Guest editorial: The sharing economy in a post-pandemic world

Guest editorial for IJCHM Vol 35 Issue 4 2023 on sharing economy
Welcome to the *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*'s (*IJCHM*) special issue on "Sharing Economy." I would like to sincerely thank our guest editors Kevin Kam Fung So, Giampaolo Viglia, Stephanie Liu and Dan Wang for putting together this very strong and timely special issue. The articles included in this special issue should be well received by scholars, students and practicing managers in our field.

Fevzi Okumus
Editor-in-Chief

Since Rachel Botsman and Roo Rogers coined the term "collaborative consumption" in their 2010 book *What's Mine Is Yours: The Rise of Collaborative Consumption*, this economic model, known as the sharing economy, has gained widespread acceptance in business sectors including transportation (e.g. Uber), accommodation (e.g. Airbnb), food (e.g. EatWith), entertainment (e.g. WillCall) and even finance (e.g. LendingClub) (Wirtz *et al.*, 2019). The hospitality and tourism industry represents a fertile ground for these types of disruptive innovations. Defined as a technologically enabled socioeconomic system featuring the five key characteristics of temporary access, the transfer of economic value, platform mediation, an expanded consumer role and crowdsourced supply (Eckhardt *et al.*, 2019), the sharing economy has produced disintermediated industries: it allows people to transact directly by connecting them in unprecedented ways (Caldieraro *et al.*, 2018). This new form of economic activity is intended to create value by matching two or more groups of actors – usually buyers and suppliers of a product, service or other resources (e.g. data) – and enabling convenient interactions and transactions (Xu *et al.*, 2021). The peer-to-peer (P2P) economy has exploded as a result (Wirtz *et al.*, 2019). Research suggests that global revenue generated by the sharing economy totaled \$40.2bn in 2022 (Statista, 2022), highlighting this sector's economic significance. Its ongoing evolution has spawned a series of studies examining various aspects of the sharing economy in hospitality and tourism (Abrate and Viglia, 2019; Cheng, 2016; Camilleri and Neuhofer, 2017; Guttentag *et al.*, 2018; Liu and Mattila, 2017; Mody *et al.*, 2017; So *et al.*, 2018; Wang and Nicolau, 2017; Zhu *et al.*, 2017).

Although the sharing economy has attracted significant academic and industry attention in recent years, the COVID-19 pandemic decimated the global hospitality and tourism industry. The UNWTO (2021) recently reported that international tourist arrivals were down 83% in the first quarter of 2021 as widespread travel restrictions remained in place across the world. Platform providers such as Airbnb and Uber were no exception. Thousands of people lost their jobs, the value of sharing firms plummeted and many service providers had no other option but to stop working (Hossain, 2021). The pandemic has had significant impacts on the development of the service ecosystem, its individual actors and their interactions.

Although a large body of literature has focused on the pandemic and the sharing economy, the potentially altered trajectories of this sector remain relatively unknown, and empirical research regarding the pandemic's effects on sharing economy activities is lacking (Hossain, 2021). For instance, during the pandemic, Airbnb experienced a considerable decline in guests, but industry research arrivals recovered to pre-pandemic levels quickly. Airbnb priced its initial public offering at \$68 per share and enjoyed a 120% jump in

its share price on the first trading day even during the pandemic (Kim *et al.*, 2022; Ponciano, 2020). Airbnb accommodations allow travelers to better avoid others during their stay (Kim *et al.*, 2022). Tourists' changing travel patterns, such as a greater preference for staycations, may produce additional growth opportunities (Jones and Comfort, 2020). Conversely, Dolnicar and Zare (2020) described the pandemic's impact on the sharing economy as "disrupting the disruptor" and suggested that the trading of space on Airbnb and similar platforms would recover but not to pre-pandemic levels. They further predicted that the proportion of investor-hosted Airbnb listings would drop. Similarly, Bresciani *et al.* (2021) found that, compared with hotel rooms and full flats, travelers are now more reluctant to book shared flats in Airbnb out of a high need for physical distance.

