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Tourist Attitudes and Participation in the Sharing Economy: Insights from the Tricity Region

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Abstract

This paper investigates tourist behavior towards sharing economy services using a comprehensive framework encompassing the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Diffusion of Innovation Theory. By analyzing the impact of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceptions of quality on tourists' intentions and actual usage of sharing economy platforms, the study reveals that attitudes significantly drive adoption, while subjective norms and perceived quality also play substantial roles. Utilizing a sample from the Tricity region, the research employs factor analysis, reliability testing, and hypothesis testing to examine the relationships between these variables. The findings highlight that positive attitudes and strong intentions are strong predictors of actual usage, providing valuable insights into enhancing user engagement. Managerial implications suggest that service providers should focus on improving attitudes towards their platforms, leveraging social influence, and ensuring high-quality service to drive adoption and convert intentions into actual usage. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of tourist behavior in the sharing economy and offers actionable strategies for businesses to thrive in this evolving sector.

Keywords: Sharing Economy, Tourist Behavior, Attitudes, Subjective Norms, Perceived Quality

1. INTRODUCTION

The sharing economy has significantly disrupted various industries, particularly the hospitality sector. Platforms like Airbnb, HomeAway, and Booking.com allow individuals to rent out properties or rooms, offering new avenues for accommodations and impacting traditional businesses (Guttentag, 2015). This system, also known as the collaborative or peer-to-peer economy, enables people to share resources through online platforms, monetizing idle assets and providing access to goods and services (Botsman& Rogers, 2010; Belk, 2014). Sharing economy platforms have permeated multiple industries, including transportation and household services, leveraging technology and user-generated content to foster trust and efficiency (Ert, Fleischer, & Magen, 2016).

The growth of the sharing economy in hospitality is driven by technological advancements, changing tourist preferences, and a demand for cost-effective, sustainable experiences. These platforms offer diverse, affordable options, appealing to travelers seeking unique and personalized experiences (Sundararajan, 2016). The rise of Airbnb exemplifies this trend, with millions of active listings worldwide, challenging traditional hotels by providing flexible and local accommodations (Li & Mu, 2021).

The sharing economy's impact on traditional hospitality businesses includes increased competition, reduced market share, and the need for adaptation to maintain relevance. Hotels have responded by integrating elements of the sharing economy, such as personalized services and flexible pricing, to meet evolving consumer demands (Zervas, Proserpio, & Byers, 2017; Tussyadiah, 2016). However, concerns about regulation, safety, and quality control remain significant challenges for the sharing economy, as these platforms often operate outside traditional regulatory frameworks (Wang, 2021). Addressing these issues is essential for creating a sustainable and equitable ecosystem in the hospitality industry.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND RESEARCH GAP

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)framework posits that tourist behavior in the sharing economy is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. This theory suggests that positive attitudes towards sharing economy platforms, influenced by perceived benefits like cost savings and unique experiences, can drive adoption. Social norms and perceived ease or difficulty in using these platforms also play crucial roles (Ajzen, 1991).Everett Rogers' theory of Diffusion of Innovation outlines how innovations are adopted and spread within a society, emphasizing factors like the innovation's characteristics, communication channels, and the social system. In the context of sharing economy platforms, understanding these elements can help identify what drives or hinders their adoption among tourists (Rogers, 2003).

Studies have identified various factors influencing tourist behavior towards sharing economy platforms. For instance, Anaya and Vega (2022) found that economic benefits, enjoyment, and trust are significant motivators for tourists' usage behavior, moderated by perceived risk. Sthapit et al. (2020) observed that hotel guests who adopt sharing economy accommodations often prioritize cost savings and local experiences, while non-adopters are more concerned about safety and service quality. Li et al. (2020) emphasized that perceived usefulness, ease of use, trust, and social influence significantly affect tourists' attitudes towards Airbnb in China. Wang et al. (2019) explored the impact of sharing economy accommodations on hotel performance, highlighting that hotels in tourist areas are more affected by competition from platforms like Airbnb. Similarly, Zervas et al. (2017) confirmed that the presence of Airbnb listings negatively impacts hotel revenues and occupancy rates. Research by Wang et al. (2017) on Airbnb in China noted that factors like perceived usefulness, trust, and prior experience with shared accommodations are crucial for adoption. Sigala (2017) highlighted the role of collaborative commerce in transforming the tourism sector, emphasizing the need for research on technology's role and the social dimensions of collaborative consumption. Hamari et al. (2016) explored the motivations behind participation in the sharing economy, categorizing them into economic, social, and environmental factors. Tussyadiah and Pesonen (2016) noted that peer-to-peer (P2P) accommodation users are more likely to choose non-traditional destinations and travel more frequently. Gursoy et al. (2013) and Gretzel and Fesenmaier (2013) investigated travelers' information search behaviors and persuasive elements in online reviews, respectively, underscoring the importance of trustworthiness and credibility in online platforms.

