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Measuring Consumer Acceptance and Patronage in the Sharing Economy: A Pilot Study

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Abstract: The growth of digital platforms has transformed consumer access to products and services, contributing to the expansion of the sharing economy. This pilot study evaluates the preliminary reliability of a structured instrument designed to measure consumer acceptance and patronage across sharing-economy categories, including shared mobility, peer-to-peer accommodation, rental clothing, and rental furniture. Data were collected from 51 respondents using a seven-point Likert scale. The study examined five constructs: consumer acceptance, perceived value, convenience, trust and safety, and customer patronage. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.897 to 0.970, indicating strong internal consistency. The findings provide preliminary support for the reliability of the instrument and its use in the main study. However, the small convenience-based sample limits generalizability. Further validation with a larger and more diverse sample is recommended.

Keywords: Sharing Economy, Consumer Acceptance, Customer Patronage, Perceived Value, Convenience, Trust.

Introduction - Digitalisation has transformed consumer behaviour by enabling access to products and services through technology-based platforms rather than relying solely on ownership. This transformation has contributed to the growth of the sharing economy across sectors such as shared mobility, peer-to-peer accommodation, rental clothing and rental furniture. Digital platforms facilitate collaborative consumption by connecting consumers with products and services in flexible and accessible ways (Hamari et al., 2016).

Consumer participation in the sharing economy is influenced by factors such as perceived value, convenience, trust and safety, and consumer acceptance. Perceived value reflects the benefits consumers receive in relation to the costs involved (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001), while convenience is associated with ease of access, flexibility and time savings. Trust is particularly important in platform-based and peer-to-peer transactions, where consumers often interact with unfamiliar service providers or shared resources (Hawlitschek et al., 2016). Research also indicates that satisfaction and perceived benefits can influence consumers' willingness to use sharing services again (Möhlmann, 2015).

Before conducting large-scale research, it is important to establish that the research instrument is clear, reliable and suitable for the target respondents. Therefore, the present study undertakes a pilot assessment of a structured questionnaire developed to measure consumer acceptance and patronage in the sharing economy. The study examines five dimensions—consumer acceptance, perceived value, convenience, trust and safety, and customer patronage—with a focus on preliminary reliability and descriptive findings. The results provide an initial basis for refining and validating the instrument for the subsequent main study.

Literature Review

The sharing economy has changed traditional consumption by enabling consumers to access products and services through digital platforms rather than relying exclusively on ownership. Previous studies indicate that economic benefits, convenience, sustainability and personal values influence participation in collaborative consumption (Hamari et al., 2016; Piscicelli et al., 2015). Similarly, access-based consumption allows consumers to use products and services temporarily without owning them (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012).

Perceived value and convenience are important determinants of consumer participation. Consumers consider affordability, flexibility, accessibility and the benefits received in relation to the costs involved (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). Technology-enabled platforms can further improve convenience through easy booking, accessibility and flexible usage, while perceived usefulness and ease of use contribute to consumer acceptance (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh et al., 2003).

Trust and reputation are especially important in peer-to-peer transactions, where consumers may interact with

unfamiliar providers. Ert et al. (2016) found that trust and reputation influence consumer decisions on Airbnb, while Hawlitschek et al. (2016) highlighted trust in platforms, providers and users as important determinants of sharing-economy participation.

Consumer acceptance and patronage are influenced by satisfaction, perceived benefits and previous usage experiences. Möhlmann (2015) found that satisfaction affects the likelihood of using sharing-economy services again. Tussyadiah and Pesonen (2016) also highlighted the influence of peer-to-peer accommodation on consumer travel behaviour. From a broader marketing perspective, Eckhardt et al. (2019) noted that the sharing economy has created new forms of interaction between consumers, platforms and service providers.

