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Societal Transformation through the Sharing Economy: An Example of Trust and Risk on Couchsurfing (Pretest)

Completed Research Paper

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Abstract

Societal transformation through contemporary online platforms fosters the change of consumption habits. In this regard, sharing economy platforms are changing the hospitality industry by attracting predominately the millennials generation through modern technologies and innovative business models. The given study examines the non-monetary hospitality platform Couchsurfing. In this regard, the authors investigate the influence of trust and perceived risk on the consumers' intention to engage in a particular sharing activity. The authors further separate intermediary and users from each other to investigate the distinct influence of the two-sided market mechanisms on the consumers' intention. This study follows a quantitative approach and employs survey data of over 200 consumers. In view of that, the authors conduct an exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis in order prepare structural equation modeling for an extended study.

Keywords: Societal Transformation, Couchsurfing, Sharing Economy, Trust, Perceived Risk.

Introduction

New online business models coin the modern Internet landscape. Particularly the service industry encounters the rapid growth of consumer-to-consumer market platforms (Hawlichschek, Teubner, and Gimpel 2016) that shift traditional consumption habits from outdated e-commerce platforms to contemporary service orientated sharing economy platforms. Especially young individuals of the millennials generation foster the rise of these new business models to disintermediate non-social commercial channels and to acquire services from other individuals in an economic, convenient, and sustainable manner (Lenhart et al. 2010). The service orientated sharing economy business model, which usually focusses on particular industries, such as hospitality services (e.g., Airbnb or Couchsurfing) or transportation services (e.g., Uber or Lyft), is often empowered by modern information technology (Hamari et al. 2015). Modern online sharing economy platforms enable social interactions between strangers on short notice over the Internet. In this regard, existing literature, such as Mittendorf (2016) or Hawlichschek, et al. (2016), identified trust as a critical factor of the individuals' intention to provide or request a particular service in the sharing economy. Trust, as an influential factor of consumer intentions has long been empirically validated in online businesses, such as in the e-commerce industry. For example, Jarvenpaa et al. (1999) assessed that high levels of trust encourage online transaction intentions, whereas Hoffman et al. (1999) showed that the lack of trust is one of the main reasons why people do not engage in online transactions. Other researchers, for example Gefen and Straub (2004), demonstrated that the prevalence of trust is a key driver for one-time interactions between two unfamiliar individuals. Based on this logic, fellow researchers identified perceived risk as a discouraging factor of user intentions in the online industry (Kim et al. 2008; Verhagen et al. 2006).

In this pretest, we analyze the intermediary framework of the service-based sharing economy hospitality industry. In this regard, we separate the online platform, accommodation providers, and potential consumers from each other. We further introduce the concept of trust and perceived risk, while evaluating their corresponding influence on the users' intention to request a booking on the Couchsurfing platform; hence, we take the consumer perspective. Our IT artefact is the service-based sharing economy platform Couchsurfing, which enables non-monetary interactions between consumers and accommodation providers. In doing so, we respond to the call by Hawlichschek et al. (2016) to perform a more detailed investigation regarding the effects of trust and risk on the consumers' intentions of contemporary sharing economy platforms. In addition, we address the call of Mittendorf (2016) to evaluate the concept of trust on another sharing economy platform of the hospitality industry. Our two opposing research questions are: RQ1: Does trust in accommodation providers respectively in the intermediary significantly increase the consumers' intention to request a booking on the service-based sharing economy platform Couchsurfing? RQ2: Does perceived risk of accommodation providers respectively of the intermediary significantly decrease the consumers' intention to request a booking on the service-based sharing economy platform Couchsurfing?

We adopt and extend the research model by Mittendorf (2016), which investigates the effect of familiarity and trust on the users' intentions on the hospitality platform Airbnb. In this regard, we add perceived risk to the model in order to increase its explanatory power. First and foremost, we contribute to the field of IS by complementing the theory of trust and risk-based decision-making on online platforms (Gefen 2000; Kim et al. 2008). Second, we add to the understanding of the service-based sharing economy research by evaluating the consumer perspective on Couchsurfing – a non-monetary sharing economy platform. Third, by incorporating trust and perceived risk in one research model, we shed light on distinct antecedents of user intentions in the hospitality industry (see Table 1). The remainder of this pretest is organized as follows: In Section 2, we present the related work on the sharing economy, trust, and perceived risk. In Section 3, we present our research design, propose our research model, and state our research hypotheses. In Section 4, we present our research methodology. In Section 5, we assess the measurement model and present our preliminary study results. Section 6, determines our pretest by discussing possible implications of our findings.

