



*Adjusting the co-living  
concept of The Student Hotel  
Amsterdam City to improve  
the guest experience*

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## Preface

Hi there,

This thesis report has been written by me, Luca Wallner, an enthusiastic 4<sup>th</sup>-year student at the Saxion Hospitality Business School Apeldoorn, who enrolled in the international program. Writing a thesis report was the last part of the rollercoaster that the past four years have been for me. For all bachelor students, it is mandatory to write a thesis report to graduate.

In the past five months, I did extensive research into co-living for The Student Hotel Amsterdam City. This report is my chef-d'oeuvre, my masterpiece. The timeframe that the thesis was written has been tough, primarily due to the current COVID-19 crisis. This crisis resulted in having an amount of time where students who are graduating are dreaming of. Sometimes it was a tough challenge, which resulted in stress for me. However, the past few months revealed me useful insights and knowledge. I did not only gained knowledge about co-living or the overall hospitality branch but especially about myself. The past few months demonstrated me the skills that I am capable of. Furthermore, it was great to see that the knowledge that I gained during the past four years study years were useful. During the past four study years, I developed a fascination about the formation of community & formation of teams. Probably one of the reasons why I realised, during my management internship at The Student Hotel Amsterdam City, that I would like to develop further understanding about these subjects.

During the past months, several people were of great help. Therefore, I want to thank the following people:

- First, I want to thank my first examiner Tatiana Alekseeva for her support, her thoughts and for pushing me into the right direction. You often took my insecurities about my work away and gave me the motivation to write it.
- Furthermore, massive thanks to all experts that took the time for the interviews. I know these are challenging times for the hospitality industry, and the COVID-19 crisis is impacting them massively. Therefore, it was great that they provided inside knowledge about their company, about their co-living concept, and especially told me inspiring stories about the formation of communities.
- Thanks as well to all students, who I have been interviewing. Your inside information, your thoughts about The Student Hotel and your notes has been a considerable contribution. As The Student Hotel would say, YOU ALL ARE SUPERSTARS.

I hope that you enjoy reading this thesis report as much as I enjoyed the process of writing it.

Luca Wallner

Putten, 10-06-2020

## **Management summary**

The purpose of this thesis assignment is to write a strategical advice for TSH Amsterdam City to adjust their co-living concept to enhance the guest experience of the students. Currently, the client is facing many complaints from the in-house student community. These unsolved complaints led to unsatisfied customers, which has an impact on the financial results of TSH. This resulted in an objective to enhance the existing student experience by implementing new co-living aspects and removing non-functioning current co-living aspects so that an improved co-living concept for The Student Hotel Amsterdam City is created. This resulted in the following advice question:

- How can TSH Amsterdam City make suitable adjustments to their co-living concepts to improve the guest experience of the students?

The introduction and the advice question identified two core-concepts: co-living and guest experience. The research done on the theoretical framework led to an elaboration of these two core-concepts. The researcher used triangulation, which is a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, to conclude. The usage of an online questionnaire gained knowledge about the advantages and disadvantages of the co-living concept. The researcher further elaborated this gained information during interviews with students living at TSH Amsterdam City. The focus during these five interviews was also to identify possible adjustments that could be made based on the students their opinions. Furthermore, six interviews were conducted with experts working at best-practice co-living and student housing companies. The experts were working in various positions at the companies across the globe, ranging positions such as CEO to the community manager.

The research results indicated that currently, there are insufficiencies in the involvement of students in the community, which results in a decrease in crucial connections with the in-house student community. Students pointed out that they do not feel that there is space to contribute to the formation of the student community. Research indicated that students would feel involved if TSH would co-create the living environment. Furthermore, results revealed that the current method of room assignment at TSH promotes essentialism and stereotyping of students based on nationalities and leads to the formation of small ethnic communities. Thus, students do not receive sufficient international experience while studying in Amsterdam.

Based on the research results, four advice options were set. These options were; rewarding students for their contribution to the community, creating a more inclusive culture of different nationalities, co-creation of the student community and helping students integrate into the community. A set of carefully selected criterion to prioritise these advice options favoured that rewarding students for their contribution to the community would be the best fit for TSH Amsterdam City. Rewarding fits perfectly since students want involvement, acknowledgement for their contribution and a connection with TSH. Therefore, the client is advised to reward students for contributing to the community. This will acknowledge the contribution that the students are making to the community. Furthermore, rewarding will reveal students the positive benefits of being involved in the community. This will help TSH Amsterdam City to create a sense of community for their in-house student community. A successful reward program should be inclusive for all members of a community and helps with involving dissocialised students as well.

The implementation of the reward program is described, based on a PDCA-cycle, which includes a detailed implementation plan for the client. For the first two years after implementation of the reward program, the costs are estimated at € 119.264,79 and the earnings at € 187.480. This leads to an ROI of 157,20 % in July 2022. Therefore, the advice is worth the investment for the client due to the quick return of their investment.

## **List of abbreviations**

TSH	The Student Hotel
NPS	Net Promoter Score
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
F&B	Food and Beverage
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions

# Declaration of own work

I hereby declare that:

- I am fully informed about the Thesis C assessment criteria;
- all the work I have conducted to fulfill these criteria is entirely my own;
- I have not been assisted by any other person, except the coaching offered within HBS guidelines.

Name: Luca Wallner  
Date: 1-6-2020

Signature: 

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# 1 Introduction

This chapter starts with an overall introduction and background information about the client, The Student Hotel Amsterdam City. Afterwards, the reasoning of the project, a description of the management problem and relevance for the client is revealed. Subsequently, an explanation is provided of the advice and research objectives. This part includes the advice question and research questions. The last part of the introduction reveals the reading guide, which describes the following chapters of this thesis report.

## 1.1 Overall introduction

In the past decade, co-living increased in large urban areas. The increase in renting prices, a bubble on the housing market, and non-flexible housing contracts led to an increase of co-living accommodations in large cities such as Amsterdam, London, or Berlin. Co-living also gained global popularity since a considerable part of the millennial group wanted to have more freedom and flexibility rather than long-term unstable renting contracts. This group of digital nomads wants to live and work alongside other people of a similar mindset, experience, and age. This specific target group wants to live their lifestyle from any type of locations (Coldwell, 2019).

The Student Hotel (TSH) combines the co-living trend within one roof, offering a complete solution for this fast-growing international community of millennials and generation z. Furthermore, TSH was founded as a solution to the current issues regarding the shortage of student rooms and the increase of renting prices in The Netherlands. Due to this shortage, students were even offered containers as housing solutions in some cities. Most international students were the dupe of these problems since they did not have the right connections or tools to find a student room in Amsterdam. Often some of these students had to spend time on an improvised camping site, which harmed the students. Therefore, the founder of TSH combined the ideal parts of a hotel and student housing accommodations with the co-living principle.

## 1.2 Background information about the client

Nowadays, TSH is the fastest growing hospitality company in Europe that focusses on co-working and co-living. In August 2015, the flagship hotel opened in the city centre of Amsterdam. TSH Amsterdam City is a hotel with 571 hotel rooms, divided into 286 student rooms and 285 standard hotel rooms. The hotel is facilitating these hotel rooms to three types of guests: hotel guests, short-stay guests, and students. A stay for a short-stay guest starts from 14 nights, and students can stay for at least five months. Furthermore, approximately 80 people are working in departments such as the food and beverage (F&B) department or the front-office department. A fully-equipped student room costs between 900 € and 1.200 € per month, depending on the size of the room. Standard hotel guests pay approximately between 80 € and 170 € a night excluding breakfast, which results in an average room rate of 130 €.

The philosophy of the founder has a significant impact on the hotel chain. On the blueprint of all newly purchased buildings, Charlie MacGregor draws a heart. The central point of this heart should be the lobby of the hotel, including the co-living facilities. TSH established a substantial mission: "The Student Hotel is a place where anyone with a student spirit – curious, open, free, adventurous – can thrive". The interior of TSH Amsterdam City contains a load of design-minded co-living features such as in-house co-working facilities or a sound-proof study area. Furthermore, the hotel contains a communal play area, including ping pong tables. TSH organises on a weekly base various in-house events. The themes of these events vary from TED talks about plant-based diets to closet sales from famous bloggers. The hotel is not only offering a range of facilities, but they focus on creating a community within their hotel. Creating a community is especially essential within the part of the hotel

that is occupied by the students. These students are living in the same building, which is a 13-floor building with a fascinating view over the city centre of Amsterdam. Each of these floors accommodate 26 rooms with two shared communal kitchens.

### 1.3 Reasoning of the thesis project and description of the management problem

The international student community living at TSH Amsterdam City pays for a subscription which includes an entirely equipped room, in-house facilities, special tailor-made events, and the unique TSH community. Nevertheless, within TSH Amsterdam City complex situations occurred over the past years, and the satisfaction of the students has decreased as well. The satisfaction drop has multiple reasons, such as the failure of the so-called kitchen buddy project or the amount of unsolved complaints. On a weekly base, the TSH student community complains about several subjects regarding their stay. TSH staff neglects many complaints or issues within the student population since these cannot be solved due to multiple reasons such as the insufficient technological infrastructure of TSH. Therefore, these numbers of unsolved complaints led to unsatisfied customers, that terminate their contract and spread negative publicities. Some parents even managed to reach out to Charlie MacGregor, the CEO and founder. By doing so, these parents managed to receive privileges for their youngsters, such as weekly cleaning. However, these unsolved complaints form a substantial potential risk for dissatisfied customers. These unsatisfied customers impact the future financial results of TSH. These issues weaken the guest experience, which has a tremendous negative impact on the TSH community. The number of complaints and negative online reviews can potentially impact the number of bookings made, which may result in less revenue.

Therefore, it seems relevant to advise how the co-living principles and co-living business concept of TSH can be adjusted. The advice will focus on tackling the growing complaints due to the low engagement and motivation of the student population. Furthermore, the advice will focus on adjusting the TSH co-living concept better to the demands and behaviour of the student population. The advice will focus on improving the guest experience of the students living at TSH Amsterdam City.

### 1.4 Relevance of the thesis to the client

More insights will be gathered about the current goals and performance ambitions of TSH to indicate the relevance of the project. The core values and vision can contribute to this relevance. Furthermore, TSH has a secure vision: "We aim to create the best space where students can determine their purpose and change the world". When TSH thinks of "best space," it is all about an exciting international community, a stimulating living environment and many shared facilities. Based on the missions and vision, the organisation has set the following performance ambitions and goals for 2019–2020.

- 1 Increase average revenue per guest through cross-selling and upselling in FY20
- 2 Reduce OTA dependency and increase direct sales
- 3 Improve employee engagement to an 8.2 in TSH survey with a 70 % participation in Q4 19
- 4 The TSH app is operational and actively used by TSH customers
- 5 Reduction of the complaints
- 6 Consistent measurement & improvement of NPS score
- 7 Enhance the TSH guest experience
- 8 Yearly increase in the variety of guests, increasing the number of nationalities and celebrating diversity.

Currently, various factors of the co-living concept of TSH Amsterdam City are not working correctly. Therefore, the main goal of TSH 'Creating a complete connected community' is not reached in its full potential. This also weakens the overall guest experience of the student population. Furthermore, the current goals and performance ambitions of TSH are ambitious, especially considered the issues that are at stake at TSH Amsterdam City. Therefore, adjusting the co-living concept to the demands of the

student population should lead to less issues and complaints. These adjustments are linked to the goal 'Reduce the complaints'. A re-development of the contemporary TSH co-living concept is also relevant to the Net Promoter Score (NPS). Improving the existing co-living concept with enhanced co-living propositions can contribute to a more positive NPS. At the end of each study year (June), the marketing department of TSH measures the NPS. They measure if the students would promote TSH by their friends and family. A better developed co-living concept could contribute to an increase of the NPS.

### 1.5 Objective for the advisory part

The management problem in paragraph 1.3 will be answered with an elaborated advice. Based on the management problem, the following advice objective is created: *Enhancing the existing student experience by implementing new co-living aspects and removing non-functioning current co-living aspects, so that a better working co-living concept for The Student Hotel Amsterdam City is created.* As an advice, a co-living concept enhancement plan will be advised that focusses on improving the existing co-living concept of TSH Amsterdam City better to the demands of the student population. This co-living concept enhancement plan will have parts which focus on the financial and the practical implication of the advice. Furthermore, the enhancement plan will include an implementation. This plan will describe steps that TSH Amsterdam City must take to implement the advice. Moreover, the enhancement plan will also include a set of goals, critical success factors and key performance indicators. These goals will describe when the advice is successful. The above-highlighted advice objective leads to the advice question described underneath:

- How can TSH Amsterdam City make suitable adjustments to their co-living concepts to improve the guest experience of the students?

### 1.6 Research

Based on the management problem, advice objective, and the advice question the following research objective is formulated: *To gain more knowledge about the positive and negative aspects of the contemporary TSH Amsterdam City co-living concept and how external knowledge can be used to adjust it.*

The research questions are formulated based on the previously provided information and the research objective. Therefore, it is essential to gain insights into the selected core-concepts to formulate advice on this management problem. The first part of the research is focussing on the current situation. During this process, data needs to be gathered on how the students living at TSH Amsterdam City experience the current co-living concept of TSH Amsterdam City. This insight may help to understand better their needs and how to satisfy the student community. Furthermore, research will illustrate the positive and negative aspects of the community. Knowledge needs to be gained about the advantages and disadvantages of the housing provided by TSH Amsterdam City. Therefore, the following research question and sub-questions should gain more insight on these subjects and is focussing on researching the current situation.

- What are the positive and negative aspects of the co-living concept of TSH Amsterdam City?

The sub-questions described underneath help to answer the first research question.

- What are the positive and negative aspects of the co-living concept of TSH Amsterdam City related to the community?
- What are the positive and negative aspects of the co-living concept of TSH Amsterdam City related to housing?

Furthermore, research needs to be done to adjust the current co-living concept based on the needs of the student population. Research should reveal possible adjustments, which fit to the demands of this student community. In addition to this, the knowledge gained from the student population will be used

to find suitable external adjustments. This research will gain knowledge about co-living concepts of best-practice companies. This knowledge will be used to gain inside knowledge about suitable changes that co-living companies might have made to their concept. This will result in the second research question, which focuses on the future. Here the focus is to determine how the co-living concept of TSH Amsterdam City should be changed.

- What co-living aspects could improve the guest experience of students?

The sub-questions described underneath help to answer the second research question.

- Which co-living aspects can improve the guest experience based on the experts' opinions?
- Which co-living aspects can improve the guest experience based on the students' opinions?

### 1.7 Reading guide

This thesis report consists of several chapters. Chapter two illustrates the theoretical framework, which discusses the literature review of the guest experience and co-living. Furthermore, this chapter reveals insights of these core concepts, which are operationalised as well. The operationalisation of these core concepts is used as a foundation for the field research. The third chapter discusses the research methodology, which also focuses on the strategy of the research, the several data collection methods, the sampling techniques, the data analysis, and the accomplishments of the field research. The fourth chapter presents the results of the field research. This chapter focuses mostly on the qualitative research such as the results of the expert interviews and in-depth interviews with students. Moreover, the fifth chapter provides an answer to the research question. The fifth chapter reveals the conclusion of the field research as well. Furthermore, the sixth chapter illustrates the discussion, including the validity and reliability of the field research. The seventh chapter of this thesis report provides strategical advice for the client. In this chapter, several advice options are compared with each other. Based on a set of criteria, the best advice option is chosen. This advice is illustrated through a PDCA-cycle, which includes an implementation plan and the financial implications of the advice. Moreover, this chapter reveals an answer to the management question as well.

## 2 Theoretical Framework

It is essential to explore the various core concepts of this research and to provide reliable insights for further research about the co-living concept of TSH. Furthermore, the literature review will be discussed first, as well as an elaboration of the evaluation method. Later in the chapter, a more in-depth clarification of the various core concepts is presented. These core concepts are: guest experience and co-living. A literature review will offer a deep insight into various definitions and parts of these core concepts. These will be analysed and compared to each other. Furthermore, the literature review should provide more in-depth knowledge about several parts of a co-living concept and the guest experience. The literature review will provide several insights, and the theoretical framework will reveal them. Appendix I will highlight several search methods and search engines. This Appendix includes a further elaboration of the sources used for the snowball method. Appendix II illustrates the assessment of the sources on their quality through an AAOCC-criteria. Moreover, the theoretical framework formed the basis for the operationalisation of the two core concepts. All the relevant information on the theoretical framework is used as input to create two reliable and useful operationalisations, illustrated in Appendix III.

### 2.1 Guest experience

Hospitality companies realise that their future growth and existence is depending on the experience of their guests. Nowadays, guests want a proper service, a delicious meal, and an experience which they might not forget (Milman, 2013). This experience is the economic motor for any hospitality organisation. An outstanding management of this guest experience can help to reach a high profitability and create a competitive advantage where companies dream of (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). It is requisite to acquire more in-depth knowledge about what experience and guest experience is.

Csikszentmihalyi (2014) describes an experience as: "When a person is actively engaged in some form of clearly specified interaction with the environment. The interaction may be primarily physical, emotional, or intellectual, but in each case the person can use some skills in acting on a limited area in his or her environment". An experience lets people forget time, and this lets them focus more on the consumption process (Chen & Chen, 2010). Therefore, the guest experience is something that is not limited by what a hospitality company offers. Instead, the hotel guest and the service provider co-create the overlapping experience (Chathoth, Altinay, Harrington, Okumus, & Chan, 2013). A persons' hospitable experience includes all encounters throughout a stay. Moreover, the guest his experience with the hospitality brand is a result of the constant interaction between an individual and the psychical and social environment (Knutson, Beck, Seunghyun, & Cha, 2011). These findings overlap partly with the literature of Laming and Mason (2014): "The physical and emotional experiences occurring through the interactions with the product and/or service offering of a brand from point of first direct, conscious contact, through the total journey to the post-consumption stage".

It is essential to understand the components that influence the guest experience. Knutson, Beck, Seunghyun, and Cha (2011) elaborate on the four dimensions of a guest experience; incentive, environment, accessibility, and driving benefit. Another researcher elaborates the environment dimension as:

It has been conceptualised that the hotel product consists of several levels. That is, the core product, i.e., the hotel room, deals exactly with what the customer receives from the purchase. Besides, the hotel product also includes facilitating, supporting, and augmenting elements which concern with, for example, how the customer receives from the purchase, the interactions with service providers and other customers, as well as necessary conditions (e.g., the front desk) which provides access to the core product and numerous value-added products and services. (Ko, 2018)

Moreover, aspects which influence guest experience are the room, the overall service, the image of the hotel, the provided food & beverage, and the price-value ratio. Furthermore, Ko (2018) explains that the measurements to provide a secure environment also dominate the guest experience at a hospitality company.

Literature reveals that non-tangible factors such as smell, taste, touch, sight, and sound influence the guest experience (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). Furthermore, other certain factors and aspects heavily influence any choice that a customer makes. These are factors such as a prime location, proper cleanliness, and the presence of modern facilities. Guests value the importance of value for money and a consistent service. These factors also influence the overall experience that a guest has at any hospitality company (Ren, Qiu, Wang, & Lin, 2016). In literature, not only findings are written about the tangible or non-tangible factors of the guest experience, but psychological factors such as hedonics, peace of mind, involvement, and recognition. Chen and Chen (2010) clarify the first two terms with the following words: "Hedonics is associated with the affective responses such as excitement, enjoyment, and memorability. Peace of Mind is concerned about the need for both physical and psychological safety and comfort". Hence, involvement is all about the guest's desire to have a particular amount of control in the consumer process. Contemporary, customers want to have influence and a choice in the offered service. Moreover, people have a particular craving to be educated and informed about the product or service. This involvement leads to a cooperation between the guest and a hotel. Chen and Chen (2010) mention the last psychological factor as well: "Recognition is linked to feeling important and confident while consumers themselves are being taken seriously".

Furthermore, social interaction impacts the experience that any customer has. These are factors that are influenced by the human aspect of the service that a hotel provides. Moreover, the literature highlights the interaction between the guests and the staff, such as the professionalism of the staff or the attitude of the staff. This professionalism describes a consistent service and the availability of product knowledge. Next to this, the attitude of the staff connects to the professionalism dimension. However, this aspect focusses more on the appearance of the staff in terms of hygiene, friendliness, and approachability (Gurel & Walls, 2016). Ren, Qiu, Wang and Lin (2016) describe the same since they focus on the amount of empathy that the staff provides towards the guest. Moreover, each guest values personal and individual attention instead of mass attention. Next to this, the modern society wants to receive a quick service and fast access to any product. A convenient service through technological advancements influences the experience of a customer. Furthermore, guests require a personalised service adapted to their demands and needs (Priporas, Stylos, & Fotiadis, 2017).

This literature review provided several definitions, insights, and aspects of the guest experience. The used definition for this research is: "Guest experience is the constant interaction between a person and the physical and social environment created by a company, which results in an unforgettable experience".

## 2.2 Co-living

Co-living is one of the trends of this decade, especially in urbanised areas. Tummers (2015) elaborates this as: "The 'co' corresponds to collaborative, communal and collective, which indicates the involvement of a wide variety of practices and groups". Quinio and Burgess (2019) define co-living as: "An alternative housing model which seeks to promote social contact through the living environment". Such alternative housing models apply in different forms, such as a group of people buys or develops an existing building together. Those residents are then involved in the management, development, and planning of this co-housing space (Shafique, 2018). People benefit in their daily life from the formation of a community since they create a social network. This especially would help people that have a sense of loneliness, such as newcomers to an urban region or older people. Co-housing is a solution to this, according to Scanlon and Arrigoitia (2015): "Co-housing is a way of combating the alienation and

isolation many experience today, recreating the neighbourly support of a village or city quarter in the past". Furthermore, co-housing is explained as a modern urban village, which is also described by Arrigoitia (2015): "A place where a robust ecosystem of support gives a place for everyone and allows for a mix of necessary skills that in turn shapes the way the community operates". Co-living residents often lack a certain amount of privacy and personal space. Nevertheless, residents of co-living accommodations agree mutually that communal areas and social benefits compensate for this lack of privacy. Ataman and Gursel Dino (2019) provide a further explanation about the dimensions of co-living: "A form of collective housing with four main characteristics, which are having social contact, extensive common facilities, resident involvement, and collaborative living practices". Another researcher presents a different definition focussing on co-living development:

"A modern form of housing where residents share living space and a set of interests, values, and/or intentions. It is a new take on an old idea, imagined by a millennial generation that values things like openness and collaboration, social networking, and the sharing economy. Fundamentally, co-living is a cultural distinction, as it can encompass many structural forms, including rental and ownership, urban and rural" (Pepper; Manji, as cited by OpenDoor, 2019).

Co-living communities include aspects from the sharing economy, such as sharing items. In contemporary co-living spaces, somewhat all various facilities are shared. These are standard facilities such as the kitchen, living room, bathroom, or even sleeping rooms. Furthermore, residents share the items, such as washing machines, vehicles, electronic devices, or kitchen utensils. Sharing these items brings various advantages, such as the usage of resources (Vestbro & Horelli, 2012). Ataman and Gursel Dino (2019) describe this sharing process as: "It reduces the amount of total living area, energy use, and waste production per person through the sharing of resources, along with the ecological costs and environmental damage caused by individualism, social stratification, and wasteful consumer habits". Moreover, it reduces the living costs per housemate since services and rent are equally shared. Next to this, the sharing aspect evolves into sharing daily responsibilities such as cooking, washing, ironing, or vacuum cleaning (Vestbro & Horelli, 2012). Co-living spaces are a combination of the need for a community, personal freedom, and the right of the residents. These three factors should be balanced; otherwise a co-living community is not in harmony.

Literature defines co-living as living together with other people, which also results in a community with specific standard regulations which should be followed by all housemates. Often these rules are set via monthly or weekly meetings, where residents discuss other details as well. During such meetings, community members can create an agenda with certain items or points that they want to discuss. Making agreements differ from community to community. Some communities only accept a mutual agreement of their members, but other communities see a majority vote as decisive (Ataman & Gursel Dino, 2019). Co-living spaces can further be identified by flexibility since a room can be rented for a year, a month, or even for one day. Nevertheless, co-living spaces commonly maintain three to nine months of lease contracts. Therefore, these lease terms are far shorter compared to traditional single house owners, which are standard renting contracts for a more extended period (O'Connor, 2019).

Based on the literature, the ideal definition of co-living for this research is the following: "Co-living is a modern form of an urban village, where people with similar interests or life philosophy live together in a shared space. They form together a community where decisions are made based on mutual agreement, which results in a set of rules which work for all members. Community members experience that living together offers them social benefits such as combating isolation and alienation".

The literature review reveals that some aspects of the core concepts correlate. Chen and Chen (2010) express that guest wants to feel important, recognised and involved by the company. The same is revealed by Tummers (2015), who indicates that co-living focuses primarily on the involvement of a variety of groups. Therefore, involvement would result in acknowledging the importance of the guest.

