



**Cross-cultural insights for customer engagement with
access and lateral service systems**

Journal:	<i>Journal of Consumer Marketing</i>
Manuscript ID	JCM-01-2025-7564.R2
Manuscript Type:	Regular Paper
Keywords:	Collaborative consumption, Access exchange markets, Lateral exchange markets, Cultural orientation, Consumer culture theory, Sharing service systems

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Cross-cultural insights for customer engagement with access and lateral service systems

Abstract

Purpose – This study advances our understanding of how macro-social structures and cultural orientations intricately shape consumption preferences—specifically perceived utilitarian value and behavioral intentions—within access and lateral exchange markets. Though integrating insights from consumer culture theory with the dynamics of sharing service systems, this research underscores that consumption choices are not merely individual acts of preference but are embedded within broader cultural frameworks and shaped by historical and societal narratives.

Design/methodology/approach – This study employs structural equation modeling using Mplus version 8 to analyze a dataset comprising 2,428 survey responses. A random effects model is applied to assess the influence of macro-cultural orientations across multiple national contexts, allowing for the simultaneous consideration of country-specific random effects and cross-national generalizability. Respondents represent six culturally diverse countries spanning five continents, enabling the derivation of insights applicable to other markets with similar cultural profiles.

Findings – Markets characterized by higher cultural indulgence and individualism, and lower uncertainty avoidance, present greater opportunities for connecting consumers' preferences to lateral exchange markets. In contrast, cultures with greater restraint, collectivism, and higher uncertainty avoidance may provide better opportunities for access exchange markets than lateral exchange markets. These findings underscore the importance of firms aligning their market selection, entry plan, and promotional strategies with the cultural dimensions that enhance the appeal and usability of their sharing economy services.

Originality/value – This research contributes to the limited body of cross-cultural empirical studies on sharing economy platforms, particularly in distinguishing between lateral and access exchange models. By highlighting the relationship between cultural orientations and consumer preferences, this study provides actionable guidance for platform developers and marketers seeking to expand globally.

Keywords: Sharing service systems, collaborative consumption, access exchange markets, lateral exchange markets, cultural orientation, consumer culture theory

Introduction

The rise of digitally based sharing service systems in access and lateral exchange markets has attracted widespread attention. The principal proposition of lateral exchange markets is that they add value by allowing owners of underutilized resources to make their personal assets (e.g., cars, rooms, and homes) available to those who need them (e.g., travelers), with transactions facilitated through a digital technology platform (Perren and Kozinets, 2018). These platforms are direct alternatives to established businesses in access exchange markets (e.g., hotels, rental cars, metered taxis). While these platforms are typically designed and developed with implicit assumptions rooted in their domestic cultural context, successful international expansion requires a deeper understanding of how cultural values shape consumer engagement and perceptions. Thus, as sharing services expand into global markets, it becomes essential to understand and navigate the cultural orientations specific to each context, given the profound influence of culture on consumer behavior (Perera *et al.*, 2023). However, despite the growing relevance of sharing services, the current literature offers limited insight into how macro-cultural orientations influence individual consumer perceptions. Moreover, there is a lack of empirical guidance on how cultural understanding can be strategically employed to position and promote these services across culturally distinct markets.

Consumer culture theory offers a theoretical perspective to address the dynamic relationships between culture, the marketplace, and consumer preferences (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Research within consumer culture theory demonstrates how consumers' consumption practices are deeply intertwined with their collective ideologies, historical developments, and cultural norms (Holt, 1997; Thompson *et al.*, 2013). Thus, though consumers may appear as individual and autonomous agents, they repeatedly embrace consumption and

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2
3 cultural preferences related to their cultural values, norms, and traditions (Rokka, 2021). These
4
5 culturally specific orientations can be used to disseminate a macro-level understanding of how
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7 similar cultures may respond to new technological offerings, such as those in access and lateral
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9 exchange markets. Therefore, using the tenets of consumer culture theory, we address the
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11 following research question: How do macro-cultural value orientations—such as individualism
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13 versus collectivism and indulgence versus restraint—influence consumer preferences for peer-to-
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15 peer (lateral) exchange platforms in contrast to business-mediated (access) sharing services?
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19 An increased understanding of the influence of cultural orientations on the relationship
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21 between access and lateral exchange markets with consumer preferences is critical for multiple
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23 reasons. First, financial outcomes depend on a proper match of consumer preferences to boost
24
25 trust and usage rates. The costs associated with expanding sharing service systems into new
26
27 markets make insights that can improve perceived value and increase intentions to use the
28
29 service valuable. This is particularly important as these insights may reduce the likelihood of
30
31 failure, as rates among startups and venture-backed companies are traditionally 70 percent within
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33 ten years of founding (Tucker, 2022). For instance, even companies that are successful in some
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35 markets are not immune to failure in others (e.g., Uber exited China in 2016). Second, while
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37 further analysis of each market is necessary, a macro-level understanding of how cultural
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39 orientations can influence consumer intentions can provide insights that can be quickly diffused
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41 into markets with similar orientations. This can attract and retain users more effectively, reduce
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43 churn and entry friction, and enhance their global brand presence. For example, promotional
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45 campaigns effective in Japan could be tested in similar collectivist markets like South Korea or
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47 China. This can provide companies with an accelerated learning curve as they introduce and
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49 promote their service in new markets.
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Utilizing the tenets of consumer culture theory as a foundation, the present research deepens our understanding of how macro-social factors and cultural orientations intricately shape consumption preferences (perceived utilitarian value and behavioral intentions) in access and lateral exchange markets. By bridging consumer culture theory with sharing service systems, this study underscores that consumption choices are not merely individual acts of preference but are rooted in enduring cultural narratives and historical developments. Through examining the roles of indulgence, uncertainty avoidance, and individualism, the findings reveal that consumer preferences for access versus lateral exchange markets is significantly mediated by cultural values that either facilitate or hinder perceived utility and behavioral intentions. This dynamic explains group-based behavioral patterns and the role of macro-social identities (e.g., national cultural orientation) in market trends such as those in sharing service systems. These findings also provide new insights into which types of markets to prioritize from a cultural orientation perspective, helping companies segment based on individual differences to identify consumers who will be more or less attractive (c.f., Lamberton and Rose, 2012). Therefore, for companies looking to expand into new markets (e.g., DoorDash has significantly expanded their international reach through acquisitions, Instacart began making their first push into Europe in 2024, and Turo has plans to expand past the five countries they currently operate within), future success from presently choosing a new market and promotional strategy may be heavily influenced by the cultural orientation of each society.

Research background

The infusion of digitally based sharing service systems into the marketplace illustrates how digitalization and servitization are closely intertwined. The impact of technological

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3 advancements on servitization has led to a great deal of discussion about the various types of
4 consumption related to the sharing economy, collaborative consumption, and access-based
5 consumption (i.e., the access economy). Yet, these concepts are not always well-defined, and
6 there is debate over the misleading impressions generated by the terms, the overlap of ideas, and
7 the failure to make digitalization central to their conceptualization (Benoit *et al.*, 2017). The idea
8 behind sharing service systems originated with peer-to-peer coordination and distribution of a
9 resource for compensation. Many academics and practitioners referred to this concept as “the
10 sharing economy,” but the term is slightly misleading because when practitioners and scholars
11 refer to the sharing economy, they are speaking of quasi-sharing (Belk, 2014; Guyader, 2018),
12 not “the act and process of distributing what is ours to others for their use” (Belk, 2007 p.126).
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26 Collaborative consumption is another concept defined by peer-to-peer coordination and
27 resource distribution. Collaboration is inherently peer-to-peer as it involves an alliance,
28 cooperation, and group effort produced by two or more actors working together toward a
29 common goal. In academia, collaborative consumption is an economic system based on sharing
30 underused assets or services, for free or for a fee, directly from individuals (Benoit *et al.*, 2017;
31 Botsman and Rogers, 2011). Individuals engage in embedded free enterprise and can hold dual
32 roles as producers and consumers. Farmers’ markets, flea markets, and garage sales are all
33 examples of collaborative consumption. However, collaborative consumption is now more often
34 facilitated by digital networks (sometimes called the platform economy) through which
35 consumers engage in various forms of peer-to-peer commerce and sharing activities, including
36 lending, renting, services, staffing, and transportation (Möhlmann, 2015).
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51 More recently, to capture the essence of collaborative coordination and consumption and
52 overcome the previously used and often misleading terms, the academic literature has classified
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3 the concepts of peer-to-peer coordination and distribution of resources as lateral exchange
4 markets. A lateral exchange market is “formed through an intermediating technology platform
5 that facilitates exchange activities among a network of equivalently positioned actors” (Perren
6 and Kozinets, 2018, p.22). Companies facilitate these sharing service systems through the
7 intermediation of technology and the sociality of platform users (Perren and Kozinets, 2018).
8 Lower-level intermediation is exemplified by websites like Craigslist, which allows transactions
9 and fulfillment to flow through with little firm involvement. Conversely, higher-level
10 intermediation transpires when the firm is significantly involved in processing the transaction
11 (e.g., Airbnb, eBay, Turo, and Uber).
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24 Next, though similar to lateral exchange markets, access-based consumption is a distinct
25 concept in the sharing services literature. In the access economy, the organization shares
26 company-owned resources to be collaboratively consumed or passed on from consumer to
27 consumer (Akbar and Hoffman, 2023). However, there is no peer-to-peer coordination, joint
28 ownership, or transfer of ownership; the consumer simply gains access to the use of an object or
29 a service from a firm for a specific period of time through a market-mediated exchange
30 established on a digital platform (Chen, 2008; Guyader, 2018). For instance, Zagster and Zipcar
31 offer bike-sharing and car-sharing services, respectively, but both are done through an App
32 where consumers participate in a short-term rental with a company. Thus, this form of access-
33 based consumption (Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2012) represents an extension of the traditional
34 business-to-consumer model (Guyader, 2018) in which access has expanded to short-term rentals
35 of bikes (e.g., Zagster), cars (e.g., Zipcar), and tools (e.g., Home Depot).
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51 Therefore, in addition to the brief overview above, Figure 1 delineates the four primary
52 types of consumption: ownership-, access-, lateral-, and community-exchange markets to display
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3 overlaps and clear distinctions. While ownership and community exchange markets may seldom
4
5 or never utilize digital sharing systems, access exchange markets often utilize digital sharing
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7 systems, and lateral exchange markets primarily utilize digital sharing systems to bring together
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9 a diverse set of actors and encourage collaborative service through advanced service solutions
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11 that promote value co-creation in service ecosystems. Thus, the following exploration and
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13 insights best relate to sharing service systems through lateral and access exchange markets.
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17 -Insert Figure 1 here-
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21 **Theoretical framework and hypothesis development**

