



BARRIERS AND DRIVERS OF THE SHARING ECONOMY IN EUROPE: INSIGHTS FROM A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

Objective. The phenomenon of sharing in the economy, driven by technological advancements, has become a global trend. In Europe, where sustainable development plays a pivotal role, various forms of sharing align with ecological trends. However, there are notable differences in the dynamics and advancement of sharing economy adoption across European countries. The aim of this study is to identify barriers and factors stimulating the development of the sharing economy in selected European countries and to propose recommendations for fostering its growth.

Methodology. The study employs an analytical approach based on a review of the literature and secondary data analysis concerning the implementation of sharing economy solutions in selected European countries. A comparative method is also applied to identify differences and similarities in the conditions affecting its development.

Findings. The analysis highlights significant disparities in the adoption of sharing economy solutions, influenced by cultural, economic, and regulatory factors. Countries with more developed technological infrastructure experience faster adoption, while barriers such as insufficient legal frameworks hinder progress in other regions. The findings emphasize the need for tailored national policies and international cooperation to fully leverage the potential of the sharing economy in Europe.

Key words: Sharing economy, Barriers of sharing, Drivers of sharing, Collaborative consumption

JEL: D12, L14, L86, O35

Introduction

The sharing economy according to its definition is an economic model defined as a peer-to-peer based activity of acquiring, providing or sharing access to goods and services that is often facilitated by a community-based online platform (Hamari et al., 2016). It is characterized by peer-to-peer exchanges facilitated by digital platforms, has emerged as a transformative force,

reshaping traditional notions of ownership and consumption (Hamari et al., 2016). This model, which includes activities like ridesharing, short-term accommodation rentals, and peer-to-peer lending, leverages underutilized resources, emphasizes access over ownership, and challenges conventional business practices and consumer behaviour (Burgiel & Zralek, 2019; Haqqani et al., 2022). Its rapid growth, driven by technological advancements, evolving consumer behaviours, and an increased focus on sustainability, has captured the attention of policymakers, academics, and industry stakeholders, prompting significant inquiry into its implications and underlying dynamics.

In Europe, the sharing economy has experienced swift growth across various sectors, influenced by factors such as economic conditions, regulatory environments, cultural attitudes, and technological infrastructure (Grybaitė & Stankevičienė, 2018). This dynamic interplay shapes the adoption and adaptation of sharing practices across the region, making Europe a compelling context for comparative analysis. The sharing economy encompasses a wide range of activities, organizing commercial activity on peer-to-peer platforms (Markman et al., 2021, Parguel et al., 2017) - including accommodation sharing (e.g., Airbnb), ridesharing (e.g., BlaBlaCar), and peer-to-peer lending, all of which exemplify the diverse manifestations of this model, which continues to redefine business practices and consumer interactions.

Understanding the drivers and barriers of the sharing economy is essential for unlocking its potential and addressing its challenges. By identifying factors that propel or hinder its growth, such as regulatory frameworks, trust deficits, and cultural resistance, this research aims to provide actionable insights for policymakers and stakeholders (Hira & Reilly, 2017; Li et al., 2024). Moreover, investigating the drivers and barriers in different contexts, such as various European countries, allows for a comparative analysis that can highlight regional differences and best practices (Panniello et al., 2022). This research plays a key role in guiding the development of the sharing economy so that its advantages are fully realized while potential risks and challenges are effectively managed.

The objective of this paper is to identify gaps in current research about drivers and barriers of sharing economy in European countries. The study aims to identify the factors that either drive or hinder the development of the sharing economy in Europe. The research question asks: *What are the drivers and barriers of the sharing economy in Europe?* This question is critical for understanding the dynamics behind the growth of the sharing economy, which has transformed various industries such as transportation, accommodation, and services. By identifying key drivers and barriers, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of what enables or restricts the expansion of sharing economy models across Europe. Additionally, the study suggests avenues for future research exploration within this domain. Moreover, it synthesizes existing literature, aiming to enhance the understanding of sharing economy drivers and barriers. The findings will be discussed in relation to broader trends and implications, providing a basis for recommendations on how to foster a more inclusive and resilient sharing economy across Europe.

The structure of the paper is as follows: Section 2 concentrates on details of the literature review process. Section 3 presents the results of the analysis, focusing on the specific drivers and barriers identified in the selected countries. Section 4 discusses the implications of the findings, and Section 5 concludes with a summary of the main points and suggestions for future research.