## 3 The Research

This chapter discusses the method of working regarding the field research. The chosen strategies in the field research should make sure that all main research questions and sub-questions are answered, which results in an input for the advice part of the thesis. In this paragraph, the research population will be discussed, as well as the research strategy.

### 3.1 Research strategy

A research plan should be based on methodology science, which includes the usage of two research types: applied research and fundamental research. This field research essences the usage of applied research since this approach focuses on solving practical problems with a theoretical approach. Based on the management problem, this research should have an overall practical application. Especially the research questions are demonstrating that this research is having a secure social and practical relevance. Therefore, an applied research approach is the ideal approach for the field research (Verhoeven, 2015, p. 29).

Verhoeven (2015, p. 30) describes this detailed research plan as: "There are two distinct types of research, quantitative research and qualitative research". For the field research, there is not a need to determine correlations between co-living aspects or any other details. Therefore, quantitative research might be in this context superficial, which results in a choice for a mixed research approach. Furthermore, the universal language will illustrate the gathered qualitative data. This standard language information is giving far more insight into the existing issues relating to the current co-living concept of TSH Amsterdam City. In this research, it is essential to understand the underlying reasons for the opinions of the research subjects, which are the students living at TSH Amsterdam City) (Verhoeven, 2015, p. 31). A combination of qualitative research methods and quantitative research methods is used for the field research, also known as triangulation. The mixed research methods may supplement one another, which may result in a profound elaboration of the research questions (Verhoeven, 2015, P. 32).

As explained earlier in this chapter, the field research focuses on obtaining more in-depth insights into the opinions of the students living at TSH Amsterdam City. Furthermore, more understanding needs to be gained to come to certain conclusions. Therefore, an inductive research approach will be conducted. In the work of Verhoeven (2015, p. 32) this is further explained as: "Researchers who use inductive methods often (but not always) use qualitative research in which they work from the specific (information collected) to the general (theory to be developed)". In the research process, the researcher will gather information and will draw conclusions based on it. The research process continues to establish additional required information (Wilson, 2014, p. 12). In research, there are schools of thought, which underline the information in which the researcher is interested. This research has an interpretative school of thought, which focuses on the opinions of people about certain circumstances and situations. Furthermore, this school of thought correlates to qualitative research with an inductive approach.

The chosen qualitative data collection methods are part of the case study strategy, which is part of qualitative research. A case study design focuses on the research of a particular aspect within a population, which is known as a phenomenon. Simons (2012) describes a case study as: "Case study is an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a project, policy, institution, program or system in a 'real-life' context". A case study has elements from several qualitative data collection methods. For the qualitative part of the field research, a combination of expert interviews and in-depth interviews is chosen. These chosen data collection methods will be further highlighted in paragraph 3.2. This research will be a single case study since there is only one unit of analysis. Furthermore, this research is holistic. Verhoeven (2015, p. 135) describes a holistic

research as: "The research elements are studied on their own turf, in their normal surroundings". This research is as a holistic research since there is only one unit of analysis. Moreover, an embedded approach compares multiple units with each other, which will be the students living at TSH Amsterdam City. The research process will occur in their natural surroundings. Therefore, a holistic approach is the ideal fit (Yin, 2009, p. 49). Next to this, the field research has elements of quantitative research. As a quantitative data collection method, a questionnaire will be used which will collect various numerical information. Therefore, survey research will be applied as part of the research strategy (Verhoeven, 2015, p. 112).

### 3.2 Data collection methods

Underneath the various data collection methods are described per chosen data collection method. For this field research, three data collection methods are chosen: questionnaire, expert interview, and in-depth interview.

#### 3.2.1 Data collection method: Questionnaire

As a first step in the data collection method procedure, a questionnaire will determine the opinions of the students about various subjects related to the guest experience and co-living. These subjects will be chosen based on the operationalisation of the two core concepts. An online questionnaire will enquire the opinion of the students. This questionnaire type surveys a large group of people at the same time, also described as cross-sectional. According to Verhoeven (2015, p. 112), this means: "The data is collected at one point in time". For the online survey, an online program will be used, which is named Qualtrics. This is an online survey program that can be used by Saxion students for questionnaires. The distribution of this questionnaire will be done through social media since the contact details of the students are not available. Therefore, the selected participants will receive a message with a link to the questionnaire in Qualtrics (Verhoeven, 2015, p. 114).

In this questionnaire, various subjects are provided based on the operationalisation of the core concepts. The students need to classify the importance of these subjects on a Likert scale from 1 to 5. The results of this questionnaire determine which subjects are essential or not essential for the students living at TSH Amsterdam City. Based on the information of the questionnaire, a not essential subject could be identified, such as the comfort of the students. Therefore, this subject does not have that much influence on the guest experience of the students. The results from this research part will answer the first research question, which is focusing on the current situation.

#### 3.2.3 Data collection method: In-depth interview and Expert interview

The questionnaire gained new insights regarding co-living, which are going to be discussed during interviews with students. For these interviews, only subjects will be used, which are identified as essential in the questionnaire. The purpose of these interviews is to gain more profound insights on the results of the questionnaire. Both types of interviews will be conducted with the help of an interview guide. The input for the expert interview guide will be based on the output of the questionnaires and the interviews with the students. Moreover, the interview guide ensures that both data collection methods will result in a maximal contribution of the respondents. Furthermore, this interview guide will ensure that all relevant information will be discussed with the expert and the students. The interview guide is a ride wire for the interview, with a set of established subjects (Verhoeven, 2015, p. 177). The interview method will be conducted in a semi-structured way, which is a combination of a structured interview and an unstructured interview. For this type of research, it is helpful to have an interview guide with standardised subjects. Nevertheless, the semi-structured way also ensures that there is enough space to include any flexible changes during the interview. These could be changes or new questions based on information which is gathered via the response of the interviewee (Wilson, 2014). During the expert interview, a participant may have a particular expertise

for one specific subject. When this is the case, then there will be additional attention provided to this subject. This can happen as well during the in-depth interviews with the students. All interviews will be conducted with the help of Skype since this is the ideal way of interviewing. Moreover, the interviews will be recorded, and the recorded material will be analysed according to a set of rules. The analysed material will help the researcher to answer the research questions.

### 3.3 Sampling of the research population

A part of the data collection is sampling, which results in defining the group of people who will participate in the field research. As explained in the introduction chapter, the first part of the research will focus on the student population living at TSH Amsterdam City. Sampling techniques are used based on appropriate literature to obtain a better understanding of the target population. For research purposes, there are two sampling methods available: the probability sampling and non-random-based sampling. The following paragraphs discuss the selected sampling methods for the field research.

#### 3.3.1 Sampling of the research population: Questionnaire

For this data collection method, a non-random based sampling method is used. Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2016) describe this as: "The samples are gathered in a process that does not give all the participants or unites in the population equal chances of being included". This population are all the people where the researcher will make pronouncements about in this research (Verhoeven, 2015, p. 179). The population for this thesis research is diverse. Therefore, a criterion is established to ensure a reliable research process. This criterion is the following: all students who are born after 1995. This specific group of students belongs to the demographic group Generation Z. The students who are living at TSH Amsterdam City and have a specific set of criteria will be chosen as the population. This part of the student population is chosen since it is essential to understand how they perceive the guest experience, which is offered now by TSH. Next to this, the population will indicate which aspects of the current co-living concept are not working. Moreover, this type of non-random based sampling is described as purposive sampling. Verhoeven (2015, p. 186) explains this as: "Purposive sampling is used to select samples on the basis of given characteristics".

Luckily, there is a sample size available for this research. The researcher can use the data about the students, which is available via the internal property management system of TSH. Based on this data, it is estimated that 286 students are living currently at TSH Amsterdam City. Contemporary, a large group of the students living in the hotel belongs to the demographic group Generation Z. The population confirms this fact since 259 students belong to this demographic group. To increase the reliability of this research, the group of respondents should be as large as possible. The sample size is calculated with the help of an online sample size calculator to make the questionnaire reliable. The sample size is the number of minimum responses that the questionnaire should receive to make it reliable for the whole population (Zohrabi, 2013). Moreover, the confidence level influences the sample size as well. Verhoeven (2015, p. 181) clarifies this as: "Indicating the ranges within the population that a given characteristic occurs". Another factor which influences the sample size is the margin of error. These are the errors which can occur during the whole process (Verhoeven, 2015, p. 189). With the help of this calculator, the following details are entered: population size is 259, the confidence level is 95 %, and the margin of error is 5 %. For the questionnaire, 155 respondents are needed.

#### 3.3.2 Sampling of the research population: In-depth interview

For this data collection method, the researcher made use of non-random based sampling. A purposive sampling method is applied, which results in a selection of respondents selected based on established characteristics. In this part of the research, it will be essential that the sample is an accurate representation of the population. Furthermore, it is reliable to include as many characteristics of the population as possible. This research project has a diverse population in terms of nationality and

culture, which influences the opinions of a person. The researcher indicated particular selection criterium related to nationality and age. In the research, all nationalities and age groups should be represented equally in the interviews. Appendix IV reveals a calculation of these characteristics, calculated per nationality, gender, and age as a percentage. Furthermore, the size of the drawn sample is large enough to ensure that all chosen characteristics are represented equally in the group.

Based on the calculations, the composition should have the following characteristics to reflect the population.

- The interviews should have an equal division of male and female participants. This results in three male and three female participants.
- Within these six participants, one participant needs to be from the age group 22 & 23, three participants from the age group 20 & 21 and two participants from the age group 18 & 19.
- Moreover, within these eight participants there need to be three people from Europe, two from North America and one from Asia.

### 3.3.3 Sampling of the research population: Expert interview

For the next step of the research process, interviews will be conducted with experts. Again, a non-random based sampling with a purposive sampling method is used. For this specific qualitative data collection method, an expert sampling is used. Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2016) clarify the advantage of this sampling method as: "Expert sampling is a positive tool to use when investigating new areas of research". This sampling method is helpful since the purpose of the expert interview is to gather new insights about best practice co-living concepts. To ensure the quality of the sample, the researcher has indicated a set of criteria for the sample.

Therefore, the following characteristics are established to ensure that the samples can be selected:

- The expert needs to be a founder, co-founder, general manager, or management team member at the best practice co-living company. This ensures that the person knows the company ideally. Moreover, the expert can elaborate the particular strategical choices that the company has made.
- The expert needs to have at least five years of work experience in his position at a co-living company which ensures that the person has enough knowledge about his field of expertise.
- The selected co-living company needs to have won at least one award related to hotel innovation, hotel concept, co-living development, or interior design.

It is estimated that the researcher will conduct expert interviews until the saturation point is reached to ensure the reliability of this research (Verhoeven, 2015, p. 224). Nevertheless, an estimated amount of a minimum of three interviews needs to be conducted by the researcher.

## 3.4 Data analysis

This paragraph relates to the data analysis. For the two types of qualitative data collection methods, the same data analysation process is used. The data analysis of the quantitative data collection method is explained below.

### 3.4.1 Data analysis: Questionnaire

The purpose of the questionnaire is to discover which aspects of the core concepts are essential for the population. Therefore, the data analysing part of the questionnaire can be completed quickly. The quantitative data will be illustrated effectively in the survey program Qualtrics. In research terminology, this is also known as descriptive statistics. Only the basic features of the data are described, which often results in summaries about the data (Trochim, 2020). The results of the research are going to be measured by using measurement levels of variables. For this quantitative part of the research, the

variables have an interval measurement level. Initially, the variables would be at ordinal level, but with the help of the Likert scale an interval measurement level is provided. The purpose of the research is to assess the opinions of the students about the sub-core concepts. It will be assessed with the help of an importance scale, varying from 1 to 7 (Verhoeven, 2015, p. 243). With the help of the score, the researcher can also calculate the mean of each sub-core concept by dividing it through the total scores (Verhoeven, 2015, p. 258). This choice can also be described as the mode (Verhoeven, 2015, p. 256). For the analysis of the results, the standard deviation will be used as well. This measurement tool indicated the division of the scores surrounding the mean. For the research, it is estimated that a subject is essential when it has a minimum average score of 4.9. An essential subject will be used as input for the interview guide for the expert interviews.

### 3.4.2 Data analysis: Expert interview and in-depth interview

The qualitative data must be analysed via coding. According to Creswell (2018), coding can be described as: "Coding is the process of analysing qualitative text data by taking them apart to see what they yield before putting the data back together in a meaningful way". This might provide a proper indication of the answers and opinions of the individual participants of the two data collection methods. Therefore, the conversations need to be first transcribed. Furthermore, the lines of text need to be numbered. The transcription should be an ideal replication of the voice recording, without any spelling or error mistakes. In the transcribed text, an entry needs to be placed for any pauses, background noise, laughter et cetera (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

After the transcription of the recorded interviews, the actual data analysis occurs. The first step is the open coding process of the transcript. The various transcripts are operationalised in several aspects. These operationalised aspects are matched or linked to one of the sub-core concepts. The next step is to summarise the gathered data into a summary per aspect. Hereafter comes the axial coding process, where the codes in different categories are set. This gathered bunch of codes are then presented via code trees. The selective coding process should be started by structuring correlations between the concepts. It is prerequisite to determine these correlations and to visualise them in a diagram or matrix. It is required to describe and elaborate on the whole coding process to increase the validity of the research. For the researcher, it is essential to keep memos throughout the whole coding process. Afterwards, these memos can be used to elaborate on the outcomes of the research. Based on the memos, the coding process can be reconstructed (Verhoeven, 2015, p. 296).

## 3.5 The accomplishment of the field research

As explained in paragraph 3.2, the researcher decided first to conduct a questionnaire. An elaboration of the process from the operationalisation of the core concept to the questionnaire can be found back in Appendix V. Furthermore, the researcher made the questionnaire with the help of Qualtrics. Due to unforeseen circumstance, the researcher was not allowed to use the internal email list of TSH. Therefore, the questionnaire was distributed to the students with the help of social media. Distributing the questionnaire to the respondents with the help of social media was the ideal strategy since it brought in nearly 85 % of the respondents. Despite the current COVID-19 situation, an amount of 144 students filled in the questionnaire. This is underneath the minimum needed respondents. Nevertheless, this is still an impressive amount in these uncertain times. In Appendix VII, the questionnaire can be found. The researcher tried to replicate the Qualtrics questionnaire as accurately as possible. Alongside the questionnaire, the respondent got a letter with an explanation about the research. This letter is illustrated in Appendix VI. Moreover, the results of this questionnaire can be found back in Appendix VIII. Based on the results of the questionnaire, the ideal subjects were indicated. These subjects were used to create an interview guide for the interviews with the students. In Appendix VIII, the most important subjects are marked to reasoning the choices for the interview guide topics. As discussed in paragraph 3.4, all subjects with an average score of 4.9 or higher would

be used for the interview guide for the students. This interview guide can be found in Appendix IX. Unfortunately, due to the current situation with COVID-19, it was not possible to conduct a focus group with students. Therefore, in-depth interviews with students were initiated until saturation. After five students, this saturation point was reached. Furthermore, in the selection process of the students, the sampling criteria in paragraph 3.3 were used. Nevertheless, there was not a possibility to find participants from North America. Moreover, all interviews with the students are conducted between the 19<sup>th</sup> of April 2020 and the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 2020 with the help of skype. Again, the researcher was not able to conduct interviews face-to-face due to the current situation with COVID-19.

In the table underneath the students can be found that have been interviewed. All interviewees wished to remain in anonymity. Throughout the whole result chapter, a reference is made to their description, such as student 1.

*Table 3.1  
Information about in-depth interviews participants*

Student	Characteristics	Interview date
Student 1	21, Male, Europe	19-04-2020, 12:00 (CEST)
Student 2	19, Female, Europe	19-04-2020, 16:00 (CEST)
Student 3	23, Male, Asia	20-04-2020, 14:00 (CEST)
Student 4	21, Female, Europe	21-04-2020, 10:00 (CEST)
Student 5	21, Male, Asia	23-04-2020, 17:00 (CEST)

These interviews were recorded and transcribed with the help of Otter.ai, which is an online transcribing software. The researcher tried to spread the interviews over a week. Therefore, there was enough time to transcribe and code the interviews the same day. During the last interviews with both interviewee groups, a saturation point was reached. The researcher indicated that during these last interviews, no useful new information was provided. The coding process of the interviews enhanced this since no new codes were provided. Furthermore, the interview guides for the expert interviews were created based on the results of the interviews with the students. The operationalisation of the core concept has been used, as well. This interview guide is illustrated in Appendix X. Again, the interviews were spread over a week to ensure enough time for the coding process.

All experts that have been approached for the interviews are part of the management team of their co-living company or student housing company. In paragraph 3.3, sample characteristics were set to ensure the quality of the interviews. These choices made sure that the expert could elaborate confident strategical choices that the company made relating to their co-living concept. For the interviews, also three student housing managers have been spoken. The researcher made this decision since the concepts of co-living and student housing are similar to one another. People refer to co-living also as a university dorm for grown-up persons (Koran, 2020). Furthermore, the sample characteristics states that the experts need to have at least 5-year work-experience in their job position or another relevant job position. Four experts match this characteristic completely, and two experts have approximately three years of work experience in the co-living industry, student housing industry or other relevant sectors. Nevertheless, the selection of the experts ensures that the persons have enough experience in their field of expertise. The last set criterion is also matched by all co-living or student housing companies. All selected companies have won at least one award related to hotel innovation, hotel concept, co-living development, or interior design.

*Table 3.2*  
*Information about expert interview participants*

Student	Position	Interview date
Expert 1	<p>Investor Relations manager at a Co-living company in China *</p> <p>The expert is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Concept development</li> <li>- Resident insights program</li> </ul> <p>*The expert requested to remain anonymous. Therefore, the company and expert are described as vague as possible.</p>	27-04-2020, 12:00 (CEST)
Expert 2	<p>Concept &amp; Brand Director at Zoku Amsterdam, a co-living company in The Netherlands.</p> <p>The expert is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guest experience &amp; Community management</li> <li>- Design &amp; Concept development</li> </ul>	28-04-2020, 12:00 (CEST)
Expert 3	<p>CEO at Mokrin House, a co-living company in Serbia.</p> <p>The expert is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Daily operation of the company and managing a team of 20 employees.</li> <li>- Bringing value to the co-living company on a macro and micro level.</li> </ul>	29-04-2020, 15:00 (CEST)
Expert 4	<p>Guest experience Manager at WeLive, a co-living company settled in Washington &amp; New York, USA.</p> <p>The expert is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Optimising member experience.</li> <li>- Establishing partnerships with the local community.</li> </ul>	29-04-2020, 18:00 (CEST)
Expert 5	<p>Student Housing Manager at Hotel Casa 400 Amsterdam, a student housing company in The Netherlands.</p> <p>The expert is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Managing of the daily operations of the student housing.</li> <li>- Controlling all financial operations of the company.</li> </ul>	30-04-2020, 12:00 (CEST)
Expert 6	<p>Sales executive at Nido Groningen, a student housing company in The Netherlands.</p> <p>The expert is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coordinating overall sales task at Nido Groningen</li> </ul>	01-05-2020, 11:00 (CEST)

During the coding process, memos were written focussed on questions or subjects for further interviews. Moreover, these memos helped to determine patterns between codes and established a layout of the results. Appendix XIV illustrates a selection of these memos, which are used to establish the results section. The researcher decided to hand in the transcripts of the interview in a separate document due to the large amount of text. In Appendix XI, an example of one of the transcripts can be found. In this Appendix, it is revealed how the recorded interviews were transcribed. The coding process of each interview has been done with Atlas.ti. In Atlas.ti, the open codes contained complete sentences, short phrasings or words that described an aspect. The transcript of the interview in Appendix XII contains an example of this coding process. Furthermore, in Appendix XII, a coding table can be found. This table illustrates the axial codes, which consist of a set of open codes. Per open code, a line number is revealed which belongs to an interviewee. Therefore, the reader can determine per open code the origin in the transcripts of the interviews. Appendix XIII illustrates code trees that reveal similarities between codes which categorise the results of the interviews. The discussion reveals any changes made in the research process concerning the validity and reliability of the research. This chapter discusses the consequences of these changes as well.

## 4 Research results

This chapter presents the results of the interviews conducted with students and best-practice experts working at co-living companies and student housing companies. These results are illustrated per sub-core concept and include only the results which are relevant for the advice. The axial codes are based on the operationalisation of the core-concept, which gives a good overview of similarities between the literature review and the field research. The axial codes are revealed per core concept. Furthermore, Appendix XV reveals the results of the field research which are not used for the advice or other relevant results. Appendix XIV illustrates a selection of memos used during the coding process of the qualitative data. These memos formed a basis for this result chapter as well.

### 4.1 Co-living – Community

This paragraph presents the results relating to 'community', which is a sub-core concept of the core concept co-living.

#### Combating isolation

##### Do not pressure people to participate & Guests that do not want to be involved in the community life, People that are dissocialising

A general mentioning was that some students tend to stay in their room and did not want to be involved in the community life. The interviewees mentioned that they did not even know the name of a socially isolated floormate. Student 5 explained that he tried to make them part of the community by inviting them to a communal diner in the kitchen. However, some floormates are willingly dissocialising, and the habits of these persons cannot be changed. It is interesting to mention that these dissocialised floormates also do not put any effort to be part of the community. One male student explained that at the beginning of the semester, he had several conversations with new students on his floor. However, these conversations are not actual conversations in his opinion. It was more an interview, where he was asking questions and the students were answering. Therefore, he was not motivated to pursue it anymore. This lack of interest from the dissocialised student creates a further vicious circle of desocialisation. One student explained that it is difficult in her opinion to make guests or students feel at home. She elaborated this by mentioning: "If you are not feeling homely, then it is not that easy to kind of make you feel homely" (Student 3, personal communication, 2020).

##### Introvert people

Furthermore, all students agreed upon the fact that a students' privacy should be respected, especially when they do not want to attend any communal activities. A student mentioned that: "If staying in their room just satisfies them and makes them happy or comfortable" (Student 3, personal communication, 2020). All experts sympathise the same thoughts. They acknowledge that they do not like to force any guest to participate more than they want to. Expert 3 mentioned that this also leads to a comfortable living environment for her co-living members since they should feel free to be themselves. The same expert also explained that some people do not require community, especially the more introvert people. One male student acknowledges this by mentioning that the more introvert people tend to stay in their room and are less involved in community formation.

##### Ways to prevent social isolation

An interesting way to prevent this type of social isolation is once again the involvement of staff. Student 1 mentioned that when students see that staff is involved with a dissocialised student, other students might get easier together with this person. Moreover, one student hoped that TSH would enquire more about the wellbeing of the students that are frequently staying in their room. Student 3 mentioned that TSH could maybe send a gift on a weekly or monthly base to students who are

dissocialising. This would result in students who feel acknowledged, involved and more at home. The same student expressed his thoughts: "Because if anything happened to anybody, nobody would know actually" (Student 3, personal communication, 2020). One of the co-living experts shared these thoughts. Her company implemented a new strategy, during the COVID-19 crisis, to prevent social isolation of her extended-stay guests. On a daily base, the staff is calling a fixed number of in-house guests, to enquire about them. This is related to the personalisation of the guests and making them aware that they are a part of the co-living community. Expert 5 mentioned that they prevent social isolation of students by installing buddy students. These are students who already live for a more extended period at the accommodation and know their way around. These buddy students are involved in the student community and have a secure connection to the student housing company. These buddy students are motivated to help their fellow floormates integrate into the community. A specific focus is set on the students, who are not involved by themselves.

### **Shared similar interest**

#### **Community formation through linking people together**

One student housing expert argued that in the creation of a connection between co-living members, the missing link is often the influence of a staff member. This was acknowledged as well by two co-living experts; their company trains the staff to link people together. The experts explain that their customer service team tries to link tenants together when they notice that people have similar interests or hobbies. In the experts' opinion, the staff is the connective tissue that facilitates community.

#### **Stereotyping nationalities & Cultural differences**

Two students expressed that currently, too many people of the same nationality are put together on the same floor. One of the students think that this is currently done by TSH staff since the staff thinks that students with similar nationality are like one another. The male student expresses this as follows: "So where people from the same community are thought that they are similar" (Student 5, personal communication, 2020). Student 3 acknowledges that this is wrong since he mentioned that this might stereotype people. One male student expressed that, at the beginning of the semester, all the students should allocate at random over the hotel. Furthermore, TSH should avoid putting students with similar ethnicity or nationality together on one floor. The same student mentioned the following: "Like for the first few years, I hardly met any Turkish people and all of a sudden I have two very close friends from Turkey. So this happens only when you put different people from different countries together" (Student 5, personal communication, 2020). Another female student acknowledges this by expressing that students want to have an international experience and want to meet interesting people. Expert 6 mentions that some people struggle with community formation and tend to stick to their own cultures. Putting the same nationalities on one floor might keep people in their comfort zone and may result in small ethnic communities. One student explains the following about this: "I am telling you like if you put all Germans together on the same floor, all Indians together on the same floor and all Chinese people on the same floor. Then there will be no interaction between the floormates. Then one floor will only cook Asian food, one floor will only cook curry and other will only cook schnitzels. Like that is all going to happen" (Student 5, personal communication, 2020).

