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Sharing Economy – a Modern Phenomenon

The Emergence of Electric Scooters

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ABSTRACT:

Sharing economy has rapidly come into today's society. Although the concept of sharing is not new per se, the modern form of the sharing economy has only recently emerged. The main idea in the sharing economy is buying an access to use resources instead of owning them—it enables a more efficient use of the existing resources. Sharing economy has two primary business models: peer-to-peer and business-to-peer. As known services, such as Airbnb, are based on the former, the latter includes the popular shared mobility service, electric scooters. This form of mobility has been integrated in the landscape of major cities in Finland, initially in the capital Helsinki.

Given that the electric scooters have been present in news outlets due to the injuries related to their use, and also the variety of public opinions for and against, it is a relevant topic to conduct research on. The main purpose of the research is both to explore the earlier literature and create an appropriate framework to reflect the empirical research upon but also to investigate who participates in the sharing economy by using the electric scooters and why.

The methodological choice for the empirical research was to perform a qualitative study by interviewing eight people living in Helsinki to gain insight on their general perceptions of the sharing economy, and also to clarify what are the most common motives and deterrents for the use of electric scooters. On a general level, the most relevant categories were given for both motives (economic, social, convenience, environmental) and deterrents (trust, efficacy, social, sustainability) in the general context of sharing economy. Consequently, the results of the interviews were mirrored to those categories.

The empirical results indicate that the interviewees perceive the concept of the sharing economy similarly—the fundamental purpose is positive, and the goal to use resources more effectively is welcomed. More specifically, users of the electric scooters mostly value the following attributes: they are a good alternative to public transportation, they save time, they are convenient, and they are widely available. In addition, the most common motives and deterrents are aligned with the main categories as for the sharing economy in general. Subsequently, the most frequently mentioned categories for the motives were convenience and environmental, whereas the most frequently mentioned categories for deterrents were trust and sustainability.

KEYWORDS: sharing economy, collaborative consumption, electric scooters, peer-to-peer, business-to-peer

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1 Introduction

The sharing economy has been rapidly emerging in the 21st century. One of the main accelerators and enablers for the phenomenon has been the development of the internet and the online platforms therein. (Cherry & Pidgeon, 2018.) The concept of sharing is not foreign per se since people have always shared resources with their relatives, friends and neighbors. However, it has recently transformed into a way of conducting business. Sharing economy allows people to receive the benefits of a product or a service without owning it (Botsman & Rogers, 2010a). The principle stems from the need to utilize idle resources to fulfill different needs of individuals and society (Cherry & Pidgeon, 2018).

Although the sharing economy is not spread throughout Finland, it has grown during the recent years. For example, for the population aged 16 to 89, utilizing online platforms for accommodation sharing grew three percentage points in 2017–2018. Moreover, four percent of the same age group used shared mobility between September and November of 2018. (Official Statistics of Finland, 2018.) Consequently, Novikova (2017) highlights new forms of shared mobility such as sharing a reservable car with other inhabitants of the apartment building, car-sharing models from car manufacturers—the author stresses that the consumers may focus on buying *mobility* instead of cars.

That said, shared mobility is not foreign in Finland and Helsinki. For instance, international shared mobility companies have already been active in Finland before the electric scooters: Uber, Bolt, Drive Now, Kyydit.net, Autolevi and Bloxcar. In addition to controlling the issue of overconsumption (Albinsson & Yasanthi Perera, 2012), buying an access to a resource—such as a car—rather than owning it may have financial benefits as well: Duncan (2011) finds that carsharing can lower the expenditure on mobility for people who do not have a consistent need for vehicle use.

Subsequently, the year 2019 has introduced a new form of shared mobility for the citizens in the capital: electric scooters. The companies which provide electric scooters

for sharing are German natives *Tier* and *Lab1886*, Swedish *Voi*, American *Lime*, Finnish *Hoop*, and Russian *Samocat* (in collaboration with Helsinki's public transportation). Concurrently, the scooters have gained attention by being visible in different media outlets.

1.1 Background of the study

As European Commission (2016; 2018) maps the interests and motives of the people in EU region to participate in the sharing economy, the studies do not include electric scooters which recently emerged in Helsinki's urban landscape. That said, the lack of research of the newest addition to the shared mobility creates a relevant and timely topic to elaborate on. What is the motive to choose a shared resource and not a traditional alternative? Consequently, who are the persons that choose electric scooter as a form of mobility?

Vaughan and Hawksworth (2014) estimate the revenue opportunities of the sharing economy industry to be up to 335 billion US dollars in by the year 2025. Given the estimate, the incentives for new startups and other possible companies creating new sharing economy platforms are evident. As mentioned above, platforms for sharing have been present, however, the electric scooters embody the phenomenon better as they can be seen whenever a person in downtown Helsinki exits home.

As the sharing economy has emerged throughout the world, it has penetrated into consumer's habits. The urban landscape in cities has changed and there can be seen several different models of collaborative consumption—whether it is related to mobility, accommodation or other business areas. As of September 2019, there are already several service providers in Finland: Airbnb, Drive Now, Uber, Voi, Tier, Hoop, Lime and Float to name a few.

Regardless of the plethora of startups and companies offering the platforms for sharing, there has not been recent empirical research in Finland to identify the people who favor sharing economy. European Commission (2018) studies the phenomenon on the EU-level, with over 500 respondents from Finland. On the contrary, the report does not identify the region nor the city of the respondents, thus it is important to target the research into a specific area—for instance, electric scooters cannot be found nation-wide in Finland.

Additionally, the motive behind the decision to participate in peer-to-peer or business-to-peer mobility sharing is yet to be thoroughly researched, albeit Novikova's (2017) study identified three key factors for using shared mobility: time, cost and convenience. As the platforms are accessible widely and as there can be more motives to prefer using resources instead of owning (Tussyadiah, 2015), the empirical research is done to identify these factors because no earlier literature demonstrates the results in the context of electric scooters.

1.2 Delimitations

Theoretically, old forms of sharing could fall under the definition of sharing economy or collaborative consumption. For example, the main concept of a library is to offer people access to information through allowing them to loan books for free. However, since the term "sharing economy" has emerged recent history and given the certain framework on which this thesis will focus, the area of research is limited to match specific requirements. Most importantly, the form of peer-to-peer or business-to-peer sharing needs to be linked to online platforms. Sharing economy platforms such as Bolt, Uber, Tier and Drive Now meet the requirements.

Also, even though European Commission (2016; 2018) already investigates the motives and profiles of the participants of the sharing economy, the recency of electric scooters in Finland makes it a relevant topic to place research on. The research is targeted for the

users in Helsinki to mitigate inaccuracy due to the fact that shared mobility is not offered nation-wide; a population from too many cities and municipalities would most likely not provide the wanted results.

The research paper's theory part encompasses the essential components of the sharing economy. First, the sharing economy is given a definition. The terminology regarding the topic varies, and there are several different words used interchangeably of the sharing economy, such as collaborative economy (e.g. European Commission, 2016). The literature review will acknowledge the similarities and differences in the terminology. Second, the sharing economy in Helsinki will be mapped to provide insight in the current service providers. The year 2019 introduced electric scooters in Finland for the first time; Tier, Voi, Lime, Hoop, Float and Samocat (in collaboration with Helsinki's public transportation).

Then, the existing literature and research will be addressed; what is the current climate of the business area? To demonstrate, Aslam and Shah (2017: 57–58) discuss the controversy in the taxation of the sharing economy, and the possible advantages it might receive compared to traditional business models. Other mobility and sharing economy models will be reviewed additionally (e.g. Uber, Drive Now, Airbnb) to demonstrate the topic from a broad perspective. The aim is to find if any preliminary associations of any kind can act as a motive or a deterrent to participate in the sharing economy.

Consequently, the primary concentration is on the electric scooters. Given that the topic and scope of sharing economy is not only limited to shared mobility, the thesis focuses on their business area in the empirical part due to the lack of research on the electric scooters' users' motivations and the socio-demographics. Thus, even though the reviewed literature about the sharing economy is not narrowed to electric scooters, the theory is mirrored in the empirical results. Conducting research specifically in the business-to-peer context is assessed in the managerial implications and limitations.

1.3 Research question

The purpose of the research paper is to determine who supports the sharing economy from the perspective of shared mobility and why. As stated in the previous chapters, service providers such as Uber or Drive Now have already been operating in Helsinki for a longer period of time. However, as electric scooters have only recently entered the business field, research should be done to reach a more comprehensive understanding of the people's motives to participate in using them.

Hence, the primary research question of the thesis is

"Who participates in the sharing economy by using electric scooters and why?"

In order to find an answer to the research question, the following objectives need to be fulfilled:

- 1. To establish a framework for the sharing economy in accordance with appropriate literature.*
- 2. To find out the general perceptions on the sharing economy*
- 3. To find out the motives and possible deterrents of using the electric scooters*

1.4 Structure of the thesis

The first chapter of the thesis will be the general introduction for the topic. Similar to this research proposal, the introduction's purpose is to create interest for the topic and to get the reader familiarized with it. Introduction includes the background of the study, research question and structure of the thesis. The second chapter will elaborate on the literature of the topic. The earlier research will be analyzed, and previous studies evaluated and reflected upon the objectives of the thesis. Additionally, this chapter will

define the theoretical framework, that is, the scope of the study through delimitations together with the definitions of key concepts.

The third chapter will go through the data and the used methodology. Moreover, the chapter will have the validation of the data and a demonstration of the reliability, as well as an introduction of the sample. Then, the fourth chapter shows the results of the research in-depth, assessing how the theory is reflected in the results. The Last chapter includes conclusions and discussion to finalize the thesis and its research by going through the research questions and objectives. In addition, limitations for the study are listed and future research proposals made based on the results.

2 Sharing economy

Sharing economy is one of many terms that are used to describe the phenomenon. Although several authors agree upon the main characteristics of it, there is no original publications from which scholars would derive their interpretations from. In terms of volume, Botsman and Rogers' (2010b) publication *What's mine is yours: the rise of collaborative consumption* is cited by over 3 300 publications in Google Scholar's search engine, making it one of the most relevant sources of information. The authors discuss topics such as access over ownership and peer-to-peer renting (Botsman & Rogers, 2010b: 75, 99, 106). In addition, the authors refer to collaborative consumption—one of the many interchangeably used terms regarding the sharing economy. Felson and Spaeth (1978) describe collaborative consumption as a joint activity performed by one or more together with others.

Moreover, other terms used to describe the activity of sharing are the, access-based consumption, the gig economy and the peer economy. Bardhi and Eckhardt (2012) define *access-based consumption* "as transactions that may be market mediated in which no transfer of ownership takes place". That is, paying for the use of a resource and not buying it. *The gig economy* on the other hand refers to the recent trend in which many workers do not want to have a long-term employment with companies but rather shorter and flexible assignments, *gigs* (Friedman, 2014). Last, *peer economy* refers to different services enabled by web technologies and effective utilization of idle capacity (Bellotti, Ambard, Turner, Gossmann, Demkova & Carroll, 2015).

Russell Belk is another important author who addresses the sharing economy and the term "sharing" itself. The author highlights that sharing is not only related to things but also to people, animals, values, ideas and time (Belk, 2007). Sharing is also linked to be a social and a communal activity, of which creates relationships between people (Belk, 2010). Moreover, Belk reviews the terminology regarding the sharing economy and challenges the interchangeable usage of the terms *collaborative consumption* and *sharing economy* (Belk, 2014).

