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Article

User Experience Dimensions in Digital Peer-to-Peer Platforms: A Grounded Theory Study of Airbnb Online Experiences

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Abstract: The current context underscores the growing importance of online formats, prompting managers to focus on creating positive online experiences. This qualitative study examines seven types of online Airbnb experiences using a grounded theory approach and data triangulation. Our findings extend the six-dimensional brand experience scale, including sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual, as well as the additions of interactive and social dimensions, by identifying three new dimensions in Airbnb's online experiences: mystical, spatio-temporal, and physical. The results suggest that, while these dimensions are present across different types of positive online Airbnb experiences, there are variations depending on the type of experience. Certain experiences, such as entertainment-focused ones, may ensure higher satisfaction and engagement by incorporating a broader range of these dimensions.

Keywords: Airbnb; online experiences; Airbnb experiences; grounded theory; brand experience; brand dimensions



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1. Introduction

Airbnb is a multifaceted platform that exemplifies the transformative potential of the sharing economy, which has generated growing academic interest in recent years (Yannopoulou et al., 2013). As a leading model within this paradigm (Fagerstrøm et al., 2017), it has significantly reshaped the tourism and hospitality industries (Zhu et al., 2017). In addition to accommodations, Airbnb has expanded its offerings through “Experiences”—immersive activities that include gastronomy, wellness, cultural heritage, and entertainment (Kokalitcheva, 2016).

While much of the research on the sharing economy has centered on legal and economic implications, relatively fewer studies have investigated the user experience and value co-creation processes within platforms like Airbnb (Johnson & Neuhofer, 2017). Although the concept of brand experience has been widely explored in physical and offline tourism contexts, existing research tends to overlook the multisensory, symbolic, and embodied dimensions that characterize online, co-created experiences.

Moreover, most digital tourism studies have prioritized engagement metrics or platform functionality, rather than the experiential richness conveyed through user-generated narratives. This study addresses these gaps by focusing on the social practices and experiential elements that shape positively perceived online Airbnb experiences. The proliferation of digital offerings—especially after the COVID-19 pandemic—has amplified the demand for authentic, individualized experiences that transcend physical boundaries (Molz, 2013;

Jiang et al., 2017; Mody et al., 2019). Online services such as Airbnb have shown potential to produce positive socio-mental outcomes (Wong et al., 2023), generating satisfaction through unique experiences including virtual goat sanctuary tours or historical explorations of cities like Prague (Lalicic & Weismayer, 2017; Guttentag et al., 2018; Purohit et al., 2023).

Airbnb's online review system plays a central role in facilitating feedback and storytelling, enabling users to articulate their experiences in meaningful ways. These narratives form the empirical basis of our study and align with prior research that underscores the role of users as co-creators of experiential value (Hatchuel, 2005; Kozinets, 2015). Furthermore, the increasing influence of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in experience design and delivery opens new paths for research on digital brand engagement (Binkhorst & Den Dekker, 2009). This study also foregrounds the co-creative nature of online experiences, emphasizing the collaborative construction of meaning between hosts and participants within digital environments.

To contextualize the nature of these online experiences, this study adopts Pine and Gilmore's (1998) typology of experience realms, which categorizes experiences according to the level of user participation (active vs. passive) and the type of connection (absorption vs. immersion). This framework outlines four distinct realms—entertainment, educational, esthetic, and escapist—each of which offers a unique lens for analyzing how users engage with digital content. Applying this model allows us to classify Airbnb's online experiences based on their experiential intent and delivery format.

Building upon this typology, the study examines the specific experiential dimensions perceived by users during these online interactions. We rely on Brakus et al.'s (2009) four-dimensional model—sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral—which conceptualizes brand experience as a multidimensional construct. This framework is expanded through the incorporation of the social and interactive dimensions proposed by Jimenez-Barreto et al. (2019), which are particularly salient in digital contexts. Moreover, our grounded theory analysis identifies three emergent dimensions—mystical, spatio-temporal, and physical—that may be especially relevant in virtual environments. Together, these dimensions offer a more comprehensive understanding of how value and meaning are constructed in Airbnb's online experiences.

This research builds upon Johnson and Neuhofer's (2017) qualitative work, which used content analysis of Airbnb reviews to explore social practices in value co-creation. In light of the growing scholarly interest in memorable tourism experiences (Sthapit & Jimenez-Barreto, 2018; Sthapit et al., 2022; Li & Wang, 2023), this study contributes by identifying the core elements of positive experiences in platform-mediated contexts, particularly in relation to online service innovation and user engagement.

In today's increasingly digitalized marketplace, delivering compelling online experiences has become a strategic imperative. These experiences not only enhance user satisfaction and loyalty but may also stimulate repeated engagement—both virtual and in person (Zhu et al., 2024). Despite their growing relevance, there remains a scarcity of empirical studies that investigate the specific dimensions involved in digitally mediated experiences. Our study seeks to address this gap by examining how experiential value is co-constructed through Airbnb's online platform and how different types of experiences influence this process.

In this way, this study offers an original theoretical contribution by expanding the conceptual framework of brand experience within the context of online experiences. It not only examines how classical and digital-specific dimensions operate in Airbnb's online interactions, but also introduces three new experiential dimensions—mystical, spatio-temporal, and physical—that emerge from user-generated narratives. This multidimensional expansion enables a more holistic understanding of experience design and symbolic engagement

in virtual environments. These insights can inform the design of emotionally resonant, multi-dimensional online offerings, helping platforms like Airbnb create more meaningful and engaging user journeys.

To guide this inquiry, the study poses the following research questions:

RQ1: Are the sensory, affective, behavioral, intellectual, social, and interactive dimensions present in participants' perceptions when they engage with an experience via the official online Airbnb platform?

RQ2: Do online Airbnb experiences consist of more dimensions than just the sensory, affective, behavioral, intellectual, social, and interactive dimensions?

RQ3: Are there differences in the composition of participants' perceptions depending on the type of experience?

By addressing these questions, this study contributes to the literature on the sharing economy and brand experience by uncovering the experiential and symbolic layers that shape online consumption. It also provides practical insights for platform managers seeking to create emotionally resonant and user-centered digital experiences.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. The Realms of Online Experience

According to [Pine and Gilmore \(1998\)](#), experiences can be categorized into four realms, defined across two key dimensions. The first dimension refers to customer participation, which can be either passive or active. In passive participation, customers do not influence the performance or event. For instance, symphony-goers experience the event as observers or listeners, without directly affecting the outcome. On the opposite end is active participation, where customers play a significant role in shaping the event or experience.

The second dimension describes the connection, or environmental relationship, that joins customers with the event or performance. At one end of the connection spectrum lies absorption, where customers observe or take in the experience from the outside. At the other end lies immersion, where customers are fully engaged and integrated into the experience.

These two dimensions—participation and connection—help categorize experiences into four broad types. Entertainment experiences, such as watching television, typically involve passive participation and are characterized by absorption rather than immersion. Educational experiences, on the other hand, involve more active participation, but customers remain somewhat outside the action (e.g., attending a class). Escapist experiences involve both active participation and immersion, such as descending the Grand Canyon, where customers are fully engaged in the activity. Finally, esthetic experiences are those where customers are immersed in an activity but have little or no influence on it, such as visiting an art gallery.

While [Pine and Gilmore's \(1998\)](#) examples focus on physical experiences, Airbnb's online experiences are primarily based on absorption ([Neuhofer et al., 2014](#)). These experiences were categorized as either entertainment or educational (Figure 1), as Airbnb has opted to offer accessible, absorption-based online experiences that can be enjoyed by anyone with a device and an internet connection ([Welthagen, 2025](#)).

