

From generation me to generation we

Values of using car sharing services



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Abstract

Previous studies have shown that people's consumption habits are difficult to change. Consumers in the western countries are becoming more used to certain lifestyle where access to cheap products and easy solutions is decisive. However, studies show that consumers are not willing to change toward more sustainable and ethical habits due to economical and institutional apprehension. In the recent years, many different ways of sustainable and yet profitable consumption both for the consumers and business are being introduced in the market, as for instance access-based consumption such as car sharing. Car sharing is a collaborative form of consumption that provide individuals with the access to a car when needed, without the transfer of ownership. As such, this thesis focuses on values behind consumers involvement in access-based consumption activities. In order to do so, Sunfleet, which is a car sharing organization in Sweden, were used as a demonstrative example. Three different types of values of high importance were founded that are connected to consumers involvement in access-based consumption for consumers using car sharing services. In this particular research; Sunfleet. The values that are found are; *Economic, Mental Energy and Identity*, all three with several under dimensions which are: *save money, depreciated asset, responsibility, financial stress, identity creation, and aesthetics values*. The findings are in line with previous researches that stress over the importance of economic value and says that this value tend to be the most meaningful cue for using services as such. However, this study further has contributed to new findings within the research fields of values and access-based theories, due to the found concept of *mental energy, aesthetic value and depreciated assets*.

Introduction

Many previous studies have shown how people's consumption habits, especially in the western countries, are hard to change. Consumers are used to their life in luxury and the comfort in easy access and cheap products are more powerful than the alarms of sustainability and how the enormous consumption must stop. Some concrete values for the individual might be a way to transform how people strives to change their habits. However, according to Hamari et al., (2016) consumers are not being able to change their consumption habits (becoming more sustainable and ethical consumers) due to economical and institutional reasons. Thus, with the emerge of a new economic model called sharing

economy, consumers are now enabled to engage in alternative consumption activities (Hamari et al., 2016). As stated in Albinsson & Perera's (2012) research article, sustainability is a global topic in the 21st century, consumers continuously searching for more sustainable solutions against "the backdrop of the impending energy crisis, ongoing environmental degradation, and the global financial meltdown". Furthermore, according to James (2014) in today's consumption market, there is a significant change in consumers consumption behaviours and routines as for instance, shafting acceptance of access over ownership.

According to Parker et al, (2016) sharing economy can be defined as an economic system that facilitates consumer and organizations to expose underused sources of value by sharing of products, services and resources. Furthermore, by sharing or renting their assets people avoid the cost of full ownership, which can be very high if the asset is not being fully utilized all the time or if the price of the asset is high (Investopedia, 2017). Sharing economy is an economic model or framework distinguished by several concepts as for example collaborative consumption. Collaborative consumption, which in terms of access-based consumption, can be the next big change in today's business model and it is what this paper will mainly focus on (James, 2014). It is a shift toward a more sustainable business development that not only contribute to sustainable business models but also open new windows of opportunities for both consumers and companies (Novel & Demailly, 2014).

Many ways of sustainable business have been introduced in the market and are available for consumers to use as for example sharing of goods, swapping, renting, bartering and lending. Companies as Airbnb and Uber are being highly used in these studies (Hamari et al, 2016; Georgios et al, 2017). As such, access-based consumption as "car sharing" which is highly discussed as a sustainable alternative to owning is going to be further analysed and it is what this paper will focus on. This study is limited to members of Sunfleet, which is one of the largest car sharing organizations in Sweden.

Kriston (2010) defines car sharing as "*a flexible alternative that meets diverse transportation needs across the globe while reducing the negative impacts of private vehicle ownership*". Bardhi et al. (2010) stress that car sharing should be defined as an access-based consumption and the reasons why people value car sharing is many, however, Bardhi et al. (2010) have

found in their study that people primary use car sharing services for the utilitarian function. The utilitarian function according to their data was expressed by convenience and savings. This data further indicate that people consume car sharing services for the use value and not for the sign value as it can be when buying an expensive car. However, the data showed that the practice of access can in itself gain sign value since it demonstrates more economically savvy and more flexible form of consumption than ownership (Bardhi et al., 2010). Schaefer's (2013) study shows similar results of what users of car sharing like and according to his research article users think that they save money and time as well as being more flexible by using car sharing services. Ownership of assets as cars can be very cost full which according to previous studies, full ownership of high cost assets can be highly expansive and many times unbeneficial since assets as cars are considered as depreciating assets (Deeter, 2017).

As mentioned before, sharing economy strategies are growing and according to many studies in this area, sharing economy will inevitably become a major part of the global one. However, previous studies about access-based consumption have mainly focused in sharing economy's growth, sustainability aspects and peer-to-peer transactions. Furthermore, schoolers have also focused in collaborative form of consumption and access-based consumption, as for instance schoolers have examined the key socio demographic drivers of using car sharing services with focus on individual preferences (Pireto et al., 2016). Lawson et al, (2016), on the other hand, analyse consumers perceived motivation in access-based consumption as behaviour attention. Albinsson and Perera, (2012) examine consumers participation in alternative consumption activities in a non-monetary marketplace as for example.

Consequently, extant studies have largely ignored how businesses have been developing high cost varieties of collaborative consumption, which mainly benefits companies as for instance car sharing. The benefits of renting a car needs to be more dominant compared owning a car and the cost must not be higher. Very few values within sustainable solutions are being communicated in markets as such, thus there is a gap connected to this subject that needs to be filled. Therefore, the aim of this study is to describe consumers values behind their engagement in access-based consumption activities, that not only support companies with communication tools but also frame and simplify information for the consumers. In order to analyse this, a couple of semi- structured interviews were made, and a qualitative approach was used. The ambitions with this study is to contribute to the field of access-based consumption and theories of value that could be used in further research in this area.

As this study focuses on describe values consumers perceive from participating in an access-based consumption activity, the following research question is developed and will be further analysed:

How can a better understanding of consumer values create a meaningful difference for consumers engaging in access-based consumption?