1. Methodology

To explore the diffusion of the sharing economy in Europe and analyse the drivers and barriers influencing its growth, a systematic literature review (SLR) was conducted. The review employed a rigorous and transparent approach to identify and synthesize relevant literature, following the guidelines outlined in the PRISMA statement (*Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses*) (Page et al., 2021), as recommended for systematic reviews in social sciences and consumer behavior research. This methodology ensured the inclusion of high-quality, peer-reviewed scientific sources. The literature search was conducted using two of the largest and most comprehensive scientific databases: Scopus and Web of Science (WoS), which are widely recognized for their extensive coverage of peer-reviewed literature. The search was carried out on August 19, 2024. The methodological approach adopted in this study consists of four sequential stages: (i) identification, (ii) removal of duplicates, (iii) automatic screening, and (iv) manual screening. The following phrase was used to identify relevant sources in Scopus and Web of Science: *"Sharing Economy" OR "Collaborative Economy" OR "Gig Economy" OR "Peer-to-Peer Economy") AND Europe AND (barrier* OR motivator* OR driver*) AND PUBYEAR > 2006 AND PUBYEAR < 2025 AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English")*. For the systematic literature review, we selected not only the term "sharing economy," but also considered "collaborative economy," "gig economy," and "P2P economy" as closely related concepts, as they share common foundations in platform-based exchanges, digital intermediation, and shifts in traditional economic practices. This holistic approach ensures a comprehensive analysis of the interconnected drivers and barriers shaping these models across Europe.

2. Results

The topic of the current study focuses on the barriers and motivators of the diffusion of the sharing economy in Europe. Therefore, only papers specifically addressing this topic were considered. The analysis included studies conducted in European countries, without limiting the scope to EU member states. All European countries for which relevant empirical research on the sharing economy was available were taken into account. The publication date was restricted to 2007 onwards, as this period coincides with the widespread emergence and growth of the

sharing economy, particularly following the 2008 financial crisis, which significantly influenced its development. To ensure methodological standardization and the highest quality of information, we excluded unpublished papers and conference proceedings from our analysis. By focusing solely on peer-reviewed journal articles and published studies, we aim to maintain rigorous standards and ensure the reliability and consistency of the findings related to our research question: *What are the drivers and barriers of the sharing economy in Europe?* This approach allows us to provide a more comprehensive and credible understanding of the factors influencing the growth of the sharing economy across the continent. By concentrating on these sources, conducted study aimed to provide a reliable and comprehensive overview of the current state of knowledge in this area, ensuring that the findings and discussions are both credible and relevant to the research question.

The literature retrieval process began with the identification of 296 records, sourced from Scopus (202 results) and Web of Science (94 results). After the removal of two duplicate entries, the dataset was reduced to 294 unique records. An automatic screening was then conducted using ASReview software, an AI tool used to assess relevance of bibliometric sources (Van de Schoot et al., 2021), which narrowed the selection down to 28 articles. After a manual screening based on their titles, abstracts, and authors' keywords, a total of 18 sources were initially selected. Subsequently, a comprehensive review of the 18 selected publications was conducted to ensure their adherence to the predefined inclusion criteria. The primary aim was to ascertain whether these studies explicitly addressed the barriers and drivers of the sharing economy within the European context. Following this rigorous evaluation, five papers were excluded, as they either failed to meet the specific focus of the study or provided only generalized insights without reference to Europe. This process refined the selection to 13 relevant papers. The entire procedure is depicted in the PRISMA flowchart (Fig. 1).

