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Minimalism and Satisfaction with Collaborative Consumption and Life: The Moderating Role of Corporate Service Sincerity

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Abstract

While previous studies have established the positive effects of minimalism on well-being, the issue of how minimalism shapes satisfaction within specific consumption contexts remains underexplored. This study investigates the relationships among minimalism, satisfaction with collaborative consumption (CC), and life satisfaction, examining the moderating role of corporate service sincerity. Drawing on goal satisfaction theory, we conceptualize minimalism as an intrinsic goal orientation that drives psychological fulfillment through value-congruent consumption. Survey data from 430 Japanese consumers with recent CC experience were analyzed using the SPSS PROCESS macro. Results indicate that minimalism positively predicts both satisfaction with CC and life satisfaction, and that these effects are amplified when the CC service is perceived as sincere. However, contrary to theoretical expectations, satisfaction with CC was negatively associated with life satisfaction, suggesting that domain-specific satisfaction in access-based consumption may not spill over to global well-being under certain conditions. We propose that this paradox reflects a boundary condition of goal satisfaction theory: when CC participation is constraint-driven rather than autonomously chosen, satisfaction may coexist with unfulfilled ownership aspirations. These findings advance the minimalist consumption literature by specifying mechanisms linking lifestyle values to consumption outcomes and offer practical guidance for sharing economy platforms seeking to engage value-driven consumers through authentic brand communication.

Keywords: minimalism; collaborative consumption; corporate service sincerity; life satisfaction; goal satisfaction theory

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1. Introduction

Growing consumer interest in sustainability, authenticity, and well-being has led to a surge in minimalist lifestyles that reject excessive material consumption [1,2]. Minimalism emphasizes achieving fulfillment through intentional simplicity—removing excess possessions and focusing on items or activities that genuinely add value to one's life [3–8]. In essence, minimalism represents a conscious reorientation from material acquisition toward meaningful, value-driven living [9]. This philosophy manifests across multiple consumption domains. For instance, minimalist home design prioritizes clarity, functionality, and emotional calmness [7]; capsule wardrobes favor fewer, versatile apparel items that reduce cognitive and environmental load [8]; and the tiny house movement embodies spatial

efficiency and self-sufficiency [10]. Moreover, minimalist consumers actively embrace sustainable alternatives, such as product sharing, renting, and swapping, as part of a broader commitment to responsible consumption [2,4,11]. Market data indicate that "minimalist seekers" have become one of the largest global lifestyle segments, representing over 18% of consumers in 2023 [12]. These shifts not only redefine individual consumption preferences but also challenge firms to align their marketing and service strategies with the values of simplicity, sustainability, and authenticity.

Despite the visibility of minimalist lifestyles, academic research on minimalism as a consumer orientation remains in its early stages. Existing research has concentrated on the psychological and well-being advantages of minimalism, demonstrating its positive influence on life satisfaction and happiness [1,5,13]. However, the effects of minimalism on satisfaction within specific consumption contexts remain underexplored. In particular, how minimalism shapes post-consumption satisfaction in collaborative consumption (CC)—a hallmark of the sharing economy—has received limited scholarly attention. CC provides access to goods and services through sharing, renting, and swapping rather than ownership, thereby promoting resource efficiency and social connection [14,15]. Given that both minimalism and CC emphasize reduced ownership, functional value, and sustainability, it is plausible that minimalists may perceive CC as a means of fulfilling their intrinsic life goals. Nevertheless, while previous research has established that minimalist consumers exhibit positive intentions to engage in CC [2,4,11], there is scant understanding of post-engagement satisfaction, which is a critical determinant of sustained participation and loyalty [16]. The present study directly addresses this gap by examining post-consumption satisfaction, specifically satisfaction with CC, as both an outcome of minimalism and a potential mechanism linking minimalist values to life satisfaction. Rather than focusing on pre-consumption intentions, we investigate the psychological process through which minimalist consumers derive—or fail to derive—well-being from their CC experiences. Addressing this gap is important for comprehending how minimalism extends beyond behavioral intention to shape the quality and emotional outcomes of consumption experiences.

Therefore, elucidating the interrelationships among minimalism, satisfaction with CC, and overall life satisfaction is crucial for deepening theoretical insights into the psychological mechanisms that underpin minimalist well-being. From the perspective of goal satisfaction theory [17,18], satisfaction derives from progress toward valued life goals. Engaging in CC may serve as a pathway for minimalists to actualize their goals—achieving psychological fulfillment [3–5] through access-based, value-consistent consumption. Consequently, satisfaction with CC could act as an intermediary mechanism linking minimalism to broader life satisfaction. Examining these interconnections provides a theoretical framework for understanding minimalist well-being not solely as diminished materialism but as a result of consumption experiences that align with individual needs and goals.

Beyond these direct associations, contextual or relational factors may condition how minimalists derive satisfaction from CC experiences. In this regard, the concept of corporate service sincerity (hereinafter, sincerity)—defined as consumers' perceived genuineness and consistency in a brand's adherence to its stated values across offerings [19,20]—provides a compelling moderating lens. Minimalist consumers tend to evaluate brands through the prism of personal values and authenticity [8]; thus, when a CC platform or brand conveys sincerity through transparent communication, ethical practices, and consistent value delivery, minimalists are more likely to perceive consumption as goal-congruent and self-expressive. Conversely, perceived insincerity or commercial opportunism may undermine this alignment, attenuating satisfaction and diluting the well-being benefits of minimalist consumption. Investigating sincerity as a moderator thus enables a nuanced

understanding of how organizational authenticity interacts with minimalist motivation to shape post-consumption satisfaction and psychological outcomes.

