THE IMPACT OF CHINESE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' PERSONAL ATTITUDES AND PREFERENCES ON THEIR ACCEPTANCE OF THE SHARING ECONOMY: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF CHENGDU

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This Independent Study Has Been Approved as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Business Administration

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of the sharing economy has reshaped consumer behavior and business models, particularly among younger generations who are both digitally native and open to innovative services. In China, undergraduate students represent a crucial demographic, as their adoption of sharing platforms not only influences market expansion but also reflects broader societal trends toward sustainability and digitalization.

The objectives of this study were: 1) To examine the influence of environmental awareness on Chinese undergraduate students' acceptance of the sharing economy. 2) To examine the influence of acceptance of new things on Chinese undergraduate students' acceptance of the sharing economy. 3) To examine the influence of risk tolerance on Chinese undergraduate students' acceptance of the sharing economy. 4) To examine the influence of evaluation of user experience on Chinese undergraduate students' acceptance of the sharing economy.

A quantitative research design was employed, and data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via Wenjuanxing (Questionnaire Star). Using a randomized sampling approach, a total of 500 questionnaires were distributed, and 460 valid responses were retained for analysis. The data were analyzed with reliability and validity testing, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, and structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the hypothesized relationships.

The results revealed that all four independent variables significantly and positively influenced students' acceptance of the sharing economy. Among them, evaluation of

user experience was the strongest predictor, followed by environmental awareness, acceptance of new things, and risk tolerance. The findings confirm the relevance of both attitudinal and control-related factors in shaping behavioral intentions, offering theoretical support for the application of Theory of Planned Behavior in the context of collaborative consumption.

Keywords: environmental awareness, acceptance of new things, risk tolerance, user experience, undergraduate students

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WANG MIN

DECLARATION

I, WANG MIN, hereby declare that this Independent Study entitled “THE IMPACT OF CHINESE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' PERSONAL ATTITUDES AND PREFERENCES ON THEIR ACCEPTANCE OF THE SHARING ECONOMY: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF CHENGDU” is an original work and has never been submitted to any academic institution for a degree.

(WANG MIN)
Sep 5, 2025

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1.1 Background of the Study

The sharing economy, characterized by peer-to-peer access to goods and services via digital platforms, has transformed traditional consumption models by promoting resource flexibility and sustainable usage (Jemio, 2024). As digitalization accelerates globally, the sharing economy continues to expand into multiple domains, including transportation, accommodation, and daily services (Sadiq, 2023).

In China, the growth of sharing economy platforms has been strikingly rapid, underpinned by widespread mobile payment infrastructure, supportive policy frameworks, and a burgeoning urban youth demographic eager to embrace innovative consumption modes (Chen, 2024). University students, in particular, represent a highly engaged and tech-savvy cohort. Their behaviors not only shape current usage patterns but also forecast future consumer trends.

Prior research has explored various psychological and behavioral antecedents to sharing economy acceptance. For instance, perceived risk and trust have emerged as central factors influencing user participation; reliability, platform credibility, and quality of service environments significantly affect users' risk evaluations and trust (Gu et al., 2025). Moreover, openness to innovation and specific motivational drivers—such as sustainability inclinations, have been linked with stronger intentions to participate in sharing models, especially among younger demographics (Martínez-González et al., 2021).

However, empirical research with a focused lens on Chinese undergraduate students, particularly within the context of Chengdu, remains scarce. There is a knowledge gap regarding how individual-level factors such as environmental awareness, acceptance of new things, risk tolerance, and evaluation of user experience shape the acceptance of sharing economy platforms.

To fill this gap, this study centers on undergraduate students across Chengdu's universities. It systematically investigates how these personal attitudes and preferences influence their acceptance of sharing economy services. This localized, empirical approach not only contributes to academic discourse surrounding digital-era consumer behavior but also offers actionable insights for platform designers and policymakers seeking to foster sustainable, student-oriented sharing economy adoption in China.

1.2 Questions of the Study

The sharing economy has experienced rapid growth, with college students emerging as one of its most active user groups. Their willingness to engage with this model is shaped by individual attitudes and personal preferences. This study examines Chinese undergraduate students in Chengdu, investigating how environmental awareness, openness to new experiences, risk tolerance, and evaluation of user experience influence their acceptance of the sharing economy. By focusing on these factors, the research seeks to provide empirical insights into the mechanisms shaping student participation in this emerging economic model. Accordingly, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. How does environmental awareness among Chinese undergraduate students influence their acceptance of the sharing economy?

2. How does openness to new experiences among Chinese undergraduate students influence their acceptance of the sharing economy?

3. How does risk tolerance among Chinese undergraduate students influence their acceptance of the sharing economy?

4. How does evaluation of user experience among Chinese undergraduate students influence their acceptance of the sharing economy?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The sharing economy has become a significant sector globally, influencing consumer behavior and business models, particularly among young educated populations. In China, undergraduate students represent a key demographic whose adoption of sharing economy platforms can drive market trends. This study focuses on how their personal attitudes and preferences shape this acceptance. Specifically, it examines the role of environmental awareness, acceptance of new things, risk tolerance, and evaluation of user experience in influencing their engagement with shared services. Specific objectives include:

1. To investigate the influence of Chinese undergraduate students' environmental awareness on their acceptance of the sharing economy.

2. To investigate the influence of Chinese undergraduate students' acceptance of new things on their acceptance of the sharing economy.

3. To investigate the influence of Chinese undergraduate students' risk tolerance on their acceptance of the sharing economy.

4. To investigate the influence of Chinese undergraduate students' evaluation of user experience on their acceptance of the sharing economy.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on undergraduate students from universities across Chengdu, China, as the primary research population. To ensure representativeness and data reliability, a randomized sampling method was employed, encompassing students from different academic years and diverse disciplines. During the survey period, 500 questionnaires were distributed, and 460 valid responses were retained for empirical analysis. The independent variables consisted of four dimensions of personal attitudes and preferences, namely environmental awareness, acceptance of new things, risk tolerance, and evaluation of user experience, while the dependent variable is acceptance of the sharing economy. Data were collected over a one-month period (October 25 to November 25, 2024) using an online survey platform, with strict quality control measures applied to ensure the authenticity, completeness, and reliability of responses.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to both theoretical understanding and practical application of the sharing economy among Chinese undergraduate students.

