Value co-destruction in hotel services: Exploring the misalignment of cognitive scripts among customers and providers

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VALUE CO-DESTRUCTION IN HOTEL SERVICES: EXPLORING THE MISALIGNMENT OF COGNITIVE SCRIPTS AMONG CUSTOMERS AND PROVIDERS

Abstract

In hotel services, the provider and customer are expected to behave according to a specific cognitive script that has been developed based on previous hotel experiences. However, if either party deviates from their script, value co-destruction – rather than value co-creation – might emerge. While the existing tourism management literature has examined how value co-destruction emerges, it has focused almost exclusively on the customer perspective, while offering less insights on the supplier and dyadic perspectives. Consequently, the purpose of this study is to explore how script misalignment between customers and providers results in value co-destruction perceived by both parties in the dyad. We analyze this empirically using supplier interviews, customer diaries and online reviews. Based on the findings, we develop an empirically grounded conceptual model that illustrates how different value co-destruction antecedents manifest in the hotel service context, and lead to different value co-destruction outcomes for customers and suppliers.

1   Introduction

Providing superior service experiences is a key goal of the tourism and hospitality industry. Yet, doing so is becoming increasingly challenging in the contemporary service space (Kandampully, Zhang, & Jaakkola, 2018; Meyer & Schwager, 2007; Walls, Okumus, Wang, & Kwun, 2011). With easier access to information, consumers tend to have higher expectations of customized service experiences (Chathoth et al., 2014) and fewer barriers to switching providers or expressing negative word-of-mouth, if the service experience does not meet expectations (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008). Given that displeased customers can cause major reputational damage and loss of business, understanding and dealing with unsatisfactory service experiences has emerged as a key issue in recent tourism management research (e.g., Alegre & Garau, 2010; He & Harris, 2014; Sánchez-García & Currás-Pérez, 2011; Sparks, So, & Bradley, 2016).

In customer behavior and service marketing research, unsatisfactory service experiences are usually explained using expectation-confirmation theory, which suggests that a disconfirmation of customers' expectations leads to dissatisfaction (e.g. Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Oliver, 1981; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985; Tse & Wilton, 1988). While this literature has provided many insights on unsatisfactory service experiences, particularly in the tourism and hotel service context (Nam, Baker, Ahmad, & Goo, et al., 2018; Sánchez-García & Currás-Pérez, 2011), it is primarily focused on customers' expectations and experiences, but provides *less insights on supplier expectations and experiences*, *and on the interaction between both parties' expectations and the resulting experiences*.

Given that contemporary service experiences are increasingly co-created (Jaakkola, Helkkula, & Aarikka-Stenroos, 2015), several studies in tourism management have emphasized the need for a better understanding of the interactive and co-created service experiences from both the customers' and service providers' perspective (e.g., Busser & Shulga, 2018; Campos, Mendes, Valle, & Scott, 2018; Li & Petrick, 2008; Shaw, Bailey, & Williams, 2011). Consequently, many recent studies in tourism management research have adopted a value co-destruction perspective (e.g., Dolan, Seo & Kemper, 2019; Quach & Thaichon, 2017; Sthapit, 2018; Zhang, Lu, Torres, & Chen, 2018), and examined how co-created service interactions can lead to dissatisfactory service experiences. Yet, while these studies have applied the value co-destruction lens conceptually, empirically, they have focused on customer data and customer-based insights only, thus providing only *limited understanding on dissatisfactory service experiences and value co-destruction from a dyadic perspective*.

To address this research gap, the purpose of this study is to explore how value co-destruction emerges during interactive and co-created service experiences in a hotel services context. This is a fruitful and relevant context, since service experiences in the hotel industry represent core elements of overall tourism experiences (Ottenbacher, Harrington, & Parsa, 2009), and are often-reported sources of service failures and value co-destruction (Johnson, Olsen, & Andreassen, 2009; Lewis & McCann, 2004; Smith, 2013).

Conceptually, we build on the emerging value co-destruction research (Plé & Cáceres, 2010) and on script theory (Erasmus, Boshoff, & Rousseau, 2002). Value co-destruction refers to interactions where the exchange of resources and activities between collaborating actors (or systems) leads to negative

value experiences (Echeverri & Skålen, 2011; Plé & Cáceres, 2010; Prior & Marcos-Cuevas, 2016). Script theory is an established approach in the sociology and psychology literature (Erasmus et al., 2002), and refers to memory structures and mental models that guide expectations of actor (or system) behaviors in specific situations (Hubbert, Sehorn, & Brown, 1995; Solomon, Surprenant, Czepiel, & Gutman, 1985). By combining these perspectives, we are able to explore how value co-destruction emerges when the expected behaviors of customers, supplier representatives, or both, are misaligned.

Empirically, we draw insights from a qualitative and dyadic field study in the hotel industry, which includes 12 in-depth interviews with hotel managers and frontline employees, 15 reflective diaries from hotel guests, and 344 online customer reviews. Overall, our methodological approach responds to several calls in the tourism management literature that highlight the need for qualitative studies to provide more nuanced insights on co-created and interactive service experiences emerge, particularly in the hotel industry (Chathoth et al., 2014; Riley & Love, 2000).

The findings of this study identify antecedents that influence value co-destruction in the hotel industry, and suggest that some of these are supplier-originated, while others are customer-originated. Based on the findings, we develop an empirically grounded framework that illustrates how the identified value co-destruction antecedent manifests in the hotel service context, and how they result in different value co-destruction outcomes as perceived by both customers and providers. Collectively, the findings provide new understanding on how dissatisfactory service experiences may emerge in dyadic and interactive service settings, and what kind of negative outcomes that might have for different actors. For managers and practitioners in the hospitality and tourism sectors, the findings provide important insights into how to anticipate, mitigate, and prevent dissatisfactory service experiences.

The paper is organized as follows. In the next section, we discuss our conceptual background. We then present our research design and the empirical findings. Finally, we discuss implications for tourism management, value co-destruction theory, and management practice, and suggest potential avenues for future research.

2 Conceptual background

In this section, we discuss how service experiences in a hotel industry are usually created in collaboration with customers and service providers, how this interactive collaboration can also lead to value co-destruction, and in what way cognitive scripts can be used to explain how value co-destruction may emerge in the hotel services context.

2.1 Service experiences and value co-creation

Service experiences in the tourism and hotel industries are usually characterized as highly interactive, intangible, and idiosyncratic (FitzPatrick, Davey, Muller, & Davey, 2013; Shaw et al., 2011). Thus, the value that emerges is often considered in terms of customers' subjective perceptions of cognitive, emotional and behavioral outcomes (Dube & Helkkula, 2015; Edvardsson, 2005). Key elements of these perceptions are the interactions with the human, technological, and physical interfaces during the service journey (Berry, Wall, & Carbone, 2006; Walls et al., 2011). Contemporary research indicates

that both customers and service providers in the hospitability industry are increasingly willing to interact and share resources (such as time, energy, information) to ensure more customized service experiences (Grissemann & Stokburger-Sauer, 2012; Kandampully et al., 2018; Ordanini & Pasini, 2008; Payne, Storbacka, & Frow, 2008). Thus, service experiences are increasingly co-created by multiple actors (Chandler & Lusch, 2015; Jaakkola, Helkkula, & Aarikka-Stenroos, 2015).

Co-creation occurs when two or more actors exchange, integrate, or share resources, such as skills, knowledge, and time (Aarikka-Stenroos & Jaakkola, 2012; Vargo & Lusch, 2016). The interaction and collaboration between actors can occur directly or indirectly (Meyer & Schwager, 2007), before, during, and after use (Payne et al., 2008), within larger communities, networks, and social systems (Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014), and be "shaped by lived and imaginary moments from past and future" (Jaakkola et al., 2015, p. 199). As a result, actors evaluate their individual and cumulative perceptions of the co-creation process and its outcomes against their subjective expectations (Goldstein, Johnston, Duffy, & Rao, 2002; Helkkula, Kelleher, & Pihlstrom, 2012). In a hotel context, though, it is important to understand that perceptions and their impacts are not all equally weighted. For example, perceptions of basic or minimum requirements (such as clean rooms or fresh food) usually have a stronger impact on dissatisfactory experiences, while perceptions of additional requirements (such as novel services or exciting entertainment) have a stronger impact on satisfactory experiences (Füller & Matzler, 2008; Matzler & Sauerwein, 2002).

