

When Guests Trust Hosts for Their Words: Host Description and Trust in Sharing Economy

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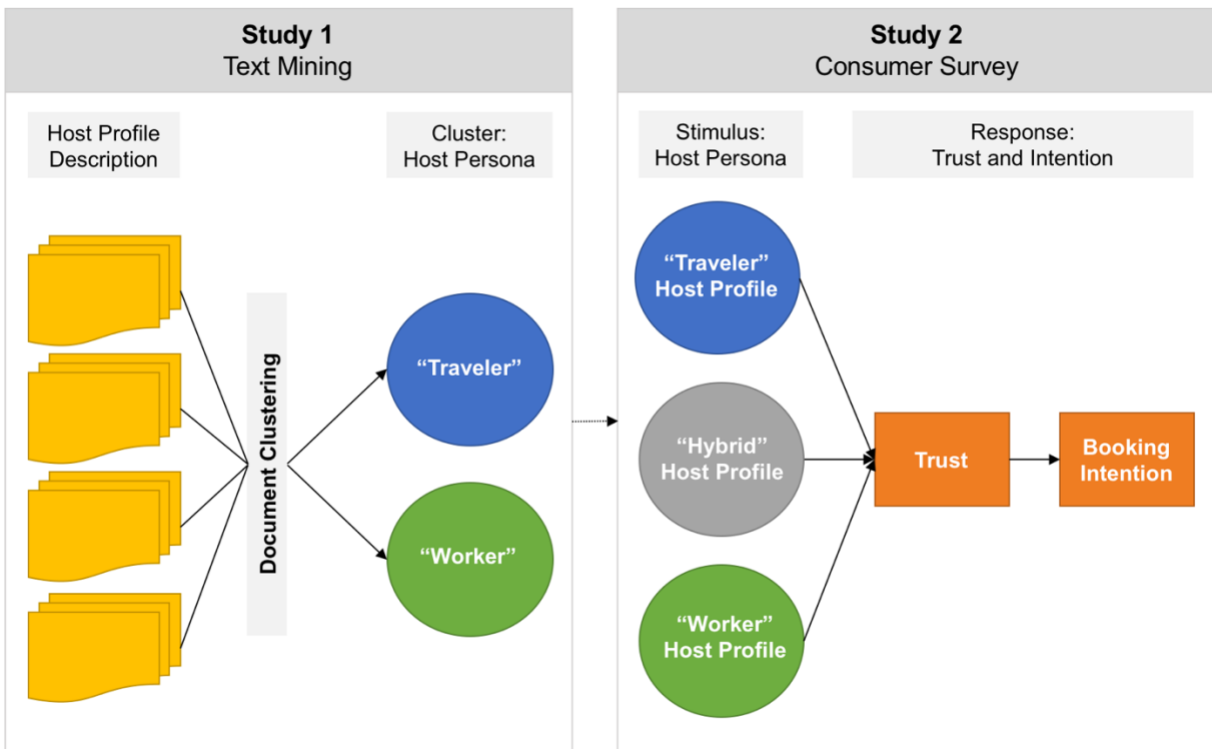
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Highlights

- Two self-presentation patterns were found from Airbnb host profiles.
- Hosts present themselves as well-traveled or those with certain professions.
- Consumers demonstrated higher trust in well-traveled hosts.
- Consumers' booking intention was higher for well-traveled hosts.
- Hosts are advised to project personal strength relevant to hosting in profiles.

Graphical Abstract



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ABSTRACT

In order to better understand the dynamics of user behavior in the sharing economy platform, a multi-stage study was conducted on how Airbnb hosts articulate themselves online and how consumers respond to different host self-presentation patterns. First, using text mining techniques on a large dataset consisting descriptions of Airbnb hosts in 14 major cities in the United States, two patterns of host self-presentation were identified. Hosts generally present themselves online as (1) a well-traveled individual, eager to meet new people or (2) an individual of a certain profession. This contributes to the conceptualization of profile as promise framework for online self-presentation in mixed-mode interactions involving peer-to-peer accommodation platform. Second, consumers respond to the two host self-presentation strategies differently, demonstrating higher levels of perceived trustworthiness in and intention to book from well-traveled hosts. This has direct strategic implications for effective self-marketing of “amateur” tourism players as well as for the role of residents as resources in tourism destinations.

Keyword: Airbnb, sharing economy, peer-to-peer accommodation, host self-presentation, self-marketing, trustworthiness

1. Introduction

Peer-to-peer accommodation business continues to grow significantly (eMarketer, 2017; Fortune, 2017; PWC, 2016) and generates substantial impacts in the tourism and hospitality industry (Skift, 2017; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016), making it one of the top priorities for research in the field (Cheng, 2016a; 2016b; Guttentag, 2015; Heo, 2016; Karlsson & Dolnicar, 2016; Tussyadiah, 2016). In order to provide a solid theoretical foundation for sharing economy as a consumption and exchange system, it is important to delineate its unique processes in comparison to that of conventional accommodation service. Therefore, a thorough investigation into the dynamics of decision-making processes in peer-to-peer accommodation is necessary. Through peer-to-peer accommodation platforms such as Airbnb, hosts and guests find each other and transact online and then, to a certain extent, interact offline during the service delivery. In order to make a decision to start the booking process, be it by contacting the host for approval or doing so through the instant booking option, potential guests are faced with a problem of evaluating not only the various attributes of the property, but also the characteristics of the hosts. Previous studies show that trust in host plays an important role in booking decision in peer-to-peer accommodation platforms (Ert, Fleischer, & Magen, 2016; Hawlitschek, Teubner, & Weinhardt, 2016; Richardson, 2015). That is, the platform – peer-consumer – peer-provider triad in the sharing economy system generates additional layers of trust that shapes consumer choice: trust in platform and trust in host. A large body of research has examined the influence of trust in service providers on consumer choice in traditional service settings (e.g., Coulter & Coulter, 2002; Doney & Cannon, 1997; Johnson & Grayson, 2005), including that of tourism and hospitality (e.g., Liu & Zhang, 2014; Sparks & Browning, 2011; Wang et al., 2015). In the context of platform economy, where buyers and sellers transact online using third-party

platforms such as Amazon and eBay, the dynamics of buyer–seller trust and buyer–platform trust as well as their effects on purchase decision have also been researched widely (e.g., Chen, Zhang, & Xu, 2009; Hong & Cho, 2011; Pavlou & Gefen, 2002). It is suggested that trust in host, along with trust in platform, plays a critical role in guest decision to book a particular property through peer-to-peer accommodation platforms.

Potential guests are using various cues to arrive at the expectation of hosts' trustworthiness (Deng & Ravichandran, 2017; Ert et al., 2016). Due to the nature of the business model, some trust mechanism is built into the platform as online reputation system such that potential guests can derive information about the trustworthiness of the hosts from guest reviews (i.e., testaments to past performance, records of past deeds) and/or their responses to guest reviews (i.e., evidence of courtesy and/or service recovery strategies). Importantly, Airbnb hosts can craft an image about themselves through their online profiles. In that, they have the opportunity to shape consumer perception about their identity and character, create favorable impressions of themselves, and, thus, positively influence consumer choice. While the link between reviews and trust in the context of sharing economy has been explored in previous research (e.g., Deng & Ravichandran, 2017; Teubner, Saade, Hawlitschek, & Weinhardt, 2016; Yang et al., 2016), research investigating the relationships between host self-presentation and trust is relatively scant. This study aims to investigate if and how the ways hosts express themselves by crafting and posting their profile online would generate trust among prospective guests.

Specifically, this study addresses two broad research questions: (1) how hosts of peer-to-peer accommodation articulate their identity online and (2) how prospective guests respond to host self-presentation practices. This study uses the theoretical foundation behind self-

presentation strategies (e.g., Chen, 2013; Labrecque, Markos, & Milne, 2011; Shepherd, 2005) as well as interpersonal trust (e.g., Raban, 2009) in the contexts of online interaction, social networks, and transaction or trading contexts. It follows a two-study approach by first conducting a series of text analyses on descriptions of Airbnb hosts to identify the underlying self-presentation practices and then assessing consumer perception of the trustworthiness of the hosts.

2. Literature review

2.1. Online self-Presentation in mixed-mode interactions

The strategies people use to present themselves online, through personal web pages or social media platforms, have been explored in literature as a form of self-marketing (e.g., Chen, 2013; Kim & Tussyadiah, 2013; Labrecque et al., 2011; Shepherd, 2005). These studies suggested that consumers are applying the same marketing and branding principles originally developed for products and services to generate a favorable image of themselves online in order to achieve various goals (Chen, 2013; Schwabel, 2009). Personal branding refers to the process by which individuals differentiate themselves from others by expressing their unique value proposition and leveraging it with a consistent image across different communication platforms (Schwabel, 2009). Research on personal branding and self-marketing on the web has focused on public figures, such as in politics and entertainment (e.g., Marshall, 2010; Marwick & Boyd, 2011; Stanyer, 2008). However, an increasing number of studies also deals with self-presentation among amateur individuals or everyday people for the purposes of seeking employment, establishing friendship, dating, or simply self-expression (Chen, 2013; Labrecque et al., 2011; Shepherd, 2005).

Self-presentation is not only associated with the process of packaging the self, but also editing it, which entails making decisions on what information regarding self to convey and what to conceal (Toma, Hancock, & Ellison, 2008). Drawing largely from Goffman's (1990) theory of self, literature on self-presentation in technology-mediated communication has focused on social interactions that occur exclusively online. Research on online impression management focuses on how the absence of nonverbal communication cues and the potentially asynchronous communication online eventually led to the practice of selective self-presentation (Walther, 1992; 2007; Walther & Burgoon, 1992). In such cases, online personal identity is viewed as malleable and subject to self-censorship. This results in an optimized self-presentation opportunity for the message deliverers and idealized perception for the message receivers. Consequently, people often end up revealing themselves far more intimately than they would be inclined to do (Rheingold, 1995). However, these strategies do not work well in areas of mixed-mode social relationships, when people first meet online and then move offline. Gibbs, Ellison, and Heino (2006) suggested that online self-presentation and personal branding strategies are entangled with anticipated future (face-to-face) interactions.

