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## MOTIVES OF PARTICIPATION IN THE SHARING ECONOMY: TOURISM SECTOR CASE

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*Received: 22. October 2020, Reviewed: 30. November 2020, Accepted: 15. December 2020*

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### Abstract

The study's main goal is to investigate the motives that encourage the usage of sharing economy-based platforms in the tourism sector. Systematic research shows that researchers' opinions who have analyzed the motives for participation in the sharing economy differ. The study found a lack of information on the motives influencing sharing economy-based platforms in the tourism sector. The methodological tools of the research were a questionnaire survey, in which 155 respondents participated. The survey was conducted in Lithuania. The questionnaire examines the social, environmental, and economic motives that influence intent to consume. The results of the empirical analysis presented in the article showed that the priority motives for the use of sharing economy-based platforms in the tourism sector are social, aimed at the fulfilment of personal needs. Other motives also influencing participation in the sharing economy in the tourism sector are economic and ecological. The research results can help adapt the product offer to consumers' requirements, creating an opportunity for tourism companies to attract higher tourist flows and compete in the tourism sector.

*Keywords: development economics, sharing economy, sharing economy models, tourism sector.*

*JEL Classification: L8, L83, L84.*

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### Introduction

Tourism is a system that encompasses elements that are closely interlinked and multifaceted. Analyzing the development of tourism, its versatility and importance in the country's economy are distinguished. The significant impact of tourism development on increasing entrepreneurship, contributing to the development of small and medium-sized businesses, increasing employment, and improving infrastructure

has been identified. The tourism sector's development is facilitated by the penetration of sharing economy-based models into the tourism market, which is crucial for consumers' willingness to choose sharing economy-based platforms in the tourism sector.

Although researchers have previously pointed out the importance to investigate motives of participation in the sharing economy (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Black & Cracau, 2015; Boateng et al., 2018), it is noted that previous research has been limited to researching only certain areas (accommodation, transportation), without exploring the tourism sector. It is important to determine that tourists can order not only a specific service but a certain set of tourism services using sharing economy-based platforms. Not enough attention is paid to sharing economy-based platforms consumers. Previous studies have mainly examined only service providers or only service users. In this research sharing economy consumers (service providers and recipients) are investigated because consumers in the sharing economy can switch places and be both: providers and recipients at the same time. Thus, despite the growing influence of sharing economy-based models and the popularity of sharing economy in the tourism sector, little is known about the motivation to participate in sharing economy activities in the tourism sector, consumers characteristic. The motives of the tourism sector's sharing economy consumers in Lithuania have not been studied so far, so the work is characterized not only by its relevance but also by its novelty.

Insights into consumers' motivation (tourists and service providers) in the tourism sector would help gain a better understanding of the consumer decision-making process, adapt services for tourists, and gain a competitive advantage in the tourism market.

This study, developing the sharing economy's exploration in the tourism sector, examines the motives for participation in the sharing economy (providers and recipients of services). The priority importance of motives is also examined in the development of research conducted so far. The study covers four main forms of sharing economy in the tourism sector: transport sharing, accommodation, entertainment and tourist information. To better understand the benefits of the sharing economy in the tourism sector, aspects are also identified that distinguish consumers of sharing economy-based models in the tourism sector from non-users.

## Theoretical background

One of the most important and most challenging to define factors for developing sharing economy in the tourism sector is motives. Individual everyday consumers, the factors acting on the basis, the available experience, the development of models based on the sharing economy in the tourism sector, and their interactions shape the advantages of the sharing economy. Consumer-perceived value encourages the use of cost-effective sharing services in the tourism sector.

Opinions of researchers who have analyzed the motives for participation in the sharing economy differ from each other. Belloti et al. (2015) single out eight unique motives for using sharing economy-based platforms: social influence, value or morality, status or power, intrinsic motives, instrumental motives, social connection and security. Lutz, Hoffman, Bucher & Fieseler (2017) indicate that the main motives are economic (monetary), moral (communality, sustainability), and socio-hedonic (connection-making). Quiros & Chankov (2021) argue that the main motives are

economic, social, and freedom of choice or trust. Although there is no consensus on the main motives for engaging in the sharing economy, three fundamental motives can be identified by linking the sharing economy triad model and the motives mentioned by most authors: economic benefits as well as social and environmental motives.

