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Customer loyalty in the sharing economy

The role of customers' personal reputation

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Abstract :

Purpose – Sharing economy is a recent phenomenon that is booming and brings with it economics, social and environmental impacts. It has some peculiarities (e.g., triadic model, exchange of underutilized resources) that make it different to the existing models. The recent research focused on the definition of sharing economy, the participants' motivations and the impacts it has. However, limited research has been developed regarding the loyalty of customers in the sharing economy and the bilateral reputation systems that enables services providers (i.e., sellers) to give reviews to customers. This thesis aims to examine the role of customers' reputation on one sharing economy platform (i.e., Airbnb), on the loyalty level of customers. In particular, the research will study the effects of review valence (i.e., positive or negative), self-esteem as mediator and review length as moderator (i.e., short or long), on customers' loyalty.
Design/methodology/approach – For the research it was adopted a multimethod approach. Firstly, an exploratory research was conducted following an observational research design to collect insight into the topic via a series of interviews. Secondly, a confirmatory research was conducted by adopting an experimental research design to test the hypotheses. In particular, it was created a survey and participants were randomly exposed to one of four scenarios.
Findings – The findings show that review valence have both a direct and indirect positive influence on customer loyalty. Indeed, the mediating role of self-esteem in the relationship "review valence – loyalty" was partially confirmed. In particular it was found that self-esteem has a complete mediating role between review valence and repurchase intention, but just a partial mediating role between review valence and word of mouth. The hypothesised moderating role of review length between review valence and self-esteem was rejected. On the other side, it was found to be significant the negative moderating role of review length between the mediating relationship of self-esteem on word of mouth.
Originality/value – Given that bilateral reputation systems are a peculiarity of sharing economy, limited research is available regarding customers reputation. This study thus contributes to extend the knowledge in this field. In addition, it also extends the existing theory regarding loyalty in the sharing economy, by studying for the first time the role and effects of customers' reputation on customers themselves (by analysing self-esteem) and their loyalty.

Keywords: Sharing economy, Customer loyalty, Customers' reputation, Airbnb, Reviews.

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1. Introduction

Sharing economy is a market that is expected to rise to $335 billion by 2025 (PWC, 2015), that means a growth of 2133% compared to 2015, when it was valued $15 billion (Hossain, 2020). In addition, in the United States, 83% of the population know the sharing economy and some sharing services, and a total of 56.5 million people have already used sharing services (Liu et al., 2021). At the same time, in China, in 2019 was registered a total of 3,282.8 billion yuan coming from sharing economy transactions and people using sharing services reached an approximate number of 800 million (Liu et al., 2021). To add to this, it is interesting to look at the cases of two of the most world-wide famous sharing economy companies, Uber and Airbnb. Uber is a ride-sharing service, where per service providers (i.e., drivers) use own cars to provide rides to customers, who can book the ride (in advance or last minute) via a mobile or desktop app provided by Uber. The app provides the best match between service provider and customer, guarantee a secure in-app payment of the ride and keeps a commission on every ride. Airbnb works similarly. It provides an online platform and app on which people can rent for short periods (even one night) their houses or rooms to other peer customers. To understand the economic importance of these companies, it is necessary to look at the numbers. Back in 2017 Uber was the highest valued start-up, valued at $70 billion (Kumar et al., 2018), while Airbnb was valued more than $100 billion in 2020, representing the biggest United States' IPO of the year (Reuters, 2020).

As described for the case of Uber and Airbnb, the sharing economy model is a so-called triadic model, where three parties are involved: service enablers (e.g., Uber and Airbnb), service providers (e.g., driver and host), and customers (e.g., rider and guest) (Kumar et al., 2017). This is a main distinction with the traditional dyadic model, characterized by the presence of just buyers and sellers (Benoit et al., 2017). Service providers and customers in the sharing economy are usually peers who do not know each other (Akhmedova et al., 2021). They are put into connection thanks to the mediating role of a digital platform provided by the service enabler. The precision of the matching algorithm of the service enabler, constitutes one of the central factors for the success of the exchange between service providers and customers. In addition, the digital platform guarantees a mitigation of the risks liked to the transaction (Akhmedova et al., 2021). Other main differentiation points are that the sharing economy model is characterized by the efficient

use of underutilized assets (Hossain, 2020) and the short-term access to these resources (i.e., temporary access, no transfer of the ownership) (Akhmedova et al., 2021). These main peculiarities make this new exchange model different to any other existing model and need to be studied separately in order to have a precise understanding of the forces driving the success of this business model.

Echoing practitioners' and investors' interest in the sharing economy, the literature on the sharing economy is booming. This recent, albeit rich literature can be divided in three main research streams: (1) one research stream focuses on conceptualizing the sharing economy phenomenon and explaining what the sharing economy is and what it is not (e.g., Kozlenkova et al., 2021), (2) a second stream examines the reasons why people are willing to participate in the sharing economy (e.g., Benoit et al., 2017), and (3) the third research stream investigates the economic, social and environmental impact of this new phenomenon (e.g., Zervas et al., 2017). However, the long-term success of this exchange model is given by the network effect that the digital platforms (i.e., the service enablers) can generate (Kumar, 2018). This means guaranteeing a good number of users from both the supply and demand side. This can be done by adopting the right strategies to acquire, retain and win-back profitable service providers and customers (Kumar, 2018). In this scenario, loyalty is thus crucial. Nevertheless, literature regarding the loyalty of customers to the sharing economy platforms is still limited (Annex 1) and mainly focused on the concepts of trust (e.g., Akhmedova et al., 2020) and satisfaction (e.g., Huarng & Yu, 2019) and on the respective antecedents (e.g., Kim, 2019). Reputation systems in the sharing economy have been mainly analyzed as a driver of trust (e.g., Basili & Rossi, 2020) and was proved that providers' reputation has direct effects on customers' trust (ter Huurne et al., 2018), thus indirectly on customers' loyalty. From the customers' reputation perspective, few research were found to investigate the consequence that it has on customers feelings (e.g., Newlands et al., 2019; Prosepio et al., 2018), but none of the examined paper was specifically addressing the influence of positive and negative feedbacks about customers on customers' loyalty. This thesis aims thus to expand the current knowledge by answering the research question: *What is the role of customers' personal reputation on the formation of customers' loyalty in the sharing economy?*

This thesis is structured into seven chapters. The first chapter is the current general introduction to the topic and the research. Through the second chapter, that is the

literature review, the phenomenon of sharing economy is explained including the motivation that drives customer to take part to the sharing economy and economic, social and environmental impacts that it brings with it. The concept of loyalty in the sharing economy is also presented, highlighting the main antecedents that has been already studied in past research. In the final part of the literature review, the concept of online reputation and feedback system is investigated in order to introduce the main research question. The third section explains the exploratory research conducted in order to be able to develop some hypotheses explained in section four. The fifth section is dedicated to the explanation of the confirmatory study made with the purpose to validate or reject the hypotheses. The sixth section provides the results of the data collect through primary research and define the implication that these results have for the future of loyalty management in the sharing economy. The very last part of the thesis presents the limits of the research and provides suggestions for future research in the field of customers' reputation and loyalty in the sharing economy.

2. Literature review

2.1. Definition, characteristics and business models of the sharing economy

Sharing economy is an umbrella concept that includes a series of similar terms such as access-based consumption, access-based service, non-ownership services, sharing, commercial sharing programs and collaborative consumption (Akhmedova et al., 2020; Benoit et al., 2017; Eckhardt et al. 2019). The sharing economy literature is mainly divided between two concepts: collaborative consumption and access-based economy (Jia et al., 2020). The first stream claims that the nature of sharing economy is collaborative consumption, i.e., "*an activity of sharing services or products that is coordinated through online-based services*" (Jia et al., 2020). The basic concept is thus that people (i.e. peers) are invited to share underutilized resources without transferring the actual ownership, but just the right to use a specific product. On the other side, the second stream recognize sharing economy as an access economy that enables customers to access services and goods without transferring ownership through information and communications technologies (Jia et al., 2020). The focus here is on the fact that this new economy should guarantee the access to as many customer as possible, but the nature of the provider is not important. In this case the provider could be a company too (e.g. ZipCar).

Researchers thus disagree on the nature of sharing economy but agree on two main characteristics: access vs. ownership and facilitation by technology/Internet (Kolenzova et al., 2021) (Table 1). The first characteristic indicates that the access to a certain resource is temporary. Business models that include transferring of ownership, such as eBay or Etsy, are thus excluded from the concept of sharing economy, because when there is a full transfer of ownership it is no more possible to talk about "sharing" (Kolenzova et al., 2021). From an operations management perspective, this characteristic guarantee flexibility to both demand and supply (Jia et al., 2020). The second characteristic refers to the fact that technology, i.e., digital platforms, facilitate the sharing process. Indeed, the majority of definitions of sharing economy recognize the fundamental presence of technology as enabler of efficient matching between demand and supply and of lower risks and transaction costs (Jia et al., 2020). Consequently, when the action of "sharing" is done without the involvement of a technological platform, the exchange model is not considered part of the sharing economy (e.g., borrowing something to a friend). This characteristic defines the triadic nature of this particular exchange model that must involve a platform provider that enables the service, a service provider (i.e., the supplier) and a customer (Beinot et al., 2017).

Kolenzova et al. (2021) identified other three characteristics that are usually occurring in the sharing economy but are not supported by all the researchers. These characteristics are (1) request of a financial compensation, (2) providers as peers, and (3) underutilized nature of offerings. Regarding the monetary exchange, some authors state the necessary involvement of monetization, some other do not provide any specification, while others express the openness to both for-free and for-fee sharing (Kolenzova et al., 2021). However, according to Kolenzova et al. (2021), the term "economy" includes itself a requirement of monetary exchange. Consequently, exchange models such as Couchsurfing, which enables people to travel the world by being hosted for free by other stranger people, satisfy the ''sharing'' characteristic, but do not include the ''economy'' part. Solutions that do not involve monetary exchange are thus considered external to the concept of sharing economy. With regard to the nature of the suppliers, it is not clear if including in the research relative to sharing economy just peer-to-peer services such as

Uber or extend it to business-to-consumer business models such as the one of ZipCar. In the case of Uber, the service providers are individuals who use their own cars to provide a transportation service, while in the ZipCar's business model, ZipCar is the owner and provider of the rental car service. According to Kolenzova et al. (2021), the peer-to-peer nature of the service is essential to distinguish the sharing economy from mere online rental services. Eckhardt et al. (2019) describe this characteristic of sharing economy by expanding the role of platform users to prosumers, that means that the user could be both customer and provider. Finally, it is debated if sharing economy business models should include or not the characteristic of exchange of underutilized assets. Kolenzova et al. (2021) defend the consideration that if a person rent out his/her own house because in that moment he/she is for example on holiday and the house is thus an idle asset, then this exchange should be included in the sharing economy. However, if a person buys a house with the purpose to permanently rent it out to tourists, then the exchange is a mere rental real estate operation, and the action should not be considered a sharing business model.

According to the research conducted by Kolenzova et al. (2021), even if an official common agreement of these last three characteristics does not exist, research regarding sharing economy show a high level of homogeneity. Indeed, out of the sharing economy studies analyzed by Kolenzova et al. (2021), 96% involved firms with financial exchange, 95% were relative to online platforms, and 82% featured peer-to-peer services.

In addition to these five characteristics, Eckhardt et al. (2019) better define the sharing economy concept by including two further key elements. The first additional element expands the definition of sharing economy to both tangible and intangible resources. This means including in the exchange model both tangible assets such as cars or houses, as well as less-tangible assets such as time, services or knowledge. The second additional characteristic is relative to the reliance based on reputation systems, for instance reviews or rating systems. This element was found by Eckhardt et al. (2019) to be typical of several sharing economy businesses but also common in some traditional business models. According to sharing economy platforms, reputation systems ensure quality standards and protect consumers (Eckhardt et al., 2019). The presence of reputation systems can be

considered particularly relevant in the sharing economy context, given the fact that it is characterized by uncertainties caused by behavioral and environmental risks (Akhmedova et al., 2021). Behavioral risks are related to the offline sphere and include bad behaviors during face-to-face exchange and missing quality standards or quality checks. Bad behaviors include socially irresponsible actions such as rape or kidnapping (Rauch and Schleicher, 2015) or deterioration of the shared good, such as leaving trash in a shared car (Eckhardt et al., 2019). It was demonstrated that a user's misbehavior negatively affects the experience of the following user (Schaefers et al., 2016). In addition, the quality check is related to the fact that sharing economy is characterized by the crowdsourcing of supply (Eckhardt et al., 2019). This means that from the supply side there are decentralized providers who offer heterogeneous products and services (e.g., Airbnb rooms or houses), in contrast to the standardized goods and services provided by centralized company (e.g. hotels room) (Eckhardt et al., 2019). On the other side, environmental risks are related to changing circumstances and can happen both in the online and offline context. In particular they encompass missing legal frameworks to regulate accidents regarding personal safety and property safety, missing transactions' protection and the risk related to privacy protection (Akhmedova et al., 2020). Reputation's systems contribute to limit these risks that are responsible for decreasing trust (Akhmedova et al., 2020).

As mentioned before, another characteristic of the sharing economy model is the fact to be triadic, thus involving a platform (i.e., service enabler) in addition to the traditional supplier (i.e., service provider) and customer. This model could be associated by some people to the traditional B2B2C setting, also called traditional two-side market (Kumar et al., 2018). An example of this business model is Ebay. However, in the case of traditional two-side market, the intermediary platform carries on independent dyadic sales dynamics with both supplier and customer, and there is no need for a direct transaction between buyer and seller (Kumar et al., 2018). Further peculiarities better explain the differences between these two business models.

First, in the traditional B2B2C setting, revenues come from sales, while in the sharing economy, revenues are generated through the short-term temporary transfer of

ownership (i.e., rental service) (Kumar et al., 2018). Second, the focus of traditional two-side markets is the product quality, while sharing economy focus on service quality. Indeed, the face-to-face interaction of service provider and clients fuel the expectation of high service quality (Kumar et al., 2018). Third, sellers in the B2B2C setting are responsible for the marketing of their own product to be able to sell. On the other hand, in the sharing economy space the service enabler (i.e. the platform) is the responsible for marketing initiatives to attract costumer (Kumar et al., 2018). Fourth, speaking about risks, taking part to sharing economy is associated with higher risks for the service provider since he/she is offering his/her own assets and is directly involved in the transaction. On the contrary, in a traditional two-side relationship, there is a full transfer of ownership and the transactions and interaction are made primarily digitally, thus risks are lower for the seller (Kumar et al., 2018).

Following the above-mentioned characteristics, it is thus possible to sum up a definition of sharing economy as: *a triadic business model where peer customers and suppliers temporarily exchange underutilized tangible and intangible resources under a monetary payment and thanks to the mediation of a digital platform that limits behavioral and environmental risks through the management of a set of reputation systems.*

Characteristic	Explanation	Business example	References
Access vs. ownership	The access to a certain resource is temporary and the transfer of ownership is excluded.	In the cases of eBay or Etsy, the customer buys the ownership of a product, thus it is not possible to talk about "sharing".	Kolenzova et al., 2021; Jia et al., 2020
Facilitation by technology/Internet	The presence of a digital platform enables efficient matching between demand and supply and lower risks and transaction costs.	Lending the mixer to a neighbor in person is not considered part of SE.	Beinot et al., 2017; Kolenzova et al., 2021; Jia et al., 2020;
Financial compensation	The involvement of monetization is necessary since the term "economy" includes itself a requirement of monetary exchange	Couchsurfing, which enables people to travel the world by being hosted for free by other stranger people, satisfy the ''sharing'' characteristic, but do not include the ''economy'' part.	Kolenzova et al., 2021
Providers as peers	The peer-to-peer nature of the service is essential to distinguish the sharing economy from mere online rental services.	In the case of ZipCar, ZipCar is the owner and provider of the rental car service, while Uber is a case of sharing economy business since the customers and providers are peers.	Eckhardt et al., 2019; Kolenzova et al., 2021
Underutilized nature of offerings	The asset at the core of the exchange must be an underutilized resource.	If a person buys a house with the purpose to permanently rent it out to tourists, then the exchange is a mere rental real estate operation.	Kolenzova et al., 2021
Tangible and intangible resources	The asset at the core of the exchange could be either a tangible or intangible resource.	In the case of Airbnb, the shared asset is tangible, i.e., a house, while in Homejoy, the shared asset is a service that is cleaning houses.	Eckhardt et al., 2019

Reliance based on reputation systems	Reputation systems ensure quality standards and protect consumers and providers from behavioral and environmental risks.	On Airbnb, both customers and providers receive ratings and reviews from each other, building thus an own online reputation linked to their activity in the Airbnb community	Akhmedova et al., 2021; Eckhardt et al., 2019; Fatma et al., 2021
Triadic model	In the sharing economy, three parties are involved: service enabler (i.e. digital platform), peer-service provider (i.e. supplier) and customer.	Uber, and BlaBlaCar are examples of sharing economy businesses involving three parties; while Flixbus is not a sharing economy business since in the transaction take part just two parties: Flixbus and the final customer.	Kumar et al., 2018

Table 1: Summary of the main characteristics of sharing economy's businesses

2.2. Drivers of customer participation in the sharing economy

To understand the reason-why behind the success of this new type of exchange model, it is necessary to look at the motivations that lead people to participate in the sharing economy as customers. Motivations could be divided between intrinsic and extrinsic (Kozlenkova et. al, 2021). Intrinsic means that a person adopt a behavior driven by his/her inherent satisfaction, while extrinsic indicates that the person is moved to act by external sources. From several studies it emerged that extrinsic motivations are the prevalent drivers in the sharing economy (Hossain, 2020). Kozlenkova et. al (2021) identified four main value-based drivers: utilitarian value as extrinsic motivation, and social, hedonic and sustainability values as intrinsic motivations (Table 2).

The **utilitarian value** is linked to the functional benefits and costs of a product or a service. For example, sharing economy options are usually economically cheaper to access given that there is not a full transfer of ownership. In addition, the lack of ownership means no maintenance costs. The economic motives are particularly important given the increasing reduction in customer wealth (Benoit et. al, 2017). In addition, the utilitarian value is also linked to the customers' reductions in risks and responsibilities that the sharing economy brings with it. For example, the temporal access to the resource allow customer to "preview" a good without committing to purchase it and reduce the ownership responsibilities of maintenance and storage (Benoit et. al, 2017).

The **social value** refers to the extent to which a product or service helps the customer to make and maintain social connections with others (Kozlenkova et. al, 2021). In some industries the social value was found to be particularly important to motivate customer to choose sharing economy options (Benoit et. al, 2017). For example, the social factor is central for Airbnb, that define itself a *"community-driven hospitality brand focusing on*

creating connections between people that lead to authentic travel experiences" (Benoit et. al, 2017). Even the company's logo, called "Belò" from the word "belonging", is a graphical entity that recalls both a stylized heart (i.e., love) and a happy person with arms raised and together (i.e., joy and people at the core) (Benoit et. al, 2017). Indeed, sleeping in a flat shared on Airbnb, involve more social factors than staying in a standard hotel room (i.e., connection, interaction and sometimes even friendship between peer provider and customer) (Kozlenkova et. al, 2021). According to the Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the social factor represents one of the consumers' basic needs (1968). Thus, consumer who enjoy the social value in the sharing economy are more motivated to adopt this form of exchange model (Kozlenkova et. al, 2021).

The **hedonic value** considers the product or service in terms of enjoyment, fun and emotional worth that they transmit to the person (Kozlenkova et. al, 2021). An example of hedonic value is the pleasure that a person feels while riding a luxury car that is normally not affordable for him/her. Also renting a luxury villa for one night on Airbnb could generate hedonic value, by giving to the customer the illusion for one day to be someone she/he is not usually and satisfying the desire to obtain a status (Benoit et. al, 2017).

The **sustainability value** looks at the product or service in terms of their impact on the environment (Kozlenkova et. al, 2021). By favoring the efficient use of underutilized resources, sharing economy solutions might be seen positively by people who support sustainability and fight overconsumption and overproduction (Kozlenkova et. al, 2021). However, studies highlight the fact that the lack of ownership and lower prices in the sharing economy, might push consumers to overuse products (e.g., cars), thus deleting the positive environmental effects (Benoit et. al, 2017).

Kozlenkova et. al (2021) added to these value-based drivers, a governance-based driver, that is **trust**. The social norm of reciprocity governs an exchange, that is a mutual transfer of resources between two parties. Since in the sharing economy, the exchange happens between stranger peer providers and customers, the outcomes of the exchange are not fully guarantee, thus trust is essential. Indeed, trust is defined as the belief that the

counterpart will respect its obligation within an exchange relationship (Kozlenkova et. al, 2021). Without trust, an exchange won't take place. Sharing economy platform are responsible to increase users' trust and do that by providing governance tools such as identity verification, or online reviews and rating systems (Kozlenkova et. al, 2021).

According to Kozlenkova et. al's (2021) recent meta-analysis, hedonic value, trust and utilitarian value have the greatest impact on the participation into sharing economy. On the other side, social and sustainability values showed a poor influence on the motivation to adopt sharing economy alternatives (Kozlenkova et. al, 2021). However, it is important to highlight that given the wide industry range and customer base, motivations to participate in sharing economy might vary significantly (Hossain, 2020). For instance, Generation Y might be more interested in choosing sharing-economy alternatives due to the economic utilitarian reasons, while Baby Boomers might be more attracted by the possibilities to make new social interaction, and thus satisfy intrinsic needs (Kumar et. al, 2018).

Generation Y constitutes the majority of the sharing economy users; thus, it is essential to keep a focus on its particular characteristics and participation's drivers (Kumar et. al, 2018). On the demand side, what Generation Y customers appreciate about sharing economy, is the practicality (Kumar et. al, 2018). Practicality includes lack of ownership, low costs, efficiency, convenience and ease of use, enabled by the use of digital technologies. In addition, a particularity of the Generation Y is that due to the regular use of digital tools and the internet, customers have easy access to a variety of information and price comparison (Kumar et. al, 2018). Given that price and convenience are important motivation factors, and that comparison is easy to access, this generation is subject to a frequent switching behavior between the different options available on the market (Kumar et. al, 2018). In this context, it is even more important for service enabler to understand the determinants of customer loyalty that might help in retaining consumer and guaranteeing a good customer base for service providers.

Motivations	Definition	Example	References
Utilitarian value/Practicality	Functional benefits and costs of a product or a service.	Given the lack of ownership transfer, a guest using Airbnb can enjoy a nice seaside apartment, when it is most convenient for him/her, without having to pay maintenance costs the whole year.	Benoit et. al, 2017; Kolenzova et al., 2021; Kumar et. al, 2018
Social value	Extent to which a product or service helps the customer to make and maintain social connections.	BlaBlaCar gives both to rider and driver the possibility to meet people and chat with them while travelling in the same direction.	Benoit et. al, 2017; Maslow, 1968; Kolenzova et al., 2021
Hedonic value	Enjoyment, fun and emotional worth that products or services transmit to the person using them.	By using UberBlack, a person might feel pleasure riding a luxury car that is normally not affordable for him/her.	Benoit et. al, 2017; Kolenzova et al., 2021
Sustainability value	Impact that the product or service have on the environment.	By using BlaBlaCar as a mean of transport, it is possible to reduce the number of cars making the same travel, thus lowering the CO2 emissions.	Benoit et. al, 2017; Kolenzova et al., 2021
Trust	The belief that the counterpart will respect its obligation within an exchange relationship.	Through reviews and rating systems Airbnb's guests are able to verify in advance the service quality of the hosts.	Kolenzova et al., 2021

Table 2: Summary of the main motivations leading suppliers and customers to use sharing economy solutions

2.3. The impact of sharing economy

As a new business model of exchanging underutilized resources between peers, the spread of sharing economy brough with it effects on the existing order. As highlighted by Zervas et al. (2017) "the sharing economy is significantly changing consumption patterns, as opposed to generating purely incremental economic activity". These effects have been mainly studied from the economic (e.g., Fang et al., 2016), social (e.g., Codagnone & Martens, 2016) and environmental (e.g., Frenken, 2017) perspectives with the majority of the papers being focused on the accommodation and the mobility industries (Boar et al., 2020). In general Boar et al. (2020) found that sharing economy is bringing positive effects on the sustainability of economy, society and environment. However, other authors presented different points of view to look at the impact of sharing economy and demonstrated the problems that it introduced to the economy, the society and the environment (e.g., Jin et al., 2018).

2.3.1 The economic impact

Talking about the accommodation industry, according to Fang et al. (2016), Airbnb led to benefits for the entire tourism industry by making more accessible for people to travel and leading tourists to spend more days travelling. This represent and expansion for the whole local industry since more tourists means higher demand for linked sectors such as the food industry (Fang et al., 2016). This positive impact of the sharing economy was also highlighted by Pouri (2021) who described it as the induction effect that is when the

consumption of a resource lead to the consumption of another one. However, Zervas et al. (2017) found Airbnb to have a direct negative impact on the low-end and non-business travellers' hotels, by being a direct competitor. This phenomenon is described by Pouri (2021) as direct substitution effect that is when the substitution of one resource with another one happens within the same industry, in this case, the accommodation industry. This substitution effect between Airbnb and the low-end hotels has caused an average reduction in revenues for the hotels between 8% and 10% (Zervas et al., 2017) and an increase in unemployment of former employees in these hotels, given that Airbnb doesn't require the employment of any particular figure for renting the houses (Fang et al., 2016). Therefore, the positive marginal effect brought by Airbnb in the tourism industry decreases as the unemployment of the low-end hotels increases (Fang et al., 2016). A similar phenomenon happened in the mobility industry between Uber and taxis. Indeed, according to a research conducted by Bond (2015) in the District of Columbia and New York, the arrival of Uber in the mobility industry negatively affected the revenues for the taxi service and reduced the number of taxi licenses.

