



### Article Title

**Tourism innovation through relationship marketing and value co-creation: A study on peer-to-peer online platforms for sharing accommodation**

### Citation

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### Abstract

This paper discusses tourism innovation developed by hosts of sharing accommodation, based on the outcomes of guests' value co-creation. In this process, relationship marketing is a central aspect of peer-to-peer business models, analysed as a catalyst of innovation.

The authors conducted thirty in-depth interviews with Portuguese hosts of Airbnb accommodations in order to understand the integration of guests' value co-creation through relational mechanisms in the innovation of their businesses.

The results evidence that it is established a close relationship marketing with guests during their stay. This fact is considered critical for the co-creation of the tourism experience and to increment innovation in the accommodation services. The main innovation outcomes are incremental and connected to the provided facilities, amenities and partnerships with other businesses. This happens not only through the user generated contents of online reviews, but also with the constant interpersonal contact established between guests and hosts.

### Summary

The study found that hosts are aware of relationship marketing, even without doing it in a professional business, and the relationships established is crucial to activate consumers' role in the co-creation process. There was a recognition by hosts of the importance that reviews assume in this type of business and the power they have for the growth and development of local hosting on peer-to-peer platforms. Besides the online reviews, hosts develop other strategies to retain feedback for continuous improvement like surveys, personal contact and instant messaging or guest books.

Effectively, the incorporation of user-generated content, in this case in the form of a review, allows hosts to add new attributes to the service they provide. This experience is co-created by the guest in the form of user generated content and the host derives the right value to innovate.

The implementation of improvements leads to incremental innovations in this peer-to-peer platform, enabling innovation in tourism. The main innovations are in regard to the accommodation facilities, but also integrate innovation in the business model, such as the establishment of partnerships with other service providers. Barriers to innovation in tourism regard to monetary concerns, inherent to the high costs of implementing innovations, which not all hosts can afford.