



Airbnb Hosts' Strategies to Market Their Place: The Case of Eskisehir

O. Can YILMAZDOĞAN*

Selçuk YÜCESOY**

Tuna DEMİRAY***

Abstract

The aim of the research is to understand the marketing and promotion strategies of the owners of Airbnb houses, which are operating within the borders of Eskisehir province and are becoming increasingly widespread, offering alternative accommodation options to the visitors and being successful examples of the sharing economy. For this purpose, face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with the owners of 20 of the houses that are active on the Airbnb platform and have received at least five visitor comments. In addition, before carrying out these meetings, the analysis of the tourist attractions Heat Map of Eskisehir and Eskisehir Airbnb Houses Heat Map was made via Microsoft Power Map and it was scientifically revealed that these houses are concentrated around the tourist attractions. In addition, during the interviews with the hosts, themes related to the decision to join Airbnb, information about other hosts, guest profile, pricing strategies, marketing strategies, guest relations and security were reached. After the interviews with the hosts, marketing strategies were put forward and interpretations and suggestions were given on these.

Keywords: Airbnb, Marketing Strategies, Heat Map, Eskisehir.

Article Type: Research Article

Airbnb Ev Sahiplerinin Evlerini Pazarlama Stratejileri: Eskişehir Örneği

Öz

Araştırmanın amacı Eskişehir ili sınırları içerisinde faaliyet gösteren ve giderek yaygınlaşan, ziyaretçilere alternatif konaklama seçenekleri sunan ve paylaşım ekonomisinin başarılı örneklerinden olan Airbnb evlerinin sahiplerinin, pazarlama ve tutundurma stratejilerini anlamaktır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda, Airbnb platformunda aktif olan ve en az beş ziyaretçi yorumu almış olan evlerden 20 tanesinin sahipleriyle yüz yüze yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Ayrıca bu görüşmeleri gerçekleştirmeden önce Microsoft Power Map aracılığıyla Eskişehir ilinin turistik çekicilikler Isı Haritası ve Eskişehir Airbnb Evleri Isı Haritası analizi yapılmış ve bu evlerin turistik çekicilikler etrafından yoğunlaştığı bilimsel olarak ortaya koyulmuştur. Ayrıca ev sahipleriyle yapılan görüşmelerde Airbnb'ye katılma kararı, diğer ev sahipleri hakkında bilgi, misafir profili, fiyatlama stratejileri, pazarlama stratejileri misafir ilişkileri ve güvenlik ile ilgili temalara ulaşılmıştır. Ev sahipleri ile yapılan görüşmeler sonrası pazarlama stratejileri ortaya konulmuş ve bunlar üzerinden yorumlamalar ve öneriler yer verilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Airbnb, Pazarlama Stratejileri, Isı Haritası, Eskişehir.

Makale Türü: Araştırma Makalesi.

* Dr. Öğr. Üyesi., Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi, Turizm Fakültesi, Turizm İşletmeciliği Bölümü, e-mail: cyilmazdogan@ogu.edu.tr, Orcid ID: 0000-0003-0642-5395

** Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Turizm İşletmeciliği Bölümü, e-mail: selcukyucesoy@yandex.com, Orcid ID: 0000-0002-1168-2508

*** Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Turizm İşletmeciliği Bölümü, e-mail: tunademiray@hotmail.com, Orcid ID: 0000-0003-3532-2424

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of ownership was perceived as the most desirable way to have and use the product in its basic sense. In this context, consumer needs that have emerged in various forms in recent years have begun to choose the way of using and sharing products or services temporarily rather than purchasing them (Matzler, Veider and Kathan, 2015). This new system, which is called the “sharing economy”, made it possible to share, produce and distribute products or services among people and finally to consume them. The source of the spread of this new business model can be shown as the development of online information technology (Tussyadiah and Pesonen, 2015; Gansky, 2010; Sundararajan, 2013; Owyang, 2015). The sharing economy model (Ex: Uber, Airbnb), which has made an important contribution to the tourism sector, has allowed people to earn financial income by sharing their properties (Zhu, So, and Hudson, 2017; Matzler et al., 2015; Ufford, 2015). It is predicted that the sharing economy will grow and develop in the coming years and that consumers and their markets will create new avenues (Porges, 2016). The sharing economy, which is generally related to the provision of services, shows itself in the tourism sector, usually the service provided by the locals to the tourists. The most important example of this platform, known as peer to peer, in the hospitality industry is Airbnb (Botsman and Rogers, 2011; Ert et al., 2016).

Airbnb, which is the most successful example of interpersonal sharing in the field of accommodation, is a platform that brings together people who are looking for accommodation and those who provide accommodation (Eckhardt, et al, 2019). In recent years, with the effect of technological developments, some innovations have emerged to serve potential customers. Uber for car rental and Airbnb, which has recently become the world's largest hotel chain, have become the most successful person-to-person sharing platform in this field (Tucker, 2014). These two platforms have fundamentally changed the way people access transportation and accommodation (Varma et al., 2016). The Airbnb platform, which serves in 192 countries and with more than 2.000.000 properties, has become very popular, especially among young people who are intertwined with technology and have willing about getting new experiences. In addition to helping people save money, Airbnb has become the most effective tool in gaining new experiences with local people (Zervas et al. 2014; Zervas et al. 2015; Carville and Basak, 2019; Helmore, 2019).

