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Master Thesis

The Sharing Economy – Is trust essential? The effect of profile quality and brand equity on trust and purchasing intention

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Best regards,

Christoffer Ramstad

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Executive Summary

The sharing economy has gained popularity in the last decade and is projected to grow substantially in the future. Several brands from the sharing economy have equally high valuations as the biggest brands in the traditional industry within the same category. However, some issues need to be addressed before the high praises can become a reality. This paper addresses a fundamental issue within the sharing economy: trust. Trust has been addressed in business-to-commerce (B2C) and interpersonal literature; however, there is no unique definition, and research on the sharing economy is still scarce. How is trust created in the sharing economy and what are its effects are open questions. This thesis examines whether the quality perceptions of brands and peers have an effect on trust and purchasing intentions. The remainder of this thesis is organized as follows. In the first part, the research conceptualizes a peer's profile quality and brand equity; and explore its effects concerning trust in both a peer and a brand. The second parts analyses trust antecedents in the sharing economy, addressing the different strands in the literature. In the last part, the research investigates whether both brand trust and peer trust significantly affect a person's purchasing intention toward a sharing economy company.

The thesis provides a thorough review of the state of research in brand equity, profile quality, brand and peer trust, trust antecedents of peer and brand trust, and their effect on purchase intention in the sharing economy. Based on the review, the research develops 9 hypotheses and test these using an experimental design with a 2 (low brand equity vs. high brand equity) x 2 (low profile quality vs. high profile quality) between subject design. The study is based on surveys submitted to all types of respondents. The main finding of this study is that profile quality has direct effects on both brand and peer trust, while brand equity has no significant direct effect. However, brand equity was found to have a moderating effect on peer trust when profile quality is perceived as low. In addition, brand trust and peer trust were both found to be reliable predictors of a person's purchase intention. Also, in line with previous studies, the trust antecedents of ability, benevolence, and integrity were found to be significant building stones of trust toward both peer and brand in the sharing economy.

1. Introduction

Online peer-to-peer (P2P) marketplaces are growing at a rapid rate, especially in the travel and tourism services (Pizam, 2014). The sharing economy involves individuals (consumers) who transact directly with other individuals (sellers), while the marketplace itself is maintained by a third party (Botsman & Rogers, 2011). Botsman (2015) defines it as "*an economic system based on sharing underused assets or service for free, or for a fee, directly from individuals.*" The concept of sharing is as old as humankind, but collaborative consumption, known as "sharing economy," is a product of the internet age (Belk, 2014). Attitudes toward consumption have shifted in recent years and have created increasing concern over ecological, societal, and developmental impacts (Hamari, Sjöklint, & Ukkonen, 2015). As a result, the sharing economy has emerged as an alternative supplier of the goods traditionally provided by long-established industries (Zervas, Proserpio, & Byers, 2014). This trend gave rise to numerous for-profit and non-profit businesses (Belk, 2014), which resulted in the sharing economy capturing $15 billion out of $255 billion in the renting industry in 2015 (PWC, 2015). However, not only businesses make profits: the estimated revenue flowing through peers was estimated to be $3.5 billion in 2013 (Geron, 2013). As a result, investors regard the sharing economy as the new "mega trend" and are investing hundreds of millions in start-ups operating in this sector (Alsever, 2013). However, given its growing importance, there seems to be a lack of research on the determinants of the consumer's attitudes and intentions toward the sharing economy (Hamari et al., 2015).

Hamari et al. (2015) found that perceived sustainability helps form positive attitudes toward the sharing economy; however, economic benefits are perceived as a stronger incentive for people to participate. The accommodation industry is found to be especially driven by economic considerations (Botsman & Rogers, 2011). Guttentag (2015) found that people seek low-cost accommodations through direct interaction with local communities. However, online collaboration, such as peer-to-peer activities, is also fueled by enjoyment, reputation, and self-fulfillment (Hamari et al., 2015). Other studies described the drivers of the sharing economy as societal, economic, and technological drivers (Owyang, Tran, & Silvia, 2013). Even though there might be different motivations behind the participation

into the sharing economy, trust is key to ensure its growth and success (Botsman & Rogers, 2011). Botsman (2012) labeled trust as the "currency" of the sharing economy, and named it the trust economy. Strader and Ramaswami (2002) named trust as one factor, if not the most important, for long-term success in consumer-to-consumer (C2C) e-commerce. However, previous findings indicate that trust is not always present. A PWC report (2015) found that consumers who were familiar with the sharing economy were 34% more likely to trust a leading hotel brand than Airbnb. However, Hawlitschek et al. (2016) showed that trust toward peers (supplier), platforms, and products play a vital role in affecting a user's intention to rely on sharing economy platforms. Those who participate in the sharing economy seem to prefer reputable brands (Vision Critical, 2015), and Ratchford, Pan and Shankar (2003) found that a strong brand equity has an effect on trust toward a peer-to-peer e-commerce setting. However, this effect has not yet been found in the case of a P2P platform, in the sharing economy context. A peer's picture quality (Ert, Fleischer, & Magen, 2015), email responses (Strader et al., 2002), electronic word of mouth (eWom) (Rosario, Sotgiu, De Valck, & Bijmolt, 2016), and profile information (Smith, Menon, & Sivakumar, 2005) have all been found to have positive independent impacts in online e-commerce. Even though these are all components of a profile on Airbnb, this information has not yet been combined into a peer's profile in the existing literature. As a result, neither the quality of the brand name or the peer's profile have been found to affect trust toward the peer and brand in a sharing economy context.

Furthermore, literature on how brand and peer trust is built in the sharing economy context is limited. However, antecedents of the ability, benevolence and integrity is a popular term of trust and have been conceptualized in interpersonal (Mayer et al., 1995), B2C e-commerce (Serva, Fuller, & Mayer, 2005, Gefen, 2002, Lee & Turban, 2001) and been mentioned in a sharing economy context (Hawlitschek et al., 2016). Their role with trust, however, is unexplored in the sharing economy. Further, brand and peer trust have not been fully discovered along with trustworthiness and its effect on purchasing intention.

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This paper outlines a conceptual research model for the role of trust in the sharing economy and differentiates between the impact of the quality of a peer's profile and the brand's equity on trust in the brand and peer and, later, on purchasing intention. The paper introduces two conceptual models. In the first part, the research builds on the quality of both peer and brand and investigates how these can enhance trust. Second, the research examines how trust toward a peer and brand is built, and their effect on purchasing intention. Two conceptual models are developed to address these two concepts. Since the hospitality industry is well represented in the sharing economy, it will be the focus of this paper. Furthermore, Airbnb is among the most well-known brands in the hospitality industry and can be compared to hotel providers in both revenue and recognition terms (Zervas et al., 2014). Therefore, the following research questions are formulated:

Research Question

"How does the profile of the peer and the brand equity of the platform affect trust and purchasing intention in a sharing economy context?"

More specifically, the aim is to:

1. Evaluate whether the quality of the peer profile affects trust in the peer and in the brand.
2. Establishing whether the brand equity of the platform affects trust in the peer and in the brand.
3. Assess whether trust antecedents are applicable to the peer and brand in the sharing economy context.
4. Determine whether trust in the platform and the peer, affect the purchasing intention.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Definitions of Trust

McKnight and Chervany (2001) claim that the research on trust is extensive, and comparing different definitions of trust can be challenging. Trust has been conceptualized in many different settings. For instance, trust is a noun, a verb, a personality trait, belief, social structure, and a behavioral intention. Some

researchers avoid defining trust and rely on the ability of the reader to grasp the meaning of the term (McKnight & Chervany, 2001).

Trust has no unique description, but researchers have defined it in different situations and settings. Deutsch (1973) defined trust as the confidence that the relational party in an exchange will not exploit the counterparty's vulnerability. Another definition describes trust as "*when one party has confidence in an exchange partner's reliability and integrity*" (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). McKnight, Choudhury and Kacmar (2002) defined trust more comprehensively. They argue that trust is influenced by the disposition to trust, institution-based trust, and trusting beliefs. First, the disposition to trust is the willingness to depend on others. This is composed of faith in humanity, the belief that others are well disposed and trusting, trusting stance, and the belief that better outcomes result from dealing with a person who is well disposed. Second, institution-based trust is the belief that structural conditions exist for a successful activity, and it depends on two conditions, structural assurance and situational normality. Situational normality postulates that the environment is in good order and expects favorable outcomes to be created. Structural assurance implies that structure is ensured through regulations, promises, and legal remedies. Third, trusting beliefs is the confidence in the trustee, which could be applied to a buyer or seller. Trusting beliefs depend on ability (competence), benevolence, and integrity and correspond to one's willingness to rely on the trustee and engage in a trust-related behavior. The willingness to rely on a seller, company or buyer/seller constitutes the foundation of trusting intentions.

The definition of trust by McKnight et al. (2002) is very broad. Trust has been discussed in more specific terms in the field of B2C online industry, P2P e-commerce, and at an interpersonal level. However, trust in the sharing economy should differ from the description provided by the B2C, P2P e-commerce, and interpersonal trust literature (Hawlitschek et al., 2016). Möhlmann (2016) suggested four factors that would differentiate the sharing economy from P2P and e-commerce. First, the sharing economy is based on a "triad relationship," involving a peer, a platform, and underutilized products in a transaction. Second, it

relies on social interactions that have an offline component. Third, transactions usually do not involve the transfer of ownership. Last, transactions are often associated with more personal characteristics of the service exchange rather than pure goods exchange. As a result, sharing economy products or services are offered by private individuals and determine three targets of trust, "*trust toward a peer, platform, and product*" (Hawlitschek et al., 2016). The consumer depends on trust in both the service or product provider and the platform (Leonard, 2012). Therefore, in the sharing economy, the definition of trust is different and more complex than in a regular economic exchange. Sundararajan (2016) found that trust plays a central role in the P2P exchange. He argues that trust in the sharing economy stems from eight principles, which are government or third-party certification, brand (certification), institutions and contracts, cultural dialog (familiarity), digital conduits to individual traits, digitized social capital, digitized peer feedback, and prior bilateral interaction.

2.2 Profile Quality

Only a few studies have focused on how the peers present themselves and the quality of their profile. As a result, there is no unique definition of profile quality. The present study defines profile quality as "how a person/peer's online profile is evaluated in terms of quality." Profile's quality is built on different components, which include personal text/information, picture quality, verifications, e-WOM (valence/volume), and response rate/time.

2.2.1 Personal Text/ Information and Verifications

Rotter (1967) defined interpersonal trust as "*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 on.*" He further stated that "*In dealing with strangers one is better off to be cautious until they have provided evidence that they are trustworthy.*" This also applies to a peer's personal information and profile verification, where the expectations of both buyer and seller relies on the personal text presented by the other. Profile verification is a new concept in the literature; however, the experience of Airbnb made it a central element in their peers' profiles. According to Airbnb, "*Profile verification is a way to connect your online host profile to other information about you, such as your phone number, email address or Facebook profile*" (Airbnb, 2017). Verification is a system that confirms who

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you are using different information. On the other hand, personal information and privacy issues have arisen. Companies seek to maximize and leverage the information received from the consumers, while consumers are concerned that their privacy is being violated by commercial interests (Norberg, Horne, & Horne, 2007).

Schoenbachler and Gordon (2002) found that the willingness of sharing information with firms builds on trust in the organization. Bart, Shankar, Sultan and Urban (2005) analyzed the perception of privacy-related activities on different web sites and found that privacy is a component of trust and affects behavioral intentions. Earp and Baumer (2003) found that brand reputation contributes to a higher willingness to share personal and financial information. Furthermore, Lee and Turban (2001) found that people have different ability to trust others, and this affects trust in online shopping. Smith et al. (2005) showed that, in an online environment, profile information influences both the perceived trust and perceived influence of the peer. Additionally, they found that, when a profile is seen as credible and having the needed expertise, people invest less time in searching for new profiles. This also applies to the sharing economy, since the information on a profile clarifies the intention of the counterpart, especially if peers share information that displays them as expert and credible. This mechanism leads to trust. However, trust toward brands might also play a major role due to the privacy issue.

2.2.2 Picture Quality

Ert et al. (2015) demonstrate that the level of trustworthiness, mainly inferred from the photos on the profiles, affects the probability of being chosen and even the listing prices in the sharing economy. They also show that both visual (photo) and non-visual information influence the building of trust. (Bente et al., 2012) found that trustworthy photos, along with a positive reputation, help buyers build trust and determine higher purchase rates. However, a negative reputation and untrustworthy photo are shown to lead to better outcomes than missing information (no photo or reputation), which results in distrust (Bente, Baptist, & Leuschner, 2012).

2.2.3 eWOM (valence/ volume)

The importance of eWOM and recommendation systems has increased as a result of its easy access (Xu & Park, 2014). Consumers are risk-averse and avoid

purchasing products with bad reviews (You, Vadakkepatt, & Joshi, 2015). A recommendation system is based on the trust transitivity principle. This principle is a specific kind of reliability trust and is represented by the subjective probability that an individual, A, expects that another individual, B, performs a given action on which A's welfare depends (Jøsang, Ismail, & Boyd, 2007).

In the online environment, Kozinets (1999) stated that consumers turn to their social networks rather than commercial sources to retrieve information about products. Online recommendation systems are more influential than other recommendation sources, such as human experts and other consumers. Senecal and Nantel (2004) found that those who consult product recommendations purchase products twice as often as people who did not consult recommendations.

Strader and Ramaswami (2002) showed that, in a C2C market, the reputation of the seller is fundamental for building trust. Interactions among customers affect their sales. See-To and Ho (2014) found that eWOM has a strong direct impact on the purchasing intention in social network sites, as well as an indirect impact on purchasing intention moderated by consumers' trust in the product.

Furthermore, Gupta and Harris (2010) showed that the strength of eWOM increases when more time is spent considering a purchase. In addition, when multiple eWOM recommendations are present, people are more likely to include a product in their consideration set. This conclusion is further supported by Xu and Park (2014), who argued that the quality and number of the online reviews have a significant effect on the purchasing intention. Rosario et al. (2016) found cumulative volume and volume to be the most important metrics to measure the impact on sales, and that a positive eWOM produces a greater impact than a negative eWOM.

2.2.4 Response Rate/Time

Response rate and time have received little attention in the existing marketing literature. Airbnb's website states that "*your response rate and response time measure how quickly and consistently you respond to inquiries and requests.*" These elements are believed to significantly contribute to a successful profile on Airbnb. Strader and Ramaswami (2002) conducted research on the online-auction-

based community and found that customers expect a quick response to their questions and prefer orders sent by email. Slow response to emails may be a sufficient reason for consumers to move on to the next seller in a highly competitive market. Similarly, response time and response rate could make buyers switch their preference from one peer to another (Strader & Ramaswami, 2002).

Research on hotel listing profiles found that quality information, high ratings, and a focus on interpersonal service increased both booking intentions and consumer trust (Sparks & Browning, 2011). Profile quality, however, has not been adequately conceptualized in the literature, as the sharing economy is a relatively new phenomenon. All the quality perceptions of a peer's profile have been found to have independent effects on trust and purchasing intentions. Different studies have identified the independent effect of picture quality (Ert et al., 2015), email response (Strader & Ramaswami, 2002), eWOM (Rosario et al., 2016), and profile information (Smith et al., 2005). In the present study, these different components are combined to assess the quality of a peer's (renter) profile in the hospitality industry. The peer's profile does not seem to have a significant effect on trust in the literature. However, the present research assumes that the combination of the above-mentioned components would create a quality perception of a profile and have a direct effect on building trust toward a brand and peer. Hence, the research wants to explore the impact of a peer's profile quality on brand and peer trust. This represents a new concept, and the peer's quality perception is expected to play a significant role in building trust toward the peer and brand. Therefore, the following hypotheses are introduced:

H1: *Profile quality has a positive effect on peer trust independent of brand equity.*

H2: *Profile quality has a positive effect on brand trust independent of brand equity.*

2.3 Brand Equity

Keller (1993) defined brand equity "*in terms of the marketing effects uniquely attributable to the brand— for example, when certain outcomes result from marketing of a product or service because of its brand name that would not occur*

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if the same product or service did not have that name." On the other hand, Simon and Sullivan (1993) defined brand equity as "*the incremental discounted future cash flows that would result from a product having its brand name in comparison with the proceeds that would accrue if the same product did not have that brand name.*" In both definitions, brand equity is an outcome related to the marketing and cash flows associated with the brand name itself. Doney and Cannon (1997) argued that a firm's reputation is the extent to which customers in the industry believe that the company is honest and concerned about their needs. Selnes (1993) defined brand reputation as the perception of quality associated with the brand name. Both reputation and equity can be attributed to the effect of the brand name. While reputation is mainly based on "feelings" and special assurances for the brand, brand equity is solely the results of the brand name. Brand equity as defined by Keller (1993) is used to describe brand equity in this research.

Brand equity is considered a relational market-based asset, which depends on the relationship between a brand and its final users (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005). The effect of a company's reputation is often considered as an indicator of its organizational success. Organizations that are well regarded are assumed to be successful (Bhattacharya, Rao, & Glynn, 1995). Brand equity has been found to create barriers for competitors; it is not easy to transfer, it creates value-added for customers, and it takes time to be developed (De Chernatony 6 McDonald, 1992). Furthermore, brand equity may lead to acquiring higher market shares (Hooley, Greenley, Cadogan, & Fahy, 2005) and has a positive effect on firm value (Simon & Sullivan, 1993). Kuenzel and Halliday (2010) showed that consumers who perceive a brand as reputable report a higher level of brand loyalty. There is a consensus in the literature that a strong brand name (equity/reputation) has a stable effect on the marketplace and boosts companies' performance. Having a strong brand transmits trust to the market, especially when there is no direct contact between consumers and companies (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995). Therefore, brand equity is expected to play a major role in the sharing economy since the brands perform as intermediaries, without a direct contact with the peers.

Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán (2005) found that building brand trust is essential for firms to enjoy competitive and economic advantages from brand equity. Yoon (2002) found that trust toward a website is affected by the awareness and reputation of the company, as well as by a consumer's familiarity and past satisfaction with the e-commerce. Looking at a similar industry to the sharing economy, Ratchford et al. (2003) showed that, in the online auction industry (C2C), brands that are familiar to most people, such as Amazon.com, enjoy a higher level of trust compared to rivals. This indicates that familiar brands induce peers to transact with other peers due to trust. The brand equity literature on trust is limited in the sharing economy context. A report by Vision Critical (2015) found that people in the sharing economy prefer reputable brands. For example, in the accommodation industry, 55% of participants declared to prefer Airbnb, 29% VRBO, 5% Couchsurfing, and 12% others, showing that customers privilege the most well-known brand.

