



IS SHARING CARING?

Exploring the perceived social and economic sustainability of sharing economy in emerging markets

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Abstract

Sharing economy is a significant socio-economic phenomenon of this century and mobility sharing is one of the most controversial, heavily-debated topic within the domain. Although there are more and more researches done in the field, but limited knowledge is achieved on social and economic sustainability of sharing economy in emerging markets. Motivated by the research gap, this thesis explores the perceived social and economic sustainability of sharing economy within the case of mobility sharing platform in a rapidly developing country, Vietnam. The focus of the study is on examining the social and economic impacts of ridesharing platforms on independent providers, namely the platform drivers in this case. The research is facilitated with interview as the research tool. Platform drivers, drivers from conventional businesses and platform representative make up the interview sample.

The findings indicate ridesharing platform changes the drivers' livelihood both positively and negatively. The economic effects include direct economic gains, increased efficiency, improved trust and safety, creation of dependent self-employment and risky financial decision. Meanwhile, the social consequences comprise of social inclusion, lack of long-term security, hostility from conventional businesses, work-life off balance and concern over threat of monopoly. The results demonstrate the social and economic transformations triggered by sharing economy especially in transportation sector. The study contributes to the ongoing wider discussion about sustainability of sharing economy in general and ridesharing specifically. It also has important managerial implications for ridesharing firms regarding their strategies to retain and attract drivers.

Keywords sharing economy, ridesharing platform, social sustainability, economic sustainability, emerging markets

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The boom of sharing economy follows right after the financial collapse in 2008 (Habibi, Davidson and Laroche, 2017) and with its current growth and flourishing, sharing economy is more than just a temporary hype (Parente, Geleilate and Rong, 2017). With the enormous scale-up ability, sharing economy platforms can transform from small start-up companies to multi-billion-dollar international corporate in less than five years (Martin, 2015). In 2015, 17 sharing economy firms were worth more than \$US 1 billion and all together they employed more than 60,000 workers (Kathan, Matzler and Veider, 2016). The main sharing economy sector are expected to continue to grow and generate revenues of approximately \$335 by 2025 (Pricewaterhousecoopers, 2015 cited in Habibi, Davidson and Laroche, 2017). Not only in value, sharing economy also expands across various sectors from financial services, mobility, travel to education, music, logistics, etc. (Puschmann and Alt, 2016). On top of that, sharing economy internationalizes in an unprecedented pace thanks to its asset-lite business model and global adoption of the internet and mobile devices (Parente, Geleilate and Rong, 2017). Go-jek, Uber for motorbike, in Indonesia, Airbnb hosts in Rio de Janeiro slums, and PrepClass, an educational platform in Nigeria demonstrate the ever-increasing presence of sharing economy in emerging markets (Parente, Geleilate and Rong, 2017).

In academic discourse, sharing economy concept appears to be in public attention around 2011-2012 (Martin, 2015) and goes into its first full-blown exposure when *The Economist* devoting its cover to “The rise of sharing economy” (Arcidiacono, Gandini and Pais, 2018). Since then, just as how sharing economy quickly pervade diverse aspects of daily life, scholarly debate on the sharing economy is also developing at a fast pace (Acquier, Daudigeos and Pinkse, 2017). That being said, academic research on sharing economy remains separate and heterogenous (Arcidiacono, Gandini and Pais, 2018). Therefore, more

studies on the topic should be facilitated to contribute to the wealth of sharing economy literature.

1.2. Research objectives

The success of two representatives of sharing economy, Airbnb and Uber have activated the diverse sharing economy debate among media, practitioners, entrepreneurs and activists. (Martin, 2015). In the sustainability field, sharing economy holds a special value because in contrary to other sustainable innovations, sharing economy are scaling up very quickly (Bocker and Meelen, 2016). On top of that, continuously evolving theories and practices surrounding sharing economy fueled with paradoxes and tensions about its boundaries and effects (Acquier, Daudigeos and Pinkse 2017) create urgency for more studies on sharing economy to be facilitated.

Sharing economy is a “contested concept” (Acquier, Daudigeos and Pinkse, 2017) from its non-universal definition to its confusing related concepts such as gig economy, collaborative consumption or peer-to-peer economy. Therefore, in this paper, instead of constraining sharing economy into one contextual boundary, I use sharing economy as an umbrella construct that envelope diverse practices (Acquier, Daudigeos and Pinkse, 2017) to include all interesting phenomena and issues arising in sharing economy practical operations. I refine the focus of this study by concentrating in one sector, ridesharing, to facilitate the research. Some scholars might argue that ridesharing is not a part of sharing economy (Acquier, Daudigeos and Pinkse 2017), however, there are numerous studies that position ridesharing companies such as Uber under the scope of sharing economy (Standing, Standing and Biermann, 2018). Therefore, while the limitation of the term ‘ridesharing’, which is that a ride is often not literally shared between providers and passengers, but one-sided trip made only for passengers, is acknowledged, the results of this research can still form a link to a wider dialogue on sharing economy. A factor constituting to the appealing of studying ridesharing is the significant presence of the practice in today society. Karim (2017) states that sharing economy with mobility as a service concept is taking part in shaping a new mobility ecosystem in urban area. Standing, Standing and Biermann (2018) affirm that while

accommodation has contributed the most to the total sharing economy sector's revenue, ridesharing has started to surpass it in many countries. Despite great commercial success, ridesharing platforms have also encountered substantial resistance and criticism (Martin, 2015). Take Uber, commonly considered as one of the most successful cases of ridesharing (Gonzalez-Padron, 2017), as an example. Since founded in 2009, Uber has grown rapidly and now its international department covers over 500 cities in most regions of the world (Martin, 2015). However, Uber also receives backlash from the public and faces protests against them around the world from Chile (Slattery, 2017) to Croatia (Euronews, 2017). This controversy attribute of ridesharing is another reason for why ridesharing makes an interesting subject to do research on.

Sharing economy has been expanding internationally and spreading across the globe from its origin in developed countries. Parente, Geleilate and Rong (2017) report that people in Asia-Pacific and Latin American are more likely to engage in sharing economy than those in North America and Europe. Companies such as Go-jek in Indonesia, Airbnb in Rio de Janeiro, educational platform, PrepClass, in Nigeria have generated thousands of jobs and nurtured many new ventures (Parente, Geleilate and Rong, 2017). The willingness to participate in sharing economy activities of the consumers in emerging markets guarantees the establishment and growth of sharing economy firms there. Despite its increasing presence and importance, sharing economy research in emerging markets context has not been done much yet. Arcidiacono, Gandini and Pais (2018) criticize that the literature on sharing economy is mainly produced by Anglo-American scholars in Anglo-American context concentrating on platforms by US multinationals. In brief, the gap for empirical study of sharing economy in developing countries is salient (Dreyer et al., 2017). Therefore, it is essential to diversify the research focus and add in literature on sharing economy in emerging markets.

Sustainability is an important principle of sharing economy since sharing economy is claimed to emerge from the critique of hyper-consumption as the potential counteract aiming for a more sustainable production and consumption practices (Martin, 2015). However, the

sustainability impacts of sharing economy are still heavily debated and closely scrutinized because while holding promises on sustainability, sharing economy embraces in itself tensions unfulfilling those promises (Acquier, Daudigeos and Pinkse, 2017). Sharing economy's sustainability paradox discourse has put forth issues mostly relating to social and economic elements with current framing as (1) An economic opportunity; (2) A more sustainable form of consumption; (3) A pathway to a decentralized, equitable and sustainable economy; (4) Unregulated market places creation; (5) Neoliberal economic paradigm reinforcement; (6) Incoherent field of innovation (Martin, 2015, pp.149). Moreover, while the environmental benefits of sharing economy have not been realized yet, sharing economy has already put the economic and social transitions in motion (Mair and Reischauer, 2017). It can be interpreted that the impacts of sharing economy on economic and social dynamics are more prominent compared to environmental effects. Additionally, regarding the motivations for participants to engage in sharing economy activities, Standing, Standing and Biermann (2018) identify income generation and the lack of conventional business opportunities are the main motives whereas Arvidsson (2018) emphasizes the importance of social desire to practice and promote certain virtue. Following the same thread of thoughts on sharing economy discourse, this study focuses on the social and economic sustainability aspects of sharing economy.

While sharing economy firms should act on their responsibilities to their primary stakeholders: users, providers and community (Gonzalez-Padron, 2017), the legal risks as well as the disruptive influence of sharing economy firms are more significant towards the providers (Nica and Potcovaru, 2015). Besides, despite being a primary stakeholder, providers are not in the center of attention of sharing platform but consumers and their experiences (Posen, 2015). Therefore, in this research, I choose to concentrate on the independent providers who are directly affected by sharing economy activities but hidden from the spotlight shone on the phenomenon.

In brief, fueled by the research gap of sharing economy in emerging market context as well as the lack of attention on independent providers of sharing economy, this research explores the impacts of ridesharing platform, a practice within the sharing economy domain, on its drivers. The findings of this study answer the question of “How are social and economic sustainability of mobility sharing platform perceived by platform drivers in emerging market, Vietnam?”. By using the sustainability theory, the effects of ridesharing platforms on its drivers are categorized into social and economic impacts. This creates a link between the research to a wider discussion on sharing economy and sustainability. The study also provides understanding on changes in social and economic dynamics triggered by sharing economy in emerging markets.

The main method for researching is qualitative method and the tool using is semi-structured interview. The interview sample include randomly selected ridesharing platform drivers, drivers from conventional businesses in the transportation sector as well as ridesharing platform representative. The research findings are expected to be tied with the unique characteristics attributing to the distinctive socio-economic background of Vietnam specifically and emerging economies in general. Therefore, the thesis enriches the sharing economy literature by offering a perspective from emerging market context which is different from the usual research done on the topic in developed countries. The study is limited within one specific case study, however, as the case platform is considered one of the best and the biggest in the market at the moment, the data collected does not lose its representative characteristics, hence, it can contribute to the general literature of sustainability of ridesharing and sharing economy.

The thesis starts with the introduction of the research and the research problem followed by the review of literature body on sharing economy, ridesharing and sustainability discourse on the phenomenon. Then it continues with a brief overview of the country and industry context. The section coming after that explains in detail how the research is constructed and facilitated. The findings of the study are presented after that, broken down into economic and social sustainability. I next discuss the contribution of the study to the ongoing debate on

sustainability of sharing economy in general and ridesharing specifically. Finally, the thesis is concluded with important managerial implications drawn from the results as well as recommendations for the future research.

2. LITURATURE REVIEW

2.1. Sharing economy

2.1.1. Sharing economy in academic discourse

The origin of term sharing economy is vague. Puschmann and Alt (2016) state that the term is first mentioned in 2008 to refer to collaborative consumption in which resources are shared, exchanged and rented without changing the ownership. Meanwhile, Martin (2015) attests that scholars have been using the term sharing economy to indicate the phenomenon of freely sharing skills and knowledge online such as Wikipedia or open source software development as early as 2004. He also dates the origin of digitally mediated sharing economy back to the late 1990s and early-mid 2000s with the fast-paced growth of online platforms which scale up the peer-to-peer relationship in an unprecedented speed. Ebay and Craigslist are among the pioneers of this phenomenon (Martin, 2015). Sharing economy concept seems to catch the public attention around 2011-2012 and other related terms such as collaborative consumption also appear in discourse around this time (Martin, 2015). Sharing economy research reaches its first peak in 2013 with The Economist dedicating its cover to “The rise of sharing economy” (Arcidiacono, Gandini and Pais, 2018).

Researches on sharing economy cover various fields and disciplines. Within macro-economic, sharing economy is addressed as a hybrid market model which is a cross over between the traditional market model of actors exchanging ownership of goods or service for money and the gift giving where no money is involved in the transaction (Puschmann and Alt, 2016). From the micro-economic perspective, different disciplines can be found taking interest in sharing economy. The management literature determines strategies for companies to achieve success in sharing economy (Puschmann and Alt, 2016). In the context of marketing channel, sharing economy is said to bear the aspects of direct-to-consumer selling

involving independent workers, online commerce and online auctions (Gonzalez-Padron, 2017). For international business management, sharing economy is appealing for its fast-paced globalization, hence, attracts researches on sharing economy in different national ecosystems (Parente, Geleilate and Rong, 2017).

Sharing economy also enters the field of social science. Acquier, Daudigeos and Pinkse (2017) address sharing economy as a social phenomenon by indicating that sharing is an old social practice and with the power of technology, this social practice is redefined into sharing economy. Arcidiacono, Gandini and Pais (2018) imply that sharing economy is related to social networks and the rise of sharing economy leads to the accustomation of society to collaborations and sharing.

