

Unlocking the wheels of change: Perceptions and participation of Serbian Gen Z in ride-sharing

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Abstract

As global urban mobility undergoes significant transformations, a profound understanding of the attitudes and behavioural inclinations of the youngest demographic cohort toward shared transportation has become paramount. The complexities surrounding the motives driving participation in ride-sharing services have posed a formidable challenge to researchers, yielding a corpus of literature marked by heterogeneous and inconclusive findings. Consequently, a notable scholarly imperative exists to determine the underlying factors shaping engagement in ride-sharing, particularly among the Generation Z population.

In this study, we explored the behaviour of Gen Z in a developing country, the Republic of Serbia, concerning their proclivity towards shared transportation modalities, with a focus on ride-sharing services. Central to this investigation is the delineation of socio-demographic factors that exert discernible influences upon Generation Z's decision-making processes regarding adopting or abstaining from shared transportation practices, alongside a nuanced exploration of their cognitive schema and perceptual frameworks pertinent to the shared mobility paradigm. To answer the questions raised, a survey was devised and administered among students at the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Organizational Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia.

A cohort of 449 students volunteered as participants, predominantly comprising females hailing from Belgrade, cohabiting with their families in privately owned residences. The analysis unveiled that a substantial proportion of participants (33.4%) used shared transportation services on at least one occasion, compared to a majority (66.6%) who had refrained from such engagements. Intriguingly, among the non-participants, a staggering 69.9% stated having acquaintances who had used ride-hailing services, underscoring a latent familiarity with the concept and presence of ride-hailing users within the respondents' immediate social milieu. A notable segment (69.2%) of respondents expressed a newfound disposition towards considering the future utilisation of shared transport services after gaining insights from the survey. Most people who used shared transport (76.7%) only used it in Serbia. This shows they prefer it for local travel rather than longer trips and might also indicate that the students are not confident in using this type of mobility abroad. Also, many (76.0%) looked at other options like buses or taxis

before choosing shared transport, underscoring a nuanced calculus informed by factors such as affordability, journey duration, and perceived reliability.

Preliminary results from this empirical endeavour afford valuable insights into the interplay of preferences, trust dynamics, and experiential factors precipitating Generation Z's engagement with ride-sharing services. Our initial findings show that a third of the surveyed students utilised shared transport, primarily within Serbia, attracted by its affordability and speed. Non-participants cited distrust in providers and platforms as reasons for abstaining, yet many are open to future participation. These insights shed light on prospects for enhancing urban mobility strategies and fostering sustainable transportation practices in Serbia and other developing markets.

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Consumer behaviour,
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Emerging economy