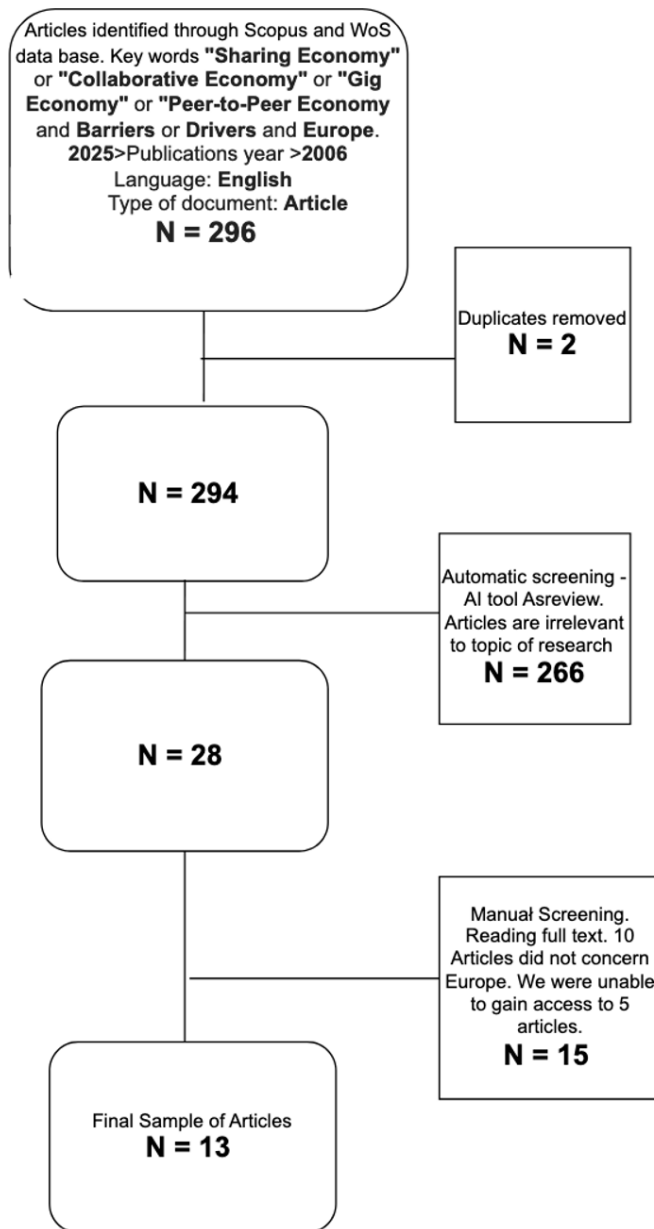


Figure 1. PRISMA flowchart

Source: own elaboration.

At the final stage of the literature review process, 13 documents authored by 39 individuals and sourced from 10 distinct journals were thoroughly examined. The analyzed literature was relatively recent, with an average age of 4.31 years, indicating that most of the studies were published in the last few years (see Table 1.) . The largest concentration of publications occurred in 2019, with 6 studies, followed by 2020, which saw the release of 4 publications (shown in Fig. 2.)

