

## STUDY OF THE CURRENT STATE AND DEVELOPMENT OF SHARING ECONOMY IN BULGARIA: SEASIDE TOURISM APPLICATION PERSPECTIVES<sup>2</sup>

*The sharing economy is a modern digitalized alternative to traditional economic relationships and is developing and growing dynamically. The most positive evidence suggests that the sharing economy could match the traditional market economy in terms of the volume of transactions. Globally, the main sharing economy markets are China, the USA and Europe, and within the EU consumer interest in sharing services is high as 52% are aware of sharing options and 17% have used them at least once. According to data, the most developed sharing subsectors in the EU are shared accommodation and shared mobility. As these are the main sub-sectors also in the tourism industry, it is obvious that the sharing economy has entered the tourism industry and is rearranging the traditional tourist business. Therefore, the main purpose of the current study is to investigate the tourism application perspectives of the sharing economy on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast as the latter is the highest developed tourist area in Bulgaria.*

*Keywords: Sharing economy; tourism; application; perspectives; Bulgarian Black Sea coast*

*JEL: L81; L83; Z31*

### 1. Introduction

The modern economy is experiencing a process of significant transformation – the kind of transformation that happens once every 100 years (Helbing, 2015). The invention of the computer, the internet and social media are changing the way in which many activities are introduced and performed – redefining institutions, organizations and structures on which society and economy are based. Helbing calls this process a digital revolution, and according to Barnes and Mattson (2016), if the internet contributed in the 1990s to the emergence of a qualitatively new distribution channel for products and services commercialization, as well as the development of e-commerce, a new digitally mediated platform-based society has emerged since 2000. Social interaction through social networks has transformed not only communication but also the exchange of goods and services, which has remodelled business

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activities and methods for resource acquisition (Botsman, Rogers, 2011). The current study is dedicated to an extremely current topic covering the sharing economy. Its purpose is to investigate the user's perception of the state and development prospects of the sharing economy in the tourism industry.

## 2. Defining Sharing Economy

Sharing economy is also commonly called collaborative economy, P2P-economy, collaborative consumption and access-based economy, which are also the most widespread and used in socio-economic aspect terms. Botsman and Rogers contribute notably to the wide adoption of the existing term 'sharing economy' and argue that it focuses on the consumer-led rather than producer-led shift in consumption. The researchers believe that this modern economic system is geared towards more sustainable resource consumption and is based on four key principles – *the critical mass, the idle capacity unlocking, the faith in community and the trust between strangers' principles*.

There are a variety of definitions for sharing economy due to the different aspects of the used term or author's perspective. In the earliest studies, the authors concentrate mostly on human ecology and the behaviour within collaborative consumption and lifestyle (Botsman, Rogers, 2011; Felson, Spaeth, 1978; Hawley, 1950). In the early years of the new millennium, studies emphasize cooperation, non-reciprocal sharing and community-based relationships between people (Rifkin, 2000; Bauman, 2003; Benkler, 2004; Gibson-Graham, 2006; Belk, 2007). From 2010 on most of the researchers have taken a look at the hybrid plethora of the sharing economy as a mixture between economic and social relationships and discuss in their scientific papers the trade alternative-based nature of sharing economy; social platforms and modern technologies as an engine of the system development; the economically more effective access based instead of ownership based consumption of resources and the ecological aspect of this modern phenomenon (Cameron et.al., 2013; Botsman, Rogers, 2010; Rifkin, 2000; Gansky, 2010; Bardhi, Eckhardt, 2012; Schor, Fitzmaurice, 2015; Sigala, 2015; Benyucef, Huang, 2013; Rifkin, 2015)

In terms of sharing economy definitions, most approaches are based on highlighting its substantive aspects, mainly aiming to clarify the process of sharing and its *distinctive characteristics from a trade-based economy*. The existing definitions, although few in number, can be grouped according to the entity producing the definition.

- Institutional – a critically small proportion of the existing definitions are produced by institutions, whether the latter are governmental or non-governmental.

**Table 1. Institutional sharing economy definitions**

Institution	Definition
World Bank Group (World Bank Group, 2018)	The sharing economy refers to individuals offering their <i>underutilized assets</i> to others using <i>digital platforms</i> .
US National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC, 2020)	The sharing economy involves sharing goods and services with strangers, often through a <i>third-party digital network</i> . The term also describes companies that allow anyone to profit from their own goods and services.
US Corporate Finance Institute (CFI, 2022)	The sharing economy is an <i>economic model</i> in which goods and resources are <i>shared by individuals</i> and groups in a collaborative manner so that physical assets are converted into <i>services</i> .
Australian Government (Australian Government, 2022)	The sharing economy connects individuals who offer/demand products or services for rent or lease through an <i>online platform</i> or mobile app.

Source: Created by the author.

- Scientific – the authors' approaches differ in the sharing economy emphasis. Due to the fact that the sharing economy has a broad content of products and services, variable forms of relationships and effects for stakeholders can be observed.

**Table 2. Scientific sharing economy definitions with highlighted aspects**

Author	Definition/emphasis
Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012	A <i>type of access-based consumption</i> in which temporary access to goods and services is obtained in return for transactions in which the right to temporary access is transferred rather than ownership.
Guttentag, 2015	A type of modern service representative of so-called " <i>disruptive innovation</i> " that can transform the market to the point of wiping out the previously dominant leaders, with the new service offering a cheaper, more convenient and simpler solution than the old status quo.
Laura Piscicelli et al., 2015	An emerging <i>socio-economic model based on sharing</i> , bartering, gifting, swapping, renting, and borrowing based on new technologies and peer communities. Providing access to underutilized assets and promoting efficient use of resources, reduced environmental impact, and a focus on sustainable consumption.
Dredge & Gomothy, 2015	A <i>hybrid, technology-based, alternative economic model</i> that reinvents deeply held cultural, moral and environmental beliefs. It is inherently an economic system characterized by a complex scheme of relationships between entities, a specific network of individuals and transactions for the transfer of a good of an intangible nature – the right of access and/or use.
Belk, 2007	The <i>process of distributing and receiving a resource</i> from an individual(s) to others for use by the latter. Unlike sharing, where a resource is provided for use free of charge, SI represents people coordinating the acquisition and distribution of a resource in exchange for payment or other compensation.

Source: Created by the author.

After conducting research about sharing economy definitions we can admit that sharing economy is a very complex term, which deters us from elaborating a single definition. However, we would like to highlight that we accept that the sharing economy is an economic system and follow the approach adopted by the authors to specify its distinctive characteristics that make it unique.

**Table 3. Main characteristics of the sharing economy**

Characteristic	Description
Economic system	It is complex in structure and includes stakeholders, relationships and objects that are different in nature, which is why it is diversified into separate sharing branches.
Basic principles	Critical mass principle, idle capacity unlocking principle, faith in community principle and trust between strangers principle.
Exchange relationship	Diverse nature of relationships: sharing, bartering, exchanging, trading (in the sense of sharing with monetary return), giving, renting, and borrowing – in essence, the process is 'pseudo-sharing'.
Main participants	The provider of the shared product/service, the consumer of the shared product/service, the mediator of the sharing process.
Object of sharing	No ownership is transferred, but the right of temporary access to an underused resource. The resource can be a tangible good (shared machine etc.), a financial good (shared credit etc.), or an intangible good (knowledge/skills etc.).
Communication type	Communication between supplier and consumer with equivalent positions from all relationship types: C2C, C2B, B2C and B2B.
Open system	Free entry and exit or with negligible barriers based on voluntary participation.
Community-based	The participants not only share assets, but also experience belonging and share cultural, moral and environmental beliefs.
Main goal	Efficient use of underutilized resources, but there are also non-monetary benefits in the alternative sense of user value creation.
Technological dependence	Platforms mediate provider-consumer interaction and facilitate outreach to a large volume of participants, without which sharing would remain critically small.

Source: Created by the author.

The most common reason for sharing economy users to prefer shared than ownership-based assets is economically based. (Bardhi, Eckhardt, 2012; Guttentag, 2015; Walsh, 2011; Zekanović-Korona, Grzunov, 2014) A shared service is considered to be more cost-effective than a traditional purchase of a good or service. In the case of shared consumption, the cost of temporary access for use is generally lower than the cost of ownership. In support, according to a survey of users of shared services, 83% use them as an alternative to ownership because of the lower cost, and another 62% emphasize the speed and convenience of the sharing process versus a traditional purchase (Gitnux, 2022).

**Table 4. Comparison of acquisition and access prices at an average frequency of use of resources**

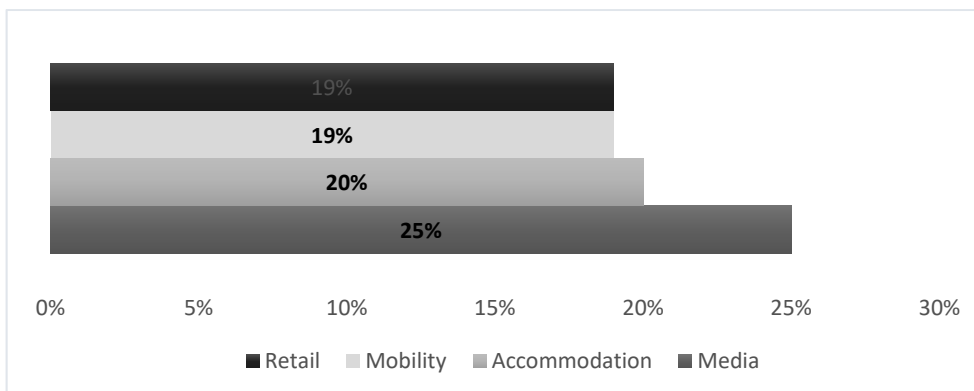
Resource	Average annual frequency of use	Acquisition price	Access based price
Lawn mower	1-2 times weekly	3000 USD	6 USD/day
Boat	1 times monthly	120 000 USD	300 USD/day
Surf	1-2 times monthly	1000 USD	60 USD/week
Bicycle	3-4 times monthly	800 USD	18 USD/day
Car	1-2 times daily	45 000 USD	9 USD/hour
Boutique handbag	1 times monthly	15 000 USD	100 USD/day

Source: The Economist (2022). Retrieved from <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2013/03/09/the-rise-of-the-sharing-economy> (Accessed on 19.03.2023).

