

Cross-Border Shopping Tourism: A Systematic Review

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Abstract: This paper provides a comprehensive analysis of the current state of research on cross-border shopping-based tourism, highlighting its significance and identifying key gaps in the literature. Given the increasing importance of cross-border shopping in tourism and its under-explored dimensions, this review seeks to consolidate existing knowledge and propose future research directions. It identifies key trends in research on cross-border shopping tourism, categorizing studies by methodology, theoretical perspectives, and geographical focus. It highlights the dominant emphasis on economic and consumer behavior analyses, while also pointing out significant gaps, such as the underuse of interdisciplinary frameworks and mixed-methods.

Keywords: Cross-border shopping, tourism, borderlands, retail, content analysis

Introduction

Human spatial behaviors and socioeconomic activities, including tourism, are simultaneously governed, facilitated, and constrained by political boundaries and their multifaceted functions. State borders influence mobility, regulate commerce, and shape the social and economic dynamics of regions. Tourism has emerged as a critical medium of socioeconomic development across nearly every region of the world, owing largely to its positive economic effects. Borderlands, in particular, host diverse forms of tourism, such as medical mobility, sports tourism, gaming, beach tourism and shopping, each shaped by the unique characteristics and regulations of state agents (Hsieh & Chang, 2006; Ormond & Sulianti, 2017; Timothy & Butler, 1995; Weaver et al., 2023). Border regions by definition are peripheral locations, and many tend to feature relatively isolated and untouched natural environments and Indigenous cultures, making them attractive destinations for nature- and culture-based tourism. At the same time, other forms of tourism, such as gambling, prostitution, and shopping, have flourished due to disparities in laws, tax structures, and levels of permissibility on either side of borders (Bowman, 1994; Leiper, 1989; Timothy, 2001; Timothy & Gelbman, 2023). Among these, shopping stands out as a significant element of border tourism, blending human mobility, consumer behavior, and economic exchange. Understanding the dynamics of cross-border retail is essential for

identifying key concepts, challenges, and opportunities for fostering transfrontier interactions and commerce.

A handful of reviews address related areas such as cross-border tourism, retail mobility, and shopping tourism, but none have comprehensively examined cross-border shopping as a distinct tourism phenomenon (Timothy & Çiftci, 2025). For instance, Sofield (2006) contextualizes state boundaries and their implications for border tourism, while Groß (2015) organizes knowledge on mobile shopping (m-shopping) within retail literature. Similarly, Choi, Heo, and Law (2016) focus on shopping tourism generally, and Jin, Moscardo, and Murphy (2017) evaluate tourist shopping, pointing out future research needs. Sialverstava et al. (2019) review cross-border tourism management perspectives, and Cawley et al. (2019) explore the economic impacts of tariffs on cross-border shopping. Meanwhile, Xi and Hamari (2021) investigate the psychological effects of virtual reality on consumer behavior, and Le et al. (2022) analyze the relationships between online shopping and travel behavior.

Numerous studies have explored various aspects of cross-border commerce and shopping tourism. However, there is a notable gap in the literature regarding the conceptualization of cross-border shopping as a distinct form of tourism, despite its widespread popularity in border cities and regions. Shopping remains a primary motivation for many travelers, driving significant visitor spending and contributing to destination economies (Makkonen, 2016, 2023; Timothy, 2005; Timothy & Çiftci, 2025).

While traditional tourism usually involves overnight stays away from home, same-day international return trips, such as those undertaken for shopping purposes, also qualify as tourism, generating substantial impacts and involving both utilitarian and leisure activities. These day-trippers, though not always included in conventional tourism statistics, are integral participants in the tourism system (Berdell & Ghoshal, 2015; Makkonen, 2023; Suriñach et al., 2019; Timothy et al., 2022; Timothy & Çiftci, 2025). Given this context, the current review aims to fill the research gap by systematically synthesizing the extant literature on cross-border shopping as a tourism activity. By examining the breadth of existing studies, this review consolidates knowledge from various disciplinary perspectives and methodologies, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of this phenomenon. In line with this aim, the research questions guiding this review are as follows:

RQ1. What is the current understanding of cross-border shopping tourism in the literature?