The structure of this paper is as followed; first section consists of a discussion of previous studies and their impact. The chosen framework for analysis, connected to the research question is presented after that, followed by the methodological approach with limitations. The most important part of the study, findings, is written after the methodological and followed by a genuine discussion about the most significant findings, the conclusion, managerial implications and at the end suggestions for further research.

Theoretical framework

Collaborative consumption

Collaborative consumption as a term were first stated by Felson and Spaeth (1978, p.614), as *“events in which one or more persons consume economic goods or series in the progress of engaging in joint activities with one or more others”*. The activities are explained as ordinary things, like going to a gym class or having coffee. All kinds of activities in consumption within groups can be defined as collaborative, why the term is quite broad (Belk, 2014). Botsman and Rogers (2010) further defines collaborative consumption as organizations of sharing, bartering, lending, trading, renting, gifting, and exchange, adjusted to fit technology expansion and consumer culture. Felson and Spaeth (1978) defined collaborative consumption in a more open and non-profitable way, why the definitions differ.

Collaborative consumption is divided into three separate categories: redistribution markets, product service systems, where car sharing belongs, and collaborative lifestyles. New is not always better and are according to Botsman and Rogers (2010), and the statement leads further to how redistribution markets was born and are developed, which are market of pre-owned goods, for instance eBay, where consumers also can fulfil an eventual want of being sustainable and responsible consumers. Product service systems, as car sharing, is defined as co-using, or even leasing tangible goods. Additional, collaborative lifestyles are defined as the services provided as intangible goods. (Botsman & Rogers, 2010).

Access-based consumption

The development of acceptance, popularity and status of access-based consumption as a concept, has led to transformation of consumers ownership perceptions, meaning they are more open for alternative ways (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012). The focus of the consumers is changing from owning to

using, when and where they need a specific good, but not necessarily have to own it. Consumers have through access-based consumption the perfect opening to use a specific service or physical object they cannot afford or do not want to own, due to personal finance or for instance environmental causes (Lovelock & Gummesson, 2004). The substitute of owning becomes easier and more attractive to the consumers, and they are paying to get temporary access, in this study, a car through the concept of car sharing (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012). Shared consumption, a quite similar concept differs in how every consumer still have some kind of ownership in the product, which are not the case in access-based consumption (ibid).

Strategies within access-based consumption could be many different ones (Belk, 2010). The objects could, for instance, be owned by a third part or by communal ownership. Sharing and access-based consumption have to be looked at as two different concepts and not be confused with each other (ibid). Sharing as a concept in these terms, are referring to a co-operative ownership, while access-based consumption is about giving the consumer access to a service or object without gaining any kind of ownership (ibid).

Cars, handbags and bicycles are all objects of access-based consumption these days, even so, studies around these marketplace is not very developed, i.e. exchanges marketplaces that access-based consumption is defined as (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012). The traditional ownership is shifting into new markets with a less heavy impact in terms of environmental aspects. Even customers can increase their profit though these services and companies that are ahead, wanting to develop and reach new markets have large opportunities of doing so, as consumers tend to be more willing to give up ownership as such.

The positive impact for the environment is in company of positive outcome for the economy. Many of today's resources are not used to maximized utility, and this is a part of why consumers are interested in joining access-based consumption due increased consumer awareness (Botsman & Rogers, 2012). Further, people are more aware about the scarce resources on the planet, which is another motivation to become a member of an access-based consumption organization (ibid). Individuals further want to keep their flexibility and not be limited or held back by things they own (ibid). Owning expensive objects which might require current maintenance and due established income, ownership can be seen as a necessary evil (ibid). Further reading in Belk (2010), Humar et. al. and Lamberton and Rose (2012).

To invent sustainable development, car sharing is one way. To meet consumer needs without being obliged owning for flexibility, access-based consumption is valuable (Belk 2014). Access-based consumption have similarities with ownership by matching specific customer needs and flexibility but have the advantages of being more resource efficient (Belk 2014).

There is a gap that needs to be filled to make more people engage in access-based services. Values as a research factor can provide a comprehensive and deep insight into what individuals value with car sharing services instead of ownership. By gaining insight into values that consumers treasure the most, service can be modified from and marketing communication can be used in the most efficient ways to recruit new members. As such, according to Parks and Guay (2009) values can be seen as a more stable and broad research determination than attitudes. However, scholars have argued against values and stated that values expression can be affected by so called cognitive control, which means that values

impact the process of decision making, thus individuals may rationally think over their choices within context of values in order to make a decision (Conner & Becker, 1994). Furthermore, due to measurement issues, schoolers have been sceptical to study values until recently (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004). However, in this study values are studied in a qualitative manner.

Values

Values in general are beliefs or ideals that members of a culture share - it is a guideline to what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable actions. Values have enormous impact on people's attitudes, behaviours and actions (Business Dictionary, 2017). As such, Goolaup and Mossberg (2017, p42) argue that value emerge from interactions and actions that consumers consider to be valuable and meaningful. Zeithaml (1988) in other hand focuses in consumers perceived value and define it as "the consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product, based on perception of what is received and what is given". Zeithaml (1988) means that economic value (function of a product) is connected to semiotic value such as feeling, which triggers meanings (Zeithaml, 1988; Karababa & Kjeldgaard, 2014). Values forms and reforms through experiences and social interactions overtime when two values are situated in conflict with each other. This further means that an individual's value structure is constantly changing and compel us to rank in what order values are important. According to Parks & Guay (2009), values may also form due to personal introspection and it is constantly in change during the adolescence and young adulthood.

Value is a central concept for the consumers experience, but the definition of value is complex. Value can further be explained in three different ways: (1) as what is perceived by the consumers; (2) attached to a product or service and; (3) as well as a trade-off between what a consumer gives in order to receive something (Goolaup &

Mossberg, 2017). Shortly, in this research values are described as the difference on what the consumer gives and receives. Furthermore, Vargo and Lusch (2004, 2008) argue that value is co-created as result of mutual integration of resources between actors in an exchange. Thus, in this process different actors integrate their operant which refers to invisible and intangible resources as skills, knowledge, culture, and social resources and operand which refers to tangible and economic resources at their disposal. According to this view value creates in market by different actors who are involved in different exchange processes (Goolaup & Mossberg, 2017). Furthermore, Goolaup and Mossberg (2017) divide value in three different categories; social, semiotic and economic as mentioned before. Schwartz (1994) in other hand divide value in two dimensions and four major clusters to categorise values which are: openness to change, values that support change and independent thoughts, conservatism is connected to values that encourage preservation of traditional practices, self-transcendent, and self-enhancement (Milfont et al., 2006 & Schwartz, 1994). However, social value is further excluded in this research since social value has not been found in collected data. Thus, values as semiotic, aesthetic, economic, convenience and financial wellness are going to be further analysed. It is important to mention that aesthetic and convenience and financial wellness values were discovered during data collection, thus been included in this research.