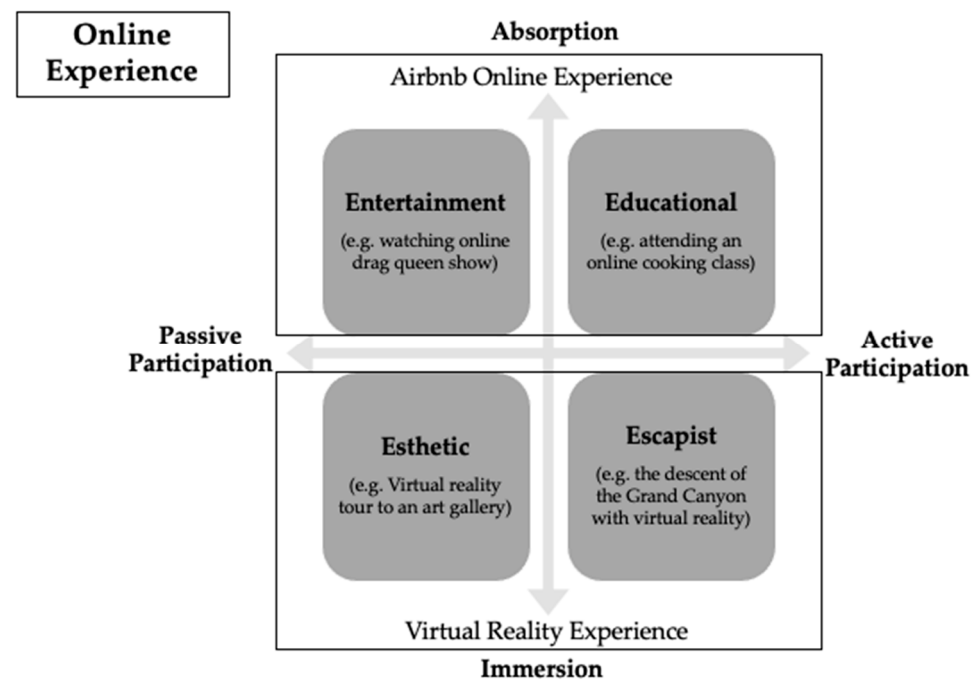


Figure 1. The four realms of an online experience. Source: Compiled by the authors.

2.2. Dimensions of Online Experience

The concept of brand experience has evolved to emphasize the brand as a provider of experiences rather than just an identifier (Brakus et al., 2009). This shift highlights the importance of brand-consumer interactions, particularly in tourism, where co-created experiences are crucial (Fan et al., 2020). Building on the foundational work by Brakus et al. (2009), the concept of brand experience is characterized by four core dimensions: sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral. These dimensions encompass sensory stimuli, emotional responses, physical actions, and cognitive engagement.

The sensory dimension refers to the sensations triggered by brand-related stimuli perceived through the senses, such as images, sounds, or other sensory cues. In online experiences, these stimuli are often visual and auditory, and their role is to elicit immediate perceptual reactions. The sensory experience is grounded in the embodied cognition perspective, which emphasizes that bodily states underlie experience. Neurophysiological signals such as sight and sound are processed by the brain and translated into perceptual experiences (Bleier et al., 2019; Krishna & Schwarz, 2014; Zha et al., 2022; Zha et al., 2020; Barrett & Russell, 2015; Williams & Poehlman, 2017). On online platforms like Airbnb, visual dominance is common, as users frequently describe the appeal of visual content using terms like “see”, “view”, or “watch”.

The affective dimension encompasses the emotional responses generated during the interaction with the brand. These include feelings such as joy, warmth, excitement, or empathy, which contribute to the formation of positive brand attitudes. Affective brand experiences are especially relevant in contexts that seek to evoke emotional engagement, and research has demonstrated that these emotions can influence behavioral intentions such as loyalty or word-of-mouth recommendations (Zanger et al., 2022). In the context of online experiences, emotional authenticity and atmosphere contribute significantly to user satisfaction.

The intellectual dimension involves mental engagement through curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking. Online experiences that stimulate users cognitively tend to offer educational value, intellectual stimulation, or problem-solving opportunities. Brakus et al. (2009) describe this dimension as central to thought-provoking content, and it aligns with

Jimenez-Barreto et al. (2019), who emphasize the cognitive nature of online destination brand experiences.

The behavioral dimension, as conceptualized by Schmitt (1999), reflects users' actions influenced by the brand experience, including changes in behavior, adoption of new habits, or motivation to act. This may include the decision to book a service, revisit a website, or physically travel to a destination after an online experience. Online environments enable these actions through interactivity, navigation, and follow-up behaviors triggered by engagement with the content (Schmitt, 2000).

This framework has been applied to various industries, including tourism, to assess online customer experiences (Bleier et al., 2019; Yoon & Youn, 2016). However, most studies have focused on offline settings (Brakus et al., 2009; Iglesias et al., 2011), with less attention given to online (Mollen & Wilson, 2010). While these four dimensions form the core of most brand experience models, the recent literature suggests that the online context introduces new experiential dimensions. Jimenez-Barreto et al. (2019) extended the scale identifying two additional dimensions as central to understand the online destination brand (ODB) incorporating social and interactive dimensions, recognizing the role of user-shared experiences on online platforms (Volo, 2010).

The social dimension stems from the psychological state of social presence during online interaction (Bleier et al., 2019; Blascovich et al., 2002; Gefen & Straub, 2003). In digital platforms, this is manifested when users perceive human warmth, sociability, or emotional closeness through mediated environments. Jimenez-Barreto et al. (2019) found this dimension to be particularly salient in official destination platforms such as Facebook or Instagram, where users can view, comment, and engage with other users' content. This creates a sense of community and peer-to-peer validation, enhancing the experiential richness of the brand.

The interactive dimension emphasizes the degree of bidirectional engagement between users and the platform. It involves user-to-system, user-to-user, and user-to-content interactions (Liu & Shrum, 2002). This was especially visible in Jimenez-Barreto et al.'s (2019) findings where users highlighted their ability to ask questions, manipulate content, and participate in co-creation (e.g., uploading pictures, interacting during livestreams). The level of perceived interactivity significantly affects the user's experience quality and their evaluation of the destination's online presence (Liu & Shrum, 2002; Ha & James, 1998).

In light of the mediated and symbolic nature of online experiences, it should be considered the potential emergence of additional dimensions beyond those recognized in previous frameworks. This consideration aligns with recent calls in the literature to expand the dimensionality of online destination brand experiences in light of the symbolic, immersive, and co-constructed nature of digital environments, where tourists' interactions with multimedia content may evoke novel experiential responses not captured by traditional models (Liu & Shrum, 2002). There are three exploratory dimensions—mystical, spatio-temporal, and physical—which, while not extensively theorized in the literature to date, have conceptual relevance given the immersive qualities of virtual experiences.

The mystical dimension refers to experiences imbued with spiritual, esoteric, or symbolic meaning, often arising from the unique thematic content offered by specific hosts (e.g., tarot readings, ritualistic elements). These experiences evoke a sense of transcendence or altered consciousness, distinct from general affective reactions. Rather than being tied to formal religiosity, this dimension aligns with symbolic interactionism and emotional authenticity in digital contexts (Davis, 2019; Osler, 2024). Online, users engage with spiritual symbols and rituals in performative ways, often creating meaning through shared metaphysical narratives (Miller, 2022; Kirby, 2014). The mystical dimension thus reflects a broader, emotionally charged form of engagement rooted in affective and symbolic participation, expanding our understanding of experiential branding in spiritualized and ritualistic environments.

The spatio-temporal dimension refers to users' perception of being mentally and emotionally transported to another place and time during the digital experience. This dimension captures how symbolic cues—such as cultural references, historical narratives, or environmental elements—create a sense of temporal and geographical displacement, allowing participants to escape their immediate reality. This aligns with research on escapism, presence, and narrative coherence in virtual tourism (Chekembayeva & Garaus, 2024; Shamim et al., 2024; Mura et al., 2017), which demonstrate that immersive meaning can emerge from symbolic rather than realistic representations.

Finally, the physical dimension concerns the user's perception of bodily engagement within the experience, even in the absence of actual physical interaction. This includes mimicking guided actions (e.g., cooking, dancing), sensations of movement, or emotional and physiological responses like relaxation or fatigue. This dimension aligns with research on cross-sensory immersion and embodied responses in virtual contexts (Mou et al., 2024; Nam et al., 2023) which underscore how affective and symbolic cues can induce physical sensations in users—supporting the broader move toward understanding virtual authenticity as relational, embodied, and co-constructed (Gao et al., 2025; Bitner, 1992; Bustamante & Rubio, 2017; Kuijt-Evers et al., 2004).

