

# The Role of Green Tourism as a Marketing at Destinations

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## ABSTRACT

These days because of climate change and increasing pollution, the concept of green travel and tourism has been proposed as a possible mitigating solution. Mass tourism is a thing of the past for the tourist countries that desire to expand their tourism industry in a well-considered way. For this reason tourist countries, need to expand a new version of tourism that should be based also on so-called alternative tourism. Alternative tourism may be a generic concept encompassing various sort of tourism like, soft, responsible, appropriate, small-scale, sustainable and green tourism. Green tourism has been progressively advanced over recent years due to developing concerns about environmental sustainability in many different industries worldwide. The green tourism concept would be profoundly appealing to tourism enterprises and operators owing to increasing governmental pressure to improve environmental performance by adopting effective and tangible environmental management techniques. Tourism marketing should not only be regarded as a tool for attracting more visitors, as it has been the case for most destinations. Instead, marketing must be used as a strategic mechanism in coordination with planning and management rather than a sales tool, to gain strategic objectives that make sure the sustainability of the destination.

**Keywords:** Sustainable tourism; Green tourism; Marketing strategy; Destinations

## INTRODUCTION

Green tourism is one of the important driving factors in supporting natural and cultural aspect and also encourage respect and desire to protect the environment and cultural heritage. The term green tourism can be applied to various forms of tourism that are connected to natural environment and cultural heritage and practices eco-friendly management. Green tourism planning and management as a part of good continuous tourism development could result in positive contribution to achieve Indonesian Milenium Developmental Target which includes decreasing poverty level, gender equality, village development, preservation of environment and cultural heritage, and climate change mitigation.

Growing concern for environmental, economic and socio-cultural consequences of tourism development has given rise to influential changes in the industry, devoting increasing attention to sustainable forms of tourism. While different terms are employed, these new forms of tourism center on combining economic progress, environmental care, and socio cultural

awareness [1]. Due to the dispute around what is in and what is out of tourism, it is impossible to regulate it. Therefore, there are no regulations to which tourism destinations self-declare themselves as being sustainable, green, eco-friendly and so on. Yet, it is more than obvious that tourism is affected by and contributes to the negative impacts on the environment, which makes it a victim as well as a perpetrator [2].

Green Tourism often highlighted and touted as the best way to enjoy your vacation but ask ten people what ecotourism or green tourism really is and you will likely get some very different and perhaps very interesting responses [3]. The three main incentives for businesses to go green are competitiveness, legitimation and ecological responsibility [4]. But Some Destinations remain hesitant to invest in green initiatives because they are not convinced whether or not such investments are financially beneficial. That is, while implementation of some new green practices requires significant initial investments, quantifying returns is often difficult for investments which produce less tangible results such as improvement to a firm's reputation for being conservation oriented [5]. Defining the relationship

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between marketing and sustainable tourism, Bakić and Lacmanovic insists that "tourism marketing can no longer be facing away from the environment (natural, cultural, historical, etc.) and society, but on the contrary it is facing towards the environment and towards socially responsible development [6,7]. National and regional tourism marketing efforts are designed to create positive feelings among the international Community and these feelings are an important factor in evaluating potential destinations of Green Tourism.

New Tourism destinations are continually emerging, making the tourism market extremely competitive. There has also been a development in the social thinking of ethical purchasing and responsible consumption over the last decade raising the issue of sustainable tourism [8]. Marketing is a strategic issue and institutional and stakeholder pressures drive the adoption of marketing strategies. An effective green marketing strategy should be endorsed by the principles of enviropreneurial marketing, Which refers to "the process for formulating and implementing entrepreneurial and environmentally beneficial marketing activities with the goal of creating revenue by providing exchanges that satisfy a firm's economic and social performance objectives" [9,10].

## Objectives

According to the concerns discussed in the introduction, the aim of this research paper is to look at what is the contribution of tourists to the development of green tourism? Is Green Tourism just a marketing policy? (At the slogan level) Has Green Tourism been able to increase the tourist's demand for destination? What is the contribution of marketing policy to the development of green tourism? These questions are the key to understand the Role of Green Tourism Marketing Strategies for Destinations.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Review of relevant literature was undertaken using the internet, library catalogue and database. The review of literature helped to inform our understanding of green tourism and marketing. Before entering into a meaningful discussion of green tourism and its facets, it is necessary to clarify exactly what is understood by this term. Numerous definitions, categorizations, and subdivisions are available.