In terms of the motivations to use sharing economy, Bellotti et al. (2015), Hamari, Sjöklint and Ukkonen (2016), Böcker and Meelen (2017), Tussyadiah and Pesonen (2016), and European Commission (2016; 2018) have studies that are relevant for this research due to the following: first, they provide useful and comparable data. Second, their data is gathered partially or mostly from the country of Finland, particularly from Helsinki. Moreover, all previous and relevant studies about the electric scooters are utilized to support the thesis. For instance, Hollingsworth, Copeland and Johnson (2019) as well as Choron and Sakran (2019) investigate the sustainability and health aspects of the electric scooters.

Even though there are no decisive and unanimous definitions for the concept, similar characteristics are listed repeatedly. First, sharing economy is based on the shift from the ownership of resources to sharing them, access over ownership. It encourages peer-to-peer sharing of goods and services, such as transportation, housing and physical products (Díaz Foncea, Marcuello & Montreal-Garrido, 2016; Cherry & Pidgeon, 2018). Second, the business models are based on different digital platforms, being scalable and available on-demand (Vaughan & Hawksworth, 2014; Hamari et al. 2016). Put differently, Constantiou, Marton & Tuunainen (2017) list three main attributes for the sharing economy: access over ownership, peer-to-peer and utilization of idle resources.

In addition to peer-to-peer sharing of goods and services, Schor (2014) distinguishes business-to-peer (B2P) to be a different model. The former is based on commissions earned from the sharing activity, whereas the latter focuses on maximizing the profit from every executed transaction. Image 1 illustrates the peer-to-peer flow of the sharing economy: the service provider is a private individual and the online platform acts as a tool through which the user will buy the service. The provider does not receive the payment as a whole but needs pay a platform fee for the entity of which platform is used. (Basselier, Langenus, & Walravens, 2018.)

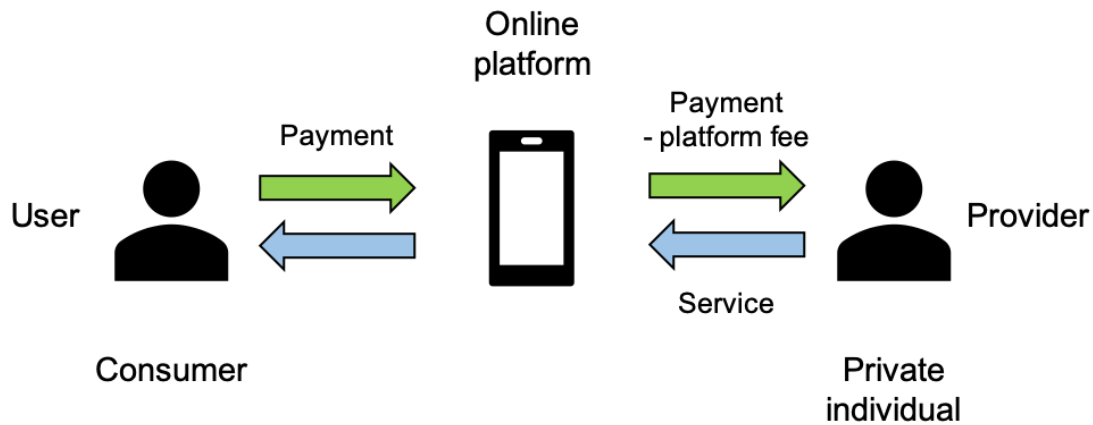


Image 1. Peer-to-peer model in the sharing economy (Basselier et al., 2018).

As the peer-to-peer flow requires another individual in the shared activity, platforms of shared mobility such as Autolevi and Blox Car and Uber fit into the category. Autolevi and Blox Car allow individuals to rent their cars to others while they are not in use, and Uber allows individuals to provide rides to others while driving their own cars. Another frequently used example of the sharing economy is Airbnb, in which persons can rent their homes or rooms of their homes to travelers. As a matter of fact, both Uber and Airbnb have become the most used examples when addressing the different sharing economy's platforms, not only because of their distribution but also because of their platforms—Sutherland and Jarrahi's (2018) study goes through 435 different publications of the sharing economy, concluding that 91 % of them consider digital technologies as elements of the sharing economy.

Regardless, business-to-peer model is constructed in a similar manner. However, as the online platform is provided by the service-providing company, there is no platform fee subtracted from the transaction and principle of utilizing idle capacity is not met. The companies providing electric scooters for shared mobility are examples of this model; the consumer is not in social exchange or making payment with other private persons but only using the service a company provides. Similarly, carsharing service Drive Now represents the business-to-peer model as the cars are provided by the franchisee OP.

Image 2 illustrates this activity in a simplified form, albeit neglecting the indirect costs such as taxes, similar to Image 1.

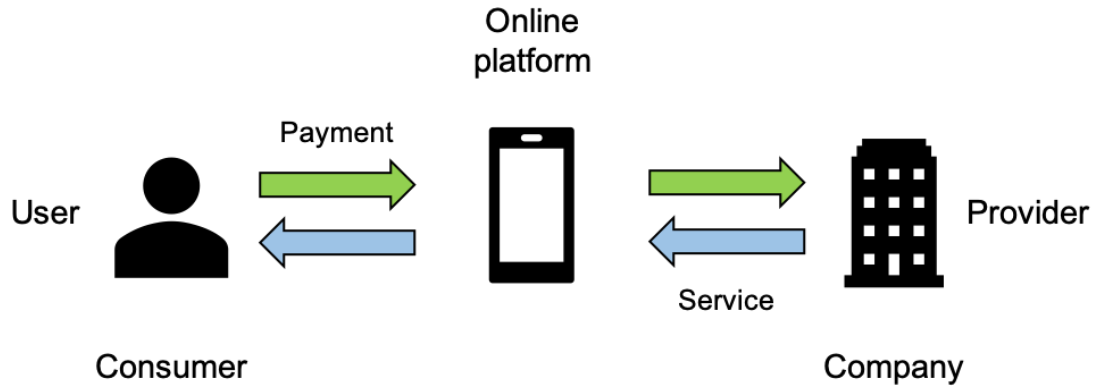


Image 2. Business-to-peer model in the sharing economy (derived from Basselier et al., 2018).

2.1 Drivers of the sharing economy

Although the concept of sharing is old, sharing economy has only emerged recently—what has had an influence on its growth? Different authors acknowledge different drivers, however, those drivers can be categorized into four main groups: technological, societal, economic and environmental drivers (Owyang, Tran, & Silva, 2013; Daunorienė, Drakšaitė, Snieška & Valodkienė, 2015; Zervas, Proserpio & Byers, 2017; Basselier et al., 2018; Sung, Kim, & Lee, 2018).

The group of *technological drivers* is a key factor in the development process and one of the main drivers of the growth (Zervas et al., 2017). Belk (2014), too, emphasizes the importance of technology and especially the development of Web 2.0. Web 2.0 allows website users to publish, interact, collaborate and share user-generated content with each other on a regular basis, whereas Web 1.0 was based more on individual content creation. (Carroll & Romano, 2010; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010.) Combining the aforementioned with the rapid increase in smartphone users lowers the threshold to

participate in sharing economy; as of December 2018, 80 % of the total population in Finland had a smartphone in own use (Official Statistics of Finland, 2018). Correspondingly, almost 70 % of the whole population in the United States owned a smartphone in 2018 (Holst, 2018).

Simultaneously, the development of the online platforms has made the market entry easier through providing sufficient tools for web and app developers to create new possibilities. Consequently, financial transactions have been made easier to execute by establishing new digital solutions for payment systems (Owyang et al., 2013). Both national and international transaction service providers can be found in Finland: PayPal, Klarna and Mobile Pay to name a few. (Felländer, Ingram & Teigland, 2015.) The service providers offer flexible solutions for transactions, supporting the peer-to-peer aspect by eliminating intermediaries.

The phenomenon has *societal drivers* as well. The study of Fitzmaurice, Ladegaard, Attwood-Charles, Cansoy, Carfagna, Schor and Wengronowitz (2020) suggests that sharing economy promotes social interaction between individuals. This stems from the will to limit the consumption of different brands and focus more on the community and other people (Owyang et al., 2013). Ikkala and Lampinen's (2015) study of people living in Helsinki supports the social aspect—in addition to financial gains, the hosts of the home sharing service Airbnb find the social point of view enjoyable. The social exchange even acts as the main driver for some instead of the financial aspect.

Moreover, the population density and urbanization has increased in the 21st century. In the year 2000, 46.5 % of the total population lived in urban areas and 53.5 % in rural areas. In contrast, 53.9 % of people lived in urban areas and 46.1 % in rural areas in the year 2015. (World Bank, 2016.) This accelerates the sharing economy as more people have easier access to collaborative consumption (Owyang et al., 2013). However, the shift is emphasized in developed countries such as the United States or Finland, as the Table 1 demonstrates. In both countries the percentage of people living in urban areas

is near 90 % by the year 2030. On the contrary, in Europe the urbanization remains under 80 % and in Asia under 60 % by the year 2030, albeit the region of Asia will have the most aggressive growth. (United Nations, 2019.)

Table 1. Urbanization in the world (United Nations, 2019).

Country or region	Urban population		Urban proportion (per cent)	
	2018	2030	2018	2030
Finland	4 732 000	4 970 000	85	87
United States	268 787 000	301 001 000	82	85
Northern America	298 987 000	334 780 000	82	85
Europe	552 911 000	572 890 000	74	77
Asia	2 266 131 000	2 802 262 000	50	57

The economic drivers of the sharing economy are logical—as the majority of people have idle capacity and resources available, the sharing economy incentivizes monetization of the idle capacity (Owyang et al., 2013). To demonstrate, approximately half of the households in the United States own a power drill, yet they are used only 6 to 13 minutes during their lifetime on average. Similarly, there is a constant abundance of spare rooms and apartments worldwide, of which could be put to use through the sharing economy. (Botsman & Rogers, 2010a.) These listed examples can be new sources of income for individuals, thus increasing their financial flexibility, and possibly, even affecting their financial independence (Owyang et al., 2013).

Approached differently, the ownership of resources may have a negative financial impact as well. In the context of carsharing, Duncan (2011) argues that people who do not need to use vehicles frequently may benefit financially from buying shared mobility instead of owning a car. To demonstrate, the Automobile and Touring Club of Finland's calculations state that owning a car which costs under 20 000 euros and driving 50 kilometers daily

would cost approximately 260 euros monthly. The monthly expenditure includes taxes, insurance, maintenance and fuel but excludes depreciation of the asset, hence the real net cost would be even higher. (Hanhinen, 2018.) Seeing the financial requirements for the need in the abovementioned example, utilizing shared mobility could be a better alternative financially if the same need for commuting is fulfilled with a lower expenditure.

Last, as overconsumption has gained increasing attention in the 21st century (e.g. Brown & Cameron, 2000; Albinsson & Yasanthi Perera, 2012), the sharing economy encourages consumers to be more *environmentally* cautious in terms of their consumption patterns. Even though Schor (2014) challenges the direct environmental impact of the sharing economy and the lack thereof, Demailly and Novel (2014) acknowledge that the impact on environmental sustainability stems from the sharing of quality goods. That is, the goods need to be originally manufactured recyclable and durable. However, promoting the mentality to utilize existing resources rather than producing new ones is advantageous for the environment per se (Grybaitė & Stankevičienė, 2016).