Hotel stays offer multiple opportunities for interaction, where customers and hotel representatives can influence each other´s expectations and perceptions (Berry et al., 2006; Morosan & DeFranco, 2016). For example, hotels provide information via multiple channels about available resources, and before the actual stay, customers search, choose, and book options they deem best suited to their individual and collective goals (Epp & Price, 2011; Grissemann & Stokburger-Sauer, 2012). During the search and booking process, customers, in turn, provide information (such as length, goals, and preferences for the stay) that helps hotels prepare a customized service experience, including (but not limited to) accommodation, transportation, catering, cleaning, billing, and checking out, which are realized during the hotel stay (Chathoth, Altinay, Harrington, Okumus, & Chan, 2013; Payne et al., 2008). After the stay, hotels can follow up, solicit feedback and suggest subsequent service experiences, while customers can express their satisfaction, give feedback, and suggest ideas for improvement.

2.2 Service experiences and value co-destruction

While the current research in the tourism and hospitality literature has considered the rich interaction opportunities in the hotel context mostly in terms of value co-creation and positive service experiences (Busser & Shulga, 2018; Cabiddu, Lui, & Piccoli, 2013; Chathoth et al., 2013; Prebensen & Xie, 2017; Shaw et al., 2011), less attention has been given to potential sources of negative service experiences. For example, recent studies in the service and marketing domains indicate collaborative interactions can result in negative experiences, too, which have been conceptualized as "value co-destruction" in the current marketing literature (e.g., Prior & Marcos-Cuevas, 2016; Plé, 2017; Čaić, Odekerken-Schröder, & Mahr, 2018).

Formally, value co-destruction refers to "an interaction process between service systems that results in a decline in at least one of the system's wellbeing" (Plé & Cáceres, 2010, p. 431). In general, it explains how collaboration between a firm and a customer can lead to diminished, dissatisfactory, and/or negatively perceived value outcomes, which can be experienced subjectively across a wide range of different economic, emotional, cultural, physiological, social, cultural, and symbolic domains (e.g., Vafeas, Hughes, & Hilton, 2016; Makkonen & Olkkonen, 2017; Cabiddu, Moreno, & Sebastiano, 2019). At present, current literature seems to agree that the key factors that usually lead to value co-destruction tend to center on misalignment or misuse in terms of resources, processes, and behaviors (Echeverri & Skålen, 2011, Prior & Marcos-Cuevas, 2016; Farquhar & Robson, 2017), and that this can occur both intentionally and unintentionally (Plé & Cáceres, 2010; Kashif & Zarkada, 2015). In particular, previous studies note that behavioral misalignment tends to occur if/when actors do not play according to their socially defined roles (Echeverri & Skålen, 2011; Zhang et al., 2018), or when they act in an "unexpected manner" (Plé & Chumpitaz Cáceres, 2010).

Recent research suggests that value co-destruction emerges primarily through actors' perceptions of goal prevention or net deficits (Prior & Marcos-Cuevas, 2016). In other words, negative perceptions arise when the collaborating actors do not achieve their desired goals (i.e., goal prevention) or when they face excessive costs in doing so (i.e., net deficits). The realization of specific outcomes is then moderated by specific actor behaviors or engagement styles (Prior, 2016; Prior & Marcos-Cuevas, 2016), which are regulated by norms and rules associated with specific social contexts (Edvardsson, Tronvoll, & Gruber, 2011; Marcos & Prior, 2017). Given that the ability to manage and shape expectations is key to successfully co-creating value (Payne et al., 2008; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004), this suggests the failure to anticipate the availability of and/or an actor's willingness and capability to contribute resources to collaborative interaction has a major influence on the value perceptions of service experiences. In the following sections, we build on and extend previous insights into value co-destruction by explaining how cognitive scripts can shape actors' perceptions of value co-destruction.

2.3   *How cognitive scripts influence service experiences*

Cognitive scripts are memory structures or mental models of specific situations and events, which guide individuals in their everyday life (Erasmus et al., 2002). A script encodes standard conditions, such as entering the event, sequences, rules, norms, typical outcomes, and roles that actors are expected to play (Abelson, 1981; Hubbert et al., 1995). Scripts are valuable because they conserve individuals' effort by triggering proper actions and responses in specific situations (Hubbert et al., 1995). In particular, script theory explains how actors anticipate other actors' behaviors in a specific situation, and then act accordingly, which has a major influence on the perceived outcomes (Erasmus et al., 2002; Hubbert et al., 1995). Although script theory originates in the sociology and psychology literatures (Erasmus et al., 2002; Solomon et al., 1985), it has recently been applied in service research to understand the roles of customers and employees during service encounters (e.g., Eichentopf, Kleinaltenkamp, & van Stiphout, 2011; Victorino, Verma, & Wardell, 2013). Therefore, for the current study's purposes, script theory provides feasible lenses to analyze the emergence of value co-destruction. We approach script analysis from three perspectives: the customer (hotel guest), the provider (hotel employees), and the alignment between the two actor groups' scripts.

Starting with the *customers*, it is important to stress that scripts are always both an individual and context-specific phenomenon. Individuals develop their own scripts based on previous service experiences while interacting with the service environment (Erasmus et al., 2002; Hubbert et al., 1995). First, customers are influenced by the institutional and cultural context perceived on their previous domestic and/or international hotel visits (Hubbert et al., 1995). For instance, if a customer has visited hotels only in countries that have a very service-oriented culture, they are accustomed to an atmosphere where, for example, customers' luggage is handled directly by the staff (Chathoth et al., 2014; Ngai, Heung, Wong, & Chan, 2007). The customer's hotel-specific script is then developed by these experiences (Hubbert et al., 1995). If they visit a hotel in the Nordic countries with a more self-service orientation (Ngai et al., 2007), the customer is then deploying a script that does not suit the surrounding context. Second important influencing factor is the customer's accumulated experience of the hotel, that is, whether they are new, repeat or even more frequent hotel guests. These segments have different needs, expectations and consumption behaviors regarding the service experiences (Jin, Lee, & Lee, 2015; Lai & Hitchcock, 2017; Lew & McKercher, 2006). New customers are more interested in sightseeing and using the hotel as their base, and might not have many touchpoints with the hotel during their stay (Jin et al., 2015; Lai & Hitchcock, 2017). On the other hand, repeat and frequent travelers are already more aware of what the city and the hotel have to offer, and are thus expecting more compared to new customers (Lai & Hitchcock, 2017; Lew & McKercher, 2006).

On the *provider* side, scripts are equally important phenomena affecting the eventual service experience and potential value co-destruction. Indeed, individuals responsible for service provision also employ scripts, which interpret how specific service situations are likely to unfold (Mohr & Bitner, 1991; Pugh, 2001). Employees individually, as well as the organization collectively (e.g. through management instructions and guidelines), have an understanding of how customers are supposed to act in a given service situation (Solomon et al., 1985). For example, if an employee has not previously interacted with a customer from a service-oriented culture, they are not aware of the different service expectations compared to a Nordic customer, who is likely more accustomed to self-service cultural settings (Chathoth et al., 2014).

