

Beer Tourism In A Global Context: A Systematic Literature Review

Bruna Jacobi Trieweiler

*Master's Student In Production Systems At The University Of Planalto Catarinense (UNIPLAC),
Lages, Santa Catarina, Brazil.*

Yoná Da Silva Dalonso

*Phd In Geography And Regional Planning From The University Of Minho (Uminho),
Braga, Portugal.*

Ciro Antonio Fernandes

*Phd In Frontiers Of Knowledge In Administration: New Approaches, Municipal University Of São Caetano Do
Sul (USCS),
São Caetano Do Sul, São Paulo, Brazil.*

Merisandra Côrtes De Mattos

*Phd In Electrical Engineering From The Federal University Of Santa Catarina (UFSC), Florianópolis/Santa
Catarina, Brasil.*

Abstract:

Beer tourism has emerged as a global phenomenon that merges cultural heritage, economic development, and sustainability. This paper presents a systematic literature review aimed at analysing the economic, cultural, and environmental impacts of beer tourism in a global context. Following the PRISMA protocol, the study examined 42 academic papers published between 2010 and 2025, identifying seven with the most significant theoretical and practical contributions to the field. The results demonstrate that beer tourism generates local employment, strengthens cultural identity, and fosters entrepreneurship, while simultaneously encouraging sustainable practices within the brewing industry. Beyond its economic relevance, beer tourism plays a vital role in preserving brewing traditions, promoting cultural exchange, and creating opportunities for regional development. Environmental concerns are increasingly central, with studies highlighting resource management, waste reduction, and the use of renewable energy as essential strategies for sustainability. However, gaps persist, particularly regarding empirical research in emerging regions and the integration of sustainable principles into tourism policies. The review concludes that beer tourism operates as a multidimensional driver of sustainable development, connecting economic growth with cultural appreciation and environmental responsibility. Future research should explore collaborative networks, policy innovation, and inclusive strategies to enhance the resilience and sustainability of this expanding sector.

Keywords: Tourist Routes; Beer Tourism; Impacts; Literature Review.

Date of Submission: 12-10-2025

Date of Acceptance: 22-10-2025

I. Introduction

In recent years, beer tourism has gained global prominence as a distinctive segment of cultural and experiential tourism. Rooted in the craft beer movement and the pursuit of authentic local experiences, this form of tourism encompasses brewery visits, beer festivals, and thematic routes that combine cultural heritage, gastronomy, and leisure. The growing interest in artisanal production and regional identity has transformed beer into more than a beverage — it has become a vehicle for place-making, storytelling, and community engagement. As a result, destinations worldwide, from Europe and North America to Latin America and Oceania, have integrated beer-related experiences into their tourism strategies, generating new opportunities for local economic growth and cultural exchange.

However, the expansion of beer tourism also brings significant challenges that demand critical reflection. As the sector becomes increasingly globalised, questions arise regarding sustainability, inclusion, and long-term impacts. While beer tourism contributes to employment creation and regional entrepreneurship, its success also depends on addressing environmental pressures related to resource consumption, waste generation, and carbon emissions. Moreover, not all regions benefit equally from this growth: developing and emerging economies often

face structural limitations that hinder their participation in the global craft beer movement. The need to balance economic development with environmental stewardship and cultural preservation therefore stands at the centre of current academic and practical debates.

The existing literature on beer tourism is extensive yet fragmented. Studies have explored diverse themes such as consumer motivations, destination branding, event management, and sustainability practices within breweries. Nonetheless, gaps persist in understanding how these dimensions intersect and how they collectively shape the sustainable development of the sector. Particularly scarce are comparative analyses that integrate economic, cultural, and environmental perspectives on a global scale. Systematic reviews that consolidate existing evidence are essential for identifying trends, synthesising findings, and outlining future research directions. This study addresses this need by conducting a comprehensive systematic literature review to evaluate the global state of research on beer tourism.

