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# The Customer Experience in the Sharing Economy: A Context Specific Approach to Airbnb

Master's Thesis (30 credits)

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** The study aims to investigate the multi-phased customer experience for accommodation through Airbnb and its relation to the concepts of co-creation and expectation.

**Methodology:** Through abductive reasoning, this study uses both qualitative and quantitative method to achieve the stated aim. The interview will be used to develop the explanations for answering the research questions. In addition they help build the questionnaire that will be used as the tool for conducting a survey among Airbnb customers.

**Results:** For the specific context, information gathering in the pre-experience is seen as the main way to build expectations that are then measured against the actual experience in the second – consumption phase. The conclusions whether the stimulators during the accommodation meet, exceed, or do not meet the expectations are reflected in the post-experience outcome. The results also suggest that customers have a higher impact from stimulators to expectations when the host is present during the stay. In addition, customers who use the accommodation alone had higher impact than the ones who traveled with friends. There was also a significant difference for post experience outcome between the customers who had contact with the host after the stay and the customers who didn't giving implications to co-creation through interactions.

**Original/value:** The study contributes to relevant fields such as customer experience, sharing economy, experience co-creation and abductive reasoning. The managerial value is knowledge about means to increase customer experience outcomes.

**Keywords:** Customer experience, Abductive reasoning, Expectation, Co-creation, Sharing Economy

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Yours sincerely,

*Roman Netsiporuk*

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## 1. Introduction

The sharing economy has emerged within daily transactions as a strong alternative to traditional economic dealings to the extent that it has been debated over around the world concerning its ability to either compliment or threaten the traditional economies. This can be seen with the radical changes in the demand for transportation where, for example, car sharing is shaking the traditional taxi industries or for accommodation where home-sharing has escalated to becoming a major competitive challenge to hospitality companies. The phenomenon has had a growth so immense, that in some cases, complications arise within countries where proper legislatures have not yet been in place to deal with the kind of trading within the sharing economy (Goudin & European Added Value Unit, 2016).

According to a study for the European Parliamentary Research Service, if all the obstacles for using the resources within the sharing economy were absent, then the potential economic gain within the European Union can be estimated up to 572 billion euros annually (Goudin & European Added Value Unit, 2016). However, since there are many obstacles that all vary within the regions of the European Union, the estimate can be, due to these varying obstacles, lowered down to be up to 18 billion euros in short term (Goudin & European Added Value Unit, 2016). A PwC audit (2015), conducted in the United States, estimates the current global revenue for the five main sharing economy sectors, which are *travel*, *car sharing*, *finance*, *staffing*, and *music and video streaming* (p. 14) to be around 15 billion dollars and by the year 2025 to be increased up to 335 billion dollars. This implies that the phenomenon has still a very long way to go to be fully exploited by actors involved and research can help this evolution of directing policies towards applying the sharing economy for the benefit of the societies where it situates.

In tourism sector, one that stands out is Airbnb, a company providing means for people to share their extra space to others in exchange for money (Hedberg, 2013). In 2013 Airbnb held more than half a million listings for various types of accommodation and with other platforms within the sharing economy, it is considered as a post crisis economical phenomenon (Hedberg, 2013). By 2016 they had around 2 million listings in 191 countries with the company itself valued at 24,5 billion dollars (Chafkin, 2016). In addition, by 2016 Airbnb was reported to have around 70 million

guests, i.e. people who use the accommodation (Chafkin, 2016). Considered as one of the icons of contemporary sharing economy, Airbnb's exponential growth seems to reflect the trends in sharing economy in general.

Nowadays, most people will have some understanding of what a sharing economy is, and many may even have a personal experience with it in their past. Some might know the phenomenon by the term *collaborative consumption* (Botsman & Rogers, 2011). However, attempts at trying to define the sharing economy, according to Schor (2014), are nearly impossible due to vague parameters where actors with very diverse activities can be considered to be included in the sharing economy, while other actors with similar actions cannot. This has resulted in multiple characterizations and definitions for the phenomenon which in turn might have a negative effect on the validity of previous research. In response, the present study attempts to delimit the concept to clearer parameters, in order to measure its relationship to other various concepts.

Many of the economic entities, found in these parameters, are various internet startups. As Cusumano (2015) states, the Internet startups within the sharing economy are in fact Internet platforms that connect people who will act both as either suppliers or pursuers of certain resources. The model works in a way where one person could rent these tangible or intangible resources from another who is underutilizing them (Cusumano, 2015). Due to these platform-based models, the companies in sharing economy can experience a rapid growth that can provide strong competition to more traditional companies in the respective sector (p. 32). This in itself presents possible turning points in the evolution of economies which deserves investigative attention, as an attempt to bring the academia in line with practice and this is why this paper focuses precisely on these internet based platforms.

This paper will focus on Airbnb, the accommodation service where people can rent out their homes to strangers who would stay there as an alternative to traditional means of accommodation (Hedberg, 2013). These people are then divided into guests, who are on the consumer side and hosts who will supply their extra space (Hedberg, 2013).



One of the founders of Airbnb has stated that the company is mostly for the hosts who want to make extra money with renting out their space (Chafkin, 2016). This thought will bring up a somewhat justified question: “But what about the guests?”

### **1.1. Problematization**

Previous research, within the sharing economy, has focused on the influencing factors for opting to consume the offers provided from sharing economy. Issues such as community belonging (McArthur, 2015; Möhlmann, 2015), economic considerations and trust (Forno & Garibaldi, 2015; Möhlmann, 2015) and environmental considerations (McArthur, 2015; Forno & Garibaldi, 2015) have emerged as some of these influencing factors.

The context of experience and in a more narrow sense, customer experience, has remained rather neglected when studying the sharing economy. To the best knowledge of the author has yet to see a study on customer experience within the sharing economy.

In terms of consumption, experiences are thought of as a multi-phased process (Arnould et al., 2004; Tynan & McKechnie, 2009). A Customer experience is holistically made up of three parts: Pre-experience, customer experience, and post-experience (Tynan & McKechnie, 2009). The first part includes activities that aid for preparation to the second part; The customer experience involves various value sources that act as stimulators; and the third is the result of the second phase with various outcomes such as entertainment or skills (Tynan & McKechnie, 2009).

Various authors see experiences as results of a co-creation effort (Akaka, Vargo, & Schau, 2015; Chen, Drennan, & Andrews, 2012; Jaakkola, Helkkula, & Aarikka-Stenroos, 2015; McColl-Kennedy, Cheung, & Ferrier, 2015; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a; 2004b; Tynan & McKechnie, 2009). Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a; 2004b) even claim co-creation to be central to gaining competitive advantage. This, however seems to be a very general statement. More over, since experiences are very uniquely dependant on the subjects and situations, as Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a) also add, co-creation facilitation is therefore very diverse.

This in a way brings forth a question of equality. Does everyone have equal ability and availability to co-create and therefore live through an experience? A study that

looked into how young adults cope with beginning their independent lives suggests that co-creation is not a homogeneous process where every co-creator is equal, but that people with more humble childhood, experienced more difficulties with resource integration, that is the central way to co-create value according to Lusch and Vargo (2014), due to less material resources and access to proper education (Piacentini, Hibbert, & Hogg, 2014). This would suggest that the surrounding context, as well as the person's individuality, plays a role in co-creation.

Tynan and McKechnie (2009), as previously mentioned, claim that customer experience is a three-stage process that is co-created. The authors, however neglect to point out how does co-creation take place within these three stages. Is it the *locus* of value creation, as Prahalad and Ramaswami (2004a; 2004b) state, or is it one aspect of many other context specific issues?

This paper will acknowledge Tynan and McKechnie (2009) who claim that majority of the academic handling of experience has been theoretic in nature. The authors add that empirical research within the field, and more specifically, their concept of a three-staged customer experience could be carried out. Furthermore, Mathis, Kim, Uysal, Sirgy and Prebersen (2016) call for co-creation to be investigated in a setting of pre-, during-, and post-experience, as shall be the setting for this study.

In addition, Akaka, Vargo and Schau (2015) claim that value is the result of an evaluation of an experience that is co-created between different actors within the service encounter. They add that experience evaluations may result in value creation that can be both positive or negative (Akaka et al., 2015). In the case of the three-staged customer experience, it remains unclear how the evaluation takes place and what are the indicators that imply that an experience has been a positive one or vice versa.

In terms of evaluation, Jantzen (2013) claims that for a good lived experience, the expectation that a person has for it, needs to be met, while for a memorable experience it should be broken. In their discussion about a multi-phased customer experience, Tynan and McKechnie (2009) as well as Arnould et al. (2004) state that the first phase, that in its nature is a preparatory phase to the actual consumption, builds anticipation for that experience. This leads to questioning whether the building of expectation is therefore generally applicable or do they differ conceptually

depending on the context? The relationship of the multi-phased customer experience, that is co-created, and its relation to the concept of expectation will be further investigated in this study.

In addition as the notion of having a specific context where a phenomenon occurs, has been brought fourth, this paper will take the viewpoint of pragmatism that allows for a very problem centric perspective (Creswell, 2014). As Atotcha (2006), claims, neither inductive nor deductive reasoning will result in an explanation that would be enough. Creswell (2014) also states, that all methods are essentially biased on their own. In accordance with these claims, an abductive inference will be the logical reasoning to contrast the majority of studies conducted.

## **1.2. Research Aim and Questions**

This paper aims, through abductive reasoning, to study the multi-phased customer experience of Airbnb consumers together with its relations to co-creation and expectation. To reach this aim, the paper tries to answer the following research questions.

1. How are customer experience, co-creation and the consumer's expectation related in the specific context of Airbnb consumption?
2. What factors emerge for different stages of customer experience of accommodation through Airbnb?

The theoretical contribution of this paper gives insights to how customer experience is connected to co-creation and expectation in a contextual setting. The abductive reasoning will provide a new perspective to the fields of customer experience and co-creation. In addition, the concept of expectation and its relation to the actual experience is shown in the customer experience setting. The problem specific approach could provide contrast to inductive and deductive schools of thought and maybe justify its usage for investigating broadly defined concepts in more narrow contexts. By this, the theoretical fields of value co-creation, service experience consumption within a customer-to-customer context gain input from this study.

The managerial contribution can provide managers a strategy on how to measure their customers' experience. Since different economic entities work differently and provide a very broad array of services, the abductive mixed method approach can be

used to better the gathering of basic feedback, conducting customer oriented R&D strategies and through that develop customer experience through customer specific aspects, their business concept and the surrounding field of commerce.

Similarly, the managers could understand the process through the customer's perspective and make strategic decisions based on that where to focus attention and what tactics to apply within that focus.

### **1.3. Disposition**

The paper follows with introducing the research design is that discusses the perspective that guides the investigation and expands on the logic of abduction in comparison to induction and deduction. After the researcher's viewpoint and logic of reasoning are introduced, the chapter will continue with methodology. The mixed method approach, which will be used for this paper, combines the qualitative data with quantitative to accommodate a more problem centric methodology.

After the research design, a theoretical background is presented. Since abductive logic combines the discovery with existing knowledge to explain the reasons of the discovery, then having a theoretical background is justified. It starts with presenting the definitions and the current understanding about the sharing economy to see the context that surrounds Airbnb that is the setting for this study. It then looks into the concept of experience and more precisely, customer experience with its definitions and understandings especially within economical thinking.

The theoretical concepts of value co-creation are presented through the understanding of value co-creation within the Service-Dominant Logic and continued with the co-creation of experiences. The customer experience, that presents the beginning and the end of the studied phenomenon, is used to define the explorative focus of the investigation. After these concepts are presented, a connecting discussion is then presented that results in a preliminary conceptual model developed from existing concepts.

The interview will produce the next chapter that will provide a discussion on the emerging results and the hypotheses that are developed from them. This chapter will further develop the conceptual model with additional input from the conducted interviews.

The Survey results chapter follows the hypothesis development that will show how strong the statistical evidence for the proposed explanations within the previous chapter is. It follows with the subchapters that present the normality tests and outliers together with scale development. Further it takes the reader to see the results of testing the hypotheses. After the results of the hypotheses testing, additional results are presented that help along with answering the research questions.

After the results are presented, the paper follows with a discussion chapter that will explain how the concepts of multi-phased customer experience, expectation and co-creation are connected.

The discussion chapter holds a subchapter for further research to give possible suggestions for what to study further from the results gained in this study.

The paper finishes up with a concluding chapter that will summarize the answers to the stated research questions.

## 2. Research design

The study will situate itself in a pragmatic worldview that focuses on the existing conditions where the research problem lies and how that should be studied with the use of quantitative and qualitative means (Creswell, 2014). This, for the mixed methods, allows for various worldviews, assumptions, and ways of gathering data since it is a problem centric worldview that deals with finding an applicable solution to the problem at hand (Creswell, 2014). The problem centricity is hence focused on accommodation through Airbnb and its customer experience.

### 2.1. Abductive Reasoning

This research, as mentioned, is conducted from a standpoint of pragmatism and the research design follows an abductive approach. Abduction, defined broadly, is “a reasoning process invoked to explain a puzzling observation” (Aliseda, 2006, p. 28). It is a problem specific reasoning where diverse interpretations are cautiously pondered that help the finding of new meanings and relations (Pålsson Syll, 2013). Aliseda (2006) narrates this pondering as “computation” (p. 30) over different elements that is dependent on what is previously known. So in simpler terms, the emerging data and the observer’s current knowledge are synthesized and tested to see, if the outcome of the synthesizing process is truthful for the specific studied phenomenon.

For this paper, having a theoretical background prior to data gathering, is justified due to abductions relying on the researcher’s knowledge around the problem and the techniques to gather data about it (Aliseda, 2006). Aliseda (2006) adds that the *abductive explanation* about the problem is always respectful to the body of beliefs that surround it. The role of theoretical background in this paper is therefore the creation of beliefs that later reflect in the explanation of the studied phenomenon.

This will not be a deductive study as the hypotheses and items for measurement are developed only after the occurring evidence (Aliseda, 2006). Nor will this be an inductive study that similarly to abduction, is directed from evidence to explanation, but does not need a background theory as such (Aliseda, 2006).

Abduction is used in two ways: abductive process and abductive explanation (Aliseda, 2006). Aliseda (2006) claims, that since they are separate elements of

abduction, they are related as process develops the explanation. The abductive explanation can thereafter be tested later through another logical reasoning (Aliseda, 2006). This paper will test the developed hypotheses by using a survey.

In a Piercian (after Charles Pierce) hypothesis, three elements need to be present; the hypothesis must be explanatory, it needs to have the ability to be tested, and it needs to be economic (Aliseda, 2006). This is elaborated as the need for a hypothesis to be a suggestive explanation that can be tested and it needs to have a better likelihood than the competing explanations that were not chosen (Aliseda, 2006).

## **2.2. Methodology**

This study will apply a mixed method approach to conduct the empirical data collection and analysis. This kind of methodology utilizes both qualitative and quantitative data in a research investigation (Creswell, 2014). The positive aspect about mixed method approach is that with using both qualitative and quantitative data, there is a possibility to neutralize each of their weaknesses (Creswell, 2014).

Various mixed method approaches emerged as a popular choice during the 1980-s with their advocates seeing bias and weaknesses in each method when used individually (Creswell, 2014). In the case of this paper, the use of qualitative data would give deeper understanding of the phenomenon of experience co-creation, however, by using quantitative data these understandings can be studied in a more general context.

Bryman (2001) states that qualitative data can assist in providing assumptions and it can also help developing scales for quantitative research. The qualitative research can build the fundamental features while the use of quantitative means may help the discovery of certain patterns and links that are very time consuming when investigated solely qualitatively (Bryman, 2001).

The qualitative data for this paper will aid in developing the questionnaire for the survey that will measure the outcome on a broader level. This will already imply that the design used for this mixed method assignment is an exploratory sequential mixed method design (Creswell, 2014). The purpose of this design, according to Creswell

(2014), is to develop better measurements that can then be tested whether they allow generalizations on a broader level.

The strategical direction that this paper uses for the exploratory sequential mixed method design is the transformative mixed method strategy that in its essence keeps a theoretical background for guiding the research design throughout all the relevant steps such as the stating of research questions, data analysis etc. (Creswell, 2014). Creswell (2014) states that this strategy is mostly used to research dealing with social justice theories, however this paper takes it as a methodological strategy where the conceptual framework that was developed prior guides the whole investigation process and allows itself to be adjusted data input, therefore distinguishing itself from a purely deductive or inductive discipline.

Creswell (2014) divides the exploratory sequential mixed method design into three stages: exploratory, instrument development, and instrument administration to a larger sample. This study will use a semi-structured interview for the exploratory stage, questionnaire as an instrument and a survey as the instrument administration. Each method for this study will be developed and its analysis described in separate subchapters.

### **2.3. Stage one – Interview**

The first stage will complement the conceptual framework by giving additional input to various factors that might influence expectations and the experience co-creation process. Since the conceptual framework has implied that the customer experience is a multi-phase phenomenon where the three phases are linked with each other, the task of these interviews is to provide knowledge into gaining input on what are the factors within the concepts, and how are they considered within the context of Airbnb consumption.

To achieve this, Interviews can be useful for their ability to project psychological recollections such as feelings, experiences and attitudes etc. (May, 2011). For the current study, this allows for getting the viewpoint of a consuming actor on how he or she will perceive the co-creation process and how that is implemented with the factors within the respective concept.



