



Demographic Drivers of Tourist Behavior in the Sharing Economy: A Comprehensive Study in the Tricity Region

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Abstract

This study explores the complex dynamics of visitor behaviour in the sharing economy, concentrating on the Tricity Region-which includes Chandigarh, Panchkula, and Mohali. Global tourism has undergone a revolution thanks to the sharing economy, which is defined by peer-to-peer exchanges and collaborative consumption. Regarding how demographic factors affect tourists' decisions to adopt and use sharing economy services in this region, there is a critical research gap that needs to be filled. By examining the effects of factors like age, income, gender, and other demographic indicators on visitor behaviour, the study seeks to close this gap. With 250 respondents and an extensive research methodology, the study offers insightful information about the complex relationship between the adoption of the sharing economy and demographics. The results bear significance for enterprises, decision-makers, and scholars who seek to comprehend and accommodate the changing inclinations of travellers in the modern travel environment.

Keywords: Sharing Economy, Tourist Behavior, Demographics, Tricity Region, Collaborative Consumption.

Introduction

The sharing economy has become a disruptive force in recent years, changing the face of international tourism. Travellers now have access to an unprecedented range of options and experiences thanks to the disruption of traditional models caused by platforms for sharing accommodations like Airbnb, ride-sharing services like Uber, and numerous other peer-to-peer initiatives (Belk, 2014; Sundararajan, 2016). Understanding the complex dynamics of visitor behaviour is crucial as the sharing economy gains traction, especially in the context of the Tricity Region, which includes Chandigarh, Panchkula, and Mohali. Travelling today is significantly impacted by the sharing economy, which is defined by peer-to-peer exchanges and cooperative consumption (Botsman & Rogers, 2010). The Tricity Region is a prime location for a thorough

investigation into the nuances of this developing phenomenon because of its distinctive combination of urbanisation, cultural diversity, and economic dynamism. Prior studies have demonstrated the noteworthy influence of demographic variables on diverse facets of tourism, such as travel inclinations, expenditure trends, and lodging selections (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2007). Still lacking, however, is a thorough analysis of how demographic factors in particular affect traveller behaviour within the sharing economy in this area. Even though previous studies have shed light on visitor behaviour in general, a study conducted specifically in the Tricity Region presents a rare chance to examine the particular demographic factors influencing the sharing economy landscape. This region presents an intriguing microcosm for comprehending the diverse influences that demographics exert on tourists' choices within the sharing economy, given its rapid urbanisation and socio-economic diversity. The research's conclusions are important for academics, business professionals, and legislators. This study adds to the academic understanding of changing travel patterns by elucidating the specific demographic influences on visitor behaviour in the sharing economy. It also offers useful insights for businesses and policymakers aiming to adjust their strategies to the dynamic changes in the tourism sector.

Review of Literature and Research Gap

In recent years, research has focused on the relationship between the sharing economy and tourism, with a number of studies elucidating the complex dynamics and influences at work. In 2021, Lee and Cha investigated the social dimensions of sharing economy platforms. Their research on user ratings and reviews shed light on how trust developed on these platforms and influenced purchasing decisions. Wang (2021) examined the regulatory issues surrounding the sharing of accommodations in the economy. Understanding the outside variables that might affect visitor behaviour in addition to individual demographics was made possible by this study. The reasons people choose to stay in sharing economy accommodations were examined by Gerwe (2021). The study clarified a major component of traveller behaviour in the sharing economy: the desire for unique experiences. In 2020, Zhao and Bacao looked into how economical sharing economy lodging is. Comprehending the Tricity Region's consumer choices required an understanding of the economic benefits provided by these platforms. Campbell and colleagues (2020) investigated the cost-effectiveness of sharing economy lodgings. Understanding one of the major adoption drivers—particularly among budget-conscious travelers—was made possible by this. Zervas et al. (2017) looked into how traditional hospitality businesses were affected by accommodations offered by the sharing economy. Understanding the competitive environment and the difficulties faced by established players required a thorough understanding of this research. Tussyadiah (2016) looked into the ways in which conventional hotel companies adjusted to the sharing economy. This study shed light on the tactics used by hotels and other similar businesses to stay competitive. A thorough analysis of the sharing economy and an explanation of its revolutionary potential were provided by Sundararajan (2016). The book offered a theoretical foundation for comprehending how conventional economic paradigms were impacted by the sharing economy. Guttentag (2015) investigated how technology helps with transactions on platforms for the sharing economy. It was necessary to understand the technological aspects in order to understand the ease of use, which is a factor that

