

Towards a consumer social behavior theory for sharing economy: an integrated view

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A consumer
social behavior
theory

Received 4 June 2022
Revised 16 October 2022
Accepted 19 October 2022

Abstract

Purpose – The current study is exploring factors affecting social and sharing behavioral intentions. The paper proposes a new theory, the consumer social behavior theory, which aids in understanding social behaviors. This is through the convergence of the theory of planned behavior (TPB) and norm activation theory (NAT) to foster the understanding of sharing and social behaviors. Religiosity, as a cultural and psychological factor, along with five major predictors of sharing practices are also incorporated. These predictors are economic benefits, sustainability, enjoyment, trust and difficulties in sharing practices.

Design/methodology/approach – The current study takes a new route through proposing a new theoretical contribution and developing a new theory termed consumer social behavior theory (CSBT) to be commonly used in social behavioral contexts.

Findings – The CSBT is an output of integrating two prominent theories in pro-social and pro-environmental contexts. It is found that integrating both theories help in thoroughly examining behavioral intentions. Religiosity is found to significantly impact intentions towards social behaviors, yet no study examined its role in sharing and social behaviors contexts.

Originality/value – This study is contributing to and enriching the sharing economy research domain through new theoretical developments. A theory adaptation for TPB and NAT was conducted to advance a thorough understanding of sharing and social behavioral intentions. This work is considered the first of its kind to develop an integrated view for sharing and social behaviors.

Keywords Sharing economy, Social behaviors, Religiosity, Theory of planned behavior, Norm activation theory, Consumer social behavior theory

Paper type Conceptual paper

1. Introduction

Sharing economy was firstly mentioned by Lessig (2008) as the exchange, sharing and rental of products without ownership. Sharing economy refers to the exchange of a physical product or service whose consumption is split-up into single parts. These parts are consumed in a collaborative manner in consumer-to-consumer (C2C) networks that are facilitated through online communities (Hamari *et al.*, 2016). The term is not considered a new one; it has been known in the business domain such as self-service laundries, and video and car rentals. Then, it has received a great attention in C2C transactions which led to the development of new business models serving consumers (Puschmann and Alt, 2016). Sharing economy has now become an interesting phenomenon for scholars, marketers and consumers to consider due to its benefits (Koopman *et al.*, 2015).

The sharing economy is now considered a paradigm shift in consumption. It transforms consumer behavior from owning to utilizing and sharing products and services (Puschmann and Alt, 2016). There are various factors affecting the consideration of sharing economy such as changes in consumer attitudes towards ownership of products and minimizing economical spending. Consumers also are seeking social connections, affected by technology advancements and became more aware of the environmental challenges (Cohen and Kietzmann, 2014; Gibbs *et al.*, 2018; Sands *et al.*, 2020). Review of the literature revealed that there is a shortage of knowledge in determining the factors affecting individuals' sharing and



social behaviors (Jenkins *et al.*, 2014; Mohlmann, 2015). There were few empirical studies conducted to examine intentions towards collaborative consumption and sharing economy (Hamari *et al.*, 2016; Dall Pizzol *et al.*, 2017; Tussydia, 2015).

According to the social exchange theory, social behaviors refer to an exchange between individuals that results in economic and social outcomes. Social behaviors refer to individuals who enter new associations as they expect its more rewarding in terms of economic benefits and social connections (Homans, 1958; Thibaut and Kelley, 1959; Blau, 1960; Macneil, 1980). Although economic rewards such as money are considered important for consumers to consider social behaviors, still there are other factors that affect their social behaviors. These factors are emotional satisfaction, spiritual values, pursuit of personal advantage and sharing humanitarian ideals (Lambe *et al.*, 2001). Therefore, the current study and the proposed theory for social behaviors utilize this definition. Social behaviors in the current study include practices such as sharing economies, collaborative consumption, and other similar online or offline sharing practices.

Social behaviors and sharing economy are associated to each other as people participating in social behaviors usually conduct a cost–benefit analysis to identify the risks and benefits associated to the behavior. In sharing economy contexts, the same exchange analysis occurs for two aspects: the economic and the social aspect. People engaging in sharing economy practices are seeking to reduce costs as well as having a safe economic and social exchange with other individuals (Xu, 2020). Despite the popularity and the significant growth of sharing economy, still there is lack of a clear theoretical founding to explain behavioral intentions (Godelnik, 2017; Yaraghi and Ravi, 2017; Ranjbari *et al.*, 2018). The fast growing and the significant importance of sharing economy as well as the various definitions and interpretations provided make it challenging to develop a well-defined and integrative framework that examines the entire phenomenon (Schor, 2016; Ranjbari *et al.*, 2018; Pouri and Hilty, 2021). Therefore, the current paper aims to provide a comprehensive and integrative theory that will aid researchers, academics as well as marketers to predict behavioral intentions in social behaviors and sharing economy contexts.

Little attention was also given to the importance of the theory of planned behavior (TPB) in examining sharing practices, although it is a well-established theory that has been used to explain a wide range of consumer pro-social and pro-environmental behaviors. The literature review also showed that studies conducted to extend the TPB to add personal norms are rare (Chan and Bishop, 2013; Park and Ha, 2014). Personal norms are a major component of norm activation theory (NAT) that is referred to as a process in which people make self-expectations toward a certain behavior (Harland *et al.*, 2007; Esfahani *et al.*, 2017). It was proved that most cases of pro-environmental and pro-social behaviors could be observed as a combination of self-interest and pro-social concerns (Shi *et al.*, 2017). Referring to social psychology models that help in explaining consumer pro-environmental behaviors, it was found that an individual's core values are rooted in his/her belief system which is religion (Minton and Kahle, 2013). However, limited numbers of studies in the marketing literature were conducted to examine religiosity effect on consumer behavior (Mokhlis, 2009; Mathras *et al.*, 2015).