In transportation domain, researchers explore the potential of sharing economy to evaluate their effects on public transport and road use (Standing, Standing and Biermann, 2018)

2.1.2. The debatable use of the term ‘sharing’

Sharing economy is a ‘contested’ concept (Frenken and Schor 2017), (Acquier, Daudigeos and Pinkse, 2017) and even the term itself has been put into discourse. Frenken and Schor (2017) argue that sharing economy is an ambiguous and confusing term mostly because when considering sharing economy as novel and disruptive, people overlook and ignore the past and history of the act of sharing itself. “Humans have always shared” (Frenken and Schor 2017, p. 4). Similarly, Dreyer et al. (2017) state that sharing has been known to mankind since the hominid societies. Therefore, what clearly makes the current phenomenon called sharing economy unique and trendy is not the sharing aspect but the notion of “stranger sharing” (Nica and Potcovaru, 2015). Sharing was always and is still considered “partially” as an act confined within individual’s social network or in another word, among friends and family. However, with the advancement of technology, the term “sharing” changes and expands its meaning and purposes to what is widely regarded as sharing economy. Sharing economy facilitates exchange and sharing among strangers with the sophisticated use of information and communication technology (Frenken and Schor, 2017).

There is criticism towards the use of the word ‘sharing’ in sharing economy. Carfagna (2018) discusses about the effects of “sharewashing” that castigate the exploitation of sociality by capital. Nevertheless, the word “sharing” has evolved and incorporated other meanings. Dreyer et al. (2017) affirm that “sharing” has become a hypernym enveloping various social practices. Whereas, Cockayne (2016) thinks that the word ‘sharing’ is used with a purpose. Starting with the booming of social media, the term sharing has gone through transition from predominantly used in social context to one associated to revenue strategies of social media firms and still maintained its meaning of community and social inclusion. Hence, the term “sharing economy” is productive in describing the economic activity, aiming to normalize flexible and unstable work by associating capitalist exchange with altruistic social value (Cockayne, 2016)

2.1.3. Conceptualizing sharing economy

Sharing economy has no universally agreed definition . There are many factors constituting to the confusion. Firstly, sharing economy comprises of diverse online economic activities from rental (Airbnb) to for-profit ride provision (Uber) to gifting (Freecycle) (Martin, 2015). Moreover, these practices are different in organization. Some connects consumer to consumer, some matches business to consumer (Parente, Geleilate and Rong, 2017). Besides, there are quite a few of neighboring concepts which can be used interchangeably to a certain extent (Martin, 2015). These terms such as peer economy, collaborative economy, on-demand economy, are sometimes used as alternatives to sharing economy although referring to very different things (Tsui, 2016). To further the complication, sharing economy is always perceived with the underpinned reliance to technology, specifically online platform (Martin, 2015). Finally, as discussed above, the use of the word sharing often creates misleading perceptions on the practices involved in sharing economy. Therefore, it is very challenging to provide one answer which is direct and be able to envelope various terms used in practice to the question of what sharing economy is (Martin, 2015). Hence, instead of filtering and picking one interpretation of sharing economy, I present a collage of sharing economy

definitions with the purpose of demonstrating sharing economy as a continuously evolving concept.

Overall, there are two schools of thoughts regarding defining sharing economy: scholars who attempt to define sharing economy in a narrow way while others think of sharing economy as a broad concept (Acquier, Daudigeos and Pinkse, 2017). In the narrow definition attempts, Martin, Upham and Budd (2015) associate sharing economy with collaborative consumption, establish that sharing economy and collaborative consumption are interchangeable terms to refer to innovation that can be ‘loosely defined as Internet mediated economic model based on providing access instead of ownership’ (Martin, Upham and Budd, 2015, pp. 240). Meanwhile, Dreyer et al. (2017) claim that collaborative consumption is only a subset of sharing economy. On the other hand, Cockayne (2016) uses the terms of on-demand economy and sharing economy alternatively to refer to digital platforms that connect consumers to goods or services by using mobile apps or website. Another approach to sharing economy is that sharing economy is a use-oriented product to service system which can be defined as ‘a business model where the market value is at least partially realized by offering a service, linked to the product’ (Verboven and Vanherck 2016, pp. 306). Mair and Reischauer (2017) refer sharing economy to ‘a web of markets in which individuals use various form of compensation to transact the redistribution of and access to resources, mediated by a digital platform operated by an organization’ (Mair and Reischauer 2017, pp.2). Similarly, Katrini (2018) identifies sharing economy as a market place facilitating asset-sharing transaction between individuals through online platform. Gonzalez-Padron (2017) offers a different approach to sharing economy by putting it in a context of a marketing channel and proposes that sharing economy is a marketing channel that presents a business opportunity to owners of underutilized assets (Gonzalez-Padron, 2017, pp. 86). Amid the scholars’ debate, a definition of sharing economy is added in the English Oxford Dictionary in 2015 describing sharing economy as “an economic system in which assets or services are shared between private individuals, either free or for a fee, typically by means of the Internet”.

Within the broad definition stream, Acquier, Daudigeos and Pinkse (2017) explain that sharing economy covers across a wide spectrum of organizations from non-profit to for-profit. Therefore, it is an umbrella construct- a concept that is used to embrace a set of diverse phenomena (Hirsch and Levin 1999, cited in Acquier, Daudigeos and Pinkse, 2017, pp. 2) - covering many other related concepts such as on-demand or gig economy, collaborative consumption, peer-to-peer economy, access economy. Acquier, Daudigeos and Pinkse (2017) propose that sharing economy encompasses of three fundamental organizing cores: access economy, platform economy and community-based economy. Similarly, Heinrichs (2013) also points out that sharing economy is an umbrella concept covering several developments, bringing together fragments of conceptual and empirical knowledge of different aspects of sharing economy. Standing, Standing and Biermann (2018) agree that sharing economy is a blanket term enveloping diverse practices related to sharing of consumption through online platforms. From a social science perspective, Arcidiacono, Gandini and Pais (2018) establish that sharing economy is a socio-economic model based on collaboration and socialization facilitated by technologies. Meanwhile, Arvidsson (2018) thinks of sharing economy as in ideological entity that encompasses diverse phenomena dedicating to the ideology of sharing.

Table 1. Collage of sharing economy conceptualization (Adapted from Acquier, Daudigeos and Pinkse, 2017, pp.3)

Acquier, Daudigeos and Pinkse (2017)	Sharing economy is an umbrella construct enveloping: access economy, platform economy and community-based economy
Arcidiacono, Gandini and Pais (2018)	Sharing economy is a socio-economic model based on collaboration and socialization facilitated by technologies.
Arvidsson (2018)	Sharing economy as in ideological entity that encompasses diverse phenomena dedicating to the ideology of sharing.
Belk (2014b) (cited in Acquier, Daudigeos and Pinkse, 2017)	Differentiate from ‘true sharing’ to ‘pseudo’ sharing Sharing as an alternative to private ownership that is emphasized in both market place and gift giving.

Botsman (2013) (cited in Acquier, Daudigeos and Pinkse, 2017)	‘an economic model based on sharing underutilized assets from spaces to skills to stuff for monetary or non-monetary benefits’
Cockayne (2016)	‘on demand or sharing economy is a term that describe digital platforms that connect consumers to a service or commodity through the use of a mobile application or website’ (pp. 73)
Eckhardt and Bardhi (2016) (cited in Acquier, Daudigeos and Pinkse, 2017)	‘access economy, [...], also known as the sharing or peer-to-peer economy, [...] provides temporary access to consumption resources for a fee or for free without a transfer or ownership’ (pp. 210)
English Oxford Dictionary (2015)	“an economic system in which assets or services are shared between private individuals, either free or for a fee, typically by means of the Internet”
Gonzalez-Padron (2017)	‘sharing economy is a marketing channel that presents a business opportunity to owners of underutilized assets’ (pp. 86)
Habibi, Davidson and Laroche (2016)	Suggest using ‘a sharing-exchange continuum that helps distinguish the degree to which actual sharing is being offered’ (pp.115)
Katrini (2018)	Sharing economy is referred to a market place facilitating asset-sharing transaction between individuals through online platform
Martin, Upham and Budd (2015)	Collaborative consumption ‘loosely defined as Internet mediated economic model based on providing access instead of ownership’ (pp.240)
Mair and Reischauer (2017)	‘a web of markets in which individuals use various form of compensation to transact the redistribution of and access to resources, mediated by a digital platform operated by an organization’ (pp.2)
Meelen and Frenken (2015) (cited in Acquier, Daudigeos and Pinkse, 2017)	Sharing economy is defined as ‘consumers granting each other temporary access to under-utilized physical assets (‘idle capacity’), possibly for money’ (pp. 4-5)
Munoz and Cohen (2017) (cited in Acquier, Daudigeos and Pinkse, 2017)	‘a socio-economic system enabling an intermediated set of exchanges of goods and services between individuals and organizations which aims to increase efficiency and optimization of sub-utilized resources in society’
Standing, Standing and Biermann (2018)	Sharing economy is a blanket term enveloping practices related to sharing of consumption through online platforms

For this research, I use the definition of sharing economy as “an economic system in which assets or services are shared between private individuals, either free of for a fee, typically by means of the Internet” provided by Oxford English Dictionary during the interviews when explanation is needed for interviewees’ comprehension. Meanwhile, I take the approach of sharing economy as an umbrella concept enveloping other related developments to analyze the data and discuss the study findings because while the narrow approach is more precise, it eliminates the complexity of sharing economy phenomenon. Besides, narrow sharing economy definition also means exclusion of some of the practices. For example, some scholars consider Uber as not belonging to sharing economy for its market-orientation whereas others view only peer-to-peer and profit-driven platforms such as Uber as sharing economy (Acquier, Daudigeos and Pinkse, 2017). Therefore, by using a broad concept for sharing economy, I am able to engage in a wide breadth of debates surrounding the rising phenomena without excluding any interesting arising issues.

2.1.4. Positioning sharing economy

For the confusion in defining sharing economy, some of the scholars think it is essential to come up with a framework to organize sharing economy. Acquier, Daudigeos and Pinkse (2017) attempt to cover a wide spectrum of sharing economy practices by using the three organization-core-frame including: access economy, platform economy and community-based economy. Access economy includes initiatives that optimizing use of underutilized assets by sharing, either material resources or skills. Platform economy is defined as ‘set of initiative that intermediate decentralized exchanges among peers through digital platforms’ (Acquier, Daudigeos and Pinkse 2017, pp.5). Last but not least, the community-based economy refers to ‘initiatives coordinating through non-contractual, non-hierarchical and non-monetized form of interactions’ (Acquier, Daudigeos and Pinkse, 2017, pp.6). Hybrids between these cores also exist including: access-platforms, community-based platforms,

community-based access and a triple-cored configuration deemed as the ideal of sharing economy.

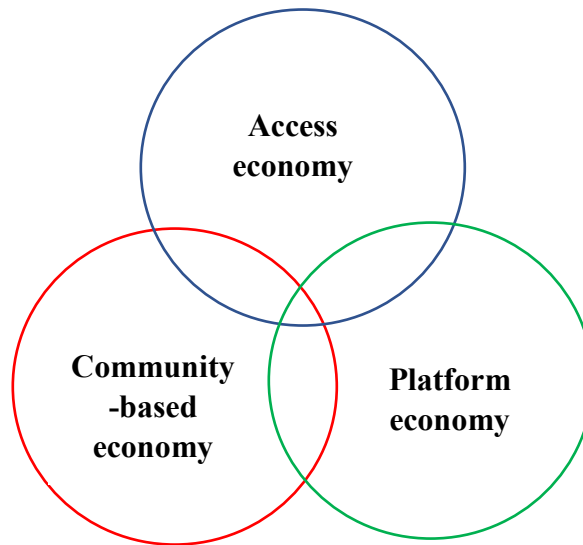


Figure 1. Three organizing cores of sharing economy (Acquier, Daudigeos and Pinkse 2017, pp.4)

Meanwhile, Habibi, Davidson and Laroche (2016) propose to distinguish sharing economy practices by their sharing nature. They establish a framework built on the exchange-sharing continuum in order to map practices based on their degrees of sharing or exchange. The placement of each practice is calculated with the extent of attributes of sharing or exchange that practice retains. This framework has significant implications for managerial literature. Practices with a low degree of sharing are recommended to mainly follow the market norms of supply, demand, and efficiency. Whereas, those with a high degree of sharing should build on consumer collaboration and sharing values such as communal links and socialization (Habibi, Davidson and Laroche, 2016).

ownership through an internet platform; (3) growth bases on network effects and social interactions between users/suppliers. This model makes sharing economy firms' organizational structure quite simple mainly including platform technology, operations, marketing and customer service and this simple structure fosters the speedy internationalization process (Parente, Geleilate and Rong, 2017). Last but not least, Posen (2015) attests that the new sharing economy has its focus on consumers with the ultimate goal of improving customers' experience.