Together, these nine dimensions—four from Brakus et al. (2009), two from Jimenez-Barreto et al. (2019), and three proposed by the present study—offer a comprehensive framework for analyzing the experiential richness of online platforms such as Airbnb Experiences. In this context, it is important to acknowledge the mechanisms that sustain and amplify these online experiential dimensions. Among them, User-Generated Brands (UGBs) and Online Brand Communities (OBCs) play a pivotal role in co-creating and disseminating digital experiences. UGBs refer to the strategic use of brand-related content generated by users, who act not only as consumers but also as producers and communicators of brand meaning (Burmam & Arnhold, 2008; Burmam, 2010; Arnhold, 2010). This participatory dynamic fosters authenticity and strengthens experiential elements such as social presence, interactivity, and symbolic immersion. Similarly, OBCs offer virtual spaces where users connect, share, and validate their experiences through continuous interaction, contributing to stronger emotional bonds and reinforcing brand loyalty (Martínez-López et al., 2016; Näsi et al., 2011; Whitty & Quigley, 2008; Ewing et al., 2013). In the case of Airbnb, these structures allow both hosts and guests to actively participate in the co-creation of meaning, reinforcing the emergence and richness of the experiential dimensions.

2.3. Virtual Authenticity in Digital Tourism

Recent literature on virtual tourism underscores the evolving nature of authenticity in immersive environments. Rather than being rooted solely in historical accuracy or physical realism, authenticity is increasingly understood as experiential, affective, and context-dependent. Adopting a postmodernist lens, Gao et al. (2022) argue that perceptions of authenticity in virtual reality are shaped by symbolic interpretation and user expectations, rather than by objective fidelity. Similarly, Mou et al. (2024) highlight the role of cross-sensory compensation and social interaction in enhancing immersive experiences, showing that users perceive virtual content as more authentic when multisensory cues and interpersonal engagement are present. Kim et al. (2022), using the case of *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild*, demonstrate how narrative coherence, interactivity, and spatial exploration contribute to perceived authenticity in open-world virtual environments. Finally, Nam et al. (2023) show that satisfaction with virtual heritage experiences depends not only on content realism but also on emotional resonance and the perceived authenticity of activities and objects, suggesting that virtual authenticity is co-produced through engagement and meaning-making.

More broadly, recent scholarship has significantly expanded the understanding of authenticity in digital and virtual environments, offering valuable insights that further inform the theoretical framing of this study. [Gao et al. \(2025\)](#) propose a multidimensional scale of virtual authenticity specific to tourism contexts, highlighting that users perceive digital experiences as authentic when they evoke emotional resonance, narrative coherence, and interpersonal connection, rather than relying solely on factual or physical realism. This aligns with our findings, particularly regarding the mystical and spatio-temporal dimensions, where affective credibility and symbolic immersion played central roles. Similarly, [Fang et al. \(2025\)](#) demonstrate that technical imperfections, such as compression artifacts in AI-generated content, can enhance perceived authenticity, suggesting that authenticity may arise from esthetic realism and sensory familiarity, rather than from flawless reproduction.

From a branding perspective, [Ramadania et al. \(2025\)](#) emphasize the role of value resonance—the emotional alignment between users and destinations—as a driver of intention, reinforcing the notion that digital experiences can reflect cultural identity and symbolic meaning, even in the absence of physical co-presence. Additionally, [Nnindini et al. \(2024\)](#) show how social media interactivity and digital co-creation foster relational trust and emotional bonding in virtual contexts—an insight that resonates with our emphasis on the social and interactive dimensions of online experiences. Together, these studies underscore that virtual authenticity is co-constructed, emotionally mediated, and contextually shaped. These perspectives support the conceptual relevance of the mystical, spatio-temporal, and physical dimensions, which together suggest that virtual authenticity in online experiences could not be derived from realism alone, but from symbolic resonance, emotional depth, and embodied engagement.

3. Materials and Methods

To address the research questions, this study employs a Grounded Theory approach to uncover the underlying experiential dimensions that characterize highly rated online Airbnb experiences. Grounded Theory is especially suitable in this case, as it allows theoretical constructs to emerge inductively from narrative data in contexts where prior models may be incomplete or insufficiently adapted to digital realities ([Charmaz, 2014](#); [Corbin & Strauss, 2015](#)). This method is particularly useful when studying complex, co-constructed phenomena such as online consumer experiences, as it facilitates the identification of latent patterns and conceptual categories through constant comparison and iterative coding ([Birks & Mills, 2015](#)). Furthermore, Grounded Theory is increasingly applied in digital tourism and platform-based research, as it enables researchers to remain close to user narratives while developing context-specific insights ([Goulding, 2002](#); [Seyfi & Hall, 2022](#)).

The study focuses on Airbnb experience listings from October 2020. From each of the seven experience categories (animal lover, artistic, esoteric, touristic-cultural, entertainment, wellness, and gastronomic), the experience with the highest number of reviews—indicating the greatest user demand—was selected. Moreover, these top-reviewed experiences were also highly rated, each receiving an average score above 4.9 out of 5. This purposive sampling strategy was adopted to ensure access to rich, detailed narratives that reflect strong user engagement and perceived value. Previous studies (e.g., [Lozano-Blasco et al., 2021](#); [Lozano-Blasco et al., 2023](#)) have demonstrated that content with higher levels of interaction—measured through likes, views, or reviews—tends to reflect greater emotional resonance and social impact. In this way, comments are selected on the basis of key performance indicators, metrics that make it possible to analyze the effectiveness and success of digital platforms ([Rakshit et al., 2025](#)). As a result, we selected the first 50 comments for each of the seven experiences, all corresponding to April 2020, and manually extracted them. In total, 350 comments were analyzed in depth.

This dataset provided sufficient conceptual depth to meet the expectations of qualitative inquiry, particularly in terms of thematic recurrence and analytical richness. In qualitative research, and especially within the Grounded Theory tradition, the goal is not to reach statistical generalizability but to achieve theoretical saturation, a point where additional data no longer contribute new conceptual insights. As Glaser and Strauss (1967) originally emphasized, Grounded Theory is aimed at building theory grounded in the data, and saturation is reached when categories are well developed in terms of their properties and dimensions. More recently, Aldiabat and Navenec (2018) have reinforced that saturation is not a numerical benchmark but a conceptual milestone. They highlight that saturation depends on the richness of the data, repetition of patterns, and the scope of the research question—conditions frequently found in user-generated digital content. Similarly, Guest et al. (2006) showed that thematic saturation can often occur within the first 12 interviews, while Hennink et al. (2017) differentiate between code saturation and meaning saturation, both of which may be reached with small samples depending on the context. In this study, narrative consistency and the recurrence of thematic structures across the 350 user reviews—specifically, 50 comments selected from each of the seven categories of online Airbnb experiences—suggest that theoretical saturation was achieved, and further data collection would likely have produced redundant conceptual insights.

To ensure analytical rigor and enhance the credibility of the coding process, we implemented a triangulated, team-based approach during the analysis phase. Two members of the research team and two external colleagues independently coded a 15% stratified sample of the dataset. This subset included experiences from all seven categories to ensure representativeness. Initial codes were derived inductively and compared across coders. Divergences were discussed in depth through iterative, reflexive meetings until full consensus was achieved. This dialogical method of intercoder validation, though not quantified statistically, follows best practices in grounded theory for ensuring conceptual clarity and reliability (Barbour, 2001; O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). Such collaborative validation provides a robust alternative to statistical metrics when the goal is conceptual discovery rather than measurement. The codebook was then refined based on these discussions before being applied to the full dataset (please see Table 1).

Table 1. Experience selection from Airbnb.