#### **Allocating students over rooms, Survey to determine a person his characteristics & Finding like-minded people**

One male student explains that he had a prime connection with his floormates since they matched well with each other. This was acknowledged by two students, who thought that it would help to allocate people over the floors based on similar interest. For student 3, it would make sense to allocate the students based on standards such as hygiene standards or if the student cares about sharing his belongings. One male student explained that it would be wise to conduct a survey to determine the

characteristics of people. Before the students check-in, they have to fill in their hobbies or interest in an online document. TSH staff will allocate the students based on similar survey results. In the students' opinion, this may result in better connections between people on each floor since they live together with people that have a similar field of interest.

One student, who already lived at several TSH locations, mentioned: "Of course, TSH is open to everybody. But maybe TSH also needs to do something about people that are not really contributing or adapting to the community" (Student 2, personal communication, 2020). Expert 5 explained that his company has recently made some changes when students are enrolling on the waiting list. To come on this waiting list, the students have to answer some questions regarding living in a community. It is a set of questions, which the students should answer for themselves. If the students answer all these questions with a yes, then living at a student housing accommodation with shared facilities is something which fits the person. If the answers appear to be no, then living in a community might not be the ideal option for the person. However, the expert explains that the student still can enrol on the waiting list. Nevertheless, this tool deter students who do not want to be involved in community formation.

### **Open attitude**

The experts agreed on that the characteristics of their members are essential for them. A student housing expert describes that his company is a great fit for students who have the characteristics social, healthy, and an open attitude. Being receptive to other people was mentioned, as well as having a genuine personality. The same expert thinks that her co-living company is open for all persons. However, not all personality or characteristic are the ideal candidates for community living. At her co-living company, they are looking for people who are into being productive and contributing to the community. Above all, people who have an explorative attitude and have a desire for a sense of community. This community feeling should also reflect in that members are contributing to the formation of a sense of community through being involved in group activities. She expresses that they had people from all over the world, with a variety of cultures. Therefore, guests must be open to other cultures. Two students expressed that the people who spent more time socialising in the communal areas are participating more in the events. These people were open-minded since they are willing to connect with people.

### **Social networking**

#### **Activities that help to form a community**

Offering free food or drinks at an event is seen by the students as a pull factor. For them, it is attracting when they receive something for free in return for joining an event. One of the female students, who was part of the event committee, mentioned that events excluding F&B attracted fewer people. Whereas the same event would attract enough turn-ups when there was an incentive through free F&B. A co-living expert endorses this since she organises a weekly community diner which is for free for all her extended-stay guests. The same experts also indicated that both factors are combined, offering food for free and the daily occurrence of an event. Various inhouse groups know that this is happening and are drawn to the same space during this specific time frame to benefit from it.

Moreover, the cultural diversity of the students creates some gaps in the community formation. Within TSH, there are groups of students with similar cultures. A large group which creates these cultural gaps are the exchange students who are staying on the same floor and not interfere that much with other students. However, activities tend to be a factor which bridges the gap. Students describe this as: "So this year the one thing that really like brought the exchange students close to us was the dinner that we had at Commons. Like with some students, we had tacos night" (Student 5, personal

communication, 2020). Two experts confirmed this fact. In their opinion, there are two findings which works ideal for connecting people, which are food and music. This connects people from all cultures, languages, and backgrounds. One of the co-living experts, expert 2, explained that they created community dinners for their co-living members on a weekly base. She elaborates this as follows: "Because we have noticed if you have a certain rhythm in your events, people will really get more familiar with them and join more easily" (Expert 2, personal communication, 2020).

#### Integration into an international community

One student housing expert mentioned that they organised an event where students had to bring a self-made dish from his country of origin. During the event, the students could taste each others dish. Such events increase the sense of community of the students, but also the cultural awareness. The same expert mentioned the importance of the creation of cultural awareness within the student population. He mentioned the following: "I do not think we are really into integrating them into Dutch culture as there is a lot of cultures living in our community. So, it is more, making them aware of multiple cultures instead of just the Dutch one" (Expert 6, personal communication, 2020). Expert 4 approved this by naming that her company tries to create a connection across her tenants countries and cultures. This is expressed by student 3 as well, who would love to represent his country by cooking a few dishes for his fellow students or floormates. By doing this, he mentioned that he felt far more involved.

#### Formation of a community on a floor & Ways to form a community

All students agreed that the frequency of communal activities is crucial for community forming, such as dinners. A student elaborates this: "Like members of that floor, then they get more interaction, and people get to know each other more" (Student 5, personal communication, 2020). During informal activities, students would gain a sense of belonging to their floormates. One male student expresses that this sense of belonging is something that international students' miss when they go to another country. These students want to belong to a community of like-minded people. One of the female students expressed her thoughts about the importance of a welcome meeting at the beginning of the semester, when all students are new on a specific floor. She mentioned that her floor did not have such a meeting, which negatively influences the formation of a sense of community. Another student corroborated this: "So we do not really know each other, so we just walked into the kitchen, and we walked out. But if we knew each other, we would definitely hang out" (Student 2, personal communication, 2020). Shafique (2018) acknowledges this sense of belonging in the literature review. When people form a group together, they create a social network from which they benefit in their daily life. The formation of a community or a group is especially helpful for newcomers to an urban region such as students.

Students mentioned that a weekly (informal) meeting would increase the solidarity of the students living on a floor. At the beginning of the semester, the occurrence of these floor activities should be high. Three students expressed that TSH should take the initiative in organising events for a floor community. Otherwise, the students themselves do not have the motivation to organise it. The staff of TSH organises these welcome meetings at the beginning of each semester. Nevertheless, the effort in these informal welcome gatherings vary from floor to floor. Furthermore, one female student intimated that the food drew her to attend this welcome gathering. She thinks that the provided F&B formed a pull factor for her floormates as well. The importance of food as a common-sense was acknowledged by student 1. Cooking together with his floormates on a daily base, created a useful connection.

#### A need in belonging to a community

The importance of the sense of belonging was once again mentioned by expert 2. Guests who often stay at a hotel for a more extended period forego integration after two weeks since they just become

bored from watching movies all night long. These guests start to miss their friends and families. In the expert her opinion, this relates to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. A standard hotel provides the bottom two layers of the pyramid of Maslow. However, it is the three layers on top that an extended-stay guest needs. When people are away from their home for more than a week, they want to acquire esteem, belonging and self-actualisation.

#### Ways to help people integrate easier

A large part of the students living at TSH Amsterdam City are living on their own abroad for the first time. A male student wants that TSH should focus more on enhancing the experience of these students by giving them a warm welcome. An expert acknowledges this with the following words: "As it can be kind of scary for some people who are young to kind of come to the outside since they are not in their home country" (Expert 6, personal communication, 2020). A co-living expert expresses the importance of the personalisation of the guest and asking what they need. When guests are staying for more than two weeks, they receive an invite for a so-called check-in chat with the community manager.

Personalising guests is mentioned as well by Ren, Qiu, Wang and Lin (2016). They argue that guests value personal and individual attention instead of the mass attention that companies utilise nowadays. During the informal chat with the community manager, the extended-stay guest specifies the specific needs. Whereas a guest wants a tennis buddy or a local business network, the community manager & his network link with people in the city. The co-living expert elaborates this by mentioning: "So it is a bit more like you are entering this warm bath, then just like being anonymous hotel number in the hotel" (Expert 2, personal communication, 2020). The literature review acknowledge these thoughts as well. Milman (2013) mentioned that guests nowadays not only want a delicious meal or a proper service. Guests want experiences that they do not forget.

## [\*\*4.2 Co-living – Housing\*\*](#)

This paragraph presents the results relating to the sub-core concept housing. This is a sub-core concept of co-living.

#### Shared facilities & items

##### A smart use of available space, Facilities that bring people together

One co-living expert explains the following: "We look at a space, and we see how can we create a space where it is all about effortless connection" (Expert 2, personal communication, 2020). All tables in the communal areas, as well in the restaurant, are made in a communal style with small toolboxes on them. These toolboxes have writing utensils in them. The design of these communal table allow that two people can sit opposite of each other with their laptop. What she also explained is that often people have the pass the salt moment, which is passing a pen or paper to a person who is sitting as well at the communal table. These crucial moments help to form a connection between strangers. Having no physical barriers in the hotel establishes the same effortless connections between people.

## [\*\*4.3 Guest experience – Staff\*\*](#)

This paragraph reveals the results relating to staff, a sub-core concept of guest experience.

#### Appearance & Professionalism of staff

##### Contribution staff to community, Creating a better connection between guests and staff, Main responsibility of staff members, Interaction guests – staff

All students thought that the staff had an essential function in the formation of the student community. One student explained: "The more the kitchen buddies are involved, I think, the better the kitchens run" (Student 1, personal communication, 2020). Another student expressed that he saw his

kitchen buddy just once for six months. This kitchen buddy should involve all student living on one floor and form a community together. Student 1 mentioned that this kitchen buddy position should be one of the primary responsibilities of a staff member. In his opinion, the staff sees being a kitchen buddy as an inessential task. Two experts explained as well that the staff is often crucial in creating a community, especially when the members or guests do not have that much life experience yet. Two experts noticed that their companies installed a so-called community manager, whose focus is to enquire about the guests or students. One of the experts mentioned about the specific job tasks: "Or that she is passing by the kitchens to see what is going on in the kitchens" (Expert 5, personal communication, 2020). The importance of staff in the creation of a community was mentioned by student 1. In his opinion, TSH staff should enquire more about what is happening in the rooms of the students or the communal kitchen. He expresses that by seeing more staff in the communal living spaces of the students, it establishes a better connection with the co-living company.

#### **4.4 Guest experience – Psychological factors**

This paragraph discusses the results relating to the psychological factors, which is a sub-core concept of guest experience.

##### **Involvement**

###### **A guest-driven community & Involvement of people**

The experts repeatedly mentioned the co-creation of activities. Expert 1 noticed to let the community decide which events they want in the coming period, rather than deciding it for them. Therefore, the co-living community determines the internal culture and felt more connected with the company as such. This involvement leads to a higher turn-up rate, as well. Thoughts about a guest-driven community relates to what is expressed as well in the theoretical framework. It is essential that both the service provider and hotel guests co-create the guest experience (Chathoth, Altinay, Harrington, Okumus, & Chan, 2013). This co-creation was acknowledged by a co-living expert, who mentioned that they moved to a guest-driven community. They took a step back and went from dictating what the events should be to hand over the power to the community. The co-living community can engage whenever they feel the need to organise something. By changing their strategy, events at this co-living company received more showups. What the expert also mentioned about the involvement strategy is that the co-living members felt acknowledged. The co-living community actively felt involved and knew that they could contribute to the co-creation of their co-living space. This co-creation was mentioned as well by one male student. He thought that it would be wise to offer students more responsibility in creating the community by themselves or organising the kitchen. These results are in line with the research of Chen and Chen (2010). In their opinion, guests want to have influence and a particular amount of control in the consumer process.

###### **Letting inhouse guests organise events & Ways to involve people**

Student 2 also expressed that she would feel more involved if she had the chance to organise events by herself at TSH. Currently, the planning of events seems to be limited to TSH staff. The student thinks that currently there is no connection at all with these events since she does not know even if students are involved currently in organising it. One male student thinks that it would help if the students had a say in the organisation of events. In their opinion, this would help students to join activities or events at TSH. One co-living expert mentioned that her company is involving the in-house community much in the planning of events. She underlines this by mentioning: "If we have a cool cryptocurrency guy in-house. We can ask him like, hey, do you feel like doing a little talk on Tuesday night?" (Expert 2, personal communication, 2020). Ataman and Gursel Dino (2019) also express resident involvement in their literature. They argue that collective housing should include the involvement of the tenants and having collaborative living practices.

### Having feedback sessions with students, Making changes based on guests their feedback, Measuring the satisfaction of the guests

Two students thought that by having more informal feedback sessions with just the community of a floor, the community feeling would be increased as well. These informal feedback sessions would create a better overview of what is happening. During such sessions, students could also share ideas to help the student community. Expert 5 explains that they held monthly meetings with students who already live for a more extended period at the student housing accommodation. During these meetings, the students can share ideas or thoughts that they have with the community manager. In the experts his opinion, this is helpful since the students have a different perspective about the student housing space. Again, also co-creation is used to acknowledge the students for taking their time to invest the meeting. Co-creation by actively sharing ideas that the company has or want to implement. This involves students by questioning if these ideas might work or not. Involving people is linked to giving people recognition for their efforts (Chen & Chen, 2010).

### Listening to what guests want

Co-living companies tend to focus on the development of their members. An expert acknowledges this since his company beforehand asks what the guests need. They do this by having an indication what the guests exactly desire during their stay at the co-living space and especially how they can help them to fulfil his expectations. She elaborates this by expressing: "So for us, it is more like, what is it that those people want that we can offer them. Not like, what do we want to offer them" (Expert 3, personal communication, 2020).

### Creating a reward system

A significant mentioning which came back during three interviews was that people nowadays need pull-factors to attend an activity or an event. One student mentioned that he would appreciate when he would receive a reward for his contribution to the community, especially since he is participating more than his roommates. He mentioned that: "So it is kind of unfair for both of us to have the same treatment. To get the same treatment from The Student Hotel" (Student 3, personal communication, 2020). In his opinion, it would make sense to offer students points for communal tasks that they do. This could be tasks such as taking out trash bags or organising an event for the student community. Depending on the amount of time invested in the task, the student will get a reward. At the end of the month, the student receives a voucher for the restaurants. The student motivated that this reward system may establish a fair participation of the students. Furthermore, one of the student housing experts acknowledges such a reward system. He mentioned that his company is thinking about implementing such a motivational tool or a reward system. Moreover, his idea for a reward system should include an active participation of the students in the community. Students would receive points for specific tasks, and with these points they can buy products or services in the hotel. The rewarding of these points combines well with the co-creation of events and activities with students. Furthermore, the rewarding of these points is shared via a monthly newsletter to encourage other students to participate as well.

### Peace of mind

### Feeling at home

Giving more responsibilities to students was also mentioned by one student concerning the usage of the kitchens. In his opinion, an increase in responsibility should lead to a sense of belonging to the community on a floor. The student elaborates these thoughts about responsibilities by mentioning that: "So they are going to be more careful using it and cleaning it (Student 3, personal communication, 2020).

## 5 Conclusion

In this chapter, the conclusion will be discussed based on the results of the literature review and the field research. The conclusion will provide answers to the research questions, as composed in chapter 1.6.

### Main question: What are the positive and negative aspects of the co-living concept of TSH Amsterdam City?

Students mentioned that cultural diversity could create gaps in the community formation, decreasing interactions and creating cultural bubbles. Currently, TSH staff allocates rooms based on nationality, so students of similar nationalities are isolated together on one floor. This method of room assignment promotes essentialism and stereotyping of students based on nationalities and leads to the formation of small ethnic communities. Thus, students do not receive international experience while studying in Amsterdam.

Students also explained that the current planning of events is limited to TSH staff, and students are not welcome to offer input. Thus, students cannot relate to TSH's attempts to develop a community. When students attempt to become involved or share their feedback, TSH staff does nothing with this useful information. Moreover, TSH staff should also enquire more about the wellbeing of a student because students noted that dissocialised students need help to become more involved in the community. Involvement leads to students feeling acknowledged, increasing a sense of belonging. The formation of a community is strengthened by collective activities when members of the community do not know one another. As such, TSH staff organises welcome events at the beginning of each semester. However, students thought that these welcome events should occur throughout the year and should not be neglected by TSH staff. When these meetings do not occur, community formation is negatively affected, which can create tension between students about issues such as cleanliness. Furthermore, students expressed that the shared kitchen was often disgusting due to a variety of students' hygiene standards.

### Sub-question: What are the positive and negative aspects of the co-living concept of TSH Amsterdam City related to the community?

International students expressed that they expected a warmer welcome to enhance their experiences. Therefore, TSH should focus on creating a warm welcome (for international) students who are living on their own for the first time. Currently, TSH staff organises events that contribute to building a sense of community for the students. However, students mentioned that these current offerings do not meet their expectations because they desire a broader range of events, including outdoor activities that promote mingling with other students. The current events are more focused on individual activities; thus, students desire events that create a platform to meet fellow students and members of the co-working community. Furthermore, while TSH organises academically focused events, students expressed that many students do not join these events and would rather party instead.

### Sub-question: What are the positive and negative aspects of housing at TSH Amsterdam City related to housing?

Students indicated that their communal facilities contribute to connecting with peers, and the lobby of the hotel is a location where students can make lasting connections, primarily through various multiplayer games such as ping pong. Moreover, students expressed that the current distribution of shared and private spaces is balanced because students value privacy and desire secluded spaces that belongs only to them. Thus, rooms at TSH provide students with a sense of hominess, and the inclusion of a private bathroom is essential to promote this feeling of comfort. Notably, students were less concerned about the living and kitchen spaces since these shared facilities facilitate connection.

Therefore, based on student responses, these shared facilities do not require adjustments. Moreover, these students desire more communal items in shared space, to promote relationship building. In seeking out these communal items, students could have more opportunities to make new friends.

Main question: What co-living aspects could improve the guest experience of students?

Guests who often stay at hotels for more extended periods forego integration and start to yearn for their friends and families. Contemporary hotels are known for providing the bottom two layers of Maslow's hierarchy of needs: safety needs and physiological needs. However, extended-stay guests presently desire much more when choosing a place to reside, including esteem, belonging, and self-actualisation. Therefore, hotel management must enquire at the beginning of a stay what guests need or desire to offer them a sense of belonging. This personalisation will eliminate anonymity with the warm embrace of community. Furthermore, some guests may struggle to leave the familiarity of the co-living community; therefore, hotel staff can use pull factors or incentives to address this need. Moreover, guest involvement in community building can create an environment where all guests can express ideas and suggestions. These expressions can then be used to create activities and even living spaces. Thus, residents can contribute to the internal culture of the community and feel more connected to the hotel, creating an environment where residents feel valued and acknowledged. Therefore, co-creation can result in a guest-driven community, where residents can engage as necessary.

As previously mentioned, at TSH, students' rooms are allocated based on similar nationalities. Instead, it would be helpful to assign rooms based on similarities in characteristics, values, and interests. To this end, students would respond to a survey to determine these particularities, thus leading to a better connection between residents on each floor who live with others of similar interest. Moreover, rewards and incentives can attract guests to attend a given event or activity because people appreciate receiving a gift for participation in the community, especially when it is not mandatory. Therefore, rewards and incentives could be used as a daily motivational tool to encourage guests to become more involved in the community. Guests could also increase involvement by assuming responsibility for community functions, including contributions to the creation of rules relating to the shared facilities. Thus, rewards and incentives could foster a sense of belonging in the co-living community.

To prevent the isolation of new tenants, hotel staff should introduce them to established tenants who can help to integrate the new tenants and create a sense of connection to the community. Because TSH staff often fail to link guests together who share interests and hobbies, the customer service staff requires training for community facilitation.

Sub-question: Which co-living aspects can improve the guest experience based on the experts' opinions?

All experts mentioned that activities are essential factors that contribute to community formation. Corporate events that bring people together can draw guests into the community experience. The experts stressed the importance of their residents knowing about the variety of activities available, and these experts acknowledged the most crucial connection points with guest food and music that attract demographics and should occur regularly. Combining food and music can ensure that guests approach communal areas at the same time to enhance possible connections between strangers. Food can also increase cultural awareness and allow residents to connect with people from other countries or cultures.

Furthermore, the organised activities should be available to residents of the co-living community as well as the local community as a platform for both groups to connect with and benefit from one another. Local community members can enhance the guests' experiences by sharing extensive

knowledge about the surrounding area. Thus, organised activities are an ideal way for fostering community comprised of different market segments.

A co-living space should facilitate effortless connections between community members. Therefore, the design of all communal facilities should generate connections between residents and help strangers interact. Moreover, guests should be able to explore the entire co-living space, which is only possible if there are no physical boundaries present. In this way, the experts explained that communal kitchens should make efficient use of available space. Nevertheless, the importance of communal kitchens has decreased in recent years due to a demand for more luxurious self-regulated housing, with private kitchens as well as bedrooms and bathrooms.

The experts also noted that they devise tools to deter people who are not ideal candidates for community living. Therefore, when prospective residents submit their application, they include answers to questions about co-living arrangements that reveal the appropriateness of communal living for them. Deterring undesirable residents is further accomplished with non-cancellable contracts. The experts hope that these barriers serve to build a community of informed residents who have thoroughly considered sharing a space with other people. These experts agreed that they want tenants who wish to contribute to and participate in community formation: tenants who are open-minded and interactive with other cultures. Therefore, it is wise for a co-living company to determine if possible residents align with co-living principles.

**Sub-question: Which co-living aspects can improve the guest experience based on the students' opinions?**

Students expressed that the focus of activities at TSH should be to bring people together to form a community by organising events where students can meet each other. Moreover, students explained that the continual occurrence of communal events and activities should lead to an interconnected group of residents. Hence, interactive events should happen in the lobby area, so that students will spend time with students with others whom they do not know yet. Furthermore, students explained that participating in team sports events can foster a sense of belonging to the group, specifically for international students who desire a community or a place to belong to. Corporate events would help students to determine like-minded people, with similar characteristics and interest. In this way, events should assist students to integrate into the international community of TSH as well as the local community. Therefore, more frequent interaction between students can help students know each other better and form solidarity. Another way to improve guest experiences is to encourage students to share opinions about all aspects of communal life at TSH. This forum for sharing can lead students to feel greater satisfaction about their stay as well as help TSH staff to have a better overview of what is happening in the student community and learn from the students' their perspectives.

The current full-service concept of TSH should be adjusted. Presently, when a student reserves a room, they can use all facilities at TSH. However, students expressed that a basic housing contract should be offered instead, which excludes shared facilities and is more inexpensive as compared to the current contract. Hence, students can add the use of facilities whenever necessary. Therefore, a basic housing contract is more aligned with the students' needs and wishes.

## 6 Discussion

This chapter discusses the reliability and validity of the thesis project. In this chapter, the literature about research methodology is used to come to conclusions.

### 6.1 Validity of the thesis study

The validity of the research is divided into three parts: construct validity, internal validity, and external validity.

#### 6.1.1 Construct validity

This type of validity indicates if the researcher measures the construct that he intends to measure. The core concepts must be well described and form an ideal foundation for the research. Moreover, the concepts should delineate well in relevant literature (Verhoeven, 2015, p. 194). For this thesis research, a theoretical framework has been defined based on relevant literature about the two core concepts. This theoretical framework operationalises the core concepts in various sub-core concepts. With these core concepts, the researcher was able to establish the questionnaire and the interview guides based on the theoretical framework. As mentioned previously, the goal of this questionnaire was to indicate essential subjects or sub-core concepts. Per sub-core concept, a question was created as specific as possible. The survey questions were formulated in a clear and specific way, which increases the construct validity. Therefore, it can be concluded that the construct validity of the research is high.

#### 6.1.2 Internal validity

A factor which increases the internal validity is the use of methodological triangulation. The combination of the selected quantitative and qualitative data collection methods helps to draw correct conclusions (Wilson, 2010, p. 121). The result section compares the research results also with the findings of the literature review. This comparison reveals that there are several similarities between the research results and the findings of the literature review. This strengthens the internal validity as well. Furthermore, testing the questionnaire multiple times with different persons improves the internal validity. This survey was tested until the test persons understood all questions entirely and did not have any further remarks about the content of the questionnaire. Moreover, the researcher conducted a test interview with a test person to see if the questions were clear. This testing gave helpful knowledge since earlier, the questions were formulated to vague (Wilson, 2010, p. 120). In conclusions, the internal validity of the research is high.

#### 6.1.3 External validity

Selecting the correct participants based on the provided characteristic increased the external validity. Verhoeven (2015, p. 192) explains this as follows: "The sample must resemble the population in terms of certain characteristics that are relevant to the research". Appendix IV and paragraph 3.3 illustrate the elaboration of the sample drawing. The way how the participants for the survey were selected was also in line with the research set up. The drawn sample is a correct reflection of the research population since the sample for the quantitative research is drawn based on the selected characteristics. This drawn sample can be found back in Appendix VIII. In this Appendix, an overview illustrates the demographical characteristics of the respondents. For the qualitative data collection methods, some changes were made due to the current COVID-19 crisis. A remark is made that external validity has not much impact on the qualitative research since only a small part of the population is investigated. As explained in paragraph 3.5, the possibilities were limited to conduct a focus group. However, the researcher used the sampling characteristics from Appendix IV to select the participants for the interview. Two factors decreased the external validity; no interview participants from North America and one expert who did not match the characteristics. Furthermore, the research situation was left as intact as possible. This increases the theoretical generalisability, and the drawn conclusions

could be applied to similar situations. Therefore, the results of the research are extrapolated to the whole population living at TSH Amsterdam City, and the external validity of the thesis project is high (Verhoeven, 2015, p. 304).

