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In Airbnb we trust: Understanding consumers' trust-attachment building mechanisms in the sharing economy☆

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ABSTRACT

The sharing norm has enabled many of unused resources revamped and returned with some value to both travelers and local communities in the sharing economy. Airbnb requires remarkable trust that goes beyond the level where both user and host take risks from a sharing transaction. This paper suggests an empirical research model developed based on the trust building model and attachment theory explaining how users develop their trust and further attachment through two major routes. The results indicate that the cognitive trust-identity attachment building mechanism is more effective than affective trust-bond attachment depending on the emotional distance between the users and hosts. Finally, this paper provides scholars with theoretical enhancement on the trust and attachment literature and recommends managers of the sharing businesses to enrich users' trust-attachment toward the firm and the service provider that has a strong influence on users' behavioral intention to use.

1. Introduction

Today, the sharing economy has become one of major business segments, focusing on the capability to share what individuals have and to provide their services to others who need them. As the sharing economy has changed the paradigm of consumption from purchasing to sharing resources, it serves as a signal for consumers to retrench by utilizing fewer resources (Leismann et al., 2013). In 2015, Forbes stated that the sharing economy has more staying power especially in the recent economic downturns (Newlands, 2015). Among the big names of the sharing economy players, Airbnb is recognizable for its accommodation sharing. According to CNBC, Airbnb, an online accommodation service giant, has been profitable during in the second quarter of 2016, and its value has risen more than 30 billion U.S. dollars since 2008 (Thomas, 2017). Moreover, it has grown faster to become a facilitator that competes against hotels for the market share; Glusac (2016) stated that more than 30 percent of leisure travelers use private sharing accommodation services such as Airbnb. In addition, the growth rate of Airbnb with respect to the change of the Airbnb traveler percentage has reached 19 percent in 2016, compared to 3 percent in 2015 (Ting, 2017). With its accelerated growth and large influence on consumers as well as the industry, manifold research in the sharing economy has been conducted in areas including what this phenomenon describes, how it is defined, and why individuals participate in it (e.g., Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2012; Belk, 2010, 2014; Botsman and Rogers, 2010; Lamberton and Rose, 2012). According to the literature, people engage in the sharing economy practice not only for economic benefits (e.g., reduced cost and saving), but also for social benefits (e.g., a desire for community practice and social interaction) (Botsman and Rogers, 2010; Guttentag, 2015; Lamberton and Rose, 2012). In order to achieve such economic and social benefits, peers evaluate one another through reviews written by prior users, which is an indication of what generates users' trust, which leads to their actual participation in the sharing economy (Ert et al., 2016; Finley, 2013; Zervas et al., 2015).

Ert et al. (2016) emphasized that the sharing economy platforms entail additional risks due to the inseparability of the service, referred to as intangible experienced goods or services. Within Airbnb online transactions, face-to-face (physical presence) interactions do not occur until the guests (users) arrive at the door (Ert et al., 2016). In order to prevent possible risks from occurring, Airbnb users intuitively seek out trusting factors to make judgments on service providers. With that in mind, this paper attempts to examine users' trust and attachment building mechanisms originating from two different types of trust antecedents toward Airbnb (the firm) and hosts (the service providers): cognitive- and affective-based trust factors. Most extant studies have emphasized qualitative analyses and have left the opportunity for

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empirical investigation to future research. Hence, this study suggests a research model to examine two types of trust factors. In addition, it discerns two ways of attachment development (identity- and bond-based attachments) as the mediator of the relationship between users' trust and their behavioral intentions.

Accordingly, this paper reveals the environmental differences between the sharing economy and traditional e-commerce environments to help understand the phenomenon of the sharing economy in a more comprehensive and precise manner. To be more specific, this research confirms that consumers recognize different types of trust and attachment toward both Airbnb enterprise and its hosts by considering the antecedents of trust originating from cognitive- and affective-based trust factors. Moreover, it further verifies the mediating role of two types of attachment (i.e., identity- and bond-based attachments) in the relationship between trust and intention to use. The results of this study highlight the emotional constructs required to maintain long-term relationships between users and Airbnb as well as their hosts. The findings indicate that users' trust-attachment building mechanism based on cognitive trust has a more powerful influence on users' intention to use Airbnb continuously. The additional findings indicate that attached Airbnb users acknowledge overall service quality on the Airbnb firm rather than evaluating Airbnb hosts.

The theoretical implication of this research is that we find there are two different types of trust as well as attachment in the sharing economy context, adopting the trust building model and attachment theory by McKnight et al. (2002) and Ren et al. (2012), respectively. Moreover, we investigate trust factors based on prior literature, and additionally, examine the unique element of Airbnb traits as a newly developed antecedent which is appropriate in the Airbnb context. Eventually, the findings of this paper may be useful not only for Airbnb hosts but also for practitioners in the sharing economy platform business by increasing the enrichment of user-seller trust attachment through the two different proposed trust-attachment development mechanisms. Furthermore, the current study may assist users in term of guidance toward a standard of what to find, and what information actually means within the online transaction in order to ensure that their decisions are beneficial, reducing expected risks and uncertainty.

2. Theoretical background

In order to investigate the effect of trust and attachment on users' continuous use intentions in the sharing economy, precisely in the Airbnb context, this study includes the characteristics of the sharing economy, and expands the knowledge ranging from users' trust to attachment based on both the trust building model (TBM) (McKnight et al., 2002) and attachment theory (Ren et al., 2012). This section elaborates the theoretical concepts of users' trust-attachment development initiated by two trust building factors (i.e., cognitive- and affective-based factors) in the peer-to-peer environment.

2.1. Literature review on the sharing economy

A variety of definitions with some recent studies on sharing market trends are related to individual businesses (Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2012; Botsman and Rogers, 2010; Tussyadiah and Pesonen, 2016), in which individuals consume their unused resources and manage them for a pecuniary value (Belk, 2014). Stephany (2015) also defined the sharing economy more precisely as the value of unconsumed assets that become available to online communities or their users. Among numerous studies of defining sharing practices, Tussyadiah and Pesonen (2016) summarized the distinctive traits of the sharing economy, which encompass discovering and distributing a hidden asset, sharing a price, exchanging among peers (individuals), and using an online platform.

With rapid growth of user participation in sharing online platforms, research interests have shifted toward motivation of why people join and how they adopt new sharing phenomena. Answers to individual motivation about participating vary in numerous studies, which generally come up with two major reasons: cost saving and authentic experience (Botsman and Rogers, 2010; Finley, 2013; Guttentag, 2015; Lamberton and Rose, 2012; Molz, 2013). In the participating motivation of Airbnb, Finley (2013) and Guttentag (2015) argued that practical benefits are the main reasons for Airbnb users, such as cost saving, flexibility, home amenities, and cultural or local experiences. Hamari et al. (2016) added one more factor, which is enjoyment in use. Then, when motivations have been realized, research interests have continued to seek out foundation factors in terms of what pulls these motivated users to continuously participate. Thus, studies on a trust and reputation mechanism among participating members in the sharing economy environment have become unavoidable (Ert et al., 2016; Finley, 2013; Zervas et al., 2015). Finley (2013) highlighted that trust and reputation are influential factors within a provider-receiver relationship. Moreover, recent studies on trust in an online sharing platform found that information provided by a service owner, such as real photos and self-uploaded information, influences users' trust building and decision making processes (Ert et al., 2016; Zervas et al., 2015).

