Airbnb in Academic Focus: A Bibliometric Analysis of Research Trends and Author Productivity

Vuk Jovanović*[1], Nikola Zornić[2], Aleksandar Marković[3]

[1]University of Belgrade – Faculty of Organizational Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia, 0009-0008-3361-0223

[2]University of Belgrade – Faculty of Organizational Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia, 0000-0002-3597-0627

[3]University of Belgrade – Faculty of Organizational Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia, 0000-0002-3976-2788

*Corresponding author: jvuk039@gmail.com

Abstract. *This paper presents a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of the academic discourse surrounding Airbnb, a leading figure in the sharing economy, focusing on author productivity and the evolution of research themes from 2010 to 2023. Utilizing data extracted from the Web of Science platform, we systematically review 2,023 scholarly articles to map out the trajectory of Airbnb research. Our findings reveal a noticeable growth in publications, reflecting Airbnb's expanding influence on global accommodation practices, local communities, and the broader hospitality industry. The analysis highlights key areas of scholarly interest, including Airbnb's disruptive innovation, its economic and social impacts, and the crucial role of trust and reputation in peer-to-peer transactions. This paper not only chronicles the rise of Airbnb within academic literature but also underscores the multidisciplinary interest it has sparked, paving the way for future research into its continuing evolution and broader implications within the sharing economy.*

Keywords. *airbnb, sharing economy, bibliometric analysis, shared accommodation*

1 Introduction

The swift advancement of information technologies and a growing global base of internet-users have spurred the sharing economy's growth, changing how goods and services are consumed worldwide. This shift, fueled by technological innovations and changes in consumer behavior since the 2008 Global Economic Crisis, emphasizes more economical, ethical, and sustainable consumption choices. Notable manifestations of this shift are platforms like Airbnb and Uber, which epitomize the preference among consumers for temporary access over outright ownership of goods (Hassanli et al., 2022). Airbnb, in particular, stands as an example of the sharing economy's ethos, offering a straightforward platform for sharing living spaces. The business model of Airbnb facilitates a mutually beneficial exchange between accommodation providers and seekers, primarily tourists, allowing the former to monetize unused spaces while offering the latter quality services at competitive (Andreu et al., 2020; Sun et al., 2024). The success of Airbnb lies in its ability to efficiently match supply with demand through a collaborative user platform. It boasts a diverse range of accommodations, from urban apartments and rooms to more unconventional options like treehouses and igloos, demonstrating the versatility and reach of the sharing economy (Dann et al., 2019).

Airbnb, a platform harnessed from the forefront of modern internet technologies, has been dubbed a "disruptive innovation" by Guttentag (2015). This peer-to-peer accommodation service goes beyond mere cost savings, offering a suite of benefits that include access to apartment amenities and the promise of an authentic local experience. As an online marketplace, Airbnb empowers homeowners to lease their spaces to visitors for brief durations, fostering a unique blend of hospitality and community. The platform saw its most significant expansion in 2008, coinciding with Airbnb's inaugural year, marking a pivotal moment in urban lodging across the globe (Faye, 2024). Furthermore, Airbnb's evolution has effectively transformed homeowners into micro-entrepreneurs, redefining traditional concepts of property rental and guest accommodation (D. Guttentag, 2019).

DOI: https://doi.org/10.62863/WLDO9331

Numerous studies on Airbnb have explored a variety of key themes, including its role as a disruptive innovation (Guttentag, 2015; Guttentag & Smith, 2017), its impact on the hotel industry, and its effects on local communities (Li et al., 2019; Zervas et al., 2017). Moreover, investigations have delved into the dynamics of trust in hosts and the overall reputation of the platform (Andreu et al., 2020).

Many researchers addressed the topic of the Airbnb platform in the literature. Some of them are focused on finding research gaps and giving suggestions for the future research (D. Guttentag, 2019). Others investigated research methods, concluding that majority of work is based on surveys and empirical data, while experiments are scarce (Dann et al., 2019). Medina-Hernandez et al. (2020) highlight the scarcity of research on peer-to-peer accommodation platforms beyond Airbnb. This research paper focuses on bibliometric analysis of the literature surrounding Airbnb, examining author productivity within this field of study.

Following an introduction to Airbnb and the broader concept of the sharing economy, the paper is organized as follows. The methodology which was used in examining Airbnb is presented in section 2. A bibliometric analysis of Airbnb in literature is provided in section 3. Finally, section 4 presents conclusions and visions for future research.

2 Methodology

Data is collected from the Web of Science (WoS) platform (Clarivate Analytics, 2023), using the following search configuration:

(TS = (airbnb))

Indexes = Web of Science Core Collection

Timespan = All years

The initial dataset contained information on 2,085 papers. The time frame for the analysis was the period 2010-2023, therefore, papers written out of the defined period were removed, leaving 2,023 papers. Data contains information such as authors, titles, source titles, publication year, keywords, categories, times cited.

