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Going back to its roots: can hospitableness provide hotels competitive advantage over the sharing economy?

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1 **Going back to its roots: Can hospitableness provide hotels competitive advantage**
2 **over the sharing economy?**

3

4 **Abstract:**

5 While the customer experience is at the heart of the hospitality industry, experience-
6 related research remains underrepresented. This gap is critical, particularly given the
7 emerging threat of the sharing economy to the hotel industry along experiential
8 factors. Using data from a survey of 630 customers who stayed at a hotel or an Airbnb,
9 the authors use structural equation modeling to compare two models with alternative
10 conceptualizations of the dynamics of experiential consumption in the
11 accommodations industry. Building on the concept of the experiencescape from the
12 branding and hospitality and tourism literatures, the model enhances Pine and
13 Gilmore's (1998) original experience economy construct by demonstrating the critical
14 role of the dimension of hospitableness in facilitating favorable experiential and
15 brand-related outcomes, particularly in the context of the hotel experience. The
16 findings have important implications for the hotel industry's strategic experience
17 design initiatives and emphasize the need to use hospitableness in order to create a
18 competitive advantage in a rapidly changing environment.

19

20 **Keywords:** Hospitableness; Experience Economy; Experiencescape; Airbnb;
21 Memorable.

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1 **1. Introduction**

2 The sharing economy has emerged recently as a significant competitor for the
3 hotel industry. While previous research suggests that lower-end hotels and hotels not
4 catering to business travelers are more likely to be substituted with accommodations
5 in the sharing economy (Zervas, Proserpio, & Byers, 2014), more recent evidence
6 shows the sharing economy to be a significant current and future competitor to the
7 hotel industry across an even broader variety of consumer markets (Trivett, 2013).
8 Given its position as the world’s largest accommodations provider in the sharing
9 economy, following a series of acquisitions, Airbnb is the undoubtedly the hotel
10 industry’s largest competitor and the focus of the present study.

11 A number of economic, social, and technological changes in society have
12 fueled the growth of the sharing economy. These changes are reflected in the
13 experiential value propositions of sharing economy providers (Dredge & Gyimóthy,
14 2015; Trivett, 2013). In the case of Airbnb, they are evidenced in the company’s
15 strategic positioning platforms: *Belong Anywhere* and *Live There*. From providing an
16 unprecedented range of differentiated accommodations—a US\$15 per night spot on
17 the couch to an \$8,000 per night mansion—to testing hotel-style packaging and
18 amenities, such as local treats, wines, and upgraded bath products in a select number
19 of highly rated listings in Sonoma, the company’s focus on enhancing the guest
20 experience lies at the very heart of its strategic plans for the future (Carr, 2014). Thus,
21 while regulating the sharing economy is likely to level the playing field to a certain
22 extent, the hotel industry must look to contend with the underlying experiential
23 drivers of the popularity and growth of the sharing economy. The fundamental
24 alteration of customers’ overall travel experiences instigated by the emergence of the
25 sharing economy (Guttentag, 2015) warrants an exploration into the evolving nature

1 and dynamics of the accommodations industry, which in the present study is defined
2 as the hotel industry and accommodations service providers in the sharing economy.

3 There is sufficient evidence in the academic literature to suggest that
4 experience is at the heart of the hospitality and tourism industry (Hwang & Seo,
5 2016). Despite this recognition, experience-related research remains underrepresented
6 in the hospitality and tourism literature (Ritchie, Tung, & Ritchie, 2011). Moreover, a
7 large portion of studies in the domain of customer experience management (CEM) in
8 the hospitality industry remains conceptual. The uniquely experiential nature of
9 hospitality and tourism services calls for systematic, theory-driven research and more
10 sophisticated models of experiential consumption (Hwang & Seo, 2016; Walls,
11 Okumus, Raymond, & Kwun, 2011). Thus, in view of these two trends—that is, the
12 sharing economy’s challenge to the hotel industry along experiential factors and the
13 scope for more experience-related research in the literature—the present study
14 examines the role of *hospitableness* in facilitating memorable experiences and
15 customers’ loyalty towards brands in the accommodations industry. The recognition
16 of the importance of hospitableness has resulted in research that identifies its various
17 dimensions. However, an understanding of its impacts on the dynamics of experiential
18 consumption in the accommodations industry is limited, particularly in the context of
19 the sharing economy. Moreover, while “creating memorable experiences is the
20 essence and raison d’etre of the hospitality industry” (Pizam, 2010), existing research
21 into hospitality and tourism experiences has ignored the role of the brand in
22 facilitating memorable experiences, and has also ignored subsequent brand-related
23 outcomes (Hwang & Seo, 2016). In this regard, the present study leverages the
24 extensive literature in the branding domain to submit the following proposition: given
25 that brand loyalty stems from repeated brand consumption experiences, firms can gain

1 more control over brand loyalty by creating *experiencescapes* (Mossberg, 2007;
2 O'Dell, 2005) that house cognitively and emotionally stimulating experiences for
3 customers (Ponsonby-McCabe & Boyle, 2006). The authors examine the role and
4 contribution of hospitableness to the experiencescape in the accommodations industry
5 and in facilitating favorable experiential and brand-related outcomes. In so doing, the
6 authors seek to achieve two objectives:

- 7 1. Enhance Pine and Gilmore's (1998) seminal experience economy construct in
8 the context of the accommodations industry i.e. to develop the concept of
9 experiencescape in the accommodations industry to include the dimension of
10 hospitableness.
- 11 2. Examine the ability of the enhanced experiencescape that includes the
12 dimension of hospitableness to produce emotional and memorable
13 consumption experiences and subsequent brand loyalty outcomes.

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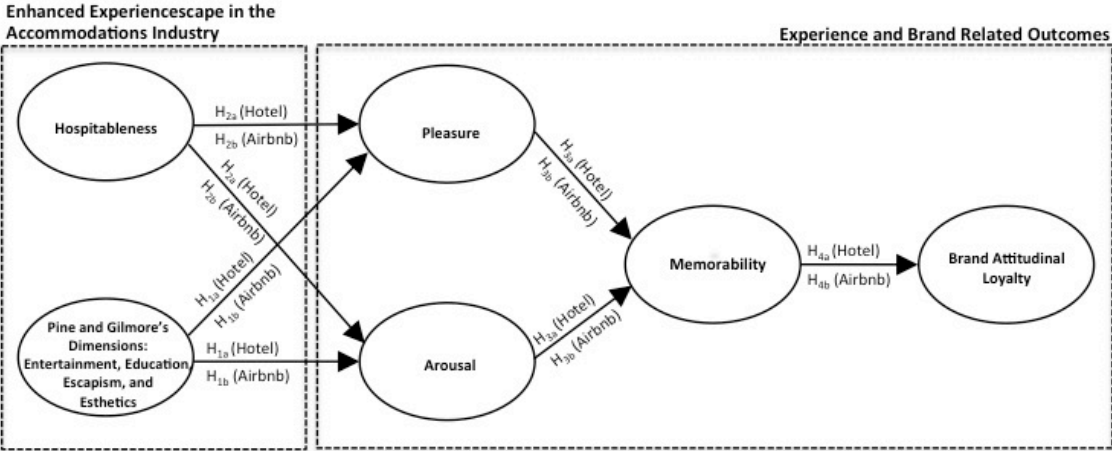
15 **2. Literature review**

16 *2.1. Experiential research in hospitality and tourism*

17 The concept of the experience economy, pioneered by Pine and Gilmore,
18 posits that as services become increasingly commoditized, companies must look to
19 differentiate their offerings by focusing on the design and delivery of experiences
20 (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). The concept of the experience economy has particular
21 relevance for the hotel industry, in which “almost any service can be leveraged to
22 stage a more compelling experience” (Gilmore & Pine, 2002, p. 88). While this would
23 suggest a higher output of academic research on experiences, there has been no
24 substantial increase in experience-related papers despite growth in the total number of
25 articles published by each major journal in hospitality and tourism (Ritchie et al.,

1 2011).