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23 When companies begin operating in lateral- or access-exchange markets, they are often
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25 domestically oriented because their technology is developed for the home market. There is
26
27 already an understanding of the cultural factors in the home market that could drive exchange
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29 because those factors are embedded in the structure of the organization. However, as companies
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31 begin operating internationally, the need to learn about foreign markets emerges. Thus, we turn
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33 to theory from social psychology to gain a better understanding of the macro-social influences
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35 and individual effects on technology adoption from cultural orientation (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010).
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37 Figure 2 provides a graphical representation of the relationships in the tested model.
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45 Culture is often described as the collective programming of the mind that differentiates
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47 one group from another (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010). These cultural values are deeply ingrained from
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49 early childhood and persistently guide consumers in setting long-term priorities (Peterson *et al.*,
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51 2015). Considerable marketing research has focused on how cultural orientation influences
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53 systematic differences in consumer behavior across various cultures at both the firm and
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3 consumer levels. However, there is still limited empirical evidence linking national culture to
4 consumers' perceptions and intentions toward access versus lateral exchange markets. Thus,
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6 researchers must still provide context for how markets' social, cultural, political, and institutional
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8 structures impact commerce realities across many industries (Jaffari *et al.*, 2022).
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12 Consumer culture theory offers a theoretical perspective for examining the complex and
13
14 evolving interplay between cultural values, marketplace structures, and consumer preferences
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16 (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). The foundation of consumer culture theory, *which examines the*
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18 *relationship between consumer behaviors and the socio-cultural contexts in which they occur*, is
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20 that consumption is not merely an individualistic act but is deeply intertwined with collective
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22 ideologies, historical developments, and cultural norms (Thompson *et al.*, 2013). For instance,
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24 research within consumer culture theory explains how consumers' engagement in consumption
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26 practices is historically rather than individually shaped and established (Holt 1997). Thus, while
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28 consumers believe they create personalized consumption narratives, they simultaneously uphold
29
30 and perpetuate shared cultural narratives (Rokka, 2021). This duality explains the predictable
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32 patterns in group-based consumer behavior and underscores the influence of macro-social
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34 identities like gender, race, religion, or nationality in shaping market trends.
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41 Consumer culture theory explains “how different macro-level structural and historical
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43 influences pattern consumption and identities available for consumers (Rokka, 2021, p.116).” In
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45 other words, consumer preferences are heavily influenced by cultural values, norms, and
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47 traditions. Thus, consumer culture theory provides “recognition of how both the macro-social
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49 (structural) and micro-social (individual) contexts are simultaneously at play and feed into each
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51 other. This means that while consumers may appear as individual and autonomous agents as they
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3 go about constructing personalized narratives about their consumption, they at the same time
4 tacitly embrace and repeat consumption ideologies and cultural narratives (Rokka, 2021, p.116).”

8 *Consumer preferences*

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10 A large body of research has established that consumers frequently seek utilitarian value from
11 the services they use (Hwang and Griffiths, 2017; Lamberton and Rose, 2012). More
12 specifically, research on sharing service systems suggests that consumers are primarily driven to
13 use sharing service systems by utilitarian motives related to the functional and economic benefits
14 the service provides (Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2012; Davidson et al., 2018; Guyader, 2018).

15 Utilitarian value materializes from a service’s ability to help consumers accomplish a particular
16 task or achieve a specific goal. Consumer judgments are often based on the functionality,
17 efficiency, and purchasing convenience of the process, and any difficulties or complexities
18 negatively impact those judgments (Hwang and Griffiths, 2017). The utilitarian value of lateral
19 exchange markets, such as ride-hailing and room-sharing, occurs from the ability to offer
20 convenience, cost-efficiency, and flexibility compared to many traditional access exchange
21 markets, such as taxis and hotels. Through intuitive digital platforms and on-demand services,
22 companies utilizing lateral exchange markets allow users to book rides or accommodations with
23 minimal effort, avoiding the hassle of phone calls or waiting in lines. Their 24/7 availability
24 ensures they remain accessible in areas and times when traditional services might be unavailable.

25
26 Utilitarian value increases when platforms are easy to navigate, offer transparent pricing,
27 and provide reliable, useful services (Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2012; Lamberton and Rose, 2012).

28 For instance, lateral exchange markets enable users to tailor their services to match specific
29 needs, whether selecting a particular neighborhood for lodging or choosing a specific vehicle or
30 vehicle size. These platforms also empower consumers by comparing available options, such as
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3 detailed property reviews, allowing them to make well-informed decisions. Moreover, many
4 platforms facilitate easier communication with drivers or hosts, offering a more direct way to
5 address concerns or ask questions compared to traditional taxis or hotels.
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10 Lateral exchange markets also eliminate overhead costs, such as fleet maintenance or
11 property ownership, allowing them to pass savings onto users. They extend their price flexibility
12 through non-peak ride-hailing fares or budget-friendly Airbnb alternatives in less tourist-heavy
13 areas. With transparent pricing models, users know the cost of their service upfront, avoiding
14 surprises like hidden fees or unpredictable meter charges commonly associated with taxis and
15 hotels. Furthermore, features such as cashless payments and real-time tracking enable these
16 platforms to prioritize functional benefits that enhance the utilitarian aspects of simplicity (e.g.,
17 ease of use) and convenience (Lamberton and Rose, 2012). This convenience eliminates the
18 hassles associated with finding money to pay for the fare, waiting for a credit card transaction to
19 complete, and awkwardness over tipping, making the service more desirable.
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33 H_{1a-b} : Consumers (a) perceive greater utilitarian value and (b) have greater behavioral
34 intentions to use lateral exchange markets versus access exchange markets.
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40 Utilitarian value is strongly associated with how well a service helps consumers achieve
41 their goals or solve problems effectively. Innovative features that enhance utilitarian value—such
42 as new technologies, faster service delivery, or personalized functionality—can differentiate a
43 service from competitors and drive behavioral intentions (Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2012; Lamberton
44 and Rose, 2012). If a service delivers practical benefits, such as saving time, reducing effort, or
45 improving productivity, it positively influences the consumer's perception of its usefulness. This
46 perception drives behavioral intentions, as consumers are more likely to adopt or reuse a service
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3 that they find effective in meeting their needs. Further, utilitarian value plays a significant role in
4 shaping consumer satisfaction, a key determinant of behavioral intentions. When consumers feel
5 that a service meets or exceeds their functional expectations, they are more likely to express
6 positive attitudes and develop a commitment to continued use.
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12 H_{1c}: Perceived utilitarian value is positively related to greater behavioral intentions.
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17 ***Cultural orientation***

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19 Next, we discuss how Hofstede's cultural dimensions create unique conditions for how consumer
20 culture theory influences consumer preferences by employing the three dimensions –indulgence,
21 uncertainty avoidance, and individualism– that are theoretically relevant to the sharing service
22 systems in access and lateral exchange markets (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010). Using the tenets of
23 consumer culture theory, Hofstede's cultural dimensions deliver a framework for exploring how
24 consumers' social relationships and group memberships influence their behavior. Because
25 consumption is not just about functional or economic decisions but is deeply embedded in
26 cultural contexts and social norms, we can expect relative regularity of perception and behavioral
27 action among people from the same group-based identity (Thompson *et al.*, 2013).
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40 Global companies can benefit from understanding how the moderating role of culture
41 influences consumers' expectations, perceptions, and emotional responses to brand experiences
42 (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010). By acknowledging these cultural variances, businesses can tailor their
43 strategies in specific markets to adapt their marketing messages, product offerings, and
44 communication strategies, making them more effective and aligned with consumer needs and
45 desires. Thus, the moderating role of culture not only aids in market expansion but also mitigates
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3 risks associated with cultural misunderstandings, ensuring that companies can effectively meet
4 local consumer needs and preferences in diverse cultural contexts.
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8 First, indulgent cultures are marked by a societal emphasis on pleasure, enjoyment, and
9 the pursuit of personal satisfaction and freedom (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010). In such contexts,
10 utilitarian value is often derived from services that not only offer functional benefits but also
11 enhance personal experiences through convenience, entertainment, or emotional gratification.
12 For instance, in countries like Colombia, consumers may place a high value on ride-hailing
13 platforms that integrate entertainment features or promote a sense of lifestyle enhancement.
14 These services align with cultural expectations of spontaneity, individual enjoyment, and ease of
15 access to gratifying experiences.
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26 Conversely, restrained cultures prioritize self-discipline, order, and adherence to social
27 norms, with a cultural orientation toward delayed gratification and modesty in consumption
28 behaviors (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010). In such environments, consumers perceive utilitarian value
29 through a more pragmatic lens, favoring cost-efficient, reliable, and socially appropriate services.
30 For example, in India, consumers may prioritize affordability and practicality over luxury or
31 experiential benefits when evaluating transportation or accommodation services, such as public
32 transit or budget lodging options.
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42 A consumer's familiarity with a service develops through direct and indirect experiences
43 related to personal use, exposure to marketing communication, and information about the
44 business from one's own network (Alba and Hutchinson, 1987). Consumers with these
45 experiences can develop a stronger understanding of the benefits and convenience related to the
46 new technology. The behaviors associated with indulgence lead to the expectation that
47 consumers from cultures with a high indulgence orientation are predisposed to enjoy the
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3 convenience and freedom that additional transportation and accommodation services offer.