This helps with answering research question 2 by bringing forth the major factors that emerge, and also help give preliminary answers to research question 1 on how these factors can link together the concepts of customer experience, expectations and co-creation.

The sample for choosing the interviewees will be a purposive non-probability sample (May, 2011). This type of sample strategy requires the participants to share a known characteristic which for this paper is their prior experience with Airbnb.

The interviews were done with three participants. One of them was a woman in her twenties and two of them men of whom one is in his twenties and one in his thirties. Table 1 illustrates their background and relation to using Airbnb.

Table 1: Sample for the Semi-Structured Interviews

Gender	Age group	Nationality	Occupation	Previous experience with Airbnb	Alone or with a friend(s) during last stay
Male	20-29	Mexican	Student	1x	Alone
Female	20-29	Finnish	Student	3x	1 Friend
Male	30-39	American	Student	7x	>1 Friend

May (2011) divides interviews into four: Structured, semi-structured, unstructured, and focus group interview. The author adds that these types can be used separately or mixed together. In this stage, the semi-structured interview will be used as it uses some aspects of structured and unstructured interviews by allowing comparability between several cases but at the same time freedom in terms of answering such as in an unstructured interview (May, 2011).

The reason a structured interview was not chosen is its uniformity where each question is to be asked in the same manner from each interviewee (May, 2011). This could become a problem if the sequence of the subjects is to change depending on the focus and willingness of the interviewee to discuss certain subjects at hand.

This was not unstructured interview due to some comparability being necessary and with a structure that can be more time consuming. Therefore some standardization will be allowed on the side of the interviewee having freedom of discussion within semi-standard guides (May, 2011).

The interviews had a sequential characteristic that laid the concepts in relation to a chronological order (May, 2011). This was, as mentioned, done by using an interview guide to keep in mind the concepts to be discussed with the questions to be asked. Silverman (2013) claims that this guide does not have to be followed and in fact steering off from it can be encouraged in many cases. For this study it was deemed necessary as to the nature of the topic and to make sure everything necessary in terms of the concept will be discussed. However, if the topic at hand went off from the interview guide, then that was not seen as a problem in this case.

The interviews were carried out between the 4<sup>th</sup> of April and the 9<sup>th</sup> of April and each one lasted between 45 minutes to one hour. One of the interviews was conducted face to face and two through Skype software. The interview guide is visible in **appendix 1**.

### **2.3.1. Qualitative content analysis**

Qualitative content analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Elo, et al., 2014; Wikberg & Eriksson, 2008) will aid in developing the questionnaire items for the survey. This analytical method looks for hidden meanings and groups them together in more abstract overarching categories (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The abductive logic of this analysis in this study is similar to what Wikberg and Eriksson (cf. 2008) did, who set the parameters according to their theoretical background, but derived their categories within those parameters inductively from the existing data.

This study analyzed the interview transcriptions within the conceptual parameters of pre-experience, customer experience, post-experience, expectation, and co-creation. Categories within those concepts were created from the emerged data that later with the development of hypotheses reassessed the conceptual model.

### **2.4. Stage two – The survey**

As previously stated, one of the three necessary characteristics of a hypothesis is that it needs to be testable (Aliseda, 2006). To do this, the developed hypotheses will be tested through the use of a survey. This will help answering the research question 1 by showing if the hypothesized explanations hold reliability and truthfulness. Without testing, a hypothesis is merely a possible explanation without evidentiary background (Liedman, 2013). With this in mind, it is important for the hypothesis to be clear and measurable, since surveys record factual events, peoples' attitudes and

behaviors through questions that need to be comprehensible to the respondents (May, 2011).

Survey is a logical tool for this paper since it requires some assumptions to either develop or test a theory (May, 2011). May (2011) adds, that surveys are good tools to study statistical evidence of causal associations that can support the stated assumptions. This allows to see whether the developed explanations to answer the research question, receive statistical evidence that supports them.

#### **2.4.1. Critique**

Surveys often fall under criticism by the way they standardize what is asked and therefore implying that the important issues within a phenomenon are prior decided by the researcher (May, 2011). Furthermore, May (2011) claims that there can be a gap in the way the questions are interpreted by the respondents' as opposed to the researcher. This could be considered when a survey is used under deductive reasoning. However, since this study is carried out under an abductive reasoning and questions are very dependent on prior emerged data in the form of the interviews, then the purpose of the survey is to see whether there is evidence supporting the hypotheses developed from prior data and theory.

In addition, to address the issue of interpretation, the questionnaire – that will be discussed below – went through a process of face validity (Drost, 2011) during its pilot phase that is also discussed below. During this, the people who had used Airbnb before gave feedback on the wording of questions and how to make it more understandable considering that the respondents know Airbnb firsthand.

#### **2.4.2. Sample**

The sample strategy, for this paper, was chosen to be the purposive sample that is in its essence a non-probability sample (May, 2011). The purposive sample, as May (2011) states, recruits participants who share a known characteristic, which for this study is the existence of their past experience with accommodation through Airbnb. Purposive sample allows for a smaller size of a sample since the characteristic limits the parameters of the population (May, 2011).

The distribution of the questionnaires via Internet and Social Media is similarly justified since to use Airbnb in the first place, access to the Internet is necessary. This distribution strategy, however, adds to the sampling strategy by giving it

attributes of a haphazard-, or availability selection (Aron, Aron, & Coups, 2014; May, 2011) where participants are recruited dependent on their availability to the researcher. May (2011) cautions for this sort of sampling for the difficulties of acquiring representativeness, however as previously stated, an access to internet is necessary to use Airbnb so online surveys can be justified in this case.

### **2.4.3. The questionnaire and the variables**

The questionnaire used for this study was a self-completion questionnaire due to its low cost and impersonal nature (May, 2011). The researcher has little power over the speed and fulfilment of the questionnaire in this way, so it needs to be made appealing to the target sample through the introduction text and assurance of anonymity (May, 2011). This study used a platform known as Google Forms to develop the questionnaire for this study. The questionnaire can be viewed in **appendix 2**.

The questionnaire consisted of 29 questions that were meant to measure 32 variables divided into five sections. The types of variables used in the questionnaire consisted of: Scale variable where the values were continuous numbers, ordinal variable where the numeric variables were presented as ordered ranks, and nominal variables where the values are names and not numbers (Aron, Aron, & Coups, 2014). The variables are presented in **figure 1**.

The first section of the questionnaire dealt with the respondents' demographic background. This consisted of five purely demographic questions and in addition one that asked about the respondents' extent of prior experience within Airbnb. The reason for that was to remove the respondents who had never had any experience with Airbnb and keep people who had used the platform previously, in the sample. This part measures age as a scale variable, gender and nationality as nominal variables and the respondent's level of education and approximate income in EUR both as ordinal variables.

The second section asks about the characteristics of the respondents' last stay at a place they had booked through Airbnb. The reason that the focus was on their last stay, is that this allows for studying a single customer experience and the hypothesized relations throughout the three stages, no matter how good or bad the

experience was. The main purpose of this section was categorization of respondents by the way they stayed at the accommodation. It consisted of 5 questions that measured the same amount of variables. The variables measured the time since the respondents' last stay as an ordinal variable, in addition it measured the existence of friends, other guests, the presence of the host during the stay, and whether the respondents' stayed in touch with their host after the stay, all as nominal variables.

The third section leads in to the main part of the questionnaire and that is the three-phased customer experience of the respondent's last stay. The section deals with the information amount gathered in the pre-experience stage. This stage is also to measure the independent variables for **hypothesis 1** and **hypothesis 3**.

The four questions are presented as Likert items that all together will sum up to be an independent Likert index of Information in the pre-experience phase. Likert scaling is good for studying one unmeasurable concept by dividing it into items that measure the respondents' attitude, agreement, and thoughts about these items (van Alpen, Halfens, Hasman, & Imbos, 1994; May, 2011). It is therefore a sum of these items that are attitude scales ranging from one extreme to the other (van Alpen, Halfens, Hasman, & Imbos, 1994).

The four Likert items, that measure the information about the booked place through description, feedback from other guests, photos, and the discussion with the host, are all ordinal values. The resulting Likert index is a scale value of information gathered during the Pre-experience stage.

The fourth section studies the actual stay, hence the customer experience with its relation to the customer's expectation. This section, similarly to the previous section, consists of ten questions that are Likert items and that all make up one Likert index. The variables in this section will be dependent variables to test **hypothesis 1** and independent variables to test **hypothesis 2**. Since the interviews prior looked into what value sources come up with an accommodation through Airbnb, then the Likert items were to measure utilitarian value sources and their accordance to the respondents' expectations such as locating the house, accessing the house, and accessibility within the house.

In addition the section studied sensory and emotional value sources through the Likert items that measured beauty of the house, cleanliness of the house, and living

conditions, all being considered by the respondents' expectations. As in the previous section, the Likert items were of ordinal values while the resulting Likert index of Customer experience in coherence with the customer's expectation was a scale value where 40 indicated the respondents' expectations. This resulted in understanding of how the stimulators, or value sources (Tynan & McKechnie, 2009) impacted the customer's prior expectations. Everything below 40 was less than the expectation and everything over that indicated the respondent's expectation was exceeded.

The final section deals with the outcomes within the post-experience phase. Similarly to the previous two, it also contains of Likert items as ordinal values that make up a Likert index of post experience outcome. The four questions are to measure the variables of respondents' overall enjoyability, the extent of them thinking about the stay afterword, the extent of them talking about the stay to others afterword, and the extent of how educative they perceived the stay. This section measures the dependent variables for studying **hypothesis 2** and **hypothesis 3**.

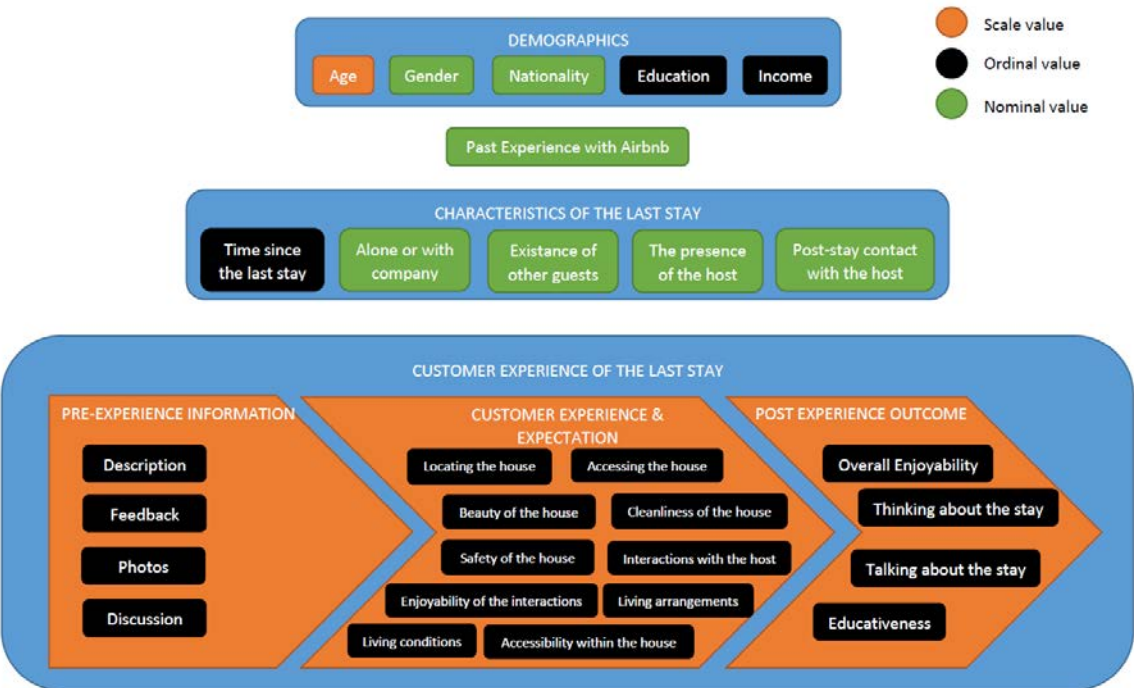


Figure 1: Survey Variables

#### **2.4.4. The Pilot study**

The pilot study for the survey was conducted on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April, 2016 and it finished on the same day. This can be a good method for further development of a questionnaire, as well as rethinking through each step of the survey strategy such as data gathering, entry and analysis (Schattner & Mazza, 2006). The main purpose for this pilot was to see if the questionnaire was easily understandable in regards to the instructions and questions, as well as easily answerable. In order to do this, face validity – a form of construct validity, was looked at (Drost, 2011). The respondents for the pilot phase gave feedback on how they understood the questionnaire and upon further discussions some questions were rewritten in a more clear way while still reflecting the variables they studied. Face validity will be further discussed under the validity and reliability chapter.

#### **2.4.5. Survey Management**

The survey was launched on the 29<sup>th</sup> of April 2016 and it was closed on the 16<sup>th</sup> of May 2016. The author shared the survey on Social media platforms such as Facebook and Reddit. In addition, the link to the questionnaire was published in a student portal [thestudentroom.co.uk](http://thestudentroom.co.uk) that facilitates a forum.

On Facebook, the survey link to questionnaire was distributed by the author on his profile page and it got shared by 19 people on their profile pages. In addition the link was published in the following Facebook groups: International Students on Campus Helsingborg, International Friends in Lund, International Students Lund University, International Students in Malmö University, International Students in Copenhagen, Erasmus in Tallinn University, Survey Exchange, Spørgeskemagruppe/Surveygroup, Norbatour, Erasmus Lund 2014-2015, Erasmus Lund 2015-2016, Service Management Autumn 2015, and Master in Service Management 2014-2016 Lund University Campus Helsingborg.

In addition, the survey link was published on Reddit in the subforum Samplesize. The forum in [thestudentroom.co.uk](http://thestudentroom.co.uk) had a subforum called “Student surveys and research” and the link was posted into that one also.

#### **2.4.6. Sample description**

The survey gathered 151 responses out of which 4 were removed due to them answering the filtering question about their past experiences with Airbnb as “I have

never used Airbnb before”. Since the purposive sample required them to have past accommodations through Airbnb, then 147 respondents were deemed valid to add into the data processing software.

The 147 respondents were divided into 37 nationalities. To provide a visual for the nationalities represented, **figure 2** was developed with an online software Webchart.net.

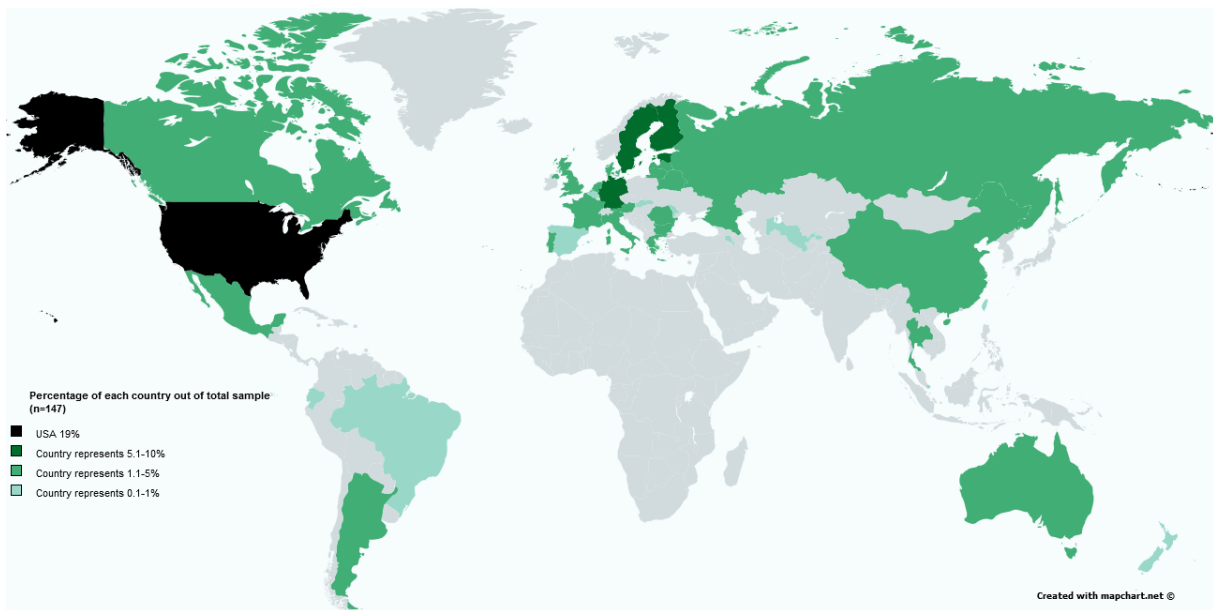


Figure 2: Percentage of each country out of a total sample of n=147

Upon testing the normal distribution and outliers, 7 outliers had to be removed which resulted in the final sample being N=140. The minimum age of the sample of 140 was 18 and maximum was 35. The mean age was 25,44 with a standard deviation of 3,647.

Out of the 140 respondents, 68,6% were female respondents with n=96 and 31,4% were male respondents with n=44. **Figure 3** and **4** show the respondents levels of education and levels of approximate net income in EUR.



