

INTENTIONS TO BOOK ON AIRBNB: A COMPARISON OF GERMAN AND CHINESE TRAVELLERS

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ABSTRACT

Given the importance of Airbnb, it is crucial to examine which factors affect intentions to book an accommodation on Airbnb. Furthermore, Airbnb has been clearly overlooked at from tourism scholars [1]. Therefore, this study proposes an integrative model to examine which factors affect Chinese and Germans' intentions to book on Airbnb and investigates if there are differences between these different cultures. The choice of China and Germany was motivated by the growing importance of these two economies in the tourism industry.

The data was collected online in early October of 2015 by sending the online questionnaire to potential user or users of Airbnb in Germany and China. Respondents were asked to visit the Airbnb website to find out their booking intentions towards using this peer to peer rental services for their holiday. Hypotheses were tested using Partial Least Squares (PLS).

A Multigroup analysis was conducted to see if there were significant differences between the German and Chinese. Surprisingly, no significant differences were found regarding the predictors of intentions to book on Airbnb. For both nationalities what really matters to book on Airbnb are the motivation factors. Indeed, the results indicate that this is the strongest predictor to book on Airbnb. One of the motivations to book on Airbnb is financial, since it offers economical prices [1]. Airbnb also offers a better variety of types of accommodation which include castles, luxury tree houses, houseboats and private islands, such a price advantage is attractive and especially to younger people who are becoming more used to having access to more things than they could ever own [2]. In order for Airbnb to attract more visitors, it should focus on highlighting its unique accommodations and variety, with competitive prices.

The second most important predictor of intentions to book on Airbnb is subjective norm. Karahanna, Straub, and Chervany [3] point out that subjective norm has been revealed to be more important in the early stages of a particular system usage. Given that Airbnb is relatively recent, this may explain the significant impact of subjective norm. Attitude towards online shopping, also affects intentions to book on Airbnb. Therefore, online marketing strategies should focus on fostering referents' opinions and creating a favourable attitude toward Airbnb.

It is believed that this study has provided a valuable contribution in understanding travellers' online travel purchasing behaviour, in the particular case of Airbnb, providing useful insights for researchers and

practitioners. Furthermore, it shows that online travel behaviours are becoming more globalized, since there were no differences between the German and Chinese, regarding their motivators to book on Airbnb.

One of the limitations of this study was that it was only applied to German and Chinese travellers. Therefore, future studies could investigate other nationalities to see if the results hold.

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