This study enriches the existing body of literature on consumer behavior and the sharing economy by focusing on a young, educated demographic in China. By examining the influence of environmental awareness, acceptance of new things, risk tolerance, and user experience evaluation, the research provides deeper insights into how personal attitudes and preferences shape the acceptance of sharing economy platforms. These findings contribute to the broader discourse on sustainable consumption, innovation adoption, and risk behavior among young consumers.

From a practical perspective, the study offers valuable implications for businesses and policymakers. For sharing economy platforms, understanding the factors influencing student acceptance can help optimize service design, improve user experience, and enhance marketing strategies targeted at young consumers. For policymakers, the results highlight the importance of cultivating environmental awareness and responsible risk management in order to encourage sustainable participation in the sharing economy. Ultimately, this research provides an empirical foundation for promoting the growth of sharing economy models within China's higher education context and beyond.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

Environmental Awareness: The degree to which individuals recognize and value the importance of environmental protection and sustainability, influencing their consumption preferences and behaviors.

Acceptance of New Things: The tendency of individuals to adopt and embrace new ideas, products, services, or technologies, reflecting openness to innovation and change.

Risk Tolerance: An individual's willingness to accept uncertainty or potential negative outcomes when making decisions, particularly in the context of adopting new services or platforms.

Evaluation of User Experience: The subjective assessment of service quality, convenience, safety, and satisfaction when engaging with sharing economy platforms, which directly influences continued usage and acceptance.

Acceptance of the Sharing Economy: The extent to which individuals are willing to adopt, use, and integrate sharing economy platforms into their daily lives as part of their consumption behavior.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

The sharing economy has emerged as a transformative force in global markets, reshaping consumption patterns and business models worldwide. Understanding the factors that drive its acceptance is crucial, particularly among younger demographics who are key participants in this ecosystem. This study focuses on Chinese undergraduate students in Chengdu, examining how their personal attitudes and preferences influence their adoption of sharing economy services. Specific dimensions including environmental awareness, acceptance of new things, risk tolerance, and evaluation of user experience are explored as independent variables shaping their behavioral intentions. Grounded in established theoretical frameworks of Innovation Acceptance Theory and User Experience Theory, this research aims to provide empirical insights into the psychological and behavioral mechanisms underlying sharing economy engagement. By investigating these relationships within a distinctive socio-cultural context, the study seeks to contribute meaningful implications for both academic discourse and practical applications in the sharing economy sector.

2.1 Personal Attitudes and Preferences

Personal attitudes and preferences refer to the enduring psychological predispositions and evaluative orientations that individuals develop, which influence their perceptions, decisions, and behavioral tendencies toward specific phenomena or services. Chen (2021) posited that personal attitudes, as amalgamations of cognitive and affective responses, serve as primary drivers of consumer behavior in digital and collaborative contexts. Li and Wang (2020) further illustrated that specific preferences, including those toward user experience and risk, directly correlate with acceptance levels of sharing services. Dowling and Staelin (2022) supplemented these findings by highlighting that such attitudes and preferences are dynamically shaped by personal traits, reinforcing their role as critical predictors of engagement in collaborative consumption models.

Recent studies have emphasized that personal attitudes in the sharing economy are not only influenced by individual psychological dispositions but also shaped by social and cultural environments. For example, Hamari et al. (2016) demonstrated that attitudes toward sustainability and community belonging significantly enhance individuals' willingness to participate in collaborative consumption. Likewise, Böcker and Meelen (2017) found that environmental motivations and lifestyle preferences can strengthen the perceived value of shared services, thereby increasing acceptance. In

addition, behavioral economics research suggests that personal preferences, such as risk aversion and novelty seeking, act as mediators between cognitive evaluations and actual behavioral intentions (Piscicelli et al., 2015).

Furthermore, technological advances and platform design also play a crucial role in shaping attitudes and preferences. For instance, Hawlitschek, Teubner, and Gimpel (2016) identified trust and perceived fairness as central determinants of user preferences in peer-to-peer services, while Möhlmann (2015) showed that satisfaction with user experience, including convenience, cost-effectiveness, and enjoyment, directly influences attitudes toward continued usage. Collectively, these findings highlight that personal attitudes and preferences operate as multidimensional constructs shaped by individual, social, and technological factors, making them pivotal in predicting the acceptance of sharing economy platforms among young consumers.

2.2 Environmental Awareness

Environmental awareness refers to an individual's cognitive understanding, emotional concern, and behavioral inclination toward environmental issues, including the recognition of environmental challenges, the approval of sustainable practices, and the willingness to adopt behaviors that reduce environmental harm. Zhang et al. (2018) highlighted that it encompasses not only knowledge of ecological problems but also a sense of responsibility to mitigate them through daily choices, emphasizing its role in shaping pro-environmental attitudes. Li and Wang (2020) further noted that environmental awareness involves evaluating the environmental impact of consumption behaviors, where individuals with higher levels tend to prioritize options that minimize resource waste and carbon footprints.

In the context of the sharing economy, Chen and Liu (2022) explained that this construct is particularly relevant as it reflects how individuals perceive the environmental benefits of sharing resources, such as reduced overconsumption and lower emissions, and how this perception influences their acceptance of sharing services, linking personal values to broader ecological sustainability goals. Similarly, Wang and Zhou (2021) observed that students with strong environmental awareness often associate collaborative consumption with ecological responsibility, which enhances their willingness to adopt sharing-based platforms. Furthermore, Barbarossa and De Pelsmacker (2016) argued that environmental awareness integrates moral obligations with behavioral intentions, suggesting that individuals with high ecological concern are more likely to transform awareness into sustainable purchasing and usage behaviors.

