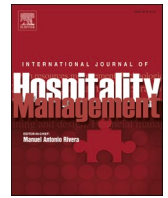




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A motivation-based study to explain accommodation choice of senior tourists: Hotel or Airbnb

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ABSTRACT

Senior tourists, traditionally known for using offline methods and staying in hotels, are increasingly using new technologies and opting for alternative accommodation forms. Based on the push and pull theory of motivation, the generational cohort and lifespan development theories, this study fills a gap in the literature and examines senior tourists' choice between Airbnb and hotels. A random parameter binomial logit applied to data from six European countries finds that the same motivation can act differently in this decision choice process. Rather than assuming that a motivation has an exclusive effect on each accommodation type, we propose the notion of a "differential fulfillment paradigm" to reflect the idea that two accommodation types can relate to the same motivation with different approaches. While both hotels and Airbnb can fulfill a common motivation, they do so through distinct features or attributes, offering consumers diverse avenues to achieve their desired outcome.

1. Introduction

The aging global population is significantly influencing the travel and tourism industry as seniors take more trips, contribute to a larger share of vacation spending, and are expected to continue doing so due to longer life expectancies and improved health (Eurostat, 2022; Patterson et al., 2021; Patterson and Balderas, 2020). Senior tourists also possess desirable attributes for the tourism industry, such as higher disposable income, more leisure time, preference for longer stays and off-peak travel, and potential for building repeat purchases and long-term customer relationships (Alén et al., 2014, 2016; Santos and Santos, 2021). Consequently, knowledge on senior tourists' preferences, motivations, and behaviors is becoming increasingly important for the tourism industry to serve this demographic segment and to meet their specific needs better (Chang et al., 2022).

Among the decisions that senior tourists have to make, accommodation is key to their experience and can greatly impact their satisfaction (Alén et al., 2017). Research on accommodation options for senior segment has covered a range of traditional options, such as hotels, friends/relatives' homes, second homes, tourist apartments, rural establishments or senior living facilities (Alén et al., 2016; Chee, 2023, Zhong et al., 2023). Evidence shows that senior tourists prefer hotels (Batra, 2009; Losada et al., 2017) and the home of friends and/or family

(Backer and King, 2016) as their accommodation options, although there is growing interest toward paid online peer-to-peer accommodation (Airbnb, 2018, 2021). However, there remains a notable gap in the literature regarding the decision-making process of senior tourists when choosing between traditional accommodation options and new home-sharing alternatives. Specifically, limited research has focused on analyzing the motivations and key factors driving the accommodation choice of senior tourists between hotels and Airbnb. Motivation has been suggested to be the cause of guidance, control, and persistence in human behavior (Tohidi et al., 2011). In hospitality and tourism literature, tourist motivation is understood as "a state of need or a condition that drives an individual toward certain types of action that are seen as likely to bring satisfaction" (Jang and Wu, 2006, p. 306). Thus, tourist motivations are considered critical factors in understanding tourist behavior in relation to travel decisions. One of the most-used theories for explaining these motivations is the "push and pull motivation" framework (Dann, 1981). Past studies on senior tourists have only used this theory to analyze the motivations in selecting a specific travel destination (e.g., Jang and Wu, 2006) or a type of trip (e.g., González et al., 2017). To enhance this "push and pull motivation" framework, the present study also posits that the generational cohort and lifespan development theories can provide a crucial understanding of the specific motivations influencing senior tourists. The generational cohort theory

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proposes that a generation will acquire the same set of values, attitudes, and behaviors if they have experienced the same political, economic, and social events during their early stages of life (Edmunds and Turner, 2005; Mannheim, 1952). Previous research indicates that this theory has emerged as a valuable approach to market segmentation since it influences consumer behavior and consumption patterns (Thach et al., 2020). Additionally, the lifespan development theory suggests that changes in physical, cognitive, and emotional capacities associated with aging and later stages of life influence individuals' travel preferences (Li and Baltes, 2006). Senior tourists, therefore, may seek accommodations that offer greater security and facilities to cover their evolving needs at that stage of life (Losada et al., 2017). Recently, McKercher (2023) highlighted the necessity of the integration of these theoretical perspectives, as he acknowledges the impact of generations while also arguing that values and subsequent behavioral preferences can evolve with age.

This framework can help provide a better understanding of the underlying motivations shaping the choices of senior tourists, which not only can aid, from a managerial viewpoint, in designing targeted marketing strategies, improving services, and tailoring accommodations to better meet the needs and desires of senior travelers but also, from a theoretical perspective, we can extend the theory—as this study puts forth—to a “differential fulfillment paradigm” to reflect the idea that two accommodation types can relate to the same motivation with different approaches: while both hotels and Airbnb can fulfill a common motivation, they do so through distinct features or attributes, offering consumers diverse avenues to achieve their desired outcome.

This extension implies that one same motivation can have different influences on the choice between hotel and Airbnb, challenging the assumption that a motivation must have an effect in one direction only.

This study addresses the above gap, provides the empirical basis for the mentioned theoretical extension and aims to understand the factors that impact senior tourists' preference for hotels versus Airbnb accommodations building on the push and pull framework of motivations as operationally outlined by Jang and Wu (2006). Furthermore, this study also extends Jang and Wu's (2006) framework to delve into the senior tourist's desire to travel sustainably. Such push factor may influence older adults' choices between hotels and Airbnb, especially considering Airbnb's frequent portrayal as a more sustainable alternative to hotels (Palgan et al., 2017). However, research specifically addressing this topic within the senior segment remains notably limited. For the sake of comprehensiveness, this study also explores the influence of travel patterns and sociodemographic characteristics of seniors as potential explanatory factors for their preference between hotels and Airbnb.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Push and pull motivations in senior's accommodation choice

According to the push and pull motivation framework, both internal and external factors can have an impact on a person's decision to travel (Dann, 1981). Travel is encouraged by internal forces, sometimes referred to as ‘push motivators’, which result from a person's fundamental drives and aspirations to satisfy a personal need (Correia et al., 2013). On the other hand, the choice of when, where, and how individuals travel is also influenced by external influences, known as ‘pull motivators’, which include situational elements of the tourist product, such as destination qualities or leisure infrastructure (Prayag and Ryan, 2011). It is not surprising that pull factors, which encompass specific characteristics of accommodations, have been extensively studied and identified as the primary drivers in accommodation choices (Kim et al., 2020). However, it is worth noting that internal factors related to the individual's motivations to travel can also play a significant role in the selection of a particular type of accommodation.

Therefore, the current study aims to analyze both push and pull factors, following the framework proposed by Jang and Wu (2006) for

the senior traveler segment. While Jang and Wu (2006) put forth different factors and relationships for senior tourists in a general context, the application of this theoretical framework to senior accommodation choice—hotels versus Airbnb—is relatively novel. Consequently, our hypotheses are stated with no predefined direction, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of the bidirectional relationship between motivational factors and accommodation choice. This approach acknowledges the potential for these factors to influence each other in complex ways, reflecting the nuanced decision-making processes of senior travelers. Furthermore, the study provides a thorough review of the literature, so that expectations are pointed out when the hypotheses are argued. Accordingly, and as will be outlined later, the selected methodology deals with this circumstance and is capable of identifying opposing effects of the same variable on different accommodation alternatives. In any case, the expectations regarding the motivations for choosing one type of accommodation over another are based on the generational cohort and lifespan development theories. As aforementioned, these theories suggest that senior tourists belonging to a distinct generational cohort can lead to different behaviors compared to other age groups. This understanding highlights the importance of considering both generational influences and developmental stages when analyzing accommodation choices among seniors, highlighting how these factors distinctly shape their preferences and decisions when traveling (McKercher, 2023).

2.2. Push factors

Regarding push (internal) factors, recent research emphasizes the need for an experiential perspective in comprehending the behavior of travel accommodation choice, with a focus on cognitive and affective factors (Kim et al., 2020; Kim and Park, 2017). Affective factors refer to how people feel when using a product or service (Kim and Park, 2017), while cognitive factors are aimed at fulfilling practical requirements and delivering useful benefits or value (Kim and Park, 2017). The affective and cognitive driving factors based on Jang and Wu (2006) encompass the following five dimensions: self-esteem (hedonism), ego-enhancement, relaxation, knowledge-seeking, and socialization, along with the inclination towards travel sustainably.

