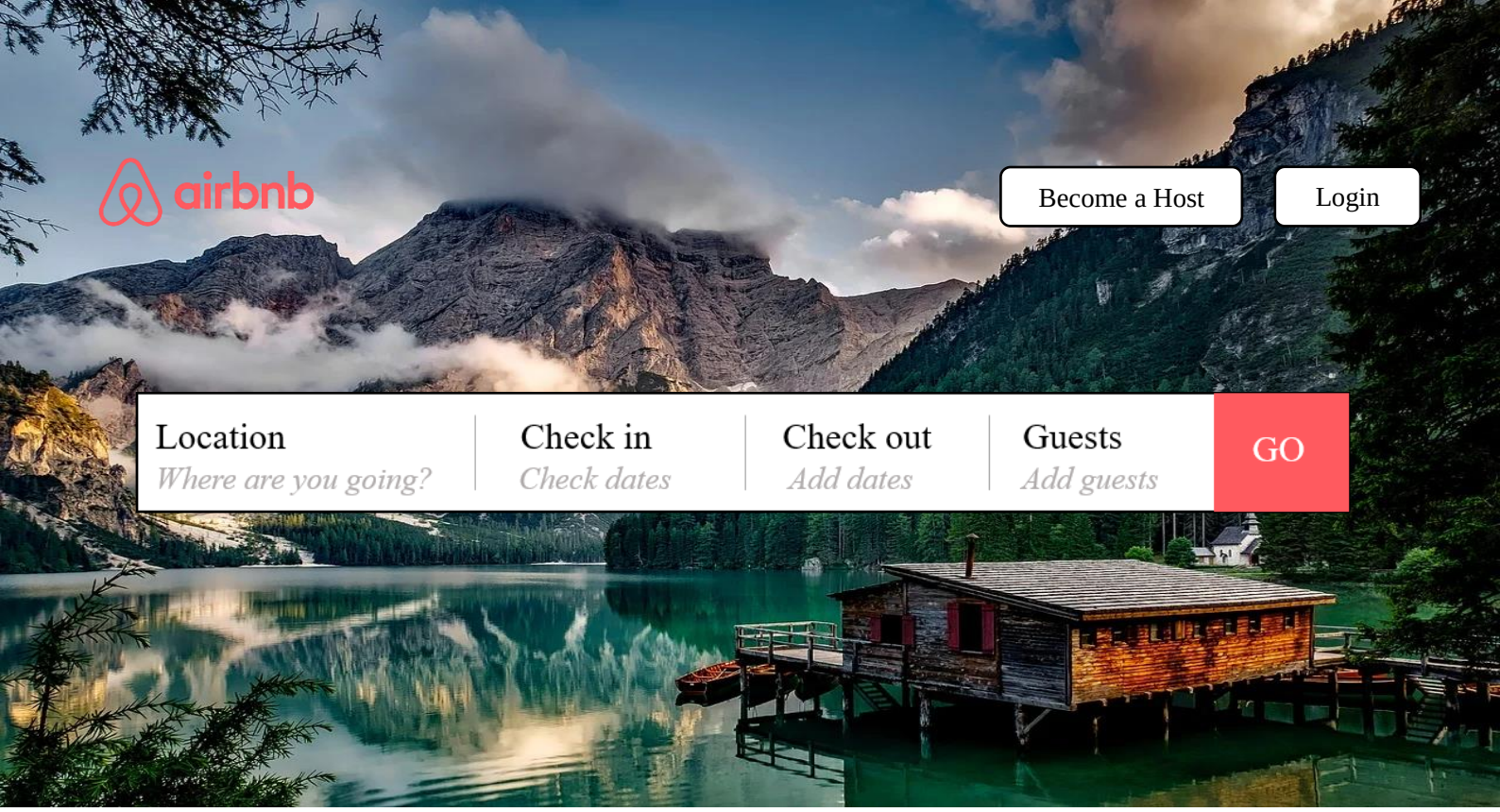

TRUST ON PEER-TO-PEER PLATFORMS IN THE SHARING ECONOMY

A Case Study of Airbnb

Indian Institute of Technology Bombay

Self project on Case study

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FIGURES

TABLES

ABBREVIATIONS

DT	Dispositional Trust
OT	Online Trust
IT	Institutional Trust
IPT	Interpersonal Trust
R	Review

ABSTRACT

Peer-to-peer platforms in the sharing economy have become a growing and popular phenomenon that increasingly creates attention among society, economy, and academia. These platforms enable individuals to engage in sharing activities with other peers, and require online interaction, as well as face-to-face encounters with strangers. This creates an uncertain and risky environment and demonstrates why trust has become an increasingly vital component on peer-to-peer platforms. This thesis uses Airbnb as a case to investigate the role of trust on peer-to-peer accommodation platforms, as well as to provide a holistic overview of the targets of trust, constructs of trust, and trust-building measures. A survey with 250 respondents and a review analysis of 200 online reviews were conducted as part of the research in this thesis.

In our findings, we identified four trust constructs (dispositional, online, institutional, and interpersonal trust) that proved to play an important role on the Airbnb platform. The survey revealed that people who have never used Airbnb have lower levels of dispositional and online trust compared to Airbnb peers. In addition, we found a very strong relationship between institutional and interpersonal trust for Airbnb peers. Significant trust-building measures include online reviews, identity verification, secure payment seals, quality of information on website/listing/profile, high quality communication, improved background checks, greater support, and accuracy of information. The review analysis identified a review bias and revealed variables which build and diminish trust in Airbnb and Airbnb peers, including i.e., service quality, safety and security, and product quality.

The insights of this study led to several discussion points, whereby it became evident that (1) trust plays a major role in participation in the sharing economy by functioning as a prerequisite, (2) platforms in the sharing economy have the ability to function as a trust-building vehicle, (3) there is a spill-over effect of trust between institutional and interpersonal trust, (4) a review bias may devalue peer reviews as a trust-building measure, and (5) incorporating certain trust-building measures can result in separate trust-challenges, and carry over negative repercussions.

Keywords: Trust, peer-to-peer platform, sharing economy, Airbnb, antecedents of trust, dispositional trust, online trust, institutional trust, interpersonal trust, trust-building measures, reviews.

1. Introduction

1.1 Motivation/ Relevance

This thesis will present the complex challenges of trust and provide a holistic and in-depth outlook on service management needs, in relation to trust on peer-to-peer platforms in the sharing economy. Trust is not only an important interdisciplinary factor that is vital to the success of collaborative consumption overall, but also a concept which is embedded in the multitude of relationships and business actors of the complex environment of peer-to-peer platforms (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 1). Trust (among other social constructs) can be explored from the customer's perception, at multiple touchpoints along the customer journey on a peer-to-peer platform and provide an overview of the customer's experience (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016, p. 77). Understanding the concept and components of trust on peer-to-peer platforms is key to understanding how trust is created in such environments, and how it affects customer's experiences, as well as how it affects the performance of the platform. Insights on trust may facilitate advances to a platforms' value proposition in terms of improved service quality and may also contribute to managing and designing for better service delivery for businesses in the sharing economy.

Analyzing trust on a peer-to-peer accommodation platform, such as Airbnb, is particularly interesting due to the triad of stakeholder relationships, the intensity of social interaction (Möhlmann, 2016, pp. 4,5), the myriad of touchpoints (both online and offline) (Voorhees et al., 2017, p. 270) and the platform's reduced control of the customer experience (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p.7). Recent incidents addressing security issues as well as legal complications on the Airbnb platform, which has been debated in popular media (Möhlmann, 2016, p. 2), has led to a discussion and concern for the safety and security of members of the Airbnb community, as well as the legal arrangements of peer-to-peer platforms (Lieber, 2015; Graham, 2019). Overall, bad experiences with Airbnb have led to negative publicity and heavy criticism of their trustworthiness (Roberts, 2019).

Despite the complexity and necessity of establishment of trust, academic research on trust, particularly in regard to peer-to-peer platforms, is still limited (Möhlmann, 2016, p. 3). Therefore, this thesis aims at providing a more holistic view on the constructs, antecedents, objects and targets, as well as the mediators of trust on accommodation peer-to-peer platforms

in the sharing economy, in order to map out needed service management measures for managing trust.

1.2 Problem Statement & Research Question

Due to the vast complexity of peer-to-peer platforms in the sharing economy, which has facilitated the merger between online transactions and face-to-face interactions with strangers, trust has become an increasingly vital component to the success of such platform providers. In analyzing existing literature on the concepts of trust and the sharing economy, there is a need to develop a deeper understanding of the role of trust in the complex environment of peer-to-peer platforms. Therefore, the aim is to answer the following research question:

What is the role of trust on peer-to-peer accommodation platforms in the sharing economy i.e., Airbnb?

To answer the research question, we developed three sub-research questions:

1. *What trust constructs and trust antecedents are relevant in the context of peer-to-peer accommodation platforms?*
2. *How and why do levels of dispositional, online, institutional and interpersonal trust vary amongst Airbnb peers and people who have never used Airbnb, and are the trust constructs interdependent?*
3. *What variables affect (builds and diminishes) the dynamics of interpersonal and institutional trust on Airbnb?*

1.3 Thesis Structure

This part will present the thesis structure, visualized in figure 1, to provide an overview of the thesis.

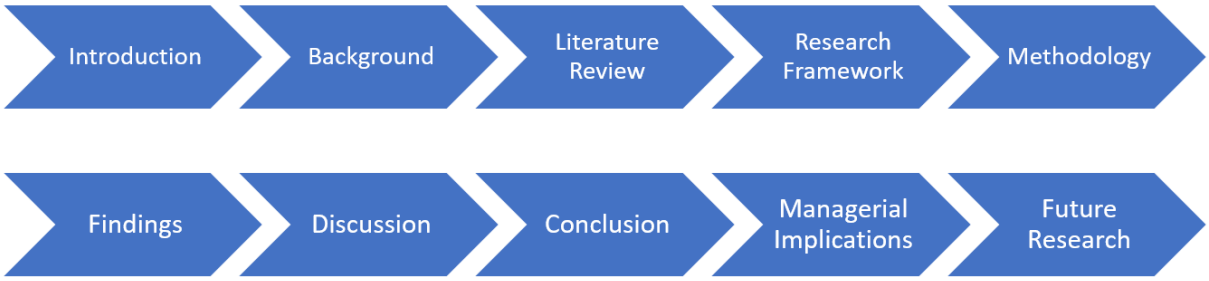

Figure 1: Thesis structure

Chapter 1 introduces the topic of this thesis, including the motivation and relevance, the problem formulation, and the research question. **Chapter 2** provides background information on the platform revolution, the sharing economy, and includes a case description of Airbnb. **Chapter 3** presents a detailed literature review on trust on peer-to-peer platforms in the sharing economy, including definitions of trust, trust in the sharing economy, antecedents of trust, constructs of trust, and trust building measures. **Chapter 4** introduces the research framework guiding the research process of this thesis. **Chapter 5** outlines the methodology of the research, including the philosophy of science, the research strategy and method, as well as the survey and the review analysis. **Chapter 6** presents the findings of the research (survey and review analysis). **Chapter 7** discusses the findings of the research and the thesis approach. **Chapter 8** wraps up the thesis with a conclusion. Lastly, **chapter 9** and **chapter 10** present managerial implications and future research.

2. Background

2.1 Platform Revolution – the Rise of Platforms

"The platform is a simple-sounding yet transformative concept that is radically changing business, the economy, and society at large" (Parker et al., 2016, p. 3). It is a new business model that connects organizations, people, and resources through digital technology and creates enormous amounts of value by exchanging goods, services, or social currency (Parker et al., 2016, pp. 3,5). The platform revolution enables the shift from a simple pipeline structure to a complex set of relationships between the producers, consumers, and the platform (Parker et al., 2016, p. 6). The list of platforms is long, including Airbnb, Uber, Facebook, Amazon, Alibaba, YouTube, eBay and many more (Parker et al., 2016, p. 3). They have the ability to disrupt traditional businesses because they are able to grow much faster as a result of no longer being connected to capital and physical assets (e.g., Airbnb does not own any rooms) (Parker et al., 2016, p. 9).

2.2 The Sharing Economy

The nature of platforms makes them part of the sharing economy. Möhlmann & Geissinger (2018, p. 1) defined the sharing economy as "[…] digitally-enabled, peer-to-peer exchange platforms for goods and services that connect spare capacity with demand or offer access-over ownership by enabling renting, lending, reselling or swapping". Co-founder of Airbnb, Brian Chesky, described the process in the sharing economy very well: "The stuff that matters in life is no longer stuff. It's other people. It's relationships. It's experience" (Sundararajan, 2016, p. 1). In other words, the sharing economy is more than just buying products. It is about meeting other people and creating meaningful relationships and experiences while sharing resources. This new phenomenon has changed the way business is done and has created "[...] the most valuable privately-owned US tech start-ups of all time" (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 1). Researchers do not agree on one name for the sharing economy, different terms such as crowd-based capitalism, collaborative economy, renting economy, gig economy, peer economy, and on-demand economy are used to describe this new economy (Sundararajan, 2016, p. 27).

The concept of the sharing economy, however, is not new. Sharing behaviors and forms of community-based exchange have been present in the past. The difference is that the sharing economy creates new possibilities of doing things by using technology. The community one

can share with extends from family and friends to basically all people around the world. This is referred to as "stranger sharing" (Sundararajan, 2016, pp. 5–6) allowing all to engage in peer-to-peer interactions (Botsman & Rogers, 2011, p. xv). Sharing is now happening "[…] at a scale never before possible, creating a culture and economy of what's mine is yours" (Botsman & Rogers, 2011, p. xv).

The idea of sharing creates the basis for collaborative consumption which is an often-mentioned term to describe sharing behaviors such as sharing, lending, renting, swapping etc. (Belk, 2010; Botsman & Rogers, 2011). Many people engage in collaborative consumption every day, following a growing global movement of collaboration. The enormous benefits of saving money, and the possibility of making new friends and contributing to the environment motivates people when choosing sharing over owning (Botsman & Rogers, 2011, pp. xv–xvi).

Characteristics of the Sharing Economy

The sharing economy's characteristics are different compared to normal e-commerce (Yang et al., 2019, pp. 199–200). Firstly, the sharing economy is relation-oriented and focuses on peer-to-peer relationships rather than on the process itself. Secondly, physical presence is required since many sharing economy products or services include face-to-face interaction at the moment of exchange. The third characteristic concerns the personal nature of individuals because similarities in lifestyles, values, preferences etc. could positively influence the transaction risks and enhance trust when individuals detect similarities between themselves and the sharing provider (Yang et al., 2019, pp. 199–200). Lastly, the dual role of the seller is a special characteristic in the sharing economy, since the seller usually owns and provides the product or service (Yang et al., 2019, pp. 199–200).

Trust in Strangers

The above-mentioned characteristics create higher risk, increased uncertainty, and greater interdependence in the sharing economy, which consequently leads to the need of trust to overcome these challenges (Zhang et al., 2018, p. 106). Belk (2010, p. 717) states that "sharing whether with our parents, children, siblings, life partners, friends, coworkers, or neighbors, goes hand in hand with trust and bonding". Since trust is already necessary in a familiar environment, it becomes even more important in collaborative consumption because it requires trust in

complete strangers (Botsman & Rogers, 2011, p. 91). Botsman (2012) even called trust the currency of the new economy. Without trust, strangers will most likely refuse to engage in monetary transactions (Ert et al., 2016, p. 64). Thus, the sharing economy requires an even higher level of trust because people meet online and because they become exposed to the risk of face-to-face interaction with a stranger (Botsman & Rogers, 2011, p. 73) when sharing a car or an apartment.

2.3 Airbnb Case Description

This thesis will take on the case of Airbnb in order to research and explore the role of trust on peer-to-peer platforms in the sharing economy. Below is a detailed case description of Airbnb that will showcase why this particular platform is fit for this research.

Airbnb is a tourism-related accommodation platform and online marketplace, founded in 2008, which connects people who want to rent out their under-utilized spaces with people who wish to discover and book short-term accommodation solutions (MarketLine, 2021). With over 5,6 million active listings, in 100,000 different cities, in more than 220 countries and regions, as well as 4 million hosts, and more than 800 million Airbnb guest-arrivals all-time (Airbnb, 2021b), it is clear that Airbnb is one of the biggest players in the accommodation industry, and one of the most prominent examples of a peer-to-peer sharing economy platform.

Airbnb has created and controls both a website and application that act as the facilitator between hosts and guests. While not owning any facilities for accommodation, Airbnb offers around the clock support, hospitality guidelines, an online community communication tool, a detailed review system, refund policies, and legal action policies etc. (MarketLine, 2021). Finally, the Airbnb platform enables people to create a profile and sign up as a host and/or guest. Hosts can create a listing, add detailed descriptions of their accommodation offer, and set the price/prices that they wish to charge. Guests may use the platform to find and book suitable accommodation, pay with their payment method of choice, and communicate with other guests and hosts (MarketLine, 2021).

Founded on collaborative consumption, Airbnb has turned its hosts and guests into stakeholders with responsibility by enabling them to be in control of the quality and value of the accommodation experience (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 7). This allows both hosts and

guests to influence the success and reputation of Airbnb. Furthermore, as a result of Airbnb's unique proposition of local and authentic accommodation experiences (Airbnb, 2021a), their business model requires both hosts and guests to exercise complete dependence on and trust in strangers, as they invite one another into each other's homes. As a result of this trilateral dependence between the platform, hosts and guests, trust is a vital aspect of the business relationships within the Airbnb community.

Existing trust enhancing features on Airbnb's platform, put in place to create a transparent community marketplace, includes a bidirectional review system, safety tips for both hosts and guests, a secure messaging system, a host guarantee, a reporting system, identity verification, a privacy policy, account security measures such as two-factor authentication, watchlist and background checks, safety workshops, risk scoring, scam prevention measures, and a secure payment system (Airbnb, 2021a). All of these measures have been added to the platform over the last decade, constantly addressing new needs in regard to facilitating and establishing trust in the Airbnb community. Such measures have been necessary in counteracting Airbnb scandals and horror stories, negative reviews, negative word-of-mouth (Lieber, 2015), as well as Airbnb's history of encounters with tax laws (Graham, 2019), which potentially could lead to distrust, a bad reputation, untrustworthiness and lack of integrity.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

This literature review presents an interdisciplinary foundation for advancing knowledge on the complexity of the notion of trust, the constituents and characteristics of trust, and the nature of trust in relation to accommodation peer-to-peer platforms in the sharing economy, with a point of departure in Airbnb. Thus, we will answer sub-research question 1: *What trust constructs and trust antecedents are relevant in the context of peer-to-peer accommodation platforms?* In dealing with the overwhelming quantity of various definitions and disagreements within the different studies and perspectives on trust, this literature review will be based on 17 peer-reviewed scientific articles that are frequently cited, have an interdisciplinary approach to trust, and address trust in relation to the sharing economy.

3.2 Literature Review Approach

The literature review synthesizes existing literature on trust through a concept-centric approach (Webster & Watson, 2002, p. xvi). A concept matrix was created (see table 1), and recurring concepts and themes were identified throughout all included articles. This effectively helped in categorizing the articles, identifying variables and relationships, and detecting implications as well as gaps in the literature (Webster & Watson, 2002, p. xviii). We identified eight central concepts throughout the articles that are of relevance for our topic: (1) trust in the sharing economy, (2) definitions of trust, (3) online trust, (3) interpersonal trust, (5) institutional trust, (6) dispositional trust, (7) trust antecedents, and (8) trust-building measures. After identifying the concepts, each concept was denoted a color and all articles were color-coded to find the parts addressing each concept. The color-coded articles were reviewed by both students, and there was a discussion about what content fits into which category. Possible disagreements about specific parts and their concepts were identified, discussed and resolved. One can detect an uneven pattern in the concept matrix (see table 1), which means that some articles address multiple trust concepts, while others only address one or two. We find this natural since the literature review includes articles exclusively about trust as a general concept (in order to get a broad overview of the complexity of trust), while articles on trust in the sharing economy mostly included a larger number of trust concepts.

Furthermore, the scope of this review excludes cultural components, and theory will only apply to peer-to-peer platforms in the accommodation industry. This is so, due to the fact that trust is both a complex and context specific construct. In addition, the findings in the literature review are limited because first-hand empirical data as well as secondary data has been included from these 17 articles. Derived from this literature review is a proposed research framework and the previously mentioned research questions, which will set the foundation for the subsequent research design and analysis of findings.

	Concepts							
Articles			Constructs of trust					
	Trust in the sharing economy	**Definitions of trust**	**Online trust**	**Inter-personal trust**	**Institution-al trust**	**Dispositional trust**	**Trust antecedents**	**Trust-building measures**
Hawlitschek et al. (2016)	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
Möhlmann (2016)	x		x		x		x	x
Möhlmann & Geissinger (2018)	x	x	x	x		x	x	x
McKnight & Chervany (2001)		x		x	x	x		
Mao et al (2020)	x			x	x		x	x
Yang et al. (2019)	x		x				x	
Zamani et al. (2019)	x	x			x		x	x
Wang et al. (2020)	x	x	x		x		x	
McKnight et al. (2002)			x				x	
McKnight et al. (1998)		x			x	x		
Kim et al. (2015)	x							
Kim et al. (2008)		x	x				x	
Chen & Dhillon (2003)		x	x	x		x	x	
Rousseau et al. (1998)		x		x			x	
Li (2007)		x						
Khodyakov (2007)		x		x	x	x		
Mayer et al. (1995)		x		x		x	x	

Table 1: Concept matrix
(own creation based on Webster & Watson, 2002, p. xvi)

3.3 Definitions of Trust

Trust, has due to its many meanings (depending on the context), become a vague concept that is difficult to pinpoint and define (McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 37). Different schools of thought (including sociologist, psychologists, and economists), have different perspectives and views on trust, resulting in dozens of definitions of trust, and great obscurity on the matter (McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 35,37). While sociologists see trust as a social structure, psychologists see it as a personal trait, and economists see it as an economic-choice mechanism (McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 37). Alongside these perspectives, researchers in the e-commerce context have defined trust as (1) a subjective belief, (2) the willingness to be vulnerable, and (3) reliance on others (Kim et al., 2008, p. 545). This has resulted in steady disagreements among scholars about the definition of trust, characteristics, features and antecedents of trust, the nature of trust (whether it is a static or dynamic concept) and the outcomes of trust. Furthermore, there has been a lack of specificity of trust referents, and a failure to include a variety of perspectives from the many actors and objects of trust (Khodyakov, 2007, p. 116; Li, 2007, p. 422; Mayer et al., 1995, p. 709). As a result, there is no consensus or agreement on the concept of trust, nor a universally accepted scholarly definition of trust (Li, 2007, p. 422; Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 394). Nonetheless, researchers do seem to agree on the fact that trust is an intermediate to highly complex, and multifaceted construct (Hawlitschek et al., 2016, p. 27; Khodyakov, 2007, p. 120; Li, 2007, p. 423; Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 393), calling for an interdisciplinary approach, that may gather a more holistic view on the concept of trust.

According to Li (2007, p. 424), some of the similarities that can be identified in literature on trust are the following four dimensions of trust: (1) uncertainty, (2) vulnerability, (which comes with the perceived risk of depending on others) (Li, 2007, p. 426), (3) expectation and (4) willingness. Furthermore, Rousseau et al. (1998, p. 395) define risk and interdependence as largely accepted components of trust within different schools of thought, while Mayer et al. (1995, p. 712) and McKnight et al. (1998, p. 474) consider trust as a willingness to take risk, be vulnerable, and depend on others.

For the purpose of analyzing trust relationships between a trustor and trustee on a peer-to-peer platform in the sharing economy, i.e., Airbnb, we will refer to a definition of trust, similar to the one used by Mayer et al. (1995, p. 712) and Zamani et al. (2019, p. 1948):

The willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party and believing that the other party will behave as expected, and deliver on the promised product/ service, irrespectively of the ability to monitor or control that other party.

Trust as a Dynamic Concept

According to Khodyakov (2007, p. 124) and Rousseau et al. (1998, p. 396), trust can be seen as a dynamic concept and as a process that may be affected by a multitude of variables. Trust can be developed, grown and expanded, but may also be maintained at a stable level, decline, contract or completely dissolve (Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 396). The trustor may constantly evaluate and anticipate the reliability of the trustee, the current circumstances and the risks involved, the reputation of the trustee, and the trustee's honesty, moral and motives, which will influence the level of perceived trust (Khodyakov, 2007, p. 126). Additionally, the level of interdependency between the trustor and trustee may stimulate fluctuating levels of trust (Chen & Dhillon, 2003, p. 306). This suggests the possibility of influencing and fostering trust in the many multidirectional relationships and components of peer-to-peer platforms in a sharing economy, and that trust may be influenced by the past, present and future (Khodyakov, 2007, p. 125). Favorable, positive and successful experiences and interactions may lead to enhanced trust and positive beliefs regarding the trustee's intentions, while unfavorable, negative, and unsuccessful experience and interactions between a trustor and trustee may lead to a decline of trust (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 728; Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 400).

Objects of Trust

Traditionally, the formation of trust has happened between two actors of trust, a trustor and a trustee (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 3). Before the digitalization, trust was an aspect only of close-knit relationships, formed amongst people, and networks (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 2). Today, objects of trust, and actors of trust is a blurred concept. In being able to both trust in people, institutions, as well as in tangible and intangible things (Khodyakov, 2007, p.

116), the concept of trust depends on the context (Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 402). In the sharing economy, objects of trust have expanded, and actors of trust have multiplied to both peers, the world wide web and the platform, while the relationships between trust actors have entangled (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 3). This makes the object of trust in the context of peer-to-peer platforms much more complex.

To sum up, due to the complex, multifaceted, and dynamic nature of trust, as well as the blurred concept of objects of trust, different perspectives and schools of thoughts have developed an independent understanding of trust. Therefore, there is no universally accepted scholarly definition of trust. However, the concept of trust is contextual and is a particularly complex concept in the context of peer-to-peer platforms in the sharing economy.

3.4 Trust in the Sharing Economy

Below, we take a closer look at why trust is particularly necessary in the sharing economy and elaborate on the different targets of trust on peer-to-peer platforms.

Trust on Peer-to-Peer Platforms

Trust is a major element for business transactions in general and in the online environment. In the sharing economy, scholars agree that trust is more important than ever before due to the new challenges that consumer-to-consumer (C2C) markets create (Hawlitschek et al., 2016, p. 1; Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 1; Yang et al., 2019, p. 200; Zamani et al., 2019, p. 1949). Trust is mentioned as one of the most critical barriers for consumers to engage in the sharing economy (Mao et al., 2020, p. 67), as well as a significant precondition to facilitate successful transactions between peers (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 1). Sharing has always been connected to trust, and one can even say that “to share is to trust” (Hawlitschek et al., 2016, p. 1), which makes trust the essential driver for participation in peer-to-peer rental (Hawlitschek et al., 2016, p. 2).

Zamani et al. (2019, p. 1949) state that if an online business (especially any sharing economy platform) wants to survive, the establishment of trust should be a top priority. In the case of Airbnb, it is crucial that both the platform and hosts consider consumer trust-building to be of the absolute essence in order to advertise a trustworthy and attractive home-sharing business

(Mao et al., 2020, p. 67). However, establishing trust on peer-to-peer platforms has been an enormous challenge for suppliers because of the complex environment (Hawlitschek et al., 2016, p. 2). In addition, it is not only important that consumers trust in the platform, but also crucial that sharing service providers (hosts) find the platform trustworthy, in order to list their services on it. This fact has been mainly overlooked in the literature and has not been addressed much (Wang et al., 2020, p. 686). Additionally, it is essential that not only customers have trust in the supplier, but that the supplier trusts the consuming peer who is going to rent and use their personal apartment, car, or other resource for a specific period of time. During this time, the supplier has no control over the shared resource, which might create concern about potential damage and loss of goods (Hawlitschek et al., 2016, p. 4).

There is one significant difference between peer-to-peer platforms and other online platform services regarding the level of trust that users have in these services. Möhlmann (2016, p. 1) identifies a trust difference, meaning that trust in peer-to-peer platforms (i.e., Airbnb) is lower than trust in large online retail services and non-peer-to-peer platforms as well as trust in peer-to-peer platforms from the first generation (i.e., eBay). This means that consumers have lower trust in accommodation platforms like Airbnb compared to making a transaction via eBay or buying clothes from an online retail website such as Zalando. It is likely that trust is lower on peer-to-peer platforms due to the difficulty of establishing and managing trust in this particular context (Möhlmann, 2016, p. 6), which is yet another significant reason why researching trust in the context of the sharing economy is highly relevant.

This trust difference can be explained by the new environment of peer-to-peer markets that give rise to many new situations and relationships, which challenge the creation of trust. The social dimension of transactions on platforms changes the whole nature of the service (Möhlmann, 2016, p. 5). Now, services are built on people and physical interactions at the point of service delivery (Möhlmann, 2016, p. 5; Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 1; Zamani et al., 2019, p. 1947). This is a new phenomenon because the service initially happens online but then concludes with a face-to-face interaction with an unknown person (Zamani et al., 2019, p. 1959). This environment creates higher uncertainty than usual (Zamani et al., 2019, p. 1959), higher privacy concerns (Wang et al., 2020, p. 691) and psychological and physical risks due to the face-to-face encounter between peers (Yang et al., 2019, p. 200). Trust is vital in this moment for people to overcome their “stranger-danger bias” (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018,

p. 1) and share their resources (i.e., apartment) with other strangers. Finally, trust becomes particularly important in situations of uncertainty, risk and limited control when interacting with unknown actions of strangers (Kim et al., 2015, p. 547). Therefore, the old-fashioned and human-based approach to trust, which has been identified in the context of brick-and-mortar transactions, is worthy of implementation on platforms in the sharing economy (Möhlmann, 2016, p. 5).

In the Airbnb context, users and hosts also take enormous risks to engage in a sharing transaction compared to a traditional online transaction (Yang et al., 2019, p. 198). Travelers are exposed to additional trust obstacles which create great uncertainty (Mao et al., 2020, p. 67). It starts by booking reservations through a third-party platform (i.e., Airbnb) which one might not be familiar nor have prior experience with. This process entails assessing a host's room or apartment as well as the host's profile itself and evaluating if a host's property and the host as a person seems legitimate and trustworthy. Furthermore, being aware of the fact that one will sleep in a stranger's home and the lack of regulations, which still create a major challenge on sharing economy platforms. All these aspects create additional concerns about the traveler's privacy, personal safety and the service quality (Mao et al., 2020, p. 67).

Targets of Trust

Trust on peer-to-peer platforms is different in many aspects compared to traditional business-to-consumer e-commerce, including the targets of trust in the peer-to-peer context which are addressed by different scholars (Hawlitschek et al., 2016, p. 7; Mao et al., 2020, p. 67; Möhlmann, 2016, p. 4; Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 3; Yang et al., 2019, p. 202). It is about moving from only one target of trust (towards an online vendor) to a more complex construct with "[…] trust considerations among peers, the platforms, as well as trust towards the product or resource at hand" (Hawlitschek et al., 2016, p. 7). Hawlitschek et al. (2016, pp. 1, 3) introduce three targets of trust, which they refer to as the 3Ps: peer, platform and product. Möhlmann (2016, p. 4) mentions three parties that are involved in transactions on peer-to-peer platforms; (1) the users of a platform's services, (2) the service providing peers and (3) the provider of the online sharing platform who acts as an intermediary between the sharing peers. Therefore, Möhlmann agrees that the dyad of relationships in the traditional e-commerce setting changes to a more complex triad of relationships in the sharing economy (Möhlmann, 2016, p. 4). Consequently, one can identify different trust relationships. A peer-to-peer relationship, as

well as the relationships that both peers have with the platform (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 3). This means that due to the complex nature of the sharing economy, trust is relevant to be considered not only towards one object, but towards multiple objects (using peers, sharing peers, and the platform) which challenges prior research on trust (Möhlmann, 2016, p. 4).

