Value addition through the exploration of digital opportunities for a coliving business in Italy

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Abstract

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This thesis explores how digital opportunities can add value to a coliving business and its customers, with a focus on the Italian market. As coliving continues to grow in popularity, understanding how digital technologies can enhance both operational performance and customer experience, while preserving essential human touchpoints, is increasingly relevant. The objective of the study is to provide Company X with practical recommendations for leveraging digital solutions to support ongoing and future development and decision-making.

The theoretical framework draws on themes of digital transformation, business development, value creation, customer experience, and coliving. While coliving is discussed separately in more detail as the last part of the literature review, the thesis author aimed to link coliving and hospitality within all theoretical parts.

Using a mixed-method approach, the research combines a service blueprinting workshop with select participants from Company X and an online survey to previous and current colivers to capture both organisational processes and customer expectations. The workshop included four participants: the thesis author together with Company X's advisor, manager, and intern. The online survey was sent to 49 people, including both current and former residents in Company X's coliving, out of which 14 people responded.

Findings highlight key digital solutions, including automation, system integration, and digital resources, that improve efficiency and customer value. At the same time, results emphasise the continued importance of in-person interactions for building community and enhancing the coliving experience. The study offers actionable recommendations for Company X across operations, customer experience, community engagement, and digital visibility.

This research contributes to the growing academic field of coliving by applying a dual-perspective view on digital opportunities in the industry through the choice of methodology. Looking ahead, future studies could explore the long-term impact of digital tools on customer retention, operational cost savings, and community dynamics in coliving businesses. Comparative research between different coliving models could reveal how business strategies change between contexts. Further studies on customer personas, cultural aspects, or local regulatory factors within the Italian market would deepen understanding on how to effectively enhance digital opportunities.

Keywords
Coliving, customer experience, business development, digitalisation, digital transformation

Table of contents

1 Introduction

In today's business environment, digital solutions offer efficiency gains and for example the use of AI can help carry out certain redundant tasks so that a human can concentrate on more value-adding tasks to the business (Holmström 2022; The Strategy Institute 2025). This also changes the roles of customers and employees by digital technology augmenting the human element (Bolton et al. 2018, 786), which is an important consideration particularly in service industries in which human interaction plays a crucial part (Solnet et al. 2019). Digital transformation is important for a business' strategy, and some of the benefits include enhancement in customer experiences and the streamlining of operations (Fitzgerald, Kruschwitz, Bonnet & Welch 2014, 2–5).

In the recent years, coliving has become an increasingly popular new way of living and demand for solutions continues to grow with changing lifestyle needs (Jones Lang LaSalle 2019). Coliving in the modern world generally refers to a form of living in which typically unrelated individuals live with mostly all-inclusive rental contracts in furnished studios or shared rooms or apartments including common spaces, designed for fostering community and ease of living (Coricelli 2022; Perdrix 2021). While coliving businesses can benefit from technology, the human side and community aspect remain important (Malaney November 2024), thus balancing technology and human input are key for a business' competitive advantage and retaining customer value (Solnet et al. 2019).

This thesis intends to gain insight into the operations of a coliving business in Italy (hereinafter referred to as Company X) in terms of digital business solutions and technologies used. Some aspects to be looked into include which operations are already digitalised, which can be digitalised or benefit further digitalisation or use of certain technology, and which operations should not be digitalised, all while maintaining a sense of community. In addition, to gain customer insight, this thesis aims to understand the perceived value and wishes of current and previous customers of Company X in order to allow Company X to focus on most important improvements.

Company X utilises many digital solutions in its operations, such as smart lock systems and key cards through an app, a property management software, and a WhatsApp group for colivers. However, being a small business, many operations are handled by the same person and there is room for improvement in task allocation. Company X has recently hired an intern in order to handle certain tasks, however, the long-term effect of hiring an additional person is yet to be seen and will not be evaluated in this thesis in juxtaposition to adding digital solutions. In addition, there are several operations and aspects in the business that could be digitalised, and some tasks currently handled by a human could be enhanced and augmented with technology. It is also relevant to revisit Company X's value proposition in terms of technology usage and mindset to adopt new solutions.

The objective of this thesis is to provide Company X with suggestions on improving its coliving business mainly through digital business opportunities. This thesis aims to identify digital opportunities that can potentially enhance the coliving experience for colivers and operational efficiency for the business. In focus is also whether digital adds value for the colivers and how digital solutions add value to the business. This thesis will provide insight through data in order for Company X to evaluate which aspects its customers are most interested in either digitally or physically, what do they place most importance on, and how satisfied they are with the current offering.

In concrete terms, this thesis will provide a set of recommendations for leveraging digital solutions in a coliving business. The insights gained can aid Company X in current and future decision-making and developing its business. The research conducted can potentially provide limited insights into business expansion through understanding what works in the current business.

Demarcation

The focus of this thesis is on urban coliving in Italy, with case example literature on the field drawn from other countries. The aim is to find the most relevant use cases for utilising digital tools in the business, however, excluding specific technological concepts such as blockchain. Value addition will be considered from a customer experience perspective, not in terms of direct business KPIs, besides customer satisfaction. Indirect business impacts will though be touched upon. This thesis' aim is merely exploratory for providing suggestions and is not intended to provide a comprehensive business plan nor develop actual digital tools or implement technological solutions. This thesis excludes any financial analysis or implications.

Use of AI

Note on the use of AI: ChatGPT-4.5 and Perplexity.ai have been utilised in this thesis for brainstorming, looking for sources, and at times helping improve structure or clarity of the text. ChatGPT-4.5 has been used for translating the survey from English into Italian after anonymising any company details, with the thesis author reviewing and editing the translations for correctness. The thesis author has further iterated any AI-generated text to ensure relevancy, clarity, comprehension and error-free content.

Research questions

The three research questions for the development task are the following.

RQ1. How do digital solutions enhance operational efficiency, foster community engagement, and improve customer satisfaction in coliving spaces?

RQ2. How can digital opportunities strengthen the value proposition of coliving businesses in Italy?

RQ3. What are the key technologies and digital tools in a coliving business for enhancing customer experience, community engagement, and operational efficiency?

Structure of thesis

This thesis is structured by first presenting a literature review on four key themes in section 2: digital transformation, digital technologies, and digital opportunities; business development and models; value creation and customer experience; and coliving. Subsequently, section 3 forms the methodological part discussing the design of the research along with mixed-method methodological choices, namely a workshop with Company X's advisor, manager, and intern that was held to draft a service blueprint, and an online survey sent to the current and former residents of Company X's coliving structure. While section 3 contains analyses of the workshop and online survey separately, section 4 discusses the key findings together.

Section 5 forms the discussion part of this thesis by addressing research questions and findings in relation to existing literature, together with implications for Company X and coliving businesses in general and includes a section on the evaluation of the development task. Finally, section 6 forms the conclusive remarks, presenting a summary of key findings and recommendations for future research. References and appendices are at the end of this thesis.

2 Literature review

The theoretical framework is structured thematically, first identifying more general key concepts, namely digital transformation and digital technologies, along with examining digital opportunities for a coliving business. This will be followed by other key themes – business development, value creation and customer experience. Finally, coliving as a concept will be discussed in the frame of evolution, culture, social, and business perspectives, and drawing background on the geographical playing field.

2.1 Digital transformation, digital technologies, and digital opportunities

Literature on digital transformation and the likes will be presented in this section, however, acknowledging the differences between concepts, this thesis does not take a stand on whether particularly digital transformation, digitalisation or other should be implemented by Company X and to what extent. This thesis draws on literature related to the heading as a thematic background to the potential opportunities Company X has.

Digital transformation is a multifaceted process in a way that it involves value creation, reworking structure, use of technology, and financial aspects (Elia, Solazzo, Lerro, Pigni & Tucci 2024, 383). Carroll et al. (2023) discuss the assumptions of digital transformation and thereby note that digital transformation is theoretically different from transformation enabled by Information Technology, the former being “transformation through digital” and the latter “transformation to digital”. Multiple other authors like Oberländer, Karnebogen, Rövekamp, Röglinger & Leidner (2025, subchapter 2.1) pinpoint the differences in definitions, thus careful consideration around the terminology is needed. This is supported by and built further upon Wessel, Baiyere, Ologeanu-Taddei, Cha and Jensen’s (2021, 102) definition on digital transformation activities utilising digital technologies in (re)defining a firm’s value proposition and identity, whereas IT-enabled transformation organisational transformation enhances an existing value proposition and organisational identity. Markus and Rowe (2023, 329) argue that researchers need not have the same definition but need to clarify the definition in each use case for enabling boundaries and coherence on theory.

In the broader scope, digital transformation is shaping how businesses create value, having an impact on processes, customer interactions, and the organisation as a whole. Although, value can be difficult to quantify or measure, and value can be perceived differently by various stakeholders. There is not much statistical linkage between value being created due to digital transformation. (Carroll et al. 2023, 514.)

Vial (2019) states that digital transformation is more than adopting new technology as it is part of strategy and operations so that companies can meet growing customer expectations and competition. Carroll et al. (2023) also argue that besides technological implementations, an organisation becomes more digitally oriented through aligning the whole firm's capabilities towards transformation. In the scope of digital transformation efforts, Braojos, Weritz and Matute's (2024) research highlights the importance of an organisation adopting digital transformation as part of their strategy along with ensuring that leadership and employees alike have a digital-first mindset and are supported by a learning environment. Digital transformation is said to improve customer retention by building meaningful relationships with the customer and competitive advantages additionally lie in producing outstanding customer experiences (Agustian, Mubarok, Zen, Wiwin & Malik 2023).

Digital transformation also plays an integral role in fostering customer engagement and customer experience through e.g. personalisation, together with enabling efficient and flexible business processes, ultimately allowing for scaling the business (Agustian et al. 2023). Gartner, Maresch and Tierney (2024) note that digital transformation in small enterprises requires integrating digital technologies for continued value enhancement and a competitive strategy, and their research supports the notion that small businesses need digital technologies for scaling. According to an empirical study by Lappalainen and Federley (2021, 48–50), whereby four residential service concepts were examined in terms of their value creation through housing as a service, digital platforms play a vital role in resident-focused housing by enhancing user experiences, promoting community engagement, and streamlining resource management. Digital attributes can therefore substantially improve user experience, optimise operational processes, and strengthen the overall value proposition (Agustian et al. 2023).

Digital technologies not only allow businesses to transform through new ways of conducting business, but also to automate and extend. The difference between transformation in comparison to automation and extension is that transformation through digital means happens by replacing traditional ways of conducting business, whereas with the latter two, existing activities and processes are automated or supplemented. (Li 2020, 4.) In service industries, technology can augment employees by automating routine tasks to allow employees to have more time for human-touch, value-adding activities, or substitute employees with for example robots that clean or guide customers (Solnet et al. 2019, 399). The drivers for human touch being replaced by technology in the service industry are increased productivity, multi-tasking capabilities, affordability, and reliability (Solnet et al. 2019, 394).

Historically, there has been reluctance in adopting digital technologies in the hospitality industry, particularly micro, small and medium sized hotels being late adopters, however, hotels have re-evaluated their strategy in terms of digital aspects due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Mihalič & Buhalis 2013; Nikopoulou, Kourouthanassis, Chasapi, Pateli & Mylonas 2023). Besides reluctance, the hospitality industry has been somewhat slow to adopt digital solutions, potentially due to such a heavy focus on human touch in service, however, in the evolving technological landscape and inevitable push towards digitalising, technologies such as IoT, AI and ML are being adopted in the industry (Ozdemir, Dogru, Kizildag & Erkmen 2023, 3306–3307). AI and big data allow companies to better understand customer preferences and thus answer to customer expectations. Successful examples are companies like Ritz-Carlton and Disney that have managed to utilise technology in creating personalised experiences (Solnet et al. 2019, 405).

In a coliving business, technology can be employed in multiple ways: for managing coliver consumption, promoting and facilitating events and other activities, and to provide colivers with a platform for connection, communication, and decision-making (Perdrix 2021, 236). Applications and technology are furthermore said to improve coliving by enabling operations to be more efficient, gaining an understanding of the needs of colivers, bring in monetisation opportunities, and helping connections form with colivers, personnel, and the community at large (Ritter Figueres, Ortiz & Lesniak 2021). Table 1 combines a list of areas where technology can support coliving, along with examples of technology solutions. Some coliving operators have built their own app, such as Cohabs and The Collective (Ritter Figueres et al. 2021), and Citylifer and Outsite, but for a small business this might not make sense.

Table 1. Areas where technology can support coliving (adapted from Ritter Figueres et al. 2021)

Area related to coliving businesses	**Technology solution examples**
Property Management System (PMS)	• ColivHQ • Yorlet
PMS & community building	• res:harmonics • District Tech • Spaceflow • TheHouseMonk
Security & access control	• SALTO KS • Latch App
Coworking	• Cobot • Nexudus
Sustainability	• Flowbox • HYDRAO
Resident & staff wellbeing	• Yoga studio • Asana Rebel • MyFitnessPal • Headspace
Communications	• WhatsApp • Slack • Signal • OneRoof
Finance & Accounting	• Splitwise • Co-Budget • Stripe • QuickBooks
Discovery & booking	• Anyplace • Coliving.com

Further to the technology that can be used, Ritter Figueres et al. (2021) identified in their research which aspects help facilitate resident and community experience, evidenced by figure 1 below. While the list is extensive, multiple coliving operators that were spoken to for the research pointed out that not everything should be added to a coliving business just for the purpose of having multiple features. Many existing coliving property management systems already integrate multiple

features and provide solutions tailored to specific needs. From a businesses' perspective, careful consideration should be practised to adopt relevant features according to customers' preferences and what makes sense financially (Malaney November 2024; Malaney December 2024).

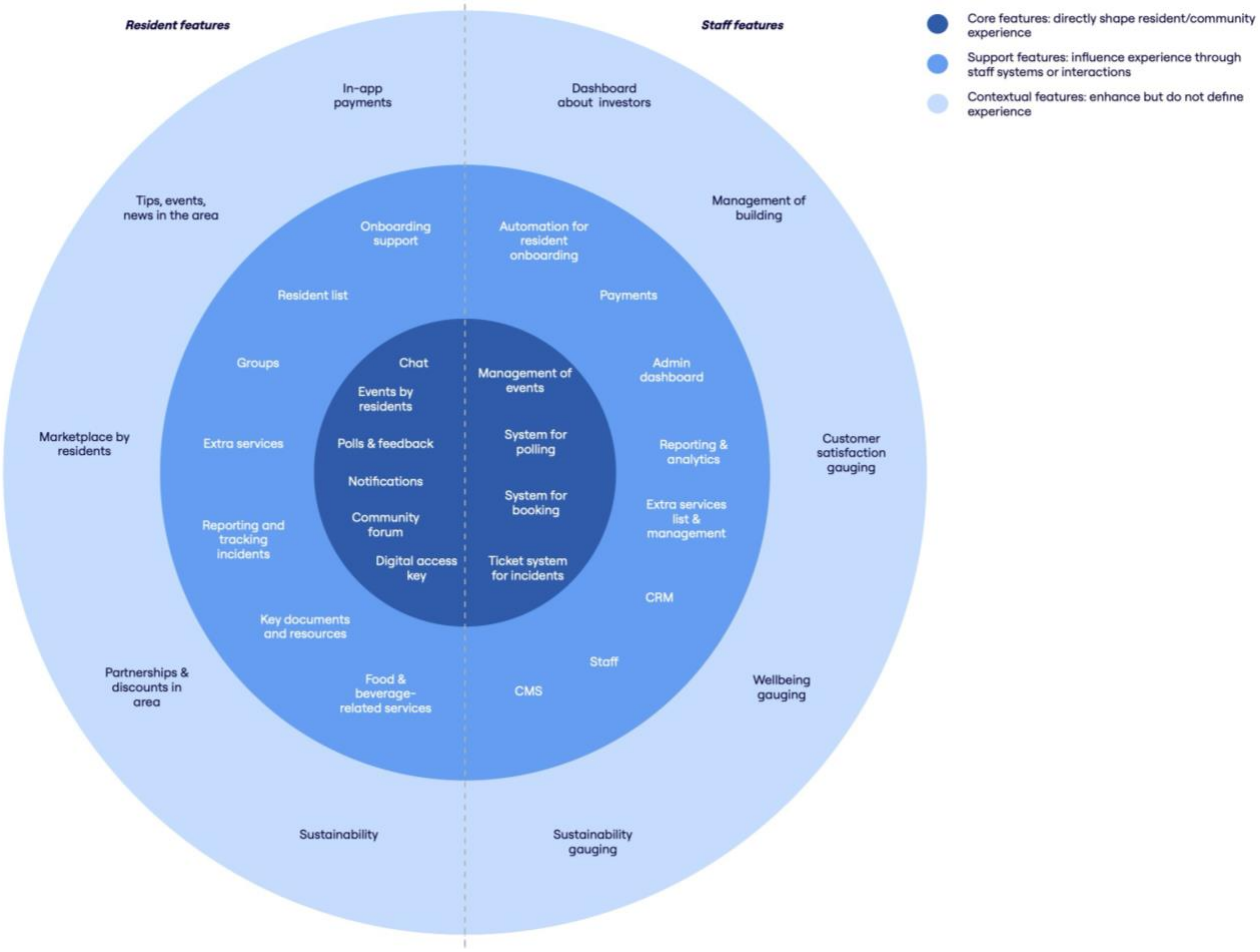

Figure 1. Aspects that help facilitate resident and community experience (adapted from Ritter Figueres et al. 2021), ChatGPT-4.5 was used to help determine feature categorisation.

Figure 1, which was adapted from Ritter Figueres et al.'s (2021) list separating resident and staff features and further developed by the thesis author into a bullseye diagram with different layers, provides a well-rounded view on various aspects to facilitate resident and community experience and maps out what may be core, support, and contextual features. The ability or need to adopt features into coliving practices depends on the size of the coliving, financial abilities of the business, and needs of the coliving community, i.e. the customers.

2.2 Business development and models

All businesses use a particular business model, whether explicitly or implicitly. A business model defines and describes the mechanisms of value creation, delivery and capture that the business

employs. A business model is the management's hypothesis on what customers want, how they want it, and what they are willing to pay for – essentially clarifying how a business delivers value to the customer while operating profitably. (Teece 2010, 191.) Li (2020, 2) presents a comprehensive review of Zott, Amit and Massa's (2011) research on business models, which eventually consisted of 50 papers, narrowed down from over 1200 papers on business models during 2010–2016, identifying digital technologies being a key enabler of emerging business models.

Many different business development models exist, for example the Business Model Canvas (BMC) being commonly known for the purpose of identifying a business' value creation, delivery, and capture (Osterwalder & Pigneur 2010). Other models include Dynamic Capabilities Framework (Teece, Pisano & Shuen 1997), Platform Business Model (Parker, Van Alstyne & Choudary 2017), and Business Model Innovation (BMI) (see e.g. Amit & Zott 2012; Chesbrough 2010; Teece 2010). The main characteristics of these models are briefly outlined in figure 2, along with identifying similarities between them with dotted lines.

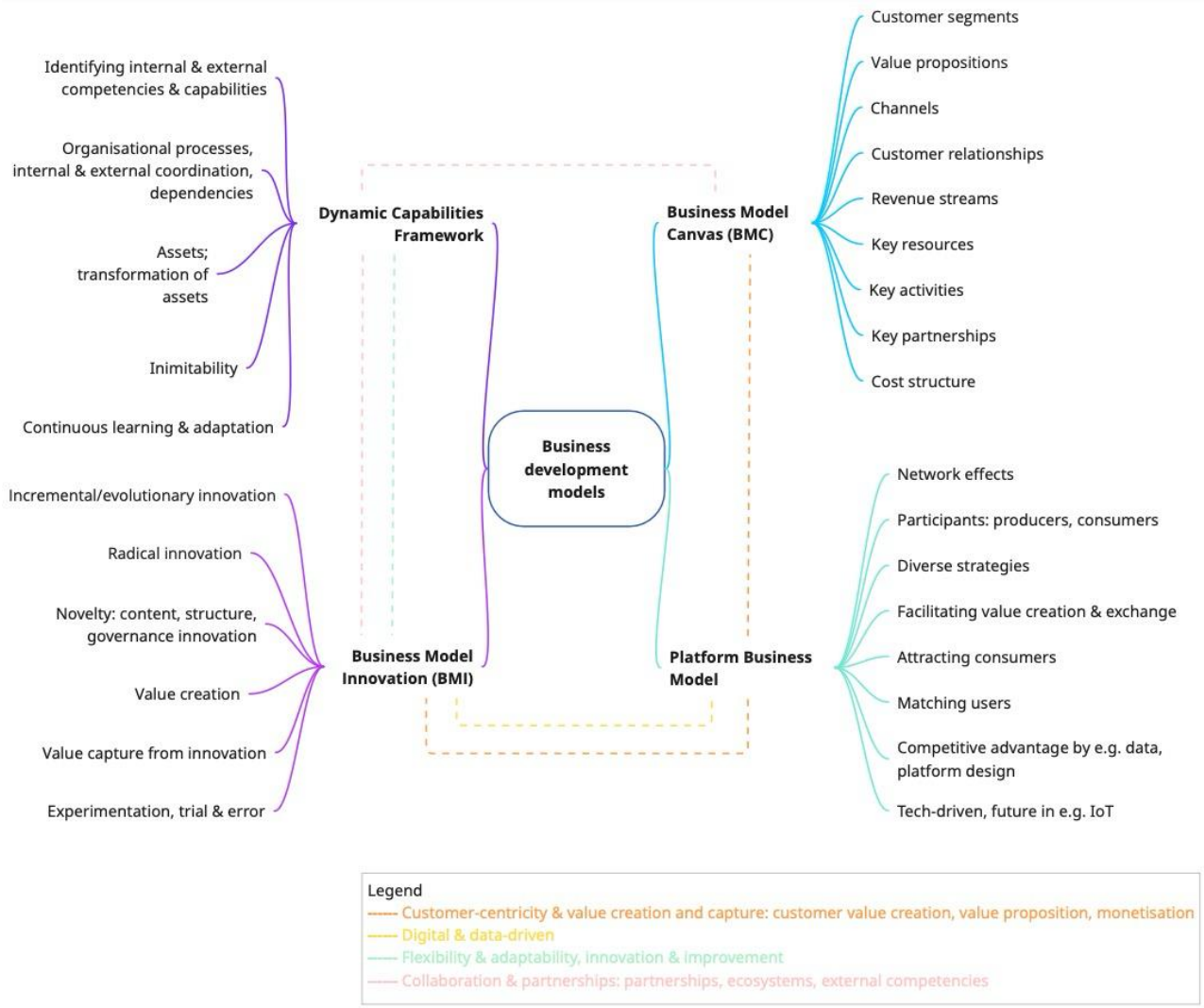

Figure 2. Business development models, their characteristics and similarities (Amit & Zott 2012; Chesbrough 2010; Parker et al. 2017; Osterwalder & Pigneur 2010; Teece et al. 1997; Teece 2010). ChatGPT-4.5 was utilised for drafting and for identifying similarities.