To address these gaps and grounded in goal satisfaction theory, this study develops and empirically tests a model linking minimalism, satisfaction with CC, and life satisfaction, while incorporating the moderating role of sincerity as a boundary condition. Specifically, we examine (1) whether minimalism positively predicts satisfaction with CC, moving beyond prior work from intention to actual post-consumption evaluation; (2) whether satisfaction with CC mediates the effect of minimalism on life satisfaction, clarifying the psychological pathway from lifestyle values to well-being; and (3) how the perceived sincerity of CC providers influences these relationships, highlighting an organizational-level boundary condition not previously addressed in the minimalism literature. Theoretically, this research contributes to the emerging literature by integrating minimalism, goal satisfaction, and authenticity within a unified framework of sustainable consumption. Practically, it provides actionable insights for service and platform managers seeking to foster meaningful engagement among minimalist consumers through sincere, purpose-driven brand communication. By clarifying the psychological and contextual conditions under which minimalism enhances satisfaction and well-being, this study advances a more comprehensive understanding of how value-driven consumers derive happiness in a post-ownership economy.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Background

This study employed goal satisfaction theory to investigate the relationship between minimalism and satisfaction. This theory was initially proposed as a type of subjective well-being theory and posits that people are satisfied with their lives to the extent that their key desires, needs, and goals are met [18]. In particular, the pursuit of such goals as future end-states related to one's competence was postulated to enhance life satisfaction by improving the perception of successful agency [21]. Furthermore, scholars have discussed how the extent to which individuals possess material, spiritual, cognitive, or relational resources contributes to their life satisfaction, as such resources act as fundamental means of achieving one's goals [18].

As individuals have diverse goals and desires, they perceive similar situations differently [17]. Consequently, not only do the contents of goals and satisfaction vary among individuals, but so do the types of resources required. For example, those with materialistic values desire or aim to acquire many valuable possessions that serve as measures of success and happiness to them [22]. However, materialistic goals are negatively correlated with life satisfaction [23]. One explanation for this phenomenon is that materialism, which emphasizes extrinsic values, creates conflicts with intrinsic values that are essential for well-being [23].

In contrast to materialism, minimalism emphasizes nonmaterial and intrinsic goals [3,5,13,24]. Hence, goal satisfaction theory provides an appropriate theoretical framework for investigating the relationship between minimalism and different types of satisfaction. Minimalist consumers demonstrate competence in controlling consumption and keeping their living spaces simple while autonomously restraining excessive consumption and pursuing internal fulfillment [7]. By using resources, such as autonomy and competence, their consumption behaviors are arguably oriented toward the attainment of intrinsic goals. Thus, this theoretical approach provides novel insights into minimalism.

2.2. Minimalism and Life Satisfaction

Wilson and Bellezza [8] (pp. 801–802) defined consumer minimalism as "a value that embraces the mindful acquisition and ownership of few, curated possessions, with a preference for a sparse aesthetic." Minimalists adhere to a simple lifestyle with heightened consciousness of what truly matters [5,9,24]. Minimizing unnecessary consumption and clutter is a key element of this lifestyle [2,9,24]. Minimalists do not seek to eliminate all material possessions; instead, they aim to possess only what they truly need, which often leads them to exercise caution while shopping and resist impulsive buying [5,8,24]. Furthermore, they have a greater sense of autonomy and competence, as they are able to actively manage their living environments in terms of space, finance, and shopping [7].

While minimalism shares similarities with voluntary simplicity in terms of reduced consumption, it also has distinct features. Grounded in the philosophy of being "outwardly simple and inwardly rich," voluntary simplicity is a holistic life philosophy that integrates ecological ethics, social justice, and spiritual growth [25–28]. Its primary objective is to harmonize personal existence with the broader ecological system [26,29]. In contrast, minimalism emphasizes the removal of material clutter to enhance individual focus, mental clarity, and aesthetic satisfaction [7,8]. Minimalists focus on curating their living environments to enhance personal productivity and well-being by carefully selecting possessions that align with their values [8]. Furthermore, unlike voluntary simplicity, minimalism is not consistently considered an environmental orientation [8]. However, it is often characterized as environmentally friendly and sustainable because it eschews unnecessary consumption [2,5,9,24].

Life satisfaction refers to the extent to which one favorably evaluates one's own overall quality of life based on self-standards [30]. Diener et al. [17] (p. 3) defined life satisfaction as "people's explicit and conscious evaluations of their lives, often based on factors that the individual deems relevant." It is also a cognitive evaluation of one's subjective well-being [18]. Given that the pursuit of mental fulfillment through decluttering and non-materialistic consumption characterizes minimalist lifestyles [1,2,6], LS is likely to be a key consequence of minimalism.

Research has shown that minimalism is positively associated with life satisfaction [13]. This positive relationship can be theoretically analogized based on goal satisfaction theory. The adoption of minimalist lifestyles to eliminate clutter is motivated by intrinsic goals, such as spiritual fulfillment, personal growth, and harmony in life [1,3,5,6]. It is not merely about reducing possessions but also carefully selecting what truly matters in one's life [8]. In other words, minimalism facilitates a shift from the pursuit of extrinsic goals (e.g., wealth, material possessions) to intrinsic goals (e.g., personal growth, community, autonomy) [3,5,9]. Thus, this approach empowers consumers to exercise autonomy, self-control, and competence [7], guiding them toward a desired future end-state. This feeling of being in control and living in line with one's values is a cornerstone of life satisfaction [17,18]. Therefore, the pursuit of minimalist goals can lead to higher life satisfaction. Accordingly, we propose the following hypothesis (H):

H1: *Minimalism has a positive effect on life satisfaction.*

2.3. Minimalism and Satisfaction with CC

CC pertains to an economic model based on sharing, renting, swapping, trading, and bartering, facilitated by advanced technologies and peer-to-peer marketplaces, which promotes access over ownership [14,16,31]. It is an essential aspect of the sharing economy and encourages the sustainable and efficient circulation of goods and services through sharing or redistribution, accelerated by digital platforms [14,15,31]. This consumption

style benefits participants by facilitating sharing and contributes to sustainability by making more effective use of resources, reducing waste, and easing environmental burdens [14,31]. CC that does not involve the transfer of ownership is often referred to as access-based consumption, which refers to transactions facilitated by marketers without ownership transfer [32], product-service systems, in which consumers pay for the benefit of using a product without owning it, gaining access to its functionality through shared or rented use [31], or commercial sharing systems, which are managed by marketers to enable consumers to obtain benefits from products without ownership [27,33]. This study focuses on CC with non-ownership transfers, as it is crucial for understanding the sharing economy.