2.2 Electric scooters

Dockless electric scooters first emerged in the United States, as a company *Bird* started to operate in California (Hall, 2017.) The basic principle on how the rental system of the electric scooters works is that a user searches for the nearest scooter through a mobile application. Then, after the desired scooter is found, the user scans the QR code found from the top of the scooter, unlocking it for use. After the trip, the user parks the scooter inside the designated area and ends the trip by locking the scooter. The unlock usually costs one euro, and the trip fee varies between 15 cents and 30 cents per minute depending on which company's scooter is used. (McKenzie, 2019.)

As a matter of fact, the majority of the electric scooters are supplied by the same Chinese manufacturer, Ninebot—the same company which owns the well-known mobility brand

Segway. Even new companies providing electric scooters are relying to Ninebot, as Ford, Uber and Lyft's new electric scooter brands are being supplied by the Chinese company. (Bergen & Brustein, 2018.) Although there are several different service providers in the United States, the majority of them are yet to enter Finland. The following electric scooter providers appeared in Finland during the year 2019: Tier, Voi, Lime, Hoop and Lab1886.

However, using electric scooters is not risk-free. A study reveals that 249 electric scooter related injuries occurred over the period of one year in two different California-based medical center's emergency departments. Moreover, 200 injuries (over 80 %) required radiograph or CT imaging (Trivedi, Liu, Antonio, Wheaton, Kreger, Yap, Schriger & Elmore, 2019). Evidence can be found from Finland as well—there were over 150 injuries treated between May and July of 2019 in the emergency department of the Haartman hospital in Helsinki (STT, 2019). The empirical part of the thesis investigates if the physical risks are linked to the possible motives or deterrents in the use of the electric scooters. In addition to Trivedi et al. (2019) and STT (2019), the injuries of electric scooters are studied by different authors (e.g. Brownson, Fagan, Dickson & Civil, 2019; Schlaff, Sack, Elliott & Rosner 2019).

2.3 Critique

Regardless of the many positively perceived attributes of the sharing economy, it has received critique as well. In terms of the peer-to-peer aspect, the one who is providing the service, a platform worker, may have a unique position comparable to an independent contractor, not being subject to labor law and employment protections (Dubal, 2017; Schor & Attwood-Charles, 2017). Schor and Attwood-Charles (2017) describe the aforementioned risks as legal ones but acknowledge physical and platform risks, too. The physical risks are related to letting strangers enter homes and vehicles; some Airbnb users have had their homes left damaged. Platforms risks on the other hand

are related to increasing pressure from growth and competition. That is, wages are pushed down and the threshold for exit and entry is low in the business.

As a matter of fact, taxation in the sharing economy is claimed to be a possible advantage compared to traditional business models, which has led to controversy. This is due to the different challenges the taxation contains for the workers, such as annual expense tracking and estimating the deductibility of the expenses—circumstances may also allow misleading reporting about the value of work done. The ambiguity of taxation may act as a hindering factor in the development of the business model. (Aslam & Shah, 2017: 58; Oei & Ring, 2018.)

Furthermore, sharing economy's participants are prone to inequality and racial discrimination (Toto, 2017). Edelman, Luca and Svirsky's (2017) study indicates that Airbnb guests who inquire accommodation are more likely to get accepted if the guest's profile is of Caucasian race. In fact, the level of discrimination is not significantly affected by the host's identity nor the accommodation's location (Edelman et al., 2017). Even though the peer-to-peer aspect of the phenomenon—the direct match making between the buyer and the provider—enables an easier participation in the sharing economy, it is an inefficient tool in mitigating the issue of discrimination (Piracha, Sharples, Forrest & Dunn, 2019).

As the aforementioned critique applies more to peer-to-peer models rather than business-to-peer, the business model of electric scooters had also been under discussion. In detail, the environmental impact and the sustainability of them is not considered positive. In terms of the life cycle assessment of the electric scooters, the use of them results in bigger carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions compared to the alternative mobility services. Because of the CO₂ impact by the materials, an electric scooter needs to have a life span of 284 days in order to have a lower global warming impact than what they substitute. (Moreau, de Jamblinne de Meux, Zeller, D'Ans, Ruwet & Achten, 2020.) Subsequently, according to Hollingsworth et al. (2019), electric scooters' lifetime may be

shorter than the public would assume. However, riding an electric scooter is more sustainable than driving a car with a low fuel efficiency. Given that sustainability is a megatrend (Mittelstaedt, Shultz, Kilbourne, & Peterson, 2014), it is an important point of view to take into consideration in future research.

3 Consumer point of view

Due to the increase in general welfare, individuals are capable of going beyond fulfilling only their physiological needs by spending their money only on necessities (Maslow, 1943). Consequently, as the supply of different products and services as well as the access to new technologies has grown, consumers have the option to decide which products and services they want to consume—the consumer power has increased. This chapter reviews the different forms of consumer power due to its effects on the sharing economy: consumer have a wide selection of different service providers in the current the competitive environment.

Upon the emergence of the internet in the beginning of 1990's, scholars predicted a shift in consumption to electronic marketplaces (e.g. Bakos, 1991; Kozinets, 1999). The mundane access to internet—along with the development of mobile devices and social media platforms—has offered a variety of different possibilities for ordinary people. Consequently, consumers have gained more power throughout the years, and there can be categorized four sources of consumer power: demand-based, information-based, network-based and crowd-based. (Labrecque, vor dem Esche, Mathwick, Novak & Hofacker, 2013.)

Demand-based power stems from the impact of consumption and purchase behaviors, of which are enabled by the social media and internet technologies. That is, consumer have the power to decide whether to buy or not to buy a product. Even though demand-based power has been existing before the age of the internet, the technological advancement removed many constraints, such as geographical and time-related. The variety in distribution helps to maintain the general prices in a reasonable level as well. (Labrecque et al., 2013.)

Labrecque et al. (2013) explain that demand-based power has also transformed the process of research and development. As consumers have gained more power, companies have lost their biggest influence, and thus, may have had to include

consumers in the development phase. This can be detected in both peer-to-peer and business-to-peer business models of the sharing economy as it forces the service provider to enhance the service based on new needs. For instance, consumers could decide not to use electric scooters because of the lack of features in the scooter, e.g. related to safety or style. Consequently, the companies would need to develop and customize the product, service or both to match the preferences.

Information-based power refers to effortless access to different product and service information, which leads to reduction in, for instance, information asymmetry. That is, consumers can search for product reviews and compare different products to match their individual preferences. In addition to the content consumption, of which is described above, information-based power can also occur through content production. It is connected to the ability to produce own content online, such as writing reviews about products and participating indirectly in marketing through electronic word-of-mouth. On the contrary, the sheer amount of information produced by individuals is now utilized by different companies, mitigating the empowerment of consumers. (Labrecque et al., 2013.)

Information-based power is linked to demand-based power closely. Having the power to buy or not to buy a product or a service is influenced by the available information—when comparing different services, bad word-of-mouth or reviews can determine whether a consumer buys the service or not. Additionally, as individuals can produce content independently, companies cannot control the outcome. As a result, the provided service needs to be genuinely useful and offer a positive experience for the consumer. Should the experience be bad, the consumer would choose another service provider next time, and possibly share the negative experience to others, too.

Network-based power is about content creation through network actions. Individuals can create their own content or influence that of others by enhancing or distributing it. In other words, network-based power is descriptive for the power of consumers to add

more value to original content created. In detail, the value is added through sharing content, completing content or modifying content. That said, Network-based power emphasizes dialogue between others, whereas information-based power focuses more on the content-producing individual. The emergence of Web 2.0 along with social networks has allowed the network-based power to spread since distributing content has no significant obstacles. (Labrecque et al., 2013.) Although this form of power is important in today's influencer culture in which marketing is done through paid collaboration (Jin, Muqaddam & Ryu, 2019), it has been the least pivotal of all four sources.

Crowd-based power is the most recent and developed one. It is the ability to unify, mobilize and structure resources to benefit groups and individuals. The rapid technological improvement brings immediate access to different resources in various platforms. Put differently, crowd-based is the embodiment of the combination of all the aforementioned powers (demand-, information- and network-based). Demand-based power is increased through purchases in the community. Moreover, information-based power is increased through ease of access to content and standardization. Last, network-based power is amplified by the growth of individual connections in networks. (Labrecque et al., 2013.)

Crowd-based power is a result of shared resources as well; companies are trying to provide more solutions for consumers increasingly (Labrecque et al., 2013). That is, both peer-to-peer and business-to-peer models of the sharing economy reflect the crowd-based power that consumers possess. For instance, the electric scooters represent pooled resources that companies have provided for the use of consumers. The community-driven usage and the mentality which prefers access over ownership steers the consumer trend away from traditional business models. However, the way in which companies should utilize crowds in their own value chain is yet to be accurately mapped, even though there are some consumer trends indicating direction, such as sustainability. (Labrecque et al., 2013.)

Had the increase in consumer power not happened, it would be unlikely that consumption habits enabled the emergence of technologies and services such as electric scooters. As internet is one of the main drivers of the phenomenon of the sharing economy, its influence on the consumer power is evident—the instant access to content, word-of-mouth and independency of location to name a few. These aspects have pushed companies to improve themselves by inventing new methods to satisfy consumer needs and preferences. Moreover, being able to give instant reviews and spread information quickly to others creates a win-win scenario for the consumer and the company; the feedback will eventually force the company to enhance the provided service for the former, and the latter will have a chance to remove deficiencies to separate itself from its competitors.

Electric scooters are inclusive to the abovementioned; a new way of conducting business and providing new services to consumers. Given that there are several companies offering the services, there is a constant need to listen to consumer reviews and feedback. Should a company ignore suggestions for improvement and negative perceptions, the consumers will have the power to not buy the service again and spread information of their bad experience to others through reviews or word-of-mouth. Also, the sustainability and sharing point of view stems from the act of altruism—as the crowd-based power suggests, the benefits of consumption should reach individuals as well as groups of people. (Labrecque et al., 2013.)

3.1 The framework for consumer behavior: motives

In order to reflect upon the results of the empirical part of the thesis, a framework for the user motives needs to be created; what are the most common motives to participate in the sharing economy. In detail, the point of view of the service users are more important for the purpose of this thesis as opposed to that of the service providers. That is, because the sharing economy is researched in the context of electric scooters—in

which the form of participation is service user. The general framework will be applied to electric scooters to find if similar factors are decisive within the specific area of the sharing economy.

Zalega (2018) investigates consumer behavior in collaborative consumption by surveying 240 people between the ages 18 and 34 to map the most frequently mentioned motives for the users of sharing economy. Four of the most emphasized aspects are knowing the person from whom the service or product is bought, regulations which create a safe atmosphere, on-demand access to resources, and the opportunity to earn money. Financial motive is a dominant factor, and many seem to value the opportunity to earn additional money. Concurrently, financial motives can also occur in the form of affordability; the resources of which cannot be bought can now be accessed. Conversely, if consumption is not limited by the financial status, traditional consumption models are often preferred rather than sharing resources. (Zalega, 2018.)