Experiences	Name of the Experience	Type of Experience
Experience 1	Remote Rescue Goats (https://www.airbnb.es/experiences/1655931 , accessed on 1 April 2020)	Animal lovers
Experience 2	Creative drawing with an illustrator—(now it's called Drawing session— https://www.airbnb.mx/experiences/1655210?source=p2 , accessed on 1 April 2020)	Artistic
Experience 3	Turkish coffee and divination (now it's a physical experience called Turkish coffee and good fortune— https://www.airbnb.es/experiences/500361 , accessed on 1 April 2020)	Esoteric
Experience 4	Follow a plague doctor through Prague (https://www.airbnb.es/experiences/1658926 , accessed on 1 April 2020)	Touristic-cultural
Experience 5	Sangria and secrets with drag queens (now it is not available on airbnb and they manage it independently and it is a physical experience— https://dragtaste.com/ , accessed on 1 April 2020)	Entertainment
Experience 6	Meditation with a Buddhist monk (https://www.airbnb.es/experiences/1654801 , accessed on 1 April 2020)	Wellness
Experience 7	The best coffee experience in the world (https://www.airbnb.es/experiences/1655017 , accessed on 1 April 2020)	Gastronomic

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Among our seven types of experiences, Experience 1 corresponds to the animal lover category. The first experience with multiple reviews during the selected dates for this category is Remote Rescue Goats, a virtual visit to a sanctuary in the Catskills Mountains of New York, where participants can interact closely with goats. In contrast, the next experience falls under the artistic category, with the highly acclaimed activity *Creative Drawing with an Illustrator*, where participants learn various drawing techniques from a professional illustrator. Within the esoteric category, the experience *Turkish Coffee and Divination* is found, in which participants, after drinking a sweet, espresso-like Turkish coffee, listen to the instructor as they read fortunes from the remaining coffee grounds. The touristic-cultural category, on the other hand, includes *Follow a Plague Doctor Through Prague*, a virtual experience that recreates a walk through the deserted streets of Prague during the Black Death. Similarly, in the entertainment category, *Sangria and Secrets with Drag Queens* is highlighted, where participants enjoy a drag queen show while learning how to prepare Sangria. The wellness category is represented by *Meditation with a Buddhist Monk*, where participants learn and practice two types of meditation guided by a Buddhist monk. Finally, the gastronomic category includes *The Best Coffee Experience in the World*, a masterclass with a Mexican coffee judge, where participants learn about high-quality coffee.

Using axial coding, the key elements that contribute to the generation of a positive online brand community (OBC) experience could be identified (Figure 2). In the results section, the subthemes were identified (i.e., dimensions of a positive online Airbnb experience), which include sensory, affective, intellectual, behavioral, social, interactive, mystical, spatio-temporal, and physical experiences.

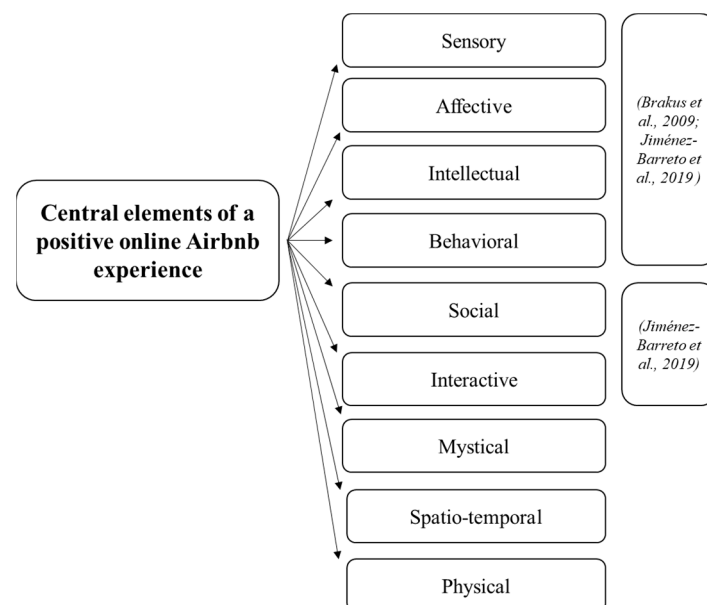


Figure 2. Positive online Airbnb experience (Brakus et al., 2009; Jimenez-Barreto et al., 2019). Source: Compiled by the authors.

Different customer experience dimensions impact customer engagement and co-creation, which, in turn, affect revisit intent (Rather et al., 2022). In Brakus et al.'s (2009) framework for brand experience, the first dimension is the sensory dimension, which involves the sensations elicited by brand-related stimuli perceived through the senses. The second dimension, the affective dimension, includes emotions, feelings, and sentiments, such as the feeling of being welcome in a hotel or admiration for a city's architecture (Barnes et al., 2014). The third dimension, the behavioral dimension, includes experiences in which visitors perform physical actions, such as walking in a park, getting a tattoo, or dancing

(Brakus et al., 2009; Yoon & Youn, 2016). The intellectual dimension, the fourth, is linked to thought processes, curiosity, and problem-solving stimulated by brand-related stimuli (Barnes et al., 2014).

The fifth dimension, the social dimension, relates to the outcomes of socialization, with recent brand experience studies indicating that social presence is key to relevant online brand experiences (Arnhold, 2010; Jimenez-Barreto et al., 2019). Some studies suggest that participants can learn from others' comments and opinions, connect with destination managers, and socialize with other users during the experience. The sixth dimension, the interactive dimension, refers to the users' internally and subjectively perceived ability to change, create, or interact with one another during the experience (Jimenez-Barreto et al., 2019). The seventh dimension, spatio-temporal, is connected to the cross-selling process, defined as the sale of additional, related or unrelated experiences to those already purchased by a customer (Schmitt, 2000). The eighth dimension, the mystical dimension, pertains to a "magical" experience, often related to esotericism and occultism (Yoon & Youn, 2016). The ninth dimension, the physical dimension, refers to the participant physiological responses in his/her interaction with the environment (Bitner, 1992; Bustamante & Rubio, 2017).

For data analysis, this study employed a grounded theory design, similar to other qualitative studies (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory is both a method for conducting qualitative research and a way to create inductive theory (Backman & Kyngäs, 1999). It is defined as a qualitative research method that uses a systematic process to inductively develop a theory about a phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1999). Grounded theory research addresses social processes and meanings, which are meant to be clarified and made explicit (Glaser, 1978; Smith & Biley, 1997).

Based on Strauss and Corbin's (1999) framework, three steps for our grounded theory approach were conducted. First, the data were reviewed to gain a broad understanding of them. Second, participants' responses were analyzed and we identified the elements contributing to a positive online Airbnb experience. Third, open, axial, and selective coding was manually performed (Strauss & Corbin, 1999). The first researcher, with support from an expert in the brand experience construct, acted as the sole coder in subsequent phases. Following Saldaña's (2013) recommendations, the coding outputs for each step (i.e., open, axial, and selective coding) were discussed among the research team using a dialogical intersubjectivity method until consensus on the coding results was achieved (Harry et al., 2005; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007; Jimenez-Barreto et al., 2019).

Given the nature of the dataset—user-generated reviews extracted from the Airbnb platform—the comments analyzed are typically brief and informal. These narratives reflect the spontaneous and experience-driven communication style common to digital review environments, and do not always provide extended elaborations. While we selected the most expressive and representative quotes available, this stylistic characteristic of the data imposes a natural limit on the narrative depth of individual excerpts.

Table 2 illustrates the open coding process in this study, where participants' quotes were extracted line-by-line. Axial coding allowed us to identify the elements crucial to the success of various Airbnb online experiences by analyzing concepts and abstract ideas in relation to theoretical frameworks.

For selective coding, the narratives were read multiple times, reviewing various coding decisions and comparing original concepts with new ideas from the literature (Creswell et al., 2007). Then, the same process was replicated for the April 2022 sample.

Table 2. Open coding (line-by-line example).

Study's Narratives	Participants' Narratives (Extracted Examples)	Open Coding (Line-by-Line Coding)
Experience 1	"My daughter (9) really enjoyed it, especially entertaining for those who love animals"	Enjoying for kids and animal lovers
Experience 2	"He then proceeded to lead a highly informative and interactive sketching session"	The instructor lead made the session informative and interactive
Experience 3	"My friend and I had a blast learning about our perceived futures"	They learnt about our perceived futures
Experience 4	"Learned a lot about the history of Prague".	Lots of learning about the history of the destination
Experience 5	"They truly made us all feel so special, they were engaging, entertaining, and really did it up!"	The instructors made the participants feel so special
Experience 6	"Very interesting meditation with nice people"	The participant appreciates the meditation with nice people
Experience 7	"I had a great time learning about coffee with Ricardo"	The participant had a great experience learning about coffee

Source: Compiled by the authors.

4. Results

Based on the analysis of the comments from the seven types of Airbnb experiences, the contextual motivation behind each experience could be examined, determining whether they are primarily educational or entertainment-focused. It was also conducted an in-depth exploration of the dimensions of these experiences (sensory, affective, intellectual, behavioral, social, interactive, mystical, spatio-temporal, or physical). Both the presence and absence of these dimensions were observed, as well as the intensity with which they manifest depending on the type of experience under consideration.

4.1. First Part—Contextual Motivation

The seven types of experiences were analyzed to determine whether they contain educational or entertainment content, or both. Our findings indicate that all seven types of experiences include both educational and entertainment components, but the intensity of each varies. Specifically, it is observed that one type of experience—cultural-touristic—exhibits a high intensity of both educational and entertainment content compared to the other experiences.