One major reason behind integrating both theories to develop the consumer social behavior theory (CSBT) is to increase the prediction power of behavioral intentions towards social behaviors. According to Taylor *et al.* (2006), the TPB and NAT are widely used in different contexts; however, they have a major limitation, which is the low prediction power. The researchers stated that one theory is not sufficient to explain behaviors fully. Thus, using more than one theory will increase the explanatory power and predictability of behavioral intentions towards social behaviors. Also, it was supported by Achterberg and Miller (2004) that combining different variables and constructs from competing theories into one or more poly-theoretical frameworks will enhance the predictability and understanding of individual behaviors (Kim *et al.*, 2018).

Based on the abovementioned studies, the current study takes a new route through proposing a new theoretical contribution and developing a new theory termed CSBT to be commonly used in social behavioral contexts. A theory refers to making sense out of the observable world through coordinating and ordering the relationships between constructs that constitute a theorist's focus of attention in the real world (Dubin, 1976). It is a coherent description, explanation, and depiction of both observed and experienced phenomena (Gioia and Pitre, 1990). According to Whetten (1989), there are four crucial elements that a complete theory should include to be considered as a contribution. First is identifying the constructs and the variables that should be included as a part of explaining this phenomenon. Second is determining how these constructs are related to each other. Third is developing a theoretical framework to provide the glue that welds the constructs together. The more complex the model is, the better it explains the phenomenon. Fourth is explaining the reason why the new theory should be given credence and considered important in the field (Whetten, 1989; Cloutier and Langley, 2020).

The current paper satisfies the requirements and conditions for a theory development through the following. First, after an extensive review of the social behavior field, no research was found defining or explaining social behaviors or factors affecting it. The purpose of this paper serves toward an enlightened understanding of sharing and social behaviors that is of value not only to academic thought but also to practitioners and policy makers. This is achieved through integrating two prominent theories that proved to explain pro-social and pro-environmental behaviors in several and different contexts. These theories are the TPB and NAT. It was stated by Chatterjee (2015) that newly developed theories are usually different from practice and are not useful to be used by practitioners. Thus, the CBST has included variables that have proved in previous studies to affect people behaviors, attitudes and decision-making processes. One variable that is included in the CBST and affects individual's core values and life decisions is religiosity.

The new theory also included five major factors affecting people's decisions towards sharing practices and communities. These factors are economic benefits, sustainability, trust, enjoyment and difficulties faced by individuals in sharing communities. The inclusion of these variables serves the second and third conditions for a theory building stated by Whetten (1989) which are determining the relationship between variables and having a comprehensive framework combining them together. The CBST depiction shows the untested relationships between the abovementioned variables. The theory is testing for the effect of religiosity in affecting attitudes towards social practices, moral obligations of an individual to consider sharing and social acts and on intentions towards social behaviors. The CBST is also testing for the direct and indirect impact of five major predictors of sharing economy, a concept similar in definition to social behaviors. Finally, to satisfy the fourth condition for theory building, the theory should give credence and fill a gap in its field. This is achieved as the CBST is the first theory developed to test and examine social behaviors. It is a comprehensive theoretical contribution that provides new directions to examine psychological and social motives effectively and thoroughly behind individuals' attitudes and behavioral intentions in social behavior contexts (Whetten, 1989). The paper also provides propositions for the relationships between variables for verification and testing in future studies.

In science, the word "theory" refers to an integrative and comprehensive interpretation of an important phenomenon that is supported by many facts over time (Quoted by Weisenmiller, 2008, p. 2). Theories have been explained and classified in terms of scope and the level of abstractness of their concepts and propositions. The classifications are grand, middle and juts (Smith, 2008). Middle theories are bigger than proposing individual concepts and smaller than the grand theories. The middle theories are narrower in scope or concepts studied. They are also composed of a limited number of concepts that are related to a certain topic or phenomenon and can be empirically measurable (Smith and Liehr, 1999). On the other

hand, grand theories are broader in scope, less abstract and more general, due to the broad scope of the topic. The concepts of the grand theories cannot be tested empirically as they are too general and, in some contexts, they may include sub-theories (Imenda, 2014). The proposed CSBT is categorized as middle theory, in which its scope is social behaviors and sharing economy practices. At the same time, the proposed relationships and propositions can be empirically tested.

The CSBT is developed and supported through extensive research using prominent journals and peer-reviewed journals. Exhaustive coverage of extant literature was conducted to ensure that all relevant information is included in the paper. Thus, the theory development and propositions and conclusions are based on inclusive knowledge base. Also, the current theory is developed based on previous studies in similar disciplines and contexts. The researchers have presented materials that are representative of most other works in the field of social behaviors and pro-environmental contexts. This extensive research and propositions were conducted through searching and gathering information from relevant peer-reviewed journals. These journals are *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, *Journal of Consumer Behavior* and *Journal of Islamic Marketing*.

The next focal point of the study is providing an overview on the main concepts. These concepts are sharing economy, religiosity, TPB and NAT. Then, the explanation of the new developed theory is discussed followed by the research propositions. Finally, conclusions and theoretical contributions are discussed.

