

Vacation rental management firms: Check-in practices and online ratings

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Abstract

In-person interactions between a vacation rental management firm and its customers mainly happen during check-ins, converting this process into a decisive touchpoint. Nevertheless, there is scant evidence on how check-in practices affect guests' satisfaction in the context of vacation rental management companies. Accordingly, this study examines the impact of three possible check-in practices on guests' online ratings. To this end, data from three experimental studies in a real vacation rental management company in Barcelona is examined. The first experiment inspects the effects of asking for a good review to guests during the check-in. The second experiment examines the influence of assigning a check-in agent who can proficiently speak the same language as the guests' native language. Finally, the third experiment evaluates the impact of doing check-ins on the remote. The results establish three managerial implications: (1) asking for good ratings during check-ins do not have any effect, (2) guests derive a positive satisfaction when the check-in agent masters their native language, and (3) guests prefer in-person check-ins rather than remote ones.

Key words: Check-in, online rating, vacation rental management companies, Airbnb

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Introduction

The emergence of Airbnb back in 2008 completely transformed the hospitality industry (Aydin, 2019). Peer-to-peer (P2P) accommodation exchanges appeared as a low-cost option integrated into local communities that allowed for a more authentic experience when traveling (Guttentag *et al.*, 2018). However, what initially started as a marketplace for P2P exchanges has also evolved into a marketplace for business to consumer (B2C) exchanges (Demir & Emekli, 2021), where vacation rental property management companies have become a key player. The business model of management companies consists of fully administering houses, apartments, villas, and similar properties on behalf of their owners in exchange for a commission. Management companies usually take care of the promotion, pricing, reservation, check-in, cleaning, and maintenance processes. Although these companies existed well before the arrival of Airbnb, the emergence of P2P tourist accommodation platforms undoubtedly represented a positive economic shock for this tourism accommodation subsector (Sisson, 2018).

An important part of vacation rental property management companies' bookings comes from Airbnb, the hallmark of the tourist accommodation industry's sharing economy. Indeed, some of these agencies even call themselves "Airbnb management service" firms (BnbLord, 2021; Hosty, 2021). Another relevant share of their bookings is obtained through online travel agencies (OTAs), such as Booking.com. As a consequence, the main distribution channels for vacation rental property management companies are P2P platforms and OTAs. In Europe, more than 70% of these companies' bookings are materialized on these platforms (Menze, 2018). Correspondingly, these management companies strive to obtain good online ratings on the properties they administer because having good online ratings is vital to attract new customers and increase the likelihood of a sale in sharing-economy platforms and OTAs (Chen & Chang, 2018a; De Pelsmacker *et al.*, 2018).

A convenient location and excellent facilities of a property, and a positive interaction with a host are vital determinants of a positive experience in P2P exchanges (Cheng & Jin, 2019), and hence, key for obtaining good online ratings. Regarding the host's interaction in the rental of entire homes or apartments, the in-person interaction between guests and hosts mainly happens during check-in, converting this process into a powerful touchpoint. Certainly, previous studies analyzed, in P2P accommodation exchanges, the check-in process and, specifically, the interaction between guests and hosts, establishing that pleasant and authentic interactions are associated with high guests' satisfaction ratings (Cheng & Jin, 2019; Xu *et al.*, 2019; Zhu *et al.*, 2019). Yet, to the best of the authors' knowledge, there is scant evidence on the impact of the in-person interaction on online satisfaction ratings when a property is managed by a company instead of a peer host. The check-in process in which the host is a rather impersonal management company might be completely different from a check-in process in which the host is an independent owner. These companies can be quite large and administer many apartments scattered throughout a tourism destination to exploit economies of scale.

Accordingly, this study proposes to analyze, in the context of vacation rental management companies managing properties on sharing economy platforms and OTAs, the impact of different check-in practices on online ratings. To this end, data from three different experimental studies from a real vacation rental property management company in Barcelona have been analyzed. The first experiment studied the effects of asking guests for a good review during the check-in. The second experiment examined the influence of assigning a check-in agent who masters the same language as the guests' native language. The third experiment evaluated the impact of doing check-ins on the remote. In each of these experimental studies, a control group and a treatment one have been created. The former is characterized by the absence of the evaluated check-in practice, whereas the latter includes it. The

control and treatment groups' online ratings have been compared to assess the check-in practice's impact.