2 To address the dearth of conceptual frameworks for CEM in hospitality and
 3 tourism research, particularly given the emerging threat of the sharing economy, we
 4 proffer the model of experiential consumption in the accommodations industry
 5 (Figure 1). The model is based on the literature pertaining to consumption experiences
 6 in both the branding and hospitality and tourism domains. It is built on the
 7 understanding that the consumption experience, a phenomenon that involves the
 8 consumer’s subjective evaluation of the cognitive, affective, and relational interaction
 9 with the item consumed, is the ultimate point of brand differentiation in today’s
 10 overcrowded marketplace (Morrison & Crane, 2007; Ponsonby-McCabe & Boyle,
 11 2006; Zomerdijk & Voss, 2010). In line with the objectives of the present study, the
 12 model enhances the concept of the experience economy in the accommodations
 13 industry, and, in so doing, examines the role of hospitableness in the evolving
 14 dynamics of experiential consumption in the accommodations industry. In the
 15 following sections, we present the literature from the domains of branding and
 16 hospitality and tourism that supports the model of experiential consumption and its
 17 various hypotheses.



18
19

Fig. 1. Model of experiential consumption in the accommodations industry

1 2.2. *Dimensions of the customer experience*

2 In their seminal work on the nature of the consumption experience, Pine and
3 Gilmore (1998) identified four dimensions—entertainment, education, escapism, and
4 esthetics—differentiated at two levels: (1) the degree of customer involvement
5 (passive vs. active participation) and (2) the degree to which the customer connects or
6 engages with the event or performance (absorption vs. immersion) (Hosany &
7 Witham, 2010). These four dimensions have been extensively researched in
8 hospitality and tourism, with applications in the bed-and-breakfast sector (Oh, Fiore,
9 & Jeung, 2007), cruise industry (Hosany & Witham, 2010), wine tourism (Quadri-
10 Felitti & Fiore, 2016), and golf tourism (Hwang & Lyu, 2015), among others. In a
11 recent study, Mody, Suess, and Lehto (2017) added four more dimensions to the
12 experience economy construct in the context of the accommodations industry.
13 However, existing research has ignored the fact that in the hospitality and tourism
14 industry, “the human component of the product [is identified] as the most essential
15 ingredient for a positive consumption experience. Especially for those serviceful
16 products that are generally labeled with the umbrella term of hospitality, the
17 hospitableness element of the human component is what makes the product special.”
18 (Tasci & Semrad, 2016, p. 30). Thus, in the context of the accommodations industry,
19 the authors argue for the addition of the concept of hospitableness to the original four-
20 dimensional structure of the experience economy.

21

22 2.2.1. *Hospitableness and the customer experience*

23 While an essential component of the hospitality industry, the concept of
24 hospitableness has only recently gained the attention of academic researchers. One of
25 the first to delve into the concept, Telfer (2000) differentiated between hospitality as

1 the provision of food, drink, and accommodation to visitors, and hospitableness as an
2 orientation possessed by hospitable people. The distinction is important, for it
3 highlights that hospitableness can exist without the provision of hospitality (as in the
4 case of a receptionist welcoming and dealing with visitors in a hospitable manner);
5 however, for true or genuine hospitality to be delivered, hospitableness is essential
6 (Brotherton, 1999). O'Connor (2005) makes a similar assertion, and further
7 differentiates between service-orientation and hospitableness: while a service-
8 orientation requires skillfulness, attentiveness, and experience, all of which can be
9 developed over time, for genuine hospitality to be delivered, employees must possess
10 and deliver high levels of natural hospitableness. In this regard, true hospitableness
11 comprises the overarching layer of hospitality and surrounds the inner layers that
12 comprise the sustenance needs of food, drink, and shelter, the entertainment needs of
13 socializing, learning, and self-actualization, and the need for high quality service
14 (Tasci & Semrad, 2016: see Fig. 1., p. 32).

15 Thus, in the context of modern commercial hospitality, which still requires
16 highly interactive and dynamic face-to-face encounters between consumers and
17 providers, hospitableness can serve as a brand differentiator by creating inimitable
18 superior value and positively impacting long-term competitive performance and brand
19 loyalty (Hemmington, 2007; Lashley, 2008; Ponsonby-McCabe & Boyle, 2006; Tasci
20 & Semrad, 2016). This recognition has motivated a line of recent research that
21 measures concept of hospitableness and identifies its various dimensions (Pijls,
22 Groen, Galetzka, & Pruyn, 2017). In their seminal work, Ariffin and colleagues
23 (Ariffin, 2013; Ariffin & Maghzi, 2012; Ariffin, Maghzi, Aziz, & Ariffin, 2011)
24 identified three dimensions of hotel hospitality: *personalization*, *comfort*, and *warm*
25 *welcoming*. Expanding on this research in different consumption contexts, Tasci and

1 Semrad (2016) developed a Hospitableness Scale comprising the dimensions of
2 *heartwarming*, *heart-assuring*, and *heart-soothing*. In general, these scales capture the
3 extent to which hosts' hospitable behavior is motivated by and manifests in a genuine
4 desire to please and care for others (Lashley, 2008; Telfer, 2000) and the extent to
5 which hosts' understand and cater to guests' needs "to feel welcome as an individual,
6 together with the need to feel respected and valued; the need to feel that the welcome
7 and service by the host(s) is genuine and heartfelt" (Lashley, 2008, p. 82).

8 While existing research has provided useful measures of the concept and
9 dimensions of hospitableness, its role in facilitating memorable experiences and
10 customers' loyalty towards brands in the hospitality industry has not been explored.
11 The "paradigm shift from the utilitarian view to experiential view of consumption in
12 experience economies [has rendered] hospitableness as a crucial dimension in the
13 creation of memorable experiences" (Tasci & Semrad, 2016, p. 31). According to
14 Lashley (2008), staff performance and the qualities of hospitableness are the key
15 sources to generating emotions that elicit customer satisfaction and long-term
16 customer loyalty. Thus, in the context of hospitality and tourism, not only does the
17 literature makes a persuasive argument to add hospitableness to the experiencescape
18 in the accommodations industry, but also to examine its contribution to the outcomes
19 of brand consumption experiences. Our inclusion of hospitableness is timely given the
20 sharing economy's challenge to the hotel industry along experiential lines, and,
21 specifically, given Airbnb's efforts and strategic plans to enhance the guest
22 experience through hospitality (Carr, 2014; "Hosting Standards," n.d.).

23

24 2.3. *Experiencescapes in the accommodations industry*

25 In the present study, the authors facilitate the inclusion of hospitableness to the

1 consumption experience by adopting a marketing approach to the tourist experience
2 and leveraging the extensive literature in the branding domain. We propose that Pine
3 and Gilmore’s (1994) original experience economy construct—including the four
4 dimensions of entertainment, esthetics, education, and escapism—and the added
5 dimension of hospitableness comprise brand environments called *experiencescapes*:
6 experiential brand consumption spaces that house cognitively and emotionally
7 stimulating experiences for customers. From a strategic marketing perspective, the
8 objective of a brand is to facilitate brand loyalty through memorable brand
9 consumption experiences (Ding & Tseng, 2015; Morrison & Crane, 2007; Ponsonby-
10 McCabe & Boyle, 2006; Voss, Roth, & Chase, 2008; Zomerdijk & Voss, 2010). This
11 recognition motivates our use of the concept of *experiencescape* in the present context
12 of the accommodations industry.

13 The concept of *experiencescape* is based on a marketing perspective which
14 recognizes that “experiences are highly personal, subjectively perceived, intangible,
15 ever fleeting and continuously on-going” (O’Dell, 2005, p. 15). It has an obvious
16 parallel to the concept of *servicescape* and represents the arena in which experiences
17 are staged and consumed (Mossberg, 2007). *Experiencescapes*, which represent a
18 blend of many elements (both physical and imagined), “are [thus] spaces of pleasure,
19 enjoyment and entertainment, as well as the meeting grounds in which diverse groups
20 move about and come in contact with one another” (O’Dell, 2005, p. 16). Their study
21 allows us to come to terms with the cognitive, social, and cultural processes that work
22 to define and frame them (O’Dell, 2005). Moreover, the *experiencescape* is
23 particularly important for its strategic role in effecting favorable customer outcomes,
24 which in the present study, comprise the experiential outcomes of emotions and
25 memorability, and the brand-related outcome of attitudinal loyalty.

