Review and Research Framework on Proliferation of Airbnb Accommodation Platform

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Abstract

This study reviews and synthesise academic research on Airbnb accommodation service within the time frame of 2013 to 2018. After an evaluation and screening process, total of 42 published articles on social science database were selected and reviewed. Articles were analysed and categorized accordingly into different themes. The findings reveal that there are more studies on Airbnb in terms of its effect on incumbent businesses, gentrification of communities, issues of legality and regulation, influences and impact of Airbnb host. However, despite the importance of technology as a driver of sharing economy platform, there remains a paucity of evidence on technological advancement as a catalyst of proliferation of Airbnb accommodation service. Through context analysis, it was revealed that the literature on Airbnb in the continent of Africa is very scanty. This study provides a precise and organizes the knowledge basis for future research on Airbnb and proposed a conceptual framework on the explosive growth of Airbnb. Also provide the current trends on the topic and presents a comprehensive future research agenda.
Keywords: Airbnb, Research Framework, Sharing Economy, Peer To Peer, Technological Advancement

Introduction

The prevailing of platform businesses have gained mixed reactions from the researchers and the general public that leads to critical debates in tourism industry (Horn and Merante, 2017). A good example can be exemplified in the case of Airbnb accommodation platform with over 6 million listings in 81,000 cities across 191 countries (Airbnb.com). Airbnb was founded in year 2008 as an accommodation platform that connect individual that want to rent an apartment with the house owner seeking to rent out their empty space. Airbnb accommodation is similar to that of hotel in terms of their service offerings. However, a guest can book a shared room, full room or entire house on Airbnb and their booking is slightly different from hotel; there is a provision of instant communication between the potential customers and the host. This provides the guest with prior engagement with host and an avenue to request for more information about accommodation i.e. the location,

transportation, local attractions and others. Also, other extra arrangement may be requested by the guest to the host. Airbnb has been embraced by not only the guest but also by the many house owners (host), as it enables the host to earns more revenue at relatively low cost. Undoubtedly, "Peer to peer platform" such as Airbnb accommodation is a dynamic and prevailing business model of today (Lutz and Newlands 2018).

The business model of Airbnb accommodation relies on bringing both consumer and seller together by creating a conducive platform where business transactions can be conducted smoothly. It can be said that advancement in technological capability and other factors have contributed tremendously to the potentiality of the new business model of sharing economy of today (Tan et al. 2017). Although, there is increasing number of studies investigating Airbnb from different standpoints, such as consumer behavior (Cheng and Jin, 2019; Lee et al., 2019; Mody et al., 2019), the effect of Airbnb accommodation on conventional businesses (Bie et al., 2018), the impacts of Airbnb on the community (Horn and Merante, 2017), and the role of host in the Airbnb reputation system (Abrate and Viglia), and that comprises of journals of different disciplines. However, there remains a paucity of research on Airbnb that summarized literature distinctive on proliferation of Airbnb accommodation platform. Specifically, the impacts of technological advancement on the growths of Airbnb service. Hence, it is imperative to shed light on the current trend and foreseeable future research direction of sharing economy, specifically Airbnb accommodation service. This study is among the first paper to review the extant literature specifically about proliferation of Airbnb accommodation. Contributing to the existing literatures by critically review scholarly work in relation to Airbnb that lead to it prevailing market in hospitality industry.

The paper is organized into four main sections. First, a review method will be discussed in outlining the steps and flows in selection and compiling of past literatures. Secondly, description of key outcomes of past literatures on Airbnb accommodation platform predicated on reviewing the literature across multiple disciplines in the global context. Third, highlighting of different past papers on Airbnb into different classifications from different research context and methodology approaches. Also depicting the findings from the past literatures relating to the Airbnb accommodation based on myriads on stand points. Lastly, future research agenda was proposed, and followed by discussion and limitations, and end by conclusion of the paper.

Review Method

The review process involved the followings: identifying the time frame of the literatures, choosing a particular literature database, screening, selection and analysis of the articles selected according to respectively themes (See Table1). Studies on Airbnb accommodation is still at infant stage (Laurell and Sandstrom, 2017), with the first public article on Airbnb published in 2013, according to the Scopus database. This study focuses on the online articles published on Airbnb since 2013–2018. A keyword search was conducted in one of the major database i.e. Scopus, by using Airbnb as keyword.

