

Investigating the Entrepreneurial Orientation of Airbnb Hosts

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Abstract:

The quick development of the Platform Economy was fueled by several innovative companies who introduced new ways to access passive resources and facilitate their exploitation by offering millions of micro-entrepreneurs the possibility and the technical system to sell or rent their available time, work, tools, skills, objects or available accommodation. Our research focuses on Airbnb's micro-entrepreneurs, who benefit from various functions and services developed by the online platform in order to rent accommodation to clients, usually on a short-time basis. Considering the multitude of support services and features made available to hosts on the Airbnb's platform, we posit that the entrepreneurial profile of these Airbnb hosts is different from that of independent Bed & Breakfast owners. To achieve comparison, we collected primary data from two samples of short-term rental accommodation owners, including 35 Airbnb hosts and independent 31 Bed & Breakfast owners active in the South of France, by applying a structured questionnaire, followed by a half an hour interviews with 10 randomly selected respondents from each category. Data analysis confirms that all three dimensions of the entrepreneurial orientation construct are less developed in the profile of Airbnb hosts, than in the independent Bed & Breakfast owners. The findings resulting from the analysis of the interviews provide a clear justification of these differences: the rental accommodation owners who have a more acute entrepreneurial spirit naturally chose situations characterized by more risk and potential higher gains, deciding to remain independent, while those risk and challenge adverse, migrate towards online platforms that offer a vast array of supporting services. This relationship is, however, verified, only in the case of hosts who rent in areas considered less attractive for tourists, as those who own a premium rental accommodation chose the path of less resistance, using Airbnb to maximize their revenues, while concomitantly educing their costs. These findings have interesting implications for entrepreneurship theory and practice.

Keywords:

Entrepreneurial orientation, short-term rental accommodation, Airbnb hosts, independent owners, comparison of entrepreneurial profiles, motivation and justification.