Opportunities for accommodation industry to improve the customer journey for leisure solo travellers

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Abstract

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Abstract

The objectives of the study were to understand the solo travellers as a market segment for the accommodation industry and to find opportunities for accommodation industry to improve the customer journey for leisure single travellers. The study was conducted because of the realized market potentials and the author's interest in solo travelling.

The literature review part of the study was done using secondary data from previous studies, books, journals and articles on solo travellers, customer journey and accommodation industry. Through the literature review, solutions were proposed to be tested afterwards. The empirical part of the study was done using quantitative research method in the form of a survey research. An online, structured and self-administered questionnaire, consisted of the proposed solutions, was sent judgmentally to the target population of leisure solo travellers by social medias. The total of 89 samples were collected and analysed.

The result of the thesis showed that solo traveller is an important customer segment of the accommodation industry. Moreover, easing their concerns while traveling alone was a well-responded approach to improve the leisure solo traveller's customer journey. Overall, the leisure solo traveller's customer journey can be improved by improving their touchpoints with the different departments of the accommodation establishment. There are many aspects of the leisure solo traveller's customer journey that accommodation providing businesses could both improve and take as opportunities.

Keywords

leisure solo traveller, solo travel, customer journey, accommodation industry

Contents

Appendices

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Travelling alone is a rising trend, marking up around 18% of global bookings in 2019, which was a seven percent increase compared to 2018 (Brown 2019). Especially after during the post-lockdown of the Corona Virus pandemic 2020, solo travel could be the among the first segments to recover in the tour segment. According to a study by Cox & Kings, only after couples, traveling alone is the second most popular answer when attendees are asked about whom that they would be traveling with. (French 2020.) Despite of its growing potentials, the solo traveller market segment appears to the most overlooked market segment in the accommodation industry.

As a result, the author is researching for ways to help accommodation service providers to better the customer journey experience for leisure solo travellers when they are choosing or staying at the establishment. As for the companies, understanding the importance of solo travellers to the accommodation business is significant because of its growing and soon recovered market. The outcome of the research may provide companies with insights and ideas to improve their services for the solo travellers, which potentially would generate more incomes for the business. Moreover, it also helps companies to establish their competitive advantage and boost their attractiveness towards the delicate customer group of leisure solo travellers. As for the leisure solo travellers, the main idea is to listen to and understand the concerns of the most likely underrated customer group of leisure solo travellers. The research is aimed to help to improve the customer journey for future solo travellers. With the improvement in products and services specifically designed for leisure solo travellers, it will ideally help to ease the concerns of solo travellers and encourage them to travel more.

1.2 Aims and main questions

The main aims for the thesis are firstly to develop a deeper understanding of the solo travellers, especially leisure solo travellers as a market segment and the concept of the customer's journey in the accommodation industry. The second aim would be to help accommodation service providers to better the customer journey experience for leisure solo travellers with insights from the customers.

The core research questions are "Why solo traveller, especially leisure solo traveller, is an important customer segment for accommodation industry?"; "How can the accommodation service providers better the customer journey to the preference leisure solo travellers?" and

"What can the accommodation service providers do to better the customer journey to the preference leisure solo travellers?"

1.3 Delimitations

The main focus of the research is to find out effective opportunities to improve the customer journey of leisure solo travellers in the accommodation industry. Because of the large scale of the industry, the research is delimited to the most common departments in most accommodation providing establishments, which are Rooms Departments, Food and Beverage Department, and Back Office Department.

Justifications for the chosen departments

Accommodation businesses are typically organized into different departments, grouped according to their similarities in the work activities. Figure 1 below gives information on a typical organizational chart for a 500-room hotel. (Rutherford & O'Fallon 2007, 77.)

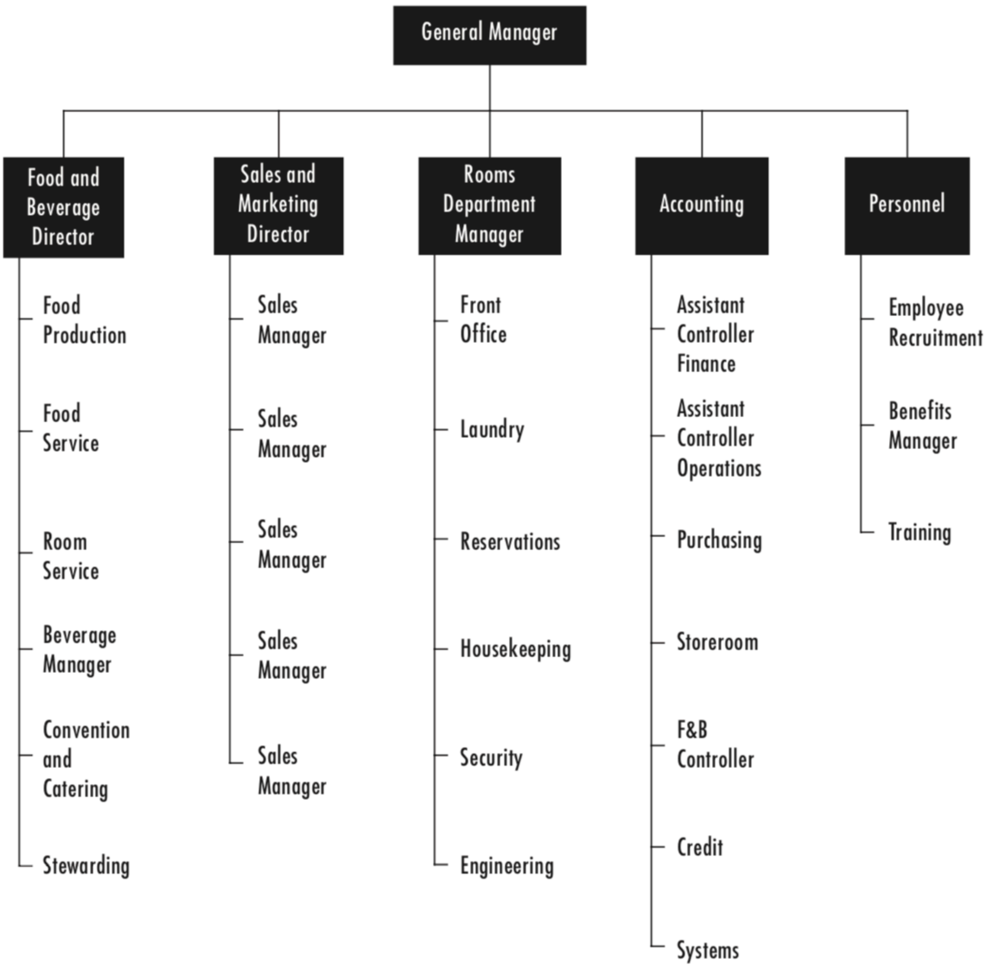

Figure 1. Typical hotel organization chart (Rutherford & O'Fallon 2007, 78)

As illustrated in Figure 1, a typical hotel with 500 rooms consists of five main departments, including rooms, food and beverage (F&B), sales, accounting or finance and human resources or personnel. The first and so-called most important part of the accommodation industry has to be the accommodation itself or the rooms department (RD). The RD is responsible for the room reservations, status, availabilities and assignments. It is also in charge of welcoming and seeing off the guests, together with their security and comfort at the establishment while the F&B department is responsible for all food and drink related matters, including both the production and the services. The third department is sales and marketing, which could sell out the entire hotel at once when dealing with mostly business to business customers. The fourth department is finance, which deals with monetary matters internally and externally. Lastly, there is the human resources department, which is in charge of employee recruitments and trainings. (Rutherford & O'Fallon 2007, 77-81.)

Although the 5-department organization (Figure 1) is sufficient to cover all of the daily operations, it is only applicable for medium to large establishments with 500 rooms or higher (Rutherford & O'Fallon 2007, 77-78). As many smaller businesses cannot afford such wide managerial structure of organization, some are operating in a very condensed organizational manner. An example is the organization of Hostel X in Finland in Figure 2 bellow.

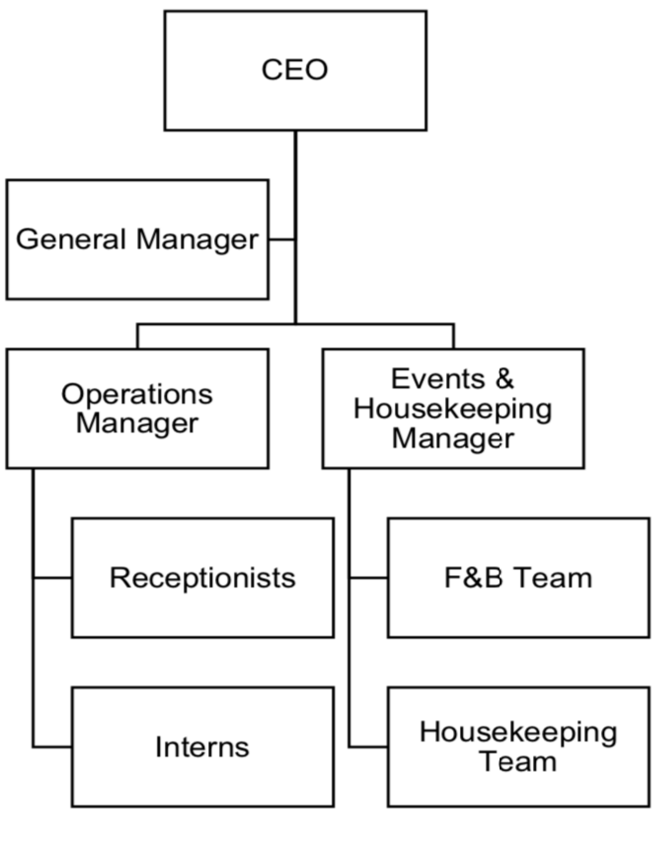

Figure 2. Hostel X organization hierarchy (Tran 2020)

With only the management team and 4 staff teams, they could run the hostel with the capacity of more than 250 beds. Not specified, but according to the teams and tasks, the hostel has three main departments plus interns, who multi-task and attend needed empty positions. (Tran 2020.) If Figure 1 presented a typical medium to large size accommodation establishment, Figure 2 can be used as a representative example of a typical small size establishment.

This thesis study investigates only those departments or departments with similar responsibilities, that the two types of establishment share to reflect the accommodation business in general. Therefore, the departments chosen for this research are Rooms Department (RD), Food and Beverage Department (F&B), and the Back-Office Department (BO).

As for the details of those departments, they are listed as follow:

- Rooms Department: reservations, front office, housekeeping, security
- F&B Department: restaurants and bars
- Back Office Department: sales and marketing

Not only are these departments chosen because they are the most common departments in the accommodation industry and because they share similarities in the tasks in operation, but they are also specifically chosen because of the high tendency of service touchpoints, which will be further examined in Chapter 3.2.

The research focuses exclusively on leisure solo travellers, which concept is defined later in chapter 2.1. Ideally, the travellers represent from a diverse demographic group with a delimited size of sample of about 100. The target group consists primarily on those who had experienced travelling alone for leisure purposes. Limiting the research sample to only those who had travelled alone for leisure purposes may allow a more accurate result because of the differences in the nature of travelling, travel benefits and the traveller's mindset between the business solo travellers and the leisure solo travellers.

1.4 Research method

The theoretical part is done by analysing academic materials, journals, articles and previous thesis work related to the topic of customer journey, hotel service, customer relationship management and solo travellers. The empirical part is implemented using quantitative methods by focusing on collecting data from leisure single travellers. The result will be analysed quantitatively from the data collected from an online survey.

Targeting leisure solo travellers as the population, the author uses judgment sampling methods sending the survey to different social media channels, for instance, single-travellers-content-focused Facebook groups, Youtubers and Instagram. The author also focuses on solo traveller related hashtags on those social media platforms. As narrowing the research to an area or a form of accommodation business does not provide an up-to-date and reliable enough result to reflect the whole population of leisure solo travellers, contacting them directly through their communication and information channel is considered to be the most effective option. It is believed that with the help of social medias and Youtubers with a large number of subscribers, the research sample would be widened, which would help to improve the reliability of the result.

2 Solo travellers as a market segment

2.1 Overview of solo travellers

Having a clear understanding of the factors that define solo travellers is crucial because it gives background information on the research target. There is often misconception between the two terms “solo traveller” and “independent traveller” (Laesser et al. 2016). Independent travellers refer to those traveling alone with a flexible itinerary in neither all-inclusive packaged nor group and tend to have a longer than average holiday duration. While solo travellers might arrive in the country alone, they might not stay alone for the whole travel duration. Therefore, the term ‘solo’ generally only represents one’s arrival status and not whole trip status. However, due to limited research on lone travellers, solo travellers are likely to be viewed as independent travellers, who valued freedom and flexibility over restriction and scheduled organization. (Wilson 2004.)

According to Laesser, Beritelli and Riklin (2016), the concept definition of solo travellers could be categorized into four segmentations depending on the combination of departure status, including being in a single or collective; and arrival status, including taking the trip alone or joining a group. The four groups are listed below.

> *1. SINGLE-SOLO (travel by persons who come from single households)*
>
> *2. SINGLE-GROUP (travel by persons who come from one-person households, traveling with a group of other people)*
>
> *3. COLLECTIVE-SOLO (travel by persons who do not live alone, but travel solo)*
>
> *4. COLLECTIVE-GROUP (travel by persons who come from collective households, but take off by themselves to travel as part of a group).*

This study examines only those solo travellers who are referred to as single-solo, those who live and travel alone; and collective-solo, those who do not come from a single household but travel by themselves (Laesser et al. 2016). Therefore, when referring ‘solo travellers’ in this thesis, the term stands for those who arrive at the destination and travel primarily by themselves for the majority of the travel duration. Not only are they not traveling with the company of friends or families, but they also do not meet up with them at their destination (Heimtun & Abelsen 2014, 162). Even though they might meet others and use tours, they are in charge of the activities and choices in their itinerary (Wilson 2004).

2.2 The market of solo travellers

Solo travelling is the hottest trend topic and rising by all accounts (WiT 2018; Haugen 2018; Lisella 2019; Elliott 2018 & Brown 2019). In order to obtain a thorough view of the solo travellers as a market segment, there are several aspects arise during the research that should be taken into consideration; such as gender differences, changes in way of living, the rising trend and market current situation. These aspects give general information this specific segment and help answering on of the research question, which are the reasons for leisure single travellers to be an important customer segment for accommodation industry.

The gender differences

The first aspect to be investigated would be the gender differences in this market segment. Even though studies towards solo travellers have been appearing more gradually, the author could not help but noticing the significant focus of most study so far was primarily targeting women (Wilson 2004; Jordan & Gibson 2005; Terán 2016; Ahokas 2017 & Pereira & Silva 2018). According to Wilson (2004), thanks to the movement of feminism and woman empowerment, women around the world have been traveling more liberately. Not only are women more well-educated but they are also achieving better employment and earning more incomes (Terán 2016). Accounting for half of the world's population, however, women can influence more than 80 percent of the buying decision and accounted for more than 50 percent of online sales (Ahokas 2017). The focus on women, including travel motivation and safety concerns, in solo traveling can also be explained by the fact that women are accounted for approximately 80 percent of the solo travel market (Ahokas 2017 & Catto 2018). Moreover, nowadays, women are choosing to travel alone more, especially Western women, thanks to the development of the tourism industry providing more variety of recreation activities (Pereira & Silva 2018).