2.1.6. Drives of sharing economy

Sharing economy has been growing steadily. In 2015, sharing economy sector is worth about \$15 billion and it is estimated to rise up to \$335 billion in 2025 (Pricewaterhousecooper 2015 cited in Habibi, Davidson and Laroche 2016). The drives for this development of sharing economy as a whole are comprised of changes in consumer behaviors, widespread of social networks and electronics markets as well as ubiquitous access to mobile devices and electronic devices (Puschmann and Alt, 2016). In detail, however, Bocker and Meelen (2016) imply that different sharing economy practices are motivated by different factors. Based on the nature of the practices, true sharing is associated with social concerns while pseudo-sharing is mainly done for economic gains (Bocker and Meelen, 2016). Across regions, Asia-Pacific and Latin America are more willing to involve in sharing economy activities compared to North America and Europe (Nielsen 2014 cited in Parente, Geleilate and Rong, 2017). The reason is that in developing context, consumers are attracted to the sharing economy's promise of more transparent and fairer transactions (Parente, Geleilate and Rong, 2017). Among sectors, environmental incentives are thought to be more prominent in car and ridesharing (Bocker and Meelen, 2016).

On a personal level, individuals, either consumers, providers or intermediaries, participate in sharing economy activities because it is beneficial for them. However, the main motivations for different groups of participants are different from each other. Increased convenience and cost-saving advantage are thoughts to be the main motives for consumers next to the ecological promise for waste reduction, as well as enjoyment and reputation (Puschmann and

Alt, 2016). Habibi, Davidson and Laroche (2016) also draw from their research on Zipcar members to conclude that environmental, social and political concerns are not among the priorities of consumers participating in sharing economy, but cost savings are the main drives. The situation is further supported by Bocker and Meelen (2016) stating that in comparison to providers, users are more driven by economic gains. However, Bocker and Meelen (2016) also claim that environmental concerns are more relevant to higher income and higher educated individuals than others and lower income groups are more economically motivated to join the sharing economy. On the other hand, Gonzalez-Padron (2017) say that providers are more willing to share for social and moral reasons. The author also considers users' motives being in line with providers' sentiments that sharing economy is more fun and better for the environment than traditional companies (Gonzalez-Padron, 2017). Standing, Standing and Biermann (2018) identify income generation and the lack of conventional business opportunities are the main drives for providers to participate in sharing economy whereas Arvidsson (2018) emphasizes the importance of social desire to practice and promote certain virtue in the decision process of joining sharing economy for participants.

2.2. Sharing economy and sustainability

Heinrichs (2013) states that it is reasonable to connect sharing economy with sustainability since sharing economy influences production and consumption habits which are essential triggers to the transition to sustainability. He also claims that sharing economy adds perspectives to fundamental sustainability visions and fosters a more collaborative and sustainable society (Heinrichs, 2013). Mair and Reischauer (2017) asserts that sharing economy has put the transition of social and economic relevant dynamics in motion and influenced the current market and therefore a crucial topic for sustainability. They affirm that sharing economy disrupts social and economic activity by blurring the boundaries of consumption and production, shifting from putting full-time workers as the core of the organization to casual labor, inclining to instant demand of supply of workforce (Mair and Reischauer, 2017). On top of that, sharing economy also makes vague the distinction between

private and public when owners invite strangers into the house or individual borrow money from unknown crowd (crowdfunding) (Mair and Reischauer, 2017).

While initially thought as the potential pathway to sustainability (Heinrich, 2013), sharing economy has faced with more and more criticism over time regarding its sustainability paradox. Acquier, Daudigeos and Pinkse (2017) argue that sharing economy is inherently paradoxical. The authors state that while holding promises on sustainability, sharing economy embraces in itself tensions unfulfilling those promises. They further explain that even if sharing economy promotes sustainable consumption and production, it also has the potential to reinforce the current unsustainable economic patterns. For instance, sharing economy is expected to provide more inclusive and broader access as well as to optimizing resources use, however, the rebound effect which triggers increase in consumption, as well as the new rising of market power of platforms which goes against the vision of decentralization seem to hinder the pathway to sustainability of sharing economy (Acquier, Daudigeos and Pinkse, 2017). Verboven and Vanherck (2016) also finds that sharing economy creates negative side-effects along with proclaimed positive consequences.

2.2.1. Economic sustainability of sharing economy

In terms of economic sustainability, Frenken and Schor (2017) attest that the economic benefits of sharing economy to users – payers and providers- is undeniable and that the direct profits to participants come from low transaction costs of sharing economy. This point is also mentioned by Verboven and Vanherck (2016) as the positive impacts of sharing economy including ‘increase of purchasing power for consumer, decrease of transaction and information costs, better coordination of market demand and supply, flexibility for user, quality of services in the complete sector is improved’ (Verboven and Vanherck, 2016 pp.307). Similarly, Nica and Potcovaru (2015) affirm that sharing economy creates values for users and make their lives easier by providing ‘effortlessly attainable revenue’. However, Frenken and Schor (2017) also raise concerns that the full economic effects of sharing

economy are more complex due to its indirect impacts on other markets. Martin (2015) agrees that the wider economic impacts of sharing economy are unclear.

2.2.2. Social sustainability of sharing economy

Concerning social sustainability of sharing economy, Frenken and Schor (2017) claim that stranger sharing extends and broadens sharing practices to larger social circle to the point that sharing peers can become meaningful contacts. Therefore, sharing economy increases social mixing. Verboven and Vanherck (2016) agree that sharing economy helps to enhance social interactions. On the contrary, it is stated that early adopters of sharing platforms are more open towards social interactions, and as more people participate, less durable social connections are formed; hence, the sustainability of social benefits of sharing economy is questionable in the long run when sharing economy becomes more casual, daily-life and less novel (Frenken and Schor, 2017). Besides, social exclusivity is identified by Verboven and Vanherck (2016) as one of the negative impacts of sharing economy next to tax avoidance, data privacy, discrimination as the consequences of rating and review system. Dreyer et al. (2017) criticize that because assets ownership is required in order to participate in sharing economy activities, people at the base of the pyramid are left out. In addition, Frenken and Schor (2017) claim that dynamics in the sharing economy result in the uneven distribution of income and welfare since often only well-off people will be able to own valuable assets and owners of the idle assets are the second profiting group after the platforms. Therefore, the profits of sharing economy concentrate in a small group of users accentuating inequality (Frenken and Schor, 2017). On top of that, issues regarding sharing economy being harmful to social cohesion due to the decrease of 'true sharing' and the rise of monetized exchange of 'pseudo sharing' are also raised by Frenken and Schor (2017).

Another criticism towards sharing economy revolves around its influences on the market. Frenken and Schor (2017) contend that the promise of sharing and collaboration as indicated in its name is unlikely to be realized since most goods and services that sharing economy firms offer are already commercialized by existing businesses; hence, competition on market

is unavoidable. Verboven and Vanherck (2016) worry that sharing economy is characterized with its rapid growth which can lead to monopolistic constellations and cannibalization of traditional businesses.

Labor organizing is another issue that sharing economy is condemned. Dreyer et al. (2017) argue that while collaborative consumption provides flexibility to providers and does not tie them to the firms with employment, this arrangement which at first glance is beneficial for providers actually puts them in risks of non-employee protection regarding pension, insurance and other types of employment welfare. Cockayne (2016) further accuses sharing economy of attempting to treat labor as a cheap commodity while promises social inclusion. Similarly, Verboven and Vanherck (2016) considers sharing economy as a threat to the rights of workers by replacing stable jobs with casual, poorly paid jobs.

In brief, sharing economy and sustainability is a topic in the spotlight with various points of view and opinions. In order to systematize those streams of thoughts, below are six sharing economy framings that Martin (2015) identifies and organizes among current discourse regarding the topic:

- (1) Sharing economy as an economic opportunity: fostering greater economic activity and empowering individual to monetize their underutilized assets
- (2) Sharing economy as a more sustainable form of consumption based on wider access to resources instead of owning them.
- (3) Sharing economy as a pathway to a decentralized, equitable and sustainable economy by promoting collaboration among citizens, communities and grassroot organizations leading to decentralizing power structure across societies and economies.
- (4) Sharing economy creates unregulated market places

(5) Sharing economy reinforce neoliberal economic paradigm including rising corporate power of platforms, casualization of labor, a lack of concern towards environmental sustainability issues, social exclusivity and inequality if profit distribution.

(6) Sharing economy is an incoherent field of innovation due to lack of strong definition, and coherent sharing economy movement

2.2.3. Environmental sustainability of sharing economy¹

Regarding the environmental element, Bocker and Meelen (2016) points out that although the environmental sustainability aspect of sharing economy is often emphasized as one of its prominent promises, however, it is not yet clear at all what environmental effects of sharing economy is. On top of that, many studies have found that environmental factor barely accounts for the decision behind sharing economy participation. Moreover, Frenken and Schor (2017) indicates that the environmental effects of sharing economy are complicated. Although it is commonly believed among users that sharing platforms optimize resources use, hence, sharing is eco-friendly, there is not yet empirical evidence for these claims; therefore, sharing economy does not assure being green or fair (Verboven and Vanherck, 2016).

2.3. Ridesharing

2.3.1. Conceptualizing ridesharing

Similar to the case of sharing economy where the concept of sharing is nothing novel in human society, ridesharing has been around for quite a while before the sudden bloom with the advance of technology. Furuhashi et al. (2013) date the practice of ridesharing back to World War II when ridesharing was first organized by the United States government along the policy of fuel conservation. In the beginning state, ridesharing was matched on the

¹ This study focuses only on economic and social sustainability of sharing economy. To evaluate the environmental impacts of sharing economy would require a research of its own.

bulletin boards at local matching institutions. There are two types of ridesharing service providers: matching agency and service operator. While service operator employs the driver and owns the vehicles, matching agency focuses on coordinating rides between individual car driver and passenger. The authors define ridesharing as a system combining private cars' flexibility and speed with the reduced cost of fixed-line systems, at the expense of convenience. This system's mechanism is described as impromptu matching at pre-arranged spots on a first-come-first-serve basis. The breakthrough in ridesharing comes from advanced technology which helps to match on-demand requests instead of requiring participants to schedule the trip beforehand. This creates a new ridesharing system called dynamic real-time ridesharing (Furahata et al., 2013).

Stiglic et al. (2016) also use the term “dynamic ridesharing” to talk about the current ridesharing phenomenon that is enabled by mobile technology. Pike and Krantz (2018), however, adopt the term on-demand ride-hailing services indicating the current on-demand ride services. Whereas Anderson (2016) refers services offering on-demand rides as for-profit ride-sharing or soft cabs. He claims that ridesharing distinguishes itself from conventional taxi only by using the affective framing accentuating drivers as “friends with car, on demand” instead of taxi driver. Nina (2017) calls Uber – one of the representatives of ridesharing platforms at the moment as the biggest taxi company in the world inserting under the umbrella of sharing economy.

2.3.2. Ridesharing model and its characteristics

Furuhata et al. (2013) state that ridesharing model involves coordinating itineraries received from drivers and passengers with specified pick-up and drop-off locations to facilitate a match. Other features such as cost, compensation for the ride, gender, reputation can also be taken into consideration while matching (Furuhata et al., 2013). Since ridesharing is two-sided matching, the main challenge for ridesharing is to design a market mechanism appealing to both drivers and passengers in order for them to join the market (Furuhata et al, 2016), (Banerjee, Johari and Riquelme, 2016). Stiglic et al. (2016) claim that the key factor

bringing success to dynamic ride-sharing is flexibility regarding to the departure and arrival times of both drivers and passengers as well as the willingness of drivers to make detour.

Another characteristic of ridesharing is that it belongs to the informal economy. Vacano (2017) attests that ridesharing under the umbrella of sharing economy informalizes the traditional taxi industry. Even in the motorbike taxi industry which is already in the informal economy sector, ridesharing positions at the opposite pole of informal economy to the traditional motorbike taxi (Vacano, 2017). Because of the differences, ridesharing clashes with conventional businesses, creating tension in the industry which in turn improves the sector as a whole in terms of efficiency and productivity (Nina, 2017).

Besides, Hensley, Padhi and Salazar (2017) report that the current ridesharing model offers services mainly to adult in metropolitan areas whose main reason for using this mode of transportation is convenience, not price which is the initial attraction point. They also assert that another characteristic, turning challenge, of the current ridesharing model is the high turn-over of drivers which reaches the completion point every two years. They also describe the three core features of current ridesharing model in their study. Firstly, ridesharing platforms do not employ the drivers but mainly work with them as freelancers. Therefore, the drivers have the liberty to decide when and where to work. Secondly, ridesharing platforms are designed in a way that the platforms exclusively determine matches and prices as opposed to how things get negotiated in other two-sided marketplaces. Finally, dynamic pricing plays an important role as platform intermediation to manipulate supply and demand (Hensley, Padhi and Salazar, 2017). The exclusive control of ridesharing platform over pricing and information is believed to exert considerable control over drivers (Anderson, 2016). In the paper, Anderson (2016) criticizes that while the drivers are thought to work independently without any supervision from the company, the monitoring task is in fact delegated to the passengers through the rating systems, the drivers themselves and the software being used to facilitate the jobs. There are three ways described in the study for ridesharing platforms to supervise the drivers' performances: control of work and pay, control of information, and monitoring performance notably through acceptance and

cancellation rates, and a five-star rating system. On the same thread of thought, Vacano (2017) affirms that ridesharing platform impair the employment standards of formal economy while put the drivers in a situation of dependent self-employment with its regulations and pre-determined price scheme.