On peer-to-peer platforms in the sharing economy, private individuals slip into the role as suppliers and/or customers. The vendor rents out or shares their privately owned goods/properties, while the customer seeks to rent it. To make the transaction possible and to connect the two parties, a mediator such as the platform is needed to create the infrastructure which is necessary in facilitating the sharing activity (Hawlitschek et al., 2016, p. 2; Möhlmann, 2016, p. 11). For users, one can differentiate between two targets of trust. Users might trust that the platform is setting the right conditions for sharing transactions and might also trust that the service-providing peer delivers the service as expected (Möhlmann, 2016, p. 11). Since all parties play an important role in the sharing transaction, the "multiple-entity characteristic" on a platform implicates a distribution of responsibilities among both peers and the platform provider (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 7).

Mao et al. (2020, p. 67) and Yang et al. (2019, p. 202) address the targets of trust particularly in the Airbnb context. They mention that Airbnb users (guests) trust in two objects: (1) the Airbnb platform and (2) the hosts on the platform. Trust in Airbnb is driven by objective factors that concern the functions of the platform, while trust in hosts is mainly created through the experience one has when renting a room or apartment (Yang et al., 2019, p. 202). In this context, scholars differentiate between "[…] trust in Airbnb as cognitive-based trust, and trust in hosts as affective-based trust" (Yang et al., 2019, p. 202). This can be explained by the fact that cognitive-based trust is stronger in less familiar groups, whereas affective-based trust applies to the closer relationships one has with friends and families (Yang et al., 2019, p. 207). Comparatively, Mao et al. (2020, p. 67) mention trust in the Airbnb platform as institutional trust and trust in hosts as personal trust.

As mentioned above, there is trust in the platform provider and trust in peers in the sharing economy context. Möhlmann (2016, p. 1) identified a so-called 'spill-over effect' which means that when someone trusts the platform, it positively affects their trust in peers who are sharing or using the services on the platform. In other words, when a person already perceives the platform as trustworthy, it is more likely that the person will trust the service-providing peers.

This is labeled a ‘trust transfer’ because it shows that trust in the context of the sharing economy is a hierarchical two-fold construct which transfers trust from one object to the other (Möhlmann, 2016, pp. 12, 23). This research also identified trust in the platform as the central and most important construct (Möhlmann, 2016, p. 26). In addition, Möhlmann & Geissinger (2018, p. 5) found that the different trust circles of interpersonal trust and institutional trust are interconnected on sharing economy platforms. Interpersonal trust is at the core of the trust circle because the sharing transaction is about peers who engage in physical interaction with other peers, while institutional trust is in the outer trust circle because the peers need some sort of established framework to successfully match with others (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 5).

To sum up, trust is essential in the sharing economy and especially on peer-to-peer platforms such as Airbnb. Here, trust is especially important because of the social dimension and the face-to-face interaction during the transaction, which challenges people to overcome their stranger-danger bias. There are three targets of trust on platforms: (1) the users of a platform's services, (2) the service providing peers and (3) the provider of the online sharing platform which extends the relationships in this online environment to a triad. In the Airbnb context, one differentiates between trust in the platform and trust in peers., However, there may be a spill-over effect that makes trust in the platform and trust in peers interdependent.

3.5 Antecedents of Trust

Several studies have researched antecedents of trust in different ways (Chen & Dhillon, 2003; Kim et al., 2008; Mao et al., 2020; Mayer et al., 1995; McKnight et al., 2002; Wang et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2019; Zamani et al., 2019). Antecedents of trust are conditions that lead to trust (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 717) and are therefore relevant to look at in order to understand the whole concept of trust, what factors form trust, and what measures work best to create trust. However, there is no agreement among scholars about the components that affect consumer trust in the e-commerce setting (Kim et al., 2008, p. 545). McKnight et al. (2002, p. 317) argue that if trust is vital for transactions in the online environment, then building trust is even more important. When one is familiar with the components of trust in the online setting, it is easier to design for increased trust-levels among consumers on a website through trust-building mechanisms (Chen & Dhillon, 2003, p. 304; Kim et al., 2008, p. 557; McKnight et al., 2002, p. 298).

We have identified a comprehensive set of components of trust among the chosen articles of this literature review. In order to present them in a structured way, we chose to follow the classification which Wang et al. (2020, p. 693) present in their research, and hereby cluster the antecedents in groups of social antecedents, technical antecedents and privacy assurance antecedents. This layout is reasonable because sharing platforms in the tourism context are seen as a socio-technical system (Wang et al., 2020, p. 688). The technical system addresses the technology infrastructure that enables users to share services with others and the social system takes a human perspective including user's skills, experience, values, knowledge, social relationships, and interactions (Wang et al., 2020, p. 688). In addition, privacy assurance is an essential factor for e-commerce and social networking in the sharing economy (Wang et al., 2020, p. 689). Since the majority of studies in the context of antecedents of trust are done within the online environment or even more particularly, in the sharing economy, we find this approach suitable. The antecedents we will elaborate on are the most often mentioned antecedents of trust throughout the selected articles (see table 2).

Social Antecedents	**Technical Antecedents**	**Privacy Assurance Antecedents**
Characteristics of trustee Social value orientation Trust propensity Reputation Familiarity	System quality Service quality Information quality	Privacy & security Risk

Table 2: Antecedents of trust

Social Antecedents

Characteristics of Trustee

The characteristics of the trustee (the person that needs to be trusted in an online transaction), is responsible for building trust. Scholars identify many different trustee characteristics in the literature. However, ability, benevolence, and integrity were the most frequently mentioned (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 717). Several authors addressed these three characteristics and agree that they have an effect on levels of trust (Chen & Dhillon, 2003, p. 303; Hawlitschek et al., 2016, p. 2; Mayer et al., 1995, p. 717; Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 4; Wang et al., 2020, p. 688). If all three characteristics are perceived as high, one will most likely trust the trustee and have

high trustworthiness in this person. Trustworthiness moves along a continuum, meaning that all three factors can vary along a scale and can range from low to high (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 721). The characteristic *ability* includes the skills and competencies that enable the trustee to do certain tasks. Additionally, when the trustee has good intentions, they can be characterized as benevolent. Lastly, integrity means that the trustor approves of the trustee's behavior and principles (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 4).

In the e-commerce setting, ability, benevolence, and integrity are mentioned in relation to an Internet vendor. Chen & Dhillon (2003, p. 303) describe *ability* as when a company has the required competences to fulfill its promises to the consumer, *benevolence* as when the vendor puts the customer's interest before its own and cares about the customers welfare, and *integrity* as when the company acts in honest and reliable ways. In the sharing economy market, there are two peers who need to be trusted in a transaction, the consumer, and the supplier. From the consumer's perspective, ability addresses the supplier's skills and whether this person has the competency to deliver the task as expected, while benevolence refers to whether the supplier acts in the consumer's interest, and integrity means that the supplier keeps his word. (Hawlitschek et al., 2016, p. 3). On the other hand, the supplier needs to trust in the consumer's *ability* to handle their personal belongings, to not damage them during use, to act according to the supplier's interest (*benevolence*), and to show *integrity* when behaving like promised (Hawlitschek et al., 2016, p. 4). Overall, a person's level of ability, benevolence, and integrity strongly influences the trust one has towards another person and whether one engages in a transaction (Hawlitschek et al., 2016, pp. 3, 4).

Social Value Orientation

Social value orientation refers to a person's tendency to share and participate in the sharing economy, depending on whether this person is pro-social (i.e., engages in sharing, helping and co-operative activities) or not (Wang et al., 2020, p. 690). People with pro-social tendencies are more likely to be social, to enjoy sharing with others, and tend to be more trusting. That makes this antecedent an influencer of trust (Wang et al., 2020, p. 698). Values (such as social values) can create a propensity to trust, meaning people who value trustworthiness (i.e., having values such as honesty) also tend to perceive others as trustworthy (Chen & Dhillon, 2003, pp. 308–309). In the sharing economy context, Wang et al. (2020, p. 690) find a positive influence of the host's social value orientation on their trust toward the platform.

Trust Propensity

Trust propensity is mentioned by many authors as an essential factor in trust relationships and is therefore an antecedent of trust. This factor addresses the general attitude towards trust, meaning how easily people trust another person or thing, (Möhlmann, 2016, p. 10). Kim et al. (2008, p. 548) research four different groups of antecedents that influence consumer trust including personality-oriented antecedents, which they define as a consumer's disposition to trust. They found that this specific antecedent strongly affects consumer trust (Kim et al., 2008, p. 557). Mao et al. (2020, p. 72) also identified personality-based trust as the strongest source that influences trust. They explain this finding by arguing that consumers must have a high tendency to believe and trust others in general before they are willing to trust unknown sellers in an online environment.

Reputation

Different authors mention reputation as a factor that influences trust based on the findings of their research (Kim et al., 2008; McKnight et al., 2002; Yang et al., 2019). Reputation has long been recognized as an important trust building mechanism since it enables us to form a conclusion about a person or a company without prior experience, solely based on other's evaluation. If someone else has a positive experience with a vendor, this person might spread positive word-of-mouth. This may contribute to the vendor's good reputation, which can help eliminate other consumer's perceived risk and influence their level of trust towards the vendor (McKnight et al., 2002, pp. 306, 307). In fact, McKnight (2002, p. 297) refers to reputation as a very powerful tool for building consumer trust. Yang et al. (2019, p. 207) researched three affective features that are crucial for building user's trust in the Airbnb context. Their results indicate that reputation has the strongest and most significant impact on users' trust in hosts. Lastly, the third study that addressed reputation as an affect-based trust antecedent, also concluded that reputation has a strong positive influence on consumer trust (Kim et al., 2008, pp. 548, 556).

Familiarity

A familiar environment is a prerequisite for trust, "[…] meaning that trust is increasing with every positive experience made, and stable if that positive experience is made over and over again" (Möhlmann, 2016, p. 10). Hence, Möhlmann (2016, p. 19) finds that familiarity, in the context of the sharing economy, affects trust in the platform and trust in the host. Möhlmann & Geissinger (2018, p. 7) add that it is likely that a person's trust will increase when familiarity is established through frequent interactions with a platform, and when a person is familiar with interacting with strangers, or with the concept of a sharing economy service (e.g., a person trusts Airbnb because of previous positive experience and therefore also trusts an unknown platform). Indeed, other scholars also find familiarity an important influencer of trust (Kim et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2020). Kim et al. (2008, pp. 548, 557) measure familiarity as an experience-based antecedent next to Internet experience and e-commerce experience and identify a strong direct influence of familiarity on trust and users' purchase intentions. Mao et al. (2020, p. 68) add that experience-based trust refers to social-exchange knowledge. This means that if a trustor has first-hand knowledge about a trustee (collected through prior interactions), they can estimate the appropriate trust levels and competences of the trustee. Chen & Dhillon (2003, p. 308) agree that past online experiences directly affect consumer's trust levels because knowledge and experience enable an easier evaluation of the online vendor's trustworthiness. Other authors identify user experience as an antecedent of trust (Wang et al., 2020, p. 697). When a user has great experience and is familiar with a service or a particular situation, it increases the level of trust. In addition, they mention that familiarity with a website as an important component of trust in e-commerce (Wang et al., 2020, p. 690). Despite one study identifying familiarity as the weakest factor that affects user's trust (Yang et al., 2019, p. 207), the majority of researchers in this literature review find a strong positive connection between familiarity and trust.

Technical Antecedents

System Quality

System quality includes factors such as reliability, availability, and ease of use (Wang et al., 2020, p. 691). McKnight et al. (2002, p. 297) already mention website quality in their trust building model as an important trust antecedent that influences consumers' trust. How consumers perceive the quality of a website is positively linked with the level of trust in that

website (Wang et al., 2020, p. 690). A person has greater trust and feels safer to engage in an online transaction, when the online vendor or sharing economy platform provides a high-quality website that is well structured, reliable and easy to navigate (Wang et al., 2020, p. 691). Since technological services enable the online sharing activities in the sharing economy, the quality of the online system plays a crucial role in building trust (Wang et al., 2020, p. 690). Wang et al. (2020, p. 697) even found that along all technical antecedents, which have a great impact on trust, system quality had the most powerful effect on trust towards a sharing economy platform. In addition, Kim et al. (2008, p. 548) identify system reliability as a cognition-based trust antecedent that influences consumer trust.

Service Quality

Service quality also counts as a technical-based trust antecedent and refers to the overall support one receives from the service provider via the website (Wang et al., 2020, p. 691). Zamani et al. (2019, pp. 1959, 1960) found that support provision and assurances from the provider to the customer, minimizes risk-perceptions and is an important driver for trust building.

Information Quality

Information quality describes the completeness and accuracy of the content of a website (Wang et al., 2020, p. 691). Research has shown that "[…] information quality is the strongest antecedent of travelers' trust toward e-commerce travel websites and consumer-generated platforms" (Wang et al., 2020, p. 691). Other scholars mention that cognition-based trust can be influenced by information quality (Kim et al., 2008, p. 548; Zamani et al., 2019, p. 1949). In the context of the sharing economy, information quality is a relevant predictor of trust because platforms typically contain lots of different information including profiles, pictures, reviews, ratings, and social media account info which can help increase user's trust level (Wang et al., 2020, p. 691). However, one author did not find an effect of information quality on trust in the platform (Mao et al., 2020, p. 72).

Privacy Assurance Antecedents

Privacy and Security

Privacy and security protection are cognition-based trust antecedents. Consumers' perceptions of both factors strongly affect trust (Kim et al., 2008, pp. 548, 556). Zamani et al. (2019, p. 1956) also mention safety and security as direct antecedents of trust. A privacy policy makes consumers feel that their personal information is protected against potential misuse. Especially in e-commerce and in the sharing economy, it is essential to develop and integrate privacy policies on a website to reduce consumers' privacy concerns and increase the level of trust (Wang et al., 2020, p. 692). On a platform in the sharing economy, users provide lots of sensitive information such as their telephone number, house address, and credit card details. However, the users' trust in the platform can be negatively affected if the platform provider is not able to protect private information effectively and adequately (Wang et al., 2020, p. 697).

Risk

The last major antecedent of trust has been identified as risk. Trust and risk are closely related because if one could engage in actions with complete certainty, then trust would be unnecessary. Therefore, "[…] risk creates an opportunity for trust, which leads to risk taking" (Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 395). Möhlmann (2016, p. 10) used risk as one of the control variables in her study and found that risk had considerable effects on trust in peers and trust in the platform. If a situation or environment brings high risks, it is even more important to have high levels of trust (Mao et al., 2020, p. 70). In the sharing economy, risk is especially high due to the special circumstances that sharing activities create (i.e., sharing personal resources), which also influences the level of trust that is needed (Wang et al., 2020, p. 687).

To sum up, antecedents are conditions that lead to trust and are therefore significant to understand in order to create trust-building measures. We have clustered the trust antecedents into three groups: social antecedents, technical antecedents, and privacy assurance antecedents and explained all components and their influence on trust.

3.6 Constructs of Trust in the Sharing Economy

As mentioned before, there are different objects of trust in the sharing economy that one can build trust towards. Four main constructs of trust in relation to peer-to-peer platforms have been identified: (1) dispositional trust, (2) online trust, (3) institutional trust, and (4) interpersonal trust. These four constructs of trust will be presented in detail in the next sections, including their relevance to the sharing economy context.

3.6.1 Dispositional Trust

When one has no prior experience, know-how, or first-hand knowledge on a subject, initial trust formation is largely influenced by one's disposition to trust (McKnight et al., 1998, p. 474). This most likely also holds true for an inexperienced guest or host on Airbnb's platform in the sharing economy. New members of the Airbnb community must be willing to depend on others (the host/guest/platform), in order to not only join the community, but also actively participate.

A frequently used definition of dispositional trust is "a willingness to depend on and trust others, across a broad spectrum of situations and persons" (Chen & Dhillon, 2003, p. 307; McKnight et al., 1998, p. 477; McKnight & Chervany, 2001). In other words, it is a person's trust propensity, and the extent to which one is generally willing to trust and depend on others regardless of the circumstantial context and the people involved (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 714; Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 7). People will naturally differ in their propensity to trust (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 714), meaning some people may be more likely to trust another person, despite no prior knowledge about or experience with that person. The formation of trust propensity is said to result from childhood experiences, interactions between the child and the caregiver, childhood derived attributes, and deeply inherited interaction patterns (Chen & Dhillon, 2003, p. 307; McKnight et al., 1998, p. 475; McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 41; Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 7), combined with experiences later in life (McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 45).

Several aspects of dispositional trust are worth mentioning, as they may affect initial trust formation between peers in the sharing economy. The concepts of 'faith in humanity' and 'trusting stance' are two largely agreed upon sub-constructs of dispositional trust (Chen & Dhillon, 2003, p. 307; McKnight et al., 1998, pp. 477, 478, 480; McKnight & Chervany, 2001,

pp. 43, 47). Faith in humanity represents underlying assumptions one may have about other people. These assumptions include trusting in people's benevolence, competence, moral, motivations, and their predictability (McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 47). The second sub-construct, trusting stance, refers to a personal choice of trusting others, without relying upon one's assumptions (McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 47). It entails having the belief that one will obtain more successful interpersonal outcomes when dealing with people as though they have good intentions (McKnight et al., 1998, pp. 477, 480).

A third component and moderator of trust propensity are personal values about right and wrong. Individuals who stand for and represent a high moral, including honesty, trustworthiness, and righteousness, have the tendency to view others as trustworthy (Chen & Dhillon, 2003, p. 308). Meaning someone trustworthy may find it difficult to see the bad in people and adopt an optimistic instead of realistic outlook on others' trustworthiness. Additionally, cultural values and societal differences may influence people's trust propensity (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 7). Khodyakov (2007, p. 117) distinguishes between low vs. high-trust societies. As a result of cultural traditions, some people (depending on their origin), may only trust those in their inner circle or may also trust people in their outer circles. Low-trust societies trust those in their private sphere, whom they are similar to, and their families, while high-trust societies may trust people in their outer circles, strangers and whom they are different from (Khodyakov, 2007, p. 117).

To sum up, people's trust propensity, which is made up of people's faith in humanity, trusting stance and personal values, is developed during childhood or through experiences later in life, and differs across cultural contexts. It will have a significant effect on how members of the Airbnb community will approach each other and form relationships (Hawlitschek et al., 2016, p. 27). Airbnb hosts with a high trust propensity will most likely find it easy to invite strangers into their homes. Similarly, guests with a high trust propensity, will find it easier than those with a low trust propensity, to utilize Airbnb's services.

3.6.2 Online Trust

As a result of the digitalization, an increasingly faceless and impersonal side of commerce has emerged (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 26). Most customer journeys on peer-to-peer platforms in the sharing economy begin in online settings, on either a website or application, and end in face-to-face interactions. Therefore, online trust is of great importance in facilitating onboarding of customers, and securing a platform's success (McKnight et al., 2002, pp. 313, 317; Kim et al., 2008, pp. 544, 556; Möhlmann, 2016, p. 11; Wang et al., 2020, p. 687).

Due to the characteristics of the online environment, a lack of trust will lead to greater perceived risk, perceived uncertainty, privacy and security concerns. This will most likely impact consumer intentions and withhold people from completing a transaction on a platform (McKnight et al., 2002, p. 298; Kim et al., 2008, p. 544; Wang et al., 2020, pp. 688, 689). The online environment and the initial phase of signing up on a platform (i.e., Airbnb) is without face-to-face relations, nor personal contact, and is focused mainly on transactional processes (Kim et al., 2008, p. 545). This consequently fosters concern for the legitimacy of the online platform provider, and authenticity and quality of the product and service (Chen & Dhillon, 2003, p. 303). Furthermore, the online environment is unable to provide customers with the possibility of inspecting and trying out products (McKnight et al., 2002, p. 298; Kim et al., 2008, p. 546). It is a borderless and blind environment (Kim et al., 2008, p. 544), where the customer and platform provider are separated in time and space (McKnight et al., 2002, p. 298). Furthermore, the customer has to provide confidential and substantial personal information (address, phone number, credit card information, and photo identification) (Kim et al., 2008, p. 546), while also having complete faith in having the services performed and products delivered (McKnight et al., 2002, p. 302). All of these characteristics create an environment influenced by unfamiliarity, uncertainty and risk. Establishment of online trust will allow customers to overcome risk and uncertainty related to the needed processes of performing an online transaction (McKnight et al., 2002, pp. 297, 299).

In designing for digital trust, addressing the needs of establishing deepened trust between customers and online platforms, as well as reducing fear of fraud and perceived risk, online platform providers have focused on incorporating privacy statements, privacy seals (Wang et al., 2020, p. 689), third-party seals (Kim et al., 2008, p. 556), building a good reputation

(McKnight et al., 2002, p. 307), creating structural assurance of the website, having source credibility, information quality, achieving high customer satisfaction (Yang et al., 2019, p. 200), as well as great service quality (Wang et al., 2020, p. 691). Should the online platform provider fail to provide such trust-building measures, or become exposed to engaging in illegitimate business practices, reputation may be damaged, and trust may be broken (Chen & Dhillon, 2003, p. 303). When various trust-building measures have been incorporated onto a platform, customers should feel more confident and comfortable engaging in online transactions.
Moreover, a customer's prior experience with online transactions may impact a customer's formation of trust towards an unfamiliar online platform provider. With a great deal of positive online experience, customers will have lower levels of perceived risk (Chen & Dhillon, 2003, pp. 307, 308), whereas customers who have had negative online experiences, including instances of fraud, may be more reluctant and hesitant in engaging in online transactions in general.

To sum up, faceless interactions with unknown vendors in an intangible online environment leads to increased perceived risk, uncertainty and unfamiliarity as well as concern for fraud, security, and privacy, and hereby poses needs for extra trust building measures on the web (i.e., platforms).

3.6.3 Institutional trust

Trust in institutions has been referred to as institutional trust, institution-based trust, 'system trust', impersonal trust, political trust, and public trust depending on the researcher and the school of thought (Khodyakov, 2007, p. 123; McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 41). At a general level, institutional trust consists of two sub-constructs: (1) situational normality, and (2) structural assurance (Mao et al., 2020, p. 69; McKnight et al., 1998, p. 478; McKnight & Chervany, 2001, pp. 43, 48). Structural assurance may be considered as protective measures set in place to facilitate situational success. Those measures are norms, rules, regulations and principles such as assurances, safety nets, legal contracts, certifications, insurance and guarantees, which help facilitate trust in impersonal structures, reduce perceived risk, and support positive and fair outcomes (Mao et al., 2020, p. 69; McKnight et al., 1998, pp. 474, 475, 478; McKnight & Chervany, 2001, pp. 42,43,45,46; Möhlmann, 2016, pp. 7, 12). Situational normality entails a belief in success because the situation is normal (McKnight et

al., 1998, p. 478). A greater level of institutional trust is achieved through incorporation of such variables on a platform, and the negative effects of the risks involved, such as low seller visibility and high product uncertainty, has consequently been reduced (Mao et al., 2020, p. 69; Zamani et al., 2019, p. 1948).

In the context of peer-to-peer platforms in the sharing economy, trust-in-platform or trust in the platform provider may be considered the equivalent of institutional trust (Mao et al., 2020, p. 69; Möhlmann, 2016, p. 27; Zamani et al., 2019, p. 1959). Specifically, for members of the Airbnb community, where risk is high in connection with renting out private property to strangers, the establishment of trust towards Airbnb is important. Airbnb hosts must feel secure that any economic loss, damage, stolen goods etc. will be covered by Airbnb (Wang et al., 2020, p. 687), while Airbnb guests must feel secure that they will be refunded should the property's facilities not live up to what was promised. Additionally, Airbnb should also have measures in place to secure the decency of its members and facilitate trust in the other party's legitimacy and intentions (Wang et al., 2020, p. 697). Finally, Airbnb should provide social presence. This could be in the form of support from a customer service unit, in order to facilitate security, and to personalize an otherwise impersonal online platform (Mao et al., 2020, p. 69; Zamani et al., 2019, p. 1959). Other ways Airbnb has tried to elevate social presence is through requiring that hosts and guests create profiles (Mao et al., 2020, p. 69).

According to Mao et al., (2020, p. 70) institutional trust should be high, and consumers (i.e., guest and hosts) should be confident that the platform has effective measures in place, when the platform has achieved great social presence, high perceived information and website quality, as well as high perceived privacy, security and legitimacy. This should result in greater willingness to use a platform's services, and greater sharing intentions (Hawlitschek et al., 2016, pp. 31,32; Mao et al., 2020, p. 69; Wang et al., 2020, p. 693).

To sum up, institutional trust consists of structural assurance (i.e., protective measures such as norms, rules, regulations, policies etc.) and situational normality (i.e., the belief that a situation is normal and therefore will yield success). The establishment of institutional trust is particularly important in reducing perceived risk in a high-risk context and can help facilitate trust in impersonal structures. Lastly, social presence (i.e., customer support), perceived information and website quality, privacy, security, and legitimacy are important measures that can be incorporated onto platforms in order to establish institutional trust.

3.6.4 Interpersonal Trust

A frequently used definition for interpersonal trust is an "[…] expectancy held by an individual or a group that the word, promise, verbal or written statement of another individual or group can be relied upon" (Chen & Dhillon, 2003, p. 304; Mayer et al., 1995, p. 714). That means, individuals become the object of trust, and trust is embedded in relationships. According to McKnight & Chervany (2001, p. 44), interpersonal trust consists of two concepts: (1) trusting beliefs, and (2) trusting intentions. Trusting beliefs is person-specific and includes four components: competence, benevolence, integrity, and predictability beliefs. Conclusively, a trustee has to have confidence that the trustor will behave as expected, has the capabilities and skills to deliver the product/service, and has good intentions, is honest and reliable etc. Trusting intentions is having the willingness and intention to depend on a trustor, despite limited control over the circumstances (McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 46). It is about accepting vulnerability and being content with taking risks in hopes of a positive outcome.

Rousseau (1998, p. 399) refers to interpersonal trust as relational trust. He puts emphasis on how preceding interactions between a trustor and trustee will affect the level of trust between them. Information availability, reliability and dependability in previous interactions, as well as the frequency and length of a positive interaction, may positively influence trust levels as well as the level of attachment, and therefore makes relational trust dynamic (Rousseau et al., 1998, pp. 399, 400). Thus, the level of trust will match the current state of the relationship between the trustor and trustee, taking into consideration all previous interactions.

According to Khodyakov (2007, p. 120), there is a difference between the level of trust that a trustee may have towards a trustor. Thick interpersonal trust (high interpersonal trust) is the type of trust that individuals typically develop towards those that are in their inner circle; family members, relatives and close friends (Khodyakov, 2007, p. 120). Close relationships, or relationships with strong ties, typically foster a strong emotional connection, and happen between individuals with familiar and similar personal traits (Khodyakov, 2007, p. 121). On the other hand, thin interpersonal trust (low interpersonal trust) is seen between individuals of weak ties, who are not part of each other's in-groups (Khodyakov, 2007, pp. 122, 128). In these types of relationships, the other person's intentions, competence, abilities etc. may not be transparent (Khodyakov, 2007, p. 122), which negatively influences possibilities for trust-

building. Relying on thin interpersonal trust plays a particularly important role in peer-to-peer platform success because it will facilitate and permit trust in members of a virtual community (Khodyakov, 2007, p. 121).

In the sharing economy, interpersonal trust lies at the core of the business (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, pp. 3, 4). That is because interpersonal trust is particularly important should the situational context, like that of a peer-to-peer platform, be characterized by risk, uncertainty, vulnerability and interdependence, as well as interaction with out-groups and strangers. The environment of the Airbnb platform is as such. Guests (trustees) have to be willing to be vulnerable and have the trusting beliefs that the host (trustor) operates with high integrity and benevolence and has the ability and intention to fulfill their promised obligations (Mao et al., 2020, p. 68), despite the fact that hosts are not legal entities, but private non-professionals (Hawlitschek et al., 2016, p. 28). On the other hand, hosts have to entrust their personal belongings to a stranger, which requires them to have the trusting beliefs that the guest has high integrity and benevolence, will follow the rules and policies of the stay, and behave according to appropriate norms (Hawlitschek et al., 2016, p. 29).

The platform provider may act as an enabler of interpersonal trust by incorporating trust-enhancing features for peers to build trust towards one another (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 1). This suggests that businesses as well as platforms have the ability to manipulate and influence trust-building, and nudge virtual community members and web-users towards greater trust in each other. Additionally, due to the dynamism of trust and its ability to expand and contract (Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 400), it is important that Airbnb facilitate interpersonal trust through positive Airbnb experiences, limit risk in interactions, and provide as much personal information about the hosts and guests as possible, while still upholding high privacy and security standards. Lastly, Möhlmann & Geissinger (2018, p. 3) identify social capital as a key aspect of facilitating mutual trust between members of a virtual community and overcoming xenophobic as well as stranger-danger biases. In facilitating social capital through peer reviews or detailed user profiles, peers can develop an understanding for each other and maybe even a set of shared values, and hereby increase interpersonal trust (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 3).

To sum up, trusting beliefs and trusting intentions will affect the level of interpersonal trust, which may grow or decline over time. Low interpersonal trust is typically represented in the peer-to-peer platform environment, and therefore trust enhancing features of such platforms including information availability, reliability and dependability in previous interactions, social capital, as well as facilitation for positive interaction between peers is critical to increasing interpersonal trust between peers.

3.7 Trust-building Measures in the Sharing Economy

In the previous sections, we have explained why trust is an indispensable factor in the sharing economy. High uncertainty and dynamic change processes make the sharing economy a complex construct where trust plays an important role (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 1). To establish trust in peer-to-peer contexts between strangers, the platform provider needs to create trust-enhancing digital cues to enable platform-mediated peer trust (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 1). Platforms have already implemented a set of powerful mechanisms to create and maintain trust among their users (Hawlitschek et al., 2016, p. 2). In this review, we understand digital trust cues as the equivalent of trust building measures or mechanisms.

Digital trust cues give rise to a new digital infrastructure that builds trust among strangers in a fast and easy way and drives complex and costly state and governmental regulations and rules out of the picture (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, pp. 3, 5). However, institutional trust mechanisms such as legal rules and contracts will never disappear, as they will maintain a fundamental function of establishing online trust (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, pp. 5–6). Nonetheless, sharing economy platforms constantly think of new ways of developing innovative trust cues that support the trust-building process between all parties, since more trust cues are likely to produce more trust (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 6).

Trust measures can build institutional and interpersonal trust by addressing calculative as well as relational factors (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 6). Calculative trust building mechanisms focus on rationality and economic thoughts, hereby enabling formation of institutional trust. On the other hand, relational trust-building mechanisms put relationships at the center of trust building, and hereby addresses the social aspect of trust based on identities and joint values, which relates to interpersonal trust (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 5). The

following part presents different trust building measures that have been identified in the chosen articles of this literature review.