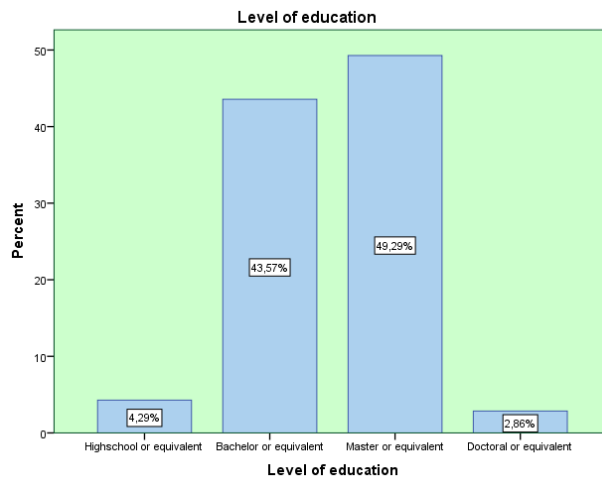


Figure 3: Level of education for n=140

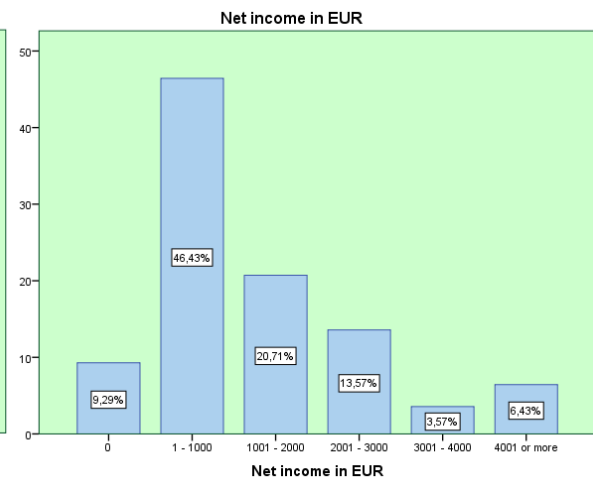


Figure 4: Net income in EUR for n=140

Figures and charts for various characteristics of the accommodation through Airbnb are presented in **appendix 3**.

#### 2.4.7. Statistical tests

The statistical tests for this paper were conducted through IBM SPSS software along with some independent calculations for the effect strength of some tests (discussed further).

Once the survey was concluded, the normal distribution age variable was investigated via visual methods. Razali and Yap (2011) claim, that using visual methods is the easiest way to determine a normal distribution for a sample. This study uses the histogram for seeing how the distribution follows the normal distribution line, and boxplot to see whether there are any outliers.

Scale development used internal consistency for Cronbach's Alpha to be measured between the Likert items for creating Likert scales of Pre-experience information, Customer experience and expectation, and post experience outcome. For the scales that had a lower than 0,7 alpha score, which is suggested for a scale to be considered reliable (DeVellis,2012 in Pallant, 2013), further considerations were taken into account. With a lower than 0,7 alpha score, Pallant (2013) suggests looking up the mean inter-item correlation. The suggested range for that is between 0,2 and 0,4 (Briggs & Cheek, 1986 in Pallant, 2013). The results of Cronbach's Alpha and the inter-item correlation, if necessary, are shown in the Scale development subchapter.

Since correlations are to be measured between the variables of Pre-experience information, Customer experience and Expectation, and Post experience outcome, the normal distribution of those variables needs to be assessed as well. Again, visual methods are taken into account with the addition of the Q-Q plot that is considered as one of the best ways to assess normal distribution of a variable (Razali & Yap, 2011). In addition to visual methods, SPSS provides two statistical tests, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and Shapiro-Wilk test.

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test has shown to require larger sample sizes to gain power while Shapiro-Wilkinson test is more appropriate for smaller samples (Razali & Yap, 2011). The Shapiro-Wilkinson test has been improved multiple times to be applicable to bigger sample sizes than the original  $n=50$  (Razali & Yap, 2011). This paper uses the Shapiro-Wilk test for it has shown to have the most power in determining whether a distribution is normal for a sample size between  $n=100$  and  $n=200$  (Razali & Yap, 2011).

Hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 3 were tested with Spearman Rho correlations test since, as the results show later, the pre-experience information is not normally distributed. Spearman Rho correlation is a non-parametric measurement for variables that do not meet the assumptions for Pearson R test (Hauke & Kossowski, 2011).

Hypothesis 2 was studied with the application of Pearson R test. Pearson's correlation test looks at the strength of the linear correlation between two scales and one requirement prior conducting the test is that the scales are normally distributed (Hauke & Kossowski, 2011). Both the variables of Customer experience and Expectation, and Post experience outcome had a normal distribution with the assessments mentioned before. That justifies the Pearson R test for hypothesis 2.

In addition to testing the hypotheses, several tests were conducted with the characteristics of the respondents' Airbnb accommodation experiences. T-test for independent means (Pallant, 2013) was used to see if an occurrence of a characteristic had a different outcome than the one without that occurrence (e.g. the presence of the host during accommodation etc.).

Alongside the T-test, since certain characteristics had more than two groups, they were tested with a one-way ANOVA test. One-way Anova test looks if the mean scores of the three groups differ from one another significantly (Pallant, 2013). The

between-groups ANOVA test, according to Pallant (2013), is used among different groups during the same study to see differences of the same variable between those groups.

The effects of the T-test for independent means and one-way ANOVA were calculated separately with the  $Eta^2$  equation after each test. Pallant (2013) provides the following formulas for calculating the  $Eta^2$ :

- One-way ANOVA  $Eta^2 = \frac{\text{Sum of squares between groups}}{\text{Total sum of squares}}$
- T-test for independent means  $Eta^2 = \frac{t^2}{t^2 + (N_1 + N_2 - 2)}$

Effect size is small with 0,01, average with 0,06, and large with 1,14  $Eta^2$  (Cohen, 1988 in Pallant, 2013).

## 2.5. Validity and Reliability

This chapter addresses the validity and reliability of this study. Validity concerns with the issue of whether the assessment in reality, is in accordance to what was sought to be assessed (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015; Drost, 2011; Zohrabi, 2013). In other terms it asks if the actual measurement is appropriate for getting answers about a certain phenomenon.

Reliability, on the other hand, deals with the consistency of the measurement in different occasions (Drost, 2011; Zohrabi, 2013). Since this paper is an abductive mixed method study, the consistency should be considered for the whole process since different factors might arise in contexts other than Airbnb accommodation. Therefore the course of investigation can remain the same while the emerging peculiarities, such as questionnaire items, may differ. However, the internal consistency for the variables of Customer experience and Expectation, and Post experience outcome showed good alpha scores and they could be used within further research on Airbnb customer experience

In mixed method research such as this, problems may arise within the development of the questionnaire items (Creswell, 2014). To address this issue, the author used face validity among people who had experiences with Airbnb as, previously mentioned. Face validity is a way, in which the subject assesses whether the

question in front of him is understandable and touches upon the issue at hand (Drost, 2011). This was done during the piloting of the survey.

In addition, triangulation can be argued in this case since more than one method is used for finding answers to a research question. Triangulation is considered as a way of getting an understanding of a phenomenon by using more than one method (Silverman, 2013). To answer the research questions, both the interview and survey methods were used.

Furthermore, Elo, Kääriäinen, Kanste, Pölkki, Utriainen and Kyngäs (2014) claim that a good description of sampling and participants' background can lead to trustworthiness of qualitative content analysis. This paper justifies the purposive sampling for the interviews due to it being the best way to get participants who are familiar with the studied context.

Statistical tests for normality will be conducted in addition to tests of assumptions prior hypothesis testing to help with interpretations for the tests to see whether they can be regarded in answering the research questions.

## **2.6. Ethical considerations**

The following chapter discusses about ethical considerations for this research. May (2011) ponders over the question whether answers in research should be pursued with any means necessary. He further concludes that social values cannot be taken away but should rather be implemented in the research design (May, 2011). This paper considers the Interviewees and respondents' right to privacy and anonymity as these can be valued concepts within the society.

The interviewees were promised anonymity of identity. They did however consent to the presentation of their background and age group. Similarly, the respondents for the survey were presented with an introductory text prior to fulfilling the questionnaire that promised anonymity.

When distributing the survey, the author made sure to point out that this survey is directed at anybody who has used Airbnb before to minimize the chance for the respondents who have not used Airbnb to feel that they are not able to fill out the questionnaire after they have already begun.

The author avoided distributing the survey at sites meant for Airbnb community discussions since majority of them was meant for the hosts. Creswell (2014) cautions researchers when conducting research within stakeholder groups, which might have vested interests. Since hosts would have probably helped distribute the questionnaires among people who they know to give positive feedback, then that could have biased results for the study at hand.

With keeping in mind the ethical advice from Creswell (2014), the author made sure not to pressure the participants into taking part in the interviews and the surveys. Nor were the participants withheld from information about what the study was about. Furthermore, it was also made clear prior to interviews and questionnaire distribution that this is a thesis project where no profits are made for private enterprises.

### 3. Theoretical Background

The following chapter starts with a closer look at how the sharing economy is understood and presents a parametrical framework of a comprehension of the sharing economy that surrounds Airbnb that is studied in this paper. Furthermore, the notion of experience is explained and its relevance is argued for with its impact on the economical processes taking place in the world. As experiences are reactions to the surrounding stimulators, expectations will be introduced to provide insight to the evaluation of experiences reflective to expectations. The theory chapter also covers topics such as the theoretical perspectives of value co-creation in which the value co-creation within the Service-Dominant logic will be closely examined and critiqued. It will then continue with reviewing the co-creation of experiences and how the experiences are relevant within consuming the offers provided. After this, it continues with a focused discussion of how experiences are linked to value creation. The theory chapter will conclude with a discussion that connects the different perspectives that are presented with the main parameters of the study.

#### 3.1. Defining sharing economy

There have been some efforts made in defining some base characteristics about sharing economy and collaborative consumption. Botsman and Rogers (2011) bring forth three distinctions of the phenomenon that they categorize as *collaborative consumption systems* (p. 71). The first of the three, *Product Service Systems*, allows multiple consumers to share a product or service that is owned by a company (e.g. car share, laundrettes); secondly, *Redistribution Markets* that allow the relocation of products that are deemed unnecessary by one actor to another actor that presents a demand for them (e.g. Freecycle, eBay, Swapcycle); and lastly, *Collaborative Lifestyles* where in addition to goods and products, more intangible assets are shared and the emphasis of exchange is often in the inter-human relations (e.g. Airbnb, Landshare, Brooklyn Skillshare) (pp. 71-75). These three help bring clarity when categorizing economic entities within collaborative consumption practices.

In a similar distinction, Schor (2014) provides a framework out of four factors for consideration when looking at the sharing economy – these are: *customer-to-customer* and *business-to-customer* interactions and within these groups she divides the companies into *non-profit* and *for-profit*. Considering the distinctions by both

Schor (2014), and Botsman and Rogers (2011) it is clear that a unifying definition and comprehension of this phenomenon is difficult. Therefore it is necessary to focus on a more concrete concept within the overall occurrence.

For example, an audit by PwC (2015) defines sharing economies as something that “allow individuals and groups to make money from underused assets. In this way, physical assets are shared as services.” (p. 5). However, Goudin and European Value Added Unit (2016) who imply that many of the previous definitions have been either too broad or too narrow uses the definition of sharing economy as “The use of digital platforms or portals to reduce the scale for viable hiring transactions or viable participation in consumer hiring markets (i.e. 'sharing' in the sense of hiring an asset) and thereby reduce the extent to which assets are under-utilized.” (p. 11). These publications imply that each study conducted within the sharing economy needs to clarify its definition of what aspect of the sharing economy is investigated.

This paper, in accordance with previous examples and discussions views sharing economy as, the digital platforms that allow various actors to make economic transactions by sharing, lending or borrowing resources, that are then utilized in real life, either to or from other actors. This perspective would fall into the framework of *collaborative lifestyles* (Botsman & Rogers, 2011) where the transactions are based in a *customer-to-customer* (Schor, 2014) model and these transactions are economic, hence *for profit* (Schor, 2014). Examples here would be platforms such as Uber and Airbnb.

This utilization in real life is where experiences, that are the focus of this study, emerge through co-creation. The following chapter explains experience and its peculiarities to have a better understanding of its emergence and what is co-created.

### **3.2. Experience in an economic context**

To continue with this theoretical framework, the notion of *experience* should be clarified. In simple ways the word in the English language is somewhat more difficult to grasp than the concepts behind it in other languages. The difficulty lies within understanding these concepts since experience can be either a noun or a verb (Tynan & McKechnie, 2009). Experience can be defined in two concepts: the first is defined as “*Practical contact with and observation of facts or events*” that can be related to competences in certain aspects and the second one is “*An event or*

*occurrence which leaves an impression on someone*” that has more to do with living through something (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016). Originating from Latin *Experientia* (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2016), the English use of the word has similarities with some romance languages that use their form of *experientia*. Spanish *experiencia* is also used to express the meaning of both contexts (Cambridge Dictionaries Online, 2016). However, in many other languages these concepts are expressed through separate words.

In addition, it does not stop there, as these concepts are separate, they are still connected within the development of each other (Jantzen, 2013). Jantzen (2013) concludes that the first concept of experience is the source of experiencing within the second concept and in the other way, the second concept of lived experience is building the first. For example the first skydive can be a new lived experience but after a number of jumps one can be considered an experienced skydiver and that experience can influence your next skydive. Or in relevance to this study, the first time someone consumes an accommodation through Airbnb, would be a new experience that makes the consumer experienced in this particular consumption and that experience will build expectations for further consumption. This type of lived experience will be the focus of the study.

This, however, is not enough to express how experience might have economic significance. There are several attempts to define the experience in an economical context. For example, Sundbo and Sørensen (2013) define experience in the context of experience economy as “the mental impact felt and remembered by an individual caused by the personal perception of external stimuli” (p. 4). The authors further add that experiences take place in the subject’s mind that is provoked by outside stimuli and this provocation is very much dependent on the subject’s readiness within the overall and particular surrounding situation (p. 4).

In addition, Arnould, Price and Zinkhan (2004) follow a similar thinking about experiences in the realm of consumption and define them as “physical, cognitive and emotional interactions with an environment” (p. 340). Pine and Gilmore (2011; 2013) who also state that experiences occur within individuals, each experience is unique and that based within the prior readiness of the subject and the occurring event. They see experiences as economic outputs that can reinvigorate the economies (Pine & Gilmore, 2013).



Ooi (2005) looks at experiences through attention and states that subjects lived experience is affected by what the subject's attention is focused upon for that gives awareness of the surrounding situation. In addition, at any given moment, people pay attention to one thing and that the shift of attention is influential for a lived tourism experience (Ooi, 2005). This reflects how experiences are individual since, as Ooi (2005) further adds, in the same situation, attention can be provoked by different factors and the same factor may get attention due to different reasons.

Also, the place of planning, development and staging of the experience can all be different from each other hence experience is not bound by a single space (O'Dell, 2005). In addition, in the context of value perceptions for customer service experience, significance to value perceptions remains even when the experience is imaginary (Helkkula & Kelleher, 2010). So one could argue that experiences take place everywhere where the subjects mind is whether it's together with the subject – hence in reality, or outside the subject – hence memory or imagination.

In their conceptual paper that discusses about experience and its co-creation in a service context, Jaakkola et al. (2015) define service experience as an “actor's subjective response to or interpretation of the elements of the service, emerging during the process of purchase and/or use, or through imagination or memory” (p. 186).

Arnould et al. (2004) state that consuming experiences is conducting activities in three phases: pre-consumption, consumption and post-consumption. Tynan and McKechnie (2009) further develop this into a customer experience as a three-staged process with pre-experience, customer experience and post-experience. The first stage is preparatory and creates expectations for the latter through imagining and planning etc.; the second stage is the experiencing of stimulators that can act as value sources such as sensory, functional, and social etc.; and the third stage is where the outcomes of the stimulators as value sources from the previous stage occur in the form of enjoyment, learning, and skills etc. (Tynan & McKechnie, 2009).

