Asia Pacific
Academy of Science Pte. Ltd.

REVIEW ARTICLE

How psychological factors influence hosts to participate in the accommodation sharing economy: A systematic review

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ABSTRACT

This research study investigated the impact of psychological factors on hosts within the accommodation sharing economy. Specifically, the study aimed to explore how psychological factors motivate individuals to become hosts and actively engage in this sector. Through a systematic review, the paper identified relevant articles in electronic databases such as Web of Science, Science Direct, EBSCOhost, and Scopus from 2000 to 2023, following the PICo model (Population, Interest, Context) to determine the review question. From an initial pool of 555 records, a comprehensive screening for eligibility resulted in the inclusion of three studies for this systematic review. The research applied rigorous reference control and evaluated the quality of included studies using the CASP tool (Critical Appraisal Skills Program). Among the three studies meeting the review criteria, socialization emerged as the primary research focus. Drawing on self-determination theory, the research demonstrates that social interaction and the formation of friendships between hosts and guests positively impact individuals' decisions to become hosts. Furthermore, aspects such as personal development, social interaction with guests, and a sense of achievement contribute to sustained participation. The study underscores the correlation between emotional stress and guest reviews, emphasizing hosts' motivation to enhance services. Additionally, the research identifies emotional and social loneliness as obstacles to host participation in the sharing economy, highlighting the crucial role of social interactions in alleviating loneliness for both hosts and guests.

Keywords: sharing economy; accommodation; peer-to-peer economy; host; psychological factors

1. Introduction

The sharing economy is not something new, as peer-to-peer businesses existed before the advent of the internet. The difference to the past lies in the use of digital platforms. Today's sharing economy platforms help unrelated people to exchange products and services[1,2]. In 1995 the first examples of the digital sharing economy emerged when the eBay platform was created, and consumers were given the opportunity to sell personal items. By 2010, several similar companies had emerged, enabling the sale and free exchange of goods and services, such as clothing, books, toys, furniture, household appliances, etc.[2]

Since 2013, the sharing economy has gone mainstream, with the emergence of companies such as Airbnb, which provides the ability to register, find, and rent accommodation[3], Turo (formerly RelayRides), which

allows individuals to lend their cars, when they're not using them, TaskRabbit, which makes it possible to do small daily tasks like supermarket shopping, carpet washing etc., and Uber and Lyft, which focus on peer-to-peer mobility and transportation services[4].

Today, due to the widespread use of handheld devices such as mobile smartphones and tablets, as well as access to Global Positioning System (GPS), the sharing economy has evolved into a collection of businesses connecting millions of consumers with other individuals[3]. It should be noted that, specialized platforms are created and are constantly developed for several industries, through which, the interested parties can offer or receive the desired product or service through a monetary transaction or an exchange. Ismail (2014) stated that the success of the companies involved is due to having a higher compelling purpose, daring to experiment, having intelligent interfaces, being based on community and engagement, and attracting private wealth and authorized self-employed workers[5].

The general acceptance of the sharing economy is quite high. According to the European Commission (2016), over 50% of European citizens are aware of the sharing economy, 1 out of 6 Europeans are actively engaged in the sharing economy, while at younger ages the ratio is 1 out of 3[6]. Zhang et al. (2018) argue that additional empirical studies are needed to better understand the impact of the sharing economy on individuals, communities and society at large[7].

1.1. Sharing economy nowadays

It is well known that sharing economy platforms have gradually become mainstream in recent years and have transformed several aspects of our lives, including the way we travel. Accommodation sharing economy is steadily attracting the interest of the scientific community. There are alternative terms in the literature for this phenomenon (i.e., sharing economy), such as collaborative consumption and peer-to-peer economy[8]. Sharing economy is nothing new as peer-to-peer businesses existed before the advent of the internet but has become a global phenomenon with the international expansion of sharing economy platforms[2].

Weitzman was the first to coin the term "sharing economy" in 1986, proposing the share system as a solution to the stagnant inflation of the then US economy[9]. In his work he justified his proposal as a practical economic model in contrast to up to that point inapplicable macroeconomic theories. A modern interpretation is that of Botsman (2013) who defines it as: "an economy based on distributed networks of connected individuals and communities, transforming the way we can produce, consume, finance and learn"[10].