The changes in the way of living

The second aspect contributing to the rising trend of solo traveling concerns the changes in humans' way of living, especially when it comes to marriages. Even though marriages were viewed as a sign of adulthood in the past, time has changed. Nowadays, there are significant increases in nonmarital cohabitation cases, child-bearing outside of marriages and divorces. (Amato et al. 2009, pp.1-3.) Especially after the quarantine of COVID-19, the number of divorce cases has spiked significantly in many countries, such as the USA and Finland with around 30 percent (Edmonds 2020 & Yle 2020). The more divorces there are, the more persons become single there are, which also indicates the more solo travellers there could be. Especially after the quarantine time of COVID-19, solo travel could be the among the first segments to recover in the tour segment. According to a study by Cox & Kings, only after couples, traveling alone is the second most popular answer when attendees being asked of whom that they would be traveling with. (French 2020.)

The rising trend

Thirdly, it is the increasing trend of the solo traveller market. This aspect is the one that best showcasing the importance of the solo traveller market for the accommodation industry, because the increase for solo traveling could lead to an equal increase in sales for the accommodation industry.

Over the past few years, various sources have confirmed solo travelling was a rising trend. Starting with incline in the search engine for this topic, the keyword “solo travel” has been searched for more than 143 percent over the last 3 years in the UK, approximately 600 percent on Pinterest and all above 30 percent on accommodation booking sites like Booking.com and Airbnb (Elliott 2018). The large increase in the searching and booking can be interpreted as the uprising demand for solo travelling.

In 2018, Klook annouced that Solo travel is the hottest topic of the travel industry (Wit 2018). And, the company statement was accurately supported by different statistics and studies. However, not only is the topic the hottest topic of 2018, it was still a heated topic during these last few years. In addition to the rise of internet searches, Lisella (2019) also pointed out the 150 percent increase in the subscription newsletter of the site Solo Traveller, from 33,000 to 50,000 in just one year, indicating the continuous interest.

Additionally, a study by Klook in late 2019 also revealed an astounding number of 76 percent out of 21,000 people surveyed around the world, regardless of age, sex or nationality, have either travelled alone or been thinking about doing so (Klook 2019 & Fah 2020). Therefore, not only is the market large in volume, but it is also large in scale being the hundred millions dollars market, taking up 18 percent of the global booking of the 8 Trillion dollars travel industry (Schroeder 2018 & Brown 2019).

The current situation

The last aspect that would help marketers and accommodation providers to navigate its focus to the industry would be its current situation. Due to the tragic event of the Corona virus outbreak 2020 on the global scale, besides its significant impact on the World’s economy and human’s health, the travel and hospitality industry has endured a significant loss. With the nature of the virus spreading through human interactions, borders are closed and so are hotels, bars and restaurants. Even though that the event was rather unfortunate, humans have learned a lot from social distancing and isolated quarantine. The silver lightning in this case would have to be the gradual rebuilding of the world's economy, including the travel industry. For instance, during the post quarantine time, solo traveling is expected to be the second most popular option for traveling (French 2020).

Besides that, it is worth noticing that there is a shift in the demographic regarding solo travellers. Meanwhile a study at Princeton Survey Research Associates found that the main demographic of the solo travellers was millennials in 2017 with 58 percent of them were willing to travel alone compared the lower number of 47 percent of older generations, a study by Booking.com revealed that main solo travellers that had taken a solo trip was actually baby boomers with 40 percent (Schroeder 2018). However, Gen Z was forecasted as the main future solo travellers and shaping the whole travel industry with over half of British Gen Z thinking that it is worth spending money on travelling, outweighing spending on Spa, eating out, furniture, clothes and tech gadgets. Moreover, 60 percent of Gen Z considers travelling over buying property investments. (Booking.com 2019.) The current situation and the shift in the market give signals that in order to capitalize on this market, accommodation service providers would need to be ahead of the changes. Therefore, it is important for accommodation providers to pay close attention to this particular market.

In summary, this section provides information regarding the market segment of solo travellers, its growth and current market situation in the travel industry. Aligned side-by-side with the travel industry is the accommodation industry providing 'safe haven' for solo travellers. Therefore, this section is contributing answers to the research question of the reasons that solo travellers should be focused on in the accommodation industry. The next section is to have a better understanding of the target segment.

2.3 Leisure solo traveller's psychology

In order to know the way to serve leisure solo travellers, it is important to profile them to understand their mindset and psychology. Starting with the different motivations for solo travel and on to their psychology, the author was determined to gain better insights of leisure solo travellers.

2.3.1 Motivations for travel

Motivation is a complex structure which relies on numerous factors, for instance one's personal experience, demographic and personality (Ahokas 2017). The motivations for solo traveling also define by the nature of the travel. Meanwhile business travellers are compiled to take the trip by themselves, the leisure ones deliberately choose so. This study investigates only on leisure solitude travellers as their views on and motivations for the trip are different. Leisure single travellers have to use their own resources for the trip not having the company or corporate's benefits during their travel.

In spite of the limited resources for motivations for solo travelling as a whole, the most common motivations can be observed through studies of woman solo travellers. Chiang and Jogaratnam's study (2005) about the motivations for woman to travel alone for leisure purpose revealed the five distinct items, such as Experience, Escape, Social, Self-Esteem and Relax. The Experience ranks the highest with 19 percent the variance of the study. Whether it is to explore a new culture, livelihood or new places, travellers want to experience things that they have never done before. Second comes Social with more than 11 percent, including romances, thrills, entertainment and travel stories to share. Self-esteem, Relax and Escape come last with their percentage respectively 10.7, 8.54 and 8.13. It appeared that being pampered on accommodation and luxury services is more important than getting away from pressure for solo travellers. (Chiang & Jogaratnam 2005.)

2.3.2 The traveller's psychology

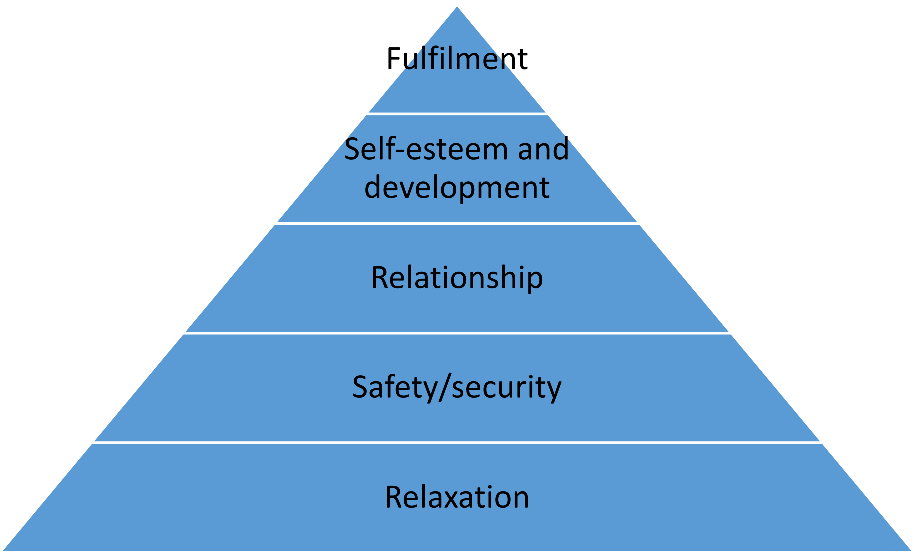

Figure 3. Travel career ladder. (Woodside & Martin 2007, 17)

The leisure woman's solo travellers' motivations study result by Chiang and Jogaratnam in 2005 was totally aligned with the travel career ladder of Woodside and Martin 2 years later, demonstrated in Figure 3. The two studies provided insights to the psychology of solo travellers. Historically, solitude has been viewed as both a bless and a curse or both good and bad. Depending on the view on solitude can one decide its nature. On one hand, it is negatively debated as going against the basic human's needs to belong and bringing about loneliness in social isolation. One another hand, it is positively celebrated for the restorative haven of escapism and creativity. (Coplan & Bowker 2014, 3-6.) In the case of solitude travellers, the questions that distinguish the two come down to the whether they travel alone because they could not find suitable companionships or it was a personal choice (Wilson 2004). However, in both cases, the initial urge to travel remains similar. The more experienced the travellers are, the higher the level of fulfilment is demanded as the decision to travel alone goes above just Relaxation, Safety and Relationship, the first 3 bottom layers of the ladder in (Figure 3). It is also stated that solo travellers tend to be more emotional, empathic and imaginative (Laesser et al. 2016). Nonetheless, solo travelling is the *ultimate indulgence* (Reid 2018, 7-8). Travelling alone does not mean that the travel would be lonesome. Solitude travelling empowers one to freely build a personalized schedule, meet new people and reflect on oneself (Reid 2018, 7-8).

2.4 The common concerns for solo travellers

If the previous sections presented insights on solo traveller's peace of mind, their way of thinking, their motivations, this chapter would shed some lights on the common concerns that travellers face when travelling alone. Identifying the challenges that solo travellers are up against would help to find the right resolutions. If any of the concerns is holding the travellers back from taking the trip again, fixing it might help to change that. Understanding the nature of the traveller's concern is also the first step to answering the question ""How can the accommodation service providers better the customer journey to the preference leisure solo travellers?".

According to Reid (2018, 8-11), there are 7 concerns that is stopping people from travelling alone. For the purpose of this research, they can be grouped into 3 main concerns, including fear of loneliness, fear for safety and monetary fear.

Fear of loneliness

Autophobia, or monophobia, is the scientific term for *the fear of being alone or lonely*. It is the mental phobia with symptoms might include worrying, experiencing anxious or even terror about ending up alone and not safe when being alone. In a large scale, it is a treatable mental illness with the help of psychotherapy and even medication. (Healthline 2017.)

However, on a small scale, it is one of the reasons that is either stopping one's will to travel alone or being on one's mind when travelling alone. There is a saying that one is the loneliest number in the world. Of all of the fears listed above, fear of loneliness when travelling alone ranked the most significant (Klook 2019). Klook's study (2019) also revealed that the largest concern for solo traveller of all generations was the phobia towards loneliness. The feeling of loneliness often occurs in public places and not often while alone at home. Not only can solitude appear when humans are alone, but it can also happen when they are in a group yet not communicating. (Heimtun & Abelsen 2014.)

The feeling also associates with eating alone (Catto 2018). While some consider dining alone a lonesome experience that is stopping them from solo traveling, some conder it a guilty pleasure and toast to self (McHugh 2019). However, with the changes happening in human's lifestyle, solo dining is also becoming more popular. For instance, from 2014 to 2018, the number of table-for-one restaurant reservations in the UK had risen 160 percent. (Amato et al. 2009, pp.1-3 & Fleming 2019.) Eating alone is also changing one's diet because of the tendency to choose unhealthy fast food yet eat less than dining with companies (Fleming 2019). There are also ways that one can do to avoid eating alone, if they do not enjoy doing so. An example could be mukbang, a Korean-born trend, where one can watch another eating on their choice of internet-connected devices, is incredibly popular nowadays.

The feeling of loneliness during a solo trip sometimes connects to homesickness or feeling guilty of leaving the loved ones behind. It is said that at some point during one's travel, he or she is bound to feel homesick. (Reid 2018, 8-11; Juliff 2019 & Pawlik-Kienlen n.d.) Homesickness can also be a result of culture shock, where one is uncomfortable with unfamiliar situations and people. The outcome would be longing for home or even self-pity. (Juliff 2019.) Leaving the loved ones behind is never an easy thing to do. However, thanks to the development of technology, staying in touch with those at home has never been easier. Taking a solo trip might be the best thing to do for one's relationship. (Reid 2018, 8-11.)

The level of loneliness when travelling alone that one feels could be associated with one's personality as well. The stigma towards solo travellers, especially women solo travellers, as brave, outgoing or extrovert can be observed in many sources (Teran 2014; Reid 2018, 9 & Boland 2019). Different people prosses different personalities so it is important to acknowledge that not everyone is comfortable enough to start a conversation with strangers. However, there are ways for the timid or shy ones to ease out of their shells as well. For instance, it can easily be building confidence by traveling to an easy destination, which can very well be a domestic one. (Reid 2018, 9.)

Fear for safety

Is it even safe? (Reid 2018, 9), is a question not only Reid is asking but also a question of many others. Solo travellers tend to be more vulnerable mentally and physically. Mentally, they are more emotional and empathetic (Laesser et al. 2016). Physically, travelling alone is much riskier than travelling in a group (Reid 2018, 9). Therefore, they tend to choose a safe and secure location to visit and stay away from the unsafe ones. A bad experience can affect the whole trip experience and the traveller's future travel. (Ahokas 2017.)

Klook's study (2019) showed that out of 21,000 people, 48 percent of those are worried about their safety traveling by themselves. As a result, the question and demand for safety arises on most solo traveller's mind, especially those that are women. Statistically, 76% of women feel unsafe travelling by themselves (Solo Travel Statistic 2020). The concerns about being harassed or sexually attacked make women feel like the cannot fully express themselves, specifically when using public transportation. There has been a lot of discussion regarding safety for female solo travellers, for instance, Virgin Hotels chains designed for female business travellers or London Hilton with designated women only occupied floor. (Ahokas 2017.) Yet, there are not many actions that businesses are doing to improve the safety for all single travellers.

In the case of the accommodation industry, safety is one of the key issues affecting one's decision of the place to stay when travelling because everyone wants to sleep in peace, safe and sound. Therefore, having the room number spoken loudly in a public space not only would make one uncomfortable but it also potentially compromises one's safety (Ahkas 2017). No-one wants to sleep having to look behind their back for the time somebody might come knocking or kicking on the door. Being the most vulnerable customer segment, solo travellers often consider themselves defenceless.

Monetary fear

There is no rule indicating that solo traveling must be more expensive than joining a group. More frequently, solo travelling is considered a more affordable option as travellers are making the itinerary themselves. Solo travellers would be able to adjust their spending to their individual needs. (Reid 2018.) A study of Swiss solo travellers in 2007 pointed out that single traveller tended to be less educated and those single travelling alone spent significantly less than those joining a group, 60 euros per day against 148 euros per day to be specific (Laesser et al. 2007). However, more than 10 years later, an analysis by Solo Traveler revealed completely different findings. With the sample of 46,000 of its newsletter subscribers, it showed that the majority of those are highly educated with the total of 85 percent of university, college degree diplomas or post-graduate degrees. Moreover, 24 percent of their subscribers spent more than 1,500 dollars per week excluding flight tickets for their travel. (Solo Traveler 2020.) Even though travellers can spend less money on accommodation, they tend to spend 50% extra on accommodation supplement cost and another 20% on travel insurance (Solo Travel Statistics 2020). Therefore, it is understandable that the fear for money is also a large concern for solo travellers.

The fear concerning money presents itself even clearer when travellers are planning their trip or thinking about their jobs. Klook's study shows that 34 percent out of 21,000 respondents expressed their concerns for planning the itinerary themselves (Klook 2019). Planning a trip by oneself can appear as a stressful and intimidating process. Not only could it be time-consuming but it could also be very costly. Moreover, quitting a job or taking some time off from work for the travelling in nowadays fast-paced lifestyle is an almost an unrealistic idea. In addition to that, planning on the budget, including questions about the place, the time and the amount of money on sleeping, eating, drinking, getting around and even the possibility to earn extra bucks during the trip, is a lot of extra work to do on your free time. (Reid 2018, 8-29.)