There is a consensus in the branding literature on the definition and importance of brand equity. In particular, brand equity has been found to have an impact on trust in the e-commerce (Yoon, 2002), regular (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005), and peer to peer industries (Ratchford et al., 2003). While there is limited research on brand equity and its direct effect on trust in the sharing economy context, this study assumes that its effect is in line with the findings of the literature on auctions, brands, and online commerce. Hence, the present study aims to explore the impact of brand equity on trust toward the brand and peer. Even though the sharing economy is in its early phase, with few companies operating in the sector, brand equity is expected to play a significant role in building a consumer's trust toward a brand and peer. Therefore, the following hypotheses are introduced:

H3: *Brand equity has a positive effect on peer trust independent of profile quality.*

H4: *Brand equity has a positive effect on brand trust independent of profile quality.*

2.4 Conceptual Model 1

The first four hypotheses constitute the first conceptual model. The model describes the relationships between profile quality, brand equity, and brand- and peer trust.
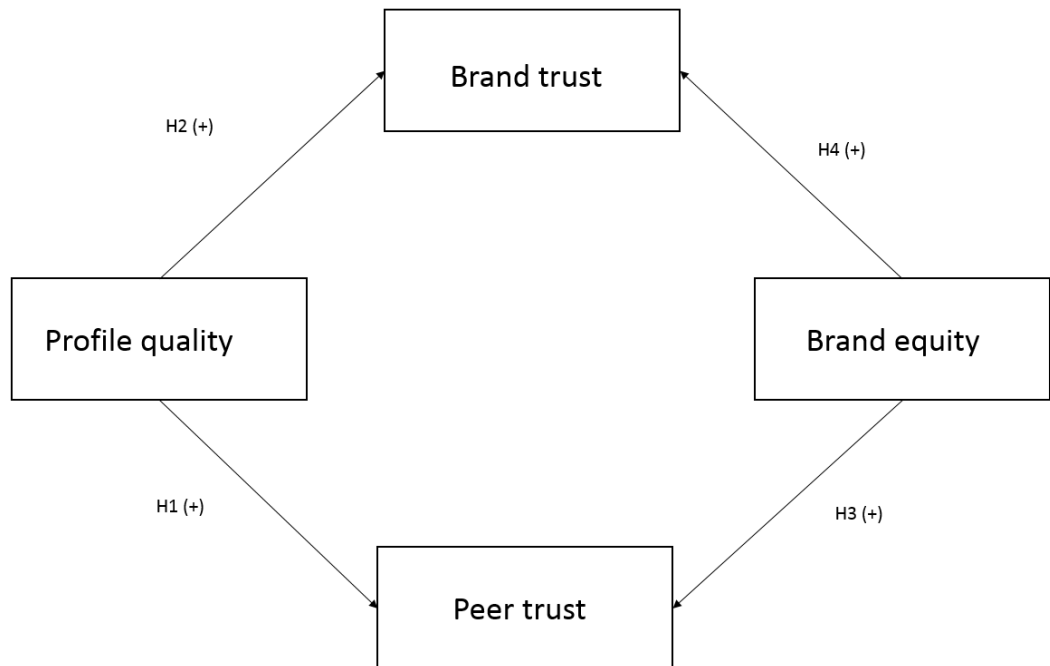
Figure 1: *Conceptual Model 1*

Hypothesizes	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable
H1: Profile quality has a positive effect on peer trust independent of brand equity	Profile Quality	Peer Trust
H2: Profile quality has a positive effect on brand trust independent of brand equity	Profile Quality	Brand Trust
H3: Brand equity has a positive effect on peer trust independent of profile quality	Brand Equity	Peer Trust
H4: Brand equity has a positive effect on brand trust independent of profile quality	Brand Equity	Brand Trust

Table 1: Summary of hypotheses and Conceptual Model 1

2.5 Trust Antecedents: Ability, Benevolence, and Integrity

Trust antecedents are perceived as the building stones of trust. Mayer, Davis and Schoorman (1995) first proposed a model of trustworthiness. They defined trust as *"the willingness of a party (the trustor) to be vulnerable to the actions of another party (the trustee) based on the expectation that the other (the trustee) will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that party."* Based on this definition, trustworthiness is the product of three antecedents: ability, benevolence, and integrity. Although the study by Mayer et al.

(1995) was intended for organizational culture, their theory of trustworthiness based on these building blocks of trust has been addressed in many different setting and has become very popular in the B2C e-Commerce literature (Serva et al., 2005, Gefen, 2002, Lee & Turban, 2001). Similarly, in the e-commerce literature, trust is defined as "*a buyer's intentions to accept vulnerability based on his/her beliefs that transactions with a seller will meet his/her confident transaction expectations due to the seller's competence, integrity, and benevolence*" (Pavlou, Liang, & Xue, 2006).

The trustworthiness antecedents explain both cognition-based and affect-based trust. Cognition-based trust is grounded in the beliefs about a peer reliability and dependability, while affect-based trust is based on reciprocated interpersonal care and concern (McAllister, 1995). For cognition based trust "*we choose whom we will trust in which respects and under what circumstances, and we base the choice on what we take to be good reasons, constituting evidence of trustworthiness*" (Lewis & Wiegert, 1985: 970). Affect-based trust consists of emotional bonds between individuals. Individuals tend to invest in emotional relationships based on trust, express care and concern for the welfare of the other peer, believe in the relationship and the intrinsic value it brings, and believe that these sentiments are reciprocated (Pennings & Woiceshyn, 1987; Rempel, Holmes, & Zanna, 1985). Ultimately, a combination of cognitive and affective elements can provide the basis for trust (McAllister, 1995). This has also been supported in an interpersonal setting in the marketing literature (Crosby, Evans, & Cowles, 1990). Both affect and cognition were pointed out as essential components of consumer trust in a salesperson.

2.5.1 Ability

Mayer et al. (1995) conceptualized ability as the "group of skills, competencies, and characteristics that enable a party to have influence within a specific domain." Lee and Turban (2001) developed a framework for consumer trust in the context of internet shopping. In their research, ability is described as the competence of a company in the internet shopping business. Another popular definition in the e-commerce environment is that ability consists of the perceived capacity in the seller's product design, manufacturing, order processing, delivery, after-sale service, and customer problem solving (Salam, Iyer, Palvia, & Singh, 2005).

Sutanonpaiboon and Abuhamdieh (2008) conceptualized ability in the C2C commerce in a similar way. A buyer is likely to transact if he/she trusts that the seller can process the order and deliver the product on time, provide after-sale service, and take care of customer's needs.

Ability is found to be a significant building stone of trust in C2C e-commerce (Sutanonpaiboon & Abuhamdieh, 2008), B2C e-commerce (Lee & Turban, 2001), and interpersonal relationships (Mayer et al., 1995). In the sharing economy, the ability of the peer and brand is expected to affect trust toward both the brand and peer. Therefore, the research introduces the following hypothesis:

H5: *Ability has a positive effect on trust in transactions toward a (a) peer and (b) brand.*

2.5.2 Benevolence

"*Benevolence is the extent to which a trustee is believed to want to do good to the trustor, aside from an egocentric profit motive*" (Mayer et al., 1995). It is the belief that one partner is genuinely interested in the other partner's welfare. Bhattacherjee (2002) defined benevolence as the situation when a trustee is believed to do good to the trustor and focuses on the motives and intentions of the exchange partner. Lee and Turban (2001) conceptualized benevolence as the extent to which the trusting party believes that the trusted party wants to do good rather than just maximize profit. This concept involves qualities, intentions, and characteristics attributed to the partner rather than specific behaviors (Rempel et al., 1985). In the e-commerce, benevolence is associated with the consumer's perception of the seller's characteristics, such as goodwill, care, responsiveness, and concern (Salam et al., 2005). Likewise, in the seller's perspective, Pavlou et al. (2006) found that a trustworthy seller focuses on the long-term benefit and is less likely to endanger his/her reputation by acting opportunistically. A buyer is more likely to trust a seller when he/she realizes that the seller has no incentive to act opportunistically.

The role of benevolence is stressed in the literature and can be applied to both a peer and a brand in the sharing economy. Its role is recognized in the e-commerce context (Lee & Turban, 2001; Salam et al., 2005), seller perspective (Pavlou et al.,

2006), and interpersonal relationships (Mayer et al., 1995). Therefore, the same effect should also be present in the sharing economy, and the research introduces the following hypothesis:

H6: *Benevolence has a positive effect on trust in transactions toward a (a) peer and (b) brand.*

2.5.3 Integrity/ Honesty

Mayer et al. (1995) argued that "*the relationship between integrity and trust involves the trustor's perception that the trustee adheres to a set of principles that the trustor finds acceptable.*" In an online perspective, integrity can be described as the trusting party's perception that the trusted party will be honest and adhere to an acceptable set of principles (Lee & Turban, 2001). Salam et al. (2005) defined integrity in e-commerce as the seller's compliance with a buyer's beliefs, to be explicit and careful in his/her actions, and protect the buyer's financially and legally sensitive information. Integrity is also fundamental for obtaining information. Buyers may have concerns on whether the information provided by the seller is valid, credible, and accurate. A buyer is more likely to do business with a seller if the former believes that the latter will provide valid, accurate, and timely information (Pavlou & Fygenson, 2006).

Along with other trust antecedents, integrity is found to be a significant determinant of trust in the literature, and this concept can be extended to the peer and brand in the sharing economy. The role of integrity has been established in the e-commerce context (Lee & Turban, 2001; Salam et al., 2005), buyer and seller relationship (Pavlou & Fygenson, 2006), and interpersonal relationships (Mayer et al., 1995). Therefore, this research assumes that integrity also plays a central role in both peer and brand trust and introduces the following hypothesis:

H7: *Integrity has a positive effect on trust in transactions toward a (a) peer and (b) brand.*

2.6 Trust and Trustworthiness

McKnight et al. (2002) and Serva et al. (2005) defined trustworthiness as the situation in which the "*trustee has attributes that are beneficial to the trustor,*" and

trust as *"the willingness to depend on the trustee."* However, trustworthiness and trust are distinct concepts. Both McKnight et al. (2002) and Mayer et al. (1995) clearly differentiated these two concepts. The distinction between trust and trustworthiness is supported by the connection between the research on trust and the theory of reasoned action, which implies that an individual's belief affects one's attitudes and behavior (Serva et al., 2005; Fishbein & Azjen, 1975). Furthermore, Serva et al. (2005) clearly distinguished between the trustor's perception that a company/person has beneficial characteristics (trustworthiness) and the willingness of the consumer to depend on the company/person (trust). They suggested to apply the theory of reasoned action (TRA) to trust models, and that trustworthiness may affect the trusting attitudes of the individual, but should not be considered as trust itself (Serva, 2005; Fishbein & Azjen, 1975). Since the sharing economy is based on both personal and company trust, this research divides trust into two components: brand and peer trust.

2.7 Peer Trust

Hawlicheck et al. (2016) argued that the trust of the supplying peer in the sharing economy depends on whether *"the supplier has the skills and competences to execute his part of the transaction, and whether he/she is considered as a transaction partner of high integrity and benevolence. The constructs integrity ("the supplier keeps his word") and benevolence ("the supplier keeps the consumer's interests in mind") are closely related, as a benevolent supplier will most likely also exhibit high levels of integrity, and vice versa."* In the branding literature, Delgado-Ballester, Munuera-Aleman and Yague-Guillen (2003) discussed the role of interpersonal trust in the social science and psychological literature, addressing altruism (Frost, Stimpson, & Maughan, 1978), benevolence and honesty (Larzelere & Huston, 1980), and dependability and responsibility (Rempel et al., 1985). These concepts are based on interpersonal trust, defined as:

"Trust in a person is a feeling of security based on the belief that his/her behavior is guided and motivated by favorable and positive intentions toward the welfare and interests of his/her partner. Therefore, it is expected that he/she does not intend to lie, break promises or take advantage of the other's vulnerability. Therefore, the lesser the doubt that his/her purposes are questionable, the lesser the risk to the

relationship and, so, the development of a valuable relationship will be less difficult" (Delgado-Ballester et al., 2003).

In the e-commerce perspective, Salam et al. (2005) defined trust as the ability, benevolence, and integrity of the seller toward the buyer, which closely relates to the trust antecedents discussed by Mayer et al. (1995). In summary, trust antecedents have been addressed in the computer science perspective, in the sharing economy context (Hawlicheck et al., 2016), branding literature (Delgado-Ballester et al., 2003) and e-commerce context (Salam et al., 2005). However, none of these definitions focused on the importance of the dependency on a person. Therefore, this research applies trust antecedents to the dependency of trust (TRA), which Serva et al. (2005), McKnight et al. (2002), and Mayer et al. (1995) introduced. As a result, this research defines peer trust as the confident expectations and dependence on the ability, benevolence, and integrity of the peer.

In the context of the interpersonal literature, in the retail setting, Macintosh and Lockshin (1997) found that the interpersonal relationship between the salesperson and customer is essential for building retail store loyalty. The retailers who have successful interpersonal relationship and salespersons who create trust and guarantee commitment to the consumers are characterized by positive purchasing intention and store attitude. In a C2C transaction, Lu, Zhao and Wang (2010) found that the intention to complete a transaction depends on the trust in the peer (supplier). A PWC report (2015) stated that 89% of those who were familiar with the sharing economy argued that transactions were based on the relationship between the peers. Similarly, Hawlicheck et al. (2016) showed that the trustworthiness (trust antecedents) of a supplying peer affects the intention to consume in a sharing economy context.

Hawlicheck et al. (2016) only focused on the different effects of the trust antecedents on the intention to consume. However, this study will address the combination of trustworthiness and the dependence principle by TRA, which Serva et al. (2005) stated as fundamental to understand trust. This study provides a distinct contribution to the literature by applying dependency measures along with trustworthiness to assess the effect of peer trust on purchasing intention. By

applying the dependency dimension to the trustworthiness principles, trust in a peer (supplier) is expected to affect purchasing intention in the sharing economy. Therefore, the following hypothesis is introduced:

H8: *Peer trust has a direct effect on purchasing intention.*

2.8 Brand Trust

Delgado-Ballester et al. (2003) defined brand trust as "*the confident expectations of the brand's reliability and intentions.*" Another definition is given by Chaudhuri and Holbrook, (2001), where brand trust is described as "*the willingness of the average consumer to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function.*" Thereby, trust antecedents have been considered as building blocks of trust in the brand literature. Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán (2005) defined the dimensions of trust antecedents on brand trust. Reliability, which has a technical or competence-based nature, means that the brand is expected to have the ability and willingness to keep promises and satisfy consumer needs. Secondly, intentions refer to the brand's attribution of good intentions in relation to the consumer's interest and welfare. Therefore, a brand that is perceived as trustworthy is one that consistently keeps its promises to their consumer through the products and services developed, sold, advertised, and performed. Beliefs about reliability, safety, and honesty are all essential determinants of the confidence that individuals incorporate in their operationalization of trust (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Doney and Cannon (1997) found that brand trust is based on the consumer's belief that the brand is consistent, competent, honest, and responsible. They also argued that the benevolence of the firm acts in the best interest of the customer based on shared goals and values. However, as previously discusses by McKnight et al. (2002), Mayer et al. (1995), and Serva et al. (2005), trust in not only built on trustworthiness, but also considers whether a consumer depends on the brand. In summary, this research defines brand trust as the confident expectations and dependence on the ability, benevolence, and integrity of the brand.

Bhattacherjee (2002) found that trustworthiness is a significant predictor of a consumer's willingness to transact with online firms. A brand can be seen as a symbol of quality and assurance to build trust and is essential for building trust in

web-based relationships (Davis, Buchanan-Oliver, & Brodie, 1999). Ganesan (1994) stated that vendors that are concerned with the outcomes of a retailer along with their own will be trusted to a greater extent than vendors who are solely interested in their own welfare.

On the other hand, trust has been considered a key predictor of consumer intentions. Liu, Marchewka, Lu and Yu (2005) found that trust predicts consumer intentions in online shopping and also has a direct effect on purchasing intention (Long-Yi & Ching-Yuh, 2010). In line with these findings, Kuan and Bock (2007) found the same effect in an online grocery shopping context. Zboja and Voorhees (2006) linked brand trust to customer satisfaction levels and repurchase intentions. Brand trust directly relates to both purchase and attitudinal loyalty and is indirectly related to the market share and relative price (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). The future use of an offline bank was directly found to be influenced by consumer trust toward the brand (Lee, Kang, & McKnight, 2007). Brand trust generates customer commitment, which, in turn, affects the customer price tolerance and overall satisfaction (Delgado-Ballester, 2001).

Brand trust has been shown to have an effect on a company's performance (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001), customer satisfaction (Zboja & Voorhees, 2006), and purchasing intention of the consumer in many different settings (Kuan & Bock, 2007; Liu et al., 2005; Long-Yi & Ching-Yuh, 2010). These findings suggest that brand trust can be applied to all different types of online and offline settings. The effect of brand trust is expected to be similar in the sharing economy. This paper has previously argued that trust is the most important factor in the sharing economy. Therefore, trust in a brand in an economy built on trust is expected to affect the purchasing intention of customers. Therefore, the following hypothesis is introduced:

H9: *Brand trust has a direct effect on the purchasing intention.*

2.9 Purchasing Intention

Purchasing intentions have been used in the literature to identify the likelihood of buying a certain good or service (Brown, Pope, & Voges, 2003). Consumers that

report intentions to purchase a service or product have higher buying rates than those who report no intention (Berkman & Gilson, 1978). Purchasing intention relates to why a consumer buys a particular product (Shah et al., 2012), and it is an effective tool to predict the buying process (Ghosh, 1990). Furthermore, their purchasing behavior is the primary tool for consumers to evaluate specific types of products. The PWC report (2015) stated that 6% of the US population experienced hospitality in the sharing economy, while 1.4% served as service providers. Additionally, among those who have not been active in the sharing economy, 72% could see themselves being a customer in the next two years. Therefore, with a high percentage of people declaring an intention to purchase in the context of the sharing economy in the future, understanding how trust can help improve people's purchasing intention becomes essential for companies.

2.10 Conceptual Model 2

The hypotheses from five to nine constitute the second conceptual model, which represents the relationship between trust antecedents and brand and peer trust, as well as the effect of trust on purchasing intention.
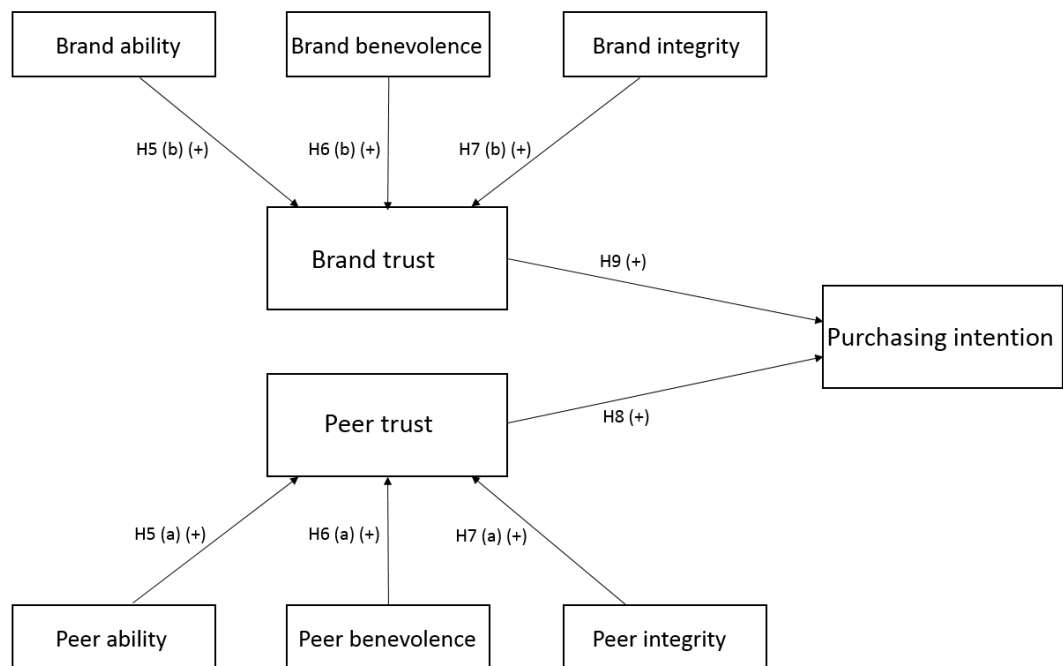
Figure 2: *Conceptual Model 2*

Hypothesis	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable
H5: Ability has a positive effect on trust in transactions toward a (a) peer and (b) brand	(a) Peer Ability (b) Brand Ability	(a) Peer Trust (b) Brand Trust
H6: Benevolence has a positive effect on trust in transactions toward a (a) peer and (b) brand	(a) Peer Benevolence (b) Brand Benevolence	(a) Peer Trust (b) Brand Trust
H7: Integrity has a positive effect on trust in transactions toward (a) peer and (b) brand	(a) Peer Integrity (b) Brand Integrity	(a) Peer Trust (b) Brand Trust
H8: Peer trust has a direct effect on purchasing intention	Peer Trust	Purchasing Intention
H9: Brand trust has a direct effect on purchasing intention	Brand Trust	Purchasing Intention

Table 2: *Summary of hypotheses and Conceptual Model 2*

3 Methodology

3.1 Subject, Design and Context

To test these hypotheses, this research introduced a quantitative research design. To assess the effect of profile quality and brand equity on trust, an experimental design with different scenarios is proposed. The participants were randomly assigned to different scenarios and were later asked to answer questions regarding brand trust, peer trust, and trust antecedents to assess their trust toward a brand and peer, and their purchasing intention. The scenarios are reported in Appendix 1 and the questionnaire is available in Appendix 2.

