

A Global Review of Consumer Behavior Towards Sustainability Environmental and Implications for the Circular Economy

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Abstract: - This research delves into the attitudes and approaches of consumers in Albania towards the circular economy, aiming to analyze their perceptions and potential adoption of circular practices. The circular economy, which emphasizes resource efficiency, cost reduction, and environmental sustainability, aligns with the principles of the Green Economy and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The study includes a survey, gathering responses from 399 randomly selected respondents. In order to reduce the possibility of errors, the data were randomly chosen in Excel before being analyzed with the statistical software SPSS, and multinomial regression is used to establish the connection between the anticipated benefits of the circular economy and consumer attitudes. The findings reveal a positive and supportive consumer stance towards transitioning from a linear to a circular economy. Also, the study provides valuable insights for future researchers interested in understanding the consumer-driven shift towards a circular economy, with a primary focus on preserving environmental sustainability.

Key-Words: - Circular economy, Consumer Attitudes, Sustainability, Multinomial Regression.

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1 Introduction

The circular economy is a system that aims to reduce various global challenges, including climate change biodiversity loss, waste, and pollution, [1]. It is an approach to the traditional linear economy, which follows a model where resources are extracted, used to create products, and then discarded as waste. The circular economy emphasizes recycling, reusing, and repurposing materials and products. Maintaining materials and products for a long time led to the return from a linear to a circular economy, [2]. In Albania, the concept of the circular economy is new and our

research makes consumers closer to this phenomenon that is changing the world. In this study, during discussions with a panel of experts in the field of circular economy, it is necessary to initiate strategies and compose policies for bringing the consumer closer to this approach. Also, the concern of consumers for the maintenance of the environment has led them more and more towards the substitution of green products. The circular economy induces an opportunity to decouple economic growth from resource consumption and environmental degradation, offering a more sustainable and better future, [3]. By considering the

additional benefits of green products, consumers can make a more informed choice that aligns with their values, which will contribute to a greener and more sustainable future, [4]. Green marketing, also known as sustainable marketing or environmental marketing, aims to meet customers' needs and desires while minimizing negative impacts on the natural environment. The goal of the green economy is to promote products or services that are environmentally friendly and encourage sustainable practices, [5]. Also, green products offer numerous benefit product for firms and economies, ranging from environmental preservation and cost savings to improved market positioning and long-term sustainability. Investment in green products can contribute to the transition to a more sustainable environment. Green marketing can drive operational improvements, leading to cost reductions. Additionally, streamlining production processes and supply chains can result in cost savings by eliminating unnecessary steps and reducing waste. Green economy policies often promote renewable energy, energy efficiency, sustainable agriculture, and eco-friendly technologies. By transitioning to a green economy, countries can reduce their carbon footprint, enhance resource efficiency, create green jobs, and stimulate innovation in environmentally friendly sectors, [6]. The bio-economy involves utilizing renewable biological resources, such as plants, animals, and microorganisms, to produce food, energy, and various products. It emphasizes the sustainable use of biological resources, including agricultural residues, forestry by-products, and bio-based materials. By promoting the bio-economy, countries can reduce reliance on fossil fuels, mitigate climate change, support rural development, and foster the sustainable production of bio-based products, such as biofuels, bioplastics, and bio-based chemicals. The business has a chance to behave in an environmentally responsible manner and use the financial resources to establish the firm's innovative environmental products and technologies to aciform profitability and ensure environmental sustainability. Green innovation can open doors to new market segments and partnerships. Many governments, organizations, and investors prioritize sustainability initiatives, creating opportunities for firms that actively engage in green practices, [7]. According to [8], describe green innovation is a transformation process that comprises novel ways of doing things (e.g., production–manufacturing, construction, procedures, systems, etc.) that provide direct and positive benefits to the environment. According to, [9], green innovation is a novelty used in