Finally, it is important to examine to what extent the customer and provider scripts are *mutually aligned*. If the customer and the hotel staff are running mismatched scripts, intentionally or unintentionally, the service experience creation results in an unsatisfactory outcome, because the parties are not behaving as the other expects (see e.g. Surprenant & Solomon, 1987; Hubbert et al., 1995). Furthermore, if customer expectations are excessive, unjustified, misaligned, or misunderstood, the service provider might not be able to meet them, at least not without considerable effort and cost (Smith, 2013). Therefore, similarly to the previous co-destruction literature (Echeverri & Skålen, 2011; Smith, 2013), we expect high variation in the mutual alignment of how scripts are followed by customers and providers. From the script theory perspective, value co-destruction can be seen to reside in the actors' inability to follow scripts as expected of them by the other actors. Furthermore, we expect value co-destruction originating from script misalignment to manifest in the actual service encounters or experiences, where one or both of the actors have the possibility to observe whether a script is followed as expected. If the observed behavior on both sides aligns with the scripts, there is greater potential for value co-creation, while in misalignment, value co-creation potential emerges. Figure 1

below illustrates a simple categorization of the possible variety in such outcomes. In order to promote a better understanding empirically, the following section introduces a research design where we focus on identifying the different ways that scripts are not followed, which results in value co-destruction.
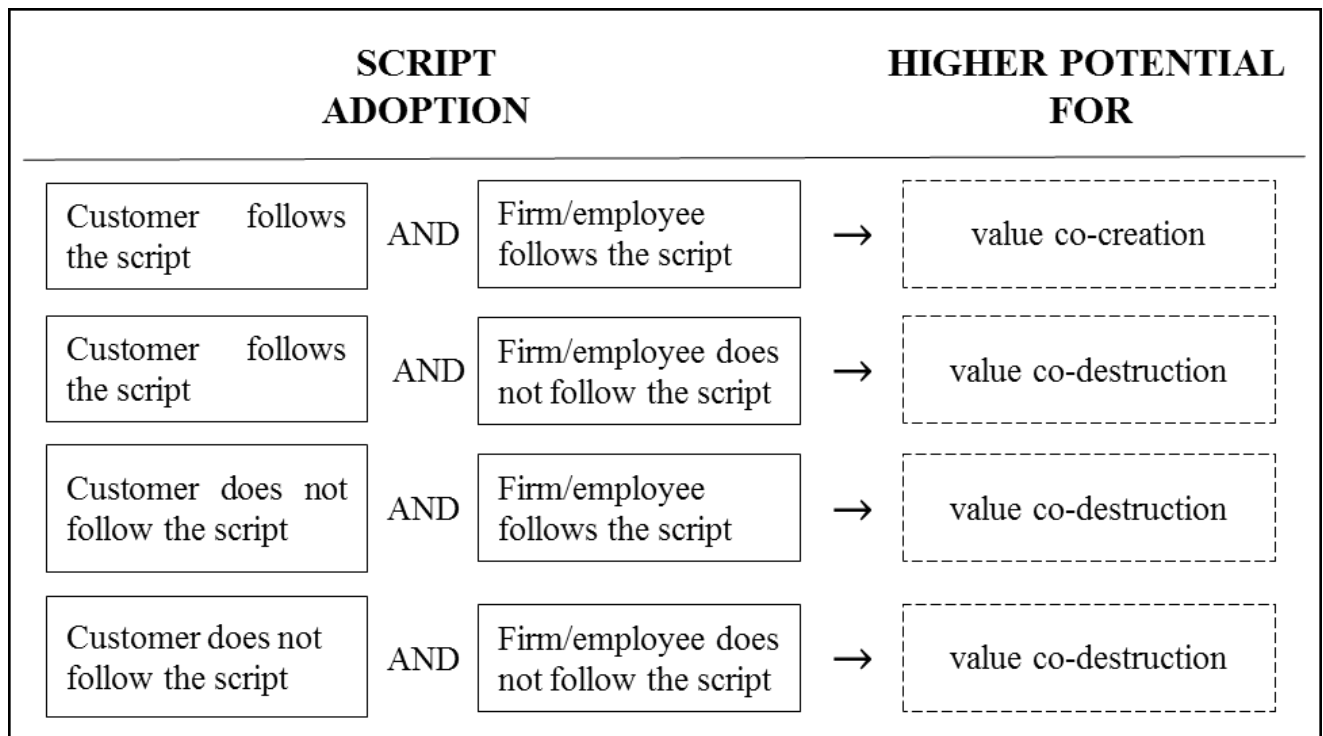
SCRIPT ADOPTION				HIGHER POTENTIAL FOR
Customer follows the script	AND	Firm/employee follows the script	→	value co-creation
Customer follows the script	AND	Firm/employee does not follow the script	→	value co-destruction
Customer does not follow the script	AND	Firm/employee follows the script	→	value co-destruction
Customer does not follow the script	AND	Firm/employee does not follow the script	→	value co-destruction

Figure 1. Framework for investigating value co-destruction through script theory.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research approach

Since value co-destruction is an emerging and central, yet relatively underexplored, phenomenon in the tourism management literature, we adopted a qualitative research approach (Patton, 2015), with the goal of developing a more comprehensive understanding of the reasons that lead to negative value perceptions in service encounters. Our approach is grounded in the interpretative and moderate constructivist paradigm (Järvensivu & Törnroos, 2010), which takes into account the subjective and socially constructed nature of value perceptions, and the possibility of multiple realities experienced by different individuals and/or social groups within a service system (cf. Pinnington, Meehan, & Scanlon, 2016). Given that value co-destruction is a highly subjective phenomenon (Prior & Marcos-Cuevas, 2016), adopting an interpretative research approach enabled us to i) elicit empirical insights from both the customer and provider perspectives, ii) understand and account for the idiosyncratic, subjective, and multiple actor perceptions, and iii) capture different, and potentially divergent, perceptions that customers and providers had about value co-destruction and its manifestations in the empirical context of our study.

In line with the interpretative epistemology, the qualitative research strategy provides the flexibility to explore complex, sensitive, and subjectively experienced issues in a real-life social context, and develop preliminary theories from empirical insights (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Overall, this research

approach responds to several calls that emphasize the need for more interpretative and qualitative studies in tourism management research (Riley & Love, 2000; Wilson & Hollinshead, 2015).

3.2   Data collection

Our empirical inquiry focused on the hotel industry, which offers a rich and fruitful context to explore dyadic perspectives on service interactions in the tourism industry (Chathoth et al., 2014; Ottenbacher et al., 2009). Hotel stays usually involve multiple interactions between customers and several hotel representatives, which occur before, during and after the hotel stay, providing both parties with several opportunities to contribute resources (such as time, skills, and knowledge) that influence expected and realized value experiences (Aarikka-Stenroos & Jaakkola, 2012; Smith, 2013).

Data collection followed an abductive process (Dubois & Gadde, 2002), where emerging insights guided subsequent data collection attempts. In practice, this process unfolded in three key stages (see Table 1).

Table 1. Overview of the abductive data collection process

Data collection stage	Methods used	Empirical data	Main objective
First stage Provider perspective: *Interviews*	Theoretical and purposive sampling logic to identify an empirically relevant and information-rich research context and host organization Snowball sampling to identify knowledgeable and information-rich provider-side informants Open-ended and semi-structured interviews to elicit naturally occurring data and potentially sensitive insights Multi-level interviews to generate a holistic understanding of the provider's perspective (interviews at organizational and individual levels)	Five (5) interviews with senior directors and seven (7) interviews with front-line employees	To generate and capture the provider's (hotel) perceptions of value co-destruction
Second stage Customer perspective: *Reflective diaries*	Purposive sampling logic to identify information-rich customer informants Reflective diaries to elicit emergent customer experiences in a naturally occurring context, and individual service episodes that have major influence on customers' overall experiences	15 completed customer diaries	To generate and capture customers' perceptions of value co-destruction
Third stage Customer perspective: *Online reviews*	Purposive sampling logic to identify relevant and matching sources of customer experiences and perceptions Online reviews to access customer-generated documents that describe past customer experiences verbatim	344 online reviews written on TripAdvisor about hotels H1 and H2 in the sample	To complement, verify, and validate insights from customer diaries, and customers' overall perceptions of value co-destruction