For digital business development, the BMC, Platform Business Model, and BMI are rather fitting. Particularly considering this thesis project, the BMC and Platform Business Model are the most applicable which form part of the framework for actions taken in this thesis due to their suitability for systematically analysing value mechanisms and a coliving business involving network interactions between residents, the company, and external parties such as local businesses. Parts of any of the abovementioned models could be applied both to this thesis project and utilised by Company X for development purposes.

Companies need to integrate new IT solutions for developing a digital strategy and identify whether already existing technology should be used or whether to develop their own. Financial aspects come into play and large-scale enterprises are able to purchase new technologies easier than

SMEs, although SMEs in turn have the advantage of being able to integrate new technologies faster because of size. The change in technology often implies a change in value addition creation. This also means that companies need to increase their know-how in technology and possibly hire right resources. (Becker & Schmid 2020, 988–989.) In successfully incorporating digital products or services to a business to improve interaction and engagement with customers, create personalised experiences, and increase the chances of customers returning, businesses can experience growth and increase competitiveness. Fast adaptation to changes in technology and evolving demands of customers presents an advantage. (Agustian et al. 2023.) The rise of new, purely digital companies has shifted competition, and SMEs therefore need to have clear plans how they create added value in a digitalised landscape (Becker & Schmid 2020, 988–989.)

2.3 Value creation and customer experience

Value is an important consideration in a business' operations and business model, often focused on value creation, value capture, and value proposition, whereby it is important for the business model to define the value proposition. In incorporating technological solutions to the business, from a customer perspective, businesses need to think of how the customer values the technology - through the reduction of costs or by enabling new possibilities and solutions. (Chesbrough & Rosenbloom 2002, 533–534.)

Customer experience as a concept emerged some decades ago, but one of the most prominent works was by Pine and Gilmore in 1999 by way of the book Experience Economy (Gentile, Noci & Spiller 2007, 396). Pine and Gilmore (1998, 99) advocate for an experience economy, in which experience plays an important role, and an experience happens when customers are engaged by the company in a personal, emotional, and memorable manner (Pine & Gilmore 1998, 99). Thereafter, many researchers have brought attention to customer experience discussing the holistic nature of it (Gentile et al. 2007) and others advocating for the co-creation of unique experiences (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004b). According to Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004b, 7), companies should focus on personalised interactions between the consumer and company in order to gain a competitive advantage. According to the co-creation between the company and consumer, value creation and extraction emerge as opportunities through all points of interactions (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004b, 10). From this point of view, Prahalad & Ramaswamy (2004a, 5) further argue that customers are increasingly the ones that define and create value, and Vargo, Maglio and Akaka (2008, 148) support this with the notion of service-dominant (S-D) logic stating that value is at all times solely determined by the customer while companies merely propose value through their offerings.

Customer experience happens through a series of interactions (Gentile et al. 2007). In order for businesses to understand value within a customer experience, digital, physical and social elements need to be taken into account, also enabling co-creation. Technology is becoming an important component of the physical component of an experience, which involves cultural cues and thus a sense of space. In regard to the social aspect, companies need to increasingly facilitate their customers interactions with others in order to enable co-creation of experiences. (Bolton et al. 2018, 777–780.) Customer experience and the purchase steps involve prepurchase, purchase, and postpurchase, which aligns well with the methodological choice in this thesis by looking at the customer journey including pre, current, and post phases. As a multifaceted construct, customer experience is spread across the entire buying journey of the customer. (Lemon & Verhoef 2016, 71–76.)

Whether it be products, services, or experiences rendered to a customer, Pine and Gilmore (1998, 101) argue that they all comprise of outstanding design, marketing, and execution. From an organisational perspective, excellent customer experiences must be created with customers to build strong relationships, which in turn lead to business success and cash flow over time. Customer experience is an all-encompassing result of a company's reputation, how the offering aligns with the customer's goals, how fitting an offering is to the customer, and how relevant the offering is. (Bolton 2016, 6–7.)

Customers expect personalised products and services, and these are more than ever expected real-time (Buhalis & Sinarta 2019). On the other hand, Bolton et al. (2018, 790) argue that customisation often depends on whether customers are willing to share their information with service providers, and in service businesses questions arise whether optimisation is necessary for a superior experience or what organisations provide and what consumers want and when (Bolton et al. 2018, 791). With the increasing role of technology in services, customers' concerns are around privacy, confidentiality, and communications that are not always solicited (Bitner, Brown & Meuter 2000, 139).

Buhalis and Sinarta's (2019) exploratory study of hospitality and tourism brands' use of social media and digital technology to enhance the customer experience reveals that real-time consumer intelligence, big data mining, and artificial intelligence induce value co-creation and increase competitiveness for organisations in the industry. While large companies such as Marriott Hotels have implemented their own real-time tracking tools, small- and medium-sized companies can easily use free monitoring tools for consumer experience enhancement real-time (Buhalis & Sinarta 2019). Further to these, other innovative digital technologies like IoT and virtual reality are being adopted by organisations (Bolton et al. 2018, 779).

An interesting consideration is for customers to be able to “test drive” a service experience before experiencing it for real (Edvardsson, Enquist & Johnston 2010, 314). Edvardsson et al. (2010) explored such in their study which was determined as “value in pre-use” for the customer. This concept includes six dimensions, out of which intangible artefacts and technology are key considering this thesis. For example, hotels have started offering digital “test drives” by making a 3D virtual tour of the premises (Edvardsson et al. 2010, 313). This could be a consideration in a coliving business to entice customers to see what part of the experience would be like and to add potential value to the customer before the actual experience.

Mihalič and Buhalis (2013, 36) highlight that sustainable value can be created through intangible aspects that answer to customer needs, and while being profitable as a company is essential, intangible qualities are those that add most value to a product or service. Traditionally customer relationships have been seen as transaction-based, and customers’ thinking has been seen as logical by purchase decisions based on rationality, however, in the newer thought related to customer experience, intangible aspects like the customers’ emotional value perceived have been considered (Gentile et al. 2007, 396).

A service encounter is said to comprise of the interplay between employees, customers, and technology (Bitner et al. 2000, 141). In incorporating technological solutions in an organisation, it is important to do so by involving customers in the process. In service industries considering digital and physical experiences, a balanced approach may work best in which a customer is provided with alternatives – a technology-based encounter but also a more interpersonal service encounter. (Bitner et al. 2000, 147; Solnet et al. 2019, 397.) Human interaction is decreasing in service due to adopting technological solutions for efficiency gains, which is particularly evident in hospitality, affecting customer value. Customer expectations for human-touch hospitality and value creation should be kept in mind. Besides some common places of automation like self-check-in kiosks, retaining a human element in a service experience is important for making an experience memorable, also creating a competitive advantage for a company. (Solnet et al. 2019, 393–395.) Perdrix (2021, 236) echoes the notion of human-tech balance by highlighting that it is elemental to consider which customer experience point of contacts should be automated and which should be left human.

2.4 Coliving

Coliving has existed for hundreds of years, historically in different forms throughout peoples’ lives such as house sharing, student housing, boarding houses, and senior housing (Perdrix 2021, 31–32). Albeit lacking a universal definition and sufficient academic literature, *coliving* essentially means a way of living whereby often unrelated individuals choose to live with common rules in a

structure comprised of furnished rooms with most commonly a rental contract that includes everything together with shared residential spaces designed to foster community and convenient living (Coricelli 2022; Perdrix 2021). The new interpretation of coliving is it being used as a term for the service industry and often understood as “housing-as-a-service” as a for-profit form of business. Coliving moves from the technicalities of e.g. student and senior housing being forms of coliving to a more demographical definition of a target group between student and senior housing. (Perdrix 2021, 33.) Coliving spaces are community-driven and thought to be life-enhancing (Perdrix 2021, 34).

Coliving started to trend in 2015, which was seen in increased searches in search engines and many of today’s successful companies launching the year after. In the years after, coliving as a term started to be discussed in blog posts and niche media, the first non-profit organisation, Co-Liv, launched and coliving made its way to real estate conferences and studies started surfacing. In 2019, mainstream media covered the term, new coliving non-profit organisations formed, and magazines and platforms were founded covering coliving specifically, and coliving professionals quadrupled within two years’ time. (Perdrix 2021, 38.) Coliving has become an increasingly popular new way of living and demand for solutions continues to grow with changing lifestyle needs (Jones Lang LaSalle 2019). The amount of coliving brands has grown from some 500 in 2019 to over 1700 in 2023 (Everything Coliving October 2023). The key drivers of demand for coliving are changing societal values, a growing mobile workforce, an increase of city dwellers, a real estate crisis, and global loneliness (Perdrix 2021, 41–42). Coliving companies seem to target young people, and typically approximately 95 % of residents are mainly 18–24 and 25–34 years old (Perdrix & Pokharna 2025, 10).

Without going into too much detail on financial and real estate models, there are several coliving business types – either purely for coliving, or a hybrid hotel-coliving-type model combining short- and long-term stays (Malaney December 2024). Coliving operating models are ownership by operators, master leasing, revenue-share or management agreements, or hybrid partnership or franchise models (Perdrix & Pokharna 2025, 5). Particularly since the pandemic, hotels have been converted into coliving facilities due to fast turnaround, low operating costs and less staff, and minimal capital spending compared to residential buildings (Coliving March 2024).

In figure 3, four categories of movements were identified by JOYN that relate to coliving: shared living, smart living, living environment, and human living (Perdrix 2021, 39). In relation to coliving, of particular interest in today’s world with advancements in technology and changing society are property tech, the use of artificial intelligence, culture, and contrary to technology, digital-free

zones. Balancing technology and physical components while creating community and fostering culture of a place are interlinked and key aspects to consider in a coliving.

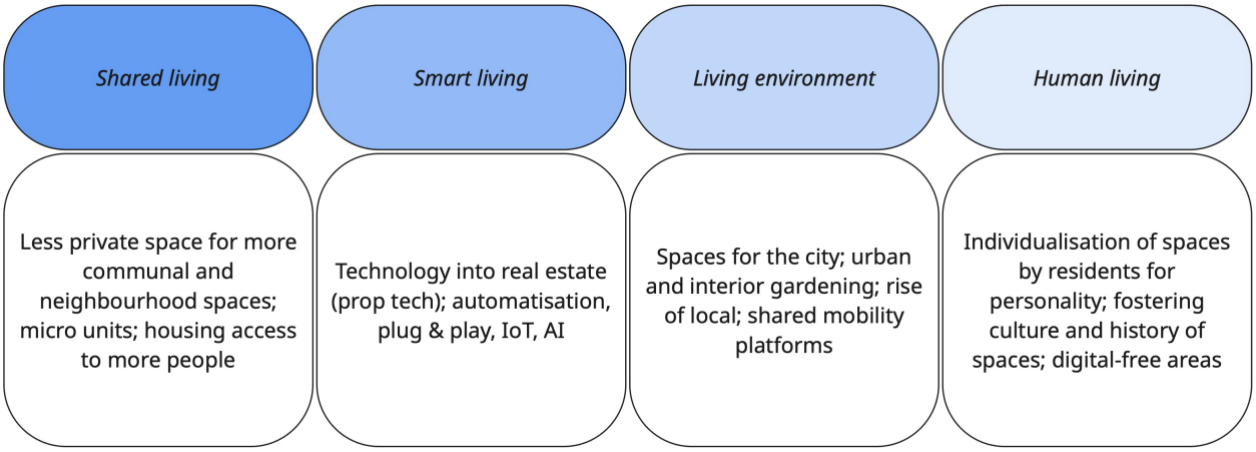

Figure 3. The rise of four movements regarding coliving according to JOYN, a Portuguese coliving consultancy firm (adapted from Perdrix 2021, 39)

Flexibility, convenience, and community are factors that contribute to the appeal of coliving, particularly when urban housing is costly and people long for social connection (Artof.Co 2025, 17; Knight Frank 2024). Already in the early days of coliving, now former coliving company operators Jon Dishotsky (August 2016) from Starcity and Christopher Bledsoe (March 2019) from Ollie both advocated for framing coliving around Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs – social impact over profit, a welcoming and safe home, and sense of belonging and community were identified as important factors. Lesniak, Ritter and Clark (October 2019) also promote the notion of incorporating social value into the business strategies of coliving companies.

In von Zumbusch and Lalicic's (2020) study of digital nomads and their experiences in coliving spaces in the USA, Europe, and Southeast Asia, the importance of social, physical, and psychological factors in relation to wellbeing were identified. Aspects such as community, a community manager, communal spaces, amenities, and reinforced sense of belonging were key factors appreciated by the interviewees (von Zumbusch & Lalicic 2020, 445–447) – coinciding with Artof.Co's Coliving Report 2025, which is based on data from a survey with 21 coliving founders and companies (Artof.Co 2025). In Bergan and Power's (2024, 1394–1395) research regarding the value of households and residents in coliving housing, focused on the coliving sector in New York, San Francisco, and Australia, they also found out in their research that community managers were key to affecting the experience in coliving, since they significantly contributed to residents' positive experiences by maintaining the premises, facilitating networking opportunities, and making

residents feel welcome. Bergan and Power (2024, 1394) further identified that beside physical spaces and interiors, hospitality-type experiences as a way of generating profit were crucial.

Most prominent coliving reports and material appear to be by Jones Lang LaSalle (2019), Perdrix (2021), Artof.Co (2025), and Perdrix and Pokharna (2025), and sites like Conscious Coliving (see Ritter Figueres et al. 2021). Other than these, there seems to be a lack of trustworthy, updated, and consolidated industry reports on the overall coliving market. However, according to a global coliving report overview by Market.Us (April 2025), the coliving market sector was worth just under 8 billion US dollars in 2024 and expected to grow at a CAGR of 15.4% to reach just over 32 billion US dollars by 2034.

According to a survey by Perdrix & Pokharna (2025) approximately 47 % coliving operators were geographically located in Europe, with strong concentration in cities like London, Paris, Berlin, and Amsterdam. The survey showed that most coliving operators had only one property or less than 50 beds, and only a few companies had large portfolios. Some of the major players in the coliving industry are Habyt, Outsite, Lyf and Node Living (see for example Market.Us April 2025; VentureRadar 2024; Everything Coliving October 2023). According to the thesis author's research, largest coliving operators in Italy appear to be Habyt and Cohabs. In addition to Company X, smaller coliving companies in Italy are for example Tertulia, Netural, BeetCommunity, and Cummari (Nomadago 2025).

Coliving as a sector has been rather resilient during and after COVID-19, benefiting from trends like the rise of remote work (Artof.Co 2025, 26). Some downfalls have happened though as for example an early market player and previously successful coliving operator, Common Living, filed for bankruptcy in 2024 (Artof.Co 2025; Habyt June 2024). Common Living merged with Habyt in 2022, however, could not achieve profitability and needed to file for bankruptcy. Other companies that went bankrupt were Quarters, later acquired by Habyt (Habyt March 2021), and The Collective, whereas companies like Outpost continued to expand by concentrating operations in one city with already established staff and marketing connections. (Webster June 2024.) Despite fears for an uncertain future (Webster June 2024), coliving is still noted as a scalable and profitable business venture (Artof.Co 2025, 28-29). Coliving as an investment prospect in real estate is rather high up on the list at 4.08 out of 5, equal to serviced apartments at 4.08, in comparison to for example private rented residential at 4.12 and hotels at 4 (PwC 2024).

In 2017 a research project and survey called One Shared House 2030 was conducted by anton&irene and SPACE10, with over 14 thousand responses from 180 countries (SPACE10 2025). To highlight a few Italy-specific results, Italians prefer to live in the city, would be willing to pay extra for services related to managing house-related aspects, want other colivers from various

backgrounds in life, do not need a private kitchen and would share a common kitchen, worry most about lack of privacy, and find that one out of the two biggest pros of living with other people is more socialising opportunities (One Shared House 2030 s.a.). On the interactive site, browsing around the results of other European countries like Portugal, Spain, and The Netherlands, the results were the same on the aforementioned aspects. In comparison, slightly different results in terms of preferred location, aspect most worried about, and biggest pros of living with others came from respondents from Guatemala for example. Cultural and habitual differences have an effect on the preferences.

Aligning with the Italian population and its digital literacy, Orazi & Sofritti (2024, 5) discuss digital skills of Italians and adaptation of digital technologies in Italy, wherein only 40 percent of Internet users in Italy use public digital services. This may have an effect on the use and adoption of digital technologies in a coliving in which many colivers are Italian. Traditionally many Italians own their homes, however, according to a report by the OECD (2023, 18), while home owning promotes financial stability and involvement with community, in volatile labour market circumstances where it would be good to seek employment elsewhere, owning a home reduces residential mobility, making it harder for people to relocate. Coliving as a flexible form of housing may offer relief to such situations.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research design

The research approach for this thesis is a case study, lending theory from Moilanen, Ojasalo & Ritalahti's (2022) book *Methods for Development Work*. The case study approach was selected for this thesis because it allows exploration of pre-existing literature and real-world examples within Company X, providing a detailed understanding of how digital opportunities can practically enhance user experiences and company operations. The case study approach together with mixed methodology, a survey and workshop, revealed the complexities and subtle dynamics involved both from an organisational perspective and customer viewpoint. Moreover, this approach was effective for generating practical and detailed recommendations that address the thesis objectives, ensuring findings are applicable and relevant to actual scenarios.

As typical to a case study approach (Moilanen et al. 2022, subchapter 3.2), data collection took place by way of a semi-structured, mixed-method survey sent to current and previous colivers at the coliving of Company X. In addition to this, a workshop with Company X's advisor, manager, and intern was held to draft a service blueprint. This thesis has a more technical approach, with the qualitative part strongly forming and building upon the workshop, with the survey being in a supporting role to understand the customer perspective both in qualitative and quantitative measures. These approaches will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

3.2 Phase 1 – Workshop with service blueprint

Phase 1 of the methodology was held as a workshop that focused on a service blueprint. This subsection will thus present the workshop methodology combined with a service blueprint. Using a service blueprint as a starting point for identifying the customer journey is well aligned with theory on customer-centricity and business process improvement (Lemon & Verhoef 2016, 79).

3.2.1 Workshop design and implementation

A workshop is a structured, collaborative session and is used for obtaining specific goals, solving problems, or creating a predefined output (Hamilton 2016, chapter 1 and 3), which fits the objective of this thesis. Often workshops involve key stakeholders (Stickdorn, Hormess, Lawrence & Schneider 2018, chapter 10), however in this case, a workshop was held by the thesis author with Company X's advisor, intern, and manager in a supporting role to the intern. The purpose and expectations of a workshop need to be clear when planning it. Once in the planning stage, it is crucial to keep in mind that design is explorative and not everything should be planned, and an agile approach may be useful. (Stickdorn et al. 2018, chapter 10.) The workshop method was

chosen to gain in-depth information on Company X's operations, with the opportunity to ask follow-up questions and get a viewpoint on the business side and the daily operations (both back- and front-end).

The workshop methodology loosely followed the workshop ideologies and approach as outlined in Hamilton's (2016) *The Workshop Book*, reinforcing good facilitation through supporting theory from *This Is Service Design Doing* by Stickdorn et al. (2018). The held workshop is examined below based on Hamilton's (2016) view on successful design and successful participation in workshops, depicted in table 2.

Table 2. Workshop ingredients for successful design and participation (Hamilton 2016, chapter 2)

Successful design	
Structure	Plan exercises in small groups for differing viewpoints by different people.
Diversity	Bring in a diverse range of participants to ensure a group of gender, background, opinion and ethnicity diversity.
Stimulus	Break the norm to stimulate thinking and creativity by taking inspiration from new or unconventional sources.
Successful participation	
Prep task	Request the group to think in advance and bring ideas to the workshop for maximum time efficiency.
Focus	Think about strategies to keep participants focused and evoke deep thinking by minimising distractions and not overwhelming participants with too much information.
Behaviour	Motivate positive and helpful behaviours for example by turn taking during the workshop.
Conflict	Be prepared for conflict, opposing views and challenges as part of a fruitful idea creation process.

Design of workshop

Structure. The workshop was carried out between four people, which in itself created a small team, thus further groupings were not intentionally planned for the workshop. Due to changes in a participant's schedule, the workshop was structured in different combinations of participants throughout the span of the workshop. Also, prior to the workshop the thesis author and the advisor have had discussions, and the advisor, intern, and manager have had separate discussions, allowing for diverse conversations to take place. The service blueprint and working together in Miro (2025), a digital collaboration platform, created a clear structure with a set objective.