CC mitigates the risks and responsibilities associated with ownership while allowing individuals to avoid accumulating excess possessions [32,34], thereby aligning closely with the principles of minimalism. Recent studies have elucidated the relationship between minimalism and CC. For instance, Shukla et al. [2] examined the impact of minimalism on rental consumption intentions and found that minimalist consumers use rental services to reduce clutter and prioritize experiences over ownership. Similarly, Rasheed and Balakrishnan [11] examined how minimalism drives the adoption of sharing economy-based services among tourists, demonstrating that minimalist values positively influence behavioral intentions and actual behavior. Moreover, Lee and Furukawa [4] investigated how promotion focus, minimalism, and voluntary simplicity affect CC in Australian and Japanese contexts. They found that promotion focus boosts minimalism and CC; however, voluntary simplicity moderates these links with cultural differences, either amplifying or diminishing their impact.

One of the central goals of minimalism is to mitigate the burdens associated with ownership by reducing unnecessary consumption and clutter [2,9]. CC serves as an ideal strategic vehicle for achieving this fundamental minimalist goal. CC, particularly in its non-ownership form, enables consumers to fulfill their needs without accumulating physical possessions and incurring the risks and responsibilities associated with ownership [32,34]. This model directly addresses a minimalist's desire to live a less cluttered life [2,8] by prioritizing access over ownership, thereby supporting the goal of intentional, sustainable, and clutter-free living. This alignment between values (minimalism) and behavior (participation in CC) should logically lead to a heightened sense of satisfaction with consumption.

This value-behavior alignment operates through a goal-achievement mechanism that unfolds across three sequential levels. At the value level, minimalist consumers hold intrinsic goals centered on reducing possession-related burdens and achieving intentional, clutter-free living. At the behavioral level, CC participation represents a direct enactment of these values: by accessing rather than owning, consumers translate their abstract minimalist principles into concrete consumption choices. At the goal-achievement level, the successful enactment of this value-consistent behavior generates psychological closure—a sense that a meaningful subgoal has been accomplished—which constitutes the cognitive and affective basis of satisfaction [17,18]. In other words, satisfaction with CC is not merely a utilitarian evaluation but rather a psychological response to perceiving that a CC experience has served as an effective vehicle for minimalist goal progress.

Consequently, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2: *Minimalism has a positive effect on satisfaction with CC.*

2.4. Mediating Role of Satisfaction with CC

Satisfaction with CC and life satisfaction are conceptually distinct. The former is a domain-specific evaluation that reflects a consumer's affective and cognitive judgments related to specific CC experiences. It answers the question, "How satisfied am I with this particular experience or way of consuming?" In contrast, the latter is a global evaluation

reflecting an individual's overall assessment of their life, influenced by a wide array of life domains, including work, health, relationships, consumption, and others [17,35]. It answers the broad question, "How satisfied am I with the overall state of my life?"

Through the lens of goal satisfaction theory [18], achieving subgoals through specific consumption behaviors is expected to contribute to individuals' overall satisfaction. In other words, achieving smaller goals, such as decluttering, through CC is likely to increase minimalist consumers' satisfaction with life. This is because accessing resources without ownership (CC) simultaneously meets immediate needs and desires for a sparse aesthetic, thereby reinforcing their overarching lifestyle goals. Consequently, satisfaction with CC is expected to positively affect life satisfaction, thus bridging the positive effects of minimalism on life satisfaction. This mechanism indicates that the abstract minimalist value is translated into a concrete, positive experience of CC and, in turn, spills over to contribute to a positive overall assessment of one's life. This led us to propose the following hypothesis:

H3: *Satisfaction with CC mediates the positive effect of minimalism on life satisfaction.*

2.5. Moderating Role of Sincerity

While minimalist values and the benefits of CC often lead to satisfaction, we believe that this satisfaction varies across different CC experiences. For minimalist consumers, consumption is not merely a utilitarian act but a deliberate form of value expression; they mindfully curate their consumption to focus on what truly matters in life [8,9]. Therefore, the perceived authenticity of the provider should play a crucial role in shaping post-consumption evaluations.

We introduce corporate service sincerity (referred to as sincerity in this study), defined as a brand's perceived genuine commitment to its principles and goals [19,20,36], as a crucial boundary condition that determines the strength of the relationship between minimalism and satisfaction. Goal satisfaction theory provides a theoretical foundation for this moderation. According to this perspective, satisfaction is amplified when an action is perceived as highly congruent with one's core goals [17,18]. For minimalist consumers, the central goal is to live an authentic and intentional life by aligning their choices with their intrinsic values [3,7]. Thus, high perceived sincerity in CC should create a powerful sense of goal congruence. Given that consumers feel more favorable toward and are more satisfied with services that align with their self-concept [37,38], this amplified sense of value congruence should strengthen the positive relationship between minimalism and satisfaction with CC.

Furthermore, this moderating effect extends beyond satisfaction with CC to life satisfaction. Minimalist consumers prioritize broader life goals, such as spiritual fulfillment and psychological well-being, through intentional decluttering [3,5]. When sincerity is high, the CC experience not only satisfies immediate consumption needs but also reinforces the minimalist consumer's sense that they are living in accordance with their values. This resonance between a sincere brand philosophy and the minimalist self-concept fosters emotional attachment and a sense of authentic goal attainment [39,40], which in turn propels life satisfaction. In other words, sincerity is coupled with a minimalist lifestyle to produce a holistic sense of well-being. Conversely, if a brand is perceived as having low sincerity—for example, engaging in greenwashing—a state of goal incongruence may arise [41,42]. Even if CC services are functionally convenient, minimalist consumers may feel that their carefully curated values are being exploited for commercial gain. This perception erodes the sense of authentic goal attainment, weakening the positive psychological link between their minimalist identity and the satisfaction they derive from both their specific consumption choices and their lives as a whole. Therefore, sincerity is a crucial factor in determining the

quality of goal-attainment experiences for minimalist consumers. Accordingly, we propose the following hypothesis:

H4: *Sincerity moderates the positive effect of minimalism on (a) life satisfaction and (b) satisfaction with CC, such that these effects are strengthened when sincerity is high.*

Figure 1 presents the conceptual model for this study.

