

Backpackers' Expectations of Hybrid Hotels: A Text Mining Approach

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Submitted to Dr. Astrid Dickinger

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AFFIDAVIT

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ABSTRACT

Backpackers are a rapidly growing youth traveller segment, motivated by budget airfare and the increasing popularity of hostels. Hostels are the primary choice of accommodation as they provide a unique social atmosphere, designed to facilitate interactions between guests, at an affordable price. A review of the literature determined that backpackers hold expectations and evaluate hostels based on eight accommodation dimensions.

With hostel trends on the rise, hotels are trying to claim part of the backpacker market by offering inexpensive dormitory accommodations to backpackers. The definition of a hostel becomes muddled as the industry continues to evolve, and the number of hotel-hostel hybrid accommodations rises quickly. However, is a hotel with dormitory-style rooms and communal facilities enough to qualify it as a hostel? This author hypothesizes that hybrid hotels do not meet the expectations held by backpackers to the same degree as traditional hostels do.

A total of 894 reviews were sourced from Hostelworld.com: 500 reviews from Meininger's Vienna Downtown Franz Hotel, and 394 reviews from Wombat's City Hostel: The Naschmarkt, which served as a baseline for comparison purposes. Text mining, focusing on keywords and latent topics, and sentiment analysis were utilized to provide insight into the perceptions, expectations, and sentiments of backpackers opting to stay in a hybrid hotel rather than a traditional hostel.

The hybrid hotel failed to meet guests' expectations regarding the atmosphere and facilities dimensions, demonstrating the need for a better understanding of the customer-business fit. The author recommends three solutions that Meininger could implement to address the issues.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

API: Application Programming Interface

DJH: Deutsches Jugendherbergwerk

DMO: Destination Management Organization

e-WOM: Electronic Word-of-Mouth

OTA: Online Travel Agency

SYHA: Scottish Youth Hostels Association

TF • IDF: Term frequency x inverse document frequency

WOM: Word-of-Mouth

1 INTRODUCTION

The global travel industry is one of the largest and fastest growing sectors in the world with gross bookings reaching USD 1.6 trillion in 2017 (Deloitte, 2018). In 2009, the international youth traveller segment, which is comprised of Generation Y (also referred to as 'millennials') and Generation Z, had a total value of USD 190 billion, and in less than ten years, that value doubled to USD 280 billion in 2017. The UNWTO forecasts that by 2020, the nearly 370 million youth travellers will spend collectively over USD 400 billion (WYSE Travel Confederation, 2018).

The WYSE Travel Confederation (2018) has found that year after year, young travellers between the ages of 15 and 29, accounted for approximately 23% of all arrivals. Since they were first recognized as an independent tourist segment in 1968 by Erik Cohen, young budget travellers, now more commonly referred to as backpackers, have significantly increased their market share. This group tends to take longer trips, as they have more free time, and despite having limited funds, they generally spend more money directly in local communities than other types of tourists. The director general for the WYSE Travel Confederation, David Chapman, said, "With young people traveling further, staying away longer, spending more, keeping in touch more and integrating with overseas communities on a scale not seen before, the industry is becoming far broader than ever before" (as cited by Mohn, 2013). Backpackers seek out budget-friendly accommodations while abroad, such as hostels, campsites or staying with a local; however, when travelling to major metropolitan areas, hostels tend to be the preferred choice (Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995; Murphy, 2001). Hostel backpacking has become a significant global cultural, social and economic phenomenon due to the emergence of cheap and affordable plane tickets and new hostels popping up all over the place (Thyne, Davies, & Nash, 2005 as cited by Oliveira-Brochado & Gameiro, 2013).

The hostel industry, valued at USD 5.2 billion in 'bed' revenue in 2016, is expected to grow 7-8% year-over-year (Hostelworld Group, 2016). In 2018, the Viennese hostel industry saw a 2.5% increase in bed nights from 2017 to 2018, accounting for 803,100 bed nights (B2B Wien, 2019). With hostel trends on the rise, hotels are trying to claim part of that market segment by offering dormitory accommodations for travellers on a budget. The definition of a hostel becomes muddled and unclear as the industry continues to shift and evolve. Fundamentally, a hostel offers a dormitory-style accommodation with shared common areas. However, many hostels now include private accommodations with private ensuite bathrooms, similar to rooms one would expect to find in a hotel.

On the other hand, hotels have begun to offer dormitory-style options, thus qualifying them as hostels as well. The managing director of B&B Hotels, Mark Thompson, said on the subject, "not everything is black and white and there is plenty of greyness and cross-over in the hostel/hotel

market” (as cited by Ruetz & Marvel, 2011, p.100). In an attempt to gain a competitive advantage, differentiation becomes key; however, it then becomes more challenging to rely on industry and sector definitions. Once these specialized hotels begin marketing themselves on OTA such as Hostelworld.com, questions on how they can meet the expectations and needs of the backpacker segment should be addressed and subsequently answered. Is it enough to simply meet the basic requirements of a hostel?

This author hypothesizes that hybrid hotels do not meet the expectations held by backpackers to the same degree as traditional hostels do and the reasons will be revealed in this paper.

The research will apply the theoretical concept of the expectation confirmation theory and employ a netnography approach using text mining analysis of hybrid hotel reviews from backpackers to provide insight into their perception of this particular type of accommodation and to draw conclusions about the customer-business fit. The goal is to determine if a discrepancy between hybrid hotels and hostels satisfaction levels exist, and if so, determine the specific aspects causing it. This study further aims to clarify the perceptions and expectations held by backpackers regarding hybrid hotels.

If the results are found to be valid and support the hypothesis, this will provide the starting point to further clarify and develop the definitions of a hostel and a hybrid hotel to guide future research in this area, as well as to gain a better understanding of what backpackers want and expect from their hostel experiences. This research will contribute to the literature on backpackers and their accommodation preferences by analyzing their reviews and providing actionable insights for managers of hybrid hotels. The blurred line between hotels and hostels needs clarification in order for hoteliers and hosteliers to effectively market themselves and provide an optimal and satisfactory service and experience that guests expect.

The remainder of this thesis is structured as follows. Following the introduction, section two presents a review of the relevant literature through an expectation confirmation theoretical framework, focusing on the backpacker tourist segment and their values, hostels, hotels and the grey zone that lies between the two, and an overview of previous studies applying text-mining tools to hotel reviews. In the subsequent section, the research methodology and hybrid hotel selection are presented and explained. The results of the text-mining analyses are covered in the fourth section, including a discussion of the findings. The final section covers the conclusion of the thesis and future research implications.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This literature review explores the backpacker traveller segment to understand and define their essential characteristics, values, needs and accommodation expectations while simultaneously examining previously held assumptions held by this author based on her own backpacking experience. The assumptions that hostels are sought out because they are the ideal budget accommodation that also fulfils backpackers' economic, cultural and social needs has led this author to hypothesize that hybrid hotels, although a budget accommodation, are failing to meet backpackers' expectations to the same degree as traditional hostels.

This literature review aims to answer the following questions:

- What is a backpacker and what does (s)he value?
- What differentiates a hostel from a [budget] hotel?
- What is text mining and how has it affected the hotel industry?

To accomplish this, the literature review follows an expectation confirmation theoretical framework, which will be explained following this introduction. To begin, it is necessary to define the backpacker segment and understand what this group values as this information will allow businesses to better address the needs of their primary clientele. For this research, it is vital to gather as much information as possible as this will allow for the optimal determination of the sample that will be observed. Furthermore, this will aid in understanding the role that hostels play in a backpacker's experience.

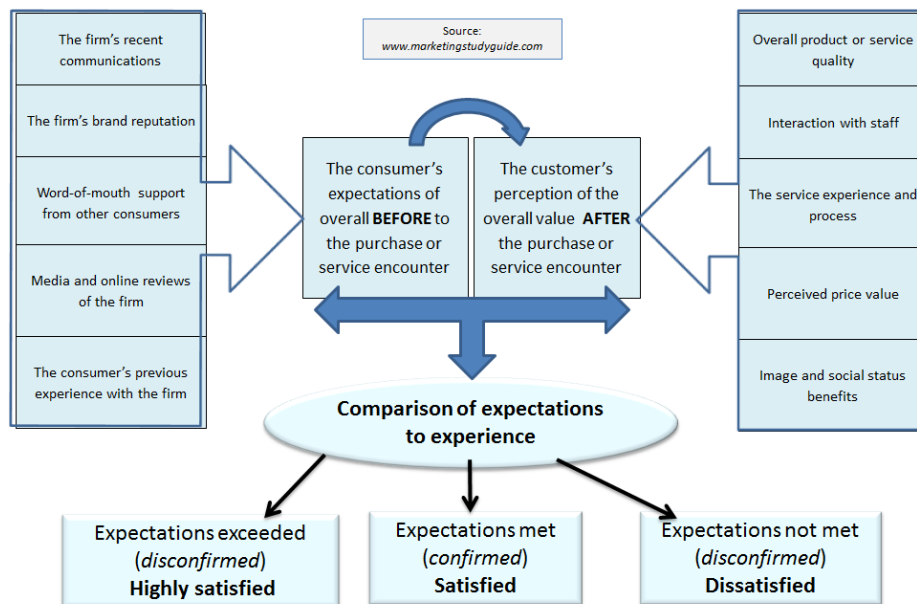
In comparison to hotels, there is minimal research surrounding hostels. The criteria used to categorize whether an establishment qualifies as a hostel or not is vague, and therefore, it is imperative to collect and analyze as much information on the topic as possible to eliminate this lack of clarity. In order to proceed with this research, hostels need to be accurately defined and understood. Furthermore, a clear definition of what constitutes a proper and legitimate hostel and analyzing the differences between hostels and hotels will clarify the grey zone in which hybrid hotels, such as the Meininger Hotel chain, operate.

The final part of this review involves researching and determining the tool that will be used to analyze and understand the data collected. Text mining was determined to be the optimal choice given its acceptance and extensive use in research on the hospitality and tourism industry. This is necessary to understand the various methods in which text mining can be applied to textual data.

2.2 Theoretical Framework: Expectation Confirmation Theory

To apply the Expectation Confirmation Theory correctly, it is critical for the researcher to understand the target segment at the center of this thesis. Every consumer develops expectations about a product or service before consumption. They hold beliefs which aid in attitude formation and serve as personal adaptation levels for satisfaction decisions. Therefore, an individual's expectation level about a product or service's performance can be interpreted as a level of adaptation as it is applied to satisfaction decisions. Essentially, individuals create a frame of reference that will form the basis for a comparative judgment (Oliver, 1980). Figure 2-1 lists possible sources that form these attitudes and expectations. Once the product or service has been consumed, the customer evaluates their experience and determines if their expectations were either confirmed or disconfirmed. Essentially, they are comparing their prior expectations with those after the actual delivery. Figure 2-1 lists additional factors that consumers take into consideration when evaluating their overall experience. Depending on whether the product or service exceeds or falls short of a customer's expectations, it is automatically disconfirmed (i.e., positive or negative disconfirmation). If the expectations are met, then it is confirmed (i.e., zero disconfirmation). In evaluating the quality of the experience, the consumer determines if they are satisfied or dissatisfied; satisfaction is perceived as a combination of the level of expectation and the resultant disconfirmation (Oliver, 1980).

FIGURE 2-1: THE EXPECTATION CONFIRMATION THEORY



Source: www.marketingstudyguide.com

Academics generally agree that expectations are an inherent factor of a customer's post purchase evaluation; however, where they differentiate is on their viewpoints of the process of expectancy disconfirmation. Some authors believe this phenomenon only exists whenever a

consumer's expectations are met with a disparate performance. Another view is that it is a comparative process resulting in an instantaneous satisfaction judgement. Others see expectancy disconfirmation as a distinct cognitive state as a result of the comparison process before a satisfaction decision is reached (Oliver, 1980).

Oliver (1997) defined satisfaction as "a judgement that a product, or service feature, or the product or service itself, provides a pleasurable level of consumption – related fulfilment, including levels of under or over fulfilment" (p.13, as cited by Martins, Rachão & da Costa, 2018). As the performance/expectation ratio rises, so does satisfaction with the service quality (Oliver, 1980). Additionally, satisfaction and service quality differentiate in their construct. Satisfaction is an individual's measurement of a specific transaction, whereas service quality is an attitude formed by a consumer's overall evaluation. Furthermore, satisfaction results from a comparison of what a consumer 'would' expect, and service quality results from the comparison of what a consumer 'should' expect. Essentially, they differentiate in the manner in which they operationalize disconfirmation (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). Berry, Zeithaml and Parasuraman (1985) were able to conclude that a customer's perceptions of service quality are based on the comparison of expectations held prior to using the service and the actual experience of consuming the service, as a result of their study.

2.2.1 Service Quality Management

Berry et al. (1985) offer several definitions of service quality in their article. They cite Lehtinen's (1983) definition in which he qualifies service quality in terms of 'process-' and 'output quality'. A customer judges the process quality while the service is being carried out, and the output quality is determined following the delivery and performance of the service (as cited by Berry et al., 1985). A significant number of responses from Berry et al.'s (1985) focus group study made comments about the interpersonal behaviours (i.e. politeness and trustworthiness) of the service provider. These results allowed the authors to confirm and validate Lehtinen's view of service quality, and thus, conclude that quality evaluations are derived from both the service process, and its outcome. Furthermore, two types of service quality were determined. The first type is the quality level that is regularly delivered by the service provider. The second quality level is determined by the manner in which 'exceptions' and 'problems' are handled. "Quality is conformance to customer specifications; it is the customer's definition of quality, not management's, that counts" (Berry et al., 1988, p.35).

According to Berry et al. (1988), service customers have expectations that cover five dimensions. The first is 'tangibles', which is any part of the service experience that can be physically touched, such as facilities, furniture and staff. The next dimension is 'reliability', which meets customers' expectations when the service provider accurately performs the same service repeatedly and consistently. The third area covered is 'responsiveness', which can be defined as the willingness and readiness to provide help and rapid service to customers. 'Assurance' which is defined as an

employee's professionalism and politeness, their knowledge and their ability to inspire trust and confidence in a consumer, is the fourth dimension. The final dimension, 'empathy' is targeted at frontline employees who directly provide specialized care and individualized attention to patrons. In order to collect data on the service quality of different service providers, the authors handed out a 97-item instrument to customer groups from a bank, a long-distance phone company, an appliance repair-and-maintenance business, and a credit-card issuer (sample sizes of approximately 190 customers each). The results of this instrument determined that, regardless of the service provider, tangibles were the least important dimension to customers; however, the other four were all found to have average scores above nine. The most significant dimension was reliability which the authors were able to confirm by replicating the results by handing out the same questionnaire to another sample of bank customers. "The customer's message to service providers is clear: [...] do what you say you are going to do" (Berry et al., 1988, p.37). The service provider's level of reliability is key to meeting the expectations of their customers.

Berry et al. (1988) note an underlying message found in the results: human behaviour and performance are essential components in a customer's perception of service quality. Responsiveness, assurance, and empathy are the only dimensions that result directly from human performance; however, the researchers argue that reliability is a dimension that depends heavily on the human aspect as well.

Within a chain company, the distance between senior management and front-line employees is quite large due to the many organizational layers that often exist in chains. Service production is mostly decentralized which can lead to quality control issues. With a company hierarchy, that has large gaps between bottom and top-line employees, it becomes very challenging for upper management to assess individual employees' performance (Berry et al., 1988). The dimensions of service quality rely heavily on the human element as it is the key to an optimal service performance. Therefore, it becomes clear that service quality deteriorates when staff becomes unwilling or unable to provide an acceptable service. It is important for businesses to ensure that their employees are well trained, knowledgeable, motivated and happy in their work environment to guarantee this outcome.

Carman (1990) argued that there is little theoretical or empirical evidence to support Berry et al.'s assertion that the expectation-performance gap is an appropriate and reliable method for measuring service quality (as cited by Cronin & Taylor, 1992). Cronin and Taylor (1992) hypothesize that a performance-based measurement method was simpler and more reliable and consistent. Their research determined that the SERVQUAL conceptualization is flawed because it is based on a satisfaction paradigm and was only successful in two out of the four industries they studied. The authors determined that service quality measurements based on an attitude model elicited far more accurate results. Furthermore, they concluded that satisfaction had a more significant effect on purchase intentions of consumers than service quality (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). Brady, Cronin and Brand (2002) replicated Cronin and Taylor's 1992 study using a

recursive form of the original model. The authors successfully duplicated the results of the original study, further demonstrating the superiority of a performance-based measurement over a perception-minus-expectation approach. Brady et al. (2002) conducted two more studies to collect new data with different construct measures in order to increase the validity of Cronin and Taylor's (1992) method. Results from the two additional studies allowed them to confirm their hypothesis and successfully support the performance-based measurements approach.

Like any consumer, backpackers also hold certain expectations and attitudes, molded by their experiences, characteristics, the information they have about the business, and [e-]WOM. Management, in this case, of budget lodging accommodations, are responsible for ensuring they have a clear understanding of their patrons' expectations.

2.3 Backpacker Market Segment

2.3.1 Definition and Characteristics

Millennial travellers represent roughly 20% of global tourism (Mohn, 2013); however, it was and continues to be problematic to determine the precise number of backpackers from arrival statistics. This lack of information makes it difficult to accurately determine their segment size and overall value in foreign markets (Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995). As well, the backpacker segment is hard to distinguish economically and demographically (Nash, Thyne, & Davies, 2006), and it was suggested by Pearce (1990) that this sector should be defined in social terms (as cited by Oliveira-Brochado & Gameiro, 2013). This portion of the literature review aims to provide an understanding of the backpacker archetype by reviewing (her)his origins, characteristics, and preferences regarding budget accommodations.

Articles from different decades tend to vary in their descriptions of this traveller group, but together, provide insight into the evolution of the backpacker over time. Cohen (1968) was the first to propose that tourists are not a homogeneous group, but, rather are composed of several different types of tourist roles (as cited by Cohen, 1973). In a follow-up publication, Cohen (1973) described one of the tourist types, the 'drifter,' in greater detail. This 1973 article was the initial recognition of what is known today as a backpacker. 'Drifters' were likened to hippies due to their similar rebellious natures by rejecting the traditional mass-market travel experiences and choosing to stray from the beaten track. Riley (1988) assigned the term 'budget traveller' to replace the derogatory 'drifter' title as it no longer characterized that market. The origin of the term 'backpacker' cannot be ascertained, but it appears in literature going back as far as 1990 (Pearce, 1990; McCulloch, 1992; Loker, 1992, as cited by Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995). Throughout the literature, there are several distinct characteristics that would allow for a tourist to be segmented as a backpacker (see Table 2-1).

The Federation of International Youth Travel Organizations recognized and accepted an age range of 15 to 25 years old in defining members of the youth traveller segment (Loker-Murphy

& Pearce, 1995). The research supports and agrees with this age range (Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995; Murphy, 2001; Uriely, Yonay & Simchai, 2002; Hecht & Martin, 2006; Nash et al., 2006; Hostelworld Group, 2016; Mikulić, Krešić, Miličević, Šerić, & Ćurković, 2016); however, some disputes exist when the possibility of backpacker subtypes are taken into account. Riley's (1988) research focused on long-term budget travellers (minimum one consecutive year of travel) and found that most participants were in their late twenties or early thirties. Hecht and Martin (2006) segmented backpackers into three subtypes based on age: youth tourist backpackers (ages 15 to 26), transition backpackers (ages 26 to 29), and contemporary tourism backpackers (30 years and older). Hartmann (1991) categorized backpackers into seven subtypes, each possessing one or more of the characteristics inherent to backpackers. One such subtype is the 'Peter Pan traveller'; this is an individual in their forties who decides to abandon regular everyday life in search of their 'second youth' abroad (as cited by Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995). With the emergence of so many subsegments of backpackers, age becomes just a number as the type of traveling choice is the determining factor at the center of backpacking (Oliveira-Brochado & Gameiro, 2013).

The literature also points to the fact that neither females nor males garnered a majority with the backpacker segment which is evenly distributed between genders (Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995; Elsrud, 2001; Murphy, 2001; Hecht & Martin, 2006; Oliveira-Brochado & Gameiro, 2013). Hecht and Martin (2006) found that the backpacker segment was rather evenly distributed in terms of gender, but their research demonstrated that females and males value certain hostel aspects and features differently. This will be explained further under the following heading. Elsrud (2001) noted that ethnographic observations have shown that there is a strong likelihood that there are as many solo female backpackers venturing off-the-beaten-track as there are male travellers. However, one study conducted in Australia found that there were more solo female travellers from outside the country backpacking than males (Hillman, 1999, as cited by Elsrud, 2001), although Hillman's findings have not been replicated in other research since and; therefore, cannot be confirmed.

One of the key defining characteristics of backpackers that truly differentiates them from other tourists is their flexible itinerary (Cohen, 1973; Riley, 1988; Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995; Murphy, 2001; Hostelworld Group, 2016). Cohen's (1973) 'drifter' archetype is not constrained by a fixed timetable and prefers to immerse (her)himself in the host culture and enjoy the experience. Riley (1988) found that long-term budget travellers shared this characteristic with the 'drifter', explaining that a year of travel provides them with true flexibility. The backpackers she encountered and interviewed were not constrained by the restricted holiday periods most others exploit to travel. The author further explained that this is typically why most backpackers choose to travel solo, as to avoid the constraints associated with a permanent travel companion. By travelling alone, backpackers avoid compromising with the inherently different schedules,

budgets and resource management styles of companions. However, social interactions are important as they have a very powerful influence on an individual's plans going forward.

Backpackers are much more time rich in comparison to other tourists and therefore, can travel for extended periods of time. Typically, this segment of travellers is at a juncture in life, such as recently graduating, taking a break in between jobs, or taking a year off from their studies (Cohen, 1973; Elsrud, 2001; Uriely et al., 2002; Hecht & Martin, 2006; Oliveira-Brochado & Gameiro, 2013; Martins et al., 2018). The narrative that unfolds in the literature is that backpackers make the decision to travel when they have reached a 'cross road' in life and choose to postpone certain socio-economic decisions (i.e., marriage or starting a career) for when they return (Moshin & Ryan, 2003; Sorensen, 2003, both as cited in Oliveira-Brochado & Gameiro, 2013). Interviewees from Elsrud's (2001) study described this time away as "'a time bubble', 'a parenthesis' or they regard it as spending time in places where 'time is standing still' which implies a break with a life course normally seen to move in one direction" (p. 605). As a result of long trips abroad, backpackers are spending more money in local communities. According to WYSE Travel Confederation (2018), youth travellers are directly spending approximately 60% of their budget in the destination. This makes sense considering that in 2014, when the WYSE Travel Confederation conducted its Millennial Traveller Survey, the results showed that 55% of young travellers felt it was important to interact with locals and 45% also felt it was important to experience everyday life in the country they were visiting. This close interaction with local communities demonstrates that this segment of travellers has a more direct economic, cultural and social impact on the destinations visited.

For decades, DMOs, businesses and governments erroneously dismissed the youth traveller segment and their limited budget, rather focusing their energies and marketing strategies on mainstream tourists who were believed to bring in a lot more money into the visiting economies, especially tourists who opted for luxury hotels and fine dining (Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995). In 2017, 304 million travellers between the ages of 15 and 29 years old were responsible for USD 308 billion in tourism receipts, spending an average of €3,000 per trip, two thirds more than other tourists (WYSE Travel Confederation, 2018). Loker-Murphy and Pearce (1995) determined that although young travellers exhibit strong independence from family, they nevertheless remain financially dependent on them. This was found to be particularly true for individuals younger than 25 years old.

