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Customer experience in the standard and premium Peer-To-Peer contexts: a mixed-method combining text analytics and qualitative analysis

Abstract

Although the sharing economy is growing, there is limited research on customer experience (CE) with peer-to-peer (P2P) offerings, particularly on standard *versus* premium P2Ps. This study explored CE with standard versus premium P2P offerings adopting an innovative mixed-method approach combining text analytics and thematic analysis. The study relies on a sample of 14.680 reviews of 468 listings on Airbnb. Findings reveal that premium P2P customers are more involved and likely to leave positive and longer reviews. CE with standard P2P offerings focuses on the utilitarian aspects of the physical internal and external environment and human interaction, which, in the premium P2P context, foster aesthetic, symbolic, and emotional experiences. Overall, CE with premium P2P is rich in symbolism, aesthetically pleasing, and emotionally involving and is likely to lead to customer delight. The study makes a methodological contribution by integrating qualitative research and text analytics in the study of customer experience.

Keywords: Peer-To-Peer; premium Peer-To-Peer; Airbnb Plus; Customer experience; Text analytics; Thematic analysis.

1. Introduction

Sharing involves "the act and process of distributing what is ours to others for their use and/or the act and process of receiving or taking something from others for our use" (Belk,

2010, p. 126). The past decade has witnessed the growth of sharing economy start-ups developing innovative and disruptive business models, which are challenging long-established businesses (Guttentag, 2015; Tussyadiah and Pesonen, 2016; Guttentag and Smith, 2017; Li and Srinivasan, 2019). These new business models are encouraging new consumption habits and experiences. For example, Uber and BlaBlaCar are changing consumers' urban and extra-urban mobility; companies like Deliveroo, JustEat, and UberEats are transforming consumers' meal preparation and eating habits. Start-up companies like Airbnb, HomeAway, and Wimdu have changed the way of traveling for many people.

Among these sharing economy businesses, Peer-to-Peer (P2P) accommodation sharing, or home-sharing, is one of the fastest-growing sharing-economy segments. Paid P2P indicates the sharing of accommodation by private individuals for short-term use through direct interaction between hosts and guests (Guttentag, 2015). Besides its economic importance, accommodation sharing has received growing attention from marketing and hospitality scholars (e.g., Zervas, Proserpio, and Byers, 2017; Gleim, Johnson, and Lawson, 2019; Cheng and Jin, 2019; Guttentag, 2019; Li and Srinivasan, 2019; Lim, Yap, and Makkar, 2021; Jiang and Lyu, 2021).

Research has established that consumers are motivated to use P2P accommodation sharing to enjoy authentic experiences (Guttentag, 2015; Tussyadiah and Pesonen, 2016), enabling social interactions with locals (So et al., 2021) in the so-called back region (MacCannell, 1973). However, few studies have been carried out to explore the dimensions of CE with different P2P offerings (Schmitt, 1999; Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello, 2009; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Customer experience (CE) is a source of differentiation and competitive advantage in service industries (Pine et al., 1999; Schmitt, 1999) and is at the heart of the P2P sector and Airbnb philosophy (Tussyadiah and Pesonen, 2016).

Inspired by celebrities' posting of their Airbnb experience on social media (VanderMey, 2019), Airbnb launched, in February 2018, Airbnb Plus in an attempt to attract a high-end customer segment through a new premium rental service (Farmaki et al., 2021). Airbnb with Airbnb Plus claims to target highly performing hosts (i.e., super-hosts) offering well-designed, well-maintained, and well-equipped homes, and where the company guarantees a minimum standard of quality and premium customer support (Airbnb, 2018). Airbnb is not the first to launch premium services besides its standard offering; Uber offers Uber Black, where professional drivers provide a ride in a luxury car; TaskRabbit Elite group reliable service providers (i.e., Taskers) who consistently receive high ratings for their tasks.

Although the growing relevance of premium sharing economy services, there is a lack of research on CE in different P2P settings, specifically customer experiences with standard and premium P2P services. Although valuable, existing studies mainly focus on a single destination or use a single-method approach (e.g., Brochado, Troilo, and Aditya, 2017; Johnson and Neuhofer, 2017; Tussyadiah and Zach, 2017; Cheng and Jin, 2019; Jiang and Lyu, 2021), which does not allow the generalization of the findings and theorization. Moreover, although scholars have argued that big data analytics can potentially generate valuable attitudinal and psychographic insights about customer experience, there is a lack of application of mixed-method studies integrating text analytics and qualitative analysis (Holmlund et al., 2020; Filieri et al., 2022).

To build CE theory and advance the literature on CE (e.g., Schmitt, 1999; Brakus et al., 2009; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Walls, 2013; Bolton et al., 2014; Burton et al., 2021) with P2P, this study explores CE using a mixed-method approach combining big data text analytics and qualitative analysis using a systematic random sampling of reviews to compare CE with standard (Airbnb) and premium P2P (Airbnb plus) as expressed in their reviews. By focusing

on CEs in multiple destinations and with two types of P2P offerings, this study aims to develop CE theory in the context of P2P. Furthermore, this is one of the first studies on customer experience employing a mixed-method approach. Hence, we formulate the following research questions: *What does constitute customer experience in the P2P industry? How do customers experience standard versus premium P2P accommodations?*

2. Peer-to-Peer Services and Customer Experience

2.1 Standard and Premium P2P

Technology start-ups increasingly facilitate the sharing of goods and services through digital platforms, which are disrupting the traditional business models in service industries (e.g., transport, hospitality, dining, and the like) (Guttentag, 2015; Zervas et al., 2017; Guttentag, 2019). Funded in 2008 in San Francisco, Airbnb is a pioneer in the Peer-to-Peer (P2P) accommodation-sharing sector and is today the leader of this industry. Airbnb revenues have been growing until 2020, when the company, similarly to other hospitality groups, has been severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and registered declining revenues (i.e., 72% from the previous year) (Abril, 2020). The company has revolutionized the traditional P2P lodging sector, driving radical changes in travelers' behavior and challenging the hospitality industry (e.g., Guttentag, 2015; Zervas et al., 2017), surpassing the major hospitality groups (i.e., Hilton, Marriot, Accor) in terms of the number of beds, establishments, and overnight stays.

Standard P2P accommodation-sharing services have been increasingly the focus of scholarly research on the sharing economy, often on Airbnb (Zerva et al., 2017; Guttentag, 2019; Li and Srinivasan, 2019). Existing studies on customers' behavior with standard P2P

have investigated the impact of product and host personal reputation on revenue optimization (Abrate and Viglia, 2019; Mauri et al., 2018); guests' evaluation of service providers, focusing on self-presentation strategies, perceived trust, and personal reputation (Ert, Fleischer, and Magen, 2016; Tussyadiah and Park, 2018; Mauri et al., 2018; Abrate and Viglia, 2019; Yang et al., 2019; Lu, Cai, and King, 2020); guests' expectations about the performance of Airbnb accommodation in comparison with budget hotels/motels (Guttentag and Smith, 2017); the determinants of purchase intention and post-trip experience sharing (Bae et al., 2017); the impact of short-term rental regulation on the home-sharing economy (Chen et al., 2021); the impact of service quality attributes' on customer satisfaction (Birinci et al., 2018; Ju et al., 2019); guest–host's hospitality value creation practices (Camilleri and Neuhofer, 2017); customers' motivation to use P2P (Chen and Xie, 2017; Tussyadiah and Pesonen, 2016; Guttentag et al., 2018; Farmaki and Stergiou, 2019; Gupta et al., 2019; So et al., 2021), (Liang, Lin, and Ho, 2021), or to continue/discontinue to use or to repurchase through P2P platforms (i.e., Airbnb) (Mao and Lyu, 2017; Wang and Jeong, 2018; So, Kim and Oh, 2020; Huang et al., 2020). Other studies have focused on the host side and tried to understand how hosts construct meanings of luxury as enacted in their hospitality practices (Farmaki et al., 2021), and what makes host decide to continue using the same platform (i.e., Airbnb) (Wang, Asaad, and Filieri, 2020).