technologies that incorporate energy saving, pollution prevention, waste recycling, green product designs, and corporate environmental management. Consumers are now more knowledgeable about environmental issues such as climate change, deforestation, and pollution. This awareness has led to a growing demand for products that minimize harm to the environment, [10]. The circular economy promotes the development of closed-loop systems, where materials are recycled and reintegrated into production processes. This reduces the need for virgin resource extraction and minimizes the environmental impact associated with resource depletion, [6]. Circular economy principles encourage the design of products with durability, reparability, and reusability in mind. By creating products that last longer and can be easily maintained or upgraded, the need for new products and the associated resource consumption can be reduced. The struggle to maintain environmental sustainability is a challenge, and this challenge is met by substituting and using green products. Most consumers use them even though they do not have enough information about why they serve today in the environment. The transition from a linear to a circular economy (implementation in a green economy) has become a necessity. The research study is focused on the transition from a linear to a circular economy, specifically in relation to its characteristics, dimensions, limitations, effects, and coping mechanisms employed by the population. The study aims to evaluate and provide important information regarding this transition as it relates to consumer behavior and its impact on the environment and individual well-being. The overall goal is to highlight the benefits of transitioning to a circular economy for environmental sustainability and the assurance of high quality of life. Qualitative and quantitative analysis include interviews, focus groups, or surveys which gain insights into consumers' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors related to the circular economy. The research studies consist to shed light on how consumers are confronting the transition from a linear to a circular economy and emphasize the positive impacts this transition can have on the environment and individuals' lives. By providing evaluation and important information, the researchers aim to promote awareness and support for the adoption of circular economy practices as a means to achieve sustainability and improve quality of life.

2 Literature Review

The circular economy is indeed focused on transforming economic systems and contributing to sustainable development. The concept of a circular economy aims to move away from the traditional linear “take-make-waste” model of production and consumption and instead promotes the idea of a closed-loop system circular economy (CE) seeks to decouple value creation from waste generation and resource use by fundamentally transforming production and consumption systems, [11]. Due to such changes, consumption issues, particularly consumer and user acceptance, have been highlighted as a significant factor hindering the diffusion of ‘so-called’ circular business models, [12]. Implementing CE-related activities and policies occurs in various geographic contexts and scales, [13]. Consumer approach, today in the world is very important for a better future and a safe life. Despite the relatively recent interest in circular economics, recycled materials are being returned to manufacturing processes at much lower levels, [14]. In contrast to the economy of the linear type, this stimulates the consumer to change items of consumption always to replace them with newer ones, [14]. The European Development Plan for a Circular Economy is one of the best-developed practical guidelines for the transition in today’s economic environment to the new, more sustainable production and consumption patterns. The European plan considers the formation of sustainable consumption as one of the priority areas of the circular economy, [15].

From a Linear to a Circular Economy

In a circular economy, the goal is to keep resources in use for as long as possible, extracting the maximum value from them, and then recovering and regenerating products and materials at the end of their life cycle. [16]. In this new economic system, both producers and consumers would shift their focus towards reprocessing, renovating, and recycling previously used materials and products. According to [17], the revised Strategy of Integrated Management of Waste is developed on the vision or perception of the concept of “zero waste”, so that waste is collected and treated as raw materials, and management is done following the concept of circulating systems, serving the criteria of using and preserving raw material resources. Companies would need to redesign their business models to incorporate the principles of a circular economy. This might involve developing products that are more durable, repairable, and upgradeable, rather than promoting a culture of planned obsolescence.

The circular economy has become a dominant factor in economic development, increasing well-being or creating new jobs by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, waste, and pollution.

From circularity to sustainability

The circular economy is indeed a key component of the European Commission's 2030 Green Agenda. The Green Agenda, also known as the European Green Deal, is a comprehensive strategy that aims to make the European Union (EU) climate-neutral by 2050 and transform the region into a sustainable, resource-efficient, and circular economy, [18]. Circular Economy is based on three dimensions, economic, social, and environmental. The cooperation of these dimensions makes the environment more sustainable. It also results in healthier generations. Sustainable development refers to a development approach that addresses the needs of the present generation while ensuring that future generations can meet their own needs. It involves balancing economic growth, social progress, and environmental protection. Empowering consumers and providing them with cost-saving opportunities is a key building block of a sustainable environment, [19].

