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Customer Engagement and Bias in Online Reviews: Comparative Analysis between Airbnb and Traditional Hotels

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SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
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COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE



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of Glasgow

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Abstract

This study advances the understanding of customer engagement and online review dynamics in the hospitality industry by comparing traditional hotels and Airbnb within the sharing economy framework. Although online reviews have become central to shaping consumer decision-making, prior research has underexplored the distinct engagement mechanisms and biases between standardised hotel services and peer-to-peer accommodation platforms. In particular, limited attention has been given to how cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement dimensions influence review content, or how service-dominant logic (SDL; Vargo and Lusch, 2008) and customer-dominant logic (CDL; Heinonen et al., 2010) shape these patterns. This study addresses these gaps by examining the role of reciprocity, emotional connection, and platform design in driving review biases.

A robust multi-qualitative design was employed, integrating large-scale text-mining of TripAdvisor and Airbnb reviews using Leximancer with purposive manual coding, 26 semi-structured interviews, and a follow-up quantitative survey (Ryan, 2019; Creswell, 2014). This methodological integration ensures scalability in detecting thematic patterns while retaining contextual validity, aligning with critical realism's emphasis on combining objective structures with subjective interpretations and with recent recommendations for ensuring paradigm–method fit in qualitative international business research (Aguzzoli et al., 2024).

Findings reveal that SDL-driven hotel engagement more emphasises structured, standardised interactions centred on service consistency and reliability, with relational elements such as guest recognition contributing to loyalty. In contrast, CDL-driven Airbnb engagement prioritises personalised, emotionally resonant experiences, often resulting in positively biased reviews reinforced by reciprocal host–guest relationships and bilateral review systems. Platform-specific features were found to amplify positive sentiment while potentially obscuring dissatisfaction.

Academically, the research bridges SDL and CDL within a comparative platform context, offering a novel conceptual model that links engagement dimensions with review biases. Methodologically, it demonstrates the value of combining automated semantic analysis with qualitative triangulation and quantitative validation. Managerially, the findings provide actionable insights for hotels to incorporate personalised engagement strategies and for sharing economy platforms to strengthen review authenticity. By addressing a critical gap in understanding engagement and bias in online reviews, the study contributes to both theory development and practice in digital hospitality management.

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Finally, to my best friend, Tongtong Wang—without you, my thesis would have been finished a long time ago.

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis represents my own work, which has been done after registration for the degree of PhD at the University of Glasgow, and has not been previously included in a thesis or dissertation submitted to this or any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualifications.

Signature: Mengwei HE

Date: 22nd December 2024

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Research Background

The hotel industry has experienced major structural changes in recent years, driven by stronger competition, rapid digitalisation, and the growth of the sharing economy. These forces have changed not only how services are delivered but also how customer engagement is defined and measured. In the past, most hotel engagement practices followed service-dominant logic (SDL). In SDL, value is co-created by the provider and the customer, but the process is largely led, organised, and controlled by the service provider. Hotels aim to enhance the guest experience by offering standardised services, direct interactions with staff, and a consistent level of quality (Puspita, 2021; So et al., 2016).

In this study, “traditional hotels” refer to professionally managed accommodations that prioritise consistency, reliability, and predictability. Their operations are built on formalised procedures and standardised service delivery. For example, a guest checking into a hotel is greeted by front-desk staff, may have their room cleaned daily by housekeeping, and can approach the concierge for tailored recommendations. The hotel sets the rules and service standards, ensuring that every guest experiences similar levels of cleanliness, professionalism, and amenities, regardless of when or where they stay (Vargo and Lusch, 2008). In this model, the guest’s engagement is mainly as a recipient of services, with limited influence over how those services are shaped.

The rise of the sharing economy, led by platforms such as Airbnb, has introduced a very different model based on customer-dominant logic (CDL). CDL gives consumers a much more active role in creating their own experience. Guests can make choices that reflect their personal needs, lifestyle, and interests (Heinonen et al., 2010). An Airbnb guest, for example, might select a rural cottage for peace and quiet or a downtown loft for cultural immersion. They

may also communicate directly with the host before and during the stay, arrange for flexible check-in times, request special items, or exchange local stories over coffee (Camilleri and Neuhofer, 2017). This type of interaction creates a high degree of personalisation and emotional connection that is rarely possible in the formal setting of a hotel.

Although SDL recognises customers as co-creators of value (Vargo and Lusch, 2004a) in hotels this co-creation happens within fixed boundaries set by the provider. The hotel decides the service options, and guests engage mainly by accepting or declining them. In CDL, as seen with Airbnb, the boundaries are more flexible, and the guest plays a central role in shaping the experience from start to finish (Tussyadiah and Zach, 2017). This difference shows clearly in how guests write online reviews.

Airbnb reviews often display a positive bias, where guests are willing to overlook or minimise small service issues because of the emotional bond they have with the host or the uniqueness of the experience. For example, a delayed response from a host might be forgiven if the guest feels welcomed, enjoys the property's character, or appreciates local insider tips. In contrast, hotel reviews tend to be more objective and direct. Guests are more likely to highlight any failures in service delivery, such as slow room service, lack of cleanliness, or unhelpful staff (Zervas, Proserpio and Byers, 2021; Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006). This is because hotel stays are seen as formal transactions: customers expect professional standards to be met consistently, and when these expectations are not fulfilled, they respond critically. CDL-based engagement tends to lead to emotional and empathy-driven evaluations, while SDL-based engagement produces more transactional and performance-based evaluations (Azer and Alexander, 2020; Alexander et al., 2018).

This study examines these differences in detail. It uses a multi-method qualitative approach, starting with a qualitative text analysis of online reviews from platforms like TripAdvisor and Airbnb, followed by semi-structured interviews with people who actively write reviews. This approach allows for a deep understanding of how cognitive (thinking), emotional (feeling), and

behavioural (acting) dimensions of engagement appear in each setting (Thomsen and Jeong, 2021; Zhang and Fu, 2020; Cheng and Jin, 2019a; Thakur, 2018). For instance, many Airbnb reviews contain personal stories about how the host made the stay special, while hotel reviews tend to focus on whether the service matched expectations for speed, professionalism, and cleanliness.

A key factor explored in this research is reciprocity. On Airbnb, the personal relationship between host and guest often creates a feeling of mutual obligation. A guest may choose to leave a positive review not only because the stay was good, but also as a way to “give back” to the host for their hospitality (Gervasi et al., 2022a; Geiger and Germelmann, 2015). In hotels, this is less common because the relationship is formal and commercial. Guests feel less personal responsibility towards hotel staff and are more comfortable giving critical feedback based purely on performance.

By analysing these patterns, this study addresses a clear gap in existing research. Previous work has often looked at SDL or CDL separately, without comparing how they influence engagement and review behaviour in the same study. Very few studies have examined the role of reciprocity in shaping bias in peer-to-peer accommodation reviews, and fewer still have combined large-scale text analysis with in-depth interviews. By filling these gaps, this research links the two logics in a single comparative framework and shows how they lead to different engagement styles and review outcomes. The results will contribute to both academic theory on customer engagement and value co-creation, and to practical strategies for hotels, Airbnb hosts, and platform designers who want to encourage engagement while keeping reviews credible.

Service and Sharing Economies

The service economy and the sharing economy are two major frameworks in today’s market systems, and both are essential for understanding customer engagement and value co-

creation in the hospitality industry. The difference between these two is not only theoretical but also reflects the real changes in business models and customer behaviour that have reshaped industry standards and guest expectations.

The service economy is an economic model in which the provision of services, rather than goods, is the main driver of value creation (Kon, 1997). It focuses on intangible value, created through interactions between service providers and customers that go beyond simple one-off transactions (Joseph and Gilmore, 1988). Its underlying principles align closely with service-dominant logic (SDL), which views service as the foundation of value creation. In SDL, value is co-created when providers and customers interact, but this happens within a framework largely designed and controlled by the provider (Vargo and Lusch, 2004a). For example, traditional hotels follow this model by offering standardised services, such as check-in procedures, housekeeping, and concierge support, to ensure reliability and consistent quality (Zeithaml, 1988a).

The sharing economy, by contrast, is a more recent and disruptive model. It relies on digital platforms to enable peer-to-peer exchanges of goods and services (Wirtz et al., 2019). It makes use of underutilised resources and creates settings where consumers can be both users and providers of services. This model reflects the principles of customer-dominant logic (CDL), in which customers have a more active role in shaping their experiences and defining what value means to them (Heinonen et al., 2010). Platforms like Airbnb are strong examples: they allow guests to communicate directly with hosts, customise the details of their stay, and engage in more personal, locally grounded interactions. These elements give the guest more control over their experience and often lead to unique, personalised service encounters.

The move from the service economy to the sharing economy signals a wider shift from provider-led engagement to consumer-led engagement. SDL acknowledges that customers are active in value co-creation, but CDL takes this further by giving them greater autonomy and situational control. This shift is clearly visible in online reviews. In traditional hotels,

reviews tend to focus on objective measures—such as service delivery, cleanliness, and adherence to professional standards (Lee et al., 2023). In the sharing economy, especially on Airbnb, reviews are more likely to be personal and emotional, shaped by the direct relationship between host and guest and the mutual exchange of hospitality.

Recognising these differences is key to understanding how customers form satisfaction and engagement. The structured nature of the service economy promotes transactional relationships centred on reliability and efficiency, whereas the sharing economy encourages relational connections, empathy-based evaluations, and a greater tolerance for variation in service quality. These contrasting models not only create different guest experiences but also influence how bias appears in online reviews.

However, while there is growing research on SDL and CDL separately, there is still limited understanding of how these two logics directly compare in shaping customer engagement behaviours, especially in the context of online reviews. In particular, little attention has been paid to how reciprocity—common in peer-to-peer settings like Airbnb—affects review bias. By framing the study around these two economic and theoretical models, this research addresses these gaps, exploring how SDL and CDL influence consumer behaviour, satisfaction factors, and the expression of bias in online reviews for both traditional hotels and sharing economy platforms.

Research Objective and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to advance a deeper understanding of customer engagement within the hospitality industry, with a particular focus on the differences in customer satisfaction and engagement between traditional hotels and sharing economy platforms such as Airbnb. Although both accommodation types strive to deliver value, they operate under distinct service logics—service-dominant logic (SDL) for traditional hotels and customer-dominant logic (CDL)

for Airbnb—which shape not only the nature of service delivery but also the way customers evaluate and communicate their experiences. This research examines the shifting dynamics of customer behaviour in these contexts, paying close attention to the role of reciprocity in influencing feedback, as well as the psychological and emotional factors that drive the content, tone, and perceived fairness of online reviews. By situating these behaviours within the broader issue of how online reviews capture the evolving expectations of consumers, the study contributes to the theoretical refinement of SDL and CDL in hospitality research and offers insights into how engagement manifests differently across provider-led and consumer-led service models.

The specific aim of this research is to investigate and explain the differences in customer engagement between Airbnb and traditional hotels as reflected in online reviews, focusing on the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions of engagement. The study seeks to uncover key patterns, determinants, and biases that shape customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction in both models, identifying the extent to which these outcomes are influenced by structural factors (e.g., service standardisation versus personalisation) and relational dynamics (e.g., host–guest reciprocity). In particular, it examines how reciprocity operates as a driver of review behaviour in different service contexts, potentially leading to more empathetic and favourable evaluations in peer-to-peer environments like Airbnb compared with the more transactional and performance-focused assessments typical of traditional hotel reviews.

Research Questions:

Building on the research aim, this study is guided by three key questions that structure the investigation and provide a framework for comparative analysis:

1. What are the key similarities and differences in the determinants that drive customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction in traditional hotels and Airbnb?

2. How do the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions of engagement manifest differently in online reviews for traditional hotels compared with Airbnb?
3. How does reciprocity influence the tone, content, and evaluative stance of customer reviews in the contexts of traditional hotels and Airbnb?

Together, these questions are designed to probe the exploration mechanisms that shape customer perceptions, review-writing behaviour, and evaluative bias across two distinct service models, thereby enabling a structured comparison of engagement patterns in provider-led and consumer-led hospitality settings.

Objectives:

To achieve the overall aim, the study pursues four specific and interrelated objectives.

First, it examines customer engagement as expressed in online reviews through a combination of large-scale text-mining and in-depth qualitative enquiry. The text-mining analysis will be conducted on a substantial corpus of reviews sourced from TripAdvisor and Airbnb, enabling the extraction of key themes, sentiment patterns, and the principal drivers of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. These findings will then be enriched through 26 semi-structured interviews with customers who have actively authored reviews. This mixed-method approach is designed to provide a holistic understanding of customer engagement by integrating quantitative insights with qualitative depth.

Second, the study compares the overall review tendencies of Airbnb and traditional hotels, with particular attention to the prevalence of positive bias in Airbnb reviews. This involves exploring the factors that contribute to more favourable evaluations in the sharing economy context, including personalised host–guest interactions, the distinctiveness of guest experiences, and the emotional bonds developed during a stay. The analysis will also consider how the structural features of sharing economy platforms foster a different form of customer satisfaction than the more standardised and transactional service model of traditional hotels.

Third, it identifies and compares the determinants of satisfaction and dissatisfaction across both accommodation types, with specific reference to the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions of engagement (Dessart et al., 2015). This objective seeks to clarify whether traditional hotel guests place greater emphasis on efficiency, reliability, and professionalism, while Airbnb guests prioritise authenticity, emotional connection, and experience-driven value creation.

Finally, the study investigates the role of reciprocity in shaping the tone and content of online reviews in both service contexts. Reciprocity, as a well-established social norm, drives customers to return perceived value—either positive or negative—through their feedback. In the sharing economy, this norm may encourage guests to provide more empathetic and favourable reviews for Airbnb hosts, even in cases of minor service shortcomings, whereas traditional hotel reviews are more likely to be critical and performance-focused. Understanding this dynamic offers valuable insights into how interpersonal relationships and mutual obligations influence review behaviour.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a critical realism paradigm, acknowledging that reality exists both objectively—such as enduring service structures and the actual quality of service delivered—and subjectively—through individual perceptions, expectations, and interpretations of that service. As Park and Peters (2022) note, “Reality exists both objectively and subjectively. This enables researchers to bridge social constructionism and structural causation.” This position aligns with the ontological realism central to critical realism, whereby much of reality exists and operates independently of our awareness or knowledge, including social reality, yet our understanding of it is inevitably shaped by subjective meaning-making processes (Fletcher, 2017). This philosophical stance is particularly appropriate for the present research, as online

reviews reflect not only the factual aspects of service encounters but also the reviewers' subjective interpretations, emotional responses, and contextual biases.

Guided by this philosophical foundation, the study incorporates both inductive and abductive reasoning to explore and interpret the complex dynamics of customer engagement in online reviews. To address the research objectives and answer the research questions, a multi-method qualitative approach is employed, integrating quantitative text-mining with qualitative semi-structured interviews. This design provides a comprehensive and triangulated understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

In the first stage, quantitative text-mining is conducted using data collected from Airbnb and TripAdvisor. Leximancer software is utilised to identify recurring themes, relationships, and sentiment patterns within the review texts, thereby uncovering key areas of concern or satisfaction among customers.

In the second stage, semi-structured interviews are conducted to gain deeper insights into customer experiences and to verify, elaborate, and contextualise the patterns identified during the text analysis phase. These interviews focus on the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions of customer engagement, with participants reflecting on their most memorable accommodation experiences and online review practices. In the analysis of interview data, transcripts are coded both manually and using Leximancer to ensure a comprehensive examination of the data. Thematic analysis is then applied to identify and interpret patterns relevant to customer engagement, satisfaction, and the role of reciprocity.

Throughout the study, the confidentiality and anonymity of participants are rigorously maintained. Informed consent is obtained from all participants, and all data is stored securely and processed in compliance with ethical research guidelines. By integrating the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods within a critical realist framework, this research

provides a robust, multi-layered analysis of customer engagement as reflected in online reviews for Airbnb and traditional hotels.

Research Contribution

This research offers a novel and substantial contribution to the understanding of customer engagement by examining its manifestations within two fundamentally different economic models: the traditional service economy and the sharing economy. While prior studies have explored customer satisfaction or online reviews in isolation, few have systematically compared how customer engagement is shaped under service-dominant logic (SDL) and consumer-dominant logic (CDL) across these two contexts. This study addresses this gap by conducting a direct, theory-driven comparison of Airbnb and traditional hotels, linking engagement behaviours to the structural differences between SDL's provider-driven value co-creation and CDL's consumer-directed value creation.

The novelty of this research lies in three interconnected advances. First, it applies SDL and CDL not merely as descriptive lenses but as comparative analytical frameworks for interpreting customer engagement in both cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions. This dual-theory integration in the hospitality context is rare in the literature and enables a more nuanced explanation of engagement differences across economic models. Second, it uncovers and theorises the role of reciprocity as a bias mechanism in online reviews—a factor often overlooked in hospitality research. The study demonstrates that in the sharing economy, relational reciprocity between hosts and guests systematically produces more positive evaluations, even in the presence of service shortcomings, in contrast to the more objective and critical stance of hotel guests. Third, it adopts a multi-method qualitative approach, combining large-scale text mining of online reviews with in-depth semi-structured interviews. This methodological integration enables both broad pattern recognition and deep interpretive insight, ensuring the robustness of findings.

Empirically, the study reveals that traditional hotel engagement remains transactional and anchored in standardised service quality, reflecting SDL's provider-centric framework, whereas Airbnb engagement is more experiential, personalised, and emotionally infused, reflecting CDL's emphasis on consumer agency. Theoretically, it advances understanding of how emotional connection and social norms of reciprocity influence consumer feedback behaviour, thereby enriching both SDL and CDL by incorporating review bias mechanisms.

From a practical perspective, this research provides actionable insights for practitioners in both sectors. For hotel managers, it suggests that moving towards more personalised, consumer-driven engagement strategies could narrow the perceived experiential gap with sharing economy platforms. For Airbnb hosts, it underscores the importance of managing relational reciprocity consciously to maintain authenticity while ensuring realistic guest expectations.

By bridging SDL and CDL in a comparative empirical setting, theorising reciprocity as a driver of review bias, and employing an integrated methodological design, this study offers a novel conceptual and empirical contribution to customer engagement research. It not only fills a clear theoretical gap but also equips hospitality practitioners with evidence-based strategies for enhancing service delivery, customer satisfaction, and long-term loyalty in an era of evolving consumer expectations.

Structure of this Research

This thesis is divided into six chapters and is structured as follows:

The first chapter, Introduction, provides the background and context of the research. It outlines the research purpose and problem, presents the research objectives, and highlights the significance of the study. The chapter also briefly explains the methodology adopted and summarises the expected contributions of the thesis.

The second chapter, Literature Review, introduces the concept of value and clarifies the theoretical perspective and outlook on value adopted in the current study. It compares customer-dominant logic (CDL) with other marketing logics to establish the rationale and significance of using it as a theoretical lens. The chapter then offers a critical review of customer engagement definitions, dimensions, and conceptualisations in the literature, proposes a definition of customer engagement specific to the context of this research, and addresses the concept of bias in online reviews.

The third chapter, Research Methodology and Design, presents the research philosophy and design adopted for the study. It begins by discussing the research paradigm and clarifying its ontological and epistemological positions. The chapter also explains the rationale for using a multi-method approach, describes the data collection procedures across different phases, and outlines the context, sampling strategies, and analytical techniques used in the study.

The fourth chapter, Findings, presents the results of the study from both the text mining and interview phases. It reports the outcomes of the text-mining analysis and the semi-structured interviews, identifying and discussing the relevant themes that emerged from the data. It also presents the results of the survey, testing the conceptual model and examining the relationships between engagement dimensions, reciprocity, and review bias.

The fifth chapter, Discussion, interprets the findings in relation to the research objectives and the existing literature. It outlines the similarities and differences between the findings and prior studies, demonstrating how the results contribute to the theoretical understanding of customer engagement and online review dynamics. A refined conceptual framework is proposed, based on the comparative analysis of Airbnb and traditional hotels. The chapter also discusses the theoretical, methodological, and managerial implications of the research, acknowledges its limitations, and offers recommendations for future research.

The sixth chapter, Conclusion, summarises the research process, key findings, and overall contributions of the study. It highlights how the research addressed the identified gaps, reflects on the implications for both academia and practice, and reinforces the value of the multi-qualitative approach adopted. This chapter closes the thesis by emphasising its significance within the wider field of hospitality and service research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter examines customer engagement and online review dynamics in the hospitality industry, comparing traditional hotels with Airbnb, a sharing economy platform. To establish a clear foundation, traditional hotels are defined as professionally managed accommodations characterised by standardised service delivery, emphasising consistency, reliability, and formal interactions to meet customer expectations for professionalism and predictability (Vargo and Lusch, 2004a). For example, traditional hotels offer uniform amenities (e.g., daily housekeeping, concierge services) and employ trained staff to ensure a consistent guest experience, aligning with service-dominant logic (SDL), where value is co-created through provider-driven interactions. In contrast, Airbnb operates within consumer-dominant logic (CDL), facilitating peer-to-peer exchanges where guests actively shape personalised, emotionally resonant experiences through direct host interactions (Heinonen et al., 2010). These definitions frame the study's comparative analysis of engagement and review patterns across distinct service models. Through this literature review, the chapter provides a foundation for analysing how customer engagement is expressed in online reviews and how these expressions vary across different service types.

Customer Engagement in Online Review between Two Service Types

This section explores customer engagement in online reviews for Airbnb and traditional hotels. It covers the shift from traditional marketing to customer-centric approaches, emphasising the importance of engagement. The chapter highlights the role of reciprocity in consumer-organisation relationships and examines the dimensions of customer engagement—cognitive, emotional, and behavioural. It also discusses the impact of online reviews in the hospitality industry on consumer decision-making and trust. Finally, it addresses the bias in online

reviews between Airbnb and traditional hotels, identifying key research gaps and setting the stage for further investigation.

The Definition of the Two Service Types

The rapid evolution of the hospitality industry—driven by digital transformation and shifting consumer expectations—has led to the coexistence of two fundamentally different service models: traditional hotels and peer-to-peer platforms such as Airbnb. While both aim to fulfil the core function of providing temporary accommodation, they differ significantly in their operational logic, customer engagement mechanisms, and value co-creation processes. Traditional hotels are grounded in standardised, provider-led service delivery, whereas Airbnb exemplifies a more flexible, consumer-driven model that emphasises personalisation and social interaction. Comparing these two models is not merely a contrast of business formats but a deeper examination of how service logic (SDL vs. CDL) shapes consumer experience, engagement, and online feedback behaviours.

Historically rooted in the concept of hospitality, the term “hotel” originates from the French *hôtel*, referring to a large house, and by the 18th century had evolved into a commercial enterprise offering lodging (Tahiri et al., 2021). A hotel is often conceptualised as a “home away from home”, providing essential amenities such as cleanliness, comfort, safety, and quietness—features typically associated with one’s personal residence (Tahiri et al., 2021). From an operational perspective, the hotel room constitutes the core product, around which a variety of structured services—including guest reception, room preparation, housekeeping, and food and beverage—are built. As Buhalis (2003) highlights, a distinctive feature of the hospitality industry is that service consumption must occur at the site of production, reversing traditional logistics and reinforcing the experiential nature of the offering.

Traditional hotels, as a long-established accommodation model, are further characterised by formal service procedures, professional management, and standardised guest experiences. These services are typically structured around five dimensions of service quality—reliability,

responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles—which shape customer perceptions and expectations (Chathoth et al., 2014). The emphasis lies in delivering consistent, timely, and trustworthy services within a physical environment that conveys professionalism and quality. Within this model, value creation is firm-driven, and the guest assumes a relatively passive role as the recipient of predesigned and managed service offerings. This reflects the underlying logic of Service-Dominant Logic (SDL), where the firm remains central in orchestrating value and service delivery.

In contrast, Airbnb represents a fundamentally different accommodation model that emerged from the sharing economy. Established in 2008 as a platform for renting out shared living spaces, Airbnb has evolved into a global peer-to-peer marketplace offering a broad spectrum of service formats, including entire homes, private rooms, shared spaces, and curated offerings such as Airbnb Plus and Airbnb Luxe (Guttentag, 2015; Reinhold and Dolnicar, 2021). Unlike the institutional infrastructure of hotels, Airbnb listings are hosted by individuals and shaped by personalised communication, domestic aesthetics, and local immersion. Guests actively participate in curating their own experiences by choosing hosts, style, and location, and engaging in reciprocal review mechanisms that foster platform trust.

Although Airbnb has expanded its services and introduced hotel-like features—such as verified listings, professional photography, and dynamic pricing—it continues to prioritise informality, uniqueness, and host-guest interaction. As Reinhold and Dolnicar(2021) mentioned, its business model evolution notes, Airbnb's strategic shift from community-focused roots to a hybrid model reflects both its commercial scaling and its effort to preserve authenticity through decentralised, emotionally resonant service encounters. Operationally, the platform remains asset-light, with hosts functioning as micro-entrepreneurs and guests co-constructing their stays.

This fundamental difference in structure also reflects divergent service logics. Airbnb aligns with Consumer-Dominant Logic (CDL), wherein the consumer plays an active, even

generative, role in the value creation process (Heinonen et al., 2010). The experience is not simply consumed but co-created through personalised choices, social interaction, and emotional resonance. In contrast to the standardisation of hotel chains, Airbnb listings are characterised by variability and authenticity, which are often evaluated in reviews through subjective language and emotional nuance.

Thus, while traditional hotels institutionalise hospitality through consistency and managerial control, Airbnb decentralises it, enabling a form of hospitality that is fluid, localised, and socially co-produced. The contrast between these models raises significant questions about how value is perceived, how engagement is expressed, and how customer feedback (e.g., online reviews) reflects underlying service logics. These distinctions provide a critical foundation for examining not only how engagement differs between the two service ecosystems, but also why review behaviours may exhibit distinct patterns of bias, emotionality, and satisfaction framing.

Marketing and Customer Engagement

The concepts of marketing and customer engagement (CE) are both customer-centric approaches that prioritise the needs and preferences of the customer to create added value. Modern marketing concepts have evolved from traditional approaches (such as production, product, and sales concepts), shifting the focus from the needs of sellers to the needs of buyers. This shift reflects a deeper understanding of market dynamics and the critical role of customer satisfaction and loyalty in achieving business success. Due to changing market conditions and customer environments, marketing scholars have found that relying solely on traditional marketing metrics (e.g., quality, satisfaction, value, and trust) is insufficient for maintaining a competitive advantage. These traditional metrics, while important, do not capture the full spectrum of customer behaviour and preferences. Empirical evidence shows that quality alone does not generate customer loyalty (Aydin and Ozer, 2005); even satisfied customers may turn to competitors (Mittal and Lassar, 1998). This phenomenon underscores the complexity of customer loyalty and the need for more nuanced marketing strategies. More

recently, marketing researchers have argued for the need to drive profitable loyalty and satisfaction to higher levels for differentiation and sustainable competitive advantage (A Pansari and Kumar, 2017). Relationships are crucial as they generate immediate cash flow for businesses, and ignoring non-transactional behaviour may lead to lost opportunities (e.g., word-of-mouth growth or co-development of new products/services) and adverse effects (e.g., negative ratings on the company's website). Moreover, if customer engagement is not considered, customers may be incorrectly assessed, leading to resource misallocation (Kumar et al., 2010).

Customer engagement extends the realm of relationship marketing, emphasising human interactions within the value delivery process of service organisations. According to Ashley et al.(2011)Consumer engagement can be studied as part of the broader concept of relationship marketing, from which consumer engagement theories originated(Vivek, 2009). Earlier studies focused on the transactional aspects of marketing, such as the exchange of goods and services for cash(Schau et al., 2009; Vivek, 2009; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004a). Relationship marketing literature posits that reciprocity is a fundamental characteristic (Barnes, 2001; O'malley and Tynan, 1999; BAGOZZI, 1993). Tadajewski and Saren (2009) argue that any literature related to consumer-organisation relationships must include the idea of reciprocity. Relationship marketing emphasises long-term value creation beyond immediate cash flow from transactions(van Doorn, 2011; Sheth and Parvatiyar, 1995).

The concept of consumer engagement in relationship marketing expands the focus to highlight the value of interactive consumers. Early marketing literature emphasised the behavioural aspects of CE, describing it as customers' behavioural manifestation toward a brand or firm beyond purchase, driven by motivations such as recommendations, customer-to-customer interactions, and word of mouth (Brodie et al., 2011). With the advent of the Internet and mobile technologies, engagement now includes activities such as follows, likes, comments, ratings, and advocacy on social media and related platforms. Interactive consumers are crucial and should benefit from engagement, even without making a purchase (Moore, 2012). However, it

is important to note that highly interactive consumers can also be value destroyers, participating in negative behaviours such as negative word of mouth, low ratings, or negative reviews, impacting other consumers(Grant and O'donohoe, 2007a).

Building on this understanding, it is essential to recognise that consumer engagement is not a static concept but rather a dynamic and evolving interaction between consumers and organisations. The rise of digital platforms has transformed the way consumers engage with brands. Online reviews, social media interactions, and other forms of digital engagement have become critical touchpoints that influence consumer perceptions and behaviour. For instance, positive online reviews can significantly enhance a brand's reputation, while negative reviews can detract from it. Therefore, managing these interactions effectively is crucial for sustaining consumer trust and loyalty.

Moreover, the concept of engagement has expanded to include not just positive interactions but also the potential for negative engagement. Negative engagement, such as critical reviews or unfavourable social media posts, can have a substantial impact on a brand's image and customer base. It highlights the importance of proactive engagement strategies where companies not only respond to negative feedback but also learn from it to improve their offerings and customer service. This holistic approach to engagement emphasises the need for continuous dialogue between consumers and organisations, fostering a culture of mutual respect and responsiveness.

In addition, the role of technology in facilitating consumer engagement cannot be overstated. Advanced analytics and customer relationship management (CRM) systems enable organisations to track and analyse consumer interactions across multiple channels. This data-driven approach allows for more personalised and timely responses, enhancing the overall customer experience. It also provides valuable insights into consumer preferences and behaviour, helping organisations to tailor their marketing strategies more effectively.

In conclusion, the evolving landscape of marketing and consumer engagement underscores the need for a strategic and integrated approach that prioritises customer needs and fosters meaningful interactions. By understanding and leveraging the dynamics of consumer engagement, organisations can build stronger relationships, enhance customer loyalty, and achieve sustainable competitive advantage in today's complex and rapidly changing market environment.

Definition and Overview of Customer Engagement

The original use of the term 'engagement' in business practice discourse can be traced back to Appelbaum (2001). Since then, the concept of consumer engagement (CE) has been explored extensively in marketing literature, albeit with varying definitions and interpretations. Authors have not reached a consensus on a singular definition of CE, leading to a diversity of perspectives. Some researchers adopt a behavioural approach (Pansari and Kumar, 2017; van Doorn et al., 2010a), focusing on observable actions such as purchasing behaviour, recommendations, and interactions with the brand. Others approach CE from a psychological perspective (Bowden, 2009; Brodie et al., 2011), emphasising the internal states of consumers, such as emotional connection, cognitive processing, and attitudinal loyalty.

Over the past decade, numerous definitions have been proposed to capture the multifaceted nature of engagement across different stakeholders and contexts (see Table 1). This diversity reflects the complexity of CE and the various ways it can manifest. For instance, while some definitions highlight the transactional aspects of engagement, others emphasise relational or experiential dimensions.

Table 1 Definitions and Dimensions of Consumer Engagement in Marketing Literature

Definition	Author (s)	Dimension
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The level of a customer's physical, cognitive and emotional presence in their relationship with a service organisation.	Patterson et al.(2006)	Multi-dimensional
An individual difference representing consumers' propensity to include important brands as part of how they view themselves.	Sprott et al. (2009)	One-dimensional
Consumer engagement is a collection of experiences. An experience is a consumer's beliefs about how a website fits into his/her life. Some sites could be engaging because they provide high levels of a utilitarian experience, while other sites could be engaging because they are intrinsically enjoyable.	Calder et al.(2009)	Multi-dimensional
A psychological process that models the underlying mechanisms by which customer loyalty forms for new customers of a service brand, as well as the mechanisms by which loyalty may be maintained for repeat purchase customers of a service brand.	Bowden(2009b)	Multi-dimensional
Customers' behavioural manifestation toward a brand or firm, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers such as word-of-mouth activity, recommendations, helping other customers, blogging or writing reviews.	van Doorn et al.(2010a)	One-dimensional

The customer's cognitive and affective commitment to an active relationship with the brand as personified by the website or other computer-mediated entities designed to communicate brand value.	Mollen and Wilson (2010a)	Multi-dimensional
A motivational state that occurs by virtue of interactive, co-creative customer experiences with a focal agent/object (e.g. a brand) in focal brand relationships.	Brodie et al. (2011b)	Multi-dimensional
The level of a customer's motivational, brand-related and context-dependent state of mind characterised by specific levels of cognitive, emotional and behavioural activity in brand interactions.	Hollebeek (2011)	Multi-dimensional
The intensity of an individual's participation and connection with the organisation's offerings and activities initiated by either the customer or the organisation.	Vivek et al. (2012)	Multi-dimensional
Individual participation and promotion behaviour' in online brand communities on social networking sites.	Zheng et al. (2015)	One-dimensional

In addition to the varied definitions, there are differing views on the dimensions of CE. Some scholars conceptualise engagement as a multidimensional construct, encompassing cognitive, affective, and behavioural elements. This perspective suggests that true engagement encompasses not just what consumers do, but also how they feel and think about the brand.

For example, cognitive engagement involves consumers' mental investment and interest in the brand, affective engagement refers to the emotional connection and feelings towards the brand, and behavioural engagement includes actions such as purchases, social media interactions, and word-of-mouth recommendations.

However, despite the prominence of multidimensional perspectives, more than 40% of these definitions(Thakur, 2018) focus on one-dimensional aspects of engagement, either affective, cognitive, or behavioural. Among these, the behavioural dimension seems to dominate in one-dimensional perspectives. This approach simplifies the measurement of engagement by focusing on observable actions, which are easier to quantify and analyse. However, while one-dimensional methods offer simplicity and practicality, they fail to capture the full richness of the engagement concept. By neglecting the cognitive and affective dimensions, one-dimensional approaches may overlook important aspects of how and why consumers engage with brands.

As mentioned above, customer engagement (CE) is viewed as an extension of relationship marketing, emphasising human interactions embedded in the value delivery process of service organisations. According to Ashley et al. (2011), CE can be studied as part of the broader concept of relationship marketing, from which consumer engagement theories originated (Vivek, 2009). Earlier studies focused on the transactional aspects of marketing, such as the exchange of goods and services for cash(Schau et al., 2009; Vivek, 2009; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004a). In these views, organisations were primarily seen as value creators, while consumers were value receivers. This approach considered consumer engagement as external to relationship marketing rather than an extension of it(Bijmolt et al., 2010; Sheth and Parvatiyar, 1995).

The relationship marketing perspective highlights value-creating relationships between organizations and consumers over a long period (Sheth and Parvatiyar, 1995), which goes beyond the transactional approach of value exchange focusing on immediate cash flow(van

Doorn, 2011). This perspective also reveals the value of interactive consumers, whose engagement ranges from follows and likes on social media to comments, ratings, reviews, and advocacy. Interactive consumers are important and should be valued even if they have not yet made a purchase (Moore, 2012). However, highly interactive consumers can also engage in value-destroying activities, such as negative word-of-mouth and low ratings, which can influence other consumers and potential customers (Grant and O'donohoe, 2007b). This highlights the dual nature of consumer engagement, where interactions can be both beneficial and detrimental depending on the context and consumer behaviour.

In this study, customer engagement is defined as the contextual and multidimensional process through which customers interact with hospitality service providers, particularly via online review platforms. Drawing on Brodie et al. (2011), Hollebeek et al. (2014), and Vivek et al. (2012), engagement is conceptualised as comprising cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions, each of which reflects varying levels of psychological investment, affective resonance, and participatory action toward the service experience.

This definition aligns with the broader literature summarised in Table 1, yet it is tailored to the digital hospitality context by focusing specifically on online review behaviour as an expressive and observable form of engagement. In this sense, customer engagement is not limited to real-time service interactions but extends into post-consumption digital expressions, such as writing, rating, and emotionally framing reviews on platforms like Airbnb or TripAdvisor.

By adopting this definition, the study situates engagement within the framework of value co-creation and service logic (SDL/CDL), highlighting how customer agency, platform interactivity, and emotional involvement coalesce in shaping how service experiences are evaluated and communicated.

Dimension of Customer Engagement

Regarding the dimensions of customer engagement, several key studies have laid the foundation for understanding this complex concept. Brodie et al.(2011b), Hollebeek (2011), and Hollebeek et al.(2014a) conducted comprehensive analyses, significantly contributing to the theoretical landscape. According to Javornik and Mandelli(2013), the number and nature of engagement dimensions depend on whether customer engagement is viewed as a unidimensional or multidimensional construct. Additionally, the definition of these dimensions varies based on the perspective of who is participating in the engagement. The concept of customer engagement is notably fragmented, as there is no consensus on which dimensions should be included. This lack of agreement is evident in Table 2, which highlights the differing views among researchers. Despite this fragmentation, the diverse interpretations provide a valuable basis for further theoretical exploration.

Table 2 Dimension of Customer Engagement

Dimension type	Author (s)	Affective	Behavioral	Cognitive	emotional	Absorption	Dedication	Vigor	Interaction
Unidimensional	Sprott, Czellar and Spangenberg,(2009)				✓				
	van Doorn et al. (2010)		✓						
	Verhoef et al. (2010)		✓						
	Jaakkola and Alexander(2014)		✓						
	Gummerus et al.(2012)		✓						
	Guthrie and Cox (2001)			✓					
Multidimensional	Pomerantz (2006)		✓						
	Catteeuw et al.(2007)				✓				
	Patterson et al. (2006)					✓	✓	✓	✓
	Mollen and Wilson(2010)			✓	✓				
	Kumar et al. (2010)		✓		✓				
	Brodie et al(2011a,2011b)	✓		✓	✓				
	Hollebeek (2011)		✓	✓	✓				
	So et al.(2012)	✓	✓	✓	✓				
	Vivek et al. (2012)		✓	✓	✓				
	Wirtz et al.(2013)	✓	✓	✓					
	Hollebeek et al. (2013)		✓	✓	✓				

In the unidimensional perspective, a single dominant dimension is identified. However, different researchers emphasise different dimensions within this perspective. For instance, Hollebeek (2011) and Guthrie and Cox (2001) underscored the importance of the cognitive

dimension, whereas Catteeuw et al.(2007) proposed the emotional dimension as central. Within the realm of customer engagement research, the behavioural dimension is frequently mentioned, with significant contributions from Pomerantz (2006), van Doorn et al.(2010a), and Jaakkola & Alexander(2014). On the other hand, the multidimensional perspective recognises the interconnectedness of various dimensions of engagement. Hollebeek et al. (2014b) argued that engagement is inherently a multidimensional concept encompassing three key dimensions: cognitive, affective, and behavioural. This view posits that these dimensions are interlinked, with emotional engagement potentially intensifying cognitive and behavioural engagement levels. Brodie et al.(2013) supported this interconnected view, finding that emotional engagement could lead to increased intensity in other dimensions. This three-dimensional conceptualisation by Hollebeek et al.(2014b) has gained considerable acceptance and has become the most widely endorsed framework for understanding customer engagement. This multidimensional approach provides a robust basis for further research and development in the field. By acknowledging the interplay between cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions, this framework allows for a comprehensive exploration of how customers engage with brands and services.

Table 3 Definition of Cognitive, Emotional and Behavioural Dimensions in CE Research

Dimensions	Definitions
Cognitive dimension	A consumer's level of engagement is object-related thought processing, concentration and interest in a specific object.
Emotional dimension	A state of emotional activity is also known as the feeling of inspiration or pride related to and caused by engagement in objects.
Behavioural dimension	A state of consumer behaviour related to engagement in objects and understood as an endeavour and energy is given for an interaction.

Source: Adapted from Brodie et al (2013).

Cognitive Dimension

Cognition is essential in triggering customer emotions and behaviours (Do et al., 2021). The cognitive dimension in customer engagement (CE) is notably intricate (Hollebeek & Chen, 2014a). It involves the thoughts and mental states that consumers experience toward an engagement subject (Refaie, 2021; Moliner et al., 2018a). These mental states are typically described as active and enduring (Dessart et al., 2015), emphasising the depth and persistence of cognitive engagement.

In the context of online reviews for hospitality, cognition becomes a key factor in how customers form opinions and make decisions. Hollebeek (2011) provided examples of cognitive engagement related to specific brand activities, illustrating different levels of consumer cognitive engagement. This highlights the range of cognitive interactions consumers can have with brands, from superficial awareness to deep, thoughtful involvement. Additionally, the vitality dimension described by Patterson et al. (2006) can also be seen as a cognitive aspect of consumer engagement. This dimension pertains to the psychological flexibility and stability consumers demonstrate when engaging with organisations, brands, and other consumers (Kuvykaitė and Tarutė, 2015; Sashi, 2012). It signifies consumers' willingness to invest energy, time, and effort in business activities, emphasising proactive cognitive engagement.

The cognitive dimension is closely connected with consumers' quest for information and knowledge. Often, consumers engage with brands to satisfy these cognitive needs, seeking a deeper understanding of products, services, and brands. The perception phase includes the initial connection and interaction between the customer and the focal object (company, brand, and/or product/service). According to Sashi (2012), this phase is the foundation for all transactional and non-transactional relationships (Chen et al., 2020). During the perception phase, businesses use various methods such as advertising, social media, and online brand communities to reach potential and existing customers. These channels provide essential

information about products and services, effectively conveying the brand's message. Customers then process this information, evaluate the product or service's performance, and form their perceived cognition of the brand (Huang et al., 2017).

This cognitive processing is crucial for customer engagement as it affects subsequent emotional and behavioural responses. The initial cognitive interaction paves the way for deeper engagement, where customers not only assess but also internalise and respond to the brand's offerings. This dynamic interaction between cognition, emotion, and behaviour forms the essence of customer engagement, highlighting the importance of nurturing cognitive connections in marketing strategies.

Emotional Dimension

The emotional aspect of customer engagement is essential as it significantly impacts how consumers perceive a brand and their subsequent behaviours. According to Berger and Heath (2007) Engagement starts with a subconscious emotional connection. This connection may not be immediately obvious, but it develops over time through repeated interactions and experiences with the brand. The emotions that emerge during this process can include joy, excitement, trust, and pride, all of which help to strengthen the bond between the consumer and the brand.

In the context of online reviews for hospitality, Abdul-Ghani et al. (2011) emphasised the hedonic aspect of engagement. When consumers participate in online activities, such as writing or reading reviews, the positive emotions they experience can enhance their overall perception of the hotel. These enjoyable emotions make engagement more pleasurable, increasing the likelihood of repeated interactions and fostering a stronger emotional connection with the brand. Within the realm of brand engagement, the emotional dimension often manifests as dedication. Patterson and Yu(2006) suggest that dedication reflects a consumer's sense of loyalty and commitment to a brand. This sense of belonging and pride not only enhances the consumer's self-esteem but also motivates them to advocate for the

brand. Dedicated consumers often become brand ambassadors, promoting the hotel with genuine enthusiasm and passion. Refaie (2021) further highlights that these emotions are enduring and have a lasting impact. Long-term emotional connections are crucial for building sustainable relationships between consumers and brands. Hollebeek and Chen(2014a) added that the intensity of these emotions can vary, indicating that consumers might feel different levels of passion towards different brands. This variability underscores the necessity for hotels to consistently engage with their customers to maintain and deepen these emotional connections. The feedback from online reviews serves as a critical touchpoint where hotels can understand and nurture these emotions, leading to more meaningful and enduring customer relationships.

Behavioural Dimension

According to Kuvykaitė and Tarutė(2015)The behavioural dimension of consumer engagement is inherently linked to the verb 'engage,' which encompasses a range of actions and behaviours. This dimension is particularly prominent in the customer engagement literature, where it is often highlighted as the most observable aspect of engagement (Gummerus et al., 2012; van Doorn et al., 2010a; Verhoef et al., 2010). Engagement behaviour manifests in various forms, both online and offline, serving as a clear indicator of engagement(Dessart et al., 2015). Mollen and Wilson(2010b) emphasize that engagement behaviours are especially noticeable in online environments.

Hollebeek and Chen(2014b) describe the behavioural dimension of engagement as 'activation,' referring to the amount of energy, effort, and time that consumers invest in interacting with a brand. This level of engagement can be positive or negative, reflecting the consumer's valence towards the brand interaction. Refaie(2021) further elaborates that engagement behaviour includes a range of actions and activities that consumers perform, which may not always be visible to businesses. In the context of the hospitality and tourism industry, customer engagement is critical due to its influence on customer behavioural intentions. One of the most common and impactful methods of customer engagement is

through online reviews, where consumers share their opinions and experiences based on their evaluations of products or services (Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006). A recent study by Mazereeuw (2015) highlights that the majority of consumers trust online reviews and appreciate the transparency they offer.

The behavioural dimension of customer engagement in the context of hotels and online reviews is multifaceted. It includes visible actions such as writing reviews, sharing experiences, and engaging in brand-related activities. These behaviours are critical for understanding customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Online Customer Engagement

Online customer engagement encompasses the various ways consumers interact with providers or brands on the internet, ranging from liking online material, viewing pages, sharing content, commenting, complaining, expressing thoughts and emotions, discussing products and brands, to making online purchases and recommendations (Pletikosa and Michahelles, 2013). The internet's growth has created new communication platforms, allowing marketers to engage in two-way communication with their consumers (Fournier and Avery, 2011). Consumers have become more interactive with service providers, their messages, and their experiences in the online realm. They communicate with brands, enjoy entertainment provided by them, and even socialize with them. Moreover, consumers contribute to content creation for brands online and engage in sharing information and content. This evolution has changed how consumers perceive and engage with brands, facilitating online consumer engagement. The widespread use of social networking sites has fundamentally altered the interactions between consumers and companies (Cantone et al., 2013). It has also shifted the research focus from traditional concepts such as consumer satisfaction, buying behaviour, and value to newer concepts like consumer participation and engagement (Pletikosa and Michahelles, 2013).

One significant aspect of online customer engagement is the role of online reviews as a form of consumer feedback. Online reviews have become a crucial component of customer engagement, offering consumers a platform to share their experiences and opinions about products and services. These reviews not only provide valuable insights for other consumers but also serve as direct feedback for brands, allowing them to understand consumer sentiments and preferences better. In the context of this study, online reviews are considered a vital element of online customer engagement, as they reflect the consumers' engagement levels and their willingness to share their experiences.

Online reviews can be found on various platforms, including e-commerce sites like Amazon, travel sites like TripAdvisor, and specialised review platforms such as Yelp. These reviews often include detailed accounts of consumer experiences, highlighting both positive and negative aspects. The feedback provided in these reviews can significantly influence the purchasing decisions of other potential customers, making them a powerful tool for brands to leverage in their engagement strategies.

The importance of online reviews in customer engagement is underscored by the fact that they embody a range of engagement activities, from passive reading of reviews to actively writing and responding to them. Consumers who write reviews engage deeply with the brand by reflecting on their experiences and sharing them with a broader audience. This level of engagement indicates a strong connection with the brand and a willingness to contribute to the brand's community. Moreover, online reviews offer a unique opportunity for brands to engage with their customers by responding to feedback, addressing concerns, and showing appreciation for positive reviews. This interaction not only enhances the consumer's experience but also builds trust and loyalty, as consumers feel heard and valued by the brand. Brands that actively manage their online reviews demonstrate their commitment to customer satisfaction and continuous improvement, which can further strengthen customer relationships.

In essence, online customer engagement is driven by a blend of evolving marketing strategies and the dynamic nature of online platforms. This engagement includes a wide array of activities, from passive consumption of content to active participation and creation. As brands continue to adapt and innovate within the digital landscape, how they engage with consumers will continue to evolve, driving further research and insights into consumer behaviour in the online context. The inclusion of online reviews as a focal point of this study highlights their significance in the broader scope of online customer engagement, emphasising the need for brands to pay close attention to this valuable source of consumer feedback.

The Comparison Between Customer Engagement and Online Customer Engagement

The distinction between Customer Engagement (CE) and Online Customer Engagement (OCE) is particularly notable in the hospitality context, where interactions are increasingly occurring through digital platforms. CE has been widely conceptualised as a multidimensional construct comprising cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions (Vivek et al., 2012; Brodie et al., 2011). However, OCE, while sharing these core dimensions, introduces additional modalities of participation mediated by technology, such as online reviews, ratings, digital storytelling, and social media interactions (Dessart et al., 2015; Hollebeek et al., 2014a).

Traditional CE typically occurs in face-to-face or service-encounter-based settings. In hotels, for example, cognitive engagement manifests in guests' active evaluation of service quality and comparison with prior expectations, whereby guests mentally process staff professionalism, cleanliness standards, and service reliability as core determinants of engagement (Chathoth et al., 2016; Linda Hollebeek, 2011; Patterson and Yu, 2006). Emotional engagement arises from interpersonal encounters—such as being recognised by staff, experiencing empathy from service providers, or feeling disappointed when expectations are not met (Bowden, 2009a; Han et al., 2009; Berger and Heath, 2007). Behavioural engagement is reflected in visible loyalty actions, including repeat stays, joining loyalty programmes, or providing direct feedback to managers (So et al., 2014;

Vivek et al., 2012; van Doorn et al., 2010a). These forms of engagement remain bounded by physical service contexts and rely heavily on structured provider-driven interactions, reflecting the service-dominant logic of traditional hospitality.

By contrast, OCE extends these dimensions into digital environments, where engagement is both temporally and spatially expanded beyond the immediate service encounter. Cognitive engagement online includes searching for comparative information, critically analysing peer-generated reviews, and interpreting multimedia narratives shared by other consumers. Emotional engagement is frequently expressed through online reviews rich in affective language, digital storytelling in travel blogs or vlogs, and real-time sharing of experiences on social media platforms such as Instagram or TikTok. Behavioural engagement in OCE is far more visible and quantifiable than in CE, encompassing posting ratings and reviews, uploading photos and videos, sharing experiences across networks, or actively contributing in online brand communities. These actions extend engagement beyond individual consumption and create ripple effects by influencing other consumers' decision-making.

In addition to these dimensions, OCE enables new forms of engagement not typically observed in traditional CE. One example is user-generated content creation, where consumers produce travel stories, guides, or host recommendations, thereby becoming co-creators of value. Another is community participation, as seen in platforms like TripAdvisor forums, where consumers provide peer-to-peer advice, answer questions, and contribute to collective knowledge building. Social media advocacy represents another form in which consumers amplify their experiences through reposting, tagging, or using hashtags that associate their personal narratives with a brand or destination. Importantly, OCE also incorporates negative engagement, such as critical reviews, retaliatory feedback, or public complaints, which signal strong emotional and behavioural involvement even when outcomes are unfavourable. These negative expressions may contribute to value destruction, but they also highlight the active role of consumers in shaping brand reputation online.

Thus, while CE and OCE share the triadic framework of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement, their manifestations differ significantly in scope, visibility, and impact. CE in traditional

settings emphasises direct, structured encounters led by the service provider, reflecting the provider-driven nature of service-dominant logic (SDL). OCE, however, reflects consumer-dominant logic (CDL) by highlighting user-driven, participatory, and discursive engagement that transcends physical service boundaries. Recognising these differences is crucial for understanding how consumers create, share, and evaluate value across hospitality ecosystems, and how engagement in online contexts contributes not only to value co-creation but also to the emergence of bias in online reviews.

Table 4 Customer Engagement vs. Online Customer Engagement in Hospitality

Dimension	Traditional CE (Hotel Context)	Online CE (Digital Hospitality Platforms)	Key References
Cognitive	Evaluation of service quality, staff professionalism, cleanliness, reliability; comparison with prior expectations.	Processing peer reviews, assessing the authenticity of information, and comparing service providers and platform features.	Patterson et al. (2006); Hollebeek (2011); Chathoth et al. (2014)
Emotional	Feelings from interpersonal encounters, recognition by staff, empathy, disappointment if expectations are unmet.	Emotional storytelling in reviews, affective bonds with hosts/communities, and trust in peer-generated content.	Bowden (2009a); Berger & Heath (2007); Han et al. (2009)
Behavioural	Repeat stays, loyalty programme participation, direct feedback, and	Writing reviews, uploading photos/videos, rating services, engaging	van Doorn et al. (2010a); Vivek et al. (2012); So et al. (2014)

	advocacy behaviours.	on social media and brand communities.	
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Online Reviews in the Hospitality Industry: Foundations and Trends

Traditional word-of-mouth communication (WOM) has demonstrated a significant impact on consumer choice (GOLD, 1956) post-purchase products (Bone, 1995). WOM has also proven to be more effective and credible than traditional marketing tools for personal sales and various types of advertising (Engel et al., 1969). Similar to WOM, research has shown that online reviews have higher credibility, empathy and relevance to customers than information sources created by marketers (Schindler and Bickart, 2012; Godes and Mayzlin, 2004).

However, unlike traditional WOM influence, which is usually limited to local social networks, the influence of online consumer reviews can reach far beyond the local community via the Internet. The Internet and information technology have provided new opportunities for consumers to share product reviews online (Mosteller and Mathwick, 2016). Most online retailers prompt shoppers to share post-purchase reviews on their websites. Consumer reviews include customers' experience of product quality, as well as the services of online service providers (Thakur, 2016) Due to the credibility of the information source (Bickart and Schindler, 2001), there is strong evidence of the increasing importance of consumer reviews in consumer purchasing decisions and product sales (Chen & Xie, 2008). Online consumer reviews, such as product information created by consumers, can therefore be regarded as a special type of WOM communication(Godes and Mayzlin, 2004).

With online reviews becoming a key factor influencing customers' purchasing decisions, researchers are exploring the drivers of online reviews in a variety of settings. Extensive literature shows that high satisfaction levels lead to customer loyalty in the form of repurchases,

referrals and positive word-of-mouth (Anaza and Zhao, 2013; ANDERSON and SULLIVAN, 1993). Another widely explored construct closely related to satisfaction is trust in a brand or company. Trust has been found to have a significant effect on a customer's propensity to stay with a company and provide positive reviews (Ranaweera and Prabhu, 2003).

Numerous studies have highlighted the importance of online reviews in the consumer decision-making process, especially in the travel industry (Reyes-Menendez et al., 2019). In hospitality, it is difficult for consumers to evaluate services before consumption because of the heterogeneity and intangibility of services and the inseparability of service production and consumption (Reyes-Menendez et al., 2019). These characteristics of hotel service, and the fact that its quality is often not known before consumption, increase the perceived risk in the purchasing decision process. Access to information is the first step in reducing perceived risk and fostering trust in the travel decision-making process (Nusair et al., 2013). Online hotel reviews enable potential consumers to decide whether an institution is trustworthy, while also reducing risk and uncertainty (Weber et al., 2017; Sparks et al., 2016). From a consumer perspective, positive reviews lead to better perceptions, while negative reviews lead to distrust (Lee et al., 2008). Positive reviews lead to positive expectations for a product or service. Such confidence and trust often lead to purchase intentions (D. Kim et al., 2009) and help increase sales revenue (Yin et al., 2014).

As much as the benefits brought by user-generated online reviews seemed attractive and relatively economical, marketers learned soon that it is a double-edged weapon. This is because companies almost lost control over their reputation and everything related to their online presence came into the hands of consumers (Refaie, 2021). Consumers who sometimes post about their negative experience with a service or product most likely do so because their experiences might have been poorer than or even unlike what they were expecting. Consequently, consumers may recognize that there is a loss, or that some damage has occurred, and will seek compensation for their loss or damage (Sparks and Bradley, 2014).

Because of the convenience brought by the Internet, some of them will try to retaliate by exposing them and letting others know what happened to them (Sparks and Bradley, 2014).

The hospitality industry is particularly vulnerable to negative online reviews, as the majority of bookings are made online. Research has found that most leisure travellers use review sites as their primary source of information, and half of all travellers' hotel purchase decisions are influenced by online reviews (Levy et al., 2013). Furthermore, the impact of negative information on online complaints is more pronounced when customers purchase services rather than goods (Christodoulides et al., 2012).

The Role of Valence in Customer Engagement and Online Reviews

With the development of participation theory, valence has become one of the key dimensions linked to the concept of engagement (Storbacka et al., 2016). The term 'valence of engagement' was first established in research conducted by van Doorn et al. (2010b) to reflect the range of positive and negative engagement types, and is considered a key determinant of engagement behaviours (Hollebeek & Chen, 2014b) in terms of their behavioural directions (Bowden et al., 2015), properties, forms (Li et al., 2018), and outcomes.

In psychology, valence refers to the positivity and negativity associated with an object, expressed as an individual's emotions, cognition, and evaluation of the direction of behaviour (Colombetti, 2009). Therefore, the nature of psychological valence is always related to the individual's psychological level. Tolman (1932) and Lewin (1935) originally proposed that valences existed within objects, which had intrinsic positive (attractive) or negative (aversive) forces. Subsequent studies focused on individuals' emotions and cognition (Colombetti, 2009). Several related studies have pointed out that positive or negative valence depends on the individual's response to experiencing pleasant or unpleasant emotions. Active participation is associated with pleasant feelings and positive evaluations (Brodie and Hollebeek, 2011),

whereas anger, fear, and sadness are viewed as negative(CACIOPPO and BERNTSON, 1994).

In customer engagement studies, authors tend to link the valence of engagement to dimension-labelled behaviour. Van Doorn et al.(2010a) showed that the valence of participant engagement behaviours depended on a firm's behavioural outcomes. They stated that 'positive customer engagement behaviours include those that have a positive impact on the company in the short and long term, both financial and non-financial' (van Doorn et al., 2010b), and suggested that the opposite reflected negative participation. The concept proposed by Dolan et al.(2016) distinguishes between positive and negative valence by judging whether the participation behaviour results in value co-creation or value destruction. Li et al. (2017) conducted research from a multi-participant and systems perspective and showed that participants' positive and negative participation is related to the psychological tendencies of other participants in the network, perceived value propositions, and the outcomes of participating behaviours in the network.