One further research theme is associated with the tourism impact on the sharing economy, which may affect tourists' behavior or travel-related industries in general (Tussyadiah and Pesonen, 2016; Zervas et al., 2017). According to Tussyadiah and Pesonen (2016), travelers could change their patterns of travel when using the sharing economy services; as a result, they tend to travel more often, stay longer, consume more activities, and have authentic experiences at their destinations. In the same vein, Zervas et al. (2017) concluded that Airbnb is acquiring the accommodation market share by competing against traditional accommodations in the hotel industry. Gutiérrez et al. (2017) also revealed that there is a close spatial relationship between Airbnb and hotels through the analysis of bivariate correlations in Barcelona, and concluded that Airbnb has more advantages of proximity with city's main tourist attractions than hotel. Moreover, Hamari et al. (2016) empirically examined what drives people to participate in sharing economy, and they concluded that user enjoyment and economic benefits are important motivations, while consumption sustainability and reputation are either a partially or not influential factor to users' motivation. To extend our understanding, this present study suggests a comprehensive empirical investigation to reveal consumers' trust-attachment mechanism in the sharing economy setting by identifying the unique characteristics of the sharing economy as antecedent factors of trust and attachment.

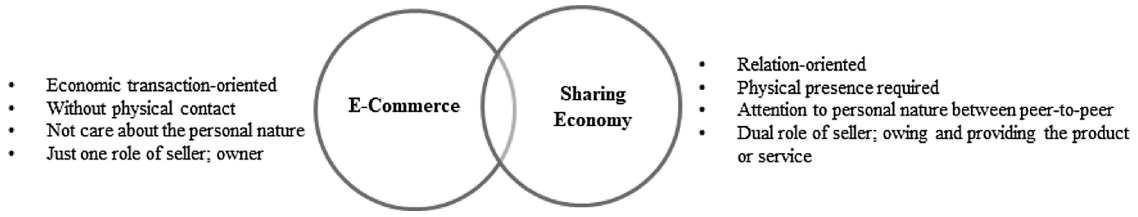

Fig. 1. Distinguishing features of the sharing economy compared to the general characteristics of e-commerce.

2.1.1. Characteristics of the sharing economy

Based on the literature review, four distinguishing features of the sharing economy, demonstrated in Fig. 1, have been recognized in comparison with the general characteristics of e-commerce. The first distinctive feature is the way of exchange or distribution of goods or services. Hamari et al. (2016) and Belk (2010) claimed that peers exchange or distribute their owned goods and services to other peers who are in need of such goods/services or who are not willing to own them. This collaborative concept is a key for the sharing marketplace, which is related to relationships among related peers (Belk, 2010). While peer-to-peer (P2P) business is relationship oriented, e-commerce is regarded as process oriented, which focuses on economic transactions (Belk, 2010).

The second distinctive feature is the physical presence required in order to close the transaction. The major representatives of sharing economy products oblige both or either exchanger to be present at the moment of exchange. Belk (2010) also stated that sharing transactions involve strangers, which is quite different from buying online without physical contact. In the sharing market, Lamberton and Rose (2012) explained that both the sharing peer (service provider) and the recipient peer (user) confront security risks from uncertainty because of a physical transaction.

Another unique quality of the sharing economy concerns the personal nature (e.g., values, lifestyles, likes or dislikes, preferences, and commonalities) of individuals. Lamberton and Rose (2012) argued that when sharing and recipient parties recognize similarities, it could diminish their concerns about transaction risks. Unlike e-commerce transactions, where a service provider or a service receiver can be disregarded, individual similarity evokes a positive attitude toward products or services that enhance trust, a key component of the sharing economy (Botsman and Rogers, 2010).

Furthermore, it is evident that the sharing peer possesses two entities: owning and providing a service at the same time. The dual role of the sharing partner differs from general e-commerce practices, whereby the owner of the product is not required to perform services for the buyer. Ert et al. (2016) highlighted that e-commerce transactions are controlled and restricted within online circumstances, whereas in the sharing economy business, the owner is required to share the actual product or service with direct integration.

2.2. Trust building model

The trust building model (TBM) is structured based on three phases: trust antecedents, trusting beliefs and intentions, and trusting behaviors (McKnight et al., 2002). In other words, the model explains that trust is created by two types of antecedents (i.e., structural assurance and external factors) influencing consumers' trust intentions, which lead to engaging behaviors such as following advice, sharing information, and purchasing from a seller. Shapiro et al. (1992) emphasized that the developmental process of how trust is established is quite similar to relationship development.

In an early study, Zucker (1986) also delineated three approaches toward trust building in the online context: social characteristics, institution, and process. Social characteristics that are similar between exchange partners, such as ethnicity and nationality, contribute to building personal relationships. Institution refers to trust building through formal social assurance such as the legal system and professional declaration; thus, institutional beliefs generally assign credibility to exchange partners and services for consumers. Lastly, process is associated with prior experience, given that people trust experience. In this study, these dynamic factors of trust development have adopted because they are seen as a source of trust development in online transactions.

McKnight et al. (2002) suggested that there exist two types of trust formation, depending on the factors that are either cognitive or affective within the trust building model. Cognitive-based trust is related to rational and benefit-cost features (McAllister, 1995). The antecedents of cognitive-based trust include users' (buyers') observations and perceptions toward service providers (sellers); for instance, information quality, transaction security, and product benefits (Kim et al., 2008). As previously stated, trust progresses as relationships between exchange parties show similarities in emotional aspects; trust initiated by affective sources relies on emotional features or social skills to develop social relationships (Kanawattanachai and Yoo, 2002). The antecedents of affective-based trust are linked with the interactions between a buyer and a seller, achieved through reviews, comments, referrals, and recommendations. Having studied cognitive- and affective-based trust, extant studies have come to the conclusion that social influence is the most important factor that impacts the affective-based trust building process (Kanawattanachai and Yoo, 2002; Kim et al., 2008). Affective-based trust, for instance, is stronger than cognitive-based trust in more intimate relations (i.e., family and friends), while cognitive-based trust is more concerned about casual groups (McAllister, 1995). In the case of Airbnb, affective-based trust could be a more powerful influence on its users than cognitive-based trust when users find an Airbnb service provider (host) as familiar through emotional connections. Therefore, this study identifies two types of trust building factors based on cognitive and affective trust generators within the Airbnb context to investigate the effects of trust antecedents that better understand and explain the sharing economy.

2.2.1. Trust development in the online context

Prior research has highlighted the importance of the initial trust building in online circumstances and trust has a mediating role in linking antecedents to purchase intention (Hong and Cha, 2013; Li et al., 2014). McKnight et al. (2002) examined how to build consumer trust within e-commerce settings. Consumers tend to search for reliable information in order to reduce risk when they encounter uncertain situations (McKnight et al., 1998). In the web-based environment, there are three primary trust factors, which are structural assurance of the website, perceived reputation, and quality of the website (McKnight et al., 2002), and consumers generally rely on the exposed source to develop trust and decide on their subsequent behaviors. Filieri et al. (2015) recently added to the influential factors on e-commerce consumer trust building: source credibility, information quality, customer satisfaction, and user experience. Remarkably, uncertainty is regarded as a major threat for users in terms of identification for sharing partners and the physical risk of personal safety. Consequently, trust building is vital in forming sharing relationships.

2.2.2. Airbnb trust in the sharing economy context

The sharing economy has emerged within the tourism field, in which local people supply their resources to tourists (Ert et al., 2016). Moreover, sharing economy practices support visitors at an affordable price, give them a chance to live like locals, and supply income to service providers and the local community (Fang et al., 2016; Molz, 2013; Tussyadiah and Pesonen, 2016). Airbnb represents the sharing economy in the hotel industry, which creates innovative accommodation value for locals and tourists. Cheng (2016) analyzed prior studies on Airbnb, which have utilized an analytical approach, and found two common foci in the business model of the sharing economy and consumer behaviors, including lifestyle, social movement, consumption practice, paradigm of sharing, trust, and innovation.