influences decisions made by tourists. Belk (2014) explored the theoretical underpinnings of collaborative consumption and offered psychological insights into sharing economy participants. Deciphering the decision-making processes of tourists required an understanding of the psychological aspects. Botsman and Rogers (2010) formulated the concept of the sharing economy and its capacity for revolutionary change. An extensive framework for comprehending the collaborative nature of sharing economy platforms was supplied by this groundbreaking work. The impact of demographic factors on tourist decision-making was investigated by Litvin et al. (2008), who emphasised the need for in-depth research. They found that spending patterns and travel preferences were strongly influenced by age, income, and cultural background. Wang and Fesenmaier (2007) investigated how demographics are influencing travel preferences as they change. They emphasised the significance of conducting examinations specific to a region in order to capture complex dynamics, a theme that aligns with the study's regional focus. Gursoy et al. (2002) investigated how travellers felt about advertisements for tourism products. This was especially important in light of the sharing economy, which heavily relies on user-generated content and internet reviews. The Theory of Planned Behaviour was first presented by Ajzen (1991), and it became a popular framework for analysing and forecasting consumer behaviour. This theory's application to the sharing economy setting gave this study its theoretical basis.

Even though the body of current literature has made a substantial contribution to our understanding of a number of aspects of tourist behaviour in the sharing economy, there is still a clear research gap, especially when it comes to the demographic factors that influence this behaviour in the unique context of the Tricity Region (Chandigarh, Panchkula, and Mohali). The gap that has been identified results from the lack of a thorough analysis that focuses on how demographic factors influence travellers' decisions to adopt and use sharing economy services in this area. Although more general research has acknowledged the impact of demographics on travel behaviour (Litvin et al., 2008; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2007), there hasn't been a thorough investigation of the distinct socioeconomic and cultural environment of the Tricity Region. Therefore, it is imperative to close this knowledge gap and offer insightful analyses of the complex interactions between demographic factors and traveller behaviours in the sharing economy, thereby advancing scholarly research and having real-world applications for corporations and decision-makers.

Statement Of Problem And Objective Of The Study

The sharing economy is now a major force in the global tourism industry, changing the way that visitors choose their experiences and make decisions. Nonetheless, there is a notable deficiency of research in the Tricity Region (which includes Chandigarh, Panchkula, and Mohali) concerning the specific influence of demographic variables on the behaviour of tourists in the sharing economy. Understanding the factors that influence the adoption and usage of sharing economy services is critical, and businesses, policymakers, and researchers must work together to close this knowledge gap. These factors include age, income, cultural background, and others. This study aims to close this gap by carrying out an extensive investigation focused on the Tricity Region. This study's main goal is to investigate how tourists' decisions to adopt and use sharing economy services in the Tricity Region are influenced by demographic factors such as age, income, and gender.

Research Methodology

In order to thoroughly examine the impact of demographic factors on visitor behaviour within the sharing economy in the Tricity Region, this study utilises a quantitative research methodology. The intended audience consists of travellers who are in Chandigarh, Mohali, and Panchkula. A convenience sample of 250 respondents will be chosen, and they will be given a structured questionnaire. The purpose of the questionnaire is to gather demographic data, including gender, age, and income, as well as details about the participants' sharing economy usage habits. Statistical tools that have been used for data analysis and have illuminated the relationship between customer satisfaction and demographics include descriptive statistics, t tests, and ANOVA. Throughout the whole research process, two ethical principles that have been strictly adhered to are confidentiality and informed consent. It is anticipated that the study's findings will give Tricity hotel managers helpful information, making it simpler to customise offerings to raise overall guest satisfaction in this dynamic hospitality environment.

Results And Discussions

With 46.4% males and 53.6% females, the demographic profile of the 250 respondents in this study shows a balanced gender distribution. The respondents range widely in age, with 28.0% being under 25, 28.6% being between 25 and 45, 21.4% being between 45 and 55, and 22.0% being over 55. When it comes to monthly income, the majority (54.6%) make between Rs. 20,000 and Rs. 50,000, followed by 24.2% who make between Rs. 50,000 and Rs. 100,000, 11.6% who make less than Rs. 20,000, and 9.6% who make more than Rs. 100,000. There is a divide in the respondents' marital status, with 36.2% of them single and 63.8% married. There is a clear diversity in educational attainment: 21.0% have a degree or equivalent, 33.4% have less than a diploma, and 45.6% have a post-graduate degree or equivalent. This thorough demographic analysis offers a starting point for investigating the complex interactions between different demographic variables and traveller behaviour inside the Tricity Region's sharing economy.