A 2x2 factorial design was set up to test the impact of the first measure of profile quality and brand equity on trust toward a transaction. The 2x2 design for four groups implies the research needed, at least, 120 participants, approximately 30 for each treatment group.

	Profile quality	**Brand equity**
Treatment 1	Low	Low
Treatment 2	High	Low
Treatment 3	Low	High
Treatment 4	High	High

Table 3: *Different treatments*

The set-up allowed four different types of treatments as visible in Table 3, where each respondent received a mixture of either low or high profile quality and brand equity. The context in this study is renting an apartment on a sharing economy profile. Therefore, low and high-quality profiles have been tested with high and low brand equity in the different scenarios. For high brand equity, Airbnb was used, being the most recognizable brand within the hospitality industry in the sharing economy (Zervas et al., 2014; PWC, 2015; Vision Critical, 2015). For the low brand equity setting, a new brand was created along with designing a logo. An explanation of both companies was provided, using the same text to make them look equal, and only the name itself to be the difference. The low and high profiles consist of personal text/ information, picture, verification data (email, phone number, social media), eWOM (volume/valence), and response rate and response time. The profile's design was based on Airbnb's instructions for a bad and good profile (Figure 3).
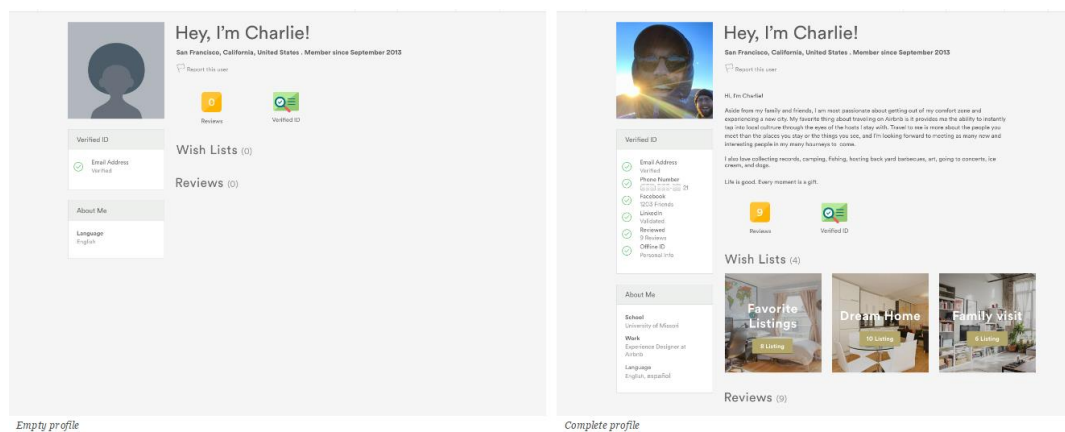
Figure 3 *Low (left) and high (right) profile quality from Airbnb's website*

Adjustments have been made in the case of the bad profile (with no picture), presented in figure 4 (left), as it could not be used to assess how people present

themselves. The good profile was also adjusted to seem more authentic (figure 4, right).
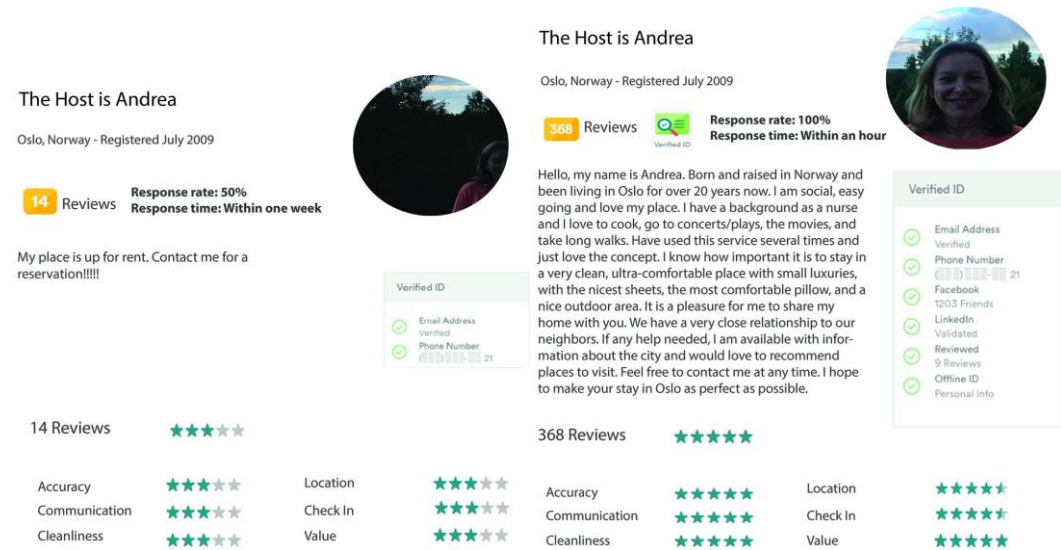
Figure 4 *Low profile quality (left) and high profile quality (right) from the survey treatments*

In this study, the researcher used a general population from the US. The general populations are relatively large and diverse. Therefore, a context (scenario) that is applicable to all demographics was designed. The study was based on profiles from Airbnb, which is applicable to a whole population due to its representation in 191 countries (Airbnb, 2017). The sample was collected through digital connections with mostly unknown respondents. With digital connections, the survey can quickly expend and reach a wide range of demographics.

3.2 Operationalization of Models

This study includes two conceptual models that will be examined. The first model examines the effect of the variables under different conditions. Here, brand trust and peer trust are dependent variables of the different treatments. The analysis of each dependent variable in isolation allows testing the different manipulations with respect to different dependent variables. In the hypotheses, brand and peer represent trust toward two different types, a company and a person. This research will test whether the effects of all manipulations are significant and different with respect to both trust types. Therefore, the multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) is applied to Model 1.

In Model 2 questions for trust antecedents (brand and peer), brand trust, peer trust, and purchasing intention were applied to the given treatments. Brand trust, peer

trust, and purchasing intention are endogenous variables, while the brand and peer trust antecedents are exogenous. Previous research established a thorough understanding of the links between the dependent and independent variables used in this study (Lu et al., 2010; Liu et al., 2005; Serva et al., 2005; Mayer et al., 1995).

A structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis is carried on to test complete theories and concepts of Model 2 (Rigdon, Schumacker, & Wothke, 1998). SEM has the ability to evaluate latent variables, while testing the relationships among them (Babin, Hair, & Boles, 2008). The partial least squares path modeling (PLS-SEM) technique, which is less known than the co-variance structural equation modeling (CB-SEM) approach, is a variance-based partial least square technique and is based on an iterative approach that maximizes the explained variance of endogenous constructs (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982). The PLS-SEM operates like an ordinary least square (OLS) multiple regression model (Astrachan, Patel, & Wanzenried, 2014). It fits the criteria of the conceptual models and hypotheses introduced in this research, dealing with multiple dependent variables. The model is based on latent constructs in multiple stages with multi-item indicator variables. The number of constructs, indicators, and structural relationships is large and helps the PLS-SEM model easily incorporate highly complex analyses compared to the CB-SEM model (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2014). PLS-SEM is also more suitable for the early phases of theory development and testing (Hair et al., 2014). This model is characterized by a combination of well-used and known theory (brand trust and trust antecedents), but it is applied to the new scenario of peer and brand trust in the sharing economy. Peer trust has not been well established in the marketing literature, especially in comparison with brand trust, and the literature on trust in the sharing economy is also scarce. Therefore, the PLS-SEM model is introduced in this study to evaluate different effects and the model quality.

3.3 Operationalization of Independent Variables

All the measurement items included in the study are based on previous research, but they have been adjusted to fit the purpose of this study. Profile quality and brand equity are measured as treatments of low and high profiles, and no measurement item is applied to them. However, all the other measurements were based on a 7-point Likert scale where 1= "Strongly Disagree," 2= "Disagree," 3= "Somewhat

disagree," 4= "Neither agree nor disagree," 5= "Somewhat agree," 6= "Agree," and 7= "Strongly agree."

The scale of the antecedents of trustworthiness and trust are obtained from Serva et al.'s (2005) "Trustworthiness in B2C E-Commerce: An examination of Alternative Models." The authors found that reliability levels (Cronbach's alpha) for ability (0.93), benevolence (0.89), and integrity (0.93) exceed the standard set of the trustworthiness scale introduced by Gefen (2003), that is, a 0.80 standard. Both these scales were tested in an online B2C setting. This research adjusted the scale to apply to the peer's trust antecedents since trustworthiness along with the trust scales are not present in the sharing economy literature. However, in the literature on e-commerce, the trust antecedents have been previously applied to individual trust and found to be significant predictors (Salam et al., 2005). This was not needed for the antecedents in the case of the brand trust, since Serva et al. (2005) have already conceptualized it in a B2C setting.

3.4 Operationalization of Dependent Variables

The dependent variables brand and peer trust will serve as indicators of trust toward the brand and peer. They are both based on four-items, in line with Serva et al. (2005), who found reliability levels (Cronbach's alpha) of trust equal to 0.89 and incorporated them in the trust antecedents. Even though this measure has been applied to companies (brand/online trust), the present research adjusted it to fit the peer trust concept.

The dependent variable, purchasing intention, is in line with Pavlou (2003) and Chang and Chen (2008). Both studies used purchasing intention in an online brand perspective. The construct was adjusted to fit purchasing intention in the context of peer trust. The items are the results of three measurements. However, one measure was applied to the brand and another to peer purchasing intention, obtaining a combination of six items for the overall purchasing intention. Such combinations were used to determine whether brand and peer trust have an effect on the purchasing intention since, in the sharing economy, one purchases from a peer on a specific brand web page. Therefore, one does not buy from the brand or peer alone, and these different components need to be combined into one measurement item.

Table 4 reports the items used in this study and the sources of these operationalizations.

Measurement Items – Construct and Sources

References:	Latent Variables:	Items:
From Serva et al., 2005 *Based on constructs from Gefen, 2003*	Peer/Brand Trust	If I needed to book an accommodation in a hurry, I would feel comfortable renting from brand/peer.
		I can always rely on peer/brand whenever I need to rent an accommodation
		I feel that I could count on peer to provide me the accommodation I need; *(or)* I feel that I could count on brand to help me rent the accommodation I need.
		If I needed the best accommodation in a specific place, I would be willing to rely on the information provided by peer/brand.
From Serva et al., 2005 *Based on constructs from Gefen, 2003*	Peer/Brand Ability	Peer/brand is competent and effective in renting out accommodation.
		Peer/brand performs its role of renting out accommodations very well.
		Overall, peer/brand is a capable and proficient accommodation renter.
		In general, peer/brand is very knowledgeable about renting out accommodations.
From Serva et al., 2005 *Based on constructs from Gefen, 2003*	Peer/Brand Benevolence	I believe that peer/brand would act in my best interest.
		If I required help, peer/brand would do its best to help me.
		Peer/brand is interested in my well-being, not just its own.
From Serva et al., 2005 *Based on constructs from Gefen, 2003*	Peer/Brand Integrity	Peer/brand is truthful in her/its dealings with me.
		I would characterize peer/brand as honest.
		Peer/brand would keep its commitments.
		Peer/brand is sincere and genuine.
From Chang and Chen, 2008 *Based on constructs from Pavlou, 2003*	Peer/Brand Purchasing Intention	I intend to use peer/brand to conduct product purchases.
		I expect to purchase from peer/brand in the future.
		It is likely that I will transact with peer/brand in the future.

Table 4: *Measurement Items – Constructs and Scores*

3.5 Pre-Test

After developing the two profiles and brands, a pre-test was sent to respondents to verify whether both the profile quality and brand equity were perceived as low or high. The questions tested the constructs of recognizability, realism, trustworthiness, service quality, whether the brand is well-known, and the purchasing intention of both the peer and brand. The result of the test indicates that both the profile and brand seem realistic and vary in being well-known and in their quality. The test was submitted to 36 respondents, and everyone was randomly

confronted with different scenarios. The pre-test questionnaire is reported in Appendix 3.

Table 5 presents the differences between low and high quality for profile quality and brand equity. Both brands, DreamHub (5.53) and Airbnb (5.71), are perceived as realistic. The introductory text explaining the main features of the companies makes the brands feel realistic. There is a clear difference in the mean scores on all constructs between the low and high case for both profile quality and brand equity, and this indicates that the test achieved the desired level of discrimination. The four different treatments were also tested, and significant differences in the brand and profile were found when the two elements showed either low or high quality. For example, when Airbnb had a low profile, users could still rely on its higher brand equity compared to a low profile for DreamHub. The same scores apply to profile quality measurements; the high profile DreamHub scored higher than the low profile quality with DreamHub (Appendix 4). This seems to indicate that both measurements for low and high profile quality and brand equity are adequate. The sample size is too small to obtain any significant effects; however, the distinction between a low and high profile and the treatments can be used in the survey.

	Low brand equity (mean score)	High brand equity (mean score)
I think Airbnb/DreamHub is recognizable	4.68	5.94
I think Airbnb/DreamHub is trustworthy.	5.00	5.41
I would rent an apartment from Airbnb/DreamHub.	4.89	5.00
I believe Airbnb/DreamHub is well-known	3.43	5.83
	Low profile quality (mean score)	**High profile quality (mean score)**
I think Andrea`s profile is realistic.	5.00	5.50
I think Andrea offers a high quality service.	3.82	4.86
I think Andrea`s profile is trustworthy.	4.29	5.00
I would rent an apartment from Andrea.	3.47	4.69

Table 5: *Mean differences in the pre-test*

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3.6 Reliability and Validity

Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson (2010, 125) described reliability as the assessment of the degree of consistency between several measurements of one variable. A variable should be consistent with what is intended to measure and to how it is measured. Several items, recommended by Hair et al. (2010), measure the different constructs. For increasing the internal validity of Model 1, a manipulation check is carried on for the independent variables (section 4.5). The Cronbach's alpha for the two dependent variables in the first model (section 4.3) is also considered. In the second model, both the indicator and internal consistency reliability are calculated (section 4.9).

Validity is the extent to which a scale or set of measures accurately represent the concept of interest (Hair et al., 2010). Content validity is defined as the assessment of the degree of correspondence between items that make up a construct (Hair et al., 2010). All constructs have been well established in the previous literature (Table 4), but the profile quality of the peer has not been defined before and can, therefore, adversely impact the validity of this study. Construct validity is the accuracy of the measurements and refers to whether the constructed items actually refer to what they should. Furthermore, construct validity consists of the discriminant and convergent validity. Convergent validity means that the indicators of a construct share large portions of variance. Discriminant validity is the extent to which constructs are distinct from one another (Hair et al., 2010). In the first model, the manipulation was assured to be valid (Section 4.5), and the randomization of the scenarios strengthens the internal validity. In the second model, the convergent and discriminant validity measures were satisfactory (section 4.9). Therefore, both models demonstrate high internal validity. However, for external validity, the different scenarios and profiles were based on real profiles from the online environment. The research found heterogeneity across profiles regarding the high or low quality of the informative text, recommendations, profile picture quality, verifications, and response rate/ time. A combination of the best and worst cases was obtained in the two profiles to create scenarios with a globally low and high profile quality. For brand equity, Airbnb was used as the high equity brand since it is the most well-known brand in the sharing economy (Vision critical, 2015; PWC, 2015), and a made-up brand, called DreamHub, with its own design logo was used

as the low brand equity firm. Thus, the research tried to build a scenario as realistic as possible to enhance its external validity.

4 Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

A total of 394 questionnaires were submitted, and 304 was used for the analysis. One-liners and uncompleted questionnaires were discarded. The response rate was 77%. For the different scenarios, 69 respondents were attributed to the low-quality profile and low brand equity (DreamHub), 71 respondents to low-quality profile and high brand equity (Airbnb). For the high-quality profile and low brand equity (DreamHub), there were recorded 79 respondents, and 85 respondents were assigned to the high-quality profile and high brand equity (Airbnb).

174 respondents were male (57.2%), 130 were females. The age varied from 18 to older than 65, and 67.1% of respondents were between the age of 25 and 44; 56.9% of respondents had the minimum of a bachelor degree, while 98% had completed high school. 74.7% or respondents were either self-employed or employed full-time, and 59% lived in the city. More detailed information on the descriptive statistics is available in Appendix 5.

With respect to the importance of the different elements in a profile, the provided information was perceived as the most important factor, with a mean score of 5.93 (Table 6). On the other hand, the quality of the picture was not perceived as equally important (4.90). Verification of the information (5.38) and the response rate and average response time of the host (5.32) were perceived as the second and third most important factors, with recommendations (5.09) as the fourth most essential element. The results imply that the most important factors, of a good profile, are the information and text provided by the peer. The other factors, however, is also considered to be of importance as well.

	Mean score
Other people's online recommendations for the profile	5.09
Quality of the pictures on the profile	4.90
The provided information on the profile	5.93
Verification of the information	5.38
The response rate and average response time of the host	5.32

Table 6: *Mean scores of profile quality components*

Model 1

4.2 Factor Analysis

A factor analysis was performed on the constructs of brand trust and peer trust. The result of the analysis led to a Kayser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) of 0.902, which is above the threshold of 0.5. The Bartlett's test of sphericity was also found significant and, therefore, the variables are uncorrelated. Since the values of both factors were above the threshold of one eigenvalue, they explained 89% of the variance (threshold of 60%), and each factor explains over 5% of its variance. The Varimax rotation is reported in Appendix 6, where the constructs for trust were used to build the factors of brand trust and peer trust in the first model.

