Doris Podrug[1], Dragana Grubišić[2]

SHARING ECONOMY: COMPARING USERS' SERVICE QUALITY PERCEPTIONS IN ACCOMMODATION AND TRANSPORT ON THE CASE OF CROATIA

ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the two most prevalent and economically significant services of the sharing economy: accommodation and transport. Its primary objective is to compare these two crucial sectors in terms of user perspective and their perceived service quality. Given that these platforms operate similarly, this study aims to determine if there are unique aspects that require different approaches or areas that need to be improved. This is crucial for making these platforms function better and provide a better experience for users. The quality of service was analysed through technical and social categories. The goal was to determine whether and how the aforementioned service quality categories affect user behaviour and whether there are differences in the ranking of service quality categories from the users' perspective, depending on the individual sector of the sharing economy. On a sample of 327 respondents, SEM analysis was used to show that the technical and social categories of service quality positively and directly influence the behavioural intentions of users in the sharing economy in both the accommodation and transport sectors. The findings also revealed that, for the users of the sharing economy service in the accommodation sector, the social category of service quality is more important than the technical category, while for the users of the sharing economy services in the transport sector, the technical category of service quality is more important than the social one.

KEYWORDS: *user perspective, sharing economy, service quality, accommodation, transport*

1. INTRODUCTION

The sharing economy is an economic system that has gained significant attention in recent years due to its potential to promote sustainable consumption and efficient use of resources. It is a socio-economic model that enables individuals and organizations to share resources, goods, and services in a peer-to-peer model facilitated by digital platforms. The sharing economy is based on the principles of collaboration, trust, and community and can potentially transform how we consume and interact with goods and ser-vices (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Cohen & Kietzmann, 2014; Hamari et al., 2016).

The sharing economy has also transformed how we interact with goods and services, fostering community and trust between individuals and organizations. However, the sharing economy poses significant challenges, including regulation, taxation, and data privacy issues. Firstly, the lack of clear regulations and controls can lead to safety concerns for users, as there may be inadequate screening of service providers. Secondly, the taxation of transactions in the sharing economy can be a contentious issue,

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as it may be difficult to ensure that all participants pay their fair share of taxes. Lastly, data privacy and security concerns arise as sharing economy platforms collect large amounts of personal information from users. This raises the question of how this data is handled and protected against potential breaches and misuse.

The sharing economy can be broadly categorized into several sectors, including accommodation, transport, finance, education, and healthcare. The accommodation and transport sectors have emerged as the most prominent, transforming how people travel and live. Accommodation-sharing platforms like Airbnb, Vrbo, and HomeAway have revolutionized the travel industry, providing travellers with affordable and unique accommodation options. Ride-sharing services like Uber and Lyft have become ubiquitous, offering users a more convenient and cost-effective way to get around.

The sharing economy is growing rapidly and the global market is estimated to be worth $335 billion by 2025 (PWC, 2015). From the beginning, the field of the sharing economy has attracted great interest among scholars from various disciplines. The topics of previous research were mainly based on several aspects: *the aspect of transport service providers* (Rosenblat & Stark, 2016; Zhang et al., 2016; Nie, 2017); *the aspect of service users* (Lien et al., 2014; Gargiulo et al., 2015; Möhlmann, 2015; Hamari et al., 2016; Hawlitschek et al., 2016; Tussyadiah, 2016; Hofmann et al., 2017; Priporas et al., 2017; Cristobal-Fransi et al., 2019; Zhou et al., 2019); *implications for tourism* (Tham, 2016; Sovani & Jayawardena, 2017; Zervas et al., 2017); *transport implications* (Giesel & Nobis, 2016; Martin, 2016; Perboli et al., 2017; Standing et al., 2019); *business models* (Russo & Stasi, 2016; Täuscher & Kietzmann, 2017), etc. However, the success of sharing economy services largely depends on user satisfaction. Studies that focused on the aspect of service users mostly included issues of quality perception, service satisfaction, motivation, etc. However, these studies are mainly related to the sharing economy in the accommodation sector. The transport sector is also a large part of the sharing economy, and therefore, it is extremely important to determine the factors that affect user satisfaction and quality in this sector as well. Given the size of the sectors mentioned, it is logical to explore whether there are similarities and differences in users' perception of service quality and behavioural intentions that could be assumed to be universal in specific sectors of the sharing economy. The reason for comparing these sectors can be found in Möhlmann's study (2015), which emphasized the importance of new research in the sharing economy sector alongside the accommodation sector in order

to strengthen the validity of cross-sectoral findings. Furthermore, a comparison of the two sectors would be crucial for a comprehensive understanding of user experiences and for informed tailored policies, strategies and decisions in these sectors. It would offer crucial insights into consumer behaviour and market dynamics, thus increasing the overall effectiveness of interventions and improvements. This comparative approach would provide important insights into the similarities or differences in user preferences and motivations across these two sectors and allow for a more nuanced understanding of the factors that drive user behaviour in the sharing economy. Therefore, this study focuses on the perceived quality in the sharing economy and its influence on behavioural intentions, particularly in the accommodation and transport sectors.

Service quality, defined as the degree to which a service meets or exceeds customer expectations, has been identified as a key determinant of customer satisfaction and loyalty (Wang et al., 2018). Previous research has shown that price and convenience significantly influence user satisfaction (Chen & Xie, 2017). To investigate users' behavioural intentions in the sharing economy, we develop a set of research hypotheses based on theoretical background research. To test our hypotheses, we conducted an online survey of sharing economy users in the accommodation and transport sectors. We developed a research model and analysed the data using structural equation modelling (SEM). The survey instrument included questions on user demographics, service quality categories and users' behavioural intentions. Our findings provide valuable insights for sharing economy companies to improve their services and increase user satisfaction, which ultimately contributes to the growth and success of the sharing economy.

This paper is divided into five main sections. First, the introduction highlights the significance of investigating user perspectives in the sharing economy, with a focus on the accommodation and transport sectors. Second, the theoretical background of these sectors is presented and research hypotheses derived from the existing literature are developed. The third section provides a detailed description of the empirical method used in this study, including the methodology used for data collection, the design and administration of the survey instrument, and the development and testing of the research model. The fourth section presents the discussion summarizing the key findings of the study and discussing their implications for improving the quality of sharing economy services. Finally, the fifth section is the conclusion, which, in addition to concluding remarks, also highlights the limitations of the study and the possibilities for future research.