Recent empirical research also emphasizes that environmental awareness is not static but evolves through education, cultural values, and exposure to sustainable practices. For instance, Geng et al. (2019) demonstrated that targeted sustainability education programs significantly increase university students' environmental knowledge and strengthen their behavioral intentions toward green consumption. Moreover, Nguyen et al. (2020) confirmed that environmental awareness is positively correlated with participation in sustainable consumption models, such as recycling, eco-friendly purchasing, and the use of sharing services. Collectively, these dimensions underscore environmental awareness as a multifaceted concept that bridges cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects in guiding decisions related to environmentally responsible consumption.

2.3 Acceptance of New Things

Acceptance of new things refers to an individual's inherent openness and willingness to adopt novel ideas, products, services, or technologies that differ significantly from established practices or existing alternatives. It encompasses both cognitive and affective dimensions, reflecting a proactive inclination toward innovation rather than resistance to change. This construct signifies a predisposition to perceive the potential benefits of emerging offerings and actively seek out novel experiences (Hamari et al., 2019).

Within the sharing economy context, it manifests as the readiness to engage with unconventional business models such as peer-to-peer accommodation or ride-sharing platforms, driven by curiosity and a positive evaluation of their distinct characteristics compared to traditional services (Mittendorf, 2020). Individuals high in acceptance of new things demonstrate lower psychological barriers to trial and exhibit stronger behavioral intentions toward using sharing platforms, viewing them as opportunities rather than uncertainties (Tussyadiah, 2020).

Scholars have noted that this trait is closely related to concepts such as innovativeness and openness to experience. For instance, Hirschman (1980) emphasized that consumers who score high in innovativeness are more likely to adopt emerging consumption practices early, thereby accelerating diffusion in society. Similarly, Rogers (2003) in his diffusion of innovations theory pointed out that early adopters are characterized by their greater acceptance of novelty, willingness to take risks, and ability to influence peers. More recent empirical research by Leung (2021) showed that young consumers' acceptance of innovative technologies significantly

predicts their adoption of sharing platforms, especially when the platforms are perceived as convenient and socially rewarding.

In addition, cultural and social environments play a crucial role in shaping the acceptance of new things. According to Zhang and Lin (2022), students in rapidly developing urban areas in China demonstrate stronger tendencies to try new digital platforms, reflecting both their exposure to technological advancement and their cultural valuation of innovation. Collectively, these findings underscore that acceptance of new things is not only an individual trait but also a socially embedded disposition that critically determines the adoption and sustained usage of disruptive sharing economy applications.

2.4 Risk Tolerance

Risk tolerance refers to an individual's willingness and capacity to endure uncertainty, potential losses, or negative outcomes associated with a particular behavior or decision, reflecting the degree to which one remains open to engaging in activities despite perceived risks. In the context of the sharing economy, this concept encompasses the extent to which undergraduate students can accept uncertainties such as information asymmetry between providers and users, potential service quality fluctuations, or concerns about asset safety, without being deterred from participating.

Dowling and Staelin (2022) noted that risk tolerance is a key determinant of consumer decision-making, as it shapes the threshold at which perceived risks begin to inhibit behavioral intentions. Miltgen et al. (2022) further elaborated that in peer-to-peer sharing models, higher risk tolerance often correlates with greater willingness to trust unknown service providers and engage in transactions with incomplete information. Wang et al. (2019) found that among Chinese consumers, risk tolerance is particularly influential in the sharing economy, where institutional safeguards are still developing, making individual acceptance of inherent risks a critical factor in determining overall acceptance of such services.

Other studies have reinforced the significance of risk tolerance in digital and collaborative consumption contexts. For example, Kim et al. (2018) demonstrated that consumers with higher risk tolerance are more willing to adopt new technological services even when privacy and security concerns exist, underscoring the link between personal risk attitudes and innovation adoption. Similarly, Mittendorf (2018) observed that risk tolerance moderates the relationship between trust and participation in the sharing economy, showing that individuals with greater tolerance for uncertainty are less deterred by potential failures in platform reliability.

Furthermore, cultural values and social norms shape how risk tolerance operates across different consumer groups. Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory suggests that societies with lower uncertainty avoidance, such as China, may foster greater acceptance of risks in innovative consumption settings (Hofstede, 2011). Complementing this, Lee et al. (2021) found that younger consumers, particularly university students, tend to display higher levels of risk tolerance due to their familiarity with digital platforms, exposure to diverse services, and stronger curiosity for novel consumption models. Collectively, these findings illustrate that risk tolerance functions as a pivotal psychological construct influencing both the initial adoption and continued participation in sharing economy services.

2.5 Evaluation of User Experience

Evaluation of user experience refers to the cognitive assessment individuals make regarding the perceived utility, ease of use, satisfaction, and overall quality derived from their interactions with sharing economy platforms and services. This assessment encompasses judgments formed during the entire user journey, including service discovery, access, transactional processes, direct usage, and post-consumption reflection. It fundamentally represents a user's subjective appraisal of whether the platform's functionality, interface design, reliability, and service delivery meet or exceed their expectations and needs within the specific context of sharing goods or services (Moon et al., 2023).

This evaluation directly influences perceived value and future behavioral intentions, as users continuously weigh the benefits received against any encountered friction or costs, such as effort required or perceived risks (Zhang & Liang, 2021). Consequently, a positive evaluation significantly strengthens the user's likelihood of sustained engagement and advocacy within the sharing ecosystem. The construct inherently involves measuring affective responses and satisfaction levels tied to specific touchpoints and the holistic interaction, forming a critical determinant of adoption and loyalty in collaborative consumption models where trust and seamless interaction are paramount (Chen et al., 2020).

Recent studies further stress that evaluation of user experience is multi-dimensional, including functional quality, emotional engagement, and social interaction. Tussyadiah and Pesonen (2018) found that users' evaluations of peer-to-peer accommodation platforms were strongly influenced by perceptions of authenticity, convenience, and enjoyment, which in turn predicted intention to reuse. Similarly, Akbar and Tracogna (2018) observed that satisfaction with platform responsiveness and

problem-solving ability shaped users' loyalty to ride-sharing services. In addition, Huang and Benyoucef (2020) emphasized the role of interface usability and transparency in building trust, suggesting that user experience evaluation is not only about functionality but also about how effectively platforms reduce uncertainty and support decision-making.