1 2.4. *Experiencescapes and emotions*

2 The literature on experience in the fields of branding and hospitality and
3 tourism attests to the ability of a strategically designed brand experience i.e.
4 experiencescape to effect favorable emotional responses in customers. The
5 experiencescape thus serves as the canvas for the consumption experience; the various
6 dimensions that comprise the experiencescape serve as the cognitive cues from which
7 consumers derive “some feeling for the value of the brandscape experience”
8 (Ponsonby-McCabe & Boyle, 2006, p. 183). Emotions then serve as mediators
9 between experiential stimuli and subsequent customer responses (Hwang & Seo,
10 2016). In their study of four brands in the foodservice industry, Ding and Tseng
11 (2015) found that the positive hedonic emotions of pleasure and arousal play a
12 powerful mediation role in the relationships between the various dimensions of the
13 brand experiencescape and brand loyalty. Morrison and Crane (2007) also
14 emphasized the need for marketers to build strong service brands by creating and
15 managing emotional brand consumption experiences. A key characteristic of
16 experience-centric services such as hospitality “is that they encourage customer
17 loyalty by creating emotional connections through engaging, compelling, and
18 consistent contexts” (Zomerdijk & Voss, 2010, p. 67). Interestingly, Zomerdijk and
19 Voss (2010) also identified the role of service employees in engaging customers
20 through behaviors that demonstrate genuine and natural hospitableness. Thus, the
21 concept of hospitableness also has theoretical support in the literature pertaining to
22 branding and service and experience design. Given that “consumers seek positive
23 hedonic emotions in the consumption process and marketers induce positive hedonic
24 emotions by experiential marketing” (Ding & Tseng, 2015, p. 998), the present study
25 examines the influence of the experiencescape in the accommodations industry on the

1 positive emotions of pleasure and arousal.

2

3 *2.4.1. Pine and Gilmore's dimensions and emotions*

4 The relationships between Pine and Gilmore's (1998) four dimensions of
5 entertainment, esthetics, education, and escapism and the emotions of pleasure and
6 arousal have support in the hospitality and tourism literature (Hosany & Witham,
7 2010; Kastenholz, Carneiro, Marques, & Loureiro, 2018; Oh et al., 2007). For
8 example, in a study of rural B&B's in Portugal, Loureiro (2014) found the four
9 dimensions had a significant and positive impact on pleasant arousal, a finding that
10 has support in non-tourism domains (e.g. Bhate & Hannam, 2014; Jeong, Fiore,
11 Niehm, & Lorenz, 2009).

12 Thus, in the context of in the context of customers' accommodations—i.e.
13 hotel and Airbnb—experiences, we hypothesize:

14

15 *H_{1a}*: The four dimensions of the experience economy construct—
16 entertainment, esthetics, education, and escapism—positively influence
17 customers' feelings of pleasure and arousal in the context of the hotel
18 experience.

19 *H_{1b}*: The four dimensions of the experience economy construct—
20 entertainment, esthetics, education, and escapism—positively influence
21 customers' feelings of pleasure and arousal in the context of the Airbnb
22 experience.

23

24 *2.4.2. Hospitableness and emotions*

25 In addition to the relationship between the original dimensions of the

1 experience economy construct and emotions, the literature has also proposed the
2 critical role of hospitableness in eliciting desirable positive emotional responses
3 (Ariffin, 2013; Ariffin & Maghzi, 2012; Ariffin et al., 2011; Ariffin, Nameghi, &
4 Zakaria, 2013; Hemmington, 2007; Lashley, 2008; Lugosi, 2008; Tasci & Semrad,
5 2016). Despite this, there is no empirical research that has tested these relationships.
6 Lashley et al.'s (2005) study into the emotions of hospitality through special meal
7 occasions, and Teng and Chang's (2013) examination of customer value in restaurant
8 consumption come closest. However, while Lashley et al.'s (2005) study was
9 qualitative, and heavily context-dependent (special meal occasions), Teng and Chang
10 (2013) examined the moderating effect of employee hospitality on customer's
11 affective responses (arousal). Similarly, Omar and Ariffin (2016) found that
12 hospitableness mediates the relationship between surprise and customer delight,
13 alluding to its potential to elicit positive customer emotions such as pleasure and
14 arousal. Thus, the testing of the following propositions, in the context of customers'
15 accommodations i.e. hotel and Airbnb experiences, represents a significant
16 contribution to the literature:

17

18 *H_{2a}*: Customers' favorable perceptions of the hospitableness of their hotel staff
19 positively influence their feelings of pleasure and arousal in the context of the
20 hotel experience.

21 *H_{2b}*: Customers' favorable perceptions of the hospitableness of their hosts
22 positively influence their feelings of pleasure and arousal in the context of the
23 Airbnb experience.

24

25

1 2.4.3. *Hospitableness: a comparison of hotels and Airbnb*

2 While the testing of these relationships between hospitableness and emotions
3 (H_{2a} and H_{2b}) makes a significant contribution to the literature, they must be
4 developed further given the context of the present examination: the sharing
5 economy’s challenge to the hotel industry along experiential factors. Ritzer (2007)
6 has argued that certain trends and tendencies are increasingly driving the hospitality
7 industry, and hotels in particular, towards the inhospitable. The McDonaldization of
8 the industry—the need for greater efficiency, predictability, calculability, and
9 control—enabled by non-human technologies is increasingly limiting and replacing
10 what human employees do. On the other hand, the experiential drivers fueling the
11 growth of the sharing economy include the customer’s desire for more authentic, local
12 experiences and more meaningful social interactions with locals—hosts and the
13 community (Guttentag, 2015; Trivett, 2013; Tussyadiah, 2015). Thus, it has been
14 suggested that the accommodation experience in the sharing economy can facilitate an
15 intimacy of relationships that tourists cannot receive in other, “more professional”
16 hospitality experiences (Dredge & Gyimóthy, 2015). For example, in a comparison of
17 hotels and sharing economy accommodation rentals in Portland, Oregon, Tussyadiah
18 and Zach (2015) found that reviews for sharing economy rentals put more emphasis
19 on the hospitality of the host (i.e. the experience of being welcome in someone’s
20 home), while those for hotels emphasized conveniences (e.g. airport shuttle services,
21 free parking, in-room services etc.). Thus, based on existing research and evidence
22 from broader trends impacting the hotel industry and those supporting the growth of
23 the sharing economy, the authors hypothesize:

24

25 *H_{2c}*: Customers’ favorable perceptions of the hospitableness of their hosts

1 positively influence their feelings of pleasure and arousal *to a greater degree*
2 in the context of the Airbnb experience than the extent to which customers'
3 favorable perceptions of the hospitableness of their hotel staff positively
4 influence their feelings of pleasure and arousal in the context of the hotel
5 experience.

6
7 Moreover, it has been suggested that Airbnb hosts are willing to go the extra
8 mile for customers to provide them with unique hospitality experiences, which
9 facilitate perceptibly more hospitable host-visitor relations not achievable within
10 traditional tourism systems (Dredge & Gyimóthy, 2015; Tussyadiah & Pesonen,
11 2016). Such a proposition is also embedded within discussions of the philosophy of
12 hospitableness in the domestic/private domain as compared to commercial hospitality
13 experiences (Hemmington, 2007; Lashley, 2008; Telfer, 2000). Lalicic and
14 Weismayer (2017) surmise that Airbnb hosts feel the need to be more hospitable
15 because it contributes to the perceived authenticity of the sharing economy experience
16 that their guests desire. Thus, the authors present the following hypothesis pertaining
17 to the concept of hospitableness in the accommodations experience:

18
19 *H_{2d}*: Customers' perceptions of hospitableness are *higher* for the Airbnb
20 experience than for the hotel experience.

21 22 2.5. *Emotions and memorability*

23 Pine and Gilmore (1998) suggested that the generation of favorable customer
24 emotions results in a more memorable consumption experience. Memorability thus
25 represents a distinct economic value proposition to the experience-seeking customer,

1 a finding that has been established in the hospitality and tourism literature. For
2 example, in the context of rural tourism experiences, Loureiro (2014) found that
3 pleasant arousal influenced the creation of positive memories, which subsequently
4 resulted in favorable behavioral intentions.