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2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Sharing economy in the accommodation sector: Users' perspective

The sharing economy has emerged as a popular phenomenon in recent years, transforming traditional business models and disrupting established industries. Accommodation is one sector that has been heavily influenced by the sharing economy. The emergence of accommodation platforms offers private individuals the opportunity to rent out their houses, apartments, and other properties to travellers looking for an alternative place to stay.

Studies have shown that the accommodation-sharing economy has both positive and negative implications for users. On the one hand, it provides travellers with more diverse and affordable accommodation options and allows them to experience more authentic and immersive destinations. On the other hand, there are concerns about safety, regulation and the impact of short-term rentals on local communities. Foremost among these concerns is safety, as not all properties listed on these platforms undergo rigorous safety inspections, potentially exposing users to unexpected hazards. Moreover, the regulation of these accommodations can be inconsistent, which may lead to legal ambiguities and disputes between hosts, guests and local authorities.

Another pressing concern is the impact of short-term rentals on local communities. Some critics argue that the proliferation of short-term rentals can contribute to a shortage of affordable housing in popular tourist destinations, as properties are taken off the long-term rental market in favour of more lucrative short-term rentals. This, in turn, can disrupt the social fabric of neighbourhoods and result in a housing shortage for residents. In addition, the influx of tourists in residential areas can lead to noise pollution and overuse of resources, potentially straining the relationships between hosts and their neighbours.

In terms of service quality, research has shown that users generally have positive experiences with the sharing economy accommodation. A study by Priporas et al. (2017) examined the relationship between loyalty, customer satisfaction, and service quality on Airbnb and found a positive relationship between the variables mentioned. The study also revealed that customer satisfaction partially mediates between service quality and loyalty. Tussyadiah and Pesonen (2016) conducted a study to examine how peer-to-peer accommodations affect travel behaviours. The study found that the use of peer-to-peer accommodation such as Airbnb significantly influenc-

es travel behaviour, including increased frequency of travel, a preference for unique and local experiences and longer stays. The study sheds light on how the emergence of the sharing economy has altered travel behaviour. Prior research by Zervas et al. (2017) investigated the impact of Airbnb on the Texas hotel industry and found that hotel revenues in areas with high Airbnb supply, such as Austin, declined by 8 to 10% over a decade. These results suggest that the sharing economy has the potential to significantly affect established industries, both positively and negatively.

In another study, Liu et al. (2021) used text mining and econometric methods to analyze online customer reviews from a well-known Chinese accommodation-sharing platform and discovered that customer experience, perceived value, and loyalty are interrelated. Ju et al. (2019) studied the service quality attributes of Airbnb and found that there are different attributes related to the website, host, and facility that have different effects on customer satisfaction.

Similarly, Liang et al. (2018) explored the relationship between perceived risk, perceived value, and repurchase intention in the context of Airbnb. They found that perceived risk negatively affects perceived value and repurchase intention, while perceived authenticity and electronic word-of-mouth positively impact them. Meanwhile, An et al. (2019) investigated the relationship between service quality, perceived value, satisfaction, and revisit intention among Airbnb guests. They discovered that service quality and perceived value positively affect satisfaction, and perceived value partially mediates the relationship between service quality and satisfaction. Ultimately, overall satisfaction plays a crucial role in determining revisit intention. These studies suggest that service quality is important in determining user satisfaction with sharing economy accommodation. In addition, trust, perceived value, social influence, and cleanliness are significant predictors of the intention to use and recommend sharing economy accommodation.

In conclusion, the sharing economy has significantly changed the accommodation sector, providing travellers with more diverse and affordable lodging options. Although there are concerns about safety and regulation, studies have generally found that users have positive experiences with the sharing economy accommodation, with service quality being a key determinant of user satisfaction. In addition, trust and social influence play important roles in determining users' intentions to use and recommend sharing economy accommodation.

2.2. Sharing economy in the transport sector: users' perspective

The sharing economy has also significantly impacted the transport sector with the emergence of ride-sharing services such as Uber, Lyft, and DiDi, as well as car-sharing services such as Zipcar and Car2Go. These services allow individuals to share rides and vehicles, providing an alternative to traditional taxis and car rentals.

Studies have shown that sharing economy transport services offer more affordable and convenient transport options as well as opportunities for social interaction and environmental sustainability. Users tend to have positive experiences with sharing economy transport services. Suhaimi et al. (2018) conducted a study that demonstrated safety, price, convenience, and communication technology as significant factors that influence customer satisfaction and return usage. Yang and Xia (2022) explored the factors influencing customer satisfaction and willingness to pay for DiDi Chuxing in China and found that emotional, economic, social service and functional value play significant roles in determining these outcomes. Several studies have investigated factors that influence customer satisfaction and loyalty in app-based ride-sharing services. Lim et al. (2022) found that platform reliability, responsiveness, vendor competence and empathy, and co-sharer empathy positively influence customer satisfaction, while platform assurance has the least impact. Similarly, Kumar et al. (2022) highlighted the importance of service quality factors such as reliability, safety, responsiveness, and tangibility for both ride-hailing and ride-sharing services. In a survey of Uber users in Malaysia, Lee et al. (2018) identified convenience and affordability as the primary drivers of user satisfaction and continued usage, while social interaction and environmental sustainability had a lesser impact. They also found that perceived ease of use and usefulness were predictors of user satisfaction and continued usage. As can be seen, the sharing economy has brought considerable changes to the transport industry and accommodation, offering people more economical and convenient means of transport.

2.3. Development of research hypotheses: Comparison of the accommodation and transport sectors

The preceding analysis of various studies demonstrates that several factors can influence users' behavioural intention in the sharing economy in the accommodation and transport sectors. In the following paragraphs, a more detailed explanation of the theoretical basis for the hypothesis development will be provided.

Studies indicate that the users of sharing economy services prioritize the platform they use for booking (Priporas et al., 2017). Zhang et al. (2018) emphasize that the users in the sharing economy highly value various technical aspects that offer functional benefits. According to Huarng and Yu (2018), an efficient platform is crucial for ensuring service quality and is a key driver of repeat usage intention in e-services. Users particularly value platform ease of use, rapid issue resolution, convenience (flexible reservations, user-friendliness), and quick problem-solving (prompt responses, clear service provider instructions, fast platform response times, customer support). Priporas et al. (2017) highlight convenience, particularly in terms of access to information and customer support, as the most important factors for service quality. The study also stresses the importance of customer support and data protection for repeat service usage. Clauss et al. (2018) confirm that trust in the platform significantly influences loyalty, while Shao et al. (2020) identify response time, platform usability, transaction security, and appealing aesthetics as crucial service quality determinants for continued platform usage.