Peer-to-peer accommodation system provides a unique context for mixed-mode social relationships. Prospective hosts and guests communicate online using the platform to book accommodation and then interact offline during service delivery. The modality switch from online to offline communication shapes the degree of self-disclosure (e.g., Ellison, Heino, & Gibbs, 2006; Gibbs et al., 2006). For hosts, while it is important to highlight personal strength and uniqueness to attract prospective guests, it is more important to convey an online identity that is consistent with the expected offline impression. This will result in perception of authenticity (Labrecque et al., 2011). Authenticity can be said as a match between online and

offline identity, which transforms a sense of authenticity in online environment to reflect offline believability or an authenticity to presented self (Orsatti & Riemer, 2012). Indeed, “feeling real” and free of psychological uncertainty between one’s social roles/behaviours and one’s true self is the crux of psychological component of authenticity (Reinecke & Trepte, 2014). Social network (or sharing) sites such as online dating websites provide users with various features allowing people to share rich self-presentations (e.g., online profiles) (Ellison, 2007) and emphasise self-disclosure through social gratifications (Trepte & Reinecke, 2013). Self-presentation and self-disclosure on social network websites tend to offer users chances to portray their true self as opposed to anonymous format of computer-mediated communication including chats or forums. For example, in the context of online dating environment, pressure to highlight one’s positive attributes can be arisen with need to display one’s true self to others in an intimate relationship (Ellison et al., 2006). Thereby, the users consider balancing the desire for positive self-presentation with the need for accurate self-presentation based upon the likelihood of a face-to-face meeting (Ellison et al., 2006). Ellison, Hancock and Toma (2011), in this vein, suggest “profile as promise” framework, asserting that online profiles are crafted to allow audience to have an expectation that “future face-to-face interaction will take place with someone that does not differ fundamentally from the person represented by the profile” (p. 12).

Kim and Lee (2011) identified two strategies from self-presentational behaviour in social media, honest and positive self-presentation. Honest self-presentation strategies place more emphasis on accuracy or authenticity. On the other hand, positive (or selective) self-presentation strategies emphasize desirability. Researchers have observed the tension between the need for accuracy and desirability, especially in situations such as online dating, where significant and long-term social relationships are the goal of personal branding (e.g., Ellison et al., 2006).

However, in situations where social relationships are not expected to endure, such as in social-commercial exchanges, this tension is largely unknown. Since hosts are the targets of trust in online transactions and offline service delivery, they have the burden of presenting themselves as trustworthy parties (Haas & Deseran, 1981). Therefore, it can be proposed that hosts employ various strategies to present themselves online through their profile descriptions in order to gain trust from prospective guests.

Proposition 1. There are different identifiable patterns of online self-presentation among hosts of peer-to-peer accommodation.

2.2. Trust within digital platforms

In consumption situations, trust matters when the trusting expectations make a difference to a decision. Trust is defined as positive expectations regarding the conduct, motives, and intentions of trustees, which lead to a willingness to act on the basis of the trustees' words and actions (Cook & Wall, 1980; McAllister, 1995). As suggested by Barber (1983), trust in social exchanges is based on an expectation of the persistence and fulfillment of the natural and social order, an expectation of the technically competent role performance from those involved, and an expectation that partners in social interactions will carry out their fiduciary obligations and responsibilities. That is, from a social perspective, trust is centered on moral duties. Prospective guests make a booking through a peer-to-peer accommodation platform on the confident expectations that all parties involved in the service system, including the hosts and the company behind the online platform (e.g., Airbnb), will act competently and dutifully. From a rational perspective, trust centers on self-interest; an increase in trust will decrease the transaction cost associated with protecting self from the possibilities of others' opportunistic behavior (Lauer &

Deng, 2007). Trust is, thus, defined as the willingness of trustors to be vulnerable to the actions of trustees based on the expectations that trustees will perform important actions irrespective of the ability to monitor them (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995).

In general, trust is partially a product of people's capacity to assess the trustworthiness of others (Sheppard & Sherman, 1998). In deciding whether or not to trust hosts in peer-to-peer accommodation platforms, prospective guests make an estimation of hosts' characteristics that reflect trustworthiness. Sztompka (1999) suggested two types of information on which people make such trusting decisions: the inherent traits of the trustees, which lead to primary trustworthiness, and the context in which the trustees operate, which leads to derived trustworthiness. In estimating primary trustworthiness, people employ three criteria: reputation, performance, and appearance (Sztompka, 1999). Reputation is associated with record of past deeds, consistency of the record, and a certain unity of conduct over time. Performance refers to actual deeds, present conduct, and currently obtained results. Appearance is associated with one's look and self-presentation, which in offline contexts includes how people dress, bodily discipline and civility, as well as ascribed statuses. Based on this conceptualization, the information people can use to estimate the primary trustworthiness of peer-to-peer accommodation hosts include reviews on past and most recent services (to estimate reputation and performance) as well as host profiles (to estimate appearance). Further, trust is viewed as an expectation that others will handle their volition in keeping with the personalities they have presented and made socially visible (Luhmann, 1979). This infers that trusting hosts means expecting hosts to act in accordance with the persona they portray through their profile description as well as their reputation. Therefore, it can be suggested that the ways hosts

articulate themselves online can have an influence on prospective guests' estimation of the trustworthiness of the hosts.

Mayer et al. (1995) proposed the framework of the facets of trustworthiness, which consist of three attributes and characteristics of trustees that predict trust: (1) trustees have the required skills and characteristics that enable them to be perceived as competent within a specific domain (competence or ability), (2) trustees are believed to feel interpersonal care and concern and be willing to do good to trustors beyond egocentric profit motive (benevolence), and (3) trustees are perceived to adhere to a set of principles that trustors consider to make the trustees dependable and reliable (integrity). Various studies have applied the three concepts as a means to assess trustworthiness of exchange partners, including individuals and organizations (e.g., firms), in offline and online settings (e.g., Cheung & Lee, 2001; Gefen, 2002; Lee & Turban, 2001; Ratnasingam & Pavlou, 2003). Indeed, while initially proposed for face-to-face interpersonal contexts, these dimensions of trustworthiness (also referred to as trusting beliefs) can be adapted to measure online trust, where the object of trust is a person or a technology-deploying organization. For example, McKnight, Choudhury and Kacmar (2002a; 2002b) assessed consumers' trusting beliefs toward a web vendor, which consist of perception of competence, benevolence and integrity, based on the company profile portrayed on a hypothetical website. Similarly, Lauer and Deng (2007) estimated the three dimensions of trustworthiness of a company in the context of e-commerce based on the evaluation of the company's privacy policy on its website. Finally, Raban (2009) identified the role of self-presentation, specifically cues in textual communication, in online trust between users in a "Question-and-Answer" (Q&A) online community, which leads to social and monetary feedback. Therefore, it can be suggested that

prospective guests will expect certain levels of competence, benevolence, and integrity from the information they can find about the hosts on peer-to-peer accommodation platforms online.

Proposition 2. Hosts' online self-presentation patterns will result in different levels of perceived trustworthiness among prospective guests.

Previous studies suggested the antecedents and consequences of trusting beliefs on online and offline consumer trust (Beldad, de Jong, & Steelhouder, 2010; Hoffman, Novak, & Peralta, 1999). In online platform contexts, trust in online sellers is influenced by trust in platform providers or intermediaries (Chen et al., 2009). Studies also found that trusting beliefs lead to trusting intentions. McKnight et al., (2002a; 2002b) found the positive impact of trusting beliefs on willingness to depend on and transact with an online vendor. Lauer and Deng (2007) identified that perceived trustworthiness of an online company positively influenced trust in the company, which results in customer truthfulness and loyalty. Additionally, studies found the individual dimensions of trustworthiness to have an effect on different trusting intentions. For example, Gefen (2002) discovered that perceived ability of online vendors leads to window shopping intention, while perceived integrity to purchase intention. While the aim of this study is not to test the relationships between perceived trustworthiness (or its individual dimensions) and its antecedents and/or consequences, it is worth noting the findings from previous research to support the significance of studying perceived trustworthiness of peer-to-peer accommodation hosts. Given the importance of trusting beliefs in generating trusting intentions, a better understanding on how hosts can induce positive expectations among prospective hosts is critical to assess the dynamics of trust system and consumer decision making processes in peer-to-peer accommodation platforms.

3. Methodology

3.1. Study 1: Host self-presentation patterns

The aim of Study 1 is to identify patterns of hosts' self-presentation on the leading peer-to-peer accommodation platform, Airbnb. Dataset containing textual information of Airbnb hosts 14 cities in the United States were obtained from InsideAirbnb.com (2015). InsideAirbnb.com sourced the dataset from publicly available information on Airbnb website, served by Amazon S3 "bucket." In order to analyze the underlying self-presentation strategies among hosts who are not professional accommodation businesses, this study excluded hosts who have more than one listing on Airbnb. A total of 31,119 Airbnb host descriptions were selected. A text analytics software, KH Coder (Higuchi, 2016; 2017), was used to analyze the large textual dataset. First, the text corpus was pre-processed for further analysis, using Stanford POS tagger (Toutanova et al., 2003). This pre-processing comprises of four sequential steps: tokenization (i.e., decomposing a stream of text into words, phrases, symbols, and other meaningful parts called tokens), elimination of stop words (i.e., detaching frequently occurring non-context-bearing, common words, such as definite or indefinite articles and auxiliary verbs, including "a", "an", "the", etc.), part-of-speech (POS) tagging (i.e., allocating parts of speech to each word, such as noun, verb, adjective, and so on, based on both its definition and its context), and lemmatization (i.e., conflating tokens to their root form, such as "booking" and "booked" into "book"). The study conducted by Tussyadiah and Zach (2017) comprehensively explained the relevant terminologies used in this study. The results of pre-processing are presented in Table 1, which details the total number of tokens, word types, mean term frequency (TF) and a standard deviation of TF for 14 cities in the US. As seen in Table 1 New York, NY has the most number

of Airbnb hosts across fourteen cities (12,175 documents), followed by Los Angeles, CA (5,278), San Francisco, CA (2,581), Chicago, IL (1,712), and Austin, TX (1,681).

Then, a series of hierarchical cluster analyses (i.e., document clustering) were conducted for each city. Based on the dissimilarity matrices and agglomeration schedules as well as number of documents classified into the different clusters across the different cities, the 2-cluster solution appears to have higher accuracy in terms of self-presentation patterns than the 4-cluster solution (see Table 2). Therefore, results from 2-cluster solution were considered for further studies. Only a small fraction of reviews in the documents (less than 1% of the data) does not belong to any of the clusters.

[Please insert Table 1 and 2 about here]

The next step was to classify a set of documents having similar appearance patterns in order to identify the differences in how Airbnb hosts communicate their self-identity online. A hierarchical cluster analysis was applied with Ward's criterion and Jaccard Coefficient as distance measure (Finch, 2005). Furthermore, in order to obtain better insights regarding the clusters of host descriptions, word co-occurrence networks were developed using Jaccard Coefficient of word pairs to determine the edges of the network and Fruchterman and Reingold's (1991) algorithm to determine the layout of the network. Co-occurrence networks developed from the top frequency words belonging to the two clusters in the dataset from Austin, TX, Chicago, IL, and New York, NY are presented in Figures 1 – 3. Size of nodes indicates term frequency. Thickness of edges indicates strength of connections (i.e., extent of similarity) between word pairs. Color of nodes indicates communities in the network, which were detected using random walk method (Pons & Latapy, 2005). Word communities, the densely connected sub-graphs in the network, can be interpreted as representation of themes from the text corpus. It

is important to note that the researchers also conducted analyses on the top frequency words and co-occurrence networks of all cities in the dataset, but the rest are not included in manuscript due to space limitation.

