What Trust means in the Sharing Economy: A provider perspective on Airbnb.com

Completed Research Paper

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Abstract

Information and communications technology has fostered the rise of the sharing economy, enabling individuals to share excess capacity. In this paper, we focus on Airbnb.com, which is among the most prominent examples of the sharing economy. We take the perspective of an accommodation provider and investigate the concept of trust, which facilitates complete strangers to form temporal C2C relationships on Airbnb.com. In fact, the implications of trust in the sharing economy fundamentally differ to related online industries. In our research model, we investigate the formation of trust by incorporating two antecedents – 'Disposition to trust' and 'Familiarity with Airbnb.com'. Furthermore, we differentiate between 'Trust in Airbnb.com' and 'Trust in renters' and examine their implications on two provider intentions. To seek support for our research model, we conducted a survey with 189 participants. The results show that both trust constructs are decisive to successfully initiate a sharing deal between two parties.

Keywords

Accommodation Providers, Airbnb.com, Disposition to Trust, Familiarity, Intermediary Framework, Sharing Economy, Trust

Introduction

New digital sharing practices have evolved in recent years. Empowered by the expansion of the information and communication technology, sharing practices have gained attraction as practical tools to distribute, share, and reuse excess capacity of personal goods and services (Andersson et al. 2013; Botsman and Rogers 2011). The sharing economy is a prominent example that leverages modern technology in order to effectively allocate and share excess capacity in the online environment (Abramova et al. 2015; Bardhi and Eckhardt 2012). Thereby, the sharing economy intends to disintermediate traditional commercial channels while operating on continuously growing internet-based platforms (Hamari and Ukkonen 2015).

A distinctive characteristic of the sharing economy business model is the temporary sharing of private property in an intermediary framework (Weber 2014). Existing research already analyzes the influence of trust on user intentions in the online environment, such as in the e-commerce industry. Moreover, some studies differentiate between the implications of user and platform trust. This research typically shows that customers mostly rely on a trustworthy platform when building intentions. In other words, researchers found that trust in customers and sellers has no direct impact on users' intentions in online intermediary frameworks (Hong and Cho 2011; Pavlou and Gefen 2002). However, two main characteristics differentiate the e-commerce business model from the sharing economy.

First, the e-commerce business model implies that the ownership respectively a good is permanently transferred to a customer. Thus, the transaction is completed with the acquisition or the selling of a specific good on the platform. On the other hand, the business model of the sharing economy is distinctly different, as sharing implies only a temporary possession of a specific good. The sharing deal is completed after the customer returns the shared good to its owner respectively the provider in the pre-appointed

condition. Second, there is no need to interact directly with the customer or the seller in the e-commerce industry, as the entire process of ownership transfer is covered by the online platform. For example, the customer is able to purchase a good without prior agreement of the seller. However, participants of the sharing economy are supposed to interact with each other in order to conduct business. The providers need to accept the customers' requests in order to establish a sharing deal. Hence, in comparison to the traditional e-commerce industry, additional interactions among the participants need to be carried out in the sharing economy. In consequence, both business models vary in their fundamental context.

Existing theory is unable to explain the effect of trust on temporary sharing activities. Moreover, we argue that in contradiction to existing research, trust in customers does have a substantial effect on the providers' intentions in the sharing economy. Furthermore, we introduce the idea that customer trust and platform trust are interconnected. The current research is the first attempt to study the effects of platform trust and customer trust in a sharing economy framework. We test our assumption by analyzing the implications of trust on property providers in the collaborative housing market. In particular, the goal of our study is to verify that both 'trust in Airbnb.com' and 'trust in renters' significantly influence the accommodation providers' intentions in the given sharing economy framework. In our paper, we extend the current understanding of the sharing economy and close existing research gaps by answering the following three research questions:

RQ1:"Does 'trust in renters' significantly influence the providers' intention to 'offer an accommodation' and to 'accept a booking request' on Airbnb.com?"