Backpackers constructed and assumed this dichotomy in which true backpackers define themselves as travellers rather than tourists. Vogt (1976) defined a tourist as an individual who participates in packaged tours organized by a travel agent, and a traveller is someone who arranges their own trip, independently (as cited by Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995). Kerry (2013) argued that a tourist will only 'see' whilst abroad and return home unchanged, whereas backpackers 'experience' a destination and return home a new person. When Riley (1988) asked participants whether they were a traveller or a tourist, every single one rejected the tourist label.

Backpackers view the traditional mass tourist to be one who seeks an unimaginative, conventional Westernized vacation with all the creature comforts of home. Many long-term budget travellers expressed to Riley that they would avoid certain destinations, sights and attractions they deemed to be too touristy. In order to avoid areas where mass tourists congregate, backpackers utilize risk creation by venturing off the beaten track to less travelled areas, sometimes implementing the 'high risk, high reward' mentality by visiting destinations described as "Third World, primitive, poor, or underdeveloped" (Elsrud, 2001, p.598). The high value of risk-taking, which leads to the development of a backpacker's 'self' and 'adventure narrative', can only be truly illustrated when it is contrasted with the opposite of itself, the non-adventure or what could be interpreted as the traditional mass tourist (Scheibe, 1968, as cited by Elsrud, 2001). Although backpackers tend to avoid mainstream tourists, they accept the inevitability that they will occasionally cross paths (Cohen, 1973; Riley, 1988; Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995; Elsrud, 2001; Uriely et al., 2002; Kerry, 2013). The presence of backpacker-friendly accommodations, transportation services, restaurants, bars and cafés supports the notion that this segment of travellers operates parallel to the mass tourist market (Cohen, 1973).

Despite their general avoidance of areas frequented by mass tourists, backpackers, being highly social individuals, are eager to form new connections with others who share their travel philosophy/ideology and lifestyle. This segment of travellers has become adept at quickly establishing relationships as their interactions and time together are typically short-lived. Communication among backpackers is incredibly important as WOM is an essential component in gathering information and insights. These travellers exchange stories and experiences, often recommending places to visit or avoid, discussing prices, and getting to know each other (Riley, 1988; Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995; Murphy, 2001; Hecht & Martin, 2006; Nash et al., 2006; Kerry, 2013; Hostelworld Group, 2016; Martins et al., 2018). Alves, Abrantes, Antunes, Seabra and Herstein's (2015) research and results allowed them to conclude that backpackers prefer locations where they can meet other like-minded individuals (as cited by Martins et al., 2018). Several authors list various places backpackers frequent and interact with each other, but the literature clearly shows that hostels serve as a primary hub to form new connections and socialize. Therefore, it is necessary to understand what backpackers value about hostels and why they repeatedly seek out this type of accommodation.

TABLE 2-1: BACKPACKER CHARACTERISTICS AND REFERENCES

Backpacker Characteristics	Literature Reference
Ages 15-25	Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995; Murphy, 2001; Uriely et al., 2002; Hecht & Martin, 2006; Nash et al., 2006; Hostelworld Group, 2016; Mikulic et al., 2016
Flexible schedule	Cohen, 1973; Riley, 1988; Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995; Murphy, 2001; Uriely et al., 2002; Hostelworld Group, 2016
Travel for longer periods compared to traditional tourists	Riley, 1988; Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995; Murphy, 2001; Uriely et al., 2002; Hecht & Martin, 2006; Nash et al., 2006; Mohn, 2013;

	Oliveira-Brochado & Gameiro, 2013; Hostelworld Group, 2016; Martins et al., 2018
At a juncture in life	Riley, 1988; Uriely et al., 2002; Hecht & Martin, 2006; Martins et al., 2018
Travelling on a budget/Budget conscious	Cohen, 1973; Riley, 1988; Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995; Murphy, 2001; Uriely et al., 2002; Hecht & Martin, 2006; Nash et al., 2006; Mikulic et al., 2016; Martins et al., 2018
Avoid mass-tourism experience	Cohen, 1973; Riley, 1988; Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995; Elsrud, 2001; Uriely et al., 2002; Kerry, 2013
Interested in meeting other travellers	Riley, 1988; Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995; Murphy, 2001; Hecht & Martin, 2006; Nash et al., 2006; Kerry, 2013; Hostelworld Group, 2016; Martins et al., 2018

Source: Cohen, 1973; Riley, 1988; Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995; Elsrud, 2001; Murphy, 2001; Uriely et al., 2002; Hecht & Martin, 2006; Nash et al., 2006; Kerry, 2013; Mohn, 2013; Oliveira-Brochado & Gameiro, 2013; Hostelworld Group, 2016; Mikulic et al., 2016; Martins et al., 2018.

2.3.2 Accommodation Attribute Preferences and Expectations

It is important to understand the preferred accommodation attributes of backpackers and the concerns they have when selecting a place to sojourn. As budget-conscious travellers, backpackers often stay in hostels as they explore new destinations. Their preferences, past experiences and financial constraints guide them to select accommodations that they hope will result in a satisfactory visit. In reviewing the literature, eight primary attributes were found to be the most important to backpackers (not listed in any particular order):

(1) Pricing/Affordability

The literature clearly shows that affordability and pricing are important factors for budget travellers when choosing an accommodation (Cohen, 1973; Riley, 1988; Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995; Firth & Hing, 1999; Murphy, 2001; Hecht & Martin, 2006; Nash et al., 2006; Hostelworld Group, 2016; Mikulić et al., 2016; Martins et al., 2018). The literature also shows that the backpacker archetype is frugal, given (her)his necessity to stretch out (her)his budget for longer periods than the typical tourist. Although some backpackers resort to working during their travels, most typically do so out of necessity and usually work for only brief periods, just long enough to earn enough money to continue wandering and exploring (Cohen, 1973). Research conducted by Firth and Hing (1999) determined that pricing and affordability of a hostel are the primary factors that backpackers take in to account when deciding which accommodation to stay at. Loker-Murphy and Pearce (1995) compared travel preferences between traditional tourists and backpackers, and found that the latter were far more likely to stay in a budget accommodation such as backpacker's hotels (58% vs. 5.2%), and youth hostels (22.3% vs. 2.8%), further illustrating the budget-consciousness of this segment of travellers. Interestingly, Kerry (2013) observed that while money is important to backpackers, prices of hostels were never discussed during her interviews; however, backpackers would often joke about being 'broke' and 'poor', even boasting when they would get free drinks or were able to save money by cutting economic corners.

The author determined that while prices are indeed compared when selecting an accommodation, it is expected that all hostels are affordable, hence the choice of a hostel is not based solely on price.

(2) Facilities

Facilities generally include dormitories, communal areas (i.e., kitchen, bar, lounge, and so forth) and bathrooms. Backpackers expect hostels not only to provide the facilities but also to ensure that they are in good working order (Firth & Hing, 1999; Murphy, 2001; Hecht & Martin, 2006; Nash et al., 2006; Brochado, Rita, & Gameiro, 2014; Martins et al., 2018). Facilities are a tangible attribute that expands beyond the mere walls of the accommodation. Facilities includes all the furnishings and décor as well. Nash et al. (2006) found that hostel patrons listed 'good cooking facilities' (44%), 'good bathroom facilities' (29%) and 'good bunk facilities' (23%) as reasons for staying in an SYHA hostel. In particular, backpackers prefer self-catering facilities such as laundry facilities and guest kitchens, where they can be left to their own devices. Communal kitchens also provides patrons with an affordable way to eat while travelling, rather than frequenting restaurants or fast-food establishments. Grocery stores are an excellent source of inexpensive food; however, without the availability of a kitchen, it becomes challenging for this segment of travellers to cook and prepare meals. Furthermore, communal kitchens are expected to provide the kitchen basics, such as cutlery, dishware, pots and pans, to name a few. Firth and Hing (1999) found that 15% of respondents listed 'service and facilities' as a significant factor that influences a backpacker's choice of hostel.

(3) Cleanliness

Cleanliness is often a top requirement for many backpackers (Murphy, 2001; Hecht & Martin, 2006; Brochado et al., 2014; Amblee, 2015; Hostelworld Group, 2016; Martins et al., 2018). Hostelworld Group (2016) stated that specifically, daily cleaning services are highly desirable for millennial travellers. Hecht and Martin (2006) determined that while cleanliness is an important factor for all backpackers, it is significantly more important for female hostel guests than for males. Murphy (2001) described the ideal environment to facilitate social interactions among backpackers, specifying that cleanliness would encourage travellers to feel comfortable and spend more time in these areas. This suggests that cleanliness is not only necessary as a general requirement, but is also a key modifier in determining the effectiveness of the shared spaces in creating opportunities to form new connections and exchange information with other guests. Amblee (2015) studied the relationship between cleanliness and the perceived security of a hostel and determined that there was a significant causal link. The author provided the example of a restaurant: if one dines in a clean restaurant, any concerns about the safety of the food is typically dismissed.

(4) Security

Security is a requirement most backpackers demand when considering which hostel to stay at (Hecht & Martin, 2006; Nash et al., 2006; Brochado et al., 2014; Amblee, 2015; Mikulić et al., 2016). Backpackers choose to stay in shared rooms with strangers, and therefore, the risk of theft is much higher than for those staying in private rooms. The average hostel has lockers big enough to store a large backpack, although not all provide locks thereby putting the onus of security on guests by requiring them to provide their own. Hecht and Martin (2006) concluded that female travellers, in particular, valued security and safety more than their male counterparts. The same study also found a cultural component which determined that backpackers from Asia and North/South America tended to place a higher value on security than guests from other continents. Amblee (2015) hypothesized that a guest's perception of security of a hostel depends on its location, and the results confirmed this perception to have significant value in a backpacker's choice of accommodations. Hospitality accommodations, including hotels and hostels, update their security features when the surrounding area becomes less safe, as is the common practice (Feickert, Verma, Plaschka & Dev, 2006, as cited by Amblee, 2015). In the same study, the author hypothesized that a guest's perception of security depended on the cleanliness of the accommodation as well. The results of Amblee's research established that cleanliness is a key driver in ensuring a guests' sense of safety and security. The location of the hostel, cleanliness of the establishment, availability of lockers, 24-hour reception and locks on the dormitories are components that factor in the security of a hostel.

(5) Location

One of the most critical decisions any hotelier/hostelier must make is choosing the appropriate location for their establishment (Chou et al., 2008, as cited by Amblee, 2015). The location factor is based on the centrality of the hostel and its proximity to attractions, transportation, restaurants, bars, clubs and grocery stores (Cohen, 1973; Firth & Hing, 1999; Hecht & Martin, 2006; Nash et al., 2006; Brochado et al., 2014; Amblee, 2015; Martins et al., 2018). Interestingly, two studies determined location to be one of the least important attributes as long as the hostels met or exceeded the other requirements (Brochado et al., 2014; Amblee, 2015). In Firth and Hing's (1999) study, the research showed that 27% of respondents were influenced by the location when choosing a hostel. Research conducted by Nash, et al. (2006) on hostel patrons revealed the reasons participants chose to stay at any of the SYHA locations and of the 309 respondents, 66% listed 'good location' as the reason for their accommodation choice. Hecht and Martin (2006) determined that female backpackers felt it was important that the hostel was located in a safe area, one where they would feel comfortable walking to and from their accommodation. Amblee's (2015) research examined the relationship between the location of a hostel and a guest's perception of security and determined there was a causal link, further supporting Hecht and Martin's (2006) conclusion.

(6) Staff

Front-line employees in the hospitality industry play a crucial role in how service quality is perceived and in the guest's overall experience (Murphy, 2001; Hecht & Martin, 2006; Brochado et al., 2014; Mikulić et al., 2016; Martins et al., 2018). Brochado, et al. (2014) expressed that the quality level of the staff held a high significance value for backpackers. In essence, it is the human component that can 'make or break' a guest's experience and therefore, is a very critical requirement for backpackers. This comes as no surprised to Berry et al. (1985; 1988) who strongly state the importance the role the service provider plays in a guest's overall perception of the quality of service. The human component of any service is found in four out the five service quality dimensions, and as such, customers are particularly affected by their interactions with staff. As the authors have shown in their 1988 study, this remains true across all service industries, including the hospitality industry.

Murphy (2001), whose research focused primarily on the social interactions of backpackers, found that hostel staff plays a central role in encouraging connections between guests and ensuring an overall positive experience. The author suggests that staff members should have the knowledge to offer advice and the social skills to interact with guests. Furthermore, one of the participants from Murphy's 2001 study stated that "the nicest facilities, the cleanest rooms are all forgotten, all you'll remember is the miserable person that you met when you came in" (p.58).

Murphy (2001) also determined that hostel staff play a more important role in the facilitation of social interactions between backpackers than previously believed. She learned that staff involvement in organizing activities and proactively encouraging participation was highly valued by hostel patrons seeking new connections. These organized activities will be explained in greater detail under the Miscellaneous Services heading.

(7) Atmosphere

Brochado et al. (2014) define the atmosphere factor as a combination of both social and atmosphere aspects, namely large communal areas that provide an appropriate environment to facilitate interactions with other travellers, and the enjoyment guests experienced during their stay. Results of this research demonstrate that backpackers perceive the atmosphere as a significant requirement when choosing a hostel. As well, atmosphere is listed as one of the criteria for reviews on Hostelworld.com and the literature has successfully demonstrated the significance of this criterion from a backpacker's perspective (Cohen, 1973; Riley, 1988; Murphy, 2001; Hecht & Martin, 2006; Kerry, 2013; Brochado et al., 2014). Murphy's (2001) work is a very significant indicator of the importance of the atmosphere and social aspects of a hostel when backpackers decide where to stay. Her research delves into the social interactions between backpackers, and she concludes that there are four concepts pertinent to studying the environmental settings that facilitate these interactions: boundaries, props, modifiers, and spaces. Boundaries are the

physical enclosures wherein interactions take place. Props include the décor, the furnishings and any other tangible objects found within the boundaries. Modifiers are described as physical aspects such as odour, colour, lighting, noise and humidity. Lastly, spaces account for the distances between people and various objects in the area, as well as the manner in which the objects are used and the meaning individuals attach to them. It is believed that these elements largely make up the atmosphere of the hostel, and that each plays a role in ensuring the successful facilitation of new connections between guests.

Hecht and Martin (2006) determined that the majority of their respondents stayed at hostels in the Greater Toronto Area specifically to meet other guests. This was especially true for Australians and Europeans. The significance of this social aspect was evident in questionnaire responses regarding the importance of the communal kitchen and restaurant/bar. Hostel services, which include the aforementioned requirements, was determined to be one of the top five backpacker preferences when choosing one hostel over another. Furthermore, the respondents that fell into the 15- to 25-year old category viewed hostels more as an experience rather than just a place to sleep. In a 2016 report published by Hostelworld Group, it was determined that 72% of American hostel travellers were traveling solo and were motivated to seek out and form new social connections. In addition, results showed that 31% of hostel guests chose hostels as their preferred choice of accommodation because of the opportunity to meet fellow backpackers.

Riley (1988) did not refer solely to hostels as a spot where backpackers could convene and meet but did suggest the need they have for social interactions and the importance they place on exchanging information and the necessity of hubs that can facilitate this. This vast communication network of budget travellers provides them with information on the 'best' and the cheapest places to visit, eat, and sleep. While Cohen (1973) has received criticism for his portrayal of budget travellers, his articles are still currently referred to as there are aspects that have continued to hold true throughout the evolution of the traditional backpacker into the 21st century. Cohen's "Nomads from Affluence: Notes on the Phenomenon of Drifter-Tourism" aimed to better define and help the tourism industry understand the 'drifter' tourist type. While the author did not explicitly say that backpackers choose hostels for their atmosphere and social aspects, he did state "cheap hotels or youth hostels become centres of drifter tourism, where youngsters exchange information..." (1973, p.97). Kerry (2013) argued that a backpacker's trip would be meaningless without the atmosphere of sociability expected in hostels. The author adds that interactions and exchanges that happen within the walls of a hostel help the backpacker to develop their identity and sense of self. The literature clearly shows that for decades, hostels have been, and continue to be a hub for like-minded budget travellers to come together and forge new relationships.

(8) Miscellaneous Services

In reviewing the literature, there are several miscellaneous services mentioned that do not fall into any particular category (Murphy, 2001; Hecht & Martin, 2006; Brochado et al., 2014; Martins et al., 2018). In Hostelworld Group's 2016 report, several desirable services were listed, such as: free Wi-Fi, onsite food and beverages, social activities organized by the hostel, bike rentals, and common areas which feature libraries and media centres. Free Wi-Fi availability in hostels is often found in research as a category of its own as a requirement for backpackers (Hecht & Martin, 2006; Martins et al., 2018). Internet access is considered important to backpackers, as they are mainly composed of millennial and generation Z travellers (Martins et al., 2018). The WYSE Travel Confederation's Millennial Survey (2014) found that 43% of young travellers use their phone every five minutes (as cited by Mohn, 2014) demonstrating their attachment to and need for Wi-Fi services. Hecht and Martin's (2006) research discovered a cultural component which determined that Asian and North/South American backpackers place a higher value on internet access than other guests. Although the literature clearly demonstrated the value backpackers place on Internet accessibility, interestingly, it was not found as a criterion on any hotel/hostel review forms, perhaps given that most now offer free Wi-Fi.

A couple of authors cited that hostels that offer breakfast and other meals are providing a service that backpackers highly value (Hecht & Martin, 2006; Martins et al., 2018). In studying the tangible features of the Tattva hostel in Portugal, Martins et al. (2018) listed 'breakfast' as a feature under 'facilities'. Following their analysis, the authors concluded that breakfast was one of three highly satisfactory tangible elements, represented in 8.6% of positive reviews. However, for this literature review, it is being listed as a miscellaneous service because it does not fit the definition of 'facilities' outlined earlier and is rarely mentioned in other articles covering the topic. Quite a few hostels will host sit-down dinners (usually for a fee) which hostel guests can sign-up in the morning before they leave to go exploring for the day. While Hecht and Martin (2006) did not specifically mention 'breakfast' in their article, they did cite that the possibility of purchasing meals from a hostel is an attractive service for backpackers as it gives them a relatively cheaper opportunity to eat a home cooked meal. They also list 'free coffee/tea' as an aspect that backpackers value. These organized dinners, which can be seen as a hostel activity, are an ideal way for backpackers to meet and interact with each other.

Two research articles listed services, such as walking tours, karaoke and other activities provided by hostel staff, as essential services for some backpackers (Murphy, 2001; Brochado et al., 2014). Murphy (2001) determined that social activities specifically held with hostel staff helped create an enjoyable stay for guests, increased their overall satisfaction and experience, and provided them with a great opportunity to meet and interact with other travellers. Brochado et al. (2014) suggested that hostels should direct more energy into promoting group activities (i.e., pub crawls, game night, movie night, and city tours, etc.) based on the results of their study. This

would be particularly easy to implement as most hostels have large common areas designed for this very reason, to bring travellers together.

2.4 Hospitality Industry

2.4.1 Hostels

Richard Schirrmann, sometimes referred to as the 'Herbergvater' (the hostel father), was the founder of youth hostels and built the first hostel inside the restored Altena castle in Germany in 1912 (Linse, 2015). As a school teacher, he would lead his students on walking excursions outside the city center because he believed that "wandering is school in the open" and that young students needed to occasionally escape the confines of their classroom and city (Biesanz & Biesanz, 1941, p.55). Hostelling stemmed from this philosophy and was strongly associated with progressive education throughout the first half of the 20th century. During that time, hostels were frequented in majority by school groups and teachers. Educators believed that hostels were instrumental in building character and teaching students how to balance social and group responsibilities with individual freedom. "Dewey's principles of education for democracy and the breakdown of barriers of class, race, and national differences are very prominent in hostel ideology" (Biesanz & Biesanz, 1941, p.57). Hostels were an ideal hub for groups of students from different areas to meet and not only to learn about each other, but also to learn how to co-habitate in a shared space.

Opening the first hostel was not Schirrmann's only contribution. Shortly after opening, the primary school teacher went to war where he witnessed horrific and gruesome acts of violence and destruction. This experience brought about the certainty that youngsters would not be so eager to sign up to be soldiers and fight if they had the opportunity to experience different cultures from around the world and have the opportunity to interact with the locals. Upon returning home, Schirrmann formed a nationwide youth hostel association, known as the Deutsches Jugendherbergwerk (the DJH), and helped neighbouring nations to set up their own (Stuchbery, 2019). The movement was incredibly successful, with overnight stays in Germany more than tripling from 60,000 in 1919 to 186,000 in 1920. Twelve years later, in 1932, a total of 2,124 hostels were in operation and accounted for 4.5 million overnight stays (Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995). This marked the beginning of the international hostel movement.

Over the decades, hostels have distanced themselves from school groups and teachers, and begun focusing their marketing efforts solely on backpackers. Hostel managers owe their success and industry growth to the continuous patronage of this segment of travellers (Nash et al., 2006; Oliveira-Brochado & Gameiro, 2013). Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines a hostel as "an inexpensive lodging facility for young travellers that typically has dormitory-style sleeping arrangements and sometimes offers meals and planned activities" (n.d.). Additionally, "a hostel is a budget accommodation with a minimum of [one] dormitory and a common area" (The

Hostelgeeks, n.d.). The official definition of 'hostel' is rather broad and can be thrown around easily, as long as an accommodation meets the criteria. It is as simple as that, and that is why the grey area is so large and as a result, easier to market different accommodations, not necessarily worthy of the title, as hostels. According to Martins et al. (2018), an establishment should only list itself as a 'hostel' if the majority of its rooms are offered as dormitory-style sleeping arrangements. However, that might prove more difficult than one would envision. With the rapid growth of the hostel industry, nine in ten hostels have private rooms in addition to offering traditional dormitories. Unbeknownst to most, there are currently fewer dormitory-style rooms than private rooms per hostel (Hostelworld Group, 2016). Despite its simplicity, the concept of a hostel can become quite complex as the accompanying ideology is studied.

"[Meaning] does not reside in place, but rather is performed in a place with discourse, objects, practices, bodies, activities, and technologies, which then serve to create a sense of place" (Kerry, 2013, p.35). In reviewing the literature on hostels, it is apparent that these establishments can be thought of as offering much more than affordable place to sleep; in essence, they offer a community, a lifestyle, a second home, and a place to meet fellow, like-minded travellers. In addition, hostels play a very important role in the creation and reproduction of backpackers' identities by providing them with a space where stories, knowledge and ideas are shared (O'Regan, 2010, as cited by Martins et al., 2018). Backpackers are nomadic in that they never stay to long in a single destination; however, the hostels themselves remain stationary. The culture, lifestyle and vibe of the hostel are present in every interaction that takes place within their borders (Murphy, 2001), regardless of the mobility of hostel patrons (Kerry, 2013). It is for this reason that the front-line staff plays such an important role in manifesting a welcoming and social atmosphere. The hostel staff, despite turnover, and the actual establishment of the hostel remains after their guests leave. These employees are responsible for ensuring that the service quality is consistent and that it adheres to the hostel ideology.

In summation, a hostel is a budget-friendly accommodation that supports the rapidly-growing backpacker trend. Hostels can be regarded as hybrids themselves as they are the product of both accommodation services and a friendly, relaxed, informal atmosphere (Brochado et al., 2014). Like backpackers, hostels are heteronormative and have many subtypes. Interested readers can refer to Hostelgeeks.com, Hostelbookers.com and Oliveira-Brochado and Gameiro (2013) for further information on the subtypes.

2.4.2 Budget Hotels

The hostel industry's rapid growth is encroaching on hotel territory, with young travellers, not only backpackers, opting for a budget accommodation rather than a hotel. In order to remain competitive, some larger hotel chains are developing 'hostel-like' accommodations (Bunda, 2014; Mohn, 2016). The Oxford English Dictionary defines a hotel as "an establishment providing

accommodation, meals, and other services for travellers and tourists" (n.d.). While on the surface, hotels and hostels might appear similar, but they differentiate in many ways.