2. Overview on sharing economy

In recent years, the notion of sharing economy has grown substantially. However, there is still no universally fixed definition for sharing economy in the literature, but there are several proposed definitions by researchers (Koopman *et al.*, 2015). Sharing economy has emerged with the spread of Internet-based technologies and started to grow rapidly in economies. It helped in facilitating the exchange of goods and information that led to lowering transaction costs. Digitalization facilitated the emergence of sharing economy practices as it allowed people to meet via online platforms and easily reach each other (Geissinger *et al.*, 2019). There is a new wave of emerging companies that operate depending on web-based platforms to facilitate sharing practices. These companies are Airbnb, which connects renters to rooms. Kiva is another company that facilitates crowdfunding, which refers to people who can invest in entrepreneurial and innovative activities. Uber and Lyft are other examples that allow car owners to share either cars or rides to same destinations (Hira and Reilly, 2017).

Scholars and researchers started since then to propose new terms and definitions like sharing economy such as moral economy, collaborative consumption and peer-to-peer communities. The sharing economy applications are extremely beneficial to users. They aid in providing a way for escaping the high costs brought by the overly regulated government businesses that impose unnecessarily high costs (Allen, 2015). Policy makers, scholars and practitioners started to consider the importance of the sharing economy trend in transforming many aspects in people's social and economic systems. The concept of sharing economy allows for the exchange and eases the access of goods and services. It also allows policy makers, communities and organizations to re-think the way people live, grow, sustain and connect with each other (Cheng, 2016).

3. The convergence of sharing economy and sustainability

Despite the controversies about which practices being included under the sharing economy, the promoters for the concept are emphasizing its great potential in contributing to

sustainable development (Botsman and Rogers, 2010; Heinrichs, 2013). Sustainability is a term that includes three main aspects which are environmental, social and economic benefits to societies over time (Lozano, 2008). It can be linked to sharing economy through the well-organized use of resources, the social connections between people and the economic value it provides (Botsman and Rogers, 2010). Hence, sharing economy could help in satisfying the needs of present generations without hindering future generations to satisfy their own needs as well (Brundtland, 1987).

Sharing economy helps in increasing the environmental and economic benefits by the frequent interactions between people. Thus, it can lead to creating and strengthening the cohesion between people addressed by the social dimensions of sustainable development (Dempsey *et al.*, 2011). There were studies conducted to investigate the relationship between sustainability and sharing economy (Cheng, 2016). First, a study conducted by Martin and Shaheen (2011) revealed that car sharing reduces the emissions of greenhouse gases in North America. Second, a study by Leismann *et al.* (2013) found that textile swapping, tool hiring and chemical leasing schemes help in reducing the resources use. Third, several studies found out that sharing practices create and enhance social relationships and community building between individuals (Albinsson and Perera, 2009; Philip *et al.*, 2015; Plewina and Guenther, 2017). It is mentioned by Heinrichs (2013) that sharing economy is believed to be the new prospective pathway to achieve sustainability.

4. Theories addressing pro-environmental and pro-social behaviors

This section discusses two common and major theories that are used to examine pro-environmental and pro-social behaviors. These kinds of behaviors refer to human actions that significantly affect the society as well as the environment. According to the current study, pro-social and pro-environmental behaviors are referred to as social behaviors. Each theory with its corresponding components is explained next.

4.1 Theory of planned behavior

To study individual's behaviors, there are two intertwined theories that are commonly used by researchers. The first one is the theory of reasoned action (TRA) and its extension which is the TPB (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Both theories are applied and used in social sciences to predict and examine behaviors and intentions and explain attitudes that are related to pro-environmental behaviors (Harland *et al.*, 1999), travel choices (Bamberg and Schmidt, 2003; Heath and Gifford, 2002; Bamberg *et al.*, 2003) and green consumerism (Kalafatis *et al.*, 1999). The TPB was also used to examine pro-environmental behaviors such as recycling, energy and water consumption and ethical investment (Jackson, 2005; Stern, 2000).

The TPB proposes that attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control (PBC) are significant determinants of behaviors (Lee and Back, 2009). Unlike the TRA, that only comprises volitional aspects which are referred to as behavioral belief (attitude) and normative belief (subjective norms), the TPB includes the non-volitional aspect which is the control belief (PBC). The inclusion of the control belief aspect to the TRA has significantly impacted the ability of the TPB to predict intentions and behaviors as they are not fully under the control of volitional factors (Han *et al.*, 2010; Han, 2015).

4.2 Norm activation theory

Schwartz's (1977) NAT is considered an adequate and suitable model to provide the foundation for examining pro-environmental behaviors such as recycling and conserving energy. The model originally intends to investigate pro-social and pro-environmental

behaviors based on three antecedents. These antecedents are awareness of consequences (AC), ascription of responsibility (AR) and personal norms (PN). The first activator is AC; it refers to an individual's attention of the possible consequences of his/her actions on the environment and society, thus it activates his/her personal norms to behave in a certain manner. The second activator is AR; it refers to an individual's feeling of responsibility toward the negative consequences of his/her actions. This leads to affecting personal norms towards the ethical/environmental behavior. Personal norms refer to moral obligations to do or refrain from a certain behavior (Han, 2015).

