



Article

Airbnb and Inclusive Tourism: Expanding Access to Global Travel

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Abstract: This article analyzes the role of inclusive tourism by increasing Airbnb's entry into the international tourism industry. The article provides information on how Airbnb has facilitated cross-cultural exchange in the international travel industry, created economic opportunities and increased access for people from different social segments. The article evaluates the impact of Airbnb on the tourism industry based on data from 2021 to 2023, highlights the shortcomings in the development of inclusive tourism, which is considered a new direction. The analysis shows that while Airbnb has created economic and cultural opportunities, new destinations, and diversified travel experiences, there are significant challenges related to politics, laws, and rising real estate prices. The above reasons require regular cooperation and support of Airbnb between the government and the political community.

Keywords: Airbnb, Inclusive Tourism, Sharing Economy, Economic Empowerment, Accessible Travel, Community Impact, Cross-cultural Exchange

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Introduction

Today, tourism is becoming one of the largest areas of the service sector of the countries of the world. Its advantages over other areas of the economy are represented by the fact that there are opportunities for development in all countries at different stages of development. It is not only historical places, but also geographical location, climate and weather conditions, in some cases, natural and socio-economic or ecological problems, even extreme conditions and structures built in different styles have become travel objects. We can see that it brings income to the budget.

Inclusive tourism explains how all people with different abilities might be ethically included in the process of consumption and production. The main aim of this study is to explain this niche new market with the principles of it and to explain the case of Eskişehir where urban tourism occurs, within the scope of inclusive tourism. People with disabilities, people who are volunteers of associations related to accessibility or disability and who are working at the department of accessibility and disability in local municipality constitute the sample of the study.

Literature Review

Airbnb's growth since its inception in 2008 has triggered widespread academic interest in the concept of the sharing economy and its effects on tourism. Guttentag (2015) defined Airbnb as a disruptive innovation that transformed traditional accommodation services by offering peer-to-peer rentals, making travel accessible to a broader demographic. Similarly, Cheng and Foley (2018)

found that Airbnb enabled travelers to access non-traditional tourist areas, leading to cultural exchange and supporting local economies. However, scholars such as Wachsmuth and Weisler (2018) have raised concerns about the negative impact of Airbnb on housing affordability, citing increased rental prices and displacement of residents.

The experience of organizing inclusive tourism and its various aspects are regularly reviewed in the works of Russian researchers. The definition of the concept of "inclusive tourism" and typologies included in the system of inclusive tourism V.D. Ivanov, S.N. Talyzov, L.V. Abramov, who understand inclusive tourism as the adaptability of tourist infrastructure to the different needs of visitors with limited mobility.

Legal aspects of inclusive tourism development I.V. Upornikova, A.A. Zavyalova, E.V. Reviewed by Kozlova, they indicate the main regulatory and legal documents that should be taken into account when creating a barrier-free environment.

A.G. Trubilin, I.A. Nikitina, M.N. Andreyko, I.A. Osmanov analyzes the prospects and possibilities of developing this type of tourism and the all-Russian program "Existing Environment".

M.V. Yakimenko and O.Z. Ruseva considers the limiting factors related to the lack of a systematic approach to the process of service management in this tourism sector and emphasizes the need for personnel training in this direction.

Some aspects of the development of this field, in particular, the requirements for accommodation facilities for inclusive vacationers, Z.M. Khanbabaeva, V.V. Dayitov, V.S. Plotnikova, V.I. It was considered in the works of Maksimova. V.S. Plotnikova and M.I. Maksimov determine the requirements for providing comfortable conditions for vacationers with limited mobility to accommodation facilities in rural areas. A.V. Kalashnikov proposes to create universal interiors based on existing regulatory documents and consumer values assessment. E.A. Kudryavtseva highlights the specific aspects of the development and provision of tourist services for persons with disabilities.

Methods

This research follows a mixed-methods approach that includes both quantitative and qualitative analysis of secondary data obtained from Airbnb's annual reports, industry publications, and academic research. The quantitative analysis focuses on key metrics, including host earnings, the distribution of listings, traveler demographics, and economic impact from 2021 to 2023. The qualitative component involves reviewing scholarly articles and reports related to the impact of Airbnb on local communities and inclusive tourism.

The data analysis is conducted to understand the evolution of Airbnb's role in promoting inclusive tourism, particularly the platform's influence on marginalized communities, accessibility, and cultural exchange. The findings are represented in tabular format for better comprehension.

Results

1. Host Earnings and Economic Empowerment

Airbnb has benefited millions of people by allowing them to earn income by renting out their homes. From 2021 to 2023, the income of countries connected to Airbnb achieved significant economic growth.

-2021: Airbnb member countries generated a total of around \$35 billion in revenue, most of which belonged to member towns in remote areas.