### Sustainable tourism

Green tourism, responsible tourism and sustainable tourism. There are many names for it but all of them have the same definition: Low impact, environmentally friendly tourism that value, enhances and protects the natural and built environment, not destroys. Sustainability is about more than just looking after our natural environment. It is also about considering the social and economic impact of what we do. The United Nations World Tourism Organization's definition of sustainable tourism brings the above concepts together and defines sustainable tourism as 'tourism that delivers positive economic, social and environmental outcomes with consideration to the needs of the visitor, industry, community and environment.

Sustainability means meeting the needs of the present generations without compromising the aptitude of the future generations. The term of sustainable tourism emerged in geographical debate in the 1990s to describe tourism development without such negative environmental or social impacts. In an ideal form, it addresses all forms of tourism, both mass and niche markets and also aims to provide sustainable profits to industry. Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability. Sustainable tourism is a positive approach intended to reduce the tensions and friction created by the complex interactions between the tourism industry, visitors, the environment and the communities which are host to holidaymakers. It is an approach, which involves working for the long term viability and quality of both natural and human resources. It is not anti-growth but it acknowledges that there are limits to growth.

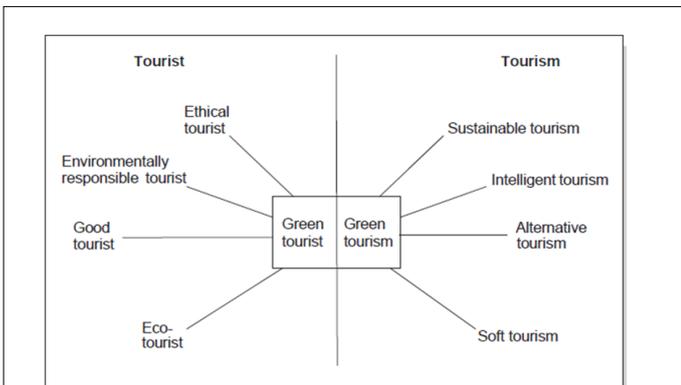
### Green tourism

Tourism has been considered as one of the promising sectors for development that influences the achievement of sustainable growth through poverty reductions, large scale employment generation, fostering tolerance and other complementary activities. It continues to makes a real difference in the lives of the millions of people [11]. In a debate where terms are used frequently, but are rarely defined, we should perhaps begin by talking briefly about what we mean by the term 'green'. Most definitions of the term focus on the natural physical environment. This is in contrast to the now more fashionable term, sustainable, which tends to be concerned with the future and with the balance between the environment, society and the economic system. In recent years, environmental or 'green' issues have come to the forefront of public debate in many countries. These have included 'global warming', animal welfare and wildlife conservation, organic food, pollution and the recycling of waste products. Green tourism is a term that can be applied to any form of tourism that relates to the natural environment and cultural heritage of an area or that undertakes good environmental management (or green) practice. There are three methods included by which a tourism practice would have to demonstrate practices for preventing or minimizing impacts to the environment if it were to be considered a green operations as follows:

- The wise use of resources such as raw materials, water and energy.
- The prevention of pollution (air, land, and water).
- The protection and where possible the enhancement of biodiversity [3].

One thing is clear, as the debate developed, the term 'green tourist' did not achieve the acceptance that the phrase 'green consumer' has in general. The whole debate became complex with a series of different terms being used.

Figure 1 shows some of the other words and phrases that were often used instead of the term 'green' in relation to both tourists and tourism.