In the first stage, we employed a theoretical and purposive sampling logic (Patton, 2015) to seek empirically relevant and information-rich cases with access to multiple data sources, in order to enable a holistic inquiry. Following this logic, we engaged in research collaboration with the largest hotel chain in the Nordic region, whose differentiation strategy emphasized customer orientation and a strategic focus on anticipating and managing customer needs. We conducted 12 in-depth interviews with five senior directors from the hotel chain's senior management, and seven frontline employees from four specific hotels in Finland. By interviewing both senior managers and frontline employees, we were able to generate a deep and holistic understanding from the hotel chain's perspective (Dyer & Wilkins, 1991), as we had access to both organization-level policies and strategies, as well as individual-level tactics and practices used to manage service experiences. The respondents were selected using the snowball method (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981), with the goal of choosing information-rich key informants. The initial goal was to interview several managers from each of the four hotels, but as the field data began to indicate redundancy after 12 interviews, we concluded jointly with the key informants that we had reached theoretical saturation (Creswell, 2013), which signaled completion of the first stage. All interviews with the hotel managers were semi-structured and focused on resources, behaviors, practices, and strategies related to managing customer experiences. The interviews lasted between 45 and 70 minutes, and were digitally recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim.

In the second stage, we collected customer data using reflective diaries (Bolger, Davis, & Rafaeli, 2003), an established qualitative data collection method to gain a deeper understanding of actors' motivations, emotions, and overall experiences in specific socially and contextually bounded settings (Dube & Helkkula, 2015; McColl-Kennedy, Cheung, & Ferrier, 2015). Reflective diaries are particularly suitable for data collection in the hotel industry, as they allow guests to document their emergent experiences in a natural and spontaneous context, and reflect on guests' overall daily experiences, while also describing individual service episodes that have a major impact on guest well-being (Bolger et al., 2003).

Given the sensitive nature of the research topic, and the confidentiality of customer data, only two of the hotels (H1 and H2) granted us permission to employ diaries with their customers. Both hotels have been given a 4-star rating on TripAdvisor, which indicates very good service quality. The diaries included open-ended questions (Cachia & Millward, 2011) focused on describing the specific service experiences as they occurred (or as soon afterwards as possible), and daily and overall reflective summaries to understand how individual episodes contributed to the customers' overall experience (c.f., Hollmann, Jarvis, & Bitner, 2014). In order to improve the response rate and ensure potential respondents had multiple interactions with hotel representatives, we used purposive sampling logic (Patton, 2015), and targeted customers who were members of the hotels' loyalty programs and stayed longer than two nights. In addition, we engaged several practices to facilitate the guests' diary use, including ensuring anonymity and providing diaries in multiple languages. In addition, hotel managers offered gift cards in exchange for completed diaries. During the second stage, we received 15 completed diaries, which is in line with recent service studies that used diaries to complement interview data (Dube & Helkkula, 2015; McColl-Kennedy et al., 2015).

In the third stage, we accessed 344 online reviews written on the TripAdvisor website about the service experiences at hotels H1 and H2. We chose TripAdvisor because it is one of the largest and best-known online review sites, and the hotel managers actively monitor feedback there. Our purpose was to use hotel guests' online reviews to complement and corroborate the interview and diary data. First, we read through the Finnish and English language reviews, but because their distribution (on a 1–5 scale) and the nature of the content were similar, we decided to analyze the Finnish reviews in greater detail. We exported all the 344 reviews that addressed hotels H1 and H2 to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, which we used to aid for further coding and analysis.

Overall, the empirical data (see Table 2) include a combination of oral narratives and written accounts, which describe actors' expectations and perceptions of service experiences in the hotel industry. Collectively, the breadth and depth of the sample size are well in line with the recommendations for exploratory research (McCracken, 1988), and provide a rich base for theory development (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007), as data are included from multiple sources (interviews, diaries, online reviews), and several different perspectives (senior management and frontline employees; customers).

Table 2. Data sources.

	Interviews (Provider perspective)	Diaries (Customer perspective)	Online reviews (Customer perspective)
Data items	12	15	344
Pages	192	67	36
Period	May 2015 to March 2016	Summer 2016	January 2017
Description of the data	Country Procurement Manager Director of Sales Director of Marketing and Communications District Director 1 District Director 2 General Manager 1 (H1) Food and Beverage Manager (H1) Restaurant Duty Manager (H1) Executive Chef (H1) General Manager 2 (H2) Front Office Duty Manager (H3) Front Office & Food and Beverage Manager (H4)	15 diaries (10x H1 & 5x H2)	Finnish users' reviews for two hotels (same as diary distribution hotels) written on TripAdvisor
Type of information provided	Typical products, situations and services customers are disappointed with; how guests can act in a value-destructive manner; how informants perceive that their company can engage in behavior perceived negatively by their guests; and, what are the biggest challenges related to value co-destruction	Background information; negative experiences encountered during each day of the stay; how these affected guests' behavior (requesting a refund, complaining to family members, etc.)	Reported problems with products and/or services, general perceptions of the stay