2.3.3. Ridesharing and sustainability

Nina (2017) states that while the main goals of ridesharing platforms remain profit-driven, being under the umbrella of sharing economy, ridesharing platforms explicitly and implicitly promotes the practice of sharing and shape people's understanding of social common goods. Therefore, the ridesharing platforms' business-as-usual operation can be considered as them facilitating their corporate social responsibility (Nina, 2017).

On top of that, Pike and Krantz (2018) contest that ridesharing envelop potential for a pathway to sustainability. Stiglic et al., (2016) claim that ridesharing brings in significant societal benefits. The authors attest that by reducing the number of vehicles ride-sharing can reduce congestion and the need for parking space, which is challenging to find in populated areas. Additionally, by optimizing car seats and increasing occupancy rates, ridesharing makes urban transportation more effective (Agatz et al., 2012). Besides, Pike and Krantz (2018) indicate that poorly served area in terms of transportation can rely on ridesharing as a new mobility option.

Moreover, ridesharing's environmental benefits are claimed to include reduction in fuel consumption and emission (Pike and Krantz, 2018) (Agatz et al., 2012) (Stiglic et al., 2016). It is said that in the long term, ridesharing can help to reduce the number of household vehicle holdings as well as individual miles traveled (Pike and Krantz, 2018). Empirical data from Beijing case is presented in the paper by Yu et al., (2017) to further prove the positive environmental effect of ridesharing platforms. The study results demonstrate that ridesharing directly saves approximately 26.6 thousand tce of energy and reduces 46.2 thousand tons of CO₂ and 253.7 tons of NO_x every year.

3. CONTEXT

3.1. Country context

Within the emerging markets, Vietnam presents itself as a useful case study for its unique social and economic dynamics of a socialist market economy. According to the World Bank (2018), ever since the economic and political reform in 1986, Vietnam has witnessed dramatic economic growth spurt and transformed itself from the poorest country to the lower middle-income country and its gross domestic production (GDP) in 2016 expanded by 6%. The population of more than 92 million people (GSOa, 2016) contributes to the impressive growth of Vietnam and mainly accounted for productivity as well as makes Vietnam an attractive market be it with retail and investment. Regarding to the social and political scene, while Vietnam has achieved some impressive advancement such as 99% of the population has access to electricity now compared to 20 years ago, challenges and limitations remains. Social inequality is high as described by Oxfam on a 2018 report “it would cost \$2.2 billion a year to increase wages of all 2.5 million Vietnamese garment workers to a living wage. This is about a third of the amount paid out to wealthy shareholders by the top 5 companies in the garment sector in 2016”.

With great GDP growth, high level of inequality together and ever-changing institutional settings, Vietnam makes a critical case for the study to be conducted.

3.2. Industry context

In Vietnam in 2016, approximately, there are 33,976,000,000 (GSOa, 2016) passengers carried on road only. In Ho Chi Minh City, where the research is conducted, there are 12,500 taxis (Ho Chi Minh City Taxi Association, 2018) and 24,000 cars (N.An, 2017) operating with ridesharing platforms. This indicates the huge capability encompassed in Vietnamese transportation sector. Another highlight in the Vietnamese transportation sector is that there are two main means of transportation in Vietnam: motorbike and car. In Ho Chi Minh City with 8,297,500 people (GSOa, 2016), there are 7,600,000 motorbikes and 700,000 cars (Ta

Lam, 2017). This results in two types of taxis operating in Vietnam: car taxi and motorbike taxi. With the meaning of taxi as “a motor vehicle licensed to transport passengers in return for payment of a fare” (In: Oxford Living Dictionaries), motorbike taxi which is usually called “xe ôm” in Vietnamese does not qualify to describe with the term taxi for it is not licensed. However, for the convenience of translation and comprehension, I use the term motorbike taxi to replace “xe ôm” in this study. So, while cars operating in ridesharing platforms are threats to traditional taxi businesses, platform motorbike drivers compete directly against traditional motorbike taxi drivers who are mostly self-employed. Additionally, whereas motorbike taxi sector is mostly self-regulated and informally organized as in the case of major bus stations where any traditional motorbike taxi drivers would like to pick up customers from has to register to the person in charge and the decision is up to that person and often based on social connections (Personal interview T2, 26 July 2018), taxi are governed by law. However, the legislation for this sector is still developing. The Transport Ministry’s Decision promulgating the Regulation on passenger transportation by taxi was issued in 2007, then cancelled and replaced by Circular 14/2010/TT-BGTVT in 2010 monitoring organization and management of transportation by automobile. The Circular applies to all organizations and individuals involved in commercial transportation by automobile. Some of the requirements indicating in the circular include but not limited to the following:

- All the transportation business units must be licensed according to the nature of the business they operate.
- All the transportation business units must have transportation business plans in details.
- All vehicles have tracking devices that are inspected and constantly updated.
- For taxi, the vehicles must bear names and telephone numbers of their enterprises or cooperatives on the outer sides of their bodies or their doors.

In addition, the Decree 91/2009/ND-CP on Road Transport Business and Business Conditions acknowledges only five types of road transport businesses: cars with fixed

routes, buses with fixed routes, taxi, cars with spot-to-spot contracts and goods delivery transport. Therefore, based on that Decree, it is not legal for unregistered personal car to be used in transporting business. However, in 2015, the Prime Minister agreed to a trial deployment of digital spot-to-spot contracts instead of regular paper-based contracts proposed by the Vietnamese Ministry of Transport (VMTc, 2017) creating the legal premise needed to open the door for ridesharing platforms in Vietnam.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Building the research case

The thesis uses case study as the main research approach to seek answers for the question of “How are social and economic sustainability of mobility sharing platform perceived by platform drivers in emerging market, Vietnam?”.

The purpose of this study is to provide real-life understanding regarding the social and economic sustainability of mobility sharing platforms in Vietnam, consequently, by nature of the research, case study is picked for its ability to investigate a phenomenon in real-life context (Yin, 2002). Additionally, the thesis focus is on perceived social and economic sustainability of mobility sharing platforms therefore the weight of interpretation and understanding is significant and case study is the most suitable to provide for that kind of inquiry (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). Moreover, the study seeks answers that are bounded and heavily under the influence of contexts with cultural perspectives at the core, hence case study is the most fit for research strategy

The case company named A that is chosen for this research is considered one of the biggest ridesharing platforms in Vietnam specifically and in South East Asia generally. Platform A’s international operation covers 160 cities in eight countries. A’s business includes two main segments corresponding with the transportation market in Vietnam: 4-wheel and 2-wheel. Platform A services varies from passengers transportation to goods delivery. Their vision is to be a super platform where not only transportation is available but also food and other necessities.

4.2. Research method

The data used in this research is mainly primary data and collected by conducting interviews. The interviews are semi-structured and in-depth. This helps to build thick description and rich understanding enabling interpretation.

Semi-structured interview and conversational interview are used as the main tools to facilitate this research for a couple reasons. Firstly, these types of interview provide flexibility for good narratives which are essential for the purpose of this paper. Moreover, semi-structured and conversational interviews allow the interviewer to provide clarification when deeming the respondents having difficulties understand the questions. This helps with more accurate response when there is ambiguity between the question concept and the information the interviewee has to provide (Lavrakas, 2008). Hence, the chosen methods can produce comprehensive materials while keeping the tone of the interview informal and conversational (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008) which is the appropriate approach considering the fact that the main group of interviewees – drivers - are often not familiar with interviews.

4.2.1. Interview sample

To examine the case, three main actors are chosen for interviews: (1) the drivers – car drivers and motorbike drivers providing services through platform A; (2), taxi drivers and traditional motorbike taxi drivers; (3) the representatives of the ride sharing platforms. From now on in this paper, I will use drivers referring to platform A drivers, and when talking about taxi drivers or traditional motorbike taxi drivers I will specify as such.

In total, there are 12 interviews carried out from the end of May to the end of July 2018.

Three interview guides are prepared beforehand for three groups and while be different from each other, all three interview guides include two big themes: social and economic sustainability of ridesharing platform. The interview guides encompass but not exclusively to issues that are present in the current discourse around social and economic sustainability of sharing economy.

Economic sustainability:

- Direct economic benefits to providers (Frenken and Schor, 2017) (Verboven and Vanherck, 2016)
- Effortlessly attainable revenue for providers (Nica and Potcovaru, 2015)
- Uneven profit distribution between actors (Frenken and Schor, 2017)

Social sustainability:

- Increasing social mixing/interactions and enhancing social meaningful contacts (Frenken and Schor, 2017) (Verboven and Vanherck, 2016)
- Increasing tension on the market which can lead to monopolistic constellations and cannibalization of traditional businesses (Frenken and Schor, 2017) (Verboven and Vanherck, 2016)
- Labor organizing issues: risks of non-employee protection regarding pension, insurance and other types of employment welfare (Dreyer et al.,2017) (Cockayne, 2016) (Verboven and Vanherck, 2016)

For the first group, drivers participating in ridesharing platforms, there are eight interviews conducted with the length ranging from 15 minutes to 1 hour and a half. Through the interviews, I collect data on the drivers' positions and perceptions towards ridesharing platform A.

For the second group, taxi drivers and traditional motorbike taxi drivers, two interviews are conducted to understand their attitudes towards the ridesharing platform drivers and the ridesharing platform itself. One lasts for 16 minutes and the other is 24 minutes.

The interview with quality control manager from platform A enriches the data set by offering a different viewpoint. Finally, Dichung is a Vietnamese social enterprise established in 2013, coordinating service exchange through community-based interactions. Dichung's service focus was on carpooling in long-distance ride (Dichung, 2018). An interview with

a former business development manager of dichung, is conducted in order to gain deeper understanding of the context of the case study. It provides information on the operation of ridesharing platform in Vietnam, and how local platform views the situation of sharing economy in transportation sector in Vietnam.

Table 2. List of interviews

Code	Description/Position	Group	Date	Length
P1	Car driver; 67-year-old male	Platform driver	31 May 2018	15 minutes
P2	Motorbike driver; 51-year-old female	Platform driver	4 June 2018	15 minutes
P3	Motorbike driver; 38-year-old male	Platform driver	4 June 2018	30 minutes
P4	Motorbike driver; 27-year-old male	Platform driver	6 June 2018	30 minutes
P5	Motorbike driver; 26-year-old male	Platform driver	18 June 2018	1 hour and 38 minutes
P6	Car driver; 48-year-old male	Platform driver	26 June 2018	1 hour and 4 minutes
P7	Car driver; 33-year-old male	Platform driver	2 July 2018	1 hour and 15 minutes
P8	Car driver; 45-year-old male	Platform driver	3 July 2018	38 minutes
T1	Taxi driver; 47-year-old male	Traditional taxi driver	20 Jul 2018	16 minutes
T2	Motorbike driver, 62-year-old male	Traditional motorbike taxi driver	26 Jul 2018	24 minutes
S1	Quality control manager	Platform A staff	11 Jul 2018	35 minutes
S2	Business development manager	Dichung staff	19 Jun 2018	54 minutes

4.2.2. Data collection process and limitations

The research focus is on only ridesharing platform drivers and the interview sample consist of only eight drivers. To minimize this disadvantage, different perspectives from other

actors, demonstrating here as different groups of interviewees, including drivers from traditional businesses and representative of the ridesharing platform, are added into the data set. By doing so, the validation from various fronts helps to uphold the precision as well as the attribute of generalization of the achieved information.

Interview P1, P2, P3, P4 and T1 happened during the time that I used their services. Therefore, the interview length depended on the distance that I travelled at the time. This ensures the randomness of the interviewees, however, it resulted in number of obstacles for data collection. Firstly, there were distractions disrupting the flow of the interviews since the respondents needed to focus on driving while answering the questions. Secondly, the interviews happened on the road which means it was not possible for proper audio recording of the interview. Hence, for the interview P1, P2, P3, P4 and T1, data is collected mainly from my brief notes jotting down while being on the vehicles. Lastly, interviewees were asked for an interview on the spot which while prevented them to have time to prepare beforehand, it also took time for them to get into the interviewing state including comprehending the purpose of the interview as well as understanding the questions. Therefore, sometimes the interview ended before the data became sufficient. However, thanks to the brief grasp of the operation of platform A from these four interviews, I was able to develop a more comprehensive interview guide for the later interviews. Interviewees for P5, P6, P7, P8, and T2 were contacted beforehand and asked for an interview through my social connections who are not affiliated with platform A. These five interviews are in-depth interviews. All the participation is voluntary, and no compensation of any kind was offered for participating in the interviews.