Studies demonstrate that the reduction of non-monetary costs, such as time and effort (convenience), may positively influence users' repeat service use (Kaura et al., 2015). In addition, tangible aspects, like cleanliness and comfort, can significantly impact the quality of accommodation services. Zhou and Zhang (2019) find that vehicle condition, cleanliness, ride ease, and comfort are pivotal factors affecting satisfaction and intent to reuse bike-sharing services. Clean and comfortable spaces also attract users and encourage longer stays in the accommodation services.

Furthermore, studies on service quality in the sharing economy focus primarily on social determinants. This emphasis arises from a predominant focus on the accommodation sector rather than the transport sector. In the sharing economy, two settings, online platforms and the real world provide opportunities for social value. Online platforms serve as tools for social exchange and motivate continued engagement (Hamari et al., 2016). In the real-world sharing economy experiences, like Airbnb bookings, users can build relationships with service providers and like-minded people (Zekanović-Korona & Grzunov, 2014). Service providers play a crucial role in user experiences by establishing good communication and trust (Ju et al., 2019). In accommodation services, understanding guest needs and providing friendly care positively affect satisfaction and reuse intentions (Priporas et al., 2017). This also applies to transport,

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where driver-passenger interactions can contribute to a pleasant experience. Social interactions, including reviews and direct connections with other users, can encourage service reuse (Kim et al., 2015). Users are drawn to the sharing economy to fulfil social needs, making them part of online or offline communities (Möhlmann, 2015).

The studies show that users value specific service quality attributes, and it is possible to link them to users' behavioural intentions. However, studies have usually examined only a limited number of determinants, focusing on four or five fundamental ones that, by nature, would sometimes be heterogeneous. This study encompasses a greater number of factors that have proven to be the most significant in several studies and, for the first time, groups them into two categories: technical and social. Therefore, this research focuses on investigating the determinants of service quality that influence users' behavioural intentions through two indicators: repeated use and recommendations to others. The technical category in this research includes service environment variables related to technical, functional or practical benefits that primarily result from using the platform and the overall service. These include the following indicators: ease of platform usage, response time, reliability, platform appearance, comfort of the accommodation/vehicle, and condition of the accommodation/vehicle. The social category of this study focuses on social interactions between users and service providers, the importance of gaining insights from the comments and impressions of other users, and the trust and courtesy of the service provider. The presented results of previous research and the literature analysis served as the basis for the development of research hypotheses:
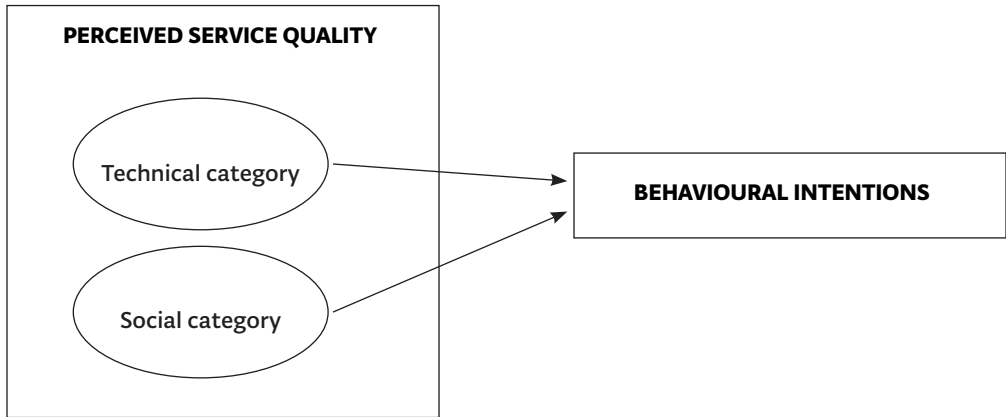
H1.   *The technical and social categories of service quality have a positive and direct impact on users' behavioural intentions in the sharing economy.*

H1.a   *The technical and social categories of service quality have a positive and direct impact on users' behavioural intentions in the sharing economy in the accommodation sector.*

H1.b   *The technical and social categories of service quality have a positive and direct impact on users' behavioural intentions in the sharing economy in the transport sector.*

As seen in the studies mentioned, the user experience and service quality perception factors can influence the decision to reuse or recommend the service. However, previous research has not shown whether the assessed aspects of service are equally important across all sectors of the sharing economy or whether there are differences among sectors.

Should the above-mentioned aspects of the service in the entire sharing economy be given equal emphasis and attention or is there a variation in importance depending on the specific sector? The answers to these questions can certainly contribute to the theoretical and especially the practical aspects of the sharing economy in order to improve the quality of the service. It is imperative to shift research focus to identifying the distinctive dimensions of perceived service quality across diverse sectors. Studies that compare the two largest sectors of the sharing economy - accommodation and transport, in terms of user perspective and service quality are limited in the literature. The primary objective of this study is to fill the aforementioned gap and to compare the two sectors in terms of different service quality categories. The aim is, as already stated in the introduction, to determine whether there are differences in the ranking of service quality categories from the user's perspective, depending on the specific sector of the sharing economy. Upon studying the results of previous research, it is evident that social interaction and community play a significant role in the accommodation sector. Studies have shown that users prefer to stay in sharing economy accommodations over traditional accommodation because they have the opportunity to socialise with the host and other guests (McArthur, 2015; Tussyadiah, 2016; Ert et al., 2016). The role of the host is crucial in choosing an Airbnb accommodation, as they provide tourists with authentic experiences and a safe and comfortable environment (Guttentag & Smith, 2017; Ariffin, 2013). The social category, particularly the influence of hosts, has been the most researched factor in the sharing economy in the accommodation sector. Therefore, we propose the following research hypothesis:

H2.   *The social category of service quality has a higher ranking for users than the technical category in the sharing economy in the accommodation sector.*

In contrast, research in the transport sector indicates that technical factors play a more significant role in determining user satisfaction. Studies by Zhou and Zhang (2019) emphasize the importance of ease of use and access to the platform, which can encourage reuse. Shao et al. (2020) found that response time, ease of use of the platform, security of transactions, and an attractive platform appearance are key determinants of service quality, with greater importance than the interaction with the driver. Sthapit and Bjørk (2021) studied the quality factors of sharing economy services that contribute the most to a bad experience and concluded that the cleanliness of the vehicle and the comfort of driving are the most important factors for users. The following hypothesis is suggested:

PERCEIVED SERVICE QUALITY

Technical category

Social category

BEHAVIOURAL INTENTIONS

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FIGURE 1: Research model
SOURCE: Authors' work

H3. The technical category of service quality has a higher ranking for users than the social category in the sharing economy in the transport sector.