A narrower definition, according to Stephany (2015), is to "make underused assets accessible to a community, leading to a reduced need to own those assets"[11]. Also, Schor and Fitzmaurice (2015) reported that the sharing economy is just peer-to-peer transactions facilitated by digital platforms[12]. According to Matofska (2016): "People are the heart of the sharing economy. It is the economy of the people, meaning that people are active citizens and participants in their communities and in society at large"[13].

The European Commission (2016) states that the term "cooperative economy" refers to "business models where activities are facilitated by collaborative platforms that create an open market for the temporary use of goods or services often provided by individuals", "In general, cooperative economy transactions do not involve a change of ownership and can be for-profit or non-profit"[6].

1.2. Psychological factors in the sharing economy

The development of the sharing economy has changed the balance in the hospitality industry[14]. However, studying psychological factors that drive individuals to participate as hosts in the accommodation sharing economy is a scientific area that is now beginning to be studied. Psychological factors play an important role in influencing hosts to participate in the accommodation sharing economy. This is because individuals'

decision-making and behavior are often influenced by their psychological states, attitudes, beliefs, and motivations[15]. It is evident that individuals gain business opportunities through the sharing economy that they otherwise would not have[16]. The opportunity to generate additional income[15] combined with new forms of social interaction, are the key elements of the sharing economy, which attract more and more people to participate[17,18].

Loneliness recognized as a pathogen leads to poor mental and physical health[19,20]. Emotional loneliness is closely related to the lack of close relationships associated with reduced quality of social interactions, while social loneliness results from inadequate social networks[21]. Tourism often provides an opportunity to escape loneliness and empower individuals to socialize[22]. Researchershave studied the link between Airbnb use and loneliness. Loneliness has been identified as one of the main reasons for joining the Airbnb platform, emphasizing that social interactions between hosts and guests can reduce loneliness[17].

Also, the social interaction between guests and the hosts is a critical aspect of the tourism experience and at the same time affects guest and host satisfaction[23–26]. People interact with each other by exerting influence and control over each other's behavior. In the tourism industry, the relationship between hosts and guests, is characterized by power and dominance dynamics. Researchers point out that hosts and guests are not socialized in the same way as different intensity and duration between their interactions have been observed[17]. In particular, Sheringham and Daruwalla (2007) emphasize that a host offering hospitality to a guest creates a climate of negotiation between them[27]. It has been observed that power in the field of hospitality is directly related to the hosts and whether they are willing to welcome or reject guests in their space[28]. It was also emphasized that the host-guest relationship is a form of social interaction that reflects the balance of power of both parties to meet their respective needs[29].

Because the relationship between stress and emotion is complex, it is also considered a benchmark for host attitudes[30]. Traditional theories of emotion, such as those of James (1894), Cannon (1931), and Schachter and Singer (1962) tend to view emotions as either subconscious or cognitive reactions to normal change[31–33]. According to Lazarus (2006), experiencing emotions often causes stress[34]. Until recently, research has focused heavily on the relationship between stress and negative emotions[35], however, researchers have come to believe that there is also a relationship between stress and positive emotions[36].

Although researchers have attempted to identify the different aspects of the host-guest relationship[37], they have all concluded that the commercial aspect dominates[25]. Several studies have focused on the host and guest relationship and experience-based satisfaction, considering the service provider's reputation, photos, and ratings[38–40].

A growing body of accommodation sharing economy studies point to the need for a systematic review of research to highlight the reasons that drive individuals to become hosts[41]. Several systematic reviews of sharing economy research have been conducted[42–46]. At the same time, no systematic review of the psychological factors driving people to become hosts has been conducted. This paper attempts to fill this gap by focusing on the impact of psychological factors on hosts when participating in the accommodation sharing economy.

2. Materials and methods

The systematic qualitative review method was deemed most appropriate according to the research question and objectives and was used to determine how psychological factors lead individuals to become hosts in the sharing economy. Qualitative studies are particularly useful in providing in-depth information about complex phenomena, experiences, and perspectives. These studies can help to answer research questions that

aim to understand the experiences, perspectives, and attitudes of individuals or groups[47]. This paper focuses on reviewing primary qualitative research studies that explore the psychological factors that lead individuals to engage for hosting in the sharing economy.

The first author conducted the search for scientific articles, extracted the data after reviewing them, and evaluated both the quality of the studies and the results. To avoid errors and contradictions, all researchers participated in the evaluation and approval of the search process, verified and extracted data. Both the analysis and the writing of the paper were carried out jointly.