However, according to Dillahunt & Malone (2015), in general the sharing economy can help in reducing unemployment during local economic downturns by offering an alternative to generate incomes to unemployed and financially struggling individuals. Frenken (2017) also mentioned the positive effects of the flexibility of the sharing economy in helping in case of emergence. In particular, Frenken (2017) stated that the sharing economy infrastructure is a good support to the public administrations in rare peaks of demands (e.g., mega-events, natural disasters, humanitarian crises), given that in these cases, the public investments required are lower thanks to the presence of the sharing economy market. Shaheen & Chan (2016) studied the cases of some cities where the public authorities saved further money by collaborating with ridesharing solutions to integrate their public transport systems by substituting some expensive and underutilized bus routes with subsidized or free ridesharing rides. In addition, Jin et al. (2018) advocated the idea that the flexible sharing economy infrastructure leads to higher economic efficiency. Indeed, for example Uber adopts a dynamic pricing mechanism that efficiently follows the fluctuation in transportation demand (i.e., higher demand, higher prices) (Edelman & Geradin, 2016). Furthermore, the technology adopted by Uber

enables to reduce transaction costs such as the time spent for looking to a ride (the platform proposes the best match) or the waiting time for the arrival of the car (the platform suggests cars that are already in the surroundings) (Rogers, 2015). Finally, Uber reduces uncertainty and increase safety of the users by providing the real time GPS location of the car (Edelman & Geradin, 2016) and a reputation system (i.e., ratings and reviews) of both the drivers and the riders (Glöss et al., 2016).

2.3.2 The social impact

Boar et al. (2020) found that the emergence of sharing economy has enabled the wide access of people to assets that they were previously excluded from due to high costs both to buy the assets and maintain them. In addition, often sharing economy solutions such as BlaBlaCar or Airbnb are cheaper alternatives to more expensive traditional market solutions (i.e., taxis, trains and hotels) (Renne and Bennett, 2014). The consumers can thus save money by using sharing economy (Boar et al., 2020) and according to a study of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2016) this positively impact in particular the accessibility of low-income individuals. Sharing is also a cost reduction for the owner who receives a compensation for the sharing and can thus for example cover some costs of the car or the house. In addition, according to Boar et al. (2020), the sharing mobility solved the problem of having to own one car person in order to freely move, that can be a problem especially in big cities. Indeed, often in the cities, the public transport systems are not perfect and represent high costs for the public institutions (Jin et al., 2018). The ride sharing systems can thus be a convenient complementary service to close the temporal and spatial gaps of the public transports (e.g., rides late in the night or in isolated places) (Jin et al., 2018). Finally, as social positive impact, Malik and Wahaj (2019) found that ridesharing services, facilitate the empowerment of women in patriarchal societies such as in Pakistan, by enabling them to autonomously move in the city. Indeed, the presence of a rating system for the drivers and the real time GPS tracking guarantee a high safety level for women and enable the men in the family to keep an eye on the moves of the women (Malik and Wahaj, 2019). These factors positively affect the quality of life and increase inclusion by guaranteeing accessibility of low-income individuals and empowerment of women in patriarchal societies (Boar et al., 2020; Fraiberger & Sundararajan, 2015, Malik & Wahaj, 2019).

However, on the other hand some authors claimed that the sharing economy contribute to spread inequality in different ways. First of all Selwyn (2004) reported that by being a form of exchange based on the existence of a digital online platform, the sharing economy, excludes from this exchange people who are not able or don't have the economic availability to access a smartphone and mobile data. According to a research conducted by Poushter in 2016 in France, Japan, Poland, Hungary, and Greece the smartphone ownership rate was below 60%. In addition, the smartphone ownership rate was higher in younger people with higher education, and with income higher than the country median (Poushter, 2016). This proves that the sharing economy is not inclusive and divides the society. Furthermore, from a study of Ge et al. (2016) it emerged that in some cities of the U.S.A. African American passengers were exposed to longer waiting times and higher cancellation rates. In addition, it was found that female riders received extended rides and thus excessive fares (Ge et al., 2016). Edelman & Luca (2014) proved that also service providers are afflicted by discriminations given that on Airbnb in New York black hosts ask around 12% less than non-black hosts for an equivalent rental.

What was also criticized as a negative impact of the spread of sharing economy, is the figure of the prosumer, defined as a consumer who is asked to perform tasks usually done by employees, without receiving a financial compensation (Toffler, 2013). In particular in the sharing economy the performance of the service providers (e.g., hosts and drivers) is monitored via the rating system generated by the consumers (Dzieza, 2015). For this reason, some authors following the neo-Marxian theory, defend the idea that sharing platforms are exploiting the creativity and valuable contributions of consumers (e.g., Zwick et al., 2008).

On the other side, critics emerged also about the exploitation of service providers. Indeed, on one side some authors claim that sharing economy has created a new group of micro-entrepreneurs, who enjoy to be self-employed and manage their own working schedule to have more balanced work and life (e.g., Hall & Krueger, 2015). However, other researchers reported that the idea to be micro-entrepreneur is just a way for sharing companies to transfer the entrepreneurial risk to the service providers who are

underpaid and not covered by job security and benefits (Summers & Balls, 2014; Schor, 2015). Indeed, for example, even if the Uber drivers were proved to receive slightly higher payment per hour compared to taxi drivers, it has to be taken into consideration that contrary to what happen for taxi drivers, Uber drivers don't enjoy healthcare insurance, paid leave and expense reimbursement (Jin et al., 2018). In addition, given that Uber prices are dynamic and follow the demand flow, also the drivers' wage is fluctuating causing instability for them and their families (Jin et al, 2018).

In addition, speaking about the accommodation industry, if on one hand the sharing economy have led to a new touristic model, on the other hand, it brought to the phenomenon of gentrification in several cities such as Barcelona, Amsterdam and Venice (Martin et al., 2018). The possibility for owners to generate higher profit by renting their apartments for short term to tourists and the high demand by tourists, led to a decrease of the available properties on the market for long-term rents and a consequent increase of the prices for locals living in these cities (Martin et al., 2018). This caused a social shift in some cities and created conflicts between locals and tourists, that even led Amsterdam's' authorities to prohibit the short-term rent of apartments to tourists in the city centre (Boar et al., 2020).

2.3.3 The environmental impact

Sharing economy is based on the idea to use and re-use underutilized assets, without having to owning them. These characteristics made clear since its emergence that sharing economy promotes environmental sustainability in the way of reducing waste and production of goods (Boar et al., 2020). For this reason, it can be opposed to the idea of consumerism that incentivize people to continuously consume new goods in order to be satisfied (Richins, 2012). With regard to the sharing mobility industry, the fact of sharing rides and not having to own an own car was proved to lowering total polluting emissions and energy consumption and expenditure (Meng et al., 2020). This can be defined as cross-activity optimization effect (Pouri, 2021) that means that the sharing of a resource (e.g., car rides) led to the optimization of the production of another resource (e.g., carbon emission). According to an environmental report shared by BlaBlaCar (ridesharing platform with over 20 million users in Europe) in 2015 (BlaBlaCar, 2015), in two years, 1

000 000 tons of CO2 were saved by using BlaBlaCar given the higher occupancy rate (2.8 passengers per vehicle) compared to the average occupancy rate (1.7 passengers per car). This is described by Pouri (2021) as direct optimization effect that happens when the functional units created by a resource grow (e.g., sharing a ride via BlaBlaCar enable the car's owner to fulfil the car capacity). However, as in the case of other environmental studies sponsored by sharing companies (e.g., Airbnb, 2015) neither the methodology nor the data have been published, so the validity of these results are hard to be judged (Franken, 2017).

In contrast to what presented regarding the reduction in consumption and the re-use of underutilized assets, Benjaafar et al. (2019) surprisingly found that sharing economy encourages the ownership of assets, and thus the consumption of new assets, especially when the cost of owning is high. This is explained by the fact that thanks to the act of sharing and receiving a payment by the users of the shared asset (e.g., guests and riders) the cost of ownership is lower (Benjaafar et al., 2019). Furthermore, other studies in the ridesharing industry found that ridesharing users didn't changed their habit of owning cars after having started using ridesharing services (Rayle et al., 2016; Clewlow & Mishra, 2017). In addition, due to the wide accessibility, the sharing economy could lead to higher usage of assets such as cars by introducing people who were previously non-users (Benjaafar et al., 2019). This means that for example, people who were previously using public transports for moving in the city, now start to use the ride-sharing service of Uber, leading higher usage of cars in the city. This phenomenon is described by Pouri (2021) as indirect substitution effect, that is when the use of a resource affects the use of another resource in a different system (e.g., sharing mobility affects public transportation).

In addition, another highly discussed effect of the sharing economy leading to negative effects especially for the environment is the so-called rebound effect (e.g., Frenken, 2017; Pouri, 2021; Jin et al., 2018). It is defined as the increment in demand following the higher resource efficiency. Pouri (2021) distinguished between the direct rebound effect that brings an impact within the same system (e.g., lower prices on Airbnb enable guests to book other vacations using Airbnb), and the indirect rebound effect that affects different systems (e.g., lower prices on Airbnb enable guests to spend the saved money on air

travel). Both direct and indirect rebound effects lead to a higher consumption (within the same system or not) given the higher real income of the consumer who can save money by accessing goods and services at convenient prices via the sharing economy (Frenken, 2017). The higher utilization of the shared goods amplified by the direct rebound effect, lead then to the degradation effect (Pouri, 2021), that is the wear of the resource due to the intensified utilization, which reduce its lifetime. Liu and Chen (2020) added that the quasi-public nature of the goods shared might lead to a lack in maintenance that accelerates even further the degradation effect and the consequent demand for new goods.

2.4. Moving forward: Customer loyalty in the sharing economy

2.4.1 Definition of "loyalty"

Loyalty is defined as the customers' positive attitude towards a product or a service, that leads to a repurchase of the same product or service, and to a referral of the product or service to other customers (Xie et al., 2019). It is thus possible to identify two main elements in the definition of customer loyalty that have positive direct and indirect influence on the business performance: the positive intention and word of mouth, and the repurchase action. From a theoretical perspective these two elements of loyalty take the names of attitudinal loyalty and behavioral loyalty (Xie et al., 2019). More precisely, attitudinal loyalty refers to the commitment to a product, which include a stated preference repurchase intentions (Xie et al., 2019). This element of loyalty involves thus a psychological dimension of the customer (So et al., 2019). On the other side, behavioral loyalty recognizes the action of repeat a purchase as an indicator of loyalty of a customer (So et al., 2019). Attitudinal loyalty and behavioral loyalty together form the composite loyalty that is defined as *"a biased behavioral purchase process that results from a psychological process"* (So et al., 2019).

2.4.2 The main theoretical constructs of loyalty

Behavioral loyalty is considered easier to collect since it can be measured through factors such as repeat purchase, proportion of purchase and frequency of purchase (Faridah & Ghani, 2013). For this reason, it has been largely used for research about loyalty. However, studies evidenced that repeated purchase alone is not a good measure for loyalty, since

this behavior could be induced by routine or opportunity rather than by preference (Day, 1969; East et al., 2005). Theories thus were developed trying to combine both attitudinal and behavioral loyalty.

Oliver (1999) developed the theory of the "four phases of loyalty", stating that there four steps of loyalty (i.e., cognitive, attitudinal, conative and action loyalty) and the "ultimate loyalty" is the one that leads to repurchase based on rooted attitudinal preferences.

Colombo and Morrison (1989) studied the model of preference-behavior loyalty. They distinguished customers into two categories: hard core loyal and potential switchers. They assumed that all customers have an own preference that can be weak (i.e., potential switchers to other companies or products) or strong (i.e., hard core loyals).

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) proposed the theory of reasoned action according to which attitude, together with normative and conative factors, are part of the formation process of behavioral loyalty in the role of antecedents.

In the context of relationship marketing, the relationship benefit perspective (Yang et al., 2017) proposed the idea that customers are involved in a long-term exchange relation with the provider due to a series of relation benefits. Relational benefits come from the interaction between customer and provider. These benefits are confidence benefits (i.e., relax, trust and confidence in the provider), social benefits (i.e., personal recognition, familiarity and friendships), rather) and safety benefits (i.e., feeling of security) (Yang et al., 2017). In this construct, the relationship between relational benefits and behavioral loyalty is mediated by commitment that is defined as a positive attitude towards the provider (Newman and Werbel, 1973).

Other general theoretical loyalty constructs have at their core customers' satisfaction and customers' value.
The value-satisfaction-loyalty chain advanced by Gallarza et al. (2016) proved that the positive effects of perceived value and customer satisfaction on loyalty after a consumption are not simultaneous, but sequential. In this model thus, satisfaction is a

mediator between perceived value (i.e., enjoyment, aesthetics and relaxation) and loyalty (Gallarza et al., 2016).

Service-loyalty-profit chain (Heskett et al., 2008) take a focus on the economic impact that loyal customers have on a company. Indeed, according to Reichheld and Sasser (1990), a 5% increase in customer loyalty could lead to a growth in a company's profit between 25% and 85%. This model expanded the concept of loyalty chain, by taking as a starting point of the formation process of loyalty, the internal service quality delivered to the employees. This construct thus states that high quality services offered to the employees guarantee employees satisfaction, that in turn leads to lower turnover and higher productivity. This enables employees to deliver a valuable and high-quality service to the customers. Customers who receive a high-value and high-quality service are satisfied customers, who are consequently loyal customers.

Similarly, Lee et al. (2009) developed the quality-value-loyalty chain. The satisfaction element is thus excluded from the construct and a direct link between value and loyalty is hypothesized. Furthermore, in addition to product quality, also the perceived price was found to have a positive impact on value (Lee et al., 2009), given that often price is used by customers as an indicator of quality (Lambert, 1972; Shapiro, 1973).

2.4.3 Importance of loyalty in the sharing economy

Consumer loyalty is a key element for the success of companies in the sharing economy, since loyalty brings with it shared consumption and positive word of mouth (Kim, 2019). As mentioned before, this enables the platform to maintain a critical mass of both service providers and customers (Kumar, 2018). Indeed, service providers are essential to satisfy the demand of customers, while a solid customer base is crucial to attract service providers, who are willing to lose part of the profit for each transaction on the platform, just if the frequency of transactions is high enough to cover this additional cost (Kumar, 2018). This mechanism takes the name of network effect and is central in sharing economy models, where the platform's value grows with the size of the network (Sung et al., 2018). When talking about network effect, it is necessary to make a distinction

between direct and indirect network effect, also called respectively same-side network effect and cross-side network effect (Eisenmann et al., 2006).

The direct network effect is created when the utility of a user increase as a consequence of the growth of a specific group of users in the same community (Duch-Brown, 2017). The direct network effect is particularly important in businesses such as social media (e.g., Instagram and Facebook) and communication platforms (e.g., WhatsApp or Telegram) (Wirtz et al., 2019), where the presence of family members or friends on the platform, is key in determining the decision to use that platform or not. In the case of sharing economy platforms, characterized by capacity-constrained assets (e.g., space in a house on Airbnb or in a car in the case of Uber), it is not so relevant for providers to attract other providers or for customers to attract other customers (Wirtz et al., 2019). Indeed, after a certain threshold the presence of more providers just create competition for the existing ones, by bringing for example new houses or car rides on the platform (Wirtz et al., 2019). At the same time, a larger number of customers force customers to compete against each other to have access to a specific product in a specific time period (e.g., an house on Airbnb) (Wirtz et al., 2019).

What is important for the sharing economy platforms it is called indirect network effect, and as introduced before, consists in the increase of utility for a user (e.g., customer), given the growing number of users in the opposite user group (e.g., providers) (Johnson, 2018). A specificity of the indirect network effect is that usually the platform identifies a "subsidy side"(more sensitive to price) and a "money side" (less sensitive to price) (Eisenmann et al., 2006). The "money side" is the user group that is willing to pay more for accessing a large the volume of "subsidy side" users via the platform (Eisenmann et al., 2006). On the other side the presence of a large number of "money side" users are what push the "subsidy side" users to register on the platform (Eisenmann et al., 2006). Loyalty and network effect have a double supporting relation. Indeed, as already mentioned, on one side loyal customers keep using the platform supporting the creating of a network effect (Kumar, 2018). However, on the other side, the presence of a positive and strong network effect guarantees loyalty of the users who are sure to find a solid base of customers or providers on a specific platform (Eisenmann et al., 2006). This latter is

particularly true if at least one side of the network face high multi-homing costs (i.e. the costs meet to be part of a network such as adoption, operation and maintenance costs) and both sides' users don't express preference for special features that could be developed by competitors (Eisenmann et al., 2006).

In addition to the network effects, loyalty leads to increased customers' expectations (Jia et al., 2020) and expenditure (Kim, 2019), lower marketing costs (Kim, 2019) and transaction costs (Tajeddini et al., 2022), continuance of customer visit (Jia et al., 2020), and higher profit (Liu et al., 2021).

Loyalty is not just about marketing but represent a challenge in terms of platform operations management (Jia et al., 2020). Indeed, from an operation management perspective, problems leading to a decrease in customer loyalty might be:

- Lack in providing the same platform loyalty scheme in a consistent way, for instance by stopping providing discounts to loyal users (Jia et al., 2020).
- An operation management that is not efficient enough to meet the rapid development of the platform and leads to waste of resources and poor service quality (Jia et al., 2020).
- Negative externalities caused by focusing on mere profit maximization, without considering environmental and social topics (Jia et al., 2020).

2.4.4 Antecedents of customer loyalty in the sharing economy

Loyalty in the sharing economy has been studied from different perspectives (Table 3). The two main research streams have studied customers' loyalty as consequence of trust and customers' loyalty as consequence of satisfaction (Akhmedova et al., 2020). The two approaches are not mutually exclusive, and some researchers have combined these two main factors to explain loyalty in a more comprehensive way (Bagus et al., 2021; Kim, 2019; Nadeema et al., 2020).

2.4.4.1 Trust approach

Research based on trust focused on the risks associated with sharing economy. Indeed, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the fact that the service is neither standardized nor

professional (i.e., the exchange is made with strange peer service providers) leads to behavioral and environmental uncertainties (Akhmedova et al., 2021). Consequently, by enhancing trust, the perceived risk decreases, thus customers are more willing to purchase and repurchase (Akhmedova et al., 2020).

According to Akhmedova et al. (2020) there are four main trust drivers, specific to the sharing economy. The first one is the perceived website/app usability and is linked to a perceived information accuracy and transparency, ease of use, and low effort to access information and make transactions (Akhmedova et al., 2020). The second trust driver is the platform's structural assurance supported by guarantee polices, platform responsiveness and positive reviews. The third driver is the perceived platform usefulness, which is created for instance through a perfect match between demand and supply and can generate beneficial relations (Akhmedova et al., 2020). The fourth and last driver is the perception of the peer service provider. Issues such as lack of reliable information and official quality standards might enhance behavioral risks perceived by customers, thus decreasing trust (Akhmedova et al., 2020). On the other side, it is proved that ability, benevolence and integrity of the peer service provider, are main characteristics enhancing trust (Cheng et al., 2018; Priporas et al., 2017). Among these four drivers, website useability is the basis for both platform-based trust (i.e., platform structural assurance and perceived usefulness) and peer-based trust (i.e., trust towards peers) (Akhmedova et al., 2020). In addition to these trust drivers, from a research conducted by Fatma et al. (2021) it emerged that customers had higher level of trusts for companies embracing corporate social responsibility behaviors (economic, environmental and ethical). As a consequence, it is possible to state that corporate social responsibility positively influence trust. Hou et al. (2021) found a direct correlation also between transaction costs and trust. The explanation for this phenomenon is that cheap service is associated with bad service. Consequently, people are led to believe that high transaction costs are more trustful and in order to have a good service they are willing to pay high implicit and explicit costs (Hou et al., 2021). With regard to the ride sharing industry, driving skills and online rating score were identified as major trust drivers. In particular, driving skills has a direct positive impact also on the loyalty to the platform (Hou et al., 2021). Finally, Li & Tsai (2022) deepened the analysis of trust in the sharing

accommodation industry and identified guest-based factors, host-based factors and platform-based factors. The results showed that trust's antecedents are rating volume (guest-based factor), information quality and media richness (host-based factors), and environmental benefits, locational benefits, and authenticity (platform-based factors) (Li & Tsai, 2022).

2.4.4.2 Satisfaction approach

The logic followed by the satisfaction-based research stream, is that the quality of the product or service influences the customer value, which in turn affects satisfaction (Akhmedova et al., 2020), which again leads to a positive or negative consumer evaluation and then loyalty and behavior (i.e., repurchase and word of mouth) (Huarng & Yu, 2019). Indeed, a good service quality enables the platform to satisfy the customers' needs and meet their expectations. When the customer's expectations are matched, the satisfaction level is reached (Bagus et al., 2021). In the e-space, service quality is supported by elements like web-design, privacy, security, and customer service and data (Bagus et al., 2021). With regard to the sharing accommodation industry, the platform's service quality, the lodging service quality and the experience were identified as customers satisfaction drivers (Huarng & Yu, 2019). Jia et al. (2020) adopted an operational perspective and analyzed customer satisfaction starting from platform asset characteristics and mergers and acquisitions. According to this research, sharing economy businesses as previously defined are asset-light, since the assets such as cars or houses are not owned by the platform, but by the peer service providers. Mergers and acquisition policies enable the platforms to expand their businesses by accessing a larger operational capacity and by having a better supply network readiness (i.e., network connectedness and comprehensiveness of stakeholder types) (Jia et al., 2020). These factors lead to a higher customer satisfaction (Jia et al., 2020).

Clauss et al. (2019) agreed on the central role of customer value in defining customer loyalty and considered customer value as a set of emotional, quality and price-based value. However, surprisingly, their models reveled that quality is not a driver affecting customers' loyalty. On the other side, emotional value and price-based value were found to have a direct effect on customers' loyalty. Emotional value is positively influenced by

customer assessment of value co-creation process (e.g., ease of use, reliability, privacy protection, platform security), customer assessment of value proposition design (i.e. offers' customization, products' portfolio and platform design) and customer assessment of value capture mechanism (i.e. payment methods, pricing fairness and price relative to competitors). To the contrary, price value is influenced by just the customer assessment of value capture mechanism (Clauss et al., 2019). According to Liu et al. (2021), in the sharing accommodation industry, perceived customer value is key in the relationship between customer experience and customer loyalty. Indeed, perceived value is an internal process that takes place based on the external experience the customer had (Liu et al., 2021). Customer experience is based on human interaction and physical environment and both equally influence the perceived value. However, the perceived value was found to have a stronger influence on attitudinal loyalty than on behavioral loyalty (Liu et al., 2021).

2.4.4.3 Other approaches to explain loyalty

Other research recognized both the role of trust and satisfaction as drivers of loyalty. By analyzing the behavior of customers on Airbnb, Kim (2019) found out that entertainment (i.e., perceived level of enjoyment and fun) and recognition (i.e. symbolic benefit that provide customers with self-esteem and social approval) have a positive influence both on trust and satisfaction. In the same way, the perception that customers have regarding the ethical behavior of the platform (i.e., privacy, security, non-deception and reliability) has a positive effect on both trust and satisfaction (Nadeema et al., 2020). However, social benefits (i.e., customers' need of interaction with locals) are only relevant in the creation of trust (Kim, 2019). Furthermore, Bagus et al. (2021) proved the moderating role of trust between service quality and customer satisfaction. According to this research at high level of trust, service quality has a low effect on satisfaction, while at low level of trust, service quality has a big effect on satisfaction (Bagus et al., 2021).

Eckhardt et al. (2019) analyzed loyalty in relation to innovation and social motivations. Indeed, the research confirm that innovation positively influence loyalty in terms of improved efficiency and effectiveness of the platform in matching providers and customers. This enables the platform to better meet the customers' needs and provide for

instance lower price and enhanced benefits. On the other side, social motivations foster loyalty given the fact that prosumers were found to be particularly willing to participate in the act of sharing and connect with people. This leads thus to higher engagement and lower risks of churn (Chung et al. 2019).

Yang et al. (2017) linked the concept of commitment to customers' loyalty. Commitment is defined as the *"customer's long-term orientation toward a business relationship that is grounded on emotional bonds"* (Yang et al., 2017). The willingness to maintain a relationship is an indicator of loyalty. Commitment fully mediates the influence of social benefits (i.e., benefits generated from the emotional element of a relationship) on customer loyalty, while partially mediates the influence of confidence benefits (i.e., mental relax due to full confidence in the service provider) and safety benefits (i.e., lack of concern about possible negative incidents or injuries) (Yang et al., 2017). Indeed, confidence and safety benefits, have also a partial direct effect on customer loyalty, that is stronger when commitment is in place (Yang et al., 2017).

Loyalty's antecedents	**Definition**	**Influenced by**	**References**
Trust	By enhancing trust, the perceived risk decreases, thus customers are more willing to purchase and repurchase (loyalty).	perceived website/app usability, platform's structural assurance, perceived platform usefulness, perception of the peer service provider, corporate social responsibility behaviors, transaction costs, driving skills, online rating score, rating volume, information quality and media richness, environmental benefits, locational benefits, and authenticity	Akhmedova et al., 2020; Fatma et al., 2021; Hou et al., 2021; Li & Tsai, 2022
Satisfaction	Satisfaction leads to a positive or negative consumer evaluation and then to loyalty.	Web-design, privacy, security, customer service, customer expectation, platform's service quality, the lodging service quality, the experience, larger operational capacity and supply network readiness	Akhmedova et al., 2020; Bagus et al., 2021; Huarng & Yu, 2019; Jia et al., 2020
Customer value	Customer value in terms of emotional value and price-based value, has a direct effect on loyalty.	Customer assessment of value co-creation process, value proposition design and value capture mechanism	Clauss et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2021
Trust and satisfaction	Trust and satisfaction act together in influencing loyalty and have some common antecedents. In addition, trust have a moderating role of trust between service quality and customer satisfaction.	Entertainment, recognition, customers' perception of the ethical behavior of the platform.	Bagus et al., 2021; Kim, 2019; Nadeema et al., 2020
Innovation	Innovation positively influence loyalty in terms of improved efficiency and effectiveness of the platform in matching providers and customers.		Eckhardt et al., 2019
Social motivations	Social motivations foster loyalty given the fact that prosumers were found to be particularly willing to		Eckhardt et al., 2019

	participate in the act of sharing and connect with people.		
Commitment	The willingness to maintain a relationship (i.e., commitment) is an indicator of loyalty.	Social benefit, confidence benefits, safety benefits.	Yang et al., 2017

Table 3: Summary of the loyalty antecedents

Finally, some research were conducted with just a focus on attitudinal loyalty (i.e. repurchase intention) in the sharing accommodation industry. The results show that attitude (i.e., a positive or negative psychological emotion that helps customer to evaluate if performing or not a specific action), subjective norms (i.e., the social pressure felt by individuals when performing an action) (Mao & Lyu, 2017) and frequency of past stays (Xie et al., 2019) have a positive influence on repurchase intention. Attitude is positively affected by unique experience expectation and perceived value, and negatively affected by perceived risk (i.e., lower the risk, higher the attitude), while subjective norms are an effect of word of mouth (Mao & Lyu, 2017). It also emerged that unique experience expectation, e-word of mouth and familiarity have a direct effect on repurchase intention (Mao & Lyu, 2017). According to Möhlmann's research (2015), in addition to familiarity, also utility, trust and cost savings contributes to enhancing the repurchase intention. He highlighted the fact that these drivers are serving users' self-benefit, also defined as self-gratification value by Tajeddini et al. (2022).