Noticeably, trust in the sharing economy has been mainly studied because it functions as a fundamental element. Compared to the traditional e-commerce market, in which only monetary gain or loss is valued, the sharing economy involves additional and more threatening risks, such as psychological and physical risks (Ert et al., 2016). For instance, unfortunate incidents have occurred during sharing or exchanging transactions, such as guests being attacked or sexually assaulted by hosts and vice versa (Lieber, 2015a, b). In contrast with the e-commerce market, the sharing economy generally accompanies both

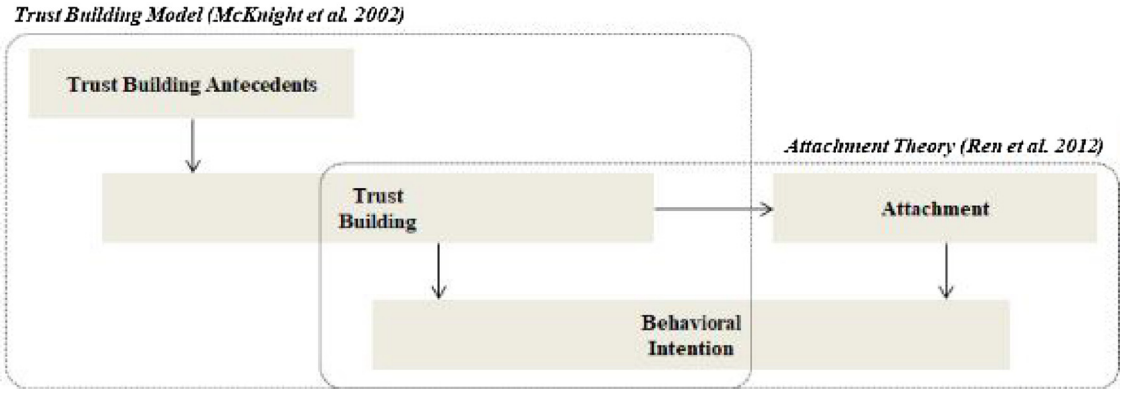

Fig. 2. Conceptual framework.

online and offline contact with unknown peers (Ert et al., 2016).

2.3. Attachment theory

Fig. 2 visually explains the overall trust-attachment mechanism in the integration of the trust building model and attachment theory. Attachment theory is established in social and personality psychology in order to understand the bonding within close relationships, such as those between infants and mothers (Bowlby, 1982). It investigates how human beings from and maintain affective bonds with particular others (Sable, 2008). Psychology and marketing researchers have developed and suggested an extensive attachment theory beyond person-to-person relationships to possessions, enterprises or brands, and places (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Kleine and Baker, 2004; Thomson and Johnson, 2006). In psychology, scholars have focused on adult-partner attachment, infant-caregiver attachment and have suggested the tendency of human beings to form strong bonds (Hazan and Shaver, 1994; Thomson and Johnson, 2006). In the research of marketing, attachment is related with an emotional bonding and affectionate tie, which is important for consumers' long-term relationships with a company or brand (Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2012; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Yim et al., 2008). Kleine and Baker (2004) investigated the relationship between individuals and possessions and analyzed the attachment traits that infer personal meaning and value, personal experience, and history.

Gupta and Kim (2004) suggested three benefits of e-marketers when they have more bidirectional friendship attachments with consumers. The primary benefit of friendship attachment contributes to the relationship marketing, which leads to personalized consumer tastes and demands and repeated interactions between sellers and buyers (Gupta and Kim, 2004). Another benefit is that friendship attachment builds consumer loyalty by enhancing the social relationship, in which the firm shares transparent information with their customers that may prevent customers from entertaining switching intentions (Gupta and Kim, 2004). Lastly, maintaining methods of attached relationships can be achieved through multiple online communication channels, which are comparatively cost efficient. With respect to a recent research tendency, it has been weighted toward trust building, but this paper recognizes the vulnerability of attachment research in the sharing economy.

Ren et al. (2012) proposed that attachment branches out into two distinctive modes: identity and bond attachment. In identity-based attachment, people feel connected to similar characteristics and purposes within a group. On the other hand, the interpersonal bond exists between individuals, where people feel close in their relationships with others (Ren et al., 2012). Particularly in the online community setting, group identity attachment underlies community features, group homogeneity, and intergroup competition, while interpersonal bond attachment draws attention to personal information, interpersonal similarity, familiarity, and directional communication with a particular individual (Ren et al., 2012). In the application of the two branches of attachment in the sharing economy environment, we use group identity-based attachment toward the firm and individual bond-based attachment toward a sharing partner.

3. Research model and hypotheses

In this study, we investigate how trust and attachment factors work in the Airbnb context by integrating the trust building model and attachment theory. As previously discussed, emotional constructs function as a crucial role in terms of whether users decide to engage in the sharing economy situation; especially, two types of attachment (i.e., attachment to Airbnb and attachment to hosts) function as a mediator

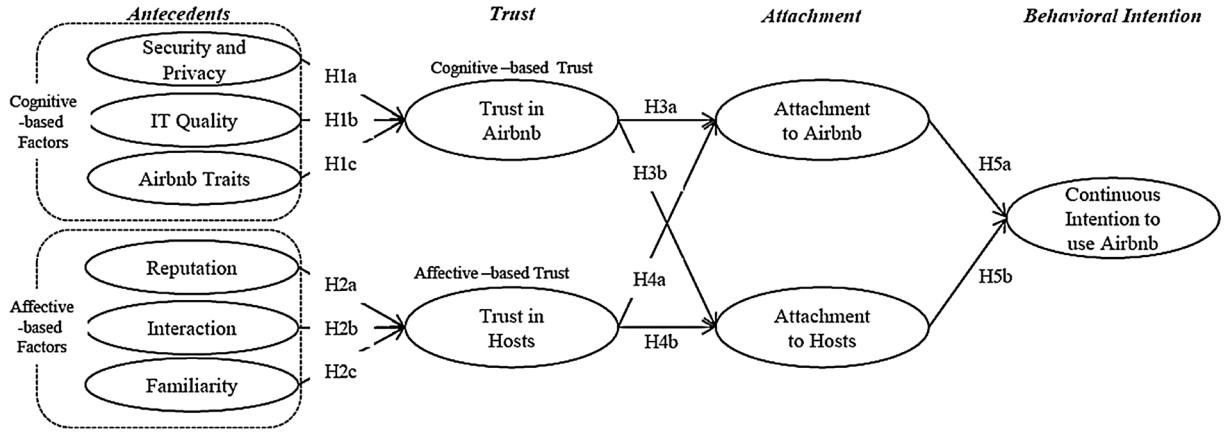

Fig. 3. Research model.

in the relationship between two types of trust (i.e., trust in Airbnb and trust in hosts) and users' behavioral intentions. Fig. 3 shows the integrated research model.

3.1. Antecedents to trust

According to the literature of the trust building model, trust is divided into cognitive-based trust and affective-based trust (Johnson and Grayson, 2005; McAllister, 1995; Whitener et al., 1998; Young and Daniel, 2003). Furthermore, these two different types of trust have different antecedent factors associated with either rational (i.e., cognitive) or emotional (i.e., affective) characteristics (McKnight et al., 2002). Particularly, in the sharing economy context, Airbnb users have two objects to trust: Airbnb platform and its hosts. While trust in Airbnb is accumulated by factual factors that drive the functions of online platform itself, trust in hosts is more generated by interactive experience with renting houses, hosts, and other users, indicating that cognitive- and affective-based trust are clearly separable in an Airbnb setting. Therefore, we designate trust in Airbnb as cognitive-based trust, and trust in hosts as affective-based trust.

Kim (2008) empirically studied on e-vendor and customer trust and argued that there are two different types of reasoning in terms of trust building: self-perception-based trust and transference-based trust. Among them, trust built by self-perception or cognitive reasoning is formed through the direct experience with a trustee, considering antecedents such as security protection, privacy concern, and system reliability. McCole et al. (2010) also found the significant role of cognitive-based factual factors (e.g., security and privacy concerns) in building consumer trust in an e-commerce environment. Therefore, we suggest that cognitive-based trust is determined by security and privacy, IT quality, and Airbnb traits based on prior studies (Hsu et al., 2014; Kim, 2008; Kim et al., 2008; McCole et al., 2010). Security and privacy indicate that Airbnb endeavors to provide safe environments to protect users from private information leakage or risk in transactions. IT quality also regulates Airbnb users' trust at the time of use (Kim, 2008; McKnight et al., 2002). IT quality, including the quality of the website and transactions, represents users' perceived usefulness or ease of use in order to locate target information. Moreover, the traits of Airbnb refer to the unique features of accommodations that are displayed on the Airbnb website. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1a. Security and privacy have a positive impact on trust in Airbnb.

