

MASTER THESIS

The Ubers of babysitting

A comparative study of ways of measuring trustworthiness and assessing reputation between users of babysitting services in the sharing economy.

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Abstract

The transformation of the Internet into a collaborative environment has given rise to the sharing economy, allowing users to connect not only with friends, but also to interact with strangers. The sharing economy enables its users to exchange services and goods among one another in a quick and easy manner. Nonetheless, due to the fact that such services function based on relationships established online, their creators need to provide tools, which would facilitate trust between users. This thesis delves into the theory concerning trust on online platforms and expands it by means of qualitative interviews with users of peer-to-peer services connecting babysitters and parents. The qualitative approach reveals that the respondents' answers vary depending on their personal needs for babysitting or au pairing, but all respondents are aware that the platforms are a means of connecting peers to one another and allowing them to communicate without much interference. Despite the fact that most of the background checking necessary to increase trust towards strangers met online is done by the users themselves, they still trust the platform and view it as very practical. The study reveals that babysitting and au pairing platforms are not very sustainable, as the users only use them when they are under pressure to find a caretaker for their child or when their current babysitter is not available anymore. Therefore, the users play a passive role on these websites most of the time. The research reveals that although the peer-to-peer babysitting platforms are helpful, they could not establish trust between the users on their own, as the most important element of building trust between strangers is interaction on other media, via video call and in an offline environment.

Keywords

The sharing economy, online trust, reputation, recommendation systems, peer-to-peer environments

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1 Introduction

Not talking to strangers is probably the first life advice one receives from parents in their childhood. Naturally protective of their offspring, most parents are terrified by the thought of their child being kidnapped or their house being robbed. Can you imagine the possible dangers of being provided services by strangers met on the Internet?

“The ‘Uber of babysitting’ is creeping some parents out” is a caption of an article published by *The New York Post* (2016). One may wonder: what is the Uber of babysitting and why is it creeping parents out? The service goes by the name of Hello Sitter (www.hellositter.com), a peer-to-peer online platform enabling parents to find babysitters within an hour. This specific application requires parents to fill in information about their children, such as allergies, bath routines and interests in order to find a good babysitter match, which is alarming to some parents. After all, many parents would not be comfortable sharing his or her children’s private information in the offline world, let alone an easily accessible online space.

Despite their privacy-invading character, similar sharing applications within the sharing economy, not only connected to babysitting, have gathered a large user base (Belk, 2014). The global emergence of online marketplaces allowing people to share resources over the Internet was initiated by the development of network technologies, the economic crisis and environmental concerns. The online platforms enabling the sharing of accommodation, transport tools, and skills are now a significant element of the market, creating job positions and generating income in urban environments (Sacks, 2011).

Thanks to the collaborative consumption practiced through such services, many people claim to prefer access to goods and services instead of owning commodities, resulting in an increased efficiency in the allocation of resources. This hints at the advantages of such practices for finance and the environment, as they generate less pollution and waste (Kaye, 2012). What is more, while the sharing economy operates online, it has the power to unite people in the same locations, sharing their resources with one another in real life, thus encouraging social encounters and building communities (Gansky, 2010).

1.1 Definition of problem

Recent developments in the realm of web 2.0 have caused an emergence of platforms based on user collaboration. The web 2.0 enables the users not only to interact with web pages, but also to connect and collaborate with one another (Carroll & Romano, 2011). The sharing economy resembles a market, where consumers and sellers are connected to freely cooperate, with the marketplace taking the role of a mediator (Botsman & Rogers, 2010). In the sharing economy, sectors such as personal services, transportation and accommodation are being transformed and simplified by replacing the middlemen by software and directly connecting users to one another by means of online applications (Davidson, 2016). The most popular examples of businesses, which are a part of this rapidly growing phenomenon are Airbnb, offering accommodation sharing, Blablacar, which enables people to share car rides to the same destinations and TaskRabbit, where one can find people to help with daily chores or small work tasks (Davidson, 2016).

People make use of these sharing platforms on a consumer-to-consumer basis (C2C), creating sharing economies based on collaborative consumption (Rauch & Schleicher, 2015). In other words, sharing platforms gather users and encourage them to share resources between other members of the network created on a given platform. For instance, Airbnb allows users to rent out their living spaces for short amounts of time, whereas Uber functions as a replacement for mainstream taxis, by allowing users to rideshare in their private vehicles.

In the past years, peer-to-peer services of this kind have gained significant popularity and many people prefer them to mainstream hotels and taxis (Davidson, 2016). This, in turn, causes a disruption of the existing industries, which have been offering similar services for a long time, raising criticism concerning this emerging phenomenon (Cohen & Kietzmann, 2014).

The rapid development of sharing economy platforms and emergence of new services within it makes it a challenge for researchers to cover the topic entirely. Previous research views the sharing economy platforms from a broader perspective, focusing on its impact on the economy, industries such as tourism or transport, its environmental sustainability aspect, as well as motivations of users to participate in collaborative consumption (Reisch & Thøgersen, 2015). Other researchers look at products of the sharing economy in terms of innovation and an opportunity to improve unemployment rates by allowing people to make money independently from corporations (Cohen & Sundararajan, 2015). Hawlitschek, Teubner and Weinhardt, (2016) claim that the sharing economy is not defined accurately

enough at this point in time, what proves the demand for more research regarding this topic.

Although humans have been familiar with sharing for centuries (Sahlins, 1972) the sharing economy as a modern practice is governed by different rules. After all, the Internet is mediating the communication between the two parties and the specific interface offered by the service plays an important role, therefore research connected to sharing online is required to expand on this context of the sharing economy. The consumption patterns of millions of people are being transformed with the increasing number of peer-to-peer services available.

It has been found that trust is the number one determinant of consumer behavior (Papadopoulou et al., 2001). What is more, trust ensures a positive impression of security in a peer-to-peer transaction and faith in the reliability of the other party (Wirtz & Lwin, 2009). In the context of the sharing economy, trust refers to the party users are sharing with to the same extent as it does towards the platform (Bhattacharjee, 2002; Melnik & Alm, 2002; Chai et al., 2012). Because of this, trust constitutes a basis for an individual in the decision whether to start using a peer-to-peer service or not (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Bauwens et al., 2012; Keymolen, 2013; Slee, 2013). According to Cox et al. (2009), reciprocity and trust are the core reasons for people to collaborate with one another. Similarly, Morgan and Hunt (1994) identify trust as a predictor of cooperation between individuals. According to Rogers and Botsman (2010), trust between the two parties participating in the sharing economy is so crucial that it can be perceived as a currency.

The aforementioned research on trust in collaborative environments proves that the sharing economy highly relies on trust. First of all, individuals would not be inclined to begin using such a service without trust towards the platform and its users. Second of all, the users, who do not know each other, are dependent on one another to provide and receive good quality services (Belk, 2010). Considering that without trust the sharing economy services would certainly not be as popular, it is surprising that the amount of research of such platforms in the context of trust remains low.

Besides trust, John (2013) argues that also interdependence, selflessness and caring constitute important components of sharing communities. Since sharing has become an equivalent of online participation, these values are just as valid in the sharing economy. Additionally, he notes that it does not matter that we do not see or personally know the person we are communicating with online, because the act of sharing brings about a natural feeling of fellowship anyway. While this could be the case for some users, the levels of reciprocation and ways of trusting strangers via an electronic medium remain an individual matter,

therefore many external factors could impact an individual's inclination to trust a stranger online (Cox et al., 2009).

For this reason, some sharing platforms feature their own reviewing peer-to-peer systems, in order for the users to evaluate each other and gradually build their reputation online. Besides the common review sections in user's profiles, elements such as adding sufficient personal information and a profile photo also play a significant role in the users' assessment of one another before deciding whether to ask someone for a service (Nurvala, 2015).

Although there is an increasing amount of researchers interested in consumer-to-consumer trust, the majority of research concerning trust in business focuses on business-to-consumer relationships, again proving that more insights into this subject are needed (Gefen & Straub, 2004). Research by Ert, Fleischer and Magen (2016) was the only recent study found on the impact of photos on trust in the sharing economy and the user's choice to cooperate with someone online. This study focused on the specific example of Airbnb and combined an empirical analysis of data from the platform as well as an experiment with the users. The researchers found a relation between the perceived trustworthiness in a host's profile photo and the price of the accommodation provided and the probability of being asked to provide a place to stay. It also touches upon the topic of reputation, revealing that the reviews published on a profile do not impact the probability of being chosen nor do they determine the price of an accommodation (Ert, Fleischer & Magen, 2016). Overall, this in-depth perspective on one of the elements featured on a profile in a sharing economy service proves the significance of photos and the powerful effect they have on consumer choices. For this reason, it is necessary to develop this area of research even further, so that the importance of more elements of the sharing economy platforms can be known. What is more, most sharing economy studies focus on the most popular services, such as transport and accommodation with Uber and AirBnb being the most popular examples. However, collaborative consumption keeps transforming many other industries and services, thus services with smaller user groups should also be looked into.

1.2 Research question

Many peer-to-peer platforms are designed to establish and maintain trust among users, including review and rating systems, as well as a variety of verification mechanisms. Nevertheless, trust is more difficult to obtain when technology is involved (Teubner, 2014). The fact that the consumer-to-consumer model lacks human supervision, which the users could depend on, makes it challenging to the creators of such platforms to provide enough tools for users to feel safe when providing or receiving a service.

The platforms function as mediators between the two parties who take up the roles of a vendor and a customer. Therefore, it is not only important to create a verification system, but also for the platform itself to be trustworthy (Joinson et al., 2010). Privacy and safety are the most common issues people have with peer-to-peer platforms. After all, the parties involved are strangers, who plan to meet in reality and rely on one another to provide the service they promised online. Sharing a living space, vehicle or equipment with a stranger requires a lot of mutual trust for one another. What this thesis will focus on are the aforementioned babysitting services, where the well being of a child could be at risk in case of a miscalculation of trustworthiness.

In sharing platforms, where strangers take up the role of child caretakers, there is a need for mutual trust between the parents and babysitters. One's reputation online functions as an indicator of trustworthiness as it is expressed by other users in the form of testimony (Slee, 2013). Reputation helps promote trust, constituting a discriminating signal to other members of a community by means of word of mouth. For instance, in a community with a high level of informal communication between users, it is easy to promote those who act as they claim to act compared to people who lack skills, but claim to have them. The truth about the lack of skills of the latter type of user is likely to be revealed quickly if the community allows the users to share their experiences with collaborations on such platforms. This way, well-functioning reputation measuring systems are an effective way of confirming information about users and increasing trust towards them (Slee, 2013). Reputation systems enforce the community by means of rating, textual feedback, photos and user referencing. Making these elements visible to all signed up users and potential new users ensures transparency of both the product and the supplier, what in turn reduces potential risks users take when becoming participants in a service. As the probability of risks decreases community trust increases (Sundararajan, 2012).

The reputation of both parties plays a big part in how they perceive one another, therefore it can be said that the concept of reputation is very closely related to trust. The research question this thesis sets out to answer is:

How do parents and caretakers using peer-to-peer babysitting platforms establish mutual trust by means of the tools provided by the sharing platform?

The babysitting services, which have emerged within the sharing economy, allow users to network and create a web of connections with potential caretakers. My research will focus on the way both babysitters and parents evaluate trustworthiness by means of the tools provided by specific babysitting and au pairing (long-term babysitting) platforms. The thesis will look at the experiences of both types of users with seven different Benelux based and international platforms. Furthermore, it will provide personal user experiences of babysitters and parents and their individual use of the tools provided by the service, in order to result in an explorative insight into online trust in the sharing economy services connected to babysitting specifically. Babysitting P2P services revolve around children, who constitute a separate party from the two transacting peers and their nature significantly differs from this of commodities or services. Additionally, they are naturally more valuable to parents than products usually shared on such platforms, therefore this study can potentially reveal new observations about trust and the challenges both parties are faced with when deciding to trust their peer.

1.3 Practical and scientific relevance

The peer-to-peer babysitting market is an interesting subject to study in terms of trust and transparency facilitated by online businesses, as it can be assumed that parents require extra reassurance and transparency when it comes to depending on a stranger to take care of their children. The main aspect of this type of sharing economy service, which sets it apart from others, is that it does not concern commodities or products, but a service, where the well being of a defenseless child is at stake. The results of this thesis could help to improve other sharing economy platforms and increase trust between users sharing commodities of various degrees of value. This thesis constitutes a comparative study of the trust evaluations of babysitters, as well as parents who use babysitting services. The results could help improve the functioning of such platforms, benefiting babysitters and parents whose lifestyle requires using babysitting services. As mentioned before, since the level of trust needed to allow an individual to babysit one's child is higher than for instance renting a car, the results of this study could be utilized to improve other P2P services, where trust is slightly less important, but remains crucial for a transaction to take place. Such platforms could specialize in connecting people to share commodities such as modes of transport, accommodation, food, money or skills, for instance fixing things or simply sharing knowledge on a subject.

The comparative nature of the research can potentially lead to findings not only concerning trust mediated by peer-to-peer platform mechanisms, but also the differences in the tools made available to evaluate trustworthiness between seven platforms operating in Benelux and worldwide. Once it is known how the two parties make use of the available tools to evaluate one another's reputation and trustworthiness, it will be possible to evaluate, which tools are perceived as the most useful by users and what their reasoning behind this is. This constitutes essential information for the creators of applications within the sharing economy, which operate on trust, as well as their users, who themselves are skeptical towards collaborating with strangers met online.

There has been research focused on the impact of user's profile images on trust between Airbnb users, as well as the impact on their decision to rent a place from someone (Ert, Fleischer and Magen, 2016), who looked into the impact of users profile images on trust on the Airbnb platform and the user's decision to rent a room from someone. The aforementioned research focused on the specific example of Airbnb and utilized the methods of a controlled experiment and data analysis. This research will build on that idea by look into the remaining tools available on sharing economy platforms and their impact on mutual trust

between the users. This way, the thesis will generate more insights into not only the concept of mutual trust of users, but also on the importance of the specific tools available. It will look at reputation systems and platform tools including the user photo aspect as in the previous research. Additionally, it looks at reviewing systems, descriptions and rating systems, which were not looked at in the research by Ert, Fleischer, and Magen (2016). Additionally, it appears to be the first qualitative research of the topic of online trust in P2P environments, which would provide a comparison of the perspectives of the two parties of sharing services.

