



Sharing economy perspective on an integrative framework of the NAM and TPB

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ABSTRACT

The study adopts the concept of the sharing economy to investigate sharing services in the service industries by examining an integrative framework made up of the Norm Activation Model (NAM) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), along with awareness of the sharing economy, for evaluating intentions to use sharing services. Results from a survey of 344 respondents were analyzed using structural equation modeling. The study's findings reveal that, with the exception of the direct effect of awareness of the sharing economy on the intention to use sharing services, the underlying dimensions have a significant effect on consumers' intention to use sharing services. Implications for future research and marketing strategies for sharing services are discussed.

1. Introduction

With the development of information technology and social networks, business and economic systems have given way to an alternative type of system, changing the consumption model from individual ownership to the concept of shared access (e.g., Chen, 2016; Habibi et al., 2017; Hamari et al., 2015; Lamberton and Rose, 2012). The “sharing economy,” is an economic model in which an individual can borrow and/or rent assets owned by others (Lamberton and Rose, 2012). Hamari et al. (2015, p. 2047) mentioned that the sharing economy is “the peer-to-peer-based activity of obtaining, giving, or sharing the access to goods and services [through] community-based online services.”

The sharing economy has received considerable attention in a variety of business services industries, including accommodation (e.g., Airbnb, Kozaza, and Couchsurfing), transportation (e.g. Uber, Zipcar, Lyft, Blablacar, and Didi Kuaidi), household services (e.g., TaskRabbit and Care.com), and retail commerce (e.g., eBay, Etsy, and Taobao) (Investment Strategy and Research, 2015). The global sharing economy is forecast to grow to US\$335 billion in 2025, compared with US\$15 billion in 2015 (Pricewaterhouse Coopers, 2015). Investment Strategy and Research (2015) estimated that Airbnb booking services will grow to close to US\$60 million by 2020, from US\$10 million in 2015, and car-sharing members will reach 26 billion by 2020, compared with 4 billion in 2014.

Several studies on the concept of the sharing economy in the service

sectors have pointed out that business innovation of information and communication technology (ICT) increases the desirability of sharing with others more desirable, thereby extending an existing practice to a larger social scale (e.g., Belk, 2014a; Botsman and Rogers, 2010; Hamari et al., 2015; Lamberton and Rose, 2012). These studies have also emphasized that an academic approach should help to ensure that the sharing economy's influence on consumption markets is beneficial to decreasing the search and transaction costs.

Wu and Zhi (2016) investigated the effects of the sharing economy on social, economic, and environmental arenas, and Chen (2016) reviewed research on the sharing economy. Chen's work revealed that those studies were performed in five domains: lifestyle and social movement (e.g., Laamanen et al., 2015), consumption practice (e.g., Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2012), the sharing paradigm (e.g., Belk, 2014b), trust (e.g., Möhlmann, 2015), and innovation (e.g., Martin et al., 2015). As these research categories suggest, most research has focused on conceptualizing the sharing economy as a way to foster social change, but research on the sharing economy in the context of consumption practices has also dealt with it as an alternative consumption practice and a new business paradigm to be applied for long-term sustainability.

From this point of view, despite the importance of the sharing economy as an alternative method of consumption, research on the sharing economy in the tourism and hospitality sectors remains in its early stages. Therefore, it is timely to apply the sharing economy to consumer behaviors in the context of tourism and hospitality. The current study adopts the concept of the sharing economy to investigate

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sharing services in the context of service industries using an integrative framework consisting of the Norm Activation Model (NAM) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to evaluate consumers' intentions to use sharing services as a form of collaborative consumption. The study also examines whether awareness of the sharing economy increases customers' intent to use sharing services as a potentially efficient channel for purchasing goods and services.

2. Literature review

2.1. The sharing economy

Even though Frenken and Schor (2017) mentioned that the definition of the sharing economy has been ambiguous and even confusing, studies have generally regarded the concept of the sharing economy as peer-to-peer sharing of access to underused goods and services that prioritizes use and accessibility over ownership (e.g., Botsman and Rogers, 2010; Chen, 2016; Hamari et al., 2015; Lamberton and Rose, 2012; Schor and Fitzmaurice, 2015). Nadler (2014) argued that the shared economy has the potential to increase access while reducing transaction costs and the need for investments in resources and infrastructure; in so doing, it contributes to improving consumer welfare and reducing societal costs. Therefore, the shared economy is considered a sustainable alternative to individual consumption.