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5 Further, consumers from an indulgent orientation value flexibility and reliability (Hofstede *et al.*,
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7 2010) and typically have a great collection of novel experiences that have increased their comfort
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9 level. Thus, we expect consumers from more indulgent cultures to have a stronger preference
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11 toward lateral exchange markets.
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15 H_{2a}: Under conditions of high cultural indulgence, lateral exchange markets have a stronger
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17 relationship with utilitarian value.
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20 H_{2b}: Under conditions of high cultural indulgence, lateral exchange markets have a stronger
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22 relationship with behavioral intentions.
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27 Second, cultures characterized by high uncertainty avoidance strongly emphasize
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29 predictability, safety, and reliability in service experiences, often leading to resistance toward
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31 novel technologies and innovations (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010). According to consumer culture
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33 theory, this resistance frequently stems from a tension between deeply held traditional values and
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35 the disruptive nature of globalized consumer offerings. For instance, Japan—a prototypical high
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37 uncertainty avoidance culture—has been relatively slow to adopt sharing economy models,
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39 largely due to concerns about standardization, service quality, and trust. In such contexts, the
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41 perceived lack of structure and predictability in collaborative consumption platforms heightens
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43 consumer apprehension.
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47 In contrast, cultures with low uncertainty avoidance are more receptive to innovation and
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49 experimentation. Consumers in these societies are generally more tolerant of ambiguity and may
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51 actively seek out novel, flexible, or nontraditional service models, even when such models
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53 involve some degree of risk or unpredictability (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010). For example, in countries
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3 like Sweden, consumers may derive significant utilitarian value from ride-hailing, bike-sharing,
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5 or room-sharing platforms because these services align with a cultural openness to unstructured
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7 experiences and decentralized forms of consumption.
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10 Uncertainty avoidance can thus be understood as a cultural orientation that reflects the
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12 degree to which members of a society feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations. This
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14 orientation becomes particularly salient in lateral exchange markets, where consumers transact
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16 with other individuals through a company rather than directly with the company. For consumers
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18 in high uncertainty avoidance cultures, utilitarian value is often inextricably linked to
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20 mechanisms that foster trust, reduce risk, and ensure consistency. As such, in markets like Japan,
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22 sharing economy platforms are more likely to succeed when they foreground robust safety
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24 features, such as identity verification, user ratings, and standardized booking procedures that
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26 minimize ambiguity and deliver a reliable service experience.
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31 While skepticism toward peer-to-peer service models or interactions with strangers may
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33 be more pronounced in some cultures, consumer culture theory offers a valuable framework for
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35 designing culturally tailored trust-building strategies (Jaffari *et al.*, 2022). By understanding the
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37 socio-cultural roots of consumer resistance, companies can develop more effective market entry
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39 strategies, mitigate cultural frictions, and adapt their value propositions to resonate with local
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41 consumer expectations. Nevertheless, relative to business-to-consumer transactions in access-
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43 based markets, collaborative consumption within lateral exchange systems presents heightened
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45 perceptions of risk, nonconformity, and uncertainty (Shankar *et al.*, 2002). These arise from the
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47 inherently novel and intimate nature of such exchanges—such as sleeping in a stranger’s home
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49 or riding in their personal vehicle. Consequently, because lateral exchange markets' relative
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51 novelty and perceived unfamiliarity can generate caution in cultures prioritizing stability and
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3 relational trust, we expect consumers from high uncertainty avoidance cultures to exhibit weaker
4 preferences for lateral exchange platforms.
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8 H_{3a}: Under conditions of high cultural uncertainty avoidance, lateral exchange markets
9 have a weaker relationship with utilitarian value.
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12 H_{3b}: Under conditions of high cultural uncertainty avoidance, lateral exchange markets
13 have a weaker relationship with behavioral intentions.
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19 Third, individualistic cultures strongly emphasize personal autonomy, self-reliance, and
20 the prioritization of individual goals over collective ones (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010). Within such
21 cultures, utilitarian value is often linked to service attributes that enhance personal efficiency,
22 convenience, and control. Consumers in individualistic societies tend to favor platforms that
23 provide customizable, time-saving, and flexible options that align with their emphasis on
24 independence and effective time management. For example, in the United States, ride-hailing
25 services like Uber have gained widespread popularity by offering users the ability to independently
26 manage their transportation needs, select preferred routes, and travel on demand. Similarly, room-
27 sharing platforms such as Airbnb appeal to individualistic preferences through a wide array of
28 unique accommodations, giving users freedom of choice and personalized travel experiences.
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42 In contrast, collectivist cultures emphasize group cohesion, interdependence, and
43 adherence to shared social norms (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010). Thus, the perceived utilitarian value of
44 services is frequently rooted in their ability to benefit the collective and reinforce social harmony.
45 For instance, in collectivist societies like those in most of Asia, consumers may prioritize features
46 that facilitate group use, such as carpooling options or accommodations that support family or
47 communal travel. Additionally, trust-based elements—such as local service providers, familiar
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3 payment methods, and community-reinforcing interactions—enhance perceived value by aligning
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5 with cultural expectations of social interconnectedness and mutual support.
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8 In some cultures, social conformity and adherence to group norms may strongly influence
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10 purchasing decisions, while in other cultures, individual uniqueness and differentiation might be
11
12 more important (Rokka, 2021). For example, in collectivist cultures, consumption choices may
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14 prioritize family and community needs, and collectivist consumers may exhibit slower adoption
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16 of sharing service systems, not necessarily due to resistance but because informal sharing
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18 systems may already exist within tightly knit social networks. Conversely, in individualistic
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20 cultures, consumption choices may prioritize personal preferences and self-expression because
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22 individualism reflects that consumption is rooted in independence and gratification, which are
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24 associated with choice and customization (Akdeniz and Talkay, 2013). This focus on personal
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26 freedom is coupled with high acceptance of innovations that provide consumers with more
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28 options. Therefore, we expect consumers from highly individualistic cultures to exhibit stronger
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30 preferences for lateral exchange markets, as these platforms align with culturally ingrained
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32 values of self-determination, flexibility, and innovation acceptance.
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38 H_{4a}: Under conditions of high cultural individualism, lateral exchange service systems have
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40 a stronger relationship with utilitarian value.

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42 H_{4b}: Under conditions of high cultural individualism, lateral exchange service systems have
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44 a stronger relationship with behavioral intentions.
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49 **Research Design**

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51 Following the call for future research to investigate more than two countries to better understand
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53 the intersection of culture and collaborative consumption (Perera *et al.*, 2023), survey data was
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3 collected from consumers in several countries with unique cultural orientations. First, the use of
4 room-sharing and ride-hailing to represent collaborative consumption has been established in the
5 literature (Frechette *et al.* 2020), and these forms of services are offered in access and lateral
6 exchange markets. Therefore, a combination of emerging and developed market economies with
7 substantial room-sharing and ride-hailing operations (\$100 million or more in revenue) was
8 sought (45 countries had over \$100 million in revenue for each sharing service system).
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17 Second, to provide generalizable cross-cultural insights into access and lateral exchange
18 markets, countries with diverse cultural characteristics representing many other countries in the
19 region and world were identified using classifications from the World Economic Forum and
20 Hofstede's cultural orientation scores. The World Economic Forum's classifications include
21 countries from every continent and region based on GDP per capita and other indicators. This
22 helps researchers select countries at different development stages, allowing for comparative
23 studies across economic maturity levels. Three diverse middle-income and efficiency-driven
24 economies were selected with distinct combinations of scores on Hofstede cultural orientations:
25 Columbia represents similar countries higher in collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and
26 indulgence; India represents similar countries higher in collectivism but lower in uncertainty
27 avoidance and indulgence; and South Africa to represent similar countries that are above the
28 median in individualism, but are closer to the median in uncertainty avoidance and indulgence.
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3 the United States to represent similar countries higher in individualism, but closer to the median
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5 in uncertainty avoidance and indulgence.
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8 The selection of countries with substantial room-sharing and ride-hailing operations and
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10 diverse characteristics resulted in data being collected in six different countries across five
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12 continents: Colombia, India, Japan, South Africa, Sweden, and the United States. The survey
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14 was designed in English and translated into the specific languages or regional dialects found in
15
16 each country through the translation/back-translation technique (Brislin *et al.*, 1973) with the
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18 assistance of native speakers. In addition to implementing procedural remedies to minimize the
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20 possibility for response bias (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003), the study adopted three approaches to
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22 overcome the potential for common method bias (Spector, 2006): multi-source data, the
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24 inclusion of data from six different countries, and the use of interaction effects not susceptible to
25
26 inflation from common method bias.
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31 Utilizing the research team's network, data were collected using an online survey
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33 distribution through two or three universities in each country. Each university contact from the
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35 research team's network made the opportunity available to their students, colleagues, and
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37 community partners (which were primarily made up of organizations that partner with the
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39 university to offer internships, set up booths at career fairs, etc.) through email and by publishing
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41 the survey link on social media. The sample included 2428 responses from 1214 respondents,
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43 with each respondent answering questions concerning room-sharing (e.g., Airbnb, Hotel) and
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45 ride-hailing (e.g., Uber, metered Taxi) services for each exchange market (access versus lateral).
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47 A filter question at the start of the questionnaire ensured that all respondents were aware of the
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49 different types of services, and anyone unaware was excluded from the study (see Table I for
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51 sample statistics related to the respondents).
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-Insert Table I here-

Perceived utilitarian value and behavioral intentions were measured with scales specific to services and technology adoption, which were initially created by Taylor and Todd (1995). The variables were assessed using a six-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 6 = strongly agree). The three cultural orientation dimensions theoretically relevant to this study –indulgence, uncertainty avoidance, and individualism– were measured using Hofstede’s cultural dimensions and scores (de Mooij and Hofstede, 2010; Hofstede, 1997). Lateral and access exchange markets were not measured, as they were represented by the sharing service system in which respondents completed the questionnaire.

Next, because cultural models like Hofstede’s dimensions assign cultural scores at the country level, it’s possible to categorize and compare different cultural orientations and produce insights to be generalized across cultural regions rather than limiting insights to a single country. This approach strengthens the internal validity of cultural comparisons by ensuring that the cultural variable (e.g., individualism) is the actual driver of differences—not unrelated national factors. Therefore, to account for the complex and nested structure of the data, we pooled the data but still accounted for random effects in the model, represented by each respondent’s country. This approach enabled us to identify the impact of macro-cultural orientations across several countries (i.e., without limiting the effect to one country) and still account for the individual differences related to each country (i.e., modeled as random effects).

