Research on Sharing Intention Formation Mechanism Based on the Burden of Ownership and Fashion Consciousness

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Abstract: The sharing economy has become an important business model for China to promote energy conservation and emission reduction, improve the utilization efficiency of social resources, promote green and sustainable development, and achieve high-quality economic development. How to improve the willingness of individuals to share underutilized resources with others is becoming an urgent problem for enterprises and academia. Although current research on the sharing economy provides insights into users’ perspectives, little attention has been given to the comprehensive investigation of the sharing intention of individual service providers. Based on the motivation—opportunity—abilities (MOA) theory, we analyze the influencing factors and boundary conditions of individual resource sharing intention by taking new consumer groups as research samples. The results reveal that the sharing intention of individual service providers depends on their customized service capability, economic motivation, and perceived ease of use. Furthermore, the burden of ownership and fashion consciousness will further influence the sharing intention of individual service providers. This discovery provides theoretical basis for the development of an enterprise sharing economy and government guidance, and enriches the theoretical research on the sharing economy.

Keywords: sharing economy; MOA theory; the burden of ownership; fashion consciousness

1. Introduction

The sharing economy business models, such as sharing accommodation, sharing cars, and peer-to-peer platforms, have not only changed people’s daily lives, behaviors, and habits [1,2], they have also exerted a huge impact on the traditional economic structure [3,4]. In 2017, the valuation of Airbnb was more than $31 billion, that of Uber was more than $68 billion (The Wall Street Journal, l “The Billion Dollar Startup Club”, http://graphics.wsj.com/billion-dollar-club/), and the turnover of this economic market was up to 4.9 trillion yuan in China (China information center). The sharing economy not only promotes a more convenient flow of resource elements, but also realizes more efficient matching between supply and demand [5–7]. Moreover, this model is not just a new economic phenomenon and economic form, but also a new development concept and consumption concept [4,8,9]—one that has attracted the attention of academic circles and enterprises [10].

The sharing economy provides opportunities for individuals to obtain temporary access to resources or to share underutilized resources with others as an alternative to ownership [3–5]. This situation leads to a more efficient use of resources while reducing resource consumption, thereby reflecting the significant potential of sustainability [9,11]. At present, many scholars have studied the sharing economy from different perspectives, including (1) basic theories, such as conception [4,12]...
and characteristics [13]; (2) antecedents and motivations to participate, such as trust [6], familiarity [14], and social contact [15]; and (3) the marketing effect of participating in the sharing economy, such as increasing employment [16]. However, most of the existing research was carried out from the perspective of the users, and only a few studies discussed the sharing intention of individuals who, with underutilized resources, act as service providers rather than consumers (in the sharing economy, an individual can be either a resource demander or a resource provider. When playing two roles at the same time, he or she is also called prosumer. We define an individual who owns and is willing to provide underutilized resources as an individual service provider.) [17]. According to the 2018 China Sharing Economy Development Report, individual service providers account for less than 10% of the total number of participants in sharing economic activities, indicating that China’s actual sharing behavior is lower than the sharing intention. The gap between sharing intention and behavior means that the formation mechanism of sharing behavior at the individual level has not been completely solved [6,17]. Accordingly, this study attempts to solve two research problems:

Q 1: What factors affect the sharing intention of individual service providers?
Q 2: How can the sharing intention of individual service providers be improved?

Using survey data from 300 respondents, we analyze the sharing intention of individual service providers. The results show that the motivations, abilities, and opportunities of individual service providers have an impact on their sharing intention. The burden of ownership has positive moderating effects on economic motivation, perceived ease of use, and sharing intention, but negatively moderates the relationship between customized service capability and sharing intention. Besides, fashion consciousness has a positive moderating effect on customized service capability, perceived ease of use, and sharing intention, but negatively moderates economic motivation and sharing intention.

The main contributions of this paper are as follows: First, while most research on the sharing economy is carried out from the perspective of demand or the consumer, this study is carried out from the perspective of the suppliers. Under the new concepts of “green and sharing development”, promoting sustainable development and achieving high-quality growth are the results of reducing resource consumption and improving the recycling of underutilized resources [18]. Unfortunately, the current number of service providers is relatively small. Thus, we take individuals with underutilized resources as research objects and then call for more people to participate in the sharing economy.