[Please insert Figure 1, 2, and 3 about here]

It can be observed from the top words (see Tables A1 – A3 in Appendix A) that similar distribution of top words makes up the two clusters in three cities. For Cluster 1 in Austin and New York and Cluster 2 in Chicago, among the important top words are “love,” “live,” “travel,” “people,” and “new.” The other cluster consists of words such as “professional,” “artist,” “designer,” “photographer,” and “student.” Based on the list of words alone, it can be suggested that host descriptions in one cluster are dominated by themes related to their love for travel and meeting new people, while those in the other cluster by themes associated with host professions. This is supported by the patterns represented in the word co-occurrence networks (Figures 1 – 3). Therefore, it can be concluded that peer-to-peer accommodation hosts present themselves online following two broad patterns, which can be presented into two host personae: Persona 1, referred to as ‘Travelers’ herein for simplification, consisting of hosts who personify themselves as well-traveled individuals who are eager to meet new people, and Persona 2, called ‘Workers’ herein, consisting of hosts who identify themselves as working professionals.

Looking further into the list and associations of the top words, host descriptions belonging to Persona 1: “Travelers” also contain presentation regarding competence in hosting guests, with clearly-defined subgraphs corresponding to knowledge about and experience living in the city, as well as recommendation regarding things to do in the neighborhood (e.g., favorite places). However, the degree of self-disclosure is rather low, indicated by the absence of personal characteristics such as age, profession, or marital status in the top words. Therefore, it

can be suggested that the underlying strategy behind Persona 1: “Travelers” is to project an identity that fits for the role, a *host*, by highlighting their resourcefulness and empathy for the traveling guests, offering travel experience, recommendation, and social connection. On the other hand, the word co-occurrence networks of Persona 2: “Workers” show disjointed subgraphs around different types of host professions and industry (e.g., “illustrator,” “graphic,” “designer,” “photographer”) or a hobby (e.g., “singer,” “actor,” “reading,” “gardening”), but less on hosting-related information. Some top words reveal the personal characteristics of the host, such as gender (“male,” “man”), age (“mid,” “twenty”), marital status (“wife”), etc., implying a higher degree of self-disclosure. Since work has long been considered a principal source of identity to many (Fryers, 2006), and that a majority of American workers get a sense of self-identity from their job (Gallup, 2014), it can be suggested that self-presentation strategy associated with Persona 2: “Workers” is to project personal identity, presenting self as a *peer* in the peer-to-peer system. It is important to note that additional clusters in the 4-cluster solutions are derivatives of the two personae (e.g., “Workers” with niche professions such as doctors, bankers, and lawyers), but do not demonstrate different patterns of self-presentation strategies.

3.2. *Study 2: Host personae, perceived trustworthiness, and intention to book*

The objective of Study 2 is to understand consumers’ responses to the different ways Airbnb hosts present themselves online (i.e., host personae). Specifically, this study examines if the different personae would result in different levels of perceived trustworthiness of the hosts, including perceived ability, benevolence, and integrity, and, subsequently, likelihood to book accommodation from the hosts.

3.2.1. Pilot test: Confirmation of host personae

Before the main study was conducted, a pilot test was run in order to examine if respondents can (1) correctly identify host personae based upon the host descriptions and (2) confirm the suitability of the descriptions as a proper stimulus for the following main studies. Actual host descriptions, one from each cluster, were randomly selected from the dataset and presented in a randomized order as stimuli in within-subject experimental design (see stimuli in Appendix B). After reading the descriptions, respondents were asked to classify the host into either Persona 1 (*“Host is well-traveled and eager to meet new people.”*) or Persona 2 (*“Host is a working professional.”*). We carefully designed the study to minimize confounding effects that can be derived from survey and/or response errors. First, in order to manage bias related with the context of a specific destination, three types of questionnaires were developed for three separate cities: New York in NY, Chicago in IL, and Austin in TX. Second, with the aim of reducing possible sentiment bias resulting from host names, following Dodds et al.’s (2011) hedonometrics study, all host names were changed into names that score 5 (i.e., neutral in sentiments) on a valence scale of 1 – 9: Neil for male and Marjorie for female. The questionnaire was distributed via Amazon Mechanical Turk (AMT), targeting users residing in the United States. As previous studies have shown that users with high reputation (95% or higher in approval rating) produce high quality data (Peer, Vosgerau, & Acquisti, 2014), the link to the questionnaire was only made available to MTurk users with approval rating above 98%. In order to target travelers, only those who have traveled in the past six months and are familiar with peer-to-peer accommodation services were allowed to continue to answer the survey. Respondents were randomly assigned to answer one of the three questionnaires. This effort

resulted in 101 responses for New York and 100 responses for two other cities, respectively ($N = 301$). All respondents received US\$.75 (seventy-five cents) upon completion of the survey.

Some respondents had visited the city portrayed in the stimuli: 71 had visited New York, 41 had visited Chicago, and 24 had visited Austin. The majority of respondents (81%) had stayed in Airbnb or other similar peer-to-peer accommodation services before; 57% of them had their most recent stay within the last six months. Of those who had not stayed in a peer-to-peer accommodation, they were moderately familiar with the service ($Mean = 2.76$, $St. Dev. = 1.011$). As presented in Table 3, the majority of respondents classified host descriptions correctly into the two personae. On average, the accuracy is 92% of for New York and Chicago and 94% for Austin. In order to assess the reliability of agreement between respondents in classifying the stimuli (i.e., inter-rater reliability), Fleiss' Kappa value (Fleiss, 1971) was calculated for each destination. All three studies demonstrated substantial agreement ($\kappa > .61$) (.69 for New York, .70 for Chicago, and .75 for Austin, $p < 0.001$), indicating tolerable reliability and ultimately confirm the experimental stimuli to be used for further studies (Landis & Koch, 1977).

[Please insert Table 3 about here]

3.2.2. *The main study*

In order to address the research questions, stimuli that produced the highest agreement rating for each persona in the pilot test (i.e., Persona 1: "Traveler" from Chicago and Persona 2: "Worker" from New York) were used in a follow-up main study with between-subject design (See Appendix C for questionnaire). Host names, Neil for male and Marjorie for female, both having neutral sentiment (Dodds et al., 2011), were used to represent gender of the hosts. Respondents were presented one of two host descriptions and asked to rate the host in terms of trustworthiness. In order to assess the perceived trustworthiness of hosts as a response to host

personae, scales measuring trusting beliefs: ability, benevolence, and integrity, were derived from previous studies (Colquitt & Rodell, 2011; Ridings, Gefen, & Arinze, 2002; Walsh & Beatty, 2007) and adapted to peer-to-peer accommodation context (see Table 4). Then, they were asked to rate the likelihood to book from the host given a good match between the property and their preference. All responses were presented in a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree or extremely unlikely) to 5 (strongly agree or extremely likely). Respondents were also asked to provide their travel behaviors, experiences and familiarity with peer-to-peer accommodation, and demographic characteristics. The questionnaire was distributed online via AMT targeting consumers who reside in the United States with AMT approval rating above 98%, resulted in 800 responses. All respondents received US\$.40 (forty cents) upon completion of the survey.

[Please insert Table 4 about here]

About 59% of respondents are male and over 70% of them are between the ages of 25 and 44 years old. About half (44.6%) of the subjects obtained a 4-year college degree. With regard to annual household income, 68% of them receive \$70,000 or below. In terms of accommodation experiences, the majority of respondents (74.8%) had stayed in Airbnb or other similar peer-to-peer accommodation services before; 58.1% of them had the most recent stay within the last six months. Of those who had not stayed in a peer-to-peer accommodation, they were moderately familiar with the service (*Mean* = 2.82, *St. Dev.* = 1.04).

Partial Least Square (PLS) was employed to assess the measurement model by considering discriminant and convergent validities as well as reliability. It is important to note that this study does not aim to test theory development, which is the main purpose of using the covariance-based structural equation modelling (e.g., AMOS). Indeed, the key purpose of this

research is to identify factors enhancing the variance explained in the outcome variable, which, in this research, is trusting intention. This is consistent to the rationale of PLS employing a principal component analysis to maximize the extent of variance accounting for the endogenous variables, rather than developing a covariance matrix (or reproducing the theoretical model) in covariance-based SEM (Chin, Marcolin, & Newsted, 2003).

In addition, all measurements were applied from extant studies that suggested acceptable levels of reliability and validity. Thus, it is appropriate to carry out a confirmatory approach to an analysis, instead of an exploratory method. To do so, this study focused on cross-loadings of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), Average Variance Extracted (AVE) with cut-off value over 0.50, and latent correlation analysis (Chin, 2010). Additionally, both Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) on the basis of consistency reliability were estimated with a cut-off level of 0.80 (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011). Given the measurements were confirmed to be in acceptable estimations, the group comparisons between Persona 1: "Travelers" and Persona 2: "Workers" were conducted using t-tests. Meanwhile, as part of robustness test, we checked potential existence of confounding effects that may cause group differences in terms of past accommodation experiences and demographic characteristics (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998).

Table 5 presents the results of CFA to estimate the measurements for determining each construct. It is found that all of indicator reliability (or loadings) are over the cut-off of 0.70. This implies that the factor loadings on the corresponding constructs are much higher than the ones on other principal constructs, which confirms the discriminant validity. The square root of AVEs was then calculated to assess the convergent validity for the individual constructs (see Table 6).

[Please insert Table 5 about here]

The results of the analysis show that the AVEs of each construct are larger than the squared cross-correlations of other constructs, which confirms discriminant validity. The values of AVEs are over 0.70. This implies that the variables explain the indicators more than the error variances, which confirms the convergent validity. Two types of reliability tests, Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability, were estimated. All values are over 0.75, which indicate sufficiently high levels to satisfy tolerable reliability (Hair et al., 2011). Accordingly, it can be confirmed that the measurements for each construct are validated and reliable in acceptable levels.

[Please insert Table 6 about here]

There were significant differences of perceived trustworthiness and the likelihood to book an accommodation between the different host personae. As shown at Table 7, consumers are likely to perceive higher levels of trust to hosts who described themselves as Persona 1: "Travelers" than those as Persona 2: "Workers." Specifically, people who responded to Persona 1: "Travelers" show higher values in terms of trust in platform (*Mean* = 3.90), integrity (*Mean* = 4.02), benevolence (*Mean* = 4.23), and ability (*Mean* = 4.39) compared to those engaged with Persona 2: "Workers" (*Mean* = 3.79, 3.94, 3.51, and 3.97, respectively). Consistently, hosts who described themselves as well-traveled and eager to meet new people induce a higher likelihood to book (*Mean* = 4.26) than those who presented themselves as a working professional (*Mean* = 3.99, $p < 0.001$).