Interviewees for S1 and S2 were contacted beforehand to schedule the interviews. As being deemed confidential, overall information on platform A such as the platform volume, drivers' demographic, platform revenue and profits, etc. could not be achieved. This is one of the limitations of this study because without the exact information, it is difficult to illustrate the market presence of platform A. Nevertheless, the growth and importance of platform can be pictured through the interviewees' perceptions.

The interviews were facilitated in Vietnamese which is the native language of the researcher as well as the interviewees except for interview S1 where the interviewee's native language was English.

4.3. Analysis process

The analysis process is tightly based on thematic analysis process proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Reason for choosing thematic analysis as the main analytic method is two-folded. Firstly, thematic analysis is often used to unravel lived experiences, views and perspectives (Clarke and Braun, 2017) which fall in line with the main purpose of this study – providing understanding on perceived social and economic sustainability. Moreover, thematic analysis is theoretically flexible (Braun and Clarke, 2016) which makes it an appropriate analytic strategy for this study since there is not a concrete theoretical framework used in this study but discourses around sharing economy as the starting point.

All the interviews are number coded and alias for anonymous interviewees.

The analysis process is divided into 6 phases as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006):

Phase 1: All the data will be transcribed and in Vietnamese or the language that the interviews are conducted.

Phase 2: From the transcribing and being familiar with the data, initial codes are generated attempting to systemize interesting features of data.

Phase 3: The codes are organized into sub themes under two big themes of social and economic impacts

Phase 4: Themes and sub themes are then reviewed with the research question, coded extracts as well as entire data set in mind.

Phase 5: Refining sub themes and two big themes of social and economic as well as the story they tell.

Phase 6: Producing report with selected appealing and exemplary extracts, final analysis and reflect on correlation with research question and literature review.

4.4. Ethical concerns

The main data collection method is interview and all of the interviews are facilitated with caution of ethical concerns. Firstly, the purpose of the interviews is discussed openly at the beginning of the interview and when approaching the interviewees. Secondly, the options to participate in the interviews or not is presented to the interviewees beforehand to make sure that their involvement is voluntary. Thirdly, permissions to record the interviews are granted by the interviewees. Besides, the interviewees are informed about their rights at the beginning of the interviews including stopping the interviews, skipping questions that they feel uncomfortable to answer, and reviewing the interview transcriptions. In fact, the transcripts of the interviews are sent to the interviewees who requested for review before being analyzed in this paper. Additionally, the interviewees' identities are protected in this paper based on their requests. Moreover, since my approach to the driver interviewee groups is to use their services, it is made clear to them that their decision regarding my request to interview them do not affect my rating on their services or my pay and tips for them. On top of that, no compensation of any kind is offered to the interviewees in exchange for the interviews to ensure of the transparency and objectiveness of the interviews.

Regarding the confidentiality of the information, all the data is used only for the purpose of a Master thesis and I will make certain that if it is for another purpose, further consent will be discussed with the participants. In general, research ethics and good scientific practices will be followed closely throughout the study process.

5. FINDINGS

5.1. Understanding of the operations

Platform A operates in two segments: cars, 4-wheel vehicles and motorbikes, 2-wheel vehicles. The management styles for each segment is different from each other. While the

management style for car segment is similar to ridesharing platform in other parts of the world, the way motorbike segment organized is more similar to that of a traditional business. Comprehending the management styles of the platform gives me a better understanding of the differences in perceptions towards ridesharing between the platform car drivers and motorbike drivers.

4-wheel segment management style:

Due to the fact that automobile transportation is a regulated industry in Vietnam, platform A has to alter their operation to legalize their 4-wheel segment. The legal premier for car ridesharing is based on the trial to replace paper-based transport contracts with digital transport contracts. This means that the cars used for transporting passengers in ridesharing platform have to be registered as automobile for business to the government and their business activities, in the form of transport contracts, need to be tracked. Since ridesharing firms do not own any car and do not wish to do so, transport cooperatives come into the picture. Drivers put their cars under these transport cooperatives to legitimize the use of their personal cars for doing business. Then platform A works out an algorithm to turn every trip that car drivers make on the platform into spot-to-spot digital contract. This process creates and maintains some of the traits of traditional transport company in car ridesharing operations. For instance, the vehicles are tracked and monitored, drivers' personal tax is paid through the platform by taking 3% off the transport fee.

Except for requirements set by Ministry of Transport, regulations of the platform for car drivers lessen compared to the traditional taxi companies. Platform A does not control one's schedule or assign shifts. Drivers and platform are not bounded by any type of labor contracts. Being self-employed, the drivers have full responsibilities to decide on life plan which refers to paying for their social security and health insurance.

2-wheel segment management style:

Motorbike taxi sector in Vietnam is not regulated and belongs to the informal economy. There has been no rules or laws from the government to monitor this sector. Platform A manages the motorbike drivers by registration process before joining the platform including providing information on their motorbike registrations, health check-up results to testing the drivers' driving skills. On top of that, the platform requires their drivers to wear uniform which has logo or items affiliated with the platform while driving passengers. Besides, the price scheme set up by the platform eliminates the ambiguous price scheme of the informal economy. Last but not least, the platform supervises the drivers following the feedback from the customers with their rating systems.

In brief, I comprehend that platform A informalizes the traditional taxi sector while formalizes the traditional motorbike taxi sector. That being said, the car segment in ridesharing platform still belongs to the formal economy and the motorbike segment remains in informal economy.

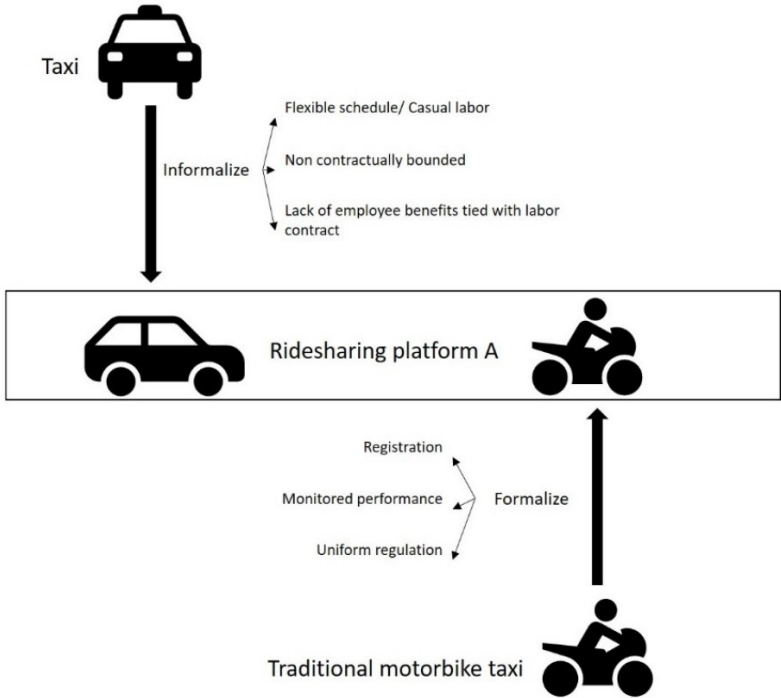


Figure 3. Understanding case study platform A's operations

5.2. Economic sustainability

5.2.1. Direct economic gain

Table 3. Drivers' income

Interview	Other source of income	Job before platform A	Current average daily revenue	Changes in daily revenue generated from A over time
P1	No	Drove for another platform; before that worked as driver for a company	Do not mention	Do not mention
P2	No	Unemployed	Do not specify	Declining. 300,000VND before
P3	No	Construction work by day and motorbike taxi at night	200,000VND	Declining. 300,000VND or 400,000 before
P4	No	Factory worker	Do not mention	Do not mention
P5	Yes: from poker tournament (just sometimes)	Unemployed	500,000VND	No change
P6	Yes: driving for regular customer (maybe once or twice a week); commission from real estate transactions	Office worker and had a wood export business	1,500,000VND	Do not mention
P7	No	Office worker; then kitchen staff in Germany	1,200,000VND	Declining. 3,000,000VND before

P8	No	Taxi driver for 10 years; then drove for another platform	Enough but do not specify.	Do not mention.
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Table 3 shows that the economic impact of platform A on the drivers is significant. All of the drivers generate income primarily from driving for platform A. Among them, only two of the drivers have other ways to earn a living but the revenue from those sources remains minimal and unstable.

The drivers state that platform A gives them chances to work and has their efforts paid off. They view the platform as fair since the more work they put in, the more income they get. A driver uses the phrase “đất lành thì chim đậu” – meaning bird comes to good land to talk about the reason for drivers’ participation in platform A. Moreover, a driver explains that the only reason one cannot sustain themselves by providing services through the platform is their own laziness.

This direct economic benefit to the drivers goes in line with the mission of platform A. When talking about the platform sustainability aspects, the representative of A attests that although there are some environmental impacts such as reducing the amount of people on the road, promoting micro-entrepreneurship is their main take on contributing to the drivers and the community. Besides, he claims that based on their own calculation, the drivers can sustain themselves economically providing their services to A.

However, the earnings from the platform are getting smaller. Motorbike drivers worry that the competition is getting fiercer now than when they first join the platform. Table 3 depicts that while some of the motorbike driver’s daily revenue has been declining quite significantly, others remain unchanged. The motorbike drivers who have got their income decreased claim that it is exhausting for them to earn a living. They account the fall to the fact that the number of platform drivers keep rising sufficiently. Similarly, in the four-wheel sector, some of the drivers attest that the earnings from the platform are decreasing. On top of the shrinking revenue, the profit drivers get also reduces due to the rise in platform

commission. For motorbike taxi drivers, the platform charged 15% on each trip made before but now it is 20%. It is also mentioned that platform A planned to increase the fee to 23% but the drivers went on a protest, so they lowered it down to 20%. To car drivers, the platform commission was 23,6% previously and now it rises up to 28%.

5.2.2. Trust and safety

Besides the direct economic gain from the platform, the issue of trust and safety are also recognized as the advantage of driving for the platform.

Interviewee P2 states that picking up guests from the platform is safe. She mentions that there was a robbery earlier that month to one of the platform drivers and the guest that he was driving at the time was not from the platform. A motorbike driver discloses that he sometimes picks up customers on the road and he would charge more for those trips because of the risks he is taking. When probed about what kind of risks he means, the interviewee replies that in case of accidents or robbery, he would have died without any compensation or insurance.

Compared to taxi drivers, platform car drivers enjoy the benefit of better trust entitled to them by the passengers. Interviewee P8, who used to be a taxi driver, states that in the case of taxi, customers usually pay based on the meter, so they sometimes get suspicious if the taxi drivers do not take the straight-up road even when it is the only way to avoid traffic jam or it is the short cut that the taxi drivers know of. Now with the ridesharing platform's price scheme, the drivers can do their job comfortably without fearing the passengers being displeased with their decisions on which road to take.

5.2.3. Efficiency

A car driver mentions that driving for the platform is very convenient when the he has a personal plan to go somewhere and he could get passengers going to the same direction. It is a win-win situation for everyone involved: platform A, the driver and the customer. While the platform can connect people with matching needs, the driver can earn enough money to

cover his commuting cost and the customer have their demand satisfied. However, the ridesharing benefit of increasing efficiency is still questionable for the car sector. There is a number of drivers who buy a new car just for the purpose of ridesharing. Therefore, the sharing economy advantage of efficient use of idling assets cannot be applied in those cases.

In motorbike taxi sector, ridesharing platform increases the efficiency significantly. Traditionally, every motorbike taxi driver has a designated or usual waiting spot where they go back after dropping off the passengers. On top of that, it is very rare that the drivers can pick up any customers on their return trips because the area usually belongs to other drivers. This results in low productivity and high price in the traditional motorbike taxi market. With the way ridesharing platform works, motorbike drivers can now pick up customers on their ways and avoid empty rides completely. This explains the low price, often half of the traditional motorbike taxi.

5.2.4. Dependent self-employment

Table 4. Dependent self-employment

Dimension	Interview	Exemplary quotes
Flexible self-employment	P4	“There are people who work part time but a lot of them convert to drive for Grab full time since it is flexible, and you can earn money”
	P5	“I drive if I have free time. I driver whenever I feel like it. It is very free”
	P6	“It is good that I can do other things. This and that. Driving for the platform does not restrict me. For example, if I am busy during the daytime, I can drive at night”
	P7	“You can turn on the app to drive whenever you feel like it.”
	P8	“Driving for the platform provides more freedom compared to the taxi company... You can turn on the app to drive whenever you feel like driving. If you don’t, then you can turn it off. This

is different from driving for a taxi company is that as a taxi driver, I drive for the company and here I work for myself, so I have to work more and be more motivated.”