According to another survey, people are most willing to share electronics (28%), services/education (26%), technology (23%), a bicycle (22%), their home (15%), and

furniture (17%). (Nielsen, 2014). According to the most recent 2021 survey, attitudes have refocused with the most shared being: media (music, photos, movies, etc.) (25%); accommodation (20%); mobility (19%); and retail (19%).

**Figure 1. Top shared resources by readiness providing temporary access for use**



Source: Šestáková, A., Plichtová, J. (2019). *Contemporary commons: Sharing and managing common-pool resources in the 21st century. Human Affairs 29(1), 74-86.*

### 3. Sharing Economy State and Participation Within the Tourism Industry

In terms of shared products and services consumption, statistics show that more than 500 MN people in the US, China, Germany, France, the UK, and the UAE have shared resources in the past 3 years to earn a profit. Remarkably, more than 680 MN people have consumed these shared assets in the same period.

**Table 5. Sharing economy statistics worldwide**

Region	Sharing services widespread
North America	72% have used a shared service app and 50% have fulfilled a shared service transaction.
Asia-Pacific	78% would like to share their owned resources and 81% are willing to use shared assets.
Latin America	70% have a positive attitude to share and another 73% would like to use shared services instead of ownership.
Middle East and Africa	68% of people are willing to share or rent, while 71% are willing to rent from others.
Europe	54% would like to share their own resources, while 44% are willing to use shared-based consumption.
China	73% of the online population are consumers in the sharing economy, from these more than 55% share their owned assets.
UAE	54% are willing to share their owned resources and 61% would like to use shared assets.

Source: Created by the author on Proficient Market Insights, 2023.

As the world economy suffered one of the worst crises in history by the impacts of COVID-19 in 2020, the pandemic also had a significant influence on the sharing economy. However, the effects were different in trade-based and sharing economies. In the sharing economy,

some of the most negatively affected sub-sectors were tourism-related mobility and accommodation. The demand for shared accommodation has declined in all major markets except South America (+30%) and North America (+10%) by between -8 and -39%. (AirDnA, 2022). Shared mobility platforms, such as Lyft and Uber, also reported drops in summer 2020 ranging from -54% to -75% compared to 2019. (MovMi, 2021) On the other hand, the COVID-19 pandemic has created some new opportunities for part of the sharing economy. Due to the lockdowns and social distancing measures, services within **Food & Entertainment sharing** have registered a rise in demand and sales and increased by 51% from March to May 2020.

From a statistical point of view, there has been a dynamic development of shared economic relations over the last few years. The following statistics can be cited in support of this statement (Proficient Market Insights, 2023):

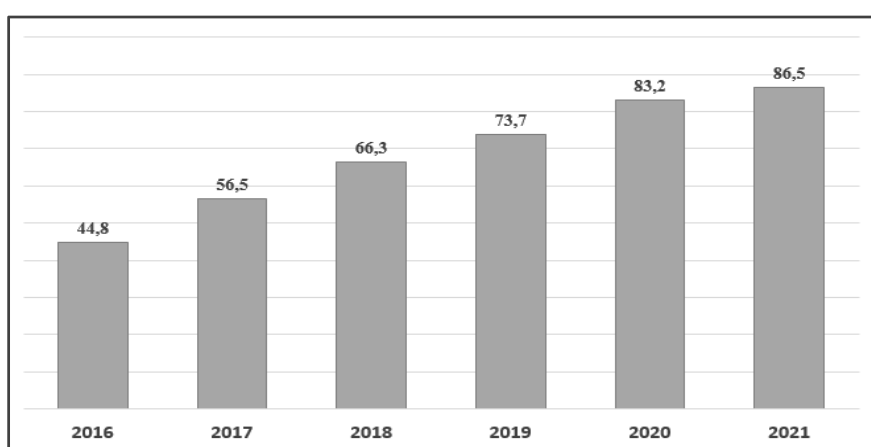
- There are 9,829 companies in the sharing economy worldwide, operating in 133 countries on all continents, indicating the high and efficient productivity of these companies.
- Of the 500 million individuals listed as providers of shared services, 96% made a profit from sharing resources, indicating the opportunity to stimulate entrepreneurship and small business.
- The global sharing economy is expected to grow to \$600 billion by 2027, from \$113 billion in 2021, with a remarkable annual growth rate of approximately 32% (Statista, 2022). Cumulative growth in the sharing economy for the next 12 years is forecast to be 2.133%, with traditional trade-based companies seeing a 39.6% increase in revenue.
- According to PwC, the turnover in the EU sharing economy is expected to rise from €15bn in 2013 to over €300bn by 2025. The total economic impact of the sharing economy amounts to €572m per year within the EU, accounting for nearly 85% growth on an annual basis (Statista, 2022).
- The global leader in the sharing economy, Airbnb, reports an average of 425 million nights spent per year as of 2019, which compares to over 90% more than the Hilton hotel chain worldwide.
- Uber's market capitalization for 2019 is \$75.5 billion, which is more than the capitalization of airline giants such as Delta Airlines, American Airlines and United Airlines combined.
- French ride-sharing pioneer BlaBlaCar had over 60 million users worldwide in 2018. In response to competition, the national rail operator SNCF in France composed new products such as low-cost trains, showing the stimulating innovation impact of the sharing economy (Lewkowicz, 2021).

**Within the EU**, sharing economy revenue is concentrated in five main sectors, which recorded over 100% year-on-year growth and are expected to continue their trend of steady expansion. In 2020, nearly 70% of sharing economy users in the EU were aged between 25 and 49 (European Commission, 2016). More specifically, the sharing economy is best developed in France and Ireland, where around 35% of users use sharing platforms, and the

least developed in Malta and Cyprus, where the share is below 5% (World Bank Group, 2018). As a perspective, the sharing economy in Europe is expected to grow at an annual rate of over 25%.

In terms of the **US sharing economy**, according to a survey 39% of consumers have used shared services, most commonly in the areas of **mobility** and **accommodation**. These users are mainly in the age range between 21 and 30, and they also have the widest range of shared services used – **mobility**, **accommodation**, retail and finance. Only 14% of respondents said they had not participated in any resource-sharing initiatives.

**Figure 2. Number of users in the U.S. sharing economy system, 2016-2021 (million)**



Source: Statista (2022). Number of sharing economy users in the United States from 2016 to 2021, Retrieved from <http://www.statista.com/statistics/289856/number-sharing-economy-users-us/> (Accessed on 22.04.2023).

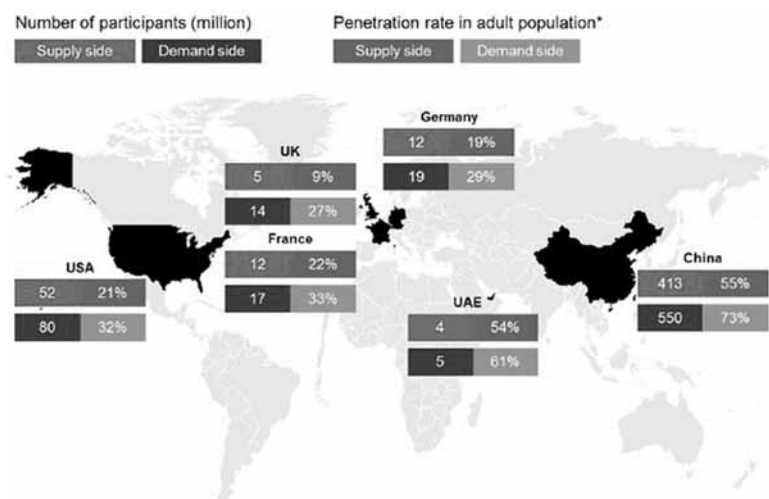
The total number of users of shared services in the US has reached 86.5 million, registering a growth of almost 94% compared to 2016, with an average annual growth rate of around 13%. Of U.S. sharing economy users, 58% agree that shared services save them money and 78% agree that the sharing economy builds a stronger community.

As the chart makes it visible, the largest market for shared economic relationships is China. Interestingly, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, **China's sharing economy** is recorded to increase by 2.9% in 2020. While the sharing of accommodation, work and travel is declining due to the restrictions, the sharing of skills, education and medical care is increasing by 30.9% and 27.8% respectively. China's sharing economy transactions for 2021 amount to US\$582.5 billion. Regarding the sharing economy development prospects, the system is expected to maintain an annual growth rate of 10% over the next five years (Xinhua, 2019).

As a perspective, according to another global study, the top five sharing sectors would be co-financing, co-working, **shared accommodation**, **shared mobility** and music/video sharing (Hawksworth et. al., 2014). As it can be highlighted from the previous statistical information, the sharing economy is well developed in the tourism industry, most commonly in mobility

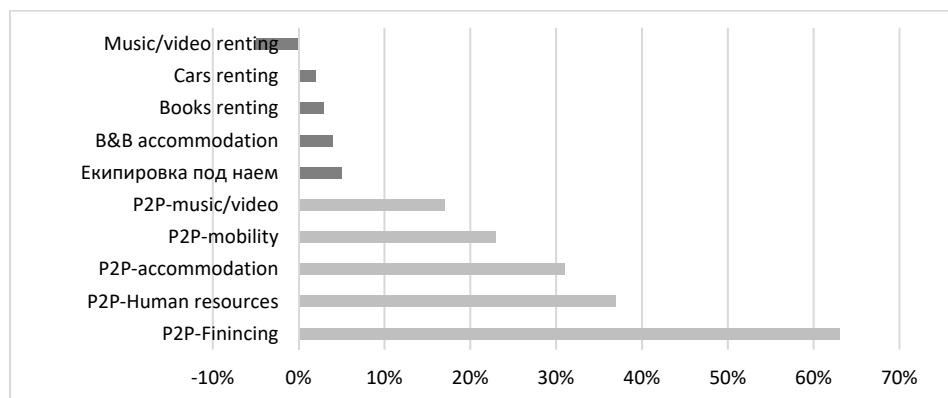
and accommodation sub-industries, but after the pandemic Food & Entertainment is gaining popularity.