[Please insert Table 7 about here]

It is important to verify that the results of the group differences do not include the effects from other aspects that were not manipulated in the study, also called confounding variables (Ewert & Sibthorp, 2009). Based upon reviewing relevant literature that discussed the potential

factors influencing perceived trust, we compared previous peer-to-peer accommodation experiences and demographic characteristics between respondents who are assigned into the two personae, respectively. As presented in Table 8, no significant difference was found in the results. This implies that confounding effects on the significant findings of group differences are restricted.

[Please insert Table 8 about here]

3.2.3. Additional study: A new persona

We carried out an additional study in order to understand consumer responses to a host persona with combined characteristics of Persona 1: “Travelers” and Persona 2: “Workers”, called herein as Persona 3: “Hybrid”. To do so, a host description reflecting a hybrid persona was developed by combining description of their professional affiliation (adapted from “Workers”) and explorative personality (adapted from “Travelers”), especially with regards to hosting competence (see Appendix B). We then compared consumer perception of “Hybrid” with that of “Travelers” and “Workers” personae, respectively. A series of identical procedures used in Study 2 was applied to collect the data, which results in a total of 279 responses. About 60% of the subjects are male, and around half are aged between 25 and 34 years old. Approximately, 43% of respondents obtained a 4-year college degree.

Consumer trust (i.e., integrity, benevolence, and ability) and booking intention were compared across Airbnb hosts’ personae: “Travelers,” “Workers,” and “Hybrid.” Of them, significant differences appeared in terms of benevolence ($F\text{-value} = 125.84, p < 0.001$), ability ($F\text{-value} = 52.25, p < 0.001$) and trusting intention ($F\text{-value} = 11.61, p < 0.001$) (see Figure 4). Consumers who read the description of Persona 1: “Travelers” tend to show the highest perception of benevolence, ability, and booking intention, followed by those who have engaged

with Persona 3: “Hybrid” and Persona 2: “Workers” hosts. More specifically, applying a Duncan method for the post-hoc analysis, the mean values of ability and trusting intention between Persona 3: “Hybrid” and Persona 2: “Workers” are not statistically different. However, the mean values of all three variables of Persona 1: “Travelers” are statistically different to those of both Persona 3: “Hybrid” and Persona 2: “Workers.”

[Please insert Figure 4 about here]

4. Conclusion and implications

The rising significance of sharing economy in the tourism and hospitality industry calls for an extensive investigation into the unique processes of peer exchanges and service experiences involving mixed-mode interactions, online and offline. Specifically, peer-to-peer accommodation services involve not only transactions between non-business entities (i.e., individuals) online, facilitated by third-party platform providers such as Airbnb, the use of peer-to-peer accommodation often involves sleeping in a bedroom of a stranger. Hence, trust between prospective guests and hosts has a significant role in this new service system. For peer-to-peer accommodation hosts, being considered trustworthy by potential guests is key to thrive in this business. However, unlike conventional hotel companies who regularly market themselves strategically to appeal to potential customers, it is largely unknown if individual hosts employ self-marketing strategies to achieve this outcome. This paper provides a closer look at patterns of self-presentation among Airbnb hosts in major cities in the United States to identify the ways hosts articulate their identity online. Further, multiple studies were conducted to test how these different self-presentation strategies result in consumer trust and likelihood of being selected at the point of booking decision. The findings support further conceptualization of self-presentation

strategies adopted by “amateur individuals” in their capacity as (paid) service provider and in mixed-mode interactions context. Further, the results also provide empirical evidence effectiveness of different self-presentation strategies in inducing perceived trustworthiness and booking intention.

Using text mining techniques to analyze Airbnb host descriptions in major US cities, this study identified two broad patterns in host self-presentation based on the words they are using to describe themselves online. In the first cluster, a group of hosts paints a picture of a well-traveled individual who is eager to meet new people and show all that the destination has to offer. This pattern indicates an underlying strategy for peer-to-peer accommodation hosts to portray themselves as a host with knowledge about the “ins and outs” of the destination and expansive experience of traveling, allowing them to understand and feel empathetic toward fellow travelers (i.e., guests). These host descriptions carry a “promise” of experienced travelers turning into attentive hosts, implying an emphasis on desirability, while being relatively low on self-disclosure. In the second cluster, host descriptions contain more personal information, particularly highlighting their profession, representing a higher degree of self-disclosure. It is suggested that because profession can be a main source of personal identity, these hosts are projecting self as regular individuals. As previous studies suggest the need to balance between desirability and authenticity in self-presentation involving mixed-mode interactions (Ellison et al., 2006; Gibbs et al., 2006; Labrecque et al., 2011), the identification of these two patterns implies opportunities to assess if one is more effective in bringing about consumer trust than the other.

In the second study, consumer responses to the two patterns of host self-presentation were compared in terms of trusting beliefs, which include aspects of ability, benevolence, and

integrity, as well as trusting intention. It was identified that consumers who are exposed to host description belonging to Persona 1: “Travelers” perceived a higher level of trust in terms of integrity, benevolence and ability compared to those exposed to Persona 2: “Worker”.

Importantly, consumers also rated higher for likelihood to book from the host in Persona 1:

“Travelers” compared to that of Persona 2: “Workers”. This implies that a host who is portrayed as well-traveled and eager to meet new people is considered more trustworthy and desirable compared those who disclose their profession as personal identity. Further, in order to ensure that the source of the significant difference in perceived trustworthiness is the host’s travel experience and eagerness to meet new people instead of information related to hosting competence (e.g., knowledge about city), a hybrid persona was created by combining description of profession as personal identity and information related to hosting competence. The results suggest that while Persona 1: “Travelers” still shows the highest scores in terms of benevolence, ability, and trusting intention, the hybrid persona seems to perform better than the Persona 2: “Workers.” This implies the important role of hosts’ travel experience in the evaluation of trustworthiness among “fellow” travelers. It can be suggested that the fact that hosts have experienced similar situations as the prospective guests (i.e., visiting new destinations, finding accommodation, etc.) gives a new meaning to renting from (and staying with) *peer* travelers.

As this study includes profiles from hosts who have one listing at the time of data collection, the results represent self-presentation behavior of peer-to-peer accommodation hosts who are “amateur” individuals as opposed to professional accommodation providers. The managerial implications of these findings are twofold. First, while about half the hosts follow a somewhat typical approach to writing user profiles in online communities, including information about their profession, age, marital/family status, hobby, etc., the rest project their image to

reflect their role as a (desirable) host through their profile. In describing themselves, these hosts project personal strength that is highly relevant to hosting (i.e., well-traveled, open to meet new people, knowledgeable about neighborhoods). This identifiable pattern indicates that although they are not conventional business entities, but nonprofessional players in the industry, they behave strategically to market themselves in the sharing economy platform. For tourism destinations, the important implication is that residents who are renting out their property to tourists act as destination “ambassadors” and should be considered as additional resources in tourism management. Second, the significant difference in perceived trustworthiness between consumers who are exposed to Persona 1: “Travelers” and those to Persona 2: “Worker” has a direct implication with regards to the effective self-marketing approach, which is useful for peer-to-peer accommodation hosts. According to the “profile as promise” framework (Ellison et al., 2011), profiles serve as a psychological contract between hosts and prospective guests, in that hosts promise aspects of the self that they believe are feasible during future service delivery. As evident in the results from Study 2, consumers trust a “well-traveled” host more than a “designer/doctor/lawyer” host, implying that communicating hosting-related information carries more “promise” than personal information. Furthermore, in light of a higher perception of competence in Persona 3: “Hybrid” compared to Persona 2: “Workers,” it can be suggested for peer-to-peer accommodation hosts that adding statements that project their resourcefulness (e.g., knowledge about the city and neighborhood) can be effective in inducing perceived ability, which shapes the overall trustworthiness.

Theoretically, this study contributes to discussions on sharing economy in tourism literature by revealing the strategic self-marketing behavior of peer-to-peer accommodation hosts. Specifically, the findings contribute to our understanding of self-presentation strategies in

mixed-mode interactions in the context of peer-to-peer service platform, where prospective tourists refer to online profile of residents (hosts) to make accommodation decision with the expectation of staying (and interacting with them) in their property. That is, apart from typical hotel marketing strategies targeted to form people's expectations of service quality associated with brand reputation, an understanding of the strategic mechanism in the sharing economy to generate trust from prospective guests is crucial. Indeed, this study reinforces the framework of "profile as promise" suggested in studies on self-presentation in interactions involving online and offline modalities (e.g., Ellison et al., 2006; 2011; Gibbs et al., 2006). Importantly, this study clarifies the strategic behavior of hosts in sharing economy, particularly with regards to self-marketing, filling the research gap suggested by previous research on sharing economy in the context of tourism and hospitality (e.g., Cheng, 2016a; Li, Moreno, & Zhang, 2015). Further, the results demonstrating the different levels of perceived trustworthiness and booking intention induced by the two host self-presentation patterns contributes to a better understanding on host-related factors that influence tourists' decisions to book accommodation. This enriches the discussion on decision-making process in the emerging peer-to-peer economy in tourism literature.

Despite the contribution, this study has several limitations that should be addressed by future research. Firstly, in stimulating perceived trustworthiness and booking intention, this research did not consider other cues in host profiles, such as pictures, reviews, and other demographic characteristics, as previous studies have studied these aspects separately (e.g., Deng & Ravichandran, 2017; Ert et al., 2016). Future studies should combine different aspects of host profiles to identify the importance of host description relative to pictures or other identifiers in inducing trust. Secondly, this study did not consider the variation in the length of host

descriptions, even though the presented stimuli fit the average length of documents in the corpus. In order to test the effects of profile length (and level of details) in host profiles, future studies should test consumer responses to variable lengths in host descriptions. Finally, the stimuli used to solicit consumers' booking intention were made independent from the property characteristics, assuming that the property matches consumer's criteria. Since property characteristics on peer-to-peer accommodation platform are highly variable, future studies should consider the weight of trust in host relative to property characteristics in influencing booking decision.