Green products and green innovation

Green Innovation refers to all forms of innovation that minimize environmental damage and ensures that natural resources are used in the most effective way possible. According to, [20], environmental degradation has turned into a major threat to human survival. A successful Green Innovation improves the market position attracts customers, provides green services, and gains a competitive advantage, [20]. Consumers' green awareness is a key market-driven factor that promotes the sustainable supply chain, and their demand for green products has elicited extensive attention in the world, [21]. Green innovation encompasses various fields and sectors, including energy, transportation, agriculture, manufacturing, construction, and more. Green innovation supports the transition to a circular economy by developing technologies and processes that enable the reuse, recycling, and repurposing of materials and products. This includes innovations in waste management, recycling technologies, and resource recovery systems.

3 Materials and Methods

The purpose of the study is to highlight the impact that the new generation today have on the circular economy and how they can face the challenges of

buying and consuming green products. A questionnaire with 399 samples was designed face-to-face with consumers of Albanians. Quantitative and qualitative data were processed with the SPSS statistical program. In this study, descriptive analysis with tables and graphs as well as the multinomial regression model are included. The answers to the interviewers are random and real. The questionnaire includes socio-demographic variables, also specific questions about the circular economy and green products. This literature will serve new generations as valuable information transitions from a linear to a circular economy, where the main priority is saving the sustainability of the environment. The less waste, the more sustainability and, above all, the health and well-being of the consumer. Based on the results, it was found that the new generation is willing to pay more for green products to contribute to the sustainability of the environment. The study suggests that reducing waste is associated with increased sustainability and, importantly, the health and well-being of consumers. These findings highlight the potential market demand and positive attitudes towards environmentally friendly products among the surveyed population.

4 The Results of the Study

A swot matrix of Albania is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary SWOT matrix – Albania

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
There is a willingness to pay more for green products	Lack of environmental consciousness and awareness
Green products are socially desirable	Consumers' low purchasing power for green products
There is a demand for a sustainable green economy	Firms have poor information about the circular economy
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
High Potential for Green Economy	Most companies focus on economic benefits rather than on environmental impacts
Information and education of organic consumers	Economic agents are ignorant in terms of green knowledge
The organic food market has potential	Green products remain a niche market

Source: Author, 2023

Table 2. Gender of the interviews

Description	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	207	51.9	51.9	51.9
Valid Male	192	48.1	48.1	100.0
Total	399	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author, 2023

Table 2 shows the gender of the interviewees. 51.9% are female and 48.1 % are male from 399 respondents.

Table 3. Age of the interview

Description	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-25	221	55.3	55.3	55.3
25-35	118	29.5	29.5	84.8
Valid Over 35	60	15.2	15.2	100.0
Total	399	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author, 2023

The results above, show the age of the interviewees. According to this data, 55.3% are 18-25 years old, and 5 years old, and 15.2 % are over 35 years old.

Table 4. Living place

Description	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Urban	319	79.9	79.9	79.9
Valid Rural	80	20.1	20.1	100.0
Total	399	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author, 2023

The table above shows the living place of the interviewees. Most of them live in an urban area (79.9%) and only 20.1 % lives in a rural area. The level of education is presented in Figure 1.

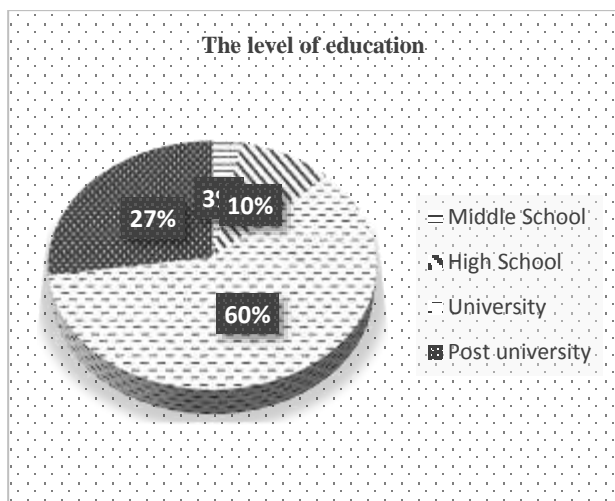


Fig. 1: The level of education
Source: Author, 2023

Of 399 respondents, 3% have middle school, 10% with high school, 27% with post-university, and 60% with university degrees.