Airbnb has recently launched its premium brand, Airbnb Plus, a service offered through its online platform to market providers and customers of premium accommodations. Although premium services are growing in the sharing economy sector, there is a lack of research on premium P2P services. Premium P2P service can be defined as P2P businesses providing superior services at all stages of the customer journey as recognized by their customers through high rating scores. Airbnb Plus accommodations are deemed to offer superior quality

accommodation, with hosts consistently receiving good reviews and ratings. Airbnb Plus homes are labelled through the Airbnb Plus signal on the platform if they fit the criteria (e.g., high ratings, no cancellations) established by the company.

2.2 Customer experience

Consumer behavior scholars first shed light on the non-rational nature of decisions and revealed that consumers' phantasies, feelings, fun, and sensory pleasures were inevitably associated with consumption (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1989). Customer experience is increasingly important for academics and practitioners alike (Burton et al., 2021). By delivering exceptional customer service and developing intense relations with customers, companies create memorable and unforgettable experiences that help service companies differentiate themselves (Pullman and Gross, 2004; Burton et al., 2021). Customer experience (CE) is a multidimensional concept and refers to the subjective, internal consumer responses evoked by specific experiences (i.e., sensorial/physical, affective, cognitive, social) with a brand (Schmitt, 1999; Brakus et al., 2009; Verhoef et al., 2009; Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010) or a service provider across multiple touchpoints during the entire customer journey (Bolton et al., 2014). CE is subjective and implies the customer responses to a brand stimulus at *rational* (i.e., curiosity, thinking, and memories), *emotional* (i.e., sentiments, feelings), *sensorial* (i.e., physical experiences), and *behavioral* levels (i.e., word-of-mouth) (Schmitt, 1999; Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010; Zollo et al., 2021).

In the service industries, Walls et al. (2011) define the hospitality experience as a blend of many individual elements that come together and may involve the consumer emotionally, physically, and intellectually. The quality of guest experience is generally based on two

dimensions, the product and service quality dimensions (Han and Hyun, 2015; Ye, Li, Wang, and Law, 2014). Product quality refers to how the core tangible product performs relative to its value and includes physical attributes such as location, room aesthetics, and furniture style (Han and Hyun, 2015). On the other hand, service quality refers to the performance of the service providers in terms of the service delivered to their guests (Saleh and Ryan, 1991; Ye et al., 2014). In accordance with this categorization, CE with hotel attributes has been classified into two major themes, i.e., *the physical environment* and *human interactions* (Walls et al., 2011; Walls, 2013). The physical environment includes different property-related dimensions such as design, property upkeep, ambiance (cleanliness, comfort, elegance, landscaping, security, safety, and lighting), space and function (architectural layout, space and maintenance, furnishings, socially engaging environment, equipment), signs, symbols, and artifacts (quality of materials, signage, and personal artifacts). Human interactions, on the other hand, entail the attitude of the staff (happy, friendly, accommodating, courteous, respectful, nurturing guest rapport), their professional behavior (efficient, knowledgeable), and the services they offer.

Research on customer experience with standard P2P accommodations has been developing in the last years (i.e., Tussyadiah and Zach, 2017; Cheng and Jin, 2019; Jiang and Lyu, 2021). For instance, Camilleri and Neuhofer (2017) focus on the formation of value co-recovery, value co-reduction, and value co-destruction using data from 850 Airbnb reviews in Malta. Through their lexical analysis of Airbnb reviews in Portland (USA), Tussyadiah and Zach (2017) found that guests' experience is determined by factors such as the host (i.e., hospitality, feeling welcome, the comfort of staying in a home), the property (i.e., facility, atmosphere), and the location (proximity to points of interest and characteristics of the

neighborhood). Their findings emphasized the role of hosts and feeling welcome as a distinctive feature of Airbnb, which is associated with higher rating scores.

Hosts' attitudes and behavior in terms of friendliness, consciousness, and responsiveness, are found to be key elements in shaping the customers' experience and value perception in another study based on thirty-four in-depth interviews with Chinese Airbnb customers (Lyu, Li, and Law, 2019). Additionally, previous studies suggested that the physical environment of Airbnb accommodations in terms of home-like amenities (e.g., access to the full kitchen) is considered one of the principal reasons consumers choose and continue to use Airbnb (Guttentag, 2015). Mody, Suess, and Lehto (2017) developed a model based on Stimulus Organism-Response (S-O-R) theory and tested it through structural equation modeling with 630 respondents to measure how eight dimensions of experience (i.e., entertainment, education, escapism, serendipity, localness, communitas, and personalization) affect extraordinary, memorable outcomes (composite construct composed of meaningfulness and well-being). Conversely, through their analysis of Sydney's Airbnb reviews, Cheng and Jin (2019) found that the guests evaluate their experience with Airbnb accommodations similarly to their hotel stay. Their findings confirm that location convenience, accommodation amenities, and hosts' helpfulness, flexibility, and communication are the key attributes of guests' experience. So et al. (2021) use structural equation modelling to study the physical, contextual, and social components of P2P (authenticity, home benefits, social interactions) on perceived enjoyment and repurchase intention.

As evident from this literature review, existing studies have mostly focused on one type of P2P offering (i.e., standard Airbnb) and a single case study (i.e., single destination), limiting the generalizability of the findings and impeding theoretical development. Furthermore, although these studies offer valuable insights into the customer experience with standard

Airbnb, none of them has explored the nascent premium P2P accommodation-sharing service (i.e., Airbnb Plus). Moreover, existing studies have not used big data text analytics or mixed-methods approaches, which is recommended in future research on customer experience (Holmlund et al., 2020). To build CE theory in P2P contexts, the present study offers a mixed-method approach, combining text analytics with a large dataset and thematic analysis of customer reviews in multiple destinations.

Relevant research questions that have not been answered and that we attempted to address in this study include: *What does constitute customer experience in the P2P industry? Are there any differences in customer experiences with standard versus premium P2P services?* These questions are relevant in the service management context because premium P2P offer different services, target different customer segments, and have different costs compared to standard P2Ps. Moreover, to enhance our contribution, we adopt for the first time a mixed-method approach combining big data text analytics and qualitative analysis. We rely on a large dataset of guest reviews where customers increasingly share their experiences about the services they buy and consume (Cheng and Jin, 2019; Holmlund et al., 2020). Online customer reviews are extremely valuable for academic research, as they provide information about actual consumption experiences, hence, overcoming the issues associated with survey respondents' perceptions, memory, or declaration of intentions (Filieri et al., 2022). Text analytics combined with manual qualitative analysis not only can strengthen the validity of the insights generated but can also produce a more comprehensive picture of the phenomenon investigated (Filieri, Yen, and Yu, 2021).