Online reviews are an important consumer factor that allows consumers to discover, learn about, and make decisions about goods or services offered on the Internet (Hu et al. 2009). Since approximately 70% of consumers trust online reviews, businesses with positive ratings face high sales, and businesses with negative ratings face low sales (Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006; Luca, 2011). Rating, which is important in online review, is a foundation within Airbnb. The main reason for this is that trade based on mutual trust is facilitated and Airbnb is a guide for users (Zervas et al. 2015; Bailetti, 2012). He attributed the development and growth of Airbnb, one of his online reviews, to three factors:

- I. The global prevalence of the issues addressed
- II. Enabling customers to become entrepreneurs
- III. It offers innovative web-based services.

Airbnb can offer people different options from hotels (rent a house, room, hostel, shared room) online. In addition, this platform provides travelers with the opportunity to stay in one-to-one contact with the local people and stay at a lower price (Zervas et al., 2014; Guttentag, 2015). Guttentag's (2015) research revealed that the main reasons for choosing Airbnb are factors such as affordability, interaction with local people, and providing a home atmosphere. Although Mao and Lyu (2017) revealed that the

risk perceived by users is high, when the studies of Wang and Nicolau (2017), Guttentag et al. (2017) and Ma et al. (2017) are examined, they found that Airbnb is generally affect the preferences positively.

2. OVERVIEW OF AIRBNB

Airbnb was founded in California in 2007 by two college graduate students who wanted to rent unique places to conference delegates. Airbnb, which started to be actively used in 2008, does not recognize itself as “*a community marketplace that enables people to discover and securely list accommodation in every country of the world from their mobile phones thanks to an application*” (Guttentag, 2015; Choi et al. 2015). The Airbnb platform is actively serving in 192 countries, more than 60,000 cities, with 2,000,000 facilities and 60,000,000 accommodations annually. According to 2019 data, the company value is over \$38 billion. Airbnb's worldwide growth is far from classical methods, it has a new and innovative structure (Austin, 2014; Spector, et al. 2014; Zervas et al, 2019; Carville and Basak, 2019; Helmore, 2019).

Working as a system basically built on trust, Airbnb provides an identity verification for both parties (associated with Facebook, Google and LinkedIn accounts, using a working email address and phone number, a copy of passports, IDs or driver's licenses) in order to ensure reliability and transparency between the parties. Thus, the evaluations after the stay become more reassuring (Ufford, 2015; Zervas et al., 2015). There are hundreds of thousands of apartments, flats and rooms within the Airbnb platform. Airbnb hosts can rent out their homes for days, weeks or months. In Airbnb, which is a system based on host approval, reservations are canceled without any penalty (Zervas et al., 2015). Although the purpose of Airbnb is to offer people's homes to tourists' accommodation, the rented space can vary from a living room to an island (Wortham, 2011).

Airbnb is a platform that can be accessed by almost anyone over the internet, has low transaction costs, and therefore shares properties in the cheapest way and more easily. The cheap and easy accessibility of this online network has allowed the consumer to reach wider segments (Stephany, 2015). Airbnb offers additional benefits as well as being cheaper than traditional accommodations. For example, a tourist may prefer the feeling of staying at home rather than a hotel. In addition, they can take advantage of the local products offered by the hosts and get some suggestions about the region from the hosts. In addition, it may be preferable to have household appliances such as kitchen, washing machine and dishwasher (Guttentag, 2015).

On the Airbnb platform, both guests and hosts can comment positively and negatively on each other in a publicly accessible manner. Trust is the most important factor for businesses with a lot of positive comments, sustainability and strong market target (Oskam and Boswijk, 2016). There are several ways Airbnb has designed for trust. In addition to obtaining information about the host and property before booking, there is a security policy and reputation system. Airbnb has photos, a text description, social media accounts, and most importantly, reviews from other users and optional photos for each property (Ma et al., 2017). These shares create a reason for accepting potential guests and preference in decisions. There are also some validation methods for profile creation. For example, photo authentication, verification by phone number, or association with Facebook and LinkedIn accounts (Liu, 2012). Because of all these, it has been determined that customers trust more comments and suggestions on social media when choosing Airbnb (Spark and Browning, 2011).

Airbnb in recent years, Zervas et al.'s (2016) study in the US state of Texas found that hotels were greatly affected by the growth of Airbnb. In addition to the effect of the entertainment factor, another reason behind this growth is that it offers various options to users (Yang and Ahn, 2016). In

addition to all these positive factors, regulatory laws should not be neglected, attention should be paid to quality and safety, and any threats should be considered and not neglected (So et al, 2018).

3. TOURISM POTENTIAL OF ESKISEHIR PROVINCE

Eskisehir province is in the west of Turkey's Central Anatolia Region. Porsuk River, one of the branches of Sakarya River, passes through the city. There is the Black Sea Region in the north of the city, the Marmara Region in the northwest, and the Aegean Region in the west and southwest of the city. Eskisehir covers 1.8% of Turkey's land area and its surface area is 13,652 km², and the average altitude of the city is 792 meters (Albek, 1991: 4).

An increase was observed in Eskisehir's population after the second half of the 19th century. The first of the important reasons for this situation was the beginning of the migrations to Anatolian lands due to the difficult living conditions in the new states established on the lands of the disintegrating Ottoman Empire. Most of the immigrants who migrated from countries such as Crimea, Bulgaria and Greece were settled in Eskisehir and its vicinity with the settlement policy. As a second reason for the population increase, it can be said that Eskisehir made great progress in the field of industry in the early days of the Republican period (Güneş and Yakut, 2007: 37).