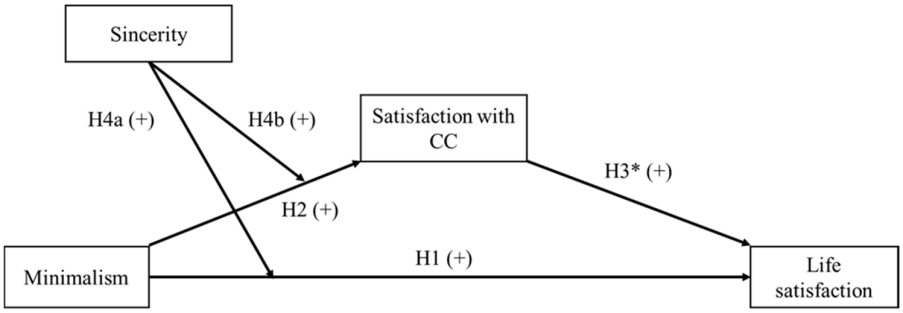


Figure 1. Conceptual model. * denotes a mediating relationship. (Source) Authors.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Instruments

Each scale was selected based on its established psychometric properties in prior research. The Minimalist Consumer Scale (MCS; Wilson and Bellezza [8]) was adopted to measure minimalism. The MCS consists of 12 items that capture the extent of mindfully curated consumption (four items), sparse aesthetics (four items), and the number of possessions (four items). Next, Napoli et al.'s [20] four-item sincerity scale was adopted to estimate how consumers perceive sincerity when experiencing a sharing service. Furthermore, the four-item satisfaction scale from Bhattacherjee [43] was used to measure satisfaction with CC, that is, the extent to which respondents were satisfied with the CC they participated in. Finally, the five-item Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al. [35]) was used to assess perceived life satisfaction. Items were assessed using a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). Thus, the initial questionnaire comprised 25 focal items in total, in addition to demographic items. The validity and reliability of each scale were assessed in the present study, as reported in Section 4.

3.2. Data Collection

Data were collected in Japan, a country renowned for its thriving minimalist lifestyle [1,5,7,8]. Japan is a leading country in minimalist lifestyle trends [5], thereby providing a valuable context for understanding minimalist phenomena. Kondo [44] and Sasaki [45], who focused on Japanese-style minimalism, have attracted global attention and have been featured in academic literature on minimalism (e.g., [5,7–9]).

Furthermore, the growth of Japan's sharing economy market is noteworthy. According to the Sharing Economy Association Japan [46], the market size has increased from 1887 billion yen in 2018 to a record high of 2616 billion yen in 2022 and is predicted to reach 15,117 billion yen by 2032. This expanding market indicates surging interest and experience of Japanese consumers with CC.

The questionnaire was translated into Japanese. To ensure accuracy, two English–Japanese bilingual translators followed a stringent back-translation method. The survey was conducted in September 2023 through a reputable Internet research firm, Pollfish, headquartered in New York, NY, USA. Participants were recruited using a stratified quota sampling approach to ensure broad demographic representation across gender and age

groups. Informed consent was obtained electronically from participants through an active opt-in process. Prior to the survey, participants were presented with a detailed disclosure statement explaining the voluntary nature of participation, the guaranteed anonymity of responses, their right to cancel at any time, and the strict use of data for academic research purposes only. Only those who explicitly agreed to these terms were allowed to participate in the survey. No personally identifiable information was collected, and no minors participated in this study.

Respondents who agreed with the above instructions were asked to mention the sharing service they had used within the past year. Those who did not use sharing services during this period were excluded from the survey. If the respondents had used multiple sharing services, they selected one experience that they could vividly recall. Based on this experience, the respondents answered the questions. After excluding respondents who provided straight lines with a standard deviation of zero or incorrect responses to the attention-check item, 430 valid responses were obtained. Table 1 exhibits the characteristics of the valid sample.

Table 1. Sample description.

Sample Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	220	51.163
	Female	210	48.837
Age	18–24	70	16.279
	25–34	90	20.930
	35–44	90	20.930
	45–54	90	20.930
	over 54	90	20.930
Annual household income	Lower income (Lower)	18	4.186
	Lower income (Upper)	21	4.884
	Middle income (Lower)	33	7.674
	Middle income (Upper)	94	21.860
	High income (Lower)	91	21.163
	High income (Middle)	148	34.419
	High income (Upper)	19	4.419
	Prefer Not To Say	6	1.395
Education	Middle School or low	14	3.256
	High School	39	9.070
	Vocational/Technical College	51	11.860
	University	263	61.163
	Post-Graduate	63	14.651
CC experience	Car sharing	146	33.954
	Ridesharing	63	14.651
	Apparel/fashion products	92	21.395
	Electronic equipment/appliances	96	22.326
	Other goods	33	7.674

Note: Income categories were classified into seven tiers in accordance with international standards provided by the research agency. The annual income ranges are as follows: Lower income (Lower): less than 2.8 million JPY; Lower income (Upper): 2.8 million to 5.58 million JPY; Middle income (Lower): 5.58 million to 8.36 million JPY; Middle income (Upper): 8.36 million to 11.15 million JPY; High income (Lower): 11.15 million to 13.94 million JPY; High income (Middle): 13.94 million to 16.73 million JPY; and High income (Upper): 16.73 million JPY or more. (Source) Authors.

3.3. Data Normality and Multicollinearity

Kline [47] recommends that absolute skewness values of <3 and absolute kurtosis values of <10 are acceptable guidelines for testing normality. The absolute skewness values ranged from 0.496 to 1.164, whereas the absolute kurtosis values ranged from 0.021 to 1.208. Because neither value exceeded the threshold, it is reasonable to conclude that the data distribution was normal.

To conduct a collinearity diagnostic, we calculated the correlation coefficients and the variance inflation factor (VIF), as shown in Table 2. Although three correlations of 0.70 or higher exist, they are within acceptable ranges when favorable VIF diagnostics are present [48]. Mundfrom et al. [49] also found that correlations in the 0.7–0.8 range had a limited impact on prediction accuracy when other multicollinearity diagnostics remained favorable. Similarly, Marcoulides and Raykov [50] indicated that correlations are insufficient for assessing multicollinearity and demonstrated that VIFs provide more reliable diagnostic information than simple correlation matrices. Our VIF values ranged from 1.407 to 2.946, all of which were substantially below commonly accepted thresholds. According to Hair et al. [51], VIF values exceeding 5–10 indicate multicollinearity problems. Kim [52] also suggests that VIF values greater than 5–10 indicate severe multicollinearity and require remedial action. Our maximum VIF is well within the acceptable range, indicating that multicollinearity does not substantially inflate the coefficient variances.