2.5. Online reputation and feedback systems

2.5.1 Definition of "reputation"

Joe Gebbia (2016), co-founder of Airbnb, claimed that sharing economy is a "commerce with a promise of human connection". Indeed, the act of sharing involves by itself the connection with other people and the human need for interaction is one of the drivers of the success of the sharing economy's exchange model (Abate & Viglia, 2019). In addition, even if thanks to the development of technology and the mediating role of the service enabler the direct human interaction is reduced, still most sharing platforms require the service providers to personally meet the customers (Newlands et al., 2019). For example, it is inevitable for Uber's drivers to meet the riders, and drivers are often expected to be of comfort and accommodate the riders (Newlands et al., 2019). Furthermore, the acts of sharing and exchanging with strangers also involve a huge level of risk (Mauri et al., 2018) and the so-called stranger danger bias, or homophily (Maier, 2016). Indeed, convince

people to host strangers to sleep in their bed when not at home, seems something impossible (Maier, 2016). In this context, reputation plays a fundamental role in reducing risk and driving both customers' and providers' decisions (Mauri et al., 2018). Simply said, reputation is what people think or state about another person, object or service's character or standing (ter Huurne et al., 2018). Extending the concept of reputation to the context of a community, such as a sharing economy's community, reputation is *"a summary of one's past actions within a specific community, presented in a manner that can help other community members make decisions with respect to whether and how to relate to that individual"* (Dellarocas, 2010). Reputation is something that exists within all kind of societies and communities, both small and large, both online and offline. Within small communities, reputation is directly created and spread through frequent offline word of mouth between the member of the community (Dellarocas, 2010). On the contrary, within large communities, a web-based central reputation system is needed to made reputation information available to all the community members (Dellarocas, 2010). In the virtual word, reputation is defined as the sum-up of the feedback that a person receives online from different sources (Maier, 2016).

Before moving on with the practical explanation of reputation systems in the sharing economy, it is necessary to make a distinction between product and personal reputation. Product reputation refers to information relative to the shared assets (e.g. houses in the case of Airbnb or cars in the case of Uber), thus product's physical and service characteristics that constitute the input to generate revenues in the sharing economy (Abate & Viglia, 2019). Indeed, research proved that product reputation has significant positive influence on revenues (Floyd et al., 2014). Examples of factors that constitute product reputation are positive or negative products reviews, the volume of products reviews, pictures of the offered products and complete descriptions of the products (Trainor, 2012). Professional product pictures and number of reviews were found to be the most important factors influencing product reputation (Abate & Viglia, 2019).
On the other side, personal reputation is the set of personal characteristics of the sellers, such as identification data and data relative to the functions they perform (Abate & Viglia, 2019). Factors having a particular influence on personal reputation in Airbnb are:

- the number of days since the seller's registration on the platform, since it indicates the seller's experience in the community
- the completeness of the seller's profile that includes all identification information and profile picture
- the "Superhost" badge that is a certification of the fact that the seller is satisfying certain personal reputation requirements (Abate & Viglia, 2019).

Personal reputation was found to reduce revenue inefficiency, by lowering uncertainties and favoring transactions (Abate & Viglia, 2019). As explained before, the human interactions are key in the sharing economy, thus personal reputation was proved to play a greater role in the success of transaction than product reputation (Mauri et al., 2018).

2.5.2 Reputation systems

In order to generate a reputation in the online world, three steps are fundamental: the creation of a profile, the presence of reviews and the interaction within the community (Maier, 2016). Creating a profile means exchange with other users' general personal information, a profile picture and links to social media, so that community members are no longer strangers, but become more familiar to each other (Maier, 2016). Encouraging reviews is the second step to generate reputation. It is proved that in Airbnb, hosts with at least one review are four time more likely to conclude a transaction, than hosts with no reviews (Maier, 2016). Finally, having interaction among community members give the possibility to exchange information, thus this is also fundamental for the creation of reputation. For instance, in order to foster users' interaction, Airbnb encourages through a guided online experience the guests to share more information about themselves with the hosts when booking a room/house via the Airbnb platform (Maier, 2016).

These reputation creation and management steps are part of what is called a reputation system. A reputation system is defined as a mechanism that enable to operationalize reputation, through the collection and aggregation of feedbacks coming from community's members regarding the behavior of other users during past transactions (ter Huurne et al., 2018). These feedbacks can take different forms, from a numerical 1 to 5 rating scale, to a long textual comment (Newlands et al., 2019). Reputation systems are essential components of a community platform, since they might determine the success

or failure of the platform itself. Indeed, reputation systems are what enable the formation of trust and honesty among the community's members, and thus encourage transactions among strangers (Dellarocas, 2010). However, poorly designed reputation systems might not be efficient in deterring fraud and in a later stage may require the platform to spend time and money to put in place additional monitoring mechanisms (Dellarocas, 2010). That is why for example nowadays the majority of the sharing economy platforms enable the users to leave a review or a rating just after a transaction happened and just to the users involved in that transaction (Dellarocas, 2010).

In order to define the reputation system design, it is firstly important to identify the metrics that are most important for the platform's users. For instance, if the system aims to support the customer to found out if a seller is honest, it could be useful to display the number of seller's completed transactions (Dellarocas, 2010). On the other side, it won't be useful to know which categories of products the seller sold in past transactions (Dellarocas, 2010). Based on this reflection it is then necessary to make a distinction between first-hand and second-hand reputation's information. First-end information are aggregation of data generated directly by the platform, explaining the behavior of the users on the platform itself (Sen, 2010). First-hand information includes for example, the number of reviews posted by a user. Second-hand information instead, represent feedback provided by others, such as reviews left by customers after having stayed in an apartment listed on Airbnb (Sen, 2010). Three main forms of information aggregation and display are used in community platforms including sharing economy platforms:

- **Raw activity statistics** are represented by first-hand information such as the number of transactions completed or the messages answer rate. Given the objectivity of the information, this is the most neutral method to sum up a user's reputation. It is in the hand of the other users to look at this information and draw own conclusions on the reputation of a person. The disadvantage lays in the fact that sometimes users are not familiar enough with the platform environment to understand and interpret these raw data (Dellarocas, 2010).
- **Scores and distinctions** such as 1-to-5 rating or star rating are easily readable by all users and don't need any particular interpretation or platform's knowledge (Dellarocas, 2010). However, it results to be very explicit in judging quality, thus it

is recommended to adopt this system in cases where a definition of "quality" is commonly agreed and understood by all community members (Dellarocas, 2010).

- **Leaderboards and user rankings** not only give information about a user, but also provide a dimension to compare one user with all the others (Dellarocas, 2010). An example of this reputation system's tool is the "Superhost" badge given to Airbnb's hosts who respect certain criteria or archive certain quality goals. The presence of a user's ranking or leaderboard might have to contrasting effects on the community behavior. On one side, by encouraging comparison, it could lead to a virtuous competition to look for a continuous improvement (Dellarocas, 2010). On the other side, the obsession to be in the top users might encourage manipulative and counter-productive actions (Dellarocas, 2010). In addition, users who cannot reach top positions might feel discouraged and take the decision to leave the community (Dellarocas, 2010).

Usually, a combination of the above-mentioned reputation system's tools is adopted on the sharing economy platforms.

2.5.3 The role of reputation in the sharing economy

Reputation has been always associated with the concept of trust. However nowadays web-based reputation systems have effects on a broad set of objectives (Dellarocas, 2010).

Build Trust. Given that trust is created through feedback sharing among people after an exchange (Mauri et al., 2018), building trust is the most obvious and commonly accepted role of reputation systems (Dellarocas, 2010). As seen in the previous chapters trust represent a main key factor for the success of sharing economy solutions, since exchange is made between non-professionals and strangers. In addition, between providers and consumers there is information asymmetry. Information asymmetry is defined as *"the situation where one party has more or better information than the other"* (ter Huurne et al., 2018). Thinking about an Airbnb accommodation, the host perfectly knows his/her apartment, including eventual problems such as for example poor wall insulation. However, he/she can decide to omit stating this problem when renting the apartment, putting it on the market at the same price as other apartments that have perfect

insulation. The guest thus doesn't know this defect of the apartment and pays the whole amounts. The presence of information asymmetry leads to an increase of the perceive risk and is usually what prevent people to take part to sharing economy (ter Huurne et al., 2018). The presence of an effective reputation system might help in building and maintaining trust (Basili & Rossi, 2020). Indeed, if in the case of the Airbnb apartment, the guest writes a negative review after his/her staying, highlighting the insulation problem, the future guests can access this information and ask for example to the host to have a discount.

Simplify decision making. Given that in the internet context users are overwhelmed by information and quality is uncertain, when having to take a decision, users find easier to adopt the most popular option. Reputation systems helps in defining what is popular by displaying a summary of the reputation of the available options. The better the feedback gave by the majority, the higher the popularity level and in turn, the higher the probability that the option is chosen again by other users. In particular, Mauri et al. (2018) found that personal reputation alone, explain 40% of popularity variation.

Promote Quality. Usually, within web-based communities, quality is concentrated among relatively few users (Dellarocas, 2010). In this scenario, reputation systems might help making emerge and reward these high-quality users (Dellarocas, 2010). If high quality is rewarded with high rating from other users, the high-quality option will be more popular and thus will be choose more often, guaranteeing more revenues. This mechanism might incentivize all the users to try increase quality, leading to an improved overall quality (Dellarocas, 2010). At the same time, reputation systems help in identifying poor quality solutions and keep control over the platform via metrics, gatekeeping and process control (Basili & Rossi, 2020). One of the most common market-oriented metrics to implement control are ratings (Basili & Rossi, 2020). Gatekeeping is the level of criteria the platform sets to define who can take part the activities on the platform and who cannot (Basili & Rossi, 2020). For example, defining a rating threshold below which users are excluded from the platform, is a form of gatekeeping (Basili & Rossi, 2020). Lastly, process control refers to the extent to which users are rewarded or punished after having meet predefined behavioral rules (e.g., being rewarded with

"Superhost" badge or being punished with suspension from the platform) (Basili & Rossi, 2020).

Facilitate Member Matching. Another fundamental role of reputation systems is the fact that enable providers and customers to be better matched, especially in situations where there is a wide range of various interests and tastes, and quality is characterized by subjectivity (Dellarocas, 2010). Having access to each other reputation, enable users to see how compatible they are and define if start a collaboration together or not (Dellarocas, 2010).

Sustain Loyalty. Given that, as previously mentioned, reputation is defined within a specific community, it might be a powerful tool to retain customers in that community (Dellarocas, 2010). Indeed, reputation takes time to be built and when users have good reputation on one platform, they will hardly exit it to start building a new one on another platform (Dellarocas, 2010). Considering the highly competitive environment, this element regarding loyalty is something that sharing economy platforms should keep in mind (Dellarocas, 2010).

2.5.4 Main focus of prior research on online reputation systems

Reputation systems, both in online commercial marketplaces and sharing economy, have been studied in the context of different disciplines such as economics, management, information systems, electronic commerce and computing (Basili & Rossi, 2020). Research in economics and management have focused on driving trustful feedback, biases in aggregating reviews, sellers' manipulation of information for strategic purpose and the effect of reputation on sales (Luca, 2016). Research thus studied the effects that the design of the reputation systems has on platform users (Basili & Rossi, 2020). In addition, the effect of reputation on trust towards service providers and service enablers, and the effect on sales and price have also been studied (e.g., Ba & Pavlouv, 2002). Finally, research have been conducted to study the behavior of customers in releasing reviews. In particular incentives to provide reviews, the reliability of the reviews and the truthfulness of the reputation information have been investigated (e.g., Li et al., 2016). Other problems investigated by researchers were the lack in feedback, tendency to avoid writing negative

reviews and increasing ratings, the non-sincere reviews, and the social influence and selection biases (e.g., de Langhe et al., 2016).

2.5.5 Research question

In the existing literature it is often discussed the influence of ratings and other reputation mechanisms in influencing the provider's behavior. In the previous sub-chapter was indeed discussed the role of reputation system in keeping under control the provider's behavior, by for instance excluding from the community providers who do not reach specific rating threshold. This unilateral vision of the reputation system is an influence coming from the traditional service setting, where "the client is always right" and customers are not expected to follow any particular behavioral norm (Newlands et al, 2019). However, in the sharing economy context *customers* become *guests*, *riders* and *peers* and this brings with it pro-social expectations in terms of consumer behavior and emotional labor. Emotional labor is defined as "*the process of regulating both feelings and expressions for organizational goals*" (Grandey, 2000). Indeed, customers in sharing economy are expected by both platforms and providers to be more pleasant and friendly than traditional services' consumers (Newlands et al, 2019). For this reason, in the sharing economy, customers are also subject to reviews and providers could reject customers due to poor customer's reputation (Glöss et al., 2016). This mechanism takes the name of bilateral reputation system, where both service providers and customers review each other (Proserpio et al., 2018). This particularity implies that, contrary to what happen in the traditional service setting, bad consumer behavior creates consequences that could impact future use of a product or service (Newlands et al, 2019). Two studies started analyzing the impact of bilateral rating systems on customers (i.e. Newlands et al., 2019; Proserpio et al., 2018).

According to Newlands et al. (2019), ratings not just have an influence on the emotions of providers but serves also as an emotional conditional mechanism for customers. Indeed, from the customer perspective, past negative rating experiences lead more likely to suppressive forms of emotional labor (Newlands et al., 2019). In addition, Newlands et al. (2019) found that the subtle obligation to display high ratings to be accepted by providers

and the expectation to act in a socially desirable way, generate pressure and stress in the consumers and might discourage participation.

Furthermore, Proserpio et al. (2018) proved that bilateral reputation systems are subject to reciprocity that is when *"positive (negative) feedback from one party is likely to be "reciprocated" with positive (negative) feedback from the other party"*. This means for example that the negative review received from a provider is reflected due to reciprocity in a negative review of the customer to the service provided.

These studies lay the foundation for a more in-depth analysis of the customer reputation topic that I aim to expand with this thesis by analyzing in particular: *What is the impact of customers' personal reputation on customer loyalty in the sharing economy?*

3. Exploratory research

3.1 Methodology

In order to produce more robust results, for this thesis it was adopted a multimethod approach. Indeed, by combining different research methods, a multimethod approach enables to overcome weaknesses and limitations of each method (Brewer & Hunter, 1989). In particular, both an exploratory and confirmatory approach were adopted.

As a first step, given the limited knowledge regarding the topic of customers' reputation and loyalty, an exploratory research was conducted. It was chosen to adopt an observational research design to collect insight into the topic via a series of interview with people who had already had a previous experience in using sharing economy platforms as customers. A questionnaire was created (Annex 2) and used to guide the interviews, following the general guidelines described by Knight (2013). After having asked for the consent to the interviewee, all the interviews were recorded and then transcribed (Annex 3). The data collected through the interviews were analyzed following a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), that means the data were examined, synthetized into simple codes (Annex 4), grouped according to common themes (Annex 5), logically connected (Figure 1), and presented in an ordered way. On the basis of the result of the observational research and the limited literature available, the hypotheses were then developed.

3.2 Descriptive analysis

A total of 12 interviews were conducted (Annex 3). The only prerequisite necessary to take part to the interview, was to have a precedent experience with sharing economy services. The interviewees preferred to stay anonymous, but some general demographic data were collected. Six interviewees recognized themselves as male and six as female. The age ranged between 23 and 55, with the majority of the interviewees in the range 25-29 years old. Nine of the interviewees were Italians, while the remaining three were Romanian, Austrian and German.

3.3 Thematic analysis

After the synthesis (Annex 4) and the definition of a first thematic maps (Annex 5) (Braun & Clarke, 2006), three main themes emerged from the interviews: confusion regarding the concept of sharing economy, the benefits and consequent repurchase intention, and the scarce influence and possible improvements for the reviews to customers (Figure 1).

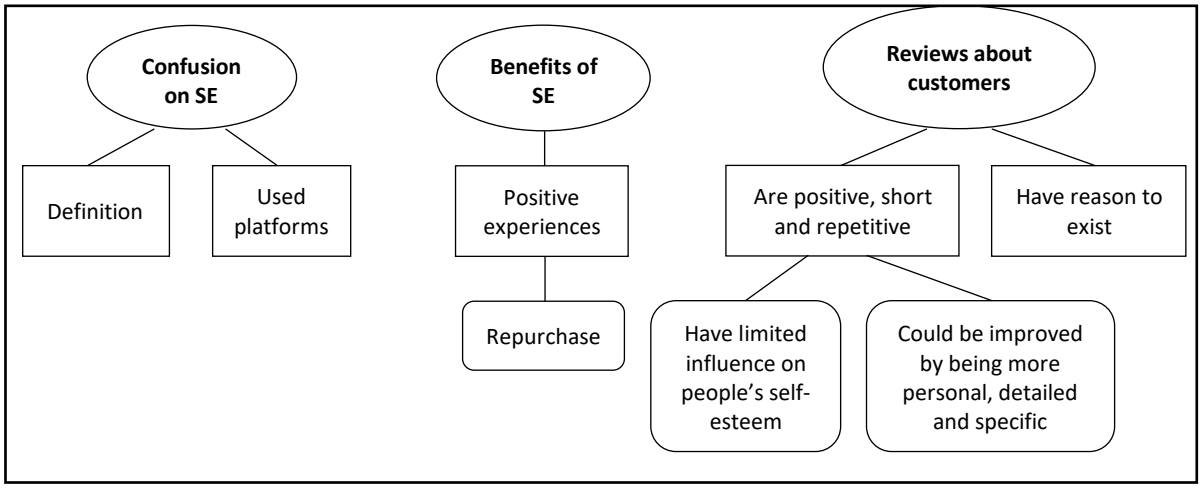


Figure 1. Final thematic map, showing three main themes.

Even if all the interviewees had a previous experience using sharing economy platforms, just half of them could recognize the term sharing economy and describe it (I3, I4, I6, I8, I11, I12). This could be caused by the fact that the majority of the interviewees were not English mother tongue speakers and in their countries of residency, the English term sharing economy is not commonly used. From the interviews it emerged that the most used sharing economy platform is Airbnb, used by nine of the interviewees, followed by Uber and BlaBlaCar, both used by four of the interviewees (I2, I3, I4, I5, I6, I7, I8, I10, I11).

During the interviews, solutions such as Enjoy (i.e. a car sharing platform), bike sharing companies and sharing via WhatsApp groups were mentioned by the interviewees as sharing economy examples (e.g., I6 and I7). In the definition of sharing economy given at Chapter 2.1. these solutions, where not considered part of the sharing economy. This demonstrates the confusion and different interpretations of the users relative to the term sharing economy.

The main drivers for users to use and reuse sharing economy services are the flexibility and autonomy these services guarantee to the customers (e.g., I7 and I10 mentioned that booking an apartment leave the guests more flexible to organize their day than staying at the hotel with reception hours and precise breakfast times), the wide range of offers (e.g., I11 stated that with BlaBlaCar it is possible to ride also to destinations that are not covered by public transports), the convenient price (e.g., I2 said that usually sharing solutions are cheaper than standard solutions) and the technological advancement of the sharing platforms that guarantee an easy and efficient user experience (e.g., I6 told that by using Uber it is possible to see in advance the price range asked for the ride and the live location of the car that is coming to pick you). All these benefits lead to positive experiences and thus to a willingness of the consumers to use these services again. Regarding the customer reputation, all the interviewees agree on the usefulness of reviews to the customers by the providers. Interviewees mentioned the fact that reviews are incentives for customers to behave correctly and thus lead to an improved overall service quality for all the other customers (e.g., I3). In addition, a good behavior of the customers, also simplify the job for service providers who could focus on other aspects of the service. For example, if a rider keeps the car clean, the driver doesn't need to spend time in cleaning after the car, thus he/she could immediately take another ride and the next rider could enjoy a fast and clean ride (I7). Finally, the reviews serve for customers as an instrument to understand eventual personal errors and operate a self-improvement (I4, I6, I7).

The interviewees stated that they received just positive reviews by service providers after having used a sharing economy services. The interviewees told that as an immediate reaction the positive comments generate positive feelings. In particular they mentioned

that positive feedbacks both increase personal satisfaction for their "good job" as customers (I3, I7, I10) and their ego since the comments are a prove that they are appreciated by the others (I1, I2, I5). However, it was also mentioned that in the majority of the cases the reviews are short general comments, so similar to each other to seems pre-set responses (e.g., I10). The interviewees recognized that these elements decrease the influence that positive comments have on their feelings, leading sometimes to indifference towards the reviews (I9, I10). It thus emerged from the interviews that more in-depth (e.g., detailed) and personal (e.g., mentioning personal quality of the customers) positive reviews would be highly appreciated and would have a higher impact on the positive feelings of the customers and on the whole sharing experience (i1, I2, I3, I4, I5, I6, I7, I10). On the other side, regarding negative reviews, they would be better welcomed if they were objective, thus explaining in the specific the problems leading to the negative review (I12).

4. Hypotheses

As seen in the literature review, existing literature prove that, ratings on customers have an emotional impact on the latter and in particular, negative ratings leads customers to suppressive forms of emotional labor (Newlands et al., 2019). In addition, Proserpio et al. (2018) found that reciprocity rule applies to bilateral reputation systems, so that *"positive (negative) feedback from one party is likely to be "reciprocated" with positive (negative) feedback from the other party"*. Regarding positive review, it is proved that positive feedback, stimulates enjoyment, motivation and satisfaction (Viciana et al., 2007; Jaworski & Kohli, 1991), that in turn influence loyalty (Gracia et al., 2011; Akhmedova et al., 2020). Regarding loyalty in the sharing economy, according to Akhmedova et al. (2020), customers loyalty is driven by positive interactions between customer and service provider, where provider acts in the customer's best interest. Given that negative feedbacks lead to a worst customer reputation, when this happen, it is plausible to assume that customer loyalty decrease, while increase when the feedbacks are positive and contribute to build a good customer reputation. Literature thus supports the idea that the intention to reuse a service or product is influenced by the positive or negative emotions aroused by positive or negative interaction or feedback received by the providers. However, what interestingly emerged from the interviews is that personal satisfaction for

the good job done and appreciation by the others are the major drivers leading to the development of positive emotions after having received a feedback. These drivers together can be summed up in self-esteem that according to You et al. (2020) is gained "*through external sources, such as others' respect, admiration, and acceptance*". From other research it emerged that higher self-esteem given by a positive-toned answer, leads to higher satisfaction and recommendation intention (You et al., 2020). In addition, Kim (2019) found that personal recognition provides customers with self-esteem, that in turn positively impact trust and satisfaction. As explained in the literature review of this thesis, trust and satisfaction are two main antecedents of loyalty. As a first hypothesis it is thus possible to conclude that:

H1: the positive (negative) impact of positive (negative) feedback on customers' loyalty is mediated by self-esteem.

In addition, according to the interviewees, it emerged that the presence of some factors could decrease or increase the impact that positive or negative feedbacks have on self-esteem. Indeed, interviewees agreed on the fact that detailed description of the positive or negative behavior of the guest could respectively increase the positive effect or decrease the negative effect on the emotions and thus on self-esteem. This is also supported by literature that confirms that in order to provide constructive feedback without causing pain to the receiver, it is essential to be precise in describing the behavior that were good or not (Kaprielian & Gradison, 1998). In the case of reputation systems, the tool available to describe the behavior of a person is the written review. By assuming that the length of the review corresponds to a more in-depth feedback, the second hypothesis that will be tested with the quantitative experimental research is:

H2: the impact of positive (negative) feedback on self-esteem is positively (negatively) moderated by the length of the written review.

The proposed relationship model is thus as follow:

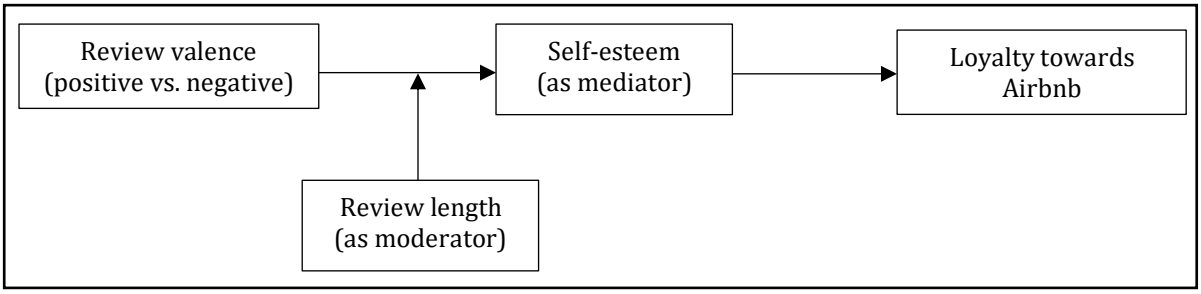


Figure 2: model explaining the relationship between review valance and intention to use Airbnb again.

5. Confirmatory research

5.1 Methodology

In the second part of the research, a confirmatory research was conducted based on the developed hypotheses. In the confirmatory research often an experimental research design is adopted in order to test the hypotheses (Jaeger & Halliday, 1998). Indeed, in the experimental research design the researcher have control over the variables and deliberately manipulate the context to see the reaction of individuals taking part to the experiment and identifying possible cause and effect relationships (Khanna, 2020). For the purpose of this specific research four different scenarios were created (Figure 3) and described in four different surveys. Each interviewee was randomly exposed to one of the four scenarios. Each scenario was describing a situation in which the interviewee was exposed to a different review from a host, after having spent two nights in an apartment via Airbnb as guest.

		Review valence	
		Positive	Negative
Review length	Short	Positive and short review	Negative and short review
	Long	Positive and long review	Negative and long review

Figure 3: Synthesis table of the four scenarios identified to test the hypothesis.

In particular, the experiment aimed to study the variation of a dependent variable (i.e., customers' loyalty to Airbnb) in relation to three independent variables (i.e., review valence, self-esteem as mediator and review length as moderator). To determine self-esteem, it was used a scale adapted from You et al. (2020): "The way the host wrote down the review about me, made me feel I'm a person of worth/take a positive attitude toward myself/believe I am a valuable person". As analyzed in the literature review of this thesis, loyalty is a complex phenomenon, thus in order to produce more precise and easily interpretable results loyalty was decomposed in word of mouth and repurchase intention.