Similar to Zalega, Möhlmann (2015) also finds trust as one of the most important determinants in the sharing economy. Subsequently, the author points out that even though trust is often considered important, there is lack of empirical research of it being as a determinant. However, as the determinants related to satisfaction and to the likelihood of returning to use the provided resource can be different for peer-to-peer and business-to-peer services, Möhlmann's study aims to nominate the most important determinants and their connection to satisfaction and re-selection in both contexts. In accordance with the current literature, 10 important determinants are found: community belonging, cost savings, environmental impact, familiarity, internet capability, service quality, smartphone capability, trend affinity, trust and utility (Figure 1) (Möhlmann, 2015).

First, Möhlmann (2015) investigates the business-to-peer concept by using the mobility service Car2go as an example. As a result, the author finds that community belonging, cost savings, familiarity, service quality, trust and utility have a positive impact on the

satisfaction with the selected service but only utility is linked to the likelihood of re-selecting the same service later. Interestingly, despite being a relevant topic as of the 21st century, environmental impact's effect on satisfaction is not found positive in this context. Also, having a positive correlation on satisfaction does not guarantee a decision to re-select to same service again. As Car2go is part of shared mobility, the study is of relevance in the context of electric scooters, too. (Möhlmann, 2015.)

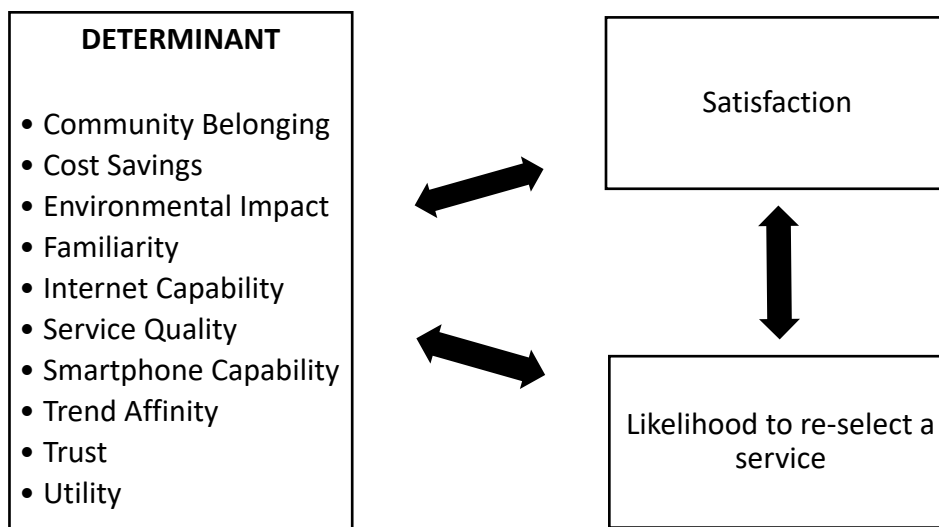


Figure 1. The most important determinants and their connection to satisfaction and likelihood to return to use the same service (Möhlmann, 2015).

Then, in the context of peer-to-peer sharing, the author finds similarities with the abovementioned scenario. Cost savings, familiarity, trust and utility have a positive correlation on satisfaction. Consequently, satisfaction in familiarity and utility has a positive effect on re-selection of the service. However, in peer-to-peer context, satisfaction correlates positively with the likelihood of choosing the service again as opposed to that of business-to-peer. (Möhlmann, 2015.) In other words, being satisfied with the use of a shared resource acquired from an individual is more meaningful as it can lead to re-purchase.

Albinsson, Perera, Nafees & Burman (2019) recognize similar determinants as Möhlmann: perceived sustainability, materialism, generosity, trust and risk-seeking tendencies. Perceived sustainability is linked to the conserved natural resources and energy efficiency. In this context, the sharing economy favors the use of shared resources rather than, for example, the ownership of private vehicles. Hence, people perceive that reduced driving leads to environmental benefits. Additionally, the sharing acts as a way to educate others about sustainability (Albinsson & Perera, 2012). Materialism, much like trend affinity, includes the status and fashion aspects. Consumers want to be in possession of things they normally would not afford to own, and they want to have exclusive goods to be more fashionable.

Generosity is described to reflect one's characteristic regarding helping other people and contributing to the community. Whether sincere or not, it drives community building and development; for example, during natural disasters different communities are encouraged to provide and share housing with the ones in need. However, community building takes time as trust plays an important factor in relationships—as generosity is described as a determinant for the resource provider, trust reflects the perceptions of the resource user. In general, if the sharing economy business model is business-to-peer, it is found trustworthy due to different regulations and being unpredictable, whereas peer-to-peer services may not have those attributes. (Albinsson et al., 2019.)

Last, the participants of the sharing economy are perceived as risk-seekers as opposed to risk-avoiders. This is due to the fact that buying services from strangers and transferring money to them through third-party platforms are characteristics of risk-seekers. Albinsson et al. (2019) refer to Airbnb as an example: booking an apartment or providing an accommodation for strangers does not guarantee risk-free environment. The stayer could leave the apartment to a bad condition or, vice versa, the booked apartment could not meet the expectations for the buyer.

Böcker and Meelen's (2017) study analyzes the social, environmental and economic motivations related to peer-to-peer sharing, and their correlation between socio-demographic factors. On a larger scale, the users of peer-to-peer sharing are driven by economic motivators. However, in terms of shared mobility—ride and car sharing—environmental motivations are found relatively important. Noteworthy, environmental motivations are not typical for males and individuals with low or middle education as opposed to those of females and individuals with a higher education, albeit being highly educated is not significantly related to environmental motivations. Regarding economic motivations, young people with low income are more likely to use shared resources because of financial reasons, whereas older people with higher income are significantly more socially motivated.

On the contrary, Bellotti et al. (2015) investigate the user motives and their psychological roots—the three most common motivators for sharing economy's users are access to the service, convenience and the social aspect. The former two are instrumental motivations, linked to practicality. Hence Bellotti et al. argue that sharing economy's participants are more driven by practicality than by longevity, as motivations such as community building or sustainability are not found crucial for making purchase decisions. On the contrary, as Böcker and Meelen (2017) acknowledge, socio-demographic factors may change the approach to participation, thus it is important to analyze the motivations together with the context.

European Commission (2018) provides a comprehensive image of the EU's sharing economy's climate in their Flash Eurobarometer 467. In terms of the motives to participate in the sharing economy, the study lists convenience (73 %) as the most frequent motive by service users in the EU member states, followed by availability of user reviews (60 %), cost of the service (59 %), wide selection of choices (56 %) and possibilities to interact with others (34 %). In addition, people with higher education had differences compared to those of lower education—the ones with higher education are

more likely to choose a form of sharing economy because of the price, selection and convenience.

Table 2 summarizes the most common motives to participate in the sharing economy. The motives are categorized into four main groups due to similarity they share—economic, social, convenience and environmental. However, although some reasons for participation may be dominant for many, there are differences inside socio-demographic groups. Also, the context in which the sharing economy occurs affects the primary motivations. The first group is economic motives: authors refer to affordability, cost savings and earning money with regards to financial reasons. Naturally, an economic motive is more present for those with lower incomes, whereas older people with higher incomes lean towards social factors. (Böcker & Meelen, 2017).

Table 2. A summary of the most common motives.

	Motive	Author(s)
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordability • Cost savings • Earning money 	Böcker & Meelen (2017) European Commission (2018) Möhlmann (2015) Zalega (2018)
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community belonging • Materialism • Generosity • Trend affinity • Relationships • Interaction • User reviews • Trust 	Albinsson et al. (2019) Bellotti et al. (2015) European Commission (2018) Möhlmann (2015) Zalega (2015)
Convenience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarity • Access to the service • Utility 	Bellotti et al. (2015) European Commission (2018) Möhlmann (2015) Zalega (2018)
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability • Resource efficiency 	Albinsson et al. (2019) Albinsson & Perera (2012) Bellotti et al. (2015) Böcker & Meelen (2017) Grybaitė & Stankevičienė (2016)

Social motives include several aspects which are all based on some level of two-way interaction between individuals. Therefore, motives such as materialism, generosity and trend affinity have suitable characteristics related to enhancing one's status in others' eyes. In comparison with other motives, European Commissions' (2018) study does not indicate that social motives are dominant. Economic motives are more important for consumers, however, motives related to convenience are the most frequently referred to by the sharing economy's participants. The social aspect is more present in the peer-to-peer models, whereas the business-to-peer models do not necessarily include interactions with others. On the contrary, a business model such as electric scooters may establish situations wherein two individuals ride along with each other, making it a social event.

Trust is also categorized under the social motives because the services are influenced by other people; either directly in peer-to-peer formats or indirectly in business-to-peer formats through, for instance, user reviews. As a matter of fact, business-to-peer services are found more trustworthy compared to peer-to-peer services. That is because of the regulations many companies are subject to and need to comply, whereas in peer-to-peer models are ran mainly by individuals, although the platform acts as an intermediary. Still, peer-to-peer business models tend to attract risk-seekers because of many existing variables (Albinsson et al. 2019.) In contrast, business-to-peer models generally give the users a perception of a safe atmosphere to participate in (Zalega, 2015).

Before all the economic and social motives, consumers value convenience the most. (Bellotti et al., 2015; European Commission, 2018). Convenience includes the aspects of familiarity, access to the service and utility. Bellotti et al.'s study finds that users expect convenience by default, and although there are often other motives linked to the participation, it is rare for a consumer to not think about convenience when using a model of sharing economy. European Commission supports the findings—on average,

73 % of the consumers of all member states expect convenience from the sharing economy model they participate into.

If the service is perceived useful and linked to utility, it often leads to consumer satisfaction, which is not common for other determinants. From all the motivations, satisfaction in familiarity and utility is more likely to generate the will to re-select the consumed service. (Möhlmann, 2015.) Regarding the on-demand point of view, electric scooters possess certain characteristics that conform the attractiveness of instant access: the scooters are spread across different parts of cities and they are quickly accessible. Hence, it can be argued that convenience is pivotal for their users.

The last main category is for the environmental motives. Eventually, sharing economy aims for resource efficiency (Grybaitė & Stankevičienė, 2016). In general, owning a private vehicle is linked to negative associations in terms of the carbon footprint. Hence, shared mobility is considered a more viable option for sustainable consumption because consumers do not need to own a resource, such as a car ran on fossil fuels. As the socio-demographics of the consumers differ, the importance of the environmental aspect might be decreased. Thus, it is expected to be shown in the results of the empirical part of the thesis. (Böcker & Meelen, 2017.)

3.2 The framework for consumer behavior: deterrents

As distinguishing the different motives of consumers to participate in the sharing economy was done in the previous chapter, it is important to acknowledge the most common deterrent as well. That is, understanding the dynamics of the consumer behavior by addressing different perspectives. The empirical part of the thesis analyzes interview results from both users and non-users, thus a further analysis on the motives and deterrents is needed in order to create a comprehensive picture of the current sharing economy's climate in Helsinki.

As Zalega's (2018) study lists the most common motives, the most common deterrents are also listed. The author finds that the biggest deterrent for not participating in sharing is a lack of trust and fear of fraud as indicated by over 80 % of the respondents. The higher the value of the resource, the more lack of trust is highlighted. Additionally, approximately half of the respondents name uncertainty about the origin of a product as a negative factor. Zalega stresses that there is a need to further develop the aspect of trust in order to broaden the consumer base which participates in collaborative consumption.