4.3 Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha was used as a measure of internal consistency and to assess how closely the related standard errors of items are as a group. Internal consistency needs to be verified in this type of analysis. The general "rule" is that the Cronbach's alpha should not be lower than 0.7. Hair et al. (2010) stated that each construct should consist of three or four items, and this holds true for both the peer trust and brand trust measurements. The Cronbach's alpha, presented in Appendix 7, shows that all the constructs have good internal consistency and are well above the threshold of 0.8. Therefore, no items should be deleted from the different constructs.

4.4 Mean Differences/ Manipulations

The different treatments have been recoded into four variables, where 1 = "LowDream," 2 = "HighDream," 3 = "LowAirbnb," and 4 = "HighAirbnb." To assess the effects of the different manipulations of brand equity and profile quality on brand trust, peer trust, and purchase intention, an overall mean of the four

different treatments was calculated. As shown in Table 7, there are clear differences for all treatments in the predictions of the different variables. The overall mean of the treatments for brand trust is 4.86, and 4.50 for peer trust, indicating that, in all treatments, the trust toward a brand is higher than the trust toward the peers. Within the different treatments, LowDream had a mean of 3.93 for brand trust and 2.41 for peer trust. Comparing this result to LowAirbnb, the mean for brand trust was 4.50, and 3.29 for peer trust. The high equity brand (Airbnb) creates a higher trust toward both brand and peer compared to a low equity brand (DreamHub). Even when the profile is stronger, the effect of a high brand equity is noteworthy. The mean of high profile quality and low brand equity for brand trust is equal 5.35, and 5.93 for peer trust, while for the high profile quality and high brand equity the mean for brand trust was 5.49, and 5.98 for peer trust. The high profile quality is shown to exert a marginal stronger influence on trust toward both the brand and peer when the equity of the brand is high.

The mean of purchasing intention was 3.16 for LowDream, 3.68 for LowAirbnb, 5.32 HighDream, and 5.77 for HighAirbnb. A low profile quality is associated with a low purchasing intention, while a brand with high equity ensures a stronger purchasing intention. In the case of a high-quality profile, a high equity brand creates a stronger purchasing intention compared to a low equity brand.

Treatments	Brand trust		Peer trust		Purchase intention	
	Mean	Std dev	Mean	Std dev	Mean	Std dev
LowDream N=66	3.93	1.429	2.41	0.958	3.16	1.062
HighDream N=73	5.35	0.877	5.93	0.704	5.32	1.057
LowAirbnb N=71	4.50	1.458	3.29	1.649	3.68	1.470
HighAirbnb N=81	5.49	0.859	5.98	0.732	5.77	0.897
Total N=291	4.86	1.328	4.50	1.900	4.55	1.459

Table 7: *Treatments mean effects on brand trust, peer trust and purchase intention*

4.5 MANOVA Analysis/ Manipulation Checks

The set-up of this study comprises four different treatments in a 2x2 between-subjects analysis. The research aims to verify whether the different treatments (low

and high profile quality and low and high brand equity) are significant predictors of the brand and peer trust, the degree to which the manipulation is effective, and the impact of brand equity and profile quality on brand and peer trust.

Assumptions

4.5.1 Sample Size

Hair et al. (2010) argued that the minimum sample size in each cell should be larger than the size of the dependent variable. In this data set, LowDream has the lowest sample size (69), while HighDream has 78 observations, followed by LowAirbnb (71) and HighAirbnb (83). All treatments have a higher sample size than the recommended size of 20 observations in each cell.

4.5.2 Independence

Lack of independence within observations is the most essential as well as problematic of the assumptions in a MANOVA analysis. If this assumption is not verified, each group of responses cannot be considered independent (Hair et al., 2010). The survey used for the present analysis was randomized and submitted independently to different respondents. Each person received only one survey, was asked to read the different scenarios and, then, answer to the best of his/her knowledge.

4.5.3 Normality

For MANOVA analysis, the normality assumption constrains the dependent measure to be multivariate normal, which means that the joint effect of two variables is normally distributed (Hair et al., 2010). Hair et al. stated that there is no direct test for multivariate normality; therefore, researchers generally test for the univariate normality of each variable. As a result, a univariate test for all independent measures of the two dependent variables was conducted in this study. In the strictest interpretation, the normality assumption implies that all variables are multivariate normal. The Shapiro-Wilk test was significant for all the independent measures of both brand trust and peer trust. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed that LowDream was the only non-significant measure for both peer and brand trust (see the normality test reported in Appendix 8). This result indicates a violation of the univariate normality assumption for the remaining variables. The normality

assumption has a significant impact on small samples, but Hair et al. (2010) showed that the violation of this assumption has little impact on larger samples. As this research is based on a large sample size (301 respondents), the violation of the normality assumption is expected to have little impact on the analysis as long as the violations are only due to the skewness of the distribution and not to the presence of outliers (Hair et al, 2010).

To further analyze the univariate normality of each dependent variable, a quantile-quantile (QQ) plot is created for each relationship (Appendix 8). The different QQ plots show that the effect of LowDream on brand trust is normally distributed, in line with the result of the Kolmogorov- Smirnov test. LowAirbnb presents a small left skewed curve. HighAirbnb and HighDream have a small number of outliers, and this issue needs to be further evaluated. LowDream seems to have a high number of outliers even though the result of the Kolmogorov- Smirnov test is not significant. However, to avoid a type one error, the impact of outliers on the normality assumption needs to be further analyzed.

4.5.4 Equality of Variance-Covariance Matrices

The assumption of homogeneity of covariance matrices across groups relates to the difference in the variance across one group compared to another. To test this assumption, the Box's M test is preferred, as it allows to test the equality of the covariance matrices. If the result of the test is significant, a difference in the variance between groups is likely to exist. Therefore, the result of the test should be insignificant. The Box's M test is sensitive to large covariance matrices and high number of groups in the analysis. Even small groups of four to six should be based on conservative levels of significance (Hair et al., 2010). Therefore, a significance level of 0.01 is applied in this study rather than the usual 0.05 level. The results from the Box's M test are significant (Appendix 9), which means that differences exist in the variance across different treatment groups. Analyzing the Levene Statistics for each univariate normality test (Appendix 9), the impact of brand equity on both brand and peer trust is found to be insignificant. On the other hand, the effect of profile quality on both trust variables is significant.

Hair et al. (2010) argued that the test is especially sensitive to departures from normality, as in the case of the data used in the present study. However, the violation of this assumption is expected to have a minimal impact if the groups are of approximately equal size (largest group size / smallest group size <1.5), as indicated by Hair et al. (2010). In the sample, HighAirbnb (85 respondents) and LowDream (69 respondents) was used to calculate the size difference, which corresponds to 1.23, well below the 1.5 benchmark. The box plot of the different treatments (Appendix 10) indicates a large difference in the variance among the treatments for both brand trust and peer trust. The largest variance difference is for LowAirbnb (brand and peer trust) and LowDream (brand trust). The other treatments have similar variances. The differences in the variance can be explained in several ways. For instance, a strong brand could make someone trust more both the brand and peer, but could also be perceived as low in combination with a low-quality profile. Individuals might differ in their familiarity toward the sharing economy. Therefore, people may perceive differently a good and bad profile, and this effect should not be retested.

4.5.5 Outliers

According to Hair et al. (2010), the MANOVA analysis is sensitive to outliers. This also has an effect on the possible presence of a type one error. In this analysis, outliers have been carefully removed, as there could be different reasons why people do not trust a peer or brand. The previous literature did not provide a satisfying description of what an outlier is in such a setting. Using the box plot analysis on the different treatments for both brand and peer trust resulted in removing 14 participants. The respondents number 39, 40, and 57 have been removed from the brand trust sample (see Appendix 10). In the case of peer trust, respondents number 11, 39, 40, 69, 128, 224, 152, 180, 205, 272, 280, and 197 have been removed (see Appendix 10). Respondents number 39 and 40 were perceived as outliers both in the brand and peer trust samples. Even though one should be careful about removing outliers, Hair et al. (2010) strongly encouraged to remove all outliers due to their disproportionate impact on the overall result. After removing the observations perceived as outliers, LowDream had 66 respondents, followed by LowAirbnb (71), HighDream (73), and HighAirbnb (81), which obtained a total of

291 respondents (Appendix 10). Therefore, the sample size is much larger than the recommended 20 respondents in each cell (Hair et al., 2010).

When testing for normality after removing the outliers, HighAirbnb (brand trust) is found to be insignificant in both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk test, while LowDream (brand trust) is insignificant only in the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The QQ plot shows that all other treatments are skewed due to their repeated movement from one side of the line to another (Appendix 11). They start out on one side of the lines, then, they are almost exclusively on the other side for a long stretch, and finally move to the other side of the line again. This behavior indicates some degree of skewness (Brown, 2017). On the other hand, all treatments are significant in both tests in the case of peer trust. Analyzing the QQ plots for these treatments, the same result applies to all the treatments in the case of peer trust, as they are all skewed (see the new normality discussed in Appendix 11). Therefore, the issue of outliers have been removed from the normality assumption to avoid a type one error, as recommended by Hair et al. (2010).

4.5.6 Linearity and Multicollinearity

The last assumption is the presence of linearity and multicollinearity. To verify the presence of a linear relationship between the two dependent variables a scatter plot was drawn. The scatter plot (Appendix 12) confirms the presence of a linear relationship between the variables. The Pearson Correlation test was conducted on the two dependent variables. The result indicates a correlation of 0.596 (Appendix 12) for brand trust on peer trust. This correlation is well below the threshold value for multicollinearity issues (0.8 or 0.9), as indicated by Pallant (2010). Therefore, the researcher can confirm the absence of multicollinearity issues between the dependent variables.

4.5.7 MANOVA- Analysis of Significance Test on Brand Equity and Profile Quality

In a MANOVA analysis, one needs to test for the presence of statistical differences among a group of linear combinations of the dependent variables (Pallant, 2010). Tests such as Pillai's Trace, Wilk's Lambda, Hotelling's Trace, and Roy's Largest Root were applied in this study. Only two groups of measures are equivalent (Hair et al., 2010); however, Pillai's Trace is the most robust test, and, since some

assumptions of the MANOVA were violated, the result of this test is particularly significant.

Multivariate Test								
Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Observed Power
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.960	3433.691	2.000	286.000	.000	.960	1.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.040	3433.691	2.000	286.000	.000	.960	1.000
	Hotelling's Trace	24.012	3433.691	2.000	286.000	.000	.960	1.000
	Roy's Largest Root	24.012	3433.691	2.000	286.000	.000	.960	1.000
Treatments	Pillai's Trace	.694	50.797	6.000	574.000	.000	.347	1.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.311	75.611	6.000	572.000	.000	.442	1.000
	Hotelling's Trace	2.200	104.514	6.000	570.000	.000	.524	1.000
	Roy's Largest Root	2.193	209.841	3.000	287.000	.000	.687	1.000

Table 8: *Multivariate test of manipulations (treatments)*

The result of the Pillai's Trace test is highly significant (p = 0.000), and the partial eta squared is 0.960. The effect of the treatments is significant (p = 0.000), the partial eta square is 0.347, and an observed power is equal to one (Table 8). The overall F ratio is statistically significant; therefore, a post hoc test will be performed (Table 9). Post Hoc test is often used due to its simplicity in calculating the difference in multiple comparisons. The test can be calculated if the overall F ratio is statistically significant (Pallant, 2010). To analyze the presence of a significant difference in the treatments, the Games-Howell test was performed. Since the dataset did not meet the homogeneity of the variance assumption, the Games Howell post hoc test seems an adequate tool to fit the data set. The Games-Howell test is designed for unequal variances and tends to perform better than the Tukey HSD if the variances are unequal (Pallant, 2010).

Dependent variable	(I) Which manipulation	(J) Which manipulation	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Brand trust	LowDream	HighDream	-1,42*	.204	.000	-1.95	-.89
		LowAirbnb	-.57	.247	.103	-1.21	.07
		HighAirbnb	-1.56*	.200	.000	-2.08	-1.03
	HighDream	LowDream	1.42*	.204	.000	.89	1.95
		LowAirbnb	.85*	.201	.000	.33	1.38
		HighAirbnb	-.13	.140	.771	-.50	.23
	LowAirbnb	LowDream	.57	.247	.103	-.07	1.21
		HighDream	-.85*	.201	.000	-1.38	-.33
		HighAirbnb	-.99*	.198	.000	-1.50	-.47
	HighAirbnb	LowDream	-1.56*	.200	.000	1.03	2.08
		HighDream	,13	.140	.771	-.23	.50
		HighAirbnb	.99*	.198	.000	.47	1.50
Peer trust	LowDream	HighDream	-3.52*	.144	.000	-3.89	-3.14
		LowAirbnb	-.88*	.229	.001	-1.47	-.28
		HighAirbnb	-3.57*	.143	.000	-3.94	-3.19
	HighDream	LowDream	3.52*	.144	.000	3.14	3.89
		LowAirbnb	2.64*	.212	.000	2.09	3.20
		HighAirbnb	-0.05	.116	.977	-.35	.25
	LowAirbnb	LowDream	.88*	.229	.001	.28	1.47
		HighDream	-2.64*	.212	.000	-3.20	-2.09
		HighAirbnb	-2.69*	.212	.000	-3.24	-2.14
	HighAirbnb	LowDream	3.57*	.143	.000	3.19	3.94
		HighDream	0,05	.116	.977	-.25	.35
		HighAirbnb	2.69*	.212	.000	2.14	3.24

*The mean difference is significant at the 0,05 level

Table 9: *Games- Howell post hoc test*

In the analysis of brand trust, all group differences, except for HighDream vs. HighAirbnb (brand and peer trust) and LowAirbnb vs. LowDream (brand trust) were found significantly different from each other at the 5% significance level (Table 9). These results indicate the presence of a statistically significant difference in low and high profile quality for both brand and peer trust. However, for peer trust, the difference between low and high brand equity is only significant when a low profile quality is present. Furthermore, there is a cross-effect difference on brand trust for a low profile quality, with a mean difference of .57, in favor of a brand with high equity. This is however not significant in the Games-Howell test (p < 0.05). The cross-effect, on the other hand, is not present when the profile quality is high. In the case of peer trust, the differences across relationships are all significant, except when both profile quality and brand equity are high. It is also evident that, when the profile quality is low, a high brand equity is statistically different from a low brand equity, with a mean difference of .88. The different significance levels for all treatments toward the brand and peer trust is reported in Table 9 above.
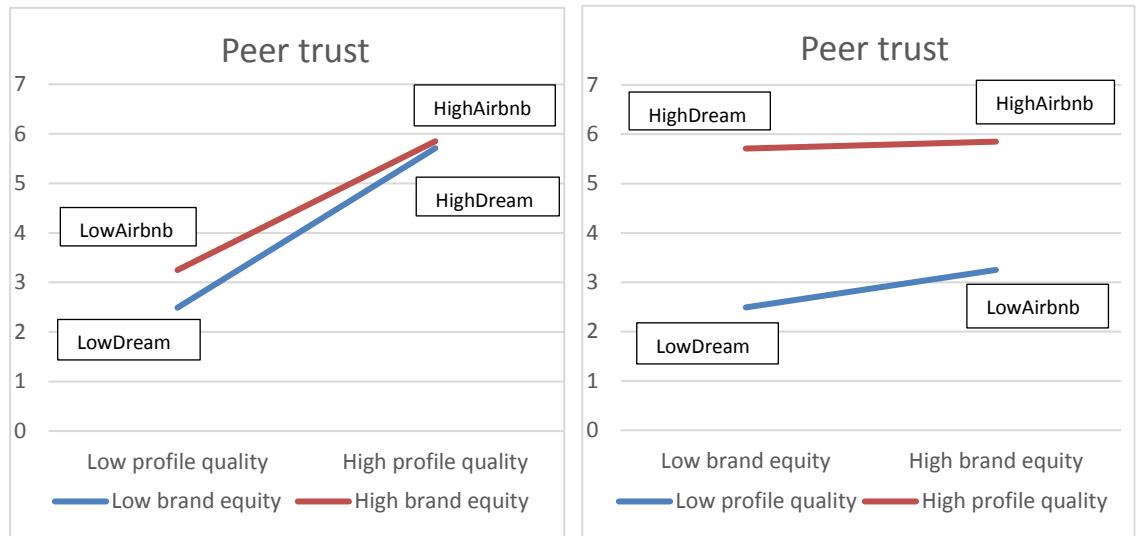
Figure 5: *Mean scores of treatments on peer trust*

Figure 5 shows that a high profile quality significantly improves trust toward the peer. Brand equity has a higher effect toward peer trust when profile quality is low. Hence, brand equity becomes a stronger moderator when profile quality is low. Furthermore, the graphs above indicate that, when profile quality is high, the brand has very little effect on trust toward the peer. There is a significant difference, however, for both low and high brand equity when profile quality is perceived as high compared to low. This shows that a high profile quality makes one trust the peer more, while brand equity only has a moderating effect when the profile is perceived as low quality.
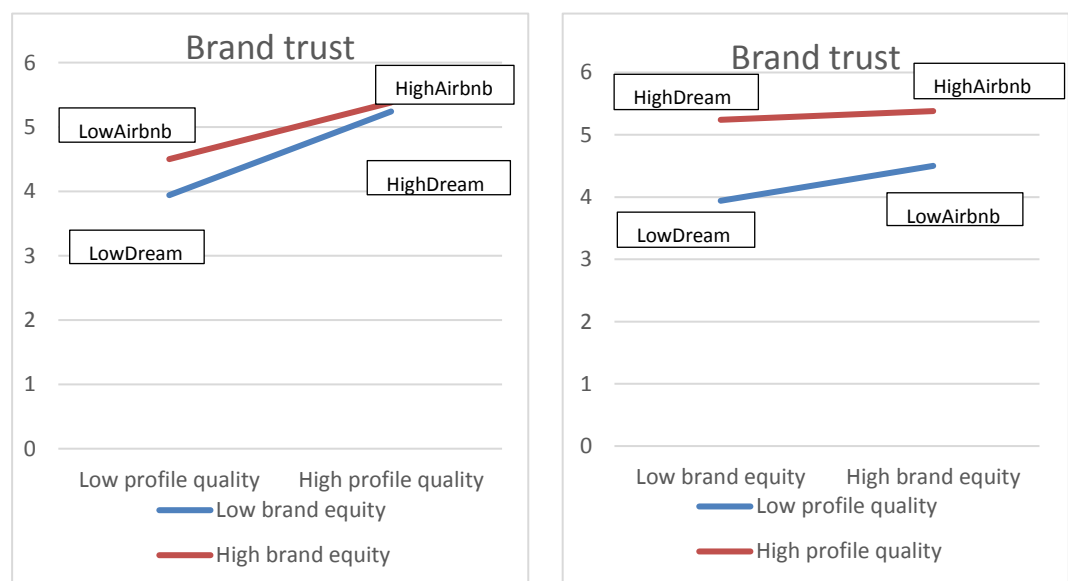
Figure 6: *Mean score of treatments on brand trust*

Comparing Figure 6 (brand trust) and Figure 5 (peer trust), it seems clear that mean values are generally higher for brand trust. Yet, the high profile scores for peer trust have the highest mean values. Furthermore, Figure 6 shows that the effect of profile quality is less strong toward brand trust than toward peer trust. Profile quality has an effect when brand equity is either low or high. The effect is, however, stronger when brand equity is low. Furthermore, there is nearly no difference between a high equity brand and a low equity brand when profile quality is high. Yet, Figure 6 shows that there might be a moderating effect of brand equity when profile quality is perceived as low. However, this effect was found insignificant in the post hoc analysis. Still, by adjusting the significance level to 10%, this moderating effect becomes significant. Both Figures 5 and 6 shows the strong effect of profile quality on both brand and peer trust, while brand equity has a small effect when the profile quality is low and the effect is marginal for a high profile quality.

