

# Responding to Online Complaints: The Role of Response Attentiveness, Content, and Patterns

**Brianna JeeWon Paulich**

Muma College of Business, University of South Florida

**Ali Tamaddoni**

Deakin Business School

**Stephan Ludwig**

Monash University

Cite as:

Paulich Brianna JeeWon, Tamaddoni Ali, Ludwig Stephan (2025), Responding to Online Complaints: The Role of Response Attentiveness, Content, and Patterns. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 54th, (123895)

Paper from the 54th Annual EMAC Conference, Madrid, Spain, May 25-30, 2025



## **Responding to Online Complaints: The Role of Response Attentiveness, Content, and Patterns**

### **Abstract**

The rise of webcare marks a significant evolution in customer service with the recommendation that providers engage directly with their dissatisfied customers on online review platforms. Nevertheless, lacking clear evidence-based guidelines, providers often struggle to respond to online service complaints effectively. This research considers both the service providers' content (i.e., attentiveness, type of justice offered) and response patterns (selectively responding vs. responding to all) and demonstrates how content that suggests interactional justice is effective in driving subsequent customer demand. However, greater attentiveness to specific wrongs in providers' responses to complaints must be paired with the correct kind of justice (procedural and distributive). Moreover, customer demand increases when providers respond selectively to negative reviews. These insights provide guidance for service providers on how to respond to dissatisfied customers on online review platforms.

*Keywords: Webcare, Justice dimensions, Online customer reviews*

*Track: Marketing Theory and Strategy*