Second, many scholars have conducted cause analysis, especially for consumers. However, few have studied the antecedents for individual service providers to participate in the sharing economy. The public is already aware of the positive social benefits of energy saving, emission reduction, and green and sustainable development from the sharing economy [9,11], but the existing research lacks specific guidance and promotion conditions on “how to effectively share underutilized resources through individuals” [6,17]. However, owning underutilized resources alone is not enough to establish sharing behaviors, so it is vital to study “the conditions to form individual sharing intention”.

Third, to promote sustainable development, many scholars have called for a more efficient use of resources [18,19]. The call is mainly manifested in the sharing economy as individuals sharing underutilized resources with others [9,11], but the overall effect is not ideal [6]. Many individuals have the conditions of sharing behavior, but their willingness to participate is not high. Exploring how to enhance their willingness and encourage more people to share resources is an urgent issue related to enhancing the boundary conditions of the sharing intention.

2. Resource Sharing and the MOA Framework

As a new economic model, the sharing economy promotes the high-quality allocation of various resource elements and is committed to stimulating the potential value of underutilized resources. This is considered the most effective way to practice green development and promote sustainable development and the most important form of market operation to encourage high-quality development [20,21]. Under the new resource allocation model of the sharing economy, the resources
required by services not only come from enterprises, but also from underutilized resources owned by private individuals. In other words, individuals, not organizations acting as assistants, comprise the main body of this economic model [22]. Although the number of individual service providers in the sharing economy has increased this year compared with that recorded in 2017, these service providers only account for 5.1% of the total population of China (According to the China Population and Employment Statistics Yearbook and the 2018 China Sharing Economic Development Report). How to encourage more individuals to share underutilized resources is a question worthy of further investigation.

In addition, MOA theory refers to the motives, abilities, and opportunities required for behaviors [23]. Previous research on MOA theory is based on the traditional economic background and focuses on organizational behavior and knowledge sharing, and so on [23–25]. We propose that MOA should be a good predictor of the sharing intention of individual service providers in the sharing economy. Subsequently, we will elaborate the formation mechanism of sharing intention based on MOA theory.

2.1. Resource-Sharing Motivation of Individual Service Providers

Motivation is the critical driver of one’s behaviors [23]. In the sharing economy, the individual resource-sharing behavior is mainly driven by the economic goal of obtaining extra income. In other words, economic motivation is the main trigger of the sharing behavior [26]. Therefore, we define motivation as economic motivation, which refers to people’s participation in the sharing economy, mainly to obtain extra income through underutilized resource-sharing.

Unlike the traditional economy, underutilized resource waste caused by information blocking, the Internet age, diversified resources, or fragmentation time is continuously optimized, integrated, and efficiently matched. The development of the sharing economy provides people with a platform for short-term trading of the right to use underutilized resources and opportunities to create more value and increase income [26–28]. Correspondingly, a series of positive effects are generated, such as revitalizing the underutilized resources, avoiding the high cost of ownership [26–28]. This new business model provides a platform and opportunity for increasing income and generation. Yet, according to the economic exchange theory, the final analysis indicates that everyone’s resource-sharing behavior is the result of their perception of the value associated with resource sharing, which is influenced by rational self-interest [29]. In other words, if an individual perceives that the benefits of doing so outweigh the costs, then the sharing behavior will occur, and vice versa [30]. Compared with the sunk cost of resource idleness, people prefer to share resources with others for extra income [26,31]. As of October 2018, the number of rural landlords in Airbnb have increased by 203%, generating more than 260 million yuan in revenue, according to the report on sharing accommodation to help rural revitalization in China.

H1. The economic motivation of individual service providers positively affects their sharing intention.

2.2. Resource-Sharing Ability of Individual Service Providers

Ability represents an individual’s skill or knowledge foundation related to an action [24]. In the sharing economy, consumers judge the ability of individual service providers mainly by the degree of satisfaction of their own needs [32]. Therefore, we define ability as the ability of individual service providers to provide customized services, that is, the ability to provide consumers with products or services that meet their specific needs and preferences [33].