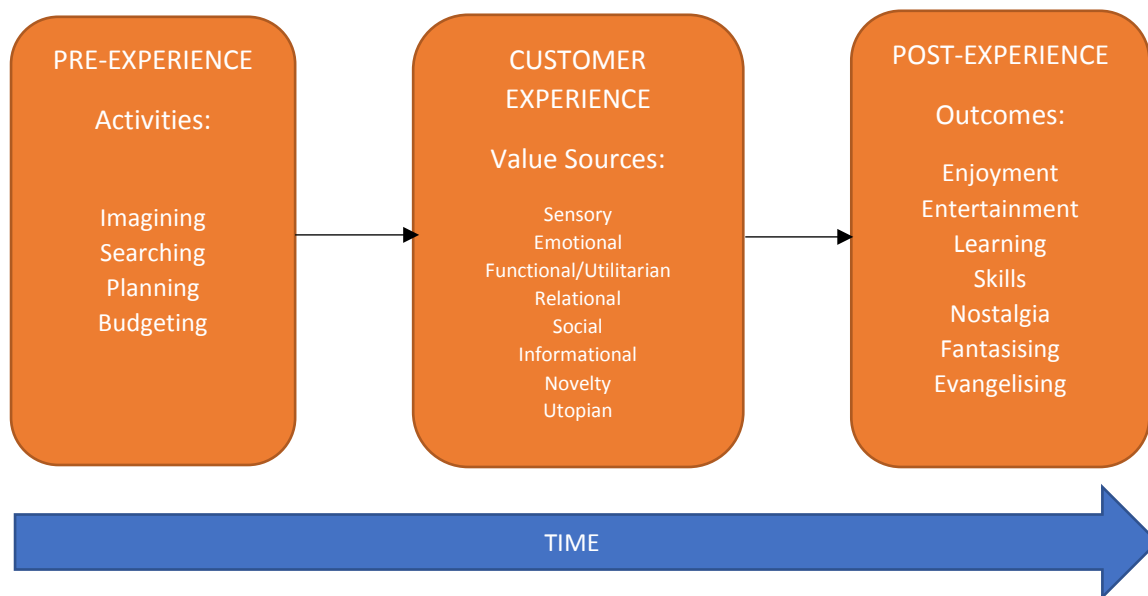


Figure 5: Customer's Experience - activities, value sources, and outcomes (Tynan & McKechnie, 2009)

**Figure 5** presents the three-staged customer experience as conceptualized by Tynan and McKechnie (2009).

To conclude the chapter, the key bullet points can be presented:

- Experience is an occurrence that results in an impression and/or emotion
- Each experience is unique to its surrounding context (Ooi, 2005; Pine & Gilmore, 2011; 2013; Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013)
- Experience takes place in a subjects mind that is provoked by the external environment (Jantzen, 2013; O'Dell, 2005)
- Experience is strongly influenced by the subjects prior readiness to it (Akaka, Vargo, & Schau, 2015; Jantzen, 2013; Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013)
- Experience in the mind can be lived, remembered and imagined (Jaakkola et al., 2015)
- Customer experience is a three stage process (Arnould et al., 2004; Tynan & McKechnie, 2009)

This paper will assume, in accordance to Jaakkola et al. (2015) the parameters of experience as the respondents' response or interpretation of the elements of service during the consumption of their sharing economy offer. However, since the multi-phased customer experience model views the first stage to build expectations for the following, the concept needs further introduction. The next chapter discusses expectations through theoretical perspective that proposes an understanding of how

the concept of expectations can be further related to the three-staged customer experience by Tynan and McKechnie (2009).

### **3.3. Expectations**

The previous chapter discussed how experiences are understood and one major aspect of experiencing is the prior readiness to it due to it occurring as a response to a stimulus. Jantzen (2013) states, however, that experiencing is not just a reaction to a stimulus but an interaction with it. Experiencing happens throughout all the time but for an experience to be memorable, it has to de-stabilize the expectations to experiences (Jantzen, 2013). This chapter will therefore introduce the concept of expectations for this study.

In other disciplines, such as human-computer interactions, expectations are seen as “beliefs and/or emotions related to a product that are formed before to its actual use” (Raita & Oulasvirta, 2011, p. 363). For a service setting, it has been defined as “a service that the customer anticipates” (Bowie & Chang, 2005, p. 307). As this paper deals with experience of consumption of a service therefore it views expectations as beliefs and emotions about the oncoming consumption process. More specifically, beliefs and emotions about the actual accommodation experience within Airbnb.

This process can be viewed through the Expectation-Confirmation Theory (Battacherjee, 2001; Michalko, Simonsen, & Hornbaek, 2015; Raita & Oulasvirta, 2011) that measures occurrence to its prior expectation. This perspective has been used in consumer psychology and shortly put, a low quality of the occurrence in respect to a high prior expectation leads to a negative evaluation of the occurrence and vice versa (Battacherjee, 2001; Raita & Oulasvirta, 2011). Hence, the result comes from comparing the expectation to an actual occurrence.

A Confirmation occurs when an expectation is the same with the perceived service (Battacherjee, 2001). If the perceived service either exceeds or does not meet the prior expectation, then the expectation has not been confirmed (Battacherjee, 2001). A disconfirming can be both positive and negative depending on the level of expectation and the perceived service (Battacherjee, 2001; Michalko, Simonsen, & Hornbaek, 2015; Raita & Oulasvirta, 2011). Therefore expectation confirmation is the measuring of real life occurrence to the prior expectation to it.

In terms of experiences, a positive lived experience is something that at least meets the prior expectations to it while extraordinary experience de-stabilizes them (Jantzen, 2013). Expectation for future experience, or readiness to it as previously mentioned, is therefore a key feature in determining whether an experience is good or bad. As Jantzen (2013) claims, the unexpectedness of an occurrence and the interaction required in that case, makes the occurrence memorable. He further adds, that the key is to break expectations in a positive way (Jantzen, 2013).

This is also exemplified by Akaka et al. (2015) who claim that in addition to the quality of the products and processes in a service environment, the subjects past experiences with these kinds of service environments and the expectations to that service environment are also important for a good experience.

For the multi-staged customer experience, it is claimed that the first stage builds the expectations for the following stages (Arnould, Price, & Zinkhan, 2004; Tynan & McKechnie, 2009). Therefore the second phase is the comparing of the actuality with the prior expectations to it that should result in the post-experience outcome.

### **3.4. Value Co-Creation**

Co-creation has emerged as a vital paradigm of thought that contains its own theoretical standpoints and applications in various empirical perspectives (Galvagno & Dalli, 2014). Galvagno and Dali (2014) further state that the term has been introduced around the turn of the millennium and brought to wider use by several authors such as Prahalad and Ramaswamy in their paper *Co-opting Customer Competence*. Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a; 2004b) claim that with the changing understanding of a market, co-creation will provide the competitive advantage to a firm that will now create the value in that market together with the customer as opposed to creating value for the product or service before taking it to that market. Similarly, Lusch and Vargo (2014) make a distinction in value creation within a goods-dominant logic and service-dominant logic and claim that for service-dominant logic value is always co-created among various actors involved as opposed to goods-dominant logic where value creation and realization is viewed to be controlled entirely by the firm.

Up until recently the discussion of value co-creation has divided itself into three main theoretical disciplines which are: *Service Science, Innovation and Technology*

*Management, and Marketing and Consumer Research* (Galvagno & Dalli, 2014, p. 659), the authors however add that these perspectives are tied strongly with each other. In *Service Science* it's the customer who will, with using the resources offered by the firm, always co-create value and with that aid in developing the business (Galvagno & Dalli, 2014). Co-creation, through the interactions between customers and firms, facilitated by technological platforms, will lead to innovation within the *Innovation and Technology Management* perspective and with *Marketing and Consumer Research* viewpoint customer expectations are kept in consideration when thinking of customer facilitation and empowerment (Galvagno & Dalli, 2014).

For Service-Dominant logic (SDL) the realization of value is in the actual consumption of the product or service and it is determined by what the recipient can do with the product or service (Lusch & Vargo, 2014). In this concept of *value-in-use*, the process of exchange is one aspect of value creation – a process that continues during the consumption of the product or service (Lusch & Vargo, 2014). This can be further elaborated with SDL-s understanding that a customer is the co-creator of value by the recipient still, after the payment, being in the process of value creation through integration of tangible and intangible resources (Lusch & Vargo, 2014). For accommodation, this occurs during and after the stay separate from the monetary transaction.

The value co-creation, within SDL, is conducted by integrating resources where all actors, social or economic, are viewed as resource integrators (Lusch & Vargo, 2014) In this case the tangible resources, such as material objects or location space are together with intangible resources like knowledge and skills all combined through necessity and availability. This could include the technical platform of Airbnb that facilitates the relations and transactions, the information given for a home, actors' existing knowledge about market situation for price and quality or the house that facilitates the accommodation and everything that is included with it such as the relations, utilities and experiences.

Since intangible resources are gathered throughout one's lifetime, then the abundance of tangible resources that provide possibilities to evolve and integrate other intangible resources, are equally important than intangible resources (Campbell et al., 2013; Piacentini et al., 2014). This would imply an equal weight of importance for both intangible and tangible resources within resource integration.

This brings forth a problem of equality between the firm and the consumer and between multiple consumers. Piacentini et al. (2014) present their study to reflect the consumers' abilities to perform resource integration due to social and cultural factors. The authors further mention that less privileged consumers have limited power of resource integration while the mainstream discussion about co-creation and integration regards all consumers in a more homogenous way to be creative and skillful (p. 215). The utility of a resource is in mixture with other resources (Campbell et al., 2013; Lusch & Vargo, 2014). Therefore value co-creation through resource integration seems to be influenced by the available resources the consumers (and the firm) might have.

In addition, SDL views value as something that is concluded within a unique context and phenomenon (Lusch & Vargo, 2014). This is due to the distinctiveness of a service encounter, or the prior resources that lead to a specific point in time, where the value can then be uniquely assessed (Lusch & Vargo, 2014). Therefore the value assessment can be different for the consumers in the same service setting due to differences in the consumers' experiences.

#### **3.4.1. The Co-creation of Experience**

As previously discussed, understanding the customer perspective and company centricity and the differences they pose will be one of the main drivers of success in the 21st century (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a). The main focus that Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a; 2004b) emphasize with this customer perspective is that interactions between the consumer and the firm allow for unique experiences that can be central to gaining competitive advantage. In addition, Jantzen (2013) states that customers' prior experience that influences expectation, may alter their choice of certain goods and services, therefore trying out these offers might break the expectation and form a new experience. With having more interactions with the customers, where they make their expectations and past experiences known, firms could create their goods or services in a way that are more likely to break these expectations.

This thought of an interaction being bound just between a firm and its consumer has been contested by more recent conception efforts (Jaakkola, Helkkula, & Aarikka-Stenroos, 2015; Lusch & Vargo, 2014; McColl-Kennedy, Cheung, & Ferrier, 2015). Jaakkola et al. (2015) claim that the service experience co-creation can be influenced

by actors that are outside of the service settings and add that a company should focus on possibilities to foster these interactions between multiple actors to facilitate service experience co-creation.

SDL has implemented actor-to-actor interactions to account the limitations with business-to-customer paradigm (Lusch & Vargo, 2014). Lusch and Vargo (2014) consider firms, customers and other stakeholders as essentially identical actors who all integrate resources to create value. Value is co-created through social practices with their specific sets of rules, procedures and methodology for creating meanings and acting upon them (Lusch & Vargo, 2014). This can be seen in a study by McColl-Kennedy, Cheung and Ferrier (2015) where it is shown that service experience co-creation is a relational and collaborative effort that adds in other actors in addition to frontline staff and their relationships to customers.

Further, Akaka et al. (2015) consider value being co-created via interactions among actors involved, and the positive evaluation of the experience had in those moments defines the resulting value. They further claim that gaining a bad experience might result in a negative value creation, implying that the goodness of experience influences the resulting value creation (Akaka, Vargo, & Schau, 2015). This reflects the previously discussed issue of braking expectations in a positive way as stated by Jantzen (2013). An argument could be made that breaking subjects expectations through interactions would result in a positive experience and therefore finalize as positive value creation. Interactions would allow the realization of the specifics of those expectations and what is necessary for breaking them or at least meeting them. For instance the role of the host could present importance within the interactive co-creation during the stay.

This reflects the understanding that experiences are unique and constructed differently by each individual (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004b). Furthermore due to this uniqueness, experiences are unpredictable for actors involved and this in turn questions the traditional understanding of the supply and demand concept where the demand becomes influenced by the surrounding context (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a). This re-touches the issue presented in an example above about the consumers in a bed and breakfast where different value assessments reflect differences in prior individual demand. These value assessments are derived from the general experience of the encounter.

The example directs our thought to the fact that the subject experiencing the surrounding, does so with other subjects around and therefore thought of a shared experience could be fostered. Experience sharing is an attempt at value creation that is more extensive than resource integration and the experience is embedded with value (Chen, Drennan, & Andrews, 2012).

Within SDL there is an understanding that value is determined by the beneficiary and firms can only make value propositions (Lusch & Vargo, 2014). In similar way, the quality of experience offering and its value is determined by the consumer and the firm can in a best case scenario only deliver certain elements for invoking an experience (Jantzen, 2013).

### **3.5. Merging the framework**

The context of the theoretical framework sets itself within the sharing economy that in this case are the internet platforms that provide means for *customer-to-customer* based interactions that include economic transactions. The supplying and consuming customers within this context are considered as actors who share, borrow or lend resources to and from each other in exchange for economic resources. Lusch and Vargo (2014) consider all economic entities whether a company, individual or a government as actors who integrate resources through interactions. This paper focuses on the consuming actor's perspective within the consumption of Airbnb – a known company within the sharing economy.

Throughout the exchange of resources, the actors interact with other actors and the material surroundings and this allows for experiences to occur. Therefore, as the framework suggests, these experiences are co-created since Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a; 2004b) suggest experience co-creation is done through interactions. Lived experiences create experiences within the competence context and these in turn determine the expectations to new lived experiences (Jantzen, 2013). This suggest that experience is an intangible resource that could be molded with the help of the host and other guests during the accommodation.

A study has shown an issue where consumers had more difficulties with resource integration due to their low-income backgrounds (Piacentini, Hibbert, & Hogg, 2014). This lack of sufficient tangible resources (income, food, infrastructure) limiting the integration of intangible resources (access to education, skills, experience) implies



that co-creation through resource integration is influenced by the actors specific possibilities and availabilities for resource integration. This is interesting in terms of Airbnb consumption since the context is strongly linked with possibilities within telecommunications because of the web platform that provides the means for beginning a service encounter.

In addition, SDL views value being determined solely and phenomenologically by the beneficiary (Lusch & Vargo, 2014). Similarly, as previously mentioned, experiences are individual occurrences. The reasoning here is that there can be more actors than one to co-create the individual experience for the beneficiary. Every actor has their experience that is co-created by every actor involved in the co-creation. In this paper the focus is on the consuming actor's individual experience.

The experience in this case is measured against the previously attained expectation (Battacherjee, 2001; Michalko, Simonsen, & Hornbaek, 2015; Raita & Oulasvirta, 2011). Expectation confirmation is when the experience meets the expectations and it is not confirmed when it's less than expected or more than expected (Battacherjee, 2001). For a good experience to occur, it needs to meet the prior set expectation to it (Jantzen, 2013).

In addition, Jantzen (2013) has stated that by breaking expectations new memorable experiences occur and calls for breaking the expectations in a positive way. Akaka et al. (2015) claim that evaluation of an experience leads to value creation. This suggest that the consuming actors' perceived value is influenced by the lived experience of the consumption that is measured against the expectation to it. Expectation confirmation happens when the experience, in this case, meets the prior expectation to it and when it doesn't then the expectation is not confirmed. When an expectation is not confirmed, it can be either negative – the experience did not meet the expectation; or positive – the experience exceeded the expectation.

Customer experience is perceived to be a step-by-step process with a pre-, during-, and post phase where the first phase builds expectations for the following phase (Arnould, Price, & Zinkhan, 2004; Tynan & McKechnie, 2009). The next phase where the actual experience takes place holds various value sources that work as the stimuli for the subject to experience (Tynan & McKechnie, 2009). Expectation

confirmation will take place in regards to the experience that the value sources stimulate.

The post experience phase is the result of the customer experience relationship with customer's expectation. Tynan and McKechnie (2009) state that, the value sources lead to outcomes in the last phase of the customer experience. But the outcome comes from whether the experience was as expected or not, and in that case whether it was better or worse.

**Figure 6** shows how the consumer's expectation fits into the multiphase customer To answer research questions 1 and 2 further investigation will be made into how the customer experience, as presented in the conceptual model work within the consumption of Airbnb accommodation. The next chapter will discuss the results from the interview and present the developed explanations that are developed as hypotheses.

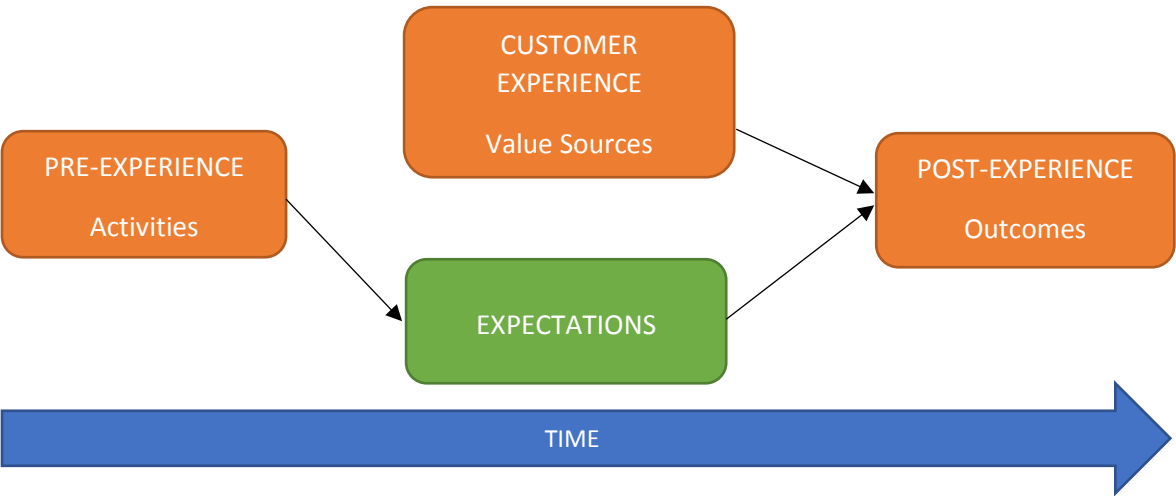


Figure 6: Developed from the Customer's experience (Tynan & McKechnie, 2009) by adding expectations

#### 4. Hypotheses development

The abductive reasoning, that was previously discussed, would clarify a single observation unlike inductive that has diverse observations (Aliseda, 2006). Therefore it is important to bring forth that this analysis and hypothesis development is only for customer experience during the consumption of Airbnb. This will not apply to other sharing economic entities as they are not the surroundings for the occurred viewpoints expressed within the interviews.