Online reviews have been extensively discussed as an essential tool to build trust on platforms (Zamani et al., 2019, p. 1950). They allow users to communicate their experience with a sharing economy service and enable other users to read about someone's prior experience with this service, form an opinion and make a decision. Mao et al. (2020, p. 68) also mention online reviews as "[…] effective consumer empowerment tools to improve consumer trust using second-hand yet credible information". In addition, they confirmed Airbnb's online review system as a significant measure to build trust (Mao et al., 2020, p. 72).

Möhlmann & Geissinger (2018, pp. 6–7) propose six digital trust cues that establish trust among peers on platforms. Table 3 provides an overview of the different trust-building measures with a short explanation.

Peer reputation	Digital reputation based on peer ratings
Digitized social capital	Connecting a peer's profile with other social media networks
Provision of information	Showing relevant information (full name, age, competencies, general interests, picture) on profiles
Escrow services	Extended security systems for safer financial transactions
Insurance cover	Providing an insurance cover for peers in case of potential damages
Certification and external validation	Using certification/ validation, internal certification systems or third parties (government institutions)

Table 3: Digital trust cues
(own creation based on Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, pp. 6–7)

While it is difficult to get first-hand experience in a large international network, people can rely on digital reputation, created through peer ratings, to determine whether they trust someone or not. The second measure to build trust refers to connecting a user's profile with other social media networks. This opens up the opportunity for peers to access digital social capital from different sources (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 6). Provision of information builds trust through providing complete user profiles with lots of useful information, i.e., user's full name, age, profile picture, general interests, competencies, and skills. Providing relevant information about users and descriptions of the offered services can facilitate in shaping a first impression and act as a trust-building measure for peers on the platform (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018,

p. 6). Using escrow services such as extended security systems is a measure to enhance a secure and safe environment in which to transact business. Some platform providers reduce the financial risk of the sharing activity by withholding final payment until the service has been successfully delivered (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 6). The insurance cover is a measure which can build trust for both peers on the platform. That is because peers are not professional service providers, which in turn increases the risk of unpleasant, and inadequate service levels. The last trust-building measure refers to special certification and external validation that can foster trust through providing safe transaction processes. This can be done through digitally displayed certification or validation (i.e., telephone numbers) or include third parties such as government institutions in the process (i.e., official ID's). (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 7).

Möhlmann (2016, p. 7) addresses three trust-building measures that have not yet been researched extensively: (1) reliable insurance cover, (2) simultaneous reviews, and (3) large network: many offers worldwide (see table 4). The author chose these three trust-building measures because they are particularly relevant in the peer-to-peer sharing economy context.

Reliable insurance cover	Creates structural assurance and covers potential damages
Simultaneous reviews	Provides unbiased information about the other users' behavior and performance
Large network: many offers worldwide	Large network that enables matching the right peers with each other

Table 4: Trust-building measures
(own creation based on Möhlmann (2016, pp. 7–9))

Reliable insurance cover contributes to a secure environment by ensuring payouts for potential damages caused by a peer, thereby allowing peers to safely and securely share their personal belongings. For example, Airbnb introduced an insurance cover by up to $1million, in case of damages, which is supposed to foster trust for peers on the platform (Möhlmann, 2016, p. 7). This measure is especially relevant on peer-to-peer platforms because it is mostly services rather than goods that are offered, and it includes private individuals rather than professionals who deliver the service, meaning there is no trained staff that can assist in risky situations

(Möhlmann, 2016, p. 8). This implies a relatively high financial risk in the accommodation sharing (i.e., Airbnb) and justifies the reliable insurance cover as an appropriate trust-building measure (Möhlmann, 2016, p. 7). *Simultaneous reviews* are a development of the conventional peer-based reviews that have been present on peer-to-peer platforms in the sharing economy. They are also called double blind reviews because users have the opportunity to rate each other. However, these reviews are being published simultaneously after both parties have submitted their review (Möhlmann, 2016, p. 8). Review systems show details about how other users previously behaved and performed, which is an important mechanism in creating trust on platforms. Airbnb has changed their normal peer reviews to simultaneous reviews to create a more reliable measure. This will ensure that reviews are not affected by biased behavior, e.g., when users do not leave a negative review despite a dissatisfactory experience because they are afraid of receiving a negative review in return (Möhlmann, 2016, p. 8). *Large network: many offers available* refer to the network effects present on two-sided platforms, and that the size of a marketplace is connected with trust. This means that platforms need to have a large network in order to successfully match peers with each other (Möhlmann, 2016, p. 9). Overall, a positive influence on trust in the platform has been identified for all three measures, whereby *Large network: many offers worldwide* showed the strongest effect on trust in the platform provider (Möhlmann, 2016, pp. 16, 25).

To sum up, trust-building measures are crucial for platforms in the sharing economy to motivate people to engage in sharing activities and to overcome trust concerns. Ultimately, there are various mechanisms that platforms can use to create a safe environment and to facilitate trust.

3.8 Summary

This literature review identified eight themes around the general concept of trust, trust in the sharing economy, different constructs of trust, trust antecedents, and trust-building measures in 17 carefully selected scientific articles. Thus, sub-research question 1 (identifying trust constructs and trust antecedents that are relevant in the context of peer-to-peer accommodation platforms), was answered in this review.

Trust is essential in the sharing economy and especially on peer-to-peer platforms, such as Airbnb, due to physical interaction during service delivery, which may challenge people to overcome their stranger-danger bias. There are three targets of trust on platforms: (1) the users of the service, (2) the other peer a person is sharing with, and (3) the provider of the online sharing platform. In addition, we identified social antecedents (characteristics of trustee, social value orientation, trust propensity, reputation, and familiarity), technical antecedents (system quality, service quality, and information quality), and privacy assurance antecedents (privacy and security, and risk), that have a significant influence on trust. The review presents four different constructs of trust in the sharing economy which we find relevant in the peer-to-peer context in the sharing economy (dispositional, online, institutional, and interpersonal trust). Dispositional trust refers to people's faith in humanity, trusting stance and personal values, while online trust, trust in the platform (i.e., institutional trust), and trust in peers (i.e., interpersonal trust) may play a critical role in affecting customer's disposition to join the Airbnb community, to sharing, and to securing the success of peer-to-peer platforms. Lastly, we find that trust-building measures (i.e., online reviews) are crucial for platforms in the sharing economy to motivate people to engage in sharing activities and to overcome trust concerns.

4. Research Framework

The research framework which will guide the research in this thesis has been identified through the literature review and is shown in figure 2. It needs to be clarified that the research framework is not a theoretical model. The framework is guided by the theory which Möhlmann & Geissinger (2018, pp. 3-4) present in their research paper: Trust in the sharing economy: Platform-Mediated Peer Trust, and other theories identified in the literature review. However, the framework is a self-creation. Thus, we do not find it appropriate to name it a theoretical model but rather a research framework which guides the research in this thesis and gives an overview of the actors on a peer-to-peer platform, their relationships, and the different influencing trust constructs and trust building measures.

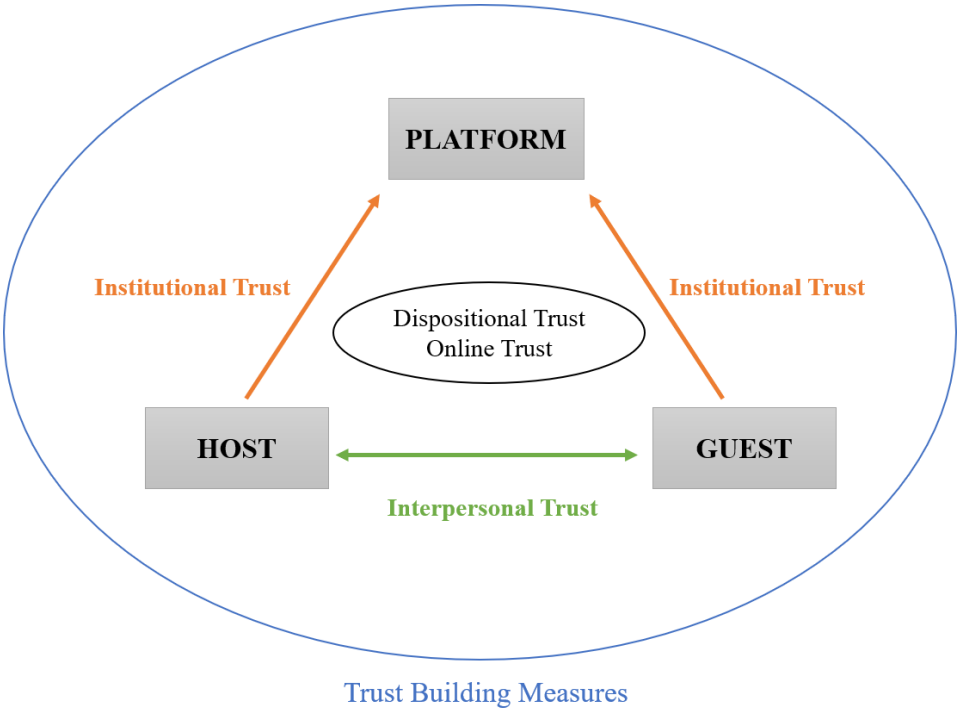

Figure 2: Research framework
(own creation based partly on Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, pp. 3-4)

The research framework (figure 2) shows the triadic relationship on a peer-to-peer platform with three parties involved: *(1) the platform, (2) the guests, and (3) the hosts*. This setting of actors makes it possible to identify different trust relationships (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 3). In this case, we have determined four types of trust relationships which we will investigate: *(1) host to platform, (2) guest to platform, (3) host to guest, and (4) guest to host.*

These relationships are visualized by the arrows in the framework. Based on the different relationships between the platform, hosts and guests, we differentiate between institutional and interpersonal trust (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 3). Institutional trust can be found in the relationship between a host and the platform as well as a guest and the platform. Interpersonal trust, on the other hand, captures the relationship between hosts and guests and vice versa.

The different constructs of trust as well as the trust building measures have been identified and discussed in the literature review. The constructs of dispositional trust and online trust are visualized in the inner circle in the center of the framework as they are expected to have an impact on trust relationships. Lastly, the trust building measures are visualized in the outer circle of the framework, since they are expected to have an influence on the overall dynamic of the trust constructs (dispositional-, online-, institutional-, and interpersonal trust) and the relationship among those actors.

Conclusively, this research framework showcases all important factors that are considered relevant when investigating and exploring the role of trust on peer-to-peer platforms in the sharing economy. This framework will further guide the research of this thesis. Below, we have summarized the five essential points of the research framework.

1. *Three parties on the platform: platform, host, and guest*
2. *Four types of relationships: host–platform, guest–platform, host–guest, and guest–host*
3. *Two types of trust relationships: institutional trust and interpersonal trust*
4. *Two influential trust constructs: dispositional trust and online trust*
5. *Overall influential factor: trust building measures*

5. Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will outline the methodological considerations most appropriate for our study, which connects the theory and research framework with the data collection process. In addition, this part creates a guiding structure for answering our main research question, which investigates the role of trust on peer-to-peer platforms in the sharing economy. First, we will present the adopted philosophy of science which clarifies the view we chose to take in regard to our research. Then, the research strategy as well as the research method and data collection are discussed which will guide the research in this thesis. Lastly, the two chosen methods, the survey and the review analysis, are described in detail.

5.2 Philosophy of Science

This section will elaborate on the philosophy of science chosen in this thesis. In general, research philosophy refers "[…] to a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge in relation to research" (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 130). Every researcher makes a number of assumptions during their research process, which shape the understanding of the research question, the methods, and the interpretation of the findings (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 130). Thus, philosophy of science enables to create a coherent research project where all methodological choices are well aligned (i.e., research approach, research strategy, research methods and data collection) (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 130).

Table 5 shows the four different levels of research; (1) ontological level, (2) epistemological level, (3) methodological level, and (4) axiological level, which have been applied to this thesis (Fitzgerald & Howcroft, 1998, p.10) and will be elaborated upon in detail in the next sections. The grey boxes show the approach we take in our study, which are mostly two-sided, because our research includes a combination of soft and hard concepts. In addition, we included a 3-point scale to illustrate the importance of each factor (highlighted in blue), since most of the time, the opposite concepts have a different level of intensity and relevance in our research.

SOFT			HARD		
ONTOLOGICAL LEVEL					
Relativist We view trust as a very dynamic and subjective concept that creates multiple realities and changes depending on the circumstances and the context			**Realist** We have a realist view on peer-to-peer platforms in the sharing economy. Its structures, actors and relationships are pre-existing and independent of individuals		
1	**2**	**3**	**1**	**2**	**3**
EPISTEMOLOGICAL LEVEL					
Interpretivist This study takes, to some extent, an interpretivist perspective since there is no universal truth about trust. It will be interpreted within the researchers chosen context of peer-to-peer platforms in the sharing economy. Qualitative methods are used which call for an interpretivist approach			**Positivist** This study is, to some extent, positivist because the quantitative method used (survey) is objective, measurable and repeatable		
1	**2**	**3**	**1**	**2**	**3**
Subjectivist This study also takes, to a small extent, a subjectivist view because the analysis of qualitative data is most likely influenced by our own subjective opinion.			**Objectivist** This study takes to a large extend an objectivist view because we follow a neutral observation, since the major part of our research is quantitative		
1	**2**	**3**	**1**	**2**	**3**
METHODOLOGICAL LEVEL					
Qualitative This study includes a qualitative part in the survey, as well as a qualitative review analysis to explore the research context, the role of trust and the constructs of trust on peer-to-peer platforms in more detail.			**Quantitative** This study includes a large quantitative survey to gather broad results about the role of trust and the constructs of trust on peer-to-peer platforms		
1	**2**	**3**	**1**	**2**	**3**
Exploratory We apply an exploratory and descriptive design to the survey questions and in general, our research question is more focused on exploring the role of trust on peer-to-peer platforms in the sharing economy			**Confirmatory** This study uses a research framework created through theory from the literature review that guides the data collection process		
1	**2**	**3**	**1**	**2**	**3**
Induction This study moves from collecting data (survey, review analysis) to assumptions that help to answer the research question and create untested conclusions			**Deduction** This study uses theory (literature review, research framework) to guide the data collection process		
1	**2**	**3**	**1**	**2**	**3**
Field This thesis uses a single case study (Airbnb) to investigate the relationship between a phenomenon and its real-life context.			**Laboratory** -		
1	**2**	**3**			

AXIOLOGICAL LEVEL					
Relevance Our research, exploring the role of trust on peer-to-peer platforms in the sharing economy, is highly relevant for practice and provides important implications for managers in the business world.			**Rigor** This study applies a quantitative method such as the survey and hereby includes internal validity.		
1	**2**	**3**	**1**	**2**	**3**

Table 5: Four levels of research in this thesis
(own creation based on Fitzgerald & Howcroft, 1998, p.10)

Ontology

Ontology is a "[…] branch of philosophy concerned with assumptions about the nature of reality or being" (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 133). Ontological assumptions determine how the world is like and how it is seen. and in this thesis, it refers to how we see and study our research topic (Saunders et al., 2019, pp. 133, 136). Referring to the table above, we adopt both a relativist and realist view in our study, whereas the relativist approach is present to a larger extent. On the one hand, we use the relativist perspective in order to view trust as a dynamic and subjective concept that creates multiple realities, and which is highly dependent on the circumstances. On the other hand, we adopt, to a small extent, a realist view on peer-to-peer platforms in the sharing economy. We view a platform's structures, actors and relationships as pre-existing and independent of individuals' realities.

Epistemology

Epistemology refers to assumptions about knowledge, what constitutes acceptable, valid and legitimate knowledge, and how we can communicate knowledge to others" (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 133). This thesis does not take an explicitly interpretivist or positivist standpoint. We view a mix of both as most appropriate. Our study takes, to some extent, an interpretivist approach since there is no universal agreement about trust and therefore will be interpreted within the researcher's chosen context of peer-to-peer platforms in the sharing economy. In addition, the use of qualitative methods which are used in this research call for an interpretivist view. On the other hand, the study also takes, to some extent, a positivist approach because the quantitative method that is used (survey) is objective, measurable, and repeatable. Lastly, this research takes, to a larger extent, an objectivist view because, (1) we follow a neutral observation to avoid any biases, and (2) take an objective position investigating the role of trust

on peer-to-peer platforms in the sharing economy. However, to a small extent, we also adopt a subjectivist approach, because the analysis of qualitative methods can be highly subjective and depend on the researcher's own opinion and perception.

Methodology

On the methodological level, the study includes qualitative and quantitative parts. There is a small qualitative part in the survey as well as a qualitative review analysis to explore the role of trust and the constructs of trust on peer-to-peer platforms in greater detail. The quantitative part of this research is larger and weighs more heavily than the qualitative part. It includes a quantitative survey which is designed to gather broad results about the research context. Both parts will be used to answer the research question.

The study is exploratory as well as confirmatory. The large part of our research is exploratory because our research question explores the role of trust on peer-to-peer platforms in the sharing economy and includes an exploratory and descriptive design in the survey. On the other hand, a small part of our research follows a confirmatory design because our research framework is created through theory from the literature review and guides the data collection process.

In regard to induction and deduction, we find a mix of both approaches most appropriate. We move from collecting data to assumptions that aim at answering our research question (induction), while also using theory such as the literature review and research framework to guide the data collection process (deduction). Therefore, an abductive approach, which is a combination of deductive and inductive, where "data collection is used to explore a phenomenon, identify themes and patterns, locate these in a conceptual framework and test this through subsequent data collection […]" (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 145), seems to be the right fit for our research. Thus, an abductive approach shifts back and forth between theory and data (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 148). Furthermore, an abductive approach fits well with our chosen research strategy of a case study as well as a mixed-method research approach.

Furthermore, the study takes a field perspective which can be justified by the fact that the study has an emphasis on a real-life context, since a single case study (Airbnb) is used to investigate the relationship between a phenomenon and its context.

Axiology

On the axiological level, the study focuses, to a large extent, on relevance, and to a smaller extent on rigor. Our research, exploring the role of trust on peer-to-peer platforms in the sharing economy is highly relevant for practice and provides important implications for managers in the business world. The rigor approach is represented by the use of a quantitative method, the survey, which focuses on internal validity.

5.3 Research Strategy

The following section will outline our choice of research strategy. There are different types of research strategies that function as a plan of action for researchers to answer their research question. The research strategy is the methodological link between the philosophy of science and the choice of methods including data collection and data analysis of a study (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 177).

The relevant concepts in this thesis include trust and the sharing economy, and in particular peer-to-peer platforms in the sharing economy. As mentioned in the literature review, trust is a complex concept that has many meanings, depending on the context, and is therefore a vague concept with no agreed upon definition among scholars (McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 37). In addition, the sharing economy is a pretty new and still growing phenomenon, especially peer-to-peer platforms like Airbnb. Our research topic in this thesis combines these two concepts and looks at trust on peer-to-peer platforms in the sharing economy (i.e., Airbnb), which can therefore be described as a highly complex concept because it applies the component of trust to the new economy of sharing activities. This specific research area is relatively new in academia and has not received much attention among scholars (Zamani et al., 2019, p. 1950). Most publications are from recent years (2016-2020), leaving us with a small amount of research regarding this topic. Thus, conducting a case study seems to be an appropriate strategy for our research topic taking all above-mentioned aspects into consideration.

Case study research is defined as "[…] an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Wilson, 2010, p. 108). Thus, a case study is able to capture the dynamics of a topic within its context, which differentiates this research strategy from others

(Saunders et al., 2016, pp. 184, 185). In business research, an in-depth analysis of an individual or an organization is part of a case study (Wilson, 2010, p. 108). Our case study is based on the platform Airbnb, which is a unique and fast-growing organization with a position as "[...] the most popular platform within the hospitality industry" (Zamani et al., 2019, p. 1951). The case study gives us the opportunity to investigate the complex concept of trust on peer-to-peer platforms in the sharing economy in the real-life context of Airbnb. A detailed case study description of Airbnb can be found in chapter two. Case study research has been criticized in the past for the lack of producing reliable and generalizable contributions to research (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 185). Nonetheless, in-depth case studies have been mentioned as the best method to investigate the relationship between a phenomenon and its context (Dubois & Gadde, 2002, p. 554). When using a case study, quantitative, qualitative or a mixed method research is appropriate (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 178).

5.4 Research Method & Data Collection

In this section, the choice of method used in this thesis as well as the data collection are discussed and elaborated upon.

Research methods are the different techniques for collecting data in a research project (Wilson, 2010, p. 106). There are two types of methods: quantitative and qualitative (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 165). Quantitative research focuses on numeric data (i.e., numbers) and includes data collection techniques such as questionnaires and data analysis procedures such as graphs and statistics. Qualitative research, on the other hand, uses non-numeric data (i.e., words, images) which are collected through interviews or similar techniques and then categorized for data analysis (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 165). The choice of research method does not necessarily have to be either quantitative or qualitative. However, they may rather be seen as two ends of a continuum, since in practice, they are often mixed (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 165). This is called a mixed methods research, since both quantitative and qualitative data are combined (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 170).

The methodological choice taken in this thesis is a mixed-method approach which develops quantitative and qualitative data through a survey and qualitative data in the form of a review analysis. With the survey, we collect both types of data. The closed-ended questions produce

quantitative data, while the open-ended questions deliver qualitative data. The second method used in this thesis is a pure qualitative method, the review analysis, which uses secondary data to gather information that will, together with the survey, answer our research question. A visualization of our research design including research methods and data collection can be seen in figure 3.

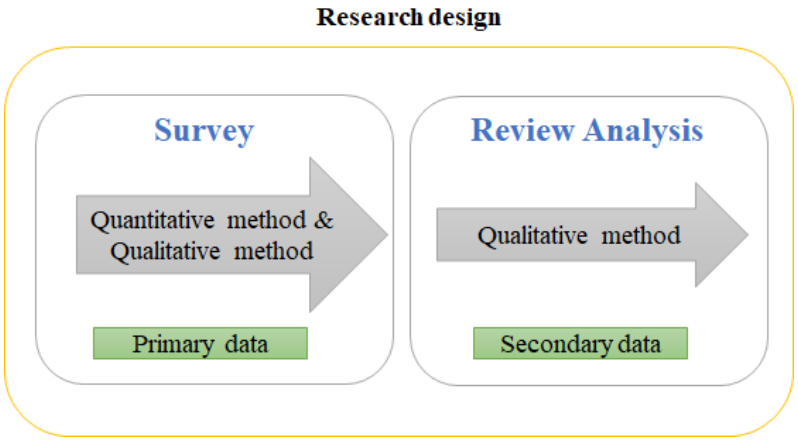

Figure 3: Research design

This way of researching can also be referred to as triangulation, since we are "[…] collecting information from a diverse range of individuals and settings, using a variety of methods" (Wilson, 2010, p. 164). Thus, data triangulation refers to data that is collected at different times and from different sources in one study, particularly, in the context of trust on peer-to-peer platforms in the sharing economy (Wilson, 2010, p. 164). Such an approach is reasonable because it reduces the risk of potential errors and systematic biases linked to only using one method, by providing cross-data validity checks (Wilson, 2010, p. 164).

Data collection in this thesis includes primary and secondary data. Primary data is information that is explicitly collected for the purpose of a single study, whereas secondary data is already published and ready to be used (Wilson, 2010, p. 134). We decided to use both types of data collection. We collected primary data about the concept of trust on peer-to-peer platforms through a survey in order to explore and gather a broad overview of our study context, and used secondary data, in form of existing online reviews/ peer reviews about Airbnb's service from websites (i.e., Airbnb and Trustpilot), to further analyze interpersonal and institutional trust, and to answer our research question.

5.5 Survey

5.5.1 Research Goal and Objectives

Through the literature review, we defined relevant trust concepts and constructs of peer-to-peer platforms in the sharing economy. With a large amount of information and knowledge on the topic and its constructs, and with our guiding research question, we developed a survey with a descriptive research design, which is a design that provides basis for quantification of and different perspectives on variables (i.e., trust constructs) identified in the literature review (Ekinci, 2015, p. 27). The aim of the survey is to (1) gather quantifiable data, which describes the opinion and beliefs of a sample of people in regard to the concept of trust in the context of Airbnb, through summary statistics, frequency distributions (Sue & Ritter, 2012, pp. 2, 151, 153) and the Pearson correlation coefficient, and (2) gain a snapshot of trust from diverse perspectives (Ekinci, 2015, p. 27).

More specifically, the survey's research goal (Sue & Ritter, 2012, p. 6) was defined as to gain a broad overview, investigate and establish a solid foundation for understanding the role of trust and the dynamics of trust on peer-to-peer platforms (Airbnb). In reaching this goal, and answering our research question, the following objectives of the survey were generated: (1) determine general trust levels amongst respondents, (2) determine the most important trust-building measures on peer-to-peer platforms, and (3) understand the interdependence of dispositional, online, institutional, and interpersonal trust on peer-to-peer platforms.

5.5.2 Survey Design

The survey was created as a highly structured questionnaire with two types of closed-ended questions (Likert scale and checkbox questions) (Ekinci, 2015, p. 4). The majority of questions were closed-ended questions, which could be answered on a rating scale (5-point Likert scale) that provided several possibilities arranged in a hierarchical order (ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree') (Sue & Ritter, 2012, p. 63). A scale with a midpoint was chosen (5-point Likert scale) to allow respondents with a neutral opinion to reply to the questions (Sue & Ritter, 2012, p. 64). Additionally, Sue & Ritter (2012, p. 64), deem both a 4- and 5-point scale useful for most attitude, and opinion data collection. The rest of the survey's questions were multiple 'checkboxes' questions (with a 'choose max 3' limitation). This means, respondents had a list of response-options to choose from (Sue & Ritter, 2012, p. 60). A shuffle

option was implemented for the checkbox questions, which means that the order of the questions changes every time a respondent takes the survey. This facilitated in avoiding biased answers from the respondents because people are likely to choose the first answers rather than reading through all options (Kuhn, 2017). All included closed-ended questions allowed for the design of an easy-to-use and easy-to-respond-to questionnaire that is useful in generating quantitative data that is easy to code and interpret (Ekinci, 2015, p. 4), and supports our approach of conducting a descriptive testing study (Ekinci, 2015, p. 28).

Nonetheless, a highly structured questionnaire may also include a few (2-3) open-ended questions that allow respondents to (1) answer in their own words and share their own thoughts and perspectives, (2) provide an alternative view that has been overlooked in the design process, and (3) add to data obtained from the closed-ended questions (Ekinci, 2015, p. 4). In this particular study, a couple of open-ended questions were included with the purpose of encouraging a more flexible way for respondents to share diverse ideas on how to build trust on a peer-to-peer platform, like Airbnb, in the sharing economy (Sue & Ritter, 2012, pp. 56, 57) and was useful in collecting qualitative data.

We drew upon the literature review, not only in drafting the design of the survey but also in writing up the survey questions and grouping them. By determining the relevance of dispositional, online, institutional and interpersonal trust as relevant for peer-to-peer platforms, questions regarding all four concepts were included in the survey. We created a list of survey questions for each target group (host, guest, both, neither), which can be viewed in appendix A and B. In total, the survey consists of 100 questions. People who have never used or booked a service on Airbnb (‘neither’) were included as a target group, as to make it acceptable for respondents to identify as unfamiliar with the topic, and not force respondents to take on an opinion that is not genuine (support non-attitudes) (Sue & Ritter, 2012, p. 55).

On the landing page of the survey, respondents first had to answer two demographic questions (age and nationality) and two questions about their Airbnb usage (number of service transactions and type of service, i.e., guest, host, guest & host, neither). Thus, the survey contains four different sections depending on whether the respondent has never used Airbnb, has used Airbnb as a guest, host or both, meaning everyone could answer the survey. The sections ‘guest’, ‘host’, and ‘both’ include closed-ended questions on a 5-point Likert-scale from all four identified relevant trust constructs plus one checkbox question about trust building

measures. The section 'neither' includes closed-ended questions (also on a 5-point Likert-scale) from two identified trust concepts plus one checkbox question about the reason for not having used Airbnb. The sections 'guest' and 'host' have two additional open-ended questions and the section 'both' has three open-ended questions. No open-ended questions have been included for the section 'neither' because these respondents do not have any prior experience with Airbnb. A detailed overview of the survey's design is presented in figure 4.

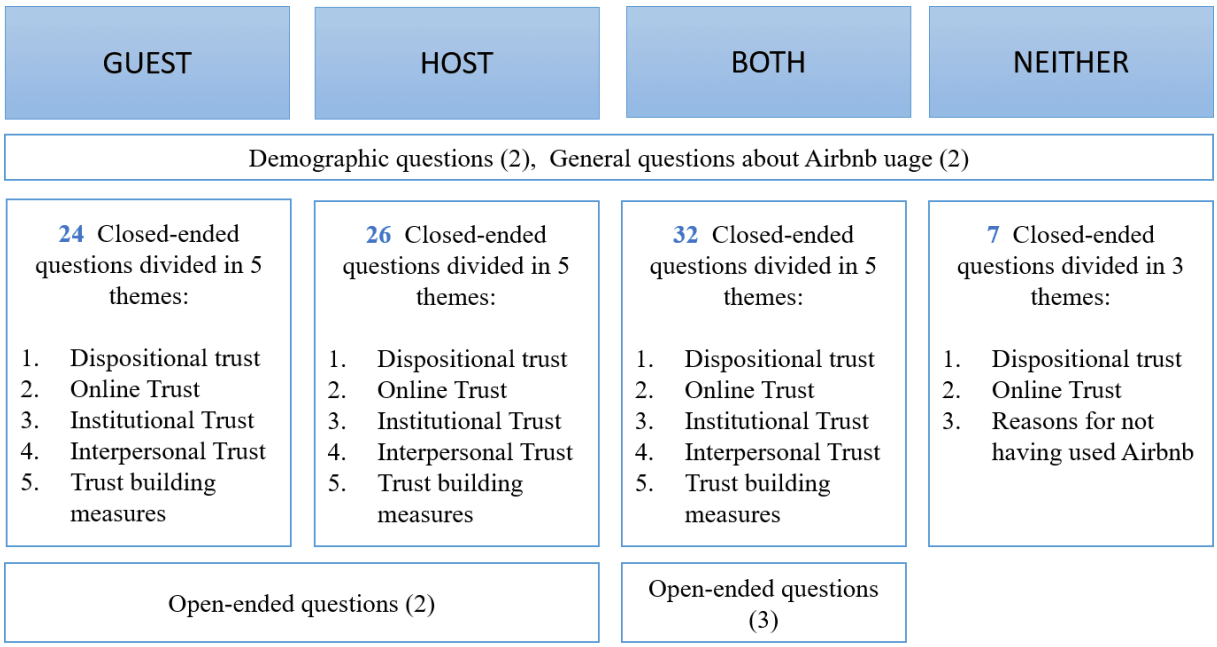

Figure 4: Survey design

The survey was created in English as to be able to distribute it to a large geographic area and diverse audience. The survey was created with Google Forms (software). A pilot survey was distributed to a small sample of 10 people, to complete the survey and provide feedback that would pinpoint possible mishaps including technical issues, and confusing or misleading wording of questions etc. (Sue & Ritter, 2012, p. 73). With feedback, the survey was revised, and necessary changes were made. The sample results for pre-testing were not included in the final results.