This question addresses the current state of research, highlighting significant findings, trends, and gaps. Previous studies such as Sofield (2006) and Bar-Koželis and Wendt (2018) contextualize border tourism's role in socioeconomic interactions, while Szytniewski, Spierings, and van der Velde (2018) explore sociocultural dynamics in cross-border shopping. Makkonen (2016) highlights cross-border shopping's integration in destination marketing strategies, and Jin,

et al. (2017) identify gaps in tourist shopping research. However, no systematic synthesis has been provided for cross-border shopping as a distinct touristic phenomenon.

RQ2. How does cross-border shopping differ across contexts?

Contexts such as geographical regions, socioeconomic conditions, and cultural dynamics shape cross-border shopping behaviors. For example, Bar-Koželis and Wendt (2018) explore variations in shopping tourism activities across Polish and Romanian borders, while Studzińska et al. (2018) examine Russian shoppers in the Finnish borderlands. Understanding these distinctions is critical for contextualized policy-making and marketing strategies.

RQ3. How does evaluating different methodologies help identify effective approaches for future research?

A methodological assessment reveals strengths and weaknesses in existing approaches, which can help guide future studies. As seen in studies evaluated by Pickering et al. (2015), the lack of mixed-method approaches limits comprehensive insights. This analysis provides recommendations for methodological innovation.

RQ4. Which issues have been addressed in research on cross-border shopping tourism?

Most prior research has focused on economic impacts and consumer behavior (Makkonen, 2016; Leal et al., 2010), with limited attention to sociocultural and technological aspects. This question explores the breadth of issues studied, identifying overlooked areas such as social psychology.

RQ5. What are the implications and directions for future studies?

Addressing this question synthesizes insights from the literature to propose future research directions. Timothy and Gelbman (2023) highlight evolving border dynamics, suggesting a need for interdisciplinary approaches to capture emerging trends related to tourism and border studies.

Cross-border Shopping

National borders are critical to economic development, particularly in transfrontier commerce and trade (Studzińska et al., 2018). In many transfrontier locations, shopping is a significant economic driver of tourism and is often the main expression of tourism in border areas. Within the broader category of international tourism, cross-border shopping refers to people from one country shopping in a neighboring country. This is a form of international travel where retail is the primary activity and motivation for crossing the national boundary (Timothy, 2001; Timothy & Butler, 1995). This form of outshopping typically takes place in adjacent border regions, with consumers taking advantage of price differences and lower taxes, obtaining more affordable goods and services,

acquiring better-quality merchandise, or encountering a greater (or different) selection of retail options (Leal et al., 2010). This form of day-tourism often involves a combination of recreational and economic motives, which differentiates it from more typical forms of leisure-oriented tourism (Chubb & Chubb, 1981; Fitzgerald et al., 1988).

Timothy (1995, 1999, 2001, 2005) outlines several variables that encourage and facilitate cross-border tourism. First, the destination borderland needs to exhibit large enough economic differences between the two polities, as well as social, and cultural advantages to create demand for something 'different'. Second, potential travelers must have an understanding of the amenities offered and opportunities to experience on the other side. This includes the types of merchandise, shops, and services over the border. Third, there must be sufficient incentives for potential cross-border consumers to be persuaded to engage in cross-border retail excursions, including lower prices and greater product diversity. Fourth, the transfrontier destination should be easily accessible by foot, personal car, or public transportation. Finally, the border must be sufficiently open to enable consumers to pass relatively easily, viz-a-viz an open border or lenient passport and visa regulations (Bar-Koelalis & Wendt, 2018; Leick et al., 2021; Więckowski & Timothy, 2021).

People's participation in cross-border shopping and other tourism mobilities differs according to their personal needs and desires, including retail shopping, medical care, recreational trips, work, and education (Sener et al., 2015). Specific factors influencing people's decisions include currency exchange rates; lower prices, especially for gas, pharmaceutical products, tobacco, and alcoholic beverages; the variety of goods abroad; better service; limited enforcement of tax collection; and rigorous or relaxed border-crossing procedures. Leick et al. (2021) divide cross-border shopping into three categories: day trips to buy grocery goods and services, cross-border weekend trips with shopping activities and an overnight stay, and other cross-border vacations involving extended stays abroad that include shopping.

