

## 76 Customer-focused drivers in the sharing economy: A meta-analysis

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### Introduction

Kotler (1972) defines marketing as “the set of human activities directed at facilitating and consummating exchanges” (p.12). Ordinarily, these exchanges are associated with permanent ownership between buyers and sellers. However, the advances of the internet and mobile technology have enabled buyers and sellers to exchange offerings that exponentially contribute to temporary access rather than ownership — as such, sharing as a form of consumption begin to emerge and numerous practices coined under this umbrella term. At the core, the phenomenon includes a variety of different products and services such as lodging (e.g., Airbnb), tools (e.g., ShareGrid), transportation (e.g., Uber), workspace (e.g., WeWork), or food services (e.g., Deliveroo).

The term of the “Sharing Economy” was first mentioned in 2008 and defined as the “collaborative consumption made by the activities of sharing, exchanging, and rental of resources without owning the goods” (Lessig 2008, p.143). After that, this phenomenon, or aspects of it, has been given many different names, including “collaborative consumption”, “commercial sharing systems” (and “access-based consumption”, “shared consumption”, “on-demand economy”, “collaborative economy”, “platform economy” and “gig economy”. Many of these terms share similar set of characteristics, yet, the definition articulates the entire set of characteristics formed by Eckhardt et al. (2019), who define the sharing economy as “a scalable socio-economic system that employs technology-enabled platforms to provide users with temporary access to tangible and intangible resources that may be crowdsourced” (Eckhardt et al., 2019 p.7).

The interest in participating in sharing systems is generally characterized as prosocial or sustainable behavior such as sharing, helping others, taking care of the environment. However, participating in sharing systems can also bring economic benefits like saving money or facilitating

access to resources, which can form more individualistic reasons for participating in sharing economy practices. Previous research has shown that monetary motivations, environmental and societal concerns, flexibility, variety seeking, sustainability, community belonging, enjoyment and trust are among several factors that enhance participation in the sharing economy.

Although there is growing attention for research on consumer behaviour in the sharing economy, the findings regarding antecedents and outcomes of participating in these services are scattered and contradicting with previous findings. The existing literature offers broad range of antecedents for sharing economy; however, researchers disagree on which one best captures the value. Albeit little amount of literature reviews has been added to the field, and a quantifiable estimation of the relationship between the antecedents and outcomes has not been investigated yet. The inconsistency of previous research supports the need for meta-analysis to integrate the accumulated empirical research, to see the landscape of the research area, and provide comprehensive understanding on which antecedents are the most effective for sharing services. Based on these grounds, the paper aims to answer the research question:

*What are the main customer-focused antecedents of the sharing economy and to what extent do these antecedents influence the behavioural intention towards the sharing economy services?*

### Methodology

The goal of this study is a research synthesis. The research synthesis is referred as “the conjunction of a particular set of literature review characteristics” (Cooper, Hedges & Valentine, 2019, p.6). The main purpose of the research synthesis is integrating the empirical research to build generalizations. The term meta-analysis is often referred as research synthesis (Cooper et al., 2019). However, meta-analysis differs

from research synthesis such that, it adds the quantitative procedures in synthesis.

Rosenthal & DiMatteo (2001) emphasize that “meta-analysis is more than a statistical technique, it is a methodology for systematically examining a body of research, carefully formulating hypotheses, conducting an exhaustive research, establishing inclusion/exclusion criteria for articles, recording and statistically synthesizing and combining data and effect sizes from these studies, searching for moderator and mediator variables to explain effects of interest, and reporting results” (p.62). Albeit meta-analysis has the same aim with narrative literature and systematic literature review, many limitations of these studies can be addressed by employing statistical methods to integrate the findings of previous research.

Several steps are followed for conducting a meta-analysis. First, electronic search engines and database EBSCO Host is searched and nonredundant articles are noted. To retrieve all the relevant articles, the articles that used the terms of “sharing economy”, “collaborative consumption”, “commercial sharing systems”, “access based consumption”, “shared consumption”, “peer to peer sharing economy”, “on-demand economy”, “collaborative economy”, “platform economy” and “gig economy” are searched in the database, which were published between 2008 and 2021. In addition, references of the articles which found through databases as well as other main papers were examined to analyse articles that were not found by the database search. These articles also included in the analysis if they satisfy the inclusion criteria.

To be included in the meta-analysis, a study must measure the relationship between consumer-focused antecedents and behavioural intention

towards sharing services with similar operationalizations. A construct is included in the conceptual framework only if at least 3 effects emerge to support its empirical analysis. The consumer related antecedents did not have to be named or regarded as antecedents, if the study measured the relationship in the sharing economy and a construct related to consumer-focused antecedents, it was included.

To avoid double counting (i.e., to maintain sample independence), if different studies used the same dataset and reported same correlations and there is no clear distinct outcome between studies, then they are excluded from the study.

### **Findings**

Initial research in EBSCO Host yielded 832 articles and references of the articles which found through databases generated additional 219 articles. Currently, 1051 abstracts and 141 articles reviewed and 75 of them were found relevant for meta-analysis. In the light of initial research, behavioural intention toward sharing services is mainly associated with financial (i.e., cost saving), environmental (i.e., sustainability), social (i.e., social experience) drivers. Moreover, trust, materialism, convenience, variety seeking, familiarity, enjoyment and reputation are among the important antecedents and prerequisites for sharing service usage intentions. Overall, the initial analysis supports that wide variety of antecedents involved in the formation of behavioural intention towards sharing services.

### **References**

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