The scale used for the word of mouth about the platform (i.e., Airbnb) was adapted from Akhmedova et al. (2020): "I will encourage friends and relatives to use Airbnb/say positive things about Airbnb to other people" and I will encourage friends and relatives to use this host/say positive things about this host to other people". The scale to measure repurchase intention was adapted from Van Vaerenbergh et al (2013): "In the future, I will continue using Airbnb", "As long as Airbnb delivers its current services, I will not switch to another service provider" and "In the near future, I will NOT use Airbnb any longer". For each statement, the interviewee was asked to give a rating from 1 to 7 where 1 was "Strongly disagree" and 7 was "Strongly agree". To enlarge the research scope, also loyalty towards the service providers (i.e., the hosts) was measured through the survey. However, in the sharing economy usually customers do not repurchase from the same service provider (e.g., when travelling, usually people visit different places, thus they will find different Airbnb hosts. In addition, given the high number of Airbnb users, even when travelling to the same place it is possible that the solution used before is full or not available for the selected dates). As a consequence, in the case of loyalty towards the service provider, just the word of mouth was measured, by using the same scale by Akhmedova et al. (2020) used for the platform loyalty. After the collection of the reactions of the survey's participants a manipulation check was made to assess the validity and credibility of the experiment. First the reviews' perception was tested by asking the participants to choose a number from 1 to 7 to state if the reviews they received were negative (1) or positive (7) and short (1) or long (7). Second, following a scale taken from Van Vaerenbergh et al (2013) the scenario realism was assessed: "This scenario seems realistic" and "What happens in this scenario could also happen in real life". The respondents were asked to use a 7-point Likert scale to state their agreement or disagreement with the statements.

The survey was created on Qualtrics.com in order to be able to randomly assign one of the four scenarios to different interviewees. Thanks to the program G*Power it was possible to compute the sample size necessary to have a good statistical power of the experiment. It was found that to have a 95% of statistical power it was necessary to collect 206 survey answers. In total, 243 surveys were collected of which 220 were considered valid. The data cleaning was made using Excel, while for the analysis JAMOVI was used.

5.2 Descriptive analysis

For the experimental research, 23 of the 243 survey's answers collected were excluded from the data analysis, since they had missing data. The majority of the respondents identified themselves as female (58%), followed by male (38%). One participant declared to be part of the group "Non-binary/third gender", while the remaining 3% preferred not to state their gender. A large majority (i.e., 70.5%) of the respondents were Italians, 5.9% from Switzerland and 5.5% from the United Kingdom. The other nationalities of the respondents and the corresponding numbers, as well as the complete results of this descriptive analysis can be consulted at the end of the thesis at *Annex 6*. The age of the respondents raged between 18 and 80 with an average age of 31.2 and a concentration of the respondents between the age of 22 and 32. A large majority (91.4%) of the survey's participants had a previous knowledge of the sharing economy platform Airbnb and 62% of them had already use it. Of this latter group of respondents, 86% had a positive experience using Airbnb (between "rather good" and "very good"), but just a slight majority (54.4%) had left a review after having used the service. By conducting an ANCOVA test (Annex 7) and comparing the results with the two-way ANOVA tests at *Annex 8*, it was found that the variables "How is your overall experience with Airbnb?" and "Have you ever left a review yourself when using Airbnb?" - used as covariates - didn't have a role in influencing the relationship between the independent variables "review length" and "review valence" and the dependent variables representing loyalty and self-esteem. This means that the previous experience of the respondents with Airbnb didn't influence the results of the experiment.

5.3 Manipulation check

Given the experimental design of this research, a manipulation check was conducted to control the effectiveness of the manipulation made via the four different reviews scenarios (i.e., short and positive review, short and negative review, long and positive review, and long and negative review) (Hoewe, 2017). In the survey, after the end of the experiment, the participants were asked to answer two questions, asking them to describe the length and the valence of the reviews they received in the experiment. The questions were "indicated a number from negative (1) to positive (7)" and "indicate a number from short (1) to long (7)". For both questions it was used a 7-pont Likert scale.

An ANOVA test was used for the manipulation check (Annex 9). From the results it emerged that both for the review valence and review length, the variance in the manipulation check questions between "positive or negative" and "short or long" was significant ($p < .001$). The manipulation is thus verified. However, as shown both by the descriptive tables (Annex 9) and plots (Figure 4), the variance is higher in the case of review length. Indeed, for negative reviews, the average answer in the manipulation check question was 2.70, that is a value between "negative" and "rather negative". At the same time, for positive reviews the average answer was 5.68 that is a high value close to "positive".

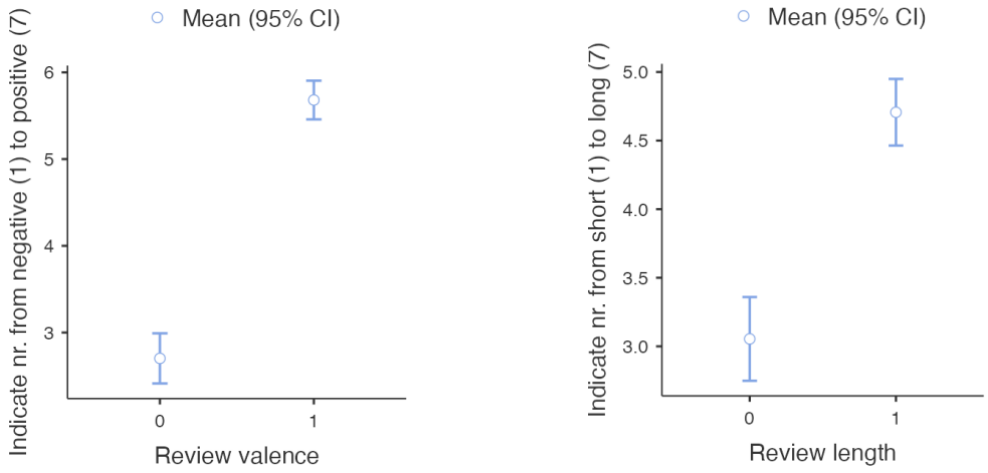


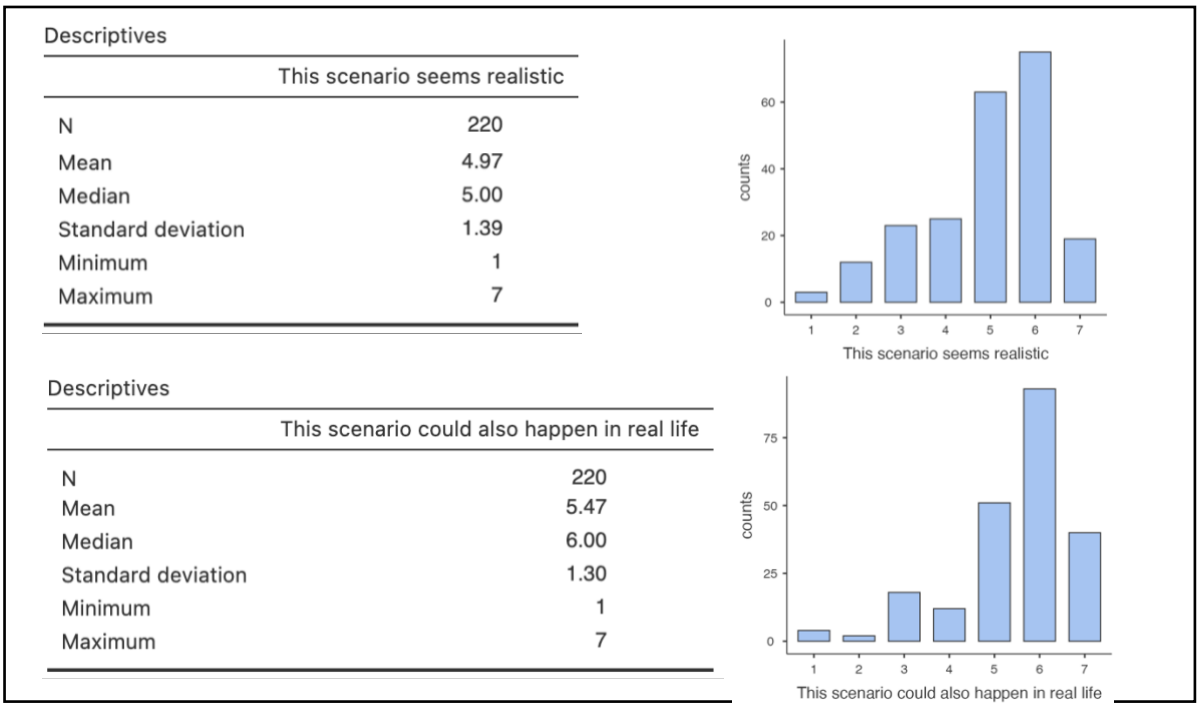
Figure 4: Descriptive plots showing the variance caused by the independent variables "review valence" and "review length" on the manipulation check variables.

On the other side, talking about the review length, it seems that the distinction between short and long was not so clear for the participants. Indeed, for people receiving short reviews, the average answer to the manipulation check was 3.05 that is "rather short" and the average answer for people receiving long reviews was 4.71 that is between "neither long, nor short" and "rather long". To sum up, even if in the manipulation check a variance between positive and negative reviews, and long and short reviews is significant, participants could better distinguish and remember if their reviews were positive or negative than if the reviews were long or short.

5.4 Scenario realism assessment

Two questions were asked to the participants to assess the realism of the scenario. It was asked them to state if (1) the scenario seemed realistic and if (2) what happened in the

scenario could also happen in real life. The participants were asked to answer the questions by expressing their agreement or disagreement on a 7-point Likert scale, were 1 was “strongly disagree” and 7 was “strongly agree”. The data (Figure 5) show that the majority of the answers of the participants were positive, with 34% of the respondents in the first question and 42% of the respondents in the second question choosing “agree” (Annex 10). In addition, also the averages of the answers are positive with values between “rather agree” and “agree”.



Descriptives

	This scenario seems realistic
N	220
Mean	4.97
Median	5.00
Standard deviation	1.39
Minimum	1
Maximum	7

Descriptives

	This scenario could also happen in real life
N	220
Mean	5.47
Median	6.00
Standard deviation	1.30
Minimum	1
Maximum	7

Figure 5: Descriptive analysis of the two questions relative to the scenario realism assessment.

A one-way ANOVA (Figure 6) and crossed descriptive analyses (Annex 11) were made also to check if there was a significant difference between the four scenarios and the corresponding answers to the scenario realism questions. A Fisher’s one-way ANOVA was used given the homoscedasticity of variances of the variables (Annex 12). The results reveal no significant variance in the response to the scenario realism questions ($p>.05$). This means that for the participants, all the four scenarios were realistic, and the scenario received didn’t significantly influence their perception of the realism of the situation they were asked to imagine them-selves in. However, it is interesting to notice that for both questions, people receiving the scenarios with positive reviews (i.e., scenario 1 and 3) gave on average a higher score to the questions (i.e., agreed more to the questions). This

could be link to the fact that usually on Airbnb, it is more common to read and receive positive reviews, than negative ones (Bridges & Vásquez, 2018).

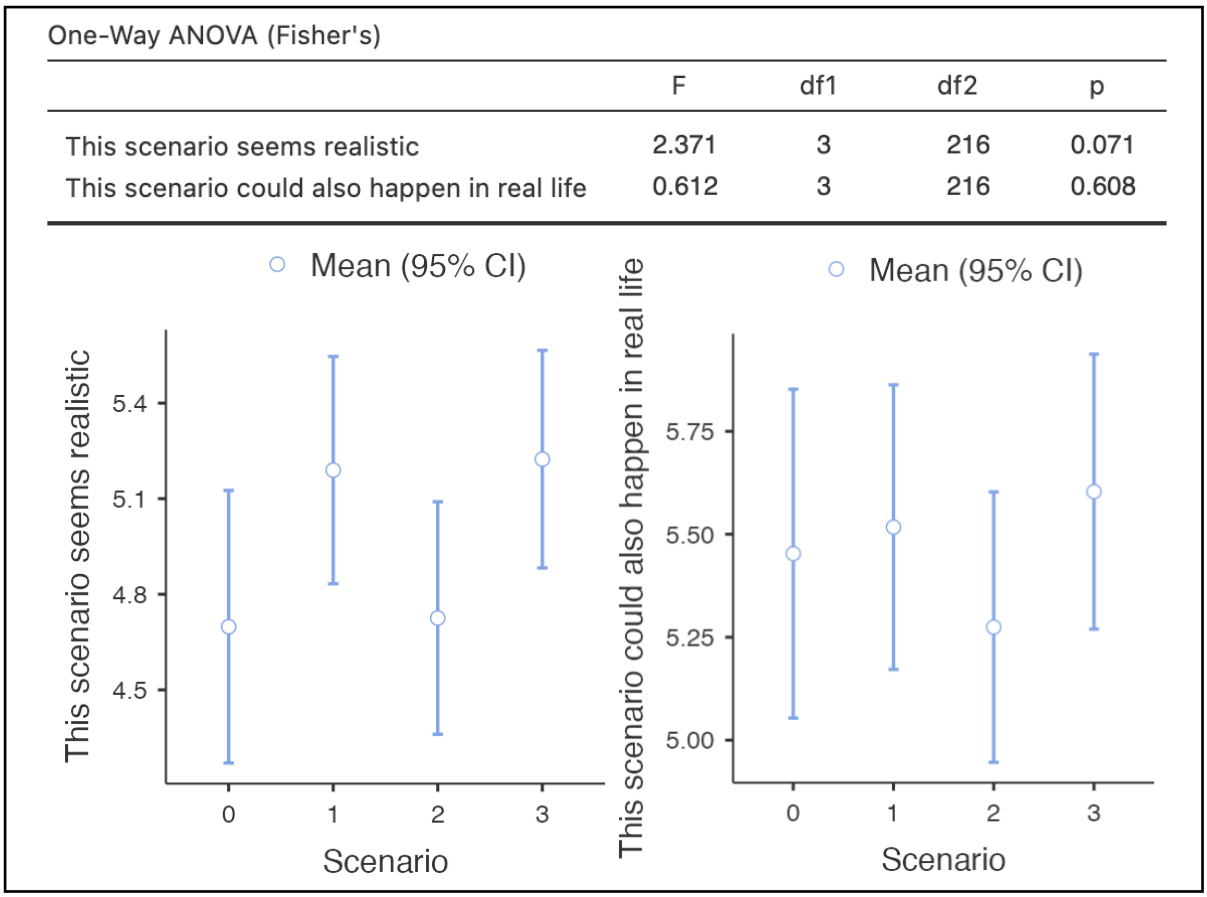


Figure 6: One-way ANOVA of the independent variable "scenario" and the dependent variables (i.e., the scenario realism questions). The descriptive plots of the variance are also shown.

5.5 Internal consistency of the scales

Before proceeding with the data analysis, the internal validity of the self-esteem, repurchase intention and word of mouth's scales was tested by computing the Cronbach's Alpha (Marshall, n.d.). The following table sums up the results:

Scale Reliability Statistics

	WOM Airbnb	Repurchase Airbnb	Self-esteem	WOM host
Cronbach's α	0,870	0,667	0,919	0,971
		0,713		

Table 4: Results of Cronbach's Alpha that test the internal consistency of the four scales used.

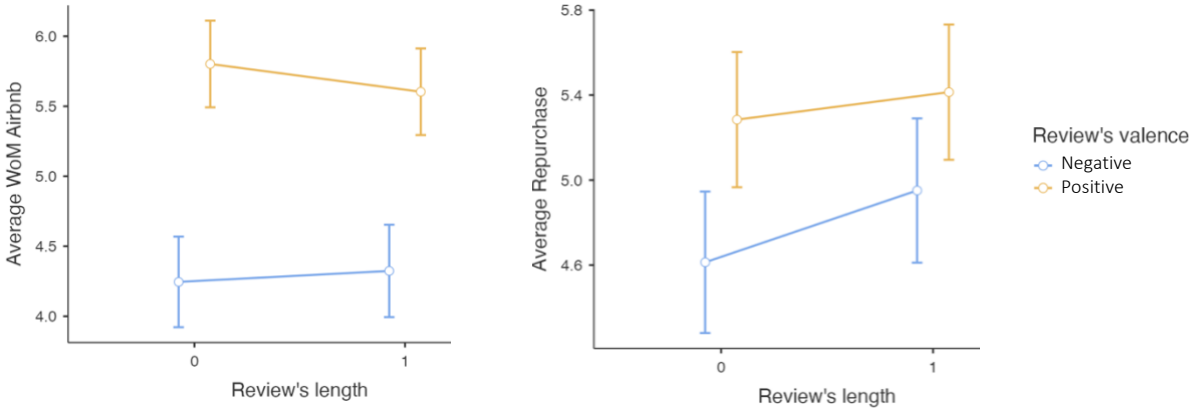
All the scales except for the repurchase intention on Airbnb, result to have a Cronbach's Alpha higher than 0.70, thus the internal consistency of these scales is verified. For the repurchase intention, the Cronbach's Alpha computed on the three questions of the scale (i.e., "In the future, I will continue using Airbnb", "As long as Airbnb delivers its current services, I will not switch to another service provider" and "In the near future, I will NOT use Airbnb any longer") is 0.667. By eliminating the last question (i.e., "In the near future, I will NOT use Airbnb any longer") from the calculation, the Cronbach's Alpha falls within the parameters with a value of 0.713. Given that the eliminated question had to be read as a reverse question, it is possible to assume that this could have caused confusion to the respondents in the understanding and consequent answer to the question. Consequently, for the following analysis, this question was deleted from the scale for the calculation of the Airbnb's repurchase intention.

5.6 Two-way ANOVA

As a next step, a two-way ANOVA was conducted to identify how the mean of continuous dependent variables change according to two independent variables and their combination (Annex 8). The dependent variables tested are word of mouth regarding Airbnb, Airbnb's repurchase intention, self-esteem and word of mouth regarding the host. The two independent variables are review length (short vs. long) and review valence (positive vs. negative). Four two-way ANOVA tests were conducted: one for each dependent variable (Annex 8). For all the four dependent variables, only the review valence was found to have a significant impact on the mean difference of the dependent variables, by having a p-value lower than 0.05 (i.e., $p<.001$). In particular, from the partial eta squared was possible to retrieve that the review valence accounted for 46.7% of the variance in the word of mouth relative to hosts, 32.4% of the variance in self-esteem, 26.3% of the variance in the word of mouth relative to Airbnb and just 5.1% of the variance in Airbnb's repurchase intention. Among the four dependent variables, the review length was found to have a greater influence on the repurchase intention, however the p-value was not low enough to certify a significant influence. The review length was thus excluded from being a direct influencer of the variance across means of the dependent variables.

A post-hoc test was used to deepen the analysis (Annex 8). How the marginal means plots show (Figure 7), the variation in the means (averages) is explained by the review valence, where positive reviews have a larger impact on the means difference. In the case of repurchase intention, the review length has a certain influence that however is not significant according to data (p>.05).

It is interesting also to have a closer look closer at the behavior of the variables "word of mouth Airbnb" and "word of mouth hosts" for positive and negative reviews (Figure 7). From the plots and tables it is possible to see that for positive reviews, "word of mouth Airbnb" and "word of mouth hosts" have similar positive levels (i.e., both have an average between 5.5 and 6 out of 7). However, for negative reviews the average word of mouth regarding the hosts (i.e., circa 2.85) is much lower than the average word of mouth relative to Airbnb (i.e., circa 4.3).

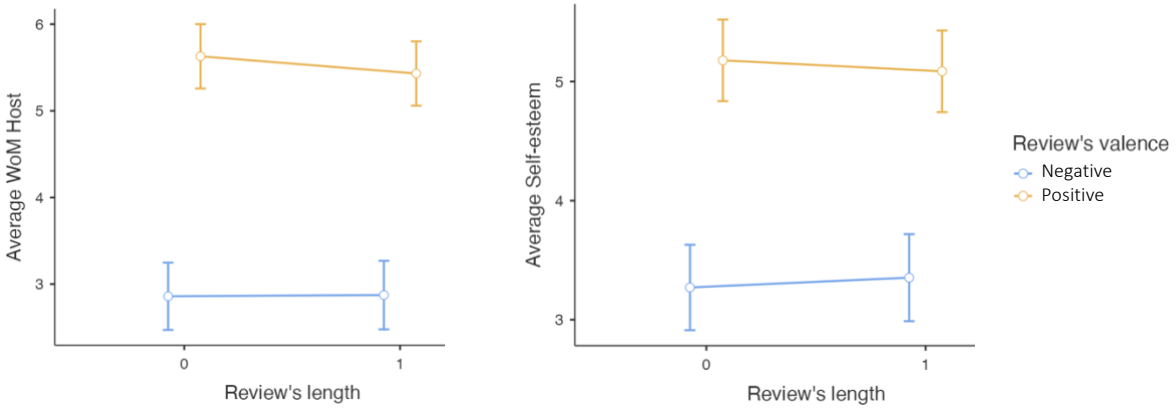


Estimated Marginal Means - Review length * Review valence

Review valence	Review length	Mean	SE
0	0	4.25	0.164
	1	4.32	0.167
1	0	5.80	0.157
	1	5.60	0.157

Estimated Marginal Means - Review length * Review valence

Review valence	Review length	Mean	SE
0	0	4.61	0.169
	1	4.95	0.172
1	0	5.28	0.161
	1	5.41	0.161



Estimated Marginal Means - Review length * Review valence

Review valence	Review length	Mean	SE
0	0	2.86	0.197
	1	2.87	0.201
1	0	5.63	0.188
	1	5.43	0.188

Estimated Marginal Means - Review length * Review valence

Review valence	Review length	Mean	SE
0	0	3.27	0.182
	1	3.35	0.185
1	0	5.18	0.174
	1	5.09	0.174

Figure 7: Marginal means plots and tables of the combination "Review length*Review valence".

From the ANOVA it is thus possible to conclude that both loyalty scales and self-esteem are influenced by the valence of the reviews and in particular the loyalty's and self-esteem's levels are higher with positive reviews. However, it is to notice that negative reviews have a larger negative effect on word of mouth relative to the hosts, than the word of mouth relative to Airbnb.

5.7 Moderated mediation

However, in the proposed model (Figure 2) it was hypothesized the presence of both a mediator and a moderator. In particular, the first hypothesis states that self-esteem mediates the relationship between review valence and customer loyalty, while the second hypothesis was relative to the moderating role of review length between review valence and self-esteem. A mediating variable explains the process that connects two variables (Bhandari, 2021). On the other side, a moderating variable determines the direction and strength of the related variables (Bhandari, 2021).

5.7.1 Mediation

Regarding the mediation variables self-esteem, it is possible to see from Table 5 that for all the three dependent variables (i.e., word of mouth of Airbnb, Airbnb's repurchase

intention and word of mouth relative to the host), the mediating effect of self-esteem was significant.

Indirect and Total Effects

Type	Effect	Estimate	SE	95% C.I. (a) Lower	95% C.I. (a) Upper	β	z	p
Indirect	Review's valence1 ⇒ Average Self-esteem ⇒ Average WoM Airbnb	0.752	0.123	0.511	0.993	0.272	6.12	<.001
Direct	Review's valence1 ⇒ Average WoM Airbnb	0.667	0.173	0.327	1.006	0.241	3.84	<.001
Total	Review's valence1 ⇒ Average WoM Airbnb	1.419	0.161	1.104	1.734	0.513	8.83	<.001

Indirect and Total Effects

Type	Effect	Estimate	SE	95% C.I. (a) Lower	95% C.I. (a) Upper	β	z	p
Indirect	Review's valence1 ⇒ Average Self-esteem ⇒ Average Repurchase	0.695	0.125	0.451	0.939	0.2760	5.583	<.001
Direct	Review's valence1 ⇒ Average Repurchase	–0.125	0.184	–0.485	0.235	–0.0496	–0.680	0.496
Total	Review's valence1 ⇒ Average Repurchase	0.570	0.166	0.245	0.895	0.2264	3.440	<.001

Indirect and Total Effects

Type	Effect	Estimate	SE	95% C.I. (a) Lower	95% C.I. (a) Upper	β	z	p
Indirect	Review's valence1 ⇒ Average Self-esteem ⇒ Average WoM Host	1.12	0.155	0.821	1.43	0.288	7.27	<.001
Direct	Review's valence1 ⇒ Average WoM Host	1.54	0.192	1.164	1.92	0.395	8.02	<.001
Total	Review's valence1 ⇒ Average WoM Host	2.66	0.193	2.287	3.04	0.683	13.83	<.001

Table 5: Indirect and direct relationship between review valence and loyalty (i.e., word of mouth Airbnb, repurchase intention Airbnb and word of mouth host) showing the mediating role of self-esteem.

Indeed, the indirect relationship have a p-value lower than 0.05. However, from the mediating analysis, differences emerged in terms of direct effect. In the cases of word of mouth both for Airbnb and hosts, the results revealed that the total effect of review valence on the dependent variables is significant, as well as the direct and indirect effects ($p < 0.5$). This means that the significant total effect between the independent and dependent variables is partially explained by the mediating role of self-esteem (53% for word of mouth of Airbnb and 42.2% for word of mouth of hosts) (Annex 13). On the other side, in the case of repurchase intention, the total effect is significant ($\beta = .226$, $p < .05$) as well as the indirect effect ($\beta = .276$, $p < .05$). However, the direct effect, is not significant ($\beta = -.050$, $p > .05$). This shows that the relationship between review valence and Airbnb's repurchase intention is fully mediated by self-esteem (i.e., complete mediation).

Consequently, the model with the mediating variable "self-esteem" could be represented as follow (Figure 8):

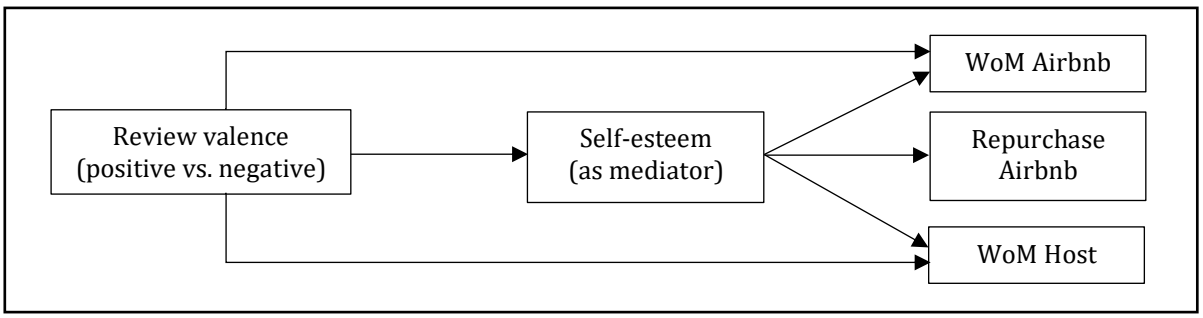


Figure 8: "Review valence - loyalty" model showing the mediating role of self-esteem.