The research gap lies in the limited exploration of tourist behavior towards the sharing economy specifically in the Tricity region (Chandigarh, Panchkula, and Mohali). While existing studies have focused on broader or different geographical contexts, there is a lack of targeted research on local tourist perceptions, attitudes, and decision-making factors. Understanding these aspects in the Tricity context can provide valuable insights for local businesses and policymakers.

3. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The sharing economy has transformed the travel and tourism industry by offering alternatives to traditional accommodation and services, yet there is a lack of comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing tourists' decisions to adopt these services, especially in specific regions like the Tricity (Chandigarh, Panchkula, and Mohali). This study seeks to address this gap by investigating how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived quality affect tourists' intentions to use sharing economy services, and how these intentions align with their actual behaviors. Additionally, the study aims to provide targeted recommendations to enhance the adoption and utilization of sharing economy services, benefiting traditional hospitality businesses, legislators, and sharing economy platforms.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to thoroughly examine the impact of demographic factors on visitor behaviour within the sharing economy in the Tricity Region, this study utilises a quantitative research methodology. The intended audience consists of travellers who are in Chandigarh, Mohali, and Panchkula. A convenience sample of 250 respondents will be chosen, and they will be given a structured questionnaire. The purpose of the questionnaire is to gather demographic data, including gender, age, and income, as well as details about the participants' sharing economy usage habits. Throughout the whole research process, two ethical principles that have been strictly adhered to are confidentiality and informed consent. It is anticipated that the study's findings will give Tricity hotel managers helpful information, making it simpler to customise offerings to raise overall guest satisfaction in this dynamic hospitality environment.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

With 46.4% males and 53.6% females, the demographic profile of the 250 respondents in this study shows a

balanced gender distribution. The respondents range widely in age, with 28.0% being under 25, 28.6% being between 25 and 45, 21.4% being between 45 and 55, and 22.0% being over 55. When it comes to monthly income, the majority(54.6%) make between Rs. 20,000 and Rs. 50,000, followed by 24.2% who make between Rs. 50,000 and Rs. 100,000, 11.6% who make less than Rs. 20,000, and 9.6% who make more than Rs. 100,000. There is a divide in the respondents' marital status, with 36.2% of them single and 63.8% married. There is a clear diversity in educational attainment: 21.0% have a degree or equivalent, 33.4% have less than a diploma, and 45.6% have a post-graduate degree or equivalent. This thorough demographic analysis offers a starting point for investigating the complex interactions between different demographic variables and traveller behaviour inside the Tricity Region's sharing economy.

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Demographic Profile of Consumers

		Count (n=250)	Column (%)
Gender	Male	116	46.4%
	Female	134	53.6%
Age	Less than 25 years	70	28.0%
	25 to 45 years	72	28.6%
	45 to 55 years	53	21.4%
	Above 55 years	55	22.0%
Monthly income	Below Rs. 20000	29	11.6%
	Rs. 20000 to Rs. 50000	136	54.6%
	Rs. 50000 to Rs. 100000	61	24.2%
	Above Rs. 100000	24	9.6%
Marital status	Single	90	36.2%
	Married	160	63.8%
Highest qualification	Below Graduation	84	33.4%
	Graduation or equivalent	52	21.0%
	Post-graduation/Equivalent	114	45.6%