Diversity. The backgrounds, ethnicities, gender, and skills of the participants vary, allowing for a diverse group. Considering the roles of the persons involved in the workshop, Company X's

founder and owner has entrusted the company's advisor to being hands-on in the development project due to the technological background. The advisor is responsible for suggesting and implementing technological aspects of Company X, and the intern, a Bachelor level student studying tourism, was recently hired to handle certain operations and help develop digital opportunities together with the owner and advisor. Company X's manager also attended the workshop in a supporting role to the intern and confirming the customer journey. At the advisor's request, the intern was involved in the workshop due to the ongoing internship and their mission closely linking with this thesis' purpose and objectives. The thesis author being a former resident at Company X during September 2024 to February end 2025, valuable first-hand insight has been gained throughout six months of staying at Company X's coliving facility, coupled with information gained through research for this thesis.

Stimulus. Working on a visual, modifiable canvas provided stimulus, and using Miro as a tool was new to half of the participants. Methods in case of being stuck were thought out, such as loosely applying an excursion technique of role playing or personal analogue (see for example Moilanen et al. 2022, subchapter 4.7). Also, although usually done by customers, a variation of the wishlist method (see for example Moilanen et al. 2022, subchapter 4.7) was thought so participants could generate ideas as if anything was possible, whether feasible or not. The six thinking hats method (see The de Bono Group s.a.), particularly wearing red, yellow, and green hat by the advisor, intern, and manager, and blue hat by the facilitator, i.e. the thesis author, was kept as a backup plan if the former methodologies did not yield results.

Participation

Prep task. The workshop participants were given a short introduction several days prior to the workshop and were encouraged to have a look at the draft service blueprint and bring with any supporting documentation to the workshop, for example an existing blueprint. They were further instructed to already think of what digital solutions are desired from the perspective of Company X.

Focus. The focus of the workshop was working on a service blueprint, thus having a clear point of discussion and objective. Through the thesis author asking questions, all participants were engaged and focused on providing ideas and solving the task at hand.

Behaviour. The thesis author aimed to bring in all participants' viewpoints by turn taking and an active dialogue. The task at hand first looked intimidating with lots of details in the service blueprint, however the thesis author reassured the participants that while the process looked complex, certain parts needed to be focused on more. There was a flowing dialogue between participants to consider additions and changes according to their specific knowledge and roles.

Conflict. In case of conflict, alternative talking points and revisiting the task and objectives at hand were thought of when planning the workshop. During the workshop, despite changes in a participant's schedule, the rest of the participants were able to work on the task at hand and continue independently until all participants were all present again in the last part of the workshop.

Service blueprinting

Service blueprinting, i.e. a process map was chosen as a method for analysing the service process of Company X. A service blueprint effectively illustrates the service process and roles of various participants, particularly paying attention to the actions of the customer. (Moilanen, Ojasalo & Ritalahti 2022, subchapter 4.8.) The service blueprint style and elements were adapted from examples available on the Boardmix (2025) website and by Blumenthal (September 2018). As the drafted service blueprint was so complex and detailed – attempting to depict as much individual actions, touchpoints, and technologies for identifying technology use in any of these – it was not feasible to draw directional arrows/flow lines, also due to the thesis author's lack of thorough experience in service blueprinting.

Workshop process

The workshop's purpose was to confirm the existing customer journey, and to jointly work on a service blueprint with digital processes and touchpoints identified from the advisor, intern, and manager's perspective, together with the thesis author's suggestions. Although the workshop was positioned to align with the success factors discussed above, allowing for clear structure and connecting the actual implementation to theory, the process can be presented as figure 4 for easier visualisation of the process.

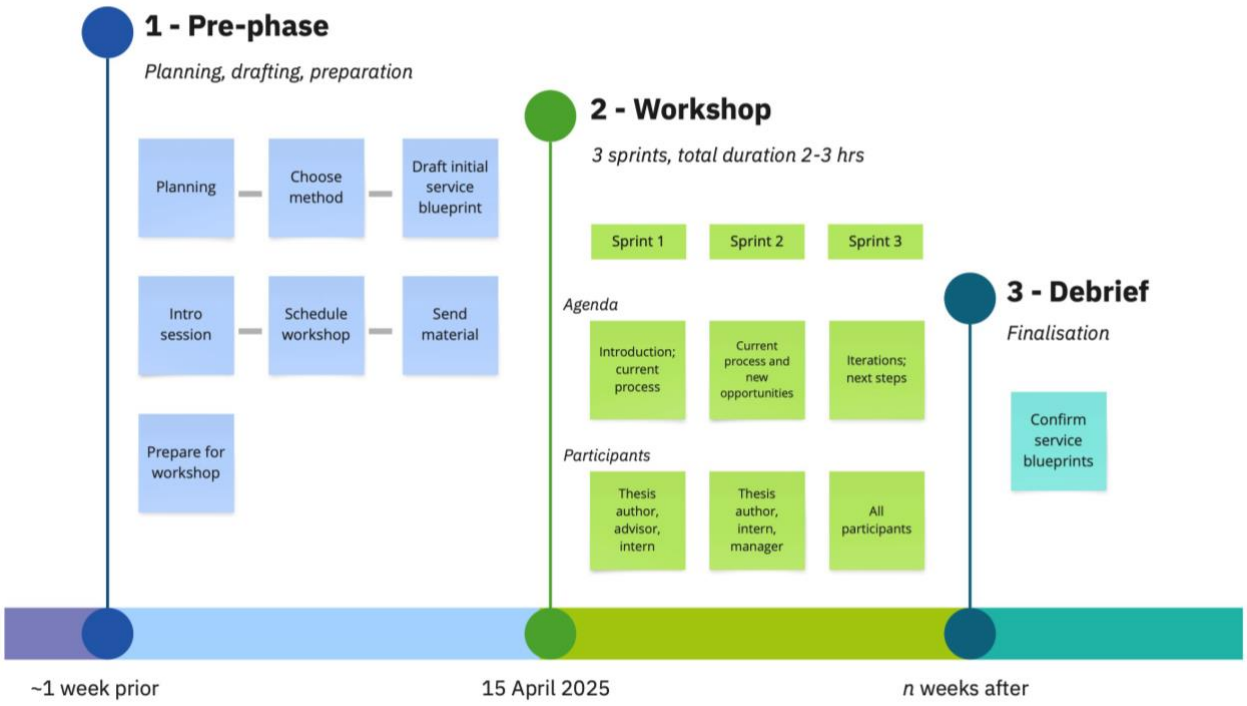

Figure 4. Workshop process

In the pre-phase of the workshop, the thesis author drafted an initial service blueprint (appendix 1) based on her experience and knowledge, which was shared to the participants before attending the workshop. During the workshop which took place on one day and lasted for around three hours, the goal was to gain feedback and confirmation to the current process, and work on iterations and new additions to the process, resulting in a subsequent blueprint (appendix 2). The workshop consisted of three sprints with various combinations of the participants as evident from figure 4.

After the workshop, the thesis author received a technology diagram from Company X's manager to ensure that all technologies were included in the service blueprint. The thesis author polished the new service blueprint and sent it for review to the advisor, manager, and intern. Some weeks after the workshop, a final session was held to make final edits to the service blueprint, resulting in the final service blueprint (appendix 3). The final service blueprint was reviewed once more by the advisor of Company X to confirm it as final form for this thesis.

The service blueprint was made in Miro, allowing for easy access by all parties involved and working on it remotely in an agile manner. Visualisation is important in service design, and practical actions resulting in making things tangible are effective and helpful (Stickdorn et al. 2016, chapter 10). Real-time edits were particularly useful when working together on such a large canvas.

The workshop was conducted via Microsoft Teams since the participants were in different countries. The workshop was set up in Miro as per figure 5, which was shared via screen sharing. The workshop lasted approximately three hours.

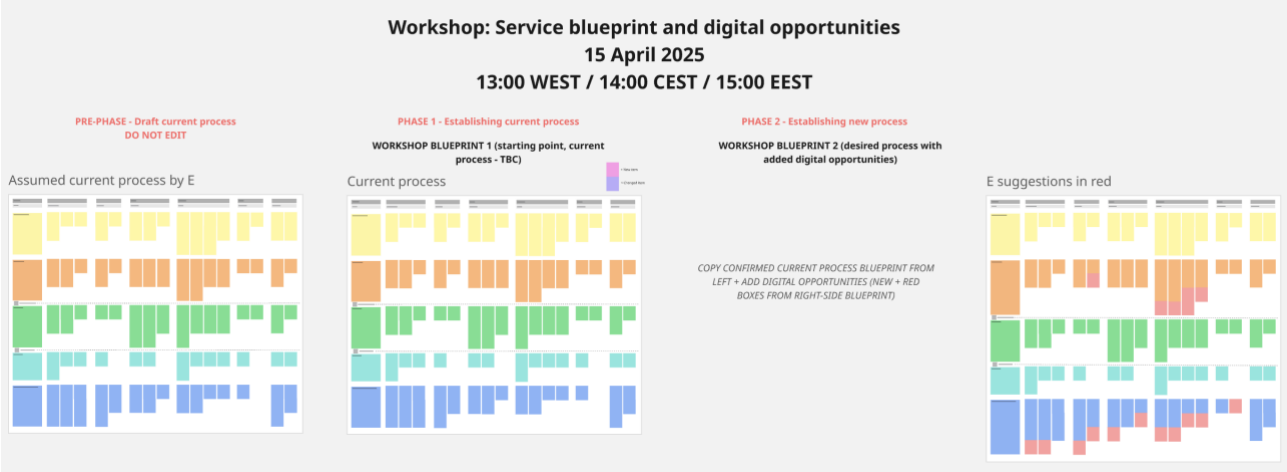

Figure 5. Screen capture of workshop set-up in Miro

The intention was to work on separate blueprints for current and new processes, however, during the workshop it was easier to modify only one blueprint (furthest right-side blueprint). The workshop endpoint was documented as figure 6. The workshop endpoint was not the final resulting blueprint but only the result from the workshop.

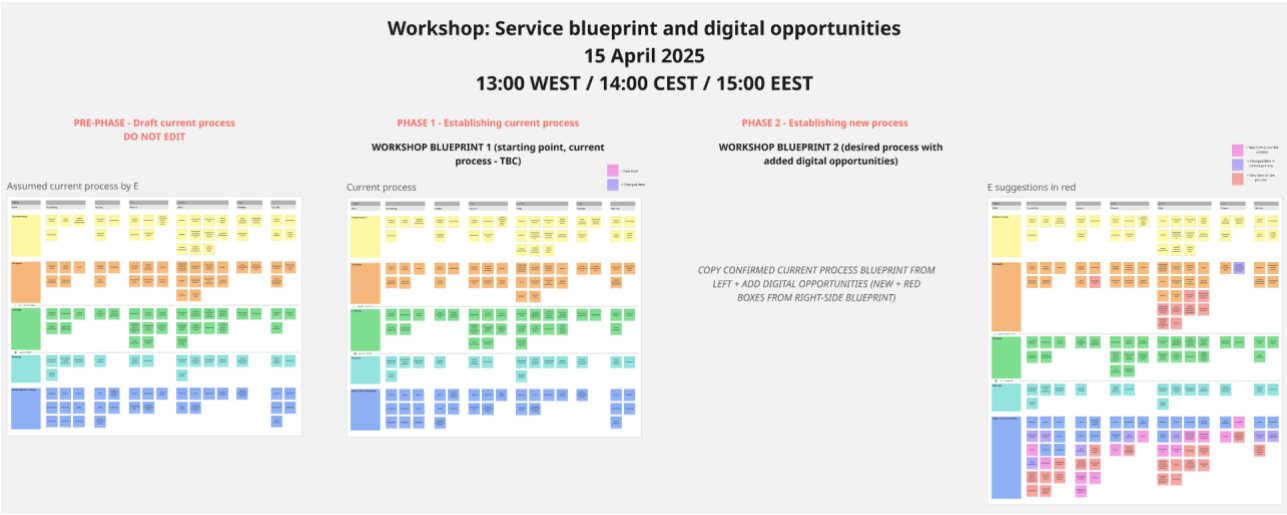

Figure 6. Screen capture of workshop end in Miro

In comparison to figure 5 (workshop set-up), in figure 6 (workshop end) it is evident that changes were made to the right-side service blueprint during the workshop. The screen captures of the workshop set-up and end are intentionally not zoomed in as they only represent the design and

progress in terms of methodology. The initial, subsequent, and final service blueprints, showcasing the development process, are presented and discussed in section 3.2.3.

3.2.2 Participants

As mentioned in the previous section, the workshop participants comprised of the thesis author together with Company X's advisor, manager, and intern. The workshop participants were from different backgrounds, representing different stakeholders in relation to Company X, allowing for differing viewpoints. The client-side participants were determined by Company X's advisor as there is an ongoing project at the client-side involving the advisor, manager, and intern, with a similar aim as that of the thesis author's research. A research announcement was sent (appendix 6) and research consent was obtained from all parties.

3.2.3 Evolution of service blueprint

The workshop and subsequent edits were conducted by establishing three versions of the service blueprint:

- Initial blueprint (appendix 1) drafted by the thesis author;
- Subsequent blueprint (appendix 2) established during the workshop confirming the current process and identifying new digital and physical aspects to the customer journey; and
- Final blueprint (appendix 3) established after a final revision round and call with the workshop participants.

Note that in the second blueprint mainly touchpoints (see orange swim lane) and support systems/technology (see blue swim lane) were modified. Other swim lanes were not significantly or at all modified due to the complexity of the service blueprint and it was important to focus more on touchpoints and support systems/technologies. However, during the final revision call in which the blueprint was revisited, and the final blueprint was established, modifications were made to all swim lanes.

Prior to the workshop, there was a pre-phase which consisted of the thesis author drafting the initial service blueprint based on her experience and knowledge of the business. The initial blueprint is showcased as figure 7, of which a larger version is available in appendix 1. The initial blueprint is rather detailed and consists of many types of customer actions, not specifying separately for example the process via booking sites versus direct booking, and it was envisioned for long-term stays only.

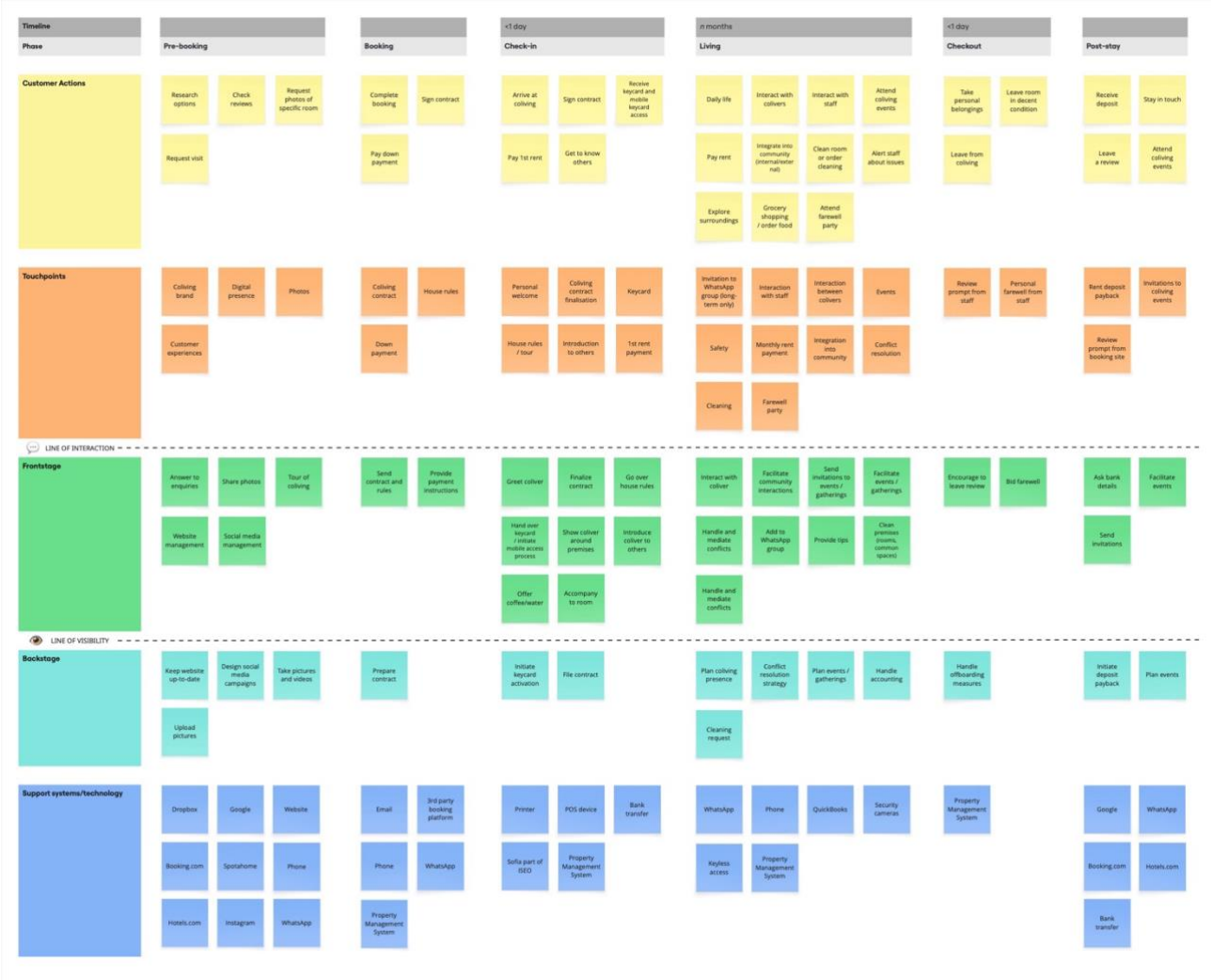

Figure 7. Initial service blueprint – draft as per thesis author's view

During the workshop, the current process was analysed and as a result, there were modifications (purple squares) and additions (pink squares) to the current process. Considering that the blueprint depicts long-term stays (over one month), some support systems/technology like Hotels.com were deleted. In addition to this, new and desired touchpoints and technologies were added as new items to the new process (red squares). The subsequent blueprint is showcased as figure 8, of which a larger version is available in appendix 2.

Figure 8. Subsequent service blueprint – Process established during workshop including changes and additions to current process, and additions to new process

After the workshop, during the final revision session, quite many changes were made to the service blueprint for added detail and clarification, resulting in figure 9, of which a larger version is

available in appendix 3. Note that in comparison to the second blueprint (figure 8, appendix 2), changes made to the purple, pink or red squares in the final blueprint were not distinguished with any new colour, although some squares were either deleted, combined, moved around, or clarified with different wording. If anything changed or was added in comparison to the initial blueprint (figure 7, appendix 1), the colour coding still follows that denoted in the legend.

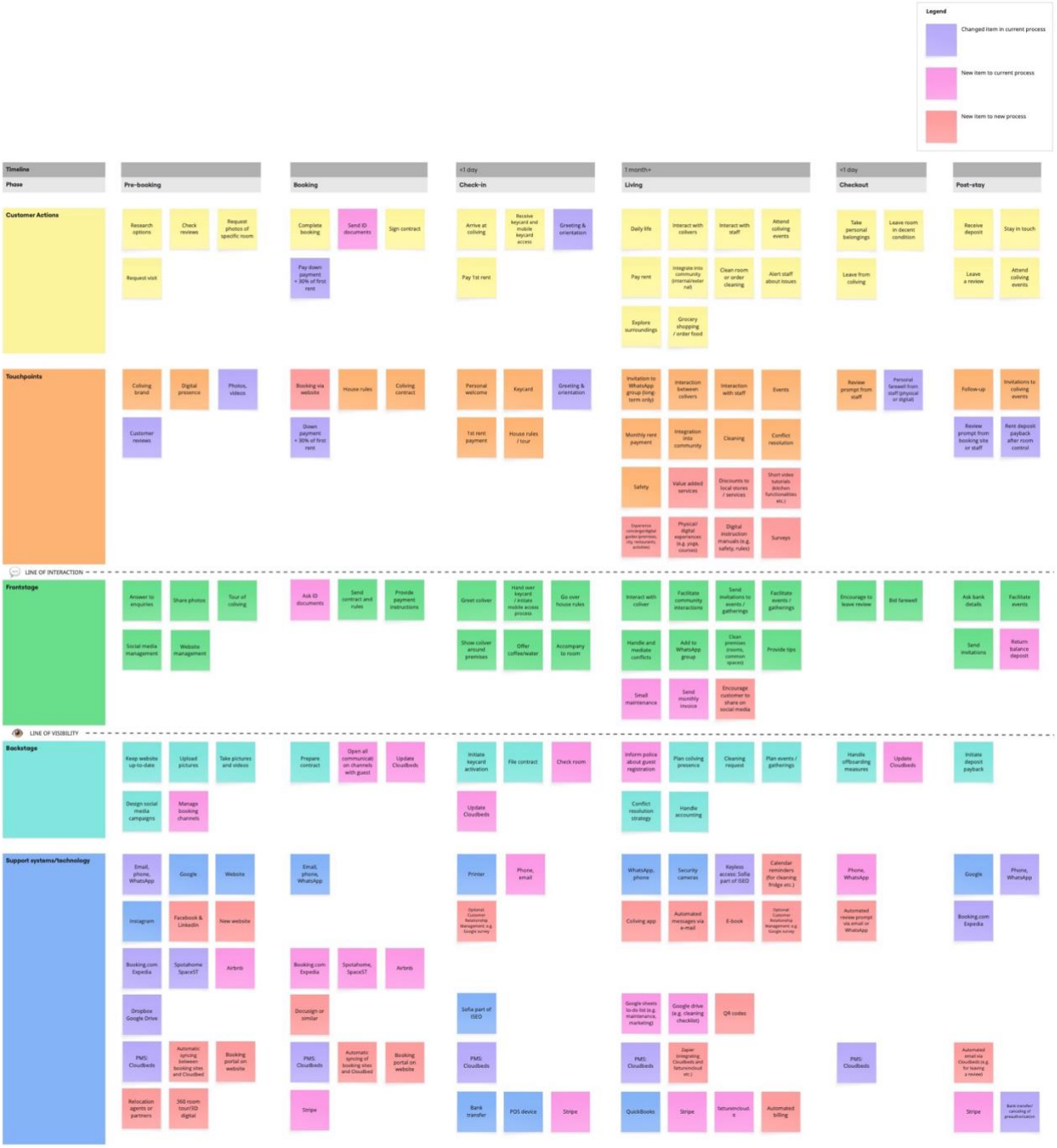

Figure 9. Final service blueprint – Process established during final revision

The touchpoints and support systems/technology swim lanes will be looked at more closely, as they contained the most modifications/additions. The choice of focus was due to a higher concentration of most technological solutions from the client perspective on these parts of the process, as the workshop was held with the client-side participants. The other swim lanes that were modified contained mainly changes to the current process or new items to the current process, thus aspects that are already being implemented by Company X. The closer analysis focuses on the parts and swim lanes of the customer journey that changed the most and contained most new items to new processes.