5 The relationship between emotions and memorability is also well established
6 in the marketing and branding literature. For example, Iglesias et al. (2011) found that
7 while functional benefits are indispensable to avoid customer dissatisfaction, in
8 today's competitive environment, brands must aspire "to differentiate and deliver a
9 brilliant brand experience, as emotions elicited during consumption experiences seem
10 to have a strong impact on consumers' memory" (p. 572). This relationship between
11 emotions and memory has a foundation in the neuroscience, a field that has informed
12 modern advertising practice. Using brain-imaging and experimental techniques,
13 Ambler et al. (2000) found that the parts of the brain that are responsible for the
14 registration and processing of emotional experiences are also involved in the
15 pathways to and from long-term memory; thus, emotional stimuli are more likely to
16 be remembered and lead to subsequent choice of the brands involved. Specifically,
17 research in psychology has emphasized that events that are appraised as achieving
18 their concerns—or in the present context, consumption experiences that effectively
19 leverage the various dimensions of the experiencescape in the accommodations
20 industry—lead to the positive emotions of pleasure and enjoyment, which
21 subsequently effect memory and learning (Bower, 1992). Thus, in the context of these
22 and other studies in the branding and hospitality and tourism domains (Hanefors &
23 Mossberg, 2003; Hosany & Gilbert, 2010; Voss et al., 2008), the authors hypothesize:

24 *H_{3a}*: Pleasure and arousal positively influence the memorability of the hotel
25 experience.

1 *H_{3b}*: Pleasure and arousal positively influence the memorability of the Airbnb
2 experience.

3

4 2.6. *Memorability and brand loyalty*

5 From a brand perspective, memorable consumption experiences emanating
6 from favorable emotional responses should subsequently translate into brand loyalty,
7 a hypothesis that has import in the branding literature (Pullman & Gross, 2004). For
8 example, in their study of several experience-based business, including leisure or
9 tourism experiences, Voss et al. (2008) found that consistent with the experiencescape
10 paradigm, businesses that evoked customer emotions which engaged customers in
11 memorable ways created significant customer value that subsequently resulted in
12 strong, positive word-of-mouth and repeat visits. That brand choice, like any human
13 decision, is driven by what we have in our heads i.e. our memory, is a finding
14 supported by neuroscience (Ambler et al., 2000). While the link between
15 memorability and *attitudinal loyalty*, conceptualized as behavioral intention, has been
16 established in the hospitality and tourism literature (Ali, Ryu, & Hussain, 2016;
17 Loureiro, 2014; Oh et al., 2007), much of this research has examined attitudinal
18 loyalty towards a specific destination or the experience itself. “Little attention has
19 been devoted to brand-related outcomes in hospitality and tourism research” (Hwang
20 & Seo, 2016, p. 2232). Given that the objective of a brand is to facilitate brand loyalty
21 through memorable brand consumption experiences, the authors propose the
22 following hypotheses:

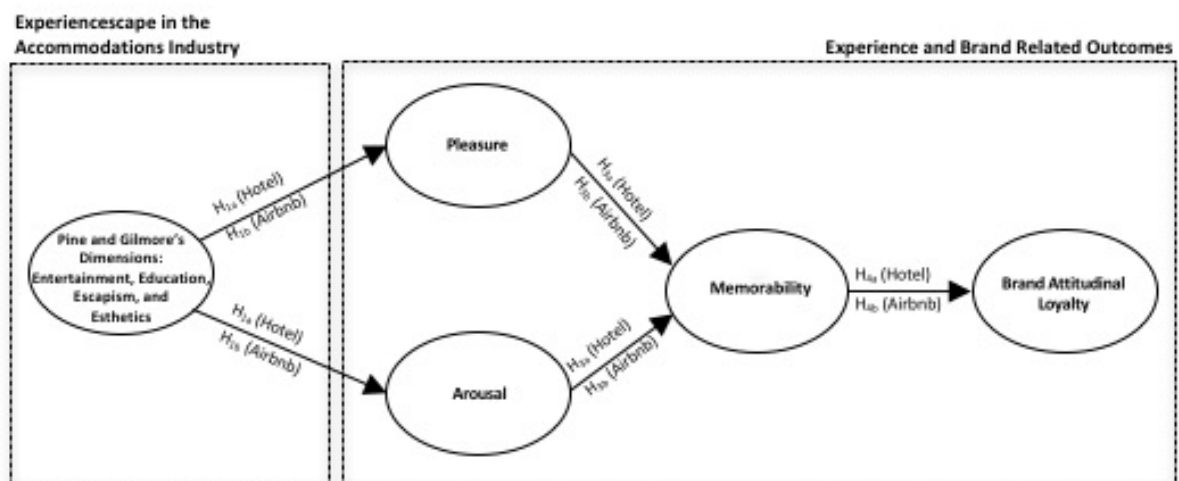
23

24 *H_{4a}*: Higher memorability of the hotel experience positively influences
25 customers’ attitudinal loyalty towards the hotel brand.

1 H_{4b} : Higher memorability of the Airbnb experience positively influences
2 customers' attitudinal loyalty towards the Airbnb brand.

3

4 Since the objective of the present study is to determine whether the concept of
5 hospitableness makes a valuable addition to the experiencescape in the
6 accommodations industry, we test two alternative models. In model 1 (Figure 1)
7 presented earlier, and as explained above, we hypothesize that hospitableness is a
8 dimension that comprises an enhanced experiencescape in the accommodations
9 industry, whereby it contributes to the positive customer emotions of pleasure and
10 arousal. In model 2, we remove hospitableness as an antecedent of pleasure and
11 arousal, and thus exclude the relationships suggested by hypotheses 2a, 2b, 2c, and 2d
12 in model 2 (Figure 2). Comparing the results of these two models allows us to more
13 conclusively establish whether hospitableness is indeed a valuable *addition* to existing
14 experiencescape in the accommodations industry, which comprises Pine and
15 Gilmore's four dimensions.



16

17 **Fig. 2.** Alternative model of experiential consumption in the accommodations
18 industry: without hospitableness (Model 2)

19

1 **3. Methodology**

2 *3.1. Data collection*

3 The sample for the study was drawn from an extensive panel provided by the
4 online research company Qualtrics. Since the purpose of the study was to compare
5 and contrast customers' experiences of hotels and Airbnb, the authors separately
6 surveyed individuals who had stayed at least one night at a hotel or an Airbnb for the
7 purpose of leisure in the last three months, a timeframe selected to elicit more recent
8 memories and thus reduce errors and biases of recall (Kahneman, Krueger, Schkade,
9 Schwarz, & Stone, 2004). Following Hosany and Gilbert's (2010) use of the retrieval
10 hypothesis, respondents were instructed to recall their most recent hotel or Airbnb
11 experience and were provided cues to remember their experience as vividly as
12 possible. A total of 630 usable responses were collected: 315 for the hotel sample and
13 315 for the Airbnb sample. The sample represents forty-five of the fifty states in the
14 U.S.

15

16 *3.2. Survey development*

17 The items used to operationalize the various constructs in the model in Figure
18 1 were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree and 7 = Strongly
19 Agree). The items pertaining to the original dimensions of the experience economy
20 construct—entertainment, esthetics, education, and escapism—were adapted from Oh
21 et al. (2007). Hospitableness was measured as the manifestation of the nature of the
22 host-guest interaction during the hotel/Airbnb experience (Hemmington, 2007;
23 Lashley, 2008), adapting items from studies that have measured the construct.
24 Specifically, overlapping items from Tasci and Semrad's (2016) *heartwarming*
25 dimension and Ariffin's (2013) *personalization* and *warm welcoming* dimensions

1 were adapted for the present examination; these studies found the items comprising
2 these dimensions to be of highest importance to customers across different
3 consumption contexts, including accommodation.

4 Measures of pleasure and arousal were adapted from the studies of Hosany
5 and Gilbert (2010) and Oh et al. (2007) respectively. The memorability of the
6 accommodation experience was measured using items adapted from Oh et al. (2007)
7 and Tung and Ritchie (2011). Attitudinal loyalty, defined as “a deeply held
8 psychological commitment to repurchase a product or repatronize a service in the
9 future” (Oliver, 2010, p. 23), was measured using items from previous studies (Li &
10 Petrick, 2008; Mody, Day, Sydnor, Jaffe, & Lehto, 2014). However, given that the
11 present study examines customers’ attitudinal loyalty towards the brand, the measures
12 were adapted to capture this critical brand-related outcome. Appendix A indicates the
13 items used to measure the various constructs in the model.