Methods

This systematic review follows the guidelines established by Petticrew and Roberts (2008) and Kitchenham et al. (2009), aiming to map the boundaries of existing knowledge and identify gaps in the field (Pickering et al., 2015). To structure the review, a clear procedure was developed based on the study objectives, specifying the databases, search keywords, and inclusion criteria.

To maintain the integrity and reliability of the review, only peer-reviewed research articles published in English were included. These articles were sourced from journals indexed in the Science Citation Index (SCI), Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), and Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI), which are known for their rigorous peer-review processes and high-quality research standards (Thomson Reuters, 2023). Books were excluded due to their broader scope, less frequent updates, and general lack of standardized peer-review

processes, which were not suited to the methodological rigor required for this review.

The following search terms were used to identify studies on cross-border shopping tourism: “cross-border,” “cross-border shopping,” “cross-border shopper,” “cross-border tourism,” “cross-border day trippers,” “transfrontier shopping,” “cross-border retail,” “transfrontier retail,” “cross-straits,” and “international outshopping.” As recommended by Pickering and Byrne (2014), these keywords were chosen to maximize the identification of relevant material while minimizing irrelevant results. Initially, publications were screened based on titles, search terms, and abstracts. In some cases, the conclusions of primary studies were reviewed to confirm relevance. Each selected study was then assessed against a detailed set of inclusion criteria to ensure it aligned with the research objectives (Ulker-Demirel & Çiftci, 2020).

Given the abundance of studies on cross-border shopping, this review focuses specifically on its relationship with tourism; those dealing only with economics or geopolitics were not included for analysis. Using CiteScore metrics up to 2022, 129 journals were identified. The review accessed these journals through the Scopus database, as well as other academic databases such as EBSCO, Elsevier, ProQuest, and Emerald. Scopus, regarded as one of the most robust academic databases (Yang et al., 2017), was used to identify tourism, leisure, and hospitality management journals, and studies were selected from the highest quartiles based on CiteScore. This analysis was undertaken with no specific start date, but it extending only through 2022, to ensure comprehensive coverage of relevant journals and research in the field.

The article selection process (Figure 1) led to the classification of 44 selected papers in an Excel spreadsheet. The classification criteria included: (1) year of publication; (2) journal name; (3) paper title; (4) research context; (5) subject area; (6) methodology; and (7) country of research focus. Additionally, the reference lists of these papers were reviewed to identify further relevant studies that may have been overlooked. This process ensured the comprehensiveness of the literature to be included. The results of this analysis are presented in the following sections.

