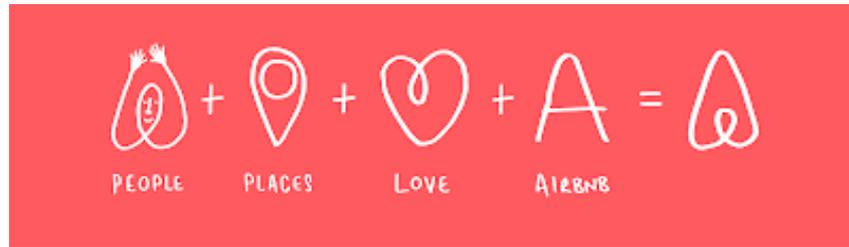


Is Airbnb succeeding in building a relationship with you?



Airbnb is a worldwide giant in the sharing community and has recently seen tremendous growth within developing countries such as South Africa. However, Airbnb is relatively new to the marketplace, so how do they ensure that they develop long-lasting relationships with their customers?

Relationship quality aids in forming long-term relationships with customers, helps strengthen the relationship between firms and customers, reduces customers' perceived risk and leads to greater customer loyalty. Although relationship quality has been identified as an important measure in relationship marketing, few studies have measured both a disaggregate approach and a composite approach to relationship quality in one study. Comparing these approaches is important as it gives marketers insights into how relationship quality should be applied in marketing strategies to promote customer loyalty.

To address this gap, Shannon Collins, a Master's student in the Department of Marketing Management, examined both approaches to identify which approach provides greater insight into the outcomes of relationship quality, namely loyalty and positive word-of-mouth, within the context of Airbnb. Responses from 252 South African Airbnb users were analysed, and findings suggest that while both approaches to relationship quality predict loyalty, the composite approach is a better predictor of customer loyalty. The disaggregate approach revealed that trust was a stronger predictor of loyalty than commitment, which may indicate that, since Airbnb operates on an online platform, it is associated with large amounts of perceived risk, making trust paramount for customers.

Findings further indicate that although trust and commitment are important predictors of loyalty, respondents view relationship quality as one construct. Thus, to increase loyalty, marketers need to ensure that customers not only trust (and are committed to) their services, but more importantly regard their overall relationship quality with the firm as high. This can be achieved by building a relationship with customers; offering additional post purchase services such as feedback surveys after using the platform or creating platforms where users can share referrals and comments. Airbnb could also ensure trust by using banking platforms with fraud-preventing security measures, providing confirmation emails to ensure bookings or providing a 24 hour customer service for any problems or complaints.

This research was conducted as part of the fulfilment of the [Master's degree](#) in Marketing Management in 2019 with the [Department of Marketing Management](#) by Shannon Collins under the supervision of [Prof. Pierre Mostert](#).