For this study, the PICo model (Population, Interest, Context) was used to determine the systematic review question as appropriately and unambiguously as possible[48]. The PRISMA 2020 (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analyzes) flowchart was also used to fully illustrate the process of selecting scientific articles. It should be noted that specific keywords and their synonyms have been identified and developed for each part of the PICo question. For research needs, an extensive search was conducted in February 2023, using Web of Science, ScienceDirect, EBSCOhost and Scopus electronic databases. The search was performed using the following query:

("sharing economy" OR "peer-to-peer economy" OR "collaborative economy" OR Airbnb) AND accommodation AND psychological

The main filtering parameters for article inclusion were language (articles only in English were acceptable), participant age in each article (18 years and older), host, and article publication date (published between 2000 and 2023, during this period the sharing economy has undergone rapid expansion.).

The research includes qualitative studies that focused on the psychological factors that influence individuals to become hosts and participate in the accommodation-sharing economy. Thus, hotel-focused studies were automatically excluded. Additionally, because the research focused on articles about accommodation hosts, articles that focused on other forms of the sharing economy were excluded. Studies with results not related to psychological factors were also excluded. Finally, articles related to other systematic reviews and bibliographic reviews were not included.

An initial search of the databases yielded 555 candidate articles (**Table 1**). Of these, 45 duplicate entries were removed prior to the audit. After deduplication, 510 records were retained for screening. No records were identified at this stage that were marked as inappropriate by automation tools that needed to be removed for other reasons. In turn, 443 entries were excluded after reviewing the titles and abstracts and the study scope was reduced to 67 articles. After diligent full text review of the 67 studies, 3 studies that fully met the eligibility criteria were identified, as 12 articles were excluded because they were quantitative studies, literature or systematic reviews, 23 articles were excluded due to outcome relevance and 29 articles were excluded due to study sample relevance (**Figure 1**).

Table 1. Results from the databases' search.

Database	Search results
Web of Science	31
ScienceDirect	394
EBSCOhost	103
Scopus	27

The reference list of each of the included studies, as well as previous relevant literature review lists, were then thoroughly examined to discover potentially valuable resources without obtaining additional results. In addition, it was ensured that the included studies were conducted according to ethical principles and approved

by the relevant committees. The included studies were also evaluated using the CASP tool[49] to ensure their methodological quality and to improve the internal validity of the review. All studies were of high quality (**Table 2**).

Table 2. Quality assessment based on the CASP qualitative research checklist.

Authors	CASP checklist criteria										Assessment
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10*	
Zhang et al. (2019)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	High
Farmaki and Stergiou (2019)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	U	Y	Y	Y	High
Farmaki and Kaniadakis (2020)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	High

Notes: Y: yes; N: no; Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) criteria for qualitative studies: 1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research? 2. Was a qualitative methodology appropriate? 3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research? 4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research? 5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue? 6. Has the relationship between the researcher and participants been adequately considered? 7. Have ethical issues been considered? 8. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous? 9. Is there a clear statement of the findings? 10. (How valuable is the research?) * This is an open-ended question.

For the thematic analysis, the three stages of Thomas and Harden's methodology were followed, i.e., coding the text, developing the descriptive themes and creating analysis themes. Each researcher re-examined each study to get a general sense of the concepts and findings of each research[50]. Then, for each individual study, the required data such as title, author, year, country, method, sampling method, sample size, mean age, and main findings were extracted and imported into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet (**Table 3**). The researchers' spreadsheets were then collected and consolidated. All authors read, analyzed, and discussed the material until consensus was reached. The three studies were published between 2000 and 2023, offering complete qualitative data from 110 hosts in different regions of Europe and Southeastern United States.

