

MEASURING SHARING ECONOMY SATISFACTION WITH STAR RATINGS: OVERALL SATISFACTION VERSUS SATISFACTION WITH THE SERVICE PROVIDER

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ABSTRACT

Sharing economy business models have gained in significance in many market categories, yet research has only begun to illuminate how these firms differ from traditional business models. This study examines the post-consumption outcome of satisfaction, specifically after a service failure, by comparing a traditional business-to-consumer (B2C) hotel model to a peer-to-peer (P2P) business model, similar to Airbnb. We find interesting effects of the P2P business models of mitigating a service failure in two regards: 1) Satisfaction with the Service Provider did not significantly decrease in the P2P condition even when a service provider was seen as accountable for the service failure, unlike the B2C condition; and 2) the negative and significant indirect effect of locus of responsibility and control on Overall Satisfaction, as mediated by Satisfaction with the Service Provider, did not manifest in the P2P condition, as opposed to the B2C condition. The results show that the conventionally expected downward pressure of a service failure on satisfaction disappears within the P2P condition. This research contributes to the growing body of literature focusing on the P2P exchange mode, establishing a unique effect on post-consumption satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Sharing economy models are becoming a significant part of the economy, receiving much academic attention recently (Akbari et al., 2022; Barari et al., 2022; Christodoulides et al., 2021), with the projected global market value of \$1.5 trillion by 2024 from \$373.7 billion in 2019 (BCC Publishing, 2020), and 48.1 million forecasted users in 2023 from 42.1 million adult users in 2019 (Droesch, 2020). Defined as “an IT-facilitated peer-to-peer model for commercial or noncommercial sharing of underutilized goods and service capacity through an intermediary without a transfer of ownership (Schlagwein et al., 2020),” numerous types of peer-to-peer models have gained popularity in the recent years, including Airbnb and Uber. The terms ‘collaborative consumption’ and ‘sharing economy’ are often used to refer to the same market activity: when consumers, providers, or both participate in the aggregation of supply, demand, or both, typically involving access over ownership transfer as well as compensation (Cf. Eckhardt et al. (2019) for a good elucidation of the domain. For the purposes of this paper both terms will be used to refer to the same market activity). Unsurprisingly, the two main clusters of scholarly research on the sharing economy involve studying ‘user experience and collaborative consumption’ and ‘hospitality and tourism’, with “customer satisfaction” and “Airbnb” listed as among the most frequent and trending terms, respectively. (Klarin & Suseno, 2021).

The current research investigates the intersection of these two areas, by examining the issue of measuring different aspects of customer satisfaction within the sharing platform of Airbnb. This research is timely, answering calls for additional research exploration on the driver(s) of customer satisfaction within the context of peer-to-peer exchange mode of the sharing economy (Eckhardt

et al., 2019). This study contributes to that stream of research by examining the effect of the sharing economy on post-consumption satisfaction. Specifically, we show that the effect depends on whether we focus on satisfaction toward the specific provider, as opposed to overall satisfaction regarding the entire experience. We utilize a vignette study of a service failure within the domain of hospitality industry, where hotels and accommodation providers alike are expected to provide proper indoor environment quality, one of the determinants of customer satisfaction in hospitality and tourism (M. Kim et al., 2022). Additionally, we utilize the star-ratings as a proxy for measuring satisfaction consistent with recent research on star-ratings (Engler et al., 2015; Esmark Jones et al., 2018; Gutt et al., 2019; Hao et al., 2017; Hu et al., 2012; Keller & Kostromitina, 2020; Kostromitina et al., 2021). In this manner, we additionally contribute to the growing body of research utilizing star-ratings as a measurement of satisfaction within the service sector.

The results of the current research show that the context of peer-to-peer sharing economy intriguingly offsets the negative transfer of the service failure onto satisfaction with the specific provider, whereas the overall satisfaction decreases uniformly due to service failure whether it is business-to-consumer or peer-to-peer context. Although more research is needed to investigate exactly what aspects of the sharing economy differentiates the influence on provider-specific satisfaction versus overall satisfaction, we hypothesize that it must relate to the social community aspect of human providers as opposed to the non-personal entities such as hotels. We conclude by providing directions for future researchers delving further into this area.

CONCEPTUAL BACKBROUND

Customer Satisfaction as Star-Ratings in the Sharing Economy

Conceptualization on customer satisfaction in marketing began in the 1970s (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016), but its power as a measurement tool still holds strong to this day, even with the other topics (e.g., Relationship Marketing, Customer Relationship Management, and Customer Centricity, to name a few) gaining popularity in the years since. Although debated often on its fuzziness, customer satisfaction is distinguishable from service quality, Net Promoter Score, behavioral intentions, or loyalty (Castañeda, 2011; Chandrashekar et al., 2007; McAlexander et al., 2003). Satisfaction is most often defined as the consumer's response to the evaluation of the perceived discrepancy between some comparison standards (e.g., expectations) and the perceived performance of the product (Oliver, 2014; Yi, 1990). The indisputable consensus within the literature is that satisfaction is an important antecedent to other downstream outcome measures such as repurchase intentions, willingness to pay, and customer loyalty, thus important to monitor on a regular basis (E. W. Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Chandrashekar et al., 2007; Ekinci et al., 2008; Gustafsson et al., 2005; Hennig-Thurau & Klee, 1997; Homburg et al., 2005; Oliver, 1980, 1993, 2014; Smith et al., 1999; Szymanski & Henard, 2001). This power of satisfaction manifests across all industries, including hospitality and tourism (Altinay & Taheri, 2018; Mody et al., 2021), in particular, involving shared economy based accommodations such as Airbnb (Johnson & Neuhofer, 2017; Pappas, 2017; Wu et al., 2017).