Barcelona seems to be a good scenario for analyzing different check-in practices undertaken by vacation rental management companies for at least the following two reasons. First, Barcelona ranked as the 17th most visited city by international tourists in 2019 (Mastercard, 2020). Second, Barcelona represents one of the most important European markets for the sharing economy platform Airbnb (Bishop, 2017).

Related literature and hypotheses development

Online reputation, which includes rating and reviews, has become a key decision factor in the tourist accommodation industry (Blal & Sturman, 2014; Casalo *et al.*, 2015; De Pelsmacker *et al.*, 2018; Hensens, 2015; Phillips *et al.*, 2017). This statement is undeniably true for short-term rentals as they are mainly traded in online marketplaces such as Airbnb. Online rating impacts consumers' perceived value of a listed property on online platforms, which, in its turn, affect the likelihood of choosing a given property (Chen & Chang, 2018b). Moreover, there exists empirical evidence that a higher online rating is associated with a higher price of sharing economy-based accommodation rentals (Chen & Xie, 2017; Gibbs *et al.*, 2018; Lawani *et al.*, 2019; Liang *et al.*, 2017; Teubner *et al.*, 2017; Wang & Nicolau, 2017).

Due to the importance of online ratings, previous studies analyzed which factors impact guests' satisfaction and are prone to result in an excellent online rating for properties traded on sharing-economy platforms. Xu *et al.* (2019) highlight that guests value the facilities and the overall experience in a short-term vacation rental. Cheng and Jin (2019) and Ju *et al.* (2019) show that location and the interaction between the guest and the host are crucial elements that determine the accommodation experience. In fact, one of the main travelers' motivations for staying in sharing economy accommodations is the search for unique and memorable experiences and authentic interactions with locals (Lin, 2020; Mao & Lyu, 2017; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016). In this vein, Belarmino *et al.* (2019) show that customers choosing peer-to-peer accommodations give particular importance to their relationships with hosts. Similarly, Zhang (2019) also establishes the importance of host-guest interactions in this type of tourist accommodation establishment.

In the context of the sharing economy, especially rental of entire homes or apartments, the on-site interaction between guests and hosts mainly happens during the check-in, converting this process into a vital part of the experience. Tussyadiah and Zach (2017) point out that a check-in experience that brings about a welcome feeling tends to yield a higher rating from sharing economy guests. Likewise, Grandey *et al.* (2005) show that hotel customers value an authentic experience during the check-in. However, the check-in process of vacation rental management firms has its idiosyncrasy and, to the best of the authors' knowledge, has been unexplored so far. These firms may manage properties scattered throughout a tourism destination, coordinating the entire process from a centralized office. Accordingly, large firms engaged in this economic activity have traditionally been sending an employee, who is not the host, to welcome the guest and perform the check-in process. If there are no incidents during the stay, guests are likely to not meet in-person with the company again and check out on their own. As a result, the check-in process usually constitutes the only in-person touchpoint between management companies and guests. In this sense, any action undertaken by management companies during check-in can be decisive in obtaining good online ratings for their properties.

Accordingly, management companies may be tempted to take advantage of the check-in process to encourage guests to post an online rating after their stay. Indeed, soliciting good online reviews and ratings is a strategy applied by many hotels (Magno *et al.*, 2018), but that usually happens during check-

out. However, as argued, such a request in person by management companies can only be made during check-in since this is the only moment in which a face-to-face interaction occurs. Certainly, the rating could also be solicited after check-out by other means, such as email or phone call, but not in person. Asking for online ratings and reviews during check-in contrasts with the advice given by ReviewPro (2019) of only asking for them during the check-out process or shortly after the stay since guests have already enjoyed the experience and have their memories fresh at those points in time. This observation suggests that asking for a rating during the check-in process may be ineffective and grounds the first hypothesis of this paper

Hypothesis 1: Asking for a good online rating during the check-in process does not impact the guests' rating.