Moreover, research highlights that negative experiences exert a disproportionately strong influence on consumer perceptions and can deter future use. According to Ertz et al. (2018), unresolved service failures in sharing platforms undermine trust and diminish willingness to re-engage, showing the critical importance of consistent and reliable service delivery. Collectively, these findings underline that evaluation of user experience is both a psychological and behavioral construct, linking users' cognitive appraisals and emotional responses to their continued participation in sharing economy ecosystems.

2.6 Acceptance of the Sharing Economy

Acceptance of the sharing economy refers to individuals' willingness to adopt and engage with collaborative consumption platforms, shaped by factors such as trust in platform governance, risk perceptions, and alignment with social values. Xiang (2021) highlighted that trust in service providers and platform governance mechanisms significantly influences users' acceptance, particularly in contexts where economic and social inequalities may affect the perceived value of sharing. Gu et al. (2021) emphasized the role of risk tolerance, demonstrating that consumers' perceptions of transaction security and rapport among stakeholders directly impact their willingness to participate. Cherry and Pidgeon (2018) further noted that environmental awareness and the desire for community cohesion are critical drivers, as individuals often associate sharing economy practices with resource efficiency and sustainable consumption.

Recent research underscores that acceptance is not only based on functional benefits but also on psychological and social motivations. Hawlitschek et al. (2018) found that participation in sharing platforms is strongly linked to the perceived fairness of transactions and the ability of platforms to reduce opportunistic behavior. Similarly, Möhlmann (2015) demonstrated that satisfaction with prior experiences, particularly regarding convenience, cost savings, and trust, has a decisive effect on users' willingness to continue adopting sharing services.

Moreover, cultural and generational differences influence acceptance patterns. According to Barnes and Mattsson (2017), younger consumers are more inclined to embrace sharing models because of their openness to digital technologies and

preference for flexible, access-based consumption. In the Chinese context, Zhang and Guo (2022) revealed that social endorsement and peer influence play important roles in shaping undergraduate students' acceptance of sharing services, reflecting the collectivist cultural orientation that places value on community norms and shared responsibility.

Additionally, research highlights that perceived sustainability outcomes significantly enhance acceptance. Hamari et al. (2016) demonstrated that users are more likely to engage with sharing platforms when they associate participation with ecological benefits and social good. In educational contexts, students' awareness of environmental and social impacts can reinforce their acceptance by linking personal consumption decisions with broader sustainability goals (Wang & Zhou, 2021).

Collectively, these findings indicate that acceptance of the sharing economy is a multifaceted construct that integrates cognitive evaluations, affective responses, social influences, and cultural values. For Chinese undergraduate students in Chengdu, acceptance is shaped by a combination of personal preferences, perceptions of risk and trust, user experience evaluation, and ecological concerns, which together form the foundation of their engagement with sharing economy services.

2.7 Theory of Planned Behavior

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) proposed by Ajzen (1991) provides a robust theoretical foundation for understanding individual decision-making in the context of the sharing economy. TPB posits that behavioral intention is the most immediate determinant of actual behavior, and that such intention is shaped by attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In this study, undergraduate students' environmental awareness and openness to new things can be understood as attitudinal orientations that shape their evaluation of collaborative consumption practices. Their risk tolerance and evaluations of user experience reflect perceived behavioral control, since these factors influence students' confidence in their ability to participate successfully in sharing economy platforms despite uncertainties. Although subjective norms are not directly measured in this research, prior studies have shown that peer influence and social endorsement strongly motivate young consumers to adopt sharing-based services in collectivist cultural settings such as China (Zhang & Guo, 2022; Wang et al., 2021). TPB has been widely applied in studies of sustainable consumption, digital platform usage, and collaborative consumption, confirming its explanatory power in similar contexts. For example, Hamari et al. (2016) found that attitudes toward sustainability and enjoyment significantly predict participation in

collaborative consumption, while Chen and Lu (2016) demonstrated that Chinese consumers' adoption of peer-to-peer accommodation services could be effectively explained through TPB constructs. More recent empirical evidence supports this perspective: Yoon et al. (2020) showed that attitudes and perceived behavioral control drive sustainable consumption among university students, while Oliveira et al. (2022) revealed that risk perceptions and platform trust mediate the relationship between attitudes and adoption of sharing platforms. Similarly, Lin et al. (2023) confirmed that user experience satisfaction, conceptualized within perceived behavioral control, significantly enhances students' willingness to reuse sharing services. By integrating these perspectives, TPB offers a comprehensive framework for analyzing how personal attitudes and preferences, such as environmental awareness, acceptance of new things, risk tolerance, and user experience, collectively shape the acceptance of sharing economy platforms among Chinese undergraduate students.

2.8 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is constructed on the basis of Theory of Planned Behavior and incorporates four independent variables: environmental awareness, acceptance of new things, risk tolerance, and evaluation of user experience. These variables are proposed to influence the dependent variable, acceptance of the sharing economy. Environmental awareness and acceptance of new things are conceptualized as attitudinal components, while risk tolerance and evaluation of user experience are considered aspects of perceived behavioral control. Based on these relationships, a conceptual framework diagram was developed to illustrate how these factors jointly shape Chinese undergraduate students' acceptance of sharing economy platforms in Chengdu.

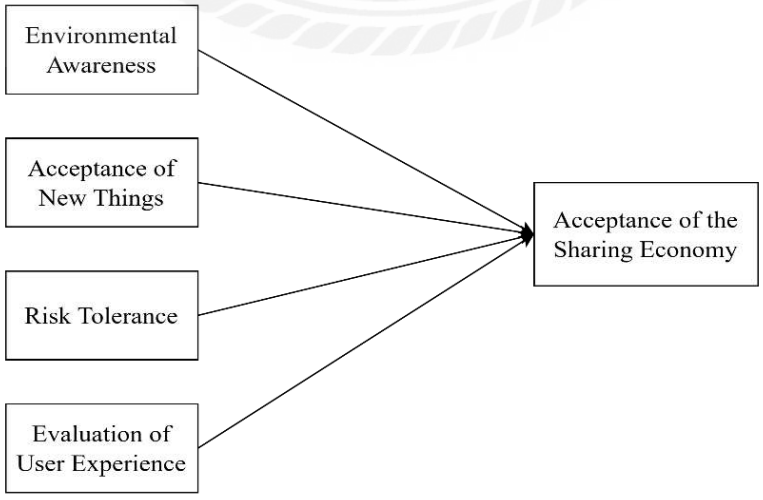

Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative research design. The research was guided by Theory of Planned Behavior, which provides a theoretical foundation for linking individual attitudes and perceived behavioral control with behavioral intention. Four independent variables, environmental awareness, acceptance of new things, risk tolerance, and evaluation of user experience, were examined in relation to the dependent variable, acceptance of the sharing economy.