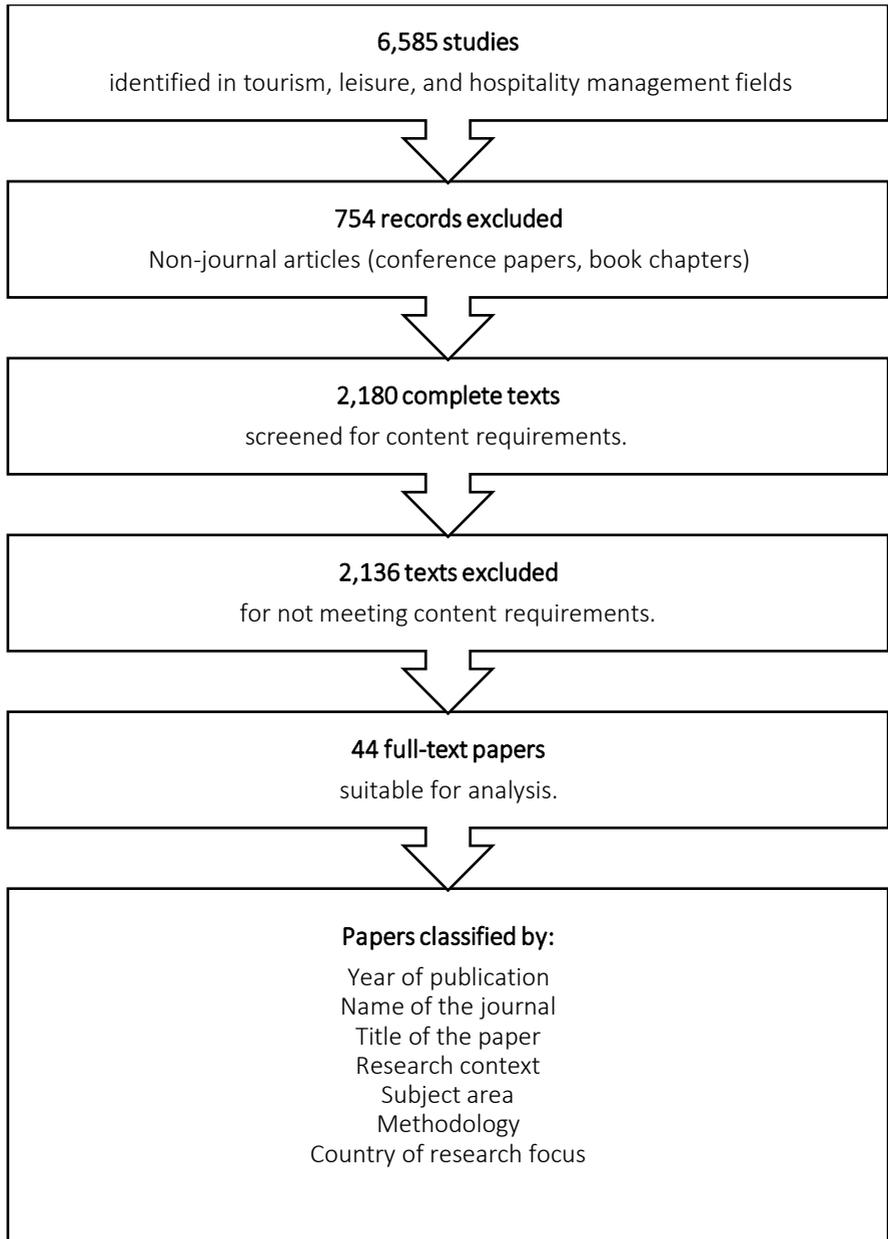


Figure 1. Article selection process

Results

This research provides insights into the complexities of cross-border shopping tourism, addressing several key aspects according to the stated research questions. Regarding RQ1, the literature reveals that most studies focus on consumer behavior, with surveys being the dominant methodology used to understand motivations, preferences, and satisfaction. For RQ2, the findings highlight geographical differences in cross-border shopping, with most research concentrating on the US-Mexico and US-Canada borders, while there is a notable gap in European studies despite the EU's integrated market and significant cross-border shopping activity (Bar-Kořelis & Wendt, 2018; Szytniewski, Spierings & van der Velde, 2018). In response to RQ3, the literature critiques the predominant use of surveys, identifying a gap in more advanced research designs, such as meta-analysis, experimental methods, and mixed approaches, which could provide richer research findings. RQ4 outlines the primary issues addressed in the literature, including the economic impact of cross-border shopping, the role of retailing in the experience, and various sociocultural dimensions, with the latter being underexplored. Temporal trends related to RQ4 show a decline in publications on the topic after 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted cross-border travel and data collection efforts. Finally, RQ5 points to future directions for research, suggesting that incorporating interdisciplinary theoretical frameworks, deepening the exploration of sociocultural dynamics, and using a wider range of methodologies are crucial for understanding the multifaceted nature of cross-border shopping tourism.

Geographical distribution

A considerable quantity of research was conducted on the borders of the United States (n=12). Nine articles focused on China's borderlands, and five focused on cross-border shopping in Canada. Three articles focused on cross-straits shopping in Taiwan by Chinese consumers. Two studies were conducted each in Denmark, Finland and Turkey. Only one study was undertaken each in Cyprus, the United Kingdom, Hungary, Ireland, Korea, Malaysia, Norway, Thailand and the Netherlands.