Given the popularity of online reviews and their importance to consumers and businesses, several studies have been conducted over the past ten years to investigate their impact. These studies have focused on valence, i.e., the assessment tone of a review, which can range from very negative to very positive(Purnawirawan et al., 2012). Review valence is likely the most studied variable in the literature concerning the impact of online reviews(Cheung & Thadani, 2012). Review valence refers to the tone of a product discussed in online reviews, with positive reviews emphasizing a product's strengths and negative reviews emphasising its weaknesses (Cheung et al., 2009). Review valence can be reflected in numerical rankings (e.g., five-star recommendations) or textual content and is considered a signal of product/service quality. Therefore, review valence can be used as a recommendation to inform consumer decision-making.

Several studies have found that review valence significantly affects consumer purchase behaviour. Utz et al. (2012) found that review valence had a strong impact on online retailer reviews. Basuroy et al. (2003) found that online review valence had a significant effect on box-office revenue, with positive reviews contributing to these revenues while negative reviews hurt them. In the hospitality industry, current research demonstrated that good ratings improve perceived usefulness (Korfiatis et al., 2012) and review credibility (Cheung et al., 2009). The general conclusion from these and other studies is that online reviews impact purchase behaviour similarly to how valence does. Negative information discourages consumers from purchasing a particular product or service, while positive information encourages them to make such purchases.

In the context of online reviews for hotels and other hospitality services, the valence of reviews plays a critical role. Positive reviews can significantly enhance a hotel's reputation, attracting new customers and increasing bookings. Conversely, negative reviews can deter potential guests and harm the hotel's image. Therefore, managing and responding to online reviews is crucial for hotels to maintain positive engagement with their customers. By fostering positive interactions and effectively addressing negative feedback, hotels can improve overall customer engagement and satisfaction, leading to better business outcomes.

Valence and Bias in Hospitality Reviews

While the foundational role of online reviews in shaping consumer decision-making in the hospitality industry has been widely acknowledged, recent scholarship has expanded beyond these basic insights to examine their underlying mechanisms, limitations, and contextual differences. A growing body of research has focused on review valence, which refers to the positive or negative evaluative tone of reviews. Studies consistently demonstrate that negative reviews exert a disproportionately strong influence on consumer perceptions and purchase behaviour compared to positive ones (Cheung and Thadani, 2012; Korfiatis et al., 2012). In hospitality, this asymmetry is particularly salient, as negative reviews heighten perceptions of

risk and uncertainty, discouraging potential bookings, while positive reviews enhance trust and perceived credibility (Sparks and Browning, 2011; T. Kim et al., 2009).

However, the expression of valence is not uniform across service contexts. Research has shown that hotel reviews tend to highlight performance standards such as cleanliness, service consistency, and staff professionalism, with negative valence typically pointing to lapses in these areas (Ye et al., 2009). By contrast, Airbnb reviews exhibit a systematic positive bias, often attributed to bilateral rating systems, social reciprocity, and the interpersonal nature of host–guest exchanges ((Zervas et al., 2021; Guttentag, 2015a). Even when shortcomings occur, reviewers on peer-to-peer platforms may soften criticism due to relational considerations, resulting in reviews that are more favourable than the actual service experience (Gervasi et al., 2022a). This divergence highlights the need to account for platform-specific dynamics when analysing online review data.

Another critical concern is the credibility and authenticity of online reviews. Research demonstrates that digital review systems are vulnerable to manipulation, including fake or incentivised reviews and platform-level algorithms that prioritise favourable content (Mayzlin et al., 2014). Such practices undermine consumer trust and complicate managerial efforts to respond effectively. These challenges are especially pronounced in hospitality, where most bookings are made online and reputation is tightly coupled with perceived review credibility.

Despite these advances, important gaps remain in the literature. Much of the existing research conceptualises online reviews primarily as outcomes of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, while their role as expressions of customer engagement—cognitive, emotional, and behavioural—remains underexplored. Furthermore, limited work has compared how review valence and bias are shaped by different dominant logics, with hotels reflecting service-dominant logic (SDL) and Airbnb reflecting customer-dominant logic (CDL). Finally, although reciprocity has been suggested as a driver of review positivity on peer-to-peer platforms, its implications for

engagement dynamics and value co-creation or destruction are yet to be systematically investigated.

Together, these perspectives suggest that while online reviews are indispensable in hospitality, their influence is mediated by valence, reciprocity, and platform-specific logics. Addressing these gaps provides a foundation for the present study, which seeks to comparatively analyse online reviews of hotels and Airbnb to better understand the interplay between engagement, bias, and dominant logics in shaping consumer experiences.

Positivity Bias in Airbnb vs. Traditional Hotel Reviews

The landscape of online reviews reveals a pronounced bias towards positive feedback, particularly within the context of Airbnb compared to traditional hotels. This trend is a well-documented phenomenon, reflecting a broader consumer behaviour where satisfaction is more frequently expressed than dissatisfaction. Hu et al. (2009) identified this tendency, observing that a substantial proportion of online reviews tend to be positive. This observation is further validated by Zervas et al. (2015), who conducted a comprehensive analysis of review data from TripAdvisor and Airbnb. Their findings reveal that Airbnb reviews exhibit a significantly stronger positive bias relative to traditional hotel reviews. This positive skew can largely be attributed to Airbnb's distinctive service model and the nature of interactions between hosts and guests, which often lead to heightened guest satisfaction.

The differences between Airbnb and traditional hotel services can be attributed to their unique characteristics and service focus. Traditional hotels typically emphasise standardised rooms and services to ensure consistency and reliability across their properties. This standardisation includes uniform amenities, decor, and service protocols aimed at providing a predictable and dependable experience for guests. The primary focus in traditional hotels is on efficiency, professionalism, and convenience, with staff trained to maintain high standards of hospitality and service delivery. Hotels often offer facilities such as restaurants, gyms, and business centres, catering to a broad range of needs and preferences. In contrast, Airbnb's unique

service model significantly influences the positive review bias observed on the platform. Unlike traditional hotels, which typically offer standardised rooms and services, Airbnb provides a diverse range of accommodations tailored to various preferences, from modern urban lofts to charming countryside retreats. This variety contrasts sharply with the uniform offerings of conventional hotels, allowing guests to choose accommodations that better match their personal tastes and preferences. Additionally, the interaction between Airbnb hosts and guests often goes beyond the typical hotel experience. Hosts frequently offer local insights, personalised recommendations, and unique touches that enhance the guest experience, further contributing to the positive review trend observed on the platform.

While star ratings provide a broad overview of guest satisfaction, textual reviews offer a more nuanced and in-depth understanding of the customer experience. Piryani et al. (2017) emphasize the critical role of textual reviews in capturing subjective factors that numerical ratings alone cannot fully convey. Textual reviews often contain detailed descriptions and nuanced observations about the guest experience, shedding light on the specific elements that drive both satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Analysing textual feedback allows for a comprehensive understanding of what influences guest perceptions, providing valuable insights that can inform service improvements and strategic adjustments. However, it is noteworthy that current research on the textual analysis of reviews remains limited, indicating a need for further exploration in this area.

Comparative studies provide additional insights into the distinctions between Airbnb and traditional hotel reviews. Guttentag(2015a) explores how Airbnb's alternative lodging options disrupt traditional hospitality models and reshape customer expectations. Airbnb's innovative approach challenges conventional hospitality standards, setting new benchmarks for guest satisfaction and introducing a level of personalisation that traditional hotels often lack. Similarly, Lutz and Newlands(2018) highlight the significant impact of user-generated content on booking decisions, noting that positive textual reviews can heavily influence consumer choices in favour of Airbnb. Anderson (2012) supports these findings by examining how review

characteristics and sentiment impact consumer behaviour, reinforcing the notion that positive reviews are a crucial factor in shaping purchasing decisions. Chechi and Lafferty (2020) further contribute to this understanding through a comparative analysis of review sentiment, demonstrating how textual analysis can reveal underlying trends in customer feedback and elucidate the factors contributing to review positivity. However, the bias in online reviews should be clarified, as the observed positivity bias in Airbnb reviews is not solely due to users genuinely liking the platform more. Instead, this bias is due to a structural or systemic factor within the Airbnb model that leads to more favourable reviews compared to other accommodation options like hotels.

For there to be a true positivity bias, there must be an underlying mechanism within the Airbnb model that distorts the reviews beyond what would be expected if guests were simply more satisfied. Recent research has expanded our understanding of the mechanisms driving positive review bias. Chen et al. (2020) investigate social desirability bias, finding that guests are often motivated to provide positive feedback to align with perceived social norms and expectations. This inclination towards positive feedback is influenced by the desire to conform to community standards and the perceived social rewards associated with favourable reviews.

Huang and Benyoucef (2017) examine how platform design and features impact review behaviour, revealing that platforms like Airbnb, which emphasise community and personal interaction, foster more favourable reviews compared to traditional hotel review platforms. The key design feature of the Airbnb platform is its emphasis on community and personal interaction, which sets it apart from traditional hotel booking platforms. The interface is designed to highlight the personal stories and profiles of hosts, allowing guests to feel a connection even before their stay begins. Ert et al(2016a) 's conceptual framework suggested that consumers are affected by both product attributes (e.g., apartment size, location) and seller attributes (reputation, visual appearance). Yet while the effect of product attributes is rather obvious, consumers' responsiveness to seller attributes, mainly sellers' photos, will affect listings' prices and probability of being chosen, even when all listing information is

controlled for. The platform also encourages users to review their stay shortly after it ends, often through automated prompts or reminders. These prompts are strategically timed to capture guests' experiences while they are still fresh, nudging them towards leaving positive feedback during the post-stay "honeymoon" period when any minor inconveniences may have already faded from memory. Airbnb's platform design also leverages social dynamics and community building to encourage positive reviews. By emphasising the shared economy model and the idea of staying in someone else's home, the platform cultivates a sense of mutual respect and reciprocity. The review system is designed to be straightforward and user-friendly, often framing the review process as an opportunity to "thank" the host rather than critically evaluate the stay. This subtle framing can lead guests to focus on positive aspects of their experience, further reinforcing the trend of favourable reviews. The public nature of reviews on Airbnb, where both hosts and guests can see each other's feedback, also contributes to this dynamic. Knowing that their comments will be visible to others, guests may be more reluctant to leave negative reviews, especially if they feel a sense of personal connection or gratitude towards their host.

The reciprocal review system on Airbnb, where both guests and hosts review each other after a stay, introduces an additional layer of accountability and the potential for bias in the review process (Fradkin et al., 2021; Hati et al., 2021). This system is designed to encourage transparency and trust within the community, but it also has the unintended consequence of fostering a culture where guests may feel compelled to leave positive reviews, even if their experience was less than ideal. In traditional hotel settings, reviews are typically one-sided: guests review the hotel, but the hotel does not review the guests (Chen et al., 2024). This anonymity allows guests to be more candid in their feedback without fear of repercussions. However, on Airbnb, the mutual review process creates a scenario where guests might feel pressure to leave a favourable review to avoid receiving a negative one in return. This concern is particularly pronounced if the guest plans to use Airbnb in the future, as a negative review from a host could affect their ability to book other accommodations on the platform (Hati et al., 2021). Guests may also be reluctant to leave negative feedback because of the potential for

creating awkwardness or conflict, especially if the guest-host interaction is amicable. The personal nature of the Airbnb experience often involves direct communication between guests and hosts, which can lead to the development of a friendly relationship (Sakr et al., 2024). In such cases, guests might worry that a critical review could harm this relationship or be perceived as ungrateful, particularly if the host went out of their way to accommodate special requests or provide extra services. Another significant factor that contributes to positivity bias is the fear of negative reciprocity (Norris et al., 2011). Unlike traditional hotel reviews, which are generally more anonymous and detached, Airbnb reviews often include personal identification of both the guest and the host. This visibility creates a situation where guests might hesitate to leave honest negative feedback out of fear that it could lead to retaliation.

Therefore, the positivity bias observed in Airbnb reviews can be attributed to a combination of structural, systemic, and psychological factors inherent in the platform's design and operational model. Unlike traditional hotels, where interactions are more transactional and reviews are generally anonymous, Airbnb fosters a personalised, community-oriented experience that deeply influences guest feedback. The platform's design emphasises personal connection, mutual respect, and reciprocal review processes, which can lead guests to feel morally obligated to leave positive reviews. This is further reinforced by social desirability bias, the fear of negative reciprocity, and the influence of carefully timed review prompts, all of which encourage guests to focus on the positive aspects of their stay while downplaying or omitting any negative experiences. As a result, the reviews on Airbnb are not only reflective of genuine guest satisfaction but are also shaped by the unique social and systemic dynamics of the platform, leading to a pronounced skew towards favourable feedback. Understanding these biases is essential for accurately interpreting Airbnb reviews and comparing them with reviews of traditional accommodations.

Value Co-Creation through Dominant Logics

This section examines the concepts of value and value co-creation in service industries. It begins by defining value, emphasising its complex and subjective nature. The discussion then highlights the importance of creating meaningful experiences as a key source of value in the experience economy. The concept of value co-creation is introduced, detailing the collaborative processes between companies and consumers. The chapter explores different perspectives on value creation, including Goods-Dominant Logic (GDL), Service-Dominant Logic (SDL), and Customer-Dominant Logic (CDL), and compares their implications for traditional hotels and Airbnb. The chapter concludes by providing insights into how value and experiences are co-created in these distinct service environments.

Value has been defined in various ways, such as benefits relative to sacrifices (Zeithaml, 1988a), means-end models (OLSON and DOVER, 1979), or the hedonic appreciation of consumed goods (Holbrook, 1994; Sanchez-Fernandez, Iniesta-Bonilla & Holbrook, 2009). However, the literature concludes that value is an elusive concept (Caru and Cova, 2015) and suffers from "fuzzy definitional problems" (Ballantyne and Varey, 2006). In the service domain, the concept of value becomes even more complex, as it heavily relies on consumers' perceptions and experiences. These subjective experiences and perceptions are crucial measures in understanding the value created in service contexts, as they encapsulate the emotional, psychological, and contextual factors that influence how consumers perceive and derive value from a service. The dynamic and interactive nature of services further complicates this, as value is co-created through interactions between the service provider and the consumer, making it essential to consider the entire customer journey, including pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase phases, to fully capture the value generated in service environments. It is widely acknowledged that experiences are becoming an increasingly important source of value creation. This shift is associated with consumer preferences moving from the utilitarian value of products and services to their experiential and symbolic value

(Schultz, 2013). Pine and Gilmore (1999, 2013) view the experience economy as a new wave of economic offerings, following the historical development of other dominant offerings: commodities meeting basic survival needs, goods addressing higher physical needs, and services solving higher physical and intellectual needs (Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013). In this new wave of economic offerings (experiences), creating new experiences or linking experiential attributes to traditional products and services can generate significant value (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Pine & Gilmore, 2013). The drivers behind the increased demand for experiences include both economic and psychological aspects. As consumers' basic needs are already met, they have reached an economic and psychological stage where they seek to fulfil their desires for emotions, feelings, and self-realization through experiential consumption (Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013).

Value co-creation refers to a collaborative, ongoing process in which various stakeholders, such as companies and customers, join forces to generate new value. This value can be both tangible and intangible, arising from the interactions and exchanges among the participants. Grönroos and Voima (2013) highlight that co-creation includes all theoretical and empirical scenarios where value is generated through company-customer interactions. This concept extends beyond conventional transactional exchanges, emphasising more profound engagement and collaboration (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a; Vargo & Lusch, 2014). The nature of value co-creation lies in its ability to transform the traditional business-consumer relationship into a more dynamic and reciprocal partnership. Instead of merely being passive recipients of goods and services, customers actively participate in the creation process, contributing their insights, feedback, and preferences. Companies, in turn, leverage this input to tailor their offerings more precisely to meet customer needs and expectations. This interactive process fosters innovation and enhances the overall customer experience, as products and services evolve in direct response to user involvement.

Value co-creation involves several key elements that contribute to the collaborative generation of value between providers and consumers (Ranjan and Read, 2016). These elements

highlight the interactive and dynamic nature of value creation, emphasising the active participation and mutual benefits for all parties involved. The key elements of value co-creation can be summarised as follows.

Table 5 The Key Elements of Value Co-creation

Element	Description	References
Interactive Process	Continuous interactions between consumers and providers facilitate dialogue, feedback, and shared experiences.	Grönroos & Voima(2013), Wang(2024)
Collaborative Effort	Joint efforts where consumers are active contributors, not just recipients of value.	Vargo & Lusch(2004a), Heinonen et al. (2010) Carvalho & Alves (2023)
Mutual Benefit	Both consumers and providers gain value, which can be functional, emotional, social, or symbolic.	Grönroos (2008), Vargo & Lusch (2008) Islam et al.(2023)
Customization	Tailoring products or services to meet individual consumer needs and preferences.	Payne, Storbacka & Frow (2008), Prahalad & Ramaswamy (2004a) Zhang(2025)
Resource Integration	Both parties bring in resources, whether tangible or intangible, to co-create value.	Maglio & Spohrer(2008), Heinonen et al. (2010) Tuan & Doan(2025)
Experience Focus	Emphasis on creating meaningful and memorable experiences rather than just delivering products.	Pine & Gilmore(1998), Uslu & Tosun(2024)

Source: Adapted from Ranjan& Read(2016)

Boswijk et al.(2007) emphasise that co-creating personalised, individualised, and meaningful experiences is fundamental to value creation. This approach is rooted in the co-creation perspective(Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004a), which has been applied across products, services, and the entire innovation process(Hoyer et al., 2010). In tourism, the encounters between employees and tourists are pivotal for co-creating experiential attributes. However, creating experiential value in these encounters is challenging, as experiential desires are more complex to identify, describe, and fulfil compared to functional needs.

The value of experiential consumption stems from the intricate interactions between customers and various elements of the product, company, or organisation (Gentile et al., 2007). These interactions provoke personal responses, necessitating rational, emotional, physical, and spiritual engagement from customers(Gentile et al., 2007). Experiences are not directly delivered to consumers; instead, they involve psychological processes that require consumer participation and emotional investment (Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013). Emotional engagement in creating experiences relies on encounters co-created through two-way interactions between users and companies (Boswijk et al., 2007). Companies should view users not as passive spectators but as active participants. Given that experiences are inherently personal, companies must facilitate individual customers in co-creating unique experiences with them.

The transition from service to experience signifies a shift from functional delivery (service) to emotional co-creation (experience) (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004a). In the co-creation process, companies cannot dictate what is valuable to customers or predict their experiences at any given moment. Rather, the company's role is to establish a robust and integrated experiential environment (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004), where co-creation can result in customised and unique experiences tailored to meet each customer's needs. Customer experiences are complex and influenced by numerous interdependent factors. Therefore, experiences must be integrated within these interactions to create a comprehensive experiential environment, thereby maximising both value creation and the overall experience enhancement.

The concept of dominant logic was first introduced by Prahalad and Bettis in 1986, describing it as managers' conceptualisation of the essence of business. This concept encompasses both cognitive dimensions and practical applications, assisting managers in making complex strategic decisions more straightforwardly. Bettis and Prahalad (1995) further expanded on this idea, emphasising its role as an information filter that determines what information is deemed important or irrelevant to the enterprise. Dominant logic has significant implications in both theoretical and practical realms, particularly in a strategic context. It represents a general mindset that guides managers and researchers, influencing their focus by filtering the information they receive (Bettis and Prahalad, 1995; Prahalad, 2004). While literature often presents these perspectives as definitive approaches to business and marketing challenges (Brown, 2007), in practice, managers frequently blend various methods to address issues, rather than strictly adhering to a single theoretical perspective (Strandvik et al., 2014).

In goods-dominant logic (GDL), value is perceived as inherently embedded in the product and is measured by the monetary output generated by the producing company. The supplier or manufacturer is seen as the arbiter of the product's value, which the customer assesses through a personal cost-benefit analysis. Zeithaml (1988a) articulates this perspective by stating, "Perceived value is the consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given." This form of value assessment is typically classified as exchange value, focusing on the transactional nature of value as perceived by the consumer (Vargo and Lusch, 2004a). Service-dominant logic (SDL) shifts the focus from the product to the consumer's experience and usage. In this paradigm, value is "perceived and determined by the consumer based on 'value in use'" (Vargo and Lusch, 2004a). Here, value creation occurs not at the point of exchange but during the actual use or application of the service or product (Lemke et al., 2011). Customers are viewed as co-creators of value, with suppliers offering value propositions that customers realise through their interactions and usage of the product (Vargo and Lusch, 2016; Grönroos and Voima, 2013). The subjective and phenomenological nature of value in SDL emphasises the importance of

individual contexts in determining value (Edvardsson et al., 2011). Understanding the personal experiences and contexts of consumers is crucial in this interpretation of value. Table 5 provides a summary of the evolution of these different value concepts.

Table 6 Table 6 The Evolution of Different Value Concepts

Aspect	Goods-Dominant Logic (GDL)	Service-Dominant Logic (SDL)
Value Creation	Value is embedded in goods and measured by monetary output.	Value is co-created through interactions and use.
Value Determination	Determined by the producer.	Determined by the consumer based on 'value in use'.
Role of Consumer	Passive receiver of value.	Active co-creator of value.
Focus of Exchange	Transactional, one-time exchange of goods.	Relational, ongoing exchange of services and interactions.
Resource Integration	Operand resources (static, tangible).	Operant resources (dynamic, intangible, like skills, knowledge).

Source: Adapted from Sánchez-Fernández & Iniesta-Bonillo (2007)

The concept of value creation has been explored through various theoretical lenses, each offering distinct interpretations and emphasising different aspects of value (Voima et al., 2010; Grönroos, 2006a; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004a). Historically, marketing perspectives on value have evolved significantly. Initially, the focus was on a goods-dominant logic, prioritising the delivery of value from the provider's perspective. This approach emphasised the features and attributes of products as the primary source of value. However, this perspective has shifted towards a service-dominant logic, which highlights the role of provider-consumer interactions in creating value. According to this newer approach, value is not merely embedded

in the production of goods or services but emerges through dynamic interactions between providers and consumers. This shift underscores the significance of co-creation, where value is co-produced through collaborative efforts and resource exchanges between both parties (Heinonen et al., 2013).

Customer engagement has become central to understanding this contemporary view of value creation. Research in this area highlights the active role of consumers in the value-creation process, emphasising their involvement beyond passive consumption. Consumers are now seen as integral participants who contribute to and shape their experiences through interactions with providers. This participatory approach recognises that value is increasingly co-created through these interactions, where both the provider and the consumer contribute resources and efforts to enhance the overall value experience. Thus, value creation is no longer solely the result of production but is dynamically constructed through ongoing, reciprocal engagements between consumers and providers. This dynamic construction involves multiple touchpoints and continuous dialogue, allowing consumers to influence and personalise their experiences in real-time. Providers, in turn, must be responsive and adaptive to these interactions, facilitating environments where meaningful exchanges can occur. This collaborative process ensures that value is unique to each consumer, reflecting their individual preferences, needs, and contexts. Consequently, the contemporary view of value creation acknowledges the complex, interactive, and fluid nature of value, recognising it as a co-evolutionary process benefiting both consumers and providers.

As previously mentioned, different marketing perspectives are built on unique sets of basic assumptions and have their own concepts, methods, and models. The main differences between these perspectives lie in what they highlight and what they pay less attention to. Therefore, all marketing perspectives have their pros and cons, as well as different emphases and scopes (Strandvik et al., 2014). Table 6, as follows, summarises the focus and differences between these dominant logics.

Table 7 Table 7 Key Points of Three Dominant Logics

Dominant Logic	Key Points	Differences	Authors
Goods-Dominant Logic	Value is created by the producer and embedded in the product; consumers passively receive value. However, GDL is increasingly seen as outdated in value-creation discourse, with emphasis shifting to relational and co-creative approaches.	Producers are the sole creators of value; they focus on product features and quality; value is embedded in the tangible product.	Tregua et al.(2021)
Service-Dominant Logic	Value is co-created through interactions between producers and consumers; focus on relationships and services. SDL has evolved toward systems thinking, emphasising service ecosystems, institutions, and actor networks.	Value creation is a collaborative process; both producers and consumers contribute to value, emphasizes interactions and the service aspect.	Vargo and Lusch (2004b), Jaakkola et al.(2024), Chou et al.(2023)
Consumer-Dominant Logic	Value is primarily determined by the consumer's context, experiences, and perceptions; consumers are the main creators of value.	Consumers are the primary creators of value; value is highly subjective and context-specific; companies adapt to the	Heinonen et al. (2010), Heinonen(2023)

	Currently, CDL has expanded via digital platforms, framing customers as active co-creators in personalized and experience-driven exchanges.	consumer's unique circumstances.	
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Goods-dominant logic (GDL) has long been the prevailing framework in traditional economic and marketing theories. This logic posits that value is created entirely by the producer or manufacturer during the production process, and this value is embedded in the tangible features and attributes of the product (Anker et al., 2015). The role of consumers, within this perspective, is to passively receive and consume the value provided to them. This process assumes that the correct usage of the product by consumers results in the realisation of its value, while any deviation from the intended use is considered value destruction. An essential aspect of GDL is that it views the value as inherent in the product itself. Producers focus on enhancing product features, quality, and efficiency to create value.

Service-dominant logic and consumer-dominant logic are service perspectives that have emerged and evolved within the field of service marketing (Grönroos and Gummerus, 2014). While they focus on different aspects, these perspectives collectively reflect the service characteristics prevalent in modern society and the business world.

Contrasting with goods-dominant logic, service-dominant and consumer-dominant logic challenge its core assumptions by highlighting the active role of consumers in value creation. These logics assert that value arises from the interactions and co-creation efforts between providers and consumers (Anker et al., 2015). Service-dominant logic, for instance, sees value as co-created through collaborative efforts and resource exchanges between both parties, moving away from the notion that value is solely embedded in the product.

These perspectives emphasise the dynamic nature of value creation, indicating that value is not merely a result of production but is continuously constructed through ongoing, reciprocal engagements between consumers and providers. This shift underscores the significance of consumer engagement and participation in the value-creation process, recognising that consumers are active participants who shape their experiences through their interactions with providers.

In SDL, value is not inherently embedded in the product or service itself but is realised during the use or consumption of that product or service by the customer (Hietanen et al., 2018). The service provider offers a value proposition, but the actual value emerges only when the customer engages with the service (Vargo & Lusch, 2014). This approach emphasises the importance of the relationship between the provider and the customer, suggesting that the quality and continuity of these interactions are crucial for sustaining and enhancing value creation over time. SDL views value creation as a dynamic process that evolves as the provider and customer continue to interact, requiring active participation from both parties. This makes the customer not just a recipient of value but a co-creator of it (Luca et al., 2016).

According to Heinonen et al. (2013), value-in-use is not created; it emerges for the customer or is formed for him or her. This represents a base for a customer-oriented view, instead of a company-dominant approach, providing customers with messages through clearly defined channels. In CDL, the customer is seen as the main agent of value creation, deriving value from how the product or service fits into their life, fulfils their needs, and integrates with their personal experiences. The service provider's role is secondary, acting more as a facilitator for this value creation rather than a direct contributor. CDL also emphasises the concept of value-in-context, where the customer's entire situation, including their environment, social interactions, and personal goals, influences the creation of value. This perspective recognises the customer's autonomy and their ability to create value independently of the service provider, often in ways that the provider might not have anticipated.

To show the difference between SDL and CDL, consider a ride-sharing service like Uber. From an SDL perspective, the company and the customer co-create value through the service interaction. The company provides the platform and drivers, while the customer engages by booking and using the service. The value is realised during the ride, where factors such as driver behaviour, ride quality, and convenience contribute to the customer's experience. In contrast, from a CDL perspective, the value of the ride-sharing service extends beyond the ride itself. It includes how the service integrates into the customer's broader context, such as their daily commute, social life, or even their identity as an environmentally conscious individual. The service's value is thus not just in the immediate interaction but in how it helps the customer navigate their world more efficiently, supports their lifestyle, or aligns with their values.

Good Dominant Logic

Traditional Goods-Dominant logic (GDL) centres on tangible resources, with the exchange process focused on output units (Mele et al., 2014; Vargo and Lusch, 2004c). In this framework, firms determine the value of their products and distinguish this value from that of their competitors. The production process aims to embed value within goods, while marketing activities are concerned with the exchange of these goods, known as value-in-exchange. Customers are viewed as external to this process, acting as passive recipients whose role is limited to consuming and thereby destroying the value of the product.

This logic has its roots in the early 20th-century philosophy of "Fordism," named after Henry Ford's revolutionary approach to mass production. Fordism embodies the concept of mass-producing standardised, value-embedded goods for widespread consumption. The emphasis was on efficiency and standardisation, with the assembly line symbolising this approach. The success of Fordism lay in its ability to produce large volumes of uniform products at low costs, making them widely accessible and driving mass consumption (Jessop et al., 1992).

GDL emphasises the firm's control over the value creation process, with minimal consideration for the customer's role beyond the purchase. Customer needs and experiences are secondary to production efficiency and distribution effectiveness. This approach presumes that value is an intrinsic attribute of the product, determined at the point of production, and conveyed to the consumer through purchase. However, this perspective has limitations in today's dynamic and interconnected markets. Modern consumers seek more than just functional benefits; they desire personalised experiences and meaningful interactions with brands. The rigidity of GDL fails to accommodate these evolving consumer expectations and the growing importance of intangible resources, such as knowledge and skills, in value creation. As markets evolve, the limitations of GDL become increasingly evident, prompting a shift towards more flexible and interactive approaches to value creation and exchange.

The drawbacks of applying GDL in the service industry are significant. Firstly, GDL overlooks the critical role of customer interactions, viewing customers as passive recipients rather than active participants(Xie et al., 2016). This is problematic in services like hospitality, where the quality of the service experience heavily relies on interactions between staff and customers. Secondly, GDL's emphasis on standardisation and efficiency can lead to inflexibility(Wirtz and Lovelock, 2022; Edvardsson et al., 2011), failing to meet diverse customer needs that often require tailored services. Additionally, GDL neglects the co-creation of value, which is essential in many services where customers actively participate in the service delivery process(Payne et al., 2008). Furthermore, measuring value primarily by tangible outputs and monetary metrics does not adequately capture the experiential and relational aspects of services(Zeithaml, 1988b). This focus can result in an incomplete assessment of service quality and customer satisfaction. Lastly, GDL ignores the importance of emotional and relational aspects, crucial in sectors like hospitality and tourism, where building relationships and emotional connections with customers is key to delivering value(Berry, 1995). Consequently, service industries adopting GDL may struggle to provide meaningful and satisfying customer experiences, highlighting the need for a shift towards service-dominant logic.

Service-Dominant Logic

The central premise of Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) is that marketing inherits the exchange model of economics, which has a dominant logic based on the exchange of commodities that typically produce output (Vargo & Lusch, 2004c). Compared to GDL focuses on tangible resources, embedded value and transactions. Advocates of SDL argue that the service marketing subdiscipline that emerged in the late 1970s builds on the same commodity and manufacturing-based model, which treats services as a special (intangible) product (Cova & Salle, 2008).

The current awareness among scholars and practitioners of the service economy is not that services outnumber goods in economic activity, but that the relative inadequacy of goods-based business classification systems in capturing and informing changes in economic activity is becoming more apparent (Lusch & Vargo, 2008). They claim that the current change is not due to the sudden emergence of services, but rather a combination of (1) the increasing ability to separate, transport, and exchange information in addition to the embodied embodiment of goods and people; (2) the degree of specialization The enhancements - which Normann (2001) refer to as "liquification" and "unbundling", respectively - allow for increased outsourcing. These changes may create new opportunities for service provision but do not change the nature of what is being exchanged (applied knowledge and skills). They will only lead to an increase in economic exchanges related to goods (i.e., "services") that are necessarily classified as residual categories in goods-centric classification systems (Vargo & Lusch, 2004c). Lusch & Vargo (2006) proposed an SDL dictionary to break down the constraints and vocabulary of commodity-dominant logic (see Table 5). The singular "service" is used in SD logic to denote the process of doing something as/with someone, while the plural "services" denotes a unit of output consistent with commodity-dominant logic (Lusch and Vargo, 2006). SD logic shifts the positioning of marketing from a "market-to" concept of promoting, locating, and capturing customers to a "market-with" concept in which customers and supply chain partners are collaborators throughout the marketing process (Lusch and Vargo, 2006).

Following the shift from the main dominant logic to service dominance, Vargo and Lush (2008) acknowledge that "experience" may be a more specific and descriptive term and that consumers' long-term experience with a brand is important. This contrasts sharply with GDL, which holds that the product itself is the most important aspect when it comes to creating value (Grönroos, 2008). The shift to an SDL has been reflected in the focus of the organisation, which has changed to be more focused on creating or co-creating the consumer's brand experience, rather than just focusing on the product.

Table 8 Conceptual Transitions of GDL to SDL

Conceptual transitions		
Goods-dominant logic concepts	Transitional concepts	Service-dominant logic concepts
Goods	Services	Service
Products	Offerings	Experiences
Feature/attribute	Benefit	Solution
Value-added	Co-production	Co-creation of value
Profit maximization	Financial engineering	Financial feedback/learning
Price	Value delivery	Value proposition
Equilibrium system	Dynamic systems	Complex adaptive systems
Supply chain	Value chain	Value-creation network/constellation
Promotion	Integrated marketing communications	Dialogue
To market	Market to	Market with

Source: Lusch & Vargo(2006).

Grönroos(2008) examines the core of service-dominant logic, outlining the roles of consumers and firms in the value-creation process. According to the study, the company is considered a valued promoter, encouraging the co-creation of value. Neoclassical economic perspectives

demonstrate the concept of exchange value, that is, value is measured in money. In other words, value is created by producers in the form of goods and distributed to the market in exchange for money (Vargo et al., 2015). According to the GD logic, value is acquired in the process of exchange, which is called exchange value (Gronroos, 2008). SD logic, on the other hand, does not see value as being exchanged or present in goods in the form of production units. Instead, according to this logic, value is co-created, not delivered.

SD logic conceptualises value in terms of Holbrook's values, which suggest that value is generated in the consumption experience, not in the product, brand, or item that is purchased. According to this logic, use-value is the result of the consumer's service experience, and although this value is co-created through direct and indirect interactions between the consumer and the service provider, it is determined by the consumer, not the service provider (Vargo & Lusch, 2004a, 2008a). Based on this, Lusch and Vargo (2008) made it clearer in their revised foundational premises that firms cannot provide value, but only value propositions.

According to service-dominant logic, the ongoing interactions and experiences that consumers have with a brand are crucial. This is in stark contrast to goods-dominant logic, which emphasises that the product itself is the primary driver of value and opportunity creation (Gronroos, 2008). The transition towards service-dominant logic is evident in how organisations have shifted their focus from merely designing products to fostering and co-creating meaningful experiences with consumers (Payne et al., 2008).

This shift reflects a broader understanding that value is not embedded in the product alone but emerges through dynamic interactions between consumers and brands. Organisations now aim to engage customers on a deeper level, creating personalised and memorable experiences that resonate with their needs and desires. By doing so, companies can build stronger relationships, enhance customer loyalty, and differentiate themselves in competitive markets. For instance, in the hospitality industry, hotels are increasingly focusing on delivering exceptional service and unique experiences rather than just offering comfortable rooms. This

approach features personalised services, local cultural experiences, and interactive engagements that make a stay truly memorable. Similarly, in the tech industry, companies like Apple emphasise not just the functionality of their products but also the user experience and ecosystem, fostering a community of loyal customers who value the holistic brand experience.

Consumer Dominant Logic

Customer-dominant logic (CDL), as articulated by Heinonen et al.(2010) and Voima et al. (2010), is a marketing and business perspective that prioritises the consumer's role. This approach shifts the focus from how providers engage customers within their processes to how consumers engage various providers within their own ecosystems. Essentially, CDL emphasises how a service integrates into the consumer's environment and daily activities, rather than how the service is delivered by the organisation(Heinonen and Strandvik, 2015).

CDL aligns with service-dominant logic (SDL) in several key areas. Both perspectives recognise the critical role of interactions in the value-creation process and view consumers as active participants. However, while SDL places significant emphasis on the provider's role in co-creating value, CDL takes this further by highlighting the consumer's supremacy and their broader ecosystem of interactions. In CDL, the consumer's experiences are paramount, including those experiences that are independent of the provider. This logic underscores that value is created not just through direct interactions with the service provider, but also through the consumer's own social resources and personal context. Therefore, CDL broadens the understanding of value creation by incorporating the consumer's entire experiential framework and social interactions into the process. While both CDL and SDL emphasise the importance of consumer engagement and active participation in value creation, CDL extends the focus to encompass the consumer's entire ecosystem, emphasising the integration of services into their daily lives and broader social networks. This approach provides a more holistic view of how consumers derive value from their interactions with various providers.

CDL represents a paradigm shift in marketing, emphasising the importance of understanding consumer practices and experiences rather than merely focusing on value creation within service-related processes. This perspective encourages service providers to gain deeper insights into the consumer's sphere, examining how their services are integrated into daily life and how they help consumers create value and achieve their goals. This approach moves away from viewing consumers simply as partners in co-creating value, as suggested by traditional models like SDL, and instead, places the consumer at the centre of the value-creation process (Voima et al., 2010).

The conceptual development of CDL and its core principles has been detailed in several key studies (Heinonen and Strandvik, 2015; Heinonen et al., 2013; Voima et al., 2010). These works outline how CDL differs fundamentally from provider-centric logic, advocating for a broader understanding of consumer behaviour and value creation. CDL suggests that value is derived not just from direct interactions with service providers but also from the consumer's own context and ecosystem. The foundational studies on CDL have paved the way for a deeper exploration of its principles through both conceptual and empirical research. Heinonen et al. (2010) presented the first framework for CDL, contrasting it with provider-dominant perspectives, including SDL and service logic. This comparison identified five main challenges for service marketers: organisational involvement, organisational control in co-creation, visibility of value creation, and the scope and character of consumer experiences. These challenges highlight the need for service providers to shift their focus from controlling the value creation process to understanding and supporting the consumer's role in it. Research on consumer-to-consumer value creation has shown how consumers derive value through social interactions, independent of the service provider (Rihova, 2013). Service brand relationship mapping has demonstrated the importance of understanding the network of relationships that consumers form around a brand (Heinonen and Strandvik, 2013). Studies on consumer activity in service contexts (Mickelsson, 2013) and consumer-bank relationships have further illustrated the varied ways in which consumers engage with services in their everyday lives (Heinonen and Medberg, 2018).

Besides, CDL's emphasis on consumer experiences and social practices extends beyond traditional service interactions. It calls for a holistic view of the consumer's life, recognising that value creation is influenced by a multitude of factors, including social networks, personal goals, and contextual variables. This broader perspective requires service providers to consider the entire consumer journey, from pre-purchase activities to post-purchase experiences and beyond. For example, in the context of Airbnb, applying CDL would involve understanding not just the accommodation provided but also how the stay fits into the guest's overall travel experience, their interactions with hosts and local communities, and their personal preferences and emotional well-being. This means looking at how guests share their Airbnb experiences within their social networks, how these interactions influence their perceptions of value, and how the service enhances their travel experience beyond just providing a place to stay. By focusing on these broader aspects, Airbnb can better cater to the holistic needs of its guests, ensuring a more personalised and enriching experience. Within the framework of CDL, value is understood to be generated through the consumers' social experiences within their own personal contexts, extending beyond the organisation's direct influence(Heinonen et al., 2010). This viewpoint aligns with Grönroos' (2008) perspective, which asserts that consumers are the primary creators of value. In this setting, companies or service providers serve as facilitators, providing platforms that empower consumers to generate value independently (Gummerus, 2013). CDL shifts the emphasis towards the lived experiences of consumers and how these experiences integrate into their daily lives, moving beyond the traditional focus on interactions between consumers and service providers. It underscores the importance of recognizing that the consumer's personal and life circumstances are central to value creation, rather than being primarily driven by provider-managed processes. The consumer's environment, which includes physical, psychological, social, and virtual dimensions, collectively contributes to the creation of value(Voima et al., 2010).

Instead of a company providing a standardised service, Airbnb empowered consumers to rent out their homes to other consumers, making the customer the central agent of value creation. Initially, Airbnb operated almost entirely outside the conventional service economy system, where hotels and other accommodations followed an SDL. This approach aligns perfectly with CDL, where value is determined by how well a product or service fits into the customer's personal context, needs, and experiences(Heinonen and Strandvik, 2015). The effectiveness of this model was evident as Airbnb rapidly grew in popularity. By enabling direct consumer-to-consumer interactions, Airbnb facilitated a new kind of value creation—one that was highly personalized and context-specific. Guests could choose accommodations that suited their unique preferences, and hosts could offer their spaces in ways that highlighted local culture and personal touches(Guttentag, 2015a). This bypassed the traditional SDL model, which typically involves a service provider playing an active role in value creation through standardized offerings. With increasing scale, Airbnb introduced standardised services such as professional photography for listings, safety protocols, and customer support(Edelman & Geradin, 2016; B. Edelman & Luca, 2014). These elements represent a shift towards SDL, where the service provider (Airbnb) begins to play a more active role in co-creating value with the customer. By enhancing the quality and consistency of the service, Airbnb started to embed more value into the service itself, aligning with SDL's focus on interaction-based value creation(Guttentag, 2015a). This hybridisation of CDL and SDL in Airbnb's business model reflects a broader trend within the sharing economy. While platforms like Airbnb have had to adopt some SDL principles to scale and ensure quality, they continue to operate largely on a CDL framework, where the consumer remains the primary creator of value. Other sharing economy platforms, such as those that facilitate accommodation swaps during holidays, also operate under CDL principles, further demonstrating that value creation in these contexts is driven largely by consumers' personal contexts and interactions(Belk, 2014). Based on the above, in the current context, SDL focuses on co-creating value through structured interactions between service providers and customers, while CDL emphasises the value that customers create independently within their contexts. Airbnb's journey from a pure CDL model to a hybrid CDL- SDL offering illustrates how companies in the sharing economy can balance

consumer autonomy with the need for standardised services, adapting their value-creation strategies as customer needs change.

Dominant Logics for This Research

In this study, we adopt Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) for traditional hotels and Customer-Dominant Logic (CDL) for Airbnb to better understand and compare these two distinct service contexts. SDL, as proposed by Vargo and Lusch (2004), conceptualises value as co-created through the interaction between service providers and customers, rather than embedded in the tangible product itself. It departs from Goods-Dominant Logic (GDL), which treats value as a property of the object exchanged, and instead emphasises the collaborative, experiential nature of services. This makes SDL particularly suitable for traditional hotels, where value creation is heavily dependent on real-time service encounters and interactions between hotel staff and guests.

In the traditional hotel context, value co-creation primarily occurs through direct, synchronous engagements—such as check-in procedures, concierge support, room service, and personalised assistance. These service moments are carefully designed and operationalised by professionals, ensuring consistency and reliability. For example, a hotel may enhance value through staff-mediated local recommendations or by resolving service issues on-site. These interactions do not merely deliver functional benefits; they also shape the emotional and relational quality of the guest experience. As such, value emerges from the interplay between structured service offerings and the customer's lived service journey, aligning with the SDL view that the firm facilitates, but does not unilaterally deliver, value.

In contrast, Airbnb aligns more closely with Customer-Dominant Logic (CDL), which places the consumer—rather than the firm—at the centre of the value creation process (Heinonen et al., 2010). CDL emphasises that value is created through the consumer's own activities, experiences, and broader life context, often extending beyond direct interactions with the service provider. This perspective is particularly relevant to Airbnb, where guests integrate

their stays into personal travel narratives, guided by self-selected preferences, host relationships, and community-based interaction. Rather than merely receiving a service, Airbnb users actively shape their own experience through choosing unique listings, communicating with hosts, and contributing to the platform's content ecosystem through reviews and photos.

Unlike traditional hotels, where value creation is typically concentrated during the stay itself, Airbnb facilitates asynchronous, digitally mediated value co-creation. For instance, communication between host and guest often begins prior to arrival and continues after the stay, while online reviews not only express value but also inform future users and influence host reputations. These peer-to-peer dynamics reflect a more decentralised and socially embedded form of hospitality, wherein value is generated through social storytelling, emotional resonance, and community feedback. In this way, Airbnb exemplifies the post-institutional logic of CDL, where the guest's life-world and subjective interpretation—not the provider's structure—become the primary site of value formation (Heinonen & Strandvik, 2015).

Thus, SDL and CDL offer complementary yet divergent lenses for understanding value co-creation in hospitality. While SDL underscores the co-production of value through managed service interactions, CDL reveals how value is constructed beyond the firm boundary, in the user's own ecosystem of meaning-making, digital engagement, and experiential narrative. Applying these logics respectively to traditional hotels and Airbnb enables a nuanced comparative analysis of customer engagement, service structure, and review behaviour across contrasting business models.

Experience for Value

Experience and value are critical concepts in understanding consumer behaviour, yet experience value remains one of the least explored forms of value compared to others. As interest in consumer experience has grown, so has the recognition of experience value as a crucial area of study (Turnbull, 2009; Tynan et al., 2014).

Experience value is a relatively new concept that focuses on the value perceived by consumers throughout their entire consumption journey. This approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of value, extending beyond traditional perspectives such as exchange value(Zeithaml, 1988a), possession value(Richins, 1994), and use value (Woodruff, 1997). Traditional views tend to concentrate on specific aspects of value, such as the immediate benefit received in a transaction, the ownership of a product, or the utility derived from using a product. While these perspectives offer valuable insights, they are often limited in scope, failing to capture the full breadth and depth of consumer experiences. For instance, exchange value typically focuses on the monetary worth of a product or service, highlighting the trade-off between what consumers give and what they receive in return. Possession value emphasizes the satisfaction and benefits derived from owning a product, which may not fully account for the dynamic and evolving nature of consumer experiences over time(Richins, 1994). Use value, on the other hand, looks at the practical benefits and functionality of a product during its usage but often overlooks the emotional and social dimensions of consumption(Vargo and Lusch, 2004a; Woodruff, 1997).

Experience value, however, encompasses a broader spectrum, considering not only the tangible and functional aspects of consumption but also the emotional, social, and experiential dimensions(Tynan and McKechnie, 2009; Gentile et al., 2007). It acknowledges that consumers derive value from various stages of their consumption journey, including pre-consumption activities like anticipation and planning, the core consumption experience itself, and post-consumption activities such as reminiscing, sharing experiences, and storytelling. This holistic approach recognises that value is created and perceived through a continuous interaction between the consumer and the service or product, influenced by personal, social, and situational factors. By capturing the full breadth of consumer experiences, the concept of experience value offers a more nuanced and enriched understanding of what constitutes value for consumers. In the service industry, as services are inherently experiential, unlike tangible products, services are often consumed as they are produced, making the consumer's

experience integral to the perceived value. For example, in the hospitality sector, a guest's experience encompasses the anticipation of the stay, interactions with staff, the ambience of the environment, and the post-stay reflections and memories. Each of these touchpoints contributes to the overall experience value.

Value and Experience under the Frameworks of Service-Dominant Logic and Customer-Dominant Logic

Service-dominant logic (SDL) emphasises the co-creation of value through interactions between service providers and consumers. This approach contrasts with traditional Goods-Dominant Logic (GDL), which views value as embedded in the product itself. SDL shifts the focus to the collaborative process of value creation, where both the consumer's experience and the provider's role in facilitating this experience are crucial (Vargo & Lusch, 2004c).

In the context of SDL, experience value is co-created through continuous interactions between consumers and service providers. For example, in the hospitality sector, the value of a hotel stay is derived not just from the quality of the room, but also from the interactions with hotel staff, the atmosphere, and the facilities of the hotel, as well as the personalised services offered. Each touchpoint, such as concierge assistance, room service, and local activity recommendations, contributes to the overall experience. The ability of hotel staff to provide personalised recommendations, promptly address customer needs, and create a welcoming environment is integral to the co-creation of value (Vargo & Lusch, 2004c). In provider-dominant logic literature, value is traditionally studied in an objective manner, focusing on tangible aspects of the service. However, SDL acknowledges the dynamic nature of value creation and the importance of subjective consumer experiences. Value is realised through the active participation of the consumer in the service process, making the consumer's involvement crucial to value creation.

Customer-dominant logic (CDL) takes an experiential approach, emphasising that value is primarily developed within the consumer's sphere, encompassing both extraordinary and routine experiences (Heinonen et al., 2010). This perspective aligns with consumer experiential research, which focuses on subjective experiences and recognises that value changes with individuals' personal and distinctive needs (McKnight, 1994). CDL extends beyond merely considering exceptional experiences to include everyday, ordinary ones. For instance, the value of staying at an Airbnb is influenced by the guest's internal and external contexts, such as past travel experiences, current mood, interactions with the host, and future travel expectations (Heinonen et al., 2010). Value realisation through experience is contingent upon the consumer's personal context, which includes biological, physical, mental, emotional, and social dimensions (Heinonen et al., 2013; Rihova et al., 2013). Consumers are integral to the value formation process, which is influenced by their situation and personal context. The consumer's past, present, and future experiences shape the value they derive from the experience (Heinonen et al., 2010). CDL expands on Holbrook's (1996) notion of the relative and comparative nature of value by suggesting that value is associated with the multi-contextual and vibrant life and reality of consumers. It posits that value is not only relative to other products or services but also deeply embedded in the personal and subjective experiences of consumers (Heinonen and Strandvik, 2009). The process of value development occurs within the consumer's context, highlighting the importance of internal and external factors that influence their experiences (Voima et al., 2010).

Reciprocity in Airbnb vs. Hotel Reviews

This chapter explores the concept of reciprocity, tracing its historical roots. It highlights how reciprocity shapes social structures, fosters cooperation, and influences human behaviour. The chapter then focuses on the application of reciprocity in relationship marketing (RM), emphasising the importance of building long-lasting, mutually beneficial customer relationships. Additionally, it discusses the impact of reciprocity on customer engagement, especially in the hospitality and tourism industry, and examines the emotional foundation of reciprocity through the lens of gratitude.

Reciprocity

Reciprocity has historically been a golden rule, shaping human coexistence, influencing various cultures, and forming a fundamental element of human moral standards (Dekker, Zika, & Anderson, 2003). Dating back over 3000 years, this principle through the notion of "an eye for an eye." This age-old dictum provides a moral foundation that underscores the importance of societal recognition and retaliation to deter abuse and maintain social order (Gervasi et al., 2022b). It has been extensively discussed in the context of interpersonal and social relationships by philosophers, psychologists, and sociologists. It is considered a cornerstone of social stability and a driving force in relationship exchanges (GOULDNER, 1960a; Homans, 1958).

The essential role of reciprocity in social relations has spurred extensive analysis across various scientific fields. Sociologists, for instance, employ the concept to elucidate social exchanges, voluntary behaviours, and social distances. Blau's (2012) work highlights how reciprocal actions foster social bonds and obligations, crucial for social cohesion and cooperation. In psychology, reciprocity is essential for understanding behaviours related to revenge and generalised exchange. Eisenberger et al., (2004) explore how the expectation of reciprocity influences the degree of vengeance, while Molm, Collett, and Schaefer (2007) investigate how reciprocal exchanges extend beyond direct interactions, benefiting broader social networks.

Anthropologists leverage the principle of reciprocity to interpret cultural narratives and social structures. Levi-Strauss (1971) examines how myths reflect reciprocal exchanges that reinforce societal norms and values, while Malinowski (1922) studies how gift-giving practices establish mutual obligations essential for community survival. Biologists and evolutionary biologists delve into the evolutionary underpinnings of reciprocity, examining its role in the development of gratitude and morality. Nowak & Roch (2007) discuss how reciprocal behaviours enhance cooperation and social harmony, which are vital for survival and

reproductive success. Alexander (1987) further posits that the evolution of moral behaviour can be traced back to reciprocal actions that promote group cohesion. In economics, the significance of reciprocity is evident in its impact on contract enforcement, social norms, and collective actions. Fehr and Gächter(2000) highlight how reciprocal actions ensure that economic transactions are embedded within a network of social obligations and trust, crucial for economic stability and growth.

Table 9 summarises how reciprocity is understood and applied in various research fields. Each field offers a unique perspective on reciprocity, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of its importance in human interactions.

Table 9 Summary of Reciprocity in Various Research Fields

Research Fields	Key Insights	References
Sociology	Forms and maintains social structures, social bonds, and obligations	Blau (1964)
Psychology	Drives human behaviour, feelings of gratitude, and need for revenge; generalised exchange	Eisenberger et al. (2004); Molm et al. (2007)
Anthropology	Underpins cultural narratives and social ties, gift-giving practices	Levi-Strauss (1969); Malinowski (1922)
Biology/Evolutionary Biology	Promotes cooperation, social harmony, and the evolution of morality	Nowak (2006); Nowak & Roch (2007); Alexander (1987)
Economics	Enforces contracts, upholds social norms, and facilitates collective action	Fehr & Gächter (2000)

However, the multitude of concepts and methods used to study reciprocity has led to a wide range of interpretations and applications. This variety can result in ambiguous and sometimes conflicting definitions, making it challenging to develop a unified theory of reciprocity (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Different disciplines may emphasise various aspects of

reciprocity, from immediate and direct exchanges to long-term and generalised exchanges, reflecting the complexity of human social behaviour. Therefore, this research will explain the concept of reciprocity in marketing, especially in the context of service and customer engagement.

Reciprocity in Marketing

Relationship marketing (RM) is a paradigm in marketing that emphasises the importance of developing and maintaining long-lasting customer relationships (Beetles and Harris, 2010). Unlike traditional transactional marketing, which focuses on individual sales and short-term gains, RM aims to build a deeper, more enduring connection with customers. This long-term focus not only enhances customer satisfaction and loyalty but also fosters a stable and mutually beneficial relationship between the service provider and the customer (MORGAN and HUNT, 1994). In RM, reciprocity involves continuous relational exchanges that often result in mutual benefits for both the service provider and the customer (MORGAN and HUNT, 1994). Positive reciprocity can foster trust, commitment, and satisfaction among parties, creating a virtuous cycle of mutual benefit. This mutual exchange forms the bedrock of successful marketing relationships, ensuring both parties feel valued and understood. Conversely, negative reciprocity, where unkind actions are met with retaliation, can damage relationships and lead to customer attrition. Therefore, developing positive reciprocity while shunning negative reciprocity is vital for marketers.

Reciprocity in RM extends beyond simple transactional interactions. It involves continuous relational exchanges that often result in mutual benefits. These benefits can take various forms, such as personalised services, exclusive offers, or enhanced customer support. By acknowledging and rewarding loyal customers, companies can strengthen their relationships and create a sense of trust and commitment. This approach aligns with the broader goals of RM, which aims to create a win-win situation for both the service provider and the customer. Therefore, reciprocity often serves as an adjective in RM to describe positive and stable relationships (e.g., "this relationship is reciprocal"). This usage underscores the mutual

exchange and balanced give-and-take that characterise successful marketing relationships. It highlights the importance of both parties contributing to and benefiting from the relationship, creating a dynamic and sustainable interaction that goes beyond mere transactions. Despite its critical role, the complexities of reciprocity in RM have not been fully explored (Palmatier et al., 2006; Bagozzi, 1995). Researchers have noted that while reciprocity is a foundational concept in RM, its multifaceted nature and varied applications require deeper investigation. For example, understanding how reciprocity influences different aspects of customer behaviour, such as trust, satisfaction, and loyalty, can provide valuable insights into developing more effective RM strategies.

In the broader context of marketing, reciprocity plays a significant role in shaping customer perceptions and behaviours. It fosters a sense of fairness and mutual respect, which are essential for building strong, lasting relationships. In the context of service marketing, reciprocity extends beyond immediate interactions to influence long-term relationship dynamics. For instance, the initial positive actions of a service provider can lead to increased customer loyalty and advocacy, as satisfied customers are more likely to engage in positive word-of-mouth and repeat patronage. This aspect of reciprocity underscores its strategic importance in cultivating sustained customer relationships and achieving competitive advantage (Kotler, 2000).

Moreover, the principle of reciprocity in marketing is closely related to concepts such as customer engagement, brand loyalty, and customer relationship management (CRM). Research indicates that when companies engage in reciprocal behaviours, such as offering personalised attention and rewards, they can significantly enhance customer loyalty and satisfaction (Palmatier et al., 2009). Additionally, strong reciprocity can mitigate the effects of service failures and enhance recovery efforts, as customers are more likely to forgive and continue their relationship with a brand that they perceive as genuinely caring and responsive (Maxham & Netemeyer, 2002). Gummesson (2000) emphasised the necessity of an ethical approach to foster lasting win-win relationships in marketing. While this is not the only type of

marketing relationship, it serves as a valuable foundation for exploring the various kinds of relationships that can exist within a marketing framework (Bagozzi, 1995). In nature, reciprocity is an important part of RM, capable of transforming customer relationships from mere transactional interactions into deep, enduring partnerships. By reciprocity, companies can build stronger, more resilient relationships that not only withstand market fluctuations but also drive sustained growth and success.

Reciprocity and Customer Engagement

Over the past decade, the concept of customer engagement has emerged as a central theme in marketing research (Islam & Rahman, 2016). Brodie et al. (2011) reviewed this concept to establish an effective definition of consumer engagement—describing it as a psychological state that occurs during the interactive and co-creative customer experiences with focal agents/objects such as brands in the focal service relationships. Marketing scholars generally agree that fostering customer engagement can yield sustainable competitive advantages for companies (Hollebeek, 2011b; Kumar & Pansari, 2016b; Islam & Rahman, 2016). For instance, loyal and engaged customers are more likely to contribute significantly to a company's revenue streams (Kumar and Pansari, 2016). The concept of customer engagement is increasingly seen as a natural extension of relationship marketing (Vivek et al., 2012). Its strategic implementation is believed to be instrumental in securing a competitive edge in the market.

Researchers have established that relational behaviours significantly enhance the performance of exchange relationships (Bercovitz, Jap, & Nickerson, 2006; Ferguson, Paulin, & Bergeron, 2005). Lusch and Brown (1996) noted that “by freely exchanging information, maintaining transactional flexibility, and fostering mutual solidarity, channel members can achieve higher levels of performance.” Flexibility in reciprocity allows relationships to adjust according to the partners' needs and the conditions under which the relationship operates (Lusch & Brown, 1996), while reciprocity in information exchange enhances communication between partners (Jap & Anderson, 2007). To ensure that relational behaviours positively

affect performance, it is crucial for both parties to actively participate in these behaviours. This perspective supports the idea that an increase in relational behaviours between two parties correlates with improved outcomes.