Today's Eskisehir province was called Dorylaion in Greek and Dorylaeum in Latin in Ancient and Middle Ages. In Arabic sources, the city is known as Darauliya, Adruliya and Drusilya (Eskisehir Governorship, 2021). The city of Dorylaion has remained a permanent settlement since prehistoric times due to its fertile plains. The history of the oldest finds belonging to Eskisehir goes back to the Paleolithic and Mesolithic periods. The excavations show that Eskisehir was under Hittite rule for a certain period (Darga, 2004: 269-283). Phrygians, who migrated from the Thrace region after the collapse of the Hittites, settled in the Central Western Anatolia Region, which includes Eskisehir, and BC. In the 8th century, they established the Kingdom of Phrygia with the capital of Gordion (Iskan, 2006: 7; Sivas, 2008: 60-81). B.C. After the Phrygians were destroyed by the Chimerians at the end of the 8th century (Tüfekçi Sivas, 2001: 93-97), the region came under the rule of Lydia. B.C. After 547 Eskisehir Persians, BC. In 334, it remained under the rule of Macedonian King Alexander the Great (Sevin, 2007: 102- 115).

Eskisehir was selected as the Cultural Capital of the Turkish World in 2013 and UNESCO declared Eskisehir the Capital of Intangible Cultural Heritage (Kaşlı et al. 2015: 32). Eskisehir, which has shown great success in the field of tourism in recent years, hosted 815 thousand visitors in 2018. Eskisehir has a significant supply capacity with its touristic attractions. Examples of tourism potential values in Eskisehir are archaeological sites and monumental structures; Yazılıkaya-Midas Monument, Unfinished Monument, Monumental Phrygia Rock Tomb, Gerdekkaya Rock Tomb, Pessinus (Ballihisar), Midas (Yazılıkaya), Dorylaion (Eskisehir) can be shown. Historical and cultural structures are Alaeddin Mosque, Kursunlu Mosque, Sucaeddin Veli Baba Tomb, Uryan Baba Tomb, 186 mansions with local architectural features can be shown in the Odunpazari urban site. As museums; Archeology Museum, Anadolu University Republican History Museum, Anadolu University Education Cartoons Museum, Anadolu University Contemporary Arts Museum, Contemporary Glass Arts Museum Meerschaum Museum, State Railways Museum, Aviation Museum, Wax Museum, Modern Museum can be shown. Haller Youth Center, Art Centers, City Park, Science, Art and Culture Park, Waterfall Park, Recreation areas (Bademlik, Forest Nursery, Musaozu, Waterfall) can be shown as recreation areas. Examples of festivals held in Eskisehir are International Children and Youth Theaters Festival, Amateur Jazz Musicians Festival, International Yunus Emre Culture Week, Eskisehir's Liberation Day from Enemy Occupation, International Glass Festival, International Eskisehir Film Festival, Eskisehir

Opera and Ballet Days, International Eskisehir Cartoon Festival, International Wooden Sculpture Festival, National Odunpazari Meerschaum Festival can be displayed.

Known as the city of firsts in Turkey, Eskisehir has attracted a lot of attention in recent years with its modern life and its cultural and historical richness from the past. With the development of transportation opportunities, Eskisehir has become a city that can be reached more easily, especially with high-speed train services. In Picture 1, the heat map of the regions with touristic attractions of Eskisehir is shown. These attractions are prepared according to city maps and brochures showing touristic values.

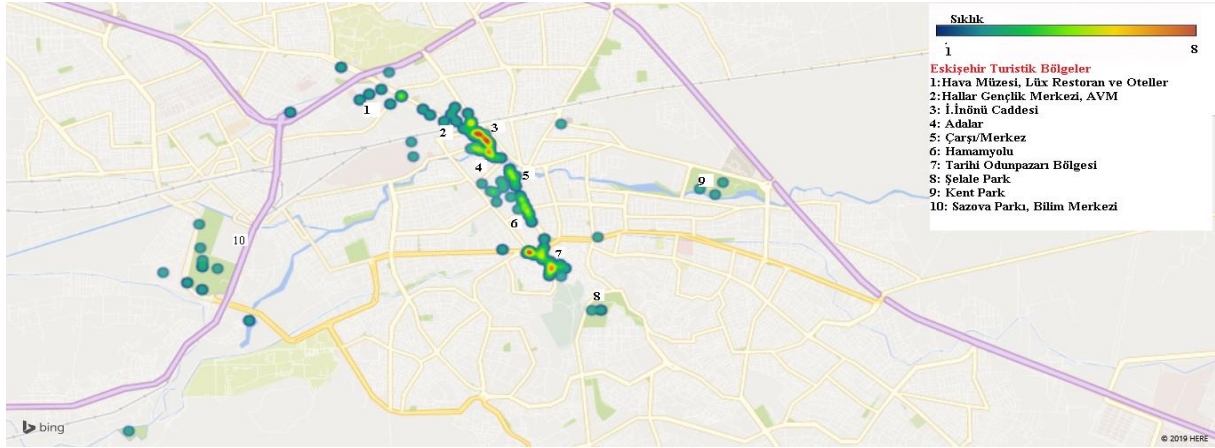


Figure 1. Eskisehir Province Touristic Attractions Heat Map

3. METHODOLOGY

In the research, a qualitative study was conducted with in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 20 hosts who actively use Airbnb in Eskisehir city center. The prices and locations of 225 houses in Eskisehir were determined from the Airbnb site one month before the meeting with the hosts. Microsoft Bing map was used to determine the locations of the houses and the house locations shown on Airbnb were found through the Bing map service. The latitudes and longitudes of the location found on the Bing map service were copied and two new columns were added next to the names of the hosts via Microsoft Excel, and their latitudes and longitudes were recorded here. A day after 1 month was chosen to determine the prices. This is because Airbnb hosts who already have guests at their home do not display their prices because there is no availability. The determined date has been applied to all Airbnb homes and the prices of all of them have been displayed. Later, a new column was added next to the latitude longitude column and the prices of the houses were recorded here. The location and prices of these houses are shown by Microsoft Power Map analysis. Microsoft Power Map was developed to improve the visualization of Excel data. Power Map maps help users to create interactive reports and analytical views, and these features enable users to discover data in a particular geographic region more easily (Microsoft, 2020).