Although research on cross-border shopping has primarily focused on North America and Asia (particularly the US-Mexico and US-Canada borders) there is a notable geographical gap in the literature concerning Europe, from a tourism perspective. Despite the European Union's (EU) integrated internal market and significant levels of cross-border shopping activity, limited attention has been given to this phenomenon as a tourism and leisure-oriented activity. This is particularly surprising given that the EU, while fostering political and economic cooperation to promote peace, prosperity, and stability (European Commission, 2020; Timothy, 2021), still experiences considerable price differentials, currency exchange rate advantages in some cases, and VAT tax variations among member states. These factors continue to drive cross-border shopping, even in the context of political and economic integration (Więckowski & Timothy, 2021). The

coexistence of national currencies in countries such as the Czech Republic, Hungary, Denmark, Sweden, and Poland alongside the euro in neighboring states introduces additional complexities that influence tourist behavior and regional economic dynamics. Existing research underscores the prevalence of cross-border shopping in EU borderlands, often highlighting its dual economic and social significance (Szytniewski et al., 2018; Szytniewski & Spierings, 2018; Timothy, 2021; van der Velde & Spierings, 2010). However, this literature rarely contextualizes the activity within the broader framework of tourism, leaving an important lacuna in understanding how this form of shopping intersects with leisure travel, cultural exchange, and regional development. Addressing this gap is essential to capture the nuanced dynamics of cross-border shopping in the EU, particularly in light of the region's unique political and largely debordered economic landscape.

Methodologies and samples in cross-border shopping tourism research

Surveys have been the most common method used in cross-border shopping research, employed in 22 of the 44 studies, reflecting a strong focus on consumer behavior and preferences. Case studies (n = 6) provided in-depth insights into specific shopping scenarios, while econometric models (n = 5) analyzed the economic factors influencing cross-border shopping. Fewer studies explored theoretical frameworks (n = 4), existing data sources (n = 4), or combined quantitative and qualitative methods (n = 2). Notably, no studies employed meta-analysis, situational analysis, or experimental designs, indicating a gap in the use of advanced research methods. This trend suggests an opportunity for future research to incorporate more diverse methodologies to provide richer insights into the complex dynamics of cross-border shopping.

Moreover, the focus on tourists as the primary research population, while important, overlooks other key stakeholders in the cross-border shopping process, such as residents, small business owners, and policymakers. Future research could benefit from a more holistic approach that incorporates the perspectives of a wider range of actors, including those who facilitate or are impacted by cross-border shopping. Additionally, the post-pandemic landscape presents a unique opportunity to explore how changes in border controls, health regulations, and consumer behavior have reshaped cross-border shopping tourism practices.

Number of articles by year and by journal

The highest number of articles was published in 2016 (n = 7), followed by 2015 (n = 6). Publications decreased after 2020, with only two articles in 2020 and a further decline thereafter. The pandemic, which restricted cross-border travel and data collection, significantly impacted research (Wallin Aagesen et al., 2023). Global travel restrictions and border closures led to a dramatic drop in passenger flights and overland arrivals (Liebig et al., 2021), including localized retail trips abroad. COVID's impact was particularly noticeable in border regions

and businesses reliant on cross-border commerce (Wille & Kanesu, 2020; Capello et al., 2023; Tömöri & Staniscia, 2023).

Figure 2 shows the quantity of papers on cross-border shopping tourism in the main journals. The research on cross-border shopping within the tourism, hospitality, and leisure fields is concentrated in a few key journals. Despite a broad search across 129 journals, only 20 published relevant articles, indicating a niche, but significant, area of study.