Study Contribution	State of the Research	Relevance	
		Theory	Empirics
Extends the understanding of the service-based sharing economy by adapting trust and risk literature that validates the users' intentions on sharing economy platforms.	Whereas trust literature has been adapted to explain interactions in the e-commerce industry (Gefen and Straub 2004), a theoretical validation of trust and perceived risk on service-based sharing economy platforms remains an open question.	✓	

<p>Advances the understanding of the sharing economy by empirically validating the influence of the platform <u>and</u> of the corresponding users on the consumers' intentions.</p>	<p>Traditional research regarding online transactions often validates user intentions by focusing on either the online platform or the (service) providers rather than evaluating their complementary influence (Gefen 2000).</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>
<p>Adds to the understanding of the sharing economy, in particular the hospitality industry, by focusing on the consumer perspective – rather than the intermediary or the provider perspective.</p>	<p>Various research papers loosely examine the two-sided market of the sharing economy (Möhlmann 2015); thus do not differentiate between consumers and providers that constitute the sharing economy business model.</p>	<p>✓</p>	

Table 1. Study Contributions

Literature Review

Sharing Economy: Modern service-based sharing economy platforms enable private individuals to request and provide underused assets (Belk 2014; Hamari et al. 2015). Sharing economy platforms can nowadays be found in a variety of industries, such as in hospitality and transportation (Hamari et al. 2015). In this pretest, we analyze the users' intention on the hospitality sharing economy platform *Couchsurfing*. Couchsurfing uses recent peer-to-peer technology to establish non-monetary relationships between travelers and accommodation providers (Molz 2012). As Couchsurfing is usually free of charge and focuses on the social aspect of traveling, the platform attracts mostly younger individuals of the millennials generation that want to experience a place and the corresponding culture by staying at a local's accommodation (Molz 2012). Following this logic, an adequate trust basis seems inevitable when requesting lodging from a stranger. Thus, Couchsurfing provides user profiles, reviews, and ratings to enable its user to spot and avoid lousy sharing partners in advance (Lauterbach et al. 2009; Rosen et al. 2011).

The sharing economy could have quite far-reaching implications for the functions and consumption habits of society in the longer term. Hence assessing critical technologies is one cornerstone of policy-making in the modern information economy. For example, EU's policy-oriented research projects have, for example, analyzed the policy dimensions of developing wireless technologies and related infrastructures (Bohlin et al., 2006). However, as ICTs are increasingly becoming the cardinal pipelines of digital society, the motivations for assessing potential transformations of social media are no longer merely technological, but increasingly societal.

Trust: Although, researchers have studied the concept of trust incessantly from different perspectives in various disciplinary fields, such as psychology (Geyskens et al. 1996), sociology (Luhmann 1979), and philosophy (Porter 1996), trust seems elusive to define (McKnight and Chervany 2001). For the purpose of this pretest, we follow the sociological understanding of trust from Luhmann (1979). Luhmann defines trust as a concept to reduce complexity, which makes it easier for individuals to rely on actions of others (Luhmann 1979). Further social sciences literature states that the rapid progress of technology influences the momentousness of trust, as especially the information technology continuously changes causation in social systems (Grandison and Reichgelt 2007; Luhmann 1979). In this context, we argue that the need for trust thrives predominantly in socially distant relationships, such as in the online environment (Jarvenpaa and Leidner 1999). In accordance with other researchers, we argue that online interactions between two strangers require an adequate trust basis to be initiated (Gefen 2000; Lauterbach et al. 2009; Rosen et al. 2011). Following this logic, trust is critical in stimulating interactions in the online environment (Corbitt et al. 2003), respectively in a variety of computer-mediated environments, such as in the e-commerce industry (Gefen 2002a), crowdsourcing (Zheng et al. 2011), virtual teams (Jarvenpaa and Leidner 1999), and the sharing economy (Weber 2014). Nevertheless, there is scarce literature on trust regarding non-monetary business models respectively the social sharing economy. We believe that the characteristics of the given setup, such as mostly non-recurring relationships, temporary sharing of private property, free of charge sharing, interactions with strangers on short notice, concurrence of digital and real-world interactions, and the intermediary framework, are unique to the sharing economy and lead to ubiquitous implications of trust (Chen et al. 2009).