**Figure 1:** Alternative terms for green tourists and green tourism.

Although these words are used, apparently, interchangeably with the term 'green', some of them are different in subtle ways:

- Eco-tourists are largely motivated by a desire to see the natural history of a destination. In addition they may or may not be interested in protecting the environment of the area, but it is certainly not their main concern.
- Alternative tourism usually means tourism that is less packaged and is smaller scale. It is assumed that this will mean it is 'greener' than mass market package tourism, but this is not necessarily the case.
- Intelligent tourism is related to the growing desire of some tourists to learn something new while they are on vacation. It is thus associated with particular forms of tourism which might be seen as educational, including cultural tourism and study holidays. Again, there is nothing inherently green about such holidays.
- Sustainable tourism is concerned with social justice and economic viability as well as the physical environment, and is also about the future. Both of these differentiate it from mainstream green issues and green concerns.
- Ethical tourists will be concerned with a broader range of issues than the archetypal green tourist. For example, they may be interested in human resource policies in the tourism industry, such as pay levels and the employment of local labor, as well as the way in which the economic benefits of tourism are distributed throughout the economy. It is this term, 'ethical tourist' which is now the most commonly used.

The major attributes of the green tourism include environmental conservation and education, and distribution of incomes to local people based on strong partnership [12].

### Green tourists

As more environmental rules/regulations appear and individuals environmental awareness increases, consumers are increasingly searching for eco-friendly destinations over conventional destinations. Consequently, many destinations are beginning to implement various innovative methods to increase the "greenness" of their operations [13]. Green consumers were described by their avoidance of products that have negative impacts. The impacts related to a number of concerns the health

of others or the environment; use of large amounts of resources; unnecessary waste; animal cruelty; use of materials from endangered species and/or adverse effects on other countries. Despite the complexities surrounding green behavior the tourism industry is still keen to understand how the green concerns of Consumers correlate to tourists and how the concerns convert to travel or holiday-related behavior [14]. Green tourists are defined as tourists who behave in an environmentally friendly manner when on vacation in a wide range of tourism contexts, whereas eco tourists behave in an environmentally friendly manner on vacation in the context of nature-based tourism. Eco tourists thus represent a subset of green tourists [15].

### Significance of greening in tourism

Greening is understood to mean increasing overall environmental performance by reducing waste, water and energy. Additionally, the consumer is interested in green hotels. In order to utilize the tourism industry market, uncontrolled numbers of tourists and related haphazard infrastructural facilities in the vulnerable mountain regions pose serious environmental implications. The ecological pressures are threatening land, water and wildlife resources through direct and indirect environmental impacts together with generation of solid and liquid wastes. So ecotourism or green tourism is emerging as an important task in order to develop a new relationship among communities, government agencies and private sectors. For assessment of an environment, one can assess the survival of some species, but for the urban habitat it must encompass all species, local population, tourists and others. In a resort town, several types of such species exist in their own environs. In urban situations where environmental inputs are enough for survival but not for optimum growth of species, a slight change in ambient conditions can be disastrous because these species had reached their carrying capacity [12]. It is evident that there is a positive impact when accommodations allocate a percentage of revenue towards green marketing. It supports the notion that if society has a vested interest in environmental issues, it can lead many businesses, including hotels to change their practices [16]. Several studies have indicated the economic benefits of going green in the hotel industry, with little or no extra capital. Going green includes various advantages like gaining competitive advantage by being a leader in the sector, customer loyalty, employee retention, awards and recognition, regulatory compliance, risk management, increased brand value [17]. Green tourism concerns with the practices which consider environmental responsibility since these activities are able to reduce ecological footprint. The involvement of ecological footprint is with the lifecycle of the product, the practices such as laundry, and heating, cooling, lighting, paper and shampoo bottles. Furthermore, the effects of such products like plastic should be considered. Green tourism is applied to indicate the tourism which is in the environmentally friendly manner. The term "ecotourism" and "sustainable tourism" are applied side by side of green tourism. Eco Tourism Australia defines ecotourism as "ecologically sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas that foster environmental and

cultural understanding application and conservation” [18]. Some tourists are willing to pay extra to support environmental sustainability, others believe that overall, the hotel has the responsibility to fund those initiatives [5]. The most important side effect of going green is to create a more sustainable environment [19].