H1b. IT quality has a positive impact on trust in Airbnb.

H1c. Airbnb traits have a positive impact on trust in Airbnb.

While cognitive-based trust is knowledge-driven, affective-based trust in the Airbnb context explains feelings generated by the degree of care, and it is correlated more with users' interactive experience than factual factors (Johnson and Grayson, 2005). Therefore, reputation, interaction, and familiarity are considered as antecedents of affective-based trust in Airbnb hosts in this study (Hsu et al., 2014). A positive reputation may reduce a risk and create trust based on the endorsed information provided by peer users who had already experienced with the hosts (Hsu et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2008). Kim (2008) also argued that antecedents of transference-based trust (i.e., third-party seal and referral) in the e-vendor and consumer relationship are based on affective matters that focus on a trusted source such as another individual, as affective-based trust is influenced by other individuals' assessments such as reputation and e-word of mouth (i.e., online reviews). In addition, interactions between exchange parties can enhance users' trust, and greater intensity is created by frequent communication, the amount of time spent, and interactive information exchanging activities (Chiu et al., 2006). In fact, when tourists look for real and recent information of stays and travel destinations, they often attempt to attain information through frequent interactions with Airbnb hosts (Yang et al., 2018). Finally, Gefen (2000) mentioned that trusting another person happens when the other person behaves in accordance with familiar expectations. Accordingly, the more familiar Airbnb users and hosts are with one another, the more favorable expectations are in confirming and trusting more deeply. Therefore, we hypothesize:

H2a. Reputation has a positive impact on trust in hosts.

H2b. Interaction has a positive impact on trust in hosts.

H2c. Familiarity has a positive impact on trust in hosts.

3.2. The relationship between trust and attachment

The research, investigating relational consequences among the three major brand personality (i.e., trust, attachment, and commitment to the brand), highlighted that brand trust influences brand attachment, and finally also effects brand commitment (Louis and Lombart, 2010). Moreover, according to Sirdeshmukh et al. (2002), two types of trust have been suggested in the relationship between customers and firms: trust for frontline employees and trust for management practice. The frontline employees' trust is associated with the individual, while management practice's trust indicates the relational trust between customers and organizations. Thus, the present study suggests that Airbnb users' trust can be observed as two different types of trust toward both the Airbnb platform and its hosts. With reference to brand studies, Esch et al. (2006) argued that a customer who trusts in a particular brand is likely to feel attached to the brand as well as the company. In addition, in recent convention and hospitality studies, Yi et al. (2018) examined about individual attachment in the context of exhibition, and stated that the trust-attachment relationship is inclined by knowing detailed information about the exhibition as well as the organizing company. Furthermore, Moussa and Touzani (2013) observed two paths of trust toward the firm and personnel in general and specified their influence on firms' attachment to three attachment types: attachment for colleagues, place, and brand. As stated in the literature review, attachment is associated with both identity-based attachment and bond-based attachment. Moreover, prior studies have suggested adequate propositions that consumer trust in Airbnb (i.e., brand, company) may cause attachment in two different levels; one creates attachment to the Airbnb firm and the other produces personal attachment to a particular Airbnb host. Thus, to test trust-attachment relationships toward two entities of interests (Airbnb and hosts), two hypotheses are proposed as follows:

H3a. Trust in Airbnb has a positive impact on attachment to Airbnb.

H3b. Trust in Airbnb has a positive impact on attachment to hosts.

A vital factor to enrich attachment is the ability to trust each other. For instance, in the patient and doctor relationship, a patient tends to feel deeply attached to a trusted doctor through the experience of honest care (Hillen et al., 2014). Individual attachment can be established when a person creates emotional security with other parties in satisfying transactions (Hazan and Shaver, 1994; Thomson, 2006). In other words, one's emotional trust with other individuals is the base of the attachment development process. Vlachos et al. (2010) confirmed that trust toward co-workers and the firm has an effect on the development of attachment. An interesting investigation on a leader-subordinate relationship demonstrated a subordinate member who shows trusted behaviors is highly committed to emotional attachment with his/her supervisor and the belonged firm (Zhu and Akhtar, 2014). Trust developed by mature interpersonal connections enhances social bonding and further promotes emotional attachment between two parties (Hsu et al., 2007). Consequently, users' trust in Airbnb hosts may increase their attachment intentions in two directions: Airbnb and hosts. Ultimately, trust in hosts is a decisive role for attachment to Airbnb and hosts. With this logic, we hypothesize:

Table 1
Operational definitions of constructs and their references.

Construct (Abbreviation)	Operational Definition	Reference(s)
Security and Privacy (ASP)	How well personal information (e.g., website protection, credit card and personal information) is used and protected before and after making transactions	Hsu et al. (2014)
IT Quality (AIQ)	The degree to which Airbnb users feel about using the website such as ease of use, controllable, intuitive to find sources, and website design and effects	Hsu et al. (2014)
Airbnb Traits (ACT)	The extent to which an Airbnb accommodation has its unique characteristics compared to the traditional hotel accommodation	Self-developed based on Airbnb.com
Reputation (HRE)	The degree to which users' emotion with Airbnb hosts by reading their personal information, rating, reviews, etc.	Hsu et al. (2014); Luo et al. (2015); Zhang et al. (2014)
Interaction (HIN)	The extent to which Airbnb hosts and users experience somehow in the process of making a transaction by ongoing conversation or real-time feedback	Hsu et al. (2014)
Familiarity (HFM)	The degree to which agreement or preference that users find similar interests, values, or lifestyles with Airbnb hosts	Gefen et al. (2003)
Trust in Airbnb (ATR)	The extent to which users' recognition whether to trust the Airbnb firm or not	Zhao et al. (2010)
Trust in Airbnb Hosts (HTR)	The extent to which emotional connection between Airbnb hosts and users influence trust intention in Airbnb hosts	Gefen et al. (2003)
Attachment to Airbnb (AAT)	The extent to which cognitive trust-based attachment with Airbnb leads users to maintain it in their proximity	Ren et al. (2012)
Attachment to Hosts (HAT)	The extent to which affective trust-based attachment enables users to feel Airbnb hosts are their friends and trustworthy people	Ren et al. (2012)
Continuous Intention to Use (AUI)	The extent to Airbnb users' attitude toward Airbnb usage subsequently resulting in their behavioral intention to use on a regular basis	Lee (2010)

H4a. Trust in hosts has a positive impact on attachment to Airbnb.

H4b. Trust in hosts has a positive impact on attachment to hosts.

3.3. The relationship between attachment and continuous use intention

Attachment has been widely accepted as an indispensable phase to develop individuals' behavior intention (Stylos et al., 2017). Ren et al. (2007) advocated that increased attachment within the community leads to positive outcomes in engaging with the whole group. Hogg (1992) also explained behavioral outcomes displaying attached individuals behave more positively, frequently participate, and invest extra effort than less attached people. In brand management, consumers tend to purchase more and recommend to others when they are attached to the company (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Vlachos et al., 2010). Previous research has indicated that attachment has a positive effect on consequent behaviors toward the object of attachment. In tourism studies, Yen et al. (2018) mentioned that attachment to travel guides and travel companies positively influences intention to return to use. Moreover, several research on the relationship between attachment and revisit intention has exposed that the cause of tourists' revisit intention involves the matter of being attached (Loureiro, 2014; Needham and Little, 2013). In our research context, a strong emotion connected with the Airbnb firm and hosts brings behavioral outcomes such as re-use or continuous intention to use Airbnb. From these rationales, the following two hypotheses are suggested:

H5a. Attachment to Airbnb has a positive impact on continuous intention to use Airbnb.