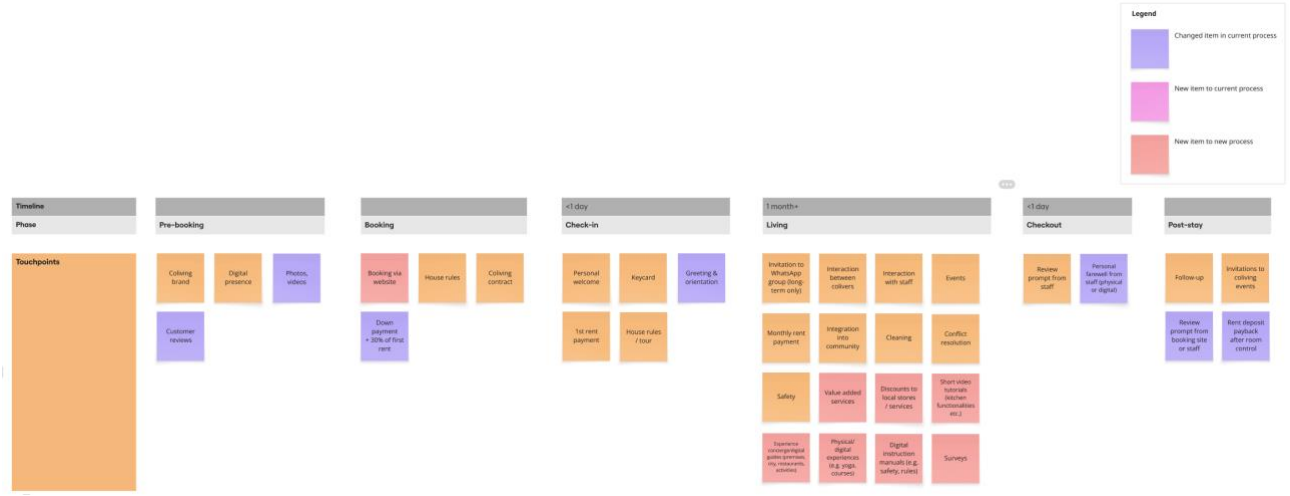

Figure 10. Touchpoints swim lane of final service blueprint

As evident in figure 10, changes to the touchpoints in the current process (purple squares) were clarifying details regarding the down payment, videos, personal farewell, and changing some wording for clarity. New items to the new process (red squares) were the possibility to book via the company website, value added services, discounts to local stores/services, experience concierge/digital guides, digital experiences, digital instruction manuals, short video tutorials, and surveys.

Figure 11. Support systems/technology of final service blueprint

As depicted in figure 11, changes (purple squares) to the support systems/technology in the current process were expanded on like Expedia, SpaceST, the PMS being Cloudbeds, cancelling of preauthorisation, combining email, phone, and WhatsApp, and so forth. New items to the current process (pink squares) were Airbnb, Stripe, Google sheets, fattureincloud.it, and phone and email. New items to the new process (red squares) were new website, automatic syncing between booking sites and Cloudbeds, 360 room tour/3D digital, booking portal on website, Facebook, Linkedin, relocation agents or partners, DocuSign or similar, customer relationship management such as through sending surveys to gauge preferences, a coliving app, calendar reminders, an e-book, Zapier for integrating Cloudbeds and fattureincloud.it, automated billing, QR codes, automated messages via email, automated review prompt via email or Whatsapp, and automated emails via Cloudbeds. Some of the items already existed in other parts of the customer process but were added during the different stages of the blueprint. Also, squares were reorganised and combined where possible to still distinguish between already existing, changed, and new items according to the legend colouration. In this swim lane, closely related items were better grouped per row according to the workshop participants' feedback for easier reading of the blueprint.

It became evident during the workshop that some of the technological solutions listed, such as a new website, are currently being implemented by Company X, and some will be implemented at a later stage. There was discussion in terms of automation where possible and retaining human touchpoints where suitable like check-in. Some items were also considered optional depending on the customer, like sending surveys to guests who are technology-forward but not to those who are not that digitally literate. In general terms, the process itself did not change drastically but the

changed and new items were added to give a richer picture of the current process, together with wishes and ideas or actual implementations for the new process. Also, by combining squares and organising them more or less by process steps or thematically, the service blueprint became more organised and better utilised by Customer X.

3.2.4 Results

The service blueprinting revealed important insights through three phases and outputs. These were an initial service blueprint drafted by the thesis author, a subsequent blueprint and a final service blueprint made in collaboration with client-side participants. This approach allowed for comparison between the experienced customer journey and practical operational perspective and a more detailed emphasis on technological solutions.

The initial blueprint by the thesis author (figure 7, appendix 1) provided a general but detailed picture of the customer journey, mainly intended to depict long-term stays. This stage provided the legwork and foundational structure but lacked specificity of technological nuances and information that only the client-side participants naturally had at the initial stages. The subsequent blueprint (figure 8, appendix 2) that was established during the workshop significantly improved depth, mainly focusing on touchpoints and support systems/technology. The final blueprint (figure 9, appendix 3) evolved even more, bringing clarity and focus, together with a broader perspective on the whole process, although still touchpoints and support systems/technology were focused on for analysis purposes. The focus on the aforementioned areas highlighted a clear shift toward adopting and focusing more on digital solutions and an enhanced customer experience, nevertheless acknowledging the importance of physical/personal touchpoints.

Touchpoints

The analysis of the blueprints underscored that touchpoints were a critical area. Small clarifications to the current processes were made (purple squares in figure 10) but more notably several new digital touchpoints were added (red squares in figure 10), making it evident that Company X is committed to digitalising and improving customer engagement and satisfaction. These new aspects included:

- Integration of direct booking system on Company X's website, suggesting a shift towards direct customer relationships made also available digitally
- Development of digital resources like guides, instructions, and video tutorials to streamline customer onboarding and ongoing support during the stay

- Implementation of new value-added services such as an experience concierge and targeted discounts to local stores/services, strengthening community and boosting customer experience
- Adoption of a digital survey as part of ongoing gauging of customer preferences, underscoring the willingness to gather customer feedback for continuous improvement.

Support systems/technology

In relation to support systems/technology (figure 11), the changes were clearly oriented towards automation and digital integration. Changes to the current process (purple squares in figure 11) were made for clarification and new items to the current process (pink squares in figure 11) were added for more detail. Operational efficiencies were important with automatic syncing of booking sites and integrating Cloudbeds with fattureincloud.it. Also prior manual processes like signing contracts to now willingness to adopt a digital signing platform showcase improvement in efficiency. The addition of new items to the current processes (pink squares in figure 11) evidenced Company X's already existing efforts with cloud-based and integrated technological solutions with the use of Google suite, Stripe, fattureincloud.it, external booking sites, and more. Company X is strategically focused on improving internal processes and providing customers with multiple technological solutions on customer interactions.

New items to the new process (red squares in figure 11) revealed a desire to implement numerous digital solutions as part of strategy, key themes being:

- System integration (automatic syncing between booking platforms, PMS integration via Zapier)
- Improved digital marketing and customer relationship management through updating Company X's website and increasing presence on social media platforms
- Launching of digital experiences and products like a 360-degree room tour, coliving application (potentially), and e-book, amplifying customer engagement practices
- Advanced automation such as automated billing, emails, review prompts, and document signature management (DocuSign).

Working on the service blueprints with client-side participants highlighted the ongoing processes of digital implementation, with many elements already included in Company X's processes, some new ones already being implemented, and several new ones that will be implemented in the future. Despite minimal changes to the current customer journey, the exploration of the customer journey and providing a richer final service blueprint with digital and technological improvements provided a comprehensive picture of Company X's efforts to strategically improve its business processes and provide an enhanced customer experience. The blueprinting also helped with identifying physical

and digital factors in the process. The service blueprinting provided good structure for discussion and acted as a means to thoroughly analyse current strengths and weaknesses together with future aspirations.

3.3 Phase 2 – Online survey

As phase 2, an online survey was sent to previous and current colivers of Company X. The online survey was sent to the colivers after the workshop with client-side participants was held to make sure that questions were somewhat comparable to the customer journey discussed in the workshop, providing an opportunity to add any relevant questions. This subsection will thus discuss the online survey as a data collection method, introduce the participants, and include presenting the survey results and analysis.

3.3.1 Data collection

The online survey method (Moilanen, Ojasalo & Ritalahti 2022, subchapter 4.4) was chosen in order to gain insight into the colivers' viewpoints on their living environment, experience, wishes, and perspective on value addition through digital means. Surveys in general are fast and inexpensive to conduct and can produce both superficial but reliable or deep but not very well generalisable data depending on the method being quantitative or qualitative (Moilanen, Ojasalo & Ritalahti 2022, subchapter 4.4). A mixed-method approach was chosen as both qualitative and quantitative questions were asked in the same data collection strategy (Bickman & Rog 2009, 295–297), which aligns well with the objectives of this thesis by gauging Company X's customers' thoughts on a more deeper level in qualitative ways together with easy data analysis in quantitative terms.

The online survey was conducted in the Webropol survey tool and was shared as a link in a WhatsApp group including previous and current colivers that are staying or have stayed at Company X for at least one month. Additionally, Company X's owner and manager shared the survey link via email and text message to some former residents that are not in the WhatsApp group. The online survey was available in English, to cater to international colivers, and Italian, as there were and are quite many Italian residents. Conducting the survey in the two languages was important to make sure that the survey was fully comprehended and it also allowed for more reliability.

The online survey was open for a week, from 17 to 24 April 2025. It was sent to 36 people in the coliving WhatsApp group and 13 people that are not part of the WhatsApp group. Out of the 49 people in total, 14 people answered, resulting in a response rate of approximately 29 %. A low

response rate is quite common for online surveys, particularly due to the influx of questionnaires being sent to people, causing exhaustion (Moilanen, Ojasalo & Ritalahti 2022, subchapter 4.4).

The online survey cover page consisted of a research announcement and a question on consent in order for the respondent to either proceed with the survey or not proceed with it (appendix 4). The online survey was anonymous. In addition to an introduction section with introductory questions, the survey was structured in sections according to the customer journey identified in the service blueprint: Pre-booking, booking, check-in, living, checkout, and post-stay. The online survey consisted of 39 questions out of which 20 were closed-ended (with some options having open-ended fields for more specification), three were multiple-choice, nine were open-ended, six were position (5-point Likert scale), and one was a ranking type of question. Answering to all questions was mandatory.

When the questions were drafted, the thesis author sent them for review to three external reviewers, and also to the thesis supervisor, and the advisor and intern of Company X. Revisions were made to the survey by adding three questions at the wish of Company X's advisor, by improving understanding on one question pointed out by the thesis supervisor, and by modifying some Likert scale response options for better clarity based on external reviewers' insight. Before going live with the survey and sending it, it was pilot tested by the thesis author in Webropol, and everything worked as planned from a technical standpoint.

3.3.2 Participants

The participants of the survey, both past and present colivers, formed a probability sample (Moilanen, Ojasalo & Ritalahti 2022, subchapter 4.4), representing clients of Company X, thus making the results somewhat generalisable to that sample, although the results could not be fully generalised due to the not large enough number of respondents. The sample size was 49 people, out of which 14 people responded. While all previous and current colivers of the WhatsApp group were targeted, having different backgrounds, Company X's owner together with the manager separately targeted former colivers via email and phone to get an even more diverse and larger number of people to respond.

3.3.3 Data analysis

The survey including both quantitative and qualitative data, each question was analysed separately. Quantitative questions were analysed using descriptive statistics and qualitative questions by thematical analysis. Some of the qualitative data was quantitised in terms of frequency count, i.e. how often did a certain response appear. (Bickman & Rog 2009, 301–304.)

The survey questions below (also available in appendix 4) are structured under headings as in the online survey and denoted as "*SQ1, SQ2, SQ3…*", retaining the order they appeared in the survey. SQ35 was intentionally left out from the analysis as the thesis author did not deem it relevant to be analysed here.

Introduction

SQ1. Age

The majority of respondents were 18-24 years old (29 %) and 25-34 years old (29 %). The third most respondents (21 %) were 55-64 years old. The second to least respondents (14 %) were 45-54 years old, and one respondent (7 %) was 35-44 years old.

SQ2. Duration of stay (if undecided, choose based on estimated length)

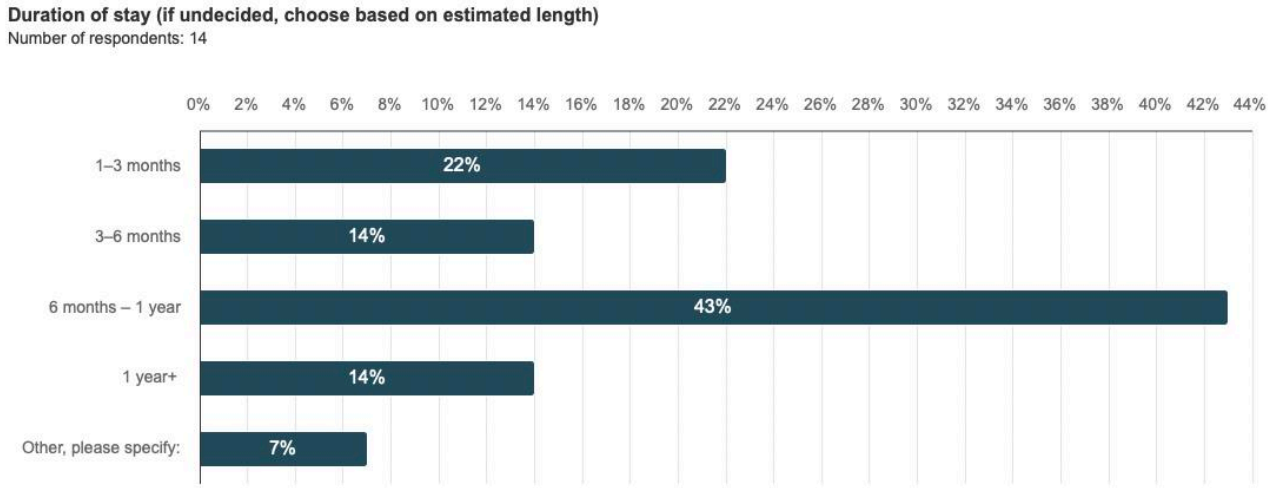

Figure 12. Survey question 2

43 % of respondents will stay or stayed between six months to one year. 22 % of respondents will stay or stayed between one to three months, and 14 % of respondents between three to six months. Since the "other, please specify" answer was a text answer stating "22 months", the reply belongs to the same category of "1 year+", making the category of 1 year+ to comprise approximately 21 % of respondents. Rounding up, there are equally as many respondents that will stay or stayed between one to three months and those for over one year.

SQ3. Nationality

Over half (57 %) of the respondents were Italian, and the rest (43 %) comprised of two Argentinians, a German, French, Guatemalan, and American.

SQ4. Occupation

The occupations of respondents varied, three being students out of which one responded having done an Erasmus+ working internship. Other occupations included online technical support, doctor, researcher at a university, cybersecurity engineer, public sector employee, IT project manager, [undefined] employee, teacher, data analyst, and freelancer.

SQ5. Purpose of stay

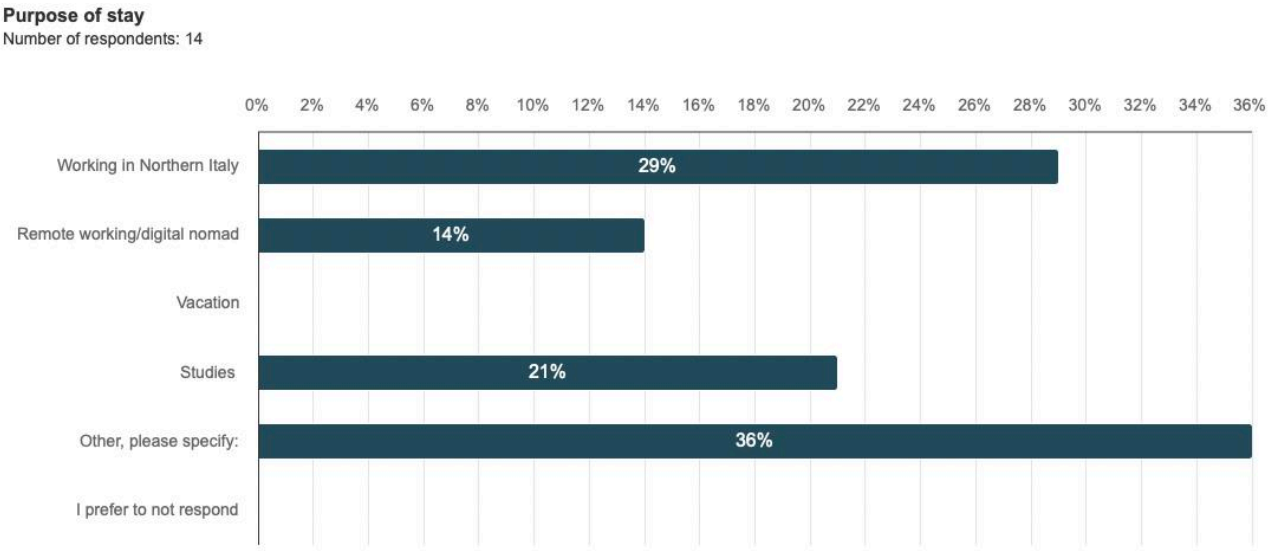

Figure 13. Survey question 5

For the purpose of stay, 36 % of respondents chose “Other, please specify” for reasons such as needing an arrangement due to separation, personal project, change of house, relocation, and Erasmus+ (which belongs in the studies category). “Studies” at 21 % would change to 29 % considering the Erasmus+ student and “other, please specify” would change to 29 % similarly. Like these categories, 29 % stay or stayed due to work in the North of Italy. Two respondents (14 %) stay or stayed for the reason of remote working/being a digital nomad.

SQ6. Why did you choose coliving?

Among the replies of the respondents, four themes were identified: community, convenience, novelty, and word of mouth.

Respondents chose coliving for reasons such as community aspects, “because it is an opportunity of meeting new people when you move abroad and you don’t know anyone yet”, for convenience like location and it being a functional temporary solution, “coliving enabled me to get a room right away without having to activate utilities”, to gain a new experience, and because it was recommended by colleagues.

Pre-booking

SQ7. How did you feel about the price point in relation to the current service offering?

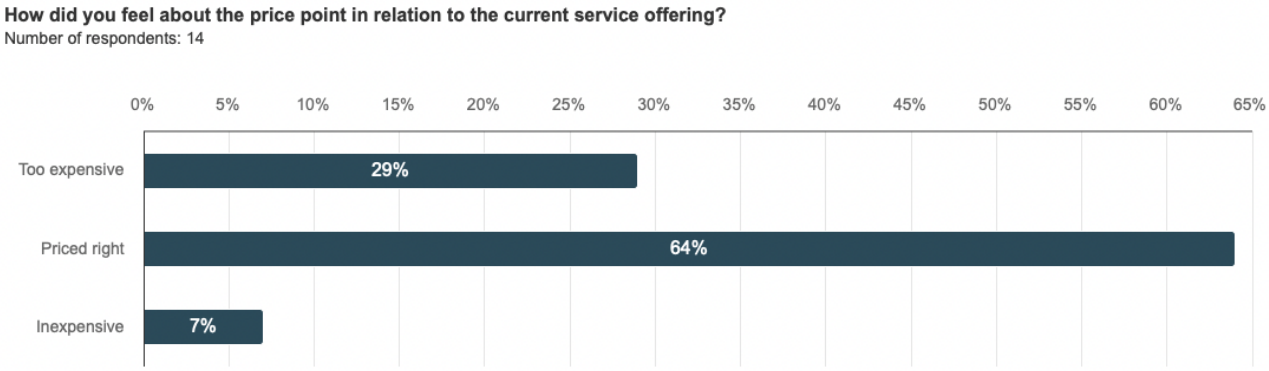

Figure 14. Survey question 7

The majority of respondents (64 %) felt that the coliving is priced right in relation to the current offering. 29 % of respondents considered the coliving too expensive and one respondent (7 %) considered it inexpensive.

SQ8. How did you find [Company X]?