Table 2. Correlation coefficients and VIFs.

	Minimalism	Sincerity	Satisfaction with CC	Life Satisfaction
Minimalism	-	0.758	0.346	0.755
Sincerity	2.564	-	0.391	0.732
Satisfaction with CC	2.946	2.369	-	0.297
Life satisfaction	2.480	2.543	1.407	-

Note: Values above the diagonal represent correlation coefficients, while values below the diagonal indicate VIFs.

4. Measurement Model Assessment

4.1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

We conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using AMOS 28. Minimalism was treated as a unidimensional construct, consistent with previous studies [1,2]. The results showed fit indices: comparative fit index (CFI) 0.935, Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) 0.928, relative non-centrality index (RNI) 0.935, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) 0.057. However, the CFI, TLI, and RNI were below the recommended threshold of >0.940 when the sample size was >250 and the number of observed variables ranged from 12 to 30 [51]. Thus, we excluded one item from each of the three dimensions of the minimalism scale based on factor loadings: specifically, "I restrict the number of things I own" was removed from the number of possessions dimension, "I keep the aesthetic in my home very sparse" from the sparse aesthetics dimension, and "I am mindful of what I own" from the mindfully curated consumption dimension. Crucially, because one item was removed from each dimension, all three conceptual facets of the MCS remained fully represented in the revised nine-item scale. The removed items had the lowest factor loadings within their respective dimensions, indicating that the retained items provide stronger, more reliable indicators of each facet. Accordingly, the content domain of minimalism, as defined by Wilson and Bellezza [8], was preserved in the revised scale. Consistent with prior studies [1,2], the construct was treated as unidimensional in the structural analysis, which is supported by the single-factor CFA fit and the interpretive coherence of the items

across the three facets. CFA was then performed again, and the goodness of fit improved, with χ^2 = 435.333, df = 203, CFI = 0.952, TLI = 0.945, RNI = 0.952, and RMSEA = 0.052. The standardized factor loadings ranged from 0.606 to 0.786, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.6 for good convergent validity [53].

To further determine reliability and convergent validity, Cronbach's alpha (α), composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) were calculated. Cronbach's α and CR were in the ranges of 0.737–0.915 and 0.738–0.915, respectively, which established internal consistency [51,54]. While the AVEs for minimalism, sincerity, and life satisfaction were greater than 0.500, the AVE for satisfaction with CC was 0.414. However, as the AVE is typically considered a conservative index, it can be deemed to have convergent validity if the CR is 0.600 or above, even if the AVE falls below 0.500 [54,55]. Zeng et al. [56] asserted that the minimum acceptable AVE falls between 0.360 and 0.500. Accordingly, our study demonstrated acceptable convergent validity, as indicated by the CR of 0.738 for satisfaction with CC. Table 3 presents the evaluation results of the measurement model.

Table 3. Measurement model evaluation.

	Constructs and Indicators	Factor Loadings	α	CR	AVE
Minimalism	It is important to me to be thoughtful about what I choose to own.	0.759	0.915	0.915	0.546
	The selection of things I own has been carefully curated	0.752			
	My belongings are mindfully selected	0.726			
	I avoid accumulating lots of stuff	0.730			
	"Less is more" when it comes to owning things	0.745			
	I actively avoid acquiring excess possessions	0.721			
	I prefer leaving spaces visually empty over filling them	0.729			
	I prefer simplicity in design	0.768			
	I am drawn to visually sparse environments	0.722			
Sincerity	The sharing service I used builds on traditions that began with its founder	0.780	0.830	0.831	0.554
	The sharing service I used has stuck to its principles	0.786			
	The sharing service that I used remains true to its espoused values	0.740			
	The sharing service I used refuses to compromise the values upon which it was founded.	0.659			
Satisfaction with CC	How do you feel about your overall experience with the sharing service you used?		0.737	0.738	0.414
	Very frustrated/Very contented	0.683			
	Very displeased/Very pleased	0.660			
	Very dissatisfied/Very satisfied	0.606			
	Absolutely terrible/Absolutely delighted	0.619			
Life satisfaction	I am satisfied with my life	0.768	0.845	0.846	0.523
	In most ways, my life is close to my ideal	0.760			
	The conditions of my life are excellent	0.743			
	If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing	0.678			
	So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life	0.674			

(Source) Authors.

The heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) ratio approach has been proposed as a more rigorous and dependable method than the Fornell–Larcker criterion for assessing discriminant validity [57]. Therefore, we employed the HTMT approach to examine discriminant validity. While a conservative cut-off criterion for HTMT is below 0.850, scholars have recommended that discriminant validity be established if the HTMT ratio between two reflectively measured constructs is below 0.900 [57,58]. The HTMT values ranged from 0.365 to 0.874, indicating discriminant validity. Table 4 presents these results.

Table 4. Discriminant validity assessment by HTMT.

	Minimalism	Sincerity	Satisfaction with CC	Life Satisfaction
Minimalism	1.000			
Sincerity	0.867	1.000		
Satisfaction with CC	0.412	0.491	1.000	
Life satisfaction	0.855	0.874	0.365	1.000

(Source) Authors.

4.2. Common Method Bias

Common method bias (CMB) is more likely to emerge from self-report quantitative studies, in which multiple variables, including dependent and independent variables, are measured simultaneously for the same respondent [59]. To minimize CMB, we implemented the following procedural remedies suggested by Podsakoff et al. [60]: measures of the independent and dependent variables were obtained from different sources, participants were informed of the survey's purpose and assured that their responses would be anonymous, and there were no correct or incorrect answers.

Furthermore, three statistical methods in the post hoc procedure were applied to address the CMB. First, CMB can be problematic when a significantly large correlation ($r > 0.09$) is found among the constructs [61]. We calculated Pearson correlations among the constructs and found that the correlation coefficients ranged from 0.346 to 0.758, falling short of the 0.90 threshold. Second, Harman's single-factor test was performed. The results showed that a single factor accounted for only 43.66% of the variance, significantly below the 50% threshold. Third, using the full collinearity assessment approach, we confirmed that none of the VIF values exceeded 3.3, which indicates that the data collection method does not bias the data [62]. Based on these examinations, it can be concluded that the CMB does not pose a substantial concern for this study.

