



# Factors of satisfaction and intention to use peer-to-peer accommodation

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## ABSTRACT

To better understand the behavioral characteristics of consumers in the sharing economy, this study examines factors that influence guests' satisfaction with a peer-to-peer (P2P) accommodation and their intention to use it again for future trips. Based on an online survey of 644 travelers living in the United States, guest satisfaction was identified as being influenced by factors of enjoyment, monetary benefits (value), and accommodation amenities. Furthermore, it was found that future intention to use P2P accommodation was again determined by enjoyment and value. By differentiating guests based on their chosen types of accommodation, the analysis revealed that social benefits influence guest satisfaction for those staying in a private room that involved cohabitation with hosts, but that this was an insignificant factor for guest satisfaction for those staying in an entire home or apartment. Directions for future research as well as implications for accommodation providers are discussed in this paper.

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## 1. Introduction

Customer satisfaction is a central concept in services marketing and management (Fornell, 1992; Halstead and Page, 1992; Westbrook and Oliver, 1991). Providing customers with services that lead to their satisfaction and return intention has been recognized as a critical factor of success and source of competitive advantage for various service businesses, including hospitality (Halstead and Page, 1992; Peterson and Wilson, 1992; Pizam and Ellis, 1999). While determinants of satisfaction and return intention associated with a hotel stay have been well-researched (e.g., Barsky, 1992; Barsky and Labagh, 1992; Choi and Chu, 2001; Gundersen, Heide, and Olsson, 1996; Oh, 1999; Ren et al., 2016; Torres and Kline, 2006), the increasing prevalence of commercial sharing services such as Airbnb marks the importance of identifying factors of satisfaction and behavioral intention associated with the use of peer-to-peer (P2P) accommodation. The so-called “sharing economy” businesses identified an unmet demand in the conventional accommodation systems and offers platforms that bring consumers together to distribute their excess capacity of property resources among each other. As a key player in P2P accommodation service, Airbnb was founded in 2008 (an initial service concept was called Airbed and Breakfast after founders hosted guests on air

mattresses in their living room), out of the identified scarcity of alternative accommodation in cities with a saturated hotel market during high profile events that drew a large number of attendees (Botsman and Rogers, 2010). The company continued to experience rapid growth and other platforms emerged, such as Roomorama in 2009 and 9flats in 2010. A relatively newcomer to the industry, P2P accommodation platforms have rapidly cemented their position as a strong competitor to hotels (Freitag and Haywood, 2015). In the summer of 2015, Airbnb served more than 17 million guests worldwide (Airbnb, 2015), a substantial growth of about 350% compared to the same period in 2010. Reportedly, the P2P accommodation platform has 1.2 million rooms in its inventory, which is more than the inventory of any branded chain hotels (Freitag and Haywood, 2015). Therefore, examining the factors that lead to guest satisfaction and behavioral intention to use P2P accommodation goes beyond informing P2P providers with important needs to fulfill in order to retain guests. It also provides hotels with information regarding the service characteristics and competitive advantages of their competitor.

Importantly, literature in hospitality management has yet to conceptualize comprehensively the behavioral characteristics of those involved in the processes of service delivery in market-mediated commercial sharing systems. As a new and innovative service phenomenon, P2P services allow *regular people*, who are distinct from typical business entities, to offer hospitality (by renting out their spare bedrooms or unoccupied properties) to their