The first hypothesis that stated "*the positive (negative) impact of positive (negative) feedback on customers' loyalty is mediated by self-esteem*" is thus partially rejected given that word of mouth is just partially mediated by self-esteem and a complete mediation is not supported by data.

5.7.2 Moderation

Regarding the moderating variable "review length", the data emerging from the moderated mediating model of JAMOVI (Table 6) show that review length has no significant moderating role in the mediated relationship "Review valence - self-esteem – Airbnb's repurchase" ($p > 0.05$). On the other side the moderation is significant in the relationships "Self-esteem – word of mouth Airbnb" and "Self-esteem – word of mouth host". This means that the combination of the mediator (i.e., self-esteem) and moderator (i.e., review length) is significant in predicting the dependents variables (i.e., word of mouth Airbnb and word of mouth hosts).

Moderation effects (interactions)

Moderator	Interaction	Estimate	SE	Lower	Upper	β	z	p
	`Review valence1`:`Review length1` ⇒ Average Self-esteem	–0.174	0.354	–0.869	0.5203	–0.0273	–0.492	0.623
	`Average Self-esteem`:`Review length1` ⇒ Average WoM Airbnb	–0.235	0.107	–0.444	–0.0246	–0.3870	–2.189	0.029
	`Review valence1`:`Review length1` ⇒ Average WoM Airbnb	0.222	0.343	–0.450	0.8936	0.0402	0.648	0.517

Moderation effects (interactions)

Moderator	Interaction	Estimate	SE	Lower	Upper	β	z	p
	`Review valence1`:`Review length1` ⇒ Average Self-esteem	–0.1745	0.354	–0.869	0.520	–0.0273	–0.492	0.623
	`Average Self-esteem`:`Review length1` ⇒ Average Repurchase	–0.0175	0.114	–0.241	0.206	–0.0318	–0.154	0.878
	`Review valence1`:`Review length1` ⇒ Average Repurchase	–0.1101	0.365	–0.826	0.606	–0.0219	–0.302	0.763

Moderation effects (interactions)

Moderator	Interaction	Estimate	SE	Lower	Upper	β	z	p
	`Review valence1`:`Review length1` ⇒ Average Self-esteem	–0.174	0.354	–0.869	0.5203	–0.0273	–0.492	0.623
	`Average Self-esteem`:`Review length1` ⇒ Average WoM Host	–0.302	0.118	–0.534	–0.0696	–0.3531	–2.548	0.011
	`Review valence1`:`Review length1` ⇒ Average WoM Host	0.444	0.379	–0.298	1.1860	0.0570	1.173	0.241

Table 6: Moderating role of review length in the mediated relationship "Review valence - self-esteem - loyalty".

After having found a significant moderating interaction, it is interesting to study how the mediated effects change, by changing the levels of the moderation. The conditional mediation table (Table 7) shows how the mediated effects look at the "mean", "mean + Standard Deviation" and "mean – Standard Deviation" levels.

Conditional Mediation

Moderator levels					95% C.I. (a)				
Review length	Type	Effect	Estimate	SE	Lower	Upper	β	z	p
Average	Indirect	Review valence1 ⇒ Average Self-esteem ⇒ Average WoM Airbnb	0.747	0.122	0.509	0.985	0.270	6.14	<.001
Average	Direct	Review valence1 ⇒ Average WoM Airbnb	0.661	0.171	0.325	0.997	0.239	3.86	<.001
Average	Total	Review valence1 ⇒ Average WoM Airbnb	1.418	0.160	1.104	1.732	0.512	8.85	<.001
0	Indirect	Review valence1 ⇒ Average Self-esteem ⇒ Average WoM Airbnb	1.006	0.167	0.680	1.333	0.345	6.04	<.001
0	Direct	Review valence1 ⇒ Average WoM Airbnb	0.550	0.223	0.113	0.987	0.189	2.47	0.014
0	Total	Review valence1 ⇒ Average WoM Airbnb	1.556	0.226	1.114	1.999	0.562	6.90	<.001
1	Indirect	Review valence1 ⇒ Average Self-esteem ⇒ Average WoM Airbnb	0.508	0.119	0.275	0.740	0.189	4.28	<.001
1	Direct	Review valence1 ⇒ Average WoM Airbnb	0.772	0.221	0.340	1.204	0.288	3.50	<.001
1	Total	Review valence1 ⇒ Average WoM Airbnb	1.280	0.228	0.833	1.727	0.462	5.62	<.001

Conditional Mediation

Moderator levels					95% C.I. (a)				
Review length	Type	Effect	Estimate	SE	Lower	Upper	β	z	p
Average	Indirect	Review valence1 ⇒ Average Self-esteem ⇒ Average WoM Host	1.119	0.153	0.819	1.42	0.287	7.30	<.001
Average	Direct	Review valence1 ⇒ Average WoM Host	1.532	0.189	1.161	1.90	0.393	8.10	<.001
Average	Total	Review valence1 ⇒ Average WoM Host	2.665	0.192	2.287	3.04	0.683	13.85	<.001
0	Indirect	Review valence1 ⇒ Average Self-esteem ⇒ Average WoM Host	1.460	0.222	1.026	1.90	0.356	6.58	<.001
0	Direct	Review valence1 ⇒ Average WoM Host	1.310	0.246	0.828	1.79	0.320	5.32	<.001
0	Total	Review valence1 ⇒ Average WoM Host	2.771	0.271	2.240	3.30	0.710	10.23	<.001
1	Indirect	Review valence1 ⇒ Average Self-esteem ⇒ Average WoM Host	0.804	0.156	0.499	1.11	0.213	5.17	<.001
1	Direct	Review valence1 ⇒ Average WoM Host	1.754	0.244	1.277	2.23	0.465	7.20	<.001
1	Total	Review valence1 ⇒ Average WoM Host	2.558	0.274	2.022	3.09	0.656	9.35	<.001

Table 7: Conditional mediation tables showing the variation of the moderated mediation of self-esteem at different levels of review length.

In the case of review length, the values are just 1 (i.e., long) and 0 (i.e., short). For this reason, it is not relevant to consider the "mean" level. In addition, given that in the case of the relationship "review valence – self-esteem – repurchase Airbnb" the moderating role

of "review length" is not significant, the conditional mediation won't be studied. On the other side, in the cases of word of mouth for both Airbnb and hosts, the data show that for lower levels of review length (i.e. short review corresponding to number 0) the mediating effect of self-esteem is higher (Table 7). This is demonstrated by the fact that the indirect effects are 1.006 and 1.406 for short reviews and .508 and .804 for long reviews.

These results regarding the moderating role of review length, reject the second hypothesis that affirmed that *"the impact of positive (negative) feedback on self-esteem is positively (negatively) moderated by the length of the written review"*. Indeed, from the data emerged that the moderating role of review length is not significant in the relationship "review valence – self-esteem" but is significant in the relationship "self-esteem – word of mouth". In addition, the data reveal a negative correlation between the review length and the mediating role of self-esteem. This means that for shorter reviews, the mediating role of self-esteem is more important in leading to word of mouth.

To sum up, the model with both the mediating variable "self-esteem" and the moderating variable "review length" looks as follow (Figure 9):

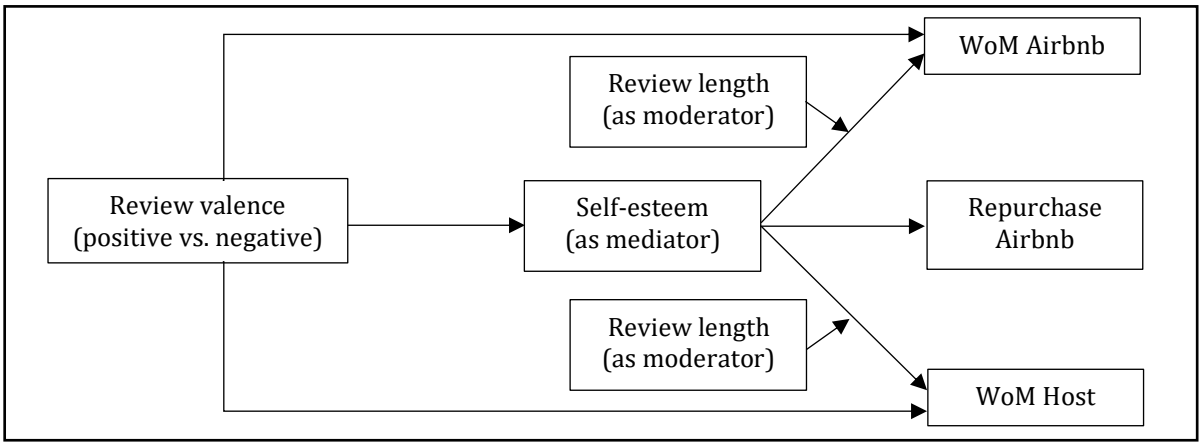


Figure 9: "Review valence - loyalty" model showing the mediator "self-esteem" and the moderator "review length".

6. Conclusions: discussion and implications

As presented at the beginning of the last chapter, both the manipulation check and the scenario realism assessment resulted to pass the test. This means that the experiment conducted was realistic and had an impact on the participants. It is thus possible to draw the conclusions from the results of the experiment in order to answer the research

question: *What is the impact of customers' personal reputation on customer loyalty in the sharing economy?*

6.1 Review valence's positive correlation

First of all, the review valence (i.e., positive or negative reviews), was found to have a strong effect on customers' word of mouth (i.e., review valence explains 46.7% of the variance word of mouth in relative to hosts and 26.3% of the variance in the word of mouth relative to Airbnb), but a slight influence on repurchase intention on Airbnb (i.e., review valence explains just 5% of the variance). In addition, review valance was proved to have influence also on self-esteem, by explaining 32.4% of its variance. On the other side, review length (i.e., long or short reviews) was not found to have a particular role in directly influencing word of mouth, repurchase intention or self-esteem. This means that the factor influencing loyalty (word of mouth and repurchase intention) and customers' self-esteem is if the review is positive or negative, and not if the review is long or short. By a further analysis, it was found that the relationship is positive between these variables is positive. That means that positive reviews correspond to higher levels of loyalty and self-esteem, while negative reviews lead to lower loyalty and self-esteem. These results partially support the first hypothesis that was assuming a positive relationship between review variance and the other variables (i.e., the positive (negative) impact of positive (negative) feedback on customers' loyalty are mediated by self-esteem").

In addition to this first partial hypothesis confirmation, the data also revealed that negative reviews have a larger negative effect on word of mouth regarding the host, than regarding Airbnb in general. This is pretty logical to think, given that in case of negative review the customer will generate negative feelings towards the direct responsible of the review, who is the host who wrote it. However, what is surprising is that in case of positive review, the data confirm that the level of positive word of mouth is essentially the same for both the host and the platform (i.e., Airbnb). This is positive for the platform since it means that both in case of positive or negative reviews, the loyalty levels of the customers don't change as much they change for hosts.

From a practical perspective, this first part of the analysis suggests that in particular hosts, should be concerned about leaving a negative review, because this is likely to lead to negative word of mouth regarding the host. This means that guest might spread negative reviews about the host with their friends, relatives and online networks, decreasing the number of possible clients for the host. In case of negative behavior of the guests during their stay, it is thus suggested to the hosts to moderate the "negativity" of their reviews by providing together with the negative feedback, also positive ones. For example, if the guest was dirty and left chaos in the apartment, it is important to highlight these aspects, but also provide some positive arguments that could help the guest to better accept the critics (i.e., maybe the guest was an interesting person to speak with, or apologized for the chaos he/she left, or was available to meet your needs when setting a time for the keys handover). Indeed, as highlighted by Young et al. (2017) personal recognition is part of the social benefits that according to the relational benefits perspective leads to higher loyalty.

The second part of the analysis focused on the core of the two hypotheses, that is the mediating role of self-esteem and the moderating role of review length.

6.2 Mediating role of self-esteem

The first hypothesis (i.e., *the positive (negative) impact of positive (negative) feedback on customers' loyalty is mediated by self-esteem*), was partially verified by the data. Indeed, it was found that self-esteem fully mediates repurchase intention via Airbnb, while partially mediates word of mouth both about Airbnb and the host. This could be given by the fact that self-esteem is an own-personal feeling and repurchase intention is as well an own-personal choice, not involving other people, or involving just a strict number of closed people with which the guest decides to spend the holidays. On the other side, the spread of word of mouth, means sharing the personal option with a possible infinite number of people (e.g., sharing an opinion or experience via social networks) and exposing the subject of the review to all these people. Given the involvement of a large number of people, it is logical to think that there are other mediators leading to the development of positive or negative word of mouth after having received a review, than not just self-esteem. However, even in the case of partial mediation, the mediating role was found to

be statistically significant. Indeed, the mediating role of self-esteem explains 53% of the relationship between review valence and word of mouth about Airbnb, and 42.2% of the relationship between review valence and word of mouth about host. This means that a large majority of the process that leads from positive or negative review to loyalty (i.e., repurchase intention and positive word of mouth) pass through customers' self-esteem.

Speaking about the practical applications of these results it is possible to add something new to what previously said regarding the positive feedback. Indeed, in order to have higher levels of positive word of mouth, hosts are suggested to write reviews that touch the self-esteem of customers. The existing literature suggests that drivers of self-esteem are admiration, respect, acceptance and in general (even in negative situations) positive-toned answer (You et al., 2020). However, what interestingly emerged from the interviews is that personal satisfaction for the good job done and appreciation by the others are the major drivers leading to the development of positive emotions after having received a feedback. Consequently, as already emerged from the qualitative interviews, elements that could increase the customers' self-esteem via the reviews are both references to the good job done as customers (e.g., punctuality in the payment and in the meetings, cleanliness and respect of the house rules) and references to the character traits of the customers (e.g., kind, energetic, curious, sunny, talkative, pleasant). As emerged from the interviews, sometimes it is difficult to express accurate feedback about the personality of a person because hosts don't meet the guests in person. Sometimes even the key handover is made via a message (i.e., the guest receives a code to open the apartment's door or receives instruction to find the keys in a hidden place). However, for the reasons described above, hosts are recommended to try to establish a minimum personal connection with the guests, by meeting them in person at least once or by exchanging a series of messages to know better each other. Indeed, as found by Chung et al. (2019) social connections lead to higher engagement and lower risks of churn, thus higher levels of loyalty. The time and effort spent to do this should be seen from the hosts as an investment. Indeed, this give them then the opportunity to write reviews that are personal and that might touch the self-esteem of the guests, leading to the spread of positive word of mouth. For example, a suggestion to try to get personally closer to the customer is to use the first name of the customer when writing the review (Burnett,

2020). Regarding the "acceptance", described by You et al. (2020) as one of the drivers of self-esteem, it is important to remember that sharing economy platforms work as communities in which people via their online reputations aim to feel accepted. To strengthen this feeling of acceptance it could be useful for hosts to recommend the "good guests" to other hosts when leaving the reviews. Regarding the role of Airbnb, it emerged from the data that self-esteem mediates also the relationship leading to customers' loyalty towards the platform (i.e. "review valence – word of mouth Airbnb" and "review valence – repurchase intention on Airbnb"). Consequently, Airbnb should educate the hosts by spreading the good practices to write effective reviews to customers (e.g., make informative videos or list the good practices when asking the hosts to leave a review).

6.3 Moderating role of review length

With reference to the second hypothesis (i.e., *the impact of positive (negative) feedback on self-esteem is positively (negatively) moderated by the length of the written review*), the data rejected it. Indeed, from the analysis it emerged that review length moderation between review valence and self-esteem is not statistically significant ($p>.05$). This means that if the review is long or short, nothing changes in the impact that review valence has on self-esteem. On the other side, it was detected a significant moderation of review length between self-esteem and word of mouth regarding both Airbnb and the host. This moderation was found to be negatively correlated to the mediating role of self-esteem. This means that longer reviews are correlated to a lower level of self-esteem mediating effect, while for shorter reviews the mediating effect of self-esteem will be more important. A possible explanation to this is that if someone receives a long review, it will be probably detailed and self-explanatory, so it will be easy for this person to form an own idea about the host or the platform and spread a negative or positive word of mouth. On the other side, if the review is short, the person doesn't have many data taken by the review on which to base the positive or negative word of mouth, thus the effect that the review had on the person's self-esteem will have a greater power in forming his/her idea about the service and subsequently a positive or negative word of mouth. The mediating role of self-esteem in the process between the review received and the development and spread of word of mouth is thus more important in this second case.

To draw practical conclusions, even if the length of the review was not found to have a direct effect on customers' loyalty (i.e., word of mouth and repurchase intention), the moderating role it has in the relationship between review valence and loyalty mediated by self-esteem, makes this variable worthy of note. Indeed, in cases of long reviews, even if the self-esteem of a person is not touched through the review, the person will be lead to generate his/her own word of mouth regarding the host, directly considering the review valence (i.e., positive or negative review). For hosts this means that if they had the opportunity to meet the guests in person or to have a deep exchange of messages, then it is better to write rather short reviews that however include personal feedbacks that could strike at the self-esteem of guests. On the other side, if the host didn't have the opportunity to speak with the guests, then it is better to spend more time in writing down a longer review, describing for example more in the detail in which way the guests were tidy (e.g., "they empty the dishwasher before leaving"). Also in this case, the role of Airbnb should be to encourage the hosts to follow these good practices, since they might lead to increased loyalty also to Airbnb itself.

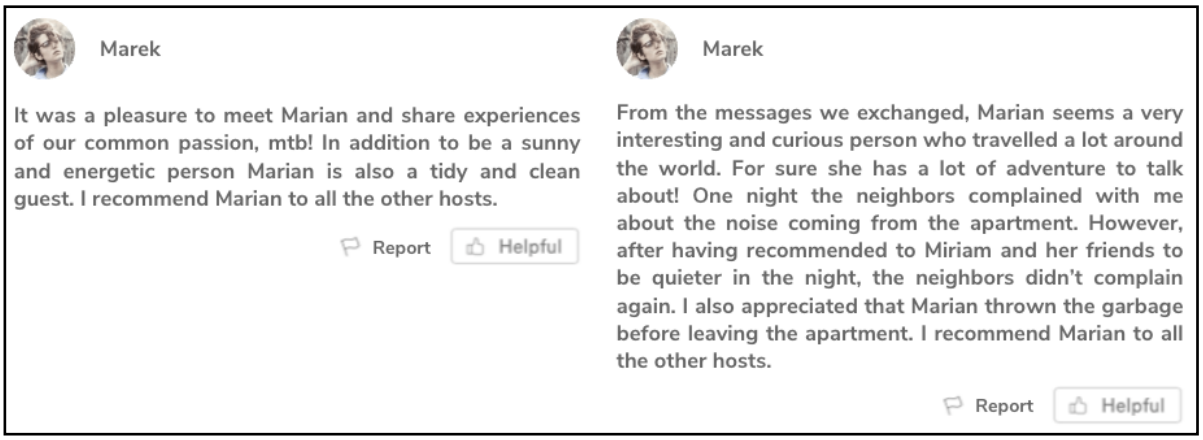


Figure 10: Examples of long and short reviews that follow the above-mentioned suggestions.

7. Limits and further research

The main limits of the research are given by time and budgetary constraints. To be able to collect both the interviews and the necessary surveys' answers in a limited time with no monetary budget available I used personal contacts and personal social media pages. Given that I come from Italy, as seen from the descriptive analysis of the samples the majority of the respondents were Italians. This limits the results of my research to a narrow geographical space. A larger geographical scope would have given the base for

more solid and reliable results. Indeed, as studied by Kozlenkova (2021) participations drivers to sharing economy vary depending on the local governments and the local social norms of a country. Consequently, it would have been interesting to study if different countries, also influence the levels of loyalty in the sharing economy.

The same happened for the age range of the participants. By sharing the survey mainly via my social media pages, the large majority of the respondents are concentrated in my same age range, that is between 22 and 32 years old. This age range correspond more or less to Millennials and Generation Y. The difference behaviors in the sharing economy between different generations was mentioned and studied by Hossain (2020) and Kumar et. al (2018). In particular regarding loyalty, Kumar et. al (2018) found that Generation Y is less loyal to consumed products or services than Baby boomers, given the fact that the easy access to technology enable Generation Y to access a wide range of information and compare alternatives. Kumar et. al (2018) also suggest that given the fact that Generation Y constitute the majority of the sharing economy users, it should be more useful to fucus the research effort on this particular group. However, considering that, as indicated by the economics growth numbers, the sharing economy market is expanding, it is reasonable to believe that in the next future also the diversity of customer base will increase, by including also different generations. It would have been thus interesting to study if and how the loyalty model studied in this research varies for different age ranges.

A further limitation was the fact that only one of the moderating variables emerged from the interviews, was studied. Indeed, a minority of the interviewers mentioned other factors moderating the effect of negative reviews on customer's self-esteem: (1) the number of other negative reviews written by the host (i.e., I9 stated that if the host is usual to write negative reviews, than the effect of his/her negative review on customer's self-esteem will be lower), (2) online reputation of the host writing the negative review (i.e. I12 told that if the host received negative reviews and has a low rating, then the effect of his/her review on customer's self-esteem will be lower). Indeed, if the host wrote several negative reviews to his guests, the guest receiving the negative review will think that probably it is not his/her fault, rather the host is particularly severe. In addition, if the host has a bad reputation in a community, the reliability of what he/she says decreases.

The two moderating factors could be thus summed up in “hosts severity” and “host reliability”. For further research it could be interesting to study the moderating effects of these two variables in the relationship “review valence – self-esteem”.

Speaking again about moderators, the hypothesis assuming that review length is a moderator between review valence and self-esteem was rejected. However, from the interviews, it strongly emerged that personalized and detailed reviews increase the personal satisfaction and self-esteem of customers. It is thus possible to assume that in the survey, review length was not the right scale to represent personalized and detailed reviews. Further research should thus try to test a new scale that could maybe include the number of adjectives used in the review.

Finally, regarding the first hypothesis, that is the mediating role of self-esteem, it was found that self-esteem just partially mediates the effect of review valence on word of mouth. It could be thus useful to understand if there are and which are the other factors mediating this relationship.

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Annexes

Annex 1. Table of reviewed literature relative to loyalty in the sharing economy

Author(s)	Results	Platform(s)	Research method	Objective of the study
Akhmedova et al., 2020	**Website/app organization** (to increase the usage frequency), **platform responsiveness and reliability** (to reduce the environmental uncertainty) and **consumer interaction with peer service provider** (to limit the asset specificity and behavioral uncertainty)	AirBnb, Cabify, Uber, Glovo, Justeat, Deliveroo, Blablacar and Wallapop	Quantitative and qualitative	Antecedents of consumers' **loyalty** towards the platform
Akhmedova et al., 2021	**Perceived website usability, platform structural assurance, perceived usefulness of the platform, trust towards peers** → website is an enabler of both the **interpersonal trust and the platform trust**	Airbnb, Uber, JustEat, BlaBlaCar, Lyft	Qualitative	Antecedents of consumers' **trust** towards the platform
Bagus et al., 2021	**Service quality** influence the **customer satisfaction**, that together with **customer trust** increase **loyalty** towards the platform. In addition, **costumer trust has a moderating role** in the relationship between service quality and satisfaction	Go-Food, Shopee-food, Grabfood In Indonesia	Quantitative	Customer **loyalty** towards Online Food Delivery Platform in Indonesia
Beinot et al., 2017	Customers' **motives to use SE platforms**: economic (less expensive), social (meeting other people), hedonic value (access products out of reach), reduce risk & responsibilities (no ownership)	Uber, AirBnB	Qualitative	**Motives**, activities and resources of platforms, peer service providers and customers
Clauss et al., 2019	Prerequisite for loyalty: customer value based on **emotional value and price-based value.** The Emotional value is influenced by the customer assessment of value (co-)creation processes, value proposition design and value capture mechanism. The price-based value is influenced by the customer assessment of value capture mechanism	Airbnb, Blablacar, Shpock (classified ads), Kleiderkreisel (second-hand fashion)	Quantitative	Consumers' **loyalty** towards sharing platform
Eckhardt et al., 2019	**Loyalty driven by innovation** (to improve the effectiveness and/or efficiency of platform matching mechanisms) and **social motivation** (the customers' opportunity to engage in the act of sharing and value connecting with others)	BlaBlaCar, Uber, Lyft, Zipcar, LendingClub, AirBnB	Qualitative	Consumer **loyalty** towards platform and SE
Fang et al., 2020	**Multi-threshold loyalty program** based on **subsidies** → monetary compensation drives loyalty of service providers	Ride sharing platforms	Quantitative	**Providers'** loyalty towards the platform
Fatma et al., 2021	**Perceived CSR** (economic, environmental and ethical) has a significant influence on **consumer brand trust and brand identification**, that in turn influence **brand commitment**. However, no direct relationship is observed between PCSR and brand commitment	Uber and Ola in India (ridesharing platforms)	Quantitative	Consumers' **commitment** to the sharing platform
Hollowell et al., 2019	Procedural and social online privacy issues hinder the buildout of trusting beliefs	Not stated	Quantitative	Customers' **trust** towards SE Platforms
Hossain, 2020	Customers' motivations to participate in SE: **convenience, flexibility, home benefits, interaction, local authenticity, SE ethos, community, and economic benefit. Utilitarian motivation, hedonic motivation, and perceived trust** also tend to have a positive effect on consumers' engagement. **In the US, convenience, brand, and price** are the three most significant factors for users engaging in SE	Airbnb, Avis, Zipcar, Couchsurf, HouseTrip, Windu, 9flats, Uber, Car2Go, ReachNow, Quicar, Mu, Car2gether	Qualitative	Customers' **motivations** to participate in SE
Hou et al., 2021	**Trust** positively influences **e-loyalty**. **Explicit and implicit costs** positively affect passengers' trust. In addition, **driving skills** of the drivers positively and directly influence both trust and e-loyalty	Ridesharing platforms in China	Qualitative and quantitative	**E-loyalty** of consumers towards the ridesharing industry
Huarng &Yu, 2019	**Network platform service quality, lodging service quality and experience positively affect customers satisfaction**. Customer satisfaction in turn **affect continuous consumption behavior**. Both Airbnb and hotels provide good services through network platforms. Hotels are better than Airbnb regarding lodging services, while **Airbnb scores higher** than hotels for **experiences and satisfaction.**	Airbnb and traditional hotels	Quantitative and qualitative	Consumers' satisfaction (in Taiwan) and **repurchase intention** for AirBnB and offline traditional hotels.
Jia et al., 2020	Platform **asset characteristics and mergers and acquisitions affect supply network readiness and operational capacity**, respectively, and **this effect**	DiDi, Uber China, Ofo and Mobike	Qualitative	How sharing platforms achieve platform **loyalty**

