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POTENTIAL FOR WELL-BEING IN PEER-TO-PEER SHARING ECONOMY: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW AND MODELING

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ABSTRACT

Humans pursue well-being in their lives. Well-being encompasses positive emotions, life satisfaction, healthy functioning, meaning of life, and self-growth. In ancient times, sharing was an intimate behavior that consolidated communities and led to an ideal life, which refers to well-being in the present. Sharing economy sheds light on a novel business model in which people can develop their well-being while sharing resources/goods and services among strangers. However, prior research shows that users participate in the sharing economy because of self-interest rather than social interaction or sustainability. Sustainable well-being is important not only for us but also for our communities and our planet. This study investigates how the components of well-being can be built into a sharing economy and foster users to pursue it in the long-term. It reviews and synthesizes prior studies to (1) elucidate the components of well-being in the peer-to-peer (P2P) sharing economy, (2) model the sharing ecosystem with components of well-being from a global perspective, and (3) discuss the design solutions for a P2P sharing platform to facilitate well-being. Furthermore, it provides examples of practices to illustrate the proposed model. We believe this study not only motivates platformers to consider users' well-being but also promotes sustainable functioning of the sharing ecosystem.

Keywords: *Well-being, P2P platform, Sharing economy*

1 INTRODUCTION

Well-being is one of the ultimate goals of life. Humans pursue well-being to attain positive emotions, life satisfaction, healthy functioning, meaning of life, and self-growth (Andrews & Withey, 2012; Diener, 2000). A hundred thousand years ago, humans already shared food, shelter, and work within tribes, an intimate behavior that encouraged a strong feeling of community. Such intimate sharing within kinship and friendship leads to an ideal social and

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physical life, which we refer to as well-being today. Owing to the rising trend in P2P platforms, the sharing economy is a novel business model in which people can share products, services, or skills with strangers. Since the sharing economy is one of the fastest growing markets (Apte & Davis, 2019; Wirtz, So, Mody, Liu, & Chun, 2019), it has significantly changed consumption patterns, markets, and business ecosystems over the past two decades. However, prior studies show that users participate in the sharing economy mainly for self-oriented benefits (e.g., joy, reward) rather than the expected benefits of social interaction and environmental sustainability (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Hamari, Sjöklint, & Ukkonen, 2016). Belk (2014) believes that “sharing for profit” creates weak bonds among users; he characterizes it as “pseudo-sharing”. Although novel sharing behavior differs from ancient intimate sharing within tribes, it still leaves room for potentially developing well-being. There are numerous studies on the relationship between the concept of well-being and the sharing economy. It still has enormous potential for social development, sustainable consumption, and environmental protection (Martin, 2016).

While there is an increasing focus on well-being in the sharing economy, a holistic review to organize the various concepts of well-being, which can be executed on P2P sharing platforms, is lacking. The gap between the reality and the expectation of positive values in the sharing economy leads us to not only explore the economic needs of users, but also the emotional, social, and environmental values that they can exchange with each other. Therefore, this study explores the potential of well-being components in the sharing economy to help both providers and receivers perceive them and continuously engage in the sharing community. We also review prior studies to identify the gaps between the present situation and the ideal structure of well-being, and propose a framework to illustrate the potential relationship of well-being that can be explored in the sharing economy. Therefore, we (1) conclude related studies elucidate the key components of well-being in the sharing economy and (2) propose a preliminary framework for sharing ecosystems with well-being. We believe that this study not only motivates scholars and practitioners to consider users’ well-being but also promotes sustainable and prosperous sharing between people and strangers.

2 WELL-BEING AND SHARING ECONOMY

2.1 What is well-being?

Well-being can be regarded as psychological well-being (or subjective well-being) in mainstream research. It can be divided into hedonic and eudemonic well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Ryff (1989) summarized well-being embodied in six dimensions of life: (1) accepting oneself in a positive way (self-acceptance), (2) having trusting and satisfying relationships with others (positive relations with others), (3) feeling a sense of self-determination and independence (autonomy), (4) having a sense of improvement in self (personal growth), (5) possessing beliefs and goals in life (purpose in life), and (6) being capable of controlling the surrounding context (environmental mastery). These theory-based dimensions of well-being correspond to basic human motivations and needs. According to Maslow’s hierarchy of human needs (Maslow, 1962), humans have eight levels of needs, wherein a person is motivated to

move up the hierarchy toward the top level. Multi-levels of well-being can be described as intro-personal, inter-personal, and extra-personal aspects, which integrate individual, social, and environmental relationships (Calvo & Peters, 2014). Thus, we believe that the levels of needs can also correspond to the multi-levels of well-being and that the lower levels (e.g., preventing illness and decreasing depression) should be fulfilled to attain a higher level (e.g., being connected with others), and consequently the top level (e.g., seeking meaningful personal growth).