The new generation of consumer groups (born from 1980s to early 2000s) that will dominate the consumer market in the next few years has a superior and affluent life, possess an advanced consumption concept, and are able to master the mobile Internet technologies [34,35]. The existing conditions provide them with fertile soil for impulsive consumption, which can lead to an increase in underutilized resources and waste. However, with the increasing awareness of environmental
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protection and conservation [20,21], people are gradually beginning to reflect on the consequences of impulsive consumption and are actively responding to the concept of sharing development. The rise of the sharing economy allows such individuals with underutilized resources to exchange, share, and convert underutilized resources into economic resources [36,37]. Due to the consumption attitude of new consumer groups who are willing to spend, enjoy new things, have dynamic personalities, and focus on gaining new experiences, individual service providers cannot meet their unique needs by merely accumulating resources and simply displaying them for consumption. Customization is a crucial measure to implement a customer-oriented market strategy and an important route to establish and strengthen relations with consumers [33], through which individual service providers can create unique value for consumers [38,39]. For example, with the gradual growth of the vast free market, hotels with standardized services are constantly challenged to meet people’s needs. In comparison, Airbnb can provide a variety of personalized accommodation services according to each user’s needs, such as joint rooms, independent rooms, apartments, vacation houses, unique spaces (e.g., vaults, domes, tree houses), beds and breakfast, and boutique accommodation listings. In this economic model, individual service providers can focus on consumer needs and positive experiences through technology to create customized services and build relationships with them [37].

**H2.** The ability of individual service providers to provide customized products or services positively affects their sharing intention.

2.3. Resource-Sharing Opportunities of Individual Service Providers

Opportunities represent an environment or scenario mechanism for action [23–25], and the likelihood of specific outcomes may vary depending on the timing. As early as 1978, sharing activities already existed, such as drinking with friends, eating with relatives, driving to see someone, and sharing washing machines with family members. However, these were only limited to acquaintances and a specific time and area [1,3,4]. Digital technology, especially the development of the Internet and the popularization of intelligent terminals, has realized the ubiquitous interconnection of participants. Mobile payment and location-based services have broken the time and space constraints, simplifying the transmission of products or services between supply and demand [8,26]. Furthermore, big data analysis technology has achieved precise and efficient matching. Those make it possible for everyone to participate anywhere and anytime [4,21]. Thus, we define opportunity as the perceived ease of mobile Internet use from the perspective of whether individual service providers can easily use mobile Internet.

The sharing economy is a new business model that takes the platform as a medium and obtains core value through the network effect of the platform [40,41]. Unlike traditional enterprises that build high entry barriers and provide first-mover advantages, value creation in the sharing economy does not require a huge initial investment, but only needs a platform and requires people to use such a platform relatively easily [41]. By understanding the significance and value of the sharing economy, people can easily use and even master this economic platform skillfully, so that they can devote themselves to extract the important value of the platform and themselves. However, many sharing economy business systems have complicated procedures and technical requirements, preventing users with poor skills from participating in such activities [42]. Therefore, the perceived ease of use of this platform by individual service providers is particularly important, because it facilitates the interaction between individual service providers and consumers and provides real-time feedback to individual service providers on the needs and preferences of existing and potential customers [40].

**H3.** The perceived ease of mobile Internet and sharing platforms use by individual service providers positively influences their sharing intention.
3. Boundary Conditions—The Burden of Ownership

According to Schwab (2007), ownership or possession of an item gives the owner the right to use, control, manage, and enjoy [43]. While enjoying such a right, the owner should also bear the corresponding risks and obligations, such as risks regarding product alteration and/or obsolescence, risks regarding making an incorrect product selection, responsibility for maintenance and repair of the product, and the full cost of goods for which a consumer has only infrequent use [43]. These risks and obligations comprise the so-called “burden of ownership” [43]. According to statistics, nearly half of consumers say that many goods become rarely used after a while (Accenture China consumer insights series Report 2018: new consumption, new forces) Goods that are rarely used need regular maintenance, take up inventory space, and face the dilemma of being “tasteless but wasteful to discard”. In response to such a problem, the rise of the sharing economy provides a platform and the opportunity for the more rational use of social resources and avoids many troubles associated with owning items.