	would consequently contribute to achieving **platform loyalty through user satisfaction**. Moreover, externality, as a moderator, may influence the strength of the relationship between satisfaction and platform loyalty.			through various operation management strategies directed to the final customers.
Kim, 2019	**Consumer loyalty** is influenced by **both consumer satisfaction and trust**. Consumer satisfaction is influenced by **entertainment** and **recognition**, while customer trust is affected by **entertainment, recognition and social benefits**	Airbnb in in South Korea.	Quantitative	Consumers' **loyalty** towards Airbnb
Kozlenkova, 2021	Hedonic value is the most important driver of participation SE, while social and sustainability values have the lowest effect on SE participation. Differences exist around the globe: (1) High levels of economic and social inequality between SE participants lessen the importance of hedonic benefits but enhance the importance of utilitarian and social benefits. (2) consumers are most motivated by the benefits associated with the lowest level of their unsatisfied needs on the Maslow's hierarchy of needs. (3) consumers are more influenced by governance mechanisms that increase their trust in providers and platforms in markets with low levels of generalized trust.	Lyft, Airbnb, Uber, SwapStyle.com	Quantitative	Consumers' **participation drivers** in SE globally
Kumar, 2018	Motives to use SE platforms for Gen Y: value, access vs. ownership, convenience, ease of use (together constitute Practicality). Economic benefits, social benefits, utility maximization, and convenience factors influence the satisfaction. **Familiarity, trust, and utility are factors for choosing the P2P service again**.	Uber, Airbnb, VRBO, Lyft, Whole Foods, TaskRabbit, Lendico, Machinerylink, Gwynnie Bee, Luxe	Qualitative	Customer motives, satisfaction and **repurchase** in SE
Li & Tsai, 2022	**Guest-based factor** of **rating volume** and the **host-based factors** of **information quality** and **media richness** positively affected levels of trust in Airbnb. Furthermore, **platform-based factors** influenced trust in Airbnb in terms of **environmental benefits, locational benefits, and authenticity**. Finally, **trust** in Airbnb is **a key determinant of users' continuance intention on the platform**	Airbnb	Quantitative	Consumers' **trust** towards Airbnb.
Liu et al., 2021	**Perceived value** mediates the **positive association** between **customer experience and customer loyalty**. **Physical environment and human interaction** have the same positive impact on **influencing customers' perceived value** In addition, **perceived value has a stronger positive effect on attitudinal loyalty** (the commitment to the product) **than on behavioral loyalty** (customers repeated repurchases of a product)	A leading Chinese accommodation-sharing platform	Qualitative	Consumers' **loyalty** towards the platform
Mao & Lyu, (2017)	**Attitude** and **subject norms** significantly influence repurchase intention, while **perceived behavioral control doesn't not**. In addition, **perceived value and risk** have only **direct significant impacts** on **attitude** and, in turn, **indirectly affect repurchase intention. Unique experience expectation, familiarity and electronic word of mouth** have **direct and indirect influences on repurchase intention**	Airbnb	Quantitative	Consumers **repurchase intention** on Airbnb
Möhlmann, 2015	**Satisfaction and the likelihood of choosing a sharing option again** are mainly explained by factors serving **users' self-benefit**. **Utility, trust, cost savings, and familiarity** were found to be essential in both studies (B2C and C2C), while service quality and community belonging were identified solely in study 1 (B2C). **Environmental impact, internet capability, smartphone capability, and trend affinity** were found to have **no influence**	Car2go, Airbnb	Quantitative	Costumers' **satisfaction** and **repurchase** in SE
Nadeema et al., 2020	The results reveal **that social support influences ethical perceptions**, which further influences value co-creation. **Ethical perceptions also influence consumers' trust, satisfaction and commitment**	Data from existing literature	Quantitative	Consumer value co-creation in SE (based on **trust,**

	with the SE platform. However, trust and commitment do not influence value co-creation intentions			**satisfaction and commitment**)
So et al., 2019	**Social distance negatively affects guest loyalty** toward the listing hosts, while **spatial distance has a positive influence** on guest loyalty**. Spatial distance significantly moderates the negative effect of social distance** on the likelihood of repeat purchase	Xiaozhu (China's leading peer-to-peer accommodation sharing platform)	Quantitative	Consumers' loyalty towards **service providers**
Tajeddini et al., 2022	**Self-gratification value** (prior experience of visitors, economic appeal, perceived service quality, hedonic value, utilitarian value) **influences revisit intention and customer loyalty** of Airbnb users. However, although the **social value** (peer and external influence, WOM, and social appeal) **is influential in forming revisit intention**, its effect in **creating customer loyalty towards Airbnb is insignificant**	Airbnb	Qualitative and quantitative	Consumers **repurchase intention** and customer **loyalty** towards the platform
Xie et al., 2019	At the host level, host attributes including acceptance rate and listing capacity positively affect travelers' likelihood of repeat purchase. In addition, travelers are likely to repurchase from hosts as their frequency of past stays with the host increases. As travelers' frequency of past stays with the host increases, they tend to perceive less important the significant host attributes in making repurchase decision-making. **At the listing level, confirmation efficiency and acceptance rate are critical, and travelers' frequency of past stays matters**	Chinese home-sharing website	Quantitative	Consumers **repurchase** on the platform and for the specific provider
Yang et al., 2017	**Confidence and social benefits have significant and positive effects on commitment in sharing-economy services**. In addition, **safety benefits also significantly affect commitment** and **customer loyalty** indirectly in this context. Furthermore, **commitment fully mediates the relationship between social benefits and customer loyalty, and partially mediates the effects of confidence benefits and safety benefits on customer loyalty. Special treatment benefits** had **no effect on commitment and loyalty** in the sharing-economy context	Uber, Lyft, Airbnb, LendingClub, FundingCircle and Prosper, Dida	Qualitative and quantitative	Consumers' **loyalty** to the SE services

Annex 2. Questionnaire guideline: explorative research

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. It is part of my master thesis in which I study consumer experience with the sharing economy.

I'd like to stress that your participation is completely voluntary and that you can stop at any moment in time. The data coming from this interview will be anonymized, and any reference to your input will happen in a purely descriptive manner (e.g., male/female).

For scientific reasons, I will be recording this interview. These audio tapes will not be made public and are kept by the researchers involved in this project only. Are you ok with this?

1. When I say "sharing economy", what comes to your mind?
2. You have already used sharing economy solutions, right? Which ones in particular and how it happens that you used this solution and not another one (i.e. a competitor)?
3. Tell me more about your experience using this product(s)/service(s)

a. Positive or negative experience? b. Was it easy, was it difficult to use it? c. Have you use it several times or just one? d. How it happens that you didn't use it anymore? e. Would you like to use it again?
4. After this positive/negative experience, did you receive a review from the provider? Tell me about it a. What kind of review was it (positive/negative, simple rating/written review)? b. How did you feel about this? How did you react? What did you think? (To what extent did this impact your self-esteem?) c. Under which conditions would you have reacted better/worse? (Would a better explanation have contributed?) d. Did this feedback change the way you judge your experience in the sharing economy?
5. What do you think about the fact that providers can judge customers?
6. Do you have something else to add that you think could be relevant for this research?
7. Do you have any question for me?
General demographic data: age, gender, nationality

Annex 3. Interviews' transcripts

Interview 1
General demographic data: Age: 25 Gender: Female Nationality: Italian
Me: When I say "sharing economy", what comes to your mind' **I1**: (*thinking*) I don't know what is sharing economy. Sharing things? (*laugh*). **Me**: yes exactly. Sharing economy is when you have an underutilized asset and decide to temporarily let another person using it, in exchange for a payment. A platform put in contact you with a possible person interested to pay for your product or service. **I1**: Ah ok, ok. Understood! Then I used BlaBlaCar several times. Is it part of sharing economy? **Me**: yes exactly! Tell me more about your experience with BlaBlaCar. **I1**: I usually used BlaBlaCar for travelling when it was difficult to find other ways of travelling or other alternatives are too expensive. For example, I used it to come back home (in Trentino) from the Airport in Milan. From the airport there is no direct train connection to where I live. I would have taken a bus from the airport to Bergamo, then a train from Bergamo to Verona and finally another train from Verona to Rovereto, where I live. It would have been very inconvenient and expensive in terms of money

and time too!. Fortunately, I found a BlaBlaCar leaving from the airport 30' after my arrival. The man driving the car was punctual and I passed a nice 2hr talking with him. He left me at the highway stop of my home-city and from there my parents picked me up by car. This was actually my fist experience with BlaBlaCar. Since then I used it other several times, always as a rider. It is really easy to use the app and I like to meet new people while travelling. Fortunately, I always met nice people (*laugh*). The only thing I don't like so much is the fact that people post their trips just one or two days before leaving, thus it is difficult to organize a trip with BlaBlaCar in advance. Indeed, I usually always used BlaBlaCar in "emergency" situations let's say; when my plans changed and I had to adjust last minute. Or in the case of the airport I know that usually, if you arrive in the morning or early afternoon, there is almost always someone during the day, who is arriving too and has the car parked at the airport and is using BlaBlaCar. Maybe you don't find someone going in your exact city, but at least they can take you closer and from there you can maybe take a direct train. Then in the case of the airport I had a plan B. If nobody was available I could always have taken "bus + train".

Me: After this positive experience, let's take the one at the airport or another one you like, did you receive a review from the driver?

I1: Yes, I still remember the name (*laugh*): Angelo. I am quite sure he left me a review. I don't remember it exactly, but can look for it if you want.

Me: yep thanks, it would be great!

I1: oki, wait a minute. (*Some minutes of break*) So he wrote me: "*Super nice, very good company. Recommended*." He was nice.

Me: How did you feel about this?

I1: I think it is always nice to receive compliments or positive feedbacks right? Especially when they are relative to your personality. It is nice to know you are appreciated by other people.

Me: Under which conditions would you have reacted even better?

I1: (*thinking*) Maybe a better in depth explanation. Some words more and not just a very synthetic "recommended" (*laugh*). But I understand people don't have so much time or don't want to spend too much for reviews. I already appreciate he wrote something. For me it is useful to have a good reputation on the platform. And with the "recommended" he invited the other drivers to take an action and accept me on their cars in the future.

Me: Did this feedback change the way you judge your experience in the sharing economy?

I1: this makes me for sure happier, thus yes, I liked the general approach of this sharing economy.

Me: What do you think about the fact that providers can judge customers?

I1: I agree, I like this and I think it is correct. If you are the customer you cannot do whatever you want. I think this contribute to form a more socially responsible society that is more attentive to the respect of social norms and to the impacts that their actions have on the others.

Interview 2
General demographic data: Age: 29 Gender: Female Nationality: Romanian
Me: When I say "sharing economy", what comes to your mind? **I2**: Oh my God, what a question…this questionnaire is too difficult (*laugh*). **Me**: Ok, ok, no problem don't worry. Now I explain you with some examples. Sharing economy include all that businesses that enable people to monetize from underutilized assets that they own, buy finding customers via a digital platform who are willing to use these assets for a limited time. Examples are Airbnb, Uber or BlaBlaCar. **I2**: ah ok, ok. **Me**: yep, it is just the way to define these "category" of businesses, this industry let's say. **I2**: ok, ok. Thanks for the explanation (*laugh*). Not a good start for this questionnaire. **Me**: Don't worry, don't worry there is no right or wrong to my question and if something is not clear, just ask me. **I2**: ok, thanks. **Me**: So, you said me before the start of the interview that you already used Airbnb. Could you tell me about your experience in general and how it came that you used Airbnb? **I2**: well, so I was on vacation with a group of three other friends in Liguria and before opting for the apartment on Airbnb, we looked also to some solutions on Booking. The prices of hotels were too high given that it was high season, so we decided to opt for an apartment, since prices are usually lower. In addition, it was covid time, so we thought that I would have been better not to stay in a hotel with other people and shared areas, but book an entire apartment. On Booking the options for apartments are not many, and there is a wider choice on Airbnb. In addition, I don't know why, but on Booking the same apartments had higher prices than on Airbnb – maybe service fees are higher on Booking? Our experience with Airbnb was positive. The place was as in the photo, the host was nice and always available to give suggestions about the city and what to do. An external professional cleaning service cleaned the apartment before our arrival (we cross them when we arrived in the apartment), so the place was 100% sanitized and tidy. **Me**: Was it easy to use the platform and booking and will you use Airbnb again? **I2**: Yes! The platform is super easy to use, very elementary and intuitive. By looking at the Airbnb map of the city we wanted to visit we found the perfect apartment for us in terms of price and location. I think we firstly sent a message asking the owner of the apartment if she was willing to host us and wrote down something about us. She replied that for her it was fine and asked us to complete the procedure via Airbnb for the booking and the payment. Then the stay was nice as said, the apartment was clean and

the host super friendly. I still didn't find the occasion to do it yet, but for sure I would use Airbnb and maybe also this host again.
Me: After this positive experience, did you receive a review from the provider? If yes, could you tell me about it?
I2: Yes, I left a review and also the host left me one. I don't remember it exactly, but it was positive. She mentioned we were tidy and nice people to talk with. If I am not wrong she wrote something like "good guys" and she recommended us to other possible hosts. She was nice.
Me: How did you feel about this? What was your reaction?
I2: oh well (*thinking*)It was positive I think right? (*laugh*) Well, I was glad to receive that comment, but thought we had earned it. I would have been very surprise to receive a negative feedback because I was sure we did everything fine. And I am proud we behaved correctly, and she recognized it and rewarded. It made me feel good.
Me: Under which conditions would you have reacted even better?
I2: I really appreciated the fact that she recommended us to other hosts. She tried to make it easier for us to be accepted next time you know? And then I don't know…what could have her done even better? (*thinking*) I don't know. Maybe spending more time to write down the review? I mean, write more. But then I don't know. It is not something that you expect on Airbnb right? I mean, sometimes I saw also long reviews, and this surprised me. So, it is not impossible and so yes, probably if I receive a nice long comment, I appreciate it.
Me: Did this feedback you received change the way you judge your experience in the sharing economy?
I2: well, my experience was already positive. Let's say it was an additional confirmation of my positive experience.
Me: What do you think about the fact that providers can judge customers?
I2: Personally, I like it and I find it right. Maybe a bit pressuring (*laugh*) …but finally I know myself and I know I am a good person and always behave correctly to other people, so I like when then I receive positive feedback…you know it fuel my ego (*laugh*).
Me: Yes (*laugh*) I perfectly understand! Here is another one like you (*laugh*). Do you have something else to add that you think could be relevant for this research or questions for me?
I2: No, no, it is ok like this.

Interview 3
General demographic data: Age: 38 Gender: Male Nationality: Austrian
Me: When I say "sharing economy", what comes to your mind?

I3: Well, first of all the services that I use more such as Airbnb and Uber. Then if we want to go deeper in the detail, SE is an area that has exploded in the last years and has become a reference sector for certain industries such as the accommodation industry.
Me: You have already used sharing economy solutions, right? You mentioned in particular two, Airbnb and Uber. How it happens that you used these solutions and another ones (i.e. a competitor or substitutes)?
I3: several factors brought me to this choice. First of all the curiosity to try a new service. This for sure plays a huge role. In addition, their flexibility. Usually in the tradition service I think to hotels, compared to Airbnb, the same service on Booking is not so flexible as it is on Airbnb. Especially in the past when Airbnb arrived on the market. Then the possibility to share experiences that are then shared also in terms of money amount among the people of a group. So, this latter united to the first two, makes sharing services really attractive for me.
Me: In general, using these services you mentioned, Airbnb or Uber, how was your experience? Positive or negative? Did you find it difficult to use the platforms or was everything easy? In general, tell me a bit about the experience you had.
I3: the general experience was very easy on both the platforms, since both of them were developed in a coherent way, they are easy to use, they don't require too many passages when registering. Maybe Airbnb is a bit more complex in this last point, since you have to provide a description and there is the verification of an identity card. However, once the process is completed, it is very easy to use. The offer is super various. You don't stop at the first option because you know that by searching you can find something that could be even more interesting for you…in the case of Airbnb. Uber on the other side, is super easy. Even easier than Airbnb and I use it very frequently even in different States. It was always a good experience…for now. Then they give you the possibility to leave a rating of the service and see the ratings of people who used the service before you. This is a huge help when deciding which provider to choose, because it gives you a metrics on the basis of which taking a decision.
Me: talking about ratings. With these experiences you had, did you receive a rating or review from the provider?
I3: Yeah yeah, on Airbnb mainly. But I think that there it is mandatory. Uber I don't think so. But now that I think about it, I even never checked (*laugh*). I know that in any case the scale for the rating is different between Airbnb and Uber. Or better, what is different is the mechanism that govern the ratings of the two companies. So, Airbnb is an average of the ratings received. On Uber, you start with the maximum and then you lose point if you behave bad. At the moment on Uber I still have 5 points.
Me: Speaking not just about ratings, but also about reviews, did you receive any and do you remember them?
I3: Yep, on Airbnb, I remember. They were positive comments, that were meeting the description of a user that the people on the other side (the service providers) want to have: tidy, clean, respect of the times. Different words to define the same concepts.

Me: do you remember how did you feel when you receive these reviews?
I3: Since they were positive review it is easy to imagine that I was happy. It meant that from my side there was respect for the rules that the host gave. It was helpful for me also to identify the behavior from my side that were positive or negative. It is an important part for the whole service.
Me: Under which conditions would you have reacted even better? For example, would a better explanation of your behavior have contributed to increase even more your satisfaction?
I3: Here there is a huge difference between Airbnb and Uber. With Airbnb often you even don't meet the host. You have for example to take the keys from a third party or find them in a specific place, so there is no social interaction. Thus it is normal that the reviews are not specific or too personal. Of course, if I met someone in person, I appreciate if in the review there is a more specific and personal feedback.
Me: did these feedbacks, change the way you judge your experience in the sharing economy?
I3: I think it was a confirmation that we are in a service system where on one side you are the one evaluating the provider and on the their side you are also evaluated as client. Usually this doesn't happen. I felt in the middle of a virtuous system where everyone gives his/her contribution. This can be seen as more involving as experience and in the relationship with the provider.
Me: What do you think about the fact that providers can judge customers?
I3: I think it is positive even because often it could happen that, especially when is the first time that you are approaching this kind of services, you don't have the perception or the experience to make this experience in the best way. For example, if someone takes an Uber and then open a bottle of beer and start drinking, you would like to know that that was not the right behavior to keep in that context. So I think that the review to the customer is an important part of the approach to the service but also of the execution of the service.
Me: Do you have something else to add that you think could be relevant for this research?
I3: In general, I like these services and I will continue to use them, until the conditions won't change (for example the service fees or the payment methods).

Interview 4
General demographic data: Age: 26 Gender: Female Nationality: German
Me: When I say, "sharing economy", what comes to your mind? **I4**: My terrible experience with Airbnb (*laugh*) **Me**: ok, wow (*laugh*). What happen exactly?

I4: Well, it was not hundred percent negative, but a bit, especially the first part of our experience. So, the story is this. In December 2017 Me, my parents and my brother decided to go on vacation in the Austrian mountains in Seefeld. When we travel as a family we always prefer staying in apartments, because we have more freedom than in the hotel. On Booking there were not so many apartments available, so I proposed to check for alternative solutions on Airbnb. My father was a bit scared because he didn't trust Airbnb so much. He had always booked on Booking, thus he considered this novelty of Airbnb not so reliable as the well-established and trusty Booking. I insisted and found a good deal on Airbnb. I said to my father "don't worry it is reliable and the solution we found seems perfect. I manage everything, so let me do it". I thus sent a message to the owner of the apartment and then booked and paid via the Airbnb platform. The day before the holiday, the owner sent me the instruction to take the keys. He wouldn't have been there in person thus we were supposed to find the keys, hidden in a specific place outside the home. We reached Seefeld in the late afternoon, found the house, parked the car, and brought the luggage in front of the door. It was quite cold outside, and the sun was going down, so we looked for the keys to enter the house as soon as possible. We tried to follow the instruction of the owner, but nothing…we couldn't find any keys. I thus decided to text the owner. We waited 20', but no reply. I thus contacted Airbnb customer service. It was a bit of a mess because it was weekend and out of the office hour, thus I had to contact a special international customer service of Airbnb. They were nice and tell us to keep quiet and that they would have try to enter in contact with the host. If they wouldn't have been able to do that, they would have pay us a hotel for the inconvenience. After circa another 30' they could contact the owner and they better explained us where and how to find the keys. You can imagine how angry was my father (*laugh*). Then the apartment was nice and our stay in Seefeld too, but this start of the vacation was terrible and since that time, my father never used Airbnb again. Even if the customer service employees were nice and efficient, he doesn't trust the hosts on Airbnb. In addition, both my mother and my father don't speak English, so if something like that would have happen when they were alone, I really don't know how they could have managed the situation.
Me: ok, wow, what an experience! Relaxing holiday ah? (*joke*)
I4: yes exactly (*laugh*).
Me: so, after this negative experience, did you receive a review from the provider?
I4: No, nothing honestly. We also didn't leave any review. We just misunderstood each other: he didn't explain very well, and we didn't understand very well.
Me: ah ok ok…but maybe while using other sharing economy services, did you receive feedbacks as a consumer?
I4: mmm, with BlaBlaCar…I received several feedbacks on BlaBlaCar.
Me: ah ok, perfect. Could you tell me more about this?
I4: yes, I left several reviews after the platform asked me several times to review my experience with the different drivers after the ride. In turn I received different reviews. They were always positive. Initially it was nice to receive positive comments, but then

after the third or fourth, I noticed the were all very similar…I mean, on the total that I received (around 20), there one or two that are personalized and nicely written, but the majority are identical (*laugh*). It seems a bot wrote them down. They are always: "nice person, recommended", "it was nice to speak with her, recommended", "good company, recommended". Something like that. I mean, I don't pretend they write poems, so it is fine. Actually, it happened also to me that sometimes I didn't want or simply didn't have time to write a review, but then the platform send you emails remembering you to complete the review and so you say "ok, let's do that". But you put in it zero effort. Then for example it is important to think that some drivers use BlaBlaCar several times a week, because they are maybe commuters between two different cities and use BlaBlaCar frequently to monetize a bit. In these cases, I can imagine it is even more unmotivating to leave several reviews every week. Then, sorry, another thing I was thinking about, is that sometimes, you just pass few hours on the car, so it is difficult to have a lot to write about a person or the experience in the review. Finally, more or less you speak always about the same stuff: your name, where you come from, where are you going, why, what do you do for a living (*laugh*). Classical conversations on BlaBlaCar.

Me: Yes, you are perfectly right! But you said you received some reviews, "one or two" you said, that are different from the others. Did they have a different impact on you and in which extent they differ from the others.

I4: Yes, yes (*thinking*) ok, I don't remember it exactly, but I can say that when I saw them, I thought: "oh my god, she was very nice in writing this!" I appreciated these comments particularly. Because they were more personal and described concrete stuff it happened, or we spoke about when we were in the car. So, I really think she was particularly nice to take the time to write down something more persona and share it with the others. She made me feel good and appreciated…appreciated for real, not just because I was forced by the platform to leave the comment you know (*laugh*). Her comment was real.

Me: Could you say if this particular feedback changed the way you judge your experience in the sharing economy?

I4: It changed this particular experience yes…the other feedbacks I received no. I mean, maybe I still had a good experience, but the feedbacks didn't have any influence on this. I was almost indifferent to them.

Me: ok, so what do you think about the fact that providers can judge customers?

I4: In general, I think this is positive. If riders for example are not correct with the drivers it is right that the drivers could leave negative feedbacks. However, the feedback they leave should be real and someone who leave a feedback should be really motivated to do that and not do that just because it is a common practice. Positive feedback could also be useful…I mean, I am happy to have several positive feedbacks, I think this is important for my reputation on the platform. But still, I don't know…this "copy-paste" of positive feedbacks doesn't make much sense for me (*laugh*). Then I don't know. Let's say that maybe you should be encouraged to leave a feedback just if the experience was

in some way negative or really particularly positive and you feel the need to reward this person with a plause. If someone doesn't have nothing to say, it means the rider was good. The same is for the reviews to the drivers. Could this work? (*laugh*)
Me: yes maybe, I like the idea! Good job for the solution (*laugh*) and thanks for your time for this interview.

Interview 5

General demographic data:
Age: 25
Gender: Female
Nationality: Italian

Me: When I say, "sharing economy", what comes to your mind?
I5: Sharing economy (*thinking*). Wait (*thinking*). Let me think. When you share something, but I am not sure what it is.
Me: Basically, sharing economy businesses are for example Airbnb or BlaBlaCar, so when you have an underutilized asset and share it with someone on exchange for a payment. So, you have already used sharing economy solutions, right? Which ones in particular and how was your experience?
I5: Well in particular with cars I didn't use BlaBlaCar initially, but I was taking rides via a WhatsApp group, that was properly created for people driving from Bolzano and Trento to Vicenza. I took the ride with a guy who initially was supposed to bring me to Vicenza. Finally, he dropped me out halfway in another city because his plans changed. It was not the greatest experience (*laugh*). However, he was quite nice. But since that time, I use BlaBlaCar because I have more certainties by using a proper platform. Then the drivers receive ratings, so you can value in advance if he/she is reliable or not on the basis of previous ratings and reviews. I also used Airbnb two times. .
Me: Ah, you also used Airbnb! How was your experience with Airbnb and why did you choose it instead of alternative solutions?
I5: I didn't use other solutions because for example on Booking, you don't have all the solutions. On Airbnb, you have different solutions, so by consulting both, we found a best solution, both in terms of location and price on Airbnb. I used Airbnb twice, but in general then I prefer booking because with each reservation you make you become "genius user" and collect discounts. For this reason, recently I used Booking more.
how it happens that you used this solution and not another one (i.e., a competitor)?
Me: In general, how was your experience with Airbnb? Would you use it again?
I5: On Airbnb, they give you prices for each night and not the total. On booking they show you the total that makes it easier to understand what you will spend at the end.
Me: So, since you used Airbnb, did you receive a review from the host?
I5: (*thinking*) Oh my god. You know, I don't think. I never request them to leave one. But I remember I left them the reviews. I received reviews on BlaBlaCar.
Me: Ah, interesting. Could you tell me about these reviews?