## 6.2 Reliability of the thesis study

After discussing the validity, it is essential to write conclusions for the reliability of the thesis project. The research results are often judged based on the reliability. Verhoeven (2015, p. 37) describes the reliability as: "The extent to which it is free of random errors". Furthermore, the reliability is divided into the internal reliability and the external reliability.

### 6.2.1 Internal reliability

To increase the internal reliability, the researcher needs to ensure that there is consistency relating to the collection of the data, the analysis of the data and the interpretation of the data. Moreover, the internal reliability indicates if the research results are in any form distorted by the researcher. To increase the internal consistency in the measurement instrument, the qualitative interviews were all conducted with one standardised interview guide. These standardised interview guides with similar questions led to data about the same subjects (Verhoeven, 2015, p. 189). Therefore, the researcher could use the same standardised way of asking questions during all interviews. To further improve the reliability of the research, the conducted interviews are recorded. These recordings are also transcribed and could be used as a reference (Verhoeven, 2015, p. 291). In the coding process, there is made use of several codes to cluster the transcript into subjects. For this coding process, the data analysis program Atlas.ti has been used. This program was useful to decrease any mistakes made in the process relating to the coding and analysis of the transcripts. Based on the provided information, the internal reliability of the thesis project is high.

### 6.2.2 External reliability

It is difficult with qualitative research, to indicate if the research can be replicated. Verhoeven (2015, p. 37) describes this replicability, which is part of the external reliability, as: "If you carry out the research under different circumstances, at some other point in time, it should lead to the same results". Therefore, for the research it is essential that clear information is provided throughout the document and that primary data collection results are available for other researchers. Several measures were taken, to increase the external reliability of the study. In the field research process, multiple sources with different field of expertise's were used for the qualitative interviews. Furthermore, all transcripts of the interviews are available for other researchers as well as a selection of the research memos (Verhoeven, 2015, p. 189). The recordings of the interviews are also accessible upon request as well as the transcripts of the interviews. Nevertheless, some elements harmed the external reliability of the thesis research. The initial idea for one of the qualitative data collection methods was to conduct a focus group. However, the current situation with Covid-19 ensured that this was not possible anymore. The students living at TSH Amsterdam City flew home to their country of origin since they were insecure whether the whole situation would take long. The diversity of the students' nationalities resulted in that the selected participants were all living in different time zones. Therefore, it was not possible to find a suitable moment for all the participants to conduct a focus group. Unfortunately, the combination of the two above mentioned factors resulted in an alternative data collection method. To compensate for this failure, the researcher decided to conduct standard in-depth interviews with the selected respondents. Therefore, the outcome of the research could be different when the planned research strategy was followed. Nevertheless, the external reliability of the thesis project is high.

## 7 The advice

The advice objective of this thesis research is to enhance the existing student experience by implementing new co-living aspects and removing non-functioning current co-living aspects, which results in a better working co-living concept for TSH Amsterdam City. The advice will consist of a co-living enhancement plan, and the advice objective will lead to the advice question:

- How can The Student Hotel Amsterdam City make suitable adjustments to their co-living concepts to improve the guest experience of the students?

Based on the theoretical framework and the field research, an answer to this advice question will be provided. In this advice, an overview of alternatives to the existing co-living concept of TSH are provided, which are the outcomes of conducted qualitative field research in the past six weeks. The various alternatives have been considered and compared based on a set of criteria. To illustrate the implementation, a PDCA-cycle has been used. These two factors combined result in advice on a strategical level, which can be implemented by the management of TSH Amsterdam City.

### 7.1 Advice alternatives

Even though the theoretical framework provided a framework for the field research, the field research itself brought another piece of theory. This theory is Maslow's hierarchy of needs, as described in a theory of human motivation. Furthermore, the provided research results revealed this psychological theory as appropriate and suitable to incorporate it to elaborate on the advice alternatives. All hotels provide the essential two layers, which are physiological needs and safety needs. Guests who are staying for just a couple of days or a week at a hotel are searching for these basic needs, which includes the vital things for the survival of a human. In addition to these vital needs, people need to receive shelter (Maslow, 2012, p. 8). In the second layer, people want to receive order and control in their lives. These needs refer to the security and safety that a hotel is providing for them (Maslow, 2012, p. 10). These are the basic needs that a standard hotel guest will receive currently by TSH. Field research results illustrated that after two weeks, extended-stay guests require a desire for the top three layers. Especially the third layer is essential for these guests, which are the love and belongingness needs. It is essential for people to become accepted and loved by fellow people. This layer avoids current problems such as depression and loneliness. A crucial role plays the personal relationship with loved ones, family, and friends as well as involvement in a group of like-minded people or a community (Maslow, 2012, p. 13). Maslow (2012, p. 13) underlines these facts by mentioning: "He will hunger for affectionate relations with people in general, namely, for a place in his group, and he will strive with great intensity to achieve this goal".

After a stay of two weeks, students and extended-stay guests just become bored from the typical standard hotel services or amenities. These guests get a desire for a sense of belonging, integration, family, and friends. They obtain this craving to this community of like-minded people where they can belong to. Currently, TSH tries to provide the student population with the third layer of Maslow's hierarchy of needs by creating a community. This works partly since the provided activities lead to that students identify like-minded people, intimacy with friends and a sense of connection to the community of TSH. However, research demonstrated that this sense of belonging is not satisfied. Students mentioned as well that the bottom two layers are satisfied currently. Nevertheless, it is the third and fourth layer that the students desire for and which is currently lacking. The results underline this since students want to be involved in the community. The fourth layer of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, esteem, reflects that students need to receive respect and appreciation by others (Maslow, 2012, p. 14). Furthermore, it describes that people should feel that they are genuinely contributing to the world and that others acknowledge their efforts. When the other layers of needs are satisfied, people want to achieve more. The fourth layer is currently missing in the co-living concept of TSH.

Therefore, alternatives must be made, which will be presented underneath. These are the most important research results, which are formulated into advice alternatives.

#### Advise alternative 1: Rewarding students for their contribution to the community

The research results revealed that students require an environment where they can contribute and that other people recognise their contribution. Furthermore, ways must be found to involve all students; this is currently not happening at TSH. Therefore, TSH must provide students with these needs. The ideal way is to reward them for their contribution to the community since contribution works ideal when students feel acknowledged for their performance. Rewarding the students should be based on equal participation and engagement of students, which means that the communal participation of the students should be highlighted. On an individual level, students would be rewarded when they perform a task contributing to the community, such as cleaning the kitchen or participating in an event. The communal participation should contain a multiplier when a student performs the task together with a fellow student. Rewarding students is the perfect way to attract all students to be involved since some students tend to isolate themselves socially. Moreover, rewarding should be a pull factor for the students since they will receive remunerations for contributing to the formation of the community. Students will appreciate the positive benefits from participating in an event, which will help TSH to establish a sense of community. Therefore, rewarding is a perfect way to provide students with the fourth layer of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Furthermore, TSH esteems the contribution of the students to the formation of a sense of community.

#### Advise alternative 2: Creating a more inclusive culture of different nationalities

Results demonstrated that students tend to struggle with creating a community on their floor, especially when they do not live together with like-minded people. Therefore, a way must be found to help people find these like-minded people. The results illustrate as well that people want to live together with like-minded people and that it would help them to make more natural contact with them if they would have similar interests. Therefore, a tool should be created to determine an inclusive culture. A culture that helps people of different nationalities, languages, or cultures to build a relationship and be connected. Bridging the gap between students with different backgrounds should be a key ingredient. This tool should not be based on the level of their primary demographical characteristics, such as age, gender, or nationality. It should be based on the level of self-actualisation, interests, characteristics, hobbies, or ambitions of the students. The goal should be to find students who match well together based on similar interests & characteristics. This will help students easier integrate in the community since they live together with people with the same characteristics. This alternative is the ideal way to provide the third layer of the Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

#### Advise alternative 3: Co-creation of the student community

TSH does not include co-creation in their current co-living concept. The research results underline this since students would like to be more involved in the co-creation of the communal space. They express that currently; they do not have an idea who is creating the activities or providing the input for activities. Therefore, ways must be found to involve students actively. A guest-driven community would be the ideal approach with this. An environment where the students themselves have the power in their own hands and can engage when they think that their community needs something. This would mean that students determine how their student community should look like. Active participation of all students would be the key here. Students would be more involved since they know that their ideas can be implemented as well. Furthermore, cooperating with students would provide TSH with another perspective on their current range of activities organised for the student's community. This would help students to have a sense of responsibility and feel that they can contribute to the creation of their living environment. Moreover, this should lead students to the fourth layer of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This layer will provide students with a sense of respect and acknowledgement for their efforts.

Thus, it should lead to a community of students that want to be involved. On the long term, this advice will help to form a student community which will have a secure connection to the company (Maslow, 2013).

#### Advise alternative 4: Helping students integrate into the community

Results revealed that some students have difficulties with integrating into the student community. Students tend to miss their home and do not feel at home in the TSH community. Therefore, it is wise to help students integrating and should primarily focus on the dissocialised students who do not feel welcome at TSH. Results indicated that the staff must be involved, in order that integration of students work. TSH staff is the facilitator in the formation of student communities. Personalisation of the students is a helpful way as well. The field research results illustrated that the ideal way for integration is to determine what the specific needs of the students are. Integration focused on specific needs will help to self-actualise the students desires or help them making connections within the student community. Furthermore, integration would demonstrate that TSH is putting effort in the creation of the entire community, including all types of students. The personalisation factor relates to the 5<sup>th</sup> layer of Maslow's hierarchy of needs since focussing on their needs will help students to become the ideal version of themselves.

## 7.2 Criteria for the alternatives

For the selection of the advice, several criteria have been chosen. These criteria are based on the mission and vision of TSH. Furthermore, the results of the research provided input as well as the client. The provided input results in the criteria revealed underneath.

### Relating to the mission and vision of TSH

This criterion is based on the mission and vision of TSH, as revealed in paragraph 1.2. The client provided this criterion since the advice must be in line with the core values of the company. The alternative should reflect these values and should contribute to reach the goals of TSH. A Likert scale from 1 to 5 is chosen for the scoring. When an advice alternative scores a 5, it is indicated that the alternative is related well to the mission and vision of TSH. Whereas an alternative that has a very low score does not relate well to the mission and vision of TSH.

### Efficiency

It is essential for a company that advice can be implemented within a short time frame. The client provided this criterion since it should take less time to implement. The current situation with complaints relating to the co-living concept is taking to long. Therefore, it is essential that the advice option can be implemented within two months. To compare the alternatives, a Likert scale from 1 to 5 has been chosen. The alternative that needs less time to be implemented will result in a high score (5) on these criteria. Whereas an alternative that needs much time to be implemented will have a low score (1).

### Impactful

The management of TSH City provided another criterion since it is essential to indicate if the advice option has an impact on the guest experience of the students. Moreover, this criterion can also be linked to one of the provided goals of TSH. Therefore, the advice alternative should have an impact on enhancing the TSH Guest experience. Again, the advice will be compared with the help of a Likert scale from 1 to 5. When the advice alternative has a large impact on the guest experience, a rating of 5 will be rewarded. A very low score (1) will be rated when the advice alternative has a low impact on the guest experience.

### Inclusive for a large audience

Based on the research results, this criterion has been established. Experts mentioned that it is essential to create a community which is inclusive and suitable for all types of people. The lowest score will be given when one of the advice alternatives is not reaching all members of the student community effectively. Whereas an advice alternative will receive the highest-scores if it effectively reaches the whole population.

As mentioned previously, a Likert scale from one to five will be used to determine the scores.

1 = Very low score

2 = Low score

3 = Medium score

4 = High score

5 = Very high score

## **7.3 Assessment of the alternatives**

In this paragraph, the four advice alternatives are assessed and compared with each other. This is done to select the most suitable and appropriate advice alternative for TSH Amsterdam City. Furthermore, the highest-scoring option will be chosen as best advice option. This assessment will be done with the usage of the criterion, illustrated in the previous chapter.

### Alternative 1: Rewarding students for their contribution to the community

This alternative does not have a clear link to the mission or vision of TSH, which results in a low score on the Likert scale. Furthermore, rewarding students is an advice alternative which can be implemented within the time frame of two months, so it scores high on efficiency. This alternative scores high as well since rewarding the students will contribute to the involvement of the students. As mentioned often in the conclusion, students want to feel more acknowledged and valued. Therefore, rewarding is the perfect way to impact the guest experience of the students. Once more, this results in a high score for this alternative. Rewarding would be inclusive as well since it would attract students with all types of personas, nationalities, or cultures. This alternative will receive a very high score since it is inclusive for the total target population of TSH.

### Alternative 2: Creating a more inclusive culture of different nationalities

This alternative is relating well to the mission and vision of TSH since it encourages all students to be the best version of themselves within the globalised society and inspires people to be a student for life. The international character of TSH also attracts a large group of international students, which should embrace these characteristics. Creating a more inclusive culture of different nationalities will help people to integrate faster into the student community. Therefore, this alternative gets a high score relating to the mission and vision of TSH. In terms of efficiency, this alternative will receive a very low score since it will take much time to create a tool that matches people together. This tool must be tested in terms of efficiency, which will be a time-consuming project. However, this tool would have sincerely impact on the student community. Especially since it relates to one of the TSH goals, embracing the variety of cultures at TSH. Therefore, this alternative would be the perfect way to do this and consequently will get a high score due to their impact on the guest experience of the students. This alternative would reach a large audience since it is applicable to all members of the student population living at TSH Amsterdam City. Once again, a high score will be rewarded.

### Alternative 3: Co-creation of the student community

This advice relates well to the vision of TSH since the company wants their inhouse community to change the world. Co-creation is a tool which helps people to balance their needs and helps students to determine their purpose as well. Involving students in the creation of the communal environment

will result in establishing the best living space for the students. Therefore, this advice alternative will get a high score on this criterion. It will take much time and effort to implement this advice since a guest-driven community cannot be implemented within a short period. TSH must find a way to involve students in the planning of events such as TSH welcome parties. Furthermore, TSH cannot suddenly put the power in the hands of the community. Therefore, this alternative will receive a very low score on the second criterion of efficiency. Once again, this advice will have a large impact on the guest experience since students are craving for more involvement. The alternative receives a high score since it adds value to the experience that TSH wants to offer its guests. As the results indicated, some students or guests tend to dissociate themselves and would not want to be involved in the community. Therefore, this alternative is not suitable for the total student's community and will receive an average score of three points on the criterion of inclusiveness.

#### Alternative 4: Helping students integrate in the community

This alternative relates well to the mission and vision of TSH. It will be rewarded with a high score since TSH wants to create a place where everyone can thrive. Therefore, they also want to include and integrate all people with a student spirit in the community. Integrating students in the community would be not an efficient advice solution. Once again, many steps would be needed, such as determining which students are dissociating themselves or finding an effective way to integrate these students. Once again, this alternative will get a low score on efficiency. However, the alternative will have an impact on the experience of the students. Therefore, this alternative will get a high score on the impact criterion. By actively involving the students in the community, they receive that international experience that they are seeking for. Unfortunately, this alternative does not include all members of the student community living at TSH Amsterdam City. It is an alternative which is suitable for only a small segment of students that are socially isolating themselves. Therefore, this alternative will get a low score for the last criterion of inclusiveness.

*Table 7.1  
Assessment of the alternatives*

	<u>Alternative 1</u> Rewarding students for their contribution to the community	<u>Alternative 2</u> Creating a more inclusive culture of different nationalities	<u>Alternative 3</u> Co-creation of the student community	<u>Alternative 4</u> Helping students integrate into the community
Relating to Mission/Vision of TSH	2	4	4	4
Alternative is efficient	4	1	1	2
Alternative is impactful	4	4	4	4
Alternative reaches effective a large audience	5	4	3	1
<b>Total</b>	15	13	12	11

#### **7.4 Best Alternative**

In this chapter, an elaboration will be written of the most suitable advice alternative for TSH Amsterdam City. This assessment has been done based on several criteria, as illustrated in the previous chapter. Based on the assessment, all four alternatives are suitable for implementation at TSH Amsterdam City. The differences between the alternatives, in terms of score, is not high. However, one of the alternatives must be prioritised and will be used for the implementation plan. Therefore, the best scoring advice will be on top of this priority list, which is rewarding students for their contribution

to the community. Therefore, the choice is made to operationalise the best scoring advice in the coming paragraph. However, when the reward advice has been entirely implemented, the other advice alternatives can be implemented as well.

The criteria illustrated that rewarding students for their contribution to the community would be the best possible fit for TSH Amsterdam City. However, the purpose of this research paper was to adjust the co-living concept of TSH Amsterdam City and not to find the best suitable rewarding program for TSH. Therefore, it is inevitable to implement another piece of theory relating to reward programs or loyalty programs. A quick research reveals that the design of a reward program or loyalty program has three core elements (Bijmolt, Dorotic, & Verhoef, 2010). Therefore, a rewarding program for TSH should consist of the following building blocks: the structure of the reward program, the reward structure and customer factors. An overview of these blocks is illustrated underneath.



Conceptual model of a reward program (McCall & Voorhees, 2010)

This reward program framework should help the client to create a reward program, which fits the conditions of TSH Amsterdam City. These framework blocks have to be thought through by the management of TSH Amsterdam City in the PDCA-cycle, illustrated in paragraph 7.5.

A reward program would fit well within the context of rewarding, which is a system based on equal participation and engagement of students. In this system, students will receive a remuneration when they perform tasks which are contributing to the formation of the community or which are helping the community. The results revealed that students strive for integration, a community, and a sense of belonging. A reward program would result in the missing piece to provide the student community with the third layer of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which is illustrated in paragraph 7.1. This should function as a motivational factor for students and will reveal the positive benefit from contributing to the formation of the community. Furthermore, research results revealed that students would like to get more involved with other students. Therefore, a multiplier should be used by TSH Amsterdam City when the task is done together with fellow students. Furthermore, this advice is the perfect way to help students integrate into the student community since the reward program would function as a platform for students to meet one another. Students will receive a substantial remuneration when they perform a task with a socially isolated student. Therefore, the reward program can also bring positivity for students who are not involving themselves easily or have difficulties with making connections. Moreover, students need to receive respect and appreciation by others, which relates well to the fourth layer of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Acknowledging students for their contribution to the community through rewarding them will lead to a student community who will feel involved and connected with TSH.

For the smooth integration of the reward program, several TSH staff members are selected. An extensive elaboration of the people involved is illustrated in the PDCA-cycle.

## 7.5 PDCA-cycle

For the implementation of the advice, a PDCA-cycle will be used. This will provide all steps to implement the best advice option at TSH Amsterdam City. It will focus on the process of planning, doing, checking, and acting upon the advice. Furthermore, the PDCA cycle concludes the advice section of this thesis report and will describe how the reward program can be implemented effectively. The PDCA cycle consists of the following steps:

- **Plan:** Indicate the change and plan it.

- **Do:** Implement the change; this can be either partly or entirely implemented.
- **Check:** Review the change and evaluate the results. It is essential to indicate what is learned in this step.
- **Act:** Actions must be taken upon what is learned during the check step. If the implementation or change was not successful, a different strategy must be recommended. If the change was successful, there should be space for improvements. What is learned during the check step, should be used to implement again. Therefore, the cycle will start again.

### Plan & Do

These two steps will be illustrated using an implementation plan.

*Table 7.2  
Implementation plan*

When	PDCA Cycle	Person(s) that are involved	What must be done
Monday 14-7-2020	Plan	General Manager Trainee, General Manager, Assistant General Manager, Connector and Connector trainee	<p><u>Kick-off meeting – Reward Program</u></p> <p>Presentation by General Manager trainee about the content of the reward program.</p> <p>Discuss the reward program and indicating any remarks that the involved stakeholders might have.</p>
Tuesday 15-7-2020	Plan	General Manager, Assistant General Manager, Connector and Connector trainee	<p><u>Meeting – Shaping the reward program</u></p> <p>Decide the structure of the reward program. Once more, the building blocks of a reward program should be used, as discussed in paragraph 7.4.</p> <p><i>Following topics must be discussed:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Decide what type of remunerations will be used (points, vouchers, physical money etc.)</li> <li>- Decide what will be used as a reward (activities, F&amp;B, TSH merchandise, discount etc.)</li> <li>- Decide the scoring logic and earning rules (For example, three vouchers = one activity or one point = one F&amp;B product)</li> <li>- Decide how to register the remunerations</li> </ul> <p><i>Think about the following topics:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Possibility of tiers in the reward program such as beginner tier or premium tier. Each tier will have different earning rules and rewards.</li> <li>- Use customer data to select rewards which are relevant and suitable for this target group.</li> <li>- Possibility to use the remunerations at other TSH locations.</li> <li>- Membership of the program. Can each student benefit from the reward program? Alternatively, maybe only students who stay for at least three months.</li> </ul>
Thursday 17-7-2020 – Tuesday 13-8-2020	Plan	Assistant General Manager & Connector trainee	Write standard operating procedures (SOPs) which are describing the reward program. These procedures should be used as a guideline for TSH staff.
Wednesday 22-7	Plan	Connector, Connector trainee	<p><u>Meeting – Reward program &amp; Marketing</u></p> <p>Discuss how to promote the reward program.</p>

		& Marketing department	<p><i>Think about the following topics:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduction of the reward program via social media or internal communication channels.</li> <li>- Usage of which internal and external promotion channels to market the reward program after the implementation.</li> </ul>
Wednesday 22-7-2020	Plan	General Manager & iOS software developer (I.T. team)	<p><u>Meeting – Reward program &amp; I.T.</u> Discuss the possibility of introducing the reward program as a feature in an online TSH system. Indicate how this rewarding feature should look like in an online TSH system.</p>
Thursday 23-7-2020 –	Plan	Connector & Connector trainee	<p>Find external partners who might want to collaborate with the reward program.</p> <p><i>Think about the following topics:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Possibility for a partnered reward program. Students can use the remunerations at the partner companies as well.</li> </ul>
Thursday 23-7-2020 – Wednesday 12-8-2020	Plan	iOS software developer	<p>Work on a feature in an online TSH system which reveals students the possibilities of the reward program.</p> <p><i>Think about the following topics:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- User friendly for all mobile operating systems (iOS, Android etc.)</li> </ul>
Tuesday 28-7-2020	Plan	Assistant General Manager & Legal department	<p><u>Meeting – Legal consequences reward program</u> Discuss terms &amp; conditions relating to the reward program.</p> <p><i>Think about the following topics:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Possibility for transferring remunerations to other students.</li> <li>- Underage students (Allowance of parents for rewarding them).</li> <li>- Validity of the rewards (How long is a reward valid to use?).</li> <li>- Rules should be easy for the students to understand.</li> </ul>
Wednesday 29-7-2020	Plan	Legal department	Work on the terms & conditions of the reward program. This should include all rules and regulations which are established during the meeting on the previous day.
Thursday 13-8-2020	Plan	iOS software developer & General Manager, Assistant General Manager	<p><u>Meeting – Reward program &amp; I.T.</u> Reveal how the reward program feature will look like in an online TSH system.</p> <p><i>Think about the following topics:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Test the feature internally before using it.</li> <li>- Indicate any bugs that might occur.</li> </ul>
Friday 14-8-2020 – Friday 11-9-2020	Plan	iOS software developer	Adjusting the reward feature based on the feedback of the meeting on the previous day.
Wednesday 19-8-2020	Plan	Assistant General Manager	<p><u>Meeting – Explanation reward program</u> Explain the reward program to the front desk staff.</p> <p><i>Thinks about the following topics:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Staff must be completely aware of how the reward program works and what the reward program structure is.</li> </ul>
Tuesday 1-9-2020 – Friday 11-9-2020	Plan	All TSH staff who is a kitchen buddy	Additional explanation of the reward program during the welcome meetings with the students. Staff must explain all information relating to this reward program.

Friday 11-9-2020	<b>Plan</b>	General Manager, Assistant General Manager, Connector, Connector trainee and General Manager Trainee,	<u>Final meeting before implementation</u> Discuss all aspects of the reward program once again.
Monday 14-9-2020	<b>Do</b>		Implementation of the reward program
Each day after implementation	<b>Do</b>	All TSH staff	Promote the usage of the reward program in situations where students are involved
Each day after implementation	<b>Do</b>	Each day after implementation	Gather all feedback about the reward program from all stakeholders (students, staff, external partners, etc.) which are involved.