Regarding affective push factors, an important variable that can explain the senior segment choice between hotels and Airbnb is hedonism (e.g., enjoying luxury, good restaurants, or fashionable places) and comfort. This affective factor, labeled in Jang and Wu's (2006) study as “self-esteem,” has been shown to be an important reason why tourists choose hotels over Airbnb (e.g., Mody et al., 2022). Notably, past research in the senior segment has found that engaging in pleasure-seeking behavior during leisure travel is a key motivator influencing senior travel decisions (Otoo and Kim, 2018). Therefore, it is expected to also play a significant role in accommodation choice. Such an assumption may be grounded in the generational characteristics of baby boomers, who grew up during a period of post-war abundance and societal change (Chris and Paul, 2007; Edmunds and Turner, 2005). Thus, they may most likely prefer facilities that provide them with opulence and social contact that reflects in their values of success and fulfillment. “Ego enhancement” and relaxation have been also found to be two important affective push factors that explain travel decisions among senior tourists (e.g., Sangpikul, 2008). The former describes a person's ego when she/he returns from a trip with the need to tell others about her/his tourist experience (Dann, 1977). This ego motivation meets an intrinsic need for recognition and pride (Otoo and Kim, 2018). Past research suggests that ego-enhancement motivation is related to the choice of luxury hotels, as the quality of service is the highest and the customer experience is superior in this type of accommodation (Xu Jing, 2010). Similarly, guests staying in a hotel usually seek a feeling of relaxation to reduce physical and mental tension (Kim and Park, 2017; Kim and Perdue, 2013). For example, Kim and Perdue (2013) found that customers have high expectations for affective attributes when selecting

a hotel for a vacation or business trip, especially for a secure, relaxed, and comfortable stay. An increasing number of hoteliers are eager to add spa facilities to their hotels because the reason for relaxation can be a differentiating attribute of the service offered (Kucukusta et al., 2013). As individuals age, physical and cognitive changes increase the importance of comfort and ease in their travel choices (Losada et al., 2017). Senior tourists, particularly those in later stages of life, often prioritize accommodations that provide a restful environment with amenities focused on reducing physical and mental stress (Patterson et al., 2011). Based on these ideas, the following hypotheses are formulated.

H1. Self-esteem motivations influence the accommodation choice of senior tourists.

H2. Ego-enhancement motivations influence the accommodation choice of senior tourists.

H3. Relaxation motivations influence the accommodation choice of senior tourists.

In terms of cognitive push factors, “knowledge seeking” refers to the motivation to know the outside world and to observe new things that senior tourists are not commonly accustomed (Jang and Wu, 2006). According to Sangpikul (2008), this factor is strongly linked to senior tourists’ psychological well-being, indicating that seniors who are motivated by knowledge-seeking tend to have a more positive emotional state. Tourists seeking local authenticity (e.g., to know how other people live) usually prefer Airbnb to hotels because the former provides an authentic experience of the destination in which the property is located (Mody et al., 2019). In the same vein, Airbnb provides a greater experience of socialization with hosts and locals and higher levels of interpersonal authenticity (Tussyadiah, 2016). Socialization is thus not merely a byproduct of travel but an important motivation for senior tourists. Travel offers them a very important opportunity to make new connections and have rewarding conversations. The very process of such interaction maintains cognitive vitality and emotional well-being and contributes to identity and belonging (Hsu et al., 2007). Consequently, in contrast to what tourists expect from traditional hotels, tourists yearn for social connections and a sense of community in an Airbnb accommodation (Tussyadiah and Zach, 2017). On the basis of these ideas, the following hypotheses are stated:

H4. Knowledge-seeking motivations influence the accommodation choice of senior tourists.

H5. Socialization motivations influence the accommodation choice of senior tourists.

Another prominent push factor that may influence the preference between Airbnb and traditional hotels among senior travelers is the desire of traveling sustainably. Research suggests that Airbnb is frequently perceived as more sustainable than traditional hotels, primarily because of its foundational principles encompassing community engagement, sustainability, and tangible contributions to local hosts (Garrod et al., 2023; Palgan et al., 2017; Tussyadiah and Pesonen, 2018). Notably, travelers drawn to such platforms appear to prioritize community and environmental values over mere cost considerations (Mahadevan, 2018; Tussyadiah and Pesonen, 2018). However, the rapid and unchecked expansion of Airbnb in certain destinations has elicited concerns, casting doubt on its continued commitment to sustainability, especially when juxtaposed with traditional accommodations that adhere to regulatory standards (Cheng et al., 2022). While there is extensive literature on peer-to-peer accommodation (Serrano et al., 2021), the emphasis on sustainability as a driving force behind seniors choosing Airbnb over hotels is relatively limited. Given this scant literature and drawing on the above ideas, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6. The desire to travel sustainably influences the choice of accommodation

2.3. Pull factors

The physical environment of the tourist experience is key in tourist accommodation choice because this tourism product is only used when visiting the place (Losada et al., 2017). The present study analyzes the following pull factors: Cleanliness and safety, natural and historical interest, facilities and events at the destination, and cost (Jang and Wu, 2006).

So far, many studies have found that cleanliness and safety are among the most valued attributes (e.g., Alén et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2012; Li et al., 2023; Wijaya et al., 2019) and the primary motivations for hotel choice (e.g., Mody et al., 2022). As Losada et al. (2017) argued, senior tourists seeking cleanliness and security will be less likely to select rented accommodations (e.g., apartments) because these options suffer from less availability of basic services. As they age, older tourists often lose some of their physical capacity and therefore require facilities that offer the highest levels of safety (Losada et al., 2017). Furthermore, the cognitive impacts of aging make environments that reduce the mental demands of older tourists increasingly significant (Hu et al., 2023). In this context, hotels are not only considered accommodation options but also a crucial element in maintaining the health, independence, and confidence of older tourists (Mody et al., 2022). Furthermore, senior tourists traveling to a tourist destination also seek leisure activities (Otoo and Kim, 2018). According to the systematic review conducted by Otoo and Kim (2018), destination appeal (e.g., cultural attractiveness, natural/scenic environment, or historic sites/museums) is the first motivation for travel decision among seniors. Senior tourists usually want to have travel experiences that connect them with the past; hence, they need critical chances in history and heritage engagement at the visited places (Patterson et al., 2017). For example, Sangpikul (2008) found that cultural factors were significant for Japanese senior tourists, primarily due to their strong interest in enriching their educational experience. This study concludes that this cultural curiosity enhances older tourist’s psychological well-being, providing emotional satisfaction and fulfilling their desire for knowledge. Senior tourists, therefore, might prefer historic heritage buildings or accommodations providing culturally enriched experiences, such as guided heritage tours or cultural shows. Hotels usually base part of their strategy on offering these resources to their clients (Losada et al., 2017). Moreover, being close to cultural and historical attractions is an important hotel location factor (Masiero et al., 2019). Furthermore, compared with less expensive options, such as hostels or family lodging, tourists drawn to historical or artistic sites exhibit a larger propensity to stay in hotels (Alén et al., 2017).

Shopping areas, entertainment, and facilities for physical activities, labeled as “facilities and events” in Jang and Wu’s (2006) study, are also important travel motivations for senior tourists (Hsu and Kang, 2009). According to Jang and Wu’s (2006) facilities and events are key motivators for senior tourists because they ensure accessibility, comfort, social interaction, cultural enrichment, and physical and mental stimulation, all of which are crucial for enhancing their travel experience at this age. Past research has shown that attributes such as proximity to key attractions (e.g., shopping venues) and convenient transportation options (e.g., walkable distances) are significant determinants in choosing peer-to-peer accommodations (Tussyadiah and Zach, 2017). Additionally, the appeal of location convenience and home-like facilities has been identified as primary reasons why travelers might opt for these accommodations over traditional hotels (Pung et al., 2019). Furthermore, past research has also pointed out that cost (e.g., overall cost of vacation) can be an important pull factor for traveling decisions (e.g. Saverimuttu and Varua, 2014). In the case of senior tourists, the cost of the trip has not received much attention in past studies of tourist decision-making (Otoo et al., 2020). Seniors are thought to have fewer financial constraints, thus giving them more money to spend on travel and other tourist-related activities (Santos and Santos, 2021). However, this pull factor deserves attention in explaining accommodation choice

because the primary motivation for booking Airbnb is the low cost compared with hotels (Guttentag, 2015; Guttentag et al., 2018).

On the basis of the above reasoning, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H7. Cleanliness and safety at the destination influence the accommodation choice of senior tourists.

H8. Natural and historical interest at the destination influence the accommodation choice of senior tourists.

H9. Facilities and events at the destination influence the accommodation choice of senior tourists.

H10. Cost motivations influence the accommodation choice of senior tourists.