As the motivation for cost savings is a commonly recognized factor for the use of sharing economy services in general, it was decided to exclude the economic category from the analysis as it is expected to have the same influence in both sectors. Despite numerous studies in these sectors, very few have examined the differences in the determinants of service quality and subsequent intentions to reuse the service in the accommodation and transport sectors. This study aims to bridge this gap and provide insights into whether there is a difference between the two sectors in relation to users' behavioural intentions.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research instrument

The questionnaire was developed in two stages: the formation of the preliminary questionnaire and a pilot study. In the first stage, the preliminary questionnaire was created by aligning its items with the relevant literature and adapting them to the research context (Lamberton & Rose, 2012; Möhlmann, 2015; Priporas et al., 2017; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2017; Zhou and Zhang, 2019; Shao et al., 2020). This was done by carefully reviewing the literature in a similar context selecting and adapting the items to fit the research context.

In the second stage, a pilot study was conducted to assess the reliability and clarity of the questions in the proposed instrument. The pilot study was con-

ducted to test the instrument's reliability in measuring a specific construct within the context of the sharing economy, which had limited prior research. It also evaluated the clarity of the questions in the instrument, which led to changes in the final version based on the results. The results showed that some statements were similar and considered unnecessary. Others, on the other hand, were changed for various reasons, such as imprecise wording, lack of adaptation to the research context, or the need to reformulate to fit the ordinal scale used for measuring agreement/disagreement.

The final version of the instrument consists of items measuring the respondents' demographic characteristics at the beginning and perceptions in the main part. The perceptions were measured using a Likert scale, where the respondents expressed their agreement/disagreement on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being "never," 5 being "always")

3.2. Data collection and sample

As previously stated, the data required for the study was collected using a well-designed online questionnaire. The study population comprised users of the sharing economy in the accommodation and transport sectors in Croatia. Simple random sampling was used as the sampling technique to select a group of individuals to represent the population and generalize the data, with each person having an equal chance of being part of the research sample. The questionnaire link was distributed through various online channels, including social media platforms, email invitations to contact lists, relevant online communities, and forums related to the research topic.

TABLE 1: Respondents' socio-demographic profiles

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	129	39.45
Female	198	60.55
Total	327	100
Age		
18 - 25	47	14.37
26 - 35	116	35.47
36 - 45	105	32.11
46 - 55	52	15.91
56 - 65	7	2.14
66 and over	0	0
Total	327	100
Work status		
Employed/self-employed	231	70.64
Unemployed	32	9.79
Student	53	16.21
Others	11	3.36
(e.g., housewives, retirees)		
Total	327	100

SOURCE: Authors' work

However, it is important to be cautious when selecting a sample in the dynamic and ever-changing sharing economy market. The market is known for its frequent changes, with new actors appearing and old ones disappearing. Therefore, if the sample includes users of all available platforms, there is a risk that some actors may no longer exist by the end of the research, which could compromise the research results. Thus, choosing platforms with a longer market presence and a growing tendency was considered more appropriate. Based on this consideration, the sample consisted of users of the most established transport platforms in Croatia, including BlaBlaCar, Bolt, Uber as well as Airbnb for the accommodation sector. The final sample size was 327 participants.

Table 1 displays the respondents' socio-demographic profiles. Table 1 is reduced with the data and shows only the most important ones, while all characteristics are presented in the following paragraphs. In this study, the proportion of female participants (60.55%) was higher than the proportion of male participants (39.45%). The participants' age distribution indicates that most respondents were between 26 and 35 years old. In terms of education level, the largest group of participants had a bachelor's degree (44.65%), followed by those with a master's degree (40.06%) and those who had completed high school (10.70%). Only 15% of the participants held a PhD. In addition, the majority of the respondents were employed or self-employed (70.64%), while the smallest group included individuals such as housewives or retirees (3.36%). The results reveal that most of the respondents were from the two largest cities in the study area, Split (37.62%) and Zagreb (33.64%).

4. DATA ANALYSIS

A Structural Equation Model (SEM) was implemented to examine the proposed model using SPSS Amos 23.0 statistical package. In the following section of the paper, the results of the measurement and the structural model will be presented separately for the accommodation and transport sectors. After presenting the results for each sector, the H1a hypothesis based on the results of the accommodation model and the H1b hypothesis based on the results of the transport model will be evaluated. In the final section of the data analysis, the technical and social categories of service quality in the accommodation and transport sectors will be compared to evaluate hypotheses H2 and H3. This comparison will help us understand how different categories of service quality impact users' intentions in both sectors.

TABLE 2 Validity of the constructs of the measurement model for the accommodation sector

Factor	Indicators	Standardized factor loadings	AVE	Cronbach's alpha
Technical category (TCQ)	TCQ1 TCQ2 TCQ3 TCQ4 TCQ5 TCQ6	0.632 0.701 0.743 0.772 0.711 0.726	0.517	0.798
Social category (SCQ)	SCQ1 SCQ2 SCQ3 SCQ4	0.765 0.832 0.793 0.782	0.576	0.752
Behavioural intentions (BLI)	BLI1 BLI2 BLI3	0.792 0.787 0.792	0.624	0.843

SOURCE Authors' calculations

4.1. Measurement model for the accommodation sector

The service quality determinants are classified into technical and social categories, summarizing the variables that have proven to be significant in most studies. The technical category (TCQ) includes the following indicators: ease of platform usage, response time, reliability, platform appearance, comfort of the accommodation/vehicle, and condition of the accommodation/vehicle. The social category of this study (SCQ) includes social interactions between users and service providers, the importance of gaining insights from the comments and impressions of other users, and the trust and courtesy of the service provider. Users' behavioural intentions (BLI) include repeated use and recommendations to others. Table 2 displays the factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, and AVE, which are essential for evaluating the construct validity and reliability of the study results. It shows that all standardized factor loadings are above 0.5, indicating that the indicators reflect latent variables well. In addition, all AVE values are higher than 0.5, which indicates a strong convergent validity of the constructs. Finally, all Cronbach's alpha coefficients are above 0.7, which indicates the internal consistency of the items.