### Marketing in tourism destinations

A destination represents an ‘amalgam of tourism products, offering an integrated experience to consumers [20]. the aim of the marketing has been to attract as many people as possible to help the While convention centers, sports stadiums and hotel rooms and attend various attractions and events, the overall objectives have been largely economic-job creation and revenue generation. The impacts, however, are borne by the local population, who are generally not a concern of the destination marketers. This is because all too often their mandate calls for an increase in the number of visitors and their length of stay, and not an enhancement of the quality of life for residents. Along with the growth of tourism has come an increasing set of concerns about its environmental, cultural and social impacts. Tourists are consumptive beings and tourism suppliers are waste and energy intensive [21]. Current marketing strategies are replacing the “golden rules of conservation” by “contradictory commercial values. Marketing directs the flow of products from the producer to the consumer. Expanded models analyze the geographic flows of tourists on the demand side and management issues for destination communities on the supply side. Management issues include determining tourism effects, minimizing negative impacts and optimizing benefits of tourism [22]. Tourism critics have questioned the environmental deterioration of natural resources and the commodification of cultural resources through growth in the tourism industry. Some recent research has examined the contributions of tourism towards sustainable development of a community, region or country. Tourism marketers have been criticized for contributing towards growth and negative impacts and as a discipline, tourism marketing has largely avoided taking a critical look at their own activities. Instead, marketing research has focused on creating more efficient and effective exchanges and flows between the tourism industry and the tourists. The main goals of their activities are economic growth while merely considering externalities such as environmental, social, cultural, and political environments. A significant issue in destination marketing of sustainable tourism is the establishment of a positive chain of influence as the concept of harmonization goals of marketing and tourism policy which leads to the development of tourism which providing social and economic benefits to the local community. The formation of negative chain of influence, in contrast, involves differences between the created image and objectives of tourism destination development which implies the question what are the real benefits and who is the real beneficiary of tourism development: A travel agency or local community? Perfect positive chain of influence may not be realistic in the modern and consumer-oriented market, but stronger link between the objectives of tourism policy and the destination image (DMO and tour operators) is as essential as a key variable in socio-economic development of local

communities in tourist destination [7]. Since tourism is a fragmented sector with numerous stakeholders operating interdependently in destination setting, marketing them as green environments with quality green products is a difficult task to achieve. Nevertheless, it is also the sector, for which the protection of natural resources is crucial for the safeguarding of this very primary product that various attractions depend on for their success and existence. Besides, various environmentally friendly management and policy concepts, such as sustainable development, ecotourism and nature-based tourism, have long been studied and practiced in tourism academic and professional circles, which can be argued to have prepared the sector to move towards green marketing applications on a destination scale [23].

### Green tourism as a marketing strategy

Greenness is indeed a valued attribute in destination image and branding for every destination. Greenness is interpreted very differently by different stakeholders, and includes aspects of health, food, architecture and cultural authenticity, as well as environmental aesthetics, quality and management. These individual attributes, are used by individual tourism enterprises to target specific market segments [24]. With positive marketing, the shareholders in the company will see greening as a way the company is doing well by their customers. This has an interesting effect [19]. About hotels Many researchers have noted that an environmentally friendly hotel can achieve competitiveness in the lodging industry and otherwise benefit from cost savings, cultivating a positive image, and attracting and retaining customers [25]. Green Tourism has been considered as one of the potent Elements for marketing of destinations. Compared destinations is green tourism within them with destinations just have tourism to specify which one is more successful. It makes sense to use the fact that ‘green’ sells for marketing purposes, but only when the product labelling conforms both consumer expectations and industry standards”, the ‘green’ concept allows the tourism industry to improve its image and practices while continuing a commercial profit strategy. If ‘greening’ is used solely for image purposes, rather than an approach adopted in practice, the very landscape, culture and heritage that provides the initial attractions will disappear [26]. Customers definitely are attracted to discounts, offers and loyalty programs. So if they are rewarded for using a green hotel over a normal hotel by providing benefits such as hotel reward points and discounts it’s a human tendency that they would visit such green hotels. This is a very good strategy under-taken by hotels nowadays to promote their brand and direct more volume of sales into their hotel. These consumers expect rewards for patronizing green hotels [17].

In a marketing perspective, the primary goal of marketing is the creation of value for consumers (tourists). The formulation and implementation of the strategy must always be consumer-oriented (consumer oriented), the understanding of the tourists should be done as well as possible. Community grouping or market segmentation strategy, the creation of a positioning position is also done to manage and serve the group of tourist community. Stages of marketing development in the strategic

level should be a unity of the segmentation stage, targeting market positioning and branding and marketing mix [27].