2.4. Travel and seniors' sociodemographic characteristics

Tourists' choice of accommodation is also shaped by the characteristics of the trip (also known as "tripographics") and by travelers' sociodemographic characteristics (Poon and Huang, 2017). A growing body of literature has examined the role of the length of stay in tourists' decision-making process of accommodation choice (e.g. Chen et al., 2017; Losada et al., 2016). This research unanimously concludes that tourists with a longer length of stay are less willing to choose hotel compared with peer-to-peer accommodations. For example, Losada et al. (2017) found for the senior segment that the greater the length of the trip, the less likely they are to select a hotel and the greater the probability of choosing a second home accommodation. Additionally, the variable regarding whether (or not) seniors travel with companions can also have an important role in senior travel decisions (Alén et al., 2017). Past research shows that older seniors prefer to travel with a companion to enhance their safety, enrich their experience, and receive support with logistical and social challenges (e.g., Batra, 2009). However, no studies have been found in the senior segment that relate this variable to the choice of accommodation. However, according to Poon and Huang's (2017) study, when people travel alone and the stay is short, they prefer to stay in a hotel. Instead, when they travel with friends, they prefer Airbnb regardless of the length of the stay.

Additionally, the boom in Internet and social media use by older people has changed the way people in this market segment travel and plan trips (Alén et al., 2017; Patterson et al., 2011). Older tourists primarily use the Internet to plan their travels, seeking information on suitable destinations, activities, and services that cover the needs of their age and activity level (Boroch, 2018). This use of the internet, therefore, allows them to make informed decisions and enjoy their travels safely and satisfactorily. Meanwhile, young older adults use the Internet more frequently as a means to obtain information on leisure activities (Näsi et al., 2012). Regarding the accommodation choice, when senior tourists use the Internet as a means of information to plan their trip, they are more likely to choose Airbnb over hotels (Poon and Huang, 2017). Friends and family are also important sources of information for tourism planning, as people usually like to discuss these plans with them to gain insights (Sedera et al., 2017). Interpersonal recommendations on Airbnb are one of the main reasons for its boom and growth (Guttentag, 2016). For example, Lin (2020) found that most Airbnb users select this type of accommodation through friends and family recommendations.

Based on the above ideas, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H11. The length of stay influences the accommodation choice of senior tourists.

H12. Travel companions influence the accommodation choice of senior tourists.

H13. Information and booking sources influence the accommodation choice of senior tourists.

Finally, gender and age can also lead to different patterns of travel

behaviors depending on the stage of the tourist's life cycle (González et al., 2017). For example, past research has shown that female business travelers focus more on security, personal services, and low prices than men when booking a hotel (McCleary and Weaver, 1991). Studies that have considered gender as an explanatory variable for the choice between different types of tourist accommodation, such as hotels or home-sharing options, have found no significant differences between men and women (e.g., Chen et al., 2017; Poon and Huang, 2017). However, research on Airbnb suggests that women fit better with the Airbnb philosophy because they typically purchase more sustainable and environmentally friendly options than males when traveling (Mahadevan, 2018). Regarding age, past research reveals that senior tourists prefer hotels over other types of peer-to-peer accommodations (e.g., Alén et al., 2016; Losada et al., 2017). However, within the senior tourist segment, a high degree of heterogeneity exists regarding travel behavior decisions, which highlights the need to analyze age subgroups (Alén et al., 2016; Patterson and Balderas, 2020). For example, Batra (2009) found that older seniors are more inclined to book hotel rooms, while younger seniors prefer other options such as camping. In the same vein, van den Berg et al. (2011) found that the likelihood of taking a pre-arranged tour package (usually staying in hotels) was higher among older senior tourists than younger tourists. Similarly, Losada et al. (2017) analyzed a series of factors related to age and concluded that people with greater self-perceived health within the senior segment (i.e., younger seniors) prefer apartments to hotels. Considering these explanations, the following hypotheses are defined:

H14. Traveler gender influences the accommodation choice of senior tourists.

H15. Traveler age influences the accommodation choice of senior tourists.

3. Methodology

3.1. Measures

The scales for measuring the variables used in this study were adapted from previous studies (see Appendix A). Push and pull factors were measured using Jang and Wu's (2006) multidimensional scale, which is focused on the senior segment. Additionally, the desire to travel sustainably was measured using a seven-point Likert scale adapted from Lee et al. (2012) with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.932.

Regarding the Jang and Wu's (2006) multidimensional scale, respondents indicated their level of agreement in a seven-point Likert scale with several statements about the following push motivations (dimensions) for traveling: self-esteem, ego enhancement, relaxation, knowledge seeking, and socialization. Pull factors were also measured in a scale ranging from 1 to 7 where respondents indicated how important for them were the following motivations (dimensions) in a tourist destination: cleanliness and safety, natural and historical interest, facilities and events, and cost. An exploratory factor analysis using principal component analysis with varimax rotation was performed to confirm the factor structure proposed by Jang and Wu (2006). Regarding the push factors, although all item loadings were 0.533 or higher on a single factor, three items changed dimension (see Appendix B). Concerning the pull factors, the same procedure was followed except for the cost factor because it was measured with a single item. One item was eliminated in the cleanliness and safety dimension because of cross-loading. The Cronbach's alpha values of each dimension were higher than the minimum value of 0.7 recommended by Nunnally and Bernstein, (1994), except for the socialization dimension, which was 0.601. This dimension was deleted in subsequent analyses.

Finally, participants were asked for demographic information, as well as information about trip planning, including the accommodation choice (Airbnb or hotels), travel companions (travel accompanied or alone), information sources (Internet, friends and relatives, or other

Table 1
Sample description.

Variables	%	Variables	mean
Accommodation choice – Hotel	68.1	PUSHMOT: Self-esteem	4.8
Gender – Female	47.9	PUSHMOT: Ego enhancement	5.5
Gender – Male	52.1	PUSHMOT: Relaxation	4.5
Age 55–59	33.2	PUSHMOT: Knowledge seeking	5.6
Age 60–64	31.9	PUSHMOT: Desire sustainability	5.0
Age 65 and over	34.9	PULLMOT: Cleanliness & safety	6.1
Travel length (1–3 nights)	14.9	PULLMOT: Natural & historical	5.5
Travel length (4–6 nights)	30.9	PULLMOT: Facilities & events	4.9
Travel length (7–9 nights)	31.4	PULLMOT: Cost	5.7
Travel length (10 or more nights)	22.7		
Source of info (Internet)	49.0		
Source of info (Friends & relat.)	15.3		
Source of info (Others)	35.7		
TC: Travel companions (Alone)	93.2		

information sources, such as magazines or travel agency), and length of stay in days.

3.2. Data collection and sample characteristics

The relevant literature does not have a standard definition of what age a tourist can be considered a senior. Ultimately, the definition of a senior tourist may depend on the products and services offered, and the needs and preferences of the target market. Consequently, some studies assume that the senior segment is composed of individuals over 50 years old (Otoo and Kim, 2018; Sie et al., 2015), while other researchers consider the minimum age as 55 (Losada et al., 2017; Otoo et al., 2020; Patterson et al., 2021), 60 (Pan et al., 2021), or 65 (Woo et al., 2016). These variations in age criteria can affect the sample selection and interpretation of results (Santos and Santos, 2021). This research targets seniors over 55, which is widely accepted as the criteria for the senior segment (Otoo et al., 2020).

The data for this study was collected between March and April 2021 using the Sphinx platform, an online contact mode that facilitated convenient and efficient data gathering. Participants were able to

mographics, this empirical application uses random parameter binomial logit models. Stemming from random utility theory (McFadden, 1974), U_n denotes the utility function of individual n so that:

$$U_n = \beta_{n0} + \sum_{i=1}^I \beta_{ni, Pullmot} \cdot Pullmot_{n,i} + \sum_{j=1}^J \beta_{nj, Pushmot} \cdot Pushmot_{n,j} + \beta_{n,DE} \cdot DE_n + \sum_{r=1}^R \beta_{nr, TripG} \cdot TripG_{n,r} + \sum_{h=1}^H \beta_{nh, DemG} \cdot DemG_{n,h} + \varepsilon_n,$$

where the independent variables (IV) are defined as follows: $Pullmot_{n,i}$ and $Pushmot_{n,j}$ represent the pull motivation type i and push motivation type j for individual n , respectively. DE_n is a measure of sustainability desire. $TripG_{n,r}$ includes the tripographics “travel companions,” “sources of information,” “trip length,” and $DemG_{n,r}$ contains the demographics “age,” and “gender.” The parameters $\beta_{i, Pullmot}$, $\beta_{j, Pushmot}$, β_{DE} , $\beta_r, TripG$ and $\beta_r, DemG$ represent the effects of these dimensions on the accommodation utility. The error term is reflected by ε_n , which is extreme value distributed. The likelihood P_n of an individual selecting hotel versus Airbnb is shown as:

