

# Exploring bibliometric evidence of Airbnb's influence on urban destinations: emotional solidarity, Airbnb supply, moral economy and digital future

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – This study aims to provide a cutting-edge evaluation of the sharing economy's impact within the realm of tourism and hospitality. The primary objectives guiding this research are as follows: to uncover the prevalent discussions and debates within the tourism and hospitality sector concerning the implications and effects of the sharing economy on urban destinations; and to analyse how scholarly inquiries and empirical investigations have contributed to a comprehensive comprehension of the intricate theoretical foundations and practical intricacies inherent in the sharing economy. This exploration takes place within the extensive expanse of existing literature.

**Methodology** – The study used the non-conventional method for data mining. An artificial intelligence (AI) tool called *www.dimensions.ai* was used to mine data between the year 2002 and 2021. After which the data was analysed, using Citespace software that assisted in building themes for answering the research questions.

**Findings** – The sharing economy has multifaceted implications for rural and urban destinations. For instance, the findings demonstrated that emotional solidarity fosters community bonds between tourists and residents, enhancing authenticity. While, management firms optimise short-term rentals, boosting revenue and occupancy rates despite capped at 20%. It further demonstrated that the sharing economy disrupts traditional accommodations, especially hotels, impacting rural and urban destinations differently based on location and regulatory flexibility. Technological advancements would shape the digital future, transforming the resource in sharing and connectivity in urban settings.

**Practical implications** – Management firms or agents significantly enhance property facilities, revenue and occupancy rates. Properties managed by professionals perform better in terms of revenue and occupancy; furthermore, traditional accommodations need innovative strategies to compete with sharing economy platforms. Policymakers must consider location-specific regulations to balance sharing economy impacts. Embracing technological advancements ensures urban destinations stay relevant and competitive.

**Social implications** – Emotional solidarity fosters bonds between residents and tourists, contributing to a sense of community. Management firms contribute to local economies and stability. However, Airbnb's impact on traditional accommodations raises concerns about the effect on residents and communities.

**Theoretical implications** – The study incorporates classical sociology theory to understand emotional solidarity and extends the concept of moral economy to guide economic behaviour in the sharing economy. The analysis also underscores the influence of technological trends such as mobile technology, Internet of Things, AI and blockchain on sharing practices in reshaping existing theoretical frameworks in the sharing atmosphere. Furthermore, the co-creation of value theory highlights collaborative interactions between hosts and guests, shaping the sharing economy experience. Consumer segmentation and choice theories shed light on sharing economy dynamics. Institutional and location-based theories provide insights into regulatory and location-specific impacts.

**Originality** – This research contributes by comprehensively exploring the multifaceted implications of the sharing economy on a tourist destination. It delves into emotional solidarity, management firm roles and location-specific impacts, enriching the understanding of the sharing economy's effects. The

*application of co-creation of value theory and examination of platform technologies offer fresh perspectives on value creation and user engagement. The study's focus on practical dimensions guides stakeholders in optimising the benefits and addressing challenges posed by the sharing economy in urban contexts. The exploration of moral economy and its relevance to the sharing economy provides a novel perspective, while the examination of technological influences on sharing practices contributes to understanding the digital future of the sharing economy.*

**Keywords** *Sharing economy, Moral economy, Emotional solidarity, Airbnb supply, Co-creation of value theory, Digital future*

**Paper type** *Research paper*

## Introduction

This research aims to provide a comprehensive global perspective on the sharing economy, harmonising the ongoing debate and shedding light on its implications through a thorough analysis of existing literature in the sector. By synthesising diverse perspectives, theories and empirical studies, this study seeks to deepen our understanding of the sharing economy phenomenon and its transformative effects. The sharing economy has revolutionised the way people travel and has gained immense popularity in tourism cities worldwide (Guttentag, 2015; Guttentag et al., 2017). Platforms like Airbnb and Uber have disrupted traditional hotel and taxi industries, they offer tourists and guests affordable accommodation and transportation options while fostering more authentic local experiences (Altinay & Taheri, 2019; Cheng, et al., 2020).

However, the rise of the sharing economy has also raised concerns regarding safety, legality and the impact on local communities (Botsman, 2010; Schor, 2016; Sundararajan, 2016). To address these concerns, local authorities in certain cities have implemented regulations, such as limits on short-term rentals and taxes imposed on sharing economy platforms (Ndaguba, 2021; Ndaguba, et al., 2022). Despite these challenges, the sharing economy continues to thrive in many tourism destinations, with tourists appreciating the convenience and cost savings it offers. According to a study by PWC (2017), the sharing economy is projected to grow by 22% annually, with accommodation being the largest segment of the market. However, concerns persist regarding the safety of sharing economy platforms, especially in relation to unregulated short-term rentals (Guttentag, 2015).

Although having a broad spectrum of sharing economy activities, this study limits its research to sharing economy regarding Airbnb. In this study, we aimed to bibliometrically assess the state of the sharing economy in the hospitality and tourism literature (Altinay & Taheri, 2019; Cheng, 2016; Guttentag, 2019). Owing to the growing debate surrounding what the sharing economy entails, two schools of thought have emerged in the sharing economy philosophy (Belk, 2007; Botsman & Rogers, 2010). The first, proposed by Belk (2007), perceives the sharing economy as emanating from sharing, and argues that digitalisation or technology has changed the method and model for sharing under the trade by barter structure. The second school headed by Botsman & Rogers (2010) presupposes that the notion of the sharing economy is the same as collaborative consumption and the circular economy. In this study, we align with Belk's (2007) perspective over Botsman & Rogers (2010) due to conceptual and theoretical considerations. Our preference for Belk's argument is rooted in the recognition that conceptual definitions have significant implications for policy development. The rationale behind the European Commission's definition of the sharing economy as collaborative consumption supports our stance, as it broadens the scope of the discourse. However, it is essential to acknowledge that this expanded definition may potentially lead to stricter regulation of sharing economy activities. By favouring Belk's viewpoint, we aim to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the sharing economy and its policy implications to facilitate informed decision-making in this rapidly evolving field.

Several researchers have attempted to systematically objectify the sharing economy, but only a few have distilled the information of the dual views and proposed a definition (Dredge & Gyimóthy, 2015; Weitzman, 1986). Most research papers use the Web of Science Core Collection (De las Heras, Relinque-Medina, Zamora-Polo, & Luque-Sendra, 2021; Gupta & Chauhan, 2021; Kraus, Li, Kang, Westhead, & Tiberius, 2020), while others have adopted Scopus (Filimonova, Kapustina, Bezdenezhnykh, & Kobiashvili, 2019; Lima & de Assis Carlos Filho, 2019; Mody, Hanks, & Cheng, 2021); or use a combination of Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, Google Scholar and Agris (Ertz & Leblanc-Proulx, 2019; Meho & Yang, 2007). In this study, we opted for the non-conventional database, Dimensions.ai (Digital Science & Research Solutions Inc., 2021), which has been used by several researchers to distil the knowledge structure in various fields or research such as cloud computing (Khan, et al., 2021), Islamic economics (Aminy, et al., 2021), critical care and pain medicine (Fassoulaki et al., 2021) and in tourism (Lynch et al., 2021).

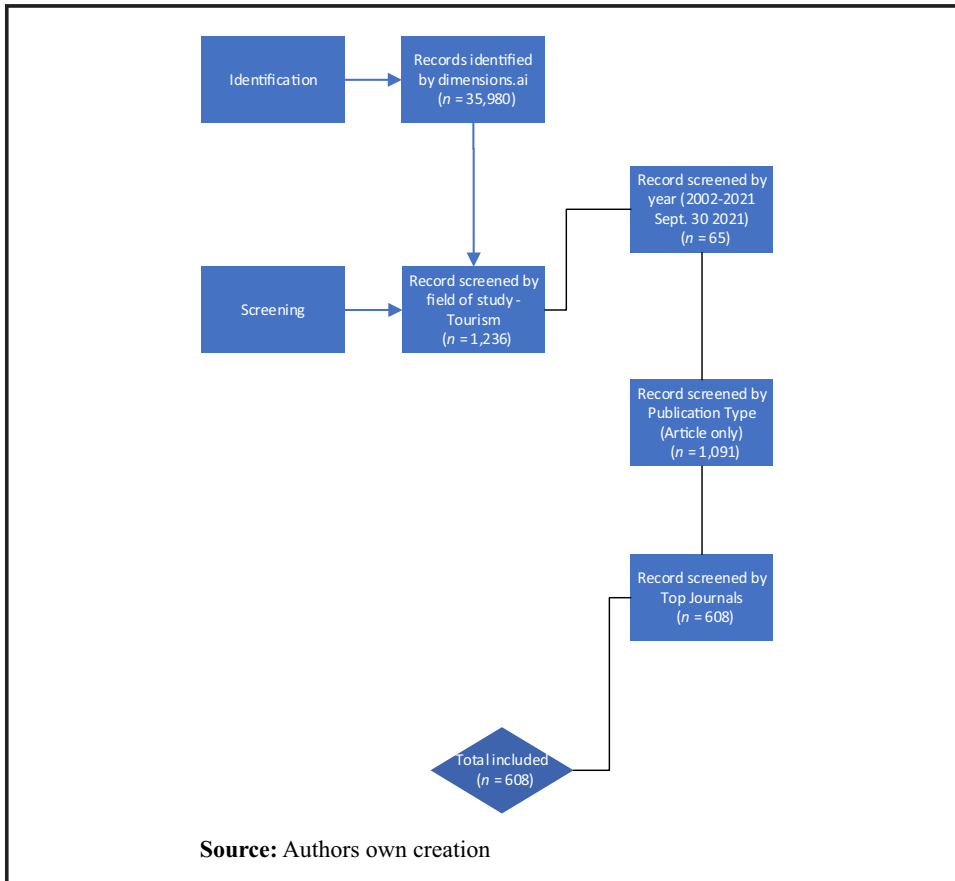
Despite several literature reviews on the sharing economy, none have fully assessed the sharing economy in its entirety. Scholars (Altinay & Taheri, 2019; Cheng, 2016; Guttentag, 2019) tend to link sharing economy with sharing accommodation, specifically with Airbnb. For example, the systematic review by Altinay & Taheri (2019) surveyed the theories used in sharing economy discourse in the field of tourism and hospitality research and offered a new path towards a theoretical framework for assessing Airbnb. The results showed a lack of uniformity in data mining techniques in the sharing economy discourse in tourism and hospitality research, highlighting the need to establish new paths or broaden disciplinary approaches in the field of hospitality and management in cities and regional areas. Cheng's (2016) research was in many respects similar to that of Altinay & Taheri (2019), but with two points of departure: the notion of context and the limitation of search terms to indexes such as EBSCOHost, Google Scholar and Science Direct, rather than journals. In another context, research by Guttentag used 132 publications from multiple databases for data mining, as is the case with Cheng (Guttenberg, 2019).