Data is analyzed using python packages pandas, collections, and matplotlib and aggregated results are presented.

3 Results of the Bibliometric Analysis

Bibliometric analysis geared towards a review of literature productivity and an observation of the trends in writing about Airbnb is presented in this section of the paper.

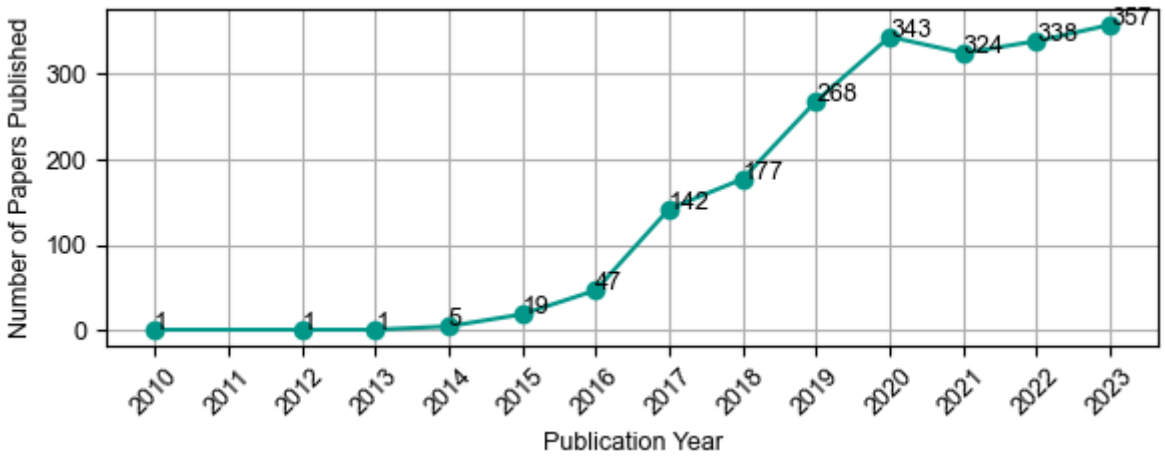

Figure 1. Number of papers with Airbnb in topic published per year (Source: Authors' work)

Figure 1 illustrates the annual trend in the number of papers published on the topic of Airbnb. The graph begins with a single paper in 2010. From 2010 to 2013, the number remains low, with 1 or fewer papers published each year. In 2014, there is a noticeable increase to 19 papers, and the trend continues to grow significantly in the following years, reaching a peak of 343 papers in 2020. Post-2020, the trend shows a slight variation but generally levels off, with a small decrease to 324 papers in 2021, a minor increase to 338 in 2022, and a final count of 357 papers in 2023.