According to classical decision theory, perceived risk refers to the possibility or severity of negative outcomes [44]. In this paper, perceived risk is defined as the “burden” caused by underutilized resources. With the rising frequency of impulsive consumption, a large number of items remain underutilized, and unused items are faced with problems, such as difficult valuation and realization and the occupation of large amounts of vacant spaces, which brings about the dual waste of money and space. Indeed, dealing with such problems is a headache, and although individual risk tendencies are different, they are generally cautious and try to avoid risks [45]. Therefore, as the potential risks of unused items increase, individuals are more motivated to adopt strategies (e.g., sharing underutilized resources with others) that help reduce these risks to a more manageable level [46]. Sharing underutilized resources can avoid many troubles and lighten the burden of ownership so that the owners prefer to share resources rather than monopolize them [47].

H4. The burden of ownership positively affects H1-H2-H3.
H4a. The burden of ownership positively moderates the effect of economic motivation on individual sharing intention.
H4b. The burden of ownership positively moderates the effect of customized service capability on individual sharing intention.
H4c. The burden of ownership positively moderates the effect of perceived ease of mobile Internet and sharing platforms use on individual sharing intention.

4. Boundary Conditions—Fashion Consciousness

As a dimension of lifestyle, fashion consciousness refers to the degree to which one exerts effort in pursuit of style or fashion. [48]. Fashion consciousness, which could be used to evaluate individuals’ ideas and attitudes towards fashion, influences an individual’s decision-making [49,50]. Highly fashion-conscious people are innovative, adventurous, and eager to attract attention [51].

With the advent of new consumerism and the formation of new consuming power, the founders of these enterprises, like Uber and Airbnb, rely on keen insights to follow trends of the times and timely embrace this innovative business model and form. As a result, these enterprises have earned considerable dividends in the fully upgraded consumer market and are widely considered as leaders in the sharing economy. At present, driven by profit, fun, fashion, and other elements, nearly 40% of Chinese consumers participate in this economic model through emerging revenue-generating channels (Accenture China consumer insights series Report 2018: new consumption, new forces). Participation in the sharing economy seems to reflect popular value trends [52,53], because individuals can help others by transferring the right to use underutilized resources, improve resource utilization, protect the environment, or learn about the latest, most popular and profitable business models, thereby
broadening their self-concept and enhancing their social identity [21]. In addition, the continuous improvement of demand levels and the significant changes in survival concepts have promoted the pursuit of flexible employment [16]. The pursuit of fashion seems to be an increasingly prominent phenomenon, and the sharing economy has adapted to the new requirements of innovation and coordination as well as green, open, and sharing development concepts. Furthermore, the sharing economy has provided fertile ground for individual fashion lifestyles and income-increasing methods.

H5. Fashion consciousness positively affects H1-H2-H3.

H5a. Fashion consciousness positively moderates the effect of economic motivation on individual sharing intention.

H5b. Fashion consciousness positively moderates the effect of customized service capability on individual sharing intention.

H5c. Fashion consciousness positively moderates the effect of perceived ease of mobile Internet and sharing platforms use on individual sharing intention.

5. Method

5.1. Questionnaire Data and Data Collection

From November 2017 to September 2018, the questionnaire was formed through a review of a large number of literatures and discussions. All the measures were adapted from established scales and were subsequently measured on a Likert scale (1—7; strongly disagree—strongly agree) (Table 1).

The chosen participants were Master of Business Administration students from Wuhan University, because of the following reasons: (1) MBA students belong to the new consumer group and are the primary users of sharing economic activities, and (2) MBA students, as opposed to undergraduate students, can understand and experience these economic activities more frequently and profoundly in their daily lives. A total of 312 paper questionnaires were distributed, and of these 300 were validated. Among the respondents, 46.3% were males, 53.7% were females, 29.85 years old on average, and earned 9351.67 yuan per month.

We used the questionnaire survey method, in which producing a homologous deviation problem is easy. Although the methods of repeated modification and an anonymous investigation were used to minimize the influence of common method biases, detecting the collected data by the Harman single factor method (i.e., factor analysis for all items) was necessary [54]. The load of the first principal component factor obtained before rotation was 15.349% (<50%), indicating that no homology deviation exists.