Another critical aspect of a check-in process delivered by a vacation rental management company has to do with the language used in the in-person interaction. Companies managing a considerable amount of properties usually have several employees who, in their turn, might speak different languages. Therefore, vacation rental management companies may want to exploit this fact since Wang *et al.* (2015) establish that matching the native language of the guest with the service provider language results in a better customer experience in a hotel check-in scenario. Alternatively, since vacation rental customers are looking for authentic experiences in this accommodation type (Lin, 2020; Mao & Lyu, 2017; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016), they may not appreciate such a language match as long as they can communicate in another language. Therefore, both forces may counterbalance, yielding to the second hypothesis formulated in the context of vacation rental management companies:

Hypothesis 2: Matching the guest's native language with a language mastered by the check-in agent does not impact guests' rating.

Alternatively, an increasing trend in the sharing economy accommodation industry is to employ self-check-in systems such as smart locks (Airbnb, 2019). Several authors have considered the use of self-service technologies (SST) in the tourism industry. For instance, Amaro and Duarte (2015) argue that travel providers should benefit from using technological advances like apps for mobile devices to facilitate check-ins. Nevertheless, Kim *et al.* (2012) and Oh *et al.* (2016) find that some customers still prefer human interactions over SST. In an airport setting, Gelderman *et al.* (2011) show that customers would rather have interpersonal check-in if the check-in desks are not crowded. These considerations, jointly with the peculiarities of what individuals are looking for in the sharing economy, suggest that guests might prefer an in-person check-in instead of self-check-in systems. This results in the third hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: Using a remote check-in has a negative impact on guests' rating.

Methodology

The methodology for this study is quantitative. Three different studies have been undertaken to analyze if any of the three proposed check-in practices impacts the guests' online rating of vacation rental properties. Each of these studies uses an experimental approach and has been conducted in a Barcelona vacation rental management company that administers more than 100 apartments. This company mainly offers these properties on Airbnb and Booking.com.

First study setup

The first of the studies is a randomized controlled trial that examined if asking guests for a good online rating during check-in affects the guests' online ratings. To this end, a sample of guests who accommodated in apartments managed by this company between July and October 2019 were randomly distributed into a treatment group and a control group. Specifically, for each guest in the sample, a computer randomly decided if a check-in agent had to finish the check-in process by saying the following sentence or not: "In case you have a nice stay in the apartment, I would very much appreciate it if you could leave us a good online rating.". In the treatment group, guests were encouraged to positively rate the apartment, whereas guests in the control group were not explicitly asked about rating the apartment. From all guests assigned in the treatment or control groups, 131 evaluated their vacation rental, and they constitute this first study's sample. Among them, 67 belong to the control group and 64 to the treatment one.

Second study setup

Through a natural experiment, the second study investigates the impact on the guest's online rating of assigning a check-in agent who masters the same language as the guest's native language. In particular, the country of origin of check-in agents employed by this vacation rental are diverse and, therefore, the languages they master are also different. Spanish, French, German, and Italian are among the different fluent languages spoken by the check-in agents, apart from English. Consequently, it might be the case that guests' first language coincides with the check-in agents' mother tongue or with a language they master. Accordingly, guests for this company can be grouped into (1) guests whose check-in agent masters their same native language and (2) guests whose check-in agent does not speak their same native language and might need to communicate in a second language spoken by both, such as English. Nevertheless, this study's vacation management company does not assign check-in agents to guests based on a language match. Instead, the company daily assigns to each check-in agent a group of properties that are located nearby. This criterion brings about two groups of guests that mimic a treatment group and a control group of a randomized controlled trial. In this vein, it could be considered that the way each check-in is appointed to a check-in agent concerning a possible language match as if randomly assigned, constituting a natural experiment. In this context, this study examined a sample of 390 check-ins that were performed between January and October 2019 for which the first language of the guests was either Spanish, French, German, or Italian, and who rated the apartments online. Guests whose first language is English were excluded since all check-in agents in this company perfectly speak English. In this second study sample, 174 individuals had a language match with their check-in agent, and 216 did not.

Third study setup

Finally, the third study analyzed, employing a natural experiment, the relationship between doing the check-in on remote and guests' online ratings. This vacation rental management company has ten apartments equipped with an SST that automatically opens the doors from its headquarters since March 2019. However, although the system to open the doors on the remote is in place, not all check-ins end up being done remotely. Doing a remote or an in-person check-in depends on the availability of check-in agents. The policy of the company is to do in-person check-ins whenever possible. Thus, the company often does remote check-ins on busy days and in-person check-ins on quiet days for these properties. This policy brings about two groups of guests who accommodate in these apartments that also mimic treatment and control groups of a randomized controlled trial. In this setting, this study examined a sample of 116 guests who accommodated in one of these ten apartments between March and October 2019 and who left an online rating. In this third study sample, 80 individuals experienced a remote check-in and 36 an in-person check-in.