Disposition to trust is a concept from psychology and assesses the tendency, based on a lifelong socialization process, to believe in the goodness of other individuals. Accordingly, disposition to trust

assesses the individuals' propensity to trust others. The antecedent of trust is a personality-type control that is comprised of two subconstructs: *Trusting stance* and *faith in humanity* (Kim et al. 2008; McKnight and Chervany 2001). Trusting stance refers to the confidence in superior outcomes when engaging in a relationship with others (McKnight et al. 1998). Faith in humanity, on the other hand, implies that other individuals are typically reliable, honest, benevolent, and predictable (McKnight et al. 1998). Fellow researchers, such as Kim et al. (2008), argue that disposition to trust is highly effective when individuals are still unfamiliar with each other – a predominant state between individuals on a variety of sharing economy platforms.

Perceived risk: The researchers Nicolaou and McKnight (2006) define the concept of perceived risk as the extent to which one believes uncertainty exists about whether a desirable outcome will occur. We adopt the given definition and understand perceived risk as a consumers' belief about the potential negative outcomes from online and offline interactions with providers (Kim et al. 2008; Wu et al. 2010). In this regard, our definition includes parts of Sitkin and Pablo's (1992) broader perceived risk concept, which is formed by outcome uncertainty, outcome expectations, and outcome potential. Perceived risk is an important obstruction for proprietors who are considering sharing their accommodation on an online hospitality platform, such as Couchsurfing or Airbnb. Compared to the e-commerce industry, where goods are sold permanently for money, sharing economy services generally let strangers access goods for a predefined period (Andersson et al. 2013; Belk 2014). Accordingly, there is a greater chance of misconduct by potential consumers in the sharing economy (Weber 2014), compared to traditional e-commerce interactions. Prior research and the peculiarities of the sharing economy mechanisms encouraged us to investigate the implications of trust and perceived risk for temporal sharing of private accommodations on the Couchsurfing platform.

Hypothesis Development and Research Model

This pretest is based on the sharing economy platform Couchsurfing, a popular service orientated hospitality platform. We analyze the consumer perspective in our paper. To do so, we modify and extend the research model by Mittendorf (2016) and analyze the influence of trust and perceived risk on the consumers' intentions. We further introduce disposition to trust as an antecedent of trust. Thus, we build our conceptual model in accordance with previous literature. We follow the findings of Gefen (2002) and Gulati (1995) that disposition to trust can build trust by detracting the likelihood of general others engaging in undesirable future actions. Moreover, we introduce trust in the online platform respectively trust in Couchsurfing and trust in accommodation providers. Based on risk theory and the call from Mayer (1995), we also include perceived risk of Couchsurfing and perceived risk of accommodation providers. We further draw on behavioral studies to assess a positive direct effect of trust on user behavior respectively a negative direct effect of perceived risk (Gefen et al. 2003; Verhagen et al. 2006). Table 2 shows an overview of the six constructs we included in this pretest.

Construct	Description	Reference
Disposition to trust	General faith in humanity and belief that other individuals are well-meaning and reliable.	Gefen (2000), Kim et al. (2008), McKnight and Chervany (2001)
Trust in Couchsurfing	Confidence that the Couchsurfing platform respectively the platform administrators will behave in a favorable way.	Chen et al. (2009), Kim et al. (2008), Tussyadiah (2015)
Trust in accommodation providers	Confidence that accommodation providers will behave in a favorable way.	
Perceived risk of Couchsurfing	Belief about uncertain negative outcomes from interactions with the Couchsurfing platform.	Kim et al. (2008), Nicolaou and McKnight (2006)
Perceived risk of accommodation providers	Belief about uncertain negative outcomes from interactions with accommodation providers.	
Intention to request an accommodation	Intention of requesting an accommodation on the Couchsurfing platform.	Davis et al. (1989), Matzner et al. (2015), Mittendorf (2017), Pavlou 2001)