3. Methodology

3.1 Methodological decisions in Studies 1 and 2

We used data from AirDNA, a data provider that collects short-term vacation rental data from hundreds of sources, including Airbnb. The data adopted refers to 2019 because we wanted to exclude the Covid-19 (potential) impact on CE. As we aim to generalize the findings of CE studies across different case studies (i.e., destinations), we decided to focus on the three European destinations with the highest number of Airbnb Plus listings according to the Airbnb Plus website, namely Lisbon, London, and Rome. Given that AirDNA does not directly indicate whether an accommodation is listed in Airbnb or in Airbnb Plus (i.e., listings are not flagged as Airbnb plus), we manually flagged the Airbnb Plus accommodations for each city from the Airbnb website. The final sample included 87 accommodations in London, 64 in Rome, and 83 in Lisbon.

Second, we matched this list with Airbnb accommodations available in the AirDNA dataset and extracted (randomly), for each city, the same number of accommodations. Hence, the two samples included the same number of accommodations for each city, i.e., 234 listings for each Airbnb type, thus 468 in total. For each Airbnb and Airbnb Plus accommodation, we collected the list of amenities available to compare them.

After this phase, we analyzed frequencies and co-occurrences with text analytics techniques. Finally, we built a dataset containing all the customer reviews of the selected Airbnb and Airbnb Plus accommodations and conducted a detailed thematic analysis (Figure 1).

---- ADD FIGURE 1 HERE ----

After the collection of data on amenities for each Airbnb and Airbnb Plus accommodation through a table indicating 1 or 0 if a given amenity is present or not in the Airbnb listing, we

compared the overall and the detailed list of amenities by implementing several chi-square on amenities frequencies, to identify significant differences between the two P2P types.

At this stage, we analyzed the customer reviews of Airbnb and Airbnb Plus accommodations, which were translated into English using the DeepL software. Researchers have used online reviews as a crucial data source to understand CE (e.g., Brochado et al., 2017; Tussyadiah and Zack, 2017; Cheng and Jin, 2019; Filieri et al., 2022).

Then, we combined two data analysis approaches. Firstly, we used Leximancer to extract information from texts and map the main dimensions of customer experience characterizing the two samples. Leximancer does not require the input of a manually-created dictionary. It automates this process by implementing a Bayesian algorithm to learn patterns and predict relevant concepts, thus reducing human bias (Smith and Humphreys, 2006). Leximancer has been largely used in previous studies to select appropriate words within the data corpus and build a semantic network map (e.g., Cheng and Edwards, 2019; Filieri et al., 2022). The semantic network map uses words and their links to represent the text's meaning (Doerfel, 1998). Nodes in such a network are terms, and "a link in a semantic network represents the extent to which two nodes, i and j, share meaning as measured by their overlapping use of language as a representation of meaning" (Doerfel, 1998, p. 23). Thus, semantic networks reveal specific linguistic contexts of the language used in the reviews (Zhu et al., 2019).

Several steps were implemented to select relevant words within the data corpus and build the semantic network, including text preparation, thesaurus creation, classification, concept mapping, and interpretation (e.g., Smith and Humphreys, 2006). Through these steps, it was necessary, for example, to exclude stopwords, perform stemming, and set the minimum term frequency to be considered (= 100). In line with previous research with Leximancer (e.g.,

Smith and Humphreys, 2006), our semantic network appears highly reliable and valid since it remained almost the same after running several times the clustering algorithm. The main dimensions that emerged from the semantic network were then used as a reference for further investigation.

Subsequently, we assessed terms frequencies and co-occurrences for the Airbnb and the Airbnb Plus samples, respectively. According to Manning and Schütze (1999), co-occurrence denotes two (or more) terms that co-occur in the document. Each term may have multiple meanings, which can be interpreted based on word co-occurrence and connections to others (Zhu et al., 2019). Hence, we worked on the shortlisted terms' frequencies and co-occurrences by implementing chi-squared test on word pairs. These analyses allowed us to gain a more in-depth understanding of the meaning of the terms used in the two samples, thus making it possible to discern the nuances in the meaning of each semantic dimension and unveil the differences between standard (Airbnb) and premium P2P (Airbnb Plus) experiences. This approach was possible mainly because the number of accommodations for the two samples was the same.

4. Findings

4.1 Study 1

4.1.1. Analysis of Amenities

We first analyzed the frequencies of the standard *versus* premium P2P amenities offered by each listing, which is represented in *Appendix 1*. The sum of all frequencies reveals that Airbnb Plus listings totalize 7,866 amenities, while Airbnb standard listings count 4,723

amenities. Thus, by implementing a chi-squared test on such values, we found that Airbnb Plus listings offer more amenities than standard Airbnb accommodations (*p-value <0.001*).

Second, the analysis went more in-depth by scrutinizing the frequencies of each amenity by implementing chi-squared tests. The results reveal that several amenities for Airbnb Plus listings obtained significantly higher frequencies (*p-value <0.001*), including *air conditioning*, *bed linen*, *blackout drapes*, *breakfast*, *carbon monoxide detector*, *coffee machine*, *dishwasher*, *extra pillows and blankets*, *fire alarm*, *fridge*, *highchair*, *Jacuzzi*, *luggage storage*, *microwave oven*, *numeric keypad*, *oven*, *patio*, *balcony*, *pets allowed*, *plates and cutlery*, *private entry*, *private living room*, *self-check-in*, *shampoo*, *stov*e, *the host welcomes you in person*, and *travel cot*. Conversely, Airbnb listings obtained significantly higher frequencies (*p-value <0,001*) for *ethernet connection*, *long-term residence allowed*, and *'you must clean before the check-out'*.

These results show that Airbnb Plus listings offer a significantly higher number and relatively high-end amenities. It can also be noticed that all Airbnb Plus listings provide a combination of standard (e.g., iron, hairdryer, oven, stove, plates, and cutlery) and high-end amenities (e.g., private entry, private living room, extra pillows and blankets, and Jacuzzi), thus showing Airbnb Plus listings offer some distinctive amenities.

4.1.2 Volume and length of reviews

After considering the amenities offered by both types of P2P listings, the analysis considered guests' reviews. Table 1 below shows the number of reviews provided by guests. The chi-squared test reveals a significantly higher number of reviews (*p-value < 0.001*) provided by guests who experienced Airbnb Plus accommodations. Interestingly, it also emerged that the average length of Airbnb Plus reviews was significantly higher than that of

standard Airbnb accommodations (*p-value* < *0.001*). Thus, we can conclude that Airbnb Plus guests are more likely to write and leave longer reviews. According to Zhu et al. (2019), to identify relevant words and make possible subsequent analyses, it is necessary to define a lower limit for the frequency of words, which was set to 100 in our study; hence, words appearing less than 100 times in reviews were not included.

-----ADD **TABLE 1** HERE ----

4.1.3 Conceptual map

Figure 2 shows the conceptual maps resulting from the text-mining process. The conceptual map layout's stability was assessed by running the clustering algorithm several times and comparing the resulting maps. We noticed that the relative positioning of concepts and themes remained similar between various runs, indicating that findings hold across repetitions.

-----ADD **FIGURE 2** HERE ----

The resulting maps made it possible to observe two main differences. First, different macro-concepts (also referred to as dimensions) emerged across both samples. While *location* and *stay* emerged as shared macro-concepts for standard (Airbnb) and premium P2P (Airbnb Plus), each P2P type featured distinctive macro-concepts. The map of the reviews about standard Airbnb highlights *host, clean, location*, and *stay* as its specific macro-concepts, whereas in the Airbnb Plus map, the macro-concepts are *location*, *stay*, *lovely*, *apartment*, and *fantastic* (Figure 2). Second, the Airbnb Plus map shows significantly more micro-concepts for each dimension and more connections between these concepts than standard Airbnb.

