences.

The results obtained corroborate recent findings in the literature, such as those of Chan et al. (2025), which highlight the importance of the functionality and credibility of websites in generating bookings. The low adoption of indicators such as feedback forms and spaces for sharing experiences suggests that, even among award-winning hotels, there is a gap between the dialogic potential of digital platforms and their practical application—a point also observed by Pant and Kumar (2025) when analyzing the tension between OTAs and direct bookings.

6 Conclusion

In the digital context, the interaction between communication, dialogism, and tourism, particularly hotel establishments, despite their complex definitions, is closely connected and converges in a common meaning: the sharing and creation of value.

This article used a mixed methodology to understand the role of digital dialogisms in customer communication, specifically which dialogical means belonging to the dialogic cycle are most adopted by Portuguese hotels nominated for the World Travel Awards 2023. Four objectives were defined based on 10 indicators related to the dialogic cycle.

The first objective, which sought to analyze, whether they are means used by hotels to establish communications with their audience in the digital context, it was identified the existence on websites of online booking resources, information to establish direct contact with hotels (telephone contacts, email, address), links to maintain online communication (social networks, booking platforms) and, in some cases, chats, and it can be concluded that, in general, all the websites in the sample are active and functional means, easily accessible and have interactive tools, confirming the possibility of communication actions with the public.

The second objective, which included studying the degree of adoption of the dialogic cycle principle on the hotels' websites, namely the items that are part of the principle, found that the websites of the hotels in the sample adopt the dialogic cycle principle, but not in its entirety, noting a disparity in its application. The results showed a general application of dialogic indicators of 48.3% which, in general terms, confirms the implementation of this principle. However, it should be noted that the overall non-existence rate was 51.7%, meaning that more than half of the websites do not fully adopt indicators belonging to the dialogic cycle.

Third objective, which consisted of analyzing the degree of adoption of dialogic indicators, we highlighted the means of contact (email, telephone, address) and links to social networks, with the results allowing us to conclude the existence of 100% adoption. As for the possibility of subscribing to newsletters and news, there was also a strong adoption, reaching a percentage of 76.7%, followed by the possibility for users to ask questions/requests for information, with an adoption of 63.3%. Regarding the possibility of contacting departments/employees, it also presented a considerable percentage of 56.7%. However, the results also allow us to conclude that there are fewer adopted indicators on hotel websites, such as links to review forums, with only 26.7% having this functionality, followed by the response to audiences (FAQ's) indicator, in which only 23.3% of websites applied this indicator. Other items revealed an even lower adoption, such as chat with 16.7% (only 5 out of 30 websites had this tool), sharing experiences through photos with 13.3% (only 4 out of 30 hotels gave this possibility), and adoption of the feedback questionnaire with 6.7% (only 2 websites out of 30 applied this indicator).

Finally, concerning the fourth objective, which sought to collect data that would allow a comparative analysis of the adoption of dialogic indicators on the hotels' websites, divided into categories. The group with the highest overall adoption rate of dialogic items was the "Best Hotel" (53.3%), followed by the "Best Resort" (48%) and, finally, the "Best Boutique" (41.3%).

In sum, the websites are strongly used as means to establish communications and mediated relationships with their audience. There is an implementation of dialogical characteristics, although with variation in their application, corroborating studies carried out (Augusto, 2014; Akwari, 2017). There is full adoption of the indicators

means of contact (email, telephone, address) and links to social networks, as well as high application of the possibility of subscribing to newsletters, asking questions/requests for information and contacting departments/employees. Regarding the other indicators, we recognize that there is an attempt to apply it by hotels, but it is still very timid and that should be worked on with a view to strong adoption, as it is limiting the existence of communications with its customers.

Our findings indicate that elite hotels show limited adoption of genuine dialogic practices, often favoring the appearance of connectivity—through social media links—over meaningful two-way communication mechanisms such as feedback loops. We conclude that hotel websites play a crucial role in promoting establishments and facilitating communication with the public. They serve as highly effective channels for global interaction, enabling hotels to reach broader audiences. Within this framework, the dialogic cycle emerges as a key component for enhancing these interactions, as it fosters mediated relationships and opens the door to true bilateral communication. To strengthen this dynamic, hotel managers should prioritize implementing post-stay feedback surveys on their websites to close the dialogic loop, as this was the least adopted yet most critical tool for fostering mutual understanding.

Beyond theoretical contributions, this study offers relevant practical insights for hotel managers and digital communication strategists. By adopting stronger dialogic features such as real-time chat functions, structured feedback questionnaires, and spaces for user-generated content, hotels can move beyond symbolic connectivity and cultivate more authentic, trust-based relationships with customers. These tools not only reinforce transparency and responsiveness- core elements of dialogic communication—but can also support service quality improvement, reputation management, and long-term customer loyalty. For digital strategists, the findings underscore the importance of designing websites that promote reciprocal communication rather than unidirectional information flow, aligning interface design with relational communication principles.

This work has some limitations. Among them is the small number of websites analyzed, which restricts the generalizability of results. Additionally, the analysis was limited to a single point in time, not accounting for possible updates or temporal changes in digital communication strategies. The investigation also focuses exclusively on one of the five dialogic principles—the dialogic cycle—leaving unexplored dimensions of dialogism that may reveal different patterns of relational engagement. Despite these constraints, the study provides a focused and meaningful contribution by offering a detailed examination of dialogic indicators within a specific, high-profile segment of the hospitality sector.

Future research can expand this line of inquiry by incorporating larger and more diverse samples of hotels, both within Portugal and internationally, as well as by conducting longitudinal analyses to observe how dialogic features evolve. Additionally, integrating all five dialogic principles proposed by Kent and Taylor would provide a more holistic understanding of digital dialogism in hospitality communication. Further studies could also examine the growing role of AI-mediated communication—such as chatbots and automated service agents—and its impact on reciprocity, trust, and customer engagement. Such expansions would not only enrich theoretical understanding but also support the development of more robust digital communication strategies in the hospitality industry.

Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Ethics statement

Ethical approval was not required for the study involving humans in accordance with the local legislation and institutional requirements. Written informed consent to participate in this study was not required from the participants or the participants' legal guardians/next of kin in accordance with the national legislation and the institutional requirements.

Author contributions

AO: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Software, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. HO: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Software, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. GG: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Software, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. RE: Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

Funding

Conflict of interest

The author(s) declared that this work was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Generative AI statement

The author(s) declared that Generative AI was not used in the creation of this manuscript.

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