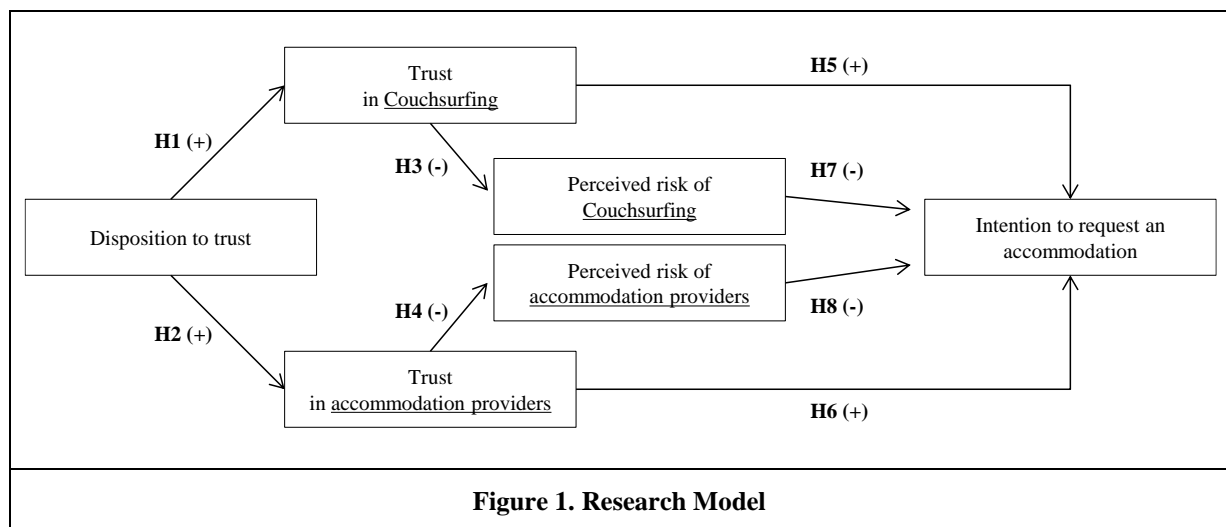
Table 2. Key Constructs

We argue that individuals have a natural disposition to trust and ability to judge trustworthiness, hence we are in line with previous research papers (Gefen 2000; McKnight and Chervany 2001). For example, Wu et al. (2010) show that individuals of high disposition to trust are more inclined to frame

positive initial interactions with unfamiliar entities (Luhmann 2000). Since literature identified disposition to trust as an antecedent of trust, we hypothesize a positive effect from the antecedent to the corresponding trust constructs (Gefen and Straub 2004; McKnight et al. 2002a; McKnight and Chervany 2001). In this regard, we expect to find an effect of disposition to trust on both trust in the platform and trust in the sharing partner. In other words, we hypothesize that trust in the Couchsurfing platform and trust in accommodation providers is determined by a general trusting disposition. In particular, we hypothesize: **H1**: The stronger the consumers’ disposition to trust is, the more they will trust in Couchsurfing. Furthermore, as most interaction between consumers and accommodation providers are short notice one-time interactions, the respective sharing partners are generally unfamiliar with each other. Hence, we expect that disposition to trust has a positive direct effect on trust in accommodation providers on the Couchsurfing platform. **H2**: The stronger the consumers’ disposition to trust is, the more they will trust in accommodation providers on the Couchsurfing platform.

We further adapt risk theory (Luhmann 2005) and conclude that high degrees of trust decrease the perception of the related risk (Kim et al. 2008; Pavlou and Gefen 2004). As an empirical example, Pavlou and Gefen (2004) find that trust works as a reduction method of perceived risk in the online environment (Dinnie 2004). Based on this logic, we assume that trust in the online platform respectively in the sharing partners decreases the perceived risk of the corresponding entity to engage in uncomplimentary future actions (Kim et al. 2008; Mittendorf and Ostermann 2017; Nicolaou and McKnight 2006). Accordingly, we hypothesize: **H3**: Increased degrees of trust in Couchsurfing will decrease the consumers’ perceived risk of Couchsurfing. **H4**: Increased degrees of trust in accommodation providers on Couchsurfing will decrease the consumers’ perceived risk of accommodation providers on Couchsurfing.

Besides and in accordance with research of the e-commerce industry, such as Gefen (2000), Gefen et al. (2003), and Gefen and Straub (2004), we assume a positive direct effect of the respective trust constructs on the consumers’ intention. Given this context, we hypothesize that the consumers’ intentions to request an accommodation rise with increased degrees of trust (Chen et al. 2009; Gefen 2000; Jiang et al. 2009). **H5**: Increased degrees of trust in Couchsurfing will increase the consumers’ intentions to request an accommodation on Couchsurfing. **H6**: Increased degrees of trust in accommodation providers on Couchsurfing will increase the consumers’ intentions to request an accommodation on Couchsurfing. Concurrently, perceived risk decreases the intention of consumers to engage in transactions in the online environment (Kim et al. 2008; Pavlou and Gefen 2004). Hence, we assume that perceived risk has a negative direct effect on the consumers’ intention to request an accommodation on Couchsurfing. Accordingly, we hypothesize: **H7**: Increased degrees of perceived risk of Couchsurfing will decrease the consumers’ intentions to request an accommodation on Couchsurfing. **H8**: Increased degrees of perceived risk of accommodation providers on Couchsurfing will decrease the consumers’ intentions to request an accommodation on Couchsurfing.