Overall, the literature indicates that perceived value, convenience, trust, acceptance and patronage are important dimensions of sharing-economy consumption. However, relatively limited research has examined these factors through a common measurement instrument across different categories such as shared mobility, accommodation, rental clothing and rental furniture. The present pilot study addresses this gap by assessing the preliminary reliability of an instrument covering consumer acceptance, perceived value, convenience, trust and safety, and customer patronage.

Objectives of the Pilot Study: The pilot study was undertaken to evaluate the preliminary suitability of the research instrument. The specific objectives were:

1. To assess the clarity and suitability of the questionnaire for the intended respondents.
2. To evaluate the internal consistency of the measurement items using Cronbach's alpha.
3. To identify and address any unclear, confusing, or ambiguous items in the questionnaire.
4. To assess the readiness of the instrument for use in the main data-collection phase.

These objectives were formulated to ensure that the questionnaire was appropriate, consistent, and adequately structured before proceeding with the full-scale study.

Conceptual Basis of the Measurement Instrument: The pilot questionnaire was structured around five key constructs relevant to understanding consumer responses to sharing-economy products and services: **Consumer Acceptance, Perceived Value, Convenience, Trust and Safety, and Customer Patronage**. These dimensions were selected to capture both the consumer's initial orientation towards sharing-economy offerings and the factors that may contribute to continued use. The research presentation identifies these constructs as the major dimensions included in the pilot instrument.

Consumer Acceptance: Consumer acceptance represents the extent to which individuals are receptive to using sharing-economy products and services. It reflects consumers' willingness to consider an access-based alternative to conventional ownership and their positive orientation towards digitally enabled sharing platforms.

In the context of the present study, acceptance is considered an important preliminary stage in consumer participation. A consumer may become interested in a sharing-economy service because it offers an alternative way of obtaining transportation, accommodation, clothing, furniture, or other resources. Acceptance therefore reflects the consumer's openness towards this form of consumption and willingness to engage with the service.

Perceived Value: Perceived value refers to the consumer's overall evaluation of the benefits obtained from a sharing-economy service in relation to the costs or sacrifices involved. In this context, value is not limited to monetary savings. Consumers may also consider the quality of the service, flexibility, variety, usefulness, and benefits obtained through temporary access.

For sharing-economy services, perceived value can therefore arise when consumers believe that accessing a product or service provides greater overall benefits than purchasing or owning it. A positive perception of value may contribute to favourable attitudes towards the platform and encourage continued use.

Convenience: Convenience refers to the extent to which a sharing-economy service makes consumption easier, quicker, and less demanding for the consumer. Digital platforms can simplify several stages of the consumption process, including searching, comparing alternatives, booking, making payments, accessing services, and cancelling or modifying reservations.

Convenience is particularly relevant to sharing-economy platforms because consumers often seek flexible solutions that reduce the time and effort associated with conventional purchasing or ownership. A convenient service experience may therefore strengthen consumers' willingness to use and reuse sharing-economy services.

Trust and Safety: Trust and safety represent consumers' confidence in the platform, service provider, product or transaction process. This construct is particularly relevant to the sharing economy because transactions may involve unfamiliar individuals, peer providers, digital payments, and reliance on information supplied through online platforms.

Consumers may therefore consider factors such as platform credibility, safety measures, reviews and ratings, transparency, secure payment systems, and mechanisms for handling complaints. A greater sense of trust and security can reduce uncertainty and perceived risk, thereby creating a more favourable environment for participation in sharing-economy services.

Customer Patronage: Customer patronage represents the consumer's intention to continue using sharing-economy products or services and to recommend them to others. While acceptance reflects the consumer's initial openness towards the sharing-economy concept, patronage focuses more strongly on continued engagement.

Patronage may be influenced by the consumer's overall experience with the service, particularly the value received, convenience, reliability, trust, and perceived quality. A consumer who is satisfied with these aspects may be more willing to reuse the service and recommend it to family, friends, or other potential users.

Thus, the five constructs together provide a preliminary framework for examining consumer responses to sharing-economy offerings. The pilot study primarily assesses whether these dimensions can be measured consistently through the proposed questionnaire before the instrument is applied to the larger sample.