The main objective of this paper is to systematically analyse the existing academic literature on beer tourism in a global context, identifying its principal economic, cultural, and environmental impacts. Specifically, the study seeks to (1) review peer-reviewed studies addressing beer tourism worldwide; (2) identify key drivers and barriers related to economic, cultural, and sustainable development; and (3) highlight research gaps and emerging trends that may guide future investigations. The study applies the PRISMA protocol (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) to ensure methodological rigour, transparency, and reproducibility in the selection, classification, and analysis of relevant works.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to consolidate fragmented knowledge and to provide a structured understanding of how beer tourism contributes to sustainable regional development. By systematically mapping the field, this study offers theoretical and practical insights for academics, policymakers, and industry stakeholders. It advances theoretical discussions by positioning beer tourism as a multidimensional phenomenon that intertwines cultural identity, economic vitality, and environmental responsibility. Practically, the findings may support destination managers and local authorities in designing strategies that integrate sustainability principles, diversify tourist experiences, and strengthen community participation.

Ultimately, this paper argues that beer tourism should not be viewed solely through an economic or leisure-based lens but rather as a transformative practice capable of promoting inclusive and sustainable development. By fostering collaboration among producers, public institutions, and communities, beer tourism can generate long-term benefits that transcend commercial outcomes — revitalising local economies, preserving intangible cultural heritage, and enhancing environmental awareness. This systematic review thus contributes to the global dialogue on sustainable tourism, emphasising the need for integrative approaches that reconcile growth with responsibility and authenticity with innovation.

II. Literature Review

Beer tourism has its origins linked to the popularisation of craft beer. Regions such as Europe and the United States are pioneers in exploring this tourism segment, attracting visitors to breweries, festivals, and specific routes. Studies highlight its impact on local economies, generating jobs and strengthening the cultural identity of regions. Recent literature emphasises the growing relevance of beer tourism as a multidimensional field of study combining cultural, economic, and environmental aspects.

The literature provides a comprehensive overview of beer tourism's role, emphasising dimensions beyond its economic contribution, including cultural and environmental implications. In this context, it is relevant to discuss how initiatives in the sector can integrate sustainable practices and promote local development, considering global demands for authenticity and socio-environmental responsibility. The systematic review by Nave et al. (2022) highlights the importance of aligning beer tourism growth with the inclusion of underrepresented regions, opening a path for a research agenda that also addresses social impacts.

Beer-related events emerge as catalysts for unique experiences that transcend mere consumption. Manis et al. (2020) point out that these events strengthen local networks and encourage community engagement, promoting regional identity. This approach aligns with Beckman and Shu (2024), who explore the potential of festivals to attract diverse audiences, especially when adapting their strategies to different social groups such as men and women, thus demonstrating the relevance of gender-sensitive planning.

Beer tourism also represents a space for cultural and social connections. In Kentucky, Berend Jr. (2017) shows that visitors seek experiences that revive tradition and promote authenticity, reinforcing a movement valuing artisanal production. In Brazil, Gimenes-Minasse et al. (2016) report significant progress in the professionalisation of the sector, particularly in São Paulo, where beer tourism has contributed to integrating different tourism segments.

The sector's economic and cultural impact is complemented by environmental concerns. Diniz and Carvalho (2024) draw attention to the need for efficient resource management, especially in Brazil's Northeast, a region facing unique sustainability challenges. These issues are also explored by de Oliveira Dias and Falconi (2018), who argue that the evolution of Brazil's craft beer industry can serve as a lever for regional development.

Finally, it is relevant to consider the strategic role of stakeholders in fostering collaboration between producers, governments, and communities. Alonso et al. (2017) suggest that such partnerships can be key to aligning local practices with global trends, ensuring that beer tourism contributes to balancing economic growth, cultural appreciation, and environmental sustainability. Thus, the discussion on beer tourism transcends market concerns, situating itself at the heart of the sustainable development debate.

III. Methodology

The methodological framework adopted in this study was based on a systematic literature review (SLR) focused on the intersection between beer tourism, sustainability, and regional development. This approach was chosen because it allows for a transparent, reproducible, and comprehensive synthesis of the existing body of knowledge, offering a structured basis for future research. The review followed the internationally recognised PRISMA protocol (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses), which provides detailed guidelines to ensure methodological rigour, clarity, and transparency throughout all stages of the research process (Moher et al., 2009; Page et al., 2021).

The process was conducted in four main phases: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. During the identification phase, the search strategy was designed to capture a wide range of academic publications addressing beer tourism in different contexts. Searches were carried out primarily using Google Scholar, due to its extensive coverage of peer-reviewed journals, conference papers, and academic theses. The search terms included combinations of keywords such as “*beer tourism*”, “*craft beer tourism*”, “*brewery routes*”, “*sustainability*”, and “*cultural heritage*”. Boolean operators (AND/OR) were applied to refine the results and include studies covering economic, cultural, and environmental dimensions of beer tourism.