**Figure 3. Number of participants in the sharing economy and penetration rates by selected countries (million)**



Source: Luisetto, M. (2016) Thesis – Alfredo Mantovani. Masaryk University: Faculty of Economics and Administration, Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342548866\\_CITATION\\_LUISETTO\\_M\\_Thesis\\_-\\_Alfredo\\_Mantovani](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342548866_CITATION_LUISETTO_M_Thesis_-_Alfredo_Mantovani) (Accessed on 17.06.2022).

**Figure 4. Projected growth rate of the sharing economy compared to traditional renting, 2013-2025**



Source: Hawksworth, Vaughan, Vaughan, 2014.

As a conclusion from the statistics review we can point out the three main sharing economy sub-sectors that represent the sharing economy in the tourism industry and the shared goods and services within tourism – shared accommodation, shared mobility and shared food &



entertainment, which are the modern shared alternatives of the trade based hospitality, transport, food & beverage and entertainment.

One of the few definitions developed specifically for the 'sharing economy in tourism' defines it as a form of (Gretzel, 2015): 1) Sharing **knowledge**, which includes ideas, experiences, etc.; 2) Sharing **experiences** and time in the context of a tourism service; 3) Sharing **objects and spaces** that are dedicated to tourism activities such as accommodation, transport, equipment etc.

It is remarkable that the sharing economy has already developed and even established itself in almost all major areas of tourism worldwide. Acts of sharing are registered in transport, food and beverage, accommodation and travel agencies.

**Table 6. Statistics about major shared service companies in tourism**

Platform	Users	Value	Scope
<i>Accommodation</i>			
AirBnB	2.5 MN offers, 100 MN guests (2017)	US \$30 BN (2016)	191 countries as of January 2017
HomeAway	1.2 million offers (2017)	US \$3.9 BN (2015)	190 countries as of January 2017
<i>Transport</i>			
Uber	40 MN monthly active trips (2016)	US \$68 BN (2016)	22 countries as of January 2017
BlaBlaCar	35 MN users (2017)	US \$1.6 BN (2015)	---
<i>Food and Beverage</i>			
VizEat	120,000 members (2017)	€3.8 M (2016)	110 countries as of January 2017
EatWith	650 hosts; 80,000 seats (2017)	<i>Unofficially US \$8 MN</i>	50 countries as of January 2017
<i>Tourism services</i>			
Vayable	---	<i>Unofficially US \$2.1 MN</i>	---
ToursByLocals	1 905 guides (2017)	---	155 countries as of January 2017

Source: Created by the author.

#### 4. Sharing Economy Impact on the Bulgarian Economic

It is difficult to determine when the first shared economic relationships emerged in Bulgaria. The earliest significant study about the country's sharing economy was in 2018 in relation to the development of the first global sharing economy index by the Swedish Timbro Trust (Timbro, 2018). In terms of how the index is formed, monthly data is collected from 213 countries regarding traffic to 286 different shared services.

In relation to Timbro's rank list, Bulgaria ranks 63rd in the world out of 213 countries and territories. The country's overall score places it in the middle among EU member states. However, it is also clear from the rankings that Bulgaria's score of 6.1 represents a rather poor performance and positions it in a radically different dimension from the top 30 representatives with scores above 20.0. The latest 2022 statistics also confirm Bulgaria's poor performance. According to the ranking of 60 major cities around the world, Tallinn, Tbilisi, Sao Paulo, Mexico City, Kyiv and Warsaw are the best for sharing economy development. In contrast, the worst performers are **Sofia**, Tokyo, Taipei, Athens and Luxembourg, where restrictive policies that disadvantage conditions for sharing services are registered.

**Table 7. Global ranking of countries according to Timbro Sharing Economy Index, 2018**

№	Country	Index
1.	Iceland	100.0
2.	Malta	58.2
3.	Montenegro	58.0
4.	New Zealand	52.8
...	...	...
29	Cayman Islands	20.3
30	Bahamas	18.9
31	Cyprus	18.8
...	...	...
63	Bulgaria	6.1
64	Bosnia & Herzegovina	5.7
65	Singapore	5.6

Source: Created by the author on Timbro (2018) Timbro Sharing Economy Index, Retrieved from <https://timbro.se/ekonomi/timbro-sharing-economy-index/> (Accessed on 13.05.2023).

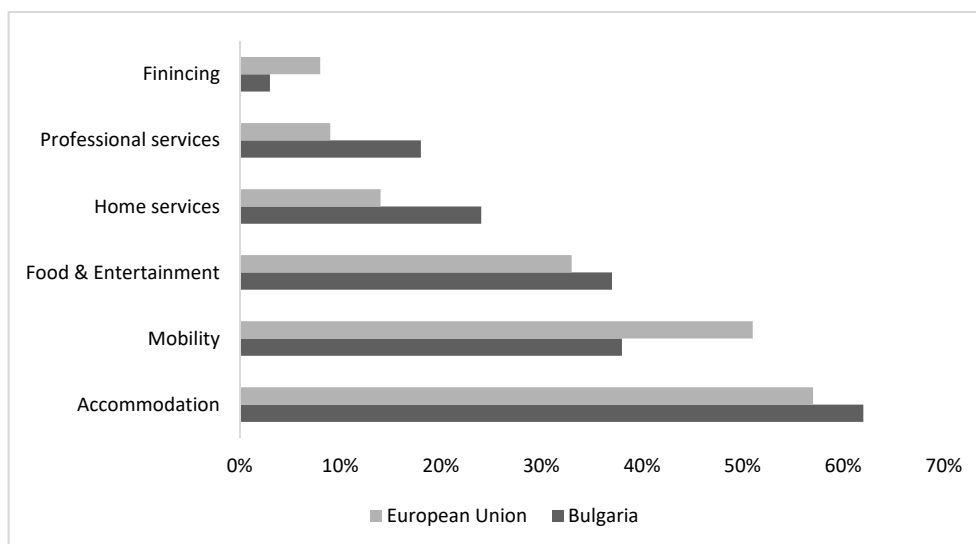
**Table 8. Rankings of the most and least favourable cities for the sharing economy**

City	Points	Index ranking	City	Points	Index ranking
<i>Sharing economy most friendly cities</i>			<i>Sharing economy least friendly cities</i>		
Tallinn	110	1.	Sofia	60	56.
Tbilisi	110	1.	Athens	60	56.
Sao Paulo	110	1.	Tokyo	55	58.
Buenos Aires	110	1.	Taipei	55	58.
Warsaw	105	5.	Luxembourg City	40	60.
Kyiv	105	5.			
Mexico City	105	5.			
Munich	100	8.			
Lisbon	100	8.			
Hamburg	96	10.			

Source: Created by the author on Consumer Choice Center (2022) Sharing Economy Cities worldwide, Retrieved from <https://consumerchoicecenter.org/sharing-economy-index-2022/> (Accessed on 04.05.2023).

Another significant survey is the Eurobarometer research on Bulgarian users' willingness to participate in the sharing economy (Flash Eurobarometer, 2018). The data show that 83% of Bulgarian consumers surveyed have not used this type of service before. Of the rest, 9% have used a shared service once to several times, another 5% say they use such a service occasionally, and the remaining 3% – regularly. The results are below the EU average but close to it (24% EU). Of those who used shared services, the most frequently used sectors of shared services are indicated as: **accommodation** (62%), **mobility** (38%), **food and drink** (37%), home services (childcare, gardening, repairs, etc.) (24%), professional services (accounting, software technology, etc.) (18%) and financing (3%). It is notable that Bulgaria's performance in 4 out of 6 areas is above the EU average in: **accommodation** (57% EU); **food and drink** (33% EU); home services (14% EU) and professional services (9% EU).

**Figure 5. Levels of use of shared services by main sectors in Bulgaria and the EU**



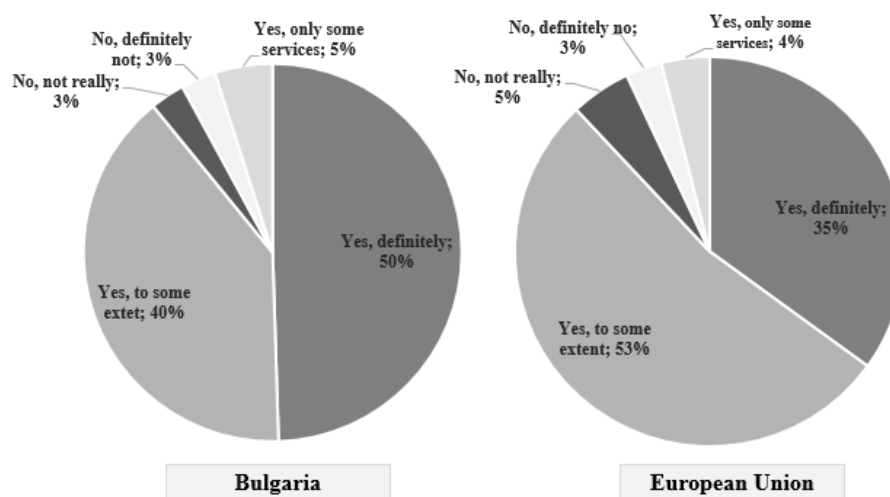
Source: Created by the author on Flash Eurobarometer (2018) *The use of services offered via collaborative platforms*, Retrieved from <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/65f6b2d7-2d3d-11e6-b497-01aa75ed71a1/language-en> (Accessed on 25.05.2023).

The most frequently mentioned advantages of shared services over traditional economic relationships among Bulgarian consumers are:

- Greater convenience of accessing the service via a platform – 74% vs. an EU average of 73%.
- Lower cost of access vs. ownership – 62% vs. 59% average for EU users.
- Greater variety and authenticity versus traditional trade-based distribution – 62% vs. 56% EU average.
- Opportunity to meet and communicate with new people – 40% vs. EU average of 34%.
- Overcoming consumer behaviour – 38% vs. 31% EU average.

Respondents' cumulative attitude towards shared services is reflected in their willingness to recommend these to other users. Among Bulgarian users the willingness can be assessed as positive – a total of 90% of shared services users would recommend them to other people.

**Figure 6. Willingness to recommend shared services to other users – Bulgaria and EU**



Source: Created by the author on Flash Eurobarometer (2018) The use of services offered via collaborative platforms, Retrieved from <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/65f6b2d7-2d3d-11e6-b497-01aa75ed71a1/language-en> (Accessed on 25.05.2023).