Unlike hostels, it is normal for hotels to have a star rating between one and five stars. The more stars, the more luxurious the hotel; however, the star rating system for hotels is not systematically controlled across all countries (Bunda, 2014). Hotels in Austria are rated by the Hotelstars Union, which falls under the HOTREC (Hotels, Restaurants & Cafes in Europe) umbrella. The union, which was founded in 2009, developed a hotel rating classification system which is currently used in Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Sweden and Switzerland (Hotelstars Union, 2015). As the industry grows and consumer demands change, hotels differentiate themselves and develop new hotel concepts. According to the Hotelstars Union's (2015) classification criteria, there are exceptions for hotels that follow a specific concept; however, the union states that in order to qualify for exceptions in certain criteria, the hotel must communicate to their guests their hotel concept and the exceptional criteria. The website does not provide a definition or an example of a specific hotel concept that would qualify for exceptions, nor does it refer to which criteria the hotel could be exempted from based on their concept.

There are many different types of hotels, including 'budget hotels'. The hotel industry defines them as "zero-to two-three-star hotels, normally with a minimum of 50 rooms, and branded by a major chain. Such hotels typically have standardised 'cookie-cutter' appearance, and offer a systematised, no-frills service format, e.g. limited food and beverage and meeting facilities" (Ruetz & Marvel, 2011, p.100). What management of budget hotels essentially do is identify certain key features that are highly valued by their target market and focus their attention on these features, allowing them to save money and resources on other features (e.g., swimming pools, spas, among others). Basic design concepts utilized by budget hotels typically try to emulate certain attributes of more luxurious hotels, such as attractive colour schemes, quality furnishings (within reasonable budgets), lighting and ambiance, and nowadays, technological gadgetry. Cutbacks are most visible with the physical space and food and beverage related services. Rooms and common spaces tend to be smaller than what is found in standard hotels. As well, budget hotels typically offer simple snacks instead of meals (Ruetz & Marvel, 2011). In 2014, it was found that 20.9% of revenue from the American hotel and motel industry came from extra services such as food and beverage sales (Brennan, 2014, as cited by Bunda, 2014). Not all budget hotels are designed the same way with regards to which features they focus on, as it holistically depends on the needs of their target market segment.

While both budget hotels and hostels provide affordable lodging, they differ in several other ways. Hotels offer their guests the option of a single or double room, unlike hostels which provide different accommodation choices such as booking a single bed in a shared room. Hostels also provide different types of rooms, including but not limited to, four-bed, six-bed, and all-

female dormitories. Hostels have a more informal atmosphere and typically are more 'adventure-oriented' than hotels, which attracts a younger market segment. Alternately, the common spaces within hotels are designed for small intimate gatherings between guests who are familiar with each other. Lastly, hostels are designed to facilitate social interactions between guests through the organized activities offered and through the unfolding of these interactions naturally in the common areas and dormitories (Murphy, 2001; Oliveira-Brochado & Gameiro, 2013; Martins et al., 2018).

In addition, the hotel and hostel guests are very different in terms of their expectations and the features they desire. For example, it was posited that leisure tourists care most about having a swimming pool and free breakfast, whereas business travellers prefer hotels that offer an airport shuttle and restaurant services (Watkins, 2003, as cited by Bunda, 2014). Hotels aim to position and market themselves as the top choice for a specific tourist segment, as it is quite difficult to be everything to everyone and still remain the primary choice for their target market.

While, it is not specifically mentioned in any of the literature, it is rather safe to assume that the role of front-line employees in a guest's experience differs based on the accommodation style. Murphy's 2001 research demonstrates that staff plays an incredibly important role in facilitating and encouraging social interactions and networking among hostel guests as they are tasked with organizing and promoting hostel activities such as pub crawls, walking tours, movie and game nights, among others. This is not a common service that hotel employees provide as their guests are not seeking the social component inherent to the backpacker segment.

2.5 Text Mining

Prior to examining the complexity of text mining programs and analyses, it is necessary to understand the source of the data (the reviews). Before social media and Web 2.0 existed, Web 1.0, essentially a one-to-many platform, was the only platform available to users. Content could be posted online by businesses, organizations and individuals as a means to convey information; however, the dialogue was one-way, which meant that the interactions were limited. The introduction of Web 2.0 allowed for a many-to-many online platform in which dialogue is free-flowing. Individuals could create their own website and blog, and post videos on Youtube.com. Suddenly, the web exploded with an overwhelming amount of user-generated content. Social media is a unique Web 2.0 innovation in that it simplified the process of generating content and sharing that content with a user's network (Techopedia, 2011). Techopedia (2011) provides the example of the social media platform Facebook. Prior to its inception, individuals would send out emails to friends, family and co-workers. Currently, sharing content is possible with just the click of a button (Techopedia, 2011). Prior to text mining, hospitality practitioners had access to an overwhelming amount of data, given the capacity of Web 2.0 to store an almost seemingly limitless amount of data. A substantial number of individuals, financing and time was necessary to manually comb through all the information and extract meaning from it. Many businesses employ

data mining techniques; however, these techniques can only be applied to structured, numeric datasets, and therefore, limit the amount of meaningful information that can be derived from the database. Text mining offers a different method to manage information (Lau, Lee, & Ho, 2005).

Text and data mining are similar in that they are both useful in identifying patterns, trends, and themes and in having similar significant features. However, they process information from different formats. Data mining works with quantitative, numeric databases. Contrarily, text mining deals with text documents, such as Web pages or reviews, that are either unstructured or semi-structured pieces of text. The challenge is the manner in which qualitative text data is combined and processed with quantitative data (Lau et al., 2005).

Text summarization is used to extract the most important information from a document and subsequently create a summarization of the text for users. Hu, Chen and Chou (2016) provide an example of a Google search query which generates a number of links that match the search term(s) and also provides a short paragraph just below with a summary of each website's content so that users can determine which link will be more useful. It is important to note when discussing text mining and Boolean queries that search engines recognize thousands of words; however, cannot recognize the concept and its meaning (Lau et al., 2005). Text mining allows users to extract meaning from keywords and phrases.

Lau et al. (2005) lays out three reasons why hotel management might find text mining to be a useful tool. The first is that it can be used for an environmental scan of customer intelligence by means of analyzing customer-generated content online. This tool can also be used to analyze qualitative data in order to collect customer intelligence. The third reason is that it can improve a hotel's private knowledge management efficiency by analyzing internal sources of information, such as e-mails and corporate documents. Text mining and the resultant analysis provides businesses and researchers with the opportunity to gain insight into the mind of a consumer, but it can accomplish a lot more. This tool is used to gather pieces of text in one place and then process the data to determine keywords, categorization, coherences, frequencies, to name a few.

Lau et al. (2005) conducted three studies in order to demonstrate the usefulness of text mining as a way to manage large amounts of hotel information found on a hotel's website. The first study was geared towards the creation of a hotel profile database. They suggest this can be useful for managers as a way to identify opportunities and threats. The second study implemented text mining to analyze the hotels' room pricing schedules. The final study conducted was to gather customer intelligence by analyzing travel-related newsgroups. Subsequent to the three studies, Lau et al. confidently concluded that text mining is a tool that hoteliers should invest in.

In addition to Lau et al.'s (2005) research, several other studies also implemented text mining when analyzing hotel reviews. Lee, Singh and Chan (2011) utilized text mining to form keyword clusters for service failures and recovery actions in the hotel industry. The authors used the critical incident technique to gather two textual datasets, namely one for service failure and the other for service recovery, from 75 hotel guests. Data was collected by means of a questionnaire handed out in person to guests; online sources were not used. As a result of the content analysis of the responses, 50 keywords in eight clusters were identified for service failure, and 50 keywords in seven clusters were also identified for recovery action. Lee et al. (2011) were able to successfully demonstrate how text mining can be used to systematically cluster service failures and recoveries in a manner that provides context, meaning and identifies patterns. Dickinger and Mazanec (2015) utilized text mining to identify keywords associated with either positive or negative hotel reviews. The authors collected 443 online reviews from TripAdvisor.com and separated them into two groups (positive and negative reviews). In order to understand the predictive power of keywords, a penalized Support Vector Machine was chosen. The authors concluded that guests tend to use different terms depending on whether they are writing a positive or negative review, and therefore, determined that the predictability of word choice was higher given their approach. Dickinger, Lalicic and Mazanec (2017) proposed that tourist reviews contain both keywords inherent to negative or positive reviews and latent topics. Their research strategy began with implementing the same approach as Dickinger and Mazanec (2015) to determine the terms with the highest association strengths for positive and negative reviews. The purpose of the second part was to show how restaurants, attractions and hotels are associated with the latent topics. In employing a text mining approach, the authors were able to identify the different language that was used in positive and negative reviews across the three service sectors. He et al. (2017) utilized text mining, along with sentiment analysis, to analyze online hotel reviews, in the form of a case study. A total of 11,043 online reviews were collected from TripAdvisor.com and followed all the necessary natural language pre-processing steps before proceeding with the text mining analysis. Frequencies and co-occurrences were recorded. They used Google Prediction API to classify their dataset into positive, negative and neutral comments. The authors concluded that the five most important aspects of a hotel for guests are food, location, rooms, service, and staff. Comparisons between the literature on backpackers and traditional hotel guests can be drawn, and conclusions derived that the atmosphere and social attribute of an accommodation are not considered important to the latter market segment.

2.5.1 Electronic Word-of-Mouth

WOM is a fundamental source of information exploited in the decision-making process of consumers and businesses. For many decades, and through many generations, WOM has been used as a way of disseminating information from experienced backpackers to new travellers (Cohen, 1973). Murphy (2001) asserted that little to no in-depth research on this phenomenon occurring

specifically between backpackers had been executed, and very little has been undertaken since this publication.

Reviews are a self-report method for customers to communicate the quality of their experience, what they did or did not enjoy, and offer possible recommendations to others who come across their review. Self-reporting has been an important source of information for tourism researchers for decades. Bagozzi, Gopinath, and Nyer (1999) strongly support self-reporting; however, it is important to note that at the time of publication, online reviewing was in its infancy, so they refer to verbally expressed review methods (i.e., WOM). They argue that this approach was particularly useful because (1) they offer anonymity and minimize any external influence as the observer is physically absent, (2) researchers can reach much wider samples, and (3) at that time, did not require any specialized equipment. Nowadays, an access point to the Internet is sufficient 'equipment', so the same holds true today. The Hostelworld Group (2016) study found that 93% of millennial hostel guests use their mobile phone while travelling. Therefore, these individuals can compare experiences online with ease and in a time-sensitive manner, further confirming the necessity and importance of reviews and the value they carry for travellers and businesses alike.

Martins et al. (2018) defined e-WOM as "a positive or negative opinion or statement written via [the] internet as online reviews, recommendations and opinions, about the usage or characteristics of particular goods and services as those provided by accommodations" (p.425) citing Cantalops and Salvi (2014). In this modern age, information is readily available through anyone's fingertips via smartphones, laptops and even smart watches. This is especially true for the younger generations that grew up in a digital era, surrounded by rapid technological innovations (Martins et al., 2018). Mohn (2014) summarized the findings of the WYSE Travel Confederation's Millennial Traveller survey (2014); they found that 80% of their respondents felt travel reviews influenced their choices, and 56% responded that they post reviews of their trip online. The majority of backpackers reports using online reviews to aid them in selecting a hostel, demonstrating the strong influence online reviews have on young travellers. E-WOM has a much larger impact than traditional WOM in that it reaches a much larger audience and accomplishes this much quicker (Martins et al., 2018). The authors conclude that this hereby becomes the most significant source of information for customers when they are making a purchasing decision.

2.6 Reflection of the Literature

A review of the literature has provided a detailed profile of the backpacker tourist segment. These young travellers typically fall between the ages of 15 and 25 years old; however, backpacker subtypes have been identified who do not conform to this age range. They have more free time than mainstream tourists, usually because they find themselves at a juncture in life, and therefore, travel for longer periods of time. Despite travelling on a smaller daily budget, this segment of travellers spends more money in local economies over the duration of their stay.

Backpackers are very motivated to meet and interact with other like-minded travelers that share their travel lifestyle and ideology. Backpackers exchange information, stories and tips about their individual experiences travelling with others. WOM is exceptionally influential within this group; recommendations and warnings are offered to help fellow travellers make more informed choices regarding destination and accommodation selections. A flexible schedule is a unique quality found only in backpacker, which allows them the freedom to change and alter their travel course at a moments notice.

The literature review has allowed this author to conclude with high certainty that hostels are an affordable accommodation that supports the backpacker customer segment's expectations. Members of this travel group have certain expectations regarding the quality of the eight accommodation dimensions: pricing, facilities, cleanliness, security, location, staff, atmosphere and miscellaneous services. Hostel patrons are given the opportunity to write online reviews following their stay to describe their overall experience and offer their opinion on the quality of the service received. Studying the different accommodations will allow for a comprehensive understanding of the role each plays in a backpacker's experience.

This section of the thesis provides insight into the backpacker traveller segment; however, the review showed that very little empirical research has been undertaken that establishes the value of the hostel industry to the tourism economy. Hostels have been repeatedly credited for their immense contribution to what Richards and Wilson (2004) call the 'backpacker phenomenon'; however, available knowledge and information about hostels remains limited (as cited by Martins et al., 2018; Musa & Thirumoorthi, 2011). Numerous studies utilizing text mining to analyze large quantities of data have demonstrated its efficacy in identifying and uncovering patterns, trends, meaning and topics (Lau et al., 2005); however, very few studies have been conducted utilizing a text mining approach to studying hostel reviews, and virtually no research on this relatively new hybrid hotel concept exists. Furthermore, to this author's knowledge, no researchers have previously studied backpackers' expectations and experiences in hybrid hotels. The studies mentioned above indicate the need for further research as well as providing guidance for this thesis. In an attempt to expand the research on this topic, a netnography observation of online reviews was utilized to address the goals of this thesis, particularly identifying the key accommodation attributes that backpackers value, their sentiments regarding hybrid hotels, and developing a better understanding of the customer-business fit.

3 METHODOLOGY

This section will explain the methodology and the manner in which it was utilized to determine if hybrid hotels are meeting the expectations of backpackers to the same degree as hostels. One hybrid hotel and one hostel from Vienna, sharing similar services, features, and location, were selected and their reviews collected from Hostelworld.com. Data from a hostel were sourced to serve two functions. The first function involved testing if the criteria for the review selection and the subsequent analyses and results were representative of the literature on backpackers. If the dataset was found to be representative, the hostel reviews' second function served as a comparable baseline on which contrasts and evaluations could be drawn between the hybrid hotel dataset and that of the hostel.

Simply put, this author is taking everything that is known about backpackers, including their characteristics, values and preferences, their general expectations of hostels, and subsequently applying that knowledge and testing if similar results would be seen in a different type of budget lodging environment. The goal of this research is to apply the theoretical framework of the expectation confirmation theory and text mining analysis in a different setting with the purpose of providing insight into the perceptions, expectations, and sentiments of backpackers opting to stay in a hybrid hotel rather than a traditional hostel.

3.1 Selection of Methodology

Hostelworld.com is one of the most widely used OTA, but this is especially true for backpackers. They provide a platform for eager travellers to find a hostel or other affordable accommodations that meets their needs. As of June 30th, 2018, Hostelworld.com had garnered over ten million reviews from 36,000 properties in 170 countries across the globe (Hostelworld Group, 2018). Backpackers tend to seek out hostels that have the highest number of online reviews on hostel booking sites, as it suggests that many other like-minded travellers have stayed there (Park, Lee, & Han, 2007, as cited by Oliveira-Brochado & Gameira, 2013). The platform's review guidelines are simple and direct. Reviews can only be written by someone who has booked an accommodation through their website. The rules strictly outline that any defamatory content or language the company deems offensive is prohibited and will be removed. As well, they do not permit reviews written by owners or managers or any reviews in which guests were either incentivized or threatened to post online. Furthermore, Hostelworld.com states that it reserves the right to remove any reviews in which it was discovered that the author did not stay at the hostel or was asked to leave (Hostelworld Group, n.d.).

Ratings are averaged from the scorings of seven criteria: (1) value for money, (2) location, (3) atmosphere, (4) facilities, (5) security, (6) staff, and (7) cleanliness. Reviewers give a rating between 1 and 10 for each criterion. Hostelworld.com does not give visitors or members on their website the opportunity to rate reviews, unlike TripAdvisor.com (Hu, et al., 2016); however,

they do list a member's 'review status' along with the number of reviews (s)he has written to date. The platform categorizes reviewers into three categories depending on how many reviews they have written: Novice nomad (1 to 9 reviews written), avid traveller (10 to 20 reviews written), and globetrotter (21 or more reviews written). The site also categorizes each reviewer into one of four age group categories: 18 to 24 years old, 25 to 30 years old, 31 to 40 years old, and 41 years old and older. Each review provides the author's nationality, whether they were a solo female or male backpacker, a couple or an all-female, male or mixed group. Property managers may post replies to reviews which would be located directly below the review (Hostelworld Group, n.d.).

Hostelworld.com was selected as the optimal source for collecting a sample of reviews that best represents the backpacker market segment due to the large number of reviews and provision of other data, such as age, gender, and nationality. In a recent study conducted by Phocuswright on behalf of Hostelworld Group, it was determined that more than 70% of online gross bookings are made through an OTA (Hostelworld Group, 2016). Another found that 44% of customers chose to book through Hostelworld.com more than once in the last 24 months because their platform has the most and the best reviews relative to Airbnb.com, Booking.com and Expedia.com (as cited by Hostelworld Group, 2018).

Text mining techniques were determined to be a suitable choice due to their established and verified ability to recognize and follow patterns within a dataset. This technique can determine if reviews from backpackers correspond with the literature as well as establishing whether the customer's expectations were confirmed or disconfirmed. The latter is harder to accomplish as not all reviews will contain enough information to accurately determine if an individual's expectations were met. However, with the use of sentiment analysis, this author should be able to determine if a review was positive, negative or neutral. Furthermore, this research employs both individual keywords and latent topics, which is essentially a classification of words into probabilistic combinations (Dickinger et al., 2017).

3.2 Research Instrument

The use of text mining as a framework within which to systematically analyze and compare the different facets of reviews written by backpackers staying in hybrid hotels and hostels is likely to provide an understanding of their expectations and satisfaction levels, and how each accommodation is perceived through a backpacker's lens. In an attempt to better understand whether hybrid hotels are meeting the requirements of backpackers, the expectation confirmation theory is utilized to examine the results of this study.

Text mining is particularly useful for companies dealing with a significant amount of reviews because reading and analysing reviews one by one is just not feasible, fiscally or time-wise.

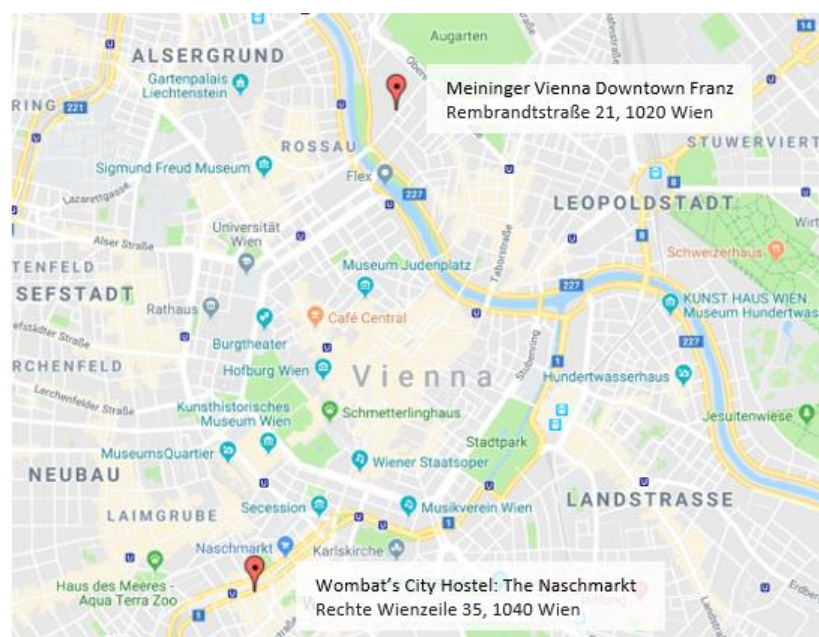
3.3 Accommodation Selection: Vienna

Vienna is the capital city of Austria and a major tourist destination. Vienna had a 78% room occupancy rate in 2018 (Stadt Wien, 2019) with a total of 16,483,497 bed nights sold, a 6.3% increase from the previous year (B2B Wien, 2019).

Meininger Vienna Downtown Franz and Wombat's City Hostel: The Naschmarkt were selected for this study because they share similar characteristics in terms of service amenities, pricing and location. Meininger is marketed as a hybrid hotel, suggesting it is both a hotel and a hostel. Like Wombat's, the Meininger property has large common areas, a communal kitchen with laundry facilities, and dormitories. Both locations share the same amenities, except that the majority of Meininger's rooms are private suites, whereas the opposite is true for Wombat's with the majority being dormitory-style or shared rooms.

Furthermore, the hybrid hotel also provides similar services, such as breakfast, free Wi-Fi, all-female dorms, lockers, luggage storage and 24-hour reception, among others. Both chains have similar price points: with single beds starting at €15 at the two Wombat Hostel sites and €20 at all three Meininger hotels in Vienna. In terms of location, they both fall just outside the ring of the first district, so they are relatively close to the city center (see Figure 3-1). On the surface, these two establishments share the same basic traits, as well, they are both chains, and therefore, consistency is implemented and expected. This analysis instils a confidence that Meininger Hotels and Wombat Hostels are comparable accommodation chains.

FIGURE 3-1: MAP OF VIENNA WITH ACCOMMODATION DROP POINTS



Source: Google Maps

3.3.1 Meininger Hotels

The Meininger Hotel Group was founded by Nizar Rokhbani and Oscar Kan in 1999 (Berliner Morgenpost, 2013). The entrepreneurs envisioned an affordable hotel with hostel-like amenities that could cater to all types of travellers, namely families, backpackers, school groups, and business travellers (see Appendix 1) (Higley, 2014). Since the opening of the first property in Berlin, Meininger has become a competitive force to be reckoned with within the hybrid hotel market (Meininger Hotels, n.d.).

Meininger's management has described themselves as a budget hotel that can be sold by the bed, rather than just by the room (Higley, 2014). At the time of submission, Meininger offered a total of 14,114 beds across 26 properties in nine countries, with plans to add another 14 hotels by 2022, expanding to four more countries, including the United States. They currently have three hotels in Vienna, accounting for 1,034 beds. The Vienna Downtown Franz location has 487 beds in 131 rooms; however, only 13 of them are dormitories. The company offers single and double rooms, dormitories (4-6 beds), and family/multi-bed rooms. Their website lists several amenities and services offered at their hotels including: free Wi-Fi, central location, 24-hour reception, relaxed atmosphere, guest kitchen, game zone, ensuite bathrooms, luggage room and lockers, laundry room and breakfast buffet (Meininger Hotels, n.d.). It should be noted that not all services and amenities are included in the price, and cost extra if guests choose to use them. The game zone, which the variety of games differs from one location to another and the breakfast buffet both costs extra.