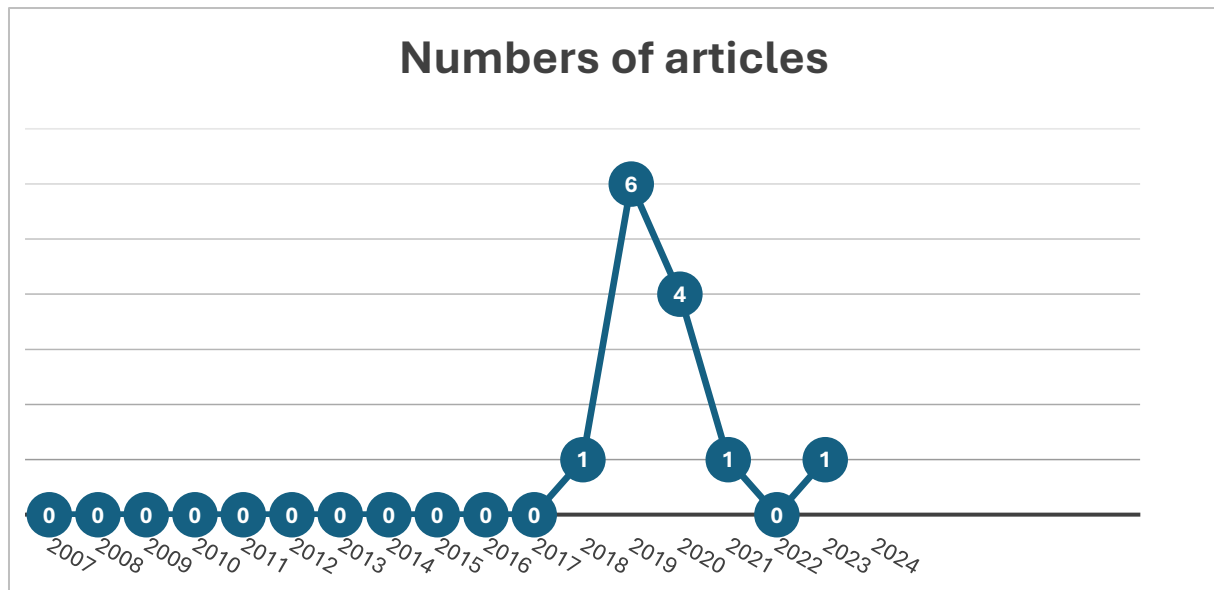


Figure 2. The annual publication count regarding barriers and driver for sharing economy in Europe.

Source: own elaboration.

Table 1. Selected information about the collected dataset

Timespan	2018:2023
Sources/documents	10/13
Annual growth rate	0%
Authors	39
References	0
Average citations per document	58.46
Document average age	4.31

Source: own elaboration.

Table 2 presents a structured overview of the key drivers and barriers influencing the development of the sharing economy across selected European countries. In compiling this table, we focused on identifying factors that either foster or hinder the diffusion of sharing-based consumption models in Europe. The entries are systematically sorted by the publication date of the respective studies, from the most recent to the oldest, allowing for a chronological perspective on the evolving landscape of the sharing economy. Only European countries were considered to ensure regional comparability and to highlight the specific socio-economic and regulatory conditions shaping the adoption of sharing practices within the continent.

Table 2. Barriers and drivers in sharing economy

Title	Year	Author	Barriers	Drivers
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Promoting synergies for sustainability through peer-to-peer sharing: an analysis of drivers and barriers	2023	Ralph Hansmann, Claudia R. Binder	1) Concerns about independence 2) Lack of trust in participants 3) Lack of trust in shared products	1) Ecological reducing use of resources 2) Social: Building connections 3) Economic: Saving money 4) Positive emotions: Enjoyment from sharing activities 5) Convenience: Time and effort saved
Impacts of the Sharing Economy on Urban Sustainability: The Perceptions of Municipal Governments and Sharing Organisations	2021	Lucie Enochsson, Yuliya Voytenko Palgan, Andrius Plepys, Oksana Mont	1) Negative impacts of accommodation 2) Oversupply 3) Rebalancing bike sharing	1) Sustainable and inclusive cities 2) Technology development
Sectoral evolution and shifting service delivery models in the sharing economy	2020	Sirat Mahmuda, Thomas Sigler, Eric Knight, Jonathan Corcoran	1) Ambiguity in property rights, regulatory difficulties 2) Loss of cost advantages; regulations governing sharing economy 3) Sector saturation; limits on growth of sharing economy firms	1) 4th Industrial Revolution technologies 2) Brand value, market penetration 3) Shift to access over ownership
Sharing economy business models for sustainability	2020	Steven Kane Curtis, Oksana Mont	1) Semantic confusion and lack of definitional clarity 2) Lack of tools for sustainable business 3) Poorly described business model attributes 4) Challenges in designing and implementing sharing economy	1) Efficient resource use via P2P platforms 2) Potential reduction in net consumption 3) Improvement in material efficiency 4) Economic and social benefits 5) Strategic design for sustainability 6) Technology mediating markets 7) Reduction in resource extraction and greenhouse gas emissions