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Figure 1. Word co-occurrence networks: Austin, TX

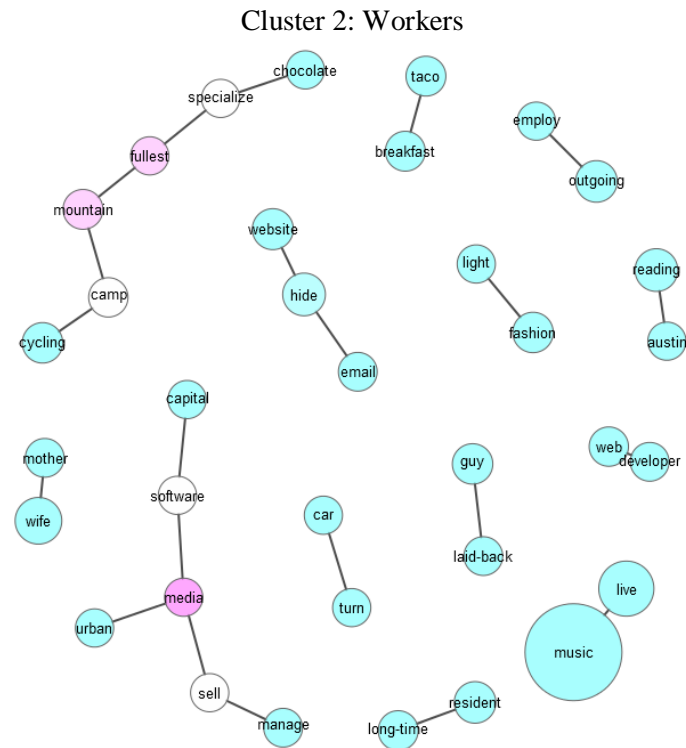
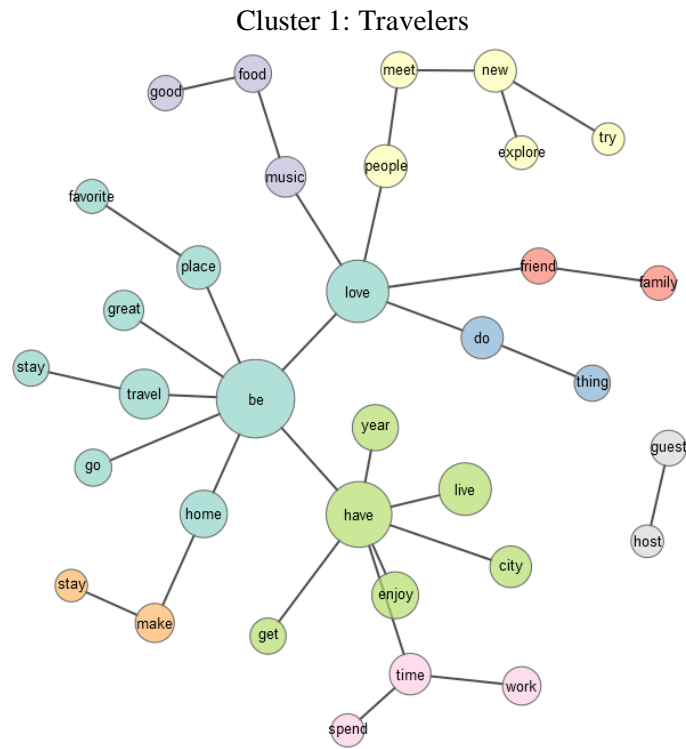
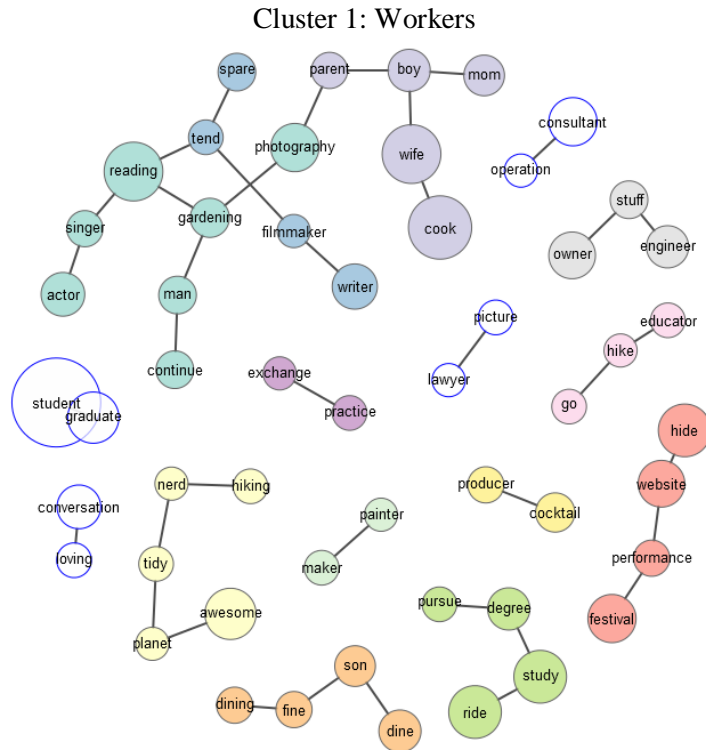
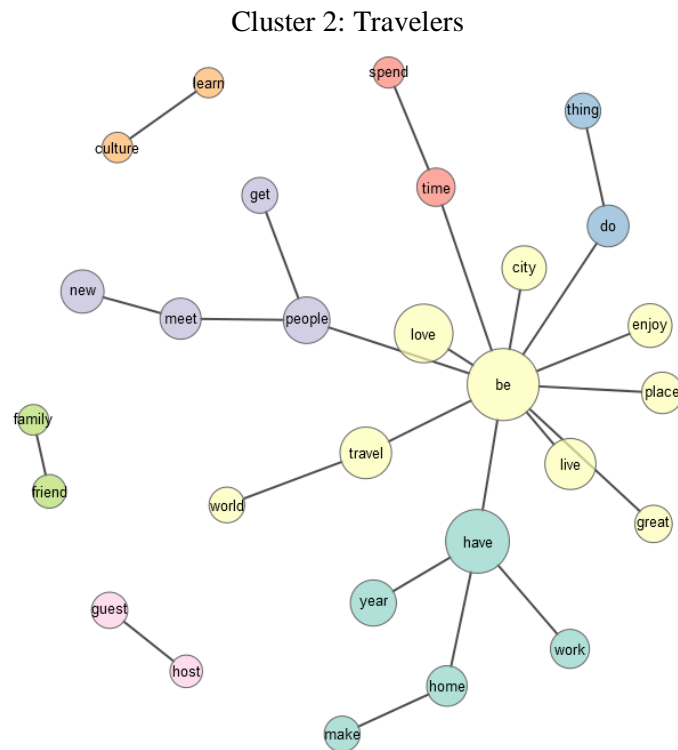


Figure 2. Word co-occurrence networks: Chicago, IL



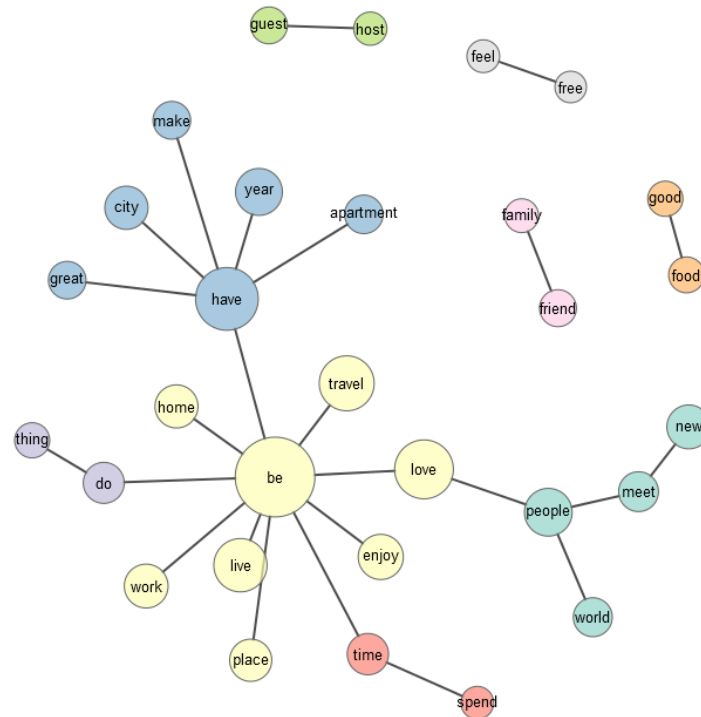
Nodes = 53; Edges = 39; Density = .028



Nodes = 28; Edges = 24; Density = .063

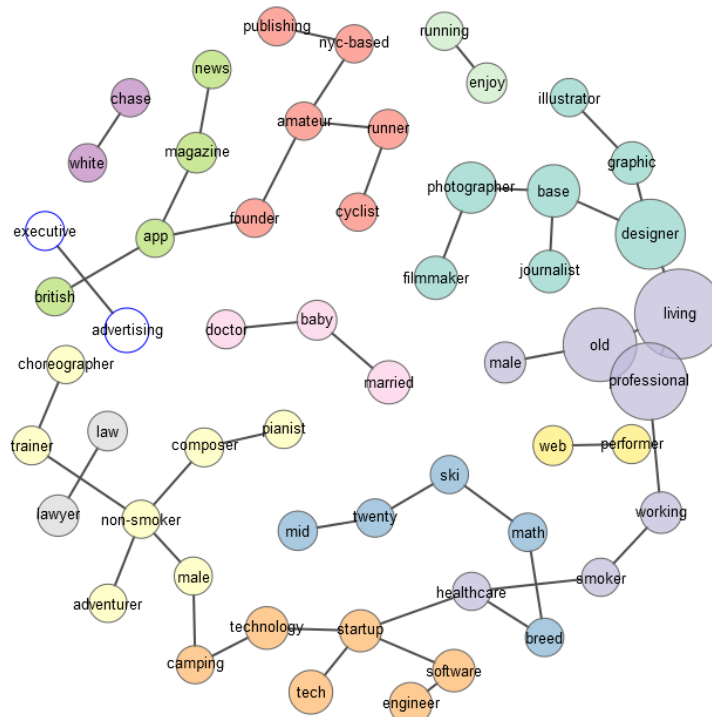
Figure 3. Word co-occurrence network: New York, NY

Cluster 1: Travelers



Nodes = 30; Edges = 25; Density = .057

Cluster 2: Workers



Nodes = 55; Edges = 49; Density = .032

Figure 4. Comparison of perceived trust and booking intention across Persona 1: “Travelers,” Persona 2: “Workers,” and Persona 3: “Hybrid.”