In terms of supply, 94% did not offer a shared service at the time of the survey. Of the rest, 3% have offered several times and another 2% offer shared services regularly. The reasons given by respondents for their lack of willingness to offer shared services are:

- Lack of time and/or interest – 52% vs. 64% EU average.
- Lack of confidence in online payments – 26% vs. 25% average among EU consumers.
- Lack of trust in users of shared services – 29% vs. 24% average among EU consumers.
- Lack of clarity on regulations – 21% vs. 22% average among EU consumers.

Another study within the EU shows that the cumulative use of shared services by the two main sectors in the system, shared accommodation and mobility, is growing dynamically after 2018 in Bulgaria. The levels increased from 4.05% in 2017 to 6.05% in 2019, showing a nearly 50% growth. Subsequently, the methodology of statistical data collection (after 2019) in the EU is changed and data is collected from sharing platforms such as Airbnb and Uber only. According to them, by 2022 the cumulative use of shared services in Bulgaria amounts to 5.3% of users, with the highest share of shared accommodation, followed by shared mobility.

**Table 9. Use of shared services in Bulgaria and the EU, 2017-2019 (% of individuals)**

Year		Bulgaria	European Union
2017		4.05	20.23
2018		4.11	20.92
2019		6.05	22.56
2020	Cumulative	3.45	18.12
	Home services	0.23	0.55
	Transport	0.57	0.77
	Accommodation	0.64	3.30
2021	Cumulative	3.76	18.46
	Home services	0.17	0.67
	Transport	0.30	0.75
	Accommodation	0.30	3.44
2022	Cumulative	5.30	18.85
	Home services	0.12	0.73
	Transport	0.69	1.20
	Accommodation	1.14	5.63

Source: Created by the author on Eurostat (2023) *Individuals – use of collaborative economy*. Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/isoc\\_ci\\_ce\\_i/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/isoc_ci_ce_i/default/table?lang=en) (Accessed on 24.04.2023).

Regarding sharing economy platforms on the Bulgarian market, earlier tourism-related research (Ivanova, 2015) highlights that as early as 2008, shared mobility was well accepted by Bulgarian consumers. According to the study, the leading platforms are AhaCar.com, VEdnaPosoka.com, ZaednoNaPat.com, Ka4i.me and others, which are more or less local platforms and are not presented as P2P-related. On the topic of specific shared service platforms, according to Baltova, there are not many of them in the Bulgarian market. The author's research points to only six main representatives of Bulgarian companies that develop shared services platforms (Baltova, Albena, 2021):

- Spark ([www.spark.bg](http://www.spark.bg)) – Bulgarian company providing a platform for sharing mainly electric cars as well as scooters. The platform expanded into Lithuania and Romania, with 70,000 users on the platform by 2020.
- TAXIME ([taxime.to](http://taxime.to)) – the company owns a shared mobility platform, launched in 2015 and by 2020 has offers from over 3,500 individual taxi drivers in Sofia and more than 350,000 users.
- Zaednonapat ([www.zaednonapat.com](http://www.zaednonapat.com)) – the company offers ride-sharing services.
- Co-Working Bansko ([www.coworkingbansko.com](http://www.coworkingbansko.com)) – the company provides platforms for shared working spaces.
- Myeducationclub ([www.myeducationclub.com](http://www.myeducationclub.com)) – the company provides the first shared education platform in Bulgaria for sharing knowledge and skills.
- Dressmania ([www.dressmania.bg](http://www.dressmania.bg)) – the company provides a platform for temporary access for sharing clothes, shoes and accessories.

As a conclusion to the presented statistical data in the current section, we can point out that in general, Bulgaria has a poor performance in the sharing economy compared to the average

of the EU, including the most developed tourism-related branches – accommodation and mobility. Though, the few studies in the field show high levels of satisfaction and willingness to use and recommend shared services among Bulgarian users. In general, we can also admit that sharing economy development is at the initial stage in Bulgaria due to the last presented data in the current section – low quantity and visibility of P2P platforms in the country.

As a working hypothesis, we can suggest that there are three main reasons for this situation:

- There is a low understanding of the sharing economy concept among the Bulgarian audience;
- Shared services, inclusive tourism P2P-services, are mainly offered through P2P-not related platforms and websites, which makes the collection of sharing economy credible statistical data for Bulgaria at the EU level impossible;
- The readiness and satisfaction levels among Bulgarian users in terms of tourism-related P2P services are relatively high, but due to the low familiarity of the P2P economy there is no diversity of the motivators, most of them economically based.

## **5. Research methodology for analysis of P2P accommodation hosts evaluation of the current state and development perspectives of shared accommodation on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast**

### *5.1. General patterns of the study – subject, object and purpose of the study*

After making a literature review of the topic we can conclude that the sharing economy in tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the sharing economy worldwide. In order to conduct our research we have to construct a methodology that would help to reveal the topic. For that purpose, at the first place, we would like to specify the following:

**The subject of this study** is to examine the current state and future development perspectives of the sharing economy in the tourism industry on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast.

**The purpose of the research** is based on an empirical study to investigate the user's evaluation of the state and development prospects of the shared economy in tourism.

The set purpose of the study is realized through the implementation of the following **scientific research tasks**:

- *Development of a questionnaire* for investigation.
- *Creation of a database* for quantitative processing of information in SPSS.
- *Processing and analysis of results* in order to describe the respondents' group and to determine their evaluation of the current state and development perspectives of sharing economy services in tourism.
- *Summarizing the results* to highlight key conclusions from the study.

The realization of the purpose of the research and research tasks is achieved through the use of a set of **scientific methods**: *observation, analysis and synthesis, questionnaire survey, comparative analysis, discriminative statistical methods and descriptive statistical methods.*

The **questionnaire survey** is conducted on the basis of an online survey among potential and current sharing economy users. The study is conducted in the period from 01.06.2023 – 30.06.2023 and it is constructed using the tools of Google Forms Questionnaire. The sources of information are separated into two main groups. **The primary sources** include field research, in-depth interviews and surveys. **The secondary sources** cover mainly scientific works by foreign authors and specialized publications of business, tourism and sharing economy organizations.

Like any scientific publication, this paper has some **limitations**:

The object of study is **geographically limited** only to the opinion of current and potential sharing economy users, who are demanding tourism services in the region of the Bulgarian Black Sea coast.

The object of study is also **nationally limited** to the opinion of Bulgarian users of tourism services in the two mentioned regions. Therefore, the sections of the survey are distributed in Bulgarian language only.

There are also **time limits** for the period of empirical research. They take into account some factors of the external (political, social, and demographic) and internal environment of the tourism industry, as well as the beginning of the active tourist season in 2023.

The leading **research problem** in conducting empirical research is related to the lack of Bulgarian scientific literature on the investigated topic and local statistical information on the subject.

## *5.2. Survey questionnaire design and distribution*

In order to collect empirical data in the first phase of the research, questionnaires were distributed to Bulgarian current and potential participants in the sharing economy in tourism through variable channels, such as: social media (Facebook); related social groups for offering and searching tourism services in Varna and Burgas regions by individuals; non-government organizations in the tourism industry, who were invited to spread the questionnaire among its members; specialized tourism related platforms offering also shared tourism services by individuals (Booking.com, Pochivka.bg), not tourism related platforms offering also shared tourism services by individuals (Olx.bg).

The survey is anonymous and consists of 3 separate sections. *Section 1* is specifically designed to describe the respondents and to form their demographic profile. The identification data consists of gender, age, monthly income, marital status, education and employment status. *Section 2* consists of 13 questions. Ten of them are the type choice of given options with two of them multiple choices possible and three questions are interval scale questions with evaluation from 1 (absolutely not correct) to 5 (absolutely correct). The questions in the current sections are grouped in three main directions:

- Actual use of shared services (respondents that have had used P2P-service in tourism at least once): Investigation of respondents' experience with shared services in general and with shared services in tourism during a holiday in Bulgaria; the reasons for preferring the shared instead of trade based services; satisfaction levels; assessment of sharing economy development perspectives in tourism.
- Potential use of shared services (respondents that have never used P2P-service in tourism before): Investigation about the possible motivators that would lead the users to switch from a trade-based service to a shared one in the tourism industry; assessment of sharing economy development perspectives in tourism.
- Actual and potential supply of shared services: Investigation of actual P2P-supply and potential readiness to share underutilized services in general and in the tourism industry; motivators for participating in the sharing economy in tourism; assessment of sharing economy development perspectives in tourism.

After the survey was conducted, it was found that for the purposes of the analysis, the questionnaires of **293 respondents** could be used. A sample approach to the study of aggregates was used to study the respondents' evaluation towards the current state and development perspective of the sharing economy in tourism. The measurement and evaluation of the parameters of the population are mediated due to the fact that only a limited number of representatives of the population are studied. The expediency of the sampling approach is associated with its speed, relatively low cost and lower error rate compared to comprehensive studies. The sample model is a non-target random sampling type, which is widely used in the study of users' opinions on new products. This sample is associated with several circumstances: first, when conducting formulation research; second, when studying sufficiently homogeneous aggregates of units; third, in preliminary tests of field documents (questionnaires, diaries, etc.). In the current research, we work with accuracy: *Significance level = 0,05*. In processing the data from the survey for analysis and evaluation specialized software for data processing and statistical analysis was used (SPSS standard package).

## **6. Analysis and assessment of the P2P-accommodation host evaluation towards the current state and development perspective of shared accommodation on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast**

The demographic profile of the respondents who participated in the survey can be presented as follows:

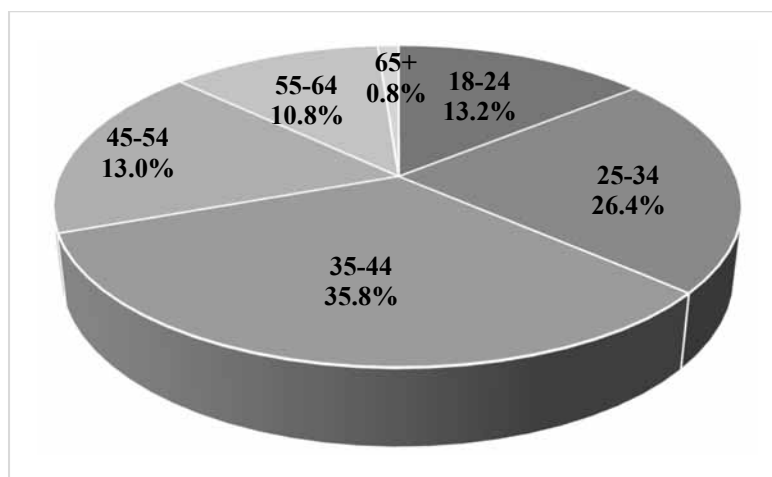
The majority of respondents are female – 61.2% (99 respondents) compared to 38.8% (63 respondents) male. This is not surprising, as studies have shown that women are more likely to participate in surveys than men (Williams, 2008).