RQ2:"Does 'trust in Airbnb.com' influence 'trust in renters?"

RQ3:"Do the antecedents, 'disposition to trust' and 'familiarity', affect 'trust in Airbnb.com' respectively 'trust in the renters' on Airbnb.com?"

Our study refers to the research model by Gefen (2000), which intends to explain the effect of building trust and its implications in the e-commerce industry. The theoretical approach is based on Luhmann's theory of *Trust and Power* (Luhmann 1979), which provides a foundation for explaining the perquisite of trust by creating a suitable framework and understanding of the environment (Gefen 2000). We adapt the given theory and derive its validity from the sharing economy. In particular, we propose a modified research model that explains the participation behavior in the collaborative housing market. First, by following the given research approach, we contribute to the field of IS by complementing the theory of trust based decision-making on online platforms (Kim et al. 2008). Second, we disentangle the implications of trust in the given intermediary framework, encompassing the behavioral intentions of the sharing economy participants. Third, by closing the link between *'disposition to trust'* and *'familiarity'* in temporary online relationships, we also contribute to the sharing economy research by adapting an established trust-inducing design while revalidating its articulated features.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. Section 1 summarizes the related literature regarding the sharing economy, the implications of trust and the corresponding antecedents. Section 2 reviews the adopted research model while introducing a set of verified research hypotheses. In Section 3, we state the research methodology applied for the survey and present the statistical results. We conclude our research paper by discussing the implications of our findings, limitations, and directions for future research.

Related Work

The Sharing Economy – Modern sharing practices are mostly based on redundant commercial channels or incumbent business models that are slowly but steadily altered or renewed (Hamari and Ukkonen 2015). They go by names like "access-based consumption" (Bardhi and Eckhardt 2012), "collaborative consumption" (Botsman and Rogers 2011), "commercial sharing systems" (Rose and Lamberton 2012), "prosumption" (Ritzer and Jurgenson 2010), "sharing services" (Andersson et al. 2013) and "social commerce" (Wang and Zhang 2012).

The extensive proliferation of these modern sharing practices in addition to new technologies fostered the rise of the sharing economy business model. The sharing economy business model enables the optimization of resources while creating new economic value through internet-enabled property exchange. As a result, the sharing economy is the topic of various research streams, due to its fundamental cultural, economic, and organizational implications (Hamari and Ukkonen 2015; Tussyadiah

2015). A wide range of these implications can be observed in the hospitality (Cohen and Kietzmann 2014; Zervas et al. 2013) and in the transportation industry (Andersson et al. 2013; Cohen and Kietzmann 2014). For example, sharing economy start-ups of the hospitality industry gain market share by setting themselves apart from their competitors by supporting property owners to establish a C2C relationship and easily share excess capacity in an often unregulated environment (Bardhi and Eckhardt 2012; Zervas et al. 2013). Hence, researchers already predict that sharing economy platforms, such as Airbnb.com, Couchsurfing, and Wimdu (online platforms for hospitality), or Uber, Bla Bla Car, and Lyft (online platforms for transportation) are on the verge of radically changing their entire industries (Cohen and Kietzmann 2014).

Trust in the online environment – Although trust has no universal definition, the majority of them rely on future actions between two or more individuals (Lewis and Weigert 1985; Luhmann 1979; McKnight and Chervany 1996; Morgan and Hunt 1994). Prior research has shown that trust is important to establish relationships, both of interpersonal and commercial nature (McKnight and Chervany 2001; Morgan and Hunt 1994). Furthermore, in environments where uncertainty and risk, or a combination of both exist, trust is decisive in overcoming, justifying or supressing appendant consequences (Gefen 2000; Rousseau et al. 1998; Schoorman et al. 2007). This particularly holds true for socially distant relationships, such as in the computer-mediated environment, due to an increase in complexity and uncertainty (Jarvenpaa et al. 1999; Kim et al. 2008; Pavlou 2001). Especially online interactions that are not entirely governed by rules and regulations require a common basis of trust to achieve accomplishment (Gefen 2000; McKnight et al. 2002). In summary, trust is of great importance to facilitate online interactions which would not be carried out otherwise.

