# Participant information sheet

**Date Information Sheet Produced:**

10/06/2025

**Project Title**

Consumer-Centric Sustainability: Perception of University Students and Graduates on their Role in the Circular Economy

**Supervisor Introduction and Professional Affiliation**

The research was supervised by Dr. Diana Lorenzo, a senior lecturer in the Department of International Business, Strategy and Business Management at Auckland University of Technology (AUT). Her research expertise covers sustainable development, business strategy and innovation, with a particular focus on sustainable business practices and ethical consumer behavior.

**An Invitation**

Hello! I am Tangzong Sun, currently studying for a Master of Business at Auckland University of Technology (AUT). I am currently conducting a research on the role of university students and graduates in the circular economy. I want to understand how they view their position and how this perception affects sustainable consumption behavior, while focusing on the role of e-commerce platforms in promoting the circular economy and exploring how to optimize incentive mechanisms and increase consumer participation. If you are a university student or recent graduate with online shopping experience, I sincerely invite you to participate in an interview (about 30-60 minutes). Your experience and views will help to better understand the impact of consumers in the circular economy and provide reference for companies and platforms to optimize sustainable consumption strategies. This research is part of my master's program and the results may be used in academic papers, research journals or conference reports. The interview is completely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without providing a reason. All personal information and interview content will be strictly confidential. If you are interested or want to know more, please contact me. Thank you for your time!

**What is the purpose of this research?**

This study aims to explore how university students and graduates view their roles in the circular economy and how this role perception affects their sustainable consumption behaviors. This study focuses on how digital platforms affect university students and graduates' participation in circular economy practices in the context of e-platform shopping. It hopes to gain an in-depth understanding of the factors influencing participation in sustainable consumption, students' motivations for participating in the circular economy, and their challenges. In addition, the existing research on the circular economy focuses on corporate sustainable strategies and product-related circular economy. At the same time, relatively few studies have examined how consumers view their role in the circular economy and how digital platforms influence their behavior. An in-depth understanding of these factors can help companies, policymakers, and platforms optimize sustainable consumption strategies and improve circular economy mechanisms.

**How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

You are invited as a potential participant because you meet the basic requirements of this interview and are a university student or graduate. In this research, graduates refer to individuals who completed their university studies within the past 1 to 10 years. You may have learned about this research through the AUT research participant recruitment page, or through a referral from someone who has already participated in the study, as this research uses a snowball sampling method to help identify suitable participants. If you are interested in this study, please email, phone, or text me. Participation criteria: You have an e-platform shopping experience (At least three times or more in one year); you are willing to share your views and experiences on sustainable consumption and circular economy. You will have seven days to consider whether you are willing to participate before the formal interview.

**How do I agree to participate in this research?**

Your participation is completely voluntary. Before participating in this research, you will read the participant information sheet to understand the basic information. If you agree to participate, you will need to sign a consent form, which outlines your rights. This interview will be audio-recorded, whether conducted in person or online. You will be informed of this in advance and asked to explicitly agree to the audio recording. You have the right to stop or withdraw from the interview or audio recording at any time, without giving any reason. There are two types of consent forms. If you choose an offline interview, you can sign a paper consent form; if you choose an online interview (WeChat, WhatsApp, or Zoom), I will provide an electronic version of the consent form for you to sign. If you have any questions, please contact me before signing.

**What will happen in this research?**

The interview may be conducted in either English or Chinese (Mandarin), depending on your language preference. If you choose to participate in this research, we will conduct a 30-60 minute interview with you. The interview will be audio recorded with your consent and transcribed by me for analysis. I plan to interview approximately 10 participants to explore the roles and behavior patterns of university students and graduates in the circular economy and identify key themes and trends. Once the research is completed, I will contact the participants to share a summary of the findings. Please be assured that all your contact details and interview recordings (including audio recordings from online interviews) will be kept strictly confidential in accordance with the Privacy Act 2020. This research will follow the AUT policy, ensuring that your personal data and interview content will be stored securely and used only for research purposes. If you have questions at any stage of the research, please feel free to contact me.

**What are the discomforts and risks?**

This research involves minimal risk or discomfort

**How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?**

In order to minimize the discomfort or minimal risk that may occur during the interview, this research will take the following measures:

You have the right to skip any questions that make you uncomfortable; You can pause, rest or terminate the interview and audio recording at any time without providing a reason; You can choose to withdraw at any stage of the research, and your data will be deleted or used further according to your choice. The interview will be conducted in a relaxed and non-judgmental environment, and you can express your thoughts freely. If you feel any discomfort or have any concerns during or after the interview, please feel free to contact me for further support or discussion.

**What are the benefits?**

You will not receive any monetary rewards directly, but as a token of appreciation for your time and contribution, you will receive a voucher valued at up to NZD $30 as compensation. The results of this research may help companies and digital platforms improve their sustainability strategies, Provide references for policymakers to promote consumer participation in the circular economy, Promote academic research, and promote theoretical progress in consumer behavior, sustainable development, and stakeholder roles. In addition, reviewing your consumption habits and sustainable choices may also give you new insights into your role in the circular economy.

**How will my privacy be protected?**

The interview will be conducted in person (at the AUT campus, café, library, or other private locations), or online via WeChat, Zoom, or WhatsApp, depending on your preference, ensuring the privacy of the interview process and not being overheard by others. All data will strictly comply with AUT data management regulations and AUT policy. To protect your privacy, this research only collects necessary basic information, such as whether you are a current university student or graduate, and the research report will not contain any identifiable personal information. The interview recording will be stored on password protected devices and backed up to AUT's secure cloud storage (OneDrive). The interview text will be strictly confidential, and all names and identity information will be removed. The research data will only be used for this research, and only the supervisor can view the interview text when necessary to ensure the quality of the study, except for myself. However, personal contact information or identity information of participants will not be obtained. All research data and consent forms will be securely stored in accordance with AUT policy and separately stored in AUT premises to ensure the privacy and data security of participants. The processing and storage of data will strictly comply with the Privacy Act 2020, and will be securely destroyed after being stored for at least six years. This research will strictly protect your privacy and data security. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at any time.

**What are the costs of participating in this research?**

Your participation mainly involves time costs. You do not need to bear any direct financial costs.

**What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

I will post my interview invitations on the AUT research participant recruitment page.

**Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

I will share a brief summary of the research findings with participants who are interested after the study is completed.

**What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

If you have any concerns about the nature of this research, please contact the Project Supervisor, Dr. Diana Lynn Lorenzo-Afable, at diana.lorenzo@aut.ac.nz

If you have concerns regarding the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Executive Secretary of AUTEC at ethics@aut.ac.nz or (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

**Whom do I contact for further information about this research?**

You are welcome to keep this Participant Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your reference. If you have any further questions or need more information, please feel free to contact the research team as follows:

**Researcher Contact Details:**

Tangzong Sun, email: ywr8666@autuni.ac.nz, phone: 0273867791

**Project Supervisor Contact Details:**

Dr. Diana Lynn Lorenzo-Afable, email: diana.lorenzo@aut.ac.nz

**AUTEC Approval number:** 25/70

**AUTEC Approval date:** 10 June 2025