5. An integrated perspective on social behavior: the consumer social behavior theory

This section constitutes and explains the theoretical contribution of the current study. It explains the merge of the TPB and NAT, along with religiosity and the five predictors to develop the CBST. It also explains how this new theory could be used and tested in future research. The TPB and NAT are two empirically supported theories, but totally different in determining human behaviors. It is stated that attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control accompanied by personal norms can have a significant impact on pro-environmental intentions and behaviors (Park and Ha, 2014). Research proved that Ajzen's (1991) TPB and Schwartz's (1977) NAT are considered two major theories in explaining pro-environmental behaviors. The TPB is proved to explain someone's personal expectancy and benefits, while NAT is proved to explain someone's behavior derived from his/her moral beliefs (Liu *et al.*, 2017). An emerging set of studies proposed the idea of integrating different theories in explaining consumers' pro-environmental behaviors (Wall *et al.*, 2007). It is claimed that pro-environmental behaviors are not stemmed only from person's self-interest, but it also could be from moral or norm-based beliefs. The combination of both theories, TPB and NAT, is imperative for the development of a more comprehensive model (Park and Ha, 2014). Therefore, the CBST is theoretically contributing to the marketing field through developing a comprehensive model that combines both perspectives, self-interest and moral ones on social behavioral intentions.

Based on results of previous empirical studies, the combination of both theories, TPB and NAT, is imperative for the development of a more comprehensive model (Park and Ha, 2014). Harland *et al.* (1999) conducted a study proving that pro-environmental behaviors are not only predicted by the three constructs of TPB, but also, the inclusion of personal norms contributed to the explanation of consumers' behavioral intentions. Another empirical study conducted applying a meta-analysis of the psycho-social predictors of pro-environmental behavior revealed the importance of including moral norms to the TPB framework (Bamberg and Moser, 2007). It was proved by Chan and Bishop (2013) that 52% of the variance in behavioral intentions is explained by the integration of attitudes, personal norms and PBC. Hence, it is claimed that it is important to integrate rational choice theories and pro-socially motivated ones. Another study was conducted by Abutaleb *et al.* (2020, 2021) to examine the impact of personal norms when added to the TPB. Results showed that personal norms along with other TPB variable helped in explaining variance in millennials' intentions towards collaborative consumption practices.

5.1 The role of religiosity in social behavior contexts

Religion is considered an important cultural element. It is one of the most influential and universal social institutions. It has a significant role in influencing and affecting several transitions in people's lives. Religiosity, the measurement construct of religion (Abou-Youssef *et al.*, 2011), can significantly affect people's attitudes, values and behaviors on both a

societal and personal level (Rice, 2006). It represents an inherent, stable human value that does not change over time. Therefore, it is important for marketers to consider religiosity because of its pragmatic value and significant effect on consumer behavior (Khraim, 2010; Rice, 2006). Previously, researchers have studied religiosity based on two perspectives, intrinsic and extrinsic religiousness (Allport and Ross, 1967; Delener, 1994; Esso and Dibb, 2004). Intrinsic religiosity motivates an individual to follow his/her internal beliefs and to have a religious life, regardless to the rewards and outcomes. However, extrinsic religiousness is mainly based on personal gains and utilitarian aspects (Vitell *et al.*, 2005). The current study follows the definition of the intrinsic religiosity.

The intrinsic approach in explaining religion and its relationship with sociocultural life is in line with the structural and functional approach to religion. This approach shows that religion has a significant role in influencing norms to address the conflicts and anti-social acts in the society. This means that religion has a cultural, structural and functional role in affecting people's inner domain and significant role as well in affecting their consumption behaviors (Vitell *et al.*, 2005). Religion serves as a tool to strengthen the solidarity of society and influences religious morals and norms to control people's actions and decisions (Hunter and Toney, 2005). It was stated by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975, 2005) that attitudes are good predictors of individuals' behaviors and intentions. As intention is the immediate antecedent before behavioral, thus, it is affected by attitudes. The researchers defined the attitudes as the behavioral beliefs that individuals have towards certain behaviors. These beliefs may be a result of an individual's religiosity and values. Therefore, religiosity is considered one of the underlying factors affecting attitudes (Schouten *et al.*, 2014).

The current study has included religiosity to the proposed theory in terms of intrinsic religiosity. Existing research focused on measuring the impact of religiosity on consumer behavior in terms of affiliation (Barro, 1999; Brown and Taylor, 2007), church attendance (Agle and Van Buren, 1999; Lipford and Tollison, 2003), religious motivation or general religious commitments (Albaum and Peterson, 2006). Nonetheless, religiosity is perceived as a complex phenomenon that consists of cognitive, affective and behavioral components (Cornwall *et al.*, 1986). The cognitive component refers to an individual's beliefs regarding the conception of God, human beings and their final destinations. These beliefs have ethical implication and affect their attitudes and behaviors. The affective component refers to the level of commitment of people towards their religions (Parboteeah *et al.*, 2007). This commitment is explained in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic religious motivation. The behavioral component refers to the manifestation of religious practices such as praying, religious studying and engaging in religious activities (Schouten *et al.*, 2014). The cognitive and the affective components of religiosity, respectively, is what is considered important in the current study as it explains how religious beliefs can help in predicting social and sharing behaviors. This can be supported by Hunter and Toney (2005) that social behaviors require consumers to sacrifice their personal interests and encourage responsible consumption behaviors that are fundamentally based on ethical and moral values. This means that moral and ethical choices of consumption by consumers could be a result of their religious values and beliefs. The relationship between consumer choices and the environment could also be attributed to moral dimensions that came from religious perspectives.

Ajzen's theory of planned behavior assumes that religiosity also is one of the background factors that may influence the consumers attitude and subjective norm (Ajzen and Fishbein, 2005). It is defined as an orienting worldview that is explained through beliefs, narratives, practices of prayers and symbols (Peterson, 2001). Religiosity is also considered as an imperative source of personal values (Fry *et al.*, 2011; Fry and Slocum, 2008; Ramasamy *et al.*, 2010). The theological concept of the equality between human beings lead to generating moral values such as solidarity and fairness, and moral values serve as a foundation for attitude formation (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980; Hill, 1990). Thus, religiosity will likely impact

attitudes towards pro-environmental and pro-social behaviors. Many religions explain values in terms of clemency, stewardship and righteousness. For instance, in Islam, individuals must be helpful and benevolent to other people. They must take into consideration other people's interests and needs and if necessary, they can provide help and support without return (Ahmed, 1995; Abeng, 1997). This also includes supporting activities that are beneficial to the society as well as the protection of the environment (Hasan, 2001; Graafland, 2017).

