

Circular Economy in Ibero-American SMEs: A Scope Review*

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Abstract

The Circular Economy (CE) has established itself as a disruptive paradigm and a vehicle for sustainability. SMEs are key players in the development of the CE. Currently, there is growing academic interest in studying the relationship between the CE and SMEs, primarily in Europe, Asia, and Africa, leaving a knowledge gap in Latin America. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to diagnose the state of knowledge on the circular economy (CE) in Latin American SMEs, considering its aims, methods, and results. A scoping review was conducted in the Scopus database (2018–2026). The search protocol was PRISMA ScR, and the findings were organized using the SPIDER protocol. R Studio software was used to visualize the data. Seventeen documents were included, mainly from Spain, Mexico, Peru, and Colombia. Qualitative and mixed-methods studies predominate. It was possible to organize them into three clusters: the first, of a technical-environmental nature; a second cluster focused on regional sustainability; and a third group related to SMEs and industrial symbiosis. The main conclusion is that the transition to a sustainable economy in SMEs is viable when internal capacities are combined with appropriate regulatory and financial frameworks.

Keywords: circular economy; SMEs; barriers; enabling factors; scope review.