The Impact of Technology-Mediated Consumption on Identity: the Case of Airbnb

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Why did we select this research?

The idea of the 'extended self' argues that possessions are major contributors to, and reflections of, our identities. In this article by Festila and Dueholm Müller, the authors ask how the rise of technology-mediated, access-based consumption influences our extended selves. That is, how do we see ourselves and how do we construct our identities when accessing platforms such as Airbnb?

Key findings

The study findings suggest that the consumption experience is meaningful and self-enriching if consumers identify with the accessed object. However, identification is compromised when there is a perceived mismatch, diminishing the consumption experience. The study finds that for Airbnb consumers, values such as community belongingness and social embeddedness are part of the Airbnb user identity projects.

Unlike previous research, the authors also find that individuals do seek to develop a perceived sense of ownership of the accessed object. As such, when consumers are highly involved in the consumption process, e.g. in searching for and selecting Airbnb homes, as well as planning their travels based on individual needs, a temporary sense of ownership emerges.

Reference

Festila, M., & Müller, S. (2017, January). The impact of technology-mediated consumption on identity: the case of Airbnb. In Proceedings of the 50th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences. Retrieved from: http://pure.au.dk/portal/files/109047455/The_Impact_of_Technology_Mediated_Consumption_on_Identity.pdf