4.6 Hypothesis-Testing

Hypothesis 1:

The first hypothesis proposes that *profile quality has a positive effect on peer trust independent of brand equity.* To estimate this effect, the two groups, HighDream vs LowDream and LowAirbnb vs HighAirbnb, need to show significant differences. As reported in Table 7, the mean difference between a high profile quality (HighDream) and a low profile quality (Low Dream) when brand equity is low is statistically significant ($p = 0.000$) for peer trust, with a mean difference of 3.52, where the mean of LowDream is 2.41 and HighDream is 5.93. Furthermore, when brand equity is perceived as high, there is a significant difference in the means ($p = 0.000$): the mean of Low Airbnb is 3.29 and 5.98 for HighAirbnb, with a mean difference of 2.69. Therefore, the conclusion it that profile quality has a significant effect on peer trust. Hence, H1 is supported.

Hypothesis 2:

The second hypothesis proposes that *profile quality has a positive effect on brand trust independent of brand equity.* To assess this effect, the two groups, HighDream vs LowDream and LowAirbnb vs HighAirbnb need to show significant differences. As reported in Table 7, the difference in the mean between a high profile quality (HighDream) and a low profile quality (LowDream) when brand equity is low is

statistically significant (p = 0.000) for brand trust. The mean of LowDream is 3.93 and 5.35 for HighDream, with a mean difference of 1.42 on brand trust. When brand equity is high, there is a significant (p = 0.000) difference in the mean, as in the case of a high profile quality (HighAirbnb) compared to a low profile quality (LowAirbnb) with respect to brand trust. The mean of LowAirbnb is 4.50, and 5.49 for HighAirbnb. This leads to a mean difference of .99. Profile quality is, therefore, significant when brand equity is either low or high. Therefore, H2 is supported.

Hypothesis 3:

The third hypothesis proposes that *brand equity has a positive effect on peer trust independent of profile quality.* To check this effect, the two groups, HighDream vs HighAirbnb and LowAirbnb vs LowDream, need to show significant differences. Table 7 shows that, when profile quality is high, there is no significant difference (p = 0.977) between HighDream and HighAirbnb. The mean difference is .05; HighDream has a mean of 5.93, and HighAirbnb of 5.98. Evaluating the same effects with low profile quality, a statistical difference in the means (p = 0.001) is found between a low equity brand and high equity brand. The mean difference between LowDream (2.41) and LowAirbnb (3.29) is .88. However, since both effects need to be different, there is no significant effect of brand equity on peer trust. Therefore, H3 cannot be supported.

Hypothesis 4:

The fourth hypothesis proposes that *brand equity has a positive effect on brand trust independent of profile quality.* To estimate this effect, the two groups, HighDream vs HighAirbnb and LowAirbnb vs LowDream, have to show significant differences. As shown in Table 7, when profile quality is low, there is not a statistical difference (p = 0.103) in the mean effect on brand trust between a brand with low equity (LowDream) and a brand with high equity (LowAirbnb). The mean difference is .57, LowAirbnb's mean is 4.50, and 3.93 for LowDream. Evaluating the same effects with high profile quality, there is no statistical difference found (p = 0.771) between the effect of low brand equity (HighDream) and high brand equity (HighAirbnb) on brand trust. The mean of HighDream (5.35) versus the mean of HighAirbnb (5.49) implies a mean difference of .13. Therefore, H4 cannot be supported.

Model 2

4.7 Mean Report of the Treatments on Trust Antecedents

Analyzing the differences in the mean for the antecedents of trust for different treatments (Table 10), a clear difference was found between a low and high profile quality. In addition, brand equity increases all the antecedents of trust for peer trust when the profile quality is low. The same effect applies to the effect of profile quality on brand equity. It is also shown that the effect of ability (2.95) on peer trust for a low profile quality and low brand equity exhibits the lowest mean, while the impact of ability (6.07) in the high profile quality and high brand equity case has the highest mean. The total mean effect of the antecedents of trust was higher for brand trust than for peer trust.

	Brand ability	Brand benevolence	Brand integrity	Peer ability	Peer benevolence	Peer integrity
LowDream	4.72	4.39	4.66	2.95	3.09	3.82
HighDream	5.49	5.24	5.40	5.98	5.61	5.79
LowAirbnb	5.39	4.83	5.20	3.51	3.68	4.19
HighAirbnb	5.84	5.39	5.52	6.07	5.82	5.92
Total	5.39	4.99	5.22	4.74	4.64	5.00

Table 10 *Mean values of trust antecedents on the treatments*

4.8 SEM Model

A PLS-SEM model was applied to the relationship between the constructs from conceptual Model 2. The first part of this section reports the test results for the validity and reliability of the model (Wong, 2013). The second part presents the explanation of the variance of the endogenous variable, inner model path size and significance, and outer model loadings and significance. To test the significance of the structural paths, the bootstrapping technique was applied using 5000 subsamples (Hair et al., 2010). A two-tailed test with Bias-Corrected and Accelerated (BCa) Bootstrap confidence interval method (5% significance level) was conducted. The model stopped at seven iterations, which is well below the suggested 300 repetitions (Ringle, 2005). No categorical scales were used in the model, as suggested by Hair et al. (2010).

4.9 Reliability and Validity

If the indicators are highly correlated and interchangeable, their reliability and validity should be thoroughly examined, as the model may be reflective (Haenlein

& Kaplan, 2004; Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2013; Petter, Straub, & Rai, 2007). Looking at the indicators in this study, the model is found to be reflective. For the evaluation of a reflective measurement model, a researcher should verify the indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2010).

4.9.1 Indicator reliability

In PLS, indicator reliability is known as outer loadings; to address indicator reliability these outer loadings need to be squared (Wong, 2013). Indicator reliability should be 0.70 or higher, but, in the case of an explanatory study, a level equal to 0.4 is acceptable (Hulland, 1999). Manifest variables with outer loading of 0.7 or higher are considered highly satisfactory (Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009). Brand and peer trust, including their trust antecedents, have indicator reliability over 0.8. For the purchasing intention, indicators have reliability over 0.7 (Appendix 13). All indicators have high reliability, well over the benchmark of 0.7; therefore, the choice of the variables seems highly satisfactory.

4.9.2 Internal consistency reliability

Internal consistency is measured by Cronbach's alpha, but the PLS-SEM literature also suggests the usage of "Composite reliability" as an alternative (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Hair et al., 2014). Composite reliability should be 0.7 or higher; in the case of exploratory research, 0.6 or higher is acceptable (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). In the present study, the composite reliability of all constructs is over 0.9, well above the benchmark of 0.7 (Table 12). The Cronbach's alpha levels are all above the 0.8 benchmark (Hair et al., 2010) Therefore, the proposed model is characterized by internal consistency reliability.

	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	AVE
Brand ability	0.964	0.950	0.869
Brand benevolence	0.960	0.938	0.889
Brand integrity	0.966	0.954	0.878
Brand trust	0.957	0.941	0.849
Peer ability	0.988	0.984	0.953
Peer benevolence	0.979	0.967	0.939
Peer integrity	0.981	0.974	0.928
Peer trust	0.983	0.977	0.934
Purchase intention	0.956	0.945	0.784

Table 12: *Constructs reliability and validity*

4.9.3 Convergent validity

To test the convergent validity in this study, the AVE score was calculated. As a general rule, AVE should be higher than 0.5 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). The scores for all different constructs are above 0.7, well above the threshold (Table 12). Therefore, the model is convergent valid.

4.9.4 Discriminant validity

To test for discriminant validity, the researcher need to verify whether the "square root" of AVE of each latent variable is greater than the correlations among the latent variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). By applying the Fornell and Larcker criterion (Table 13) findings shows that the square root of AVE for each of the latent variables is higher than the correlation among the latent variables. It can, therefore, be concluded that the model has discriminant validity.

	Brand ability	**Brand benevolence**	**Brand integrity**	**Brand trust**	**Peer ability**	**Peer benevolence**	**Peer integrity**	**Peer trust**	**Purchase intention**
				Fornell-Larcker Criterion					
Brand ability	0.932								
Brand benevolence	0.745	0.943							
Brand integrity	0.781	0.816	0.937						
Brand trust	0.781	0.715	0.745	0.922					
Peer ability	0.465	0.436	0.463	0.520	0.976				
Peer benevolence	0.444	0.509	0.476	0.487	0.881	0.969			
Peer integrity	0.492	0.469	0.544	0.500	0.867	0.866	0.963		
Peer trust	0.493	0.474	0.491	0.591	0.920	0.885	0.864	0.967	
Purchase intention	0.599	0.516	0.510	0.713	0.734	0.721	0.696	0.793	0.886

Table 13: *Fornell-Larcker Criterion*

The research finds the PLS-SEM model to have validity and reliability. All the results of the tests were within the boundaries determined by the theory.

4.10 Inner Model

4.10.1 Goodness of fit/ Model quality

For the goodness of fit, the Stone-Geisser's Q^2 for the assessment of the predictive relevance (Q^2) of the model was calculated. The Q^2 assesses the predictive validity of a large complex model and shows how well the data collected empirically can be reconstructed (Monecke & Leisch, 2012). The exogenous variables contain arrows leading away from the construct to the endogenous variables (Wong, 2013). As stated in Wong (2013), Q^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate that the predictive relevance of the exogenous variables for the endogenous variable is respectively

small, medium, and large. Table 16 shows that brand trust (0.528), peer trust (0.768), and purchasing intention (0.524) have all large predictive relevance.

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.064	0.077
Chi-square	2 684,452	2 784,234

Table 14: *Model fit measure*

The overall model quality can be evaluated by the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) method. The closer the SRMR is to 0.00, the better the quality of the model. A value less than 0.08 is generally considered a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The SRMR for the proposed model, 0.077 (Table 14), is below the threshold of a well-fitted model, and it can therefore be concluded that the model has an acceptable fit. However, SRMR has no penalty for model complexity and, therefore, the results can be restricted to a complex design. However, this test is only applied here to provide an indication of the model fit, but evaluating the overall performance based on SRMR is not ideal for a PLS-SEM model (Wong, 2013). However, both SRMR and Q^2 results displays that the model ensures a strong fit.

	T-Statistics	P-Values
Brand trust	17.239	0.000
Peer trust	53.597	0.000
Purchase intention	20.965	0.000

Table 15: *Significance of endogenous variables*

	R squared	Q squared	R squared adjusted
Brand trust	0.666	0.662	0.662
Peer trust	0.877	0.876	0.876
Purchase intention	0.720	0.718	0.718

Table 16: *R-square and Q-square measurements*

4.10.2 Trust antecedents on peer trust

The antecedents of peer trust explained 87.6% of the variance in peer trust (adjusted r-squared = 0.876), as shown in Table 16. In the marketing research, an r-squared above 0.75 suggests a substantial fit (Hair, 2011). Therefore, a strong adjusted r-squared means that the antecedents are strong predictors of trust in the peer. The path coefficients of the model (Table 17) indicate that peer ability has the strongest effect on peer trust (0.552) compared to the factor loadings of benevolence (.260) and integrity (0.160) on peer trust. The ability of a peer is, therefore, a strong

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indicator of trust in the peer since it explains over half of the effect on peer trust. The T-statistics and p-values for the bootstrapping techniques (Table 17) show that all paths from the trust antecedents are significant predictors of trust in the peer. Overall, the quality criteria of peer trust as an endogenous variable is found to be significant (Table 15). With respect to the outer model, all the loadings on the latent variables are significant for peer trust and its antecedents (Appendix 14). All the antecedents of peer trust have a correlation of 0.9 or higher. The same applies to the peer trust and its outer loadings (Appendix 14)

Variable relationships	Path coefficient	T - Statistics	P- Values
Brand ability → Brand trust	0.462	5.732	0.000
Brand benevolence → Brand trust	0.171	2.671	0.008
Brand integrity → Brand trust	0.244	2.752	0.006
Brand trust → Purchase intention	0.375	7.978	0.000
Peer ability → Peer trust	0.552	9.142	0.000
Peer benevolence → Peer trust	0.260	4.319	0.000
Peer integrity → Peer trust	0.160	3.070	0.002
Peer trust → Purchase intention	0.571	12.928	0.000

Table 17: *Variable relationship strength*

4.10.3 Trust antecedents on brand trust

The antecedents of brand trust explained 66.2% of the variance in brand trust (adjusted r-squared= 0.662), as shown in Table 16. In the marketing research, an r-squared between 0.5 and 0.75 indicates a moderate fit (Hair, 2011). The antecedents of trust toward a brand has a moderate explanatory variance of the brand trust variable. This is in line with previous research supporting the importance of the antecedent as building stones of brand trust in an online perspective (Delgado-Ballester et al., 2003). With respect to the T-statistics and p-values, all antecedents are significant predictors of brand trust (Table 17). In particular, brand ability (0.462) has the strongest factor loadings on brand trust, followed by brand integrity (0.244) and brand benevolence (0.172). The ability of the brand is an important indicator, which explains nearly half of the effect on brand trust. Overall, the quality criteria of brand trust as an endogenous variable is found significant (Table 15). With respect to the outer model, all the loadings on the latent variables are significant for brand trust and its antecedents (Appendix 14). All the antecedents of brand trust have a correlation of 0.9 or higher. The same applies for the brand trust and its outer loadings (Appendix 14).

4.10.4 Brand and peer trust on purchase intention

Brand and peer trust explain 71.8% of the variance in purchasing intention (adjusted r-squared = 0.718), as shown in Table 16. This can be considered a moderate fit (Hair, 2011). Trust is, therefore, a good indicator of purchasing intention. Purchasing intention is found, in the quality criteria, to be significantly explained by the predictors (Table 15). With respect to the effect of the two trust predictors, peer trust (0.571) has a stronger effect on purchasing intention than brand trust (0.375). Both path effects on purchasing intention from peer and brand trust are found significant (Table 17). The outer loadings on the latent variables for purchasing intention are all significant (Appendix 14). With respect to the purchasing intention, all the outer loadings (indicators) have a correlation higher than 0.8 with the latent variable (Appendix 14).

4.11 Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis 5:

The fifth hypothesis proposes that *ability has a positive effect on trust in transactions toward a (a) peer and (b) brand*. The paths of peer ability on peer trust as well as the paths of brand ability on brand trust are both found significant ($p < 0.05$) by bootstrapping method (Table 17). Brand benevolence (0.171) and peer benevolence (0.260), the exogenous variables, have both positive effects on their endogenous variables. Therefore, H8 (a) and (b) are both supported.

Hypothesis 6:

The sixth hypothesis proposes that *benevolence has a positive effect on trust in transactions toward a (a) peer and (b) brand*. From the results of the bootstrap analysis ($p < 0.05$), peer benevolence has significant paths on peer trust, and brand benevolence has significant paths on brand trust (Table 17). The effect of the two paths, brand benevolence (0.171) and peer benevolence (0.260), are both positive. Therefore, hypothesis H7 (a) and (b) are both supported.

Hypothesis 7:

The seventh hypothesis proposes that *integrity has a positive effect on trust in transactions toward a (a) peer and (b) brand*. From the bootstrap analysis ($p < 0.05$) the path from peer integrity to peer trust is found significant (Table 17). The effect

of peer integrity on peer trust is 0.160. With respect to brand trust, brand integrity (0.244) is found to have a positive and significant path ($p < 0.05$) on the endogenous variable. Therefore, H6 (a) and (b) are supported.

Hypothesis 8:

The eight hypothesis proposes that *peer trust has a direct effect on the purchasing intention*. The bootstrapping technique ($p < 0.05$) found the path of peer trust to purchasing intention to be significant (Table 17). The effect of peer trust on purchasing intention is 0.571. Therefore, H9 is supported.

Hypothesis 9:

The ninth hypothesis proposes that *brand trust has a direct effect on the purchasing intention*. The bootstrapping technique ($p < 0.05$) found the path of brand trust to purchasing intention to be significant (Table 17). The effect of this path is 0.375. Therefore, H10 is also supported.

4.12 Overview of the Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Dependent Variable	Supported/Not supported
H1: Profile quality has a positive effect on peer trust independent of brand equity	Peer Trust	Supported
H2: Profile quality has a positive effect on brand trust independent of brand equity	Brand Trust	Supported
H3: Brand equity has a positive effect on peer trust independent of profile quality	Peer Trust	Not supported
H4: Brand equity has a positive effect on brand trust independent of profile quality	Brand Trust	Not supported
H5: Ability has a positive effect on trust in transactions toward a (a) peer and (b) brand	(a) Peer Trust (b) Brand Trust	(a) Supported (b) Supported
H6: Benevolence has a positive effect on trust in transactions toward a (a) peer and (b) brand	(a) Peer Trust (b) Brand Trust	(a) Supported (b) Supported
H7: Integrity has a positive effect on trust in transactions toward a (a) peer and (b) brand	(a) Peer Trust (b) Brand Trust	(a) Supported (b) Supported
H8: Peer trust has a direct effect on purchasing intention	Purchasing Intention	Supported
H9: Brand trust has a direct effect on purchasing intention	Purchasing Intention	Supported

Table 18: *Overview of the Hypothesizes*

4.13 Additional Analysis

Trust antecedents have different effects across treatments. Table 19 reports these effects. All the antecedents have rather similar effects on both trust variables for HighAirbnb. However, the brand's (HighDream) ability (0.66) to deliver the expected service has the strongest effect on brand trust. Therefore, brands with low equity that can show their ability create stronger trust toward the brand when the quality of the peer's profile is high. Furthermore, with respect to peer trust, the peer's (HighDream) integrity and ability have the strongest effect, but, in the case of HighAirbnb, benevolence had the strongest effect. This result indicates that, in the case of a low brand equity, peers with good profiles need to mostly focus on their integrity and ability to build a strong peer trust. The trust antecedents for LowAirbnb and LowDream have a similar effect on peer trust, which indicates that a high brand equity does not affect the trust antecedents toward the peer when the profile quality is low. However, the effect on brand trust is different across profiles: for LowAirbnb, ability has a much stronger effect, while integrity is the most important component for LowDream. This means that, when the profile quality is low, the high brand equity ability is fundamental for building trust toward the brand. When brand equity is low, ability becomes particularly important in the presence of a strong profile, while, for a low-quality profile, integrity has the strongest effect on trust in the brand. With respect to peer trust, ability becomes the strongest predictor for LowDream, while integrity plays the leading role for HighDream. In the case of LowAirbnb versus HighAirbnb, ability has the strongest effect for LowAirbnb, while all the effects for HighAirbnb are rather similar; however, ability has a slightly stronger effect. The same applies to the case of HighAirbnb and its impact on peer trust; however, in this case, benevolence becomes the strongest predictor, while in the case of LowAirbnb the effect of the ability of the peer is strong. These results show that the relative importance of trust antecedents varies across treatments. Furthermore, the different types of trust toward the brand and peer vary depending on whether brand equity or profile quality is low or high. Even though these results are not part of the original testing hypotheses, they should be the object of further analysis.