In general, this first chapter provided a general view of the customer profiles or personas of leisure single travellers. Personas are fictitious descriptions of the customer based real knowledge which can be viewed as a drawing of the customer's motivations, expectations and goal (Maijanen 2020). In addition, the chapter shined lights on the importance of solo travellers to the accommodation industry. Therefore, in order to find out the ways to assist accommodation service providers on improving the customer's journey for leisure solo travellers, having an in-dept idea about the concerns that their customers encounter is an important step. To solve the research question, the author must move on to understanding the customer journey in accommodation industry and its components in the next chapter. The answer for the "how" research question is solving the leisure solo traveller's concerns while incorporating in the customer journey at the establishment. In other words, the way for accommodation service provider to improve the customer journey for their target customer is to ease their concern at best while solo traveling and staying with the business.

3 Customer journey and touchpoints

3.1 Customer journey

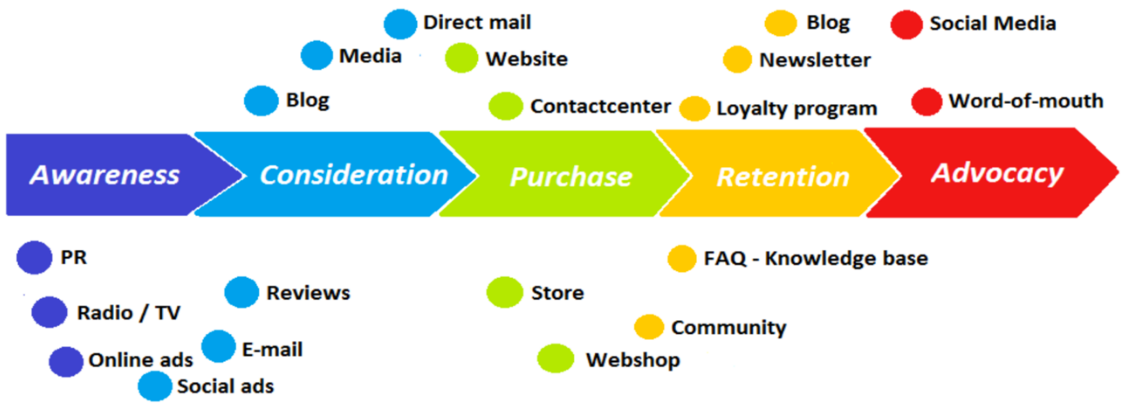

Figure 4. 5 phases of the Customer Journey (Maijanen 2020)

Taken from the Managing Customer Relationship course lecture note at LAB University of Applied Science, Figure 4 demonstrated the main 5 stages of the customer journey (Maijanen 2020). Starting from the first stage of the customer journey, it is when the customers become aware of a problem that they are having or a need, a demand that requires attention. Consequently, they would actively seek for an answer or resolution to their problem, which leads to the consideration step. After much thought, consideration and having narrowed down the potential options, customers would actually make the purchase. However, the customer journey does not stop there, yet it lasts long after the purchase as well. The fourth phrase of the journey would be the retention, meaning if the customers enjoyed the products or services that they had received and its delivery, they would potentially choose it again for their next encounter of the same problem. The creation of one's brand loyal is considered a success story itself. Nonetheless, it is only the beginning for the last stage of the customer journey, where they could also become the brand ambassador, the advocacy of the products by telling or sharing it to their friends and family and making them aware of the products or services. As a result, there born the beginning of a new customer journey for a new customer. (Zubak 2017 & Maijanen 2020.)

On the other hand, meanwhile it is also about the stages of the customer journey, Lemon and Verhoef (2016) had a much shorter and more concentrated version. According to the two authors, the 3-stage customer journey, which are prepurchase, purchase and post-purchase, made the theory more manageable. While the prepurchase consists of all interactions that the customers have with the brand, including recognition, search and consideration; the purchase stage only covers the interaction at the purchasing event itself like choice, ordering and payment. Lastly, the post-purchase stage consists of interactions after the purchase and determining if the customer would return. (Lemon & Verhoef 2016, 76; Nolvi 2018 & Schlenz 2019.)

Figure 5. Intergraded 3-stage customer journey by time (Lemon & Verhoef 2016 & Maijanen 2020)

For the purpose of this particular research, combining the two types of customer journey above, the author has an in-depth and detailed, yet comprehensible model of the of customer journey over time (presented in Figure 5). The author's model combines the awareness and consideration of the 5-stage model into the prepurchase stage of the 3-stage model, the retention and advocacy into the post-purchase. Moreover, combining the purchase with delivery into the second stage gives an overall detailed idea of the purchase itself and its components. The intergraded customer journey model in Figure 5 is considered easier to understand as it is the combination of the two theories. However, there are some modifications to be done in Figure 5 for it to be able to represents the customer journey in accommodation industry.

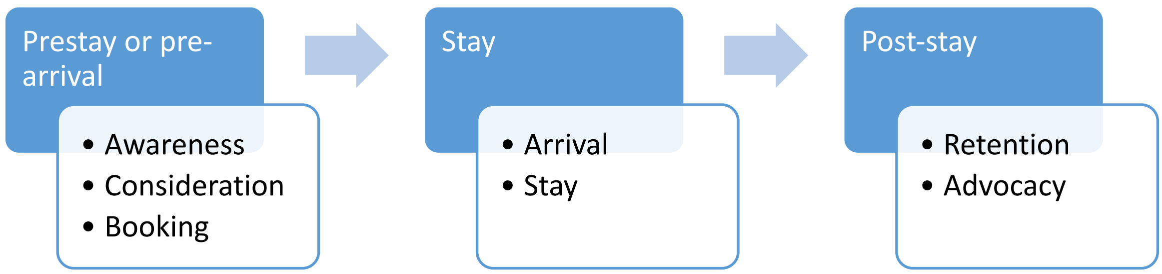

Figure 6. 3-stage customer journey by time in the accommodation industry

Being the modified version of Figure 5, Figure 6 represents the stages of the customer journey that all guests go through in the accommodation industry. It is particularly best to use in the accommodation industry due to the service intensive, time sensitive and different nature of the industry, compared to a normal customer journey for a retail product. Therefore, the model presented in Figure 6 will be the one that this research would implement on.

To find ways to help accommodation provider business improve the customer journey for leisure single travellers, having understood the customer journey in the industry itself is not yet sufficient. It is also necessary to understand where businesses could actually make an impact on the solo traveller's customer journey.

3.2 Touchpoints

A touchpoint can be defined as occurrence of contact between the customer and the organization, its representations, products or services (Nolvi 2018 & Schlenz 2019). According to Lemon and Verhoef (2016), there are four categories customer experience touchpoints, which are *brand-owned, partner-owned, customer-owned and social/external/independent*. Brand-owned touchpoints are the customer interactions that are owned and controlled by the firm. Partner-owned touchpoints are the interactions that are joint made, owned and controlled by the firm and its partner(s). Similarly, customer-owned are the actions that belongs to the customers not under the influence of the company or its partner(s). Therefore, external touch points stand for those interactions that are influenced by external forces, such as peers or family or other customers.

Not only are the touch points categorized into four categories, but they are also consists of a diversity of different elements (Nolvi 2018). To be more specific, according to the findings of Stein and Ramaseshan (2016), there are 7 distinctive themes that influence the customer experience touchpoints, which are *atmospheric, technological, communicative, process, employee-customer interaction, customer-customer interaction and product interaction elements*. The customer can encounter various atmospheric elements, elements of physical characteristics and surroundings observed by the customers, throughout their journey. Technological elements consist of all forms of technology that the customers may come across that contributed to the overall customer experience. Communicative elements are those contents of the company that are observed by the customers via different marketing channels, which play an important role especially during the purchase and post-purchase. Moreover, elements of the process, for example, waiting time or serving delivery plays a critical part during the customer journey. The interactions between the employees and the customers have a significant impact on the customer's journey as the interaction is the direct touchpoints that the company has with their customers, in this case, using brand-owned assets, the employees. The customers tend to be more comfortable receiving advice from trustworthy employees. The last element is customer-customer interaction, where the customers receiving advises from their peers, commonly seen during the pre-purchase with the reviews, shaping the image of the products. (Stein & Ramaseshan 2016 & Nolvi 2018.)

Additionally, it is the customer's interactions with the touchpoints that eventually make up the overall experience with its quality defined by how seamlessly the touchpoints work together for each customer. The role of the touchpoints varies through time and the customer's point in life. (Nolvi 2018.) According to Schlenz (2019), even though the overall customer experience was not the same as the sum of all touchpoints, the company could still improve the customer experience by improving the touchpoints. Because small and medium sized accommodation establishments may not be able to afford loyalty programs, impacting the customer journey by small touchpoints is a simpler and more cost-effective approach (Brown 2020).

Therefore, to improve the customer journey experience for leisure solo travellers, the accommodation service providers should improve the touchpoints that the solo travellers have with the company. In the accommodation industry, the touchpoints that their customers have with the companies are also their interactions with different departments and operations of the establishment, which are delimited in chapter 1.2. The next chapter would propose exactly what companies should do to improve their interactions with the customers to eventually improve their customer's journey and satisfaction. In the case of this particular research, it is the journey of leisure single travellers.

4 Personalisation and proposed solution

4.1 Personalisation

According to Titov (2017) and Ferenczuk (2018), even though the scope of personalisation is large, there are two most common, yet most mistaken for one another, types, which are personalization and customerisation. While customerization stands for individually adjusting the existing products and services to the customer's needs, personalisation stands for *tailoring the products, services marketing strategy* (Ferenczuk 2018). Personalisation tends to be associated with the interpersonal relationship between the company and their customers, which builds *intimacy, empathy and trust*. Moreover, it is also a significantly important part of the customer satisfaction and contributed to the whole image of the service quality. However, most studies related to the topic of personalisation had revolved around either E-commerce or mass customerization, yet many about offline personalizes services. (Titov 2017.)

Even though that the thought of providing exceptional personalized services is not new concept in the hospitality because many large corporations had been doing it for a long time like Ritz-Carlton or Savoy Group, maintaining such extensive customer's profile over a long time is still a costly process which remained a challenge for small and medium sized business. Managing customer relationship means recalibrating one's operation under the extensive eye of the customers and down to every touchpoint. Moreover, adapting the customer relationship management practice on a brand level would increase the consistency and service to all customer's touchpoints. (Rutherford & O'Fallon 2007, 40-42.)

However, besides its cost, the lack of standardization and appropriate IT-system also posed as a test for hospitality businesses (Rutherford & O'Fallon 2007, 42). Furthermore, *the applicability of personalization strategy is not restricted to marketing aspect only but also has plenty room-to-grow in other departments across organizations* (Nguyen 2017). Therefore, finding a cost effective and easily implemented in the daily operations of all hospitality business, including small, medium and large sized, touchpoint improvements is the key.

4.2 Proposed solution

This section is aimed to answer the question of "What can the accommodation service providers do to better the customer journey to the preference leisure solo travellers?". By personalizing the experience for leisure single travellers in accommodation industry, utilizing the traveller's personas, and combining the customer's journey with the touchpoints, a theoretical framework to improve the customer journey for leisure single travellers is proposed, see Table 1.

Departments	Concerns	Pre-arrival or Pre-stay	Stay	Post-stay
BO	Fear of loneliness			
	Monetary fear			
	Fear for safety			
RD	Fear of loneliness			
	Monetary fear			
	Fear for safety			
F&B	Fear of loneliness			
	Monetary fear			
	Fear for safety			

Table 1. Customer journey touchpoints of leisure solo travellers by accommodation department and concerns

Combining the elements targeting the solo traveller's concerns, presented in chapter 2.2 throughout their customer journey at an accommodation establishment (Figure 6), breaking down by potential touchpoints with different departments delimited in chapter 1.3, Table 1 gives an outline framework for the actions that accommodation industry could take throughout the customer journey of leisure single travellers while minding their customer's concerns. The model of Table 1 ensures that each concerns of the solo travellers will be targeted by all aspects of the hospitality industry by all steps of the customer journey.

With this theoretical framework, some theoretical actions that accommodation service providers could do to improve their customer's journey are then proposed. Further needs for investigation will be brought to the leisure solo travellers in order to evaluation its practicality and effectiveness in the eyes of leisure solo travellers.

<table>
<tr><th>Departments</th><th>Concerns</th><th>Pre-arrival or Pre-stay</th><th>Stay</th><th>Post-stay</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">BO</td><td>Fear of loneliness</td><td>- Marketing mix including channels and contents</td><td rowspan="3">- Social events at the establishment</td><td rowspan="3">- Contact for future offers
- Feedbacks</td></tr>
<tr><td>Monetary fear</td><td>- Different valued aspects of the establishment</td></tr>
<tr><td>Fear for safety</td><td>- Marketing mix</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">RD</td><td>Fear of loneliness</td><td>- Room allocation</td><td>- Interactions with the staffs (
- A friend to talk to</td><td rowspan="2">- Recognition in the next visit</td></tr>
<tr><td>Monetary fear</td><td>- Activities to do</td><td>- Personal gifts</td></tr>
</table>

	Fear for safety	- Arrival assistant	- Room location information - Panic button - Safe word	
F&B	Fear of loneliness	- Not applicable	- Eating alone - Table location - Table size	- Not applicable
	Monetary fear		- Breakfast type choice	
	Fear for safety		- Personal dietary and allergy. - Food reccommendations	

Table 2. Proposed touchpoints theory for accommodation providers to improve the customer journey for leisure single travellers

Table 2 gives details regarding the proposed touchpoints hypothesis, where related questions and actions will be brought to leisure solo travellers in order to test and gain insights of their reactions towards those. The detailed questions using the model could be found in the questionnaire in Appendix 2. For this bachelor's study, the touchpoints between the BO and the leisure solo travellers focused primarily on the pre-stay and post-stay stage of the customer journey due to its most likeliness of interaction. Contradicted with the BO, the F&B department focused solely on the Stay-stage because of the lack of interaction before and after the stay at the accommodation establishment. Nonetheless, the RD's touchpoints expanded in all stages of the customer journey as it is the department with the most contact time with the customer. The detailed different actions that accommodation service provider can do to improve the customer journey will be presented in chapter 7.

5 Research methodology

5.1 Research method

Quantitative research method is a descriptive and explanatory orientation research method, which allows researchers to employ explorative methods with quantitative measures to test out their hypothesis (Golafshani 2003 & Creswell 2008). In other words, not only can quantitative research method allow researchers to familiarize themselves with the studied concept but it also provides them with tools to test those hypothesis emphasizing of measurements and the relationship between different variables (Golafshani 2003).

The quantitative research method is specifically chosen for this research because of its ability to identify the small differences on a large scale and its ability to reflect the whole target population of the research. Moreover, it also chosen because it provides non-bias and descriptive result dealing with a larger sample size, which allows the researcher to test out his theory, presented in the previous chapter. (Mirola 2018a.)

5.1.1 Population and Sample

Population

Population *consists of all items and individuals* that researchers would like to draw a conclusion on (Mirola 2018b). In the case of this research, the population is defined as leisure solo travellers. To be more specific, leisure solo travellers are those who may or may not come from a single household yet travel and arrive at the destination by themselves. Moreover, they may join some group activities but remain by themselves for the majority of the journey. They would also use some forms of accommodation services and not joined by their friends or family. Additionally, the nature of their travel must be for sole leisure or leisure combined purposes.

Sample

Sample is the portion of the population selected for analysis (Mirola 2018b). For this bachlelor's research, the portion of the sample is defined in the Delimitation of chapter Introduction, see chapter 1.3. For short, the sample size for this research is delimited between 100 and 1000 samples. If the sample is too small, it would not be able to reflect the results of the whole population. And, if the sample is too big, it would make the analysis hard to comprehend.