These results lead us to infer that guests of standard Airbnb mainly report about the *utilitarian* aspects of the experience (i.e., room cleanliness, safe neighborhood, helpful host,

value for money, comfortable bed), while customer reviews of Airbnb Plus introduce additional dimensions, referring to customer's *affective* and *aesthetic* experiences. The aesthetic and emotional dimensions of the Airbnb Plus experience go beyond the satisfaction of utilitarian needs (i.e., experience, equipped, spacious, stylish, modern, thoughtful, touches, welcome, central, fantastic, and lovely). These results show that the Airbnb plus experience is *aesthetic and emotionally intense*, it is *richer* (i.e., the higher number of micro-concepts), *more complex* (i.e., the interrelationship between different dimensions and micro-concepts). The Airbnb plus guests' experience is *more involving,* as reflected by the length of their reviews (Pan and Zhang, 2011).

However, two considerations must be made at this stage. The Airbnb Plus map shows more macro- and micro-concepts also because, as mentioned above, the experience with Airbnb Plus is a high-involvement one and more meaningful compared to the experience with standard Airbnbs. Since Airbnb customers may decide to leave or not a review - and generally, they tend not to do so when they are not happy or impressed - we can assume that Airbnb Plus guests' level of satisfaction is higher.

4.1.4 Terms frequency

To get a more in-depth understanding of the semantic meaning of concepts, as maps show only some of the relevant connections between concepts, we calculated frequencies of terms and terms' co-occurrences using Leximancer functionalities. Following Galati and Galati (2019), we tested the terms' frequencies and co-occurrence. This approach was possible because we considered the same number of listings for Airbnb and Airbnb Plus. However, given that the number and the average length of Airbnb Plus reviews were significantly

higher, we adjusted the frequencies of the terms that emerged from Airbnb Plus reviews. This was achieved by multiplying the frequency of each Airbnb Plus term for a simple corrective factor. Its value was 0,5471[1]. Table 2 below shows the most frequent terms shared by Airbnb and Airbnb Plus or exclusive of each listing type. We performed the chi-squared tests considering the adjusted count for Airbnb Plus term frequency.

-----ADD **TABLE 2, 3** HERE ----

The chi-squared tests for the most frequent terms emerging from Airbnb and Airbnb Plus reviews reveal no significant differences between the frequencies of terms such as *area, city, clean, distance, easy, excellent, host, need*, and *stay*. Conversely, the frequencies of the other terms are significantly different; Airbnb reviews include more frequently the words *kitchen, location, nice, room* and *place*, while Airbnb Plus reviews differ significantly for other aspects, such as *amazing, apartment, beautiful, comfortable, everything, helpful, lovely, restaurants, and space*.

Table 3 shows the most frequent terms appearing either in Airbnb or Airbnb Plus reviews. Terms that appeared from reviews about standard Airbnb accommodations included *perfect*, *super*, or *recommend*, while terms for the Airbnb Plus sample included *best, better, experience, fantastic, feel, thank, welcome*, and *wonderful*. These positive terms focus more on the emotional side of the experience, reflecting customers' delight. In addition, specific terms emerged, such as *house, neighborhood, value*, and *friendly*, for the standard Airbnb sample, while *breakfast, stylish, thoughtful, touches, tips, street*, and *home* appeared for the Airbnb Plus sample.

[1] It is the result of the ratio 6,353/8,327 (reflecting the different number of reviews between the two samples) multiplied by the ratio 201.7/281.3 (reflecting the different average length of reviews).

First, guests' evaluation of their experience with Airbnb and Airbnb Plus includes considerations regarding the *external environment* (i.e., neighborhood, street), the *physical internal environment* (i.e., house, home, stylish), and *human interactions* (i.e., thoughtful, welcome). However, Airbnb Plus guests' experience is more satisfactory in that guests more frequently use positive and emotional adjectives/nouns to describe their experience with the dimensions of the physical environment (i.e., room, space, comfortable), the external environment (i.e., location, restaurants), and human interactions (i.e., helpful). Furthermore, if, from one side, standard Airbnb reviews are concerned with value-for-money considerations, which are associated with the cognitive dimension of CE (Schmitt, 1999), Airbnb Plus guests focus more on the emotional and aesthetic aspects of their experience. Hence, we support the preliminary findings by showing that the number and length of Airbnb Plus reviews are higher than standard Airbnb and the Airbnb Plus experience is richer, more complex, emotionally intense, and aesthetically pleasing.

4.1.5. Terms co-occurrence

To deepen our understanding of the terms' meaning, we analyzed the terms' co-occurrences by focusing on the macro-concepts identified before. Table 4 reports significant chi-squared tests on the most frequent co-occurrences. Next, we will discuss only some of them alone, as others are more general, and their meaning emerges only in combination with other terms (i.e., lovely, apartment, location, place, and host).

Considering the term 'apartment', substantial differences appear. Several terms in both standard Airbnb and Airbnb Plus reviews were significantly more frequent in the Airbnb Plus sample, such as *location, stay, clean, lovely, place, excellent, everything, beautiful*, and

comfortable. When considering the apartment concept, terms that emerged only in the Airbnb Plus sample included *stylish, wonderful, modern, spacious, quiet, touches*, and *home*.

These findings support that, in the Airbnb Plus experience, there is a strong interconnection between physical attributes and other experiential dimensions such as the *external environment* (i.e., location, quiet), *the aesthetics* (i.e., stylish, beautiful), and the *emotional* dimension of the experience (i.e., lovely, excellent, home). The analysis of terms frequencies shows that Airbnb Plus guests find their apartments as *sophisticated, stylish, more spacious, cleaner*, and in general, more *comfortable* than the standard Airbnb ones. We also noticed that, when considering Airbnb reviews, the term apartment was strongly linked with the term *house*; in contrast, in Airbnb Plus reviews, the term apartment frequently co-occurs with the term *home*, thus suggesting an intimate and affective attachment to the accommodation.

The experience with the host also differs between the two samples. Standard Airbnb reviews delineate a *friendly host* compared to a more *attentive and thoughtful host* in the reviews about Airbnb Plus, who provides suggestions and tips to improve the guests' experience. The frequent and significant co-occurrence of emotional terms such as *lovely, amazing, excellent*, and *best* in the Airbnb Plus sample indicates that guests' experience is *emotional* and *delightful*. Besides, the term *host* in the Airbnb Plus sample frequently co-occurs with the term *home*, which supports the idea that the concept of home is constructed as a social dimension entailing the interaction and communication with the host (Zhu et al., 2019).

Similar findings emerged when considering the term location. Airbnb Plus accommodations are located in more convenient and attractive areas than the standard Airbnb

ones, emphasizing the importance of the experiential dimension of the external environment, which is not theorized in the CE literature in service research. The Airbnb Plus customers' experience with the *external environment* included considerations about *the convenience of the location* (i.e., restaurants' proximity), but also its *aesthetics* (i.e., beautiful part of the city), and *affective* connotations (i.e., lovely, wonderful, amazing).

These findings are corroborated by the analysis of the *stay* dimension, which can be considered a summary of the guests' overall experience. Here, we observed that guests who stayed in Airbnb Plus accommodations use more frequently words such as *lovely, comfortable, wonderful, amazing*, and *best*. These findings reaffirm, once again, a much more positive and emotional experience compared to standard Airbnbs.

