ABSTRACT

The growth in the use of online platforms in the sharing economy is generating great interest in the scientific community. This study seeks to discover what causes travelers to use ridesharing platforms. A theoretical model of causal relationships, evaluated with data collected in an online survey, using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) is proposed. The results show that attitude towards ridesharing is a critical antecedent of intention to use. Travelers develop positive attitudes mainly due to the economic reward of making savings in travel costs. In addition, attitude is also positively influenced, although to a lesser extent, by perceptions of security and by the moral motivation to help other people. In contrast, the influence of social motivation is not significant. Practical implications guide platform managers in the design of their commercial strategies.
INTRODUCTION

The new internet-based technologies are an engine for collaborative economies. They give consumers easy access to information and communication platforms that promote shared use, and which have made this type of consumption grow exponentially (Botsman & Rogers, 2011). The sharing economy has changed the way people share and carry out transactions in digital spaces (Sutherland & Jarrahi, 2018). Exchange-based economies are not new, since barter systems and communal lifestyles have a long history. This strong growth is due to the introduction of new technologies, to the late economic crisis, trends towards urbanization, consumers’ inclinations towards sustainable consumption and the possibility of enjoying new experiences (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Kathan, Matzler, & Veider, 2016).

Many digital companies are active in the collaborative economy, in many industrial sectors, and with international presence (Parente, Geleilate, & Kong, 2018). Available services include animal care, tour guiding, parking and storage rental. Although the main companies focus on the hospitality sector (e.g., Airbnb and CouchSurfing), other widely used collaborative economy websites offer ridesharing systems, such as BlaBlaCar and Amicoche.com. BlaBlaCar, on whose business model this work focuses, works by connecting travellers who have common destinations and facilitating their relationship so that they travel together (Casprini, Di Minin, & Paraboschi, 2018).

Collaborative economies are attracting increasing research attention (e.g., Kathan et al., 2016; Parente et al.; 2018; Sutherland, & Jarrahi, 2018). Previous studies have analysed the phenomenon of sharing from a macro-economic perspective, analysing the role played by intermediaries and behaviours and implications at an economic and sociological level (ethics, non-commercial areas, economic implications, etc.). However, few studies have analysed the individual behaviour of users (Bucher, Fieseler, & Lutz, 2016). In addition, most studies focus on the tourism sector, especially on motivations for use (Geissinger, Laurell, Öberg, & Sandström, 2019), and largely do not consider other sectors. In the field of transport, the motivation for car sharing has been investigated (e.g., Bardhi, & Eckhardt, 2012), and studies have analysed its ecological effects and its impact on traditional sectors, such as Uber on taxis (e.g., Casprini et al., 2018; Geissinger et al., 2019). However, the question as to what leads a collaborative economy user to rideshare remains unaddressed. In other words, what are the motivations that lead a person to prefer to share a trip with other users? Thus, the objective of this research is to identify what motivates travellers to rideshare, through an analysis of four classic motivations of consumer behaviour: economic, social, moral and security (see Bucher et al., 2016; Lee, Lee, & Kim, 2018).

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Sharing is a process in which one party shares an object (or experience) that they own with another party for joint use, and/or vice versa, to obtain the benefits of a product without having to own it (Belk, 2007; Belk, 2010). The scientific community agrees that the basic nature of sharing is that it is an act of joint use of an object that is owned by at least one of the sharing parties. Changes in social technologies and societal attitudes have encouraged the growth of online sharing economy models (Bucher et al., 2016). In many cases the consumer values having access to an experience rather than owning the product that facilitates the experience (Bardhi & Eckhart, 2012; Belk, 2013). This practice has increased due to the trend among consumers to use internet-based platforms and to establish new relationships of trust via the medium (Bucher et al., 2016).
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