$$P_n = \int_{\beta_n} \frac{\exp \left\{ \beta_{n0} + \sum_{i=1}^I \beta_{ni, Pullmot} \cdot Pullmot_{n,i} + \sum_{j=1}^J \beta_{nj, Pushmot} \cdot Pushmot_{n,j} + \beta_{n,DE} \cdot DE_n + \sum_{r=1}^R \beta_{nr, TRIPG} \cdot TripG_{n,r} + \sum_{h=1}^H \beta_{nh, TRIPG} \cdot DemG_{n,h} \right\}}{1 + \exp \left\{ \beta_{n0} + \sum_{i=1}^I \beta_{ni, Pullmot} \cdot Pullmot_{n,i} + \sum_{j=1}^J \beta_{nj, Pushmot} \cdot Pushmot_{n,j} + \beta_{n,DE} \cdot DE_n + \sum_{r=1}^R \beta_{nr, TRIPG} \cdot TripG_{n,r} + \sum_{h=1}^H \beta_{nh, TRIPG} \cdot DemG_{n,h} \right\}} \varphi(\beta_n | \mu, \psi) d\beta_n,$$

contribute anonymously and voluntarily. To ensure a diverse and representative sample, a non-probability quota sampling method was employed, implementing quotas based on gender and age. This approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the topic while maintaining data integrity. Only complete surveys were utilized in the analysis, and partial surveys were excluded. Recommendations from Dolnicar (2013) were followed to ensure the validity of the data. Data on senior tourists were gathered in six European countries: UK (n=114), Hungary (n=99), Netherlands (n=37), Poland (n=87), Romania (n=120), and France (n=119). The participants were classified into three age groups: 55–59 (33.2%), 60–64 (31.9%), and over 65 (34.9%). The descriptive statistics of the sample are detailed in Table 1.

3.3. Data analysis

To analyze the determinant factors that explain the accommodation type (hotel versus Airbnb) and test the stated hypotheses of the effects of pull and push motivations, sustainability desire, tripographics and de-

where β_n has density function φ with mean μ and variance ψ . Characterized by its ability to identify the existence of heterogeneity in the sample by treating β_n parameters as random variables, the random parameter logit model overcomes the homogeneity assumption of the traditional logit model. A relevant feature of this model is that it allows us to obtain, within the sample of observations, the proportion of those for whom an explanatory variable has positive or negative effect. Random parameter models are based on the parameter distribution to estimate the parameters. Thus, their interpretation must consider, simultaneously, not only their mean but also their variance. By following the normalization $\mu/\sqrt{\psi} \sim N(0,1)$ suggested by Train (1998), we can determine the alluded proportions of positive versus negative effects.

The interpretation of the parameter estimates must consider the mean and variance at the same time. Hence, finding a parameter (its mean) to be not significantly different from zero does not mean that these variables have no effect at all. Rather, as the random parameter

model uses the distribution function to obtain the parameter estimates, if the variance of the parameter is significant—regardless of whether its mean is estimated in the vicinity of zero—the variable associated with the parameter has a positive effect on some people, whereas other people will experience a negative effect. The impact depends on whether the values of the parameters fall on the right or the left of a distribution whose mean is zero. In the interpretation of the results that follow, we explicitly point out the significance of both parameters of the distribution (mean and variance) and describe whether a variable has an influence on the accommodation choice and the proportion of the sampled observations that favor one alternative or the other, i.e., hotel versus Airbnb.

To complement this analysis, we investigate the determinant factors of the heterogeneity. With $\varphi(\beta_n|\mu, \psi)$ being the distribution function of the parameters for the entire sample, we can obtain the distribution of the individual parameters of each senior tourist $h(\beta_n|IV, \mu, \psi)$ by applying Bayes' rule (Train, 2009):

$$h(\beta_n|IV, \mu, \psi) \cdot P(\text{hotel vs Airbnb} / IV, \mu, \psi) = P(\text{hotel vs Airbnb} / \beta_n, IV, \mu, \psi) \cdot \varphi(\beta_n|\mu, \psi)$$

We obtain

$$h(\beta_n|IV, \mu, \psi) = \frac{P(\text{hotel vs Airbnb} / \beta_n, IV, \mu, \psi) \cdot \varphi(\beta_n|\mu, \psi)}{P(\text{hotel vs Airbnb} / IV, \mu, \psi)}$$

From this equation, we derive the individual parameters for each senior tourist in the sample through the following expression:

Table 2
Results of main factors to choose hotels.

Independent variables	Parameter	Var(β)
Constant	-1.815*** (0.398)	9.869 (10.572)
PUSHMOT: Self-esteem	2.272*** (0.305)	0.594*** (0.201)
PUSHMOT: Ego enhancement	-0.244* (0.147)	0.275*** (0.067)
PUSHMOT: Relaxation	-0.420 (0.331)	1.176*** (0.399)
PUSHMOT: Knowledge seeking	0.221 (0.252)	0.887** (0.453)
PUSHMOT: Desire sustainability	-0.596*** (0.226)	0.525* (0.298)
PULLMOT: Cleanliness & safety	0.642*** (0.182)	0.520*** (0.200)
PULLMOT: Natural & historical	0.031 (0.102)	0.210* (0.104)
PULLMOT: Facilities & events	-0.556*** (0.111)	0.276* (0.166)
PULLMOT: Cost	0.050 (0.322)	0.468** (0.215)
TC: Travel companion (Alone)	4.522*** (0.752)	1.077 (0.784)
SI: Source Info (Internet)	-1.716** (0.866)	1.940 (1.178)
SI: Source Info (Friends & Relatives)	-1.665*** (0.617)	2.681*** (0.924)
TL: Travel length (4–6 nights)	-0.571 (0.380)	1.468* (0.793)
TL: Travel length (7–9 nights)	0.082 (0.194)	0.691* (0.369)
TL: Travel length (10 or more nights)	-2.210*** (0.660)	3.121** (1.412)
AGE (60–64 years old)	0.604* (0.341)	0.725*** (0.257)
AGE (65 or more years old)	2.337*** (0.452)	0.713* (0.414)
GENDER (Female)	0.139 (0.325)	0.824* (0.471)
Fixed effects (Countries)	Yes	

Note 1: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.
Note 2: Push motivation=PUSHMOT, Pull motivation=PULLMOT.

$$\beta_n = \int \beta \cdot h(\beta_n|IV, \mu, \psi) = \int \frac{\beta \cdot P(\text{hotel vs Airbnb} / \beta_n, IV, \mu, \psi) \cdot \varphi(\beta_n|\mu, \psi)}{P(\text{hotel vs Airbnb} / IV, \mu, \psi)}$$

4. Results

The identification of the most relevant factors affecting senior tourists in their decision between hotels and Airbnb involves the estimation of a logit model with random coefficients (Table 2). Regardless of the significant parameters, the significant variance parameters (Var(β)) of all the explanatory variables, except for two, entail heterogeneity in the effects of these variables and show the appropriateness of using the random parameter logit model to capture and incorporate this heterogeneity in the estimation.

Regarding the results, the study finds that push motivations such as self-esteem, ego-enhancement motivations, and the desire to travel sustainably play a significant role in seniors' accommodation choice. Thus, H1, H2 and H6 are supported. Senior tourists with higher levels of self-esteem motivations for traveling are more likely to choose hotels over Airbnb. This positive relationship is found for 99.9 % of the sampled observations [$\phi(0.02722/0.594) = 0.999$]. In contrast, when the senior tourists indicate higher levels of ego-enhancement motivations, they are more inclined to select Airbnb. Although this result is contrary to our expectations, we believe that it can be explained by the type of segment analyzed (note that not everybody would choose Airbnb, 18.75 % of people would still rather choose hotels [$\phi(-0.244/0.275) = 0.1875$]). The results also suggest that the desire to travel sustainably determines the senior accommodation choice of Airbnb (87.19 % [$1-\phi(-0.596/0.525) = 0.8719$]) over hotels (12.81 %). Thus, H6 is supported.

While the push motivation related to relaxation has a non-significant mean of -0.42, it also has a significant variance of 1.176. This outcome entails that 36.08 % of the sample driven by this motivation would opt for hotels [$\phi(-0.420/1.176) = 0.3608$] and 63.92 % for Airbnb, thereby supporting H3. Regarding the last push motivation, knowledge seeking, it has a non-significant mean of 0.221 and a significant variance of 0.887, which means that 59.84 % of the sample driven by this motivation would opt for hotels [$\phi(0.221/0.887) = 0.5984$] and 40.16 % for Airbnb. Therefore, H4 is supported.

Concerning pull motivations, the senior tourist decision between hotel and Airbnb is heavily influenced by cleanliness and safety and facilities and events factors. Thus, H7 and H9 are supported. Specifically, the pull motivation indicating the cleanliness and safety motivations when traveling emerge as a key factor driving senior tourist preferences towards hotels. In fact, this positive relationship is found for 89.15 % of the sampled observations [$\phi(0.642/0.520) = 0.8915$]. In contrast, when senior tourists exhibit a strong motivation related to facilities, events, and shopping opportunities, their preferences tend to lend heavily toward Airbnb (97.8 % of the individual driven by this pull motivation would select Airbnb [$1-\phi(-0.556*0.276) = 0.978$]). Regarding natural and historical, a non-significant mean of 0.031 and a significant variance of 0.210 imply that 55.87 % of the sample driven by this motivation would opt for hotels [$\phi(0.031/0.210) = 0.5587$] and 44.13 % for Airbnb, thereby supporting H8. Concerning cost, a non-significant mean of 0.05 and a significant variance of 0.468 entail that 54.25 % of the sample driven by this pull motivation would opt for hotels [$\phi(0.05/0.468) = 0.5425$] and 45.75 % for Airbnb, thereby supporting H10.