H5b. Attachment to hosts has a positive impact on continuous intention to use Airbnb.

4. Research methodology

In order to test the hypotheses, we chose Airbnb.com as our investigation vehicle and conducted an online survey with the targeted participants who had an Airbnb accommodation experience. All measurements were either adapted from the trust and attachment literature or self-developed to be more precise to the Airbnb characteristics. The content validity of the survey items was positively determined by following the layers of confirmation. First, the questionnaire was fully investigated by two academic experts in the field of the sharing economy and tourism, as well as three practicing professionals who are well versed in accommodation and hotel management with experience of more than five years. Through this process, the face validity, applicability of real world, and readability for respondents regarding questionnaire items were guaranteed. Afterward, an online and offline pilot study was conducted with twenty (ten per each group) Airbnb users to confirm the final measurements, resulting in minor modifications to the original items.

4.1. Data collection

For data collection, we targeted members of Surveymonkey.com, a provider of web-based survey solutions, and used an online survey in two regions: the U.S. and South Korea. The core reason for incorporating these two regions was to reach the right sample for our research subjects. According to STR, a data research firm, Los Angeles and San Francisco are the two highest cities in Airbnb occupancy worldwide (Hartmans, 2016). In addition, based on the world's most wired infrastructure in Korea, Seoul has been attempting to become one of the world's sharing economy capitals with the strong support by the city government (Guerrini, 2014). With that in mind, we reached out both the U.S. and South Korean branches of Surveymonkey.com that had their own pools of respondents to facilitate our needs. Online surveys were conducted simultaneously in both regions for one month during March and April of 2016. The participants of this study were solicited among individuals who had at least one Airbnb accommodation experience as guests during the past two years, assuring that answered data would be used only for research in the front page of the survey. After these surveys were completed, we finally collected 171 samples in total; yet after removing seven incomplete and three inappropriate responses with a uniform answer to each question of the survey, 88 and 73 responses (161 in total) from the U.S. and South Korea were used for our analysis, respectively.

4.2. Measurement development

The survey questionnaire contained two languages (i.e., English and Korean) in order to satisfy regional conditions. In order to increase both the validity and the reliability of measurement scales, all items of constructs were adapted from prior literature with the exception for one construct; Airbnb traits (ACT) was self-developed due to the unique

characteristics of Airbnb. Table 1 demonstrates the operational definitions of the constructs and original references used in this research, and Table 3 lists each measurement item for all constructs, developed based on a seven-point Likert scale. Security and privacy (ASP) of using the Airbnb website was measured based on three items devised by Hsu et al. (2014). Four different items also adapted from Hsu et al. (2014) were utilized to measure the degree to which Airbnb users think about Airbnb website quality (AIQ). Four items of Airbnb traits (ACT) were self-developed due to the distinctive characteristics of Airbnb platform. To be more specific, they were developed by the authors based on the observation of Airbnb's unique features, compared with ones of the traditional hotel platform as well as the results of the brief interview with Airbnb users about their experience. As for Airbnb hosts' reputation (HRE), six items adapted from Hsu et al. (2014); Luo et al. (2015), and Zhang et al. (2014) were assessed; while the other four items are well reflective of circumstances regarding Airbnb hosts, the first two are more related to the characteristics of an official Airbnb website, which leads to deleting them after the confirmatory factor analysis. We utilized three measures developed by Hsu et al. (2014) to evaluate host-user interactions (HIN) in the Airbnb context. To measure host-user familiarity (HFM), four items were used from the study of Gefen et al. (2003).

Users' trust in Airbnb (ATR) was assessed with six items derived by Zhao et al. (2010). In measuring users' trust in hosts (HTR), a total of seven items were adapted from the literature of Gefen et al. (2003). Scales for attachment to Airbnb (AAT) were measured using three items based on prior work by Ren et al. (2012). Similarly, measures for attachment to hosts (HAT) were evaluated with four items, also borrowed from Ren et al. (2012). Finally, users' continuous use intentions (AUI) were measured using three scales developed by Lee (2010). As mentioned above, Table 3 provides a list of survey questions of all constructs.

5. Data analysis and results

In the current study, the partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) approach is a suitable analysis method as it requires the bare minimum reference on sample size, item scales, and residual distribution (Chin, 1998). In addition, it is a proper technique for theory building as well as theory testing (Fornell and Bookstein, 1982). Therefore, the PLS-SEM analysis was applied to test the research model.

5.1. Respondents' profiles

Table 2 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents and their Airbnb experiences. The respondents were assorted with 57.1 percent females and 42.9 percent males. The largest proportion of the age group was from 20 and 29 years old, with 41.0 percent; the second largest age group was from 30 to 39 years old, with 21.7 percent. The majority of our respondents traveled two to three times every year (54.0 percent), and slightly less than a quarter of the respondents (24.2 percent) traveled four to five times a year. The demographic summary indicates that the majority of our sample used the Airbnb service once a year (44.1 percent), and 34.8 percent of respondents used Airbnb two to three times a year. Our sample used Airbnb more for group trips with families (32.3 percent) or friends (29.2 percent) than for businesses (12.4 percent) or individuals (12.4 percent). Henceforth, the types of accommodations that our sample chose were entire homes (58.4 percent), private rooms (35.4 percent), and shared rooms (6.2 percent). Respondents also reported that the main reasons for using Airbnb were for home amenities such as the wireless Internet, TV, kitchen, pool, etc. (39.8 percent) and for a relatively affordable price (29.8 percent). As for the accommodation rate spent per night at Airbnb, 28 percent of the respondents spent from US$ 51 to US$ 80, and 33.5 percent of our sample spent between US$ 81 (17.4 percent) and US$ 130 (16.1 percent). This average room rate seems to be very similar to a survey result published by Statista in 2015, in which the average room rate of a private room and an entire residence were US$ 80.67 and US$ 144.51, respectively (Statista, 2015), indicating that our sample is well representing the population.

Table 2
Demographics of participants and their Airbnb experiences.

Demographics (n = 159)		Frequency	Percent (%)
Group	USA	88	54.7
	Korea	73	45.3
Gender	Female	92	57.1
	Male	69	42.9
Age	Under 20	27	16.8
	20-29	66	41.0
	30-39	35	21.7
	40-49	23	14.3
	50 or over	10	6.2
Travel Frequency (per Year)	Less than once	6	3.7
	2-3 times	87	54.0
	4-5 times	39	24.2
	6-10 times	21	13.0
	More than 11 times	6	3.7
	Missing	2	1.2
Marital Status	Single	82	50.9
	Married	57	35.4
	Widowed	3	1.9
	Divorced	4	2.5
	Missing	15	9.3
Frequency using Airbnb (per Year)	Less than once	71	44.1
	2-3 times	56	34.8
	4-5 times	21	13.0
	6-10 times	8	5.0
	More than 11 times	5	3.1
Purpose of Travel	Business trip	20	12.4
	Couple trip	22	13.7
	Family trip	52	32.3
	Friends trip	47	29.2
	Individual trip	20	12.4
Accommodation Type	Entire home	94	58.4
	Private room	57	35.2
	Shared room	10	6.2
Reasons to choose Airbnb	Affordable price	48	29.8
	Authenticity	28	17.4
	Amenities	64	39.8
	New relationship	5	3.1
	Other	16	9.9
Accommodation Price	Less than $50	19	11.8
	$51-$80	45	28.0
	$81-$100	28	17.4
	$101-$130	26	16.1
	$131-$160	15	9.3
	$160-$200	17	10.6
	More than $201	11	6.8

5.2. Measurement model

As shown in Table 3, we assessed the internal consistency of each construct by computing composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha (α) scores. Various scholars suggested that the common satisfactory level of these two tests is to exceed 0.7 (Chin, 1998; Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The results of this study confirmed that all of the constructs exceed a satisfactory level of CR and Cronbach's α, hence indicating sufficient internal consistency. As for the convergent validity, it is evident that both factor loading and average variance extracted (AVE) scores of each construct should exceed 0.5 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). As indicated in Table 3, all of the variables have good factor loading scores, ranging from 0.615 to 0.960 and AVE scores, ranging from 0.598 to 0.890, satisfying the recommended requirements. In order to assess the discriminant validity, this study conducted

Table 3
Survey items and results of measurement model.