The inclusion criteria specified that articles must: (1) be published between 2010 and 2025; (2) be written in English or Portuguese; (3) present empirical or theoretical analyses directly related to beer tourism; and (4) discuss at least one of the following aspects: economic development, cultural identity, or environmental sustainability. Studies focused solely on production processes, beverage marketing unrelated to tourism, or non-peer-reviewed sources were excluded.

Following the initial identification of 82 articles, a screening stage was performed to remove duplicates and works not aligned with the research objectives. After this process, 42 articles were deemed eligible for detailed review. Subsequently, a second-level evaluation was conducted to assess methodological consistency, relevance, and contribution to the field. Based on these criteria, seven articles were selected as the core corpus of analysis, representing the most comprehensive and influential studies in terms of theoretical robustness, practical applicability, and cross-regional perspective.

Each selected article was then examined using a content analysis technique, enabling the identification of recurring themes, methodological approaches, and emerging research gaps. Data were organised into three main categories: economic, cultural, and environmental impacts, which guided the synthesis presented in the results section.

This systematic approach not only ensured analytical depth and objectivity but also revealed persistent weaknesses in the field, including limited representation of emerging economies and insufficient integration of sustainability frameworks into beer tourism studies. Consequently, this review contributes by outlining future research directions and reinforcing the need for a more balanced and globally inclusive understanding of beer tourism as a driver of sustainable development.

IV. Results

The synthesis of the seven selected studies enabled the identification and categorisation of key impacts associated with beer tourism. These findings highlight how economic, cultural, and environmental dimensions intersect to shape the sector’s contribution to sustainable regional development. Table 1 summarises these impacts, illustrating the diverse outcomes reported across different geographical and research contexts.

Table 01 – Categorisation of Beer Tourism Impacts

Economic Impacts	Cultural Impacts	Environmental Impacts	Author(s)	Journal
Creation of local jobs	Preservation of brewing traditions	Adoption of sustainable practices in production	Stone, M. J., Garibaldi, R., & Pozzi, A. (2020)	Tourism Review International
Increase in revenues for microbreweries	Appreciation of regional cultural identity	Reduction in water and energy use	Bachman, J. R., Hull, J. S., & Marlowe, B. (2021)	Tourism Analysis
Development of new tourist routes	Creation of cultural events and festivals	Implementation of eco-friendly packaging	Egan, L., Riordan, B., Newling, G., Uthurralt, N., & Day, C. (2023)	Drug & Alcohol Review

Encouragement of regional entrepreneurship	Cultural education of tourists	Waste management and recycling	Wilson, J., Sanchez Rodrigues, V., Bhaird, C. M. A., Lotfi, M., Kumar, M., Horgan, D., & Danson, M. (2023)	Regional Studies, Regional Science
Economic growth in rural areas	Brand loyalty to local products	Reduction of carbon footprint	Murray, A., & Kline, C. (2015)	Journal of Sustainable Tourism
Contribution to regional studies	Integration between communities and tourism	Promotion of the use of renewable resources	Cabras, I., Kogler, D. F., Davies, R. B., & Higgins, D. (2023)	Regional Studies
Promotion of international cooperation	Development of public policies	Creation of sustainable infrastructure	Durán-Sánchez, A., de la Cruz del Río-Rama, M., Álvarez-García, J., & Oliveira, C. (2022)	Publication in progress

Source: The authors (2025)

The synthesis of the seven selected studies presented in Table 1 reveals that beer tourism plays a multifaceted role in promoting economic, cultural, and environmental development across different contexts. The findings indicate that the activity contributes to local growth by combining entrepreneurship, heritage preservation, and sustainability practices, reinforcing its importance as a driver of regional transformation.

The analysis shows that beer tourism generates positive economic effects through the creation of jobs and the stimulation of local supply chains. Stone, Garibaldi, and Pozzi (2020) demonstrate that the establishment of microbreweries encourages employment in both production and hospitality, revitalising small towns and urban neighbourhoods. Gimenes-Minasse, Lyra, and Santos (2016) similarly identify this effect in the State of São Paulo, where beer tourism has become a catalyst for industrial diversification and local competitiveness. These results suggest that the expansion of beer routes and festivals supports small-scale entrepreneurship while promoting local consumption networks and value-added experiences.

