

Understanding the impact of peer-to-peer platforms on micro-entrepreneurship engagement in sharing economy. Evidence from Italy, Greece and China

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Purpose - This paper aims to investigate how peer to peer platforms can increase their critical mass of providers, by analysing potential hosts culture's issues and their propensity towards entrepreneurship and gamification.

Design/Methodology/Approach - The impact of the Sharing Economy in supporting economic development and fuelling entrepreneurial activity is widely recognised (Cannon and Summers, 2014; Sigala, 2017). The success and market capitalisation of peer-to-peer platforms heavily depends on their ability to fast develop and create network externalities (Sigala, 2017) and to attract a critical mass of 'providers/micro-entrepreneurs' providing good quality of resources in order to attract 'users' who in turn will attract more micro-entrepreneurs to register and rent their services through the platform.

An empirical study has been conducted in Italy, Greece and China in order to understand the different geographical diffusion (House et al., 2006; Hofstede, 2011) of micro-entrepreneurship in sharing economy (Botsman and Rogers, 2010; Gansky, 2010). On this strength, a survey has been conducted in the accommodation sector integrating existing theoretical models, qualitative and quantitative methods. A questionnaire was developed and pilot test was conducted on a convenience sample experts and, thereafter, it was administered in the three involved countries. The non-probabilistic convenience sampling is considered appropriate due to the preliminary nature of the study (Grewal et al., 2000).

Findings - The research empirically illustrates the variables (personal traits, cultural values, attitude, platform gamification mechanisms) that cover a key role in instilling an entrepreneurial spirit and propensity. The contribution of this study is multi-disciplinary and it provides various theoretical and practical implications to policymakers, peer-to-peer platforms and micro-entrepreneurs in innovative service ecosystem. Furthermore, the study allows identifying the hosts' drivers and deterrents of P2P platforms and how the latter can increase the critical mass of providers (potential hosts) worldwide considering cultural differences.

Originality - The research contributes to deeper understand the most critical success factors of peer-to-peer platforms in hospitality sector, and the impact of strategies adopted from these platform for achieving a critical mass of users and providers.

Key words - Entrepreneurship; P2P platforms; tourism; gamification; sharing economy

Paper type - Research paper

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