5. Results

To test H1–4, Hayes's [63] PROCESS macro (Model 8) was used in SPSS 28. The sampling distribution was generated through 5000 bootstrap iterations. Gender, age, education, income, and CC experience were entered as covariates. Continuous variables were mean-centered prior to analysis. Table 5 summarizes the analysis results.

H1 and H2 predicted a direct positive effect of minimalism on life satisfaction and satisfaction with CC, respectively. Minimalism positively affected life satisfaction (B = 0.574, t = 11.389, CI [0.475, 0.673]), thus supporting H1. Furthermore, minimalism positively affected satisfaction with CC (B = 0.219, t = 4.055, CI [0.113, 0.325]), supporting H2. However, contrary to our expectations, satisfaction with CC was negatively associated with life satisfaction (B = −0.101, t = −2.255, CI [−0.189, −0.013]). These results yielded a significantly negative indirect effect of minimalism on life satisfaction via satisfaction with CC (effect = −0.022, CI [−0.049, −0.001]); thus, H3, which anticipated that satisfaction with CC would positively mediate the effect of minimalism on life satisfaction, was not supported.

Table 5. Results of moderated mediation analysis.

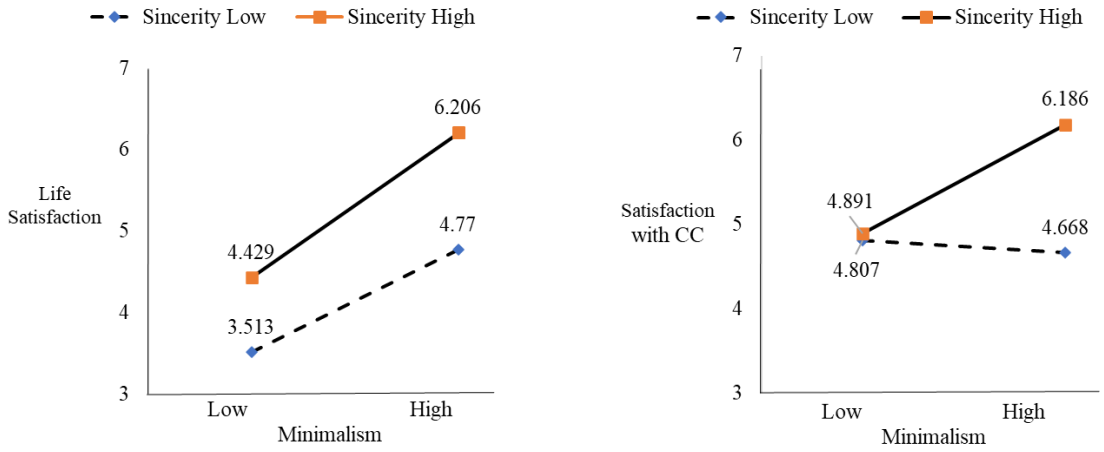
DV	IV & CV	B	t	*p*	LLCI	ULCI	R^2
Satisfaction with CC	Minimalism	0.219	4.055	<0.001	0.113	0.325	0.302
	Sincerity	0.287	5.872	<0.001	0.191	0.383	
	Minimalism × Sincerity	0.194	8.406	<0.001	0.149	0.240	
	Gender	−0.204	−2.243	0.025	−0.383	−0.025	
	Age	0.005	1.559	0.120	−0.001	0.012	
	Education	−0.023	−0.473	0.637	−0.120	0.074	
	Income	−0.003	−0.082	0.935	−0.067	0.062	
	CC experience	−0.030	−0.329	0.742	−0.208	0.149	
Life satisfaction	Minimalism	0.574	11.389	<0.001	0.475	0.673	0.666
	Satisfaction with CC	−0.101	−2.255	0.025	−0.189	−0.013	
	Sincerity	0.421	9.048	<0.001	0.330	0.513	
	Minimalism × Sincerity	0.070	3.076	0.002	0.025	0.115	
	Gender	−0.042	−0.499	0.618	−0.207	0.123	
	Age	0.012	3.797	<0.001	0.006	0.018	
	Education	0.094	2.070	0.039	0.005	0.182	
	Income	0.083	2.751	0.006	0.024	0.142	
	CC experience	−0.003	−0.032	0.974	−0.166	0.161	
Indirect effects		effect	Boot SE		Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI	
	(Sincerity: Low) Minimalism→Satisfaction with CC→Life satisfaction	0.005	0.007		−0.007	0.020	
	(Sincerity: Mean) Minimalism→Satisfaction with CC→Life satisfaction	−0.022	0.012		−0.049	−0.001	
	(Sincerity: High) Minimalism→Satisfaction with CC→Life satisfaction	−0.049	0.024		−0.098	−0.004	
	Index of moderated mediation	Index					
	Sincerity	−0.020	0.009		−0.037	−0.002	

Note: B: unstandardized coefficients; DV: dependent variable; IV: independent variable; CV: control variable; ULCI: upper limit of 95% confidence interval; LLCI: lower limit of 95% confidence interval. (Source) Authors.

H4 was formulated to examine the moderating role of sincerity: H4a hypothesized that CSS strengthens the effect of minimalism on life satisfaction. The outcome corroborated this assertion, as it revealed a positive moderating influence of sincerity on the causal association between minimalism and life satisfaction (B = 0.070, t = 3.076, CI [0.025, 0.115]). H4b hypothesized that sincerity augments the impact of minimalism on satisfaction with CC. The results supported this hypothesis, demonstrating a positive moderating effect of sincerity (B = 0.194, t = 8.406, CI [0.149, 0.240]).

Notably, the conditional indirect effects of minimalism on life satisfaction via satisfaction with CC showed a complex pattern. The indirect effect was not significant at a low level of sincerity (effect = 0.005, CI [−0.007, 0.020]), but became negative and significant at mean (effect = −0.022, CI [−0.049, −0.001]) and high (effect = −0.049, CI [−0.098, −0.004]) levels of sincerity. The index of moderated mediation was significant and negative (index = −0.020, CI [−0.037, −0.002]), indicating that sincerity strengthens the negative indirect pathway. Thus, while sincerity amplifies the direct positive effects of minimalism on both satisfaction with CC and life satisfaction (H4a, H4b), it simultaneously intensifies the negative compensatory pathway through satisfaction with CC.