Some experiences show a disparity in the intensity of contextual motivation. For instance, in the animal lovers category, the intensity of entertainment is greater than that of education, while entertainment experiences, as the name suggests, are more heavily focused on entertainment rather than education. Similarly, esoteric experiences are primarily entertainment-oriented. On the other hand, gastronomy experiences stand out for having a much stronger educational component compared to entertainment. The remaining types of experiences display a more balanced intensity between both educational and entertainment motivations.

4.2. Second Part—Dimensions

Using the grounded theory approach, the data were coded (Table 3) and initially the four central dimensions of a positive experience as outlined by [Brakus et al. \(2009\)](#): sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral elements were identified.

4.2.1. Sensory Dimension

The presence of the sensory dimension in users' positive experiences is evident from participant quotes. For example, one user said, "It's very pleasant to see the goats. . ."

(Animal Lovers Experience—Experience 1). Another stated, “It was so lovely to see the drawings others in the group created” (Artistic Experience—Experience 2). A different participant added, “. . . I loved hearing everyone else’s reading. . .” (Esoteric Experience—Experience 3). Another user remarked, “A great way to view Old Town Prague WITHOUT PEOPLE. . .” (Touristic-cultural Experience—Experience 4), while another participant mentioned, “Plus, the Sangria tastes great!” (Entertainment Experience—Experience 5).

These quotes highlight the role of sensory experiences in online platforms as a way for brands to stimulate users’ senses (Bleier et al., 2019). In the experiences analyzed, the visual stimuli predominated over other sensory stimuli, as evidenced by words such as “see”, “view”, or “watch”. Moreover, the sensory dimension was detected in all seven experiences examined in this study.

4.2.2. Affective Dimension

The next dimension that stands out in creating a positive online Airbnb experience is the affective dimension, highlighted by several participants. One user noted, “This is a fun and educational experience for all ages, and especially entertaining for those who love animals” (Animal Lovers Experience—Experience 1). Another said, “You could feel his warmth and authenticity coming through the screen” (Artistic Experience—Experience 2). Similarly, a participant mentioned, “They truly made us all feel so special” (Entertainment Experience—Experience 5). These quotes demonstrate that Airbnb online experiences evoke affective responses (e.g., fun, warmth) due to the emotions perceived during the experience. In fact, research suggests that affective responses can directly and indirectly boost purchase and word-of-mouth intentions through positive brand attitudes (Zanger et al., 2022). The affective dimension is present in all seven Airbnb online experiences, highlighting the importance of generating emotions and feelings in these online interactions.

4.2.3. Intellectual Dimension

Several participants also described having a positive intellectual experience, which involves the mental processing of brand content and the stimulation of creative thinking, curiosity, and intrigue by the destination brand. For instance, one participant noted, “Very enjoyable, and we learned a lot” (Animal Lovers Experience—Experience 1). Another stated, “The user learned some new techniques” (Artistic Experience—Experience 2). A third mentioned, “My friend and I had a blast learning about our perceived futures” (Esoteric Experience—Experience 3), while a fourth said, “David was highly knowledgeable about both Prague and the plague” (Touristic-Cultural Experience—Experience 4). These experiences align with the intellectual dimension of Brakus et al. (2009) and the cognitive experience as conceptualized by Jimenez-Barreto et al. (2019), which emphasize the importance of learning and mental engagement.

4.2.4. Behavioral Dimension

Behavioral experiences often lead to a subsequent action (Schmitt, 1999). Participants’ narratives indicate changes in behavior as a result of the online experience. For example, one participant said, “We discussed technique and design and completed a few rounds of sketches” (Artistic Experience—Experience 2). Another participant in the touristic-cultural experience mentioned, “Lovely night stroll through the legendary streets of Prague. Once quarantine is over, we must go” (Experience 4). Entertainment experience participants noted, “Cannot wait to visit! Do this now!!!”, “We cannot wait to come visit in the future!!!”, and “I will definitely be making this killer sangria on repeat” (Entertainment Experience—Experience 5). In the wellness experience, a participant stated, “Would love to do it again and maybe even try a different type of course led by Kuniatsu” (Wellness Experience—Experience 6). The behavioral dimension is present in all types of Airbnb online experiences

except for the esoteric experience, where it is absent. These narratives highlight how users can have significant behavioral experiences by responding to the instructor's stimuli and engaging with the online experience. As [Schmitt \(2000\)](#) noted, technology-mediated experiences can impact and change users' motivations and lifestyles.

4.2.5. Social Dimension

In this context, social presence refers to the warmth, sociability, and sense of human contact conveyed by a webpage ([Gefen & Straub, 2003](#)). One participant wrote, "This was really a wonderful way to start the day and connect with others" (Artistic Experience—Experience 2). A participant in the esoteric experience mentioned, "This online experience was a really great way to meet new people" (Experience 3). A user of the entertainment experience reported, "I was impressed with how many different countries were represented by the participants, and I loved how everyone was there to just have a good time" (Experience 5). The social dimension is present in most of the Airbnb online experiences analyzed, except in the gastronomic experience (Experience 7), highlighting its importance in generating a positive online experience, especially in entertainment experiences such as Sangria and Secrets with Drag Queens (Experience 5).

4.2.6. Interactive Dimension

Some participants also described having an interactive which involves experience three aspects of interaction: user-machine, user-user, and user-message ([Liu & Shrum, 2002](#)). One participant noted, "My kids loved it and were able to ask questions" (Animal Lovers Experience—Experience 1). Another user of the artistic experience reported, "He then proceeded to lead a highly informative and interactive sketching session" (Experience 2). A participant of the esoteric experience remarked, "Great interaction for an online experience" (Experience 3), while another user in the entertainment experience wrote, "There were other groups there as well, which led to some very nice interaction with Pedro and Babaya" (Experience 5). However, this dimension does not appear in all the experiences analyzed.

4.2.7. Mystical Dimension

The mystical dimension is one of the new contributions of this research. In this context, the mystical dimension refers to the authenticity of the experience rather than religious topics. It refers to the user's subjective experience of transcendence, ritual symbolism, or spiritual connection during the online activity. In this context, the mystical dimension should not be interpreted solely as a form of religiosity, but rather as a symbolic and emotionally charged mode of user engagement—where meaning is co-constructed through spiritual, ritual, or magical codes ([Davis, 2019](#); [Osler, 2024](#)). This dimension appears exclusively in the esoteric experience (Experience 3), with participants writing: "It is a very beautiful and mystical experience. . ." and "It was truly magical. . ." Such narratives reflect the presence of metaphysical meaning and a desire for connection with deeper symbolic or spiritual themes, consistent with research on digital ritual and spiritual branding ([Miller, 2022](#); [Kirby, 2014](#)).

4.2.8. Spatio-Temporal Dimension

Another contribution of this research is the spatio-temporal dimension, adapted from Köchling ([Köchling, 2020](#)) to fit online experiences. The spatio-temporal dimension, also newly identified, captures the experience's ability to mentally and emotionally "transport" users to a different time and/or place through symbolic, narrative, or audiovisual cues. This aligns with prior literature on escapism, immersive presence, and symbolic authenticity ([Glaser, 1978](#); [Smith & Biley, 1997](#); [Saldaña, 2013](#)). Several narratives reflect this concept. For instance, one participant in the animal lovers experience wrote, "Mentally transported to another place for an hour. A great escape" (Experience 1). Another participant in the

esoteric experience said, "...for the first time in a long time, it took my mind off of what's going on in the world" (Experience 3). Participants in the touristic-cultural experience commented, "Like a TRUE journey back in time!", "Nice to 'virtually travel' to a different era and place", and "We're time traveling into the past from the comfort of our couches" (Experience 4). A participant in the entertainment experience wrote, "It was a great way to get 'out' without leaving the house" (Experience 5). In the wellness experience, a participant said, "A brief escape and forced me outside of my comfort zone" (Experience 6). This dimension appears in five of the seven experiences analyzed, but is absent from the artistic and gastronomic experiences.