However, many authors have analyzed the motivations for using sharing economy-based services to focus on economic incentives. Boateng, Kosiba & Okoe (2018) argue that economic motivation is dominant among car platform users. This conclusion is also presented by Black & Cracau (2015), who studied German customers' motives to participate in the sharing economy. The authors who prefer economic motives (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Belloti, 2015) point out that the main stimulus that encourages consumers to use the services based on sharing economy is the desire to minimize costs, to choose the most profitable solution. Yang (2018) and Gerwe & Silva (2020) note that consumers are also encouraged to choose services based on the sharing economy due to business opportunities (Lesakova & Rehak, 2020) as well as flexible and individually designed work schedules.

While economic motives are essential, some authors argue that social factors, personal experiences, may also be necessary for consumers (Gazzola, Vatamanescu, Andrei, & Marrapodi, 2018; Bostman & Roger, 2011). Social factors include increasing population density, the need for social contacts, and a willingness to help other community members. According to Franssen et al. (2017), sharing economy users are usually characterized by sociality; they like to meet new people and communicate. They are also dedicated to the community.

Growing awareness of consumerism's threats in meeting future generations' needs, concerns about ecology are driving the use of sharing economy-based platforms. After analyzing the ecological advantages of sharing economy-based models (Chen, 2016; Frenken & Schor, 2017), the authors point out that the use of sharing economy-based services in the tourism sector allows traveling with a smaller ecological footprint, and does not contribute to the depletion of tourism by balancing tourist flows. While some authors argue that environmental concerns act as a strong motive for choosing sharing economy-based services in the tourism sector (Tussyadiah, 2016), other authors present conflicting results (Mohlmann, 2015; Hamari, Sjoklint, Ukkonen, 2016; Bardhi, Eckhardt, 2012), showing that the growing interest in environmental issues does not have a significant impact on the growth of demand for sharing economy based services.

However, not enough quantitative research has yet been done on consumer motivations to participate in sharing economy-based platforms, especially in the tourism sector. Also, many studies have been conducted by distinguishing a specific area of tourism without analyzing the tourism sector as a whole.

## Methodology

The authors selected a survey of respondents for the study. The questionnaire helps determine which services in the tourism sector are mostly used, identify consumers' willingness to participate in the sharing economy and analyze the factors that promote consumption. It also reveals barriers to the usage of sharing economy-based services in the tourism sector. Also, the tourism sector's typical consumers of sharing economy-based platforms are identified by using the questionnaire.

Formula (1) was used to calculate the study sample volume:

$$n = (t^2 p (1-p)) / \Delta^2 \quad (1)$$

where  $n$  - the sample volume,  $t$  - the Student's coefficient expressing the confidence level,  $p$  - the determined sample distribution,  $\Delta$  - the error.

The Student's coefficient expressing the study's level of reliability is  $t = 1.96$ , which indicates that the study's level of reliability is 95%. Error  $\Delta = 0.08$  (8%) Thus, the sample volume is equal to 150 respondents. The study was conducted in 2020, from November 11th to 23th. 155 respondents participated in the survey, so we can say that the survey sample reflects the whole general population.

The first series of questions seek to classify the attributes of sharing economy users. The second set of questions is intended to determine customer behavior in the tourism sector's sharing economy. The questions are aimed at determining which tourism-related services respondents use the most frequently, as well as at determining consumers' willingness to engage in the sharing economy. Factors that promote consumption, promote the growth of sharing economy-based businesses in Lithuania were also analyzed. The questionnaire was elaborated by the authors of the paper. The survey was carried out on the Internet (online). The research questionnaire was posted on the website [www.apklausa.lt](http://www.apklausa.lt).

Due to the heterogeneity of the broad group of respondents, the questionnaire's questions are filtering (adapted to different groups of persons, so respondents only answer questions if they are familiar with the research indicator).

To process the obtained results, descriptive statistical methods such as graphical representation, estimation of variable frequencies and averages are used. The following hypotheses are raised vertically in the consumer survey data:

*H\_1*: Economic motives are a priority for consumers of the sharing economy in the tourism sector.

*H\_2*: The sharing economy services in the tourism sector are mostly used by young people (18-30 years old).