The target population of this study consisted of undergraduate students enrolled in universities across Chengdu, representing diverse academic years and disciplines. A randomized sampling technique was applied to enhance representativeness and minimize selection bias. A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed during the data collection period, and 460 valid responses were retained for analysis. The questionnaire was developed based on established measurement scales adapted from prior literature, with modifications made to ensure contextual relevance to the sharing economy in China. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

3.2 Questionnaire Design

The measurement instrument for this study was developed based on established scales adapted from prior literature to ensure content validity and contextual relevance. All constructs were measured using multiple items rated on a five-point Likert scale, where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

Table 3.1 Measurement Items of Variables

Variable	Code	Item	Reference
Environmental Awareness	EA1	I am concerned about the negative impact of overconsumption on the environment.	Zhang et al. (2018); Geng et al. (2019)
	EA2	I believe that adopting sustainable practices can reduce environmental problems.	
	EA3	I consider environmental consequences when making consumption decisions.	

	EA4	I am willing to change my daily habits to minimize environmental harm.	
	EA5	I feel a personal responsibility to contribute to environmental protection.	
Acceptance of New Things	AN1	I enjoy trying new products and services, even if they are unfamiliar.	Hirschman (1980); Rogers (2003); Hamari et al. (2016)
	AN2	I am usually among the first to adopt innovative services or technologies.	
	AN3	I am open to replacing traditional services with newer alternatives.	
	AN4	I believe trying new things helps improve my quality of life.	
	AN5	I am curious about innovative platforms and willing to explore them.	
Risk Tolerance	RT1	I am willing to use sharing platforms even if there is some uncertainty about service quality.	Dowling & Staelin (1994, 2022); Mittendorf (2018)
	RT2	I do not mind taking certain risks if the benefits of the service are attractive.	
	RT3	I feel comfortable using sharing services even when I do not fully know the provider.	
	RT4	I am not easily discouraged by concerns about safety or security in the sharing economy.	
	RT5	I am willing to accept possible losses in exchange for trying innovative services.	
Evaluation of User Experience	UX1	I find sharing platforms easy to use and navigate.	Möhlmann (2015); Chen et al. (2020); Moon et al. (2023)
	UX2	The services I receive through sharing platforms usually meet my expectations.	
	UX3	I am satisfied with the overall quality of my interactions with sharing services.	

	UX4	Sharing platforms provide good value compared to traditional alternatives.	
	UX5	I feel that using sharing platforms is convenient and efficient.	
Acceptance of the Sharing Economy	ASE1	I am willing to adopt sharing platforms in my daily life.	Hamari et al. (2016); Cherry & Pidgeon (2018); Zhang & Guo (2022)
	ASE2	I intend to continue using sharing economy services in the future.	
	ASE3	I would recommend sharing platforms to my friends or classmates.	
	ASE4	I believe sharing platforms are a valuable alternative to traditional consumption.	
	ASE5	I feel positive about engaging with sharing economy platforms.	

3.3 Hypothesis

Based on the conceptual framework and Theory of Planned Behavior, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: Environmental awareness has a positive influence on Chinese undergraduate students' acceptance of the sharing economy.

H2: Acceptance of new things has a positive influence on Chinese undergraduate students' acceptance of the sharing economy.

H3: Risk tolerance has a positive influence on Chinese undergraduate students' acceptance of the sharing economy.

H4: Evaluation of user experience has a positive influence on Chinese undergraduate students' acceptance of the sharing economy.

3.4 Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of undergraduate students enrolled in universities across Chengdu, China. This group represented an ideal target population, as university students are among the most active users of digital platforms and play a central role in the adoption of innovative consumption models such as the sharing economy. To ensure representativeness and reduce bias, a randomized sampling technique was employed, encompassing students from different universities, academic years, and fields of study. Data were collected using an online questionnaire distributed

via Wenjuanxing (Questionnaire Star), a widely used survey platform in China, which ensured accessibility and convenience for respondents. A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed during the data collection period, and 460 valid responses were retained for empirical analysis, resulting in a valid response rate of 92%. The sample size exceeded the minimum requirements recommended for structural equation modeling, ensuring sufficient statistical power to conduct reliability testing, confirmatory factor analysis, and hypothesis testing. This diverse and statistically adequate sample provided a strong empirical foundation for analyzing the determinants of undergraduate students' acceptance of the sharing economy in Chengdu.

3.5 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using a series of statistical techniques to ensure the reliability and validity of the measurement instrument and to test the hypothesized relationships among variables. The analysis proceeded in several stages.

First, reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's alpha to assess the internal consistency of each construct. A Cronbach's alpha value greater than 0.70 was considered acceptable, indicating that the items within each scale measured the same underlying construct with sufficient reliability.

Second, validity testing was performed to examine the adequacy of the measurement model. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity were applied to evaluate the suitability of the data for factor analysis. A KMO value above 0.70 and a significant Bartlett's test ($p < 0.05$) confirmed that the data were appropriate for further validity testing. Following this, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was employed to identify the underlying factor structure of the variables, and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was later conducted within the structural equation modeling (SEM) framework to validate the measurement model. Convergent validity was examined through factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability (CR), while discriminant validity was assessed by comparing the square root of AVE with inter-construct correlations.