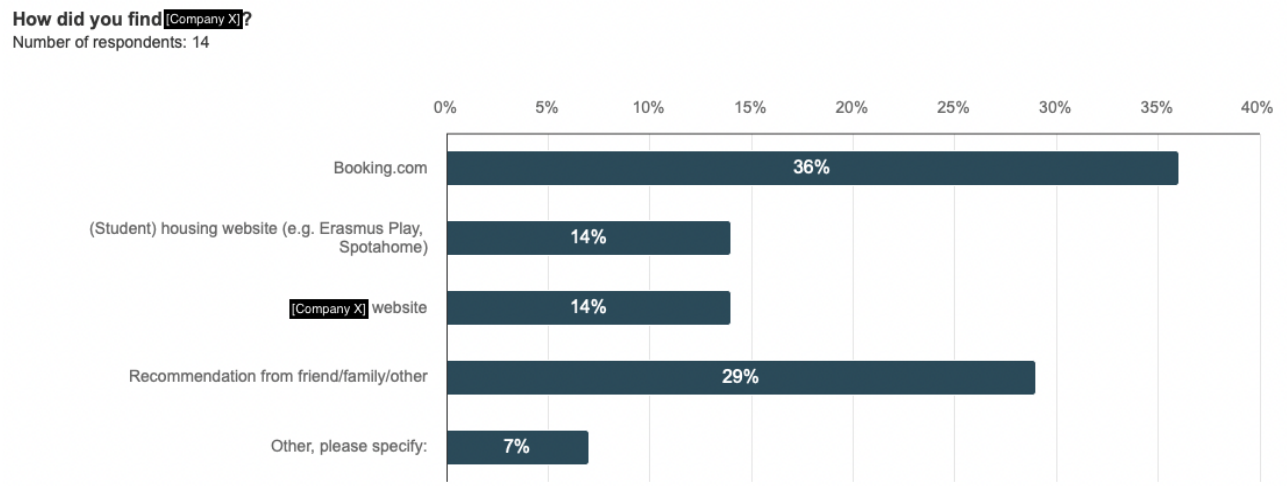

Figure 15. Survey question 8

36 % of respondents found Company X through Booking.com, 29 % of respondents because of a recommendation from friend/family/other, 14% of respondents from a (student) housing website, and 14 % of respondents from Company X's website. To "other, please specify", one respondent (7 %) answered that they "read by chance an article in the newspaper that talked about the inauguration [of Company X]". Other options were also available but hidden from figure 14 since no respondent chose them in their answers.

SQ9. Online reviews had an impact on choosing [Company X].

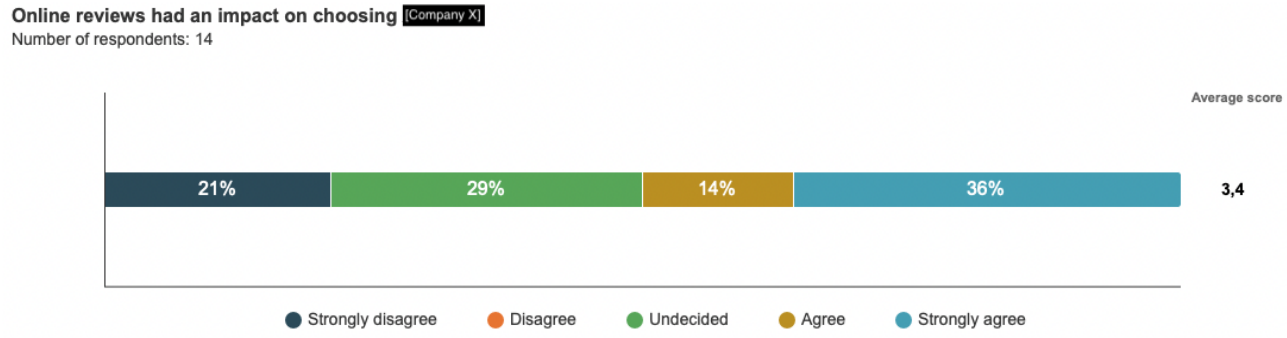

Figure 16. Survey question 9

In order from most to least positive, 36 % of respondents strongly agreed that online reviews had an impact on choosing Company X, 14 % of respondents agreed, 29 % of respondents were undecided, and 21 % of respondents strongly disagreed.

SQ10. Please describe what do you think of the availability of information online on room options, facilities, prices etc.?

Four respondents stated that there is not much information available: the content is limited and there is not much information on location and services. Other responses in line with this were that "information online was ok, but the availability of the rooms was not up to date. The room I originally wanted was booked even though it was available online" and [Company X's] website did not have prices. Out of the respondents that did not find [enough] information, three respondents contacted the coliving or even visited to gain more information. One respondent mentioned that "[Company X's] presence on social media is non-existent".

Five respondents considered the information adequate, good, corresponding to reality, descriptions being appropriate, and that there is all information on rooms, services, prices, and photos.

SQ11. What information would you have liked more of? Please provide suggestions for improvements for the digital information platforms (website, social media, booking sites).

Respondents thought that the website is nice but could be improved; there could be information on events and promotions. Three respondents mentioned wanting to see [clarity of] prices [per room] and booking directly on the company website. Also, social media content was wished for.

Respondents would have liked more information on events and social activities that have taken place and found it good if the team would be presented on the website and social network, together with photos and videos of the atmosphere and information on the age of guests [that are staying]. Having information on the city and region was also mentioned by two respondents.

Five respondents did not need more information, and one of them stated that all questions were answered by the manager via text messages.

Two respondents mentioned hotels; one stated that a hotel-type website interface would be good, and the other wanted more information on the specific selection due to a more long-term stay in comparison to a hotel.

SQ12. Did you request for additional information (e.g. pictures, video tour) before booking? If yes, what information?

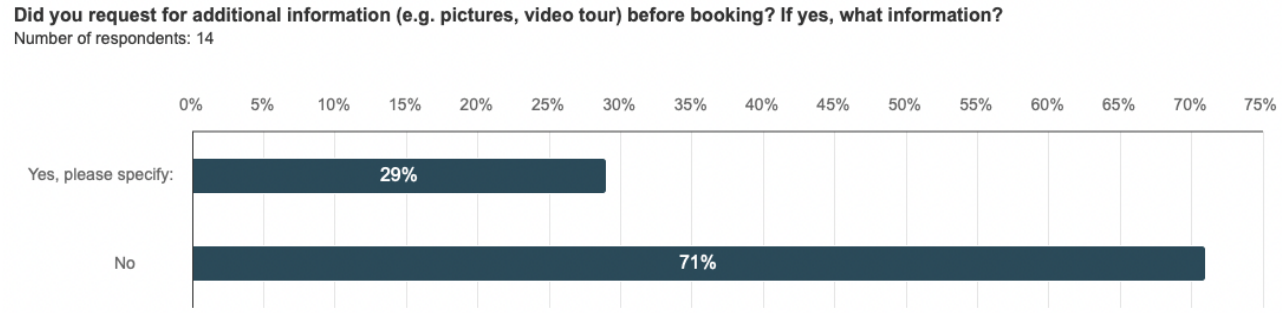

Figure 17. Survey question 12

Most respondents (71 %) did not request additional information before booking. 29 % of respondents requested additional information, out of which three requested photos [of the exact room] and in addition one of them requested a video tour of the premises, and one respondent requested a video call of the premises.

Booking

SQ13. How did you eventually book your stay?

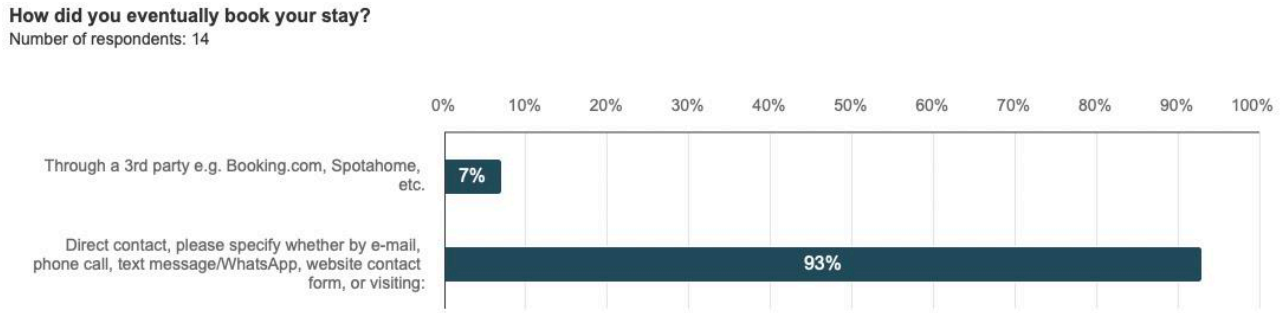

Figure 18. Survey question 13

All except one respondent (93 %) booked their stay through direct contact: three solely via email, two solely in person, two solely via phone call, one solely via WhatsApp, three via email and WhatsApp combined, and one via phone call and email combined. Out of the 93 %, one respondent replied “direct contact” to the answer field, which did not specify how. One respondent (7 %) booked through a 3rd party.

SQ14. Would you have preferred an online booking platform directly on the [Company X] website (e.g. showing availability, requesting booking, prepayment of deposit, etc.)?

Most respondents (57 %) did not prefer or found it indifferent to have an online booking platform directly on Company X's website. 43 % of respondents would have preferred an online booking platform on Company X's website.

SQ15. How did you sign the coliving contract?

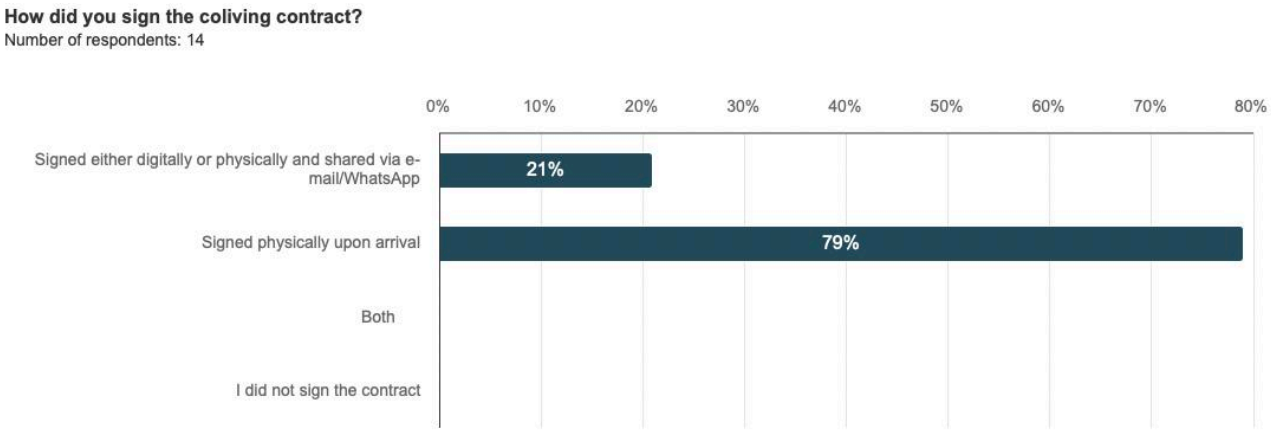

Figure 19. Survey question 15

The majority of respondents (79 %) signed the coliving contract physically upon arrival at the coliving. 21 % of respondents signed the contract digitally or physically and then shared it [to Company X] via email or WhatsApp.

SQ16. Would you find it beneficial to have the contract process handled through a digital signing platform (e.g. DocuSign)?

Most respondents (64 %) would find it beneficial to have the contract process handled through a digital signing platform, whereas 36 % of respondents did not find it beneficial.

Check-in

SQ17. Was the check-in/onboarding process handled digitally (over the phone or e-mail, sending key card access) or physically (you were welcomed by a person, and everything was explained and handed over to you in person)?

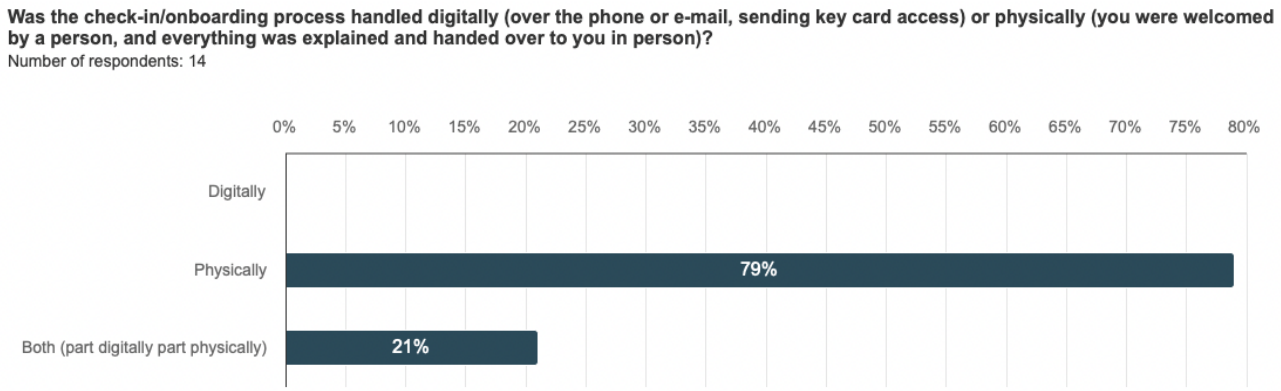

Figure 20. Survey question 17

The vast majority of respondents (79 %) had the check-in/onboarding process handled physically. 21 % of respondents had it handled part digitally part physically. No respondents had a fully digital check-in//onboarding process.

SQ18. How important do you find the in-person check-in/onboarding process (e.g. explanation of house rules, tour of premises, introduction to residents, etc.)

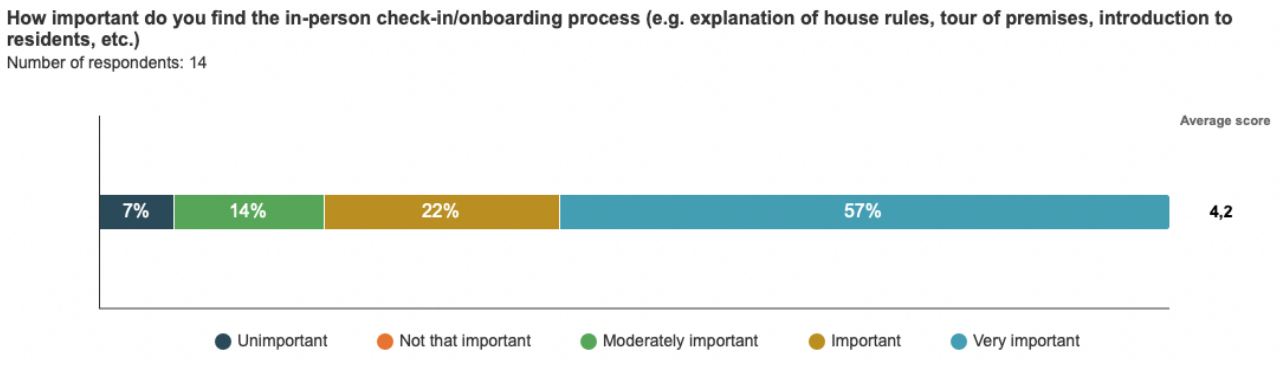

Figure 21. Survey question 18

From most to least positive, over half (57 %) of the respondents found the in-person check-in/onboarding process very important, 22 % of respondents found it important, 14 % of respondents found it moderately important, and 7 % of respondents found it unimportant.

SQ19. Please describe what was good about the check-in/onboarding process and provide any improvement suggestions.

Three key themes were identified from the responses: behavioural aspects, interactions, and digital aspects.

Behavioural aspects. Multiple respondents expressed that the detailed explanations, tour of the house, and friendly staff were good. Words like welcoming, available, kind, friendly, clear and flexible were mentioned. One respondent answered, “I appreciated everything, they were all very available, I immediately felt at home”.

Interactions. Interactions between colivers were mentioned by two respondents, one saying “unfortunately I did not get a full tour of the house. However, asking the roommates was very helpful for any topics” and another respondent mentioned it was good meeting other colivers and staff to ask questions.

Digital aspects. One respondent mentioned that the room key information and activation was handled via email, and one respondent would wish for [check-in/onboarding] information to be available digitally.

SQ20. Could parts of the check-in/onboarding process be handled digitally?

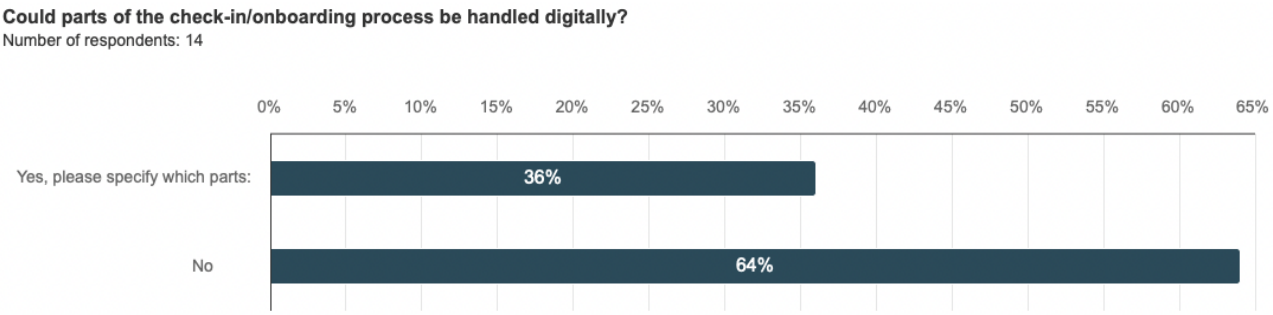

Figure 22. Survey question 20

The majority (64 %) of respondents did not think that parts of the check-in/onboarding process could be handled digitally. The 36 % of respondents who thought that parts could be handled digitally specified that the contract signing, coordinating payment, setting up the room key, and paying the down payment are those that can be handled digitally. In addition, two respondents particularly expressed that the entire process could be handled digitally, however, pointed out that

not everyone might like the digital experience, and the in-person contact during the check-in made the process very much more pleasant.

Living

SQ21. Rank these aspects in terms of how much you value them in a coliving? From most important (1) to least important (11).

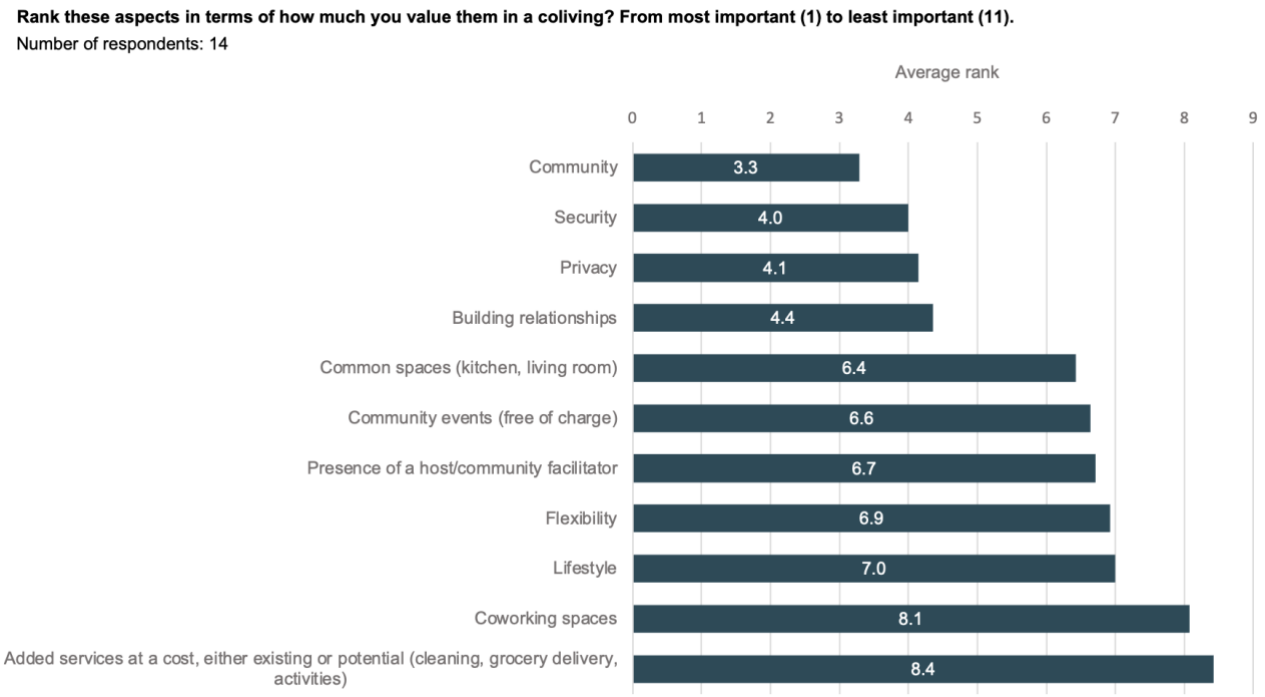

Figure 23. Survey question 21

The original graph from Webropol is attached as appendix 5. The average rank is presented as a graph to identify which aspects were ranked from most to least important for ease of analysis and representation. The smaller the average rank the more important the specific aspect is viewed.

On average, community was ranked the most important. Security was the second most important, closely followed by privacy and building relationships. Mid-important were common spaces, community events, presence of a host/community facilitator, flexibility, and lifestyle. The least important was added services at a cost, and second to least important coworking spaces.

SQ22. Which of these would you like available in digital format? You can choose several options.