Semiotic value

Semiotic value is connected to a product or experience's sign value or meaning which means that consumers consume products or experiences not only due to their functional benefits, but also their meanings and values they can gain from it (Goolaup & Mossberg, 2017, p. 44). Akaka et al., (2014) argue that the interpretation of symbols plays central role in concretion of values thus, sign values

and symbols helps people to maintain, reinforce, or construct sense of self and to feel connected to a certain group. As such, consumers are more likely to engage in experiences or buy products that are valuable, can construct their desired self-identities and have symbolic meaning for them. Furthermore, Venkatesh et al., (2006) argue that in today's consumption market signs and symbols plays an important role in consumer's consumption choices and it has changed the perception from a "good-production" to a more "image-production" perspective. According to Holbrook (1996) people want to be seen in a positive way, both by others and in their own eyes. Due to this, individuals consume sometimes high-priced or status-oriented with goal to ensure others of their high social status. However, Holbrook (1996) also state that this conspicuous consumption can be both intentionally and unintentionally.

Aesthetic value

Like other values, the definition of aesthetic is rather complex and can be explained in various ways. However, in here the main focus is on art and the experience of beauty in a product. What is beauty being rather individual and is every consumer own perception of the product. Factors that determine beauty are colour, texture, line, shape and light (Holbrook, 1996). The aesthetic value differs from other values because practical concerns are not involved. This value is further closely linked with the fine arts - painting, sculpture, architecture, music, dance and poetry. Later in twentieth century everyday products such as cars, furniture, computers and clothing has also been included in the concept of aesthetic value.

Holbrook (1996) stress that people want to be surround with aesthetic objects because it brings them pleasure and personal enrichment. It is further a self- oriented value, which means that people consume those products to please themselves and not someone else. However, among these needs

to "pleasure themselves" it can also exist a desire to induce wishful reactions from others.

Economic value

The economic value explained in basic terms means exchange of resources i.e. exchange of money in order to get different meanings and values in return. Goolaup and Mossberg (2017) develop this and stress that exchanges occur in line with mutually negotiated systems of language and meanings. Thus, the meanings in exchange and use are both important for the co-creation of value. This further implies that what is seen as valuable and worthy of exchange will be different in variant of cultures. As such, consumers desire to obtain certain things since it can bring them happiness or satisfy them in one way or another. Furthermore, Goolaup and Mossberg (2017, p46) argue that economic value is mainly based on nation of exchange as an act of giving in order to receive something in return. In sum, Goolaup and Mossberg (2017p. 48) argue that consumers co-create their social, semiotic, and economic values and these values are rather interrelated and co-generative in their nature.

Economic value of purchased assets can play an important role in consumers choice of access or ownership as for instance Emons and Sheldon's (2009) in their article issue the uncertainties connected to private owned cars. According to Emons and Sheldon (2009) cars are not reliable assets since the price and quality decreases and owners of cars many time face difficulties when attempting to sale their cars. Furthermore, the study indicates that assets as cars decline in quality and function overtime (Emons & Sheldon, 2009).

Convenience Value

Another value examined in this paper is the consumer convenience. Farquhar and Rowley (2009) argue that the concept is of importance in the context of services and

that customers value convenience high, partly as a result of new technology and more intense environments (Berry et al, 2002, Seiders et al, 2007). The value consumer perceives from services is stated as non-monetary, but instead strong enough to create customer utility (Farquhar & Rowley, 2009). However, the lack of attention for this in most marketing theories is extensive (ibid). Convenience cover several dimensions, for instance aspects of effort which counts as non-monetary costs which in turn are related to different perceptions of convenience – the efforts can be physical, cognitive and even emotional. The research within effort is scarce, but the general assumption is that saving efforts is a value, but it is hard for the consumer to estimate the extent of this value in different situations (Alba et al, 1997).

Some theories argue that convenience is equal to lazy in consumers perception, but Carrigan and Szmigin (2006) arguments shows that people are less embarrassed with the word and concept. Farquhar and Rowley (2009) defines convenience of a service as the consumers judgement giving their exception of control, utilization and conversion of their effort and time – all when using the service to achieve their goals and also side by side with access and use of the particular service. Farquhar and Rowley (2009) further encounter the traditional use of “convenience”, and instead argue that the definition of convenience rather should be how consumers are interested in using services giving them control over their expenditures of their different resources, and also let them gain value by using services (ibid).

Financial Wellness

Another concept connected to convenience, is financial wellness in a different definition but wealth. Joo (2008) defines financial wellness as the well-being and non-worry about the personal financial situation. An important aspect of reaching financial wellness is the financial satisfaction which

is not directly correlated to high income or unlimited resources, but being pleased with the circumstances, choices made, income and expenses. The subjective perception of one person’s financial situation is the one used for estimating it. Porter (1990, p.23) measured financial well-being through attributes, perceived as “the value-related qualitative indicators of financial situation”. Respondents in Joo’s (2008) study were defining financial wellness as a state of feeling free of stress regarding to one’s finances. Financial wellness is concluded as a result of high financial satisfaction and fraction of financial stress (Joo, 2008).

