

THE IMPACT OF SHARING ECONOMY PLATFORMS ON THE TOURISM INDUSTRY: AIRBNB AND UBER

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Abstract. This study examines the impact of sharing economy platforms, in particular Airbnb and Uber, on the tourism industry. It examines how these platforms influence tourist behavior, market structure and associated economic and social challenges. The research uses international data, case studies and local economic analysis to explore the transformations brought about by these platforms. The findings show that Airbnb has made accommodation more affordable, but has also contributed to rising real estate prices and stricter regulations in big cities. Uber has simplified transportation for tourists but has led to conflicts with traditional taxi services and raised concerns about drivers' rights. Despite the benefits, these platforms highlight the need for tighter regulation and adjustments to local policies to balance economic benefits with the protection of local communities. Further research is recommended to better understand the role of these platforms in promoting responsible tourism. The study provides valuable insights for policy makers who want to maximize the benefits of sharing economy platforms while minimizing negative impacts on local communities.

Keywords: Sharing Economy; Tourism; Economic impact; Economic challenges.

JEL Classification: O33, F63, Z32

INTRODUCTION

The collaborative (sharing) economy is a model of economic base for the participation of a resources, goods and services provider, the objectives of which are to facilitate the access and use of this mod, which can be effective and more accessible. This is a fundamental departure from traditional economic models, where companies own goods and services, and consumers pay for their use. The platform basic model of the world, including Airbnb and Uber, have had a significant impact on the tourism industry, changing the structure of the transportation market and accommodation.

The importance of this topic lies in analyzing the economic and social changes these platforms have brought to the tourism industry. Airbnb, for example, allowing the owner homeowners to rent out their spaces, creating an alternative to hotels and hostels, while Uber as a support module for customer service, offering a more flexible and often cheaper option than traditional taxis. However, these platforms have sparked controversy, as they have been associated with insufficient regulation

and challenges related to unfair competition to the traditional accommodation and transportation industries (Consiliul Concurenței, Direcția Cercetare 2020).

This article is an analysis of the impact of platforms on the economy and collaboration in tourism, focusing on the special services of Airbnb and Uber. We will examine both the economic advantages generated by these platforms, as well as the challenges and risks they pose to the local economy, competition and legal regulation. This analysis is based on prior research and official reports that have addressed these issues.

Key research questions focus on understanding the impact of Airbnb and Uber on the travel market's structure. What are the economic and social implications for the hotel and transportation industries? The hypothesis of this study is that while these platforms have contributed significantly to democratizing access to travel services, they have also generated considerable tensions regarding market regulation and equitable competition.

MAIN CONTENT

1. Materials and Methods.

To conduct this research, we used a documentary method of analysis based on academic sources and official reports. Core sources include case studies, academic articles and institutional reports on the impact of the collaborative economy on tourism, with a particular focus on Airbnb and Uber. The document analysis includes a qualitative approach, focusing on interpreting the results obtained from published research and extracting the most relevant information for the topic under study. Key sources include studies published in the Economic Amphitheater and AISNet (Cristian Bogdan Onete, Doru Pleșea, Sonia Budz 2018), official reports by the Competition Council (Consoliu Concurenței România 2021) and research presented on journalist resource platforms such as Journalists Resource (Uber, Airbnb and consequences of the sharing economy: Research roundup 2016). The research method includes a detailed analysis of the economic benefits, changes in tourist consumption behaviors, and regulations that influence these platforms. (Uber, Airbnb and consequences of the sharing economy: Research roundup 2016)

2. Results and Discussion.

The impact of sharing economy platforms on the tourism industry has been significant. Airbnb has democratized access to accommodation by allowing people around the world to rent out their homes, leading to an increase in the supply of accommodation in areas that previously had no access to mass tourism. According to a study published in Economic Amphitheater, this platform has been responsible for a drop in prices in traditional accommodation markets and a diversification of supply (Cristian Bogdan Onete, Doru Pleșea, Sonia Budz 2018).

Case studies conducted by AISNet (Park 2020) show that Airbnb has contributed to the growth of local tourism in smaller towns and rural areas, boosting the local economy by increasing demand for transportation and other services adjacent to tourism. However, there are also negative effects, such as rising prices in urban areas where demand for rental housing is high. Some cities have started to regulate Airbnb activity more strictly to protect the local real estate market and prevent mass tourism that can affect the quality of life for permanent residents (Researching the impacts of Airbnb on the NSW North Coast .).

As for Uber, the ride-hailing platform has revolutionized the transportation sector. According to a report by the Competition Council, Uber has provided a more flexible and affordable alternative to traditional taxis, leading to lower prices in some cities and greater affordability for consumers

(Consoliu Concurenței România 2021). However, there are a number of criticisms of unfair competition to traditional taxi drivers, who are more strictly regulated in terms of safety and fares.