The sequential interviews (May, 2011) laid out a chronological sequence of actions, thoughts, emotions and reflections that were analyzed using a qualitative content analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The purpose of the interviews and the analysis was to develop hypotheses and find thematic categories that emerge within the concepts of pre-, customer, and post-experience as well as the concept of expectation. In addition, seeing how co-creation between actors is related throughout the concepts within this customer expectation.

In essence, the interviews were conducted to answer the research questions 1 and 2 with the explanations for the first research question additionally being tested through hypotheses in the following survey. That will help certify the answers to the research questions and build further discussions about the phenomenon and its applications for further development.

The pre-experience phase revealed actions like browsing the Airbnb website for accommodation offerings, contact with the future host and arrival to the house. First thing that is evident is that to get an accommodation with Airbnb, a person must have access to the website – hence the existence of internet is vital here. Airbnb belongs to what Cusumano (2015) calls the internet based platforms.

Since Tynan and Mckechnie (2009) claim that the pre-experience activities are for preparation of the actual customer experience then the focus of the interviews in this phase was on how these actions helped in preparing for the experience. This was also important since experience occurs in relation to the subject's prior readiness to it (Akaka, Vargo, & Schau, 2015; Jantzen, 2013; Sundbo & Sörensen, 2013).

What strikes out from all these actions is the notion of gathering information. Every action that the interviewees took resulted in information. Information was something that the interviewees were knowledgeable after as the following excerpt shows

*A lot of people on Airbnb don't give much information. They will just say like "A room in an apartment" and that's it. They don't tell you much so I just avoid those places. But some of them are really good at giving information on exactly what you get.*

*Male in his 30-s*

This excerpt reflects the importance of the amount of precise information being important for the interviewee. The description however is not the only place the interviewees acquired their information. The interviewees had also discussions with the host to be for their accommodations. These discussions mainly resulted in gaining information on how to arrive such as directions, where to get the keys, and how to get in the house.

Lusch and Vargo (2014) claim that a new resource is the result of resource integration that is central to value co-creation. Information could in this case be regarded as an intangible resource that results in the consumer's knowledge on how to use the overall service.

*The person contacted me and then basically told me "When can you arrive so I can give you the keys?" and well, I had to of course use google map to know how to get there and what busses I had to take and then I remember that the last bus stop was like three kilometers from there so I had to walk that.*

*Male in his 20-s*

The previous excerpt reflects on how the exchange of knowledge as an intangible resource will result to the arrival and whether the customer has the required information on how to get to the place or not.

The description and discussion with the host were strong contributors to the expectations upon entering the place. Main expectation was that the place had to match the description on the webpage. In addition to that, the previous feedback was mentioned as a source of information for the accommodation. This was also visible

throughout the second and third phase where the value sources in the customer experience phase were evaluated in regards to prior expectations.

In the second phase – customer experience, the first impressing value sources are of sensory or aesthetic, social or relational and utilitarian nature. The first is mediated through the appearance of the house both outside and inside. In addition, the objects within the space that were perceived as representative of a certain meaning such as “alternative lifestyle” or “Danish design”. The utilitarian impressions were mediated through availability of using the objects and technology in the place to satisfy specific needs. This can be exemplified with the availability of an elevator if the accommodation is on a higher floor, the previously mentioned access through public transport or within the house access to internet.

The relational aspect will also play in the first impression when there are people involved that were not mentioned in the description. For instance some of the interviewees were not aware of other guests or “roommates” in some occasions. Another thing about the relational aspects was the enjoyment of these relations as some people might be either more private or they won’t have the time to spend on talking with other people involved in the accommodation process.

The description is what is thought of when reflecting the impressions as they match the description or not, and if not then whether they are worse or better. This will also bring in the notion of imagination that is in the pre-experience stage. The description, discussion with the host, and to some extent the price and previous experience seem to build expectation that to the customer manifested through imagination.

Therefore the first hypothesis that is constructed is as follows:

**Hypothesis 1:** The amount of information gained in the pre-experience will positively influence the level of impact the value sources within the customer experience have to consumer’s expectations.

The overall impression, that the interviewees had in many ways stayed the same in relation to the first impression upon entering the home. However, no one had the host there with the exception of one whose host was there for one day out of his whole stay. The following excerpt exemplifies this as the answer to a question about the overall impression of the stay:

*Easy and responded to my perceptions and I was happy with it. But my friend who came later and she stayed with me the last few days. She was much more critical than I was.*

*Female in her 20-s*

This excerpt also shows how the interviewee's friend had lower overall impressions due to her expectations being different. Since the interviewee was the one who handled the preparation activities, she had more information about it and the value sources related better to her expectations that resulted in a better overall impression. This could very well argue for the first hypothesis but also shows an important relation for developing the second one.

This is also in way agreeing with Jantzen (2013) who sees the outcome of the experience resulting in the relationship between the stimuli and prior expectation. Furthermore is this in line with Akaka et al. (2015) who state that the evaluation of experience involves taking in the aspects of the occurring stimulators such as the quality of service and prior experience that has set the expectation.

The overall impression when thinking about the expectations was also similar to what the first impression already gave. A lot had to do with the living arrangements that could have been better elaborated.

Taking all this into consideration, the second hypothesis was constructed:

**Hypothesis 2:** The level of impact the value sources within the customer experience have to consumer's expectations positively influences the level of post-experience outcome after the customer experience of accommodation through Airbnb.

In addition, when thinking about unexpected aspects of the accommodation, it was always reflected to a lack of information about it. For instance if the information about cohabitants was unclear in the pre-experience phase, then the interviewee would have to base their expectation on other things and that lead to a higher chance of that expectation being negatively disconfirmed.

*I didn't know that there was going to be another guest. So it was like "ok, who is this person?"*

*Male in his 20-s*

This reflects the understanding that experiences are dependent from the prior readiness of the experiencer (Akaka, Vargo, & Schau, 2015; Jantzen, 2013; Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013)

So there seems to be a relation to the amount of information and the outcome of expectation confirmation.

**Hypothesis 3:** The amount of information is positively related to the post experience outcome after the customer experience outcome of accommodation through Airbnb.

These relational aspects are visualized in **figure 7** that presents a reassessed model for three staged customer experience and its relation to expectations.

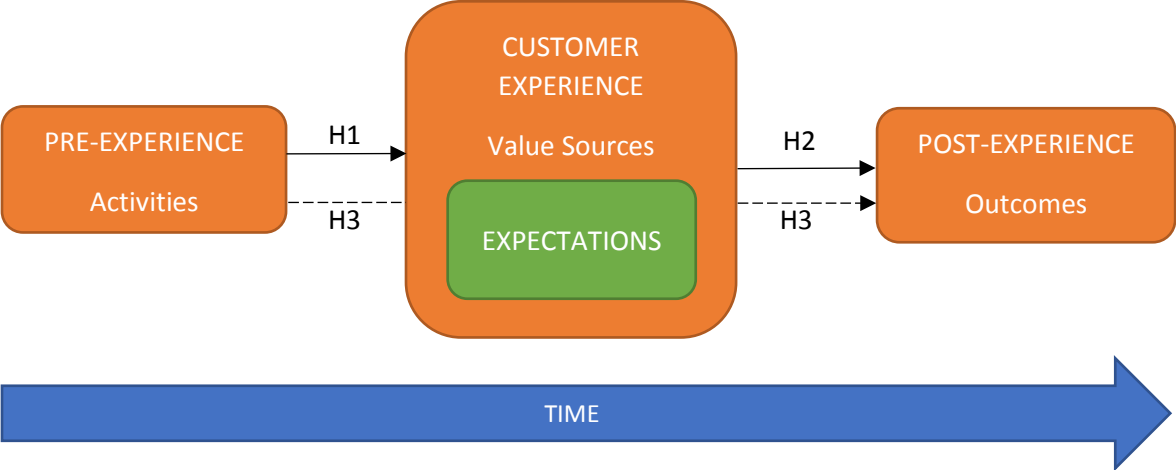


Figure 7: Reassessed Conceptual Model of Customer Experience

In terms of co-creation, the results seem to go more in line with the critique which implies that the tangible resources set the range of possibilities for resource integration (Campbell, O'Driscoll, & Saren, 2013). This is shown in cases where the host is not present during the accommodation and the communication is limited to technological possibilities.

Similarly, since co-creation as a process is done through interactions, then the interviews showed that it is not just about the willingness of the supplier to take part in the integration, but also the customer who may be wanting privacy. Similarly the availability of the host plays a role for value-in-use for the accommodation.

## 5. Survey results

The results of the survey help confirm the explanations provided to answer research questions that have been guiding the investigation. The hypotheses are tested to aid with answering the first research question and additional tests help giving input to answering the second research question. The chapter starts off with sample normality and scale development test results.

### 5.1. Normality and outliers

As discussed in the method chapter, originally there were 151 responses from which 4 had stated that they had never used Airbnb so they were removed.

The sample distribution was studied based on the respondents' age that was from 18 to 56. **Table 2** presents additional data on the respondents' age.

Table 2: Age data for n=147

Statistics		
Age		
N	Valid	147
	Missing	0
Mean		26,25
Median		25,00
Mode		24
Std. Deviation		5,251

**Figure 8** presents a histogram of the respondents' ages.

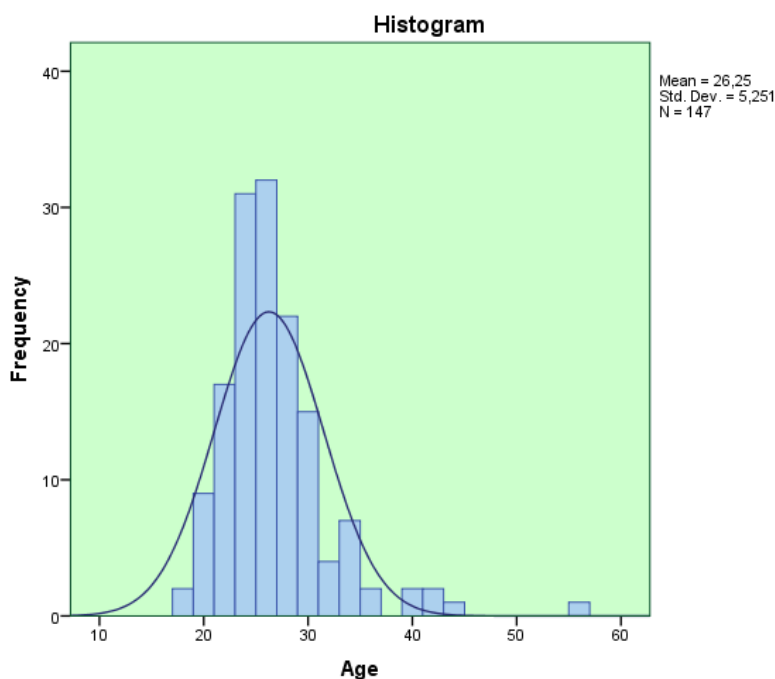


Figure 8: Age distribution for n=147



In addition, **figure 9** presents a boxplot to see if there are any outliers within the sample.

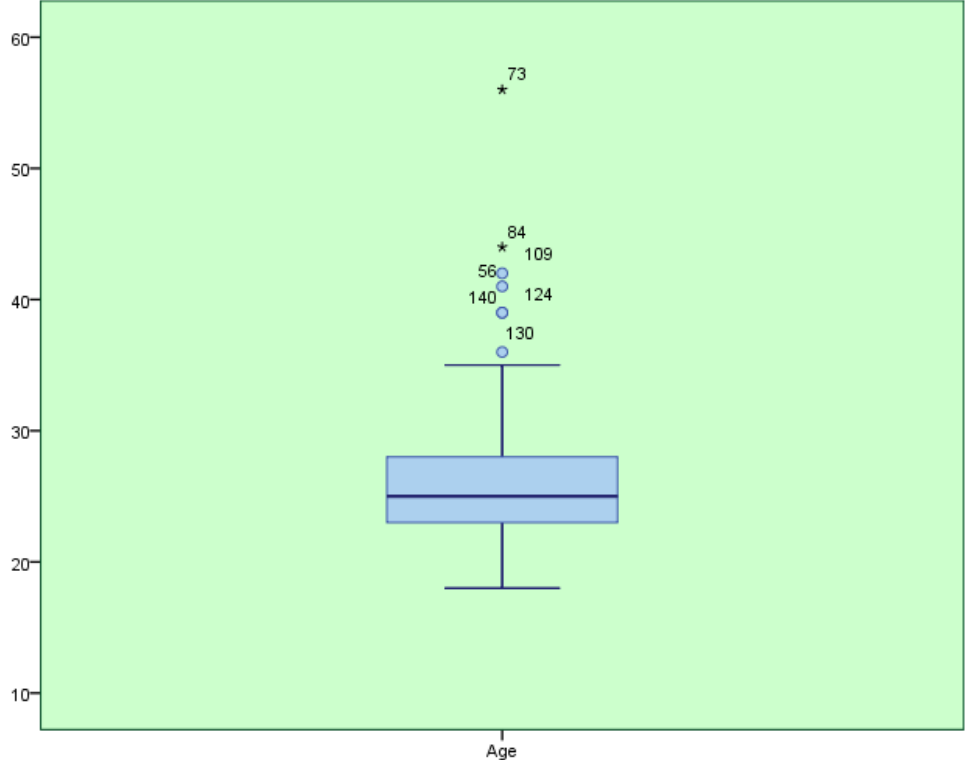


Figure 9: Outliers for n=147

The boxplot showed 7 outliers that were removed from the sample. This resulted in a sample size of n=140 with the youngest respondent being 18 and the oldest 35.

**Table 3** presents additional information.

Table 3: Age data for n=140

Statistics		
Age		
N	Valid	140
	Missing	0
Mean		25,44
Median		25,00
Mode		24
Std. Deviation		3,647

A new histogram with a sample size of n=140 is presented in **figure 10** and after that a new boxplot after that **figure 11** that shows whether there were new outliers in the reduced sample.

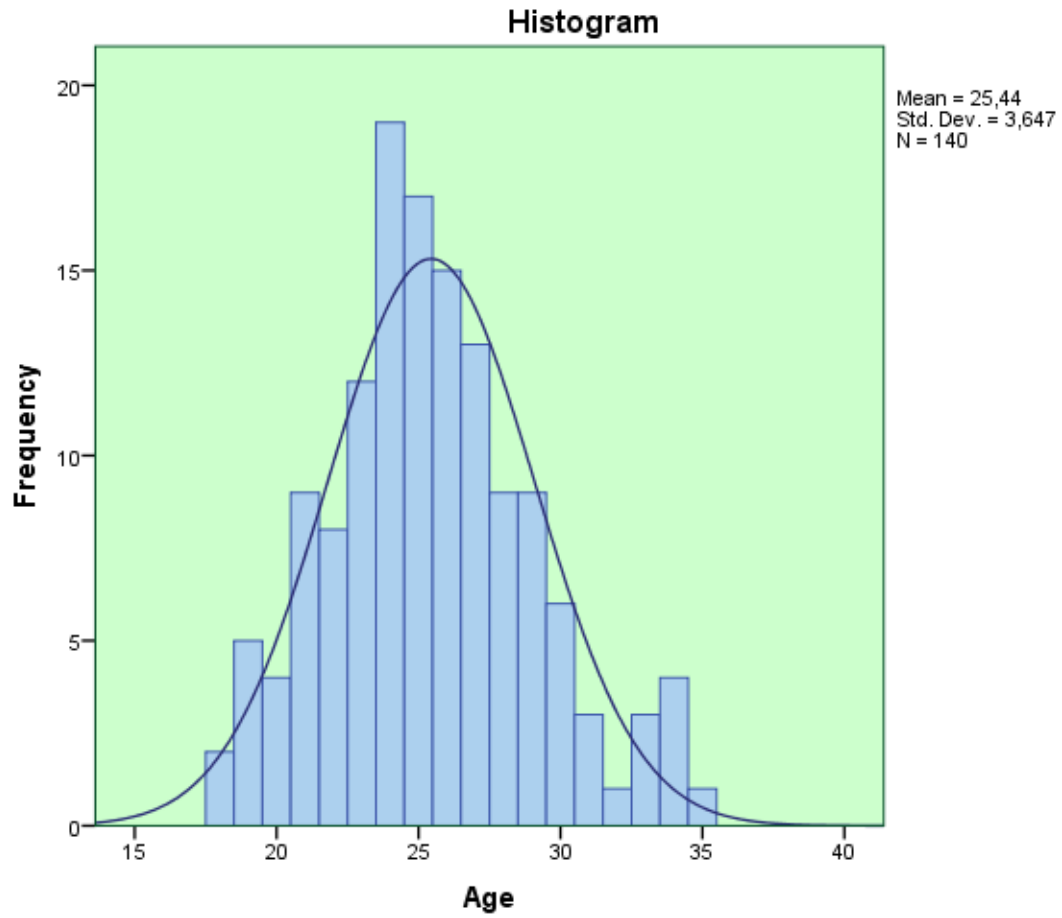


Figure 10: Age distribution for n=140

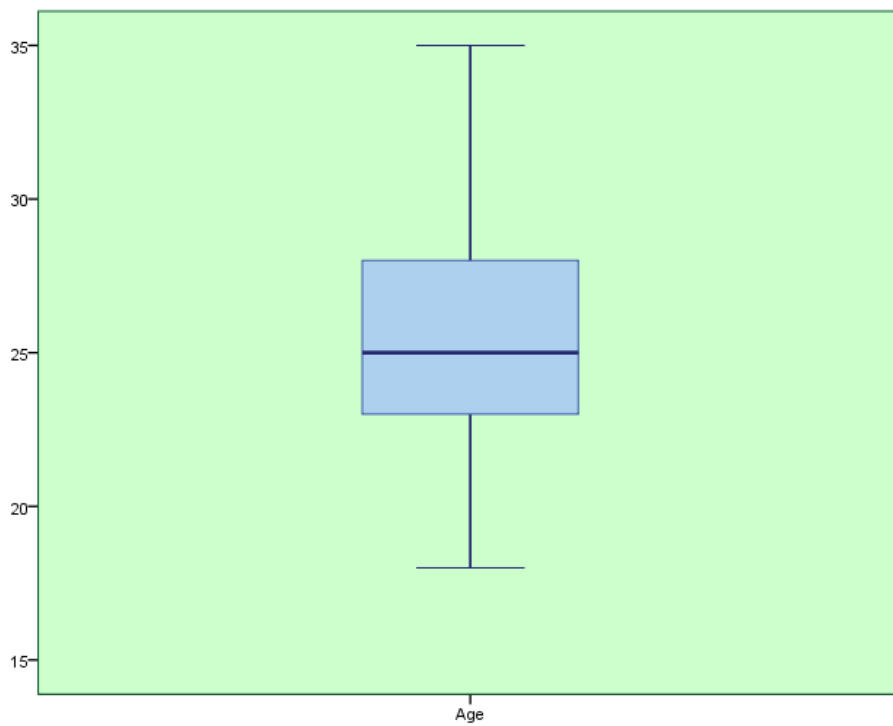


Figure 11: Outliers for n=140

**Figure 10** presents a normal distribution and **figure 11** shows that there are no additional outliers, therefore the workable sample will be n=140.