Over the years, there has been a paucity of research on emotional solidarity, emotional proximity, individual or communal sense of togetherness and the impact of midrange hotels on the sharing economy. Considering this research gap and practical paradox, this study offers a novel approach to data mining in tourism research, using the Dimensions website (Digital Science & Research Solutions Inc., 2021). On a conceptual level, our definition of the sharing economy, based on its dynamics and multidimensional roles, can help scholars understand the construct in a new light; lawmakers provide legislation based solely on the principles of the sharing economy and investors make informed investment decisions on tourism accommodation. Our definition and study can also help practitioners to appreciate the differences between various kinds of sharing economy initiatives, among which are sharing transportation, sharing money and sharing marketplace.

Despite the range of sharing economy initiatives such as sharing transportation; sharing money; sharing marketplace; sharing activities; sharing freelancing, sharing delivery services and sharing accommodation, the sharing economy in tourism research has been largely limited to Airbnb (Figure 2). The essence for sampling Airbnb is because, it is the most researched, most challenging to policymaker, most impactful and the biggest platform amongst accommodation providers in the sharing economy space.

The breakdown of the sharing economy initiatives based on access is shown in Figure 1. However, one of the most controversial players in the sharing economy and an example of disruptive innovation is Uber. While some experts in disruptive innovation, such as Christensen, Raynor & McDonald (2015), have argued that Airbnb and Netflix are examples of disruptive innovation, they consider Uber to be a different case. This lack of innovation and in-depth research in the sharing economy in the tourism industry has led to a unidimensional perspective of the sharing economy, despite its transdisciplinary nature

**Figure 1** PRISMA approach



(Figure 1). Some reasons for this limited perspective could include a lack of academic software for data analysis, such as Citespace Software v6.1.R6 December 2022 edition; and a lack of effective data mining databases, like Dimensions. Premised on the contributions, this study aimed to answer the following research questions, using Citespace, an analytical software for big data analysis:

- RQ1.* What are the prevailing discussions and debates within the tourism and hospitality sector regarding the implications and impact of the sharing economy on urban destinations?
- RQ2.* What is the commonly discussed topic within the tourism and hospitality sector regarding the sharing economy in cities?
- RQ3.* How have scholarly investigations and empirical analyses contributed to our understanding of the multifaceted theoretical underpinnings and intricate practical dimensions of the sharing economy, as explored within the extensive body of literature?

Overall, the sharing economy has multifaceted implications for urban destinations, fostering emotional solidarity, providing economic opportunities and creating diverse accommodation options, while also posing challenges and raising concerns about regulation and community dynamics.

To provide answers to these questions, the paper is structured as follows: First, the literature review will examine the background, developmental trajectory, complexities, contentions,

philosophy and proposed definition of the sharing economy. Next, the method of data mining and analysis will be explained. Then, the results and discussion section will be presented in the theoretical and practical considerations will be discussed, and the references will be provided in conclusion.

## Literature review

The sharing economy, specifically regarding Airbnb, began in San Francisco, USA in 2008 (Schor, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c). The company has experienced substantial growth in the hospitality and tourism space, with the sharing economy following suit, largely due to the increase in internet penetration (Brown, Bagozzi, & Dholakia, 2019). According to Chaffey (2019), the worldwide rise in internet usage (4.021 billion users), a 13% increase in social media users and a 4% increase in mobile phone users (Internet World Stats, 2019; Kemp, 2018) have played a significant role in the growth trajectory of Airbnb and the sharing economy (Galbreth, Ghosh, & Shor, 2012; Gansky, 2010).

The sharing economy performs two main functions: it offers access to goods and services for a fee, aligning with the access over ownership philosophy (Belk, 2007); and facilitates recycling (Wang, Xiang, Yang, & Ma, 2019a, 2019b). While the latter aspect of the sharing economy remains underdeveloped, platforms, such as the Facebook marketplace and Gumtree, are used for recycling used and unused products and services. However, the research on which this study is based places stronger emphasis on the access over ownership approach and de-emphasises the recycling aspect.

Understanding the fundamentals of the sharing economy requires consideration of the access over ownership philosophy (Belk, 2007), which has received more attention from scholars compared to the sustainability angle of the sharing economy. While the debate around the sustainability of the sharing economy is growing (Midgett, Bendickson, Muldoon, & Solomon, 2018), it is not the focus of this study.

Studies in the context of access to ownership philosophy show that there are multiple perspectives on what the sharing economy is and what it may entail for researchers, lawmakers, investors, guests and homeowners in the tourism and hospitality sector. Acquier, Lavre, & Terwiesch (2017) highlight a lack of clarity, which has led to the emergence of various synonyms related to the sharing economy, among which are peer-to-peer (primarily accommodation), Airbnb and collaborative consumption. Clustering or over-categorisation of these concepts contributes to conflicting views in some instances. In response to this confusion, Acquier et al. (2017) argue that there are three core components to the sharing economy: the community-based economy, the platform economy and the access economy (Figure 1). Figure 1 shows that while the community-based economy and platform economy directly relates to collaborative consumption, the access economy does not; the platform and access economy have a relationship with the access platform, but the community-based economy does not; and the community-based and access economy have a corresponding relationship with community-based access, while the platform economy does not. This means that when researchers or practitioners take a specific approach to the sharing economy philosophy, they limit themselves to certain perspectives and their approach has certain limitations. For example, the limitation of the community-based economy is that it does not allow for discussion on access granted through platforms. This is why the works of Botsman & Rogers (2010) and the European Commission (2016), which use the term “sharing economy” as a synonym for collaborative consumption, may mislead scholars and practitioners. While the sharing economy has a much more diverse portfolio, collaborative consumption is just one subset of the sharing economy philosophy (Acquier et al., 2017).

### *The emergence of the sharing economy*

The rise of the sharing economy industry can be attributed to several reasons. [Brown et al. \(2019\)](#) highlight four key factors that have a significant impact:

1. the 2008 global economic recession and the increasing debt-to-income ratio globally ([Botsman & Rogers, 2010](#); [Brown et al., 2019](#); [Cohen & Kietzmann, 2014](#));
2. the limited availability and high cost of traditional holiday accommodation such as hotels, bed and breakfasts and hostels during peak tourism periods ([Brännäs & Nordström, 2006](#));
3. the perception of shared prosperity or shared economy, a result of collaborative consumption and governance ([Huckle, Lázár, & Vásárhelyi, 2016](#)); and
4. financial constraints caused by job cuts among the middle class and the strain of mortgage repayment ([Oskam & Boswijk, 2016](#); [Sperling, 2015](#)).

While these factors are relevant, the growth of the sharing economy may not necessarily be driven by them. As [Noakes & Sboros \(2021\)](#) argue that the rise of gig workers, virtual employees, flexible work and internet commerce is an innovative shift that challenges the traditional employment model, particularly among Generation Z ([Campione, 2021](#)). Other factors, such as the need for job flexibility and the emergence of an entrepreneurial spirit, also contribute to the resurgence of the sharing economy.