14

15 3.3. *Analysis*

16 As the first step in analyzing the data, descriptive statistics and distributions
17 were assessed. Second, t-tests were conducted to compare the mean scores on the
18 various constructs in the model between hotels and Airbnb in order to assess their
19 relative performances on these dimensions, including hospitableness, thereby testing
20 hypothesis 2d for model 1. Third, the authors conducted a confirmatory factor
21 analysis (CFA) on the constructs used in models 1 and 2, using multiple-group
22 analysis. While providing indications of fit for an overall model of the
23 accommodation experience, multiple-group analysis provides separate estimates for
24 the hotel and Airbnb samples, enabling the authors to test the various hypotheses of
25 the present study. Given the study’s objective—to examine the role and contribution

1 of hospitableness to the experiencescape in the accommodations industry and to the
2 outcomes of brand consumption experiences—the four original dimensions of the
3 experience economy construct were modeled as a second order construct, which is
4 consistent with previous studies (Ali et al., 2016; Knobloch, Robertson, & Aitken,
5 2016; Loureiro, 2014). Thus, methodologically, the dimension of hospitableness
6 serves as a latent covariate to Pine and Gilmore’s original experience economy
7 construct in predicting experiential and brand-related outcomes in the
8 accommodations industry. CFA was also used to test for common method bias and
9 convergent and discriminant validity.

10 This was followed by the fourth stage of analysis, in which the authors
11 conducted multiple-group structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the two
12 alternative models in Figures 1 and 2, with and without hospitableness, and thus the
13 study’s various hypotheses. SEM allowed the authors to understand the dynamics of
14 customers’ experiential involvement with hotels and sharing economy providers. In
15 the fifth and final stage of analysis, the authors used the pairwise parameter
16 comparison test for hypothesis 2c for model 1. Prior to this test, the authors tested for
17 the measurement invariance of the multiple-group model 1.

18

19 **4. Results**

20 The profile of the respondents in the hotel and Airbnb samples is presented in
21 Table 1. Using a series of chi-square tests, the authors found that the hotel and Airbnb
22 samples differed significantly ($p < .001$) in terms of respondents’ age, education,
23 household status, and income levels. Table 1 indicates that respondents in the Airbnb
24 sample were younger, better educated, more likely to be married with children, and to
25 have higher incomes than those in the hotel sample.

1 **Table 1**
 2 Respondent profile.
 3

Demographic Category	<u>Hotel Sample</u>		<u>Airbnb Sample</u>		Chi-Square Value (df)
	Sample Size (n = 315)	%	Sample Size (n = 315)	%	
<i>Age</i>					71.059 ^a (4)
18-25	13	4.1	28	8.9	
26-34	66	21.0	132	41.9	
35-54	105	33.3	110	34.9	
55-64	69	21.9	29	9.2	
65 or over	62	19.7	16	5.1	
<i>Gender</i>					.229 (1)
Male	160	50.8	154	48.9	
Female	155	49.2	161	51.1	
<i>Education</i>					28.044 ^a (4)
Grade school	2	.6	0	0	
High school	25	7.9	7	2.2	
Some college	74	23.5	42	13.3	
College	134	42.5	152	48.3	
Graduate school	80	25.4	114	36.2	
<i>Household Status</i>					18.081 ^a (6)
Single	54	17.1	56	17.8	
Married w/o children	55	17.5	53	16.8	
Married with children	149	47.3	175	55.6	
Divorced/Separated/Widowed	41	13.0	13	4.1	
Living with partner	16	5.1	18	5.7	
<i>Income</i>					25.510 ^a (6)
Less than \$15,000	6	1.9	9	2.9	
\$15,000-\$29,999	23	7.3	10	3.2	
\$30,000-\$44,999	45	14.3	22	7	
\$45,000-\$59,999	47	14.9	31	9.8	
\$60,000-\$74,999	43	13.7	52	16.5	
\$75,000-\$90,000	56	17.8	89	28.3	
More than \$90,000	95	30.2	102	32.4	

4 ^asignificant at p < .001
 5

6 Appendix A presents the summary statistics for the items used to measure the
 7 various constructs of the model for both the hotel and Airbnb samples. One
 8 particularly noteworthy finding is that the means for all items were higher for the
 9 Airbnb sample than for the hotel sample.

1 4.1. Comparing construct means: hotels vs. Airbnb

2 The authors used t-tests to compare the mean scores on the various constructs
 3 between the hotel and Airbnb samples. The mean scores were calculated as the
 4 average score of the items used to measure each construct. The results of this
 5 comparison are presented in Table 2. Consistent with the means presented in
 6 Appendix A, respondents in the Airbnb sample reported significantly higher mean
 7 scores on all constructs in the model, *except* the dimensions of hospitableness and
 8 attitudinal loyalty. Thus, while Airbnb appears to be facilitating consumption
 9 experiences that leverage the four original dimensions of the experience economy
 10 construct to a greater degree, hotels appear to be doing as well as Airbnb in terms of
 11 providing hospitable experiences in which guests perceive a warm welcome, respect,
 12 and a kind hotel staff that displays a genuine desire to please. Thus, hypothesis 2d is
 13 not supported by the findings of the present study.

14
 15
 16
 17

Table 2
 Performance on experience economy dimensions: hotels vs. Airbnb.

Experience Economy Dimensions	Mean: Hotel Sample	Mean: Airbnb Sample	Difference (Hotel-Airbnb)	t
Entertainment	5.59	5.86	-0.27	3.31***
Education	4.65	5.59	-0.94	9.12***
Escapism	4.86	5.45	-0.59	5.27***
Esthetics	5.39	5.60	-0.21	2.24*
Hospitableness	5.95	6.03	-0.08	1.00
Pleasure	5.54	5.80	-0.26	3.03**
Arousal	5.50	5.88	-0.38	4.46***
Memorability	5.24	5.82	-0.58	6.53***
Attitudinal Brand Loyalty	6.02	6.18	-0.16	1.94

18 *** p < .001, ** p < .01, * p < .05

19

20 4.2. Common method bias

21 As the first step in CFA, the authors tested for common method bias using one

1 of the latent variable approaches outlined in Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, and
2 Podsakoff (2003). The authors created a second CFA model by adding a single
3 unmeasured first-order factor (common factor) with all of the measures as indicators
4 to the researcher's theoretical model, and then compared the standardized regression
5 weights for all loadings across the two models. The differences in regression weights
6 between the two models ranged from .057 to .093; none of these differences were
7 large enough to indicate common method bias.

8

9 *4.3. CFA results*

10 The results of the CFA for models 1 and 2 indicated an acceptable fit of the
11 models to the data (model 1 fit: $\chi^2/DF = 3.134$; CFI = .913; TLI = .900; RMSEA =
12 .058; SRMR = .052; model 2 fit: $\chi^2/df = 3.303$, CFI = .920, TLI = .907, RMSEA =
13 .061; SRMR = .049). CFA statistics for the constructs used in models 1 and 2 are
14 presented in Table 3. The scales indicated high reliability—Cronbach's α ranged from
15 .83 to .93 across the hotel and Airbnb samples, well above Nunnally and Bernstein's
16 (1994) recommended threshold of .70. All items loaded on to their respective
17 constructs with high and significant ($p < .001$) standardized factor loadings that
18 ranged from .773 to .981 for the hotel sample and from .745 to .983 for the Airbnb
19 sample (Table 3), indicating convergent validity. The AVEs for the constructs ranged
20 from .773 to .923 for the hotel sample and from .640 to .908 for the Airbnb sample,
21 all higher than .50, further indicating convergent validity, while the square root of the
22 AVE for each construct was greater than inter-construct correlations, across both
23 samples, demonstrating discriminant validity (Appendix B).