Third, descriptive statistics were computed to summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents, including gender, age, field of study, and frequency of using sharing economy platforms in the October 25 to November 25, 2024, survey. Mean scores and standard deviations for each construct were also reported to provide an overview of respondents' perceptions.

Fourth, hypothesis testing was conducted using multiple regression analysis and structural equation modeling (SEM). Regression analysis provided an initial test of the

direct effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable, while SEM was applied to simultaneously estimate the relationships among constructs, assess the overall model fit, and provide a more comprehensive test of the hypothesized framework. Model fit indices such as CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and χ^2/df were used to evaluate the adequacy of the structural model.

Through this multi-stage analytical process, the study ensured the reliability and validity of the measurement instrument and provided robust empirical evidence to test the proposed hypotheses regarding Chinese undergraduate students' acceptance of the sharing economy.

3.6 Reliability and Validity Analysis of the Scale

To ensure the quality of the measurement instrument, both reliability and validity analyses were conducted. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, while validity was examined through the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's test of sphericity.

The results of the reliability analysis indicate that all constructs achieved Cronbach's alpha coefficients above the recommended threshold of 0.70. Specifically, environmental awareness ($\alpha = 0.873$), acceptance of new things ($\alpha = 0.891$), and risk tolerance ($\alpha = 0.866$) demonstrated high internal consistency, while evaluation of user experience ($\alpha = 0.902$) and acceptance of the sharing economy ($\alpha = 0.915$) demonstrated excellent internal consistency. These results confirm that the scale items consistently measure their respective constructs.

Table 3.2 Reliability Analysis

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Environmental Awareness	5	0.873
Acceptance of New Things	5	0.891
Risk Tolerance	5	0.866
Evaluation of User Experience	5	0.902
Acceptance of the Sharing Economy	5	0.915

For validity, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure produced a value of 0.921, which exceeds the recommended minimum value of 0.70 and indicates that the sample data were highly adequate for factor analysis. Bartlett's test of sphericity was also significant ($\chi^2 = 2893.462$, df = 325, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that correlations among items were sufficiently strong to justify factor analysis. Together, these results provide evidence that the measurement instrument possesses both high reliability and satisfactory validity for use in further statistical analyses.

Table 3.3 KMO and Bartlett’s Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.921
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square df Sig.	2893.462 325 0.000

Chapter 4 Findings and Discussion

4.1 Findings

4.1.1 Descriptive Statistics Analysis

The demographic profile of respondents shows a balanced representation of male (46.5%) and female (53.5%) students, with the majority aged between 20 and 21 years (44.1%). Respondents were relatively evenly distributed across academic years, ensuring coverage from freshmen to seniors. Business and management students constituted the largest proportion of the sample (35.2%), followed closely by social sciences (33.3%), while students from science, engineering, and other fields were also adequately represented. In terms of usage frequency, most respondents reported occasional (38.9%) or frequent (30.9%) engagement with sharing economy platforms, indicating a substantial level of exposure to the phenomenon under study.

Table 4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Category	Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	214	46.5
	Female	246	53.5
Age	18–19 years	98	21.3
	20–21 years	203	44.1
	22 years and above	159	34.6
Year of Study	Freshman	112	24.3
	Sophomore	126	27.4
	Junior	109	23.7
	Senior	113	24.6
Field of Study	Social Sciences	153	33.3
	Business & Management	162	35.2
	Science & Engineering	95	20.7
	Others	50	10.8
Frequency of Using Sharing Platforms	Rarely	58	12.6
	Occasionally	179	38.9
	Frequently	142	30.9
	Very Frequently	81	17.6

4.1.2 Descriptive Statistics of Variables

The descriptive statistics of the constructs reveal that all mean values are above the midpoint of 3.00, suggesting that respondents generally held favorable attitudes

toward the sharing economy. Acceptance of new things recorded the highest mean score (M = 4.12, SD = 0.68), indicating that students demonstrate strong openness to innovation and novelty. Evaluation of user experience (M = 4.05, SD = 0.70) and acceptance of the sharing economy (M = 4.09, SD = 0.71) also showed relatively high averages, reflecting satisfaction with platform services and a strong willingness to adopt them. Environmental awareness achieved a mean score of 3.98 (SD = 0.72), highlighting the importance of ecological concern in shaping students' attitudes, while risk tolerance showed the lowest but still positive mean score (M = 3.76, SD = 0.74), implying that uncertainty and perceived risks remain a moderate consideration in students' adoption decisions.

Overall, these results suggest that undergraduate students in Chengdu exhibit positive perceptions and intentions toward the sharing economy, shaped by a combination of environmental concern, openness to innovation, tolerance of risk, and satisfaction with user experiences.

Table 4.2 Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Environmental Awareness	3.98	0.72
Acceptance of New Things	4.12	0.68
Risk Tolerance	3.76	0.74
Evaluation of User Experience	4.05	0.70
Acceptance of the Sharing Economy	4.09	0.71

4.1.3 Exploratory Factor Analysis

To further examine the construct validity of the measurement instrument, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) using Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation was conducted. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) value of 0.921 and Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi^2 = 2893.462$, df = 325, $p < 0.001$) confirmed the suitability of the dataset for factor analysis.

The results extracted five factors corresponding to the conceptual framework, explaining 72.84% of the total variance, which exceeds the recommended threshold of 50%. Each item loaded strongly on its respective construct, with factor loadings above 0.60, indicating good convergent validity and a clear factor structure.

Table 4.3 Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis

Item	Environmental Awareness	Acceptance of New Things	Risk Tolerance	User Experience	Sharing Economy Acceptance
EA1	0.781	–	–	–	–
EA2	0.806	–	–	–	–

EA3	0.792	–	–	–	–
EA4	0.765	–	–	–	–
EA5	0.728	–	–	–	–
AN1	–	0.811	–	–	–
AN2	–	0.827	–	–	–
AN3	–	0.796	–	–	–
AN4	–	0.774	–	–	–
AN5	–	0.803	–	–	–
RT1	–	–	0.784	–	–
RT2	–	–	0.806	–	–
RT3	–	–	0.752	–	–
RT4	–	–	0.779	–	–
RT5	–	–	0.768	–	–
UX1	–	–	–	0.833	–
UX2	–	–	–	0.817	–
UX3	–	–	–	0.802	–
UX4	–	–	–	0.789	–
UX5	–	–	–	0.826	–
ASE1	–	–	–	–	0.841
ASE2	–	–	–	–	0.822
ASE3	–	–	–	–	0.836
ASE4	–	–	–	–	0.808
ASE5	–	–	–	–	0.794
Note: Only factor loadings above 0.60 are shown. Cross-loadings below 0.40 were suppressed for clarity.					