Figure 2 presents these significant interactions. The effects of minimalism on life satisfaction and satisfaction with CC are stronger when sincerity is higher.



(**a**) (**b**)

Figure 2. Significant interactions. (**a**) Minimalism × Sincerity (H4a). (**b**) Minimalism × Sincerity (H4b). (Source) Authors.

6. Robustness Check: Subgroup Analysis by CC Type

To address potential heterogeneity across CC service types, we conducted supplementary analyses separating the sample into vehicle-based services (car sharing and ridesharing; n = 209) and goods-based sharing services (apparel/fashion, electronics, and other goods; n = 221). The results are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6. Results of subgroup analysis by CC Type.

Paths	Aggregated (n = 430)	Vehicle (n = 209)	Goods (n = 221)
Minimalism → Life Satisfaction	B = 0.574 ***	B = 0.559 ***	B = 0.568 ***
Minimalism → Satisfaction with CC	B = 0.219 ***	B = 0.142 (p = 0.061 †)	B = 0.204 **
Satisfaction with CC → Life Satisfaction	B = −0.101 *	B = −0.125 (p = 0.057 †)	B = −0.079 (*n.s.*)
Minimalism × Sincerity → Life Satisfaction	B = 0.070 **	B = 0.115 **	B = 0.033 (*n.s.*)
Minimalism × Sincerity → Satisfaction with CC	B = 0.194 ***	B = 0.063 (p = 0.077 †)	B = 0.216 ***
Minimalism → Satisfaction with CC → Life Satisfaction (Mean)	−0.022 * [−0.049, −0.001]	−0.018 *n.s.* [−0.050, 0.010]	−0.016 *n.s.* [−0.060, 0.012]
Index of moderated mediation	−0.020 * [−0.037, −0.002]	−0.008 *n.s.* [−0.025, 0.007]	−0.017 *n.s.* [−0.050, 0.014]

Note: B: unstandardized coefficients; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, † $p < 0.10$, *n.s.*: not significant. (Source) Authors.

The subgroup findings broadly support the full-sample results, with some noteworthy differences in the moderating pattern. For vehicle-based services, the direct effect of minimalism on satisfaction with CC was marginally significant (B = 0.142, p = 0.061), and the moderating effect of sincerity on satisfaction with CC was similarly marginally significant (B = 0.063, p = 0.077). Importantly, the negative path from satisfaction with CC to life satisfaction was also marginally significant in this subgroup (B = −0.125, p = 0.057),

directionally consistent with the full-sample result. The moderation of sincerity on the minimalism → life satisfaction path was significant (B = 0.115, $p = 0.001$). The marginal significance of several paths in this subgroup is consistent with the expected reduction in statistical power due to the smaller sample size ($n = 209$) compared with the full sample ($n = 430$).

For goods-based sharing services, the direct effect of minimalism on CC satisfaction (B = 0.204, $p = 0.006$) and its interaction with sincerity (B = 0.216, $p < 0.001$) were strongly significant, replicating and amplifying the full-sample findings for these paths. However, the moderation of sincerity in the minimalism → life satisfaction path was not significant (B = 0.033, $p = 0.336$), suggesting that, for goods-based services, sincerity operates primarily through the CC satisfaction pathway rather than the direct life satisfaction pathway. The negative path from satisfaction with CC to life satisfaction was not significant in this subgroup (B = −0.079, $p = 0.239$), though the point estimate remained negative and directionally consistent with the full-sample finding.

Taken together, the subgroup analyses reveal that while the specific level of sincerity moderation differs between vehicle- and goods-based services, the core directional tendencies are consistent across both subgroups and the full sample. The negative indirect effect, although not reaching conventional significance within either subgroup independently—likely due to reduced statistical power—was directionally consistent in both groups (vehicle services: effect = −0.018; goods-based sharing: effect = −0.016), lending partial support to the full-sample finding. These results suggest that the key mechanisms identified in the main analysis are not artifacts of aggregating heterogeneous CC types, but rather reflect tendencies that transcend specific service categories, with some variation in how sincerity operates depending on the nature of the shared resource.

7. Discussion

This study examined the relationships among minimalism, satisfaction with CC, and life satisfaction, with perceived sincerity as a moderator, through the lens of goal satisfaction theory. The results revealed that minimalism positively predicts both satisfaction with CC and life satisfaction, and that sincerity amplifies these relationships. However, contrary to theoretical expectations, satisfaction with CC was negatively associated with life satisfaction, yielding a negative indirect effect. These findings offer both confirmatory and challenging insights for goal satisfaction theory and the emerging literature on minimalist consumption.

7.1. Theoretical Implications

First, the positive direct effect of minimalism on life satisfaction (H1) provides empirical support for conceptualizing minimalism as an intrinsic goal orientation within the goal satisfaction framework [17,18]. Prior research has established that intrinsic goals—such as personal growth, autonomy, and meaningful relationships—contribute more strongly to well-being than extrinsic goals centered on wealth and material acquisition [23]. Our findings position minimalism as a lifestyle that operationalizes intrinsic goal pursuit through the conscious curation of possessions and experiences. This extends previous work demonstrating minimalism's association with well-being [1,5,13] by specifying the theoretical mechanism: minimalism enhances life satisfaction because it represents progress toward intrinsic, value-congruent goals rather than merely the absence of materialism.

Second, the positive effect of minimalism on satisfaction with CC (H2) advances the CC literature by shifting the focus from behavioral intention [2,4,11] to post-consumption evaluation. This finding suggests that value–behavior congruence—the alignment between one's lifestyle values and consumption choices—serves as a psychological mechanism

underlying satisfaction in CC contexts. Minimalist consumers do not merely prefer CC; they derive greater satisfaction from it because participation in CC represents a behavioral enactment of their core values. This insight also suggests that lifestyle orientations should be incorporated into models of CC outcomes.