Table 3 presents the results of the discriminant validity analysis, with each value indicating the correlation between the latent variables. The diagonal val-

TABLE 3 Correlation analysis for the accommodation sector

	TCQ	SCQ	BLI
TCQ	**0.716**		
SCQ	0.523	**0.793**	**0.791**
BLI	0.553	0.633	

SOURCE Authors' calculations

ues represent the square roots of each AVE. As these values are higher than the correlation with other constructs, it supports the discriminant validity.

Based on the analysis presented, it can be concluded that all estimated model parameters are acceptable and that the measurement model is satisfactory. As a result, the next stage of the SEM analysis can be carried out, which involves analyzing the structural model.

4.2. Structural model for the accommodation sector

The structural model, which examines the cause-and-effect relationships between the latent constructs, is derived from the measurement model. The latent constructs in this model are TCQ, SCQ, and BLI, which are measured by several indicators (see Table 2) rep-

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TABLE 4 Structural model fit statistics for the accommodation sector

			Estimate	*S.E.*	*C.R.*	*p-value*
TCQ	→	BLI	0.018	0.0091	1.978	0.032
SCQ	→	BLI	0.03	0.016	1.875	0.033

SOURCE Authors' calculations

resented by statements in the questionnaire. The constructs are measured using a Likert scale, where respondents indicated their level of agreement or disagreement with the proposed statements on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating "never" and 5 indicating "always."

Table 4 presents the model fit statistics and shows that the model has an acceptable fit. The p-values in the last column of the table indicate a statistically significant and positive influence of the service quality categories on behavioural intentions, with a significance level of 5%. Therefore, the research

hypothesis H1.a is confirmed.

Figure 1 shows the path diagram and the final structural model, depicting the causal relationships between the constructs. The structural model builds upon the measurement model and allows the direction, strength, and significance of the connections between the latent constructs to be examined. Evaluating the fit of the structural model involves testing the overall goodness-of-fit of the model and the significance of the path coefficients. All path coefficients are statistically significant, indicating that the data support the research hypotheses.
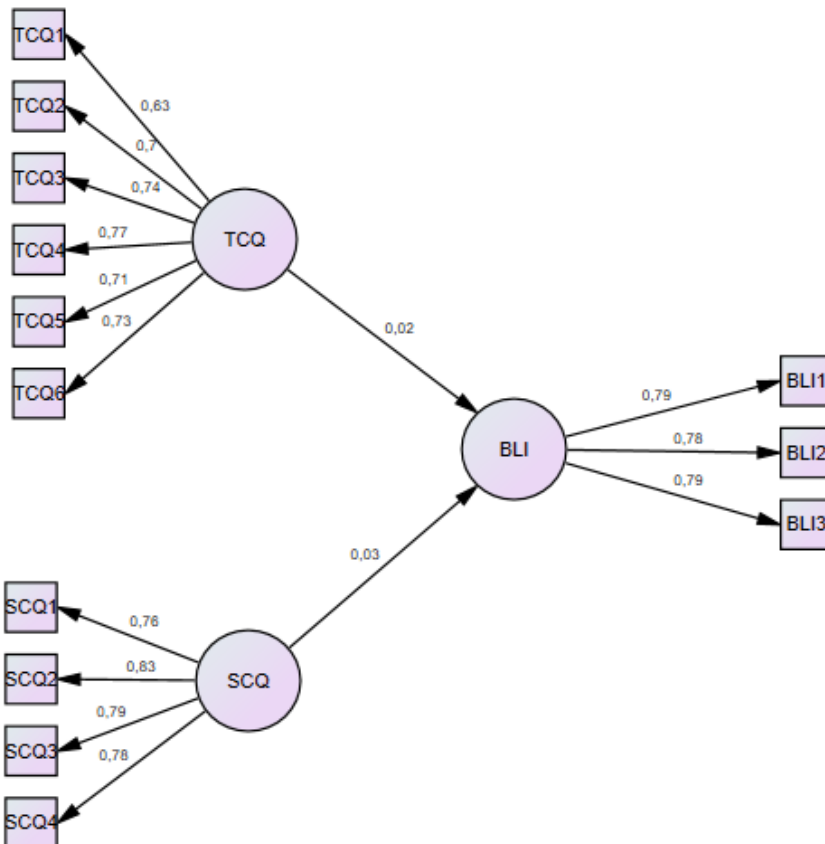
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FIGURE 2: Structural model for the accommodation sector
SOURCE: Authors' work

TABLE 5 Validity of the constructs of the measurement model for the transport sector

Factor	Indicators	Standardized factor loadings	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha
Technical category (TCQ)	TCQ1 TCQ2 TCQ3 TCQ4 TCQ5 TCQ6	0.728 0.634 0.759 0.734 0.725 0.784	0.531	0.820
Social category (SCQ)	SCQ1 SCQ2 SCQ3 SCQ4	0.858 0.712 0.621 0.797	0.565	0.831
Behavioural intentions (BLI)	BLI1 BLI2 BLI3	0.734 0.738 0.731	0.539	0.697

SOURCE Authors' calculations

4.3. Measurement model for the transport sector

The previous section of this paper focused on the accommodation sector and provided an analysis of the data from which conclusions regarding the acceptance of the H1a hypothesis were drawn. In order to provide a comprehensive study, the present section will shift focus to the transport sector. To begin this analysis, the construct validity and reliability of the measurement model must first be established. Table 4 shows the results of the analysis, including the factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, and AVE for each measurement item. These results provide important information about the construct validity and reliability of our study's findings. By ensuring these foundational elements, we can proceed with our analysis and draw reliable conclusions regarding the H1.b hypothesis.