Uncertainty about the origin of a product is related to lack of information. Comparably, having an insufficient amount of information about what a specific shared service is or not knowing how it works can be the biggest deterrents according to Tussyadiah (2015). This barrier of lack of familiarity is detected by the European Commission (2018) too, as the persons who had never participated in the sharing economy in 19 out of 28 member states mention the lack of knowledge in what the shared service is as their biggest deterrent.

Subsequently, European Commission (2018) identifies more deterrents for the *users* on an EU level; lack of clarity of who is responsible if something goes wrong (49 %), inaccurate user reviews (38 %), misuse of personal data (37 %) and lack of trust for collaborative platforms (34 %) are the most frequently mentioned ones. The aforementioned can be all categorized under uncertainty and trust, which appeared Zalega's research as well. Interestingly, Finland's individual results did not mirror those of EU's. Although the lack of clarity of who is the responsible when a problem occurs is the most frequently mentioned, only 25 % of the respondents find it as a disadvantage. Similarly, inaccurate user reviews are mentioned by only 14 %, and misuse of personal data by 19 %. On average, only 1,1 deterrents are mentioned by the Finnish respondents, whereas the EU average is 2,1. (European Commission, 2018.)

Moreover, persons who have not participated in the sharing economy list the most important reason for not doing so: lack of knowledge of the platforms (36%), preference on traditional channels (34%), sharing personal data (20%) and lack of trust (17 %). Lack of trust and hesitancy to share personal data are also concerns for sharing economy's participants as they mention them as possible deterrents—hence it is a mutuality for both users and non-users.

The deterrent for participation is not necessarily related to uncertainty. In some cases, the reason for not favoring a sharing option is purely the unwillingness to share resources with others (Grybaitė & Stankevičienė, 2016). Sharing can lower the independence and control over the particular resource, which is stated as a barrier for participation. Concurrently, independence through ownership and the status of it attracts consumers to favor traditional possession of resources. (Hawlitschek, Teubner & Gimpel, 2016.)

Spindeldreher, Ak, Fröhlich and Schlagwein's (2019) study complements the abovementioned literature by providing different barriers for sharing economy's users. In terms of the platform, the authors find five different deterrents: effort expectancy, exploitation, lack of trust, privacy risk and process risk. First, effort expectancy, is related to the overall time consumption in the sharing process. It may include the need to register to a platform, gathering information or just preparation. In contrast, a corresponding traditional model may not require any of those steps before the consumption.

Then, exploitation is about the general attitude towards the evolution of the business model because the original idea of sharing is modified. Put differently, sharing is not perceived to come naturally but rather forced by creating new, possibly idle resources. This applies to peer-to-peer models as well; for instance, Airbnb enables people to rent their own apartments to others while they are not in use. This has led to a situation in which people do not use the apartment anymore but rent it onwards throughout the

whole year. Hence, the idea of sharing excessive resources to others is diminished. (Spindeldreher, Ak, Fröhlich & Schlagwein, 2019)

Lack of trust, privacy risk and process risk appear also in European Commission's (2018) study. For some, the ambiguity and intangibility of the platform and process may hinder the willingness to participate. Who is the one to contact if something goes wrong? What if personal data is leaked to a third party? Can there be a fake profile created? The aforementioned uncertainties in the platform, host and privacy is often a barrier for the consumers (Tussyadiah, 2015).

In addition to platform deterrents, Spindeldreher et al. (2019) find resource-related factors as well: inflexibility, performance risk, physical risk and, similar to the platform deterrents, process risk. Inflexibility is the concern of a consumer regarding the independence in the use of resources. As the owner of the resource—whether it is a company or an individual consumer—is not an exclusive user, it increases the dependency on others. In the context of shared mobility, one might need to reserve a time to use their own vehicle, or for electric scooters one might need to search for an available scooter further away.

Performance risks stem only from the resource itself, as the promised product or service may not match the preliminary expectations. An electric scooter can lack attributes or be broken, whereas a peer-to-peer rented apartment is not supervised by a larger hotel chain. Similarly, physical risk is present in both examples: should an electric scooter be broken, the user is compromised and prone to injuries. For a shared apartment, the user cannot ensure in advance that it meets all the requirements for a safe environment as there can be, for instance, a missing smoke detector. Last, process risk is linked evenly to the resource as well as the platform. The unclarity of who has the liability when an accident occurs is a barrier for some consumers. (Spindeldreher et al. 2019.)

Table 3 summarizes the reviewed literature for the deterrents. Due to the overlap of different deterrents, they are put into four main categories: trust, efficacy, social and sustainability. The first category, (lack of) trust consists of all the risks that consumers consider in the sharing economy models. Since the platforms are not governed in the same way as many traditional business models, consumers lack trust in the sharing economy in terms of keeping their personal information safe, as well as the aspect of a physical injury.

Table 3. A summary of the most common deterrents.

	Deterrent	Author(s)
Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of fraud • Misuse of personal data • Inaccurate user reviews • Privacy risk • Process risk • Performance risk • Physical risk 	European Commission (2018) Spindeldreher et al. (2019) Zalega (2018)
Efficacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown origin of a product • Liability in problem situations • Lack of familiarity • Preference on traditional channels • Inflexibility • Effort expectancy 	European Commission (2018) Tussyadiah (2015) Spindeldreher et al. (2019)
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwillingness to share with others • (Losing) independence on ownership 	Grybaitė & Stankevičienė, 2016 Hawlitchek et al. (2016)
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploitation 	Spindeldreher et al. (2019)

Then, efficacy includes all the factors that hinder the effectiveness of the sharing process. In general, lack of familiarity is considered the biggest deterrent for the non-users to participate in sharing economy (Tussyadiah, 2015). That is, the threshold for participation grows the less there is knowledge in the platforms. Therefore, the consumers choose a traditional resource instead because of the familiarity of it. Similarly, inflexibility and effort expectancy are related to efficacy due to the overall effort through

increased liability that sharing can require, making it a less-favorable option compared to traditional ownership.

Social deterrents consist of the reasons that are not categorizable for trust and efficacy. Individuals may be demotivated to share because of the idea of sharing itself, or for the fear of losing an independence of the ownership. The former two deterrents are put in the under the social deterrents because they both mirror hesitancy on other people but not in a trust-related way—they are more about one's status. Last, exploitation is interpreted as a deterrent of sustainability because it questions the current trend of buying resources to benefit from them in sharing economy, as the original idea of putting idle resources on use is neglected.

4 Data and methodology

In order to understand the nature of the empirical research, this chapter introduces what and where the data is gathered from, and also what methodology is used. Research design explains the different phases of the work, justifying the methodological choices and providing an overview of the research. Then, data reliability and validity is discussed, followed by introducing the sample for the research.

4.1 Research design

The methodological approach of the research is *inductive*; hence the collected data provides new points of view in addition to reviewed literature (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009: 126). Therefore, hypotheses are not formed but instead the data is used to understand the context in which the sharing economy and the electric scooters are used. Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, Jackson and Lowe (2008) argue that the inductive approach is useful when trying to understand *why* something is happening as opposed to knowing exactly what is happening. Therefore, the inductive approach supports the objectives of the thesis.

The purpose of the research is *explanatory* given that the phenomenon of electric scooters is new in Finland—what is the phenomenon and why is it happening? Explanatory purpose supports the research strategy of doing a *case study*, which is most often used within the formerly mentioned (Saunders et al., 2009: 139, 146). In this context, a case study can provide an answer to questions "why?", "what?" and "how?". The research method for the thesis is *qualitative* because of the inductive approach. Qualitative data is based on *words* rather than numbers as in quantitative data. The qualitative data from the interviewees helps to understand the reasoning behind their decisions. In addition, the reasoning for their personal attitudes and opinions about the topic. (Saunders et al., 2009: 324, 482)

The data was gathered utilizing the mono method, through *semi-structured interviews* because as standardized interviews have a structured questionnaire and are more efficient for receiving quantitative data, semi-structured interviews gather qualitative data (King, 2004). This is because the exact same questionnaire is not necessarily used for each interviewee—as the conversation progresses, the discussion may have a focus on certain themes and topics inside the theoretical framework as opposed to a stricter, standardized interview. Also, the order of questions does not need to be the same for everyone. (Saunders et al., 2009: 320–321.) The non-standardized interviews are performed one on one with the interviewees and physically face-to-face.

Three types of data variables will be collected: opinion (why do people use the sharing economy), behavior (do they use now, and will they be using the sharing economy in the future as well. In addition, do they use the electric scooters?) and attribute (who are the people using the sharing economy and electric scooters?) (Dillman, 2007). Then, the data is analyzed by reflecting and interviewees' answers to the created framework of the motives and deterrents to use the sharing economy. Simultaneously, the socio-demographics will be assessed and compared to the final answers to find if there is any correlation between them and the literature.

4.2 Validity and reliability

The overall *validity* of the research implicates how accurate and credible the results are (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This research examines the results through the researcher's lens—the validity is embedded to the experiences and perceptions of the participants with an assumption of a constructivist paradigm. That is, measuring the results' trustworthiness and authenticity. The validity procedure within the paradigm and qualitative lens was disconfirming evidence, similar to triangulation. The topic was addressed by reviewing the literature and themes therein. Then, the data was assessed and compared to the created frameworks to find consistency (Creswell & Miller, 2000.)

Then, the way a qualitative research's robustness is measured is assessing the *reliability* of it; what is the chosen method and how it is applied to the specific research context. Ideally, the study would need to be replicable if done repeatedly (Rose & Johnson, 2020). As trustworthiness and authenticity of the results are linked to the validity of the study, they are also linked to the reliability of the study. In order to increase the reliability of this thesis, the conducted interviews were recorded, and direct quotations of the answers were showcased to avoid errors in interpretation (Gibbs, 2007). Also, each interviewee was given an interview guide to which essential information for the interviews was filled (Appendix 1). By utilizing the same interview guide, the replicability of the results increases. (Creswell & Miller, 2000.)

4.3 Sample

As the research was not possible to be conducted to every possible case in the population to form a census due to financial constraints and impracticality, the data was gathered from a sample. Given that the research has characteristics of a case study because of the focus on electric scooters, the sampling was done through a non-probability sampling technique, purposive sampling. This is because of the number of interviewees that were chosen through a self-selection. Subsequently, the decided strategy for the purposive sampling was heterogeneous in order to receive an explanation from both sides of the sharing economy—users and non-users. (Saunders et al., 2009: 210–242.)

A total of fifteen (15) people were contacted directly to participate in the interviews, with the intention to have both users and non-users of the electric scooters included. Ten (10) of the contacted persons were females, four (4) males and one (1) who did not want to determine their gender (referred to as “they/their” because the gender pronoun was asked to keep hidden). The contacted people live inside the area of Helsinki; hence they are familiar with the concept of sharing economy and electric scooters due to seeing them around the city. The interviewees' ages vary between 25 and 55, and the

majority of them belong to the middle-income class. The income brackets are classified as follows: low-income (maximum of 1 524 € net income per month), middle-income (1 525–4 065 € net income per month) and high-income (minimum of 4 066 € net income per month). (Elinkeinoelämän Valtuuskunta, 2018.)