Method

Since the purpose of this study is to get a comprehensive understanding of which values consumers experience when they engage in car sharing services, a qualitative method is more suitable (Daymon & Holloway, 2010). In-depth interviews are chosen because of their flexibility and the possibilities they give to approach unexpected answers and increase a deeper understanding for the current subject. Through that, it is possible to increase the understanding and perspective of the respondent’s perception of the subject. The type of interview used is called semi-structured and is one out of three possible types of interviews (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Furthermore, the data collected from the interviews were analysed through grounded theory in order to identify emerging codes and categories relevant for this research. Grounded theory as research method helps researchers to identify relevant categories, to make links between categories, and to establish relationship between them (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). As the aim of this research is to gain insights into a very unique topic, grounded theory is highly significant and appropriate as a comparative analysis tool.

Data collection

All the interviewed respondents in this research were at the time of the interviews

active members of Sunfleet car sharing service. This further means that the sampling used in this paper were collected with a homogeneous sampling technique. In this method, participants belong to the same subculture or carrying the same expertise, which in this case was knowledge of using car sharing services (Daymon & Holloway, 2010). Sunfleet started in 1998-2001 in Gothenburg under the name of “mobility.nu” as a development project between Volvo and Hertz and since then Sunfleet has grown massively (Jakobsson, 2002 & Bilpool, 2017). The company only offer environmentally sound vehicles in their fleet. (Jakobsson, 2002). Furthermore,

Sunfleet is a commercial car sharing company owned by Volvo, which is the largest car sharing actor in Sweden. The company provide over 1000 cars that are maximum 1,5 years old and are being active in 50 different cities in Sweden (Sunfleet, 2017). Sunfleet services focus especially on people who needs a car for short distance travelling on a regular basis (Sunfleet, 2017). The main reason behind choosing this company was due to its location (the company is located in Gothenburg Sweden), the size of the company (Sunfleet is one of the main and largest actors of car sharing services in Sweden), and since it is the largest car sharing company in Sweden, they have significant number of members that use their services. Furthermore, since the paper is conducted in that same city it was a simple choice.

When choosing participants for this research, three criteria were used: (1) be between the ages of 25-45; (2) live in Sweden; (3) use the service at least one time per month. In order to collect these participants fast, Sunfleet were contacted. They made the process faster by posting a request “to take part in this study” on their social media page Facebook. Members that were interested to join contacted the authors by email. With respect to the participants of the study, their real name will be

confidential, which means that only fictitious names will be used. However, the ages that are used are correct.

The data in this paper was collected through seven semi-structured interviews, around 20-45 minutes long each. They were all made in Swedish. The interviews were made both face-to face and via Skype, due to practical issues of location. Furthermore, the participants had the opportunity to choose location for interviews, which resulted in interviews being held in different places. All the interviews were further audio recorded in order to gain unlimited access to the material and to make the transcription process easier. The interview process continued until the answers started to repeat themselves and already confirm previously collected data. An interview-guide were created before interviews started in order to create questions related to the research question. The interview questions were mainly based on three different values defined by Goolaup and Mossberg (2017), which are social, semiotic and economic. However, since it was a semi-structured some more questions were asked as well during the interviews. The authors were significantly familiar with theories of values when creating interview questions however, the interview respondents were not theoretically informed during the interviews.

Data analysis

After the interviews were made, the material was transcribed, and the coding process begun. The first step was made up of codes alongside helpful quotations connected to values made by the participants in order to find specific themes as economic, social, and semiotic within the material. The codes were not necessarily related to each other but helped the authors to understand the material and find those specific themes. The second step of coding process were to find, and analysis values connected to the three main values used in this research. This technique is further

something that Eriksson and Kovalainen's (2008) refer to as *open coding*. From that, patterns within the data was discovered and with help of *axial coding* these codes containing words and phrases created a number of categorizes involving respondents value of car sharing. In order to sort the data, the different categories got a specific colour which was then used to colour everything that were said under one specific category. Since some of the categorizes was similar, they were reorganized and merged together according to *selective coding* methods. This resulted in three core categories; *Economic, Mental Energy and Identity*. *Mental energy* was discovered during the coding process and thus was not originally among main selected categories for this research. It is also important to mention that *Social values* has not been discovered in this process, thus is not going to be further analysed. The selected data was further carried in a separated document and divided under the chosen categories in order to gain a better overall view of the collected data. Moreover, this coding process follow Eriksson and Kovalainen's (2008) three steps as mentioned before (open, axial and selective) of coding when using grounded theory.

Issue of quality

One of the main limitations of this study was time. Since this study is conducted within five months, the time for conducting more in-depth interviews were short, thus a very few selected interviews were managed. With more time, some more in-depth interviews could have been managed which could have different effect on the result. Furthermore, since the time for more in-depth interviews were limited and the respondents were interviewed only one time each, risk for not giving sincere information is high.

According to Eriksson and Kovalainen (2011) one of challenges for qualitative researchers is to "to assure readers about

research's scientific nature, quality and trustworthiness". There are many evolution criteria's that can assure the quality of a research as for instance good and reliable research should provide answers to the research question and provide information that are easy to be found (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2011). In this research all information used in this study are available for readers. Furthermore, all information used in this research are traceable and documented, which has been done by providing readers with all used references in the study at the end of the research.

By using multiple sources and conducting interviews in different geographical places in Sweden, this research has an extensive approach. This approach has helped the research to gain broader perspective of the examined subject. The quotations used in the analysis are translated from Swedish which can modify the original meaning of the informant's answers (Crang & Cook, 2007). Moreover, since the interviews were conducted in Swedish, all quotations are being translated to English and corrected in order to make it more understandable.

Findings

Three different types of values have been identified as being an important reason for using car sharing services and in this research; Sunfleet. The values that are found are; *economic, mental energy and identity*, all three with several dimensions. The results are in line with previous research that stress that the economic value to be the most important cue for using this sort of service. Furthermore, the result from this research indicate that people participate in sharing economy activities in order to minimize their cost, avoid responsibilities that comes with full ownership and to perhaps create a wishful identity.