Table 6 displays the outcomes of the discriminant validity assessment, revealing the correlation between latent variables. Each value in the table represents the strength of the relationship between the constructs. The AVE values are higher than the correlations with other constructs, which provides evidence supporting the discriminant validity of the measurement model.

4.4. Structural model for the transport sector

In the following sections, the analysis of the structural model for the transport sector is presented and in-

TABLE 6: Correlation analysis for transport

	TCQ	SCQ	BLI
TCQ	**0.729**		
SCQ	0.613	**0.752**	**0.734**
BLI	0.535	0.533	

SOURCE: Authors' calculations

TABLE 7: Structural model fit statistics for the transport sector

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	p-value
TCQ	→	BLI	0.028	0.012	2.333	0.037
SCQ	→	BLI	0.014	0.005	2.800	0.023

SOURCE: Authors' calculations

sights into the decision for hypothesis H1b are provided. Table 7 shows the estimated parameters of the structural equation model. The p-values, displayed in the last column of the table, show a statistically significant and positive impact of the service quality categories on behavioural intentions with a significance level of 5%. It is worth noting that both values are lower than 0.05, which leads to the conclusion that hypothesis H1.b can be accepted.
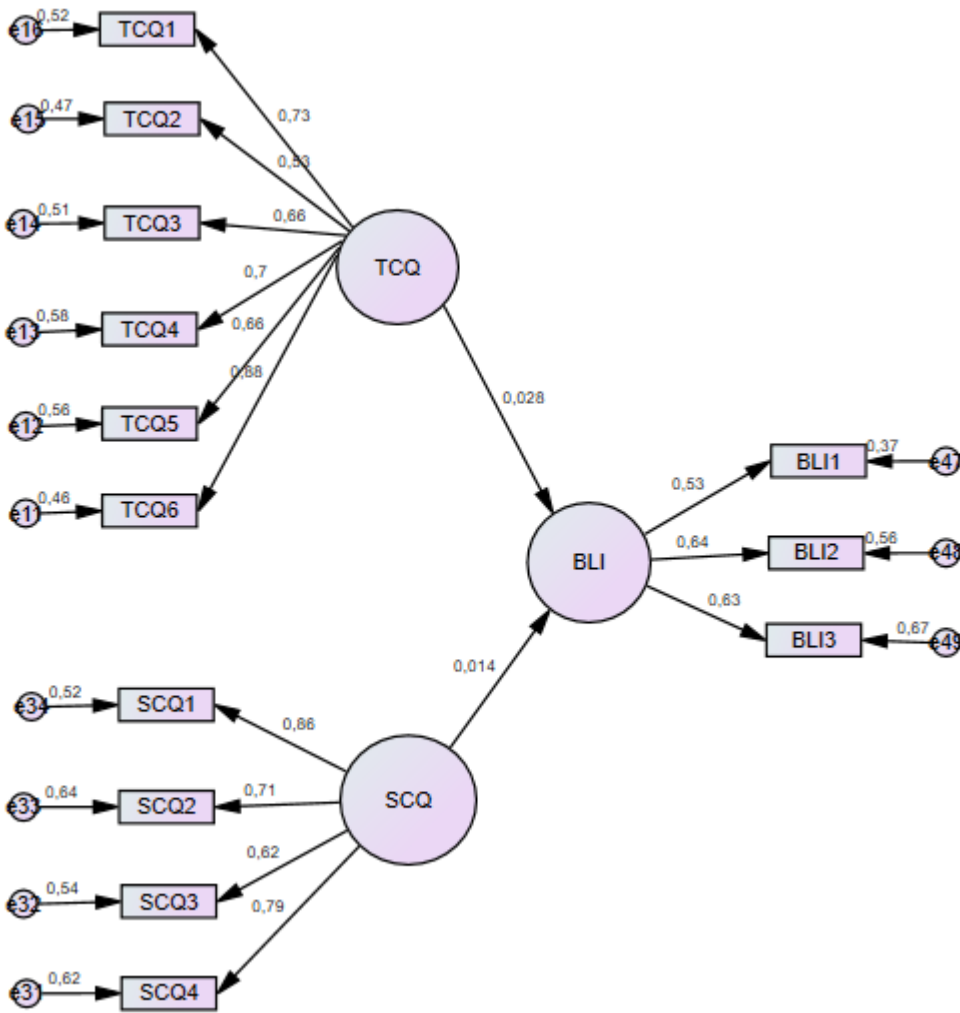
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FIGURE 3: Structural model for the transport sector
SOURCE: Authors' work

The diagram in Figure 3 illustrates the structural model depicting how perceived quality affects users' behavioural intentions. The structural model is a crucial aspect of the study as it allows for the examination of the relationship between different constructs and their indicators and provides insights into how the different categories of perceived quality influence users' behavioural intentions.

On the basis of the acceptance of hypotheses H1.a and H1.b, it is now possible to draw a final conclusion regarding the acceptance of the entire H1 hypothesis. Therefore, it can be accepted that the technical and social categories of service quality have a positive and direct impact on the users' behavioural intentions in the sharing economy. Furthermore, the

analysis of the results to test hypotheses H2 and H3 will be presented. This allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships between the variables in this study and enables a more detailed interpretation of the overall research findings. By carefully examining the results of these analyses, it will be possible to draw robust conclusions about the research questions posed in this study.

4.4. Testing the differences between technical and social categories of service quality

The second and third hypotheses aim to investigate the importance of the technical and social categories on service quality. This can be achieved by compar-

TABLE 8: Coefficients for testing hypotheses H2 and H3

	H2	H3
	Standardized Coefficients (t-values)	
TCQ	0.238 (4.461***)	0.780 (5.204***)
SCQ	0.401 (6.233***)	0.321 (3.412***)

NOTES: Two-tailed significance test: p<0.01 =***
SOURCE: Authors' calculations

ing the standardized regression coefficients. The corresponding values for both sectors are presented in Table 8.