Table 4. Interviewees.

Interviewee	User/Non-user	Age	Income bracket	Gender	Occupation	Residence
Person A	Non-user	28	Middle	Male	Analyst	Helsinki
Person B	User	35	Middle	Male	Lawyer	Helsinki
Person C	User	26	Low	Female	Student	Helsinki
Person D	Non-user	26	Middle	N/A	Student	Helsinki
Person E	User	26	Middle	Male	PhD Student	Helsinki
Person F	Non-user	55	High	Male	CEO	Helsinki
Person G	Non-user	30	Middle	Female	Data Analyst	Helsinki
Person H	User	25	Middle	Male	Specialist	Helsinki

The research data consists of eight (8) semi-structured interviews. Six (6) of the interviews were conducted face-to-face, and two (2) were conducted over a phone call because of time restrictions during September 2020. The questionnaire (Appendix 1) was translated in Finnish because all the respondents were native Finnish speakers, therefore the questions were more natural for them to answer. The time of the interviews varied between 7 and 21 minutes, as some of the respondents described their thoughts more thoroughly than others. All interviewees gave permission to record the interviews in order to increase the reliability of the research. The interviewees are kept anonymous for confidentiality. Table 4 summarizes the socio-demographics of the interviewees and distinguishes the users and non-users of the electric scooters.

5 Empirical results

This chapter introduces the results of the conducted interviews and goes through them question by question in an analytic manner. The questionnaire is found in the appendices, and they will be reviewed in order. Although some of the interviewees described the topics broadly, and also partially from a wider perspective than the question required, their answers are also included to have a comprehensive understanding on the topic. The questionnaire included open questions to avoid bias (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008), hence the conversation floated freely throughout the interviews.

As the main research question of the thesis is *“Who participates in the sharing economy by using electric scooters and why?”*, the first section of the questions emphasized the general perceptions of the phenomenon. How do the interviewees see it from their point of view? Then, the next section will go through the motives and deterrents related to the use. What do the interviewees like and not like about sharing economy? Also, what are they able to add to the framework’s listed motives and deterrents.

5.1 General opinions on the sharing economy

To begin, the interviewees were given a short introduction to the topic. The traditional forms of sharing, such as loaning a book from a library, were excluded, and the interviewees were asked to think of the modern models in order to get a more accurate view on the current phenomenon. The first question for the interviewees was *“What do you think of the sharing economy?”*. On a general level, the interviewees shared similar thoughts and perceptions on the topic. The main idea to use resources instead of having the ownership of them is repeatedly listed:

“I think it is a positive thing per se, it is like clever thinking that it is not always needed to own 1 000 similar things which are used rarely.” (Person A)

“In my opinion it’s a good thing because it decreases the threshold to own capital to buy different things—such as an electric scooter—but instead you can use it with a small payment. And it’s ‘owned’ by everybody, so you don’t need to own it yourself and take something like maintenance into consideration” (Person C)

“The basic idea is good because I think we need to use the resources we have effectively. The life span of products can be extended very much.” (Person D)

“Sharing things with others in this consumption-focused society is important for sustainability. The culture, at least in the Western countries expects that you spend your money on non-necessities.” (Person H)

On the contrary, although also giving positive feedback on the sharing economy, persons B and E shared their critique towards it by raising a concern of the conditions in which it occurs:

“Uhm well, I have, let’s say a two-sided opinion on this. On one hand, of course it’s a good thing if it’s market-based and there’s demand for it—then of course. On the other hand, I don’t see this kind of forced sharing economy a good thing in any way [...] so voluntary sharing economy—good—other forms, not.” (Person B)

“There is a lot of potential, in its current form there’s probably a lot of issues in the platforms as well but on its best, we can allocate resources well.” (Person E)

Even though the concept of the sharing economy was briefly explained to the interviewees before starting the actual interview, all of them seemed to have formed some thoughts on the topic prematurely. As seen from the answers above, the opinions are mainly positive as the concept of access over ownership (Díaz Foncea et al., 2016) is perceived as something that is worth aiming for. However, as persons B and E demonstrated, the concept is also given critique and it is not taken unconditionally.

As a second question, the interviewees were asked “Do you participate in the sharing economy? Why/Why not?”. Almost all of the interviewees said they participated in the sharing economy (Persons A, B, C, D, E, G, H). Person F was the only one who had not participated in it, referring to financial factors—there simply has not been the need to utilize shared resources, rather than the resources he already owns:

"I believe my income is good enough and I have well-established habits, so I use [the resources] that I have acquired. Age is probably one thing here, and by a certain age I have managed to get sufficient resources." (Person F)

As for the other interviewees, the perception of better utilization of resources reflected their experiences and willingness to participate in shared consumption. The mentality of wanting to use already-produced resources more effectively was mentioned by the interviewees several times. However, the actual main driver for the participation differed. For some, the economic factors of affordability and saving were stated for the most important ones (Persons C, D, E) whereas for some the convenience was the thing that was appreciated the most (Persons A, G). Additionally, for two interviewees both economic and convenience factors were mentioned (Persons B, H).

Interestingly, sustainability and environmental factors were not stated as the primary reason for participating in the sharing economy, although being one of the main drivers for the development of the phenomenon. Age and occupation seem to have an influence on the financial aspect; the ones who thought using shared resources was cheaper were 26-year-old students with low or middle income (Persons C, D, E). At the same time, the oldest interviewee (Person F) with a high income specifically referred to his good financial situation as a reason not to participate.

"I participate because of the affordable costs" (Person C)

"First of all, there are some immediate financial benefits in sharing resources, which is most likely to be cheaper for a consumer" (Person D)

"Of course, the financial benefits are a big factor, it's cheaper for yourself—it's wiser" (Person E)

After finding out who had or had not participated in the sharing economy, the interviewees were asked more specifically regarding the electric scooters: "Have you ever used the electric scooters and why? (Why not?)". Given that some level of participation in the sharing economy was mentioned, whether it was Airbnb or another

platform, only half of all the interviewees (Persons B, C, E, H) had used electric scooters before and the other half not (Persons A, D, F, G). Also, there was no significant difference in the occupation, age or the income bracket of the users and non-users.

Put differently, participating in the sharing economy is more common in other platforms and services, and using electric scooters was not a normality per se. Moreover, one of the interviewees that had used electric scooters only tried them a couple of times (Person B). On the contrary, one of the interviewees (Person A) implied that even though he had never used an electric scooter, he would have liked to use one.

“Well there’s a will to try new things, and the fact that I returned to use the service was because it is a good alternative to public transportation, and let’s say, to walking.” (Person B)

“I have used them. That is because it’s a fast method for short-distance trips.” (Person C)

“I have used a little, yes. The first time because of curiosity for this new way of mobility. But later there have been moments in which it’s the best—or I perceive it to be the best method when I’m in a hurry and no other transportation method provides as convenient and fast service.” (Person E)

“Sure, I have used them. It’s because there’s always several electric scooters available. I can see why people use them a lot as well.” (Person H)

Based on the comments, one of the key elements are convenience and low threshold in the use. More specifically, having to move short distances with the electric scooters is considered easier than waiting for public transportation—electric scooters are said to be faster than their alternatives (Persons C, E). Also, the availability favors the method because they can be found easily. In addition to the users, one non-user (Person A) would have liked to use an electric scooter:

“I haven’t tried one because there hasn’t been a chance, I have been interested though—it’s almost like a toy” (Person A)

Although Person A added: *“There’s been a lot of negative publicity about the life span for instance, so I have some doubts”*. Thus, he refers to the sustainability aspect which overrules the personal curiosity—should the service be perceived as a greener choice, the interviewee would have probably tried it. The other non-users (Persons D, F, G) did not have environmental reasons, but Person D did not see the concept as something essential:

“I don’t see this form of mobility as something that would serve me a purpose or that I would have the need for it.” (Person D)

Subsequently, the electric scooters were also perceived dangerous. As, for instance, Trivedi et al. (2019) and STT (2019) acknowledge the extent of injuries related to the use, it can hinder the willingness to try the service in a fear of hurting oneself. The fear for physical injuries were present for two of the interviewees (Persons F, G):

“I have never used them. I have seen the situations in the hospitals; what can happen if you fall and hit your head. I don’t want to participate in those activities.” (Person F)

“I haven’t used them because they are a bit scary.” (Person G)

In summary, sharing resources rather than owning them is mainly seen as a good thing, albeit one interviewee (Person F) has decided not to participate in it because of his personal situation—high income and existing resources already fulfill his needs. In general, any specific platform or form of sharing economy was not lifted above others because the interviewees referred to the principle of efficacy. That is, they had positive thoughts on utilizing the existing resources, whether idle or not, more effectively. The interviewees value longevity and purposeful resource usage.

As for the electric scooters, the interviewees became more reserved in their opinions. If electric scooters bring value to the user by saving time and or costs, they are found useful. On the other hand, some interviewees were doubtful about the safety of electric

scooters, and also if the form of mobility is something which is needed instead of walking and public transportation.

5.2 Motives and deterrents for both users and non-users

After reviewing the perceptions and opinions from the broader perspective, the intention was to figure out the main motives and deterrents—how do the opinions of users and non-users differ? To support the findings, the interviewees were also asked to think about motives and deterrents through the created framework if they were able to provide new ideas. For this section, the first question was to investigate what the interviewees find positive about the sharing economy: "What do you like about the sharing economy? What about in the use of electric scooters?".

For the first part, several interviewees (Persons A, B, C, F) suggested similar qualities as they already stated in the earlier questions—the emphasis is on the availability, costs and ease of use:

"Simplicity, it's easy. And then costs; the services are usually cheaper." (Person B)

"I like the flexibility. For instance, these car experiences [carsharing such as Car2Go and Drive Now] what also Stockholm has that you can jump to a car whenever you need to leave is convenient [...] So I like the flexibility." (Person F)

However, the other interviewees (Persons D, E, G, H) acknowledged and underlined the resource usage and the effectiveness therein. Interestingly, as found in earlier answers, the factors related to sustainability are present and valued but they are not the biggest drivers for participating. For instance, Persons D and E stress that resources need to be consumed in a smarter way, but they participate in the sharing economy mainly because of financial reasons. Hence, the ideology and the experience in-practice may not always meet as these opinions demonstrate. Even though the image in consumer's mind may

value certain characteristics, the final decision-making may be done because of other reasons.