There are three possible reasons stated by Hirschman (1983) behind the lack of research in examining the effect of religiosity on consumer behavior. The first reason is the slow development in literature in defining and discussing it. The second reason is perceiving religion as a taboo or a sensitive topic that should not be approached for investigation. The third reason is that religion is everywhere around us, thus, it is ignored by researchers as an apparent variable to be examined. There are few studies conducted to investigate religion as a predictor of consumption patterns (Rice, 2006; Bhuian *et al.*, 2018), although there has been a call in the literature about its importance (Khraim, 2010).

5.2 Predictors of sharing economy practices

Prior research has identified various motivators for consumers to participate in sharing practices such as economic, environmental, technological and social motivators. One motivator that stood out and was supported by empirical results is money savings (Benoit *et al.*, 2017; Martin, 2016; Mohlmann, 2015). Gansky (2010) mentioned that after the economic crisis in 2008, consumers started to be more mindful and rethink their values to be resourceful. They are seeking for solutions to access alternative modes of consumption at lower costs rather than ownership. Thus, researchers stated that a major driver behind sharing practices is economic benefits (Li and Wen, 2019; Tussyadiah, 2015).

Consumers also became more aware of the environmental pressures around them, and this led to seeking other options to use resources (Gansky, 2010). It is assumed that the efficient use of resources, reduction of wastes and absorbing surplus generated from production and consumption are environmentally beneficial and act as motivators for sharing economy and collaborative consumption (Dall Pizzol *et al.*, 2017). As sharing communities and practices are facilitated and occur through online platforms, trust level plays a major role in affecting intentions and behaviors. Trust is described as the willingness of individuals to depend on other parties to overcome perceptions of risk and insecurities. Researchers claim that trust is an indispensable factor for an online, computer-mediated environment to be successful (Mittendorf, 2017). Mistrust between participants in a collaborative and sharing context could act as a major hinderer (Tussyadiah, 2015).

The CBST integrates the prominent theories used in examining these types of behaviors. There are studies which highlighted the importance of combining both the volitional factors such as attitudes and subjective norms to determine pro-environmental behaviors as well as the moral norms. These variables act as key factors to thoroughly examine pro-environmental intentions and behaviors (c.f. Chen and Tung, 2014; Han, 2015; Han *et al.*, 2010; Harland *et al.*, 1999). Thus, the CBST starts by combining the TPB and NAT components in one model. Then, the theory includes religiosity as a major variable that plays a role in affecting social behaviors. The effect of religiosity and religious beliefs on consumption behaviors is not limited to specific cultures or countries. There is a resurgence of interest in religion worldwide, as loss of religiosity led to loss of values that act as a motivator for new consumption modes. The CBST is only considering the effect of intrinsic religiosity on attitudes, personal norms and behavioral intentions. Intrinsic religiosity acts as a motive behind people's actions and decisions, regardless of their religious affiliations.

Several studies have agreed that religiosity is not a uni-dimensional concept (Glock, 1962; Faulkner and DeJong, 1966; Allport and Ross, 1967; King and Hunt, 1972). It includes multiple

elements to be measured such as beliefs, practices, knowledge, experience and their effect on individuals' daily life decisions. Weaver and Agle (2002) revealed that religiosity plays a major and significant role in affecting people's attitudes and behaviors. It is one of the personal elements embedded in human beings' characters (Vitell *et al.*, 2005). The CBST adheres to Weaver and Agle's (2002) definition of religiosity and its role in impacting attitudes and behaviors and acting as a motive behind individuals' consumption behaviors.

Based on extensive review of the literature, there are five major predictors of sharing practices included in the CBST. Past research revealed that economic benefits, sustainability, trust, enjoyment and difficulties in joining sharing practices have a significant impact on attitudes and behavioral intentions towards sharing and collaborative activities (c.f. Hamari *et al.*, 2016; Hamari *et al.*, 2016; Mohlmann, 2015; Tussydia, 2015; Billows and McNeil, 2018). Therefore, these five predictors are included in the CBST to indicate their effect in social behavior contexts.

Economic benefits are significantly affecting several consumption behaviors such as second-hand reselling communities, reduction of plastic use, electricity and energy resources, recycling and re-use of products, or sharing accommodation and extra rooms (Benoit *et al.*, 2017; Martin, 2016; Li and Wen, 2019). Sustainability is an important predictor to be considered because social behaviors influence protecting and conserving the environment and natural resources (Dall Pizzol *et al.*, 2017; Gansky, 2010). Thus, examining consumers' awareness of the consequences of their actions on the environment and their feeling of responsibility is important in social behavior contexts. Furthermore, most of the sharing and collaborative consumption practices and applications are online. Consumers of different ages are tech savvy and are using social media daily (Chan and Shaheen, 2012; Belk, 2014). Thus, including a variable that examines the effect of trust in social behaviors context is important. Consumer trust proved to play a significant role in affecting sharing and collaborative consumption practices (Mittendorf, 2017).