From the economic perspective, shared resources present a paradox. The “tragedy of the commons” suggested by Hardin's (1968) well-known economic theory argued that the anti-commons, which result when people all act solely in their own self-interest, deplete the shared resources all need for their own quality of life. Ostrom's (1990) empirical work recommended the effective management of shared resources, that is, collaborative consumption, suggesting how groups can manage resources themselves in common-pool resource institutions, which contributes to a sustainable future. Arguments on collaborative consumption and the sharing economy have emerged that may overcome concerns about problems like the tragedy of the commons. Belk (2007, p. 127) suggested that “sharing is an alternative to the private ownership that is emphasized in both marketplace exchange and gift giving. In sharing, two or more people may enjoy the benefits or costs that flow from possessing a thing.” The contemporary literature has also stated that the sharing economy relies on users' willingness to share and that, in order to make an exchange, users have to be trustworthy (e.g., Belk, 2007; Frenken and Schor, 2017; Nadler, 2014; Ostrom, 1990). In addition to the academic economic debate, the necessity of the sharing economy has been considered from the perspective of increasing interest in areas like social community, the environment, and the effect on life. More specifically, social sustainability can be based on the condition of mutual communication and information dissemination, and shared information plays a central role in facilitating social sustainability (Yiftachel and Hedgcock, 1993). Martin et al. (2015) emphasized that the sharing economy, as it is perceived by individuals, can be regarded as social interaction that builds social capital in the community. Several studies have mentioned that the sharing economy can contribute to reducing consumption of products and services by renting them or lending them to others (Frenken and Schor, 2017; Wu and Zhi, 2016). Hence, sharing can be viewed as eco-friendly because it reduces the number of goods and services required, thereby reducing carbon emissions and other negative ecological influences.

The concept of the sharing economy has taken shape in various fields, along with the development of information and communication technologies (ICT) and the growth in social networks (Belk, 2014a; Lamberton and Rose, 2012). This environment allows individuals to provide their own content, share information, collaborate, and conduct transactions on Internet-based user-generated content; as a result, the sharing economy can offer a more sustainable alternative to traditional modes of consumption in online marketplaces (Belk, 2014a, 2014b). Collaborative consumption has emerged in the dynamics of

technological innovations that drive the sharing economy. In particular, ICT and online markets lower transaction costs and connect owners' and users' benefits in online markets. For example, Wang and Zhang (2012) noted that social commerce is an online marketplace that deals with peer-to-peer interaction and communal activities in pursuit of a unique set of economic benefits and costs through social networking sites (SNS). The secondary market can also enhance the perceived value of products as customers account for the products' resale value from the sharing economy aspects (e.g., Belk, 2014a; Botsman and Rogers, 2010; Nadler, 2014).

2.2. Norm activation model (NAM)

The NAM was developed to examine altruistic intention and behavior in a pro-social context (Schwartz, 1977); that is, it theorized that one's prosocial behavior or intention is affected by PN, and the level of problem awareness and ascribed responsibility contributes to generating these norms. NAM, which has been applied to environmental, psychological, and behavioral studies in order to determine the impact of PN on behavior, is one of the most prominent theories that apply to individuals' socially and/or environmentally responsible behavior (e.g., Schwartz, 1977; Steg and de Groot, 2010; Zhang et al., 2013).

NAM encompasses three major constructs for predicting pro-social behavior (De Groot and Steg, 2009): awareness of consequences (AC), ascription of responsibility (AR), and personal norm (PN). AC refers to “whether someone is aware of the negative consequences for others or for other things one values when not acting prosocially” (De Groot & Steg, 2009, p. 426). AC is also used in reference to problem awareness. AR is defined as a “feeling of responsibility for the negatives consequences of not acting prosocially” (De Groot & Steg, 2009, p. 426). Finally, PN refers to the “moral obligation to perform or refrain from specific actions” (Schwartz & Howard, 1981, p. 191) and is the most proximal variable of pro-social intention within the norm-activation framework. PN is also called moral norm.

A significant number of studies have supported the NAM, but the relationships between NAM's main constructs are not fully clear (De Ruyter and Wetzels, 2000). In general, the NAM can be interpreted in two ways: in terms of mediation and in terms of moderation (De Groot and Steg, 2009). In terms of mediation, AC is an antecedent of AR, AR is an antecedent of PN, and PN is an antecedent of prosocial intention and behavior. In terms of moderation, the NAM suggests that PN's influence on prosocial intention and behavior is moderated by both AC and AR.

Several studies have supported the interpretation of the NAM as a moderator framework (e.g., Han and Hwang, 2015; Hopper and Nielsen, 1991; Schultz and Zelezny, 1998; Schwartz, 1973). For instance, Han and Hwang (2015) examined delegates' loyalty formation based on combining two theories: four-stage loyalty and the NAM in terms of moderation. The results indicated that the norm-based loyalty model (NLM) is theoretically and empirically efficient and that normative, cognitive, and affective processes are important in generating conative (action-based) loyalty. Compared to the moderator framework, a significant number of studies has found for the mediator interpretation of the NAM (e.g., Han et al., 2016; Han et al., 2015; Vaske et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2013). Han (2014) tested the applicability of the NAM and broadened this theory by including attitude, the social norm, anticipated feeling of guilt, and attitude toward behavior in the conventional context. The author found that the revised NAM model improves on the original NAM, and the interpretation of the NAM as a sequential (mediation) model surpassed the NAM as a moderator model. Vaske et al. (2015) investigated the influence of AR and AC on the salience of ecological norms and reported pro-environmental behavior in the tourism context; their work revealed a positive relationship between AC and AR and that norm salience partially mediated the relationship among AC, AR, and reported ecological behavior. For their part, Vaske et al. (2015) found support for the continued use of the NAM to explain tourists' ecological behavior.

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