Pooling the data from the countries is often better and more effective in cross-cultural research than treating each country separately for several reasons. First, countries may differ politically or economically but share similar cultural values. Pooling them allows researchers to group cultural characteristics rather than limit insights to arbitrary national borders. Thus,

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3 researchers can reduce random cultural noise that results from using national borders as the only
4 distinction. Second, pooling the data allows findings to be generalized across cultural regions
5 rather than tied to a single country. For example, comparing “high individualism cultures” vs.
6 “low individualism cultures” is more intuitive and meaningful than comparing individual
7 countries with overlapping variables. Third, when each country is treated independently, non-
8 cultural factors (laws, currency, political climate, etc.) may influence results. Pooling the data
9 helps neutralize these country-specific effects, keeping the focus on shared cultural traits.
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22 **Results**

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24 We estimated one omnibus model with Mplus v8 using a maximum likelihood estimator with
25 robust standard errors. To examine factor unidimensionality, we subjected the two multi-item
26 constructs to confirmatory factor analysis. The measures in the model reflected the intended
27 underlying constructs, and the results indicate that the measurement model fits the data well (χ^2_{19}
28 = 40.257, $p < 0.01$, CFI = .997, RMSEA = .021, SRMR = .012). Table II presents the scale
29 reliabilities, average variance extracted (AVE), and the range of shared variances (Φ^2). All items
30 have significant loadings ($p < 0.01$) on their intended constructs, suggesting convergence of the
31 indicators with the appropriate factors (Anderson and Gerbing 1988), and all composite
32 reliability scores were above 0.70. The measures for all constructs display convergent and
33 discriminant validity, as each underlying construct explains at least 50% of the variance in its
34 indicators (i.e., all AVEs > 0.50) and has an AVE larger than the shared variance (Φ^2) between
35 the constructs (Fornell and Larcker 1981). The overall results suggest that the measures have
36 strong psychometric properties. Descriptive statistics and correlations are presented in Table III.
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3 In examining the appropriateness of the random-effects model using a maximum
4 likelihood estimator with robust standard errors in Mplus v8, we note the overall goodness of fit
5 indices, R^2 values, significance tests, and standardized path estimates for the structural model.
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7 Overall, the results of the structural model support the proposed model and offer interesting
8 insights ($\chi^2_{61} = 319.747, p < 0.01, CFI = .981, RMSEA = .042, SRMR = .018$). The model
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10 explains 7.2% of the variance in utilitarian value and 65.3% of the variance in intentions. The
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12 detailed results are presented in Table IV and discussed below.
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19 -Insert Table IV here-
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21 The following results provide feedback to the research question: how do cultural
22 orientations shape consumer preferences for lateral exchange platforms compared to business-
23 mediated access exchange platforms? The first set of hypotheses states that consumers will have
24 higher perceived utilitarian value and behavioral intentions for lateral exchange markets versus
25 access exchange markets. Support is found for H_{1a} , as lateral exchange markets have a positive
26 relationship with perceived utilitarian value ($\beta = .055, p < .01$), but not for H_{1b} , as lateral
27 exchange markets have a non-significant and negative relationship with behavioral intentions (β
28 = $-.027, p = .09$). Next, we examined the relationship between perceived utilitarian value and
29 behavioral intentions. We find a significant relationship that directionally supports H_{1c} , as
30 perceived utilitarian value has a significantly positive relationship with behavioral intentions ($\beta =$
31 $.820, p < .01$). This result reveals that though lateral exchange markets have a negative
32 relationship (albeit non-significant), there is an indirect positive relationship with behavioral
33 intentions through the mediator of perceived utilitarian value.
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51 The second set of hypotheses proposes that conditions of high cultural indulgence will
52 strengthen the relationship between lateral exchange markets and both perceived utilitarian value
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3 and behavioral intentions. Support is found for H_{2a} ($\beta = .034, p < .05$), as lateral exchange
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5 markets have a stronger relationship with utilitarian value under conditions of high cultural
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7 indulgence. Support is also found for H_{2b} ($\beta = .035, p < .01$), as lateral exchange markets have a
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9 stronger relationship with behavioral intentions under conditions of high cultural indulgence (see
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11 Figure 3). The results demonstrate that consumers from an indulgent orientation typically have a
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13 great collection of novel experiences that have increased their comfort level with new
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15 technologies, and therefore, they perceive greater value with the features of lateral exchange
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17 markets.
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22 -Insert Figure 3 here-

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24 The third set of hypotheses proposes that conditions of high uncertainty avoidance will
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26 weaken the relationship between lateral exchange markets and both perceived utilitarian value
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28 and behavioral intentions. Support is found for H_{3a} ($\beta = -.042, p < .01$), as lateral exchange
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30 markets have a weaker relationship with utilitarian value under conditions of high uncertainty
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32 avoidance. However, support is not found for H_{3b} ($\beta = .017, p = .26$), as lateral exchange markets
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34 did not have a significantly weaker relationship with behavioral intentions under high cultural
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36 uncertainty avoidance (see Figure 4). Thus, low acceptance and comfort with uncertainty and
37
38 ambiguity in unstructured situations can hinder the perceived utilitarian value of services
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40 operating within lateral exchange markets. Instead, consumers may find more utilitarian value in
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42 traditional access exchange markets (e.g., hotels, metered taxis).
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47 -Insert Figure 4 here-

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49 The fourth set of hypotheses proposes that conditions of high cultural individualism will
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51 strengthen the relationship between lateral exchange markets and both perceived utilitarian value
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53 and behavioral intentions. Support is found for H_{4a} ($\beta = .087, p < .01$), as lateral exchange
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3 markets have a stronger relationship with utilitarian value under conditions of high
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5 individualism. Support is also found for H_{4b} ($\beta = .034, p < .01$), as lateral exchange markets have
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7 a stronger relationship with behavioral intentions under conditions of high cultural individualism
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9 (see Figure 5). This provides validation that cultural individualism can benefit the growth of
10
11 lateral exchange markets because an individualistic orientation helps capture consumer
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13 preferences for personal freedom and innovations that provide consumers with more options.
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17 -Insert Figure 5 here-
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21 **Discussion**

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23 This research illustrates how macro-social factors and cultural norms shape consumption
24
25 preferences and behavioral patterns in sharing service systems. This framework enables
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27 companies in access and lateral exchange markets to develop more effective strategies for market
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29 selection and promotion by aligning with cultural orientations, thereby enhancing their chances
30
31 of success in new markets. Gaining insights into customer consumption preferences across
32
33 diverse cultures equips companies with valuable knowledge to make informed decisions when
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35 entering new markets and to minimize resistance to transitioning from traditional service
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37 providers. The findings offer theoretical contributions for researchers and practical guidance for
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39 managers and marketers operating in access and lateral exchange markets.
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44 ***Theoretical Contributions***

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46 This research reinforces and advances consumer culture theory by illustrating how
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48 cultural orientation shapes systematic differences in consumer behavior. Building on the concept
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50 of utilitarian value – consumers' preference for flexibility, convenience, and service cost-
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52 efficiency (Hwang and Griffiths, 2017) – lateral exchange markets deliver more practical
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3 benefits than traditional access exchange markets. The findings reveal that while consumers
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5 perceive greater utilitarian value in lateral exchange markets, such as new sharing service
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7 technologies with innovative features designed to enhance utilitarian value intentions (Bardhi
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9 and Eckhardt, 2012; Lamberton and Rose, 2012), they do not always have stronger intentions to
10
11 use them. Further, the higher variance in behavioral intentions compared to utilitarian value
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13 suggests that consumers may view functional benefits in access and lateral exchange markets as
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15 baseline expectations rather than differentiating factors. For example, in access exchange
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17 markets (e.g., Zipcar, Bird scooters) and lateral exchange markets (e.g., Airbnb, Turo), the core
18
19 utilitarian value propositions are relatively standardized (convenience, cost savings, efficiency).
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21 In other words, utilitarian value is necessary but not sufficient for shaping long-term adoption
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23 behaviors. Instead, behavioral intentions appear to be more strongly influenced by cultural,
24
25 social, and experiential factors, which provide greater differentiation across consumer groups.
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27 Thus, while lateral exchange markets are often more agile in enabling companies to tailor their
28
29 services to match specific consumer needs, other factors (e.g., cultural orientation) have a strong
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31 influence on intentions. This underscores the importance of moving beyond narrow functional
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33 value assessments to a broader understanding of identity, trust, and cultural congruence in
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35 driving participation in emerging service platforms.
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42 Beyond contextualizing the consumer culture framework within sharing service systems,
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44 our findings identify timely cultural orientations from the vast culture literature relevant to lateral
45
46 and access exchange markets. Cultural indulgence and individualism emerged as critical factors
47
48 in strengthening the link between lateral exchange markets and both utilitarian value and
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50 behavioral intentions. An indulgent orientation is characterized by pleasure, enjoyment, and the
51
52 pursuit of personal satisfaction (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010). In these cultures, utilitarian value is often
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3 tied to services that provide convenience, entertainment, or enhance personal experiences. Thus,
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5 the behaviors associated with indulgence lead to the expectation that consumers from cultures
6
7 with a high indulgence orientation are predisposed to enjoy the convenience and freedom that
8
9 lateral exchange markets offer. Likewise, individualistic cultures prioritize personal goals,
10
11 autonomy, and efficiency (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010). Consumers in these cultures often value
12
13 utilitarian aspects of services that are based on independence and gratification associated with
14
15 choice and customization (Akdeniz and Talkay, 2013).
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19 Conversely, high levels of uncertainty avoidance –where consumers are less comfortable
20
21 with ambiguity– diminish the perceived utilitarian value of lateral exchange services. In such
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23 contexts, traditional access exchange markets, such as hotels or metered taxis, may better meet
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25 consumer needs. Utilitarian value in cultures with high uncertainty avoidance is closely linked to
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27 trust, standardization, and measures that reduce perceived risks. For example, ride- and room-
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29 sharing services in Japan are more likely to succeed when they emphasize safety features and
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31 reduce ambiguity in the booking process.
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35 Finally, the findings underscore how consumer behavior is shaped by historical and
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37 macro-social influences (Holt, 1997; Rokka, 2021). They highlight the interplay between
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39 structural (macro-social) and individual (micro-social) contexts, showing that while consumers
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41 appear autonomous in their choices, they simultaneously reinforce broader consumption
42
43 ideologies and cultural narratives. Thus, the influence of cultural orientation and individual
44
45 preferences (e.g., Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2012; Davidson *et al.*, 2018) in the dynamics between
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47 access and lateral exchange markets should be observed from both perspectives.
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51 ***Managerial Implications***