Table 1. Construct measurement summary.

| Construct and Item Description | Factor Loadings |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| **economic motive** [27] (α = 0.852, CR = 0.876, AVE = 0.586) | |
| 1. I share because it pays well | 0.774 |
| 2. Sharing helps me pay my bills | 0.801 |
| 3. Earning extra money is an important factor when sharing | 0.682 |
| 4. Sharing is a good way to supplement my income | 0.778 |
| 5. Sharing allows me to make money from something I own | 0.788 |
| **customized service** [39] (α = 0.821, CR = 0.851, AVE = 0.656) | |
| 1. I could provide customers with the products/services they need. | 0.771 |
| 2. I extensively customized a range of products/services to meet unique customer needs | 0.864 |
| 3. Products/services provided to this customer has a lot of features that are not available in the standard version | 0.792 |
| **perceived ease of use** [55] (α = 0.812, CR = 0.852, AVE = 0.658) | |
| 1. I could provide customers with the products/services they need. | 0.771 |
| 2. I extensively customized a range of products/services to meet unique customer needs | 0.864 |
| 3. Products/services provided to this customer has a lot of features that are not available in the standard version | 0.792 |
Table 1. Cont.

| Construct and Item Description | Factor Loadings |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. The usage steps and operation rules of xx platform are clear and easy to understand | 0.826 |
| 2. It is difficult for me to learn how to use xx platform | 0.844 |
| 3. All in all, I can easily put my underutilized resources on the XX platform | 0.761 |
| **the burden of ownership [43]** ($\alpha = 0.912$, CR = 0.922, AVE = 0.748) | |
| 1. underutilized resources may face alteration and or obsolescence risks | 0.889 |
| 2. underutilized resources may face maintenance and repair risks | 0.889 |
| 3. I may have to bear the full cost of goods for which I have only infrequent use | 0.867 |
| 4. The goods (which have passed the guaranteed return period) would be reused after a while, unfortunately, it may be an incorrect selection | 0.811 |
| **Fashion Consciousness [50]** ($\alpha = 0.927$, CR = 0.940, AVE = 0.776) | |
| 1. I always try new products or services before my friends, such as sharing underutilized resources with others | 0.877 |
| 2. When choices have to be made, I tend to choose products/services that have a unique style rather than a common one | 0.904 |
| 3. I usually try the latest products and services, such as registering as an Uber owner | 0.905 |
| 4. I often talk to friends about the latest products and services, such as the sharing economy. | 0.883 |
| **sharing intention [27]** ($\alpha = 0.907$, CR = 0.903, AVE = 0.650) | |
| 1. If the circumstances allow it, I will also share in the future | 0.787 |
| 2. I may share with others in the future | 0.828 |
| 3. It is likely that I keep sharing in the future | 0.809 |
| 4. I intend to share with others in the future as well | 0.824 |
| 5. I will try to share in the future | 0.783 |

5.2. Reliability and Validity

We first performed a reliability analysis to test the reliability, followed by an exploratory factor analysis to check the validity. Subsequently, we calculated the corresponding mean extraction variance and overall reliability coefficient. Listed in Table 1 are the following results: The Cronbach’s $\alpha$ of each construct is greater than 0.8 (>the threshold level of 0.7), loads of each construct are basically greater than 0.70 (>the threshold level of 0.5), the comprehensive reliability coefficients of each construct are more significant than 0.80 (>the threshold level of 0.6), and the average extraction variance is greater than 0.50 (>the threshold level of 0.5), indicating that the scale used in this paper has a good level of reliability and validity (see Table 1).

5.3. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

Results show that the sharing intention is significantly correlated with economic motivation, customized service, perceived ease of use, the burden of ownership, and fashion consciousness. In addition, the correlation coefficients between variables are less than 0.700. No obvious multicollinearity exists (see Table 2).
Table 2. Means, standard deviations, and correlations.

|                          | M   | SD  | 1     | 2   | 3     | 4     | 5     |
|--------------------------|-----|-----|-------|-----|-------|-------|-------|
| economic motive          | 5.424 | 0.760 | 1.000 |
| customized service       | 5.302 | 0.817 | 0.390 ** | 1.000 |
| perceived ease of use    | 5.506 | 0.801 | 0.270 ** | 0.315 ** | 1.000 |
| the burden of ownership  | 5.403 | 1.068 | 0.268 ** | 0.222 ** | 0.214 ** | 1.000 |
| fashion consciousness    | 4.562 | 1.37  | 0.208 ** | 0.202 ** | 0.111  | 0.118 * | 1.000 |
| sharing intention        | 5.539 | 0.723 | 0.339 ** | 0.369 ** | 0.406 ** | 0.316 ** | 0.269 ** |

Note: *p < 0.050, **p < 0.010.