5.5.3 Data Collection

A highly structured questionnaire was chosen in order to be able to send it out to the largest possible number of respondents (Ekinci, 2015, p. 9), and to gain as much quantifiable data as possible. A simple, motivating and trustworthy survey invitation was created to inform network ties of (1) the purpose of the survey, (2) the length and time needed to complete the survey (3-7 minutes), and (3) how the survey is anonymous and will be handled with confidentiality (Sue & Ritter, 2012, pp. 111, 112). Finally, the invitation letter included a link to the front-page of the survey. The respondents were asked to base their responses on experiences with Airbnb in the last 5 years, hereby limiting inaccurate estimates and opinions that may be based on distant memories (Sue & Ritter, 2012, p. 54). After completion of the survey, a thank you message was included, as to express gratitude for the respondents' time and inputs (Sue & Ritter, 2012, p. 137). The purpose of making the survey anonymous was to reduce social desirability bias and facilitate an environment where the respondents could feel free to voice their honest and actual opinion instead of the "right" and socially acceptable one (Sue & Ritter, 2012, p. 53).

The survey was administered and sent out to potential respondents through online networks, including social media platforms such as LinkedIn and Facebook as well as our private networks. Furthermore, with the purpose of increasing the sample size, snowball sampling was used to identify participants that could refer the survey to other people in their network (Sue & Ritter, 2012, p. 45). Thus, 11 people in our network reshared the survey post on their LinkedIn and Facebook pages. We were aware of the fact that it is more difficult to receive host responses compared to guest responses, since Airbnb (with 800 million guests, and 4 million hosts listed on their platform) have a ratio of 1 host to every 200 guests (Airbnb, 2021b). Therefore, we put some additional effort in the distribution of the survey to reach more hosts. We personally approached the hosts we have stayed with on Airbnb through the Airbnb website and asked them in a personal message if they could participate in the survey. In addition, we approached Facebook groups with Airbnb hosts if we could share our survey to increase the hosts respondent rate. We wrote to a number of groups but unfortunately, none of them were willing to share our survey within their groups with the reason that they receive too many of these requests and that the groups' followers are annoyed with this type of content. Finally, due to limited financial resources and time available, the above-mentioned method of distribution was chosen due to its advantages of low cost, fast replies, efficiency, direct data entry, and wide

geographic reach, despite disadvantages of coverage bias and reliance on software (Sue & Ritter, 2012, pp. 5, 17, 212).

The period of time between launching the survey online (5th of March 2021), till downloading all data from respondents (14th of March 2021), time was spent on response observation, screening, planning for the analysis and breakdown of the results, as well as data cleaning (Sue & Ritter, 2012, p. 147).

5.5.4 Data Analysis

Analysis of Closed-ended Questions

Through the data analysis of the closed-ended questions, we investigated and established a foundation for understanding the role and dynamics of trust on the peer-to-peer platform, Airbnb. In the process of analyzing the compiled data from the survey's closed-ended questions, we created descriptive statistics, such as frequency distribution tables (e.g., bar graphs) for every question in excel and summarized the results in graphs and tables in our Survey Dashboard (see appendix D). The frequency distributions show the numbers and percentages of respondents who selected each response option for every question (Sue & Ritter, 2012, p. 151), and hereby help identify and describe the fundamental characteristics of the data (Sue & Ritter, 2012, p. 150).

Furthermore, we created summary statistics, including two measures of central tendency (the mean and median), in order to summarize the data through average values. The median is not as sensitive to outliers and is typically a more appropriate measure for attitude Likert-scale surveys (Sue & Ritter, 2012, p. 154). In calculating the mean, it technically requires that the distances on the scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree), are interpreted similarly amongst the respondents (Sue & Ritter, 2012, p. 154). Option (1) *strongly disagree*, could (by the respondent) be perceived as a response option that means they have no trust, or that they have minimal levels of trust. Option (2) *disagree*, may be interpreted as an option that reflects the respondent's rather low trust levels. Option (3) *neutral*, could be perceived as an option for when one does not agree nor disagree, and in this case have moderate trust levels. That is, when one sometimes trusts, and at other times does not trust. This may depend on the circumstances and context. Option (4) *agree*, could be perceived

as an option for when one (to a larger degree) has high trust in others, but not at all times, and independently of the circumstances. Option (5) *strongly agree*, could be perceived as an option for when one trusts unequivocally. That is, when one has a maximal level of trust. We will interpret the scale as such (see table 6) throughout the findings in chapter 6.

Likert Scale	Interpretation for Trust
1	Minimal Trust
2	Low Trust
3	Moderate Trust
4	High Trust
5	Maximal Trust

Table 6: Likert scale interpretation

Despite the dynamic nature of trust and that trust is interpreted and valued differently amongst people, we have used the numerical values to calculate means, which will provide more detailed information about each set of responses (Sue & Ritter, 2012, p. 154). Conclusively, both the mean and median have been included in this study. To determine the median and mean, we listed all the values from smallest to largest in excel, then used the (=MEDIAN) code as well as the (=AVERAGE) code in excel to calculate the median and mean. These summary statistics will showcase more compact descriptions of the distributions of answers, compared to the frequency distribution graphs (Sue & Ritter, 2012, p. 153).

Lastly, we calculated the Pearson correlation coefficient *r* with the (=PEARSON) code in excel to analyze the relationship between the trust constructs (dispositional, online, institutional and interpersonal trust), and to determine the degree of their linear relationship. Whenever the Pearson correlation coefficient is greater than 0, a positive relationship is indicated, which means that when one variable increases, so does the other variable. When the Pearson correlation coefficient is less than 0, a negative relationship is indicated, which means that when one variable increases, the other one decreases (Laerd Statistics, 2018). When calculating the Pearson correlation coefficient, it is not possible to take into consideration which variable is dependent and independent (Laerd Statistics, 2018). However, this method allows us to determine the correlation between two variables.

Analysis of Open-ended Questions

In the survey, we included 2 open-ended questions for ‘guests’, 2 open-ended questions for ‘hosts’, and 3 open-ended questions for ‘both’. All open-ended questions were optional. Through the data analysis of the open-ended questions, we investigated possible supplementary trust-building measures as well as factors that increase trust in Airbnb (institutional trust) and trust between peers (interpersonal trust) from a consumer’s perspective (guests & hosts). In the process of analyzing the compiled data from the survey’s open-ended questions, we conducted a content analysis, which is an approach to analyze text in order “[...] to quantify content in terms of predetermined categories and in a systematic and replicable manner” (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 300). We adopted the approach of emergent coding (inductive), which means that our categories developed while reading through the respondents’ answers (Wilson, 2010, p. 258). Hereby, we read and reread through the data individually, which helped us identify categories (Wilson, 2010, p. 258). The process of categorizing the responses was guided by the findings of the literature review and designed to address the research question. Afterwards, we came together to discuss our findings, and finally agreed upon the most relevant and important categories regarding our research question. Together, we assigned the identified categories to each response. Each category was assigned a numeric code, which enabled us to quantify the categories, and calculate the proportion of answers that addressed each category.

5.5.5 Limitations

To identify potential biases, and to estimate the representative nature of the survey sample, demographic data (nominal and interval) (Sue & Ritter, 2012, p. 68), such as the respondents’ nationality and age were gathered. In other words, the demographic data resulted in an overview of the diversity of the respondents, and helped identify possible sampling errors, which is when statistical approximations are made on the basis of a sample of respondents, and therefore does not reflect the characteristics of the population (Sue & Ritter, 2012, p. 49). Since demographic questions typically are sensitive by nature, these questions were carefully formulated (Sue & Ritter, 2012, p. 69).

5.6 Review Analysis

5.6.1 Research Goal and Objectives

The aim of the review analysis is to (1) gather qualitative data that describes the opinion and beliefs of a sample of people in regard to their experiences on Airbnb, and (2) gain valuable insights through a sentiment and content analysis of the reviews, as to determine which contextual aspects enhances and diminishes trust between peers (interpersonal trust), and between Airbnb and the peers (institutional trust). In doing this, we investigated and established the variables which affect the dynamics of interpersonal and institutional trust on peer-to-peer platforms (Airbnb) (sub-research question 3).

Online reviews have been identified as an important factor influencing consumers' opinions and behaviors and are described as "[...] a convenient mechanism for consumers to discover, evaluate, and compare products and services on the Web" (Zervas et al., 2021, p. 2). Thus, we found it highly relevant to analyze Airbnb's online reviews, since they are often mentioned in connection with trust building (Bridges & Vásquez, 2018, p. 2060), and have also been identified as one of the most important trust building measures in our survey.

5.6.2 Data Collection

We collected a total of 200 publicly available reviews about Airbnb, with 100 reviews from the independent review website Trustpilot (trustpilot.com), and 100 reviews directly from Airbnb (airbnb.com). Academic research has already addressed the issue that the large majority of Airbnb's reviews on airbnb.com (nearly 95%) are positive (Zervas et al., 2021, p.1). Therefore, we chose to collect reviews from two sources to keep our research as objective as possible. On the day of collecting reviews from Trustpilot (12.03.2021), we selected the first 100 reviews. The collected reviews were published between 31.01.2021 and 11.03.2021. Reviews from Airbnb were collected on 02.03.2021, however, no information is given about the date of publication of the reviews on Airbnb. To view reviews on Airbnb.com, one must first select a particular city, a time frame of which one wishes to book an accommodation, as well as the number of attending guests. We chose to collect reviews from the city of Berlin, since the majority of respondents in our survey (63%) were German, and because it is the capital of Germany. In addition, we chose a flexible time frame (April and May) to travel, as well as 1 guest. Moreover, we collected data from two perspectives on Airbnb, including guest-host

reviews and host-guest reviews. Finally, we chose the first 5 property listings with more than 25 reviews and collected the first 10 reviews from each of the 5 listings (50 guest-host reviews), and randomly selected 50 reviews from guests' profiles (host-guest reviews). Since many people use Airbnb as both guests and hosts, we chose to interpret the guest-host reviews as the guest's Airbnb experience with a host and the host-guest reviews as the host's Airbnb experience with a guest.

5.6.3 Data Analysis

Through the data analysis of the reviews on both Trustpilot and Airbnb.com, we investigated and established a foundation of the variables which affect the dynamics of interpersonal and institutional trust on peer-to-peer platforms (Airbnb). In the process of analyzing the compiled data set, we conducted a sentiment analysis, as well as a content analysis.

Firstly, all data was imported to NVivo. The Trustpilot reviews were analyzed all together, while the Airbnb reviews were analyzed in two groups: (1) host to guest (host's perspective), and (2) guest to host (guest's perspective). At times, the sentiment target of the reviews on Trustpilot were multiple entities (Airbnb, host and guest), and the large majority of the reviews targeted Airbnb (Liu, 2015, p. 19). Therefore, it seemed appropriate to analyze the Trustpilot reviews all together. In the sentiment analysis, all reviews were classified as opinionated and subjective, meaning they were all containing sentiment (emotions/ opinions/ beliefs). We ran a *word frequency query* for stemmed words, which resulted in a keyword list of most used words throughout the reviews. Afterwards, we conducted a polarity detection (Thelwall, 2017, p. 2) by reading through all keywords and classifying positive words (e.g., good, successful, amazing) as well as negative words (e.g., terrible, damage, scam), to get an indication of whether the majority of the reviews were either positive or negative. However, on a document level (considering each review as a whole) (Liu, 2015, p. 47), the word frequency query results were not able to determine whether a review was either positive or negative. In determining whether a review was positive, negative or both, the reviews were studied in full, and a percentage of negative, positive and positive-negative reviews were calculated. Lastly, we conducted a content analysis by grouping trust-influencing keywords in synonyms, analyzing the words' degree of emotion, and labeling each group with a category.

5.6.4 Limitations

We identify this analysis as highly subjective because the review analysis depends on analyzing the language used in the reviews through determining the words' negative and positive connotations and the expression of emotion. Opinionated statements (e.g., reviews) are typically subjective and are a result of experiences, ideologies and beliefs (Liu, 2015, p. 16). However, when a large number of reviewers, and not just a single reviewer, address similar issues, the validity of that particular issue becomes prevalent (Liu, 2015, p. 16).

Additionally, the use of sarcasm can limit the accuracy of a sentiment analysis (Thelwall, 2017, p. 7). A sarcastic review can potentially express a sentiment (e.g., positive feelings) that is intended to express the contradictory (e.g., negative feelings) (Liu, 2015, p. 10 & 11). In analyzing the contextual components and the theme of the reviews, sarcasm was more easily detected, and the limitation hereby reduced.

Lastly, the data set of guest-to-host reviews on Airbnb.com limits our results because these reviews address an Airbnb experience in the city of Berlin. Thus, the results are limited to this city and cannot be generalized to other cities and countries. However, the host-to-guest reviews were collected from random guest profiles and were not limited to a specific geographic location. This approach was the best option for us to receive as much diverse information as possible for the data analysis. Therefore, the host-guest reviews could address multiple cities in different countries.

5.7 Summary

This part sums up the most important aspects of this chapter in order to create an overview. We introduced the philosophy of science with its four different levels of research (see table 5 on pp. 38-39). We use a mix of relativist and realist view in our study (ontology), we adopt a mix of interpretivism and positivism (epistemology), and we use a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods as well as an abductive approach to research (methodology). The research strategy in this thesis is a case study, which investigates the complex concept of trust on peer-to-peer platforms in the sharing economy in the context of Airbnb. In regard to the research method and data collection, we adopt a mixed-method approach (qualitative and quantitative) and collect primary (survey) as well as secondary data (review analysis). We developed a survey with the aim to gather quantifiable data that describes the opinion and beliefs of a sample of people in regard to the role of trust in the context of Airbnb. The survey design was created as a highly structured questionnaire with two types of closed-ended questions (5-point Likert scale and checkbox questions) and a few (2-3) open-ended questions, which results in a total of 100 questions. The data analysis of the closed-ended questions includes descriptive statistics (frequency distribution), summary statistics (mean and median), and the calculation of the Pearson correlation coefficient. The analysis of open-ended questions includes a content analysis including the development of categories. Lastly, the aim of the review analysis was to gather data that describes the opinion and beliefs of people in regard to their Airbnb experiences. We collected a total of 200 reviews, 100 reviews from Trustpilot.com and 100 reviews from Airbnb.com. The review analysis includes a sentiment and content analysis, and was partly conducted with NVivo, in order to (1) develop a keyword list of the most used words throughout the reviews, (2) identify them as positive and negative words, and (3) grouping trust-influencing keywords in synonyms and labeling them with a category.

6. Findings

6.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from both data collection processes, the survey and the review analysis. The findings of the quantitative part of the survey will answer sub-research question 2: *How and why do levels of dispositional, online, institutional and interpersonal trust vary amongst Airbnb peers and people who have never used Airbnb, and are the trust constructs interdependent?,* while the findings of the qualitative part of the survey as well as the review analysis will answer sub-research question 3: *What variables affect (builds and diminishes) the dynamics of interpersonal and institutional trust on Airbnb?,* from both a host and guest perspective.

6.2 Survey: Quantitative Analysis of Closed-ended Survey Questions

An overview of all survey results can be seen in the Airbnb Survey Dashboard in appendix D, and all survey questions can be seen in appendix A. However, some tables and graphs will be included in the findings. To interpret the findings, we assigned a nominal interpretation to each number on the used Likert scale (1 = minimal trust, 2 = low trust, 3 = moderate trust, 4 = high trust, 5 = maximal trust). A detailed explanation of this interpretation can be found in the methodology, under data analysis of the survey.

6.2.1 Demographics

Respondents

The survey received a total of 250 responses. Out of 250 responses, 169 identified as ‘guests’, 5 as ‘hosts’, 13 as hosts & guests (‘both’) and 63 people as never having used Airbnb (‘neither’), visualized in figure 5. With 18 hosts and 182 guest respondents, the host/guest ratio was approximately 1:10. This is a significantly lower ratio than Airbnb’s 1:200 host/guest ratio (Airbnb, 2021b) and expresses a larger than expected number of respondents for this survey who have been Airbnb hosts. However, with only 5 ‘host’ respondents, this group is not a representative sample, and will most likely not yield reliable results.

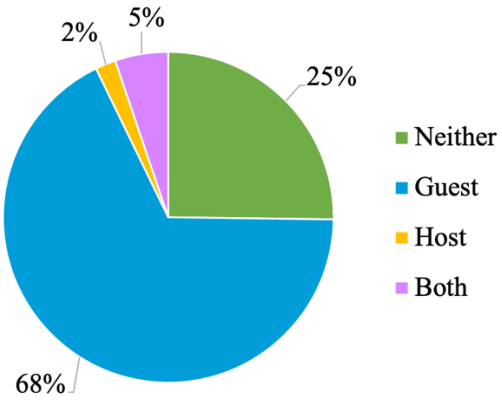

Figure 5: Survey respondents divided in four sections: 'neither' (people who have never used Airbnb), 'guests', 'hosts', and 'both' (guests & hosts)

Age & Nationality

The respondents could choose between six age groups. Out of 250 respondents, 57 respondents are between the age of 16-24 (23%), 136 respondents between the age of 25-34 (54%), 25 respondents between the age of 35-44 (10%), 17 respondents between the age of 45-54 (7%), 12 respondents between the age of 55-64 (5%), and 3 respondents are 65 years and older (1%). This survey sample is fairly representative as its age distribution is similar to the age distribution of actual users on Airbnb (see figure 6). Both the majority of the survey respondents and actual Airbnb users belong to the age group of 25-34. Getting respondents in this age group was expected as we shared the survey within our own networks.

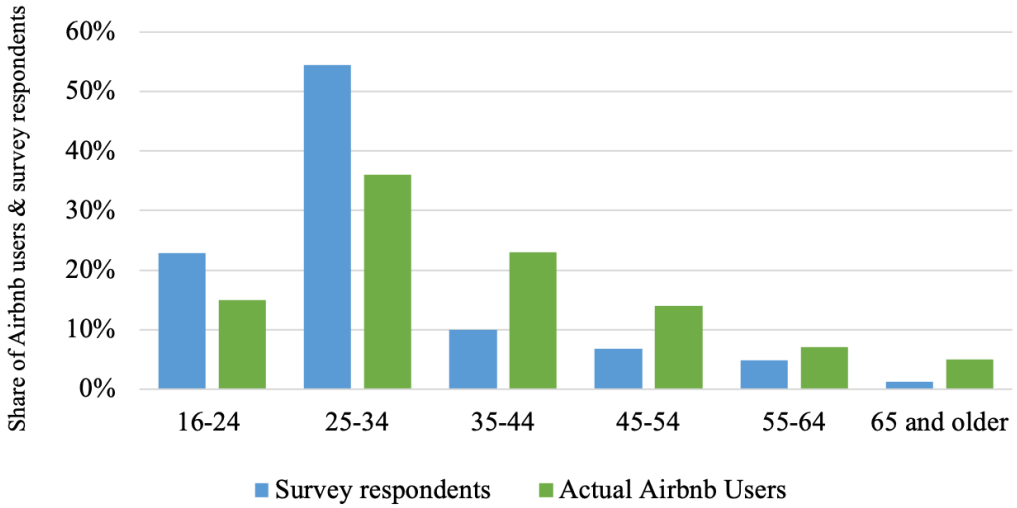

Figure 6: Age distribution of survey respondents vs. actual Airbnb users
(own results & Statista, 2019)

The collected responses are from respondents of 31 different countries, including Afghanistan, Austria, China, Columbia, Cuba, Croatia, Denmark, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Portugal, Scotland, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, and Vietnam. This showcases the diversity of the sample, and highlights that the results do not only apply to a specific country, region, continent or culture. However, the majority (63%) of the respondents were German, 15% were Danish, and 4 % were American. The remaining 18% consist of respondents from the remaining 28 countries mentioned above.

Out of the 250 respondents, a single respondent presumably misunderstood the "nationality" question. Due to this data-entry error, which could not be corrected due to the survey's anonymity, it was marked as missing/incomplete (Sue & Ritter, 2012, p. 149). Tossing out this single answer will not negatively affect the generated survey results, as cultural aspects have been excluded from the scope of the study.

6.2.2 Dispositional Trust

Below, survey results for dispositional trust (DT) will be presented for all groups; 'neither', 'guests', 'hosts', and 'both'.

Neither

Levels of DT for respondents who have never used Airbnb ('neither') were calculated based on three questions; Q5, Q6 and Q7 (see appendix A). Calculations show a mean of 3,14 and a median of 3 (see appendix D, p 31). This indicates that respondents who have never used Airbnb have moderate levels of DT. They moderately trust others, whether it be a person, institution or thing, and moderately believe that others will keep promises. 41% percent of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they generally trust other people, while 59% were either neutral, disagreed, or strongly disagreed. Between 35% and 44% of this group of respondents, selected option (3) neutral, as their response to question Q5, Q6 and Q7 (see figure 7). Therefore, we can conclude that people who have never used Airbnb, generally have moderate trust levels, depending on the circumstances.

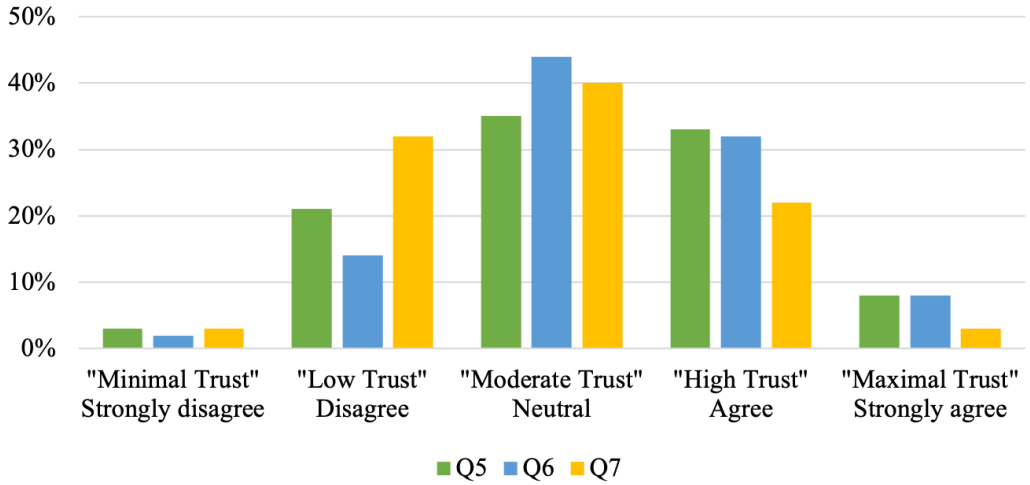

Figure 7: Distribution of DT levels amongst the 'neither' respondents (n = 63), based on Q5, Q6 & Q7

Guests

Levels of DT for 'guests' were calculated based on Q12, Q13 and Q14 (see appendix A). We found a mean of 3,52 and a median of 4, which means that guests skew towards having a high degree of DT (see appendix D, p 31). Additional results (see figure 8) show that the majority of the 'guest' respondents selected option (4) agree for Q12 and Q13. Only 10% of the 'guest' respondents disagree or strongly disagree with generally trusting other people and generally finding people reliable (Q12 and Q13), which showcases a limited number of 'guest' respondents with low DT. We can hereby conclude that the majority of the 'guest' respondents have moderate to high levels of DT.

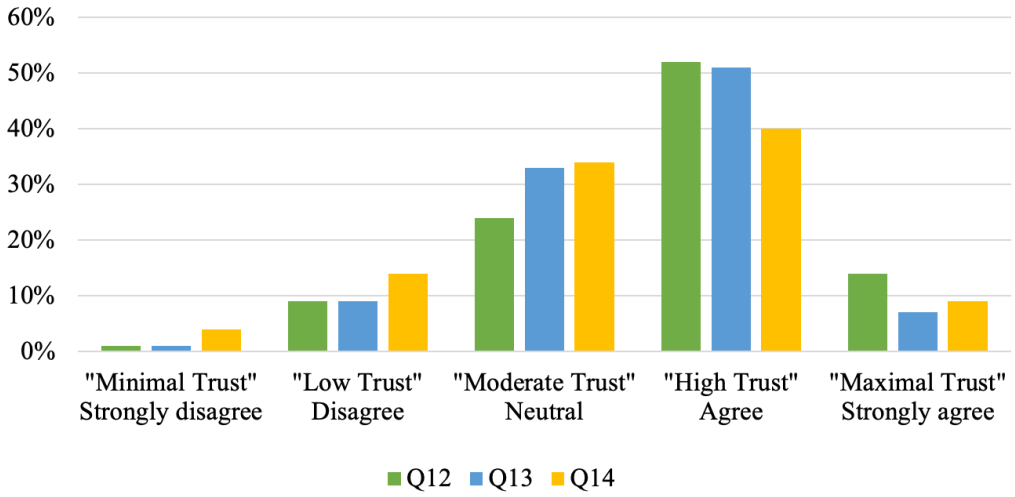

Figure 8: Distribution of DT levels amongst the 'guest' respondents (n = 169), based on Q12, Q13 & Q14

Hosts

Levels of DT for 'hosts' on Airbnb were calculated based on Q38, Q39, and Q40 (see appendix A). The 'hosts' respondents have an overall mean of 4,07 and a median of 4 for DT (see appendix D, p 31). This shows that this particular group of respondents are skewed towards a higher tendency to generally trust other people and that they feel that people are generally reliable and keep promises. Of all 5 respondents, 60% strongly agree or agree, while none of the respondents strongly disagreed with generally trusting other people/things (Q38) (see figure 9). These results show that most of the 'hosts' have moderate to maximal levels of DT.

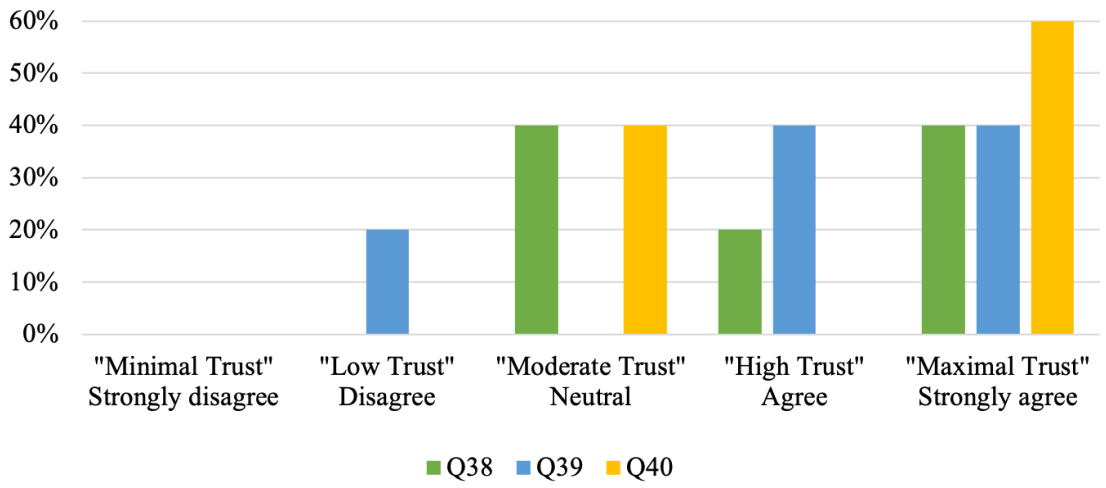

Figure 9: Distribution of DT levels amongst the 'host' respondents (n = 5), based on Q38, Q39 & Q40

Both

Levels of DT for the group 'both' were calculated based on their answers to Q66, Q67 and Q68 (see appendix A). The 'both' respondents have a mean of 4,36 and a median of 4 which showcases high levels of DT (see appendix D, p 31). 92% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed to generally trusting other people (Q66), and to feeling that they generally perceive people as reliable, and dependable (Q67). Moreover, 84% either agreed or strongly agreed that they trust a person/institution or thing, despite having little knowledge of characteristics of them/it (Q68). Additionally, not a single 'both' respondent strongly disagreed to either question (see figure 10). Therefore, the majority of people who have used Airbnb as a host and guest have a high to maximal tendency to generally trust others/things, which implies high to maximal DT levels.

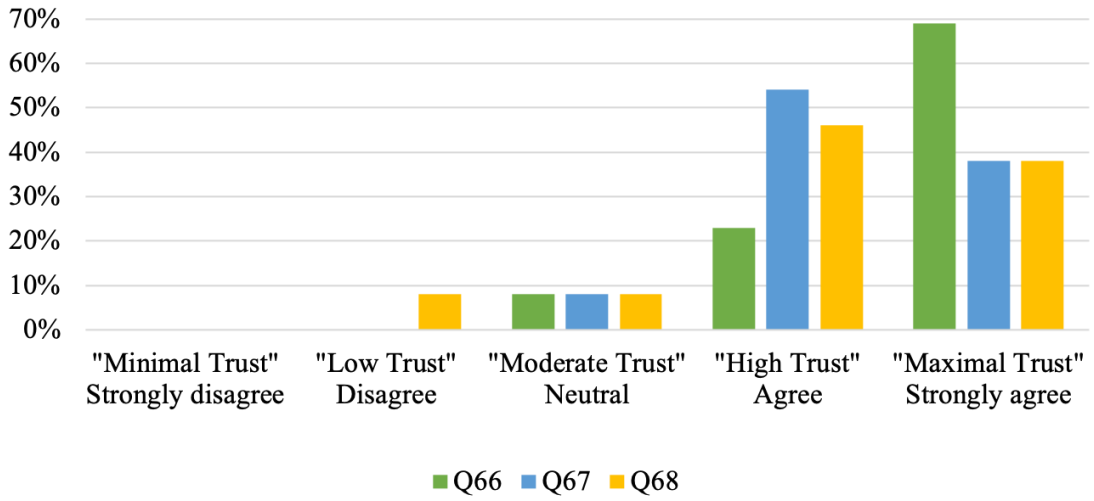

Figure 10: Distribution of DT levels amongst 'both' respondents (n = 13), based on Q66, Q67 & Q68

Comparison of DT amongst all Groups

This part compares the overall levels of DT, which is the general tendency to trust, amongst all groups. The calculated summary statistics on levels of DT for all respondents, range on average between a mean of 3,14 to 4,36 and a median from 3 to 4 (see figure 11).

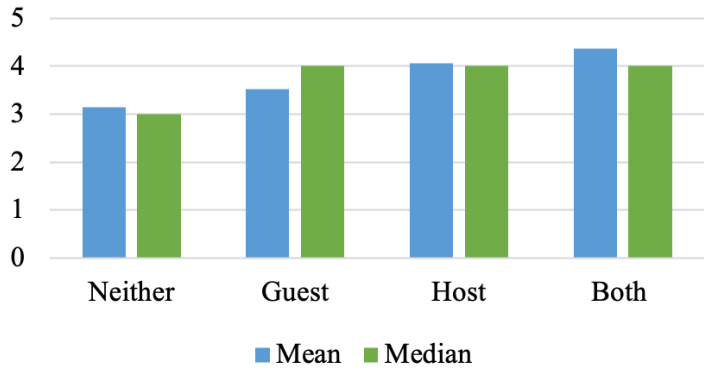

Figure 11: Mean & median showcasing the overall DT levels amongst all respondents, (n = 250)

This shows that all groups have at least a moderate tendency to generally trust others/things, while the respondents who identified as a guest, host or both have an even higher tendency to trust others/things. Worth mentioning is that the average level of DT steadily increases from 'neither' to 'guest', 'guest' to 'host', and 'host' to 'both' (see figure 11). In other words, the overall level of DT is lowest for people who have never used Airbnb, and highest for people

who have used Airbnb as both hosts and guests ('both'). Thus, it can be assumed that people's DT either increases once or the more they have used Airbnb, because Airbnb and the Airbnb experience positively influences their trust levels, or that people with higher levels of DT are more likely to use Airbnb because they are more likely to trust strangers.