A significant limitation of previous research about collaborative consumption is that many studies do not differentiate between different types of sharing economy services within different industries, treating them as one object of study (Jenkins et al., 2014). This thesis touches upon a type of service not researched before, due to the fact that most sharing economy related research focuses on the transport, accommodation or food industries, due to their popularity. However, collaborative consumption keeps transforming many other industries and services as well, thus services with smaller user groups should also be looked into.

Despite the fact that many scholars view trust as a significant factor in determining user participation in the sharing economy, there is not a lot of research about trust in the context of collaborative consumption, both of quantitative and qualitative character (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Owyang et al., 2014). This thesis responds to these research gaps by providing new academic insights into the concept of trust, enriching the already broad definition of trust (Barber, 1983; Das & Teng, 2004; Kee & Knox, 1970; McKnight & Chervany, 2002; Rosseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998). Due to the fact that trust carries different meanings depending on the study area it occurs in, it should be enriched in the context of collaborative consumption. The phenomenon of the sharing economy driven by technology is ever changing and requires thorough understanding from various angles. What is more, considering that reputation supports trust online to a high extent it is important to mind that the way a person is perceived online depends on more than one quality of this person, but their overall behavior and the way they present themselves (Masum & Zhang, 2004). For this reason, research on reputation and trust within the sharing economy is necessary, since reputation and trust are dependent on various factors, which need to be revealed through qualitative research.

1.4 Thesis outline

The second chapter of the thesis will supply the reader with a review of the theory connected to the concept of the sharing economy and characteristics of such platforms (Davidson, 2016; Hubley, 2015; Plouffe, 2007) and its users categorized into consumers - sometimes referred to as prosumers and suppliers (Toffler, 1980; Nurvala, 2015). Further it presents the theories concerning the notions of trust, which is inseparable from collaborative environments like the sharing economy services (Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 2007). Further it explains how the concept of reputation is just as relevant for this topic of study and its importance in establishing trust (Mazum, & Zhang, 2004). Following the theoretical framework for this research, chapter three will familiarize the reader with the method chosen for this research – qualitative interviews, along with an explanation of the data gathering process, the units of analysis used and the type of analysis carried out. Chapter four consists of the results of the performed interviews and provides an analysis of the main findings of the research. What follows is a concluding chapter, summarizing the outcomes of the research and discussing the relevance of the research.

2 Theory and previous research

This chapter introduces the existing literature concerning the topic of the sharing economy, trust, reputation and other aspects, which promote building trust between people. Due to the fact that applications within the sharing economy specifically offering babysitting services have emerged recently, there are no academic articles connected to babysitting platforms specifically. Thus, this chapter looks at related literature from a broader perspective of trust in peer-to-peer platforms as a whole and divides it into sections corresponding to the topics touched upon in the thesis. It includes the most relevant concepts related to the topic of the thesis such as the sharing economy and trust, which is closely tied with the concept of reputation. In order to provide a deeper insight into elements relevant in the study of the sharing economy and trust, this section will explain the concepts and establish their definitions as they are viewed in this thesis specifically.

2.1 The sharing economy

In recent years, a shift in the way business relationships function has taken place. Namely, many relationships, which could be described as business-to-consumer are being transformed into consumer-to-consumer (C2C) and peer-to-peer (P2P), becoming more focused on customer needs, emphasizing the relevance of the participating customers rather than the businesses alone (Hubley, 2015).

The sharing economy P2P marketplaces are expanding at an especially fast rate in the tourism industry (Pizam, 2014). Such marketplaces constitute platforms managed by a third party, gathering consumers and suppliers, who carry out transactions between each other (Botsman & Rogers, 2011). While the early P2P markets, which have now transformed into global selling platforms such as eBay or Craigslist focused on sales of retail products, the sharing economy platforms have been created with the objective to allow the users to trade services (Sundararajan, 2014; Botsman & Rogers, 2011). Another factor setting the early retail P2P marketplaces from the sharing economy is the direct nature of the interactions between the two participating parties. Services within the sharing economy allow the users to share a lot more personal information about both the customers and the providers of services. This includes the use of photos, descriptions of past experiences, rating systems and reviews from other users about a service provider. All of these factors allow participants to experience a feeling of closeness with the other members of the sharing economy, as well as to verify the identity of the other party (Guttentag, 2015).

The users of the sharing economy can be divided into two groups: consumers and prosumers (Toffler, 1980). Consumers are those who make use of sharing economy services and provide feedback, whereas prosumers are those who besides using the platforms for their benefit also produce, in the context of sharing services this means that users provide services to others and actively participate within the collaborative consumption. Both of the groups are encouraged to engage in P2P reviewing, which enables users to express their opinions of services and the people they have received these services from (Nurvala, 2015).

As stated by Plouffe (2007) the sharing economy platforms do not require central coordination in their communication, so that the middlemen between users are replaced by mere software. This means that users can participate in the sharing economy, earning money in a more flexible and independent way, since they are not managed by anyone. Additionally, the requirements to become a part of a P2P sharing platform are very low, considering that most platforms do not request a verification of high-level skills to become a member (Nurvala, 2015).

The lack of a human intermediary to perform background checks between users constitutes one of the issues of sharing economy platforms, because people have problems trusting one another based on only their own perception of the other user. This is why various review systems are embedded in the platforms, so that people can view other user's reviews of prosumers before they decide whether to request their services or not. These systems are built on the notion of trust and allow users to work on their online reputation with each review they receive. Without the review tools, sharing platforms would resemble a gamble, as users would neither be able to assess the quality of services nor the identity of the person providing them (Nurvala, 2015).

Due to the fact that platforms in the sharing economy function because of the collaboration between users, users constitute their core. Considering the dependence of the survival of a company on its users, the participating customers should be reassured of the safety of a platform as much as possible (Adler, 2008). This is another reason why studies concerned with trust and reputation are relevant, as such platforms could not function without reviewing systems based on them (Richardson, 2015). Therefore, it is important to find out as much as possible about user experiences, in order to optimize them to the needs of the participators.

2.2 Trust

The key element of this thesis is trust, which constitutes the basis of a collaborative relationship between the sharing economy users. According to Mayer, Davis and Schoorman (2007) trust is an inherent element of situations characterized by risk, interdependence, as well as uncertainty. These conditions can be found in many environments, also in the online realm of the sharing economy.

The greatest threat to online transactions is the lack of trust. Online C2C platforms are faced with the challenge to provide a trustworthy environment for users to sign up and remain to use a peer-to-peer service. Trust is claimed to be a significant factor affecting the purchase intentions and behavior of online users (Doney & Cannon, 1997).

The concept of trust is problematic in the way that researchers have not agreed on one universally accepted definition of it (Barber, 1983; Das & Teng, 2004; Kee & Knox, 1970; McKnight & Chervany, 2002; Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998). Trust can mean different things in various scientific fields. The definition used in this thesis constitutes a mix of the general concept of trust and the trust needed specifically in online environments, especially those where two entities: the supplying peer and the customer peer meet and tend to exchange goods, therefore trust is necessary to carry out the transaction.

This section also touches upon the trust a user puts into the online platform he is using, whether it is the supplying or the customer side. The definition of trust in the case of this thesis is based on the research model of trust for C2C sharing economy platforms (Gefen & Straub, 2004; Gefen et al., 2008; Lu et al., 2010).

Trust is especially relevant in C2C relationships, such as those in the sharing economy, due to the relevance of working relationships between two parties (Lewis & Weigert, 1985). Without the maintenance and initiation of trust it would not be possible to create stable social relationships. Similarly, the obligations of the act of exchanging goods require trust (Blau, 1964). In this thesis, trust is viewed in a sociological sense, rather than psychological, since it focuses on the exchange of trust in an online community and the way it is established to promote the smooth functioning of online C2C platforms.

Bromiley and Cummings (1992) claim that trust can be divided into two components. The first one concerns the way one feels when he or she is being trusted. Being trusted carries a positive connotation, since it reflects one's dependability, power over others and capability of managing resources, which other people find valuable (Kramer & Tyler, 1996). This component can also be viewed from another perspective of trust being an expectation of a

certain type of behavior in an interaction between two parties (Barber, 1983; Koller, 1988; Luhmann, 1979; Rotter, 1967).

The other component of trusting is the way one feels about having to trust another person. In comparison to the first, this element is significantly more negative and is closely tied to fear and anxiety. Kramer and Tyler (1996) connect this feeling to the loss of control over a situation, acceptance of exposure to vulnerability and introduction of unwanted uncertainty into one's life (Doney, Cannon, & Mullen, 1998; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998; Zand, 1972).

Zand (1972) claims that this uncertainty derives from the lack of possibility to control the behavior of other people. In other words, trust can be phrased as a permission to become vulnerable to specific actions of others, concerning this party and allowing a situation where the expected actions towards this party will not be fulfilled due to the lack of possibility to control a situation (Mayer et al., 1995). This thesis will use this concept of control and establish the way users deal with the loss of it in a collaborative consumption setting.

The previously mentioned expectations are connected to the benevolence, competence, honesty, as well as the predictability of another person in an exchange situation (McKnight, Choudhury, & Kacmar, 2000). The research model of trust for C2C environments divides trust into three elements: integrity/confidence, ability/competence and benevolence (Gefen & Straub, 2004, Gefen et al., 2008, Lu et al., 2010). The three concepts will be crucial for this thesis, as the thematic analysis of interviews with users will attempt to reveal how users use the service's tools to confirm that the other party is characterized by the three elements. The C2C model relates to both the consumer's and the supplier's perspective, as well as both of the parties' trust towards the platform they are making transactions on. Similarly, the users of babysitting platforms should base their trust on the same three elements, thus this thesis sets out to see how the presence of these elements in the other party can be confirmed by means of the online services. The following subsections provide more in-depth explanations of the three perspectives and the corresponding trust elements in each case.

2.3 The perspectives of trust in C2C environments

In this thesis trust will also be divided into two perspectives, that of the consumer side and the supplier side. The aforementioned conceptual research model for trust in C2C environments further distinguishes three trust targets: the peer, product and platform. Those three aspects

are described in the dimensions of ability, integrity and benevolence (Gefen & Straub, 2004).

2.3.1 The consumer perspective

The consumer places his trust in the supplying party, meaning the assessment of the supplier's competence and skills to complete his half of the transaction. What is more, this trust describes the level of integrity and benevolence of the supplier (Pavlou & Fygenon, 2006). In this case, integrity can be understood as the supplier keeping his promise of delivering a service to the satisfaction of the customer. Benevolence, on the other hand, relates to the supplier striving for the customer's best interest. The two characteristics are closely tied to one another and often occur simultaneously in an individual (Ridings et al., 2002; Lu et al., 2010).

Benevolence and integrity are especially necessary in C2C relationships, due to the fact that both parties are private people, instead of one of them being a legal entity. In this case, the customer does not have any protection in case the transaction would not go as planned. The customer protection aspect in services within the sharing economy either does not exist or is still at a basic level, therefore it is important that both parties treat one another fair (Koopman et al., 2015). In cases where the customer strongly depends on the supplier, such as in babysitting services, the customer depends on the supplier to take good care of their child for a certain amount of time and protect it from potential danger. When the child's life and wellbeing is at stake, the customer can't risk asking unreliable people for help.

The concept of ability describes the individual's capacity to perform his part of the transaction well. This concept is relevant in the trust model, as without it a person characterized by benevolence and integrity could simply be incompetent or unable to complete his task properly. For instance, a person with good intentions offering a ride sharing service could lack driving skills, potentially putting the customer in danger. For this reason it is important for a customer that the three qualities of benevolence, integrity and ability are present in a potential supplier.

2.3.2 The supplier perspective

Despite the fact that the service could not exist without the product provided by the supplier, it also could not function without a trustworthy customer. The consuming peer should also show the qualities of benevolence and integrity. The possibility that a customer will exploit or damage a resource is the biggest concern of the supplier (Weber, 2014). This applies to all

services where the supplier allows the customer to use his property. For instance, a rented apartment or the back seat of a car in a ride sharing setting could be left in a dramatically different condition if the customer does not have the best interest of the supplier in mind (benevolence) or if he does not do what he has agreed to do (integrity). This especially applies in situations where the supplier enables the customer to use his property without his supervision for a certain amount of time. Since the owner does not have any control over his possessions, it is important that the customer has no intention to abuse the rented goods. It is equally important that the customer shows the ability and sufficient knowledge about using the rented resources in the way they are supposed to be used, in order to avoid damage or unwanted costs for the supplier (Lu et al., 2010). The combination of the three qualities should convince the supplier that his assets would not be abused in the agreed on transaction.

2.3.3 Trust in platform

The last type of trust in the C2C model is the trust both of the users have towards the platform. Although the platform functions as an intermediary between the two parties it should also be characterized by the same constructs of ability, integrity and benevolence (Gefen, 2002; Dinev & Hart, 2006; Krasnova et al., 2012). The ability of the platform should be reflected in providing a successful mediation between the two parties by means of a seamless communication and operation of the service. The main difference between a B2C and a C2C platform is that the latter should be constructed to successfully find and connect potential partners. Another thing a reliable platform should do is to handle reliable data (Gefen, 2002).

This is especially important, as it has been proven that people tend to show increased morality in their actions when they know a lot of information about the other party. Thus, the person transacted with does not seem as if they were an abstract entity, but they are viewed as an equal and therefore they are treated better (Uslaner, 1999). Consequently, C2C platforms should avoid anonymity on user's profiles, as that leads to a better functioning, trusting environment. It is equally important that the provided information about the users is true; to further sustain the trust among the transacting parties.

The platform's integrity and benevolence can be related to the payment systems and the amount of money it charges users, the user support design, amount of spam e-mails, user data protection, supplier exploitation, overall reputation of the platform (Gefen & Straub, 2004). C2C platforms enable the user to create a personal account with private data such as

contact information or payment information. Users of such platforms are risking the loss of their privacy and disclosure of personal information to other parties. Hence, users need to decide whether the benefits deriving from the services obtained by revealing private information are worth taking the risk. For this reason, it can be said that the trust levels towards a platform are reflected in the user's intention to disclose personal information (Krasnova et al. (2012); Dinev & Hart, 2006).

Additionally, trust in the ability of the platform positively influences the intention to browse for potential products to consume. The integrity and benevolence of the platform, on the other hand, have a positive impact on the willingness to or make use of online services and actually purchase products (Gefen, 2002).