Another consensus on satisfaction in the extant literature is that it is a multi-layered and robust construct. Unlike SERVQUAL and other scales that have gained prominence, satisfaction scales are malleable to the given situation and context, instead of being confined to a strict singular format (Grigoroudis & Siskos, 2009). Thus, measurements of satisfaction also adapt widely to the surrounding environment. Although some recommend the use of multi-item scales rather than a single-item scale to capture appropriate dimensions of satisfaction more reliably (Yi, 1990), a

single-item scale directly focusing on the dimension of interest has often been used for simplicity (Glowa, 2014; Westbrook, 1980). Perhaps for this reason, online star ratings have been used as a single-item scale to reflect customer satisfaction in several settings including Yelp reviews (Al-Natour & Turetken, 2020; Keller & Kostromitina, 2020; Luca & Zervas, 2016), online doctor reviews (Hao et al., 2017), evaluation of Medicare (Custer, 2021; Meyers et al., 2021), airlines (Messner, 2020), branded entertainment (K. Kim et al., 2019), hotels (Belarmino et al., 2022; Mellinas & Reino, 2019; Qi & Qiang, 2013; Sayfuddin & Chen, 2021), and especially in sharing economy based accommodation (Wang & Nicolau, 2017) specifically Airbnb (Chung et al., 2022). The star ratings appear to reflect both the strength and the level of satisfaction (Chandrashekar et al., 2007) and its bias toward emotions rather than evidence (Vidyashankar et al., 2021) is consistent with that of the satisfaction construct itself. Similar with satisfaction, star ratings are considered as a valid complementary information for further judgments (Willems et al., 2019), helping consumers make healthier food decisions (C. L. Anderson, 2019; Thomas et al., 2021) and better investment choices (Fang et al., 2021), contributing to perceptions of credibility (Hong & Pittman, 2020) and reputation of the firm with direct increase in revenue (Sayfuddin & Chen, 2021). A note should be made here about the term 'star ratings' since the hotel industry commonly uses the term 'star' to signal quality level and key features, e.g., a five-star hotel. The star ratings in this study refer to customer reviews, typically online, with more stars meaning a better customer review.

Satisfaction with Specific Service Provider in the Sharing Economy

There are multiple scopes or perspectives when measuring satisfaction. While there is a temporal perspective to divide into two common formulations of satisfaction into transient versus cumulative satisfaction (Ekinici et al., 2008), there is also a spectrum along a variety of specificity, such as specific satisfaction with a product (Mano & Oliver, 1993; Westbrook, 1980), a service encounter (Bitner & Hubbert, 1994), a salesperson (Palmatier et al., 2007), with a transaction (Jones & Suh, 2000). Just as there are differences in satisfaction with goods and services (E. W. Anderson et al., 1997), there are potential differences in satisfaction due to the characteristics unique to the sharing economy, which therefore warrants an opportunity for satisfaction researchers (Eckhardt et al., 2019). Measuring satisfaction with specific providers in the peer-to-peer context is unique due to the triadic structure of the sharing economy where customers and peer service providers interact with the help of the sharing platform providers (Benoit et al., 2017), especially in the setup that allows reciprocity of reviewing among participants (Proserpio et al., 2018; Zervas et al., 2021).

The online ratings pertaining to the peer-providers independently contribute to the overall satisfaction, not as a reflection of product quality (Engler et al., 2015). It is not atypical to measure satisfaction with individual service provider and satisfaction with the platform within sharing economy (Barari et al., 2022), just as it had been to measure encounter satisfaction separately from overall satisfaction (Bitner & Hubbert, 1994). In the context of the hospitality industry, the star ratings given to each Airbnb 'host' are of particular focus of the current research. Host-specific satisfaction is distinguishable from property-specific satisfaction in its influence on pricing on Airbnb (Engin & Vetschera, 2022). Among the four dimensions of home benefits, personalized services, authenticity, and social connection of an Airbnb experience (Li et al., 2019), the satisfaction with the host may be related to social connection, whereas overall satisfaction will encompass all four aspects. It is interesting to note that while provider-specific satisfaction has been shown to positively influence overall satisfaction (Barari et al., 2022), the factors that

contribute to higher ratings for the host or the specific provider are not always directly related to the overall accommodation experience. Peripheral factors about the peer-providers (such as presence of photos in the host profile, as well as the recognizability of the provided photos, and whether the head is tilted) significantly influence the ratings (Jang, 2022). Photo verification service is another facet that increases ratings by reducing uncertainty and risk (Ma et al., 2022).

Considering the fact that ratings on Airbnb are inflated due to bilateral review mechanism (Gutt et al., 2019; Proserpio et al., 2018; Zervas et al., 2021), the current research chooses to utilize a context of a service failure within which to measure satisfaction. In a neutral or positive service encounter, the effect of service characteristics may be less predictable than in a service failure. The service failure context would be expected to exert a downward influence on satisfaction and thus would offer a rigorous environment in which to test variables with a positive effect on satisfaction.