This relational perspective aligns with the emphasis on customer engagement, which highlights the critical role of relational interactions in achieving success. When customers actively engage with companies to create value, it strengthens relational dynamics. Both customers and companies engage in relational behaviours because these interactions thrive on the reciprocal contributions of both parties (Fehr & Gächter, 2000). This reciprocal engagement emphasises that mutual involvement in relational behaviours not only enhances performance but also fosters deeper, more beneficial relationships for all parties involved.

Specifically, reciprocity positively influences trust, commitment, and attendance intentions (Magnusen et al., 2012), which are consistent with factors identified in customer engagement literature. Reciprocity (or perceived reciprocity) plays a crucial role in motivating consumers to build trust and commitment with their exchange partners, and increases the likelihood of fair treatment towards the business (Cialdini and Goldstein, 2004). For example, consumer confidence in the quality and reliability of transactional relationships is related to trust in the exchange partner (Garbarino and Johnson, 1999). Perceptions of reciprocity also enhance consumer commitment levels by creating a sense of obligation to reciprocate received favours, demonstrating a desire to maintain a valuable, balanced relationship. These elements of initiating and stabilising reciprocal relationships can positively affect consumer engagement in various contexts. For reciprocity to be effective, the exchange relationship must be perceived as balanced. However, unlike economic exchanges, the balance in social exchanges is flexible and not tied to market value but to the perceived value and social significance of specific behaviours. Furthermore, if consumers experience social connections through personal behaviour in a particular environment, they may feel that the most appropriate response is to reciprocate relative to the individual and the environment (Dahl et al., 2005).

In this research, the concept of reciprocity in operations may lead to varying degrees of customer engagement. Reciprocity, which involves mutual exchange and the return of favours, plays a fundamental role in shaping customer relationships and engagement levels. However, the concept of reciprocity remains implicit within the existing CE literature, and current research has yet to thoroughly explore its potential impact on customer engagement.

Reciprocity in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry

The hospitality and tourism industries, as part of the service sector, are characterised by intangibility, variability, perishability, and indivisibility(Liat et al., 2017). In light of these characteristics, several studies suggest that service providers should focus their marketing efforts on intangible factors, such as brand management, to reinforce positive consumer behaviour and attitudes(Moliner et al., 2018a). The guiding paradigm of relationship marketing has led the hospitality industry to emphasise maintaining and building sustainable connections with consumers, creating psychological and emotional attachments to the brand or organisation(Moliner et al., 2018b; Vivek et al., 2012). Customer engagement (CE) is a phenomenon and a branding practice that demonstrates the value of relationship marketing (Ashley et al., 2011; Brodie et al., 2011a). Consequently, fostering engagement plays a critical role in marketing practices(Rather, 2019).

Van Doorn et al. (2010a) assert that maintaining high levels of engagement with customers strengthens the company's long-term relationship with its customer base, often resulting in increased profitability due to enhanced customer loyalty. Researchers also suggest that a psychological connection enables customers to interact with and become more loyal to specific brands or suppliers (Hapsari et al., 2017; Moliner et al., 2018; Vivek et al., 2012). Engaged customers contribute to organisational innovation processes, value creation, brand recommendations, and the co-creation of experiences (Roderick J. Brodie et al., 2013; Hoyer et al., 2010).

Reciprocity lies at the heart of customer-company relationships (Henderson et al., 2011). Bagozzi (1995) describes reciprocity as "the core of the marketing relationship." Empirical research highlights the benefits of reciprocity in relationship marketing (Hoppner et al., 2015). Palmatier et al. (2009) discussed the role of customer gratitude in relationship marketing, grounded in the principle of reciprocity. Despite its recognised importance in managing inter-organisational relationships, reciprocity is only briefly mentioned in CE research (Refaie, 2021; Bridges and Vasquez, 2018), as CE is an extension of relationship marketing (Van Doorn et al., 2010). There remains a gap in CE research that thoroughly explores the concept of reciprocity.

The absence of obligations sometimes allows consumers to pursue selfish motivations (Harvey et al., 2020). However, the literature highlights the role of reciprocity norms in consumer behaviour (Davlembayeva et al., 2020). Anticipatory reciprocity is a significant motivator for individuals to engage in both commercial and non-commercial relationships (Cherry & Pidgeon, 2018). In the sharing economy, conditions that promote reciprocal behaviours include social bonds, hedonic factors, financial principles, and trust (Chan & Li, 2010; Wang et al., 2019). Social interaction is not only an inevitable consequence of platforms like Airbnb but also a motivating factor for hosts (Ikkala & Lampinen, 2015). Financial rewards and opportunities for social connections drive many Airbnb users to participate. Reviews left by hosts and guests contribute to the sociability of the experience, motivating hosts to continue renting their properties. Additionally, Airbnb provides a more affordable alternative to traditional hotels, offering a "feeling-at-home" experience (Yannopoulou, 2013a). Unlike traditional hotels, Airbnb guests' reviews describe subjective experiences with the property and the host, while hosts also review guests, facilitating mutual promotion and decision-making. This reciprocity of reviews is a unique feature of Airbnb compared to other platforms, where reviews are typically unidirectional.

In traditional hotels, reciprocity can also be observed through services that exceed guest expectations. Providing personalised services, complimentary upgrades, or unexpected amenities fosters a sense of gratitude and loyalty among guests (Bowen and Chen, 2001). These actions create a cycle of positive reciprocal behaviours, where guests are more likely to leave positive reviews, recommend the hotel to others, and return for future stays. By exceeding expectations, hotels can cultivate a culture of reciprocity that enhances customer engagement and loyalty.

Studies have found that increasing and strengthening connections between benefits can evoke emotions such as gratitude, empathy, enjoyment, and engagement (Schumann et al., 2014), as well as a willingness to return (Starr et al., 2020). Adherence to the norm of reciprocity in relational communication, even during potential conflicts, can generate balance, expectations, self-esteem, and personal well-being (BAGOZZI, 1993; Becker, 1986). A continuous pursuit of happiness leads to greater trust and commitment to the interaction (Cialdini and Goldstein, 2004; BITNER et al., 1990). This aligns with the core principle of service providers encouraging customer engagement. Reciprocal relationships have been shown to promote commitment and contribute to both parties' satisfaction with the relationship and communication (Myers et al., 2013).

The concept of reciprocity remains a dynamic and evolving area of study in contemporary research. While foundational theories have long recognised the importance of reciprocal behaviours in fostering trust and commitment in relationships, recent studies continue to explore and expand upon these ideas, especially in the context of modern digital and sharing economies. Overall, while the foundational principles of reciprocity are well established, current research continues to explore its applications and implications in new and evolving contexts. The ongoing development of this concept is crucial for understanding how reciprocal behaviours can be leveraged to enhance customer engagement, loyalty, and overall relationship quality in various industries.

Reciprocity and Gratitude

The critical role of emotions in developing and maintaining reciprocal relationships has been widely recognised in the literature, especially within service contexts. Gratitude is a fundamental social component in human interactions, providing the emotional foundation for reciprocal behaviours. Subjective gratitude is consumers' perception of the kindness and benefits received from service providers (Wiroko and Sugiharti, 2022). This engagement, in turn, enhances their sense of gratitude and motivates them to reciprocate the benefits received (Palmatier et al., 2009). As extensively discussed in social exchange theory, reciprocity involves the mutual exchange of benefits. The actions of one party elicit a response from another, fostering a balanced relationship based on the principle of returning favours (Emerson, 1976). Gratitude is central to this process, encouraging individuals to maintain reciprocal interactions. This emotional response is subjective and varies among individuals, depending on their evaluations of the benefits received (Fehr et al., 2017). It is conceptualised as a force that helps individuals maintain reciprocal obligations (GOULDNER, 1960a), a driving inertia that sustains prosocial tendencies in interpersonal relationships (SCHWARTZ, 1967), and a critical link supporting chains of reciprocity (Simmel, 1950). Evolutionary psychologists propose that feelings of gratitude, the pleasure of reciprocating, and the guilt of failing to reciprocate represent a sophisticated, genetically-based system promoting reciprocity and cooperation (Trivers, 1971). Through mutual exchanges, people form what is known as a "web of gratitude" (Komter, 2004). For centuries, gratitude has been a significant component in theories of social relationships and reciprocal behaviour across various disciplines (Bartlett and DeSteno, 2006).

In service contexts, consumers' perceptions of emotional benefits—such as feeling valued, appreciated, and supported by service providers—are crucial in assessing their state of gratitude (Emmons and McCullough, 2003). Positive interactions and resources provided by service providers enhance consumers' sense of gratitude, which strengthens their desire to reciprocate (Algoe et al., 2010). Researchers have identified two key aspects of gratitude:

emotional and behavioural. The emotional component refers to the feeling of gratitude that arises when individuals perceive themselves as having received intentional benefits from others (Emmons, 2004), which is considered a relatively "short-term state" (Ben-Ze'ev, 2001). This feeling of gratitude creates a deep-seated psychological pressure to return the favour. The behavioural aspect involves actions prompted by feelings of gratitude. Thus, it represents the act of reciprocating, contributing to the cycle of giving and returning favours and helping to continuously build relationships (Bartlett and DeSteno, 2006; Emmons and McCullough, 2003). Schwartz(1967) suggests that the close link between gratitude and reciprocal behaviours is the reason for the reinforcing cycle of relationships, describing it as "a continuous balance of debt—now favouring one member, now the other—that ensures the relationship continues, as gratitude remains a permanent bond between them."

Consumers engage in interactions, exchanges, and resource integration to cultivate and increase their sense of gratitude. However, this process can be disrupted by misaligned expectations or a perceived lack of reciprocity, which can diminish gratitude (Fehr et al., 2017). Despite these challenges, declines in gratitude are often temporary as consumers adopt strategies to restore and enhance their emotional state. Research by Algoe et al. (2010) and Emmons and McCullough(2003) outlines two theories explaining how consumers achieve emotional reciprocity. Firstly, consumers may engage in coping strategies such as expressing gratitude more frequently or seeking new relationships that fulfil their emotional needs. Secondly, the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions posits that positive emotions like gratitude help build lasting social resources, enhancing well-being and relationship quality (Fredrickson, 2001). When experiencing a decline in gratitude, consumers use positive emotional strategies to rebuild their sense of gratitude through relationship building and maintenance. Gratitude is conceptualised in current research as "the feeling of thankfulness, appreciation, or acknowledgement for benefits received"(Morales, 2005; Emmons and McCullough, 2003). This emotional response is crucial for the dynamics of reciprocal relationships within service contexts. When customers feel grateful for the additional efforts and benefits provided by a service provider, they are more likely to engage in positive

reciprocal behaviours, such as increased loyalty, repeat purchases, and positive word-of-mouth.

Reciprocity in Online Review Between Two Service Types

According to social exchange theory, reciprocal exchange behaviours are formed when one beneficial action by an individual triggers a positive response from another individual in a two-way relationship (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Resources are exchanged when the benefits to an individual outweigh the costs, and the rewards from the exchange process prompt individuals to engage in reciprocal relationships. Thus, social exchange theory can be used to explain the formation, maintenance, and dissolution of social relationships (Boateng, 2019).

The interpersonal relationship between the customer and the service provider develops over time, leading them to different levels of reciprocal actions (e.g., exchanging information, emotions, and activities). The reciprocity of interactive exchanges manifests in multiple stages, with exposure to self-relevant information triggering mutual interactions and developing interpersonal relationships. According to Gouldner(1960b), the interpersonal relationship significantly influences consumers' perceptions of services and the direction of online reviews. This is particularly evident in the context of Airbnb, where interactions between guests and hosts play a crucial role. Airbnb's model is inherently designed to foster direct communication and personal interactions between hosts and guests. These interactions often lead to a more personalised and authentic experience for guests, which is frequently highlighted in their reviews. Guests value the local insights, personalised recommendations, and the sense of belonging that hosts provide, which traditional hotels may not offer to the same extent (Sthapit and Jimenez-Barreto, 2018; Guttentag, 2015a). In addition, in the context of Airbnb, the reciprocity inherent in bilateral review systems significantly influences the content and tone of online reviews. Guests and hosts are motivated to maintain positive interactions, knowing that

their ratings impact each other's reputations. This mutual evaluation leads to more positive reviews, highlighting personal interactions and the quality of the experience. Hosts often go the extra mile to ensure a pleasant stay, knowing that a satisfied guest will likely leave a favourable review. In turn, guests are inclined to reciprocate the hospitality received by providing positive feedback.

However, this does not mean that reciprocity does not exist in the context of traditional hotels. Reciprocity also relates to the sense of debt that occurs when service providers in a hotel offer consumers additional services or assistance, resulting in consumers experiencing particular emotions, often surprise. Becker (1986) extended Gouldner's (1960b) definition of reciprocity to include the need to exchange suitably and proportionally, to resist evil and do no evil in return, and to make reparation for any harm done. This typically occurs more frequently in the hotel context, especially when addressing consumer complaints. Hotel staff often propose clear solutions to alleviate consumer dissatisfaction and the subsequent negative impact on the hotel and brand. These exchange conditions may include reduced or exempted room rates, upgraded room types, and gifts or vouchers. This economically oriented exchange is indeed effective.

The impact of reciprocity on online reviews is particularly evident when comparing bilateral and unilateral reputation systems. Proserpio et al.(2018a) show that bilateral reputation systems, which allow buyers and sellers to review each other, are more responsive to reciprocity than unilateral reputation systems. Zervas et al. (2021) found that ratings on Airbnb, which uses a bilateral rating system, were significantly higher than ratings of the same accommodation on TripAdvisor, which uses a unilateral rating system where only guests rate the accommodation. Bilateral reputation systems generate trust among strangers and informally regulate their behaviour, fostering a sense of mutual accountability.

Traditional hotels, although operating within a different framework, can also benefit from incorporating elements of reciprocity into their service strategies. Personalised services,

complimentary upgrades, and proactive issue resolution can create a sense of indebtedness among guests, prompting them to leave positive reviews. These practices build a culture of reciprocity, where guests feel valued and are likely to express their appreciation through favourable online reviews.

Positivity Bias in Airbnb Against the Concept of Reciprocity

In online reviews, particularly on platforms like Airbnb, a distinct positivity bias has been frequently observed, with reviews tending to be more favourable than those for traditional hotels(Zervas et al.,2021). This bias is intricately connected to reciprocity, which fundamentally shapes social interactions and influences the nature of user-generated content. Reciprocity, a core principle in social behaviour, implies that individuals often respond to the actions and attitudes they receive by mirroring them, thereby creating a cycle of positive exchanges(Mahmoodi et al., 2018). On Airbnb, this principle of reciprocity is not just a social norm but is deeply embedded within the platform's structure and culture, significantly affecting the tone of the reviews(Fradkin et al., 2021). Additionally, Airbnb's platform design itself promotes the expression of positive experiences. The review process is often framed as an opportunity to express gratitude rather than to critically assess the stay, subtly encouraging guests to focus on the positives. Moreover, the timing of review prompts, typically sent soon after the stay when memories are still fresh and positive, further encourages guests to provide glowing feedback.

The platform's reciprocal review system further amplifies this bias. Since both guests and hosts are required to rate each other after a stay, there is inherent pressure on guests to provide favourable feedback, as they might be concerned that a less positive review could lead to a negative rating from the host. This potential for reciprocal evaluation creates a scenario where guests are inclined to highlight the positive aspects of their stay, even if they encounter some drawbacks, to protect their future standing within the Airbnb community. The

observed positivity bias in online reviews on platforms like Airbnb is not merely a phenomenon confined to this specific platform but can be generalised across the broader sharing economy. The sharing economy, characterised by peer-to-peer interactions and a strong sense of community, naturally fosters feelings of reciprocity, which in turn influence the tone of online reviews. Given the particularly strong reciprocity in these contexts, it is reasonable to anticipate a positivity bias in reviews across various service offerings within the sharing economy.

The Customer-Dominant Logic (CDL) framework, which places the consumer at the centre of the value-creation process, provides a theoretical foundation for understanding this bias. CDL emphasises that value is co-created through interactions that are deeply personal, context-specific, and shaped by the consumer's active participation. In the sharing economy, where services are often personalised and experiences are co-constructed between provider and consumer, reciprocity plays a crucial role in enhancing the perceived value of these interactions (Nadeem et al., 2020a; Hansen, 2019). This enhanced value is then reflected in the overwhelmingly positive reviews that characterise platforms like Airbnb.

Airbnb's model, which heavily relies on user-generated content for building trust and reputation (Li and Tsai, 2022), capitalises on the principles of CDL by encouraging users to engage in co-creating their experience. This co-creation is evident not just in the way guests and hosts interact during the stay but also in how these interactions are later reflected in reviews. The personalised nature of these experiences, coupled with the expectation of reciprocity, often leads to reviews that emphasise the positive aspects of the stay, sometimes downplaying or omitting less favourable experiences (Sprecher, 2023). This is not just a reflection of politeness but a deeper manifestation of the value created through reciprocal relationships. Thus, the positivity bias driven by reciprocity is not an isolated occurrence but a manifestation of the underlying social and relational dynamics that define the sharing economy. As consumers continue to engage actively and reciprocally in shaping their experiences, the trend of positive reviews is likely to persist.

Unaddressed Issues in Customer Engagement and Online Reviews across Platforms

Although research on customer engagement, value co-creation, and online reviews has expanded considerably in the hospitality field, important conceptual and contextual gaps remain. First, while customer engagement (CE) has been conceptualised as a multidimensional construct—including emotional, cognitive, and behavioural components—its manifestation within online reviews remains underexplored, particularly in the hospitality sector. Existing literature tends to adopt general CE frameworks without adequately adapting them to digital, text-based engagement environments, where customers express involvement not through behaviour or interaction, but through language, sentiment, and narrative structure.

Second, although Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) and Customer-Dominant Logic (CDL) have been proposed as alternative perspectives for understanding value creation, little research systematically applies these frameworks to distinguish traditional hotel services from platform-mediated services such as Airbnb. The hospitality literature continues to treat customer experiences as largely homogeneous across service contexts, without sufficiently considering how service logic shapes engagement. Specifically, it remains unclear how provider-driven (SDL) and consumer-driven (CDL) contexts affect the way value is co-created and articulated in online reviews.

Third, while numerous studies have noted that Airbnb reviews tend to be more positive and emotionally expressive than hotel reviews, few have linked this difference to broader theoretical frameworks such as engagement theory or institutional design. Existing explanations often attribute positivity bias to reciprocity or social norms, but they do not connect these mechanisms to underlying engagement dimensions or to the platform structure that facilitates them. This limits our understanding of how review tone and style relate to customer participation in meaning-making and value attribution.

In response to these gaps, the present study aims to build a contextualised and comparative framework that integrates engagement theory, service logic, and review analysis. By examining how customers engage differently across Airbnb and hotel platforms, and how platform architecture and service logic mediate expressions of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, this research contributes both theoretically and methodologically. It bridges fragmented literatures on engagement and reviews, offering a nuanced understanding of how customers construct value in digitally mediated hospitality services. Ultimately, the study advances knowledge of how emotional and cognitive engagement is shaped by service logic and expressed through online review discourse.

Chapter Summary

This chapter reviews the literature on consumer engagement, dominant logic in marketing, and the role of reciprocity in online reviews within the hotel industry. Key research gaps are identified, including the underexplored dynamics of bias in online reviews between Airbnb and traditional hotels and the insufficient integration of reciprocity into consumer engagement theories.

The literature shows that traditional metrics fail to capture the complexities of consumer behaviour in the digital age. While value co-creation and consumer engagement are well-studied, the bias in online reviews, particularly from a consumer-dominant perspective, remains underexamined. Understanding these biases is crucial as they provide insights into consumer behaviour that impact business strategies and relationships.

The chapter emphasises the need for empirical studies on the bias in online reviews to develop strategies that enhance consumer feedback accuracy. The next chapter will detail the research methodology used to address these objectives.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Introduction

The examination of relevant literature in the previous chapter identified several gaps, which helped to refine the research objectives and further develop the research questions for this study. When conducting academic research, it is essential to justify the chosen methodological approaches and demonstrate an understanding of the academic stances within the research methodology literature. This helps to ensure that the selected methods are aligned with the study's goals and grounded in a sound theoretical framework.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section outlines the research methodology, starting with an overview of the research philosophy that underpins the study. According to Guba and Lincoln(2005)A research paradigm represents a set of fundamental beliefs concerning first principles. Selecting a research paradigm based on philosophical assumptions is essential, as these beliefs influence the choice of research methods and techniques (Gannon et al., 2022). This section also discusses the overall research design, including data collection and analysis methods, to provide direction for the research process. It concludes with a description and justification of the selected research context.

The second section details the methodological procedures for the two primary data sources used in this study: text mining of online reviews from Airbnb and traditional hotels, and semi-structured interviews. These methods are discussed about how they address the research questions and contribute to the overall objectives of the study.

Research Philosophy

Understanding the design and methodology behind any research project is critical for ensuring consistency between a study's philosophical underpinnings and its chosen methods.

Research design encompasses the ontological, epistemological, and methodological foundations that guide the research process. These elements are shaped by the research paradigm, which refers to a researcher's philosophical beliefs about the nature of reality and how knowledge can be acquired and interpreted (Creswell, 2009). The alignment of these philosophical assumptions with appropriate methods ensures the effective execution of the research process and the validity of its outcomes.

As Guba (1990) emphasised that research paradigms are the "basic set of beliefs that guide action." These beliefs are essential because they influence a researcher's approach to understanding the world, shaping the selection of methods and techniques used in research. Kim (2003) identified three primary research paradigms: positivism, interpretivism, and critical realism. Each paradigm offers a distinct perspective on how reality is constructed and how research should be conducted. Positivism relies on objective measurements and natural science methods, while interpretivism focuses on understanding human experiences through subjective interpretations. This study adopts critical realism, which lies between these two paradigms and recognises that reality exists independently of our perceptions, but our understanding of that reality is shaped by social constructs and cognitive processes.

Research paradigms differ primarily in their assumptions about ontology and epistemology. Ontology refers to the researcher's view of reality, whereas epistemology concerns the nature of knowledge and the methods used to acquire it (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). Burrell and Morgan (2019) and Guba and Lincoln (1994) highlight these distinctions, illustrating how research paradigms span a continuum from objectivist (positivist) to subjectivist (interpretivist) approaches. In this study, CR research aims to improve the world (Price and Martin, 2018), sharing the emancipatory goals of critical theory. From an ontological perspective, From an ontological perspective, this study is situated within the philosophical tradition of critical realism, a paradigm that bridges the ontological realism of the natural world with epistemological relativism in how knowledge is socially constructed and interpreted (Bhaskar, 1978; Easton, 2010). Critical realism assumes that a real world exists independently of human perception,

but our access to it is always mediated through language, culture, and context. This makes it particularly suitable for research that examines subjective expressions (e.g., online reviews) while acknowledging the influence of platform structures, service logics, and institutional norms. By integrating these elements into the research model, the underlying mechanisms can be objectively analysed, while also acknowledging the subjective experiences and interpretations that contribute to understanding social phenomena. This dual recognition allows for a comprehensive approach that considers both structural influences and human agency in the analysis.

In line with the critical realist perspective, this study adopts the view that reality exists independently of our knowledge of it, but that understanding this reality requires both empirical observation and interpretive engagement with participants' perspectives (Bhaskar, 1978; Danermark et al., 2002). Particularly in the hospitality industry—where services comprise a complex mix of interactions, physical spaces, staff behaviours, and intangible experiences—both objective structures (e.g., platform design, service processes) and subjective realities (e.g., emotions, expectations, narratives) must be accounted for. These layers of meaning cannot be fully captured through predefined hypotheses alone; instead, they must be identified and theorised inductively, often through user discourse and lived experience.

In this context, the researcher gains knowledge not merely by testing existing models, but by interpreting insights generated through participant-created content, such as online reviews. Hospitality platforms like Airbnb and TripAdvisor facilitate value-creating consumer engagement through user-generated content (UGC), where experiences are articulated in ways that reflect each consumer's unique context, values, and expectations. The meanings derived from these expressions are multiple and often divergent, reinforcing the idea that no single account of reality can fully explain engagement behaviour across platforms. Therefore, the critical realist approach—which acknowledges both the stratified nature of reality and the interpretive lens through which it is accessed—is ideally suited to capture these dynamics.

From another point, this research not only focuses on objective reality but also addresses the 'predictability that can occur in traditional interviews'(Ryan, 2019; Creswell, 2014). As critical realism emphasises, while acknowledging the significance of objective reality, it also values the importance of subjective experiences and interpretations. This study analyses qualitative data through semi-structured interviews and online reviews to identify possible and potential relationships between constructs. For instance, when a participant expresses a strong impression of service experience in an online review, they may highlight that this attribute significantly influenced their satisfaction with the hotel. This suggests a potential pathway from specific service attributes to overall customer satisfaction, brand reputation, and even brand equity. Therefore, the critical role of subjective reality is supported. Following the qualitative analysis, quantitative surveys were distributed to test the predicted relationships, ensuring a comprehensive approach that aligns with the principles of critical realism by integrating both subjective experiences and objective structures in the hospitality industry. In comparing Airbnb and traditional hotel online reviews, this study must address both underlying causal mechanisms (such as platform-mediated engagement structures, reciprocity norms, and review designs) and individual meaning-making (such as emotional tone, satisfaction expression, and value attribution). Critical realism enables theorisation beyond surface-level observations, allowing the researcher to uncover how unobservable structures generate visible outcomes. This is especially important for understanding how customer engagement is differently constructed and communicated across service logics—something that cannot be adequately explained through either positivist generalisation or pure interpretivist analysis.

By applying a critical realist lens, the research can move beyond descriptive accounts of customer engagement to explore how engagement is structured differently across platforms. This approach allows the study to identify not only what customers express in reviews, but also why they do so in particular ways—linking platform architecture, value co-creation logic (SDL/CDL), and engagement dimensions. Ultimately, CR supports an in-depth, explanatory framework that integrates structure and agency, helping to uncover how digital environments shape consumer behaviour in the hospitality context(Aguzzoli et al., 2024).

Research Approach

In this study, critical realism serves as a framework to investigate how both objective factors (such as service quality standards, pricing strategies, and regulatory requirements) and subjective experiences (such as customer emotions, cultural practices, and personal preferences) influence customer engagement. By adopting this approach, the research not only explores the observable events in customer reviews but also seeks to understand the deeper structures—such as social norms and reciprocal expectations—that drive customer behaviour. This approach is particularly relevant in the hospitality industry, where services are highly intangible, and customer satisfaction is shaped by both the objective quality of service delivery and the subjective interpretations of the service experience. It guides the selection of appropriate methods, determines the reasoning logic, and outlines the processes by which the research will be conducted.

This study adopts a qualitative research design that integrates two methods: text mining of online reviews and semi-structured interviews. The choice of a qualitative approach is driven by the need to explore the subjective and context-dependent nature of customer engagement, particularly in the hospitality sector. This design allows for a comprehensive exploration of the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions of customer engagement, specifically focusing on the differences between Airbnb and traditional hotels (Miles et al., 2013; Silverman, 2010). Text mining enables the analysis of large volumes of textual data to identify patterns and insights (Feldman and Sanger, 2007). Semi-structured interviews provide deeper qualitative insights into individual experiences and perceptions (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

Reasoning Logic

Reasoning Logic refers to the foundational logical framework or approach that directs the reasoning process within a research study, which is the process of using existing knowledge to conclude, make predictions, or construct explanations (Gamage et al., 2017). This logic

influences how researchers formulate hypotheses, design experiments, analyse data, and interpret results. It can be analytical (logical) or creative or a mix of both(Kao, 2014).

In the research context, there are three primary types of reasoning logic, namely, 1) Inductive Reasoning; 2) Deductive Reasoning and 3) Abductive Reasoning.

Inductive reasoning begins with specific observations or data and develops broader generalizations or theories based on those observations. It moves from the specific to the general. For instance, if a researcher observes that swans in a particular region are white, they may induce that all swans are white(Hakan, 2022). Inductive reasoning is often used to formulate hypotheses and theories. This method is often employed in qualitative research, where patterns and themes emerge from the data collected, leading to the development of new theories.

Deductive reasoning is linked with the hypothesis testing approach to research and tests it through specific observations and experiments(Williamson et al., 2002). It moves from the general to the specific. For example, if the hypothesis is that all swans are white, deductive reasoning involves observing multiple swans to see if they are all white. If all observed swans are white, the hypothesis is supported. This method is commonly used in quantitative research, where empirical data is used to test hypotheses derived from existing theories(Wilson, 2014).

Abductive reasoning has recently been referred to as “Inference to the best explanation”. According to Douven (2017), it can integrate elements of both inductive and deductive reasoning. It may start with real-world observations or theoretical preconceptions, depending on the phenomenon being studied(Lipscomb, 2012). Abductive reasoning often starts with an incomplete set of observations and infers the most likely explanation. Abductive reasoning aims to make sense of surprising, ambiguous, or puzzling phenomena to fill gaps in our understanding, thereby maintaining or restoring coherence in our beliefs(Thagard, 2000). For example, if a researcher observes that swans are generally white but encounters a black swan, they might use abductive reasoning to hypothesise that while most swans are white, there are

exceptions. This reasoning is useful in exploratory research where the goal is to develop plausible hypotheses that can later be tested.

This study employs both inductive and abductive reasoning to analyse data, which complements the critical realist paradigm that forms the foundation of the research. Inductive reasoning involves drawing general conclusions from specific observations or data points. In this study, inductive reasoning is used to analyse patterns and themes within the qualitative data, such as customer reviews and interviews, to develop broader theories about customer engagement (Braun and Clarke, 2006). For instance, through examining detailed customer reviews, themes such as personalised service, emotional connections, and satisfaction may emerge, which can then be generalised to explain broader trends in customer engagement across Airbnb and traditional hotel settings. This approach allows for the development of new theoretical insights from the data, as the analysis is not constrained by existing theories or hypotheses (Thomas, 2006).

Abductive reasoning comes into play when the researcher encounters surprising or unexpected findings within the data. This reasoning method helps form plausible explanations for these anomalies. For example, if Airbnb reviews frequently display positive sentiment despite notable service failures, abductive reasoning can help hypothesise why this occurs, such as a strong personal relationship with the host or unique experiences compensating for deficiencies (Timmermans and Tavory, 2012). Abductive reasoning thus provides a mechanism for generating potential explanations that can be further explored and validated.

The integration of both inductive and abductive reasoning ensures that the research not only identifies patterns and trends within the data but also provides explanations for unexpected or complex findings. This dual approach is particularly useful in exploring customer engagement in diverse contexts, such as the sharing economy and the traditional service economy, as it allows for a deeper understanding of the interplay between service provision and customer experience (Sayer, 2000).

Qualitative Approach

Due to the complexity of customer engagement as a phenomenon, the selected reasoning approaches require a research design that is flexible and capable of accommodating emerging patterns and unexpected findings, which leads to the necessity of adopting a qualitative methodology.

Customer engagement is a multidimensional construct that includes cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions, which are inherently subjective and context-dependent. These dimensions often manifest in ways that are nuanced and deeply intertwined with individual experiences, emotions, and perceptions. Qualitative research excels at capturing this complexity by allowing for a deeper exploration of how and why individuals experience and engage with services in particular ways (Creswell, 2014). Unlike quantitative methods, which tend to focus on measurable variables and testing hypotheses, qualitative methods allow the researcher to explore the subjective meanings and interpretations that customers attach to their experiences. For example, in the context of Airbnb, customer engagement may be shaped by personalised interactions with hosts, local cultural immersion, or emotional connections, all of which are difficult to quantify but are crucial for understanding the full scope of customer experiences. Traditional hotels, on the other hand, may emphasise standardised service quality, which may evoke different emotional and cognitive responses. By using qualitative methods, this research can uncover the underlying motivations and personal narratives that drive customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction, providing a richer and more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

In addition, given the exploratory nature of the research, qualitative methods are particularly well-suited for generating new insights and theories. This research is not merely testing pre-existing hypotheses but seeks to explore and understand the differences in customer engagement between Airbnb and traditional hotels. Qualitative methods, such as text mining and interviews, allow for inductive reasoning, where patterns, themes, and concepts emerge

from the data itself rather than being imposed by a predefined framework(Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Patton, 2002).

In the context of this study, text mining of online reviews provides a systematic way to analyse large amounts of qualitative data, helping to identify key themes related to customer engagement, such as personalisation, emotional connection, and service quality. Semi-structured interviews further enrich this analysis by providing in-depth perspectives on the factors that influence customers' engagement and reviews. This combination of methods is ideal for building theories about how different forms of customer engagement manifest in the sharing economy versus the traditional service economy.

On the other hand, customer engagement is heavily influenced by contextual factors, including the specific service environment, cultural expectations, and personal preferences. Qualitative methods are uniquely capable of capturing these contextual nuances, which are often overlooked in quantitative research. For example, in online reviews, customers may express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction based on personalised experiences in Airbnb stays, such as interactions with hosts, local recommendations, or unique accommodations. These experiences are highly subjective and may not be adequately captured through numerical ratings or survey responses.

By employing qualitative methods, this study can delve into the personal stories and individual experiences that shape customer engagement. Semi-structured interviews allow participants to discuss their experiences in their own words, providing the flexibility to explore topics that are important to them and offering insights into the emotional and cognitive aspects of their engagement(Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). This helps the researcher to understand the why behind customer behaviour, as well as how customers perceive and interpret their experiences in ways that might not be immediately obvious through more structured methods.

Research Design

In this study, the research design has been structured to meet these requirements by ensuring that the qualitative methods employed—text mining and semi-structured interviews—are directly aligned with the research problem and objectives. In social science research, the selection of appropriate evidence is crucial for testing theories, evaluating programs, or accurately describing phenomena (Maxwell, 2013). In this case, the research design has been developed with a focus on capturing and analysing evidence that explores customer engagement through online reviews, providing insights into the emotional, cognitive, and behavioural dimensions across Airbnb and traditional hotels.

In designing this study, particular attention was given to the following elements to avoid premature conclusions that could weaken the overall findings (Dannels, 2018). First, the research problem was identified clearly, focusing on the comparative analysis of customer engagement in Airbnb and traditional hotel contexts. The rationale for this selection stems from gaps in the current literature regarding the distinct ways customers engage with these two types of services (Guttentag, 2015a). A comprehensive literature review was conducted, examining previous studies related to customer engagement, the sharing economy, and online review behaviours to ensure that the research was grounded in established theory and practice (Miles et al., 2013).

Next, the research questions were clearly formulated to guide the study. These questions aim to investigate the differences in customer satisfaction, online review tendencies, and the role of reciprocity in shaping customer feedback in different service environments. The study aims to understand how customers' emotional, cognitive, and behavioural engagement in online reviews varies between Airbnb and traditional hotels, addressing both general trends and specific influences on consumer perceptions (Bowden et al., 2017).

To obtain the data necessary for answering these research questions, the study integrates two methods: text mining of online reviews and semi-structured interviews. Text mining was used to analyse large volumes of customer reviews to uncover recurring themes and patterns that provide insights into how customers express satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Feldman and Sanger, 2007). This approach enables the extraction of relevant data at scale, ensuring that the study captures a broad spectrum of customer feedback. Semi-structured interviews were then conducted to gain deeper insights into the motivations, attitudes, and expectations that inform these reviews. These interviews provided qualitative data that contextualised the findings from the text-mining process, ensuring a more nuanced understanding of customer engagement (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

Finally, the methods of analysis were chosen to align with the research objectives and questions. The text-mining process was complemented by a thematic analysis of the interviews, which allowed the researcher to identify underlying patterns and relationships between customer expectations, experiences, and feedback (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In the first stage, text mining was applied to the corpus of online reviews to extract key topics, terms, and co-occurrence patterns using Leximancer. This phase produced a set of emergent concepts and relational maps, which formed a preliminary framework for further exploration. The thematic analysis was then applied in two parts: first, to the text-mining outputs—by grouping related concepts and examining their semantic contexts to interpret patterns within the quantitative co-occurrence results—and second, to the interview transcripts, to provide deeper qualitative insights into the meanings and relationships underlying these patterns. This dual application ensured that the thematic analysis did not occur solely after the interviews but also informed the interpretation of the text-mining results from the outset. The integration of inductive and abductive reasoning ensures that the study not only identifies general trends but also provides explanations for unexpected findings, thus offering a comprehensive and well-rounded analysis of customer engagement (Timmermans and Tavory, 2012).

This research design ensures that the conclusions drawn are well-supported by the evidence collected and that they adequately address the research problem. By carefully aligning the research methods, data collection, and analysis with the research questions, the study minimizes the risk of weak conclusions and enhances the overall reliability and validity of the findings (Creswell, 2014).

Research Methods

As mentioned above, to explore the evolving and complex phenomenon of customer engagement and differences in satisfaction in the digital context, this study adopts a qualitative research design, combining computationally assisted text analysis with semi-structured interviews. While text mining introduces elements of computational processing, the overall methodological logic remains qualitative, focusing on interpretation and meaning-making rather than measurement or statistical generalisation.

In this study, text analysis is used to systematically examine large volumes of online reviews, with the aim of identifying recurring themes, sentiments, and key areas of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Although the process involves transforming qualitative data into structured formats, the intent is not to conduct statistical analysis but rather to support qualitative thematic interpretation. This phase is therefore better understood as qualitative text analysis supported by computational tools, rather than as a quantitative method.

Together, these two phases—qualitative text analysis and semi-structured interviews—form a cohesive qualitative methodology, suitable for investigating the nuanced, subjective, and context-dependent nature of customer engagement in both the sharing and traditional service economies.

The study follows a sequential exploratory approach. In Phase 1, text mining and lexical analysis are used to extract topics, sentiment patterns, and engagement cues from a large dataset of online reviews. This allows the identification of dominant themes, emotional

expressions, and satisfaction signals embedded in user narratives. Phase 1 addresses RQ1 and RQ2:

RQ1: What are the key similarities and differences in the determinants that drive customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction in traditional hotels and Airbnb?

RQ2: How do the dimensions of engagement (cognitive, emotional, and behavioural) manifest differently in online reviews for traditional hotels compared to Airbnb?

Text mining was chosen because it enables the researcher to analyse extensive datasets, revealing broad trends and sentiments in customer feedback. This method allows for the quantification of qualitative data, providing statistically significant insights that enhance the overall understanding of customer engagement. Additionally, text mining offers a systematic approach to data analysis, making it a valuable tool for examining the digital context of customer reviews. Semi-structured interviews were incorporated to complement the findings from text mining, offering a more nuanced understanding of customer experiences. By directly interacting with participants, the researcher can delve deeper into the reasons behind certain behaviours and sentiments observed in the reviews. This method provides rich, detailed data that helps to interpret and validate the insights gained from text mining. Regarding qualitative text analysis, some recent research has shown that analysis of textual data posted online by customers can play an important role in improving the understanding of their experience (Thanh and Kirova, 2018; Creswell, 2009). In terms of accommodation services, Most customers will express and share their experience by posting these online reviews after the service is completed (Lee et al., 2019). This study selected two existing online review datasets, Airbnb and traditional hotels (mainly from TripAdvisor). To facilitate systematic qualitative analysis, a protocol is needed:

1) Sampling: This research selected 2x300 reviews based on a set of key themes (search terms) that are relevant. Informed by the theoretical framework of this research (customer

engagement theory), this research determines relevance based on the distinction between emotional, cognitive and behavioural engagement, and based on these three dimensions to identify search terms (or a search string) for each overarching theme. The data of online reviews used in this study were primarily derived from online reviews of traditional hotels and Airbnb on TripAdvisor. The TripAdvisor data is mainly obtained from the existing Kaggle data set, and some vacancies and unbalanced timestamp gaps are captured from TripAdvisor by using web crawlers; Airbnb data is all from insideairbnb.com, which provides all user reviews for all listings in all cities from 2009 to present. The dataset contains data from five major cities located in different countries (Boston, Copenhagen, London, Paris and Tokyo), and by doing so, this study expands the geographic scope limitations of sharing economy and hospitality research beyond the usual study conducted in a single country or region and takes into account the possible effects of cultural context.

2) Coding frame: This research will develop a coding frame to analyse the sample systematically. A coding frame is a table with themes, sub-themes, quotes and researcher observations.

In Phase 2, **semi-structured interviews** are conducted to contextualise and validate the findings from Phase 1. Interview data allow a deeper understanding of the subjective motivations behind review behaviour, particularly the perceived role of reciprocity, authenticity, and platform norms. Phase 2 primarily addresses RQ3:

RQ3: How does reciprocity influence the tone, content, and nature of customer reviews in the contexts of traditional hotels and Airbnb?

The integration of qualitative text analysis with semi-structured interviews aims to achieve a comprehensive understanding of customer engagement and satisfaction. Each method addresses different aspects of the research objectives: quantitative text analysis provides a broad, qualitative text analysis of customer feedback, while semi-structured interviews offer in-depth, qualitative insights. Together, these methods allow the researcher to explore the

digital context of customer reviews holistically, gaining a deeper and more detailed understanding of customer behaviours and perspectives. The study includes 13 consumers who tend to use Airbnb and traditional hotels each, 26 in total (confirmed based on interview content). Participants were first selected from the researcher's network, followed by a snowballing method to expand the scope and reduce bias. The entire interview process was recorded to facilitate later transcription. Finally, encode the transcribed interview and reuse the coding frame from the review data.

Table 10 Analytical Framework and Data-Method Alignment

Research Objective	Research Question	Method	Data Source
Identify satisfaction/dissatisfaction expression	RQ1	Text mining (Leximancer)	Online reviews (Airbnb & hotels)
Compare engagement dimensions across platforms	RQ2	Textual analysis	Online reviews (Airbnb & hotels)
Understand the reciprocity influence on engagement/reviews	RQ3	Semi-structured interviews	26 participants (customers)

This research design reflects a critical realist paradigm, acknowledging that observable data (e.g., online reviews) reflect underlying social mechanisms that require interpretive explanation. Text mining identifies what is said and how it is said, while interviews explore why it is said in that way. Together, they enable a layered exploration of both review discourse and platform-mediated value co-creation.

Although the term "mixed methods" may suggest a combination of quantitative and qualitative paradigms, in this study, the quantitative aspect (textual frequencies, sentiment scores) serves as a qualitative scaffolding—a way to guide thematic interpretation rather than to generalise statistically. Therefore, the study should be seen as qualitatively driven, supported by digital tools

Text Mining

Qualitative text analysis, also known as text data mining or text analytics, is a method used to extract useful information and insights from large volumes of unstructured textual data. It serves as a bridge between qualitative and quantitative research methods, enabling the quantitative analysis of qualitative data. By converting textual data into a structured format, qualitative text analysis allows researchers to apply statistical techniques to analyse patterns and trends. This approach combines the depth and richness of qualitative data with the rigour and scalability of quantitative analysis.

This technique employs natural language processing (NLP), machine learning, and statistical methods to analyse and interpret text data. In the context of online reviews, qualitative text analysis can reveal patterns, sentiments, and key themes that may not be immediately apparent through manual analysis. Online reviews are a rich source of customer feedback, offering valuable insights into customer experiences, preferences, and satisfaction levels. These reviews, found on platforms like Airbnb, TripAdvisor, and various e-commerce sites, provide firsthand accounts of customer interactions with products and services. Analysing this data manually can be overwhelming due to the sheer volume and unstructured nature of the text. This is where qualitative text analysis becomes an invaluable tool.

Qualitative text analysis acts as an essential link between qualitative and quantitative research methods, facilitating the quantitative analysis of qualitative data. Transforming unstructured textual data into a structured format enables researchers to apply statistical techniques to uncover patterns and trends. This method marries the depth and richness inherent in qualitative data with the precision and scalability characteristic of quantitative analysis, thereby providing a comprehensive and robust approach to data interpretation.

For example, in the context of online reviews, qualitative text analysis can systematically parse through thousands of customer reviews to identify recurring themes, sentiments, and specific

areas of concern or satisfaction. This capability allows researchers to quantify qualitative feedback, such as determining the percentage of reviews that express positive sentiment about a particular feature or service. By doing so, businesses can gain actionable insights into customer preferences and areas needing improvement, all supported by statistically significant data. This study involved sampling and reviewing qualitative data, followed by an overview and summary of the data using analytical tools. This process included not only the selection and organisation of data but also the use of specific analytical software to identify and summarise key themes, trends, and patterns, ensuring a systematic and comprehensive data analysis.

In summary, qualitative text analysis elevates the process of analysing qualitative data by incorporating quantitative rigour, making it an invaluable tool for researchers aiming to derive comprehensive, data-driven insights from complex and voluminous textual data.

Leximancer

Computational techniques in quantitative content analysis have been utilised since the 1950s (Krippendorff, 2019). Qualitative computer-aided discourse analysis emerged later, but since the 1990s, computer-aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) applications have enabled semi-automated analysis of conversations, interviews, mass media, and new media data (Krippendorff, 2019; Angus et al., 2013; Schönfelder, 2011). The integration of text analysis and visualisation in visual text analytics, such as Leximancer, has significantly expanded the scope of analysis by visually modelling text data for interpretation by researchers (Risch et al., 2008).

Leximancer, developed by the University of Queensland, is a next-generation visual text analysis application that facilitates several key tasks: determining main topics within a text, highlighting relationships between topics, and indicating which source files contain particular topics. While well-established CAQDAS applications like NVivo also produce visual representations of connections, Leximancer emphasises a visual approach to analysis that

changes how text is used as evidence and forms the basis for decision-making. This approach allows analysts to examine concepts in the original text linked to a global perspective of the entire dataset provided by an automatically generated concept map.

A typical workflow in Leximancer starts by generating a concept map and initially viewing only the largest theme. The map resolution is gradually increased, revealing additional concepts and noting how they are linked through the spanning tree. Finally, the relative ranking of concepts is examined, and pairs of concepts are explored in the original text through linking buttons. This process is semi-automated, providing a flexible way to organise and present the results of open, axial, and selective coding of grounded theory (Moghaddam, 2006).

The most frequently co-occurring concepts are clustered together and grouped by theme circles representing the main ideas (Cretchley et al., 2010). Themes in Leximancer are named after the most prominent concept in the cluster. The size of the themes indicates the co-occurrence of concepts, while theme colours represent their importance, with red being the most prominent and purple the least connected. Leximancer typically assesses 2-sentence blocks of text to identify key concepts and clusters these into themes. These themes are visually represented in a concept map featuring clusters, key concepts, and their associations.

Over 700 peer-reviewed publications have used Leximancer (Leximancer, 2021). It has been employed to analyse opinion polling and political commentary (McKenna and Waddell, 2007), evaluate incident reporting in a maritime environment (Grech et al., 2002), and explore communication strategies of care providers for persons with schizophrenia (Cretchley et al., 2010).

Benefits and Drawbacks of Leximancer

Understanding the advantages and potential drawbacks of Leximancer's auto-coding capabilities is crucial for the development of this study and future related research. The benefits and drawbacks are summarised in Table 3.

Unlike traditional methods requiring iterative design of concept lists and codes by analysts, Leximancer generates its own lists and relationships based on the input text. According to Smith and Humphreys(2006), Leximancer discovers and extracts thesaurus-based concepts directly from the text data, making the list statistically reliable and reproducible. This automated concept list creation allows subtle or unusual relationships to emerge that might not be identified manually. Leximancer uses word occurrence and co-occurrence counts to extract major thematic and conceptual content, generating a tailored taxonomy displayed graphically via an interactive concept map or as tables indicating key concepts and relationships. The software helps users compare relevance through the percentage frequency of text segments encoded by concepts.

These concepts are then coded into the text using the thesaurus as a classifier, employing two stages of co-occurrence information extraction—semantic and relational—using different algorithms for each stage. Clusters of co-occurring concepts are aggregated into themes. The resulting concept map is generated through a process involving eight stages: Load Data, Pre-Process, Concept Seeds Identification, Edit Emergent Concept Seeds, Develop Concept Thesaurus, Create Compound Concepts, Code Concepts into Text, and Generate Outputs (Leximancer, 2021). Researchers can edit the process at each stage to tailor the analysis.

Despite its advantages, Leximancer has limitations. It does not capture the communication style and implied tone of voice in online posts, which is important for understanding customer experiences and moods. Elements like acronyms, exclamation marks, and capitalised text that convey tone are not effectively analysed. Additionally, the naming of themes based on the most prominent concept can produce unexpected or unusual themes, requiring users to adjust the concept map's resolution and re-cluster themes for meaningful interpretation.

Online reviews often contain emotional feedback that includes subjective feelings, attitudes, and opinions. Sentiment analysis, an important part of text mining, extracts and analyses

opinion-oriented vocabulary and measures the sentiment of issues or entities (Ma et al., 2018; Khan et al., 2015). Leximancer's Sentiment Lens and built-in dictionary list for positive and negative emotions help detect and score text sentiment, but it is not suitable for in-depth affective-type analysis.

Overall, Leximancer offers significant advantages for automated text analysis but also has limitations that require careful consideration and potentially supplementary methods for a comprehensive understanding of qualitative data.

Table 11 Strengths and Weaknesses of Leximancer

Strength	Weakness
Program-driven, automated analysis, which may be perceived as more objective	Lack of human insight during lexical analysis, which is driven solely by the program
Automatic identification of keywords (concepts) and clusters (themes)	Input data needs specific formatting and spelling checking before being input into the program, which may be time-consuming for large quantities of data. The program will only recognise correctly spelt words in the right format
Suitable for an exploratory study, as “themes” emerge via automated lexical analysis	Lexical analysis occurs in two sentence blocks, which may be adjusted up or down. This is problematic for data sourced online, where the form of online expression can be short or long-winded
Content analysis, data linking, and data display based on emergent themes and concepts	The researcher assigns meaning after program analysis (i.e. at the Concept Map configuration stage)
Efficient for large volumes of data. Quick, automated analysis	The sentiment lens is only suitable for at best compound concept (two “affective” words)

	type analysis but is not suitable for in-depth affective-type analysis
The researcher is able to manually seed (define) concepts required for the program to identify, akin to setting up queries	Unable to capture the online communication style (e.g., acronyms) or implied tone of voice (e.g.,!!!), common to online written form
The program develops a Concept Map and Insight Dashboard with PSs, to highlight key “themes” and “concepts” within them. The linking function allows access from the Concept Map to the original data	“Theme” is named after the most prominent concept but does not necessarily represent the essence of the other “concepts” within the theme
	Somewhat awkward and problematic researcher-driven identification of the themes’ size, the number of clustering attempts, and the rotation of the Concept Map

Source: Adapted from Wilk et al (2019)

Leximancer follows a systematic, iterative process to generate concept maps from large textual datasets. In the current study, eight stages were undertaken to ensure that the analysis of Airbnb and traditional hotel online reviews was both methodologically rigorous and contextually valid. Each stage represents a critical step in moving from raw text to interpretable conceptual outputs, with adjustments made to accommodate the specific requirements of the research. The stages and their application in this PhD are summarised in Table 12.

Table 12 Leximancer Analysis Stages and Application in the Current Study

Stage	Leximancer Standard Process	Application in the Current PhD Study
1. Data import	Uploading raw text files into the Leximancer environment for processing.	Collected Airbnb and TripAdvisor hotel reviews (in plain text format) were imported into Leximancer, separated by service type to enable direct comparative analysis.
2. Text segmentation	Automatically dividing text into segments (typically 2–3 sentences) for analysis.	Reviews were segmented according to Leximancer's default settings to ensure thematic units were small enough for semantic clustering while retaining contextual meaning.
3. Concept seed generation	Identifying high-frequency and co-occurring words to generate preliminary “seed” concepts.	Leximancer generated initial concept seeds; irrelevant terms (e.g., booking references, location codes) were removed using a customised stop-word list.
4. Thesaurus building	Expanding each concept by linking it with semantically related terms.	Thesauri were refined manually to merge synonyms (e.g., “clean” and “tidy”) and ensure culturally specific expressions in reviews were correctly grouped.

5. Theme generation	Grouping related concepts into higher-order themes based on co-occurrence patterns.	Leximancer clustered concepts into themes; these were reviewed and adjusted to ensure alignment with the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement framework.
6. Concept map generation	Producing a visual map showing themes (coloured circles) and concepts (dots) with spatial proximity indicating relatedness.	Concept maps were generated separately for Airbnb and hotel datasets to facilitate side-by-side comparison of thematic relationships.
7. Iterative refinement	Re-running the analysis after refining stop-words, thesauri, or settings to improve accuracy.	Multiple iterations were performed, with manual inspection of concept maps after each run; adjustments were made to remove noise and improve thematic clarity.
8. Interpretation and reporting	Analysing the final concept maps and integrating findings into research outputs.	Final maps were interpreted in conjunction with manual coding results and interview findings, ensuring the automated outputs were contextually validated before inclusion in the findings chapter.

In this study, these eight stages were not treated as a rigid linear sequence but as an iterative analytical cycle. For example, insights from the interpretation stage often prompted a return to thesaurus refinement or theme generation, ensuring that emergent concepts were both linguistically accurate and theoretically meaningful. By explicitly documenting each stage and its adaptation to the research context, the study enhances the transparency and replicability of its text-mining process.

Justification and Limitations of the Leximancer Approach

The decision to employ Leximancer in this study was guided by both methodological and theoretical considerations. Methodologically, Leximancer is well-suited to analysing extensive bodies of unstructured textual data in a manner that is both systematic and replicable. This capability aligns closely with the study's core objective: to identify and compare thematic patterns across large datasets of Airbnb and traditional hotel online reviews. Theoretically, the study is grounded in comparing service-dominant logic (SDL) and customer-dominant logic (CDL) in consumer engagement; therefore, an analytical tool was required that could capture emergent, data-driven themes without imposing rigid preconceptions that might bias the comparison. Unlike manual coding approaches or software such as NVivo—which, while offering flexibility, rely heavily on researcher-defined coding frames—Leximancer employs automated semantic clustering, reducing researcher-imposed bias in theme identification and producing concept maps that visually represent thematic relationships(Engstrom et al., 2022). This combination of objectivity and visual interpretability is particularly advantageous for cross-contextual analysis, as it enables direct thematic comparison between two distinct service models.

Alternative tools were considered but found less suitable for the purposes of this research. NVivo, while powerful for qualitative coding, depends heavily on researcher-defined frameworks and manual classification, which increases the risk of subjective bias and undermines the study's goal of conducting an objective comparison across service contexts.

Moreover, NVivo does not natively generate automated semantic clustering or concept maps, making it less efficient and less effective for analysing tens of thousands of reviews in a transparent, comparative manner. Similarly, computational approaches such as topic modelling in Python or R (e.g., Latent Dirichlet Allocation) are capable of handling large-scale textual data but present other challenges. These methods typically produce probabilistic distributions of keywords rather than semantically coherent themes, requiring substantial interpretive input from researchers. They also demand advanced programming skills and extensive parameter tuning (e.g., determining the number of topics, iterations, or sparsity thresholds), decisions that can inadvertently introduce bias and reduce transparency. Furthermore, topic modelling lacks the integrated visualisation capacities of Leximancer, limiting its ability to clearly depict thematic relationships in a form that is readily interpretable and directly comparable across contexts.

Despite its strengths, Leximancer has limitations. Its automated processes can be less sensitive to contextual nuance, particularly with idiomatic expressions, sarcasm, or culturally embedded meanings, and it relies heavily on high-quality data pre-processing (Goh and Wilk, 2024). To address these issues, three mitigation measures were applied. First, extensive text pre-processing was undertaken, including the refinement of stop-word lists, standardisation of spelling, and removal of irrelevant metadata, to improve concept detection accuracy. Second, the automated outputs were iteratively reviewed and sense-checked against a purposive manual coding of a sample of reviews to ensure that identified themes were contextually valid. Third, triangulation with findings from the semi-structured interviews was employed to enrich interpretation, ensuring that patterns detected through Leximancer were substantiated and meaningfully situated within participants' reported experiences.

These measures not only mitigated the limitations inherent in Leximancer but also maximised its advantages. The tool's efficiency and scalability enabled the processing of tens of thousands of reviews in a fraction of the time required for manual coding, while its semantic clustering capabilities facilitated the identification of latent thematic structures (Engstrom et al.,

2022). Compared to NVivo and programming-based topic modelling, Leximancer was preferred for its integrated semantic analysis, minimal requirement for advanced technical input, and its capacity to produce intuitive, visually interpretable concept maps. This visual dimension was particularly valuable for the comparative element of the research, as it allowed thematic similarities and differences between Airbnb and traditional hotel reviews to be mapped transparently and reproducibly.

Overall, the integration of Leximancer with rigorous manual verification and qualitative triangulation ensured that the thematic analysis was both methodologically robust and theoretically aligned with the study's comparative aims. The approach balanced the efficiency and objectivity of automated text-mining with the interpretive depth required to capture the complex, context-specific manifestations of customer engagement across distinct service logics.

Qualitative Text Mining Procedures

Qualitative text analysis requires a structured approach to ensure thorough and accurate analysis. Given the dynamic and ever-changing nature of digital content, the process of qualitative text analysis must continuously evolve to keep pace with new developments and innovations in data collection and analysis techniques. This adaptive approach is crucial for effectively managing and interpreting the vast and varied information available in online reviews. The following outlines the key procedures in qualitative text analysis for online reviews, providing a comprehensive framework for extracting meaningful insights from unstructured textual data. This framework encompasses all stages of the qualitative text analysis process, from initial exploration and data collection to detailed analysis and interpretation, ensuring that the findings are reliable and relevant to the research objectives.

Site Selection

The initial step involves exploring the digital landscape to identify relevant sources of online reviews. This includes selecting platforms such as Airbnb, TripAdvisor, and various e-commerce sites where customer feedback is abundant. The goal is to pinpoint the most relevant and rich sources of data for the study. Exploration also involves understanding the context of the data, including the type of language used by reviewers and the common topics discussed.