The home exchange phenomenon in the sharing economy: a research agenda	2020	Maria Casado-Díaz, Ana B. Casado-Díaz, Gijsbert Hoogendoorn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Dissonance between ideals and actual practices 2) Prevalence of profit-driven 'pseudo-sharing' 3) Limited accessibility for privileged groups 4) Lack of meaningful social interactions 5) Exacerbation of income inequality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Shift in consumer attitudes towards sustainability 2) Desire for authentic experiences 3) Focus on cost savings 4) Building social relationships 5) Facilitation by Web 2.0 technologies
"I like it, but I don't use it": Impact of carsharing business models on usage intentions in the sharing economy	2020	Rüdiger Hahn, Felix Ostertag, Adrian Lehr, Marion Büttgen, Sabine Benoit, Felix Ostertag	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Incompatibility of carsharing model with consumer needs 2) Limited adoption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Compatibility with consumer needs and lifestyles 2) Convenience and lifestyle factors 3) Addressing the attitude-behaviour gap
Operational and policy implications of ridesourcing services: A case of Uber in London, UK	2019	Mohamed Jama, Tom Rye, Achille Fonzone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Lack of regulations 2) Unprepared transport authorities 3) Safety concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Low-cost, on-demand ridesourcing services 2) Sharing economy trend; rethinking service access 3) Popularity of advanced technology
The Conceptualization of the Sharing Economy as a Business Model	2019	Donata Siuskaite, Vaida Pilinkiene, Dainius Zvirdauskas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Rebound effect 2) Lack of regulation 3) Risks to employee rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Social: Growing population, urbanization 2) Economic: shift from ownership to access 3) Ecological: Limited resources 4) Technological: Internet development
Trust in Sharing Economy Business Models from the Perspective of Customers in Szczecin, Poland	2019	Natalia Wagner, Roma Strulak-Wójcikiewicz, Anna Landowska	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Lack of trust in human factors 2) Credibility concerns of service providers 3) Legal liability concerns 4) Doubts about participant honesty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Sharing economy as a growing economic trend 2) Need for new models of social economy
Sharing economy revisited: Towards a new framework for understanding sharing models	2019	Sarah Netter, Esben Rahbek, Gjerdrum Pedersen, Florian Lüdeke-Freund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Societal controversies and public disputes from rapid growth 2) Legal and regulatory challenges in grey areas 3) Tensions between commercial and communal logics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Technological advancements 2) Untapped business potential 3) Flexible job opportunities 4) Environmental benefits 5) Shift: ownership to access 6) Increasing digital literacy

				7) Need for new organizational frameworks
Implementation of the Sharing Economy in the B2B Sector	2019	Katarzyna Grondys	1) Unresolved legal issues 2) Lack of formal and technological solutions 3) Legal loopholes 4) Unfair competition 5) Threat to traditional businesses 6) ROI (return of investment) uncertainties 7) Security concerns 8) Lack of trust in new technologies	1) Increasing resource efficiency 2) Reducing costs 3) Utilizing unused or underutilized assets 4) Supporting sustainable development 5) Benefiting SMEs with limited resources 6) Lowering production costs 7) Flexibility in responding to market demands 8) Improving business processes 9) Greater motivation for companies with significant fixed assets
Platforms in the peer-to-peer sharing economy	2019	Jochen Wirtz, Kevin Kam, Fung So, Makarand Amrish Mody, Stephanie Q Liu, Haeun Helen Chun, Amrish Mody, Haeun Helen	1) High competition from low entry barriers 2) Low switching costs and multi-homing by users 3) Disintermediation 4) Regulatory challenges and tax issues 5) Trust issues	1) Technological advancements 2) Shift in consumer preferences 3) Utilization of underused assets 4) Financial incentives from optimistic investors 5) Societal benefits: improved asset utilization 6) Additional income opportunities
An in-depth exploration of residents' perceived impacts of transient vacation rentals	2018	Evan J. Jordan, Jocelyn Moore	1) Regulatory challenges 2) Enforcement difficulties 3) Potential tax revenue loss 4) Lack of awareness of regulations	1) Accessibility of information 2) Reliance on user-generated content 3) Influence of online reviews

Source: own elaboration.

The findings of the SLR reveal that regulatory challenges are the most frequently cited obstacle to the development of the sharing economy in Europe. These challenges are characterized by legal uncertainties, including issues related to property rights, the lack of tailored regulations, and difficulties in enforcing existing legal frameworks (Zale, 2016). Companies operating within the sharing economy often encounter a regulatory void, as traditional legal frameworks are ill-equipped to address the nuances of their innovative business models (Stem-

ler, 2014). This legal ambiguity creates significant uncertainty for businesses, which may encounter unforeseen legal hurdles, as well as for regulators, who must navigate the delicate task of fostering innovation while ensuring public interest and legal compliance are maintained.

A further obstacle to growth of the sharing economy is lack of trust. This encompasses a wide range of concerns, including doubts about the credibility of service providers, the safety and ethical behaviour of participants, and the overall reliability of transactions (Huurne et al., 2017). Given that the sharing economy often involves direct peer-to-peer interactions and the use of personal assets, establishing trust between users is crucial (Räisänen, 2022). In the absence of established brands or traditional safeguards, participants may be reluctant to engage in these exchanges, driven by concerns over security, honesty, and the potential risks inherent in such transactions. Consequently, this lack of trust can significantly hinder the participation and growth of the sharing economy, as individuals may be unwilling to embrace these platforms without stronger assurances of reliability and safety.