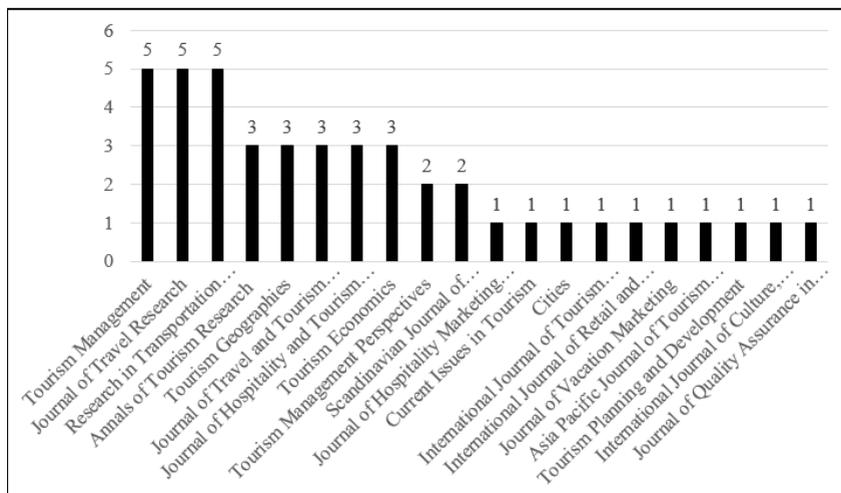


Figure 2. Distribution of publication sources

Number of articles by research fields/disciplinary contexts

Consumer behavior has garnered the most attention in cross-border shopping research, with 20 studies focusing on this perspective. This is followed by economics (n=11), marketing (n=6), retailing (n=4), general tourism (n=3), and the tourist experience (n=1). Although these themes are not mutually exclusive, our analysis focused on the main disciplinary thrust of the papers. Consumer behavior-focused studies, included Timothy and Tosun (2003), who examine how international boundaries are perceived as barriers to tourism, even in cases where borders separate culturally similar regions with minimal security concerns. Beck et al. (2004) assessed the satisfaction levels of cross-border tourists with hotel services, while Chang et al. (2006) investigated the impact of sales behavior on consumer motivation and satisfaction. Ilbery et al. (2007) focused on the attitudes of tourists and gatekeepers, emphasizing their roles in consuming and promoting various aspects of rural life, such as food processing and outdoor recreation. Díaz-Sauceda et al. (2015) explored the factors influencing travelers' behavioral intentions when crossing borders, and Zhang et al. (2018) conducted a geographical analysis of Hong Kong residents' attitudes

toward Chinese day-trippers. Boonchai and Freathy (2020) identified a mix of hedonistic, functional, and utilitarian motivations driving retail behavior in cross-border shopping.

Economics was the second most common focus of research on cross-border shopping tourism. International outshopping significantly influences local and regional economies on both sides of a border, with notable contributions to revenue streams and economic development. Key economic factors, such as fluctuating exchange rates and fuel prices, play a major role in influencing cross-border shopping activities. Di Matteo and Di Matteo (1996) analyzed the primary factors influencing trips and spending in the seven Canadian provinces bordering the US. Michalkó et al. (2014) examined the relationship between cross-border shopping tourism and economic crises in Hungary. Cabral et al. (2019) find that monthly border crossings, including for retail, between the US and Mexico are strongly correlated with the exchange rate between the two currencies.

Six articles focus on marketing in cross-border shopping tourism. Ahmed (1996) analyzes Canadian tourists' shopping behavior from the perspective of international marketing. Tosun et al. (2005) studied collaboration between Turkey and Greece in cross-border marketing, and Makkonen (2016) emphasizes how cross-border retail should be integrated into destination marketing plans to enhance the tourism sector's reputation and brand, showcasing the importance of marketing strategies in promoting cross-border shopping as a form of tourism.

Understanding how cross-border shopping affects the retail industry and local communities is crucial, as it can influence local employment opportunities, regional economic growth, and the diversification of retail offerings to meet consumer demands. With the retail sector becoming increasingly saturated, companies seek growth by expanding into emerging regions and pursuing acquisitions. However, relatively few studies (n=4) examined cross-border shopping from a retailing perspective. Brown (1990) explores shopping center development in Northern Ireland in the context of cross-border shopping tourism. Sener et al. (2015) emphasize the need for a comprehensive understanding of cross-border travel to address the mobility requirements of border crossers and the challenges faced by enterprises experiencing productivity and sales losses. Wong and Lam (2016) argue that individual retail establishments significantly influence visitors' participation in cross-border shopping, analyzing how both individual and store-level factors impact shopping motives and behaviors.

