

The customer is not always king: Airbnb hosts' ethical evaluations of guests' misbehaviour in the sharing economy

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to examine misbehaviour of consumers in the sharing economy through the eyes of their peers, i.e. service providers. Based on established ethical decision-making models and the literature on the sharing economy, we develop a conceptual model in which we link ethical climate and trust in guests to ethical judgments about guest misbehaviour. These judgments lead to negative word of mouth (WOM), with organisational trust (in Airbnb) moderating the relationship. The model was tested on a sample of 252 Airbnb hosts from the UK. We found that ethical climate and trust in guests significantly influence hosts' ethical judgments about guest misbehaviour. Moreover, ethical judgments are related to negative WOM, while trust in Airbnb significantly moderates this relationship. The results shed light on the importance of regulating consumer misbehaviour in the sharing economy, not only because of the impact on the platform, but also on other users.

Keywords: *misbehaviour; ethics; WOM*

Track: Social Responsibility & Ethics