In addition, fellow researchers found out that trust grows with the increasing dependency on other individuals and growing vulnerability to their misconduct (Luhmann 1979; Rousseau et al. 1998). Therefore, scholars determined trust to be of significant importance in a multitude of fields, such as the e-commerce industry, the sharing economy, and in virtual communities (Chen et al. 2009; Jiang et al. 2009; Kim et al. 2008; Weber 2014). However, previous research of trust in the online environment often generalizes trust as a single construct and disregards the fact that trust can be transferred, enhanced, and impaired in an intermediary framework (Chen et al. 2009).

Familiarity – Prior studies found out that familiarity is distinct from trust (Gefen 2000). Familiarity is related to previous experiences and interactions (Johnson and Russo 1984; Komiak and Benbasat 2006; Lessig and Park 1981), whereas trust mostly focuses on current and future interactions (Jiang et al. 2009). In general, familiarity can build trust by continuous ongoing interactions between two parties (Gefen 2000; Lessig and Park 1981). However, the implication of familiarity, as an antecedent of trust, within the framework of the sharing economy needs to be examined carefully, as interactions between individual are mostly temporal and non-recurrent (Tussyadiah 2015; Weber 2014; Zervas et al. 2013). Nevertheless, familiarity is of great importance in various online industries, as it serves as a precondition of trust and reduces uncertainty (Gulati 1995; Komiak and Benbasat 2006; Luhmann 1979).

Disposition to trust, as a complemental antecedent of trust, is not affected by ongoing interactions (Gefen 2000; Kim et al. 2008). Based on existing literature, it is defined as a general credulity in other entities or personal faith in humanity (Gefen 2000; Kim et al. 2008; McKnight and Chervany 2001). Therefore, the antecedent fulfils its purpose as a constant personal attitude towards trusting other individuals (Straub et al. 2004). The antecedent is formed by education, perceived social respectively cultural consistency and lifelong personal experiences (Gefen 2000; Kim et al. 2008).

Hypothesis Development and Research Model

Based on the insights that we already discussed, we develop a research model that aims to resolve existing limitations. Therefore, we focus on Airbnb.com, a popular online platform that exhibits the sharing economy business model for the hospitality industry (Tussyadiah 2015). We posit that trust in Airbnb.com and trust in potential renters are interconnected. Furthermore, we expect that the accommodation providers' intentions are influenced by the respective trust construct in the applied intermediary framework. In particular, we assume that high degrees of trust in Airbnb.com as well as in potential renters lead to an increase in accommodation offers respectively a greater acceptance of booking requests.

To open the "black box" of trust in the sharing economy, we develop a research model based on Gefen's research findings of the e-commerce industry (Gefen 2000). Consequently, we build on disposition to trust and familiarity as key antecedents. Whereas disposition to trust is adopted without any changes from previous research, familiarity is slightly modified to reflect the peculiarities of Airbnb.com. We further split the single trust construct of Gefen's research approach (Gefen 2000) into two individual constructs – trust in renters and trust in Airbnb.com. Introducing a construct split, allows us to observe the distinct impact of disposition to trust and familiarity on the respective trust construct, as well as the relationship between trust in Airbnb.com and trust in renters. Finally, we assign the effect of the individual trust construct to the provider' intentions – to offer an accommodation and to accept a booking on Airbnb.com. Table 1 shows the entire set of constructs of our research model.