### *Complexities/challenges in the features of the sharing economy*

The sharing economy is complex with aspects like definitions, authenticity, reputation and trust, limitations and ethical conduct being the subject of debates. While there are several definitions of the sharing economy ([Adamiak, 2019](#); [Dredge & Gyimóthy, 2015](#); [Zervas, Proserpio, & Byers, 2017](#)), there is no agreement on what it entails ([Abhari, Hamari, & Lehdonvirta, 2019](#)). Overlapping definitions lead to ambiguity, making it difficult for users, legislators and investors to understand the industry and regulate it without impeding its growth, as seen in the instance of Airbnb in San Francisco, Berlin, Japan and Barcelona ([Coldwell, 2017](#); [Dell, et al., 2017](#); [O'Sullivan, 2018](#); [Thomas, 2012](#)).

Two opposing views on the sharing economy exist in literature:

1. those who see it as sharing, gift-giving, exchanging or Airbnb ([Belk, 2007, 2009, 2017](#); [Schor, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c](#); [Weitzman, 1986](#)); and
2. those who equate it with collaborative consumption, circular economy, peer-to-peer, and hybrid economy ([Botsman & Rogers, 2010, 2011](#); [Dredge & Gyimóthy, 2015](#); [European Commission, 2016](#); [Sach, 2015](#)). For example, collaborative consumption, as described by [Botsman and Rogers \(2010\)](#), is similar to the sharing economy, but it may only be a part of it.

Collaborative consumption involves a community-based, sustainable model with communal security, family-friendliness and togetherness in the community, while the sharing economy can be seen as an economic empowerment model for micro-entrepreneurs; or as a survival mechanism for the most disadvantaged in the society, specifically in developing countries ([Schor & Fitzmaurice, 2015](#)). However, it appears that the affluent in society benefit the most from the current wave of sharing economy accommodation, such as Airbnb's recent luxury brand for luxury travellers ([Escandon-Barbosa & Salas-Paramo, 2021](#)).

Overall, the sharing economy is a complex and evolving industry that is driven by a few factors, among which are global economic recession, high pricing of traditional holiday homes, perception of shared prosperity and shortage of finance. Despite the various definitions and interpretations of the sharing economy, it can be viewed as an economic

emancipation model that enables empowerment and micro-entrepreneurship, specifically among the most disadvantaged in society. However, there are also concerns about trust, reputation and ethical conduct in the sharing economy, which pose challenges for regulators in balancing economic growth combined with consumer protection. While it is important for policymakers to consider these complexities when developing regulations, it is equally imperative for policymakers to put the views of their constituencies in regulating sharing economy. Additionally, further research is needed to fully understand the impact of the sharing economy on the wider economy and society, and to identify the best practices for its development and growth in the future, particularly in cities.

### *Challenges of the sharing economy in cities*

The adoption of the sharing economy in cities is in consonant with [Belk's \(2007\)](#) argument of what constitute the sharing economy. Belk refers to the operator of the sharing economy as those individuals or organisations that use sharing resources and services to increase efficiency, reduce waste and lower costs ([Hamari, Sjöklint, & Ukkonen, 2016](#)). While the concept of the sharing economy has gained popularity in recent years, particularly in urban areas, there are several issues that arise with the sharing economy in cities that require consideration ([Ndaguba, 2023](#)).

The sharing economy has the potential of exacerbating existing inequalities ([Schor, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c](#)) and providing opportunities to help individuals and corporates earn additional income by using spare rooms or mansions ([Belk, 2007](#)). A danger may be that those who do not have free rooms to share may be left behind and unable to benefit from the sharing economy ([Ndaguba, 2023](#)).

A critical challenge established by [Guttentag \(2015\)](#) is that the sharing economy can have negative impacts on traditional businesses, for example, ride-sharing services, such as Uber and Lyft, are instrumental in the disruption of the taxi industry, leading to job losses and reduced wages for traditional taxi drivers ([Roson & Carrillo, 2019](#)). In the same vein, home-sharing services, like Airbnb in cities, have been touted to reduce the availability and affordability of long-stay housing in cities and contributing to rising rent ([Guttentag, 2019](#)).

The sharing economy can have negative environmental impacts. While sharing resources can reduce waste and promote sustainability, some sharing economy services, such as ridesharing, may lead to increased traffic congestion and carbon emissions ([Shaheen, Cohen, & Davis, 2016](#)). Furthermore, the production of goods used in the sharing economy, such as electric scooters or bicycles, can contribute to environmental degradation ([Holloway, 2019](#)).

The sharing economy can pose safety risks ([Ndaguba, et al., 2023](#)). In the absence of regulations and oversight users may be at risk of harm, specifically in instances of personal services, such as peer-to-peer car sharing or home-sharing. There is also a potential for fraudulent activity or misuse of personal information which could harm users ([Botsman & Rogers, 2010](#)).

Overall, while the sharing economy has the potential of offering numerous benefits to individuals and cities, it is important to consider the potential negative impacts and work towards mitigating them through appropriate regulations and oversight.

### **Theoretical perspective**

The theoretical perspective employed in this study is the co-creation of value theory proposed by [Vargo and Lusch \(2008\)](#). This theory emphasises the collaborative nature of product-service solutions, where producers and users work together to create value. By leveraging the distinct perspectives and contributions of both the product developer and user, a unique blend of ideas is formed.

In the context of the tourism and hospitality sector, for instance, the host serves as the producer, while the guest/tourist assumes the role of the user. Through their collaborative interaction, both parties influence each other's perspectives. The host gains insights into the desires and preferences of consumers, while the guest learns about the cultural norms and regulations of the destination. This mutual shaping process plays a significant role in modifying the behavior and experience of both the host and the guest within a particular location.

### *Value co-creation theory*

The Value co-creation theory emphasises the collaborative process between businesses and customers in creating value, suggesting that value is co-created through interactions and engagements rather than solely generated by companies and delivered to customers (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). While there is no universally accepted framework for Value Co-Creation theory, several models and frameworks can be used effectively to understand and implement this concept. These frameworks include Service-Dominant Logic (SDL), Resource Integration, Interaction and Engagement Framework, Customer Journey Mapping and Open Innovation.

SDL, developed by Vargo and Lusch, focuses on the idea that service is the fundamental basis of exchange, and that value is co-created through interactions between service providers and customers (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). It emphasises the integration of resources, knowledge and skills to co-create value. Resource integration views value co-creation as the integration of resources from multiple parties, suggesting that collaboration between companies and customers, combining their unique resources, leads to mutually beneficial outcomes. The interaction and engagement Framework highlights the importance of active involvement and dialogue between businesses and customers, focusing on building relationships, understanding customer needs and co-designing experiences. Customer journey mapping involves mapping the customer's journey and identifying opportunities for value co-creation at each stage, enabling businesses to design tailored experiences. Open innovation frameworks, such as the one developed by Chesbrough, emphasise collaboration with external stakeholders, including customers, in the innovation process, leading to the co-creation of innovative solutions.

In the context of the sharing economy, the concept of value co-creation plays a crucial role as multiple actors, including users, service providers and intermediaries, collaborate to create value by sharing resources, skills and knowledge (Ndaguba, 2023). This concept aligns with the theoretical framework of value co-creation, which emphasises the active participation of users in creating personalised and experiential value through shared resources and services (Vargo & Lusch, 2008).

The SDL framework further emphasises that value is co-created through interactions among customers and various actors within the value network, challenging the traditional view of value generation by companies and transfer to customers (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). Trust, transparency and communication are identified as essential factors for successful value co-creation in the sharing economy, enabling users to feel comfortable engaging in collaborative activities and sharing their resources, skills and knowledge (Hamari et al., 2016).

Users' willingness to participate in value co-creation is often driven by their desire for social interaction, autonomy and the opportunity to contribute their expertise, highlighting the importance of integrating resources, skills and knowledge from multiple actors (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). The SDL framework provides a comprehensive framework for understanding value co-creation as users, service providers and intermediaries collaborate to share resources, skills and knowledge (Vargo & Lusch, 2008).



This perspective acknowledges that consumers are active contributors who shape and co-create value through their interactions and engagement, aligning with the theory of co-creation proposed by Prahalad & Ramaswamy (2004a) (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). By embracing value co-creation in collaborative consumption initiatives, such as in the sharing economy, consumers actively contribute to value creation through participation, sharing and collaboration, leading to more personalised and tailored experiences. This challenges the traditional view of marketing, shifting the focus from transactional exchanges to fostering relationships, encouraging collaboration and continuously co-creating value (Vargo & Lusch, 2008).

By adopting the principles of the SDL, marketers and researchers can better understand and navigate the dynamics of value co-creation within the sharing economy, resulting in more effective and customer-centric approaches (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). Overall, the concept of value co-creation within the sharing economy is supported by the theoretical framework of value co-creation, emphasising the active participation of users in the creation of personalised and experiential value. Trust, transparency and communication play critical roles in facilitating value co-creation, and collaborative consumption initiatives offer opportunities for joint production processes between consumers and manufacturers, contributing to the evolution of the sharing economy.

### *Criticisms of the co-creation of value theory*

The co-creation of value theory proposed by Vargo and Lusch (2008) has received considerable attention and support in the field of marketing, strategic and leadership. However, there are some negative arguments, while these criticisms do not undermine the entire theory, they highlight a few challenges and limitations that should be considered.