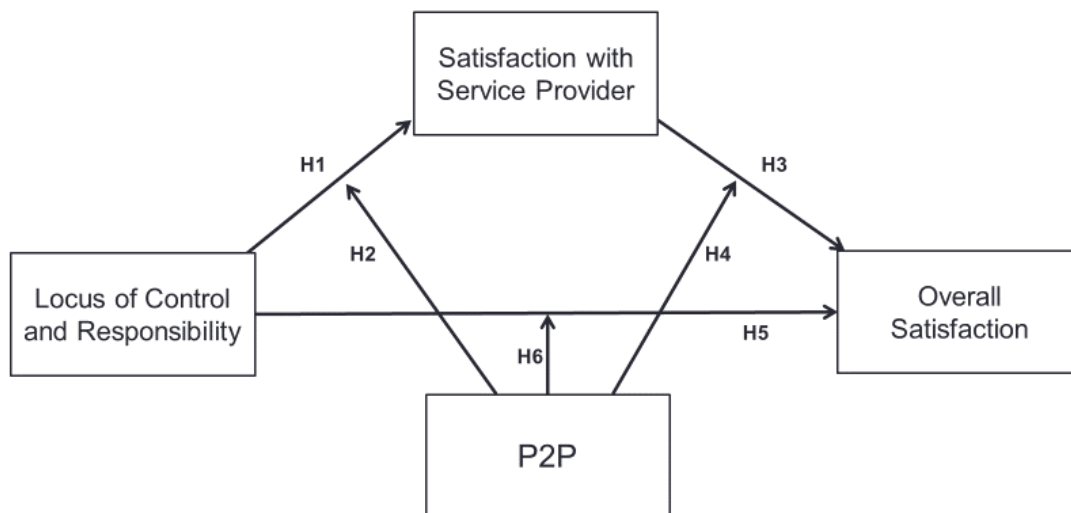
Whether the service failure will influence satisfaction with the specific provider and overall satisfaction to the same or different degree depends on several factors, one of which relates to the independence of the providers (e.g., hosts on Airbnb) versus the platform (e.g., Airbnb) on which they offer goods/services. Compared to other business models (e.g., Business-to-Consumer (B2C) models such as hotels), the context of the Peer-to-Peer (P2P) models inevitably encourage consumers to interact more personally with the peer providers. The degree of peer-to-peer interaction within the triadic structure of the lateral exchange market involving the customer, peer-provider, and the platform plays an integral role in the attributional process to determine specifically where consumers place blame (Ketrón & Mai, 2022). Uniquely in the P2P settings, consumers tend to develop an 'empathy lens' toward the individual peer-providers (Costello & Reczek, 2020) and develop perceptions of social closeness with peer-providers (Frechette et al., 2020). The role of empathy has been noted in the recent work on the sharing economy (Giesler et al., 2019; Perren & Kozinets, 2018). Empathy will be more likely to be generated for a fellow human rather than a non-personal entity such as a business or firms (e.g., hotels in the conventional hospitality industry). In fact, the power of human brands often intimidates, to the degree that it hijacks corporate brand (Giertz et al., 2022), prompts anxiety in consumers with the fear of losing a particular salesperson despite overall satisfaction with the company (Palmatier et al., 2007). Such an empathetic view from a peer-consumer toward another peer-provider inherent in the P2P settings will operate on attributional process to properly place the blame for the service failure. Moreover, consumers are known to offer more of the benefit of the doubt for the service quality issues in settings similar to P2P exchange modes versus modes wholly owned by a firm (Mai & Ketrón, 2022). This is consistent with the research on social distance, which changes how a person evaluates a situation, particularly when there is some kind of blame or attribution of responsibility involved. Research suggests that there may be room for customers in the P2P context to allow more of the benefit of the doubt for a peer-provider compared to a corporate provider (Liviatan et al., 2008). Therefore, we hypothesize differential effect of the P2P context to operate within a service failure situation, to influence differently Overall Satisfaction and Satisfaction toward a Specific Provider.

Because of causal attribution, as a customer perceives the locus of responsibility for and control over a service failure shifting more towards the service provider, then satisfaction with that service provider should decrease, as should overall satisfaction with the service. Additionally, because overall satisfaction is a formative measure, satisfaction with the service provider will in turn affect overall satisfaction. With the P2P exchange context understood to have a greater social dimension to it (Kim and Yoon, 2022), it follows that the antecedents to satisfaction that involve evaluation of human actions may be susceptible to social forces and thus exhibit differences when

in a P2P context. In other words, a P2P context will influence the three effects just mentioned. The hypotheses are thus presented, and are illustrated in Figure 1 below:

- H1.** *Locus of responsibility for and control over a service failure (Locus) will have a negative relationship with satisfaction with that service provider (SatSP).*
- H2.** *The P2P context will moderate the relationship between Locus and SatSP.*
- H3.** *SatSP is positively related to overall satisfaction (OSat).*
- H4.** *P2P will moderate the relationship between SatSP and OSat.*
- H5.** *Locus will have a negative relationship with OSat.*
- H6.** *P2P will moderate the relationship between Locus and OSat.*

Figure 1
Regression Path Model



METHOD

An online survey using multiple vignettes (experimental situations) was administered online to panel members of Amazon’s Mechanical Turk service. Participation was limited to MTurk workers with at least a 98% approval rating and with a minimum of 1000 tasks completed. Respondents received a compensation of \$.50 for a completed survey. The study asked for *sex* and *age* (to screen out minors) then randomly presented a vignette either related to the B2B or P2P mode which described a scenario in which the respondent was asked to imagine traveling to another city and renting accommodations. In the B2B condition, the stay was similar to a hotel, whereas the P2P condition was “a service that connects you with a network of owners who rent out their own personal apartment”, meant to be like Airbnb or Vrbo. The vignettes are worded slightly different so as to reflect each consumption context. For example, in the P2P context the service provider is referred to as the ‘apartment owner,’ while in the B2C context they are called ‘lodging manager.’