Research Methodology: The pilot study was undertaken as an initial methodological step to evaluate the research instrument before proceeding with the main study. The methodology focused on assessing the suitability of the questionnaire, understanding respondents' responses to the measurement items, and examining the internal consistency of the proposed constructs.

Research Design: A quantitative pilot-study design was adopted for the present investigation. The pilot was primarily intended to assess the performance of the questionnaire rather than to test the proposed relationships among variables or draw conclusions about the larger consumer population.

The pilot stage provided an opportunity to examine whether the questionnaire was appropriately structured and whether the items used to measure consumer acceptance, perceived value, convenience, trust and safety, and customer patronage demonstrated satisfactory consistency. The findings were subsequently used to determine the suitability of the instrument for the main phase of the research.

Target Respondents: The study targeted respondents who were familiar with sharing-economy products and services. The scope included individuals having awareness or experience with different categories of sharing-economy offerings, namely shared mobility, peer-to-peer accommodation, rental clothing, and rental furniture.

The inclusion of respondents familiar with different categories was intended to provide an initial assessment of whether the questionnaire could capture common consumer perceptions across varied sharing-economy contexts.

Sample and Sampling Approach: The pilot study consisted of 51 respondents. The sample was selected for the purpose of preliminary testing of the research instrument. The presentation also indicates that responses were collected through both online and offline modes, with five respondents participating offline.

Given the relatively small size and pilot nature of the sample, the findings are intended to provide preliminary methodological evidence rather than statistically representative estimates of the broader population. Accordingly, the results are not intended for population-level generalisation.

Data Collection Instrument: Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed around the major constructs of the study. A seven-point Likert scale was employed to record respondents' level of agreement with the statements included in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire covered five principal dimensions: Consumer Acceptance, Perceived Value, Convenience, Trust and Safety, and Customer Patronage

The use of a seven-point scale provided respondents with a broader range of response options and enabled the study to capture variations in their perceptions towards sharing-economy products and services.

Data Analysis: The pilot data were analysed using **descriptive statistics and reliability analysis**. Mean scores and standard deviations were examined to understand the general pattern and variation in respondents' responses to the measured constructs.

Cronbach's alpha was employed to assess the internal consistency of the items associated with each construct. The reliability assessment was undertaken to determine whether the items intended to measure a particular construct showed an acceptable level of consistency.

The pilot presentation reports that all major constructs achieved satisfactory reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from **0.897 to 0.970**.

The analysis therefore served two purposes: first, to provide preliminary descriptive evidence regarding consumer responses; and second, to assess whether the questionnaire demonstrated sufficient internal consistency to proceed to the larger data-collection phase.

Reliability Assessment: Reliability assessment is an important component of the pilot study as it provides an initial indication of the internal consistency of the measurement items used to represent the respective constructs. In the present study, **Cronbach's Alpha** was employed to assess the extent to which the items within each construct demonstrated consistency in their responses.As a general guideline, a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of **0.70 or above** is considered indicative of acceptable internal consistency, while higher values suggest stronger consistency among the measurement items.

Table 1. Internal Consistency of the Major Constructs

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
Consumer Acceptance	0.927
Perceived Value	0.925
Convenience	0.897
Trust & Safety	0.918
Customer Patronage	0.97

The results demonstrate a high level of internal consistency across all five constructs examined in the pilot study. **Customer Patronage** recorded the highest Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (α **= 0.970**), indicating a very high degree of consistency among its measurement items. This was followed by **Consumer Acceptance (α = 0.927), Perceived**

Value (α = 0.925), and Trust & Safety (α = 0.918), all of which demonstrate excellent internal consistency. **Convenience (α = 0.897)** also recorded a high reliability coefficient, indicating strong consistency among its constituent items.

Overall, the reliability results provide preliminary evidence that the measurement items used for the five constructs are sufficiently consistent for further investigation. Accordingly, the items were retained for subsequent large-scale data collection.