	LowDream			HighDream		
	Brand trust	**Peer trust**	**Purchase intention**	**Brand trust**	**Peer trust**	**Purchase intention**
Brand ability	0.27			**0.66**		
Brand benevolence	0.17			0.19		
Brand integrity	**0.42**			0.07		
Brand trust			**0.53**			**0.61**
Peer ability		**0.50**			0.33	
Peer benevolence		0.25			0.14	
Peer integrity		0.10			**0.47**	
Peer trust			0.32			0.22
	LowAirbnb			HighAirbnb		
	Brand trust	**Peer trust**	**Purchase intention**	**Brand trust**	**Peer trust**	**Purchase intention**
Brand ability	**0.65**			**0.39**		
Brand benevolence	-0.05			0.23		
Brand integrity	0.20			0.33		
Brand trust			0.45			0.31
Peer ability		**0.54**			0.24	
Peer benevolence		0.29			**0.39**	
Peer integrity		0.08			0.32	
Peer trust			**0.47**			**0.44**

Table 19: *Additional multi-group analysis*

5 Discussion

Botsman (2012) labeled the sharing economy as the "trust economy," while the PWC report (2015) found that trust between the peers is fundamental for a transaction. Keymolen (2013) emphasized the interplay of trust between peer and platform, and Hawlitschek et al. (2016) defined the sharing economy as a three target of trust: "trust toward peer, platform, and product." There is a clear agreement that trust is essential and, perhaps, the most important issue to be addressed to support the sharing economy in the future. The trusting intentions between peer (buyer), company, and peer (seller) need, therefore, to be carefully addressed. However, only a few pieces of research have focused on trust in a marketing perspective. The results of the present study add to the marketing literature explaining how trust toward a peer's (seller) profile quality and brand equity is established. It further contributes to how peer- and brand trust is built and its effect on purchasing intention.

Prior research have not investigated how profile quality and brand equity contribute to establishing trust in the sharing economy. The previous research identified the independent effects of hotel listing profiles (Sparks et al., 2011), picture quality (Ert et al., 2015), email response (Strader & Ramaswami, 2002), eWom (Rosari et al., 2016), and profile information (Smith et al., 2005); however, the existing literature on the sharing economy has not conceptualized profile quality and its effects. Therefore, this study filled this gap in the literature providing a definition of profile quality and tested its effect on peer and brand trust. On the other hand, brand equity has been defined in the literature and has been considered a significant predictor of firm value (Hooley et al., 2005). The research on brands (Delgado-Ballester et al., 2003), e-commerce (Yoon, 2002), and C2C transactions (Ratchford, et al., 2003) found quality to be a significant measure of trust. However, brand equity and its effect on trust have only been marginally addressed in the sharing economy literature. Therefore, the present research combined elements from the literature on brand trust (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005), trust antecedents (Mayer et al., 1995), B2C trust (Serva et al., 2005), and interpersonal trust (Delgado-Ballester et al, 2003; Salam et al., 2005) to address the practice of trust in different parties. This study has two primary objectives. First, the researcher tried to measure how the quality of the peer (profile quality) and the brand (brand equity) affect trust in the brand and peer. Second, the researcher attempted to understand how brand and peer trust relate to the different trust antecedents, and how trust in the brand and peer results into purchasing intention.

The main findings of this study are as follows. In the first model profile quality was found to be a significant predictor of brand and peer trust. Hence, hypothesis one and two were supported. On the other hand, brand equity had no significant effects on neither brand nor peer trust, which led to the researcher finding no support on hypothesis three and four. When dividing up the different treatments, it is more apparent how low and high profile quality and brand equity performs in a sharing economy context. For model 2, all antecedents hypothesizes, five to seven, were supported on both brand and peer trust. Further, both brand and peer trust was found significant predictors of purchase intention, and hypothesis eight and nine were supported.

First, profile quality was found significant for both brand and peer trust. Even though this term is new in the marketing literature, this research clearly shows the importance of profile quality in trust literature and that it should be further explored in future in literature. However, some interesting finding on the effects of the different treatments was found. The results of the treatments showed that a high profile quality is a significantly stronger predictor of brand and peer trust compared to a low profile quality. This effect is significant both in the case of a low and high brand equity firm. This means that profile quality is a significant predictor of trust in both the brand and the peer. As expected, a peer (buyer) has stronger trust in the other peer (seller) when the latter put a lot of effort in his/her profile, providing a clear picture, informative text, good recommendations, good response rate/time, and information verifications. This is in line with the results of Smith et al. (2005), who found that profile information influenced perceived trust in an online environment. It is, however, interesting to see that profile quality has a cross effect, where a high profile quality leads to increased trust in the brand. Similar results have been found in previous research on the offline context, where interpersonal trust was found to be a significant predictor of loyalty toward the company in the retail setting (Macintosh & Lockshin, 1997). This finding is essential for most companies, and especially those with a lower brand equity, as, by building good platforms and helping their peers (sellers) create high-quality profiles, they could easily achieve a higher trust in their brand. The outcome also has interesting implications for the peer. If peers create a strong profile, trust is immediately boosted, even if a brand is relatively new.

The second results, shows that brand equity was found insignificant on both peer and brand trust. This is not in accordance with the brand equity literature in B2C and P2P. Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán (2005) found that brand equity is important to build brand trust. However, brands might not be as important in the sharing economy, since they are not the direct sellers. Yet, this is also different from other literature. Ratchford, et al. (2003) found that brand equity (Amazon) is a significant predictor of trust in an auction-based peer-to-peer transaction. In a different setting, Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995), found that a strong brand transmits trust to the market, especially when there is no direct contact between consumers and companies. This concept can be directly applied to the sharing economy, since

brands are intermediaries and have no direct contact with the supplier and consumer. This result suggests that the sharing economy is *sui generis,* and the methods and findings of the previous literature cannot be generalized to all aspects of the sharing economy.

On the other hand, when exploring the different treatments, brand equity was found to have only one significant effect. Among the four different treatments measured in this study, only high brand equity was found to have a significant effect on peer trust. The effect on peer trust is found to be significant when the profile quality is low. The results show that, when profile quality is low, a strong brand generates more trust toward the peer than a brand with low equity. When a peer (buyer) meets another peer (seller) with a poor profile quality, a high equity brand, such as Airbnb, can make the peer (buyer) trust the other peer (seller) more. However, all other effects of brand equity on brand and peer trust were not significant. Yet, it is apparent that there could be a moderating effect on brand trust, when profile quality is low, as this was statistically significance on a 10% level. This shows that brand equity has a moderating role instead of a direct effect on peer and brand trust in a sharing economy context.

In the first model, the results showed that profile quality is a stronger measure of trust than brand equity. Therefore, peer quality is the most important measure of trust in the sharing economy. This is probably because brands have not yet acquired a dominant position in the sharing economy. The relatively low importance of brands may depend on the fact that the sharing economy is a new phenomenon, and people are often reluctant to the idea of transacting with a stranger. The peer is the one who delivers the service, and, therefore, a buyer should be mostly concerned with his/her reliability. However, this might change in the future, as consumers become more familiar with the sharing economy, and brands may have a stronger impact in the future.

The first part of the second model verified whether the antecedents of trust have a significant effect on both brand and peer trust. Even though these constructs have been tested directly with respect to purchasing intention in the sharing economy (Hawlitschek et al., 2016), their effects on brand and peer trust have not been

addressed in the existing literature. The SEM model provided significant measures for all ability, benevolence, and integrity on both peer and brand trust. However, this result is not surprising since the construct has been already tested in the interpersonal trust (Mayer et al., 1995, Salam et al., 2005) and online trust (Lee & Turban, 2001) literature. The results confirmed that these antecedents also play a role on trust in the sharing economy context.

However, the results from the peer trust antecedents show that the ability of the peers to deliver what they have promised has the strongest impact on trust in the peer. As previously discussed, both the peer and the brand need to make sure that the peer can express his/her ability to perform the service through his/her profile. On the other hand, the other antecedents, benevolence and integrity, have significant effects, but not as strong as ability. Although being honest and interested in the other person's welfare is a significant predictor, these elements have smaller effects on trust in the peer. These results suggest that the sharing economy is a value proposition (Credit Suisse, 2015), and, therefore, people are more concerned about the ability of a peer to deliver what is promised (value) rather than his/her intention to do good and his/her honesty. However, both the intention to do good and honesty play a positive role and should be taken into account. Brands need to build platforms and encourage peers to create profiles that demonstrate their ability, benevolence, and integrity as these are strong indicators of trust in the peer. This is also supported by the finding that the quality of a profile is essential for building trust.

Among the trust antecedents, brand ability has the strongest effect on brand trust. In the branding aspect, this relates to how a brand is perceived, in the sharing economy, to have the necessary skillset to deliver what is expected. This concept could be applied to a platform that supports safe and trustworthy transactions. Also, the honesty and desire to do good have an effect, but not as strong as ability. All the antecedents affect brand trust, in line with the impact of the antecedents on peer trust. Additional analysis also found a difference in the effect of the trust antecedents across the four treatments. The ability, benevolence, and integrity were different for brand and peer under the different quality treatments. Brands need to be careful regarding how they market themselves and peers based on the quality of

their brand and peers. This consideration should be further analyzed in the future research.

The last part of the second model explored the effect of brand trust and peer trust on purchasing intention. The purpose of this section is to assess the importance of trust in the brand and peer in a purchase-related measure. The trust antecedents of the peer (supplier) were found to be significant predictors of the intention to consume (Hawlitschek et al., 2016). However, the previous literature has not provided a unique definition of the combination of trustworthiness and dependency of peer trust. Therefore, a proven significant effect on purchasing intention has not been identified yet. Interpersonal relationships, however, have been proved to impact firm performance (Macintosh & Lockshin, 1997), and a similar effect for trust in the brand (Long-Yi & Ching-Yuh, 2010) was found on purchasing intention. The results of the analysis show that both brand and peer trust explain a substantial portion of the variation in the purchasing intention. Both trust variables have a strong effect. This outcome is in line with the previous literature stating the high importance of trust in the sharing economy. This study found that, by trusting the peer and the brand, the consumer is more likely to purchase. However, the strongest effect is related to trust in the peer. These findings show that a high profile quality along with brand equity will engage the peer (buyer) into trusting the other peer (seller) and create an intention to purchase. The same effect is also present in the relationship between brand trust and purchasing intention, but to a smaller degree.

In the retail setting, sales people are rewarded with a provision of the sale, which makes them eager to create and maintain good relationships with the customer. Macintosh and Lockshin (1997) found that loyalty toward the company in a retail setting is based on sales people and their interpersonal relationship with the customer. However, in the sharing economy, this relationship is different. Even though this study showed that inducing peers to create good profiles results in trust and purchasing intention, there is no direct way of rewarding the seller (peer) for providing a good profile, as it is, instead, the case in the retail industry. Therefore, the companies operating in the sharing economy are highly reliant on the self-gain economical aspect of the seller as they need to rely on sellers to build a good profile and create trust. Companies need to be aware that the quality of the profiles affects

both trust toward their brand and peers. If a brand has peers with high-quality profiles, the brand will generate trust. Companies need to build platforms and encourage peers to provide information that generates trust. An example is Airbnb's Government ID Verification and its connection to peers' social media accounts. These measures restrict people to hide under different identities, while they should create trust between peers. Another measure is to create incentives for the peers to provide high quality profiles. Airbnb's superhost accreditation is such an incentive. This accreditation is given to peers (sellers) who have a high response rate (90%), 5 stars ratings (80%), commitment (low cancel rate) and experience (at least 10 visits a year) (Airbnb, 2017). However, the sharing economy still needs more measures to create greater trust between peers. Brands needs to take a more important role than they currently have, but this could also be indirect effects by creating platforms that enhance trust.

This study has conceptualized profile quality in the sharing economy, demonstrated its significance, and showed that brand equity plays a less significant role in building trust. The results indicate that the trust antecedents play a role in the sharing economy with respect to both the peer and the brand. However, since the "trust economy" is a new phenomenon, building brand and peer trust through ability, benevolence, and integrity is essential. If businesses were able to build platforms and systems to support the trust antecedents through different elements of a profile and using the brand to also support the trust antecedents, all parties in the sharing economy would trust each other to a higher degree. Both trust in the peer and the brand become important when a company that operates in the sharing economy tries to build an intention to purchase.

6 Managerial Implications

The findings of this study help draw some general conclusions and managerial implications. In the discussion part, the effect of profile quality and brand equity on peer and brand trust was discussed. To build trust in the "trust economy," the quality of the profile becomes important with respect to trust both in a brand and in a peer. Businesses need to develop platforms where peers could demonstrate their ability, benevolence, and integrity. A high profile quality is related to the information/text provided by the peer, verification of information, response rate and average

response time of the host, recommendation system, and picture of the peer. Also, businesses should create help centers where people can receive assistance and inspiration to create good profiles. For instance, they could share videos on how to create profiles with ability, benevolence, and integrity. Brands need to actively incentivize peers to create high-quality profiles. This is especially important for new companies as their brand equity becomes less important when high-quality profiles are present on the market. Brands should further advertise people with great profiles and people that shows their ability, benevolence and integrity towards a transaction. If brands can show that their peers have these attributes, maybe people get less reluctant to the idea of sharing (or remorse to the stranger danger aspect).

7 Limitations

One limitation of the present study is that different factors, other than brand equity, could make the brand a more significant player in building trust in a peer and brand. Brand equity does not explain emotions toward a brand; soft metrics, such as liking and attitude toward a brand, can have an effect that has not been accounted for in this study. Using more measures that are attributable to the brand would help address this issue.

Since the sharing economy is a recent phenomenon, it is not known whether the conclusions reached for the hospitality industry can be extended to the whole industry. In addition, the sample size does not guarantee to adequately represent the whole population. Some respondents may have been biased toward the sharing economy before they answered the survey. Therefore, the findings of this study might not be generalizable to a more comprehensive range of peers and brands in the sharing economy context.

Trust propensity was not used in this study as a moderator in the relationship between trust antecedents and trust. Many studies found differences in trusting beliefs to have an effect on trust (Lee & Turban, 2001). The absence of trust propensity might bias the effects on trust since people have been proven to have different beliefs on trust.

8 Further Research

This research has identified several avenues for future research. Trust in the sharing economy has not been fully addressed in the existing literature.

First, profile quality is first defined in this research. Further development in the understanding of how good profiles are built is needed, both for brands and for peers. Profiles have many different aspects, and the future literature should examine how peers can set up successful profiles, for instance addressing the difference between positive and negative statements in a profile. Some words in a profile's informative text can be perceived as negative, and peers should avoid such expressions to generate trust. In addition, research should identify the expressions that may help express ability, benevolence, and integrity. The same can be applied to other profile factors as well.

As the sharing economy grows larger, people who want to sell or rent their possessions need to establish trust by providing enough information to attenuate the stranger/danger connotation. To build trust, one needs to understand what fears lie behind the lack of confidence. Therefore, research should understand the fears associated with dealing with strangers. An additional venue for future research relates to cross cultural trust, and how trust is perceived across different cultures. There may be an intrinsic difference in renting or buying from different continents, and perhaps some places need higher level of trust to create a purchasing intention. Also, different cultural backgrounds can have an effect on trust.

One could also address brand loyalty over time, trying to identify essential elements for companies to build long-term relationships with the customer when they are not the final providers of a service. Loyalty in the sharing economy will most likely be different from the concepts described in the current brand loyalty literature. Since one is most likely to order from different peers, peer loyalty may not be relevant. In this context, the brand is likely to be more important, and if people have many good transactions with the brand, this could generate brand loyalty. However, when they have one bad interaction, it is not clear whether customers change brand, go back to the regular industry, or move to another peer.

New research can also explore the relationship between seller and brand. As the present research suggests, brands need to induce their peers to provide quality profiles. Peers, on the other hand, depend on the brand to provide services to peers (buyers) and guidelines that assure that nothing bad will happen to their possession. This relationship is unexplored in the literature and requires more attention. Both elements seem highly relevant for the success of the sharing economy, and the improvement of their relationship would benefit them both.

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    25th of February from https://www.visioncritical.com/resources/new-rules-
    collaborative-economy/

Appendices

Appendix 1: *Scenarios*

Hi, my name is Christoffer Ramstad and I am a master student at BI Norwegian School. This is a pre-test for the survey for my master's thesis. Please read the text and profile carefully and answer the questions after that. Thank you in advance.

Carefully, read about the company (below) and the profile of the renter (on the next page). Then please answer some questions regarding the company and profile.

Scenario Brand Equity

(Low Brand Equity)

DreamHub is an online community driven market place for hospitality services. The company enables people to lease or rent short and long term lodging including vacation rentals, apartment rentals or hostel beds. As they are in the sharing economy, DreamHub plays the role of a broker between two peers (renter and rentee). Listings are available all around the world and can be browsed and booked online or via your smartphone device. The host's profile are available with picture, personal text, verifications, and previous customer reviews for people to evaluate the different hosts.

Imagine you are going to book an accommodation from DreamHub for your next trip. You look at different prices and places and you find your optimal accommodation based on these characteristics. You click at the accommodation and then get introduced to the host's profile of your selection. The host's profile from the accommodation you choosed is presented next. Please take a careful look at the profile.

(or)

(High brand equity)

Airbnb is an online community driven market place for hospitality services. The company enables people to lease or rent short and long term lodging including vacation rentals, apartment rentals or hostel beds. As they are in the sharing economy, Airbnb plays the role of a broker between two peers (renter and rentee). Listings are available all around the world and can be browsed and booked online or via your smartphone device. The host's profile are available with picture, personal text, verifications, and previous customer reviews for people to evaluate the different hosts.

Imagine you are going to book an accommodation from Airbnb for your next trip. You look at different prices and places and you find your optimal accommodation based on these characteristics. You click at the accommodation and then get introduced to the host's profile of your selection. The host's profile from the accommodation you choose is presented next. Please take a careful look at the profile.

Profile Quality

(Low profile quality)

The Host is Andrea

Oslo, Norway - Registered July 2009

14 Reviews   **Response rate: 50%**
Response time: Within one week

My place is up for rent. Contact me for a
reservation!!!!!

Verified ID

Email Address
Verified

Phone Number
(███)███-███ 21

14 Reviews   ★★★☆☆

Accuracy	★★★☆☆	Location	★★★☆☆
Communication	★★★☆☆	Check In	★★★☆☆
Cleanliness	★★★☆☆	Value	★★★☆☆

(or)

(High profile quality)

The Host is Andrea

Oslo, Norway - Registered July 2009

368 Reviews Verified ID **Response rate: 100%**
Response time: Within an hour

Hello, my name is Andrea. Born and raised in Norway and been living in Oslo for over 20 years now. I am social, easy going and love my place. I have a background as a nurse and I love to cook, go to concerts/plays, the movies, and take long walks. Have used Airbnb several times and just love the concept. I know how important it is to stay in a very clean, ultra-comfortable place with small luxuries, with the nicest sheets, the most comfortable pillow, and a nice outdoor area. It is a pleasure for me to share my home with you. We have a very close relationship to our neighbors. If any help needed, I am available with information about the city and would love to recommend places to visit. Feel free to contact me at any time. I hope to make your stay in Oslo as perfect as possible.