The first is related to the practical implementation of the co-creation of value concept. Critics argue that while the theory promotes collaboration and active participation of consumers, it may not always be feasible or practical for companies to involve consumers in every stage of the value creation process (Nguyen et al., 2018). In some cases, the complexity of the process or the nature of the industry may limit the extent to which consumers can contribute meaningfully. This raises questions about the scalability and applicability of the theory across different contexts (Ndaguba et al., 2023). While this is a truism, recent events in the celebrity economy demonstrates that brands could both scale and engage in the full co-production circle required for co-creation of the product (Belk, 2014; Thompson et al., 2019).

Another criticism is centered around the power dynamics between producers and consumers. Critics argue that in certain situations, power imbalances can affect the level of participation and influence that consumers have in the co-creation process (Ballantyne & Varey, 2006). Companies may still hold significant control over the design, production and delivery of products or services, potentially limiting the genuine co-creation of value. This highlights the need for careful consideration of power dynamics and the establishment of truly collaborative relationships between producers and consumers (Ramaswamy, 2008).

Additionally, some scholars argue that the co-creation of value theory may overemphasise the role of consumers in value creation while downplaying the expertise and contributions of producers (Du & Chou 2020). This perspective suggests that producers, with their knowledge, skills and resources, play a critical role in shaping and delivering value to consumers. Focusing solely on consumer participation may neglect the expertise and capabilities of producers, leading to an imbalance in value co-creation efforts.

Furthermore, critics argue that the co-creation of value theory may not fully account for cultural or contextual differences (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a). The theory assumes a universal understanding and approach to value co-creation, which may not align with diverse cultural perspectives, consumer behaviors and societal norms. Therefore, it is

important to consider the cultural and contextual factors that can influence the dynamics of value co-creation.

While the co-creation of value theory proposed by [Vargo & Lusch \(2008\)](#) has gained significant attention and support, it is not immune to criticisms. These negative arguments highlight concerns regarding the practical implementation, power dynamics, potential imbalance in value co-creation efforts, and the cultural context in which the theory is applied. By acknowledging and addressing these criticisms, researchers and practitioners can strive for a more comprehensive understanding and application of the theory in diverse contexts.

## Method followed

Dimensions (2021) was used to generate the dataset for this study. Scholarly literature and findings were synchronised, using the keyword “sharing economy” in full data ([Digital Science & Research Solutions Inc., 2021](#)). The data used to generate the intellectual architecture for the sharing economy was exported on 30 September 2021.

Several studies have attempted to understand the nature of the sharing economy ([Altinay & Taheri, 2019](#); [Cheng, 2016](#); [Guttentag, 2019](#); [Heo, 2016](#)). However, none have fully assessed the sharing economy, rather they all link it with the sharing of accommodations, specifically with Airbnb. For instance, [Altinay & Taheri \(2019\)](#) conducted a systematic review of the overriding theories used in the sharing economy discourse in the tourism and hospitality industry and found a path towards a theoretical framework for assessing the sharing economy. [Cheng \(2016\)](#) was one of the first to conduct a systematic review of the sharing economy in Australia.

[Cheng \(2016\)](#) used a data set from 2010 to 2015 and used the databases EBSCOHost, Google Scholar and Science Direct for data collection. [Guttentag \(2019\)](#) used 132 publications and multiple databases, including Web of Science, ScienceDirect Journals, IngentaConnect, Google Scholar, EBSCOhost’s full database, EBSCOhost Hospitality and Tourism Complete and Emerald Insight for data mining. [Altinay & Taheri \(2019\)](#) streamlined their data collection process by focusing on top-tier journals in the tourism and hospitality research field, such as *Tourism Management (TM)*, *Journal of Travel Research (JTR)*, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management (IJCHM)*, *International Journal of Hospitality Management (IJHM)* and *Annals of Tourism Research (ATR)*.

In this study, a novel approach was taken for data collection by using the data set from [Digital Science and Research Solutions Inc., \(2021\) \(www.dimensions.ai\)](#). The data set was chosen because it proved to be an effective means for generating scientometric analysis ([Digital Science & Research Solutions Inc., 2021](#); [Herzog & Lunn, 2018](#); [Khan et al., 2021](#)). According to [Orduña-Malea & López-Cózar \(2018\)](#), Dimensions is an innovative bibliometric data set, while [Herzog & Lunn \(2018\)](#) note its undervalued content types among which are grants, clinical trials with publication, patents, citation counts and year trends that are represented in an interface ([Digital Science & Research Solutions Inc., 2021](#)).

The research papers were gathered, using [Digital Science and Research Solutions Inc., \(2021\)](#) and followed the PRISMA logic (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) ([Sin, Tan, & McPherson, 2021](#)) ([Figure 1](#)).

The scientometric analysis explained is used to generate a data set for research on the sharing economy in the tourism and hospitality industry. The study collected data from Digital Science & Research Solutions Inc. (Dimensions.ai) and used the PRISMA logic for systematic reviews and meta-analyses. The study only considered research papers from top journals in the field, as determined by their Scimago Q1 or ABDC ranking. The journals included are *Tourism Management*, *Tourism Management Perspectives*, *Journal of Travel*

*Research, Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, Journal of Sustainable Tourism, Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, International Journal of Hospitality Management, International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, Current Issues in Tourism and Annals of Tourism Research.*

## Supplementary document

### *Citespace*

In CiteSpace, certain terminologies are used for exhibiting the strength of the relationship to node. For instance, some major concepts include node degree, centrality, betweenness, silhouette coefficient, Locally Linear Regression (LLR) and Term Frequency-Inverse Document Frequency (TFIDF), mutual information (MI), cluster labels (USR) and Modularity Q. Modularity Q is a metric proposed by [Blondel, Guillaume, Lambiotte, & Lefebvre \(2008\)](#) that can assess the significance of clusters in network analysis or community structure. The Modularity Q test evaluates different properties such as clustering coefficient, centrality, node degree and betweenness to detect communities in networks ([Newman, 2008](#)). A Modularity Q score of 0.7141 is considered relatively high, while a score lower than 0.5 is insufficient ([Chen, 2016](#)).

The silhouette coefficient is another method used for determining the quality of clusters, with values ranging from  $-1$  to  $1$  ([Bhardwaj, 2020a, 2020b](#)). A value of  $1$  represents the highest quality, while a value of  $-1$  represents the lowest ([Bhardwaj, 2020a, 2020b](#)). A silhouette coefficient of  $0.5$  is considered homogenous, while a value of  $0.3$  is relatively low and may not be significant ([Chen, 2016](#)).

The data set for this study was collected based on the concept of “sharing economy” in global tourism research, without limiting the scope of data mining to specific journals or rankings due to a lack of research in the field. The citeSpace interface was used to analyse all data from 2002 to 30 September 2021, with one slice per year favoured and the g-index ( $k = 25$ ), static-cluster view and to show merged network activated.

CiteSpace maps keywords based on themes, using two methods: LLR and TFIDF. LLR is a reliable statistical measurement tool compared to kernel regression and uses locally fitting lines with less bias in linear models as a constant ([Newey, 2007](#)). The LLR test can be used to estimate a  $p$ -value or compare it to a critical value to decide on accepting or rejecting the null hypothesis ([Shi & Liu, 2019](#)). TFIDF is a commonly used method for keyword detection, primarily used to detect keywords automatically ([Havrlant & Kreinovich, 2017](#); [Ullman, 2011](#)). The algorithm is based on the number of times a word appears ( $tf$ ), the total number of words ( $N$  or corpus  $D$ ) and the number of documents ( $df$ ) ([Havrlant & Kreinovich, 2017](#); [Rajaraman & Ullman, 2011](#)).

CiteSpace ([Chen, 2006, 2014](#)) is a software used to build scholarly network connections between variables. To understand citeSpace, it is critical to understand concepts such as “homogeneity”, “precision” and “connectivity of clusters” ([Chen, 2014](#)). In addition to conceptual and structural metrics, structural metrics include betweenness centrality, modularity Q and silhouette score ([Chen, 2016](#)), while conceptual metrics deal with the visualisation effect of the map.

Betweenness centrality measures the degree of a node to another ([Brandes, 2001](#); [Freeman, 1977](#)) and determines the flow of information throughout a network cluster ([Golbeck, 2015](#)). The higher the centrality index, the stronger the association.

## Results

This section presents the results generated from the CiteSpace software analysis on the sharing economy. The results generated five clusters; however, after triangulation and substitution, we discovered that themes 2 and 3 were similar in many respects so they were

fused together, leaving the study with four themes. The four remaining themes are indicative of having the highest hits in the discourse of the sharing economy within tourism and hospitality research. These four major themes are labelled as “emotional solidarity”, “sharing economy/Airbnb listing”, “moral economy” and “digital future”. Before discussing the results in more detail, a descriptive analysis of the two largest clusters is provided.

### **Supplementary document**

Commonly discussed topic within the tourism and hospitality sector:

The first largest cluster, labelled as “#0”, consisted of 190 members and had a silhouette value of 0.786. It was referred to as “emotional solidarity” by LLR, “sharing economy” by LSI and “role (2.52)” by MI. The most relevant citer to this cluster was [Sainaghi & Ruggero \(2020\)](#).