Descriptive Findings: The descriptive analysis of the pilot responses indicates an overall favourable perception of the major constructs examined in the study. The findings provide an initial understanding of how respondents perceived consumer acceptance, perceived value, convenience, trust and safety, and customer patronage in the context of sharing-economy products and services.

Table 2. Descriptive Summary of Pilot Responses

Construct	Range of Item-level Mean	SD Range
Trust & Safety	5.5–6.2	0.80–1.40
Consumer Acceptance	5.0–5.8	0.90–1.50
Perceived Value	5.5–6.3	0.80–1.30
Convenience	5.8–6.5	0.70–1.20
Customer Patronage	5.4–6.1	0.80–1.40

The descriptive findings indicate generally favourable responses across all five constructs, with item-level mean ranges exceeding the midpoint of the seven-point scale. Convenience recorded the highest item-level mean range (5.8–6.5), while Consumer Acceptance showed the comparatively lowest range (5.0–5.8) and greater variability in responses (SD = 0.90–1.50). The results provide a preliminary overview of respondents' perceptions and are intended primarily to support assessment of the instrument rather than to draw conclusions about the wider sharing-economy consumer population.

Discussion: The pilot study provides preliminary support for the reliability and suitability of the proposed measurement instrument. All five constructs recorded Cronbach's alpha values above 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency.

Convenience recorded the highest item-level mean range, suggesting that respondents generally viewed the ease, accessibility and time-saving aspects of sharing-economy services favourably. However, this finding should not be interpreted as evidence that convenience is the strongest predictor of acceptance or patronage, as such relationships require testing in the main study. Trust and Safety and Customer Patronage also received favourable responses, although the latter reflects reported intentions rather than established repeated behaviour.

Overall, the pilot findings support the continuation of the questionnaire into the main study. No measurement items were removed at the pilot stage. Further validation using the larger sample will be required to establish the final factor structure and examine relationships among the constructs.

Implications of the Pilot Study: The pilot study provides preliminary evidence of satisfactory internal consistency among the questionnaire items. It also demonstrates the importance of pilot testing before undertaking large-scale data collection. The results provide a basis for further assessment of the instrument through factor analysis and evaluation of convergent and discriminant validity in the main study.

The preliminary findings indicate that **convenience, perceived value, trust, and service reliability** are important areas for sharing-economy platforms to consider. Managers may focus on simplifying booking and payment, providing transparent information and reviews, strengthening safety measures, ensuring reliable service, communicating value beyond price, and offering flexible cancellation options.These implications should be further validated through the main study.

The pilot provides a foundation for the subsequent investigation of consumer acceptance and patronage across different demographic groups, sharing-economy categories, and consumer characteristics. The main study can further examine whether perceived value, convenience, trust, and other identified dimensions significantly influence consumer acceptance and patronage.

Limitations: The pilot study has certain limitations that should be considered while interpreting its findings. The sample was limited to **51 respondents**, which restricts the generalisability of the results to the wider population of sharing-economy consumers. The use of convenience-based participation may also have introduced sampling bias. Further, respondents were familiar with different sharing-economy categories, including shared mobility, peer-to-peer accommodation, rental clothing, and rental furniture, which may differ in terms of usage patterns, perceived risks, and consumption contexts. Since the study relied on self-reported responses, the findings may not necessarily reflect actual future behaviour. Finally, although Cronbach's Alpha indicates internal consistency, it does not independently establish construct validity. Therefore, the larger study should undertake further psychometric assessment through appropriate factor analysis and validity testing.

Conclusion: The pilot study assessed the preliminary reliability of a questionnaire measuring consumer acceptance and patronage in the sharing economy. Data from 51 respondents using a seven-point Likert scale covered five constructs: acceptance, perceived value, convenience, trust and safety, and patronage. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.897 to 0.970, indicating strong internal consistency. Overall, the findings support retaining the instrument for the main study, subject to validation with a larger and more diverse sample.

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