Table 3. Characteristics of included studies.

| Author, Country, Year Published	Aim	Sample: Number	Data Collection/Analysis	Context
Zhang et al., Southeastern region of the United States, 2019	To explore the motivations behind individuals' willingness to start or operate peer-to-peer accommodation services and (b) to describe the positive and negative impacts resulting from such microentrepreneurial opportunities.	60	Semi-structured interview / using a snowballing technique	Broad cross-section of people who run sharing economy businesses using Airbnb platform.
Farmaki & Stergiou, Across Europe, 2019	To explore the relationship between loneliness and the use of Airbnb from the perspective of host-guest interactions.	15	Semi-structured interview / sampling process	Hosts who cohabit with guest.
Farmaki & Kaniadakis, Across Europe, 2020	To explore power dynamics in peer-to-peer (P2P) accommodation by examining how they manifest in the host-guest relationship.	35	Semi-structured interviews / targeted selection	Participants had to be active hosts on the Airbnb platform with a substantial number of reviews.
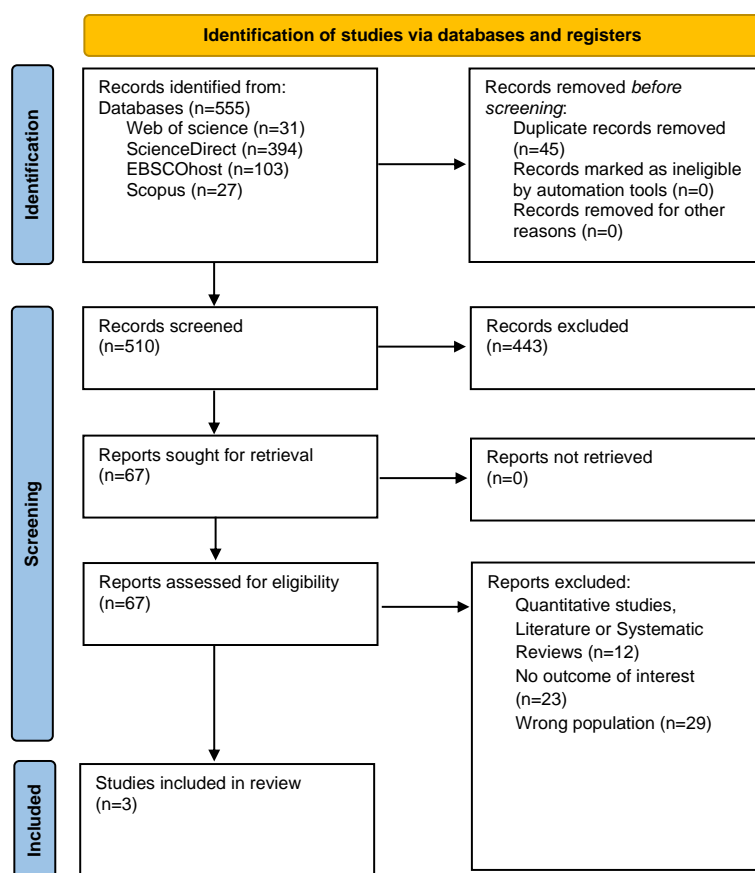
Figure 1. Study selection flowchart.

3. Results

In this study, various psychological factors were identified that influence individuals to become hosts. Most articles recognized social interaction as dominant. It is also pointed out that in addition to social connections, personal development and a sense of achievement also have a significant impact on hosts. Our results also show that emotional stress caused by guest reviews and emotional and social loneliness affect host participation in the accommodation sharing economy.

Zhang et al. (2019) conducted qualitative research on the multiple aspects of micro-entrepreneurship in the accommodation sharing economy and selected Airbnb as a representative company[16]. They tried to describe the motivations of hosts from an economic, social and cultural point of view. Criteria for evaluating the research process were established and a five-stage decision-making process was adopted[51]. Data collection took place from August to November 2017 in the southeastern United States, using the constructivist approach and avalanche method. A total of 60 interviews with hosts lasting approximately 60 minutes (average age 22-35), were conducted, which were thematically evaluated after the recording. Of the 60 hosts surveyed, 65% were full-time service providers while only 35% were part-time hosts, with the majority of them having 1–3 years of experience[16].

Eight motivations for Airbnb host activity were identified: social, economic, and cultural benefits, ease of use, resource availability, flexibility, freedom, and enthusiasm for the future. More specifically, cultural motivation was the second most mentioned motivation (42/60 participants), as the hosts reported that they often attend Airbnb to meet new people from other cultures. Also 35 out of 60 participants indicated that the

social factor is a key motivator that prompts hosts to engage with the sharing economy. In particular, it is emphasized that the provision of Airbnb hosting services offers the opportunity to meet other people and increases their social interactions. Some participants also felt great support from their families and friends. Conjointly, the research emphasizes that freedom, flexibility and work autonomy are important motivators for individuals to actively participate in the sharing economy (25 out of 60 participants)[16].