Measures for the three studies

The dependent variable for each experimental study is the overall guest rating directly obtained from Airbnb or Booking.com, depending on the used guests' platform to make the reservation. Airbnb's ratings can range from 0 to 5, whereas Booking.com's ones take values between 0 and 10. Accordingly, Airbnb's ratings have been rescaled from 0 to 10 to make them comparable. A variable called $rating_{ia}$ equals this overall rating for each guest i who accommodated in an apartment a . Likewise, for each experimental study, a dummy variable called $treated_{ia}$ equals one if a guest i belongs to the treatment group and zero if they belong to the control group. An individual belongs to the treatment group if experimented with the evaluated check-in practice. The first study's individuals belong to the treatment group if asked for a good online rating. The second study's individuals are in the treatment group if they had a language match with the check-in agent. In their turn, the third study's individuals are in the treatment group if they had a remote check-in.

Apart from creating the two previous variables, information that can also affect the online rating has also been collected about each guest i who has stayed in an apartment a . A numerical variable called age_{ia} equals the age of the guest who booked the apartment and who likely posted the rating. $Ngroup_{ia}$ is a numerical variable equal to the number of people who accommodated in the apartment. A dummy variable called $airbnb_{ia}$ equals one if the reservation was made through Airbnb and zero if through Booking.com. In their turn, adr_{ia} and LoS_{ia} are two numerical variables equal to the average daily rate and the length of stay of the reservation, respectively. Finally, the neighborhood where the apartment is located and the guest's continent of origin have also been recorded.

Comparison between control and treatment groups

As in any other experimental setting, the control and the treatment groups in each study need to be comparable in terms of observables, and the only difference between them should be the exposure to the assessed treatment (Stock & Watson, 2012). To this end, and similarly as in Anguera-Torrell *et al.* (2021), the variables age_{ia} , $Ngroup_{ia}$, $airbnb_{ia}$, adr_{ia} and LoS_{ia} have been regressed on $treated_{ia}$. To verify that the control and treatment groups are similar, the coefficient on $treated_{ia}$ does not have to be statistically significant. These regressions have been performed per each experimental study, generating a total of 15 estimates for the coefficient on $treated_{ia}$. Of all these estimates, the coefficient has only emerged statistically significant for two cases, suggesting that indeed the control and treatment groups are comparable in the three studies. These results are available upon request.

Identification strategy

To estimate the impact of each of these three check-in practices, the authors propose to separately estimate, for each experimental study, the following equation using ordinary least squares:

$$rating_{ia} = \alpha + \beta treated_{ia} + X'\gamma + \delta_c + \rho_n + \varepsilon_{ia}, \quad (1)$$

where i and a stand for a guest i who accommodated in an apartment a ; $rating_{ia}$ and $treated_{ia}$ are defined as above; X is a matrix including guest's age, the number of people in the group, a dummy indicating if the reservation was made through Airbnb, the average daily rate of the reservation, and the length of stay; δ_c , and ρ_n are neighborhood and guest's continent of origin fixed effects; and ε_{ia} is the error term. For all three experimental studies, the coefficient of interest is β , and it can be interpreted as the average impact that the implementation of the considered check-in practice has on guests' online rating. Thus, a positive and statistically significant coefficient would mean that the evaluated check-in practice positively impacts online rating. While a negative and statistically significant coefficient would mean that the assessed checked-in practice harms online rating.

For each experiment, equation (1) is first estimated without introducing any covariate but the $treated_{ia}$ variable and the intercept. These estimations would be equivalent to a two independent-samples t-test in which the mean of $rating_{ia}$ for the treatment and control groups are compared. These t-tests would suffice to analyze the hypotheses due to the experimental approach. Nevertheless, including other variables that are likely to affect the dependent variable makes the multiple regression model more efficient than the single regressor one (Stock & Watson, 2012) and are consequently preferred. Thus, equation (1) is later reestimated by including the other created variables that may also affect the online rating. For instance, the motives to choose Airbnb vary between leisure and business travelers (Jang *et al.*, 2019) and, correspondingly, how they evaluate a given property. In this sense, age, the number of accommodated guests, the length of stay, and the used booking platform may impact the type of travel purpose and the rating. Likewise, the guest's geographical origin can influence how they evaluate an apartment (Xi *et al.*, 2021). Hence, continent of origin fixed effects are also taken into account. In its turn, ADR could be considered as a proxy for apartments' facilities which have been shown to impact guests' satisfaction (Xu *et al.*, 2019). Finally, neighborhood fixed effects control the apartment's location, which certainly determines the accommodation experience (Cheng & Jin, 2019; Ju *et al.*, 2019).