The second largest cluster, labelled as “#1”, had 180 members and a silhouette value of 0.612. Both LLR and LSI referred to it as “sharing economy” and MI referred to it as “role (3.25)”. The most relevant citer to this cluster was Mauri, Aurelio (2018).

S1 Text: Citation counts, burst, betweenness centrality and sigma.

The top ranked item by citation counts is Guttentag D, 2013, *Current Issues in Tourism*, V18, P1192, DOI 10.1080/13683500.2013.827159 (2013) in Cluster #1, with citation counts of 182; Zervas G, 2017, *Journal of Marketing Research*, V54, P687, DOI 10.1509/jmr.15.0204 (2017) in Cluster #1, with citation counts of 134 in the second place; Ert E, 2016, *Tourism Management*, V55, P62, DOI 10.1016/j.tourman.2016.01.013 (2016) in Cluster #2, with citation counts of 117 in the third place; Tussyadiah IP, 2016, *Journal of Travel Research*, V55, P1022, DOI 10.1177/0047287515608505 (2016) in Cluster #1, with citation counts of 103 the fourth place; Hamari J, 2015, *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, V67, P2047, DOI 10.1002/asi.23552 (2015) in Cluster #1, with citation counts of 83 in the fifth place; Belk R, 2014, *Journal of Business Research*, V67, P1595, DOI 10.1016/j.jbusres.2013.10.001 (2014) in Cluster #1, with citation counts of 82 in the sixth place; Cheng M, 2016, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, V57, P60, DOI 10.1016/j.ijhm.2016.06.003 (2016) in Cluster #1, with citation counts of 76 in the seventh place; Wang D, 2017, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, V62, P120, DOI 10.1016/j.ijhm.2016.12.007 (2017) in Cluster #2, with citation counts of 74 the eighth place; Guttentag D, 2017, *Journal of Travel Research*, V57, P342, DOI 10.1177/0047287517696980 (2017) in Cluster #2, with citation counts of 71 the ninth place; and Tussyadiah IP, 2016, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, V55, P70, DOI 10.1016/j.ijhm.2016.03.005 (2016) in Cluster #1, with citation counts of 68 the tenth place.

The top ranked item by bursts is Sparks BA, 2011, *Tourism Management*, V32, P1310, DOI 10.1016/j.tourman.2010.12.011 (2011) in Cluster #1, with bursts of 7.10; and Zervas G, 2013, *SSRN Electronic Journal*, V0, P0, DOI 10.2139/ssrn.2366898 (2013) in Cluster #1, with bursts of 7.10 the second place; [Belk, 2007](#), *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, V611, P126, DOI 10.1177/0002716206298483 (2007) in Cluster #1, with bursts of 5.68 the third place; Fornell C, 1981, *Journal of Marketing Research*, V18, P39, DOI 10.2307/3151312 (1981) in Cluster #1, with bursts of 5.66 in the fourth place; Zervas G, 2015, *SSRN Electronic Journal*, V0, P0, DOI 10.2139/ssrn.2554500 (2015) in Cluster #1, with bursts of 5.53 in the fifth place; Tussyadiah IP, 2016, *Journal of Travel Research*, V55, P1022, DOI 10.1177/0047287515608505 (2016) in Cluster #1, with bursts of 5.45 in the sixth place; Yannopoulou N, 2013, *Contemporary Management Research*, V9, P85, DOI 10.7903/cmr.11116 (2013) in Cluster #1, with bursts of 5.37 the seventh place; Guttentag D, 2013, *Current Issues in Tourism*, V18, P1192, DOI 10.1080/13683500.2013.827159 (2013) in Cluster #1, with bursts of 5.33 in the eighth place; Belk R, 2014, *Journal of Business Research*, V67, P1595, DOI 10.1016/j.jbusres.2013.10.001 (2014) in Cluster #1, with bursts of 5.10 in the ninth place; and Lamberton CP, 2012, *Journal of*

*Marketing*, V76, P109, DOI 10.1509/jm.10.0368 (2012) in Cluster #1, with bursts of 4.70 in the tenth place.

The top ranked item by centrality is Guttentag D, 2013, *Current Issues in Tourism*, V18, P1192, DOI 10.1080/13683500.2013.827159 (2013) in Cluster #1, with centrality of 410; Zervas G, 2017, *Journal of Marketing Research*, V54, P687, DOI 10.1509/jmr.15.0204 (2017) in Cluster #1, with centrality of 367 the second place; Tussyadiah IP, 2016, *Journal of Travel Research*, V55, P1022, DOI 10.1177/0047287515608505 (2016) in Cluster #1, with centrality of 353 in the third place; Ert E, 2016, *Tourism Management*, V55, P62, DOI 10.1016/j.tourman.2016.01.013 (2016) in Cluster #2, with centrality of 348 the fourth place; Belk R, 2014, *Journal of Business Research*, V67, P1595, DOI 10.1016/j.jbusres.2013.10.001 (2014) in Cluster #1, with centrality of 319 in the fifth place; Hamari J, 2015, *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, V67, P2047, DOI 10.1002/asi.23552 (2015) in Cluster #1, with centrality of 319 in the sixth place; Cheng M, 2016, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, V57, P60, DOI 10.1016/j.ijhm.2016.06.003 (2016) in Cluster #1, with centrality of 306 in the seventh place; Guttentag D, 2017, *Journal of Travel Research*, V57, P342, DOI 10.1177/0047287517696980 (2017) in Cluster #2, with centrality of 305 in the eighth place; Möhlmann M, 2015, *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, V14, P193, DOI 10.1002/cb.1512 (2015) in Cluster #1, with centrality of 304 in the ninth place; and Tussyadiah IP, 2016, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, V55, P70, DOI 10.1016/j.ijhm.2016.03.005 (2016) in Cluster #1, with centrality of 297 in the tenth place.

The top ranked item by sigma is Kaplan AM, 2010, *Business Horizons*, V53, P59, DOI 10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003 (2010) in Cluster #4, with sigma of 0.17; Guttentag D, 2013, *Current Issues in Tourism*, V18, P1192, DOI 10.1080/13683500.2013.827159 (2013) in Cluster #1, with sigma of 0.12 in the second place; Belk R, 2014, *Journal of Business Research*, V67, P1595, DOI 10.1016/j.jbusres.2013.10.001 (2014) in Cluster #1, with sigma of 0.08 in the third place; Zervas G, 2017, *Journal of Marketing Research*, V54, P687, DOI 10.1509/jmr.15.0204 (2017) in Cluster #1, with sigma of 0.07 in the fourth place; Anonymou, 2011, *Choice*, V48, P48, DOI 10.5860/choice.48-3364 (2011) in Cluster #3, with sigma of 0.07 in the fifth place; Tussyadiah IP, 2016, *Journal of Travel Research*, V55, P1022, DOI 10.1177/0047287515608505 (2016) in Cluster #1, with sigma of 0.06 in the sixth place; Ert E, 2016, *Tourism Management*, V55, P62, DOI 10.1016/j.tourman.2016.01.013 (2016) in Cluster #2, with sigma of 0.05 in the seventh place; Hamari J, 2015, *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, V67, P2047, DOI 10.1002/asi.23552 (2015) in Cluster #1, with sigma of 0.05 in the eighth place; Cheng M, 2016, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, V57, P60, DOI 10.1016/j.ijhm.2016.06.003 (2016) in Cluster #1, with sigma of 0.05 in the ninth place; and Möhlmann M, 2015, *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, V14, P193, DOI 10.1002/cb.1512 (2015) in Cluster #1, with sigma of 0.04 in the tenth place.

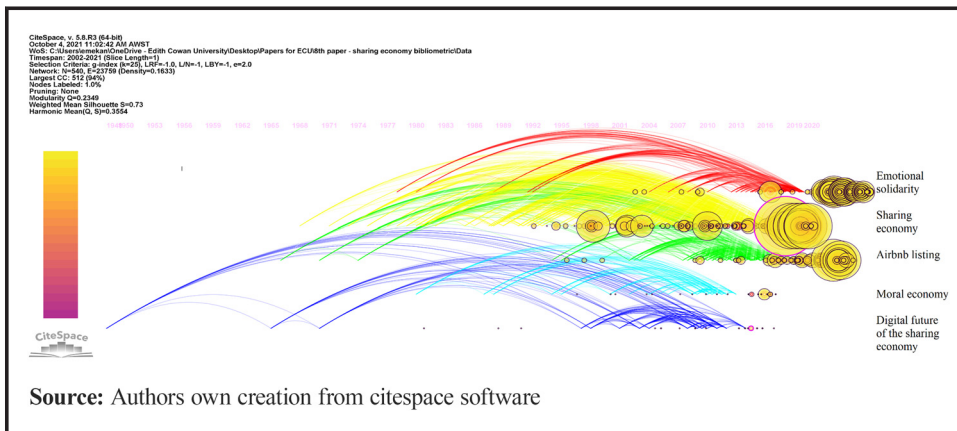
## Discussion and conclusion

This section discusses the results generated from the CiteSpace analysis and provides conclusions on the intellectual structure of the sharing economy in tourism and hospitality research.