6.2.3 Online Trust

Below, survey results for online trust (OT) will be presented for all respondent groups; 'neither', 'guests', 'hosts', and 'both'.

Neither

Levels of OT amongst the group of people who have never used Airbnb ('neither') were calculated based on Q8, Q9 and Q10 (see appendix A). We found a mean of 3,33 and a median of 3, which displays that this particular group of respondents has moderate trust levels in the online environment (see appendix D, p 31). Of all the respondents who have never used Airbnb, 46% agreed or strongly agreed, 19% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 35% could neither agree nor disagree with feeling safe using the internet for personal use (Q8). Additionally, 36% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed to feeling safe with providing personal information and credit card details on a website, while 41% disagreed or strongly disagreed to the fact (Q10) (see figure 12). In conclusion, some feel safe, while others feel unsafe in the online environment, and hereby express diverse levels of OT.

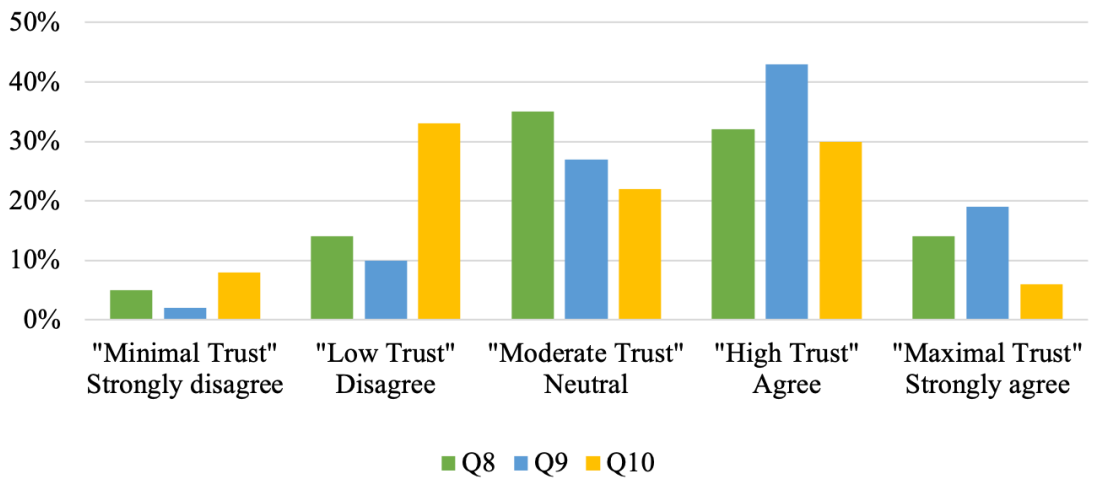

Figure 12: Distribution of OT levels amongst the 'neither' respondents (n = 63), based on Q8, Q9 & Q10

Guests

Levels of OT for the group ‘guests’ were calculated based on the respondents’ answers to Q15, Q16 and Q17 (see appendix A). Results for guests’ overall OT show a mean of 3,60 and a median of 4 (see appendix D, p 31). For Q15, 62% of the respondents strongly agree or agree, 24% are neutral, and only 14% disagree or strongly disagree that they feel safe using the Internet for personal use (see figure 13). We can hereby conclude that the majority of the respondents have high levels of OT, which displays that most of the ‘guest’ respondents trust and feel safe in the online environment.

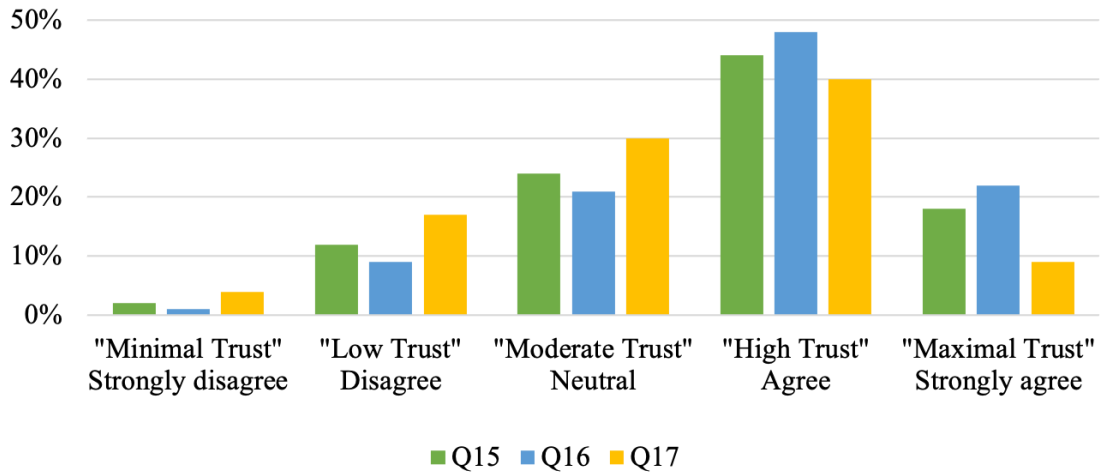

Figure 13: Distribution of OT levels amongst the ‘guest’ respondents (n = 169), based on Q15, Q16 & Q17

Hosts

Levels of OT for ‘hosts’ were calculated based on the respondents’ answers to Q41, Q42 and Q43 (see appendix A). Results for hosts’ overall OT show a mean of 3,87 a median of 4 (see appendix D, p 31). These findings show that hosts have a high tendency to trust the Internet for personal use and they are mostly convinced that there are enough safety measures that will protect them when transacting personal business online. For Q41 and Q42, 80% of the respondents agree or strongly agree that the Internet is safe for personal use and that there is enough online protection that creates a feeling of security, whereby only 20% disagree and no respondents strongly disagree nor have a neutral opinion (see figure 14). We can hereby conclude that the majority of the ‘host’ respondents have high to maximal OT levels.

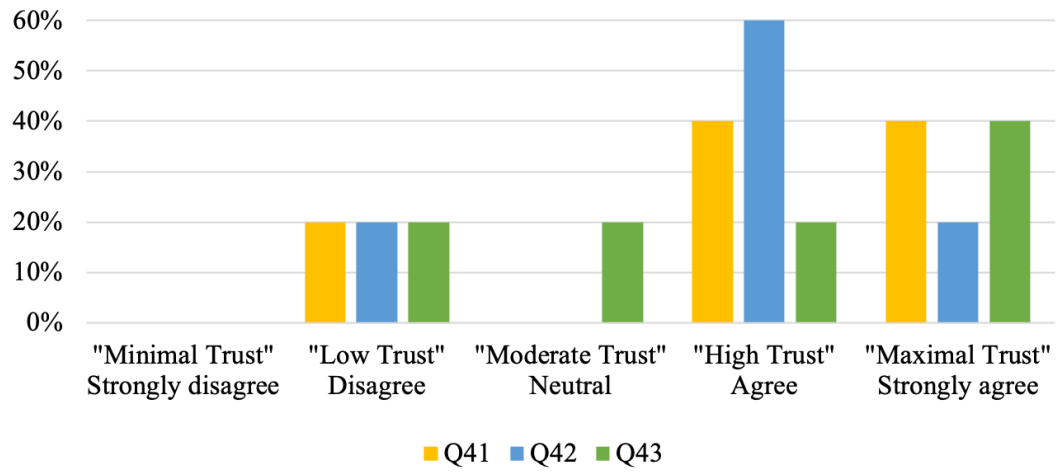

Figure 14: Distribution of OT levels amongst the 'host' respondents (n = 5), based on Q41, Q42 & Q43

Both

Levels of OT for 'both' respondents were calculated based on the respondents' answers to Q69, Q70 and Q71 (see appendix A). Results for 'both' respondents' overall OT show a mean of 3,80 and a median of 4 (see appendix D, p 31). Additionally, no 'both' respondents disagreed nor strongly disagreed to Q69 and Q70. 85% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with feelings safe while using the Internet (Q69), and 61% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with feeling that the Internet has enough safety measures (Q70) (see figure 15). Overall, the majority of the 'both' respondents have a moderate to maximal tendency to trust the online environment, including using the Internet for personal use, providing credit card details online, and trusting that there are safety measures that ensure a safe transaction.

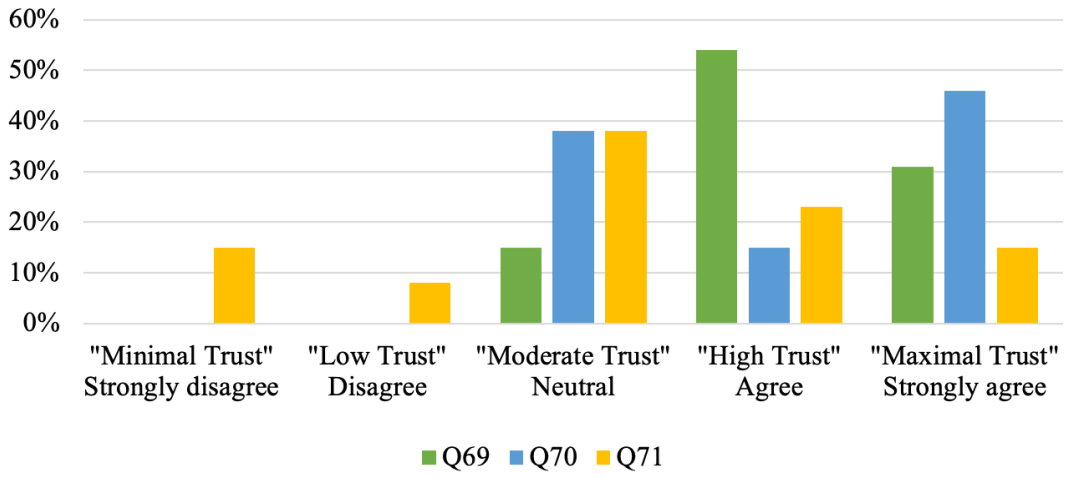

Figure 15: Distribution of OT levels amongst the 'both' respondents (n = 13), based on Q69, Q70 & Q71

Comparison of OT amongst all Groups

This part compares the overall OT amongst all four groups. Results show a mean ranging from 3,33 to 3,87 and a median ranging from 3 to 4, visualized in figure 16.

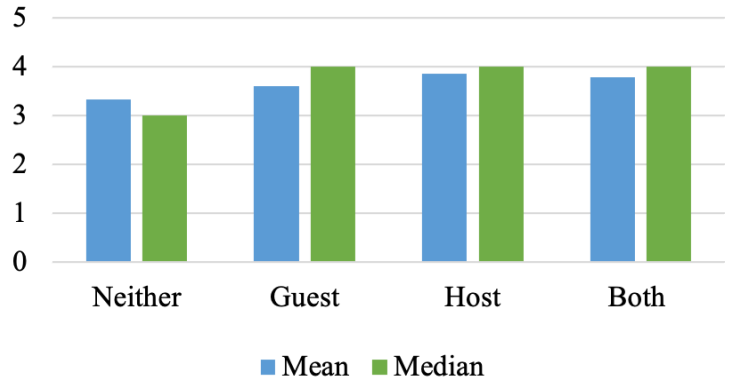

Figure 16: Mean & median showcasing the overall levels of OT amongst all respondents, (n = 250)

These results illustrate that all groups of respondents ('neither', 'guest', 'host', & 'both') generally trust the Internet for the purpose of conducting personal business, such as booking a trip or offering a room on Airbnb. However, the respondents who have never used Airbnb, have the lowest levels of OT (mean = 3,33, median = 3, moderate trust) compared to the other respondents. 'Guest' and 'both' respondents have a high tendency to trust that the Internet is a safe and secure environment, while 'hosts', with a mean of 3,87, have the highest trust levels towards the Internet. With higher levels of OT amongst Airbnb users, it can be assumed that high levels of OT are a necessity for people to come onto Airbnb's website and be willing to trust that the online environment is a safe place to share sensitive personal information i.e., name, address, ID and credit card details.

6.2.4 Institutional Trust

Survey results for institutional trust (IT) will be presented for three groups: 'guests', 'hosts', and 'both'. Bar graphs have been generated for every single question (see appendix D), but to gain a better overview of the overall IT for the three groups, responses from all questions addressing IT were pooled together and are visualized in figure 17, 18 and 19.

Guests

Levels of IT amongst ‘guests’ were calculated based on the respondents’ answers to Q18 through Q29 (see appendix A), and measures trust in the Airbnb platform. Results for guests’ overall levels of IT show a mean of 3,95 and a median of 4 (see appendix D, p 31). Additionally, 73% of all responses to Q18 through Q29 (indirectly) either agree or strongly agree that Airbnb is a trustworthy platform, while only 6% of the responses disagree or strongly disagree (see figure 17). This means that the ‘guest’ respondents, on average, have a high tendency to trust that Airbnb is honest, reliable and credible (Q18), have good intentions and high ethical standards (Q19), is competent (Q20), have a highly functional website with up-to-date information (Q23, Q24), an ability to protect personal information (Q22), offers support when needed (Q26), oppose inappropriate behavior (Q28), and have an ability to screen community members and carry out thorough background checks (Q29).

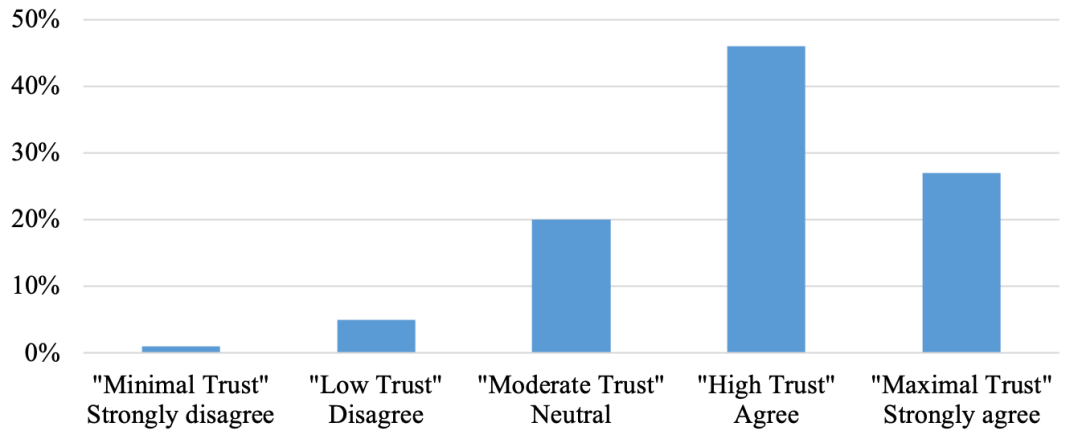

Figure 17: Distribution of IT levels amongst the ‘guest’ respondents (n = 169), based on Q18 to Q29

Hosts

Levels of IT for ‘hosts’ were calculated based on the respondents’ answers to Q44 through Q55 (see appendix A). Results for hosts’ overall levels of IT show a mean of 4,65 and a median of 5 (see appendix D, p 31). Additionally, 80% of all 5 ‘host’ responses to Q44 through Q55 (indirectly) strongly agree that Airbnb is a trustworthy platform (see figure 18). This means that the majority of ‘hosts’ have maximal IT in Airbnb. All hosts view Airbnb as honest, reliable, and competent (Q44), 80% believe that Airbnb has good intentions, high ethical standards, is a competent platform provider, will protect personal information, think that Airbnb will provide support when they need it, trust that Airbnb will take responsibility in opposing inappropriate

behavior, are confident that community members are being screened, and that Airbnb will cover costs in connection with damage (Q45, Q46, Q47, Q49, Q51, Q53, Q54, Q55) (see appendix D). We can hereby conclude that the majority of the 'host' respondents have high to maximal IT towards Airbnb and believe in Airbnb's abilities and benevolence. However, it is expected that a person would only choose to list their property on Airbnb, when trusting that Airbnb will support and protect them against potential risks.

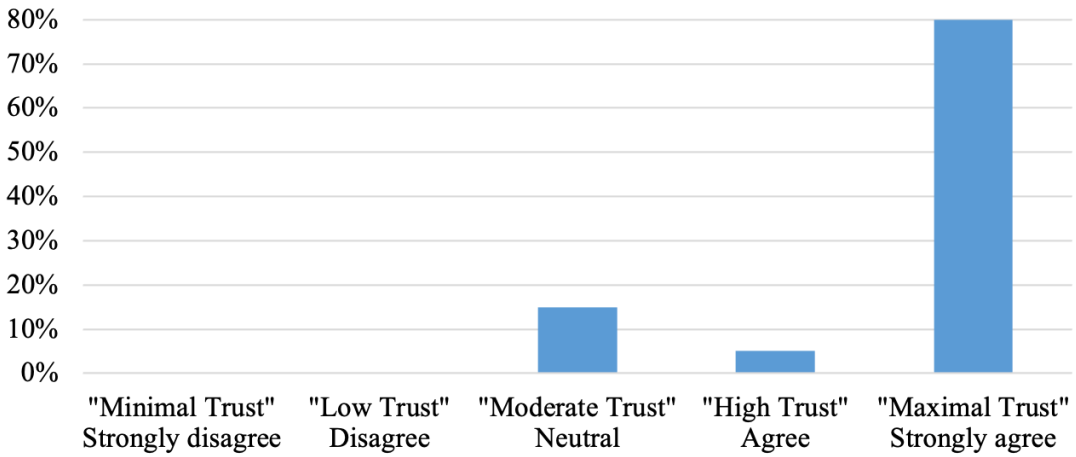

Figure 18: Distribution of IT levels amongst the 'host' respondents (n = 5), based on Q44 to Q55

Both

Levels of IT for the group 'both' were calculated based on the respondents' answers to Q72 through Q83 and Q96 (see appendix A). Results for 'both' respondents for IT show a mean of 3,75 and a median of 4 for IT (see appendix D, p 31). Additionally, of all of the 'both' responses to Q72 through Q83 and Q96, 39% strongly agree (maximal trust), 27% agree (high trust), 15 % are neutral (moderate trust) and 20% disagree or strongly disagree (low to minimal trust) that Airbnb is a trustworthy and competent platform (see figure 19). This means that the majority of 'both' respondents have high to maximal IT in Airbnb, e.g., believing that Airbnb is honest, credible and reliable (Q72), feeling safe making transactions on Airbnb (Q75), and relying upon Airbnb's reputation (Q79).

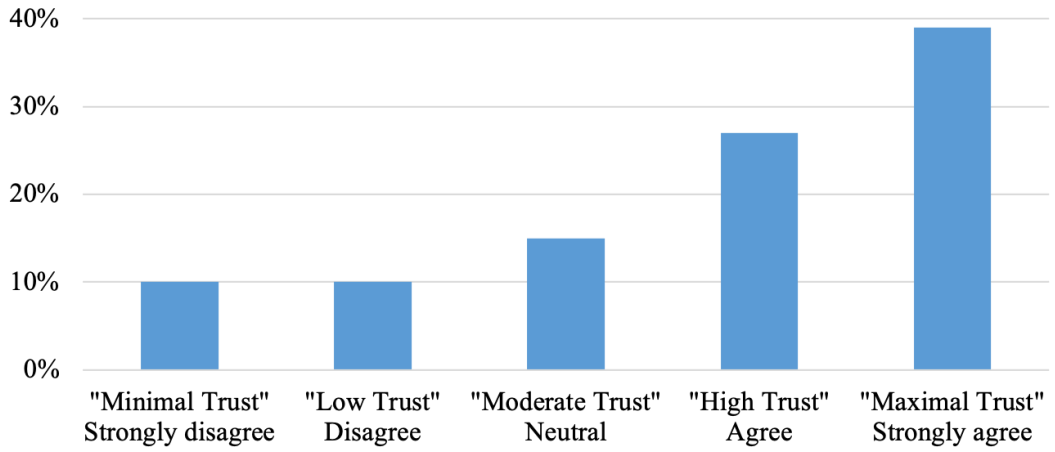

Figure 19: Distribution of IT levels amongst the 'both' respondents (n = 13), based on Q72 through Q83 and Q96

Comparison of IT amongst all groups

This part compares the overall levels of IT amongst three groups: 'guest', 'host', and 'both'. Results show a mean ranging from 3,75 to 4,65 and a median ranging from 4 to 5, visualized in figure 20.

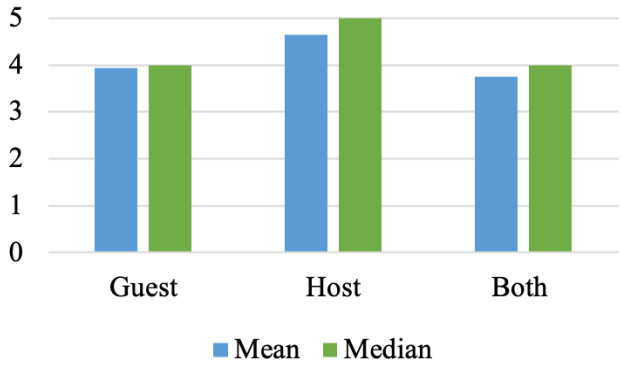

Figure 20: Mean & median showcasing the overall levels of IT amongst all respondents, (n = 250)

In comparison, the group 'both' has the lowest mean of 3,75, followed by the group 'guests' with a slightly higher mean of 3,95. The group 'hosts' has the highest mean (4,65) of all three groups. The group 'both' and 'guests' have the same median of 4 which represents a high tendency to trust that Airbnb is a competent, reliable, and honest platform provider with good intentions (IT). However, the group 'hosts' has an even higher median of 5 for overall IT, which

represents maximal trust in Airbnb. Despite results of 'hosts' displaying greater IT, all groups, at a general level, showcase similar trust levels and display high to maximal trust in Airbnb.

6.2.5 Interpersonal Trust

Survey results for interpersonal trust (IPT) will be presented for the three groups: 'guests', 'hosts', and 'both'. Bar graphs have been generated for every single question (see appendix D), but to gain a better overview of the overall IPT for the three groups, responses from all questions addressing IPT were pooled together and are visualized in figure 21, 22 and 23.

Guests

Levels of IPT for the group 'guests' were calculated based on the respondents' answers to Q30 through Q34 (see appendix A). Results for guests' overall IPT show a mean of 3,88 and a median of 4 (see appendix D, p 31), which indicates a moderate to high tendency to trust Airbnb hosts. Moreover, of all of the 'guest' responses to Q30 to Q34, 19% strongly agree (maximal trust), 55% agree (high trust), 22% are neutral (moderate trust) and 4% disagree or strongly disagree (low to minimal trust) that Airbnb hosts are trustworthy (see figure 21). Moreover, 66% of 'guest' respondents agree or strongly agree to feeling safe sleeping in a stranger's home (Q31), while 76% either agree or strongly agree that they are confident that most Airbnb hosts are honest, credible and reliable (Q34). At the same time, it is less than 10% of respondents that disagree or strongly disagree with feeling safe sleeping in a stranger's home (Q31), while only 3% do not think that Airbnb hosts are honest, credible and reliable (Q34). Therefore, the majority of the 'guests' respondents have a high tendency to perceive Airbnb hosts as trustworthy, honorable, helpful, understanding, credible, and reliable, which was expected since guests may need high trust to stay with a stranger.

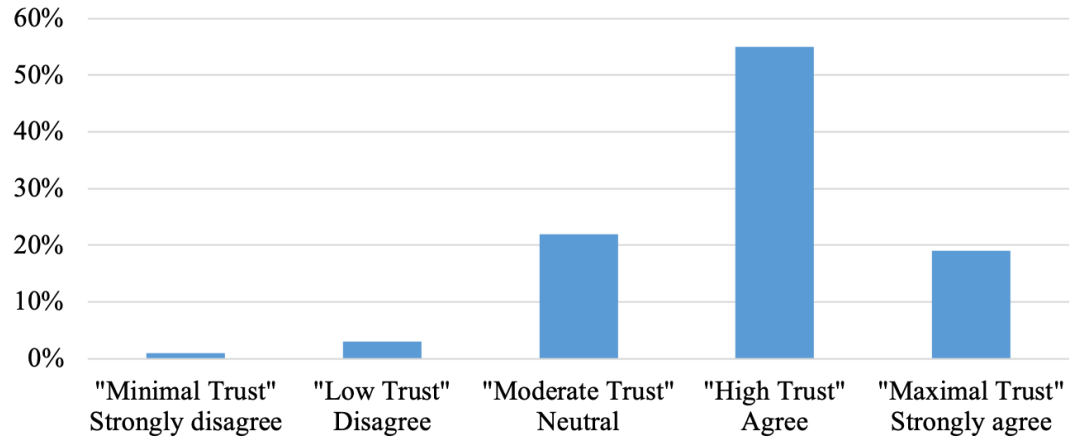

Figure 21: Distribution of IPT levels amongst the 'guest' respondents (n = 169), based on to Q30 through Q34

Hosts

Levels of IPT for the group 'hosts' were calculated based on the respondents' answers to Q56 through Q62 (see appendix A). Results for hosts' overall IPT show a mean of 3,66 and a median of 5 (see appendix D, p 31). The mean indicates that the majority of respondents in this group has moderate to high levels of trust, while the median indicates that the majority of the respondents have maximal trust levels. This result displays the need to calculate both the mean and median. In fact, none of the 'host' respondents had moderate trust levels. As it turned out, the majority of the respondents indeed have maximal IPT, and a small proportion of respondents have low to minimal IPT. Hereby, 'hosts' have taken a strong stance on how much they trust Airbnb guests and have avoided a neutral opinion. 3 respondents (60%) feel that it is easy to welcome strangers into their homes (Q56), perceive Airbnb guests as trustworthy (Q57), feel safe renting out their property (Q58), feel confident that guests will not damage their belongings, feel confident that guests will follow the rules and regulations of the stay (Q60), are confident that guest have high ethical standards (Q61), and feel that guest are honest, credible and reliable (Q62) (see appendix D). The remaining 2 respondents (40%) express opposing opinions. In conclusion, the majority of the respondents of this group have maximal levels of IPT, and perceive Airbnb guests as trustworthy, honorable, helpful, understanding, and reliable, while the rest score on the lower end of the scale and have low to minimal IPT (see figure 22).

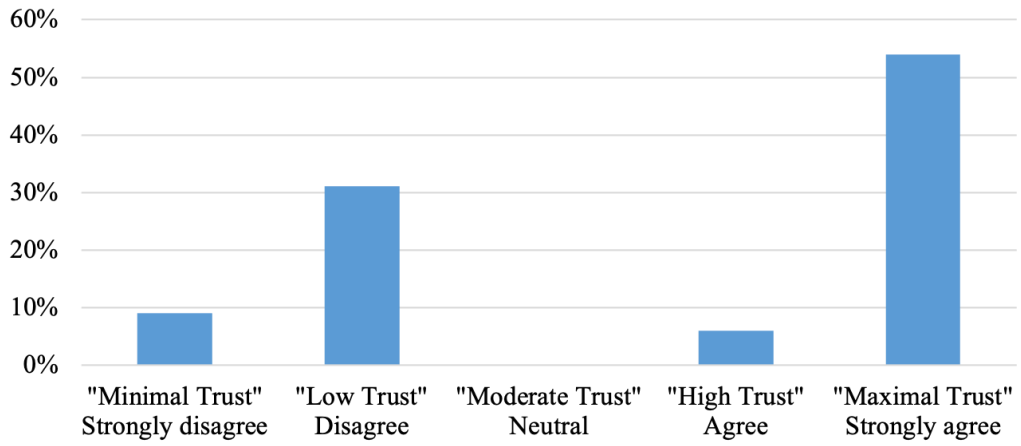

Figure 22: Distribution of IPT levels amongst the 'host' respondents (n = 5), based on Q56 through Q62

Both

Levels of IPT for the group 'both' were calculated based on their answers to Q84 through Q95 (see appendix A). Respondents were asked to take on the role as either a host or guest, when considering their responses. Results for 'both' respondents' overall levels of IPT show a mean of 3,88 and a median of 4 (see appendix D, p 31). Moreover, (77% from a host perspective, and 76% from a guest perspective) expressed high to maximal levels of trust in being confident that most Airbnb guests/hosts have good intentions and high ethical standards, while only (15% from a host perspective and 23% from a guest perspective) expressed low levels of trust (Q87, Q94). Therefore, we can conclude that the majority of 'both' respondents have a high to maximal tendency to perceive others (both host and guests) as trustworthy, honorable, helpful, understanding, credible, and reliable, which indicate high to maximal IPT levels (see figure 23).

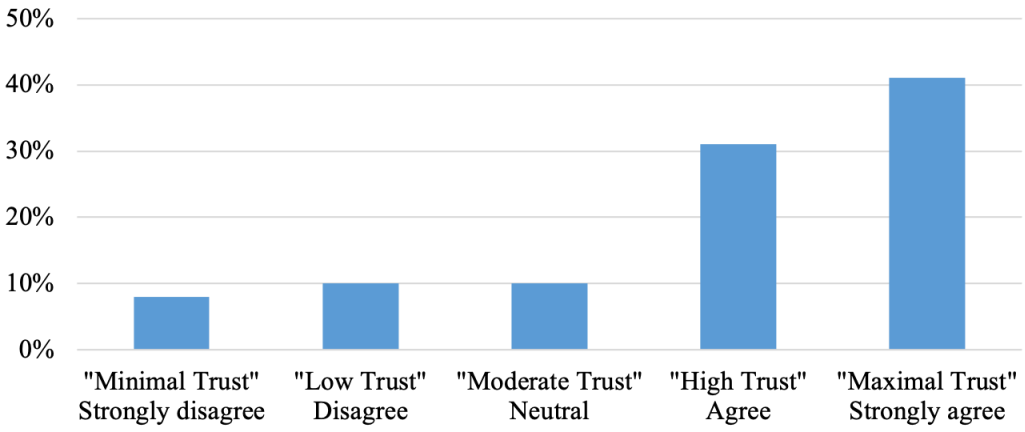

Figure 23: Distribution of IPT levels amongst the 'both' respondents (n = 13), based on Q84 through Q95

Comparison of IPT amongst all Groups

This part compares the overall IPT amongst three groups, ‘guests’, hosts’, and ‘both’. Results show a mean ranging from 3,66 to 3,88, and a median ranging from 4 to 5, see figure 24.