Dependent self-employment	P6	“I cannot do anything to the platform...This is my car but their rules. Do I want to drive? If I do not, then turn the app off. Sometimes they will text me and it seems like they try to give me a warning. As partners, cooperating with each other, we should on equal footings. But at the end of the day, I am the one who serve them. I cannot say anything. It is just a one-way communication from their side. What kind of partnership is that? They only have the software. The car and everything else are mine. If we are really partners, should there be an exchange of information? Here, whatever they say, we must accept. There is no use arguing.”
	P7	“I don’t go the company office. It is too scary... The scary thing here is that I go to the company office, I look around and I feel like I am dependent on them. I don’t like that”

A common trait that is expressed by most of the drivers while talking about driving for the platforms is that the platform provides them flexibility and in a way independence in their work. With platform A, the drivers can increase or decrease their working hours, convert from driving part time to full time on their own and set up their daily schedule in a way that is convenient for them. They can also work other jobs when they want to as they have no restriction or direct supervision from the platform.

On the other hand, table 4 demonstrates the conflicted perception drivers have towards their self-employment provided through ridesharing. Despite expressing freedom while driving for the platform, the drivers still feel restraints in the flexibility and point out their concerns regarding the dependence of their self-employment on the platform. In details, the drivers say that they do not negotiate the price of the trip with the customers but strictly follow the platform’s price even though they do not understand the algorithm behind those prices and sometimes feel that the price is unreasonable. In the case that the customers input the incorrect locations leading to unsuitable fees, the drivers still have to follow the price set up by the platform beforehand and then ask for compensation from the platform later. Another

issue relating to the price of the trip is the differences in trip fee between paying in cash, by card and in the platform's own payment method. It is the cheapest to use the platform payment method and the difference can be from 10,000VND up to 40,000VND. A driver expresses that this feels like he has to shoulder the bigger share of the cost compared to the platform while the platform runs any promotions or deals to attract passengers. Moreover, the drivers express their frustration with the one-sided communication between them and the platform A. Even though they mention about being A's partner, they do not feel like they are being treated as one.

While regarding ridesharing as free self-employment, besides requirements for the platform registration such as health check-up, driving license, etc., drivers on ridesharing platform have their performances monitored and controlled.

Table 5. Platform A's drivers' management tools

Tools	Descriptions
Cancellation rates and acceptance rates	There is a limit on how many percentages of trips drivers can cancel and when the limit is surpassed, the drivers' accounts may be blocked as punishment. The acceptance rates should not be too low either or some functions will be locked.
Demand and supply stimulation	Monetary rewards work as a mean to manipulate the supply of drivers during a certain time of the day at some areas especially during rush hour around the city center.
Customer feedbacks	While the drivers are evaluated by the customer ratings which should be kept above 4.7 out of 5, they cannot rate the customers, only the trip and with only two options: thumbs up or thumbs down. Whenever there are complaints logged by the customers, the driver will be contacted and asked about the incident. Some driver would call the platform beforehand to explain their sides to clear up the issue with the platform first, so their performance will not be greatly affected. However, some will feel like the platform sides with the customers more and that their explanation is of no use.
Restriction of customers	While car drivers attest that they do sometimes pick up regular guests who call them directly or drive for other platforms

	simultaneously and A will never know, and it has nothing to do with A, motorbike drivers declares that A does not allow them to pick up random customers on the streets and ban them to drive for another platform. Moreover, the drivers mention that platform A encourages and “teaches” them to not accept direct booking from the customers but go through the platform.
Uniform for motorbike drivers	All motorbike drivers must wear the platform helmets and shirts while transporting guests or goods. The platform staff will do inspection to make sure that the rule is abided. This sometimes leads to violent retaliation from the drivers since they feel like it is an unreasonable and scheming suppression.
Monetary fine	The drivers report that they can get fined for violating the platform’s regulations and they must pay if they want their accounts to be active again.

Table 5 describes a few management tools platform A uses to monitor the drivers and appraise their performances. With these methods, A regulates the drivers’ self-employments in a way that fits and upholds A’s business operations both in quantity and quality.

5.2.5. Financial risks

It does not come up while talking to the motorbike drivers, but financial risks emerge in the discussion with all the car drivers. It is noted that three of the car drivers buy their cars and one of them rents his vehicle for the purpose of ridesharing.

Table 6. Drivers’ personal finance

Interview	Vehicle ownership	Estimated financial breakdown	Exemplary quotes
P1	Bought new – bank loan	Do not specify	“I drive during the day to earn money for me and my wife. My son takes over at night and he takes care of the money paying for the car with the bank”
P6	Bought new – bank loan	Monthly bank installment: 12,000,000VND for 7 years <u>In case of 1,000,000VND in daily revenue:</u>	“I have to make 1,500,000VND a day...But even that does not give me any extra for saving”

		<p>Gas cost and platform commission fee: 400,000VND or 500,000VND</p> <p>Daily bank payment (calculated by the driver): 400,000VND</p> <p>Estimated profit: 100,000VND to 200,000VND</p> <p>Other not-yet mentioned miscellaneous cost: maintenance fee, repair cost, depreciation.</p>	<p>“So putting in 900 million Vietnam Dong as investment to drive for the platform does not really worth it. I drive so much that I do not sleep well at night, my legs are so worn out because I drive everyday”</p>
P7	Rent	<p>Monthly rent: 10,000,000VND</p> <p><u>In case of 1,000,000VND in daily revenue:</u></p> <p>Platform commission: 280,000VND</p> <p>Gas expense: 300,000VND</p> <p>Daily Rent (calculated by the driver): 300,000VND</p> <p>Estimated profit: 120,000VND</p>	<p>“I have to get 1,500,00VND per day for make ends meet. But getting 1,500,000VND per day is really exhausting. Getting 1,500,000VND in 12 hours driving is also very hard since there are a lot of cars in Sai Gon.”</p>
P8	Bought new – bank loan	<p>Do not specify</p>	<p>“I pay a few millions every month to the bank”</p> <p>“There is no pressure ...My car does not value much, just a few hundred million. My financial capability can only pay that much”</p> <p>“With the taxi company, I work for the company but here I work for myself so I have to work harder. Working for the company, when I feel tired, I can take a break but now even when I am a little tired, I have to try my best.”</p>
Interview		Exemplary quote	

S1 “You know, for us, we always make sure the drivers to have sustainable and stable income. At the same time, you know, we've done the math and we know riding on the platform is sustainable. That's said, you know, we can't control the drivers' financial decisions. For example, if the driver plans to have a certain level of activities that are going to give them ten million a month and then they go and buy a car where the interest payment is eight million a month when they could have bought a car that costs half that much...a lot of the drivers make smart financial decisions, not all of them do. And that's difficult for us because we can't just bail them out because of their poor decisions. We can give them access to rides but again, if they are not able to take that up then. I think that population of people that will become drivers are not very financial educated. So while we can try to make things possible for them to do well, also they make financial decision for themselves.”

Table 6 depicts financial burden platform car drivers face in their daily life. The drivers have to pay either monthly interest for the bank loan they take purchasing the car or monthly rent for leasing the car. Those fixed expenses take up a significant amount in their monthly cost. Therefore, the drivers must set up daily revenue goal which is exhausting to achieve in order to make ends meet and pay back the loan. From the drivers' points of view, there is no way out without loss on their sides be it selling the car or taking a break from driving for ridesharing platform. The drivers also attest that utilizing an idling car that one owns for ridesharing results in better economic value than making investment to buy a car with a sole purpose of providing services through ridesharing platform.

This financial issue is also get acknowledged by the representative of platform A. The problem is recognized and accounted for the fact that most of the drivers are poorly financial educated.

5.3. Social sustainability

5.3.1. Social inclusion

Drivers claim that being able to interact and meet new people is one of the reasons that they would like to provide their services through ridesharing platform. One of the interviewee states that even though he now mostly delivers goods, whenever he feels bored and misses

human interactions, he would switch to passenger transport. Moreover, all drivers manage to set up their own connections and have regular customers who are satisfied with their services and contact them directly whenever there is a need for travelling.

Even though platform A does not provide the drivers an official setting for them to interact with each other, they set up a network among themselves through informal setting. This works similarly to how it is in traditional motorbike taxi market where social relationships happen at the waiting spots. The waiting spots exits also in ridesharing because although the drivers can practically access to the platform anywhere, they usually stay where there are more demands; hence, they communicate and form groups with the “colleagues” in their areas. Within those groups, the drivers get to talk about their work lives, discuss the platform policies and support other drivers in need as well.

On top of that, ridesharing platform gives drivers opportunities to involve in social setting through employment especially for people with low to no skills and experiences. One driver had been unemployed for a long time and by driving for the platform, she is able to participate in social and economic activities. Another driver was just discharged from the army and did not know what to do at the time when he decided to join ridesharing platform A.

5.3.2. Lack of security

Regarding the stability of ridesharing, the drivers express their uneasiness for the future. While admitting driving for platform A being their main income source at the moment, the drivers do not consider ridesharing as a long-term revenue generator and express their wishes to change to some other professions in the near future. They claim that making money from A is not easy and feasible in the long run.

In terms of their own security plan, none of the drivers pays much attention to pension plan. An interviewee who used to be a taxi driver claims that the taxi company paid for his social security before because it was required by the law, however, since switching to work on his

own by partnering with ridesharing platform, he does not get it paid anymore and he has no intention to pay it on his own. In addition, insurance issues are often overlooked by the drivers. Except for the legally required vehicle insurance, most of the drivers do not have any other types of insurance such as health insurance. While platform A provides protection in terms of accident insurance for the drivers and the passengers, the drivers do not know in detail about the insurance policy. Therefore, they do not have enough information to rely on when accidents happen. This results in the drivers' frustration feeling like platform A treat them unfairly.

5.3.3. Hostility from conventional businesses

Between platform motorbike drivers and traditional motorbike drivers, the tension is so high that it affects the drivers directly in their daily lives. It is a well-known fact among the motorbike drivers that they do not get close to the main bus stations or the airport to wait for or drop-off passengers because of the strong hostility from traditional motorbike taxi drivers.

Table 7. Hostility from conventional businesses

Interview	Exemplary quotes
P2	<p>“Other traditional motorbike taxi drivers do not like us especially those at the stations or airports. We are not allowed to go inside to pick up guests... They once beat up a platform driver and broke his arm.”</p> <p>“If I pick the customers there, I would call and ask them to walk a little bit further out of the station and I drop them off not at the station but somewhere near”</p>
P3	<p>“Those guys are aggressive. The other day, I picked up a customer on the street near my house and the motorbike taxi drivers in the alley argued with me, saying that I drove for the platform, so I could not pick up guests not from the platform. I got into a heated quarrel with them. We all try to survive here”</p>
P5	<p>“When I first started, I tried to avoid all the bus stations. Even standing in front of the Hutech university was hard. When I first started, a few motorbike taxi drivers there came over and made things difficult. Things are complicated. That is why I stopped transporting passengers, only goods now”</p> <p>“They already do not like us, so they are not fond of whatever we do”</p>
T1	<p>“I am the platform's partner. They need drivers and we need customers.”</p>

T2	<p>“There are a lot of fights. It is just to get customers.”</p> <p>“This is our bread and butter and they suddenly appear and try to rob from us”</p> <p>“I would rather quit than driving for them”</p>
S1	<p>“I think with the motorbike taxi, ..., it is mostly resolved... Some of taxi companies see us as the enemy... in our view though, we are happy to basically work together”</p>

The resistance from traditional motorbike taxi is experienced individually by all the platform motorbike drivers as described in Table 7. The drivers encounter animosity and even violence from traditional motorbike taxi drivers while doing their jobs. The strongest malice comes from big groups of traditional motorbike taxi drivers whose areas are in the main bus stations and airport. The main reason accounted for that is the market share. As long as the traditional motorbike taxi market is established, groups of drivers have their own designated areas. They protect and at the same time reinforce the informal structure and hierarchy of the market in that area. The existence of ridesharing platform is viewed as the rule breaker since the platform gets access to customers in all areas. Moreover, traditional motorbike taxi market is informal, and all the drivers work individually, therefore, the hostility they bear towards ridesharing platform drivers is also on a personal level; that is why it is intense and easy to escalate to aggression.