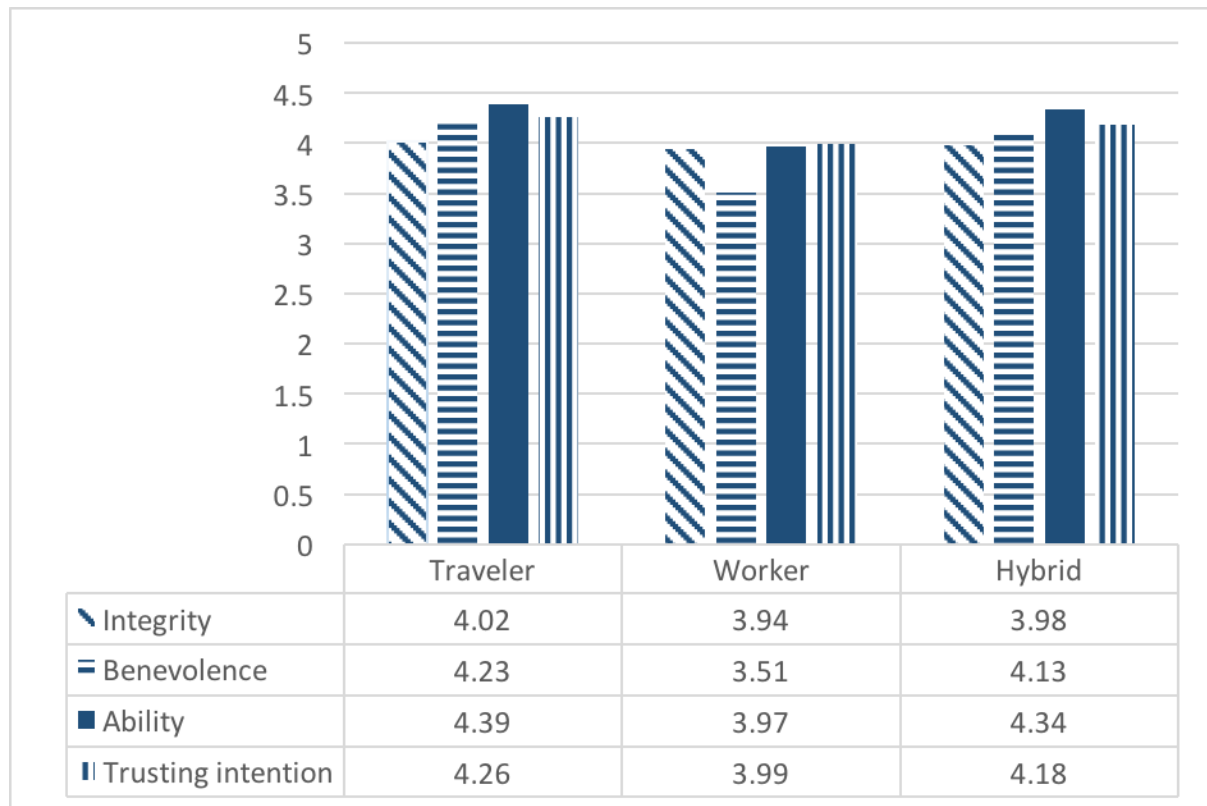


Table 1. Descriptive results of textual data

	Documents	Sentences	Sentences/ Document	Tokens	Tokens/ Document	Tokens in Analysis	Mean of Term Frequency	St. Dev. of Term Frequency
Los Angeles, CA	5,278	16,650	3.15	378,184	71.65	234,368	14.82	198.48
Santa Cruz County, CA	327	1,204	3.68	29,833	91.23	18,399	5.49	33.28
San Francisco, CA	2,581	7,893	3.06	185,251	71.77	113,859	11.01	115.92
San Diego, CA	951	3,273	3.44	78,773	82.83	48,895	8.11	66.87
Oakland, CA	506	1,586	3.13	39,738	78.53	24,297	5.64	36.79
Washington, DC	1,217	3,618	2.97	82,232	67.57	50,470	8.09	67.10
Chicago, IL	1,712	5,861	3.42	133,775	78.14	82,181	9.76	97.31
New Orleans, LA	794	2,578	3.25	62,918	79.24	38,743	6.90	54.24
Boston, MA	690	2,076	3.01	46,661	67.62	28,778	6.43	46.12
New York, NY	12,175	34,922	2.87	731,509	60.08	450,781	19.84	327.00
Portland, OR	1,201	4,526	3.77	117,334	97.70	72,041	8.92	80.99
Nashville, TN	686	2,586	3.77	60,838	88.69	37,518	7.13	54.44
Austin, TX	1,681	5,134	3.05	119,388	71.02	73,214	9.22	87.01
Seattle, WA	1,320	4,498	3.41	110,938	84.04	68,121	9.19	84.00

Table 2. Cluster analyses: 2-cluster solution vs. 4-cluster solution

	Total Docs.	2-Cluster Solution		4-Cluster Solution				Uniden tified
		Cluster 1 (Travel ers)	Cluster 2 (Worke rs)	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	
Los Angeles, CA	5,278	2,926	1,978	322	2,604	92	1,886	374
Santa Cruz, CA	327	154	160	154	78	30	52	13
San Francisco, CA	2,581	1,128	1,291	43	1,085	429	862	162
San Diego, CA	951	516	392	153	363	93	299	43
Oakland, CA	506	115	366	38	77	232	134	25
Washington, DC	1,217	371	772	63	308	159	613	74
Chicago, IL	1,712	544	1,086	31	513	714	372	82
New Orleans, LA	794	538	219	69	469	66	153	37
Boston, MA	690	311	342	36	275	27	315	37
New York, NY	12,175	5,047	6,206	766	4,281	235	5,971	922
Portland, OR	1,201	320	833	155	165	191	642	48
Nashville, TN	686	215	440	127	88	172	268	31
Austin, TX	1,681	813	772	813	162	226	384	96
Seattle, WA	1,320	558	716	375	134	331	435	46

Table 3. Reliability of stimuli: Percent agreement and Fleiss' Kappa

	New York, NY (<i>N</i> = 101)	Chicago, IL (<i>N</i> = 100)	Austin, TX (<i>N</i> = 100)
Persona 1: "Travelers"	85%	93%	91%
Persona 2: "Workers"	98%	91%	96%
Fleiss' Kappa	.69***	.70***	.75***

Note: *** $p < .001$

Table 4. Measurements of trust

Construct and Definition	Scale	Literature
Trust in Platform: the positive expectations that the peer-to-peer accommodation platform can be trusted.	TInP_1 – Peer-to-peer accommodation rental services can generally be trusted. TInP_2 – I trust peer-to-peer accommodation rental services. TInP_3 – I have great confidence in peer-to-peer accommodation rental services. TInP_4 – Peer-to-peer accommodation rental services have high integrity. TInP_5 – I can depend on peer-to-peer accommodation rental services to do the right thing. TInP_6 – Peer to-peer rental services can be relied upon.	Walsh & Beatty (2007)
Integrity: the expectation that hosts adhere to a set of principles that guests consider to make the hosts dependable and reliable.	Integrity_1 – The host is honest with his/her guests. Ntegrity_2 – The host acts sincerely in dealing with his/her guests. Integrity_3 – The host has sound principles.	Colquitt & Rodell (2011) and Ridings et al. (2002).
Benevolence: the expectation that hosts feel interpersonal care and concern and are willing to do good to guests beyond egocentric profit motive.	Bene_1 – The host is concerned about the welfare of his/her guests. Bene_2 – The host genuinely cares about his/her guests' needs. Bene_3 – The host looks out for what is important to his/her guests. Bene_4 – The host goes out of his/her way to help his/her guests.	Colquitt & Rodell (2011) and Ridings et al. (2002).
Ability: the expectation that hosts have the required skills and characteristics that enable them to be perceived as competent within peer-to-peer accommodation domain.	Ability_1 – The host is qualified. Ability_2 – The host is skilled. Ability_3 – The host is experienced. Ability_4 – The host is capable.	Colquitt & Rodell (2011) and Ridings et al. (2002).

Table 5. Results of confirmatory factor analysis

	Trust in Platform	Integrity	Benevolence	Ability	Trusting Intention
TInP_1	0.85	0.37	0.33	0.33	0.34
TInP_2	0.88	0.40	0.37	0.33	0.39
TInP_3	0.89	0.39	0.36	0.34	0.38
TInP_4	0.84	0.41	0.37	0.34	0.32
TInP_5	0.85	0.44	0.37	0.35	0.34
TInP_6	0.87	0.44	0.40	0.35	0.34
Integrity_1	0.36	0.74	0.49	0.47	0.35
Integrity_2	0.40	0.85	0.46	0.47	0.34
Integrity_3	0.41	0.87	0.59	0.55	0.42
Bene_1	0.40	0.55	0.87	0.53	0.37
Bene_2	0.37	0.60	0.92	0.57	0.40
Bene_3	0.38	0.59	0.91	0.58	0.43
Bene_4	0.36	0.50	0.87	0.56	0.36
Ability_1	0.36	0.49	0.57	0.87	0.45
Ability_2	0.37	0.58	0.51	0.86	0.45
Ability_3	0.29	0.51	0.57	0.86	0.47
Intention	0.41	0.45	0.44	0.53	1.00

Table 6. Discriminant validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite reliability	1	2	3	4	5
1. Trust in Platform	0.93	0.95	0.86				
2. Integrity	0.75	0.86	0.48	0.82			
3. Benevolence	0.91	0.94	0.42	0.63	0.89		
4. Ability	0.83	0.90	0.39	0.61	0.63	0.86	
5. Trusting Intention	1.00	1.00	0.41	0.45	0.44	0.53	1.00

Note: Items on the diagonal (in bold) represent AVE scores

Table 7. Comparison of consumer responses to host personae

Variables	Persona 1: “Travelers”	Persona 2: “Workers”	t-values
Trust in platform	3.90	3.79	2.02*
Integrity	4.02	3.94	1.96*
Benevolence	4.23	3.51	14.69***
Ability	4.39	3.97	9.07***
Trusting intention	4.26	3.99	4.52***

Note: the responses have been obtained by a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree or extremely unlikely) to 5 (strongly agree or extremely likely); * $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 8. Tests of confounding effects

Variables	Persona 1: “Travelers”	Persona 2: “Workers”	Chi-square
<i>Accommodation experiences</i>			
Previous experience staying in Airbnb or similar before (Yes)	48.8%	51.2%	1.10
Recent stay in a P2P accommodation			3.67
Within the last six months	51.3%	48.7%	
Within in a year	48.4%	51.6%	
More than a year ago	38.1%	61.9%	
Types of an accommodation stayed in			
An entire house/apartment	48.6%	51.4%	0.33
A private room	52.8%	47.2%	2.52
A shared room	46.2%	53.8%	0.01
<i>Demographics</i>			
Gender (Female)	52.1%	47.9%	3.80
Age ¹	-	-	3.21
Highest level of education ²	-	-	3.06
Annual household income ³	-	-	15.41

Note: 1 includes six numbers of age subcategories: 15 to 24 years, 25 to 34 years, 35 to 44 years, 45 to 54 years, 55 to 64 years, 65 years or above; 2 includes High School / GED, Some College, 2-year College Degree, 4-year College Degree, Master’s Degree, Doctoral Degree, and Professional Degree (Juris Doctor, Medical Doctor); 3 includes under \$20,000, 20,000-29,999, 30,000-39,999, 40,000-49,999, 50,000-59,999, 60,000-69,999, 70,000-79,999, 80,000-89,999, 90,000-99,999, 100,000-109,999, 110,000-119,999, 120,000-129,999, 130,000-139,999, 140,000-149,999, 150,000+.