This study focuses on how the company targets backpackers, and how they market themselves to that segment of travellers. In an article written by Higley (2014), he notes that six percent of all guests are backpackers, but refers to them as the 'party market'. On the surface, it appears that the hybrid hotel provides all the amenities that backpackers desire, keeping in line with the literature, but it begs the question: Does a [hybrid] hotel with the standard amenities of a hostel meet the expectations regularly held by the backpacker tourist segment? On the Meininger website, they have a page specifically geared towards this type of traveller with a detailed description provided on how Meininger is the best fit for the backpacker travel lifestyle. It is even written, "The best company for interrail travellers and backpackers" (see Appendix 1) (Meininger Hotels, n.d.). Eva Bachmann, development manager at Meininger, said during a panel discussion that the brand aggressively markets themselves on OTA such as Hostelworld.com and Booking.com (Higley, 2014). Backpackers can find a more detailed description of the Meininger Franz location on Hostelworld.com. The OTA provides their own summary preceding the hybrid hotel's official description provided by the company. Hostelworld.com writes "Meininger Vienna Downtown Franz has an atmosphere more like a hotel [...] with the facilities and cleanliness of a hotel, but the social aspect of a hostel" (Hostelworld.com, n.d.a). This information put out by Meininger and Hostelworld.com is something that consumers utilize to form their expectations prior to their visit.

Meininger Vienna Downtown Franz has an overall rating of 8.8 based on 4,076 guest reviews. Hostelworld.com listed staff, cleanliness and location as the three best qualities; however, it might need to be updated, as location is the lowest rated quality of the seven.

TABLE 3-1: MEININGER VIENNA DOWNTOWN FRANZ RATING

Value for Money	8.7
Location	8.0
Atmosphere	8.4
Facilities	8.9
Security	9.3
Staff	9.1
Cleanliness	9.2

Source: Hostelworld.com, n.d.a

3.3.2 Wombat Hostels

A little over 20 years ago, in 1998, Marcus Praschinger and Sascha Böck founded Wombat Hostels. Vienna was home to their first hostel, "The Base," situated close to Westbahnhof. Within two years, they achieved tremendous success which motivated them to expand from 150 beds to 261 (Wombat Hostels, 2010). This location is no longer open, but they have two other locations in Vienna that are currently still in operation. Since then, they have opened locations in Berlin, Budapest, London, Munich, and most recently, Venice. The chain boasts that they host more than 300,000 travellers in all their locations, excluding Venice, every year. Over the last two decades, the hostel chain has won six Hostelworld Hoscars awards in the category of 'Best Hostel Chain,' in addition to having an award-winning cleanliness rating (Wombat Hostels, n.d.). Furthermore, Wombat's was elected the 'most popular hostel chain in the world' for three consecutive years, and Vienna's Wombat Hostel "The Lounge" was awarded 'No.1 Hostel in Austria' two years in a row (Wombat Hostels, 2010).

Reviews from this location were sourced to serve as a benchmark for what constitutes a backpacker-approved chain hostel, and what is typically expected from Viennese hostels. This dataset was subjected to the same pre-processing and subsequent analyses as the Meininger set so that clear comparisons can be made with confidence. Additionally, this is done to ensure that the data is truly representative of the values and requirements of backpackers, as described in previous studies.

Opened in 2011, Wombat's City Hostel: The Naschmarkt was and continues to be the chain's largest location with 440 beds in 122 rooms. This hostel has an overall rating of 9.2 based on 24,033 reviews. Hostelworld.com list their top three best qualities, which are their location, staff and cleanliness.

TABLE 3-2: WOMBAT'S CITY HOSTELS: THE NASCHMARKT RATING

Value for Money	8.9
Location	9.3
Atmosphere	9.0

Facilities	9.1
Security	9.5
Staff	9.2
Cleanliness	9.1

Source: Hostelworld.com, n.d.b

3.4 Sampling Procedures

Dickinger and Mazanec (2015) deemed 300 to 500 reviews were sufficient for a moderate sample size of online reviews to extract statistically significant results. The reviews were screened and selected based on the criteria that distinguish backpackers from other tourist segments. This set of criteria was based on and extracted from the literature review.

Backpackers are typically solo travellers so only reviews that listed single travellers were selected, meaning that reviews written by 'couples,' 'all-female groups,' 'all-male groups,' and 'mixed groups' were automatically excluded during the screening process. Guests who mentioned being with their family or in a large group (i.e., a sports team) had their review excluded as well. Murphy (2001) found that individuals travelling alone found it easier to meet others than if they were travelling in a group or as a couple. Respondents even went so far to say that they were less likely to approach couples because of the assumption made that couples wanted privacy. Furthermore, Murphy's (2001) research also determined that couples were more likely to stay in a private room than a shared room. For the most part, it was difficult to determine whether a reviewer stayed in a dormitory or a private room unless they expressly mentioned it. If guests mentioned that they had stayed in a private room, their review was not included because they did not utilize the dormitories. Shared rooms are an essential part of hostels and the primary sleeping accommodation choice of backpackers (Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995; Murphy, 2001). It is an especially strong point for this segment as shared rooms are an ideal environment to meet and engage other travellers (Alves et al., 2015, as cited by Martins et al., 2018).

The literature supports the consensus that backpackers fall between the ages of 15 and 25 years old; however, there are backpacker subsegments that include older age groups. For this study, data from all age groups were collected but any major discrepancies between the groups will be discussed in the next part of this thesis.

The research suggests that backpackers choose to travel when they've reached a certain juncture in life, therefore, reviews which specified a guest's purpose for visiting that did not fall in line with these criteria were excluded. A pertinent example of this is demonstrated when one reviewer wrote that she was in Vienna for a work conference, despite also commenting that she was staying in a shared room with other guests. As a result, she did not fit the backpacker profile and therefore, her review was excluded from the dataset. Reviews which blatantly demonstrated that a guest was not a backpacker such as "My friend and I aren't experienced hostel-goers..." is an example of a review that was also rejected.

Furthermore, additional criteria were added when screening and selecting reviews. One such criterion was that the review had to be written in English. Reviews written in other languages were excluded to avoid possible misinterpretations during translation. The reviews also had to contain five words or more, therefore reviews containing statements with less such as “Great stay,” “Recommend,” or “Would not stay again” were not included as they did not provide enough information for the text mining analysis. These short statements also do not describe any aspects or attributes of the establishments or if their expectations were confirmed or disconfirmed.

3.5 Data Analysis Steps

The following is a description of steps undertaken to collect and analyze the data and record the results. Each of the following steps were applied to both the Meininger Vienna Downtown Franz and Wombat’s City Hostel: The Naschmarkt datasets.

(1) This author opted to manually collect the reviews rather than using web scraping as the technology is unfamiliar. The data was collected from Hostelworld.com in April 2019 and the reviews were saved into two excel spreadsheets (one for each accommodation provider). It was recorded and formatted in a manner that is usable in PSPP and WordStat. The gender, age, nationality and reviewer status (along with the number of reviews written) of the reviewer was recorded in addition to their check-in dates, overall rating of the accommodation and the actual review.

(2) Both datasets were put through PSPP to collect descriptive statistics, frequencies and to compare means. This step not only provided essential information regarding the sample, but also determined that the sample consistent and reflective of the backpacker archetype as described in the literature. Hecht and Martin (2006) found discrepancies between gender, age groups and nationalities of respondents regarding hostel attribute preferences. Therefore, this step was important in allowing this author to differentiate between these different demographic characteristics.

(3) The following step undertaken was to import each dataset into WordStat for natural language preprocessing. This is crucial as it essentially ‘cleans’ the texts by removing stop words, punctuation, numbers, special characters, white spaces and putting all words into lowercase. During this step, substitutions can be implemented (i.e., traveler is substituted for traveller and center is substituted for centre), and misspellings are identified and corrected. In certain reviews, slang native to certain regions were categorized as a misspelled word, and was manually changed to the appropriate word. For example, an Australian backpacker used the word ‘brekkie’, which is an Australian slang word for ‘breakfast’, and therefore it was manually changed to breakfast.

Lemmatization was also utilized. It removes inflectional endings from words in an attempt to return them to their lemma (the base or dictionary form of the term). For instance:

am, are, is → be
dorm, dormitory, dormitories, dorms → dorm

This was implemented during the pre-processing stage to lump variations of a particular word together. Without lemmatization, the frequency of the words, along with their co-occurrences and sentiment analyses, would not be as reliable, significant and consistent. Prior to this step, the word 'room' and 'rooms' (used 186 and 136 times, respectively, in the Meininger dataset) were counted separately and were the sixth and tenth most frequently used words. After applying lemmatization, 'room' was determined to be the second most frequent word, appearing 322 times in the Meininger dataset.

(4) Unlike in previous studies, this author did not manually sort through the datasets to develop a dictionary or a list of possible categories. WordStat can categorize the terms into various topics with word and phrase lists ready to go. The categories were based on both the literature and the review criteria used by Hostelworld.com. Once the program categorized the datasets into topics, minor adjustments were performed to clarify each topic. This included the possibility of combining topics, for example, WordStat initially created a topic specifically for public transportation and another about the location of the hybrid hotel in the Meininger dataset. Both of the respective topics related to the overall 'location' dimension and as a result, were merged into a single category. Additionally, removing words that did not fit the theme of the topic was also performed (i.e. removing the word 'location' from the 'staff' category). This process was applied in the fourth step.

(5) Continuing in WordStat, text mining is used to analyze the reviews for word frequency and co-occurrences. The program can also do mapping, proximity plots, dendrograms, cross tabulations and link analyses. Phrase frequency analysis was also utilized during this step.

(6) The next step proved to be rather challenging. The sentiment analysis provided in WordStat was not satisfactory as it erroneously categorized several negative reviews as positive and vice versa and did not include a 'neutral' classification. Therefore, it was replaced with the Text Analysis API from Aylien, in combination with Google Sheets. The reviews were uploaded onto a Google Sheet, and once the API was programmed, it conducted a sentiment analysis on each review. The API also provided the confidence level for each case, in addition to properly classifying the reviews into positive, negative and neutral sentiments.

(7) Both datasets were uploaded again into WordStat, now with their sentiment classifications, and cross-tabulations were performed to on keywords, phrases and topics to determine how backpackers felt about the various accommodation attributes.

(8) The final step was to carefully examine the results to identify patterns and themes that would provide insight into backpackers' preferences. Additionally, this step aims to use the results to address and answer the following queries:

- What do backpackers' value? Is it accurately reflected in the literature?
- How did backpackers perceive their stay in a hybrid hotel? How does it compare with guests who chose to stay with Wombats Hostels?
- What services do hybrid hotels have to offer to be competitive with hostels?

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

A total of 894 reviews were sourced from Meininger Vienna Downtown Franz and Wombat's City Hostel: The Naschmarkt. Reviewers represented 79 different countries demonstrating the diversity of the backpacker segment (see Appendix 2 for Meininger and Appendix 3 for Wombat's). The majority of the reviews written by North Americans, representing 41.27% of cases, followed by Europeans with 28.4% and Oceanians with 12.9%. The data collected was written by 626 Novice Nomads (70.02%), 196 Avid Travellers (21.92%) and 72 Globetrotters (8.05%). Furthermore, 83.89% off all reviews were written by backpackers who have reviewed more than one establishment on Hostelworld.com.

4.1.1 Meininger Descriptive Statistics

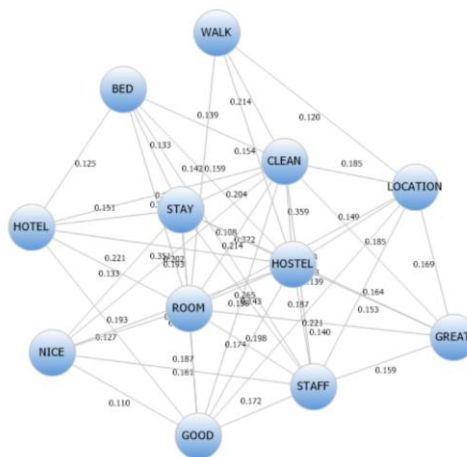
A total of 500 reviews on Meininger's Vienna Franz location were sourced from Hostelworld.com. Two hundred and sixty-nine reviews were written by females and the remaining 231 by males. Reviewers who fell into the age range of 18 to 24 years old accounted for 51.4% of the reviews written, followed by those between 25 and 30 years old which made up 33.8%, those aged 31 to 40 years accounted for 10.4%, with individuals 41 years and older making up the last 4.4%. As not all the reviews were used, the new average rating for the hybrid hotel is 8.51, with a standard deviation of 1.13. The average rating did not differentiate significantly between age groups or gender.

TABLE 4-1: TOP 16 WORDS WITH FREQUENCIES AND % OF TOTAL REVIEWS [MEININGER]

1. Hostel 394 56.60%	2. Room 322 45.80%	3. Clean 279 51.60%	4. Staff 211 41.60%
5. Hotel 206 37.20%	6. Stay 205 35.00%	7. Good 187 31.40%	8. Great 185 29.60%
9. Bed 177 25.00%	10. Nice 169 29.00%	11. Location 148 28.80%	12. Place 143 26.20%
13. Walk 137 24.40%	14. Friendly 96 19.00%	15. Kitchen 89 16.60%	16. People 85 15.40%

Figure 4-1 provides information on the co-occurrence strength between keywords. The lowest visible co-occurrence strength permitted was 0.108.

FIGURE 4-1: MAPPING OF KEYWORDS WITH CO-OCCURRENCE OF 0.1 OR HIGHER [MEININGER]



Keywords and phrases were categorized into topics based on the eight features backpackers' value. The sentiment analysis found 153 positive, 92 negative and 15 neutral reviews with the remaining 240 reviews determined to be inconclusive. The average confidence level for the analysis is 0.7737. Cross tabulations were performed to determine the general sentiment reviewers felt about each topic.

4.1.2 Wombat Descriptive Statistics

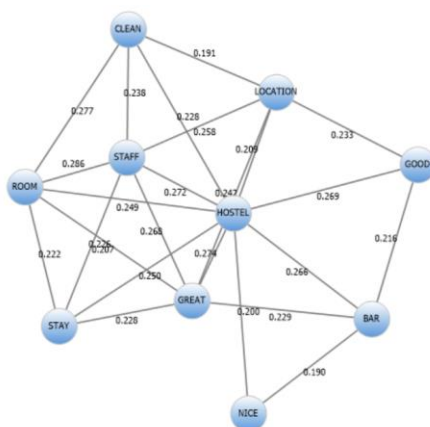
A total of 394 reviews from Wombat's City Hostel: The Naschmarkt were sourced to create the dataset. Female reviewers account for 63.45% having written 250 of the 394 reviews, and males, account for the remaining 36.55%. Nearly 50% of reviewers fell between the ages of 18 and 24 years old, keeping in line with the literature on backpackers. Guests aged 25 to 30 years old accounted for 32.49%, followed by those between 31- and 40-years old accounting for 13.96%. Guests aged 41 years and older made up the remaining 4.06%. Hostelworld Group (2016) reported that more than 70% of hostel guests are millennials, which seems to be accurately reflected in the sample. As not all the online reviews were collected for this dataset, the new average rating based on this sample is 8.92, with a standard deviation of 1.17. While the average rating did not differentiate significantly between females and males, the same cannot be said for the age groups. The average rating increased with each age group: 8.79; 8.94; 9.21; and 9.28 respectively. Table 4-2 shows the results for Wombat's top 16 most frequent words (also see Appendix 5). Additionally, Figure 4-2 illustrates the keywords that share a co-occurrence strength of 0.190 or higher.

TABLE 4-2: TOP 16 WORDS WITH FREQUENCIES AND % OF TOTAL REVIEWS [WOMBAT HOSTEL]

1. Hostel 301 56.35%	2. Room 248 44.16%	3. Great 238 45.18%	4. Stay 222 42.13%
5. Staff 207 48.98%	6. Good 194 36.80%	7. Nice 153 29.70%	8. Clean 152 36.29%

9. Location 147 36.80%	10. Bar 140 33.25%	11. Bed 107 21.32%	12. Place 97 21.57%
13. Friendly 89 22.34%	14. People 81 18.02%	15. Walk 74 17.26%	16. Atmosphere 72 17.77%

FIGURE 4-2: MAPPING OF KEYWORDS WITH CO-OCCURRENCE STRENGTH OF 0.19 OR HIGHER [WOMBAT HOSTEL]



The sentiment analysis determined that there were 152 positive, 35 negative and eight neutral reviews with 199 reviews found to be inconclusive. The average confidence level for the analysis is 0.8319. Subsequent to categorizing the keywords and phrases into topics, a cross tabulation was performed in order to understand which topics invoked a positive, negative or neutral sentiment result.

4.2 Topic Categorization

A topic extraction process was utilized in both datasets to determine the most important themes. All eight attributes that backpackers' value, namely pricing and affordability, facilities, cleanliness, security, location, staff, atmosphere and miscellaneous services, were present in the datasets. However, certain topics showed to have more significance than others depending on the accommodation. Additionally, the corresponding sentiment analyses appeared to differ between the hybrid hotel and the hostel.

4.2.1 Meininger Hotel Topics

This categorization process revealed the four most frequent topics across the Meininger dataset, namely atmosphere, facilities, location and staff. The terms and phrases associated with each topic can be found in Appendix 6.

Interestingly, key features such as security and pricing were not mentioned often enough for the text mining program to recognize them as keywords or phrases. This does not mean that they are not valued by these reviewers. One term associated with safety was found in 31 cases: 'locker'. The general sentiment is shown to be positive, appearing in 5.92% of positive reviews,

but this author is not confident that this is conclusive. Numbeo (2019) have assigned an overall safety index rating of 76.70 out of 100 for Vienna. Their report also includes the safety index rating for walking alone during the day (92.16) and at night (75.49). The Austrian capital is considered to be an exceptionally safe destination, which could have been an influencing factor in developing a backpacker's expectations before (s)he arrived at (her)his accommodation. As well, Meininger offers lockers and 24-reception, two security features appreciated by backpackers (Hecht & Martin, 2006; Nash et al., 2006; Brochado et al., 2014; Amblee, 2015; Mikulić et al., 2016). Bulchand-Gidumal, Melián-González, and González Lopez-Valcarcel (2011) noted that certain variables, providing Wi-Fi as an example, might appear less important in reviews but posited that this is because the feature's existence is considered a standard amenity. Terms associated with that amenity appear more frequently in reviews when the service is either not available or is not functioning properly (as cited by Martins et al., 2018). However, it remains unclear as to the reasons why these two attributes were not mentioned more frequently since inferences and assumptions can easily and erroneously be made without further information.

Cleanliness, which was initially expected to be its own category, was automatically categorized under 'facilities' by the WordStat program. The term 'clean' was most associated with the general state of the building or dormitories. The term was used 279 times, accounting for 51.6% of the total reviews. Additionally, 53.6% of all positive reviews contained this term. As this attribute is grouped under the facilities topic, it adds to the positive sentiment of the category (see Figure 4-3). The word 'clean' is so frequently used across reviews that it has high association strengths with other frequently used terms such as 'staff', 'hotel' and 'hostel'. O'Connor (2010) and Levy, Duan, and Boo (2012) determined that reviewers prefer to use a combination of terms, such as 'staff', 'clean' and 'breakfast' when writing a high rating review (both as cited by Martins et al., 2018). However, 'clean' was also strongly associated with keywords found under the facilities category, including 'room' with an association level of 0.322, 'kitchen' with an association level of 0.121 and, 'modern' and 'comfortable', both with association levels of 0.092. It is for this reason that 'clean' was categorized into the facilities topic.

Miscellaneous services were offered to guests at Meininger's Franz location. One such service is Wi-Fi which is freely available throughout the entire establishment. This was highly praised by patrons, as demonstrated by the positive sentiment of 73.3% of the reviews that mentioned this feature. Breakfast was by far the most popular miscellaneous service that the hybrid hotel offers, accounting for 15.69% of all positive reviews, keeping in line with Martins et al.'s (2018) research in which breakfast accounted for 8.6% of positive reviews (see Image 4-1 and Appendix 9). It was mentioned in 60 reviews with only nine deemed to have a negative sentiment. Upon further inspection of the negative comments, it was found that only seven thought breakfast was not worth the money. Aside from those reviews, backpackers generally appreciated the service and suggested it in their comments. Two backpackers mentioned that the accommodation offers bike rentals, but it does not appear to be a widely used or recognized service: "Staff

was helpful with directions, getting me a bike, providing gluten free options for breakfast and storing my luggage.”

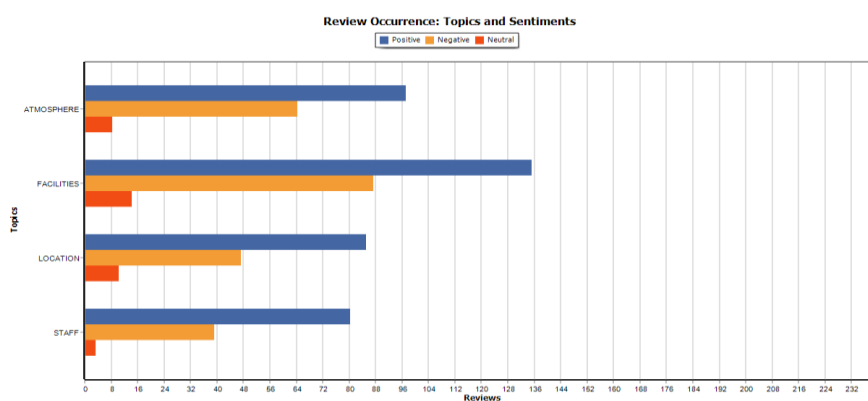
IMAGE 4-1: MEININGER VIENNA DOWNTOWN FRANZ – BREAKFAST



Source: Hostelworld.com, n.d.a

Overall, the services that Meininger Franz provides were met with positive reviews from guests. However, organized activities, a service that researchers have clearly demonstrated is very important to backpackers and aids in networking and communication, were not offered by the hybrid hotel. A keyword search of the word ‘activities’ resulted in four reviews, three of which complained about the lack thereof: “the hostel needs more activities, in order to meet other travellers. We have found this to be the case in all Meiningers (we have stayed in 3!). Not a social place but has social space - use it!”

FIGURE 4-3: MEININGER’S REVIEW OCCURRENCE – TOPICS AND SENTIMENTS BAR CHART



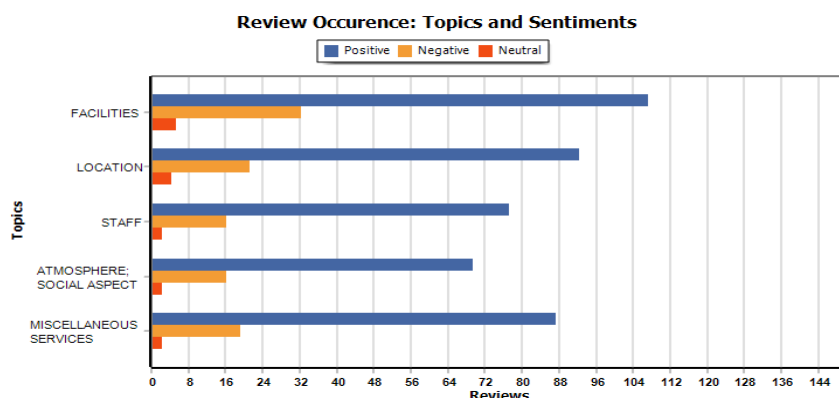
4.2.2 Wombat's Hostel Topics

Wombat's most frequent words and phrases were analyzed and subsequently categorized into five topics: staff, facilities, miscellaneous services, atmosphere and location (see Appendix 7). Like Meininger, very few of the hostel reviews mentioned pricing or security. However, the word 'locker' does appear 46 times, accounting for 11.17% of the cases, and had a general positive sentiment level (see Appendix 10). Cleanliness was also grouped into the facilities category, for two reasons. Firstly, it was used primarily in reviews to describe the state of the facilities and had an association strength of 0.277 with 'room', 0.228 for 'hostel' and 0.186 for 'bar'. Secondly, it appeared that the hostel was struggling with a bed bug infestation for a few months (not an entirely abnormal occurrence in the hostel industry) and therefore, comments regarding cleanliness and the dormitories and other facilities often co-occurred. Referring to Appendix 7, the phrase 'bed bugs' was automatically included into the facilities category by WordStat for its high coherence level with cleanliness and facilities. To reiterate Bulchand-Gidumal et al.'s (2011) findings, certain features might appear less important in reviews as their existence is standard and thus, expected. It is when issues arrive with the provision and consistency of the service that the frequency of related terms increase (as cited by Martins et al., 2018). In this case, it appears that the coherence and association strengths between cleanliness and facilities increased when a problem surfaced.