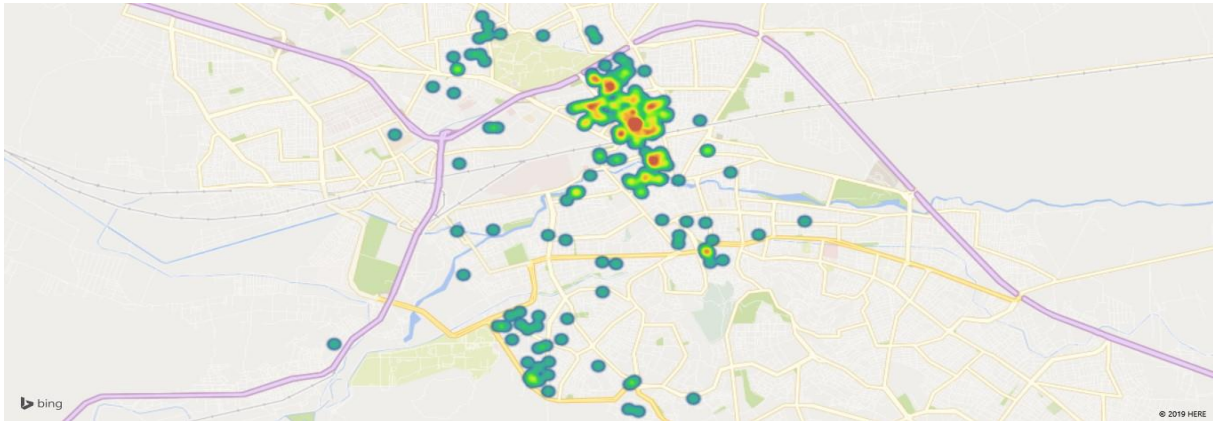


Figure 2. Microsoft Power Map Eskisehir Airbnb Home Locations Heat Map

4.1. Interview Process

The interviews were held in Eskisehir city center in May 2021-July 2021. Two days before the interview, Airbnb hosts with at least 5 comments on Airbnb were selected. These selections were made at random. A total of 63 Airbnb hosts were sent a message and informed about the issue. 38 Airbnb hosts responded to these messages. 30 Airbnb hosts stated that they have free time, and other hosts generally; They stated that they were out of the city, did not have available time, and did not want to make an interview, and gave a negative response to their appointment requests. Airbnb hosts who responded positively were requested for the day, time and venue available. There were 20 interviews, and after the 18th interview, it was concluded that the interviews were repeated, but to be sure, two more interviews were conducted, and this opinion was confirmed. The other 10 people, who received positive responses to the messages and were not interviewed, were thanked for their positive responses and reported that the interviews were ended.

The interviews lasted an average of 25 minutes. 12 of these interviews were audio-recorded in places such as public cafes and restaurants, and conducted in Turkish, and the other 8 interviews were held at their homes upon the request of Airbnb hosts. Before the start of the interview, it takes approximately 5 minutes for the interviewers not to get stressed. During the conversation, daily issues were discussed, and brief information was given about the topics of the conversation. Afterwards, the interviewees were asked whether they would be sound-recorded and whether this would cause them discomfort. 19 of the interviewees stated that they would not cause any disturbance, but one of the interviewees did not consent to the audio recording. The reason for this situation is not understood. Thereupon, the interviewer continued by taking notes on the points he deems important.

All interviews were semi-structured. The purpose of the interviews was to understand the marketing and promotion strategies of Airbnb hosts. The interviews started with a conversation about how the participants learned about Airbnb for the first time and how they decided to try it. Afterwards, questions were asked about advertising, pricing, accepting guests, interacting with them, and how to resolve complaints. Finally, the interviews were concluded by giving the participants the opportunity to raise other issues they thought necessary.

When the heat map of Eskisehir province is examined, it is seen that the houses are mostly located in the Tepebasi district of Eskisehir. Especially in the vicinity of Anadolu University and Yenibaglar neighborhood, Airbnb houses are frequently encountered. The reason for this frequency

is thought to be since Airbnb hosts are generally students. The fact that 16 people were students in the interview with 20 people confirms this situation. Again, during the interviews, H1 said: *"I don't have a roommate, so I rent a room in my house through the Airbnb platform. In this way, I get both my rent and my pocket money."*

Table 1. Demographic Information and Interview Details of the Participants

Host	Age	Gender	Marital Status	Interview Place	Interview Time
H1	24	Female	Single	Airbnb Home	28 mins
H2	26	Male	Single	Cafe	22 mins
H3	36	Male	Divorced	Airbnb Home	38 mins
H4	45	Male	Married	Cafe	14 mins
H5	26	Female	Single	Airbnb Home	19 mins
H6	35	Male	Married	University	18 mins
H7	33	Female	Single	Cafe	16 mins
H8	28	Female	Single	Airbnb Home	30 mins
H9	28	Female	Single	Airbnb Home	21 mins
H10	27	Male	Single	Cafe	33 mins
H11	31	Female	Single	Cafe	21 mins
H12	29	Male	Single	Cafe	16 mins
H13	22	Female	Single	Cafe	15 mins
H14	33	Male	Single	Airbnb Home	25 mins
H15	24	Female	Single	Airbnb Home	24 mins
H16	34	Male	Married	Cafe	20 mins
H17	40	Female	Divorced	Airbnb Home	15 mins
H18	28	Male	Single	Cafe	22 mins
H19	20	Male	Single	University	25 mins
H20	39	Male	Married	Cafe	17 mins