Methodology

Measurement Development and Data Collection

For this pretest, we designed an online questionnaire with which we explicitly gathered data to measure the influence of trust and perceived risk on the intention to request an accommodation on Couchsurfing. We chose to use the survey method as it is best adapted to assess attitudes and personal beliefs (Fang et al. 2014). Moreover, the survey method is an adequate foundation for extended studies, such as controlled laboratory and contextual field studies (Fang et al. 2014). The online survey contained 45 questions, covering six constructs, and demographic data. The survey employed a standardized response format: 7-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (7). Further, we included age, education, gender, income, financial motives, and social motives as control variables in our questionnaire. Table 4 provides a summary of the item catalogue, including the corresponding constructs, the loadings, and the item codes. The sample of this pretest was gathered in late 2016 (see Table 3). We targeted individuals of the millennials generation who are familiar with the Couchsurfing service via appropriate social media channels, e.g., Couchsurfing groups and forums. By the due date, 248 participants completed the comprehensive questionnaire.

	Count	%		Count	%
Age			Gender		
16 to 20 years	2	0%	Male	91	37%
21 to 25 years	93	34%	Female	157	63%
26 to 30 years	81	34%			
31 to 35 years	33	16%	Profession		
36 to 40 years	13	6%	Student	120	46%
41 to 45 years	8	3%	Employed for wages	92	39%
46 to 50 years	8	3%	Self-employed	20	8%
51 to 55 years	5	2%	Out of work	11	5%
56 to 60 years	4	2%	Retired	5	2%
61 to 65 years	0	0%			
Age 66 or older	1	0%	Income		
			less than US\$20,000	124	47%
Marital status			between US\$20,000 and US\$29,999	42	17%
Single	215	86%	between US\$30,000 and US\$39,999	18	8%
Married	20	9%	between US\$40,000 and US\$49,999	12	5%
Separated	5	2%	between US\$50,000 and US\$59,999	13	6%
Divorced	8	3%	between US\$60,000 and US\$69,999	14	6%
			between US\$70,000 and US\$79,999	9	4%
Education			between US\$80,000 and US\$89,999	7	3%
High school graduate	43	9%	between US\$90,000 and US\$99,999	2	1%
Associate degree	27	9%	above US\$100,000	7	3%
Bachelor's degree	126	54%			
Master's degree	46	25%			
Doctorate degree	6	4%			
Total subjects	248				

Table 3. Participants Characteristics

We used IBM SPSS Statistics and AMOS to analyze the collected dataset. In particular, we used the respective software to (1) perform an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), (2) to test the reliability of the measurement model, and (3) to examine the demographics of the survey participants. In this regard, we used the unaltered dataset (N=248) to perform the EFA and CFA. In particular, we conducted the EFA because we gathered and modified items from different literature sources. In this regard, we determined the correlation among the items by grouping the variables, based on strong correlations into six groups. We performed the EFA to make sure all our items have factorial loadings greater than 0.50 (Hair et al. 2010) on their respective construct. Further, we checked for cross-loadings greater than 0.40 (Gefen and Straub 2004). In this regard, we examined the pattern matrix, which was generated by the corresponding factor analysis

applying a PROMAX rotation. We chose PROMAX as the appropriate oblique rotation choice, because we aimed to evaluate variables in non-orthogonal conditions (Butler 1991; Ha and Stoel 2009). We identified four items (two of each perceived risk construct) that showed cross-loadings above the threshold of 0.4. Hence, we dropped the identified items and continued with the remaining item set in our analysis – Table 4 shows the full item catalogue, including the dropped items.