Guests of Wombat's Naschmarkt location were very satisfied with the miscellaneous services the hostel provided. Figure 4-4 illustrates the review sentiments per topic, and it is visually apparent why their Naschmarkt location is so highly rated on Hostelworld.com. The miscellaneous services topic garnered primarily positive reviews, as the hostel offers a wide variety. As guests check-in, they are automatically given a free drink coupon that can be redeemed at their bar, where other inexpensive drinks can also be purchased. Most reviews regarding the free drink coupon were positive, except for one in which the guest received an additional free drink coupon, free laundry and a free breakfast coupon since her room had bed bugs. Other bar related services that were mentioned included a beer pong tournament, comedy shows and weekly pub quizzes. Walking tours was another activity that was mentioned in reviews and was automatically grouped into the miscellaneous services topic (see Appendix 7).

Like Meininger Franz, the hostel offered breakfast at the cost of four euros. This was also a rather popular service, mentioned in 69 reviews, and furthermore, was present in 17.76% of positive reviews. Where Wombat's failed to meet expectations was in the provision of a reliable internet connection. Wi-Fi was mentioned in 33 reviews, of which, 87.9% complained about the terrible connection. Some reviews listed that the intermittent internet service was the only dissatisfying element of their stay.

FIGURE 4-4: WOMBAT'S REVIEW OCCURRENCE – TOPICS AND SENTIMENTS BAR CHART



The next section will outline the four remaining topics in further detail, beginning with the most problematic area, atmosphere, to the most satisfactory, staff.

4.3 Atmosphere

The literature clearly establishes the importance backpackers place on a welcoming and social atmosphere within a hostel. Atmosphere is a difficult idea to conceptualize as it cannot be easily broken down into keywords. Rather, it is a combination of many factors, namely boundaries, props, modifiers, and spaces (Murphy, 2001). If executed correctly, these environmental settings provide an inclusive hostel atmosphere, where patrons feel comfortable coming together in common areas, and interacting with other travellers and staff, forming new friendships and expanding their information network. Prior to discussing the results of this topic, it was noted that the hybrid hotel design was quite a prominent theme in many reviews, particularly those commenting on the atmosphere and facilities of the Meininger Franz property. The facilities themselves are closely tied to the perceived atmosphere, and therefore discussion of the results will overlap in the two categories.

Words such as ‘meet’, ‘people’, ‘atmosphere’, ‘area’, ‘place’, ‘family’, ‘feel’ and ‘hotel’ and combinations thereof composed the keywords and phrases of the atmosphere category. The topic had the second highest coherence level (0.362), appearing in 341 cases (see Appendix 6). The themes of this category were present in 69.56% of the negative reviews (see Figure 4-4). The word ‘atmosphere’ alone was present in 20.65% of all negative reviews (see Appendix 9). Many complained that it was incredibly difficult to meet fellow backpackers, as the common areas evidently failed to provide the necessary atmosphere for social interactions to occur.

There seemed to be two main factors contributing to the dissatisfaction with the hybrid hotel atmosphere. The first was that there were many families and school groups that utilize Meininger’s shared rooms, and therefore tended to usurp the common areas, making it an uncomfortable environment for backpackers. One reviewer wrote, “the place was overrun with young children whose parents did not look after them. It was impossible to sit in the lobby and have a

conversation [...] when the children were there.” A number of reviewers suggested that the best places to meet fellow solo travellers was in their shared room or the communal kitchen, as it was unlikely a backpacker would be successful in the common area. Reviewers commented that the presence of so many children and adolescents made for a “strange atmosphere”, suggesting the mixture of tourist types as a “mess” and made for “an unconventional hostel experience”.

An attempt to travel while avoiding mainstream tourists and attractions does not mean backpackers will not visit the same destinations, necessarily. These travellers understand that in choosing to visit a place, such as Vienna, the likeliness of crossing paths with mass tourists is higher, but still, the selection of their accommodation is meant to keep those coincidences to a minimum. This clearly is not the case at Meininger’s Franz Hotel, nor is it expected to be different at any of the other hybrid hotels in their chain: “A typical Meininger experience, if you're familiar. This hostel felt more like a hotel and had more family vibes than youth backpacking vibes.”

For many, seeing so many families and school groups came as a surprise, often citing that what they thought was a hostel, was in actuality a “family-oriented hotel”. The term ‘family’ was found in 7.8% of reviews (see Appendix 4). The word appeared in nearly 10% of all negative reviews (see Appendix 6). Families with young children and school excursion groups can also be classified as budget tourists, as they typically seek out affordable lodging establishments with shared room availability. However, they remain largely mainstream tourists as they have fixed itineraries typically composed of tours to the major sights and attractions. While the literature does not name any specific tourist segment that backpackers aim to avoid more than another, they consistently refer to mass tourists as a group whose entire purpose, motivation, and intention for travel vastly differs from that of backpackers. They are different in their methods of experiencing a destination and follow different travel ideologies, with backpackers preferring to immerse themselves in the local culture, while the masses typically aim for a leisurely holiday, choosing to take in the most popular sights (Cohen, 1973; Riley, 1988; Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995).

To summarize the first factor, backpackers are not keen on sharing their nightly accommodations with other tourist types. The loud noises and crowding caused by families and school groups negatively alter the modifiers in such a way that turns the common spaces into places to avoid. That is not to say that this atmosphere is not well suited for other guests choosing Meininger Franz. Simply put, this is not the atmosphere or ‘vibe’ that backpackers are seeking or expecting.

The second contributing factor turned out to be the actual hybrid hotel design of the building. It was not only the presence of other tourist types that had backpackers questioning if they had actually chosen to stay in a hostel or not. One reviewer described the common area to be “just like a hotel lobby.” another described the accommodation as a “hostel chain built on a hotel

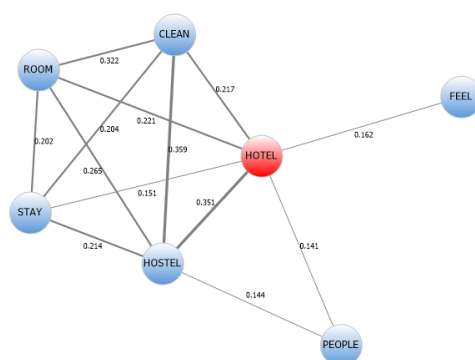
foot-print”, demonstrating that Meininger Franz lacked the hostel atmosphere that was expected:

[I] was confused because this was more of a hotel than a hostel. Very big company vibe which is not what I was looking for. Traveling Europe, I've come to love the really small hostels where you can come to know everyone from different corners.

When the common area (or ‘lobby’) wasn’t being overrun by students on a school field trip and families, it was completely deserted: “definitely has more of a hotel vibe to it and not the best option for solo travelers looking for people to explore the city with. The lobby was usually either empty or large groups of people would be down there together.” Hotel lobbies are not known for their social, communal atmosphere, and are not an attractive setting for backpackers to sit down, relax and mingle.

In the Meininger dataset, the term ‘hotel’ was used 206 times in 186 reviews (37.2%) (see Appendix 4). This word reveals a lot more about backpackers’ perspectives of this hybrid than previously envisioned. To put it into context, the term ‘hotel’ only appeared a total of 10 times (2.54% of cases) in the Wombat’s database, and of those, just five reviewers used the word to describe the atmosphere of the hostel. In fact, it was so seldom used that WordStat automatically categorized ‘hotel’ as a leftover word in the Wombat dataset. Going back to the Meininger dataset, Figure 4-5 illustrates a link analysis between the word ‘hotel’ and other keywords that had association strengths of 0.141 or higher. The words ‘hotel’ and ‘hostel’ had a high association level (0.351) within the whole dataset. The terms co-occur in 136 reviews. ‘Hotel’ only appears in 50 cases without the term ‘hostel’ (see Appendix 8). Furthermore, it is evident that the hybrid concept had a lasting impression on backpackers’ perceptions of the experience, due to its exceptionally high presence in the majority of reviews. Figure 4-7 is the proximity plot for the target term ‘hotel’, and further details can be found in Appendix 8.

FIGURE 4-5: LINK ANALYSIS FOR ‘HOTEL’ [MEININGER DATASET]



In the Meininger dataset, it was found that the term ‘hotel’ was present in 49 of the 92 negative reviews, accounting for 52.17% (see Appendix 9). It is one of a handful of keywords that were

predominantly found in negative reviews. Interestingly enough, 35 of those reviews also contained the word 'hostel' denoting that reviews containing both 'hotel' and 'hostel' accounted for 38.04% of all negative reviews. Furthermore, only 28 out of 153 positive reviews contained both terms, accounting for 18.3% of all positive reviews. 'Atmosphere' and 'hotel' have an association strength of 0.10 and co-occur 36 times. To reiterate, the term 'atmosphere' surfaces in 19 negative reviews, accounting for 20.65% of all negative reviews, and only 15 positive ones, accounting for only 9.80% of all positive reviews (see Appendix 9). Of those 19 negative reviews, 16 also contained the word 'hotel', suggesting backpackers have formed a strong negative perceptual association between Meininger Franz and a hotel atmosphere.

Wombat's City Hostels are well known for their social atmosphere, making it a favourite among backpackers. A key term search for 'atmosphere' painted a picture of a hostel atmosphere congruent with the literature. The key term co-occurs 45 times with 'hostel', 40 times with 'staff', and 32 times with 'bar' (see Figure 4-6). Their association strengths are 0.130, 0.118, and 0.112, respectively. It is well known that Wombat's Naschmarkt staff make full use of their bar area to facilitate activities (see Imagine 4-2). The literature has demonstrated that active staff involvement in interacting with their patrons results in a high level of satisfaction and a high service quality level. The word 'atmosphere' appears in 21.05% of all positive reviews and only 14.29% of negative reviews (see Appendix 10). This further illustrates that the 'cosy', 'inviting', and 'homey' atmosphere of Wombat's Naschmarkt location is better suited to meet backpacker expectations.

FIGURE 4-6: PROXIMITY PLOT FOR 'ATMOSPHERE' [WOMBAT HOSTEL]

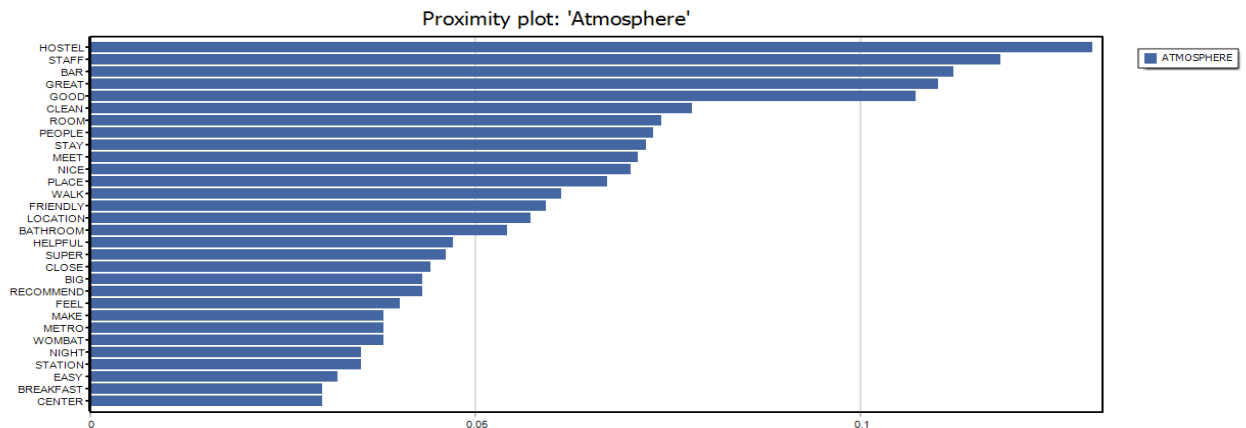


IMAGE 4-2: WOMBAT'S CITY HOSTEL: THE NASCHMARKT – BAR



Source: Hostelworld.com, n.d.b

It should be noted that not all disagreed with the atmosphere of the hybrid hotel. Interestingly, a few reviews written by guests familiar with the chain expressed satisfaction with the reliability of the accommodation. The presence of families and school groups, with the accompanying hotel vibe, came as no surprise to them. For one reviewer, staying in an accommodation that catered to families made her feel comfortable as a solo traveller, while others suggested that Meininger Franz is a great option for backpackers who need a relaxing break from the typical hustle and bustle of hostel life. One reviewer wrote, “the hotel of hostels. Not really a good place to meet people as a solo traveller, but a great place to rest up, recover, and explore the city.” Another experienced backpacker added:

I've been to dozens of hostels in the last 6 months and this is definitely the most comfortable. It's not a party hostel but if you want to chill out before going back to a crazy city such as Prague or Budapest, go there.

However, others were not so convinced. One reviewer cut her reservation short after one night due to the atmosphere, or lack thereof, citing the common areas were being overrun by children and other guests that were hogging up space with their laptops. The reviewer still decided to leave despite praising them for their comfortable, clean and modern facilities. While it cannot be said for every type of backpacker without more in-depth research, it is certain that the expected and preferred hostel atmosphere was non-existent and a ‘deal-breaker’ for many. There were many reviews that recommended Meininger Franz, and many that did not. Worth noting are the comments made by four backpackers who specifically said that they would highly recommend this accommodation to those planning to travel with friends, and would certainly

return themselves if they were with a group, but strongly recommended against it for solo travellers.

These findings are congruent with those found in the literature. Backpackers are at their happiest when they are with their own kind and will continue to avoid unnecessary interactions with mass tourists. Meininger Franz demonstrated that they could not meet the atmosphere expectation, but that was never their intention. The hybrid hotel chain is predicated upon the vision of a budget accommodation for all types of tourists. However, backpackers choosing to book through Hostelworld.com are not presented with this information. The description of the accommodation found on the booking platform is the first thing backpackers encounter, before they even look at the reviews. The OTA does not mention that it is an establishment frequented by large groups of students and families with young children, but rather focuses on the attributes most attractive to the backpacker segment (Hostelworld.com, n.d.a). Furthermore, the design of the environment, including its boundaries, props, modifiers and space, was not conducive of the atmosphere typically sought out by backpackers.

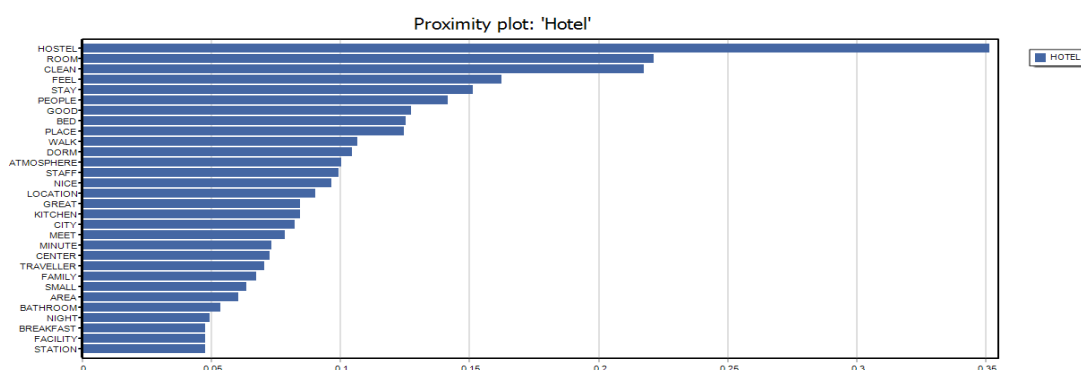
4.4 Facilities

Throughout the literature, the facilities were found to encompass communal areas, rooms and bathrooms. It also includes the inherent furnishings and features of these areas. As mentioned previously, the atmosphere and the facilities topics frequently overlap in terms of the design of the spaces. The purpose of studying facilities is to understand if the hybrid hotel provides practicality, consistency and reliability with their design.

The category of facilities includes terms and phrases consisting of the words 'bathroom', 'shower', 'room', 'bed', 'dorm', 'kitchen', 'area', among others (see Appendix 6 for complete list). To reiterate, the cleanliness dimension has been included in this category as it functions as a descriptor of the state of the facilities. Other descriptors included in the topic are 'comfortable', 'small', and 'modern'. This topic had the highest coherence level of the four topics (0.398) and was present in the vast majority of reviews, accounting for 91.6% of the total. The inclusion of such words as 'hotel' and 'hostel' resulted in a significant presence in positive, negative and neutral reviews: 88.23%, 94.56%, and 93.33%, respectively. To truly understand the perceived quality of the facilities, individual terms and phrases are analyzed closely to reach a conclusion.

The majority of reviews compared the design of the rooms and their associated features to those found in a hotel. Figure 4-7 illustrates the proximity of 'hotel' with other keywords that it shares a high association level with. Keywords strongly associated with 'hotel' and also found in the facilities category include 'room', which co-occurs 97 times and has an association strength of 0.221, 'clean', which co-occurs 102 times and has an association strength of 0.217, and 'bed', which co-occurs 54 times and has an association strength of 0.125.

FIGURE 4-7: PROXIMITY PLOT FOR 'HOTEL' [MEININGER]



The mattresses were reported to be quite ‘comfortable’, co-occurring with the word ‘bed’ in 20 reviews. A few backpackers compared the experience to previous visits they had in other hostels: “I’ve been to dozens of hostels in the last 6 months and this is DEFINITELY the most comfortable [...] Beds are incredibly comfortable, showers are private, clean and hot.” The quality of the beds and the bathrooms was determined to be high for many backpackers as it made the experience more comfortable and luxurious. One reviewer wrote:

It's so clean, it's like a hotel and that's what it is. A hotel. Don't expect to meet any other solo travellers, it's mainly sleep and get out of there. I've never seen a bathroom so well thought-out with soaps and hooks. It's so clean, it puts a lot of 5-star hotels to shame. The beds are solid. Come here to sleep off that hang over you had for going hard for 3 nights.

The mattresses are softer, the bathrooms are ensuite and pristine, and it had the modern feel of a hotel. While most generally appreciated the hotel quality beds and the clean bathrooms, there were some that felt it was still lacking that “homey” charm: “My chief complaint is that it is like a hotel. In construction, design, aesthetics and vibes. It did not have the homey and social energy I enjoy in a good hostel.” To reiterate, reviews that contained both ‘hostel’ and ‘hotel’ accounted for 38.04% of all negative reviews, but only 18.3% of all positive reviews. The comparison backpackers have drawn between both styles of accommodation is generally perceived negatively.

Some reviewers hypothesized that the hybrid was originally a hotel that had been converted to a hostel, or that the Meininger Franz was originally a hotel that later decided to convert some rooms into dormitories. The primary issue was the lack of space in some of the shared rooms: “This is a weird ‘hostel’ that is more like a hotel with beds crammed in a space meant for one or two, like a hotel.” Apparently, there are a number of shared rooms in the Meininger Franz that were set up as family rooms: they consist of a bunk bed (with two single mattresses) and a double bed that could only be separated by approximately 20 centimeters apart, usually resulting in two strangers sleeping uncomfortably close together (see Image 4-3). An employee from the Meininger Franz told this author that if ever their dormitories were fully booked, family rooms

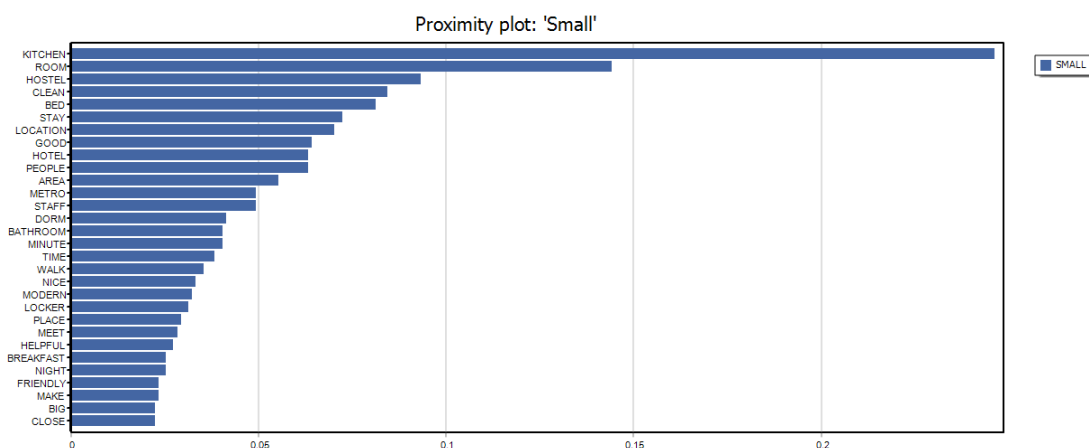
could be used to accommodate more backpackers (N. Schröcksnadel, personal communication, May 27, 2019). This demonstrates that the reviewers were not wrong in describing these shared rooms as family rooms. 'Small' appeared 73 times in 13.4% of cases and 'room' appeared 322 times in 45.8% of cases (see Table 4-1). The descriptor is also found in 13 negative reviews, accounting for 14.13% of the total negative reviews (see Appendix 9). The term 'room' co-occurs 47 times with 'small' and has an association strength of 0.144 (see Figure 4-8). Dormitories were not the only facility that backpackers thought were too cramped: "the kitchen and dorm rooms were cramped to the point of impracticality. It was clean though."

IMAGE 4-3: MEININGER VIENNA DOWNTOWN FRANZ – FAMILY/MULTI-BED ROOM



Source: Hostelworld.com, n.d.a

FIGURE 4-8: PROXIMITY PLOT FOR 'SMALL' [MEININGER]



As suggested in the literature, backpackers value the availability of a communal kitchen in a hostel, as it provides them with the means to support a budget-friendly diet. The term 'kitchen' was found in 19.61% of positive reviews and 13.04% of negative reviews. This demonstrates that while it is a facility that is greatly appreciated by this segment of travellers, there are clearly

some dissatisfying factors causing negative sentiments (see Appendix 9). The kitchen was the facility that had the highest association strength with 'small' (0.246) (see Figure 4-8). The size of the kitchen was found in 37 reviews, and seven of those cases were negative, accounting for 7.6% of negative reviews. One backpacker wrote, "the kitchen is very small. The laundry is inside the kitchen and I found it difficult for people to do laundry and cook at the same time." The placement of the washing and drying machine in the kitchen appeared to make the area more problematic (see Image 4-4). Reviewers suggested that no more than two people could cook in the space at a time (one review stated that there was actually only enough room for one person at a time), and there was often a line to use the laundry facilities. One reviewer even cited observing queues for the kettle each morning of his stay. In several reviews, it was reported that families tended to make heavy use of the communal kitchen, which, consequentially, made it even more difficult for other guests to use the facilities. Backpackers suggested that the best time to use these facilities was outside of peak hours to have guaranteed access and to avoid dealing with the other guests:

Only downside is the kitchen, very small and there were lots of family trying to cook for their kids. Not a lot of room to prepare food and that can be an issue for some travelling on a budget! Either cook before 5 or after 8.

IMAGE 4-4: MEININGER VIENNA DOWNTOWN FRANZ – COMMUNAL KITCHEN AND LAUNDRY FACILITIES



Source: Hostelworld.com, n.d.a

This is an instance in which an overlap between atmosphere and facilities occurs. In an effort to avoid crossing paths with other tourist types and avoid the change in atmosphere created by those other guests, backpackers left 'tips' for other travellers on how to make the most out of an uncomfortable situation. The design of the kitchen, coupled with the presence of families, did not meet the expectations backpackers have regarding communal facilities. However, a

communal kitchen is a facility that backpackers highly value and are willing to deal with nuisances in order to make use of them.