3.3   *Data analysis*

The data analysis focused on capturing dyadic perspectives on value co-destruction. First, we used open coding (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2012) and inductively coded all the instances from the data (interviews and diaries) that indicated negative actor experiences and perceptions from either the service provider's or customer's perspective. In the second phase, we began structuring the first-order codes into emerging categories that focused on the origins (customer; provider), recipients (customer; provider), and outcomes (net deficit; goal prevention) of the identified negative actor experiences and perceptions. Once the second-order codes had emerged, we supplemented the analysis of the interview and diary data with online reviews. We analyzed a total of 344 online reviews to seek additional insights and triangulate the preliminary findings. For example, both the reflective diaries and online reviews included information related to problems with different services (e.g., poor cleaning), and interviews and online reviews revealed reception was sometimes understaffed, which led to customers receiving insufficient information because the receptionist did not have enough time for each customer. In both these cases, the online reviews validated the other data sources' insights. After all three data sources had been incorporated into our data analysis, we contrasted and compared the emerging categories against the previous literature (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007). This approach allowed us to iteratively refine and elaborate the emerging framework, and seek alternative explanations for the data-driven insights (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). Overall, Figure 2 illustrates the final data analysis framework.
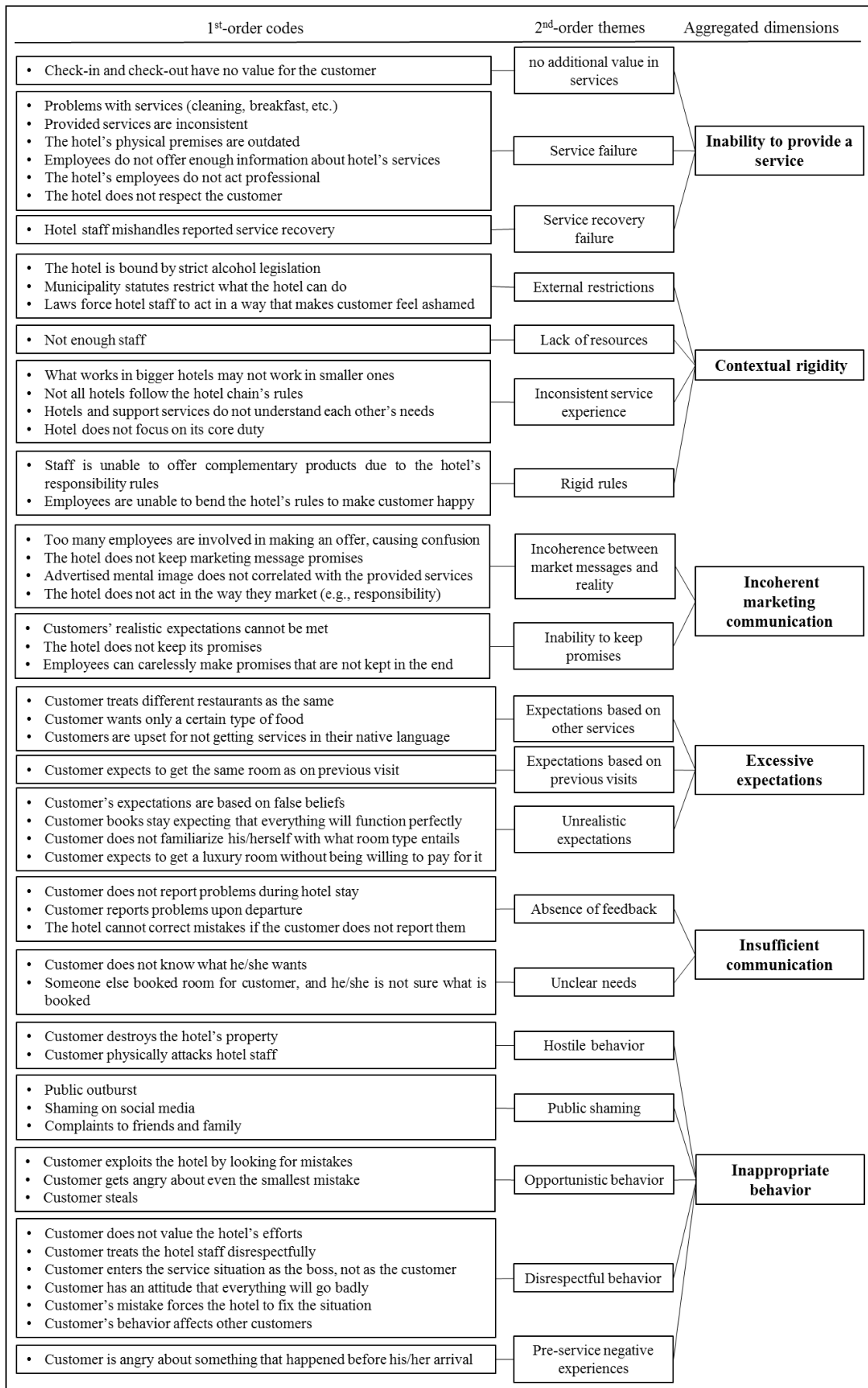
1st-order codes	2nd-order themes	Aggregated dimensions
• Check-in and check-out have no value for the customer	no additional value in services	**Inability to provide a service**
• Problems with services (cleaning, breakfast, etc.) • Provided services are inconsistent • The hotel's physical premises are outdated • Employees do not offer enough information about hotel's services • The hotel's employees do not act professional • The hotel does not respect the customer	Service failure	
• Hotel staff mishandles reported service recovery	Service recovery failure	
• The hotel is bound by strict alcohol legislation • Municipality statutes restrict what the hotel can do • Laws force hotel staff to act in a way that makes customer feel ashamed	External restrictions	**Contextual rigidity**
• Not enough staff	Lack of resources	
• What works in bigger hotels may not work in smaller ones • Not all hotels follow the hotel chain's rules • Hotels and support services do not understand each other's needs • Hotel does not focus on its core duty	Inconsistent service experience	
• Staff is unable to offer complementary products due to the hotel's responsibility rules • Employees are unable to bend the hotel's rules to make customer happy	Rigid rules	
• Too many employees are involved in making an offer, causing confusion • The hotel does not keep marketing message promises • Advertised mental image does not correlated with the provided services • The hotel does not act in the way they market (e.g., responsibility)	Incoherence between market messages and reality	**Incoherent marketing communication**
• Customers' realistic expectations cannot be met • The hotel does not keep its promises • Employees can carelessly make promises that are not kept in the end	Inability to keep promises	
• Customer treats different restaurants as the same • Customer wants only a certain type of food • Customers are upset for not getting services in their native language	Expectations based on other services	**Excessive expectations**
• Customer expects to get the same room as on previous visit	Expectations based on previous visits	
• Customer's expectations are based on false beliefs • Customer books stay expecting that everything will function perfectly • Customer does not familiarize his/herself with what room type entails • Customer expects to get a luxury room without being willing to pay for it	Unrealistic expectations	
• Customer does not report problems during hotel stay • Customer reports problems upon departure • The hotel cannot correct mistakes if the customer does not report them	Absence of feedback	**Insufficient communication**
• Customer does not know what he/she wants • Someone else booked room for customer, and he/she is not sure what is booked	Unclear needs	
• Customer destroys the hotel's property • Customer physically attacks hotel staff	Hostile behavior	**Inappropriate behavior**
• Public outburst • Shaming on social media • Complaints to friends and family	Public shaming	
• Customer exploits the hotel by looking for mistakes • Customer gets angry about even the smallest mistake • Customer steals	Opportunistic behavior	
• Customer does not value the hotel's efforts • Customer treats the hotel staff disrespectfully • Customer enters the service situation as the boss, not as the customer • Customer has an attitude that everything will go badly • Customer's mistake forces the hotel to fix the situation • Customer's behavior affects other customers	Disrespectful behavior	
• Customer is angry about something that happened before his/her arrival	Pre-service negative experiences	

Figure 2. Data analysis framework for provider- and customer-originated antecedents.

4   Findings

Based on the data analysis, we identified a range of potential factors that led to negative service experiences, which aggregate into six potential value co-destruction antecedents: inability to provide a service, contextual rigidity, incoherent marketing communication, excessive expectations, insufficient communication, and inappropriate behavior. The data indicate some of the antecedents are supplier-originated, while others are customer-originated. Our data analysis also revealed how customers and the service provider may perceive different value co-destruction outcomes. Figure 3 describes an empirically grounded conceptual model that summarizes the findings. In the following sections, we describe those findings in more detail.

Figure 3. Summary of the findings (GP = Goal Prevention, ND = Net Deficit)

Anticipated behavior / script	Value co-destruction's antecedents	Customer perceived value co-destruction (*Outcome type*)	Provider perceived value co-destruction (*Outcome type*)
PROVIDER-ORIGINATED ANTECEDENTS			
Provider delivers expected level of service	**Inability to provide a service**	Customer cannot receive the services he/she wanted (*GP*) Customer invests extra resources to receive the expected services (*ND*)	Hotel staff fails to provide service experiences for customers (*GP*) Hotel staff makes extra efforts to compensate for the missing or lacking services (*ND*)
Provider has particular services available	**Contextual rigidity**	Customer's expected services are unavailable or limited; Customer cannot achieve all the desired aspects of the service because of local limitations or restrictions (*GP*)	Hotel staff fails to flexibly accommodate customer expectations due to hotel-specific rules and external restrictions (*GP*)
Provider communicates realistically of the services	**Incoherent marketing communication**	Customer cannot have the advertised hotel experience (*GP*) Customer perceive promises related to hotel services as misleading and over-exaggerated (*ND*)	Hotel staff cannot meet their goal of providing a promised (e.g. in marketing communication or websites) hotel stay for customer (*GP*)
CUSTOMER-ORIGINATED ANTECEDENTS			
Customers have reasonable and realistic expectations	**Excessive expectations**	Customer cannot receive services that meet his/her excessive or unrealistic expectations (*GP*) Customer feels dissatisfaction or frustration related to service level or quality (*ND*)	Hotel staff are unable to deliver services that meet customer needs (*GP*) Hotel staff experience negative feelings because customers express their disappointment (ND)
Customers express their needs and feedback clearly and proactively	**Insufficient communication**	Customer cannot have the desired service due to problems that he/she did not address during the stay (*GP*)	Hotel cannot provide a satisfactory service in the absence of customer-originated feedback (*GP*) Hotel staff feel frustrated because customers do not report service failures during their stay (*ND*)
Customers follow commonly shared norms of behavior	**Inappropriate behavior**		Hotel staff cannot meet their goal of keeping their property, staff and other guests safe (*GP*) Hotel staff experiences negative feelings and stress; Provider experiences economic and reputational costs (*ND*)

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4.1 Provider-originated antecedents

Provider-originated antecedents of value co-destruction include inability to provide a service, contextual rigidity, and incoherent marketing communication. These antecedents demonstrate behavior on the part of the provider that customers did not expect, and in our data set, led to value co-destruction. Customers typically have certain expectations of a service situation, based on their previous visits to the same hotel, to different hotels, and on different service situations. These expectations influence what kind of behavior the customer expects from the provider. However, we found several instances where the hotel company or its employees behaved in a way that the customer did not anticipate. These often resulted in negative customer perceptions and value co-destruction.