5.4. Regression Analysis

We applied multiple regressions to validate the hypothesis. The following sub-models were constructed: Model 1 tested the influence of the control variables on the sharing intention; Model 2 examined the direct effects of economic motivation, customized service, perceived ease of use, the burden of ownership, and fashion consciousness on sharing intention; Model 3 examined the dual interaction effects of economic motivation, customized service, perceived ease of use, and the burden of ownership; and Model 4 examined the dual interaction effects of economic motivation, customized service, perceived ease of use, and fashion consciousness. To reduce the multicollinearity problem, the independent variable and the moderator variable were decentralized (see Table 3).

Table 3. Results of the multiple regressions.

|                          | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Control Variables        |         |         |         |         |
| Gender                   | 0.002   | 0.019   | 0.001   | −0.029  |
| Age                      | −0.971  | −1.042  | −0.982  | −1.502  |
| Monthly income           | 0.183   | 0.098   | 0.077   | 0.043   |
| Direct effects           |         |         |         |         |
| Economic motive          | 0.107 * | 0.083   | 0.117 * |         |
| Customized service       | 0.142 **| 0.149 **| 0.154 **|         |
| Perceived ease of use    | 0.230 ***| 0.209 ***| 0.207 ***|         |
| the burden of ownership  | 0.154 ***| 0.170 ***| 0.167 ***|         |
| Fashion consciousness    | 0.086 * | 0.090 **| 0.104 ***|         |
| interaction effects      |         |         |         |         |
| Economic motive x the burden of ownership | 0.167 ***|         |         |         |
| Customized service x the burden of ownership | −0.161 **|         |         |         |
| Perceived ease of use x the burden of ownership | 0.114 * |         |         |         |
Table 3. Cont.

|                           | Model 1        | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 |
|---------------------------|----------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Economic motive x Fashion|                |         |         |         |
| consciousness             |                |         |         |         |
|                          | −0.158 ***     |         |         |         |
| Customized service x     |                |         |         |         |
| Fashion consciousness    |                |         |         |         |
|                          | 0.117 ***      |         |         |         |
| Perceived ease of use x  |                |         |         |         |
| Fashion consciousness    |                |         |         |         |
|                          | 0.119 ***      |         |         |         |
|\( R^2 \)                 | 0.005          | 0.329   | 0.379   | 0.407   |
| Adjusted\( R^2 \)        | −0.005         | 0.311   | 0.356   | 0.384   |
|\( F \)                   | 0.493          | 28.161 *** | 7.739 *** | 12.546 *** |

Note: * \( p < 0.050 \), ** \( p < 0.010 \), *** \( p < 0.001 \).

(1) Direct effects. Through Model 2, the direct effects of economic motivation, customized service, perceived ease of use, the burden of ownership, and fashion consciousness on sharing intention were examined. Results show that individual service providers’ motivation (economic motivation, \( \beta = 0.107, \ p < 0.05 \)), ability (customized service, \( \beta = 0.142, \ p < 0.01 \)), and opportunity (perceived ease of use, \( \beta = 0.230, \ p < 0.001 \)) contribute to their sharing intention. Hence, H1, H2, and H3 are supported.

(2) Interaction effects. We added an interaction term for economic motivation/customized service/perceived ease of use x the burden of ownership in Model 3. Results show that the interaction item of “economic motivation x the burden of ownership” is positively correlated with the sharing intention (\( \beta = 0.167, \ p < 0.01 \)), the interaction item of “customized service x the burden of ownership” is negatively correlated with the sharing intention (\( \beta = −0.161, \ p < 0.01 \)), and the interaction item of “perceived ease of use x the burden of ownership” is positively correlated with the sharing intention (\( \beta = 0.114, \ p < 0.01 \)). In other words, H4 (b) is not supported, whereas H4 (a) and H4 (c) are supported. To clearly reflect the two-dimensional interaction between “economic motivation x the burden of ownership” and “perceived ease of use x the burden of ownership”, we used Aiken and West’s simple slope method to test [56], see Figure 1.

Figure 1. The moderating effect of the burden of ownership on (a): economic motivation; (b): perceived ease of use.