Earlier, it was mentioned that backpackers suggested that the ideal places to meet other backpackers within the hybrid hotel was either in a shared room or in the communal kitchen. Kerry (2013) noted in her study that social interactions were not limited to the larger common areas and could take place in the shared rooms and other smaller communal facilities, such as the kitchen. However, at Meiningers, these interactions were far less likely to happen due to the small size of the rooms and the lack of people congregating in the shared rooms and communal kitchen. The cramped quarters of the shared rooms, coupled with the inconveniently small kitchen/laundry, might be temporarily tolerated; however, it remains a challenge to utilize these confined spaces in a comfortable manner over time. Backpackers arriving at Meininger Franz have to face the likelihood of sleeping 20 centimeters away from a stranger, or sharing the kitchen with families, or enduring dozens of students running around the common area. However, they can continue to expect clean rooms with functioning ensuite bathrooms, a fully equipped kitchen, and a modern hotel design and décor.

Wombat's Naschmarkt location offered one facility that Meininger Franz did not provide adequately: a bar. The word 'bar' was mentioned 140 times and accounted for 33.25% of all reviews (see Appendix 5). Patrons of Wombat's love this area as staff are frequently organizing and facilitating activities in the space and it is a great place to meet new people. 'Bar' appears in 37.5% of all positive reviews, demonstrating backpackers' affinity for this sort of facility. Even without the provision of organized activities, the bar remained a prime location for backpackers to mingle and interact with like-minded individuals. Unlike Wombat, the Meininger dataset only contains eight reviews with the word 'bar' in it. All, except one, expressed disappointment with the quality of the bar service. The bar at Meininger Franz is also their check-in counter, although only the reception feature is open 24-hours: "definitely more of a hotel atmosphere than a hostel, and actually the bar wasn't even open at night at least when I was there." Furthermore, Meininger does not provide mixed drinks and cocktails like Wombat's does, rather they offer guests a couple of brands of beer and cider, and other drinks, such as Coca-Cola and Almdudler. A bar is an inherently social area that serve as a hub for backpackers to network and exchange information, and as is the case for Wombat's, it is a great space to use for organized activities. The same cannot be said for the bar at Meininger's Franz location.

The Meininger Franz hotel tends to generally meet the expectations backpackers hold regarding the state and cleanliness of the facilities, and sometimes, even manages to exceed expectations regarding their hotel design. Murphy (2001) concluded that the level of cleanliness of the facilities has a direct effect on the likelihood of backpackers using them, particularly in the common areas. Overall, the cleanliness of this hybrid hotel exceeded the expectations of most but had no effect on backpackers' usage of the common areas. Moreover, the cleanliness of the accommodation proved to be a reliable service, as the facilities were cleaned daily. Many appreciated

the hotel quality of the beds and the bathrooms as it was an upgrade from the traditional hostels they had been frequenting prior to visiting Vienna. Problem areas regarding the size and the overcrowding of some of the shared rooms and the communal kitchen tended to elicit a negative response. The compactness made for awkward and uncomfortable situations for solo travellers staying in a shared room and resulted in a general dissatisfaction with the communal kitchen and laundry facilities, and strategic avoidance of other guests that crowded these areas.

4.5 Location

In the literature review, the location was characterized by its proximity to public transportation, attractions, bars and restaurants, and grocery stores. The Meininger Franz is located about a 10 to 15-minute walk from Schottenring U-Bahn station, and about a 25-minute walk to the city center. Reviewers appreciated the close proximity to the Donau Canal, Praterstern, grocery stores, and a pharmacy (see Figure 3-1). The topic includes terms such as 'center', 'city', 'walk', 'minute', 'metro', 'station' and 'location', and phrases made up of these words were also grouped into the location category. The category had a coherence strength of 0.36 and appeared in 285 cases (see Appendix 6). The location theme was visible in 57% of reviews, accounting for 55.92% of all positive reviews and 51.09% of negative reviews. Guests of the hybrid hotel are split regarding their feelings about the location.

Reviewers mentioning the location of the hybrid hotel, often mentioned the walking distance from the closest public transportation access point and the city center. The two most frequent phrases of the dataset were both linked to the location topic. 'City center' was the most commonly used phrase, appearing in 40 reviews (8% of all cases). The second phrase is 'minute walk'; these two terms appear next to each other in 7% of the collected reviews (see Appendix 11). The distance, often measured by how many minutes it takes to get from one place to the next, was not an issue for many. The word 'walk' was present in 122 cases, accounting for 24.84% of all positive reviews and 21.74% of all negative reviews. It was also present in 40% of neutral cases (see Appendix 9). Several backpackers reported that they enjoyed the walk: "the location was a plus. It wasn't right in the city centre, but it allowed us to see more of Vienna." Others were not as pleased with the 'lengthy' trek. A Jordanian backpacker who stayed at the Meininger Franz in January wrote:

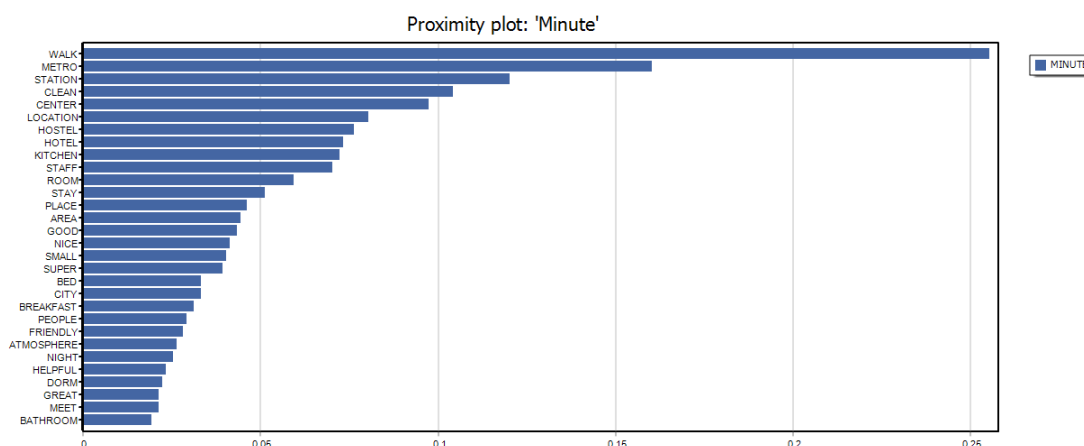
The place is great from all aspects except for the location. Not many nice spots around the area and the city center is a 25-minute walk. The nearest metro station is a 10-minute walk. It was cold and snowy when I went so it was a bit hard to move around. Other than that, the place is perfectly clean, and my stay was very good.

Understandably, a 10-15-minute walk during Vienna's colder months can be quite uncomfortable, particularly for those who are not acclimatized to the cold weather. However, sentiment classification of reviews containing vocabulary from the location dimension did not reveal any

discrepancies between reviews from different seasons or months. Elsrud (2001) wrote about the risk creation in travelling as a means of creating and developing a backpacker's identity narrative, discussing the various types of narration in more detail. One such is the 'body narrative' in which backpacker stories are explained as it relates to (her)his body. The riskier the situation, the more important it becomes to the backpacker. This segment of travellers is a resilient bunch, always pushing their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual limits. While it might seem like a bit of stretch to suggest the general acceptance of the walking distance to and from Meininger's is strongly related to a backpacker's attempt at risk creation, this segment of travellers does understand that, when necessary, they must walk far and inconvenient distances to reach their destinations. Kerry (2013) supports Elsrud's argument, positing that in a backpacker's pursuit to develop (her)his identity, they are challenged emotionally and physically. She adds, "sore feet, [...] wounded pride, and a pounding hangover [...] signal and promote identity construction" (p.10). The physical discomfort and fatigue inherent to the backpacking travel lifestyle is expected. Therefore, it is reasonable to assert that while backpackers typically prefer an accommodation that is closer to the area they wish to explore (Cohen, 1973; Firth & Hing, 1999; Hecht & Martin, 2006; Nash et al., 2006; Martins et al., 2018), they are willing to deal with greater distances if the accommodation meets their other expectations (Brochado et al., 2014; Amblee, 2015).

While Wombat's Naschmarkt might not be located in the same district (they are in the fourth district) as Meininger Franz, they both lie just outside the first district (see Figure 3-1). However, Wombat's Naschmarkt location is much closer to public, as it is just across the street from Kettenbrückegasse U-Bahn station, therefore Wombat patrons do not have to walk very far. The location category for the Wombat's dataset shared many of the same terms with Meininger, however it did not include the term 'minute'. Additionally, Wombat's category had one phrase that was not found in the Meininger set, namely 'walking distance' (see Appendix 7). It is interesting because the presence of the term 'minute' suggests that a measurement of time was highly associated with other terms relating to location and distance. 'Minute' appears 62 times in the Meininger dataset, accounting for 10.8% of total reviews (see Appendix 4). The term co-occurs with 'walk' 41 times, only occurring without it 13 times and with an association strength of 0.255. It also co-occurs with 'metro' 21 times, 'station' 18 times, 'center' 20 times and 'location' 25 times (see Figure 4-9). Whereas 'walking distance' suggests a destination that is within close proximity. The phrase occurs in the Wombat dataset 10 times, accounting for 2.54% of reviews (see Appendix 12). Four of those reviews were found to be positive, accounting for 2.63% of all positive reviews. Wombat's demonstrates that a location closer to public transportation is perceived more positively; however, it remains a dimension that backpackers are split on.

FIGURE 4-9: PROXIMITY PLOT FOR 'MINUTE' [MEININGER]



Amblee (2015) determined that the safety of the area in which the accommodation is situated added to the overall perceived quality of this attribute. The hybrid hotel is located in the second district of Vienna (see Figure 3-1), a safe area in what has already been determined to be a very safe city (Numbeo, 2019). As mentioned previously, the topic of security was not one that was frequently mentioned in the dataset, and even more rarely, with regards to the location. However, it was found that the authors of six reviews did mention the perceived safety of the location. Four stated feeling safe in the surrounding area, and felt comfortable walking at night alone:

The location was my only concern at first, but it turned out not to be a worry at all. It is conveniently located next to the underground which connects to all tourist areas. If you don't want to use public transport, it is a very safe walk into city center.

One female solo backpacker reported seeing a number of 'massage parlours' or 'brothels' in the area surrounding the hotel but insisted that their presence did not make her feel any less safe or uncomfortable than if they were not there. Only two reviewers mentioned not feeling safe, describing the area as "dodgy" and "sketchy".

The location of the hybrid hotel will be considered an issue or not depending on the individual backpacker. For the most part, the results are consistent with Brochado et al. (2014) and Amblee (2015) in that location is an accommodation attribute that this segment of travellers is willing to deal with, if the hostel exceeds at meeting the expectations held about the other attributes. However, this was not always the case, as some backpackers preferred a more central location, despite the hotel performing well in other areas:

Very nice rooms, I loved it [...] Security is like a normal hotel [...] Staff was good. It's a big trek from any tram station and the main square. I'd rather have paid more money to stay inner city than stay here. All in all, it was a good trip, but I wouldn't stay here again.

Choosing an appropriate location for a hotel is a critical decision that managers have to make (Chou et al., 2008, as cited by Amblee, 2015). The centrality of the location and its proximity to attractions, transportation, restaurants, bars, clubs and grocery stores are all factors that are taken into consideration (Cohen, 1973; Firth & Hing, 1999; Hecht & Martin, 2006; Nash, Thyne, & Davies, 2006; Brochado et al., 2014; Amblee, 2015; Martins et al., 2018). The Meininger Franz hotel seems to be well located in a quiet and safe residential area. It is in proximity to public transportation, grocery stores and pharmacies. While it might not be very close to restaurants, bars and clubs, this does not appear to be a prominent concern of patrons. Overall, it's difficult to say if Meininger confirmed or disconfirmed expectations of backpackers in this particular category; however, it is not recommended that the chain invest time, money and energy into making adjustments to increase the positive perception.

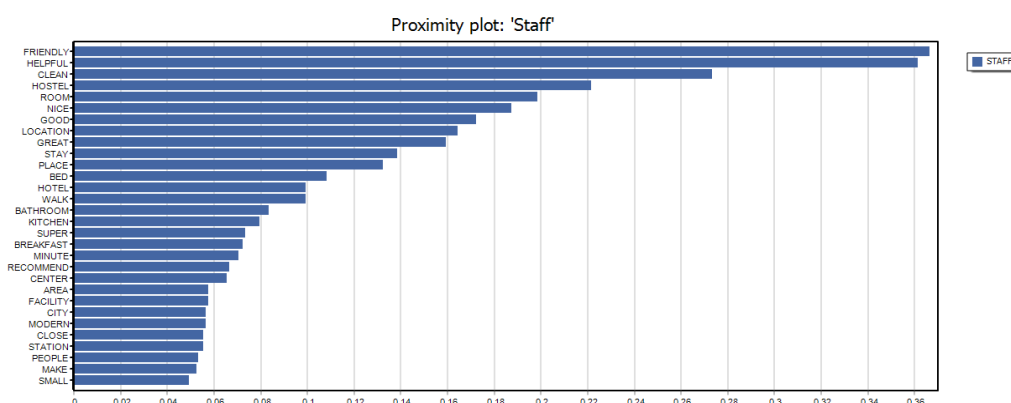
4.6 Staff

Staff was determined to be the most satisfying element of a backpacker's visit to the hybrid hotel. The category encompasses four keywords and make up six phrases: 'staff', 'helpful', 'friendly' and 'super'. Since the topic is limited in terms of vocabulary, it has the lowest coherence and frequency of the four. This theme is present in 232 reviews (46.40% of all reviews) and the category has a coherence strength of 0.351 (see Appendix 6). Analysis of the Meininger dataset has shown that the staff at Meininger Franz have either met backpackers' expectations or exceeded them. The staff dimension was mentioned 80 positive reviews, accounting for 52.29% of all positive reviews. It appeared in fewer negative reviews than any other category, with only 39 negative reviews, accounting for 42.39% of all negative reviews.

'Staff' was used 211 times across 208 reviews, accounting for 41.60% of all reviews (see Table 4-1 or Appendix 4). The word 'staff' was highly associated with two descriptors: 'friendly' and 'helpful'. 'Staff' and 'friendly' co-occur 85 times and have an association strength of 0.366. The term 'friendly' is only seen 10 times without it. 'Staff' and 'helpful' co-occur 77 times and have an association strength of 0.361. 'Helpful' only occurs twice without it (see Figure 4-10). Overall, the sentiment is very positive. Reviewers mentioned several things the staff helped them with, including printing a guest's boarding pass for free, ordering cabs, providing gluten-free breakfast and snack options, making recommendations and providing directions. Additionally, the staff is very multi-lingual and were able to help guests on a number of occasions:

I highly recommend Meininger, the staff is amazingly friendly, always willing to help you with any advice or anything else. They helped me to write a letter in Russian, and all of them speak German, English and sometimes other additional languages such as Spanish, Italian and Russian.

FIGURE 4-10: PROXIMITY PLOT FOR 'STAFF' [MEININGER]



There are many reviews in which the backpackers were very satisfied with the staff as they went above and beyond what was expected of them. In one case, a young backpacker became quite ill and needed to find a doctor that would take her American insurance. One of the staff members searched online for a doctor and set up an appointment for her, and subsequently gave her directions. It is evident that the staff excelled in the ‘empathy’ dimension of service quality, by providing specialized care on several occasions. These reviews mention the interpersonal behaviours of the service providers, namely their politeness, friendliness, helpfulness and kindness, thus confirming Lehtinen’s (1983) definition of service quality, namely process and output quality (as cited by Berry et al., 1985). This demonstrates the staff’s assurance, as they perform services with dignity and professionalism, and utilize their local knowledge to provide recommendations and tips to their guests.

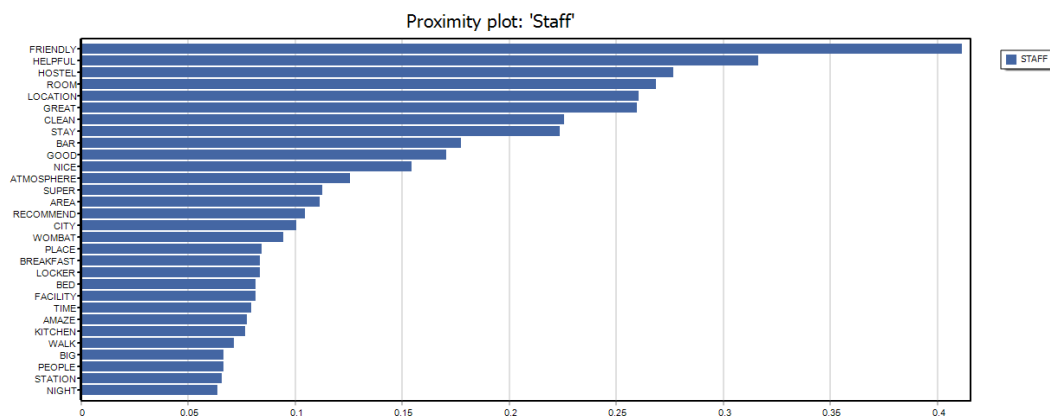
As mentioned previously, there are two types of service quality. The first involves the quality level that is regularly delivered by the service provide and the second relates to the quality level determined by the staff’s response to ‘exceptions’ and ‘problems’ (Berry et al., 1988). There were a couple of instances in which patrons requested a room change, and the staff were always more than happy to oblige: “staff was very helpful, I had a snorer in my room and they happily switched my rooms!” Of course, there are times where errors happen that cannot be avoided, but the staff at Meininger Franz were polite and courteous with dissatisfied patrons. Guests did acknowledge their kindness; however, it still did not save them from a bad experience: “my room was switched every single day for the three nights I was there. I was sick and could not even sleep in. The staff was nice and helped but this was a sincere inconvenience.” While in some cases, the problems were never resolved, the manner in which the staff handled the situation and spoke with the guests was well received by backpackers. They displayed a high level of responsiveness as they were quick and eager to help their guests.

The friendliness of the staff, coupled with their professional demeanour, was well received by the backpackers; however, there is always room for improvement. It has been mentioned several times throughout this thesis that staff plays a crucial role in a backpacker’s experience by encouraging an open and friendly atmosphere that is conducive to networking and social

interactions among guests. Organizing and facilitating activities for backpackers within the accommodation's common areas is sought out by this segment of travellers (Murphy, 2001). While the staff at Meininger Franz delivered a satisfactory service, it is believed that they would have exceeded the expectations of backpackers had they provided this additional service.

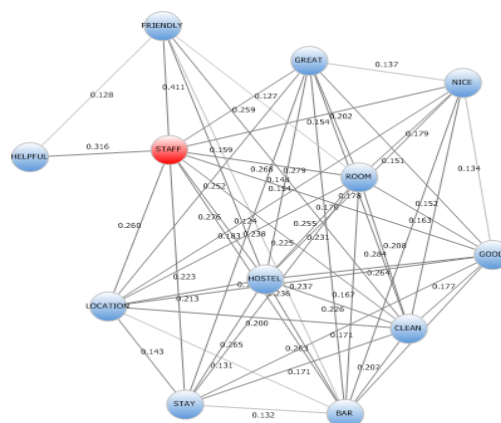
The staff at Wombat's City Hostel: The Naschmarkt was also highly associated with positive reviews. The word 'staff' was found in 49.34% of all positive reviews (see Appendix 10). The staff category contained the same keywords as that of the Meininger set (see Appendix 7). Similar to the Meininger dataset, 'staff' had high association strengths with 'friendly' (0.411) and 'helpful' (0.316) (see Figure 4-11 and 4-12).

FIGURE 4-11: PROXIMITY PLOT FOR 'STAFF' [WOMBAT'S HOSTEL]



The area where the two accommodations diverge is in the facilitation of organized activities. Wombat's staff is actively involved with their patrons, hosting such events as pub quizzes, walking tours and comedy shows, to name a few. The word 'staff' co-occurred with 'bar' 110 times and has an association strength of 0.177. It also co-occurred with 'atmosphere' 68 times and has an association strength of 0.125 (see Figure 4-11 and 4-12). This demonstrates that the staff of a backpacker accommodation is an important component to ensuring a satisfactory experience.

FIGURE 4-12: LINK ANALYSIS FOR 'STAFF' [WOMBAT'S HOSTEL]



In summary, the staff at Meininger Franz did a satisfactory job and generally met the expectations of backpackers. Guests perceived a high service quality as the staff was responsive, reliable, empathetic and provided them with assurance. However, the fact remains that the hybrid hotel lacks the social atmosphere typical of hostels, and without further staff involvement in the organization of activities, backpackers will not get the whole experience they crave.

4.7 Summary of Findings

Meininger provides the basic amenities sought out by traditional hotel guests, which incidentally, matches the majority of backpacker requirements, such as cleanliness, safety, helpful and knowledgeable staff, decent location, comfortable and well-maintained facilities, reasonably priced, and the availability of miscellaneous services, such as free internet access and breakfast.

Contrary to traditional mainstream tourists, backpackers value a social atmosphere which allows them to meet, interact and exchange information with other travellers who share similar travelling lifestyles and ideologies. The reviews have sufficiently demonstrated that the Meininger Vienna Downtown Franz failed to provide this in two ways. First, the mixing of different tourist types was not well received by the backpacker segment. Numerous studies have shown that backpackers specifically go out of their way to avoid mainstream tourists. Many reviews mention, and even warn, that the hotel is overrun with school groups and families with young children that completely usurp the common areas, making them unlikely to be used by backpackers. What would normally be a buzzing social spot in a traditional hostel to meet and interact with other backpackers, was avoided as much as possible. Secondly, numerous reviews pointed out the look and layout of the common area, often likening it to a hotel. Backpackers were confused with the concept, and ultimately believed Meininger failed to bring cohesiveness to the hybrid design: “they are trying to be a hotel and hostel at the same time and definitely failing at being a hostel. No atmosphere.”

While there were many backpackers who did appreciate the hotel look, feel and quality of the Meininger hybrid design, many also felt it took away from the overall experience. Additionally, the small size of the shared rooms and the closeness of some of the beds made for uncomfortable and awkward experiences between backpackers. Many reviewers declared that the inconveniently small size of the kitchen and the placement of the washer and dryer in the same space was problematic and thwarted their ability to interact with other like-minded travellers and use the space comfortably. Furthermore, the bar at Meininger Franz was hardly recognized or used by backpackers since it had a limited selection of beverages and was not open all evening. Wombat's Nashmarkt location has demonstrated that a bar is a popular facility among backpackers as it provides the correct environment and social atmosphere to facilitate networking among their guests. Meininger Franz did not totally fail to meet this expectation, due to the high standard of cleanliness and the state of the facilities, as well as the hotel quality mattresses,

bathrooms and décor. However, backpackers were generally unsatisfied with sharing small communal facilities with families and school groups.

Backpackers were divided on the location of the hybrid hotel, primarily due to the minimum 10-minute walk from the closest public transportation stop and 25-minute walk to the city centre. However, Meininger Franz is located in a safe and quiet residential area in close proximity to grocery stores, pharmacies and the canal. Backpackers appeared satisfied with the location as long as the hotel met their other expectations with regards to the other topics.

The staff at Meininger Franz was very well regarded by guests. They generally met backpackers' expectations, and in a number of cases, managed to exceed those expectations. The staff is knowledgeable, helpful, and friendly, and they are eager to answer their patrons' needs. Nevertheless, the lack of organized activities and staff involvement beyond the standard front-line service tasks, has revealed an opportunity to enhance the overall experience of their backpacking guests.