Among the most prominent challenges in diffusion of sharing economy is the issue of ambiguity and lack of clarity. This includes confusion around definitions, operational standards, and business models within the sharing economy. As this economic model is still evolving, there is often a lack of clear guidelines, which can lead to uncertainty for both users and providers (Köbis et al., 2021). This ambiguity makes it challenging to establish consistent practices and expectations, hindering the effective development and implementation of sharing economy platforms.

One pressing concern in the development of the sharing economy is compatibility and user alignment. This refers to the challenges that arise when sharing economy services do not fully align with consumer needs, preferences, or lifestyles (Sach, 2015). For example, if a service like carsharing does not fit seamlessly into a user's daily routine or fails to meet specific requirements, its adoption can be limited. Without compatibility between what the sharing economy offers and what users are looking for, even the most innovative services may struggle to gain widespread acceptance.

An important consideration in the analysis of barriers in development of sharing economy is competition and market saturation. Due to low entry barriers, the market quickly becomes saturated with numerous platforms offering similar services. This intense competition makes it challenging for individual platforms to differentiate themselves and maintain a competitive edge (Demary, 2015). Additionally, with users having the option to easily switch between services, maintaining customer loyalty becomes difficult. While competition can drive innovation and service improvement, market saturation can lead to instability and may hinder the long-term viability of sharing economy businesses.

While there are numerous barriers to the growth of the sharing economy, there are also many powerful drivers that have the potential to overcome these obstacles. These drivers can accelerate the diffusion of the sharing economy, fostering its widespread adoption and development.

A key driver in diffusion of sharing economy is technological advancement. This includes the development of the internet, mobile technologies, artificial intelligence, and big data, all of which have been crucial in enabling sharing economy platforms (Francesco, 2021). These technological innovations facilitate seamless peer-to-peer interactions, efficient resource management, and provide the infrastructure necessary for the sharing economy to thrive. By connecting users and providers in real-time and at scale, technological advancements have been a key factor in the rapid growth and adoption of sharing economy models.

One of the primary factors contributing to the growth of the sharing economy is the economic benefits. This encompasses cost savings for consumers, reduced production costs for businesses, and financial incentives for individuals seeking to monetize underused assets (Schor & Vallas, 2021). The sharing economy offers an attractive alternative to traditional economic models by providing opportunities for both additional income and expense reduction. These economic advantages have been a significant factor in the widespread appeal and adoption of sharing economy platforms, particularly in times of financial uncertainty.

A major force behind the success of the sharing economy is changing consumer preferences. This refers to the growing shift towards valuing experiences over ownership, especially among younger generations (Burgiel, 2016). Consumers are increasingly drawn to the flexibility, convenience, and personalized nature of direct peer-to-peer transactions that the sharing economy offers. Additionally, there is a rising interest in more sustainable and authentic experiences, which aligns well with the core principles of the sharing economy. This shift in consumer attitudes has been a key factor in driving the adoption and growth of sharing economy platforms.

A further core contributor to the expansion of the sharing economy is sustainability and resource efficiency. The sharing economy is often seen as a more sustainable model that prioritizes the efficient use of resources, reducing the need for overproduction and minimizing waste (Kamińska, 2017). By promoting the sharing and optimal utilization of existing assets, these platforms help decrease resource consumption and environmental impact. This focus on sustainability resonates with consumers and businesses alike, driving the adoption of sharing economy services to contribute to ecological sustainability and responsible consumption.

One of the less frequently acknowledged barriers in development of sharing economy was **cultural resistance**, indicating that while it exists, societal reluctance to embrace sharing

practices does not present a major hurdle. This suggests that most people do not view traditional cultural norms or resistance to change as the primary challenge when engaging with the sharing economy, even though it might still play a role in certain cases.

The least cited driver among the analysed papers was **community building**, implying that while fostering a sense of belonging and social connection is a positive aspect of the sharing economy, it is not the main reason people participate. Other factors, such as financial savings or convenience, are more likely to motivate individuals to engage in these practices.