## Results and Discussion

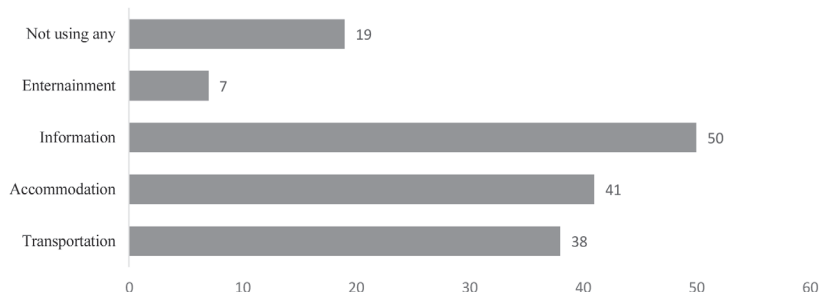
The first group of questions examines the distribution of the respondents by age, place of residence, gender, education, monthly income and marital status.

53 respondents (34.3%) were 18-30 years old, 87 respondents (56.2%) aged 31-45, 11 respondents (6.8%) aged 46-60 and 4 respondents (2.7%) 61 years old or older. 106 respondents (68.5%) live in big Lithuanian cities (more than 100 thousand people), 19.2 percent ( $N = 30$ ) live in other, smaller Lithuanian cities (between 3 thousand and 10 thousand people) and 12.3 percent ( $N = 19$ ) live in rural areas (less than 3 thousand people). The majority of respondents were men (68.4%). The majority of respondents have obtained a higher (professional bachelor's or bachelor's qualification) degree - 56.2% ( $N = 87$ ). A large part of the respondents has also obtained a master's degree or an equivalent to a master's degree - 35.6% ( $N = 55$ ). 4 respondents (2.7%) have not completed higher education, 2 (1.4%) have obtained a doctoral degree and 2 (1.4%) have obtained a professional degree. It was found that the majority ( $N = 93$ , 60.3%) of respondents generate more than 1600 EUR of monthly income. A similar distribution of respondents (13.7% each) is recorded between those receiving EUR 801 - 1200

and EUR 1201 - 1600. 9 respondents receive less than EUR 400 per month (5.5%). Respondents were also asked to confirm their marital status. The majority (N = 85, 54.8%) of participants have a partner and children. 47 persons (30.1%) have a partner. 23 persons (15.1%) are single.

The second block of question seeks to clarify which sharing economy services respondents use while traveling (Figure 1). The figure below shows the number of responses from respondents, according to the aspects examined.

1 Figure. Use of the sharing economy in the tourism sector



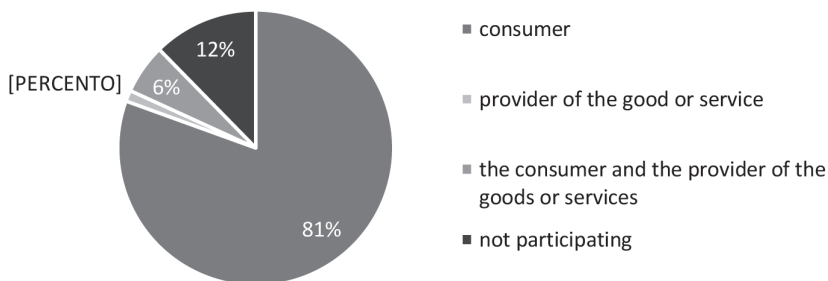
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According to the survey, respondents found that they mostly use services based on sharing economy to find information about tourism services (N = 50; 32.3%) and book accommodation (N = 41; 26.5%). Respondents answered that they most rarely order entertainment from platforms based on the sharing economy (N = 7; 4.5%).

It is important to mention that although 35 percent (N = 55) of respondents answered that they had never heard the term “sharing economy” before, from the second question is seen that only 12% of respondents never used sharing economy-based services (N = 19). According to the results, it can be stated that consumers are more familiar with the sharing economy in practice than in theory. The following part is a compilation of the participants’ responses, which includes responses from everyone who have ever used models based on the sharing economy, even if they have never heard of the term “sharing economy” before.

Participants in the study were also grouped according to the usage type of sharing economy-based platforms in the tourism sector (Figure 2).