The data showed that the most commonly reported positive outcomes were related to motivation. Specifically, social connections (25 out of 60 participants), personal growth (9 out of 60), and a sense of accomplishment (5 out of 60) were reported as positive results by Airbnb hosts. The hosts also clarified that a feeling of success and control over their lives is derived from running their own businesses. On the other hand, the researchers identified three main negative factors, mentioned by 30 respondents, risk, lack of privacy and emotional stress caused by guest reviews[16]. Guest reviews are a key factor in the success of Airbnb hosts and can cause a lot of stress and tension. In fact, relevant research shows that unfair guest reviews can be the cause of emotional exhaustion[52]. Finally, it should be noted that guest misbehaviour can often have a negative personal or emotional impact on hosts.

Farmaki and Stergiou (2019) examined host-guest interaction in terms of the association between loneliness and Airbnb use[17]. For the purposes of the research, 15 semi-structured interviews were conducted via Skype, from May to December 2018, with Airbnb hosts across Europe who live with their Airbnb guests. The researchers used deliberate sampling, taking into account the gender, age, and background of the hosts, so the sample was diverse. Thematic analysis revealed that loneliness is a key factor in using the Airbnb platform. Insights gained from interviews with hosts and cohabiting guests were used to examine loneliness and specifically how host-guest social interactions can alleviate it. The study highlighted those social interactions between host and guest can alleviate loneliness, supported by Airbnb-type technological solutions. Finally, the researchers pointed out that hosts and guests socialize in different ways, as different intensity and duration between their interactions were observed[17].

In their research, Farmaki and Kaniadakis (2020) used a qualitative approach on a sample of participants using the Airbnb platform to study the relationship between hosts and guests of peer-to-peer accommodation[53]. The sample came from different locations in Europe and was fluent in English. Between November 2018 and February 2019, 35 semi-structured interviews were conducted via Skype in English (mean age 41) lasting 45-60 minutes. The transcripts from the interviews were checked for accuracy by two authors and then the data were analyzed thematically, and axial coding was carried out. The study found various motivations for hosting.

The main motivation for research participants was the financial benefits of hosting. The research findings also showed several cases where motivation was related to social aspects. The hosts believed that their hospitality gives them the opportunity to become more actively involved in various forms of socializing. In this context, in addition to the host-guest relationship, a new form of conviviality between hosts is being developed, as the hosts who participated in the research participate in social networks and groups, sharing knowledge and informing about the hosting practices they use. The researchers also noted that hosts living with guests expressed a sense of pride and a sense of belonging to a community that stems from their participation in Airbnb. In conclusion, it is emphasized that the possibility of attaining the title of a "super host" is a matter of moral reward and improves the level of psychological enhancement[53].

4. Discussion

This systematic review, attempted to gather the psychological factors and motivations that push individuals to engage in professional activity in the accommodation sharing economy. Motive is regarded as

the main reason behind every action of the individual[54]. Researchers draw on self-determination theory to answer what motivates individuals to participate in the accommodation sharing economy[55,56].

Research results indicated that social interaction[16,17,53] and the friendship developed between host and guest have a positive effect on the individual's decision to become a host. Our findings converge with those of Pung et al. (2019), who stressed the importance of social interaction as a factor influencing the use of sharing economy services in tourism[57], and with Malazizi et al. (2018) who supported that friendship and social interaction are cornerstones of the sharing economy and that the sharing economy gives hosts the opportunity to enhance their social connection with other people[58]. In general, the benefits of contact stand out as important factor influencing the guest-host interaction, in the literature[24,25,59]. It is also worth noting that the most important indicators for measuring the guest-host interaction are its intensity[59] and its frequency[23].

Other factors such as the personal development of the host, his/her social interaction with the guests and the sense of achievement have an equally positive effect on further participation in the sharing economy[16]. Reisinger and Turner (2012) define social contact in tourism as the personal encounter between host and guest[25]. The sharing economy offers the opportunity to increase the social interaction of hosts with other people. A typical example is the hosts who live with their guests[58]. The results are consistent with previous studies conducted in the sector and mainly focus on the impact of the interaction between tourists and hosts and their satisfaction with it[25,26,59,60].