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3 The present research highlights how cultural orientation –indulgence, uncertainty avoidance, and
4 individualism– provides conditions for strengthening or weakening perceived utilitarian value
5 and behavioral intentions in sharing service systems. Markets with higher cultural indulgence
6 and individualism, and lower uncertainty avoidance, present greater opportunities for connecting
7 consumers' preferences to lateral exchange markets. Conversely, restraint, collectivism, and high
8 uncertainty avoidance cultures may provide better opportunities for access exchange markets
9 than lateral exchange markets. Thus, in addition to being cognizant of the impact structural
10 macro-social culture can have, companies can use this knowledge to decide which new markets
11 to enter and how to promote their sharing service systems to emphasize the aspects of cultural
12 orientation that are beneficial for their service.
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26 Before entering new markets, companies should gather data on the cultural orientations
27 that exist in that society and look for patterns with other countries in which they currently
28 operate. Consumer culture theory sheds light on consumer resistance, often where traditional
29 values clash with global influences (e.g., Japan has been slow to adopt many sharing service
30 systems because of uncertainty avoidance). In some cultures, uncertainty toward shared service
31 systems or strangers may be more prevalent. Likewise, consumers may find less utilitarian value
32 in access versus lateral exchange markets in restraint (versus indulgence) and collectivist (versus
33 individualist) oriented societies. Employing the tenets of consumer culture theory can help
34 companies design culturally specific trust-building mechanisms to reduce perceived risks. By
35 understanding these resistance dynamics, companies can better address consumer concerns,
36 avoid cultural missteps, and customize their service offerings toward the cultural orientation of
37 each new market they enter. Thus, knowledge about the various cultural orientations can help
38 companies navigate the tension between global standardization and local customization when
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3 introducing their service platforms in new markets. For instance, fast food chains like
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5 McDonald's adapt their menus in restraint markets to reflect regional tastes (e.g., offering the
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7 Maharaja Mac in India or teriyaki burgers in Japan).
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10 Further, companies can use variations in cultural orientations related to indulgence,
11 uncertainty avoidance, and individualism to guide their promotional campaigns, such as
12 highlighting the opportunities for new and fun indulgences for those in an indulgence-orientated
13 culture or the practical and affordable options for those in a restraint-oriented culture (see Table
14 V for message appeals to prioritize different dimensions). Likewise, in an individualistic-
15 oriented culture, promotions emphasizing convenience, independence, and the variety of
16 locations and unique accommodations or cars can appeal to individualistic consumers who prefer
17 flexibility and options. Conversely, in collectivist cultures, utilitarian value may be perceived
18 through features that accommodate group travel or shared rides, as well as services that
19 emphasize relationship-based feelings of familiarity and trust (Mittendorf, 2018) (e.g., using
20 local drivers or familiar payment systems and even cash). Companies should also expect that
21 consumers from a collectivist orientation may be slower to engage in sharing service systems
22 because of caution or because they are prone to authentic sharing within their own
23 interdependent network (e.g., while on vacation, collectivist consumers may be more likely to
24 stay with family or friends than in an Airbnb).
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47 For those in a high uncertainty avoidance culture, messaging can be adapted to focus on
48 safe and reliable transactions. Companies operating within or entering an uncertainty-oriented
49 culture should work toward increasing assurance regarding the experience, privacy, and safety of
50 consumers. Companies often use rating and review systems to build trust. Expanding these
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3 programs and offering options for consumers to filter providers based on reviews can deliver
4 more transparency before using the service. Providers can also take steps to ensure the safety and
5 experience of their consumers, including increasing security measures in their driver or host
6 approval and monitoring processes and incentivizing drivers and hosts with rewards for high
7 customer reviews and ratings. Further, minor tweaks geared toward instilling confidence in less
8 tech-savvy demographics may provide expansion opportunities and encourage new consumers to
9 engage with the platform. The intention to use these sharing service systems relies upon a
10 foundation of simplicity and efficiency. In searching for a service provider, processing the
11 payment and fulfillment of the service through the platform should reinforce feelings of ease and
12 proficiency. Designers, marketers, and managers of these platforms can benefit from enhancing
13 perceptions of ease of use through a customer-friendly design that provides a simple interface.

28 ***Limitations and future research opportunities***

29
30 Although this research is conducted with theoretical and quantitative rigor, the results of
31 exchange markets and culture on consumer preferences should be interpreted within macro-
32 social (structural) and micro-social (individual) contexts that are simultaneously at play. The
33 concept of cultural congruence across similar group orientations suggests that strategies proven
34 successful in one market can be adapted to others with comparable cultural profiles. This
35 research emphasizes the need for a holistic approach to market selection, which can be examined
36 further through experiments and field studies that simultaneously account for cultural orientation
37 and individual factors (see Grieco and Palagonia, 2024, for a review of consumer perspectives).
38 Further, future research could explore and incorporate the literature on born-global companies
39 and the distinct internationalization patterns of digital firms. Integrating these perspectives with
40 cross-cultural research and sharing service systems could help identify more nuances between
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3 companies that facilitate exchanges (i.e., lateral) and those that rent out their own products (i.e.,
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5 access).

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8 Another potential opportunity for future research is the relatively higher variance
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10 explained in behavioral intentions compared to utilitarian value in our findings. This suggests
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12 that utilitarian benefits may function as baseline expectations in access and lateral exchange
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14 markets rather than as strong differentiators of consumer adoption. Future research could explore
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16 potential moderators that amplify or diminish the role of utilitarian value, such as trust, perceived
17
18 risk, and hedonic value. Similarly, future studies could examine how platform maturity shapes
19
20 the relative influence of utilitarian versus symbolic benefits, as newer markets may emphasize
21
22 functionality while more mature markets rely on social and identity-based drivers. Such research
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24 would enrich our understanding of how and when utilitarian value matters most, offering a more
25
26 nuanced explanation of service adoption across contexts.
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31 Another consideration is that some of Hofstede's (2010) dimensions were excluded
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33 because they lacked theoretical relevance to access and lateral exchange markets. The degree to
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35 which cultures expect people to act emotionally (masculinity), how cultures are influenced by
36
37 their outlook (long-term orientation), and acceptance of differences in power and inequality
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39 (power distance) were all excluded. However, theoretically relevant cultural factors and
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41 dimensions from other academic frameworks could be explored in the context of access and
42
43 lateral exchange markets.
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47 Finally, to provide cross-cultural insights into access and lateral exchange markets,
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49 survey data was collected from consumers in six different countries based on two primary
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51 criteria. First, a combination of emerging and developed market economies with substantial
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53 room-sharing and ride-hailing operations was sought. Second, to increase the generalizability of
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3 the findings, countries with diverse cultural characteristics representative of many other countries
4 in the region and world were identified. Strategies successful in one market can often be adapted
5 to culturally similar markets, a concept known as cultural congruence. For example, community
6 trust campaigns effective in Japan could be tested in similar collectivist markets like South Korea
7 or China. Tools like Hofstede's cultural dimensions can help identify market traits, and future
8 research should focus on localized methods to gain deeper insights into cultural behaviors,
9 enabling companies to design and position their services more effectively.
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21 **Conclusion**

22 This research deepens our understanding of how macro-social factors and cultural orientations
23 intricately shape consumer behavior in the emerging landscape of access and lateral exchange
24 markets. By bridging consumer culture theory with contemporary market realities, it underscores
25 that consumption choices are not merely individual acts of preference but are rooted in enduring
26 cultural narratives and historical developments. Through examining the roles of indulgence,
27 individualism, and uncertainty avoidance, the study reveals that consumer engagement with
28 sharing service platforms is significantly mediated by cultural values that either facilitate or
29 hinder perceived utility and behavioral intentions.
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42 The findings carry important implications for theory and practice. Theoretically, they
43 reinforce the core principles of consumer culture theory by illustrating how cultural orientations
44 systematically influence consumer behavior across markets. Practically, they offer a strategic
45 framework for companies seeking to expand into new markets. To succeed, businesses must
46 align their services and promotional strategies with the cultural orientations of their target
47 consumers. Ultimately, this research contributes to a growing body of work calling for a more
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culturally sensitive approach to understanding and designing market strategies within sharing service systems. It invites future research to explore these dynamics across a wider array of industries and cultural contexts, offering fertile ground for deepening our knowledge of the evolving interplay between culture, commerce, and consumer behavior.



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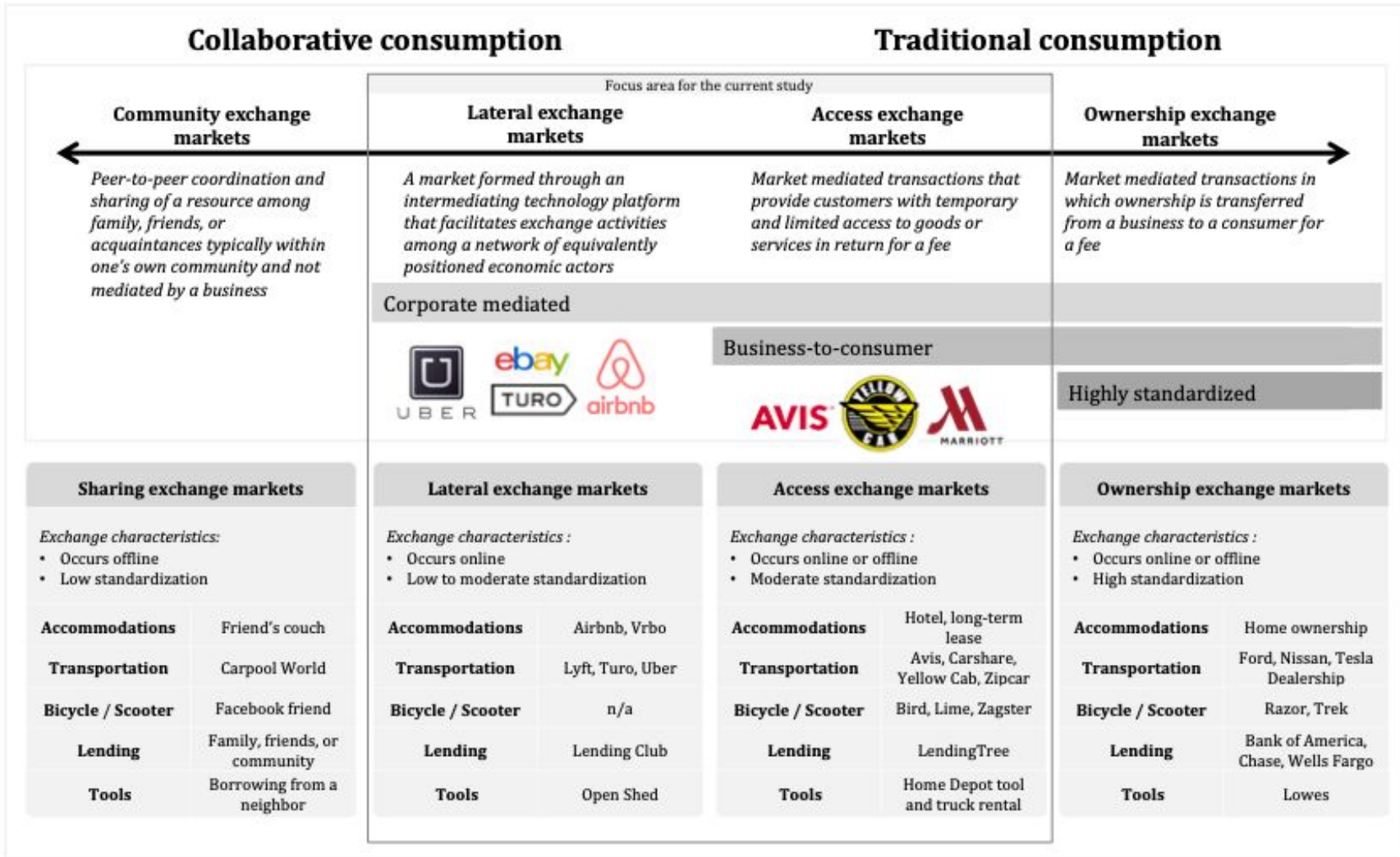
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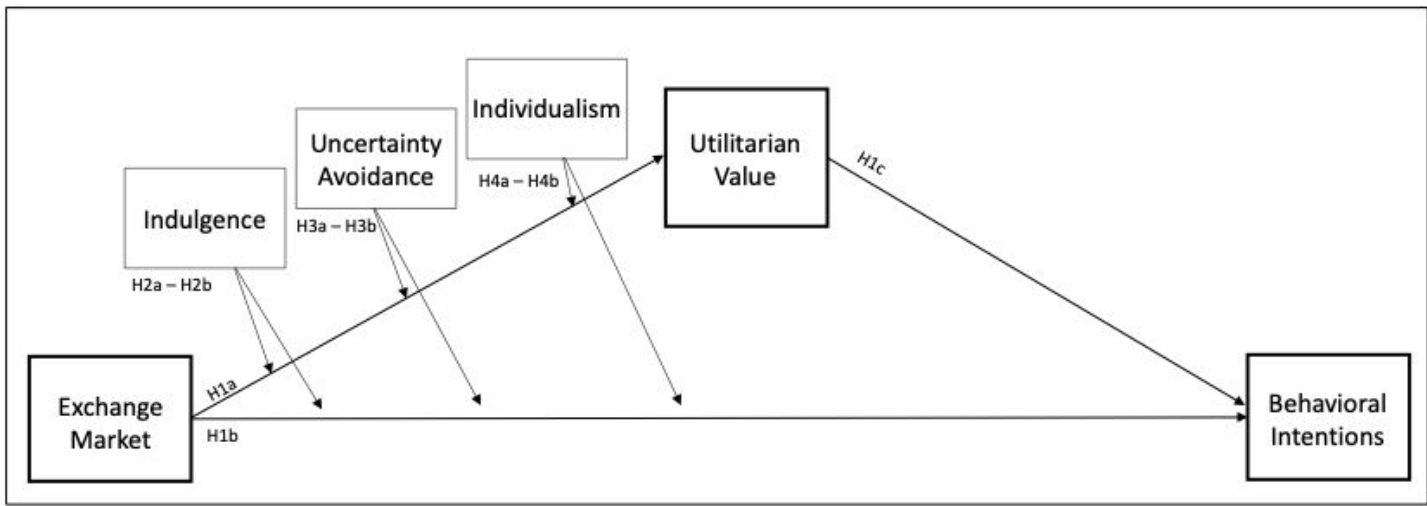
Figure 1. Forms of consumption