Regarding tripographic factors and according to our results, the length of stay is a significant factor in determining the accommodation choice of senior tourists between Airbnb and hotels, as researchers have extensively shown (e.g., Tussyadiah and Pesonen, 2016). This result supports H11. Senior tourists who are planning longer stays tend to prefer Airbnb (76.06 % [$1-\phi(-2.210/3.121) = 0.7606$]) over hotels

Table 3
Explanatory factors of heterogeneity.

	Self-esteem	Ego enhancement	Relaxation	Knowledge seeking	Desire sustainability	Cleanliness & safety	Natural & historical	Facilities & events	Cost
Constant	0.5293*** (0.1171)	0.1951 (0.1262)	2.0046*** (0.13)	-0.5214*** (0.1348)	-0.0803 (0.1305)	-0.0652 (0.1241)	-1.0718*** (0.1863)	0.4327*** (0.0589)	0.05 (0.0986)
Age (60–64)	0.0309 (0.0196)	-0.0112 (0.0212)	-0.0132 (0.0218)	0.0076 (0.0226)	-0.0132 (0.0219)	0.0082 (0.0208)	0.0299 (0.0312)	-0.0014 (0.0099)	-0.0086 (0.0165)
Age (65 or more)	0.0252 (0.0193)	0.0167 (0.0207)	0.0044 (0.0214)	0.0091 (0.0222)	0.0086 (0.0215)	-0.0024 (0.0204)	-0.0311 (0.0306)	0.0114 (0.0097)	0.0293* (0.0162)
Gender (female)	-0.0101 (0.0162)	-0.0173 (0.0175)	-0.0118 (0.018)	-0.0272 (0.0187)	0.0081 (0.0181)	-0.0178 (0.0172)	-0.0176 (0.0258)	0.0073 (0.0082)	-0.0119 (0.0137)
Studies (primary education)	0.0418 (0.102)	0.0316 (0.1099)	-0.3185*** (0.1132)	-0.0825 (0.1173)	0.1824 (0.1136)	-0.1121 (0.108)	-0.2688* (0.1622)	-0.0235 (0.0513)	0.1244 (0.0858)
Studies (secondary education)	0.0269 (0.0956)	0.0684 (0.103)	-0.1924* (0.1061)	-0.0486 (0.11)	0.2202* (0.1065)	-0.0518 (0.1012)	-0.2043 (0.1521)	-0.0069 (0.0481)	0.1143 (0.0804)
Studies (university)	0.0258 (0.0955)	0.0357 (0.1029)	-0.2217** (0.106)	-0.0425 (0.1099)	0.2073* (0.1065)	-0.061 (0.1012)	-0.198 (0.152)	-0.0039 (0.0481)	0.0979 (0.0804)
Income (less than €300)	-0.0248 (0.0621)	-0.0089 (0.0669)	0.0965 (0.069)	-0.0339 (0.0715)	-0.0164 (0.0692)	-0.0158 (0.0658)	-0.0745 (0.0988)	0.0521* (0.0313)	0.0576 (0.0523)
Income (between €301 and €600)	-0.0545 (0.0469)	-0.0238 (0.0505)	0.0228 (0.052)	-0.0645 (0.0539)	-0.0396 (0.0522)	-0.0028 (0.0496)	-0.0542 (0.0745)	0.0157 (0.0236)	-0.0226 (0.0394)
Income (between €601 and €900)	0.0095 (0.0466)	-0.0501 (0.0502)	0.0145 (0.0517)	-0.0151 (0.0536)	-0.0053 (0.0519)	0.0227 (0.0493)	-0.0136 (0.0741)	0.0103 (0.0234)	0.0008 (0.0392)
Income (between €901 and €1200)	-0.0464 (0.0466)	-0.0565 (0.0502)	0.0872* (0.0517)	-0.0324 (0.0536)	-0.068 (0.0519)	0.0008 (0.0493)	-0.0075 (0.0741)	0.0223 (0.0234)	0.0029 (0.0392)
Income (between €1201 and €1800)	-0.0204 (0.0458)	-0.0489 (0.0493)	0.0218 (0.0508)	-0.0292 (0.0527)	0.0013 (0.051)	0.0167 (0.0485)	-0.0161 (0.0729)	0.0291 (0.023)	0.001 (0.0385)
Income (between €1801 and €2400)	-0.0618 (0.0457)	-0.0661 (0.0493)	0.0398 (0.0508)	-0.0681 (0.0526)	-0.0323 (0.051)	0.0061 (0.0484)	0.0355 (0.0728)	0.0314 (0.023)	-0.0232 (0.0385)
Income (between €2401 and €3000)	0.0029 (0.0471)	-0.05 (0.0507)	0.01 (0.0522)	-0.0336 (0.0541)	-0.0129 (0.0524)	-0.0086 (0.0498)	-0.0261 (0.0748)	0.0253 (0.0237)	0.0092 (0.0396)
Income (between €3001 and €4500)	-0.0208 (0.0471)	-0.0486 (0.0507)	0.0327 (0.0523)	-0.0287 (0.0542)	0.0067 (0.0525)	-0.0207 (0.0499)	-0.0729 (0.0749)	0.0257 (0.0237)	0.0276 (0.0396)
Income (more than €4500)	-0.0498 (0.0519)	-0.0202 (0.0559)	0.0433 (0.0576)	-0.0452 (0.0597)	-0.0022 (0.0578)	-0.0246 (0.0549)	-0.0597 (0.0825)	0.0596** (0.0261)	0.0039 (0.0436)
City size (between 1500 and 10000 people)	-0.0321 (0.0258)	-0.0166 (0.0278)	-0.0459 (0.0286)	-0.0646** (0.0296)	-0.0302 (0.0287)	-0.0633** (0.0273)	-0.0116 (0.041)	-0.0066 (0.013)	-0.0375* (0.0217)
City size (more than 10000 people)	-0.0456* (0.0245)	-0.0323 (0.0264)	-0.0299 (0.0272)	-0.0926*** (0.0282)	0.0219 (0.0273)	-0.0667** (0.0259)	0.0278 (0.039)	-0.0093 (0.0123)	-0.0248 (0.0206)
United Kingdom	-0.885*** (0.0827)	-0.0513 (0.0891)	0.8261*** (0.0918)	-0.4433*** (0.0952)	0.0894 (0.0922)	-0.2127** (0.0876)	1.5851*** (0.1316)	0.2899*** (0.0416)	-0.2163*** (0.0696)
France	0.359*** (0.0322)	0.6468*** (0.0347)	-0.6501*** (0.0358)	0.0405 (0.0371)	0.7815*** (0.0359)	-0.7333*** (0.0342)	0.5076*** (0.0513)	0.0787*** (0.0162)	0.855*** (0.0271)
Poland	-0.1255*** (0.0214)	0.0586*** (0.023)	0.201*** (0.0237)	-0.0556** (0.0246)	0.0496** (0.0238)	-0.0893*** (0.0226)	-0.0798** (0.034)	0.1067*** (0.0107)	0.0539*** (0.018)
Romania	-0.0416 (0.0331)	0.2542*** (0.0357)	-0.0158 (0.0367)	0.0003 (0.0381)	0.103*** (0.0369)	-0.211*** (0.0351)	-0.2371*** (0.0527)	0.0487*** (0.0167)	0.168*** (0.0279)
Netherlands	0.4546*** (0.0377)	-0.1249*** (0.0407)	-0.581*** (0.0419)	0.2534*** (0.0434)	-0.1003** (0.0421)	0.2403*** (0.04)	0.0356 (0.06)	-0.2791*** (0.019)	-0.0336 (0.0318)
R-squared	0.9884	0.9722	0.9916	0.9339	0.9718	0.9764	0.9211	0.9833	0.9888
Adjusted R-squared	0.9879	0.9711	0.9913	0.9313	0.9707	0.9754	0.9180	0.9826	0.9883
F-statistic	2135.23***	880.48***	2970.82***	355.16***	865.73***	1038.75***	293.43***	1477.78***	2216.60***

Note 1: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

(23.94 %). The relationship between the mode of travel (indicating whether the person travels accompanied or alone) and senior accommodation choice was significantly positive, thus showing that senior tourists traveling alone prefer staying in a hotel over using an Airbnb. In fact, this aspect is one of the two variables whose variance is not significant, which means that 100 % of the sample show this preference for hotels when traveling alone. Thus, H12 is confirmed. Regarding the source of information that senior tourists use to plan their travel, the findings support H13 given the statistically significant relationship between this variable and accommodation choice. Senior tourists who use the Internet and the recommendations of friends and relatives are more likely to book a stay in Airbnb—100 % for the former, and 73.28 % for the latter [$1-\phi(-1.665/2.681) = 0.7328$].

