

Critical Analysis of AirBnB Case Study

Author: Rodolfo Croes

Selected Article

Quattrone, G., Kusek, N. & Capra, L. A global-scale analysis of the sharing economy model – an AirBnB case study. EPJ Data Sci. 11, 36 (2022).

<https://doi.org/10.1140/epjds/s13688-022-00349-3>

Strengths

The researchers understood the importance of studying the differences between the sharing economy model in the Western World cities and non-Western cities. They realised that the literature for non-Western cities is significantly sparser, or completely missing compared to the studies done for Western World cities. Knowing this the researchers understood the need for a more global-scale analysis to study the sharing economy model in different geographical contexts.

The researchers were astute in choosing Airbnb as the sharing economy model example for this study. This is because Airbnb is an example of a successful way to combine the sharing economy model with an existing hospitality industry. Or by allowing any homeowner to implement this online accommodation platform to successfully profit off the sharing economy model. Airbnb also shows the differences between how the Western World cities and non-Western world cities adopt a new technology to help their respective economies.

Also, seeing that most studies of Airbnb are set in mostly Western World cities, this study gives the local population of the non-Western cities more information on how to benefit from the sharing economy model.

Concerns and Limitations

Although the data for this article was gathered directly from the Airbnb website, the timing of when the data was gathered is only listed for one month, in this case June 2021. This time frame limits the data that was observed to the summer, when some research reveals that Airbnb hosts charge more during summer vacations compared to what they charge during the winter vacations [1]. These changes in rates can affect the amount of Airbnb reviews and listings.

Another concern is that the linguistic analysis done in this research was only using reviews written in English. This is concerning given that the reviews used were 82% for the seven Western cities and only 39% for the twelve non-Western cities. A study shows that the Chinese speaking tourist are more selective about accommodation, location, and price compared to English speaking tourists [5]. This is an example of what differences non-English and English written reviews can mean to this research. However, because the researchers only focussed on the English reviews, the perspective of the reviews used for this study are coming from the same type of travellers.

Originality and Novelty

The growth of publication discussing sharing economy has increased significantly since 2014 thus giving researchers a motive to contribute to this topic [2]. This research specifically looks at the sharing economy model in areas that are not studied at much, the non-Western cities. While Airbnb offers accommodations in 167 countries, the number of international studies on the use and impacts of Airbnb is limited by lack of publicly accessible data [3]. Thus, using data from non-Western countries, as the researchers have done in this study, can help give context on how less developed cities adapt the sharing economy model.

This study's novelty comes from the analysis of non-Western cities with different economies, geographical location and cultures and comparing them to Western cities to see how the mentioned differences affect the usage of Airbnb for the same type of tourist. We can see that a study looked at cultural differences between tourists, but not many are looking at studies with the same type of tourist in different locations [5].

This study provides a novel insight into the penetration and adoption of Airbnb in a global-scale urban study for both Western and non-Western cities. The measurement of inequality of host' and guest' clustering within cities is also unique by using the Gini index for offers and demands for all cities under study, while the South Korean study used census block group as their unit of analysis [4].

Potential Societal Impact

This study has a benefit for most countries in the world because it highlights the resemblances and differences between cities that are more developed and attractive to tourists, and this literature suggests what changes the non-Western governments can make so that their respective cities and their population can benefit from the sharing economy model.

One of the suggested changes mentioned by the researchers are to invest in safe and efficient public transport. This in turn can lead to Airbnb penetrating beyond city centres and into the suburbs where locals can benefit from the sharing economy model.

Although the research implies that the Airbnb adoption in both Western and non-Western cities are generally sufficient, the host inequalities of Airbnb when analysing Airbnb penetration in all cities examined is present. One reason suggested by the researchers is that the hosts that appear more frequently on the Airbnb platform with high ratings are viewed as most trustworthy. Thus, these existing hosts will continue to get richer while new hosts struggle to acquire guests.

Word Count: 784 (Including subtitles)

References

- [1] G. Casamatta, S. Giannoni, D. Brunstein, and J. Jouve, "Host type and pricing on Airbnb: Seasonality and perceived market power," *Tourism Management*, vol. 88, p. 104433, Feb. 2022. [Online]. Available: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0261517721001527>. [Accessed Nov. 7, 2023].
- [2] M. Hossain, "Sharing economy: A comprehensive literature review," *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, vol. 87, p. 102470, May 2020. [Online]. Available: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0278431920300220>. [Accessed Nov. 8, 2023].
- [3] C. Adamiak, "Current state and development of Airbnb accommodation offer in 167 countries," *Current Issues in Tourism*, vol. 25, no. 19, pp. 1–19, Dec. 2019. [Online]. Available: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13683500.2019.1696758>. [Accessed Nov. 8, 2023].
- [4] D. Ki and S. Lee, "Spatial Distribution and Location Characteristics of Airbnb in Seoul, Korea," *Sustainability*, vol. 11, no. 15, p. 4108, Jul. 2019. [Online]. Available: <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/11/15/4108>. [Accessed Nov. 8, 2023].
- [5] Y. Xi, C. Ma, Q. Yang, and Y. Jiang, "A Cross-cultural Analysis of Tourists' Perceptions of Airbnb Attributes," *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, pp. 1–34, Jan. 2021. [Online] Available: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15256480.2020.1862014>. [Accessed Nov. 8, 2023].