Enjoyment is the fourth predictor included in the CBST. This variable adds value to the CSBT because social behaviors are always performed in groups. Feelings of enjoyment while practicing a social or sharing practice can significantly motivate consumers' willingness and intentions to perform this practice (Barnes and Mattson, 2017; Hamari *et al.*, 2016). Hence, the role of enjoyment is important to be considered in sharing and social behavior contexts. Difficulties in sharing practices, the fifth predictor in the CSBT, refer to consumers' inability to participate or the hinderers faced when considering sharing or social practices. This could be due to inconvenience and lack of awareness of how to engage in such communities (Billows and McNeil, 2018). This variable could be adapted to several and different contexts.

The CBST is depicted in Figure 1. As there are several relationships shown in the figure, different colors are used to differentiate them. The blue color is used to show the direct and indirect relationships between the five predictors, attitudes and behavioral intentions. The red color is used to show the components of the TPB and their impact on behavioral intentions. The green color is used to differentiate the NAT components including the direct impact of AC and AR on personal norms and direct impact of personal norms on intentions. Finally, the purple color is used for differentiating religiosity and to show its direct impact on attitudes, personal norms and behavioral intentions. The new developed theory is explained in the following section in the form of research propositions addressing academics and practitioners. These research propositions present a strong prospect for future research.

6. Research propositions for future research

The TPB is considered a useful theory for predicting new behavioral consumption, and the constructs of the theory have been used repeatedly in pro-environmental and pro-social contexts (c.f. Bamberg *et al.*, 2003; Liu *et al.*, 2017; Johnson *et al.*, 2016). The components of the

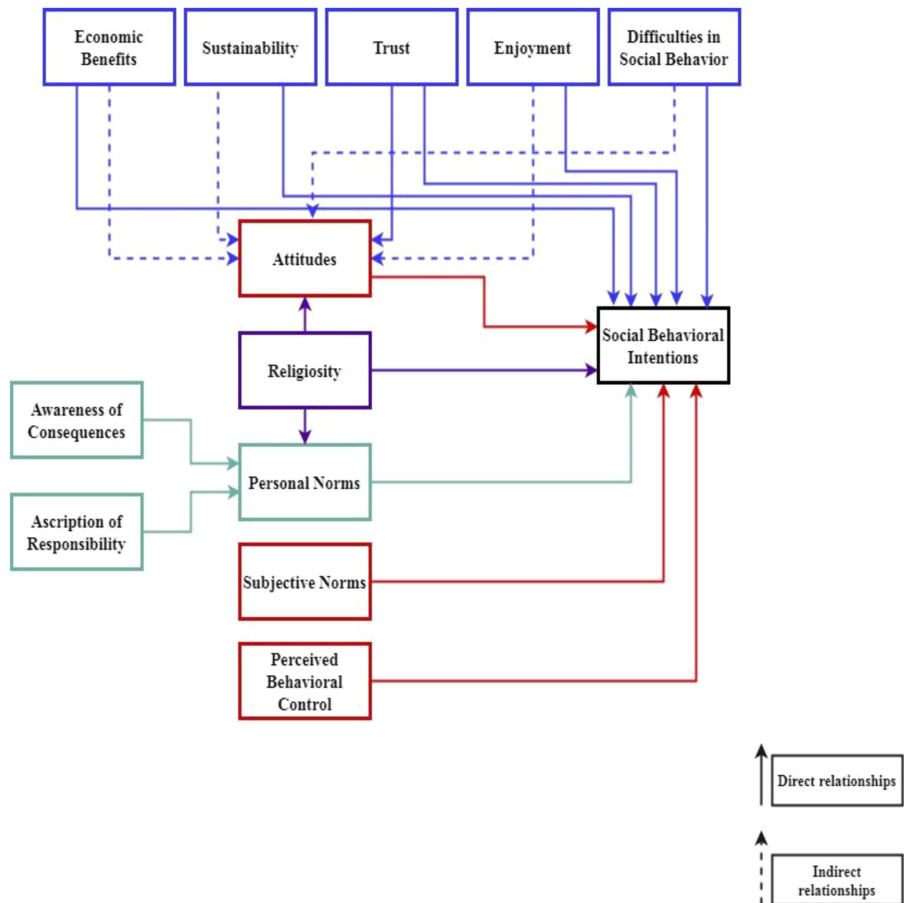


Figure 1.
Consumer social
behavior theory

Source(s): Developed by researchers

TPB framework aid in determining an individual's intention to perform a behavior based on attitudes, subjective norms and PBC. Attitudes towards social and sharing practices are measuring people's beliefs and feelings towards the positive consequences of sharing as a new consumption mode. Subjective norms are experienced as social pressure, and it reflects the influence of important people in affecting the performance of sharing and social practices (Johnson *et al.*, 2016). The third component in the theory is PBC. It refers to the ease or difficulty in doing a certain behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Botsman and Rogers (2011) stated that collaborative and sharing practices involve the use of technology and social networking platforms. Hence, consumers may not be able to have full volitional control over their intentions in some situations. They may lack information about technology as well as the ability to organize other aspects in social behavior contexts (Roos and Hahn, 2019). Therefore, the following propositions are developed:

- P1.* Individuals with favorable and positive attitudes towards sharing and social behaviors will have higher intentions towards sharing and social practices

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- P2. Subjective norms play a significant role in affecting an individual social behavioral intention
- P3. Perceived behavioral control such as trust, time or money will significantly affect an individual inclination towards social behaviors