After the presentation of the scenario's introduction and basic premise (renting a room for one night while traveling) participants were asked to imagine the service provider that they were dealing with, and then write a short description of that person. This intended to focus the respondents' thoughts on the interaction with the provider. This method, similar to Henderson et al. (2006) and Frechette et al. (2020), serves to give the respondent their own clear vision of the service provider, about whom they are going to answer questions. See Appendix 1 for the wording of the vignettes and satisfaction questions. The vignette continued and described a service failure: a noisy air conditioner fan that, although not that noticeable, was not able to be fixed and did end up lasting throughout the whole night. The nature of the service failure was chosen to represent an issue that could plausibly occur in either an Airbnb or hotel context. Two variables were randomly manipulated. First, the business model of the lodging choice was either presented as a hotel or a P2P option similar to Airbnb. Also, as the service failure was presented it was described as either stemming directly from actions of the service provider or otherwise outside of their control. This manipulated the locus of control and responsibility to focus on either the service provider or environmental factors. The Locus of Control and Responsibility was measured using two items. Locus Item 1: "How responsible was the owner for the (service failure)?" Locus Item 2: "How much control did the owner have over the (service failure)?" Both items were scored on a scale from 1 (none) to 5 (a lot).

Immediately after reading the full vignette, respondents were asked a comprehension check question: "What is the situation you are asked to imagine?" One of the answer choices was "I'm renting a room." Next, respondents were asked to give two customer satisfaction scores, for overall satisfaction (*OSat*) and satisfaction with the service provider (*SatSP*), both on a scale of 1-5 stars, 5 being the best. The *OSat* question framed the situation similar to receiving a digital request from a company to give a satisfaction rating for the particular consumption experience. The question read: "As you leave the apartment your smartphone beeps. It is a message asking you to rate your satisfaction with your stay. From what you imagined of your experience staying in the apartment and interacting with the owner, please give an overall customer satisfaction score from 1 to 5 stars, 5 being the best." The *SatSP* question was: "Also please give a satisfaction score specifically for the owner. Please rate their performance 1 to 5 stars, 5 being the best." The B2B condition had slight but appropriate changes in the wording of the satisfaction questions.

Next, an attention check question was presented. The question wording initially talked about consumer experiences, but then switched right at the end saying to disregard the previous sentence and to simply "check the 'none of the above' option." If the respondent was not paying attention, they would not have caught the change in the instructions.

Finally, three items adapted from Liberman and Trope (1998) and Vallacher and Wegner (1989) measured experience with the service context, which can influence judgments. These included as a control. The survey then thanked the respondent for participating and gave a unique code that enabled payment.

RESULTS

A total of 292 responses came in over the course of six days. Any responses that had a total survey duration of less than two minutes were deemed to have been done too quickly and were omitted. Responses that incorrectly answered the comprehension check or attention check questions were also deleted. This data screening procedure produced 275 valid responses. The final sample was 57% female, all ages 18 and over, with the following age distribution: 18-24, 9.1%, 25-44, 58.5%, 45-64 29.1%, and 65 and over, 3.3%. Summing the two items for *Locus*

created a scale with a Cronbach’s alpha of $\alpha = .858$. Also, the three survey items for the control variable *Experience* were summed to create their own scale ($\alpha = .84$). Exchange mode was included as a dichotomous variable, with B2C coded as 0 and P2P as 1. In the regression analysis this variable is referred to as *P2P*. Table 1 presents the variable descriptive statistics and correlations.

Table 1:
Correlations

	Mean	SD	OSat	SatSP	Locus	P2P	Sex	Age
<i>OSat</i>	3.978	0.694	1					
<i>SatSP</i>	4.349	0.731	.634**	1				
<i>Locus</i>	4.782	2.414	-0.099	-.228**	1			
<i>P2P</i>	0.527	0.500	.159**	0.054	0.044	1		
<i>Sex</i>	0.571	0.496	0.015	0.032	-0.082	0.077	1	
<i>Age</i>	3.266	0.666	-.122*	-0.071	0.027	0.017	0.103	1
<i>Experience</i>	14.138	4.384	-0.029	-0.05	0.036	-.243**	-0.041	0.016

Significance levels: * (.05), ** (.01), *** (.001)
 OSat overall satisfaction with the service
 SatSP satisfaction specifically with the service provider
 Sex coded: male 0, female 1; P2P coded: B2C 0, P2P 1
 N = 275

The analysis used the PROCESS bootstrapping regression tool, model 59 (Hayes, 2017). Results of the regression analysis are presented in Table 2. Higher scores of *Locus* did in fact have a negative and statistically significant relationship with *SatSP*, supporting H1. Additionally, *P2P* significantly moderated the relationship between *Locus* and *SatSP*, supporting H2. *SatSP* then had a positive and statistically significant relationship with *OSat*, supporting H3. The other three hypotheses (H4, H5, and H6) were not supported.