Tourism scholars have argued that the pandemic will offer new research opportunities, serving as a silver lining in an otherwise gloomy situation. By contrast, a stable tourism system may not provide many topics that can generate knowledge, as innovation follows from adversity (Bausch *et al.*, 2021). The pandemic's impacts on society in general and on hospitality and tourism in particular, coupled with growing academic interest and industry imperatives, call for attention to the pandemic's short- and long-term effects on multidimensional activities in the sharing economy. Relatively little is known about the consequences of the pandemic on consumers, platforms, service providers' psychological and behavioral reactions and adaptation within the sharing economy. More also remains to be uncovered regarding potential directions of the sharing economy within hospitality and tourism. These lacunae underscore the need for theoretical and practical research, hence this special issue. This publication includes several path-setting studies that survey today's sharing economy as introduced below.

Song *et al.* (2023) focused on sharing accommodation to investigate trust in the sharing economy. An analysis of 172 journal articles published between 2011 and 2021 identified key stakeholders, antecedents and outcomes of trust. Results revealed that trust building involves many stakeholders, including consumers, hosts, platforms, residents and governments. Researchers should adopt more diversified theories and integrated methodologies in the future. This study presents a systematic framework to assess trust from multiple stakeholders' perspectives.

Mody *et al.* (2023) examined differences between traditional accommodation (i.e. hotels) and Airbnb across various budget levels (from economy to luxury). Findings described individual differences, with some people preferring hotels and others favoring innovative options such as Airbnb. The authors also described important decision levers: quality and service, amenities, accessibility and safety. Godovykh *et al.* (2023) explored how the pandemic has shaped consumers' preferences. Today's consumers seek cleanliness information when booking on Airbnb. This information drives trust and, in turn, behavioral intention. These authors' results are useful for practitioners and hosts wishing to maximize revenue from their listings. This study also described factors behind guests' trust, including distinctions based on the source of cleanliness information.

Qi and Chen's (2023) work demonstrates how addressing safety pays off. They showed that enhanced preventive measures enhance consumers' attitudes toward hosts, leading to improved word of mouth and stronger intentions. These outcomes quantify the returns of monetary investments in safety. The authors concluded by providing hosts guidance on message-framing strategies to assuage safety concerns.

Li *et al.* (2023) discussed boundary conditions along with the role of culture and other barriers that inhibit consumers from using P2P accommodation. They considered Chinese consumers and identified negotiation tactics to overcome impediments. Effective techniques

to reduce consumer resistance included seeking information, behavioral adaptation, selective choice and seeking social support. These discoveries produced actionable industry advice.

Wei *et al.* (2023) used mixed methods to create a conceptual framework regarding the unique characteristics of virtual tourism experiences (VTE). In one study, they used topic modeling with latent Dirichlet allocation to analyze 91,609 online reviews from the Airbnb Experience platform. In another study, they conducted content analysis on open-ended qualitative responses from VTE customers. Their findings identified VTE as distinct in terms of stimuli (education, entertainment, esthetics, escapism, connection), organisms (experiencing synchronicity, telepresence, participation and customization, emotion) and responses (evaluation and behavioral reactions). The accompanying theoretical framework can guide the design, development and evaluation of VTE, including by identifying key considerations, ecosystem engagement and host/operator recommendations.

Shin *et al.* (2023a) provided a theoretical view on how perceived risks of the sharing economy affect customers' self-protective behavior when using associated platforms, thus influencing future behavioral intention. Several statistical approaches (e.g. partial least squares structural equation modeling, multigroup analysis and multivariate analysis of variance) were used to distinguish accommodation- and ride-sharing customers in the aforementioned relationships. Findings can help sharing economy platforms and service providers better understand customers' perceived service risks as well as key differences between accommodation sharing and ride sharing with respect to customers' self-protective behavior. Industry personnel can then refine their operational and marketing tactics to lessen perceived risk while boosting behavioral intention.

Through the theoretical lens of failure controllability, Wu *et al.* (2023) examined platform-centric versus multiparty service failure in the sharing economy using a large-scale data set containing more than 81,000 negative app reviews from eight hospitality and tourism sharing economy platforms. Topic modeling, together with emotion detection algorithms, uncovered 11 themes in platform-centric versus multiparty service failure: app glitches, customer service, locating and pooling, account issues, transaction, offer redemption, interface challenges, intermediary inaction, service lateness and cancellation, incorrect orders and fee structure. The authors further found platform-centric service failure to be more likely than multiparty service failure to elicit negative discrete emotions. These results offer profound implications regarding the sustainable development of the sharing economy and platform businesses in contemporary hospitality.