2.4 Inspections and review systems in online environments

The aforementioned reputation, upfront inspection and external enforcement are the building blocks of trust in both traditional and online markets. The degree to which they are used to establish trust varies due to the character of the online environment. Inspection is a lot more difficult to carry out online, where the two collaborating parties meet. For instance, an Internet platform allows more misunderstanding and misinterpretation, as the offered service could simply turn out to be a fake, or its description could be falsely enhanced to buy a low quality product or service (Jin & Kato, 2007).

A study carried out by Lewis (2011) focused on car sales on eBay has revealed that users have a tendency to be more skeptical toward the quality of the product the fewer photos of it are published. This signifies that the amount of information provided on a platform by a user impacts the trust levels of a potential buyer.

Nonetheless, considering the popularity of reputation or reviewing systems on peer-to-peer platforms it could be said that those bring about more trust incentives than the information posted by the service provider or seller himself. Reviewing systems seem to have replaced the inspection or upfront screening practices, by utilizing opinions of different people who have used a given service before or have bought products from an online seller in the past. Although review systems can help a user to express his trustworthiness, it has been proven that feedback mechanisms carry just as many disadvantages as benefits.

Review systems allow users to share their experiences using nicknames instead of real names or anonymously altogether, which gives room to fake reviews by people who might not have used the commented on service before or might not be honest in their comments

(Nosko & Tadelis, 2014). Users who have encountered problems in collaboration with the other party might not feel the need to publish a review at all, which would impact the ratio of negative to positive feedback on a service-provider's page. This, in turn, can mislead many people who might be exposed to fraudulent activity or low quality service, having read only positive reviews of a user (Bolton et al., 2013).

At the same time, many researchers have agreed that in the case of eBay its reputation mechanism has successfully filtered out fraudulent activity and suspicious users (Resnick et al., 2002; Dellarocas, 2003; Cabral and Hortacsu, 2010).

The peer-to-peer accommodation-sharing platform Airbnb uses identity verification of both parties involved in collaboration, in order to promote a safer online environment. Similarly, the transport application Uber not only makes it possible for riders to review their driver, but also the other way around. This positively impacts the transport experience of both parties, as they feel the need to behave appropriately to avoid negative reviews on the app. Fradkin et al. (2015) claim that providing additional incentives for writing reviews has a positive effect on the quality and amount of personal information published by users.

Many businesses functioning online feel the need to provide upfront screening before a user can become active on a page. This causes delays and hinders the smooth functioning of a platform. What is more, the trustworthiness provided by upfront screening still remains subjective (Nosko & Tadelis, 2014). At the same time, only making use of reviewing systems and strictly relying on it can cause discrimination of new, inexperienced users who have not had the chance to gather positive feedback yet. Could a trustworthiness assessment system function without the screening process or unreliable, subjective reviews?

2.5 External factors influencing trust

Nonetheless, there are other factors influencing the creation of trust online, which stem from the individual traits and experiences of users. One of them is people's propensity to trust in peer-to-peer exchanges on the web, despite the lack of sufficient information about the supplying party. This is caused by a natural disposition to trust everything and everyone in general in various situations. Similarly, other entities need an increased amount of information about the potential exchange situation and people involved before it can take place (Salam, Iyer, Palvia, & Singh, 2005).

Naturally, when people with propensity to trust gather in a peer-to-peer platform they contribute to the smooth functioning of an online space, since suspicion levels are lower than

if the users would be mixed with people who show a tendency not to trust others easily in any situation (Gefen, 2000; Teo & Liu, 2007). It is important to note that propensity to trust is obtained over long amounts of time and it constitutes a reflection of social influence throughout; therefore differences in propensity are inevitable when comparing various cultures (Gefen, 2000). This suggests that differences in trust levels and the willingness to utilize online exchanges vary across cultures.

Another factor influencing online trust is one's level of experience with online exchanges, in comparison to the traditional experiences of exchanges offline (Metzger, 2006). In other words, people who are advanced users of the Internet and are used to carry out exchanges of goods or services on the web are less likely to see online exchanges as risky; therefore they are more inclined to trust the person they are interacting with online. Corbitt, Thanasankit, and Yi (2003) have found that the level of Internet proficiency and experience is closely related to the level of trust given on an e-commerce online service. Considering this as an external factor, which could influence the opinion of a respondent, the topic list will include questions for both parties establishing whether they are exposed to dependence on strangers online on a regular basis or not.

2.6 Reputation

Reputation is an inherent element of trust, as a good reputation is characterized by competence and integrity (Doney & Cannon, 1997). According to Wang and Vassileva, although the concepts of reputation and trust are highly related, they are not the same. Reputation can be described as a public opinion, which expresses a general evaluation of an individual's characteristics (2007). Reputation systems in C2C environments collect, distribute and aggregate feedback concerning the past behavior of the users (Resnik & Zeckhauser, 2002). Such systems gather information about user reputation by means of numerical reviewing delivered by more experienced users, who have previously engaged in interactions with a particular service provider. In most cases of C2C services, the reputation systems take the form of online-reviews. Interestingly, most researchers use reviewing mechanisms as a focus point in their work, despite the fact that reputation constitutes only one element of trust (Resnick & Zeckhauser, 2002; Yacouel & Fleischer, 2012). Still, reputation is said to be the central factor affecting the feeling of trust between individuals and it has been found that positive reputation promotes increased levels of trust. On the other hand, it is important to note that in some cases people have a propensity to trust strangers irrationally

even when information about their reputation is missing (Berg, Dickhaut, & McCabe, 1995).

In an attempt to increase overall transparency on the website, reputation systems allow users to publish feedback in the form of comments or ratings on individual profiles (Tonkinwise, 2012). In a situation when a customer is considering cooperation with a supplier, but they lack experience in working with them, reputation is the key element to establish trust between the two parties. Assessing one's reputation by means of the word-of-mouth of people who have had experiences with a supplier before helps to minimize the risk of a disappointing experience, minimizes uncertainty and maximizes a user's willingness to ask a supplier for their services online (Wang & Hu, 2009). What is more, informing the community about one's good and bad experiences with users promotes trustworthy behavior and discourages negative behavior (Resnik & Zeckhauser, 2002).

By contributing to the review mechanisms, to help establish trustworthiness the users of a sharing platform begin to build their online reputation. As Masum and Zhang (2004) claim, in the colloquial language positive reputation is dependent on an individual's ability to fulfill societal expectations of good social behavior. Besides competence, this includes qualities such as reliability and honesty. Competence plays a big role in this situation, considering that honest people could simply not have enough knowledge or be misinformed about a fact, which would directly impact other's perception of them. This suggests that reliability and trustworthiness are closely connected to and built on a basis of reputation.

Similarly to the definition of trust, the meaning of reputation changes depending on the context of a situation. Each time someone's reputation is tested, different traits are desired depending on the circumstances (Masum & Zhang, 2004). For this reason, it is necessary for online sharing platforms to provide as much information as possible about users, so that every consumer can find traits desired in a service provider. Sundararajan (2012) claims that reputation systems in P2P environments combine numerical scores, textual feedback reviewing, photographs and references from fellow users and make them accessible to the members of a platform. This indicates that although the definition of reviewing systems is sometimes narrowed down to only textual reviews, in reality all of the above mentioned elements contribute to the creation of a user's reputation. This is why it is important for this thesis to look at all the elements of the user's pages, where information about them can be displayed for others to see, as these elements are the building blocks of each user's online reputation on a platform, even if they are not explicitly claimed to be a reviewing system.

According to David and Pinch (2006), online reviewing goes beyond its purpose to

assess the quality of services and products offered, also serving as a way of building one's identity on the web. This means that all activity published online, photos, personal information and even one's use of language contributes to their online personality and reputation. Studying the users of a specific online environment such as babysitting platforms can determine, which aspects of the online personality are the most important to assess trustworthiness in this specific setting.

The amount of reviewing systems online is supposed to grasp as many traits of a user's identity as possible, so that one's reputation can be measured in many contexts. This way, the current information tools allow to generate a whole set of reputations of a user (Masum & Zhang, 2004). While it is useful in the online world, so that we can relate one's reputation to a specific situation, such as for instance reliability as a good babysitter, it can become confusing when applied in reality. A good babysitter might have some negative traits, for instance being late for work, but the measurement of their reputation as a whole depends on the frequency or amount of positive and negative behavior and traits. The reputation of an online user does not depend on only one of their qualities (Masum & Zhang, 2004).

The sharing economy changes the way reputation is measured, by broadening its range and allowing online users to build an identity (David & Pinch, 2006). At the same time, it is important to remember that the measurement of reputation is highly subjective and dependent on the context or situation a user is in (Masum & Zhang, 2004).

Considering that users of babysitting platforms are in search for similar traits in babysitters or parents, it will be possible to identify categories in which trust is the most desirable.

The fact that people subjectively focus on traits, which prove a user's trustworthiness means that the best way to go about conducting this research is to approach the users and ask them for their personal techniques of trust measurement. Similarly, it will be useful to compare the various definitions of trust and reputation from the literature to the personal definitions of the babysitting platform users, to formulate a new one, which would strictly apply under the circumstances of babysitter services. It will be especially interesting to use the definition provided by Bromiley and Cummings (1992) viewing trust from a positive perspective of being trusted as a sign of dependability, control over others and resource management capabilities and a negative side where a person who trusts another gives up control over a situation and exposes themselves to vulnerability and harm. This thesis will test whether this definition still applies 25 years later in the modern setting of online sharing

platforms.

Furthermore, it will be interesting to view the situation from not only the parent's side but also the babysitter's, who is also put in a risky situation, not knowing their future employer. Even though the parents trust them, they are still expecting trustworthiness from them for their own wellbeing. The interviews will reveal whether the definitions of trust and reputation apply in a situation where it is crucial for two parties at the same time.

2.7 Concepts for operationalization

The guiding element of the discussed theory for this thesis research is the conceptual research model for trust in C2C environments. The aforementioned three trust targets: the peer, product and platform will help to structure the interviews, as well as the analysis, by providing the two perspectives of babysitters and parents as well as both of their relationships with the used platform. Furthermore, the ways of assessing the ability, integrity and benevolence of the other party by means of the platforms will be searched for in the respondent's answers (Gefen & Straub, 2004). Moreover, Bromiley and Cummings' (1992) perspectives of trust in regard to gaining control once being trusted by someone and losing control over a situation when forced to put trust into another individual will play a large role, as the research will try to establish whether this view applies in online settings to the same extent as offline. Besides this, this thesis will look into the use of reviewing systems as tools for establishing trust in babysitting communities on the studied platforms and the level of skepticism respondents have towards such tools in online environments.

The following section provides more in depth information about the method of research used to answer the main research questions, the design of the research, the sampling of the respondents, as well as delves more into the operationalization of the thesis.

3 Method of research

The following paragraphs identify the choice of qualitative semi-structured interviews with two groups of users of babysitting platforms as the method of study. It explains the operationalization aspect of the study, as well as how the necessary data will be gathered and later analyzed. What is more, this chapter explains why the chosen method is the most suitable for this specific research.

3.1 Research design

Due to the fact that trust is a subjective matter and it is measured differently depending on the circumstances, the most suitable method to look at matters connected to trust is using qualitative research. According to Patton (2001, p. 39) qualitative research is meant for context-specific settings, such as "real world setting [where] the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest".

Since babysitting platforms are meant to mediate between babysitters and parents and help the two parties find each other, the best way to conduct this research is by means of qualitative interviews. The study will consist of 14 semi-structured interviews of 45-60 minutes, seven of those will be carried out with babysitters, another 7 with the parents, in order to grasp the perspectives of both sides of the sharing economy transaction of babysitting services and goods.

According to Rubin and Rubin (2005) interviewing is the most direct type of research interaction between participants and researchers; therefore it provides the most in-depth results about a given subject. The interviews will be conducted face-to-face unless time limitation and distance will become problematic, in which case the same person will be interviewed through a Skype video call conference.

Furthermore, semi-structured interviews give the participants freedom to share their personal experiences about a subject and allow researchers to look at the individual interpretations of terms and ideas (Murray & Sixsmith, 1998). This way, the interviews will provide insightful results concerning people's criteria of assessment in terms of trustworthiness on babysitting platforms. What is more, it will provide personal accounts of both sides: the parents and the babysitters, which will make it possible to compare how the platforms used appeal to both groups.

3.2 Comparison

Focusing on both groups of users of 7 different babysitting platforms: babysitters and parents will generate interesting results concerning the two different approaches to trust in a peer-to-peer babysitting service setting, a comparison of the way the two parties make use of the tools available on the websites, differences in the evaluation of the other party and the potential use of reputation measuring systems provided by the babysitting platforms. The implementation of this method will provide findings about the way both of the user groups function in multiple online babysitting platform environments.

3.3 Sampling

This thesis extends on the existing knowledge and research conducted in the context of online trust among users of peer-to-peer online platforms by means of qualitative interviews with people who have collaborated with others through babysitting services found online. The interviewees, as participants in a babysitting community, are the units of analysis in this research. Nonetheless, it is necessary to look at the specific platforms used by the interviewees in order to understand the context of their subjective experiences with online trust on these platforms. The specific characteristics of the babysitting services described by the respondents in the interviews are further explained in the appendix.

The sample group of 14 interviewees consists of users of Benelux based or international babysitting and au pairing platforms. The Bsit users were found through four private Facebook pages devoted to the regular users of the service. These pages were recommended by the Bsit social media representative upon asking for help to reach users and potential respondents. The remaining interviewees were found via 15 different Facebook groups for expats, international students, as well as groups devoted to parenting, babysitting and au pairing from various cities in the Netherlands and Belgium reachable by the interviewer – their names are listed in Appendix C. An informative post was published in each of the groups repeatedly until a sufficient number of both babysitters and parents volunteered to help by sending a message on Facebook stating so. As a result 8 babysitters and 10 parents responded to the published message. The final 14 respondents were chosen from this group after confirming that they were users of P2P babysitting platforms suitable for this research. A number of chosen respondents did not appear at the interview. In such cases the next possible candidate was approached and asked to participate. The sample group of parents included five working mothers aged between 30 and 45 and two single fathers aged

between 40 and 52. The group of babysitters included seven females aged between 20 and 25. An overview of the respondents can be found in the table below. Eight of the interviews were carried out via Skype, whereas 6 of them were conducted in person. The face-to-face interviews took place in cafes or at homes of the respondents. Five of them were held in cities in Netherlands and one was conducted in Belgium. The group of respondents included people from various countries, namely: Philippines, Belgium, Germany, Brazil, Hungary, Netherlands, Canada, Portugal, United States and Russia. All of the respondents have provided their consent to use their real names.