**5.2. Scale development**

Internal consistency tests for creating Likert scales from Likert items (see Survey chapter) were calculated with the use of Cronbach’s alpha. Internal consistency test for Pre-experience information was put together from the four Likert items that were: description, previous feedback, photos, and pre-accommodation interactions. **Table 4** shows the resulting Cronbach’s alpha score.

*Table 4: Internal consistency for Pre-experience information*

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,573	,631	4

Due to the alpha score being under 0,7 the mean inter-item correlation is consulted. The mean inter-item correlation, for the items in Pre-experience information scale, is 0,299 which is considered to fall between the recommended range (see statistical tests chapter).

**Table 5** shows the resulting Cronbach’s Alpha score for Customer experience and Expectation variable that was put together by combining the following items: locating the house, accessing the house, beauty of the house, cleanliness of the house, safety of the house, living conditions, living arrangements, interaction intensity with the host, interaction enjoyability, and accessibility within the house. The score is higher than 0,7 and the scale is considered internally consistent.

*Table 5: Internal consistency for Customer experience and Expectation*

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,827	,830	10

**Table 6** presents the resulting Cronbach’s Alpha for Post experience outcome scale that is developed by combining the following items: overall enjoyability, thinking about the stay after, talking to others about the stay after and how educative was the stay. The alpha score is above 0,7 therefore the scale is considered internally consistent.

*Table 6: Internal consistency for Post experience outcome*

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,733	,733	4

### 5.3. Hypothesis testing

#### 5.3.1. Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis tested for relationship between the amount of information a person gathers prior to accommodation and the level of impact the value sources have on the person’s expectations.

Prior to testing the hypothesis, both the variables were tested for normal distribution. The variable of Pre-experience information was deemed not to have a normal distribution; therefore the statistical test for correlation was chosen to be Spearman’s Rho test. Spearman’s Rho test allows for correlation to be tested for non-normally distributed variables whereas Pearson’s R test requires from both of the variables to have a normal distribution. This helps to understand how pre-experience might be related to the second customer experience phase and expectations.

**Table 7** presents the results from the Spearman Rho test. There is a statistically significant correlation between the amount of information gained in the pre-experience phase and the level of impact the stimulators give to the respondents’ in their actual customer experience phase.

To visualize this correlation, **figure 12** presents a two-dimensional scatter plot of the discussed variables.

**Table 7** and **figure 12** show how people who, during their pre-experience activities phase, acquired more information had also higher impact from the stimulators to their expectations during the actual accommodation. This implies that people who have

more information are also more likely to have their expectations exceeded during the actual accommodation.

Table 7: Spearman Rho for hypothesis 1

Correlations			Customer experience and expectation	Pre-experience information
Spearman's rho	Customer experience and expectation	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,431**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,000
		N	140	140
	Pre-experience information	Correlation Coefficient	,431**	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	.
		N	140	140

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

This result has important managerial implications for the hosts, since it would seem beneficial to have their guests be well informed already prior to the actual arrival. With building a precise description along with photos, and disclosing all during the discussions before booking might through good customer experience result in good feedback that is itself implemented in the pre-experience information later. This also presents us with one way how, in terms of accommodation in Airbnb, the multi-phased customer experience is related to expectations.

Therefore the first hypothesis - The amount of information gained in the pre-experience will influence the level of impact the value sources within the customer experience have to consumer's expectations – is supported. However this needs to be taken with caution since the internal consistency test showed a low level for Cronbach's alpha.

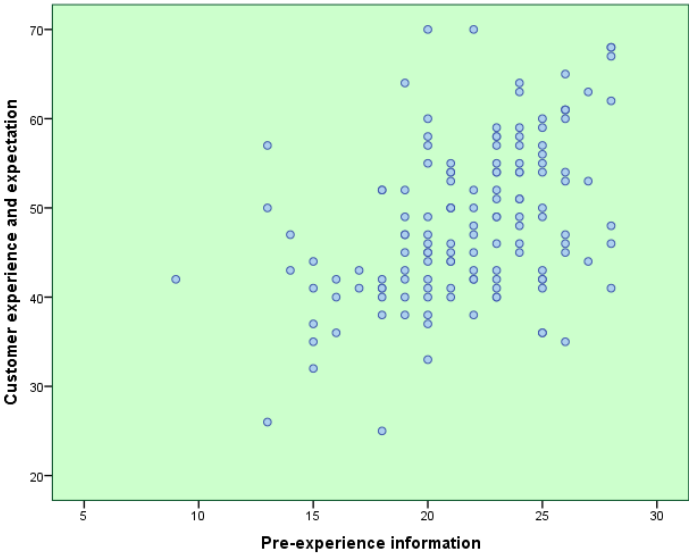


Figure 12: Scatterplot for Pre-experience Information and Customer experience and expectation

### 5.3.2. Hypothesis 2

Second hypothesis tested whether there is a relation between the impact level that the value sources are confirmed with expectations or not with the respondents' post experience outcome i.e. the overall conclusions about the experience.

For testing hypothesis 2, a Pearson correlation was conducted. Pearson correlation assumes that both, variables have a normal distribution. Therefore normality tests were conducted for the variables of customer experience & expectation, and post experience outcome. For doing that two methods will be applied: the visual assessment and the statistical test of Shapiro-Wilk. This is necessary for the validity of interpretation of the results (Razali & Yap, 2011).



Figure 13: Q-Q plot of Customer experience and expectation

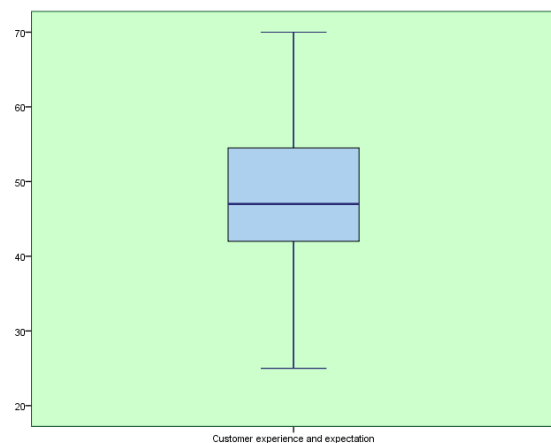


Figure 14: Outliers for Customer experience and expectation

**Figures 13** and **14** show the visual assessment of normality for the customer experience and expectation index. **Table 8** presents us statistical tests of normality. Shapiro-Wilk test shows a significance of 0,110 which reflects a normal distribution since the normality is occurring when the test shows a non-significant ( $>0,05$ ) result.

Table 8: Normality test for Customer experience and Expectation

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Customer experience and expectation	,077	140	,043	,984	140	,110

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Same procedure was done for the Post-experience outcome variable. **Figures 15** and **16** show the visual Q-Q Plot and the boxplot for Post-experience outcome.

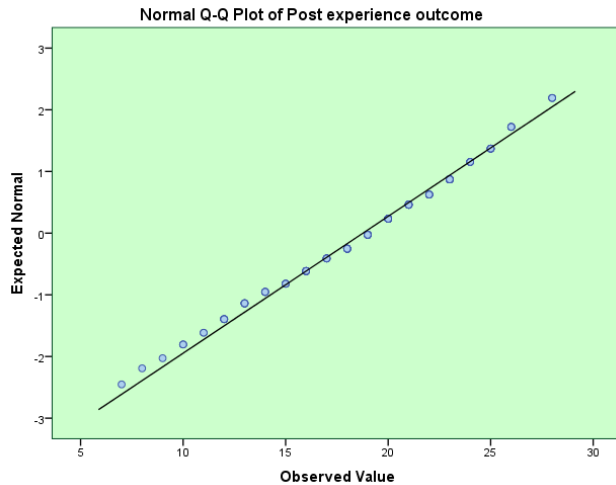


Figure 15: Q-Q plot of Post experience outcome

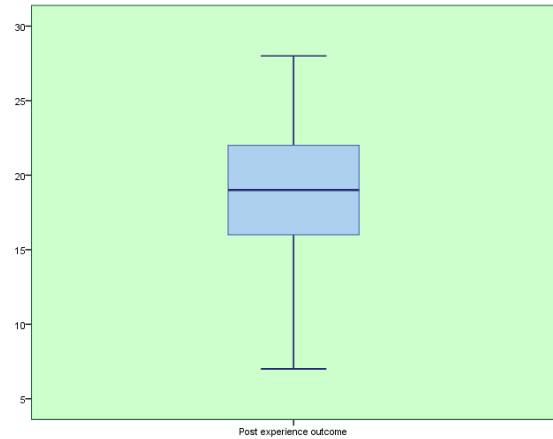


Figure 16: Outliers for Post experience outcome

**Table 9** presents the normality tests for post-experience outcome. The Shapiro-Wilk test shows a non-significant result, and therefore allows the variable to be considered normally distributed.

Table 9: Normality test for Post experience outcome

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Post experience outcome	,085	140	,016	,984	140	,108

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

After the normality tests were conducted, the Pearson correlation test was ran to see if there was a correlation between the variables of Customer experience and expectation, and post-experience outcome. Knowing this helps us strengthen the explanation that the way stimulators impact respondents' expectations in the second, customer experience phase, have a relation with the final outcomes after the accommodation through Airbnb. **Table 10** shows the result of this test.

Table 10: Pearson correlation for hypothesis 2

Correlations			
		Customer experience and expectation	Post experience outcome
Customer experience and expectation	Pearson Correlation	1	,541**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
	N	140	140
Post experience outcome	Pearson Correlation	,541**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
	N	140	140

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table shows that there is a significant positive correlation of 0,541 between the respondents' customer experience and expectation, and their post-experience outcome. **Figure 17** provides a visualization of the correlation on a two-dimensional scatterplot.



Figure 17: Scatterplot for Customer experience and expectation and Post experience outcome

The Pearson correlation test shows that there is a relation between the respondents on accommodation experiences when they are at an Airbnb home and the outcomes that result from that stay. This implies that the respondents who had their expectations exceeded also had a better overall outcome after their stay at an Airbnb house. This would imply that that, the guests expectations need to be positively exceeded for them to get a better outcome of the experience after the stay.

This would be possible with providing the guest accessibility and a sense of welcome, but also with being there when something is needed for the guest. Similarly



the house should provide safety as much as aesthetical peculiarities such as specific design or a nice location.

Therefore Hypothesis 2 – The level of impact the value sources within the customer experience have to consumer’s expectations positively influences the level of post-experience outcome after the customer experience of accommodation through Airbnb – Is supported within this study and this helps strengthen the explanations of the relationship between customer experience and expectation.

**5.3.3. Hypothesis 3**

Hypothesis three measured whether there is a relation to the amount of information gathered prior to the accommodation and the outcomes after that accommodation.

Similarly to hypothesis one, since the pre-experience information variable was not normally distributed, a Spearman Rho was carried out. **Table 11** and **figure 18** present the results of the Spearman rho test.

*Table 11: Spearmah Rho test for hypothesis 3*

Correlations			Pre-experience information	Post experience outcome
Spearman's rho	Pre-experience information	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,413**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,000
		N	140	140
	Post experience outcome	Correlation Coefficient	,413**	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	.
		N	140	140

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results show a significant correlation of 0,413 between the variables of Pre-experience information and Post experience outcome after the accommodation.

The more information the respondents had prior to their stay was in a relation to how the experience made an overall impact to the customer after. This, similarly to previous thoughts about information, has managerial implications to host of Airbnb who need to provide as much information as possible in order for the customer to have a good final outcome of the experience.

Note the excerpt in the previous chapter that mentioned a surprise over the other guests who were not known to the interviewee. The lack of information seems to be more probable in leading to experiences being negatively not confirmed – ergo bad

post experience outcome. This also provides further understanding how customer experience and expectations are related.

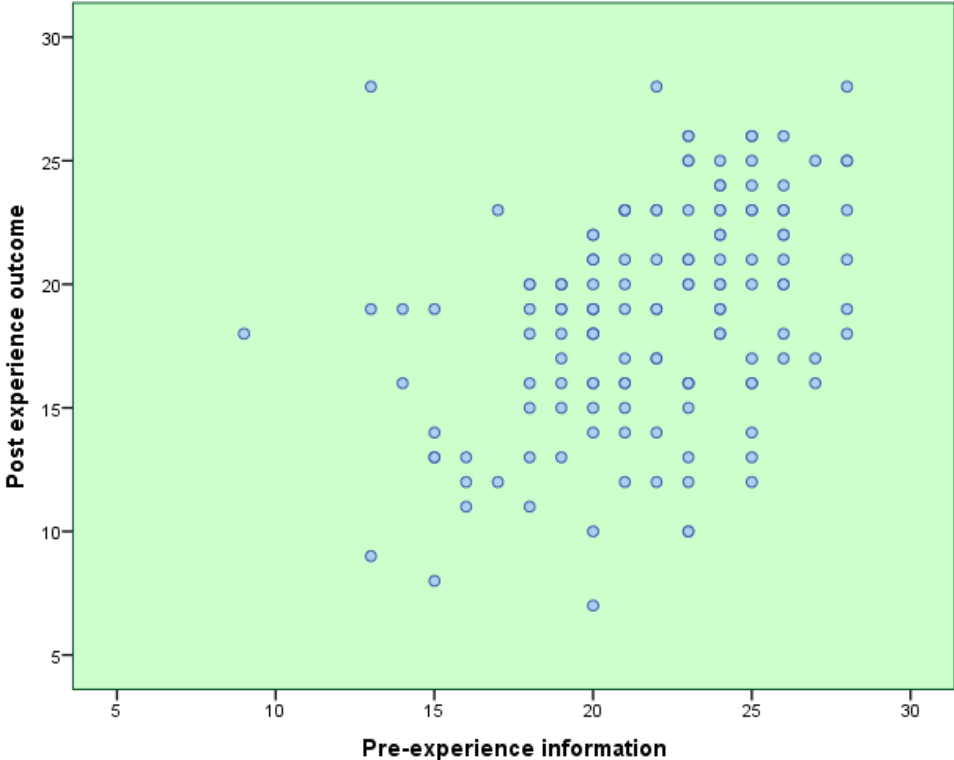


Figure 18: Scatterplot for Pre-experience information and Post experience outcome

Thus hypothesis 3 - The amount of information is positively related to the post experience outcome after the customer experience of accommodation through Airbnb – is supported by the results. This should, similarly to the testing of hypothesis 1, be taken with caution since the pre-experience information variable was not normally distributed.

### 5.4. Additional results

After testing the hypotheses, additional tests were conducted to see if there are significant differences between the different characteristics of the customer experience. This helps on answering the second research question on some of the more important factors during the customer experience of Airbnb. In addition this could help develop the understanding on co-creation since the characteristics are centered on interactive characteristics such as the presence of the host etc.

The study found no significant results for the customers' demographic backgrounds. This could possibly be explained as due to the sampling strategy and the sample having a quite narrow age range.

While conducting the tests concerning the different characteristics of the customer experience, the study found results that will be presented below.

People, who used the accommodation alone, had significantly different accommodation experience than people with one friend or more than one friend.

**Table 12** shows a test for homogeneity of variances, where the significance is 0,726 which means that, the assumption for homogeneity of variance has not been violated. **Table 13** and **figure 19** present the results of the one-way ANOVA test conducted for this measurement.