3. Discussion

Dynamic changes of economic, socio-cultural, and technological nature currently occurring on a global scale create an environment conducive to various transformations in consumption and consumer behavior (Burgiel, 2015). These changes, reinforced by technological development and the financial crisis of 2008, have contributed to the popularization of the sharing economy (Botsman & Rogers, 2010).

Sharing economy addresses many challenges faced by the modern economy, such as overconsumption, resource waste, and unequal access to goods (Burgiel, 2015; Kamińska, 2017). By enabling more efficient use of existing resources and promoting models based on sharing, the sharing economy contributes to the creation of a more sustainable and inclusive economy. However, its growth is driven by specific factors, such as technological advancements, shifts in consumer preferences, and increasing environmental awareness. At the same time, the development of the sharing economy is constrained by numerous barriers, including legal regulations or societal trust (Zale, 2016; Stemler, 2014; Räsänen, 2022). Overcoming these obstacles is crucial for the continued growth and effective implementation of sharing-based models. Understanding the key barriers to the development of the sharing economy, as well as identifying the factors that drive its growth, is crucial for the future of this economic model.

There are few articles specifically addressing the barriers and drivers of the sharing economy in Europe. That indicates a significant research gap in this area, highlighting the need for more focused studies to better understand the unique challenges and opportunities of the sharing economy within the European context.

Technologies like the internet, artificial intelligence, big data, and mobile applications enable efficient and secure real-time interactions between users, forming the foundation of sharing platforms (Allen, 2016). These innovations are essential drivers behind the development of the sharing economy model. Without them, it would be challenging to achieve the scale and efficiency we currently see in services such as carsharing or short-term rental platforms. This

technological momentum not only drives down costs but also enhances service quality and optimizes resource utilization. In the long term, these advances could lead to increased automation and personalization of services, further reinforcing the sharing economy's position.

Economic benefits also play a critical role as a driver, attracting both consumers and entrepreneurs. The sharing economy offers users opportunities for cost savings and provides the potential for generating extra income from underutilized assets like cars or apartments (Tawanna et al., 2015). During times of economic crises or financial uncertainty, these benefits become particularly appealing, likely leading to even greater adoption of this model in the future. As a result, not only will the use of sharing platforms increase, but we may also witness a shift in consumer attitudes toward ownership, where access to resources becomes more valued than traditional ownership.

Changing consumer preferences, especially among younger generations, further fuel the growth of the sharing economy (Burgiel & Zrałek, 2019). Younger consumers increasingly prioritize flexibility, experiences, and sustainability over traditional ownership. Instead of accumulating material possessions, they opt for options that allow for more efficient and environmentally friendly use of resources. This trend not only boosts the popularity of the sharing economy but also pressures traditional business models to adapt to evolving consumer expectations.

Despite these strong drivers, the sharing economy faces significant barriers that could impede its growth. One of the most prominent challenges is regulatory uncertainty. Traditional legal frameworks often struggle to keep pace with rapid innovation, leaving businesses in the sharing economy navigating a complex and unclear legal landscape (Sunjoo Oh & Jae Yun Moon, 2016). This presents risks for companies, which may face unexpected regulatory burdens, as well as for consumers, who may lack adequate legal protections. The absence of clear regulations can also discourage innovation, as companies may be hesitant to invest in new platforms due to the unpredictable legal environment.

Lack of trust is another major barrier preventing the full development of the sharing economy. In peer-to-peer models, where transactions occur directly between users, trust is paramount. Without proper safeguards and guarantees, consumers may be reluctant to engage in transactions due to concerns over fraud, participant behaviour, or insufficient protection in the event of disputes. Consequently, even the most innovative platforms may struggle to gain widespread adoption if trust issues are not addressed, limiting their growth potential.

It is important to note that the conducted SLR focuses on countries being located in Europe as a continent. Europe represents a distinctive market where the sharing economy is

developing, yet its growth is still constrained by numerous barriers. Sharing economy companies face challenges in competing with traditional businesses due to regulatory issues, as they often find that existing regulations do not adequately apply to their business models. While the sharing economy is more advanced in the US compared to Europe, there is a clear need for policy changes in Europe to support its growth and create a more level playing field with traditional companies (Demary, 2015). The Netherlands, UK, Germany, Sweden, Finland, and France emerged as the top performers in terms of having the most favorable environments for sharing economy development, thanks to their progressive regulatory frameworks, strong digital infrastructure, and high levels of consumer trust (Grybaitė & Stankevičienė, 2020). These countries have created conditions that encourage innovation and adoption of sharing economy platforms, making them leaders in this growing sector.