Another notable result is the correlation between emotional stress and guest reviews[17]. Also, the psychological risk that the host takes while running his business creates in him a sense of satisfaction[58]. Hosts are motivated by the stress caused by guest reviews to do better themselves and to improve their services, with the ultimate goal of getting good ratings for their property. This finding adds to the complex relationship between stress and emotion, as researchers have hitherto emphasized the negative relationship between negative emotions and stress, something that is slowly changing as it is found that there is a positive relationship between anxiety and stress[35,36].

Aside from the emotional stress of guest evaluations, the researchers pointed out that emotional and social loneliness impairs host participation in the sharing economy[17]. Researchers have studied the host-guest interactions based on the relationship between loneliness and Airbnb use. It found that loneliness is a key motivation for using the Airbnb platform, emphasizing that social interactions between host and guest can alleviate loneliness[17]. The findings are consistent with those of Larsen (2007) who states that tourism is a way of escaping loneliness where individuals can gain social power[22]. Many hosts seem to seek social contact to escape loneliness by participating in the sharing economy, as social contact between guest and host is a crucial factor that also affects happiness on both sides[23–26].

5. Conclusion

The sharing economy undoubtedly offers opportunities and stimulates competition between companies. It is based on cooperation, equality, and parity among its members and has the potential to be a pillar of global economic and social development. Numerous researchers have studied this phenomenon from different perspectives in recent years. This study adopted the systematic review method to investigate the psychological factors influencing hosts. Specifically, it examined the psychological factors driving individuals to become hosts in the sharing economy. After studying 555 scientific articles, this research resulted in three qualitative studies, extracting the main psychological factors affecting hosts. The study emphasizes the different ways in which each psychological factor influences the host's decisions.

Undoubtedly, the sharing economy, as a form of entrepreneurship, offers a new kind of socialization. The main conclusion that emerges from this study is that social interaction strongly influences the intention of hosts to participate in the sharing economy. It is also pointed out that, in addition to social contacts, personal development and the sense of achievement also have a strong influence on hosts. To improve the quality of their services and receive positive online ratings, hosts need to engage in personal emotional work, as confirmed by the study results.

Understanding the psychological factors that influence hosts to participate in the accommodation sharing economy is crucial for sharing economy platforms to design effective marketing strategies and policies. For instance, sharing economy platforms may design marketing messages that emphasize the social and cultural benefits of hosting, such as the opportunity to meet new people from different backgrounds and cultures. Additionally, sharing economy platforms may provide hosts with training and support to manage risks associated with hosting, such as resources for dealing with property damage or safety concerns. Our findings reveal that emotional stress about guest reviews, as well as emotional and social loneliness, impairs host participation in the accommodation sharing economy.

Also, sharing economy platforms can tailor their marketing communications to highlight the positive social and cultural outcomes of hosting. This might encompass the chance to forge connections with individuals from diverse backgrounds and cultures, fostering a sense of community and belonging. Moreover, sharing economy platforms could play a crucial role in mitigating emotional and social loneliness among hosts by offering specialized training and support. By addressing concerns related to emotional stress, including worries about guest reviews, and providing a support network, these platforms can enhance the overall well-being of hosts, ultimately fostering a more resilient and sustainable sharing economy ecosystem.

An important limitation of this research is that no specific model has been used to measure psychological factors and assess how they interact with each other based on constants. For this reason, it would be necessary to build a model to measure host emotions. Also, our study focused on hosts, potentially making it inapplicable to professional hoteliers and guests. Future studies should address how psychological factors can affect hoteliers and guests simultaneously. It will also be of great interest to examine the attitudes, perceptions, and psychological profiles of hosts and hoteliers through quantitative studies.

Our review was limited to English language articles, which may have reduced the scope and volume of data retrieved. Future research could increase the volume of articles by including those written in other languages. Finally, as this review consisted of qualitative studies, there is a need to conduct more quantitative primary research to better understand the psychological factors driving individuals to become hosts. This would help policymakers on issues related to better attracting new people to host in the future. The sharing economy is constantly evolving, and new demands are emerging, so this systematic review paves the way for new studies on the psychological factors affecting people who participate in this industry.

Author contributions

Conceptualization, F.T. and K.K.; methodology, F.T.; software, F.T.; validation, F.T. and K.K.; formal analysis, F.T.; investigation, F.T.; resources, F.T.; data curation, F.T.; writing-original draft preparation, F.T.; writing-review and editing, F.T.; visualization, F.T.; supervision, K.K.; project administration, K.K. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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