#### Check

TSH Amsterdam City should be able to reach the advice objective when the steps of the plan and do phases are realised. However, measures should be taken to indicate if the implementation of the reward program and the reward program, in general, was a success. Therefore, it is recommended to conduct a monthly evaluation meeting of the reward program to see where appropriate improvements can be made to adjust the reward program. Therefore, all involved people or stakeholders should provide feedback about the reward program. As discussed previously, the reward program should lead to a student community which is more involved. Involvement is an aspect which is quite abstract, intangible, and difficult to measure. However, the researcher tried to define the given information from the previous chapter into tangible measurement tools by providing several critical success factors (CSFs) and key performance indicators (KPIs). These CSFs and KPIs indicate to what extent the advice is successful. These chosen measurement tools are provided underneath:

#### **CSF: Premature cancellation of contracts**

Students tend to cancel their contract at TSH Amsterdam City earlier than the contract matures. For these premature cancellations, there are reasons such as 'no sense of belonging to the community' or 'tensions between students'. An elaboration of these reasons is revealed in the concluding chapter of this report. The current amount of premature cancellations are seven rooms per month, which is an average for the past study year 2019–2020. This critical success factor is a good indicator of why students want to cancel their contract at TSH Amsterdam City since it relates well to unsolved complaints, students who are not satisfied with their stay and the overall customer satisfaction of the students. Therefore, the KPI underneath is determined:

- **KPI: Not more than three premature cancellations per month will happen during the study year 2020–2021.**

#### **CSF: NPS (Customer satisfaction)**

TSH conducts at the end of each study year an NPS, which is focusing on the students living at TSH Amsterdam City. The NPS is a good indicator of the degree of satisfaction of the students. Therefore, this score must increase as well when the reward program is implemented. At the end of the study year, 2018–2019 TSH Amsterdam City received a score of 49, which is a good score for a hospitality company. Therefore, the following KPI will estimate if the reward program has increased the customer satisfaction.

- **KPI: At the end of the study year 2020–2021 an NPS score of 57 will be achieved.**

#### **CSF: Loyalty program participation**

The reward program should result in that all students actively participate in the community. Therefore, it should be indicated if the structure of the reward program is correct. This CSF is the perfect way to

do this since it indicates if students feel the need to participate. The KPI underneath will indicate the participation of the students in the reward program.

- **KPI: 75 % of the students living at TSH Amsterdam City participated in the reward program at the end of the study year 2020–2021.**

#### **CSF: Loyalty program engagement**

The engagement of the students should be tracked by indicating if students earn the remunerations and especially if they spent this on rewards. If the students are not spending their earned points, most probably something is going wrong. In such situations, it could occur that TSH Amsterdam City does not offer the right rewards or is doing something. Therefore, the KPI underneath will track the engagement of the students in the reward program:

- **KPI: 90 % of the students living at TSH Amsterdam City have spent their earned remunerations on a reward at the end of the study year 2020–2021.**

#### **Act**

In this step, the client should use the building blocks of a reward program as a starting point to determine the adjustments that should be made. Based on the four CSF's, it should be indicated if the reward program needs to be adjusted. Any adjustments will help to involve the members of the student community even more. Moreover, the management of TSH Amsterdam City should indicate any improvement points-based, which should lead to several new strategic goals. These new strategic goals should focus on premature cancellation of contracts, customer satisfaction, loyalty program participation and loyalty program engagement. Hence, this will help to develop the reward program further. Furthermore, the PDCA cycle will start again with the planning phase of this cycle. This is done so the reward program can be adjusted efficiently and effectively.

### **7.6 Financial implications**

Based on the implementation plan, the assumed costs and earnings for the reward program are presented. This reveals a realistic overview of the financial implications of the advice.

#### **7.6.1 Costs of the implementation**

The costs which are displayed in this paragraph will provide a cost overview of the reward program. Some of these costs are already admitted in the profit & loss statement of TSH Amsterdam City. However, to provide a realistic overview of the actual costs, these costs are acknowledged in the cost calculation as well. The overview underneath reveals the persons who will work on the reward program. The workload is assumed based on the experience that people had with similar projects.

*Table 7.3  
Payroll Overview*

Department	Gross salary	Tasks and Workload
iOS software developer	€ 4.250 for 38 hours work week. (Glassdoor, n.d.)	<u>Before implementation</u> Needs a full work week (38 hours) to develop the reward feature in an online TSH system, which includes any adjustments that might need to be made. <u>After implementation</u> Will spent approximately 2 hours per week on maintaining the reward program feature.
Connector	€ 2.700 for 38 hours work week.	<u>Before implementation</u> Each person will be spent 10 hours per week on the reward program. This includes the following tasks: communication towards internal and external stakeholders, several meeting with internal and external stakeholders to discuss the

Connector trainee	€ 400 for 38 hours work week. (F. van den Dries, personal communication, 2020).	implementation of the reward program, and promotion of the reward program. An extensive description of the tasks is revealed in table 7.2. <u>After implementation</u> Per person, an average of 3 hours per week will be spent working on the reward program. The tasks will be similar to the tasks before the implementation.
Assistant General Manager	€ 2.500 for 38 hours work week. (F. van den Dries, personal communication, 2020).	<u>Before implementation</u> Will spent before the implementation approximately 5 hours per week working on the reward program. The workload will consist of the following tasks: writing the SOPs, attending several meetings relating to the reward program and training fellow staff members. A description of the tasks is revealed previously in table 7.2. <u>After implementation</u> Workload will be 2 hours per week. The tasks will consist of adjusting the reward program together with General Manager trainee and collecting feedback from involved stakeholders.
General Manager	€ 4.000 for 38 hours work week. (F. van den Dries, personal communication, 2020).	<u>Before implementation</u> Will spent 2 hours per week working on the program. The tasks will include attending several reward program meetings, which are illustrated in table 7.2. <u>After implementation</u> The workload will decrease to one hour per week and will focus on indicating if the reward program has reached the CSF's & KPIs.
General Manager Trainee	€ 400 for 38 hours work week. (F. van den Dries, personal communication, 2020).	<u>Before implementation</u> Will spent before the implementation approximately once 3 hours working on the reward program. The tasks will focus on giving a presentation to the management team of TSH Amsterdam City. <u>After implementation</u> The workload will be 7 hours per week. Moreover, these tasks will include the following: Maintaining the reward program and collecting feedback from all involved stakeholders.
Marketing department	€ 2.600 for 38 hours work week. (Glassdoor, n.d.)	<u>Before implementation</u> Will spent once 3 hours working on the reward program. Together with the Connector team, the possibility of promoting the reward program will be discussed. <u>After implementation</u> N.A.
Legal department	€ 4.750 for 38 hours work week. (Glassdoor, n.d.)	<u>Before implementation</u> Will spent in total 38 hours working on the reward program. This includes the following tasks: Establishing terms & conditions of the reward program and any other legal consequences. <u>After implementation</u> N.A.

The period before the implementation will be a time range of 10 weeks (13-07-2020 until 14-09-2020). Moreover, the period after implementation will be the entire study year from mid-September until the end of June. Therefore, this will be a time range of 41 weeks (14-09-2020 until 5-06-2021). This will result in the following costs, which are displayed in the table underneath. Furthermore, the staff has a 38-hour contract which results in that on average, a person works 161,5 hours per week (P-Direkt, n.d.). Appendix XVI reveals an extensive elaboration of the calculation of the payroll costs.

The table underneath illustrates the total payroll costs.

*Table 7.4  
Total payroll costs*

Staff	Before implementation	After implementation	Total Costs
iOS software developer	€ 1.254,12	€ 2.706	€ 3.707,65
Connector	€ 2.173,37	€ 2.672,79	€ 6.003,40
Connector trainee	€ 321,98	€ 396,06	€ 889,20
General Manager	€ 644	€ 1.320,20	€ 1.512,16
Assistant General Manager	€ 1.006,19	€ 1.694,84	€ 1710,32
General Manager Trainee	€ 9,66	€ 924,14	€ 834,48
Marketing department	€ 48,30	N.A.	€ 48,30
Legal department	€ 1.452,94	N.A.	€ 1452,94
Total payroll costs	€ 6.910,56	€ 9.714,03	€ 16.624,59

#### Costs gifts in reward program

Reward programs should return 1 to 3 per cent of the yearly revenue to the guest as a reward or gift. This number is used for rewarding as a guideline throughout the hospitality industry (Brooks, 2009). Only the revenue is used, which is generated with the student accommodation at TSH Amsterdam City, which is a monthly revenue of € 240.000. Furthermore, the average of the provided 1 to 3 % will be used as a percentage for the calculation. Therefore, for ten months the rewards will be assumed on ((€ 240.000 x 10 months) / 2 %) = € 48.000. This will result in that each student will receive an average of ((€ 48.000 / 10 months) / 250 students) = € 19,2 per month as a reward from the reward program.

The table underneath highlights the total costs per month and study year.

*Table 7.5  
Total costs reward program*

Cost	Per month	Per study year
Rewarding	(€ 48.000 / 10 months) = € 4.800	€ 48.000
Payroll (Before implementation)	(€ 6.910,56 / 2 months) = € 3.455,28	€ 6.910,56
Payroll (After implementation)	(€ 9.714,03 / 10 months) = € 971,40	€ 9.714,03
Total costs	(€ 4.800 + € 3.455,28 + € 971,40) = <b>€ 9.226,68</b>	(€ 48.000 + € 6.910,56 + € 9.714,03) = <b>€ 64.624,59</b>

#### 7.6.2 Earnings of the implementation

In this paragraph, the earnings of the implementation are discussed. These total earnings are divided into three parts: direct earnings, earnings after two months and long-term earnings.

#### Direct profit or cost reduction (within one month after implementation)

The reward program will also result in earnings for TSH. The so-called kitchen voucher will disappear, which is a voucher with a worth of € 50 per communal kitchen. Therefore, this will result in a cost reduction of (€ 50 x 22 communal kitchens) = € 1.100 per month. For 10 months, this would result in a decrease in costs of 10 x € 1.100 = € 11.000.

#### Cost reduction after two months

Currently, the housekeeping is cleaning the communal kitchens each week. As mentioned previously, the reward program will result in that students feel more involved. Therefore, a floor community will

increase maintaining the hygiene of the kitchen. However, it is assumed that this will occur after two months since students first get to know one another. In the previous semester, these costs were budgeted at € 11.100 (F. van den Dries, personal communication, 2020). After implementation of the reward program, these costs will drop to an amount of € 6.660. When the housekeeping department cleans the kitchens bi-weekly, it will result in a cost reduction of ( $\text{€ } 11.100 - \text{€ } 6.660$ ) = € 4.340.

#### Long term profit or cost reduction within one year after implementation

As explained in paragraph 7.5, the implementation of the reward program will increase the customer satisfaction of the students living at TSH Amsterdam City. This increase of customer satisfaction will increase the NPS of TSH. The NPS is an essential indicator for customer satisfaction and can be used as a financial measurement of the reward program. Unfortunately, a correlation between a reward program implementation and an increase in revenue does not exist for the hospitality industry. Therefore, linking the increase of the NPS to the long-term profit is the best option.

The London School of Economics predicted that the NPS is linked to an increase in revenue, which is elaborated as: "In terms of percentage growth, a 7 point increase in word of mouth advocacy (net promoter score) correlated with a 1 % increase in growth (1 point increase = .147% more growth)" (Marsden, Samson, & Upton, 2005). Furthermore, this indication is used in several industries, such as the retail industry or the hospitality industry. The in-house student community will share their positive experiences at TSH Amsterdam City with their family, friends, and relatives. An increase of the NPS will lead to receiving more revenue from other market segments such as families or extended-stay guest. For TSH Amsterdam City, this would mean that a 1-point increase would increase to ( $1.333.333 \times 0.00147$ ) = € 1.960 (F. van den Dries, personal communication, 2020). The estimated NPS by July 2021 would be 57, which is an increase of 8 points. Therefore, after July 2021 the monthly revenue will have an estimated growth of ( $0,147\% \times 8$ ) = 1,18 %. In terms of revenue growth, this will be an average of ( $\text{€ } 1.960 \times 8$ ) = € 15.680 per month.

In the table underneath the earnings from the reward program are highlighted.

*Table 7.6  
Total earnings reward program*

Earning	Per month	Per study year
Direct earnings	€ 1.100	€ 11.100
Earnings after 2 months	€ 4.340 / 10 months = € 434	€ 4.340
Long term earnings	€ 15.680	(€ 15.680 × 10 months) = € 156.800
Total earnings	(€ 1.100 + € 434 + € 21.560) = € 23.094	(€ 11.000 + € 4.340 + € 156.800) = € 172.140

#### Return on investment (ROI)

The ROI of the investment can be calculated at the end of the second year after implementation. For the calculation, the total used costs and earning for the two years are used. The investment costs are the rewarding costs (€ 48.000) and the payroll after implementation (€ 9.516), which will result in a total cost of ( $\text{€ } 48.000 + \text{€ } 9.516$ ) = € 57.516. An assumed decrease in costs is considered 5 % due to an efficient operational procedure. Therefore, the costs of the reward program for the study years 2020–2021 & 2021–2022 will be ( $\text{€ } 57.516 \times 0,95$ ) + € 64.624,59 = € 119.264,79. The earnings after the 1<sup>st</sup> study year will be € 11.000 + € 4.340 = € 15.340. The total earnings after the study years 2020–2021 & 2021–2022 will be € 15.340 + € 172.140 = € 187.480. This results in that the return of investment of the reward program will be ( $\text{€ } 187.480 / \text{€ } 119.264,79$ ) × 100 = 157,20 %. This ROI percentage reveals that the reward program is worth the investment.

## 7.7 Advice conclusion

At the beginning of this report, a management question was formulated which should help TSH Amsterdam City to adjust their co-living concept. This resulted in the following advice question: *How can The Student Hotel Amsterdam City make suitable adjustments to their co-living concepts to improve the guest experience of the students?* In this chapter, this management question is answered, and recommendations provide suggestions for further research.

TSH has a secure willingness to create the best possible living space for their student community. It should be a community and space where all students can thrive, regardless of their culture or personal characteristics. This willingness is also reflected in one of TSH main goals, enhancing the TSH guest experience. This thesis report was developed to help TSH to reach this goal by making suitable adjustments based on the opinions of the student community and best-practice co-living experts. This resulted in an objective to enhance the existing student experience by implementing new co-living aspects and removing not functioning current co-living aspects so that a better working co-living concept for The Student Hotel Amsterdam City is created. The research perceived the notions of the student community about this co-living concept. Unfortunately, the research indicated that currently, there are insufficiencies in the involvement of students in the community, which results in a decrease in crucial connections with the in-house student community. Furthermore, students pointed out that they do not feel that there is space to contribute to the formation of the student community. Research indicated that students would feel involved if they could contribute to the co-creation of their living environment.

The research results revealed that students strive for integration in the community, involvement, a sense of belonging to the community, acknowledgement for their contribution to the community, and a sincere connection with TSH. Results illustrated that students see pull factors as attractive to attend an event or contribute to the formation of the community. Therefore, rewarding students for their contribution to the community would fit perfectly within that context. Hence, the advice for the client is to implement a reward program based on equal participation and engagement of students. Such a rewarding program will acknowledge the contribution that the students are making to the community. Furthermore, rewarding will reveal students the positive benefits of being involved in the community. This will help TSH Amsterdam City to create a sense of community for their in-house student community. A successful reward program is inclusive for all members of a community and helps with involving dissocialised students as well. Implementing this advice will create an everlasting connection between the student community and the client. In conclusion, acknowledging students for their contribution to the community through rewarding them will lead to a student community who will feel involved and connected with TSH.

It is recommended for TSH Amsterdam City to further research possibilities to involve students in the community. Furthermore, it is recommended to analyse the reward program and make adjustments based on the opinion of the involved stakeholders such as students or TSH staff. It is recommended to analyse possibilities to implement this reward program in TSH properties. Hence, the researcher recommends the client to let another researcher perform another thesis research to establish the best suitable reward program for all TSH locations. Such research will result in a reward program which is efficient and tailor-made for the client.

## Afterword

This afterword provides a reflection on the personal development, organisation, collaboration with stakeholders and planning of the process of this thesis report. Furthermore, the value of the thesis report for the hospitality industry is discussed.

### Reflection on own work

Reflecting on the past semester, I can say that it has been a challenging semester. It has been a semester where I had to work entirely alone. Furthermore, the COVID-19 crisis ensured that I had enough time to work on the thesis report. Nevertheless, the crisis leads also to that all (Saxion) trainees had to work from their home office. Therefore, I have not physically visited the company for two months. To enable a good collaboration with the client, I kept contact with the Assistant General Manager and General Manager of TSH Amsterdam City. Through skype calls, I updated them about which step of the process that I am in and if I needed any help. The extensive GANTT chart which I made for the thesis proposal contributed well and helped me to find structure during the past months. I even operationalised the steps in the GANTT chart for myself to make a daily to-do list for the thesis project. Per week I decided what to do on each day, which resulted in setting daily or weekly goals. This is probably one of the reasons why I was able to finish the thesis report far before the deadline. Working all on my own on such an extensive project was not new for me. In the past three study years, I did quite some research project on my own such as the quantitative research report or the business plan. During those projects, I knew that one day I had to write a thesis report. At that point, I decided to do some projects on my own to get a feeling of how to work individually. Therefore, I was able to follow the research set up strictly and even finished the thesis report two and a half weeks before the deadline.

During the past months, I improved my time management and project management. Time management was one of my weakest characteristics during the past four years, especially when I compare the thesis project with other projects such as the business plan or impact on events report. In the past two and a half months, I spent much time and effort on the thesis project. Therefore, the past months have been a process of eating, thesis writing, gym and repeat for me. Based on this, I think that I improved my time management during the thesis project. In the past months, I had difficulties in finding my intrinsic motivation since working for such a long time on the same project results in having a tough time at a certain point.

One of the remarks which I got during the thesis proposal defence was regarding my academical writing. In the past months, I spent much time on actual learning how to write on an academical level. This form of research taught me which words, expressions, or phrases are a taboo in academical writing. Previously, I would use many subjective words which led to biased language. Moreover, the writing style included much informal languages and was too elementary. Improving this has been a time-consuming part in the past months. Furthermore, the interviews revealed to me that I am not the best natural interviewer. During the interviews, I asked too much-closed questions. Receiving such a specific answer led to silence since I did not know which question to ask next. Asking more open question would have led to gaining more information and would be one thing which I should improve in future research.

The communication with my examiner, Tatiana Alekseeva, was excellent. During the thesis proposal semester, week 3.1 until 3.7, I had an occurring weekly meeting on Wednesday morning with her. During this meeting, we discussed my progress, any questions that I had and what I should improve. At the beginning of the semester, my examiner explained to me her conditions for the coming semester. She highlighted that before each meeting, she wanted to have the complete document that I was working on and especially the questions that I had. In the past months, I sent her this preparation

document at least 12 hours before the meeting to ensure an effective way of working. Hence, I ensured her that I was dedicated and wanted to finish the thesis project with the highest possible grade.

Based on the reflection, several learning goals are provided. These goals focus on my further development in the coming years.

- 1) When I work on a future project, I will set up a strict time management and all the steps that are included. These steps will be formulated in a GANTT chart. This will result in an overview of what I need to establish during a specific period.
- 2) This thesis project revealed me that writing and grammar are one of my weak points. I will develop my academical writing even more in the coming months and years.
- 3) I must work on my interview skills since I asked too much-closed questions. Therefore, I must gain more practical experience in interviewing people with open interviews guides.

### Relevance for the industry

In the coming decades, cities will increase their population size significantly due to the ongoing globalisation. The brain drain of the younger population from the countryside to the bigger cities will expand as well. Hence, these factors will lead to a considerable increase in the prices on the housing market as experienced in the past years in cities such as San Francisco, New York, London, or Amsterdam. However, this trend will continue in the coming years in each bigger city. Therefore, the demand for shared housing will increase since a generation with specific demands is looking for affordable housing. This increased demand will result in an opportunity for the hospitality industry and the shared housing market.

Therefore, this thesis report is relevant for hospitality companies that want to make adjustments in their business model to focus on this new generation of travellers. These should be hospitality companies, which have co-living as a core of its business model. This thesis report includes a detailed description on what the best way is to involve the future generation of travellers, Generation Z. The various interviews with students, which are a part of Generation Z, give an insight into their thoughts on the current co-living concept on one the fastest-growing European hotel chains of the past decade. For other companies, it is interesting to see how they can upgrade their business model to provide the members of Generation Z with all the layers of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. As explained, providing guests with these layers should be the focus of hospitality companies in the coming years. In the past years, Millennials were seeking for an unforgettable experience. Nevertheless, companies need to change this since the upcoming generation z is not only seeking for this unforgettable experience.

Moreover, this thesis research provides the hospitality industry insights into the needs and demands of this new generation of travellers. The results of this research demonstrate that this group requires to be involved and wants to have a say in the experience that the company is providing. Furthermore, the extensive results provide the best ways to involve the Generation Z population and makes it easier for hospitality companies to understand this demanding group of travellers. Therefore, it is wise to say that the contemporary hospitality industry can use the advice of this thesis report to involve their customer group. Furthermore, the research is especially relevant for the companies that provide accommodation for extended-stay guest. If these companies are currently just providing the essential two layers of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, then they must adjust their business model based on the results of this thesis research. In conclusion, the COVID-19 crisis revealed that the hospitality industry is fragile but flexible whenever necessary. This flexibility should be used to adapt quickly to the needs of this new generation of traveller. Lastly, this research differentiates from earlier research due to the specific research population. The combination of co-living & Generation Z has not been researched yet, especially not in the hospitality context. Therefore, this research is a valuable contribution to literature focused on the hospitality industry.

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# Appendices

## Appendix I: Search terms and search engines

### Search engines

- Google Scholar
- Taylor & Francis
- Google Books
- Saxion Library
- ScienceDirect
- SpringerLink

The search terms underneath are used for the search process via google scholar. Furthermore, only up-to-date sources are used. Therefore, a custom range from 2010–2020 is applied.

### Search terms to find information about the definition of Guest experience

Search term	Search result	Search term	Search result
Definition of experience	2.030.000	Guest experience	519.000
"Experience Definition"	1.470	Customer experience	1.450.000
"Definition Experience"	1.060	Definition of guest experience	118.000
"Experience" AROUND (5) "Definition"	1.980.000	Definition of customer experience	910.000
What is guest experience	509.000	What is an experience	1.610.000
Experience defined	1.960.000	Definition of the term experience	1.510.000

### Search terms to find information about Guest experience

Search term	Search result	Search term	Search result
Guest experience technology	99.700	Aspects of Guest experience	97.400
Dimensions of an experience	2.070.000	Hotel guest experience	25.000
Student experience aspects	1.730.000	Student experience	2.060.000
Dimensions of guest experience	48.200	Guest experience AND hospitality	26.200
Experiential dimensions	147.000	Guest experience AND Generation Z	42.100
Dimensions of customer experience	694.000	What is experience for Generation Z	756.000
Experience preferences Generation Z	48.400	Preferences Generation Z AND experience	20.900

### Search terms to find information about the definition of Co-living

Search term	Search result	Search term	Search result
Definition of co-living	2.330	Co-living defined	2.190
What is co-living	2.870	Co-living definition	2.430
Co-housing	10.500		

Search terms to find information about the definition of co-living

Search term	Search result	Search term	Search result
Dimensions of Co-living	919	Aspects of Co-living	1.510
Co-living AND benefits	1.130	Co-living AND technology	1.320
Co-living AND sustainability	735	Design of co-living spaces	898

Literature which is used for the snowball method:

Ataman, C., & Gursel Dino, I. (2019). Collective residential spaces in sustainability development:

Turkish housing unites within Co-living understanding. *SBE19 Milan - Resilient Built Environment for Sustainable Mediterranean Countries*. Milan: IOP Publishing.

Arrigoitia, M. F. (2015). *Islington Park Street Community: a model for alternative housing in London*. London: Associate Professorial Research Fellow - LSE London.

Gurel, C., & Walls, A. (2016). Understanding the Customer Experiences from the perspectives of guests and hotel managers: Empirical findings from luxury hotels in Istanbul, Turkey. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 395-424.

## Appendix II: Evaluation of literature via the AAOCC-criteria

The AAOCC-criteria indicates if a source is trustworthy and useful for the literature review. This could be any source, which is found through the search engines which are mentioned in Appendix I.

Underneath it is elaborated what the various dimensions of this criteria indicate:

AAOCC-criteria and meaning	Meaning for the thesis
Authority > To what extend is the author trustworthy and competent?	The publication should be written by researchers who affiliated to a university or research institute. Furthermore, these persons should have at least a master's degree in their field of expertise.
Accuracy > What is de validity and reliability of the author(s) publication?	The author of the publication should base his findings or information on other relevant literature sources.
Objectivity > Does the author have any personal significance in this publication?	The author of the publication should use sources which do not have any personal significance for him or her.
Currency > Is the information in the publication up to date?	For the literature review, only sources will be used which are connected to current, timely and recent findings relating to the hospitality sector. Moreover, the source should not be older than ten years (2010).
Coverage > Is the information in the publication complete, relevant, and unique?	Only sources will be used which are relevant for the research. Furthermore, the theme of the source should (partly) cover the research subject.

