

Interviewer:

Hi, thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. We are conducting a study as part of our course at Linnaeus University. The purpose is to explore how generative AI, such as ChatGPT, influences customer experiences within digital services, particularly in the travel and hospitality services. The interview will be recorded so that we can transcribe it accurately afterward. All information will be anonymized, meaning that no personal details such as name or workplace will be included in the report. Your participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. The interview will take approximately 20-30 minutes and there are no right or wrong answers. I am only interested in your own experiences. Do you consent to participate in the interview and for it to be recorded?

Participant:

Yes, that's completely fine.

Interviewer:

Thank you, then we'll begin.

Interviewer:

Can you describe a specific situation in your service experience where you interacted with or utilized a GenAI-driven tool?

Participant:

Yes I can. And I think this situation is quite interesting because it was one of the first times I actually relied on generative AI in a more serious and continuous way, not just testing it out. So, this was earlier this year when I was planning a family trip. We had decided that we wanted to travel during the winter period, mainly because we wanted to get away from the cold and have some time together. But at the same time, planning that kind of trip is not very simple. There are many factors involved especially when you are traveling as a family.

What made it more challenging was that I didn't really have a clear starting point. It wasn't like we are going to Spain or we are going to Greece. It was more like, we want something warm, not too far away, not too expensive and suitable for children. So it was quite vague. Normally in that situation, I would start by browsing different websites, maybe searching warm destinations in winter, then checking flights, then accommodation and slowly narrowing things down. But that process usually takes a lot of time and it can also feel quite overwhelming because you get so many different options.

So I decided to try using ChatGPT and I remember that I didn't just ask a simple question. I wrote a longer description, almost like I was explaining the situation to another person. I described that we are a family with children, that we want a balance between relaxation and activities and that we don't want very long travel times.

What I found interesting was that the response didn't feel like a list it felt more like a structured suggestion. It started by explaining different types of destinations that could fit our

needs. For example it mentioned nearby destinations with shorter travel time but slightly cooler weather and then compared those to destinations that are further away but offer more stable warmth. Which helped me a lot, because it gave me a way to think about the decision. Instead of just choosing randomly, I could consider trade offs.

Then I continued the conversation. I asked more specific questions like, What are good options for families with children? and What should we prioritize when choosing accommodation? And each time, the answers built on the previous ones. I also asked about practical things, like how to structure a 7 day trip, what kind of daily activities might work and what to avoid.

And I think what really stood out to me was that I didn't feel lost anymore. Usually, when I plan trips, there is a phase where I feel overwhelmed and unsure. But here, I felt like I had guidance even though it wasn't a human. So I kept using it throughout the process. Even when I started looking at specific hotels, I would go back and ask questions like, Is this area suitable for families? or What are the advantages of staying here compared to another area?. I would say that AI was not just a tool I used once it became part of the entire planning process, from the very beginning until I made the final decisions.

Interviewer:

In this situation, what specific problem or task was the GenAI intended to solve?

Participant:

I would say there were several problems, but they are all connected in a way. The first one is definitely time. Planning a trip takes time and not just in terms of hours, but also mental energy. And in my case, I didn't have long uninterrupted time to plan. I had to do it in small pieces, which makes it harder to get a full overview.

So one task the AI solved was to give me a quick starting point. Instead of spending hours just figuring out where to begin, I could get a structured overview very quickly. The second problem is complexity. There are so many variables when you plan a trip destination, accommodation, budget, activities, travel time. And when you are traveling with others, you also have to consider different preferences.

Normally, I would try to handle this step by step, but it can feel like you are constantly switching between different aspects without seeing how they connect. The AI helped by simplifying that complexity. It didn't remove it, but it organized it in a way that made it easier to understand. Another important problem is decision fatigue. At some point, when you have too many options it becomes difficult to choose. And sometimes you end up delaying decisions because you're not sure.

The AI helped reduce that by narrowing down options and explaining differences clearly. It didn't just say choose this, but it gave reasoning that made it easier to decide. Then there is also uncertainty. Especially when traveling with family, you want things to go smoothly. You don't want to take unnecessary risks. So having something that could explain what to expect

and what to consider, made me feel more confident. AI helped with structuring the process, reducing time, managing complexity and supporting decision making.

Interviewer:

How has the introduction of this GenAI tool changed the way you interact with service providers?

Participant:

Yes, I think this is where the change becomes very noticeable in practice. Before, I would rely a lot on service providers to guide me. For example, I would go to a booking platform and spend a long time browsing. I would use filters, read reviews, compare options and gradually form an idea of what I want.

Now, I feel like that process happens before I even reach the platform. So when I open a booking site now, I already have a clear idea of what I'm looking for. I know which destinations are relevant, which areas might be better and what type of accommodation we prefer. This means that I don't spend as much time browsing randomly. Instead, I search more directly. Another change is how I interpret the information on those platforms. For example reviews. I still read them, but I don't rely on them in the same way. Before reviews were my main source of understanding but now they are more like a complement.