Verified ID

✓ Email Address
  Verified
✓ Phone Number
  (███) ███-██ 21
✓ Facebook
  1203 Friends
✓ LinkedIn
  Validated
✓ Reviewed
  9 Reviews
✓ Offline ID
  Personal Info

368 Reviews ★★★★★

Accuracy	★★★★★	Location	★★★★⯪
Communication	★★★★★	Check In	★★★★⯪
Cleanliness	★★★★★	Value	★★★★★

Appendix 2: *Questionnaire*

1. How familiar are you with the sharing economy?

Extremely familiar	Very familiar	Moderately familiar	Slightly familiar	Not f
○	○	○	○	

2. When is the last time you participated in the sharing economy?

Within the pervious month	Within the pervious two months	Within the pervious six months	Within the previous year	Never pa
○	○	○	○	○

3. How often do you participate in the sharing economy service in a year?

Weekly	Monthly	Once every 2-3 months	Once every 6 month	Once a year	Never parti
○	○	○	○	○	○

4. What part do you usually take in the sharing economy?

Seller/renter	Buyer/rentee	Both
○	○	○

When evaluating a profile, how important do you find the profile characteristics below? 1= Least important and 7=Most important

5. Other people's online recommendations for the profile

1-Least Important	2	3	4	5	6	7- Most Important
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

6. Quality of the pictures on the profile

1-Least Important	2	3	4	5	6	7- Most Important
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

7. The provided information on the profile

1-Least Important	2	3	4	5	6	7- Most Important
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

8. Verification of the information (Governmental ID approval, email address, phone number, social media account).

1-Least Important	2	3	4	5	6	7- Most Important
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

9. The response rate and average response time of the host

1-Least Important	2	3	4	5	6	7- Most Important
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

To what degree do you agree or disagree with the statements below?

10. It is easy for me to trust a person

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

11. It is easy for me to trust a company.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

12. I tend to trust a person, even though I have little knowledge of them

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

13. I tend to trust a company, even though I have little knowledge of them

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

14. Trusting someone or something is not difficult.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

Exposed to scenarios

15. Have you heard of DreamHub/Airbnb before?

○ Yes

○ No

Based on the previous information about brand, host's profile and the guidelines explained, please indicate to what degree do you agree or disagree with the statements below. To what degree do you agree or disagree with the statements below? Remember that you are booking your accommodation through Airbnb/DreamHub.

16. I intend to use Airbnb/Dreamhub to conduct product purchases

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

17. I expect to purchase from Airbnb/Dreamhub in the future

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

18. It is likely that I will transact with Airbnb/Dreamhub in the future

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

19. I intend to use a person like Andrea to conduct product purchase

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

20. I expect to purchase from a person like Andrea in the future

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

21. It is likely that I will transact with a person like Andrea in the future

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

To what degree do you agree or disagree with the statements below? Remember that you are booking your accommodation through Airbnb/Dreamhub.

22. If I needed to book an accommodation in a hurry, I would feel comfortable depending on Airbnb/Dreamhub.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

23. I can always rely on Airbnb/Dreamhub whenever I need to rent an accommodation

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

24. I feel that I could count on Airbnb/Dreamhub to help me rent the accommodation I need

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

25. If I needed the best accommodation in a specific place, I would be willing to rely on the information provided on Airbnb/Dreamhub.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

26. Airbnb/Dreamhub is competent and effective in renting out accommodations

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

27. Airbnb/Dreamhub performs its role of renting out accommodations very well

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

28. Overall, Airbnb/Dreamhub is a capable and proficient accommodation renter

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

29. In general, Airbnb/Dreamhub is very knowledgeable about renting out accommodations

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

30. I believe that Airbnb/Dreamhub would act in my best interest

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

31. If I required help, Airbnb/Dreamhub would do its best to help me

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

32. Airbnb/Dreamhub is interested in my well-being, not just its own

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

33. Airbnb/Dreamhub is truthful in its dealings with me

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

34. I would characterize Airbnb/Dreamhub as honest

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

35. Airbnb/Dreamhub would keep its commitments

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

36. Airbnb/Dreamhub is sincere and genuine

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

To what degree do you agree or disagree with the statements below?

37. If I needed to book an accommodation in a hurry, I would feel comfortable renting from Andrea

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

38. I can always rely on a person such as Andrea whenever I need to rent an accommodation

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

39. I feel that I could count on Andrea to provide me the accommodation I need

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

40. If I needed the best accommodation in a specific place, I would be willing to rely on the information provided by Andrea

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

41. Andrea is competent and effective in renting out her accommodation

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

42. Andrea performs her role of renting out her accommodation very well

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

43. Overall, Andrea is a capable and proficient in renting out her accommodation

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

44. In general, Andrea is very knowledgeable about renting out an accommodatio

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

45. I believe that Andrea would act in my best interest

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

46. If I required help, Andrea would do its best to help me

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

47. Andrea is interested in my well-being, not just her own

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

48. Andrea is truthful in her dealings with me

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

49. I would characterize Andrea as honest

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

50. Andrea would keep her commitments

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

51. Andrea is sincere and genuine

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

52. How old are you?

○ Under 18
○ 18 - 24
○ 25 - 34
○ 35 - 44
○ 45 - 54
○ 55 - 64
○ 65 or older

53. What is your gender?

○ Male

○ Female

54. What is your relationship status?

○ Single
○ In a relationship
○ Engaged
○ Married
○ Seperated

55. What is your highest education?

○ Less than high school
○ High school graduate
○ Some college
○ 3 years degree (bachelor)
○ 5 years degree (master)
○ Professional degree
○ Doctorate

56. What is your employment status?

○ Employed full time
○ Employed part time
○ Unemployed
○ Retired
○ Student
○ Self-employed
○ Other

57. What is your area of residence?

○ City
○ Town
○ Rural Area
○ Other

58. What is your income?

○ Less than $20,000
○ $20,000 - $39,999
○ $40,000 - $59,999
○ $60,000 - $79,999
○ $80,000 - $99,999
○ More than $100,000
○ Prefer not to say

Appendix 3: *Pre-test questionnaire*

1. How familiar are you with the sharing economy?

Extremely familiar	Very familiar	Moderately familiar	Slightly familiar	Not f
○	○	○	○	

2. Have you heard of DreamHub/Airbnb before?

○ Yes

○ No

Exposed to scenarios

To what degree do you disagree or agree with the following statements?

3. I think Airbnb/Dreamhub is recognizable.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

4. I think Airbnb/Dreamhub is trustworthy.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

5. I would rent an apartment from Airbnb/Dreamhub.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

6. I believe Airbnb/Dreamhub is well-known.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

7. To what degree do you disagree or agree with the statement: I think the brand is realistic?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

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To what degree do you disagree or agree with the following statements?

8. I think Andrea`s profile is realistic.

| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly agree |

9. I think Andrea offers a high quality service.

| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly agree |

10. I think Andrea`s profile is trustworthy

| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly agree |

11. I would rent an apartment from Andrea.

| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly agree |

If you have any feedback or recommendations regarding the information of the brand or Andrea`s profile, please include it here.

Appendix 4: *Mean scores of treatments from pre-test*

		I think the Brand is recognizable	I think Brand is trustworthy	I would rent apartment from Brand	I believe Brand is well-known	I think Andrea`s profile is realistic	I think Andrea offers a high quality service	I think Andrea`s profile is trustworthy	I would rent an apartment from Andrea
LowDream	Mean	4.59	4.75	4.42	3.40	4.83	3.83	4.50	3.50
	N	12	12	12	5	12	12	12	12
HighDream	Mean	5.00	5.43	5.71	3.50	6.00	5.86	5.57	6.14
	N	7	7	7	2	7	7	7	7
LowAirbnb	Mean	6.20	5.20	3.80	6.00	5.40	3.80	3.80	3.40
	N	5	5	5	1	5	5	5	5
HighAirbnb	Mean	5.83	5.50	5.50	5.80	5.92	5.75	5.67	5.58
	N	12	12	12	5	12	12	12	12
Total	Mean	5.28	5.19	4.94	4.54	5.50	4.86	5.00	4.69
	N	36	36	36	13	36	36	36	36

Appendix 5: *Descriptive Statistics*

Have you heard about DreamHub before?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	8	2,6	5,4	5,4
	No	140	46,1	94,6	100
	Total	148	48,7	100	
Missing	System	156	51,3		
Total		304	100		

Have you heard about Airbnb before?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	149	49,0	95,5	95,5
	No	7	2,3	4,5	100
	Total	156	51,3	100	
Missing	System	148	48,7		
Total		304	100		

How old are you?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Under 18	1	0,3	0,3	0,3
	18 - 24	19	6,3	6,3	6,6
	25 - 34	123	40,5	40,5	47,0
	35 - 44	81	26,6	26,6	73,7
	45 - 54	42	13,8	13,8	87,5
	55 - 64	30	9,9	9,9	97,4
	65 or older	8	2,6	2,6	100,0
	Total	304	100	100	

What is your gender?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Male	174	57,2	57,2	57,2
	Female	130	42,8	42,8	100
Valid	Total	304	100	100	

What is your relationship status?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Single	132	43,4	43,4	43,4
	In a relationship	45	14,8	14,8	58,2
	Engaged	7	2,3	2,3	60,5
	Married	116	38,2	38,2	98,7
	Seperated	4	1,3	1,3	100
Valid	Total	304	100	100	

What is your highest education?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than high school	6	2,0	2,0	2,0
	High school graduate	38	12,5	12,5	14,5
	Some college	87	28,6	28,6	43,1
	3 years degree (Bachelor)	127	41,8	41,8	84,9
	5 year degree (Master, MBA)	27	8,9	8,9	93,8
	Professional degree	15	4,9	4,9	98,7
	Doctorate	4	1,3	1,3	100
	Total	304	100	100	

What is your employment status?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Employed full time	172	56,6	56,6	56,6
	Employed part time	44	14,5	14,5	71,1
	Unemployed	15	4,9	4,9	76,0
	Retired	6	2,0	2,0	78,0
	Student	6	2,0	2,0	79,9
	Self-employed	55	18,1	18,1	98,0
	Other	6	2,0	2,0	100
	Total	304	100	100	

What is your area of residence

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	City	179	58,9	58,9	58,9
	Town	83	27,3	27,3	86,2
	Rural area	36	11,8	11,8	98,0
	Other	6	2,0	2,0	100
	Total	304	100	100	

What is your income?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than $20,000	64	21,1	21,1	21,1
	$20,000 - $39,999	93	30,6	30,6	51,6
	$40,000 - $59,999	70	23,0	23,0	74,7
	$60,000 - $79,999	38	12,5	12,5	87,2
	$80,000 - $99,999	23	7,6	7,6	94,7
	More than $100,000	10	3,3	3,3	98,0
	Prefer not to say	6	2,0	2,0	100
	Total	304	100	100	

Appendix 6: *Factor Analysis*

KMO and Barlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.902
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2960.554
	df	28
	Sig.	0.000

Rotated Component Matrix

	Component	
	1	*2*
Brand Trust1	.330	.838
Brand Trust2	.270	.887
Brand Trust3	.250	.909
Brand Trust4	.304	.866
Peer Trust1	.905	.320
Peer Trust2	.919	.284
Peer Trust3	.929	.302
Peer Trust4	.922	.296

Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.687	71.086	71.086	5.687	71.086	71.086	3.714	46.430	46.430
2	1.444	18.045	89.130	1.444	18.045	89.130	3.416	42.701	89.130
3	0.259	3.237	92.367						
4	0.222	2.779	95.146						
5	0.148	1.853	96.999						
6	0.096	1.199	98.198						
7	0.091	1.137	99.334						
8	0.053	0.666	100.000						

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Appendix 7: *Reliability Analysis*

Construct	Item	Cronbach's alpha
Brand Trust	4	0.939
Peer Trust	4	0.977

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Peer Trust1	13.48	32.664	0.928	0.972
Peer Trust2	13.60	33.931	0.932	0.972
Peer Trust3	13.40	32.413	0.961	0.963
Peer Trust4	13.54	31.980	0.943	0.968

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Brand Trust1	14.62	16.182	0.824	0.930
Brand Trust2	14.78	16.340	0.862	0.918
Brand Trust3	14.43	16.246	0.885	0.911
Brand Trust4	14.49	16.937	0.849	0.922

Appendix 8: *Normality*

Normal Q-Q Plot of Brandtrust for Treatment= LOWDREAM

Normal Q-Q Plot of Brandtrust for Treatment= HIGHDREAM

Normal Q-Q Plot of Brandtrust for Treatment= LOWAIRBNB

Normal Q-Q Plot of Brandtrust for Treatment= HIGHAIRBNB

Normal Q-Q Plot of Peertrust for Treatment= LOWDREAM

Normal Q-Q Plot of Peertrust for Treatment= HIGHDREAM

Normal Q-Q Plot of Peertrust for Treatment= LOWAIRBNB

Normal Q-Q Plot of Peertrust for Treatment= HIGHAIRBNB

Test of Normality

	Treatment	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Brand Trust	LowDream	0.103	69	0.069	0.957	69	0.019
	HighDream	0.141	79	0.000	0.933	79	0.000
	LowAirbnb	0.134	71	0.003	0.940	71	0.002
	HighAirbnb	0.104	85	0.023	0.955	85	0.005
Peer Trust	LowDream	0.093	69	0.200	0.943	69	0.003
	HighDream	0.174	79	0.000	0.863	79	0.000
	LowAirbnb	0.149	71	0.000	0.942	71	0.003
	HighAirbnb	0.189	85	0.000	0.890	85	0.000
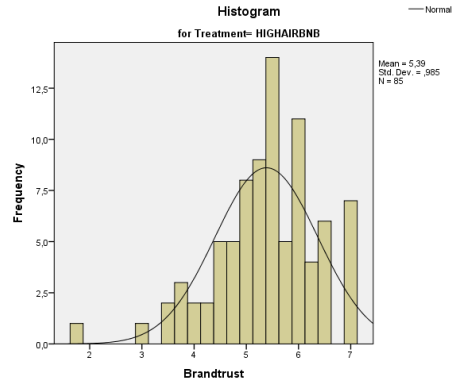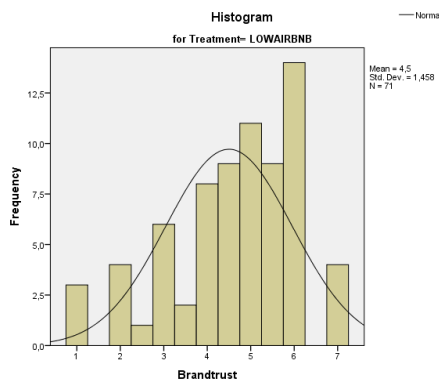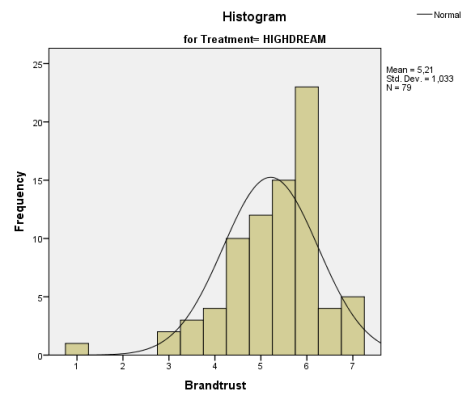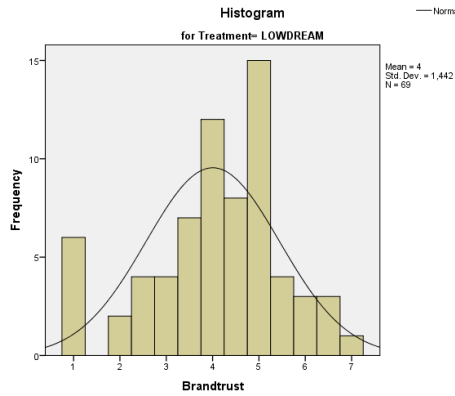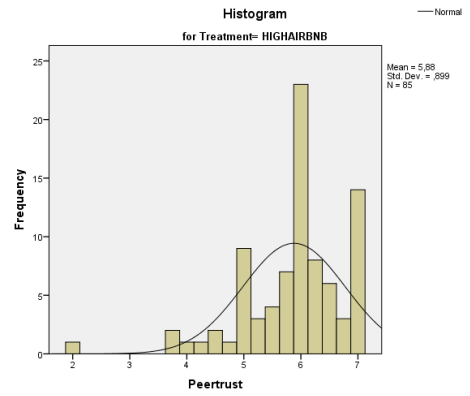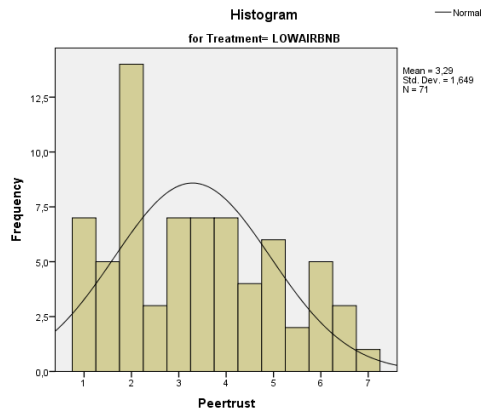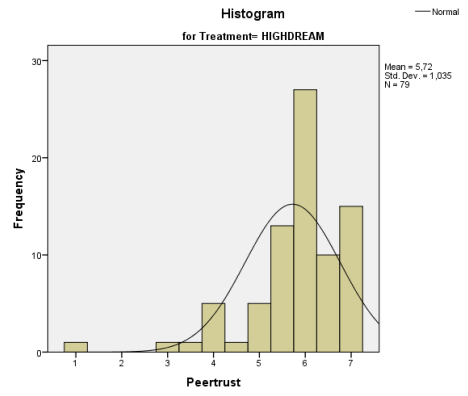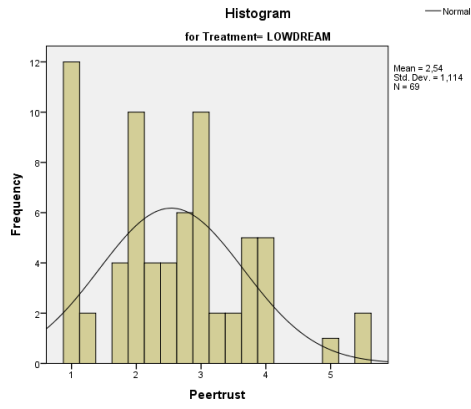
Descriptives