Airbnb and TripAdvisor were chosen for several reasons. Firstly, they both have a high level of user engagement and activity, providing a wealth of up-to-date reviews and interactions. This ensures that the data collected is current and relevant. Additionally, these platforms offer interactive features that facilitate communication between users, which is a necessary criterion for this study. This interaction provides deeper insights into consumer experiences and behaviours.

Moreover, Airbnb and TripAdvisor offer heterogeneity, being popular platforms with a large and diverse user base from multiple locations worldwide. This diversity ensures a wide range of perspectives and experiences, enhancing the comprehensiveness of the data collected. The following provides a more detailed description of the selection rationale behind each data source and demonstrates how Kozinets's (2010) The selection guidelines apply to each platform selected.

Airbnb:

Airbnb is a well-known platform where users can book lodging and share reviews of their experiences. The site is active, with continuous updates and new reviews being posted regularly. This provides a rich source of data, including detailed descriptions of user experiences. The interactive nature of Airbnb, where users can respond to reviews and communicate with hosts, adds a layer of data, capturing the dynamics of consumer interactions. Additionally, Airbnb represents the sharing economy, where individuals rent out

their personal properties to travellers, providing unique insights into customer experiences in this emerging economic model.

TripAdvisor:

TripAdvisor is a comprehensive travel site where users can review hotels, restaurants, and attractions. It is highly active, with a vast amount of user-generated content being posted frequently. The site's detailed review system includes ratings, written reviews, and user photos, offering a multi-faceted view of consumer experiences. TripAdvisor also encourages user interaction through comments and forums, making it an excellent source for understanding consumer sentiment and engagement. TripAdvisor represents the traditional hotel economy, providing valuable data on customer experiences with established hotel brands and conventional lodging options.

By selecting Airbnb and TripAdvisor, the study ensures a robust and comprehensive data collection process, leveraging platforms that provide detailed, diverse, and interactive consumer feedback. This alignment with Kozinets's (2010) guidelines ensure that the data collected will be rich, relevant, and conducive to achieving the research objectives. Furthermore, choosing these platforms allows for a comparative analysis between the sharing economy (Airbnb) and the traditional hotel economy (TripAdvisor), providing deeper insights into the differences and similarities in customer engagement and satisfaction across these two economic models.

Data Collection

All collected reviews and posts are considered public and accessible to anyone. The study focuses exclusively on reviews about regular services to examine customer engagement. The primary unit of observation is public comments or reviews. Thus, the selection criteria are based on the content of the reviews rather than the characteristics of the participants.

The reviews cover a period from January 2018 to December 2021, ensuring a comprehensive analysis over three years. This period captures a wide range of consumer experiences and allows for the examination of trends and changes in customer engagement over time. Additionally, the study considers the impact of COVID-19 on consumer experiences and reviews during this timeframe. The pandemic brought unprecedented changes to the hospitality industry, significantly altering customer expectations, service delivery, and overall satisfaction. By including this period, the study aims to capture the shifts in consumer behaviour and sentiment caused by the pandemic, providing valuable insights into how these extraordinary circumstances influenced customer engagement. To ensure randomness and mitigate selection bias, reviews were randomly sampled within the specified timeframe.

The dataset comprises the following six variables, each providing essential information for the analysis, which can be found in Table 13.

Table 13 Key Variables for Analysing Hotel and Airbnb Reviews

Variable Name	Description
Country	The country where the hotel or Airbnb listing is located
City	The city where the hotel or Airbnb listing is located
Hotel_name/Listing_ID	The name of the hotel (for TripAdvisor) or the ID of the Airbnb listing
Region	The specific region within the country where the hotel or Airbnb listing is situated
Reviewer_ID	A unique identifier for the reviewer
Review_Content	The text of the review, containing qualitative feedback from users

The study considers data from several major cities, highlighting the cultural and contextual diversity inherent in customer reviews. This diverse dataset enables a comprehensive analysis of customer engagement across different regions and contexts. By including reviews from multiple cities, the study can capture a wide range of customer experiences, reflecting both regional and cultural differences. Each city in the dataset offers a unique combination of

characteristics, including different levels of tourism activity, cultural norms, and customer expectations. For instance, cities like Paris and London, which are renowned for their historical and cultural attractions, may have different review patterns compared to cities like Tokyo and Boston, which have a mix of business and leisure travellers. By analysing data from such varied contexts, the study aims to uncover common themes in customer engagement while also identifying city-specific factors that influence customer satisfaction.

The tables below summarise the data collected from each city, separating the data for Airbnb listings and traditional hotels. This detailed breakdown allows for a thorough examination of the volume and nature of customer feedback from each location, providing a solid foundation for in-depth qualitative text analysis.

Table 14 Airbnb Data Sample

City	Country	Number of Listings	Number of Airbnb Reviews
London	UK	198	6,190
Paris	FR	454	8,996
Copenhagen	DK	1,890	16,953
Tokyo	JP	248	5,486
Boston	US	269	11,280

Table 15 Traditional Hotel Data Sample

City	Country	Number of Hotels	Number of Hotel Reviews
London	UK	28	9,306
Paris	FR	96	10,835
Copenhagen	DK	38	7,403
Tokyo	JP	63	5,839

Boston	US	24	10,465
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Benefits and Limitations of Qualitative Text Analysis

Qualitative text analysis offers numerous advantages, as highlighted by various researchers (Church et al., 2019). One significant benefit is that it allows for the unobtrusive collection of data. Unlike traditional qualitative methods such as interviews, ethnography, and focus groups, qualitative text analysis does not require the researcher to interrupt participants to gather information (Ugwu and Eze, 2023). This unobtrusive nature allows researchers to analyse text data without influencing the participants' responses, leading to more authentic and unbiased insights (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005).

Another notable advantage is the cost-efficiency and time-effectiveness of qualitative text analysis. Compared to methods that require in-person interactions, such as interviews or ethnographic studies, qualitative text analysis can be conducted more quickly and at a lower cost (Rose and Lennerholt, 2017). Researchers can analyse large volumes of text data from online sources (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005) without the need for extensive travel, scheduling, or logistical arrangements.

Moreover, qualitative text analysis excels in capturing the detailed and nuanced aspects of consumer experiences. Consumers often share their experiences online after the fact, which means their feedback is reflective and considered rather than being influenced by the immediate presence of a researcher (Tran, 2020). This post-experience reflection allows for a richer and more comprehensive understanding of consumer sentiments and behaviours. Additionally, qualitative text analysis provides the ability to capture the social and collective aspects of consumer interactions. This interaction can provide deeper insights into how experiences and opinions are shaped by social influences and collective dynamics, something that may not be as easily captured in one-on-one interactions (Puppis, 2010).

Despite these benefits, qualitative text analysis also has limitations. One of the main challenges is the subjectivity involved in interpreting qualitative data. The analysis often relies on the researcher's judgment, which can introduce bias and affect the consistency of the findings(Kuckartz, 2019). Additionally, the process can be labour-intensive and time-consuming, especially when dealing with large volumes of text(Kuckartz, 2019). Coding, categorising, and interpreting data requires significant effort and meticulous attention to detail.

Unstructured textual data can be complex and varied, making it challenging to standardise the analysis process(Mayring, 2015). Variations in language, writing style, and context can complicate the extraction of consistent themes and insights. Furthermore, the findings from qualitative text analysis may have limited generalizability due to the specific and detailed nature of the data(Noble and Smith, 2015). The insights gained are often context-specific and may not apply broadly to larger populations.

Conducting qualitative text analysis effectively also requires specialised skills in natural language processing (NLP), coding, and thematic analysis(Kuckartz, 2019). Researchers must be proficient in these techniques to ensure the accuracy and reliability of their analysis. Additionally, analysing publicly available text data, such as online reviews, can raise privacy concerns. Researchers must navigate ethical considerations and ensure that their data collection and analysis comply with privacy regulations(Kuckartz, 2019).

In conclusion, qualitative text analysis offers a rich, flexible, and human-centric approach to understanding textual data, providing deep insights into customer experiences and behaviours. However, it also presents challenges related to subjectivity, complexity, and generalizability that researchers must address to ensure the validity and reliability of their findings. By balancing these benefits and limitations, qualitative text analysis can be a powerful tool for comprehensive and nuanced data analysis.

Semi-Structured Interview

This research employed semi-structured interviews as the second phase in the data collection process. Semi-structured interviews served two primary purposes. The first purpose was to complement the qualitative text analysis phase by exploring areas that are difficult to observe directly, such as personal reflections and detailed individual experiences. The second purpose was to verify and deepen the understanding and interpretation of the patterns and themes identified during the first phase. Semi-structured interviews have been widely used in qualitative research to gain deeper insights into the observed phenomena, providing a richer, more nuanced understanding of the research subject (Costello et al., 2017).

Interviews are widely acknowledged as a fundamental tool in qualitative research for gaining deep insights into people's experiences and perspectives (Bryman, 2004; Fontana & Frey, 2003). They are instrumental in gathering detailed and specific information on various topics (Gruber et al., 2008) and play a crucial role in research design (Weiss, 1994). Among the various interview formats, semi-structured interviews strike an effective balance. They offer a structured framework to ensure all relevant areas are addressed while providing the flexibility to delve into new and emerging topics during the conversation. This approach enables researchers to gather comprehensive and nuanced data, making it a preferred method in qualitative studies. Semi-structured interviews are a widely accepted method for gathering authentic information on various topics and situations. These interviews are intentionally designed and guided by specific procedures and guidelines, ensuring consistency while allowing for depth and spontaneity in responses (Leonard, 2003). According to Kvale (1996), the true meanings that emerge from individuals and events in their natural context are often not directly observable. Therefore, interviewing consumers is a powerful method for uncovering these hidden constructs.

When exploring consumers' emotions and cognitions during their interactions with online reviews, semi-structured interviews are particularly effective. This method provides a platform

for participants to express their thoughts, feelings, and interpretations in their own words, offering a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Through these interviews, researchers can gather detailed opinions, experiences, interpretations, and emotions, often capturing precise quotations from individuals. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews allows researchers to delve into interesting or unexpected topics that arise during the conversation, enriching the data collected and ensuring a comprehensive understanding of customer engagement and satisfaction (Gruber et al., 2008).

The second phase of this study involves semi-structured interviews with the following objectives) To understand why consumers leave online reviews for traditional hotels and Airbnb listings, and 2) to identify the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural states of consumers when posting online reviews. 3) To explore the impact of online reviews on future booking decisions and perceptions of service quality. And 4) to gain insights into the differences in satisfaction and engagement between traditional hotel stays and Airbnb experiences.

Interview Procedure

The interview begins with the researcher introducing themselves and explaining to the participants that they are being invited to take part in a doctoral research study. To clarify the research purpose, the details from the participant information sheet will be read slowly to the interviewees. Verbal consent to participate in the interview and to record the interview will be obtained.

At the start of the interview, participants will be asked to talk about their most memorable accommodation experience, choosing either an Airbnb experience or a traditional hotel experience. They will be allowed to explain the details of the event or issue in their own time, using their own words and preferred language (Chinese or English).

The second part of the interview involves discussing the three dimensions of customer participation in the chosen accommodation experience. Finally, participants will answer

questions related to online reviews, including their review habits and whether they write online reviews honestly based on their own experiences. The details of the interview guide are provided in the appendix (see Appendix 1).

During the interview, the researcher will take notes and ask exploratory questions when necessary to clarify, obtain further details, and better understand the participant's perspectives. The duration of the interview depends on the participant's willingness. The interview will conclude when the participants have fully answered the researcher's questions at their own pace. On average, the interviews lasted 36 minutes, varying according to each participant.

Interview Sampling Description and Justification

The interview sampling for this study was designed to ensure a diverse and representative group of participants, providing a comprehensive understanding of customer engagement and satisfaction across traditional hotels and Airbnb listings. Participants were selected based on their experiences with both traditional hotels and Airbnb accommodations. The criteria for selection included having stayed in both accommodation types at least once in the past three years, which allowed for comparative insights. Additionally, the sample included individuals of varying ages, genders, occupations, and travel frequencies to capture a wide range of perspectives and experiences. To account for regional and cultural variations, participants were also selected from different cities and countries.

The recruitment process involved a snowball sampling technique, where initial participants were asked to refer other potential participants who met the study's criteria. This approach helped to identify additional respondents and broaden the sample's diversity.

To ensure data randomness, at the beginning of the interviews, consumers could choose to share either their Airbnb or traditional hotel stay experiences. This allowed participants to discuss the most relevant and recent experiences, contributing to unbiased and varied data collection.

A total of 26 participants were interviewed, with an equal number of respondents who frequently use traditional hotels and Airbnb listings. This balanced sample size ensured that the study captured detailed insights from both types of accommodation, allowing for a robust comparison. Additionally, the study considered the impact of COVID-19 on consumer behaviour and experiences, acknowledging that the pandemic significantly altered travel patterns, expectations, and satisfaction levels.

The justification for this sampling strategy is multifaceted. By selecting participants who have recently stayed in both traditional hotels and Airbnb listings, the study ensures that the insights gathered are current and reflective of recent trends and experiences in the hospitality industry. Including participants with experiences in both accommodation types allows for a direct comparison of customer engagement and satisfaction, highlighting key differences and similarities. The inclusion of participants from diverse demographics and geographical locations ensures that the study captures a broad spectrum of customer experiences. This diversity is crucial for understanding how different factors, such as cultural background and travel habits, influence customer behaviour and engagement.

Furthermore, the use of a semi-structured interview format, combined with a carefully selected and diverse sample, enables a deep exploration of the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural aspects of customer engagement. This approach provides rich, detailed data that enhances the overall quality and depth of the research findings. By considering the impact of COVID-19, the study also addresses how the pandemic has influenced travel behaviour, expectations, and satisfaction, ensuring that the findings are relevant and applicable to current and future trends in the hospitality industry.

Respondent Profiles and Translation of Interview Protocol

The semi-structured interviews conducted in this study involved 26 participants who had previously written online reviews for either Airbnb or traditional hotel stays. To ensure

transparency and contextual clarity, a profile table has now been included in Appendix 5. This table includes each participant's gender, age range, accommodation type reviewed (Airbnb/hotel/both), review frequency, and general travel background.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling with the aim of capturing diverse engagement behaviours across both service models. Recruitment was conducted through snowball sampling. All participants had posted at least one substantive online review within the past 24 months.

This study purposefully recruited respondents from multiple cultural and national backgrounds, including China, the United Kingdom, the United States, France, Japan, Thailand, and Canada, for three key reasons: (1) to account for the increasing globalisation of travel and the heterogeneity of customer engagement in the hospitality sector; (2) to ensure that variations in online review behaviour are not solely attributable to cultural norms or linguistic context; and (3) to strengthen the robustness of qualitative findings by capturing cross-cultural nuances in cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement.

While the review data analysed in the first phase included user-generated content from a wide range of geographic locations, the inclusion of culturally diverse interviewees provides an additional layer of interpretive depth. It allows the study to move beyond a single-culture lens and better reflect the global nature of both the hotel and sharing economy markets. Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that the number of participants per country remains limited, which may restrict the ability to draw strong country-specific conclusions. The study therefore, positions its qualitative insights as broadly cross-cultural rather than representative of any single national group.

To ensure that all respondents fully comprehended the interview questions and were able to provide accurate and meaningful responses, the original interview protocol was developed in English. As the majority of interviews were conducted in English, this version was used directly

with most participants. For a small subset of Chinese respondents who preferred to be interviewed in Mandarin, a Chinese version of the protocol was produced. The translation process followed a rigorous forward–backward translation procedure. Initially, a bilingual researcher—fluent in both English and Chinese and knowledgeable in hospitality and marketing terminology—translated the interview protocol into Chinese. Subsequently, an independent bilingual translator, with no prior exposure to the original English version, back-translated the Chinese version into English. The research team compared the back-translated version with the original to identify and address any discrepancies in meaning, nuance, or terminology. All inconsistencies were resolved through consensus to ensure semantic, conceptual, and experiential equivalence between the two versions.

To further guarantee clarity and cultural appropriateness, the Chinese protocol was pilot-tested with two participants whose profiles matched those of the target sample. Feedback from this pilot testing informed minor wording adjustments, resulting in a final version that was both linguistically precise and culturally relevant. The inclusion of respondents with diverse linguistic preferences and backgrounds enriched the dataset, enabling a more comprehensive comparison of customer engagement behaviours across different demographic groups.

Research Ethic

In this study, the researcher focused on online reviews and customer engagement without collecting personal data that could identify the participants. Only basic demographic information was collected during the interviews, which is not sufficient to reveal the identity of any participant. The University of Glasgow Ethical Committee reviewed and approved the data collection process (see Appendix 2). Ethical issues in online research remain a topic of debate and are often unresolved (Rageh et al., 2013; Haggerty, 2004).

This research does not focus on the identities of reviewers. This research does not focus on the identities of reviewers. As secondary, publicly available data were used, such as online

reviews from platforms like Airbnb and TripAdvisor, ethical approval was not necessary. No direct contact with reviewers occurred, and their identities, including any aliases, were not used in the research. This ensured complete anonymity and ethical integrity, as the research did not engage with any identifiable private information. No direct contact with reviewers occurred, and their identities, including any aliases, were not used in the research. This ensured complete anonymity and ethical integrity, as the research did not engage with any identifiable private information.

During the semi-structured interviews, participants were provided with detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights. This included the voluntary nature of their participation, their right to withdraw at any time without any consequences, and assurances of confidentiality. Participants were asked to sign a consent form indicating their willingness to participate and allowing the audio recording of the interview.

The confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were rigorously maintained in this research. Personal identifiers were removed from the interview transcripts and replaced with pseudonyms or codes. All data were stored securely, with access limited to the research team. In any reports or publications resulting from this study, the identities of the participants will remain anonymous to protect their privacy.

Data were collected, stored, and analysed following ethical guidelines. Digital recordings of interviews were securely stored and only accessible to the research team. Transcriptions were handled with care to ensure that no personal information was disclosed. All data will be securely archived for a specified period as per institutional guidelines before being destroyed to prevent unauthorised access.

Every effort was made to ensure that participation in the study did not cause any harm or discomfort to the participants. The interview questions were designed to be respectful and non-intrusive. Participants were informed that they could skip any questions they were

uncomfortable answering or terminate the interview at any point. Participants were provided with transparent information about the study's aims, methods, and how their data would be used. The researchers were committed to honesty in reporting the study's findings and ensuring that the data were presented accurately and without fabrication or misrepresentation. Given the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, additional ethical considerations were taken into account. Participants were informed about the study's interest in understanding the impact of COVID-19 on travel behaviours and satisfaction levels. Any potential sensitivities related to the pandemic were handled with care to avoid distress.

In conclusion, this study was conducted with a strong commitment to ethical principles, ensuring respect, confidentiality, and integrity throughout the research process. By adhering to these ethical guidelines, the research aimed to contribute valuable insights while safeguarding the rights and well-being of all participants.

Research Rigour

To ensure the rigour of this study, several measures were implemented throughout the research process. These measures were designed to enhance the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the findings, thereby ensuring the study's overall quality and reliability.

The study employed multiple data collection methods, including qualitative text analysis and semi-structured interviews. Triangulating these methods helped to cross-verify the findings, enhancing their credibility. The researcher also spent an extensive amount of time engaging with the data and the participants to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Additionally, detailed descriptions of the research context, participants, and procedures were provided to enable others to determine the applicability of the findings to different contexts. By offering thick descriptions, the study ensures that readers can assess the transferability of the results to their settings or populations. The research process was meticulously documented, including the data collection and analysis procedures. An audit trail

was maintained to provide a transparent account of the research steps taken. This thorough documentation allows other researchers to replicate the study or understand the basis for the conclusions drawn. Moreover, to minimise researcher bias and ensure objectivity, reflexivity was practised throughout the research process. The researcher continuously reflected on their own assumptions and potential influences on the data interpretation. Additionally, the use of audit trails and peer debriefing enhanced the confirmability of the study by providing external checks on both the research process and the findings. The audit trail comprised a detailed record of methodological decisions, data coding steps, and analytical memos, enabling transparency and allowing external reviewers to trace the progression from raw data to conclusions. Peer debriefing involved regular discussions with two academic colleagues who were not directly involved in the data collection but had expertise in qualitative and mixed-methods research. These sessions served to challenge assumptions, verify interpretations, and ensure that the findings were grounded in the data rather than in researcher bias.

Data Analysis

For the qualitative text analysis, immersion notes of the relevant comments and reviews were taken, noted down, and analysed. Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, Leximancer, was used to identify themes and relationships within the text data.

For the semi-structured interviews, recordings were personally transcribed by the researcher, and the participants' answers were noted and coded both manually (Kashif and Zarkada, 2015) and with the use of Leximancer software. This dual approach ensured a comprehensive analysis of the data, allowing for the identification of key themes and patterns related to customer engagement and satisfaction across traditional hotels and Airbnb listings. By employing these rigorous methods, the study aimed to provide robust and reliable insights into the factors influencing online reviews and customer behaviour.

This thorough and methodical approach to data analysis ensured that the findings were both credible and meaningful, contributing valuable insights to the understanding of online

customer engagement and satisfaction. The utilisation of Leximancer's advanced analytical capabilities enabled a detailed and in-depth exploration of the data, capturing the complexity and richness inherent in the qualitative material.

Data Management and Analysis Process

The data management and analysis process in this study was meticulously designed to ensure the accuracy, consistency, and reliability of the findings. The following steps outline the comprehensive approach taken to manage and analyse the data collected from both qualitative text analysis and semi-structured interviews.

In the qualitative text analysis phase, comments and reviews were systematically collected from online platforms, including Airbnb and TripAdvisor. All collected data were stored in a secure, encrypted digital repository. For the semi-structured interviews, data were collected from participants who provided informed consent. Each interview was audio-recorded to ensure that no information was missed. Audio recordings were securely stored and later transcribed by the researcher. The transcriptions were anonymised, with personal identifiers replaced by pseudonyms or codes.

To manage the data, it was organised into separate folders according to the collection method (text analysis and interviews) and further categorised by platform (Airbnb, TripAdvisor) and interview sessions. A database was established to track all data sources, including metadata such as collection dates, participant demographics, and the context of the reviews or interviews. To maintain participant confidentiality, all personal identifiers were removed, and anonymised data were utilised in all stages of analysis to ensure privacy.

For the qualitative text analysis, Leximancer, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, was employed to further analyse the text data. This software helped identify and visualise themes and relationships within the data, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the patterns present. In the semi-structured interview phase, interviews were

transcribed verbatim by the researcher and reviewed for accuracy. The transcribed data were manually coded, with codes assigned to significant phrases, sentences, and paragraphs. The codes were then grouped into broader themes. Leximancer was also used to assist in analysing the interview data, facilitating the identification of key themes and patterns, and enhancing the depth and rigour of the analysis.

To ensure rigour, participants were given the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the interview transcripts and preliminary findings. This process, known as member checking, helped to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the data. A detailed audit trail was maintained throughout the data management and analysis process, including documentation of all decisions made during data collection, coding, and analysis, providing transparency and allowing for replication of the study. The researcher practised reflexivity, continuously reflecting on their own assumptions and potential biases, helping to minimise the influence of personal biases on the data interpretation.

Coding Process

Recent research has shown that analysing textual data posted online by customers can significantly enhance the understanding of their experiences (Thanh and Kirova, 2018). In terms of accommodation services, most customers express and share their experiences by posting online reviews after the service is completed. This study selected two existing online review datasets from Airbnb and traditional hotels (primarily from TripAdvisor) to facilitate a systematic qualitative analysis.

To ensure a representative sample, this research selected reviews based on a set of key themes identified through relevant search terms. Informed by the theoretical framework of customer engagement theory, relevance was determined based on the distinction between emotional, cognitive, and behavioural engagement. Specific search terms (or search strings) were identified for each overarching theme. The data for online reviews were primarily derived from TripAdvisor and insideairbnb.com. The TripAdvisor data was mainly obtained from an

existing Kaggle dataset, supplemented by additional data captured using web crawlers to address vacancies and unbalanced timestamp gaps. The Airbnb data was sourced from [insideairbnb.com](https://www.insideairbnb.com), which provides user reviews for all listings in various cities from 2009 to the present. The dataset includes data from five major cities: Boston, Copenhagen, London, Paris, and Tokyo. This diverse geographic scope expands the limitations of sharing economy and hospitality research beyond studies typically conducted in a single country or region and considers the possible effects of cultural context. To systematically analyse the sample, a coding frame was developed. This coding frame included themes, sub-themes, quotes, and researcher observations, ensuring a structured approach to data analysis.

The first step in the coding process involved familiarising oneself with the data. The researcher read through all the collected text data and interview transcripts multiple times to gain an in-depth understanding of the content. This step was crucial for identifying initial impressions and potential themes. In the next phase, the researcher began to generate initial codes from the data. Codes are basic labels or tags that capture important features of the data relevant to the research questions. In this research, Leximancer was employed. The software analysed the text data to identify co-occurrences of terms and visualise the relationships between different concepts. Leximancer helped in highlighting broader patterns and themes that might not be immediately apparent through manual coding alone. After generating initial codes, the researcher reviewed and refined them. This involved combining similar codes, eliminating redundant ones, and ensuring that each code accurately represented the data segment it was assigned to. The goal was to create a coherent coding framework that could be used to systematically analyse the entire dataset. The refined codes were then grouped into broader themes. Themes represent patterns across the dataset that are relevant to the research questions. The researcher examined the codes to identify overarching themes that encapsulated the key aspects of customer engagement and satisfaction in both traditional hotels and Airbnb listings. The coding and theme development process was iterative. The researcher continuously moved back and forth between the data, codes, and emerging

themes to refine and validate the analysis. This iterative approach ensured that the themes were grounded in the data and accurately reflected the participants' experiences.

To enhance the credibility of the findings, triangulation was used. The themes identified from the qualitative text analysis were compared with those from the semi-structured interviews. This cross-verification helped to ensure consistency and robustness in the identified themes. By following this rigorous coding process, the study ensured a systematic and comprehensive analysis of the qualitative data, leading to robust and reliable insights into customer engagement and satisfaction in traditional hotels and Airbnb listings.

Chapter Summary

This chapter detailed the research philosophy and design of the current study, which aimed to explore customer engagement and satisfaction through qualitative text analysis and semi-structured interviews. The two phases of data collection—text analysis of online reviews from Airbnb and TripAdvisor, and in-depth interviews—were thoroughly explained and justified. The sampling technique, sample size, and structure were discussed to ensure a representative and diverse participant group. Ethical considerations were addressed, highlighting the measures taken to maintain participant confidentiality and data integrity. Finally, the chapter outlined the data management and analysis process, emphasising the systematic approach to coding and thematic analysis using Leximancer. The subsequent chapter will present the findings derived from this comprehensive analysis.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

This chapter presents an in-depth analysis based on data and text mining of online reviews and semi-structured interviews. The methodical data collection has yielded comprehensive insights into the studied context. Most interviews and online reviews revolved around the same level of moderation and were confirmatory and complementary to each other. The analysis pinpoints the variations and commonalities in customer engagement as reflected through online reviews. To effectively illustrate these findings, the chapter is segmented into three sections, each dedicated to explaining the occurrences within the respective dimensions of customer engagement: cognitive, emotional, and behavioural. This structure aims to thoroughly dissect and interpret the ways customers reflect their experiences and evaluations through online platforms.

The first section is about the cognitive dimension in the context of online reviews, primarily concerning how consumers establish their expectations and what factors they consider important. This dimension explores the thought processes behind customer decision-making and experience evaluation. It examines the similarities and differences in consumer expectations, shedding light on how these expectations are formed and how they influence the content of online reviews. The second section is the emotional dimension of customer engagement. The study examines how emotions influence customer experiences and perceptions. This dimension explores the diverse emotional responses that customers have during their interactions with these services and how these emotions are reflected in their online reviews. It delves into the psychological impact of these experiences and how they

contribute to the overall customer experience and the valence of online reviews in different contexts. The behavioural dimension of customer engagement is the third and last section of the whole process. It focuses on understanding how the emotional and cognitive aspects translate into actual behaviours exhibited by customers in the hospitality context. The behavioural dimension in this section does not reflect the subsequent actions of customers but rather focuses on how consumers describe their interactions, communications, and connections with service providers during their stay, as mentioned in their reviews. This includes detailing the nature of their interactions with hosts or hotel staff, the communication styles they experienced, and the overall quality of engagement during their accommodation experience.

Cognitive Dimension of Customer Engagement

This section emphasizes the significance of cognitive processes in customer engagement, discussing how customers assimilate information and establish expectations based on their experiences. A comparative analysis of customer engagement in varied service environments, such as Airbnb and traditional hotel settings, is conducted. This comparison illuminates the commonalities and distinctions in consumer behaviour and expectations across different service models. Key themes explored include the influence of location, service quality, amenities provided, and the pivotal role of online reviews in shaping consumer decision-making processes.

Cognitive Dimension and Customer Experience, Customer Journey

A crucial aspect of customer engagement is the cognitive processes customers undergo when assimilating information and establishing expectations based on their experiences. In the context of customer engagement, cognitive engagement generally refers to the degree to which a customer is mentally involved in and actively processes information about a brand or

service. Unlike normative beliefs, which refer to expectations about behaviour, cognitive engagement focuses on the intellectual effort and attention a customer invests in evaluating and interacting with a brand or service. Hollebeek et al.(2014b) define cognitive engagement as the degree of focus and mental investment a customer exerts when interacting with a brand. Brodie et al. (2011) explain that cognitive engagement refers to the conscious attention and processing effort directed toward a brand or service, emphasising the intellectual aspects of customer interaction. Van Doorn et al. (2010a) view cognitive engagement as part of a multidimensional framework, where it encompasses the mental activities involved in interacting with a product or service, including awareness, learning, and processing information. In the hospitality context, this involves customers forming perceptions about the service environment, whether in an Airbnb or a traditional hotel setting. These cognitive processes are shaped by various factors such as service quality, location, amenities, and online reviews, influencing how customers assess their experiences and form expectations for future interactions.

Customer experience plays a pivotal role in shaping customer engagement. A customer's perception of their interaction with a service provider often triggers the process of sharing experiences, particularly through online reviews. The customer journey concept, widely adopted in service management(Rawson et al., 2013; Zomerdijk and Voss, 2010), highlights the sequence of touchpoints where customers engage cognitively and emotionally with a brand. This concept is central to understanding how customers process service interactions, develop preferences, and ultimately engage with brands.

Through repeated touchpoints, such as website interactions, physical stays, or customer support encounters, customers continuously assess service quality and integrate these experiences into their decision-making framework. Each touchpoint provides input that influences customer cognition, whether through rational assessment of service features or emotional responses to service interactions (Gunawardane, 2023). While the customer journey involves various stages—pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase—each stage

includes key cognitive elements where customers actively process information, evaluate service offerings, and formulate opinions. For example, in the pre-purchase stage, customers gather and analyse data from online reviews, which helps shape their expectations. During the purchase and post-purchase stages, customers compare their actual experiences with their expectations, which further contributes to their cognitive engagement and likelihood of leaving reviews. This process directly ties into the cognitive dimension of customer engagement, as customers' mental frameworks—shaped by past experiences, reviews, and expectations—guide their decisions and interactions with service providers. Thus, the customer journey is not only an experiential process but also a critical cognitive pathway that influences engagement and the generation of online reviews. Cognitive engagement in the hospitality sector is evident as customers consciously evaluate the benefits they derive from services. They exchange economic, emotional, and cognitive resources with marketers (Rather, 2020), and this dynamic process hinges on customers' ability to process and respond to service experiences cognitively. The multidimensional nature of customer engagement, involving cognitive, emotional, and behavioural elements (Brodie et al., 2013; Hollebeek, 2013), means that understanding the cognitive processes involved is essential for evaluating how customers make sense of their experiences and share them through online reviews.

Cognitive Dimension in Airbnb and Traditional Hotel Online Review

Cognition is defined as 'the mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses. The cognitive dimension of CE is considered as the degree of interest and attention to the information of the service brand/community. Customers hold a tentative belief or preference for a purchase before an actual decision is made (Russo et al., 1998). Consumers evaluate information based on their perceptions of information, namely, the usefulness and accessibility of the information. If the information that consumers get is what they seek, it will undoubtedly affect consumer perceived value. Previous research has recognised that cognition has been studied mainly in

terms of the disconfirmation paradigm, which predicts satisfaction to be a function of a comparison between expectations and performance (BEARDEN and TEEL, 1983; LABARBERA and MAZURSKY, 1983; OLIVER, 1980). The cognitive process will not develop instantaneously, but only after an individual can cognitively process and assess the available evidence (Morrow et al., 2004), which is related to accumulated knowledge. In this research, cognitive engagement is defined as the confidence held by the consumer that the service providers can be relied on to deliver their promises. And then the customer compares them to make a decision. Therefore, customers have access to extensive information to compare their options and control the quality of their experience (Jung and Seock, 2017).

In the case of fairly complex and experiential services, consumers will screen brands on the market according to their own needs and available information, and make a final decision. In this process, new knowledge is absorbed in consumers' cognition, and an expectation for future experience is established based on this knowledge and information. This is evident in the online reviews of both service providers. In addition to the deviation between consumers' own understanding and reality, some false information or promises will lead to sharp reactions.

Therefore, the first step for service providers to establish positive interactions with consumers is to provide authentic and easily accessible information, this helps consumers establish more realistic expectations, thereby building initial trust to reduce transaction-related anxiety, uncertainty, and vulnerability, thereby bringing greater satisfaction.

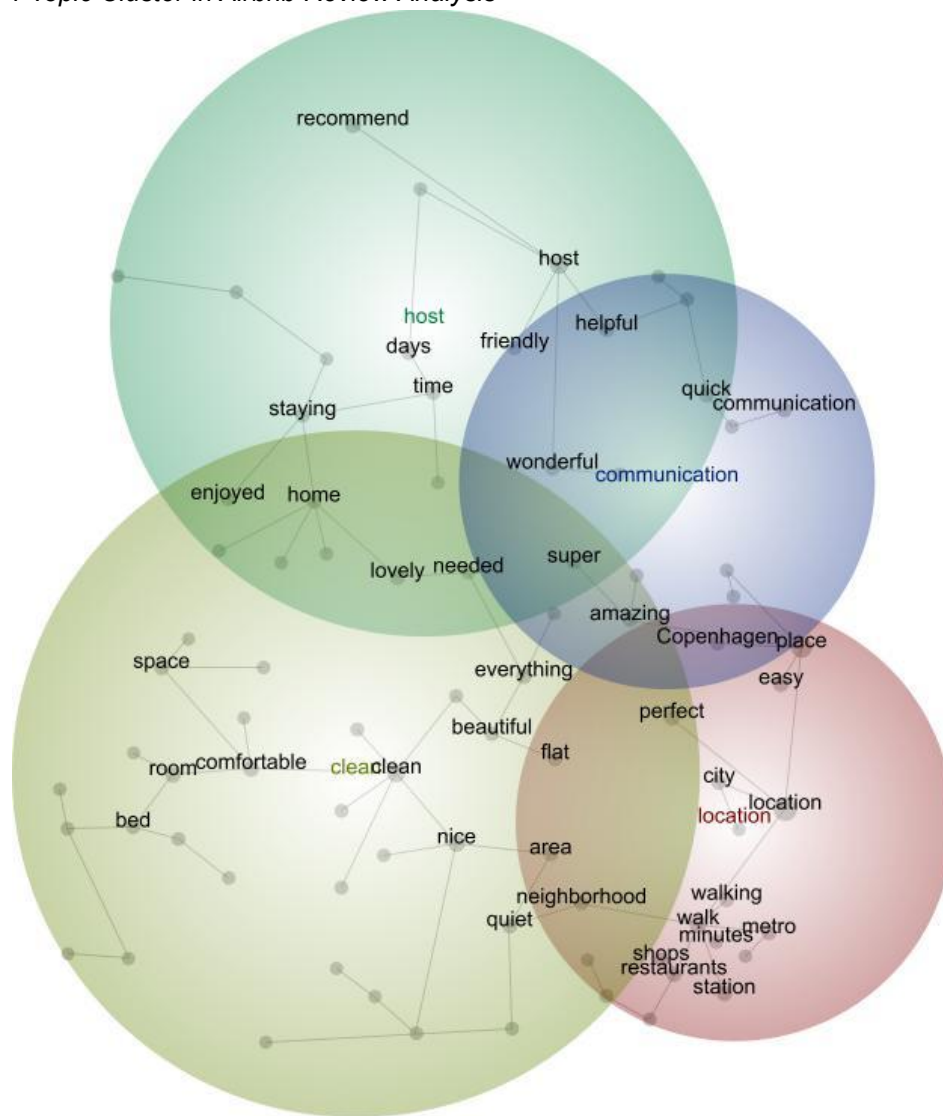
Customer expectations are beliefs about a service that serve as standards against which service performance is judged (Zeithaml et al., 1993). In the context of hospitality, consumers' evaluation criteria for those two kinds of service types are very similar. These two maps provide a broad overview of the themes consumers care about most in online reviews of Airbnb consumers and traditional hotel consumers, respectively. The results rendered what accommodation and experience look like from the perspective of the customers.

Due to the similarity in services provided by Airbnb and traditional hotels, the four main theme trends initially generated are very similar. In the Airbnb data set, four major topics emerged within the review comments, including 'location' (100%), 'clean' (80%), 'host' (62%) and 'communication' (16%) (by order of importance) (Table 16). Among them, "location" is a prominent consideration in accommodation choices and requires active cognitive engagement, as customers must evaluate the proximity of the property to points of interest, transportation options, safety, and convenience. This involves comparing the accommodation's location to their travel plans and expectations, which is an inherently cognitive process. The topic "cleanliness" is another crucial aspect that requires active cognitive judgment. Guests assess the cleanliness of the space during their stay and compare it with their expectations based on descriptions, photos, and previous reviews. This evaluation requires mental processing about hygiene standards, comfort, and health, all of which are fundamental to cognitive engagement. About the "host", the interactions with the host often involve complex social and service-related judgments. Cognitive engagement occurs when customers assess the host's responsiveness, helpfulness, and the personalised recommendations they provide. This evaluation process includes weighing these interactions against their expectations for the overall experience, requiring critical thinking. "Communication" plays a central role in shaping the guest experience, as it facilitates the exchange of information, clarification of expectations, and resolution of potential issues. Effective and timely communication between hosts and guests not only ensures the smooth coordination of practical arrangements but also fosters trust and rapport. This process requires cognitive engagement, as guests interpret, evaluate, and respond to the messages they receive, ultimately influencing their perceptions of service quality and their overall satisfaction.

Table 16 Connectivity score of Each Airbnb Theme.

Theme	Location	Clean	Host	communication
Connectivity score	100%	70%	58%	34%

Figure 1 Topic Cluster in Airbnb Review Analysis



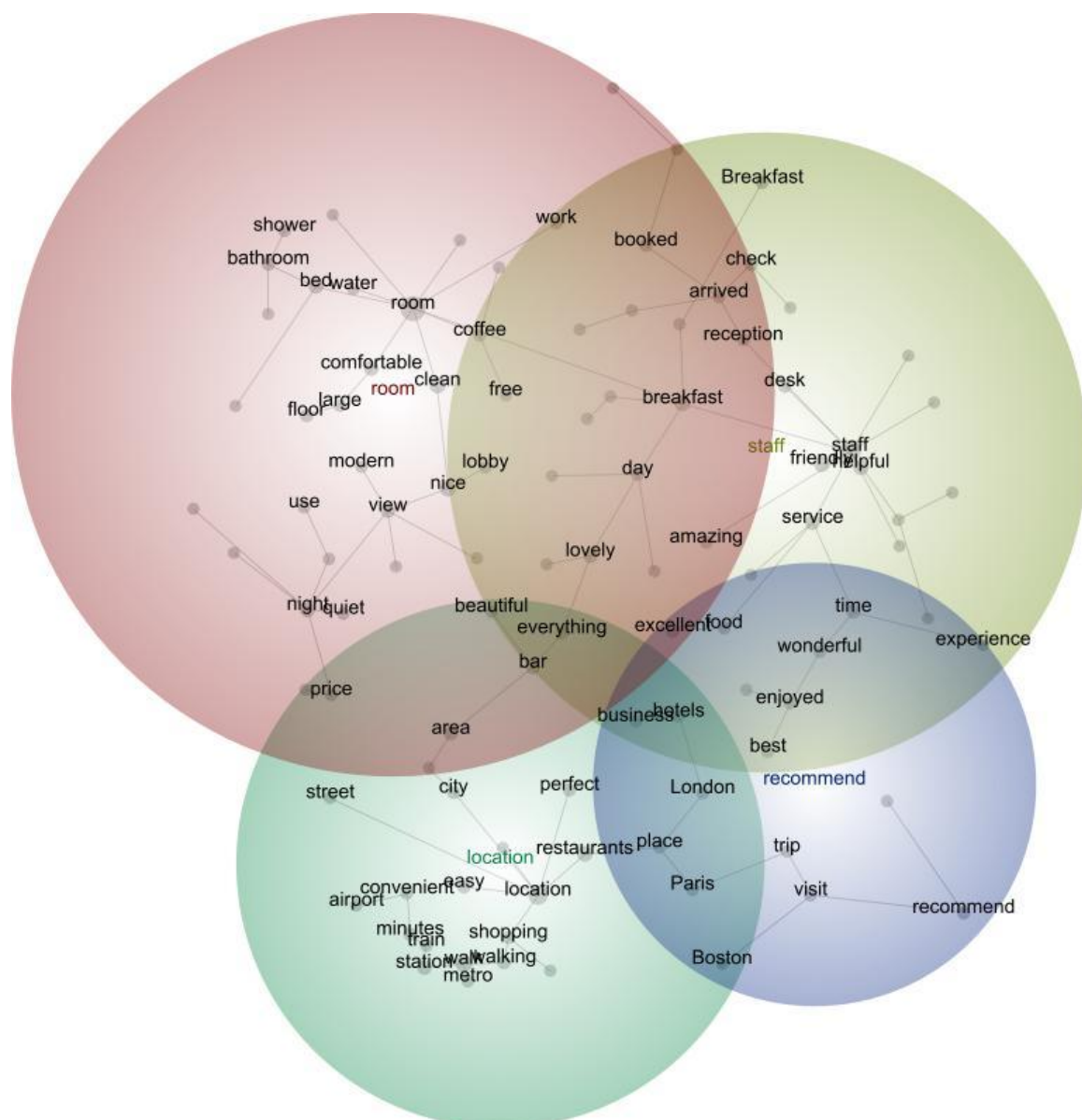
In the traditional hotel data set, the four initially generated topics are 'room' (100%), 'staff' (87%), 'location' (81%) and 'recommend' (35%) (Table 17). These topics also align with the cognitive dimension. The topic "staff", cognitive engagement with hotel staff involves assessing their professionalism, friendliness, and effectiveness in resolving issues or providing services. Guests mentally process their interactions and compare them to prior experiences or expectations from a traditional hotel setting, contributing to overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The "location" and "recommend" are Similar to Airbnb, hotel guests evaluate location based on convenience, proximity to attractions, and ease of access, requiring cognitive comparison and analysis. For recommend, when guests recommend a hotel, they

reflect on their experience, weigh different aspects such as service quality, amenities, and value for money, and consider how these factors align with the preferences of others. This reflective process is a form of cognitive engagement.

Table 17 Connectivity Score of Each Traditional Hotel Theme.

Theme	Room	Staff	Location	Recommend
Connectivity score	100%	87%	81%	35%

Figure 2 Topic Clusters in Traditional Hotel Review Analysis



In both Airbnb and hotel contexts, these identified topics are indicative of cognitive engagement because they require active mental processing, decision-making, and reflection on the part of the consumer. Engaging cognitively with these aspects influences the consumer's overall perception of their stay and their subsequent actions, such as leaving a review or making a recommendation.

According to Leximancer guidance, the connectivity scores indicate the relative importance of the themes (the most important is the top Theme at 100%). 'Host' and 'Staff' emerged as important themes, which have implications on the role of the 'service provider-guest encounter' and 'services' play in customers' experience. Importantly, while 'recommend' appeared as a theme, it was not regarded as an attribute, but the reference to 'recommend' was an outcome of the other three themes. The analysis of the two datasets reveals a similarity in the three prominent themes identified. Although not emerge as the dominant theme, the sub-concepts within the Airbnb data also included the keyword 'recommend'. This suggests that while recommending an accommodation is not the core focus of this theme, it is nonetheless present as a related concept, potentially reflecting how effective communication can influence guests' willingness to advocate for the property. These shared themes underscore the common cognitive dimensions that customers consider important across different datasets, suggesting a universal set of criteria that which hospitality is evaluated cognitively by guests. To further explain the data, this study conducted a more detailed breakdown of the two datasets (Table 18), and when breaking down the themes, most of the comments compared the knowledge and information gained from cognitive engagement to experience.

Table 18 Cognitive Themes and Concepts in Airbnb and Traditional Hotels

Airbnb				Traditional Hotel		
Themes	Concepts in the Theme	in	Explanation	Themes	Concepts in the Theme	Explanation
Location	location, place,	city, walk,	Guests' cognitive evaluations of the	Location	location, city,	Guests' cognitive assessments of

	nearby, convenient, quiet, street, metro	accommodation's location, considering proximity to points of interest and convenience.		convenient, easy, restaurants, airport, nearby, metro	the accommodation's proximity to points of interest and transportation options for practical planning.
Host	host, friendly, responsive, helpful, communication	The cognitive judgment of guests about the quality of interaction and service provided by the host of the accommodation.	Staff	staff, friendly, helpful, service, responsive	Cognitive evaluations of the efficiency and professionalism of the service provided by the accommodation's staff.
Clean	clean, cosy, comfortable, space, kitchen, clean, bed, bathroom, tidy, well-maintained	Guests' cognitive acknowledgement of cleanliness as a critical aspect of the apartment facilities that significantly affects comfort and satisfaction.	Room	room, bathroom, bed, clean, large, comfortable, modern, view	Expands cognitive judgments to include guests' evaluations of room cleanliness, spaciousness, comfort, modern amenities, and views offered by the room.

Among them, 'comfortable' is a complimentary word; it along with some feedback on actual experiences, although it is much more related to psychological and emotional activities, confirms the authenticity of the information available to consumers. When breaking this topic down into different contexts, the top ten concepts related to the most comfort are shown in Table 19; most concepts are closely related to accommodation environment and facilities.

Table 19 Top 10 Concepts about 'Comfortable' in Airbnb and Traditional Hotels

Airbnb		Traditional Hotels	
Concept	Likelihood	Concept	Likelihood
bed	46%	bed	40%
spacious	18%	clean	22%
felt	17%	quiet	21%
kitchen	17%	large	20%
clean	16%	shower	18%
shower	15%	bathroom	17%
room	14%	modern	16%
home	14%	room	16%
space	14%	space	14%
bathroom	14%	air	14%

Cognition-related topics in the hotel dataset were further detailed, and even a specific item (breakfast) emerged. Compared with Airbnb, traditional hotel data contains more content related to consumer cognitive knowledge. Consumers mentioned the hotel brand and image, price, as well as the hotel's physical features and room features. Here, consumers typically compare a hotel's public area amenities (e.g., size, architecture, decor, cleanliness, facilities, amenities, design, space, service, security, food and beverage offerings, and location) and accommodation rooms (e.g., space, furniture) are described separately (Dolnicar and Otter, 2003). Different from Airbnb, in the traditional hotel data set, the top-ranked topic Staff involves keywords that are highly related to services and service events, while host is more related to emotion or interaction(Dolnicar and Otter, 2003).

These themes indicate the factors that consumers of this type of accommodation service are most concerned about. In the early stages of cognitive engagement, consumers will try to absorb information about target (or potential) service providers in the market from zero. In this process, they will match their needs with information from different service providers. Whatever consumers' deeper needs are, their initial cognitive engagement is closely tied to utilitarian attributes, the most basic need for accommodation. And in the hospitality industry, service providers first need to provide consumers with a basic accommodation function, and then demonstrate their additional functions.

Similar Theme and Concept

Airbnb and traditional hotel customers exhibit similar criteria regarding accommodation services. Both groups prioritize aspects like location, service, and general amenities. Despite different accommodation styles, these fundamental requirements remain consistent, reflecting a shared baseline in consumer expectations within the hospitality.

Location

Location is mentioned many times in previous literature(Cheng & Jin, 2019), indicating that customers value the attractions and facilities around the accommodations. Consumers evaluate 'location' based on how they define 'convenience'. From the data analysis results, convenience can be reflected in the following three points, namely: 1) Transportation convenience; 2) Convenience of surrounding facilities and 3) Community quality. The convenience of transportation refers to whether consumers can reach their destinations by walking or economical public transportation; the convenience of surrounding facilities is reflected in whether consumers easily satisfy their shopping (utilitarian or hedonism) and dietary needs, as well as the distance to tourist attractions; community quality is an interesting summary, this category contains content that tends to relate to safety factors and noise levels

throughout the area. The specific content can be found in Table 20, these concepts and trends show extremely high similarity in the two data sets.

Table 20 Similarity of Airbnb and Traditional Hotel Consumer Demand for Location		
Category	Concepts	Reviews
Transportation Convenience	'walk'; 'station'; 'metro'	<i>"Location is great for shopping and large bistros and a walkable distance to the Eiffel Tower."</i> (from Airbnb) <i>"Bus station and supermarket within short walking distance. Easily to access both from the airport and the central station."</i> (from traditional hotel)
Convenience of Surrounding Facilities	'shop'; 'restaurant'; 'shopping'; 'tourist attraction'	<i>"I am very pleased with my selection of Hotel Regina Louvre for my recent stay in Paris. The hotel is very centrally located where the major museums and shopping districts are."</i> (from a traditional hotel) <i>"Everything you need to cook a meal was available and the location is only a few blocks away from authentic bakeries, cheese shop, butcher and fresh fruits and vegetables. LOVE IT!"</i> (from Airbnb)
Community Quality	'safe'; 'quite' ; 'noise'	<i>"No complaints, but please note the great central location means there is a lot of noise from the nightclubs on the weekend."</i> (from Airbnb) <i>"I am very satisfied with this location. felt that the security is very good. Even if I come</i>

back very late, but won't worry about safety.” (from traditional hotel)

According to Yang et al.(2014), Airbnb listings inherit the location model of traditional accommodation businesses such as hotels. This results in Airbnb accommodations meeting consumers' location needs that are very similar to hotel accommodations(Fang et al., 2019; Adam and Amuquandoh, 2013; Yang et al., 2012; Shoval, 2006). However, due to the influence of the regulatory model and the platform economy, the location of sharing accommodation also has different characteristics (Wegmann and Jiao, 2017). For instance, sharing accommodation can be flexibly laid out on a variety of land types, located close to city attractions and/or established hotels (Jiang and Yin, 2021), while hotels can only be laid out in commercially permitted areas. Airbnb listings are more tourist-oriented than hotels(Ki and Lee, 2019), so they have a more pragmatic approach, concerned about the surrounding commercial atmosphere and public transportation convenience within the city(Jiao and Bai, 2020; Qiu et al., 2020; Eugenio-Martin et al., 2019).

Although consumers have slightly different travel purposes (consumers who choose Airbnb are more inclined to travel and leisure than consumers who choose traditional hotels), the location of accommodation is the primary consideration for basic needs. Consumers tend to describe the location of the accommodation by listing surrounding facilities and using some adjectives to express their positive or negative feedback. Some typical positive reviews can be found in Table 21 below.

Table 21 Positive reviews in Airbnb and traditional hotels about Location

	Airbnb	Traditional Hotel
Positive Review	<i>“This is a great spot, very close to Duplex Metro, Le Motte Picquet Grenelle metro and RER - C metro which we used to get to Versaille and</i>	<i>“Exactly like what I expected ! Hotel is located in the middle of Ginza road, very easy to go to anywhere ex. restaurants, shopping centre(Ginza</i>

can also be used to get to Notre Dame six), and subway just a few minutes quicker/easier. The room is no more away. Family mart is just ground floor of than a 10-minute walk to the Eiffel the hotel..... I figure that I have select Tower, and we wandered around long the right hotel, it is safe, reasonable enough to find our way to the Arc de price, convenient location!"

Triomphe along the Champs Elysee.

You are also not far from the Musee d'armee if you're willing to walk. But again, the metro is 5 minutes away and there is a bus stop across the street.

There is also a market where you can buy fruits near the apartment, as well as another market closer to Le Motte Picquet Grenelle and the Bistrot Duplex with slightly cheaper fruits. There is a Monoprix close by as well. Exactly as described"

Based on the positive reviews in Table 21, it is evident that both Airbnb and traditional hotel consumers dedicate ample space to describing the surrounding environment and transportation conditions of the accommodation location. Examining the text, Airbnb consumers express high satisfaction and often conclude with the phrase 'Exactly as described.' This confirms that consumers, despite having already made a purchase decision, approach it with careful consideration. They are eager to affirm that the information provided by the merchant accurately reflects the actual conditions, highlighting the significance of bridging the gap between information and reality. Analysing participation at the cognitive level from another perspective, consumers verify that the information provided by merchants is reliable, aiding in the formation of correct perceptions and expectations. Building on this foundation, consumers' actual experiences further solidify their cognition based on the initial

knowledge, contributing new value to the listing through their comments. In contrast, a hotel consumer wrote, 'Exactly like what I expected' in their reviews. It is crucial to consider the basis of their expectations, which likely stems from the information acquired before check-in, predominantly sourced from the hotel booking page. Thus, positive reviews indicate that customers are satisfied when the actual situation aligns with the service provider's promises, and they are pleasantly surprised when expectations are exceeded. This underscores consumers' emphasis on the authenticity of service providers' statements regarding their commitments.

The negative reviews often revolve around complaints regarding the location being different than expected, most of this happens due to the difference between consumers' cognitive expectations and the information they get. Some negative reviews report that the location is different than expected. As mentioned above, most of this happens due to the difference between consumers' cognitive expectations and the information they get. This is one situation that may occur, that is, consumers themselves have misunderstood the information because they did not read it carefully. In such cases, the review may not be genuinely negative; rather, the frustration expressed by the consumer stems from their misunderstanding, especially when it results in additional expenses. For example:

"The hotel's page said it was only 10 minutes from the city centre...I didn't know it meant driving distance! I thought I could easily get anywhere by walking! I had to budget a little extra for the taxi fare; taking a taxi in this city is really expensive."

However, they seemed to realise that the hotel did not promise a walking distance within 10 minutes. As a clarification, they added at the end of the overall review, 'You need to read carefully, this hotel is non-refundable.'

Consumers tend to be forgiving of their own mistakes, but they are often less forgiving when it comes to fraudulent service providers. In some highly negative online reviews, consumers

have accused service providers of exaggerating their geographical locations to attract business, leading to frustration about the actual location and facilities. Expressing their anger, some consumers resort to extreme language, including swear words, to rebuke service providers, labelling them as 'liars' and 'thieves.' These consumers accuse the service providers of wasting their time, money, and overall mood during their travels. In more 'creative' responses, some consumers take to writing satirical reviews online as a form of retaliation against these service providers. For instance:

"This is such a great place. If you want to get to the airport on time, you'd better leave a day and night in advance. There are even more wonderful landscapes around - oh, I mean there are farms in the centre of Paris. It's so awesome! Bravo!"

Service and Service Provider

Service is the second factor that consumers care about, which is understandable in the service industry environment. Customers perceive a service encounter as a social experience, and as such, they may prefer human interaction during the encounter (Curran & Meuter, 2005). Hospitality, as the name suggests, is a shared experience between host and guest, and hospitality service is therefore based on "hospitality," the positive attitude of the service provider that makes the guest feel polite, friendly, welcome, and valued (Kim et al., 2019). Imagine that when travellers come to a strange country or city alone or with their companions, they expect to be treated with kindness and warmth to enhance the positive experience and memory of the journey. So poor service will no doubt be met with strong backlash and complaints. In addition to the polite and friendly service attitude, consumers who choose Airbnb and traditional hotel accommodations have similar requirements for service efficiency. For example, in the hotel context, some consumers mentioned that the breakfast service in the restaurant is too slow. And the efficiency of the front desk in checking them in when they are very tired is too low; in the context of Airbnb, it is more to complain that the host responds too slowly and also does not come in time to help guests check-in. In addition, some service

encounters of a bad nature are not uncommon. For example, consumers will complain about differential treatment due to gender discrimination:

“The service, however, was poor. It seemed that our treatment was discriminatory, as we noticed the treatment of male travellers was very attentive.”

Some Airbnb consumers also pointed out that after a dispute with the host, the host's attitude was very poor, and even tried to physically conflict with them.

In the interview, a respondent who chooses hotels more frequently mentioned that he has high requirements for service quality because he decides on five-star hotels or hotels under the hotel group with a better brand reputation for daily travel. But these seem to be unable to guarantee the quality of service 100%. He mentioned that he was ridiculed when he checked in because of a problem with his credit card.

Regarding service quality, hotel customers emphasize that since hotels list the services they provide on their websites, which is equivalent to giving an official commitment, and they have paid a reasonable amount of money, they ask for an exchange of the same quality of service. Interestingly, Airbnb guests, on the other hand, appear to struggle to recognize services within the context of Airbnb. At least two respondents claimed that they did not understand the services provided by Airbnb accommodation. They were not even familiar with the typical greetings or communication expectations associated with hosts in the sharing economy accommodations. As a result, they tend not to make too many demands on the host.

In Airbnb reviews, the host was one of the most common topics. The theme 'host' covers a variety of concepts about the role that the host plays in facilitating an Airbnb experience. While the central focus of the hotel reviews was the 'staff', both represent the interaction between service provider and guest. The main concepts under the two themes reflect the subtle differences in the reviews between the two service types. It can be seen from Table 22 that

when Airbnb customers write reviews related to 'host', they use more adjectives to describe the personality of the host, and their feelings during the process of getting along, but the functional service provided is mentioned relatively few. Concepts related to 'staff' in traditional hotels tend to state the job position and service type of 'staff' (for example, 'food' may be related to waiters in restaurants; 'clean' will mention housekeeping).