Table 12: Homogeneity of variances customer experience and Expectation grouped by travel style

**Test of Homogeneity of Variances**

Customer experience and expectation

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
,321	2	137	,726

Table 13: One-way ANOVA test for Customer experience and Expectation grouped by travel style

**ANOVA**

Customer experience and expectation

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	900,060	2	450,030	6,146	,003
Within Groups	10030,826	137	73,218		
Total	10930,886	139			

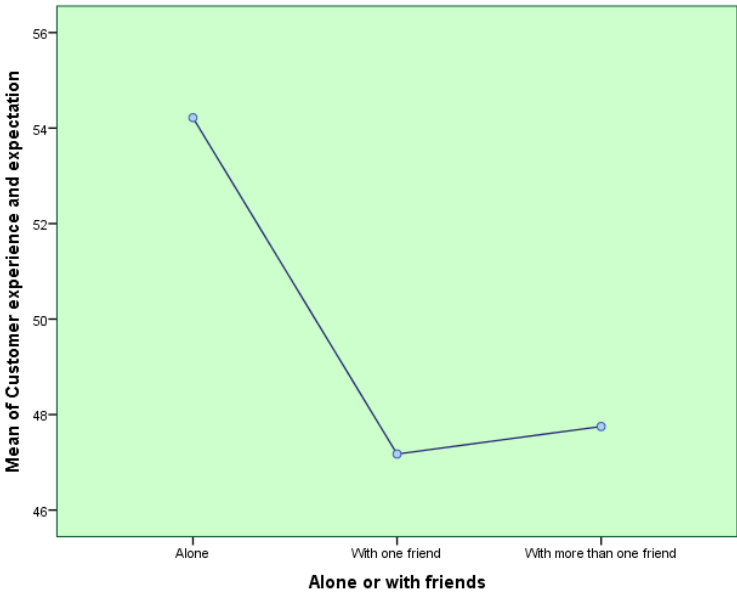


Figure 19: Differences of means between the groups who used the accommodation alone, with a friend, with more than one friend

The effect size was calculated using the Eta<sup>2</sup> formula (see Statistical test chapter) and it resulted in 0,082 that can be considered as a medium effect.

This might imply that the guests who are alone are more open to try out new things and interact with the host and this has implications on the co-creation and its relation to the whole customer experience within Airbnb. It can also imply that guests who are alone are not affected by their companions' opinions that affect the experience, whether they are positive or negative. Being alone, a guest could be certain that whether an experience is good or bad is based solely on that guest's experience.

In addition, the results show significant differences in the customer experience and expectation phase between the respondents who had the host present during accommodation and the ones who did not.

The first group, where the host was present, was represented by 50 respondents whose mean value of Customer experience and expectation index was 50,8 with a standard deviation of 9,212. The second group where the host was not present was represented by 90 respondents and the mean value there was 47,27 with a standard deviation of 8,461. **Table 14** shows the result of a T-test for independent samples.

Table 14: T-test for Customer experience and Expectation grouped by the host presence during the stay

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper	
Customer experience and expectation	Equal variances assumed	,289	,592	2,293	138	,023	3,533	1,541	,487	6,580
	Equal variances not assumed			2,238	94,293	,028	3,533	1,579	,399	6,668

The table shows a significant (sig. 0,023 since Levene's test for equality of variances greater than 0,05) difference between the two groups. To see the effect size of this test, an Eta<sup>2</sup> was calculated separately (see Statistical test chapter) that resulted in 0,037 which corresponds to a small effect size.

This implies that the respondents who had the host present during their accommodation had a higher impact from stimulators to their expectations. This can have implications to co-creation that happens through interactions between the host and the guest. This could also be a direction to further studies through comparative research for finding out how are the interactions carried out when the host is present and when it has to be done via telecommunications.

Last but not least, the results also showed a significant difference between two groups of respondents, which were the ones who had contact with the host after their accommodation and the ones who did not, for their post experience outcome. The first group was represented by 27 respondents with a mean of 21,4 and a standard deviation of 4,442. The second group was represented by 113 respondents and the mean was 18,23 with a standard deviation of 4,369. **Table 15** shows the results of the T-test for independent means.

Table 15: T-test for Post experience outcome grouped by post stay contact with the host

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Post experience outcome	Equal variances assumed	,003	,960	2,990	138	,003	2,807	,939	,951	4,663
	Equal variances not assumed			2,959	38,928	,005	2,807	,948	,888	4,726

The effect size was calculated using the Eta<sup>2</sup> that resulted in 0,049 that can be considered as a small effect.

This shows that the respondents, who had a better post-experience outcome, were also more in contact with the host after the stay. Further studies could look into what do these after-stay relations consist of and does it have any future benefits to the oncoming guests.

**Table 16** presents a summary of all the tests and their results.

Table 16: Summary of survey results

Test subject	Test	Test result	sig.	Conclusion
Hypothesis 1	Spearman Rho	r <sub>s</sub> = 0,431	0,000	Hypothesis 1 is supported
Hypothesis 2	Pearson R	r = 0,541	0,000	Hypothesis 2 is supported
Hypothesis 3	Spearman Rho	r <sub>s</sub> = 0,413	0,000	Hypothesis 3 is supported
Difference of impact of value sources to expectations during the second phase by the presence of the host	T-test for independent means	Mean difference: 3,533	0,028	Respondents with the host present had a higher customer experience
Difference of impact of value sources to expectations during the second phase: alone, friend, friends	One-way ANOVA test	F = 6,146	0,003	Respondents who used Airbnb alone had a higher impact then other groups
Difference of post experience outcome between respondents who had post contact and who didn't	T-test for independent means	Mean difference: 2,807	0.005	Respondents with post experience contact had higher post experience outcome

## 6. Discussion

Through abductive approach, this paper looked into the customer experience of Airbnb and its relation to co-creation and expectation. The interviews created some understandings that will be further developed in this chapter with the results from the survey that looked into whether the explanations given prior have any statistical evidence. It will also add interesting findings that emerged separately from the survey and discuss its usage within the studied aim.

It has been suggested, that through activities in the pre-experience phase, people build anticipations for the following phases (Arnould, Price, & Zinkhan, 2004; Tynan & McKechnie, 2009). The results through mixed methods revealed that for the context of customer experience of accommodation through Airbnb, information gathering was the main factor that seemed to build expectations. This was done via consulting the description of the potential choice of accommodation, its previous feedback from other customers, the photos, and the discussions with the future host.

For the context of accommodation through Airbnb, the expectations seem to be then measured against the stimulators on site of the accommodation in the second phase of the customer experience. The stimulating factors in this phase were found to be of utilitarian kind, such as safety, locating, and accessing the house and the accessibility within the house as well as the living conditions. In addition, relational factors, such as interaction intensity and enjoyability within the house or the living arrangements with guests other than friends, were present. And factors that were of a more aesthetical nature such as the beauty and cleanliness of the house.

The impact of these factors was, as mentioned, measured with the expectations and resulted in the expectations being either confirmed or not confirmed, and if they were not, then either positively not confirmed or negatively not confirmed. The idea that the people who have more information might have a higher impact level of the on-site stimulators received statistical evidence through the testing of hypothesis 1.

The statistical result should be handled with caution on its own, but when considered with the surrounding factors, there can be considered a causal relation there. After all, experience is said to be the result of subject's interactions with the surrounding stimulators (Jantzen, 2013). So this paper argues that gathering information in the pre-experience phase, builds the expectations that are later measured against the

surrounding stimulators or more precise, value sources as Tynan and Mckechnie (2009) call them. This is an important finding since as previously brought up in the hypotheses development section, the amount of information that is put out by the hosts varies a lot.

Therefore this presents a suggestion to Airbnb hosts to manage their booking information constantly by creating a precise description about the place with clear photos. Also, they should be open and during the discussions with the potential guests prior to renting. It would benefit to think through the accommodation experience from the guest's perspective for mapping out the important issues along with it to be implemented in the pre-booking information bundle.

The expectation confirmation, or how the stimulators impacted the guest's expectations, resulted in the post-experience outcome with factors such as the overall enjoyment of the accommodation, thinking and talking about the accommodation, and the how educative the accommodation was. The higher impact levels of stimulators had a relation with post experience outcome as was shown through the results for hypothesis 2. The importance of this part shows that the better the stimulators or value sources interact with the customer's expectations the higher is the chance that a positive outcome will stay with the customer after the stay. The outcome is where the stay is pondered over, remembered, shared with others and its meaning to the customer is created.

In addition, the supportive results for hypotheses 1 and 2 also reflect the understanding by Akaka, Vargo, and Schau (2015) that evaluation of an experience is not just about the quality of but about what standard has been set prior to the experience by the customer. The results provide an explanation for the context of accommodation through Airbnb, about how the standards could be built as expectations and how the value sources interact with these expectations (e.g. don't meet-, meet-, or exceed the expectations), that then in turn result in the final outcome of the whole.

The importance of co-creation as something that is done through interactions is evident in the second and third phase. This part showed interesting results with the respondents who had the host present during their accommodation had higher levels of impact to expectations from value sources. Theoretically, co-creation is seen as a

process that is facilitated within interactions (Akaka, Vargo, & Schau, 2015; Jaakkola, Helkkula, & Aarikka-Stenroos, 2015; McColl-Kennedy, Cheung, & Ferrier, 2015; Lusch & Vargo, 2014; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a; 2004b). This along with the empirical results of this paper might imply that the host interactions had something to do with it. As mentioned before, the on-set expectations can be made known through interactions with the host, which then in turn could be fulfilled through service (see *The Co-Creation of Experience*).

In addition, it was also evident that the respondents who travelled alone had a higher impact from value sources as stimulators to their expectations. It could be argued that lone travelers are prone to interacting with the host and not be affected by the opinions of their peers. This was seen in one interview also with the friend of the interviewee having a more negative experience and that having a minor effect to the interviewee's perspective of the accommodation.

Information has been shown now to be important for the second, on stay experience as shown by the result after testing hypothesis 1. The results of testing hypothesis 3, however, also showed that respondents who had higher amounts of information also seemed to have higher levels of post-experience outcome. This should be regarded with caution since the internal consistency of the variable was lower than suggested. But it could also be argued that the more you know, the less is the chance of having a negative evaluation of an experience. However this study did not look into the characteristics of information in terms of whether they were positive or negative. This could be studied further whether the positiveness of the information gathered might influence the outcome of an experience.

In addition, this may bring forth a valuable potential for co-creation, especially in the first – pre-experience phase, where interactions are limited to what the tangible media platform allows for. If the booking platform could facilitate more interactions, then that could generate more information for the customer to build expectations. Many authors see experiences being dependent on the prior readiness to them (Akaka, Vargo, & Schau, 2015; Jantzen, 2013; Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013). Therefore it could again be argued that the information creates prior readiness, which in turn could reduce negative outcome after the experience.



It was also seen that respondents' who had contact with the host after their stay had higher levels of post-experience outcome. That could reflect that with higher outcome, people may be more open to have a contact with the host after the stay. This may present itself in relations such as becoming a loyal customer for oncoming trips, but why not friendship even. This post-service relationship could be one of the interesting directions of investigations, especially from the customer's perspective and whether this could have direct managerial and personal benefits such as better customer feedback.

To briefly summarize, the three-stage customer experience is related to customers' expectation and co-creation in the following way for accommodation through Airbnb: Pre-experience activities gather information that builds the customers' expectations. These expectations are stimulated upon by the value sources in the second customer experience phase and this results in the expectation confirmation or disconfirmation either positively or negatively. The experience evaluation that follows the expectation confirmation or disconfirmation results as an outcome after the accommodation.

Co-creation is more evident in the second and third phase with results concerning the host's on stay presence during the stay and the post-stay contact with the host. A possible managerial relevance could take this into and facilitate more interactions in the pre-phase since, as previous results imply, more information seems to result in better outcome. Information itself can be transferred through interactions before booking the accommodation. However it should be taken into account that these interactions have their limitations in the pre-experience phase due to the peculiarities of the booking platform.

The abductive approach has proven to be a valuable way of conducting this research since it allows for a very problem specific handling of the study with tools that seem to be the most necessary whether qualitative or quantitative. In addition, this has allowed for a retrospective consideration of relevant knowledge, whether theoretical or empirical, that continuously develops the contextual understanding and the author urges more research to be undertaken this way.

## 7. Conclusions

The study aimed to investigate the multi-phased customer experience for accommodation through Airbnb and its relation to the concepts of co-creation and expectation. Based on the aim, two research questions were developed:

- How are customer experience, co-creation and the consumer's expectation related in the specific context of Airbnb consumption?
- What factors emerge for different stages of customer experience of accommodation through Airbnb?

With the help of abductive reasoning, this study used both qualitative and quantitative method to achieve the stated aim. The mixed methodology used the qualitative method of semi-structured interview together with the quantitative method of survey to answer the posed research questions.

In order to answer the first research question, then in the specific case of accommodation through Airbnb, the results showed that information gathering in the pre-experience phase is the main way of building expectations that are measured against stimulators in the second – customer experience phase. Whether the stimulators meet, exceed or in fact do not meet the prior expectations results in the post experience outcome.

Co-creation is more evident in the second phase where the respondents who had the host present during the stay had higher impact levels from stimulators to expectations. Since information amount and post-experience outcome had a correlation, the author calls for further facilitation of co-creative interaction in the pre-experience phase.

To answer the second research question, the factors that emerge for accommodating through Airbnb are as follows: the description of the home and service, the photos, the previous feedback, the discussions with the host prior to arriving to the house, locating the house, arriving to the house, accessing the house, beauty and cleanliness of the house, the interactions with the host, living conditions, living arrangements with other people, accessibility within the house, overall enjoyment from the stay, thinking and talking about the stay, and how educative the stay was.

Host presence, whether one travels alone or not, and post-stay contact are seen as important characteristics within the accommodation experience.

The theoretical contribution here provides input to how customer experience is connected to co-creation and expectation in a contextual setting. The abductive reasoning will provide a new perspective to the fields of customer experience and co-creation. In addition, the concept of expectation and its relation to the actual experience is shown in the customer experience setting. Fields of value co-creation, service experience consumption within a customer-to-customer context gain input from this study.

Managerial input shows how customers experience the process and how their expectations are built and reflected upon. Similarly the co-creation is brought to attention in terms of where it is more present and where it could be increased. For the host this shows possibilities to increase the guests' customer experience and its outcomes by directing focus to certain factors such as information sharing prior to booking and interactions during the accommodation.

Further research is recommended for seeing how the host presence relates to the customer experience and expectation. Also how the nature of information can influence the customer experience and its outcome. Also due to the differences that surround each company and organization, the studying of customer's experience should be conducted in an abductive way by applying both qualitative and quantitative methods.

## **8. Limitations**

This acknowledges limitations that were present during the investigation for this paper. Since this was a mixed method study, time was of great importance since each method required its amount of time to achieve full focus. The absence of this limitation could have allowed for more thorough analysis to the interview and similarly more respondents for the survey through a more focused survey management.

In addition, more diverse research design could have offered more linkages with the addition of methods such as participant observation with for example, shadowing the guest or being a guest. In addition to time being of limitation, that might have been limited by a lack of monetary funds to conduct those methods.

The research presented a cautionary lesson with scale development where one scale failed to have a good internal consistency that would be agreed upon within the majority of academia. This clearly limits the interpreting of the data and calls upon viewing it with caution.

People's will to fill out surveys has become an issue of limitation for studies that apply questionnaire tools for their investigation. This was visible in the sample size and the demographics with the age distribution being rather narrow.

Because of non-probability purposive sampling the interpretations cannot be applied to the general population of Airbnb customers. This also emerged within the sample characteristics previously said.

### **8.1. Further research**

The author of this paper sees the potential of an abductive approach for other contexts within the sharing economy. This approach is important since different service encounters have different factors that influence the different parts of the customer experience.

Based on the current results, more research should be focused on how the presence of the host influences the customer experience since the results showed that there might be factors that may help along for getting an expectation positively not confirmed. How are the interactions taking place and how do they affect the customers?

In addition to that, it could be further investigated as to the characteristic nature of the information gathered. Is it presented in some specific way? There is a relation between the amount of information and the post experience outcome, but could there be more to it?

Qualitative methods could be used in order to study how the host helps along with breaking the guest's expectations during the stay. This could be done with using comparative studies between guests who had the host there and the ones who didn't.

Last but not least, the scale development for the context specific three-phased customer experience requires more procedural development. It was shown that the pre-experience information had a lower inconsistency than other measures, so in the future this matter should be dealt with more delicately. It can be done with various screening methods such as multiple pilot surveys and more consultations with experts within the concepts.

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## 10. Appendix 1: Interview guide.

### Customer experience for the accommodation through Airbnb

Date:

Gender:

Age group:

Background

- What is your overall experience with Airbnb?
- What do you think of this kind of accommodation in comparison to other types of accommodation (Hotel, Hostel, BnB)

The first part is about the preparation of the consumption

Pre-experience

- How did you prepare for the accommodation with Airbnb?
- Where do you get the necessary information for the oncoming accommodation (what about other actors)?
- Who do you interact with in your planning and preparation before consuming the oncoming accommodation?
- What are your thoughts and feelings right before the accommodation (resulting from the planning and preparing)?

The next part of the discussion is about the actual staying with the accommodation (check-in/check-out)

Customer-experience

- What was the first thing you noticed upon entering the home?
- How did you feel about these first impressions?
- How did these impressions relate to your prior thoughts about the stay?
- What was the main influencer of your emotional state during your stay?
- What were you allowed to do i.e. what were your possibilities during consumption (e.g. the areas and or equipment off limits)?
- How much did you interact with the host(s)?
- How did the interactions make you feel?
- How much could you initiate the interactions?