We added an interaction term for economic motivation/customized service/perceived ease of use x fashion consciousness in Model 4. Results show that the interaction item of “economic motivation x fashion consciousness” is negatively correlated with the sharing intention (\( \beta = −0.159, \ p < 0.01 \)), the interaction item of “customized service x fashion consciousness” is positively correlated with the sharing intention (\( \beta = 0.117, \ p < 0.01 \), and the interaction item of “perceived ease of use x fashion consciousness” is negatively correlated with the sharing intention (\( \beta = −0.158, \ p < 0.01 \)).
consciousness “is positively correlated with the sharing intention ($\beta = 0.119, p < 0.01$). In other words, H5 (a) is not supported, whereas H5 (b) and H5 (c) are supported. We reused Aiken and West’s simple slope method to perform the test, see Figure 2.

![Figure 2](image)

**Figure 2.** The moderating effect of fashion consciousness on (a): customized service; (b): perceived ease of use.

6. Conclusions and Prospects

6.1. Conclusions and Discussion

1. The impact of individual service providers’ ability, motivation, and opportunity. In the sharing economy, the resources required for services come from enterprises and underutilized resources owned by individuals [22]. A large number of studies have extensively explored the conditions that an enterprise should have as a service provider. In comparison, few studies have discussed the conditions an individual with underutilized resources should have to become a service provider. In this case, we systematically and theoretically discuss as well as empirically analyze the formation mechanism of the sharing intention of individual service providers with MOA theory. Empirical results show that economic motivation, customized service, and perceived ease of use positively influences the sharing intention of individual service providers, which is consistent with Siemsen, Roth, and Balasubramanian’s research stating that ability, motivation, and opportunity can effectively predict behavior [24].

2. The moderating effect of the burden of ownership. Previous studies have discussed the ownership paradigm and its positive impact in detail [47]. Under the stimulation of the external environment, such as the development of the Internet and the increase in income, impulsive consumption has brought pleasure to individuals. However, this has also led to a large number of items becoming idle and eventually turning into burdens. In the context of this new economic model, we discuss the influence of ownership on individual behavior from the ‘perspective of burden’. Empirical results show that the heavier the burden of ownership, the stronger the influence of individual service providers’ (b) economic motivation and (c) perceived ease of use on their sharing intention. This finding is consistent with Schaefer’s, Lawson’s, and Kukar-Kinney’s research, which concluded that consumers prefer acquisition rather than possession because of the burden of ownership [47]. Interestingly, we found that the burden of ownership negatively affects the relationship between customization and sharing intention. As Wang, Lee, Fang, and Ma stated, customization is a time-consuming and costly marketing strategy [39]. Subsequently, the burden of ownership will bring more risks and troubles to individuals [47]. Thus, the burden of ownership will weaken and even negatively affect the relationship between customized services and sharing intention.

3. The moderating effect of fashion consciousness. The sharing economy, which provides resource sharing or acquisition rather than possession through the platform, provides a new form of value [20–22]. This practice is consistent with sustainability [11,21] and embodies a fashion trend [52,53],
which meets consumers’ pursuit of sustainability [57] and conforms to the characteristics of new consumer groups. For example, new consumer groups grew during the first years of the Internet and possess advanced consumption concepts, love fashion, follow the trends, and enjoy new things (Accenture China consumer insights series Report 2018: new consumption, new forces) [34,35]. Thus, we introduced the concept of “fashion consciousness” and explored its impact on individual behavior. Results show that an increase of fashion consciousness brought about stronger influences of (b) customized service capability and (c) perceived ease of use of the mobile Internet on the sharing intention. In other words, H5 (b) is not supported. This can be due to the fact that, based on the limited attention [58], the stronger the fashion consciousness is, the more likely the individual is to attach importance to fashion and fun in activities while ignoring the economic value generated by them, which will inevitably weaken or even negatively affect the relationship between economic motivation and the sharing intention.

6.2. Theoretical Contribution and Implications

This study is an extension and enrichment of the research on the theme of the sharing economy. The paper’s theoretical contributions are outlined here.

(1) The introduction of MOA theory enriches the theoretical basis of the research on the sharing economy. Previous studies focus only on transaction cost theory, collaborative consumption theory, and multilateral platform theory. However, based on MOA theory, we discussed the sharing intention of individual service providers with underutilized resources, which is conducive to a clearer self-cognition of individuals.