Economic Value - As the difference between financial cost and perceived benefit

The major findings and most prominent common denominator is the economic value that Sunfleet users experience, compared to owning a car. Despite Botsman and Rogers (2012) findings, the respondent's awareness of scarce resources, the environment, where not the crucial factor but still of importance. The economic value was underlying within all the interviews, and the other discovered values are correlated, shadowed or a result of beneficial financial aspects. Most respondents valued the security of controlling their monthly expenses and valued the economic predictability, flexibility and financial control through using a car sharing service as Sunfleet. Six out of seven respondents had calculated and compared estimated savings due to using a car pool service instead of owning or leasing a car, and for all of them the financial aspects were a crucial factor, even if Sunfleet itself is generally considered quite expensive, especially for long way trips or weekends. Furthermore, even if time and environment is expressed to be an important value related to car sharing, the answer to the question: "Why did you become a member of Sunfleet" is always in first hand due to economic reasons and benefits. Clearly, the most environmental solution for most of the respondents would be to use public transports, walk or use a bicycle, why it is shown that all respondents were willing to pay a bit more to gain the convenience of using a car instead, at least for some errands. Furthermore, from the collected data two main economic dimensions has been discovered which are: *Save money* and *Depreciable asset*.

Save money:

Saving money tend to be one of the main reasons behind access-based consumption as car sharing. According to interviewed respondents by using car sharing services and not driving private cars, they save

significant amount of money each and every month. As Goolaup and Mossberg (2017) stress consumers exchange money in order to get different meanings and values in return, in this case the interviewed respondents value the economic benefits of car sharing services such as saving money that they can use for something else or save. The economic value, such as any, is stated as a factor of consumers experience (Goolaup & Mossberg (2017). Furthermore, according to many respondents Sunfleet is highly beneficial and economic comparing to owning. As such, having the most cost-effective and easy transport solution for interviewed respondents tend to be significantly important.

"For me, it's cost effective in how so ever, there's nothing I earn on having my own car in comparison. Not economic".

Sofia, 42

"But I counted how much it would cost to have a car and it would be \$ 1000 month ... [...] so I thought it's better to have Sunfleet and it costs 300-400 kr month instead. So, It's good because it's cheaper, that's probably the main reason."

Lisa, 25

As Sofia points out, it is important to have a transport solution that is not very expensive and complicated or requires time and resources. Consequently, from collected data it emerged that for those who have privilege of getting free or discounted membership at Sunfleet throw their work, are more motivated in using Sunfleet's car sharing services.

"It is a benefit we have at work, we have four months of free membership, small. So that's why I took it. And then, I and my wife, we have HSB, so we have free membership there. What I like is that it's affordable when you have a free monthly fee"

Gunnar, 44

The quotation shows the importance of the economical and beneficial aspect of using car sharing services instead of owning, and the aspect of other benefits, such as the scarce resources, are estimated just as Botsman and Rogers (2012) states, but they are not drivers. From collected data it appears that people can be more motivated in participating in car sharing services if they can save lots of money. Having discounted membership through work seems to be highly appreciated and a major factor behind getting membership at Sunfleet in first place. Without the beneficial agreement Gunnar has, his interest for Sunfleet might be lower.

Depreciable asset:

Another main reason behind using car sharing services instead of owning is value of the car (monetary). Cars are depreciable asset and it decreases in value direct after purchase, thus people who use car sharing services instead of owning are more sensitive to this fact (Deeter, 2017). According to many respondents the depreciation of a car is a major economic lost that they highly avoid by using Sunfleet cars. This is in line with Emons and Sheldon (2009) research that showed how assets as cars can decrease in price and quality overtime and that owners of cars many time face difficulties when trying to sale their cars.

"That's really expensive. It's a loss economically to have a car, you win nothing at all. They are raging in value. You'll never get the money back, like that, by having a car. "

Gunnar, 44

As Gunner mentioned "you win nothing at all" which is why many people are sensitive to private owned cars. Thus, saving money is significantly important for several members of Sunfleet. The value that they lose in car's depreciation is extremely sensitive and a major factor behind participating in car sharing activities.

"Well, it's always with insurance and should be replaced by oil and it will be in service and, just assume the purchase of your own car and the depreciation is enormous".

Carl, 33

When it comes to access or ownership cars tend to be a very sensitive and risky asset to own, thus consumers more and more are willing to use car sharing services instead of buying in order to reduce uncertainties connected to cars (Emons & Sheldon, 2009).

Mental Energy Value - the perceived difference of mental energy costs and benefit

A new phenomenon, that was not really considered from the beginning, were found within the respondent's answers. The concept is connected to convenience but differs in some parts and thereby further called "Mental energy". The mental energy and the importance of avoiding the responsibilities a car requires, in both expenses and physical obligations such as service and changing tires. The mental energy is further divided into two dimensions based on the different values identified; *Responsibility* and *Financial stress*.

Responsibility:

To avoid responsibility connected to a private owned car, was further an important factor behind becoming a member of car sharing organisations. This included almost all of the respondents, who during the interviews mentioned several times, the convenience of not taking any responsibility for the care of the car. This corresponds well with the theory of saving effort as a significant value for chosen services to achieve goals (Alba et al, 1997), but goes deeper than described in theory - with the argument from the respondents that they have too much to take care of in their daily life, and there is just no space for

another thing to remember and spend their mental energy on. Appreciation was shown for not having to book appointments for service, changing tires according to seasons, looking out for other needs such as oil, washer fluid and yearly motor vehicle inspection and possible consequences that needs to be addressed. As Farquhar and Rowley (2009) argue, value can be something non-monetary but strong enough to create utility for the customer, in this case avoid responsibility. The respondents also expressed unwillingness to be responsible for a car, to not have one more thing to do or one more thing to keep in their head as Johan, 35 mentioned during the interview.

"...and maintenance, I have to do it. The more I drive it, the more maintenance it is, so no. I probably would not have done that. I do not want a car for the same cost as Sunfleet. Should I have to do all that I would not do it, no ..."
Johan, 35

Johan as well as Christopher commented other mental advantages;

"Two months can pass without me spending one second on it and then suddenly I need it three times on one week and then I use it"
Johan, 35

"You do not have to take responsibility or take care of a car..."
Christopher, 27

What Johan and Christopher wants to say is that they appreciate the opportunity to have access to a car without having any responsibility for it or to take care of it. The connection with convenience in these quotes are quite clear in terms of effort (Alba et al, 1997), but there is another value included, which is called mental energy - the value of not having to think about one more thing as the responsibility. By owning a car, most respondents explained their unwillingness to take care of it, worry about

finding a parking lot and the administration required. With other words, the commitments and mental energy they save with Sunfleet is high valued. As Farquhar and Rowley (2009) argues, that convenience should be defined as the value of having control of their financial.

