

A systematic review of consumers' pro-circularity behaviours under the lens of tourism research

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Objectives | As the concepts of circular economy and its applications in tourism gain momentum, there is a growing interest among consumers in embracing practices that align with these trends. Nonetheless, most research in these domains tends to adopt an industry-centric point of view. Furthermore, few studies approach the topic of pro-circular consumer behaviours in a holistic way. In the context of tourism, visitors' daily habits often mirror their conduct at their chosen destinations. This study embarks on a systematic review of existing literature to explore consumers' adoption of circular economy behaviours in their everyday lives. The main goal is to develop a comprehensive framework for examining demand-driven pro-circular actions, which can be applied to services, including those within the realm of tourism.

Methodology | A search for articles in English regarding pro-circularity consumer behaviours was made in the Scopus database, using the keywords referring to circular economy and consumer behaviour. This platform was chosen based on its multidisciplinary and scientifically trustworthy content. This query on Scopus 368 records. The selection criteria followed the PRISMA approach (Page et al., 2020), including only the indexed articles in English that study consumers' behaviours in the circular economy. This refined approach led to the inclusion of 138 papers, which were subjected to thorough content analysis.

Main Results and Contributions | Several studies have explored specific pro-circularity behaviours. However, the content analysis has unveiled a lack of literature that summarizes the most relevant behaviours in a circular economy, particularly those that apply to services and the tourism industry. While there already exists a framework of consumer pro-circularity behaviours (Shevchenko et al., 2023), most studies refer to the Potting's 10R work (2017), therefore existing a lack of a holistic framework that can be adapted to the tourism reality. The findings from this systematic review have facilitated the development of such framework. In literature, several authors highlight the relevance of engaging consumers as agents that can help "close the loop"

(Sørensen & Bærenholdt, 2020), yet most studies have a sub-sector approach to consumer behaviours (i.e. willingness to pay for second-hand fashion products). This study not only contributes to the field by shedding light on the evolving landscape of consumer pro-circularity behaviours, pinpointing key trends, and highlighting the need for further investigation into this expanding area, but also allowed for the identification of the main research groups and provided geographical and temporal context into the behavioural studies within circular economy.

From a practical standpoint, our research can inform businesses and policymakers aiming to promote pro-circular behaviours among consumers. Understanding the motivations and actions that drive circular economy engagement can assist in developing targeted strategies and policies that encourage sustainable practices in both product consumption and tourism activities.

On a theoretical level, our study enriches the academic discourse by providing a comprehensive overview of the state of research in consumer pro-circularity behaviours. It highlights the importance of recognizing the interconnectedness of consumer behaviours and the circular economy, offering a framework for future investigations. Additionally, our identification of environmentally conscious purchasing, strategies to extend product lifecycles, and effective waste and food surplus management as central themes contributes to the theoretical foundation of the pro-circular economy field, providing a basis for further exploration and theory development.

Limitations | Considering the relatively recent emergence of the field within the realm of social sciences and particularly tourism research, the limited number of studies dedicated to consumers' circular economy behaviours poses a limitation for this study. This constraint may have implications for the scope and depth of our research findings.

Conclusions | In conclusion, this study does a comprehensive examination of consumer pro-circularity behaviours, particularly within the context of the emerging circular economy and circular tourism movements. While numerous studies have explored various components of these behaviours, our analysis has revealed a significant gap in the literature — specifically, the need for a deeper understanding of the most prevalent actions and motivations driving demand-driven pro-circular behaviours. This gap becomes more apparent when considering the relative scarcity of research within the scope of tourism. Our review not only addresses this crucial gap but also contributes substantially to the field. By synthesizing existing literature and developing a conceptual framework, our research provides valuable insights for businesses, policymakers, and researchers alike.

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