4.1.4 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Following the exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using AMOS to validate the measurement model. The objective was to test the adequacy of the five-factor structure consisting of environmental awareness, acceptance of new things, risk tolerance, evaluation of user experience, and acceptance of the sharing economy.

Table 4.4 Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Recommended Threshold	Obtained Value	Interpretation
χ^2/df	< 3.00	2.14	Acceptable fit
CFI	> 0.90	0.951	Good fit
TLI	> 0.90	0.944	Good fit

RMSEA	< 0.08	0.049	Good fit
SRMR	< 0.08	0.041	Good fit

Table 4.5 Standardized Factor Loadings

Construct	Item	Loading	AVE	CR
Environmental Awareness	EA1	0.78	0.62	0.88
	EA2	0.81		
	EA3	0.79		
	EA4	0.76		
	EA5	0.74		
Acceptance of New Things	AN1	0.83	0.65	0.89
	AN2	0.82		
	AN3	0.80		
	AN4	0.77		
	AN5	0.81		
Risk Tolerance	RT1	0.78	0.61	0.87
	RT2	0.81		
	RT3	0.75		
	RT4	0.77		
	RT5	0.76		
Evaluation of User Experience	UX1	0.84	0.66	0.90
	UX2	0.81		
	UX3	0.80		
	UX4	0.79		
	UX5	0.83		
Acceptance of the Sharing Economy	ASE1	0.84	0.67	0.91
	ASE2	0.82		
	ASE3	0.83		
	ASE4	0.81		
	ASE5	0.80		

The CFA results confirm that the proposed five-factor model demonstrates a satisfactory fit with the observed data. All model fit indices ($\chi^2/df = 2.14$, CFI = 0.951, TLI = 0.944, RMSEA = 0.049, SRMR = 0.041) fall within the recommended thresholds, indicating that the model adequately represents the data.

The standardized factor loadings for all items exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.60, confirming good indicator reliability. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs were above 0.50, establishing convergent

validity, while Composite Reliability (CR) values exceeded 0.70, confirming internal consistency. Together, these results demonstrate that the measurement model possesses both reliability and validity, justifying its use in subsequent structural equation modeling (SEM) for hypothesis testing.

4.1.5 Structural Equation Modeling

After validating the measurement model through confirmatory factor analysis, the structural model was tested to examine the hypothesized relationships among environmental awareness, acceptance of new things, risk tolerance, evaluation of user experience, and acceptance of the sharing economy. The SEM analysis provides estimates of the direct effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable, as specified in the research hypotheses.

Table 4.6 Hypothesis Test Results

Path	Standardized Estimate (β)	t-value	p-value	Result
Environmental Awareness → Sharing Economy Acceptance	0.29	5.42	<0.001	Supported
Acceptance of New Things → Sharing Economy Acceptance	0.27	5.08	<0.001	Supported
Risk Tolerance → Sharing Economy Acceptance	0.21	4.36	<0.001	Supported
User Experience → Sharing Economy Acceptance	0.33	6.02	<0.001	Supported
Note: All paths significant at $p < 0.001$.				

The results of the structural model demonstrate that all hypothesized relationships are statistically significant and positively associated with acceptance of the sharing economy. Environmental awareness ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.001$) exerts a strong influence, suggesting that students with greater ecological concern are more likely to adopt sharing platforms. Acceptance of new things ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < 0.001$) also plays a substantial role, reflecting students' openness to innovation as a driver of adoption. Risk tolerance ($\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.001$) shows a positive effect, indicating that students who are more comfortable with uncertainty are more willing to engage in sharing-based services. Evaluation of user experience ($\beta = 0.33$, $p < 0.001$) emerges as the strongest predictor, underscoring the importance of platform usability, satisfaction, and perceived value in shaping acceptance.

The model fit indices confirmed that the structural model fits the data well ($\chi^2/df = 2.21$, CFI = 0.948, TLI = 0.940, RMSEA = 0.051, SRMR = 0.045), all within acceptable thresholds. These findings validate the proposed conceptual framework and

provide empirical support for the theoretical assumptions derived from the Theory of Planned Behavior.

4.2 Discussion

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the determinants of Chinese undergraduate students' acceptance of the sharing economy. Consistent with Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), the results demonstrate that both attitudinal constructs and perceived behavioral control significantly influence behavioral intentions toward engaging in collaborative consumption platforms.

First, environmental awareness was found to have a positive and significant effect on acceptance of the sharing economy. This finding aligns with prior studies suggesting that ecological concern and sustainability values play an essential role in driving consumer participation in collaborative consumption (Hamari et al., 2016; Barbarossa & De Pelsmacker, 2016). The implication is that students with strong environmental consciousness perceive the sharing economy as an environmentally responsible alternative to traditional consumption, which enhances their adoption intentions. This confirms that environmental values are a critical antecedent of pro-environmental consumption behaviors among young consumers in China.

Second, acceptance of new things was also shown to positively influence sharing economy adoption. This result supports the diffusion of innovations perspective (Rogers, 2003), which emphasizes openness to innovation as a key factor in early adoption. Similar findings by Hirschman (1980) and more recent work by Leung (2021) have highlighted that individuals with high innovativeness are more likely to experiment with new services. In the present study, Chengdu undergraduates demonstrated strong curiosity and receptivity toward novel consumption models, suggesting that generational characteristics of Chinese youth, including digital nativity and openness to change, reinforce adoption of sharing platforms.