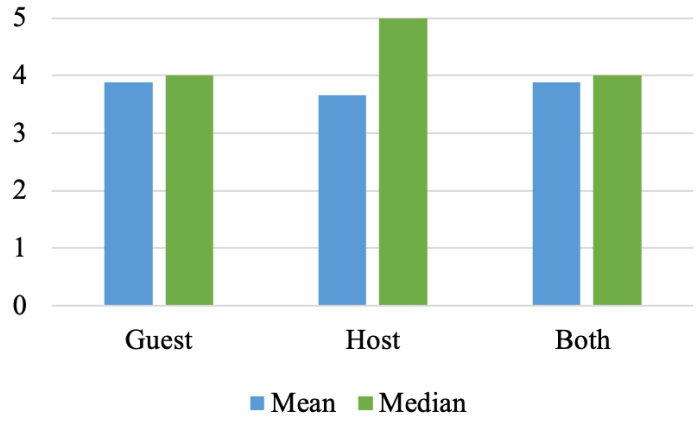

Figure 24: Mean & median showcasing the overall levels of IPT amongst all respondents, (n = 250)

Variance in the results is low, and ‘guests’ and ‘both’ respondents have the exact same mean of 3,88 and median of 4, meaning they have moderate to high levels of trust towards their peers on Airbnb. Among the ‘guest’ and ‘both’ respondents, we see a curve that displays steady exponential progression of trust from minimal to high trust (‘guests’) (see figure 21), and minimal to maximal trust (‘both’) (see figure 23). Hereby the majority of ‘guest’ and ‘both’ respondents have high to maximal trust. On the other hand, ‘host’ respondents show sporadic results with the majority having maximal IPT, and the remaining with low IPT. Nonetheless, all groups have similar trust levels and display a high tendency to trust other peers in regard to having good intentions, being reliable and honest, and being competent and professional.

6.2.6 Relationship of Trust Constructs

To determine the relationship between the four trust constructs (dispositional, online, institutional, and interpersonal trust), we calculated the Pearson correlation coefficient *r*. Below, results will be presented for each response group: ‘neither’, ‘guests’, ‘hosts’ and ‘both’. All tables and scatter plots can be seen in appendix D, pp. 14, 19, 20, 25, 30.

Neither

For the 'neither' group, we were only able to compare DT and OT, since IT & IPT was not measured. We identified a Pearson correlation coefficient *r* of 0,30 which indicates a weak positive relationship between DT and OT for the group of people who have never used Airbnb (see appendix D, 14). Thus, in a small number of cases, DT might increase when OT increases and vice versa.

Guests

For the 'guest' group, we calculated the Pearson correlation coefficient for all six trust-construct combinations (see table 7). For the following trust constructs we identified a weak positive relationship; OT & IT (r = 0,33), DT & IT (r = 0,38), DT & OT (r = 0,40), and OT & IPT (r = 0,26). Thus, for a small number of cases, when one of the mentioned trust constructs increases, the other one might also increase and vice versa. For DT & IPT, we identified a moderate positive relationship (r = 0,51), which implies that for a fair number of cases, DT might increase when IPT increases and vice versa. For IT & IPT, we found a somewhat strong positive relationship (r = 0,65), which means that it is likely that when IT increases, IPT also increases and vice versa.

Trust Constructs	Pearson Correlation Coefficient *r*	Interpretation
Online Trust & Institutional Trust	0,33	Weak positive
Dispositional Trust & Institutional Trust	0,38	Weak positive
Dispositional Trust & Online Trust	0,40	Weak positive
Online Trust & Interpersonal Trust	0,26	Weak positive
Dispositional Trust & Interpersonal Trust	0,51	Moderate positive
Institutional Trust & Interpersonal Trust	0,65	Strong positive

Table 7: Pearson correlation coefficient r for all trust constructs for the 'guest' respondents

Hosts

For the 'host' group, we calculated the Pearson correlation coefficient for all six trust construct combinations (see table 8). For the following trust constructs, we identified a weak positive relationship; DT & OT (r = 0,12), OT & IPT (r = 0,34), and DT & IT (r = 0,39). Thus, in a small number of cases, when one of the mentioned trust constructs increases, the other one

might also increase and vice versa. For IT & IPT, we found a somewhat strong positive relationship (r = 0,68), which means that it is likely when IT increases, IPT also increases and vice versa. Lastly, we found a very strong positive relationship for OT & IT (r = 0,89) and DT & IPT (r = 0,90). Thus, if one trust construct increases, the other one most likely also increases and vice versa.

Trust Constructs	Pearson Correlation Coefficient *r*	Interpretation
Dispositional Trust & Online Trust	0,12	Weak positive
Online Trust & Interpersonal Trust	0,34	Weak positive
Dispositional Trust & Institutional Trust	0,39	Weak positive
Institutional Trust & Interpersonal Trust	0,68	Strong positive
Online Trust & Institutional Trust	0,89	Very Strong positive
Dispositional Trust & Interpersonal Trust	0,90	Very Strong positive

Table 8: Pearson correlation coefficient r for all trust constructs for the 'host' respondents

Both

For the 'both' group, we calculated the Pearson correlation coefficient for all six possible trust construct combinations (see table 9). For two trust constructs, we identified a weak negative relationship: DT & IPT (r = -0,27) and DT & IT (r = -0,06). Thus, in a small number of cases, if one construct increases, the other one decreases and vice versa. For DT & OT, we found a weak positive relationship (r = 0,15), as well as a moderate positive relationship (r = 0,57) for OT & IPT. Thus, in a small number of cases, when one of the mentioned trust constructs increases, the other one might also increase and vice versa. For OT & IT, we found a somewhat strong positive relationship (r = 0,62), which means that it is likely that when OT increases, IT also increases and vice versa. Lastly, we found a very strong positive relationship for IT & IPT (r = 0,83). Thus, if IT increases, IPT also increases and vice versa.

Trust Constructs	Pearson Correlation Coefficient *r*	Interpretation
Dispositional Trust & Interpersonal Trust	-0,27	Weak Negative
Dispositional Trust & Institutional Trust	-0,06	Weak Negative
Dispositional Trust & Online Trust	0,15	Weak Positive
Online Trust & Interpersonal Trust	0,57	Moderate Positive
Online Trust & Institutional Trust	0,62	Strong Positive
Institutional Trust & Interpersonal Trust	0,83	Very Strong Positive

Table 9: Pearson correlation coefficient r for all trust constructs for the 'both' respondents

Comparison amongst all groups

There is a strong positive correlation between IT & IPT (and vice versa) for all response groups ('guests' $r = 0,65$, 'hosts' $r = 0,68$,' both' $r = 0,83$). Conclusively, if you trust Airbnb, you will most likely also trust that they will put good people/peers on the platform, and hereby trust Airbnb peers. Or, you may have had a good experience with a peer, which makes you more likely to trust the institution. In other words, Airbnb and its peers are a reflection of each other. The platform in itself and Airbnb's peers are ambassadors of Airbnb. Both entities will shape Airbnb's reputation and influence customers' levels of trust towards Airbnb (IT) and Airbnb's peers (IPT).

Moreover, there is a weak positive correlation between DT & OT for all response groups ('both' $r = 0,15$, 'hosts' $r = 0,12$, 'guests' $r = 0,40$, 'neither' $r = 0,30$). Thus, we assume that in a small number of cases, a person's levels of OT will increase when a person's levels of DT increases, and vice versa. Likewise, there is a weak to moderate positive correlation between OT & IPT for three response groups ('guests' $r = 0,26$, 'hosts' $r = 0,34$, 'both' $r = 0,57$). Thus, we assume that an increase in a person's OT will only in a small number of cases cause an increase in their levels of IPT and vice versa. Furthermore, there is a weak to strong positive correlation between OT & IT ('guests' $r = 0,33$, 'hosts' $r = 0,89$, 'both' $r = 0,62$). The degree to which OT influences IT (and vice versa) varies across all three response groups. For the 'both' and 'hosts' respondents, OT fairly or strongly influences IT, while for 'guests', OT only positively influences IT in a low number of cases. 'Both' and 'hosts' respondents use the internet (online environment) to make a living. Their experience with the Internet, which secures their

livelihood, may positively influence their trust in online platforms like Airbnb. However, in some cases, guests' OT may also positively influence their IT. This may be a result of how familiar they are with using the online environment for transaction purposes. Lastly, if any of the two (guests or hosts) generally have high OT, but have had a bad experience with Airbnb, then the two trust constructs may not positively correlate for the case of Airbnb.

Moreover, the degree to which DT influences IPT (and vice versa) varies greatly across all three response groups ('guests' r = 0,51, 'hosts' r = 0,9, 'both' r = -0,27). For 'guests' and 'hosts', we found a moderate to very strong positive correlation, which means that if people have high levels of DT, they are also quite likely to trust Airbnb peers (and vice versa). However, for the 'both' respondents, we identified a weak negative relationship.

Lastly, there is a similar weak positive correlation between DT & IT for two response groups ('guests' r = 0,38, 'hosts' r = 0,39), as well as a weak negative correlation for the 'both' respondents ('both' r = -0,06). Thus, we assume that a person's DT will only in a small number of cases influence their level of IT and vice versa.

The validity of the computed *r* value for the 'host' and 'both' respondents is limited due to the two groups' small number of respondents. With only 5 'host', and 13 'both' respondents, it is difficult to argue that this part of the survey sample is representative, and that the *r* value for these groups will reflect the actual correlation of trust constructs.

6.2.7 'Neither' Groups' Reasons for not having used Airbnb

The 'neither' respondents finished the survey by giving reasons for never having used Airbnb (neither as a guest or host). They could choose multiple reasons. 65% of the respondents said they have never had the need to use Airbnb. For 20,6% of the respondents, this was their only reason for never having used Airbnb, which indicates that their choice of not using Airbnb, is not related to trust. 48% of the respondents said they simply prefer other accommodation types, such as hotels, hostels etc. (see figure 25). 7 'neither' respondents (11%) chose to respond to Q11 with a combination of: "I have never had the need to use Airbnb" and "I simply prefer other accommodation types", which indicates that for these respondents, trust is not related to their choice of never having used Airbnb.

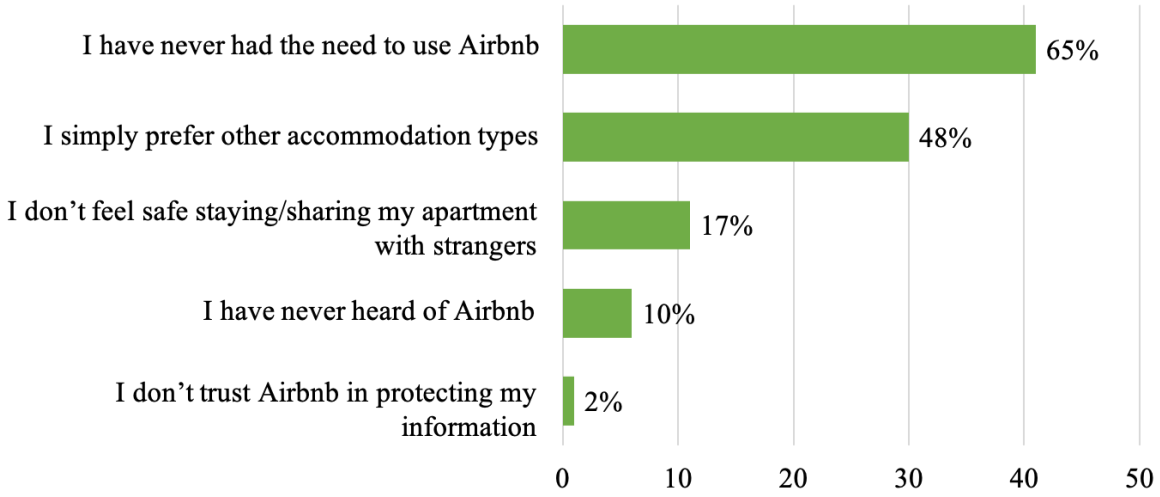

Figure 25: The 'neither' respondents' reasons for never having used Airbnb, (n = 63), based on Q11 (respondents could choose multiple reasons)

Another 7 respondents (11%) chose a combination answer of: "I simply prefer other accommodation types", and "I don't feel safe staying with or sharing my place with strangers", which indicates that their reasoning for preferring other accommodation types is that they do not feel safe on Airbnb. Overall, 11 'neither' respondents (17%) said they do not feel safe staying with or sharing their place with strangers, which indicates low IPT. 5 of those respondents also said that they have never had the need to use Airbnb. This indicates that because they are not comfortable sharing their space with strangers, they have not found a need to use Airbnb, or that they have not developed greater IPT because they have never tried staying with strangers. Additionally, 2% of the respondents said they do not trust Airbnb in protecting their personal information, which indicates that only a few of the respondents have low IT towards Airbnb.

Finally, a few respondents added extra feedback as to why they have never used Airbnb. One respondent added: "I don't support Airbnb because it's partly illegal and makes the current housing crisis in big cities worse", which suggests the belief that Airbnb is without integrity and engages in unethical business processes (low IT). Finally, another respondent added: "[...] don't know if I can trust the pictures online", which indicates that they have low IPT because they do not trust that hosts put up authentic pictures of the listing, as well as low IT because they do not trust that Airbnb regulates their listings.

6.2.8 Trust-building Measures

Respondents completed the final closed-ended question of the survey by answering what helps them build trust towards Airbnb and Airbnb peers. The top three trust building measures for 'guests' are (1) online/peer reviews, (2) identity verification and (3) the number of transactions conducted on the platform. The top three trust building measures for 'hosts' are (1) secure payment seals, (2) online/peer reviews, and (3) identity verification. The top three trust building measures for 'both' are (1) peer reviews, (2) identity verification, and (3) quality of information on website/listing/profile (see figure 26, full graphs in appendix D pp. 21, 25, 31).

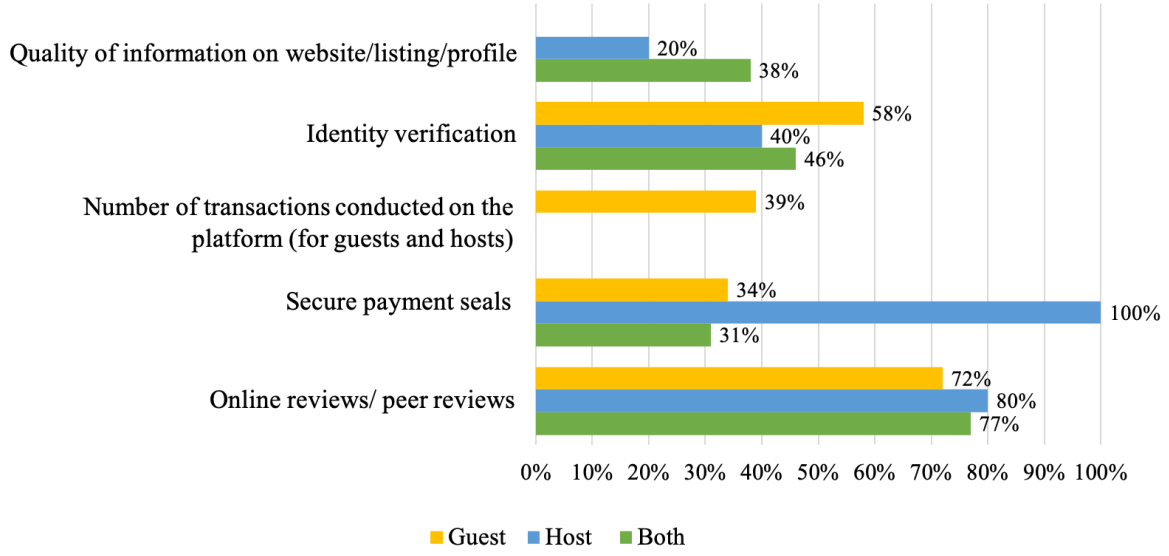

Figure 26: Trust-building measures that help respondents build trust towards Airbnb and Airbnb peers

A total of 72% of the 'guest' respondents, 77% of the 'both' respondents, and 80% of the 'host' respondents chose online reviews as one of the most important trust building measures on Airbnb. We can hereby conclude that reviews are essential to the concept of trust on peer-to-peer platforms in the sharing economy. Moreover, a total of 58% of the 'guest' respondents, 40% of the 'host' respondents, and 46% of the 'both' respondents chose identity verification, while 34% of the 'guest' respondents, 20% of the 'host' respondents, and 23% of the 'both' respondents chose background checks as one of the most important trust-building measures on Airbnb. This expresses a need for being able to trust that Airbnb peers are who they claim to be.

Additional essential trust building measures include: (1) secure payment seals ('guests' 34%, 'hosts' 100%, and 'both' 31%), (2) Airbnb's reporting system of inappropriate behavior ('guests' 27%, 'both' 31%), (3) quality of images ('hosts' 40%, 'both' 15%), and (4) quality of information on website/listing/profile ('hosts' 20%, 'both' 38%) (see figure 26, full graphs in appendix D, pp. 21, 25, 31). Secure payment seals are potentially an important trust-building measure for both 'hosts' and 'guests' because these peers are concerned with getting paid for the services they provide, and securely paying for their booking.

6.3 Survey: Qualitative Analysis of Open-ended Survey Questions

In the following section, we will present the findings for the open-ended survey questions and answer sub-research question 3. The questions investigate possible ways of increasing trust between Airbnb and its peers (IT) as well as between the peers, hosts and guests (IPT). Through 'coding', we identified 7 recurring categories that address ways in which the respondents think Airbnb and its peers could establish increased trust levels; (1) information, (2) communication, (3) accuracy, (4) security & safety, (5) background checks, (6) support and (7) responsibility (see figure 27). Among the 'guests', we received 43 responses for Q36 and 49 responses for Q37. Among the 'hosts', we received 1 response for Q64 and 2 responses for Q65. Lastly, among the 'both' respondents, we received 3 responses for Q98, 5 responses for Q99, and 5 responses for Q100. In total, we received 108 open-ended responses, and excluded 6 responses which were marked as either incomplete or unsuitable (see appendix C).

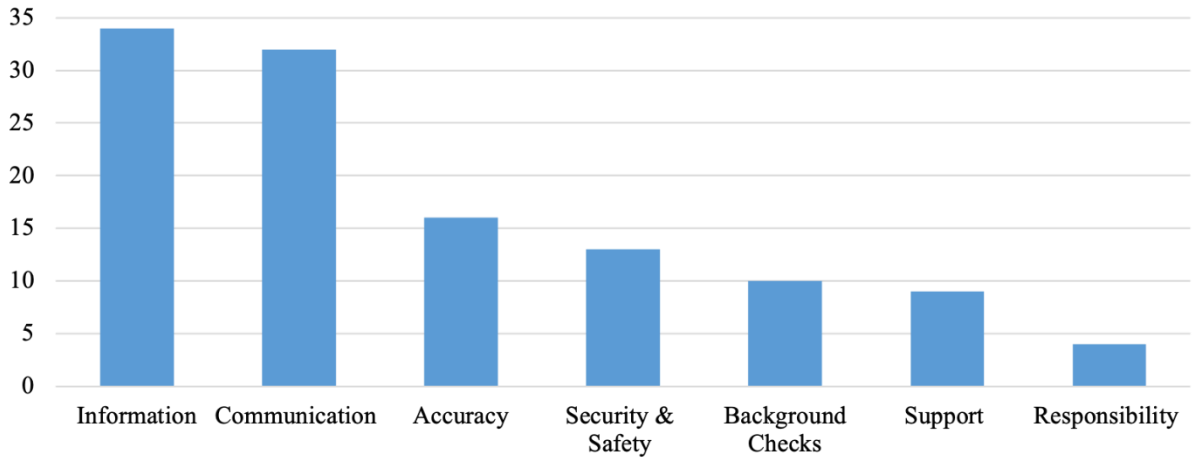

Figure 27: Proposed trust-building categories, and the number of times each category was addressed in a response (answered by all respondents who have used Airbnb as either a guest, host, or both, n = 187)

6.3.1 Information

The ‘information’ code was applied to responses which call for (1) more detailed background information on the services which Airbnb provides, (2) informative and detailed peer profiles, and (3) more informative reviews that describe accommodation experiences. 26% of the ‘guest’ respondents to Q36 wish for increased trust building measures in the form of high-quality information on Airbnb’s website, including information on insurance cover, privacy policies, security explanations, credit card security, and money-back guarantees. Providing more information on these critical service topics can bring about guests to develop higher IT towards Airbnb. In addition, one respondent wished for Airbnb to provide more information on listing images, including information on when the images were taken and uploaded onto the listing profile.

Moreover, 40% of the ‘guest’ respondents to Q37 claim that if hosts would supply them with greater information about themselves and the listing, then they would have greater IPT towards them. Conclusively, these guests want more honest background information about hosts, including detailed host profiles with a description and a picture of the host, their motivation for hosting on Airbnb, and the number of people that have previously stayed with them. In addition, many guests wish for a personal interaction with hosts after booking their accommodation by receiving a personal message with hosts introducing themselves. Lastly, “offering high quality pictures of the accommodation”, as one respondent described it, can create higher trust in the hosts and their offers (IPT).

Additionally, a ‘host’ respondent to Q65, suggests that guests could introduce themselves and state their wishes and preferences when they book a stay, in order for the host to not only provide them with a more pleasant stay, but also to feel greater trust towards the guest (IPT). Similarly, a few ‘both’ respondents to Q99 wish for guests to provide trustworthy presentations of themselves (including their background, nationality etc.), to be informative about the purpose of their stay, and to state their needs ahead of time. However, another respondent stated that such information (greater transparency) may facilitate issues in regard to discrimination. Lasly, a ‘both’ respondents’ response to Q100, indicated a wish for hosts to send a greeting/message to upcoming guests with some general, necessary and useful information about the stay, as this would help them build trust prior to the stay.

6.3.2 Communication

The ‘communication’ code was applied to responses which call for increased trust building measures in the form of transparent and personalized communication as well as quick response times throughout the website/Airbnb platform and between peers. 36% of the ‘guest’ respondents to Q37 wish for greater communication with hosts (IPT), and 18% of the ‘guest’ respondents to Q36 call for greater communication from Airbnb (IT). Overall, guests wish for (1) Airbnb to provide the infrastructure to digitally communicate and meet up with hosts, (2) hosts to provide answers to negative reviews, and (3) to be able to have a personalized and individualized conversation with hosts.

Guests want to be able to talk to hosts before booking and before arrival through e.g., video chat, FaceTime, video messages, and invitation letters. They also want the type of communication to not be “[...] too much copy and paste” and for the communication to enable them to “[...] use Airbnb for that kind of special and authentic interaction and experience” (IPT). Similarly, a ‘host’ respondent to Q65, and two ‘both respondents to Q99 call for guests to be willing to communicate honestly and to establish greater contact prior to the stay, while 4 ‘both’ respondents wish for increased communication in terms of (1) a private phone call in advance of a stay, (2) a message from the host with some light information and a greeting, and (3) greater communication as to avoid misunderstandings. Therefore, it seems that both hosts and guests wish to establish greater contact with each other, in order to increase IPT.

Furthermore, ‘guest’ respondents call for Airbnb to not hide behind the platform, but to become more visible and to provide an emergency hotline, while a ‘both’ respondent to Q98 call for better and more direct communication with Airbnb customer service providers. Lastly, guests express that they would feel greater IPT if hosts were reachable by mobile and if they were quicker to respond to questions and booking requests (in good English).

6.3.3 Accuracy

The ‘accuracy’ code was applied to responses which call for more honest, correct and up to date information on Airbnb’s services, listing descriptions, and listing images etc., in order to build more trust towards Airbnb (IT). 15% of the ‘guest’ responses to Q36 wish for Airbnb to validate descriptions of listings and to require hosts to update images of their listings yearly with a digital time stamp. Respondents stated that “[...] most of the accommodations are described as

much more beautiful than they really are", and that Airbnb should "make sure that the provided pictures of the accommodation are up to date and show the actual condition of the room/flat", calling for greater transparency in the description of the listings. Similarly, 19% of the 'guest' responses to Q37 and a 'both' respondent to Q100, think that more trust could be attained between peers, by calling on hosts to provide more honest, reliable, up to date and unvarnished descriptions and images of their homes. Conclusively, they wish for the hosts to not sugarcoat their offers, but to be more truthful about their listings' downsides.

6.3.4 Security and Safety

The 'security & safety' code was applied to responses which call for increased trust building measures in the form of increasingly secure and safe transactions and experiences on Airbnb and applies to 31% of the 'guest' respondents to Q36.

Guests wish for two-factor authentication on the website to establish higher security, as well as a better verification of hosts. Additionally, they wish for publicly displayed verification badges on hosts' profiles and listings. Thorough host verification is especially important for those guests who are concerned with being scammed by hosts (IPT). One respondent said: "I have been nearly scammed by a fake host […], it is easy to set up fake profiles, […]". To avoid these scams, guests wish for Airbnb to check hosts more often and to perform in-person visits before allowing them to list their property. Some 'guest' respondents even suggested that Airbnb do random tests by letting undercover Airbnb employees stay with hosts. Moreover, 6 'guest' respondents felt that they need to receive better information on policies, insurances and money-back guarantees in case of cancellations or dissatisfying accommodations. Similarly, a 'both' respondent to Q98 wished for Airbnb to provide a formal refund policy and clear guidelines on how to refund money to guests when needed. Conclusively, more information on these security topics can make guests and potential customers feel safer and allow them to build greater trust towards Airbnb and Airbnb peers (IPT).

6.3.5 Background Checks

The ‘background checks’ code was applied to respondents which call for increased trust building measures in the form of improved verification of peers’ identity, background, history etc., and applies to 23% of the ‘guest’ responses to Q36. Thus, there is a clear concern for the legitimacy of Airbnb’s peers and listings, and a need for increased IT. Overall, the ‘guest’ respondents wish for Airbnb to (1) thoroughly check up on all provided information about listings and hosts’ profiles to prevent scams, (2) provide authentication badges for verified listings and hosts, (3) identify hosts’ identity, history and work history, (4) test hosts by performing random visits undercover, and (5) ensure that the listing is a private and not industrial rent out. Lastly, a single ‘guest’ response to Q37 expressed a concern for the integrity, honesty and benevolence of hosts, and mentioned that there will always be a few peers, who are not legitimate and not genuine with their offers. This statement indicates that in order to achieve high levels of IPT, Airbnb needs to constantly and consistently perform thorough background checks and communicate those efforts to their community.

6.3.6 Support

The ‘support’ code was applied to respondents which call for increased trust building measures in the form of better support from Airbnb and applies to 8% of the ‘guest’ responses to Q36. They desire for Airbnb to (1) be more readily available at local offices, (2) provide a 24-hour emergency hotline/number, and (3) not just “pass the buck” of support to hosts. In other words, they call for Airbnb to not shirk their responsibility of providing support, but to be available to support tourists. Moreover, the ‘guest’ respondents wish for a higher quality of support from hosts with greater availability (a phone number which the host can be reached on), quicker response times, better written and spoken English skills, prepared answers for frequent questions, and useful tourist information (such as where to eat/things to do). Lastly, a ‘both’ respondent to Q98 wished for better and more direct customer service from Airbnb, as well as integration with partner apps such as google maps.

6.3.7 Responsibility

The ‘responsibility’ code was applied to respondents which call for increased trust building measures in the form of higher accountability from Airbnb (taking more responsibility for their services) and applies to 10% of the ‘guest’ responses to Q36. One respondent stated: “I don’t feel they are easy to get hold of as an organization when things go wrong”, expressing their concern with Airbnb’s accountability. Additionally, guests wish for Airbnb to display greater responsibility for their impact on issues related to over-tourism, tax laws, and the housing market. For some guests, this lack of responsibility may lead to diminished levels of IT towards Airbnb. As one respondent said: “I find it hard to trust a group of people who do all they can to chase profit at the expense of local communities, which they purport to support”. Conclusively, guests call for Airbnb to be more accountable and to do some serious ethics work to regain their trust in the platform and its services.

6.4 Survey Results displayed in the Research Framework

The guiding research framework for this thesis has already been introduced and explained in chapter four. In this part, the findings of the survey, in particular, the trust building measures that already help and potentially could help the respondents build trust in Airbnb and Airbnb’s peers have been integrated in the framework (see figure 28). The inner blue circle shows the top three of the most important and highly valued current trust building measures identified in the survey amongst ‘guests’, ‘hosts’, and ‘both’: reviews, secure payment seals, and identity verification. The suggestive trust building measures (yellow outer circle), identified in the qualitative analysis of the survey, include responsibility, security & safety, background checks, communication, information, accuracy, and support. The categories which dominate a positive influence on IT (trust in Airbnb) are security & safety, background checks, and responsibility, whereas communication and information are the dominating categories for creating higher IPT between peers (guests & hosts). Lastly, information seems to have a high impact on both IT and IPT, while support and accuracy appear to be equally important for building IT and IPT.

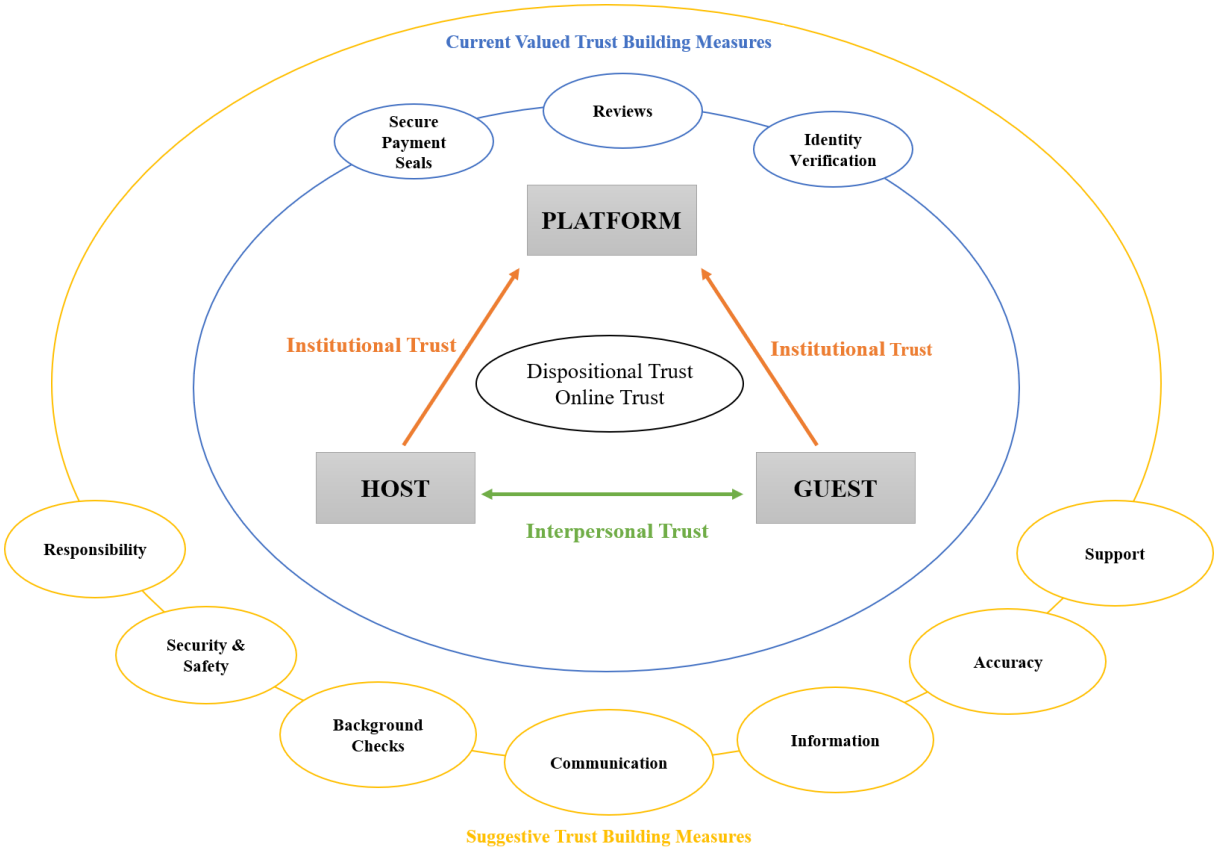

Figure 28: Adjusted research framework

6.5 Summary Survey Findings

The survey received 250 responses (169 ‘guests’, 5 ‘hosts’, 13 ‘both’, and 63 ‘neither’). With a limited number of ‘host’ respondents, a majority of respondents (54%) in the age group of 25-34, and a majority of German (63%) respondents, the sample is not representative. In answering part of sub-research question 2, we identified the following ways in how and why DT, OT, IT and IPT varies amongst Airbnb peers and people who have never used Airbnb. The quantitative analysis of the closed-ended questions reveals that people who have never used Airbnb have lower DT and OT compared to Airbnb peers, while ‘both’ respondents have the highest levels of DT. Moreover, ‘hosts’ have the highest levels of IT (maximal trust), while ‘guests’ and ‘both’ rank similarly on the higher end of moderate to high IT. Lastly, ‘guests’ and ‘both’ respondents have almost the same high levels of IPT, whereas ‘hosts’ are divided, with the majority having maximal IPT, and the remaining having low levels of IPT. The ‘neither’ groups reasons for not having used Airbnb include that they have never had the

need to use Airbnb, and that they simply prefer other accommodation types. However, these responses are often combined with the answer “I don’t feel safe staying/ sharing my apartment with strangers”, which indicates low levels of IPT.