2 Figure. Use of the sharing economy in the tourism sector, by the type of use

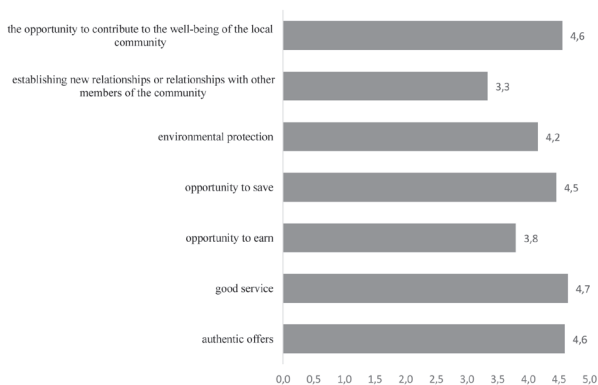


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The survey results revealed that most respondents (81%, N = 124) use services based on the sharing economy as consumers, without providing or offering their own services.

The factors that promote the use of sharing economy services in the tourism sector are analyzed below. According to the analyzed criteria, respondents' estimates are presented after calculating the value of the given average scores (Figure 3).

3 Figure. Factors motivating consumers to use the services of sharing economy in the tourism sector



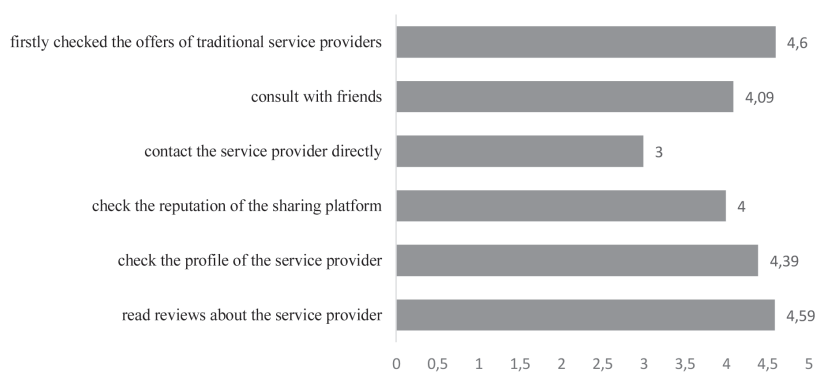
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The study results revealed that consumers are motivated by the produce of good service (4.7 points), authentic offers (4.6 points), and the belief that by using platforms, travelers provide income for local people and support the well-being of

the local community. Thus, the first hypothesis is rejected - economic factors are not the primary motive for the participation in the sharing economy. Many consumers also believe that sharing assets and resources contributes to reducing travel's financial cost (4.5 points). It is observed that some consumers point out that the sharing economy in the tourism sector is less harmful to the environment, so the consumption of sharing economy services contributes to the promotion of sustainable tourism (4.2 points). Analyzing the results of the study, it was observed that the need to use the services of the sharing economy is also stimulated by social influence, the desire to establish new relationships or connections with other members of the community (3.3 points).

Another factor to be analyzed is the process of ordering sharing economy-based services (Figure 4). The figure below provides average estimates by the analyzed categories.

4 Figure. The process of ordering services based on the sharing economy in the tourism sector

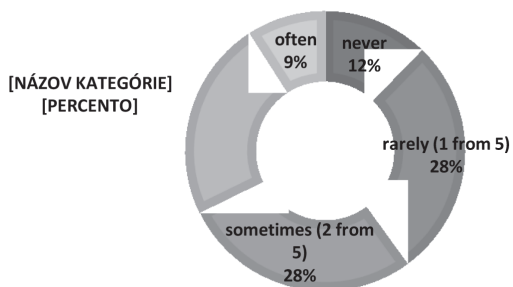


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Most respondents indicated that they would first check the offers of traditional service providers before using sharing economic platforms (4.6 points). According to data, we can conduct that consumers' need to use sharing economy-based platforms is conditioned by unfulfilled expectations when using or analyzing traditional service offers in the tourism sector. Analysis shows that users of the sharing economy, who use digital and social platforms intensively, tend to consult or trust online information providers (feedback - 4.59 points; user profile analysis - 4.39 points; reputation assessment check - 4 points) before making a decision. The need to gather information about the service provider includes the search for information and the need for further consultation with friends and others (4.09 points) who have used sharing economy services earlier.

The frequency of sharing economy use in the tourism sector is further analyzed (Figure 5).