Berry et al. (1988) wrote that when a discrepancy arises between what management thinks their customers expect, and what they actually expect, the overall perceived quality diminishes. Without truly understanding what backpackers desire and expect from their accommodations, Meininger will most likely continue to fail in meeting certain expectations.

5 CONCLUSION

This author hypothesized that hybrid hotels do not meet the expectations held by backpackers to the same degree as traditional hostels do and this author concludes that this can be confirmed for the Meininger Vienna Downtown Franz hotel. This research applied a text mining approach to online reviews on Meininger Vienna Downtown Franz and Wombat's City Hostel: The Naschmarkt in order to study if the hybrid hotel concept is meeting backpackers' expectations. This topic is unique in that no one has ever studied backpackers' expectations and experiences with hybrid hotels. This thesis is regarded as the first stepping stone to further understanding this relatively new customer-business relationship between backpackers and hybrid hotels.

Meininger Hotels is a chain of hybrid hotels in which management has worked hard over the last two decades to maintain and uphold their vision of a budget accommodation for families, school groups, business travellers and backpackers. Backpackers choosing to stay at this particular Meininger location might not be aware that they will be sharing the accommodation with mainstream tourists and few other like-minded travellers. The reviews of the common areas clearly demonstrate that backpackers feel these areas are either overrun with school groups and families with young children, or totally empty and devoid of opportunity for socializing and connecting with other backpackers. This segment of travellers tends to avoid contact with the types of tourists also staying at Meininger's, and as a result, they steer clear of the common areas, thus reducing the chance of interacting with other backpackers. "The exchange of information about experiences as a product of the social interaction among backpackers throughout their travels has an obvious implication for tourism businesses in this market, including the necessity to provide a product or experience which satisfies their needs" (Murphy, 2001, p.51). Furthermore, the 'cookie-cutter' hotel design increased the likelihood that backpackers would not be communing in these areas. The hotel quality of the tangible features, namely facilities (i.e., beds/mattresses, bathrooms and kitchen), incited a positive sentiment from some reviewers; however, the cramped rooms and inconveniently small kitchen/laundry facility resulted in a general feeling of discomfort and dissatisfaction among the backpacker patrons.

It could not be ascertained with complete confidence whether or not Meininger met backpackers' expectations regarding the location of their hotel due to the split sentiment results of the category. The chief complaint noted pertained to the lengthy trek between the hybrid hotel and the closest public transportation stop and the city centre. Guests can be assured that Meininger Franz is suited in a quiet and safe residential area.

The staff met and, in some cases, exceeded the expectations of backpackers by going beyond the call of duty and providing a reliable service quality. Some of the most dissatisfied guests were generally pleased with the staff, even in the instances where employees were incapable of providing a satisfactory solution to their problem. The interactions between front-line

employees of Meininger Franz and guests are limited to check-in and check-out, answering questions and dealing with a variety of issues. Despite the general satisfaction regarding the hybrid hotel staff, they still did not provide backpackers with activities to facilitate backpacker relations.

Meininger guest reviews provide a clear message to management that they are not creating the right atmosphere that encourages the facilitation of new connections among the backpacker patrons. If the hybrid hotel chain continues to target the backpacker market, it is suggested that they invest their energy into better understanding their clientele and work towards creating a satisfying experience that meets their clients' needs and expectations. Berry et al. (1988) suggest that some instances of service quality failure may be caused by management erroneously believing that it would be impossible or impractical to try and meet all the expectations of their target market. Meininger management staff was not interviewed, so it is unknown whether they are aware of the fact that they are not fully meeting the expectations of backpackers, or if they even consider it a problem worth addressing.

5.1 Recommended Solutions

After an in-depth analysis of all the results, this author has determined three possible solutions that the Meininger management team could adopt to best address the issue of dissatisfied backpacker patrons.

(1) This author recommends that if Meininger wishes to continue pursuing backpackers in general, they should implement staff-run activities to foster increased social interaction between guests. These activities could take place in the common areas of the hotel and/or off-site. With sufficient training, staff can expand beyond their regular duties, and play a more significant and active role in the overall experience of their backpacker guests. The common area is large enough that staff could cordon off a section to host backpacker-focused activities (see Appendix 13). By providing backpackers with an opportunity to meet and interact with other travellers, as well as utilize the common areas in a manner that is more comfortable for them, the overall satisfaction with their stay is expected to rise, reducing the level of dissatisfaction with the atmosphere dimension. Furthermore, the amount of time backpackers spend in the common areas would also be expected to increase following participation in these activities because that opportunity would allow them to familiarize themselves in the space and feel more comfortable. An example of a tamer activity that Meininger could provide backpackers, but also keeping in line with the 'non-party' atmosphere, is organized dinners. Solo travellers could sign-up for the meal and then convene in the common area with others eager to meet other like-minded individuals.

Using Wombat's Naschmarkt location as a baseline for what is typically expected of backpackers, activities in common areas encourage backpackers to utilize the space more and fulfill their social needs. The hostel's bar is a prime communal facility and very popular among backpacker

patrons. Meininger could also make changes to their bar to encourage their patrons to spend more time in the communal areas, thus increasing food and beverage revenues and backpackers' satisfaction simultaneously.

(2) If Meininger continues targeting their marketing efforts towards backpackers, it is recommended that they change the manner in which they present themselves to this segment. The Meininger website, as well as the description written by and posted on Hostelworld.com, both erroneously suggest that this is a modern hostel-hotel hybrid with a social atmosphere ideal for backpackers; however, this study has shown this to be a misleading representation of what guests can actually expect during their stay at Meininger Vienna Downtown Franz.

Quite a few reviewers recommended Meininger Franz as a great accommodation for backpackers who are choosing to travel as a group, as they do not require a social and open atmosphere to the same degree as solo travellers. As the results have shown, Meininger is designed to host large school groups and families, and therefore, marketing to backpacker groups should be a relatively easy and smooth shift in marketing strategy. Furthermore, if the hybrid hotel runs out of standard dormitory-style rooms, the intimacy of the smaller family/multi-bed rooms is far less uncomfortable and inconvenient for a group (see Image 4-3).

Another suggested marketing approach was inspired by several reviewers who recommended Meininger Franz as an ideal accommodation for backpackers who require a bit of rest and relaxation between major party destinations, such as Berlin and Prague. The hotel quality mattresses and modern and clean ensuite bathrooms are perceived as an upgrade to the facilities typically found in a hostel. The hybrid hotel is within walking distance of all the hustle and bustle of the first district, but is located just across the Donau Canal (see Figure 3-1) in the quiet second district. Solo travellers do crave social interactions with like-minded individuals, but ultimately revel in their solitude and independence whilst travelling (Cohen, 1973; Riley, 1988). As this is a hotel that also caters to business travellers, portions of the common area are designed to include tables with fewer chairs strategically located close to electrical outlets. The chain has an opportunity to showcase their hybrid concept as a more luxurious alternative for tired and "partied-out" backpackers while still offering the same affordable price as hostels.

(3) The final recommendation is the most labour intensive and costly solution. This author would recommend that the Meininger Hotel chain conducts its own detailed and in-depth research on backpacker subtypes to determine the best traveller type for their hybrid concept. Hecht and Martin (2006) categorized backpackers into subtypes based on the age range a backpacker would fall into. Transition backpackers (ages 26 to 29 years) and contemporary tourism backpackers (30 years and older) typically seek out accommodations that provide more privacy, as they have more disposable income than their younger backpacker counterparts and are willing to spend extra for a private room or a shared room with fewer beds. The appeal of a hotel-hostel hybrid could be appealing for older backpackers.

As the research on backpacker subtypes is very limited, this can be a lengthy and costly process for the hybrid hotel chain. While it is always encouraged and recommended that businesses regularly conduct market research in order to recognize and keep up to date with current trends and changes in customer preferences and expectations, this should not be the only solution implemented. Rather, backpacker subtypes should be studied simultaneously with the other recommendations. The hybrid hotel concept has survived for over two decades; therefore, this author is hesitant to conclude that backpackers are the wrong target customer segment. Instead, treating and viewing backpackers as a heterogeneous group, as Cohen (1973) did for tourists, would allow Meininger to provide a more personalized and satisfactory service that better fits the needs and expectations of a particular subtype.

5.2 Future research

Continuing with the subject of this thesis, it would be interesting to expand the scope of research to include all Meininger locations and confirm if the results of this isolated study remain constant across the other hybrid hotels. In addition, this author would be curious to know if the results can be replicated across different areas and with independently owned hybrid hotels.

Furthermore, it would be interesting to research what recovery actions Meininger and other hybrid hotels are using to respond to dissatisfied guests and the outcome of said actions, if any. On Hostelworld.com, it was observed that many of the reviews, whether they were positive or negative, elicited a response from Meininger's management team. It would be interesting to collect data about backpackers' level of satisfaction with the recovery action offered to them and record any changes in perceived service quality. This research direction would be valuable for a hotel chain like Meininger, which has properties all over Europe, and soon to be in North America, in developing and handling customer retention and loyalty, as it is significantly more cost-effective than trying to obtain new ones (Lee, Singh, & Chan, 2011).

Min, Min and Emam (2002) utilized data mining to create customer profiles for hotels so that hotel management could better understand customers and maintain or increase their competitive advantage by keeping up with the changing preferences and lifestyles of guests. In doing so, hotel managers are able to improve their customer relationship management and customer retention strategy. This would be particularly interesting for Meininger's as the hotel chain tries to accommodate everyone, and therefore, customer profiling could be of immense value to them.

Different backpacker subtypes usually denote different motives for travelling, which could signify that backpackers have different preferences and expectations regarding accommodations. Hybrid hotels, like Meininger Vienna Downtown Franz, hostels and researchers should expand beyond text mining to investigate and better understand the type of backpacker they should be targeting their marketing efforts towards. This information would allow for accommodations to

further differentiate themselves from the competition by catering to niche backpacker markets. This would subsequently lead to a need for further research into and categorization of different hostel types. Already such hostels exist (e.g., surfing, hiking, LGBTQ+ hostels); however, virtually no empirical research has been conducted to better understand these unique hostel accommodations.

Additionally, an evaluation program or rating system to measure hostel quality, similar to that of the Hotelstars Union, could and should be developed. Hotels and hostels are not comparable in terms of guests' perceived service quality. A five-star hotel could provide services such as room-service, turn-down service, spas, and so on, whereas a five-star hostel could be one that offers a bar with a wide selection of beverages and cocktails, breakfast, an abundance of organized activities to choose from, curtains on bunk beds to provide privacy, ensuite bathrooms, shared rooms containing no more than six beds and so on. What hostel patrons expect and need is vastly different from traditional tourists and therefore, hostels should not be subjected to a hotel rating system, which automatically classifies them as two stars or lower. Most of the time, they do not qualify at all as they do not meet the standardized criteria of a hotel. This author knows of only one such system that exists for hostels currently: The Wales Hostel Grading Scheme. Interestingly, despite Germany being the birth place of hostels and responsible for creating the first hostel association, no such hostel rating system exists there either. Research into and development of this kind of program is necessary as the youth traveller segment and, as a result, the hostel industry continues to grow year-over-year. Currently, hostels are rated solely based on consumer feedback and ratings on OTA, so there exists a lack of consistency. This was found to be particularly true with Meininger Vienna Downtown Franz. Different tourist types tended to use different booking and review sites, therefore not only was there a lack of consistency in ratings, but the property descriptions also varied. Hostelworld.com is predominantly used by backpackers and other youth travellers and was also the only OTA to include a rating for 'atmosphere', as it is an important accommodation attribute for this segment of travellers. A hostel rating system would reduce the grey zone surrounding hybrid hotels and different hostel accommodation types and provide consistent and verifiable ratings.

Applying the research of Kim and Fesenmaier (2015) would be an interesting research opportunity to record and compare real-time emotions with a guest's review written post hoc to determine if a discrepancy exists, and if so, its level of significance. Text mining could be applied to comment cards that guests fill out prior to checking out. It is likely that these comment cards will better reflect the true feelings of the guests than online reviews written at a later date when emotions are no longer experienced with the same intensity and when memories have faded and no longer considered 100% reliable. This is especially true given the time gap is significantly shortened and would better reflect the sentiments of the traveller as they occurred.

5.3 Limitations

A traveller's emotions are affected by their perceptions of their physical and social environment. Studying emotions in real-time as travellers visit places, engage in different activities, and meet new people, allows researchers and management to form conclusions and "optimize physical, mental and cognitive performance" (Hogertz, 2010, p.31, as cited by Kim & Fesenmaier, 2015). Kim and Fesenmaier (2015) explain that the significant time gap between the moment a traveller experiences emotions and the time they are reported (usually in the form of a review) creates a problematic discrepancy, and researchers lose valuable data as a result of this 'slippage'. For this research, the time elapsed between a guest's initial stay and the moment they submitted their review online could not be ascertained. This suggests that the reviews that were sourced were probably not a completely accurate representation of a backpacker's true emotions regarding (her)his experience. This is seen as a particularly strong limitation, as many reviews were determined to be inconclusive when the sentiment analysis was performed. Out of the total 894 reviews collected from both locations, nearly half (439 reviews/49.1%) could not be classified as positive, negative or neutral. In addition, customers' abilities to remember or explain their experiences and their emotions often result in biased reviews (Wilhelm & Grossman, 2010, as cited by Kim & Fesenmaier, 2015). The authors argue that the optimal way to understand a traveller's experience is to gather data on their emotions within the tourist settings they are occupying in real-time while travelling.

Relying solely on text mining to extract meaning leaves a lot of unanswered questions for this researcher. The Expectation Confirmation Theory model could only be partially applied as information and details about a backpacker's expectation and feelings prior to arriving at Meininger Franz or Wombat's Naschmarkt hostel was seldom mentioned in reviews. This lack of data caused a certain level of ambiguity in determining the degree to which backpackers had their expectations confirmed or disconfirmed. Upon revision, the addition of a questionnaire or possibly a series of interviews could have removed some of that uncertainty. Nearly all the studies on backpackers employed one or a combination of both data collection methods.

Financial constraints limited this research. There was no budget assigned to this project and therefore, the number of available text mining programs was significantly reduced. Moreover, the programs that had free trials limited the use of certain features only available to those who own a license.

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Appendix 1: Meininger Website


MEININGER GUESTS

The guests at MEININGER vary as much as the reasons for each city break. Couples, backpackers, business travellers, families and groups or school classes all find a home here. The excellent service and modern facilities mean that all the guests at MEININGER feel totally at ease.




BACKPACKERS

Backpackers are true globetrotters and are especially welcome at MEININGER. Not only the central locations, but also the modern rooms and the guest kitchens with washing machines and dryers are popular with travellers. And the game zone makes a stay at MEININGER really fun!




BUSINESS TRAVEL

MEININGER hotels are ideal for business travellers. They are always in a central location and offer accommodation in single and double rooms with modern facilities. 24 hour reception and free WiFi throughout the whole hotel are a given at MEININGER! The quiet and comfortable rooms guarantee a good sleep.



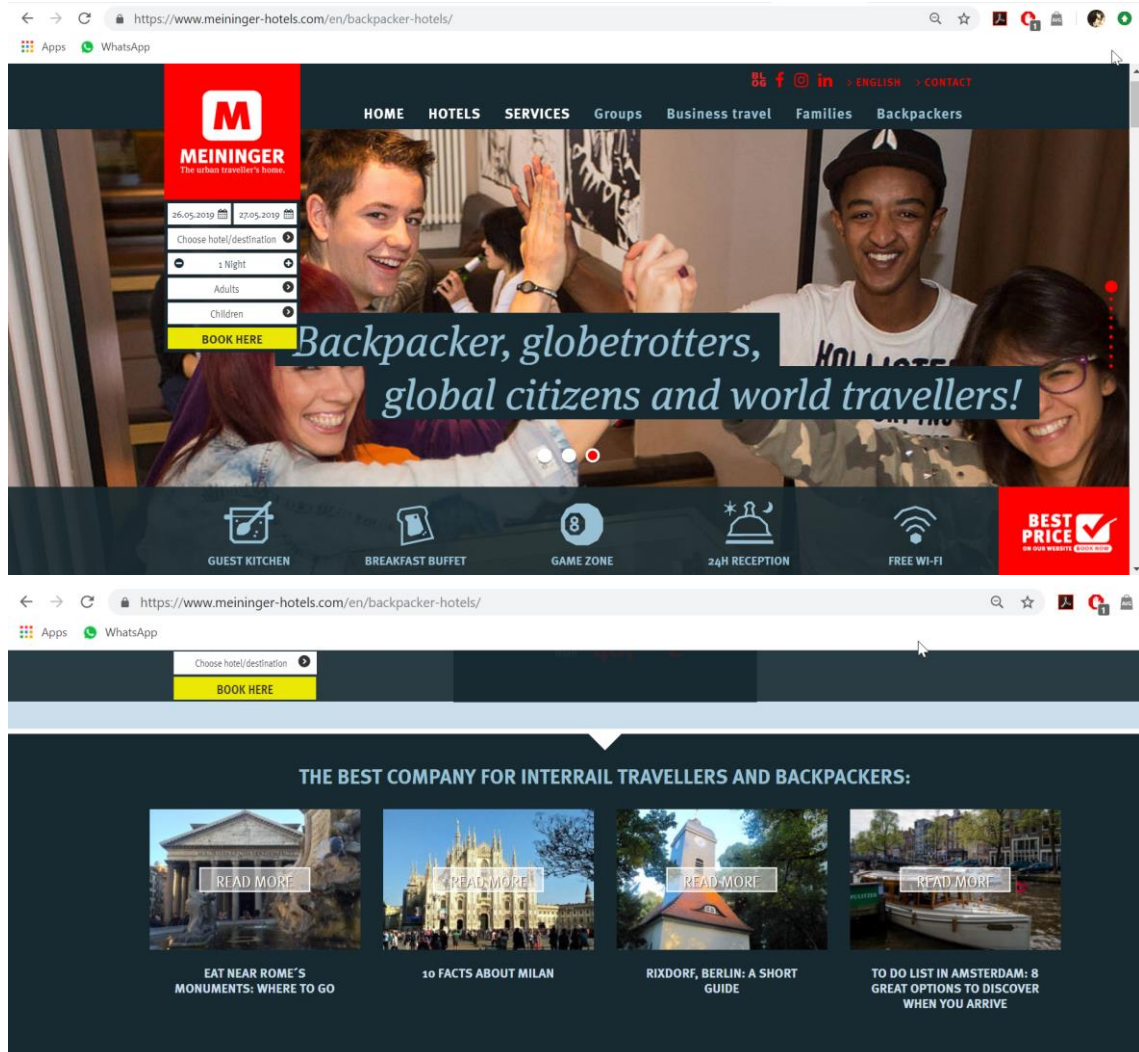
FAMILIES

For families MEININGER has shared rooms for three to eight people. These are usually equipped with a double bed and bunk beds and, if needed, a cot is available at no extra charge. The guest kitchen at the hotel is a comfortable and affordable place to prepare everyone's favourite food after an exciting day.



GROUPS

Club trip or class trip? MEININGER has special conditions for groups over twelve people. Central, modern, with bed and breakfast option if desired or with packed lunches to take with you - MEININGER knows what tour groups need. And if necessary there is always space for bags in the lockable luggage room.



The screenshot shows the website interface for backpackers. At the top, there is a navigation menu with 'HOME', 'HOTELS', 'SERVICES', 'Groups', 'Business travel', 'Families', and 'Backpackers'. A search bar is visible with the URL 'https://www.meininger-hotels.com/en/backpacker-hotels/'. Below the navigation is a large banner featuring a group of smiling backpackers with the text 'Backpacker, globetrotters, global citizens and world travellers!'. A booking form is overlaid on the left side of the banner, showing dates from 26.05.2019 to 27.05.2019, a dropdown for 'Choose hotel/destination', and fields for '1 Night', 'Adults', and 'Children'. Below the banner is a row of service icons: 'GUEST KITCHEN', 'BREAKFAST BUFFET', 'GAME ZONE', '24H RECEPTION', and 'FREE WI-FI'. A 'BEST PRICE' badge is also present. Below the banner is another section titled 'THE BEST COMPANY FOR INTERRAIL TRAVELLERS AND BACKPACKERS:' with four image-based links: 'EAT NEAR ROME'S MONUMENTS: WHERE TO GO', '10 FACTS ABOUT MILAN', 'RIXDORF, BERLIN: A SHORT GUIDE', and 'TO DO LIST IN AMSTERDAM: 8 GREAT OPTIONS TO DISCOVER WHEN YOU ARRIVE'.