Figure 1: Measurement Model of Study

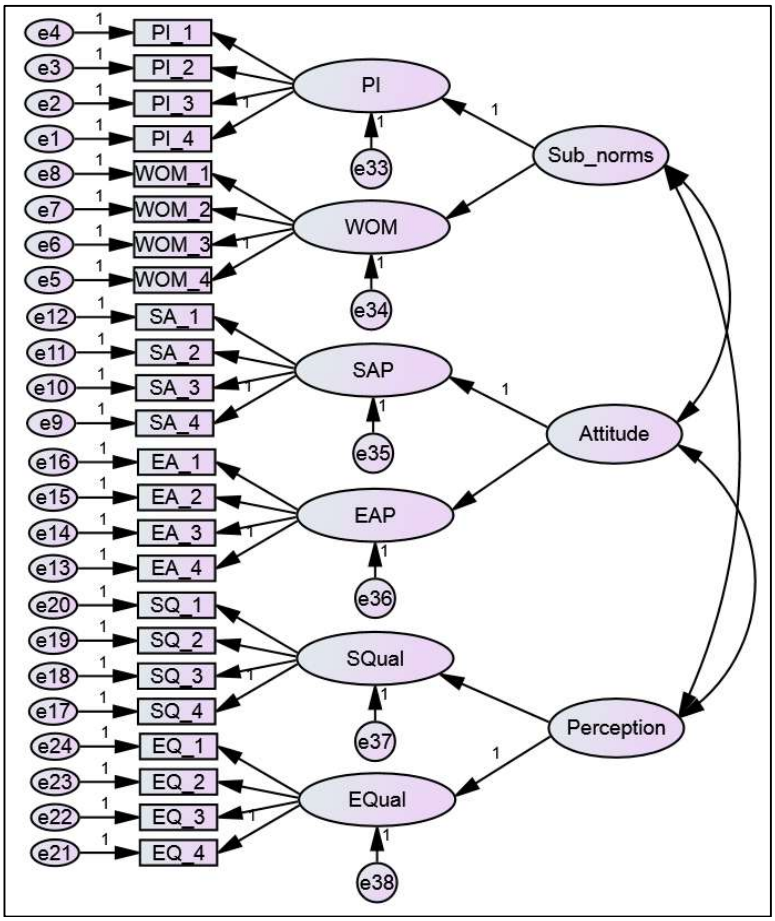

Table 2 : Factor Loadings

			Estimate
Peer Influences	<---	Subjective Norms	0.794
Word of Mouth	<---	Subjective Norms	0.749
Social Appeal	<---	Attitude	0.773
Economic Appeal	<---	Attitude	0.877
Service Quality	<---	Perception	0.776
Economic Quality	<---	Perception	0.725
PI_1	<---	Peer Influences	0.608
PI_2	<---	Peer Influences	0.754
PI_3	<---	Peer Influences	0.737
PI_4	<---	Peer Influences	0.887
WOM_1	<---	Word of Mouth	0.714
WOM_2	<---	Word of Mouth	0.813
WOM_3	<---	Word of Mouth	0.709
WOM_4	<---	Word of Mouth	0.657
SA_1	<---	Social Appeal	0.867

SA_2	<---	Social Appeal	0.709
SA_3	<---	Social Appeal	0.696
SA_4	<---	Social Appeal	0.766
EA_1	<---	Economic Appeal	0.728
EA_2	<---	Economic Appeal	0.72
EA_3	<---	Economic Appeal	0.666
EA_4	<---	Economic Appeal	0.735
SQ_1	<---	Service Quality	0.811
SQ_2	<---	Service Quality	0.703
SQ_3	<---	Service Quality	0.741
SQ_4	<---	Service Quality	0.567
EQ_1	<---	Economic Quality	0.771
EQ_2	<---	Economic Quality	0.854
EQ_3	<---	Economic Quality	0.742
EQ_4	<---	Economic Quality	0.688

Table 2 presents the factor loadings of various indicators measuring constructs related to tourists' intentions and behaviors towards sharing economy services. Notably, the factor loadings for constructs such as Peer Influences (ranging from 0.608 to 0.887), Word of Mouth (0.657 to 0.813), Social Appeal (0.696 to 0.867), Economic Appeal (0.666 to 0.735), Service Quality (0.567 to 0.811), and Economic Quality (0.688 to 0.854) demonstrate substantial loading values, generally exceeding the commonly accepted threshold of 0.7 for confirmatory factor analysis, indicating strong convergent validity (Hair et al., 2014). These findings suggest that the indicators are well-aligned with their respective latent constructs, providing a robust measurement model for assessing tourists' perceptions and behaviors in the sharing economy context.