Au and Tsang (2023) drew on protection motivation theory to understand Uber drivers' self-protective behavior against legal risks given the illegal nature of the gig economy in some cities. Through in-depth interviews and online surveys with Uber drivers, they identified eight maladaptive perceptions fitting a bidimensional conceptualization of cognitive and affective components that reduce workers' unwillingness to work illegally in the gig economy. Effects on Uber drivers' unwillingness to work and weekly working hours were shown to potentially vary across threat appraisal, coping appraisal and maladaptive perceptions. These findings can help platform companies negotiate with governments about the gig economy's legality. Governments can also refer to the results to develop policies around illegal gig work or legalization of the gig economy.

Wong *et al.* (2023) examined Airbnb's online experience initiative, which offers virtual tourism activities. The authors adopted transformative tourism theory and identified four major themes in online experiences – hedonism, attention restoration, social relatedness and self-exaltation. Their study revealed how these experiences can meet tourists' needs and produce positive socio-mental outcomes. This research sheds light on the transformative

potential of virtual experiences and lays a theoretical foundation for future investigations into the topic.

Ye *et al.* (2022) explored how travelers choose between traditional hotels and P2P sharing accommodation in urban tourism and how the pandemic may change their preference formation. Using two waves of survey data, the authors outlined 15 key value attributes and personal traits with differential effects during the pandemic. Practitioners can enhance hotel and sharing accommodations' competitiveness by understanding each sector's competitive edge and advantageous market profile. This study adds empirical evidence related to how the pandemic has informed tourists' behavior patterns.

Shin *et al.* (2023b) explored consumers' perceptions of the economic and sociocultural effects of P2P accommodation on local communities. Based on a survey of 300 consumers, the authors tested a proposed framework using structural equation modeling. Results showed the significant impacts of these accommodations' sociocultural benefits on perceived community resilience. Economic benefits had a nonsignificant effect. P2P accommodation platforms can contribute to sustainable development and community resilience through strategic collaboration.

Xu *et al.* (2023) adopted a qualitative approach to gain a deeper understanding of the well-being of transient organizations/groups. Thematic analysis of diary and interview data unveiled a complex picture of sharing economy workers' well-being, including physical, subjective, psychological and social dimensions. Their research enriches the literature by presenting a framework of well-being in the sharing economy context. The authors also described the precarious nature of sharing economy work and how hospitality, tourism and event industry settings can affect well-being.

Lin *et al.* (2023) explored the impacts of labor market transformation after the Chinese Government issued guidance to promote gig workers' welfare. The authors held focus groups and used the Delphi technique to explore impacts on online catering platforms and gig workers based on governance theory. Institutional governance was found to negatively affect these platforms' operating costs but to sustain gig workers' welfare. Lin *et al.* (2023) suggested that the dual effects of market mechanisms and institutional governance in the sharing economy need to be balanced to foster labor market transformation. This study puts forth an integrated governance theory to enhance the epistemology of institutional governance.

Fu *et al.* (2023) aimed to unearth influencing factors and mitigating mechanisms behind customers' institutional distrust of P2P accommodation. The authors identified underlying critical issues using online review data. Their results informed the assembly of a model depicting how institutional distrust arises under the boundary condition of subjective norms. The model was verified using a questionnaire survey. Finally, in-depth semi-structured interviews were held to ensure the model's robustness. The external environment and internal platform effectiveness were identified as critical aspects of customers' institutional distrust of P2P accommodation. The external environment influenced such distrust through perceived threats, demonstrating the formation of this response through internal psychology. Subjective norms moderated the effects of perceived threats on customers' institutional distrust.

Zhong *et al.* (2023) examined differences in guests' perceptions of P2P accommodation before and after COVID-19 to recommend how these properties could be enhanced in China following the pandemic. They constructed a multidimensional framework of tourists' perceived values based on the P2P accommodation context and pandemic conditions. This model tracked changes in the perceived value of P2P accommodation before and after

COVID-19; consumers' perceptions of environmental health, service and physical risks increased.