Three hypotheses related to the post-consumption stage were supported by the results of the regression model. Figure 2 shows which model paths were significant as well as which hypotheses were supported. The most impactful finding of the study is based on the investigation of H2 showing the effect on the satisfaction with the service provider (*SatSP*) from the interaction of *P2P* and *Locus*.

This effect is also illustrated in Figure 3 which separates the P2P and B2C data. It is clear that the hypothesized relationship between *Locus* and *SatSP* is only evident in the B2C data, but not in the P2P data. The expectation is that as the service provider is seen as more responsible for and in control over a service failure, specific satisfaction with that service provider will suffer. This is true for the B2C condition. Interestingly, the P2P condition data shows no such downward trend. Perhaps the expectation for the P2P (Airbnb owner) is somehow lower, countering the downward pressure on satisfaction scores as a result of a service failure, essentially rendering *Locus* useless. The exact mechanism within the P2P context producing this interaction should be further investigated in future research.

Figure 2:
Path Model with Significant Relationships

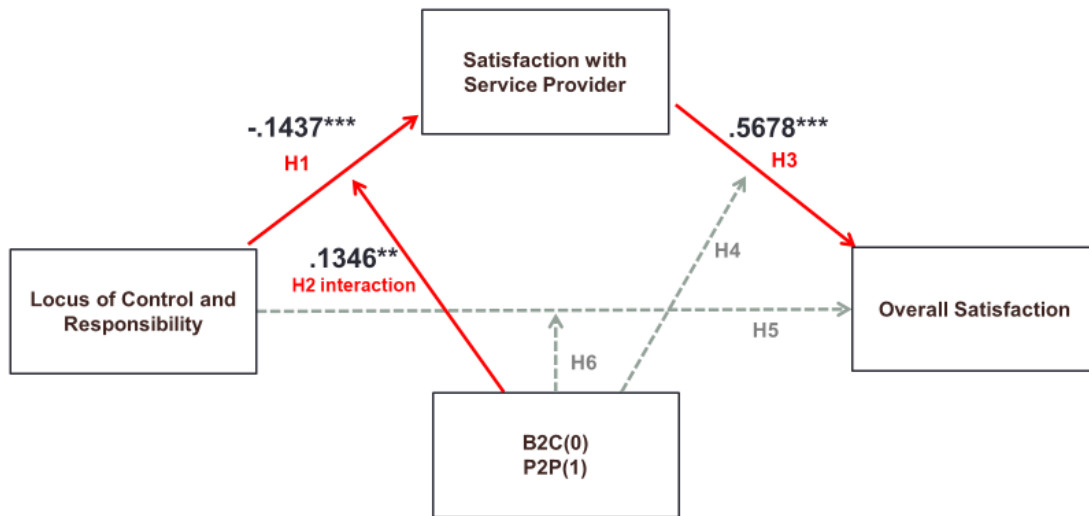
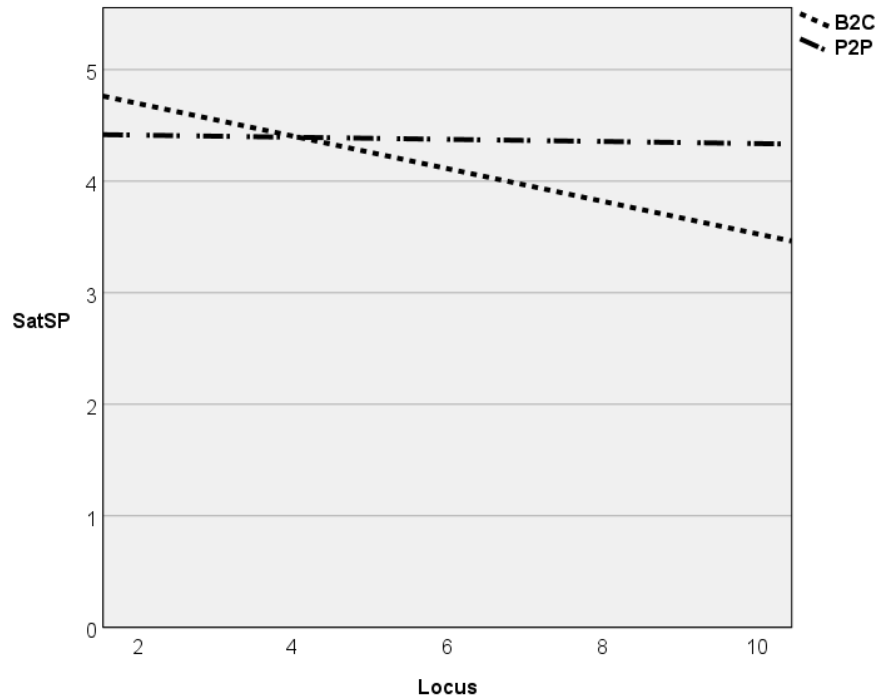


