

Research on Perceptual Features of Couchsurfers on New Hospitality Tourism Platform Couchsurfing

Authors : Yuanxiang Miao

Abstract : This paper aims to examine the perceptual features of couchsurfers on a new hospitality tourism platform, the free homestay website couchsurfing. As a local host, the author has accepted 61 couchsurfers in Kyoto, Japan, and attempted to figure out couchsurfers' characteristics on perception by hosting them. Moreover, the methodology of this research is mainly based on in-depth interviews, by talking with couchsurfers, observing their behaviors, doing questionnaires, etc. Five dominant perceptual features of couchsurfers were identified: (1) Trusting; (2) Meeting; (3) Sharing; (4) Reciprocity; (5) Worries. The value of this research lies in figuring out a deeper understanding of the perceptual features of couchsurfers, and the author indeed hosted and stayed with 61 couchsurfers from 30 countries and areas over one year. Lastly, the author offers practical suggestions for future research.

Keywords : couchsurfing, depth interview, hospitality tourism, perceptual features

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