A major proportion falls into Generation Y – a total of 62.2% of responding persons (ages 25-44), with a significant proportion also of Generation X – 23.8% (ages 45-64). Generation Baby Boomers form the negligible 0.8% (65+) and Generation Z – 13.2% (ages 18-24). This is logical, as Gen Y is the largest consumer population on the global market, and according



to statistics, by 2025 this generation will form 75% of the working population worldwide and nearly 67% of consumers globally (Team Stage, 2023).

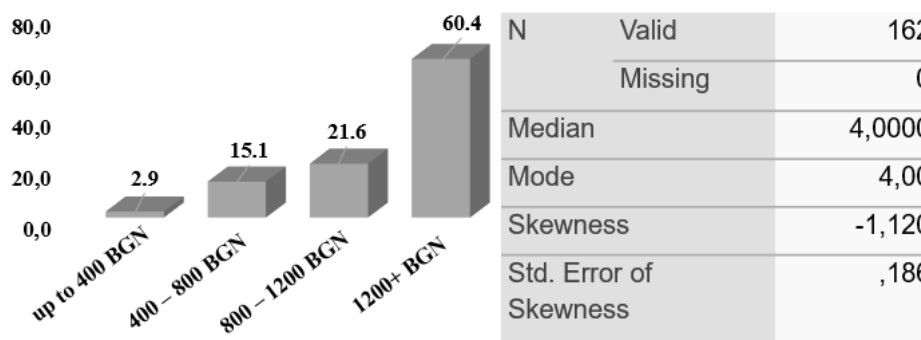
**Figure 7. Age structure of survey respondents**



Source: Created by the author.

In terms of income, the main share has more than 1200 BGN household monthly income per person (60.4%). Of the rest, nearly one-fifth (21.6%) indicates household monthly income per person in the range of 801-1200 BGN. The mode and the median are presented by 1,200 BGN household monthly income per person and the asymmetry has a coefficient of -1.120, which means that the left tail is longer. Given that official statistics suggest a net income of BGN 1268 for a working person and just over BGN 800 for a member of a family of three, we can argue that for the latter group, the economic benefits of sharing rather than trade-based services would be a significant motivator (Mediapool, 2022).

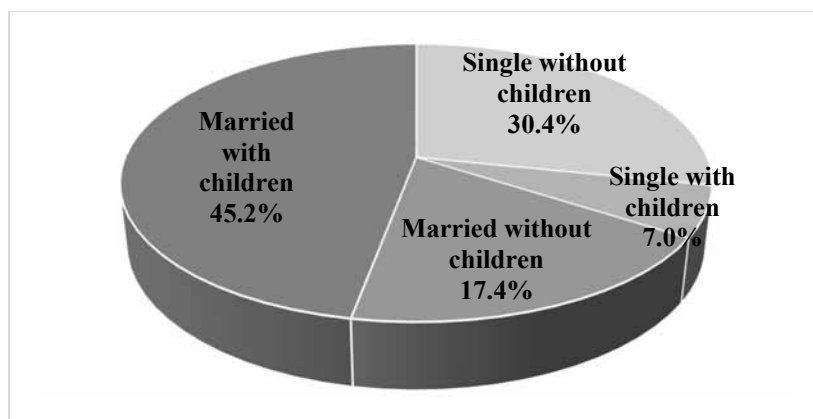
**Figure 8. Distribution and statistical indicators of respondents by income**



Source: Created by the author.

In relation to marital status, the main share is of those who are married with children (45.2%), but a major share consists of those who are single without children (30.4%).

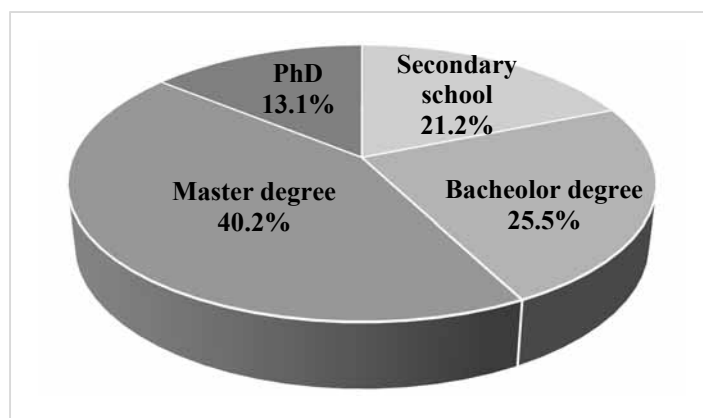
**Figure 9. Demographic profile of respondents by marital status**



Source: Created by the author.

In terms of education, the biggest share is represented by highly educated persons (78.8% combined PhD, master's and bachelor's degree) and a little above a fifth have secondary education.

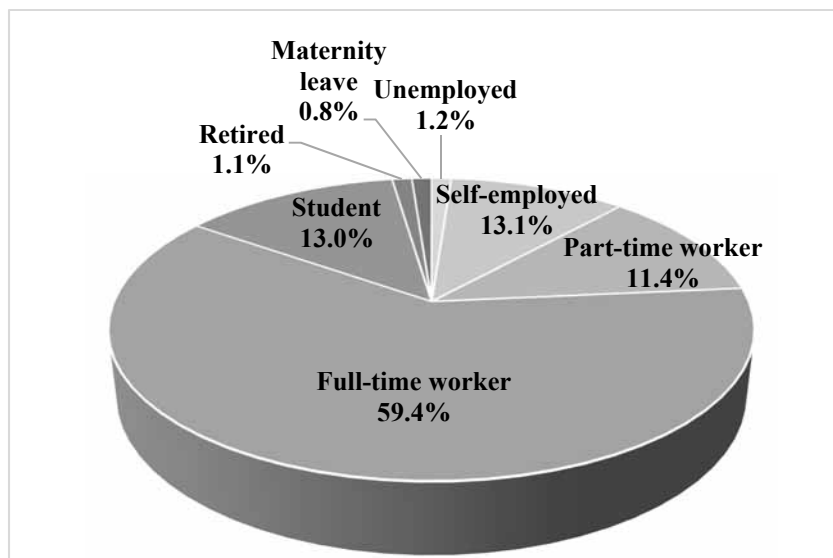
**Figure 10. Demographic profile of respondents by level of education**



Source: Created by the author.

Notably, a major share of the respondents are full-time workers (59.4%). The remaining groups ranged as follows: 1.2% are unemployed; 1.1% are retired; 11.4% are part-time workers; 13.0% are students and 13.1% are self-employed.

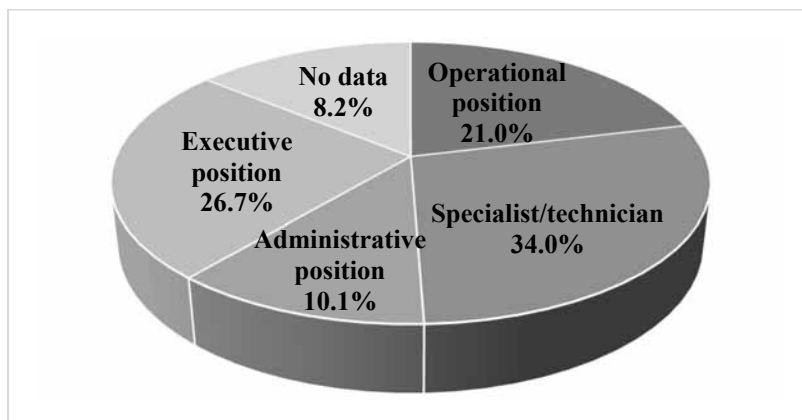
**Figure 11. Demographic profile of respondents by employment status**



Source: Created by the author.

Of those in employment, the profile of respondents is more diverse, with a predominance of executive positions (26.7%) and specialist/technician (34.0%). It is interesting to note that a total of 26% of the respondents work part-time or are self-employed, which deviates from the statistics about the very low share of these two forms of employment in Bulgaria – below 2% of the employees according to NSI (NSI, 2022).

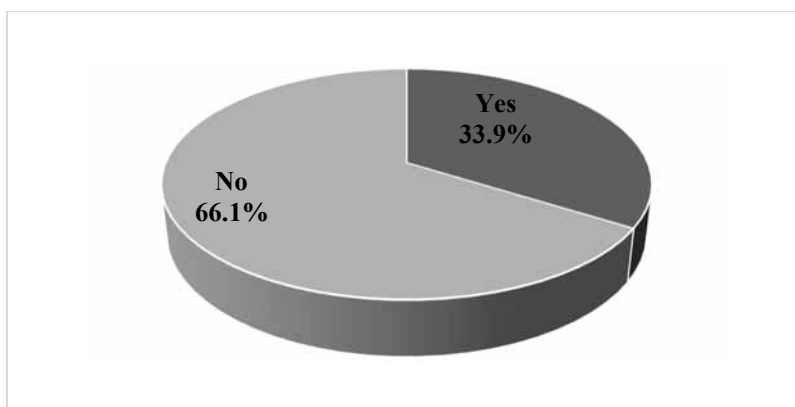
**Figure 12. Demographic profile of respondents by job position**



Source: Created by the author.

In relation to the survey respondent's familiarity with the sharing economy concept, a major proportion of the participants state that they are not aware of the essence of the concept (66.1%). Only about one-third claim that they know the sharing economy concept, which accounts for 33.9% of survey respondents.