4.1.1 Inability to provide a service

Inability to provide a service refers to problems related to services offered during a customer's hotel stay. When customers stay at a hotel, they usually expect a certain level of services, based on previous visits. However, if the hotel or its employees are unable to deliver these expected services, that might lead to value co-destruction. The data analysis revealed three types of service provision problem of that nature. First, value co-destruction might emerge if customers perceive *no additional value in services* offered, yet they have to pay for them anyway. A hotel chain's director of sales described this as follows:

> "*Maybe the whole check-in process is not valuable for some customers at the moment. They would want to handle it digitally and just get to the room as fast as possible, and that's it*."

Second, the data suggest that value co-destruction may emerge if a customer experiences a *service failure* (i.e., the customer cannot receive the expected level of service). Diary respondent 11 (customer) described the following service failure:

> "*When we came to the restaurant in the evening, I asked could we dine in the lobby bar instead of the restaurant area, since the ramp to the restaurant is very steep for a person in a wheelchair. The answer was no. -- Additionally, there was a big dinner party and that was also a reason why the answer was no since "we are in a hurry with this big dinner party". -- I got the feeling they did not want to serve us.*"

Third, the analysis indicated if there is a service failure and hotel employees engage in service recovery which also fails, the customer may experience value co-destruction due to *service recovery failure.* For example, if a customer makes a complaint to a frontline employee about a specific service failure, but the employee handles the complaint in a way that makes the customer feel ashamed or guilty, value co-destruction emerges.

Customers perceived the inability to provide a service usually as goal prevention when they could not enjoy the services they wanted or a net deficit if they had to expend additional resources (time, money, effort) to acquire the service. Providers, on the other hand, perceived the inability to provide a service usually as goal prevention when they failed to serve their customer as expected, or net deficits when they had to expend extra effort to compensate for the missing or lacking services.

4.1.2 Contextual rigidity

Contextual rigidity refers to a hotel's internal or external issues that limit how well the staff can serve their customers. During a hotel stay, a customer anticipates the provider has particular services available and the hotel staff are in attendance and helpful. However, if this is not the case, and the hotel and/or its employees are bound by external restrictions, such as specific legislation, and/or the firm's internal rules, then the customer may experience contextual rigidity. The data analysis revealed three ways in which contextual rigidity influenced customer experiences. First, the data analysis indicated that *external restrictions*, such as cultural norms and specific legislation, might restrict the hotel's ability to serve customers. As the food and beverage manager from hotel 1 explained:

> *"In the city center of Helsinki, terraces are not allowed to be open later than 10 p.m., so our customers cannot sit outside after 10 p.m., even if they wanted to, and it would not bother anyone [local residents]."*

Second, both the staff and customer informants reported that if the hotel does not have enough staff overall or in a specific service situation, then the customer might perceive a *lack of resources.* Hotel guest 5 described this as follows:

> *"Receptionists seemed to be busy. Even if they are in a hurry, they need to serve customers with patience; they should not show that they are in a hurry*."

Third, while chain hotels tend to enforce similar service concepts across the whole chain, sometimes individual hotels may depart from the chain policy, and this might cause *inconsistent service experiences* for customers. As a country procurement manager described it:

> *"I think that in a chain business we need to behave like a chain. If hotels go rogue, they are not behaving like a chain. So many times I have thought that what if one hotel employee decides "I will do things like this here." And what if that hotel's customer goes to a different hotel, where they cannot find the same things? They will experience disappointment. Then hotels are not thinking of the greater good [following the chain's concept] but individual gain."*

Finally, some hotel employees noted the *rigid rules* of chain hotels sometimes prevented them from accommodating additional customer wishes, such as granting earlier or later check-in times that deviated from the hotel chain policy, even when there were rooms available.

Customers perceived contextual rigidity in terms of two types of goal prevention. First, sometimes, the expected services were simply not available, and second, the customer's goals to receive specific services were restrained by local limitations or restrictions related to a particular hotel. Providers, on the other hand, perceived contextual rigidity usually as goal prevention in accommodating customer wishes when they could not "bend the rules" of the hotel chain, or external regulations came into play.

4.1.3 Incoherent marketing communication

Incoherent marketing communication describes inaccurate communication on the part of a firm with its customers, potentially creating false expectations. When booking a hotel stay, the customer is subject to the firm's marketing communication, which creates an image of the experience the customer can expect once they enter the establishment. However, if that experience is not realized, and the marketing communication is perceived as misleading, the customer may experience value co-destruction. We identified two types of incoherent marketing communication in our data. First, the interview informants described situations where *incoherence between market messages and reality* (i.e., what was marketed is not what was delivered) influenced customer perceptions. The general manager from hotel 1 described a situation:

> "We were renovating one of our hotels, and we renovated half of it first, and the second half was to be renovated later. When the first half was complete, our market message was "welcome to our renewed hotel." And we figured out on the first day that consumers who came to the renewed hotel, some of them where placed into the part of hotel that was not yet renewed. In my opinion, that is an excellent example of how we cannot operate."

Second, sometimes the hotel or some of its employees made customers (explicit or implicit) *promises* during the booking process of features or resources available during the visit that *were not fulfilled*, at least not without additional cost or effort. As described in an online review:

> "I booked my room through booking.com so I paid for the room in advance, 120€. I phoned them [the hotel] in the morning, saying that I would be arriving around 9 p.m. When I arrived, the receptionist apologized and said that the hotel was overbooked, so there was no room for me. So I asked, what are you going to do about this? The receptionist informed me there is a smoker's room available, which I could not take due to my allergies. The receptionist called the chains´ other hotels in the area and promised to pay the taxi fare there, but not back to the city center the next day. In the other hotels, also only smoker's rooms were available. In the end, the receptionist took a room from someone else at the hotel and gave it to me. (Hotel 1, August 2015)"

Customers perceived incoherent marketing communication usually as goal prevention when some of the promised features they expected based on advertising were not in fact available, or as net deficits when they were annoyed by misleading or over-exaggerated promises. Providers, on the other hand, perceived incoherent marketing communication usually as goal prevention when they could not deliver the hotel stay in the form they had advertised and communicated beforehand.

4.2 Customer-based antecedents

Customer-originated antecedents of value co-destruction include excessive expectations, insufficient communication, and/or inappropriate behavior. These antecedents describe customer behavior that the firm and its employees did not expect, and based on our data analysis, led to value co-destruction. In the same sense that the customer has expectations of the provider, a firm has certain expectations of potential customer behaviors, generally based on previous customer interactions. However, we found

many instances where customers behaved in a way the hotel firm and its employees did not anticipate. These often resulted in value co-destruction. We describe each identified antecedent next.