-----ADD **TABLE 4** HERE ----

5. Study 2: Thematic analysis

5.1 Rationale and data analysis

In study two, we implemented a detailed manual analysis of a sample of reviews (Zhu et al., 2019) to understand more in-depth semantic nuances and eventually confirm or expand the findings that have emerged in the previous analysis. Hence, study two attempts to extend and validate the existing findings through data triangulation (Creswell and Miller, 2000) and focus on the human interpretation of guests' reviews to present a complementary, qualitative analysis of the phenomenon. This mixed-method approach allowed us to get a comprehensive view of the phenomenon under investigation (Torrance, 2012). Furthermore, we respond to scholars who recommend combining qualitative analysis for research using text analytics methods to improve its accuracy (D'Acunto et al., 2021; Filieri et al., 2022).

To build the data corpus, we adopted a systematic random sampling approach by selecting one review every ten in the dataset of Airbnb and Airbnb Plus (N = 1,200 reviews). While performing the analysis, the authors searched for conceptual and associated meanings according to the previously identified dimensions and potential new ones. The analysis also focused on categorizing the most frequent co-occurrences.

The qualitative approach, although time-consuming, allowed us to eventually validate the findings from the previous analysis and generate a more thorough understanding of the differences between standard and premium P2P. The thematic analysis confirmed that guests experience their P2P accommodation differently. However, in the second study, we tried to use the concept labels available in the academic literature (theory-driven) to name the dimensions identified in study one (data-driven). Leximancer's labeling of the macro-dimension was then modified and adapted to the terminology of CE literature. For example, the physical dimension was previously labeled by Leximancer as 'apartment' in Airbnb Plus and 'clean' in standard Airbnb reviews; the external environment was labeled 'location' in both samples; the dimension of human interactions was termed 'host' in the standard Airbnb reviews and 'lovely' in Airbnb Plus' reviews, while the emotional dimension emerged only in Airbnb Plus reviews and was termed 'fantastic'. Furthermore, the qualitative analysis enabled us to identify the new dimensions of *symbolic and cognitive experiences*. In order to validate the findings, we contacted four academics who did not participate in this study and were given a sample of the reviews of the two types of Airbnb listings (N=50). We asked to generate themes and to comment on the framework generated. Further, we asked 40 students enrolled in a master's degree program to analyze a larger sample of the reviews (N=1,000) and code them after receiving training on qualitative data analysis and coding. After some

follow-up meetings between the authors of this study, the coding frame and the emerging framework were validated.

5.2 *Findings. Dimensions of customer experience*

5.2.1 Physical internal environment: Apartment

Standard Airbnb guests discuss the basic, functional amenities of the properties and consider the apartment a foothold.

*... Tim's apartment is a **nice place** to stay. The room was **not very big**, but **comfortable** and cozy. Good option for staying in London for **reasonable money**... ID 240*

Conversely, Airbnb Plus guests' experience with the internal physical environment is intertwined with the aesthetic dimension of the apartment experience, such as staying in a *beautiful, stylish, and comfortable* place. Furthermore, Airbnb Plus guests also share home feelings and are more likely to use superlatives to describe their experience, revealing the emotional intensity of Airbnb Plus's experience.

*... Gina's flat is quite simply **wonderful**. Its located the heart of a vibrant area, but once you are inside, it's like an oasis...**beautiful, stylish** and oh **so comfortable**. And the outdoor areas??! In London?!! **Unheard of** and such a bonus! ... ID 190*

*...James apartment is extremely **stylish, modern and clean**. You must visit his garden which is **beautifully decorated**, **enjoy** a relaxing breakfast offered by James and we are **glad** that we can **enjoy** the summer breeze at his garden…ID 234*

*The apartment was exactly as it looked on the listing **--very beautiful yet homey**. ID 47*

5.2.2 Human Interactions: The Host

Based on the qualitative analysis of consumer reviews, the host is also perceived differently. Standard Airbnb accommodation reviews emphasize positive attributes such as hosts' friendliness, communicativeness, and flexibility.

*...Robert's communication was usually **prompt and helpful**, as are **his recommendations** for eating and drinking around…ID 200*

*...Mrs. Yang is **really helpful** and she was **very flexible** in the check-in and check-out. Ideal for short stays…ID 540*

However, Airbnb Plus reviews delineate a more attentive and committed host who goes the extra mile to provide an unforgettable experience by offering suggestions and tips to improve guests' experience and make guests feel welcome. The host is often described as *knowledgeable, expert and communicative*. Once again, we notice the *emotional* content of some expressions (i.e., warmth), which denote, once again, the positive emotional declension of the experience with the host, overcoming customers' expectations and achieving customer delight.

*...what sets out apart is the **absolute kindness and generosity** of James himself. **He went over, above and beyond to ensure we were happy**, be it the beautiful tea service he set out or the offers of a luxurious bath after a long day in town…ID 556*

*...**above and beyond** is what Santo's family displayed. Can't thank you enough for the **warm hospitality**, your patience with our late arrival, your help with luggage parking. Thank*

you so much for the welcome package with all the valuable info for our stay. We loved your recommendations…ID 324

*...what **a lovely host**! Alex and Pati, make you **feel very welcome**, my partner and I had experienced a cancellation of a connecting flight and **were welcomed** in the early morning **with a big smile which felt wonderfu**l after an 18+hr layover! Alex and Pati also have included a very large book of recommendations, which we found **very helpful.**..ID 933*

5.2.3 The external environment: Location

The analysis of Airbnb Plus reviews underlines a more positive evaluation of the location compared to standard Airbnb. In Airbnb Plus, the experience is positive because of the convenience, but most importantly, the beauty of the location and its surroundings. Airbnb Plus accommodations are often located close to iconic touristic areas (e.g., Spanish Steps in Rome), which foster people's expression of positive feelings such as ideal, fantastic, and exceptional.

*... The apartment, too, is top-notch, and the location is **PERFECT**…ID 451*

*... We were extremely happy with everything about the place. **The location is fantastic** for exploring all of Rome…*

5.2.4 The Aesthetic dimension

As we mentioned above, when customers discuss their Airbnb Plus experience with the physical internal and external environment, they often comment on the aesthetic attributes of the experience, focusing on the *design, the decoration, the style, and the colors of the*

*furniture, the room, or the hous*e. Moreover, the experience with the aesthetic dimension of the internal dimension is often associated with emotional expressions like lovely, beautiful, fabulous, and wonderful.

*...**the decor, artwork,** books, furniture and kitchen equipment were exceptional, I felt we were visiting a friends' home as a special guest. Everything reflects **a great "design eye" and loving care**. Not your run of the mill rental. Marina was most helpful for any of our needs and questions. Can't imagine anyone not loving their stay at this very special property with this **lovely** host…ID 1045*

5.2.5 The Emotional dimension

Furthermore, we have also noticed that the Airbnb Plus experience often triggers intense *emotions* because the guest reviews often contain superlatives and affective comments like *fantastic, homey, amazing, stunning*, and *awesome*, sometimes followed by exclamation marks.

*...**absolutely fantastic!** Cannot fault it! Beautiful space and garden, friendly and knowledgeable host who goes the extra mile! Perfectly located for the weekend I had planned and made better by the hospitality provided. **Even better than I could have imagined and my best stay in London to date!** Communication is fantastic, breakfast is a real treat and the **space is cosy and homely** yet beautifully modern with everything and more!...ID 890*

5.2.5 The Symbolic dimension

Airbnb Plus customers also comment about the luxuriousness and exclusivity of their experience. The luxury feel of the Airbnb Plus experience is associated with attributes like *exclusivity, extravagance, and high quality*. Besides, several reviews equate Airbnb Plus accommodations to five-star hotels.