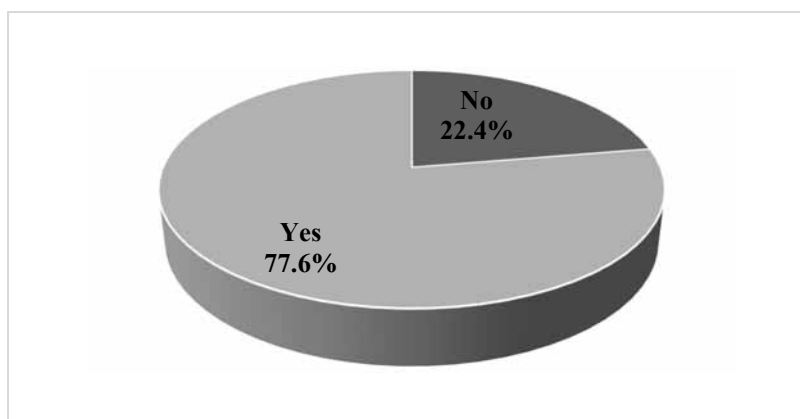
**Figure 13.** Structure of survey responses of the question “Are you familiar with the concept of sharing economy?”



Source: Created by the author.

At the start of the second survey section, we introduced a short definition to explain the sharing economy nature, giving also examples for four shared assets according to the literature and statistical review in the previous paragraph. After making this clarification, the structure of the responses presents a great part of the respondents having used at least once in the past a shared service.

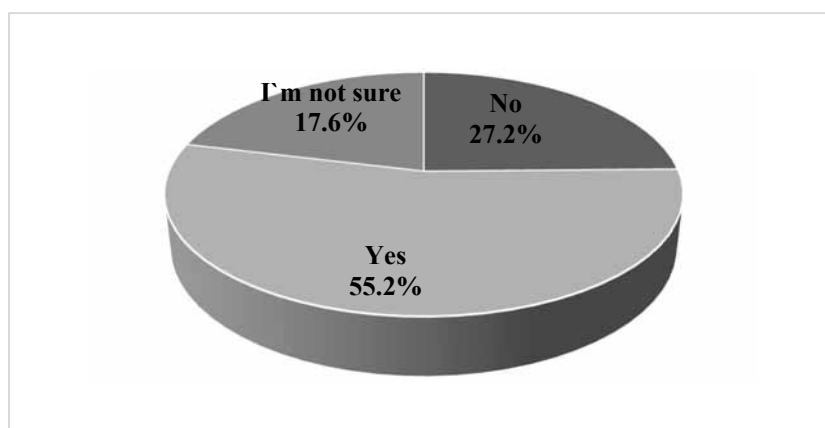
**Figure 14.** Structure of survey responses of question “Have you used shared services such as accommodation, mobility, house services, music and video, other?”



Source: Created by the author.

In terms of usage of sharing services in tourism during a holiday in Bulgaria, it is noticeable that a smaller proportion of the respondents gave a positive answer – slightly more than half (55.2%). Less than a third stated they have never used shared services in tourism during a trip in the country (27.2%) and less than a fifth could not specify.

**Figure 15. Structure of survey responses of the question “Have you used shared services in tourism during a holiday in Bulgaria such as accommodation, mobility, food & beverage, equipment/tours, others?”**



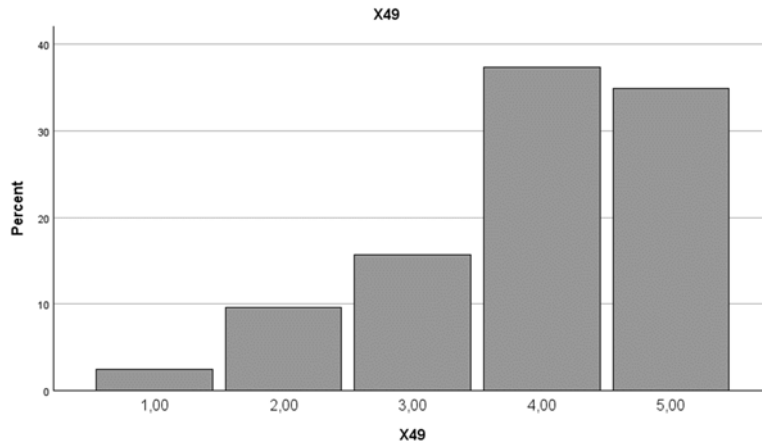
*Source: Created by the author.*

Regarding those, who have used shared services in tourism during their holiday in Bulgaria (162 respondents), important for the survey purpose is the reason to prefer shared instead of trade-based tourist services. We gave four main options for answers with an interval scale type choosing evaluation from 1 (absolutely not correct) to 5 (absolutely correct).

In terms of shared service usage instead of trade-based tourist service, because it reduces the holiday cost as sharing assets is economically effective, the mean is 3.93, the median is equal to 4, i.e. 50% of the respondents give a score less than or equal to 4, and the mode is 4. The skewness is equal to -0.862, indicating that the left tail is longer and the mass of the distribution is concentrated on the right of the figure.

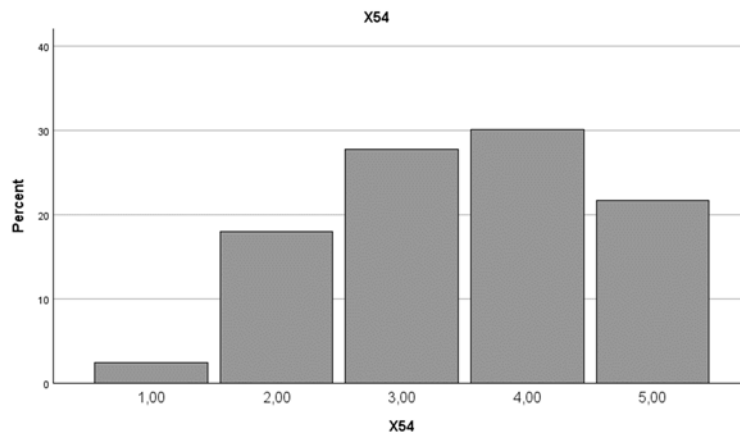
Giving the suggestion for shared service usage instead of trade-based tourist service because it helps to build social new contacts with the local community, the survey responses distribution is noticeably different with a greater proportion of the neutral responses 'neither agree nor disagree' (3.00). The mean is 3.50, the median is equal to 4, i.e. 50% of the respondents give a score less than or equal to 4, and the mode is 4. The skewness is equal to -0.212, indicating that the left tail is slightly longer and a bigger proportion of the distribution is concentrated on the right of the figure.

**Figure 16. Survey responses in terms of the statement “holiday cost reduction”**



Source: Created by the author.

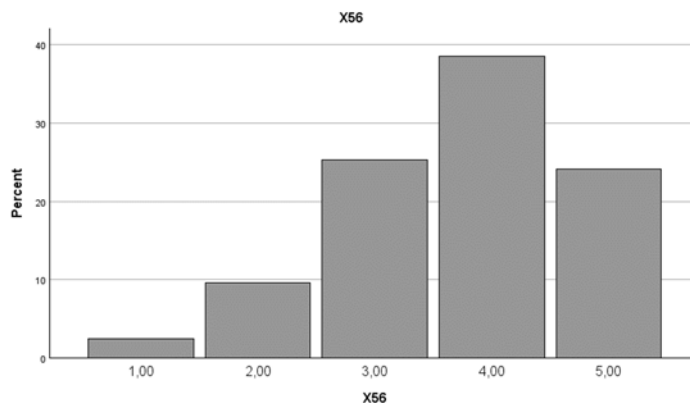
**Figure 17. Survey responses in terms of the statement “social contacts improvement”**



Source: Created by the author.

Regarding the statement that shared tourist services instead of trade based are preferred because they are more environmentally friendly, it is interesting that more answers are distributed on the positive side of the scale compared to the previous statement – “I agree” (4,00) and “I absolutely agree” (5,00). In terms of response distribution, the mean is 3.73, the median is equal to 4, i.e. 50% of the respondents give a score less than or equal to 4, and the mode is 4. The skewness is equal to -0.554, indicating that the left tail is longer and a greater proportion of the distribution is concentrated on the right of the figure.

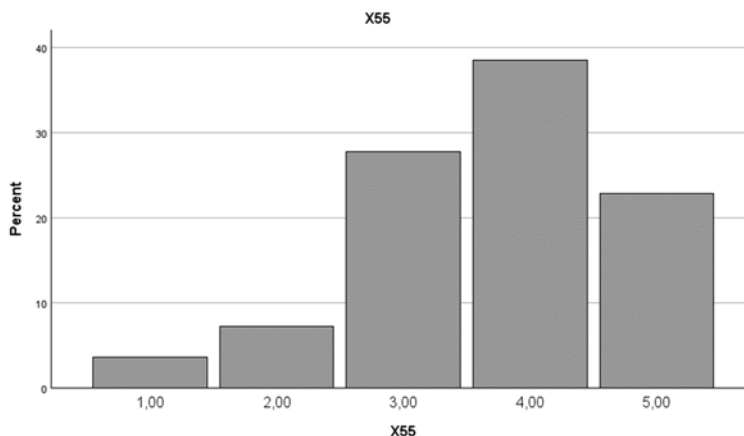
**Figure 18.** Survey responses in terms of the statement “more environmentally friendly”



Source: Created by the author.

Similar seems to be the distribution of the respondent’s answers making a suggestion that shared tourist services during a holiday in Bulgaria make the holiday experience more authentic compared to the trade-based tourist services. In terms of shared service usage instead of trade-based tourist service, because it reduces the holiday cost as sharing assets is economically effective, the mean is 3.70, the median is equal to 4, i.e. 50% of the respondents give a score less than or equal to 4, and the mode is 4. The skewness is equal to -0.622, indicating that the left tail is longer and the mass of the distribution is concentrated on the right of the figure.

**Figure 19.** Survey responses in terms of the statement “authentic experience”



Source: Created by the author.

One of the central questions for sharing economy appliances in the tourism industry is the cost reduction compared to the trade-based alternative tourist service, taking into consideration the conclusion from the previous paragraph. Of those, who have used such shared service during a holiday in Bulgaria, the main part stated that the cost reduction is less than 10% (63.5%). About one-fourth of the respondents claimed a cost reduction between 21% and 40% compared to trade-based tourist services and a negligible proportion falls to those who pointed a cost reduction between 11% and 20% and more than 40% – respectively 5.9% and 4.7% of this section survey respondents (162 participants).

