

Communication style, personal characteristics and business performance in the sharing economy – an empirical study in the context of Airbnb

Samantha Looi
Monash University
Bhoomija Ranjan
Monash University
Junzhao Ma
Monash University

Cite as:

Looi Samantha, Ranjan Bhoomija, Ma Junzhao (2020), Communication style, personal characteristics and business performance in the sharing economy – an empirical study in the context of Airbnb. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 49th, (62486)

Paper from the 49th Annual EMAC Conference, Budapest, May 26-29, 2020.



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Abstract

The rapid rise of the sharing economy has engendered a new class of entrepreneurs. Commonly referred to as micro-entrepreneurs, these individuals offer products and services on the sharing platforms and are an integral part of this new form of digital economy. In this paper, we empirically investigate how the individual characteristics and communication style of micro-entrepreneurs influence their business performance. We do so with a detailed set of listing and host characteristics data from the short-term lodging platform Airbnb. In particular, we use text processing software to extract information on host gender, relationship and business status and create measures that characterise the hosts' communication style. We find that the individual characteristics of Airbnb hosts and their communication styles have significant effects on the listings' performance. This study is the first large-scale empirical study that examines the relationship between the characteristics of micro entrepreneurs and their business activities.

Keywords: *Sharing economy ; text mining; micro entrepreneurs*

Track: Methods, Modelling & Marketing Analytics