I also feel more critical. If something doesn't match what I expect, I question it more. And then there is customer service. I used to contact hotels more often, asking questions about facilities or details. Now, I usually try to find the answer through AI first. I would say that my interaction with service providers has become more focused, more efficient and less dependent on them for initial guidance.

Interviewer:

Can you describe a moment where the GenAI did not perform as expected? How did you handle it?

Participant:

Yes and I think this is an important part of the experience, because it shows that you cannot rely on it completely. One example was when I asked about a specific area within a destination. The AI described it as calm and suitable for families, but when I later checked more detailed sources, it turned out to be more crowded and not exactly what I expected. Another example was related to costs. The AI gave general estimates for things like meals and activities, but those estimates were not always accurate when I compared them with real prices. So I realized that while the AI is very good at giving general guidance, it is not always precise. How I handled it was by adjusting my approach. I started using the AI as a first step and then verifying important details through other sources. So instead of replacing my usual process it became part of it.

Interviewer:

To what extent do you feel GenAI technology has changed the human element of your service experience?

Participant:

I think it has changed where the human element is present, rather than removing it. In the planning phase, there is definitely less human interaction. I don't ask other people for advice as much and I don't contact service providers early on. But during the actual trip, human interaction is still very important. And maybe even more noticeable. Because when everything else is handled efficiently, the moments that stand out are the human ones. So I don't think AI replaces the human element it shifts it.

Interviewer:

Looking ahead two to three years, what is the most significant change you anticipate GenAI will bring to your travel planning or service experience?

Participant:

That's actually something I've thought about a bit, because even now I feel like things have changed quite quickly so if I try to imagine two or three years ahead, I think the biggest change will be that planning becomes almost invisible in a way. What I mean is that today, you still have to actively sit down and plan. Even with AI, you have to think about what to ask, guide the conversation and then go to other platforms to actually book things. It's still a process that requires effort.

But I think in the future, that process will become much more automated and integrated. For example, instead of me starting with a blank page, the system might already suggest trips based on my previous behavior, my budget, maybe even my calendar. So instead of asking Where should I go? I might get something like Based on your preferences and available time, here are three travel options that fit you. That feels like a very different starting point.

I also think that the connection between planning and booking will become much tighter. Right now there is still a gap you plan with AI, then you go somewhere else to book. But in the future, I imagine that you can go directly from idea to booking in one flow. Another thing I think will change is real time support during the trip. Not just planning before, but actually having assistance while you travel. For example if something changes like weather, delays or plans you could get immediate suggestions that are adapted to your situation.

And I think that could reduce stress quite a lot especially when traveling with others. I think the biggest change is not just better answers, but a shift from active planning to more guided or even automated experiences.

Interviewer:

In what way does generative AI influence your decisions when choosing travel destinations or accommodation?

Participant:

I would say it influences my decisions quite strongly, but maybe not in an obvious way. It's not that I just follow what the AI says and book exactly what it suggests. It's more that it shapes how I think about my options. For example before using AI, I would often make decisions based on what I already knew or what I had seen before. So my choices were a bit limited to familiar destinations or popular places. But with AI, I feel like my perspective becomes wider. It suggests options that I might not have considered and more importantly, it explains why those options might be relevant. So instead of just seeing a destination, I understand it in context like what type of experience it offers, what kind of traveler it suits and what trade offs are involved. That changes how I evaluate things.

When it comes to accommodation, I think it has made me more aware of what actually matters. Before I might focus on price or rating but now I think more about things like location in relation to activities, convenience and overall experience. It has also made me more confident in making decisions. Because instead of guessing, I feel like I have some kind of reasoning behind my choice. At the same time, I wouldn't say it removes my own judgment. It's more like it supports it. I still make the final decision but the process leading up to it is more informed.

Interviewer:

Do you feel that AI replaces human service or does it function more as a complement? Why?

Participant:

For me it clearly functions as a complement, but I think the relationship between AI and human service is quite interesting. AI is very good at handling information. It's fast, always available and it can process a lot of input at once. So for tasks like planning, comparing options or answering general questions, it's actually very effective. But at the same time, it lacks something that is quite important in service experiences which is the human element.

For example, understanding emotions, adapting to unexpected situations or just creating a feeling of being taken care of those are things that I still associate with human interaction. So I don't see AI as replacing that, but rather taking over the more routine or informational parts of the service. And I think that can actually improve the overall experience. Because if AI handles the basic questions and preparation, then human service can focus more on the meaningful interactions.

For example, instead of asking a hotel basic questions I already have that information. So when I interact with staff, it's more about the experience itself. At the same time I do think there is a risk if everything becomes too automated. If there is no human contact at all, the experience could feel quite impersonal. So I think the ideal situation is a balance. AI for efficiency and support and humans for connection and flexibility. And I think that balance will become more important as the technology develops further.

Interviewer:

Thank you very much for your detailed answers. That concludes the interview.

Participant:

Thank you, it was very interesting to reflect on this.