Table 5. Monthly income

Description	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
400 – 500€	96	24.1	24.1	24.1
500– 600€	56	14.0	14.0	38.1
600 - 700€	56	14.0	14.0	52.1
700- 800€	32	8.0	8.0	60.2
Over 800€	159	39.8	39.8	100.0
Total	399	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author, 2023

The table above shows the monthly income of the interviewees. 24.1% of respondents have 400-500€, 14% have monthly salary 500-700€, 8% have monthly salary 700-800€, 38.8% have monthly salary over 800€.

Table 6. Do you think that the transition from a linear to a circular economy is beneficial for the environment today?

Description	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	247	61.9	61.9	61.9
No	24	6.0	6.0	67.9
Maybe	128	32.1	32.1	100.0
Total	399	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author, 2023

The results above show the data of the transition from a linear to a circular economy. 61.9% agree with this phenomenon, 6% no and 32.1% are not sure about this change. The consumer approach shows a percentage above half of the probability, which means they are ready for this change to maintain the sustainability of the environment.

Table 7. Have you heard of green products before?

Description	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	359	90.0	90.0	90.0
No	40	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	399	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author, 2023

Nowadays, technology is at its peak, and the access of youth to social networks is at a very high level. As can be seen from the above results, they have heard about the green economy.

Table 8. Do you think that the use of green products affects the conservation of exhaustible resources?

Description	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	263	65.9	65.9	65.9
No	40	10.0	10.0	75.9
Others	96	24.1	24.1	100.0
Total	399	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author, 2023

65.9% of interviewees think that green products are necessary for environmental sustainability.

Table 9. Do you buy green products in your family?

Description	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	311	77.9	77.9	77.9
No	24	6.0	6.0	84.0
Others	64	16.0	16.0	100.0
Total	399	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author, 2023

The results above show that 78% buy green products, 6% didn't buy and 16% are confused about this new concept of production.

Table 10. How ready are you to pay more for green products?

Description	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
0-10%	112	28.1	28.1	28.1
10-15%	160	40.1	40.1	68.2
Valid 15-20%	111	27.8	27.8	96.0
20-25%	16	4.0	4.0	100.0
Total	399	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author, 2023

According to the percentage, the interviewers are ready to pay more for green products. This choice shows that today it is necessary to invest more than ever in the sustainability of the environment, clean air, and the renewal of exhaustible resources.

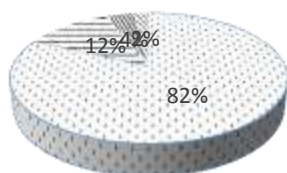
Table 11. If the logic of the circular economy is so compelling, why companies didn't do it already?

Description	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
It has High costs	128	32.1	32.1	32.1
Information missing	120	30.1	30.1	62.2
Valid Pressure of time	31	7.8	7.8	69.9
Lack of interest	120	30.1	30.1	100.0
Total	399	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author

The most important indicators are the high cost, missing information, and no high interest. The answers to the question "How useful forms of social media are for promoting the circular economy?" are presented in Figure 2.

How useful forms of social media are for promoting the circular economy?



Valid Google - Valid Twitter - Valid Radio - Valid TV

Fig. 2: How useful forms of social media are for promoting the circular economy?

Source: Author, 2023

Social media is the most important international network today. The Internet has become an integral part of every family and business in the world. This is clear from the responses of the respondents that the most important information is provided by social networks. 82% of the information is gained from Google.

Multinomial Regression

"Galton compared the height of children to that of their parents. He found that adult children are closer to average height than their parents are". Francis Galton (1885) is commonly regarded as the founder of the statistical techniques of correlation and linear regression, [22].

Regressive analysis And Correlation

This part of the method will deal with the development of regression models, thus analyzing the relationships and interdependencies between the characteristics, dimensions, limitations, and effects of pandemics and how they are faced by the population/employees.