Results

Descriptive statistics

Table 1 reports the descriptive statistics for the sample used in each experiment. The three samples share some common characteristics. First, the average age of the guest who booked the apartment is around 40 years old. Second, the average number of guests is always higher than three. Third, the majority of the participants booked the apartment through Airbnb. Fourth, the average length of stay is between four and five days. Fifth, the average daily rate greatly varies across reservations but, on average, is lower in the second study than in the other two.

The impact of each assessed check-in practice on online rating

The results of estimating equation (1) are shown in Table 2. Per each experimental study, the odd column shows the results of estimating equation (1) when including only the intercept and $treated_{ia}$, while the even column displays the results when the other variables and fixed effects are also incorporated.

The first two columns report the results for the first experimental study. The coefficient of the variable $treated_{ia}$ is not statistically significant in none of the columns. Hence, there is no statistically significant relationship between asking for a good rating during the check-in and the actual rating, on average. This result confirms the first formulated hypothesis. Columns (3) and (4) present the results for the second experimental study. The coefficient of the variable $treated_{ia}$ is positive and statistically significant in both columns, determining a positive average impact on guests' rating when matching the guest's native language with a language mastered by the check-in agent. This result contradicts the second hypothesis. Finally, columns (5) and (6) show the results for the third experiment. In this case, the coefficient of the variable $treated_{ia}$ is negative and statistically significant in column (6) but not in column (5), which is the less efficient specification. If the attention is focused on column (6), it can be affirmed that the individuals who experimented with a remote check-in were, on average, less satisfied, confirming the third hypothesis. This result suggests that doing a remote check-in has an average negative impact on guests' ratings.

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics*

First study:					
	Observations	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
Rating	131	9.318	1.147	3	10
Treated	131	0.489	0.502	0	1
Age	131	39.160	10.481	22	68
Ngroup	131	4.038	1.661	2	10
Airbnb	131	0.947	0.226	0	1
ADR	131	183.271	60.323	80.37	477.32
LoS	131	4.855	2.718	1	17
Second study:					
	Observations	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
Rating	390	9.241	1.019	3	10
Treated	390	0.446	0.498	0	1
Age	390	41.328	11.687	20	72
Ngroup	390	4.126	1.456	1	10
Airbnb	390	0.869	0.338	0	1
ADR	390	162.765	96.981	42.29	1,544.38
LoS	390	4.467	3.396	1	35
Third study:					
	Observations	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
Rating	116	8.934	1.407	4.58	10
Treated	116	0.690	0.465	0	1
Age	116	41.201	10.514	18	69
Ngroup	116	3.078	1.158	1	6
Airbnb	116	0.767	0.424	0	1
ADR	116	189.901	112.73	64.89	989.4
LoS	116	4.724	2.236	1	14

Concerning the other estimated coefficients in even columns of Table 2, it is important to note that most of them are not statistically significant. An exception is the estimated coefficient on age for the last experimental study. A higher age is associated with a better online rating. Another exception is the coefficient on Airbnb for the last two experimental studies. In both cases, guests who booked through Airbnb posted, on average, a higher rating than those who did it through Booking.com.