### Enterprises of destinations in green tourism

Green tourism, that is an important component of sustainable tourism, is described as journey to destinations in which the flora, fauna, and cultural heritage are the primary attractions [28]. This definition is further expanded to include environmentally sustainable travel to destinations where climate impacts are minimized with the aim of respecting and preserving natural resources and adapting programs to fit the context of fragile resources [26]. Green tourism is crucial to persuade travel that would help support natural and cultural aspects, whereas encouraging respect for and preservation of urban resources and cultural diversity.

Contemporary tourists expect an environmentally responsible hotel management to meet their environmental needs and expectations. This provokes a profound modification in the hotel industry which has steadily recognized the necessity for becoming greener in order to be well positioned on the competitive tourism market. Consequently, hotels (as leading accommodation facilities) are rapidly becoming environmentally responsible. By developing the idea of having eco-hotels, a "green" brand may be initiated which may position the country positively to be differentiated from competitors in a way that authentically resonates across stake holders [2].

The tourism industry plays an imperative role as an economic contributor to most countries. The concept of green tourism in developed countries for example in Bantimurung green tourism is currently in a "Growing and Developing" position so that the strategy to be implemented is market penetration through expanded advancement and publicity, market improvement strategy through cooperation with travel agent, and product development strategy by maintaining price but offering product quality which is more applicable to tourists [28].

In another part of the world in Malaysia, the practice of green tourism in relatively to encouraging the use of green products, providing training programs on environmental management and introducing waste management techniques like recycling particularly by participating resorts. The main aims were to conserve water, energy and minimize waste, and resorts that actively monitored this practice managed to substantially cut their operating costs [29].

Following this In United Kingdom, the Green Tourism Business Scheme was established in 1997 and covers the whole country. It is the biggest and most established scheme of its sort in the world with the main aims to ensure that the country remains at the forefront of sustainable tourism in the future. By using businesses accredited by the Green Tourism Business Scheme for the holiday or overnight live visitors or tourists can be assured that certain environmental criteria have been met by the accommodation establishments that they choose. The establishments will be assessed every two years against rigorous criteria, covering areas such as energy efficiency, waste minimisation and recycling, use of local produce, and support of public transport [30-32].

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Tourism providers and managers need to highlight the spiritual dimension of green tourism. Green tourism is a form of spiritual tourism because it offers opportunities for humankind to interact with the environment meaningfully. There is a lot of strategy formula to green tourism destination based on the where is the destination. This conceptual paper is purpose to understand green tourism destination and its processes. It is significant to conduct a destination evaluation to assess the community's infrastructure and tourism resources. Doing this work in a comprehensive manner can benefit everyone. Tourism marketing should not only consider as a tool for attracting more visitors, as it has been the case for most destinations. Instead, marketing have to be used as a strategic mechanism in coordination with planning and management rather than a sales tool, to gain strategic objectives that ensure the sustainability of the destination. Green tourism as significant part of tourism business sustainability. The potential of green tourism is regarded as an effective tool for sustainable development and hence the reason for developing countries to use this concept in economic and conservation development strategies. In the business context, green tourism is an alternative tourism, involving visits to natural areas to learn or to implement a range of environmentally friendly activities that have a positive contribution to the local economy and social community. Its main focus is on finding experiences and learning about nature, its flora, fauna and its habitat as well as cultural artifacts of a particular region. In order to the sustainability of green tourism, marketers/companies need to know the environmental, social and economic impacts of green tourism activities and to consider the effects during the planning. One of the most important dimensions of green tourism success is the community-based management approach. The form of tourism is based on the premise that people living around existing resources are the ones most suited to protect it. Tourism activities and businesses developed and operated by local community members based on their approval and support. The use of local people's knowledge is easier for local people to build a tourism industry whose work is influenced by the responsibility of environmental use for tourism sites. Alternative strategies and marketing programs that can be done is by consolidating tourist destinations, improving product quality and human resources, promoting promotion, enhancing cooperative relationships, engaging local people, highlighting program excellence, creating security, pricing products without suffering losses, and consistency of rules and execution.

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