Table 1

List of some synthesized literatures on Airbnb

Author and year	Research Objective	Methodology	Context	Themes
Birinci et al. (2018)	This set out to compare customer perceptions of hotel and Airbnb accommodation.	Quantitative method, cross-sectional survey was designed.	USA	(Micro level) Consumer behavior
Liang et al. (2018)	Extending research on consumer repurchase intention in relation with Airbnb service.	Quantitative method, 395 surveys were collected in Canada and US.	Canada and USA	(Micro level) Consumer behavior
Lalicic and Weismayer, (2018)	To investigate consumers' behavioral intentions with Airbnb and its effect on loyalty.	Quantitative method, Online survey was conducted.	South America, North America, Europe, Africa, Asia and Oceania,	(Micro level) Consumer behavior
So et al. (2018)	To investigate factors that motivates consumers to choose peer-to-peer accommodation of Airbnb.	Mixed method approach was adopted.	USA	(Micro level) Consumer behavior
Volgger et al. (2018)	To compare the actual travel behavior of Airbnb users in a specific location with	Quantitative method, Survey	Western Australia	(Micro level) Consumer behavior

	that of visitors staying in hotel.			
Zhang et al. 2018	This paper aims to investigate the role of value co-creation in Airbnb business platform.	Quantitative method, Survey	USA	(Micro level) Consumer behavior
Bie et al. (2018)	The research aim to investigate the influence Airbnb on Chinese tourism.	Mix methods of surveys, interviews, and ethnography	China	(Micro level) Effect of Airbnb on traditional businesses
Blal et al. (2018)	This study seek to investigate the complementary and substitution effects of Airbnb supply on hotel sales.	Mixed model method was used, both saturated and unsaturated covariance matrix.	San Francisco, USA	(Micro level) Effect of Airbnb on traditional businesses
Boros et al. (2018)	This study ought to investigate how the proliferation of Airbnb is stimulating hotel room rates in Budapest.	Internet data query and GIS-based mapping method was applied.	Budapest, Hungary	(Micro level) Effect of Airbnb on traditional businesses
Guttentag and Smith (2017)	This study seek to investigate the effect of Airbnb on hotel	Quantitative method, A survey of	USA and Canada	(Micro level)

	as a substitution service.	800 tourists.		Effect of Airbnb on traditional businesses
Ioannides et al. (2018)	To investigate what Airbnb growth means to the mid-size city with diversified economy.	The research utilize geospatial and statistical analysis.	Netherland, Utrecht	(Micro level) Effect of Airbnb on traditional businesses
Koh and King (2017)	To investigate the impact of Airbnb on budget hotels in Singapore context.	Qualitative method, Interview	Singapore	(Micro level) Effect of Airbnb on traditional businesses
Xie and Kwok (2017)	To examine relationship between price positioning on Airbnb and hotel property in close proximity.	Field data was collected from Airbnb listings and hotels specifically in Austin, Texas.	Austin Texas, USA	(Micro level) Effect of Airbnb on traditional businesses
Zervas et al. (2017)	The study set out to examine the implication of Airbnb on the traditional hotel industry.	Auxiliary data sources	Texas, USA	(Micro level) Effect of Airbnb on traditional businesses
Gunter (2018)	To investigate the important criteria to obtain super host status of Airbnb.	Secondary data from AirDNA	San Francisco, USA	(Micro level) Host

Lutz and Newlands (2018)	To examine how Airbnb host visualise the vital differentiations between users and non-users segment of the airbnb.	Mixed model method was used, quantitative survey and a qualitative analysis	USA	(Micro level) Host
Abrate and Viglia (2017)	To examine the Airbnb host's personal enhancement of reputation in relation to revenue generated.	Multistage Sampling, Sample contains 981 firms in five cities.	Barcelona, Istanbul, London, Paris, and Rome	(Micro level) Host
Cho et al. (2017)	This paper set to propose a model in exploring the host information identity shared on Airbnb platform.	Quantitative method, Survey	New York, USA	(Micro level) Host
Horn and Merante (2017)	The policy makers are baffled in making the effective decision on how Airbnb affect the housing marketing specifically in Boston.	Census tracts	Boston, USA	(Macro level) Effect of Airbnb on community
Smith et al. (2017)	To investigate the role of emergence of Airbnb in the	Qualitative method, Interview	Budapest, Hungary	(Macro level) Effect of Airbnb on community

	urban cities planning and development.			
Wegmann and Jiao (2017)	To investigate the effects of Airbnb on the neighbourhoods and housing market.	Utilizing web scraped data from Airbnb to analyse geographical patterns and concentrations of its effect.	Washington DC, Boston, Chicago, Austin and San Francisco.	(Macro level) Effect of Airbnb on community
Yrigoy (2017)	This study seeks to examine the transformation of urban area of Minorca due to the Airbnb.	Using geographical and social perspective approach.	Minorca, Spain	(Macro level) Effect of Airbnb on community
Ferreri and Sanyal (2018)	The study focus on increasing impact of Airbnb in policy planning and urban governance in a case of London.	Qualitative method, interview	London	(Macro level) Regulations
Hong and Lee (2018)	This paper looks into the influence of government and political interest that leads to decision bias of the regulatory of Airbnb	Secondary data,	USA	(Macro level) Regulations