Construct	Description	Key Reference
Disposition to trust	Tendency to believe in the goodness of other individuals based on a lifelong socialization process.	(Gefen 2000; Kim et al. 2008; McKnight and Chervany 2001; McKnight et al. 2002).
Familiarity with Airbnb.com	Understanding of Airbnb.com, including knowledge about the web interface, functions and available services, based on previous interactions and experiences with the platform.	(Gefen 2000; Gulati 1995; Jarvenpaa et al. 1999; Lewis and Weigert 1985; Schoorman et al. 2007).
Trust in Airbnb.com	Confidence that Airbnb.com will behave in a favorable way, which makes users comfortable to use the web interface and helps them to overcome perceptions of risk and insecurity.	(Andersson et al. 2013; Jarvenpaa et al. 1999; Kim et al. 2008; McKnight et al. 2002; Venkatesh 1999; Weber 2014).
Trust in renters	Willingness to rely on favorable future actions of potential renters to overcome perceptions of risk and insecurity.	(Morgan and Hunt 1994; Tussyadiah 2015; Weber 2014).
Offer an accommodation	The intention of uploading an accommodation offer and making it available for booking requests.	(Gefen 2000; Jiang et al. 2009; Pavlou 2001; Schoorman et al. 2007; Zervas et al. 2013).
Accept a booking request	The intention of evaluating and confirming a received booking request for a given accommodation.	

Table 1.   Summary of Key Constructs

The following sections derives the established hypothesis. Familiarity is a precondition of trust based on previous interactions and experiences. The antecedent is able to reduce effort, complexity, and uncertainty by applying a previously learned course of action to accomplish a desired outcome (Johnson and Russo 1984; Komiak and Benbasat 2006; Lessig and Park 1981). In the case of Airbnb.com, familiarity can be achieved by the repetition of a previously learned behavior on the website, such as the successful creation and upload of an accommodation offer.

H1. Increased degrees of familiarity with Airbnb.com will increase the accommodation providers' trust in Airbnb.com.

Besides familiarity, disposition to trust serves as a further precondition of trust. Research tells us that a general trusting disposition is the tendency to believe in the integrity of other entities (Mayer et al. 1995; McKnight and Chervany 2001). In general, humans have a natural disposition to trust and ability to judge trustworthiness. In our research model the antecedent, disposition to trust, is directly associated with the appendant trust constructs – trust in Airbnb.com and trust in potential renters. Whereas familiarity deliberately focuses on previous short-term interactions and experiences, disposition to trust evolves from a lifelong socialization process (Gefen 2000; Kim et al. 2008; Schoorman et al. 2007). As prior research states that both antecedents differ in their basic context (Gefen 2000), we exclude a possible interdependence of the constructs from our research model.

H2. The stronger the accommodation providers' disposition to trust is, the more they will trust in Airbnb.com.

H3. The stronger the accommodation providers' disposition to trust is, the more they will trust in potential renters on Airbnb.com.

A number of prior studies have found a positive relationship between corresponding trust constructs in intermediary frameworks (Chen et al. 2009; Hong and Cho 2011; Son and Benbasat 2006). We expect a comparable phenomenon in the given sharing economy framework, due to logical dependencies between the two constructs. Thus, we implicitly assume that the perceived trustworthiness of potential renters listed on Airbnb.com, is reliant on the premise of trusting Airbnb.com. Our assumption is amongst others based on the fact that Airbnb.com provides and monitors various trust building measures that allow potential renters to signal trust to accommodation providers (Abramova et al. 2015). Beyond that, in order to register on Airbnb.com, all users have to accept the platform's general terms of conduct, which allow Airbnb.com to carry out systematic quality checks designed to verify the identities or backgrounds of users. As a result, Airbnb.com continuously revises, restricts, or deactivates distrustful profiles that are conspicuous or blocks users that commit misconduct.

H4. Increased degrees of trust in Airbnb.com will increase the accommodation providers' trust in potential renters.

In addition, we posit trust to encourage distinct actions of accommodation providers on Airbnb.com (Gefen 2000; Pavlou 2001). In this regard, we focus on two separate actions of accommodation providers. First, we are convinced that accommodation providers are more likely to offer property and personal information on a trustworthy online platform. Personal information on Airbnb.com does usually contain facts about age, nationality, education, languages, and contact information, whereas property information usually consists of location, equipment, room types, price, and availability. Second, we assume that this effect also applies to the users' intention to accept a booking request on Airbnb.com.