Figure 2: Causal Model of Study

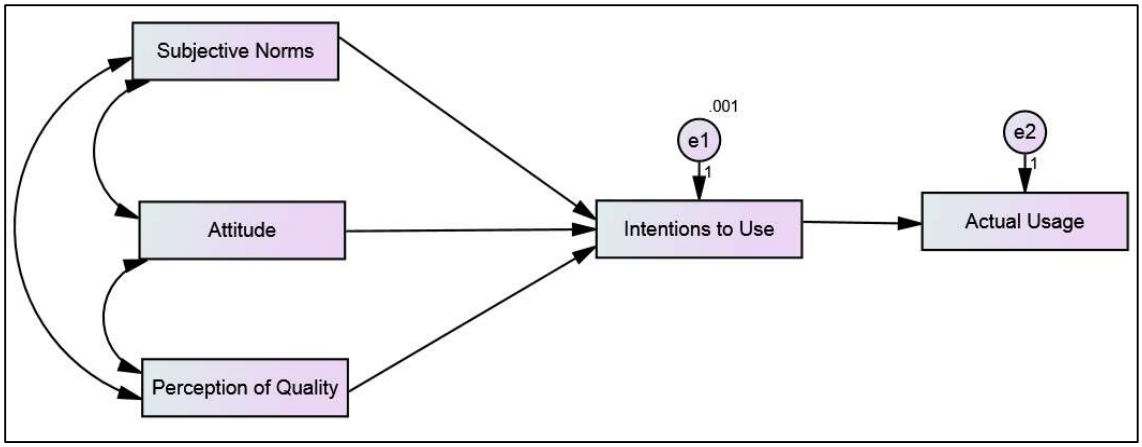

Table 3: Reliability Statistics

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)
Attitude	0.811	0.683	0.137	0.828
Subjective Norms	0.746	0.596	0.137	0.749
Perception	0.721	0.564	0.019	0.724

Table 3 reports the reliability statistics for the constructs Attitude, Subjective Norms, and Perception, using composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), maximum shared variance (MSV), and maximum reliability (MaxR(H)). The CR values for Attitude (0.811), Subjective Norms (0.746), and Perception (0.721) all

exceed the recommended threshold of 0.7, indicating good internal consistency (Hair et al., 2014). The AVE values for Attitude (0.683), Subjective Norms (0.596), and Perception (0.564) are above the threshold of 0.5, suggesting adequate convergent validity (Fornell&Larcker, 1981). The MSV values are low, with the highest being 0.137, indicating that the constructs are distinct from one another, supporting discriminant validity (Fornell&Larcker, 1981). The MaxR(H) values, which also exceed 0.7, further corroborate the reliability and validity of the constructs measured in this study.

Table 4: Discriminant Validity

	Attitude	Subjective Norms	Perception
Attitude	**0.827**		
Subjective Norms	0.370	**0.772**	
Perception	0.129	0.138	**0.751**

Table 4 presents the discriminant validity statistics for the constructs Attitude, Subjective Norms, and Perception, using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The diagonal elements represent the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct: Attitude (0.827), Subjective Norms (0.772), and Perception (0.751). These values are greater than the corresponding inter-construct correlations, which are represented by the off-diagonal elements: Attitude and Subjective Norms (0.370), Attitude and Perception (0.129), and Subjective Norms and Perception (0.138). This indicates good discriminant validity, as each construct shares more variance with its own indicators than with other constructs (Fornell&Larcker, 1981).