However, as previous research argues there is both costs and benefits connected to access-based consumption. Indeed, the benefits of car sharing are many, but there are costs that might not be connected to financial (money) costs but rather non-monetary as for instance loss of flexibility.

"Sometimes, it would have been easier if one could have left the car in different places than one specific and later pick it up, sometimes, perhaps you do not want to have the eight hours just because you go from one place to another and then back eight hours later, but I understand that it's not possible, haha."
Sofia, 42

Even though consumers desire to avoid responsibility of having their own car, they wish to maintain as high flexibility as possible with Sunfleet. It has been clear that the consumers have an interest in having flexibility of choice when it comes to the possibility to pick up and leave the cars at different places. This tend to be significantly important for almost all of the respondents. As such, if Sunfleet had offered this service, it might increase the number of participants and had increased daily usage of Sunfleet cars.

Financial Stress:

Another dimension of the mental energy is the more or less obvious connection to the respondents' personal finance. This dimension correlates with the other two, with responsibility they also meant the economic aspect, with unforeseen expenses, damage, break in or any other thing that can happen to your car. This goes quite well with the arguments of Joo (2008) who

defines the financial wellness with the comfort in not having to worry about the personal finance situation. The respondents further mentioned the cost control in the application, and the advantage of having a clear picture of their monthly expenses for the car. These monthly costs varied from 800 to 3000 (approximately) and as Porter (1990) argues, the financial well-being is clearly individual in terms of actual expenses in every single user's comfort zone. Observed among the respondents were the negative approach about having to think about these financial commitments, why this dimension of mental energy in this study is called financial stress. The respondents experienced a value with Sunfleet reducing that stress by taking care of the costs. There are though some costs that the users can be responsible for, such as the excess when accidentally damage the car. This can be reduced or eliminated depending on how much you are willing to pay to do so, which the respondents did, much because of the mental energy required worrying about large unseen expenses, which reduces the financial stress.

"Eh, you can pull it down. When I drive, I'll drop it to the max, so then it's 4 000 something I think. It's nice to not worry about that [...] Now I found here a deductible of max 12 000 and you click to pay a little extra, you can get it down to 4 000 or you can even lower it to zero if you pay even more per kilometre you drive."

Christopher, 27

The undertone of the stress in the economic insecurity about owning a car appeared during all interviews. For instance, the credit card for gas that are placed in every car is appreciated and reduces the stress of another bill to pay.

"Sunfleet pays everything Yes, you will get a code when you borrow the car and then enter the code and thoughts. You do not have to worry about anything."

Gunnar, 44

Identity value - the perceived difference of cost and benefit related to identity

The third and least important value, of the chosen three, using car sharing services were identity. Identity was further divided into two different dimensions; Identity creation and Aesthetic value. Identity creation highlight the underlying value of being member of Sunfleet, which are to improve an individual's identity. Aesthetic value on the other hand is connected to the fact that most of the members are very satisfied with the design of the cars. It is not only the function of the car that is important and valuable, but also its appearance.

Identity Creation:

Identity creation was never something that was mention as a reason for being member of Sunfleet. However, when asking the respondents what they associate with a person that uses car sharing services, the answers was mainly connected to something positive. This can further prove that a reason for being member of Sunfleet can be because they desire to create a wishful identity. Two of those that said something positive also said that they can identify with that description.

"It is the picture of myself I have... haha [...] Njaa...well I do not know... maybe people that are. You care about the environment, are positive to sharing economy... You like the idea that everyone does not have to own everything by themselves."

Lisa, 25

"It is a new generation of humans, like I am more or less, he or she get that it is a good thing to avoid problem, but I think that, I like that person"

Arash, 37

Goolaup and Mossberg (2017p. 44) stress that people tend to engage in experiences that they think construct their desired self-identity and according to Akaka et al., (2014) symbols of product and services can

actually help people with this construction. In this context, it is car sharing that might help them construct a desired identity. Other respondents that also said something positive about a person using car sharing services was Christopher and Johan.

"Modern, I would say"
Christopher, 27

"...No but young and thinking in a new creative way, sort of"
Johan, 35

To be a person that is modern and capable of thinking in new ways are probably many people's goal and thus one reason for using car sharing services. Holbrook (1996) stress that it is important for people to be seen in a positive way which in turn can affect their consumption choices. Their consumption habits can with other words be based on what other people will think of them. Even if it is hard to prove that the respondents consume car sharing services due to a positive identity creation, the quotations that can be seen points towards it. Some of the respondents maybe do it intentionally, while some unintentionally. Values are correlated to social circumstances such as environments and interactions, and through changing of habits and norms, the value of car sharing might be affected through increased interaction between users and new newcomers (Parks & Guay, 2009). Even though, some of the respondents describe their car sharing identity as modern and new thinking, it appears that what car sharing user's identity stands for is rather diffused. As mentioned earlier there are two side of one coin, "desired identity" which is connected to ownership is what perhaps car sharing user have not been able to gain from participating in car sharing activities. As such, car sharing users might desire to create an "desired identity" by consuming this service. However, this is not something that this research can prove but can rather be seen as a potential non-monetary cost for members of car sharing. If the identity

association to a user of car sharing could be even more clear and perhaps could be known as a "modern and creative person", maybe the number of people using car sharing services could grow.