A regression model has this general form:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_k X_k + e$$

In this model, Y is the dependent variable and X_1 to X_k are independent factors or variables. The coefficients β_1 to β_k are regression coefficients and show the effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable Y . The model will be evaluated based on the data for the variables Y and X_1 to X_k . Different models will be built to be able to explain all the questions or assumptions raised on the influencing factors, limitations, effects, opportunities, effectiveness of online work, differences between genders, job categories, etc. In 1885, Sir Francis Galton first defined the term "regression" and completed the theory of bivariate correlation. A decade later, Karl Pearson developed the index that we still use to measure correlation, Pearson's r

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient is a dimensionless index, which is invariant to linear transformations of either variable. Pearson first developed the mathematical formula for this important measure in 1895:

$$R_{yx} = \frac{n \sum XY - \sum X \sum Y}{\sqrt{(n \sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2)(n \sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2)}}$$

Thus Equation describes r as the centered and standardized sum of the cross-product of two variables. Therefore, the value of a correlation

coefficient ranges between -1 and +1. The correlation coefficient is +1 in the case of a perfect direct (increasing) linear relationship (correlation), and -1 in the case of a perfect inverse (decreasing) linear relationship (anti-correlation), [23].

Hypothesis: The transition from a linear to a circular economy has a positive impact beneficial for consumers.

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	8.704	4	2.176	2.592	.036 ^b
Residual	330.804	394	.840		
Total	339.509	398			

a. Dependent Variable: Do you think that the transition from a linear to a circular economy is beneficial?

b. Predictors: (Constant), Monthly Income, Age, Gender, Level of education

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	1.750	.303		5.773	.000	1.154	2.346
Education	.210	.061	.171	3.448	.001	-.214	.175
Age	.084	.100	.050	.840	.401	-.112	.280
Gender	-.139	.108	-.077	-1.287	.199	-.350	.073
Monthly Income	.097	.030	.172	3.213	.001	.037	.156

a. Dependent Variable: Do you think that the transition from a linear to a circular economy is beneficial?

Source: Author

5 Conclusion and Discussion

A total of 399 consumer responses were used for analysis, excluding responses with vague and missing responses and outliers. Based on the information provided, it seems that the consumer responses were analyzed to understand their

attitudes and preferences regarding the transition from a linear economy to a circular economy, with a focus on sustainability and green products. Here are the key findings from the analysis:

About 48.1% of the respondents were male and 51.9% female with a majority (44.7%) from the 25–35 age group. The data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed using the SPSS program to build a process model using a regression linear equation. It is a popular statistical technique because of its ability to model selected independent variables and consider all possible forms of measurement error to test an entire theory. Most of them live in an urban area (79.9%) and only 20.1 % lives in rural areas and also have a university education (60%). 24.1% of respondents have a 400-500€, 14% have a monthly salary of 500-700€, 8% have monthly salary 700-800€, 38.8% have a monthly salary over 800€. The consumer approach shows a percentage above half of the probability, which means they are ready for this change to maintain the sustainability of the environment. 65.9% of interviewees think that green products are necessary for environmental sustainability from 399 respondents. This choice shows that today it is necessary to invest more than ever in the sustainability of the environment, clean air, and for the renewal of exhaustible resources. Social media is the most important international network today. The Internet has become an integral part of every family and business in the world. This is clear from the responses of the respondents that the most important information is provided by social networks. 82% of the information is gained from Google.

- Level of education (Sig=0.001 <0.05) has positively affected the transition from the linear economy to the circular economy
- Monthly income (Sig= 0.001<0.05) has positively affected the transition from the linear economy to the circular economy
- Gender and age do not affect the circulating economy.

The results indicate that the consumer approach towards sustainability and the transition to a circular economy is positive and aligns with recent studies on the green economy. The findings suggest that education and income are important factors influencing consumers' willingness to adopt sustainable practices.

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Contribution of Individual Authors to the Creation of a Scientific Article (Ghostwriting Policy)

-Alerta Basha designed the questionnaire and processed the data with the statistical program SPSS.

-Eralda Noçka has realized the introduction, purpose, and hypotheses of the study.

-Ana Kapaj has carried out and compared the studies of foreign authors with our research (literature review).

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Conflict of Interest

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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