2.2 Sharing Economy and P2P Sharing Platform

The platform on which enormous value can be exchanged is the center of the P2P sharing economy. It matches providers, receivers, and objects (or services) in an interactive ecosystem (Parker, Van Alstyne, & Choudary, 2016). Airbnb, Uber, Lyft, and eBay are examples of such successful platforms. In the P2P platform mechanism, information, object (or service), and currency exchanges are core interactions (Parker et al., 2016). Therefore, we illustrate the P2P platform mechanism based on the three interactions proposed by Parker et al. (2016) (Fig.1). However, we updated the information exchange to be divided into user profile, object description, and communication—the features on which some prior studies have conducted experiments. Essentially, both providers and receivers interact on the platform (online) before sharing and accessing objects. After making the deal and paying on the platform, they interact offline to share and access the resources.

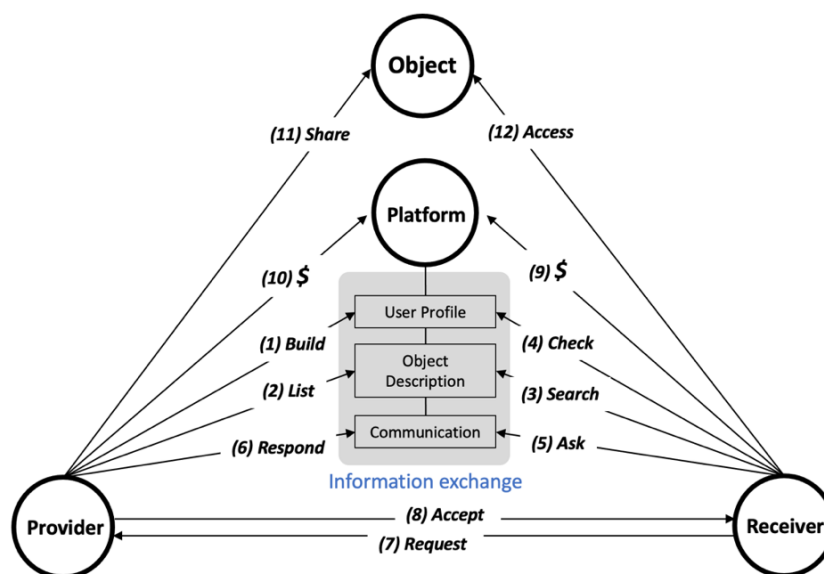


Figure 1. The mechanism of the P2P platform

3 THE COMPONENTS OF WELL-BEING IN SHARING ECONOMY

3.1 Definitions of the components of well-being

The study organizes and proposes literature-based components of well-being in the sharing economy. We propose nine such potential components: pleasure, attachment, trust, empathy, contribution, gratitude, engagement, compassion, and altruism. As prior studies from various

disciplines may differ in terms of the definitions of each component of well-being, this study integrates them into simplified definitions that can be found and developed in the sharing economy.