Table 1: Respondents Profile

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Demographic Profile of Consumers

		Count (n=250)	Column (%)
Gender	Male	116	46.4%
	Female	134	53.6%
Age	Less than 25 years	70	28.0%
	25 to 45 years	72	28.6%
	45 to 55 years	53	21.4%
	Above 55 years	55	22.0%
Monthly income	Below Rs. 20000	29	11.6%
	Rs. 20000 to Rs. 50000	136	54.6%
	Rs. 50000 to Rs. 100000	61	24.2%
	Above Rs. 100000	24	9.6%

Marital status	Single	90	36.2%
	Married	160	63.8%
Highest qualification	Below Graduation	84	33.4%
	Graduation or equivalent	52	21.0%
	Post-graduation/Equivalent	114	45.6%

The results show no significant differences when viewed in the context of the independent samples t-test based on gender and marital status for the variable "Actual Usage" in sharing economy services. The calculated t-values with associated p-values ($p > .05$) suggest that these demographic factors do not significantly influence the adoption and utilisation of sharing economy services in the Tricity Region. The mean actual usage scores for males and females, as well as singles and married individuals, are very close. This suggests that within this particular demographic, the appeal of sharing economy platforms is universal and does not depend on a person's gender or marital status. As a result, companies in this area might think about implementing strategies that aim to reach a wide audience instead of focusing just on these demographic factors when customising services. But it's important to handle these implications with caution and take into account other factors that might influence differences in actual usage within the sharing economy.

Table 2: Independent Samples t-Test on the basis of Gender and Marital Status

Group Statistics						
Gender		N	Mean	T- Value	Df	Sig-value (2 tailed)
Actual Usage	Male	116	4.12	.146	248	.884
	Female	134	4.14			
Marital Status						
Actual Usage	Single	90	4.24	.061	248	.951
	Married	160	4.17			

To investigate the impact of age, education, and income on the variable "Actual Usage" of sharing economy services, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed. Respondents were divided into four age groups based on their age: under 25, 25 to 45, 45 to 55, and over 55. With a significant p-value of .033 and a mean actual usage score that varies across age groups, $F(3, 268) = 2.636$ suggests that age has a statistically significant effect on actual usage.

Respondents were classified as Below Graduation, Graduation or Equivalent, and Post-Graduation/Equivalent in order of qualification. Since the average actual usage scores for each of these groups are comparable, the qualification factor does not appear to have a significant impact on actual usage, as indicated by the non-significant F value ($F(2, 247) = 0.350, p = .844$).

Participants' income levels were used to divide them into four groups: below Rs. 20,000, between Rs. 20,000 and Rs. 50,000, between Rs. 50,000 and Rs. 100,000, and above Rs. 100,000. With a significant p-value of .021 and a $F(3, 246) = 1.292$, the mean actual usage scores show a statistically significant relationship between income and actual usage.

According to the ANOVA results, the Tricity Region's actual use of sharing economy services is significantly influenced by factors such as age and income. Businesses operating in the sharing economy may find it useful to customise their marketing and service strategies based on these demographics. The non-significant influence of qualification, however, suggests that actual usage patterns may not be significantly shaped by educational background. To effectively target and engage their audience within this region, businesses should take into account these subtle demographic variations.

Table 3: ANOVA Results for Age, Qualification and Income

Group Statistics					
Age		N	Mean	F Value	Sig-value (2 tailed)
Actual Usage	Less than 25 years	70	4.0718	2.636	.033
	25 to 45 years	72	4.1358		
	45 to 55 years	53	4.4605		
	Above 55 years	55	4.1240		
Qualification					
Actual Usage	Below Graduation	84	4.1304	.350	.844
	Graduation or equivalent	52	4.1732		
	Post-graduation/Equivalent	114	4.0926		
Income					
Actual Usage	Below Rs. 20000	29	4.0938	1.292	.021
	Rs. 20000 to Rs. 50000	136	4.1374		
	Rs. 50000 to Rs. 100000	61	4.1186		
	Above Rs. 100000	24	4.1454		

Conclusions and Managerial Implications

In summary, the present investigation has yielded significant findings regarding the intricate correlation between demographic variables and visitor conduct in the context of the sharing economy operating in the Tricity Region. Age and income were found to be important determinants of sharing economy service usage, while traditional divisions of gender and marital status had no discernible effect. The usage patterns of younger age groups varied, which highlights the need for targeted strategies across demographics. Actual usage was highly influenced by income levels, demonstrating the significance of economic factors in determining the dynamics of the sharing economy market. This necessitates customised marketing strategies for companies operating in the Tricity Region that take into account the financial capabilities and inclinations of particular age and income groups. Acknowledging that marital status and gender might not be the main factors helps businesses to allocate resources more effectively. These results add to a more nuanced understanding of how tourists behave in the sharing economy and offer useful information to businesses to help them optimise their approaches and create a more welcoming sharing economy environment in the area. To find more complex patterns, future studies could investigate different demographic variables or go deeper into already-identified influencers like age and income. It would also be beneficial to look into how changing socioeconomic conditions and technology trends affect traveller preferences in the sharing

economy space. A thorough grasp of the changing tourism landscape could also be obtained by looking at the intersections of demographic variables with business and policymakers.

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