From a cultural perspective, beer tourism contributes to preserving brewing traditions, strengthening collective identity, and enhancing social cohesion. Wilson et al. (2023) highlight that brewery visits and local beer festivals encourage cultural participation by connecting tourists and residents through shared experiences. Beckman and Shu (2024) add that the design of beer-related events increasingly considers gender and diversity issues, fostering inclusive and plural spaces for community engagement. This cultural dynamic transforms beer into a symbolic element of local identity, enabling regions to express authenticity while adapting to global tourism demands.

The emergence of organised beer routes and events, as observed by Egan et al. (2023), reflects how urban and rural areas alike integrate beer tourism into broader development strategies. In Sydney's inner-west, the concentration of microbreweries has revitalised post-industrial districts, attracting new audiences and generating cultural capital for the city. Manis et al. (2020) support this view, noting that inaugural beer events not only attract visitors but also cultivate lasting destination loyalty and stimulate recurring tourism flows. This evidence reinforces the idea that beer tourism succeeds when it combines sensory experience, local culture, and strategic place branding.

Economic diversification through entrepreneurship also appears as a key dimension. Bachman, Hull, and Marlowe (2021) underline that, beyond immediate financial returns, beer tourism fosters innovation and cooperation among local actors. Microbreweries often act as platforms for experimentation, connecting producers, artisans, and creative industries. Alonso, Sakellarios, and Bressan (2017) emphasise that stakeholder collaboration is essential for structuring these networks, ensuring resilience and shared benefits across the community. The synergy between private initiatives and public policies thus emerges as a decisive factor for sustainable growth.

Environmental sustainability stands out as a central concern in the sector. Cabras et al. (2023) and Murray and Kline (2015) report that many breweries are adopting waste management and energy-efficiency measures, reducing their environmental footprint while promoting awareness among visitors. Diniz and Carvalho (2024), focusing on the Brazilian Northeast, warn that the expansion of craft production must consider the responsible use of water and raw materials, especially in regions facing resource scarcity. These studies underline the need for environmental governance frameworks that align production, tourism, and conservation efforts.

Social integration and community participation also play a significant role in the evolution of beer tourism. De Oliveira Dias and Falconi (2018) observe that, in Brazil, the growth of the craft beer industry has fostered partnerships between municipalities and tourism boards, contributing to local branding and collective identity. Such initiatives reinforce beer tourism's capacity to act as a social connector, generating pride of place and stimulating sustainable destination development through collaboration and shared governance.

Finally, the results highlight an emerging global agenda for cooperation and policy development. Durán-Sánchez et al. (2022) demonstrate that international partnerships are strengthening research and policy exchange

in the field, promoting shared sustainability standards and collaborative innovation. This transnational dimension points to an evolution of beer tourism from a localised niche activity to a coordinated global movement grounded in sustainability, authenticity, and knowledge transfer.

V. Conclusions

The analysis of the seven selected studies confirms that beer tourism represents a dynamic and multidimensional phenomenon that contributes significantly to local and regional development. Economically, it fosters job creation, supports microbreweries, and stimulates entrepreneurship, generating positive spillover effects on supply chains related to agriculture, gastronomy, and hospitality. The reviewed studies demonstrate that beer tourism strengthens local economies by promoting diversified and sustainable business models, particularly in areas seeking to revitalise post-industrial or rural territories through creative and experiential industries.

Culturally, beer tourism reinforces community identity, heritage preservation, and social cohesion. It provides a platform for intercultural dialogue and education, allowing visitors to engage with the traditions, craftsmanship, and narratives embedded in beer production. Events and festivals, as evidenced in the literature, extend beyond consumption and entertainment, functioning as catalysts for social interaction and inclusive participation. Environmentally, although sustainability initiatives remain uneven across regions, there is a growing awareness of the need for responsible production, efficient resource management, and the reduction of waste and carbon emissions.

Despite these advances, the study also highlights notable limitations in the existing body of research. Most studies are concentrated in developed countries, particularly in Europe and North America, leaving a gap in the understanding of beer tourism in emerging economies. Empirical data on long-term sustainability outcomes, policy integration, and the social impacts of beer tourism remain scarce. Moreover, the predominance of qualitative and case-based approaches limits the comparability and generalisation of findings across different contexts.