Name	Gender	Role	Platforms
Ivy	Female	Babysitter	Greataupair.com
Melanie	Female	Babysitter	Bsit
Victoria	Female	Babysitter	Bsit
Isabel	Female	Babysitter	Oudermatch Aupairworld.com
Arsheilla	Female	Babysitter	Aupair.com
Caroline	Female	Babysitter	Aupairworld.com
Dora	Female	Babysitter	Greataupair.com
Femke	Female	Parent	Oudermatch
Amanda	Female	Parent	Oudermatch
Marisa	Female	Parent	Oudermatch Facebook groups
Raimund	Male	Parent	Aupairworld.com Facebook groups
Tarek	Male	Parent	Oppassen.nl
Tatiana	Female	Parent	Oudermatch
Maria	Female	Parent	Oudermatch

Table 1. Overview of the interviewees of this master thesis.

The seven online babysitting platforms used by respondents in this study are:

Greataupair.com, Bsit, Oudermatch, Aupairworld.com, Aupair.com, Oppassen.nl and babysitting focused Facebook groups. The platforms differ in the amount of tools provided to the users to introduce themselves to the community, the accessibility of information, as some

of them require a membership fee before a user can sign up or before he can contact a family or babysitter. The biggest distinction within the platforms used by the respondents in this thesis is between the Bsit application, the Facebook groups, and the remaining platforms, which are very similar in the way they function. Bsit is the only babysitting platform in this study, which exists in application form only. Besides this, Bsit is the only application, which was created with occasional babysitting in mind; it gathers people interested in casual, one-time babysitting in emergency situations or on holidays. The platform encourages the parents to switch between babysitters each time they are searching for one, as it requires sending an invitation to the babysitter each time they are needed. The babysitter, on the other hand is not able to view any parent profiles until they are invited to babysit. Bsit is also the only platform among those used by the interviewees, which has a star rating system. The babysitting Facebook groups are not officially babysitting platforms, but they appear to function in a very similar way. The Facebook group talked about by one of the respondents is called

Babysitter, Nanny, Oppas, Au-Pair and Cleaner Jobs (Netherlands / Holland) and acts as a noticeboard for English speaking people in the Netherlands to publish requests for babysitting jobs among others, such as cleaning or dog sitting jobs. Due to the amount of active users in the group, the Facebook group is often used by expats in the Netherlands to find babysitters or babysitting jobs, as it allows them to become connected to a large community without a fee and to quickly verify the identity of peers by visiting their personal Facebook profiles. The remaining platforms used by respondents function as websites, which also include personal profiles, the possibility to post a request for a babysitter or a babysitting job. They function in a more balanced way than for instance Bsit, as they enable both parents and babysitters to view one another's profiles and both parties are able to initiate a conversation. Some of the remaining platforms also enable the users to leave comments describing their experience with a peer or to submit a recommendation.

The platforms also differ in the way they are meant to be used. Besides babysitters, Aupairworld.com, Aupair.com and Greataupair.com also gather people searching for au pairs – longer-term babysitters, who move in with the host family for a certain amount of time - ranging from six months up to a year. None of the services perform screening of the users before they can sign up. The only traces of control from the platform's side can be found on Greataupair.com, where due to the amount of international users from all over the world the administrators try to control any suspicious content or links published on personal pages. Therefore, what all of the services used by respondents in this thesis have in common is that

they leave the decision making up to the parents and they merely function as mediators connecting the users. What sets the platforms apart is the extent to which the user is encouraged to base their trust on the opinions of others, by means of recommendations from friends and neighbors, written reviews or a star-rating system.

The different combinations of features the platforms provide allow for a broader scope of findings concerning trust in babysitting online platforms. While all of the platforms help parents find a suitable babysitter, the babysitters also take a risk by taking up a job offer online from strangers. A comparison of the accounts of users of different platforms will reveal the way babysitters select proposed jobs from parents using platforms, which are governed by different rules. The specifics of each of the platforms are further explained in Appendix C.

The babysitting services described by respondents in this thesis are the most popular among the members of the babysitting community online. Their large amount allows covering various combinations of tools available on such platforms. Nonetheless the types of services viewed in this thesis are user driven, since the main sampling focus was to provide 7 accounts of parents and 7 accounts of babysitters from the online community. Therefore, the platforms described in this thesis are simply those used by the 14 respondents who agreed to become a part of the sample.

3.4 Operationalization

In order to gather equally insightful data in the time span of 45-60 minutes, a detailed interview topic list was created. It was divided into three parts corresponding to the main themes found in literature. The first one focuses on the babysitters' user experience of the platform, in order to provide a context for the individual situations of the respondents. First, the respondent is asked to provide general information about their use of the service, as well as their feelings about it, whereas at the end they are asked to reflect on their use of the specific service in the future. This is meant to establish an idea of the level of trust towards the platform a user has. An expected answer, which would indicate trust towards a platform, besides directly using the words 'trust' and 'platform' in the same answer accompanied by positive adjectives would be indicating the frequency of use of a platform, in which case the longer a platform is used, the more trusted it is. Further, to indicate trust towards a platform, the interviewees would show low level of hesitation before signing up or sharing their own information online, as well as hesitation whether they should switch to a different service or not. Knowing the context of respondents' use of a platform allows identifying inconsistencies

in the personal situations of the respondents and external factors, which could have impact on their opinions and pose limitations to the research. For instance a natural propensity to trust offline (Gefen, 2000; Teo & Liu, 2007) or the level of Internet proficiency and use of other sharing economy services, which has been argued to make trusting on other online services of this type easier (Corbitt, Thanasankit, & Yi, 2003). In order to identify this, the answers will be scanned for mentions of use of other sharing economy platforms earlier or indications of use of other P2P services, not necessarily within the sharing economy, but also other online markets, such as for instance Amazon.

Secondly, both types of respondents: babysitters and parents are directly asked about their trust towards the platform and experiences connected to this, as described in the conceptual research model for trust in C2C environments (Gefen & Straub, 2004). Since trust towards the platform is just as important as trust towards the other party, it is a necessary element in answering the question of how the users use the platform to establish trust between one another online, therefore a direct answer is required. The question concerning this in the topic list is divided into the ability, integrity and benevolence aspect of the platform. The concept of ability is measured on a scale of 1-10 in the respondents' answers, as they are asked to rate the way the service aids their trust towards other users. Therefore, their answers will be categorized as negative from 1-4 and positive from 6-10, the 5 being a neutral answer. Moreover, phrases such as "positive experience", "no problems" or mention of "feeling safe" or explicitly "trust" in a positive context in the answers concerning the platform will indicate trust towards the platform. Besides this, upon asking about the possible improvement points for the used platform the users' answers will be looked at for indication of doubt of the ability of the platform to perform its primary job – connecting the two user parties. Doubt could be expressed in having no positive feedback, especially where the key words "safety" and "data protection" are used. In cases where the answers reassure that the criticism is meant to be constructive and upon indication that the users experiences were "good", "positive" or that they would use the services again, it will be interpreted as an indication of platform trust. Similarly, statements that the user would not use the service in the future will be interpreted as lack of trust towards the platform. Another way of assessing trust towards platform will be through questions concerning payment systems on the platform and membership fees and suspicious actions from the platform, since the integrity and benevolence of the platform can be related to the payments, the user support design, amount of spam e-mails and the protection of user data (Gefen & Straub, 2004). This information will be found in the

interview answers in the form of indications of suspicion concerning these platform aspects, by either questioning the amount of money or purpose of membership fees and the amount of information about users required. Statements expressing willingness to share an extended amount of personal information will also be an indication of platform trust, considering that users risk the loss of privacy by signing up to such services (Krasnova et al. (2012); Dinev & Hart, 2006).

The last set of questions in the topic list focuses on the user's experiences with the other party and trust towards them (Gefen & Straub, 2004). This is where the questions connected to assessing ability, integrity and benevolence will be asked, in order to see how the theoretical concepts are determined in real life between the two parties. This is done by posing questions concerning their selection techniques and the criteria they have in choosing a babysitter suitable and reliable enough to take care of their child or a reliable family as an employer. The ability aspect will be indicated by answers to questions concerning importance of work experience and recommendations from past families in case of babysitters and experiences with past babysitters in case of families in the selection process. This means that answers, where the interviewee clearly gives examples of past babysitters or babysitting jobs and their methods of assessment of ability of the other party will be the most important to find out about this aspect. The answers will most probably include keywords such as "experience", "professional", "recommendation", "good experience". Another way of finding out about the way users assess their ability aspect of trust will be any indications of both the children and parents being satisfied with the quality of the service, therefore statements where the family clearly state that they have used a service of one babysitter for an extended amount of time, accompanied by positive adjectives will be interpreted as trust towards the babysitter. Similarly, for the babysitters, positive descriptive words about the family, as well as an indication that the babysitter has worked for a family multiple times will be an indication of trust towards the family. The integrity and benevolence aspect of trust between parents and babysitters will be looked for by asking questions about nationality and age, where answers including signs of skepticism, discrimination or unwillingness towards a specific type of person will be interpreted as lack of trust. The same way, an explicit explanation of preferred users among both parents and babysitters, such as indications of a preferred nationality or age of a user will be viewed as an indication of trust. Moreover, when asked about the use of background checks or external checks performed when a babysitter has already started working with a family will be treated as hints of distrust, based on the theory of Bromiley and

Cummings concerning trusting someone as a sign of vulnerability and loss of control (1992). In situations where users clearly attempt to regain control, they either do not trust one another at all or partly. The same way, complete trust towards the other party will be expressed in lack of additional checks meant to control the situation. In order to find out the specific techniques of users to establish online trust and verify the concepts of ability, integrity and benevolence upon contacting via the platform they will be asked to list and rate the tools, which help them the most to verify the trustworthiness of the other party. Such answers will be scanned for keywords such as “description box”, “personal profile”, “photos”, “recommendations”, “comments”. In cases where the answers do not reflect the user’s preference or level of importance of each of the platform tools in the selection process, they will be asked explicitly, which tool they find more important and useful than another. This will ensure a clear indication of most useful tools utilized by the two parties in establishing trust between one another. Similarly, when asking the question concerning extra checks and ability, integrity and benevolence verification answers listing practical examples of extra checks are expected. This will open a discussion about the notion of control and trustworthiness and hopefully give insight into the practical side of the users’ verification processes. This connects to the notion of reviewing and recommendation systems, which are used in the sharing economy to aid the verification processes, which is another concept, which this research focuses on (Nosko & Tadelis, 2014). Both respondents will be asked about their experiences and opinions about recommendations and reviews, revealing the extent to which people rely on such tools and the extent to which they remain skeptical towards them. In this case answers indicating lack of use of review tools and recommendations will prove lack of reliance on such tools in the assessment of trust between users. Phrases such as “unreliable”, ”subjective” and those expressing criticism of reviews and recommendations will be looked for in the answers for an indication of lack of reliance on such systems. Similarly, high reliance on these tools will indicate their importance in the selection process and establishment of trust.

3.5 Data collection and analysis

While conducting the interviews the audio data was collected by means of the iPhone recording tool and a QuickTime Player recording computer tool. Next, the 14 interviews were thoroughly transcribed. Once the transcriptions were complete, a qualitative thematic content analysis was performed with the help of the Atlas.ti analysis software. The analysis consisted of open coding, which is the process of comparing and examining data in detail, in order to

determine concepts and categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The next step, the axial coding, is meant to reorganize the dataset by selecting the most often occurring codes and eliminating unnecessary ones. Finally the selective coding results in a combination of the axial codes to specify relationships between them, which will enable making theoretical sense of the emerged categories (Boeije, 2010). In the carried out analysis, the Atlas.ti software was used to categorize the respondents' answers in the raw datasets to distinguish the open and axial codes. Most open codes were directly organized to correspond to their overarching open codes. Further, the open codes were narrowed down to those, which besides reflecting the most relevant patterns in the answers of respondents, also connected to the theoretical framework.

3.6 Validity and reliability

In order to increase the validity and reliability of the thesis, the analysis was performed with the help of the Atlas.ti software. It enabled the location, coding, and annotation of findings from the 14 interview transcripts in order to systematically analyze a raw dataset.

The steps of the analysis were carried out so that they are as reliable as possible, by using an open coding on the initial transcribed interview dataset. The external validity is ensured by a detailed explanation of the sampling procedure, whereas the choice of utilizing an inductive analysis approach provides the internal validity. Elements of the analysis steps can be found in Appendix E.

4 Results

The following chapter reveals the results of the thematic analysis of data gathered from 14 interviews conducted with the users of different peer-to-peer babysitting platforms. This chapter answers the research question of the master thesis, namely how the parents and caretakers using peer-to-peer babysitting platforms establish mutual trust by means of the tools provided by the sharing platform. The thematic analysis has revealed 3 main themes, which will help to formulate an answer to the research question. The main themes found are: (1) reclaiming control (2) reputation assessment and (3) trustworthiness assessment.

The chapter is divided into three parts respective to the three themes found. Each of the themes is divided into subthemes, explained and illustrated by interview quotes. Since the research constitutes a comparison of the two perspectives of babysitters and parents, each theme section will provide an account of how the two parties establish mutual trust. At the end of each theme section the differences and similarities between the two perspectives will be compared and discussed.

4.1 Reclaiming control

The most important theme found in the research as a whole is that of attempting to reclaim control. This broad theme provides an explanation for a lot of behavior of parents and babysitters on the sharing economy platforms used when they are forced to trust a stranger.

Interestingly, all of the interviewed parents have shown similar ways of dealing with the loss of control when they are required to rely on someone met via a P2P babysitting platform. The users' techniques of reclaiming control of the situation can be divided into those which occur online, as well as offline. While the online reclamation of control relates to previously discussed theory, the offline aspects of it constitute findings beyond the literature. The following section delves deeper into the subthemes of: initiative and communication strategies, and testing strategies offline.

The first subtheme provides an explanation of the way both users approach one another online and continue communicating online to establish whether the other party is a suitable, trustworthy babysitter candidate or a reliable family to babysit for. The second subtheme presents ways the users attempt to take control of the situation offline, by means of various types of verification tests carried out face-to-face or once a babysitter first meets and starts working with a family.

4.1.1 Initiative and communication strategies

According to Zand (1972) the main problem with trust is the uncertainty, which derives from the inability to control other people's behavior. The interviews revealed that while both the parents, as well as the babysitters cannot control the behavior of the other party, they are equally responsible for deciding whom to trust. Both parties have shown to have their individual ways of dealing with this problem and have developed tactics, which help them decide whether the other person is a good match for them or not upon finding their profile online or initiating the first conversations. None of the respondents answers have shown the possibility to trust a stranger online without questioning their trustworthiness, which means that trusting another person requires time and verification of certain features. The ability, integrity and benevolence as described in the literature are one of the few characteristics users look for in another peer before they decide to collaborate.