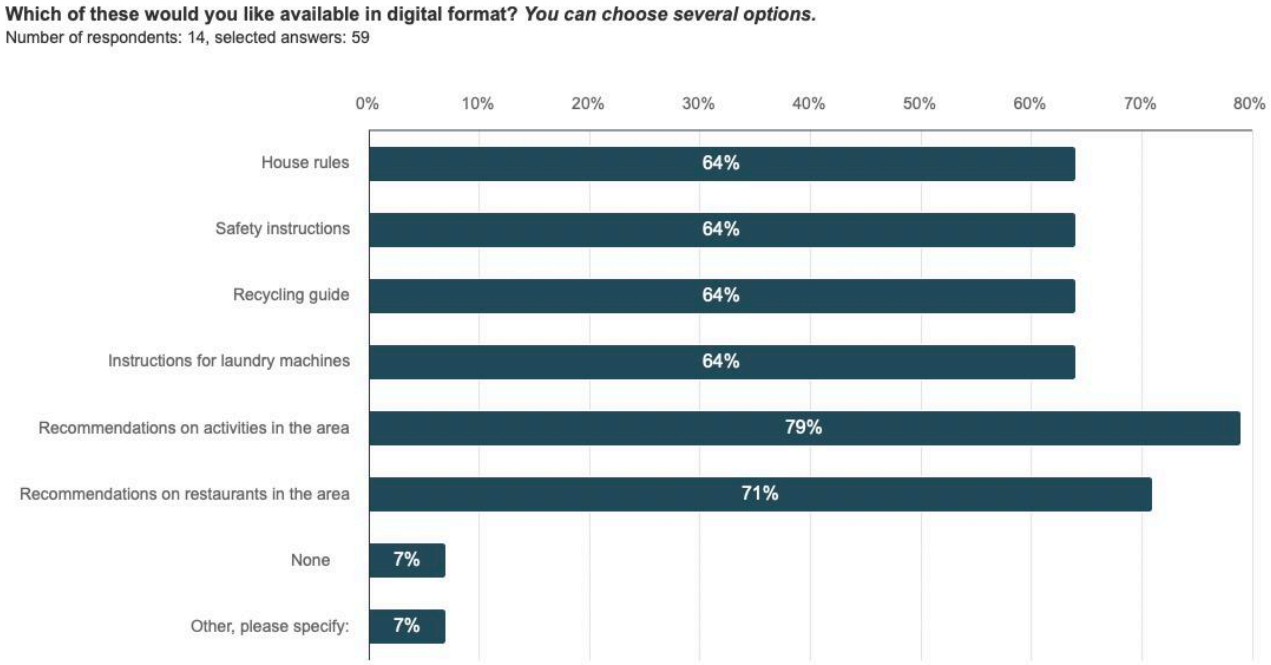

Figure 24. Survey question 22

All the suggested options were preferred in digital format quite evenly, with recommendations on activities in the area (79 %) and recommendations on restaurants in the area (71 %) preferred most. House rules, safety instructions, recycling guide, and instructions for laundry machines were each preferred by 64 % of respondents. One respondent (7 %) did not want any of the options in digital format. Either the same respondent that replied none or another respondent (7 %) replied “other, please specify” and wrote that they prefer [information on] events in the area to be available in digital format.

SQ23. In relation to the above, do digital copies suffice, or would you additionally want them as physical copies?

Almost twice as many respondents (64 %) thought that digital copies suffice whereas 36 % of respondents would want both digital and physical copies of the items listed in the previous question (SQ22).

SQ24. Additional digital services. Which of these digital services are you interested in? You can choose several options.

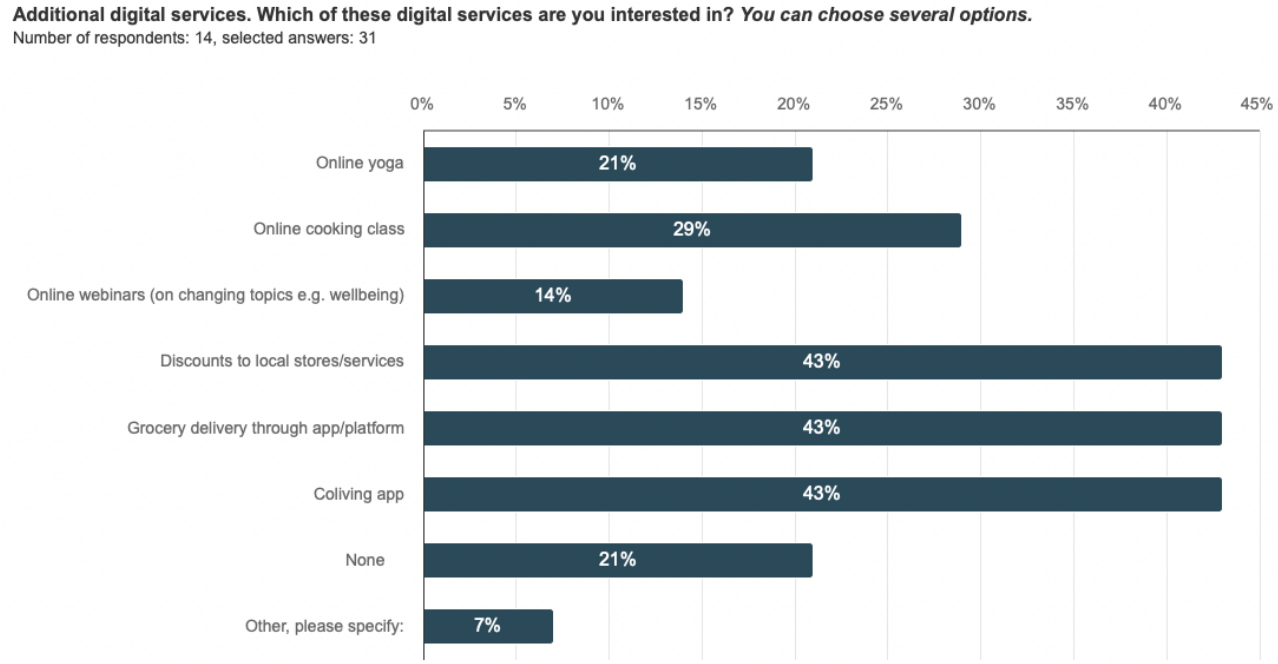

Figure 25. Survey question 24

Respondents were most interested in discounts to local stores/services, grocery delivery through app/platform, and a coliving app, each voted by 43 % of respondents. Respondents were also interested in an online cooking class (29 %), online yoga (21 %), and online webinars (14 %). 21 % of respondents however were not interested in any digital services. One respondent (7 %), either as their sole option or having also responded “none”, replied “other, please specify” and clarified that they “would prefer yoga, cooking classes and other activities in person”.

SQ25. Imagine that there is a platform for sharing your itinerary or plans with other colivers so they can use these for planning their own activities, or even join you on trips, activities, or local events in [city] – and you could also utilise such platform for seeing others' itineraries and join them – how interested would you be?

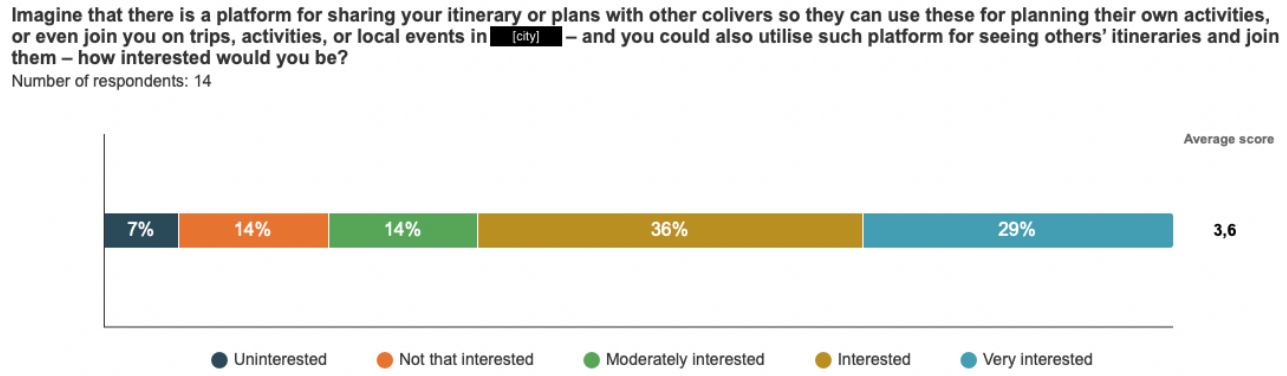

Figure 26. Survey question 25

From most to least interest on the scale, 29 % of respondents were very interested in the described platform, 36 % of respondents were interested, 14 % of respondents were moderately interested, 14 % of respondents were not that interested, and one respondent (7 %) was uninterested.

SQ26. Imagine that [Company X] organizes an event to involve the local community, which would also be a chance for you to meet and interact with locals. This could be e.g. artists coming to [Company X] to present their art, or a book launch event at [Company X]. How interested would you be in such?

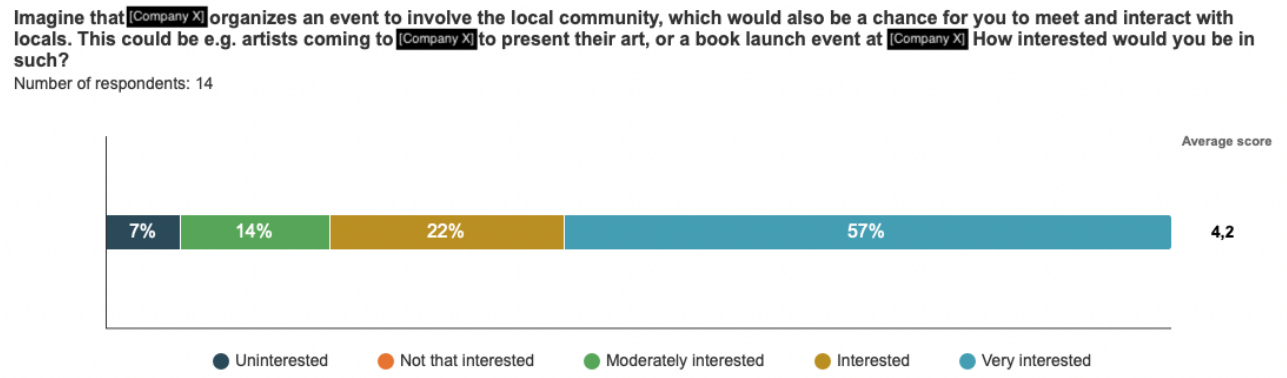

Figure 27. Survey question 26

From most to least interest on the scale, over half (57 %) of the respondents were very interested in an event similar to what was presented in the question, 22 % of respondents were interested, 14 % of respondents were moderately interested, and one respondent (7 %) was uninterested.

SQ27. If [Company X] would provide an "experience concierge" service, i.e. planning a personalized itinerary and organising events and activities for you, would you pay for such service?

With a relatively even score, more respondents (57 %) would however pay for an experience concierge service compared to those who would not pay (43 %).

SQ28. If you wish for additional services, do you wish for them to be physical or digital (as applicable, e.g. cooking class, yoga, tours)? For clarification, a physical service/activity means something organized in-person, and a digital one means something organized online or through digital means (e.g. video, mobile app, website).

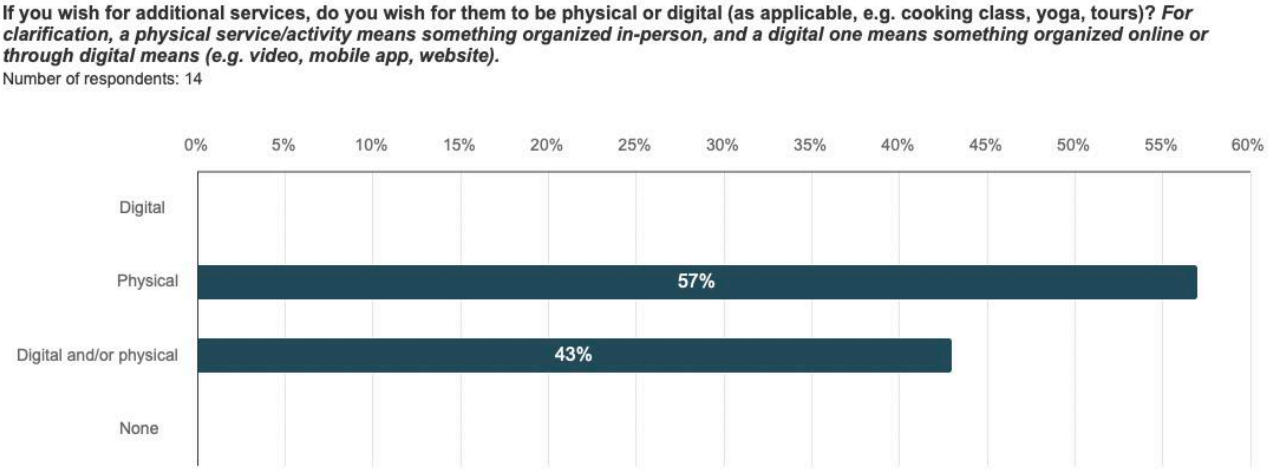

Figure 28. Survey question 28

With a rather even vote, 57 % of respondents wish for additional services to be physical only, whereas 43 % of respondents wish for additional services to be digital and/or physical. No respondent wished for fully/only digital additional services.

SQ29. Would you be willing to pay for additional services and events?

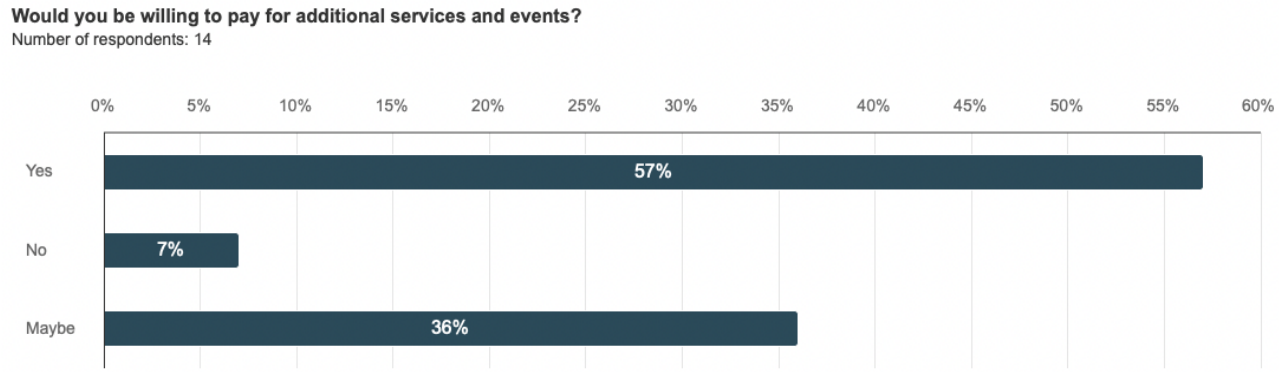

Figure 29. Survey question 29

More than half (57 %) of respondents would be willing to pay for additional services and events, 36 % of respondents might be willing, and one respondent (7 %) is not willing.

SQ30. Which digital features would significantly enhance your coliving experience (e.g. mobile app for community engagement, smart home technology)?

The theme that appeared the most was *mobile app*. Half of the respondents mentioned a [coliving/mobile] app significantly enhancing their coliving experience. One respondent mentioned a coliving app for problem-solving. One respondent mentioned that a mobile app would not be needed as WhatsApp is already being used.

Two respondents mentioned [smart] home technology. Other suggestions were “online guide for problems commonly encountered in the house”, “a shared activity calendar, available to anyone without having to schedule in advance”, and “[Company X] newsletter and forum for colivers”.

SQ31. What would add value to your coliving experience at [Company X]? List anything you want.

A recurring theme was events, mentioned by five respondents; advertising events more, organising more community events and activities together like cooking or eating together and events that help foreigners get to know more about Italian/local culture.

One respondent expressed that an exchange of skills between colivers would add value to their coliving experience, detailing, “for example someone who is a good cook can teach other colivers

or someone who wants to improve their Italian or English. There could be a free exchange to help other colivers. This can extend to sports, soft skills etc.”

Two respondents mentioned free laundry, also the possibility to know availability of laundry machines. Another aspect was getting a [free] metro/bus ticket.

Two respondents mentioned [bigger] desks and [office/ergonomic] chairs inside rooms, particularly considering students and remote workers.

Two respondents mentioned physical presence, one mentioning that “someone [from staff] should stay at the premises in case of issues that need to be handled”.

SQ32. Based on your experience, evaluate the sense of community (i.e. feeling of belonging and being part of a community) at [Company X].

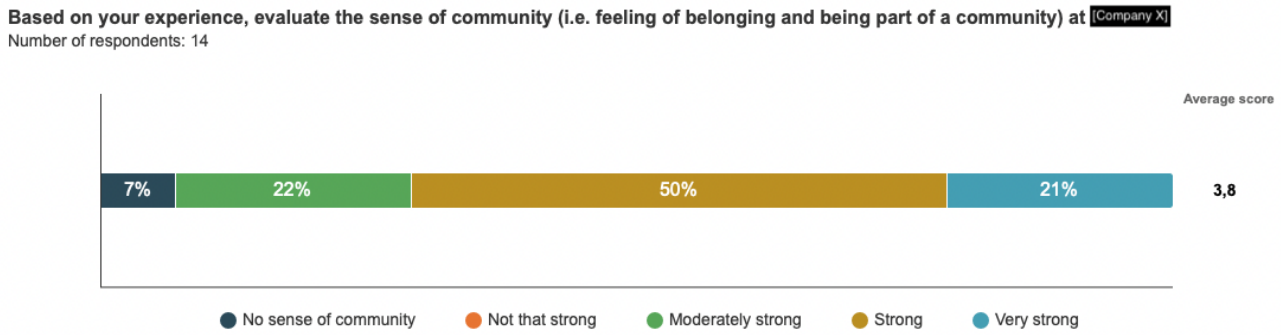

Figure 30. Survey question 32

From most to least strong on the scale, 21 % of respondents felt that the sense of community at Company X is very strong, half of the respondents (50 %) felt that it is strong, 22 % of respondents felt that it is moderately strong, and one respondent (7 %) felt that there is no sense of community.

SQ33. What would add to your sense of community? You can choose several options.

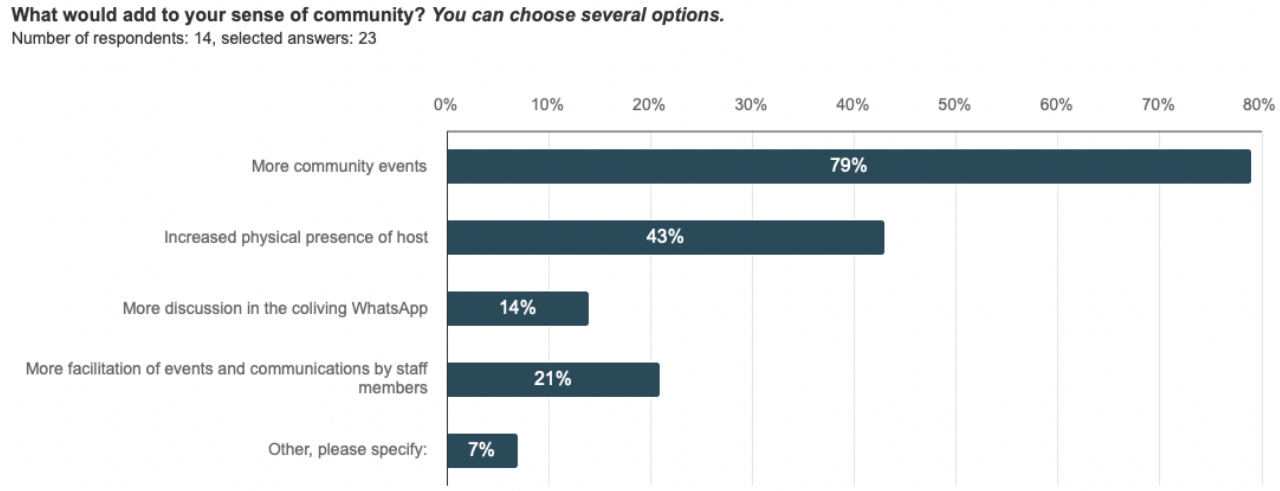

Figure 31. Survey question 33

The vast majority (79 %) replied that more community events would add to their sense of community, 43 % of respondents replied that increased physical presence of host would add to it, 21 % of respondents replied that more facilitation of events and communications by staff members would add to it, and 14 % of respondents replied that more discussion in the coliving WhatsApp would add to it. One respondent (7 %) chose “other, please specify” and responded with “N/A”.

Checkout

SQ34. What checkout option would you prefer?

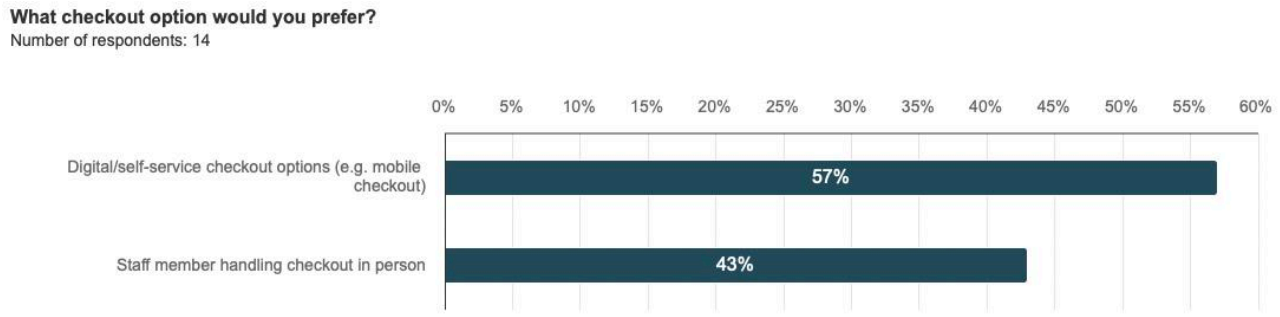

Figure 32. Survey question 34

Over half (57 %) of respondents would prefer a digital/self-service check-out option and 43 % would prefer a staff member handling the checkout in person.

Post-stay

[SQ35 intentionally left out due to not being relevant for analysis in this thesis.]

SQ36. How satisfied have you been / were you with [Company X] during your stay?