- **Pleasure:** Pleasure is a positive feeling central to the perception of well-being (Kringelbach, 2010). It plays an important role in survival and reproduction (Darwin, 1859). The need for pleasure assures that people are attracted by food, sex, and social interactions.
- **Attachment:** Attachment toward a possession is acquired from a sense of ownership, and past experience with the possession serves as the identity of oneself (Ahuvia, 2005; Belk, 1988). People with strong attachment to an object intend to take good care of it and have better life satisfaction (Tsurumi, Yamaguchi, Kagohashi, & Managi, 2020).
- **Trust:** Trust and well-being are closely connected. Trust allows people to perceive security, support, and comfort (Bowlby, 2008) and facilitates pro-social behaviors (Helliwell & Wang, 2010). People living in high-trust environments have a higher level of well-being (Helliwell & Wang, 2010).
- **Empathy:** Empathy is regarded as being pervaded by others' emotions or understanding the factors of others' emotions (Cuff, Brown, Taylor, & Howat, 2016). It is an other-oriented emotional response wherein people are concerned about others' well-being (Batson et al., 2002b).
- **Contribution:** The sense of contribution (or having a positive impact on others) fulfills the basic human needs of autonomy, relatedness, and competence, based on self-determination theory (Martela & Ryan, 2016). Additionally, contribution to others can strongly predict eudemonic well-being (Ryan, Huta, & Deci, 2008).
- **Gratitude:** Gratitude is a feeling of gratefulness experienced when one receives favors, kindness, help, and support from others (Tesser, Gatewood, & Driver, 1968). One could feel gratitude for not only inter-personal relationships, but also an object or an experience, such as an artwork or a trip (Sansone & Sansone, 2010). Evidence shows that practicing gratitude improves well-being (Dickerhoof, 2007; Froh, Sefick, & Emmons, 2008).
- **Engagement:** Engagement is a state of being engrossed in an activity. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) also regards it as "flow". People recall that state as an exceptional and enjoyable experience that leads to well-being (Schueller & Seligman, 2010).
- **Compassion:** Compassion is a caring attitude toward others and a willingness to help them. Empathy and compassion are fundamental to the quality of social relationships. Compared to empathy, compassion enables people to have helping intentions in addition to sharing others' emotions (De Waal, 2010).
- **Altruism:** Altruism is a behavior rather than an emotion that helps or confers benefits upon others at the cost of oneself (Fehr & Fischbacher, 2003). Altruism likely stems from compassion and empathy (Batson et al., 2002a; Hoffman, 1981). Here, altruism concerns inter-personal helping behaviors and extra-personal behaviors, such as protecting animals and the environment.

The components of well-being selected in this research correspond to Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the three aspects of well-being. Figure 2 shows nine well-being components located at the level of well-being relationship and related needs. Pleasure and attachment are categorized as intra-personal aspects, which focus more on the self-object relationship, referring to physiological and safety needs. Trust, empathy, contribution, and gratitude belong to the interpersonal aspect that one can attain through social interaction, referring to safety, belonging and love, esteem, cognitive, and aesthetic needs. Lastly, engagement, compassion, and altruism belong to extra-personal aspects that lead people to think about the meaning of activity, society, and the environment, which further refers to aesthetic needs, self-actualization, and transcendence. In this structure, well-being can be enhanced to higher-level values if its lower-level components are fulfilled.

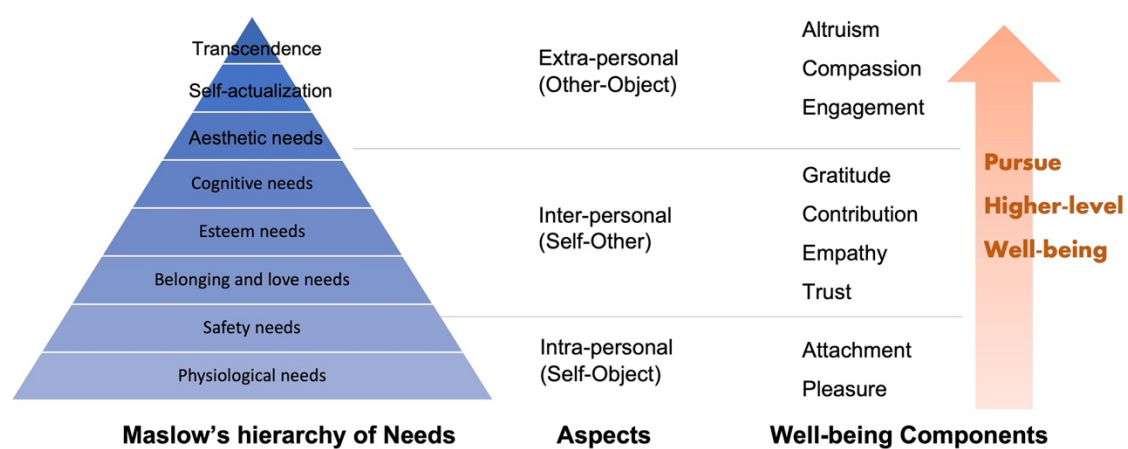


Figure 2. The relationship between Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the well-being components