Table 2. *Experiments' estimates*

	Ask a rating:		Language match:		Remote check-in:	
	(1) Rating	(2) Rating	(3) Rating	(4) Rating	(5) Rating	(6) Rating
Treated	0.250 (0.198)	0.159 (0.213)	0.221** (0.102)	0.251*** (0.096)	-0.413 (0.256)	-0.580** (0.226)
Age		0.007 (0.009)		0.000 (0.004)		0.022** (0.010)
Ngroup		0.116 (0.075)		0.060 (0.038)		0.019 (0.124)
Airbnb		1.499 (0.999)		1.066*** (0.245)		1.848*** (0.352)
ADR		-0.002 (0.002)		-0.001 (0.001)		-0.001 (0.001)
LoS		-0.026 (0.039)		-0.022 (0.022)		-0.069 (0.056)
Intercept	9.196*** (0.171)		9.143*** (0.073)		9.219*** (0.194)	
Continent Fixed Effects	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Neighborhood Fixed Effects	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	131	131	390	390	116	116
R ²	0.012	0.219	0.012	0.185	0.019	0.455

Coefficients are statistically different from zero at the following levels: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$ and *** $p < 0.01$. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

Discussion

This article's results are threefold and confirm the first and third formulated hypotheses, whereas they contradict the second one. First, asking for a good online rating during the check-in process does not influence the obtained online rating for vacation rentals, as shown in the first two columns of Table 2. This result seems natural because, at the moment of check-in, guests have not experienced the vacation rental yet, and hence, asking for a good review at that point might not affect them at all. This result is in concordance with the advice given by ReviewPro (2019) of only asking for good reviews after the check-out. However, vacation rental management companies may be tempted to in-person solicit online reviews to their guests during check-in. After all, it is usually the only moment when there is a face-to-face interaction between the company and the host. In this sense, this experiment's result suggests not to carry out this practice. Second, on average, guests evaluate better vacation rentals when the check-in agent masters their first language, as shown in the columns (3) and (4) of Table 2. This result refutes the second hypothesis. That is, the check-in agents' capacity to communicate with guests' native language is positively valued for in-person interactions in vacation rental businesses. This result is in line with Wang *et al.* (2015), who point out that matching a client's language with the service provider results in a better customer experience. Finally, the sixth column of Table 2 highlights that guests prefer in-person check-ins rather than remote ones. Therefore, this outcome is also related to previous studies in other industries that found that customers might prefer human interactions over SST (Gelderman *et al.*, 2011; Kim *et al.*, 2012; Oh *et al.*, 2016). In any case, this article's results provide new insight since no former studies analysed check-in practices for vacation rental management properties, which have their idiosyncrasies.

Conclusion

This paper's objective was to examine how three check-in practices that vacation rental management companies may undertake can impact guests' online rating. To this end, data from three experimental studies in a real vacation management company in Barcelona have been analyzed. The results give vacation rental management companies clear insight into critical aspects for their optimal performance. This study's first implication is that vacation rental businesses do not have to encourage check-in agents to ask for good ratings to guests as it does not affect them. Alternatively, they should restrict to encourage online ratings by email or phone after check-out. The second implication is that vacation rental companies should focus on recruiting multilingual staff for their check-in processes. Besides, they should try to incorporate this feature when assigning check-in agents to different reservations. An attempt must be made to produce a language match between one of the languages mastered by check-in agents and the native language of the guests. This would undoubtedly make the operations more complicated instead of assigning agents based on the properties' proximity. Yet, it can have a positive return, and it is worth considering it. Finally, the third implication is that doing remote check-ins significantly decreases the average review score. The idea behind them is to reduce the cost associated with check-in agents and make daily operations less complicated. However, a higher online rating results in being able to charge a higher price (Chen & Xie, 2017; Gibbs *et al.*, 2018; Lawani *et al.*, 2019; Liang *et al.*, 2017; Teubner *et al.*, 2017; Wang & Nicolau, 2017). Therefore, introducing automatic check-ins might end up not being as cost-effective as it initially seems.

Research limitations and future work

The study has four main limitations. First, the analyzed experimental data come from a vacation rental management company located in Barcelona. Therefore, the results might not apply to other tourist destinations. Second, the study has been undertaken in one specific company, which has its specific way to operate. Therefore, future research studies should be conducted in other destinations and companies to amplify generalization. Third, and related to the first experiment, the reader must note that the used message could be perceived as unfair by guests as it seems to only ask for a rating in case of a lovely stay. Guests could have inferred that the vacation rental management firm may not have been interested in improving potential service failures, leading to their indifference when posting a rating. Finally, the experimental studies were undertaken before the irruption of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this sense, customer preferences may have changed for remote check-ins. Not having to interact with other people can lead to a sense of security, improving their customers' acceptance. Future studies should analyze what their current approval is.

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