Also, a study by Journalists Resource (Uber, Airbnb and consequences of the sharing economy: Research roundup 2016) points out that ride-hailing platforms, including Uber, have led to economic volatility in some cities, where prices and availability of transportation services vary widely depending on the demand and supply on the platform. This can negatively affect the stability of the transportation market and lead to economic losses for traditional taxi drivers.

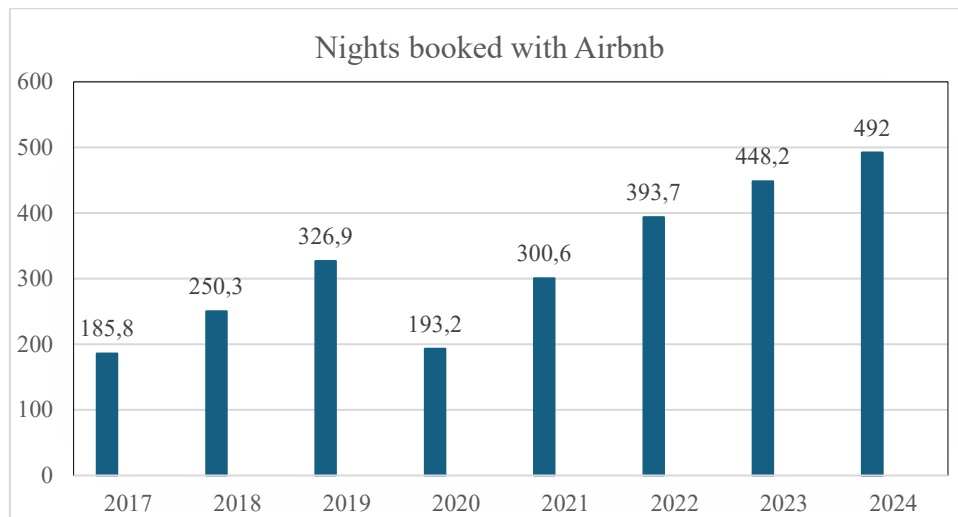


Figure 1. Nights booked with Airbnb from 2017 to 2024 (mil.)

Source: Statista.com

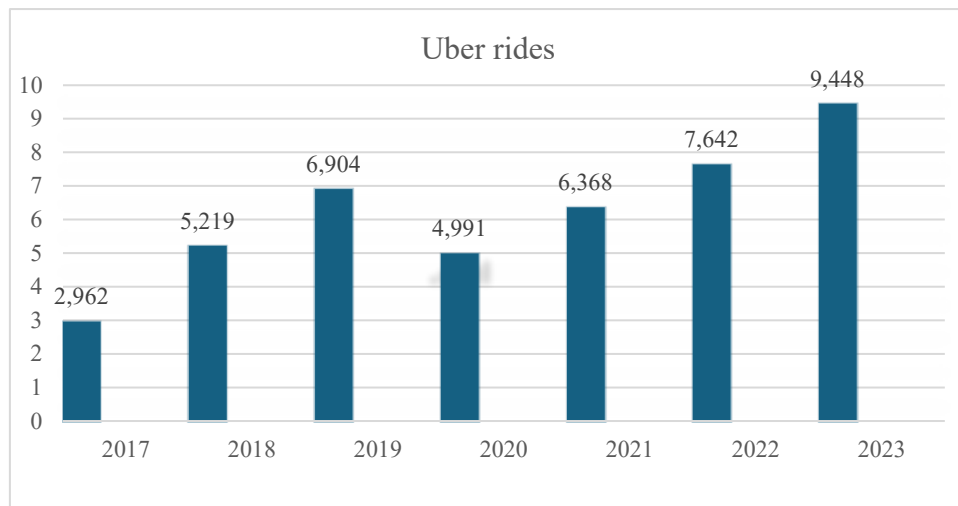


Figure 2. Uber rides per year (bil.)

Source: Wallstreetzen.com

Figure 1 shows the growth in nights booked through Airbnb from 2017 to 2024, with a dip in 2020 due to the pandemic, followed by a strong rebound. Figure 2 shows Uber rides increasing steadily, peaking in 2023, with no significant drop during the pandemic period. Both graphs reflect growth trends in the collaborative economy, with Airbnb temporarily affected by travel restrictions, unlike Uber.

FINDINGS

The research results show that sharing economy platforms such as Airbnb and Uber have had a considerable impact on the tourism industry. These platforms have made accommodation and transportation services accessible to a wide range of consumers, thereby contributing to the growth of tourism and boosting local economies. However, there have also been significant challenges related to insufficient regulation and unfair competition to traditional industries. The study findings underline the need for clearer regulation to protect both consumers and traditional economic actors.

Moreover, future studies should focus on analyzing the long-term impact of these platforms on local economic structures and consumer behavior. In this context, it will be essential to develop policies that ensure a level playing field between new platforms and traditional companies, while protecting the economic interests of local communities.

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