It is important to mention that all 14 of the interviewed users of various types of babysitting platforms, both parents and babysitters have expressed their unwillingness to pay for the services. The users were aware of the fact that the services operate within the sharing economy on a peer-to-peer basis, therefore the websites or apps function merely as mediators, meant to connect the users.

I realized that I had to pay some kind of membership fee and I thought: "Ok, well, only when I'm exhausted of all those other options will I pay the money to reach out to someone – Amanda, Oudermatch.

For this reason, as demonstrated in the quote above, the interviewees revealed that they would do everything to avoid having to pay membership fees for any part of the service, unless they were in a desperate situation, where they would have to contact a specific user and there was no other way of reaching them other than paying for their contact information.

Furthermore, the interviews have revealed that the approaches of both sides concerning which party should be sending the first message vary depending on the motivation levels and the popularity of the platform used. As exemplified below, Tarek has developed a system for communicating with potential babysitters:

I'll send them copy paste, copy paste message: "Hi, I'm T. this is what I want, I'm looking for...". Once that happens I'm pretty sensitive to who responds first – Tarek, Oudermatch.nl

All of the interviewed parents have expressed that they preferred to be the ones reaching out first, so that they could have more control of the situation. The case of Tarek (Oudermatch.nl) stood out from the other communication methods of the parents, as he carried out his own pre-selection strategy:

I'm also pretty keen on who responds correctly. For example, I'll always put in a note to reach out to me directly on my phone, right? So, if people are not doing that, that's an indication to me that they are not reading the e-mail. Right? And if they're not reading the e-mail and they cannot do that and follow that simple instruction, then I sure as hell don't want them taking care of my kids – Tarek, Oppassen.nl

In the above quoted case, the parent tests the ability element of the C2C model of trust (Gefen & Straub, 2004) of the candidate before they even get a chance to talk to them. Besides this, Tarek's strategy allows him to make a prediction of how a potential babysitter would act in other situations if he were to employ him. This relates to research claiming that the level of predictability of an individual has an impact on the amount of trust given to them (McKnight, Choudhury, & Kacmar, 2000). The aforementioned example of a father testing the ability of a sitter to perform the task of reading e-mails and reacting accordingly to given instructions is also a way of checking the predictability of an individual. The father bases his opinion on the nature of the first interaction, if the response does not align with the instruction, the candidate will be dismissed.

Another reason for all of the interviewed parents to prefer to contact the candidates first was pressure to find a babysitter for their child in a short amount of time because of emergency situations. Moreover, initiating contact enabled the users to make faster decisions as this allowed parents to only approach babysitters who fit the desired profile. The time saving aspect of this system is especially important for parents as parenting responsibilities take up a large amount of time. This leads to another strategic move of parents, as all of them confirmed that they use the babysitting platform only for a short amount of time before they make an appointment to meet in person or they invite the candidate to move their conversation to another medium or a social media platform. The different media used by the parents to continue conversing with their babysitting candidates include: Whatsapp, Skype, Facebook Messenger or regular text messaging. The reasons for this are purely practical as exemplified in Femke's quote below:

There was some sort of messaging system on Oudermatch, where you can instant message on the website so that you can have a private chat, but in a way I find this annoying because you get messages and notifications through your e-mail and I don't have my notifications in my e-mail, so it would be easier if there was some real service to connect you to these other media, like a Skype contact or Whatsapp or if it directed you to someone's Facebook profile – Femke, Oudermatch.nl

Another reason for this is identity and reputation confirmation as it is explored further in the next main theme.

In comparison to the parents, babysitters' interview answers have revealed that their motivations whether to contact a family first or not depend on various factors. Those include the popularity of the used platform and their motivation to find a babysitting job and selectiveness in families. While most interviewed babysitters preferred to wait for families to contact them so that they could make a selection from a smaller group, others felt that the amount of users and competitors also looking for babysitting jobs was too high; therefore they had to show initiative and reach out to parents first. Another reason for approaching the parents first is the popularity of platforms such as in the case of Greataupair.com, which gathers users from all over the world for both babysitting and au pair jobs.

I was looking for families and I already knew my preferences. I knew that I didn't want a 1 or 2 years old, so no toddlers. You have all the criteria there that you can enter so I did that. I the one was messaging, so I was initiating the contact with the families always, except in one case when [... they found me because they were a bit desperate. I think that usually the au pairs or the babysitters that are looking for something are the ones that contact first. Actually [...] I perceived it that they are the employers and the families are kind of online so it's like they are waiting to be contacted by babysitters or au pairs – Dora, Greataupair.nl

The quote above from Dora indicates that she treats the family as an employer; therefore her communication initiation resembles that, which would happen in case of a job application. It also shows the difference between regular babysitters and au pairs, who commit to living with the family and stay with them for an extended amount of time. Because of this, the amount of reassurance needed is slightly higher than that of regular or casual babysitters.

Melanie, for example, who is a regular user of Bsit in Belgium, where she mainly babysits for tourist families during holiday months, admitted that she never approaches the family first, as the application does not allow babysitters to view parent profiles. This is not a problem, however, as she receives a lot of invites despite this. In her situation it often occurs that she needs to decline a babysitting job, due to the amount of invitations she receives. This is another example of the differences between the platforms and the dependence of its functionality on the location, considering that while Bsit is very popular among tourists at the Belgian seaside, this does not need to be the case elsewhere.

4.1.2 Testing strategies

The interviewed parents had developed their own individual extra check systems, such as test babysitting, where they would for instance sit in a different room while the babysitting took place and allowing to move further away from home during the babysitting as the trust levels between the parties were built. This is another important element of regaining control when having to rely on a stranger. The parents literally want to control the behavior of the other person, so that if there are signs of undesired behavior they can dismiss them from the job.

I have a testing mechanism, first time I'm on the 2nd floor, second time I'm maybe on the second floor or I go to the supermarket really around the corner, the next time I maybe go for a dinner, that is really at the end of the street, so I choose a restaurant that I can always be here in literally 5 minutes. [...] I have their phone number and I send them a few messages, when I write them I want a reply, to see how it's going here – Marisa, Oudermatch.nl.

In the case of au pairing, the testing period would take place for approximately 2 weeks, before the candidate would be reassured that they can remain with a family to keep taking care of a child as exemplified by Raimund's quote:

What is really important to me, because you asked if there is something that I check after the selection? Yes, because the first weeks that someone is there – because I don't work – so if they are with my son, I'm very close and I see and I hear everything, so I can see if it's good or not – Raimund, Aupairworld.com

In Raimund's case, this proved to be an important step in the decision whether to trust a stranger, as certain characteristics or habits cannot be known from an online conversation or

even a few meetings as illustrated in the quote below.

I got some very good candidates from that website, but with one of the candidates, later on when she was already here I had a very bad experience and there are many au pairs that come to Holland and don't be surprised but they come for drugs [...] I absolutely didn't want any smoking in the house and we had an agreement about that and then I found out that she was smoking in the bed, in the bedroom, which is against what we agreed and that person was kindly asked to leave as well – Raimund, Aupairworld.com.

Although Raimund was searching for a live-in au pair, where the knowledge of the daily habits of an individual is crucial, one parent has claimed to use a radical precautionary action despite the fact that their babysitter only visits her child on a part time basis.

Maria's example (Oudermatch.nl) was the most extreme among the parents, as she struggled to trust strangers in the Netherlands due to her South American background, therefore she regularly uses cameras around her house to control the situation at home while she is away. She has installed a special application on her phone to be able to hear and see what is happening to her child from any location while she is away. This way, if anything dangerous would happen to her child she has the proof of it in her phone:

I cannot trust people on the website, but then if I invite them over to talk, then I can check if I can trust them. Also, I have a camera in my house and I can see the video. So when I leave my house, I have an app for it, so when I go away I can check what's happening on my phone any time I want – Maria, Oudermatch.nl.

Maria reveals another significant recurring finding among all of the parents. All of them have expressed their high reliance on face-to-face interviews, when deciding whether to hire a babysitter. It appears that communication via technology cannot replace the multidimensional interaction, which takes place upon an informal meeting of another person.

So the first time, they don't come for a babysitting service, I kind of meet them in a way to overcome both of our anxieties, where you come here to meet me and I meet you and my boys will meet you too and if they like you then we can talk. Because I remember once we had a lady here that one of the boys liked and the other one was really reluctant – Marisa – Oudermatch.nl.

All 5 interviewed mothers agreed face-to-face interviews allow them to test whether there is a “click”, between the child and the potential babysitter. This is especially important as the parent needs to be reassured that the candidate really possesses the ability to take care of, interact and sufficiently entertain the child while they are gone. What is more, it is important for them to see the child’s first impression of the candidate, as the child will be spending most of the time with the babysitter, thus it is most important for them to get along.

The face-to-face interview is the most important to me and I need to see how the click with my daughter is, so she has to be there too and she gets to almost decide.

Normally, I am the first to check out the person and then she is the second decider –
Maria, Oudermatch.nl.

This, once again, relates to the ability, benevolence and integrity from the C2C model of trust (Gefen & Straub, 2004). Personal contact allows the parent to make a prediction whether the candidate will keep their promise to act in their best interest and deliver a high quality service. This can be reflected in their behavior during such a direct, face-to-face interview, where they need to show how they would interact with the child during a babysitting. Half of the interviewed parents mentioned the relevance of their “instinct” or “gut feeling”, when meeting a babysitting candidate.

We went to the estate agent. So before we went there we met up and I had a sort of code word with my husband, saying if she doesn’t look okay, then we’ll just say, “let’s go for a coffee” or something like that and then we won’t do it. We met up and she really seemed like a very nice girl, she even sent us some pictures during our meeting with the housing agent and so it seemed to go very well. But it was very short notice in the use and actually I’ve been using her services since then and we’re very happy with it. – Femke, Oudermatch.nl

In the case above, Femke indicates that her and her husband’s quick decision to leave her child with a babysitter after a brief conversation was mainly based on her impression of the candidate.

While the abovementioned examples show that online and offline testing strategies are crucial for parents to establish trust with their potential babysitter, they are slightly less needed for babysitters, as they are not risking as much as the parents when they take up

babysitting for a family, whose child could be in danger if they make a wrong choice. The babysitters, on the other hand are risking having a bad experience or not being paid after their job is done. For this reason, the babysitters admitted to be able to babysit for a family after having just a short conversation beforehand. Nevertheless, face-to-face or Skype interviews before even a casual babysitting jobs can also be beneficial, as they allow them to confirm that the family they were writing with is a good match, as exemplified in Victoria's quote. In her case this is especially applicable, considering that the Bsit app does not allow users to share an extended amount of personal information.

In writing you can think about what you are going to say, you can change things to appear more mature or trusting, but in face to face you don't have the possibility to do that. I think the parents, as well as the babysitter; they could have a chance to really see the family – Victoria, Bsit.

The au pairs - live-in babysitters, however, agreed that since they are not able to carry out a face-to-face conversation, due to living abroad or far away, they ask the families to Skype with them multiple times to reassure them about their intentions and integrity. In their case, they are risking a loss of a large sum of money if they move to a different country or a continent with certain expectations, which could not be met at all upon the first meeting with a family.

4.2 Reputation Assessment

The second relevant theme in this research is the assessment of the other party's reputation. The interviews have revealed certain behaviors of users connected to the judgment of the reputation of the other party, which constitutes a building block of trust between the two peers. The literature confirms P2P environments use user's feedback on past behavior of peers to express their reputation online (Resnik & Zeckhauser, 2002). This theme is divided into two subthemes: background checks on social media and reviews and recommendations. This theme has provided unexpected insights into the use of the platform. tools by the users.

4.2.1 Background checks on social media

The most interesting finding in this theme is that the users do not rely as much as expected on the reputation measuring tools on the babysitting platforms. Besides the fact that the majority of parents and babysitters claimed to prefer to move their introductory conversations to a

different medium or means of communication, they also admitted to using social media for background checking of the other party, to confirm their identity and whether the things written in the profile were true. While most parents ran a Google search of the potential babysitter only to confirm their identity and minimize risks, others use this method to assess the reputation of the other party and increase their level of control in making the decision whether to employ someone or not.

When I was still on Au pair world, as soon as possible I asked people if they had a Facebook profile, if they did I switched the whole conversation to Facebook, with the same goal that I found out later, you can capture someone's personality much more on Facebook – Raimund, Aupairworld.com

As Raimund's case shows, upon moving to a different, more popular social media platform or communicating service, the simple fact that a person exists on a different platform constitutes a confirmation that he or she is a legitimate individual. He makes another remark:

[...] the profile really didn't tell much, the only option that it has is the option to send messages. You don't even know if that person writes the message or is it the sister who writes better English? – Raimund, Aupairworld.com

Here, Raimund argues that his method of thorough background checking allows him to ensure that the person who claims to be interested in working with him as an au pair actually has the skills they claim to have. One of such skills is the ability to speak a certain language. It could be that someone else wrote the previous messages on the babysitting platform, whereas this practice would not be sustainable on a regularly used social media platform, such as Facebook for instance. This allows the user to confirm some skills and characteristics of a candidate before they arrive to their home.

[...] What is very important is to look at the holidays people go to. If you have people who always go to Chersonisos in Crete, then you know that they only drink a lot and they go out. Decency is not number one on their list. If you find someone who went backpacking in South Africa and Canada, that's someone who [...] has depth and you can get an impression that this is someone who wants to develop, who wants to increase knowledge and is an interesting person. If you come to the last step in this process, it's the Skyping, because everything else, even your Facebook profile can be

fake, you can influence it or change it just for the purpose of being an au pair. Many candidates on Facebook by the way, they have two profiles, one for partying and the other for profiling themselves as au pairs. Those I don't take, if it's only about au pairing you know that they only have one profile – Raimund, Aupairworld.com.

The last quote reveals some of Raimund's observations made, considering that he has worked with 10 different au pairs and has had a number of negative experiences. Such situations have taught him to pay attention to the details about his candidates, so that he would not experience any unpleasant surprises once they arrive to him home. In his case it is important to note that it is more likely that au pairs attempt to use fake platform profiles in order to be chosen for babysitting jobs as this constitutes a life-changing opportunity for them in some cases. Au pairs could apply for such jobs with the sole purpose of moving to another country.