4.2. Decision to Join Airbnb

17 of the interviewees stated that they did not own the house they rented, and they were tenants. Since 16 of the interviewees were university students, it was accepted as a normal situation that the houses were rented. 15 of the interviewees are people who have previously stayed through Airbnb. H1: *"I went to Istanbul once and my friend told me that he had arranged a house for me. But when I got home, I saw that there were other people in the house, and I told my friend that I couldn't stay here. My friend stated that this is an Airbnb home and that he paid money, and that if he cancels the reservation, his money will not be refunded. So, we had to stay at home. But in the morning my whole thinking changed. I have concluded that these houses may be safe for accommodation. Later, my roommate, with whom I lived, left my house, so I decided to join Airbnb."*

During the interviews, it is seen that the recommendations of the circle of friends are also effective in hosting Airbnb. 5 of the interviewees stated that they are hosts in Airbnb, with the advice of friends who have previously stayed in Airbnb homes. H18: *"I have a close friend who stays with me from time to time and he is very active in alternative accommodation. Not just accommodation, he travels via Bla bla car, he uses Couchsurfing. He told me it was simple that I could do it myself. With his help, I started this business."* H3, one of the notable participants of the interviewees, has a lot of

experience on the Airbnb platform. He stated that he was one of the first hosts on Airbnb Eskisehir. Stating that he started hosting in 2014, H3 said: “When I first became a host on Airbnb, there were either 14 or 15 Airbnb homes in Eskisehir. I think there are about 250 houses now” he said. H3 stated that it hosts about 800 people. When asked how he became a member of this platform as one of the firsts, H3 said, “I had a friend in Istanbul, he was doing this job. I had a difficult time financially at one time and I decided to leave my house at that time. My friend told me that I could be a host on Airbnb, and so my Airbnb adventure began.”

4.3. Information of Other Residents and Owners

The houses rented by all the interviewees are in an apartment. The interviewees were also asked questions about this issue. All the interviewees stated that the neighbors of the houses they rented were not aware of it. Asked whether your neighbors are disturbed by the constant change of guests, H10 did not want to be recorded: “My neighbors don't even know who I am, and I don't know who they are. I don't think anyone would come to my door unless there was a noise anyway. In fact, my Airbnb guests complained, not the neighbors, because your neighbors were making too much noise.”

Another opinion about the neighbors is that the neighbors are aware of the guests, but they cannot make sense of this situation. H5: “When I take Airbnb guests home with my neighbors, we meet from time to time. Actually, they are aware of the situation, but I introduce my guests as my friends, and nobody says anything because they don't make noise. First, I warn my guests not to make any noise.”

Not all Airbnb hosts own the homes they rent, and neither does the property owner. H6: “My landlord does not know that I am renting out my house. Even if he already knows, he can't be legally sanctioned. The law states that a tenant cannot rent out their home. But I don't rent my house. I'm only renting out a roof, I think there is a legal loophole here”.

4.4. Guest Profile

All the interviewees stated that the age of Airbnb guests is between 20-45 years old. They stated that guests aged 45 and over are very rare, and none of them stated that guests aged 60 and over do not stay. Although the interviewees did not have exact information about the professions of the guests, most of them stated that they were students or guests who stayed on business trips with a general assumption. H3, who hosted the most guests on Airbnb by far, said: “Most of my guests were either students or employees who came to do business, I guess so.”

Another conclusion drawn from the questions about the guest profile in the interviews is that there has been a recent shift from foreign nationals to Turkish guests. 14 of the interviewees stated that the frequency of stay of Turkish guests rather than foreign visitors has increased recently. H9: “Previously, foreign guests were staying, and guests from almost every country were staying, recently Turkish guests are staying.” she said. This is thought to be due to the widespread use of Airbnb in Turkey.

4.5. Pricing Strategies

Regarding pricing on Airbnb homes, the interviewees stated that the homes they rented; It makes pricing according to its location, square meter, competitors' prices and the variety of household items. However, Airbnb does not offer pricing opportunities to users who want to rent their house and allows users to take part in the site for a fee of 3%. The host cannot intervene in the determined price, but the host can intervene in the pricing in other accommodation. (Airbnb, 2019).