In answering the second part of sub-research question 2, we identified the following ways in which the trust constructs are interdependent. The relationship between the trust constructs was calculated with the Pearson correlation coefficient (*r*). Significant results include (1) a strong correlation between IT & IPT for all groups (‘guests', ‘hosts’, ‘both’), (2) a weak positive correlation between DT & OT (‘neither’, ‘guests’, ‘hosts’, ‘both’), (3) a weak to very strong positive correlation for OT & IT (weak for ‘guests’, strong for ‘both’ and very strong for ‘hosts’), and (4) a weak to moderate positive correlation between OT& IPT for ‘guests’, ‘hosts’ and ‘both’.

In answering part of sub-research question 3, we identified the most important trust building measures, as well as supplementary trust-building measures that build trust towards Airbnb (IT) and Airbnb peers (IPT). The top three trust building measures are peer reviews, identity verification, and number of transactions conducted on the platform (‘guests’), secure payment seals, peer reviews, identity verification (‘hosts’), and peer reviews, identity verification, and quality of information on website/listing/profile (‘both’). Possible supplementary trust-building measures include high quality communication and information, greater security & safety, improved background checks, greater support, and accuracy of existing information.

6.6 Review Analysis

The findings of the review analysis will be presented in two groups: (1) the Trustpilot reviews of Airbnb on trustpilot.com, and (2) the Airbnb reviews on airbnb.com. Both parts first present the sentiment analysis, followed by the content analysis of the reviews. The findings of these analyses will address and aim at answering sub-research question 3.
Examples of reviews in the text are chosen parts of the full reviews and will typically include the identified keywords. A list of all complete reviews can be found in appendix E and F. Additionally, the content analysis will only include identified groups of synonyms, generated from the keyword list, that address a reason for a positive or negative experience on Airbnb, and that could be labeled with a specific category concerning trust on the peer-to-peer platform Airbnb.

6.6.1 Trustpilot Reviews of Airbnb

The targets and opinion holders of the reviews on Trustpilot vary. A total of 88 reviews addresses issues with the platform Airbnb, including dissatisfactory support from a guest-to-Airbnb perspective. 9 of those reviews also address issues in relation to staying with an Airbnb host, which makes the target and issue twofold. Additionally, 4 reviews address issues from a guest to host perspective only. Lastly, a total of 8 reviews addresses issues in terms of unhelpful support and service, property damage, and stolen goods from a host-to-Airbnb perspective. All Trustpilot reviews can be seen in appendix E.

Sentiment Analysis (Trustpilot)

In the sentiment analysis of the Trustpilot reviews, we identified 4 positive and 96 negative reviews by thoroughly reading through all 100 reviews. This shows that reviews of Airbnb on Trustpilot are mostly negative, and that the majority of these peers have had bad experiences with Airbnb.

Although sarcasm in consumer reviews of products and services are infrequent (Liu, 2015, p. 11), we were aware of the potential use of such throughout the reviews. Out of all 100 reviews, we identified 1 case of sarcasm. In (R32), the reviewer states: “No issue, I was happy with losing the money [...] “. In this case, the word *happy* is an expression of a positive sentiment that is intended to be interpreted by the review-reader as a negative sentiment because the reviewer was indeed upset about losing his money. Conclusively, with a limited discovery of sarcasm, the majority of the reviews are expected to express the reviewer’s emotions as they were felt.

When analyzing the keyword list created in NVivo, we segmented the list into a group of positive sentiment words and a group of negative sentiment words. We identified a total of 11 positive sentiment words that indicated that the peers had a positive experience with Airbnb, as well as 110 negative sentiment words which indicated that these Airbnb peers had a negative experience with Airbnb. A full list of all positive and negative words identified in the Trustpilot reviews is provided in table 10.

Positive Words (11)	Negative Words (110)
Beautiful, Excellent, Good, Great, Happy, Kind, Nice, Perfect, Positive, Well, Wonderful,	Abandon, Absurd, Abusing, Accused, Afraid, Arrogant, Ass, Assaulted, Avoid, Awful, Bad, Ban, Beware, Blame, Blocked, Broke, Broken, Bugs, Cancelled, Catfish, Cheat, Cheater, Collapse, Complain, Con, Crime, Criminal, Damage, Damn, Dangerous, Delete, Difficult, Dirt, Dirty, Disappointed, Disaster, Discriminate, Disgusting, Dishonest, Dispute, Dissatisfied, Disturbingly, Dodgy, Error, False, Fault, Filth, Filthy, Fraud, Fraudulent, Greedy, Gross, Hell, Homeless, Horrible, Ignored, Illegal, Insects, Issue, Lack, Lied, Loss, Mice, Mislead, Mistreat, Nasty, Negative, Never, Obscene, Outdated, Penalty, Poor, Problem, Rat, Refund, Refused, Rejected, Ridiculous, Ripped, Risk, Roach, Robbed, Rodents, Rubbish, Sadly, Scam, Scammer, Screw, Shady, Shame Shocking, Stains, Stealing, Stolen, Sucks, Terrible, Unfair, Unhappy, Unhelpful, Unprofessional, Unreasonable, Unresponsive, Unsanitary, Upset, Useless, Waist, Warning, Worse, Wrong

Table 10: List of positive and negative words in Trustpilot reviews

Examples of reviews that include negative sentiment words are*:* (R79) "*Horrible* host and no help from Airbnb", (R88) "Never experienced such *terrible* service", *(*R3) "*Awful* customer support", (R32) "Absolutely *shocking*, I will not be booking anything through this site again", (R5) "We will delist our property due to the *unhelpful* and *unreasonable* customer support", and (R28) "I am completely *unhappy* with the way they do business". In a couple of these reviews, the opinion holder has made use of words that intensifies the degree of the expressed opinion (Liu, 2015, p. 21), i.e., (R59) "Where to start with this *really, really, bad* company?". This indicates that some of these opinion holders have had an extremely bad experience with Airbnb. Additionally, an opinion holder used capital letters, which may also be considered to have an intensifying effect on the expression of the review, i.e., (R20) "POOR CUSTOMER SERVICE".

Having a bad experience with Airbnb may decrease the opinion holder's trust in the possibility of having a successful and positive experience on Airbnb in the future and may also diminish review-readers' trust in Airbnb's and Airbnb's peers' integrity, benevolence and abilities. The degree of the negative experience (whether it was *horrible/terrible/awful* or simply

bad/disappointing), may also determine the opinion holders' trust levels towards Airbnb, and affect review-readers trust levels towards Airbnb because trust is a dynamic concept (Khodyakov, 2007, p. 124; Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 396). It is therefore expected that the worse the experience, the lower the trust levels will be.

In the initial phase of identifying positive reviews, 11 positive sentiment words were identified (see table 10). However, these positive sentiment words did not sufficiently indicate positive reviews. Most reviews that include the words *'good', 'great', 'well', 'happy', 'wonderful',* and *'excellent',* did not use these word in a positive context, but mostly in a negative one, e.g. (R20) "A *good* company is only as *good* as its customer service and I'm afraid they've lost our custom", (R20) "We've never had any issues for years, then just when we expected *great* customer service, they let us down", (R38) "Airbnb is hiding bad guests on their platform. They are *happy* to quickly remove a review that's not *great* for a guest that has been very difficult, abusive [...]", and (R34) "I found out that Airbnb tells their hosts that they only want *excellent* reviews, nothing less". Therefore, even the small amount of identified positive sentiment words does not express a positive experience.

Conclusively, both negative and positive sentiment words were used in overall negative reviews. With the majority of the Trustpilot reviews being negative, almost all Trustpilot-reviewers have had negative experiences with Airbnb. Therefore, when a reviewer goes on Trustpilot to gain insights on Airbnb, the overwhelming negativity of the reviews may diminish a review-reader's trust in Airbnb (IT) and Airbnb's peers (IPT).

Content Analysis (Trustpilot)

Security & Safety

With the keyword list, we identified a large pool of words which addressed security and safety concerns. The word *safety* was identified 4 times, while *security* was identified 5 times. Examples include: (R58) "Clearly Airbnb doesn't care about anything, so why would they care about your *safety*?", (R74) "*SAFETY* HAZARD", (R24) "I COMPLAINED TO THE HOST AND AIRBNB THAT THE AREA OF THE PLACE DOES NOT LOOK *SAFE* AND WANTED TO CANCEL AND THEY STILL CHARGED ME!", and (R54) "I ended up at a crime infested complex with ineffective *security*". Additionally, the following words from the

generated keywords list, grouped in synonyms and presented in table 11, were identified as indirectly addressing safety and security.

Security & Safety		Counts
Group 1	avoid, beware, never, warning, careful	55
Group 2	scam, fraud, scammer, fraudulent, cheat, con, cheater, dodgy, shady	37
Group 3	dishonest, mislead, lied, false	13
Group 5	abusing, mistreat, assaulting, damage	12
Group 5	stolen, robbed, stealing	10
Group 6	privacy, private	6
Group 7	dangerous, risk	5
Group 8	crime, illegal	4

Table 11: Groups of synonyms addressing security & safety

Synonyms in group 1 (55 counts) were used to advise against the utilization of Airbnb's services, as well as the need to be cautious when/if using Airbnb's services. Examples of such reviews include: (R82) "Be *careful* of renting from the wrong host", (R62) "Rubbish company. *AVOID* at all costs!!", (R93) "*Beware* of mistreatment of physically disabled persons by host" and (R83) "The worst company ever!!! I'm not even going to talk about my last experience with a host but *beware* of Airbnb". In warning potential future Airbnb peers, and advising against coming onto the platform, this could be interpreted as reviewers telling review-readers to not trust Airbnb (IT) and Airbnb's peers (IPT).

Synonyms in group 2 (37 counts) were used to describe an experience where someone tried to cheat or trick them out of something. Examples include (R29) "Airbnb allows *scammers* to *scam* you through holes in their policy", (R51) "Absolute money-making *scam* artists", (R78) "We will never book again with this *scam* company", (R27) "They make it difficult and allow hosts to lie, *cheat* and steal", and (R21) "Company has *shady* acts. Dishonest!". In labeling both the Airbnb platform and Airbnb peers as entities that take advantage of others for unethical self-serving reasons, then review-readers may be more hesitant to believe that Airbnb (IT) and Airbnb peers (IPT) are benevolent actors.

Synonyms in group 3 (13 counts) were used to describe Airbnb and Airbnb hosts as dishonest towards guests by providing false and misleading information. Examples of such reviews include (R21) "Company has shady acts! *Dishonest*!", (R19) "The listings look great but many of the hosts *mislead* you, and do not give the full info and take your money!", (R32) "I don't

know how Airbnb can let properties be so *misleading* and then not help", (R48), "Our host *lied* to us about the apartment, and we wanted to leave", (R93) "My host left a review with *false* information". In labeling Airbnb and hosts on Airbnb as dishonest and lying actors on the platform, review-readers may be influenced to not trust Airbnb (IT) and Airbnb's hosts (IPT).

Synonyms in group 4 (12 counts) were used to describe incidents where peers have not been treated properly or appropriately by their fellow peers or by Airbnb, or when guests have treated hosts' properties in inappropriate ways by damaging property items. Examples of such reviews include (R1) "A guest trashed my house and did 100s worth of *damage*", (R13) "Recently I've had a spate of guest's stealing, *damaging* and *abusing* my home", and (R83) "This is about an organization supporting misinformation, unsafe practices, and *mistreatment* of physically disabled persons". When hosts complain about guests having damaged their personal belongings, it may diminish IPT among review-readers (especially hosts) and diminish trust in guests (IPT).

Synonyms in group 5 (10 counts) were used to describe incidents where a peer has taken something from their opposite peer without permission. Examples of such reviews include (R13) "Airbnb [...] fails to recognize when a guest has *stolen*/damaged property. I've since closed my account as I don't feel *safe* having guests in my home [...]", (R25) "[...] do not stay with [...]. *Robbed* us of $850 [...]", and (R13) "Recently I've had a spate of guest's *stealing*, damaging and abusing my home.". When notifying review-reviews of incidents of theft, IPT between peers may diminish in the sense that both peers (hosts and guests) may become more reluctant with welcoming strangers into their homes and also staying with a stranger because of concerns for their safety and security. Additionally, potential customers of Airbnb may choose to take their business elsewhere in fear of having their personal items stolen on Airbnb.

Synonyms in group 6 (6 counts) are used to describe online privacy concerns. Examples include (R56) "I didn't use a profile picture of myself to keep myself *private* (...)", (R37) "the site asked me to upload a government ID, which they'd never requested previously. That's something I never do, for *privacy* reasons.", and (R38) "Airbnb has gone downhill in management of upholding their own review and *privacy* policy.". When expressing a concern for Airbnb's abilities to uphold high privacy standards, regulations and policies, the review-readers may question how much they can trust Airbnb and their abilities to protect their peers from online identity theft (IT).

Synonyms in group 7 (5 counts) are used to describe situations that imply danger and risk during the service encounter, from the perspective of hosts and guests. Examples include (R74) “There was no outside lighting when we arrived, so we had to unload, and load in the complete dark. *Dangerous*, as that area is known for wildlife and bears!!” and (R38) “I believe they are trying to keep people circulating and booking places despite the *risk* involved with sending an obviously bad and difficult guest to another good Superhost all because Airbnb has become greedy”. This may create potential safety concerns for review-readers and diminish trust in peers (IPT) and trust in Airbnb (IT).

Synonyms in group 8 (4 counts) were used to describe accommodations that lack security and safety because of criminal and illegal actions happening. Examples include (R54) “I ended up at a *crime* infested complex with ineffective security”, and (R58) “(...)place was *illegally* converted without any inspection or approval”. When notifying review-readers of Airbnb experiences characterized by criminal and illegal actions, this warns review-readers of unlawful activities in relation with Airbnb. This has the potential of diminishing trust in accommodations provided by hosts, trust in the host itself (IPT), as well as trust in Airbnb for allowing such properties on the platform (IT).

The opinion holders of these reviews clearly express a concern for their own safety, whether it be physical safety in connection with hosting, safety and security in the online environment, or Airbnb’s ability to function as a safety net. Reviewers who do not feel safe and secure on Airbnb’s platform and with Airbnb’s peers, may find it more difficult to trust in Airbnb (IT) and its peers (IPT), and may influence potential customers to feel similarly.

Service Quality

With the keyword list we identified a large pool of words which addressed issues in relation to service quality. The words *support* (26 counts), *help* (29 counts), and *communication* (10 counts) were identified as addressing low quality assistance and service from both Airbnb and Airbnb peers. Additionally, the following words from the generated keyword list (grouped in synonyms), address concerns in regard to support and communication (displayed in table 12).

Service Quality	Counts
unhelpful, useless, unresponsive, unprofessional, ignored, refused	37

Table 12: Groups of synonyms addressing service quality

Examples of reviews complaining about the quality of assistance and calling for increased and improved *support* and *help* include: (R72) "Customer *support* = zero", (R5) "We will delist our property due to the *unhelpful* and unreasonable customer *support*", (R19) "If there are any issues with the hosts, Airbnb does not *support* you.", and (R73) "The company offers no *help* when you have pretty much got scammed". Other reviews which address issues in relation to support and help include: (R19), (R53), (R68), (R86) etc. When reviewers complain about the quality and lack of support from Airbnb, peers and potential customers may lose faith in Airbnb's abilities and hereby obtain lower levels of IT towards Airbnb. Additionally, examples of reviews complaining about the quality of *communication* include (R32) "No *communications* at all", and (R31) "So now as this man is choosing to *ignore* all *communication* from me, he is able to keep my money and Airbnb approved that". In relation to low quality communication, we identified the words *unresponsive* (R42) and *ignored* (R16, R31). These reviews describe situations where hosts have not reacted/responded to a guest's booking request or refund request. Furthermore, the word *refuse* (17 counts) was used in connection with expressing Airbnb's and Airbnb peers' unwillingness to provide a service, help out, or communicate.

Product Quality

With the keyword list we identified words that describe the functionality and state of Airbnb accommodations and their amenities (see table 13).

Product Quality		Counts
Group 1	dirty, stains, filthy, unsanitary, disgusting, filth, gross, nasty, dirt	33
Group 2	bugs, insects, roach, mice, rat, rodents	18
Group 3	broke, broken	2

Table 13: Groups of synonyms addressing product quality

The synonyms in group 1 (33 counts) and group 2 (18 counts) both address cleanliness issues of accommodations. Therefore, these words have been used by guests to describe accommodations on Airbnb that did not fulfill high sanitary standards. Examples of reviews

complaining about dirty accommodations include (R79) “We didn’t stay there for one night because it was sooo *dirty*.”, (R86) “Booked with Airbnb twice and both places booked were *filthy*, *unsanitary* and very in need of an update”, (R85) “*Disgusting* bed sheets and towels.”, and (R82) “(...) The inside was *nasty* and *filthy*.” (R74) “SAFETY HAZARD! COMPLETE FILTH AND DISTURBINGLY *UNSANITARY*!! BED *BUGS*!!! *INSECTS*!!!”, and (R74) “After staying for 2 nights, we were completely eaten up by bed *bugs* or some kind of *insects [...]*”. The content of these reviews may withhold review-readers from trusting that Airbnb hosts have the ability and competence to provide guests with high quality accommodations that are not dirty and unsanitary (IPT).

Lastly, the synonyms in group 3 (2 counts) described accommodations and accommodation amenities as broken and non-functional. One review stated: (R85) “Everything’s outdated & *broken.”,* which suggests the low quality of the accommodation itself (the product). When reading about broken amenities in accommodations, review-readers might get a very bad impression of Airbnb’s product quality and may not trust that Airbnb hosts are able to provide good service quality.

Rules & Regulations

With the keyword list, we also identified three words which addressed issues in relation to Airbnb’s rules and regulations (see table 14).

Rules & Regulations	Counts
refund	72
policy	20
blocked	6

Table 14: Keywords addressing rules & regulations

The keyword *policy* (20 counts) is mentioned when Airbnb users refer to issues with Airbnb’s policy (i.e., privacy policy, cancellation policy). Examples of reviews include (R25) “Airbnb is the most fraudulent company I have ever dealt with. They do not follow their own cancellation *policy* and make up excuse after excuse”, (R28) “Airbnb allows scammers to scam you through holes in their *policy*”, and (R38) “Airbnb has gone downhill in management of upholding their own review and privacy *policy*”. This indicates that some peers have a lack of trust in Airbnb’s abilities to provide functional, and useful policies that will protect them.

Furthermore, *refund* is often mentioned throughout all reviews (72 counts), which addresses Airbnb's rules in regard to refunding money for bookings. Examples of reviews include (R26) "They cancelled my reservation and will not *refund* me", and (R52) "Airbnb refused to provide a refund despite admitting that the host violated their own policies". This suggests frequent issues in relation to refunds, and unclear guidelines for the refund procedure.

Lastly, we identified the word *blocked* (6 counts) in the reviews, which refer to Airbnb users complaining about being blocked by Airbnb due to their rules and regulations. Examples include (R56) "I didn't use a profile picture of myself to keep myself private and even though I tried to compromise and offered to change my profile picture, they *blocked* me anyway", and (R100) "The host has written a review that I made-up the flaws despite having photo and video evidence, yet Airbnb have *blocked* me to write my honest review".
In notifying review-readers of issues in regard to Airbnb's rules and regulations, readers may increasingly become concerned with Airbnb's business practices, which could diminish people's overall trust in Airbnb (IT).

Trust

Finally, the word *trust* was mentioned 5 times. Examples include: (R13) "DON'T TRUST AIRBNB!", and (R34) "I don't trust the Airbnb reviews at all". When these opinion holders discredit Airbnb and warn others of coming onto the platform, they inform review-readers that Airbnb can be untrustworthy, which may lower IT and IPT.

6.6.2 Airbnb.com Reviews

This part presents the findings of the Airbnb reviews (100 reviews) retrieved from airbnb.com, split in two groups; (1) host to guest reviews (50), and (2) guest to host reviews (50), depending on the perspective and the target of the review. All Airbnb reviews can be seen in appendix F.

Sentiment Analysis (Host - Guest Reviews)

In the sentiment analysis of the Airbnb reviews, we identified 48 positive (96%), 1 negative (2%), and 1 positive-negative (2%) host-guest reviews by thoroughly reading through all 50 reviews. This shows that reviews of Airbnb on their own website are mostly positive, which is an indicator of hosts expressing a good experience with guests on Airbnb.

When analyzing the created keyword list for positive and negative words, we found 53 positive words and 15 negative words that have been used from people throughout the reviews to describe their Airbnb experience. Positive sentiment words are an indication of a good experience with Airbnb, while negative sentiment words are an indication of bad experiences with Airbnb. A full list of all positive and negative words identified in the Airbnb reviews is presented in table 15.

Positive Words (53)	**Negative Words (15)**
Admiring, Amazing, Beautiful, Considerate, Courteous, Easy, Enjoyed, Excellent, Excited, Fantastic, Fine, Finest, Flawless, Flexible, Glad, Good, Great, Happier, Happily, Happy, Helpful, Humble, Impressed, Kind, Like, Lovely, Marvelous, Neat, Nice, Perfect, Pleasant, Pleasure, Polite, Positive, Recommend, Relaxing, Reliable, Respectful, Responsible, Safe, Smile, Smoothly, Successful, Super, Sweet, Sympathetic, Tidily, Tidy, Trustful, Uncomplicated Welcome, Well, Wonderful	Damage, Disappointment, Gross, Hassle, Hesitate, Mess, Nightmare, Rotten, Shocked, Smell, Smoked, Stressful, Suspicious, Unable, Weed

Table 15: Positive and negative words in Airbnb reviews (Airbnb.com): host to guest

Examples of reviews that include some of the positive sentiment words are: (R1) "Very *nice* and *beautiful* people. Everything was *perfect*", (R4) "Everything *great*! *Great*, nice communication!", (R39) "The apartment was left in a *good* condition [...]", (R16) "It was a real *pleasure* to meet and host Marine and Thomas", (R38) "*Wonderful* guests", and (R25) "I'd be *happy* to host her again anytime". In addition, many hosts used the word *recommend* when expressing their satisfaction about guests. The identified positive sentiment words in the host-guest Airbnb reviews vary in intensity (Liu, 2015, p. 21), and describe positive experiences on Airbnb.

Examples of reviews that include some of the negative sentiment words are: (R20) "Alikson and his friend have been a *disappointment* as guests [...]", (R15) "Hosting Therese and her friends turned into a bit of a *nightmare* and was probably the most *stressful* hosting experience". However, not all of the negative sentiment words did sufficiently indicate negative reviews. The words *hesitate* and *hassle* have not been used in a negative context, but in a positive one, e.g. (R17) "I would not *hesitate* to recommend them as guests for staying in other properties",

[...] and I would recommend them to everyone who wants a *hassle*-free hosting experience". In this case, the negative sentiment words describe both negative and positive experiences on Airbnb.

Conclusively, with the majority of the host-guest Airbnb reviews being positive, almost all hosts who gave a review on Airbnb's website have had positive experiences on Airbnb, and especially with Airbnb guests. Therefore, if other hosts read through mostly positive reviews that guests received from other hosts, their trust in Airbnb guests (IPT) may increase as well as their trust in the possibility of having a successful experience with hosting them.

Content Analysis (Host – Guest Reviews)

Guest Quality

With the keyword list, we identified a large pool of words which addressed guest qualities, such as their communication skills, behavior, manners, and the respect they had for the accommodation and the host. The word communication was identified 28 times. Examples include: (R7) "The *communication* was perfect! ", (R19) "[...] the *communication* went smoothly [...]", and (R48) "Great guests with very good *communication*". These reviews express the importance of guest's having the ability to communicate properly, transparently, and appropriately. With increased and high-quality communication, it is likely that it will be easier to establish IPT between peers. Additionally, the following words from the generated keywords list, presented in table 16, in groups of synonyms, were identified as addressing guest qualities.

Guest Quality		Counts
Group 1	respectful, polite, considerate, courteous, welcoming, sweet, kind, sympathetic, helpful, humble, friendly	65
Group 2	tidily, tidy, neat, clean	42
Group 3	easy, uncomplicated, smoothly, flexible, flawless, perfect, successful	35
Group 4	responsible, trustful, reliable	3

Table 16: Groups of synonyms addressing guest quality

Synonyms in group 1 (65 counts) and group 4 (3 counts) were used to describe the behavior and manners of guests during a stay with a host. Examples of such reviews include: (R27) "[...] So nice to have such a *considerate* guest.", (R30) "[...] She was very *respectful*, *kind* [...]", (R46) "Was a pleasure meeting Ben! *Friendly, respectful* and [...]", (R41) "Oleksandr and his guests were fantastic. Very *polite*, quiet, *humble* and neat. [...]", and (R43)" She is a *kind*, smart, and *responsible* young lady [...]". These reviews describe ways in which guests behaved, both in regard to how they treated the accommodation and its amenities, and how they interacted with hosts. When a guest has been described as a person who behaves and interacts with integrity and benevolence, another host may be more likely to trust this guest (IPT).

Synonyms in group 2 (42 counts) are used to describe the condition of the accommodation after a guest checked out. Examples of such reviews include: (R14) "Even with two kids, they left the apartment super *clean* and *tidy*.", (R26) "they (...) left the place *clean* and *tidy*", and (R48) "[...] treated the apartment with respect and left it *clean* and *tidy*. These reviews express gratitude for how well-kept the accommodation was after hosting a guest, and positively builds the guest's Airbnb profile and reputation. When a guest has been described as a person with good character, other host's may be more likely to trust this guest with access to their accommodations (IPT).

Synonyms in group 3 (35 counts), were used to describe guests who made the hosting experience trouble-free, simple, and easy. Examples include: (R19) "He was really *uncomplicated*, the communication went *smoothly*, and he left the apartment in good condition (...)", (R17) "Emil and friends were the *perfect* guests (...)", and (R14) "They arrived in time and all arrangements we made were *flexible* and *easy* to make." In telling review-readers about an uncomplicated experience with a guest, other host's may be more likely to trust that particular guest, and other guests who have been described as behaving in similar ways (IPT).

Sentiment Analysis (Guest – Host Reviews)

In the sentiment analysis of the Airbnb reviews, we identified 41 positive (82%), 3 negative (6%), and 6 positive-negative (12%) guest-host reviews by reading through all reviews in detail. This shows that reviews of Airbnb on their website are mostly positive, which is an indicator of guests expressing a good experience with hosts on Airbnb.

When analyzing the created keyword list for positive and negative words, we found 42 positive words and 17 negative words that have been used from people throughout their reviews to describe their Airbnb experience. Positive words that have been used indicate a good experience with Airbnb, while the negative words indicate a bad experience with Airbnb. A full list of all positive and negative words identified in the Airbnb reviews is given in table 17.

Positive Words (42)	**Negative Words (17)**
Accurate, Amazing, Appreciated, Available, Awesome, Beautiful, Better, Clean, Comfortable, Comfy, Cosy, Cozy, Easy, Enjoyed, Excellently, Fine, Flexible, Friendly, Good, Great, Guaranteed, Happy, Helpful, Hospitality, Incredible, Kind, Like, Lovely, Marvelous, Nice, Outstanding, Perfect, Pleasant, Pretty, Proficient, Recommend, Smooth, Sparkling, Super, Welcome, Well, Wonderful	Banging, Bother, Broken, Cancelled, Complain, Dirty, Disturbed, Hard, Hassle, Issues, Lack, Loud, Missing, Noisy, Screams, Unfortunately, Unhappy

Table 17: Positive and negative words in Airbnb reviews (Airbnb.com): guest to host

Examples of reviews that include some of the positive sentiment words are: (R24) “Very nice apartment, the description is very *accurate*”, (R31) “Georgy’s place was *amazing*”, (R11) “Very quiet and *cozy* flat in a very *good* location”, (R32) “The host responds quickly and is very *friendly*”, (R42) “Everything was very *clean,* and the host was *helpful* and very communicative”, and (R48) “*Marvelous*, *outstanding,* everything was *perfect*”. Moreover, many guests use the word r*ecommend* when expressing their satisfaction with a host and their accommodation. The identified positive sentiment words, in the guest-host Airbnb reviews, vary in intensity (Liu, 2015, p. 21), and describe positive experiences on Airbnb.

Examples of reviews that include some of the negative sentiment words are: (R21) “[...] the holder for the shower curtain was *broken*, making taking a shower a bit of a hassle [...]”, (R33) “Building entrance and staircase were quite *dirty* and very *noisy*”. However, the negative sentiment words *issue* and *complain* were not used in a negative context, but in a positive one, e.g. (R6) “Tony was very helpful and easily contacted if *issues* arise, which they didn't” and (R29) “Can’t *complain* but definitely nothing to write home about”.

Conclusively, with the majority of the guest-host Airbnb reviews being positive, almost all Airbnb reviewers who gave a review on Airbnb’s website have had positive experiences with

Airbnb. Therefore, if guests go on Airbnb to look for accommodations and read through mostly positive reviews, their trust in Airbnb (IT) and Airbnb hosts (IPT) may increase as well as their trust in the possibility of having a successful and positive experience on Airbnb in the future.

Content Analysis (Guest – Host Reviews)

Service Quality

With the keyword list, we identified a pool of words which addressed hosts' service qualities, such as their hospitality and friendliness and the quality of their accommodation. The words are shown in groups of synonyms in table 18.

Service Quality		Counts
Group 1	Welcome, hospitality, friendly, kind, helpful	21
Group 2	Easy, flexible, smooth, available	10
Group 3	Comfy, cosy, cozy, comfortable	12

Table 18: Groups of synonyms addressing service quality

Synonyms in group 1 (21 counts) and group 2 (10 counts) both address the hosting qualities of hosts on Airbnb. This is shown in the following examples: (R4) "The *welcome* and communication with Tony was perfect", (R48) "Garrelt is a very lovely guy. The *hospitality* is great", (R1) "Very *friendly* host [...]", (R39) "He was very *helpful* and a *kind* person". (R35) "Communication with Georgy was *easy,* and he responded fast", (R50) "Great host, quick responses and *flexile* check ins", (R21) "Check-in and key pickup went pretty *smooth* [...]", and (R32) "But the host was friendly and *available* all the time". In telling the review-reader about great hosting qualities and hosts' ability to provide great service, other potential guests' trust may increase to stay with these hosts (IPT) because of great hosting skills which are necessary for a successful stay.

