Sustainable Marketing as a Key to Building Tourists' Eco-Friendly Character in Tourism Destinations

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Abstract. This study examines the role of sustainable marketing in shaping tourists' environmentally friendly behavior, using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. Data were collected from peer-reviewed articles published between 2010 and 2025 in four major databases: Scopus, ScienceDirect, Emerald, and ProQuest. The review of previous studies indicates that sustainable marketing supports the development of pro-environmental behavior among tourists through three primary mechanisms: environmental education, value-based tourism experiences, and emotionally resonant communication strategies. Despite these established findings, existing literature has largely examined these three elements in isolation. The novelty of this study lies in its integration of environmental education, value-based experience, and emotional communication into a single conceptual framework, offering a more holistic explanation of how sustainable marketing practices can cultivate an eco-friendly character among tourists. This research contributes theoretically to the growing body of literature on sustainable tourism marketing and provides practical implications for destination managers seeking to design marketing strategies that effectively promote environmental responsibility and long-term sustainable tourism behavior.

Keywords: Sustainable Marketing, Environmentally Friendly Behavior, Tourists, SLR.

1 Introduction

The concept of sustainable tourism has increasingly become a major concern in the management of tourist destination [1]. Tourist awareness of the environmental impacts of tourism activities drives the need for marketing strategies that are not only profit-oriented, but also pay attention to social and ecological aspects.

Research conducted [2,3] shows that sustainability-based marketing communications have a significant influence on consumer behavior in adopting a more environmentally friendly lifestyle. In the context of the tourism industry, marketing strategies that promote sustainability principles can help tourists understand the

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importance of choosing destinations and services that support environmental conservation.

Furthermore, research [4,5] highlights that sustainability leads to aspects of sustainable marketing that are not only relevant in the business world but also play a role in shaping the mindset of future generations.

With some of the results of the theoretical studies above, it can draw questions to be used as research questions, including:

1. How can sustainable marketing strategies be effective in implementing environmental awareness for touriststst?

2 Methods

This study uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to examine in depth how the concept of sustainable marketing contributes to shaping the character of environmentally friendly tourists in tourist destinations.

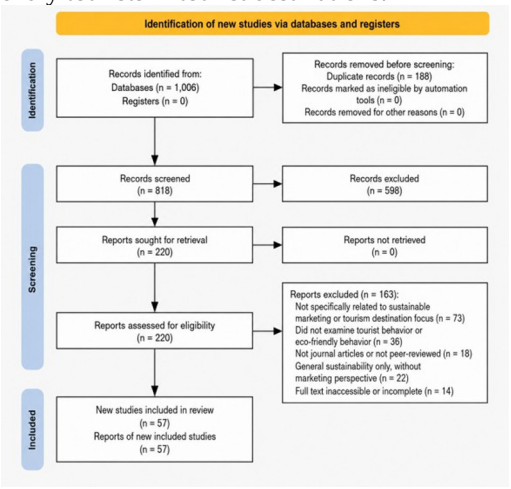

Fig. 1. Prisma Diagram

Source : Author's works

3 Results and Discussions

The selection of 57 articles is justified because they represent the most relevant studies after the PRISMA screening process, focusing specifically on sustainable marketing, tourism destinations, and tourists' eco-friendly behavior. These articles provide a strong basis for explaining how environmental education, value-based experiences, and emotional communication shape tourists' sustainable character [6,7,8]. Moreover, the inclusion of digitalization perspectives, such as VR/AR and the metaverse, strengthens the novelty of this study by showing how immersive technologies can enhance

sustainable marketing through virtual destination experiences, environmental awareness campaigns, and low-impact tourism promotion [9].