5.1.2 Reliability and Validity

Reliability

The reliability of a research is defined by the extend of the result's consistency over a period of time and its ability to reflect the whole population. It can also be evaluated by its tendency to produce the same result when applying similar methods. (Golafshani 2003 & Mirola 2018b.) The reliability of this research will be evaluated by combining the result of its findings with the previous researches of solo travellers.

Validity

The validity of a research stands for its truthfulness and ability to measure up to the initial intention. It also determines which and how the data needed is gathered. (Golafshani 2003.) The goal of those research is to observe the population's reaction to the proposed solutions. Therefore, it shall be determined by the result's ability to reflect the reaction of the population.

5.2 Data collection method

The data for this research was collected from both the secondary data and through a survey research.

5.2.1 Secondary data

Secondary data was mostly used in the theoretical part of this research. Different statistics and data were collected previous studies and researches related to solo travellers and to the tourism and hospitality industry. All of the data collected in this research was from analysis and studies of large online travel agencies, such as Booking.com, Klook, or by solo traveller's channels with large member pool; major news outlets and academic studies. Because there was no official data from governmental organizations available for this specific topic, the data from large travel corporation's and field's experts' studies was the second most trustworthy.

5.2.2 Survey research

This quantitative research used survey research as a data collection method, where participants were asked to do the same well-structured and predetermined questionnaire. It was also a self-administered survey, where the participants were asked to complete and submit the survey by themselves. (Mirola 2018b.) The questionnaire consisted of mostly closed ended questions, such as yes-no, multiple choice or rating questions. However, there were still some small and optional open-ended questions for the participants to fill in themselves had they wanted to. The structure of the questionnaire could be found in details in appendix 2. The questionnaire was done using Google forms and distributed online via social medias, such as Facebook, Instagram and Youtube. The participants could access the online survey themselves by clicking on a link and the form would be submitted automatically after they had answered the questions in the form. This method was the most applicable one due to its ability to reach a wider and larger audience. Moreover, it was also less costly and better for the environment, not involving papers or shipping logistics.

6 Survey results

6.1 Survey responses

An online google survey, structured in appendix 2, was sent via social medias as direct messages to solo travellers and solo-travel-focused-content group. To be more specific, on Instagram, the participants were randomly chosen via their posts using the hashtag solo-travel, solotraveller or their re-post on a third-party social traveller page. On Facebook, even though partnership with pages having large number of solo travellers was not possible, de-spite of the author's attempt to contact those pages via both email and messages, the au-thor managed to send out the survey to members of those pages individually directly, cho-sen by their most recent interactions with the page's latest posts.

Even though the survey was sent out via email to potential partners on October 8th, 2020. It was not until October 19th, 2020 that the first responses were coming in. After 3 weeks and hundreds of messages sent, 89 responses were received. The deadline for the data collec-tion was extended until November 2nd,2020 due to the lack of responses after the first one of 25th October, 2020. Even though the goal for research sample was 100, there were only about 20 responses by November 27th, 2020. Therefore, it was decided by the supervisor that 40 responses were sufficient in this case as the current COVID-19 situation might affect solo traveller's tendency to respond to travel related survey. Fortunately, by November 2nd, 2020, there were 89 responses in total, which are still less than the initial goal of at least 100, but still more the minimum sufficient number of responses for the research.

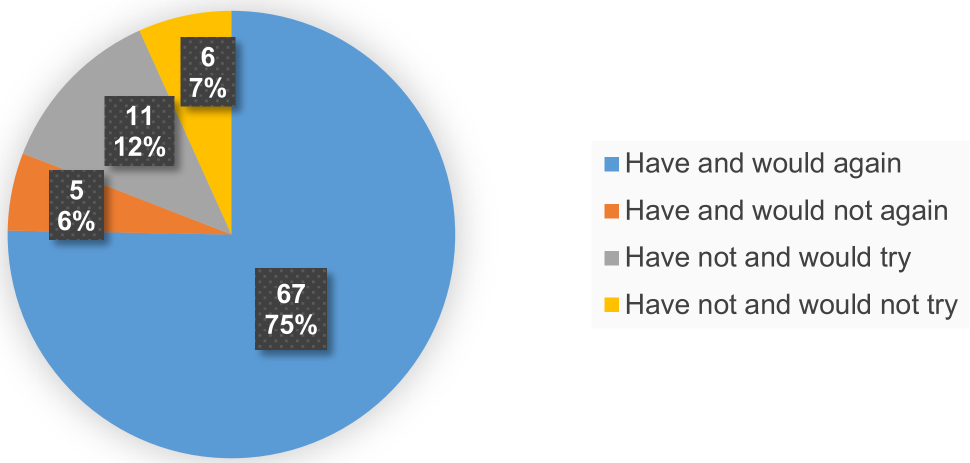

Figure 7. Participant's travel solo travel history

As demonstrated in Figure 7, of all 89 participants, seventy-two participants or 81 percent of the participants responded that they had travelled by themselves before, including 67 participants or 75 percent of all participants, had travelled alone and would travel alone again and six percent would not travel alone again. Four out five participants who would not travel alone again gave their reasoning, which was either feeling lonely not having anyone to talk to or travelling with friends, partners is more preferred. Moreover, of the 19 percent of the participants who had not travelled alone yet, about two third of those were thinking about travelling alone. Therefore, the result shows that over 90 percent of the participants either have done solo travel before or thinking about solo traveling.

6.2 Non-solo traveller's responses

The 17 respondents who had not travelled alone, hence do not belong to the research sample, were directed to shorter path of the survey, where only the reasons stopping them from solo travelling and their intentions for potential solo travel were asked. Figure 8 below gives information on the reason refraining respondents from taking a trip by themselves.

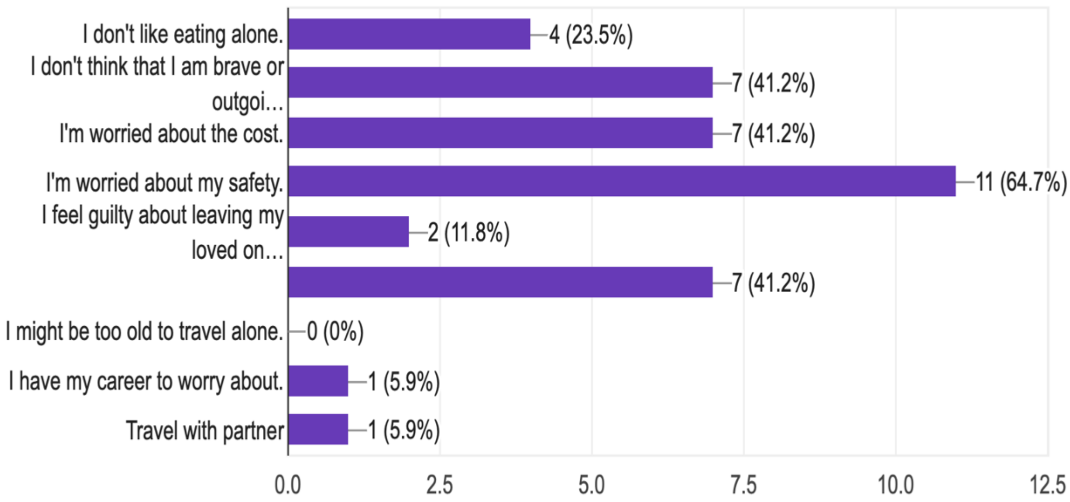

Figure 8. Reasons stopping participants from travelling alone

According to those who have not travelled alone before, the most common reason is the concern about their safety with 11 out of 17 shared. The second most common reasons are personality-associated, money-related, loneliness or homesickness-wise. The three previous reasons share the same percentage of answer of 41.2%, which are of great significance. Therefore, this research results are aligned with the common concerns theory presented in chapter 2.4. However, even though that the concerns are similar with the theory, the significance of the ranking of the concerns in the research is where the difference lied. It is not loneliness or homesickness that proved most worrisome, but safety issues.

6.3 Solo traveller's responses

If the participants had travelled alone before, thus passing the first filtering question towards the target population sample, they were then asked of their solo travel's history. In addition to the first filtering step, two more filtering steps were then applied. The second one was applied by asking the accommodation services used by the solo travellers to delimit those joined by friends or family as stated in chapter 2.1. The last filtering step is regarding the nature of the solo travel to access the target of leisure solo travellers defined for the study.

6.3.1 Solo traveller's accommodation reference

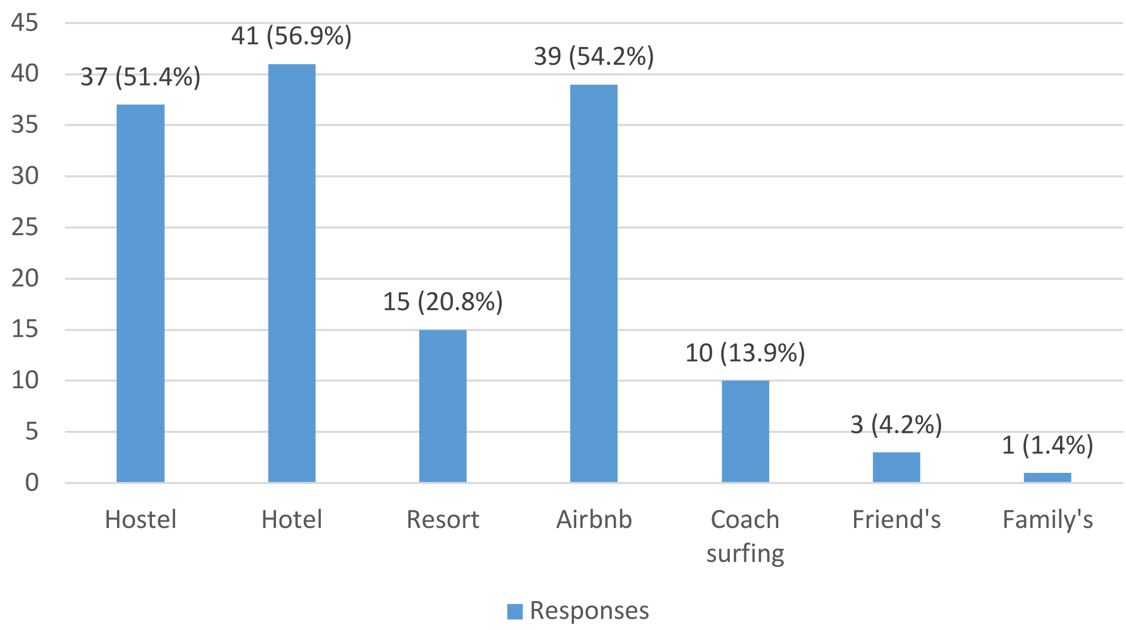

Figure 9. Solo traveller's accommodation reference

With the multiple-choice question of the preference accommodation when travelling alone, Figure 9 demonstrates all of the responses chosen by the participants. Out of the 72 responses from those that have at least travelled alone once, it is clear that Hotel, Airbnb and Hostel are the most popular accommodation type among solo travellers with over half of the participant's choice, and their percentage respectively 56.9%, 54.2% and 51.4%. Even though staying at a friend's house or with family members has the lowest percentage of choice, those responses are excluded from this research as they do not belong to the sample, defined in chapter 5.1.1. Therefore, couch surfing and staying at a resort are the two least popular choice of accommodation among solo travellers with their percentage respectively 13.9% and 20.8%. Of the 72 participants who have travelled alone at least once, excluding those joining by friends or family at the destination, the solo traveller sample consists of 68 individuals.

6.3.2 The solo traveller's concerns

Concerns/Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Mean
Loneliness	13	19	15	13	8	68	2.76470588
Homesick	31	16	9	7	5	68	2.10294118
Safety	7	7	18	16	20	68	3.51470588
Money	6	13	15	18	16	68	3.36764706

Table 3. Solo traveller's concern

Moving on further into the analysis with the filtered 68 respondents, Table 3 illustrates the solo traveller's responses to the common concerns when being asked to grade statements, for instance, "I am concerned about" plus a common concern, each from the scale of 1 being not at all agree, to 5 being totally agree. The frequency of the answers and the mean value for each concern are demonstrated in Table 3. Ranking the mean value of each concerns gives clear insights on the traveller's state of mind when they are travelling alone. Statistically, safety ranks the highest concern for solo travellers with the mean value of 3.51 and follows closely by money with the mean value of 3.37. Fear of being homesick and loneliness have the lowest mean score, respectively 2.1 and 2.76. Fear of loneliness and home-sick's mean value are all below the average number of 3, meaning that even though the concerns exist, solo travellers are only slightly worried about feeling lonely and homesick.

Combining this result with the theory presented in chapter 2.2 regarding the concerns, it can be seen that there are similarities but also differences. The similarities lie within the fact that the 3 main fears, such as loneliness, safety and monetary fear, exist on the solo traveller's mind. However, similar to the result of those who have not travelled alone before, safety is most significant concern for solo travellers. The result of this particular study showed that safety is also the most worrisome aspect of the solo trip, not the fear of loneliness. The following question of the survey was another designed filtering question which concerned that reasons that participants travelled alone.

6.3.3 Reasons for solo travel

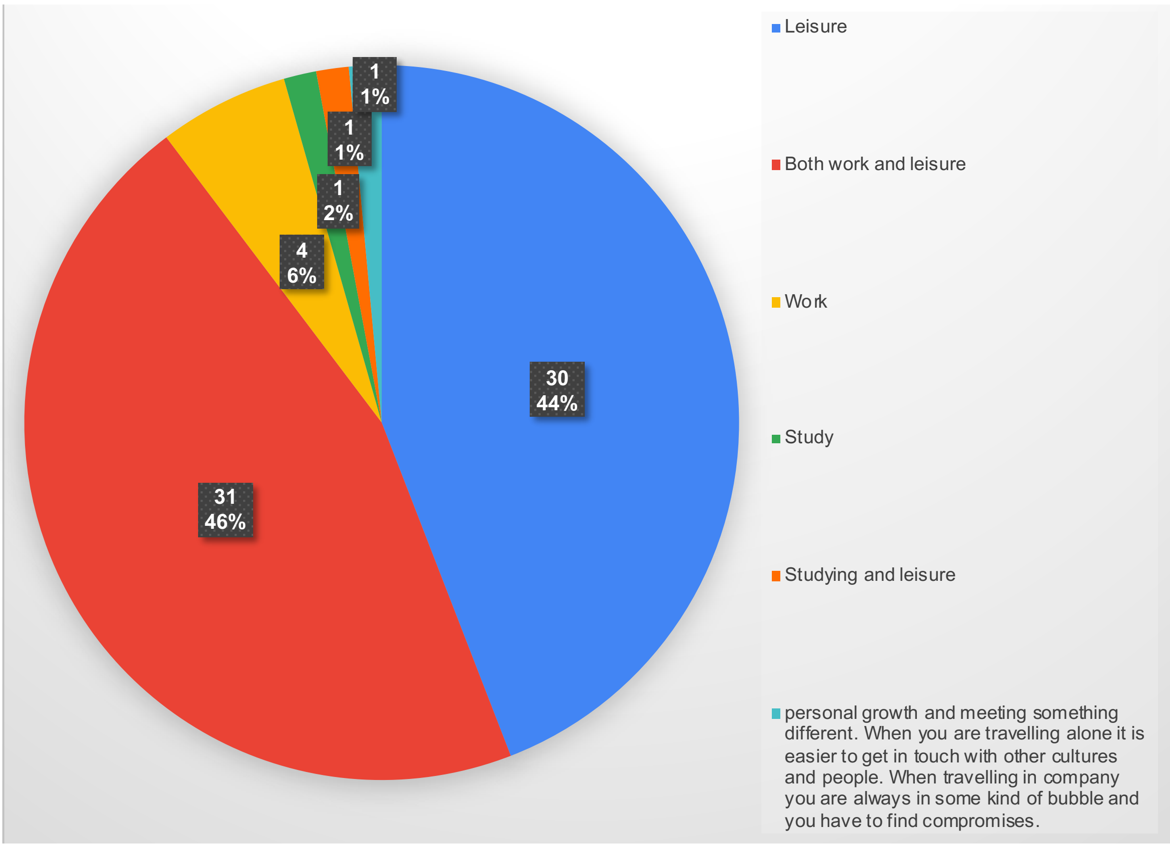

Figure 10. Reasons for solo travelling

Figure 10 gives information regarding the nature of the solo travel among the participants. The question for the reason of the solo travel trip is for the sole purpose of narrowing the solo traveller participants down to the target sample, which are those solo travellers who travelled for leisure purposes. Among the 68 solo travellers, 31 of those travelled alone for both work and leisure, ranks the highest with 46 percent. Coming right behind is for leisure purposes with 30 participants or 44 percent of all participants. The other reasons for travelling alone are study, both study and leisure and for personal growth.