Table 2:
Regression Results PROCESS Model 59

Outcome: SatSP		<i>b</i>	SE		
	<i>Locus</i>	-.1437***	0.0265		
	<i>P2P</i>	-.5596**	0.1903		
	<i>P2P x Locus</i>	.1346***	0.0354		
Outcome: OSat		<i>b</i>	SE		
	<i>Locus</i>	0.0135	0.0224		
	<i>SatSP</i>	0.5678***	0.0680		
	<i>P2P</i>	-.0838	0.4701		
	<i>P2P x Locus</i>	-.0068	0.0288		
	<i>P2P x SatSP</i>	0.0695	0.0945		
Conditional indirect effects of Locus on OSat at values of the moderator					
	LLCI	ULCI	<i>b</i>	SE	
	B2C	-.1234	-.0450	-.0816 ¹	0.02011
	P2P	-.0372	0.0237	-.0058	0.01531
Significance levels: * (.05), ** (.01), *** (.001)				N = 275	
¹ Significant relationship					
LLCI/ULCI = Lower level and upper level confidence intervals (95%)					

Figure 3:

P2P condition shows no downward pressure on SatSP, while B2C condition does.



The common thread with the three supported hypotheses is that in this model they all involve satisfaction with the service provider (*SatSP*), either as an antecedent or direct effect. This suggests that although it seems that satisfaction in a P2P context does differ from that in a B2C context, it is limited to effects directly related to the service provider. In other words, the effect involves -- one could even say ‘protects’ or ‘buffers’-- the tangible human being in the encounter, but not satisfaction with the abstract and general concept of the service in its entirety.

Another outcome worthy of further investigation is the direct effect of P2P on *SatSP* in the current model. This relationship was not included in the hypotheses but is calculated as part of the interaction analysis. The direct effect of *P2P* on *SatSP* was negative and significant, which is counter to the result of the positive interaction effect, a condition known as competitive partial mediation. This suggests an omitted mediator on the direct path (Zhao et al., 2010). Discovering an omitted mediator(s) would shed more light into the process of how P2P context yields positive results.

DISCUSSION

Research Summary and Limitations

The main proposition of this study has been that the exchange mode of peer-to-peer collaborative consumption has unique qualities to it that result in different effects on satisfaction. Our approach was to test this main hypothesis with randomly assigned situational vignettes and related survey questions. The study presented above demonstrates consistent support for our main thesis, that P2P exchange was shown to have direct or indirect effects on customer satisfaction (overall, and with service rep). The indirect effect from *Locus* was mediated by *SatSP* and in certain circumstances were of the opposite sign of the direct effects from *P2P*. When combining

these results with those from prior work, it is apparent that P2P effects are present across three difference contexts: pre-consumption, consumption, and post-consumption. This fact is important as it suggests that P2P exchange may have influence in several traditional theoretical contexts of consumer behavior, for example those that deal with attitude (Ajzen, 1991), expectations (Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman, 1993), and satisfaction (Oliver, 1980). Table 3 gives a summary of the hypotheses and results.

Table 3:
Summary of Hypotheses and Results

H1. <i>Locus</i> is negatively related to Satisfaction with the Service Provider (<i>SatSP</i>)	Supported
H2. <i>P2P</i> will moderate the relationship between <i>Locus</i> and <i>SatSP</i>	Supported
H3. <i>SatSP</i> is positively related to Overall Satisfaction (<i>OSat</i>)	Supported
H4. <i>P2P</i> will moderate the relationship between <i>SatSP</i> and <i>OSat</i> .	Not Supported
H5. <i>Locus</i> will have a negative relationship with <i>OSat</i>	Not Supported
H6. <i>P2P</i> will moderate the relationship between <i>Locus</i> and <i>OSat</i> .	Not Supported

One of the limitations of the study is that the experimental conditions may not authentically depict real-life situations enough to measure correctly an effect from P2P. The survey did include a question to confirm that respondents knew they were being asked about a hotel or Airbnb-like experience. However, situational vignettes are not a real-world experience. Actual data from firms or surveys of consumers in the field undoubtedly could get closer to a real experience and could strengthen a study on this topic. Another limitation of the current research is the use of the service online panel for survey responses. Amazon’s Mechanical Turk service conveniently gives access to survey respondents, who are paid for their participation. There is not universal agreement, though, on the quality of data from MTurk. Even though the current study did not have a need to exclude a high number of responses, this is not always the case with MTurk data. Data quality has been known to be variable and tactics such as attention check questions and duration analysis are crucial steps when dealing with MTurk data. Again, actual firm or field data would improve future projects. It would be best if the relationships between the same variables could be shown across multiple methodological contexts, for example, descriptive surveys, lab experiments, as well as field studies.

An additional limitation may stem from the wording of the vignettes, specifically the passage that introduced the first satisfaction/star rating question: “As you leave the apartment your smartphone beeps. It is a message asking you to rate your satisfaction with your stay. From what you imagined of your experience staying in the apartment and interacting with the owner, please give an overall customer satisfaction score from 1 to 5 stars, 5 being the best.” Since the question mentions both ‘experience staying in the apartment’ as well as ‘interacting with the owner’, this could be seen as asking two questions in one statement. If the reader was influenced by this wording then this may account for some of the relationship between *SatSP* and *OSat*. There was, however, a physical characteristic of the survey that may mitigate any effect from the question wording. Firstly, during the survey respondents saw both satisfaction questions on the screen at the same time, giving the respondent the opportunity to see the difference between the two questions. Also, each satisfaction question had a phrase in bold text so as to emphasize the