Construct	Code	Item	Loading	Reference
Disposition to trust (reflective)	DisTr1	I generally trust other people.	0.928	Items adapted and modified from: Gefen (2000), McKnight et al. (2002)
	DisTr2	I generally have faith in humanity.	0.742	
	DisTr3	I generally trust other people unless they give me reason not to.	0.823	
	DisTr4	I feel that people are generally reliable.	0.729	
	DisTr5	I tend to count upon other people.	0.685	
Trust in Couchsurfing (reflective)	TrCS1	I feel that Couchsurfing (platform) is honest.	0.875	Items adapted and modified from: Mittendorf (2016)
	TrCS2	I believe that Couchsurfing (platform) is trustworthy.	0.863	
	TrCS3	I trust Couchsurfing (platform).	0.954	
	TrCS4	I feel that Couchsurfing (platform) is reliable.	0.895	
Trust in accommodation providers (reflective)	TrAP1	I trust the accommodation providers using Couchsurfing.	0.949	Items adapted and modified from: Mittendorf (2016)
	TrAP2	I believe that the accommodation providers on Couchsurfing are trustworthy.	0.963	
	TrAP3	I feel that the accommodation providers on Couchsurfing are honest.	0.892	
	TrAP4	I feel that the accommodation providers on Couchsurfing are reliable.	0.889	
Perceived risk of Couchsurfing (reflective)	PRCS1	I think it is risky to use Couchsurfing.	0.811	Items adapted and modified from: Pavlou and Gefen (2004), Zaleskiewicz (2001)
	PRCS2	I hesitate to use Couchsurfing.	0.870	
	PRCS3	Using Couchsurfing is unsafe.	0.806	
	PRCS4	It is likely that Couchsurfing will fail to meet my expectations.	<i>dropped</i>	
	PRCS5	It is likely that Couchsurfing will cause me a financial loss.	<i>dropped</i>	
Perceived risk of accommodation providers (reflective)	PRAP1	I think it is risky to share an accommodation with accommodation providers on Couchsurfing.	0.898	Items adapted and modified from: Pavlou and Gefen (2004), Zaleskiewicz (2001)
	PRAP2	I hesitate to send a booking request to accommodation providers on Couchsurfing.	0.848	
	PRAP3	Interactions with accommodation providers on Couchsurfing are unsafe.	0.850	
	PRAP4	It is likely that accommodation providers on Couchsurfing will fail to meet my expectations.	<i>dropped</i>	
	PRAP5	It is likely that accommodation providers on Couchsurfing will cause me a financial loss.	<i>dropped</i>	
Intention to request an accommodation (reflective)	Req1	I am very likely to request a booking on Couchsurfing in the future.	0.898	Items adapted and modified from: Davis et al. (1989), Gefen et al. (2003), Pavlou (2001)
	Req2	I would not hesitate to request a booking on Couchsurfing.	0.884	
	Req3	I would feel comfortable requesting a booking on Couchsurfing.	0.952	
	Req4	I would use Couchsurfing to request a booking for a specific accommodation.	0.783	
	Req5	I would request a booking on Couchsurfing, even if I cannot withdraw my request.	0.656	

Table 4. Overview of Items after the Content Validity Assessment

Measurement Model

First, we assessed the reliability of our measurement model and validity of the six model constructs. We followed the approach from Hair et al. (2010) and Straub et al. (2004) in order to determine internal consistency. As a result, we found sufficient reliability for all our pretested constructs, as the calculated Cronbach's Alpha scores are all above the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Fornell and Larcker 1981). Table 5 gives an overview of the reliability index and the descriptive statistics of our constructs.

	DisTr	TrCS	TrAP	PRCS	PRAP	Req
Cronbach's Alpha	0.863	0.947	0.962	0.866	0.901	0.920
Mean	4.815	5.438	5.208	3.004	2.872	4.588
Standard Deviation	1.409	1.141	1.055	1.549	1.500	1.951

Table 5. Reliability Index and Descriptive Statistics

Data distribution is an important factor when performing multivariate methods, such as CB-SEM (Gefen et al. 2000). According to Muthén et al. (1987), as the default maximum likelihood method assumes conditional multivariate normality, we need to check for Kurtosis and Skewness issues. We applied the thresholds +/-2 for Kurtosis and +/-1 for Skewness on every variable (Sposito et al. 1983). With the applied SPSS analysis, we could not identify any Skewness or Kurtosis issues. Regarding the results, as displayed in Table 6, we claim that our variables are fairly normal distributed (Sposito et al. 1983). Furthermore, we performed a common method bias (CMB) analysis in order to evaluate the variance that is attributable to our measurement method (Podsakoff et al. 2003). We chose the Harman's single factor test to confirm that no single component explains more than 50% of the total variance (Harman's single factor test of our pretest-dataset: 37.62%). The analysis shows that it is unlikely that CMB is a potential concern in our data.