I did this with most, I check them on Facebook or Google. I basically checked all of them online. So, this first time that we met the babysitter that still babysits now, there were actually two people that we thought that were suitable [...] So this other woman actually had this kind of daycare center thing and she really had extended information on the Oudermatch profile, then we checked her profile on Facebook and we saw that she had this very huge dog [...] so I didn't really feel safe or cool enough with this woman to make use of her services – Femke, Oudermatch.nl

In the case of casual babysitting, social media checks are also beneficial to the families, as they also reveal additional information about the candidate. In Femke's case, a babysitters profile revealed that she had a big dog at home, which in the end made her dismiss this candidate.

Also, all of the interviewed babysitters have confirmed that they run background checks of their candidate families. While some parents admitted to not having enough time to spend searching for background information about their babysitter candidates, the babysitters viewed it as a natural procedure.

Yes, of course. I used Facebook. I try to find their social media accounts to confirm the information. Clearly, they don't put their full name on the website, but we know where they live and we know their last name, so if you try to type it on Google, you can actually

find a lot of things about them – Arsheilla, Aupair.com

While this practice was seen as less informative than Skype calls with families, it was the most popular method of performing extra checks to confirm that the parents are who they claim to be.

4.2.2 Reviews and recommendations

While services within the sharing economy strongly rely on peer feedback, which allows users to openly express their opinion about a service to help others make the decision whether to use the same service or not, the situation within babysitting platforms is different. Many of the platforms used by the respondents do not have a functioning internal commenting or reviewing system. For some of them, this is a matter of the app design (Bsit, Aupairworld.com), whereas others (Oppassen.nl, Oudermatch.nl) have an option to leave reviews, but due to the fact that not enough people commit to leaving comments, the system does not function properly. This finding is surprising considering that many platforms within the sharing economy function smoothly because of their reviewing systems, such as for instance Airbnb.

You also don't know who gives these reviews and what tastes they have. Some people who don't have extreme opinions aren't passionate enough to write a review right? So, I'm always critical of them, but I think it could help in this kind of situation –
Amanda, Oudermatch.nl

Amanda's answer reveals that she approaches reviews in a critical manner. When a profile features only extreme opinions, the validity of the review remains questionable. When comments under a profile are only positive, it is more likely that it is a result of fraudulent activity; therefore it is safer to find other ways of checking the reliability of the service provider (Bolton et al., 2013).

The majority of the interviewees for this master thesis have expressed that they are aware of the subjectivity of peer reviews on babysitting platforms; therefore they know they can't entirely trust them, but they claim they are an additional tool helping in making the decision whether to use someone's services or not. As mentioned in the literature on the topic, review systems, which allow anonymous commenting tend not to be reliable, as the

commenter is not identifiable, therefore the review could simply be dishonest or altered to a user's advantage (Nosko & Tadelis, 2014).

The interviewees have expressed that they were not likely to want to work together with a person with only negative reviews, this way service-providers of low quality or characterized by fraudulent behavior are never approached by users and asked to work together.

Yeah, if you see comments under a profile that are not good, I would take them into consideration. If I see good comments I take them less serious, because it could just be a friend commenting – Marisa, Oudermatch.nl.

Reputation systems on peer-to-peer online platforms are said to filter out fraud and suspicious users (Resnick et al., 2002; Dellarocas, 2003; Cabral & Hortacsu, 2010) The interviewees have expressed that they were not likely to want to work together with a person with only negative reviews, this way service-providers of low quality or characterized by fraudulent behavior are never approached by users and asked to work together.

While most parents and babysitters both agreed that a well-functioning, reliable reviewing system would be an additional help in building trust, on platforms, which had it, it was not used enough to provide a enough reviews about all users. Tatiana, for instance, had a different opinion, stating that she would appreciate a reviewing system, but not at the expense of the privacy of the users, since they are also private people and not professional babysitters hired by an agency:

If I would approach a professional babysitting company where they are trained and especially selected people, then I would say yes, definitely, here I think it's too open, it's not very discreet and respectful, it's a risk you take and some matches work some don't, but if I match didn't work it doesn't mean that it's about the babysitter – Tatiana, Oudermatch.nl

Despite not making an extensive use of reviewing systems, 4 of the parents have found written recommendations, which were delivered to them upon meeting, a lot more valuable, as they confirmed babysitting skills showed the sitter's initiative to make themselves more trustworthy. This is directly connected to the ability element of trust, as described in the

literature (Gefen & Straub, 2004).

Another way of doing this was to provide the parents or the babysitter with the contact information of the previous person that worked with them so that they could confirm what the candidate or family was claiming by means of a phone call or e-mail.

[...] at least the kid, so for somebody that really needs a job, it's most important how the kid is, because you work with it in the end. Also the circumstances play a big role too, like for example for me it was very important that the mother exactly writes down what she does during the day or what she will do and what she expects and where she is going to be, to be clear about what my role is, because it's always the mother who is more problematic, so it's good to know that – Dora, Greataupair.com

The quote above illustrates how useful Dora found being connected to the previous babysitter of a family, as it allowed her to gather information about the way the family functions and communicates her responsibilities. This kind of information might not always be fully disclosed by families; therefore asking somebody who knows the family for their experience allows the candidate to imagine whether they can cooperate well with a family. It also highlights how important it is to get information about the behavior and the personality of the child, which is also something the parents might not want to share right away. While it was enough for some babysitters to have received a phone number of the previous caretaker, the parents took the next step to actually contact the previous families as a form of a background check of the candidate.

4.3 Trustworthiness assessment

The last main theme of the thesis is the assessment of trustworthiness. This theme combines the most desired elements of profiles and actions of peers, which significantly increase trust between the two parties. This section is divided into the three subthemes: availability of photos, direct, honest communication and information density, as well as the personalization of user profiles. The first theme explores the role of photos on the user's personal page, whereas the second looks at the way the users communicate with one another about their expectations and shows the user's preference for quality of information over its quantity. Finally, the last subtheme explains the importance of profile personalization for building mutual trust.

4.3.1 Availability of photos

While not all parents claimed the candidate's profile photo to be a decisive factor, they all pay attention to it and claim that it is important to have one on a profile. A photo allows the parent to form a first impression of a candidate, which can speed up their selection process if they can identify things they definitely don't want from a picture. Besides being able to identify the person later upon meeting them face to face, the parents can see characteristics in a person, which could be disqualifying them before they even get in contact with one another. Maria and Marisa for instance, both did not want a babysitter to wear impractical and not suitable outfits to their "babysitting job", so long nails and earrings were not appreciated.

According to Marisa, the mere fact that a candidate would put a "sexy looking" picture in a babysitting application profile tells her a lot about the girl's lack of professionalism, therefore would be off-putting to her:

The only thing I want to know for a fact is that you are responsible, that you think fast in moments of danger and that you can play with them [...] I just want the real essential information about them and no sexy pictures, come on. If you do that, you are out of my selection immediately, if you do that you have a complete lack of judgment, you're not getting the whole picture- Marisa, Oudermatch.nl

Half of the parents also claimed to utilize their intuition to decide if a person can work for them or not. They appreciate pictures featuring smiles and an overall "sweet" look over an outgoing person on a picture. What is more, the interviewed parents were less likely to consider a candidate or would dismiss them right away if there was no picture or if the picture would be of poor quality so that they couldn't identify the person depicted.

In one case the photo option has caused the parent to start wondering about their own prejudices once he found out that a candidate was male, instead of a female, as the majority of babysitters on the used website were. The same parent claimed that a picture allows him to find out whether a candidate has any religious tendencies. In Tarek's case specifically, it was important that the babysitter does not introduce the concept of religion to his children and he prefers to keep his home religion-free:

[...]I'm a humanist and that person's cousin was a sort of a devout Muslim with a hijab, wearing a headscarf and my ex asked: "would you want her to mind the kids", and I thought: "no, I don't want that, I want the sort of religion neutral person". So

that's something that's revealing in a photo, also something that I didn't expect necessarily from myself – Tarek – Oppassen.nl.

This way, the majority of parents claim that the photo is less important than practical information from the description, which allows them to assess whether a candidate fits their specific needs. Nonetheless, the interviews reveal that the photo is not any less important as a secondary criterion, since the photo allows the parents to gain a first impression, which helps eliminate unsuitable candidates even before they read their description.

The babysitters' approaches to the photos on the parent's profiles have shown similarities to the approach of the families. Although it was not the most important thing, it was also a helpful additional tool to confirm what the family is like. One respondent used the picture to sense whether the parents would be strict and business-like by judging their clothing style:

Yeah, usually the wealthier families were online there. So I also wanted to see how they dress and whether they are really formal or not, I didn't want that, so I wouldn't feel uncomfortable there. So, I checked that they would be a bit more casual – Dora – Greataupair.com

The remaining sitters confirmed that they were the most interested in seeing the children on the photos, as they were mostly going to be working with them, instead of the parents. One respondent shared that her trust increased when she saw that a family owns pets. While the babysitters claimed that the more pictures they had access to, the more reassuring it was for them that the family was decent, it was not a problem if a profile featured just one picture and some more were sent privately via the internal chat option.

4.3.2 Direct honest communication and information density

The primary element in the selection process described by the parents was an examination of the description box of the candidates. Besides matching basic criteria dependent on the personal situation of the family, for instance a babysitter comfortable with taking care of a newborn or a babysitter in a very specific close location or in a specific age group, in general the parents paid close attention to the amount of information given away in a description box and the way it was written.

According to all respondents, honesty in expectations is the most important criteria

when selecting babysitters. This can be seen in Amanda's answer to a question about her thoughts on mentioning personal limitations in one's description.

Parents look for candidates who describe in detail what they are looking for, so that misunderstandings can be avoided and their selection process can go smoothly. Secondly, parents identified a description of one's previous babysitting experience as an important element, which is crucial in making a decision to employ someone. While most parents claimed not to pay attention to it, they stated that honesty in limitations was very appreciated and it either increases their trust towards a candidate or would increase it if it were present in a profile. This can be seen in Amanda's answer to a question about her thoughts on mentioning personal limitations in one's description.

[...] there were some people who might mention that they had experience with all these age groups except babies and for me that was really helpful to [...] if it's something like that, where they feel that they're not skilled enough in it. I think that honesty is important, because its better to say it than not and say that you can do it and then it just doesn't work out right? – Amanda, Oudermatch.nl

The internal chats within the babysitting services helped the individuals to narrow down their choices of potential host families on the platforms. Due to the fact that the babysitters are in high demand, they have a tendency to exchange messages with multiple families at once after reviewing their family profiles. The internal chat allows them to ask questions about topics, which were omitted in the parent's descriptions. Once the babysitter finds the best candidate, only then they switch the communication to a different medium, such as Whatsapp, phone or Skype. The same way the parents value face-to-face meetings, the babysitters claim that they would not be able to make a decision to work with someone on a long-term basis without an interview first. The only case they would agree to babysit without meeting the family beforehand would be if the babysitting was going to be a one-time job for a short amount of time, which eliminates the possibility of being exposed to potential risks. Contrary to the families, babysitters do not mind if the interviews are performed online, for instance a Skype interview is just as reassuring to the babysitters as a face-to-face one.

4.3.3 Personalization of user profiles

Another commonly mentioned aspect of the description box in a profile was the fact that such a space allowed the parents to get a better view of who the other person is and what they are

like based on the way they phrased their sentences. Besides revealing their language skills, their description style reflected how much effort a candidate put into the preparation of their profile, thus how seriously they are taking their application for the babysitting jobs. Despite the fact that some of the websites had a restriction in the amount of characters that could be typed, the parents and the majority of the babysitters agreed that personalization is a crucial aspect of one's profile, even if the profile does not include all of the information they need to know about a candidate. This can be illustrated by a quote from a babysitter:

It's more about the quality for me, I really focus on the phrasing it, because if I see that they don't put effort into it, then they really don't care. So they are careless and not responsible and don't really care what happens with the children. So I could really judge by the description – Dora, Greataupair.com

All parents claimed that the website they used provided them with enough information about the candidates, considering that all of the services used by the interviewees include an internal messaging option, where they could reach out and continue to ask questions. Parents did not want the babysitters to reveal too much personal information such as address, phone number, CV or a copy of ID, as the services used could be easily accessed for free by anyone, meaning that they understand the limitations of the websites and respect the privacy and care for security of the other party's private information

Each of the internal chats within the services used by the respondents has played a key role in the primary communication between the two parties. Similarly to the open description box, the chat allowed parents to see further how the candidate phrased their words towards them, the amount of additional information they wanted to share with the family and their response speed. The internal chat option has served as the only communication form for 3 out of 7 parents, while others preferred to switch to other types of media to continue their conversation for security reasons or out of convenience. All parents agreed that the chat option was not as important as a face-to-face interview, but it was key to schedule such an interview and exchange private information such as phone numbers or an address. The main problem with the internal chat was the need to return to the website inbox each time a message was received, thus exchanging phone numbers allowed for a less time-consuming communication between the parties and constituted a sign that the other party is a real individual with good intentions, as they were willing to share their private contact details with a stranger.

4.4 Chapter summary

To summarize, the most important element of the selection process and one of the most significant findings of this research was the importance of face-to-face interactions before a babysitter was employed, as mere online communication was not enough for the respondents to establish trust. Inviting the candidates to a family home and carrying out an interview or having a casual coffee together, allowed both sides to get to know each other. Something that was highlighted by all parents was the importance of seeing the interaction of the child and the sitter. This is something that is very difficult to achieve just by means of media channels, the closest a parent can get to a face-to-face interview is a Skype interview, where they allow the child to talk to the babysitter. Nonetheless, a video chat cannot compare to a real meeting, where the responses cannot be faked and the gestures can be thoroughly studied by the parents in real time. The online communication, however functions more as a conversation starter and a means to schedule an interview or a meeting. Both parties only require a certain amount of information about the candidate and job, as long as its quality is high and it includes the most relevant experiences, characteristics of the candidate and job expectations in the case of the babysitter.

While the photo displayed on a user's page is relevant to create a first impression of the other party, it is claimed to be less important than a personalized description with honest, detailed expectations from both sides of the transaction. The photo, on the other hand, can function as a helpful tool to quickly dismiss unsuitable candidates and speed up the selection process.

The analysis has revealed that the reviewing systems on the platforms do not function well, as not enough people actively participate in rating or commenting on one another's profiles. The majority of respondents agreed that reviews are not necessary, because while they could be helpful, they would not have too much influence on their choice.