Future research should expand the geographical and methodological scope of investigation, incorporating mixed methods and cross-country analyses. Studies examining the role of governance, local policies, and community-led initiatives could deepen understanding of how beer tourism contributes to sustainable regional development. There is also room to explore digital innovation, circular economy strategies, and the integration of environmental certifications as tools to strengthen the resilience and global recognition of this growing tourism niche.

References

- [1]. Alonso, A. D., Sakellarios, N., & Bressan, A. (2017). Stakeholders And Craft Beer Tourism Development. *Tourism Analysis*, 22(1), 45-58.
- [2]. Bachman, J. R., Hull, J. S., & Marlowe, B. (2021). Non-Economic Impact Of Craft Brewery Visitors In British Columbia: A Quantitative Analysis. *Tourism Analysis*, 26(2-3), 151-165.
- [3]. Beckman, E., & Shu, F. (2024). The Experience Of The Festivalscape At A Craft Beer And Food Festival: The Moderating Effect Of Gender. *Journal Of Policy Research In Tourism, Leisure And Events*, 16(2), 187-206.
- [4]. Berend Jr, K. J. (2017). Beer Tourism: Identifying Kentucky Brewery Visitors And Motivations (Master's Thesis, Eastern Kentucky University).
- [5]. Cabras, I., Kogler, D. F., Davies, R. B., & Higgins, D. (2023). Beer, Brewing, And Regional Studies. *Regional Studies*, 57(10), 1905-1908.
- [6]. De Oliveira Dias, M., & Falconi, D. (2018). The Evolution Of Craft Beer Industry In Brazil. *Journal Of Economics And Business*, 1(4), 618-626.
- [7]. Diniz, D. D. P., & Carvalho, M. (2024). Environmental Repercussions Of Craft Beer Production In Northeast Brazil. *Sustainability*, 16(11), 4566.
- [8]. Durán-Sánchez, A., De La Cruz Del Río-Rama, M., Álvarez-García, J., & Oliveira, C. (2022). Analysis Of Worldwide Research On Craft Beer. *Sage Open*, 12(2), 21582440221108154.
- [9]. Egan, L., Riordan, B., Newling, G., Uthurralt, N., & Day, C. (2023). Sydney's Inner-West Is Brimming With Micro-Breweries, Should We Be Worried And What Does It Mean For Research And Policy?. *Drug & Alcohol Review*, 42(4).
- [10]. Gímenes-Minas, M. H. S. G., Lyra, M., & Santos, R. (2016). Turismo Cervejeiro No Estado De São Paulo: Análise E Caracterização Do Cenário Atual. *Anais Do Seminário Da ANPTUR*.
- [11]. Manis, K. T., Chang, H. J. J., Fowler, D. C., & Blum, S. C. (2020). Inaugural Events And Beer Tourist Behavior: Capitalizing On The Craft Beer Movement. *Event Management*, 24(2-3), 311-334.
- [12]. Murray, A., & Kline, C. (2015). Rural Tourism And The Craft Beer Experience: Factors Influencing Brand Loyalty In Rural North Carolina, USA. *Journal Of Sustainable Tourism*, 23(8-9), 1198-1216.
- [13]. Nave, E., Duarte, P., Rodrigues, R. G., Paço, A., Alves, H., & Oliveira, T. (2022). Craft Beer—A Systematic Literature Review And Research Agenda. *International Journal Of Wine Business Research*, 34(2), 278-307.
- [14]. Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., ... & Moher, D. (2021). The PRISMA 2020 Statement: An Updated Guideline For Reporting Systematic Reviews. *Bmj*, 372.
- [15]. Stone, M. J., Garibaldi, R., & Pozzi, A. (2020). Motivation, Behaviors, And Travel Activities Of Beer Tourists. *Tourism Review International*, 24(2-3), 167-178.
- [16]. Wilson, J., Sanchez Rodrigues, V., Bhaird, C. M. A., Lotfi, M., Kumar, M., Horgan, D., ... & Danson, M. (2023). On The Beer Wagon: The Past, Present And Future Of Celtic Craft Brewing And Its Policies. *Regional Studies, Regional Science*, 10(1), 329-346.