Third, the moderating role of sincerity (H4a, H4b) enriches the brand authenticity literature [20,36,40]. For minimalist consumers, sincerity signals that the CC experience is not solely functional but also value-aligned. This finding integrates authenticity research with goal satisfaction theory: perceiving high sincerity validates minimalist consumers' goal pursuit, intensifying the psychological rewards of value-congruent behavior. This means that authenticity is not merely a brand attribute, but also a catalyst that transforms consumption experiences into meaningful goal achievements.

However, the full pattern of results reveals an important nuance: while sincerity strengthens the positive direct effects of minimalism on both satisfaction with CC and life satisfaction, the conditional indirect effects show that higher sincerity simultaneously intensifies the negative indirect pathway through satisfaction with CC. Drawing on self-discrepancy theory [64], one plausible account of this dual amplification pattern is as follows: perceiving high sincerity can increase the prominence of consumers' ideal ownership standards—including ownership as a marker of identity and security [65]—thereby sharpening the perceived gap between access-based consumption (CC) and unfulfilled ownership desires. Under low-sincerity conditions, the consumption experience may remain more instrumental and less value-laden, attenuating this contrast effect. This finding advances our understanding of authenticity in CC contexts beyond merely enhancing satisfaction and suggests unintended psychological costs in high-sincerity service environments.

Finally, the negative relationship between satisfaction with CC and life satisfaction (contrary to H3) represents the most theoretically provocative finding of this study. The present dataset does not include direct measures of ownership aspiration, psychological reactance, or the voluntary versus constrained nature of CC participation. Accordingly, the following interpretation is offered as a theoretically grounded post hoc proposition rather than as a confirmed explanation.

Goal satisfaction theory assumes that progress toward valued subgoals positively contributes to global well-being [18]. However, this assumption may not hold when achieving a subgoal simultaneously activates awareness of constraints in other life domains. Drawing on research on behavioral spillover and compensatory patterns [66,67], we suggest that satisfying CC experiences may function as compensation for unmet ownership aspirations rather than spillover contributors to life satisfaction. When consumers are highly satisfied with a CC service, this satisfaction may paradoxically highlight what they cannot own, triggering social comparison upward or reminding them of financial limitations that preclude ownership.

This interpretation is consistent with research on the psychological complexity of access-based consumption. Bardhi and Eckhardt [32] noted that non-ownership can evoke feelings of transience and lack of control. Our findings suggest that even when CC is satisfying at the experiential level, it may fail to provide the psychological benefits of possession—such as extended self, identity expression, and ontological security [65]—that contribute to global life satisfaction.

In this light, the relationship between domain-specific consumption satisfaction and life satisfaction might depend on whether the consumption mode is chosen (reflecting autonomous goal pursuit) or constrained (reflecting necessity). When CC participation is driven by financial constraints rather than voluntary minimalist values, high satisfaction with the service may coexist with lower life satisfaction because the consumption mode itself signals unfulfilled aspirations.

7.2. Practical Implications

These findings offer actionable guidance for managers of CC platforms and sharing economy services.

First, the strong association between minimalism and satisfaction with CC suggests that psychographic segmentation based on lifestyle values may outperform traditional demographic targeting. Platforms should develop tools to identify minimalist consumers and tailor communications that emphasize intentionality, curation, and clutter-free living rather than cost savings alone.

Next, the amplifying effect of sincerity indicates that authenticity is a strategic asset rather than merely a positioning claim. Managers should prioritize verifiable commitments—such as B Corp certification, transparent environmental impact reporting, and consistent adherence to stated values—over superficial sustainability messaging. Given minimalist consumers' sensitivity to greenwashing [42], perceived insincerity may not only fail to attract this segment but actively repel them.

Furthermore, the counterintuitive finding that satisfaction with CC does not translate into life satisfaction suggests that transactional excellence is insufficient. Platforms aiming to contribute to consumer well-being should design experiences that address higher-order psychological needs—such as a sense of belonging in community, personal growth, and identity coherence—rather than focusing solely on convenience and value. For instance, facilitating connections among users who share minimalist values may transform CC from a service transaction into a source of social identity and meaning.

Finally, for consumers whose CC participation may be constraint-driven, platforms should actively reframe non-ownership as a positive choice rather than a limitation. Messaging that emphasizes freedom, flexibility, and intentional living—rather than affordability—may help transform the psychological meaning of CC engagement from compensation to genuine goal achievement.

7.3. Limitations and Future Research Directions

Several limitations necessitate acknowledgment and suggest directions for future research. Data were collected in Japan, where minimalism has particular cultural resonance [4,44,45] and the sharing economy is well established [46]. The relationships observed here may differ in cultural contexts where ownership carries stronger symbolic value or where CC infrastructure is less developed. Cross-cultural replication is essential to establish generalizability.

Furthermore, the theoretical explanation of the negative indirect effect depends on constructs that were not measured in this study, specifically, autonomous versus constrained motivation for CC participation, ownership aspiration, and perceived scarcity of owned goods. Without directly measuring these variables, the proposed interpretation of boundary conditions remains speculative. Future research should include validated measures of autonomous versus controlled motivation and psychological ownership aspirations to gather direct empirical support for or against the compensatory mechanism suggested here.

In addition, although sincerity proved to be an important boundary condition, other factors may moderate the relationship between minimalism and satisfaction. Perceived community among CC users, trust in the platform, and personal dispositions such as frugality or sufficiency orientation merit investigation. Additionally, brand authenticity is multidimensional [20,40]; examining whether heritage, credibility, or integrity differentially moderate these relationships could provide finer-grained managerial guidance.

8. Conclusions

This study contributes a goal-based theoretical framework for understanding how minimalism shapes consumer satisfaction in the sharing economy. By demonstrating that minimalism enhances both satisfaction with CC and life satisfaction, and that sincerity amplifies these effects, we provide evidence that value–behavior congruence and organizational authenticity jointly determine the psychological rewards of sustainable consumption. The unexpected negative relationship between satisfaction with CC and life satisfaction challenges simplistic assumptions about domain-to-global spillover and calls for a theoretical refinement of the conditions under which CC contributes to well-being. As minimalism continues to gain prominence in consumer lifestyles and CC platforms proliferate, understanding these psychological dynamics becomes increasingly important for both theoretical development and managerial practice.

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Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent for participation was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available upon reasonable request from the corresponding author.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this manuscript:

CC	Collaborative Consumption
Sincerity	Corporate Service Sincerity

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