However, this question was only for the filtering purpose. Therefore, its result cannot reflect real reason for solo travelling of all solo travellers as the cover page in appendix 1 had clearly stated that this research was targeted at those leisure solo travellers. Moreover, the questionnaire had been programmed to only automatically continue for those who answered either leisure or both work and leisure, see appendix 2. Hence, the questionnaire moved onto the background section for 61 participants and ended for the 7 participants with the different answers.

6.3.4 Leisure solo traveller's background

Having the 61 samples of the target population narrowed down, information regarding the sample's background were simultaneously asked afterwards. Those were questions regarding their sex, age, money spending tendency and optional nationality, which could help to determine the research's reliability and validity and their potential correlation with the answers provided.

Sex

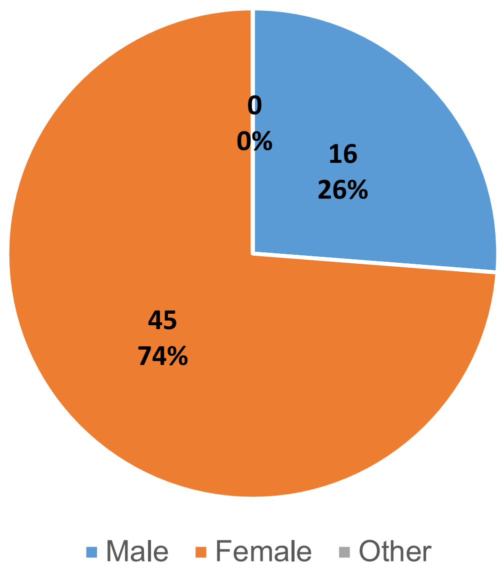

Figure 11. Leisure solo traveller's gender

Figure 11 provides the gender of all 61 participants. It is observable that the number of female solo travellers outweighs that of the male ones. With the number of participants of 45 over 61, female solo travellers hold about three quarters of the sample population. Therefore, from the reliability point of view when comparing that to the 80 percent female solo traveller of the solo traveller market presented in chapter 2.2, the research result regarding the gender is relatively close. However, the small margin difference can be understood as either a slight margin of error or a slight increase in the number of male solo traveller. Thus, women still remain the dominant in the segment of leisure solo traveller.

Age

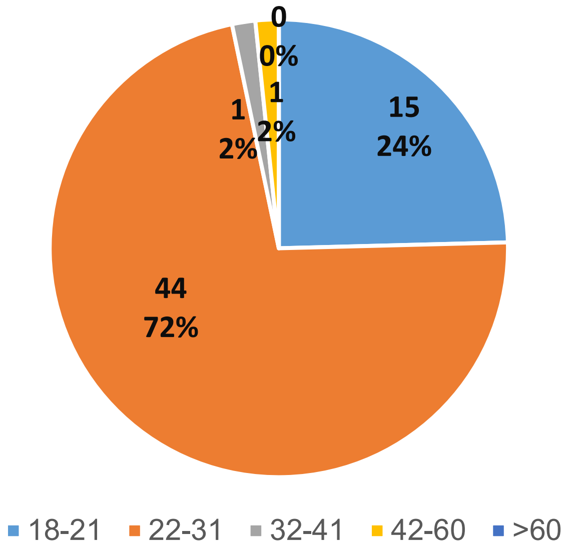

Figure 12. Leisure solo traveller’s age

Regarding the age of leisure solo travellers, Figure 12 demonstrates the age group of the sample population. The majority of the sample is between the age of 21 and 31. With 72% of the 61 participants, the group of 21 to 31 years-old ranks the largest in this research. Having 24 percent, the group of young people from the age of 18 to 21 come in second. Unfortunately, there is only one response each from the age of 32 to 41 and 42 to 60. Therefore, there is a margin of error that the result of this research would only apply for millennials and gen Z, not the whole leisure solo traveller’s population.

Nationality

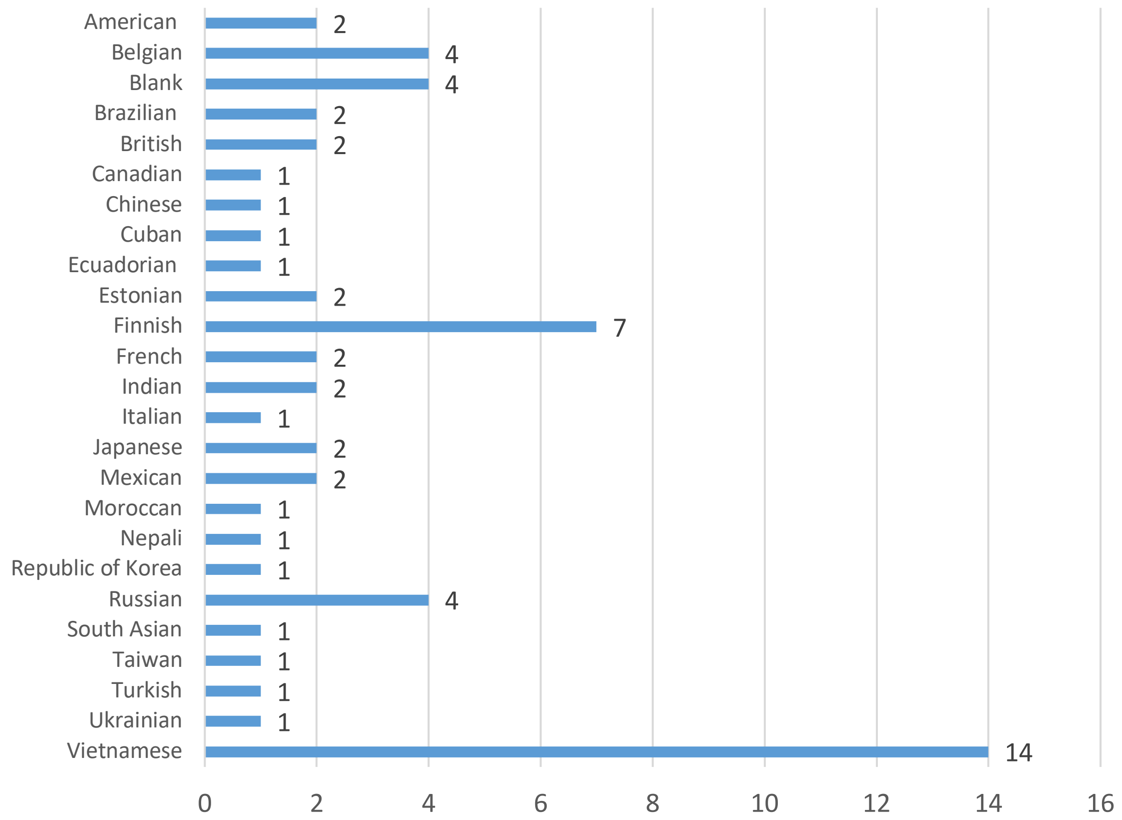

Figure 13. Leisure solo traveller's nationalities

Figure 13 illustrates the optional nationality question for the 61-participant sample. The nationality result shows that the two most common nationalities in the research were Vietnamese and Finnish with their number respectively 14 and 7. Besides those, there are also a lot of other nationalities, who participated the research as well. For instance, there are 4 Russians and Belgians; 2 Americans, Belgians, British, Estonians, French, Indians, Japanese, Mexicans; and 1 Canadian, Chinese, Cuban, Ecuadorian, Italian, Moroccan, Nepali, Korean, South Asian, Taiwanese, Turkish, Ukrainian. Therefore, even though there are a large number of Vietnamese and Finnish participated in the study, it id still widely accessible internationally thanks to the help of social medias.

The result could have been influenced caches, cookies and machine learning of the social media's technology system. To be more specific, as an example, the author is a Vietnamese studying in Finland. Therefore, the author's personal profile's searching engine could have been filtered and presented in the way that prioritized Vietnamese and Finnish accounts. As partnering with large groups and corporations were not possible and the personal approach was used predominantly, this could be the case that the result was presented.

Money spending habit

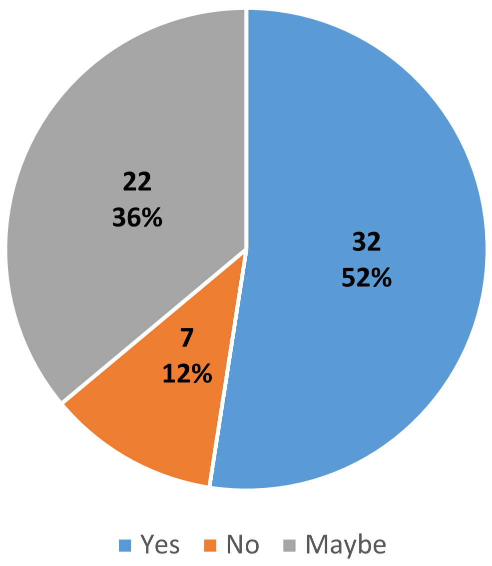

Figure 14. Leisure solo traveller's tendency to spend more than intended

According to Figure 14 demonstrating the leisure solo traveller's splurging tendency, it is clear that the majority of travellers are willing to spend more money on themselves than anticipated when traveling alone. More than half of the participants answer "yes" when being about splurging on themselves. The second most answered option is "maybe" with 36 percent. Therefore, in total, almost 90 percent of the participants either would spend above the budget or willing to do so. The result answer of this question matches the psychology analysed earlier in chapter 2.3.2 with the solo travel being the ultimate indulgence and sense of fulfilment for oneself (Reid 2018, 7-8).

6.4 Leisure solo traveller's customer journey responses

After the questions regarding the sample's background, the questionnaire continued with three more sections regarding the customer journey, starting with the pre-stay, moving onto the stay and ending with the post-stay.

6.4.1 Pre-stay

Questions following the Pre-stay stage were asked of the research samples. These were the questions regarding the pre-stay part of the leisure solo traveller's customer journey with potential touchpoints related to the two departments, including BO and RD. Unfortunately, touchpoints regarding the F&B were disregarded during the Pre-stay stage of the customer journey in this study due to its less frequent occurrence.

Back Office

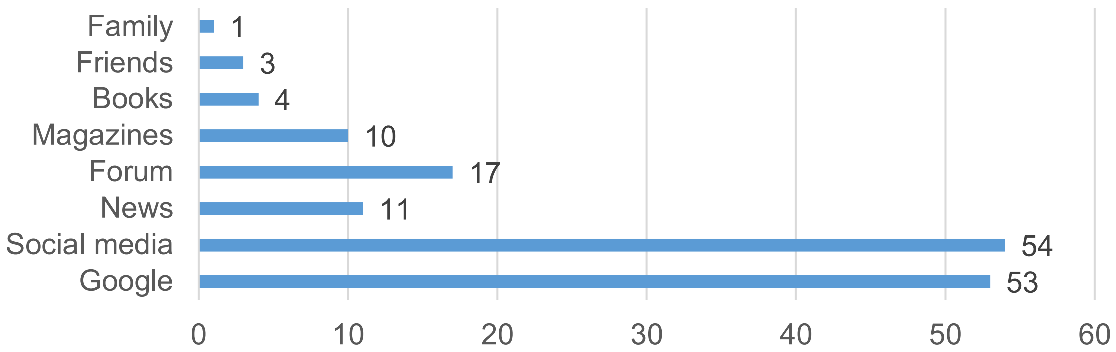

Figure 15. Leisure solo traveller's information channel preference

Starting the touchpoints of BO's the marketing mix concerning channels (Table 2), Figure 15 represents the leisure solo traveller's preferred information channel when they are travelling. Out of 61 responses, 54 samples or almost 90 percent use social media to look for information when they are travelling. The second most common information channel among leisure solo travellers is Google with 53 responses, which has only one response less than social media. Ranking third with almost 20 percent of the responses is forum with 17 choices. However, due to the fact the social media was the main survey distribution channels, the result could have been influenced by the research access point as well. Furthermore, the next question is about the touchpoints of different aspects of the establishments that their target customers valued.

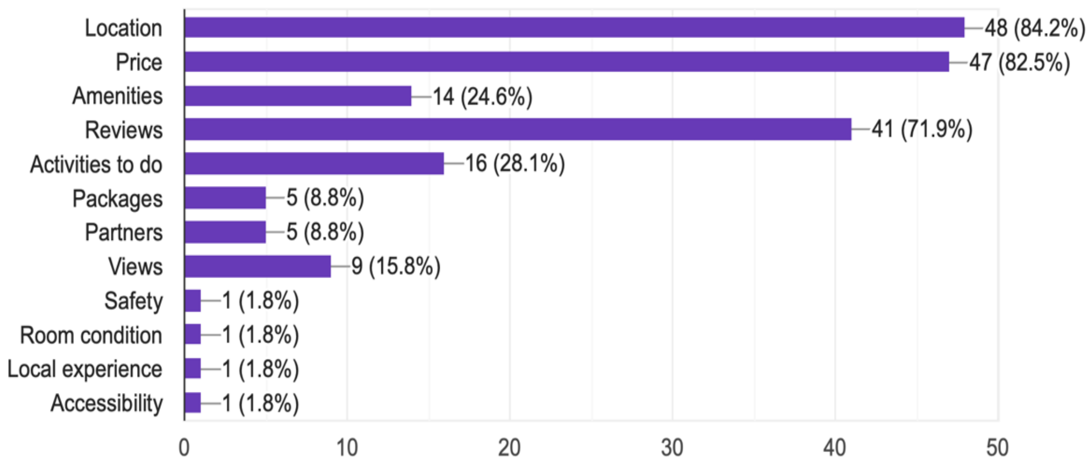

Figure 16. Important accommodation features to leisure solo travellers

The significant features that leisure solo travellers look for while choosing the accommodation are demonstrated in Figure 16 above. Fifty-seven out of sixty-one respondents answered this optional multiple-choice question concerning the valued accommodation features. According to the participants, the location and price are the two most important features that they look for while choosing their travel accommodation with their number of choices being closely and respectively 48 and 47. The third most valued feature is the reviews with 41 choices, which stands for more than 70 percent of the answers. Moreover, besides those 3 features, there are also features that leisure solo travellers notice, such as the activities and the amenities with both more than 20% of answers.