### *Prevailing discussions and debates within the tourism and hospitality sector*

Figure 2 depicts five clusters in a timeline between 1948 and 2020. Cluster #0 represents “emotional solidarity” (red), cluster #2 represents “sharing economy” (yellow), cluster #3 represents “Airbnb listing/peer-to-peer accommodation” (green), cluster #4 represents “moral economy” (blue); and cluster #5 represents the “role of design in the future of digital channels” (purple).

**Figure 2** Visualisation of the co-citation network publication themes, timelines and spotlight (Modularity Q, Ave Silhouette and Harmonic Mean is embedded)



*Theme 1: Emotional solidarity.* Cluster #0 on emotional solidarity, primarily discussed guest and community intervention in short stay providers. In the context of sharing economy in tourism and hospitality research, the research on emotional solidarity deals with the bonds created through mutual experiences due to emotional proximity. Emotional proximity is influenced by bonds created between individual experiences and the degree of proximity and contact, which helps residents to get support and assistance (Woosnam, 2011). This idea is rooted in Durkheim & Swain’s (1915) classical sociology theory, which assumes that tourists and residents who share common beliefs, exposures and attitudes may interact effectively and foster emotional solidarity.

Our findings suggest that management firms or agents play a crucial role in enhancing the facilities, revenue and occupancy rate of a property. According to Deng & Ravichandran (2020), a management firm or agent in the short-term rental market is an individual or group responsible for managing three or more properties. Li et al. (2019) found that properties with management firms or agents tend to earn 16% higher revenue and 15.5% higher occupancy rate daily compared to those without professional hosts. Additionally, properties managed by firms or agents are less likely to leave the short-term rental market compared to those managed by nonprofessional hosts (Li et al., 2019). Professional hosts also play a role in improving the quality of facilities and making the property more attractive to guests, which increases the chances of the property becoming a “super host.” However, Dolnicar (2019) observed that the impact of a property manager or agent may not be as disruptive as the threat posed by Airbnb to hotels (Dogru et al., 2020b).

The impact of Airbnb on traditional tourism accommodations leans on the peer-to-peer theories, which suggest that individuals can directly interact and engage in sharing activities without the need for intermediaries, and through the means, industries such as hotels, bed and breakfasts, motels and budget hotels would be severely negatively impacted given rise to substitute threat (Benítez-Aurioles, 2019; Dogru et al., 2020a; Heo, Blal, & Choi, 2019; Sainaghi & Baggio, 2020; Tussyadiah & Zach, 2015; Young, Corsun, & Xie, 2017). The threat of substitution is particularly damaging for hotels that are slow to adapt to technology changes. The effect of Airbnb on traditional accommodations is location-based and cannot be generalised, as there are many factors that influence the relationship between Airbnb supply and revenue such as average daily rate, seasonality, location and pandemic lockdowns (Heo et al., 2019; Sainaghi & Baggio, 2020). The mutual exclusivity between Airbnb and hotels may not be as factual as previously thought (Varma, Jukic, Pestek, Shultz, & Nestorov, 2016) as both platforms target the same clientele.

*Theme 2/3: Airbnb listing.* The concept of the sharing economy has received considerable attention in previous research (Belk, 2007, 2009, 2014). Interestingly, the values associated with sharing and the sharing economy is cohabited in the assumptions of collaborative consumption, which has implications for happiness of both the guests and hosts.

Research has demonstrated the dual role of happiness in the sharing economy. Both hosts and guests experience happiness through the sharing process. Hosts are pleased to secure bookings, while guests are happy to find accommodations that meet their expectations as advertised on the platform (Gentina, et al., 2015). Scholars such as Wang, et al., (2020) have identified this aspect of expectation and fulfilment as trust in the sharing economy. The notion of caring has been examined by Belk (2017) in the context of accommodation providers without hosts in the Airbnb context. Other scholars, including Thulemark, et al., (2021) and Miller, et al., (2020), have further contributed to the discussion on sharing and caring. While Thulemark, et al. (2021) have questioned the relationship between sharing and caring, Miller et al. (2020) have provided evidence supporting the existence of such a connection.

Overall, the lyrics from the children's show Cocomelon convey an important message about sharing and its significance in the sharing economy. The research literature has explored related themes such as happiness, trust and caring, shedding light on the multifaceted nature of sharing within this economic model. By understanding and incorporating these values into the sharing economy, owners, investors and researchers can create an environment that fosters trust, happiness and caring among participants, ultimately contributing to the success and sustainability of the sharing economy.

*Theme 4: Moral economy.* The concept of moral economy refers to the framework of social and economic values and norms that govern economic interactions within a community. It acknowledges that economic exchanges go beyond mere transactions of goods and services, encompassing social and moral responsibilities that accompany these exchanges. Thus, it expands upon the philosophy of social exchange theory, going beyond considerations of social interaction, cost-benefit analysis, fairness and mutual benefit. Moral economy also emphasises the obligations of individuals and businesses to their communities, aiming to prevent social disorganisation and disruption caused by the displacement of locals when accommodation providers fail to recognise their obligations. Within this framework, individuals and groups in a society develop expectations about the conduct of economic transactions and hold those involved in these transactions accountable to these expectations.

One of the key aspects of moral economy is that it is often rooted in a sense of fairness and justice (Scott, 1976). This means that individuals and groups in a society often have strong feelings about what is fair and just in economic transactions and will work to uphold these values. The influence of moral economy can be seen in economic behaviour and decision-making; individuals and groups, for instance, choose to engage in economic transactions with some individuals or groups, while avoiding others based on their perceptions of fairness and justice (Polanyi, 1944). Additionally, they may be more likely to support or oppose certain economic policies or practices based on their views on fairness and justice.

The sharing economy, which refers to the trend of individuals and groups sharing goods and services through digital platforms, has gained significant attention in recent years. While the sharing economy has been criticised for a lack of regulation and oversight, which can lead to negative impacts on workers and communities (Lohman, 2016), proponents argue that it can promote a more equitable and sustainable economic system by allowing individuals and groups to share resources and collaborate in new ways (Bauwens & Kostakis, 2014). In this context, the concept of moral economy is particularly relevant as it highlights the importance of social and moral values in shaping economic behaviour and outcomes and informs discussions about how to create a fairer and more just economy.

*Theme 5: Digital future of the sharing economy.* The digital landscape continues to shape the future of the sharing economy, with constant evolution and transformative impacts. As technology advances at a rapid pace and digital platforms become increasingly integral, the sharing economy undergoes significant changes (Belk, 2014). Often referred to as the collaborative economy, this emerging model revolves around the concept of sharing resources and services among individuals, challenging traditional business paradigms (Botsman & Rogers, 2010).

Mobile technology stands as a prominent driver of the sharing economy's digital future (Goudie & O'Mahony, 2018). The widespread use of smartphones and other mobile devices has facilitated seamless connectivity and resource sharing, leading to the emergence of mobile-based sharing platforms like Airbnb and Uber (Botsman & Rogers, 2010).

Another influential factor shaping the digital future of the sharing economy is the rise of the Internet of Things (IoT) (Botsman & Rogers, 2010). The IoT refers to the interconnectedness of physical devices, vehicles, buildings and other objects embedded with sensors, software, and connectivity, enabling data exchange and sharing among individuals (Goudie & O'Mahony, 2018).

Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning also play a significant role in driving the digital future of the sharing economy. These technologies enhance the sharing experience by providing personalised recommendations and automating various tasks (Goudie & O'Mahony, 2018).

Furthermore, the growth of blockchain technology has a notable impact on the sharing economy. Blockchain, a decentralised digital ledger that records transactions across a network of computers, is being leveraged to create decentralised sharing platforms, such as the sharing of renewable energy, which has the potential to disrupt traditional energy markets.

Overall, the digital future of the sharing economy is shaped by various transformative forces. Mobile technology, IoT, AI and machine learning, and blockchain technology all contribute to the ongoing evolution of the sharing economy. These advancements redefine the way resources and services are shared, enabling greater connectivity, personalisation and decentralisation within the sharing economy ecosystem.

### ***Implications and impact of the sharing economy on urban destinations***

Based on the prevailing discussion, the implications and impact of the sharing economy on urban destinations could be as follows:

*Emotional solidarity:* Emotional solidarity is a key aspect of the sharing economy that can have profound implications for urban destinations. As tourists and guests engage with local residents through shared accommodations or experiences, bonds are formed based on mutual experiences and emotional proximity. This sense of connection fosters stronger community relationships and a deeper sense of belonging, benefiting both tourists and residents. It enhances the overall experience of urban destinations by creating a more authentic and immersive environment.

*Role of management firms or agents:* The presence of management firms or agents in the sharing economy has significant implications for urban destinations. These professionals play a crucial role in managing and optimising short-term rental properties. They are responsible for improving the facilities, maintaining high standards and maximising revenue for property owners. Their expertise contributes to the growth, sustainability and stability of the sharing economy in urban areas by ensuring that accommodations meet the expectations of travellers and ensure that tourists and guests adhere to local regulations.