Finally, concerning the demographic factors, the variable of gender (female) has a parameter whose mean value is not significantly different from zero (0.139); nevertheless, its variance is significantly different from zero (0.824), thereby supporting H14. In real terms, this result implies that 56.70 % of females opt for hotels [$\phi(0.139/0.824) = 0.5670$] and 43.30 % opt for Airbnb. We find a significant parameter for age, which supports H15. While senior tourists may share some common characteristics, they may also be divided into subgroups by age to explore how different subgroups of senior tourists make their accommodation choices. Older senior tourists (65 or older) seem to prefer staying in hotels (99.95 % [$\phi(2.337/0.713) = 0.9995$]).

Table 3 shows the parameters estimates of the determinant factors that explain the heterogeneity found for each motivation. One notable finding is the prevalent effect of countries on all the motivations, revealing that the idiosyncrasies associated with each country exert a strong influence on senior tourists' motivations. The level of education shows significant effects on the motivations "relaxation," "sustainability," and "natural and historical;" the level of income has an influence on "relaxation" and "facilities and events;" the city size has an impact on the motivations "knowledge seeking," "cleanliness and safety," and "cost."

5. Discussion

This study fills gaps in understanding factors influencing seniors' choices between hotels and Airbnb accommodations, drawing from the push-pull motivation theory. Furthermore, the incorporation of generational cohort and lifespan development theories into our study not only addresses these gaps identified in the existing literature but also enhances the predictive and explanatory power of our model regarding the choice between hotels and Airbnb for senior tourists. Our analysis of data from six European countries using a random parameter binomial logit model reveals that certain motivations increase hotel preferences for some seniors while simultaneously favoring Airbnb for others.

Regarding the push motivations included in this research, it is suggested that seniors with higher self-esteem motivations prefer hotels over Airbnb. If an accommodation guest gives importance to enjoying high-quality food, is interested in a luxury and comfortable accommodation, and values fashionable lodging, she/he will be more willing to select a hotel instead of an Airbnb. This result agrees with previous research that has found that the hedonic elements of the stay (i.e., comfort, food, and beverages) increase the likelihood of choosing hotels over Airbnb by tourists in general (e.g., Spoerr, 2021) and specifically by high-standing (upscale) tourists (e.g., Guttentag and Smith, 2017) and senior tourists (e.g., Kim et al., 2020; Liew et al., 2021). Conversely, when senior tourists express stronger ego-enhancement motivations, they tend to lean towards choosing Airbnb. While this result was contrary to our expectations, it could be attributed to the novelty of the tourism experience and their current development stage concerning the need for senior tourists to project an image of modernity and adaption to current trends (Wang et al., 2017). Since senior tourists typically prefer traditional accommodations, especially hotels (Alén et al., 2016), the Airbnb experience might offer an extra talking point upon their return,

in addition to the sites they visited. Furthermore, people with greater levels of ego-enhancement attempt to take part in activities that contribute to making favorable impressions of themselves and winning the respect of others (Fan et al., 2022). As Airbnb is considered an innovative type of service in the tourism accommodation industry used by younger people (Mody et al., 2017), its consumption by senior tourists can enhance their social image (Fan et al., 2022). Additionally, a preference for sustainable travel drive seniors to choose Airbnb. Paterson and Balderas-Cejudo (2024) have recently highlighted that the baby boomer generation demonstrates a heightened awareness of environmental issues when making tourism decisions, compared to other age groups. Sustainability is a concept closely linked to circular economy practices (Poon and Huang, 2017). By choosing accommodation in the sharing economy, such as Airbnb, they are able to access unique and locally owned properties that align with their desire to travel sustainably. This result coincides with past research that found that the decision to stay at an Airbnb was motivated by the desire to travel more responsibly, to lessen the effects of travel on the environment, to use resources responsibly, and to support local businesses (e.g., Tussyadiah, 2015; Tussyadiah and Pesonen, 2018).

For the relaxation push motivation, most seniors in the sample prefer Airbnb. While the literature tends to associate relaxation with hotels (Kim and Park, 2017; Kim and Perdue, 2013), Airbnb seems to be a viable alternative for senior tourists seeking relaxation. This result may reflect the cultural and technological adaptation of this baby boomer generation compared to previous generations at the same age. Although traditionally older tourists of this age tended to opt for more conventional and high quality options like hotels looking for relaxation (Prayag, 2012), this currently generation seems to be more open to innovative accommodation modalities that offer a more "homelike" and personalized experience to be relaxed. For knowledge-seeking, most of the sample prefers hotels. The eagerness to know and explore new environments is a strong motivation for senior tourists (Otoo and Kim, 2018). Interestingly, most of those who follow this motivation opt to stay in hotels. While this result is not in line with the expected positive relationship between knowledge-seeking and Airbnb, we argue that the knowledge related to local authenticity that senior tourists seek do not necessarily coincide with that of local authenticity linked to the choice of accommodation; rather, they may look for general knowledge about a destination without expecting to acquire that knowledge through accommodation, i.e. the specific place they stay. In other words, even though seniors tourists with a knowledge-seeking motivation express interest in seeing how other people live and experiencing different cultures and different ways of life, this motivation does not seem to manifest mostly through stays with local people in the same apartment or house. It seems that when senior tourists choose accommodation, luxury (self-esteem) prevails over local authenticity (knowledge-seeking); consequently, even if motivated by knowledge-seeking, they mostly prefer to stay in hotels.

Pull motivations, such as a preference for cleanliness and safety while traveling, strongly influence senior tourists to choose hotels. Cleanliness is crucial for the senior population and is often the decision-making criteria for choosing the hotel accommodation. This dimension is often related to their health and personal hygiene needs (Losada et al., 2017). Furthermore, our findings are consistent with past studies that found that tourist perceive Airbnb to perform worse than hotels in security (e.g., Mody et al., 2022; Poon and Huang, 2017), especially in the absence of technological and human trust (between hosts and visitors) (Tussyadiah and Pesonen, 2018). Indeed, one of the major concerns among Airbnb consumers is personal safety (Cao et al., 2022). Conversely, the pull motivation associated with facilities, events, and shopping opportunities tends to favor Airbnb preferences. This result can be explained for the Airbnb accommodation location and for the saving costs that allow tourists to diversify their activities at the destination. Regarding the former, our results corroborate past research on Airbnb that suggests location (e.g., access to convenience stores or retail

shops) to be an important reason for selecting this type of accommodation (e.g., [Ki and Lee, 2019](#); [Tussyadiah and Zach, 2017](#)). Studies on spatial patterns of peer-to-peer accommodation and hotels conclude that Airbnb is usually more present in city-center residential districts with a greater number of facilities ([Sainaghi, 2020](#)). In addition, as [Masiero and Nicolau \(2012\)](#) suggest, the decision of participating in leisure activities at the destinations depends on the amount of money they need to spend in total. Thus, one of the advantages of staying in a cheaper accommodation such as Airbnb compared with hotels is that tourists can spend more money on other activities (e.g., shopping or attending festivals) at the tourist destination ([Tussyadiah and Pesonen, 2016](#)). For the natural and historical factor, the larger proportion of seniors with this motivation that opt for hotels is in line with the literature, especially considering that being close to cultural and historical attractions is part of the strategy of many hotels ([Losada et al., 2017](#); [Masiero et al., 2019](#)). Concerning cost, the slight preference for hotels over Airbnb is in line with the literature. Although previous research indicates that individuals who are highly price-sensitive when traveling typically prefer Airbnb accommodation (e.g., [Saverimuttu and Varua, 2014](#)), the fact that this factor is not a key motivation in our study may be due to the life stage of the baby boomers. At this older adult stage, seniors are perceived to have fewer financial constraints and more discretionary income available for travel ([Santos and Santos, 2021](#)).