3.2 Related studies on well-being and sharing

Regarding the pleasure of sharing, some interesting studies on food sharing have pointed out that sharing food online or offline allows social connections to prosper (Maldoy, De Backer, & Poels, 2021; Mendini, Pizzetti, & Peter, 2019) and increases the appeal of food (Maldoy et al., 2021). However, the attachment to sharing is mainly explored in accommodation sharing. For example, personal objects that evoke hosts' presence can improve their social attachment to hosts (Dogerlioglu-Demir, Akpınar, & Ceylan, 2022). Trust has received the most attention in studies on the sharing economy. For example, the quantity of information and communication are important factors in building trust perceptions (Zamani, Choudrie, Katechos, & Yin, 2019). Additionally, the length of the provider's self-descriptions influences the receiver's trust (Ma et al., 2017) and the perception of the hosts' trustworthiness from their photo affects the listing price or likelihood of selection (Ert et al., 2016). Evidence shows that receivers' empathy toward providers can improve loyalty (Shuqair, Pinto, & Mattila, 2021) and the antecedent of empathy can be information shared between a salesperson and customer (Mangus, Bock, Jones, & Folse, 2020). A sense of contribution can be found in coupon sharing (Tang, Zhao, & Liu, 2016) and knowledge-sharing contexts (Seebohm et al., 2013; Teh & Yong, 2011). A gratitude study shows that gratitude fosters sharing word-of-mouth for sustainable luxury brands (Septianto, Seo, & Errmann, 2021), prosocial behaviors (e.g., information sharing) of a salesperson, and long-term

business relationships (Mangus, Bock, Jones, & Folse, 2017). In the studies on engagement, scholars point out that the sense of ownership is the antecedent to engagement, but interpersonal contamination has a negative effect on the intention to engage (Baker, Kearney, Laud, & Holmlund, 2021). Regarding compassion, one study finds that people who have high trust and compassion levels significantly increase their willingness to share resources after a disaster (Wong, Walker, & Shaheen, 2021). On altruism, studies state that trust improves knowledge-sharing intentions and behaviors (Chen, Fan, & Tsai, 2014; Wu, Lin, Hsu, & Yeh, 2009).

To sum up, prior studies have shown that higher-level well-being components (gratitude, engagement, compassion, altruism) serve as antecedents to motivate providers to share with others. For example, the feeling of gratitude fosters information-sharing between providers and receivers, and compassion and altruism increases the willingness to share objects. In contrast, lower-level well-being components (pleasure, attachment, trust, empathy, and contribution) serve as the consequences of information sharing and object sharing. As Figure 4 shows, we structured the potential relations of well-being components and sharing behaviors based on several literature reviews.

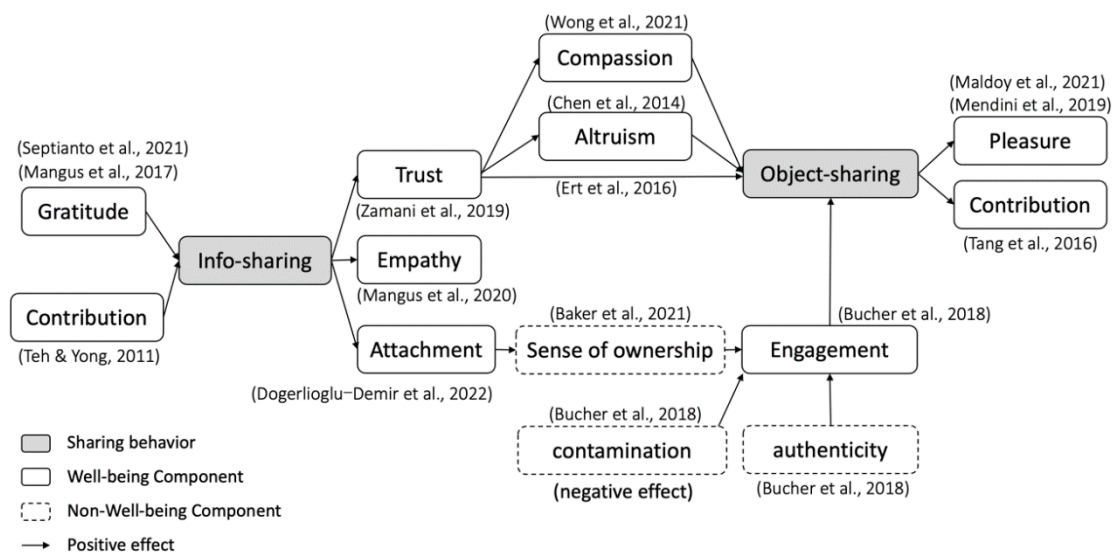


Figure 3. The summary of potential relations of well-being components and sharing behaviors