Item	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Dev.	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
DisTr1	2	7	4.90	.084	1.328	1.764	-.417	-.385
DisTr2	1	7	5.04	.087	1.373	1.885	-.650	-.081
DisTr3	1	7	5.25	.096	1.506	2.269	-.662	-.382
DisTr4	2	7	4.59	.079	1.240	1.539	-.218	-.315
DisTr5	1	7	4.29	.088	1.387	1.923	-.055	-.364
TrCS1	1	7	5.26	.079	1.236	1.528	-.645	.477
TrCS2	1	7	5.21	.080	1.258	1.583	-.697	.510
TrCS3	1	7	5.14	.082	1.287	1.657	-.396	-.389
TrCS4	1	7	5.15	.081	1.280	1.639	-.508	-.173
TrAc1	1	7	4.94	.083	1.305	1.704	-.507	.037
TrAc2	1	7	4.95	.081	1.278	1.633	-.437	-.003
TrAc3	1	7	4.94	.078	1.229	1.510	-.563	.257
TrAc4	1	7	4.89	.077	1.205	1.453	-.480	.174
PRCS1	1	7	3.28	.097	1.530	2.341	.302	-.741
PRCS2	1	7	3.35	.123	1.937	3.752	.412	-1.141
PRCS3	1	7	2.72	.093	1.467	2.153	.778	-.008
PRAP1	1	7	3.13	.095	1.495	2.234	.393	-.705
PRAP2	1	7	3.06	.114	1.790	3.203	.568	-.831
PRAP3	1	7	2.54	.092	1.450	2.104	.862	.086
Req1	1	7	4.71	.129	2.035	4.142	-.460	-1.134
Req2	1	7	4.74	.121	1.907	3.635	-.503	-.925
Req3	1	7	4.89	.116	1.832	3.356	-.625	-.660
Req4	1	7	4.78	.118	1.858	3.450	-.591	-.765
Req5	1	7	3.82	.123	1.939	3.758	.044	-1.161

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics

Important for quantitative analysis, especially in order to consider the results of SEM, we assessed construct validity by calculating convergent validity and discriminant validity (O'Leary-Kelly and

Vokurka 1998). *Convergent validity* is the extent to which the measures of an item act as if they are measuring the underlying theoretical construct because they share variance (McKnight et al. 2002b). In this regard, convergent validity is considered acceptable when the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is greater than 0.50 for all constructs (Fornell and Larcker 1981). *Discriminant validity* is the degree to which measures of different latent variables are unique (O’Leary-Kelly and Vokurka 1998). In this regard, discriminant validity is considered acceptable when the square roots of the AVE are superior to the correlations among the research constructs – Fornell-Larcker criterion; and the variance explained by each construct is larger than the measurement error variance. The results of our pretest indicate that there is strong evidence of construct validity in our dataset. Table 7 shows that there are no validity concerns; hence, the data is suitable for an extended CB-SEM approach.

	<u>AVE</u>	<u>Req</u>	<u>PRCS</u>	<u>DisTr</u>	<u>TrAP</u>	<u>PRAP</u>	<u>TrCS</u>
Req	0.708	0.841					
PRCS	0.688	-0.802	0.830				
DisTr	0.571	0.420	-0.457	0.756			
TrAP	0.853	0.617	-0.674	0.542	0.924		
PRAP	0.749	-0.783	0.646	-0.405	-0.669	0.866	
TrCS	0.805	0.584	-0.634	0.504	0.686	-0.561	0.897

Note: AVE = Average Variance Extracted. Diagonal elements of the last six columns represent the square root of the AVE. Off diagonal elements are the correlations among latent constructs.

Table 7. Convergent and Discriminant Validity Coefficients

As a final step of our pretest-data-analysis, we evaluated the model fit of our Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). First, we assessed Absolute Fit Indices, such as χ^2 , RMSEA, SRMR, to directly measure how well our model reproduces the observed data (Hair et al. 2010). Second, we assessed Incremental Fit Indices, such as NFI, CFI, to assess how well our estimated model fits relative to an alternative baseline model (Hair et al. 2010). Third, we assessed Parsimony Fit Indices, such as AGFI, to provide information about which model among a set of competing models is best, considering its fit relative to its complexity (Hair et al. 2010). Our AMOS analysis confirms that the collected data adequately fits our proposed research model (Hu and Bentler 1999). The given items share only little residual variance, indicate unidimensionality, and show good fit indexes regarding the CFA approach (Hu and Bentler 1999).