Based on our findings, senior tourists opting for extended stays tend to favor Airbnb accommodations over hotels likely because it offers the flexibility and comfort of staying in a home-like environment for an extended period ([Mahadevan, 2018](#)). In addition, the savings that one can make over time by staying in Airbnb could be a factor contributing to this preference ([Chen et al., 2017](#)). This study also confirms that, when senior tourists are traveling alone, they may prioritize the traditional, more established option of staying in a hotel, as it can provide them with a sense of security and reassurance ([Losada et al., 2017](#)). Furthermore, older people who travel alone usually do so in senior-oriented travel packages and programs where the primary accommodation is in hotels ([Alén et al., 2017](#)). On the other hand, when traveling with someone else, senior tourists may be more open to trying out new and authentic experiences in Airbnb accommodations. These results corroborate the findings of past studies that suggest a greater propensity for tourists traveling with a larger group to stay in peer-to-peer accommodations (e.g., [Volgger et al., 2019](#)). The findings of this study show that seniors who rely on the Internet and recommendations from friends and family are more inclined to choose Airbnb for their accommodations. As for the Internet, this result is intuitive, as senior travelers must utilize the Internet to make Airbnb reservations because it is an online platform. Unsurprisingly, this variable has a non-significant variance. Accordingly, the lack of efficacy regarding technology can be an important barrier for seniors to use Airbnb ([Tussyadiah, 2015](#); [Jang et al., 2024](#)). Regarding recommendations, our result is consistent with previous studies that show that a big number of Airbnb users select this sort of lodging based on recommendations from friends and relatives (e.g., [Lin, 2020](#)). On the other hand, senior tourists who rely on other sources of information through offline means, such as travel agencies, travel guides, and newspapers, are more inclined to book a stay in a hotel. Although this generation of baby boomers uses the internet more than past generations did at the same age ([Patterson, 2018](#); [Wang et al., 2017](#)), they seem to prefer offline methods for booking hotel accommodations, even in the presence of online hotel booking platforms ([Grønflaten, 2009](#)).

Lastly, in terms of demographics, the gender variable indicates that the majority of females prefer hotels. This outcome is in line with the literature that shows opposing effects regarding accommodation choice; depending on the weight they attribute to certain elements, such as security—which favors hotels over Airbnb—versus sustainability-related behavior—which leans more toward Airbnb—an accommodation choice is made ([Mahadevan, 2018](#)). As for age, older senior tourists (65 or older) tend to favor hotel accommodations likely because they

may prioritize comfort and traditional amenities over more unique or local experiences ([Chen et al., 2017](#)). This finding supports earlier studies suggesting that older individuals prefer hotels than peer-to-peer accommodations (e.g., [Alén et al., 2016](#); [Losada et al., 2017](#); [Volgger et al., 2019](#)). This trend can be due since the elderly appreciate every tour they can take for the remainder of their life and, as a result, value the quality of tourist lodging products higher ([Chen et al., 2017](#)).

6. Conclusion and implications

The accommodation industry is one of the main sub-sectors within the tourism sector because of its impact on overall tourism spending and the growth of tourist destinations ([Losada et al., 2017](#)). The ongoing development of peer-to-peer accommodations, such as Airbnb, has compelled conventional lodging, especially hotels, to adapt to this situation as they compete for similar segments in most cases ([Mody et al., 2017](#)). Although the elderly have traditionally used offline means to book accommodation and mostly stay in hotels ([Batra, 2009](#); [Losada et al., 2017](#)), they are increasingly utilizing new technologies and opting for alternative types of lodging ([Vigolo et al., 2021](#)). This circumstance is particularly true for the baby boomer segment, who have become seasoned users of digital technology after growing up with it ([Mahadevan, 2018](#)). Thus, to examine how decision-making motivations impact the choice accommodation of senior tourists between Airbnb and hotels is crucial for the prosperity of hotels in the future.

The findings of the present study show that the motivations for choosing between Airbnb and hotels in the senior segment qualify the motivations that the general literature identifies. Regarding push motivations, self-esteem, ego enhancement, relaxation, and knowledge seeking influence the accommodation choice. Specifically, seniors with motivations for self-esteem and knowledge seeking favor hotels, while seniors with motivations for ego enhancement and relaxation are more inclined to Airbnb. Concerning pull motivations, cleanliness and safety, natural and historical interest, facilities and events, and cost are determinants in the accommodation decision. In particular, cleanliness and safety, natural and historical interest, and cost are associated with hotels, and facilities and events are linked to Airbnb. Meanwhile, the desire to travel sustainably seems to be determinant and related to Airbnb. Regarding demographics, female and older senior tourists who travel alone show a preference for hotels, and seniors who book long stays and use the Internet and friends and relatives as sources of information lean toward Airbnb.

6.1. Theoretical implications

This study makes several valuable contributions to broadening knowledge of tourism accommodation literature, particularly in the senior segment. First, while the push and pull theory of motivation assumes that motivations have a unidirectional effect on choices, with the differential fulfillment paradigm connected to the push and pull factors found in this study, an extension is proposed.

The differential fulfillment paradigm highlights the nuanced ways in which various accommodation options, such as hotels and Airbnb, cater to the same underlying motivations of travelers. Rather than viewing motivations as leading to dual effects, this paradigm emphasizes the diversity of approaches that different lodging types employ to satisfy these motivations. Under this paradigm, accommodations are recognized for their unique features and attributes, which contribute to fulfilling specific needs or desires of travelers. For example, hotels may emphasize standardized services, professional staff, and amenities geared towards convenience and luxury, appealing to travelers seeking reliability and ease of use. On the other hand, Airbnb properties may offer a more personalized and immersive experience, allowing guests to connect with local culture, enjoy homely comforts, and have greater flexibility in their accommodations, which could attract travelers seeking authenticity and a sense of belonging. The key aspect of the

differential fulfillment paradigm is that it acknowledges the multifaceted nature of traveler motivations and the adaptability of accommodation options to meet these diverse needs. Rather than viewing motivations as dictating a singular choice between accommodations, this paradigm recognizes that travelers may prioritize different aspects of their experience and select accommodations based on how well they align with their specific preferences and priorities. The differential fulfillment paradigm underscores the importance of understanding the unique value propositions of different lodging options and how they resonate with the varied motivations of travelers, ultimately allowing for a more nuanced understanding of decision-making in the hospitality industry.

The results reveal that some push and pull motivations increase the preference for hotels for some senior tourists; however, those same motivations also enhance the preference for Airbnb for some other senior tourists. For example, the motivation “relaxation” leads 36 % of senior tourists to opt for hotels and the remaining 64 % choose Airbnb; the motivation “knowledge seeking” prompts nearly 60 % of senior tourists to opt for hotels, and leads the remaining 40 % to choose Airbnb. Likewise, the “natural and historical” motivation determines that 56 % select hotels and 44 % Airbnb, and cost leads 54 % of the sample to opt for hotels and 46 % for Airbnb. Say, for example, that “knowledge seeking”—or “curiosity” in a broader sense—is to be analyzed exclusively. One could argue that this curiosity would lead senior tourists to explore new alternative accommodation choices such as Airbnb; however, one could also state that the strategic location of hotels prompt senior tourists to satisfy their eagerness to get new knowledge by staying in these hotels surrounded by elements that sparked their curiosity. Consequently, this “knowledge seeking” motivation may act bidirectionally with this differential fulfillment paradigm.

Additionally, these results also show that although generational theories in consumer behavior are relevant for explaining purchasing and consumption patterns by age group (Thach et al., 2020), there can also be some heterogeneity within each generation regarding the motivations for choosing between hotels and Airbnb among individuals of the same age. This heterogeneity is primarily explained by the country of origin, as well as by education, income, and city size.

Second, the literature on accommodation choice has mainly focused on pull factors, and this study makes the alluded theoretical extension by analyzing pull and push factors. This bidirectional influence suggests a nuanced understanding of how motivations—push and pull—operate in the accommodation choices of senior tourists, underscoring the complexity of decision-making processes, where the same motivation can lead to diverse preferences based on individual preferences, circumstances, or contextual factors. This extension enriches the push and pull theory by acknowledging the bidirectional nature of motivations and their impacts on the choices between hotels and Airbnb in the senior tourism segment.

In summary, while challenging the unidirectional assumption of push and pull motivation effects, the study provides a theoretical extension by introducing a more nuanced understanding of bidirectional influences that significantly contributes to the literature on accommodation choices, particularly in the context of senior tourists.

6.2. Practical implications

Our research has important implications for the tourism industry. The differential fulfillment paradigm that guides the effects of some push and pull factors in this study has relevant managerial implications. Chief among them is the identification of “hidden” market segments that are stimulated by certain motivations. Traditional studies that only look at unidirectional effects would state that a certain motivation positively influences a particular choice alternative. This study, however, identifies the percentage of the sample—and the size of the market segment for that matter—that selects a choice alternative motivated by a specific push/pull factor and the percentage who chooses the other choice

alternative compelled by the very same motivation. Quantification of these market segments is no longer a chimera because, with the method employed in this study, firms can determine the size of different market segments and the motivations that lead the members of the segments to opt for hotel vs Airbnb.