Table 8 shows the standardized regression coefficients for the technical and social categories of service quality in the accommodation and transport sectors. From the given analysis, we can see that the standardized coefficient for SCQ is higher than for TCQ for accommodation (H2), with SCQ having a value of 0.401 and TCQ having a value of 0.238. This suggests that SCQ is a stronger predictor of the dependent variable than TCQ. Furthermore, we can conclude that both coefficients are statistically significant, with p-values of 0.000 for both TCQ and SCQ. Based on this analysis, we can, therefore, conclude that the second hypothesis (*The social category of service quality has a higher ranking for users than the technical category in the sharing economy in the accommodation sector*) is supported by the data. Table 8 also presents the standardized regression coefficients for the technical and social categories of service quality in the transport sector. The analysis suggests that the technical category of service quality has a higher ranking than the social category of service quality in the transport-sharing economy. The standardized coefficient for TCQ is 0.780, which is higher than the standardized coefficient for SCQ (0.321). Furthermore, both coefficients are statistically significant, with p-values of less than 0.01, indicating that the differences between the coefficients are probably not due to chance. Based on this analysis, we can, therefore, conclude that the third hypothesis is also supported, which means that *the technical category of service quality has a higher ranking for users than the social category in the sharing economy in the transport sector.*

5. DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to investigate possible differences in the behavioural intentions of service users in the sharing economy for the transport and accommodation sectors and to determine which category of service quality is more important to them. Service quality was measured using two categories: technical and social. The results of hypotheses testing indicate that the technical and social categories of service quality positively and directly influence users' behavioural intentions in the sharing economy for accommodation and transport services. The study objectives have been achieved and the implications of the results are presented below.

The results of the hypotheses testing indicate that the social and technical categories of service quality play an important role in shaping users' behavioural intentions in both sectors. However, the importance of these categories varies between the sectors. Specifically, the social category of service quality is more important than the technical one for users of sharing economy services in the accommodation sector, while the technical category of service quality is more important than the social one for users of sharing economy services in the transport sector. The implications of the results shed light on the different preferences and behaviours of users within the sharing economy services and focus on theoretical and practical considerations.

The study emphasises the desire of users in sharing economy services related to accommodation for fast, accurate, user-friendly, and secure information on available accommodation. However, it is interesting that they prefer to build connections and experiences with new relationships rather than focus on how well the platform works. As their stay at the destination is significantly longer than the time they spend using the platform, the study suggests that positive experiences and relationships built at the destination might have a greater influence on their behaviour than positive experiences resulting from using the platform alone. The emphasis on social aspects is also consistent with studies that emphasize the role of social interactions and community building in shaping user preferences. The users of sharing economy services in the accommodation sector are keen to build meaningful social relationships with their hosts (Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016). Therefore, the decision to use Airbnb is not only about the quality of the amenities but also about the desire for an authentic local experience (Guttentag, 2015; Richardson, 2015). Understanding and caring positively influence service quality compared to other factors, which is consistent with Airbnb's unique peer-to-peer mod-

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el that fosters personal relationships between guests and hosts (Priporas et al.,2017).

On the contrary, the users of sharing economy services in the transport sector prioritize fast, accurate, straightforward, and secure access to vehicle availability. The study shows that these users frequently switch between vehicles and drivers and typically do not show a strong tendency to build interpersonal relationships. Their main focus is on convenience and a sense of security, with an emphasis on the technical aspects of the service. The results of the study are consistent with previous research that has emphasized the importance of technical aspects for user behaviour in the sharing economy. Furthermore, researchers have consistently argued in favour of including technical variables in research (Lee et al., 2018). Considering that modern sharing economy services rely on information technologies, the characteristics of these platforms are crucial for influencing user participation. Our findings on platform reliability are consistent with Lim et al. (2017) and Marimon et al. (2019), who emphasize the importance of factors such as ease of use and error-free content. A study by Wang et al. (2019) highlights the importance of convenience and technical aspects for users of sharing economy services in the transport sector. Kim et al. (2018) also found that service quality dimensions such as reliability and responsiveness are important for users of sharing economy services in the transport sector.

These findings have both theoretical and practical implications. From a theoretical point of view, they provide valuable insights into the different priorities of users within the sharing economy and highlight the interplay between technological and social elements in shaping user behaviour. Furthermore, studies that have looked at this topic have not summarised these many elements of service quality into two categories; instead, they have mostly focused on one aspect of quality and only a few indicators. This study enriches the ongoing discourse on the sharing economy by revealing sector-specific differences in the importance of the dimensions of service quality. A study by Hamari et al. (2016) suggests that users of sharing economy services may have different motivations and barriers depending on the type of service and context. The different preferences of users in the accommodation and transport sectors emphasize the need for a customized approach to understand and meet users' expectations in different sectors of the sharing economy. This nuanced understanding contributes to the theoretical framework of service quality in the sharing economy and emphasizes the importance of integrating both technical and social dimensions. Furthermore, the study introduces an

innovative methodology by presenting a sector-specific ranking of service quality categories, providing a novel perspective that advances our understanding in this field. Furthermore, this study attempts to systematically examine the factors that influence user participation in the sharing economy. The inhibiting and motivating factors identified emphasize the crucial need for future research to thoroughly investigate the dynamics that shape user participation in this evolving economic model.

On a practical level, businesses operating in the sharing economy sectors can leverage these theoretical insights to tailor their services more effectively. For accommodation services, increasing the potential for meaningful social interactions at the destination could be a valuable strategy, acknowledging the longer duration of user stays and the importance of building relationships. Conversely, transport services should prioritize technical reliability and user safety to meet their users' primary needs, as user interactions in this sector are transient and convenience-driven. These findings offer valuable insights for platform providers and researchers seeking to optimize user experience and tailor services to meet sector-specific preferences.

The analysis of the technical dimension of the service underscores the significance of several key aspects. First and foremost, regular platform updates are crucial to ensure access to the latest information and a seamless service selection process. Users emphasize the need for platform reliability, particularly due to concerns about potential risks associated with unsecured software that could be vulnerable to misuse or hacking. In addition, the ease of use is a fundamental requirement for users of both accommodation and transport services. Navigating the platform independently, without requiring additional assistance, is paramount. Therefore, the platform should maintain a simple, intuitive structural and functional design. The overall design of the platform is also of great importance, as it can significantly influence user adoption and engagement by impacting its construction and performance. Both user groups also attach great importance to cleanliness and the overall condition of accommodations or vehicles. Users expect a well-maintained, pleasant, and inviting environment, which increases the attractiveness of the service. In the transport sector, the focus should be on a well-designed application that is free from errors and technical issues, providing accuracy, speed, and reliability. To fulfil users' expectations and maintain their trust, it is crucial to meet users' expectations and maintain their trust. Additionally, features such as real-time tracking and clear communication can contribute to a positive experience for users in