Shang *et al.* (2023) considered how local tour guides operate via a sharing economy platform. They explored how these guides have responded to pandemic restrictions using self-efficacy and other resources to improve resilience and performance. The authors adopted an interpretive approach to assess this phenomenon via two main sources: data from 40 semi-structured interviews with local tour guides and 26,478 online tourist reviews from tour guide service recipients before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Local tour guides used sharing economy platforms to arrange flexible services. Resilience emerged through tour guides' dynamic capabilities to address contextual factors in real time. This research contributes to the sharing economy literature by theorizing a workflow that enables local tour guides to maintain self-efficacy and respond fluidly on P2P platforms. The results also link resilience to real-time contextual features.

In conclusion, this special issue includes a collection of innovative and much-needed studies addressing stark knowledge gaps in the tourism and hospitality literature. The articles provide systematic literature syntheses, seminal theory-building efforts and creative endeavors that unveil novel findings related to the sharing economy's evolution in the post-pandemic era. These papers offer rich theoretical and practical contributions to sharing economy research. We hope readers will find this special issue useful for their own studies. We also hope that this issue offers directions for investigations of the sharing economy in a post-pandemic world. We would like to sincerely thank all authors for their valuable contributions. We would additionally like to acknowledge the panel of renowned scholars who reviewed submissions and provided constructive feedback on multiple versions of these manuscripts. We would like to wholeheartedly thank Dr Fevzi Okumus, Editor-in-Chief of the *IJCHM*, for his dedication to the journal and his enormous support for this special issue.

Kevin Kam Fung So
Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, USA
Giampaolo Viglia
University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth, UK
Stephanie Liu
The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, USA, and
Dan Wang
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong SAR, China

1153

References

Abrate, G. and Viglia, G. (2019), "Personal or product reputation? Optimizing revenues in the sharing economy", *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 58 No. 1, pp. 136-148.

Au, W.C.W. and Tsang, N.K. (2023), "Gig workers' self-protective behaviour against legal risks: an application of protection motivation theory", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.

Bausch, T., Gartner, W.C. and Ortanderl, F. (2021), "How to avoid a COVID-19 research paper tsunami? A tourism system approach", *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 60 No. 3, pp. 467-485.

Bresciani, S., Ferraris, A., Santoro, G., Premazzi, K., Quaglia, R., Yahiaoui, D. and Viglia, G. (2021), "The seven lives of Airbnb. The role of accommodation types", *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 88, p. 103170.

Caldieraro, F., Zhang, J.Z., Cunha, M., Jr. and Shulman, J.D. (2018), "Strategic information transmission in peer-to-peer lending markets", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 82 No. 2, pp. 42-63.

Camilleri, J. and Neuhofer, B. (2017), "Value co-creation and co-destruction in the Airbnb sharing economy", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 29 No. 9, pp. 2322-2340.

Cheng, M. (2016), "Current sharing economy media discourse in tourism", *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 60, pp. 111-114.

Dolnicar, S. and Zare, S. (2020), "COVID19 and Airbnb–disrupting the disruptor", *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 83, p. 102961.

Eckhardt, G.M., Houston, M.B., Jiang, B., Lamberton, C., Rindfleisch, A. and Zervas, G. (2019), "Marketing in the sharing economy", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 83 No. 5, pp. 5-27.

Fu, S., Yang, J. and Su, L. (2023), "Antecedents and intervention mechanisms of institutional distrust of P2P accommodations during COVID-19 in China", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.

Godovykh, M., Back, R.M., Bufquin, D., Baker, C. and Park, J.Y. (2023), "Peer-to-peer accommodation amid COVID-19: the effects of Airbnb cleanliness information on guests' trust and behavioral intentions", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.

Guttentag, D., Smith, S., Potwarka, L. and Havitz, M. (2018), "Why tourists choose Airbnb: a motivation-based segmentation study", *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 57 No. 3, pp. 342-359.

Hossain, M. (2021), "The effect of the Covid-19 on sharing economy activities", *Journal of Cleaner Production*, Vol. 280, p. 124782.

Jones, P. and Comfort, D. (2020), "The COVID-19 crisis and sustainability in the hospitality industry", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 32 No. 10, pp. 3037-3050.

Kim, H., So, K.K.F. and Mihalik, B. (2022), "Disentangling the dynamics of service failure and service recovery in peer-to-peer accommodations: a triadic perspective", *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 100, p. 103086.

Li, Z., Huang, J., Huang, S. and Huang, D. (2023), "Perceived barriers and negotiation of using peer-to-peer accommodation by Chinese consumers in the COVID-19 context", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.