In the tables underneath it is illustrated how the researchers used the AAOCC –criteria to assess the quality of a founded source. There are two types of sources elaborated, one for co-living and one for guest experience.

### Co-living

Ataman, C., & Gursel Dino, I. (2019). Collective residential spaces in sustainability development: Turkish housing unites within Co-living understanding. *SBE19 Milan – Resilient Built Environment for Sustainable Mediterranean Countries*. Milan: IOP Publishing.

Authority	Ipek Gürsel Dino is a professor and researcher at the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey. She has published a variety of articles in the past two decades, with a focus on architectural design & energy performance in households. She is an authority in her branch, also due to the distinction that she receives from fellow researchers and professors. Cem Ataman is the co-author of this article since he recently got his Master of Architecture degree.
Accuracy	Information in the publication of the authors is based on relevant and reliable literature. This literature is later demonstrated in a bibliography, which is also used for the snowball method. Based on this bibliography, the researcher was able to verify that the references in the literature were precise.
Objectivity	Gürsel Dino is doing much research in her fields of expertise, not only for her university. In various publications of (international) researchers, she is a co-author in the field of design engineering. Her (own) articles are published in various scientific journals such as Journal of computing in civil engineering or Renewable Energy. Furthermore, she is a popular speaker on (international) conferences. During these conferences, she talks about different subjects such as smarter usage of objects or renewable energy in modern housings.
Currency	In this publication, there are several aspects mentioned which are relevant for the research. The author compares the aspects in this publication with other literature over co-living & architecture. The findings

	where she is referring to in her publication is timely since those findings are just recently published (2018). Other authors also refer her publication in her field of expertise in the past year. Furthermore, the source is just published a few months ago and is entirely up to date.
Coverage	Her publication provides a broad overview of what co-living exactly is, with several new insights. In her article, she presents information which was already known by the researcher. Furthermore, she also provides more in-depth insights about the specific dimensions of co-living. Therefore, the information of the researcher is not unique. Nevertheless, this publication is relevant for the research due to the amount of new insights.

### Guest experience

Pine, J., & Gilmore, J. (2011). *The experience economy*. Boston: Harvard Business Review Press.

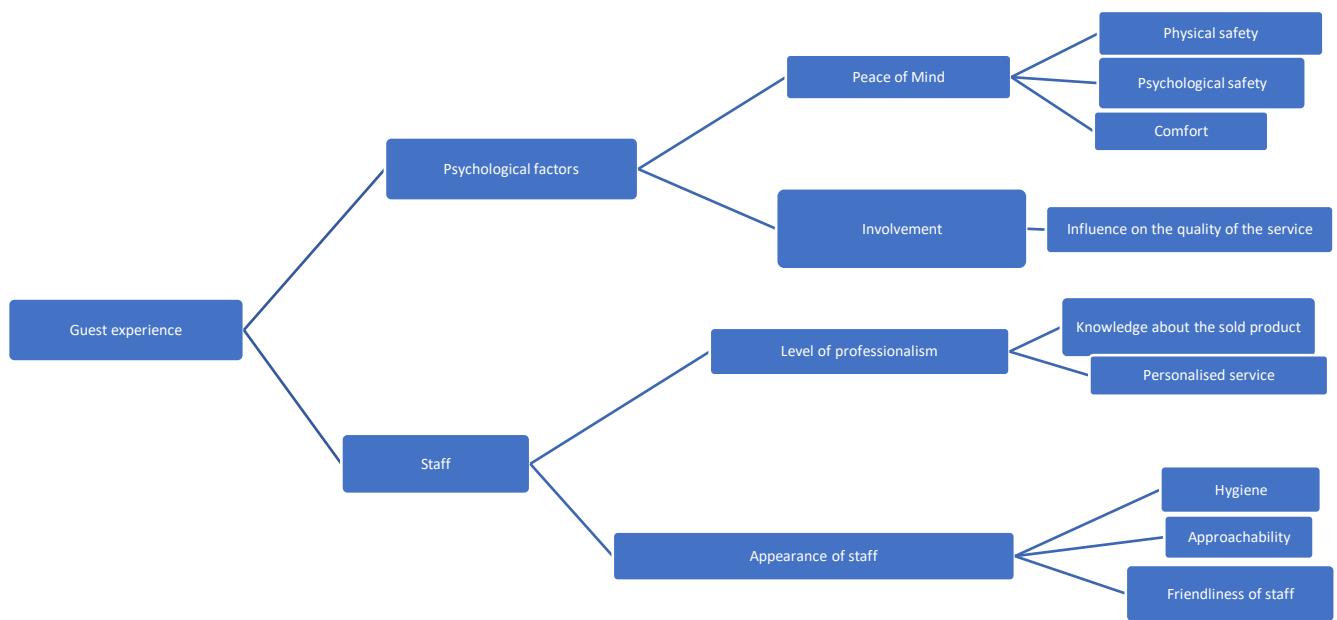
Authority	The authors are head-researchers & professors at universities in the United States that have articles published in several scientific journals. Therefore, the authors are an authority in their field of expertise (Tourism management).
Accuracy	De information which is presented in the publication is based on scientific sources. Therefore, for the researcher it was convertible based on which sources the text was written.
Objectivity	They have both published several books and articles about behavioural intentions of customers, (customer) experience and consumer behaviour. The books are praised by the literature world and are used as reference materials by (international) researchers. Moreover, their articles got published in recommended scientific journals such as Harvard Business press and Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly. Therefore, their book is objective.
Currency	The book has value for the whole hospitality branch. It is focused on the experience industry. Nevertheless, it can also be used for the hotel industry. Their books regarding the experience economy is more than 15.000 times referred in other scientific publications or books. The authors publish each couple of years a revised version of this book, to keep it up to date. In these new versions, also new material is presented, which has a secure connection with recent findings in the fast-changing hospitality sector. This book is more than relevant and entirely up to date, based on this information.
Coverage	This book provides complete information about experiences in the contemporary economy. Therefore, it offers only new insights into the dimensions of an experience. Furthermore, it also describes in an objective way why an experience has much value for a customer. Therefore, this book is relevant to the research.

### Appendix III: Operationalisation of the core concepts

#### Operationalisation: Tree diagram – Co-living



Operationalisation: Tree diagram – Guest experience



## Appendix IV: Sample in-depth interviews

### Nationalities

#### Per country

Country	Amount of students	Percentage
Argentina	1	0,39%
Australia	1	0,39%
Austria	2	0,77%
Belarus	2	0,77%
Belgium	4	1,54%
Brazil	5	1,90%
Bulgaria	2	0,77%
China	9	3,50%
Croatia	2	0,77%
Cyprus	1	0,39%
Ecuador	4	1,54%
Egypt	5	1,93%
France	11	4,25%
Germany	16	6,20%
Greece	1	0,39%
Hong Kong	1	0,39%
Hungary	3	1,16%
India	5	1,90%
Ireland	3	1,16%
Italy	19	7,34%
Japan	3	1,16%
Jordan	1	0,39%
Kazakhstan	2	0,77%
Republic of Korea	11	4,25%

Nationalities	Amount of students	Percentage
Kuwait	1	0,39%
Kyrgyzstan	1	0,39%
Latvia	1	0,39%
Lithuania	1	0,39%
Luxembourg	1	0,39%
Mexico	3	1,16%
Netherlands	11	4,25%
Paraguay	1	0,39%
Poland	4	1,54%
Portugal	1	0,38%
Romania	5	1,90%
Russian Federation	2	0,77%
Saudia Arabia	1	0,38%
Slovakia	2	0,77%
South Africa	2	0,77%
Spain	10	3,86%
Switzerland	1	0,38%
Thailand	3	1,16%
Turkey	10	3,86%
UAE	1	0,39%
Ukraine	9	3,47%
UK	12	4,63%
USA	61	23,56%
Uzbekistan	1	0,39%

#### Per Continent

Continent	Amount of students	Percentage	Percent	Calculation	Focus group
Europe	124	0,479	47,88%	0,479 * 6 = 2,87	3
South America	11	0,042	4,25%	0,042 * 6 = 0,25	
North America	64	0,247	24,71%	0,247 * 6 = 1,48	2
Oceania	1	0,004	0,39%	0,004 * 6 = 0,02	
Asia	52	0,201	20,08%	0,201 * 6 = 1,20	1
Africa	7	0,027	2,70%	0,027 * 6 = 0,16	
Total	259	100,00%	100,00%		6

### Gender

	Amount of students	Percentage	Percent	Calculation	Focus group
Male	120	0,463	46,33%	0,463 * 6 = 2,78	3
Female	143	0,552	55,21%	0,552 * 6 = 3,31	3
Total	259				6

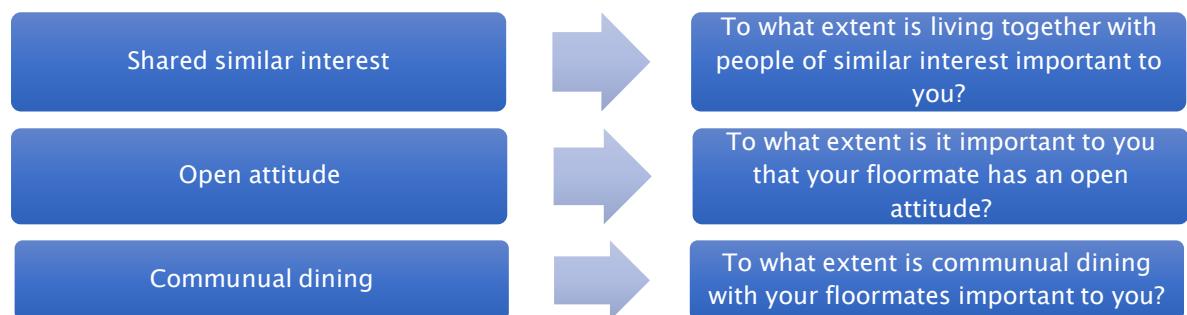
### Age

	Amount of students	Percentage	Percent	Calculation	Focus group
24 & 25	13	0,050	5,02%	0,05 * 6 = 0,3	
22 & 23	33	0,127	12,74%	0,127 * 6 = 0,762	1
20 & 21	112	0,432	43,24%	0,432 * 6 = 2,592	3
18 & 19	94	0,363	36,29%	0,363 * 6 = 2,178	2
16 & 17	7	0,027	2,70%	0,027 * 6 = 0,162	
Total	259	100,00%	100,00%		6

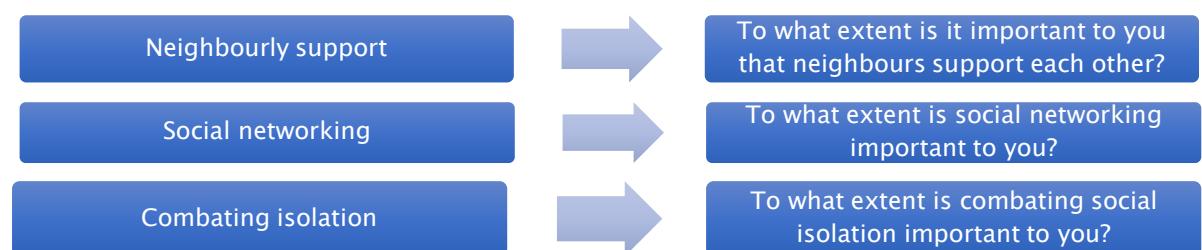
## Appendix V: Operationalisation to Questionnaire

Based on the operationalisation of the core concepts, the questionnaire is made. The operationalisation of the core concepts can be found back in Appendix III.

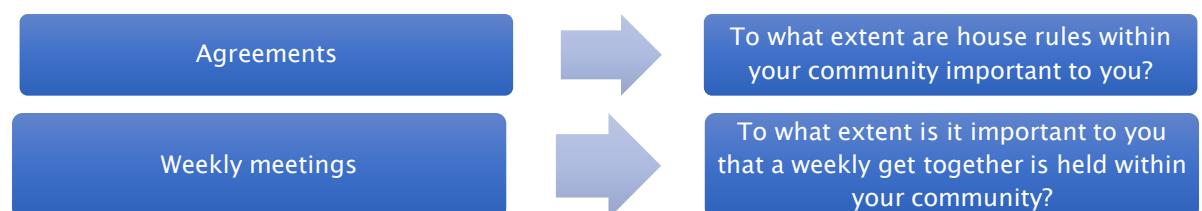
### Live with like-minded



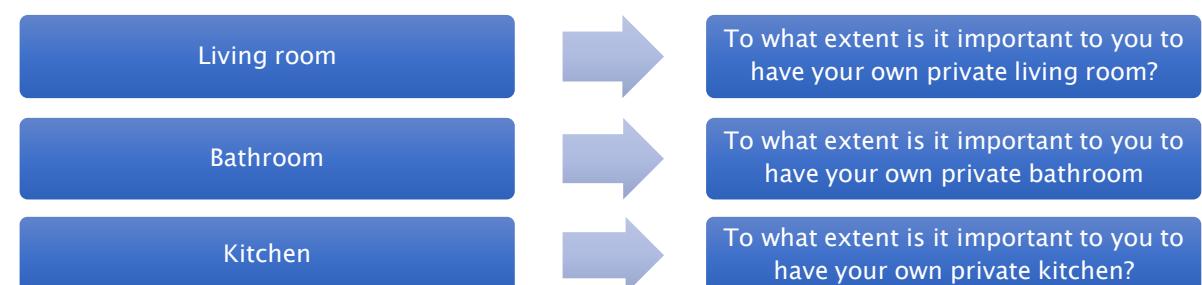
### Social interaction



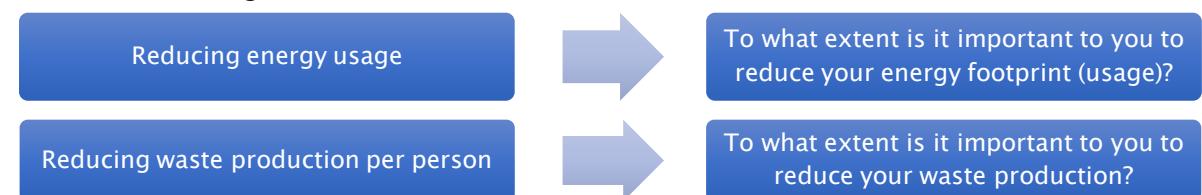
### Standard rules & regulations



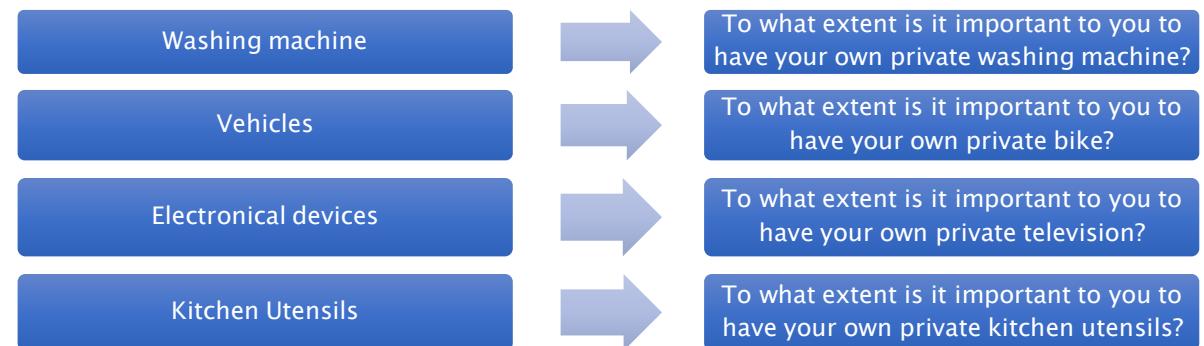
### Sharing facilities



### Sustainable advantages



#### Shared items

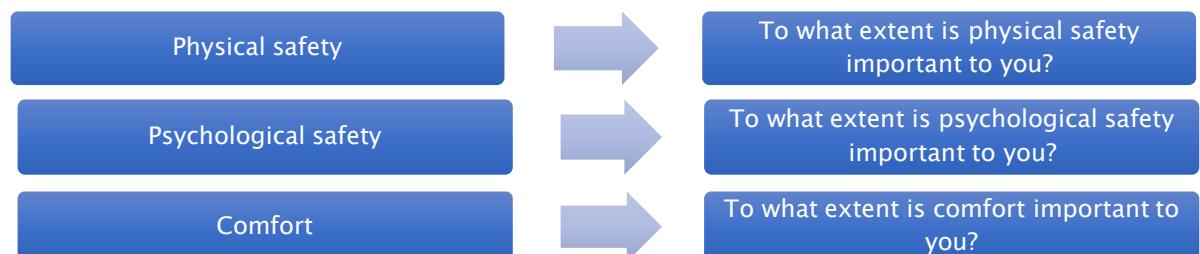


#### Flexible housing contracts



#### Guest experience

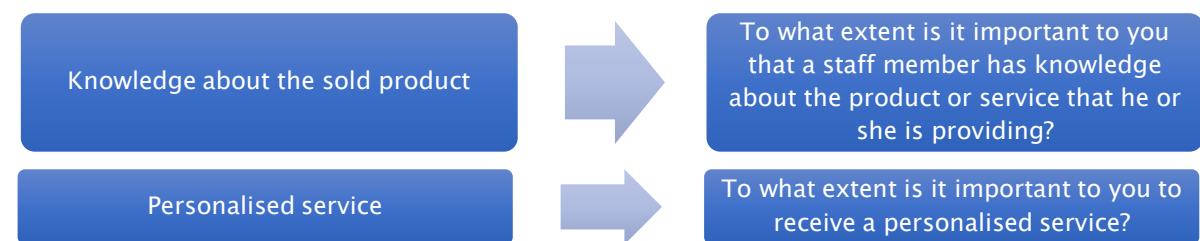
##### Piece of mind



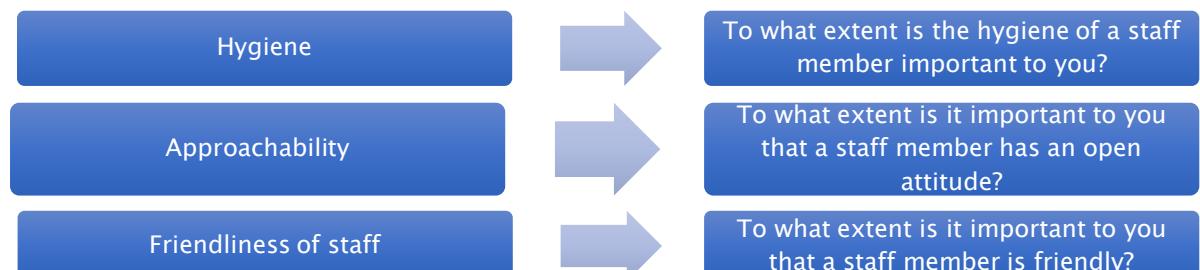
##### Involvement



##### Level of professionalism



##### Appearance of staff



Appendix VI: Introduction letter to questionnaire

# THE STUDENT HOTEL

Hi there,

*Crazy times, right? These are times where everything comes to stagnation. Nevertheless, these are also times which can be used to reflect upon anything. Therefore, we would love to hear your opinion about co-living. Therefore, reflection within The Student Hotel Amsterdam City can happen as well. It would be awesome if you could take 2 minutes to fill in this online survey about the co-living concept of this extraordinary hotel.*

*The survey is part of a Hotel management thesis project. I will use the results of this survey for further qualitative research. You have might seen me (Luca) wandering around in the hotel. Currently, I am working super hard to (hopefully) graduate this year. You would help me by filling in this survey.*

*The outcome of this survey will help me to write an advice on the co-living concept of The Student Hotel Amsterdam City. Furthermore, in this survey you will find questions about subjects that influence the perceived experience of a guest.*

*By filling in the questionnaire as truthfully as possible, you help as well to improve the co-living concept of this awesome hotel. This survey is anonymous, and the individual results will be treated confidential as such.*

*By scanning the QR code underneath, you will reach the online survey.*

*Once again, thanks for taking the time to complete this survey.*

*Cheers and warm regards,*

*Luca Wallner (General Manager trainee The Student Hotel Amsterdam City)*

SCAN ME



## Appendix VII: Questionnaire

The questionnaire underneath was created to represent as honestly as possible the original Qualtrics questionnaire. A line is representing a page break. This is done to indicate that questions about a new subject are coming.

### **Small introduction to questionnaire**

Hey, glad to see that you want to take part in this research. I would like to know what you honestly think about co-living and guest experience. By filling in this quick survey, you are an amazing help!

### **Demographic questions**

#### Gender

I identify my gender as (open question):

What is your age?

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

Not applicable

What is your nationality (open question)?

---

In this questionnaire, you can find various questions about parts of two subjects: Co-living and Guest experience.

Please fill in for all question how important this is for you on a Likert scale from 1 to 7. Underneath you can find the meaning of this scale:

1 = Not at all important

2 = Low importance

3 = Slightly important

4 = Neutral

5 = Moderately important

6 = Very important

7= Extremely important

## **Co-living**

### Living with like-minded & Social interaction

To what extent are the following subjects important to you?

- *Living together with people of similar interest*

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

- *Communal dining with my floormates*

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

- *That my floormate has an open attitude*

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

- *Neighbours that support each other*

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

- *Social networking*

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

- *Combating social isolation*

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

### Rules & regulations

To what extent are house rules within your community important to you?

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

To what extent is it important to you that a weekly get together is held within your community?

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

### Shared facilities & items

To what extent are the following facilities or items important to you?

- *Your own private kitchen*

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

- *Your own private bathroom*

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

- *Your own private living room*

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

- *Your own (private) washing machine*

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

- *Your own (private) bike*

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

- *Your own (private) television*

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

- *Your own (private) kitchen utensils (cutlery, pans etc.)*

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

### Co-living & sustainable advantages

To what extent are the following subjects important to you?

- *To reduce your energy footprint (usage)*

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

- *To reduce your waste production*

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

### Contracts

To what extent is it important to you to have a flexible housing contract?

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

The features underneath are sub-aspects of Guest experience. Once again, please rate the importance.

1 = Not at all important

2 = Low importance

3 = Slightly important

4 = Neutral

5 = Moderately important

6 = Very important

7 = Extremely important

### **Guest experience**

#### Peace of mind

To what extent are the following subjects important to you?

- *Physical safety*

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

- *Psychological safety*

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

- *Comfort*

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

#### Involvement

To what extent is it important to you to influence the quality of a chosen service?

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

#### Staff – Level of professionalism

To what extent is it important to you that a staff member has knowledge about the product or service that he or she is providing?

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

To what extent is it important to you to receive a personalised service? (\*A personalised service is tailored to your specific needs and expectations).

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

#### Staff – Appearance of staff

The following subjects are part of the appearance of a staff member. Please rate the importance of the topic for you.

- *Hygiene*

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

- *Approachability (Approachable attitude)*

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

- *Friendliness*

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

I want to thank you for every eyeblink that you have invested in this research. You are a Rockstar!

## Appendix VIII: Results Questionnaire

### Demographics

Gender	Quantity
Male	70
Female	73
Nonbinary	1
Total	144

Age	Quantity
16	1
17	4
18	13
19	31
20	28
21	24
22	15
23	13
24	7
25	5
Not applicable	1
Total	144

Per country	
Country	Amount of respondents
Argentina	
Australia	1
Austria	3
Belarus	1
Belgium	4
Brazil	3
Bulgaria	2
Colombia	1
China	5
Croatia	2
Cyprus	1
Czech Republic	1
Ecuador	1
Egypt	3
France	4
Germany	7
Greece	
Hong Kong	
Hungary	2
Indonesia	1
India	4
Ireland	3
Israel	1
Italy	11
Japan	2
Jordan	1
Kazakhstan	1
Republic of Korea	7

Country	Amount of respondents
Kuwait	
Kyrgyzstan	
Latvia	
Lithuania	1
Luxembourg	
Mexico	3
Netherlands	3
Paraguay	
Philippines	
Poland	3
Portugal	1
Romania	2
Russian Federation	1
Saudia Arabia	
Slovakia	1
Slovenia	1
South Africa	4
Spain	4
Sweden	2
Switzerland	2
Thailand	1
Turkey	10
UAE	
Ukraine	3
UK	3
USA	27
Uzbekistan	
Total	144

### Co-living

Aspect	Mean	Standard deviation
<i>Live with like minded</i>		
Shared similar interest	<b>4.93</b>	1.38
Open attitude	<b>5.36</b>	1.27
Communal dining	4.34	1.53
<i>Social interaction</i>		
Neighbourly support	<b>5.26</b>	1.28
Social networking	4.83	1.40
Combating isolation	<b>5.21</b>	1.32
<i>Standard rules &amp; regulations</i>		
Weekly meeting	3.99	1.60
Agreements	<b>5.38</b>	1.16
<i>Sharing facilities</i>		
Living room	4.27	1.74

Bathroom	<b>6.24</b>	1.19
Kitchen	4.34	1.69
<i>Sustainable advantages</i>		
Reducing energy usage	4.86	1.47
Reducing waste production per person	4.82	1.53
<i>Shared items</i>		
Washing machine	3.82	1.82
Vehicles	4.87	1.82
Electronical devices	3.86	2.05
Kitchen utensils	<b>5.68</b>	1.48
<i>Flexible housing contract</i>	<b>5.39</b>	1.19

#### Guest experience

Aspect	Mean	Standard deviation
<i>Peace of Mind</i>		
Physical safety	<b>5.99</b>	1.24
Psychological safety	<b>5.80</b>	1.19
Comfort	<b>5.96</b>	1.04
<i>Involvement</i>		
Influence on the quality of the service	<b>5.20</b>	1.13
<i>Level of professionalism</i>		
Knowledge about the sold product	<b>5.83</b>	1.13
Personalised service	4.73	1.27
<i>Appearance of the staff</i>		
Hygiene	<b>5.93</b>	1.21
Approachability	<b>5.80</b>	1.23
Friendliness of staff	<b>5.83</b>	1.10

## Appendix IX: Interview guide – Interview with students

### Introduction

- Thank the interviewee for participating.
- Short introduction about yourself and an introduction of the thesis study (why the thesis study is happening, the outcome of the thesis study and the purpose of this interview).
- Explanation about the reasoning of the interview, the topics that will be discussed and the desired length of the interview.
- Ask if there are any questions before the interview.