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this sector. The social category of service quality is more significant to users of accommodation services, as they believe that this service provides multiple benefits, such as the opportunity to meet new people and access other users' comments and suggestions. Users value the friendliness of the host and despite the increasing isolation brought on by technology, it is clear that people still crave social interaction, conversation, and the exchange of information, attitudes, and experiences in direct interaction. In the accommodation sector, hosts play a pivotal role in determining whether guests will return and use the service again. A friendly and attentive host who genuinely cares about their guests can have a significant impact on the likelihood of repeat service usage. In addition, gaining insight from the reviews of other guests who share their comments and experiences with the host and the accommodation provides an additional level of assurance and trust. This, in turn, increases users' willingness to choose the same service again because they feel safe during their experience.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study investigated the main sectors of the sharing economy, focusing on the accommodation and transport sectors. Its primary aim was to compare these sectors in terms of service quality and user perspectives. Despite the similarities in the operation of the platforms, we tried to discover any different aspects that may require tailored approaches or improvements. This is instrumental to improve the performance of these platforms and delivering an enhanced user experience.

Service quality was assessed using technical and social categories to determine their impact on user behaviour and potential sector-specific differences in user preferences. Analyzing data from 327 respondents using SEM analysis, we found that the technical and social service quality categories directly and positively influence users' behavioural intentions in the sharing economy, regardless of the accommodation or transport sector. We also found that the users of accommodation services in the sharing economy value the social aspect of service quality more than the technical aspect. For transport services in the sharing economy, on the other hand, users prefer the technical aspect of service quality over the social aspect.

Interpreting the results of the conducted study requires a consideration of the limitations of the study. The main limitation of this study is that the sample is not sufficiently representative, especially in terms of gender (men vs. women). This may affect the generalizability of the results to the wider population, as the gender distribution in the sample may not accurately reflect the diversity among the users of sharing economy services in Croatia. Another limitation is that the insights gained may not be universally applicable to all accommodation and transport providers in the sharing economy. Our study specifically examines the well-established transport platforms in Croatia, including BlaBlaCar, Bolt and Uber, as well as Airbnb for accommodation. This specific context emphasizes the need for caution when extending our findings beyond these platforms or to sharing economy services in diverse geographical and cultural contexts. This limitation highlights the importance of future studies encompassing a broad spectrum of sharing economy providers to enhance our understanding of user experiences and dynamics.

Recommendations and directions for future study can be focused on several areas. First, it has already been mentioned that there is a wealth of research on the sharing economy in accommodation in the literature, but there is a lack of research in other sectors of the sharing economy. Therefore, this could be considered when motivating researchers to explore the transport sector further or choose other research areas, such as the on-demand household services sector. Furthermore, in addition to investigating the user perspective, future research could also consider the service provider's perspective. In all areas of the sharing economy, the service providers' perspective is less frequently analysed than the users' perspective. The results from this perspective could help to understand the overall quality of service and could lead to higher quality if provider satisfaction is encouraged. The results could also be compared with other international studies, which could lead to general conclusions about the motivation and needs of service providers. In conclusion, another recommendation for future research concerns the investigation of user behavioural outcomes. Instead of users' behavioural intentions, future studies could measure actual behavioural outcomes in terms of creating loyalty through affective, cognitive and conative components. This approach would further confirm the results of this study or indicate different research directions.

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Appendix A. Measurement items

Measurement items		Source
1. The platform is updated regularly and provides the latest information quickly. 2. I can rely on the accuracy of the platform at all times. 3. The platform is easy to use. 4. The design of the platform encourages me to use it. 5. The cleanliness of the accommodation/vehicle is important to me. 6. It is important to me that the accommodation is tidy and well-maintained./ I value a pleasant atmosphere in the vehicle (scents, music...).	Technical category of service quality	Lamberton & Rose, 2012 Möhlmann, 2015 Priporas et al., 2017 Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2017 Zhou and Zhang, 2019 Shao et al., 2020
1. Using this service allows me to meet local people. 2. The opportunity to access comments and suggestions from other service users is important to me. 3. I feel secure in the accommodation I rent through this application./ A sense of security is important to me when driving. 4. The hospitality of the host is important to me./ The friendliness of the driver is important to me.	Social category of service quality	
1. I feel the need to recommend this service. 2. I plan to continue using the service. 3. I would prefer using this service over alternative accommodation rental options./ I would prefer using this service over alternative transport methods	Behavioural intentions	

EKONOMIJA DIJELJENJA: USPOREDBA PERCEPCIJE KVALITETE USLUGA KORISNIKA U SMJEŠTAJU I PRIJEVOZU NA PRIMJERU HRVATSKE

SAŽETAK

Ovaj rad usredotočuje se na dvije najrasprostranjenije i ekonomski značajne usluge u ekonomiji dijeljenja: smještaj i prijevoz. Njegov primarni cilj je usporediti ova dva ključna sektora s aspekta korisnika i njihove percipirane kvalitete usluge. S obzirom na sličan način djelovanja ovih platformi, ovo istraživanje ima za cilj utvrditi postoje li jedinstveni aspekti koji zahtijevaju različite pristupe ili područja koja treba poboljšati. To je ključno kako bi ove platforme bolje funkcionirale i pružile bolje iskustvo korisnicima. Kvaliteta usluge analizirana je kroz tehničke i društvene kategorije. Cilj je bio utvrditi hoće li i kako navedene kategorije kvalitete usluge utjecati na ponašanje korisnika te postoje li razlike u rangiranju kategorija kvalitete usluge s gledišta korisnika, ovisno o pojedinom sektoru ekonomije dijeljenja.

Na uzorku od 327 ispitanika, SEM analiza korištena je kako bi se pokazalo da tehničke i društvene kategorije kvalitete usluge pozitivno i izravno utječu na ponašanje korisnika u ekonomiji dijeljenja u sektorima smještaja i prijevoza. Također, rezultati su otkrili da je za korisnike usluga ekonomije dijeljenja u sektoru smještaja društvena kategorija kvalitete usluge važnija od tehničke kategorije, dok je za korisnike usluga ekonomije dijeljenja u sektoru prijevozna tehnička kategorija kvalitete usluge važnija od društvene.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI: *aspekt korisnika, ekonomija dijeljenja, kvaliteta usluge, smještaj, prijevoz*