*Impact on traditional accommodations:* The rise of sharing economy platforms like Airbnb has sparked debates and divisions between the sharing economy and traditional accommodations. Traditional providers, such as hotels, bed and breakfasts and motels, are facing increased competition from the sharing economy (Guttengag, 2015). Platforms like Airbnb offer alternative and often more affordable options for travellers, disrupting the traditional accommodation market. The impact of this substitution varies across locations and depends on the adaptability of traditional accommodations to embrace technological changes and differentiate their offerings.

*Location-based effects:* The impact of the sharing economy on urban destinations is not uniform and can vary significantly depending on the location. Different cities and regions experience varying levels of disruption or integration of sharing economy services. Factors such as local regulations, market demand, and the presence of established sharing economy platforms are ways in which sharing influence how the sharing economy affects urban destinations. Cities with more flexible regulations and high demand for alternative accommodations may experience a greater impact, while others with stricter regulations or limited demand may see a more moderate or low influence.

*Digital future:* Technology and digital channels play a significant role in shaping the sharing economy in urban destinations. Advancements in technology, mobile applications and online platforms have facilitated the growth of the sharing economy by enabling seamless transactions, user reviews and efficient communication between hosts and guests. The continuous evolution of digital tools and platforms will continue to influence the sharing economy and its impact on the changing dynamics of urban destinations, while creating new opportunities and challenges.

Lastly, the sharing economy has multifaceted implications for urban destinations. It can foster emotional solidarity, create economic opportunities, provide diverse accommodation options for travellers and enhance the overall experience. However, it also poses challenges by disrupting traditional accommodations and raising concerns about regulation, housing affordability, and community dynamics. Achieving a balance between the benefits and challenges of the sharing economy is crucial for urban destinations to leverage its potential while effectively addressing any negative consequences.

## **Theoretical and practical implications**

Understanding of the multifaceted theoretical underpinnings and the intricate practical dimensions of the sharing economy is essential to comprehensively grasp its implications and impact on urban destinations. This section delves deeper into these aspects, shedding light on the complex nature of the sharing economy phenomenon.

### ***Understanding of the multifaceted theoretical underpinnings***

The sharing economy is underpinned by various theoretical frameworks that contribute to understanding its functioning and effects, and one of them is the co-creation of value theory. The fitting idea is that both the host and the user are engaged in the process of creating an experience that is of value.

The co-creation of value theory proposed by Vargo and Lusch (2008) asserts that value is not solely generated by producers and transferred to consumers but is instead co-created through collaborative interactions between the two parties. This theory emphasises the active participation of both producers and consumers in the value creation process, highlighting the importance of their unique contributions and perspectives.

According to this theory, the traditional view of value creation, which focuses on the exchange of products or services, is limited. Instead, value emerges through the integration of resources, skills, and knowledge from both producers and consumers. The theory

suggests that by actively involving consumers in the development and design stages, producers can tap into their insights and expertise, leading to the co-creation of innovative solutions and personalised experiences.

The co-creation of value theory challenges the notion of a passive consumer and highlights the active role of consumers in shaping the outcomes of products or services. It recognises that consumers are not simply recipients of value, but active contributors who actively shape and co-create value through their interactions and engagement.

Overall, the co-creation of value theory proposed by [Vargo and Lusch \(2008\)](#) emphasises the collaborative and interactive nature of value creation, underscoring the significance of engaging consumers in the process. It provides a framework for understanding and leveraging the unique contributions of both producers and consumers, ultimately leading to the creation of value that is more tailored, innovative and customer centric. The theoretical contribution of this study emanates from Airbnb consumers and Platform technologies.

### *Airbnb consumers*

The term “Airbnb consumers” encompasses various individuals, such as visitors, tourists and guests, who engage with the Airbnb platform for short-stays. The literature on Airbnb has demonstrated its global dominance as the most widely used platform for providing alternative accommodations. With a presence in over 191 countries worldwide, Airbnb facilitates over 2 million nightly stays in apartments, challenging traditional notions of destination stays ([Guttentag, 2015](#)).

The rise of Airbnb has had a significant impact on traditional tourism accommodation providers, such as hotels and B&Bs. These providers have faced the challenge of competing with Airbnb’s vast inventory and unique offerings. Additionally, the housing sector for longer stay accommodations in many destinations has been affected, particularly in areas where short-stay prices are high or where local councils or state governments implement zoning laws ([Bieger et al., 2017](#)). Zoning laws regulate the operation of Airbnb within specific territorial confines, aiming to manage the impact on housing availability, affordability and local communities.

In tourism locations where Airbnb is in high demand, the implementation of the co-creation of value theory may face some resistance, especially when the demand outweighs the supply of accommodations. The theory emphasises the collaborative process between hosts and guests in creating value ([Vargo & Lusch, 2008](#)). However, in destinations heavily influenced by Airbnb, limited availability of accommodations may hinder the ability of the guest/tourist to fully engage in value co-creation process. This scarcity of supply may limit the active participation of consumers and their ability to contribute to the value creation process.

Despite these challenges, the co-creation of value theory can still be applicable in the context of Airbnb. For example, hosts and guests can engage in communication and negotiation to co-create personalised experiences, share local knowledge and establish mutual trust in either premium apartment notwithstanding the ratio of demand to supply, or in an instance, where the supply outweighs the demand. Co-creation of value theory may apply in premium Airbnb apartments or castles. Also, in destination experiencing low demand and a high supply, the applicability of value co-creation is feasible. Additionally, the feedback and reviews system on the platform enables consumers to contribute to the reputation and quality of accommodations, enhancing the co-creation of value ([Sthapit et al., 2021](#)).

The emergence of Airbnb and the behaviour of Airbnb consumers have disrupted the traditional tourism accommodation sector and challenged longer stay accommodations in certain destinations. The high demand for Airbnb accommodations in some areas may

pose challenges to the implementation of the co-creation of value theory. However, there are still opportunities for consumers and hosts to engage in value co-creation through platform feedback mechanism, communication and negotiation mechanisms.

### *Platform technologies*

Choi and He (2019) argue that peer-to-peer collaborative consumption, facilitated by platform technologies, aligns with the concept of the sharing economy. This philosophy, characterised by obtaining, giving, sharing and accessing goods and services, is central to collaborative consumption (Belk, 2007). By adopting this perspective, the debate between the sharing economy and collaborative consumption becomes clearer, reducing ambiguity and potential decreases in the perceived value of products or services.

The theoretical lens supporting this discussion is the theory of co-creation value, which emphasises the active involvement of consumers and stakeholders in value creation (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). In the context of collaborative consumption, value co-creation theory helps elucidate how individuals and communities contribute to the value generation process through their active participation in obtaining, giving, sharing and accessing goods and services.

Engaging in peer-to-peer collaborative consumption through platform technologies allows individuals to play an active role in co-creating value (Choi & He, 2019). This involvement fosters a sense of pride, dignity and togetherness between individuals and communities. By participating in obtaining resources, giving or sharing their own resources and accessing resources from others, they experience a sense of ownership and empowerment.

Platform technologies provide the digital infrastructure that connects consumers and providers, allowing them to interact, exchange resources and co-create value. These platforms enable individuals to access a wide range of goods and services offered by their peers, empowering them to participate actively in the consumption process. For example, Airbnb connects travellers with hosts who offer accommodations, while Uber connects passengers with drivers who provide transportation services. Through these platforms, individuals can engage in direct peer-to-peer interactions, bypassing traditional intermediaries and fostering a sense of community and trust.

However, the launch and availability of platforms are crucial for individuals to participate actively or remotely. Until the platform is built and launched, individuals, both hosts and guests, are unable to engage. Only after the launch, individuals can query the platform using the user feedback mechanism to participate. Future research can explore strategies to address the challenges and optimise value co-creation within the Airbnb context.

### *Intricate practical dimensions of the sharing economy*

The operational aspects and real-world implications of the sharing economy encompass its practical dimensions. These dimensions involve various elements such as the role of management firms or agents, the impact on traditional accommodation providers, location-based effects and the influence of digital technologies.

By considering these practical dimensions of the sharing economy, businesses operating within this realm can gain valuable insights into consumer behaviour, blitzscale their business models, build trust with users and facilitate value co-creation. Attention to these dimensions contributes to effective management and development of sharing economy platforms, ultimately fostering the overall success and sustainability of businesses in this space.

*Consumer segmentation:* The literature on the sharing economy, such as the discussion on Airbnb consumers, highlights the importance of understanding different consumer segments within the sharing economy ecosystem (Lutz & Newlands, 2018). This recognition

allows businesses to tailor their offerings and marketing strategies to meet the specific needs and preferences of various consumer groups.

*Consumer choices:* Understanding the reasons behind consumer choices is another practical dimension of the sharing economy (Guttentag et al., 2017). Analysing factors that influence consumer decisions, such as pricing models, value creation and repurchase intention, can help businesses optimise their offerings and improve customer satisfaction (Chen & Xie, 2017; Huang & Yu, 2019).