Table 5: Model Fit Indices

CMIN/Df	2.13	<3 Very good; <5 acceptable
CFI	0.923	>.90 good fit
TLI	0.912	>.90 good fit
IFI	0.923	>.90 good fit
RFI	0.914	>.90 good fit
NFI	0.916	>.90 good fit
RMSEA	0.048	<.08 acceptable, <.05 very good

Table 5 provides the model fit indices, which indicate how well the proposed model fits the observed data. The CMIN/Df value is 2.13, suggesting a good model fit as it falls below the threshold of 3, which is considered very good, and well within the acceptable range of less than 5. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) are 0.923 and 0.912, respectively, both exceeding the good fit benchmark of 0.90. Similarly, the Incremental Fit Index (IFI) and the Relative Fit Index (RFI) are 0.923 and 0.914, respectively, also indicating a good fit as they surpass the 0.90 threshold. The Normed Fit Index (NFI) is 0.916, further confirming a good fit. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is 0.048, which is within the acceptable range of less than 0.08 and closer to the very good fit standard of less than 0.05 (Hu &Bentler, 1999).

Table 6: Hypothesis Testing of Model

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Hypothesis
Intentions to Use	<---	Subjective Norms	0.028	0.011	2.545	0.011	H1
Intentions to Use	<---	Attitude	0.889	0.095	9.358	0.000	H2
Intentions to Use	<---	Perception of Quality	0.234	0.081	2.889	0.004	H3
Actual Usage	<---	Intentions to Use	0.805	0.038	21.184	0.000	H4

Table 6 presents the results of the hypothesis testing for the model. The path from Subjective Norms to Intentions to Use is estimated at 0.028 with a standard error (S.E.) of 0.011, a critical ratio (C.R.) of 2.545, and a p-value of 0.011, indicating that the relationship is statistically significant and supports Hypothesis 1 (H1). The relationship between Attitude and Intentions to Use shows a strong estimate of 0.889 with an S.E. of 0.095, a C.R. of 9.358, and a highly significant p-value of 0.000, thus confirming Hypothesis 2 (H2). The link between Perception of Quality and Intentions to Use is estimated at 0.234 with an S.E. of 0.081, a C.R. of 2.889, and a p-value of 0.004,

supporting Hypothesis 3 (H3). Finally, the effect of Intentions to Use on Actual Usage is estimated at 0.805 with an S.E. of 0.038, a C.R. of 21.184, and a p-value of 0.000, confirming Hypothesis 4 (H4) (Byrne, 2016).

6. CONCLUSIONS AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The study offers several key insights into the dynamics of tourist behavior towards sharing economy services. Attitude emerged as a predominant factor influencing tourists' intentions to use sharing economy platforms. A positive attitude towards these services, driven by factors such as perceived benefits and personal preferences, strongly correlates with the intention to adopt. However, Subjective Norms—representing social influences and peer pressure—also play a significant role, though it is less influential than attitudes. Additionally, the Perception of Quality, encompassing aspects like service and economic quality, impacts tourists' intentions, albeit to a lesser extent.The findings indicate that tourists' intentions to use sharing economy services are a strong predictor of their actual usage. This underscores the importance of not only shaping positive attitudes and perceptions but also ensuring that these intentions translate into behavior. The high correlation between Intentions to Use and Actual Usage suggests that addressing factors that influence intentions can effectively drive actual engagement.From a managerial perspective, these insights have several implications. First, service providers should focus on improving the overall attitude towards sharing economy platforms by highlighting their unique value propositions, such as cost savings and unique experiences. Marketing strategies should leverage positive testimonials and peer recommendations to influence subjective norms and reinforce favorable attitudes. Ensuring high service quality and addressing any concerns about reliability can improve perceptions and foster trust among potential users. Moreover, to bridge the gap between intention and actual usage, managers should consider strategies that facilitate ease of use and provide incentives for first-time users. Simplifying the booking process, enhancing user experience, and offering introductory discounts or promotions can help convert intentions into actual usage. Additionally, understanding local preferences and cultural nuances can tailor the service offerings more effectively to meet the expectations of the target audience.In summary, by addressing attitudes, subjective norms, and perceptions of quality, and by implementing strategies to convert intentions into actual behavior, sharing economy service providers can enhance user engagement and satisfaction. This comprehensive approach will help in capturing a larger market share and achieving sustainable growth in the competitive landscape of the sharing economy.

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