A consumer
social behavior
theory

As aforementioned, the TPB is open to new variables if these additional variables are statistically significantly in explaining additional variance beyond the theory's main components. The NAT components are added to the TPB framework, forming the CBST. The first activator in the NAT is AC; it refers to individuals' consciousness of their actions towards the environment. Empirical studies showed that individuals who are aware of their actions on the environment are willing to act pro-environmentally, and their personal norms are activated (Eriksson *et al.*, 2006; Schwartz, 1992). The second activator is AR, it refers to the feeling of responsibility of individuals towards the consequences of their actions on the society and the environment, and thus, leads to activating personal norms (Esfahani *et al.*, 2017). Personal norms have a central position in the NAT and act as a mediator between the activators and the behavior (De Groot and Steg, 2009). Hence, the following propositions are derived:

- P4. Awareness of consequences will increase the tendency to activate an individual's personal norms towards social behavioral intentions
- P5. Ascription of responsibility will increase the tendency to activate an individual personal norm towards social behavioral intentions
- P6. Activated personal norms will significantly predict an individual social behavioral intention

Religiosity is a major construct that is included in the CBST to examine its effect on attitudes, personal norms and social behavioral intentions. Several studies revealed that religiosity has a significant effect on consumer attitudes and behaviors (c.f. Bonne *et al.*, 2009; Delener, 1994; McDaniel and Burnett, 1990; Minton and Kahle, 2013). It is recommended to examine the role of religiosity in pro-environmental and pro-social behavioral models (Bhuian *et al.*, 2018). It was also supported by Schneider *et al.* (2011) and Soyeze (2012) that religiosity has a significant role in determining a variety of values, attitudes, concerns and behaviors.

An individual's religious beliefs and values can prevent him/her from being manipulated by unhealthy social elements. They are considered a superior force that faces any negative element that emotionally and mentally hurts. Strong holdings of religious principals will aid in shaping positive self-development on individuals and will make individuals capable of discarding negative attitudes and behaviors. Strong moral holdings can lead to wise decisions taken by individuals before doing anything immoral. Therefore, it is interesting to examine the relationship between an individual's level of religiosity and his/her behaviors (Bakar *et al.*, 2018). It was stated formerly in the paper that intrinsic religiosity will be included in the CBST, which refers to people who find their master motive in religion (Koenig and Büssing, 2010) Thus, the following propositions are developed:

- P7. Individuals who are high on intrinsic religiosity will tend to have favorable attitudes towards social behaviors
- P8. Individuals who are high on intrinsic religiosity will have activated personal norms and feeling of obligation towards social behaviors
- P9. Individuals who are high on intrinsic religiosity will have higher intentions towards social behaviors

The inclusion of the five predictors of sharing economy practices are based on previous empirical research. For instance, a study conducted to examine car sharing motives, as one type of sharing economy, found that economic benefits are a main driver to stimulate behavior (Tussyadiah, 2015). It was revealed that economic benefit as an extrinsic motivator can determine behavioral intentions towards sharing practices (Barnes and Mattson, 2017). After the economic crisis in 2009, Walsh (2011) claimed that consumers started to consider collaborative consumption and sharing practices due to their low costs. The sharing economy refers to better usage of resources and assets, thus it has proven economic benefits. It substitutes the sole title of goods with new economical alternatives (Ballu's-Armet *et al.*, 2014). Individuals participating in sharing economy perceive it as a mean for saving time, expenses and removing the burden of proprietorship as well as providing autonomy. It was proved that there is a significant link between financial and economic benefits with collaborative consumption intentions, which is a type under sharing economy practices (Hamari *et al.*, 2016; Kim and Yoon, 2021).

Sharing economy is also believed to foster more environmentally sustainable ways of life and help in reducing consumers' carbon footprints (Carbone *et al.*, 2018). Botsman and Rogers (2010) mentioned that there is now a greater concern by consumers with the exhaustion of natural resources encouraging better use of products. This could explain the importance of including sustainability as a predictor of intentions towards social behavior. In previous literature, sharing practices were perceived as socially responsible behavior (Botsman and Rogers, 2010) or as an ecological practice (Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2012). Sharing practices are appealing to individual who are environmentally conscious and ecologically sensible (Hamari *et al.*, 2016). It was also proved that sustainability is considered a key intrinsic motivator behind sharing and collaborative consumption practices (Kim and Yoon, 2021). Thus, it is one of the major predictors added to the CSBT that focuses on the environmental aspect of sustainability, protection of resources and reducing ecological footprints.

Another predictor of sharing economy is mutual trust. Botsman and Rogers (2010) mentioned that one of the main factors that encourage collaborative activities is mutual trust between those who are sharing a product or service. Sharing practices are based on social interaction, therefore, a high level of trust between participants must exist (Dall Pizzol *et al.*, 2017; Carbone *et al.*, 2018). Whereas trust between service providers and consumers is a must in sharing economy contexts, the trust between the consumers with the other users in the sharing activity is imperative. Trust plays a major and essential role in affecting individual's intentions towards sharing economy and collaborative consumption practices (Möhlmann, 2015; Kim and Yoon, 2021).

Enjoyment, the fourth predictor in the CSBT, is considered one of the emotional aspects of collaborative and sharing behaviors. Consumers are trying to do something different from their daily lives routine, and it is always fun to interact with community members in a meaningful way (Mayasari and Haryanto, 2018). It was proved that enjoyment plays an important role in attitude formation and intention (Hamari *et al.*, 2016). It was proved in previous studies that enjoyment is an important factor in sharing practices such as sharing information through online platforms (Nov *et al.*, 2010). According to McArthur (2015), individuals participating in sharing economy practices such as Airbnb are attracted to the feeling of originality and genuine involvement, thus this leads to enjoyment while doing the activity. Enjoyment is referred to as the epistemic benefit of sharing economy practices (Kim *et al.*, 2015). It was also proved that it acts as a major intrinsic motivator for collaborative consumption (Hamari *et al.*, 2016).