The next part focuses on the time after leaving the home?

#### Post-experience

- What was your overall impression of the stay?
- How did it differ from your first impression when you entered the home?
- How did your overall impression relate to your overall expectation?
- What could have been better?
- What knowledge did you gain from this stay?
- How can you use this knowledge in the future?
- Do you ever think about the stay in that specific home?
- Have you contacted the hosts after your stay?
- Did you talk about the stay with someone?

#### Conclusion

- Is there anything you think should have been discussed or touched upon further?
- Is there anything you would like to add?

Thank you

## 11. Appendix 2: Questionnaire developed with Google Forms

# Customer experience of accommodation through Airbnb

Thank you for your interest in this survey! The following questionnaire was developed after analyzing prior interviews with people who had stayed overnight at a place they had booked through Airbnb. It will take approximately five minutes to fill out. Your answers are anonymous and will be handled as such.

\* Required

Please state your age. \*

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

Please state your gender. \*

- Male
- Female
- Other : \_\_\_\_\_

Please state your nationality. \*

If you come from a multinational background, please state the one you identify yourself with more.

Choose ▼

Please state your level of education. \*

In case you are in the middle of your studies, please state the level you are in the process of acquiring.

- Lower than highschool
- Highschool or equivalent
- Bachelor or equivalent
- Master or equivalent
- Doctoral or equivalent
- Other : \_\_\_\_\_

Please state your approximate monthly income in EUR after taxes (net) \*

I.E. salary, welfare, grant, scholarship, allowance etc. PS! 1 EUR is approximately 1.13 USD or 0.77 GBP.

- 0
- 1 - 1000
- 1001 - 2000
- 2001 - 3000
- 3001 - 4000
- 4001 and more

Please state the extent of your past experience with Airbnb. \*

- I have used Airbnb once before
- I have used Airbnb more than once before
- I have never used Airbnb before

The following questions are only in regards to your last stay at a place you booked through Airbnb.

How long has it been since that stay? \*

- Less than a week
- Less than a month
- Less than six months
- Less than year
- One year or more

Did you stay there alone or with friends? \*

- Alone
- With a friend
- With more than one friend

Were there any other guests present (excluding your friends)? \*

- Yes
- no

Was the host (i.e. the person you rented the place from) present during your stay? \*

- Yes
- No

Have you been in contact with the host after your stay? \*

- Yes
- No

## The booking phase.

This part deals with the booking of your last stay through Airbnb. Please state your answer as you perceived it to be on a scale from 1 - 7 with its explanation shown under each question.

How much information did the description of the chosen home provide? \*

1= Not at all; 7= Very much

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

How much feedback from other customers was there for the chosen home? \*

1= Not at all; 7= Very much

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

How much did the photos describe the home? \*

1= Not at all; 7= Very much

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How much did the discussions with the host disclose before entering the home? \*

1= Not at all; 7= Very much

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## The period of your stay.

This part deals with your actual stay at the last place you booked through Airbnb. Please state your answer as you perceived it to be on a 1 - 7 scale with regarding nr 4 as equal to your expectations.

How easy was it to find the house? \*

1= Far less than I expected; 4= As I expected; 7= Far more than I expected

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How easy was it to access the house? \*

1= Far less than I expected; 4= As I expected; 7= Far more than I expected

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How beautiful was the home? \*

1= Far less than I expected; 4= As I expected; 7= Far more than I expected

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**How clean was the home? \***

1= Far less than I expected; 4= As I expected; 7= Far more than I expected

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

**How safe was the house? \***

1= Far less than I expected; 4= As I expected; 7= Far more than I expected

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

**How much did you interact with the host? \***

1= Far less than I expected; 4= As I expected; 7= Far more than I expected

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

**How enjoyable were the interactions with the host? \***

1= Far less than I expected; 4= As I expected; 7= Far more than I expected

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

**How were the living arrangements concerning cohabitants other than friends? \***

1= Far less than I expected; 4= As I expected; 7= Far more than I expected

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

**How were the living conditions? \***

1= Far less than I expected; 4= As I expected; 7= Far more than I expected

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

**How accessible were various places within the house? \***

1= Far less than I expected; 4= As I expected; 7= Far more than I expected

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**After the stay.**

This part deals with the time that starts from leaving the place until now. Please state your answer as you perceived it to be on a scale from 1 - 7 with its explanation shown under each question.

**How enjoyable was the stay overall? \***

1= not at all; 7= Very enjoyable

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**How much do you think about the stay after? \***

1= not at all; 7= Very much

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**How often do you talk about the stay with other people? \***

1= not at all; 7= Very often

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**How educative was the stay? \***

1= not at all; 7= Very educative

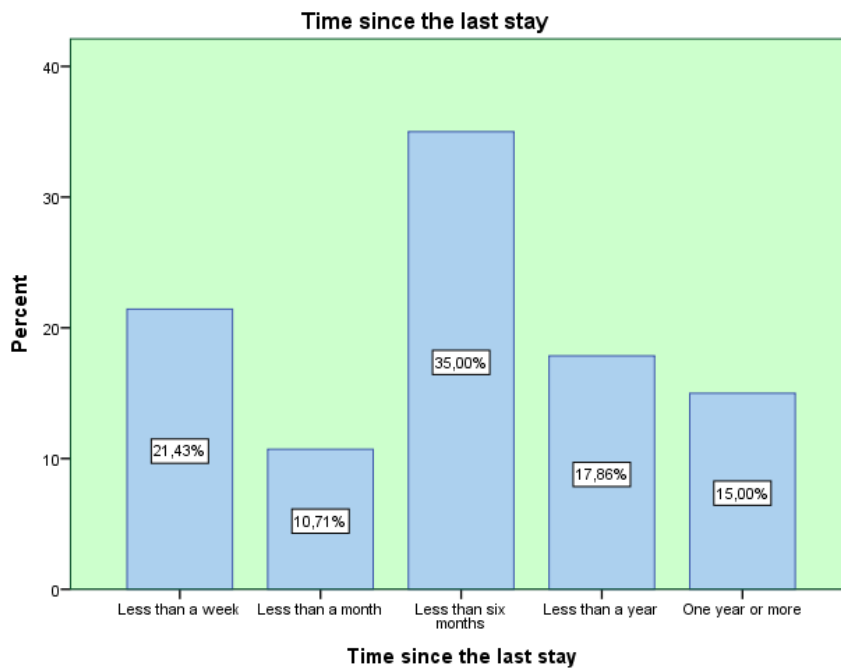
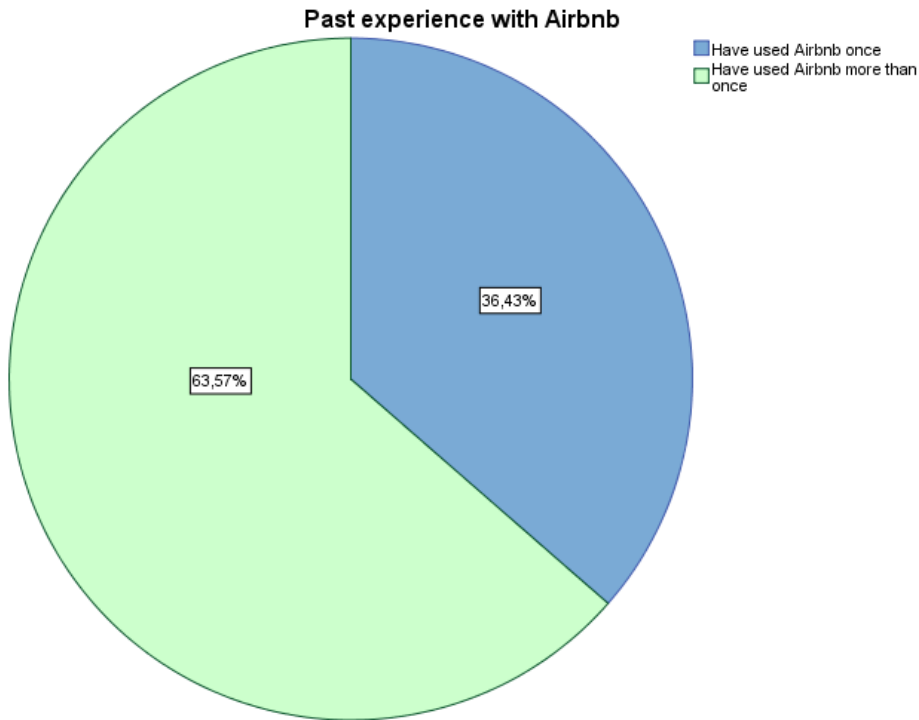
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Thank you for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire.**

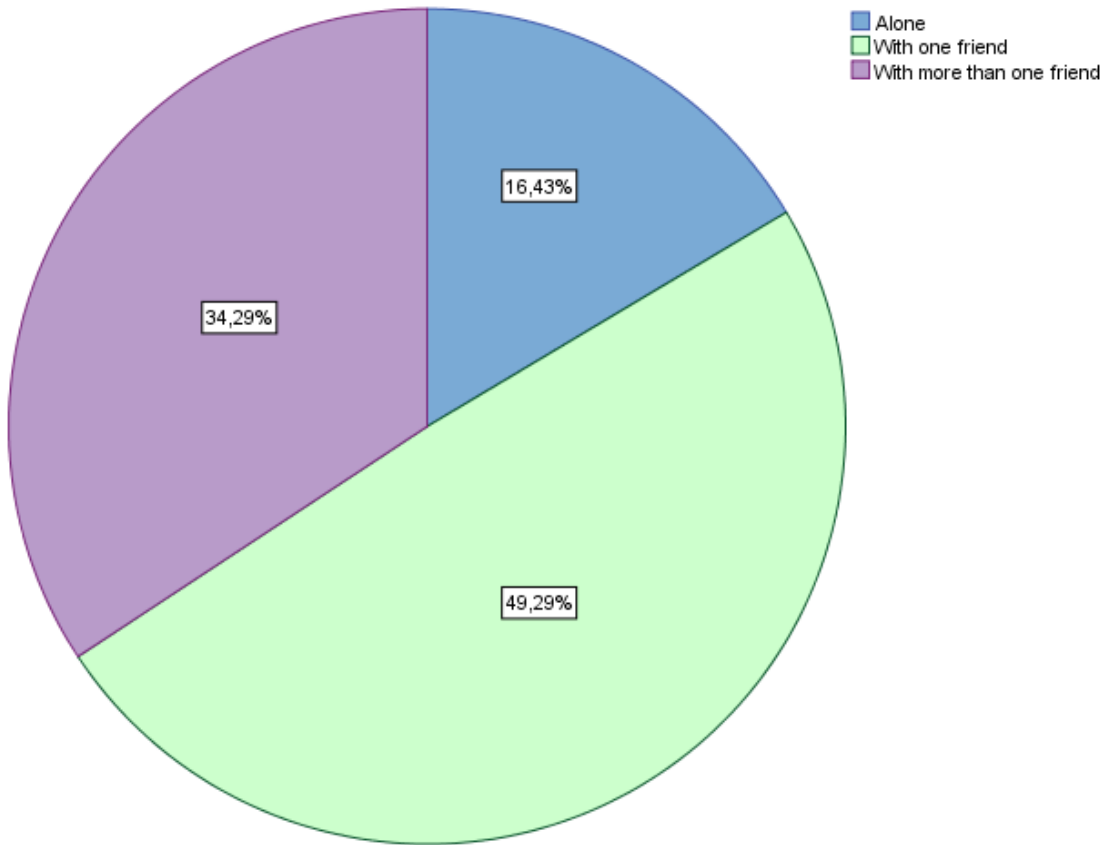


## 12. Appendix 3: Descriptive statistics

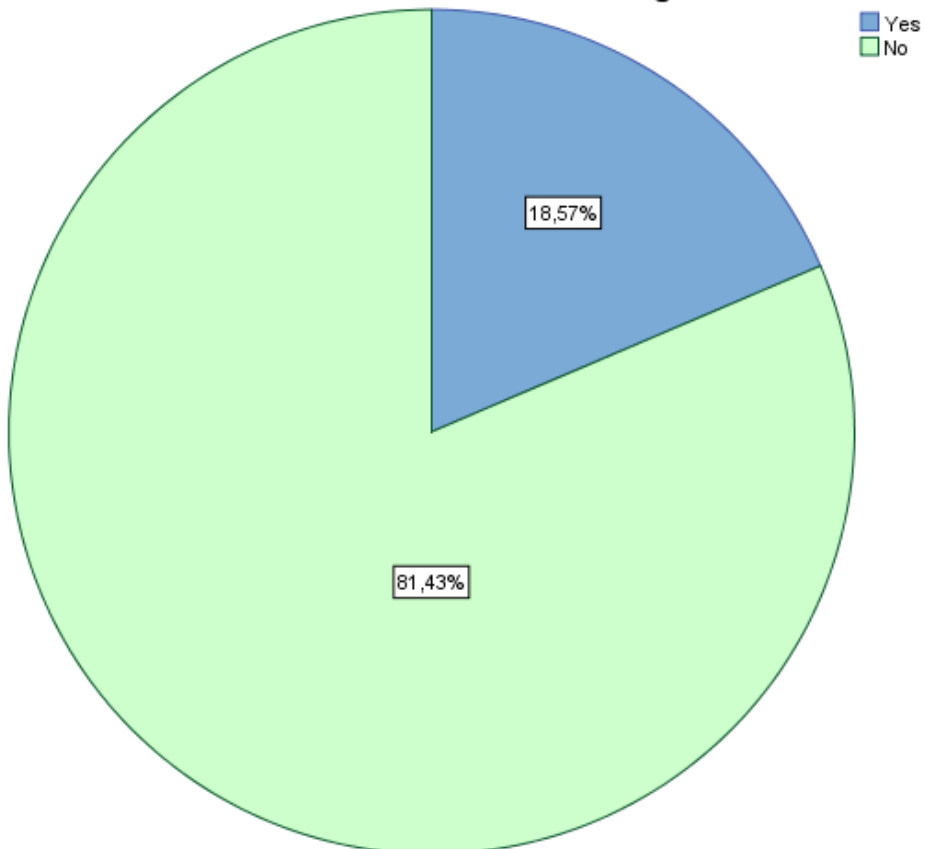
The following appendix presents the descriptive statistics of the characteristics of the trip for the sample of N=140.



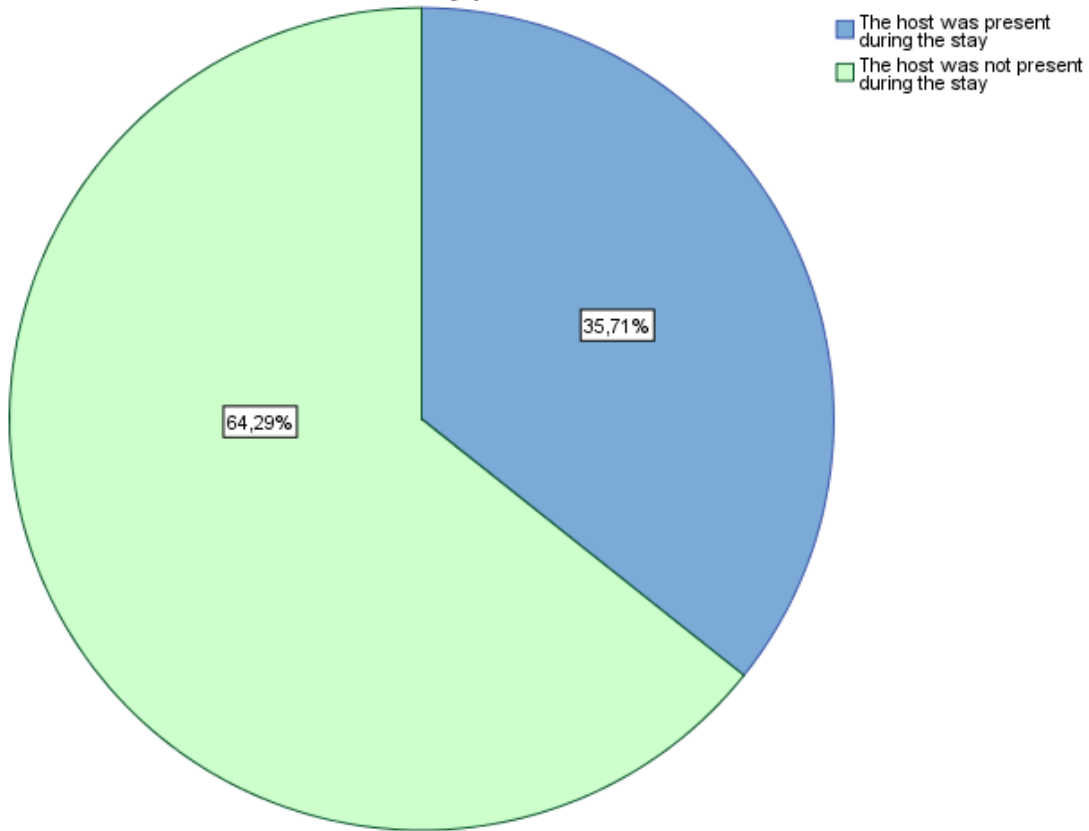
**Alone or with friends**



**Existence of other guests**



### On stay presence of the host



### Post-stay contact with the host