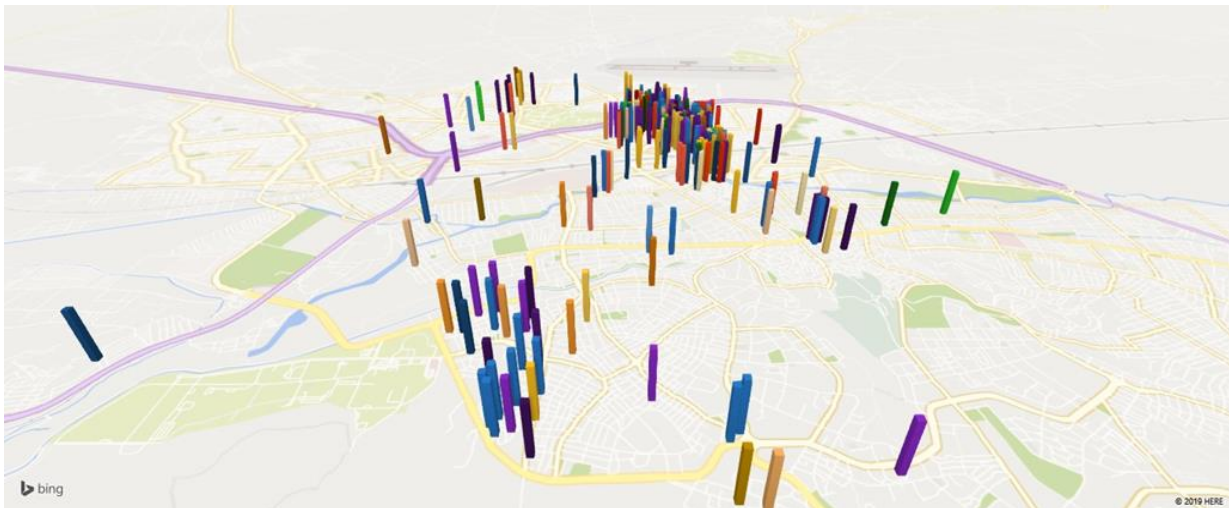


Figure 3. Eskisehir Airbnb Price Ranges

The hosts intervene in the prices after the first guest's stay and first examine the prices of the houses in the vicinity and make pricing. To the question of how you determine the price of H13's house, she replied, *"Airbnb does not allow you to enter a price for the first use anyway. However, in subsequent uses, I determine the price of my house according to the Airbnb houses around me."*

All participants agree on the price and location of Airbnb homes. All the interviewees stated that the location of the houses is important rather than the price, and the price has a secondary importance. H15 *"Eskisehir is a small place anyway, location is not that important here because it is easy to reach everywhere, but in big cities like Istanbul, the location of the house is more important than the price, both in time and financially."* she said.

4.6. Advertising Strategies

Regarding advertising activities, none of the participants stated that they did not advertise their homes outside of Airbnb. The interviewees stated that they only advertise their homes on the Airbnb platform. H19 about advertising activities: *"I'm already marketing my house through Airbnb. Other than that, I do not advertise my house on any site or social media."* Other interviewees used expressions similar to this one.

4.7. Guest Relations

Guest relations at Airbnb start with the reservation request. On the Airbnb platform, hosts can comment and evaluate their guests. All the interviewees start reading the comments of the booker after the reservation request and after evaluating the comments, they allow the guests to stay in their homes. Hosts usually send the location of their homes to the guests they approve, or phone them and give directions to the guests. H3: *"I usually send my home location on WhatsApp. However, I try to help my guests how they can come to my house from the bus station or train station. No one of my guests has ever failed to find my house,"* he said. During the interview with the interviewees, it was observed that all the hosts behaved like H3. Guest relations are very important to Airbnb hosts. This is because Airbnb allows guests who stay to rate their hosts after their stay. Homeowners care about making the best possible reviews and evaluations so that their homes rank high in searches.

In communication with foreign guests, 12 hosts stated that they communicate with guests in English. H17: *"I don't speak English, but I can communicate with my guests through language translation programs over the phone. I think that this situation did not cause any difficulties for me and*

my guest.” she said. H1 said: *“I know very little English; I cannot communicate fully with my guests. But to overcome this, I signed up for a language course so I can improve my English and communicate with my guests more interactively”*.

The hosts stated that they do their best to solve the problems of their guests. H3 said, *“My guests already have a mobile phone, and I tell them that they can call me in case of any problem, no matter what time it is. I haven't had such a problem so far, only the toilet paper has run out, and my guest called me and said I got it right away.”* H17 said, *“I take care of a dog at home, and I already share this on my profile. One of my guests was disturbed by my dog at night and left my house without telling me. He just texted me and said we're leaving. She reported me to Airbnb. I wish he had told me about this situation, I would like to host them in another house where they can stay for the night free of charge”*. H1, on the other hand, stated that her Korean guests complained about her one day when the water was cut off by the municipality and that Airbnb did not pay her accommodation fee and returned it to the guests. *“Actually, I was a victim, how could I have known that the waters would be cut off. My guests complained to me that there was no water in my house”*.

4.8. Security

It is necessary to evaluate the need for security in Airbnb homes both from the point of view of the hosts and the guests. During the interviews, 17 interviewees stated that they rented a room in their house. This poses a risk to users. H20 said, *“For the safety of my guests, I explain the rules they must follow at home, the use of natural gas, the location and use of electrical sockets, the use of the kitchen, I hand over the key and state that they can lock their rooms. Other than that, I don't take any extra precautions for security. After all, this is not a hotel so that security will wait at the door for 24 hours”*. When the interviews were examined, the interviewees generally gave similar answers to H20.

When the interviewees were asked about their own safety, the interviewees stated that they had security concerns when they first started, but they lost this concern later. H16, *“I read his comments before accepting a guest in my house, and this is how I accept him into my house. If the guest is already neat, they usually get good comments and there is nothing to worry about.”* H1: *“I once had a male Airbnb guest at my house. I looked at their comments, they have very positive comments, so I accepted. While sitting at home in the evening, he asked me if I had a girlfriend, told me that he had a girlfriend with the owners of the houses he stayed in before, and he started to bother me. I snapped at him and went to my room and locked my door. I couldn't sleep that night. It was a really tough night for me.”*

5. EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

In the interviews, it was seen that the interviewees acted jointly at the point of marketing their homes. Homeowners consider the pricing of nearby homes in their pricing strategies. It has been a common feature of all homeowners that they do not advertise their homes on other sites or on social media. This situation was asked to all homeowners, but no one gave a clear answer.

As supported in face-to-face meetings, security and the desire not to be deceived are the main issues that service producers and consumers pay attention to. Airbnb has eliminated intermediary institutions as a requirement of the sharing economy, beyond the classical hotel management and advertising approach. As a result of this, the formation of an essential interpersonal trust has emerged as a natural result. In addition, users' comments and ratings have had a positive effect on service quality due to their effect on preference selection. Today, as all sectors must keep up with technology, especially the tourism sector, which has human factors at its core, must also adapt to this change. Developing technological innovations such as Airbnb should be carefully examined and implemented when necessary. The fact that people are in a constant exchange of information (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram,

etc.) with each other due to the effect of technology makes it necessary to closely follow developments such as Airbnb.