Laurell and Sandström (2017)	Taxation and regulation problems remain the unsolved concern of encroachment of Airbnb in Sweden.	(SMA) simple moving average analysis	Sweden	(Macro level) Regulations

The screening phase predicated on eliminating articles journal, conference paper, books, editorial books and research notes that is incomplete. The inclusion and exclusion process was applied for article selection in other to eliminate inappropriate articles and also to retain relevant articles for the next stage. Selection of books reviews, editorial notes, research notes, and articles to which full text was available follows. This process only focused on identifying papers published in English. Selected articles were further examined to confirm that they are in line with the searched key words (Airbnb) by looking through the abstract and as well as the references. The articles were read in order to determine it suitability for this review. Relevant articles were retained for the full review process and they were categorized according to different themes, (Micro and Macro level), research objective, methodology, research context, and specific research focus. As shown in (Table 1), a summary of some of the existing literature on Airbnb.

Synthesizing the Existing Knowledge
The literature review in the previous section demonstrates that research on Aribnb accommodation is still at embryonic stage and also depicted relative dearth of studies that focus on technological as a drivers of proliferation of Airbnb accommodation. For instance, majority of the previous studies have adopted a quantitative method approach in their investigation (Volgger et al. 2018; Zhang et al. 2018), followed by mixed method (Bie et al. 2018) and the other approaches were utilised (Zervas et al. 2017). As revealed, there is relative more studies investigating what drives consumer to participate in unconventional accommodation service such as Airbnb (Lalicic and Weismayer, 2018), and another study further the investigation by looking into what causes consumer to re-patronise Airbnb service (Liang et al. 2018). Also, some researchers have probed into the role of Airbnb host and their effect on overall reputation of Airbnb (Abrate and Viglia (2017). Apart from that, some studies were carried out to examine the impact of Airbnb on the incumbents business (Guttentag and Smith, 2017). On macro level, growing number of scholars have started to look into the impacts of Airbnb on the communities as a whole (Horn and Merante, 2017; Wegmann and Jiao, 2017), and the issue of regulations were also examined (Laurell and Sandstrom, 2017). Clearly, the aforementioned studies have contributed tremendously to the body of knowledge in the literature. However, there has been no detailed investigation on technological advancement as a catalyst of proliferation of Airbnb service. Thus, the current study provides crucial future research agenda.

Future Research Direction

Synthesized review of the past literatures have shed light on future focus for further investigations on Airbnb accommodation service. Previous researchers have investigated Airbnb from different perspective such as consumer behavior (Birinci et al. 2018; Lalicic and Weismayer 2018; Liang et al. 2018), the effect of Airbnb on incumbents (Blal et al. 2018; Boros et al. 2018; Guttentag and Smith, 2017), its effect on community such as gentrification of the neighbourhood (Horn and Merante, 2017; Smith et al. 2017; Wegmann and Jiao, 2017), and government regulations (Ferreri and Sanyal 2018; Hong and Lee 2018. Furthermore, some scholars have considered it from micro perspective by investigating how super host status on Airbnb are being obtained (Gunter, 2018), consumer behavioral intention towards Airbnb accommodation (Lalicic and Weismayer, 2018). It is interesting to observe that majority of the previous studies on Airbnb have been conducted in developed country settings (Ferreri and Sanyal, 2018; Ioannides et al. 2018; Lutz and Newlands 2018; Zhang et al. 2018). In contrast, less attention has been paid to other regions such as Africa, Middle East, South East Asia, and South America are limited research (See Table 1). Meanwhile, a few number of studies have included a wider geographical context. For an instance, a study conducted by Lalicic and Weismayer (2018), investigating the consumer behavioral intention towards Airbnb, data were collected from participants from Europe, Asia, North America, Africa, Oceania and South America. In addition to this, very little is currently known about impacts of technology on proliferation of Airbnb accommodation service. Given it importance as one of the major catalyst or drivers of sharing economy business model. As argued by Guttentag et al. (2018), that the availability of technology have revitalized informal accommodation service to be dominant force in the market.