Aesthetics:

When asking about the cars Sunfleet provides, the response from the respondents are all significantly positive. The respondents describe the cars as having a modern technic, good function and new. Hence, most of the respondents did also mentioned the aesthetic value of the car. Some of the words the respondents describe the cars as were, nice looking, modern and fresh. Some also stated clearly that it is very important for them that the type of the cars goes in hand with their taste. One of those were Johan 35, who said that he would not use any car how so ever:

"Yes, I would probably do that... actually, it's a bit of what you identify yourself with, if it would have been Toyota hybrid or something which is that image I want to be associated with, even though it is a few years old...but if it would have been a rusty environmental villain I would never not put myself in that"
Johan, 35

What Johan means is that it does not matter if the car is brand new or a few years old, but he prefers it to have some standards when it comes to physical appearance and the environmental aspects of it. Furthermore, when asking what Johan and Christopher thinks about the fleet of cars Sunfleet provides this is the answers they give:

"That is part of the thing as well (talking about Sunfleet). that it is new, nice and fresh-looking car and it is fun to drive a xc90 or xc40 or whatever it is. It is fun to drive new, nice cars"
Johan, 35

"I want a nicer car, that I can look decent in, if you are allowed to say that haha. [...] What I like about Sunfleet is that the car

models are not more than a year old, they are new, fresh and always Volvo, so it is nice things. But of course, you have to pay a little bit more for it."

Christopher, 27

From these two quotations it looks like the aesthetic value of the cars are important. According to Holbrook (1996) it is common that people want to be around objects that it beautiful because it will bring them pleasure and personal enrichment. In Johan's case it seems like he gains pleasures when using nice looking cars since he describes it as fun. Christopher on the other hand seems not to like the cars only for his own personal enrichment, but also that it looks professional and matches his profession as a project leader. This goes in line with Holbrook's (1996) argument that states that consumption of aesthetic objects can also be made in order to induce wishful reactions from others. Overall, the respondents are very satisfied about the design of the cars.

"Mhmm... I think they are very good... I think they are perfect, small nice cars that is good to drive. I always use the small models"

Lisa, 25

Both Johan, Christopher and Lisa think that the design of the cars are nice. But would these respondents have equal interest for Sunfleet if they did not consider the cars attractive? This is further an interesting subject; how much the design of the cars affects what they think of Sunfleet.

Values of Car Sharing

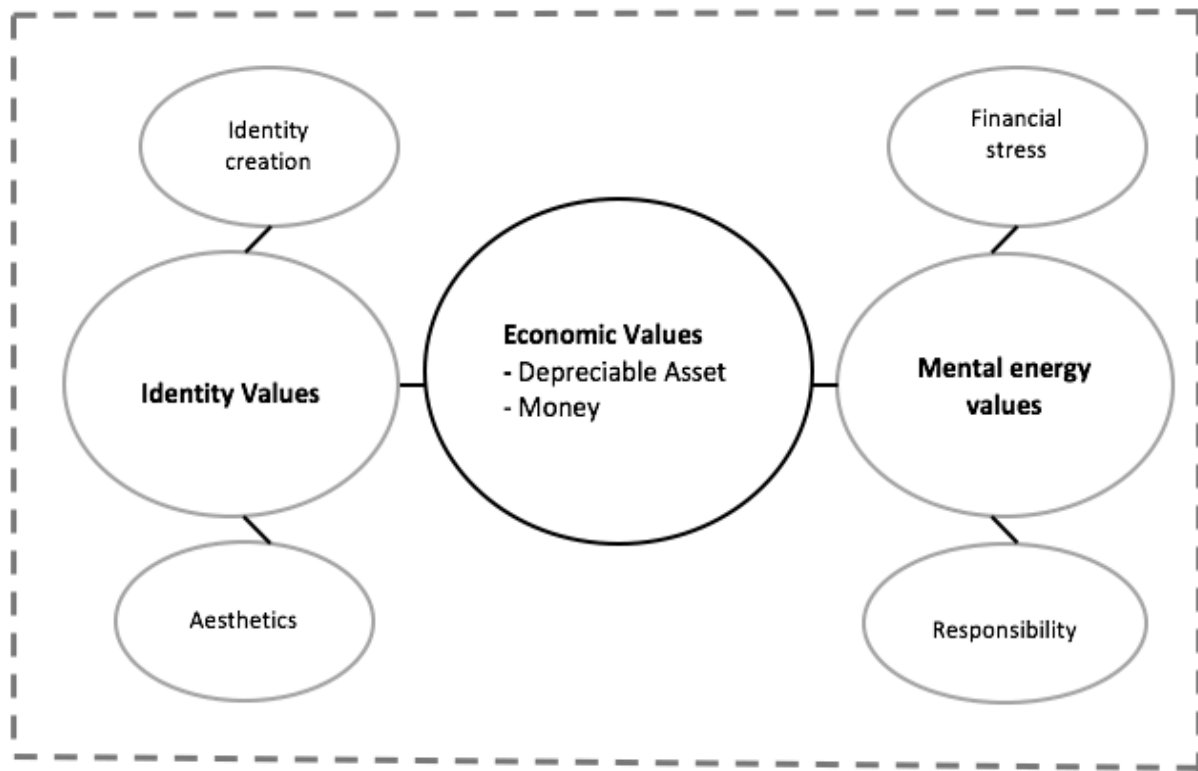


Figure 1: Values of car sharing. This model illustrates values connected to consumers engagement in car sharing services.

As the model illustrated all values analysed in this research are highly connected with each other. Economic value as shown in the model has major impact in all other values since saving money tend to be the main reason behind respondent's participation in access-based consumption as car sharing. For instance, the mental energy value is connected to the economic one since the motivation behind participation in car sharing according to mental energy values is having control of the monthly cost of the car, with no maintenance of the car and no unpredicted expenses as service. Personal finance is shown to be correlated to the benefits of mental energy perceived with car sharing.

Identity value is correlated to the economic one through the members fancying driving new, premium cars while they do not have the possibility, need or will to buy one. This cater for their identity value without

burdening the personal finance. Also, people tend to be seen as economic smart when participating in collaborative businesses (Bardhi et al. 2010). This is not something that the respondents have mention concrete but is an underlying point of view stated in previous research.