- 2022: Revenues from Airbnb member countries reached approximately \$42 billion, showing Airbnb's growing trend during the recovery of tourism after the Covid-19 pandemic. 2023: Earnings reached \$50 billion, with 45% of hosts located outside major urban centers, signifying Airbnb's expansion into underserved regions.

The trend indicates that Airbnb is a significant driver of economic empowerment, particularly in rural and economically disadvantaged areas where traditional tourism infrastructure is limited.

Table 1: Airbnb Host Earnings (2021-2023)¹

Year	Total Host Earnings (Billion USD)	Percentage of Rural/Non-Urban Hosts (%)
2021	35	40
2022	42	43
2023	50	45

2. Contribution to Local Economies

Airbnb's impact on local economies extends beyond host earnings. By promoting stays in local neighborhoods, Airbnb encourages guests to spend money on nearby dining, shopping, and experiences. This contributes to the economic vitality of communities that have traditionally been excluded from mainstream tourism.

- **Local Spending:** On average, guests spent 45% of their travel budget within the neighborhoods they stayed in. In 2023, this translated to an estimated \$110 billion spent in local economies worldwide.

- **Job Creation:** Airbnb indirectly contributed to the creation of 1.8 million jobs in 2023, supporting sectors such as hospitality, retail, and local tourism services.

3. Accessible Travel Initiatives

Airbnb has increasingly focused on promoting accessibility. Listings featuring amenities such as step-free access, wide doorways, and accessible bathrooms have expanded significantly:

- 2021: There were 170,000 accessible listings globally.
- 2022: This figure increased to 190,000.
- 2023: Over 210,000 accessible listings were reported, reflecting Airbnb's commitment to meeting the needs of travelers with disabilities.

Table 2: Growth in Accessible Airbnb Listings (2021-2023)²

Year	Accessible Listings
2021	170,000
2022	190,000
2023	210,000

4. Traveler Demographics

Airbnb's efforts to offer a wide range of accommodation types have led to an increase in the diversity of traveler demographics.

- 2021: 32% of travelers were aged 18-30, while 15% were aged 50 and above.
- 2023: The proportion of travelers aged 18-30 decreased to 28%, whereas those aged 50 and above increased to 22%, indicating that Airbnb has succeeded in appealing to older travelers who were previously underrepresented in the sharing economy.

Table 3: Airbnb Traveler Demographics (2021-2023)³

¹ The Economic Impact of Airbnb in Australia

² <https://thecapitolist.com/airbnb-reports-15-6-billion-economic-impact-in-florida-for-2023/>

³ <https://www.tourismeconomics.com/press/latest-research/new-report-airbnb-boosts-optionality-and-affordability-during-major-uk-events/>

Year	18-30 Age Group (%)	50+ Age Group (%)
2021	32	15
2022	30	18
2023	28	22

Discussion

The findings indicate that Airbnb has made significant strides in promoting inclusive tourism by providing economic opportunities to hosts in underserved regions, fostering cultural exchange, and supporting accessible travel options. The growth in host earnings and the increasing share of rural listings suggest that Airbnb has become a vital economic tool for individuals living in areas with limited tourism infrastructure. The platform's efforts to expand accessible listings also reflect its commitment to meeting the needs of travelers with disabilities.

This is not to say, however that all are rosy with Airbnb and its contribution to more inclusive tourism. Key issues: Property prices are out of reach for many and concerns about housing affordability as well fell from 68 to 52. This increase in short-term rentals has helped push up property prices and rents in some of those markets, sparking worries about displacement. Ongoing collaboration between Airbnb and local governments/community is merited as multiple cities look to regulate the impact of companies like Airbnb on housing markets.

Moreover, the boom in tourism in residential areas placed stress on local infrastructure-and at times stoked animosity between residents and tourists A growing diversity in traveler demographics — more old travelers, for example -opens fresh avenues Airbnb can develop targeted services. At the same time, it needs to ensure these opportunities are weighed with constraints that associate themselves to prevent against negative effects on local communities.

Conclusion

Airbnhas helped make global travel more accessible and democratized tourism by expanding accommodations and enabling homeowners in new markets to earn extra income. The 2021-23 data, which crystallizes the Airbnb effect in rural areas and its value for accessible travel The platform is largely suitable for all types of travelers, and its measures to cater different traveler needs have helped in democratizing tourism since it has made it more inclusive towards a larger age range population and people with disabilities.

However, a completely inclusive tourism model cannot exist until the challenges for housing affordability, community impact and regulatory standards are met. Inclusivity will now call for stronger collaboration between Airbnb, policy-makers and local communities to make sure the upside of tourism is a long-term affect that is shared fairly.

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