

**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, I'm okay with that.

**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've experienced this quite a lot over the past few years. It feels like almost every company now uses some kind of AI or chatbot as the first step when you contact customer service. It doesn't really matter what kind of company it is either. I've seen it with streaming services, online stores, telecom companies and even some travel related platforms.

Usually when you try to get help, the first thing that happens is that a chatbot pops up. It either asks you to choose between different options or lets you type your issue. Sometimes it feels like it might help, but most of the time it just feels like something you have to go through before you can actually get real help.

I understand why companies use it. It probably saves them a lot of time and money, especially if they get many similar questions every day. It probably also helps them manage a large number of customers at the same time. So from that perspective, it makes sense.

But from my perspective as a customer, it often feels frustrating. The biggest issue is that the AI doesn't really understand what I'm trying to explain. If the problem is very simple, then it might work. But if there is even a small level of complexity, it usually struggles.

Another thing is that it feels like you don't really have a choice. You can't just skip the AI and talk to a real person directly. You are kind of forced to interact with the system first, even if it doesn't help you. That makes the whole experience feel more complicated than it needs to be.

Sometimes it also feels like the system is designed to keep you inside the chatbot instead of helping you reach a human faster. That creates a feeling that the company is trying to delay real support rather than provide it.

So overall, I would say that I've had quite a lot of experience with GenAI tools in service situations, but most of the time I feel like they make things slower and more frustrating instead of easier.

**Interviewer:**

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

**Participant:**

I don't remember one specific situation in detail because this has happened several times, but most of the time it has been things like account problems, technical issues or questions about products or services.

For example sometimes I've had problems logging into my account or something not working properly. In other situations, I've had questions about subscriptions, like what is included, how billing works or how to change something. I've also used it when something just didn't behave the way it should and I needed some kind of support or explanation. I think the main purpose of AI is to solve common problems quickly. It seems like it is designed to answer frequently asked questions and guide users step by step toward a solution. It probably works well for very standard situations where the answer is clear and the problem is easy to categorize.

From a company perspective, it makes total sense. If they can solve maybe 50% or more of the incoming questions automatically, then they save both time and money. It also probably reduces waiting times for customers in general. But in reality, I often feel like the problems I have are not simple enough for the AI. Even if the issue is not extremely complicated, it still requires a bit of understanding and flexibility. And that is where the AI struggles.

It often gives answers that are kind of related to what I asked, but not really helpful for my exact situation. It feels like it understands the topic but not the actual problem. That can be quite frustrating, because you feel like you are close to a solution but not really getting there. Because of that, I often end up needing a human anyway. But before I get to that point, I've already spent time trying to explain the issue to the AI, which makes the whole process longer than it should be. So even though the goal of the AI is to make things easier and faster, I don't always feel like it achieves that in practice.

**Interviewer:**

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

**Participant:**

It has definitely changed the way I interact with service providers and honestly, not really in a

positive way for me. Now I kind of expect that I will have to go through a chatbot before I can get real help.

That expectation alone changes the whole experience. Instead of thinking I'm going to contact support and get help, I think I'm going to have to deal with a bot first. It already sets a slightly negative tone before the interaction even starts. Because of that, I sometimes try to avoid chat support completely. If I have the option, I would rather call or send an email. I feel like I get better help when I speak to a real person, especially if the issue is not very simple.

It has also made me more impatient. If the AI doesn't understand me quickly, I get frustrated much faster than I would with a human. With a real person, I feel like there is more chance they will understand if I explain again or ask follow up questions that actually help. Another thing is that it has made me less confident in the whole support system. I don't feel as sure that I will get help quickly. It feels like there are more steps and more potential points where things can go wrong.

It also makes the experience feel less personal. Before, even if customer service took time, it still felt like there was someone trying to help you. Now it feels more like interacting with a system that is trying to manage your request rather than really understand it. So overall, I would say that AI has made the interaction feel less smooth, less personal and sometimes more time consuming. Even if it might be more efficient for companies, it doesn't always feel like an improvement from my side.

**Interviewer:**

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

**Participant:**

Yes, one situation I remember clearly was when I had an issue with my account on a streaming service. I tried to use their chatbot to solve the problem, but it didn't go well at all. The AI didn't understand what I was trying to explain. I tried to explain it in different ways, thinking maybe I wasn't being clear enough. But every time, it gave me answers that didn't match my issue.

It felt like it was just repeating standard responses instead of actually understanding what I meant. I probably had to repeat myself around five times and each time it became more frustrating. At some point I started to question myself, like maybe I was explaining it wrong. But after trying multiple times, it became clear that the issue was not with how I explained it, but with the system itself. It felt like I was stuck in a loop. No matter how I explained the problem, I got similar types of responses that didn't actually help me move forward.

After a while I just gave up. I closed the chat because I felt like it was a waste of time to continue. A few days later I contacted customer service again but this time I called instead. When I finally spoke to a real person, the difference was huge. They understood the issue much faster, asked a couple of follow up questions and then solved it quite quickly.

That experience really showed me the limitations of AI in customer service. It might work for simple questions, but when something is even slightly more complex, it can fail completely. It also made me less willing to rely on AI in the future, because I don't want to go through that same frustrating experience again.

**Interviewer:**

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

**Participant:**

I think it has changed the human element quite a lot and mostly in a negative way. The biggest difference is that the experience feels less personal. When you speak to a human, there is a natural understanding. Even if you don't explain everything perfectly, they usually understand what you mean. They can also adjust their response depending on how the conversation goes.

With AI it feels more rigid. You have to explain things in a very specific way and even then it might not be understood. That makes the interaction feel less natural and more like you are interacting with a system instead of a person. Another important thing is empathy. When you are frustrated or confused, a human can pick up on that and respond in a way that feels supportive. AI doesn't really do that in the same way.

It also feels like you have to put in more effort as a customer. You have to repeat yourself, rephrase things and try different ways of explaining the same problem. That creates more friction. So I feel like the human element has become weaker. The interaction feels more mechanical and less understanding and for me that makes the service experience worse.

**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:**

For me personally, I don't think it will completely change how I plan travels, because I already have a way of doing things that I like. I enjoy planning trips myself, looking at different options, reading reviews and comparing things before I make a decision. But at the same time, I do think that AI will improve a lot in the next few years. It will probably become better at understanding preferences and giving more tailored suggestions. For example it might be able to recommend destinations or hotels that really match what I usually look for.

I can also see it becoming more integrated into platforms like Booking.com or other travel websites. Instead of being something separate, it might just be part of the normal experience. Another thing I think will improve is how detailed the suggestions are. AI might be able to create full travel plans instead of just giving general ideas. But for me, I would still prefer to use it as a support tool rather than something I fully rely on.

**Interviewer:**

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

**Participant:**

At the moment I would say it doesn't influence my decisions that much, at least not in a direct way. I usually base my decisions on recommendations from friends, previous experiences and social media. Those feel more real and trustworthy to me. It's possible that AI influences me indirectly, but I'm not really aware of it. So I would say AI doesn't play a big role in my decisions right now.

**Interviewer:**

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

**Participant:**

I definitely see AI as more of a complement rather than a replacement. AI can be useful for simple things, but I don't think it can replace human service completely. One reason is trust. I don't fully trust AI and I think many people feel the same. Another reason is the human connection. When you talk to a real person, there is something different. So I think AI can support service but it cannot replace it.

**Interviewer:**

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

**Participant:**

You welcome