H5. Increased degrees of trust in Airbnb.com will increase the accommodation providers' intentions to offer property on Airbnb.com.

H6. Increased degrees of trust in Airbnb.com will increase the accommodation providers' intentions to accept a booking request on Airbnb.com.

Besides trusting the actual platform, we expect that offering an accommodation on Airbnb.com is dependent on trusting the potential renters. Furthermore, we implicitly believe that accommodation providers are more likely to accept booking requests from trustworthy renters on Airbnb.com. Hence, we verify, whether trust in a collaborating party forms the accommodation providers intentions, as we expect that our results might differ to previous research in the e-commerce industry (Hong and Cho 2011; Pavlou and Gefen 2002).

H7. Increased degrees of trust in potential renters will increase the accommodation providers' intentions to offer property on Airbnb.com.

H8. Increased degrees of trust in potential renters will increase the accommodation providers' intentions to accept a booking request on Airbnb.com

Figure 1 presents the conceptual model and the entire set of hypotheses developed in accordance with the above reasoning.
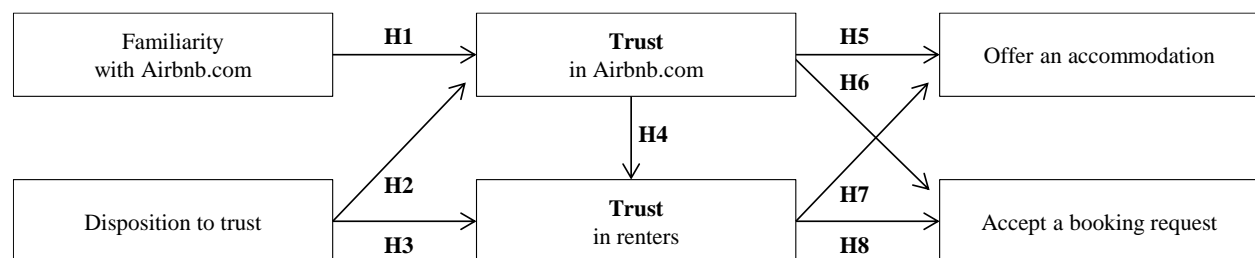

Figure 1.   Research Model

Research Method

Instrument Development

The questionnaire was specifically designed to explain the formation and the aftermath of trust in the sharing economy out of the perspective of an accommodation provider. As explained earlier, we differentiated between trust in the platform provider, respectively Airbnb.com, and trust in potential guests, respectively renters. Altogether, our questionnaire contained 39 questions, covering six constructs and demographic data. The items were assessed with a psychometric 7-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (7). The entire item catalogue, the constructs as well as the respective item codes are presented in Table 2.

Construct	Code	Item
Familiarity with Airbnb.com (reflective)	Fam1	I am familiar with Airbnb.com.
	Fam2	I am familiar with the web interface of Airbnb.com.
	Fam2	I am familiar with the functions on Airbnb.com.
	Fam4	I am familiar with the services of Airbnb.com.
Disposition to trust (reflective)	DisTr1	I tend to count on other people.
	DisTr2	I generally have faith in humanity.
	DisTr3	I feel the people are generally reliable.
	DisTr4	I generally trust other people unless they give me reason not to.
Trust in Airbnb.com (reflective)	TrAir1	Even if not monitored, I would trust Airbnb.com to do the job right.
	TrAir2	Airbnb.com is a trustworthy company.
	TrAir3	I trust Airbnb.com.
	TrAir4	I believe that Airbnb.com is trustworthy.
Trust in renters (reflective)	TrRen1	Renters are in general reliable.
	TrRen2	Renters are in general honest.
	TrRen3	I trust potential renters.
	TrRen4	I believe renters are trustworthy.
Offer an accommodation (reflective)	Off1	I am open to offer a room.
	Off2	If it benefits me, I would offer a room.
	Off3	I could imagine to offer a room.
	Off4	If it makes sense, I would offer a room.
Accept a booking request (reflective)	Acc1	I generally would accept requests unless the person does not seem to be trustworthy.
	Acc2	I would accept a request from a potential renter.
	Acc3	If a potential renter wants to rent an accommodation from me, I would accept it.
	Acc4	If asked by a potential renter, I would accept a request.