4.2.9. Physical Dimension

The final contribution of this paper is the physical dimension, which refers to users' perception of bodily involvement during the online experience, including guided movement, tension release, energy flow, or emotional-physical alignment. While seemingly paradoxical in virtual environments, participants reported real physiological responses—often triggered by replicating physical actions such as drawing, dancing, or meditating. This aligns with research on cross-sensory immersion and affective embodiment in digital contexts (Bitner, 1992; Bustamante & Rubio, 2017; Kuijt-Evers et al., 2004). This dimension was identified in several user narratives. A participant in the artistic experience wrote, "I felt full of energy and excitement after exploring my creativity with you and other guests" (Experience 2). Another user in the esoteric experience reported, "You instantly feel comfortable and welcome in his presence" (Experience 3). In the touristic-cultural experience, a user said, "The future is here—we're time traveling into the past from the comfort of our couches" (Experience 4). In the entertainment experience, a participant commented, "Pedro and his team bring such energy" (Experience 5). Finally, in the wellness experience, a user mentioned, "Came out of the meditation session feeling relaxed and calm for the whole day" (Experience 6). This dimension is related to a state of well-being/comfort or discomfort (Kuijt-Evers et al., 2004) where the online experience atmosphere influences the participant's physiological responses (Bitner, 1992; Bustamante & Rubio, 2017). The physical dimension was detected in five of the seven experiences analyzed, but was absent in the animal lovers and gastronomic experiences.

5. Discussion

This study offers a comprehensive analysis of the central elements of a positive Airbnb experience and is one of the few to use a grounded theory approach (Sthapit & Jimenez-Barreto, 2018). It successfully addresses the four proposed research questions.

First, the research confirms that all the dimensions proposed by Brakus et al. (2009) (sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral) and the additional dimensions by Jimenez-Barreto et al. (2019) (social and interactive) are present in users' descriptions of positive online Airbnb experiences.

Second, this study introduces three new dimensions—mystical, spatio-temporal, and physical—that enrich the understanding of online Airbnb experiences. These dimensions reflect a broader shift in digital tourism toward symbolic, affective, and embodied forms of engagement. The mystical dimension encompasses symbolic and emotionally charged experiences often linked to ritual or spiritual meaning, and resonates with literature on online spiritual engagement and symbolic interactionism (Osler, 2024; Miller, 2022; Kirby, 2014). The spatio-temporal dimension captures users' psychological and emotional transport to alternative times or places, aligning with theories of immersive presence and escapism (Gao et al., 2022; Shamim et al., 2024) as well as findings in virtual tourism studies, where symbolic and narrative cues allow users to feel psychologically "displaced" from their

immediate physical surroundings (Tussyadiah et al., 2018; Saleem et al., 2024). Finally, the physical dimension highlights the relevance of bodily responses—even within virtual contexts—and connects to research in affective embodiment, cross-sensory immersion, and digital well-being (Mou et al., 2024; Nam et al., 2023; Gao et al., 2025).

Together, these emergent dimensions extend the theoretical framework of brand experience and provide new insight into the affective and symbolic depth of digital encounters. In doing so, the study contributes to ongoing debates on virtual authenticity by demonstrating how symbolic, emotional, and embodied interactions—captured in dimensions such as mystical, spatio-temporal, and physical—shape the perceived quality and value of online tourism experiences.

Third, the research reveals that the composition of dimensions varies across experience types. Brakus et al.'s (2009) dimensions appear consistently, but the social and interactive dimensions are absent in some contexts, such as gastronomic experiences. The mystical dimension is exclusive to esoteric experiences, while the spatio-temporal and physical dimensions are not present in certain experiences, like artistic and gastronomic ones.

These findings align with Jimenez-Barreto et al.'s (2019) work, which highlights the importance of the social and interactive dimensions in customer experiences. Participants' narratives underscore the value of social interaction and content engagement for a more positive experience. The introduction of new dimensions—mystical, spatio-temporal, and physical—further contributes to the literature. The mystical dimension adds authenticity to certain experiences, while the spatio-temporal dimension enables psychological escape, and the physical dimension focuses on well-being and comfort.

Moreover, the results can be further interpreted through the lens of virtual authenticity, which recent literature has reframed as relational, affective, and co-constructed (Gao et al., 2022; Mou et al., 2024; Gao et al., 2025). Rather than depending on realism or historical fidelity, authenticity in virtual environments emerges through narrative coherence, symbolic immersion, emotional resonance, and interpersonal connection (Shamim et al., 2024; Nam et al., 2023). This reframing helps explain the centrality of the mystical, spatio-temporal, and physical dimensions in our data, where users described deep emotional involvement, symbolic interpretation, and even embodied responses. Our study thus supports and extends this evolving conceptualization by demonstrating how these experiential dimensions serve as key drivers of perceived authenticity in online tourism.

In conclusion, this research is among the first to qualitatively examine positive online Airbnb experiences. It provides valuable insights into how both established and new dimensions shape user experiences, offering implications for improving the design and delivery of online tourism experiences.

6. Managerial Implications

From a managerial perspective, this study offers several important implications for enhancing positive online experiences based on the identified nine dimensions. Their presence across most experiences underscores their relevance in shaping the success of Airbnb's online offerings.

The analysis also reveals variation in the intensity and presence of these dimensions across experience types. For instance, entertainment experiences incorporate a broader range of dimensions with greater intensity, correlating with higher user satisfaction and engagement. Managers can leverage this insight to prioritize and promote experiences more likely to generate strong emotional and cognitive responses.

The behavioral dimension, in particular, points to opportunities for cross-selling. Users frequently express interest in exploring other offerings by the same instructors or attending

similar experiences in person, creating potential for managers to build a value chain that encourages repeated participation.

Conversely, some categories—such as gastronomy—show lower dimensional intensity and reduced user engagement. This finding can guide managers away from promoting formats that contribute less to brand value unless redesigned. For example, gastronomic experiences could be enriched with co-creation features such as collaborative live cooking, real-time interaction with chefs, or user-generated content like photos and reviews. Enhancing spatial immersion through virtual tours of local markets or 360° kitchen walkthroughs may also foster stronger engagement and a sense of authenticity.

The study further emphasizes the importance of authenticity, particularly through the mystical dimension observed in esoteric experiences. These offerings, which are often among Airbnb's most expensive, illustrate how symbolic and emotional resonance can increase both perceived value and pricing potential.

In addition, the potential of the spatio-temporal dimension should not be underestimated. Experiences that encourage users to mentally “escape” their physical environments through compelling design can offer distinctive value and emotional appeal.

Taken together, these insights suggest that platforms like Airbnb should consider integrating immersive and socially engaging features into experience categories with lower current impact. This may enhance user involvement, boost satisfaction, and contribute to a more distinctive and authentic brand experience.

7. Limitations and Future Research

This study has some limitations. First, the reliance on reviews from the official Airbnb website limited control over participants. A follow-up with users could have provided deeper insights.

Moreover, the experiences analyzed were originally developed during the early phases of the COVID-19 pandemic and have since undergone notable transformations. Many of the experiences that were once offered online have now shifted to physical formats due to the resumption of in-person tourism and the greater appeal of live interaction. For instance, the Turkish coffee and divination session is now offered exclusively in person under new titles. Similarly, experiences like “Remote Rescue Goats” and “Creative Drawing with an Illustrator” have either transitioned to on-site formats or been discontinued. The only exception is “Sangria and Secrets with Drag Queens”, which remains an online experience but is now hosted outside of Airbnb on its own platform, DragTaste. These shifts underscore the evolving nature of online experiences in a post-pandemic context and suggest that user expectations and platform strategies have changed accordingly.

Second, the dataset is temporally bounded to April 2020—a period marked by widespread lockdowns and a surge in virtual alternatives to physical travel. This context likely influenced both the emotional intensity and nature of user responses, as well as the design and reception of Airbnb's online offerings. Accordingly, the study reflects a specific moment in time, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future studies could examine how perceptions of online experiences evolve over time as platforms adapt and hybrid formats emerge. Additionally, while this study focused on highly rated experiences, future research should investigate predominantly negative or mixed reviews to provide a fuller understanding of the user experience spectrum.

Third, the spontaneous and concise nature of user-generated reviews limited the narrative depth of individual quotes. Unlike in-depth interviews, platform-based reviews often consist of short statements, which may lack descriptive detail but are nevertheless rich in sentiment and experiential cues. This limitation should be considered when interpreting the findings.

Furthermore, the online Airbnb experiences analyzed in this study were primarily based on absorption rather than immersion. Future research should investigate the potential inclusion of immersive experiences in Airbnb's online offerings, as these may significantly impact the user experience and could warrant in-depth exploration.

Finally, future studies could compare Airbnb experiences offered in both physical and online formats to better understand how experiential dimensions are perceived across modalities.