1 **Table 3**
 2 CFA results.
 3

Constructs and Measurement Items*	<u>Hotel Sample</u>			<u>Airbnb Sample</u>		
	Standardized Factor Loading**	AVE	Cronbach's α	Standardized Factor Loading**	AVE	Cronbach's α
Second Order Loadings						
<i>Pine and Gilmore's Dimensions</i>		.811			.858	
Entertainment	.914			.904		
Education	.773			.942		
Escapism	.922			.872		
Esthetics	.981			.983		
First Order Loadings						
<i>Entertainment</i>			.90			.86
ENT_1	.869			.795		
ENT_2	.882			.845		
ENT_3	.833			.820		
<i>Education</i>			.92			.85
EDU_1	.899			.806		
EDU_2	.873			.857		
EDU_3	.895			.745		
<i>Escapism</i>			.87			.86
ESC_1	.843			.825		
ESC_2	.783			.843		
ESC_3	.841			.801		
<i>Esthetics</i>			.89			.87
EST_1	.791			.814		

EST_2	.917			.842		
EST_3	.854			.833		
<i>Hospitableness</i>		.773	.93		.640	.88
HOS_1	.886			.845		
HOS_2	.885			.824		
HOS_3	.866			.772		
HOS_4	.880			.756		
<i>Pleasure</i>		.843	.91		.843	.84
PLEA_1	.918			.946		
PLEA_2	.876			.943		
PLEA_3	.959			.863		
<i>Arousal</i>		.923	.91		.854	.84
ARO_1	.949			.927		
ARO_2	.972			.888		
ARO_3	.961			.956		
<i>Memorability</i>		.840	.85		.908	.83
MEM_1	.936			.847		
MEM_2	.855			.962		
MEM_3	.956			.952		
<i>Attitudinal Brand Loyalty</i>		.812	.93		.771	.91
ATT_1	.929			.827		
ATT_2	.852			.885		
ATT_3	.921			.919		

1 *See Appendix A for items associated with the labels presented in this table

2 **All loadings significant at $p < .001$

3

1 From a multivariate perspective, Mardia's normalized estimate of multivariate
2 kurtosis was found to be 350.946 and 333.109 for the hotel and Airbnb samples
3 respectively, indicating significant positive kurtosis and that the data are multivariate
4 nonnormal. However, an examination of the univariate skewness [(hotel sample:
5 between -1.966 and -.280); (Airbnb sample: between -2.120 and -0.563)] and kurtosis
6 [(hotel sample: between -.938 and 4.243); (Airbnb sample: between -.057 and 6.413)]
7 indices for the variables in the overall model indicated that the data were moderately
8 non-normal. While the maximum likelihood estimation technique has been shown to
9 be fairly robust to these conditions, the authors used the bootstrapping procedure with
10 maximum likelihood estimation to address the issue of nonnormality (Bryne, 2010).

11

12 *4.4. SEM results: Model 1 (with hospitableness)*

13 The structural model indicated an acceptable fit to the data ($\chi^2/df = 3.364$;
14 CFI = .901; TLI = .899; RMSEA = .061; SRMR = .056). Given the use of the
15 bootstrapping procedure to address nonnormality in the data, the authors used the
16 bias-corrected percentile bootstrap intervals to test the significance of the estimates
17 for the various structural relationships in the model; this procedure is considered to
18 yield the most accurate confidence intervals to test for parameter significance (Bryne,
19 2010). The parameter estimates, presented in Table 4, indicated that all the structural
20 relationships in the model were significant for the hotel sample ($p < .001$), thus
21 confirming hypothesis 1a, 2a, 3a, and 4a in the context of model 1. However, in the
22 case of the Airbnb sample, the relationships between hospitableness and the emotions
23 of pleasure and arousal, and the subsequent relationships between these emotions and
24 memorability were not significant. Thus, while hypotheses 1b and 4b were confirmed,
25 hypothesis 2b and 3b were not supported in the context of model 1.

1 **Table 4**
 2 Results of structural equation modeling.
 3

Path	Hotel Sample		Airbnb Sample	
	Estimate ^a	p-value	Estimate ^a	p-value
Pine and Gilmore's Dimensions → Pleasure (H _{1a/1b})	.758	.023	.922	.011
Pine and Gilmore's Dimensions → Arousal (H _{1a/1b})	1.029	.016	.727	.021
Hospitableness → Pleasure (H _{2a/2b})	.322	.003	.107	.555
Hospitableness → Arousal (H _{2a/2b})	.250	.009	.102	.197
Pleasure → Memorability (H _{3a/3b})	.186	.016	.092	.637
Arousal → Memorability (H _{3a/3b})	.772	.010	.490	.323
Memorability → Brand Attitudinal Loyalty (H _{4a/4b})	.649	.012	1.435	.011

4 ^aunstandardized estimates
 5

6 To test for hypothesis 2c i.e. whether hospitableness elicits feelings of
 7 pleasure and arousal to a greater degree in the case of the Airbnb experience than in
 8 the case of the hotel experience, a two-step analysis was employed: an initial test for
 9 measurement invariance, followed by the pairwise parameter comparison test. While
 10 the results of the CFA indicated acceptable fit of the model to the data, establishing
 11 configural invariance, the authors found no substantial differences between the other
 12 fit indices ($\Delta CFI = .004$, $\Delta TLI = 0$, $\Delta RMSEA = 0$, and $\Delta SRMR = .007$) across the
 13 configural and metric-invariant models, establishing metric invariance and allowing
 14 for the next stage of testing for structural differences. The pairwise parameter
 15 comparison test indicated that the relationships between hospitableness and the
 16 emotions of pleasure and arousal were significantly different across the hotel and
 17 Airbnb samples. Specifically, the estimates were significantly higher for the hotel
 18 sample than for the Airbnb sample [z (difference in parameter estimates) = 2.475 and
 19 2.027 respectively]; results that are exactly the opposite of those hypothesized in H_{2c}.
 20 Thus, while hypothesis 2c was rejected, the results demonstrate the significant

1 potential of the enhanced hotel experiencescape, including the dimension of
 2 hospitableness, to elicit positive affect-laden and memorable consumption
 3 experiences that subsequent result in attitudinal brand loyalty.

4

5 *4.5. SEM results: Model 2 (without hospitableness)*

6 The structural model indicated an acceptable fit to the data ($\chi^2/df = 3.558$;
 7 CFI = .912; TLI = .900; RMSEA = .064; SRMR = .054). Given the use of the
 8 bootstrapping procedure to address nonnormality in the data, the authors used the
 9 bias-corrected percentile bootstrap intervals to test the significance of the estimates
 10 for the various structural relationships in the model; this procedure is considered to
 11 yield the most accurate confidence intervals to test for parameter significance (Bryne,
 12 2010). The parameter estimates, presented in Table 5, indicated that all the structural
 13 relationships in the model were significant for the hotel sample ($p < .001$), thus
 14 confirming hypothesis 1a, 3a, and 4a in the context of model 2. However, in the case
 15 of the Airbnb sample, as in model 1, the two relationships between the emotions of
 16 pleasure and arousal and memorability were not significant. Thus, while hypotheses
 17 1b and 4b were confirmed, hypothesis 3b was not supported in the context of model 2.

18 **Table 5**
 19 Results of structural equation modeling.
 20

Path	Hotel Sample		Airbnb Sample	
	Estimate ^a	p-value	Estimate ^a	p-value
Pine and Gilmore's Dimensions → Pleasure (H _{1a/1b})	.986	.001	1.105	.001
Pine and Gilmore's Dimensions → Arousal (H _{1a/1b})	1.120	.001	.931	.001
Pleasure → Memorability (H _{3a/3b})	.368	.012	.053	.907
Arousal → Memorability (H _{3a/3b})	.603	.004	.528	.145
Memorability → Brand Attitudinal Loyalty (H _{4a/4b})	.646	.001	1.432	.001

21 ^aunstandardized estimates

1 In addition to examining the parameter estimates of the two models with and
2 without hospitableness, we also conducted effect size testing to determine whether the
3 addition of hospitableness to model 1 contributed additional explanatory power to the
4 model. To do this, we compared the amount of variance explained (squared multiple
5 correlations) in the exogenous constructs predicted by hospitableness—pleasure and
6 arousal—using Cohen’s f^2 , a measure of effect size, between models 1 and 2. The
7 difference in squared multiple correlation statistics for these two constructs in model
8 1 vis-à-vis the alternative model without hospitableness (model 2) indicated that the
9 addition of hospitableness, as in model 1, did add explanatory power to the model in
10 explaining the two exogenous constructs, with medium and small effect sizes for
11 pleasure and arousal respectively [(Pleasure: R^2 for model 1 = .837, R^2 for model 2 =
12 .804, $f^2 = .203$, effect size = medium) (Arousal: R^2 for model 1 = .944, R^2 for model 2
13 = .922, $f^2 = .036$, effect size = small).