Appendix 2: Meininger – Nationalities

Country	Frequency	Percent
Algeria	1	0.20%
Argentina	4	0.80%
Australia	55	11.00%
Austria	3	0.60%
Belgium	1	0.20%
Brazil	9	1.80%
Bulgaria	3	0.60%
Canada	44	8.80%
Chile	4	0.80%
China	3	0.60%
Colombia	5	1.00%
Congo	1	0.20%
Costa Rica	2	0.40%
Czech Republic	2	0.40%
Denmark	2	0.40%
Ecuador	1	0.20%
Egypt	5	1.00%
England	59	11.80%
Estonia	1	0.20%
Finland	2	0.40%
France	5	1.00%
Germany	6	1.20%
Greece	2	0.40%
Hong Kong	4	0.80%
Hungary	5	1.00%
India	8	1.60%
Indonesia	3	0.60%
Iran	3	0.60%
Ireland	8	1.60%
Israel	4	0.80%
Italy	6	1.20%
Jordan	2	0.40%
Kazakhstan	1	0.20%
Lebanon	1	0.20%
Malaysia	3	0.60%
Mexico	10	2.00%
Morocco	1	0.20%
Myanmar	1	0.20%
Netherlands	4	0.80%
New Zealand	14	2.80%
Nicaragua	1	0.20%
Norway	2	0.40%
Pakistan	1	0.20%
Philippines	3	0.60%
Poland	3	0.60%
Portugal	1	0.20%
Romania	2	0.40%
Saudi Arabia	1	0.20%
Scotland	6	1.20%
Serbia	1	0.20%
Singapore	3	0.60%
Slovakia	1	0.20%
Slovenia	3	0.60%
South Korea	1	0.20%
Spain	5	1.00%
Suriname	1	0.20%

Sweden	3	0.60%
Switzerland	2	0.40%
Taiwan	3	0.60%
Tanzania	1	0.20%
Turkey	5	1.00%
USA	145	29.00%
Uruguay	1	0.20%
Vietnam	2	0.40%
Wales	5	1.00%

Appendix 3: Wombat's – Nationalities

Country	Frequency	Percent
Afghanistan	2	0.51%
Albania	1	0.25%
Antarctica	1	0.25%
Argentina	5	1.27%
Australia	35	8.88%
Austria	2	0.51%
Belgium	1	0.25%
Bosnia	1	0.25%
Brazil	8	2.03%
Bulgaria	2	0.51%
Canada	24	6.09%
Cayman Islands	1	0.25%
China	3	0.76%
Colombia	2	0.51%
Croatia	1	0.25%
Czech Republic	2	0.51%
Dominican Republic	1	0.25%
Egypt	1	0.25%
England	38	9.64%
Estonia	1	0.25%
Finland	3	0.76%
France	3	0.76%
Germany	4	1.02%
Greece	3	0.76%
Hong Kong	1	0.25%
Hungary	2	0.51%
India	15	3.81%
Indonesia	1	0.25%
Iran	1	0.25%
Ireland	13	3.30%
Israel	2	0.51%
Italy	6	1.52%
Japan	1	0.25%
Jordan	1	0.25%
Kazakhstan	1	0.25%
Malta	1	0.25%
Mexico	11	2.79%
Morocco	1	0.25%
Nepal	2	0.51%
Netherlands	8	2.03%
New Zealand	11	2.79%
Norway	1	0.25%
Philippines	2	0.51%
Poland	2	0.51%
Portugal	2	0.51%
Romania	2	0.51%
Russia	3	0.76%
Scotland	1	0.25%
Singapore	6	1.52%
Slovenia	3	0.76%
South Africa	2	0.51%
South Korea	2	0.51%
Spain	6	1.52%
Switzerland	1	0.25%
Taiwan	1	0.25%
Turkey	3	0.76%

USA	131	33.25%
Ukraine	1	0.25%
Venezuela	1	0.25%
Vietnam	1	0.25%

Appendix 4: Meininger Keyword Frequency (expanded list)

Keyword	Frequency	% Shown	% Processed	% Total	No. Cases	% Cases	TF • IDF
HOSTEL	394	8.51%	4.22%	1.72%	283	56.60%	97.4
ROOM	322	6.95%	3.45%	1.41%	229	45.80%	109.2
CLEAN	279	6.02%	2.99%	1.22%	258	51.60%	80.2
STAFF	211	4.56%	2.26%	0.92%	208	41.60%	80.4
HOTEL	206	4.45%	2.21%	0.90%	186	37.20%	88.5
STAY	205	4.43%	2.19%	0.90%	175	35.00%	93.5
GOOD	187	4.04%	2.00%	0.82%	157	31.40%	94.1
GREAT	185	3.99%	1.98%	0.81%	148	29.60%	97.8
BED	177	3.82%	1.89%	0.77%	125	25.00%	106.6
NICE	169	3.65%	1.81%	0.74%	145	29.00%	90.9
LOCATION	148	3.20%	1.58%	0.65%	144	28.80%	80.0
PLACE	143	3.09%	1.53%	0.63%	131	26.20%	83.2
WALK	137	2.96%	1.47%	0.60%	122	24.40%	83.9
FRIENDLY	96	2.07%	1.03%	0.42%	95	19.00%	69.2
KITCHEN	89	1.92%	0.95%	0.39%	83	16.60%	69.4
PEOPLE	85	1.84%	0.91%	0.37%	77	15.40%	69.1
HELPFUL	80	1.73%	0.86%	0.35%	79	15.80%	64.1
CENTER	77	1.66%	0.82%	0.34%	76	15.20%	63.0
SMALL	73	1.58%	0.78%	0.32%	67	13.40%	63.7
ATMOSPHERE	72	1.55%	0.77%	0.32%	70	14.00%	61.5
CITY	71	1.53%	0.76%	0.31%	67	13.40%	62.0
AREA	68	1.47%	0.73%	0.30%	61	12.20%	62.1
DORM	65	1.40%	0.70%	0.28%	53	10.60%	63.4
BATHROOM	64	1.38%	0.69%	0.28%	63	12.60%	57.6
BREAKFAST	63	1.36%	0.67%	0.28%	60	12.00%	58.0

FACILITY	63	1.36%	0.67%	0.28%	61	12.20%	57.6
MINUTE	62	1.34%	0.66%	0.27%	54	10.80%	59.9
CLOSE	59	1.27%	0.63%	0.26%	55	11.00%	56.6
RECOMMEND	58	1.25%	0.62%	0.25%	57	11.40%	54.7
FEEL	56	1.21%	0.60%	0.25%	48	9.60%	57.0
MAKE	53	1.14%	0.57%	0.23%	53	10.60%	51.7
METRO	53	1.14%	0.57%	0.23%	51	10.20%	52.5
NIGHT	52	1.12%	0.56%	0.23%	48	9.60%	52.9
STATION	50	1.08%	0.54%	0.22%	50	10.00%	50.0
MIN	47	1.01%	0.50%	0.21%	40	8.00%	51.6
MEET	43	0.93%	0.46%	0.19%	43	8.60%	45.8
FAMILY	42	0.91%	0.45%	0.18%	39	7.80%	46.5
COMFORTABLE	39	0.84%	0.42%	0.17%	38	7.60%	43.6
SUPER	39	0.84%	0.42%	0.17%	38	7.60%	43.6
TRAVELLER	39	0.84%	0.42%	0.17%	37	7.40%	44.1
MODERN	38	0.82%	0.41%	0.17%	38	7.60%	42.5
BIG	35	0.76%	0.37%	0.15%	34	6.80%	40.9
LOCKER	35	0.76%	0.37%	0.15%	31	6.20%	42.3
TIME	35	0.76%	0.37%	0.15%	32	6.40%	41.8
PRETTY	34	0.73%	0.36%	0.15%	30	6.00%	41.5
SHOWER	34	0.73%	0.36%	0.15%	32	6.40%	40.6

Appendix 5: Wombat's Keyword Frequency (expanded list)

Keyword	Frequency	% Shown	% Processed	% Total	No. Cases	% Cases	TF • IDF
HOSTEL	301	7.65%	3.76%	1.60%	222	56.35%	75.0
ROOM	248	6.31%	3.09%	1.32%	174	44.16%	88.0
GREAT	238	6.05%	2.97%	1.27%	178	45.18%	82.1
STAY	222	5.64%	2.77%	1.18%	166	42.13%	83.3
STAFF	207	5.26%	2.58%	1.10%	193	48.98%	64.2
GOOD	194	4.93%	2.42%	1.03%	145	36.80%	84.2
NICE	153	3.89%	1.91%	0.82%	117	29.70%	80.7
CLEAN	152	3.86%	1.90%	0.81%	143	36.29%	66.9
LOCATION	147	3.74%	1.83%	0.78%	145	36.80%	63.8
BAR	140	3.56%	1.75%	0.75%	131	33.25%	67.0
BED	107	2.72%	1.34%	0.57%	84	21.32%	71.8
PLACE	97	2.47%	1.21%	0.52%	85	21.57%	64.6
FRIENDLY	89	2.26%	1.11%	0.47%	88	22.34%	57.9
PEOPLE	81	2.06%	1.01%	0.43%	71	18.02%	60.3
WALK	74	1.88%	0.92%	0.39%	68	17.26%	56.5
ATMOSPHERE	72	1.83%	0.90%	0.38%	70	17.77%	54.0
BREAKFAST	70	1.78%	0.87%	0.37%	69	17.51%	53.0
HELPFUL	69	1.75%	0.86%	0.37%	69	17.51%	52.2
RECOMMEND	65	1.65%	0.81%	0.35%	65	16.50%	50.9
WOMBAT	65	1.65%	0.81%	0.35%	54	13.71%	56.1
AREA	64	1.63%	0.80%	0.34%	60	15.23%	52.3
CITY	59	1.50%	0.74%	0.31%	54	13.71%	50.9
CLOSE	55	1.40%	0.69%	0.29%	47	11.93%	50.8
NIGHT	53	1.35%	0.66%	0.28%	50	12.69%	47.5

SUPER	51	1.30%	0.64%	0.27%	45	11.42%	48.1
STATION	49	1.25%	0.61%	0.26%	49	12.44%	44.4
BATHROOM	47	1.20%	0.59%	0.25%	45	11.42%	44.3
CENTER	47	1.20%	0.59%	0.25%	47	11.93%	43.4
FACILITY	46	1.17%	0.57%	0.25%	46	11.68%	42.9
LOCKER	46	1.17%	0.57%	0.25%	44	11.17%	43.8
MEET	46	1.17%	0.57%	0.25%	45	11.42%	43.3
TIME	46	1.17%	0.57%	0.25%	39	9.90%	46.2
KITCHEN	44	1.12%	0.55%	0.23%	43	10.91%	42.3
MAKE	43	1.09%	0.54%	0.23%	38	9.64%	43.7
BIG	41	1.04%	0.51%	0.22%	40	10.15%	40.7
METRO	39	0.99%	0.49%	0.21%	38	9.64%	39.6
WIFI	38	0.97%	0.47%	0.20%	36	9.14%	39.5
AMAZE	35	0.89%	0.44%	0.19%	33	8.38%	37.7
FREE	35	0.89%	0.44%	0.19%	34	8.63%	37.2
PRETTY	35	0.89%	0.44%	0.19%	31	7.87%	38.6
TRAVELLER	35	0.89%	0.44%	0.19%	35	8.88%	36.8
LOVE	34	0.86%	0.42%	0.18%	30	7.61%	38.0
DRINK	31	0.79%	0.39%	0.17%	27	6.85%	36.1
EASY	31	0.79%	0.39%	0.17%	29	7.36%	35.1
EXPERIENCE	31	0.79%	0.39%	0.17%	31	7.87%	34.2
FEEL	31	0.79%	0.39%	0.17%	29	7.36%	35.1
FUN	30	0.76%	0.37%	0.16%	27	6.85%	34.9

Appendix 6: Meininger – Topic Categorization

Topic	Keywords	Coherence	Frequency	No. Cases	% Cases
STAFF	STAFF; HELPFUL; FRIENDLY; SUPER; STAFF WAS; STAFF WERE; FRIENDLY STAFF; STAFF ARE; FRIENDLY AND HELPFUL; STAFF IS;	0.351	309	232	46.40%
LOCATION	CENTER; CITY; WALK; MIN; CITY CENTER; MIN WALK; CITY CENTRE; MINUTE WALK; WALK TO THE CITY; OF THE CITY; STATION; MINUTE; METRO; WALK; MIN; MINUTE WALK; LOCATION IS; MIN WALK; METRO STATION; MINUTES WALK; LOCA- TION; CLOSE; METRO;	0.360	565	285	57.00%
ATMOSPHERE	GOOD LOCATION; LOCATION WAS; MEET; PEOPLE; TRAVELLER; AREA; NIGHT; FAMILY; MEET PEOPLE; PLACE TO MEET PEOPLE; SOLO TRAVELLER; IS A HOTEL; FEEL; PLACE; HOTEL; NIGHT; TRAVELLER; ATMOSPHERE;	0.362	390	341	68.20%
FACILITIES	HOTEL THAN A HOSTEL; OF A HOTEL; BATHROOM; SHOWER; BED; ROOM; COMFORTABLE; AREA; DORM; ROOM WAS; KITCHEN WAS; BUNK BED; COMMON AREA; BED WAS; DOUBLE BED; KITCHEN; SMALL; ROOM; MODERN; KITCHEN IS; KITCHEN WAS; ROOM WAS; BEDS WERE; HOSTEL; HOTEL; CLEAN;	0.398	1257	458	91.60%

Appendix 7: Wombat's – Topic Categorization

Topic	Keywords	Coherence	Frequency	No. Cases	% Cases
FACILITIES	ROOM; BATHROOM; LOCKER; CLEAN; KITCHEN; BED; BIG;	0.389	420	280	71.07%
	ROOM WAS; WAS CLEAN; BATHROOM WAS; PRIVATE ROOM; BED WAS; BEDS ARE; BED;				
ATMOSPHERE SOCIAL ASPECT	BED BUGS; BED DORM; MEET; PEOPLE; TRAVELLER; ATMOSPHERE;	0.351	133	143	36.29%
	MEET PEOPLE; GREAT ATMOSPHERE; GREAT WAY TO MEET; NICE PLACE; PLACE TO MEET PEOPLE; SOLO TRAVELER;				
STAFF	STAFF; FRIENDLY; HELPFUL;	0.348	283	201	51.02%
	STAFF WAS; STAFF WERE; FRIENDLY AND HELPFUL; FRIENDLY STAFF; STAFF IS; HELPFUL STAFF; STAFF ARE; SUPER FRIENDLY; SUPER HELPFUL; STAFF WAS FRIENDLY; GREAT STAFF;				
LOCATION	CENTER; CITY; WALK; CLOSE;	0.348	313	234	59.39%
	CITY CENTER; CITY CENTRE; CLOSE TO THE CITY; WALKING DISTANCE; STATION; METRO; CLOSE; WALK; LOCATION; EASY;				
MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES	METRO STATION; TRAIN STATION; LOCATION IS; LOCATION WAS;	0.332	137	221	56.09%
	FREE; DRINK; FEEL; BAR; BREAKFAST; WALK; FREE DRINK; BAR WAS; WALKING TOUR;				

Appendix 8: Meininger Proximity Analysis for 'Hotel'

Target	Keyword	Co-occurs*	Do not**	Is absent***	Association
HOTEL	HOSTEL	136	147	50	0.351
HOTEL	ROOM	97	132	89	0.221
HOTEL	CLEAN	102	156	84	0.217
HOTEL	FEEL	38	10	148	0.162
HOTEL	STAY	70	105	116	0.151
HOTEL	PEOPLE	45	32	141	0.141
HOTEL	GOOD	61	96	125	0.127
HOTEL	BED	54	71	132	0.125
HOTEL	PLACE	55	76	131	0.124
HOTEL	WALK	49	73	137	0.106
HOTEL	DORM	32	21	154	0.104
HOTEL	ATMOSPHERE	36	34	150	0.100
HOTEL	STAFF	62	146	124	0.099
HOTEL	NICE	51	94	135	0.096
HOTEL	LOCATION	49	95	137	0.090
HOTEL	KITCHEN	36	47	150	0.084
HOTEL	GREAT	48	100	138	0.084
HOTEL	CITY	32	35	154	0.082
HOTEL	MEET	25	18	161	0.078
HOTEL	MINUTE	27	27	159	0.073
HOTEL	CENTER	32	44	154	0.072
HOTEL	TRAVELLER	22	15	164	0.070

*The number of reviews in which the keyword co-occurs with the target word

**The number of cases where the keyword appears without the target word

***The number of cases where the target word appears without the keyword

Appendix 9: Meininger – Case Occurrence and Sentiment Cross Tabulation (with percentage of total positive, negative and neutral reviews)

Keyword	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Inconclusive	% Positive Reviews	% Negative Reviews	% Neutral Reviews
AREA	21	10	1	29	13.73%	10.87%	6.67%
ATMOSPHERE	15	19	1	35	9.80%	20.65%	6.67%
BATHROOM	13	12	2	36	8.50%	13.04%	13.33%
BED	33	34	2	56	21.57%	36.96%	13.33%
BIG	9	8	1	16	5.88%	8.70%	6.67%
BREAKFAST	24	9	2	25	15.69%	9.78%	13.33%
CENTER	23	14	4	35	15.03%	15.22%	26.67%
CITY	20	10	1	36	13.07%	10.87%	6.67%
CLEAN	82	41	7	128	53.59%	44.57%	46.67%
CLOSE	20	6	1	28	13.07%	6.52%	6.67%
COMFORTABLE	18	3	1	16	11.76%	3.26%	6.67%
DORM	13	19	1	20	8.50%	20.65%	6.67%
FACILITY	18	8	3	32	11.76%	8.70%	20.00%
FAMILY	10	9	0	20	6.54%	9.78%	0.00%
FEEL	11	7	2	28	7.19%	7.61%	13.33%
FRIENDLY	36	13	1	45	23.53%	14.13%	6.67%
GOOD	58	25	2	72	37.91%	27.17%	13.33%
GREAT	55	17	1	75	35.95%	18.48%	6.67%
HELPFUL	26	12	1	40	16.99%	13.04%	6.67%
HOSTEL	73	56	8	146	47.71%	60.87%	53.33%
HOTEL	43	49	3	91	28.10%	53.26%	20.00%
KITCHEN	30	12	2	39	19.61%	13.04%	13.33%
LOCATION	45	22	6	71	29.41%	23.91%	40.00%
LOCKER	9	5	1	16	5.88%	5.43%	6.67%

MAKE	19	13	2	19	12.42%	14.13%	13.33%
MEET	11	8	1	23	7.19%	8.70%	6.67%
METRO	13	11	4	23	8.50%	11.96%	26.67%
MIN	11	8	4	17	7.19%	8.70%	26.67%
MINUTE	13	10	3	28	8.50%	10.87%	20.00%
MODERN	14	2	2	20	9.15%	2.17%	13.33%
NICE	58	13	2	72	37.91%	14.13%	13.33%
NIGHT	15	11	1	21	9.80%	11.96%	6.67%
PEOPLE	22	14	2	39	14.38%	15.22%	13.33%
PLACE	45	14	2	70	29.41%	15.22%	13.33%
PRETTY	7	7	1	15	4.58%	7.61%	6.67%
RECOMMEND	17	8	2	30	11.11%	8.70%	13.33%
ROOM	63	51	6	109	41.18%	55.43%	40.00%
SHOWER	8	7	1	16	5.23%	7.61%	6.67%
SMALL	20	13	3	31	13.07%	14.13%	20.00%
STAFF	71	35	1	101	46.41%	38.04%	6.67%
STATION	17	7	4	22	11.11%	7.61%	26.67%
STAY	52	31	5	87	33.99%	33.70%	33.33%
SUPER	15	4	1	18	9.80%	4.35%	6.67%
TIME	7	9	0	16	4.58%	9.78%	0.00%
TRAVELLER	9	8	1	19	5.88%	8.70%	6.67%
WALK	38	20	6	58	24.84%	21.74%	40.00%

Appendix 10: Wombat's – Case Occurrence and Sentiment Cross Tabulation (with percentage of total positive, negative and neutral reviews)

Keyword	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Inconclusive	% Positive Reviews	% Negative Reviews	% Neutral Reviews
AMAZE	14	0	0	19	9.21%	0.00%	0.00%
AREA	24	6	2	28	15.79%	17.14%	25.00%
ATMOSPHERE	32	5	1	32	21.05%	14.29%	12.50%
BAR	57	12	2	60	37.50%	34.29%	25.00%
BATHROOM	12	6	0	27	7.89%	17.14%	0.00%
BED	26	14	1	43	17.11%	40.00%	12.50%
BIG	17	2	2	19	11.18%	5.71%	25.00%
BREAKFAST	27	7	1	34	17.76%	20.00%	12.50%
CENTER	22	5	2	18	14.47%	14.29%	25.00%
CITY	23	4	3	24	15.13%	11.43%	37.50%
CLEAN	62	12	4	65	40.79%	34.29%	50.00%
CLOSE	22	2	2	21	14.47%	5.71%	25.00%
DRINK	10	2	0	15	6.58%	5.71%	0.00%
EASY	16	1	1	11	10.53%	2.86%	12.50%
EXPERIENCE	10	5	0	16	6.58%	14.29%	0.00%
FACILITY	17	2	0	27	11.18%	5.71%	0.00%
FEEL	11	4	0	14	7.24%	11.43%	0.00%
FREE	11	5	0	18	7.24%	14.29%	0.00%
FRIENDLY	34	9	1	44	22.37%	25.71%	12.50%
FUN	15	0	0	12	9.87%	0.00%	0.00%
GOOD	61	15	1	68	40.13%	42.86%	12.50%
GREAT	78	9	3	88	51.32%	25.71%	37.50%
HELPFUL	31	6	0	32	20.39%	17.14%	0.00%
HOSTEL	97	21	5	99	63.82%	60.00%	62.50%

KITCHEN	18	7	0	18	11.84%	20.00%	0.00%
LOCATION	55	16	1	73	36.18%	45.71%	12.50%
LOCKER	10	5	2	27	6.58%	14.29%	25.00%
LOVE	17	1	0	12	11.18%	2.86%	0.00%
MAKE	16	3	1	18	10.53%	8.57%	12.50%
MEET	21	4	1	19	13.82%	11.43%	12.50%
METRO	16	6	1	15	10.53%	17.14%	12.50%
NICE	51	5	1	60	33.55%	14.29%	12.50%
NIGHT	20	8	1	21	13.16%	22.86%	12.50%
PEOPLE	36	6	2	27	23.68%	17.14%	25.00%
PLACE	40	7	0	38	26.32%	20.00%	0.00%
PRETTY	10	4	1	16	6.58%	11.43%	12.50%
RECOMMEND	31	4	1	29	20.39%	11.43%	12.50%
ROOM	60	21	4	89	39.47%	60.00%	50.00%
STAFF	75	14	2	102	49.34%	40.00%	25.00%
STATION	16	5	0	28	10.53%	14.29%	0.00%
STAY	75	10	1	80	49.34%	28.57%	12.50%
SUPER	16	1	0	28	10.53%	2.86%	0.00%
TIME	16	3	0	20	10.53%	8.57%	0.00%
TRAVELLER	15	6	1	13	9.87%	17.14%	12.50%
WALK	24	7	2	35	15.79%	20.00%	25.00%
WIFI	15	6	0	15	9.87%	17.14%	0.00%

Appendix 11: Meininger – Phrase Frequency

Phrase	Frequency	No. Cases	% Cases	TF • IDF
CITY CENTER	41	40	8.00%	45.0
MINUTE WALK	38	35	7.00%	43.9
MIN WALK	27	24	4.80%	35.6
FRIENDLY STAFF	26	26	5.20%	33.4
HOTEL THAN A HOSTEL	24	24	4.80%	31.7
GREAT PLACE	23	23	4.60%	30.8
SOLO TRAVELLER	22	20	4.00%	30.8
MEET PEOPLE	21	21	4.20%	28.9
PLACE TO STAY	21	21	4.20%	28.9
COMMON AREA	20	20	4.00%	28.0
FRIENDLY AND HELPFUL	19	19	3.80%	27.0
GOOD LOCATION	18	18	3.60%	26.0
METRO STATION	18	18	3.60%	26.0
STAFF BE FRIENDLY	18	18	3.60%	26.0
BUNK BED	17	16	3.20%	25.4
GREAT HOSTEL	17	17	3.40%	25.0
GREAT LOCATION	15	15	3.00%	22.8
CLEAN HOSTEL	14	14	2.80%	21.7
GOOD HOSTEL	14	14	2.80%	21.7
HELPFUL STAFF	14	14	2.80%	21.7
NICE HOSTEL	13	13	2.60%	20.6
PUBLIC TRANSPORT	13	13	2.60%	20.6
ROOM BE CLEAN	13	13	2.60%	20.6
SUPER CLEAN	13	13	2.60%	20.6
GOOD PLACE	12	12	2.40%	19.4

Appendix 12: Wombat's – Phrase Frequency

Phrase	Frequency	No. Cases	% Cases	TF • IDF
GREAT LOCATION	28	28	7.11%	32.2
CITY CENTER	27	27	6.85%	31.4
GOOD LOCATION	26	26	6.60%	30.7
MEET PEOPLE	24	24	6.09%	29.2
GREAT HOSTEL	22	22	5.58%	27.6
PLACE TO STAY	22	22	5.58%	27.6
FRIENDLY AND HELPFUL	18	18	4.57%	24.1
FRIENDLY STAFF	18	18	4.57%	24.1
COMMON AREA	17	17	4.31%	23.2
METRO STATION	16	16	4.06%	22.3
MINUTE WALK	16	15	3.81%	22.7
SOLO TRAVELLER	16	16	4.06%	22.3
STAFF BE FRIENDLY	16	16	4.06%	22.3
GOOD HOSTEL	15	15	3.81%	21.3
HELPFUL STAFF	15	15	3.81%	21.3
NICE PLACE	15	15	3.81%	21.3
BAR DOWNSTAIRS	14	14	3.55%	20.3
HIGHLY RECOMMEND	14	14	3.55%	20.3
ROOM BE CLEAN	14	14	3.55%	20.3
TRAIN STATION	14	14	3.55%	20.3
NICE HOSTEL	13	13	3.30%	19.3
ENJOY MY STAY	12	12	3.05%	18.2
GREAT ATMOSPHERE	12	12	3.05%	18.2
GREAT STAY	12	12	3.05%	18.2
PRETTY GOOD	12	11	2.79%	18.6

WOMBAT HOSTEL	12	12	3.05%	18.2
FREE DRINK	11	11	2.79%	17.1
GREAT PLACE TO STAY	11	11	2.79%	17.1
BED BUG	10	6	1.52%	18.2
STAFF BE SUPER	10	10	2.54%	16.0
WALK DISTANCE	10	10	2.54%	16.0

Appendix 13: Meininger Vienna Downtown Franz – Common Area