Discussion

The findings in this paper are both supporting previous studies within the research field, but also but also contributes to new insights to the academic field of values and access-based theories, due to the found concept of mental energy, aesthetic value and the dimension under economic value – depreciated assets. According to Bardhi et al. (2010) people use car sharing services mainly for the utilitarian function, which are expressed to be convenience and economically beneficial. These things are further something that is mentioned several times by the respondents of this research as well, convenience however is only one dimension under what in this report is called mental energy values. Savings on the other

hand are the main thing that the respondents in this research value the most with car sharing, which further support both Bardhi et al. (2010) and Schaefer's (2013) findings. Further, most respondents highly valued the security of controlling their monthly expenses, economic predictability, flexibility and financial control through using a car sharing service as Sunfleet. This is in line with Schaefer's (2013) study that shows similar results of what users of car sharing like and according to his research users think that they save money and time as well as being more flexible by using car sharing services. Another dimension within economic value found in this research is something that in this research are called *depreciated asset*. This dimension further means that consumers value the fact that they avoid the economic loss connected to depreciation of a car, which is something that previous research have not focused in.

Bardhi et al. (2010) also stress that car sharing can be consumed for the sign value since it can be seen as economically savvy and a more flexible form of consumption than ownership. This goes in line with what is found under the dimension *identity creation*; which showed that people consume car sharing services because they want to shape their identity in a certain way. However, among these respondents the concept car sharing was more related to being modern and thinking with a new mind-set. Another dimension related to identity found in this research is the *aesthetic value*, the importance of driving nice looking cars. Moreover, this dimension is something that previous research have not found before.

One value that this research has contributed to theories of value which is brand new, is something that in this research is called *mental energy*. Mental energy is further divided into two dimensions; responsibility and *financial stress*. The respondents described how they appreciated to avoid keeping things in mind as changing tires,

gasoline bills and unexpected costs but also the stress in finding a parking lot, worrying about break in and damage caused by others. Different to convenience (Bardhi et al. 2010), mental energy is more about how the respondents are having trouble mentally managing their "to do's" and commitments rather than talking about car sharing as convenience as such. They value the parts of not having to take any responsibility more as a mental energy saver than a physical benefit. The responsibility dimension covers the worry about having to take care of commitments and things you must do due to owning a car. The financial stress dimension covers the respondents worry about unforeseen expenses and how they reduce their financial stress through using access-based consumption. Consequently, this paper contributes with new dimensions to existing values - depreciated assets under economic value and aesthetic value under identity value. The new value identified by this study is mental energy.

Conclusion

Since the purpose of this study has been to gain deeper understanding of what individuals value with car sharing services, few members of car sharing organization Sunfleet has been interviewed. By answering the research question: *How can a better understanding of consumer values create a meaningful difference for consumers engaging in access-based consumption?* three different and most important values behind consumers engagement in car sharing activities were discovered: *Economic, Mental energy and Identity values*. As such, this article contributes to theoretical field of values theories as well as access-based consumption theories.

One of the most significant findings in this research is the importance of saving money, as a consumer, which has been generally the main reason for interviewed respondents

participation in access-based consumption activities such as car sharing. The economic value tends to be more dominating than other values analysed in this research, which is in line with Goolaup and Mossberg's (2017) theories that argue that consumers exchange money in order to get different meanings and values in return. In this study it has shown how the respondents choose to be smart about the personal finance and create the possibility to use their money for other activities, which creates great value, but still gain access to a car and the benefits it provides. Without the economic benefits, consumers are most certainly not interested to join services within access-based consumption as car sharing or other services as such. This research can further prove that sustainability is not as significant value as economic value, which further has been as argument used in previous marketing communication. Values that consumers signify the most within access-based consumption, can intensify consumers involvement in collaborative consumption when communicating them in organizations marketing communication tools. These findings could be useful both in terms of developing the concepts of values within theory and how businesses approach difficulties in the field of marketing and presented services. Indeed, values are the meaningful difference between two things as economic benefits and freedom of choice in this research.

Managerial implications

This study is further considered useful for business within car sharing services, as it describes what individuals are valuing with it. By recognizing what people value the most with car sharing services, organisations providing this service can adapt their marketing strategy according to this and hopefully increase the number of members and increase the use within already existing ones. When the consumer values of car sharing were examined, some

negative aspects with Sunfleet were discovered. As such, according to almost all research respondents Sunfleet do not provide flexibility of choice when it comes to the possibility to pick up and leave the cars at different places. The members stress the importance of being flexible and save money at the same time by being able to for example use one car to the chosen destination and another one back, without paying the hour fee when not using it.

This in turn opens up possibilities of more available renting hours for others to use the cars when they need and where they need. In relation to this, the respondents also explained the difficulty in calculating how many hours they need the car. Many felt stressed about the risk of arriving too late and causing delays for the next user and be obliged to pay the predetermined delay fee. Moreover, one solution to this issue might be to arrange the possibility to pick up and leave the cars at different places and use a bit longer duration period for car return. Stressed and forced people might increase the risk of accidents and damage of the cars and harm for the users and environment. Since one of the major findings were the mental energy savings the consumers appreciated, another solution and a bit more flexibility in this area might increase the customer satisfaction.

Another negative aspect pointed out by the respondents was the high weekend fee. Due to the high fee, the respondents explained it to be as equal beneficial or even lower to rent a similar car from a regular renting agency. Furthermore, many respondents mention the process of car inspection before using it to be quite time consuming and wished it to be simplified somehow. Other things mentioned were the desire to rent electric cars and make the app a bit easier in terms of software and by that faster.

Further research

This qualitative research was mainly conducted with people living in few cities of Sweden as for example Gothenburg, Stockholm and Norrköping. Further research could therefore examine more cities around Sweden and maybe look at how the different locations and conditions could affect the use and benefit of car sharing for consumers. Any future researcher in this area could also focus in some wider areas, for instance other cities within Europe, in order to gain knowledge of how car sharing services looks like in other countries. Furthermore, as this study only uses members of Sunfleet as respondents, further research might also create value within research by including members of other car sharing organisations. Additionally, the understanding of values connected to “not using” car sharing services could be an interesting and significant area to examine in future. As this research has a consumer perspective, further research could use a business perspective to understand how the findings in this study can be used in practice, such as how strategies car sharing companies use in order to success and improve could be developed and more efficient. Since this research are mainly focusing on the received benefit of using car sharing, further research could also focus on the cost connected to car sharing; is there any costs for instance within identity – do car sharing users lose out of something but not having their own car.

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