*...Andrea and Sarah have created a fabulous**, luxurious, leafy and chilled space**. The decor is striking, with gorgeous colour palette, high quality furniture and quirky touches are perfectly balanced...ID 19*

*...Wow! Lauras flat has been magnificently refurbished with all the modern amenities one could ask for. **A spa like experience**. A perfect balance of access to the city and **luxurious** accommodations in the Earls Court neighborhood for a family of four!...ID 1046*

*...Look no more! This place is impeccable! Quiet and spacious. **I stayed at many 5 star hotels in London, and this place is sooooo much better!**... ID 1008*

5.2.6 The cognitive dimension

In addition to these dimensions, the qualitative analysis allowed the generation of additional insights regarding the cognitive dimension, reflecting a rational evaluation of the experience (Schmitt, 1999). Specifically, the cognitive dimension includes considerations of the value for money and problems of the standard Airbnb experience. The first, value for money, includes considerations about the financial value of the accommodation in relation to the price paid, which are more likely to occur in reviews for standard P2P than for Airbnb Plus.

...super location with everything you need if you're planning to be touring through the day. Very simple but offers ***good value for money****....ID 1200*

...fantastic value. Everything clean and very straight forward, ***a very pleasant stay at an even better price****...ID 624*

...this place is comfortable and very central. ***Great value for money!****...ID 775*

5.2.7 Negative Experiences

Finally, by comparing the two review samples, we also noticed differences in discussing problems encountered by guests during their travel experiences. Customers of standard Airbnb are more likely to complain in their reviews, mentioning, more frequently, issues related to *cleanliness*, *damaged furniture*, or *misleading advertising*. Standard Airbnb Guests' dissatisfaction is mainly expressed in terms of their experience with the *physical internal* (e.g., cleanliness issues, damaged furniture, amenities malfunctioning, bad smell) and *external environment* (e.g., noisy streets, dirty stairs).

...This trip was one of the few bad experiences with Airbnb accommodations… The apartment is in ***very bad status****. Carpets are* ***super dirty, furniture is damaged, in the bedrooms and in the bath, lots of dust****.... The* ***shower*** *on the ground floor* ***was blocked****. The heating system on the ground floor* ***does not work properly****. The company that manages the apartment did not provide any specific indications at check in, namely on the way the heating system works.*

Eventually on the third day they dropped off portable heaters but our stay only lasted 4 days so we were forced to sleep on the sofa bed in the lounge (a futon bed very

uncomfortable)… The ***pictures and description*** *of this apartment is* ***a clear example of misleading advertising*** *and should be forbidden…ID 777*

...Not a great experience I'm afraid. even ***though I was expecting a 'budget' experience it was more like grotty student digs****. no door handles meant easy to get locked in bathroom, front door difficult to open****. noisy at night and vomit in the pavement outside****, (granted not the hosts fault.) not a great stay…ID 878*

*...****Be prepared for a HOSTEL like experience****, as in shared spaces, shared bathrooms, and sometimes dealing with other guest's messes. If you prefer your own private, clean space, just get a hotel. We stayed during a terrible heatwave and our rooms had no air conditioning and no fans. The AirBnB got so hot one night (105ºF) we simply could not sleep and had to leave and stay in a nearby hotel…ID 995*

Conversely, the term *problem* in the reviews for the Airbnb Plus sample refers to relatively minor issues for guests, such as smaller rooms compared to photos or unstable internet connection. Despite such minor issues, the reviews still reflect an overall satisfaction with other aspects of guests' experience.

...The condo itself was very clean and had everything you could need - ***only downside*** *was that the* ***AC wouldn't reach room area*** *which meant it was very warm in the evenings (probably wouldn't be an issue outside of the summer months)…ID 154*

... The ***only downside*** *was the* ***internet*** *which was* ***very unstable****…ID 454*

5.2.8 Meeting versus exceeding customer expectations

Overall, we noticed that guests of standard Airbnb discussed how their expectations were met concerning *basic needs* (comfortable bed, convenient location, room cleanliness).

...nice stay, ***everything as it was described really****. The place was clean and tidy when we arrived with fresh bed sheets. The check in process was quick and easy which was important as it was raining heavy at the time of our arrival…ID 765*

...this was a very nice stay. ***The room was exactly like on the pictures clean and nice.*** *The host was Great Alessandro told us where to go eat (and oh it was very Good!) …ID 700*

On the other side, we noticed that when Airbnb Plus guests discuss the emotional, aesthetic, and symbolic aspects of their experience, their expectations are often overcome, reaching customer delight (Oliver, 1980; Matzler et al., 1996).

Even better than I could have imagined *and my best stay in London to date! Communication is fantastic, breakfast is a real treat and the space is cosy and homely yet beautifully modern with everything and more!...ID 890*

...The location was amazing ***much better than we expected****, the house is so cozy and cute and had everything we needed…ID 454*

5.2.9 Theory development

In order to abstract from the findings and builds theory, we developed an explanatory framework (see Figure 3) to reduce the wide range of concepts into a set of manageable relationships (Zhu et al., 2019) and provide a comprehensive framework for future research. Our analysis reveals that the P2P type (Plus versus standard) moderates the effect of the primary dimensions of CE (*internal, external environment, human interaction*) on *cognitive,*

emotional, symbolic and aesthetic experiences. As explained above CE with the internal and external environments and human interaction trigger different outcomes based on the P2P type: in the context of Airbnb Plus they foster emotional, aesthetic, and luxurious experiences, leading to customer delight; in the context of standard P2Ps, they foster cognitive evaluation of experiences and match with expectations, leading to guests' satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

-----ADD **FIGURE 3** HERE ----

6. Discussion

Customer experience is a relatively new concept in the marketing literature, and there is still a dearth of empirical studies on the topic (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Schmitt et al., 2015; Homburg, Jozić, and Kuehnl, 2017). This is one of the first studies that has adopted a mixed-method approach combining text analytics and qualitative thematic analysis using data from multiple P2P accommodations of different P2P types (premium versus standard) located in different European destinations.

The study contributes to the growing research on customer experience with P2P (Tussyadiah and Zach, 2017; Cheng and Jin, 2019; Lyu et al., 2019; Zhu et al., 2019; So et al., 2021; Zhang, Meng, and So, 2021). Specifically, we explored customers' experience with standard *versus* premium P2P sharing of accommodations (i.e., Airbnb *versus* Airbnb Plus). Premium P2P services represent a new concept in the literature; hence, this study is the first attempt to unveil CE with premium P2P. The study's findings demonstrate that significant differences exist in customer experiences with standard and premium P2P in terms of the *number and types of amenities offered*, *customer involvement*, and *nature and richness of the experience*.

First, Airbnb Plus accommodations provide a significantly higher number of amenities and of a higher standard, such as for example spa and jacuzzi, high quality linen, private space, and coffee machine. This finding aligns with the result of hosts construction of P2P meanings (Farmaki et al., 2021), and on previous studies on luxury hotels, emphasizing high levels of comfort and convenience as core attributes of luxury hospitality (Chen and Peng, 2014).

Second, our findings highlight that Airbnb Plus guests are more likely to leave a review and write longer reviews. The length of a review also reflects the reviewer's involvement and the meaningfulness of the experience; the more involved the customer, the more detailed and lengthier his/her reviews are (Pan and Zhang, 2011), which demonstrates that the Airbnb Plus experience is highly involving compared to the customer experience with standard Airbnb listings.