Table 2.   Overview of Items after the Content Validity Assessment

The survey was conducted in 2015 over period of four months. The final questionnaire was distributed globally utilizing professional contacts and suitable social media channels, resulting in 189 valid datasets. The participants were mostly between 21-25 years (n = 72), 26-30 years (n = 54), or 16-20 years (n = 31). About 46 % of the respondents were women (n = 87) and 54 % were men (n = 102). The level of education is high, with 26.5% graduating from high school (n= 50) and another 57.7% holding a bachelor's degree or higher (n = 109). 41.3% of the sample were employed or self-employed (n = 78) and 57.7% were students (n = 109); hence, the sample is mainly comprised of students and professionals (n = 187). 50.8% earn less than $10.000 a year (n = 96), 14.3% between $10.000 and $19.999 (n = 27) and the other income classes range from 1.6% (more than $150.000) to 7.4% ($50.000 to $59.000).

Data Analysis and Results

Measurement Model

Our statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS Statistics 19.0.0 for Windows and AMOS 16.0.1. The SPSS package was used to perform the factor analysis, to test the reliability of the measurement model and to examine the demographic data. A confirmatory factorial analysis (CFA), performed with AMOS, was carried out to check for convergent validity (O'Leary-Kelly and Vokurka 1998) and discriminant validity (Straub et al. 2004). We applied the widely recognized guidelines of Hair et al., 2010 and Straub et al., 2004, and verified for every individual construct that both Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability reached an acceptable threshold of 0.70 or higher (Bagozzi and Yi 1988; Fornell and Larcker 1981). Additionally, we demonstrated that the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) successfully exceeds the threshold of 0.50 for all constructs (Fornell and Larcker 1981). The reliability and convergent validity values are presented in Table 3.

	CA	CR	AVE	SD	Mean	Acc	Fam	TrRen	TrAir	Off	DisTr
Acc	0.95	0.95	0.83	1.42	4.11	**0.91**					
Fam	0.97	0.97	0.89	1.97	3.64	0.39	**0.95**				
TrRen	0.90	0.90	0.70	1.00	4.19	0.36	0.32	**0.83**			
TrAir	0.94	0.94	0.79	1.25	4.66	0.37	0.58	0.49	**0.89**		
Off	0.94	0.94	0.81	1.68	3.94	0.67	0.35	0.38	0.39	**0.90**	
DisTr	0.80	0.81	0.51	0.96	4.28	0.25	0.32	0.66	0.52	0.32	**0.72**

Note: CA = Cronbach's alpha, CR = Composite Reliability, AVE = Average Variance Extracted, S.D. = Standard Deviation. Diagonal elements of the last six columns represent the square root of the AVE. Off diagonal elements are the correlations among latent constructs.

Table 3.   Evaluation of Reliability and Convergent Validity

Common method variance can be a potential source of bias in survey research using self-report data. To minimize the effect of common method bias (CMB) in this study, we randomized the order of the measurement items in our questionnaire, limiting respondents' ability to detect patterns between measurement items (Cook et al. 1979) . We further checked for CMB in our data performing the common latent factor (CLF) test (Podsakoff and Organ 1986). In detail, we compared the standardized regression weights from the CFL model to the standardized regression weights of our model without the CLF. The CLF test did not identify differences that exceed the threshold of 0.200. The results suggest that the CMB was unlikely to be a serious concern for this study.