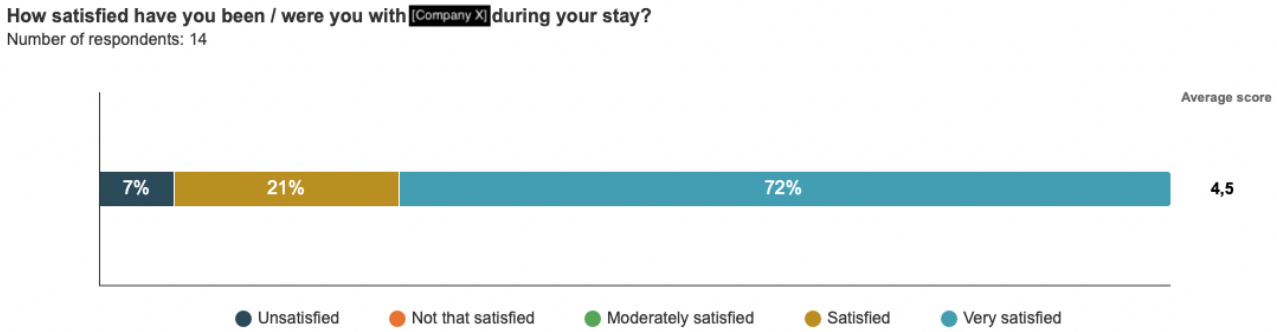

Figure 33. Survey question 36

From most to least satisfaction, the vast majority (72 %) of respondents have been/were satisfied with Company X during their stay, 21 % have been/were satisfied, and one respondent (7 %) is/was unsatisfied.

SQ37. Would you appreciate receiving digital follow-ups or offers after your stay?

The vast majority (79 %) of respondents would appreciate receiving digital follow-ups after their stay, whereas 21 % of respondents would not appreciate it.

SQ38. What factors contribute to your willingness to return to [Company X] or recommend the place to others?

Community, people, and staff were mentioned the most as factors that would contribute to respondents' willingness to return to [Company X] or recommend the place to others. Respondents particularly highlighted kind, caring, professional, and available staff, together with community, meeting all kinds of people, and relationships that could be built. Respondents described the experience particularly well with comments like "Having caring and professional staff members to ensure that all colivers feel safe and comfortable, sets the foundation to naturally create a sense of

community and build stronger relationships” and “This welcoming environment is not easy to find everywhere”.

Respondents also mentioned location often, the coliving being close to the metro and a hospital. Premises/facilities also contributed to respondents’ willingness to return or recommend the place to others, being described as beautiful, great and clean.

Price was mentioned as an important factor even though not the only reason, and a respondent would “pay a premium compared to other places if there were value added services and community events”.

SQ39. What factors contribute to the likelihood of attending [Company X] events as alumni?

Factors that contributed to the likelihood of attending events as an ex coliver were reconnecting with community and staff, mentioned by several respondents. One respondent expressed that “a bit younger people like me” would have an effect.

Interesting events like a tour of a winery or events with relevant people were mentioned as contributing factors. Advertising events and sharing information were also factors.

Several respondents felt that their busy lives, other commitments, lack of more free time, and personal availability contributed to the likelihood.

3.3.4 Results

The results, i.e. analysis of survey responses will be synthesised into thematic insights. This will help in analysing the data obtained and identify trends.

Demographic and duration of stay

The survey revealed age groups among respondents, mainly consisting of young adults (18-24 and 25-34 years old, each at 29 %), together with older adults (55-64 years old at 21 %). This is in line with a coliving solution attracting both younger and older demographic searching for flexible living arrangements coupled with community and convenience. The duration of stay portrayed a preference toward mid-term stays (six months to one year, 43 %), making the coliving a solution for transitory and extended stays. More or less an equal number of respondents chose short-term stays (1-3 months) or long-term stays (over one year), making coliving also versatile in its appeal.

Trends in nationality and occupation

The majority of respondents (57 %) were of Italian nationality, showing strong local market penetration, whereas a diverse set of international residents (43 %) suggest a considerable appeal to international guests. Occupation diversity ranging from students, technical professionals, healthcare, and academia to freelancing, indicates that coliving is an appealing solution broadly across diverse professional backgrounds, likely due to its flexibility and networking opportunities.

Purpose of stay and criteria for selecting coliving

Work and study-related aspects were predominant motivations for stays (each at 29 %). Equally important were personal circumstances like relocation or temporary solutions, emphasizing the flexibility of coliving as a housing arrangement. Primary reasons for coliving being an attractive solution were community-building, convenience, and novelty – respondents highlighted social integration and immediate accommodation as considerable benefits. Overall, price was considered appropriate (64 %), while a notable minority (29 %) perceived the price as expensive, indicating an opportunity for enhancing perceived value.

Digital presence and booking preferences

Online visibility of the coliving was important in attracting residents, with Booking.com (36 %) and personal recommendations (29 %) being most influential, signifying that trusted platforms and peer feedback are strongly relied on. The significance of online reviews was interestingly dispersed, with 36 % strongly agreeing, 29 % being indecisive, and 21 % strongly disagreeing with how much they had an effect. The adequacy of information available online was a critical factor and opinions were mixed, as five respondents deemed it sufficient however numerous respondents wanted more detailed, updated content in relation to availability, pricing, and services.

While most respondents booked their stay directly through personal contact with Company X (93 %), slightly less than half (43 %) were interested in an online booking platform directly on Company X’s website. This indicates potential for streamlining the booking process digitally. Moreover, the majority (64 %) would prefer a platform for digital signing of the coliving contract, highlighting openness of the respondents for enhanced digital integration of processes visible to the customer.

Check-in experience

The vast majority of respondents preferred an in-person check-in experience (79 %), underscoring the value perceived in human interactions, detailed explanations, and a personalised initial touch for fostering community. Respondents highlighted strengths to be behavioural aspects like staff

friendliness and clarity. Although digital aspects were viewed as beneficial by some respondents, regarding administrative tasks in particular (e.g. payment and digital key), most advocated for the importance of personal engagement during the check-in process.

Digital preferences during stay

Respondents were highly interested in information resources in digital form, particularly showing interest towards recommendations in restaurants and local activities, together with practical information such as house rules and laundry instructions, indicating digital resources complementing respondents' stay. Digital copies were preferred (64 %) over both digital and physical formats (36 %). In addition, local discounts, grocery delivery through an app, and a dedicated coliving app were most desired as digital enhancements, further underscoring the demand for digital convenience.

Community and engagement

Community was ranked as the most valued aspect of the coliving experience, closely followed by security, privacy, and opportunities for relationship-building. Beyond practical conveniences, this emphasises the importance of social connections in overall satisfaction. Respondents clearly wished for more community events (79 %) and increased staff involvement, showing opportunities for strengthening community aspects even further.

Enhanced experiences and additional services

Respondents were very much interested in community-oriented activities and events that involve local community (79 % highly interested). Additionally, more than half (57 %) were willing to pay for personalised experience services or additional events. Most respondents (57 %) preferred additional offerings in physical format, although almost as many wished for them to be digital and/or physical (43 %), suggesting personal interactions important but also interest towards both digital and physical options. It was somewhat expected that in a service business, and with some of the respondents of slightly older age, physical components and human touch are important.

Perception on community and post-stay preferences

Sense of community at Company X was perceived positively by the majority (71 % describing it as strong or very strong), although there is some room for improvement. Particularly, respondents suggested that more community events and facilitation of them, together with increased staff presence would significantly contribute to the sense of community. Opportunities to digitally enhance post-stay included follow-up communications and alumni events, which the majority (79

%) was in favour of, reflecting the residents' interest in engaging with the community beyond their physical residency.

Aspects influencing likeliness of return and recommendations

Key factors contributing to the respondents' willingness to return or recommend the coliving to other included staff, community, location, cleanliness, and facilities. Price, while somewhat impactful, was secondary to overall perceived value compared to relational and experiential components of the coliving experience. Respondents also mentioned reconnecting socially and professionally as a contributing factor to sustained engagement with the community.

Overall, the survey results demonstrate opportunities for enhancing digital integration, community activities, and detailed online information to further meet guests' increased expectations and enhance overall satisfaction and perceived value in regard to the coliving experience.

4 Synthesised results

As both the workshop and survey have been discussed separately in the previous section, this section synthesises the results for better understanding of the linkage between the two methodologies and the results they yielded. The workshop and online survey complemented each other well as this allowed to analyse both the client-side efforts combined with customer expectations in order to find out whether the views are aligned. Since in a coliving business value is co-created by the business and customers to some extent, the methodological choices addressed the research questions from both client and customer perspective. The workshop was held first, as it was the exploratory main methodology, and the survey acted as a concurrent confirmatory method. While both the workshop blueprint and survey were organised according to the customer journey, and many similar points were focused on, naturally the workshop was slightly more process-oriented, also including processes that the customer does not see. The results are organised into thematic insights, discussing the similarities and differences.

Digital integration and technological solutions

The service blueprint workshop and the online survey portrayed quite a strong alignment concerning the importance of digital solutions, though different aspects were emphasized. Both methods identified a digital booking system on Company X's website as somewhat important, giving customers streamlined access and enhancing the direct relationship between the client and customers. Overall, there was a high demand for digital resources such as guides, tutorials, recommendations, underscoring customers' interest in digital solutions and Company X's intention to provide such. Customers were interested in automated processes like digital signing, and Company X's goal is to provide not only this but automated emails, billing, and CRM solutions, indicating a mutual demand for streamlining processes. Survey respondents showed strong interest towards a coliving app and other digital resources, which were also touched upon in the workshop as new touchpoints. The workshop naturally highlighted more operational aspects like PMS integration and syncing between platforms, though recognising that a human touch remains important and should be provided in addition to digital, and survey respondents specifically valued personal engagement during for example check-in.

Community engagement and interactions

Community-building was a key theme in both the workshop and survey. The survey showed that community was ranked highest, and events, community activities, and staff involvement were important for customer satisfaction, which is in line with the workshop discussions to add more of these to the customer journey. Personal interaction, particularly during check-in and community

events was necessary according to both workshop participants and survey respondents. The survey revealed quantitative insights into how much experiences and community events are valued (79 % wanting more community events), whereas the workshop highlighted how to provide these practically to customers in form of experience concierge, local partnerships, and events. Survey respondents were highly interested in post-stay engagement opportunities like follow-ups and alumni events, which was not covered in that much detail during the workshop.

Customer experience and value perception

Both findings portrayed interest towards an enhanced customer experience. Convenience and flexibility were emphasised, attracting diverse demographics and different lengths of stay. Targeted services and personalised experiences such as experience concierge and discounts were important according to both Company X and customers. Both methods' insights showed that digital solutions contribute to enhancing customer experience, though the human and physical aspect was valued much too. Survey respondents showed interest towards daily enhancements such as grocery delivery through an app and local discounts, whereas the workshop, while taking these into account, focused more on higher-level operational efficiency and digital integration in the big picture – this aligns well with the thesis objectives by understanding where to reap efficiency gains operations-wise while adding value to the customers. While price was not discussed in detail in the workshop, it was important to discover through the survey that almost a third of respondents felt that the price was high in relation to the perceived value, over half felt that the price was accurate, and more than half were willing to pay for personalised experiences and additional events, aligning with Company X's plans to offering additional services at a cost.

Online presence and availability of information

Online presence and clarity of information were important aspects identified in both analyses. Digital visibility, improved social media engagement, and informative online content were desired by the survey respondents, which is in line with Company X's efforts in creating a new website with these characteristics and increased focus on social media platforms. Peer recommendations and using trusted booking sites were important not only from survey respondents' perspective but also emerged during the workshop as Company X identifying these as part of the pre-booking process and mentioning social media as a form of sharing content to act as a recommendation to others. These types of improved contents could attract and retain customers. The survey revealed mixed perceptions on current availability of content and explicit wishes for richer and updated content, while the workshop focused on the overall digital presence and customer interactions through various digital opportunities.

As concluding remarks on the synthesised results, there were many aligning factors yet naturally diverse focuses emerged due to the duality of the research and looking at the aspects from different stakeholder perspectives and needs. The combined insights from the workshop and survey revealed the need for integrating digital tools in order to strengthen community engagement, together with increasing customer interactions through both technological and physical/personal touchpoints. Addressing these findings as part of strategy can greatly improve customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, and perceived value, aligning Company X's offering with market and customer expectations.

5 Discussion

This chapter will discuss how research questions are aligned with the results of the research and connect the research to previous literature. Furthermore, this part will introduce implications to Company X and coliving companies more broadly. Lastly, the development task will be evaluated together with strengths and weaknesses of the research.

5.1 Addressing research questions

As a recap, the research questions were as follows.

RQ1. How do digital solutions enhance operational efficiency, foster community engagement, and improve customer satisfaction in coliving spaces?

RQ2. How can digital opportunities strengthen the value proposition of coliving businesses in Italy?

RQ3. What are the key technologies and digital tools in a coliving business for enhancing customer experience, community engagement, and operational efficiency?

RQ1 encompasses the themes that arose in both the workshop and survey, being operational efficiency, technology integration, community engagement, and customer satisfaction along with value adding factors. The findings showed that digital solutions streamline processes visible to customers like onboarding and administration, for example with digital contract signing, instruction videos, and other digital resources. Survey respondents specifically valued accessing guides, recommendations, and information in digital form. Importantly, findings emphasise balance between digital solutions and personal interactions or digital and physical copies of documents, indicating that although customers value technology and the efficiency it brings, human touchpoints are extremely valuable particularly during check-in and events.

As regards RQ2, the workshop explored the various digital opportunities both from an operational perspective and introducing aspects that potentially add value to the customer, and the customer survey validated customer expectations and value adding factors around digital enhancements, both methods revealing also preference towards physical and personal opportunities alike. Findings revealed that digital opportunities added perceived value through potentially offering personalised items and experiences like discounts and an experience concierge, and conveniences through a coliving app and tutorials. Survey respondents were interested in information online such as on the website or social media and wanted post-stay communications and events. Digital opportunities not only were explored to improve operations but also to enhance

customer-perceived value and satisfaction, which strengthens Company X's position amongst competitors in the Italian coliving market.

RQ3 was covered well with the workshop identifying technologies and digital tools throughout the whole customer journey and both back- and frontend operations, such as use of a digital signing tool, integrations, automations, together with survey responses supporting digital signing and wanting a coliving app. The survey particularly highlighted the desire for community engagement opportunities through both digital and physical events and a coliving app, and there was also a lot of interest towards discounts to local stores, grocery delivery through an app, and online cooking classes. The tools discussed in the workshop and preferences of customers enable Company X to achieve increased operational efficiency, engage customers on a deeper level, and improve the overall customer experience to stay competitive.

The strength of the gathered data lies in having obtained data both from Company X via the service blueprint workshop and customers via the online survey. In the planning stages of both the workshop combined with the service blueprint and online survey, they were clearly structured according to the same customer journey. The data was then processed and analysed thematically.

A limitation in answering to the research questions is the lack of richer and more plentiful data, as there were not that many detailed open-ended responses from the survey and the number of respondents was low. The workshop focused on many aspects at once, the service blueprint containing a lot of data, so it was not possible to focus on all aspects in high detail. Also, more workshop sessions and time could have produced richer data. Thus, overall, more data could have better helped in answering the research questions.

5.2 Comparison with existing literature

Findings in this thesis conform well to previous literature. The findings related to digital integration align with literature in terms of identifying efficiency gains through technology. This research particularly focused on technology use in a coliving business, confirming best industry practices and use of solutions presented by for example Ritter Figueres et al. 2021. No processes of Company X's business are to be fully replaced by technology, rather augmented to allow humans more time for value-adding processes in which the human touch is highly appreciated, like experiences to some extent and the check-in process. Multiple new technological touchpoints, both customer-facing and internal, have been identified for Company X to implement into its processes, which indicates a hospitality business' desire to evolve as an organisation and add value to customers. Although the literature review in this thesis discussed the use of specific technologies like AI, IoT and alike, this thesis' results did not specifically highlight technology to this particular

technical level. As this thesis focused on digital business development of Company X with its mixed methodology, the digital business frameworks and models presented in subchapter 2.2 were applicable to draw components from for this research.

Value and customer experience were at the core of understanding the customer journey both through the service blueprint workshop and gauging customer interest and perspective through an online survey. The results showed that many customers wanted presence of client-side participants, events involving local community which supports literature on co-creation of value. Furthermore, survey respondents indicated they would like to see more content on social media for example and showed strong interest towards digital solutions, supporting studies on digital technology usage in hospitality. The workshop showed that there is intent to develop all these aspects.

In literature and previous studies, community has been identified as one of the most if not the most important components of coliving, which is supported by this research's results from the survey. From a business perspective, added services at a cost that were introduced both in the service blueprint workshop and interest gauged in the online survey to customers also align with studies indicating that such are crucial to generate profit. Although the survey indicated a high number of customers willing or potentially willing to pay for added services, added services was ranked last in terms of how much it is valued in coliving with respect to other factors. While literature suggests that flexibility and common spaces are some of the key drivers of coliving, the results from the survey in this thesis rank other aspects much higher when looking at the average rank, higher ranked aspects being community, security, and privacy.

Many results in this thesis align with literature. It is though important to understand that while attempting to discuss alignment, the results of the survey conducted for this thesis are not generalisable due to a low number of respondents, so they are not fully comparable. The workshop results are better aligned. More case studies and synthesised research on multiple coliving companies can more adeptly connect and confirm theory with practise.

5.3 Implications for Company X

Company X is already implementing new technological solutions such as a new website among other aspects discussed during the workshop, thus this section provides an actionable, easy-to-follow list of potential actions to take, organised thematically. It is at the discretion of Company X when or whether these will be implemented, and the survey results should be used to provide insight to whether a certain item is of more immediate importance according to the current viewpoints of former and current residents.

Operational and technical

- Proprietary online booking: Implement an online booking system directly on Company X's website to provide easy access to customers and reduce reliance on external platforms.
- Digital contract signing: Transition to digital signing such as DocuSign to streamline onboarding and document management.
- CRM and automated communication: Take into use automated emails, messages, calendar reminders, and review prompts and personalised follow-up communication to enhance the relationship with customers and engage customers even post-stay.
- Fully integrate PMS: Take full advantage of integrating Cloudbeds PMS with other systems like booking platforms and financial systems (fattureincloud.it) to reduce manual work.

Community engagement

- More community events: Schedule regular community activities and events, also involving both staff and local community partnerships for relationship building among residents, staff, and the local community.
- Personalised services: Implement value-added services such as experience concierge (both digital and physical) and local discounts to services and products, aligning them with customer preferences.
- Post-stay community engagement: Retain alumni network and follow-up regularly to sustain community and encourage repeat bookings and referrals.

Customer experience

- Coliving app: Offer a mobile app that includes practical information, house rules, local recommendations on restaurants and activities, a grocery delivery feature, and shared activity calendar/itinerary to directly cater to customer preferences obtained from the survey. Other suggestions from the survey could be taken into account, such as a guide for resolving problems in the coliving and a forum for colivers.
- Digital and physical experiences: Invest in organising digital and/or physical activities such as yoga and cooking classes.
- Rich and up-to-date online content: Regularly update digital content (room tours, availability, pricing, etc.) on website and social media to fill information gaps and attract digitally savvy customers.
- Balance digital and personal: Keep an in-person check-in experience when possible, augmenting it with administrative conveniences such as digital contract signing and

automated invoicing. Ensure that staff facilitates events more and is more present for enhanced feel of community.
- Other: Whether through a coliving app, QR code, or e-book, provide all instructions and guides like safety, recycling, and house rules digitally as the survey indicated that these were desired in digital format.

Marketing and visibility
- Increase online presence: Strengthen visibility through social media efforts and encourage and incentivise leaving online reviews.
- Digital showcasing: Develop virtual room tour and video content to showcase rooms and coliving premises better.

The above items directly address key findings from the online survey and link with the items discussed in the workshop. Many customers indicated willingness to pay for additional services and particularly personalised services, thus it would be beneficial to further gauge their interest to understand what services specifically should be offered. An implementation calendar or plan would be beneficial to plan the implementation schedule according to perceived order of importance.

5.4 Implications for coliving businesses more broadly

While this thesis does not necessarily provide new information in the context of coliving as some reports and studies already exist, and coliving operators are already implementing a multitude of technological and human solutions, this subchapter highlights the most important considerations. The results from this thesis underline the importance of strategically integrating digital solutions into a coliving business. Coliving businesses, alike hospitality businesses, need to consider digital solutions as convenience and an opportunity for operational enhancement by streamlining booking, providing digital onboarding, and app-based community engagement opportunity, also to enhance their value proposition. It is equally important to balance digital solutions with personal interactions, notably in key touchpoints like check-in and events in order to maintain a sense of community and relationship building which sets coliving apart from traditional housing.

Furthermore, the findings from the workshop and survey suggest actionable opportunities for coliving businesses to increase customer value through personalised digital offerings like customised services, digital information resources, and ongoing community engagement even post-stay. For scalability and growth, coliving businesses should automate operational processes where possible, allowing for humans to focus on community facilitation and personal interactions. The interplay between digital technologies and human touchpoints surely continues to be a factor for sustained success and competitive advantage in the coliving market.

5.5 Evaluation of the development task

The significance of the research outcomes was assessed by gathering qualitative data through a service blueprint workshop with Company X's advisor, manager, and intern, and through qualitative and quantitative insights directly from colivers via a semi-structured online survey. The open-ended survey responses were then organised into thematic categories, highlighting colivers' experiences and opinions. By combining first-hand feedback from actual customers with information gained on Company X's processes during a workshop, this allowed to effectively demonstrate the practical relevance and value of proposed digital solutions for enhancing coliver experiences and operational improvements in a coliving business. The duality of the research, gathering both company perspective and customer views, proved to be essential in understanding the need and demand for technology and on the other hand, what operations are important to leave at least partially or optionally human.

For evaluating the results of the development task in relation to the objectives, the following methods for increasing credibility and ensuring high quality of work, according to Self (October 2019), were used:

- Peer-debriefing: It was extremely useful to ask the thesis supervisor and other people to look at the data, verify the interpretations, and offer different viewpoints. Feedback gained about the survey questions and during the workshop and of blueprint versions helped strengthen the research and prompted to make necessary modifications.
- Member checking: The thesis author had good access to the client, advisor, intern, manager, and other colivers, which ensured the opportunity to ask follow-up questions and clarification.
- Researcher's lens: The thesis author tried to continuously question how the author's own identity formed interpretations of the situations.