Words in group 3 (12 counts) address the quality of the hosts' accommodation. Guests used the words *comfy, cozy, cosy* and *comfortable* to describe the accommodation they stayed at. Examples of reviews include: (R46) "The room was really *comfy*", (R42) "Very nice host with a *cozy* apartment!" and (R1) "Very friendly host and very *comfortable* apartments". In addition, the word clean was counted 15 times, where guests express their satisfaction with the cleanliness of the accommodation. Examples include: (R10) "The place is spacious and

sparkling *clean*", (R20) "A very nicely decorated and *clean* apartment", and (R35) "The apartment is spacious and very, very *clean*!". When notifying review-readers about the great quality of an accommodation, including how clean, cozy and comfortable it was, it may increase other people's trust in this particular hosts' accommodations and consequently enhance trust in the hosts' abilities in providing a good experience on Airbnb (IPT).

6.7 Summary Review Analysis Findings

The majority of the Airbnb.com reviews are positive, while the large majority of the Trustpilot reviews about Airbnb are negative. Typically, the negative reviews address a negative experience with Airbnb, which diminishes a review-reader's trust in Airbnb (IT) and Airbnb peers (IPT). On the other hand, the positive reviews address a positive experience with Airbnb, which typically builds a review-reader's trust in Airbnb (IT) and Airbnb peers (IPT).

The identified variables which diminish trust include cases of scamming, fraud, abuse, theft, illegal activities etc. and address concerns for security and safety. Additionally, variables such as lack of support and communication (service quality), lack of functionality of accommodation amenities, and lack of cleanliness (product quality), as well as confusing Airbnb policies and issues with refunds, also diminishes IPT and IT.

On the other hand, the identified variables which build IPT on Airbnb are an appreciation for guests' tidiness, good communication skills, good manners and respect for the accommodation and themselves, as well as host hospitality and friendliness, and the quality of the accommodation. These variables contributed to a good experience and may build greater IPT.

7. Discussion

In aiming at discovering the extent of the role of trust on peer-to-peer accommodation platforms in the sharing economy, i.e., Airbnb, we were able to (1) identify relevant trust constructs and trust antecedents (see chapter 3), (2) measure the levels of these trust constructs among Airbnb peers and people who have never used Airbnb before (see chapter 6), (3) measure the interdependency of these trust constructs (see chapter 6), and (4) identify variables that may build and diminish the dynamics of trust on Airbnb (see chapter 6).

Various results clarify the multi-dimensional role of trust and suggests that Airbnb has the ability to act as a vehicle for trust-building, that trust may be a prerequisite for peer-to-peer platform participation, and that the various relevant trust constructs are dynamic, somewhat interdependent, and may be influenced by various trust antecedents and variables. Furthermore, results pinpoint complex paradoxes of the role of trust, particularly in regard to building trust without also diminishing trust. The results explaining the role of trust and the relevant trust-paradoxes will be discussed below.

7.1 Part 1: Discussion of Results

Airbnb as a Vehicle for Trust-building vs. Trust as a Prerequisite for joining Airbnb

Survey results showed that people who have never used Airbnb have lower levels of DT compared to people who have used Airbnb as a guest, host, or both. There might be various reasons for this. Either Airbnb is a vehicle for trust-building (an entity with the abilities to foster, create, and positively stimulate people's trust levels), or it is people with higher levels of DT that choose to or are willing to participate in sharing activities and hereby join the Airbnb platform.

According to Airbnb's co-founder Joe Gebbia, Airbnb is designed for trust (Gebbia, 2016), and has the ability to manipulate and influence trust-building. The idea is, that the more capable Airbnb has been in providing its peers with the means to achieve secure and successful transactions, as well as interactions on the Airbnb platform, then the more likely Airbnb has secured a successful partake in the sharing economy, and the more likely it is that these people's trust levels will increase after joining Airbnb.

When requiring peers to create a profile with personal information (i.e., full name, date of birth, phone number, email address, government ID), Airbnb is facilitating trust between peers by allowing peers to know more about one another and not feel like strangers anymore (Airbnb for Work, 2021). Hereby, Airbnb is creating an environment that allows people to successfully and securely interact with strangers and setting the scene for creating a sense of familiarity with strangers and for overcoming their stranger-danger bias (Gebbia, 2016). Additionally, Airbnb has included various measures (a system of simultaneous reviews, hospitality guidelines, an online community communication tool, and 24/7 global assistance) in an attempt to increase peers' trust levels (MarketLine, 2021, Airbnb for Work, 2021). Overall, this suggests that Airbnb is a vehicle for trust-building.

On the other hand, trust may be a prerequisite for joining Airbnb's platform. In other words, it might be that it is simply people with higher trust levels that join Airbnb. Peers' higher trust levels may have been achieved through general recurring positive experiences with strangers (Möhlmann, 2016, p. 10) and sharing activities beyond Airbnb's platform, or may, due to their personality, be more likely to trust and join Airbnb. Indeed, throughout the literature review, we established that people with pro-social tendencies (people that like to socialize, share with others etc.), also tend to be more willing to trust (Wang et al., 2020, p. 698). Therefore, it is likely that the more social, extroverted and motivated one is to befriend others, the more willing one is to share with and trust others, and the greater one's DT levels are. Conclusively, having a pro-social personality may foster high DT levels, which may influence people's likeliness to join Airbnb.

In addition, people with lower trust levels, may be more reluctant to, and find it more difficult to stay with and invite strangers into their homes. In fact, when asking the 'neither' survey respondents about the reasons why they have not used Airbnb, a fair amount (17%) expressed that they would not feel safe staying in a stranger's home or sharing their apartment/house with a stranger. Seeing that people with low trust choose not to join Airbnb, it is likely that high trust levels is a prerequisite for joining Airbnb. If trust indeed is a prerequisite for joining Airbnb, then greater persuasion, encouragement and nudging is necessary in convincing people with low trust levels to (1) willingly trust strangers, and (2) become Airbnb peers.

Conclusively, both suggestions may hold true. The role of trust may be that high DT is a prerequisite for joining Airbnb, and that Airbnb is a vehicle for trust-building. This suggests

that Airbnb has the ability to use the role of trust to their advantage by successfully managing trust levels, designing for greater trust levels, and bettering their value propositions through understanding the dynamism of trust in the sharing economy.

Going forward, Airbnb may find that they are successful enough to not spend extra resources on convincing people with low and moderate levels of DT to join the platform, or they may want to implement additional trust-enhancing measures throughout their platform to secure future onboarding of peers, and to secure continued high levels of DT as well as participation by current peers.

Trust Transfer ("Spill-over effect")

In the survey, we identified a strong correlation between IT & IPT for the 'guest', 'host', and 'both' respondents. This result showcases that high IT among peers will spill over and cause high IPT, and vice versa. In other words, when IT increases among peers, IPT will most likely also increase, and vice versa. Similarly, throughout the literature review, we identified trust as a two-fold hierarchical construct in the concept of the sharing economy that allows trust to be transferred from one object to the other (labeled as a trust transfer) (Möhlmann, 2016, pp. 12, 23). Möhlmann (2016, p. 1) also called this a 'spill-over effect', which means that trust in the platform (IT) spills over to trust in the platform's peers (IPT).

Having identified that IT & IPT plays an interconnected role in shaping trust on peer-to-peer platforms, we need to consider the possible effects of such trust transfers.

If Airbnb can showcase that they are a company with benevolence, integrity and great abilities, then levels of IT will increase and possibly spill over into higher IPT. In other words, if one trusts the platform, one may also trust that the platform ensures that its peers have similar values and are just as trustworthy. Airbnb has great control over this spillover effect and may positively use it to their advantage. According to our literature review and survey results, Airbnb has the ability to increase IT by (1) securing a safe online environment through privacy and safety measures (i.e., protecting personal information, supplying safe transactions through the website, screening of community members, and completing thorough background checks), (2) taking responsibility and sanctioning peers who have engaged in inappropriate behaviors, (3) providing reliable insurance cover and refund policies etc., (4) providing a well-functioning,

well-structured website with sufficient and up-to-date information, and (5) providing reliable, around the clock support. By ensuring such measures and externally communicating them, Airbnb puts themselves in a position to be able to positively influence and create higher IT among peers, which at the same time may bring about higher levels of IPT.

On the other hand, high levels of IPT may also spill over into higher levels of IT. In other words, if you trust the Airbnb peers, you may also be more likely to trust Airbnb. Afterall, the central concept of a peer-to-peer platform is sharing, which makes this economy about social (face-to-face) interactions, and not just about commerce (Gebbia, 2016). This puts IPT at the core of the trust circle (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 5) and allows peers to be in control of the sharing experience and hereby function as stakeholders (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 7). Therefore, Airbnb has limited control over peers' face-to-face encounters, including the service quality provided by hosts (i.e., how friendly, helpful, and welcoming they are), as well as the guests' behavior (i.e., how friendly, respectful, and tidy they are). However, Airbnb has the ability to secure the quality of the listings, to facilitate good encounters by setting ground rules, and to resolve possible disputes. An unsuccessful interaction between peers may lower IPT and IT, but this may also be an opportunity for Airbnb to step in, rectify the situation by coming up with an appropriate solution, and hereby raise the wronged peers' levels of IT.

Conclusively, it is likely that Airbnb (as a platform) and Airbnb peers function as a reflection of one another. Undoubtedly, some peers' high trust in Airbnb (IT) have led to trusting Airbnb peers (IPT) and vice versa. We can conclude that (1) IT and IPT are interconnected constructs on platforms in the sharing economy, (2) IT and IPT have a positive relationship and are highly relevant for successful sharing transactions, and (3) Airbnb has limited control over the IPT to IT spillover effect but has the ability to appropriately handle IPT-lowering incidents and hereby increase IT levels.

Privacy Concerns vs. the Necessity of Background Checks, Identity Verification & Sharing of sensitive Information

The review analysis of the 100 Trustpilot reviews revealed peers' concern for their privacy, and a general discovery of resharing of sensitive information. Examples include: (R37) "[...] the site asked me to upload a government ID [...]. That's something I never do, for *privacy* reasons.", (R40) "They now have my credit card details, my ID and my personal details [...] they can clone

my identity.", and (R36) [...] the home was [*address*]. Suggest you stay away.". Additionally, survey results showed that a significant number of respondents pinpointed identity verification and background checks as one of the most essential IPT and IT trust-building measures on Airbnb.

In addressing this need for verifying peers' identity and in an attempt to increase IPT and IT, Airbnb requires that peers upload a copy of their ID, provide their address etc. Airbnb needs this type of sensitive information to (1) ensure the identity of their peers, (2) ensure a safe environment, and (3) reassure its peers of the legitimacy of its' community. Additionally, this will assist in building IPT between peers. However, these requirements demand that people who wish to join Airbnb already have high levels of IT and OT. Uploading an ID requires people to trust that Airbnb will protect them against identity theft etc., and that the online environment has the necessary security measures in place. Once again, it seems that initial trust levels play a role in peer-to-peer platform participation. Conclusively, when designing for trust on a peer-to-peer accommodation platform, one must understand the consequences of incorporating certain trust-building measures and explore ways of how such trust-building measures can be managed. One way to ensure peers' identity and establish greater IPT is by connecting peers' Airbnb profiles with their social media accounts. This will allow peers to access digital social capital on each other (Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018, p. 6). However, this requires further distribution of personal information, which may yet again overstep peers' privacy demands. Another way is for Airbnb to integrate and more clearly communicate their privacy policies, regulations, safety and security measures to reassure peers that they are protected. This is essential for building IT and for reducing consumers' privacy concerns (Wang et al., 2020, p. 692).

Despite integrating above-mentioned efforts, Airbnb will, due to its nature as a peer-to-peer platform, have limited means for preventing leaks of sensitive information and privacy violations. Airbnb guests will still be able to share sensitive information (i.e., addresses) on external review sites such as Trustpilot. Therefore, being a host comes with certain risks, and hosting requires high levels of IPT towards guests (i.e., trusting that guests will not reshare sensitive information). However, this issue could potentially be resolved by requiring all peers to sign confidentiality agreements that prohibits peers in sharing sensitive information to third

parties. Following up on violations of this agreement, may however not be possible due to limited resources.

Conclusively, managing privacy concerns while ensuring the identity of peers and requiring peers to share sensitive information, is a balancing act. Airbnb should facilitate greater IPT between peers through thorough background checks, and at the same time, aim at increasing IT and OT through incorporating well-communicated and reliable policies and regulations that will protect peers' privacy. This should limit the associated risks with disclosing personal information with Airbnb and strangers.

The Paradox of Airbnb Reviews

Reviews: Trust-building vs. Trust-diminishing

Online reviews are often discussed as an important tool for platforms to facilitate trust-building between the platform and the customer (Zamani et al., 2019, p. 1950, Bridges & Vásquez, 2018, pp. 2060-2061). They provide information on the prior experience of others (Zamani et al., 2019, p. 1950), and are especially valuable to customers in the travel and tourism sector because they are helpful in avoiding unsatisfactory products and experiences (i.e., accommodations) (Bridges & Vásquez, 2018, pp. 2057-2058). This is supported by our survey findings, as we identified online reviews/ peer reviews as one of the most important trust-building measures (top 3) that help respondents build trust towards Airbnb and Airbnb peers. In fact, 72% of the 'guest' respondents, 80% of the 'host' respondents, and 77% of the 'both' respondents chose online reviews as a significant trust-building measure. However, reviews might not only be trust-building, but also trust-diminishing.

Out of 200 reviews, we identified 93 positive reviews which described good experiences on Airbnb, and 100 negative reviews which described bad experiences on Airbnb. 7 reviews were both positive and negative. We found that good experiences are created by great guest qualities, good communication etc., and that bad experiences are created by security & safety issues, low service and product quality (no support, bad communication, dirty accommodations etc.), and issues with Airbnb's rules and regulations. From literature, we know that positive and successful experiences may enhance peoples' trust, while negative and unsuccessful experiences may diminish their trust (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 728; Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 400).

Thus, it might be true that when reading positive reviews from Airbnb customers, one's trust levels in Airbnb and Airbnb's peers might increase, and that when reading negative reviews, one's trust levels in Airbnb and Airbnb's peers might decrease.

Conclusively, from a consumer's perspective, online reviews might be highly valued, especially on a peer-to-peer accommodation sharing platform, in determining if a stranger/peer is trustworthy. Good reviews will most likely build trust, while negative reviews may diminish trust. Therefore, it is necessary for Airbnb to consider the consequences that negative reviews may have on their community's trust levels. In fact, negative information/reviews that diminishes the trustworthiness of a platform provider has a stronger influence on users compared to positive information/reviews (Möhlmann, 2016, p. 23). Therefore, Airbnb should consider allocating additional resources towards a team that may deal with negative reviews (even on third-party review sites) and treat it as an opportunity to prove the platform's integrity and abilities. Hence, negative reviews may be treated as free-of-charge valuable data that can be used to identify customer pain-points, and allow Airbnb to improve their value propositions, and the Airbnb customer experience.

However, with a clear incentive of securing good reviews and limiting negative reviews, this leads us to our second discussion point on the role that review biases may play in the establishment of IT. Our review analysis revealed that the majority of reviews on Trustpilot are negative (96%), whereas the majority of reviews on Airbnb.com are positive (89%). So, while the Trustpilot review diminishes trust levels in Airbnb and Airbnb's peers, the Airbnb.com reviews increase trust levels. Such a result may cause suspicions in regard to whether Airbnb alters or disapproves of negative reviews.

Reviews Bias – Can Airbnb Reviews be trusted?

A review bias was identified based on an overwhelming number of negative reviews (96%) on Trustpilot, and an overwhelming number of positive reviews (89%) on Airbnb.com. There are several reasons that could explain the positivity bias on Airbnb vs. the negativity bias on Trustpilot. When writing a review on Airbnb's platform, it is not possible for users to leave an anonymous review. Here, reviews are linked to the user's profile and only customers who have used Airbnb can leave a review. On the contrary, everyone can create a user profile on Trustpilot and leave a review. This profile does not need to be connected to the Airbnb profile or any other

social media accounts. When the review is not anonymous and connected to the Airbnb profile, users might be more hesitant to actually complain and write a negative review because of the physical and social interaction they have had with other hosts and guests when taking part in a sharing activity (Bridges & Vásquez, 2018, pp. 2060, 2070). This personal interaction with peers may be yet another reason for the positivity bias. On Trustpilot, reviews do not have a specific target and are more general about Airbnb, whereas reviews on Airbnb are directed towards the Airbnb peers (hosts and guests). Therefore, one could say that the interpersonal component is stronger on Airbnb compared to Trustpilot. Therefore, when peers are rating other peers, which they have personally interacted with, they might be less comfortable giving negative reviews to avoid being unkind (Bridges & Vásquez, 2018, pp. 2060).

The positivity bias on Airbnb has already received lots of attention from researchers and the media (Bridges & Vásquez, 2018, p. 2059) and seems to be a highly discussed issue. Over 70% of consumers say that they trust online reviews (Zervas et al., 2021, p. 2, Bridges & Vásquez, 2018, p. 2057) and for many, it is a good way to receive first-hand information from an unbiased source (Bridges & Vásquez, 2018, p. 2058). However, the bias might influence consumers' opinion of the reviews in general. As a result of the positivity bias, consumers might perceive the reviews on Airbnb as less trustworthy and deem them meaningless. Indeed, researchers found that consumers often experience negative reviews as more trustworthy and authentic (Zamani et al., 2019, p. 1950). In addition, overly positive reviews might create suspicion and raise the question if Airbnb influences the review process on their website by i.e., taking out negative reviews which go against their policy, but which would actually contribute to a more diverse and open source of information. In addition, it might raise consumers' concerns about the validity of the reviews in general.

Conclusively, an overwhelming number of positive reviews on Airbnb along with an overwhelming number of negative reviews on Trustpilot, could have a negative impact on Airbnb's reputation and the trust consumers have in Airbnb (IT). As it turns out, Airbnb may want to facilitate more detailed, honest, and even negative information-sharing in their review-system to foster credibility and trustworthiness.

Greater Communication and Information-Sharing vs. Discrimination

Data derived from our analysis of the open-ended survey question responses revealed that respondents think greater trust could be established between peers (IPT) by improving information sharing and the quality of inter relational communication. Similarly, results from our review analysis of the Airbnb.com reviews revealed that hosts and guests greatly value when peers communicate properly, transparently, and appropriately. Overall, a lack of good communication may diminish IPT.

Both guests and hosts requested that their opposite peers get better at introducing themselves. Guests want hosts to disclose more personal information including their motivation for hosting, and some background information on who they are and what they do, while hosts want guests to state the purpose for the stay, as well as their personal wishes and preferences. Through greater information sharing, peers may identify similar needs and interests, and establish a sense of familiarity and similarity that will (1) help them understand each other, (2) overcome their stranger-danger bias, and (3) allow them to form an expectation of whether this other party is trustworthy (IPT) (Gefen, 2000 p. 726). This sort of bonding and familiarity establishment is particularly important because Airbnb peers typically function as weak ties and hereby do not know anything about each other's background, intentions, competences etc. (Khodyakov, 2007, p.121). Hence, minimal transparency will negatively affect trust-building, while greater communication, detailed information-sharing between peers, and greater information availability may positively influence trust levels and assist in building stronger IPT (Khodyakov, 2007, p. 122; Rousseau et al., 1998, pp. 399, 400).

However, according to Airbnb's co-founder Joe Gebbia (Gebbia, 2016), there is such a thing as disclosing the right amount of information in order to build a healthy level of IPT. If a guest or host shares too little or too much information, acceptance rates go down. Additionally, what is too much and too little may be a subjective opinion and may vary from peer to peer. One must be aware that disclosing the right amount of information can be difficult.
A survey respondent rightfully stated that greater transparency can cause issues in regard to discrimination. While increased communication and information-sharing may lead to the discovery of many similarities and create a sense of familiarity, it may also lead to the discovery of differences and unfamiliarity. Therefore, it may even allow hosts and guests to discriminate. According to Gebbia (2016), a joint study with Stanford University on people's willingness to

trust based on how similar people are, revealed that people prefer other people similar to themselves, and that the more different someone is, the less likely we are to trust them. Identifying such personal similarities and dissimilarities can happen extremely quickly. In fact, research discovered that a person is able to form an opinion about another person's trustworthiness in less than a second after seeing their face (Ert et al., 2016, p. 64). This indicates that hosts' and guests' trust towards each other (IPT) may be influenced by their profile pictures. Airbnb's introduction of a new photo process on the platform (Airbnb, 2020) displays one example addressing the information-sharing vs. discrimination issue. Hosts are now only able to see the guest's profile photo after they accepted the booking request (Airbnb, 2020). This may be a step in the right direction of reducing subconscious or conscious discriminatory acts through not accepting a guest's request, simply because this person looks different or has a different background. At the same time, to still ensure the hosts' wish for greater transparency, hosts are able to customize their booking requirements and may require a profile photo from guests after they have accepted the booking request (Airbnb, 2020). This may help enhance hosts' trust levels towards their peers (IPT). This new photo process provides a measure which may support the prevention of discrimination in the sharing process between hosts and guests in the first place, however, there is no guarantee against discrimination after releasing the photo or any other discrimination on the platform.

Managing for greater transparency and higher IPT, while reducing discriminatory acts remains a difficult act as peers should have the autonomy to decide who they feel comfortable staying with and inviting into their homes. However, one would assume that in participating in sharing activities with strangers, one is open to all kinds of people and non-discriminatory by nature.

7.2 Part 2: Reflections on Thesis Approach

If allocated more time and resources, we would have distributed our survey to respondents beyond our own networks, acquired a larger number of respondents (specifically more hosts), and conducted a larger pilot study that could have eliminated possible misunderstandings, and data entry errors. Additionally, we would have acquired more qualitative data (more specifically through interviews) instead of spending the majority of our time on deriving quantitative data from a non-representative sample. Additional qualitative data could have given us more in-depth insights into Airbnb peers' and non-Airbnb-user's perspective on their own trust levels, their previous experiences with strangers, as well as incentives and deterrents for participating in the sharing economy. Moreover, we would have held interviews with representatives of Airbnb to gain a perspective on how Airbnb designs for interpersonal and institutional trust, how they deal with the dynamism of trust, and how they resolve trust-issues. Lastly, a broader less in-depth literature review could have yielded a more comprehensive and diversified overview of relevant trust constructs and trust antecedents and provided a greater theoretical foundation for our study.

8. Conclusion

This study aimed at expanding knowledge on the role of trust on peer-to-peer accommodation platforms in the sharing economy, and more specifically on the platform of Airbnb. Trust is essential in the sharing economy and especially on peer-to-peer platforms due to the physical interaction when delivering the service. This brings about challenges for people to overcome their stranger-danger bias. In the literature review, we identified three targets of trust on platforms: the platform provider, and the platform's peers (hosts & guests). Additionally, we identified four trust constructs relevant in the sharing economy: dispositional, online, institutional, and interpersonal trust. Furthermore, we identified relevant trust-building measures including online reviews, peer reputation, digitized social capital, provision of information, escrow services, insurance cover, certification and external validation. Lastly, we identified trust antecedents that may positively or negatively affect trust levels, including social antecedents (characteristics of the trustee, social value orientation, trust propensity, reputation, and familiarity), technical antecedents (system quality, service quality, information quality), and privacy assurance antecedents (privacy, security, risk).

We developed a survey with the aim to gather quantifiable data that describes the opinion and beliefs of a sample of people in regard to the role of trust in the context of Airbnb. Survey results yielded an overview of Airbnb peers' and non-Airbnb-users trust levels for all four trust constructs, the interdependence between trust levels and trust constructs, reasons for never having used Airbnb, and suggestions on measures that could facilitate in building trust between peers as well as between Airbnb and the peers. Additionally, we conducted a review analysis with the aim of gathering data that describes the opinion and beliefs of people in regard to their Airbnb experiences. By performing a sentiment and content analysis of the reviews, we were able to identify positive and negative reviews, and collect data on trust-building and trust-diminishing factors.

Through our research, we gained a holistic overview of the role of trust, including the means to achieve higher trust levels, the variables that diminishes trust, the dynamics of trust, and how different types of trust and trust-building measures may affect one another.
Significant survey results include (1) lower levels of DT and OT among non-Airbnb-users compared to Airbnb peers, (2) a strong correlation between IT & IPT among guest, host and

both respondents, (3) the most important trust building measures: peer reviews, identity verification, number of transactions conducted on the platform, secure payment seals, and the quality of information on the website/listing/profile, and (4) suggestive additional trust-building measures: high quality communication and information, greater security & safety, improved background checks, greater support, and accuracy of existing information.
The review analysis results identified the Airbnb.com reviews as largely positive and the Trustpilot reviews about Airbnb as largely negative. Negative reviews were indicators of negative experiences and trust-diminishing variables, while positive reviews were indicators of positive experiences and trust-building variables. Trust-diminishing variables include (1) cases of scamming, fraud, abuse, theft, illegal activities etc., (2) concerns for security and safety, (3) lack of support and communication, (4) lack of functionality of accommodation amenities, (5) lack of cleanliness, and (6) confusing Airbnb policies. Trust-building variables include (1) guests' tidiness, (2) good communication skills, (3) good manners and respect for the accommodation and their peers, (4) host hospitality and friendliness, and (5) the quality of the accommodation.

Throughout the discussion it became evident that (1) trust plays a major role in participation in the sharing economy by functioning as a prerequisite, (2) platforms in the sharing economy have the ability to function as a trust-building vehicle, (3) there is a spill-over effect of trust for IT and IPT, (4) a review bias may devalue peer reviews as a trust-building measure, and (5) incorporating certain trust-building measures can result in separate trust-challenges, and carry over negative repercussions.
Examples include the privacy concerns vs. identity verification paradox, which addresses that greater identity verification on the platform may increase IPT and IT but can also increase peers' privacy concerns and may require initial high levels of OT and IT. Additionally, the greater communication/ information vs. discrimination paradox displays that while greater transparency may yield greater IPT and IT, it can also result in greater discrimination, which may cause a drop in IPT. Therefore, it is important to consider the effects (negative and positive) of trust-building measures including how to appropriately integrate them and manage for possible repercussions.

9. Managerial Implications

Our findings on the roles of trust on peer-to-peer accommodation platforms derive valuable implications for platform managers. However, this study's results and the implied implications cannot be generalized for other peer-to-peer platforms besides accommodation platforms, as our research is built on a case study of Airbnb.

Findings provide the means to navigate management of trust and how to overcome trust challenges, and provide knowledge on what trust constructs, trust antecedents, trust-building measures and trust-affecting variables managers need to be attentive to, in order to successfully manage for the highest possible trust-levels. By capturing perceived trust levels and valuable data on ways of improving peer-to-peer platforms' value proposition in regard to trust from a customer's point of view, managers have the ability to design for trust more easily.

Proposed trust building measures (i.e., identity verification, privacy & refund policies etc.) should be incorporated onto peer-to-peer accommodation platforms with caution. Managers need to develop an understanding of the effects that specific trust-building measures may cause, as well as the requirements of incorporating said trust-building measures. For example, implementing greater transparency in internal as well as external communication and increased information sharing, may be helpful in achieving greater levels of interpersonal and institutional trust, but may also facilitate discriminatory acts. Additionally, implementing improved background checks and identity verification measures may be helpful in achieving greater interpersonal and institutional trust, but may also require initial high levels of online trust, as well as cause increased concerns for privacy. Furthermore, managers need to take advantage of the possibility of communicating the implementation of new and improved trust-building measures to consumers, and hereby promote and market the trustworthiness of the platform and the platform's peers.

Moreover, our findings suggest that more resources should be allocated to community management, including management of reviews. Negative reviews may yield free of charge data (feedback) that may be utilized for the purposes of improving peer-to-peer platforms' services and offers and bettering the customer experience. Furthermore, peer-to-peer platforms should consider implementing a review system on their website, specifically for the purpose of allowing peers to write reviews directed towards the platform (company). This may allow

platforms to limit the number of negative reviews on third-party review sites, and further give them the opportunity to respond to complaints about the quality of their services. This will allow platforms to prove their trustworthiness through displaying their abilities, benevolence and integrity.

Findings also revealed that higher security & safety, more background checks, greater identity verification, and higher service quality can increase trust levels on peer-to-peer accommodation platforms. This insight can be used by managers to argue the implementation of a specialized team that does accommodation check-ups and authenticates listings' validity, legality, quality and security by periodically visiting and inspecting accommodations in person. Thus, it may be possible to identify listings that do not fulfill established quality and security requirements, and hereby prevent them from coming onto the platform. This should facilitate higher interpersonal and institutional trust.

Furthermore, managers need to be aware of trust transfers and the interconnected dynamics of trust constructs on peer-to-peer platforms. Managers may strategically design for positive trust transfers, and successfully exploit a spill-over of institutional to interpersonal trust and vice versa but should also be cautious of possible negative trust-transfers.

Additionally, managers need to be aware that because the sharing experience is solely created by the peers, they have limited control over the service delivery. Thus, peers should be treated as stakeholders, and managers should foster a greater feeling of responsibility among peers. This could be done by communicating to peers that they play an important part in facilitating a successful service encounter. However, managers still have some influence on the service transaction by providing the environment for the sharing activity and establishing rules and regulations, as well as enhance trust in Airbnb and trust in peers with the use of effective trust-building measures.

Lastly, findings identified high levels of dispositional and online trust as a prerequisite for peer-to-peer platform participation. This finding suggests that managers should direct their marketing efforts towards identifying consumers who can more easily be persuaded to join the platform.

10. Future Research

Future research should focus on establishing a framework for managing trust on peer-to-peer platforms, regardless of the platform's nature of business. This may facilitate a greater understanding of relevant trust constructs for peer-to-peer platforms, as well as grasp the full extent of interdependence of the different trust constructs (dispositional, online, institutional, and interpersonal trust), and possible spill-over effects.

Additionally, future research should explore the connection between people's personality as well as disposition to trust, and their likelihood to participate in or join a peer-to-peer platform in the sharing economy. People's disposition to trust may be impacted by xenophobia, xenophilia, ethnocentrism, social biases, culture and personality traits such as introversion and extraversion, as well as prosocial tendencies. The effects of such traits could both enhance and diminish participation in sharing activities and affect peers' trust levels. Knowing how to approach, market to and communicate with people from different backgrounds and with different personalities etc. may lead to the ability in facilitating greater trust levels. Moreover, research should explore how previous experiences form trust levels, and how platforms can overcome and ensure people with initial low-trust levels that engagement in sharing activities is a good and safe idea.

In addition, researchers should investigate the issue of trust-loss on peer-to-peer platforms that may be caused by negative and bad experiences on the platform. Identifying a recovery strategy on how to deal with trust-rebuilding will allow platforms to establish a proactive approach to maintaining peers on their platform and winning back their peers' trust. Having concrete, actionable recovery strategies in place, may make it easier for platforms to deal with incidents that have the potential for causing trust-loss.

Lastly, research should also focus on exploring possible solutions on how to handle trust paradoxes that may have negative effects on other variables on the platform (i.e., privacy concerns vs. greater identity verification, greater transparency vs. discrimination). This may bring valuable insights for platform managers on how to design for better trust-building without unexpected negative implications and may help to establish steady trust levels on peer-to-peer platforms.