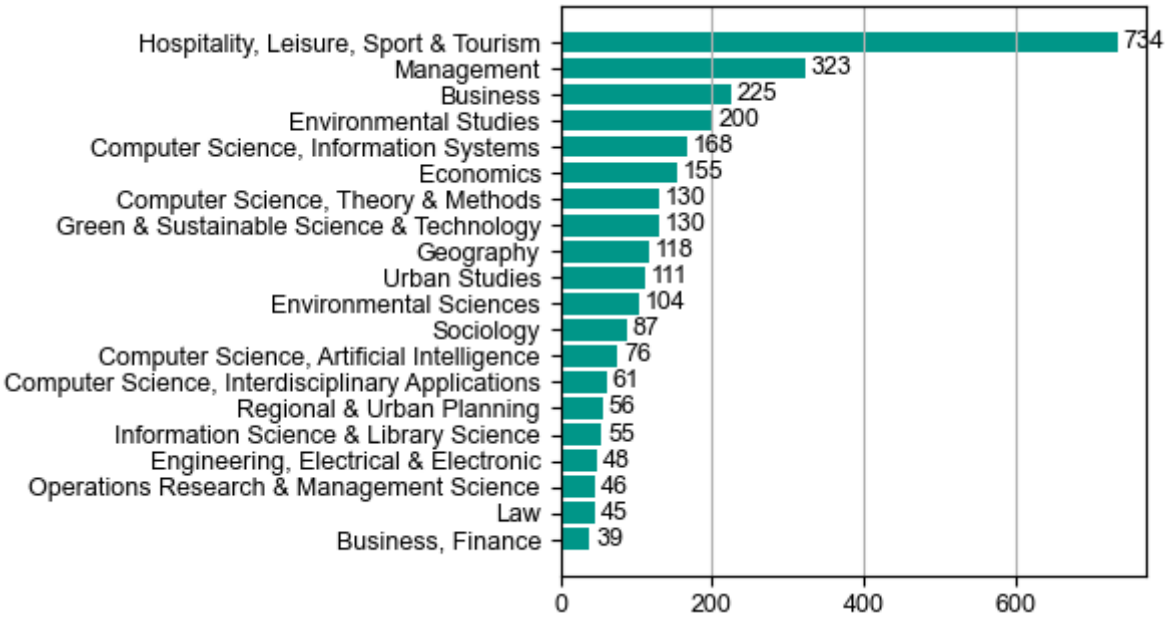

Figure 2. Most popular WoS categories for papers with Airbnb in topic (Source: Authors' work)

Figure 2 displays the distribution of research areas in scientific papers related to Airbnb, ranked by the frequency of their occurrence. The field of “Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism” leads with 734 papers, reflecting its primary relevance to the service that Airbnb offers. “Management” and “Business” are also highly represented with 323 and 225 papers respectively, indicating a strong focus on the business and management aspects of Airbnb. The domain of “Environmental Studies” follows with 200 papers, while “Computer Science, Information Systems” shows a significant contribution with 168 papers, suggesting interdisciplinary research involving technology's role in Airbnb's services. This chart highlights the diversity of academic disciplines engaged in the study of Airbnb and its multifaceted effects on various aspects of society and industry.

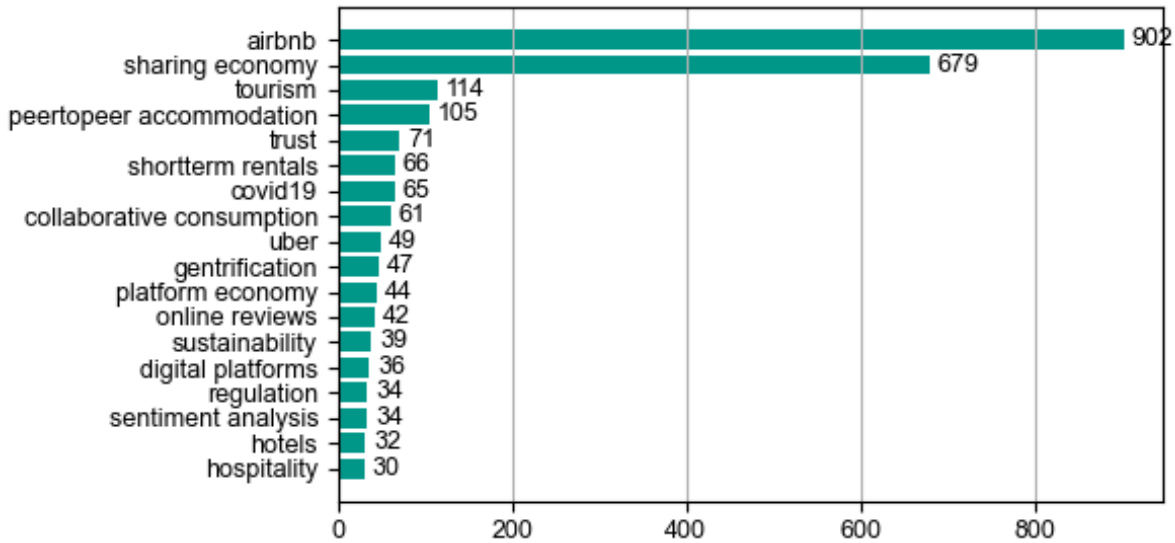

Figure 3. Most popular author keywords in papers with Airbnb in topic (Source: Authors' work)

Figure 3 provides an overview of the frequency of keywords used in scientific papers that discuss Airbnb. The keyword “airbnb” itself tops the chart with 902 occurrences, underscoring its centrality to the research. It's followed by “sharing economy”, which is mentioned 679 times, reflecting a significant focus on the broader economic phenomenon encompassing Airbnb. The keyword “tourism” appears in 114 papers, highlighting the impact of Airbnb on the tourism industry. “Peer-to-peer accommodation” is identified in 105 papers, indicating a strong research interest in the fundamental business model of Airbnb. Other notable keywords include “trust” with 71 mentions, “short-term rentals” with 66, and “COVID-19” with 65, pointing to research into the trustworthiness of peer-to-peer transactions, the nature of Airbnb's offerings, and the impact of the pandemic on such services, respectively. The chart continues with a range of other relevant keywords, including “collaborative consumption”, “uber”, and “gentrification”, each with fewer than 50 mentions, but still significant enough to demonstrate a variety of research interests in the context of Airbnb's operation and influence. This visual representation emphasizes the diversity and scope of research themes related to Airbnb within the academic literature.