Table 22 Top 10 Concepts about 'host' and 'staff' in Airbnb and Traditional Hotels

'host' in Airbnb		'staff' in Traditional Hotels	
Concept	Likelihood	Concept	Likelihood
arrival	51%	friendly	100%
responsive	38%	concierge	59%
friendly	35%	reception	49%
helpful	33%	check	36%
communication	32%	service	34%
wonderful	31%	nice	32%
excellent	30%	clean	30%
quick	30%	excellent	29%
home	30%	food	26%
check	30%	asked	26%

Meanwhile, with the assistance of Leximancer's function, it can be found that under the host theme, there are various names of people. This is very interesting. Consumers will directly call (or remember) the host's name to reflect the friendship or personal relationship between them; and under the theme of Staff, most of them are more inclined to the functions of employees or the help they provide, and the names of employees rarely appear.

Amenities were a common theme of the more scattered topics. Hotels generally provide standardised amenities and services, while each Airbnb listing offers amenities of different types, quantities and qualities. According to Festila and Müller(2017), Airbnb is just a hotel-

like experience at a relatively lower cost. Therefore, in terms of basic needs, consumers have very similar evaluation criteria for Airbnb and hotels.

Amenities

Amenities were a common theme of the more scattered topics. Travellers often hope that they can get an excellent accommodation environment during a short trip. In this regard, the needs of Airbnb and traditional hotel consumers are very consistent. The themes generated in online reviews about amenities differ between Airbnb and traditional hotels. In Airbnb reviews, such content is often categorised under the 'clean' theme. Conversely, in the context of traditional hotels, similar concepts are summarised under the 'room' theme, and the results can be found in Table 23. But in contrast, traditional hotel consumers seem to have stricter requirements on hotel facilities. This distinction highlights the different consumer expectations and experiences in each accommodation type. In many reviews, hotel online reviews will have more detailed reviews, ranging from hotel decoration and room facilities to fragrance in the lobby. In contrast, Airbnb consumers seem to be more casual in the reviews, and they usually praise the decoration style of the room and complete kitchen utensils (compared with most hotels, the apartments on Airbnb can be used by consumers to cook their meals).

Table 23 Concepts of Amenities in Airbnb and Traditional Hotels

"room" in Traditional Hotel	"clean" in Airbnb
room, clean, nice, night, comfortable, bed, view, bathroom, floor, coffee, beautiful, quiet, shower, use, large, work, modern, water, lobby, free, morning, door, top, tea, hot, sleep, space, table, pool, noise, old, told, air, due	clean, nice, comfortable, lovely, everything, room, quiet, area, space, home, beautiful, bed, flat, needed, enjoyed

Through interviews, most consumers put forward these points very similarly when targeting their own expectations. Although there are subtle differences in the manifestations of some factors. In terms of geographical location, in addition to choosing a specific type of resort,

Hotels are preferred for shorter stays and family trips, guests emphasize drivers such as location and accessibility (e.g., walking distance from major attractions such as city centre, transportation hub, or beach); Mody et al. (2017) conclude that Airbnb outperforms hotels in communities and localness, e.g., staying in more residential neighbourhoods and offering real people and a home atmosphere(Ert et al., 2016b). P2P accommodation extends into residential areas and grows in areas with few or no hotels. Furthermore, Airbnb properties provide a more authentic, interactive experience than hotels. One Airbnb customer even mentioned that, driven by a desire to immerse themselves in the local atmosphere, they can accept living in remote areas.'

Hotels have fostered a traditional paradigm centred on service delivery, emphasising service quality and amenities. For example, amenities such as internet access, minibars, TV streaming services, hair dryers and coffee makers play a vital role in guest satisfaction and property features such as open escapes, higher safety and security, car parking or gym services. As Yu et al.(2020) note, "Research indicates that hotel amenities play a significant role in guests' decision-making processes and service experience, including satisfaction". Some consumers who regularly choose Airbnb mentioned that they prefer to feel at home rather than stay in a traditional hotel, which offers a variety of experiences they can enjoy. Compared with the more standardised facilities and characteristics of traditional hotels, Airbnb provides a series of differentiated accommodations. These facilities and decorations may reflect the local culture and the different aesthetic levels of the host. It is easier for consumers to experience happiness in a (fashionable, warm) environment, to satisfy the curiosity and novelty of the guests.

Therefore, the core services in the context of hospitality are highly related to the quality of accommodation. Concepts in related topics include accommodation area (such as concepts about space and spaciousness), functional space and decoration, cleanliness, noise inside and outside the house, and amenities (e.g., air conditioning, TV, etc.). In other words, core services refer to the basic benefits that hotel and Airbnb guests seek, for example, a

comfortable place to stay. According to Festila and Müller(2017), Airbnb is just a hotel-like experience at a relatively lower cost. Therefore, in terms of basic needs, consumers have very similar evaluation criteria for Airbnb and hotels.

Different Themes and Concepts

Airbnb and traditional hotel reviews reveal contrasting perspectives on price and recommendations. While hotel guests commonly evaluate cost against services and amenities, Airbnb guests focus more on the overall experience and uniqueness.

Price

One difference between the two datasets is reflected in references to price. When comparing the differences between the two, it is important to note that Travellers could regard Airbnb as an alternative (more or less perfect) to a hotel, e.g., mid (or low)-price hotels (Guttentag & Smith, 2017) or those not specialising in business guests (Zervas, Proserpio and John W Byers, 2021a). In the two groups of online reviews, an obvious trend in hotel online reviews is that consumers will habitually refer to the price of the hotel and use "worth (or beyond) this price" or "not worth such a high room price" as an entry point to give feedback on their stay experience. Therefore, this study explores its correlation concept by breaking down the concept of 'price' to clarify what consumers think are factors in their perception of price, and the results can be found in Table 24.

Table 24 Top 10 Concepts related to the concept of 'price' in the hotel context

Concept	Likelihood	Description	quotes
quality	15%	Usually accompanied by an evaluation of all facilities and services within the hotel	<i>"Overall a good quality hotel with reasonable prices usually a little lower than some others in the Marriott group."</i>

star	12%	Use the hotel's star rating to demonstrate whether the price is reasonable	<i>"Overall a solid 4 star at a five start price."</i>
food	11%	Usually refers to the food provided or food serving time by the restaurant in the hotel	<i>"We did not use their food offerings, even though they were very well priced."</i>
breakfast	9%	Breakfast service	<i>"The breakfasts were super and the one dinner we had there was very good and reasonably priced"</i>
location	9%	Hotel's location	<i>"Can't beat the vibe, price, or the location! Loved our stay at the Verb."</i>
better	8%	Appears in comparisons between different experiences and prices	<i>" Nice hotel but I feel there are better around that price point."</i>
area	7%	Similar to 'location'	<i>"Compare to other hotels I looked in the same area it's prices are very competitive."</i>
service	7%	All services in the hotel, including the service attitude of the staff	<i>"There is a luggage delivery service in the hotel as well. The price is very reasonable."</i>
style	6%	Usually refers to the decoration style of the hotel	<i>" Great standard of hotel for the price I paid. The</i>

and the decoration in the *room was very modern*
room *style with lots of gadgets."*

In addition to the first ten related concepts, the subsequent related concepts are more detailed and trivial (such as 'shower' in the room and 'coffee' in the hotel restaurant). Consumers' sensitivity to price leads them to start evaluating the hotel when they enter the area where the hotel is located, and some consumers even care about the decoration and style of the hotel. One of the very interesting concepts is 'better,' as a comparative adverb. This word represents the consumer's inner weighing and comparison. These comparisons may come from 1) staying in a hotel and alternative hotels; 2) this experience and past experiences (It may be the same hotel or other hotels); 3) expectations and real experience. An interviewee gave his opinion in the interview, "I think the hotel price includes the items they think I will use, so I always think the price is inflated. At least I will not go to the gym or pool, so I try to get my money's worth as much as possible. Naturally, I'm harsh, and didn't they say the customer is God?" From this perspective, hotel guests seem to be more focused on economic values and attribute everything they experience to an equal exchange. They are explicit about any asymmetry between the price and services provided.

The user mainly judged the hotel by location and other factors and finally concluded that they paid a reasonable price. On the other hand, although the guests have acknowledged the quality of the hotels, the price is still a crucial factor that will affect whether they will become repeat customers. For instance, one comment mentioned that the location of the hotel is very convenient, the facilities in the hotel are complete, and the service attitude of the staff is friendly and considerate. However, the conclusion of this consumer is, 'Would be back if the price is right.'

In contrast, few Airbnb reviews mentioned the price (this may be because the prices of Airbnb accommodations are relatively lower than those of hotels). At least, this concept is not shown in the table of the top 30 concepts in Airbnb reviews. Although Cheng and Jin(2019b) propose

that Airbnb users do not care more about value, competitive prices and physical space in accommodation(Dolnicar, 2019)are traditional motives for selecting P2P accommodation instead of hotels (Quinby, 2014). In addition to the advantages of Airbnb's price itself, the respondents' answers seem to reveal another perspective: 'I can't be so unreasonable after meeting my host...even after a period of time. It's his/her own house, and it doesn't seem appropriate to comment on whether someone else's private property is worth a certain amount.'

Recommendation

Recommendation of a place in reviews was an outcome of a positive experience. Importantly, while 'recommend' appeared as a theme(Cheng & Jin, 2019b)It was not regarded as an attribute, but the reference to 'recommend' was an outcome of the other themes and concepts. Factors that affect consumers' recommendations for hotels have been extensively explored (Gao et al., 2022), and these factors are also fully reflected in the excavated concepts.

Table 25 Top 10 Concepts about 'Recommend' in Airbnb and Traditional Hotels

Traditional Hotels		Airbnb	
Concept	Likelihood	Concept	Likelihood
room	67%	friendly	35%
staff	45%	place	26%
location	33%	host	23%
walk	20%	helpful	15%
clean	20%	local	13%
breakfast	20%	family	13%
night	17%	trip	12%
coffee	17%	food	12%
restaurant	17%	people	11%
friendly	17%	experience	10%

As mentioned above, 'recommendation' is the result obtained by consumers after considering a variety of factors. When comparing the two service types, many factors may guide consumers to take recommendation-related actions in future reviews, and these factors are obviously different in traditional hotels and Airbnb. From the data results of traditional hotels, it is evident that consumers still prioritise the ability of products or services to provide functionality in the experience process (that is, value for money and quality). Belarmino et al. (2019) found that hotel guests value room amenities and food and beverage more. Therefore, most comments will focus on reviewing these related contents before arriving at a decision to 'recommend' or 'not recommend,' making their actions appear reasonable. The typical hotel reviews in Table 26 below visually demonstrate these points:

Table 26 Review of Airbnb and Traditional Hotels about Recommendations

Airbnb		Traditional hotel	
Keywords	Review	Keywords	Review
Experience; Host; Communication; Location; Amenities; Check-in/out	<i>"Excellent stay all-around! Communication with Firas was absolutely timely from beginning to end. Check-in was a breeze. The flat is incredibly close to lots of walkable destinations and within a few minutes walking to the Underground which will take you anywhere in London you'd ever want to visit. The flat is in a very classic building, but updated with all of the modern amenities. Super clean</i>	Amenities; Breakfast; Check-in/out	<i>"I definitely recommend staying here! They even provide a mini-fridge with complimentary water, juice, and soda. I only woke up in time for breakfast twice but it was a decent spread of eggs, toast, pastries, and more. Checking in and checking out was very fast!"</i>

apartment, with plenty of hot water, and a great view of the Kensington area. Awesome experience with Firas, highly recommended!"

Host	<i>"Nobuko is the kindest host customer we could ever have, very service; concerned of all details. Staff Apartment Absolutely recommended."</i>	<i>"I highly recommend this hotel to everyone...and best customer service hotel that I've been to... thanks from bottom of my heart to all the staff especially Jason and Ms Kathleen... everything excellent.. perfect stay"</i>
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Location	<i>".....The flat is situated on a quiet street and walking distance to a metro. It is close to check out touristy attractions and you can walk around the neighbourhood to get dinner with locals. Our host is brilliant! Super communicators, gave countless recommendations when asked. Thanks!!"</i>	<i>Service; Location; Comfortable stay</i>	<i>"...we are very pleased to recommend this hotel for a comfortable stay in Paris. There was always a smile and a cheery bonjour every morning and anytime we came in and out of the hotel. It is also very well located and there is a number of very fine restaurants in the area. Highly recommend Hotel Joyce if you visit Paris."</i>
Host			
Communication	<i>Absolutely recommended ! "</i>		

And from the reviews for Airbnb in Table 26 can find that customers' experiences with Airbnb and hotels share some common attributes(Cheng & Jin, 2019). This is because Airbnb users tend to use the criteria of traditional hotels to evaluate their Airbnb experience, like the facilities, location, and clean, as the quote below illustrates:

"...The apartment was as clean and carefully appointed as any five-star hotel that I've stayed at over the years."

Still, it appears that there are more factors influencing whether an Airbnb consumer will recommend a listing they've stayed in. By comparing the co-occurrence of words with the term 'recommendation' in the Airbnb dataset, experiences, hosts, and local areas show a very high frequency. Returning to the concepts in Table 9, we find that the concept related to 'recommendation' in Airbnb is different from that in the traditional hotel context, where consumers pay more attention to the quality of the accommodation environment and service. Some positively charged adjectives ('friendly', 'helpful') and the concept 'host' have a likelihood value of 23%, indicating that 23% of the text segments with the term 'host' contain 'recommend'. Secondly, consumers staying in hotels or Airbnb do not necessarily travel for leisure; however, some concepts more characteristic of travellers appear in Airbnb reviews, such as 'trip', 'family', and 'experience'. In view of this, this study suggests that Airbnb consumers pay more attention to the overall travel experience and do not attribute all positive or negative experiences solely to the accommodation environment. Additionally, while the roles of hosts and hotel staff in accommodation services may seem similar, they exhibit some dramatic differences. The Airbnb experience can be less predictable and more flexible for the guest than hotel operations and services, which are more standardised, leading to more surprising experiences. Therefore, hosts play a more important role than hotel staff in bringing about unique experiences.

Today's travellers increasingly demand experience-oriented opportunities that involve meaningful interactions with local people and local culture (Tussyadiah and Pesonen, 2016).

Staying at an Airbnb is considered a novelty-seeking act. Through guest-host interaction, consumers tend to pursue emotional pleasure and enjoy benefits. In the context of Airbnb, this pleasure is manifested through the consumer's interaction with the host or the activities proposed or facilitated by the host (Lee et al., 2017). In comparison to hotel consumers, Airbnb consumers regard the place of stay as a venue to seek experiences to a higher degree, not just a place to sleep. They will spend more time enjoying things in the room more immersively (Carrington, 2016). Through this host-guest interaction and community-based experience, it is easier for consumers to satisfy their needs for uniqueness, enjoyment, and experiencing something different and memorable (Dedeoglu et al., 2018).

Section Summary

While Airbnb and traditional hotel services differ significantly in customer expectations, they also share some similarities. Airbnb guests prioritise unique experiences and personal interactions, focusing on the overall quality of their stay rather than just price. Traditional hotel guests, on the other hand, tend to emphasise practical aspects like price, service quality, and amenities. However, both groups of customers show a common interest in factors such as location and cleanliness, indicating overlapping priorities in these areas. This highlights that despite their differences, both service types cater to some fundamental customer needs in the hospitality industry.

Emotional Dimension of Customer Engagement

This section mentions the emotional dimension of customer engagement in the hospitality industry, comparing Airbnb's approach to traditional hotel experiences through online reviews. It focuses on how Airbnb's unique, home-like environment creates stronger emotional

connections with guests, unlike hotels which, despite their professionalism and efficiency, often lack a personal touch. This leads to a more transactional guest relationship in hotels, in contrast to the deeper emotional bonds formed in Airbnb settings.

Emotional Dimension in Airbnb and Traditional Hotel Online Review

Among the three dimensions of engagement, the emotional dimension is defined as a state of emotional activity caused by the engagement object. Heath (2007) describes engagement as a subconscious emotional construct, where “emotion” refers to any stimulation of feelings. According to Hollebeek et al. (2014c) The affective dimension of engagement can also be expressed as consumer “attachment,” which includes positive feelings toward a specific brand during a specific consumer-brand interaction. Researchers emphasise that different dimensions of consumer engagement are interrelated. Brodie et al. (2013) identified that emotional engagement may increase the intensity level of other dimensions, such as cognitive and behavioural engagement. Heath (2009) also shows that strong brands may be built via emotional creativity rather than using only rational messages. In this research, emotional engagement refers to the affective connection customers develop with a brand, service, or product. In the context of Airbnb and hotels, emotional engagement manifests through feelings of attachment, pleasure, and satisfaction derived from their stay. Emotional engagement typically emerges when customers feel their expectations have been exceeded or when the experience triggers positive emotional responses such as joy, comfort, or belonging (Hollebeek & Chen, 2014c). This dimension is distinct from cognitive engagement as it involves more subconscious and affective responses, rather than deliberate mental processing (Linda Hollebeek, 2011).

Through the data results, it is clear that customers of different accommodation types express emotions when evaluating their experiences in reviews. Airbnb customers, in particular, seem to exhibit more emotional engagement compared to traditional hotel customers. In this

research, some of the key concepts that most significantly drive consumer sentiment are “feeling like home,” “pet-friendly,” “Name,” “gratitude,” and “reciprocity,” which will be elaborated as follows.

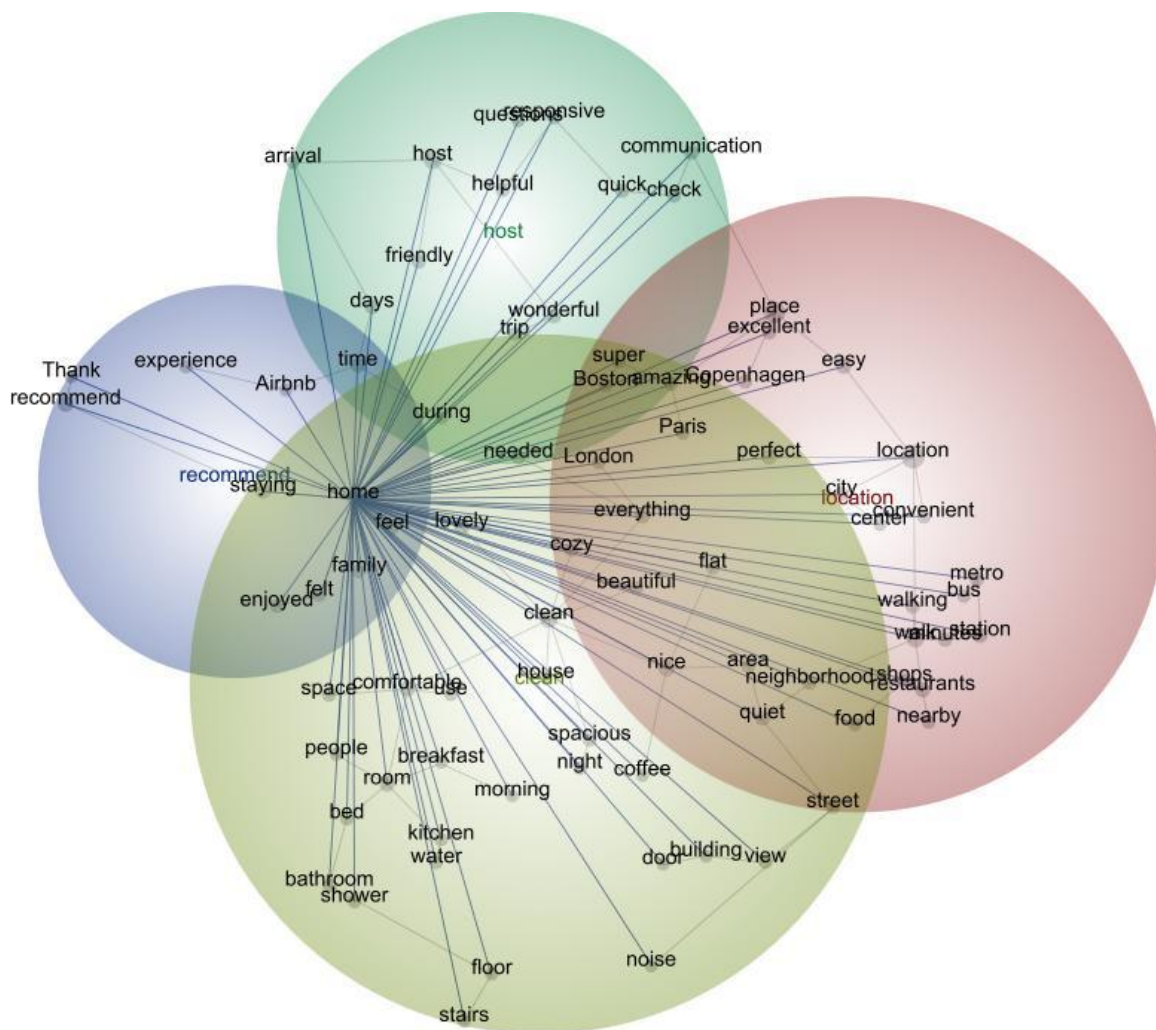
Among those concepts, “feeling like home,” is a deeply emotional concept that triggers feelings of comfort, belonging, and safety. When guests feel at home, it suggests that they have formed an emotional attachment to the space, feeling relaxed and secure (Zorfas and Leemon, 2016). This sense of “home” creates an affective connection, making customers feel cared for, leading to greater satisfaction and emotional loyalty. As for “pet-friendly” For many customers, especially those who travel with pets, a “pet-friendly” environment creates a sense of inclusivity and care, showing that their needs are being considered beyond the basics (Meng et al., 2024; Ashley, Stephanie M. Noble, et al., 2011). This evokes positive emotions such as relief, joy, and attachment, as they associate the service or accommodation with warmth and understanding toward their lifestyle. “Name” refers to personalised recognition of a guest (e.g., remembering their name or preferences), which represents a powerful form of emotional engagement (Ashley et al., 2011b). Being recognised by name creates a sense of personal connection and respect, triggering feelings of belonging and importance. This personalisation helps establish a deeper emotional bond with the service. “Gratitude” reflects an emotional exchange where guests feel appreciated by the service provider, often reciprocating with positive reviews, recommendations, or loyalty. Gratitude can be triggered by thoughtful gestures, personalised services, or even small acts of kindness that exceed expectations (Hsiao et al., 2023). The feeling of being valued contributes to emotional engagement by fostering positive emotional responses such as appreciation and attachment. Reciprocity, especially in a hospitality context, is linked to the social exchange where guests feel compelled to return positive gestures, either through favourable reviews or continued loyalty. This exchange taps into the emotional domain, as guests respond emotionally to perceived goodwill from hosts or service providers. The mutual give-and-take fosters trust and emotional bonding, which are critical to emotional engagement (Andersen and Kumar, 2006).

Feeling Like Home

As Airbnb describes itself, it is 'a trusted community marketplace for people to list, discover, and book unique accommodations around the world.' Empirical researchers have provided recent evidence emphasising the significance of a home to individuals, identifying features that distinguish a 'home' from merely 'a place in which one resides.' These features include warmth and ambience (Graham et al., 2015), surrounding community (Smith, 1994), self-expression, and personal identity (Sirgy et al., 2005). In addition to being meaningful for residents, a home environment may also hold psychological significance for travellers. Peer-to-peer accommodation providers, such as those listed on the Airbnb platform, have experienced rapid growth in recent years, driven by continued consumer demand for stays in homes rather than traditional hotels (Guttentag & Smith, 2017; Hajibaba & Dolnicar, 2017). For instance, compared to typical hotel offerings, travellers may prefer staying in a home for its functional space (e.g., kitchen, dining facilities, a variety of furnishings, etc.), community atmosphere (ability to accommodate groups of family or friends, interaction with hosts and neighbours, etc.) (Mody et al., 2017), and interior design experience (e.g., decoration and ambience) (Mody et al., 2019). The results from data analysis could further support this idea. The concept of 'home' frequently appears between the themes of 'clean' (mostly evaluating the accommodation environment and facilities) and 'host.' This suggests that the overall style, interior decoration, and facilities of Airbnb accommodations, as well as interpersonal communication and interaction with the host, contribute to customers feeling at home. In addition, the sub-concepts identified in the analysis, such as "clean" and "interior design," may not seem directly connected to "feeling at home", but they play a crucial role in creating that emotional state (Lugosi, 2003). A clean environment contributes to a sense of comfort and safety, both of which are foundational to feeling at ease in a space. Guests often associate cleanliness with care and hospitality, which fosters emotional comfort and satisfaction (Magnini and Zehrer, 2020). In a sense, cleanliness can act as an emotional signal that reassures guests, allowing them to feel more at home in the space. The aesthetics of a space, including its interior design, can influence how "home-like" it feels to a guest (Petermans and Pohlmeier,

2014). Thoughtfully designed spaces evoke feelings of warmth, personalisation, and care, which contribute to a sense of belonging. Guests may feel emotionally connected to the space because it reflects aspects of their personal taste or provides an inviting atmosphere(Mallett, 2004), which is key to feeling "at home."

Figure 3 Themes Related to 'Home' in Airbnb Reviews



The emotional concept most frequently mentioned by Airbnb customers in reviews is 'home.' Many guests expressed feeling 'lovely,' 'cosy,' and 'comfortable' in their reviews, using a plethora of warm and positive adjectives, as detailed in Table 27.

Table 27 Review content about 'feel like home' in Airbnb Context

Concept adjective	of	an	likelihood	Quotes
lovely			12%	"This is a lovely, warm home. Every detail is taken care of, and Elena could not be more attentive."
wonderful			11%	"We had a wonderful stay at Gerard and Marie's home. Accommodation is as described."
cozy			11%	"Very cosy and the decorations really make it feel like a home."
comfortable			11%	"It was a very comfortable and well-equipped home. Wine and snacks were very thoughtful."

An intriguing observation in Airbnb reviews is that a percentage of customers refer to the accommodation as 'home,' opting for this term over more neutral words like 'apartment' or 'house.' Such reviews are not uncommon in number; for instance:

"Home from home; we felt like true Parisians for a few days..."

"The street was quiet which meant after a day of wondering we could return home and rest peacefully."

The prevalence of such reviews can be attributed to the fact that Airbnb hosts typically list their properties on the platform for short-term rentals. Many of these properties are situated in residential communities, fostering a sense of connection with the local area, particularly for foreign travellers. Simultaneously, these personally owned apartments or houses often feature amenities that resemble those of private residences, differing from those offered by commercial hotels. One of the most distinctive features is the inclusion of a kitchen, allowing guests to prepare their own meals. While some serviced apartments may offer similar facilities, subtle differences persist in personal perception, as confirmed by one of the interviewees.

The concept of 'home' is not commonly associated with traditional hotels. However, referring back to Table 11, the frequently used top-ranked adjective 'lovely' in the context of Airbnb is also found in reviews by hotel consumers. Nevertheless, these hotel-related reviews tend to focus on facilities and services, providing a more comprehensive perspective, as illustrated in the following reviews:

“This lovely, individual hotel was in a very convenient location minutes from the central train station...We had two single rooms on the 2nd floor of building two, which were, of course, small, but well designed and comfortable, so you didn't feel cramped in as an afterthought or cramped.”

This aligns with the conclusion proposed by Meijerink and Schoenmakers (2020) that customers' quality perceptions of hotels generally stem from their assessments of hotel room quality and staff quality (Jeong and Jang, 2011). When comparing the different connotations of the term 'lovely,' Airbnb users appear to exhibit more emotional sentiments, while in hotel reviews, though not entirely dismissing the emotional connection between guests and hotels, 'lovely' tends to be a commonplace adjective. By dissecting the components related to 'lovely' (refer to Table 28), this study found that, in comparison to Airbnb, 'lovely' is more likely to depict consumers' narratives of their stay, local experiences, and interactions with the host. In hotel reviews, 'lovely' is predominantly used to describe the location, room decor, and restaurant dishes, and is seldom (though not absent) found in depictions of staff behaviour or staff interactions with consumers. Furthermore, key concepts like 'home' do not appear in hotel reviews.

Table 28 Top 10 Concepts Related to 'lovely' in Airbnb and Traditional Hotels

Airbnb		Traditional Hotels	
Concept	Likelihood	Concept	Likelihood
home	14%	view	11%

morning	12%	pool	10%
neighbourhood	12%	everything	10%
host	12%	tea	9%
house	11%	bar	9%
experience	11%	modern	9%
kitchen	10%	bed	8%
family	10%	bathroom	8%
people	10%	staff	8%
communication	9%	area	8%

The reason for this difference may stem from Airbnb's nature, which enables hosts to rent out their accommodations to guests through the company's platform. Airbnb accommodation offers guests the prospect of staying in a local home, a more functional environment (e.g., kitchens, laundry), residential neighbourhood advantages, and potential local host interactions (Mody et al., 2017; Guttentag, 2019). The above typical services and experiences unique to Airbnb accommodation remind consumers of the difference between Airbnb and traditional hotel accommodation all the time. Not only the differences in listing location and in-room facilities, but also the interaction between consumers and Airbnb hosts may also be an important factor in the feeling. After breaking down the key concepts of the theme and positioning them in certain reviews, it was found that Airbnb customers shared a lot of interactive stories with the hosts. Some customers wrote that the host helped his sick family members contact local doctors and provided additional suggestions; some consumers mentioned that the host gave them a lot of local souvenirs when they left, and considered whether they were easy to carry, which moved them very much.

This phenomenon embodies hospitality like no other; hospitality has been viewed as customer care within an economic exchange framework (Lovelock, 1995), implying a prioritisation of customer needs and satisfaction often at the expense of the service provider. Canziani and Nemati (2021) pointed when considered in the context of the sharing economy, this is a

challenge to this traditional notion of hospitality since hosts can negotiate and dictate the extent of sharing of their personal space, background and information and time spent interacting with guests. In commercial accommodation and hospitality provision, there are often well-established rules and standards on host-guest relationship management. Sharing as a concept moves away from traditional forms in commercial accommodation and hospitality (Canziani & Nemati, 2021). In this kind of relationship, individuals not only take care of each other needs but also have a genuine concern for each other's well-being(Canziani & Nemati, 2021). Therefore, online reviews written by Airbnb customers may be a reflection and feedback on this relationship.

Pet Friendly

".....Their lovely dog welcomed us every time we returned home to the Airbnb (and being dog lovers, that definitely was an added bonus)."

Here's a rather interesting Airbnb review that mentions a rare factor - pets. 'Pets' refer to the animals in the host's home, as guests typically rate the friendliness of the animals as a reflection of the host's hospitality. However, unfriendly animals can also negatively affect the guest's overall experience. Some comments may also mention potential security issues:

"We were shocked by the host's dog at first, but this dog is very friendly"

Currently, pet owners increasingly see themselves as pet parents, especially childless adults or empty nesters who can enjoy caring responsibilities when adopting a pet (Owens and Grauerholz, 2019). During the adoption process, pet owners' attitudes towards their pets will resemble those of human family members, creating specific service expectations(Owens & Grauerholz, 2019). Such reviews frequently appear in the context of Airbnb. It is important to note that the concept of animals is one of the differences between Airbnb and a hotel stay, as most hotels do not allow guests to keep animals inside their rooms. Unlike the host's pet dog in this review, some Airbnb consumers choose to travel with their pets, making the pet's check-

in situation a matter of great attention. In Airbnb reviews, searching keywords such as "dog" and "cat" (two relatively common household pets) and "pet" will yield about 15-20 related pieces of content, with most being positive comments, such as:

"Thank you very much, David! He allowed me to stay with my dog. When I checked in, he praised my Daisy (dog) for being cute, and he helped me prepare a small bowl and some dog food in advance!"

What's even more interesting is that concepts and keywords related to pet-friendliness are often associated with concepts such as friendliness and enthusiasm. Some consumers believe that the host's agreement to allow their pets to stay demonstrates a high level of empathy and will further enhance their trust and goodwill towards the host. This also appears to be Airbnb's potential competitive advantage—an interviewee recalled his own experience:

"When I graduated, I needed to bring my pet back to my home country, and I needed to stay overnight in London before I took off, so I asked a lot of hotels, and it was frustrating that none of the hotels allowed me to take my pet with me. In the end, I found an apartment on Airbnb and the host readily agreed and asked if I needed help. This made me believe she must be a nice person!"

Some consumers whose first intention is a traditional hotel will turn to Airbnb because of the rejection of the hotel. There may be many such examples. Research by Chen et al. (2014) pointed out that pet owners often prioritise the needs of their pets over their own and are therefore limited by the places their pets can visit and the services they can use.

In the online reviews of traditional hotels, not a single review mentions concepts or keywords related to pets or any family pets. Due to the size of the hotel and the standardised facility and service design, service providers must strike a balance in accommodating guests with and without pets. Especially with the COVID-19 pandemic, guests are paying more attention to

hygiene measures in hotels(Chan et al., 2021). Consumers who choose hotels are more diverse than Airbnb (which also includes the purpose of their travel, such as business travel), making it more difficult not to compromise the health and safety of all stakeholders. Among hotel groups that have declared pet-friendly, pet restrictions are typically means (including animal characteristics such as weight restrictions, types of pets, number of pets, and prohibited hotel public areas). The limited number of pet-friendly brands, expensive costs, and strict pet policies deter some pet-carrying guests. In contrast, Airbnb hosts have a higher right to decide on their own houses, and the communication and negotiation between the host and the guest show more flexibility.

It may be that Airbnb experiences with family pets are statistically insignificant, but associated with high consumer engagement and satisfaction.

During this process, there will be more interaction and communication between the host and the guest and a deeper trust relationship and empathy will be generated. These results will eventually be reflected in the impact on the final online reviews:

"It's really amazing, me and my cat love it here, If I have the chance, I will definitely go back to Lily's apartment!"

The Role of Personalised Recognition in Enhancing Guest Experience

In the context of the research personalised recognition refers to the act of acknowledging and responding to customers on an individual level, particularly by recognising personal details such as their name, preferences, or specific needs. This form of recognition goes beyond standardised interactions, as it demonstrates a deeper understanding and attention to the individual customer(Dwivedi), making them feel uniquely valued. Here, specifically, name the service providers identified in online reviews in the analysis. In hospitality, personalised

recognition plays a significant role in fostering emotional connections, as it signals to the guest that their unique identity and needs are being noticed and respected (Lalicic, 2018). This often leads to increased customer satisfaction, loyalty, and a sense of belonging, particularly in environments like Airbnb or hotels where guests expect a comfortable, welcoming experience. Service providers can create a more intimate and emotionally engaging atmosphere by addressing customers by their names or anticipating their preferences.

When consumers experience the emotional impact of home and authenticity, another clue in their online reviews reflects the emotional difference. In both datasets, one of the most obvious manifestations is the different ways of mentioning service providers in reviews. In the context of a traditional hotel, various services (such as the front office, room department, and catering department) are provided through a clear and rigorous division of labour. Employees in each department have their own job titles. In reviews, the most frequently used term is 'staff,' forming a theme. This theme can be further split into the classification and service positions of 'staff' (such as front desk, doorman, restaurant, etc.) and the provided service content (check-in/out, breakfast, information, reservation, etc.). Additionally, there are some vocabulary used to describe the service provider in the hotel, such as 'helpful' and 'friendly.' For example, the following comment essentially covers all these elements:

“Each staff member from the bellman to the front desk worker, was very friendly; always greeting us with a smile. Upon entering you feel the luxury, chandeliers and beautiful decor.”

In the context of Airbnb, in the cognition of consumers will intuitively distinguish between the service staff in the hotel and the title of the house owner provided to them on the Airbnb platform. "I think the platform has a subtle influence on us because the word 'host' is always used on the Airbnb page to remind consumers how to address the owner of the house," said one interviewee. What's more interesting is that in more than 70% of the reviews, consumers will mention the name of the host (or the names of the host's family members) in the reviews. Such reviews are usually composed of positive content, such as:

"Val certainly goes above and beyond for her guests. She genuinely enjoys getting to know you and almost no request is too much (she made sure a gift I'd brought for a friend managed to get to them)."

When conducting a semi-structured interview, an interviewee could clearly name the host of an Airbnb apartment he had stayed in. When asked why, the interviewee recalled:

"I think there are probably three reasons for this. The first is that Airbnb will prompt me with the name of the host, which will also be displayed on the host's homepage (there is also a personal introduction of the host on the homepage). It will not be just a stranger without a name which makes me feel good; secondly, he greeted me personally, and we introduced each other very friendly; The most important thing is that this accommodation experience made me very happy... Of course, getting along with the host also benefited a lot. So I wrote a very long comment, you know, I wanted to politely express my kind thoughts, and I thought it would be more appropriate to mention the host's name."

This response is very enlightening. After highlighting the interaction with the host and their kindness, consumers also mentioned the implicit and egalitarian atmosphere created by the Airbnb platform. The relationship between the host and the guest is not just a simple transactional relationship between strangers. Compared with the scale of traditional hotels, conveying the name and personality of each service staff to guests, especially those staying for a short period, is almost impossible. While there is a small amount of content in hotel reviews that mention specific service personnel (and their names), in terms of weight, this situation cannot be compared with related reviews on Airbnb. By randomly sampling related reviews, there appears to be a common tendency for consumers to exhibit this kind of behaviour, namely: 1) High interaction or communication with the same service person. 2) The service of the service person exceeds the original scope of work, and their performance also exceeds the expectations of consumers. 3) The service personnel are senior management

personnel in the hotel. The fourth factor is more special and has an extremely negative impact, which is consumer complaints about a specific employee.

Among these three situations, the second one occurs most frequently. Consumers often remember the employee's name and mention it in the comments because of the special help of the service personnel. The third reason in the hotel context occurs in two situations. The more likely reason is that when the consumer enters the hotel, the duty managers or lobby managers will introduce themselves and send greetings to the customer. If the customer has a high-level membership in the hotel group, they may be greeted by higher-level management staff. Another possibility is often accompanied by varying degrees of negative emotions, meaning consumers have a bad experience in the hotel and make complaints. To deal with this potential negative impact, hotels often send higher-level staff to apologise and compensate consumers to show respect.

To present these four possibilities more intuitively, this study summarises some representative reviews and presents them in Table 29 as follows:

<i>Table 29 The Possible Factor Hotel Customers Mention the Service Provider's Name in the</i>				
<i>Review</i>				
situation	Description			Reviews
High-Frequency Interaction	High interaction or communication with the same service person	or	<i>"The breakfast attendants, Crisela A. and Amalia V. were very efficient and even brought our waffles to our table! Amalia is a cute girl! If she's not busy we'll have a little chat !</i>	
Extra Service	The service of the service person exceeds the original Scope of work, and its			<i>"Skilful staff and always ready to help. Special thanks to Mrs. Lada for her</i>

performance also exceeds assistance to Help me get my husband to the
the expectations of hospital”

consumers “Emily helped me find my wallet!! THANK
GOODNESS !! She even selected the
fastest courier to send it to my house... I was
on the verge of cryingggggg!!”

Management The service personnel are “Rob, the front office manager, is a very
staff senior management friendly person. He gave us free drinks while
personnel in the hotel we were waiting to check in and wished us a
happy stay in this hotel.”

“Finally, I have someone who can say
something for this tragedy! Yuki (the
manager) finally promised to give me a full
refund and a breakfast coupon.”

Complaint Complaining in the reviews “We had high hopes for our stay in this hotel
because of a bad experience but were greeted by the rudest
manager/concierge we have ever met. His
name is Michael.”

One of the interviewees highlighted a lack of substantial contact with hotel service personnel, attributing this to the standardised service prevalent in hotels. Employees are confined to specific roles, limiting their capacity to allocate additional time and attention to individual guests. The interviewee pointed out instances, such as during check-in, where the front desk receptionist's workload appears overwhelming. The pressure to manage waiting guests discourages extended interactions, resulting in a brief and essential exchange of information. The interviewee remarked, "I mean, they definitely won't introduce themselves to you." This operational structure contributes to the rarity of the first situation (High-Frequency Interaction). The price factor and the inherently professional nature of hotel services prompt consumers to

prioritize maximizing economic benefits. Particularly in traditional hotel settings, social interaction and communication, compared to the Airbnb environment, are limited, making it challenging for consumers to form lasting impressions. The constraints of the service model and the emphasis on efficiency appear to impact the depth of consumer-staff engagement in hotels.

Gratitude

An interesting concept that emerged in Airbnb reviews is 'thanks', which refers to a customer's gratitude to a host. The observation that 'thanks' is rarely used in hotel reviews but commonly appears in Airbnb reviews reflects the differences in the service dynamics and emotional engagement between the two platforms. In traditional hotels, the services provided—such as room cleaning, front desk support, and other amenities—are perceived as part of a standardized, transactional experience (Cheong and Law, 2023). Since these services are expected and viewed as part of the commercial exchange, guests may feel that there is no need to explicitly express gratitude, as they believe they are simply receiving what they paid for (Lashley, 2008).

On the other hand, Airbnb operates within a more personal and informal setting, often involving direct interactions between hosts and guests. Many Airbnb hosts provide personalized touches, such as local recommendations or tailored services, which go beyond what might be offered in a traditional hotel (Ding et al., 2023). This fosters a sense of reciprocity and emotional connection, where guests may feel a greater sense of appreciation for the effort hosts put into their stay. The expression of 'thanks' in Airbnb reviews may reflect not only gratitude for the accommodation itself but also for the personalized, human interaction that makes the experience feel more unique and tailored (Tussyadiah and Zach, 2017).

Thus, the frequent use of 'thanks' in Airbnb reviews signifies a deeper emotional engagement, as guests feel more connected to their hosts on a personal level, while the absence of 'thanks' in hotel reviews aligns with the more professional and transactional nature of hotel services. I

will delve deeper into this topic in the discussion section, exploring how these differences reflect broader trends in emotional engagement across different accommodation types.

Gratitude is a commonly felt positive emotion (Bartlett and Desteno, 2006), which is a positive moral emotion that individuals experience in response to another person's favour (Bartlett and Desteno, 2006; McCullough et al., 2004; Mccullough et al., 2002). Gratitude has an important and unique standing in the marketing literature; prior marketing research focuses on the mediating role that gratitude plays in connecting marketing practices with desired consumer responses. In a similar vein, scholars have distinguished gratitude from other positive emotions (e.g., joy, happiness, pride) in the sense that it often facilitates pro-social behaviours (McCullough et al., 2008; Bartlett and Desteno, 2006), suggesting that gratitude motivates individuals to translate their positive emotional state into diverse forms of pro-social action (Fredrickson, 2004). In this study, this prosocial behaviour is seen as consumers wanting to give some positive feedback to the service provider after receiving kindness; this feedback may be reflected in their online reviews. The factors that make consumers feel grateful can be divided into three categories(see Table 30).

Table 30 Three Categories that Make Airbnb Consumers Feel Grateful

Category	Reviews	Interview
Host's hospitality and interaction	"...Thank you for hosting us. We were very comfortable at your home which had a great location too." "...Thank you for hosting us. We were very comfortable at your home which had a great location too."	<i>"Well, my host greeted me very warmly and invited me to prepare dinner together! I had a great time during that trip, and I would like to thank him for adding a touch of colour to my experience."</i>

Additional Assistance, suggestions and gift	"...Thank you Camille for being so hospitable and working with us when we needed to extend our stay." "...couldn't believe our host prepared us some really lovely cookies and some wine, thank you!"	<i>"I don't know if you have had that experience, but I have. My host gave me a beautiful little bag after I arrived, which contained some local souvenirs! You know, the accommodation fee I paid was really It's very cheap, and she and her family prepared this for me...I really don't know what to say. All I can say is thank you! Endless thank you!"</i>
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"She was super friendly, kind, thoughtful and always ready to give me suggestions about the city, but at the same time she always respected my privacy. After work, in the evening I was always happy to go home because I knew I would have found Deborah to chat together about our day and share our opinions about everything! She is a very clever and dynamic woman and it was a pleasure for me to listen to her stories about her life and her big family."

Polite Attitude	"...Thank you, Catherine!"	<i>"I haven't met my host because I checked in by myself, but I'm very grateful that he</i>
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accepted my reservation. In fact, I have some social phobia, and many times I choose self-check-in, but I also express my gratitude politely."

The first category is to thank the host for their friendly attitude and hospitality. Also, this review in Table 14 proved that this category also includes positive communication and fast responses from hosts. Airbnb hosts' hospitality is very common in the context of Airbnb, and this is not just present in the dataset. During the interview process, 18 interviewees (26 in total) mentioned that when they arrived at the accommodation, the host would wait for them in the apartment and warmly welcome the guests, even though some listings' description pages said self-check-in. The second category has to do with the help the host actually provides to the consumer. This help may be proposed by consumers when the consumer needs additional assistance, and the host would like to agree and collaborate, such as extending the check-out time. At this point, one interviewee added that the reason she likes Airbnb is that it is more flexible and user-friendly. When you ask if you can make changes, the host will usually agree. Meanwhile, there is also some help reflected in some items or suggestions offered by the host. such as welcome packages and some advice for being a local. On the one hand, gifts will bring extra surprises to the guests, because subconsciously, consumers think that the host does not need to do this for them; and suggestions from "locals" seem to bring a better experience. This was reflected in the content of some interviews, for example:

"He didn't have to come and meet me at the station, but he did – that really stuck with me"

It can help consumers as tourists better integrate into the local area. Three interviewees gave very similar answers from another perspective. They believed that whether it was a gift or a personal suggestion, it had a strong personal touch and showed many characteristics of the host - culture, hobbies, taste, etc. This makes them feel fresh. Combining these two aspects,

they believe that everything the host does helps them have a better experience. The third category does not seem to have too deep meaning; it is just that consumers express their gratitude to the host. This kind of thanks does not describe their experiences and reasons too much. The author guesses that these consumers just wrote this review politely. Some consumers also specifically mentioned the name of the host.

This topic was rare in hotel reviews, but not none. Some rare thank-related concepts mainly revolve around the extra service or help that the hotel provides to consumers. For example, the hotel helped the consumer decorate the room on the consumer's birthday, such as the following comment:

"...they decorated my room with happy birthday, thank you."

Another consumer said that he lost his laptop in the hotel, and the hotel staff helped to find it and returned the laptop to the consumer by courier. This consumer expressed his gratitude like this:

"...Brian Jones (employee) saved the day. He flagged down FedEx at 715PM and overnighted the computer back to me! Thank you to everyone at the hotel, specifically you Brian. You called my worst fears and really bailed me out on additional travels."

Guests of both Airbnb and traditional hotels need to pay for accommodation services, but the guests of traditional hotels took all the services and hospitality they received for granted, while guests who chose Airbnb were more polite in their reviews as if they were not paying to rent a place to stay, but visiting someone's home; the relationship between the two parties was equal.

Reciprocity

The extant literature has revealed that gratitude plays a role as an essentially emotional component underpinning a reciprocal relationship (Bartlett and Desteno, 2006). As gratitude

arouses the cognitive awareness of reciprocity norm (i.e. one should repay another person who has provided help). In the online reputation literature, reciprocity refers to strategic reviewing behaviour where positive (negative) feedback from one party is likely to be “reciprocated” with positive (negative) feedback from the other party (Dellarocas and Wood, 2008).

In comparing the online reviews of Airbnb and traditional hotels, the online reviews of Airbnb show a more positive trend in which the more active topics are related to host, interaction, experience and gratitude. Among them, gratitude is the positive emotion one feels when one person has intentionally given, or attempted to give, one something of value (McCullough et al., 2002). According to Emmons (2004), gratitude is a positive emotional response to receiving a benefit that will trigger the psychological impulse to restore social balance through reciprocal actions. GOULDNER (1960) called this response the norm of reciprocity; that is, an action produces a similarly valuable reward in order to restore a shared sense of balance. In the Airbnb context, generally, customers receive benefits such as financial savings and engagement in sustainable consumption. Customers who receive benefits from hosts tend to feel obligated to return the favour.

The basic features (facilities, services, etc.) that Airbnb offers are very similar to hotels, and what people want from a stay is roughly the same between the two, but in online reviews of traditional hotels, there are very few comments related to gratitude. This phenomenon was answered through interviews. On the one hand, it is related to the price. The price of Airbnb is generally lower than that of traditional hotels. One interviewee said, ‘I feel that I have picked up a great deal’, so this interviewee will be extra lenient when writing the online reviews and try to give back to the host. On the other hand, it is quite interesting what lies in the blind spots of consumers’ knowledge of services. More than one interviewee said that they felt embarrassed to accept hospitality while living in a stranger’s home (especially since the host was very warm-hearted and offered a lot of help), so they tried to do some good things to help the host. From this point, there seems a much stronger emotional connection between guests

and hosts because the host is renting out their own home and may be living in the same house or flat at the same time. They were surprised, however, when they were reminded in the interview that such hospitality counted as a service. For example:

'Is this true? I always thought we were in an equal relationship, but I've received too much kindness in the process...'

Here, this research infers that the sharing economy is qualitatively different from the mainstream economy - in this case, this is exemplified by consumers not perceiving themselves as consumers and not perceiving the seller of services as commercial agents. This kind of feeling also leads to the fact that consumers will not place too many demands on service personnel, like in traditional hotels, nor will they be too demanding on the efficiency and quality of Airbnb hosts. For example:

"I'm already staying at someone else's house and it feels a lot like being a guest at a friend's house I just met and I can't be too harsh."

This feeling confuses consumers' perception of the definition of service. Most consumers believe that it is a friendly way of hospitality. For example, one respondent asked: "Is this service? I don't think so. I think we are just getting along and communicating normally. The host even gave me something." Compared with Airbnb, which seems to be a very vague service (for example, the listing page mentions that breakfast is provided, but it does not promise an exact time and standard menu like a hotel), traditional hotels show their functions and service types to consumers in an up-front way. Consumers mentioned, 'I think these are included in the bill I pay,' so they take the service for granted and do not generate a more emotional response to the exceptional service.

The interpersonal relationship between the customer and the host develops over time, leading them to different levels of reciprocal actions (e.g. exchanging information, emotions, and

activities). The reciprocity of interactive exchanges manifests in multiple stages. This exposure to self-relevant information triggers mutual interactions between individuals and develops interpersonal relationships between them. According to the interview results, the interpersonal relationship will affect consumers' perception of services and the direction of online reviews. For example:

"I live with the host, we chat almost every day, I feel like we are friends...so when she finally told me to give her a good review, I agreed, why not? Just hide some small blemish."

When comparing the online reviews of Airbnb with traditional hotels, the content related to human interaction and communication between guests and hosts far exceeds the number of online reviews of traditional hotels. This seems to have led consumers to write more explicit online reviews, such as the following:

"I will always tell the truth because I think online reviews are important to consumers, and if I fall into a pit, I will try to put up a sign to warn others. I don't want others to be scammed!"

However, This does not mean that similar situations are lacking in the hotel context. A sense of debt that occurs when service providers in a hotel offer consumers additional services or assistance. This results in consumers experiencing particular emotions, often surprise, as shown in the following review:

'They decorated my room and gave me some presents for my birthday, which was cool...a surprise, it wasn't part of their job, but they did, and my way of giving back is by recommending this hotel to my friends and [writing] them a long online review, you know, I'm not usually in the habit of doing that!'

It surely boosts customer satisfaction, but it still feels more transactional than relational. The hotel put on a good show, and that was rewarded by a great customer review. But it feels like

it is more the service than the inter-relationship between the staff and the customer that is important.

Regarding the need to incorporate efforts to stabilise exchanges, Becker (1986) extended Gouldner's (1960) definition of reciprocity to include the need to exchange suitably and proportionally, to resist evil and do no evil in return, and to make reparation for any harm done. This normally happens more in the hotel context, especially when dealing with consumer complaints. Hotel staff will propose a very clear solution to alleviate consumer dissatisfaction and the subsequent negative impact on the hotel and the brand. From the summary of the interviews, these exchange conditions may include reduced or exempted room rates, upgraded room types, and gifts or vouchers. This economically oriented exchange is indeed effective. One interviewee mentioned:

'I'm very angry, this room is so humid, the front desk and housekeeping staff didn't make any effort to help me with my request...I wrote a very bad online review at first, but they contacted me to say they would offer me a full refund and some vouchers for the same hotel group and just asked me to revise the review, and they sent a serious apology...so I compromised and it looked like I had nothing to lose.'

Therefore, this study proves that reciprocity exists in the service context, but when comparing Airbnb and traditional hotels, the concept has different manifestations. Regarding Airbnb, reciprocity is primarily reflected in the sense of gratitude and debt arising from interactions between people and the stimulating effect of emotion on behaviour, whereas in traditional hotels, reciprocity is more related to economic benefits.

Proserpio et al. (2018) show that bilateral reputation systems, which allow buyers and sellers to review each other, are more responsive to reciprocity than unilateral reputation systems. Ratings on Airbnb were studied by Zervas et al. (Zervas, Proserpio and Byers, 2021b), who found that ratings on the bilateral rating system were significantly higher than ratings of the

same accommodation on TripAdvisor, which uses a unilateral rating system in which guests rate the accommodation, but hosts do not rate the guests. Bilateral reputation systems generate trust among strangers and informally regulate their behaviour. However, at the same time, consumers become apprehensive because bilateral reputation systems play a role in the relationship between the two parties, and a negative evaluation made by the host will affect the consumer's follow-up bookings on the Airbnb platform and the impression of other hosts on consumers. For example:

'Airbnb is a very useful platform, but I have always been worried that I will dissatisfy the host because of a bad place...If the host writes a bad review for me, will other hosts not accept my reservation in the future?'

Another interviewee said that even though he had already paid the cleaning fee, he would still clean the room as much as possible before leaving and even leave a thank-you card to leave a good impression on the host.

This kind of bilateral reputation system will give consumers cause for concern. Even if their experience is not very good, they will try their best to leave some positive comments in their reviews. Interestingly, almost all reviews are either very positive or reflect an extremely bad experience, with customers tending to avoid writing about moderate experiences. But in the context of Airbnb, customers leave online reviews almost every time – mostly very positive – much more frequently than in traditional hotels.

Throughout the findings, it becomes evident that expressions of gratitude—particularly in the form of “thanks”—are significantly more prevalent in Airbnb reviews than in hotel reviews. This is a critical point because it highlights the influence of reciprocity in shaping customer engagement in the sharing economy.

In the context of Airbnb, hosts may offer unique touches, like personalised recommendations or accommodations tailored to specific guest preferences. This personalised service fosters a sense of reciprocity on the part of the guests, where they feel compelled to express gratitude in their reviews as a way of acknowledging the extra effort made by the host. This reciprocal dynamic is a hallmark of the sharing economy, where value is co-created not just through the exchange of goods or services, but through personal, community-driven relationships(Nadeem et al., 2020b). In contrast, in the traditional service economy, exemplified by hotels, the relationship between service provider and guest is more formalised and transactional(Grönroos, 2006b). Hotel services, such as housekeeping or front desk assistance, are generally viewed as part of the paid experience. As a result, guests may feel less need to express gratitude for these services, seeing them as standard and expected parts of their stay. The absence of personalised interaction limits the potential for reciprocity, and thus the emotional connection between the guest and the service provider is weaker.

By integrating reciprocity into this analysis, it becomes clear that the emotional engagement fostered in the sharing economy—through gestures of gratitude—goes beyond the expectations of the nature of commercial transactions. Instead, it reflects a mutual exchange where both guest and host contribute to the overall experience. This deepens customer satisfaction and builds lasting relationships, which is a distinctive feature of the sharing economy compared to the more impersonal dynamics of the traditional service economy. These findings reinforce the idea that reciprocity is a core driver of emotional engagement in the sharing economy, where gratitude is not merely an expression of satisfaction but part of a broader exchange that strengthens the connection between participants. This is contrasted with the more limited role of emotional engagement in traditional hotels, where services are standardised, and personal interaction is reduced.

To further strengthen these insights, this research will continue to draw explicit connections between gratitude, reciprocity, and the service models (sharing vs. traditional) throughout the findings section. This approach will underscore how the emotional dynamics in the sharing

economy contribute to higher levels of customer satisfaction and engagement compared to traditional hotel experiences.

Section Summary

This section reveals a deeper understanding of how emotional factors, such as a sense of belonging and personalization, influence customer engagement differently in Airbnb and hotel settings. It suggests that Airbnb's model, which often includes unique, personalized touches, elicits stronger emotional responses, like joy or a sense of gratitude. This emotional resonance is reflected in customer reviews, which tend to be more detailed and emotionally expressive for Airbnb stays. The study also touches on the concept of 'emotional contagion', where the positive emotions of hosts can influence guests, further enhancing their experience which leads to a higher level of reciprocity between guests and hosts. This contrasts with the more transactional, less emotionally involved interactions in hotels.

Behavioural Dimension of Customer Engagement

This section focuses on the behavioural interactions between consumers and service providers in two service types. It emphasizes the role of communication as a key element of interaction. It highlights differences in interaction styles, and the analysis also explores the impact of these interaction styles on customer perceptions and experiences.

Behavioural Dimension in Airbnb and Traditional Hotel Online Review

According to Hollebeek et al. (2014a), the behavioural dimension of customer engagement (CE) refers to the effort and energy that consumers invest in interactions, highlighting a shift toward consumers as active participants in the creation of services. This proactive involvement is necessary for successful service encounters, where both service providers and customers

take initiative (Guo et al., 2016). Service encounters are not solely dependent on employees but also on how customers act during these processes, as their behaviour significantly impacts service outcomes (Dong and Sivakumar, 2017; BITNER, 1992). This behavioural dimension extends beyond mere consumption and manifests through various interactions, such as leaving reviews, providing feedback, or communicating with service providers—both online and offline.

In the context of Airbnb and traditional hotels, behavioural engagement takes different forms. Airbnb guests often engage more actively, due to the personalised nature of their experiences and the more intimate interactions with hosts. This might include sharing experiences, giving suggestions, or contributing to the overall service experience. In contrast, interactions in hotels tend to be more standardised, and while guests can also engage through feedback, the interaction is often more formal and transactional.

This rising trend of consumer engagement aligns with a broader shift from goods-dominant logic (GDL) to service-dominant logic (SDL) (Brodie, Saren, et al., 2011b; Scholl-Grissemann & Stokburger-Sauer, 2012; SVargo & Lusch, 2004a), and further developed into customer-dominant logic (CDL) (Heinonen et al., 2010). GDL focuses on tangible products and discrete transactions, whereas SDL emphasises intangible relationships and the co-creation of value between providers and consumers. CDL, however, shifts the perspective further, placing the customer at the centre of value creation, suggesting that service is embedded in the customer's life and that their actions and engagement are key to shaping the service outcome (Heinonen et al., 2010). On platforms like Airbnb, this is especially apparent as guests often customise their interactions based on personal preferences, making their actions just as influential as the provider's efforts.