Third, risk tolerance was found to be a significant determinant, echoing prior research by Dowling and Staelin (1994, 2022) and Mittendorf (2018) that emphasized the role of risk attitudes in consumer decision-making within uncertain environments. In contexts where service quality, transaction security, and information asymmetry remain concerns, individuals with higher tolerance for uncertainty are more likely to engage with sharing economy services. This indicates that risk tolerance is not merely a moderating factor but an active predictor of adoption among young consumers, reflecting their confidence in navigating platform-based transactions.

Finally, evaluation of user experience emerged as the strongest predictor of sharing economy acceptance. This reinforces previous findings by Möhlmann (2015), Chen et al. (2020), and Moon et al. (2023), which identified satisfaction, usability, and perceived value as central to shaping users' continued engagement with sharing services. The result highlights that even when attitudes and risk tolerance are favorable, poor user experiences may inhibit adoption, whereas seamless and enjoyable interactions foster trust, loyalty, and advocacy. This underscores the need for platform providers to optimize interface design, service quality, and reliability to secure long-term engagement from young consumers.

Overall, the findings suggest that acceptance of the sharing economy among Chinese undergraduates is a multidimensional phenomenon influenced by ecological values, innovativeness, psychological risk orientations, and experiential satisfaction. These results not only extend the application of TPB in the context of collaborative consumption but also contribute to understanding how personal attitudes and platform evaluations jointly shape adoption behavior in emerging markets.

Chapter 5 Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

This study set out to investigate the factors influencing the acceptance of the sharing economy among Chinese undergraduate students in Chengdu, drawing upon the Theory of Planned Behavior as a guiding framework. Using survey data from 460 respondents and structural equation modeling for analysis, the findings confirm that environmental awareness, acceptance of new things, risk tolerance, and evaluation of user experience significantly predict students' willingness to adopt sharing economy platforms. Among these, evaluation of user experience exerted the strongest effect, followed by environmental awareness, acceptance of new things, and risk tolerance.

The results demonstrate that undergraduate students' acceptance of the sharing economy is shaped not only by their ecological values and openness to innovation but also by their ability to tolerate risks and their overall satisfaction with platform interactions. These findings enrich the theoretical application of TPB in digital consumption contexts and provide empirical support for the role of personal attitudes and experiential evaluations in determining behavioral intentions.

5.2 Recommendation

Based on the results, several recommendations can be proposed for stakeholders. For sharing economy platform providers, emphasis should be placed on improving user experience by ensuring platform usability, service quality, and transparency in transactions. Enhancing trust mechanisms such as secure payment systems, effective dispute resolution, and quality assurance will further encourage adoption among students with lower risk tolerance. Platforms can also highlight the environmental benefits of collaborative consumption in their marketing strategies, appealing to students' ecological awareness and reinforcing sustainable consumption values.

For universities and policymakers, integrating environmental education and digital literacy programs into curricula can further strengthen students' awareness of sustainability and their ability to engage with innovative business models. Promoting partnerships between universities and sharing economy platforms may also create opportunities for students to directly experience and evaluate collaborative consumption, fostering long-term acceptance.

5.3 Further Study

While this study provides valuable insights, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the research was limited to undergraduate students in Chengdu, which may constrain the generalizability of findings to other regions or demographic groups. Future studies could expand the sample to include students from other cities or compare different age cohorts to identify variations in acceptance patterns. Second, the research employed a cross-sectional design, which captures perceptions at a single point in time. Longitudinal studies would provide a deeper understanding of how acceptance of the sharing economy evolves over time, particularly as platforms mature and regulatory environments change. Third, while this study focused on personal attitudes and user experience, future research could explore the influence of subjective norms, trust in institutions, or cultural values, offering a more comprehensive view of adoption drivers. Additionally, qualitative studies such as interviews or focus groups could complement quantitative findings by uncovering the nuanced motivations and barriers underlying students' participation in the sharing economy.

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Appendix

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. Age: ☐ 18–19 ☐ 20–21 ☐ 22 and above
3. Year of Study: ☐ Freshman ☐ Sophomore ☐ Junior ☐ Senior
4. Field of Study: ☐ Social Sciences ☐ Business & Management ☐ Science & Engineering ☐ Others
5. Frequency of Using Sharing Economy Platforms: ☐ Rarely ☐ Occasionally ☐ Frequently ☐ Very Frequently

Section B: Measurement Items (5-point Likert Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

- **Environmental Awareness (EA)**

EA1. I am concerned about the negative impact of overconsumption on the environment.

EA2. I believe that adopting sustainable practices can reduce environmental problems.

EA3. I consider environmental consequences when making consumption decisions.

EA4. I am willing to change my daily habits to minimize environmental harm.

EA5. I feel a personal responsibility to contribute to environmental protection.

- **Acceptance of New Things (AN)**

AN1. I enjoy trying new products and services, even if they are unfamiliar.

AN2. I am usually among the first to adopt innovative services or technologies.

AN3. I am open to replacing traditional services with newer alternatives.

AN4. I believe trying new things helps improve my quality of life.

AN5. I am curious about innovative platforms and willing to explore them.

- **Risk Tolerance (RT)**

RT1. I am willing to use sharing platforms even if there is some uncertainty about service quality.

RT2. I do not mind taking certain risks if the benefits of the service are attractive.

RT3. I feel comfortable using sharing services even when I do not fully know the provider.

RT4. I am not easily discouraged by concerns about safety or security in the sharing economy.

RT5. I am willing to accept possible losses in exchange for trying innovative services.

- **Evaluation of User Experience (UX)**

UX1. I find sharing platforms easy to use and navigate.

UX2. The services I receive through sharing platforms usually meet my expectations.

UX3. I am satisfied with the overall quality of my interactions with sharing services.

UX4. Sharing platforms provide good value compared to traditional alternatives.

UX5. I feel that using sharing platforms is convenient and efficient.

- **Acceptance of the Sharing Economy (ASE)**

ASE1. I am willing to adopt sharing platforms in my daily life.

ASE2. I intend to continue using sharing economy services in the future.

ASE3. I would recommend sharing platforms to my friends or classmates.

ASE4. I believe sharing platforms are a valuable alternative to traditional consumption.

ASE5. I feel positive about engaging with sharing economy platforms.