Structural Model Assessment

The statistical analysis confirms that the proposed theory adequately fits our data. In this regard, we are able to show that the recommended 'Absolute fit indices' and the 'Incremental fit indices' provide a fundamental indication of an excellent measurement model. The listed items share only little residual variance, indicate unidimensionality, and show good fit indexes in our CFA – CFI 0.971, RMSEA 0.053, PCLOSE 0.303, GFI 0.869 and NFI 0.922 (Bagozzi and Yi 1988; Hu and Bentler 1999). Only the GFI value, as a measure of fit between the hypothesized model and the observed covariance matrix, is below the recommended threshold of 0.90 (Hu and Bentler 1999). However, the index has continuously become less popular, as its explanatory power is excessively dependent on the sample size and the number of parameters involved (Hu and Bentler 1999). As a result, researchers recommend not to overrate its explanatory power.

In addition to analyzing the factor structure of our dataset in the CFA, we conducted further analysis using structural equation modeling (SEM) to identify possible nonlinearities and measurement errors in our interaction framework. In this regard, we controlled for age, income, experience, and gender, as variations in those factors may lead to differing results. An appropriate model fit has been reached for our SEM – CFI 0.967, RMSEA 0.057, PCLOSE 0.151, GFI 0.862 and NFI 0.916 (Bagozzi and Yi 1988; Hu and Bentler 1999). The corresponding path coefficients provided strong evidence for the explanatory power of our research model. The results of the SEM are presented in Figure 2.
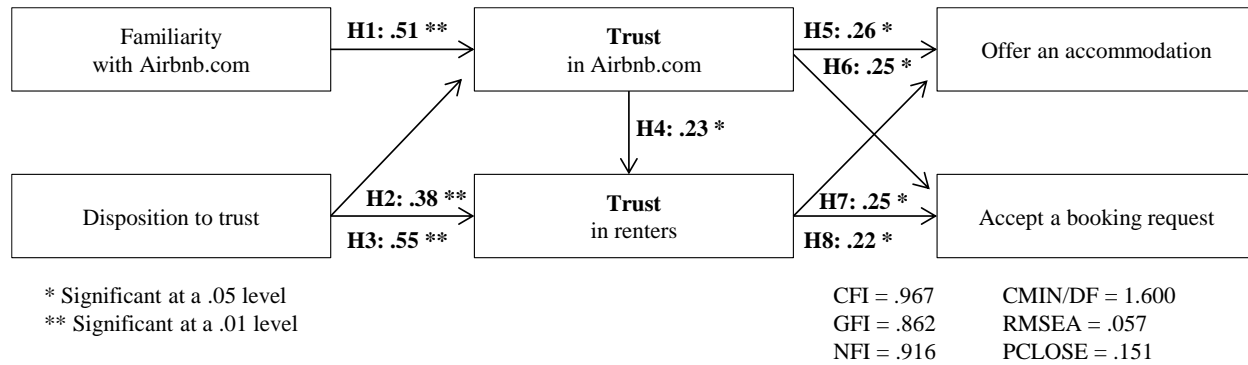
| Familiarity with Airbnb.com | **H1: .51 **** → | **Trust** in Airbnb.com | **H5: .26 *** | Offer an accommodation |
| | | | **H6: .25 *** | |

H4: .23 *

| Disposition to trust | **H2: .38 **** | **Trust** in renters | **H7: .25 *** | Accept a booking request |
| | **H3: .55 **** | | **H8: .22 *** | |

* Significant at a .05 level   CFI = .967   CMIN/DF = 1.600
** Significant at a .01 level   GFI = .862   RMSEA = .057
                                                NFI = .916   PCLOSE = .151

Figure 2.   AMOS analysis of the research model showing standardized coefficients

Disposition to trust affects both trust in Airbnb.com (t = 5.02) and trust in renters (t = 5.82), whereas the effect of H3 is stronger. Familiarity, on the other hand, affects trust in Airbnb.com (t = 7.68), supporting H1. In addition, H4 is supported, demonstrating that trust in Airbnb.com has a significant effect on trust in renters (t = 3.09). The effect has clearly been identified by analyzing specific modifications of our SEM. As postulated in H5 and H6, trust in Airbnb.com has a significant impact on both intentions – to offer an accommodation (t = 3.26) and to accept a booking request (t = 3.15). Concurrently, resolving the discrepancy to the e-commerce industry (Hong and Cho 2011), we find that H7 and H8 also indicate a significant effect on both intentions – to offer an accommodation (t = 2.95) and to accept a booking request (t = 2.67).