It is interesting that upon being asked about their level of trust towards the platform, the majority of the respondents were positive, however their remaining answers, which indicate a need to control the situation by verifying details about the other party or literally controlling the other party shows the opposite. This was also reflected in the common unwillingness of all respondents to pay membership fees on the platforms. This shows that the platform trust element of the C2C trust model does not apply in the case of babysitting platforms or at least based on the data from the respondent group in this thesis (Gefen &

Straub, 2004; Gefen et al., 2008; Lu et al., 2010).

5 Conclusion and discussion

The aim of this Master thesis was to find out how parents and babysitters using peer-to-peer babysitting platforms establish mutual trust by means of the tools provided by the sharing platform. The analysis combining the literature on the topic of trust in online environments and the outcomes of 14 interviews with parents and babysitters using different applications and websites of this kind has provided an answer to the main research question.

How do parents and caretakers using peer-to-peer babysitting platforms establish mutual trust by means of the tools provided by the sharing platform?

The thematic analysis has shown that establishing trust between users of babysitting platforms is a complex, time-consuming process, which cannot happen by means of online communication only. All of the three themes found in the analysis process: regaining control both online and offline, assessing reputation and assessing trustworthiness are equally important and intertwined, when it comes to establishing trust between users. The users' selection methods of babysitters and families to work for vary depending on their preferences and the needs of their children, however patterns were found in the choices and selection strategies of both parties. The research has proven that parents, as well as babysitters participating in babysitting services are exposed to the loss of control of the situation in the moment they are forced to trust someone. Their reaction to this is reflected in numerous verification and control techniques used by both parties. This observation aligns with the studies on trust carried out by numerous scholars, who claim that the act of trusting requires the trustee to permit the other person to put them in a situation of uncertainty, despite the fact that they would prefer not to be in such a situation (Doney, Cannon, & Mullen, 1998; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995; Rosseau et al., 1998; Zand, 1972).

The main difference between the two parties is that babysitters are exposed to less risk when they agree to work with a stranger and trust them, due to the fact that the parents are allowing a stranger to take care of probably their most prized possession –their child, which most of the time isn't able to defend itself from harm. The babysitter, on the other hand, is risking having a negative experience with a family or losing money, also depending whether they are babysitters or au pairs. For this reason, the parent's methods of verifying the level of integrity, benevolence and skills of the supplying party are more extensive and detailed than the babysitters' (Pavlou & Fygenson, 2006).

Both parents and babysitters value face-to-face interaction the most when establishing

trust, as they are allowed to observe the other person's gestures, interaction with children or as many respondents claimed they are able to use their intuition upon meeting to find out whether they 'click'. The users measure one another's reputation by means of assessment of the tools, which allow users to introduce themselves to the babysitting community on a platform, namely: the amount and subject of photos posted, the quality of a personal description and its personalization. Besides this, users utilize the messaging tools of the platforms to observe the response behavior of one another to predict their future behavior in the role of a babysitter or a host family. This observation confirms that the claim of Sundararajan (2012), that photographs and textual interaction between users promotes transparency and contributes to one's reputation. The reviewing and feedback part of his argument, similarly to the platform trust perspective of the C2C trust model, have not been confirmed in this research, due to the limited use or complete absence of functioning feedback systems on the platforms used by the respondents (Gefen, 2002).

The thesis has also revealed that besides physical interaction and control methods in the form of an introductory meeting, testing period or installation of cameras at home as a confirmation of trustworthiness, users often rely on using multiple media and communication channels to confirm the other party's identity and background information. Users unable to carry out a face-to-face conversation, due to distance are forced to rely on a combination of data about the other party from different media, which shows a multichannel trustworthiness-assessing pattern especially among the respondents who have had past experiences with babysitting or hiring a babysitter. Users either observe one another's social media presence and activity or their communication outside the babysitting platform, to ensure the legitimacy of the claims of the other party about their identity.

5.1 Theoretical implications

This thesis uses a thematic analysis based on 14 interviews with both the suppliers and the customers of P2P babysitting services, providing a qualitative comparison of their ways of establishing mutual trust online qualitative insights concerning online trust, which appears not to have been done before. The type of platform looked at in this thesis requires an increased amount of trust between the users since the nature of the services provided could put children at risk, therefore the subject studied stands out from other research which focuses on only the most popular sharing economy platforms. For this reason, the information gathered from users of such platforms could be used to relate to and improve other sharing economy websites,

which specialize in services provided offline, also those, which are less well-known. The thesis builds on the research of Ert, Fleischer, and Magen (2016), who studies the relation of users' consumer behavior on the images published on Airbnb profiles, as it expands knowledge concerning the use of online reputation tools in establishing trust in P2P online environments. Additionally, it enriches the existing research about trust (Barber, 1983; Das & Teng, 2004; Kee & Knox, 1970; McKnight & Chervany, 2002; Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998), by setting it in the context of the sharing economy services. The qualitative method of user interviews with babysitters/ au pairs and parents of 10 different cultural backgrounds and ages provides different viewpoints and allows an in-depth exploration of the topic, as the levels of trust of respondents vary.

5.2 Practical implications

This thesis has shown that establishing trust on online P2P sharing economy platforms is impossible without offline interactions. Besides this, the responses of the users' have reflected a behavioral pattern meant to reclaim the control lost when a user needs to be dependent on their peer. This pattern constitutes making use of multiple channels outside the babysitting platform to verify the identity and trustworthiness of the other party. These observations could be used by not only the babysitting platforms mentioned in this study, but also other P2P platforms, which involve meeting peers online and providing services offline, regardless of the amount of trust needed by the users to transact. This section presents recommendations, based on the observations made in the research, which would improve the functioning of such platforms and benefit its users.

First of all, the users require offline interactions or reassurance of the legitimacy of the identity of the other party by use of other forms of communication. Babysitting platforms could streamline the transitions from one platform to another, by for instance connecting user profiles to their Facebook profiles or Whatsapp numbers, so that users do not waste time moving between platforms. This could help to encourage the users to come back to the platform once the babysitter is hired.

Moreover, the platform could feature a call option, either with or without video, considering that a Skype call was the substitute for face-to-face meetings for au pairs unable to travel to meet the parents personally. This method would help users get a better idea of the other user's personality, thus match quicker and more effectively.

Similarly, the reviewing and recommendation systems on the platforms could be

improved so that the users would be required to provide feedback for one another. This way, the matched users benefit as they receive constructive criticism, so that they can develop their skills and other members can discover valuable information about babysitters or families.

Furthermore, considering that the written communication is the key to initiate a meeting, which is a building block to trust between members of the babysitting platforms, it would be useful for such platforms not to limit the amount of words allowed to write to the other party, as well as abolish fees for their contact information.

5.3 Limitations and directions for further research

The thesis compares two different views of seven parents and seven babysitters of different ages, cultural backgrounds and sexes. It presents a qualitative perspective on the usage of numerous different types of babysitting services, covering the tools made available on such platforms to make trusting one another easier. Despite the relevance of the research, there are aspects of it, which could be improved. This section presents the limitations of the thesis and proposes methods for further exploration of the topic.

The main limitation of the study is the low amount of respondents, which does not allow the results to be generalized to a larger sum of people. The same topic could be explored from a quantitative perspective, by turning the interview questions into a survey, which could also compare the two standpoints.

The respondents interviewed for this study have used seven differently functioning babysitting platforms. This means that the results might not have been identical if this study was to be repeated with a different group of people. Future research could attempt to repeat this study by focusing on only one platform. Similarly, the group of interviewees was dominated by women, therefore the results could have varied if the study was to be done with only men or an equal number of men and women.

Due to the fact that the pool of respondents included people of 10 different nationalities, their views could have been influenced by their cultural background. In the future, this study could be conducted with respondents of the same cultural background or in a different country or a continent, where criminal activity both online and offline is higher, in order to compare the results. Additionally, due to the cultural differences, the respondents could have hidden elements of their selection criteria in order not to appear discriminative towards other members of the babysitting community.

Furthermore, since the majority of the interviewees claimed to have had only positive

experiences with the platform services, the responses could have varied if the positive and negative levels of service satisfaction of the respondents were more balanced. Lastly, it is possible that some users had a higher propensity to trust others compared to the rest, which could also limit the reliability of the results.

The proposed examples of possible future exploration of the topic could also be translated to other types of P2P services in the sharing economy involving trust. It is also important to take the offline trust factor into consideration when looking further into trust in P2P environments.

What is more, this topic could be viewed from a marketing perspective, so that the functioning of such sites could be further improved. Additionally, research on this topic from a psychological perspective could provide further insights into online trust and could potentially contribute to the reformulation of the current definition of the term.

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Appendix A: Interview topic list

Topic	Sub-topic	Question	Additional follow up questions
The service used and opinion about it	Experiences with babysitting and platforms of this kind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Could you please explain the way you use the platform when you are looking for a babysitter job /a babysitter? - How do you select the family/the babysitter? What do you pay attention to first, what second? And specifically on their online profile? - Did the way you review profiles change compared to your first experiences with the platform? - Did your use of the babysitting service change the way you trust others? - What do you think about the service and the platform itself? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What service do you use? How frequently do you babysit/hire a babysitter via this service? - Did you use others? - Why did you register? - Have you ever used the service in the opposite role of the nanny/parent? - Why do you like the service you used? - Why did you register? - Did you hesitate before signing up to the online service? - Did you ask friends/acquaintances/family to help you with babysitting before signing up? - What do you think about the interface of the service? - How long have you used the services for?/ how many different babysitters/families did you work with? - Did you start using the online app through a recommendation from a friend?
Trusting the service	Ability, integrity, And benevolence of the platform – establishing trust between platform and user	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How would you rate the way the service helps you trust other members of the community? - What do you think about the amount of information the platform gives away about the sitter/parents online? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Did you ever have to contact people managing the website? Why? - Do you trust the platform itself and its management - How safe do you feel using the application? Why? - Why does the service make you feel safe about the aspect of the money transfer or insurance matters? (Or why it doesn't) - What kind of information about the sitter do you think is missing? - Do you trust the information displayed on a sitter's personal page? Did you ever check it yourself?
Trusting the babysitter/parent	Ability, Integrity, And benevolence of the users (the supplying peer and the consuming peer)– establishing trust between two types of users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do you think the appearance of the other party/ their profile influences your choice of a babysitter/ parent? - What role does his/her reputation play? How do you assess their reputation using the website? - What do you think about reviewing systems of the service? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are your most important requirements for choosing a sitter/ family to take care of? - How much do you pay attention to the aesthetics of the profile picture of the potential sitter? - What did you expect before you met with the first potential babysitter/the first family, did their appearance influence your expectations of the sitter's personality? - Did your first impression after seeing the picture match the sitter upon meeting face to face? - How long have you used the services for?/ how many different babysitters/families did you work with? - When deciding on babysitters what elements of the personal profile did you pay most attention to?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When did you realize that the babysitter you were thinking to employ was the one you we're looking for? - For how long did you work with the same babysitter/parent? Did you employ/work for different babysitters/families at the same time? – Why/ why not the same trusted one? - How does the nationality/ age of the sitter influence your choice of a babysitter? - How does including weaker point of a sitter influence your trust level? - What kind of role do recommendations play for you? - Would you trust a sitter with negative reviews or no recommendations but with experience/personality traits matching your requirements? - How much did you use the internal chat option to ask additional important questions before deciding whether to employ someone as a babysitter or did you prefer to do this upon meeting? - Would you end your screening process on the app on a basic set of questions, or would you ask detailed questions online? - Would you trust a parent/babysitter more if they would ask many detailed personal questions through the app before meeting face to face?
<p>Additional checks carried out upon meeting offline</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do you think about extra checks performed after the babysitting candidate was already chosen online? Do you have experiences connected to this? - What do you do to present yourself as trustworthy to the other party through the website? - Did u use a lot of sharing economy apps before? - Would you attempt to check on the chosen nanny after employing her through the website? (by means of a camera for instance) - What do you think about the practice of checking whether the sitter's recommendation is real, by means of calling the recommender? Do you have experiences with this? - Once setting up a face-to-face meeting would you check the identity of the sitter upon meeting for example by checking their ID? Why and would you check any other information about them?
<p>Additional questions about the future and intention to use the services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you like the babysitting community online as much as you did at the beginning? - Are you planning to continue using the service? Would you want to work with the same family/sitter? Why? - Any additional remarks or relevant experiences you want to share concerning trust online?