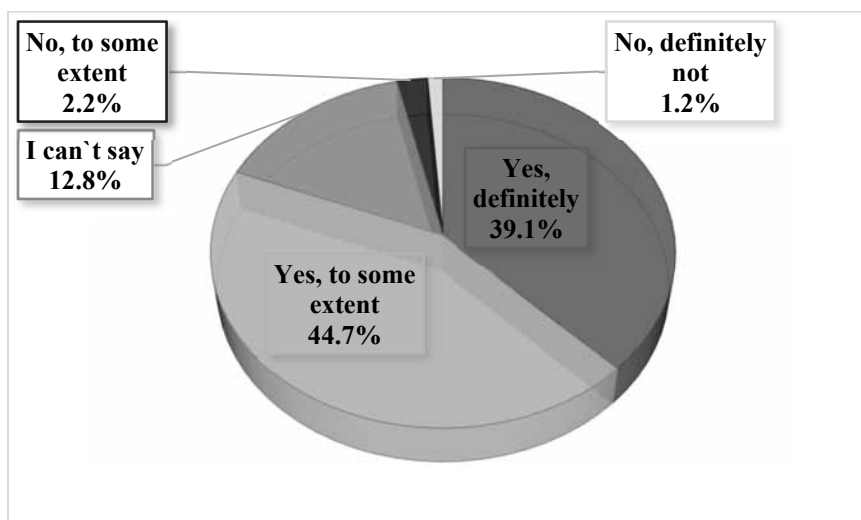
**Table 10. Survey responses in terms of cost reduction compared to trade-based alternatives**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Up to 10%	106	63,5	64,3	64,3
	11% – 20%	8	5,9	6,0	70,2
	21% – 40%	40	24,7	25,0	95,2
	More than 40%	6	4,7	4,8	100,0
	Total	160	98,8	100,0	
Missing	System	2	1,2		
Total		162	100,0		

Source: Created by the author.

Arising from the previous question, we aimed to assess additionally to what extent the shared service is effectively replacing the trade-based tourist services even if they are or they are not reducing the holiday costs. The main part among respondents states that shared tourist service replaces trade-based effectively with more than 39% absolutely agree and an additional 44.7% agree.

**Figure 20. Survey responses in terms of effective alternative to trade-based service**



Source: Created by the author.



In connection to those, who have never used shared tourist service during a holiday in Bulgaria (80 respondents), for the survey, it is important to reveal the potential motivators that would push them to consider replacing a trade-based with shared tourist service. We positioned the same possible answers as to the respondents who have used shared tourist service during a holiday in Bulgaria – holiday cost reduction, social contact improvement, environmentally friendly behaviour and authentic holiday experience, with an interval type scale evaluation from 1 (absolutely not correct) to 5 (absolutely correct).

**Table 11. Survey responses in terms of motivator “holiday cost reduction”**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	4	4,4	4,7	4,7
	2	10	13,3	14,1	18,8
	3	31	39,9	42,3	61,1
	4	21	25,9	27,5	88,6
	5	9	10,8	11,4	100,0
	Total	75	94,3	100,0	
Missing	System	5	5,7		
Total		80	100,0		

*Source: Created by the author.*

In terms of response distribution, the mean is 3.26, the median is equal to 3, i.e. 50% of the respondents give a score less than or equal to 3, and the mode is 3. The skewness is equal to -0.147, indicating that the left tail is slightly notably longer and a bigger proportion of the distribution is concentrated on the right of the figure.

**Table 12. Survey responses in terms of motivator “improved social contact with the local community”**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	4	5,1	5,5	5,5
	2	7	9,5	10,3	15,9
	3	24	30,4	33,1	49,0
	4	25	31,0	33,8	82,8
	5	13	15,8	17,2	100,0
	Total	73	91,8	100,0	
Missing	System	7	8,2		
Total		80	100,0		

*Source: Created by the author.*

Regarding this statement, the mean is 3.47, the median is equal to 4, i.e. 50% of the respondents give a score less than or equal to 4, and the mode is 4. The skewness is equal to -0.147, indicating that the left tail is longer and a greater proportion of the distribution is concentrated on the right of the figure.

**Table 13. Survey responses in terms of motivator “holiday experience more authentic”**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	4	4,4	4,9	4,9
	2	7	9,5	10,5	15,4
	3	32	39,9	44,1	59,4
	4	21	24,7	27,3	86,7
	5	9	12,0	13,3	100,0
	Total	73	90,5	100,0	
Missing	System	7	9,5		
Total		80	100,0		

Source: Created by the author.

In conjunction with the motivator that sharing tourist service is more authentic than trade-based, the mean is 3.34, the median is equal to 3, i.e. 50% of the respondents give a score less than or equal to 3, and the mode is 3. The skewness is equal to -0.201, indicating that the left tail is slightly longer and a bigger proportion of the distribution is concentrated on the right of the figure.

**Table 14. Survey responses in terms of motivator “environmentally friendly behavior”**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	7	8,9	9,8	9,8
	2	12	15,2	16,8	26,6
	3	31	39,2	43,4	69,9
	4	13	17,1	18,9	88,8
	5	9	10,1	11,2	100,0
	Total	72	90,5	100,0	
Missing	System	8	9,5		
Total		80	100,0		

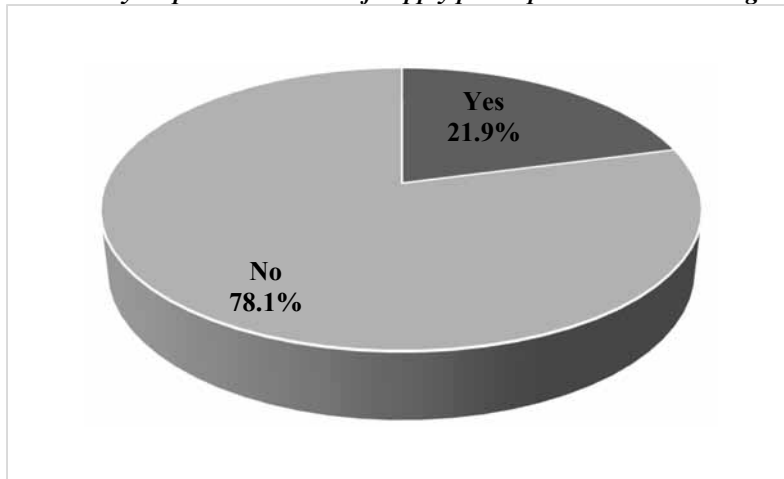
Source: Created by the author.

Given the environmentally friendly behaviour as a motivator to prefer shared rather than trade-based tourist service during a trip in Bulgaria, the mean is 3.05, the median is equal to 3, i.e. 50% of the respondents give a score less than or equal to 3, and the mode is 3. The skewness is equal to -0.033, indicating that the left tail is nearly negligibly longer and a slightly bigger proportion of the distribution is concentrated on the right of the figure.

In the last section, we pointed out questions about the readiness of the respondents to participate in the sharing economy as a supply. As we indicated in the previous paragraph, the readiness of the people to share assets in the sharing economy on a European level is below the demand level.

From the current survey respondents (293 participants) more than 1/5 (21.9% or 64 participants) have shared underutilized assets, but the greater majority (78.1% or 229 participants) states that have never participated as a supplier in the sharing economy.

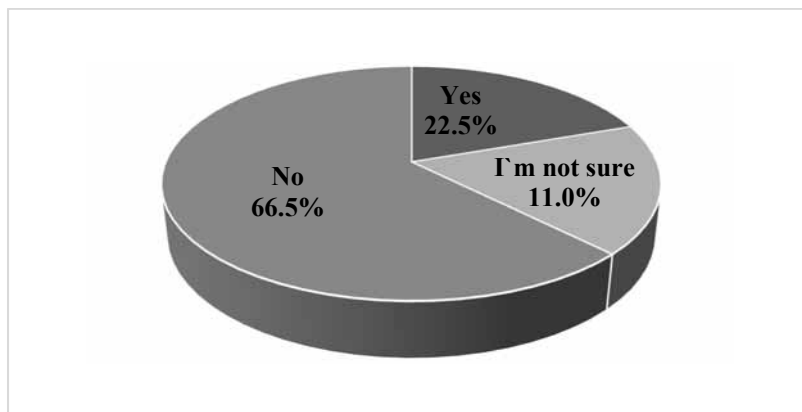
**Figure 21. Survey responses in terms of supply participation in the sharing economy**



Source: Created by the author.

For those, who have never shared underutilized assets before, it is important to assess the readiness to share in perspective. It is positive that more than a fifth state that they would participate in the sharing economy as a supplier (22.5%).

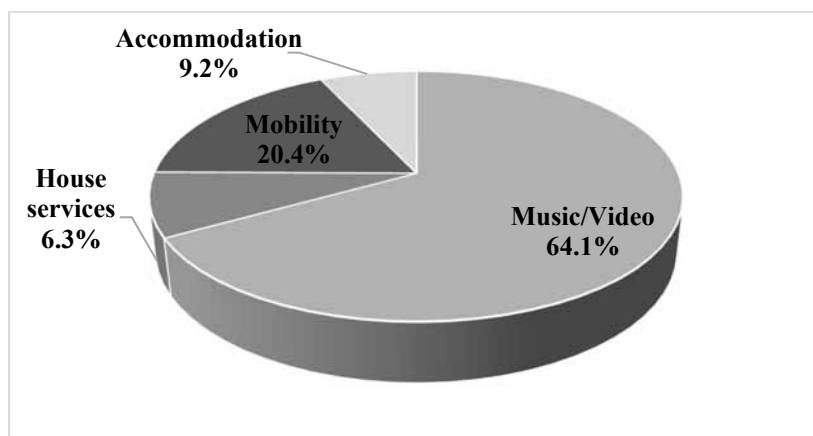
**Figure 22. Structure of responses in terms of readiness to share underutilized assets**



Source: Created by the author.

Giving the respondents the opportunity to choose from the main four subsectors of the sharing economy according to our study in the previous paragraph, the majority suggest that they would share music and/or video (64.1%). Another 20.4% would rather share mobility in its diverse forms – car sharing, ride sharing etc., an additional 9.2% would share accommodation and the rest 6.3% would share house services. None of the respondents have chosen the ‘food & beverage’ option.