Rooms Department

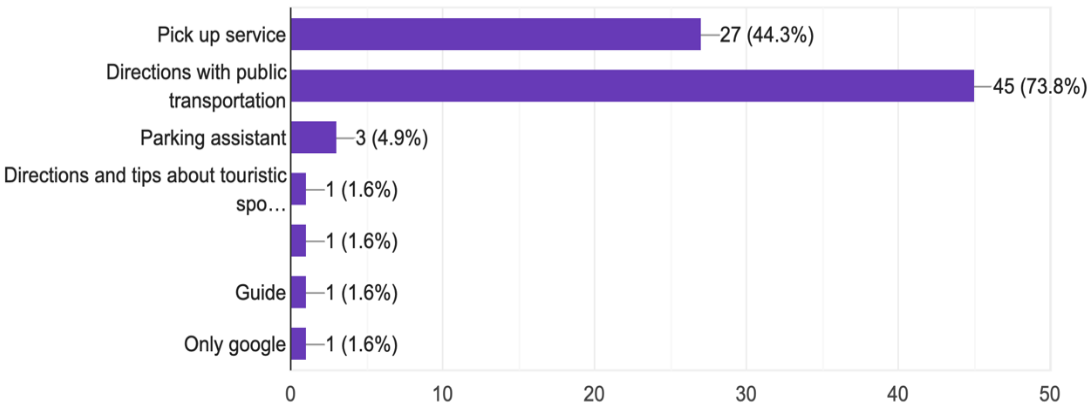

Figure 17. Leisure solo traveller's arrival assistant preference

Figure 17 presents the leisure solo's preference when it comes to their arrivals. Apparently, leisure solo travellers appreciate getting public transportations the most with more than 70 percent of the participants agreeing so. After public transportations come the pick-up service with approximately 44%, which is also a lot higher than the near five percent of parking assistant and everything else. It seems that solo travellers mostly prefer using public transportation or the planed pick-up service for their trip to driving to their accommodation of choice.

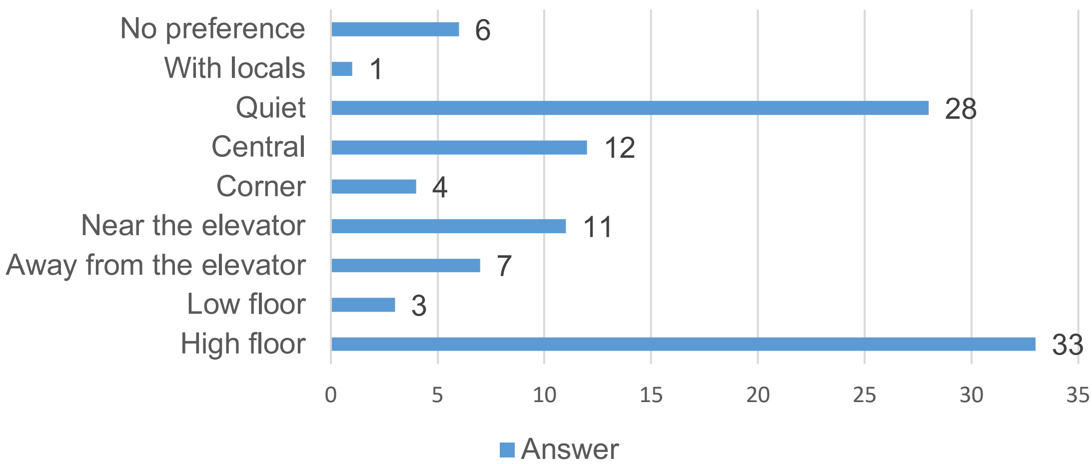

Figure 18. Leisure solo traveller’s room location reference

Figure 18 illustrates the leisure solo traveller’s preferred choice of room location. When it comes to the floor, the number of samples choosing high floor is 11 times more than those loving the low floor. Comparing the room location to the position of the elevator, it seems that more participants prefer having their room closer to the elevator. Sound-wise, more participants appreciate having a quiet room than central location or corner. Overall, the two most preferred room location criteria are high floor and quiet.

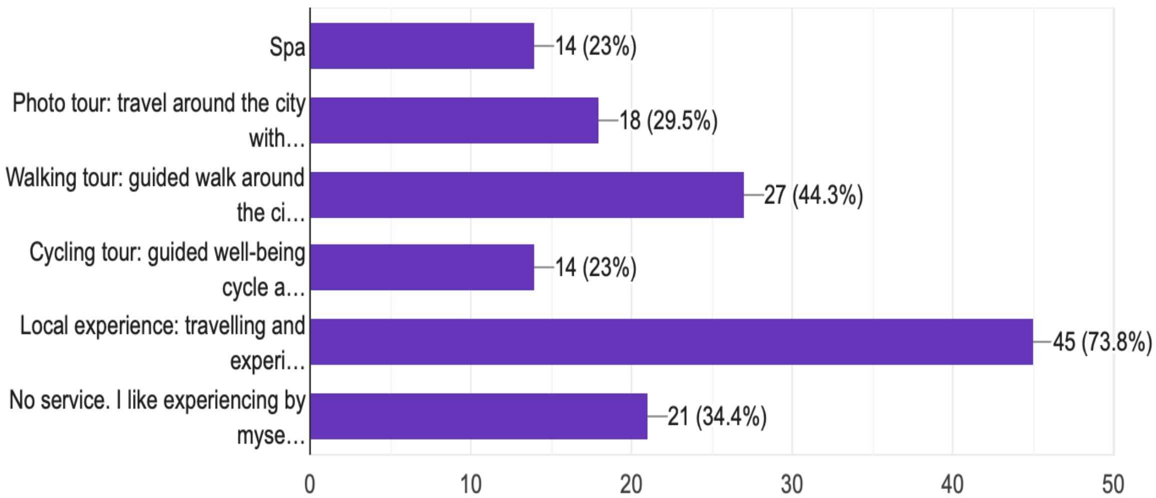

Figure 19. Leisure solo traveller’s preferred service

Additionally, some potential services were brought to the samples to gather their interest towards those. Figure 19 presents services that leisure solo travellers prefer. Local experiences, giving the travellers opportunities to experience as a local, seem to be what interest leisure solo travellers the most with more than 70% approval rating. The second most appealing service to solo travellers is the guided walking tour around the city and its sites with approximately 40% participant’s choice. The third most chosen option is surprisingly no service at all with 21 choices. Nonetheless, even though the other proposed services do not have as many choices as the most popular previous three, spa, photo tour and cycling tour also intrigue all 20 percent of the participants.

6.4.2 Stay

Back Office

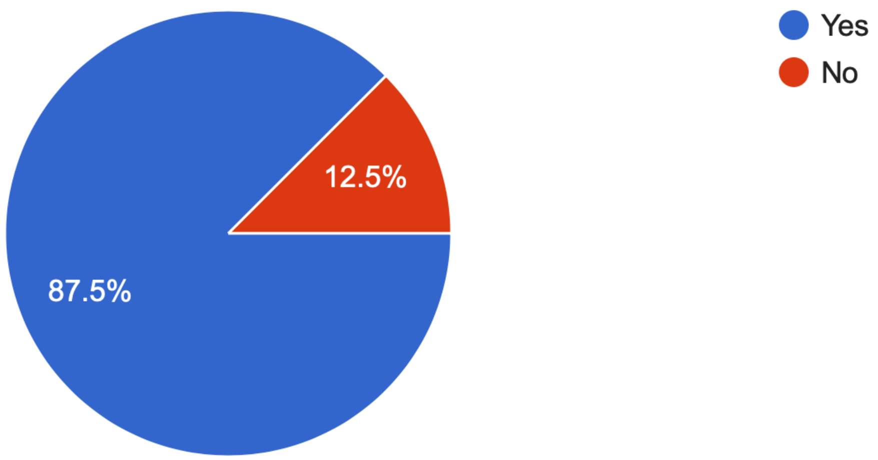

Figure 20. Leisure solo traveller’s social event interest

Figure 20 illustrates the leisure solo traveller’s interest in participating in social events. With the significant difference of 87.5 percent to 12.5 percent, it is clear that leisure solo travellers are very much willing to participate in social events if there is one held.

Rooms Department

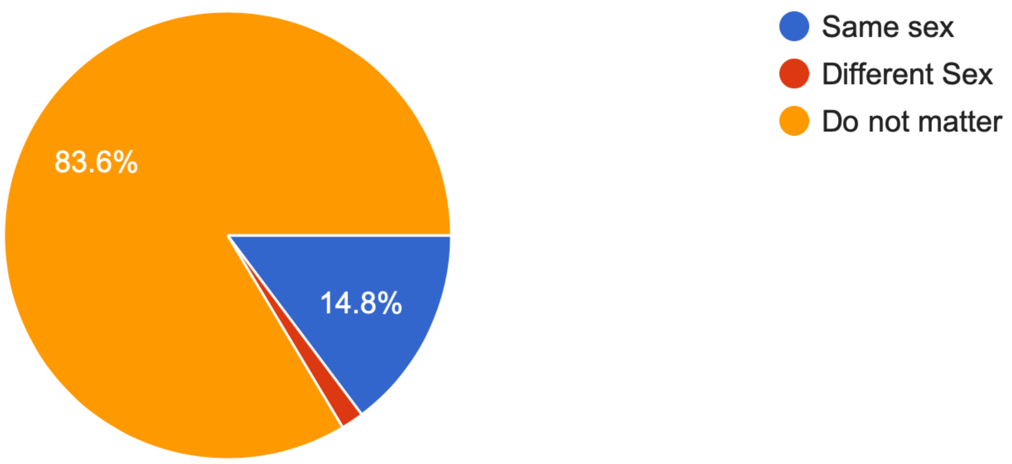

Figure 21. Leisure solo traveller’s preferred gender of receptionist or room attendant

Bearing the result for leisure solo traveller’s preferred gender choice of receptionist or room attendant, Figure 21 shows that the large majority of leisure solo travellers do not consider the sex of the front office clerk or bell attendant an object of matter. The result is only approximately 15% of the participants want to have the same-sex employees, which is about 5 times smaller than those did not mind.

Table 4 below gives detailed information about the leisure solo traveller's interaction and safety preference, where participants are asked to grade different statements from the scale of 1, not at all agree, to 5, totally agree.

Statement / Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Mean
I feel comfortable talking to the staff.	1	4	4	20	32	61	4.278689
I feel comfortable being talking to by the staff.	1	1	4	20	35	61	4.42623
I feel comfortable sharing my story.	3	3	15	12	28	61	3.967213
I like feeling being cared for.	2	3	11	23	22	61	3.983607
I would feel more comfortable having a friend to talk during my stay.	7	3	11	19	21	61	3.721311
I like receiving personal notes and gifts.	1	5	14	8	33	61	4.098361
I like being recognized during my stay.	2	3	13	13	30	61	4.081967
I feel safer having my room number handled in a discreet manner.	2	8	19	11	21	61	3.672131
I feel safer if there this a safe word to communicate signalling my state of danger or emergency.	3	3	19	13	19	57	3.736842

Table 4. Interaction and safety grade

Concerning the interactions with the service provider's staffs, statistically, not only are leisure solo travellers comfortable with starting the conversation but they are also comfortable to keep the conversations with the staffs, with the mean value of the answers respectively 4.28 and 4.42. With the mean value of all above 4, it shows that solo travellers are eager and keen on having communications with the employees at the accommodation. Moreover, they are also good with sharing their stories with its mean value at almost 4. Besides that, statistically, they also like being cared for and having a friend to talk to while travelling by themselves having the mean value of the two related statements being higher than 3 as well. Additionally, with the mean value surpassing 4, the samples appear to appreciate being recognized during the stay and receiving personal notes and gifts too.

Concerning safety, statistically, by having the mean value for the two related statements being higher than 3.5, leisure solo travellers feel safer having a safe word to communicate their state of danger or emergency, at 3.74, and having their room number handled in a discreet manner, at 3.67. The safety issue continues with Figure 22 demonstrating the leisure solo traveller's response to the panic button.

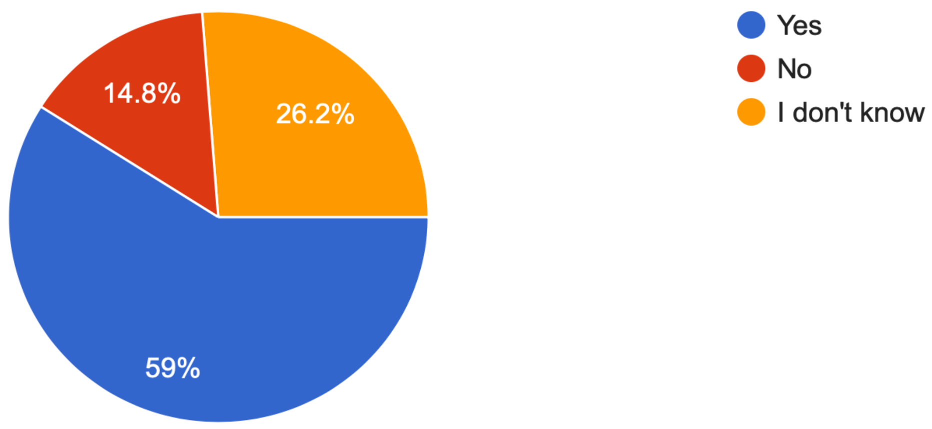

Figure 22. Leisure solo traveller's respond to having the panic button inside the room

Even though there is more than a quarter of the participants having an indefinite answer, with more than half of the participants wanting to have the panic button inside of their rooms, almost four times more than those answering no, it appears that it would help the leisure solo travellers to feel safer while staying alone inside their room.

Food and Beverage Department

Continuing with the customer journey with the F&B Department, dining alone does not pose as a challenge for leisure single travellers with more than 90% of the participants claiming that they are comfortable dining by themselves. Figure 23 and Figure 24 bellow reveal the leisure solo traveller's preference when it comes to the table size and location respectively.

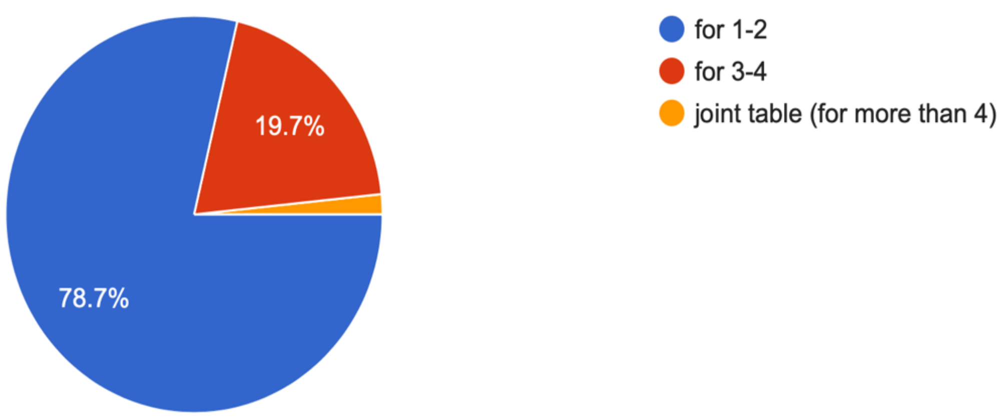

Figure 23. Leisure single traveller's table size preference

According to Figure 23, the large majority of the leisure solo travellers, more than three quarters, prefer to be seated at a table for one-to-two persons, or so-called "single table".