On the other hand, platform car drivers dismiss any claim of strained relationship with taxi drivers. Although they have experienced some trivial obstruction such as some taxi drivers do not give way on the road but those are very minor and unimportant. Car drivers state that they have friends working as taxi drivers and that their businesses do not interfere with each other, therefore there is no reason for any tension to arise. To further prove the point, a taxi driver reveals that he has been getting passengers from platform A besides his company's channels ever since A arrived in Vietnam. He mentions that A is very good for taxi drivers because A does not charge taxi drivers any commission. Moreover, since the entrance of ridesharing platform, taxi company has been improving itself in terms of digitalization and now the taxi companies have their own mobile applications. Therefore, the taxi driver thinks

that platform A and taxi drivers benefit each other. While platform A can have more drivers available on their platform, taxi drivers can receive more customers.

However, it is worth to note that things are different on the organizational level. The platform representative attests that while problems with traditional motorbike taxi drivers are mostly resolved, tension leading to lawsuit remains between A and certain taxi companies despite A's efforts trying to cooperate with all the taxi companies.

5.3.4. Work-life off balance

Table 8. Drivers' working hours

Interview	Has been with the platform for	Working hours per day	Working days per week
P1	Almost 1 year	Around 10 hours per day; from 9am	7 days per week
P2	Almost 1 year	11 hours; from 6am to 12pm and from 3pm to 8pm	7 days per week
P3	A while	15 to 16 hours per day; from 12pm till 3am or 4am the next day	7 days per week
P4	A few months	12 to 14 hours per day; from early morning till 6pm or 8pm	7 days per week
P5	1 year and 4 months	12 hours per day; 8am to 8pm	5.5 days per week
P6	11 months	9 to 10 hours per day; from 8.30am to 9pm or 10 pm; rest during rush hours	Usually 7 days per week
P7	9 months	12 hours per day; 7pm to 7am;	7 days per week
P8	A few months	12-15 hours per day; 9am until night (9pm or 12pm)	7 days per week

Table 8 shows the working hours per day and working days per week estimated by the drivers. According to the drivers, their schedule is very flexible. They also emphasize that their working schedule depends on their well-being and if they do not feel good on some day, they go home early. However, it also means that they would drive more if there are customers. Based on the schedule, driving for platform A takes up a significant portion of the drivers' days and they barely have time for other social and personal activities. On top of that, the drivers do not take any days off or vacation. A driver discloses that he used to have another job besides ridesharing, but he got so exhausted after a day of driving, so he quit his side job. This clearly shows that the work-life balance of the platform drivers is far from a sustainable point and it certainly would lead to a significant depreciation in the drivers' quality of life in the future.

5.3.5. The threat of monopoly

Due to the characteristics of the business, in Vietnam ridesharing sector has high industry entrance barrier. Firstly, due to the law, there are currently only nine companies and organizations allowed by the Vietnamese government to operate in the sector (VTMc, 2017). Secondly, to operate a ridesharing platform successfully requires significant investment in technology and efforts to capture the market. Dichung is a local ridesharing platform established in 2013 with the vision of optimizing empty seats in the car. However, they soon had to change their business model for two reasons: Vietnamese' unwillingness to share the car with strangers, and dichung's small market size. The former business development manager at Dichung explains that because they could not acquire a big enough number of users so there were not a lot of matches happening on the platform. Therefore, dichung had to switch their business strategy, from long distance travel in general to airport shuttle professional service sharing. Dichung's failure indicates enormous obstacles small local ridesharing platforms face due to the lack of resources leading the possibility of only a few big players can survive in the ridesharing industry.

This threat of monopoly has great impacts on the drivers. Platform A is currently considered by the drivers as the best ridesharing platform in terms of volume and technology in the

Vietnamese market. While this benefits the drivers directly for the user-friendly application and enormous access to customers, it also poses as a threat for drivers due to the lack of alternatives. Drivers express their frustration on the ever-increasing commission fee from the platform. They claim that A now can act however they want and do not care about the drivers anymore because no competitor in the market can catch up to A. On top of that, as A continues to grow exponentially – drivers attest that there are at least 100 to 150 drivers signing up to platform A everyday – drivers’ power and voices are getting more and more insignificant. Hence, the drivers become indifferent to any new policies coming from the platform because they feel that there is nothing they can do to make a difference. On top of that, for car drivers, since they mostly belong to a cooperative as a requirement to join platform A, they consider the cooperatives as their representatives. However, the cooperatives have shown no visible support or have done nothing to protect the car drivers. This adds in to the low perceived power of the drivers.

All this result in drivers’ disappointment as they express their expectation for more players in the market and claim that they will switch to another platform if there is an equally good one.

6. DISCUSSION

In this section, I will summarize the findings of the research as well as use the empirical data collected to address the discourse around sustainability of ridesharing specifically and sharing economy in general.

6.1. Common traits of ridesharing operations in emerging markets

In this section, I attempt to draw a general picture for ridesharing specifically in emerging markets by pulling out similar attributes in the findings of this study and previous researches done on the topic other emerging markets.

Ridesharing is growing in emerging markets. The Uber drivers in South Africa shared that the work was not as much as it used to be anymore since there are more and more drivers

(Dreyer et al, 2017). The sentiment is also expressed by the Vietnamese drivers saying that it is getting harder to earn a living since the number of drivers increases every day. Another common attribute of ridesharing platform in emerging economies is that ridesharing platform is often the primary income source of the platform drivers. Dreyer et al. (2017) mention that all the drivers interviewed in their study in South Africa generate income only from ridesharing platform. This is also the case with all the interviewees in this study conducting in Vietnam. The situation is very different from ridesharing platform drivers in other developed countries such as USA where ridesharing is mostly a second or third source of income (Dreyer et al., 2017). Additionally, drivers in emerging economies are often lack of access to cars. Dreyer et al. (2017) state that majority of South African drivers rely on cars provided by “owner partners” or lease agreements with their ridesharing platform earnings statement as guarantee. Vietnamese platform car drivers usually rent the car or take out bank loan to purchase the car. Finally, it can be seen that in emerging markets where there are other modes of transportation besides cars, ridesharing platform expand their operations and covers more segment beside their original four-wheel model. Vacano (2017) studies the impacts of ridesharing in motorbike sector in Jakarta, Indonesia. From the observations, she states that ridesharing formalizes the motorbike sector-called ojek to a certain degree regarding the employment and service. This point is supported by transformation of motorbike taxi sector in Vietnam triggered by the entrance of ridesharing described in this study.

6.2. Positioning ridesharing in sharing economy framework

Platform A business model works similarly to how the ridesharing model is claimed to operate. Platform A is a two-sided marketplace with the platform technology plays the intermediation role of matching rides automatically. However, there are also real-life developments that is not entirely covered in the academic research yet. Firstly, based on the services platform A offers at the moment, they go beyond transporting only passengers to delivering goods on request. On top of that, platform A’s vision is to make themselves a super app where every daily necessity can be accessed on one platform. Moreover, by

developing their own digital money – the platform wallet – platform A do not only play the role of matching rides but also facilitating financial transactions.

In terms of inserting ridesharing under the umbrella of sharing economy, according to the framework of three sharing economy fundamental organizing cores proposed by Acquier, Daudigeos and Pinkse (2017) which includes access economy, platform economy and community-based economy, platform A can be classified as access-platform. However, while access economy emphasizes the optimization of underutilized assets, empirical data from the research shows that most of the vehicles are not underused because they are obtained solely for the purpose of ridesharing and the drivers drive for the platform full time. Moreover, whereas platform economy accentuates the decentralized transactions among peers, results from the study show that despite being not under direct supervision of the platform, participants, specifically drivers, are monitored closely by various management tools. On top of that, except for the physical aspect of the exchange, other factors such as price schemes, ride matching, and even financial transactions are exclusively determined by the platform.

On the other hand, taking the sharing and exchange continuum proposed by Habibi, Davidson and Laroche (2016) in considerations, transactions happening on platform A are closer to exchanges than sharing activities. Interactions between drivers and passengers carry many of the attributes of pure exchange activity including reciprocal, balanced exchange, no lingering obligation, money relevant, calculation, inspection. That being said, some of the sharing characteristics still exist such as inalienable.

6.3. Sustainability discourse

6.3.1. Economic sustainability

The participants, specifically the drivers in this case, receive economic benefits from providing their assets and services through the platform in exchange for a fee. Most of the drivers have their main income coming from the platform. This result support argument of Frenken and Schor (2017) saying that economic benefits of sharing economy to providers is

undeniable. Especially in a lower-middle-income economy with the Gross National Income per capital from \$996 to \$3,895 (The World Bank - WBb, 2018) such as Vietnam, the appeal of economic benefit is highlighted further than other types of gains. Based on the daily revenue disclosed by the drivers, all of them approximately generate more than the minimum wage for employees working under contracts in Ho Chi Minh City area proposed by the government which is 3,980,000VND per month (Vietnamese Government, 2017). The drivers' estimated monthly incomes are approximately at least two times for motorbike drivers and ten times for car drivers the living wage. This can also be seen particularly with the platform A driver recruitment advertisement where only monetary value is used as the appealing point of the platform.

However, the data collected refute the statement by Nica and Potcovaru (2015) affirming that sharing economy provides 'effortlessly attainable revenue'. As presented in table 7, drivers do not generate their revenue effortlessly. Their working hours range from 63 to 112 hours per week which is significantly more than the maximum working hours of 48 suggested in the Vietnamese Labor Code (Vietnamese National Assembly, 2012) for contract employee. On top of that, drivers usually mention how exhausting it is to drive around all day and attest that sometimes a good night sleep does not come because they overwork themselves. The reason lies on the fact that ridesharing is not the drivers' side gigs besides their main jobs but their primary income source therefore they must put in efforts to achieve good economic results.

Sharing economy is said to increase the quality of the complete sector in general (Verboven and Vanherck, 2016), however, this point has previously been addressed only from the customers' side. The findings of this research demonstrate that the trust and safety drivers feel towards customers also improve. This aspect is especially highlighted in the motorbike taxi sector. While taxi companies are regulated, and taxi drivers are monitored, the traditional motorbike taxi belongs to the informal economy which means that they are not registered and protected in any ways including their access to customers. Through the ridesharing platform, instead of random strangers, drivers now know at least the customers' names and

contact details which help them to feel safe while making the trip. Moreover, since the price is pre-determined by the platform, drivers feel comfortable driving since they face no suspicions of scams coming from the customers which improve the drivers' working experiences.

While optimization of under-utilized assets is one of the basic features of sharing economy, there are little findings in this research condoning this aspect. The reason is that since the economic gain is attractive and as the representative of platform A confirms that by their own calculation, driving for the platform is a sustainable way of generating revenue for the drivers, most of the drivers drive full time for the platform. This means that the assets are mostly not underused therefore there is no space in efficiency to improve. However, it is indeed mentioned once by the driver that if he has a trip planned beforehand and he can share the ride with passengers from the platform then he can fully feel the benefits of ridesharing platform.

Verboven and Vanherck (2016) state that sharing economy offers flexibility to the users and the drivers' perceptions towards platform A support the claim. All of drivers express a sense of freedom in terms of deciding when and where to work. For some of them, flexibility is the key factor why they turn to full-time platform drivers. On the other hand, drivers still have conflicted feelings towards being controlled within the liberty of self-employment. This goes in line with the criticism Anderson (2016) makes toward ridesharing platform. He attests that ridesharing platform streamline the information and payment through which drivers' performances are monitored. Drivers from platform A are supervised closely by the rating system where customers evaluate their services, the cancellation and acceptance rate, and motorbike drivers even have to wear uniform while working. On top of that, the motorbike drivers' customer access is restricted to only through platform A which goes against the decentralized and equitable feature of sharing economy. Anderson (2016) explains this flexibility conflict by pointing out the affective framing of "friends with cars, on demand" ridesharing uses to construct the affective labor and the pervasion of monitoring software in the hybrid space of work. On top of that, the lack of clarity in any of the platform's policies

and algorithms is said to be used to manipulate the drivers' behaviors (Anderson, 2016). The evidence collected shows that the drivers do not have the knowledge on the platform's operations. What the drivers know is only how to use the application to pick up and drop off passengers. They have little understanding on how the price schemes work, how the cancellation and acceptance rates are calculated, what kind of fine will be implemented violating a certain rule, etc. Even issues that related directly to their benefits, the drivers do not seem to know clearly about those either. For instance, the drivers know about the accident insurance policy that the platform provides them, but they do not know the terms and conditions required for the insurance to be valid or how much the covered amount is.

One development of ridesharing impacts in the emerging market context that seems to not happen in the developed countries is the financial trap drivers find themselves in while investing in ridesharing. This is not a phenomenon in the motorbike sector but car sector. With 8,297,500 people (GSOa 2016) in Ho Chi Minh City, there are 7,600,000 motorbikes but only 700,000 cars (Ta Lam, 2017). Therefore, it can be assumed that most people in Ho Chi Minh City own a motorbike but only a few can afford a car. This results in car drivers usually taking loan to purchase a car to participate in the ridesharing activities. As the representative of the platform comment that some of the drivers are not financially literate which leads to poor financial decisions resulting in the debts that car drivers usually put themselves in. The situation is demonstrated in the findings with car drivers being burdened by their debts and have to set up a hard-to-achieve daily revenue goal to make ends meet. Hence, the pressure and frustration of car drivers comes from trying to keep their investment afloat.