Construct (Abbreviation)	Items	Loadings	α	CR	AVE
Security and Privacy (ASP)	Airbnb implemented security measures to protect me when using website.	0.858	0.853	0.910	0.772
	I felt safe in making transactions through Airbnb website.	0.877			
	Airbnb usually ensured my personal information is protected.	0.901			
IT Quality (AIQ)	I felt ease of use on the system of Airbnb website.	0.870	0.896	0.928	0.763
	I felt usefulness on the information of Airbnb website.	0.857			
	I was satisfied with Airbnb service such as peer reviews, super-host badge, star rating, and	0.888			
	recommendation of other choices.	0.878			
	I was satisfied with Airbnb website design, such as interface, layout, formation, and set-up.				
Airbnb Traits (ACT)	Airbnb offered a variety of types of rooms and houses.	0.881	0.847	0.897	0.686
	Airbnb offered an accommodation in numerous cities.	0.855			
	Airbnb offered an opportunity in experiencing diverse cultures.	0.770			
	Airbnb offered a home-like atmosphere of the accommodation.	0.803			
Reputation (HRE)	The level of Airbnb hosts' personal information sharing about school, occupation, Facebook, picture, and	–	0.881	0.918	0.737
	LinkedIn was high. *(D)*	–			
	Star-rated scores about Airbnb hosts and accommodations were high. (i.e., accuracy, communication,	0.891			
	location, cleanliness, check-in, value) *(D)*	0.897			
	Airbnb hosts had a good reputation in the market.	0.826			
	Airbnb hosts had reputations for being honest.	0.817			
	Airbnb hosts had a large number of reviews.				
	Reviews about Airbnb hosts were found to be favorable by previous guests.				
Interaction (HIN)	Airbnb hosts were able to answer my questions correctly and appropriately.	0.837	0.804	0.884	0.717
	Airbnb hosts understood my needs.	0.868			
	Airbnb hosts could keep us informed of matters relating to my trip.	0.835			
Familiarity (HFM)	I was familiar with the Airbnb hosts' interests such as hobbies.	0.814	0.835	0.888	0.664
	I was familiar with the Airbnb hosts' values.	0.817			
	I was familiar with the Airbnb hosts' lifestyle.	0.863			
	I was familiar with the accommodations that feel like home.	0.764			
Trust in Airbnb (ATR)	Airbnb is honest.	0.878	0.864	0.898	0.598
	Airbnb keeps its promises.	0.858			
	Airbnb puts customers' interest before its own.	0.714			
	Airbnb demonstrates it belief that "the customer is always right".	0.615			
	Airbnb is competent in carrying out its online booking accommodation transactions.	0.730			
	Airbnb knows how to provide an excellent online booking accommodation service.	0.811			
Trust in Hosts (HTR)	Based on my experience with Airbnb hosts, I know they are honest.	0.815	0.904	0.910	0.637
	Based on my experience with Airbnb hosts, I know they care about guests.	0.790			
	Based on my experience with Airbnb hosts, I know they provide good service.	0.880			
	Based on my experience with Airbnb hosts, I know they are trustworthy.	0.878			
	Based on my experience with Airbnb hosts, I know they are not opportunistic.	0.758			
	Based on my experience with Airbnb hosts, I know they are predictable.	0.724			
	Based on my experience with Airbnb hosts, I know they know their market.	0.726			
Attachment to Airbnb (AAT)	I like Airbnb as a whole.	0.918	0.908	0.942	0.844
	Airbnb is important to me when I travel.	0.907			
	Airbnb is useful to me when I travel.	0.932			
Attachment to Hosts (HAT)	I like to be friends with Airbnb hosts.	0.902	0.905	0.933	0.778
	I am interested in learning more about Airbnb hosts.	0.880			
	I like to keep in touch with Airbnb hosts in the future.	0.858			
	I feel close to Airbnb hosts when I travel.	0.886			
Continuous Intention to Use (AUI)	I intend to continue using Airbnb website on a regular basis.	0.932	0.938	0.960	0.890
	My intentions are to continue using the Airbnb website.	0.960			
	I would strongly recommend Airbnb website others to user it.	0.937			

Notes: α: Cronbach's alpha; CR: composite reliability; AVE: average variance extracted; *(D)* = deleted item after factor analysis.

Table 4
Construct correlations and discriminant validity.

Construct	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	Mean	SD
ASP (1)	**0.88**											5.18	0.98
AIQ (2)	0.67	**0.87**										5.66	0.92
ACT (3)	0.65	0.65	**0.83**									5.66	0.92
HRE (4)	0.41	0.52	0.56	**0.86**								5.15	0.96
HIN (5)	0.43	0.44	0.47	0.45	**0.85**							5.42	1.06
HFM (6)	0.27	0.24	0.26	0.37	0.25	**0.82**						4.27	1.17
ATR (7)	0.72	0.70	0.69	0.50	0.49	0.38	**0.77**					5.02	0.93
HTR (8)	0.49	0.52	0.55	0.66	0.66	0.41	0.61	**0.80**				5.06	0.97
AAT (9)	0.63	0.61	0.69	0.50	0.52	0.29	0.67	0.59	**0.91**			5.43	1.19
HAT (10)	0.04	0.09	0.16	0.18	0.13	0.44	0.11	0.29	0.19	**0.88**		3.76	1.44
AUI (11)	0.53	0.58	0.61	0.44	0.46	0.30	0.58	0.52	0.77	0.15	**0.94**	5.56	1.24

Notes: ASP: security and privacy; AIQ: IT Quality; ACT: Airbnb traits; HRE: reputation; HIN: interaction; HFM: familiarity; ATR: trust in Airbnb; HTR: trust in hosts; AAT: attachment to Airbnb; HAT: attachment to hosts; AUI: Airbnb use intention; Diagonals: square roots of AVEs; Off-diagonals: correlations among latent variables; SD: standard deviation.

a test based on the requirements recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981); when the square root of the AVE is greater than its correlation estimates between the latent dimensions, the discriminant validity is secured. As demonstrated in Table 4, all the square roots of the AVEs, diagonally arranged, exceed the related construct correlations, indicating adequate evidence of the discriminant validity. Moreover, as data were collected in a cross-sectional single setting even though we gathered samples based on two countries, there is a potential threat of the common method bias (CMB). However, the result of Harman's one-factor test recommended by Podsakoff and Organ (1986) indicated that CMB is unlikely to be a major threat to the current study. In addition, as shown in Table 4, since the highest correlation coefficient is less than 0.90 ($r = .77$ in the relationship between AAT and AUI), the robustness against CMB of this study is confirmed (Pavlou et al., 2007).

5.3. Structural model

In a subsequent manner, the structural model was tested, applying SmartPLS 3.0 with 5000 bootstrapping samples of 161 cases, following the recommendation of Hair et al. (2011). The main path coefficients, *t*-values, and explained variances of endogenous variables (R^2) for the structural model are shown in Fig. 4 and Table 5.

The results of our hypotheses tests indicated that all proposed hypotheses were supported, with the exception for two hypotheses (H3b and H5b), in which to address the logic behind the associations between users' trust in Airbnb and attachment to hosts, which in turn leads to continuous use intentions. As expected, the results found that all antecedent factors (both cognitive-based and affective-based factors) influence users' trust building in Airbnb and its hosts. As for cognitive-based antecedents, security and privacy of the Airbnb website have the most significant impact on users' trust in Airbnb, with a path coefficient of .354 ($t = 5.082$, $p < .001$), thus supporting H1a. In addition, Airbnb's IT quality (H1b) and website traits (H1c) have a positive impact on users' trust building in Airbnb, supporting both H1b and H1c. As for affective-based antecedent factors, hosts' reputation has a positive significant influence on users' establishment of trust in hosts ($\beta = .425$, $t = 7.391$, $p < .001$), supporting H2a. Other impactful antecedents to users' trust in hosts are how often users have an active interaction with Airbnb hosts (H2b) and the concept of familiarity between hosts and users (H1c).