Ranking second with about one-fifth of the participants' choice, family tables or table for three-to-four people appear also a popular option for leisure single travellers. Joint tables or tables for more than four people are not at all favoured by leisure solo travellers with only one choice out of 61.

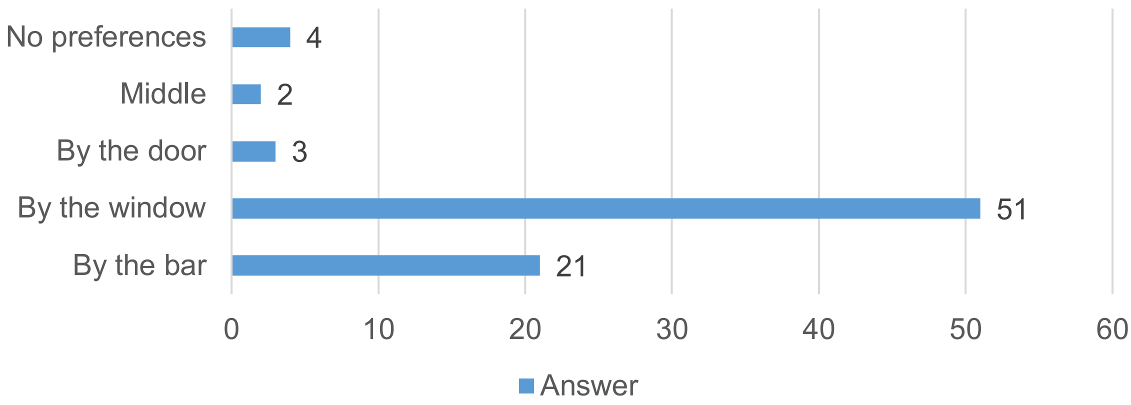

Figure 24. Leisure solo traveller's table location choice

Figure 24 illustrates the leisure solo travellers' table location choice while dining by themselves. Fifty-one out of sixty-one samples choose seating at tables by the window to enjoy their meal, making tables by the window an ultimate location for leisure solo travellers. The second most chosen table location is by the bar with more than one-third of the participant's choice. After settling down to the table, the customer journey at the restaurant continues with the food. Figure 25 below illustrates the type of breakfast that the research samples would like to have.

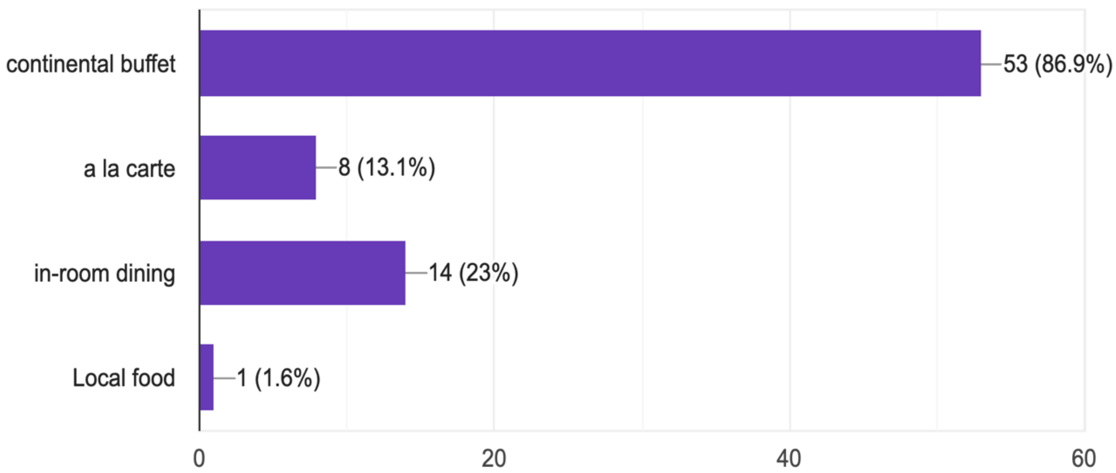

Figure 25. Leisure solo traveller's breakfast type choice

It is clear that continental buffet breakfast is the most popular breakfast type choice among leisure solo travellers with more than 80% of the participants chose the option. Having only

14 choices out of 61, surprisingly, in-room dining is the second most popular breakfast type choice.

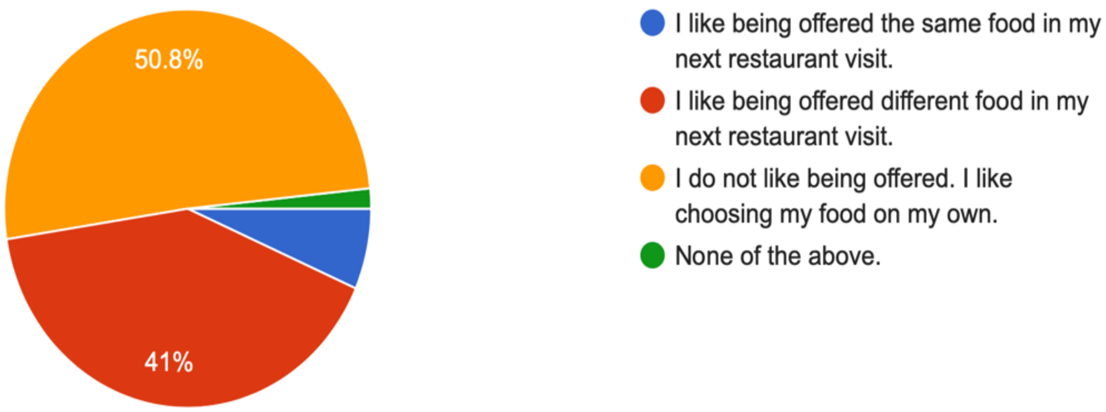

Figure 26. Leisure solo traveller's preference for the next restaurant visit

Figure 26 demonstrates the more favoured ways of order for leisure solo travellers in their next restaurant visit. The result shows that more than 50 percent of the samples would like to order their own food, without the assistance of the server. Being the follow-up option, 41 percent of the participants prefer to be offered different food on their next visit.

6.4.3 Post-stay

Back Office

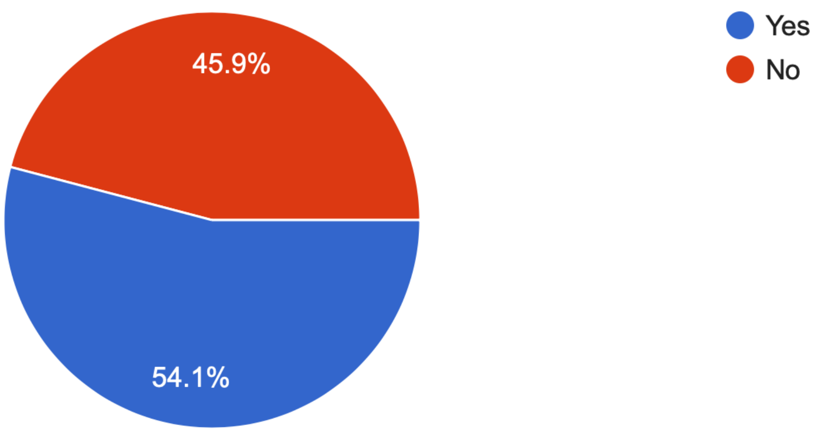

Figure 27. Leisure solo traveller's future offer contact

Regarding the post-stay customer journey, the result on whether the leisure solo travellers would like to receive future offers varies with a relatively small difference (Figure 27). Even though the majority of the samples would like to receive future offers with the percentage of

54.1, the number of leisure solo travellers not wanting to receive future offers come close behind with only 5 participants fewer.

Rooms Department

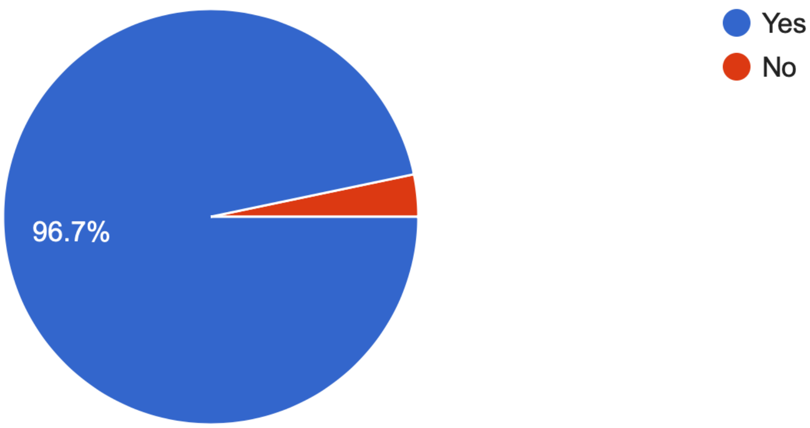

Figure 28. Leisure solo traveller's comfortability giving feedbacks

Figure 28 gives information regarding the attitude of leisure solo travellers about feedback giving. Out of sixty-one responses, fifty-nine answers that they are comfortable with giving the establishment feedbacks about their stay, which is more than a ninety percent of all the whole sample size.

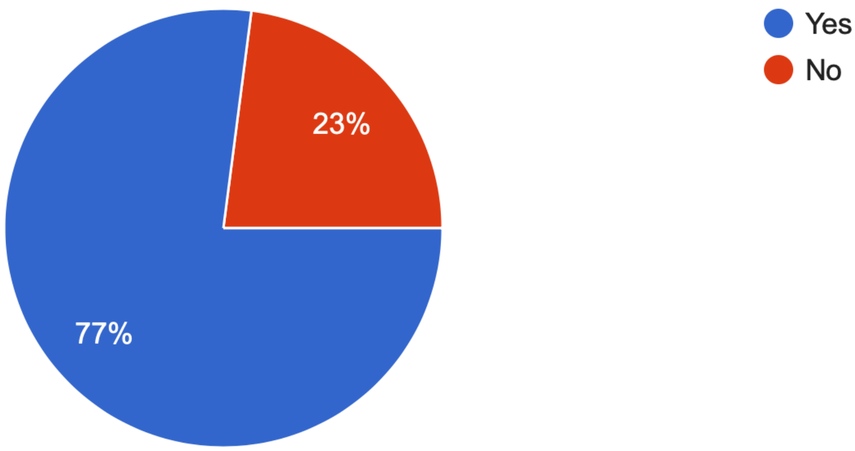

Figure 29. Leisure solo traveller's recognition preference

Figure 29 demonstrates the preference in terms if future recognition of leisure solo travellers. With the percentage of 77% yes over 23% no, it is certain that leisure solo travellers would like to be recognized in their next visit at the establishment.

7 Survey results interpretations

7.1 Background interpretations

According to the information regarding the participant’s background collected in this particular study, it is clear that the majority of the leisure solo traveller market consists of mostly Millennials and Gen Z, many of those are women. Moreover, even though monetary concerns ranks the second highest for solo travellers statistically, almost nine out of ten leisure solo travellers are either willing or considering spending beyond the budget on themselves. Thanks to the intercultural mix of answers from a variety of nationalities and the participant’s willingness to open their wallets, it can be interpreted that regardless of cultural background, solo travelling is indeed a worthwhile self-indulgent experience.

Therefore, accommodation service providers can use this information to their advantage by providing leisure solo travellers with the products and services that they can spend money on. The products and services can be beneficial to both parties. On one hand, they can aid leisure solo travellers on their self-indulgent journey and improve their customer journey by easing their concerns while travelling alone. On the other hand, they can assist to improve the accommodation service provider’s relationship with their customer and bring extra revenues for the company. The next chapter analyses in detailed the different valued touchpoints during the customer journey that the companies can target.

7.2 Customer journey interpretations

Different touchpoints with different hospitality departments at the accommodation establishment can be used to ease the leisure solo traveller’s concerns throughout their journey. The results of the interpretations are produced by combining the data collected from the survey and the framework of Table 2.

7.2.1 Pre-stay interpretations

Back Office

When it comes to the touchpoints with the BO, different marketing mix could be used to target the concerns for safety and loneliness of solo travellers. For instance, acknowledging that social media and Google are the most commonly used information channels for leisure solo traveller, accommodation service providers can bring out messages regarding safety issues to their customers more effectively by prioritizing social media and Google as their marketing channels. Additionally, some examples of messages to ease the concerns for loneliness can be other solo traveller's testimonials showing that even though they are travelling by themselves, yet they are not alone.

As for monetary concerns, they can be reduced by highlighting the hospitality features that the leisure solo travellers valued while choosing the accommodation, such as location, price, reviews and activities to do. The continuation of messages highlighting the valued featured may ease the monetary concerns by contradicting it with the feeling of money for quality. Moreover, product-bundling would also be an excellent choice for the accommodation service providers as not only does it take advantage of the willingness to spend more than intended to help the companies to upsell, but it also creates the feeling of money for value for leisure solo travellers having the room rate as a discounted price.

Rooms Department

Regarding the touchpoints with the RD, easing the feeling of loneliness can be done by alternating the room allocations according to the leisure solo traveller's wishes. For example, according to this research results, a large majority of leisure solo travellers wish to have a quiet room on the high floor. Allocating solo traveller's room closer together to their liking might also increase the possibility for them to make friends with other solo travellers. However, not all accommodation establishments are skyscrapers, whenever the possibility for high floor room is not possible in case of villas or resorts, a quiet yet central room would be the ideal option.

Concerning the monetary issues, providing leisure solo travellers activities to do can be a solution. Local experience seems to interest leisure solo travellers the most. Therefore, creating such service and tour to bundle with the room rate might be an ideal solution. Besides that, there are also mixed interest shown by leisure solo travellers for activities like spa, photo tour, walking and cycling tour, which can also pose as potential upselling and crossing opportunities accommodation service providers.

Regarding the concerns for safety for the pre-stay, getting the customers safely to the accommodation of choice can help to ease that. Arriving at the new destination or country can be challenging, therefore, assistant with public transportation or planned private transportation arrangement may be useful.

7.2.2 Stay interpretations

Back Office

The result for the stay stage of the BO's touchpoint is straight forward. Creating, having and promoting social events is considered a good approach and well-appreciated by leisure solo travellers. Social events, activities with possibilities for solo travellers to meet up and share their personal experience, can be a perfect approach to target most of the leisure solo traveller's concerns. Moreover, it is also a chance to gather the customer's feedbacks while they directly during their stay.

Rooms Departments

RD is the department that has the most potential touchpoints with the customer during their stay, which represents the whole company and contributes the most to the customer journey. Having the most frequent interactions with the leisure solo travellers, RD also has the most possibility to ease their concerns.

Starting with the fear of loneliness, with no extra cost, the staffs might be the most effective brand-owned touchpoint, and asset that a company possesses. The result shows that leisure solo travellers are eager to communicate with the staffs and they are also willing to share their stories. Therefore, spending time listening to the customers and their stories would be a way to know them and ease their feeling of loneliness. Moreover, leisure solo travellers also like being cared for and having a friend to talk to during their travel, therefore, an employee can be assigned to take of a client to build a personal friendly relationship with him or her. Not only can the leisure solo traveller experience the ultimate self-indulgent experience, but he or she can also have a friend to talk to about it. Additionally, guest recognition is also a valued aspect, which demonstrated the company's care for their customer as well.

Continuing with the monetary concerns, gift-giving is considered an act of appreciation, which leisure solo travellers seemed to enjoy receiving. Besides the good service, accommodation service providers can take the extra step to make the leisure single traveller's journey seem more worth-it by preparing for them some personal gifts or even notes. Not costing much, it is the thought that counts.

