

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:

Ofcourse, no problem.

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:

Yeah I can think of one situation that really stands out and it's actually quite personal. It was when I planned a trip for me and my girlfriend for our three year anniversary. So it wasn't just like a normal trip where you just want to go somewhere cheap or convenient. It was more like I wanted it to feel meaningful. Like something that we would both remember, not just another weekend away that kind of blends in with everything else.

And I think that also made it more difficult, because I felt some kind of pressure to get it right. At the same time we're both students, so I didn't have a big budget to work with. So I had this mix of wanting something romantic and special, but still needing to be realistic. In the beginning, I honestly didn't know where to start. I opened a few booking sites and started scrolling, but everything just felt very similar. Like every place is described as cozy, romantic or perfect for couples and after a while it just doesn't mean anything anymore.

So I thought, okay I'll try ChatGPT and just see what happens. I didn't really expect it to help that much, but I figured it could maybe give me some direction. And I remember writing quite a detailed message. I explained that it's our three year anniversary, that we're students, that I want something romantic but not too fancy and that I don't want it to feel like a typical tourist trip. And what surprised me was that the answer didn't feel generic. It actually felt like it was trying to understand what I meant.

Instead of just giving destinations, it started talking about what creates a romantic experience. Like, it mentioned things like choosing a place with a certain atmosphere not too crowded,

maybe somewhere where you can walk a lot and just spend time together without stress. It also talked about the importance of not overplanning, which I found interesting because I usually try to plan everything in detail. But it suggested that leaving some space for spontaneous moments can actually make the experience better. And that kind of changed how I thought about it. I stopped focusing only on where we should go and started thinking more about what I want this trip to feel like.

Then I kept asking more questions like about specific destinations, what kind of accommodation would feel more personal and even small details like what kind of activities or moments could make it feel more special. And I kept going back to it over a few days. It wasn't just one interaction it became part of the whole process. In the end, I chose a smaller coastal city instead of a big popular destination. I booked a small apartment instead of a hotel and I planned a few small things like a dinner spot and a place to watch the sunset. And honestly I don't think I would have planned it in that way without using AI. It made me think differently, not just faster.

Interviewer:

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

Participant:

I think the main problem was that I had a clear intention emotionally, but I didn't know how to translate that into actual decisions. Like, it's easy to say I want something romantic, but what does that actually mean in terms of where you go, where you stay and what you do?

Before, I would probably just choose something that looks nice or has good reviews, but that doesn't always create the kind of experience you want. So the AI helped me break that down. It made me think about things in a more structured way, like the atmosphere of a place, how busy it is, what kind of environment it creates.

It also helped me reduce the feeling of being overwhelmed. Because normally, when I search online, I open a lot of tabs and compare things and it becomes messy. Here, it felt more like I had a direction and that made it easier to move forward. And I think it also helped with confidence. Because instead of just guessing, I felt like I had some reasoning behind my decisions.

Interviewer:

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

Participant:

I think it has changed quite a lot, especially in how I approach booking platforms. Before, I would spend a lot of time browsing without really knowing what I was looking for. I would scroll through options, compare prices, read reviews and kind of figure things out along the way.

Now I feel like I already have a clearer idea before I even start. So instead of browsing randomly, I search more specifically. And that makes the process much faster and also less stressful. It also changed how I use reviews. I still read them, but I don't rely on them in the same way. Before, reviews were my main source of decision making. Now, they are more like a way to confirm what I already think.

Another thing is that I don't really contact customer service as much anymore. I used to send messages sometimes to ask questions, but now I usually try to understand things through AI first. So I would say it made me more independent in the process.

Interviewer:

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

Participant:

Yeah, definitely. And I think that's something you notice quite quickly when you use it more. For example, when I asked for restaurant recommendations, the descriptions sounded very good like very romantic and authentic but when I checked them, some of them were actually quite touristy. So there was a difference between how things were presented and how they actually were.

Another example was pricing. The AI gave general estimates, but when I checked actual options, they were sometimes quite different. So I realized that it's very good for ideas and general understanding, but not always accurate when it comes to details. So what I did was just combine it with other sources. I used it to get ideas and structure and then I verified things through reviews and maps.

Interviewer:

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

Participant:

I think it has reduced the need for human interaction in the planning phase. Like, I didn't really ask friends for advice this time, which I probably would have done before. But during the actual trip, I don't think it changed anything. If anything, I think the human element becomes more important when you're there. Like the atmosphere, the people, the interactions. So I don't feel like AI replaces it, it just changes how you prepare for it.

Interviewer:

Looking ahead two to three years, what is the most significant change you anticipate GenAI will bring?

Participant:

I think the biggest change will be that planning becomes much more natural and maybe even something you don't really think about anymore. Right now, you still have to actively sit down and plan, even with AI. You have to think about what to ask and how to guide it. But in the future, I think that process will become much smoother.

Like, I can imagine that instead of me explaining everything again, the system already understands my preferences. Maybe it knows that I prefer smaller places or that I care more about atmosphere than luxury. So instead of starting from zero I might just get suggestions that already feel relevant.

I also think that everything will become more connected. Right now, you plan in one place and book in another, but I think those steps will merge. And maybe during the trip itself, AI will be more present. Like suggesting things in real time, based on where you are and what you're doing. So I think the biggest change is that it becomes less of a tool and more of a natural part of the whole experience.

Interviewer:

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

Participant:

I think it influences my decisions quite deeply, but not in a direct way where I just follow what it says. It changes how I think about my options. Before, I would focus mostly on practical things like price and ratings. Now, I think more about the overall experience, like what kind of trip it will be and how it will feel. And I think that comes from how AI explains things. It gives more context, not just options.

It also makes me more open to trying different things. Before, I might choose something familiar, but now I feel more comfortable exploring other options because I understand them better. So it doesn't decide for me, but it definitely shapes the way I make decisions.

Interviewer:

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

Participant:

For me it's clearly a complement. AI is very useful for planning and information, but it cannot replace human interaction. Especially in something like this, where the experience is personal. I think AI takes care of the practical side, like helping you understand options and plan things.

But the actual experience, the feeling of the place, the interactions, the atmosphere that's still human. And I think that balance is important. If everything becomes too automated, it might feel less personal. So I think the best experience is when AI helps you prepare, but the actual trip is still shaped by real experiences.

Interviewer:

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

Participant:

Thank you