I5: They are all positive. Of course, I like the fact that I receive positive reviews. It means that I like to people and I am nice for people, it is good for my self-esteem (*laugh*). Who doesn't like to receive positive feedbacks? Usually, the feedback I receive are about my relationship and communication skills. I don't want people to invent compliments. Finally, this is what you can judge during a BlaBlaCar trip. You finally spend just few hours on the car, so you cannot say so much regarding a person. You don't have the knowledge to go deeper. It is normal that reviews are a bit superficial. Maybe Airbnb is different, and you can better know the host given that maybe you stay at his/her home for several days. For example, when I stayed in Croatia last year, I used Airbnb and the host was living the same building. We thus spoke a lot during my stay and when I left, I wrote a long-detailed review. This is something that doesn't happen with BlaBlaCar.
Me: How do you see this fact that in the sharing economy also the clients receive a feedback?
I5: I think it is positive that this happen. However, I don't value the review too much because people could not be honest when they write the reviews and say anything they want. I trust until a certain point.
Me: Ok, this is the end of my interview if you don't have questions for me. Thanks for your time.

Interview 6

General demographic data:
Age: 24
Gender: Male
Nationality: Italian

Me: When I say "sharing economy", what comes to your mind?
I6: well, sharing economy, I think to all that services that aim to make available to more people a resource for a different period of time. It could be the sharing of a mean of transport or of an accommodation.
Me: Ok, nice. So you said me before this interview that you have already used sharing economy solutions, right? Which ones in particular and how it happens that you used these solutions and not other ones or other competitors?
I6: well, I remember I used Uber, very often. Then I used bike and car sharing apps, such as enjoy. I used Airbnb, several times for my journeys.
Me: OK, and why? I mean, in the case of Uber, why Uber and not a taxi, or a bus?
I6: Well, because in the case of the bus, maybe because it was late in the night or I needed someone who could come to take me at my place and bring me in a precise location, or I was in a place where there was not a public transport available. For the taxis instead, the main factors for the choice were two. The first one is the technological factor. So with Uber you have a very nice app, where you see where is the car, which car it is, you have a nice customer service if something happens. The second factor is the price. Well, sometimes you even pay more, but at least you already know the price

before taking the ride. It gives you a feeling of being safe and secure. And then there are also the reviews about the driver. You have a series of technological integrations that helps you.
Me: And how were your experiences in general? Positive, negative? Was it difficult or easy to use these services?
I6: In general, it was positive. I am in favor for these solutions. It was super easy to use them. Then, I am thinking, it depends. In the last years, maybe I used more Uber than Airbnb, but when it happens that I need these services for one reason or another, these are options that I always consider.
Me: After these positive experiences, did you receive as a customer some reviews from the providers?
I6: yes, yes. Well, not so many from. The drivers, but I remember some from the hosts of Airbnb. Yes, yes. In general, they were positive. I remember one in particular. It was surprisingly positive, because I was in Barcelona with a group of friends and we literally destroyed the apartment (*laugh*). I don't know how it was possible that we received a positive review, but yes, that was.
Me: Do you remember how were these reviews in terms of content? General, short, long?
I6: They vary a lot. For example, in the case where I met the host, because I just booked a room in the apartment of the host, so I was basically living with the host, in that cases the reviews were more depth.
Me: And how did you react when reading these reviews? Which feelings and thoughts did you have?
I6: In the case of Barcelona, I though "wow, we were lucky". We tried to clean a bit, but we had the flight early in the morning, so we couldn't do a nice job. I really felt bad for the conditions in which we left that apartment. But in that case, I never met the host. The review was positive, but yes, I felt relieved, because I was worried, I had to pay some penalties or stuff like that. In other cases, when I met the host and they left positive reviews, I had good feelings. It is nice to receive good feedbacks.
Me: ok and according to you, under which conditions would you have reacted even better to these positive reviews? Or which ones where the reviews that were particularly appreciated by you?
I6: Well (*thinking*), in general when a person describe my way of being (thinking). To be honest, well I don't know. I never think about this. I don't care too much. When my experience is positive, I find a place that meet my expectations, it is clean, it is nice, it corresponds to the photos, it is fine. Even if the host don't leave a positive review, it is the same for me. Then if the host leave a positive feedback for the first five seconds I think "ok, nice, if I will come back to that city I will go back by him/her, because he/she is positive and nice". It is very banal, but I like if someone mention I am a nice person to stay.
Me: Ok. Last question. What do you think about the fact that hosts can leave reviews to the customers? Does this stress you as a customer the fact that you will be judged?

I6: For me, it doesn't stress me. But I met other people for whom the final review was a stress. And I understand this. Because if you are a person who often use that service and you are reviewed badly, then maybe hosts could decide to reject your request. But yes, I don't see it as a stress, but simply as an incentive to behave correctly. And this is right. Providers make their job and we pay for this job, but at the same time the customer have respect the rules. So I think this is absolutely right.
Me: Ok, this is the end of the interview. I don't know if you have questions for me.
I6: No, no, absolutely. I hope I was useful for you and your research.

Interview 7

General demographic data:
Age: 23
Gender: Female
Nationality: Italian

Me: So, I previously already mentioned you what is sharing economy. You have already used sharing economy solutions, right? Which ones in particular and why?
I7: I used once Airbnb in France on holiday on the French Riviera. And then I used Uber in the States. From the airport to the University campus and back.
Me: Ok, so how it happens that you used these solution and not other ones, for example hotels in the case of Airbnb or taxis in the case of Uber?
I7: (*thinking*) Ok, regarding my French holidays, Airbnb was the cheapest and most convenient solution. I had to stay there a specific amount of days, I was with my family, we are six person in my family, so it was the most flexible option. The location was also good, because it was close the sea. Then we could make shopping, the supermarket was near to the apartment, we were more independent. Regarding Uber (*thinking*), it is very common to use it in the States and actually it is not so expensive. It is very convenient also for the timing. When you book a ride, the driver that is closer to you take the book and so in very few minutes you have your ride. So to go from the apartment to the university campus it was much more convenient to take a Uber instead of a taxis, that would have cost much more.
Me: Ok, make sense. So economic and timing factor. A second question is regarding your experience in general. Was it positive or negative, easy or difficult to use, did you use it several times? Tell me more.
I7: Ok, no, no. Airbnb, then we always used hotels. Uber the same, because then Covid19 started so, nothing (*laugh*). It was very easy to use these services. In one case I was very satisfied, in the other one, less. With Uber, I was very satisfied; it was fast, convenient, nice drivers, punctual. With Airbnb, the position was perfect, but the house conditions were not exactly how described on Airbnb and on the photos on Airbnb. However, the idea of Airbnb is super nice.
Me: Ok so, would you reuse Airbnb for one of your next travel?

I7: Yes, yes. I would reuse both Uber and Airbnb. Even if with Airbnb I was not hundred percent satisfied.
Me: Ok, so after these experiences you had, both with Uber and Airbnb, did you receive reviews from the providers, so from the host of Airbnb and the driver of Uber?
I7: Ok, honestly I don't remember. I think I never checked. But I remember I left reviews to both the Airbnb host and some Uber's drivers. Because some of the drivers were particularly nice, so I left the star rating and a nice comment. For Airbnb, we didn't left a super nice review, but in any case I would reuse it again. Because it is convenient and also saw other houses on Airbnb that are tidy and clean.
Me: And what is the reason why you left the reviews?
I7: Ah ok, well, as said, for the drivers is because some of them were particularly nice, so it is right that they receive a good review. Then it is also convenient for others because for example when a girl like me is alone, in the night, in a place she don't know very well and has to go back home, she could use the reviews of other people to understand if the driver is reliable or not. So this is convenient for people who will use the service in the future.
Me: Do you remember how were the reviews that you left?
I7: It was short, concise, not too long.
Me: Was it person what you wrote or very general like "nice drive"?
I7: It was a mix of both. I mentioned both the nice driving skills and if the driver was particularly friendly in the conversations, I mentioned that part too in the review.
Me: Ok, understood. And you said me you don't remember the reviews you received, but…
I7: Ah no I don't think I received any.
Me: Ah ok. No problem. If you would have received a review as customer similar to the once you left, how would you have reacted?
I7: (*thinking*) Well, on the one of Uber, I would have felt satisfied, because it means I did my job well and the customer left the car satisfied. So happy for the good job done.
Me: what do you think about the fact that in the sharing economy also the customer is judged, receive a review?
A: I think it is right. Because some people behave bad, always. I personally try to act always well and be nice with the others and if I receive a negative review, this help me to understand what I did wrong and how to improve. So they are constructive critics.
Me: Ok, nice, thanks. I don't know if you have something else to add that could be useful for my research.
I7: Well, I don't know. If you want to know something else, just ask me.
Me: ok, then. If you received a negative review and you knew you behaved bad for example you forgot the bottle in the Uber car, and then you received a negative review with written "this rider left trash in the car", how would you react?
I7: Ok, if I could answer, I would answer by apologizing and I would do a remind to myself to be more tidy and keep my stuff in my bag.

Me: Ok, so you wouldn't be offended or angry with the driver for the bad review, but you would be angry with yourself.
I7: Yes, yes, sure. He is there to drive, not to clean the car and throw trash.

Interview 8

General demographic data:
Age: 24
Gender: Male
Nationality: Italian

Me: When I say "sharing economy", what comes to your mind?
I8: Ok, well, when you say sharing economy, I think to the car sharing in big cities or the sharing of means of transport or the sharing of houses and apartments. For example, the houses that are shared when the owners are on holidays.
Me: You have already used sharing economy solutions, right? Which ones in particular and how it happens that you used this solution and not another one (i.e. a competitor)?
I8: Yes, in Milan I used several times sharing services. I used this solution mainly for economic reason. Because in Milan taxis costs really a lot. Sharing solutions enable you to move from one place to another quite fast, even where public transports for example are not present. If you need to go outside the city center, sharing services are the most convenient ones. I used in particular Enjoy for the car sharing and a bike sharing platform.
Me: Tell me more about your experience using these services. Was it positive or negative, easy or difficult, did you use it several times or just once?
I8: Very positive, very positive. It was very easy to use, you just need to register on the platform, insert the credit cart and once you are registered you can use the means of transports. The only condition is that the cars or bikes have to be available, because it can sometimes happen that all the cars or bikes near to you are not available, because other people are using them. Convenient, prices are reasonable, so, I would say win-win situation. I used these solutions several times, in particular the bike-sharing service.
Me: Ok, well, actually for my thesis I consider sharing economy just that services like Airbnb, where there are three players: a platform, a consumer and a provider who is a peer of the customers, thus he/she is a private person. So, for example, with Uber there is a private person who owns the car, so the car is not owned by the platform. One of the particularities of these sharing businesses as I intend sharing economy, so when you have three players, is that also the customers receive a review by the service provider after having used a service. I don't know if in the sharing services that you used, as customers you received a review too.
I8: Ah no, but actually I used also Airbnb, I just remembered (*laugh*). So I know how it works
Me: (*laugh*) Ok. And with Airbnb, did you receive a review from your host?

I8: Yes, I used Airbnb last summer for a vacation with friends and we left a review to the host because it was a bit of an adventure the house that we used (*laugh*). And then the host reviewed us, how we behaved.
Me: Ok (*laugh*). Tell me more, also about your "adventure".
I8: Ok, well we booked a house in Sardinia to make a 5-6 day-holiday, with my friends from Milan and we ended up in this tiny house in the country side of Sardinia, because the person who had book is a bit of a crazy person. And we ended up in a house where the water didn't work, the air conditioning didn't work the doors' closing system were a bit (*thinking*) not so safe, not working so well. So we had to call the owners three four times during our vacation to make the water generator work and have a shower or make the sink work. So after the experience we wrote a review telling that the owner was available in case of problems, but we had some problems with the water procurement. And the owner answered by saying thank you to us for our education and recommending us to other hosts.
Me: Ah ok, understood. Well, not bad, finally the review was positive.
I8: Yep, it was positive overall. Then when we wrote it we tried to be kind because it didn't have sense to destroy this person.
Me: but referring to the review you received by the host, it was positive.
I8: Ah, yeah, yeah. Absolutely.
Me: How did you feel, how did you react, what did you think when you received this review?
I8: Nothing particular honestly. "It is the right review" and nothing else (*laugh*).
Me: Ok, ok. You already knew you were right, right?
I8: Yeah, we always behaved correctly and always kind.
Me: And what if you would have received a negative review in turn? Because finally you made also some critics, right?
I8: I think we would have felt offended, but we wouldn't have write it on Airbnb. We would have just leave it.
Me: Ok, reasonable. And what do you think about the fact that providers can judge customers?
I8: I think it is very interesting when for example the guest looks for houses, other providers can use the reviews that this guest received from other hosts to know if this guest behave correctly. I think this is a very smart solution even to create a relaxed environment both for the guest and the house owner.
Me: Ok, nice. Thanks. Then did you use Airbnb again after this experience in Sardinia or do you think you will use it again in the future?
I8: I never used it again. I wanted to use it again during my exchange in Paris last semester, but prices were over the roof. So I never used it again. For the future, it depends. My main decision factor is the price, so I choose the options that is more convenient (also in term of location) and cheaper.
Me: Yeah, ok. If you have to add something or questions for me, please do not hesitate.
I8: No, no, it is fine for me.

Interview 9
General demographic data: Age: 55 Gender: Male Nationality: Italian
Me: When I say "sharing economy", what comes to your mind? **I9**: Oh my God. I think it is sharing of money (*laugh*). **Me**: ok, not exactly (*laugh*). Basically, sharing economy businesses are for example Airbnb or BlaBlaCar, so when you have an underutilized asset and share it with someone on exchange for a payment. So, you have already used sharing economy solutions, right? Which ones in particular and how was your experience? **I9**: I used Booking several times. I use it for both the hotels and the apartments. In the majority of the cases the apartments are managed by private people. I used it because it is easy to use and book. It is also reliable, convenient from an economic perspective and fast. **Me**: Ah ok, yes, when considering the apartment section, also Booking could be considered part of the sharing economy. How were your experiences? Always positive? **I9**: Yep, positive, always positive, never got any problem. Neither with the platform, nor with the apartments. I already used it several times and I will continue use it. **Me**: after all the positive experiences, did you left any review? **I9**: Well, unfortunately, just few times. I left few reviews and concise. Because, well, I don't care so much. But they were always positive. But I read the reviews left by other people to get information regarding a place. **Me**: And you as a customer, did you ever receive any review? **I9**: (*thinking*) No I don't think I have any review as a customer. I don't think there is this function on booking. What is known, is that if you leave a negative review, usually the service provider can answer in order to justify or explain his/her own behavior. **Me**: Ok, ok. He/she can answer let's say. **I9**: Yes, exactly. **Me**: Ok. And do you think would it be right that also you as a customer, would receive a review for your behavior? **I9**: Yes, but it wouldn't be so relevant for me. But it could be useful, for sure. **Me**: And according to you, how would you react if you received a review? **I9**: Well, I wouldn't care so much actually. **Me**: And if you would receive a negative one? **I9**: Well, no, no, I wouldn't care so much even if it would be available. I have my life, I know what is wrong and what is right, so I wouldn't care. Neither positive, nor negative reviews. I would be indifferent to that review. Then, maybe in the case of a negative review, I would check other reviews left by the same person who left the review to me. If the majority of his/her reviews are negative, I would care even less. Of course, maybe if I am the only one receiving a negative one, well, maybe it is my fault.

Me: ok, interesting point of view, thank you very much.

Interview 10

General demographic data:

Age: 36

Gender: Male

Nationality: Italian

Me: When I say, "sharing economy", what comes to your mind? There is no right or wrong, just say me what comes to your mind with this word/concept.

I10: (*thinking*) well, but this is a difficult question (*laugh*)!

Me: no (*laugh*). Well no worry.

I10: I never heard about this "sharing economy".

Me: Don't worry at all. Actually you know for sure what is sharing economy, you just don't know it is called like that! Basically, sharing economy businesses are for example Airbnb or BlaBlaCar, so when you have an underutilized asset and share it with someone on exchange for a payment. Before this interview you told me you used some of these businesses, right? Which one in particular and why you used them and not competitors?

I10: I used Airbnb, I used BlaBlaCar, I used Uber too. However, I used Uber in Australia and Thailand. In the case of BlaBlaCar, I used it mainly because I like to drive and I prefer to travel by my car because I feel safer, offering at the same time a service to another person so that I receive something for exchange. I mean, I can divide the expenditures.

Me: ok, I understand. So you use BlaBlaCar as driver. And in the case of Airbnb?

I10: Airbnb, I use it especially abroad, because in Italy it is not so cheap (*laugh*). And because the service costs less than booking, sometimes.

Me: so you mainly use it for the economic reason.

I10: Yes, yes because with Airbnb I usually book the entire home. I don't share it.

Me: Ah ok, and in general or if you want to tell me one in the specific, how was your experience with the sharing economy? Positive, negative? Easy to use, difficult to use? Tell me.

I10: Well (*thinking*). They are easy to use eh. Maybe Airbnb is easier because you are asking a service, while BlaBlaCar, I am providing the service as a driver. By the way, in general, the experiences were positive, and I used these solutions several times.

Me: Ok, so after these positive experiences, did you receive any review as a client, so as rider for BlaBlaCar and as guest for Airbnb?

I10: Yes, I was also rider in BlaBlaCar. I did both rider and driver. It is just with Airbnb that I am just client.

Me: Ah ok, amazing. So, as a client, did you receive any review?

I10: Yes yes, sure.

Me: And how were them? Positive, negative? Do you remember some of these reviews?

I10: As rider they are all positive. Between "very good" and "excellent". As driver I received almost every review positive, except for one, where the comment is positive, but the rider made a mistake in assigning the right rating. So there is an intermediate rating, but the comment is very positive.
Me: Ok, nice. But the written comments where all positive.
I10: Yes, exactly.
Me: And do you remember any of these reviews? How were them? Long, short? Was there any review that you particularly remember? That really impressed you?
I10: Well actually they are almost all pre-set. Because they are all relative to punctuality, driving skills, if you are available to bring the person to a specific place. Because usually you should leave people at one of the stops of the highway, but if someone say me "from there, I don't have the possibility to arrive at the train station, where I should go", I try to go closer to the train station. And then usually the reviews are about the company that a person make during the travel, if he makes jokes or if he stays serious in silence.
Me: When you received these feedbacks, how did you feel about this? How did you react?
I10: Oh my God, psychological questions (*laugh*). I am happy I gave a service that was appreciated. So, satisfaction for my good job.
Me: do you also have a feeling of personal satisfaction? So linked to your self-esteem?
I10: (*laugh*) No, I really don't care. I really don't care also because now I have a large amount of reviews, so if I would react like this for each compliment I receive, I would probably be a narcissist with a super high level of self-esteem (*laugh*).
Me: Do you think that this could be given by the fact that as you mentioned, the reviews that you receive are not personal, but are very general and pre-set?
I10: Yeah well, for sure this has an influence. I think that if I would receive a one page long review with positive feedback, for sure, I would be positively surprised and much more satisfied, compared to the classical general sentences "nice and punctual".
Me: Ok, ok, interesting. One of the last questions now. What do you think about the fact that in the sharing economy providers can judge customers?
I10: This is for sure a positive thing. Also from the clients' side (*thinking*), it makes you feel satisfied if you behaved correctly, you put the other person at ease, etc..
Me: Ok, so do you think that it is right that also clients receive reviews?
I10: yes, yes, absolutely. Even because, I don't know if you know it, but on BlaBlaCar, you need to leave a review to visualize the review of the other person.
Me: Oh, yes, yes, I know it. This system enables the driver and rider to visualize their reviews simultaneously, so that the review that one person leave, is not influenced by the review of the other person. This system was studied to avoid the problem of reciprocity. Well, do you have any questions for me or something to add? Otherwise, this is the end of our interview.
I10: No, no, everything fine from my side, no questions.

Interview 11
General demographic data: Age: 25 Gender: Female Nationality: Italian
Me: When I say "sharing economy", what comes to your mind? **I11**: Oh my God (*thinking*), "sharing", so share with someone (*thinking*). Well, yeah sharing as much as possible in the society to save money. Make save money both the single person and the whole community, with the environment. I think for example at shared cars, or shared apartments. **Me**: yeah, exactly as you mentioned, the fact of saving money and preserve the environment are two of the main reasons why people choose sharing economy services. Going on with the next question, you told me earlier that you have already used two sharing economy platforms. Which ones in particular and how it happens that you used these solutions and didn't use other competitors' service? **I11**: I used BlaBlaCar and Airbnb. I also downloaded Uber to use it in New York, but it was incredibly expensive, thus I used taxis and public transport solutions. In the case of BlaBlaCar, I used it because it was much more convenient than using public transports. I usually used it to go from Udine to Bolzano and vice-versa. By train, I have to change three trains to go from Udine to Bolzano and it costs much more than taking a BlaBlaCar. Bus doesn't exist along this way. So, I used it both for an organizational and economic reason. It helped me in both ways. **Me**: And how was your experience in general by using these solutions in the sharing economy? **I11**: Well, for now it was very positive. Especially with BlaBlaCar, I wouldn't have expected, but for now I always found nice people. And it always allowed me to save both money and resources for the environment. If someone has a car and can make it available for someone else, it is much better. **Me**: Was it easy or difficult to use these solutions? **I11**: yes, yes! Uber (*thinking*), so-so. I needed a bit of time to understand it and from my point of view it was too expensive. I tried to use it in New York, but it was really too expensive. While Airbnb, was also nice. I used it in Milan and I preferred it to an hotel both for the cost and the location (*thinking*) and for the flexibility too. Because we were three people and so we could better manage our space. **Me**: so from what you said, I understand that you used, especially BlaBlaCar, several times right? And will you continue using it and the other sharing economy platform in the future? **I11**: Yes, yes, I used it several times. Then well, recently I didn't have much the occasion to use it. I used it much more when I didn't have kids. But for example, once I used it when I was pregnant.

Me: ok, nice point. So to use BlaBlaCar while pregnant, means that you really trust the company?
I11: yeah well, especially for the reason that there are reviews. So if someone read all the reviews, understands also which kind of person you can expect. And for now everything went always well.
Me: So after these experiences, that you said to be very positive, did you, as customer, so as guest or rider, receive review from the providers
I11: Yes, and they were always positive.
Me: Ok, and do you remember how did you feel about these positive reviews? I mean, do you remember how did you react when you read these positive reviews?
I11: Ok (*thinking*), I knew I had behaved correctly, so I didn't expect nothing more and nothing less.
Me: And what would have let you less indifferent? What would have made you happier?
I11: No, no because the judgement of a person that I don't know and who doesn't know much of me, doesn't have so much impact on me. So, I though "nice that he wrote a right review", but then stop, nothing else.
Me: Ok, interesting point of view. And as a very last question; from your point of view, what do you think about the fact that providers can judge customers?
I11: I absolutely agree with this reviews system. Because if had an apartment and have put it for rent on Airbnb and have gave it to a person who destroy it, I would be able to alert the possible next hosts about the bad habits of this person.
Me: So, you, as costumers, don't you feel some kind of pressure to behave in a certain way in order to receive good reviews?
I11: no, I don't feel any pressure for the review. I feel more an intrinsic kind of pressure to behave good, because it is part of my values and I feel in duty to do that. So, the fact that I will receive a review doesn't stress me and doesn't push me to behave differently as I would do normally.

Interview 12

General demographic data:
Age: 27
Gender: Male
Nationality: Italian

Me: When I say, "sharing economy", what comes to your mind?
I12: the sharing of goods, such as houses, cars and so on, that you own but you share them to earn some moneys. And then I think to all the platforms, such as Airbnb and BlaBlaCar.
Me: Which platforms did you use in particular?
I12: In particular I used in Milan some sharing services such as Enjoy, so carsharing.
Me: Ah ok, that kind of sharing, where the cars are owned by the platform itself, so by Enjoy.

I12: yes, exactly.
Me: Ok, so why did you use it and no other services such as taxis or public transports?
I12: It was convenient. Because I didn't have a car there and I needed to have a car to go quick from one side of the city to another. Nowadays similar services are BlaBlaCar and Uber, but you have a driver. I feel safer if it is me, driving in the city. Enjoy is super easy and convenient. You download the app, insert the card, find the closest car and take it. And then you leave the car on the other side of the city if you don't have to go back. Uber is very expensive in Milan.
Me: Did you use it several times or do you think you will use it again in the future?
I12: I used it twice, but in the future if I will have the necessity, I will use it again, because it is cheaper, and I have more autonomy. Of course, if I have to move from one city to another, I can consider other solutions such as BlaBlaCar. But for now, I never had the necessity.
Me: For travelling, have you ever thought about Airbnb?
I12: Yes, I considered it, but then I always chose something else.
Me: Ok, then considering your experience with the car sharing platform Enjoy, how was your experience?
I12: It was positive. It was super easy as said, so very positive and easy experience.
Me: After this experience, did they ask you to leave a review, or did you receive a review?
I12: No, no, neither left nor received. I never reviewed anything.
Me: But do you usually read reviews?
I12: Yes, yes, especially when I have to buy products or if I have to go in an apartment, I read the reviews.
Me: Considering the reviews that you read, if you would be reviewed as a customer, how would you react?
I12: I would check if the review is correct. If it is not, I would be mad of course (*laugh*).
Me: So, you would check that the reviews are right compared to what you expect?
I12: No, not that the review is right compared to what I expect, but that (*thinking*)…because usually people leave reviews just to criticized, I mean, they didn't like you, so they leave the review just to hurt you. I just would like the review to be objective. Because I think that sometimes the reviews are used as an instrument of revenge (*laugh*). And they don't correspond to the truth and are exaggerated.
Me: Both positive and negative exaggeration?
I12: Ah well, yes, yes, sure. The positive ones are usually manipulated. You ask friends and relatives to leave positive reviews.
Me: If you would receive this kind of exaggerated positive reviews, how would you react?
I12: I would for sure have a laugh and stop. And thanks for the review. But if it would be negative then, it would cause a damage.
Me: so the positive ones would be indifferent to you, but the negative ones, would have a bigger impact.