Finally, it is important to consider consumers' perceived barriers of engaging in sharing and social communities. There are some barriers that could hinder people to consider sharing as their attachment to belongings and the associated risk of sharing and engaging in

collaborative consumption communities. These barriers could make it difficult for people to easily accept the notion of sharing and social behaviors (Kumar *et al.*, 2017).

The CBST is also examining the mediation effect of attitudes between the five predictors and behavioral intentions. It is supported by Zelezny and Schultz (2000) that attitudes act as a deep-rooted concept in a person's self with a perception of the degree of connection with self and the environment. Attitude is considered a mental and neural state of readiness that impacts individuals' responses towards all objects and situations they are confronted with. It has also proved that attitudes have a significant impact on intentions that lead to actual behaviors in pro-environmental contexts (Kumar *et al.*, 2017). Based on these theoretical premises, the following propositions are developed:

- P10.* Economic benefits will lead to high intentions towards sharing and social behavior
- P11.* Sustainability will lead to high intentions towards sharing and social behavior
- P12.* Trust will lead to high intentions towards sharing and social behavior
- P13.* Enjoyment will lead to high intentions towards sharing and social behavior
- P14.* Difficulties in sharing practices may act as hinderers of sharing and social behaviors
- P15.* Attitudes mediate the relationship between the predictors of sharing economy and social behavioral intentions
 - P15.1.* Economic benefits of social behaviors will significantly influence individuals to generate positive attitudes
 - P15.2.* Sustainability and the positive consequences on the environment due to social behaviors will significantly influence individuals to generate positive attitudes
 - P15.3.* Trust levels in sharing and social practices will significantly influence attitudes towards social behaviors
 - P15.4.* Enjoyment and social connections through sharing and social practices will significantly influence individual to generate positive attitudes
 - P15.5.* Difficulties in sharing practices will significantly influence attitudes towards social behaviors

The above-mentioned propositions represent the relationships in the CBST to be tested in future research. These untested relationships will help in a better understanding of the factors and motives behind sharing and social behaviors. Religiosity is added as a major variable to the TPB and NAT. Regarding the five predictors, they were previously tested and proved to affect sharing behaviors, thus, they are considered relevant to be tested in the current study. The CBST is not limited to certain cultures or contexts; it could be utilized and tested in several and different contexts. For example, collaborative consumption, accommodation and car sharing, second-hand products reselling, and recycling and re-using of products.

7. Conclusions

The current study enhances knowledge in understanding sharing and social behaviors. Previous research has commonly utilized TPB to examine and study various underlying pro-environmental and pro-social behaviors. The present study is designed to be the first to consider the examination of sharing economies and social behaviors from two major perspectives which are self-interest and moral value. This is considered a theoretical contribution achieved through merging the TPB and NAT. According to Corley and Gioia

(2011), a paper with a theoretical contribution should develop a new theoretical conceptualization in the management field. It should also identify new theoretical relationships that provide substantial contribution for theory and research in management. This was achieved in the current study through the merge of TPB and NAT, along with religiosity and five major predictors of sharing economy. The CBST has depicted novel and untested relationships in the social behavior context. It was stated by Minton and Khale (2013) that social psychology models help in explaining consumer pro-environmental decisions through some attitudinal factors such as values, beliefs and personal norms. However, there is a lack of such models and theories developed for in explaining social behaviors. Thus, the CBST will set a new enlightened path for researchers and practitioners to explore social behaviors. It will also set a path that leads to the propensity to put sustainable behavior in a new context.

Future studies that will use this theory will be able to explain a greater proportion of variance in social behavioral intentions. It was stated by researchers that there were efforts to extend both theories to develop a rigorous version of them. These efforts led to a greater ability in predicting individuals' pro-social and pro-environmental behaviors, accounting for a greater proportion of the total variance that was not sufficiently captured through utilizing the original theories solely (Chen and Tung, 2014; Han *et al.*, 2010). The paper is an eye-opener to an undervalued topic, which is the role of religiosity on social behavior. There are a few numbers of studies examining the role of religiosity in affecting attitudes, norms and behaviors (Gerro and Jaeger, 2012; Bhuian *et al.*, 2018; Rice, 2006), despite its significant impact on individuals, both as human beings and consumers (Dekhail *et al.*, 2017). Hence, religiosity is added in the CBST as a major variable, along with the TPB and NAT components to examine its effect on social behavioral intentions. Religious consumers count for 70% of the world's population (Hunt and Penwell, 2008); hence, it is important to consider this large consumer base. Marketers nowadays would make use of social media campaigns that are created for social and environmental cause. They could include messages such as people are God's Stewards on Earth, and they must have a role in preserving and protecting the environment and contributing to society through sharing and collaborative practices. The use of opinion leaders such as Imams for Muslims or Churches leaders to educate people the importance of sharing and social behaviors. There are also several sharing economy and collaborative consumption applications that integrate the religious aspect of consumers such as Muznub. It is an app for Muslims to encourage them towards sharing practices through providing shared accommodations options that are near to mosques and halal food restaurants (Abutaleb *et al.*, 2020, 2021).

The theory also calls for examining the mediation effect of attitudes between the five predictors and social behavioral intentions. There was only one study conducted in a similar context that tested for attitudes as a mediator in examining sustainable products purchase (Kumar *et al.*, 2017). Results of future research are needed for verifying these relationships and indicating the variables with the greater contribution in explaining social behaviors.

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