Unlike traditional accommodation, Airbnb, which is an alternative accommodation type, is more successful in terms of interaction with guests and sharing cultures in their homes. Most of the interviewees stated that they still have ex-guests with whom they meet and that they invite them to their countries and cities. In addition, the fact that students benefit from tourism income proves that the sharing economy of the study allows the tourism income to spread to the lower segments. Most of the interviewees are students and they have limited budgets. Students can earn their living through Airbnb. When the results of previous studies are examined (Ma et al., 2017, Zervas et al., 2016, Helmore, 2019), it is seen that the homeowners use similar marketing strategies, talk about similar problems or common issues, and position their homes near touristic attractions. In this respect, the study shows similarities with the results of previous studies.

One of the limitations of this study is that Airbnb, which is an alternative accommodation type, is taken as subject and other accommodation platforms are not included in the research. Therefore, other home sharing platforms are likely to produce different results. In addition, the study was carried out within a certain date range. In terms of accommodation supply capacity, Eskisehir Airbnb houses are increasing and decreasing periodically.

Ethical Statement

Research and Publication Ethics rules were followed during the writing and publication of the research titled "Airbnb Hosts' Strategies to Market Their Place: The Case of Eskisehir". Ethics committee approval was obtained with the approval of Eskisehir Osmangazi University Social and Human Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee dated 09.04.2021 and numbered 2021-07.

Contribution Rate Statement

All of the authors in the study contributed to all processes from the writing of the study to the drafting and read and approved the final version.

Conflict Statement

This study did not lead to any individual or institutional/organizational conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

- Airbnb. (2019). "Trust and Safety", <https://www.airbnb.com/trust>, (10.08.2019).
- Airbnb. (2019). Verifying Your Identity, <https://www.airbnb.com/help/article/1237/verifying-your-identity>, (11.08.2019).
- Albek, Suzan (1991). *Dorylaion'dan Eskisehir'e*. Eskisehir: Anadolu University.
- Austin, S. (2014). "How Does Airbnb's \$10 Billion Valuation Size Up?", <https://www.wsj.com/articles/BL-DGB-33710>, (13.09.2019).
- Bailetti, T. (2012). What Technology Startups Must Get Right to Globalize Early and Rapidly. *Technology Innovation Management Review*, 2(10), 5-16.
- Botsman, R., and Rogers, R. (2010). *What's Mine is Yours: The Rise of Collaborative Consumption*. New York: Harper Business.

- Yılmazdoğan, O. C., Yücesoy, S. & Demiray, T. (2022). Airbnb Hosts' Strategies to Market Their Place: The Case of Eskisehir, *KMU Journal of Social and Economic Research*, 24(43), 717-730.
- Carville, O., and Basak, S. (2019). Airbnb Leans Toward Direct Listing Over Traditional IPO, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-10-01/airbnb-is-planning-for-direct-listing-instead-of-traditional-ipo> (11.09.2021).
- Chevalier, J., A., and Mayzlin, D. (2006). The Effect of Word of Mouth on Sales: Online Book Reviews. *Journal of Marketing Research* 43(3).
- Choi, K. H., Jung, J. H., Ryu, S. Y., Kim, S. D., and Yoon, S. M. (2015). The Relationship Between Airbnb and the Hotel Revenue: In the Case of Korea. *Indian Journal of Science and Technology*, 8(26), 1-8.
- Darga, M. (2004). Şarhöyük-Dorylaion (Eskişehir) Kazılarında Hitit Buluntuları (1989–2003). 60. Yaşında Fahri Işık'a Armağan Anadolu'da Doğdu, 269-283.
- Eckhardt, G. M., Houston, M. B., Jiang, B., Lamberton, C., Rindfleisch, A., and Zervas, G. (2019). Marketing in the Sharing Economy. *Journal of Marketing*, 83(5), 5-27.
- Ert, E., Fleischer, A., and Magen, N. (2016). Trust and Reputation in the Sharing Economy: The Role of Personal Photos in Airbnb. *Tourism Management*, 55, 62-73.
- Eskisehir Governorship (2021). <http://www.eskisehir.gov.tr/tarihce> (17.10.2021).
- Gansky, L., (2010). *The Mesh: Why the Future of Business is Sharing*. New York: Portfolio Penguin.
- Guttentag, D. (2015). Airbnb: Disruptive Innovation and the Rise of an Informal Tourism Accommodation Sector. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 18(12), 1192-1217.
- Güneş, İ., and Yakut, K. (2007). *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Eskişehir: 1840-1923..* Eskisehir: Anatolian University.
- Guttentag, D., Smith, S., Potwarka, L., and Havitz, M. (2017). Why Tourists Choose Airbnb: A Motivation-Based Segmentation Study. *Journal of Travel Research*, 57(3), 342-359.
- Helmore, E. (2019). Airbnb announces it will go public next year after WeWork delays IPO, <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/sep/19/airbnb-ipo-2020-value>, (17.09.2021).
- Hu, N., Zhang, J., and Pavlov, P., A. (2009). Overcoming the J-Shaped Distribution of Product Reviews. *Communications of the ACM*, 52(10), 144-147.
- Iscan, N. (2006). *Eskişehir: Tarihin Şehri*. Eskisehir: Iscan Publications.
- Kaşlı, M., Cankul, D., Köz, EN and Ekici, A. (2015). Gastronomic Heritage and Sustainability: The Example of Eskişehir, *Journal of Eco-Gastronomy*, 1(2), 27-46.
- Liu, C., S. (2012). A Couch Surfing Ethnography: Traveling and Connection in a Commodified World. *Student Pulse*, 4(07).
- Luca, M. (2011). Reviews, Reputation, and Revenue: The Case of Yelp. com. Working Paper. Tech. rep., Harvard Business School, 12-016.
- Ma, X., Hancock, J. T., Lim Mingjie, K., and Naaman, M. (2017). Self-Disclosure and Perceived Trustworthiness of Airbnb Host Profiles. In Proceedings of the 2017 ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing (pp. 2397-2409).
- Mao, Z., and Lyu, J. (2017). Why Travelers Use Airbnb Again? An Integrative Approach to Understanding Travelers' Repurchase Intention. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 29(9).