Appendix A

Table A1. Top 50 words in host description clusters: Austin, TX

Cluster 1: Travelers					Cluster 2: Workers			
No	Word	POS	Conditional Probability	Jaccard Index	Word	POS	Conditional Probability	Jaccard Index
1	be	Verb	1251 (0.744)	0.6924	music	Noun	353 (0.210)	0.1457
2	have	Verb	811 (0.482)	0.6083	live	Adj	104 (0.062)	0.0601
3	love	Verb	823 (0.490)	0.5198	living	Noun	84 (0.050)	0.0526
4	live	Verb	630 (0.375)	0.3747	wife	Noun	63 (0.037)	0.0352
5	travel	Verb	552 (0.328)	0.3393	lay	Verb	53 (0.032)	0.0339
6	home	Noun	398 (0.237)	0.3333	artist	Noun	60 (0.036)	0.0335
7	enjoy	Verb	437 (0.260)	0.3097	writer	Noun	43 (0.026)	0.0326
8	year	Noun	428 (0.255)	0.2976	lover	Noun	48 (0.029)	0.0323
9	place	Noun	318 (0.189)	0.2677	hide	Verb	30 (0.018)	0.0233
10	people	Noun	327 (0.195)	0.2533	reading	Noun	38 (0.023)	0.023
11	new	Adj	293 (0.174)	0.2509	entrepreneur	Noun	31 (0.018)	0.0213
12	do	Verb	300 (0.178)	0.2438	daughter	Noun	33 (0.020)	0.0212
13	time	Noun	288 (0.171)	0.2342	resident	Noun	23 (0.014)	0.0196
14	city	Noun	312 (0.186)	0.2325	outgoing	Adj	27 (0.016)	0.0195
15	great	Adj	256 (0.152)	0.21	transplant	Noun	28 (0.017)	0.0195
16	music	Noun	353 (0.210)	0.2032	gardening	Noun	29 (0.017)	0.0194
17	make	Verb	233 (0.139)	0.1937	website	Adj	23 (0.014)	0.0176
18	work	Verb	269 (0.160)	0.1754	passionate	Adj	28 (0.017)	0.0175
19	food	Noun	228 (0.136)	0.1591	swim	Verb	29 (0.017)	0.0174
20	go	Verb	202 (0.120)	0.1586	fashion	Noun	10 (0.006)	0.0161
21	meet	Verb	173 (0.103)	0.1513	cycling	Noun	21 (0.012)	0.0157
22	thing	Noun	186 (0.111)	0.1444	guy	Noun	25 (0.015)	0.0156
23	stay	Verb	174 (0.104)	0.1439	married	Adj	25 (0.015)	0.0156
24	get	Verb	187 (0.111)	0.1432	dancing	Noun	26 (0.015)	0.0156
25	friend	Noun	203 (0.121)	0.1382	long-time	Adj	11 (0.007)	0.014
26	guest	Noun	169 (0.101)	0.1373	chef	Noun	12 (0.007)	0.014
27	world	Noun	171 (0.102)	0.133	guitar	Noun	14 (0.008)	0.0139
28	life	Noun	182 (0.108)	0.1297	mountain	Noun	16 (0.010)	0.0139
29	good	Adj	179 (0.106)	0.1271	interested	Adj	17 (0.010)	0.0138
30	share	Verb	157 (0.093)	0.1246	rock	Noun	19 (0.011)	0.0138
31	know	Verb	149 (0.089)	0.1224	breakfast	Noun	21 (0.012)	0.0137
32	like	Verb	155 (0.092)	0.1218	super	Adj	23 (0.014)	0.0137
33	see	Verb	153 (0.091)	0.121	taco	Noun	23 (0.014)	0.0137
34	move	Verb	163 (0.097)	0.1209	drink	Noun	23 (0.014)	0.0137
35	house	Noun	146 (0.087)	0.1157	web	Noun	10 (0.006)	0.012
36	family	Noun	162 (0.096)	0.115	sale	Noun	13 (0.008)	0.0119
37	find	Verb	133 (0.079)	0.114	woman	Noun	14 (0.008)	0.0119
38	local	Adj	143 (0.085)	0.11	base	Verb	16 (0.010)	0.0119
39	favorite	Adj	133 (0.079)	0.109	education	Noun	16 (0.010)	0.0119
40	want	Verb	126 (0.075)	0.1067	basketball	Noun	18 (0.011)	0.0118
41	offer	Verb	129 (0.077)	0.1064	camp	Verb	19 (0.011)	0.0118
42	best	Adj	130 (0.077)	0.1053	instructor	Noun	9 (0.005)	0.01
43	happy	Adj	136 (0.081)	0.1047	soccer	Noun	9 (0.005)	0.01
44	town	Noun	136 (0.081)	0.1038	worker	Noun	9 (0.005)	0.01
45	explore	Verb	136 (0.081)	0.1038	email	Noun	10 (0.006)	0.01
46	restaurant	Noun	127 (0.076)	0.1036	developer	Noun	11 (0.007)	0.01
47	look	Verb	132 (0.079)	0.1012	laid-back	Adj	11 (0.007)	0.01
48	host	Verb	123 (0.073)	0.1	camping	Noun	11 (0.007)	0.01

49	travel	Noun	157 (0.093)	0.0989	filmmaker	Noun	11 (0.007)	0.01
50	experience	Noun	120 (0.071)	0.0973	bicycle	Noun	12 (0.007)	0.0099

Table A2 Top 50 words in host description clusters: Chicago, IL

Cluster 1: Workers					Cluster 2: Travelers			
No	Word	POS	Conditional Probability	Jaccard Index	Word	POS	Conditional Probability	Jaccard Index
1	student	Noun	87 (0.051)	0.0572	have	Verb	861 (0.503)	0.6538
2	professional	Noun	63 (0.037)	0.0372	be	Verb	1361 (0.795)	0.6067
3	cook	Verb	59 (0.034)	0.0346	love	Verb	868 (0.507)	0.5139
4	sport	Noun	56 (0.033)	0.0319	live	Verb	604 (0.353)	0.4383
5	reading	Noun	46 (0.027)	0.0309	travel	Verb	717 (0.419)	0.4096
6	wife	Noun	50 (0.029)	0.0307	people	Noun	437 (0.255)	0.3887
7	outdoors	Noun	47 (0.027)	0.0294	year	Noun	471 (0.275)	0.3637
8	native	Noun	46 (0.027)	0.0265	city	Noun	474 (0.277)	0.3218
9	lover	Noun	47 (0.027)	0.0265	enjoy	Verb	457 (0.267)	0.312
10	hide	Verb	36 (0.021)	0.0255	new	Adj	418 (0.244)	0.3098
11	hang	Verb	39 (0.023)	0.0254	do	Verb	336 (0.196)	0.2983
12	study	Verb	41 (0.024)	0.0253	meet	Verb	298 (0.174)	0.2952
13	ride	Verb	44 (0.026)	0.0252	place	Noun	354 (0.207)	0.2877
14	graduate	Noun	35 (0.020)	0.024	home	Noun	343 (0.200)	0.2666
15	awesome	Adj	37 (0.022)	0.024	work	Verb	372 (0.217)	0.2261
16	guy	Noun	41 (0.024)	0.0238	time	Noun	327 (0.191)	0.2193
17	musician	Noun	42 (0.025)	0.0238	great	Adj	254 (0.148)	0.2145
18	photography	Noun	28 (0.016)	0.0214	guest	Noun	229 (0.134)	0.1926
19	festival	Noun	33 (0.019)	0.0212	go	Verb	238 (0.139)	0.1872
20	consultant	Noun	34 (0.020)	0.0212	get	Verb	232 (0.136)	0.1824
21	website	Adj	26 (0.015)	0.02	world	Noun	231 (0.135)	0.1802
22	owner	Noun	28 (0.016)	0.0199	thing	Noun	222 (0.130)	0.1794
23	writer	Noun	29 (0.017)	0.0184	make	Verb	264 (0.154)	0.179
24	week	Noun	24 (0.014)	0.0171	host	Verb	190 (0.111)	0.155
25	conversation	Noun	26 (0.015)	0.0171	share	Verb	185 (0.108)	0.1535
26	actor	Noun	26 (0.015)	0.0171	neighborhood	Noun	189 (0.110)	0.1493
27	engineer	Noun	16 (0.009)	0.0159	life	Noun	190 (0.111)	0.1468
28	dine	Verb	20 (0.012)	0.0158	good	Adj	200 (0.117)	0.1465
29	boy	Noun	20 (0.012)	0.0158	favorite	Adj	169 (0.099)	0.1464
30	native	Adj	21 (0.012)	0.0157	look	Verb	191 (0.112)	0.1455
31	degree	Noun	23 (0.013)	0.0157	stay	Verb	174 (0.102)	0.1445
32	property	Noun	26 (0.015)	0.0156	food	Noun	207 (0.121)	0.1397
33	son	Noun	21 (0.012)	0.0143	friend	Noun	217 (0.127)	0.1372
34	mom	Noun	22 (0.013)	0.0143	know	Verb	168 (0.098)	0.1359
35	gardening	Noun	16 (0.009)	0.0129	music	Noun	221 (0.129)	0.1344
36	roommate	Noun	18 (0.011)	0.0129	restaurant	Noun	182 (0.106)	0.1329
37	chef	Noun	19 (0.011)	0.0129	like	Verb	198 (0.116)	0.1307
38	cocktail	Noun	22 (0.013)	0.0128	explore	Verb	200 (0.117)	0.1282
39	cycling	Noun	11 (0.006)	0.0116	experience	Noun	139 (0.081)	0.127
40	modern	Adj	14 (0.008)	0.0115	many	Adj	147 (0.086)	0.1259
41	stuff	Noun	15 (0.009)	0.0115	host	Noun	154 (0.090)	0.1238
42	continue	Verb	16 (0.009)	0.0115	other	Adj	138 (0.081)	0.1177
43	earth	Noun	17 (0.010)	0.0115	travel	Noun	195 (0.114)	0.1177
44	spare	Adj	18 (0.011)	0.0114	happy	Adj	126 (0.074)	0.1133
45	man	Noun	18 (0.011)	0.0114	try	Verb	146 (0.085)	0.1087
46	enthusiast	Noun	19 (0.011)	0.0114	apartment	Noun	140 (0.082)	0.1082
47	rest	Noun	11 (0.006)	0.0101	see	Verb	142 (0.083)	0.108
48	producer	Noun	11 (0.006)	0.0101	visit	Verb	133 (0.078)	0.1044
49	performance	Noun	11 (0.006)	0.0101	traveler	Noun	146 (0.085)	0.1042
50	parent	Noun	12 (0.007)	0.0101	lot	Noun	136 (0.079)	0.1041