	Treatment			Statistic	Std. Error
Brandtrust	LOWDREAM	Mean		4,00	,174
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	3,66	
			Upper Bound	4,35	
		5% Trimmed Mean		4,03	
		Median		4,00	
		Variance		2,080	
		Std. Deviation		1,442	
		Minimum		1	
		Maximum		7	
		Range		6	
		Interquartile Range		2	
		Skewness		-,459	,289
		Kurtosis		-,112	,570
	HIGHDREAM	Mean		5,21	,116
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	4,98	
			Upper Bound	5,44	
		5% Trimmed Mean		5,26	
		Median		5,50	
		Variance		1,067	
		Std. Deviation		1,033	
		Minimum		1	
		Maximum		7	
		Range		6	
		Interquartile Range		1	
		Skewness		-1,088	,271
		Kurtosis		2,583	,535
	LOWAIRBNB	Mean		4,50	,173
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	4,15	
			Upper Bound	4,85	
		5% Trimmed Mean		4,56	
		Median		4,75	
		Variance		2,125	
		Std. Deviation		1,458	
		Minimum		1	
		Maximum		7	
		Range		6	
		Interquartile Range		2	
		Skewness		-,713	,285
		Kurtosis		-,097	,563
	HIGHAIRBNB	Mean		5,39	,107
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	5,17	
			Upper Bound	5,60	
		5% Trimmed Mean		5,43	
		Median		5,50	
		Variance		,970	
		Std. Deviation		,985	
		Minimum		2	
		Maximum		7	
		Range		5	
		Interquartile Range		1	
		Skewness		-,746	,261
		Kurtosis		1,368	,517
Peertrust	LOWDREAM	Mean		2,54	,134
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	2,27	
			Upper Bound	2,81	
		5% Trimmed Mean		2,49	
		Median		2,50	
		Variance		1,240	
		Std. Deviation		1,114	
		Minimum		1	
		Maximum		6	
		Range		5	
		Interquartile Range		1	
		Skewness		,471	,289
		Kurtosis		,015	,570
	HIGHDREAM	Mean		5,72	,116
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	5,49	
			Upper Bound	5,96	
		5% Trimmed Mean		5,82	
		Median		5,75	
		Variance		1,071	
		Std. Deviation		1,035	
		Minimum		1	
		Maximum		7	
		Range		6	
		Interquartile Range		1	
		Skewness		-1,684	,271
		Kurtosis		5,009	,535
	LOWAIRBNB	Mean		3,29	,196
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	2,90	
			Upper Bound	3,69	
		5% Trimmed Mean		3,24	
		Median		3,00	
		Variance		2,721	
		Std. Deviation		1,649	
		Minimum		1	
		Maximum		7	
		Range		6	
		Interquartile Range		3	
		Skewness		,363	,285
		Kurtosis		-,948	,563
	HIGHAIRBNB	Mean		5,88	,097
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	5,69	
			Upper Bound	6,07	
		5% Trimmed Mean		5,95	
		Median		6,00	
		Variance		,807	
		Std. Deviation		,899	
		Minimum		2	
		Maximum		7	
		Range		5	
		Interquartile Range		1	
		Skewness		-1,326	,261
		Kurtosis		3,299	,517

Appendix 9: *Equality of Variance-Covariance Matrices*

Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices	
Box's M	109.753
F	12.045
df1	9
df2	930874.119
Sig.	.000

Brand Equity:

Test of Homogeneity of Variance

Brand Trust			
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
0.837	1	299	0.361

Test of Homogeneity of Variance

Peer Trust			
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
2.218	1	299	0.138

Profile Quality:

Test of Homogeneity of Variance

Brand Trust			
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
29.964	1	299	0.000

Test of Homogeneity of Variance

Peer Trust			
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
43.423	1	299	0.000

Appendix 10: *Outliers*
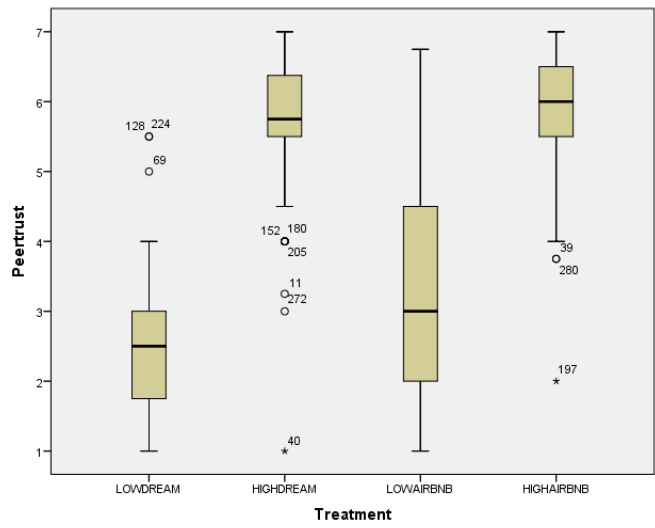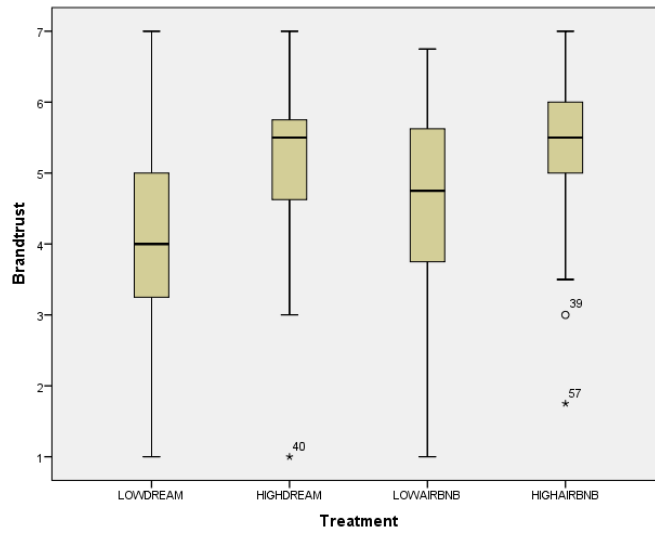
Treatment					
		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Valid	**LowDream**	66	22.7	22.7	22.7
	HighDream	73	25.1	25.1	47.8
	LowAirbnb	71	24.4	24.4	72.2
	HighAirbnb	81	27.8	27.8	100.0
	Total	291	100.0	100.0	

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Appendix 11: *New tests of Normality*

		Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
Test of Normality							
	Treatment	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Brand Trust	LowDream	0.109	66	0.052	0.957	66	0.023
	HighDream	0.142	73	0.001	0.960	73	0.022
	LowAirbnb	0.134	71	0.003	0.940	71	0.002
	HighAirbnb	0.087	81	0.200	0.970	81	0.052
Peer Trust	LowDream	0.112	66	0.040	0.931	66	0.001
	HighDream	0.119	73	0.012	0.947	73	0.004
	LowAirbnb	0.149	71	0.000	0.942	71	0.003
	HighAirbnb	0.166	81	0.000	0.936	81	0.001

Normal Q-Q Plot of Peertrust
for Treatment= LOWAIRBNB

Normal Q-Q Plot of Peertrust
for Treatment= HIGHAIRBNB
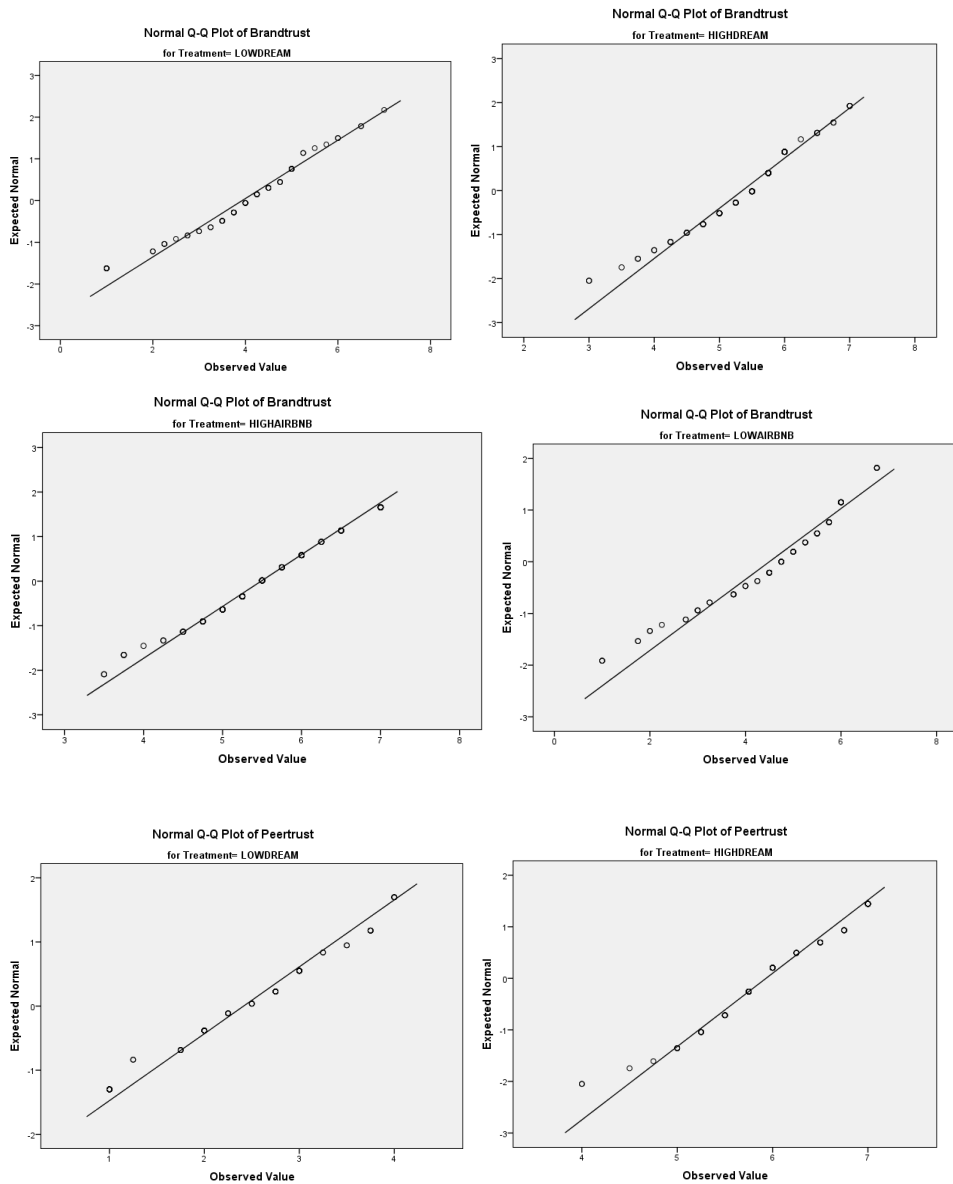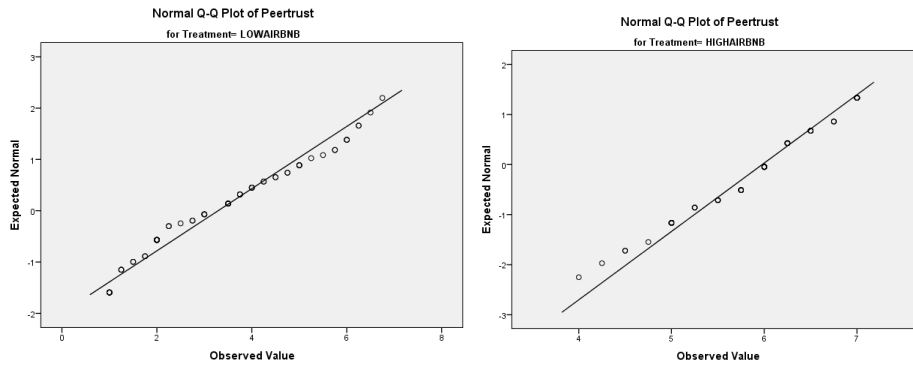
Appendix 12: *Linearity and collinearity/multicollinearity*
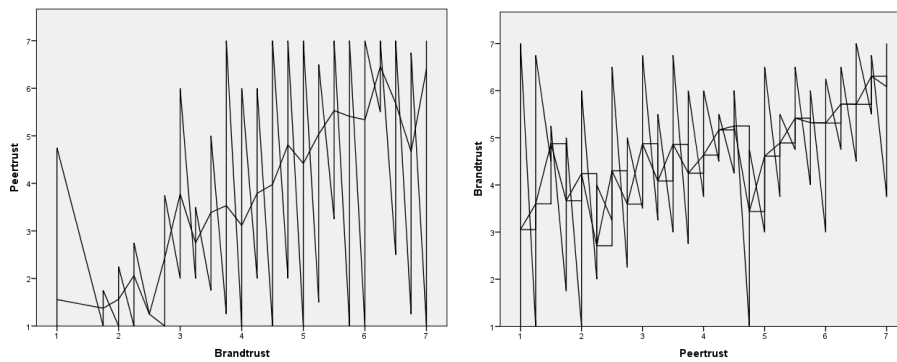
Correlations		Brand Trust	Peer Trust
Brand Trust	Pearson Correlation	1	0.596
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	291	291
Peer Trust	Pearson Correlation	0.596	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	291	291

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Appendix 13: *Indicator Reliability (Outer Model Loadings Squared)*

	Outer loadings	Outer loadings ^2
AbilityB1 ← Brand ability	0,936	0,876
AbilityB2 ← Brand ability	0,930	0,864
AbilityB3 ← Brand ability	0,953	0,908
AbilityB4 ← Brand ability	0,910	0,829
BemevolenceB3 ← Brand benevolence	0,930	0,865
BenevolenceB1←Brand benevolence	0,954	0,910
BenevolenceB2 ← Brand benevolence	0,945	0,892
IntegrityB1 ← Brand integrity	0,932	0,869
IntegrityB2 ← Brand integrity	0,950	0,902
IntegrityB3 ← Brand integrity	0,927	0,859
ItegrityB4 ← Brand integrity	0,939	0,882
Pability1 ← Peer ability	0,973	0,948
Pability2 ← Peer ability	0,979	0,959
Pability3 ← Peer ability	0,983	0,966
Pability4 ← Peer ability	0,969	0,940
Pbenevolence1 ← Peer benevolence	0,969	0,939
Pbenevolence2 ← Peer benevolence	0,970	0,940
Pbenevolence3 ← Peer benevolence	0,968	0,937
Pintegrity1 ← Peer integrity	0,955	0,912
Pintegrity2 ← Peer integrity	0,972	0,946
Pintegrity3 ← Peer integrity	0,955	0,912
Pintegrity4 ← Peer integrity	0,970	0,940
PurcaseiBnt2 ← Purchase intention	0,872	0,760
PurchaseiBnt1 ← Purchase intention	0,842	0,710
PurchaseiBnt3 ← Purchase intention	0,848	0,720
PurchaseiPnt1 ← Purchase intention	0,909	0,826
PurchaseiPnt2 ← Purchase intention	0,921	0,849
PurchaseiPnt3 ← Purchase intention	0,917	0,841
TrustB1 ← Brand trust	0,900	0,811
TrustB2 ← Brand trust	0,927	0,859
TrustB3 ← Brand trust	0,940	0,884
TrustB4 ← Brand trust	0,919	0,844
TrustPe1 ← Peer trust	0,959	0,919
TrustPe2 ← Peer trust	0,962	0,926
TrustPe3 ← Peer trust	0,977	0,955
TrustPe4 ← Peer trust	0,968	0,937

Appendix 14: *Outer model loading and significance*

	Brand Ability	Brand Benevolence	Brand Integrity	Brand Trust	Peer Ability	Peer Benevolence	Peer Integrity	Peer Trust	Purchase Intention
AbilityB1	0.936								
AbilityB2	0.930								
AbilityB3	0.953								
AbilityB4	0.910								
BenevolenceB3		0.930							
BenevolenceB1		0.954							
BenevolenceB2		0.945							
IntegrityB1			0.932						
IntegrityB2			0.950						
IntegrityB3			0.927						
IntegrityB4			0.939						
TrustB1				0.900					
TrustB2				0.927					
TrustB3				0.940					
TrustB4				0.919					
AbilityP1					0.973				
AbilityP2					0.979				
AbilityP3					0.983				
AbilityP4					0.969				
BenevolenceP3						0.969			
BenevolenceP1						0.970			
BenevolenceP2						0.968			
IntegrityP1							0.955		
IntegrityP2							0.972		
IntegrityP3							0.955		
IntegrityP4							0.970		
TrustP1								0.959	
TrustP2								0.962	
TrustP3								0.977	
TrustP4								0.968	
PurchaseintB2									0.872
PurchaseintB1									0.842
PurchaseintB3									0.849
PurchaseintP1									0.909
PurchaseintP2									0.921
PurchaseintP1									0.917

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Std. Dev.	T-Statistics	P Value
AbilityB1 ← Brand ability	0.936	0.935	0.011	87.164	0.000
AbilityB2 ← Brand ability	0.930	0.929	0.013	71.753	0.000
AbilityB3 ← Brand ability	0.953	0.953	0.009	102.559	0.000
AbilityB4 ← Brand ability	0.910	0.910	0.019	48.395	0.000
BemevolenceB3 ← Brand benevolence	0.930	0.930	0.012	74.747	0.000
BenevolenceB1←Brand benevolence	0.954	0.953	0.007	137.831	0.000
BenevolenceB2 ← Brand benevolence	0.945	0.944	0.008	120.299	0.000
IntegrityB1 ← Brand integrity	0.932	0.932	0.011	82.382	0.000
IntegrityB2 ← Brand integrity	0.950	0.950	0.007	131.741	0.000
IntegrityB3 ← Brand integrity	0.927	0.926	0.011	81.615	0.000
ItegrityB4 ← Brand integrity	0.939	0.939	0.009	100.014	0.000
Pability1 ← Peer ability	0.973	0.973	0.004	260.480	0.000
Pability2 ← Peer ability	0.979	0.979	0.003	330.322	0.000
Pability3 ← Peer ability	0.983	0.983	0.003	288.445	0.000
Pability4 ← Peer ability	0.969	0.969	0.007	143.445	0.000
Pbenevolence1 ← Peer benevolence	0.969	0.969	0.005	143.377	0.000
Pbenevolence2 ← Peer benevolence	0.970	0.970	0.004	181.188	0.000
Pbenevolence3 ← Peer benevolence	0.968	0.968	0.005	227.186	0.000
Pintegrity1 ← Peer integrity	0.955	0.955	0.006	200.673	0.000
Pintegrity2 ← Peer integrity	0.972	0.972	0.004	152.620	0.000
Pintegrity3 ← Peer integrity	0.955	0.955	0.008	256.171	0.000
Pintegrity4 ← Peer integrity	0.970	0.970	0.004	123.575	0.000
PurcaseiBnt2 ← Purchase intention	0.872	0.871	0.017	217.871	0.000
PurchaseiBnt1 ← Purchase intention	0.843	0.842	0.023	50.440	0.000
PurchaseiBnt3 ← Purchase intention	0.849	0.848	0.021	37.247	0.000
PurchaseiPnt1 ← Purchase intention	0.909	0.909	0.010	39.711	0.000
PurchaseiPnt2 ← Purchase intention	0.921	0.921	0.008	94.654	0.000
PurchaseiPnt3 ← Purchase intention	0.917	0.917	0.009	115.441	0.000
TrustB1 ← Brand trust	0.900	0.899	0.022	105.296	0.000
TrustB2 ← Brand trust	0.927	0.927	0.011	40.997	0.000
TrustB3 ← Brand trust	0.940	0.940	0.010	87.704	0.000
TrustB4 ← Brand trust	0.919	0.918	0.014	94.989	0.000
TrustPe1 ← Peer trust	0.959	0.959	0.007	67.806	0.000
TrustPe2 ← Peer trust	0.962	0.962	0.005	133.922	0.000
TrustPe3 ← Peer trust	0.977	0.977	0.003	300.637	0.000
TrustPe4 ← Peer trust	0.968	0.968	0.005	206.458	0.000