“Utilizing idle resources is good [...] I think it’s smart and clever—it saves money, time and environment. I guess it also makes you happy that you can help someone.” (Person G)

“For sharing economy, we play with what we got as efficiently as possible. We don’t produce pointless things with a short life span and therefore become unnecessary.” (Person D)

“The feeling that we use common resources in a smarter way, and we don’t waste so much resources is nice. In addition, as for the aspect of trust, quite many [services] are based on trust, and using those services can increase trust between people which is nice in the sharing economy.” (Person E)

“I like the fact that people re-consider and think about their consumption and the way they use money. In theory, a big audience can control the supply of a certain product, and I really think that some industries are sort of unhealthy in terms of manufacturing things people don’t really need—especially as brand new.” (Person H)

In order to reach a better understanding between the users and non-users, their answers about the positive aspects of the electric scooters are reviewed separately. First, the interviewees that use them (Persons B, C, E, H) describe their thoughts; resulting in similar opinions even though two of them are students and two of them regular workers. Put differently, given that there are income and age differences, each user identified convenience and ease of use as important drivers for them:

“Positive about the scooters...I think that being capable of controlling traffics and decreasing private driving in short distances and things like this. It gives freedom for people; it makes life easier.” (Person B)

“Low costs and easy to use by just downloading an app, so it’s very easy. I’d say simplicity and user-friendliness.” (Person C)

“At best, they are well available, and you can go from place to place without an effort. At certain distances.” (Person E)

“They allow people to roam freely and to me, it’s a bit luxurious [laughs]. Some 5-10 years ago it would have been insane to see an electric car, let alone an electric scooter. Also, they are obviously convenient.” (Person H)

As for the group of interviewees that were non-users (Persons A, D, G, F): they seemed to value similar attributes than the group of users. Two interviewees (Persons F, G) emphasized flexibility and convenience. Hence, even though they had not used an electric scooter ever before, they had a perception of the aforementioned attributes. The main motives to use electric scooters clearly lean towards convenience (easy to use, fast, convenient, flexible):

“It’s the same [as in the sharing economy], the flexibility that if you can take an electric scooter if you need to go somewhere and can get there faster than walking then it’s of course a plus.” (Person F)

“They are easy, fast and especially in Helsinki where roads are in ok condition, convenient to use.” (Person G)

At the same time, one interviewee (Person D) did not see positive aspects in the use of the electric scooters, although they stressed that it was only their own point of view, having a subjective opinion. As an exception from the others, one interviewee (Person A) saw the phenomenon as something modern and futuristic, which the interviewee thought of being attractive. This can be interpreted as trend affinity:

“Well, it is this kind of—it creates this sort of futuristic feeling, that right now we’re living the future.” (Person A).

Put together, the positive aspects—motives—for the users of electric scooters (Persons B, C, E, H) were sustainability, availability, ease of use, low costs, simplicity, feel of luxury and convenience. Moreover, the motives for the group of non-users (Persons A, D, F, G) were ease of use, saving time, convenience, flexibility and trend affinity. Noteworthy, there were no significant differences between the groups. To understand the reason why the other group had not used the electric scooters, their possible deterrents needed to

be addressed. For the next part, the interviews proceeded to the question "What do you not like about the sharing economy? What about in the use of electric scooters?".

Taking all answers into consideration, a small tendency can be detected in the answers. Four interviewees (Persons D, E, G, H) discussed the aspect of trust, and how different forms of sharing economy do not necessarily meet the expected level of governance. In other words, even though the image in consumers' minds would not match the reality, the negative publicity and cases clearly affect the decision-making and how the platforms are seen:

"What I don't like... well perhaps related to the fact that certain platforms such as Uber pursue to avoid the labor laws through their disruptive power, thus the regular workers are transformed into simple factors of production." (Person D)

"Well, the sharing economy has grown a lot lately, so the regulation and rules need to be improved. It can be seen when the platform developers are taking advantage of the users. Those issues related to these systems need to be addressed." (Person E)

"Maybe having trust—usually the platforms may not be fully developed so need to trust the other person a lot." (Person G)

"Personally, I don't like the grey areas—I mean the lack of clear rules. For instance, I have seen many news about Airbnb cases where the renter has destroyed the property of the host, and they have had difficulties deciding who has the liability in some of those cases." (Person H)

The concern is focused on the rights of the workers, and also the trust to peers is highlighted. Who is responsible when something goes wrong? Who ensures that platforms meet all the regulations and are in compliance with the laws? Two interviewees (Persons D, E) acknowledged the power of the companies which operate as intermediaries, and their possibility to control the market. Given that the modern concept of the sharing economy is relatively new, the businesses that operate in the market may not be subject to certain monitoring of a governmental body. Nevertheless, one interviewee (Person F) just thought sharing resources can demand more effort than having the full ownership:

“I don’t like that ultimately you still need to make more effort, let’s say that your own car is parked on the driveway ready-to-use, but for instance if you search for a shared car it takes time.” (Person F)

Naturally, there are differences depending on the form of sharing—whether it is accommodation or mobility, to name a few. Also, a significant factor is whether the business model is peer-to-peer or business-to-peer. Therefore, negative associations towards certain sharing economy’s platforms and forms may not carry over to electric scooters. In terms of peer-to-peer models, in which there is not a company on the other side, and the used resource is owned by another individual, the level of trust needs to be high. Based on the literature, it was anticipated that the interviewees would have a different point of view on the negative aspects of electric scooters because it is a business-to-peer model.

To analyze what factors the interviewees disliked about the electric scooters, they are divided into groups of users (Persons B, C, E, H) and non-users (Persons A, D, F, G) again. Basically, all the interviewees that use the electric scooters have doubts about the rules and standards—the issue is linked to efficacy. That is, the service does not occur in the most effective manner because of the way people handle the traffic conditions. Also, trust needs to be developed into the condition of the electric scooters as three interviewees (Persons C, E, H) were concerned about the physical risk:

“Well, maybe the rules need to be made clear, and I have read that the recyclability is pretty bad if the average lifetime if one to two months. Certain standards are needed and how it is made more recyclable. Also, where do they need to be parked.” (Person B)

“If somebody mistreats the electric scooters and you get a defective version yourself” (Person C)

“For the electric scooters, the rules need to be fixed in order to reach the best results. It creates a lot of trouble for others regarding traffic, and people leave them in random places and drunk drive.” (Person E)

“The number one thing I don’t like is that they are being parked in the middle of the street. I also see a lot people misusing them, having maybe two to three people

riding them at the same time. How is it secured that people do not break the rules? I guess the bottom line is that they are dangerous when used in a wrong way.”
(Person H)

As for the interviewees that had not used the electric scooters (Persons A, D, F, G), similar thoughts were found. For instance, one interviewee (Person A) brought up the environmental aspect, just like one interviewee who was a user (Person B):

“I have seen some news about the life span being 27 days on average for a certain electric scooter, so I think it damages the idea of the sharing economy; to reduce the environmental effect. And with these electric scooters, it’s not fully in order.”
(Person A)

Then, in fact, two interviewees (Persons D, G) shared the thoughts for the efficacy and social aspects; due to the dangerous behavior by other people, a second-hand concern is created. In other words, not only the misuse leads to efficacy issues, it includes social problems as well:

“I don’t like that I see drunk people going everywhere when I’m walking down the street, and that I need to be concerned on behalf of other people that I don’t know [...] over the past few weeks I’ve witnessed two people fall down while riding a scooter.” (Person D)

“Aren’t electric scooters pretty good as a resource? But the users bother me, I would like to tell people how to use them. There needs to be rules about the parking; where to leave them.” (Person G)

Last, one interviewee (Person F) saw the expected effort as a negative thing which is also part of efficacy. Why would one bother to use an electric scooter if it takes more effort than utilizing a traditional form of mobility, such as a car?

“The electric scooters aren’t waiting for you at your door, so you need to anyway go to a certain location. That’s why it’s easy for me to jump into a car instead”
(Person F)

For the last part of the interviews, the interviewees were given categories of the framework which was created based on the literature. This was done to investigate if the interviewees had any additional thoughts and perspectives for the topic, as they were first answering based on their own perceptions. First, they were asked to contemplate other things they liked about the electric scooters: “Do you think of any other positive things about electric scooters related to the following categories: economic, social, convenience & environmental?” The answers are reviewed for each category separately.

First, *economic* factors were requested from the interviewees. In general, they were considered positive from the financial standpoint. For instance, three interviewees referred to the low costs for using the service (Persons C, F, H), especially if it replaces the use of a car (Person G). Also, it was stated that if it serves the purpose well of getting from place A to place B, it meets the requirements for added economic value for the user (Person E). Moreover, one interviewee addressed the fact that electric scooters may not only be financially beneficial for the users, but they also create value through employment:

“To some extent, they probably create jobs and increase economic movement—they are manufactured. Also, the maintenance and other stuff increase employment, thus bring added value.” (Person A)

Second, *social* factors were also found: most importantly, riding an electric scooter is fun (Persons A, C, H). Naturally, the more people enjoy a certain service the more likely they are to re-select it—especially if it is also found affordable. Using presumably a more sustainable form of mobility can attract others to try it, too (Person G). One interviewee saw this as wanting to be part of a trend (Person F). In addition, it can become a lifestyle for some (Person B).

The third category, *convenience* was the clearest for the interviewees. Although some of them did not mention it as a positive factor initially, all of them considered using the electric scooters as a convenient way of moving around. As the last category, the

interviewees were asked about additional *environmental* factors. The concept of something running on electricity was considered a good thing overall (Persons A, C, G). Moreover, if the electric scooters can decrease the number of private vehicles and ease off traffic jams, they provide a positive change (Persons B, D, E, H). Related to not producing carbon emissions—at least during the use—they do not pollute as much as cars:

“Well of course it’s environmental. When they drive it there, it doesn’t pollute.”
(Person F).

Out of the categories, the potential cost savings and convenience were promoted the most, as the interviewees were the most responsive on those matters. For the social factors, some interviewees (such as Person D) had difficulties finding anything positive. Subsequently, the even though positive environmental factors were found, several interviewees stressed that the whole lifecycle of the product needs to meet the requirements of sustainability in order for the electric scooters to be environmental.

Then, the last question to finish the interviews was “Do you think of any other negative things about electric scooters related to the following categories: trust, efficacy, social & sustainability?”. This was to demonstrate the framework for deterrents, and if the interviewees had opinions and thoughts when given a cue. The first category was related to *trust*, and the factors that it contains. In general, one interviewee (Persons B) did not see trust as an issue in the use. Person C retained her opinion related to the performance and physical risk: what if the electric scooter does not work as it should? Additionally, two interviewees shared similar thoughts:

“Indeed, one thing of course is that when you see the electric scooters they are put properly in line and you wonder if they are all in a good condition [...] is this in good condition when I take it; do the brakes work for instance. I wouldn’t trust them myself.” (Person F)

“Now that you mention trust, I perhaps would not trust others in traffic, probably not even myself sometimes. They can go pretty fast and you can injure yourself easily.” (Person H)

On the contrary, one interviewee (Person D) was concerned about the privacy; the user’s account could be stolen and used for free rides. Moreover, two interviewees (Person A, G) were hesitant about the process—if something goes wrong before, during or after the ride, who has the liability? In this context, should an accident occur, the parties involved are at least the company which provides the electric scooter and the user who has rode it. Person B on the other hand did not trust other users in complying the common rules of use.

Second, the category of *efficacy* was discussed. Interestingly, six of the eight interviewees (Persons A, B, C, D, E, H) did not find any deterrents related to service efficacy. However, two interviewees (Persons F, G) referred to the lack of information about the service. They were both unfamiliar about how it works, and they didn’t have the will to figure it out:

“Maybe I don’t want to examine how it works myself, not once have I checked from online if I need to download an app, how does it move, to name a few. It could be easy; I just don’t know. Perhaps I’m from a different generation.” (Person F)

Third, *social* factors were discussed from a negative point of view. As there are many people who favor the electric scooters and many who dislike them, it creates tension between the two groups (Persons A, B, G, H). Consequently, individuals can feel social pressure from others as they can put pressure on the person who might not want to ride the electric scooters (Person F). Some interviewees could not detect any deterrent in terms of social factors (Persons C, D, E).