*Business model effects:* Examining the effects of the sharing economy business model on consumer behaviour and accommodation prices is an important practical aspect (Chua et al., 2019). Businesses need to understand how their operations and pricing strategies impact both consumers and the broader market to ensure a sustainable and competitive position.

*Trust and reputation:* Trust and reputation play a significant role in the sharing economy (Ert et al., 2016). Building and maintaining trust among users is crucial for the success and growth of sharing economy platforms. Implementing measures to enhance trust, such as user reviews and verification systems, can help businesses establish a positive reputation and foster long-term relationships with consumers.

*Socioeconomic and spatial analysis:* Analysing the socioeconomic and spatial aspects of host participation in the sharing economy provides practical insights (Sarkar et al., 2019). Understanding the demographic and geographic patterns of host participation can guide businesses in targeting specific markets and tailoring their offerings to specific locations.

*Value co-creation:* The concept of value co-creation, central to the sharing economy, highlights the active participation of users, service providers and intermediaries in the creation of value (Ndaguba, 2023). Emphasising trust, transparency and communication in value co-creation processes can lead to enhanced customer experiences and satisfaction (Hamari et al., 2016).

By exploring the multifaceted theoretical underpinnings and intricate practical dimensions of the sharing economy, a more comprehensive understanding of its implications and impact on urban destinations can be achieved. These dimensions highlight the interplay between theoretical frameworks, operational aspects and real-world effects, shedding light on both the positive and negative consequences of the sharing economy on urban destinations. Such understanding is crucial for policymakers, destination managers and stakeholders to make informed decisions, develop appropriate regulations and harness the potential benefits while mitigating any adverse effects.

## Summary of findings

- **Emotional solidarity:** The research on emotional solidarity in the sharing economy highlights the bonds created through mutual experiences and emotional proximity between tourists and residents. This sense of connection fosters stronger community relationships and enhances the overall experience of urban destinations. Emotional solidarity also fosters a sense of community and authenticity in urban destinations, benefiting both tourists and residents. This deals the nature of social engagement between locals and tourists, and understanding this social exchange dynamics helps in sharing the initiative or the future of the sharing economy initiatives.
- **Role of management firms or agents:** Management firms or agents play a cognitive function in this exchange, as they facilitate the entire process and ensure that tourists and guests have the best experience on their tour. They also engage in enhancing the facilities, revenue and occupancy rate of short-term rental properties. Properties managed by firms or agents tend to earn higher revenue and occupancy rates

compared to those without professional hosts, and they are less likely to leave the short-term rental market. These roles are in contravention to the peer-to-peer theory which emphasizes a process devoid of intermediaries in facilitating stay. However, within the institutional theory which focuses on the role of formal and informal institutions that shapes the behaviour and life circle of the sharing economy, the argument here is that effective institutional support is required for the growth, sustainability and stability of the sharing economy in urban areas.

- Impact on traditional accommodations: The rise of the sharing economy, particularly platforms like Airbnb, has disrupted traditional accommodations such as hotels. The impact varies across locations and depends on factors such as local regulations, market demand and the adaptability of traditional accommodations to embrace technology changes.
- Location-based effects: The impact of the sharing economy on urban destinations is not uniform and varies depending on the location. Cities with more flexible regulations and high demand for alternative accommodations may experience a greater impact, while others with stricter regulations or limited demand may see a more moderate or low influence.
- Digital future: Technology advancements and digital channels, such as mobile applications, IoT, AI, machine learning and blockchain tend to shape the digital future of the sharing economy. These advancements redefine how resources and services are shared, offering opportunities for greater connectivity, personalisation, and resource sharing and transforming the dynamics of urban destinations.

## Conclusion

The research on the prevailing discussions and debates regarding the implications and impact, and the theoretical underpinnings and intricate practical dimensions in the sharing economy and its implications has highlighted several important findings. The concept of emotional solidarity in the sharing economy came out strongly reflecting the bonds created through mutual experiences and emotional proximity between tourists and residents. This sense of connection fosters stronger community relationships and enhances the overall experience of the destinations. Additionally, the role of management firms or agents in the sharing economy has been shown to play a crucial function in enhancing the facilities, revenue and occupancy rate of short-term rental properties.

The impact of the sharing economy on traditional accommodations, such as hotels, varies across locations and depends on factors such as local regulations, market demand and the adaptability of traditional accommodations to embrace technological changes. Furthermore, location-based effects indicate that cities with more flexible regulations and high demand for alternative accommodations may experience a greater impact from the sharing economy. On the other hand, cities with stricter regulations or limited demand may see a more moderate or low influence.

This narrow perspective of the sharing economy in the tourism industry has reduced the scope of the discussion in tourism research and may have been over-emphasised. Literature (Belk, 2007; Botsman & Rogers, 2011) suggest that barter systems in the form of sharing have been one of the oldest forms of consumption (Huijbens & Jóhannesson, 2019), and the sharing economy is viewed as an alternative to individual ownership in gift-giving and marketplace exchange (Belk, 2007). However, ownership cannot be claimed under the collaborative consumption (CC) and barter approach, which is a significant differentiation from the sharing economy.

Looking towards the future, the digital landscape and advancements in technology continue to shape the sharing economy. Mobile technology, IoT, AI, machine learning

and blockchain are driving the digital future of the sharing economy, offering opportunities for greater connectivity, personalisation and resource sharing. These transformations redefine how resources and services are shared, transforming the dynamics of urban destinations.

Lastly, partnerships with local investors are essential to create a more compelling sharing economy that is sustainable where innervation rather than more innovation or counter innovation can upscale the sector faster. For firms in the sharing economy to grow in the long term, the short-rental sector must innervate by optimising technologies that are subjectively different rather than objectively similar. The future of the digital accommodation platforms may not involve competition between CC and VC or the sharing platform itself, but as [Prahalad & Ramaswamy \(2004 b\)](#) noted, the next biggest dimension for the future is collaboration. Thus, collaborative firms specialising in personalisation (user/customer experience), shared experience (gamification, community building), VC (crowdfunding, participatory design) and CC (access-based consumption, circular economy), among other digital traits, may be a game changer in Airbnb research.

Overall, the research on the sharing economy highlights the multifaceted theoretical underpinnings and intricate practical dimensions of this economic model. Understanding these dimensions is crucial for policymakers, destination managers and stakeholders to make informed decisions, develop appropriate regulations and harness the potential benefits of the sharing economy while mitigating any adverse effects. By incorporating the findings from this research, urban destinations can navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by the sharing economy, fostering sustainable and thriving communities.

## Future studies

Future studies can build upon the findings and contributions of this research by exploring the following areas:

*Long-term effects:* Investigating the long-term effects of the sharing economy on urban destinations would provide valuable insights into its sustainability and societal impacts. With limited research on the societal and social impact, makes it a gold rush for future researchers. Also, the environmental consequences and the place of gentrification, waste management and climate change on the sharing economy over extended periods is imperative. Social dilemma resulting from sharing economy such as long-term issues of housing affordability, community dynamics and the overall resilience of urban destinations.

*User perspectives:* While this study touched upon user behaviour and consumer insights within the sharing economy, future research can delve deeper into understanding the motivations, preferences and experiences of users. Examining user perspectives can help identify the factors that influence their decisions to participate in the sharing economy and shed light on the challenges and opportunities they encounter.

*Regulation and governance:* The sharing economy operates within a complex regulatory landscape. Future studies can benefit by analysing the effectiveness of existing regulations and governance structures in managing the sharing economy in urban destinations. Exploring innovative regulatory approaches, examining the impacts of regulatory changes and assessing the role of local authorities in governing the sharing economy can provide valuable guidance for policymakers and urban planners.

*Impact on local communities:* Further research can investigate the social and cultural impacts of the sharing economy on local communities in urban destinations. This includes understanding the dynamics between residents and tourists, the effects on local businesses and employment and the potential for gentrification or displacement. Examining

the perceptions and experiences of residents can offer insights into how the sharing economy can be better integrated into the local community fabric.

*Technological advancements:* The sharing economy heavily relies on technological platforms and digital innovations. Future studies can explore emerging technologies and their impact on the sharing economy in urban destinations. This includes examining the role of blockchain, AI and Internet of Things (IoT) in enhancing trust, improving operational efficiency and facilitating new sharing economy models.

*Comparative analysis:* Conducting comparative studies across different urban destinations can provide a broader understanding of the sharing economy's implications. Comparing cities with varying regulatory frameworks, market characteristics and cultural contexts can help identify best practices, success factors and challenges specific to different urban environments.

By addressing these areas in future studies, researchers can further expand our knowledge of the sharing economy's implications and contribute to the ongoing discourse on its role in urban destinations.

## Note

1. To distinguish between the capability of hosts to reconvert their properties to become more appealing (innervation) and add new elements to a host property to increase profitability (innovation), both innervation and innovation were used. According to Ryder (2017), "no imagination without innervation." Although the concept of innervation is mostly studied from neurophysiological perspectives, it does not mean that business practitioners cannot apply the concept. Innervation aligns with the revitalisation or transformation of mental and emotional energies to reconvert existing protocols, products or services with the aim of generating or re-engineering solutions from within, whereas innovation remains focused on rethinking the entire protocols, products and services.

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