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Figure 2. Model



Journal of Consumer Marketing

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3 **Figure 3.** Interaction of exchange markets and cultural indulgence
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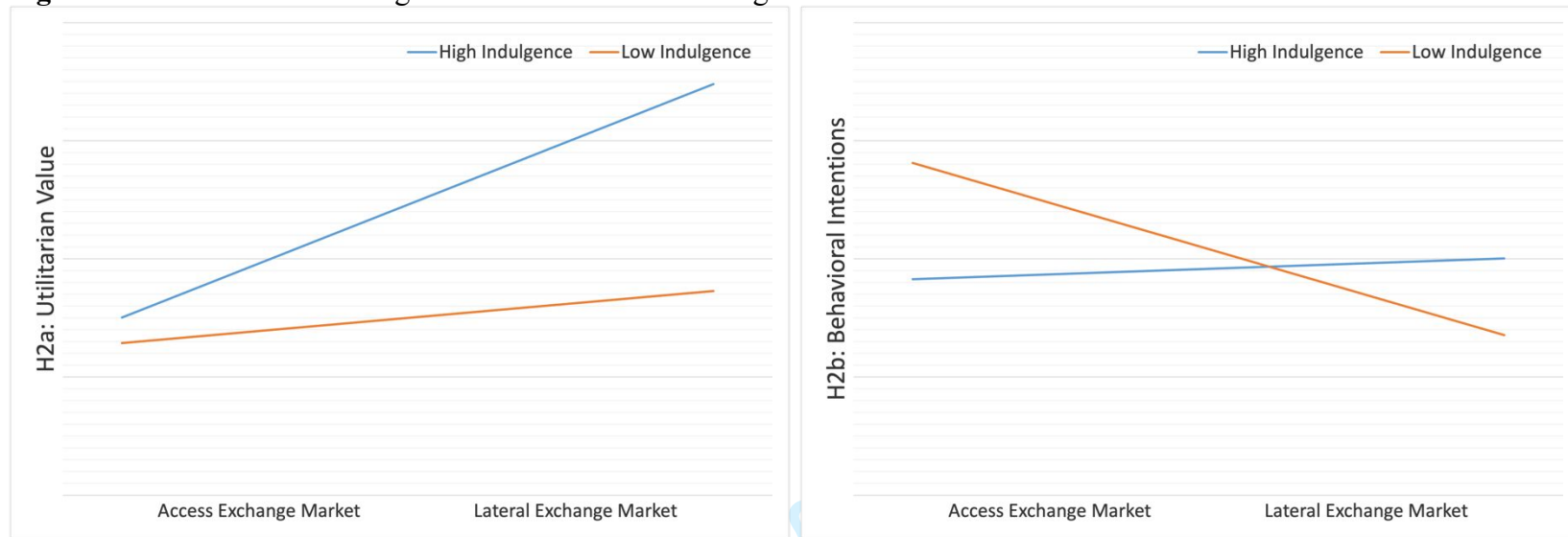
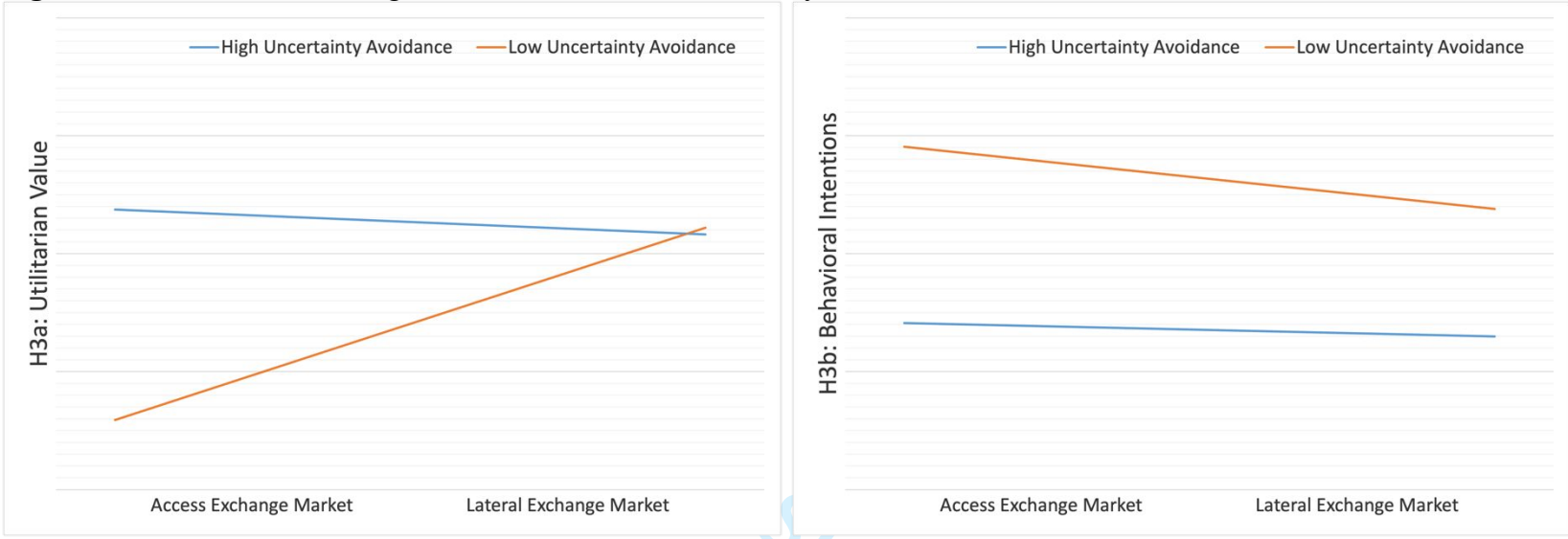
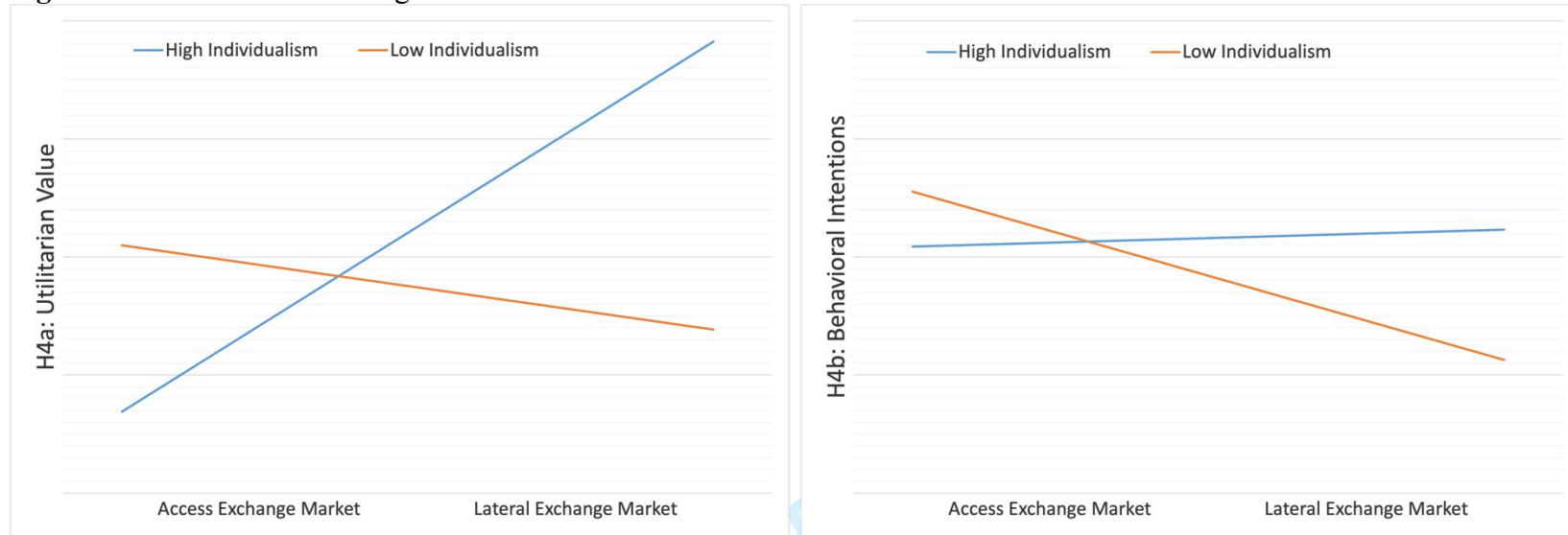