Table 3, presented in the results section, identify the type of contextual motivation and the intensity of each dimension's appearance (e.g., educational or entertainment), as well as the dimensions present in different Airbnb online experiences in April 2020. These dimensions include sensory, affective, intellectual, behavioral, social, interactive, mystical, spatio-temporal, and physical experiences.

Table 3. Codes indicating the significance of Contextual Motivation and Experience Dimensions from Online Destination Experience 1 (Remote Rescue Goats).

	Open Coding (Line-by-Line Coding)	Subthemes (Axial Coding)	Main Themes (Selective Themes)
Contextual Motivation	"Amazing knowledge", "The experience was fun, educational and Meagan is very passionate! oved seeing and learning about the different goats!", "Very enjoyable and we learned a lot."	Educational experiences	Educational and entertainment experiences take part of the contextual motivation of a positive Airbnb online experience.
	"The experience was fun, educational and Meagan is very passionate! Very enjoyable and we learned a lot. My daughter (9) really enjoyed it and loved meeting all the goats!"	Entertainment experiences	
Dimensions	"It's very pleasant to see the goats. . ." "Kids would enjoy this experience—getting to see so many goats up close!"	Sensory experience	The sensory, affective, intellectual, social, behavioral, interactive, and spatio-temporal dimensions are the central elements of the positive online Airbnb experience
	"This is a fun and educational experience for all ages and especially entertaining for those who love animals", "My daughter (9) really enjoyed it and loved meeting all the goats!", "This was a lovely experience, It's very pleasant to see the goats."	Affective experience	
	"The experience was fun, educational", "She's very knowledgeable", "Very enjoyable and we learned a lot."	Intellectual experience	
	"Can't wait to visit in person one day soon.", "Wonderful experience short of being there in person!"	Behavioral experience	
	"Absolutely recommend this experience to connect with Meagan and her playful goats!"	Social experience	
	"Meagan was welcoming and encouraged participation.", "My kids loved it and was able to ask questions about them."	Interactive experience	
	"Mentally transported to another place for an hour. A great escape.", "A great activity for when you're stuck in doors but would rather be petting super cute goats.", "A lovely escape! Perfect getaway with goats!"	Spatio-temporal experience	

Codes indicating the significance of Contextual Motivation and Experience Dimensions from Online Destination Experience 2 (Creative drawing with an illustration).

Table 3. Cont.

	Open Coding (Line-by-Line Coding)	Subthemes (Axial Coding)	Main Themes (Selective Themes)
Contextual Motivation	"Thank you for teaching us a great new technique", "My kids and I learned in a very special way to make some faces!", "Learned a lot in a short amount of time!"	Educational experiences	Educational and entertainment experiences take part of the contextual motivation of a positive Airbnb online experience.
	"Super fun experience!", "It's a fun experience to do with family and friends while sharpening your drawing skills!", "I had such a fun time!"	Entertainment experiences	
Dimensions	"In such a short time Gabriel taught us the basics of creating a face with gestures and colors.", "The video and audio quality were excellent.", "it was so lovely to see the drawings others in the group created."	Sensory experience	The sensory, affective, intellectual, social, behavioral, interactive, spatio-temporal, and physical dimensions are the central elements of the positive online Airbnb experience
	". . .the instructor has a kind and great personality and makes everyone feel welcome.", "He is very warm and teaches how to love drawing for any level.", "I felt very inspired!", "You could feel his warmth and authenticity coming through the screen.", "Although I was embarrassed initially with my drawings, he didn't make me feel dumb about them and was incredibly encouraging.", "keep us feeling encouraged."	Affective experience	
	"I loved learning about the proportions and the shading", "He then proceeded to lead a highly informative and interactive sketching session.", "Learned a lot in a short amount of time!", "The user learned some new techniques."	Intellectual experience	
	"He is very warm and teaches how to love drawing for any level.", "I can finally draw a face!", "We discussed technique and design and completed a few round of sketches.", "It was so lovely to see the drawings others in the group created."	Behavioral experience	
	"What a great way to interact with other humans", "This was really a wonderful way to start the day and connect with others.", "It's a fun experience to do with family and friends while sharpening your drawing skills!", "He really made an effort to relate with each one of us in the class (there were 6 of us) and keep us feeling encouraged."	Social experience	
	"He then proceeded to lead a highly informative and interactive sketching session.", "What a great way to interact with other humans.", "Great interaction and communication.", "Good instructions and helpful advice to complete the art assignments."	Interactive experience	
	"The instructor has a kind and great personality and makes everyone feel welcome.", "I felt full of energy and excitement after exploring my creativity with you and other guests.", "I loved learning about the proportions and the shading, all from the comforts of my own home", "I never would have taken the time to stop, relax and get creative if it wasn't for this experience:	Physical	

Codes indicating the significance of Contextual Motivation and Experience Dimensions from Online Destination Experience 3 (Turkish coffee and divination).

Table 3. Cont.

	Open Coding (Line-by-Line Coding)	Subthemes (Axial Coding)	Main Themes (Selective Themes)
Contextual Motivation	"My friend and I had a blast learning about our perceived futures.", "...learn something new through the host and his passion for Turkish coffee fortune reading."	Educational experiences	Educational and entertainment experiences take part of the contextual motivation of a positive Airbnb online experience.
	"...uluç kept the entire group on their toes with his highly entertaining reading style.", "What a super fun date night during COVID.", "...it was very fun."	Entertainment experiences	
Dimensions	"...I loved hearing everyone else's reading...", "Each reading was personal and insightful, and it was fun and fascinating to listen to others' fortunes".	Sensory experience	The sensory, affective, intellectual, social, mystical, interactive, spatio-temporal, and physical dimensions are the central elements of the positive online Airbnb experience
	"...I left full of hope.", "Uluc is a natural-born story teller and made us all feel connected to one another.", "...while simultaneously ensuring everyone involved feels seen, welcomed and participates.", "Uluc was so personable and made sure each and every one of us was comfortable and fully engaged.", "...my personal fortune brought tears to my eyes...", "It really is a joy to not only participate and receive a reading from such an insightful host but also to witness how Uluc uses this traditional method to connect people with each other and with the deeper aspects of themselves...", "...this experience and the warmth and incredible knowledge of the host, make it unique and hopeful..."	Affective experience	
	"...this experience and the warmth and incredible knowledge of the host...", "...and learn something new through the host...", "My friend and I had a blast learning about our perceived futures...", "It was great getting to learn about him, and his culture..."	Intellectual experience	
	"his online experience was a really great way to meet up with new people", "Uluc is able to effortlessly connect with each person in the group...", "...and getting to know other members in our group!", "...and made us all feel connected to one another", "...this traditional method to connect people with each other and with the deeper aspects of themselves...", "...I loved hearing everyone else's reading. Great to do with friends!"	Social experience	
	"The whole process is interactive, engaging and inspiring.", "Great interaction for an online experience...", "...while simultaneously ensuring everyone involved feels seen, welcomed and participates.", "...Uluc uses this traditional method to connect people with each other and with the deeper aspects of themselves."	Interactive experience	
	"It is a very beautiful and mystical experience...", "It was truly magical..."	Mystical experience	
	"...for the first time in a long time, it took my mind off of what's going in the world".	Spatio-temporal	

Table 3. Cont.