Lin, P.M., Peng, K.L., Wilson Au, W.C. and Baum, T. (2023), "Labor market transformation in the hospitality gig economy in a post pandemic era: impacts of institutional governance", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.

Liu, S.Q. and Mattila, A.S. (2017), "Airbnb: online targeted advertising, sense of power, and consumer decisions", *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 60, pp. 33-41.

Mody, M.A., Jung, S., Dogru, T. and Suess, C. (2023), "How do consumers select between hotels and Airbnb? A hierarchy of importance in accommodation choice", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.

Mody, M.A., Suess, C. and Lehto, X. (2017), "The accommodation experiencescape: a comparative assessment of hotels and Airbnb", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 29 No. 9, pp. 2377-2404.

Ponciano, J. (2020), "Airbnb stock down 25% since IPO, three billionaire cofounders lose $5 billion in 3 trading days", available at: www.forbes.com/sites/jonathanponciano/2020/12/15/airbnb-down-25-since-ipo-three-billionaire-cofounders-lose-5-billion-in-3-trading-days/ (accessed 1 February 2023).

Qi, R. and Chen, H. (2023), "Do efforts to address safety pay off? Evidence from the sharing economy in the post–pandemic world", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.

Shang, K., Fan, D.X. and Buhalis, D. (2023), "Tour guides' self-efficacy and resilience capability building through sharing economy platforms", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.

Shin, H., Jeong, M., Zapata-Cuervo, N., Montes Guerra, M.I., Cho, M.H. and Kim, Y. (2023b), "Effects of customers' perceived risks of sharing economy on self-protective behavior toward COVID-19", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.

Shin, H.W., Yoon, S., Jung, S. and Fan, A. (2023a), "Risk or benefit? Economic and sociocultural impact of P2P accommodation on community resilience, consumer perception and behavioral intention", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.

So, K.K.F., Oh, H. and Min, S. (2018), "Motivations and constraints of Airbnb consumers: findings from a mixed-methods approach", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 67, pp. 224-236.

Song, X., Gu, H., Li, Y. and Ye, W. (2023), "A systematic review of trust in sharing accommodation: progress and prospects from the multistake holder perspective", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.

Statista (2022), "Revenue of platform providers in the global sharing economy 2017-2022", available at: www.statista.com/statistics/878844/global-sharing-economy-revenue-platform-providers/ (accessed 1 February 2023).

Wang, D. and Nicolau, J.L. (2017), "Price determinants of sharing economy based accommodation rental: a study of listings from 33 cities on Airbnb.com", *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 62, pp. 120-131.

Wei, W., Baker, M.A. and Onder, I. (2023), "All without leaving home: building a conceptual model of virtual tourism experiences", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.

Wirtz, J., So, K.K.F., Mody, M.A., Liu, S.Q. and Chun, H.H. (2019), "Platforms in the peer-to-peer sharing economy", *Journal of Service Management*, Vol. 30 No. 4, pp. 452-483.

Wong, I.A., Lu, M.V., Lin, S. and Lin, Z. (2023), "The transformative virtual experience paradigm: the case of Airbnb's online experience", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.

Wu, L., Liu, S.Q., Ma, S. and Hanks, L. (2023), "Platform-centric vs. multi-party service failure: an examination of consumers' negative word of mouth about sharing economy platforms", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.

Xu, Y., Hazée, S., So, K.K.F., Li, K.D. and Malthouse, E.C. (2021), "An evolutionary perspective on the dynamics of service platform ecosystems for the sharing economy", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 135, pp. 127-136.

Ye, S., Lei, S.I., Zhao, X., Zhu, L. and Law, R. (2022), "Modeling tourists' preference between hotels and peer-to-peer (P2P) sharing accommodation: a pre-and post-COVID-19 comparison", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.

Zhong, L., Liu, J., Morrison, A.M., Dong, Y., Zhu, M. and Li, L. (2023), "Perceived differences in peer-to-peer accommodation before and after COVID-19: evidence from China", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.

Zhu, G., So, K.K.F. and Hudson, S. (2017), "Inside the sharing economy: understanding consumer motivations behind the adoption of mobile applications", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 29 No. 9, pp. 2218-2239.

Further reading

Li, Y., Xu, S., Yu, Y. and Meadows, R. (2022), "The well-being of gig workers in the sharing economy during COVID-19", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.