Regarding the association with users' trust in Airbnb toward attachment, users' trust in Airbnb is not related to users' attachment to Airbnb hosts ($\beta = -.110$, $t = 1.139$, $p > 0.05$), failing to support H3b, while showing a significant connection with users' attachment in Airbnb ($\beta = .504$, $t = 5.410$, $p < 0.001$), thus supporting H3a. Whereas users' trust in Airbnb has a positive influence only on attachment to Airbnb, users' trust in hosts has a significant impact on users' attachment in both directions: Airbnb ($\beta = .280$, $t = 3.458$, $p < .001$) and its hosts ($\beta = .360$, $t = 3.996$, $p < 0.001$), supporting both H4a and H4b. The concept of continuous use intentions hypothetically generated by users' attachment to both Airbnb and its hosts indicates mixed results; while users' attachment to Airbnb is significantly associated with continuous use intentions ($\beta = .778$, $t = 18.629$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H5a, contrary to our expectation, the path from users' host attachment to continuous use intentions is not significantly found ($\beta = .005$, $t = 0.090$, $p > 0.05$), thus rejecting H5b. Additionally, we put four control variables (i.e., age, gender, travel frequency per year, and accommodation type) in our research model to check its robustness. As shown in Fig. 4, no significant relationships are observed, indicating that our results are not contingent on control variables.

Overall, explained variances of endogenous variables (R^2) are also presented in Fig. 4. The results of the structural model provide some support for arguing that all the six antecedents to users' trust are powerful predictors, indicating 64.7 and 58.1 percent of the variance in both trust in Airbnb and trust in hosts. In addition, the R^2 values for both attachment to Airbnb and attachment to hosts are 50.4 percent and 9.4 percent, respectively. Lastly, 64.5 percent of the variance in users' intention to continuously use Airbnb was explained by attachment to both Airbnb and its hosts and the four control variables. Hence, the explanatory power of the structural model is verified as almost all of the R^2 values (with the exception for attachment to hosts) are within the acceptable range, exceeding ten percent (Falk and Miller, 1992).

6. Discussion and implications

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate how Airbnb users' trust-attachment development affects users' intended behaviors (e.g., continuance use) by integrating two theories: the trust building model (TBM) and attachment theory. This paper, in addition, explores Airbnb users' trust-attachment building mechanism in two different ways that are initiated by both cognitive-based trust in the Airbnb firm and affective-based trust in its hosts. Finally, this study intends to find the role of antecedent factors in developing the two types of trust in order to enhance users' attachment toward the Airbnb firm and its hosts. The research findings are discussed, followed by the discussion of theoretical and practical implications.

6.1. Research findings

This study explores two different types of trust-attachment building mechanism from the perspective of Airbnb users. In the cognitive-based trust-attachment building mechanism, Airbnb provides its customers with an online platform service such as security and privacy, IT quality,

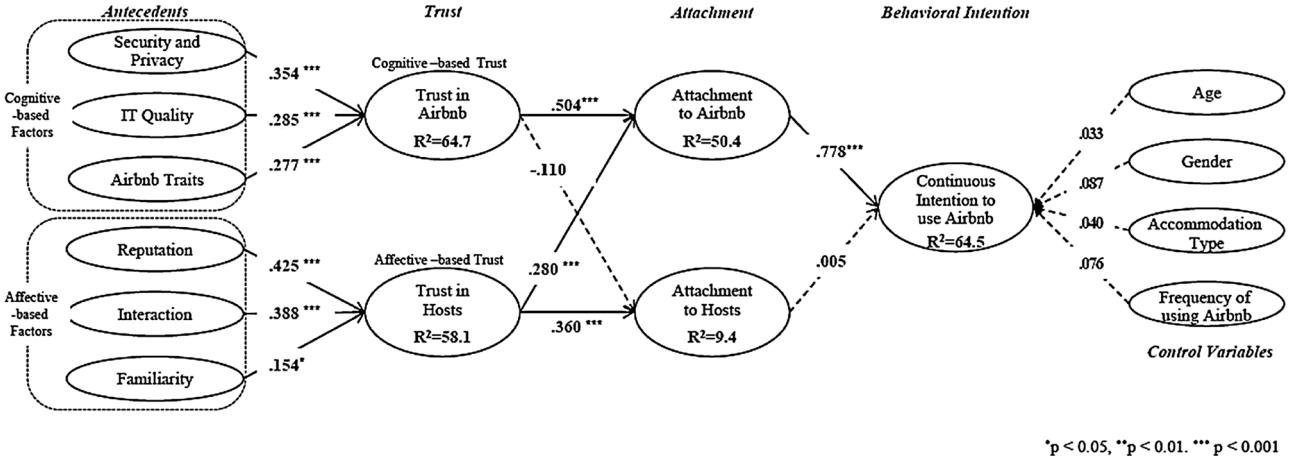

Fig. 4. Results of the structural model.

Table 5
Results of PLS analysis and the summary of the hypotheses tests.

Hypothesis	Path coefficient (β)	t-value	Result
H1a: Security and Privacy → Trust in Airbnb	.354***	5.082	Supported
H1b: IT Quality → Trust in Airbnb	.285***	3.476	Supported
H1c: Airbnb Traits → Trust in Airbnb	.277***	3.744	Supported
H2a: Reputation → Trust in Hosts	.425***	7.391	Supported
H2b: Interaction → Trust in Hosts	.388***	7.238	Supported
H2c: Familiarity → Trust in Hosts	.154*	2.528	Supported
H3a: Trust in Airbnb → Attachment to Airbnb	.504***	5.410	Supported
H3b: Trust in Airbnb → Attachment to Hosts	−.110	1.139	Not supported
H4a: Trust in Hosts → Attachment to Airbnb	.280***	3.458	Supported
H4b: Trust in Hosts → Attachment to Hosts	.360***	3.996	Supported
H5a: Attachment to Airbnb → Continuous use intention	.778***	18.629	Supported
H5b: Attachment to Hosts → Continuous use intention	.005	0.090	Not supported

Notes: *, **, ***: significant at the 0.05, 0.01, and 0.001 levels, respectively.

and Airbnb traits. The results of the study indicate that these three cognitive features contribute to forming users' trust in Airbnb. However, among these cognitive-based trust factors, security and privacy have the most significant impact on users' trust development toward Airbnb as users are likely to focus more on the transaction process or personal information security during the Airbnb booking period. While cognitive-based trust factors deal with trust in Airbnb, affective-based trust features pay more attention to users' trust in Airbnb hosts. The results also explain that all three affective features (i.e., reputation, interaction, and familiarity) are significant in building users' trust in Airbnb hosts through the connected feeling in the affective-based trust-attachment building process. Particularly, the present study shows that reputation has the most powerful impact on users' trust in hosts, followed by repeated interactions with a slight difference. Unexpectedly, familiarity is found to be the weakest factor that influences users' trust development with hosts. The major reason for these findings is that it is either difficult or insufficient for users to feel connected with hosts only within the web (online) setting of Airbnb; the actual (offline) experience can be substituted with indirect experience such as reviews, comments, and star-ratings. To elaborate the two types of users' trust building mechanism, Airbnb users first build their trust intentions based on rational (or cognitive) information processing, and then solidly confirm whether to trust or distrust through emotional (or affective) connections with the hosts of Airbnb.