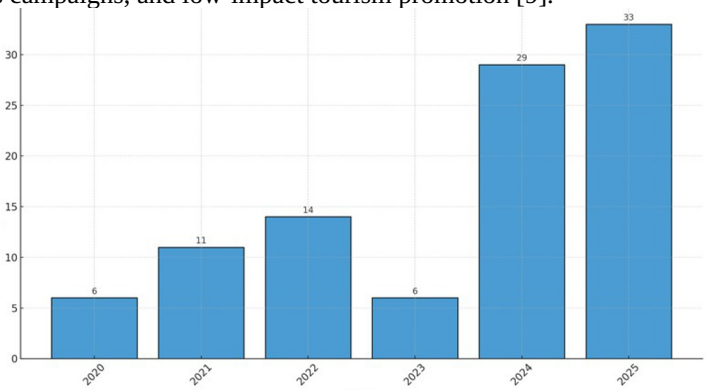

Fig. 2 Annual Graph of Number of Publications

Source : Author works

It is seen that there has been a significant increase in the number of publications in recent years, with the highest peak recorded in 2025. This trend indicates an escalation of academic interest in the research topic, which implicitly reflects the thematic relevance and urgency in responding to contemporary challenges, both in scientific and practical contexts.



Fig. 3. Co-Occurrence

Source : Author's works

Visually, there are three main communities identified through cluster coloring: the blue cluster refers to marketing , sustainable development , and decision making aspects ; the green cluster concentrates on the concepts of ecotourism , tourism development , and stakeholders ; while the red cluster, which is more fragmented, relates to demographic dimensions such as human , male/female , and environmental protection [1,11,12]. The presence of the "marketing" node as the largest and most central node

indicates its role as a main topic with high connectivity to other topics such as tourism, sustainability, and tourist destination [13,14].

Based on the results of the research questions obtained above, an answer emerged that underlies this research, which was strengthened by several sources who were interviewed.

1. Sustainable marketing strategies can be effective in implementing environmental awareness.

   Sustainable marketing in tourist destinations can increase tourists' environmental awareness through approaches such as green marketing , eco-labeling , as well as ecological awareness campaigns. In addition, strategies based on sustainability-oriented innovations (SOI) implemented in the tourism sector has been proven to reduce carbon footprints and increase tourist participation in environmentally friendly practices .

2. The main actors that encourage tourists to adopt environmentally friendly behavior after receiving sustainable marketing?

   The main factors influencing tourists' adoption of environmentally friendly behavior after receiving sustainable marketing:

   - Awareness of environmental impacts : Research shows that travelers who are more aware of the negative impacts of tourism activities are more likely to choose more sustainable travel options.
   - Green certifications & eco-labels : Tourists are more interested in accommodation or destinations that have green certification as a guarantee of environmental quality.

Studies show [15,16] that tourists who understand how their travel activities contribute to environmental change are more likely to choose more responsible travel options.

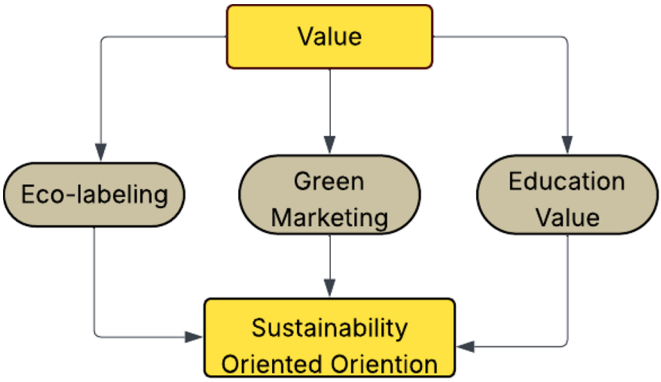

Fig.4. Research Value Construct

Source : Author's works

4 Conclusion

This study concludes that sustainable marketing plays a strategic role in shaping tourists' eco-friendly character in tourism destinations. Based on the synthesis of 57 selected articles, sustainable marketing encourages environmentally responsible behavior through three key dimensions: environmental education, value-based experiences, and emotional communication. In addition, digitalization through VR/AR and metaverse-based tourism experiences can strengthen sustainable marketing by providing immersive, educational, and low-impact promotional strategies. However, this study has several limitations. The review only used articles from four databases, which may exclude relevant studies from other sources. Third, the findings are conceptual because they are based on secondary data from previous studies. Therefore, future research is recommended to conduct empirical studies using quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method approaches.

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