Discussion

There is only limited research regarding trustors and trustees in sharing economy. In addition, findings in the e-commerce context cannot be assumed for the sharing economy, as both business models vary in their fundamental context. Personal interactions between customers and sellers usually remain an exception in the e-commerce industry, whereas interactions between individuals in the collaborative housing market are required to establish a sharing deal. Moreover, goods are transferred permanently in the e-commerce context, whereas goods in the sharing economy are only shared temporarily; hence goods will be returned to the provider after a predefined period.

The sharing of private property with complete strangers leads to unprecedented levels of risk and complexity in the sharing economy. In order to counteract risk and complexity, providers require a sufficient amount of trust to overcome these obstacles (Botsman and Rogers 2011; Tussyadiah 2015). In this study, we investigated antecedents and implications of trust in a definite sharing economy framework. The results of our data analysis effectively supported our research questions. In particular, we were able to derive a detailed understanding about trust in the sharing economy with our research approach, which could not be explained with existing theory.

Our study contributes to research in several ways. In RQ1 we argued that trust in renters has a significant impact on the providers' intentions. This assumption substantially differs from the traditional e-commerce industry, where users mostly rely on a trustworthy platform rather than on the participating individuals (Hong and Cho 2011; Pavlou and Gefen 2002). However, in the case of Airbnb.com, we could show that the providers' intentions are also determined by trust in renters. Our hypotheses regarding the influence of trust in renters was supported for both tested intentions. In addition, with RQ2 we successfully addressed an existing research gap by analyzing the effect between platform trust and trust in renters in the sharing economy (Hong and Cho 2011). We could show that trust in Airbnb.com affects trust in renters. Hence, we extended the theoretical background by adopting the phenomenon of trust transfer of related online environments on the sharing economy (Hong and Cho 2011). Furthermore, we successfully answered RQ3 by evaluating the effect of both antecedents, disposition to trust and familiarity, on their respective trust construct. As a result, by evaluating the given antecedents in an unprecedented online environment, we resolved limitations that have been frequently formulated by prior researchers (Gefen 2000; Gulati 1995; Johnson and Russo 1984).

From a practical point of view, we found that potential renters have the need to signal trust to accommodation providers in order to be accepted. In this regard, we recommend the renters to adopt the given trust-building measures provided by Airbnb.com. Accordingly, in order to offer accommodations on Airbnb.com, property providers need to have trust in the platform as well as in potential renters. Therefore, we recommend Airbnb.com to support an elaborated set of trust-building measures, which could reduce complexity and risk (Abramova et al. 2015). In sum, besides extending the existing literature, we provide a foundation for further research towards clarifying the implications of trust in the context of the sharing economy. Finally, our results can provide guidance for designing sharing economy services respectively for comprehending interactions in existing sharing services.

Besides contributing to a more profound understanding of the sharing economy, our research approach shows several limitations. Even when limiting our discussion context to the sharing economy, there are multiple antecedents that affect the construct of trust. Thus, besides the suitability of deposition to trust and familiarity in our research model, other antecedents have been omitted in this study. Additionally, limitations of our sample size prevented us from checking for cross-cultural effects of the applied constructs. We recommend to pursue this research approach in order to identify cultural differences. Likewise, our study only focuses on a definite sharing economy website that belongs to a particular industry. Consequently, our study is context-dependent and it is unclear whether the results can be generalized for other sharing economy frameworks. Finally, because this research is exploratory in nature, prospective research should test and verify our propositions from different perspectives respectively in different environments to support the applicability of the scales and generalizability of our findings.

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