4.2.1 Excessive expectations

Excessive expectations describe how customers can develop expectations that are not justified. When a customer enters the hotel, hotel firm and staff expect that the customer has reasonable and realistic expectations regarding the hotel visit, based on previous hotel experiences within a similar cultural setting, such as Nordic hotels. However, if the customer has excessive expectations, it becomes difficult or impossible for the firm and its employees to meet those expectations, which may result in value co-destruction. Our data analysis revealed that excessive expectations can arise for three reasons. First, customers can have expectations *that have been influenced by other services* from a different hotel or from a different service setting and are not fully applicable in the present hotel setting. Hotel guest 5 described a disappointment compared with a foreign hotel setting:

> *"Room's safe was so small that it could not fit an iPad. In most hotels in the world, the safe is big enough that you can even fit in a laptop."*

Second, the customer can be expecting *to receive the same experience as on a previous visit* to the same hotel. If, on the previous visit, the customer received service that was above the hotel chain's quality standards or service standards in general, for example an additional discount, this can affect the expectations that customer has for future visits. Third, sometimes customers can also have *unrealistic expectations* of what kind of services could or should be available, or how the service process should be managed. The general manager at hotel 1 described one such incident:

> *"I received feedback from a family some time ago. They wanted to make a complaint that our hotel did not have a swimming pool; however, we never say anywhere that we have a swimming pool. And then they complained that there are too many people, and the streets outside our hotel are noisy. We are a hotel in the city center of Helsinki; we do not have a swimming pool. Noise from the street travels into our hotel, and we have a lot of people, so in this case the expectation was totally wrong."*

Providers perceived the excessive expectations usually as goal prevention, where they simply cannot deliver the services to meet customers' (excessive) needs. Customers, similarly, experienced goal prevention when they could not receive services to meet their needs, even if excessive and unrealistic. On the other hand, given the excessive expectations, the customers experienced a net deficit in the form of dissatisfaction and frustration concerning service level and quality.

4.2.2 Insufficient communication

Insufficient communication describes the lack of communication from a customer to hotel staff. During a hotel stay, the hotel expects customers to express their needs and feedback relatively clearly and proactively. If customers do not express or report their emerging needs or problems, the hotel cannot address them. In our data, we found two instances of such issues. First, the informants mentioned that if customers experience a problem during their stay, the hotel expects them to report it. However, not

all guests do and this manifests as *absence of feedback*. The front office duty manager from hotel 3 explained this as follows:

> *"But especially when there has been something wrong with the room. It is an issue that frustrates me that a customer feels like that. It does not matter what the thing is, like you could not open the window wide enough or something like that. And when they are leaving, we usually ask that how was your stay? Did everything go well? And then they might say that the carpet was not good, and I could not open the window. It is a frustrating factor since I wish they would have said something yesterday so I could have done something about it."*

Second, the respondents described that if a customer has *unclear needs*, it becomes difficult for the hotel to address them and deliver a successful service experience. The general manager from hotel 2 explained this:

> *"Or then it can be that the arriving customer is not at all the one who did the booking, someone else has done the booking, and the customer is totally unaware what has been booked."*

Providers perceived insufficient communication usually as goal prevention when they could not address customers' latent or uncommunicated needs, or as net deficits when the hotel staff experiences frustration over the lack of communication on the customer's part. Customers, on the other hand, perceived this also as goal prevention given that their needs were not addressed (even if those could have been accommodated with better customer-originated communication).

4.2.3   Inappropriate behavior

Inappropriate behavior describes situations where customers can behave in ways that are not appropriate, or in line with commonly shared norms of social behavior. For example, a hotel usually expects that customers are polite, treat the hotel property with respect, inform hotel staff of their emerging problems and/or service failures, and pay their bills during and after their stay. If the customers' behavior deviates sufficiently from the appropriate behavior, this might lead to value co-destruction. Our data analysis identified five types of inappropriate behavior. First, the informants described several situations where customers had engaged in *hostile behavior*, ranging from physical and verbal attacks on hotel staff to stealing hotel property. As the General Manager (H1) explained:

> *"We have had situations where a customer has physically attacked a waitress, and the situation ends there. My staff has a right for immunity that cannot be broken. And after that, there is nothing to discuss."*

Second, sometimes when customers were disappointed in the services received, instead of complaining to the hotel staff and giving them the opportunity to resolve the situation, they engaged in *public shaming* by voicing their disappointment to other customers either in person or via different social media. Third, the respondents mentioned that customers can sometimes express *opportunistic behavior*, either by stealing hotel property (i.e., towels, snacks, etc.), or by intentionally looking for mistakes for which they could be refunded or compensated. As hotel guest 4 and Food & Beverage Manager (H1) explained:

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> *"Toilet's cleaning in my room was left unfinished, and there were dirty rags in the sink. Receptionist came to take them and did apologize ... Mistakes could be refunded somehow. My room was [room type, above the average], so the level of standards should be excellent."*

> *"Sometimes, customers are looking for mistakes and our continuous reimbursement policy feeds this behavior. Customers are taking advantage of our [reimbursement] system by looking for mistakes."*

Fourth, the informants described that customers sometimes engage in *disrespectful behavior*, for example when they do not value the hotel's efforts to serve them or they behave in a manner that negatively affects other customers. This was described by General Manager (H1) in the following way:

> *"Impertinence. And in my opinion that kind of inappropriate behavior, because even though we are all professionals, I can tell that when a customer is truly outrageous and behaves in a bad way for example towards one of my team members. If affects to this team member's day and feelings and kind of through that to the service that he/she is able to provide for other customers."*

Finally, sometimes customers may have encountered *negative experiences before the service encounters* in the hotel (i.e., late/delayed fight or transport), and project this unfairly onto the hotel staff. This was explained by the Director of Sales:

> *"There is a person on the other side of the counter, so he/she will mirror his/her behavior to the customer's behavior on certain ways, even though we should keep the smile on our faces and serve everyone well, but especially if it escalades to a negative direction. For example, let's assume that you are at reception, and you have had a bad flight and it was a bit late, and now you have sat in that traffic, so you might come here feeling a bit irritated and kinda like the way that you communicate there [reception], it can already affect negatively to that you might not get that good service compared to that you would enter the situation feeling more neutral."*

Providers perceived the inappropriate behavior as goal prevention when it compromised the hotel's goals to keep customers, property, and staff safe and secure. Net deficits occurred for providers when the staff experienced negative feelings and stress due to customer behavior, or when the hotel firm/chain suffers broader economic or reputational damage due to customers' behavior.

5   Discussion

The aim of this paper was to understand how value co-destruction emerges in the hotel industry context. In general, based on the nascent research in the field, we expected that value co-destruction emerges from unanticipated behavior by one or several actors during the value co-creation process. We further grounded our theoretical background on script theory (e.g., Erasmus et al., 2002), in which value co-destruction can be explained by an actor's inability or unwillingness to follow a script as the other actors expect. Actors include the provider firm and its employees, and the individual customers; all have perceptions of anticipated scripts for hotel service experiences, and either act or fail to act on them. Based on this empirical study, we found that value co-destruction emerges from three provider-

originated antecedents (inability to provide a service, contextual rigidity, incoherent marketing communication) and three customer-originated antecedents (excessive expectations, insufficient communication, inappropriate behavior). Furthermore, the findings suggest that each antecedent leads to different value co-destruction outcomes for the customers and the service provider. Overall, this provides novel and practically relevant findings for the tourism management and value co-destruction literature. In the next section, we discuss specific theoretical and practical implications, concluding with comments on the limitations of this study, and future research directions.

5.1 Theoretical implications

This study makes three key contributions to the existing literature. First, it contributes to the tourism management literature by responding to the calls for more research on the interactive and co-created nature of service experiences (e.g., Li & Petrick, 2008; Shaw, Bailey, & Williams, 2011; Campos et al., 2018). While extant research has shed light on the role of subjective disconfirmation of customer expectations as a source of dissatisfactory services (e.g., Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Oliver, 1981; Tse & Wilton, 1988), most of the existing literature has focused on customer experiences, while offering less insights on the supplier and dyadic experiences. In our study we employ a qualitative field study to understand the interactive nature of service experiences and related value co-destruction outcomes, by focusing on the potential mismatches in the cognitive scripts between customers and providers. Thus, our analysis can be viewed as helping to explain the "disconfirmation" of the scripts from both customer and provider sides. This approach is informative and valuable as it can uncover a richer picture of both the emergence and sources of dissatisfaction and disconfirmation on both sides of the customer-provided dyad in the tourism services context.