Research on cross-border shopping tourism has followed several discernible trends that offer insights into its evolving role within the broader tourism sector. First, consumer behavior remains the central focus of most studies, with a significant number of articles examining tourists' motivations, shopping habits, and satisfaction levels when crossing international borders. These studies underscore the importance of cross-border shopping as a significant driver of

tourism, with various factors such as price sensitivity, convenience, and novelty influencing consumers' decisions to participate in international outshopping.

Additionally, economics research has highlighted the substantial economic impact of cross-border shopping, particularly in regions where exchange rates and tax differences play a critical role in shaping tourists' expenditures. Retailing and marketing perspectives also dominated much of the literature, albeit to a lesser extent, with studies emphasizing the role of retail environments and destination marketing in attracting cross-border shoppers.

While these themes have been well explored, the sociocultural dimensions of cross-border shopping remain relatively unexplored, yet we know they are significant (Timothy & Çiftci, 2025). A few studies, such as that by Szytniewski, Spierings and van der Velde (2018), have explored the emotional and social dynamics of cross-border shopping, investigating how tourists engage with cultural and social differences during their shopping experiences. This highlights a potential area for further research, particularly in understanding the experiential and sociocultural aspects of cross-border shopping as an integral part of the tourism experience, particularly including perspectives on the ludic or leisure elements of international retail beyond only the utilitarian perspective.

Theoretical perspectives

As previously noted, cross-border shopping research has primarily adopted theories and concepts in consumer behavior; however, there is a noticeable gap in applying interdisciplinary or practice-oriented frameworks. While theories like generational cohort theory (Chung, Chen, & Lin, 2016) have been used to examine motivations and destination image, theoretical approaches are still lacking. As a multidisciplinary field, tourism has benefitted from integrating theories from psychology, sociology, anthropology, geography, and economics (Matthews & Ritcher 1991; Sheldon 1992; Tribe & Liburd, 2016). The same could be done in the subfield of cross-border shopping.

In addition, practice-oriented concepts and theories could offer practical insights for better policy development and more favorable social practices (Lamers et al., 2017). This theoretical gap points to a broader need for a more diverse theoretical lens in future research to enhance the understanding of cross-border shopping as a multifaceted phenomenon that transcends consumer behavior. In summary, the research on cross-border shopping tourism, despite being concentrated in a few key journals and locations, provides valuable insights into consumer behavior, economic impacts, and the sociocultural dynamics of international outshopping. This specialized but significant area of study reveals the integral role of cross-border shopping within the broader tourism sector, highlighting both its economic benefits in the borderland destination and its influence on tourist experiences.

Discussion and Conclusion

This review reveals a notable balance between quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches supplemented by a smaller proportion of concept papers. However, mixed-methods approaches remain underutilized, with only a limited number of studies employing such designs. To address this gap, future research should prioritize primary data collection and fieldwork, moving beyond theoretical conjectures to provide richer empirical insights that borderland destinations worldwide could use in promoting and sustainably managing their retail tourism (Anisiewicz, 2021; Bygvrå, 2019; Ramsey et al., 2019; Yung & Khoo-Lattimore, 2019).

From a theoretical and multidisciplinary perspective, the predominance of consumer behavior frameworks underscores the need for greater interdisciplinary engagement. Geographical and socioeconomic theories, such as distance decay, Central Place Theory, and econometrics, offer valuable tools for understanding the spatial and economic dimensions of cross-border shopping. Additionally, integrating insights from fields such as geography, sociology, economics, and political science could enrich our understanding of the social, political, and spatial dynamics underpinning this phenomenon (Pearce & Packer, 2013), especially given the geopolitical and macro economic forces that determine the administration of border regions and how life is lived in these peripheral parts of the state (Timothy, 2023).

The findings of this review emphasize the critical role of cross-border shopping as an economic driver in border regions and often the main thrust of their economic development. While much of the extant literature views cross-border shopping primarily through a utilitarian lens driven by economic motives, fewer studies have explored its connections to normative tourism forms, such as medical tourism, pilgrimage, or heritage tourism. This oversight highlights the need to examine cross-border shopping as a multifaceted activity, encompassing both pragmatic and experiential dimensions. Examples such as pharmaceutical retailing and combined shopping-pilgrimage activities underscore the importance of these intersections and their implications for tourism scholarship (Shinde, 2014).