Table A3 Top 50 words in host description clusters: New York, NY

Cluster 1: Travelers					Cluster 2: Workers			
No	Word	POS	Conditional Probability	Jaccard Index	Word	POS	Conditional Probability	Jaccard Index
1	be	Verb	8729 (0.717)	0.6004	living	Noun	1001 (0.082)	0.0796
2	have	Verb	4683 (0.385)	0.5279	professional	Adj	693 (0.057)	0.0628
3	love	Verb	4710 (0.387)	0.4403	old	Adj	712 (0.058)	0.0568
4	travel	Verb	4255 (0.349)	0.388	designer	Noun	572 (0.047)	0.0522
5	live	Verb	4209 (0.346)	0.3584	easy	Adj	509 (0.042)	0.044
6	people	Noun	2400 (0.197)	0.3323	base	Verb	266 (0.022)	0.0253
7	year	Noun	3037 (0.249)	0.2868	photographer	Noun	258 (0.021)	0.0231
8	enjoy	Verb	2208 (0.181)	0.2856	lover	Noun	277 (0.023)	0.0228
9	new	Adj	2072 (0.170)	0.2645	director	Noun	126 (0.010)	0.0134
10	home	Noun	1899 (0.156)	0.2545	producer	Noun	151 (0.012)	0.0129
11	city	Noun	2138 (0.176)	0.2495	advertising	Noun	133 (0.011)	0.0125
12	work	Verb	2691 (0.221)	0.2416	tech	Noun	121 (0.010)	0.0113
13	place	Noun	1821 (0.150)	0.2392	graduate	Noun	132 (0.011)	0.0111
14	time	Noun	1691 (0.139)	0.2276	filmmaker	Noun	114 (0.009)	0.0105
15	do	Verb	1722 (0.141)	0.2191	architect	Noun	116 (0.010)	0.0105
16	meet	Verb	1415 (0.116)	0.2059	married	Adj	97 (0.008)	0.0104
17	world	Noun	1527 (0.125)	0.1861	engineer	Noun	91 (0.007)	0.0096
18	apartment	Noun	1497 (0.123)	0.1782	technology	Noun	117 (0.010)	0.0095
19	make	Verb	1319 (0.108)	0.1672	journalist	Noun	101 (0.008)	0.0093
20	great	Adj	1278 (0.105)	0.1663	software	Noun	94 (0.008)	0.0091
21	friend	Noun	1190 (0.098)	0.1554	graphic	Adj	107 (0.009)	0.0091
22	guest	Noun	1130 (0.093)	0.1544	startup	Noun	104 (0.009)	0.0085
23	go	Verb	1475 (0.121)	0.1468	finance	Noun	93 (0.008)	0.0083
24	share	Verb	1015 (0.083)	0.1357	working	Noun	86 (0.007)	0.0077
25	food	Noun	1191 (0.098)	0.1355	australian	Adj	70 (0.006)	0.0073
26	like	Verb	1194 (0.098)	0.1339	lawyer	Noun	72 (0.006)	0.0073
27	get	Verb	1048 (0.086)	0.1338	male	Noun	79 (0.006)	0.0069
28	life	Noun	1162 (0.095)	0.1327	female	Noun	61 (0.005)	0.0065
29	look	Verb	1083 (0.089)	0.1305	non-profit	Adj	77 (0.006)	0.0065
30	stay	Verb	917 (0.075)	0.1268	magazine	Noun	65 (0.005)	0.0061
31	thing	Noun	980 (0.080)	0.1266	grad	Noun	66 (0.005)	0.0055
32	good	Adj	1080 (0.089)	0.1257	enjoy	Adj	56 (0.005)	0.0053
33	music	Noun	1245 (0.102)	0.1215	painter	Noun	58 (0.005)	0.0051
34	neighborhood	Noun	888 (0.073)	0.1167	baby	Noun	51 (0.004)	0.0049
35	know	Verb	789 (0.065)	0.1123	web	Noun	53 (0.004)	0.0049
36	work	Noun	1135 (0.093)	0.1108	runner	Noun	55 (0.005)	0.0047
37	host	Verb	832 (0.068)	0.109	nyc	Noun	57 (0.005)	0.0047
38	happy	Adj	826 (0.068)	0.1069	law	Noun	49 (0.004)	0.0043
39	travel	Noun	999 (0.082)	0.1065	mid	Adj	39 (0.003)	0.0041
40	family	Noun	771 (0.063)	0.1058	surfing	Noun	45 (0.004)	0.0041
41	lot	Noun	841 (0.069)	0.1035	educate	Verb	44 (0.004)	0.0037
42	experience	Noun	731 (0.060)	0.1024	maker	Noun	30 (0.002)	0.0035
43	explore	Verb	890 (0.073)	0.1022	canadian	Adj	31 (0.003)	0.0035
44	art	Noun	1038 (0.085)	0.1013	performer	Noun	40 (0.003)	0.0035
45	see	Verb	751 (0.062)	0.1002	doctor	Noun	30 (0.002)	0.0033
46	love	Noun	875 (0.072)	0.0988	composer	Noun	35 (0.003)	0.0033
47	host	Noun	733 (0.060)	0.0966	executive	Noun	37 (0.003)	0.0033
48	many	Adj	660 (0.054)	0.0925	publishing	Noun	34 (0.003)	0.0031
49	best	Adj	671 (0.055)	0.0921	trainer	Noun	35 (0.003)	0.0031
50	restaurant	Noun	650 (0.053)	0.0913	founder	Noun	34 (0.003)	0.0029

Appendix B

B1. Stimuli for Phase 1: Within-Subjects Design

Questionnaire 1: New York, NY

Host Name: Neil

"I am a well-traveled art connoisseur who has lived in my neighborhood for 20+ years now. I would love to host you on your trip to the city as meeting people from around the world has brought much joy and satisfaction into my life. Welcome! My location is one of the most convenient in New York City, you can walk almost everywhere!" (Persona 1)

Host Name: Marjorie

"I work as an UX designer for one of the big banks in the Financial District. I design financial software for Technology Infrastructure department. I am studying towards a Masters' degree in Software Engineering through Harvard Extension – I was on campus in the spring semester, but I got a job in (NY), so I moved. I don't smoke and don't drink." (Persona 2)

Questionnaire 2: Chicago, IL

Host Name: Marjorie

"I love to go on global adventures and meet new people. My ferocious passion for learning is often fed by studying languages, cooking, watching interesting documentaries, etc. Because I am born and raised here, I can share all there is to know about the windy city. If you want restaurant recommendations, possible places to live permanently, shopping hot spots, or just cool tourist spots, I got you covered." (Persona 1)

Host Name: Neil

"Entrepreneur and enthusiast. Co-Founder of a tech company providing an online learning platform. Foodie, Snowboarder, Wanderlust, Wine Enthusiast, listening to Alternative Rock, and reading Economist. If you are not living on the edge, you are taking too much space." (Persona 2)

Questionnaire 3: Austin, TX

Host Name: Marjorie

"Hello! I am a world traveler and an organic gardener and a native Austinite. I love this city and all its parks, rivers, lakes and swimming spots, and bike paths. I have lived in Central and Downtown Austin for more than a decade and I like to share it with other travelers. I like to host not just for a little extra cash, but because I really like sharing this little corner of Austin with people visiting from all over. It is a great city and I am so happy to live here. I like for my guests

to enjoy the place and to have a good time. If there is any question during your stay please feel free to ask." (Persona 1)

Host Name: Neil

"Senior Vice President of business development for a recording studio, Producer of HBO's Entourage's app, Co-creator of Platinum Life Street featuring Jamie Foxx & Platinum Life Country presented by CMT! In addition to being a published author, he is co-founder and silent partner of a music software company. A 15-year record industry veteran, Neil has utilized his expertise in co-creation and editing of novels; budget construction; negotiating deals with authors; chief liaison; and executive in charge of A&R for an album. Neil's record industry experience includes: retail, marketing and promotion, and product management at indie labels."
(Persona 2)

B2. Stimuli for Phase 2: Between-Subjects Design

Host Name: Marjorie or Neil

"I work as an UX designer for one of the big banks in the Financial District. I design financial software for Technology Infrastructure department. Because I am born and raised here, I can share all there is to know about the city. If you want restaurant recommendations, possible places to live permanently, shopping hot spots, or just cool tourist spots, I got you covered."
(Persona 3: Hybrid)

Appendix C

Questionnaire

Statement of consent:

"I give my voluntary consent to take part in this study."

Yes

No

Q1.1 How often do you travel, to domestic or international destinations, for leisure or business purposes?

About once every other year or less

About once a year

A few times a year

Monthly

Weekly

Q1.2 Have you stayed in Airbnb or other similar peer-to-peer accommodation rental services before?

Yes

No

(If "Yes" was selected)

Q1.3 When was your most recent stay in a peer-to-peer accommodation (such as Airbnb)?

Within the last six months

Within a year

More than a year ago

Q1.4 When staying at a peer-to-peer accommodation (such as Airbnb), which type of property have you used? Please select all that apply.

An entire home/apartment

A private room

A shared room

(If "No" was selected)

Q1.5 How familiar are you with Airbnb or other similar peer-to-peer accommodation rental services?

Not familiar at all

Slightly familiar

Moderately familiar

Very familiar

Extremely familiar

Q2.1 Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements regarding peer-to-peer accommodation rental services such as Airbnb.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Peer- to- peer accommodation rental services can generally be trusted.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I trust peer-to-peer accommodation rental services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have great confidence in peer-to-peer accommodation rental services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Peer-to-peer accommodation rental services has high integrity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can depend on peer-to-peer accommodation rental services to do the right thing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Peer-to-peer accommodation rental services can be relied upon.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q3.1 The following description is written by an individual who rents out his property on Airbnb. This description was posted under "About Host" section on Airbnb website. Please read carefully and answer the questions that follow.

(Respondents randomly assigned to one of four descriptions)

Host Name: Neil (Male)

Description:

"I love to go on global adventures and meet new people. My ferocious passion for learning is often fed by studying languages, cooking, watching interesting documentaries, etc. Because I am born and raised here, I can share all there is to know about the city. If you want restaurant recommendations, possible places to live permanently, shopping hot spots, or just cool tourist spots, I got you covered."

Q4.1 Based on the above description, please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements regarding the host.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
The host is honest with his/her guests.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The host acts sincerely in dealing with his/her guests.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The host has sound principles.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The host is concerned about the welfare of his/her guests.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The host genuinely cares about his/her guests' needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The host looks out for what is important to his/her guests.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The host goes out of his/her way to help his/her guests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
The host is qualified.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The host is skilled.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The host is experienced.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The host is capable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q4.2 If the price, location, and amenities of this accommodation suit your need and preference, how likely are you to rent from this host?

- Extremely unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Somewhat likely
- Extremely likely

Q5.1 What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

Q5.2 What is your age?

(Dropdown Menu)

Q5.3 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Less than High School
- High School / GED
- Some College
- 2-year College Degree
- 4-year College Degree
- Masters Degree
- Doctoral Degree
- Professional Degree (JD, MD)

Q5.4 What is your combined annual household income before taxes?

(Dropdown Menu)

Q5.6 In which state do you currently reside?

(Dropdown Menu)