

# Green Consumerism and Sustainability Tourism Marketing: A Systematic Bibliometric Review

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The growing awareness about climate change and environment has a perceived impact on consumer behaviour. The change is observed in a greater focus on green consumerism in the tourism industry, which in turn has led a large number of researchers to study this area. The purpose of this research is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the present and future state of research in the domain of green consumerism and sustainable marketing of tourism. **Design/ Methodology/ Approach:** A comprehensive list of journal publications, conference papers, corporate reports and relevant books were analysed using Systematic Literature Review consisting of bibliometric review, citation analysis, co-citation analysis and co-occurrence of keyword analysis. **Findings:** The findings of this research would assist government departments, policymakers, and senior management at hotels to focus better on niche aspects of green consumer behaviour and strategize their marketing initiatives to be sustainable. **Research Limitations:** Limitations may exist due to study search strings used, which may not be exhaustive to include all relevant studies in the analysis. **Practical Implications:** Sustainability in marketing of tourism products may get the desired impetus from government policies through a strong strategic intent. **Originality/ Value:** This research paper presents an original work in terms of comprehensively analysing the most relevant research studies through systematic literature review.

**Key words:** Sustainable marketing, UN, SDGs, Green marketing, Tourism, Consumer behaviour

## Introduction

The (United Nations, 1987), Brundtland report deliberates on the concept of sustainable development as warranting 'to meet the present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs'. It considers sustainable development as a process of change which ensures use of resources, course of investments, alignment of technological innovations and institutional transformation in sync with present and future needs and backed by political will. The crucial principles of sustainability as per the report are *Need* for social

justice; *Equitable* distribution of costs and benefits of economic development; *Balancing* needs of present and future generations; and *Finitism* of environment to provide for production and consumption systems without impacting the quality of environment (Belz and Peattie, 2009). Further to this initiative, (Independent Group of Scientists, 2019), in UN's Global Sustainable Development Report 2019, identify six dimensions of sustainable development, necessary to achieve the desired levels of progress for the 2030 agenda; these are: '*Human well-being and capabilities*', '*Sustainable and just economies*', '*Food systems and nutrition patterns*', '*Energy decarbonization with universal*

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access', 'Urban and peri-urban development', and 'Global environmental commons'.

The concept of marketing has evolved over the years. From being an academic discipline and a subject in early twentieth century, to the customer-centric philosophy of sense and respond and satisfying customer needs better than the competitors, in the later half. However, (Belz and Peattie, 2009) are of the view that immediate satisfaction of consumer needs is not always in societal or consumer interest. It is observed that in 1970s various concepts emerged to address the ecological and social issues, like societal marketing, green marketing and eventually sustainability marketing. The idea of Societal marketing is of micromarketing which acknowledges the current limitations of marketing and embraces the idea of changing both corporate and consumer behaviour while embracing triple bottom line of ecological, social and economic perspectives (Belz and Peattie, 2009). The UN's SDGs also focus heavily on the need to inspire change in demand patterns and consumption through promoting and regulating marketing practices and consumer education. Consumerism is as much of a social and cultural process, as it is economic. It is through consumerism that consumers express their identity and establish a niche in the society, as a consequence of which there are global changes. Corporates, in order to be successful in their sustainability marketing endeavours need to either identify a green consumer segment, or encourage their existing customers to change for sustainable consumption or market more sustainable offerings without explicitly labeling them as sustainable. However, research indicates that though most consumers show positive attitudes towards green products and services, they are often reluctant to spend more on them (White *et al.*, 2019). Sustainability in tourism marketing through the perspective of green consumerism would imply tourists seeking offerings that attempt to protect the environment and safeguard the cultures at travel destinations (Belz and Peattie, 2009). Moreover, tourism organizations like hotels by incorporating sustainable practices like conserving water, recycling, reusing and storing can help promoting green consumerism and contributing to a cleaner environment (Prakash *et al.*, 2022). It is also observed that right use of technological tools, like Internet portals for destination information and geographical packages embedded within the destination ecosystem can be an enabler for achieving

sustainability marketing goals and revolutionize tourism marketing (Mason *et al.*, 2022).