To illustrate with an example, when an Airbnb host shares a spare room with a guest who wants to book a room for a conference trip, both may feel gratitude for exchanging information (e.g., the purpose of this trip and the facilities in the room). The information sharing elicits trust and empathy, which drives the host to sincerely share the room. In addition, trust also arouses the host’s compassion and altruism to further help the guest, so the host suggests that the guest go to the local farmer’s market and art exhibitions. The guest feels attached and engages in this unique and in-depth trip. Consequently, they both have a sincere sharing experience, and both feel pleasure and a sense of contribution.

4 PRELIMINARY CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Based on the literature review of well-being in the sharing economy, we found that higher-level well-being components (gratitude, engagement, compassion, and altruism) were the key motives for positively influencing the willingness to share. In contrast, pleasure and attachment, belonging to intra-personal well-being, were positive consequences of sharing. Evidence suggested that how we foster sharing should not only focus on intra-personal benefits but also on inter-personal and extra-personal well-being. Thus, we structured the Hyper-Pyramid-Eco-System model of the P2P sharing platform (HPES model) to conceptualize how well-being can be a concern in the sharing economy (Fig.3).

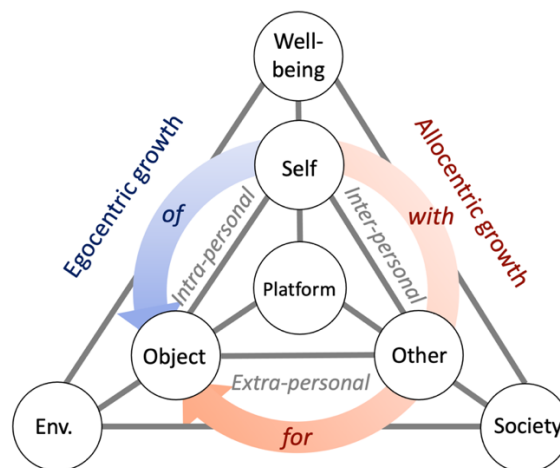


Figure 4. The Hyper-Pyramid-Eco-System model of the P2P sharing platform (HPES model)

In the HPES model, the central pyramid shows the key actors: self, other, object, and platform. The relations between each pair of actors are regarded as intra-personal, inter-personal, and extra-personal, corresponding to self-object, self-other, and other-object relations, respectively. The two circular arrows indicate egocentric (self-oriented) and allocentric (other-oriented) motives. They also depict that human desire starts from owning an object, and that humans share objects with others to pursue a higher-level goal. The outer pyramid depicts what people pursue as ultimate goals: well-being, society, and the environment. This model shows our expectation of fostering participants' awareness of not only intra-personal well-being but also inter-personal and extra-personal relationships, which can improve social interaction and ecological sustainability to attain higher-level values for life.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study investigated how and which components of well-being could be developed in a sharing economy to help users to perceive them and engage in a sharing economy sustainably. Based on the literature review, we organized and concluded the extant evidence to build potential relations among all well-being components and sharing behaviors. The egocentric growth (intra-personal well-being) and allocentric growth (inter-personal and extra-personal well-being) are both crucial in the sharing economy. In particular, users usually notice

egocentric benefits rather than allocentric growth. Thus, this is a potential direction to draw people's attention to, lead them to notice social interactions, and install more allocentric elements (e.g., empathy, gratitude, altruism) on P2P sharing platforms.

In addition to studying well-being, we also found that information sharing might be pivotal to initiate a flow of a perception of well-being. The divisions of information exchange, user profiles, object descriptions, and communication provide enormous potential for redesign. The user profile is the place for self-closure, which is suitable for building similarities between providers and users to generate empathy and attachment. Communication channels are good for building trust, so the design can be focused on facilitating users to ask and respond frequently, such as nudging notices to push users to ask simple questions. We believe this study not only motivates platformers to consider both providers' and receivers' well-being, but also promotes the sharing ecosystem to function sustainably and prosperously. Ultimately, this ecosystem can create behavior changes to improve wellbeing in individuals, society, and the environment.

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