Third, our analysis of both types of listings identified several *common themes*, including host, apartment, location, and stay, with greater emphasis granted to the *social aspect of interaction* (i.e., host) by standard Airbnb guests and the physical environment (i.e., apartment) by the Airbnb Plus guests. A previous study on standard Airbnb accommodation in Sydney identified the themes of location, host, and amenities as key themes of the guests' experience (e.g., Cheng and Jin, 2019). Our study did not identify the theme *recommend*, but it identified a more comprehensive attribute *stay* encompassing many dimensions, including amenities.

Further, this study found that the experience with premium P2P is *richer* (i.e., a higher number of micro-concepts), and *more complex* (i.e., the interrelationships between different dimensions) compared to standard P2P. Airbnb Plus experience carries *symbolic meanings*

(i.e., exclusivity), is *emotionally intense* (i.e., affective dimension), and is *aesthetically pleasing* (i.e., aesthetic dimension). These findings reveal the differences in customer experiences with premium and standard P2P accommodation sharing services.

Fourth, we categorize Airbnb and Airbnb plus experiences into different dimensions, including the primary components of the service offering: *internal physical environment, external environment*, *human interaction*, and customers' reaction to the experience with them (*aesthetic*, *affective*, and *symbolic experiences*). Eventually, the analysis of Airbnb Plus reviews made it possible to identify new dimensions of CE, that is, aesthetic, emotional, and symbolic dimensions, which did not emerge in previous studies on standard Airbnb (e.g., Tussyadiah and Zach, 2017; Cheng and Jin, 2019; So et al., 2021). We also differentiated the external from the internal environment, while previous studies only discussed the location in general (Tussyadiah and Zach, 2017). These dimensions characterize the differences existing between the two types of P2P accommodations. For instance, we highlight how the key dimensions of the physical environment, external environment, and human interactions can foster emotional, aesthetic, and symbolic responses for premium P2P (versus standard Airbnb), potentially leading to customer delight.

Our findings show that the term *apartment* (i.e., physical environment) is found to have more of a *homey* connotation in *Airbnb Plus*, building more affective value for the customer and leading to emotionally intense experiences. Previous studies suggest that the physical dimension, in isolation from social and affective dimensions, is less likely to trigger the home feeling in Airbnb guests (Zhu et al., 2019). However, in contrast to Zhu et al. (2019)'s findings, the term *home* did not emerge in our analysis of the standard Airbnb sample, while it was an integral element of the experience with Airbnb plus accommodations. Our findings reveal that the home feeling can be constructed by either the physical environment, human

interaction, or a combination of both. Hence, the host is not necessarily central to creating a home feeling for P2P guests (Zhu et al., 2019). Accordingly, we reveal that guests' interaction with the physical environment generates a sense of home feelings in the Airbnb Plus experience, for instance, through extra touches, stylish design, and modern décor. This finding aligns with Farmaki et al. (2021) who in a qualitative study reveal that for hosts the home feeling represents a fundamental aspect of the luxury P2P accommodation experience.

In the Airbnb Plus setting, our analysis suggests that guests' experience with the physical environment highlights the importance of the aesthetic dimension of the experience, frequently mentioning the design and style of the accommodation, whereas in the Airbnb case, the design and style attributes did not emerge. Apartments are considered more sophisticated, beautiful, better located, more spacious, cleaner, and more comfortable than Airbnb ones. Airbnb Plus apartments are often characterized by stylish, unique, classy, and design solutions. Moreover, premium P2P customer experiences foster emotionally charged expressions (i.e., awesome, amazing, fantastic), which suggest, once more, that customers are delighted about their experience with the physical environment.

Our model includes human interaction as an important dimension of guests' experience, which refers to how the employees make the consumers feel (Carbone and Haeckel, 1994). The centrality of host-guest interaction in shaping positive guests outcomes was highlighted in previous studies on standard Airbnb (Camilleri and Neuhofer, 2017; Tussyadiah and Zach, 2017; Zhang, Jahromi, and Kizildag, 2018). This factor is more accentuated in P2P research, where in-person interaction with the host is critical in evaluating service quality (Ju et al., 2019). Unlike previous studies, we show how human interaction can trigger emotional CE. The analysis of Airbnb and Airbnb Plus guests' reviews shows that the host is perceived not only as helpful (cognitive) but also as friendly and lovely (emotive), thus contributing to

enhancing guests' emotional satisfaction. Cheng and Jin's (2019) findings indicate that *friendly* and *helpful communication* are key (and positive) themes used to describe service providers (i.e., hosts) in standard Airbnbs. However, our results reveal that, in the premium P2P experiences, hosts are described as *professional*, *knowledgeable*, *thoughtful*, and *proactive* compared with standard Airbnb ones. Moreover, premium P2P hosts are appreciated for their ability to make guests feel at home, provide tips, and promptly resolve issues. The willingness of these hosts to go the extra mile triggers emotional evaluations. Airbnb Plus hosts are perceived to be more professional in dealing with guests' requests, more attentive to guests' information needs, and more effective in handling their complaints. Hence, the role of Airbnb plus hosts moves beyond the role of facilitator, as identified by Cheng and Jin (2019), to a co-creator role where the host designs the travel experience with their guests.

Finally, we reveal that the percentage of negative comments is significantly lower or almost absent in the Airbnb Plus sample. Conversely, positive superlatives frequently co-occur with the concept *stay*, a guest description of the overall experience in the Airbnb Plus experience compared to the standard one. We can link this finding to studies on luxury hotels, which receive a relatively higher percentage of positive reviews compared to budget hotels, whereas budget hotels are more likely to receive negative reviews (Li, Ye, and Law, 2013). Moreover, luxury hotel guests seek delightful attributes (i.e., spacious rooms, pleasant views, etc.), while budget hotel guests focus on basic features, including clean rooms, value for money, and location (Shanahan and Hyman, 2007). The premium version of Airbnb evokes feelings essential to consuming luxury products (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982).

Conversely, customers' experience with standard Airbnb included issues encountered during their stay and related to value-for-money considerations, thus confirming the finding of a previous study (Cheng and Jin, 2019). In this study, standard Airbnb customers'

dissatisfaction expressed through their reviews is mainly emanating from the negative cognitive assessment (value for money) of the physical internal (i.e., amenities) and external environment (i.e., noisy street).

7. Theoretical contribution

The key theoretical contribution of this study lies in the development of a framework of experiential consumption at a premium *versus* standard P2P, which contributes to the customer experience theory (e.g., Schmitt, 1999; Schmitt et al., 2015; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Homburg et al., 2017). Specifically, this study focused on P2P service offerings (i.e., accommodation sharing) and compared customer experience with premium *versus* standard P2P offerings. Since we studied accommodation-sharing P2P, we also contributed to this literature (e.g., Camilleri and Neuhofer, 2017; Mody et al., 2017; Tussyadiah and Zach, 2017; Cheng and Jin, 2019; Moon et al., 2019; Osman, D'Acunto, and Johns, 2019; Lyu, Li, and Law, 2019).

We developed a theoretical framework (see Figure 3) of CE with standard *versus* premium P2P accommodations, showing how the two P2P services affect the customer experience. Specifically, the primary elements of customer experience (i.e., internal, external environments and human interactions) trigger different experiences depending on the P2P type (premium versus standard). Customer experience with standard P2P is more likely to trigger cognitive experiences, while experiences with premium P2P offerings are more likely to produce aesthetics, symbolic and emotional experiences. Interestingly, we also demonstrated how some of these dimensions of CE contribute to different outcomes, such as delight and customer satisfaction.