Last, the interviewees were asked about *sustainability*. Compared to alternative forms of mobility, an electric scooter was seen as something that cannot compete with, for instance, bicycles and taking a walk (Person A). Also, the short lifetime of the electric

scooters was seen as a negative thing (Persons B, D, E, H) as well the recyclability of the battery (Persons B, G). Subsequently, two interviewees (Persons C, G) stressed the work conditions in which the electric scooters are made; how can it be ensured that they are produced sustainably?

“What is the place of origin for them? What kind of battery technology is used for them? In that sense, it makes me doubtful.” (Person G)

6 Conclusions and discussion

This chapter summarizes the thesis by discussing the results of the empirical research and reflecting the results on the literature. Moreover, the research questions are reviewed to complete the purpose of the research—who participates in the sharing economy by using electric scooters and their motives to do so. In order to analyze the primary research question and provide a final outcome, the supporting objectives are undergone first. Last, relevant limitations for the thesis are introduced to examine the deficiencies.

As the first objective to support the research question, a framework for the sharing economy was created. The phenomenon itself has many different definitions and terms, e.g. collaborative consumption (Botsman & Rogers, 2010b) or access-based consumption (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012). The main idea in the sharing economy is not the ownership of resources but buying an access to use them—it enables a more efficient use of the existing resources (Cherry & Pidgeon, 2018). In the modern times, different platforms such as an application operate as intermediaries between the provider and the user. Hence, the resource provider can easily be either a company or an individual: the two main business models for the sharing economy are peer-to-peer and business-to-peer. (Basselier et al., 2018.)

The growth of the sharing economy stems from a group of different drivers: technological, societal, economic and environmental (e.g. Zervas et al., 2017). Concurrently, as the consumer power has increased, the competitive climate of the business area is hectic. Companies need to be aware of different trends and values in society in order to be successful within the market of sharing economy. Electric scooters are subject to the consumer power as well: due to the significant amount of information and alternative services available, it is relevant to acknowledge the factors which affect the decision-making process in choosing to use or not to use an electric scooter. That is, the motives and deterrents.

The second objective was to find out the general perceptions on the sharing economy. After conducting the interviews, regardless of the age, occupation, gender or income, all interviewees shared mutual thoughts on the matter. The fundamental idea of the sharing economy—using the existing resources more effectively—is considered relevant especially in today's society. Consequently, participating in the sharing economy is common based on the interviewees, as seven out of eight do so. However, the oldest interviewee referred to his income level and age in terms of not choosing to participate: an incentive could not be found.

Furthermore, half of the interviewees (4) were users of the electric scooters. Their ages vary between 25 and 35, being students and workers. Three of them were males and one female, being having either middle on low income. As a matter of fact, their reasons to participate in the sharing economy and use the electric scooters had the following main drivers: being a good alternative to public transportation, saving time, convenience and availability. An indication could be made based on the answers: the people who use them value their time, and they want to transit from a place to another with convenience and as little effort as possible. A key theme is that the users had a perception that using the electric scooters makes life easier—not only for them but also indirectly for others as they can decrease traffics and private driving.

The general perceptions are linked to the third objective as well: what are the motives to use electric scooters, and what are the deterrents preventing their use? A framework for both factors in the sharing economy was created based on the literature. The interviewees discussed their thoughts and also added input based on the categories that were given to them. To begin with, the motives were addressed: what makes people to decide riding an electric scooter?

Table 5 summarizes the motives that were acknowledged during the interviews. Noteworthy, both users and non-users gave their input, therefore, the results are applicable to larger groups. The motives are distributed to four main categories:

economic, social, convenience and environmental. First, as a primary benefit, the users save money. On the other hand, electric scooters and the companies producing them are said to create jobs, thus they contribute positively to many people's financial situation.

Table 5. Motives to use the electric scooters.

Category	Motive	Interviewee(s)
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost savings • Creates jobs 	Persons C, E, F, G, H Person A
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel of luxury • Trend affinity • Fun activity • Lifestyle 	Person H Person F Persons A, C, H Person B
Convenience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Lack of) Effort • Ease of use • Availability • Flexibility • Saving time 	Persons A, E, F, G, H Persons B, C, D, G Person E Person F Person C, F, G
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreasing private driving and traffics • Promoting sustainable mobility • Utilization of electricity • Better for the environment 	Persons B, D, E, H Person G Persons A, C, G Person F

Second, several social motives were listed: feel of luxury, trend affinity, fun activity and lifestyle. Using an electric scooter is not only seen as a utility but also as something that boosts the social side. People like being trendy and they enjoy the feeling of luxury when riding the scooters. Third, seemingly the strongest category, is convenience and the aspects that it contains. At best, the electric scooters save time, minimize effort and are simple to use. Last, the environmental aspect is evident as electric mobility promotes green values. Additionally, it is better for the environment for the aforementioned reason and also indirectly as it can decrease traffics and private driving.

After investigating the motives to use the electric scooters, the interviewees were asked to list possible deterrents (Table 6). Similar to the general framework for the sharing

economy, several risks were acknowledged: privacy, process, performance and physical. Often the user may not know in which condition the chosen electric scooter is, thus it creates a performance risk which may lead to a physical injury. Other riders may perhaps set the user prone to danger with their own actions. Furthermore, the process can be foreign—who has the liability in these aforementioned situations?

Table 6. Deterrents for the use of electric scooters.

Category	Deterrent	Interviewee(s)
Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Privacy risk • Process risk • Performance risk • Physical risk • Trust in others 	Person D Persons A, G Persons C, F Persons C, F, H Persons E, H
Efficacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of familiarity • Lack of rules • Preference on traditional channels • Effort expectancy 	Persons F, G Persons B, E, G, H Person F Person F
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear on behalf of others • Tension between people • Social pressure from peers 	Person D Persons A, B, G, H Person F
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recyclability of materials • Short average lifetime • Not as sustainable as alternatives • Unknown production conditions 	Persons B, G Persons A, B, D, E, H Person A Persons C, G

Then, efficacy includes all the barriers which prevent effective use. The most consistently mentioned aspect was the lack of rules regarding the use and parking; the electric scooters are left in bad places which irritates people. Moreover, people may drive the scooters recklessly under the influence of alcohol or other substances. On the other hand, lack of knowledge of the service may hinder the willingness to use it due to the expected effort to seek for information.

Third, the social factors, are partially linked to an earlier deterrent, lack of rules—as people drink and drive, setting themselves to danger, it makes other people concerned

about their health. In addition, as some people are for and some against the electric scooters, it separates the group and creates tension between them. This is embodied in a situation where, for instance, others try to give pressure to others to ride a scooter even though they would rather not. Last, it was widely considered that there is room for improvement in making the electric scooters sustainable. That is, extending the average lifetime of one unit as well increasing the recyclability of the materials. Also, more transparency is needed for the work conditions in which the scooters are manufactured. As a final note, alternatives such as walking and riding a bicycle are more sustainable, thus it lifts the threshold to use an electric scooter.

In terms of the international aspect, the applicability of the results relies upon the conditions of the specific area, which is discussed in the future research chapter hereafter as well. Although the electric scooters as a peer-to-peer model are available for consumer use in several countries, the factors that define consumer preferences differ regarding the cultural nuances; as lack of rules and regulations may hinder the willingness to use the electric scooters in Finland, the perception in, for instance, Southern European countries might be the opposite.

In addition, the general quality of living in Finland as opposed to that of other countries or areas affects the outcome. Moreover, cultural factors play a significant role in the consumption habits. Based on the results of this research, Finnish people in Helsinki value cost savings, convenience and the decreasing amount of private driving, whereas they consider lack of rules and sustainability aspect of the scooters themselves as a possible barrier. As this could be the same case in culturally and geographically similar countries, different set of mentality plays a role in the decision-making.

Also, the origin of the company which provides the service inevitably affects the image in consumers' minds. If it is a domestic or even a local company, the perception could be very positive. The Swedish company Voi or the German company Tier may evoke different feelings for the consumers on a national level compared to the international

market. However, as it was seen in the results of the research, the interviewees did not stress the origin of the companies providing the service, even though the companies providing the electric scooters are mainly coming from abroad.

6.1 Limitations

This research consists of few limitations; in order to apply the results to a broader context, it would be beneficial to investigate the matter on a larger scale. This research was based on opinions from people living in Helsinki, Finland. Hence, research could be expanded to national level, including other cities which have electric scooters. Consequently, this research did not acknowledge other cities outside Finland—a comparable city by population and area would be beneficial to include.

Another limitation for this research is the sample diversity and methodology. To expand the scope and reliability, a more diverse group of people should be included, as this research's empirical study had primarily 25–30-year-olds. Also, to support the qualitative analysis, a quantitative study could be added for support. Additionally, as the electric scooters are a relatively new as a phenomenon throughout the world, relevant literature was limited around the topic. Conducting a similar research in five years' time could explain the topic in more detail.

6.2 Future research

Given that research on the sharing economy is relatively new, and electric scooters as a business-to-peer service has only emerged some years ago, further research needs to be done to investigate consumer preferences. Subsequently, as the business model is not exclusive to Finland and has expanded to different countries, conducting a research of European countries could demonstrate a more detailed version of the perceptions as discussed earlier in the conclusions. Similarly, European Commission (2016, 2018)

investigate the sharing economy on a broader level, however, the studies do not consist of distinguished categories of the business models therein.

The preferences could be compared between countries based on their cultural tendencies; even though electric scooters are discussed and perceived from a certain point of view in Finland, the opinions of other countries or areas can differ significantly. For instance, according to Hofstede's (1984) dimensions, Finland ranks low on masculinity which entails appreciating high quality of life and modesty. On the other side of the spectrum, countries such as Austria are considered to be masculine countries, valuing materialism and achievement. Do the opinions and perception on the sharing economy differ in those countries? Taking other dimensions into consideration—such as long-term orientation—would provide profound insight on the topic (Hofstede, 2006).

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview guide

**Master's thesis interview – 8 questions regarding the sharing economy
and electric scooters**

This interview is part of a master's thesis. For the purpose of the empirical research, the main concept is given a brief definition: sharing economy refers to buying an access to a resource instead of ownership. Although sharing is not new per se, in this context it requires a digital platform as an intermediary.

With your consent, the answers are recorded in order to provide a more detailed result to analyze the results. This interview is confidential, and you will be referred to anonymously.

Date			
Age			
Gender			
Occupation			
Residence			
Monthly income	1 524 € or less <input type="checkbox"/>	1 525–4 065 € <input type="checkbox"/>	4 066 € or more <input type="checkbox"/>
My relationship to electric scooters	I am a user <input type="checkbox"/>	I am not a user <input type="checkbox"/>	

Questionnaire

1. What do you think of the sharing economy?
2. Do you participate in the sharing economy and why? (Why not?)
3. Have you ever used the electric scooters and why? (Why not?)
4. What do you like about the sharing economy? What about in the use of electric scooters?
5. What do you not like about the sharing economy? What about in the use of electric scooters?
6. Do you think of any other positive things about electric scooters related to the following categories: economic, social, convenience & environmental?
7. Do you think of any other negative things about electric scooters related to the following categories: trust, efficacy, social & sustainability?