I12: yes, yes, of course. Because they ruin my online reputation. This remembers me one of my company's client, who was angry with the company and started making negative comments and reviews on all the company's social pages. She was hating us with no reason and wanted to ruin the reputation of the company. Then of course we flagged these comments as "hate" and Facebook and Google removed them.
Me: What do you think about the fact that in the sharing economy also the customers are reviewed?
I12: Well, this is positive, because you have a double point of view. When I read review, I always try to understand who wrote the review and why. Because often you understand that they were written by a stupid person. The negative ones, you sometimes understand that the reviewer is complaining about stupid things. So, by having a double review, both client and provider, you can make a double check.
Me: So, you mean that if I see a negative review, I go see which reviews received the person who wrote them, and I can understand if he/she is a reliable person or not. Right?
I12: Yes, yes, exactly.
Me: So, let's say that a negative review has less impact if you understand that the person who wrote it has in turn just negative reviews. Is it right?
I12: Yes, so finally you just want to understand who the person on the other side of the screen is who wrote the review. If it was written by a stupid person, then the impact it has is lower.
Me: Are there according to you other factors that could influence according to you your reaction to a review?
I12: (*thinking*) well, no. In which sense other factors? Which other factors there could be?
Me: I don't know, maybe how a review is written, so for example if the person is aggressive in the way of writing a review or not.
I12: ah well, yes, so it was what I was saying. The factor for me is if the review is realistic and objective or not. Then how you write it, I don't care.
Me: Ok, so exactly, what do you mean by realistic or objective?
I12: Objective means that you describe what was the problem. You can even be aggressive in the way you write the review, but if you justify your aggressivity by explaining the problem, for me is fine. Then I maybe think "ok, he/she could have been a bit more kind", but still I appreciate the fact he/she mentioned the problem. There is always to learn and improve. But if you just insult me without explaining the problem, then I don't accept the review. Just explain me.
Me: Ok, ok. Interesting. Do you have something to add or some questions for me.
I12: No, no. It's everything on my side.

Annex 4. Synthesis of the interviews

Do not know what sharing economy is*:* I1, I2, I5, I7, I9, I10

Know what sharing economy is*:* I3, I4, I6, I8, I11, I12

Most used platforms*:*

1. Airbnb (I2, I3, I4, I5, I6, I7, I8, I10, I11) → 2 had negative experiences
2. Uber (I3, I6, I7, I10)
3. BlaBlaCar (I1, I5, I10, I11)

Not sharing economy platforms*:* Enjoy, bike sharing options, WhatsApp groups

Why did you use sharing economy?

I1: Convenient, no other options available, cheaper than other options, easy to use, flexibility, positive experience.
I2: Flexibility, conveniency, price, privacy and hygiene during Covid19. Easy to use.
I3: Curiosity for the service, flexibility, easy to use and register, huge choice for the offer, easy to detect the reputation of the service providers.
I4: Flexibility, several options available on the platforms.
I5: You have several options.
I6: Availability of the service, quick, efficient, convenient, comfort, new technologies that simplify the experience, price, safe.
I7: cheapest and most convenient, flexible, good locations, quick to use.
I8: Economic and fast. Good offers. Easy to use. Win-win solution.
I9: Easy to use and book. It is also reliable, economically convenient and fast.
I10: It is cheaper, and I am more flexible (usually book the entire home).
I11: Save money, time and environmental resources. Flexibility.
I12: Faster, easy to use, more autonomy, cheaper.

Did you use it several times/would you use it again?

I1: Yes, used several times when travelling
I2: Yes, will use it again
I3: Yes, used several times.
I5: Yes, Airbnb and BlaBlaCar several times.
I6: Yes, used several times
I7: Yes, I will use it in the future.
I8: Yes, used several times and will reuse in the future if needed.
I9: Yes, used several times
I10: Yes, used several times.
I11: Yes, used several times. Will use it again if there are the conditions to do that.
I12: Yes, I would use it again.

Did you receive reviews?

I1: Yes, positive. Nice to know you are appreciated by others. Nice to receive positive compliments.

I2: Yes, positive. I expected it, because behaved correctly. Was nice to see the host appreciate and recognized our good behavior. Made feel good and satisfied with my-self. Positive comments fuel ego.

I3: Yes, positive. meeting the description of a user that the people on the other side (the service providers) want to have: tidy, clean, respect of the times. I was happy I could meet the host expectation in following the rules. Useful to identify positive or negative things about myself.

I4: Yes, positive. Banal, always the same. When nicely written had a positive impact on my sharing experience. When common feedbacks, then no influence, very indifferent to them.

I5: Yes, positive. Good for my self-esteem to receive good comments. People like me.

I6: Yes, positive. Sometimes the reviews were more depth and precise for example when met the host. Positive feelings, it is nice when receiving positive feedbacks.

I7: Not received but left. Because I was particularly happy about the service, so I wanted to reward the service providers. In addition, it is useful for other people to get informed about the service provider. If I would have received one similar to the ones I left, I would have felt satisfied for my job. If I would receive a negative review, I would apologize for my bad behavior and remind me to improve on the things I was criticized.

I8: Yes positive. The host said thanks for our education and recommended us to other hosts. It was the right comment, so it didn't have such a huge impact on me. If we would have received a negative review, we would have felt offended of course.

I9: Didn't receive any review but left several. Always positive. Concise, because I don't care too much. But I know they are useful, because I also spend time reading reviews. If I would receive reviews, I wouldn't care so much especially if it is positive. But I know could be useful for the others.

I10: Always positive. The majority are pre-set reviews, very similar to each other. I feel satisfied for my good job, but I don't take it too seriously for my self-esteem because they are very general reviews.

I11: Yes, positive. Met my expectancies. I didn't expect nothing more and nothing less.

I12: No, never. And never left reviews. But I read them. In many cases they are not real, so you have to read lot of reviews to be sure to have a real understanding of the situation. The negative reviews sometimes are written by angry people and haters. Exaggerated positive reviews would make me laugh, but negative ones, would get me crazy if they are not right, because ruin my online reputation.

Under which conditions would you have reacted better?

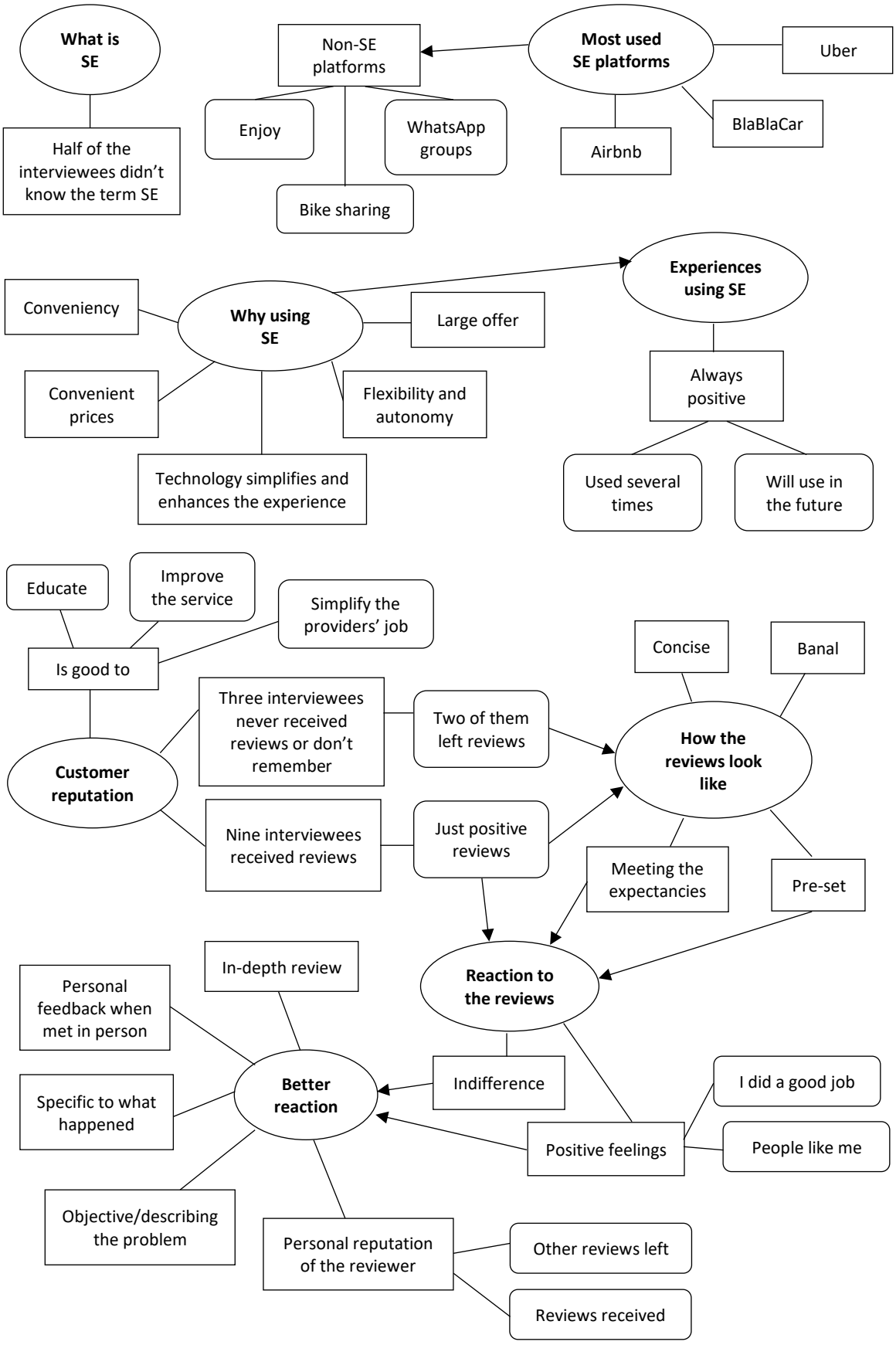
I1: In depth explanation. Less concise, more personal.

I2: Longer comment, for sure it is something you remember compared to all the other comments. Means more time spent in writing the review. Recommend to the other hosts.

I3: When you don't meet the service provider in person, it is normal that the reviews are not specific or too personal. Of course, if I met someone in person, I appreciate if in the review there is a more specific and personal feedback.
I4: Appreciate more effort when spending a particular nice time with a customer and have the possibility to meet him/her personally and spend time together. Describe concrete stuff that happened.
I5: Deeper feedback more personal, when possible is welcome. If I meet the host in person and spend time talking with him/her, it is possible to write a more in-depth review.
I6: Better describe my way of being. But honestly, I don't care too much. If the experience during the travel is good and the apartment meet my expectation, then the review the host leave is not so important. But with a positive review, it is banal, but I like, so I am more pushed to revisit that person.
I7: Mention personal objective things if the person was particularly nice.
I9: If I receive a negative review, I will check if the person who wrote it left several other bad reviews. In that case I would care less.
I10: Longer and more detailed reviews, would be welcomed and would give much more personal satisfaction.
I12: If the person who write the review is reliable or not. So, if the reviewer has a positive or negative online reputation. The objectivity of the review, so if the problem is explained.

<u>Do you agree to the customers reviews?</u>
I1: Yes, absolutely. Bring to a more socially responsible society, more attentive to others
I2: Find it right.
I3: Yes. Bilateral reputation system is more involving as experience and in the relationship with the provider. I felt in the middle of a virtuous circle. Review to the customer as an important part of the approach to the service but also of the execution of the service, since it leads to higher quality for everyone.
I4: Agree. Right to make a critic when needed or give kudos when nice experience. But all the other cases should be excluded from the reviews, because they are useless for me, they are just copy paste.
I5: Agree, it is positive.
I6: Not a stress, it is right. Incentive to behave correctly. Also means respect for the providers.
I7: Yes, I agree. They educate people to behave better and improve themselves.
I8: Agree. It is a smart solution to create a relaxed environment.
I9: Agree, could be useful for the others to have more certainties in the exchange.
I10: Yes agree.
I11: I agree. Good to alert other people if a person in the community behaves bad. It doesn't stress me.
I12: Yes, I agree.

Annex 5. Developed thematic map, showing eight main themes



Annex 6. Descriptive analysis of the survey's respondents

Frequencies of Origine

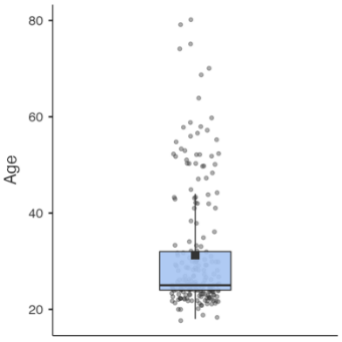
Levels	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Armenia	1	0.5%	0.5%
Australia	1	0.5%	0.9%
Austria	1	0.5%	1.4%
Belgium	7	3.2%	4.5%
Bulgaria	2	0.9%	5.5%
Chile	1	0.5%	5.9%
China	1	0.5%	6.4%
Finland	1	0.5%	6.8%
Germany	7	3.2%	10.0%
Hungary	1	0.5%	10.5%
India	4	1.8%	12.3%
Israel	1	0.5%	12.7%
Italy	155	70.5%	83.2%
Jordan	1	0.5%	83.6%
Kenya	3	1.4%	85.0%
Poland	1	0.5%	85.5%
Romania	1	0.5%	85.9%
Russia	1	0.5%	86.4%
Sweden	1	0.5%	86.8%
Switzerland	13	5.9%	92.7%
Taiwan	1	0.5%	93.2%
United Kingdom	12	5.5%	98.6%
United States of America	3	1.4%	100.0%

Frequencies of Gender

Levels	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Female	128	58.2%	58.2%
Male	84	38.2%	96.4%
Non-binary / third gender	1	0.5%	96.8%
Prefer not to say	7	3.2%	100.0%

Descriptives

	Age
N	220
Missing	4
Mean	31.2
Median	25.0
Standard deviation	12.7
Minimum	18
Maximum	80



Frequencies of #Did you know Airbnb before this survey?

Levels	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
0	19	8.6%	8.6%
1	201	91.4%	100.0%

Frequencies of #Have you already used Airbnb?

Levels	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
0	84	38.2%	38.2%
1	136	61.8%	100.0%

Frequencies of #Overall experience with Airbnb

Levels	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
0	6	4.4%	4.4%
1	2	1.5%	5.9%
2	2	1.5%	7.4%
3	4	2.9%	10.3%
4	5	3.7%	14.0%
5	34	25.0%	39.0%
6	56	41.2%	80.1%
7	27	19.9%	100.0%

Frequencies of #Already left a review

Levels	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
0	62	45.6%	45.6%
1	74	54.4%	100.0%

Annex 7. ANCOVA analysis measuring the influence of the previous experience (covariates) of the survey's participants on the relationship between independent and dependent variables

ANCOVA - Average WoM Airbnb

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Review length	0.1437	1	0.1437	0.0999	0.752
Review valence	68.1452	1	68.1452	47.3871	<.001
#Overall experience with Airbnb	0.8087	1	0.8087	0.5624	0.455
#Already left a review	0.0227	1	0.0227	0.0158	0.900
Review length ✻ Review valence	0.2285	1	0.2285	0.1589	0.691
Residuals	186.9470	130	1.4381		

ANCOVA - Average Repurchase

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Review length	1.1453	1	1.1453	0.7449	0.390
Review valence	12.6161	1	12.6161	8.2052	0.005
#Already left a review	0.0173	1	0.0173	0.0112	0.916
#Overall experience with Airbnb	9.6595	1	9.6595	6.2823	0.013
Review length ✻ Review valence	0.0411	1	0.0411	0.0267	0.870
Residuals	199.8835	130	1.5376		

ANCOVA - Average Self-esteem

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Review length	0.00896	1	0.00896	0.00465	0.946
Review valence	79.49116	1	79.49116	41.24492	<.001
#Overall experience with Airbnb	0.17116	1	0.17116	0.08881	0.766
#Already left a review	0.19382	1	0.19382	0.10057	0.752
Review length ✻ Review valence	0.63468	1	0.63468	0.32931	0.567
Residuals	250.54844	130	1.92730		

ANCOVA - Average WoM Host

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Review length	1.0877	1	1.0877	0.4917	0.484
Review valence	254.6042	1	254.6042	115.1021	<.001
#Overall experience with Airbnb	0.0223	1	0.0223	0.0101	0.920
#Already left a review	0.5405	1	0.5405	0.2444	0.622
Review length ✻ Review valence	0.0474	1	0.0474	0.0214	0.884
Residuals	287.5582	130	2.2120		

Annex 8. Two-way ANOVA Analysis and Post Hoc Tests

ANOVA - Average WoM Airbnb

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	η^2p
Review length	0.197	1	0.197	0.138	0.710	0.001
Review valence	110.267	1	110.267	77.187	<.001	0.263
Review length ✻ Review valence	1.048	1	1.048	0.734	0.393	0.003
Residuals	308.572	216	1.429			

Post Hoc Comparisons - Review length

Comparison							
Review length		Review length	Mean Difference	SE	df	t	p_{tukey}
0	-	1	0.0600	0.161	216	0.372	0.710

Note. Comparisons are based on estimated marginal means

Post Hoc Comparisons - Review valence

Comparison							
Review valence		Review valence	Mean Difference	SE	df	t	p_{tukey}
0	-	1	−1.42	0.161	216	−8.79	<.001

Note. Comparisons are based on estimated marginal means

Post Hoc Comparisons - Review length ✻ Review valence

Comparison									
Review length	Review valence		Review length	Review valence	Mean Difference	SE	df	t	p_{tukey}
0	0	-	0	1	−1.5564	0.227	216	−6.853	<.001
		-	1	0	−0.0782	0.234	216	−0.334	0.987
		-	1	1	−1.3582	0.227	216	−5.980	<.001
	1	-	1	0	1.4782	0.229	216	6.443	<.001
		-	1	1	0.1983	0.222	216	0.893	0.808
1	0	-	1	1	−1.2799	0.229	216	−5.578	<.001

ANOVA - Average Repurchase

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	η^2p
Review length	2.990	1	2.990	1.978	0.161	0.009
Review valence	17.629	1	17.629	11.660	<.001	0.051
Review length ✻ Review valence	0.596	1	0.596	0.394	0.531	0.002
Residuals	326.573	216	1.512			

Post Hoc Comparisons - Review length

Comparison							
Review length		Review length	Mean Difference	SE	df	t	p_{tukey}
0	-	1	−0.234	0.166	216	−1.41	0.161

Note. Comparisons are based on estimated marginal means

Post Hoc Comparisons - Review valence

Comparison							
Review valence		Review valence	Mean Difference	SE	df	t	p_{tukey}
0	-	1	−0.567	0.166	216	−3.41	<.001

Note. Comparisons are based on estimated marginal means

Post Hoc Comparisons - Review length ✻ Review valence

Comparison									
Review length	Review valence		Review length	Review valence	Mean Difference	SE	df	t	p_{tukey}
0	0	-	0	1	−0.671	0.234	216	−2.873	0.023
		-	1	0	−0.338	0.241	216	−1.400	0.500
		-	1	1	−0.801	0.234	216	−3.426	0.004
	1	-	1	0	0.334	0.236	216	1.413	0.493
		-	1	1	−0.129	0.228	216	−0.566	0.942
1	0	-	1	1	−0.463	0.236	216	−1.961	0.206

ANOVA - Average Self-esteem

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	η^2p
Review length	0.00122	1	0.00122	6.98e−4	0.979	0.000
Review valence	181.70298	1	181.70298	103.572	<.001	0.324
Review length ✻ Review valence	0.41715	1	0.41715	0.238	0.626	0.001
Residuals	378.94316	216	1.75437			

Post Hoc Comparisons - Review length

Comparison							
Review length		Review length	Mean Difference	SE	df	t	p_{tukey}
0	-	1	0.00473	0.179	216	0.0264	0.979

Note. Comparisons are based on estimated marginal means

Post Hoc Comparisons - Review valence

Comparison							
Review valence		Review valence	Mean Difference	SE	df	t	p_{tukey}
0	-	1	−1.82	0.179	216	−10.2	<.001

Note. Comparisons are based on estimated marginal means

Post Hoc Comparisons - Review length ✻ Review valence

Comparison									
Review length	Review valence		Review length	Review valence	Mean Difference	SE	df	t	p_{tukey}
0	0	-	0	1	−1.9077	0.252	216	−7.580	<.001
		-	1	0	−0.0825	0.260	216	−0.318	0.989
		-	1	1	−1.8158	0.252	216	−7.214	<.001
	1	-	1	0	1.8252	0.254	216	7.179	<.001
		-	1	1	0.0920	0.246	216	0.374	0.982
1	0	-	1	1	−1.7333	0.254	216	−6.817	<.001

ANOVA - Average WoM Host

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	η^2p
Review length	0.465	1	0.465	0.226	0.635	0.001
Review valence	389.283	1	389.283	189.119	<.001	0.467
Review length ✻ Review valence	0.618	1	0.618	0.300	0.584	0.001
Residuals	444.615	216	2.058			

Post Hoc Comparisons - Review length

Comparison							
Review length		Review length	Mean Difference	SE	df	t	p_{tukey}
0	-	1	0.0921	0.194	216	0.475	0.635

Note. Comparisons are based on estimated marginal means

Post Hoc Comparisons - Review valence

Comparison							
Review valence		Review valence	Mean Difference	SE	df	t	p_{tukey}
0	-	1	–2.66	0.194	216	–13.8	<.001

Note. Comparisons are based on estimated marginal means

Post Hoc Comparisons - Review length ✻ Review valence

Comparison									
Review length	Review valence		Review length	Review valence	Mean Difference	SE	df	t	p_{tukey}
0	0	-	0	1	–2.7708	0.273	216	–10.1633	<.001
		-	1	0	–0.0141	0.281	216	–0.0500	1.000
		-	1	1	–2.5725	0.273	216	–9.4360	<.001
	1	-	1	0	2.7568	0.275	216	10.0097	<.001
		-	1	1	0.1983	0.266	216	0.7442	0.879
1	0	-	1	1	–2.5585	0.275	216	–9.2897	<.001

Annex 9. One-way ANOVA and descriptive tables of the manipulation check

One-Way ANOVA (Fisher's)

	F	df1	df2	p
Indicate nr. from negative (1) to positive (7)	267	1	218	<.001

Group Descriptives

	Review valence	N	Mean	SD	SE
Indicate nr. from negative (1) to positive (7)	0	104	2.70	1.49	0.146
	1	116	5.68	1.21	0.113

One-Way ANOVA (Fisher's)

	F	df1	df2	p
Indicate nr. from short (1) to long (7)	70.2	1	218	<.001

Group Descriptives

	Review length	N	Mean	SD	SE
Indicate nr. from short (1) to long (7)	0	111	3.05	1.62	0.154
	1	109	4.71	1.28	0.122

Annex 10. Frequencies of the two questions relative to the scenario realism assessment. 1 corresponds to "strongly disagree" and 7 corresponds to "strongly agree"

Frequencies of This scenario seems realistic

Levels	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	3	1.4%	1.4%
2	12	5.5%	6.8%
3	23	10.5%	17.3%
4	25	11.4%	28.6%
5	63	28.6%	57.3%
6	75	34.1%	91.4%
7	19	8.6%	100.0%

Frequencies of What happens in this scenario could also happen in real life

Levels	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	4	1.8%	1.8%
2	2	0.9%	2.7%
3	18	8.2%	10.9%
4	12	5.5%	16.4%
5	51	23.2%	39.5%
6	93	42.3%	81.8%
7	40	18.2%	100.0%

Annex 11. Descriptive analysis of the scenario realism's answers split by the scenario received by the respondents

Descriptives

	Scenario	This scenario seems realistic
N	0 Short/Negative	53
	1 Long/Positive	58
	2 Long/Negative	51
	3 Short/Positive	58
Mean	0 Short/Negative	4.70
	1 Long/Positive	5.19
	2 Long/Negative	4.73
	3 Short/Positive	5.22
Median	0 Short/Negative	5
	1 Long/Positive	5.00
	2 Long/Negative	5
	3 Short/Positive	6.00
Standard deviation	0 Short/Negative	1.55
	1 Long/Positive	1.36
	2 Long/Negative	1.30
	3 Short/Positive	1.30
Minimum	0 Short/Negative	2
	1 Long/Positive	1
	2 Long/Negative	1
	3 Short/Positive	1
Maximum	0 Short/Negative	7
	1 Long/Positive	7
	2 Long/Negative	6
	3 Short/Positive	7

Descriptives

	Scenario	This scenario could also happen in real life
N	0 Short/Negative	53
	1 Long/Positive	58
	2 Long/Negative	51
	3 Short/Positive	58
Mean	0 Short/Negative	5.45
	1 Long/Positive	5.52
	2 Long/Negative	5.27
	3 Short/Positive	5.60
Median	0 Short/Negative	6
	1 Long/Positive	6.00
	2 Long/Negative	6
	3 Short/Positive	6.00
Standard deviation	0 Short/Negative	1.45
	1 Long/Positive	1.31
	2 Long/Negative	1.17
	3 Short/Positive	1.27
Minimum	0 Short/Negative	1
	1 Long/Positive	1
	2 Long/Negative	3
	3 Short/Positive	1
Maximum	0 Short/Negative	7
	1 Long/Positive	7
	2 Long/Negative	7
	3 Short/Positive	7

Annex 12. Heteroskedasticity test of the independent variable "Scenario", and the dependent variables "This scenario seems realistic" and "What happens in this scenario could also happen in real life"

Heteroskedasticity Tests

	Statistic	p
Breusch-Pagan	2.37	0.499
Goldfeld-Quandt	0.797	0.878
Harrison-McCabe	0.556	0.895

Heteroskedasticity Tests

	Statistic	p
Breusch-Pagan	1.36	0.714
Goldfeld-Quandt	1.26	0.121
Harrison-McCabe	0.443	0.124

Annex 13. Mediating role of self-esteem with effect percentage

1- Review valence – self-esteem – word of mouth Airbnb"

Mediation Estimates

Effect	Estimate	SE	Z	p	% Mediation
Indirect	0.752	0.123	6.12	<.001	53.0
Direct	0.667	0.173	3.84	<.001	47.0
Total	1.419	0.160	8.85	<.001	100.0

2- Review valence – self-esteem – repurchase Airbnb"

Mediation Estimates

Effect	Estimate	SE	Z	p	% Mediation
Indirect	0.695	0.125	5.583	<.001	84.8
Direct	–0.125	0.184	–0.680	0.496	15.2
Total	0.570	0.165	3.448	<.001	100.0

3- Review valence – self-esteem – word of mouth Host"

Mediation Estimates

Effect	Estimate	SE	Z	p	% Mediation
Indirect	1.12	0.155	7.27	<.001	42.2
Direct	1.54	0.192	8.02	<.001	57.8
Total	2.66	0.192	13.86	<.001	100.0