## Materials and Methods

The research paper intends to highlight the need for green consumerism and steps towards sustainable marketing of tourism. Keeping the broad objective in mind, a detailed review of literature was done using search strings from databases of repute, viz., Emerald, Routledge, and Taylor & Francis. The research papers reviewed were recent and limited from 2009 to 2023 in order to focus on the recent developments in the discipline. Search strings was performed using the following keywords: 'Sustainable marketing', 'Green consumerism', 'Green hotels', 'Sustainable tourism', etc. The content of the retrieved research papers was screened on the basis of scope of the study (Khalil *et al.*, 2022) and content was considered for data analysis. Apart from research papers published in reputed journals, other publications like books, book chapters and government reports were also considered for review. Bibliometric analysis was done with the aid of VOS viewer to create scientific maps and analyse objectively. Within the broad purview of bibliometric analysis, citation analysis, co-citation analysis and co-occurrence of key words to explore the central theme, frequency of citation counts and interconnection between various keywords respectively (Fauzi, *et al.*, 2023).

## Results

### Publication trends and descriptive analysis

The number of citations for considered publications were 176 times and 153 times without self-citations. Average citation per category was 3.12 with an H-index of 18. The publication trends reflect that sustainability marketing initiatives (like minimising air pollution, energy conservation and effective management of waste) by hotels have a significant positive impact on consumers, with increase in awareness about green consumerism leading to higher revisiting intentions (Prakash *et al.*, 2022). The approach further helps managers to better align organizational goals by improvising sustainability efforts in marketing (Jamkhaneh *et al.*, 2022). The findings also suggest five prominent aspects of sustainability tourism marketing, viz., 'Green mar-

**Table 1.** Top five papers with highest citations

S. No.	Authors and Study	Citations	Links
1.	(Fauzi, Abdul Rahman, and Lee, 2023)	23	9
2.	(Khalil, Abdullah, Haron, and Hamid, 2022)	36	15
3.	(Mason, Augustyn, and King, 2022)	28	19
4.	(Jamkhaneh, Shahin, and Shahin, 2022)	18	11
5.	(Prakash, Sharma, Singh, Vijayvargy, and Nilaish, 2022)	22	5

keting strategy', 'Green managerial attitude', 'Eco-innovation investment', Sustainable marketing', and 'Environmental management strategy (Khalil *et al.*, 2022).

### Citation analysis

This section presents the citation analysis by contemplating sustainability in tourism marketing based on citations per publication. The top five articles with their total citations are furnished in Table 1.

The results of citation analysis highlight that hotel's adoption of sustainable practices has a positive impact on its economic, social and environmental performance, the three pillars of sustainability (Khalil *et al.*, 2022), leading eventually to green consumerism.

### Co-citation analysis

The benchmark level of citations for co-citation was kept at three, which led to the cumulative cited references as 84. The network analysis of sustainability marketing of tourism was prepared grounded on the cited references. The best three publications with highest co-citation are (Belz and Peattie, 2009); (Khemka and Kumar, 2020); and (Caradonna, 2018) with 20, 18 and 12 co-citations respectively.

### Co-occurrence of keywords

The findings of co-occurrence of keyword analysis by applying all keywords and by keeping the minimum threshold level at 3, resulted in 28 keywords. Table 2 shows the top five highest frequency keywords.

**Table 2.** High frequency keywords

S. No.	Keywords	Frequency
1.	Sustainable tourism	51
2.	Sustainability marketing	46
3.	Green consumerism	44
4.	Green marketing	38
5.	Hotel industry	31

'Sustainable tourism', 'Sustainability marketing' and 'Green consumerism' occurred more than forty times, while the other two, 'Green marketing' and 'Hotel industry' occurred more than thirty times, forming the central node and giving focus to the study.

### Discussion

Advancements in tourism sector has made it as one of the rapidly growing sectors worldwide, and its achieving sustainability through green consumerism seems to be a challenge (Khalil *et al.*, 2022). There is a need for sophisticated marketing research on consumer behaviour towards sustainable tourism, as sustainable marketing strategies could be executed to achieve sustainability in existing forms of tourism (Swarbrooke, 2010). The study offers a comprehensive bibliometric analysis on sustainability marketing of tourism and green consumerism, suggesting key focal points to help tourism industry better align their strategies in achieving their objectives (Fauzi, *et al.*, 2023). There are a few limitations of the study, as the current search strings and keywords were non-exhaustive and results could have been improved with a more comprehensive search string. Secondly, inclusion of all forms of publications in the current analysis could have impacted the quality of analysis as a large number of bibliometric studies are limited to journal publications and may not be directly related to the field of study.

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**Conflict of Interest:** The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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