Opening question:

- Why did you choose to live at TSH?

### Topic 1: Community – Open attitude

When I say community, what is the first finding what comes for you to mind?

- Attention points:
  - Being part of a community
  - Student preferences towards community formation
  - The need for community & social interaction

### Topic 2: Housing contract

In your opinion, which changes should TSH make to the current housing contracts?

- Attention points
  - More flexibility in the current housing contracts

### Topic 3: Community – Combating social isolation

Example: One of your floormates does not take part in the community life and is socially isolating herself/himself. How would you combat such a social isolation?

- Attention points
  - Forcing students to participate
  - Ways for TSH to involve this type of people

### Topic 4: House rules

What do you think of the current house rules of TSH City?

- Attention points
  - Agreements made at the beginning of a semester
  - Agreements that did not work or should be added.

### Topic 5: Facilities

Which facilities are you currently missing in the hotel?

- Attention points
  - Adding or removing (communal) facilities
  - Communal living spaces like a living room
  - Sharing (communal) facilities or items with fellow students
  - Facilities or items that create a comfortable living environment

### Topic 6: Community – Living together with people of similar interest

Would you prefer to live together with people of similar interest?

- Attention points
  - Characteristics of people that students would like to live together
  - The ideal characteristics of fellow students or floormates
  - Expectations in terms of attitude when students are living together

### Topic 7: Community – Neighbours that support each other

How would you describe your current relationship with your direct floor neighbour at TSH City?

- Attention points

Creating harmony between students  
Tensions between students

### Topic 8: Peace of mind

What factors provide you a safe feeling?

- Attention points

Comfortable living environment  
Psychological & Physical safety  
Ways to increase safety  
Feeling at home at TSH City

### Topic 9: Involvement

What does it take to personally involve you?

- Attention points

Ideal ways to involve students in general  
Students expectation on how they want to participate or be involved  
Offering of activities that help students to participate.

### Topic 10: Staff

How can the TSH staff contributes to the formation of a student community?

- Attention points

Differences between staff & students  
Approachability & friendliness of staff  
Personalisation of guests

### Finish off:

- Let the interviewee know that the interview is coming to an end.
- Summarise the important findings of the interview.
- Ask the interviewee if he has any further questions or unclarities.
- Explain the interviewee the further procedure of the thesis, such as analysing the interviews and using the output for the advice.
- Thank the interviewee for the cooperation and wish a pleasant day.

## Appendix X: Interview guide – Expert interviews

### Introduction

- Thank the interviewee for participating.
- Short introduction about yourself and an introduction of the thesis study (why the thesis study is happening, the outcome of the thesis study and the purpose of this interview)
- Explanation about the reasoning of the interview, the topics that will be discussed and the desired length of the interview.
- Ask if there are any questions before the interview.

### Opening questions

- Could you quickly introduce your company?
- How is your company differentiating from other co-living companies?

### Topic 1: Community – Open attitude

What are the specific characteristics that you are looking for in a \* member?

#### Attention points:

Organising the community life  
Bringing people together in the communal areas

### Topic 2: Housing contract

Why did \* chose to offer this type of housing contracts?

#### Attention points:

Flexible housing contract  
Cancelled contracts  
Additional services of facilities which are not included in housing contract  
Complementary services

### Topic 3: Community – Combating social isolation

Example: A person does not take part in the community life and is socially isolating herself/himself.

How is \* combating this social isolation?

#### Attention points:

Encouraging guests to be social  
Forcing guests to participate  
Ways to involve this type of people

### Topic 4: House rules

Which house rules can be found at the \* property?

#### Attention points:

Members breaking house rules

### Topic 5: Facilities (Bathroom & Kitchen utensils)

What are the facilities which can be found within a \* room?

#### Attention points:

Reasoning behind some shared facilities  
Types of (communal) facilities  
Usage of (communal) facilities  
(Communal) facilities that has been removed or added, reasoning behind this.

### Topic 6: Community – Living together with people of similar interest

At the start of a study semester, how are you allocating the students over the rooms?

#### Attention points:

People of similar interest should be living together  
Ways to create a community of like-minded people

Selecting people which fit in the co-living community

Topic 7: Peace of mind

What are you guys doing to create comfort for the co-living members?

Attention points:

- Physical & Physiological safety
- A comfortable & safe living environment

Topic 8: Involvement

How is \* involving their guests in the co-living community?

Attention points:

- Ways to motivate guests to participate in the community life actively
- Offering of activities to involve people
- Motivational tools for involvement

Topic 9: Staff

How is your staff contributing to your co-living concept?

Attention points:

- Approachability & friendliness of staff
- Personalisation of guests
- Contribution to community

Finish off:

- Let the interviewee know that the interview is coming to an end.
- Summarise the important findings of the interview.
- Ask the interviewee if he has any further questions or unclarities.
- Explain the interviewee the further procedure of the thesis, such as analysing the interviews and using the output for the advice.
- Thank the interviewee for the cooperation.
- Wish the interviewee a pleasant day.

## Appendix XI: Example transcripts

### Transcript example student interview

2212 [REDACTED] Oh, yeah, I know the party it has been always there. But I think maybe the other way the  
2213 courses are something, like for people who wants to learn.  
2214 Luca: Yeah, yeah. Good. Cool. So continue talking about that student community. Yeah, what would  
2215 you personally change in the student community to make it better?  
2216 [REDACTED] Well, I think it's the most basic things, a kind of like fair participation from everybody. And  
2217 I think there is no way we can do that. It's kind of hard, so The Student Hotel is already doing very  
2218 well. And because I've lived on two floors, I've lived for six months in one floor and the six months in  
2219 another floor. So these two floors are very different from each other. The first one few neighbours  
2220 hated each other. [REDACTED] The kitchen, like was full of tension every day. And some people would not stick to  
2221 their schedule. While the other, which I am currently in, everybody is friends with everybody, they  
2222 always have meetings in their kitchen. So I think after all, it's kind of if everybody got well together or  
2223 not. So maybe the parties that The Student Hotel is doing. The floor hero, for instance, they can do  
2224 that, they can have like parties every two weeks, every few weeks. But after all, if like there were few  
2225 problems in between the neighbours. I think that would be okay. Wait, I have a suggestion, maybe if  
2226 they get feedback from the students. Like every month when they want to pay and pay the rent or  
2227 whatever. Because I don't remember receiving any survey or yeah, surveys would help a lot.  
2228 Especially on the monthly basis, like not when the contract ends. Because there would be to late  
2229 then. Or maybe on a monthly basis. You're going to have enough data to analyse what do they want  
2230 to be better, depends on the floor. Not generally because it's hard to do that general.  
2231 Luca: Good, because I heard you talking that you had differences between the first and second floor.

- LW Luca Wallner Creating a reward system
- LW Luca Wallner Issues between students
- LW Luca Wallner Having feedback sessions with students
- LW Luca Wallner Forming a community on a floor

### Transcript example expert interview

2643 [REDACTED] So we also have long stay accommodation, which is similar to social housing. So people can  
2644 stay their entire school period with us, which is called a campus contract. But we also have the short  
2645 stay, which is more similar than The Student Hotel. And I think that a big difference is that we really  
2646 have restrictions at who stays with us. So somebody who stays with us either has to be a student, so  
2647 enrolled within an university. So if he's not a student, then has to be no older than 28. So we are  
2648 really focusing on keeping this community likeminded, so people have the same activities and  
2649 interests in life.  
2650 Luca: So are you really focusing on one specific type of students?  
2651 [REDACTED] No, not a specific type students. It's just all students are welcome. But, well, if you only focus  
2652 on students or young people, you're more likely to have a likeminded community.  
2653 Luca: Cool so it's really only the students that are coming together there. And for example, what are  
2654 specific characteristics that you're looking for in a student that is living at your place at [REDACTED]  
2655 [REDACTED] Characteristics?  
2656 Luca: Yeah.  
2657 [REDACTED] Well, it's not really that we're focusing on characteristics. Because well, the most people who  
2658 book with us, we don't see them face to face before they book. Unless they are coming for a viewing  
2659 when they're already in the Netherlands. So it's hard to see characteristics by communicating  
2660 through email or on the phone. So I don't think there's any focus on this with us. But I think that we  
2661 are a great fit for people who are, the characters social and like a healthy lifestyle. I think that fits to  
2662 the company. But it's not that we are not looking for people with certain kind of characteristics.  
2663 Luca: Cool, alright. So I heard you talking about your housing contracts. So are these the only housing  
2664 contracts which you offer? Or do you have more of these?  
2665 [REDACTED] No it's two. So it's a short stay, which is a maximum of six months and long stay or campus  
2666 contracts, which is a minimum of six months.  
2667 Luca: So what are you doing when a person for example, cancels his contract earlier?  
2668 [REDACTED] So we do when if people want to cancel the contract earlier? With the short stay contract  
2669 they cannot. Because there's a set of first starting date and an end date. So they have a contract for a  
2670 fixed duration, so it's not cancellable. And with the campus contracts, it's the first six months that is  
2671 not cancellable. And afterwards it becomes monthly cancellable.

- LW Luca Wallner Finding like-minded people
- LW Luca Wallner A person's ideal characteristics for co-living
- LW Luca Wallner A fixed housing contract

## Appendix XII: Coding table

The table underneath illustrates the axial codes, open codes, and line numbers per sub-core concept.

Sub-core concept	Axial code	Open code	Interviewee	Line number in text
Community	<b>Agreements &amp; Regulations</b>	Agreements made by students	Student 5	417–418
			Student 4	603–605, 617–618, 782–783
			Student 2	1202–1205, 1211–1212
			Student 1	1660–1663
			Student 3	2458–2459
		Issues about cleanliness	Student 5	427–429
			Student 4	734–735, 791–793
			Student 2	940–941
			Student 1	1636–1639, 1663–1666
		Issues between students	Student 2	1232–1233, 1645–1648
			Student 1	1578–1581
			Student 3	2240–2241, 2452–2454, 2466–2468
		Ways to combat issues on a floor	Student 1	1513–1515
	<b>Combating isolation</b>	Guest that do not want to be involved in the community life	Student 5	86–88
			Student 4	690, 697–701
			Student 1	1382–1383, 1386–1387, 1629–1630
			Expert 3	1995–1998
			Expert 2	3821–3824
		Do not pressure people to participate	Expert 3	1837–1839, 1978–1979, 1984–1985, 1999–2000, 2018–2019
			Student 3	2158–2161, 2505–2508, 2533–2534
			Expert 6	2740–2741
			Expert 5	3141–3143, 3148–3150,
			Expert 1	3453–3456
		Introvert people	Student 5	148–150, 259–262, 270–272
			Student 2	925–926
		People that are dissocialising	Student 1	1479–1481, 1483–1484
		Ways to prevent social isolation	Student 4	680–682
			Student 1	1499–1500
			Student 3	2537–2540, 2548–2552
			Expert 5	3147–3148
			Expert 2	3824–3829
Shared similar interest	<b>Allocating students over rooms</b>	Allocating students over rooms	Student 5	290–293, 298–301
			Student 4	583–584
			Student 3	2297–2299, 2308–2310, 2315–2316
			Expert 6	2862–2866
			Expert 5	3248–3251
		Community formation through linking people together	Expert 4	3051–3053
		Cultural differences	Expert 1	3477–3483
			Student 5	268–270, 301–305, 321–323

			Student 3	2201–2202
	Finding like-minded people		Student 4	576–578
			Student 2	1008–1009
			Student 1	1373–1374
			Expert 6	2647–2649
	Interaction students & coworking community		Student 5	126–132, 138–140
	Platform to get to know other people		Student 1	1315–1316
	Preferences when students are living together		Student 5	393–399
			Student 4	599–600
			Student 2	983–984, 986, 988–990
			Student 1	1539–1544
			Student 3	2321–2322, 2329–2330
	Similar nationalities connect people		Student 1	1529–1532
	Stereotyping nationalities		Student 5	279–281, 285–287
			Student 3	2304–2305
	Survey to determine a person his characteristics		Student 4	698–702
			Student 1	1520–1525
			Expert 5	3103–3106, 3301–3305, 3307–3312,
			Expert 1	3554–3447, 3456–3459
	<b>Open attitude</b>	A person his ideal characteristics for co-living	Student 5	55–56, 196–197, 247
			Student 4	541
			Expert 3	1844–1845, 1866–1869, 1873–1878
			Student 3	2146–2147
			Expert 6	2661–2662
			Expert 4	3023–3024, 3048–3050, 3053–3055
	Characteristics of people who are willing to participate in the community		Student 5	145–148
			Student 1	1471–1473
			Expert 1	3451–3453
	Interested in community formation		Student 5	72–73
	<b>Social networking</b>	A need in belonging to a community	Student 3	2151–2153
			Expert 2	3755–3762
	Activities that help to form a community		Student 5	221–222, 225–226, 231–240, 319–321
			Student 4	532–533
			Expert 6	2709–2712

			Expert 4	2903–2907, 2944–2945, 2974–2978, 3038–3039
			Expert 5	3116–3117, 3123–3124, 3294–3298
			Expert 1	3407–3411, 3471–3474,
			Expert 2	3782–3784, 3787–3789, 3794–3796, 3854–3859
	Communication channels that increase the formation of a community.		Expert 4	2957–2961
			Expert 2	3910–3914
	Community formation with locals		Expert 3	1813–1816, 1939–1343, 1946–1949, 1953–1956, 2086–2089
			Expert 4	2909–2913, 2942–2944
			Expert 1	3620–3624
	Events which attracts all students		Student 5	95–97
	Formation of a community on a floor		Student 5	202–205, 206–208, 213–214, 254–256
			Student 4	523–526, 566–567, 627–629, 657–659, 669–670,
			Student 2	1014–1015, 1019–1021, 1179–1182
			Student 1	1367–1371
			Student 3	2153–2154, 2229–2230, 2462, 2508–2509
	Improvements of activities		Student 5	103–105
			Student 1	1405–1408
	Integration into an international community		Student 4	588–589
			Expert 6	2730–2732
			Expert 4	2967–2971, 3042–3043
	Items that bring people together		Student 5	184–187, 200–201
			Expert 5	3118–3120, 3292–3293
	Reasons for students to participate		Student 5	121–123
	Student preferences in activities		Student 5	111–114, 116–121
			Student 4	537–539
			Student 2	977–979
			Student 1	1389–1391
	Ways that help people integrate easier		Student 4	549–551, 553–554
			Student 2	1294–1250
			Student 3	2204–2207
			Expert 6	2712–2716, 2727–2730, 2738–2740
			Expert 2	3767–3771, 3797–3801, 3958–3966
	Ways to form a community		Student 5	210–211
			Student 1	1438–1440
			Student 3	2207–2209
			Expert 1	3483–3487

Sub-core concept	Axial code	Open code	Interviewee	Line number in text
<b>Housing</b>	<b>Housing contract</b>	A fixed housing contract	Expert 6	2668–2671, 2684–2686
		Flexible housing contract	Expert 3	2054–2056
			Expert 5	3187–3191
			Expert 1	3425–3427
		Offering a flexible basic housing contract	Student 3	2569–2571, 2573–2575, 2577–2580, 2583–2590, 2592–2600
			Expert 1	3661–3665
	<b>Shared facilities &amp; items</b>	A smart use of available space	Expert 1	3569–3570
			Expert 2	3734–3735
		Disadvantages of shared facilities	Expert 6	2779–2780
		Facilities that bring people together	Student 5	152–155, 178, 188–189
			Student 4	559–561, 635–636
			Student 2	1146, 1148–1149
			Student 1	1452–1455, 1614–1615
			Expert 3	2107–2110
			Expert 6	2796, 2799–2802
			Expert 5	3327–3329
			Expert 1	3602–3609
			Expert 2	3835–3853
	Improvements on shared facilities		Student 5	333–338, 341–345, 356–358, 435–439
			Student 4	721–723
			Student 2	1129
			Student 1	1455, 1457–1458, 1550–1551, 1556–1557
			Expert 3	1886–1888
			Student 3	2247–2249, 2267–2268, 2336–2337, 2339–2342, 2348–2349, 2365–2368, 2406–2408
			Expert 6	2763–2767, 2772–2774,
			Expert 5	3320–3324
			Expert 1	3561–3564
	Improvements on shared items		Student 4	646
			Student 2	1165–1167
			Student 1	1562–1565, 1579–1582
			Expert 3	1910–1911
			Student 3	2285–2289
			Expert 1	3590–3593
	Navigating towards shared facilities	Expert 3		1830, 2067–2068
	Problems with shared items	Student 3		2275–2278, 2283–2285, 2313–2315
	Shared facilities which are not used		Student 1	1587–1588
			Student 3	2370
			Expert 5	3208–3212
			Expert 2	3926–3931

		TSH lobby is open for everybody	Student 5	155–158, 164–166
		Usage of shared facilities	Student 5	374–376
			Student 1	1602–1603
			Expert 5	3223–3228, 3231–3232

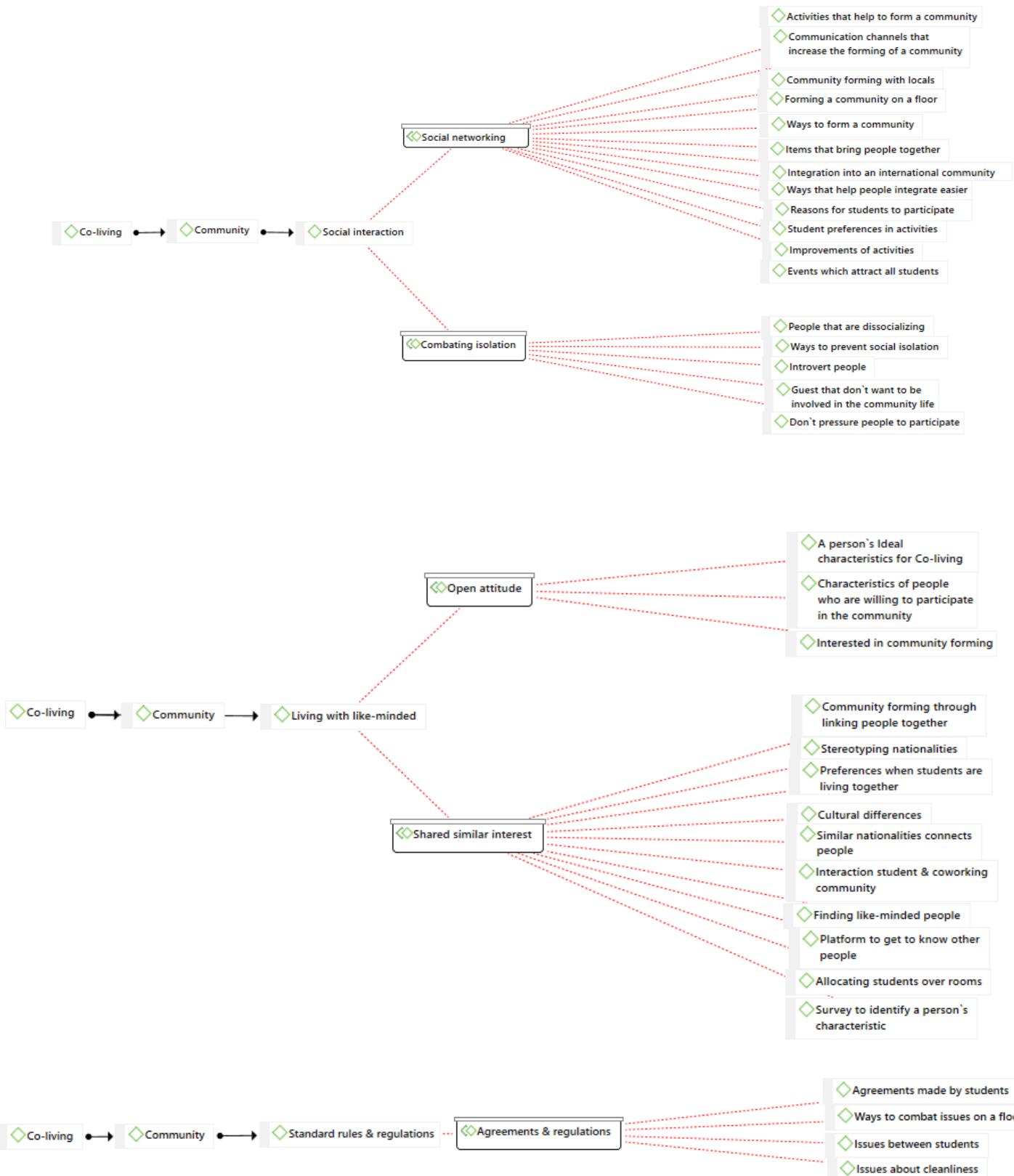
Sub-core concept	Axial code	Open code	Interviewee	Line number in text
Staff	<b>Appearance &amp; Professionalism of staff</b>	Contribution staff to community	Student 2	1069
			Student 1	1437–1438, 1445–1447
			Expert 4	3060–3062
			Expert 1	3619–3620
		Creating a better connection between guests and staff	Student 1	1714–1720
			Expert 5	3261–3263
			Expert 2	3771–3774, 3776–3778
		Having a warm relationship with the staff	Student 3	2393–2396
		The importance of staff	Expert 1	3626–3631
		Interaction guests – staff	Student 5	76–77
Psychological factors	<b>Involvement</b>		Student 1	1421–1422, 1498–1500, 1722–1724
			Expert 5	3369–3370,
			Expert 2	3378–3780
		Main responsibility of staff members	Student 3	2517–2520
		No differences between staff & students	Student 5	32–35, 40–41
			Expert 5	3341–3343
		Personalisation of guests	Expert 2	3805–3806, 3914–3919
		A guest-driven community	Expert 5	3257–3258
			Expert 1	3474–3477, 3506–3509
		An open community where everyone can participate	Student 1	1487–1489
			Expert 3	2003–2004
		Check-in chat	Expert 2	3762–3767, 3811–3818
		Creating a reward system	Student 3	2168–2170, 2176–2185, 2188–2194, 2216
			Expert 5	3151–3155, 3157–3159, 3162–3168
		Giving students more responsibility	Student 3	2490–2493
		Having feedback sessions with students	Student 1	1424–1427
			Student 3	2226–2229, 2521–2524
		Involvement of people	Student 5	77–82, 217–218
			Student 2	970–973, 1040–1041, 1044–1045, 1063–1064
			Student 1	1464–1466, 1670–1672,
			Expert 3	1840–1841, 1899–1901, 1937–1939,
			Student 3	2498–2500, 2509–2513
			Expert 5	3254–3257, 3283–3285,

			Expert 1	3402–3406
			Expert 2	3774–3776
Letting inhouse guests organise events			Student 2	1037–1038
			Expert 2	3801–3805
Listening to what guests want			Expert 3	1879–1886, 1888–1889, 1895–1899, 1919–1923, 1970–1972, 1990–1993, 2009, 2019–2023, 2025–2028, 2030–2036, 2069, 2096
			Expert 1	3540–3543
Making changes based on guests their feedback			Student 3	2262–2265
			Expert 2	3908–3910
Measuring the satisfaction of the guests			Student 1	1419–1421
			Expert 6	2698–2702
Transparent communication			Expert 5	3277–3280
			Expert 1	3493–3494, 3694–3698,
Using students as buddy for other students			Expert 2	3749–3753, 3891–3895
			Student 1	1705–1706, 1709–1711
Ways to involve people			Expert 5	3120–3123
			Student 5	171–174
Peace of mind	A high comfort level		Student 4	858–859
			Expert 3	1961–1962
Creating a comfortable living environment			Student 3	2534–2536
			Expert 4	3033–3036
Factors that provide a safe feeling			Expert 1	3598–3600
			Expert 2	3784–3787
Feeling at home			Expert 4	2998–3001
			Expert 2	3735–3741
Full-service concept			Student 4	775
			Student 2	1152–1153, 1172–1174, 1244–1246
Offering fully furnished rooms			Expert 3	1850–1853
			Student 3	2429–2434
			Expert 6	2629–2631, 2815–2818
			Expert 4	3075–3077
			Expert 2	3873–3878
			Student 5	442–443
			Student 4	831–833, 844
			Student 2	1264–1265, 1272–1274
			Student 1	1690, 1698–1699
			Expert 2	3650–3654
			Student 1	1611, 1676–1677, 1680–1683
			Student 3	2381–2384
			Expert 2	3780–3781, 3956–3958
			Expert 5	3238–3239
			Expert 2	3946–3953
			Expert 4	3071–3075