In this research, the behavioural dimension of CE is understood through interactive, co-creative consumer experiences within specific service relationships, such as hotels or Airbnb. When both consumers and providers engage actively—whether through communication or

other relational activities—more positive outcomes are likely to result (Runhaar et al., 2013; Jang et al., 2004). Service providers who take the initiative in shaping service offerings and fostering communication can better meet customer needs and enhance the overall experience (Jaaskelainen and Heikkila, 2019; Field et al., 2018). The importance of behavioural engagement is also closely linked to S-D logic and CDL, where both service providers and customers contribute to the final service outcome. Customer participation and feedback are integral to this co-creative process, resulting in personalised and meaningful interactions (Zhao et al., 2018; BITNER, 1990).

As described by Gilmore and Pine (1998) the lodging sector was primed for an overhaul, as it had become commoditised and lacked experiential offerings. Although hotels have responded by attempting to create memorable experiences, Airbnb has taken the lead in shaping the experience economy. Airbnb's approach, where engagement between hosts and guests is central, offers more personal and intimate exchanges, fostering deeper emotional connections than traditional hotels (Bearne, 2018). In contrast, hotels are typically viewed as focusing more on service quality and facilities, emphasising delivery over guest interaction (Jiang et al., 2019).

Airbnb's 'commercial home' model, which blends the characteristics of domestic homes and hotels, enables direct encounters between hosts and guests (Dolnicar, 2019). According to Frenken and Schor (2017), Airbnb facilitates consumer-to-consumer exchanges, as guests rent directly from peers rather than interacting with hotel staff. This personalised interaction often leads to a stronger bond between host and guest compared to the more formalised exchanges seen in hotels (Sutherland & Jarrahi, 2018).

The consumer-to-consumer interactions fostered by Airbnb resemble social exchanges rather than purely economic transactions, as suggested by Proserpio et al. (2018c). These interactions create a more intimate, personalised experience, allowing Airbnb to stand out in the sharing economy compared to the more standardised hotel industry.

When comparing behavioural interactions between Airbnb and traditional hotels, communication emerges as the key differentiating factor. Communication, along with other specific contact activities, varies significantly between the two. In Airbnb, higher levels of interaction are often observed due to the more personal nature of the host-guest relationship. This variance is influenced by two key factors: attitudinal differences and the degree of self-disclosure, which determine the depth of communication and engagement between the two types of accommodation services.

Communication as Interaction

Airbnb would also compete with the hotel domain regarding guest experience (Mody et al., 2017a) and create “a more diversified experience than conventional hotel accommodation” (Wang and Nicolau, 2017). The human relationship is sometimes the primary shared asset (Dolnicar, 2019).

A more intuitive topic representing the interaction between the customers and service providers in the Airbnb reviews was ‘communication’, and it seems to be related to all keywords in the dataset. The review comments show that host and guest communications involve different stages (pre, onsite, and post), for different purposes (check-in/out, facilities, help), and via different modes (online, face-to-face). One feature of Airbnb host and guest communication is the pre-written instructions by the host/owner, which are published online or disseminated to guests on arrival. The results indicate that Airbnb users are happy to read these instructions, and they don’t feel it is a hassle. By looking at related reviews, we found that many customers mentioned that their hosts provided very detailed instructions and gave their guests a warm welcome when they arrived (except for self-check-ins). As Airbnb transforms the online experience into a face-to-face transaction with a stranger, good pre-arrival communication can help guests ease initial anxiety and build trust. The following Table 31 summarises some typical Airbnb online reviews, which describe in detail the relatively complete communication process from pre-check-in to post-check-out:

Table 31 Airbnb Review Related to 'Communication' Concepts in Different Situations

Pre	Onsite	Post
<i>Maria was so kind to send us suggested things to do and places to eat prior to our trip. She was also very helpful anytime we had a question.</i>	<i>We had a 12-hour delay in the airport and they were kind enough to meet us even though it was so late at night. She was so welcoming and easy to talk to when we met him. She explained everything about how the apartment is laid out, how to use the TV and washer, to check out, and gave us tips and local directions for our stay. Maria was excellent in all communications as well. In the listing and posted in the apartment everything you need to know is covered.</i>	<i>The most noteworthy thing is that because I accidentally dropped my passport, Maria called me promptly and asked if I needed to send it to the airport?! deeply appreciated!</i>
<i>Alienor was very prompt at sending through information and responding to messages before we checked in.</i>	<i>Communication was great and we seem got plenty of common interests! I'm looking forward to coming back again.</i>	
<i>Martin is a very thoughtful host. He preset the TV language to English and sent all the information to me few days before I arrive.</i>	<i>When we get there it's already 11 pm, but Martin waits for us at the front door shows us his house and lets us know where to get dinner around at that time.</i>	

Daniel and Nadine thoughtfully prepared and sent a sightseeing list of suggestions for each day of our stay before we arrived, as well as maps, menus and the best iPhone metro app ever! Being unfamiliar with metros, it was a lifesaver and made using the metro easy.

Daniel and Nadine were the perfect hosts from the day we made the reservation, throughout our stay, and even sending well wishes after we departed. They even send us holiday wishes on subsequent holidays, and I feel like a friendship-like connection has developed between us!

An interviewee mentioned the difference between hotels and Airbnb when recalling his own experience. He pointed out that no matter whether they book accommodation through an Online Travel Agency (platform like TripAdvisor) or on the hotel's official website, they can only receive one confirmation email from the hotel. In addition, if you want to get more information, consumers need to take the initiative to make further inquiries, usually through email or phone (the interviewee mentioned that he hates communicating on the phone); if it's an email, there's usually a long, unsettling wait time. After a successful Airbnb booking, the host will soon send greetings and notes through the platform's chat function, which is more convenient and more immediate. Consumers can more easily establish communication and interaction with unfamiliar hosts and obtain further information.

Self-check-in is not uncommon at Airbnb. Hosts and consumers usually communicate through the Airbnb platform or some instant messaging software. For example, the reviews in Table 32 verify the feasibility of this kind of non-face-to-face communication:

Table 32 None-Face-to-Face Communication

Reviews	Communication method (tools)
<i>Magda is an amazing host, called us in Australia to talk about any concerns we had</i>	Phone call

before booking and even provided us with a Christmas tree wine and chocolate while we were in Paris for Christmas.

I didn't get to meet Julien, but he was great with communication, always responded in a timely manner through the platform, and was just overall a great host. Merci Julien!

Airbnb platform

Although we didn't meet our host, he left us his and his wife's phone numbers on the platform for us to contact him more conveniently and told us that we could contact them at any time by calling or WhatsApp.

Airbnb platform

phone call

WhatsApp

The success of this model stems from the service model of Airbnb and traditional hotels. It is obvious that traditional hotels cannot provide (and are not accepted by consumers) this contactless communication method.

Hotels offer staff contact and facilitate indirect (and engaging) communication with other guests (Hanaa Osman et al., 2019). The keyword related to communication is noted in the hotel review dataset as 'told', which mainly occurred in the interaction between customers and employees and related to the customers' requests or inquiries for the staff, where the staff's response became a division of the work within their purview. When querying concepts related to 'told', the concept with the likelihood score ranked first is 'asked', and the remaining concepts are job titles in the hotel (such as 'reception', 'concierge', 'breakfast', restaurant'), even 'staff' which could refer to all positions and some keywords related to hotel facilities ('pool', 'coffee', 'desk'). After randomly checking related reviews, this study found that most reviews are intended to state that consumers asked questions to hotel staff, while 'told' in most cases refers specifically to the staff's responses to the response or answer. For example, as mentioned in one of the comments below:

“We were told there would be parking but not told it sells out by 4 p.m. Then had to drive to garages they said were their overflow only to have them turn us away because they were full.”

There are some special cases where only a small number of staff will take the initiative to inform or advise consumers. This means that staff who work in the hotel may rarely take the initiative to communicate with customers. As can be seen, interactions related to communication are standard items inherent in hospitality services, such as responding to inquiries, keeping guests well-informed or simply making guests feel welcome. They relate only to customer service performance (e.g. communication about directions, tips or recommendations, house rules, Wi-Fi instructions or check-in/check-out, etc.).

Interestingly, compared with the content of Airbnb and hotel reviews, Airbnb hosts seem to be more inclined to actively communicate and communicate, while traditional hotel employees seem to be more passive in their actions, requiring consumers to initiate questions before responding. For example, one comment from London mentioned:

“...Nothing was forthcoming unless we asked. Maybe because there was a convention going on that? Why the service was so mediocre.”

Therefore, when interaction happens between the service provider and the customer, the service provider is more passive. As Osman et al.(2019) concluded that in service contexts, when interactions are institutional and have a high degree of standardisation, such as with a receptionist at a hotel counter, social distance is high due to limited interaction between parties, which makes it difficult to translate interactions into further relationship development.

In contrast, Airbnb hosts received much more positive reviews in this regard, and this also shows the difference between the two

Higher-level contact as interaction

Interaction has traditionally been considered a defining characteristic of all services. The primary reason is that services are characterised by simultaneous production and consumption, thereby requiring customer–firm interaction. Many people equate service with customer service — that is, service provided in support of the company's core products. However, services are typically broadly defined as ‘deeds, processes and performances’ (Berry, 1980). In the service context, human interaction involves participating in and co-creating experiences and memories with other people (Prebensen et al., 2013). People interact with other people every day for various reasons (Hamari et al., 2016). In some of these interactions, people find something special that they remember and cherish. In these cases, people co-create quality interactions, and not just needful interactions (Prebensen et al., 2013).

The interaction between Airbnb consumers is an important factor in choosing Airbnb instead of a hotel or other accommodations. In this context of service, social interactions, or socialising (Ertz et al., 2017) or interpersonal contacts (Lutz and Newlands, 2018; Bucher et al., 2016), normally occur between guests and hosts who are total strangers (Tussyadiah, 2016; Ikkala and Lampinen, 2014). The forms of host-guest social interactions include but are not limited to, communicating and sharing jokes, interests, or information, even complete events together (like having a meal or cooking together) during the moments of accommodation (Lutz and Newlands, 2018; Sung et al., 2018; Guttentag, 2017). In the Airbnb data analysis results, the concept “together” appears very frequently. The concept undergoes further breakdown; the relevant reviews showed that many consumers recorded in detail some of their interactions with hosts during their stay. These typical activities are summarised in table 33 below:

Table 33 Interaction activities between guests and hosts in the Airbnb context

Reviews	Activities	Findings
“...we looked forward to our morning chats during breakfast, she made lots	Chat; Information sharing, Extra help	These are central activities that

of recommendations and updated us with what's going on in the city, how the weather is gonna be before we head out and most importantly she was able to get us a table at one of the busiest restaurants which was booked solid for a month. Thank you, Catherine!"

involve communication but are not as such communicative acts. These behaviours are an interaction that

"Carole was supportive and inviting from beginning to end. Upon arrival, she showed me around the neighbourhood and we grabbed a cup of coffee together. "

Guide; Being invited to complete an activity together(have a coffee), Communication

combines communication and changing levels of contact

"David is very nice! I stayed in a room in his apartment. During this period, we often chatted together and I found that we had a lot in common! We even cooked a meal together!"

Chat; Complete an activity together(cooking);higher level contact

"Belle didn't live with us, but she entertained us warmly, prepared a lot of food in the refrigerator, and even asked us if we needed her to take us to the beach the next day."

Extra help

Interestingly, judging from the overall results, most consumers who described the interaction process in detail chose "room" in the housing type and chose to live with the host. This seems to prove that meaningful social interaction with hosts contributes to the guest experience when the guests stay in a cohabitated space.

In the Airbnb context, the social contact between the guests and the host is the most important of these contacts. This contact has effects on mutual understanding, reducing prejudices and improving interpersonal relationships (Kirillova et al., 2015). One respondent said that she was full of anxiety when she checked into Airbnb for the first time because she accidentally chose a listing that could only book a single room. She was nervous at the thought of spending three days with strangers. "But my host and I got along very well. She prepared breakfast for me every day, and we went to a famous local bar together! I felt very relaxed. I don't know how to explain it. Maybe it was her sincere behaviour that won my trust?" Another respondent who knows the core of Airbnb very well shared that he likes to live with a host. Not only is it a cheaper option, but he can also experience the local culture more authentically through contact with the host, who is a local. While he also pointed out that such a choice also has certain risks. After all, the host is a true 'stranger' to travellers.

Therefore, unique local experiences (Tussyadiah and Pesonen, 2016) and meaningful social encounters (Cheng, 2016a) differentiate P2P accommodation, such as that provided through Airbnb, from that provided by traditional accommodation services. Results of data analysis hotels are better at providing functional services, and P2P accommodation services are better at building relationships. Respondents sharing their experiences with hotel stays mostly replied that they did not interact much with hotel service providers. One respondent mentioned that the hotel staff was friendly and enthusiastic, but they did not seem to provide as much information as an Airbnb host (under a proactive situation), and the information was too impersonal. More than one responder mentioned that the hotel may have been overcrowded, and staff could not fairly interact with each guest, but also noted that consumers do not go to staff without a question or request. However, a respondent replied that she has a high level of membership with a hotel group and is greeted enthusiastically by name by the staff whenever she stays at an affiliated hotel. Perhaps this differential treatment makes some consumers (especially those who do not receive more privileged treatment) more resistant and reinforces consumers' stereotyped transactional attributes of hotels.

With the processing of Leximancer, when breaking down Airbnb's concepts related to service providers ("host") or with engagement and interaction meanings ("communication", "together", "interaction"), a series of detailed nouns about activity, these are a series of behavioural contacts that consumers have with hosts during their stay; in contrast, in the traditional hotel context, the social contacts between service providers (staff in the hotel) and consumers except for the provision of basic functional services are few and far.

Although from the overall trend, hotel consumers have a positive attitude towards the functional facilities and basic services provided by their chosen hotels, as the diversification of consumer demands has gradually strengthened in recent years, some consumers who pay attention to social contact are not satisfied with these "basic" stuff. By reading the online comments in the dataset, most reviewers put forward their ideas and feedback around the interaction content, the attitude of staff, and the interaction duration. This study selected some representative online reviews and summarised them in Table 34:

Table 34 Interaction activities between customers and staff in the Airbnb context		
Reviews	Sentiment	Key Points
<i>"...the staff here are friendly and polite. Maybe I asked too much, they all seemed to have a template to deal with us. The staff seemed very busy and didn't seem to have time to stop and chat with me"</i>	Mixed	Attitude; Reaction model; Interaction duration
<i>"To start, we lost our family of five passports and rail tickets on the Narita Express on the way to the hotel. The staff called the railway office and police to see if they could track them down. Thankfully, ours were found (apparently common in Japan) and the follow through (a staff member picked up our documents</i>	Positive	Extra help; Communication

*which were in another part of town), and good communication with us and amongst staff was extraordinary. We were just trying to get help at the beginning, but **the hotel staff's actions far exceeded our expectations!** deeply appreciated"*

*"The location was perfect, each & every one of **the staff was a pleasure to interact with...**The girl working in the restaurant also **helped us look after the kids and played with kids** while we having breakfast, which was a huge help. Overall we would highly recommend a stay here. Our trip to Japan had a great start, thanks to FS Marunouchi. The concierge team was a **big help in planning out our daily activities** and was always there to **provide suggestions**. Thank you to the incredible FS Marunouchi team and for the **highly personalized service!** We hope to make a return visit sometime in the future..."*

Positive

Personalized service;
Suggestion;
Interaction duration;
Attitude

According to statistics, the keyword most commonly used by consumers to initiate interactions with service providers in hotels is 'suggestion'(or 'advice'). This was confirmed in interviews with multiple respondents: "Many times it is the first time for me to come to this place. I will habitually ask the front desk or concierge staff if they have any recommended places to go, although the answers may be inconsistent." The respondent mentioned that sometimes he would ask different staff multiple times what makes him feel It is very interesting that the front desk staff may highly recommend a restaurant, but the concierge staff strongly advises him not to go there. "Maybe it's because of personal differences, which makes it feel interesting and real." An alternative answer was given by another respondent, who said some hotels may

be trying to improve efficiency and streamline processes (it may also to reduce the possibility of making mistakes), usually the staff just hand the consumer a brochure (or even tells the consumer where to find these brochures), which records some information and recommended places about the city or surrounding areas. "It's boring and I feel like this is perfunctory to me," the respondent complained. "I could have found those online, guess why I'm asking you?".

A corresponding control group can also be found in the comments regarding staff responses to consumers seeking advice, which can be found in the summary table (Table 35) as follows:

<i>Table 35 Comparison of Staff's Reaction when Customer Asks for a Suggestion</i>	
Review	Sentiment
<i>"Ellen worked the concierge desk the entire time I was on this property - 6 days. Every time I asked for suggestions regarding restaurants, bars, etc. she had the best at her fingertips. I can't say enough good things about Ellen - always polite, friendly and on top of her game. She never sent me to a bad restaurant and always gave the best directions."</i>	Positive
<i>"I know the staff are busy but they just told me that there is a city guide book available in the room, I tried again telling them I only had three days to travel here and wanted some more detailed advice but the concierge boy told me then I need to do some trade-off, and the attitude is even a bit indifferent. This makes me very depressed...But they did a great job in their position, like helping us with our luggage and booking a taxi. "</i>	Mixed

In contrast, it can be seen that although the consumer mentioned that he was frustrated because he did not get the answer he expected, the consumer did not deny the staff's other work. According to Podsakoff et al. (1997), employee performance comprises both in-role and

extra-role performances. In-role performance refers to the expected employee behaviours (Brief and Motowidlo, 1986), which are derived from explicit norms, job descriptions, and performance evaluation standards in the workplace (Bettencourt and Brown, 2003), while extra-role performance refers to employee behaviours that extend beyond the formal job description (Brief and Motowidlo, 1986). In this study, when comparing Airbnb and traditional hotels (even some hotel reviews), it is clear that current consumers more focus on employee extra-role rather than in-role behaviours.

No matter whether Airbnb or a traditional hotel, service providers' discretionary behaviours toward the customer, "going the extra mile" to serve the customer, or engaging in behaviours or functions that might result in the improvement of customer service, even if these actions are not part of the job description (in hotel context, some staff even exceed organisational expectations). Such behaviours are performed voluntarily and spontaneously, without any need to inhibit or suppress any unpleasant thoughts and behaviours (Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002), and can lead to positive customer outcomes, such as increased purchase intentions. These behaviours represent "a more authentic action, which aligns well with the principal's interest in providing quality service" (Chan et al., 2011), and those behaviours are typically the antecedents of high levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty (Netemeyer et al., 1996). This can be confirmed by the content mentioned by consumers in their reviews about recommending the listing or hotel. The more direct proof is reflected in their level of expectation and willingness to stay again. While some consumers in the data set did mention keywords such as "the second time" and "stayed again" in their comments.

Factors Affecting Interaction and Communication Levels

This study combines text mining data results and information obtained from interviews to summarise the factors that affect the gap in levels of behavioural engagement between Airbnb

and traditional hotels, namely, 1) the self-disclosure level between consumers and service providers, and 2) service attitude.

Self-disclosure

Combined with the interview results, this study concluded that one of the main factors that affects the level of interaction and contact between consumers and service providers is the degree of self-disclosure between both parties. Compared to traditional hotel lodging, one distinctive aspect of Airbnb is its promise to offer closer interactions with local residents and to create a sense of place (Cheng, 2016b). Paradoxically, according to Moon et al. (2019) for the same reason, interactions between guests and hosts can also be a source of concern for both parties, as people who have connected via the online platform share personal living quarters with otherwise total strangers, all without the security and backup of a business entity such as a traditional hotel establishment. Due to the perceived uncertainty of other peers and the platform (Bialski, 2013), peers' profiles, online reputations, online review ratings, and how the information is presented by the platform play a critical role in the interactions between guests and hosts. Furthermore, in the Airbnb context, while face-to-face interactions are usually ephemeral, the interactions can be intimate in that peers emotionally and physically let others into their personal lives for a while (Molz, 2014).

In the initial phase, the two parties share superficial information (e.g., personal demographics) through communication (RUBIN and PEPLAU, 1975). In this stage, each party considers the provided information and develops tentative attitudes toward the other (TAYLOR and ALTMAN, 1975). This exposure to self-relevant information triggers mutual interactions between the individuals and develops the interpersonal relationship between them. The relationship development process stimulated by self-disclosure continues when the other party reciprocates the exposure by sharing his/her information as well. This responsiveness can strengthen the relationship, causing the two parties to become closer to each other (J P Laurenceau et al., 1998). In particular, when people are introduced as strangers in a community and have little knowledge of the background of the others in the community, they

accelerate the relationship development process (Newcomb, 1978). Similarly, people are more active in social exchange when they are less exposed to the other's information. Subsequently, they feel closer to each other more rapidly through social exchange (Cozby, 1972). Following the reciprocation of these behaviours in both public and private areas, the interactants' perceptions of security and trust toward each other fluctuate and contribute to relationship development (Reis and Shaver, 1988). Thus, interpersonal relationship development, as an amalgam of mutual encounters between two entities, is a continuous process consisting of self-disclosures (e.g., exchanging information, emotions, and activities).

This self-disclosure feature is once again attributed to the core difference between the P2P accommodation model (Airbnb) and the traditional B2C accommodation model (traditional hotels). In Airbnb, self-disclosure takes place throughout online and offline P2P interactions and plays a pivotal part in relationship development between guests and hosts. Peers gradually become acquainted with each other by disclosing their personal information and communicating online and face-to-face. In the meantime, the relationship develops rather quickly, since the novelty of the interaction between two strangers that lasts only for a short time intensifies the reciprocity of interpersonal exchange (Morton, 1978). Hence, the development of an interpersonal relationship in the P2P context is a continuous and two-way process. In a traditional hotel environment, the commercial relationship between service providers and consumers is characterised by instrumentality (e.g., service providers' capability to fulfil customers' needs) and limited resource exchanges (e.g., making payments to a hotel for a room). The employee-customer interpersonal relationship is typically a one-way rapport, as there is little need for employees to share their personal information with customers. In contrast, Airbnb self-disclosure manifests throughout the process of online and face-to-face encounters between guests and hosts. Such two-way interactions may influence peers' perceptions of their overall experiences of using Airbnb accommodations, which leads to a deeper level of interaction and stimulates further feelings.

Attitude

Research in business and management found that customers were more cautious when evaluating the return on investment when their relationship with brand enterprises is purely for business, but were more tolerant of service failures if being treated like friends or family members (Reich et al., 2018; Algoe et al., 2010; Aggarwal, 2004). In short, enthusiasm and a hospitality attitude help establish relationships with customers, thus psychologically enhancing their emotional connections (Zhu et al., 2019). However, if service providers create a home-like atmosphere through their attitude, the inherent transaction attribute of the accommodation business would be weakened (Stringer, 1981), and customers are more likely to experience authentic hospitality (Lynch, 2005). This also applies to the accommodation industry (Lv et al., 2020). However, enthusiasm and hospitality may not be entirely sincere.

Service personnel in the accommodation industry are considered a type of emotional labour (Grandey, 2003). A discrepancy may exist between individuals' true internal emotions and the external expression of emotions (e.g., smiles) that is required by work. Individuals usually adopt two strategies to handle such discrepancies - deep acting so that their inner feelings are consistent with their external emotional expressions; and superficial emotional expressions (e.g., smiles) required by work, hiding true inner feelings (Grandey, 2000; ASHFORTH and HUMPHREY, 1993). Superficial emotional expressions at work are more likely to bring inauthentic experiences and poor service to customers (Gong et al., 2020; Yagil, 2012). If customers noticed fake smiles, programmed care, and superficial hospitality in their contacts with service personnel due to insincerity, they would rate the service as staged performance and a strategic business approach instead of sincere caring, which may affect their receiving of the ideal feelings. Combined with the complex descriptions of the reviewers above in traditional hotel reviews, they admitted that the hotel staff provided excellent services, but gave people the impression of "like template" and "standardisation" in the sense. One respondent who prefers Airbnb gave his own perspective on this, mentioning that traditional hotel groups are more focused on overall reputation, and they are more afraid of providing

wrong services and experiences. Therefore, they will repeatedly emphasize standardized processes during employee induction training to improve service efficiency and quality. This seems to be detrimental to consumers' ability to perceive service providers' real emotions and prevent further contact (or even give up the idea of interaction).

In hotel online reviews, consumers mostly use words such as "friendly", "polite", and "helpful" to describe the attitude of service providers. These frequently occurring words are very consistent with traditional hotel requirements for staff to treat guests. It represents the staff's cautious and respectful attitude towards consumers and the provision of functional help when help is sought. In contrast, the words used to describe the host's attitude seem to be more diverse. In addition, among the words describing the attitude of Airbnb hosts, some words are more like words used between friends or acquaintances, such as "warm" and "sweet". At the same time, when exploring the meaning of "communicative" in online reviews, this study found that the adjective is like a signal; that is, hosts with communicative attitude characteristics are more likely to have further interactions with consumers. Because customers often mention some subsequent joint activities with the host. A host who is good at and keen on communicating can usually stimulate consumers' willingness to socialise.

Table 36 Top 10 Adjectives about the Service(Interaction)Airbnb and Traditional Hotels

Airbnb context		Traditional hotel context	
Adjectives	Count	Adjectives	Count
helpful	1364	friendly	8132
friendly	1147	polite	7918
responsive	1058	helpful	7821
lovely	958	good	1242
warm	948	superficial	840
comfortable	864	great	641
hospitality	844	rude	432
sincere	602	terrible	320

sweet	543	unfriendly	317
communicative	308	good	304

It is worth noting that among the top 10 adjectives related to service (interaction) attitude, all the words attributed to Airbnb hosts have commendatory attributes, while some derogatory and negative adjectives appear in the online reviews of traditional hotels. Another noteworthy point in this study is that in the two sets of data, the concepts 'friendly' and 'helpful' also appeared with very high frequency. This study posits that these two concepts may have the same or different meanings in the two contexts. Literally, both words are used as adjectives to modify what happens in the interaction between hosts/staff and consumers. The most common and direct comments directly describe the service provider as 'friendly' and 'helpful'. The results of data processing show that these two words tend to appear together, but the gap in their likelihood scores in the two service types reveals another difference (see Table 37).

<i>Table 37 The Difference of Likelihood between 'Friendly' and 'Helpful' in Two Service Types</i>		
Service type	Airbnb	Traditional Hotel
Likelihood score	18%	43%

In traditional hotels, the likelihood scores of the two words are nearly three times higher. This indicates that consumers are more accustomed to combining these two words to describe the behaviour or services of hotel staff. In the context of Airbnb, guests are more inclined to separate the two words when describing the behaviour or attitude of the host. Simultaneously, due to hotel staff giving customers the stereotype that "they are professional service people," consumers subconsciously assume that hotel employees must be "friendly and helpful to our needs." Therefore, when they express negative judgments in reviews, many consumers complain about "cold and unfriendly staff" and "unhelpful" experiences. When examining Airbnb reviews, customers appear more willing to compose longer texts compared to hotel reviews when evaluating the listings they stayed in. Consequently, when randomly selecting instances of 'friendly' and 'helpful', consumers don't seem to have very high expectations for

hosts. In their reviews, guests typically describe specific behaviours of the host to convince readers why they believe the host is friendly. These behaviours might include warm greetings and a friendly attitude. Similarly, when referencing 'helpful', consumers often detail how the host assisted them. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, Airbnb guests may not clearly identify services within the context of Airbnb. They might categorise numerous events that should fall under the umbrella of services as additional assistance. For example, solving issues like Wi-Fi failure and conducting repairs in the house. If the host responds promptly and resolves the problem, guests consider it ultra 'helpful'.

Based on these differences, compared to the traditional hotel industry, hosts of shared accommodations are less restricted by service procedures (Mody et al., 2019) and are thus more flexible to add a personal touch to their service. The creation of host-guest relationships in shared accommodations is no longer simply oriented toward economic returns, but also toward building family-/friend-like relationships with customers (Zhu et al., 2019). Through comparison, this study concluded that the overall atmosphere provided by Airbnb and the more sincere and enthusiastic attitude of hosts weakened the commercial nature of the transaction, shortened the psychological distance with customers, and ultimately won the favour of customers and further developed willingness to interact with service providers. In addition to establishing a close host-guest relationship, a sincere and individualised interaction attitude also helps create a better sensory experience for customers.

The chemical reactions generated by more intimate interactions between consumers and service providers will, in turn, affect the cognitive perceptions established by early consumers and create some emotional connections. Such as some guests felt they just 'clicked' with the host right away: *'It was like we'd known each other forever, we got along instantly'*. This cognitive influence and emotional connection may influence consumers to a certain extent to evaluate their own experiences from a rational perspective, lowering the standard of real experience based on the perspective of interpersonal socialisation and reciprocity, making it easier to tolerate less disturbing experiences. Satisfactory accommodation and service

experience. Therefore, when it comes to Airbnb, the reviewers seemed to be kinder and more merciful, even helping to hide less pleasant experiences. When asked why, some interviewees mentioned the helpfulness of the host and thought they could help cover some minor flaws in the house facilities. From the insights from the interview, responders replied that they have established personal connections with these hosts and do not want to hurt their small businesses.

Section Summary

The behavioural dimension reveals significant differences in interaction styles between Airbnb and traditional hotels. In Airbnb settings, interactions are more personal and intimate, fostering stronger personal connections between guests and hosts. where there is often direct contact and self-disclosure between hosts and guests. This intimacy fosters stronger personal bonds, enhancing the overall customer experience. In contrast, hotel interactions are characterised by their formal nature and focus on efficient service provision, lacking the personal touch found in the Airbnb context, often leading to a feeling of disconnect in hotel environments due to the lack of personal touch.

Key Insights from Semi-Structured Interviews

The semi-structured interviews provided rich, nuanced insights into the dynamics of customer engagement in the hospitality sector, complementing the patterns identified through text-mining analysis. While text mining allowed for the identification of high-frequency themes and sentiment patterns, the interviews enabled an in-depth exploration of the meanings, motivations, and relational factors underpinning these patterns(Qu and Dumay, 2011). Guided by the interview protocol outlined in Appendix 3, the conversations focused on guests' satisfaction determinants, the manifestation of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement, and the role of reciprocity in shaping online review behaviour. The findings reinforce and extend the theoretical propositions

of service-dominant logic (SDL)(Vargo and Lusch, 2008) and customer-dominant logic (CDL) (Heinonen et al., 2010), while also revealing the nuanced interplay between objective service delivery and subjective interpretation (Easton, 2010).

One of the most prominent findings concerns the determinants of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. While both Airbnb and hotel guests valued cleanliness, comfort, and responsiveness, the weight assigned to these factors varied according to the service model. For hotel guests, satisfaction was strongly tied to the consistent delivery of professional standards. As one participant described, *“The check-in was smooth, the staff wore uniforms, and I got exactly what I expected”*. In contrast, Airbnb guests placed greater emphasis on authenticity and the personal touches offered by hosts, often tolerating minor flaws if the overall experience felt personalised. For instance, a participant recalled, *“The flat wasn’t perfect, but the host left a handwritten note and some snacks – that made me feel really welcome”*. These accounts reinforce the text-mining results, which showed “cleanliness” as a high-frequency theme for both accommodation types, but position it as a baseline expectation in hotels and a value-enhancing feature in Airbnb stays.

The interviews also illuminated differences in how cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement manifest between the two models. On the cognitive level, hotel guests tended to focus on evaluating whether their expectations, shaped by the brand’s promise, were met. In contrast, Airbnb guests engaged in reflective thinking about the uniqueness of their stay. One respondent observed, *“I kept thinking about how different it felt from staying in a hotel – like living in the city, not visiting it”*. Emotional engagement was consistently stronger in Airbnb experiences, where participants described forming personal bonds with hosts and feeling a sense of belonging. For example, *“The host was so warm and told me stories about the neighbourhood; I felt like I belonged there”*. Behaviourally, both sets of guests engaged in post-stay feedback activities, but Airbnb guests frequently described feeling a moral or social obligation to leave positive reviews. As one participant put it, *“She helped me so much; I couldn’t give her anything less than five stars”*. These findings help explain why, as the text-mining analysis revealed, Airbnb reviews are more positive on average despite occasional service imperfections.

Reciprocity emerged as a particularly influential driver of review behaviour, especially within the Airbnb context. Several participants described overlooking minor issues because of the kindness or effort shown by their host. For instance, *“There were some small things, like the kettle not working, but it didn’t bother us because the host was so kind and helpful”*. This tendency contrasts sharply with hotel guests, who reported a greater inclination to note such problems in reviews. One participant stated, *“If the air con was broken, I would definitely mention it in the review – that’s what you pay for”*. These insights deepen the interpretation of the text-mining results, where sentiment analysis indicated higher positivity in Airbnb reviews. The interview data reveal that this positivity often stems not from the absence of service failures, but from guests’ reluctance to criticise hosts with whom they have formed a positive interpersonal connection.

Overall, the integration of interview findings with the text-mining analysis strengthens the study’s ability to address the research questions. While text mining quantified the prominence of themes such as “host,” “cleanliness,” and “service,” the interviews unpacked the underlying psychological and relational drivers of these patterns. The two methods thus operate in a complementary manner: text mining maps the thematic landscape, while interviews provide the interpretive depth required to understand why certain themes dominate and how they are experienced differently in Airbnb and hotel contexts. This methodological complementarity enhances the robustness of the study’s conclusions and offers a more comprehensive account of how SDL and CDL shape customer engagement in the hospitality sector.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presents the findings from a qualitative analysis of online reviews of Airbnb and traditional hotels and semi-structured interviews. It identifies and discusses key themes drawn from the data, supported by quotes to illustrate these themes. These themes are integrated under the customer engagement dimensions of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural, revealing a comprehensive experience process. The cognitive dimension focuses on how consumers form expectations and the factors they deem important. The emotional dimension

explores the psychological impact of these experiences on the overall customer experience and online review valence. The behavioural dimension examines how customers describe their interactions and connections with service providers during their stay, as reflected in their reviews. The subsequent chapter will relate these findings to existing literature.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

This chapter critically synthesises the findings from text-mining online reviews and semi-structured interviews to provide a deeper understanding of customer engagement across Airbnb and traditional hotel services. The key contribution of this research lies in its identification and comparison of the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions within online review content, revealing not just differences but underlying mechanisms that influence customer feedback. Notably, Airbnb reviews display more positive sentiment and personalised engagement, a trend which aligns with the platform's emphasis on reciprocal, intimate host-guest relationships.

In contrast to previous studies, which have primarily focused on the mere act of posting reviews as customer engagement, this study breaks new ground by dissecting the content of reviews across multiple dimensions. By doing so, it uncovers how reciprocity—central to Airbnb's model—deeply influences customer satisfaction and feedback patterns, offering valuable insights into the importance of personalised service encounters.

As this chapter progresses, it will evaluate how cognitive expectations, emotional responses, and behavioural engagement interact to shape customer reviews and engagement outcomes. The analysis will further explore why Airbnb experiences, rooted in personalised and authentic service exchanges, lead to stronger emotional connections and more positive reviews compared to traditional hotel stays, which often remain transactional.

This discussion will not only contextualise these findings within the framework of service-dominant logic (SDL) and customer-dominant logic (CDL) but also provide a critique of how current hospitality models can adapt to enhance customer engagement through deeper

reciprocal interactions. These insights offer actionable recommendations for service providers seeking to elevate customer satisfaction and loyalty in an increasingly competitive market.

Discussion on Manifestations of Three Dimensions in Traditional Hotels and Airbnb Online Reviews

The first objective of this study was to explore the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions of customer engagement in online reviews for Airbnb and traditional hotels. This was undertaken in light of several critical gaps in the literature. First, while there is extensive research comparing traditional hotel services and the sharing economy (Bridges & Vasquez, 2018; D. Guttentag, 2019b; Kian Fung & Hamzah, 2020; Mody et al., 2017b; Sánchez-Franco & Aramendia-Muneta, 2023) Few studies have examined how these differences are expressed in online reviews, where customer engagement is directly visible and measurable. By contrasting these reviews, this study offers key insights into distinct customer preferences and experiences that shape service expectations and brand loyalty, providing actionable data for service providers in both sectors.

Further, while existing literature predominantly focuses on customer satisfaction (Xu et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2022; Zhu et al., 2020), service quality (Yang et al., 2022; Priporas et al., 2017), and the uniqueness of experiences (Sthapit et al., 2022; Mody et al., 2017b) This research moves beyond satisfaction to critically evaluate how customer engagement manifests differently in Airbnb versus traditional hotels. It sheds light on how cognitive, emotional, and behavioural aspects of engagement influence not only the customer experience but also the nature of their feedback. This perspective offers a holistic understanding of engagement that is less emphasised in current research.

The focus on emotional and behavioural responses in online reviews allows for a more nuanced critique of customer engagement. While cognitive dimensions—such as expectations—have been widely studied (Bhavani, 2013; Loizos and Lycourgos, 2005) This research adds depth by revealing how emotional connections and reciprocal exchanges play a crucial role in shaping customer perceptions. Through the lens of service-dominant logic (SDL) and customer-dominant logic (CDL), the study highlights the co-creative nature of these interactions and suggests how service providers can harness these dynamics to foster stronger relationships with their customers.

In summary, this study's focus on the engagement dimensions provides fresh perspectives for understanding customer feedback in the hospitality sector. It moves beyond merely cataloguing customer experiences to critically assessing how these experiences are framed within the broader context of customer engagement theory, offering valuable implications for both academic research and industry practice.

Value Co-creation in Online Reviews

Co-creation, a key paradigm in management literature, redefines value creation as a collaborative process between companies and customers, breaking away from the traditional divide where suppliers and consumers operate on opposite sides (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004b; Vargo & Lusch, 2008b). This study emphasises the growing significance of customer engagement in shaping the hospitality experience, highlighting how Airbnb and traditional hotels are evolving to offer more than just accommodation—they are providing the foundation for memorable, co-created experiences. This aligns with the principles of the experience economy and service-dominant logic (S-D logic), which prioritises intangible experiences and personal interactions over the traditional focus on tangible services.

However, the findings of this study challenge the existing paradigms of co-creation. The shift from customers as passive recipients to active co-creators reveals a significant transformation in how value is generated. This transition, particularly prominent in platforms like Airbnb, emphasises customer autonomy and competence as essential to the co-creation process, pushing the boundaries of traditional value-creation models in hospitality. Businesses can no longer rely solely on orchestrating service delivery but may adapt to a model where customer empowerment and engagement are central to delivering value.

From a consumer-driven value creation perspective (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004b; S. L. Vargo & Lusch, 2008b) This shift towards decentralised value creation underscores the autonomy of consumers, enabling them to shape their experiences, even in the absence of direct interaction with service providers. This autonomy is especially apparent in the self-service and digital interaction features of Airbnb, which empower consumers to select lodging options, communicate with hosts on their terms, and access personalised recommendations. These capabilities allow customers to engage in independent yet collaborative value creation, illustrating how technology transforms the traditional service provider-consumer dynamic.

Herein lies a critical contribution of this study: it shows how platforms like Airbnb foster a new form of value creation—one that is independent, decentralised, and shaped by consumer autonomy. This challenges the traditional business models that once placed service providers at the centre of value creation, suggesting that companies should now develop ecosystems that enable and encourage customer participation. By integrating customer experiences and interactions into the core of service delivery, businesses can foster a more dynamic and inclusive approach to value co-creation. This re-orientation has broader implications for the hospitality industry, where service providers should now adopt consumer-centric strategies to remain competitive in an increasingly experience-driven market.

The Manifestation of Cognitive Dimensions in Online Reviews

The cognitive dimension often refers to the mental processes involved in understanding and making sense of information (ALBA and HUTCHINSON, 1987). This includes the process of knowledge acquisition, where consumers gather information about a product or service, and expectation formation, where this information shapes their anticipations about the experience. These cognitive processes are crucial in determining how consumers perceive and react to their actual experiences, comparing their initial expectations with the reality of the service or product (Tavares et al., 2021). This study delves into the cognitive processes of consumer engagement, exploring how knowledge acquisition and expectation formation influence perceptions of Airbnb and hotel services. It contrasts these processes with actual experiences, highlighting the critical role of cognitive dimensions in shaping consumer reactions. Specifically, the research findings delve into three aspects related to the cognitive dimensions within online reviews: 1) Information processing and expectation formation; 2) Common Cognitive Themes; 3) The value of experience and the transformation of traditional value structures; and 4) How different types of services cater to the diverse needs of consumers. These aspects comprehensively depict the process of consumer cognitive engagement within the context of online reviews. These research findings enrich the existing literature by providing significant support, whereas the current literature predominantly focuses on the influence of cognitive dimensions on consumer purchase decisions (Wattanacharoensil and La-ornual, 2019; Verhagen and Bloemers, 2018; Liang, 2016; Xia and Bechwati, 2008) and their impact on consumer satisfaction (Palací et al., 2019; Tseng, 2017).

The first identified aspect is information processing and expectation formation about accommodations. During this process, customers assimilate information from various sources, which may include official information provided by the accommodation providers or information from third-party agents. Following this initial information-gathering phase, consumers meticulously evaluate their preferences, which may inform their purchasing decisions, aligning the accommodation choice with their unique requirements and expectations. This cognitive process plays a pivotal role in shaping their perception and overall experience, which aligns with the extensive body of literature on customer decision-making processes (Han et al., 2021; Stankevich, 2017; Chikweche et al., 2012). Unlike previous studies that have broadly categorised accommodation preferences and customer expectations, this study delves into the specific cognitive evaluations that differentiate Airbnb experiences from those of traditional hotels. Through detailed analysis of customer reviews and interviews, it was found that Airbnb's model, emphasising personalisation, community integration, and local experiences, significantly influences consumer expectations and decision-making processes. This contrasts with traditional hotel models, where expectations are more closely aligned with service quality and amenities. Meanwhile, this aspect connects with studies on the multi-dimensional nature of customer journeys in hospitality, emphasising the significant role of cognitive processes in shaping consumer choices and experiences (Wolny and Charoensuksai, 2014). Here is a contribution of this study to enhance the existing body of research by offering a detailed comparison of cognitive processes in consumer engagement with Airbnb and traditional hotels. It challenges the conventional understanding by demonstrating that decision-making is not uniform across different types of accommodations. The research reveals that the cognitive processes behind expectation formation and information processing are influenced by the unique attributes of each service model. Airbnb's emphasis on personalised experiences and local integration leads to distinct cognitive evaluations by consumers, indicating a shift in the way accommodation preferences are formed. This contradicts the established assumption that consumer decision-making in the hospitality sector follows a standard pattern (Sandoff, 2005), suggesting instead that the service type (Airbnb vs. traditional hotels) plays a critical role in shaping cognitive processes.

The second aspect explored is the Common Cognitive Themes, Airbnb and traditional hotel customers exhibit similar criteria regarding accommodation services. Both groups prioritise aspects like location, service, and general amenities. Despite different accommodation styles, these fundamental requirements remain consistent, reflecting a shared baseline in consumer expectations within the hospitality. This partly resonated with the literature about comparing these two service types (Yang and Mao, 2020; Cheng and Jin, 2019c). However, given the

notable differences in other engagement variables between the hotel and Airbnb contexts(may include the degree of personalization in guest services, the nature and extent of interaction with hosts or staff, variations in the booking and check-in processes, and the distinctiveness of the local experience and community integration offered to guests), it prompts an inquiry into the reasons behind the parallel findings concerning cognitive themes. This convergence could be attributed to the core processes governing customer expectations in hospitality being broadly similar, regardless of the accommodation model. Despite the diversity in accommodation types—from the personalised, community-driven experience offered by Airbnb to the standardised, often more formal services provided by traditional hotels—there exists a foundational layer of customer needs and expectations that is invariant. The fundamental nature of what consumers seek in accommodation is safety, comfort, convenience, and value for money(Mangali and Ortaleza, 2021). Whether a traveller chooses a luxurious hotel suite or a cosy room in a local's home, their basic expectations regarding cleanliness, privacy, security, and accessibility to desired locations remain consistent. Moreover, the importance of quality service—characterised by responsiveness, hospitality, and the ability to meet or exceed guests' needs—transcends the specifics of the accommodation type, highlighting a shared priority across the spectrum. Alternatively, limitations within the study itself could be a reason, suggesting that certain nuances or factors were not fully captured or explored.

The third aspect emphasises the value of experience and the transformation of traditional value structures. Value co-creation in the hospitality industry, particularly within platforms like Airbnb and traditional hotels, is realised through the interactive and collaborative engagement between service providers (such as hosts or hotels) and consumers (guests). This concept, rooted in the service-dominant (S-D) logic, posits that value is phenomenologically determined and co-created through the utilisation of a market offering, emphasising the consumer's active role in the value-creation process (S. L. Vargo & Lusch, 2008b). While traditional perspectives have tended to place greater emphasis on tangible aspects—such as price, location, and amenities (Kim et al., 2023; Mangali & Ortaleza, 2021)—recent scholarship, including the present study, observes a growing recognition of the role of experiential value. Intangible factors such as a sense of belonging, cultural immersion, and the authenticity of local experiences increasingly shape consumer decisions, complementing rather than replacing tangible considerations. This transition from a goods-centric to a consumer-centric view of value creation underscores that value emerges from the consumer's involvement and experiences, rather than being inherent in the product or service itself. The disparity between expected and perceived experiences plays a crucial role in shaping consumer value

perceptions. Positive experiences that surpass expectations generally lead to enhanced consumer satisfaction, fostering loyalty, repeat purchases, and positive word-of-mouth (Olorunniwo et al., 2006). On the other hand, experiences that fall short of expectations can result in disappointment, adversely affecting the perceived value and the consumer's relationship with the service or product. By challenging conventional assumptions and highlighting the importance of experiential factors, this study contributes to a more holistic understanding of value in accommodation services, suggesting that the dynamic interplay between service providers and consumers is central to the co-creation of value.

The fourth identified aspect is the approach that different types of services cater to diverse consumer needs. By analysing the specific attributes that differentiate Airbnb and traditional hotel experiences, the findings indicate that while both service types share common themes like location and amenities, their approach to these factors varies. Airbnb satisfies consumer needs by offering personalised experiences, such as unique accommodations and local cultural immersion, facilitated by host-guest interactions. This approach meets the desires of guests looking for authenticity and a personal touch in their stay (Yannopoulou, 2013b). In contrast, it focuses on delivering standardised services, offering consistency in room quality, amenities, and professional customer service. This approach appeals to guests who prioritise reliability and efficiency in their travel experience. Each service type thus caters to distinct consumer preferences, with Airbnb focusing on unique, experience-driven stays and hotels on predictable, standardised services. This result has directly resonated with Mody et al. (2017a). These results challenge the perspective that suggests that for a segment of consumers, the decision to opt for Airbnb over traditional hotels might be driven more by economic considerations than the desire for authenticity or a personalised touch (Strømmen-Bakhtiar and Vinogradov, 2019). However, the emphasis on cost does not necessarily negate the importance of experience-driven choices. Consumers are often looking for the best value proposition, which includes both the price and the quality of the experience. For some, the decision might hinge more on financial considerations, while for others, the uniqueness and personalisation of the stay are paramount. To further enrich the discussion, it would be beneficial to examine how these preferences vary across different demographics, travel purposes, and regions. This comprehensive approach can offer a more detailed picture of the evolving consumer behaviour in the hospitality industry, highlighting the complex interplay between cost, convenience, personalisation, and authenticity in shaping travel decisions.

The Manifestation of Emotional Dimensions in Online Reviews

The cognitive dimension refers to the mental processes consumers engage in when gathering, processing, and interpreting information (ALBA and HUTCHINSON, 1987). These processes include knowledge acquisition, where consumers actively seek information about a service, and expectation formation, which shapes their anticipations before the experience. These cognitive mechanisms are crucial in determining how consumers compare their expectations with the reality of their experiences (ALBA and HUTCHINSON, 1987). This research investigates how these cognitive dimensions manifest in online reviews, with specific attention to the information processing and expectation management involved in consumer engagement across Airbnb and traditional hotels. The study presents four key aspects of cognitive engagement: 1) information processing and expectation formation, 2) common cognitive themes, 3) the transformation of value structures, and 4) how different service types cater to diverse consumer needs. Each of these aspects highlights the distinct role cognitive dimensions play in shaping consumer reactions and reviews.

The first aspect, information processing and expectation formation, focuses on how consumers evaluate and process information regarding accommodation options. This study moves beyond prior research by revealing the differentiated cognitive pathways consumers use to form expectations about Airbnb versus traditional hotels. Consumers assess Airbnb accommodations with a focus on personalisation, community integration, and local authenticity, setting expectations that are tied more to the intangible experiences offered by the platform. In contrast, traditional hotel customers anchor their expectations on more tangible aspects, such as service quality and standard amenities. This finding critically challenges the prevailing notion in hospitality research that consumer decision-making is largely homogeneous (Sandoff, 2005). The findings suggest instead that the service model—whether experience-driven like Airbnb or service-centric like traditional hotels—fundamentally influences cognitive processes. This point shows that consumer expectations are contextually shaped, which has significant implications for how service providers in each sector manage customer expectations.

The second aspect, common cognitive themes, points to a shared baseline in consumer expectations despite the vastly different service models of Airbnb and traditional hotels. Regardless of accommodation type, consumers universally prioritise core elements such as

location, service quality, and basic amenities. This convergence is indicative of fundamental consumer needs in hospitality, which transcend service models. However, the study critically questions why these common cognitive anchors remain consistent despite the divergent engagement models. One potential explanation is that these basic expectations reflect a universal consumer psychology rooted in safety, comfort, and convenience (Mangali and Ortaleza, 2021). Nonetheless, the persistence of these themes across different service models could also signal limitations in current research methodologies, which may not fully capture the more nuanced differences in consumer evaluations of Airbnb versus traditional hotels. Thus, the study suggests that while core cognitive themes remain invariant, more granular differences are likely masked by overarching customer expectations.

The third aspect delves into the transformation of traditional value structures through the value of experience. In both Airbnb and traditional hotel contexts, value is increasingly co-created through consumer-provider interactions, challenging the traditional paradigm where value is perceived solely through tangible benefits, such as price, amenities, and location (J. J. Kim et al., 2023; Mangali and Ortaleza, 2021). Rooted in service-dominant logic (S-D logic), this study highlights how experiential value—manifested through elements like a sense of belonging, cultural immersion, and authenticity—has become a critical factor in consumer decision-making (Vargo & Lusch, 2008b). Airbnb, in particular, emphasises these intangible factors, shifting the value proposition from transactional to experiential. This challenges the traditional goods-dominant logic in hospitality, suggesting that consumers now co-create value not only through the product itself but through their interactive, immersive experiences. The findings critique conventional views by showing that value creation in hospitality is phenomenologically determined, and dependent on the interaction between the service provider and the guest. Positive experiences that surpass expectations lead to increased customer satisfaction, loyalty, and positive word-of-mouth (Olorunniwo et al., 2006), while negative experiences erode perceived value, underscoring the critical role of cognitive dimensions in shaping these value perceptions.

The final aspect, catering to diverse consumer needs, reveals how Airbnb and traditional hotels adopt distinct approaches to satisfy their customers. While both service types address common priorities such as location and cleanliness, their strategies differ in key ways. Airbnb tends to meet the needs of consumers seeking authentic, personalised experiences, facilitated by host-guest interactions and opportunities for local immersion (Yannopoulou, 2013b). These elements create a sense of uniqueness and cultural integration, appealing to consumers who prioritise these experiences over standardised service. In contrast, hotels focus on delivering

predictability, consistency, and efficiency, appealing to consumers who value reliability and convenience in their travel experiences. This divergence challenges the simplistic view that cost is the primary driver behind the preference for Airbnb over traditional hotels (Strømmen-Bakhtiar and Vinogradov, 2019). Instead, this research reveals that for many consumers, experiential value—such as uniqueness and personal connection—is a more critical factor in their accommodation decisions. By exploring how these preferences vary across different demographics, travel purposes, and regions, the study offers a deeper understanding of how cognitive engagement is tailored to diverse consumer profiles. This nuanced view complicates existing assumptions about cost-driven choices and highlights the complex interplay of cognitive factors influencing consumer behaviour in hospitality.

From Emotional to Cognitive

The relationship between emotional engagement and the cognitive dimension of consumer behaviour is intricate, as emotional states significantly shape how consumers process, evaluate, and recall their experiences. Positive emotions, especially those stemming from experiences that exceed expectations, can enhance cognitive functions such as information processing, attention to detail, and the evaluation of satisfaction and value (Alexander et al., 2021; R. P. Bagozzi et al., 1999a; Richins, 1997a). This research emphasises that emotional engagement doesn't just affect how consumers feel about a service—it also alters the way they think about, process, and reflect on that experience, thus influencing their overall judgment and behaviour (Pham, 2007).

In the context of Airbnb, heightened emotional engagement plays a critical role in shaping cognitive responses in several ways. First, when consumers are emotionally invested in their stay, their information processing becomes more selective and biased toward positive interpretations. They are more likely to focus on aspects of the experience that align with their emotional state, such as the warmth of host interactions, unique local experiences, or personalised touches (Isen, 1993). This emotional investment also triggers cognitive dissonance, where discrepancies between expectations and reality are cognitively downplayed or rationalised to maintain the positive emotional state. As a result, negative aspects of the service may be minimised or reframed in a less critical way (Tsiros and Mittal, 2000).

Second, emotional engagement influences the recall of information. Research suggests that emotions play a pivotal role in memory retention and the salience of certain experiences (M L

Richins, 1997). In Airbnb's case, emotionally engaged consumers are more likely to recall the positive aspects of their stay, such as memorable host interactions or a unique, personalised environment, while negative incidents are either forgotten or framed as minor inconveniences. This selective memory results in a cognitive filtering process, where the consumer's emotional attachment to the experience biases what is remembered and later conveyed in reviews. Essentially, emotional engagement helps create a positive narrative that overshadows any service failures or discrepancies.

Third, these emotional influences extend into the review writing process. Emotionally engaged consumers are more inclined to express empathy and understanding in their reviews. Even when service failures occur, their cognitive processing—shaped by their emotional attachment—leads them to soften critiques or provide feedback in more constructive, empathetic terms (Tsiros and Mittal, 2000). Some consumers may even choose to withhold negative feedback entirely, consciously deciding not to tarnish the emotional bond they feel with their host or experience (Dunn and Schweitzer, 2005). This phenomenon suggests that emotional engagement creates a cognitive bias toward leniency and forgiveness, where consumers are willing to overlook service shortcomings in favour of preserving the positive emotional memory of the experience (Zajonc, 1980).

In contrast, traditional hotels often elicit less emotional engagement due to their more standardised and impersonal service frameworks. As a result, consumers exhibit a more rational and critical cognitive approach to service evaluation. Without the strong emotional ties that Airbnb fosters, consumers are more likely to process information objectively and focus on tangible service aspects like cleanliness, service speed, and comfort, leading to a transactional mindset. When service failures occur, the absence of emotional buffering results in more direct and unforgiving evaluations. Negative aspects of the stay are not reframed or downplayed, but rather highlighted, leading to harsher reviews. Here, cognitive engagement is more about meeting expectations in a straightforward, measurable way, rather than the subjective, emotionally-driven narratives seen in Airbnb reviews.

The distinction between high emotional engagement services like Airbnb and low emotional engagement services like traditional hotels illustrates the powerful role that emotions play in reshaping cognition. Emotional engagement reconfigures how consumers process service discrepancies, recall events, and ultimately express their experiences in reviews (Pham, 2007; R P Bagozzi et al., 1999). This study suggests that emotional engagement can be strategically leveraged to influence cognitive evaluations. By fostering deeper emotional connections,

service providers can encourage consumers to approach their experiences with greater empathy, leading to higher satisfaction and loyalty, even in the face of minor service failures.

Moreover, the findings imply that emotional engagement not only reshapes moment-to-moment cognitive processing but also affects long-term consumer loyalty and brand attachment. When consumers reflect on their experiences, their emotional memories guide their cognitive evaluations, prompting a more favourable long-term view of the service (Isen, 1993). This could explain why emotionally engaged customers are more likely to return and recommend the service, despite having encountered service issues during their stay. Emotional engagement therefore acts as a cognitive lens, filtering both immediate reactions and long-term perceptions, and reshaping how consumers evaluate the overall quality and value of their experience.

From Emotional to Behavioural

The findings of this research reveal that the emotional reliance and trust consumers develop towards service providers significantly enhance the frequency and intimacy of their interactions, creating exchanges that go beyond mere transactions. These interactions are not limited to the exchange of goods or services for payment but involve meaningful, personal dialogues that enrich the overall consumer experience (Kin et al., 2008). Emotional dependence fosters a deeper level of trust, encouraging consumers to engage in more personal conversations about their preferences and needs, leading to a more tailored service experience (Kim & Sullivan, 2019).

In comparing Airbnb and traditional hotel services, the emotional bonds that guests form with Airbnb hosts often lead to more intimate and frequent interactions, in contrast to the more formal, standardised exchanges typical of traditional hotels. This is largely due to the personalised nature of Airbnb stays, where hosts frequently offer not just accommodation but also their personal spaces, local knowledge, and individualised touches that enhance the guest's experience (Sakr et al., 2024). Such personalisation creates an environment where trust and emotional connection thrive, making guest-host interactions more meaningful and personal.

Moreover, in the Airbnb setting, these personal connections often lead to interactions that transcend conventional service exchanges. For instance, guests and hosts might engage in social activities, share meals, or participate in local events together, contributing to a sense of

community and belonging that is rarely found in traditional hotel environments, where interactions typically end at check-out. This fosters a stronger emotional bond and enhances the guest experience in ways that go beyond the transactional nature of traditional hospitality services.

Building on Brodie et al.'s(2013) work, this research further illustrates how emotional engagement can amplify the cognitive and behavioural dimensions of customer engagement. High levels of emotional engagement not only deepen the consumer's cognitive processing but also intensify their behavioural responses. This interconnectedness suggests that emotions act as a catalyst for stronger overall engagement, influencing how consumers think about and act upon their experiences. Service providers who recognise the importance of emotional connections can craft strategies that enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty, thereby driving value creation.