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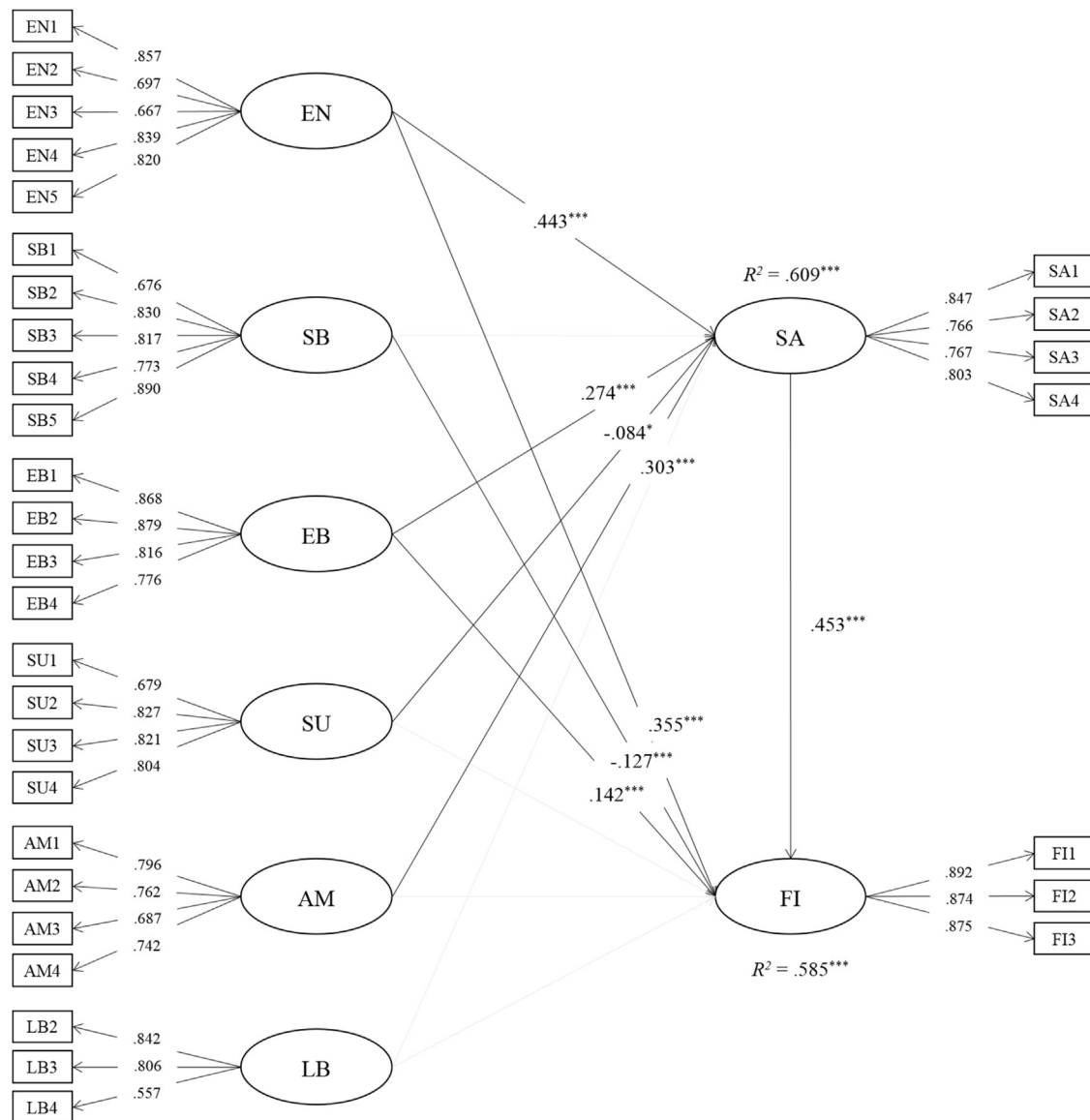


Fig. 1. Structural Model 1: All Respondents. Model Fit Indices:  $\chi^2 = 1384.336$ ;  $df = 436$ ;  $sig. = .000$ ; CFI = .927; TLI = .917; RMSEA = .058; SRMR = .050;  $N = 644$ .

peers (i.e., tourists). This suggests that the sharing economy transforms and disrupts long-established business practices (Koopman et al., 2014). From the consumption context, services rendered through P2P accommodation can be perceived as distinctive from hotel services, which may result in different expectations and service evaluation among consumers (i.e., guests). This is especially important because marketing literature generally assumes that consumers use a customer-service provider relationship as the basis for service evaluation (Brown and Swartz, 1989; Solomon et al., 1985). Furthermore, from the macro-environmental perspective, the birth of the sharing economy has been tied to a shift in attitude and behavior toward consumption practices in general (Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2012; Botsman and Rogers, 2010; Gansky, 2010), resulting from various societal and economic pressure, such as desire for community, sustainable form of consumption, and frugality, facilitated by advancements in social networks and mobile technology (Owyang, 2013; Guttentag, 2013; Sheth et al., 2011; Walsh, 2011). This indicates that P2P accommodation may fulfill different consumer needs when compared to hotels (e.g., needs for lower prices, more meaningful social experiences, more sustain-

able travel, etc.). Therefore, what determines guest satisfaction and intention to use P2P accommodation may be different from those associated with a hotel stay.

Studies investigating the determinants of satisfaction and intention of using P2P services in general have started to emerge in business literature. For example, Hamari et al. (2015) found factors of sustainability, enjoyment, and economic benefits to affect behavioral intention to participate in a P2P sharing platform. Möhlmann (2015) identified the effects of some of these determinants: cost-savings, community belonging, familiarity, trust, and utility, on satisfaction and future intention to use P2P services. However, these studies did not differentiate users into providers and consumers (e.g., hosts and guests), resulting in lack of specification in terms of whose satisfaction and intention were measured. Recently, Bellotti et al. (2015) interviewed peer providers (or user providers, such as hosts), peer consumers (or user receivers, such as guests), and service providers of different types of P2P services to gauge their (perceived) motivations. While their study is helpful in understanding user needs from different perspectives, its findings apply to general P2P services (i.e., consumer evaluation on the sharing

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