

Does sharing equal caring? Findings from an empirical study analyzing motivation for consumers to participate in the sharing economy in Austria.

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### **Abstract**

This study analyzes consumption motives, consumer behavior, and the relevance of environmental awareness of Austrian participants in the sharing economy. Compared to participants with no experience of the sharing economy, those respondents who do have experience describe that they attach a significantly higher importance to environmental awareness. However, examining the motives of sharing users in detail, self-interest seems more important for their purchasing decisions than social and ecological benefits. An analysis of sociodemographic differences shows that female respondents attribute a significantly higher relevance to social and ecological motives. Altogether, consumers associate the sharing economy with increased sustainability, implicating a competitive advantage compared to ownership-based business models. Nevertheless, as the buying decision is primarily based on self-interest, successful marketing communication has also to focus on individual utility.

**Keywords:** *sharing economy; consumption motives; sustainability*

**Track:** Transformative Consumer Research