The strength of the study was using mixed methodology to carry out a rich study with both client and customer perspective to enhance the value proposition of Company X, value perceived by customers, and enhance operational efficiency of Company X. The holistic analysis took into account the entire customer journey with back- and frontend aspects which provided strategic insights. This methodological approach allowed for both qualitative depth and quantitative validation. The collaboration with client-side participants offered practical and relevant operational insights to induce real-life, realistic recommendations. Customer insights via the survey provided rich perspectives on user expectations and perspective, enhancing reliability and validity. The study generated actionable recommendations directly applicable to Company X.

The limitations of the study were sample size in the survey, limiting generalisability despite the insights being meaningful. The lack of open access to industry data was a challenge, as many reports were from around 2019-2021 and data in databases like Statista were limited mainly to the UK, and some data was behind paywalls. This links to also trustworthiness and quality of data as not much scientific, peer-reviewed articles were available specifically on coliving with the focus similar to that of this thesis, although real estate and financial aspects of coliving were more researched.

There were minor issues with the workshop as it was difficult for the thesis author due to lack of experience both in steering a workshop and service blueprinting. Another consideration during the workshop is potential participant bias and subjectivity, all participants being close to the business and having their own experience and interest. The survey questions could have been thought more of for more clarity and dividing some questions into separate questions, in addition to the ranking question being improved to be easier to comprehend both by respondents and the thesis author for data analysis. Before going live with the survey, although no technical problems were brought to the attention of the thesis author during completion of the actual survey, the survey could have been pilot-tested in Webropol by someone else in addition to the thesis author.

This thesis research was limited to a long-term customer journey, so it would have been interesting to study also short-term stays specifically to see the differences and what needs need to be met. On the other hand, since this thesis' findings captured current perceptions and immediate opportunities, long-term trends and evolving customer relationships and expectations were not studied. This thesis did not take into account financial aspects, which would be interesting to look at both in terms of what costs relate to the business and taking onboard new solutions, and what are customers specifically willing to pay for and how much.

6 Conclusion

The purpose of the research was to gain insight into Company X's operations and current and future technological implementations coupled with insight from Company X's customers of perceived value and interest towards various digital aspects. A mixed-method approach was chosen by implementing a service blueprint workshop held with client-side participants and an online survey sent to former and current colivers. Both methods were structured around the customer journey – pre-booking, booking, check-in, living, checkout, and post-stay – in order to obtain somewhat comparable results. The objective was to provide Company X with data about its customers' preferences and perceived value, a structured way of looking at the company's operations via a service blueprint following the customer journey, and a set of recommendations for leveraging digital solutions to develop the business.

The research showed that digital solutions are central to improving operational efficiency, customer satisfaction, and community engagement in a coliving business, combined with the importance of human components for enhanced experience and community. Operations could be streamlined with key technologies like integrated property management, automated operational processes like billing, automated administrative processes like document signing, and automated communications. Customer insights underlined interest towards digital resources like digital documentation, recommendations, a coliving app, and post-stay engagement opportunities, together with more community events and either digital or physical activities. Importantly, the findings emphasise that digital opportunities can strengthen the value proposition of a coliving business and operational efficiency without compromising the sense of community and personal interactions which are essential to the coliving experience.

The results of the research aid in providing actionable suggestions for integrating digital tools to enhance efficiency and customer experience. By aligning digital opportunities with customer expectations, Company X can directly address customers' perceived value and simultaneously strengthen its competitive edge in the Italian coliving market. Retaining a balance with digital and human allows Company X to preserve its focus on community while evolving operationally. From a broader industry perspective, the findings suggest that innovation and new ways of doing business in a coliving is welcomed by both coliving operators and customers.

This thesis contributes to coliving-specific research. The mixed method approach of a workshop with a service blueprint combined with an online survey contributes to the co-creation ideology in which both organisations and their customers' viewpoints are important. The thesis author did not find any similar studies that combined both methodologies in the field of coliving, thus making this thesis a first study of its kind. This thesis' contribution is providing practical, coliving-specific

insights into digitalisation in the Italian coliving industry which is an area that remains underexplored in literature.

Future research could benefit from more empirical studies examining customer experiences, business models, and technology adoption in the Italian coliving context but also more widely. Future research could also focus more on Italy-specific elements like local regulations and cultural aspects. The survey answers in this thesis can provide indication to what kind of added services customers would be willing to pay for, however, to thoroughly examine this topic, a study on the current pricing model of Company X as well as costs needed to run additional services/operations would be needed. The survey in this thesis can be used for future purposes and further developed for specific needs.

A more advanced version of the service blueprint could be made, or alternatively a more focused version in which only a specific customer process is focused on. In terms of methodology, deep customer analysis could be made, exploring for example customer personas to truly understand the different types of customers and their needs. Considering the sequence of methodological implementation, it would be interesting to first carry out a survey and then work on a service blueprint or process maps based on customer wishes to see if the focus changes, and also to make sure that time is well spent on prioritising enhancements to the business and ensuring that value is added for customers. An analysis could be made on short-term stays as Company X is a hybrid coliving business offering both short- and long-term stays. In addition, research could be done on the business models and digital needs comparing boutique hotels/hybrid colivings versus large hotels. Long-term impacts of digital implementations on customer satisfaction, retention, and operational savings could be studied.

Many reports concerning coliving are already a few years old, thus the industry and academics would benefit from updated and consolidated industry reports from Co-Liv or other organisations. It is to be noted that Everything Coliving has published a global coliving report 2025 (part 1) including some insights into the coliving industry, however, more is needed to understand and gain insights into the industry on a larger scale. Hopefully also more theses and academic papers will be written on the coliving industry.

As the coliving landscape continues to grow and evolve, this study highlights the need for strategic digital integration that encompasses both operational performance and meeting evolving customer expectations. Future research can build on this research by exploring coliving from different viewpoints and longevity perspectives. Coliving should remain both innovative and community-driven in an ever more digitalising world.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Initial service blueprint


Timeline
Phase
Pre-booking
Booking
<1 day
Check-in
n months
Living
<1 day
Checkout
Post-stay
Customer Actions
Research options
Check reviews
Request photos of specific room
Request visit
Complete booking
Sign contract
Pay down payment
Arrive at coliving
Sign contract
Receive keycard and mobile keycard access
Pay 1st rent
Get to know others
Daily life
Interact with colivers
Interact with staff
Attend coliving events
Pay rent
Integrate into community (internal/external)
Clean room or order cleaning
Alert staff about issues
Explore surroundings
Grocery shopping / order food
Attend farewell party
Take personal belongings
Leave room in decent condition
Leave from coliving
Receive deposit
Stay in touch
Leave a review
Attend coliving events
Touchpoints
Coliving brand
Digital presence
Photos
Customer experiences
Coliving contract
House rules
Down payment
Personal welcome
Coliving contract finalisation
Keycard
House rules / tour
Introduction to others
1st rent payment
Invitation to WhatsApp group (long-term only)
Interaction with staff
Interaction between colivers
Events
Safety
Monthly rent payment
Integration into community
Conflict resolution
Cleaning
Farewell party
Review prompt from staff
Personal farewell from staff
Rent deposit payback
Invitations to coliving events
Review prompt from booking site
LINE OF INTERACTION
Frontstage
Answer to enquiries
Share photos
Tour of coliving
Website management
Social media management
Send contract and rules
Provide payment instructions
Greet coliver
Finalize contract
Go over house rules
Hand over keycard / initiate mobile access process
Show coliver around premises
Introduce coliver to others
Offer coffee/water
Accompany to room
Interact with coliver
Facilitate community interactions
Send invitations to events / gatherings
Facilitate events / gatherings
Handle and mediate conflicts
Add to WhatsApp group
Provide tips
Clean premises (rooms, common spaces)
Handle and mediate conflicts
Encourage to leave review
Bid farewell
Ask bank details
Facilitate events
Send invitations
LINE OF VISIBILITY
Backstage
Keep website up-to-date
Design social media campaigns
Take pictures and videos
Upload pictures
Prepare contract
Initiate keycard activation
File contract
Plan coliving presence
Conflict resolution strategy
Plan events / gatherings
Handle accounting
Cleaning request
Handle offboarding measures
Initiate deposit payback
Plan events
Support systems/technology
Dropbox
Google
Website
Booking.com
Spotahome
Phone
Hotels.com
Instagram
WhatsApp
Email
3rd party booking platform
Phone
WhatsApp
Property Management System
Printer
POS device
Bank transfer
Sofia part of ISEO
Property Management System
WhatsApp
Phone
QuickBooks
Security cameras
Keyless access
Property Management System
Property Management System
Google
WhatsApp
Booking.com
Hotels.com
Bank transfer

Appendix 2. Subsequent service blueprint

Appendix 3. Final service blueprint

Appendix 4. Survey cover letter and questions

Research Announcement / Survey Cover Letter

Thesis title: Value Addition through the Exploration of Digital Opportunities for a Coliving Business in Italy

Student/author: [name], [email]

Supervisor: [name], [email]

Commissioning party: [Company X]

The objective of the data collection is gaining information on the customer experience at [Company X] and identifying potential opportunities for digitalisation throughout the customer journey.

Data collection will take place in April 2025 via this online survey conducted with the survey tool Webropol. The survey is open until Thursday 24 April 2025. All replies are anonymous.

Responding to the survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes. Participation in the research is voluntary, and the survey can be discontinued if so desired.

In participating to this survey, no preparation or prior knowledge on the topic is needed – as detailed answers as possible are appreciated when applicable.

This research will benefit current and future colivers by helping shape [Company X] into a service provider that increasingly uses digital offerings in its coliving experience. [Company X] will gain invaluable insight of colivers' needs and wants in order to enhance its value proposition. The input of both current and previous colivers is paramount for this research. All answers are greatly appreciated and will help the researcher conduct important research of and for the industry.

If you are a former resident, please answer the questions based on your experience and based on what you would have preferred during your stay.

The data gained from this survey will be handled and stored securely on Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences access-only platforms and will be disposed of from the student's devices and Haaga-Helia platforms upon completion of the thesis. The data may however be saved by [Company X] for future use. The data is intended both for the thesis work and for [Company X] for company development. Any personal information will be handled under the current data protection legislation (EU General Data Protection Regulation 679/2016 and valid national regulations).

The thesis report will be published in the Theseus online library, the national Finnish thesis collection archive.

For additional information, please contact [name] at [email].

I have reviewed the research announcement above, and I give my consent to participate in the research.

o Yes

o No. Completing the form requires giving consent. [Responding to the survey will be defined as ending]

Introduction

1. Age
    a. 18–24
    b. 25–34
    c. 35–44
    d. 45–54
    e. 55–64
    f. 65+
    g. I prefer to not respond

2. Duration of stay (if undecided, choose based on estimated length)
    a. 1–3 months
    b. 3–6 months
    c. 6 months – 1 year
    d. 1 year +
    e. Other, please specify: _____

3. Nationality
    a. Italian
    b. Other, please specify: _____
    c. I prefer to not respond

4. Occupation: [open ended]

5. Purpose of stay
    a. Working in Northern Italy
    b. Remote working/digital nomad
    c. Vacation
    d. Studies
    e. Other, please specify: _____
    f. I prefer to not respond

6. Why did you choose coliving? [open ended]

Pre-booking

7. How did you feel about the price point in relation to the current service offering?
    a. Too expensive
    b. Priced right
    c. Inexpensive

8. How did you find [Company X]?
    a. Booking.com
    b. Expedia
    c. (Student) housing website (e.g. Erasmus Play, Spotahome)
    d. Social media (e.g. Instagram)
    e. [Company X] website
    f. Google search for coliving
    g. Recommendation from friend/family/other
    h. Other, please specify: _____

9. Online reviews had an impact on choosing [Company X].
    a. Strongly disagree
    b. Disagree
    c. Undecided
    d. Agree
    e. Strongly agree

10. Please describe what do you think of the availability of information online on room options, facilities, prices etc.? [open ended]

11. What information would you have liked more of? Please provide suggestions for improvements for the digital information platforms (website, social media, booking sites). [open ended]

12. Did you request for additional information (e.g. pictures, video tour) before booking? If yes, what information?

a. Yes, please specify: _____
b. No

Booking

13. How did you eventually book your stay?
    a. Through a 3rd party e.g. Booking.com, Spotahome, etc.
    b. Direct contact, please specify whether by e-mail, phone call, text message/WhatsApp, website contact form, or visiting: _____

14. Would you have preferred an online booking platform directly on the [Company X] website (e.g. showing availability, requesting booking, prepayment of deposit, etc.)?
    a. Yes
    b. No / Indifferent

15. How did you sign the coliving contract?
    a. Signed either digitally or physically and shared via e-mail/WhatsApp
    b. Signed physically upon arrival
    c. Both
    d. I did not sign the contract

16. Would you find it beneficial to have the contract process handled through a digital signing platform (e.g. DocuSign)?
    a. Yes
    b. No

Check-in

17. Was the check-in/onboarding process handled digitally (over the phone or e-mail, sending key card access) or physically (you were welcomed by a person, and everything was explained and handed over to you in person)?
    a. Digitally
    b. Physically
    c. Both (part digitally part physically)

18. How important do you find the in-person check-in/onboarding process (e.g. explanation of house rules, tour of premises, introduction to residents, etc.)
    a. Unimportant
    b. Not that important
    c. Moderately important
    d. Important
    e. Very important

19. Please describe what was good about the check-in/onboarding process and provide any improvement suggestions. [open ended]

20. Could parts of the check-in/onboarding process be handled digitally?
    a. Yes, please specify which parts: _____
    b. No

Living

21. Rank these aspects in terms of how much you value them in a coliving? From most important (1) to least important (11).
    a. Community
    b. Flexibility
    c. Building relationships
    d. Coworking spaces
    e. Added services at a cost, either existing or potential (cleaning, grocery delivery, activities)
    f. Community events (free of charge)
    g. Lifestyle
    h. Privacy
    i. Security
    j. Common spaces (kitchen, living room)
    k. Presence of a host/community facilitator

22. Which of these would you like available in digital format? *You can choose several options.*

a. House rules
b. Safety instructions
c. Recycling guide
d. Instructions for laundry machines
e. Recommendations on activities in the area
f. Recommendations on restaurants in the area
g. None
h. Other, please specify: _____

23. In relation to the above, do digital copies suffice, or would you additionally want them as physical copies?
    a. Digital only
    b. Digital and physical

24. Additional digital services. Which of these digital services are you interested in? *You can choose several options*.
    a. Online yoga
    b. Online cooking class
    c. Online webinars (on changing topics e.g. wellbeing)
    d. Discounts to local stores/services
    e. Grocery delivery through app/platform
    f. Coliving app
    g. None
    h. Other, please specify: _____

25. Imagine that there is a platform for sharing your itinerary or plans with other colivers so they can use these for planning their own activities, or even join you on trips, activities, or local events in Brescia – and you could also utilise such platform for seeing others' itineraries and join them – how interested would you be?
    a. Uninterested
    b. Not that interested
    c. Moderately interested
    d. Interested
    e. Very interested

26. Imagine that [Company X] organizes an event to involve the local community, which would also be a chance for you to meet and interact with locals. This could be e.g. artists coming to [Company X] to present their art, or a book launch event at [Company X]. How interested would you be in such?
    a. Uninterested
    b. Not that interested
    c. Moderately interested
    d. Interested
    e. Very interested

27. If [Company X] would provide an “experience concierge” service, i.e. planning a personalized itinerary and organising events and activities for you, would you pay for such service?
    a. Yes
    b. No

28. If you wish for additional services, do you wish for them to be physical or digital (as applicable, e.g. cooking class, yoga, tours)? *For clarification, a physical service/activity means something organized in-person, and a digital one means something organized online or through digital means (e.g. video, mobile app, website).*
    a. Digital
    b. Physical
    c. Digital and/or physical
    d. None

29. Would you be willing to pay for additional services and events?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Maybe

30. Which digital features would significantly enhance your coliving experience (e.g. mobile app for community engagement, smart home technology)? [open ended]

31. What would add value to your coliving experience at [Company X]? List anything you want. [open ended]

32. Based on your experience, evaluate the sense of community (i.e. feeling of belonging and being part of a community) at [Company X].
    a. No sense of community
    b. Not that strong
    c. Moderately strong
    d. Strong
    e. Very strong

33. What would add to your sense of community?
    a. More community events
    b. Increased physical presence of host
    c. More discussion in the coliving WhatsApp
    d. More facilitation of events and communications by staff members
    e. Other, please specify: _____

Checkout

34. What checkout option would you prefer?
    a. Digital/self-service checkout options (e.g. mobile checkout)
    b. Staff member handling checkout in person

Post-stay

35. Have you left a review / will you leave a review (on Google, Booking.com, etc.)?
    a. Yes
    b. No

36. How satisfied have you been / were you with [Company X] during your stay?
    a. Unsatisfied

b. Not that satisfied
c. Moderately satisfied
d. Satisfied
e. Very satisfied

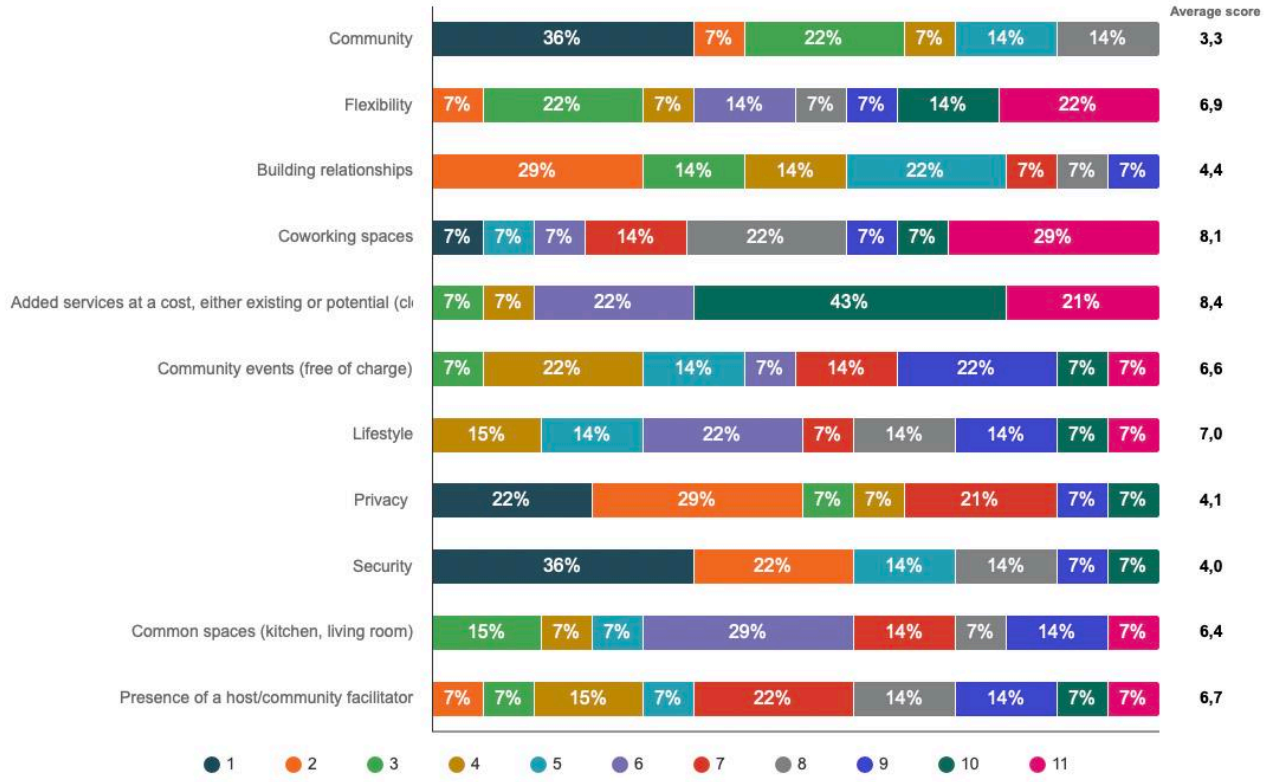
37. Would you appreciate receiving digital follow-ups or offers after your stay?
    a. Yes
    b. No

38. What factors contribute to your willingness to return to [Company X] or recommend the place to others? [open ended]

39. What factors contribute to the likelihood of attending [Company X] events as alumni? [open ended]

Appendix 5. Survey question 21 original graph

Rank these aspects in terms of how much you value them in a coliving? From most important (1) to least important (11).
Number of respondents: 14



Appendix 6. Research announcement

Research Announcement

Thesis title: Value Addition through the Exploration of Digital Opportunities for a Coliving Business in Italy

Student/author: [name], [email]

Supervisor: [name], [email]

Commissioning party: [Company X]

The objective of the data collection is gaining information on the customer journey and business operations at [Company X] and identifying potential digital opportunities throughout the customer journey and business operations.

Data collection will take place on an agreed date in April 2025 via a two-hour workshop on Microsoft Teams or Zoom. An additional interview may take place if needed. Participation in the research is voluntary, and the workshop or interview can be discontinued if so desired.

In participating to the workshop, you can prepare by thinking of the operations and customer journey and by bringing any previous supporting documentation (e.g. previously made service blueprint, if existing). It would also be beneficial to think about any identified digital opportunities to be integrated into the business.

This research will benefit current and future colivers by helping shape [Company X] into a service provider that increasingly uses digital offerings in its coliving experience, through [Company X] gaining a structured and holistic understanding on where the business operations are at in terms of digitalisation and what potential there is for improvement. This research will also benefit [Company X] in identifying digital opportunities for improving business operations. Your participation is greatly appreciated and will help the researcher conduct important research of and for the industry.

The data gained from the workshop and potential interview will be handled and stored securely on Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences access-only platforms and will be disposed of from the student's devices and Haaga-Helia platforms upon completion of the thesis. The data may however be saved by [Company X] for future use. The data is intended both for the thesis work and for [Company X] for company development. Any personal information will be handled under the current data protection legislation (EU General Data Protection Regulation 679/2016 and valid national regulations).

The thesis report will be published in the Theseus online library, the national Finnish thesis collection archive.

For additional information, please contact [name] at [email].