As mentioned above, customers of premium P2P services not only review the functional aspects of the experience with the physical environment and human interaction (e.g., Barsky and Nash, 2002; Walls et al., 2011; Walls, 2013); instead, they also discuss the emotional, aesthetic, and symbolic nuances related to their experience with these dimensions. Guests of Airbnb Plus accommodations often use expressions of amazement - a feeling of great surprise or wonder - usually driven by the perception of novelty and/or greatness, expressing a sense of awe. Amazement is often triggered by stimuli that are so extraordinary or remarkable (Filieri et al., 2021), hence exceeding users' expectations.

We contribute to the literature on customer experience dimensions with services (e.g., Bueno et al., 2019). This conceptualization is necessary to reduce the wide range of concepts involved in the analyses into a set of manageable relationships (Zhu et al., 2019). Theoretically, the model introduces the aesthetic and symbolic dimensions of CE, which adds to the human and physical dimensions of the CE framework adopted in hospitality research (e.g., Bitner, 1992; Barsky and Nash, 2002; Walls et al., 2011; Walls, 2013), and the cognitive and emotional dimensions of theoretical frameworks adopted in retailing/branding research (Schmitt, 1999; Brakus et al., 2009; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Becker and Jaakkola, 2020). The emotional dimension includes the affective side of the customer experience, i.e., how guests feel about it (Schmitt, 1999), while the cognitive dimension reflects a rational evaluation of the experience (Schmitt, 1999). We introduce a new dimension, which is the symbolic dimension, which includes the social meanings and values attached to the experience by customers. This dimension is exhibited in reviews describing the exclusivity, extravagance, and luxury of their stay. Guests appreciate the stylish touches, (beautiful) gardens/terraces, brightness, gorgeous color palette, and high-quality furniture of Airbnb Plus accommodations. The location is also appreciated in terms of comfort and exclusivity. This

finding links with research on luxury consumption; experiencing a premium P2P offering is important to some guests who value and emphasize the exclusivity and luxuriousness of their experience in their reviews (Berthon et al., 2009). Although the importance of location has been identified in previous studies, this concept has not been integrated with CE theory. Hence, we suggest the external environment dimension of CE is important. Customers value the location of the Airbnb accommodation and its surroundings, the neighborhood, its distance to transportation, services, and restaurants, and its safety. Our study also highlights the interrelationships between different dimensions of customer experience. For example, the external environment dimension of CE triggers aesthetics and emotional evaluations in premium P2P experiences.

By combining these results, customers of premium P2P show a higher level of satisfaction, closer to delight, compared to its regular counterpart. Linking this finding to expectation-confirmation theory (ECT) (Oliver, 1980), customers of premium P2P (Airbnb Plus guests) are likely to be delighted because their experience is much more positive than they expected; hence, a positive disconfirmation occurs (Churchill and Surprenant, 1982). According to ECT (Oliver, 1980), customer delight can be defined as an emotional response exhibiting high pleasure and high arousal as a response to a pleasurable/pleasantly positive experience that exceeds his/her expectation and goes beyond satisfaction (Oliver et al., 1997; Barnes et al., 2020). Delight is crucial to service providers as the result of an emotionally engaging experience (Finn, 2005); it is long-lasting in customers' minds and associated with customers' loyalty and repeat purchases (Torres, Fu, and Lehto, 2014).

Finally, another contribution is the adoption of a mixed-method approach in the study of customer experience combining text analytics and qualitative analysis, responding to a recent call for research on CE (Holmlund et al., 2020; Filieri et al., 2022). Text analytics of a large

dataset combined with manual qualitative analysis can, in addition to strengthening the robustness of the method, produce a more in-depth analysis of the phenomenon investigated through human interpretation (Filieri et al., 2021). Qualitative research can be used to better understand and go in-depth with respect to what is obtained by data analytics software, which can serve the purpose of delimiting the areas of investigation through preliminary findings.

8. Managerial implications

The findings of this study can be helpful for P2P entrepreneurs to understand how to improve the customer experience at the various touchpoints in the customer journey. Airbnb hosts can understand more about the attributes and dimensions that are more frequently used by their guests to describe their experience. The knowledge generated can help them understand to what extent their offer matches customers' expectations and know, in more detail, what they are looking for in a premium P2P experience. This study provides insights that will equip hosts of premium P2P with more information about what attributes best contribute to customer delight. This is crucial as the ultimate purpose of any service provider is to reach customer delight through creating or orchestrating a memorable and emotionally engaging experience for their customers (Gilmore and Pine, 1999). Furthermore, hosts of standard Airbnb can learn about the importance of exceeding customer expectations regarding the experiential dimensions of physical internal and external environments and human interaction, triggering positive emotional evaluations.

However, we believe the findings of this study can also be useful for hotel managers of luxury hotels and P2P companies. The attributes and dimensions of CE explored in the analysis of Airbnb Plus sample can help, for example, luxury hotels to understand their points

of parity and point of difference (Keller, Sternthal, and Tybout, 2002) concerning Airbnb plus *versus* standard Airbnbs. Furthermore, the knowledge generated can help them know where they stand, respond to their customer base needs adequately, and identify the (new) elements that will enhance the CE while competing with the emerging premium/luxury P2P sector. Large hotel groups could use the information generated in this study to understand which attributes effectively create delightful CEs and build customer loyalty.

Considering the emergence of the symbolic dimensions in premium P2P experiences, we assume that Airbnb will increasingly challenge the luxury hospitality industry and offer a competitive product for a different, more upscale clientele. The study can be valuable for Airbnb to understand consumer perceptions, expectations, and experiences with the two service offerings. For example, these findings can help Airbnb develop a new set of guidelines/criteria that hosts must respect or attain to be listed on the Airbnb Plus platform.

Interestingly, Marriott International, one of the largest hotel groups in the world, is planning to launch its home-sharing platform that exclusively focuses on high-end accommodation. On the one hand, the findings of this study can help Airbnb to understand the CE with premium P2P services and adapt their platform accordingly. On the other hand, they can be insightful for new entrants like Marriott to learn about consumer needs in the emerging premium P2P sector and design an offering that can cater to these needs.

9. Limitations and future research

Like all studies, ours includes limitations. First, the analysis focuses on reviews to explore CE. However, consumers sometimes do not fully express the intricacies of their experiences

in online reviews. Therefore, a qualitative approach based on interviews or focus groups is needed to validate the findings.

Furthermore, this study adopted data collected prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. Although we believe that the theoretical implications of this study are relevant in the post-Covid-19 world, it is probably interesting to explore the dimensions of customer experience during the Covid-19 pandemic. In this context, we might expect that the dimensions related to the internal physical environment might assume higher importance, considering the relevance of clean and sanitized environments to reduce uncertainty and the high risk connected with catching the virus.

Third, our study focused on CE with Airbnb and Airbnb Plus. Although Airbnb is among the first P2P companies who launch a premium P2P service, other companies operating in other P2P sectors (i.e., transportation) have started offering similar premium services. Hence, an investigation across platforms and services is recommended in future research.

Fourth, the study adopted an exploratory approach to identify the dimensions of CE with premium P2P. A quantitative analysis based on online surveys could test the potential cause-effect relationships between the dimensions specified in this study and between these dimensions and relevant CE outcomes, such as perceived value, satisfaction, delight, and loyalty.

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