Figure 4. Interaction of exchange markets and cultural uncertainty avoidance



Journal of Consumer Marketing

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Figure 5. Interaction of exchange markets and cultural individualism

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Table I. Sample statistics

	Emerging economies			Developed economies		
	Columbia	India	South Africa	Japan	Sweden	United States
Number of respondents	360	384	444	416	376	448
Percentage of female respondents	43.1%	45.2%	42.2%	46.6%	52.2%	58.0%
29-years or younger	54.3%	82.0%	55.4%	59.9%	53.1%	55.4%
30-years or older	45.7%	18.0%	44.6%	40.1%	46.9%	44.6%
Availability of the service	74.4%	92.1%	89.3%	71.3%	80.4%	94.9%
Experience using ride-hailing	79.4%	76.5%	60.7%	60.7%	63.5%	63.7%
Experience using room-sharing	18.9%	20.3%	24.8%	16.8%	32.0%	19.3%
Downloaded a ride application	62.8%	61.9%	60.1%	42.5%	58.7%	60.4%

Table II. Confirmatory factor analysis results

Scale Items	Standardized Loadings	t-values
Utilitarian Value (CR = .89; AVE = .66, $\Phi^2 = .37$)		
Using this type of service makes things more efficient.	.809	*
Using this type of service improves my options.	.792	62.628
Using this type of service enables me to accomplish my needs faster.	.817	73.305
Using this type of service is beneficial for me financially.	.824	80.874
Behavioral Intentions (CR = .89; AVE = .68, $\Phi^2 = .37$)		
I intend to use this service in the future.	.862	*
I intend to use this service the next time I need a ride or place to stay.	.887	103.556
I intend to use this service when visiting another city.	.817	67.354
I intend to use this service when having a night out with friends.	.709	45.016

Loadings were initially fixed to 1.0. All items have significant loadings ($p < 0.01$).

CR = composite reliability, AVE = average variance extracted, $\Phi^2 =$ phi squared (to assess discriminant validity).

Table III. Means, standard deviations, and correlation matrix

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Behavioral Intentions	1						
2	Utilitarian Value	.607*	1					
3	Exchange Market	.021	.094	1				
4	Indulgence	-.026	-.095	.000	1			
5	Uncertainty Avoidance	.089	.228*	-.001	-.549*	1		
6	Individualism	.064	.047	-.003	-.202*	.162*	1	
7	GDP (1000s)	.035	.063	-.002	.592*	-.065	-.072	1
	Mean	4.560	4.294	1.501	54.438	59.183	55.934	31.393
	Standard deviation	1.181	1.114	0.500	23.906	23.052	17.830	19.621

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table IV. Results

		β	SE	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>
<i>Main Effects</i>					
Exchange Market (Access, Lateral) → Utilitarian Value	H _{1a}	.055	.010	5.447	.000
Exchange Market (Access, Lateral) → Behavioral Intentions	H _{1b}	-.027	.016	-1.696	.090
Utilitarian Value → Behavioral Intentions	H _{1c}	.820	.038	21.644	.000
<i>Indulgence Cultural Orientation (Moderation)</i>					
Indulgence → Utilitarian Value		.088	.074	1.202	.229
Indulgence → Behavioral Intentions		-.013	.006	-2.228	.026
Indulgence x Exchange Market → Utilitarian Value	H _{2a}	.034	.016	2.202	.028
Indulgence x Exchange Market → Behavioral Intentions	H _{2b}	.035	.012	2.886	.004
<i>Uncertainty Avoidance Cultural Orientation (Moderation)</i>					
Uncertainty Avoidance → Utilitarian Value		.276	.082	3.367	.001
Uncertainty Avoidance → Behavioral Intentions		-.111	.023	-4.831	.000
Uncertainty Avoidance x Exchange Market → Utilitarian Value	H _{3a}	-.042	.010	-4.302	.000
Uncertainty Avoidance x Exchange Market → Behavioral Intentions	H _{3b}	.017	.015	1.136	.256
<i>Individualism Cultural Orientation (Moderation)</i>					
Individualism → Utilitarian Value		.047	.052	.921	.357
Individualism → Behavioral Intentions		.028	.007	4.217	.000
Individualism x Exchange Market → Utilitarian Value	H _{4a}	.087	.021	4.114	.000
Individualism x Exchange Market → Behavioral Intentions	H _{4b}	.034	.010	3.361	.001
<i>Gross Domestic Product (GDP; Control Variable)</i>					
GDP → Utilitarian Value		.051	.081	.632	.527
GDP → Behavioral Intentions		-.009	.006	-1.459	.144

Note: Hypothesized relationships with significant p-values are in **bold**

Table V. Message appeals to prioritize different dimensions

Dimension	Key Message Appeals	Tactics & Examples
High Indulgence	<p>“Indulge yourself” Focus on enjoyment, comfort, lifestyle.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize lifestyle content (e.g., “Luxury stays,” “VIP rides”). • Limited-edition experiences and collaborations with local leisure brands.
Restraint	<p>“Practical & affordable” Stress value, utility, cost-efficiency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize functionality: “Get where you need.” • Promotions on savings (e.g., “Ride for less”).
Low Uncertainty Avoidance	<p>“Try something new” Highlight novelty, flexibility, fun.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize fun: “Explore without limits.” • Viral social campaigns demonstrating the experience.
High Uncertainty Avoidance	<p>“Safe & reliable” Emphasize safety features, guarantees, predictability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Book with confidence” badges and safety-feature spotlights (ID checks). • 24/7 support and easy-refund policies. • Emphasize user testimonials highlighting personal success stories.
Individualism	<p>“Freedom to go” Emphasize personal choice, independence, convenience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Customize your ride/stay” demos. • Emphasize individual benefits.
Collectivism	<p>“Join the community” Stress group approval, shared benefits, social proof.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with local influencers or community leaders. • Group-rides and rental discounts. • Emphasize peer-review showcases: “Our community loves us.”

Dear Special Issue Editors,

Thank you for the opportunity to revise our manuscript for publication in the *Journal of Consumer Marketing*. We have addressed the last remaining concerns and provided a response to Reviewer 4, comment 4, 5, and 6 for you to review. We have also highlighted the additions in the manuscript.

We're looking forward to how this research will invite future researchers to explore consumer culture dynamics across a wider array of industries and cultural contexts. We expect that the empirical tests and novel findings will appeal to stakeholders who read, advance, and disseminate ideas from articles in the *Journal of Consumer Marketing*. Below, we provide *original comments in italics*, followed by our responses, which are in plain text.

Sincerely,
The Authorship Team

Manuscript ID JCM-01-2025-7564.R1 entitled "Cross-cultural insights for customer engagement with access and lateral service systems" which you submitted to the Journal of Consumer Marketing, has been reviewed.

Guest Editor Comments:

Dear Authors,

The reviews have been returned with favorable comments (the comments of the reviewers are included at the bottom of this letter). However, one reviewer would like to have some additional comments on the explanatory power of utilitarian value in the model and some additional practical implications of your research. In addition, please have your manuscript edited for clarity, grammar, and conciseness. We see this as a **minor revision** which should be able to be completed in a timely manner. We do NOT foresee sending this paper out for additional review if your revision addressed the above comments satisfactory.

We look forward to your revised manuscript.

Yours sincerely,

JCM Special Issue Guest Editors

Hugo Guyader, hugo.guyader@liu.se

Pia A. Albinsson, albinssonpa@appstate.edu

Lucie K. Ozanne, lucie.ozanne@canterbury.ac.nz

Reviewer(s)' Comments to Author:**Reviewer: 1****Recommendation: Accept***Comments:*

I would like to thank the authors for their thorough and thoughtful revisions. The improvements made in response to the earlier comments have significantly strengthened the manuscript, both in terms of clarity and academic rigor. The conceptual framework is now more clearly defined, the methodology better justified, and the conclusions well integrated with the findings. I congratulate the authors on this revised version and appreciate their efforts in enhancing the quality of the paper.

Author Response: Thank you for your thoughtful comments and guidance throughout the revision process. Your contribution as a reviewer is much appreciated, as it has helped to improve the potential impact of this journal article.

Additional Questions:

1. Originality: Does the paper contain new and significant information adequate to justify publication?: The paper addresses a significant and relevant topic—the sharing economy or lateral Exchange market—while adopting a consumer culture theory perspective. This theoretical approach contributes to developing new knowledge at both academic and managerial levels. By leveraging this perspective, the paper advances understanding of the cultural factors that may influence individuals' decisions to participate in the lateral exchange market.

2. Relationship to Literature: Does the paper demonstrate an adequate understanding of the relevant literature in the field and cite an appropriate range of literature sources? Is any significant work ignored?: The revised manuscript shows a notable improvement in its engagement with the relevant literature. The authors have now addressed the previously raised concerns regarding terminology by acknowledging the ongoing debate around terms such as sharing economy, collaborative economy, collaborative consumption, platform economy, and access economy. They provide a clearer justification for their use of the term "lateral exchange market" and have clarified the distinctions between these overlapping concepts. These additions significantly enhance the conceptual framing of the paper and demonstrate a deeper understanding of the literature. Overall, the revised version offers a more comprehensive and accurate positioning within the existing body of work, and no significant literature now appears to be overlooked.