Second, this study contributes to the emerging value co-destruction literature (e.g., Echeverri & Skålen, 2011; Prior & Marcos-Cuevas, 2016; Ple, 2017), by illustrating how value co-destruction that stems from either customer- or provider-originated antecedents can result in both customer- and provider-perceived (negative) value outcomes. In other words, this study shows that irrespective of the liability of the actor who initiates value co-destruction, it has specific and often different consequences for both (all) interacting parties. This is an important contribution to the existing value co-destruction research, which has thus far prioritized perceived value outcomes from the customer (Smith, 2013; Prior & Marcos-Cuevas, 2016; Zhang et al., 2018) and network actor (Caic et al., 2018) perspectives, but paid less attention to perceived value outcomes from the supplier perspective. The findings from this study provide a more balanced and genuinely dyadic view on value co-destruction. Importantly, the results show how the service provider, too, can perceive detrimental outcomes in terms of unmet objectives (goal prevention) or excessive costs (net deficits). Furthermore, previous studies (e.g., Vafeas et al., 2016) have asked whether different value co-destruction antecedents have differential impacts on customers and suppliers. This study responds to this call by illustrating how specific customer- and provider-originated value co-destruction antecedents can manifest as different types of negative outcome (in terms of goal prevention and net deficits) on both sides of the dyad.

Finally, most of the previous value co-destruction studies have used practice theory (e.g., Echeverri & Skålen, 2011; Cabiddu et al., 2019) or service-dominant logic (e.g., Robertson, Polonsky, & McQuilken, 2014; Kashif & Zarkada, 2015; Prior & Marcos-Cuevas, 2016) to explain what kind of

enacted (and misaligned) practices lead to value co-destruction. Our study complements this literature by employing *script theory* (Erasmus et al., 2002), and providing new insights on the ways how misaligned expectations on both the customer and provider side can lead to different value co-destruction outcomes. While script theory has been proposed as a suitable alternative to explain value co-destruction (Lefebvre & Plé, 2011), this study is, to our knowledge, the first to do so empirically. Our results highlight the key role of the mental models and memory structures (i.e. scripts) on both sides of the customer-provider dyad, and illuminate how cognitive scripts act as frames of reference that actors adopt when they engage in social and organizational practices in hotel service situations. The findings demonstrate, for example, that hotel guests might have very different scripts to those of the hotel staff on how the service experience should be and actually is delivered, leading to emotional disappointments and operational service failures on both sides. Exploring actors' cognitive scripts helps shed light on not only how, but also *why* actors enact (intentionally or unintentionally) misaligned practices and behaviors that lead to value co-destruction. This responds to several previous calls to understand the individual, subjective, and idiosyncratic motives that heterogeneous and diverse actors may have when engaging in non-positive or destructive behaviors and practices in different social contexts (Vafeas et al., 2016; Makkonen & Olkkonen, 2017; Cabiddu et al., 2019).

5.2   Managerial implications

The findings of this study provide several important implications for tourism and hotel industry practitioners. First, the findings suggest that managers should look for opportunities to shape potentially misaligned customer- and provider-side expectations before they have a chance to manifest as value co-destruction. For example, to minimize provider-originated antecedents to value co-destruction, managers at individual hotels could ensure their service portfolio and capabilities are up to par with the broader corporate marketing programs. To minimize the key sources of customer-originated antecedents to value co-destruction, managers could increase communication frequency with customers, and proactively probe customer needs to discover hidden expectations that have the potential to manifest as value co-destruction.

Second, the findings indicate that it is also important to prevent or minimize the violations of both customer- and provider-specific expectations that may lead to value co-destruction. Managers could design and develop preventive measures, such as service processes and/or training programs that address potential sources of misaligned expectations in either party's operating domain. For example, hotel employees and senior management could be offered professional training to detect weak signals of diverging expectations, and given more individual latitude to address emerging misalignments in expectations before they have time to materialize. Customers could be encouraged to access (online) communication forums and other channels in advance to voice potential concerns and, thus, potentially re-align their expectations, or be offered systematic pre-visit surveys to surface the expectations with the greatest potential to diverge from planned service delivery.

Third, value co-destruction is usually hard to detect in advance, and often becomes visible only after it has occurred. In these cases, it is crucial for providers to understand what kind of negative outcomes actors have experienced, in order to manage recovery attempts or at least minimize negative perceptions. Different actors may experience specific value co-destruction outcomes, and managers

can use this as a basis for designing potential service recovery and/or restoration strategies. For example, if a customer perceives the value co-destruction mainly in terms of net deficits, it might be possible to remedy this by offering financial compensation, or monetary discounts for subsequent visits, to balance the perceived cost-benefit ratio. On the other hand, if a customer perceives the value co-destruction mainly in terms of goal prevention, monetary compensation does not address the root cause. In these cases, a better recovery strategy might be to offer a free upgrade to a more inclusive service level on a subsequent visit.

5.3   Limitations and proposals for future research

Although this study offers important insights for the current tourism and service management literature, it also has several limitations, which provide directions for future research. First, the study was limited to the hotel industry and explored service experiences in one hotel chain only. Future studies could explore whether and how scripts shape service experiences in other tourism management settings, such as sports resorts and amusement parks. Alternatively, a comparative study with different types of hotel (i.e., status, class, strategy, culture, segment, etc.) could reveal additional antecedents and examine whether or when the hotel type may moderate these antecedents.

Second, this study employed in-depth interviews, customer diaries, and online reviews as the primary sources of data. Although these methods are well-established and approved for data collection, particularly in the tourism and service research communities (e.g., Dube & Helkkula, 2015; Sparks et al., 2016), they rely primarily on retrospective data and may suffer from subjective and time-lagged bias. A fruitful alternative for future research could be to employ a combination of ethnographic and longitudinal research designs, which could enable deeper, richer, and more objective observations of actor reactions to and perceptions of mismatched scripts as service experiences unfold in real time, as well as the dynamics between realized experiences and subsequent scripts. This could help scholars and practitioners understand how they can try to diffuse or mitigate in-action conflicts before they reach the consideration threshold for dissatisfactory service experiences (c.f., Hollman et al., 2014).

Third, our study focused on the interactive process of value co-destruction among hotel customers and representatives of the hotel service provider. While this scope allows us to analyze the details of the process and reveal antecedents and outcomes of value co-destruction from both sides, it also leaves the analysis at the level of the service process. This leaves out the more strategic levels of analysis such as those of *hotel management*, for instance. Future research could focus more on the hotel perspective in terms of managerial responses to value co-destruction processes, and how value co-destruction issues could be mitigated in interplay between hotel management, hotels' service staff, and hotel marketing.

Finally, due to the qualitative and perceptional nature of our research design, we were not able to explicitly assess the value co-destruction process. This remains a limitation, and creates a need for studies using alternative approaches to more explicitly assess the goals and expectations of the customers, and compare those to the actual value delivered. With such assessments – which could be e.g. survey-based or otherwise quantifiable – future research could examine the processes of value co-destruction from a more systematic standpoint.

6. Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to explore how value co-destruction emerges in the hotel industry. We integrated value co-destruction literature and script theory to develop theoretical insights into how misalignment of cognitive scripts between customers and providers may affect value co-destruction in the hotel services context. Subsequently, to understand and take into account the highly subjective and interactive nature of value co-destruction, we drew empirical insights from multiple data sources from both customer and supplier perspectives, including field interviews, reflective diaries, and online reviews.

The findings of this study identify six different customer- or provider-originated antecedents to value co-destruction, and explicate how specific antecedents can manifest as different value co-destruction outcomes on both the customer and provider side, irrespective of the origin of the antecedents. While prior research in tourism management and value co-destruction has focused on dissatisfactory service experiences and negative value perceptions primarily from the customer perspective, this study makes a contribution by providing a dyadic perspective, and highlighting the antecedents and outcomes of value co-destruction on both the customer and provider side. Based on the findings, we discuss key implications for theory and practice, and highlight promising areas for future research.

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