14 The results of these alternative models indicate that if hotels can generate
15 positive customer emotions such as pleasure and arousal—emotions that are enhanced
16 by the provision of more hospitable experiences, as suggested by the experiencescape
17 literature in both the branding and hospitality and tourism domains, they can create
18 more memorable consumption experiences that subsequently facilitate attitudinal
19 brand loyalty. On the other hand, our results suggest that Airbnb has potentially
20 different pathways to memorability and attitudinal brand loyalty than hotels. The
21 emotions → memorability pathway did not hold for Airbnb in either model 1 or 2,
22 suggesting that the Airbnb experience becomes memorable to customers though
23 different mechanisms i.e. there are alternative determinants of memorability for
24 Airbnb. Examples of such determinants may include outcomes such as well-being and
25 meaningfulness, which Mody et al. (2017) found to be significant antecedents of

1 memorability in the context of the Airbnb experience. These findings have significant
2 theoretical and practical implications for the hotel industry.

3

4 Table 6 presents a summary of the results of the study's hypotheses tests.

5

1 **Table 6**
 2 Summary of hypotheses testing.
 3

Path	Hotel Sample			Airbnb Sample		
	Label	Model 1	Model 2	Label	Model 1	Model 2
Pine and Gilmore's Dimensions → Pleasure	H _{1a}	Supported	Supported	H _{1b}	Supported	Supported
Pine and Gilmore's Dimensions → Arousal						
Hospitableness → Pleasure Hospitableness → Arousal	H _{2a}	Supported	N/A	H _{2b}	Not supported	N/A
Pleasure → Memorability Arousal → Memorability	H _{3a}	Supported	Supported	H _{3b}	Not supported	Not supported
Memorability → Brand Attitudinal Loyalty	H _{4a}	Supported	Supported	H _{4b}	Supported	Supported
<i>Comparative Hypotheses: Hotels vs. Airbnb (relevant to Model 1)</i>						
H _{2c} : Hospitableness → Pleasure and Hospitableness → Arousal is greater in Airbnb experiences than hotel experiences		Not supported				
H _{2d} : Hospitableness is greater in Airbnb experiences than hotel experiences		Not supported				

1 **5. Discussion**

2 In view of the sharing economy's threat to the hotel industry along
3 experiential factors and the scope for more experience-related research in the
4 literature, the present study sought to enhance Pine and Gilmore's (1998) concept of
5 the experience economy in the context of the accommodations industry. Given the
6 importance of the human component in enabling positive consumption experiences,
7 the authors added the concept of hospitableness to the experiencescape in the
8 accommodations industry and examined its role in effecting favorable experiential—
9 affective and memorability—outcomes, which in turn facilitate customers' loyalty
10 towards brands in the accommodations industry. Contrary to previous studies that
11 have suggested and/or demonstrated the primacy of the sharing economy in providing
12 more meaningful, authentic, and intimate host-guest interactions, the findings of this
13 study, summarized in Table 6, present significant evidence for hotel operators to
14 leverage the dimension of hospitableness, which lies at the core of providing true
15 hospitality in a commercial setting (Hemmington, 2007; Tasci & Semrad, 2016), to
16 facilitate memorable consumption experiences. In addition to their practical
17 implications for the hotel industry, the findings of the present study have important
18 theoretical implications for experience-related research in hospitality and tourism.

19

20 *5.1. Theoretical contribution*

21 First, in developing the model of experiential consumption in the
22 accommodations industry, the present study contributes to addressing the paucity of
23 systematic, theory-driven research in CEM in hospitality and tourism by suggesting a
24 conceptual framework that enables “a better understanding of the sequential and
25 enduring aspect of customer experience and thereby sustain long-term customer

1 loyalty and commitment” (Hwang and Seo, 2016, p. 2237). Relatedly, that the
2 concept of experiencescape has an obvious parallel to the concept and underlying
3 dynamics of the servicescape in the hospitality industry (Ariffin et al., 2013;
4 Spielmann, Laroche, & Borges, 2012) extends this line of research to the broader
5 realm of CEM in hospitality and tourism (Hwang & Seo, 2016).

6 Second, the study contributes to understanding the evolving nature and
7 dynamics of the accommodations industry, particularly given how little is known
8 about how customers using sharing economy accommodations evaluate their
9 experiences versus those who use traditional tourism services (Heo, 2016). Thus, it
10 makes a valuable contribution to the pursuit of a more informed, evidence-based
11 assessment of the sharing economy and the hospitality and tourism industry (Dredge
12 & Gyimóthy, 2015). Third, while existing research has provided useful measures of
13 the concept and dimensions of hospitableness, its contribution to the dynamics of
14 experiential consumption in the hospitality industry is unexplored. The present study
15 illuminates the role of hospitableness in facilitating positive affect-laden and
16 memorable experiences and customers’ loyalty towards brands in the
17 accommodations industry, specifically in the hotel context. Thus, it also adds to the
18 nascent literature on hospitableness in hospitality and tourism experiences. Finally, by
19 conceptualizing attitudinal brand loyalty as the outcome of memorable consumption
20 experiences, the study addresses the lack of attention to brand-related outcomes in
21 hospitality and tourism research (Hwang & Seo, 2016).

22

23 *5.2. Practical implications*

24 The findings of the study also have important implications for the hotel
25 industry’s strategic experience design initiatives. It highlights to hotel operators the

1 role of customers' experiences of hospitableness in facilitating brand loyalty. In
2 addition to leveraging the dimensions of entertainment, esthetics, education, and
3 escapism, hotels have more to gain than sharing economy providers by focusing on
4 the human dimension of the guest experience; aspects of welcoming, kindness,
5 respect, and a genuine desire to go above and beyond, which lie at the core of
6 providing true hospitality in a commercial setting. Interestingly, hotel industry leaders
7 have identified this as an important trend for the next few years in terms of enhancing
8 the guest experience: the need for hospitality to rediscover its roots and to empower
9 employees to be better at delivering genuine hospitality that emphasizes the basics of
10 hospitableness (Ting, 2017).

11 Consistent with the propositions in the branding literature, our findings
12 suggest that hospitableness can serve as the differentiator that elicit emotions that
13 have a strong impact on customers' memory. In a crowded marketplace, this
14 dimension can help create inimitable brand value that serves as an antecedent to the
15 consumer's differential preference for a brand (Morrison & Crane, 2007; Zomerdijk
16 & Voss, 2010). This does not mean that every brand try and emulate the Four Seasons
17 or the Ritz Carlton's of the hotel industry, companies that are known to deliver
18 memorable customer experiences based on exceptionally hospitable service. Rather,
19 brands need to create their own version of true hospitality, by adding touches that
20 facilitate hospitable encounters as a natural extension of the customer experience.

21 There are several strategies that brands can adopt to facilitate such hospitable
22 customer experiences. First, they must devise practical ways of measuring natural
23 hospitableness that subsequently inform recruitment practices (O'Connor, 2005).
24 While not an easy task, such recruitment would support the development of an
25 organizational culture that is built around the idea of *hospitableness excellence* (King,

1 1995), one that goes beyond service-orientation and service excellence (Pizam, 2012).
2 Second, brands can re-introduce frontline hospitality staff to the need to be hospitable
3 through training and management practice. As in the case of recruitment, this would
4 necessitate an emphasis on *hospitableness quality*, an idea that goes beyond service
5 quality to emphasize “hospitable hosting behavior as an extension of the natural
6 hospitable character of the hotel staff” (Ariffin, 2013, p. 176). Third, hospitality
7 businesses should design their guest experiences to include “lots of little surprises” or
8 “sparkling moments” (Hemmington, 2007, p. 753). While this requires brands to use
9 the ideas and creativity of their staff to stimulate and excite their guests over time, it
10 must go beyond formulaic giveaways; rather these surprises must be delivered in the
11 context of an organizational culture that rewards employees for creating customer
12 experiences that bear greater resemblance to the more genuine forms of hospitality
13 often experienced in the private domain (Hemmington, 2007; Lashley, 2008; Telfer,
14 2000).