Also, by understanding senior tourists’ motivations, hotels and Airbnb can tailor their offerings and provide a better travel experience. This information can help them stay ahead of the competition and meet the needs of this demographic segment. Considering our results, the emotional motivations of pleasure and self-image should be considered when targeting senior tourists. Hotels are more appealing to senior tourists who have a higher level of self-esteem motivations for travel. Hotels can boost their marketing by emphasizing their reputation, comfort, and luxury to attract these tourists. Airbnb is more appealing to senior tourists who have higher levels of ego-enhancement motivations. To target these tourists, Airbnb should focus on offering unique and memorable experiences. Regarding the pull motivations, hotels and Airbnb should focus on cleanliness, safety, and leisure facilities to attract senior tourists. Hotels should highlight their cleanliness and safety measures to attract seniors who prioritize these factors. Meanwhile, Airbnb should offer more facilities and events to appeal to seniors who seek these types of experiences.

Furthermore, our results indicate that age plays a crucial role in shaping the preferences of senior travelers. Younger senior tourists (under 60) could be drawn to Airbnb by promoting unique and local experiences, thus emphasizing its sustainable aspect and providing eco-friendly options, such as using renewable energy sources, practicing green building, and reducing their carbon footprints. Our results show that senior tourists who prefer longer stays favor Airbnb over hotels. Hotels can appeal to these seniors by offering extended stay packages that emphasize a home-like environment, with comfortable amenities, such as fully equipped kitchens and spacious rooms. These features will make these accommodations more attractive options for seniors who want the comfort of a hotel and the flexibility of a home-like environment and help them compete with Airbnb. Our findings also suggest that senior travelers who use the Internet and trust friends and family recommendations tend to choose Airbnb over hotels. To appeal to this segment, hotels should increase their efforts in building relationships with senior tourists by offering loyalty programs and incentives for repeat bookings and encourage referrals from satisfied guests.

Additionally, this research may aid policymakers in boosting local economic activity and community development. Seniors’ travel may bring economic and social benefits to destinations through their engagement with local communities and support for local businesses. However, the impact of Airbnb on local communities, such as the number of guests and strain on resources, must be considered. The impact of seniors’ accommodation choice on local communities must be analyzed, and suggestions must be provided to maximize benefits and minimize negative impacts.

6.3. Limitations and future research

The present study has some research limitations that allows us to suggest several avenues for future research. First, and as was stated before, when defining senior age, the previous literature lacks uniformity. This lack of uniformity can have a significant impact on the conclusions reached in similar studies. Although the current study has selected the most common option in the literature, this issue should be taken as a limitation of this research and should also serve to highlight the importance of having a common definition of the senior segment in any research on this subject. To have a more nuanced understanding of the impact of this segment on the tourism industry, further research on the matter is needed to reach a consensus on what the senior age should be. Second, our research does not analyze factors such as health and wellness considerations. However, seniors may have different health and wellness needs in their accommodation, such as the availability of

accessible rooms or in-room health amenities. Future research could explore how these needs influence the accommodation choice of senior tourists and how accommodations can better meet these needs. Third, our study has a limitation of not measuring personalization preferences for senior tourists, such as concierge services, room service, or personalized check-in. Future research can explore how these preferences impact their accommodation choice and how accommodations can better cater to this demographic segment. Fourth, in the context of peer-to-peer accommodation, socialization is a relevant push factor. However, the empirical analysis of this study did not include it due to the reliability of the scale used. Additional research avenues should focus on this dimension.

Apart from these future research lines, there is a compelling need to validate the framework used in this study across diverse generations. This broader validation process could uncover varied patterns of results, enhancing the framework's ability to explain accommodation choices across a wider spectrum of travelers, and gaining more universal applicability.

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Appendix A

PUSHMOT: Ego-enhancement^a

PSE_1. I like to talk about my trip when I get home.

PSE_2. When I go home, I talk to everybody about my trip.

PSE_3. I like to be able to talk about the places I've visited and the things I've seen on trip.

PSE_4. While on trip, I attend cultural events that I don't have access to at home.

PUSHMOT: Self-esteem^a

PSS_1. The availability of good restaurant and good food is important in choosing a trip spot.

PSS_2. While on trip, I want luxury, nice food, and a comfortable place to stay.

PSS_3. I think that the kind of accommodation that you get on trip are real important.

PSS_4. It's important for me to go someplace fashionable on trip.

PUSHMOT: Knowledge-seeking^a

PSK_1. I like to see how other people live.

PSK_2. It's important for me to experience different cultures and different ways of life.

PSK_3. I want to see the things that I don't normally see.

PSK_4. On trip, I like to do the same things that the people there do.

PUSHMOT: Relaxation^a

PSR_1. A trip means being able to do nothing.

PSR_2. The main thing for me on trip is just to slow down.

PSR_3. There should be no deadlines while on trip.

PSR_4. Just resting and relaxing is trip enough for me.

PUSHMOT: Socialization^a

PSSO_1. I like to see how other people live.

PSSO_2. It's important for me to experience different cultures and different ways of life.

PSSO_3. I want to see the things that I don't normally see.

PUSHMOT: Desire sustainability^a

DE_1. I want to travel sustainable in the near future.

DE_2. I wish to travel sustainable in the near future.

DE_3. I am eager to travel sustainable in the near future.

DE_4. My wish to travel sustainable in the near future can be described desirably.

PULLMOT: Cleanliness & safety^b

PLC_1. Standards of hygiene and cleanliness.

PLC_2. Environmental quality of the air, water and soil.

PLC_3. Safety and security.

PLC_4. Public transportation such as airlines, train service, bus service, local system.

PLC_5. Nice weather.

PULLMOT: Facilities & events^b

PLF_1. Walking paths or other places to walk for exercise.

PLF_2. Facilities for physical activities.

PLF_3. Availability of shopping facilities.

PLF_4. Special events and attractions.

PULLMOT: Natural & historical^b

PLN_1. Outstanding scenery.

PLN_2. Historical sights.

PULLMOT: Cost^b

PLCO. Overall cost of vacation (including transportation, accommodations, and meals).

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Declaration of Competing Interest

None.

^a Questions for these variables were evaluated from “Strongly disagree” (1) to “Strongly agree” (7).

^b Questions for these variables were evaluated from “Not at all important” (1) to “Extremely important” (7).

Appendix B

Table 1
Appendix B. Exploratory factor analysis Push Motives

Variable/items	Dimensions				
	PUSH MOTIVES	Knowledge-seeking	Ego-enhancement	Self-esteem	Relaxation
PSE_1.	0.177	0.891	0.069	0.004	0.119
PSE_2.	0.275	0.784	0.072	0.216	0.146
PSE_3.	0.232	0.888	0.093	0.005	0.126
PSE_4.	0.614	0.302	0.174	0.181	0.054
PSS_1.	0.333	0.130	0.597	0.180	0.205
PSS_2.	-0.008	0.006	0.893	0.149	-0.104
PSS_3.	0.087	0.091	0.736	-0.099	0.386
PSS_4.	0.221	0.131	0.545	0.452	-0.082
PSK_1	0.793	0.094	0.052	-0.101	0.167
PSK_2	0.842	0.144	0.087	-0.091	0.066
PSK_3	0.680	0.178	0.163	-0.104	0.088
PSK_4	0.752	0.104	0.021	0.259	0.108
PSR_1	-0.087	0.065	0.128	0.813	0.062
PSR_2	0.068	0.033	0.101	0.695	0.372
PSR_3	0.160	0.012	0.113	0.259	0.669
PSR_4	0.063	0.078	0.092	0.624	0.549
PSSO_1	0.268	0.206	-0.109	0.296	0.533
PSSO_2	0.676	0.157	0.041	0.118	0.310
PSSO_3	0.187	0.232	0.134	0.007	0.711
Cronbach's alpha	0.854	0.874	0.734	0.767	0.601
KMO test of sampling adequacy	0.859				
Bartlett's test of sphericity	6978.08 (171 d.f., p < 0.000)				
Total % variance explained	66.35 %				

Table 2
Appendix B. Exploratory factor analysis Pull Motives

Variable/items	Dimensions			
	PULL MOTIVES	Cleanliness & safety	Facilities & events	Natural & historical
PSC_1.	0.854	0.195		0.114
PSC_2.	0.790		0.242	0.150
PSC_3.	0.825		0.126	0.239
PSC_4.	0.452		0.378	0.425
PSC_5.	0.377		0.563	0.202
PSF_1	0.115		0.741	0.370
PSF_2	0.102		0.798	0.225
PSF_3	0.243		0.732	0.033
PSF_4	0.299		0.461	0.540
PSN_1	0.230		0.173	0.815
PSN_2	0.109		0.193	0.876
Cronbach's alpha	0.839		0.779	0.778
KMO test of sampling adequacy	0.893			
Bartlett's test of sphericity	4391.59 (66 d.f., p < 0.000)			
Total % variance explained	65.20 %			

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