(2) We discussed the sharing intention from the perspective of individual service providers with underutilized resources, which is another identity of consumers. In the sharing economy, an individual can be either a resource demander or a resource provider. When playing two roles at the same time, he or she is also called a “prosumer” [59]. Most of the existing studies focus on the participation behavior of individuals from the perspective of consumers, whilst ignoring the identity of service providers. Exploring the influencing factors of the sharing intention from the perspective of individual service providers not only provides guidance and suggestions for private flexible employment, but also positively responds to new development concepts, which, in turn, provides an important impetus for improving resource utilization efficiency and promoting high-quality development.

(3) Although many individuals have the supporting conditions to participate in this new economic model, their sharing intention is very low. The number of individual service providers accounts for only approximately 5.1% of the total population in China, and the relative proportion is still deficient and requires further improvement. Combined with the consumption characteristics and values of new consumer groups, we explored the interactions among the burden of ownership/fashion consciousness and motivation/ability/opportunity in the context of the sharing economy from the perspectives of “the burden of ownership” and “fashion consciousness” concepts, thus deepening our understanding of the boundary for improving sharing intention.

The sharing economy has profoundly influenced China’s economic patterns. Apart from China, other countries around the world are also guiding and vigorously developing the sharing economy, thus further contributing to its development. Despite its advantages, however, this new business model is also prone to several problems, such as obsolete management practices and a small number of resource-sharing personnel. Hence, the development path of the sharing economy is still fraught with difficulties and has a long way to go. To help solve this problem, our research provides some suggestions and enlightenment for its further development on several levels.

First, on the government level, we argue that the government should further promote the implementation of new development concepts, especially the idea of sharing and green development. Then, it must implement this specific economy strategy through omni-channel marketing, such as through the Internet, mobile phones, television, radio, newspapers, etc., and then promote the concept of sharing consumption, foster the spirit and culture of sharing, and encourage the
sustainable use of resources among the public. At the same time, the government must also focus on eradicating the negative effects of resource idleness—the burden of ownership—gradually deepening individual cognition and experience, overcoming the traditional consumption concept, and continuously improving public willingness and enthusiasm to share. Moreover, apart from actively promulgating the policy of sharing economic development and individual incentives, the government should foster a good atmosphere for sharing economic development by strengthening construction (e.g., infrastructure construction in the sharing areas, investment in business services, talent teams, etc.) and improve the institutional mechanisms (e.g., market supervision of sharing economic development, credit construction, information services, and legal services) in order to effectively encourage and guide enterprises toward orderly competition.

Second, on the enterprise level, we argue that enterprises should actively implement the national policy and the concept of sharing economic development, increase the capital investment and research & development innovation in this field, and actively promote the construction of sharing economic intelligence data, platform operation, team personnel, and so on. In doing so, enterprises can promote the sharing economic business model and brand marketing. Enterprises should also fully expand customization as well as online and offline sharing service business methods and models, and then create innovative and mutually beneficial sharing business modes, especially according to the characteristics of new consumers who love fashion, enjoy new things, take risks, and are more willing to start businesses and pursue free and flexible work and lifestyle. In this way, enterprises can improve the level of sharing economic development comprehensively and on multiple levels.

6.3. Limitations and Further Research

Although this research was expanded in theory and gave some suggestions in practice, some shortcomings and areas for improvement still exist.

(1) This paper does not directly examine the mediating mechanism of the influence of the ability, motivation, and opportunity of individual service providers on sharing intention. In the future, exploring the explanatory mechanism of the mediating mechanism in the relationships among ability, motivation, opportunity, and sharing intention is necessary.

(2) Although we emphasized the anonymity and confidentiality of the research during the survey and controlled the age and monthly income level of the subjects in the data analysis, the research conclusions were still affected, to some extent, by the common method bias since all variables involved in this paper were self-reported. Thus, future research should consider the use of case studies to support the conclusions of this study.

(3) Previous studies have shown that, in addition to economic motives, environmental and social motivations will affect taking part and sharing in certain ways [6,60]. However, the conclusions about the impact of environmental and social motivations are inconsistent [5,27]. Consistent with the views of most scholars [26,31], we believe that individuals participate in sharing economic activities for economic benefits. To avoid ambiguity, we mainly considered economic motivation. Thus, we suggest future research to evaluate the impact of environmental and social motivations to gain further insights into the reasons why individual service providers participate and share.

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