These findings challenge traditional customer engagement models, which often emphasise cognitive or behavioural engagement at the expense of emotional connections. Instead, this research underscores the necessity of fostering emotional engagement as a core component of the customer experience. By doing so, service providers can create a more holistic engagement strategy that better satisfies consumer needs and strengthens long-term loyalty.

Reciprocity in the Emotional Dimension

Reciprocity, defined as "the equality of perceived investments in and outcomes from a relationship relative to the person's own internal standards" (Pritchard, 1969), plays a vital role in shaping consumer engagement. The perceived equity between investments and outcomes in social exchanges determines the level of reciprocity(Thomas & Rose, 2010). This study's findings show that emotional engagement, catalysed by feelings such as indebtedness, liking, and gratitude(Cialdini, 1993), is central to driving reciprocal behaviour. Emotional exchanges that fulfil others' needs can be both enjoyable and emotionally reinforcing(Arnould & Price, 1993; Bagozzi, 1995), leading to greater reciprocity. As Bagozzi and Dholakia (2006) note, happiness and delight increase people's desire to reciprocate, and positive interactions often result in indirect reciprocal actions (Wasko & Faraj, 2005).

In the context of Airbnb and traditional hotels, this research highlights the crucial role of emotional contagion from hosts to guests, which enhances reciprocity and creates more memorable guest experiences. The emotional engagement guests experience with their hosts

goes beyond individual emotional responses, as it also strengthens cognitive and behavioural engagement. Cognitive engagement, which involves guests' perceptions, beliefs, and expectations of the service, is enriched by the emotional dimension of engagement (Shin and Back, 2020). In Airbnb settings, personalised interactions foster gratitude and appreciation from guests, motivating them to leave positive reviews, recommend the service, and engage in respectful behaviours such as maintaining cleanliness and following house rules.

The study also found that the behavioural dimension of engagement is significantly influenced by emotional factors. Guests who feel emotionally connected to their hosts are more likely to participate actively in the service ecosystem, exhibiting more positive and supportive behaviours. This interconnection between emotional, cognitive, and behavioural engagement suggests that emotional engagement amplifies the depth and intensity of other engagement dimensions. The emotional connection between hosts and guests not only fosters reciprocity but also enhances overall customer satisfaction, loyalty, and value co-creation.

This research provides new insights into how Airbnb fosters stronger emotional connections through personalised guest-host interactions and novel experiences, contrasting with the more transactional relationships observed in traditional hotel data and interviews. Although traditional hotels often maintain professionalism and standardised service quality, they lack the emotional engagement that is central to Airbnb's appeal. The study emphasises that emotional engagement is a critical differentiator between Airbnb and traditional hotels, with Airbnb's ability to foster a sense of belonging, personalisation, and emotional resonance emerging as key drivers of consumer preference and satisfaction.

By comparing these two hospitality models, the research highlights the importance of emotional engagement in shaping consumer behaviour and provides evidence on how platforms like Airbnb leverage personalised experiences to create stronger, more reciprocal relationships. This contributes to the broader understanding of consumer engagement by showing how emotional connections can significantly enhance both cognitive and behavioural engagement in the hospitality industry.

The Manifestation of Behavioural Dimensions in Online Reviews

The behavioural dimension of customer engagement is often defined as a customer's behavioural manifestations that have a brand or firm focus, extending beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers (van Doorn et al., 2010). Therefore, in most existing studies, the focus of customer engagement behaviours is primarily on the specific behaviour of consumers writing online reviews after consumption, as illustrated by examples such as Brodie et al. (2011), Calder et al.(2009), and van Doorn et al.2010). However, there is almost no literature that pays attention to consumers' behavioural interactions with service providers during the service process, especially in terms of analysing how this dimension is reflected in the reviews they write. Regarding the two different types of accommodation services, Airbnb and traditional hotels, the literature has yet to explore the variations in consumer behaviour dimensions extensively. This study aims to explore the interactive behaviour between consumers and service providers.

Communication

In previous studies, Interactions between a customer and a focal object are a key tenet of customer engagement (Brodie, Hollebeek, Juric and Ilic, 2011; Hollebeek, 2011a). Meanwhile, Patterson et al. (2006) pointed out that the equivalent of behavioural engagement dimensions as dimensions of energy and interaction, define consumers' communication with employees, and interaction among consumers, brands, business enterprises, or other consumers, which highlights the importance of communication. According to Sawhney et al. (2005), through such interactions, firms can build long-term, personalised relationships with customers and foster overall engagement. Comparing the two service types, Airbnb provides a range of differentiated accommodations to experience well-being in (fashionable and warm) environments and satisfy guests' curiosity and novelty-seeking. As a result, Airbnb becomes a social option that allows exploring the destination authentically, allocating resources more efficiently (Sánchez-Franco and Aramendia-Muneta, 2023).

The initial findings of this study highlight similarities and differences in communication styles between Airbnb and traditional hotel services. Within the Airbnb context, communication between hosts and guests transpires through a mix of online and offline channels,

encompassing various forms of communication such as consultations, greetings, and detailed property descriptions. These interactions are characterised by dynamic, multi-dimensional online or face-to-face peer-to-peer exchanges. This feature some researchers argue is not mirrored in the conventional service model adopted by traditional hotels (Qiu et al., 2022). The prevailing view of hotels posits a focus on a delivery-centric paradigm that prioritises service quality and facilities over the personal attributes of guests, like age, nationality, gender, or purpose of travel. This perspective, however, tends to stereotype and overlook the evolving nature of traditional hotel services. Contrary to this static view, our findings suggest that traditional hotels are indeed fostering environments that encourage staff engagement and facilitate indirect yet engaging communications among guests, minimising social or physical barriers (H Osman et al., 2019). This study has verified that a significant number of hotels prioritize responding to and booking messages as a means to foster a sense of connection among guests. This approach aims to make guests feel at home, promoting a sense of belonging or allowing them to indulge in hedonistic comforts throughout their stay. As Lugosi (2008) mentioned, consumers will establish communal moments during travel, that is, short-lived emotional bonds that may be built or experienced through hospitality transactions. This short-lived connection will be provided by consumers and services, communication and interaction between the two parties. Arnould and Price (1993) discuss an evolving feeling of communion with friends, family and strangers, and this trend appears stronger in Airbnb. The study supplements existing knowledge by detailing the nuanced differences in interaction styles between Airbnb and traditional hotels. Airbnb's model fosters more personal and intimate interactions, facilitating stronger personal connections and enhancing the overall customer experience. This contrasts with the more formal, efficiency-focused interactions in hotels, often leading to a sense of disconnect due to the lack of personal touch.

The findings in this study support the view that there are two main reasons for the different levels of this trend: 1) Airbnb's communication between guest and host involves more stages (pre-, onsite, and post); and 2) differences in communication methods.

Communication Stages

The findings showed that the journey of communication between Airbnb hosts and guests begins well before the actual arrival, transitioning seamlessly through the stay, and extending beyond departure. This journey is intricately designed to cater to the diverse needs of guests, ranging from facilitating check-ins and check-outs, guiding them about the facilities, to providing general assistance. A feature of the Airbnb experience is the provision of

comprehensive pre-written instructions by hosts, meticulously detailing every aspect of the stay—from accessing the property to utilising its amenities. This proactive approach is met with widespread appreciation from Airbnb users, who find such instructions not only helpful but also integral in streamlining their stay without adding any burden. The perspective that an abundance of information might dampen consumers' purchase intentions due to increased search costs and information overload (Xu et al., 2021). The preferences exhibited by Airbnb consumers serve as a compelling counterargument. The positive reception of detailed host instructions underscores a crucial insight: in certain marketplaces, like Airbnb, consumers value detailed information as it significantly contributes to easing initial anxieties, building trust, and facilitating a more informed decision-making process.

In contrast, the communication stages within traditional hotels adhere to a more standardised approach. The interaction typically commences with a booking confirmation, followed by a set of standard pre-arrival information primarily delivered via email or through hotel booking platforms. While functional, this form of communication rarely achieves the personalised depth of Airbnb's. Once on-site, guest interactions with hotel staff tend to revolve around the formalities of check-in and check-out processes, information requests, and occasional concierge services. Though professional, these interactions often lack the personalised engagement that characterises Airbnb stays, emphasising a more transactional relationship between guest and provider.

As Mossberg (2007) claimed encounters with service personnel and other tourists serve to modify the tourist experience. Under some situations, the absence of direct human contact in these scenarios could, ostensibly, create a sense of detachment or isolation among guests. Yet, the reality is markedly different, thanks to the proactive and thoughtful efforts of Airbnb hosts. This adaptability and flexibility in communication seen in the Airbnb model present a distinct advantage over traditional hotel services, which traditionally rely heavily on face-to-face interactions to deliver their brand of hospitality. While the immediacy of direct service in hotels is invaluable, enabling staff to promptly respond to guest inquiries and provide personalised care, it is not without its challenges. High-volume accommodations often struggle to maintain a consistently personalised experience for each guest, given the operational constraints and the sheer number of guests serviced.

Communication Method

The results claim that the fundamental differences in communication methods between Airbnb and traditional hotels illustrate how these differences can significantly impact the guest experience. In the realm of traditional hotel bookings, whether through an Online Travel Agency or the hotel's own website, the communication typically begins and often ends with a single confirmation email. This approach places the onus on the consumer to actively seek out more information, necessitating further inquiries that usually require navigating through emails or making phone calls—a process that the interviewee finds particularly distasteful, not to mention the lengthy wait times often associated with email correspondence.

Conversely, the Airbnb experience is marked by a more dynamic and immediate form of communication. Following a booking, Airbnb hosts frequently initiate contact with guests through the platform's chat function, sending greetings and notes that not only provide essential information but also establish a welcoming and personal connection right from the start. This method of communication is both more convenient and faster, facilitating easier interaction and information exchange between guests and hosts who have rarely been observed in our data, thereby enhancing the overall experience and ease of obtaining information.

The practice of self-check-in further exemplifies the contrast in communication methods. Within the Airbnb platform, this process is typically supported by direct communication through the platform itself or via instant messaging software, enabling a seamless and personalised check-in experience without the need for face-to-face interaction. The reviews in Table 17 offer concrete examples of this non-face-to-face communication, ranging from hosts proactively calling guests internationally to discuss any concerns before booking, to using the Airbnb platform and other messaging tools like WhatsApp for timely and convenient communication. These interactions not only underscore the feasibility and effectiveness of digital communication methods but also reflect a broader trend towards more flexible and user-friendly hospitality experiences.

The study supplements existing knowledge by detailing the nuanced differences in communication methods between Airbnb and traditional hotels. Airbnb's model, characterised by proactive, immediate, and personalised communication, contrasts sharply with the more passive and standardized communication methods often found in traditional hotel settings.

Interactive Behaviour

Overall, one of the most significant differences between Airbnb and hotels is the role of hosts versus employees. In short, efficient and appropriate interactions between accommodation service providers and guests are critical to guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction with Airbnb and hotels. This study indicates that hotels are better at providing functional services, and Airbnb accommodation services are better at building relationships. Based on the existing literature, one of the key benefits guests seek from their Airbnb stay experience is social interaction (Stollery & Jun 2017).

The desire for social interaction is often viewed as a significant driving force behind Airbnb's growth (Gansky, 2010). In this context, social interaction entails a sense of connection with locals and a feeling of belonging to a group (Kim et al., 2012). Williams and Soutar (2009) highlight that interactions with others, such as hosts, staff, and other customers, in a tourism setting can yield social benefits. Because Airbnb accommodations consist of ordinary people's homes, travellers have the chance to engage with hosts or neighbours (Guttentag, 2015b). Moreover, communication plays a critical role in building trust between hosts and guests and in reducing uncertainty as much as possible (Guttentag, 2015b). This emphasis on social interaction not only enhances the travel experience by fostering a more authentic and localised understanding of the destination but also contributes to a more personalised and meaningful visit. Engaging with local communities allows guests to gain insights into local cultures, traditions, and ways of life, often leading to a deeper appreciation and more memorable experiences. This social dimension of Airbnb stays can distinguish them from traditional hotel accommodations, where such personal interactions are less common. The gamut of host-guest social interactions encompasses a range of activities, including but not limited to the exchange of jokes, sharing of interests or information, and collaborative engagement in events such as dining or cooking together during the accommodation period (Lutz and Newlands, 2018; Sung et al., 2018; Guttentag, 2017). The results of this study show a very interesting phenomenon. Some travellers do not realise that the host's warm attitude and hospitality are a service to them, so they prefer it to be an equal interaction between people. This verifies earlier studies have highlighted the importance of personal interactions with a host in imparting a sense of security and comfort, which are crucial for the pleasure derived from the experience and intentions to return (Lim et al., 2019; Lalicic and Weismayer, 2018). Specifically, the nature and quality of interactions between hosts and guests play a pivotal role in defining the overall guest experience (Tussyadiah and Zach, 2017). It becomes clear that these personal interactions go beyond mere transactional exchanges; they imbue the guest's stay with a

sense of warmth and personal touch, thereby elevating the hedonic value of the accommodation experience. This increased sense of personal security and comfort not only enhances the immediate satisfaction derived from the stay but also fosters a positive overall perception of the host and the platform, which in turn can significantly influence guests' loyalty and their likelihood to recommend the service to others. Furthermore, the qualitative aspect of these interactions, including the depth of conversation, shared experiences, and the genuine interest shown by the host, can transform an ordinary travel experience into an extraordinary one.

Given the nature of the business, hotel staff often don't have time to socialise with guests or spend long periods with them. In traditional hotel services, interactions with consumers can vary widely but typically include professional and formal engagements, such as front desk check-ins, concierge services, room service, daily housekeeping, and assistance from hotel staff regarding inquiries or issues during the stay. These interactions are designed to ensure a smooth, efficient, and standardised service experience, reflecting the hotel's commitment to providing consistent quality and comfort. Given the nature of the business, hotel staff often don't have time to socialise with guests or spend long periods with them. In traditional hotel services, interactions with consumers can vary widely but typically include professional and formal engagements, such as front desk check-ins, concierge services, room service, daily housekeeping, and assistance from hotel staff regarding inquiries or issues during the stay. Thus, studies indicate that in traditional models such as hotels, there are strong institutional settings (Hanaa Osman et al., 2019). Contrarily, peer-to-peer models (Airbnb) present a lower social/physical distance between guests and hosts (Pera et al., 2019). The findings in this research support the relevant literature and noted that interactions in the hotel context are often limited to specific touchpoints such as the reception desk, during room service deliveries, or at hotel facilities like restaurants and fitness centres. This distance is part of the professional service model of hotels, where staff are trained to provide efficient, courteous service while maintaining a level of formality and respect for guests' privacy which ensures that services are delivered with a focus on professionalism and efficiency, rather than the intimate, personalized interactions in Airbnb experiences. Most hotel groups wanted their frontline employees to be professionals and to apply a formal code of conduct with the guests and provide excellent service. In reality, the research results claim that customers wanted and valued more informal interactions with the staff on a personal level and attach more importance to the frontline employees' local knowledge.

The behavioural performance differences between Airbnb and traditional hotels are deeply rooted in their distinct approaches to guest interaction. Airbnb's model fosters an environment where hosts and guests can engage in meaningful exchanges, share insights, and share personal stories that extend beyond simple transactions. This study proposed that differences in the level of self-disclosure bring consumers and service providers closer together, and the level of self-disclosure enriches the guest experience, creating a unique sense of community and belonging not commonly found in the standardised environment of hotels. Furthermore, service provider attitudes lead to differences in the behavioural dimensions of customer engagement across the two service types. The authentic enthusiasm and personalised hospitality provided evidence by Airbnb hosts enhances the appeal of these interactions, making them more memorable and satisfying for guests. In contrast, the formal and efficient nature of hotel services, while professional, often lacks the personal connection and emotional depth that can transform a stay into an experience. In the discovery, many consumers will use words such as "cold" or "unapproachable" to describe the service providers (employees) in the hotel. Interestingly, they also put forward the idea of being able to understand the hotel mechanism. This stark contrast underscores the impact of interpersonal dynamics and service attitudes on shaping the guest experience across different accommodation platforms. Meanwhile, Airbnb guests often prioritise unique experiences and personal interactions over practical concerns like price, service quality, and amenities, focusing on the overall quality of their stay. Factors influencing a consumer's likelihood to recommend a listing prominently include experiences with hosts and the local environment, with adjectives like 'friendly' and 'helpful' frequently used to describe hosts. This challenges the notion that Airbnb users prioritize value, competitive pricing, and accommodation space above all, suggesting a shift from traditional motives for selecting peer-to-peer accommodations over hotels.

Discussion on the Key Themes in Online Reviews of Airbnb and Traditional Hotels

The second research objective is embarked on an exploration of the key themes in online reviews of Airbnb and traditional hotels, aiming to understand how these themes encapsulate consumer satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The analysis revealed distinct and overlapping themes that highlight the nuances of customer engagement across these accommodation options. For many years, the conventional approach to value creation was rooted in a firm-centric perspective, where the roles of producers and customers were distinctly delineated

and mutually exclusive. However, this paradigm no longer aligns with contemporary market demands, evolving towards a more customer-centric viewpoint. In this transformed model, value is collaboratively forged alongside customers, rather than being unilaterally crafted for them (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Michel, Brown, & Gallan, 2008). There are several existing research in hospitality research which focus on Goods-Dominant (G-D) Logic, underlining accommodations and services as tangible commodities, emphasising attributes like infrastructure, location, amenities, and physical quality of service (Tussyadiah and Zach, 2016; Jeaheng et al., 2020). This perspective, while valuable, often reduces the complexity of consumer experiences and preferences to a set of standardized, measurable features, overlooking the nuanced, experiential, and relational aspects that significantly influence consumer satisfaction and engagement.

By integrating insights from these findings, it becomes evident that understanding value creation in the modern hospitality sector, especially within contexts like Airbnb and traditional hotels, requires a focus on the complex network of service flows and organisational evolution. This network is underpinned by the interactions within a whole ecosystem, including not just the service provider and the customer but also other stakeholders who play a role in the experience. This approach highlights how the service-dominant logic can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that drive customer satisfaction and engagement in the hospitality sector.

Key Themes Between Two Service Types

Based on the comprehensive analysis of online reviews for both Airbnb and traditional hotels, the findings explored several key themes that reflect consumer satisfaction or dissatisfaction. These themes, deeply intertwined with the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions of customer engagement, offer insightful contrasts between the two types of hospitality services. They illuminate how different aspects of the service experience influence consumer perceptions and highlight the dynamic nature of value creation in the hospitality industry.

Table 38 Key Themes Between Two Service Types

Key Themes Between Two Service Types				
Super-Theme	Airbnb Theme	Description	Hotel Theme	Description
Personalization	Authentic Local Experiences	Focuses on unique, local, and personal experiences that make the stay feel more integrated with the destination(Pine and Gilmore, 1998).	Service Consistency and Reliability	Guests prioritise standardised, reliable services ensuring comfort and predictability in their stay(Priporas et al., 2017).
Comfort and Atmosphere	Feeling like Home	Emphasizes a cosy, familiar atmosphere that enhances relaxation and a sense of belonging.	Professionalism of Staff	Hotel staff's efficiency and professionalism contribute to the overall quality of the experience(Magnini et al., 2011).
Community and Belonging	Community and Belonging	Highlights the importance of host-guest interactions and connections with other guests, creating a sense of community.	Quality of Amenities and Facilities	Guests focus on the range and quality of facilities, such as pools, gyms, and business services, provided by hotels.
Cleanliness and Value	Cleanliness and Location Convenience	Guests place importance on the cleanliness of the accommodation and the proximity to attractions(lis P. Tussyadiah and Zach, 2017).	Cleanliness and Maintenance	Maintenance and cleanliness are critical factors in hotel reviews, directly impacting guest satisfaction.

Convenience	Location Convenience	Location plays a key role in satisfaction, influencing ease of access to desired attractions and amenities(Guttentag, 2015a).	Location Convenience	Location remains a priority in both Airbnb and traditional hotels, impacting the guest's convenience and experience(Shoval, 2006).
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Similar Theme Between Two Service Types

While Airbnb and traditional hotels offer distinct experiences that cater to different traveller preferences, there are overlapping themes in their online reviews that reflect shared priorities among guests across the hospitality spectrum. These similarities highlight core aspects of the guest experience that are universally valued, regardless of the service type.

Cleanliness

Both Airbnb and traditional hotel guests place a high premium on cleanliness (Godovykh and Tasci, 2020). Reviews across both platforms frequently mention the cleanliness of the accommodations as a critical factor in their overall satisfaction. This focus on cleanliness reflects a universal expectation that, regardless of the type of accommodation, guests want to stay in a space that is well-maintained and hygienic. Cleanliness, as a critical factor, plays a multifaceted role in shaping guest experiences (Guthrie and Brock, 2020). Beyond the basic assurance of hygienic conditions, it conveys a sense of care and attention to detail that enhances guest comfort and trust in the accommodation provider. In the era of heightened health awareness, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, this focus has only intensified, with guests increasingly evaluating their lodging options through the lens of health and safety protocols.

For Airbnb, where accommodations can range from a room in a shared home to a luxury private villa, hosts are tasked with ensuring that their spaces meet high cleanliness standards. The platform has responded to this guest priority by introducing enhanced cleaning protocols and certification programs, enabling hosts to communicate their commitment to cleanliness directly to potential guests. These measures not only aim to meet guest expectations but also to build trust in the safety and quality of Airbnb accommodations.

In traditional hotels, cleanliness has long been a cornerstone of service quality, with established procedures and dedicated staff ensuring that every aspect of the hotel environment meets rigorous standards. The consistency and reliability of cleanliness in hotels form part of their value proposition, offering guests peace of mind when it comes to hygiene. Moreover, many hotels have adapted to the current health-conscious environment by publicly emphasising their cleaning protocols and introducing new measures to safeguard guest health, from increased sanitisation of public spaces to contactless check-ins.

The critical importance of cleanliness in guest satisfaction highlights a shared challenge for both Airbnb hosts and hoteliers: maintaining and communicating high standards of hygiene to meet guest expectations and ensure a competitive edge.

Accurate Descriptions and Expectations Management

This theme best reflects the cognitive dimension of customer engagement explored in this study. When potential guests browse listings on platforms like Airbnb or hotel websites, they engage in a cognitive process of evaluating the provided information, comparing it with their criteria for comfort, convenience, aesthetics, and value. The accuracy and comprehensiveness of the descriptions serve as the foundation for this cognitive evaluation, enabling guests to visualize their stay and anticipate the experience they are likely to have. This visualization process is critical because it allows guests to align their expectations with the reality of what the accommodation provider can offer. When expectations, formed through this cognitive processing, are unmet, it can lead to cognitive dissonance, a psychological discomfort arising from the gap between the belief created by the description and the actual experience. This dissonance often drives dissatisfaction, underscoring the importance of accurate, transparent communication in descriptions.

The study highlights that customers remember instances where their expectations were not met, and such experiences can significantly influence their future choices and their likelihood to recommend the service to others. Conversely, when experiences align with or exceed expectations, it enhances customer satisfaction and contributes to positive memories, fostering brand loyalty and encouraging repeat bookings. Therefore, cognitive processes not only shape initial decisions but also play a crucial role in shaping long-term customer engagement and satisfaction.

In the context of Airbnb, the platform's diversity of offerings—from shared rooms to entire homes—requires hosts to provide detailed, honest descriptions that accurately convey what guests can expect. Findings from this study emphasise the importance of hosts detailing unique attributes of their spaces, including any potential limitations, to ensure that guest expectations are in line with reality. By providing such details, supported by photos and guest reviews, hosts enable potential guests to make informed decisions, reducing the likelihood of dissatisfaction upon arrival.

Similarly, traditional hotels may rely on the clarity and precision of their marketing materials, websites, and booking platforms to communicate the expected standard of service, room features, and available amenities. The promise of a consistent level of quality across a hotel chain sets a clear expectation that the hotel may meet to maintain guest satisfaction and trust in the brand. Any failure to meet these promised standards risks disappointment and the erosion of customer loyalty. This highlights the critical role that cognitive engagement plays in both service models, as it directly influences how guests form expectations and evaluate their experiences.

Value

In the context of Airbnb, the concept of value for money is often tied to the unique advantages the platform offers, such as more spacious accommodations compared to standard hotel rooms, the availability of full kitchens that can reduce dining out expenses, and the inclusion of personal touches or amenities that can enhance the overall quality of the stay. These aspects are particularly appealing to groups of travellers or families who require additional space and facilities, as well as to those who seek a more localised and personalized travel experience. The ability to filter searches by specific needs or desires allows guests to find listings that best match their value expectations, showcasing the platform's versatility in meeting diverse guest requirements at various price points.

Conversely, traditional hotels provide value through different avenues, such as the reliability of service, the convenience of on-site facilities like restaurants, spas, and business centres, and the luxury of certain in-room amenities. Hotels often leverage their brand reputation to assure potential guests of a certain standard of quality and service, which is factored into the guest's perception of value. Loyalty programs and rewards can also enhance perceived value by offering discounts, upgrades, or complimentary services, making guests feel that their purchasing goes further.

The discussion of value in guest reviews serves as an important feedback mechanism for both Airbnb hosts and hoteliers. Airbnb emphasises the importance of accurate listing descriptions that highlight the unique value propositions of a property, including any amenities or experiences that set it apart from traditional hotel offerings. For hotels, it underscores the need to maintain high standards of quality and service while exploring opportunities to add value through personalised experiences or exclusive benefits that justify the cost. While both Airbnb and traditional hotel guests prioritise receiving good value for their purchase, the way this

value is discussed in online reviews reveals a notable contrast between the two service types. This distinction underscores not just differing expectations but also how value is perceived and evaluated within each accommodation type.

From the findings in this study, Airbnb guests, while deeply concerned with value for money, tend to focus less on price in absolute terms when sharing their experiences online. Instead, their reviews often highlight the qualitative aspects of their stay—such as the uniqueness of the accommodation, the personal touches provided by hosts, or the authenticity of the local experience—attributes that are inherently difficult to quantify. When Airbnb guests mention value, it's often in the context of the broader experience offered by the listing, including the additional space, privacy, or amenities like a kitchen (Guttentag, 2015b), which contributes to a sense of receiving more for their enjoy without directly comparing it to a price point. Conversely, in the realm of traditional hotels, online reviews frequently include direct references to price, with guests explicitly weighing the cost of their stay against the perceived quality of the hotel's facilities, services, and amenities. This comparison is a clear indicator of guests conducting a cost-benefit analysis, where the price paid for the room is directly correlated with their expectations for service quality, cleanliness, location convenience, and the luxury level of amenities provided. The discussion of price and value in hotel reviews often reflects a more transactional view of the accommodation experience, where guests have clear benchmarks for what constitutes value for money based on the hotel's category, brand reputation, and the standard rates for similar accommodations in the area.

Location

In the context of Airbnb, value for money is closely tied to the platform's unique offerings, such as spacious accommodations, full kitchens that reduce dining costs, and personalised touches that enhance the stay experience. These features cater to specific traveller needs, particularly families or groups seeking space and a localised experience. Airbnb's ability to match diverse preferences through customisable search filters exemplifies its approach to meeting guest expectations at varying price points (Guttentag, 2015a).

In contrast, traditional hotels provide value through reliability, brand consistency, and convenience, offering on-site amenities like restaurants, spas, and concierge services. Hotels leverage their reputation to assure guests of a standardised level of quality (Xiang, 2018). Additionally, loyalty programs add perceived value, offering repeat guests incentives like discounts and complimentary services (Ladhari and Michaud, 2015).

This study's findings reveal a fundamental difference in how value is perceived in online reviews between Airbnb and traditional hotels. Airbnb reviews frequently focus on qualitative, experiential factors such as unique accommodations and personal interactions, which are harder to quantify but play a significant role in shaping guests' perceptions of value. Traditional hotel reviews, however, emphasise a more transactional view, with guests often comparing price directly to service quality and amenities (Zervas, Proserpio and John W Byers, 2021b). This cost-benefit analysis reflects the more standardised nature of traditional hotels, where expectations are typically aligned with the brand's reputation and market category.

The research highlights that Airbnb guests prioritise the experiential and emotional aspects of their stay, such as personalised interactions and local authenticity, while hotel guests are more focused on the practical aspects of service delivery and amenities. This distinction underscores broader differences in customer engagement between the sharing economy and the traditional service economy. Airbnb fosters a more experience-driven understanding of value, whereas hotels maintain a more price-focused, transactional approach to guest satisfaction. These findings contribute to the understanding of how service models impact customer perceptions and provide actionable insights for hospitality providers seeking to enhance customer engagement (Tussyadiah and Pesonen, 2018).

Service and Service Provider

The findings of this study critically challenge existing frameworks of service quality by demonstrating that customer engagement within Airbnb and traditional hotel contexts extends beyond standardised service delivery, pointing to the importance of emotional and personalised interactions in shaping satisfaction. Traditional service quality metrics—such as cleanliness, staff professionalism, and the range of amenities—are insufficient to fully capture the complexities of customer satisfaction in the sharing economy, where the role of the host is integral to the value-creation process. Unlike hotels, which rely heavily on consistency and formalised service provision, Airbnb's appeal lies in the personal connections and localised experiences provided by hosts, shifting the paradigm from transactional to relational engagement.

This research reveals that the conventional focus on service efficiency in hotels overlooks the critical role of emotional and experiential factors in guest satisfaction. The personalised nature of Airbnb interactions fosters a deeper emotional investment from guests, which not only

enhances their immediate satisfaction but also reinforces long-term loyalty and positive word-of-mouth. The study highlights a gap in the existing literature on service quality by showing that, in Airbnb, the host-guest relationship significantly amplifies perceived value, even when service failures occur. This indicates a shift away from traditional evaluations of service quality, where any deviation from established standards typically results in dissatisfaction. The findings contribute to the broader understanding of how reciprocity and emotional engagement reshape customer expectations and tolerance for service discrepancies, particularly in the sharing economy.

Furthermore, this research provides empirical evidence that challenges the traditional dichotomy between formalised service environments (hotels) and more informal, peer-to-peer services (Airbnb). The study shows that the perceived value derived from Airbnb stays is not purely functional but is heavily influenced by the emotional resonance and social interactions between guests and hosts. This has implications for how service providers, especially in the traditional hotel sector, approach customer engagement and satisfaction. The findings call for a re-evaluation of service quality models in hospitality, suggesting that traditional hotels might benefit from integrating more personalised, experience-driven elements into their service delivery to compete with the relational value offered by Airbnb.

In sum, this study contributes to the understanding of service quality by demonstrating that emotional engagement and reciprocity, particularly in the sharing economy, play a critical role in customer satisfaction. It challenges the dominance of traditional service quality frameworks that prioritise functional aspects over relational ones, offering a nuanced perspective that positions emotional connection as a key driver of value in the hospitality industry. The research thus calls for a reconsideration of how service providers in both traditional and sharing economies define and deliver customer engagement, suggesting that future strategies may account for the interplay between emotional, cognitive, and behavioural dimensions in fostering guest satisfaction.

Different Themes Between Two Service Types

While both Airbnb and traditional hotels serve the fundamental needs of accommodation, the research findings elucidate distinct themes and factors influencing guest satisfaction within Airbnb and traditional hotel contexts, drawing attention to both the similarities and differences in guest preferences and expectations.

Personalisation and Interaction

The evidence presented in this research highlights a profound disconnect between SDL and the contemporary consumer's desire for deeper, more authentic connections during their stay. This disconnect represents a significant limitation of traditional hotels, which continue to operate under the assumption that standardised service provision is the primary driver of customer satisfaction (Guttentag, 2015b).

By contrast, the success of Airbnb, as revealed in the study, underscores the critical importance of Customer-Dominant Logic (CDL) in redefining how value is co-created in hospitality settings (Heinonen et al., 2010). CDL places the consumer at the centre of the value-creation process, emphasising the need for personalised, co-created experiences that engage the guest on both emotional and relational levels. The study demonstrates that Airbnb's model, rooted in CDL, transforms the guest experience from a transactional interaction to a meaningful, relational exchange, where hosts act not merely as service providers but as facilitators of local culture, personal connections, and unique, tailored experiences. This finding highlights a major contribution to the understanding of consumer engagement in the hospitality industry, as it challenges the traditional hotel model to evolve beyond its SDL roots and embrace the more dynamic, guest-centric principles of CDL.

Critically, the research uncovers the limitations of SDL in fostering long-term customer loyalty and satisfaction. Traditional hotels, bound by their operational focus on consistency and standardised service, fail to provide the level of emotional engagement and personalisation that modern travellers increasingly prioritise. This study exposes the inadequacy of these approaches, showing that while hotels may succeed in delivering functional benefits, they are less effective in fostering the emotional and experiential value that drives guest satisfaction in the age of the sharing economy (Zervas et al., 2017). The inability of SDL to accommodate these shifting consumer preferences suggests a fundamental weakness in traditional hospitality models, which this research argues must be addressed through the integration of CDL principles to remain competitive in an evolving market.

Moreover, the study contributes to the literature by empirically demonstrating that Airbnb's success lies not merely in offering an alternative form of accommodation but in its ability to harness CDL to create value through personalised guest-host interactions (Heinonen et al., 2010). These interactions go beyond the scope of traditional hotel services by fostering a sense of community, belonging, and cultural immersion. This critical insight not only extends

our understanding of how value is co-created in service encounters but also highlights the potential for traditional hotels to adopt similar strategies if they are to meet the evolving expectations of modern consumers.

In essence, this research makes a significant contribution by revealing the inherent shortcomings of SDL in traditional hotel operations and advocating for a shift towards CDL. By highlighting the transformative impact of personalised, co-created experiences in the hospitality sector, the study challenges existing service paradigms and calls for a rethinking of how value is delivered to consumers.

Authenticity and Emotional Connection

The results of this study critically highlight the growing divide between the standardised service offerings governed by Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) in traditional hotels and the personalised, authentic experiences rooted in Customer-Dominant Logic (CDL) as exemplified by Airbnb. This differentiation directly reflects the shifting preferences of modern travellers, who increasingly seek emotional connections and authentic interactions rather than functional, standardised accommodations. The findings make a significant contribution to understanding how the hospitality sector is evolving to meet these new consumer demands, particularly in the context of SDL versus CDL.

Airbnb's model, as revealed through the findings, embodies CDL by fostering deeper integration of personal, emotional, and cultural exchanges. The co-creation of value through genuine human interactions between guests and hosts is a critical driver of Airbnb's success, meeting the growing desire for authenticity that travellers increasingly prioritise. This aligns with Wang's (2007) concept of authenticity, where travellers seek accommodations that provide not only a place to stay but also a space for fostering meaningful connections and personal growth. Airbnb hosts, as this research shows, serve as cultural mediators rather than mere service providers, creating an environment that encourages emotional investment from guests. This sharply contrasts with the SDL-based model of traditional hotels, where the emphasis is on consistent service delivery rather than personalised experiences.

The research critically challenges the sufficiency of SDL-governed traditional hotels in addressing the evolving demands of the modern traveller. While hotels, as noted by Xiang (2018), have attempted to incorporate local culture into their services, they often fall short of the intimate, authentic exchanges that Airbnb facilitates. The hotel industry's reliance on

professionalism, predictability, and standardisation, while ensuring service consistency, struggles to capture the essence of local culture in the same way as Airbnb. The study reveals that the emotional connections forged in Airbnb settings—through shared stories, personalised recommendations, or unique local experiences—serve as significant differentiators that SDL-driven traditional hotels cannot easily replicate. This reflects a fundamental limitation in SDL-based hospitality models, where emotional engagement is secondary to operational efficiency.

Moreover, the findings contribute to a broader understanding of the shift from SDL to CDL within the hospitality industry. Traditional hotels, operating under SDL, focus on delivering a consistent product where value is embedded in tangible outputs like room quality and professional service. In contrast, Airbnb, operating within CDL, emphasises value co-creation through personalised interactions, where the guest plays an active role in shaping their own experience. This study's identification of emotional engagement as a key driver of guest satisfaction in Airbnb further challenges the traditional hotel sector to rethink its service delivery approach. The findings advocate for a move beyond standardised offerings to more dynamic, relationship-based models that foster deeper emotional connections with guests, in line with CDL principles.

In conclusion, the study makes a significant contribution by demonstrating that the hospitality industry is at a crossroads, where the SDL-driven emphasis on standardisation is increasingly misaligned with the demand for personalised, authentic experiences promoted by CDL. This shift is not merely a preference but represents a fundamental transformation in how value is perceived and co-created in hospitality. By positioning Airbnb as a leader in this evolution, the research calls on traditional SDL-based hotels to adapt their service models or risk losing relevance in a market increasingly embracing CDL principles. The findings underscore the need for SDL-based hotels to incorporate more authentic, emotionally engaging experiences that align with the expectations of the modern traveller.

Gratitude

This research critically highlights the distinct ways in which gratitude is expressed and shaped by the varying forms of customer engagement within traditional hotels, governed by Service-Dominant Logic (SDL), and Airbnb, operating under Consumer-Dominant Logic (CDL). The findings provide a deeper understanding of how gratitude as an emotional response is not only different across these two contexts but is also tied to the respective service models they

embody. This exploration marks a significant contribution to hospitality research, filling a notable gap in the literature concerning the role of gratitude in customer engagement within the sector.

In the context of Airbnb, gratitude emerges as a personal and emotionally resonant experience, deeply intertwined with the unique, intimate interactions between guests and hosts. The study identifies that gratitude in Airbnb settings is not merely a response to a satisfactory service outcome but is rooted in the co-created experiences between the host and guest. This aligns with CDL, where the guest is an active participant in shaping their stay, and the host's personalised attention fosters a profound emotional connection. Airbnb guests express gratitude not just for the tangible aspects of their stay but for the sense of belonging, the cultural immersion, and the personalised care they receive—elements that are core to CDL's focus on value co-creation through experience and interaction.

In contrast, traditional hotels, under SDL, emphasise the delivery of standardised, high-quality services, with gratitude typically stemming from the efficient and professional execution of these services. The study reveals that while guests may feel grateful for exceptional service in a hotel setting—such as an upgrade or special attention from staff—the nature of this gratitude is more transactional, reflecting the hotel's SDL-driven emphasis on consistent service provision. The emotional depth and personal connection that characterise gratitude in Airbnb are often absent, as hotel services are designed to meet expectations through professionalism rather than personalised engagement.

However, the research also underscores moments where these two models intersect, offering a nuanced understanding of how both SDL and CDL elements can co-exist. For instance, when hotels personalise services beyond the standardised framework—engaging with guests on a more emotional and personal level—there are elements of CDL that enhance guest satisfaction and deepen the expression of gratitude. Similarly, Airbnb hosts, when providing efficient, professional-level services, integrate SDL principles into their offerings, demonstrating that the boundaries between SDL and CDL are not rigid.

The key contribution of this study lies in its identification of how gratitude, as a critical emotional response, differs not only in expression but also in the underlying service dynamics that provoke it. By comparing SDL and CDL-driven service models, this research illustrates that while both traditional hotels and Airbnb foster gratitude, the depth, nature, and triggers of this gratitude are fundamentally shaped by the broader service logic at play. For SDL-driven hotels,

gratitude is often a response to service efficiency and professionalism, whereas in CDL-driven Airbnb settings, gratitude is more personal and rooted in emotional connections, reflecting a broader shift in the hospitality industry toward experiential and emotionally resonant value creation.

This research challenges traditional hospitality models to rethink their approach to service delivery, advocating for a more integrated model that blends the strengths of both SDL and CDL. By doing so, traditional hotels could foster deeper emotional engagement and enhance guest experiences, moving beyond mere service provision to creating lasting emotional impacts that build loyalty and trust. Similarly, Airbnb hosts can benefit from incorporating SDL's focus on professionalism and service consistency, balancing the personal and professional to cater to the evolving expectations of modern travellers. In this way, the study advances our understanding of how gratitude, as a key driver of customer engagement, can be strategically cultivated across different hospitality settings, contributing to a richer, more nuanced theory of consumer behaviour in the industry

Sense of Belonging

The findings from this study reveal a significant distinction in how belongingness is fostered within Airbnb's Consumer-Dominant Logic (CDL) framework compared to the Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) typically seen in traditional hotels. This distinction is not merely a byproduct of differing service models but a fundamental shift in the way value is co-created between service providers and guests. The prominence of belongingness in Airbnb highlights a core contribution of this research, emphasising the growing importance of personalised, co-created experiences that transcend mere service provision (Grönroos and Voima, 2013; Heinonen et al., 2010). In Airbnb settings, belongingness is not an optional add-on but rather an integral aspect of the value proposition, driven by personal interactions and emotional engagement with hosts. This personalisation aligns with CDL, where the consumer plays an active role in shaping their own experience, fostering deeper emotional connections that make guests feel integrated into the local culture and community (Heinonen and Strandvik, 2015).

The results challenge the traditional hotel model, which, despite offering high-quality, consistent services under SDL, falls short of cultivating the same depth of emotional connection and belongingness. Traditional hotels' reliance on professionalism and consistency creates a sense of reliability but lacks the personal, emotional engagement that has become a hallmark of platforms like Airbnb (Lusch & Vargo, 2014). While hotels may

attempt to bridge this gap through loyalty programs or personalised touches, these efforts are typically standardised and do not generate the same emotional resonance that emerges from the host-guest relationship in Airbnb (Guttentag, 2015b).

This study's findings significantly contribute to understanding the limitations of SDL in addressing the evolving expectations of modern travellers. The research critiques the traditional hotel industry's emphasis on predictability and service efficiency, revealing that this approach may be increasingly out of sync with consumer desires for authentic, meaningful experiences that foster a sense of belonging. Airbnb's model, which prioritises relational exchanges and co-creation of value, better aligns with the emotional needs of travellers, offering a more dynamic and flexible service experience (Tussyadiah and Pesonen, 2016).

By highlighting the importance of belongingness in consumer satisfaction, this research offers a critical perspective on how the hospitality industry must evolve to remain competitive. The study suggests that traditional hotels, operating under SDL, should move beyond standardised service delivery and incorporate more elements of CDL if they are to foster the emotional connections that drive loyalty in the sharing economy (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). Hotels that fail to adapt to this shift risk becoming irrelevant in a market increasingly dominated by platforms that prioritise co-creation, personalisation, and emotional engagement over standardised service provision (Joseph and Gilmore, 1988).

Ultimately, this research advances the theoretical understanding of belongingness within hospitality, demonstrating that value creation in the modern hospitality landscape is increasingly tied to emotional and social interactions, rather than the mere provision of goods or services. By positioning Airbnb as a leader in this paradigm shift, the study provides critical insights into the future of hospitality, where the emphasis will likely continue to move towards CDL-driven models that place consumers at the heart of the value-creation process (Heinonen et al., 2013). Traditional hotels, still entrenched in SDL, may recognise this shift and reconsider their approach to service if they wish to remain relevant in an industry that is rapidly evolving towards more personalised, authentic guest experiences.

From Goods-Dominant Logic to Service-Dominant Logic and Customer-Dominant Logic

Goods-Dominant Logic(GDL) primarily focuses on "products," encompassing both tangible items and intangible services, as the central elements of economic exchange(Paunonen, 2019; Clauß et al., 2014; Järvensivu and Helsingin Kauppakorkeakoulu., 2010). This perspective posits that products, the fundamental units of exchange, are inherently valuable due to the value infused into them during their production, whether through manufacturing, agriculture, or extraction processes. GDL underscores the efficiency of producing these goods away from the consumer, aiming for standardised, stackable outputs. This approach implies that the value is created and embedded within these goods before any customer interaction, with the transactional exchange marking the transfer of value from producer to consumer.

In contrast, Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) and Customer-Dominant Logic (CDL) present alternative perspectives on value creation(Refaie, 2021), particularly relevant in the service industry. SDL posits that value is co-created through interactions between providers and consumers, emphasising the importance of customisation, personalisation, and the consumer's active role in the service experience(Tommasetti et al., 2017). In this model, the consumer is not a passive recipient of a pre-defined service but an active participant in shaping the service experience. For instance, in the hospitality industry, traditional hotels, which align with SDL, emphasise pre-packaged, standardised services where value is embedded into the service offerings during the design and development phase before interaction with the customer. This approach is aimed at ensuring consistency and reliability across various customer segments and locations, focusing on efficiency and scalability.

However, the emergence of CDL, exemplified by platforms like Airbnb, challenges these traditional notions. CDL centres on consumer centrality, making consumers the primary focus rather than the service provider(Dass and Kumar, 2014). This consumer dominance includes brand-related interactions that occur independently of corporate agent relationships, potentially impacting the organisation both positively and negatively. Airbnb's model epitomises a "collaborative lifestyle" where individuals with common interests share and exchange time, space, knowledge, experiences, culture, skills, and even money. Staying at an Airbnb allows guests to create personalised experiences with hosts, providing a distinctive value proposition that contrasts with the standardised services of traditional hotels.

Under CDL, value cannot be fully realised until the service is consumed, with the consumer's inputs and experiences integral to the value creation process. This active role extends beyond mere consumption to include feedback, customisation requests, and involvement in the design of the service itself. For example, Airbnb hosts often provide personalised recommendations, share local insights, and engage in activities with guests, enhancing the overall experience and contributing to a more personalised, memorable stay.

Moreover, CDL underscores the significance of knowledge and skills exchange between providers and consumers. In this collaborative engagement, both parties contribute resources—be it information, preferences, or expertise—to enhance the value of the service (Viglia et al., 2023). This exchange is not unidirectional but a reciprocal interaction that enriches the experience for both the provider and the consumer.

The findings from this research challenge the Goods-Dominant Logic by illustrating how customer engagement in the hospitality industry, particularly through platforms like Airbnb, extends beyond mere transactions to involve a complex interplay of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions. Traditional hotels, operating under SDL, emphasise standardised service delivery, focusing on efficiency and consistency. In contrast, Airbnb, operating under CDL, leverages the active participation of consumers in the co-creation of value, offering personalised and unique experiences that break the conventional GDL stereotypes of traditional hotels. This shift underscores the evolving nature of customer engagement and the need for traditional service models to adapt to more consumer-centric approaches that prioritise individual experiences and interactions.

Cognitive Dimension

Cognitive engagement, as it pertains to the hospitality industry, involves the mental processes that customers undergo as they gather information, form expectations, and make decisions regarding their accommodations. From the findings, this research has suggested that this engagement is not a passive receipt of what the service industry offers but an active, information-driven journey that begins long before the actual purchase or consumption of the service. Customers today, empowered by the digital revolution, embark on this journey armed with a wealth of information sourced from service providers' descriptions, peer reviews, and shared experiences online (Dwivedi et al., 2021). In this context, cognitive engagement

challenges the GDL by emphasising the importance of information and knowledge exchange. Unlike the static, one-dimensional value proposition of GDL, cognitive engagement within the hospitality industry illustrates a dynamic, multi-dimensional process of value co-creation.

Service-Dominant Logic(SDL) and Customer-Dominant Logic (CDL) provide a contrasting perspective to GDL. SDL posits that value is co-created through interactions between providers and consumers, emphasising customisation and personalisation. Traditional hotels, aligned with SDL, focus on pre-packaged, standardised services where value is embedded during the design and development phase before interaction with the customer. However, the emergence of Customer-Dominant Logic (CDL), exemplified by platforms like Airbnb, challenges these traditional notions by placing the consumer at the centre of the value-creation process. CDL underscores the significance of cognitive engagement, where customers actively participate in shaping their experiences. For instance, when prospective guests browse through Airbnb listings, they are not merely looking at the physical attributes of a property. Instead, they engage in a cognitive process, piecing together information about the host's responsiveness, the authenticity of the accommodation experience, and the alignment of the service with their expectations and preferences. This process elevates the role of information from mere background context to a central component of the value proposition itself.

Moreover, the cognitive dimension of customer engagement transcends the boundaries of standardised services by advocating for the customisation and personalisation of experiences. The information exchanged during the cognitive engagement phase enables service providers to tailor their offerings to meet the nuanced needs and preferences of each customer, further deviating from the G-D logic's emphasis on uniformity and standardisation. This tailored approach is particularly evident in how Airbnb hosts can modify their communication, recommendations, and even their service based on the specific interests and feedback of their guests, thus enriching the overall customer experience and satisfaction.

Emotional Dimension

Unlike the traditional focus on transactions and the inherent value of standardised services, the emotional dimension underscores the importance of personal connections, the authenticity of experiences, and the profound impact of feeling "at home" on customer satisfaction and loyalty. Goods-Dominant Logic (GDL), with its roots in the tangible production and exchange of goods, posits that value is embedded within the product or service itself, before any

customer interaction (Skålén & Edvardsson, 2016). This perspective inherently limits the scope of value creation to the functional attributes of the service, overlooking the emotional connections that can significantly enhance the customer experience. In the context of the hospitality industry, traditional hotels have largely operated within this logic, focusing on the delivery of standardised services with consistent quality across locations. This perspective has predominated the service industry, advocating for efficiency, consistency, and the scalability of services, with a focus on the tangible attributes of what is being offered to consumers.

However, the emotional dimension of customer engagement, particularly highlighted by the experiences shared by Airbnb users, suggests a significant paradigm shift. The emergence of CDL, exemplified by platforms like Airbnb, challenges these traditional notions by placing the consumer at the centre of the value-creation process. Airbnb experiences often include hosts who go above and beyond in making guests feel welcomed, such as by providing personalised local recommendations or creating an environment that feels more like a home than a rental. These instances exemplify the emotional value that guests attribute to their stays, which goes beyond the physical attributes of the accommodation. Such emotional engagements are seen as integral components of the value proposition, underscoring that the essence of value in hospitality extends well into the realm of personal connections and the authenticity of experiences.

Furthermore, the analysis within the findings explored a preference for accommodations that offer a sense of belonging and an opportunity to live like a local. These preferences challenge the GDL by demonstrating that value for consumers is not static or universally defined but is dynamically co-created through interactions that have a significant emotional component. The emphasis on storytelling and shared experiences, as facilitated by platforms like Airbnb, further challenges the traditional G-D framework, and further beyond the SDL. It shows that value creation is not confined to the delivery of standardised services but encompasses the pre-experience phase where customers form emotional connections and set expectations based on the narratives shared by others.

In summary, the findings from this research challenge the Goods-Dominant Logic by illustrating how customer engagement in the hospitality industry, particularly through platforms like Airbnb (CDL), extends beyond mere transactions to involve a complex interplay of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions.

Behavioural Dimension

The result presents a rich presence of customer experiences, where interactions with hosts or service providers leave a lasting impact, deeply influencing customer satisfaction and perception of value. For example, reviews often detail moments of genuine connection, such as hosts going out of their way to ensure a comfortable stay, offering personalised local tips, or simply engaging in meaningful conversations that enrich the guest's experience. These instances shared through online platforms underscore the significance of behavioural engagement in the value creation process, highlighting that value is not static and embedded by the provider but is dynamically shaped through social interactions and shared narratives.

One profound finding in this study is how customers often attribute their overall positive evaluation of their stay not just to the physical amenities or the aesthetic appeal of the accommodation, but significantly to the quality of interaction with their hosts. This suggests a paradigm shift from viewing services as discrete transactions to understanding them as ongoing relational exchanges that significantly influence customer perceptions of value.

Moreover, the shared experiences online serve as a testament to the experiential and relational nature of value in the hospitality sector. When customers mention their interactions with service providers, they not only contribute to their personal narrative of the stay but also influence the decision-making process of potential future guests. This participatory aspect, where customer actions and shared experiences contribute to the collective construction of value, challenges the Goods-Dominant Logic (GDL) by illustrating that value cannot be fully predetermined at the point of production. Instead, it is continually co-created and redefined through customer engagement and the sharing of experiences.

Furthermore, these documented interactions and shared narratives through online reviews play a critical role in shaping the service standards and expectations within the hospitality industry. They act as a feedback loop, informing service providers about what aspects of the interaction are most valued by customers, thereby guiding future improvements and innovations in service delivery. Overall, the behavioural dimension, as highlighted by customer interactions and their subsequent sharing through online reviews, reveals that value is not merely a product of the service provided but is significantly influenced by the quality of interpersonal engagements between customers and service providers. This dynamic conception of value emphasises the importance of fostering meaningful connections and

actively engaging with customers to co-create personalised and memorable experiences that resonate well beyond the confines of traditional service transactions.

Discussion on the Impact of Reciprocity on Online Reviews in Airbnb and Traditional Hotels

Despite the recognition of gratitude as a crucial emotional response in consumer behaviour studies, its specific applications within the hospitality industry remain underexplored (Watkins et al., 2006). Gratitude, conceptualized as an emotional reaction that acknowledges and appreciates the actions of a service provider, plays an essential role in fostering positive relationships between customers and service providers (Mathews & Green, 2009). This emotional response is not merely incidental but directly contributes to enhancing relationship quality through its influence on trust and satisfaction, which are pivotal in service settings (Jin et al., 2017). These emotional dimensions of engagement suggest that gratitude can be a critical factor in creating long-term loyalty and value co-creation in the hospitality industry.

This research offers a significant contribution by identifying that expressions of gratitude in hospitality settings are not only differentiated but also shaped by the varying logics of service provision. In Airbnb settings, where Customer-Dominant Logic (CDL) prevails, gratitude is deeply intertwined with the personal interactions and unique experiences provided by hosts. These interactions often lead to bespoke experiences, which might involve personal gestures like offering local insights, organizing transportation, or creating a welcoming environment akin to a home (Heinonen et al., 2010). Such personalized acts foster a sense of emotional connection, enhancing the guest's feeling of being valued on an individual level. The study identifies that gratitude, in the context of Airbnb, is often a more profound and personal response, underpinned by the emotional bonds formed between guest and host. This type of emotional engagement aligns with CDL, where value is co-created through meaningful, relational exchanges that extend beyond transactional service delivery (Camilleri & Neuhofer, 2017).

Conversely, in traditional hotel settings governed by Service-Dominant Logic (SDL), gratitude arises from high-quality, professional service that meets or exceeds guest expectations. This aligns with the principles of Goods-Dominant Logic (GDL), where the focus remains on the delivery of tangible, standardised services like room cleanliness, timely check-ins, or the efficiency of staff (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). Gratitude in this context is typically triggered when

service providers go above and beyond the expected norms, offering personalised touches or problem-solving in ways that enhance the guest experience. However, this gratitude, while sincere, often lacks the personal, relational depth found in Airbnb interactions, primarily because the hotel service framework emphasises operational efficiency and standardised care.

What this study critically highlights is that gratitude in the hospitality industry operates differently depending on the service logic in place. In Airbnb's CDL framework, gratitude emerges from personal connections and co-created experiences, while in hotels operating under SDL, gratitude is more transactional, focused on service efficiency and professional care. Both environments show moments where the opposing logic may integrate: hotels may incorporate CDL when staff personalise service, and Airbnb may embody SDL when hosts provide professional-level service (Guttentag, 2015). This nuanced understanding of gratitude in the hospitality industry contributes to the broader discussion on how service models may evolve to meet the emotional and relational needs of modern travellers.

Reciprocity in online reviews

Reciprocity is also a key dimension to understanding and stimulating social exchanges (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Under the umbrella of this broad understanding of reciprocity in the literature, one finds two related concepts, social exchange and economic exchange, which are mentioned as much of management research pivots on them. Reciprocity is central to social exchange theory and is an important construct for eWOM participation (Hossain et al., 2019). During a social exchange, an individual evaluates the ratio of what they contribute to the relationship compared to what they receive in return, as well as the ratio of what the other party contributes to what they receive. According to Equity Theory, a relationship is considered equitable when individuals perceive that the relative outcomes they gain from the exchange are proportional to their inputs (Watkins et al., 2006; ADAMS, 1965). In other words, individuals gauge whether they are receiving a fair return for the efforts or resources invested in the exchange (Glass & Wood, 1996). A perception of inequity in an exchange results in a feeling of indebtedness (Gouldner, 1960). Such a feeling motivates individuals to commit to a reciprocal behaviour to avoid being perceived as socially insensitive (Mathews & Green, 2009). Meanwhile, reciprocity is the behavioural response to a perceived kindness or unkindness. Substantial evidence suggests that people help those who help others (Baker and Bulkley, 2014). In the absence of clear transactional norms, perceptions of

reciprocity offer inferred moral rules that guide interdependent behaviours across users (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). The norm of reciprocity is motivational; it provokes a person's innate desire to repay a favour, typically driven by a feeling of indebtedness (Greenberg, 1980). Posting reviews is considered a voluntary behaviour entailing customers or travellers to spend their time and/or effort. Thus, without any external intervention, the number of travellers who write online reviews may be considerably less than that of travellers who only read such reviews. Reciprocity in the context of online reviews can be understood as a consumer's response to a perceived benefit or value received during their interaction with a service or product. When consumers feel that they have received exceptional service or an outstanding product experience, they may feel a sense of obligation to reciprocate the favour. This reciprocity is not monetary but communicative; by writing a positive review, consumers are effectively giving something back to the service provider.