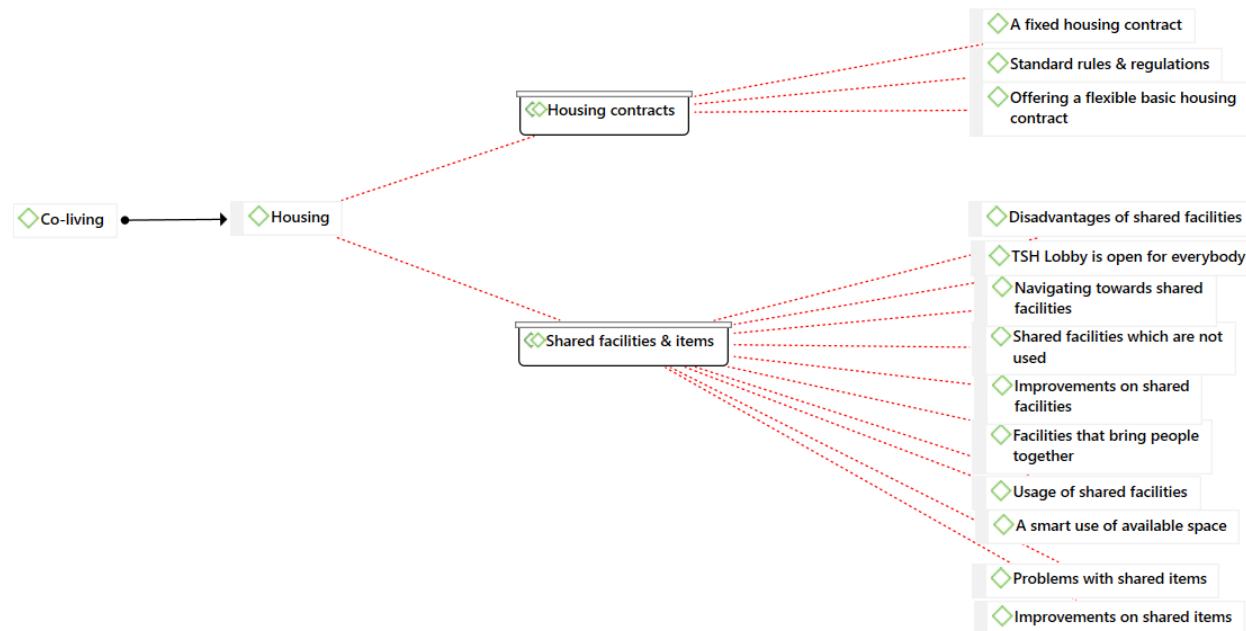
		Expert 5	3216–3219
		Expert 1	3573–3574, 3585
		Expert 2	3870–3871
	Private space	Student 5	362–364, 385–387
		Student 4	749–750
		Student 1	1593, 1603–1605
		Expert 3	1775–1777, 1828–1829
		Student 3	2375, 2378
		Expert 5	3205–3206
		Expert 1	3397–3399
	Ways to increase the security	Student 4	796–799

## Appendix XIII: Code trees

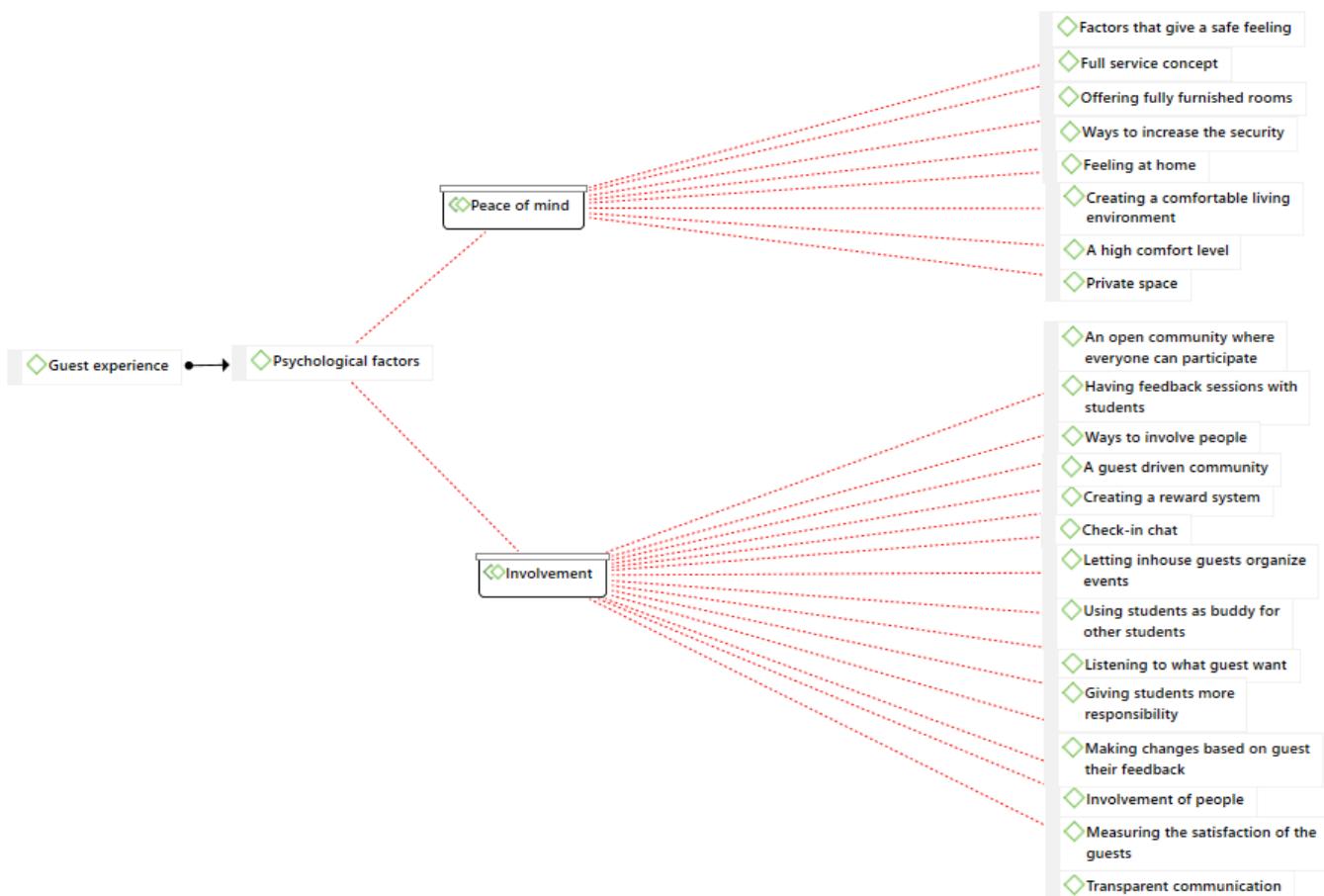
### Co living – Community



## Co living – Housing



## Guest experience – Psychological factors



## Guest experience – Staff



## **Appendix XIV: Research memos**

This Appendix provides a selection of the research memos. These are the essential memos which are used to establish the results section. Furthermore, it provides memos which formed an inspiration for the advice section of this research.

### Theoretical memos relating to in-depth interviews with students

- It is interesting to see that students tend to agree that TSH is currently not doing enough to involve them in the community. Students want to be involved, but TSH does not allow them currently to be involved since there is a gap between the company and students. Staff also has to involve themselves more into the community.
- All students express that TSH should focus more on enhancing the diversity of cultures. Too often, students express that cultures do not interfere with one another. TSH has to find a way to create an inclusive culture in the student community.
- Interesting to see that this student also expresses that the activities do not fulfil his expectations.

### Methodological memos relating to in-depth interviews with students

- Try to ask more open questions during interviews. Find ways to improve the way how questions are asked since in the first conducted interviews too often there is a silent pause after a closed question.
- Try to formulate questions in such a way that the students express more. They react quite blunt currently. Maybe a possibility to prep them before the interview? Students would probably have more information available then.
- These students see staff as part of the community. Focus on this during further interviews with remaining students. Would be interesting to see how other students see their relationship with staff.
- It would be interesting to see how other students, who are not part of the event committee, see the involvement by TSH. Do these students feel involved as well?

### Theoretical memos relating to expert interviews

- It is interesting to see that both staff and students think that staff is contributing to community forming. Both mention that this is an essential element.
- This expert expresses as well that the community itself should establish certain activities or events. The same is expressed during the third interview with an expert.

### Methodological memos' relating to expert interviews

- How do experts let people participate in the community? Are they forcing them, or do they have motivational tools?
- During experts' interviews, there should be a primary focus on strategies to involve customers or guests. Students agree that this is lacking at TSH.
- Try to stick to the minutes planned per subject. Interviews tend to take too much time, and experts were not happy with that. Therefore, try to stick to the subjects that are essential and are mentioned during the in-depth interviews with students.
- Do not interrupt the expert that much. This interferes with what experts want to express. Let the experts speak freely and save the follow-up questions for later.

### Theoretical memos relating to the coding process

- Several codes are merged into 'Involvement of people', which is relating to the axial code 'Involvement'. These codes had the same meaning and related all to the involvement of guest or people.

- Process of creating names for the axial codes was started. First names were established which matched the open codes. However, these names are changed to match the sub-core concepts of the operationalisation of the theoretical framework. This would make more sense since it is described as well in Doing Research by Verhoeven.
- The following codes would probably fit well with combating isolation: people that are dissocialising, ways to prevent social isolation, introvert people, guest that do not want to be involved in the community life and do not pressure people to participate.

Theoretical memos relating to possible advice ideas

- Questionnaire with questions to find similar interests and characteristics. This will help students to easier integrate in the community since they live already together with people with the same characteristics. Students will form more natural communities since people are living together, which are matching. Furthermore, TSH needs to let easier people switch between floors if they do not fit into their floor community.
- Rewarding students with a system based on the participation and engagement of students. This will be based on individual and communal participation. Individual students will get a reward when they clean the kitchen, bring garbage away, participate in an event or organise an event by themselves. Individually they get points, but there will be a multiplier when they do it together as a floor. With these rewards, the students can buy vouchers at the front desk for the commons or events in the city.
- Sell more rooms with kitchen. This would solve problems with cleanliness of kitchens as well.
- Create a basic room option, with just a room and kitchen. Students can book additional shared facilities or items on top of it. For example, the bike, the gym, the study room, or daily meals (breakfast, lunch, or dinner) in the commons.

## **Appendix XV: Remaining results field research**

In this Appendix the remaining results of the field research are presented per axial code.

### **Community formation**

#### **Activities that help to form a community**

All interviewees mentioned that activities are essential factors that help with the formation of a community. Expert 4 explained that her company tries to draw their guest into the fulfilling community experience by organising corporate events. These activities should not be expensive as such but should focus on bringing people together. All students mentioned that activities which involved alcohol drinking contributed to the building of a sense of community. This was mentioned as well by one of the experts. However, he contradicts this by remarking that: *"And for us, it is really important that they know that we do not have only drinking events"*. (Expert 5, personal communication, 2020). Student 5, who organised events as part of the event committee, contradicts this by mentioning that non-party events did not attract that many students. These events focused on a different group of students. All students do not join such more academically focused events since students were more focused on partying.

#### **Improvement of activities, Events which attract all students & Students preferences in activities**

Furthermore, students mention sports activities as something which could help to form a community on a floor. This was mentioned by a student as: "*So just imagine if it is my floor, then we have a sense of like, okay, it is my floor, we need to win. And that kind of brings all the people from the floor together*". (Student 5, personal communication, 2020). The student underlines this by explaining that the current activity offering at TSH is not in align with his expectation. One student elaborates this by mentioning: *"So something outdoors, something happening"*. (Student 1, personal communication, 2020). This student also thought that a weekly sport activity, a football tournament each Thursday, would improve the activity offers. His thoughts are in line with one of the experts, who explained earlier in the results chapter, the importance of regular occurrence of events for the building of a sense of community. These sports activities would increase the diversity in activities and contribute to finding like-minded people. The same student explains that through such a program, he would have met even more people who are like him, that have sportive characteristics.

A student also describes that: *"The more activities are organised, the more like closer the people are going to get"*. (Student 5, personal communication, 2020). Moreover, this student thought that TSH should organise more events where the students could meet each other. In his opinion, the events were focusing on being active as such. However, an event should be function as a platform for people to meet each other. The interviewees of the best-practice companies tend to have various events which contributed to the building of a sense of community, from screenings of films to meditation events.

#### **Community formation with locals**

All experts mentioned that they try to create a community which includes locals as well. The ideal way to do this is through activities. These activities should be receptive for all people. One expert elaborates this as follows: *"So it is really amazing to be having like a 24-year-old YouTube guy sitting right next to like a 60-year-old lady from the village who speaks zero English. But they are watching a movie together and they are laughing at it. There is some sort of a community-building there as well and some sort of solidarity"*. (Expert 3, personal communication, 2020). Integration into the local culture was named by two of the students as well. Student 4 mentioned that Dutch classes would help. Co-living companies try to support the local community as well, especially by hiring local staff. By doing this, two experts thought that their company became a part of the local community. The local

staff members contributed to a seamless experience of guests by sharing their knowledge about the local environment.

## **Involvement**

Student 3 mentioned that during the period that he lived at TSH Amsterdam City, he had three times a meeting with TSH staff. During these meetings, the student expressed his thoughts about some aspects of the co-living concept. On own initiative, he tried to be involved in the development of the concept. Nevertheless, the student mentioned that he was disappointed since TSH staff did nothing with his feedback.

## **Shared facilities & items**

### **Facilities that bring people together & Navigating towards shared facilities**

All students agreed that facilities are contributing to the gathering of students in the lobby. Mainly the ping pong table and pool table helped with this. One student mentioned the following: *"So, we can see that it is the games that brings students together"*. (Student 5, personal communication, 2020). The same student explained that he made his best friends in the lobby since it is such an essential communal space. He explains that he sees the lobby as his second living room, next to the shared kitchen. Furthermore, he mentions that he would like to see more activities or events in the lobby area since this would bring more students together there. In his opinion, more students will spend more time in the lobby and the sense of community increases with that. One of the co-living experts expresses the importance of facilities or physical places where all people navigate towards. She mentions that this should be facilities which attract all types of residents and that it is essential to bring people together in the same physical space. Her company built a fireplace since they did not have a physical space where the co-living residents could come together during the wintertime.

### **Improvements on shared facilities, Disadvantages of shared facilities, Improvements on shared items & Shared facilities which are not used**

A female student explained the importance of the kitchen as a communal living space. The kitchen functions as a gathering place, where a student can socialise with their floormates or come together during the evening hours. Student 1 acknowledges this since its natural for people to gather around food. Furthermore, expert 1 expressed that the kitchen is the place where the interaction between people who do not know each other happen. The same co-living expert also mentioned that his company built the communal kitchen to make in a smart way use of the available space. He explained that his real-estate company had apartments previously with kitchens. However, they noticed that people just did not use these kitchens. Therefore, they decided to build another project which included a large communal kitchen. A student housing expert contradicted the importance of the communal kitchen. A demand for more luxurious self-regulated studios was noticed, which had its own kitchen, own bathroom, and own bedroom.

Having more communal items in the co-living space would be also beneficial for the students. Focusing on the student kitchens, student 2 thought that having a TV in her kitchen makes it easier for her to build a relationship with her floormates. Having a tv there makes it much more natural than watching a movie with fellow students in her room. The same students agreed upon the fact that currently, TSH has not enough washing machines and dryers, especially considering the amount of guest that make use of these shared facilities. Students expressed that they need to walk across the building to do their laundry. One female student thought that it would be wise if each floor has its washing machine and dryer. Students mentioned the importance of a facility for outdoor sport activities and an outside area where students could meet friends or play some ballgames.

## **Agreements & regulations**

### **Agreements made by students**

All students mentioned that they and their floormates had established a set of agreements. This were agreements that focused on aspects such as cleanliness or noise. Furthermore, rules were created that ensured a respectful way of communication between the students living on one specific floor. Once again, student 4 mentioned that the welcome meeting at the beginning of the semester was essential in establishing these agreements. During this meeting, the students came together and created rules on how to use the kitchen. One student expressed that the rules for one floor should be co-created with the students, which will result in students who feel more a part of their small community. The importance of agreements is acknowledged by Vestbro and Horelli (2012) since in sharing spaces; the tasks should be equally divided over the residents.

### **Issues about cleanliness & Issues between students**

Two students expressed that they had a clean kitchen which led to an ideal community and harmony on their floor. Another female student explained that she did not have a welcome meeting; this instantly led to issues about cleanliness. This non-existence of collective agreements created some tensions between her floormates. She elaborated this by expressing: "*The kitchen, like was full of tension every day. And some people would not stick to their schedule*". (Student 3, personal communication, 2020). Tensions between students was an ordinary happening, which was also expressed by all students. Moreover, two students mentioned that often they had to clean the kitchen first before being able to use it. One student emphasised this by arguing that: "*We always had that problem when someone else had to clean after a person*". (Student 2, personal communication, 2020). One male student motivated that students were aware of the agreements but did not stick to the application of the rules. Interference by staff in case of tensions between students was not seen as a welcome addition. These thoughts were acknowledged by Student 4, who mentioned that students are old enough to tackle their problems.

## **Appearance & Professionalism of staff**

### **No differences between staff & students**

Two students also mentioned that the relationship with the staff became better, upon the point that they stopped distinguishing between staff and student. Moreover, one of these students mentioned that being close with the staff helped in feeling connected with TSH. This was acknowledged as well by expert 5. His company hires staff, especially in the own student housing community since it decreases the differences between staff & in-house students.

## **Shared similar interest**

### **Preferences when students are living together**

Students expressed that they would like to live together with people who keep the shared facilities clean. Furthermore, two students expressed that they would like to see that their floormates behave more respectfully. In their opinion, this is currently lacking at TSH. Moreover, students mentioned that the floormates should be open to meet new people and being around people. Student 5 wants his fellow floormates to respect his privacy and that they do not disturb him if he is busy.

### **Housing contract**

One male student expresses his thoughts about the current full-service concept that TSH is offering. The student mentioned that he does not use the gym at all and doubts why he should pay for such a shared facility. TSH should offer a basic housing contract which excludes the shared facilities. Students themselves can add specific shared facility to their basic package such as the gym or a bike. Therefore, TSH can also decrease their monthly room rates. He elaborated this by mentioning: *"Like if you remove this facility, then you can take out this amount of money. So, you can take it out, and you can deduct from the rent"*. (Student 3, personal communication, 2020).

Experts tend to agree that housing contracts should be flexible since this ties to what guests need these days. In their opinion, guest that stay for just two nights can contribute much to the co-living community. Both experts agreed upon the fact that they do not want to constrain that. These arguments are in line with what O'Connor (2019) expresses. Nowadays, co-living operators can be identified as being flexible with housing contracts. Expert 5 mentioned that his company is using housing contracts as a barrier for students. Their company set the following two impediments: a non-cancellable six months contract and a non-refundable payment for the whole period. By doing this, they hope to attract students that thought well about living in a student housing complex.

### **Peace of mind**

#### **Private space**

Privacy is one of the research findings which guest value nowadays, which was mentioned by several experts. The importance of a private space was mentioned as well by all the students. In their opinion, the current distribution of private and shared space is balanced. All students agreed that they do not want to share their private space with another student since this privacy provides them with a sense of feeling at home. All students acknowledged that especially the sleeping room and bathroom are considered by them as their private zone. One student elaborates this by expressing: *"So having your own bathroom, your own bedroom will give you a sense of like being at home. You do not have to change the towels, you put your toothbrush in the sink without thinking if anybody uses it"*. (Student 3, personal communication, 2020).

#### **A high comfort level, Creating a comfortable living environment, Full-service concept & Offering full furnished rooms**

One expert expressed that all their rooms have a kitchenette in the rooms since guest are not willing to share facilities anymore. Expert 4 expresses that they decided to offer fully furnished rooms, where extended-stay guest just need to bring their suitcase with clothes to move in. She thinks that comfort for her guest is that all belongings that they need is in one place. Expert 5 mentioned that they also tried to implement a full-service concept. However, it was not successful since several Dutch students were resident who wants to bring their personal belongings and do not expect a furnished student room. Students agreed that bringing their belongings increased that they felt homely. All student individualised their rooms by putting their belongings in there.

#### **Factors that provide a safe feeling**

All students agreed that the recent increase of security gave them a safer feeling. One student specified that his safe feeling was improved since he recently saw security more often in the lobby. Student 2 indicated that the amount of SALTO locks provides her a safe feeling as well. Being familiar with people is considered as a safe feeling by one student. She expresses that if she knew her floormates better, then she would bring something up quicker in case of danger. Literature acknowledges this since it is the measurements to provide a secure environment that dominates how a person or guest experience his stay at a hospitality company (Ko, 2018).

## Appendix XVI: Calculation of payroll costs

Underneath an elaboration of the payroll is revealed. These payroll costs give a realistic overview of the time, which needs to be invested in the implementation of the reward program.

Department/Person	Gross salary + 30 % Employer contribution	Cost calculation
iOS software developer	(€ 4.250 * 1,3) = € 5.252	<p>€ 5.330 / 161,5 hours = € 33,00 per hour  <u>Before implementation</u>          € 33,00 * 38 hours = <b>€ 1.254,12</b>  <u>After implementation</u>          € 33,00 * 2 hours = € 66,00          € 66,00 * 41 weeks = <b>€ 2.706</b></p>
Connector	(€ 2.700 * 1,3) = € 3.510	<p>€ 3.510 / 161,5 = € 21,73 per hour  <u>Before implementation</u>          € 21,73 * 10 hours = € 217,30          € 230,9 * 10 weeks = <b>€ 2173,37</b>  <u>After implementation</u>          € 21,73 * 3 hours = € 65,19          € 65,19 * 41 weeks = <b>€ 2.672,79</b></p>
Connector trainee	(€ 400 * 1,3) = 520 €	<p>€ 520 / 161,5 hours = € 3,22 per hour  <u>Before implementation</u>          € 3,22 * 10 hours = € 32,20          € 32,20 * 10 weeks = <b>€ 321,98</b>  <u>After implementation</u>          € 3,22 * 3 hours = € 9,66          € 9,66 * 41 weeks = <b>€ 396,06</b></p>
General Manager	(€ 4.000 * 1,3) = € 5.200	<p>€ 5.200 / 161,5 hours = € 32,20 per hour  <u>Before implementation</u>          € 32,20 * 2 hours = € 64,40          € 64,40 * 10 weeks = <b>€ 644</b>  <u>After implementation</u>          € 32,20 * 1 hours = € 32,20          € 32,20 * 41 weeks = <b>€ 1.320,20</b></p>
Assistant General Manager	(€ 2.500 * 1,3) = € 3.250	<p>€ 3.250 / 161,5 hours = € 20,12 per hour  <u>Before implementation</u>          € 20,12 * 5 hours = € 100,62          € 100,62 * 10 weeks = <b>€ 1.006,19</b>  <u>After implementation</u>          € 20,12 * 2 hours = € 40,24          € 40,24 * 41 weeks = <b>€ 1.694,84</b></p>
General Manager trainee	(€ 400 * 1,3) = € 520	<p>€ 520 / 161,5 hours = € 3,22 per hour  <u>Before implementation</u>          € 3,22 * 3 hours = <b>€ 9,66</b>  <u>After implementation</u>          € 3,22 * 7 hours = € 22,54          € 22,54 * 41 weeks = <b>€ 924,14</b></p>
Marketing department	(€ 2.600 * 1,3) = € 3.380	<p>€ 2.600 / 161,5 hours = € 16,10 per hour  <u>Before implementation</u>          € 16,10 * 3 hours = <b>€ 48,30</b>  <u>After implementation</u>          N.A.</p>

Legal department	$(€ 4.750 * 1,3) = € 6.175$	<p><math>€ 6.175 / 161,5 \text{ hours} = € 38,24 \text{ per hour}</math></p> <p><u>Before implementation</u></p> <p><math>€ 38,24 * 38 \text{ hours} = € 1452,94</math></p> <p><u>After implementation</u></p> <p>N.A.</p>
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