4. Concluding remarks

The diffusion of the sharing economy in Europe is shaped by a balance between significant drivers and notable barriers. Technological advancements, such as digital platforms, mobile applications, and big data analytics, which have enabled the rapid growth of peer-to-peer exchanges, were the most frequently mentioned driver of the sharing economy model. Their popularity allows for the sharing economy to be an accessible and efficient alternative to traditional ownership. Changing consumer preferences, particularly among younger generations who value flexibility, convenience, and sustainability, have further fueled this expansion. By promoting more efficient use of resources and aligning with global sustainability trends, the sharing economy has gained traction as a viable economic model across the continent.

However, the expansion of the sharing economy also faces considerable obstacles, particularly in the areas of regulatory uncertainty and trust, which were the most frequently mentioned barriers. Traditional legal frameworks often struggle to keep pace with the innovation of sharing platforms, resulting in ambiguities around property rights, liability, and taxation. This lack of regulatory clarity can stifle growth and discourage businesses from entering new markets. Additionally, the trust deficit among users (concerns about safety, reliability, and the ethical behavior of participants) presents a significant barrier to broader adoption. Coupled with market saturation and intense competition, these challenges underscore the need for more tailored regulations and trust-building mechanisms to sustain the long-term growth of the sharing economy in Europe.

The findings of this systematic literature review suggest that collaboration between companies within the sharing economy sector and regulatory authorities is crucial in establishing a balance between fostering innovation, ensuring legal compliance, and enhancing trust. Striking this equilibrium is fundamental to supporting the sustainable growth and long-term viability of the sharing economy.

5. Limitations

The limitations of this research are primarily tied to its focused scope and methodology. The literature review concentrates solely on the European context, which may restrict the general applicability of the findings to other regions. Additionally, the analysis is specifically centered on the drivers and barriers of the sharing economy, potentially overlooking other relevant dimensions of the phenomenon. The study draws exclusively from Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus databases, limiting the breadth of the research pool. With a relatively small dataset, the exclusion of non-peer-reviewed articles and conference papers may have resulted in the omission of the most current studies, further narrowing the scope of insights.

6. Future research

Future research should broaden its geographic scope beyond Europe to include a more diverse range of regions, allowing for comparative insights into how the sharing economy operates under different regulatory, cultural, and economic contexts. Expanding the use of databases beyond Web of Science and Scopus would also enrich the study, providing access to a wider array of sources and potentially uncovering more current trends. Moreover, a deeper examination of regulatory issues would be valuable, focusing on how specific legal frameworks and policies affect the development and adoption of sharing economy platforms across various sectors and regions.

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Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest identyfikacja barier oraz czynników sprzyjających rozwojowi gospodarki współdzielenia w wybranych krajach europejskich. Autorzy podejmują próbę wyjaśnienia, dlaczego tempo wdrażania modeli współdzielenia w Europie jest zróżnicowane, mimo wspólnego kontekstu zrównoważonego rozwoju i zaawansowanej cyfryzacji. W artykule wskazano kluczowe przeszkody w rozwoju gospodarki współdzielenia, takie jak niejasne regulacje prawne, brak zaufania oraz niedopasowanie modeli do potrzeb konsumentów. Z drugiej strony, jako główne czynniki wspierające rozwój tego modelu wskazano postęp technologiczny, zmiany preferencji konsumenckich oraz korzyści ekonomiczne i ekologiczne.

W badaniu zastosowano metodę systematycznego przeglądu literatury (Systematic Literature Review, SLR), zgodną z wytycznymi PRISMA. Analiza objęła 13 recenzowanych artykułów naukowych z baz Scopus i Web of Science, opublikowanych w latach 2007–2024. Proces selekcji obejmował identyfikację, usunięcie duplikatów, automatyczne oraz ręczne przeszukiwanie treści, co zapewniło wysoką jakość i trafność źródeł. Dzięki podejściu porównawczemu autorzy uchwycili regionalne różnice oraz zaproponowali rekomendacje dla decydentów i interesariuszy gospodarki współdzielenia.

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