intention. For OSat the bolded phrase was “give an overall customer satisfaction score”, and for SatSP it was “specifically for the owner”. Finally, in addition to the question wording, next to the star rating icons used to indicate an answer were more labels that read “Overall Customer Satisfaction Score” and “Owner Satisfaction Score”. These factors offered multiple indications that the questions were distinct. Although it is not possible to determine ex post facto the degree to which the wording influenced the outcome, it is likely that the survey layout helped to mitigate any unintended effect.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Our examination of P2P effects answers calls such as: “it is not just the *consumer-salesperson* relationship that needs to be considered in the rental context. The *consumer-consumer* relationship should also be considered, particularly in rental situations without intermediaries” (Koppenhafer, 2014, p. 53). Consumer to consumer social interactions are known to play a key role in spreading word-of-mouth information, an important factor in developing product or service expectations (Naylor, 2016). That social factors also influence post-consumption satisfaction is intuitive, since expectations play a role at that stage, too. In this regard, this study makes two significant contributions to managerial decision-making. First, P2P collaborative consumption exchange modes have an effect on consumer satisfaction, which suggests an inherent competitive advantage for collaborative consumption business models. This competitive advantage may also be good news for those who are looking to promote sustainable economic business models. Since the access-over-ownership nature of collaborative consumption is seen as promoting lower rates of product turnover and less overall consumption, firms may switch to a more sustainability-friendly business model if it can be shown that the bottom line may actually benefit by doing so. If firms employing collaborative consumption models can be more sustainable (by aggregating existing under-utilized assets) and/or profitable (by occupying niches in pricing or convenience), it is easy to see that the result may be gains in both economic and social welfare.

A second managerial contribution this study makes is by providing more information to existing traditional firms, big or small, about the opportunities that reside in innovative business models. Several major moves of companies have either partnered with or outright purchased collaborative consumption firms. For example, in the car sharing sector alone there are two such examples. AVIS Budget Group, the major player in traditional car rentals bought 100% control of the B2C car sharing service Zipcar for \$500 million (Kell, 2013). Also, the P2P ride sharing company Lyft has partnered with General Motors to allowed people to rent GM cars specifically to join the Lyft driver network (Somerville, 2016). This allowed Lyft to tap into a new segment of drivers who may have had a barrier to participation (no car), while GM benefits from an innovative way to lease their cars. If traditional firms understood better the dynamics (and opportunities) of collaborative consumption business models, we may see more of these moves in the future.

Social factors can increase arousal and positive affect (Williams & Anderson, 1999), key antecedents to satisfaction. If, as we suspect, a kind of socially-derived factor is indeed the underlying mechanism driving the P2P effect on satisfaction, then that position is consistent with current viewpoints that see satisfaction as a ‘social process’ (Swan, 1992; Wright & Larsen, 2022). This is good news for non-P2P firms, because there are many conceivable ways to make social or interpersonal factors more salient in their businesses. Firms need not adopt sharing economy business models in order to benefit from the effects offered by socially-derived factors. If the underlying mechanism responsible for the P2P-satisfaction relationship is better investigated, then

traditional firms may be able to replicate the outcomes without having to change their business model.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The current research contributes to extant research in several areas, first starting with the comprehensive examination of consumer satisfaction in both cognitive and affective dimensions, and then focusing more on the social aspect of the P2P exchange context. As satisfaction is understood to be a multidimensional outcome that is the result of both thinking and feeling (Westbrook, 1987), any examination of satisfaction may be more comprehensive by addressing both cognitive and affective elements. In the present research, we examined a service failure assessed through a cognitive evaluative process of causal attribution (Weiner, 1985), involving the mental processing of information from both a previously developed standard of comparison and current brand performance (Cadotte, Woodruff, and Jenkins, 1987). What can be further explored in the framework include affective dimensions, such as social connections (Johnson and Grayson, 2005; Shi, Hong, Wang, and Pavlou, 2013) in which affective responses become stronger and more positively valenced with the reduction in social distance. Future satisfaction studies, particularly those dealing with P2P or hospitality contexts, can examine social constructs such as familiarity, similarity, and in-group membership between customer and service provider.

Honing on these relevant variables of social connections, social distance, and social closeness can be a key to elucidating the underlying mechanism of how P2P context suppresses negative transfer of service failure. Calls for examining a social dimension of P2P exchange go back several years, including by Lamberton and Rose (2012). With already a decade of research since 2012, this area of research still has many unexplored directions, ripe for future contributions. Social closeness has already been established as a mediating factor in the consumption and pre-consumption stages of P2P exchange (Frechette et al., 2020), and the same variable may be influential during post-consumption as well. The most promising research would focus on a type of interpersonal or social dimensions to explore the mechanism underlying the P2P-satisfaction relationship. This approach could also answer calls for research into dysfunctional consumer behavior (Aron, 2016). If social factors can influence causal attribution (who we blame for service failure) then affecting consumer retaliation (how we respond to service failure) is likely, as with the findings of Ketron and Mai (2022).

Future research in this area can also examine different types of service failure in the P2P-hospitality sector, or for P2P businesses in general. For services like Airbnb, some research has already suggested some general categories of process failures to guide future examination. Sosa et al. (2021) concluded that service experiences could be divided into either process failures, (such as those related to booking or to staff responsiveness), or outcome failures (e.g., safety issues, problems with other guests or hosts). These failures are said to be evaluated either objectively or subjectively, and if so, then the dimension of social influence that underlies subjective judgements could make those service failures a more interesting area of inquiry, at least for P2P scholars. To be more relevant, research may want to focus specifically on some of the more typical manifestations of service failure. Noise complaints and poor customer service from hosts are listed as some of the top issues in Airbnb-like service environments (Griffith, 2020; HustlePads.com, 2021). Researching these issues directly may broaden the appeal of the findings since both guests and hosts could benefit from such knowledge.