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. The scope was confined to articles published in peer-reviewed journals within tourism, hospitality, and leisure studies. As a result, significant insights from other disciplines and other sources, including industry reports, theses, books, and conference proceedings, remain unexamined, yet we acknowledge the growing prominence of these as sources of research output on cross-border shopping. Future research could adopt a broader multidisciplinary approach, incorporating perspectives from marketing, consumer behavior, and health-related fields to provide a more comprehensive analysis. Additionally, alternative methodologies, such as meta-analyses and experimental designs, could uncover nuanced patterns and relationships within the phenomenon of cross-border shopping (Baruca & Zolfagharian, 2013; Cuevas Contreras & Zizaldrá Hernández, 2015).

Emerging themes such as digitization, sustainability, and geopolitical changes also warrant deeper exploration. The role of digital technologies, for instance, in shaping cross-border shopping behaviors and enabling new patterns of consumer engagement remains largely unexplored. Similarly, the influence of global trends, such as regional economic disparities, supranational integration and political tensions, calls for innovative research approaches that integrate macroeconomic and cultural perspectives. These aspects are critical for understanding cross-border shopping behaviors in the context of rapid technological advancements and shifting political landscapes (Pearce & Packer, 2013).

One of the least studied topics in cross-border shopping tourism is technology. In particular, knowledge transfer and innovation cooperation between border cities, regions, and their neighbors have remained poorly developed in research. Online commerce and its relationship to cross-border shopping-based tourism is an area that warrants further investigation. For instance, despite the growing prevalence of online retail platforms and other forms of e-commerce, their interactions with, and impacts on, in-person cross-border shopping have not been systematically examined (Baruca & Zolfagharian, 2013). Moreover, studies on cross-border medical tourism and retail prescription drugs often lack a broader contextualization within cross-border shopping literature, despite their significant relevance (Cuevas Contreras & Zizaldrá Hernández, 2015, 2023).

As previously mentioned, another neglected aspect is the intersection of cross-border shopping and religious tourism (Shinde, 2014). Often tied to holidays such as Christmas, Easter, Ramadan, and Hanukkah, shopping forms a significant part of the pilgrimage experience. For example, shopping during religious holidays along the US-Mexico border highlights the cultural and economic interplay in cross-border regions, yet this phenomenon has not been systematically explored in tourism journals (Cuevas Contreras & Zizaldrá Hernández, 2015).

Incorporating the insights from existing research on cross-border shopping tourism can significantly enhance current understanding and motivate further investigation. For example, understanding the socioeconomic contributions of cross-border shopping tourism provides a foundation for examining factors such as exchange rates, fuel prices, and border policies that impact cross-border shopping activities (Baruca & Zolfagharian, 2013). Similarly, sociocultural dynamics, including tourists' perceptions of cultural similarities and differences, influence shopping trips and might foster cultural exchange between neighboring countries. Insights into regulatory and infrastructural barriers can guide policymakers in formulating strategies to facilitate smoother cross-border interactions and boost economic activities.

By addressing these and other gaps, future research can provide actionable insights for policymakers, marketers, and destination managers. A nuanced understanding of the geographical, social, and consumer behaviors of cross-

border shoppers will be indispensable for developing effective strategies to enhance economic sustainability and competitiveness in border regions. In doing so, the academic community can contribute meaningfully to both theoretical advancements and real-world challenges in the dynamic context of cross-border shopping.

Notably, the literature consistently highlights economic factors, such as price differences and exchange rate fluctuations, as primary motivators for cross-border shopping. However, there is a divergence in how scholars interpret the sociocultural dimensions of this phenomenon. Some studies underscore the role of cultural similarities in fostering cross-border shopping, while others emphasize the allure of experiencing differences. Additionally, research diverges on the environmental impacts of cross-border shopping, with some studies advocating for its economic benefits while others critique its sustainability challenges. These conflicting findings point to the need for more nuanced, interdisciplinary approaches to reconcile these differences and to develop a more holistic understanding of cross-border shopping tourism.

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