ACADEMIC WEEKLY DIGEST

YOUR WEEKLY DIGEST OF KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

BEAUTY PREMIUM

Is there a beauty premium on Airbnb?

Do attractive hosts on Airbnb charge more and receive more bookings? Based on experimental design, Prof Gang Li and colleagues examined the existence and mechanisms of the beauty premium on Airbnb.

Results indicated that consumers tended to book and pay more for an accommodation offered by an attractive host, and these effects were mediated by potential consumers' perceived enjoyment and threats regarding their future stay. Two factors can weaken consumers' reliance on hosts' facial attractiveness when making purchase decisions: hosts' reputation and self-disclosure.

DO LOOKS MATTER FOR HOSTS ON THE PEER-TO-PEER SHARING ACCOMMODATION MARKET?

Prof Gang Li

Airbnb hosts are encouraged to share authentic personal photos to mitigate consumers' concerns about uncertainty. Therefore, it is worth exploring how photo disclosure influences consumers' attitudes and behaviour. Using an experimental design approach, this study tested the existence of the beauty premium on Airbnb. The results showed that hosts' facial attractiveness in their profile photos positively affected consumers' booking intentions and willingness to pay, and the impacts were linear. Distinct from previous studies, this research unearthed the underlying mechanism of the beauty premium on mental imagery theory. Results highlighted the mediating roles of perceived enjoyment (i.e., a positive emotional state when the behavioural inhibition system is activated)

and perceived threat (i.e., a negative emotional state when the behavioural activation system is activated), which shaped consumers' booking intentions and willingness to pay. This study further confirmed two approaches to reducing consumers' reliance on hosts' facial attractiveness: hosts' reputation and self-disclosure.

The results of this research can aid peer-to-peer accommodation platform operators in diminishing consumers' dependence on hosts' appearance when making decisions. Platforms should provide hosts with more opportunities to showcase themselves, as well as offer detailed onboarding guidance to help hosts set up listing pages and engage in high-quality self-disclosure.

Two approaches to reducing consumers' reliance on hosts' facial attractiveness: hosts' reputation and self-disclosure

Li, H., Wang, Q., Li, G., & Cai, D. (2023). Do looks matter for hosts on the peer-to-peer sharing accommodation market? *Annals of Tourism Research*.
Link: bit.ly/3j4UtuJ
https://youtu.be/nB4LVh8ku2U