Table 1: Journals with most papers containing Airbnb in topic (Source: Authors' work)

Journal	Number of papers
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT	96
SUSTAINABILITY	75
CURRENT ISSUES IN TOURISM	68
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT	68
ANNALS OF TOURISM RESEARCH	47
TOURISM MANAGEMENT	43
TOURISM ECONOMICS	29
JOURNAL OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM	25
JOURNAL OF HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT	23
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CULTURE TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY RESEARCH	21
JOURNAL OF BUSINESS RESEARCH	21
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF TOURISM CITIES	20
JOURNAL OF TRAVEL RESEARCH	19
JOURNAL OF TRAVEL & TOURISM MARKETING	17
TOURISM GEOGRAPHIES	16
TOURISM MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVES	15

Number of papers on Airbnb-related topics published in different journals is presented in Table 1. Leading the chart is the International Journal of Hospitality Management with 96 publications, indicating a primary interest in Airbnb's influence on hospitality management. The Sustainability journal follows with 75 papers, suggesting a significant focus on the sustainability aspects of Airbnb. Current Issues in Tourism and the International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management are tied, each featuring 68 papers. The distribution presented in the chart reveals the multi-disciplinary interest in Airbnb, with a clear emphasis on its impact within the fields of hospitality and tourism research.

4 Conclusion

The bibliometric analysis conducted in this paper has shed light on the significant academic interest in Airbnb and its pivotal role within the sharing economy. The methodology employed, utilizing data from the Web of Science platform, allowed for a comprehensive review of author productivity and research advancements concerning Airbnb, from its inception in 2008 to the present day.

The trends observed through this analysis, including the exponential increase in publications since Airbnb's launch, underscore the platform's importance and the wide-ranging implications of its business model. The diversity of research areas, from hospitality and tourism to environmental studies and

information systems, highlights the interdisciplinary interest in Airbnb and reflects its multifaceted impact on society.

As we look towards the future, it is clear that Airbnb will continue to be a subject of keen academic interest. Areas such as the ongoing evolution of the sharing economy, the regulatory challenges faced by Airbnb and similar platforms, and the long-term effects of these services on global travel and local economies promise rich avenues for further research. Additionally, emerging trends such as the impact of global crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, on the sharing economy will undoubtedly shape future scholarly inquiries.

Acknowledgment

This research was supported by the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia, Grant no. 7523041, Setting foundation for capacity building of sharing community in Serbia - PANACEA.

References

Andreu, L., Bigne, E., Amaro, S., & Palomo, J. (2020). Airbnb research: an analysis in tourism and hospitality journals. International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research, 14(1), 2–20. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCTHR-06-2019-0113

Clarivate Analytics. (2023). Web of Science. https://apps.webofknowledge.com

Dann, D., Teubner, T., & Weinhardt, C. (2019). Poster child and guinea pig – insights from a structured literature review on Airbnb. International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 31(1), 427–473. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-03-2018-0186

Faye, B. (2024). Neighborhood Trip. How do guests' neighborhood preferences shape the touristification process? Tourism Management, 102, 104880. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2023.104880

Guttentag, D. (2015). Airbnb: disruptive innovation and the rise of an informal tourism accommodation sector. Current Issues in Tourism, 18(12), 1192–1217. https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2013.827159

Guttentag, D. (2019). Progress on Airbnb: a literature review. Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology, 10(4), 814–844. https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTT-08-2018-0075

Guttentag, D., & Smith, S. (2017). Assessing Airbnb as a disruptive innovation relative to hotels: Substitution and comparative performance expectations. International Journal of Hospitality Management, 64, 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2017.02.003

Hassanli, N., Small, J., & Darcy, S. (2022). The representation of Airbnb in newspapers: a critical discourse analysis. Current Issues in Tourism, 25(19), 3186–3198. https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2019.1669540

Li, J., Hudson, S., & So, K. K. F. (2019). Exploring the customer experience with Airbnb. International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research, 13(4), 410–429. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCTHR-10-2018-0148

Medina-Hernandez, V. C., Marine-Roig, E., & Ferrer-Rosell, B. (2020). Accommodation sharing: a look beyond Airbnb's literature. International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research, 14(1), 21–33. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCTHR-07-2019-0130

Sun, X., Gui, L., & Cai, B. (2024). To be honest or positive? The effect of Airbnb host description on consumer behavior. Decision Support Systems, 114200. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2024.114200

Zervas, G., Proserpio, D., & Byers, J. W. (2017). The Rise of the Sharing Economy: Estimating the Impact of Airbnb on the Hotel Industry. Journal of Marketing Research, 54(5), 687–705. https://doi.org/10.1509/jmr.15.0204