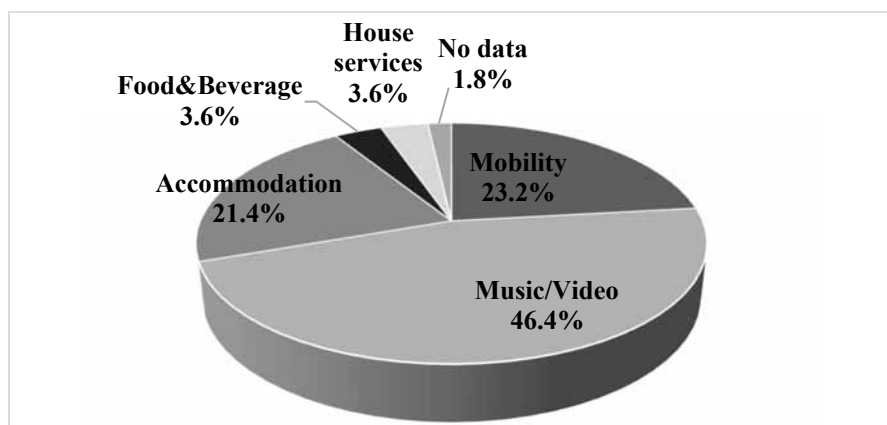
**Figure 23. Structure of responses in terms of type of potential shared asset**



Source: Created by the author.

Giving the same opportunity to specify the shared assets to the respondents who have shared underutilized assets, the range list keeps the same order with more responses of the accommodation and mobility services. Less than half of the respondents have shared music and/or video in the past. More than a fifth have shared mobility and accommodation – respectively 23.2% and 21.4% of the survey participants. Negligibly small proportion have shared house services and food and beverage.

**Figure 24. Structure of responses in terms of type of actual shared asset**



Source: Created by the author.

Important for our survey are the actual motives for sharing economy participation as suppliers. This question gives options for statements of the participant agree or disagree, but with the conditions pointing only to two of the four given options as leading motivators.

**Table 15. Survey responses in terms of actual leading motives for suppliers' participation**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Generates additional income</b>					
Valid	No	30	46,4	46,4	46,4
	Yes	34	53,6	53,6	100,0
	Total	64	100,0	100,0	
<b>Reduces the cost of ownership by sharing when resource is not used</b>					
Valid	No	23	35,7	35,7	35,7
	Yes	41	64,3	64,3	100,0
	Total	64	100,0	100,0	
<b>Diversify my social contacts with interesting people</b>					
Valid	No	35	55,4	55,4	55,4
	Yes	29	44,6	44,6	100,0
	Total	64	100,0	100,0	
<b>Helps to overcome consumer behaviour and be more environmentally friendly</b>					
Valid	No	51	80,4	80,4	80,4
	Yes	13	19,6	19,6	100,0
	Total	64	100,0	100,0	

Source: Created by the author.

Most of the respondents think that the leading motivator for sharing economy supply participation is the opportunity to reduce the cost of ownership by sharing when the asset is not used by the owner – 41 respondents have chosen this option (64.3%). A great proportion of the participants pointed out the opportunity to generate additional income by sharing an underutilized asset as a leading motivator – 34 respondents or 53.6%. Less than half (44.6% or 29 respondents) chose as a leading motivator the opportunity to diversify their social contacts by meeting new people. Less than a fifth (19.6% or 13 respondents) pointed out overcoming consumer behaviour and performing more environmentally friendly behaviour as one of the leading motivators for the sharing economy suppliers.

The sharing economy development perspectives in tourism from the respondents' point of view can be assessed as follows:

**Table 16. Sharing economy development perspectives**

		Mean	Median	Mode	Skewness
<i>Positive</i>					
Development perspectives	Compete hotels successfully	4.173	5.0	5.0	-1.347
	Grow as a cheap type of accommodation	4.06	4.0	5.0	-1.101
	Develop as an eco-friendly form of accommodation	3.98	4.0	5.0	-0.959
	Grow with a focus on social aspects/authentic experience	3.86	4.0	4.0	-0.856
<i>Negative</i>					
	Not develop successfully with lack of time and/or interest	2.32	2.0	1.0	0.637
	Not develop successfully with lack of trust in quality/payment	2.28	2.0	2.0	0.673
	Not develop successfully with lack of clarity on regulations	2.31	2.0	1.0	0.588

## 6. Conclusions

After the conducted study among former employees in the tourism industry the following conclusions can be highlighted as most important:

- In relation to the survey respondent's familiarity with the sharing economy concept, most of the respondents state that they are not aware (more than 66%). However, after giving clarification about the sharing economy nature and examples of sharing services more than 77% of respondents confirmed that they have used shared instead of trade-based services at least once in the past. We can conclude that sharing economy use is widespread but its concept is not so familiar.
- More than 55% of survey respondents have used tourist-shared services during a holiday in Bulgaria, which confirms the great acceptance of shared services in tourism among Bulgarian users. Interestingly, more than 17% claimed that they were not sure if the tourist service they used was shared or trade-based. This alarms us about the low visibility of information about the service provider.
- Among the respondents, more than 70% of tourist shared services users in total agreed or absolutely agreed that sharing services reduce their holiday cost, which contributes to our statement that the main advantage of sharing instead of trade-based services is economic efficiency.
- Interestingly, the environmental reasons for using shared instead of trade-based tourist services have greater support among respondents with 50% that agreed or absolutely agreed. This indicates that the ecological aspect of the sharing economy could be a co-influencer of its future development.
- Controversy to the previous statements, the cost reduction of using shared instead of trade-based tourist service is most likely less than 10% – more than 63% from respondents.
- In terms of efficiency, more than 80% confirmed that shared tourist services replace trade-based effectively, which overlaps with the sharing economy study on the European level from section three.
- Among shared tourist services non-users, the leading motivator for sharing economy participation would not be a cost reduction – mainly the respondents are neutral to this statement. Similarly is the situation with authentic holiday experience and environmentally friendly behaviour. More voluntarily, the non-users would try shared tourist services influenced by the chance to broaden their social contacts (47% in total), which makes it another potential co-influencer along with economic benefits.
- In terms of readiness to participate in the sharing economy as a provider, more than one-fifth (21.6%) have shared underutilized assets in the past. That is more than in 2016 introduced statistical data from the Eurobarometer (5.6%), which leads us to the conclusion that there is a definitive positive tendency for sharing economy development in Bulgaria.

- Positively, from those who have never shared underutilized assets 22.5% confirm readiness to participate in the sharing economy as a supplier in the future. Moreover, another 11% could not specify, which makes them potential suppliers of shared assets if the right motivator is addressed to them. In total 30% of respondents would share the tourism-related mobility and/or accommodation.
- Giving the respondents who have shared underutilized assets in the past the same options, a greater part confirms readiness to share mobility (23.2%) and accommodation (21.4%), giving the shared services in tourism a more significant influence on the sharing economy in the studied area – 44.6% in total.
- Importantly, the leading motivators for those who have shared underutilized assets are economically based. More than half of this respondents group agreed that the leading motivator is generating additional income and reducing ownership costs. Additionally, the possibility of diversifying their social contacts is also well accepted (45%).
- The sharing economy development perspectives can be generally assessed as positive. The positive statements for successful development are assessed predominantly with value '4' ('I agree') and the negative statements that the sharing economy will not grow are predominantly assessed with value '1' ('I absolutely agree').
- In terms of positive development perspectives, the highest share of positive values among respondents is reported with the statements that the sharing economy will expand competitively with trade trade-based economy and with a focus on the sharing economy as a cheap alternative of trade-based services. This explicitly highlights the economic aspects of the sharing economy as the greatest value for the users.
- With the negative perspectives statements, it is clear that from the respondent's point of view, there are no threats to the successful development of the sharing economy in perspective. The negative statements are valued predominantly with '1' ('I absolutely don't agree'). As a conclusion, generally, respondents disagree that there is a lack of interest or regulation clarity as well as mistrust in payment or quality of sharing services.

As we can conclude, the sharing economy development perspectives in tourism on the Bulgarian seaside are positive from the actual and potential participant's point of view. However, we can argue about this highly positive attitude due to some other results from our study. In the first place, we outlined that the sharing economy concept is not familiar to most of the respondents, but after giving clarification with examples of P2P-services we discovered that sharing economy use is relatively widespread. These results *confirm* partly our working hypothesis – *there is a low understanding about the sharing economy concept among the Bulgarian audience*. A very important result is the confirmed low visibility of the shared service provider, which makes the respondents unsure if they are using shared or trade-based services. We can assume that as a result shared services in tourism are offered and demanded mostly in non-P2P-related platforms and/or websites. Moreover, in the tourism industry, there are also a lot of non-tourism-related websites and social network groups that offer shared accommodation and mobility. This makes it impossible to gain a real insight about the tourism sharing economy's current state due to the official statistical leakage in Bulgaria compared to the European statistical data collection methodology. This *confirms*

partly our working hypothesis – *the collection of sharing economy credible statistical data for Bulgaria at the EU level is at the current stage impossible.*

The main reasons for using and offering shared services in tourism are definitely economically based. In terms of users, this is the cost reduction, but it is admitted that the reduction is low – mostly up to 10%, which makes this motivator not strongly influencing. Though, most of users agree that shared service replaces trade based effectively, which leads us to the conclusion that the authenticity of the experience should be the supportive motivator to the economical one – this gives us a wide open area for further investigations on which would be the cluster of stimulating motivators for the further development of sharing economy in tourism.

Additionally, in terms of the supply side – more people have offered underutilized services to others as in the past due to the comparative statistical data from the 2016 Eurobarometer's research and our study. A significant part of them have shared services in the tourism industry, mostly mobility and accommodation. Moreover, a great number from the other are willing to give it a try as more than 30% are ready to offer shared services in tourism – again mobility and accommodation. Once again the economical-based motivators are leading – generating additional income and/or reducing the ownership costs by sharing, but the possibility to diversify their social contacts is also well accepted. The presented conclusions confirm the third part of our working hypothesis – *the readiness and satisfaction levels among Bulgarian users in terms of shared services in tourism are high, but there is no diversity of the leading motivators, most of them economical*, which limits the positive prospects for further development.

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