Figure 1. Research framework on proliferation of Airbnb
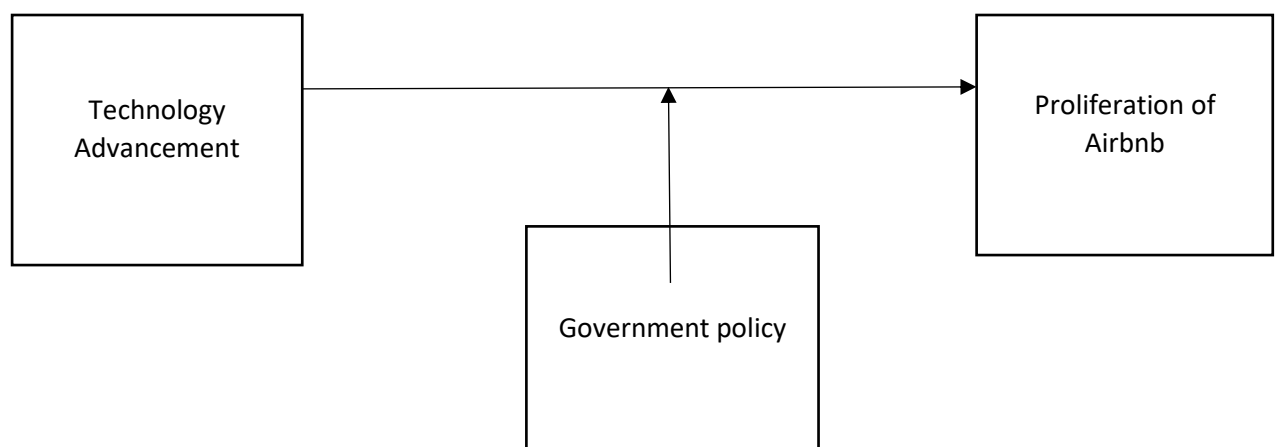
Moreover, key findings from content analysis of the literature consistently lead to the impression that the constructs such as (technological advancement and government policy) used as a crucial determinant in a relation to proliferation of Airbnb accommodation have not been closely examined in the literature, and were mostly neglected. Therefore, this part of the study propose a robust conceptual framework to gain more knowledge on proliferation of Airbnb. Government policy is presented as a moderator between technological advancement and the growth of Airbnb. Government policy can be a crucial mediator in terms of regulatory of Airbnb. As noted by Gurran and Phibbs (2017, that there are mixed views on regulations of Airbnb. There will be huge impact on the Airbnb accommodation when their service is considered illegal or being banned. Whereas, when Airbnb is being regulated, it may

facilitate a vibrant and safe atmosphere for the Airbnb host and consumer to conduct their businesses. The proposed conceptual framework can be investigated by use of quantitative research approach (See Figure 1). Future researchers will most likely benefit from the empirical testing of the proposed framework. Therefore, it is vital to call for marketing service and hospitality scholars to turn their attention to the technological impact on sharing economy as a whole. In addition, more emphasis can be placed on specific locations and platforms in order to shed light on specific context and look for their both similarities and differences.

Limitation

One of the limitations was that this study considered only one type of database for the selection of articles published within time frame stated in review process. Another limitation of the study is related to the selection bias due to the selected key terms searched. Although, it is considered that the key word searched were sufficient in acquiring for all the related information to the research aim. As this study sheds light on the current trends in Airbnb accommodation service literatures and also reveals different research perspectives based on methodology and approaches.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this work reveals that literatures on Airbnb is still at infant stage and much uncertainty still exit. Although, recent trend shows that there is growing studies on Airbnb and it will likely to continue. As highlighted above, this study have shed light on the current trend in terms of their focus and specific themes. And have identified the future research direction on Airbnb accommodation. Therefore, this study contribute to the scholarly debate on the critical review of proliferation of Airbnb platform by undertaking a comprehensive review of the literature within 2013-2018 period. The aim of the study is to enrich and advance and inform our understanding on current research on Airbnb platform, and to offer suggestions for future research direction. There is a growing number of studies on Airbnb but most of the literature consists of research conducted in combined continent of America and Europe (See table 1). There is need to study Airbnb in other parts of the world, especially in the continent of Asia and Africa due to insufficient number of research on Airbnb in this region. Additionally, this will provide the researchers, practitioners and policy makers' new insight on the proliferation of Airbnb accommodation service in the Africa cities. As it has been indicated that out of eight fastest-growing countries in the world for Airbnb guest arrivals, three are located in Africa, comprises of Nigeria, Ghana, and Mozambique (Airbnb). This study presents a clear theoretical and practical implications. For an instance, this study provides more insight into the Airbnb literature and add new perspective to the understandings of proliferation of Airbnb i.e. technology advancement and government policy as the factors that may drive exponential growth of Airbnb. In the terms of practical implications, the findings of this study provides a comprehensive framework to the Airbnb managers and other tourism practitioners and policy makers in understanding the drivers of Airbnb increasing growth and how to effectively manage it.

Conflict of Interest

"The author(s) declare that they have no conflict of interest".

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