5 Figure. Frequency of sharing economy-based services use in the tourism sector

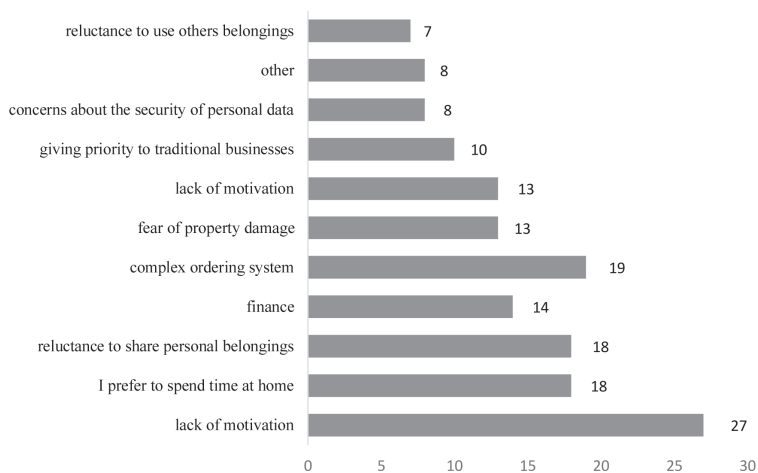


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When assessing the frequency of using sharing economy-based platforms in the tourism sector, it can be noticed that consumers use sharing economy-based platforms approximately 1-2 times out of 5 cases while planning a trip (Figure 5).

When studying the factors influencing the consumption of sharing economy services in the tourism sector, respondents were asked to identify the reasons that limit the more frequent use of sharing economy services (Figure 6).

6 Figure. Reasons limiting the use of the sharing economy in the tourism sector



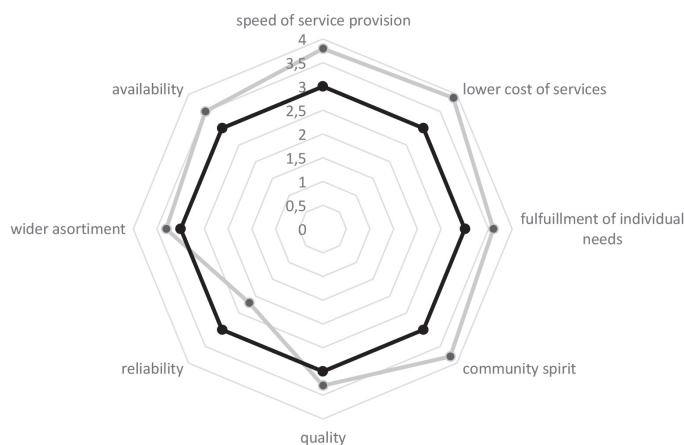
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Analyzing the barriers to use the sharing economy in the tourism sector from the consumer's point of view, it is observed that the most important ones are social aspects (lack of time, reluctance to travel and sharing existing assets). It is noticed that when users are ordering the services, the systematic nature of data is also important (N = 19; 12%). It has been observed that platforms, which are characterized by the homogeneity and systematic nature of information, reduce the time of searching for a service, and ensure faster process performance. A study by Li & Netessine (2018) found that with multiplying the number of hosts and travelers on the platforms, the number of requests sent to hosts increased by 19.6 percent, and the number of confirmed bookings decreased by 15.4 percent. Excessive choice and unsystematic data make decision-making more difficult. Consumers in the tourism sector also face barriers such as concerns about the security of personal data (N = 8; 5.16%), lack of motivation (N = 13; 8.4%) and fears of possible property damage through asset sharing (N = 8; = 13; 8.39%). Some respondents also chose the "other" option and indicated that they could not identify a specific reason.

When analyzing the importance of the sharing economy in the tourism sector, it is also necessary to assess the sharing economy's advantages in contrast with the traditional business models. Users of the sharing economy were asked to note the comparative advantages of sharing economy and traditional business. The rating was based on a scale: 1 point means that traditional business models are the best, 2 - traditional business models are slightly better, 3 - both business models are evaluated equally, 4 - more advantageous models are based on the sharing economy, 5 - based on the sharing economy business models are the best. Figure 7 presents the evaluation of the sharing economy and traditional business models in the tourism sector, according to selected aspects. The border between the points is indicating the advantage of traditional business models (from 1 to 3) and sharing economy-based models advantages (from 3 to 5) is marked in black. The grey line in the figure represents the average number of points awarded for a given criterion.