15 Brands must also critically examine the role of technology in facilitating
16 hospitable guest experiences. Technology must not be implemented for the sake of
17 novelty and innovation; rather, it must add value to the guest experience by allowing
18 employees to amplify their delivery of a more genuine hospitality experience
19 (“Finding the Balance Between Humans and Technology in Hospitality,” 2017). In an
20 age of digital overload, travelers are “prioritizing a stronger connection among
21 themselves and with the people they meet” (Oates, 2016). Not only does this include
22 the locals in the destinations they visit, but also the employees responsible for
23 delivering memorable guest experiences. Consequently, brands must emphasize the
24 human connection in their marketing; from a content marketing perspective, brands
25 must find the balance between communicating the “doing things” part—experiences

1 that leverage entertainment, education, escapism, and esthetics—and the
2 hospitableness that evokes the affective and memory antecedents of loyalty (Oates,
3 2016) This requires hotel employees—genuine people and real stories—to be front
4 and center in a brand’s content marketing efforts, with technology playing a
5 supportive role to make the hotel “more human” (“Finding the Balance Between
6 Humans and Technology in Hospitality,” 2017).

7

8 **6. Limitations and future research**

9 It is important to highlight certain limitations of the present study, and identify
10 avenues for future research on this emerging and exciting phenomenon. First, in
11 operationalizing the dimension of hospitableness, the study did not measure the
12 contribution of the level of security perceived by guests, one of the basic needs of
13 Maslow’s hierarchy and historically considered the most important responsibility of
14 the host (Ariffin, 2013; Hemmington, 2007; Tasci & Semrad, 2016). This particular
15 aspect of hospitableness may be particularly relevant given the sharing economy’s
16 (Airbnb in particular) ongoing spate of safety-related incidents, which have probably
17 kept number of skeptics away from the idea of renting from strangers.

18 Second, the study did not differentiate between the different types of
19 accommodation that guests may have experienced while using Airbnb or hotels. For
20 example, an Airbnb accommodation in which the host was staying with the guest may
21 facilitate a different experience of hospitableness than when the host was not present.
22 Similarly, a guest staying at a luxury hotel may experience a different level of
23 hospitableness than one staying at a limited-service hotel. While the inherent nature of
24 hospitableness—being welcoming, kind, respectful, and genuine—is such that it,
25 theoretically, transcends such differentiation, future research that explores these

1 characteristics of the type of accommodation may offer more nuanced insights into
2 the provision of true hospitality in modern commercial settings (Ariffin & Maghzi,
3 2012). Third, future research can test alternative, structurally variable non-nested
4 models using techniques such as PLS-SEM, to assess the contribution of
5 hospitableness to these and other critical experiential and brand-related outcomes.
6 Finally, cross-cultural perspectives that incorporate cultural expectations of and
7 obligations to be hospitable (Kirillova, Gilmetdinova, & Lehto, 2014) can provide
8 useful insight into the global experiential dynamics of hospitableness and hospitality
9 in the hotel and sharing economy contexts (Ariffin et al., 2011; Hwang & Seo, 2016;
10 Lashley, 2007).

11

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51

1 **Appendix A**

2 Measurement items and summary statistics.

3

Constructs and Measurement Items*	<u>Hotel Sample</u>		<u>Airbnb Sample</u>		Adapted from
	Mean**	SD	Mean**	SD	
<i>Entertainment</i>					Oh et al. (2007)
The hotel/Airbnb experience was fun (ENT_1)	5.63	1.23	5.96	1.08	
The hotel/Airbnb was entertaining (ENT_2)	5.34	1.41	5.71	1.18	
I really enjoyed this hotel/Airbnb experience (ENT_3)	5.74	1.29	5.91	1.14	
<i>Education</i>					Oh et al. (2007)
I learned a lot through my experience (EDU_1)	4.69	1.55	5.66	1.24	
The hotel/Airbnb experience stimulated my curiosity to learn new things (EDU_2)	4.71	1.59	5.52	1.31	
Staying at the hotel/Airbnb was a real learning experience (EDU_3)	4.56	1.59	5.57	1.12	
<i>Escapism</i>					Oh et al. (2007)
Staying at the hotel/Airbnb made me feel I was in a different world (ESC_1)	4.93	1.59	5.55	1.40	
Staying at the hotel/Airbnb made me feel I was living in a different time or place (ESC_2)	4.70	1.73	5.44	1.54	
I completely escaped from reality during the hotel/Airbnb experience (ESC_3)	4.96	1.66	5.36	1.50	
<i>Esthetics</i>					Oh et al. (2007)
It was pleasant just being at the hotel/Airbnb (EST_1)	5.62	1.22	5.73	1.19	
The setting of the hotel/Airbnb provided pleasure to my senses (EST_2)	5.26	1.42	5.52	1.32	
The setting of the hotel/Airbnb really showed attention to detail in terms of design (EST_3)	5.28	1.43	5.54	1.28	

<i>Hospitableness</i>					Ariffin (2013); Tasci and Semrad (2016)
I felt welcome at the hotel/Airbnb (HOS_1)	6.11	1.05	6.12	1.05	
The hotel staff/Airbnb host was kind (HOS_2)	5.95	1.12	6.03	1.01	
The hotel staff/Airbnb host displayed a genuine desire to please (HOS_3)	5.72	1.12	5.90	1.11	
The hotel staff/Airbnb host treated me with respect (HOS_4)	6.01	1.11	6.07	1.08	
<i>Pleasure</i>					Hosany and Gilbert (2010)
I felt a sense of cheerfulness (PLEA_1)	5.58	1.23	5.83	1.13	
I felt a sense of joy (PLEA_2)	5.37	1.29	5.75	1.09	
I felt a sense of pleasure (PLEA_3)	5.66	1.24	5.81	1.13	
<i>Arousal</i>					Oh et al. (2007)
The hotel/Airbnb experience was interesting (ARO_1)	5.60	1.25	6.07	1.02	
The hotel/Airbnb experience was stimulating (ARO_2)	5.19	1.40	5.68	1.18	
The hotel/Airbnb experience was enjoyable (ARO_3)	5.72	1.20	5.89	1.08	
<i>Memorability</i>					Oh et al. (2007); Tung and Ritchie (2011)
I won't forget my hotel/Airbnb experience (MEM_1)	5.43	1.35	5.94	1.02	
I tell stories about this hotel/Airbnb experience to people I know (MEM_2)	4.97	1.63	5.76	1.10	
I like going back and re-experiencing the trip in my mind (MEM_3)	5.31	1.49	5.77	1.19	
<i>Attitudinal Brand Loyalty</i>					Li and Petrick (2008); Mody et al. (2014)
How likely is it that you will make another trip with the hotel brand/Airbnb? (ATT_1)	6.08	1.25	6.19	1.10	
I would recommend the hotel brand/Airbnb to other people/friends and relatives (ATT_2)	6.03	1.24	6.20	1.04	
I intend to continue using the hotel brand/Airbnb (ATT_3)	6.13	1.22	6.20	1.08	

1 *Respondents viewed the survey with the appropriate wording (hotel brand name/Airbnb) depending on the sample to which they belonged.

2 **All items were measured on a 7 point Likert scale, where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 7 = Strongly Agree

1 **Appendix B**

2 Discriminant validity tests.

3

4 Comparison of square root of AVE and inter-construct correlations—Hotel sample.

	Arousal	Hospitableness	Pine and Gilmore's Dimensions	Pleasure	Memorability	Behavioral Intentions
Arousal	.961					
Hospitableness	.747	.879				
Pine and Gilmore's Dimensions	.864	.702	.901			
Pleasure	.883	.775	.873	.918		
Memorability	.832	.618	.893	.853	.917	
Behavioral Intentions	.637	.665	.603	.637	.467	.901

5 Note: Square root of AVE is on the diagonal (in bold). Inter-construct correlations are on the off-diagonal.

6

7

8

9 Comparison of square root of AVE and inter-construct correlations—Airbnb sample.

	Arousal	Hospitableness	Pine and Gilmore's Dimensions	Pleasure	Memorability	Behavioral Intentions
Arousal	.924					
Hospitableness	.823	.800				
Pine and Gilmore's Dimensions	.789	.748	.926			
Pleasure	.818	.749	.918	.918		
Memorability	.700	.744	.847	.908	.953	
Behavioral Intentions	.810	.672	.636	.767	.770	.878

10 Note: Square root of AVE is on the diagonal (in bold). Inter-construct correlations are on the off-diagonal.