3. Methodology: Is the paper's argument built on an appropriate base of theory, concepts, or other ideas? Has the research or equivalent intellectual work on which the paper is based been well designed? Are the methods employed appropriate?: The revised paper presents a well-

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3 *structured and conceptually grounded methodology. The theoretical foundation remains solid,*
4 *and the authors have clarified key aspects that previously required elaboration. Specifically, the*
5 *rationale behind the country selection is now clearly articulated, with explicit reference to*
6 *relevant classifications such as those from the World Economic Forum and a more detailed*
7 *explanation of the cultural characteristics considered. This addition enhances the transparency*
8 *and validity of the sampling strategy.*

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11 *Moreover, the authors have addressed the influence of socio-cultural factors on the adoption of*
12 *sharing economy practices, reinforcing the relevance of their groupings. The inclusion of more*
13 *detailed demographic information about the respondents, including age and gender, further*
14 *strengthens the robustness of the analysis by acknowledging variables known to affect*
15 *engagement with sharing platforms.*

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18 *Overall, the methodological design is now more comprehensive and appropriately aligned with*
19 *the research objectives, supporting the paper's claims with increased rigor and clarity.*
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22 *4. Results: Are results presented clearly and analysed appropriately? Do the conclusions*
23 *adequately tie together the other elements of the paper?: The results are presented clearly and*
24 *analyzed appropriately, maintaining the clarity and coherence observed in the previous version*
25 *of the paper. Importantly, the addition of a dedicated conclusion section and improvements to*
26 *the discussion have enhanced the overall structure and impact of the manuscript. The conclusion*
27 *now effectively ties together the key elements of the study by directly addressing the research*
28 *questions, summarizing the main findings, and articulating the broader implications of the work.*
29 *This addition provides a strong closing to the paper and reinforces the significance of the*
30 *research within the wider academic context.*
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35 *5. Practicality and/or Research implications: Does the paper identify clearly any implications*
36 *for practice and/or further research? Are these implications consistent with the findings and*
37 *conclusions of the paper?: The revised manuscript now presents both theoretical and practical*
38 *implications more clearly and consistently. Overall, the practical and research implications are*
39 *well-integrated, consistent with the study's results, and provide meaningful guidance for both*
40 *scholars and practitioners in the field.*
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45 *6. Quality of Communication: Does the paper clearly express its case, measured against the*
46 *technical language of the field and the expected knowledge of the journal's readership? Has*
47 *attention been paid to the clarity of expression and readability, such as sentence structure,*
48 *jargon use, acronyms, etc.: The paper is well written and clearly expresses its case, using*
49 *appropriate technical language for the field and maintaining a level of clarity suitable for the*
50 *journal's readership.*
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3 **Reviewer: 4**
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6 **Recommendation: Minor Revision**
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8 *Comments:*
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10 *Thank you for your thorough revisions, which have strengthened the manuscript's theoretical*
11 *positioning, methodological transparency, and practical relevance. The expanded literature*
12 *review and clarification of consumer culture theory's application within the sharing economy*
13 *context are notable improvements. However, further attention is needed to explicitly discuss the*
14 *model's limited explanatory power for utilitarian value and to provide more concrete, context-*
15 *specific examples to enhance the practical implications. Additionally, a final focused edit to*
16 *streamline dense sections would improve clarity.*
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19
20 **Author Response:** Thank you for your kind words and guidance throughout this process. Your
21 contribution as a reviewer has strengthened the manuscript and helped to make it a more
22 constructive article for the future readers.
23
24

25 *Additional Questions:*
26

27 *1. Originality: Does the paper contain new and significant information adequate to justify*
28 *publication?: This revised manuscript has the opportunity to provide a meaningful contribution*
29 *by integrating consumer culture theory quantitatively into the study of cross-cultural differences*
30 *within the context of the sharing economy. The authors addressed prior reviewer and editor*
31 *feedback by effectively differentiating lateral and access exchange markets and justifying this*
32 *differentiation. The authors address prior reviewer feedback and clarify the theoretical*
33 *differences, making this revised manuscript a stronger submission.*
34
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36 **Author Response:** Thank you.
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38 *2. Relationship to Literature: Does the paper demonstrate an adequate understanding of the*
39 *relevant literature in the field and cite an appropriate range of literature sources? Is any*
40 *significant work ignored?: In this revised manuscript, the authors expanded their literature*
41 *review to incorporate key works such as Lamberton and Rose (2012). The authors have justified*
42 *their theoretical positioning around utilitarian, rather than hedonic value. Further, the authors*
43 *acknowledge that born-global or digitally-native companies in this space are a concern that*
44 *should be addressed in future research. This revised manuscript demonstrates a strong*
45 *integration of the literature suggestions suggested in the first round of reviews.*
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49 **Author Response:** Thank you.
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52 *3. Methodology: Is the paper's argument built on an appropriate base of theory, concepts, or*
53 *other ideas? Has the research or equivalent intellectual work on which the paper is based been*
54 *well designed? Are the methods employed appropriate?: The authors strengthened the*
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3 *methodological rigor of the paper in this revised manuscript. They clarified their country-*
4 *selection logic, explicitly explaining the use of World Economic Forum criteria and Hofstede's*
5 *dimensions. They also responded to the concern regarding pooled cross-cultural samples by*
6 *justifying using random-effects structural equation modeling to account for nested data*
7 *structures. I found these revisions effective, and the justifications sound. These changes improve*
8 *their methodological approach's transparency and validity, strengthening the potential impact of*
9 *the research from the previous version of the manuscript.*

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13 **Author Response:** Thank you.

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16 *4. Results: Are results presented clearly and analysed appropriately? Do the conclusions*
17 *adequately tie together the other elements of the paper?: The results section is presented clearly,*
18 *with improved use of visuals and tables that address prior concerns about clarity. The authors*
19 *clarified the moderation effects of cultural dimensions and framed their findings in a structured*
20 *manner. Acknowledging and addressing the relatively low variance explained in utilitarian value*
21 *would further strengthen the potential impact of this research. However, overall, the authors*
22 *effectively responded to previous critiques by making their findings clearer and better integrated*
23 *with their theoretical framework.*

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27 **Author Response:** Following your guidance, we have addressed the higher variance explained
28 by behavioral intentions compared to utilitarian value in the discussion section (and later in the
29 future research section).

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32 Page 24: This research reinforces and advances consumer culture theory by illustrating how
33 cultural orientation shapes systematic differences in consumer behavior. Building on the concept
34 of utilitarian value – consumers' preference for flexibility, convenience, and service cost-
35 efficiency (Hwang and Griffiths, 2017) – lateral exchange markets deliver more practical
36 benefits than traditional access exchange markets. The findings reveal that while consumers
37 perceive greater utilitarian value in lateral exchange markets, such as new sharing service
38 technologies with innovative features designed to enhance utilitarian value intentions (Bardhi
39 and Eckhardt, 2012; Lamberton and Rose, 2012), they do not always have stronger intentions to
40 use them. Further, the higher variance explained in behavioral intentions compared to utilitarian
41 value suggests that consumers may view functional benefits in access and lateral exchange
42 markets as baseline expectations rather than differentiating factors. For example, in access
43 exchange markets (e.g., Zipcar, Bird scooters) and lateral exchange markets (e.g., Airbnb, Turo),
44 the core utilitarian value propositions are relatively standardized (convenience, cost savings,
45 efficiency). In other words, utilitarian value is necessary but not sufficient for shaping long-term
46 adoption behaviors. Instead, behavioral intentions appear to be more strongly influenced by
47 cultural, social, and experiential factors, which provide greater differentiation across consumer
48 groups. Thus, while lateral exchange markets are often more agile in enabling companies to
49 tailor their services to match specific consumer needs, other factors (e.g., cultural orientation)
50 have a strong influence on intentions. This underscores the importance of moving beyond narrow
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3 functional value assessments to a broader understanding of identity, trust, and cultural
4 congruence in driving participation in emerging service platforms.
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9 *5. Practicality and/or Research implications: Does the paper identify clearly any implications*
10 *for practice and/or further research? Are these implications consistent with the findings and*
11 *conclusions of the paper?: The manuscript improves the clarity and usefulness of its practical*
12 *implications, directly responding to prior reviewer comments. Adding Table V enhances the*
13 *practical relevance, illustrating how platform companies might tailor marketing messages based*
14 *on cultural dimensions. Offering succinct real-world scenarios or illustrative cases could further*
15 *increase this section of the manuscript and strengthen its potential application to practitioners.*
16 *Also, the authors could add some of the differences in the variance explained among the*
17 *constructs into future research, as there exists potential to explore this further.*
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24 **Author Response:** Thank you for providing feedback and concrete ideas for improving the
25 manuscript.
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27 Following your advice, in addition to Table V, we have added more examples into the
28 manuscript to represent Lateral and Access exchange markets.
29

30 Page 4: Therefore, for companies looking to expand into new markets (e.g., DoorDash has
31 significantly expanded their international reach through acquisitions, Instacart began making
32 their first push into Europe in 2024, and Turo has plans to expand past the five countries they
33 currently operate within), future success from presently choosing a new market and promotional
34 strategy may be heavily influenced by the cultural orientation of each society.
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38 Page 6: For instance, Zagster and Zipcar offer bike-sharing and car-sharing services,
39 respectively, but both are done through an App where consumers participate in a short-term
40 rental with a company. Thus, this form of access-based consumption (Bardhi and Eckhardt,
41 2012) represents an extension of the traditional business-to-consumer model (Guyader, 2018) in
42 which access has expanded to short-term rentals of bikes (e.g., Zagster), cars (e.g., Zipcar), and
43 tools (e.g., Home Depot).
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46 Page 26: Thus, knowledge about the various cultural orientations can help companies navigate
47 the tension between global standardization and local customization when introducing their
48 service platforms in new markets. For instance, fast food chains like McDonald's adapt their
49 menus in restraint markets to reflect regional tastes (e.g., offering the Maharaja Mac in India or
50 teriyaki burgers in Japan).
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3 We have also added some suggestions for future research regarding the higher variance
4 explained by behavioral intentions compared to utilitarian value.
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6 Page 29: Another potential opportunity for future research is the relatively higher variance
7 explained in behavioral intentions compared to utilitarian value in our findings. This suggests
8 that utilitarian benefits may function as baseline expectations in access and lateral exchange
9 markets rather than as strong differentiators of consumer adoption. Future research could explore
10 potential moderators that amplify or diminish the role of utilitarian value, such as trust, perceived
11 risk, and hedonic value. Similarly, future studies could examine how platform maturity shapes
12 the relative influence of utilitarian versus symbolic benefits, as newer markets may emphasize
13 functionality while more mature markets rely on social and identity-based drivers. Such research
14 would enrich our understanding of how and when utilitarian value matters most, offering a more
15 nuanced explanation of service adoption across contexts.
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23 *6. Quality of Communication: Does the paper clearly express its case, measured against the*
24 *technical language of the field and the expected knowledge of the journal's readership? Has*
25 *attention been paid to the clarity of expression and readability, such as sentence structure,*
26 *jargon use, acronyms, etc.: The manuscript is clearer and better organized following revisions,*
27 *with terminology and methodological explanations more accessible to the journal's audience.*
28 *That said, some sections still contain lengthy sentences and dense phrasing that could be*
29 *streamlined for clarity. A final focused edit for conciseness would enhance the readability and*
30 *strengthen the manuscript's presentation.*
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36 **Author Response:** Thank you for your suggestions. We have proofread and made some changes
37 to further streamline the manuscript to enhance conciseness and the presentation of the
38 manuscript.
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