7 Figure. Comparison of sharing economy and traditional business, from the consumer's point of view in the tourism sector

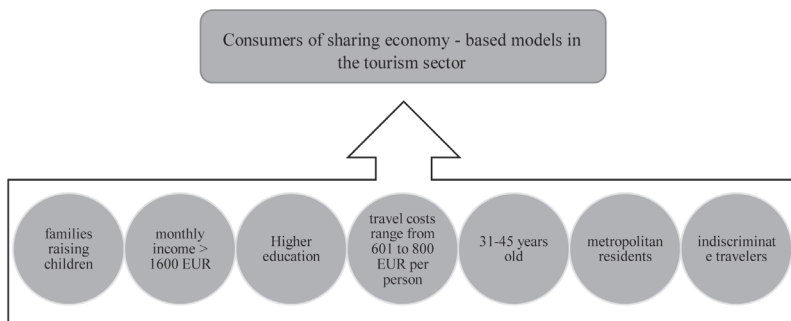


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It is observed that sharing economy platforms offer a lower price (3.9) than traditional businesses. Sharing economy platforms in the tourism sector can also offer new, exciting and attractive offers and thus create an unforgettable experience for customers and meet the tourists needs for personalized services (3,6). However, it is observed that consumers' risks due to the principle of the operation of platforms (sharing a property with strangers) lead to lower trust for sharing economy platforms (2.2) compared to the services offered by traditional businesses in the tourism sector. Consumers in the tourism sector point out that the sharing economy, compared to traditional business models, is characterized by faster service delivery (3.8), wide choice (3.3) and quality (3.3).

Using an advanced data filtering tool and calculating frequencies to process the overall data obtained from respondents, we can state that sharing economy-based businesses in the tourism sector are used mainly by families with one or more children; receiving a monthly income of more than 1,600 EUR who spend around 601-800 EUR per person for a trip. The typical consumer also has a higher education diploma (Figure 8). It is also noted that the typical consumer of the sharing economy in the tourism sector is 31-45 years old, so the second hypothesis is rejected - the prominent participants in the sharing economy in the tourism sector are not 18-30 years old.

8 Figure. Characteristics of sharing in the tourism sector



Source: created by authors

It is also observed that the typical user of the sharing economy travels to get to know new cultures, to break away from everyday life, and to visit authentic, secluded places. Consumers in the sharing economy in the tourism sector characterize themselves as individuals who are indiscriminate travelers.

Analyzing the consumer segment from the perspective of service providers, according to the data, it is observed that 18-30-year-old people usually provide services based on the sharing economy. Also people who live in metropolitan areas, have a higher professional bachelor's degree, earn more than 1,600 EUR. It has been established that women mainly provide sharing services in the tourism sector, so we can say that the development of the tourism sector's sharing economy enables women to achieve financial independence and reduces financial exclusion.

It is observed that sharing economy-based services in the tourism sector are less frequently used by people living in smaller cities or rural areas, while those who do

not use sharing economy services in the tourism sector are less likely to use them due to the overly complex sharing economy-based platforms.

## Conclusion

Travel decision-making is complex and multifaceted, closely related to the information available for the tourists. The tourism sector is significantly affected in the early stages of a customer's journey, when platforms linking service providers to potential customers act as tourist service reservation centers, complementing traditional service providers by facilitating exchanging information with other tourists and locals.

Businesses based on the sharing economy have been superior to traditional ones in offering more affordable prices to tourists, and meeting individual needs. Consumers in the sharing economy thus have the opportunity to become part of the bigger community. There are such advantages as a broader range of services, better availability of tourism services, the speed of provided services. Assessing the benefits of sharing economy-based businesses also emphasizes service quality.

It can be argued that participants in sharing economy-based models are motivated by economic, social, and environmental motives, but the most significant motive is social. From the research, we can see that the influence of the main motive - economic, singled out by many authors who have studied the sharing economy, among the consumers of the sharing economy in the tourism sector is more perceived as an added value than as a priority motive. Personal hobbies become an essential motivation for tourists to travel. Increasingly, traveling aims to use tourism products specially offered for tourists and get to know the local culture, get involved in the local community's life. A strong need for closer contact with the local community was identified.

No significant differences were found between the users and non-users of sharing economy-based platforms.

In the future, this study may be extended by examining differences in motivation and ideology between the users of traditional tourism services and the sharing economy. The research could also be supplemented by distinguishing features that are unique to Lithuanian tourists using sharing economy-based platforms.

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