	Open Coding (Line-by-Line Coding)	Subthemes (Axial Coding)	Main Themes (Selective Themes)
	“You instantly feel comfortable and welcome in his presence...”, “Uluc was so personable and made sure each and every one of us was comfortable and fully engaged.”, “I love his energy he made me feel better in this situation.”	Physical	
Codes indicating the significance of Contextual Motivation and Experience Dimensions from Online Destination Experience 4 (Follow a plague doctor through Prague).			
	Open Coding (Line-by-Line Coding)	Subthemes (Axial Coding)	Main Themes (Selective Themes)
Contextual Motivation	“Learned a lot about the history of Prague.”, “It was fascinating to learn the history”, “I learn a lot, thank you, Lucie!”, “...and I learned SO MUCH!”, “A great deal of fun while being educational!”	Educational experiences	Educational and entertainment experiences take part of the contextual motivation of a positive Airbnb online experience.
	“...really enjoyed it.”, “It was a whole new experience and a lot of fun.”, “Very interesting and entertaining...”, “A great deal of fun while being educational!”	Entertainment experiences	
	“...and walk in the shoes of a plague doctor!”, “A great way to view Old Town Prague WITHOUT PEOPLE...”	Sensory experience	The sensory, affective, intellectual, social, behavioral, spatio-temporal, and physical dimensions are the central elements of the positive online Airbnb experience.
	“David was awesome!...”, “My 8 yo son loved this Airbnb experience...”, “I loved this experience...”, “...I loved the way it was filmed and I learned SO MUCH!...”	Affective experience	
	“Learned a lot about the history of Prague.”, “... David was highly knowledgeable about both Prague and the plague.”, “...I loved the way it was filmed and I learned SO MUCH!”, “It was fascinating to learn the history”	Intellectual experience	
	“Lovely night stroll through the legendary streets of Prague. Once quarantine is over, we must go!”, “...I really would like to join the REAL tour some day!”	Behavioral experience	
	“My 8 yo son loved this Airbnb experience, despite being only with adults.”, “Thank you was great to connect and be with others”	Social experience	
	“...Like a TRUE journey back in time!...”, “...Nice to ‘virtual travel’ to a different era and a different place.”, “...we’re time traveling into the past from the comfort of our couches...”, “I forgot for a while that I was quarantined at home...”	Spatio-temporal experience	
	“The future is here—we’re time traveling into the past from the comfort of our couches.”	Physical experience	
Codes indicating the significance of Contextual Motivation and Experience Dimensions from Online Destination Experience 5 (Sangria and secrets with drag queens).			

Table 3. Cont.

	Open Coding (Line-by-Line Coding)	Subthemes (Axial Coding)	Main Themes (Selective Themes)
Contextual Motivation	“Great interactive experience that made me laugh and learn.”, “I learned a new recipe for sangria and have been enjoying the “fruits” of my labor for days!”, “Loved learning about Sangria and it’s place in Portuguese culture”.	Educational experiences	Educational and entertainment experiences take part of the contextual motivation of a positive Airbnb online experience.
	“Really fun!”, “This was so fun and unique...”, “...seriously it’s legit and so much fun.”, “so much fun...”	Entertainment experiences	
Dimensions	“...watch an awesome show...”, “...enjoyed a delicious sangria.”, “Plus the Sangria tastes great!”	Sensory experience	The sensory, affective, intellectual, social, behavioral, interactive, spatio-temporal, and physical dimensions are the central elements of the positive online Airbnb experience.
	“This event made their 21st birthday one of the most memorable birthdays of their lives.”, “...They truly made us all feel so special...”, “...I was impressed with how many different countries were represented by the participants and I loved how everyone was there to just have a good time”, “Loved feeling connected to all attendees from around the world.”, “...made me feel so special to have my friends celebrating with me!”	Affective experience	
	“Pedro and his team bring such energy, knowledge, and personality to the experience.”, “Loved learning about Sangria and it’s place in Portuguese culture.”, “Great interactive experience that made me laugh and learn”.	Intellectual experience	
	“when none of us can get out of the house to do anything close to this fun!”, “Can’t wait to come to Lisbon and get to meet you all in person!!”, “It was such a fun event to make sangria with them and it was amazing! Could not recommend more”, “...we had a blast making sangria...”, “Cannot wait to visit! Do this now!!!”, “We cannot wait to come visit in the future!!!”, “I will definitely be making this killer sangria on repeat.”	Behavioral experience	
	“...A bunch of my friends popped on for my partners birthday, and what a perfect choice it was!...”, “My husband and I book this experience to celebrate our anniversary and we are glad that we did!!!! The host and his friends made it a point to interact with all participants numerous times and there was lots of laughs and entertainment...”, “I was impressed with how many different countries were represented by the participants and I loved how everyone was there to just have a good time.”, “It’s such a fun way to virtually connect with people during the pandemic. They made it a special way to connect with people all over the world!”, “Booked this event with several friends across the country.”, “It worked really well for my bookclub friends to join in so that we were there as a “group”.”, “I could keep doing this every week with my friends”, “Loved feeling connected to all attendees from around the world.”	Social experience	

Table 3. Cont.

	Open Coding (Line-by-Line Coding)	Subthemes (Axial Coding)	Main Themes (Selective Themes)
Dimensions	“They handled the large zoom group very well, making sure to check in with each participant multiple times so we all felt like participants and not just observers.”, “Great interactive experience that made me laugh and learn.”, “There were other groups there as well and that led to some very nice interaction with Pedro and Babaya.”, “Pedro was really engaging too by enticing guest to interact and sharing attention with all participants!”, “We highly recommend this experience if you want to interact with some fun people and make something great to drink!”, “I loved how all the guests participated and there were a lot of cooking tips thrown in.”	Interactive experience	The sensory, affective, intellectual, social, behavioral, interactive, spatio-temporal, and physical dimensions are the central elements of the positive online Airbnb experience.
	“It was a great way to get “out” without leaving the house”	Spatio-temporal experience	
	“The girls made us feel sooo comfortable during the entire time.”, “Pedro and his team bring such energy. . .”	Physical experience	
Codes indicating the significance of Contextual Motivation and Experience Dimensions from Online Destination Experience 6 (Meditation with a Buddhist monk).			
	Open Coding (Line-by-Line Coding)	Subthemes (Axial Coding)	Main Themes (Selective Themes)
Contextual Motivation	“...and explains the practice in an easy method to follow.”, “...kuniatsu introduces some new techniques and really helps focus your mind.”	Educational experiences	Educational and entertainment experiences take part of the contextual motivation of a positive Airbnb online experience.
	“I enjoyed being with Kuniatsu.”, “A fun experience. . .”	Entertainment experiences	
Dimensions	“I enjoyed listening to his stories.”	Sensory experience	The sensory, affective, intellectual, social, behavioral, spatio-temporal, and physical dimensions are the central elements of the positive online Airbnb experience
	“Kuniatsu is very warm and welcoming.”, “I got relax and happy”, “...Beautiful kind hearted host. . .”, “...Kuniatsu-san radiates joy.”	Affective experience	
	“...kuniatsu introduces some new techniques and really helps focus your mind.”, “...explains the practice in an easy method to follow.”, “Really enjoyed his meditation lecture & exercises.”	Intellectual experience	
	“Would definitely do it again and recommend to a friend.”, “Would love to do it again and maybe even try a different type of course led by Kuniatsu”	Behavioral experience	
	“Very interesting meditation with nice people. . .”	Social experience	
	“A brief escape and forced me outside of my comfort zone.”	Spatio-temporal experience	
	“The meditation session was immersive and refreshing.”, “Felt refreshed and calm after”, “I got relax and happy”, “It was calming and relaxing.”, “Came out of the meditation session feeling relaxed and calm for the whole day.”, “Suzuki has a great energy”	Physical experience	
Codes indicating the significance of Contextual Motivation and Experience Dimensions from Online Destination Experience 7 (The best coffee experience in the world).			

Table 3. Cont.

	Open Coding (Line-by-Line Coding)	Subthemes (Axial Coding)	Main Themes (Selective Themes)
Contextual Motivation	“Would recommend Ricardo to anyone who wants to learn about coffee.”, “Ricardo was a great host and teacher.”, “I had a great time learning about coffee with Ricardo.”, “I learned a lot during our hour together.”	Educational experiences	Educational and entertainment experiences take part of the contextual motivation of a positive Airbnb online experience.
	“This class was fun!”, “Ricardo is a wealth of knowledge and is very entertaining and engaging.”	Entertainment experiences	
Dimensions	“Really cool to see Ricardo’s house and street view even on Zoom.”, “Very good intro to different flavour profiles and great tips to try at home to improve coffee flavour.”, “Ricardo helped us fine-tune our coffee tasting experience at home.”	Sensory experience	The sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral, dimensions are the central elements of the positive online Airbnb experience
	“I love coffee and I think I will be able to make a better cup.”, “Ricardo’s knowledge was excellent and his personality and passion was apparent during the class.”, “Ricardo was lovely”	Affective experience	
	“Would recommend Ricardo to anyone who wants to learn about coffee.”, “. . . I learned a lot during our hour together.”, “A very nice experience in how to make a tasty cup of coffe.”, “and will give you some solid basics in coffee making.”, “Left with enough knowledge to start experimenting.”, “I am going to look for more Airbnb experiences.”	Intellectual experience	
	“A very nice experience in how to make a tasty cup of coffe.”, “Now I can make better coffee”, “I think I will be able to make a better cup.”	Behavioral experience	

Source: Compiled by the authors.

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