Another direction for future satisfaction research is to look further at satisfaction and service recovery, not just service failure. Research on service recovery has shown that a firm's

response does play a role in subsequent levels of satisfaction. Wirtz (2004) found that important factors were the immediacy of service recovery, the inclusion of some kind of compensation, and the offering of an apology. In that effort, future researchers can consider the correspondence bias, a tendency to attribute blame or intentions differently depending on how close we feel to the actor (Gilbert & Malone, 1995). With strangers the default tendency is to think “you meant to do that,” even if environmental conditions constrained their behavior. Yet with those we perceive as socially closer to us we are more likely to examine all evidence equally rather than just blame the actor’s intentions by default. Future research could explore if a social dimension prevents the correspondence bias from taking place when satisfaction, P2P exchange, and service failures intersect.

Examination of the correspondence bias in sharing economy service failures could advance theory in the area of how attributions contribute to consumer experiences. The current paper investigates the degree to which the P2P exchange context moderates the predictable attribution patterns due to constrained or unconstrained decision making. Thus, the present results strengthen the integration of attribution theory with consumer experiences by demonstrating the presence of such effects in within the P2P exchange context. P2P exchange, however, is not a single monolith in that there are varying degrees of collaboration between the peer-provider and peer-consumer. Within some business models the peer-consumer is expected to contribute to the maintenance and up-keep of the shared asset, drawing the consumer closer to the locus of responsibility. It seems intuitive to think that the degree to which the consumer is expected to contribute to the execution of the P2P exchange would influence attribution processes. A logical next step could be to explore boundary conditions that result in the consumer perceiving their ‘self’ as being responsible for service outcomes. Furthermore, attribution theory in the consumer context is not limited to the domain of P2P firms. Traditional B2C firms also interact with their customers and can deliberately take steps to influence perceived social factors from the perspective of the consumer. In this case, theory stemming from newly evolved P2P business models would then be informing advances in legacy business models, resulting in a sort of symmetry where the old and the new models learn the underlying principles that are common to both.

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SUBMITTED: 17 August, 2022

REVISED: 3 October, 2022

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Appendix 1. Vignettes and satisfaction questions

Wording that changed across the different conditions is indicated either in bold (P2P condition) or in parentheses (B2C condition).

“Please read the following closely. You'll be asked to imagine a situation and a person. After you finish reading you'll be asked some questions related to this, so try to remember the details that you imagine.

“Imagine that you are traveling to a city and need a place to stay for one night. You have chosen to use **a service that connects you with a network of owners who rent out their own personal apartment** (a traditional lodging company that has a several apartments to rent for short term stays, similar to a hotel) for short term stays. You arrive and the apartment owner shows you around. You enter their apartment, have a look around, and have a seat on the sofa. Their apartment is clean and relatively comfortable, you take the keys and the apartment owner leaves. As you sit in their apartment you look around and begin to think about your experience so far.

“Please think about the apartment owner who is **renting out their personal apartment** (the lodging manager who is renting the company's apartment) to you. Try to imagine details about them and describe him or her in writing, for example what would they look like, what do they do at home, what hobbies they might have.

“Write some details about the **apartment owner** (lodging manager) in the box below. Random words or nonsensical typing will not be accepted.”

Here respondents were given space to create a written description of the service provider. The second part of vignettes came next, randomly showing one version (High Locus or Low Locus).

High locus: Service provider more at fault (own actions)

“Imagine again that you are in the apartment and you’ve recently arrived. It was a very hot evening, and in an attempt to increase the efficiency of your air conditioner the **apartment owner** (lodging manager) made some adjustments to the temperature control. However, their attempt actually made the air conditioner fan a little noisy. Even though the noise wasn’t that noticeable, it ended up lasting throughout the night. The next morning you are ready to check out and you meet the **apartment owner** (lodging manager) to hand back the keys. Payment is all handled online.”

Low Locus: Service provider less at fault (constrained by the environment)

“Imagine again that you are in the apartment and you’ve recently arrived. It was a very hot evening, and in an attempt to increase the efficiency of your air conditioner the **apartment owner** (lodging manager) made some adjustments to the temperature control. You mention hearing a noise that sounds like an air conditioner’s fan. However, the **apartment owner** (lodging manager) says that it is actually from the building next door and is out of their control. Even though the noise wasn’t that noticeable, it ended up lasting throughout the night. The next morning you are ready to check out and you meet the **apartment owner** (lodging manager) to hand back the keys. Payment is all handled online.”

Satisfaction Questions

“As you leave your smartphone beeps. It is a message asking you to rate your satisfaction with your stay. From what you imagined of your experience staying in the room and interacting with the **apartment owner** (lodging manager), please give an overall customer satisfaction score from 1 to 5 stars, 5 being the best.

“Also please give a satisfaction score specifically for the **apartment owner** (lodging manager). Please rate their performance 1 thru 5 stars, 5 being the best.”

The rest of the survey was then presented without changes across conditions.