- Yılmazdoğan, O. C., Yücesoy, S. & Demiray, T. (2022). Airbnb Hosts' Strategies to Market Their Place: The Case of Eskisehir, *KMU Journal of Social and Economic Research*, 24(43), 717-730.
- Matzler, K., Veider, V., and Kathan, W. (2015). Adapting to the Sharing Economy. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 56(2).
- Microsoft Power Map (2020). <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/get-started-with-power-map-88a28df6-8258-40aa-b5cc-577873fb0f4a> (17.09.2021).
- Oskam, J., and Boswijk, A. (2016). Airbnb: The Future of Networked Hospitality Businesses. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, 2.
- Owyang, J. (2015). Tech Trend: Rent a Satellite from These Companies, <https://web-strategist.com/blog/2019/09/26/tech-trend-rent-a-satellite-from-these-companies/> (06.09.2021).
- Porges, S. (2016). The One Issue with Airbnb Reviews That Causes Hosts to Burnout, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/sethporges/2016/06/29/the-one-issue-with-airbnb-reviews-that-causes-hosts-to-burnout/?sh=11d9fcac1eb3> (09.09.2021).
- Sevin, V. (2007). *Anadolunun Tarihi Coğrafyası I*. Ankara: Turkish Historical Society Publications.
- So, K. K. F., Oh, H., and Min, S. (2018). Motivations and Constraints of Airbnb Consumers: Findings from a Mixed-Methods Approach. *Tourism Management*, 67, 224-236.
- Sparks, B., A., and Browning, V. (2011). The Impact of Online Reviews on Hotel Booking Intentions and Perception of Trust. *Tourism Management*, 32(6).
- Spector, M., MacMillan, D., and Rusli, E. (2014). TPG-Led Group Closes \$450 Million Investment in Airbnb, *The Wall Street Journal*, 18.
- Stephany, A. (2015). *The Business of Sharing: Making It in the New Sharing Economy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sivas, T. (2008). Frigler (Midas'ın Ülkesi Anadolu). *National Geographic Magazine*, January 59-79.
- Sundararajan, A., (2013). From Zipcar to the Sharing Economy. *Harvard Business Review*, 1(1), 1-2.
- Tucker, P. (2014). Learning Without Schools: A Contrarian Future. *Futurist*, 48(2), 45.
- Tussyadiah, I. P., and Pesonen, J. (2015). Impacts of Peer-To-Peer Accommodation Use on Travel Patterns. *Journal of Travel Research*, 55(8), 1022-1040.
- Tüfekçi Sivas, T. (2001). Frig ve Eskişehir Çevresindeki Frig Vadileri'ne Genel Bir Bakış. Eskişehir in History Symposium-1 (2-4 November 1998), *Eskişehir: Anadolu University Faculty of Letters Publications*, 93-113.
- Ufford, S. (2015). The Future of the Sharing Economy Depends on Trust, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/theyec/2015/02/10/the-future-of-the-sharing-economy-depends-on-trust/?sh=6b73b9f14717> (07.09.2021).
- Varma, A., Jukic, N., Pestek, A., Clifford, J., Shultz, A., and Nestorov, S. (2016). Airbnb: Exciting Innovation or Passing Fad? *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 20, 228-237.
- Wang, D., and Nicolau, J., L. (2017). Price Determinants of Sharing Economy Based Accommodation Rental: A Study of Listings From 33 Cities on Airbnb.Com. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 62, 120-131.
- Wortham, J. (2011). Room to Rent, via the Web. *The New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/25/technology/matching-travelers-with-rooms-via-the-web.html> (11.09.2021).

- Yılmazdoğan, O. C., Yücesoy, S. & Demiray, T. (2022). Airbnb Hosts' Strategies to Market Their Place: The Case of Eskisehir, *KMU Journal of Social and Economic Research*, 24(43), 717-730.
- Yang, S., Ahn, S. (2016). Impact of Motivation in the Sharing Economy and Perceived Security in Attitude and Loyalty Toward Airbnb. *Advanced Science and Technology Letters*, 129, 180-184.
- Zervas, G., Proserpio, D., and Byers, J. W. (2014). The Rise of the Sharing Economy: Estimating the Impact of Airbnb on the Hotel Industry, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 54(5), 687-705.
- Zervas, G., Proserpio, D., and Byers, J. W. (2015). A First Look at Online Reputation on Airbnb, Where Every Stay is Above Average. *Marketing Letters*, 32(1), 1-16.
- Zervas, G., Proserpio, D., and Byers, J. W. (2016). The Rise of the Sharing Economy: Estimating the Impact of Airbnb on the Hotel Industry, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 54(5), 687-705.
- Zhu, G., So, F., K., K., and Hudson, S. (2017). Inside the Sharing Economy: Understanding Consumer Motivations Behind the Adoption of Mobile Applications. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 29(9).