Moving onto the safety concerns, which is the most worrisome aspect for leisure solo travellers, RD including the security department plays an important role in guaranteeing the safety and well-being of all customers. Leisure solo travellers feel safer having their room number handled discreetly, therefore, saying the leisure solo traveller's room number out loud in the lobby should be avoided. Additionally, a safe word or a panic button to communicate in case of emergency would be a great idea to assure the leisure solo traveller's safety. Although installing a system for a single-purpose use might be costly, accommodation service providers can also take it into consideration not only for leisure solo travellers but also for other customers as well. Nonetheless, if the panic button is an extreme measure and costly to implement, a safe word does not cost any penny yet good to have when needed and should be adapted.

Food and Beverage Department

The focus of the customer journey touchpoints with the F&B department is solely during the leisure solo traveller's stay at the establishment due to its lack of contacts with the customer before and after their stay. However, the leisure solo traveller's experience dining during their stay also contributes significantly on their overall customer journey experience with the accommodation provider. Therefore, it should not be overlooked.

Concerning the F&B touchpoints with the fear of loneliness, eating alone dose not seem to be a problem for leisure single travellers even though it is one of the reasons stopping other travellers to take the trip alone. Having a beautiful table might help leisure solo travellers to feel more comfortable dining at the restaurant or bar of the accommodation establishment. According to the study results, most leisure solo travellers enjoy having small size tables either by the window or by the bar. Even though they like participating in social events, they do not like dining in a joint table. Reserving desirable tables for leisure solo travellers also indicates the company's care for their customers, which might aid the loneliness.

With regards to the F&B monetary touchpoints, the breakfast type preference is what asked of the leisure solo travellers. The question of breakfast preference is asked because breakfast is the most commonly seen food and drink related offer in many accommodation establishments, regardless of their size or type. Continental buffet and in-room dining are respectively the two most popular choice of breakfast for leisure solo travellers. Being not a new concept, still, bundling bed and breakfast is practice which might ease the monetary concerns.

As for the safety touchpoints of the F&B department, it involves the safety of the leisure solo traveller's private dietary and allergy restrictions information. Such information can directly influence one's health and even life, therefore, must be kept as securely as possible. Moreover, even though leisure solo travellers like to be recognised during their stay, most of them like the freedom of ordering their own food when coming back to the restaurant, not being offered either the same or different food from their last restaurant visit. Besides those, another large portion of leisure solo travellers enjoy being offered different food for their next visit. Therefore, even though remembering the customer and their dietary is important, asking the customer how they like to order would be the safest option because it varies depending on the individual's preference.

7.2.3 Post-stay interpretations

Back Office

Sending future offers is considered an ideal way for companies to keep in touch with the customers with the hope of bringing them from the post-stay stage back to the pre-stay stage of the customer journey. However, it can be seen that even though the majority of the leisure solo travellers are interested in receiving future offers, not all of them are. Therefore, it would be safer to clarify this with the traveller individually. Moreover, personal information data protection is also an important aspect during the post-stay of the customer journey.

Rooms Departments

Regarding the RD’s post-stay touchpoints, almost all leisure solo travellers are willing to give the accommodation service providers feedback on their stay. Such information is extremely beneficial for companies because it allows them to improve their services to the preference of their customers. Furthermore, leisure solo traveller’s customer feedback is also customer-owned touchpoints that can potentially become independent touchpoints to other customers at their pre-stay stage as well. Therefore, it would be a great loss for companies not to ask for their customer’s feedbacks and testimonials. Additionally, recognizing return customers is also a point valued by leisure solo travellers.

8 Summary of the results

8.1 Summary of the theoretical study results

The theoretical part of this study provided a deeper understanding of the solo traveller, especially leisure solo travellers by giving an overview definition of solo travellers and its market segment including its components, rising trend and current market situation, which answered the first research question of "Why solo traveller, especially leisure solo traveller, is an important customer segment for accommodation industry?". And, the answer was consisted of several reasons. Firstly, it was simply because of the fact that the market of solo travellers was a multi-million dollars and still growing industry (Schroederder 2018 & Brown 2019). Secondly, after COVID-19, the market segment of leisure solo travellers was predicted to be one of the first one to recover (French 2020). The third reason was because of the shifting in ways of livings and the generations of the market, which made it crucial to put more focus on this particular market segment.

Additionally, the theoretical part moved onto the following aim of the study, which was to help accommodation service providers to improve the customer journey for leisure single travellers. Consequently, the exploration deepened into the leisure solo traveller's psychology exploring their motivations and concerns. Thus, it explored the customer journey in accommodation industry, its concept, components and touchpoints. Both of which theory was targeted to find the answer for the second research question "How can the accommodation service providers better the customer journey to the preference leisure solo travellers?". The answer for that question lied upon improving the touchpoints in the customer journey of leisure solo travellers at the accommodation establishment. As the result, combining the customer journey in the accommodation industry, the delimited most common operation departments of the hospitality and the leisure solo traveller's concerns, the author proposed a hypothesis model of different touchpoints that accommodation service providers could target during the customer journey of leisure solo travellers with the purpose of easing their concerns. The hypothesis then applied in the empirical study to find out the answer for the last research question.

8.2 Summary of the empirical study results

The empirical part of this study continued searching for the ways for accommodation service providers to better the customer journey for leisure solo travellers in more details. Applying the proposed solution theory and quantitative research method, the author distributed an online structured questionnaire to potential leisure solo travellers through social media.

There were 89 responses in total, which consisted of 61 target research samples. The analysis of the questionnaire results brought upon the answer for the last research question, which was “What can the accommodation service providers do to better the customer journey to the preference leisure solo travellers?”. The answer for such question consisted of actions, products and services that each departments of the accommodation industry could provide during the leisure solo traveller’s customer journey.

Firstly, before they arrived at the accommodation establishment, marketing mix with contents highlighting safety, peer customer’s testimonials, different accommodation features and activities could be targeted at leisure solo travellers. Not only could those help easing the leisure solo travellers concerns but they could also encourage those that had not travelled alone before to try as they share relatively similar concerns. Moreover, the accommodation company could assign to leisure solo travellers their preferred room locations and provide them with interesting activities. Arrival assistance like direction with public transportations or pick-up service was also proved well appreciated by leisure solo travellers.

Secondly, during their stay, the accommodation service providers could throw social events to encourage leisure solo travellers to make friends during their stay. The company could also maintain attentive interactions with leisure solo travellers as they responded positively to communications with the staffs. Guest recognition and personal notes or gifts were also valued highly by leisure solo travellers. Hence, those could be the ideal personal touches that accommodation service providers should add to their daily operations. Moreover, companies may also have their safety measures strengthened and appeared more visible to the customers. As for the interactions at the restaurants and bars, reserving a good table, asking for the order preference and dietary were the answers.

Thirdly, after their stay, accommodation service providers may keep in touch with the leisure solo travellers by sending them future travel offers, if they were allowed to. Hence, the company may also ask for the customer feedbacks and testimonials because most customers were willing to give them. Overall, communication is the key. Asking the customers is the safest and most accurate way for companies to evaluate and improve their products and services.

9 Conclusion

To conclude, even though solo travelling for leisure purposes is not a new concept, it has become more popular these recent years, especially after Covid-19. Therefore, accommodation service providers should put more focus on this customer segment and its growing potentials. Moreover, the research has developed a framework which aimed to allow accommodation providing businesses to improve the customer journey for their customer segments by understanding their concerns and targeting it using the touchpoints. In this study, it was used to improve the customer journey for leisure solo travellers in accommodation industry.

The results show that there were many aspects of the leisure solo traveller's customer journey that accommodation businesses could improve and take advantage of. Despite of their many concerns, leisure solo travellers were eager to explore extra products and services had the right ones were offered to them. Generally, quiet rooms, quiet tables yet interactive communications and local or social activities were what leisure solo travellers after. Moreover, a touch of personalisation and extra sense of security were also well-appreciated.

The research outcomes have achieved the aims of thesis, which were to understand solo travellers as a market segment and find opportunities for the accommodation industry to leisure solo travellers' customer journey. Moreover, the outcomes also answered all research questions and provided particular measures that accommodation businesses could take to improve the customer journey for leisure solo travellers.

As for recommendations for future study, the author suggests that this research could be repeat but with a larger and more diverse demographic group of leisure solo travellers to further strengthen its findings because of the current limited sample. Additionally, future studies can also apply the framework presented in this thesis to improve the customer journey for other customer segments of the accommodation industry as well. For instance, improving the customer journey for pregnant women, disabled guests or even business or family travellers can be done by adapting the concerns to match the particular customer segment, the departments to match a specific establishment.

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Appendix 1. Cover page

Dear solo travellers,

I am Dao Hoang, a final-year student at LAB University of Applied Sciences in Finland. I am conducting a survey for solo travellers, especially for those for leisure purposes for my graduation bachelor's thesis. The purpose of my research is to find out opportunities for accommodation service providers to improve their customer journey for leisure solo travellers.

Your response to this survey not only could help accommodation service providers better their service to your needs and wishes but it also could help to improve your overall solo travel experience as well. The result of this thesis will be published in Theseus (https://www.theseus.fi) in December 2020.

The survey is distributed primarily on Social Media platforms like Facebook, Youtube and Instagram. All responses will be processed anonymously and confidentially. As no personal identifiable information will be collected, your response cannot be traced back to you in any way.

The survey only takes about 10 minutes to complete and it is open until the end of October 31st, 2020. If you have any question regarding the research, the questionnaire or the result of the questionnaire, do not hesitate to contact me at my email. I am more than happy to assist you in any way possible.

Thank you for your participation!

Truly yours,

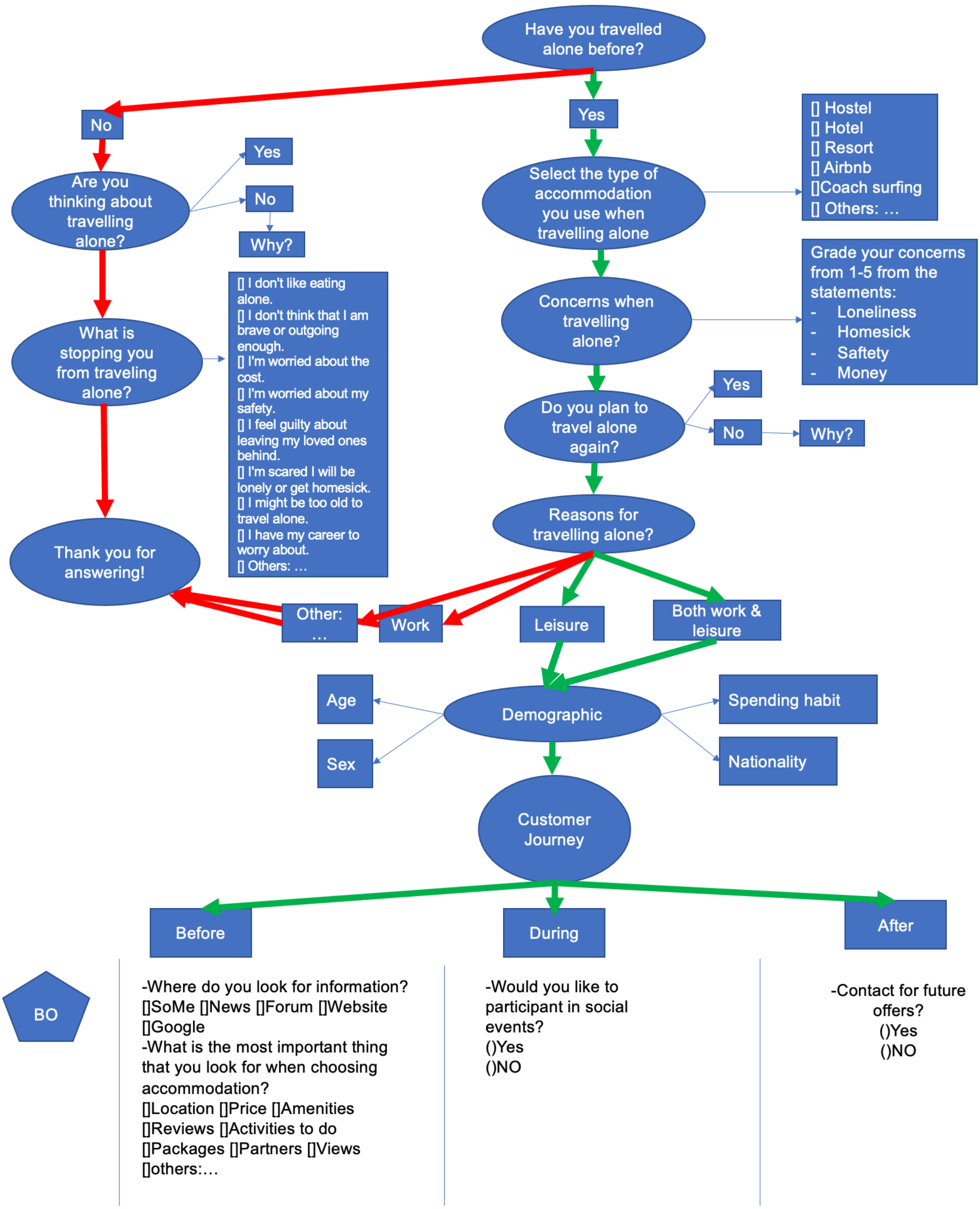
Dao Hoang

Student, HOMA17

Tourism and Hospitality Management

LAB University of Applied Sciences

Appendix 2. Questionnaire structure



RD

Before

-Room allocation reference
[]high floor []near the elevator []away from the elevator []cornor []central []quiet []other
-Assistant to get to the establishment
[]pickup service []directions with public transportation
[]parking assistant
[]others
-Choose the services that you are interested in
[]spa: spa packages, spa services
[]photo tour: traveling to take photos with a photographer to capture the memory of the trip
[]walking tour: introductive walk around the city and historical sites
[]cycling tour: introductive and well-being tour around the city
[]local tour: traveling and experience life as a local

During

-Receptionist and room attendant sex reference
()same sex ()different sex ()not matter
-Rate your reference level of interaction from 1-5
+ I feel comfortable talking to to the staff
+ I feel comfortable being talked to by the staff
+ I feel comfortable sharing my story
+ I feel comfortable having a "buddy" (a friend) to talk to at the establishment
+ I feel like I am being cared for
+ I like receiving a personal note
+ I like receiving gifts
+ I like to be recognized
+ I feel safer having my room number in a discreet manner
+ I feel safer if there this a safe word to communicate signalling my state of danger or emergency.
-Do you want to have a panic button in your room in case of emergency situation? ()Yes ()No ()I don't know
-- Do you plan to invite guests over?
()Yes ()No ()Maybe

After

-Are you comfortable with giving feedbacks?
()Yes ()NO
- Would you like to be recognized in your next visit?
()Yes ()NO

F&B

Before

-Do you like reserving your table before?
()Yes ()No

During

-Are you comfortable eating alone?
()Yes ()No ()I don't know
-Table location reference
[]by the bar
[]by the window
[]by the door
[]middle
[]others: what?...
-Table type preference
()for 1-2
()for 3-4
()community table >4
-Breakfast reference
[]continential buffet
[]a la carte
[]in-room dining
[]others: what?...

After

-Choose the most correct statement to you
()I like being offered the same food in my next visit
()I like being offered different food in my next visit
()I do not like being offered, I like choosing food on my own
()None of the above

Do you have any reccommendation?

Thank you for your answer!