6.3.2. Social sustainability

Increasing social interactions is deemed as one of the positive impacts of sharing economy (Frenken and Schor, 2017) (Verboven and Vanherck, 2016). However, Frenken and Schor (2017) predict that the sustainability of social benefits of sharing economy becomes ambiguous when sharing economy becomes more daily-life. This aspect is acknowledged in

the results with the drivers getting regular customers, but their interactions do not develop further than a driver – passenger relationship. The situation can be accounted for the fact that to the drivers, ridesharing platform is not about sharing but doing business as usual so there is no need for them to put in efforts to make meaningful social relationships. In addition to social contacts, evidence for social inclusion can be found in the research findings especially for drivers who were unemployed before joining in the ridesharing platform. However, it seems that being socially integrated is more of the result of employment than the impact of ridesharing.

Another point in social sustainability discourse of sharing economy is criticism towards the labor organization. While Anderson (2016) views ridesharing as a legal ploy to evade the regulations, Dreyer et al. (2017) states that flexibility in employment puts participants in risks of non-employee protection. The results show that drivers do not have any long-term security plan including pension plan. Lack of insurance such as health insurance is also a concerning issue emerging from the data. On top of that, as drivers are not officially employed by the platform, hence, they do not have any protection from the labor code which ties with labor contracts. This means that the drivers do not enjoy the benefits or security regulated by the labor code for instance maximum working hours, sick leave, vacation leave, mandatory social security and health insurance, etc. That being said, while ridesharing car drivers seem to be lacking in terms of benefits coming from the labor contracts compared to taxi drivers, ridesharing motorbike drivers have more assurance under the form of accident insurance than traditional motorbike taxi drivers. As the traditional motorbike taxi sector is not administered by the government, the passengers as well as traditional motorbike taxi drivers are not well-supported either. By offering accident insurance, ridesharing platform acts as a guarantor for motorbike drivers and passengers in this aspect. Nevertheless, the general lack of protection from employee contract as well as financial pressure and having ridesharing as the main income source result in the drivers' work-life off balance. Their working hours can sometimes be twofold the maximum working hours of 48 hours regulated for contract employees by the labor code. In the long run, this can significantly deteriorate the drivers' quality of life.

Moreover, Frenken and Schor (2017) express their concern over the increasing competition in the market, whereas Verboven and Vanherck (2016) worry about the threat of monopoly. The uneasy is shared by the ridesharing drivers participating in this research, however, the competitiveness is perceived differently on different levels. On a personal level, only motorbike drivers experience violence and aggression from the traditional motorbike drivers, whereas car drivers maintain neutral relationship with taxi drivers. On an organizational level, ridesharing platform expresses that they only have unresolved tension with taxi companies but not in the traditional motorbike taxi sector. The reason for this might be the fact that the traditional motorbike taxi sector belongs to the informal economy, so they do not have a formal organization who can represent the traditional motorbike taxi drivers. Additionally, the threat of monopoly becomes real when platform A takes over another platform and becomes the biggest ridesharing provider in Vietnamese market. This results in the drivers' worries over limited choices of work, future increase of platform's commission, and other type of changes in policies that may be issued later from the platform.

6.4.Recommendations

Regarding managerial implications, the findings show that ridesharing specifically or sharing economy in general is mainly framing as an economic opportunity in emerging market. This seems to work and attract an enormous number of drivers and passengers to the ridesharing platform. However, as the thrill of economic gain dies down and more players coming in the market as well as the retaliation of conventional businesses going digital, ridesharing platform may face difficulties to uphold their market share. Therefore, I would like to recommend that ridesharing platform and sharing economy practices should make efforts in maintaining their "sharing" value and the novelty of sharing economy by refocusing their operations on embracing and emphasizing the social and environmental value. This would also help to give the firms the market advantage and distinguish themselves with other competitors especially the conventional businesses. Moreover, ridesharing platform is a two-sided market and it relies heavily on the independent drivers to provide services to consumers (Furuhata et al., 2016). Therefore, it is important for managers in ridesharing firms to

understand the dissatisfaction of the drivers, the rationale behind that and take act upon it to prevent the high driver turn-over as well as maintain the drivers' loyalty. Based on the findings, it is recommended that communication should be improved between ridesharing firms and drivers in terms of transparency and clarity. On top of that, as the drivers are considered as independent providers to ridesharing platform, it is essential for ridesharing firms to balance the control exerting on the drivers. Ridesharing firms while try to maintain the service quality, should pay attention to their policies making sure that they respect and treat the drivers as their partners. Finally, since ridesharing platform in emerging market is considered by many drivers as their main income source, the role ridesharing platform plays in drivers' livelihood is significant. Therefore, I suggest that ridesharing platform to take other aspects of drivers' lives besides revenue into considerations while formulating their platform policies.

6.5.Future research

For future research, an investigation using quantitative instead of qualitative method on social and economic impacts of ridesharing platform on drivers can provide substantial empirical data to support and compete the findings of this study. Moreover, impacts on traditional businesses should be examined in detail in order to achieve a holistic view on the economic sustainability of ridesharing platform specifically and sharing economy in general. While this paper addresses the strained relationship between the platform drivers and conventional drivers, overall influence ridesharing platforms have on traditional business is not studied in detail. As a traditional motorbike taxi driver affirms that traditional motorbike taxi section is shrinking, and it is harder to find traditional motorbike taxi drivers along the alleys in residential areas where they used to wait for passengers, it is essential for a study to investigate the progressing abolition of the sector triggered by the introduction of digital sharing platforms. Besides, research on other practices such as rental (Airbnb) or skill-sharing platform under the umbrella of sharing economy in emerging context should be examined to offer perspectives in other sectors besides ridesharing. As how ridesharing platforms are permitted to operate in Vietnam as part of a legal trial to test out digitalization

in transportation sector, it is interesting to do a study on changes in legal system activated by the development of sharing economy practices as well as how legal regulations shape sharing economy firms' operations.

7. CONCLUSION

This research explores the perceived economic and social sustainability of sharing economy within the transportation domain. The study focus is on the independent providers and in the context of emerging markets. Interview is used as the main research tool and the interview sample include ridesharing platform drivers, taxi drivers and traditional motorbike taxi drivers as well as ridesharing platform representative. The findings of this study carry the unique characteristics of the local institutions. Despite being tied to the emerging context, the study does not lessen its value in contributing to sharing economy literature since it offers an angle where the literature body is lacking, and it places itself as a comparison case to those carried out in developed context as well as in other emerging markets. Moreover, this research is bounded by one specific case study. As the case platform is considered one of the best and the biggest in the market at the moment, the data collected retains its representative attribute and therefore, can contribute to the literature of sustainability of ridesharing and sharing economy.

Sharing economy in general and ridesharing specifically in emerging markets establishes and grows differently to its kind in developed countries due to the local socio-economic institutions. Unlike in developed countries, sharing economy plays a significant role in transforming its' independent providers' lives. The research results show that the impacts of sharing economy on the independent providers are both positive and negative. The economic effects include direct economic gains, increased efficiency, improved trust and safety, creation of dependent self-employment and risky financial decision. Meanwhile, the social consequences comprise of social inclusion, lack of long-term security, hostility from conventional businesses, work-life off balance and concern over threat of monopoly. It can be seen from the findings that the providers enjoy the economic benefits from the boom of sharing economy, however, the enjoyment has been dying down and concerns over the future

has emerged. Whether or not sharing economy can become a long-term source of income for providers depends on to what extent direct economic gain can be achieved in the expense of security, quality of life and other social sustainability aspects. Moreover, dissatisfaction and frustration, that are expressed by providers, are mostly stemmed from the conflicts of new business model and conventional management system. While the novelty of sharing economy promises independence, flexibility, economic, social and environmental sustainability for its providers, the conventional, business-as-usual management strategies hinder those promises with closely monitored performance tools while eliminate the benefits of contract labor. Additionally, the findings demonstrate that sharing economy is now only framed as an economic opportunity. Sharing economy operations do not seem to be able to uphold the value of the sharing in sharing economy but operates more likely as a digital marketplace where exchange transactions happen. Economic value is prioritized over the social and environmental impacts. If there are positive social or environmental effects, it is well be the unintentional consequences while the sharing economy firms focus on the economic sustainability.

Regarding managerial suggestions for ridesharing firms, I recommend that ridesharing platform should improve communication in both transparency and clarity with platform drivers in order to increase the drivers' satisfaction rate. This can help to enhance the drivers' service quality as well as their loyalty to the platform, hence, create market advantage for the platform against its competitors. Another recommendation is that ridesharing platform should integrate a good sustainability strategy focusing on social and environmental aspects in its operation. By doing so, ridesharing firms can fully harness the novelty and sustainability-based benefits of sharing economy and distinguish itself from conventional businesses.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW GUIDE 1 – for platform drivers

1. Can you tell me about a little bit about yourself? Is providing services for the ridesharing platform A your main job?
2. Can you tell me about your story of joining in the platform?
3. How is your contract with the platform? What kind of responsibilities and benefits do you agree to provide to and receive from the platform?
Probing questions about fee charging from the platform (per trip/per month?)
4. How often do you communicate with the platform company?
Probing questions about the reasons for contacting the company/problem types
5. When are the busiest and slowest time of the day or the week for you?
6. How much time do you work per day on average?
Probing questions about any working hour limits/policy from the platform stating or encouraging you to work more
7. On average, how many customers do you have a day? And how more or less is it in comparison to before you joined the platform (applicable to traditional motorbike taxi drivers turning to platform drivers)?
Probing questions on income, trips (does the platform provide you more income/trips? How much more in comparison?)
8. How important as an income source the platform is to you?
9. Besides getting customers from the platform, do you use any other channels/approaches? If yes, what are they?
10. How is your relationship with other drivers in the platform?
Probing questions on driver diversity (background, social classes)
11. Can you describe the customers you receive from the platform and how is your relationship with them like?
Probing questions on customer diversity

Probing question on any meaningful contacts that drivers have created

Is your relationship with platform customers different from other customers not from the platform?

12. How does the rating system work? Do you feel pressure to make efforts in order to receive good rating?
13. How are complaints handled by the ridesharing platform?
14. How is your relationship with taxi drivers/motorbike taxi drivers?
15. How satisfied are you with the services the platform provides to you?
16. What other benefits do you think the platform offer to you?
17. What is your ideal ridesharing platform like? What kind of benefits that you would like it offers to you as drivers?

INTERVIEW GUIDE 2 – for taxi drivers and traditional motorbike taxi drivers

1. Can you tell me about a little be about yourself?
2. Can you tell me about your story of getting into this profession/getting in the taxi company you are currently working for?
3. How is your contract with the company? What kind of responsibilities and benefits do you agree to provide to and receive from the company?
4. When are the busiest and slowest time of the day or the week for you?
5. What kind of channels/approaches you use to get customers?
6. How is your relationship with your customers?
7. On average, how many customers do you have a day?
8. Have you noticed any changes in your workload recently? If yes, what do you think is the cause of those changes?
9. Do you know anything about ridesharing platforms? And how do you know about them?
10. What do you know or think about ridesharing platforms?
11. How do you think ridesharing platforms affect other drivers and transportation companies?

12. Have you noticed any changes in your work ever since the appearance of ridesharing platforms?
13. Who do you think ridesharing platforms are beneficial for?
14. How do you think ridesharing platforms support their drivers?
15. Have you ever thought about joining the platforms? Why or why not?

INTERVIEW GUIDE 3 – for ridesharing platform representative

1. Can you tell me about a little bit about yourself and what position are you holding at the company?
2. Can you tell me about your story of getting into the company? And how is working here for you?
3. Can you provide me overall information on the platform such as revenue or the platform volume?
4. Do you know about sustainability and what do you think is sustainability?
5. Based on what you just describe about sustainability, what pillars of sustainability do you think the company you are working for is built on?
6. What kind of corporate social responsibility programs does the company have?
7. Have these programs been the same since founding?
8. Does the company have any plan to roll out new social responsibility programs in the near future? If yes, can you share that with me?
9. What channels does the company usually use to communicate sustainability or corporate social responsibility programs and who are the target audience?
10. Which actors/stakeholders are in the center of the business? /Who are the main beneficiaries of the company?
11. What does the company think about independent service providers? And do you know about the demographic of your service providers?
12. How does the company recruit drivers?
13. What kind of benefits does the company offer to the drivers?

14. How does the platform communicate with the drivers and what kind of information does the platform usually discuss with the drivers?
15. Compared to other platforms, what do you think your platform is doing better for your service providers?
16. Do you know about the resistance of traditional drivers towards your platform? What does the company think about that? And what measure does the company take to counteract with that?