<u>χ^2</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>χ^2/df</u>	<u>RMSEA</u>	<u>PCLOSE</u>	<u>SRMR</u>	<u>NFI</u>	<u>CFI</u>	<u>AGFI</u>
406.03	234	1.735	0.055	0.195	0.040	0.932	0.970	0.844

Table 8. Model Fit Indices of the CFA approach

Conclusion

The pretest attempts to provide a foundation for an understanding of trust and perceived risk on the consumers’ intentions on the sharing economy platform *Couchsurfing*. In our study, we adopted and extended the recent research model of fellow sharing economy researcher Mittendorf (2016). Our modified research model is based on trust and risk theory to explain the consumers’ intentions on the given platform. Following the idea of the two-sided market (Eisenmann et al. 2006; Ertz et al. 2016), we separated the online platform from the respective users in order to evaluate their distinct impact on the consumers’ intentions. The separation of the platform from its users is particularly necessary to evaluate contemporary sharing economy platforms, as interactions in the sharing economy are usually initiated via an online platform, but executed in the offline world between the respective sharing partners. Our established model and expected results are likely to have important theoretical and practical implications for the sharing economy literature and platforms providers of the hospitality industry that aim at incentivizing potential consumers to engage in their service.

Research Implications and Practical Implications

The distinct influence of both the sharing economy platform and its corresponding users on the consumers’ intentions cannot be fully explained with the given literature or established theories (Lauterbach et al. 2009; Weber 2014); especially as the sharing economy peculiarities provide a unique framework of an online environment that connects strangers on online platforms that further enable offline interactions between consumers and providers (Ikkala and Lampinen 2014; Zervas et

al. 2013). To close this research gap, we incorporated trust and perceived risk of Couchsurfing respectively trust and perceived risk of accommodation providers to shed light on the consumers' intentions on non-monetary sharing economy platforms. Given our results of the EFA and CFA with adequate reliability, validity, and model fit measures, we established a suitable foundation for an extended study in order to empirically validate the actual effects on the respective constructs on the consumers' intentions while performing CB-SEM.

Our pretest-study contributes to research in several ways: First and foremost, we expect to be in line with previous researchers (Gefen 2000; McKnight and Chervany 2001), and show that the antecedent, disposition to trust, positively influences both trust constructs. Second, based on trust literature, we expect to find a positive effect of trust on the consumers' intentions. Hence, our analysis will add to the online platform literature by addressing the calls from Gefen (2001) and Kim et al. (2008) to evaluate disposition to trust and trust in e-commerce related online environments. Third, our pretest-study is among the first to address the theoretical gap by incorporating both trust and perceived risk on user intentions that do not follow financial motives respectively are non-monetary. With our pretest-study, we further advance the understanding of the sharing economy by providing a foundation of validating the direct effects of trust and perceived on the consumers' intention to request an accommodation on Couchsurfing. Overall, our findings will be an important contribution to our scholarly understanding of non-monetary sharing economy mechanisms. Besides, we expect our pretest to have practical implications for the sharing economy platforms administrators. In this regard, the identification of possible direct effects on the consumers' intention to engage in accommodation sharing on Couchsurfing could lead to an endorsement for the online platform: (1) to emphasize the importance of trust building measures for either the platform or the accommodation providers in order to signal trust to potential consumers, or (2) to counter the perception of perceived risk by including additional background checks as well as advancing current quality control processes in order to reduce concealed damage possibilities and bad experiences for the consumers.

Finally, an enhanced research approach can address several limitations of our pretest. First, whereas the sample size of our pretest is generally acceptable for a principal component analysis, including EFA and CFA, a larger sample size is desirable to identify significant path coefficients with the satisfactory coefficient of determination values and CB-SEM with an appropriate model fit. Second, our pretest focuses on the consumer perspective – hence, an additional research approach could identify commonalities and differences with the accommodation provider's perspective. Finally, our pretest is solely based on one sharing economy platform – Couchsurfing. Consequently, our study is context-dependent and it is indistinct whether our findings can be generalized to other sharing economy platforms with a monetary focus, such as HouseTrip or Airbnb.

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