Reputation holds significant weight in transactions on Airbnb, given that guests and hosts often interact in person, frequently within the host's primary residence. Similar to findings in other research, reviews on Airbnb tend to be overwhelmingly positive. In this study, the majority of reviews rate hosts with five out of five stars, a rating much higher than what is typically observed in traditional hotels. Research findings from a survey on hotel booking intentions revealed that favourable online word-of-mouth significantly boosts booking intentions, attitudes, and trust (Ladhari and Michaud, 2015). Notably, Airbnb ratings surpass conventional hotel ratings on TripAdvisor by a considerable margin (Zervas et al., 2017). While these positive ratings may accurately reflect guests' positive experiences, they might also be influenced by various biases. This bias may stem from the fact that stays on Airbnb often incorporate a social component, with guests typically communicating with hosts about room availability and check-in details. Additionally, social interactions frequently occur during the stay, whether through shared use of a living room or kitchen, or through more deliberate engagements such as hosts offering to show guests around town, or guests seeking advice from their hosts. The nature of these interactions may also vary, depending on whether the host is a professional managing multiple listings or an individual renting out their residence. The interview results indicate that this social aspect can influence reviewing behaviour, as many guests report feeling awkward about leaving a negative review after having interacted with their host. Respondents frequently mentioned that they don't want the host to feel bad and don't want to hurt the host's reputation. In this study, the positive trends in traditional hotel reviews appear to be lower than those for Airbnb. On the one hand, operates under a more standardised service model. Guests are often treated professionally but impersonally, leading to a transactional relationship. This relationship, while effective for consistent service delivery,

lacks the deeper connections that can inspire positive reviews. Additionally, the service provided is often perceived as an expected part of the payment, which may reduce the likelihood of guests reciprocating with positive reviews. Guests on Airbnb often feel a stronger emotional connection, perceiving their stay as a home-like experience. This emotional engagement can lead to positive reviews that highlight both the physical aspects of the stay and the intangible elements, such as the warmth and hospitality of the host. This duality of experience promotes both emotional and cognitive engagement, resulting in reviews that reflect a comprehensive and positive guest experience. In traditional hotels, reviews tend to focus more on cognitive elements, such as room quality, amenities, and service efficiency. This cognitive engagement, while important, may not evoke the same emotional responses that lead to positive reviews. Additionally, the cognitive focus can make guests more critical of their experiences, further lowering the likelihood of overwhelmingly positive reviews. In contrast, it may reflect a more neutral or negative trend, as guests feel less socially obligated to reciprocate positively. The lack of a personal relationship or bilateral rating system may also make them more likely to focus on any shortcomings or negative experiences.

The contribution of this research is a significantly enhanced understanding of the dynamics of reciprocity and its impact on online reviews, particularly within the context of digital hospitality platforms like Airbnb and traditional hotels. By demonstrating that a perceived obligation to reciprocate exceptional service can lead to more positive online reviews, this study sheds light on a critical aspect of consumer behaviour that is pivotal for platforms where reviews play a substantial role in shaping consumer choices and influencing market dynamics. Specifically, the finding that guests are likely to post positive reviews as a non-monetary form of reciprocating perceived benefits enhances our knowledge of voluntary consumer behaviours in digital environments. This insight is valuable as it helps to explain the often observed discrepancy between the positivity of online reviews and the actual quality of service or experience provided. By elucidating the psychological mechanisms that drive such behaviour, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how and why consumers participate in eWOM (electronic word-of-mouth) activities. Moreover, this contribution is not just theoretical but has practical implications for the management of online platforms and service providers. Understanding that consumers feel a sense of indebtedness that compels them to leave positive reviews allows businesses to strategize more effectively around customer service and engagement. It emphasises the importance of creating positive interactions and experiences that prompt this reciprocal behaviour, which can lead to enhanced reputations and potentially greater business success in highly competitive markets.

From Emotional Dimension to Behavioural Dimension: From Gratitude to Reciprocity

In the context of online reviews for both Airbnb and traditional hotels, the emotional dimension plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer behaviour, particularly through the progression from gratitude to reciprocity. This transition from an emotional response to behavioural action is essential to understanding how guest experiences influence the hospitality industry. Geetha et al. (2017) explored the correlation between guests' ratings and review sentiment within the tourism and hospitality sector. While their research rigorously examines this correlation within the conventional hotel industry, they omit to provide a theoretical underpinning for this association. Given that guests' ratings symbolise customer satisfaction within the Airbnb context, they are likely influenced by guests' emotions, which have been extensively identified as pivotal determinants of satisfaction. For instance, Chang (2017) posits that consumption emotions comprise a spectrum of emotional reactions elicited by consumption encounters and highlights their strong correlation with customer satisfaction.

Gratitude, a positive affective response induced by the receipt of a benefit, elicits the psychological impulse to restore social balance through reciprocal action (Emmons and McCullough, 2004). Theoretical development and empirical examinations of gratitude and reciprocity are well represented within the psychology literature. Studies have demonstrated the lasting impact of gratitude on relationships (Algoe and Haidt, 2009) and psychological well-being (Emmons & McCullough, 2004), the distinction of gratitude from other positive affect and social exchange constructs (Watkins et al., 2003), and the separation of trait gratitude from state gratitude (Wood et al., 2008). Gratitude is a key emotional response from positive interactions with hosts or service providers. In Airbnb settings, guests may feel grateful for personalised services, such as tailored accommodations, local insights, and attentive care. Similarly, in traditional hotels, guests may experience gratitude when receiving unexpected upgrades, personalised amenities, or exceptional customer service. This gratitude, beyond being a simple emotional response, lays the groundwork for further reciprocal behaviours. It creates a positive emotional bond between the guest and the provider, fostering a deeper connection that extends beyond the immediate experience. Gratitude then transitions into a behavioural dimension, manifesting as reciprocal actions. This reciprocity is particularly evident in online reviews, where guests express their gratitude by writing positive feedback, highlighting the aspects of their stay that exceeded their expectations. These reviews serve as a tangible form of reciprocation, acknowledging the provider's efforts and contributing to the provider's reputation and future success.

Except for the interaction or communication within the stay, customer reciprocity finally manifests as writing reviews, which significantly influences the cognitive perceptions and purchasing decisions of potential future customers. The reviews generated from these reciprocal actions play a critical role in shaping the cognitive perceptions of potential customers. By sharing detailed accounts of their experiences, guests provide future consumers with valuable information regarding the quality of the service, the professionalism of the provider, and the overall satisfaction of the stay. This information helps potential customers form accurate expectations, making them more confident in their purchasing decisions. In addition to shaping cognitive perceptions, these reviews act as a guiding force for consumer decisions. The detailed insights and feedback from past guests influence how potential customers evaluate and compare different service providers. Positive reviews highlighting exceptional service, personalised touches, and unique experiences can sway potential customers toward choosing a particular Airbnb or hotel, while constructive feedback can inform service providers of areas for improvement, ultimately leading to a cycle of value creation that benefits both consumers and businesses.

Here this research has explored how emotions, particularly gratitude, play a critical role in shaping consumer behaviour from an emotional response to a behavioural action, such as writing reviews. By exploring the progression from gratitude to reciprocity, the research fills a gap left by previous studies.

The Impact of Reciprocity on the Authenticity of Online Reviews

The significance of word-of-mouth stands firmly established, particularly within information retrieval and purchase decision-making realms, notably within the tourism and hospitality sectors (Liu and Park, 2015). The advent of social media and digital platforms has significantly magnified its impact. Whereas traditional WOM is constrained within a relatively limited social circle, online word-of-mouth(online review) transcends geographical boundaries, reaching a global audience. Compared to official brand messages, which are often viewed as crafted for marketing purposes(Muda and Hamzah, 2021), online reviews usually represent consumers' judgements since they are readily available, provided on a purely voluntary basis, and offer rich insights about consumers' experiences and perceptions(Le et al., 2023), which resonates strongly with audiences. Consequently, through online reviews, consumers can access comments that are more balanced and unbiased from other individuals, helping to diminish

the risks and uncertainties associated with making purchases(Watson and Wu, 2022). Authenticity in these reviews significantly influences consumer motivations and the memorability of experiences(Cohen, 1988). Authenticity is frequently defined as a characteristic that portrays a product, service, or experience as genuine, real, or faithful to its original form (Abarca, 2004). The pursuit of authenticity and genuine experiences is evident in contemporary society, whether it be in the context of product purchases (Chiu et al., 2012) or recreational activities (Yeoman et al., 2007; Maccannell, 1973). Safaaa et al.(2017) examined how the term ‘authenticity’ is used in commercial and tourism brochures and its relevance to the actual travel experience.

Authentic is a term often defined as being real, trustworthy, original, and distinct from anything copied, reproduced, or imaginary (Molleda, 2010). Prior research in consumer behaviour has argued that consumers constantly quest for the “authenticity” of a website and its contents (Koiso-Kanttila, 2005). Authentic content, which is generated by both the website and its users, is meant to be original, credible, trustworthy, reliable, genuine, real, and actual as opposed to artificial, fake, second-hand, and copied (Napoli et al., 2014). Travellers cannot experience services without visiting the accommodation places in person. Therefore, within this digital context, customers’ perceptions about the authenticity of online reviews generated by other (virtual) users can influence their perceptions, attitudes, and behaviour (or purchase intention) toward all digital tourism products on the mega review sites (Evrard and Krebs, 2018).

From the results, it is evident that consumer expressions in online reviews do not often guarantee authenticity. Guests may conceal certain negative experiences or dissatisfactions, and this can be closely tied to reciprocity. The desire to reciprocate for additional benefits received during their stay, such as personalised services or special accommodations, can lead guests to write more positive reviews or avoid mentioning areas of discontent. This tendency is especially prevalent in Airbnb reviews, where the social component of stays often amplifies the reciprocal dynamic.

In traditional hotels, reciprocity often emerges from personalised services or unexpected benefits that significantly enhance the guest's stay. Examples include complimentary room upgrades, personalised greetings from staff, or additional services such as extended check-out times or special amenities tailored to individual preferences. These benefits create a sense of being valued and cared for, evoking feelings of gratitude in guests, which can then transition into a behavioural response in the form of reciprocal actions. This response is particularly evident in online reviews, where guests express gratitude by acknowledging these

personalised services and highlighting the hotel's efforts to exceed their expectations. Such reviews provide positive feedback that not only contributes to the hotel's reputation but also reinforces the value of personalised services in fostering reciprocal relationships with guests. However, this reciprocity does not lead to concealing negative aspects of the experience as strongly as in Airbnb reviews. Interviews with guests reveal that while most respondents claim their reviews are based entirely on their authentic experiences when asked specifically about leaving negative reviews for Airbnb, many tend to backtrack on this assertion.

As a result of self-disclosure in this research, the dynamics of information exchange within interpersonal interactions catalyse the evolution of relationships. As individuals engage in self-disclosure and sharing personal information and experiences, they create a platform for mutual understanding and connection. This act not only allows for a deeper understanding of one another but also sets the stage for reciprocal disclosure from the other party. When individuals reciprocate by sharing their information, it signifies a willingness to engage and invest in the relationship. This responsiveness fosters a sense of trust and intimacy, laying a strong foundation for relationship development (Jean Philippe Laurenceau et al., 1998). Moreover, in contexts where individuals are initially strangers, such as in the Airbnb community, the rapid exchange of information can expedite the relationship development process. With limited prior knowledge about each other's backgrounds, there is a heightened curiosity and eagerness to learn more, driving individuals to engage in deeper and more meaningful interactions (Newcomb, 1979). In the realm of Airbnb, where hosts and guests often come from diverse backgrounds and cultures, these interactions take on added significance. The platform serves as a melting pot of experiences, bringing together people from different walks of life and fostering connections that transcend geographical boundaries. Through shared experiences, conversations, and mutual hospitality, hosts and guests forge bonds. This bond ultimately leads consumers to blur the lines between their personal experiences and the assurance of absolute authenticity when discussing their experiences. As individuals engage in open communication and mutual sharing within relationships, they not only build trust and intimacy but also cultivate a sense of reciprocity. As this cycle of reciprocity unfolds, consumers may find themselves less preoccupied with the notion of absolute authenticity when recounting their experiences. Instead, they may subconsciously blur the distinction between their subjective experiences and the objective reality, emphasising their encounters' emotional and relational value over the quest for absolute truth.

While most existing studies emphasise that consumer-generated online reviews are more readily accepted and trusted by other potential consumers due to their perceived authenticity

(Kim et al., 2023; Kim & Kim, 2020), these studies often overlook the possibility that consumers might conceal certain negative experiences due to reciprocal motives. This is especially prevalent in accommodations like Airbnb, where social interactions can lead guests to overly emphasise positive experiences in their online reviews, thus avoiding mentioning any dissatisfactions. One of the contributions of this study is to explore the reciprocity might lead to more positive reviews, potentially distorting consumer perception. There is a tendency for guests to reciprocate the hospitality received by focusing primarily on positive aspects, potentially leading to reviews that do not fully reflect the entirety of their experience. They will subconsciously and deliberately conceal information. This emphasis on positive experiences while neglecting to mention any dissatisfactions is particularly significant because it can skew the perceptions of future consumers who rely on these reviews to make informed decisions.

Indeed, current research primarily focuses on overtly false reviews, such as those that exaggerate or fabricate experiences, which are intended to directly influence consumer purchasing decisions and benefit businesses or products. This focus is necessary because such false reviews can mislead consumers into making purchases that do not meet their actual needs. There's a relative lack of exploration into why consumers might voluntarily hide negative experiences without any direct benefits. This study has suggested that in many cultures, criticising others or businesses publicly is seen as impolite or uncooperative, prompting consumers to withhold negative feedback to align with these norms. Additionally, empathy towards service providers, particularly small businesses or individual operators, can lead consumers to conceal their true feelings, fearing the destructive impact a negative review might have on the business. There's also a psychological aspect where consumers might anticipate future benefits such as better service or discounts, thus posting positive reviews as a form of indirect reciprocity. Moreover, some individuals naturally avoid conflict and the discomfort associated with engaging in potentially contentious interactions, which makes them reluctant to express dissatisfaction publicly. Group influence also plays a role; when surrounded by positive reviews, consumers might perceive their negative experience as an anomaly and choose not to share it.

The contribution here of this study is to enhance the understanding of how reciprocity influences the authenticity of consumer-generated content. It reveals that the desire to reciprocate for received benefits can lead guests to emphasise positive aspects of their stay, potentially at the expense of omitting negative experiences. In addition, this adds complexity to the understanding of online reviews, challenging the assumption that they are inherently unbiased and genuine reflections of consumer experiences.

The Sharing Economy and the Evolution of Customer Engagement

This research emphasises the critical shift in customer engagement paradigms as the hospitality industry moves from the traditional service economy to the sharing economy. Traditional service models, grounded in service-dominant logic (SDL), centre around a provider-driven approach where engagement is standardised and customer satisfaction hinges on consistency, reliability, and professionalism. In this framework, providers play the central role in shaping value through structured, predictable interactions, and customers generally have a more passive role, focusing on the consumption of predefined services. However, the sharing economy, embodied by platforms like Airbnb, operates under a consumer-dominant logic (CDL), empowering consumers as active co-creators of their experiences. This shift fosters a highly personalised, socially connected, and flexible approach to engagement, where consumers are not only recipients of service but also contributors to its meaning and value.

A key contribution of this study is its examination of biases in online reviews, illustrating how the shared economy's reciprocal nature—where hosts and guests mutually rate each other—leads to a distinct positive bias in reviews. This is often driven by social norms and a desire for continued access to the platform. Such biases differ markedly from the more detached, often critical tone in traditional hotel reviews, where feedback is usually one-sided and focuses on the evaluation of service standards rather than relational dynamics. This observation provides significant insights into the different ways consumer engagement is framed and expressed across these models. In the sharing economy, reviews often carry a social and emotional dimension shaped by personal interactions, which can lead to empathy-driven cognitive processing, influencing guests to highlight positive experiences while minimising minor service issues.

The practical implications of these findings are far-reaching. For traditional hotels, integrating elements of CDL—such as offering more personalised services, facilitating direct guest-staff interactions, and providing flexible service options—can foster deeper customer engagement and loyalty. By adopting a consumer-centric approach, traditional service providers can offer unique experiences that resonate emotionally with guests, bridging the gap between the transactional nature of SDL and the relational nature of CDL. For sharing economy platforms

like Airbnb, recognising the role of reciprocity and social influence in shaping feedback can guide the design of review systems that balance authenticity with the need for constructive critique. Encouraging honest feedback without fear of reciprocal negativity could enhance trust and provide valuable insights into service improvements, thereby benefiting both hosts and guests.

In conclusion, this study enriches our understanding of customer engagement's evolving dynamics across distinct economic models, shedding light on the complex role of social reciprocity, emotional connection, and personalisation in shaping customer experiences. By clarifying the implications of SDL and CDL within the hospitality sector, this research provides a foundation for further explorations of consumer engagement in both traditional and emerging economies. It underscores the importance of adapting engagement strategies to an increasingly fluid marketplace, where customer expectations continually evolve and demand greater flexibility, authenticity, and depth of connection. This conclusion highlights the potential for future research to explore the boundaries between SDL and CDL further, refining our understanding of how customer engagement can be optimised across a range of service contexts in an ever-changing economy.

Proposed Conceptual Model

The proposed conceptual model (Figure 4) integrates Customer-Dominant Logic (CDL) and Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) to explain customer engagement in the hospitality industry, focusing specifically on online reviews of Airbnb and traditional hotels. Customer engagement is a critical factor for businesses seeking to build lasting relationships with their customers, and the model seeks to illustrate how different engagement dimensions interact under distinct service logics. This framework is speculative in nature—it does not test or predict specific relationships empirically, but rather offers a theoretically grounded vision of how customer engagement behaviours and review patterns may be structured, serving as a foundation for future research.

Outer Layer: Service Logic Framework

The outer layer of the model differentiates SDL from CDL, two perspectives that, while emphasising different elements, collectively capture the essence of contemporary service delivery. Both SDL and CDL challenge the goods-dominant logic by rejecting the notion that value is embedded solely in tangible products delivered from producer to consumer. Instead,

they position value creation as an interactive process between provider and customer (Xie et al., 2016). Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) emphasises provider–customer interaction in structured, standardised service delivery. It focuses on process efficiency, service reliability, and optimising delivery through continuous feedback loops. Customer-Dominant Logic (CDL) places the customer at the centre of the value-creation process, emphasising personalised, context-specific experiences and consumer autonomy(Heinonen et al., 2010). CDL assumes that value emerges from the customer’s lived experience and active role in shaping the service. These perspectives together propose that value creation is a dynamic and ongoing process rooted in stakeholder collaboration(Anker et al., 2015).

Core Layer: Customer Engagement Dimensions and Reciprocity

At the core of the model is Customer Engagement (CE), defined as brand-related cognitive, emotional, and behavioural activity during or related to consumer–brand interaction (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). The model conceptualises CE in three dimensions.

Cognitive engagement involves the mental effort, attention, and evaluative processing that customers invest in understanding and assessing their experiences(Bowden, 2009a). In CDL contexts (e.g., Airbnb), cognitive engagement manifests through personalised communication, customer empowerment, and detailed property descriptions. This tailoring enhances perceived control and relevance. In SDL contexts (e.g., traditional hotels), cognitive engagement often relates to evaluating service consistency, operational reliability, and efficiency.

Emotional engagement refers to affective responses, such as enjoyment, trust, loyalty, and attachment, generated during the service experience(Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). CDL-driven experiences foster strong emotional bonds through personalised hospitality, local insights, and authentic host–guest interactions. SDL contexts cultivate emotional engagement through loyalty programmes, personalised guest recognition, and consistent service delivery, albeit within a more standardised framework.

Behavioural engagement involves the observable actions and participation behaviours customers display, such as posting reviews, recommending services, or engaging in repeat bookings(van Doorn et al., 2010a). CDL contexts highlight peer-to-peer interaction and co-created experiences, promoting voluntary and community-oriented behaviours. SDL contexts

emphasise functional interactions, with behavioural engagement often tied to structured service touchpoints and formal feedback channels.

Reciprocity, situated as a cross-cutting influence in the model, reflects the mutual exchange of value between provider and customer (Resnick et al., 2014). In Airbnb, reciprocity is embedded in bilateral review systems and host–guest interactions, where mutual evaluation can create a bias towards positive reviews. In traditional hotels, reciprocity emerges through loyalty rewards, personalised attention, and service recovery gestures, reinforcing customer loyalty and repeat patronage.

Model from an integrated perspective

The model integrates cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement within both SDL and CDL frameworks to provide a holistic explanation of how customers interact with hospitality services and subsequently articulate their experiences in online reviews.

Within SDL contexts (e.g., traditional hotels), cognitive engagement often emerges through structured service evaluation, focusing on attributes such as service consistency, process reliability, and functional quality. Emotional engagement is nurtured through loyalty programmes, guest recognition, and personalised attention during service encounters. Behavioural engagement is typically expressed through repeat bookings, formal feedback channels, and participation in loyalty schemes, reflecting SDL's emphasis on structured, transactional relationships.

In CDL contexts (e.g., Airbnb), cognitive engagement is stimulated by personalised communication, customer empowerment, and detailed property listings, which provide transparency and enable guests to make informed, tailored choices. Emotional engagement is strengthened by local experience, personalised hospitality, and authentic host–guest relationships, creating strong affective bonds. Behavioural engagement often manifests as peer-to-peer interaction, experience sharing, and co-creation of unique stays, extending beyond the purely transactional into voluntary and community-driven behaviours.

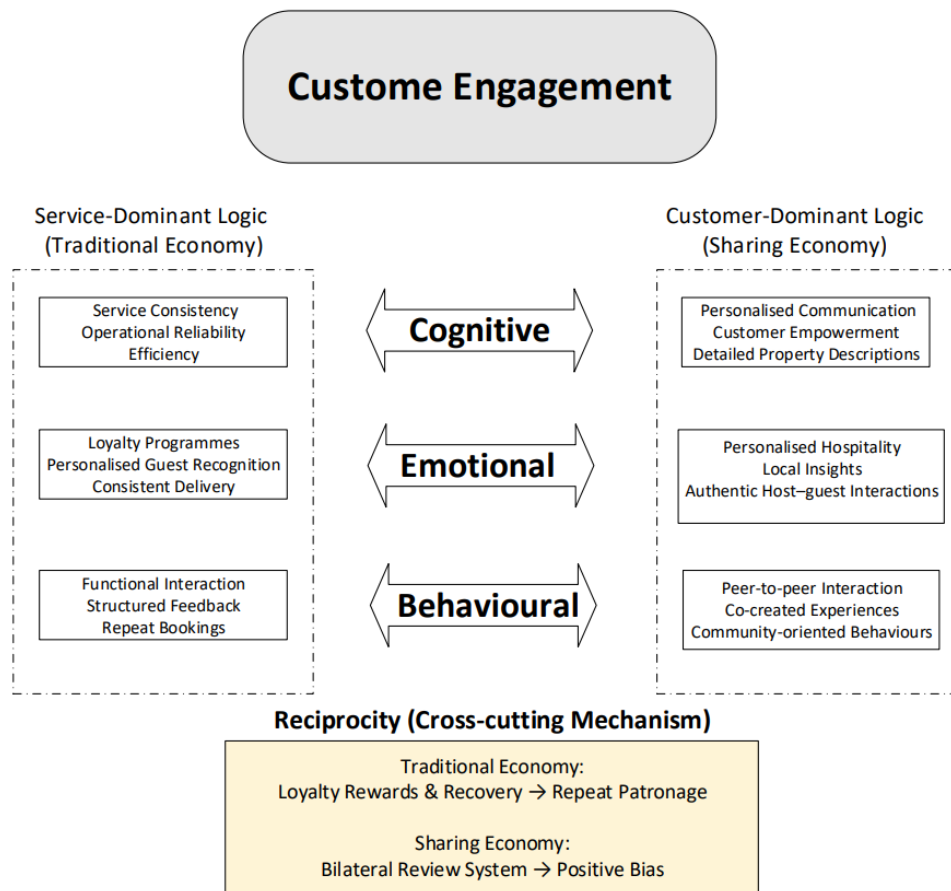
Reciprocity operates as a cross-cutting influence in both contexts but differs in its mechanisms. In Airbnb, bilateral review systems and interpersonal exchanges foster a sense of mutual obligation, encouraging positive tone and selective omission of negative experiences. In

traditional hotels, reciprocity is more institutionalised through complimentary upgrades, service recovery gestures, and loyalty incentives, promoting repeat patronage and positive evaluations.

By incorporating these structural and relational elements, the model explains why SDL-based reviews often emphasise efficiency, reliability, and functional performance, with bias linked to brand loyalty or service expectations, whereas CDL-based reviews tend to be more emotionally expressive, reflecting personalised experiences, social bonds, and the perceived authenticity of the encounter.

This conceptual framework, therefore, supports moving beyond a single dominant logic in hospitality research. It advocates for an integrated view that balances transactional efficiency—ensuring predictable, consistent delivery—with relational engagement—cultivating personalised, emotionally resonant connections. Airbnb exemplifies CDL's personalised, reciprocal engagement, fostering a sense of belonging and community, while traditional hotels embody SDL's structured, reliable service delivery with selective personalisation (Camilleri and Neuhofer, 2017). Together, these perspectives reveal the interplay between service design, customer agency, and review behaviour, illustrating how value is co-created and communicated in modern hospitality contexts.

Figure 4 Proposed Conceptual Model:



Contribution

This chapter sets out the thesis's contributions on two fronts. On the theory side, it brings together service-dominant and customer-dominant logics with a mechanism-based view of customer engagement, showing how expectation anchors, reciprocity, and emotion shape what people value and, in turn, the tone of their reviews. It also links reciprocity to platform design to explain why reviews often skew positive and how detailed they are. On the practice side, it turns these mechanisms into concrete steps for hotels, hosts and platforms—setting expectations well, using human touches within clear boundaries, and building review systems that encourage balanced, high-quality feedback—alongside governance measures that improve transparency and algorithm accountability. The chapter is organised accordingly: it first sets out the theoretical contributions, then derives the managerial implications from the mechanisms and boundary conditions established above.

Theoretical Contributions

This thesis advances theorising on customer engagement and online review formation in hospitality by integrating service-dominant logic (SDL) and customer-dominant logic (CDL) with a mechanism-rich account of how experiences become expressions. Specifically, it proposes a process that links expectation anchoring to evaluation criteria, then to relational reciprocity, affective activation, and finally to expression strategies visible in review valence. The value of this contribution lies in moving beyond typological contrasts between hotels and peer-to-peer accommodation toward micro-foundations that explain why ostensibly similar service incidents are evaluated and narrated differently across service models. In SDL-aligned hotel contexts, evaluation is governed primarily by standardisation, professionalism and process reliability; in CDL-aligned Airbnb contexts, evaluation is co-shaped by autonomy, place-based authenticity and host–guest interaction. By specifying how those macro-logics become operative—through different expectation anchors that prime distinct evaluation criteria—the study connects long-standing debates on value-in-use and co-creation to observable review outcomes, thus tightening the bridge between abstract service logics and empirics in digital trace data.

A second theoretical contribution is the articulation of an emotion-to-leniency mechanism within customer engagement. While the CE literature recognises cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions, it has been less explicit about the sequential dominance of these

dimensions under particular structural conditions. The evidence here indicates that relational cues in peer-to-peer encounters (e.g., personalised care, flexible coordination, situated recommendations) reliably trigger gratitude and felt connection, which raise tolerance thresholds for minor failures and shift expressed valence upward. Conversely, when the same cues breach perceived boundaries (e.g., privacy or role limits), affect may reverse and accelerate value destruction. This conditional sequencing adds nuance to affective engagement theory by clarifying when affect overrides cognitive benchmarking and why boundary conditions matter for the direction of that override. In hotel settings, where roles and promises are institutionalised, the appraisal centre of gravity remains closer to cognitive consistency and delivery against explicit standards; the framework therefore accommodates asymmetric pathways to expression across service models.

Third, the thesis reconceptualises reciprocity in eWOM as a coupled affective–institutional driver. Beyond the familiar social-exchange view, the findings show that reciprocity operates simultaneously through emotions (hospitality begetting “gift-return” expressions) and through platform governance (two-sided review sequencing, relational visibility, and community norms), together producing systematic positivity and occasional self-censorship in peer-to-peer reviews. Embedding reciprocity in the architecture of expression extends relationship marketing accounts into platform studies and explains how review systems can shape not only participation but also the valence of feedback. This moves the co-creation conversation from service production to feedback formation, positioning expression architecture as part of the value process rather than a neutral afterthought.

Fourth, the thesis offers a comparative, mechanism-rich explanation of engagement across service models that unifies several streams—SDL/CDL, CE, reciprocity and eWOM, and platform governance—into a single, testable account. The proposed model specifies antecedents (expectation anchors, platform cues), mediators (affective activation, leniency thresholds), and moderators (institutional reciprocity, boundary clarity) that together produce the observed polarity and narrative style differences between Airbnb and hotels. This integration advances theory by converting broad claims about “emotionality” or “authenticity” in the sharing economy into causal sequences with boundary conditions, inviting formal modelling and cross-context replication (e.g., ride-hailing, peer services beyond lodging). In short, the thesis contributes not only new labels or categories but an explanatory pathway that links service logic to engagement mechanics and, ultimately, to expressed evaluations.

Methodologically, the study contributes a triangulated, mechanism-seeking design that combines computational text-mining of large-scale reviews with semi-structured interviews, integrated at the level of the research question rather than at the level of generic “convergence.” Text analytics establishes robust thematic and polarity structures across service types; interviews recover psychological mechanisms, situational triggers, and boundary conditions that are otherwise latent in trace data. The joint-display integration by RQ demonstrates how mixed qualitative methods can move from pattern detection to process explanation in a critical-realist frame, strengthening inference without defaulting to fragile causal claims. In operational terms, the study refines the measurement of online engagement by mapping CE dimensions to digital indicators—for example, affective lexicon density and relational narration as markers of affect; interaction and negotiation terms as behavioural participation; and cleanliness/professionalism versus authenticity/place as cognitive anchoring cues—thereby offering an auditable coding bridge between theory and text data. The abductive, iteration-heavy workflow—using text-mining to inform interview probes and interviews to reinterpret text patterns—provides a replicable template for scholarship on digital hospitality and, more broadly, for service research that seeks to connect macro-logics with micro-expressions in user-generated content. By showing how expression architecture (e.g., two-sided reviews) can be studied as part of the phenomenon rather than a nuisance variable, the design also broadens the methodological lens of eWOM research to incorporate governance features as data.

Managerial Implications

The evidence presented in this thesis suggests that improvements in practice are most plausibly achieved by intervening along the same causal chain that links experiences to expressed review outcomes—namely, by shaping expectation anchors, calibrating relational cues and reciprocity, and configuring the architecture of expression. For traditional hotels, whose competitive advantage rests on standardisation and reliability, pre-stay communications and arrival routines can be designed to prime a balanced cognitive–affective appraisal without compromising throughput. Messages that make reliability cues salient (predictable check-in, cleanliness protocols, clear escalation paths) while signalling one or two authentic human touches appear to orient guests toward both competence and care. At arrival, brief personalisation paired with visible efficiency (accurate time promises, swift resolution of routine frictions) may activate moderate affect that, in turn, raises leniency thresholds when minor imperfections occur. Where lapses do arise, recovery practices that combine rapid acknowledgement, reasons framed without defensiveness, and context-relevant restitution

are more likely to convert disappointment into a sense of fair treatment than generic vouchers that feel transactional. The managerial task is chiefly one of calibration: over-engineering warmth risks disconfirmation and congestion, while neglecting it forfeits the affect-to-leniency pathway suggested by the findings.

In peer-to-peer settings, where interaction is itself part of the value proposition, a small repertoire of high-yield gestures—timely and empathic first responses, flexible coordination, and situated recommendations—tends to elicit gratitude and perceived connection; however, the same interviews indicate that these benefits are contingent on explicit boundary management. Hosts who state privacy expectations, contact windows, and role limits in warm but unambiguous language reduce the likelihood that relational intensity is experienced as overreach, a condition under which affect can reverse and precipitate value destruction. Expectation realism in listing text and pre-stay dialogue, especially around property quirks and neighbourhood externalities, can also prevent affect from being expended to compensate for misaligned baselines. In both contexts, the efficacy of these practices is monitorable: managers can track dispersion in review valence, the prevalence of affective language in free-text comments, first-contact resolution, and the proportion of reviews that combine praise with diagnostic specificity.

Because the design of review systems shapes perceived reciprocity obligations and the granularity of feedback, platform-level choices carry material consequences for information quality. Decoupling or blinding two-sided reviews until both parties have submitted (or a neutral window has elapsed) may attenuate “gift-return” pressures and reduce self-censorship without suppressing civility. Structured prompts that disentangle assessments of property, process, and people can nudge contributors toward specific, verifiable content rather than undifferentiated positivity; lightweight disclosures that normalise balanced, concrete feedback may further support this goal. Ranking and visibility logic can be adjusted to reduce the overweighting of near-perfect scores by incorporating indicators of text quality and perceived helpfulness, thereby counteracting inflation while rewarding substantive contributions. These design choices are empirically testable through staggered roll-outs and pre-registered A/B experiments that evaluate changes in rating dispersion, helpfulness voting, early detection of recurrent issues, and the share of mixed-valence reviews.

The same results motivate policy and governance measures directed at transparency and accountability in review ecosystems. Clear, accessible disclosures about the mechanics of reviewing (whether submissions are two-sided or blinded, how timing works, and what

moderation criteria apply) would support informed interpretation of ratings without undermining community norms. Minimum information standards that encourage separation of property, process, and interpersonal evaluations could improve comparability and reduce noise from globalised scores. Where feasible, privacy-preserving research access to platform data (e.g., controlled enclaves, differentially private aggregates) would enable independent scrutiny of potential rating inflation, bias patterns, and ranking effects. Routine impact assessments for recommendation and visibility algorithms—particularly checks for the inadvertent suppression of critical but constructive reviews—could further strengthen accountability while protecting reputable providers.

An incremental implementation roadmap follows from these implications. Organisations might begin with baseline diagnostics on existing review corpora, aligning indicators with the mechanisms identified here and pre-registering evaluation plans for small pilots (e.g., revised pre-stay scripts, arrival routines, cooling-off windows for reviews, and structured prompts). Interventions that produce credible improvements can then be scaled with embedded monitoring and periodic audits. Boundary conditions merit sustained attention: effects are likely moderated by culture, trip purpose, and segment mix; engineered warmth may provoke reactance if perceived as inauthentic; and overly prescriptive prompts can be read as manipulation. With these cautions in view, the most defensible route to practice improvement is not wholesale reinvention of service models but the careful orchestration of expectation setting, a few high-salience relational cues within clear boundaries, and expression architectures that elicit specific, balanced accounts—precisely the levers that this thesis links to more credible reviews and more resilient engagement.

Limitation

This research highlights several limitations useful for future research investigations. Firstly, this study's reliance on data derived exclusively from online reviews on platforms like TripAdvisor and Airbnb poses a significant limitation due to potential sample bias. While these platforms provide valuable insights and a large volume of user-generated content (Liang et al., 2020), they also tend to attract users who are more inclined to share their experiences online, often resulting in a bias towards more extreme opinions, either highly positive or negative (Han and Anderson, 2020). This can potentially exclude more moderate or neutral perspectives, leading to an incomplete picture of customer engagement and satisfaction. Moreover, reviews on these platforms may not fully capture the diversity of customer experiences. TripAdvisor

and Airbnb reviews are often written by tech-savvy travellers who are comfortable using these platforms, potentially underrepresenting the experiences of less technologically inclined customers, such as older demographics or those from regions with limited internet access (Sutherland & Kiatkawsin, 2020). Additionally, the platforms' specific user bases may differ significantly, with Airbnb typically attracting users looking for unique, local experiences, while TripAdvisor may have a broader audience, including those who prefer traditional hotel stays. This discrepancy can introduce further bias in comparing the two types of accommodations. Future studies should aim to diversify their data sources to include a wider range of platforms and methods. Incorporating data from additional travel review websites, social media platforms, and direct customer feedback mechanisms can help create a more balanced and comprehensive understanding of customer experiences. Additionally, employing passive data collection methods, such as observational studies or tracking customer interactions in naturalistic settings, can provide insights that are not captured through self-reported reviews. This approach would help mitigate the limitations associated with using only TripAdvisor and Airbnb reviews, leading to more generalizable and robust findings.

Furthermore, the lack of specific geographic focus in the data collection can limit the generalizability of the findings across different cultural and regional contexts. This limitation is particularly significant in the hospitality sector, where customer expectations, behaviours, and experiences can vary widely by culture and location. For instance, travellers from different regions may have varying standards for service quality, cleanliness, and amenities, influenced by their cultural backgrounds and local norms (Zou and Yu, 2022). Therefore, findings derived from a geographically limited dataset may not accurately reflect the global diversity of customer experiences and expectations. Although this study selected city data located in five different countries and regions as sample data and diversified the nationality, gender, age, and occupation of the interviewees as much as possible when conducting interviews, the geographic and cultural representation might still be insufficient to capture the full spectrum of global customer engagement in the hospitality sector. Cultural differences can influence the perceived value of services and how guests express satisfaction or dissatisfaction. For example, guests from collectivist cultures may be less likely to leave negative reviews due to a cultural preference for harmony and non-confrontation (Chan and Wan, 2008). Conversely, guests from individualist cultures might be more direct and critical in their feedback. These cultural nuances highlight the importance of considering geographic diversity in research to ensure findings apply to wider contexts.

Another important limitation of this study lies in its treatment of traditional hotels as a single, homogeneous category. In reality, traditional hotels encompass a wide spectrum of subtypes, ranging from luxury and boutique hotels to mid-range chains and budget accommodations. Each of these subtypes may exhibit distinct customer engagement dynamics, shaped by differences in service standards, guest expectations, and brand positioning. For instance, guests at luxury hotels may place greater emphasis on personalised service, emotional resonance, and exclusivity, leading to different patterns of cognitive and emotional engagement than those staying at budget hotels, where expectations may be more pragmatic and price-sensitive. By aggregating all traditional hotels into a single analytical category, this study potentially overlooks intra-category variations that could yield valuable insights into how engagement dimensions—cognitive, emotional, and behavioural—manifest differently within the traditional hotel sector itself. For example, it is plausible that emotional engagement is stronger in luxury hotels due to their emphasis on bespoke experiences and service excellence, whereas behavioural engagement may be more prominent in budget hotels, where reviews often focus on functionality and value-for-money.

Moreover, the valence and tone of online reviews may also differ within hotel types. Guests in high-end hotels may be more critical of minor service lapses due to elevated expectations, whereas guests in economy hotels may show greater tolerance for shortcomings if the price-quality ratio is perceived as fair. Without accounting for these distinctions, the analysis may inadvertently flatten nuanced differences that are important for both theory and practice. Future research should consider segmenting the traditional hotel category more finely to explore how various hotel classifications influence engagement mechanisms and review behaviour. This would provide a more granular understanding of consumer expectations, satisfaction drivers, and the influence of dominant logic across different tiers of the hotel industry.

In addition, although this study acknowledges the impact of COVID-19 on data collection—particularly concerning participant recruitment and travel restrictions—it does not fully account for how the pandemic may have influenced customer engagement behaviours or review patterns in the hospitality industry. The COVID-19 crisis significantly altered consumer expectations, travel motivations, and risk perceptions, which likely had implications for how guests evaluated their experiences and expressed them in online reviews. For example, during and after the pandemic, guests may have placed greater emphasis on cleanliness, health protocols, contactless interactions, or flexibility in booking and cancellation policies. These shifting priorities could have affected the tone, content, and valence of reviews, as well

as the emotional and cognitive framing of guest experiences. However, the current study does not systematically compare engagement or review dynamics across pre- and post-pandemic contexts, nor does it control for time-based variations in the review data or interview responses.

As such, this temporal aspect represents a limitation in the study's interpretation of findings. Without explicitly segmenting the data according to COVID-19 phases, it is difficult to isolate whether certain engagement patterns or review biases are inherent to the platform/service model (Airbnb vs. hotels) or shaped by the extraordinary circumstances of the pandemic. Future research should consider a longitudinal or comparative design to better capture the influence of exogenous shocks—such as public health crises—on consumer behaviour and engagement in the hospitality sector. Meanwhile, this study did not explicitly account for the influence of travel purposes during the COVID-19 period. At that time, government policies and mobility restrictions significantly altered consumer travel behaviour. In many cases, travel was permitted mainly for essential or business-related purposes, while leisure and discretionary trips were heavily constrained. As a result, the composition of travellers during the pandemic differed markedly from normal conditions. Business and essential travellers may have prioritised efficiency, hygiene, safety protocols, and reliability, while leisure travellers, where present, may have focused more on reassurance, flexibility, and the emotional comfort of the stay. These policy-driven differences in travel purposes likely shaped both expectations and the ways in which customers expressed satisfaction or dissatisfaction in online reviews. Since the present study does not distinguish between these pandemic-specific travel motivations, it may overlook important nuances in how customer engagement and review biases manifested during this exceptional period.

Furthermore, the use of specific tools for data analysis presents its own set of limitations. Leximancer, a powerful text-mining tool, has constraints such as limited flexibility in customising the analysis process. Its performance can also be affected by the size and complexity of the text data, requiring substantial computational resources for large-scale analyses (Smith & Humphreys, 2006). To achieve a comprehensive data analysis, it is beneficial to combine different software tools. Each tool offers unique strengths and compensates for the limitations of others. When considering tools like R or Python packages, researchers must be aware of potential limitations and differences, as these can impact the interpretation of sentiment and thematic analysis due to variations in handling language nuances and computational efficiency. By integrating these tools, researchers can handle diverse data sets more effectively, address context-specific differences, and optimise computational resources.

Future studies should include a more diverse and representative sample to address these limitations. One approach is to use stratified sampling methods to ensure that the sample covers various demographics and geographic locations. Stratified sampling involves dividing the population into distinct subgroups based on characteristics such as region, age, or income level, and then randomly sampling from each stratum. This method can help ensure that all relevant subgroups are adequately represented in the study, leading to more generalizable results. Additionally, data collection could be expanded to include a variety of sources beyond online reviews and interviews. Passive data collection methods, such as observational studies in naturalistic settings, can provide a more comprehensive view of customer engagement. For example, observing guest interactions with service providers in real time can yield insights into behaviours and preferences that are not captured through self-reported data. This method also reduces the potential bias introduced by self-selection in online reviews and interviews.

Future Research

Building on the conceptual model developed in this thesis, which integrates Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) and Customer-Dominant Logic (CDL) to explain the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions of customer engagement, future research should focus on empirically validating and extending its propositions. Longitudinal studies using multi-platform datasets from contexts could track how engagement patterns evolve over time and in response to platform design changes, revealing causal pathways between engagement, review sentiment, and potential bias. Comparative work across cultural and market contexts would also be valuable, as the mechanisms of reciprocity, trust, and emotional connection may vary according to cultural norms, market maturity, and the prevalence of sharing economy platforms. This is particularly relevant for testing whether the emotionally rich and reciprocal engagement patterns observed in Airbnb reviews hold in non-Western contexts or in markets where traditional hotels dominate.

Methodologically, advancing the analytical tools used in this study offers another important avenue. While Leximancer provided systematic semantic mapping, integrating deep learning-based natural language processing could capture more nuanced elements such as sarcasm, subtle sentiment shifts, and culturally embedded idioms, enhancing both thematic sensitivity and predictive capacity. Such approaches could also be applied to monitor in real time the balance between positive sentiment and expectation management, addressing the risk

identified in this study that excessively positive reviews—particularly common in Airbnb—may inflate expectations and increase the likelihood of post-experience dissatisfaction. Further refinement of the model could involve embedding platform design features such as bilateral review systems, algorithmic content curation, and interface structures as antecedents or moderators of engagement. The finding that Airbnb’s bilateral review mechanism can create subtle pressure to reciprocate with positive feedback highlights the need to explore how these structural elements influence the authenticity and balance of cognitive versus emotional content in reviews.

The conceptual framework also offers opportunities to link engagement dimensions more explicitly to business performance outcomes, including repeat bookings, customer lifetime value, and brand equity. Establishing these connections would not only reinforce the model’s practical relevance but also help service providers design engagement strategies with demonstrable returns. At the same time, the framework could be extended to incorporate negative engagement and value destruction, such as retaliatory reviews, coordinated complaint campaigns, or platform boycotts, providing a more balanced view of the SDL/CDL interplay. The study’s identification of differing service perceptions between Airbnb and hotel customers—where the former often interpret personalised hospitality as informal social interaction rather than formal service—further suggests the value of investigating how such cognitive framings influence engagement pathways and review behaviours across contexts.

Finally, incorporating individual-level variables such as personality, cultural orientation, age, and gender into the framework would help explain heterogeneity in engagement patterns and the expression of feedback. Together, these lines of inquiry can transform the proposed model from a theoretically informed vision into a robust, evidence-based framework with both academic and managerial utility, offering a richer understanding of how structural, relational, and individual factors converge to shape customer engagement in an evolving hospitality landscape.

Chapter Summary

This research offers several significant contributions to the existing literature by combining the analysis of customer engagement with Airbnb and traditional hotels, employing both text-mining online reviews and semi-structured interviews. By adopting a comprehensive approach that integrates cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions of customer engagement,

this research addresses the limitations of previous studies in the hospitality industry. The textual data were analysed using innovative methods, making this study the first of its kind to delve deeply into the differences and commonalities in customer feedback between Airbnb and traditional hotels. This research contributes to the literature by uncovering the nuanced ways in which customer engagement dimensions manifest in online reviews, offering valuable insights for hospitality managers. Additionally, the findings suggest practical strategies for improving customer satisfaction and highlight areas for future research. Finally, this thesis identifies some limitations and proposes avenues for further investigation.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This thesis has dissected the dynamics of customer engagement and online review biases across traditional hotels and Airbnb, utilising a robust multi-method qualitative analysis. The comparative exploration rooted in service-dominant logic (SDL) and consumer-dominant logic (CDL) reveals profound insights into the structuring of consumer engagement within these disparate accommodation models.

In traditional hotels, where SDL prevails, the research underscores an engagement model that is often perceived as transactional, with a focus on standardised service delivery that values consistency and reliability. However, in certain contexts, traditional hotels may also foster relational and personalised interactions, particularly through guest services and loyalty programmes (Puspita, 2021). This model, while proficient at ensuring quality and meeting predefined customer expectations, often limits the scope for personalised guest interactions, which is reflected in the more critical and objective nature of its online reviews.

Contrastingly, Airbnb's operational model, which aligns with CDL, supports a more fluid and dynamic engagement where guests have significant leverage over their consumption experiences. This study illustrates how such consumer empowerment fosters personal connections and emotional bonds with hosts, cultivating a conducive environment for positive review biases. These biases are further amplified by the platform's reciprocal review system, which not only encourages but somewhat obligates positive feedback, subtly influencing guest evaluations through social and psychological mechanisms.

Furthermore, this research has highlighted the pivotal role of reciprocity in crafting the narratives found within online reviews. In the context of Airbnb, where interactions often transcend mere transactions to become personal exchanges, guests are more inclined to reciprocate the hospitality they receive with favourable reviews—even when encountering service mishaps. This reciprocity is less pronounced in traditional hotel settings, where the professional detachment of the service provision does not engender the same level of personal obligation.

The implications of these findings extend beyond theoretical contributions, offering actionable strategies for both traditional hotels and platforms like Airbnb. For traditional hotels, there is a clear directive to recalibrate engagement strategies to incorporate more personalised guest interactions that can rival the CDL-driven experiences offered by Airbnb. Meanwhile, Airbnb

stands to benefit from critically assessing its review system to ensure that it continues to foster genuine and constructive feedback, thereby maintaining trust and authenticity in consumer reviews.

In synthesizing the insights from this comparative analysis, this thesis not only advances the academic discourse on customer engagement by bridging SDL and CDL but also catalyses a rethinking of how engagement strategies can be optimised in the digital age to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty in the hospitality industry.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. I am interviewing you to better understand the reason that consumers have different online review trends on hotels and peer-to-peer accommodation (Airbnb) services. I am interested in your own experiences, so there are no right or wrong answers to any of our questions. I will conduct a semi-structured interview that participation in this study is voluntary and your decision to participate and this interview should take approximately one hour depending on how much information you would like to share. With your permission, I would like to audio record the interview because I don't want to miss any of your comments. All responses will be kept confidential, which means that your de-identified interview responses will only be shared with the research member and I will ensure that any information I include in our report does not identify you as the respondent. You may decline to answer any question or stop the interview at any time and for any reason. Are there any questions about what I have just explained?

Warm-up questions (within 10 minutes)

-Before we get started, I want to get to know you first, would you mind introducing yourself?

Prompts: Demographics questions, e.g. age; occupation; frequency of travel (per year)

Service Type and experience(within 10 minutes)

-Could you tell me which kind of accommodation service(between a traditional hotel and Airbnb) you use more frequent when you travel?

-Thinking about the accommodation service you chose on your last travel, could you please tell me something about the experience?

Cognitive level (within 10 minutes)

- How would you evaluate this service experience compared to your expectations? What are your evaluation criteria?

Prompts: What were you hoping to get out of this service before you received it?

Emotional level (within 10 minutes)

- How did you feel about receiving this service? what makes you feel this way?

Behavioural level(within 10 minutes)

-Have you participated in or contributed to this service? If so, could you please describe it? (If the answer is "no", go to the next question)

Prompts: How did you participate (or give input) in this service? Please elaborate;

How did you feel about the participation or your input? Did you benefit from it?

Online review(within 10 minutes)

-Do you have the habit of writing online reviews of services you have received? What motivated you to do this?

-Will you write online reviews based on your experience honestly every time?

Prompts: For example, are you willing to give a relatively positive review even if you have received unsatisfactory service or experienced something unpleasant?

What prompted you to do this?

- Have you ever given a negative online review about something? Why? Can you tell me about it?

Conclusion

-Is there anything else that you would like to comment on that I haven't already asked you about?

Thank you very much for your time and the information you shared today

Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Study title: Customer Engagement and online review: Different Voices between Airbnb and hotel customers

Researcher Details:

Researcher: Mengwei HE

Student ID: XXXXXXXX

School & Subject: Adam Smith Business School & Marketing Cluster

PGR Programme Title: Management

Supervisors:

Dr Thomas Anker

Email: TAnker002@dundee.ac.uk

Dr Bowei Chen

Email: Bowei.Chen@glasgow.ac.uk

You are invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to take part it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask the researcher/s if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take some time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

FAQs

1. What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study is to investigate the reasons for the differences in online reviews of Airbnb and traditional hotel consumers. This research gives Airbnb hosts and traditional hotels a better understanding of what drives consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction. At the same time, as demand changes, travel service providers should pay more attention to the emotional experience and interaction of consumers, and view consumers' value as a creation.

2. Why have I been chosen?

You are invited to participate in this research project because the researcher is interested in better understanding the reason that consumers have different online review trends on hotels and peer-to-peer accommodation (Airbnb) services. You, as an Airbnb and/or traditional hotel customer, are the best person to participate in this research. Approximately 20 other participants will be recruited for the study

3. Do I have to take part?

Your participation is entirely voluntary: if you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project at any time without prejudice, for example, to your job, studies or well-being and without providing a reason. In addition, your relationship with the researcher will not be affected by your decision to participate or not. There are no right or wrong answers. In the case of respondent withdrawal, the data provided by the respondent will be deleted

4. What will happen if I take part?

The interview will take approximately 45 minutes. Interviews will take place over Zoom or in person. Interviews will only be audio-recorded with participants' consent. Before the interview, the researchers will ask the interviewee for permission to record the conversation (audio-recorded) and then turn on the recording. During the interview, you will be asked a series of open-ended questions about your experience with Airbnb or traditional hotel service. The interview will NOT be video-recorded. The interview will be audio-recorded. The audio file will be stored securely for the purposes of transcribing. There will be no personal identifiers (e.g., name) in the transcript file.

You will not be at physical or psychological risk and should experience no discomfort resulting from the research study methods.

5. Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential

Confidentiality will be maintained. All data will be collected anonymously, confidentially, and stored securely. Only the researcher will have access to the research materials, which will be kept on a password-protected computer. Only basic personal data will be collected – specifically, your first name and email address – for the purposes of scheduling the Zoom interview. This information will then be discarded after the interview is completed. The transcript of your interview will not be stored together with any of your personal data, there will be no personal identifiers (e.g., name) in the transcript file.

Please note that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases the University may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.

6. What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of this research will be used to in PhD thesis at the University of Glasgow, future conference papers, or future journal publications, both print and online. Full confidentiality of your information will be kept by the researchers, that is, by all people helping with the study. Any information provided by you is only for academic use and will be kept securely: research data will be openly available. Interview transcripts **CONTAINING NO PERSONAL INFORMATION** of the participants will be stored electronically on a password-protected computer in encrypted files for 10 years after the completion of the research project. Participants should aware that data may be shared/archived or re-used, including PhD thesis, future conference papers, and future journal publications, both print and online. A copy of this summary of results will be presented to you directly if you wish to request it (contact email: XXXXXXXX@student.gla.ac.uk)

7. Who has reviewed the study?

This project has been considered and approved by the College Research Ethics Committee.

8. Contact for Further information

If you have any complaints about any aspect of the project, the way it is being conducted or any questions about your rights as a research participant, then you may contact the researcher Mengwei HE at XXXXXXXX@student.gla.ac.uk or the supervisor Dr Thomas Anker at TAnker002@dundee.ac.uk and Dr Bowei Chen at Bowei.Chen@glasgow.ac.uk.

In addition, **if you have any complaints regarding the conduct of this research project, you can also contact the College of Social Sciences Acting Lead for Ethical Review, Dr Benjamin Franks at socsci-ethics lead@glasgow.ac.uk.**

_____End of Participant Information Sheet_____

Appendix 3: Consent Form

Consent Form

Study title: Customer engagement and online review: Different voices between Airbnb and hotel customers

Researcher Details:

Researcher: Mengwei HE

Student ID: XXXXXXXXX

Email: XXXXXXXXX@student.gla.ac.uk

School & Subject: Adam Smith Business School & Marketing Cluster

PGR Programme Title: Management

Supervisors:

Dr Thomas Anker

Email: TAnker002@dundee.ac.uk

Dr Bowei Chen

Email: Bowei.Chen@glasgow.ac.uk

Please tick as appropriate

Yes ☐ No ☐ I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

Yes ☐ No ☐ I confirm that I am 18 years old or over.

Yes ☐ No ☐ I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

Yes ☐ No ☐ I consent to interviews being audio-recorded

Yes ☐ No ☐ I acknowledge that participants will be referred to by pseudonym.

I agree that:

Yes ☐ No ☐ All names and other material likely to identify individuals will be anonymised.

Yes ☐ No ☐ The material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times.

Yes ☐ No ☐ The material may be used in PhD thesis, future conference papers, future journal publications, both print and online.

Yes ☐ No ☐ Other authenticated researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.

Yes ☐ No ☐ Other authenticated researchers may use my words in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form

Yes ☐ No ☐ I acknowledge the provision of a Privacy Notice in relation to this research project.

I agree to take part in this research study ☐

I do not agree to take part in this research study ☐

Name of Participant Signature

Date

Name of Researcher

Signature

Date

Appendix 4: Ethical Approval Letter

23 January 2023

Dear Mengwei HE

College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Project Title: Customer engagement and online review: Different voices between Airbnb and hotel customers

Application No: 400220046

The College Research Ethics Committee has reviewed your application and has agreed that there is no objection on ethical grounds to the proposed study. It is happy therefore to approve the project, subject to the following conditions:

- Start date of ethical approval: 23/01/2023
- Project end date: 31/01/2024
- Any outstanding permissions needed from third parties in order to recruit research participants or to access facilities or venues for research purposes must be obtained in writing and submitted to the CoSS Research Ethics Administrator before research commences: socsci-ethics@glasgow.ac.uk
- The research should be carried out only on the sites, and/or with the groups and using the methods defined in the application.
- The data should be held securely for a period of ten years after the completion of the research project, or for longer if specified by the research funder or sponsor, in accordance with the University's Code of Good Practice in Research: (https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_490311_en.pdf)
- Any proposed changes in the protocol should be submitted for reassessment as an amendment to the original application. The **Request for Amendments to an Approved Application** form should be used: <https://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/students/ethics/forms/staffandpostgraduateresearchstudents/>

Yours sincerely,

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College Ethics Lead

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Appendix 5: Interview Respondent Profiles

The table below provides an overview of the 26 interview participants, including key demographic and behavioural characteristics relevant to the study. The following clarifies the meaning and classification of each column:

Accommodation Selected: Refers to the type(s) of accommodation the participant had experience with and shared during the interview, including Airbnb properties, traditional hotels, or both. This distinction reflects the nature of their past stays and forms the basis of their reflections on engagement and service experience.

Review Frequency: Self-reported frequency of writing online reviews. "Often" implies regular reviewing after most trips; "Sometimes" denotes selective reviewing, often in response to particularly notable experiences; and "Rarely" reflects infrequent or one-time reviewing.

Travel Frequency: Describes the participant's overall travel activity in the past two years. "Frequent" denotes regular domestic or international travel (typically 3+ trips per year), whereas "Occasional" suggests less regular travel patterns.

Participant ID	Country of Origin	Gender	Age Range	Accommodation Selected	Review Frequency	Travel Frequency
P01	China	Female	26–30	Airbnb	Often	Frequent
P02	UK	Male	31–35	Hotel	Sometimes	Occasional
P03	China	Female	36–40	Airbnb & Hotel	Often	Frequent
P04	France	Male	26–30	Hotel	Occasionally	Frequent
P05	Japan	Female	31–35	Airbnb	Often	Frequent
P06	India	Female	20–25	Hotel	Rarely	Occasional
P07	Canada	Male	40–45	Airbnb	Often	Frequent

P08	China	Male	35–40	Hotel	Sometimes	Occasional
P09	USA	Female	28–32	Airbnb	Often	Frequent
P10	UK	Female	33–37	Hotel	Sometimes	Frequent
P11	France	Male	29–34	Airbnb	Often	Frequent
P12	Japan	Female	31–36	Hotel	Sometimes	Occasional
P13	Thailand	Male	27–32	Airbnb	Occasionally	Frequent
P14	China	Female	22–26	Airbnb	Often	Frequent
P15	Canada	Female	34–39	Hotel	Sometimes	Occasional
P16	Finland	Male	30–35	Airbnb	Often	Frequent
P17	UK	Male	45–50	Hotel	Rarely	Occasional
P18	China	Female	28–33	Hotel	Often	Frequent
P19	France	Female	25–30	Airbnb & Hotel	Often	Frequent
P20	Netherland	Female	32–36	Airbnb	Sometimes	Frequent
P21	China	Male	26–30	Hotel	Occasionally	Frequent
P22	Danmark	Male	38–42	Hotel	Sometimes	Occasional
P23	UK	Female	29–34	Airbnb	Often	Frequent
P24	China	Male	36–40	Hotel	Sometimes	Occasional
P25	Canada	Female	41–45	Airbnb	Often	Frequent
P26	Japan	Female	25–30	Airbnb	Occasionally	Frequent