Appendix B: List of Facebook groups used to find interviewees

- Expat Republic Rotterdam
- Babysitter, Nanny, Oppas, Au-Pair and Cleaner Jobs (Netherlands | Holland)
- Aupair in Holland / Netherlands
- Rotterdam Parents chit-chat
- Rotterdam Mamas: Babysitter & other family Services
- Mama Café Delft Forum
- Utrecht Mamas
- Parenting and The Hague
- Expats Utrecht
- Professional Parents The Netherlands
- Le coin babysitting - Paris et environs
- Le coin babysitting - Bordeaux et environs
- Le coin babysitting - Lyon et environs
- Le coin babysitting - Rennes et environs
- International Students in Amsterdam
- International Students Rotterdam
- Utrecht International Students
- Babysitting Bruxelles
- Babysitting Gent

Appendix C: Example of communication with respondent

Katarzyna Ciszek ▸ Rotterdam Mamas: Babysitter & other family Services
13 maja · 📍

Dear Parents,
I'm currently doing a Master's research about online trust in babysitting platforms. I only need 1 more parent to interview (Skype also possible)! Please help me out!
Do you have experiences with finding babysitters online?
Please let me know if you are interested or know somebody who could help! 😊
By participating you help me improve those types of services, so that we can all benefit from them 😊

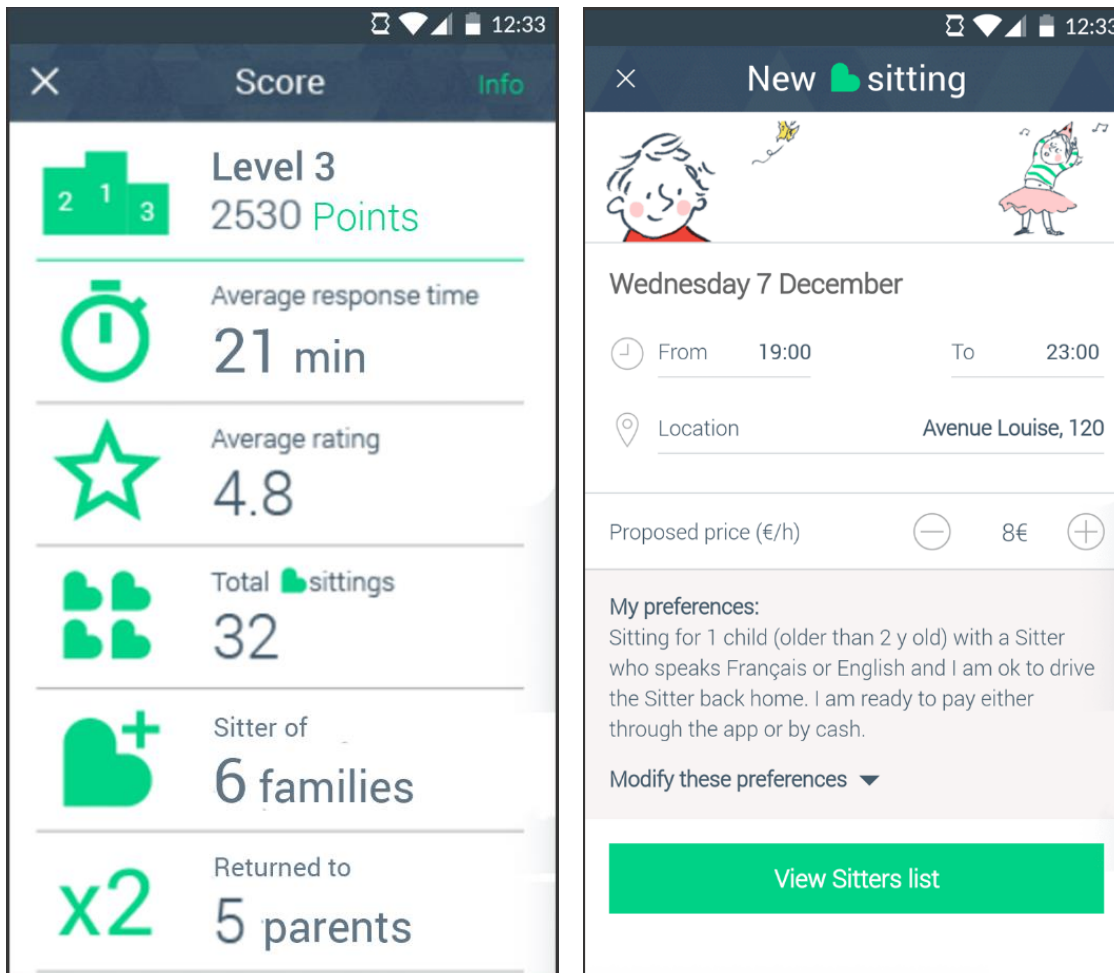
Komentarze: 1

👍 Lubię to! 💬 Komentarze

Appendix C:1 Example of a message written to potential respondent groups on Facebook

Appendix D: Context of the platforms used by respondents

Bsit



Bsit is a babysitting peer-to-peer platform operating in France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxemburg. The premise of this app is to connect parents and babysitters in an area based on recommendations from an existing network of friends, who are also active on the app. The app offers an internal chat for the family and sitter and a payment system to secure that the sitter is paid for the exact time they have worked for. Bsit does not perform pre screening of the babysitters who sign up to the platform, allowing the recommendation system to establish trust between the users. Bsit offers insurance solutions to prevent unpleasant situations in case a child or babysitter happen to have an accident on the way to or during a sitting. Bsit stands out from the rest of the platforms used by the interview respondents in this thesis as it is the only service operating via an app only. The application is limited compared to the other websites, despite the fact that it includes the necessary tools for users to connect. The users are not able to view any

job postings until a family has approached them. They can, however fill in their basic personal details, name, age, location, transport to the babysitting job, add a photo and fill in their availability. The personal profile also includes an open section to be filled in by the user, where they can introduce themselves, however there is a character limit, which cannot be surpassed. The app allows the users to communicate via an internal chat built into the application. Although the users are able to comment on one another's work and experience, the comments can only be read by the person they are meant for, they are not visible to other users. The only reviewing system present on the app is a star rating system on a scale from 1 to 5 stars. The interviewees of this thesis have admitted that although it's great that the system exists, it does not indicate what a person has done wrong during a babysitting; therefore it could be improved by either expanding the scale or categorizing the scale. Besides this, the users have admitted that the star rating system is quite discriminating to new users, who are less likely to be asked to babysit without having any stars to begin with. The application also includes a build in money transfer option, which allows the parents to register the amount of hours worked by the sitter and paying them via the app. It is important to mention that only 2 babysitter respondents in this thesis were users of Bsit.

Oudermatch

The screenshot displays the Oudermatch website interface. On the left, there is a search results section for 'Oppassen Rotterdam' (Nanny Rotterdam). It shows a list of available nannies with their profiles, including photos, names, and brief descriptions of their services. On the right, there is a registration form titled 'Registreer gratis' (Register for free) with a '2 min' timer. The form includes fields for 'Voornaam' (First name), 'Achternaam' (Last name), 'Ik meld me aan als' (I register as), 'E-mailadres' (Email address), and 'Wachtwoord' (Password). Below the form, there is a 'Gratis aanmelden' (Free registration) button and a 'of meld je aan met Facebook' (or register with Facebook) button. At the bottom right, there is a 'Reviews' section showing a star rating of 8.9/10 based on 20 reviews, with a 'Vertrouwd' (Trusted) badge.

Oudermatch is an online platform connecting parents and babysitters in the same location. It currently operates in the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Norway, Finland and Denmark. The

premise of the platform is to allow parents, babysitters and child-minders to contact one another and collectively organize childcare among them. The moderators of the service do not interfere in the communication between the users unless inappropriate messages are being posted on a public forum. No preliminary screening of users is performed to enhance security and trustworthiness. This means that the users are fully responsible for the choice of the childcare of their offspring. The platform claims to be for free and not charge users for contacting other members, but it requires purchasing a premium subscription when a user wants to contact a second person.

Greataupair.com

The screenshot shows the Greataupair.com website interface. On the left is a 'Refine Your Search' sidebar with various filters. The main area is titled 'Babysitter Jobs' and features a banner for 'Join now to...' with options like 'Contact employers', 'Get trusted', and 'Get hired'. Below the banner is a list of job listings with columns for Employer, Job Location, Weekly Rate, Hours/Week, and Experience Req'd. Two listings are visible: one for Agnes L in Carro, France, and another for Eldar M in Miami Beach, FL.

Employer	Job Location	Weekly Rate	Hours/Week	Experience Req'd
Agnes L	Carro, France	\$201-\$300	35	2 years
Eldar M	Miami Beach, FL	\$401-\$500	15	None

Greataupair.com is one of the oldest babysitting and au pairing platforms. It claims to be the most trusted on the international market, as it provides jobs and babysitters for users from all over the globe. Greataupair.com is protective of its users, as it reassures personal data protection. The platform performs checks of the users' profile descriptions, to ensure that undesired content, such as inappropriate messages and photos and links to external websites are not posted. The website supports its users by providing instructional videos about au pairing and babysitting. It also connects people in search of pet sitting, tutoring, as well as housekeeping. Greataupair.com does not allow users to comment or review each others work and collaboration.

Aupairworld.com

The screenshot shows the AupairWorld website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the logo, search icon, and links for 'For au pairs', 'For host families', 'About AupairWorld', 'English', and 'Login'. Below the navigation bar, there are four profile cards for au pairs:

- Eleonora M.**: from Roma, Italy, 3 children, 3 - 8 years. Start: 09 / 2017 - 10 / 2017, Available for 3 - 9 months. Description: We live in a nice area in the center of Rome, near Villa Borghese (one of the main park in Rome), Vatican, Piazza del ...
- Alicia G.**: from Madrid, Spain, 2 children, 6 - 8 years. Start: 07 / 2017 - 08 / 2017, Available for 1 - 2 months. Description: Vivimos en la ciudad de Madrid, muy bien comunicados en bus y metro con cualquier punto de la ciudad. Nuestro barrio es tranquilo y con ...
- Antonella M.**: from Bologna, Italy, 3 children, 7 - 13 years. Start: 08 / 2017 - 09 / 2017, Available for 3 - 24 months. Description: In Bologna there are a lot of nice places where you can meet friends. Is plenty of young people because of the university and many ...
- Barbara M.**: from Milano, Italy, 3 children, 3 - 10 years. Start: 01 / 2018 - 02 / 2018, Available for 3 - 12 months. Description: We live in Milano and our family consists of 5 people. Barbara (myself), my husband Francesco and our 3 kids: Margherita, 10 years old, Alessandro ...

Aupairworld.com is a platform primarily used to connect au pairs, but also utilized by babysitters. Upon registration the user fills in their search criteria, profile description and publishes photos. Based on the criteria the babysitters are exposed to lists of recommended families. In order to get in contact, the family is required to pay a fee, whereas the babysitter does not. The website requires the users to sign a contract before agreeing to au pair for a family. The website originated in Germany, but is popular globally.

Oppassen.nl

The screenshot shows the Oppassen.nl website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the logo, 'Oppas gezocht', 'Oppaswerk', 'Gratis aanmelden', and 'Inloggen'. Below the navigation bar, there is a search bar and a filter section. The main content area shows search results for 'Oppas postcode 3062GS en omgeving (0.5 km)'. A profile for Judith is displayed, including her photo, name, location (Oppas Rotterdam), and details: 'Hi ouders in Rotterdam! Sinds vorig jaar studeer ik gezondheidswetenschappen in Rotterdam. En sinds een paar maandjes heb ik ook het fijne Den Haag geruild.. Leeftijd: 19 jaar Ervaring: 4 - 5 jaar'. There is also a map showing the location and a 'Hoe werkt het?' section with steps: 1. Zoeken, 2. Aanmelden, 3. Reageren.

Oppassen.nl is a Dutch babysitting platform, which allows its user to filter the users based on detailed search criteria. Users are able to search by location or availability. The downside of the website is that it only functions in Dutch. The website allows users to comment on one another's profiles. The website verifies whether the users have a Facebook profile and publically provides an overview of the amount of connected friends on the user's social media platform.

Aupair.com

Family Nationality

All Nationalities

Afghani

Albanian

Algerian

American

Job duration

4-6 months

Max. children /people you would take care of

1

Children's / people's age group

Any

Your Age

Do you Smoke?

Any

Your Gender

Ms.

Start date

Any

Picture required?

9%

ID 366977
Job start Apr 2017 - Dec 2017

1 children 11 - 14 years old

Dear Candidate, I am a single father with a very well behaved, smart, and sweet boy. We live in Northern CA in Silicon Valley. I work as a manager in the

[View profile](#)

Australian family in brisbane, **Australia**, offering the **Au Pair** job for 4-6 months

NA

ID 907674
Job start Apr 2017 - Jun 2017

1 children 1 - 5 years old

Hi we're Shane and Xavier from Australia and would love some help taking Xavier to School 3 mornings a week Mon/Tue/Wed as Dad needs to go to work early these d

[View profile](#)

Singaporean family in Heidelberg Heights, **Australia**, offering the **Au Pair** job for 4-6 months

0%

ID 891567
Job start Jul 2017 - Aug 2017

1 children 0 - 1 year old, 1 - 5 years old

****MELBOURNE Au Pair wanted – starting JULY or AUGUST** Hi Au Pairs.**

Aupair.com is one of the oldest au pairing platforms online. It has a multilingual character, as it operates in eight languages. The au pairs are not required to pay for registration, whereas the parents need to pay a fee of 39.90 for 30 days of use. The platform encourages the users to video call one another before the au pairs begin working together. The platform is protective of the user's data and does not disclose the profile contents to third parties.

Appendix E: Visualization of analysis steps

Fig. 1. Part of open and axial coding

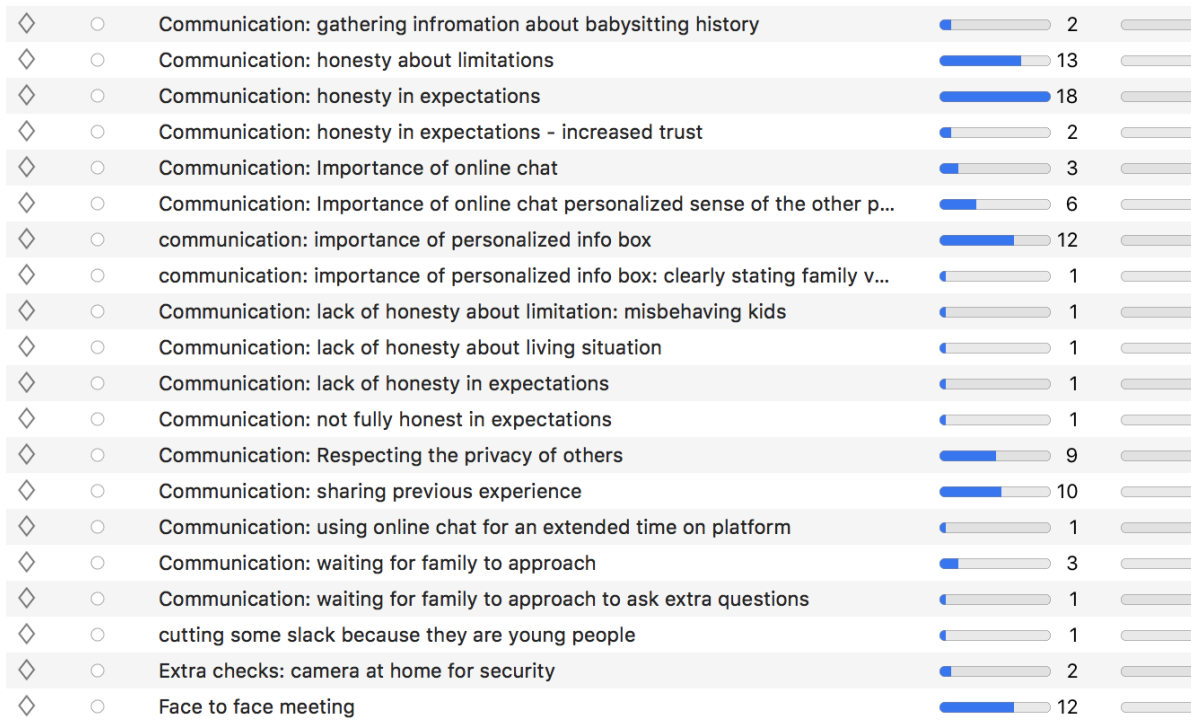


Fig. 2. Coding tree