The research model also suggests that two trust-attachment mechanisms occur in peer-to-peer sharing businesses. In the same regard, Airbnb users realize two entities for their trust-attachment development: Airbnb and its hosts. The findings confirm that users' trust in Airbnb is driven by cognitive-based trust factors, which leads to increasing attachment toward Airbnb. However, users' cognitive trust in Airbnb has no significant effect on users' attachment toward hosts. In other words, users with a high level of trust in Airbnb can easily feel attached to Airbnb; yet, in this cognitive trust-attachment mechanism, even when users trust the Airbnb firm, they are not likely to be emotionally attached to its hosts. McAllister (1995) explained the relationship between cognitive and affective trust in terms of the psychological distance, arguing that affective-based trust is stronger than cognitive-based trust in close relations, such as families and friends; yet, conversely, cognitive-based trust becomes more significant in a less intimate group. In our research context, Airbnb users perceive Airbnb hosts as less familiar; thus, cognitive-based trust becomes more reliable.

On the other hand, in the affective trust-attachment building process, the findings reveal that earned trust has a significant impact on users' attachment toward both entities: Airbnb and its hosts. Although affective-based trust factors are regarded to be emotion-related ones that rely on users' experience or interactions with hosts (McKnight et al., 2002), an online Airbnb platform provides users with indirect experience to obtain others' input, such as trusted third-party endorsements, referrals, review comments, or recommendations (Kim et al., 2008). With this affective trust-attachment building mechanism, users tend to accept and recognize such information as a part of Airbnb service; thus, users can emotionally participate in the cognitive trust-attachment building mechanism as well.

Moreover, the present research model alludes the mediating role of attachment in the relationship between users' trust and their continuous use intentions through the two aforementioned mechanisms. The results demonstrate that identity-driven attachment to Airbnb, generated by cognitive-based trust, has the most significant impact on continuous use intentions. However, bond-driven attachment to hosts, generated by affective-based trust, has no effect on use intentions. These findings are consistent with Ren et al.'s (2012), which argued that identity-based attachment has a stronger impact on user intention than bond-based attachment because human attachment can be accomplished by any sort of direct experience or personal contact that takes a relatively longer time period to develop. In addition to theoretical support, due to the perishable characteristics of an accommodation product (Yang et al., 2018), the contact with a particular host is likely to be limited to one time. This indicates that users may tend to conclude their positive accommodation experience with a particular host as an overall Airbnb experience. It is therefore possible that user attachment toward Airbnb brings about a more effective mediating outcome in this particular setting. As a result, users naturally possess continuous usage behavioral intentions when receiving a satisfactory experience with not only the Airbnb firm, but also with the hosts of Airbnb.

6.2. Theoretical implications

This study acknowledges four major theoretical contributions. First, this study endeavors to understand the uniqueness of the sharing economy through the lenses of several academic fields, including marketing, communications, tourism, accommodation, and hospitality. Based on extant studies on the sharing economy, this paper overviews and enriches the related literature by identifying distinctive characteristics within an online setting of the sharing economy, especially compared to an e-commerce setting.

Second, the present paper expands users' trust related studies in the context of the sharing economy by exploring the role of six antecedent factors to both trust and attachment. The recent and existing studies regarding the sharing economy have explained the relationship of trust with reputation (Ert et al., 2016), cultural experience (Finley, 2013), motivation to participate (Guttentag and Smith, 2017), privacy invasion (Lutz et al., 2018), experience satisfaction (Tussyadiah, 2016a), and host branding (Tussyadiah, 2016b) in a separate manner, requiring the needs of providing an integrative view on how the two different sets of antecedent factors influence user's trust, attachment, and finally intention to return. This paper is one of the first attempts to identify and explore the role antecedent factors in a comprehensive manner from the users' perspective.

Third, this study extends the trust and attachment literature by suggesting an integrated empirical research model based on the trust building model (TBM) and attachment theory. This research model examines and proves its applicability in the sharing economy literature by emphasizing the important role of attachment within the process of trust-attachment-behavior development. Unlike prior studies which has relied solely on trust (e.g., Finley, 2013; Guttentag, 2015; Lamberton and Rose, 2012; Molz, 2013), this paper carefully regards attachment from both human-to-tangible (Airbnb) and human-to-intangible (hosts) angles.

Fourth, this study identifies two trusted entities (i.e., Airbnb and its hosts) through users' judgments on either cognitive- or affective-based trust antecedents. Since trust is treated as a crucial part in establishing subsequent attachment in peer-to-peer online platforms, this study involves and classifies antecedent factors to trust by initiating and generating users' trust-attachment building process with rational and emotional foundations. In addition, this present paper suggests the mediating role of attachment toward two trusted entities in this unique business setting.

Lastly, this study analyzes two general routes of users' trust-attachment development mechanism that occur in an online platform of the sharing economy, which are cognitive- and affective-based building processes. Furthermore, the current research examines the effective route that brings about beneficial behavioral outcomes, such as continuous use intentions.

6.3. Practical implications

In addition to theoretical implications, this study also suggests four valid implications to practitioners in the sharing economy. First, this work convinces Airbnb platform managers of the necessity of increasing the level of each antecedent factors that help form users' initial trust in both the firm and its hosts. For example, in order to increase the level of familiarity, Airbnb managers should recommend its hosts to improve their interpersonal or communication skills by revealing their hobbies, lifestyles, or values so that Airbnb users may feel more connected or emotionally close to them. Alternatively, Airbnb can create or implement new functions which enable users to have more chances to communicate with hosts (e.g., a series of interesting questions about the specific hosts).

Second, enterprises in the sharing economy should concentrate on the impact of emotional elements in the process of trust-attachment building and develop a system to support related members with opportunities to enhance relationships in individual and social manners. Various marketing scholars have agreed that emotional attachment to a firm is a leading factor for a long-term customer relationship (e.g., Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Yim et al., 2008). Practical implications such as a host-initiated message system associated with before, during, and after Airbnb experiences for users to report any issues or experiences through various social media channels (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) can enrich the feelings of closeness with a particular host and such a one-time positive caring experience may lead to developing users' attachment toward Airbnb, as demonstrated in our research.

Third, it is apparent that Airbnb hosts have dual roles as a service provider as well as a hosting entity. In order for hosts to properly place their information for potential users, it is recommended that the proven six antecedent factors to trust (i.e., security and privacy, IT quality, Airbnb traits, reputation, interaction, and familiarity) be properly enhanced. By doing so, each individual host is able to improve her/his guest's experience, which in turn leads to the increase of their overall Airbnb service experience.

Finally, this paper may accommodate the needs of Airbnb users by delivering the quality of information in online communication. In this study, six of the trust initiating antecedents may stimulate users' trusted relations with hosts, reducing expected risks and uncertainty during the period of reservation. Furthermore, the findings may provide users of the sharing economy businesses with instructions on what information needs to be read, and how to evaluate and find information that is the most relevant to their demands.

6.4. Limitations and future research

Despite the implications for theory and practice discussed, there are also a few limitations in the current study. First of all, the respondents of our study are restricted only to two countries, the U.S. and South Korea, which represents a particular group of the population. This study admits that the dataset collected from the two regions cannot guarantee the generalization of our results to diverse contexts of the sharing economy. In addition, due to the geographical hindrance of the study, cultural factors were disregarded. This could be a weakness in terms of representing the whole population where various cultural contexts exist. Therefore, this paper encourages further research that considers examining if dynamic cultural contexts influence users' trust-attachment development processes by gathering data which better represents the whole population from all around the country.

Second, since this research focuses especially on the development mechanism with respect to the two types of trust and attachment, variables regarding users' usage patterns (e.g., accommodation type and frequency of using Airbnb in Table 2) were added into our research model as control variables. In future research, however, by considering such variables (e.g., accommodation type, frequency of using Airbnb, travel purpose, and reasons to choose Airbnb) as moderating variables, researchers may have chance to further investigate the trust-attachment-behavior development mechanism depending on different kinds of usage pattern in the context of the sharing economy.

Lastly, this study examines users' intentions to continuously use Airbnb accommodation services, which may not completely reflect actual experience. It would be worthwhile for future research to consider including actual usage data to investigate whether or not the suggested trust-attachment building mechanism is valid.

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