

The Impact of Social Distance on Ridesharing

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Abstract

Ridesharing mandates novel forms of social interaction in confined spaces, making social factors a critical driver of participation. However, research on these social factors is scarce, and the effect of social distance on ridesharing remains unexplored. This research addresses this critical gap. Findings from three studies (n=951) confirm that lower social distance increases ridesharing intention, and that trust and social interaction anxiety represent the underlying mechanism for this effect. Further, the effect of social distance is contingent on trip duration but not on company cooperation. By identifying social distance as a core psychological lever influencing trust and anxiety, our results offer strategic insights for user matching, information display, and trust-building in shared mobility services.

Track: Service Marketing & Service Innovation