

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Sustainable tourism is a term used by The UN Tourism (UNWTO), and the concept covers concern for economic, environmental, and social issues. The importance of sustainable tourism is also aiming for increasing the benefits and reducing the negative impacts when managing tourism activities. The negative impacts can be caused by tourism for different destinations. In contrast, sustainable tourism can develop protection of the natural environment, natural resources, and wildlife by addressing the needs of host communities and improving the tourist experiences. The study will analyse the positive effects of sustainable tourism and the practice of sustainable tourism with minimal environmental impact, maintaining essential ecological processes and conserving biological diversity and natural resources. Also, the study will provide an understanding of the actualities and opportunities with the development of sustainable tourism by recommending some of the strategic changes to benefit the triple bottom line.

Keywords: destinations, environment, sustainable tourism, tourist

Introduction

Sustainable tourism is a concept in which ecological tourism focuses on being encountered in destinations for conserving cultural heritage and its flora and fauna as the primary attractions. Sustainable tourism management also finds the right balance between the needs of the places and the people by clearly defining the vision, purpose, and the point of satisfying local communities through community-based tourism activities. The study aims to evaluate how sustainable tourism provides actuality and opportunities to different destinations and how it refers to benefits for the planet, people and profits. Sustainable tourism can also be called eco-tourism or simply responsible travel to make a positive difference from the traditional way of tourism and make more unique choices that reduce harm to a place people visit.

Discussion

Sustainable tourism can be defined as people staying with local people at a destination and managing local food and generic hotels rather than staying at luxurious hotels. It is also against 'exploitative tourism', which can easily harm the people and the environment of the tourist destinations (Streimikiene *et al.* 2021). The benefits of sustainable tourism aim to provide economic viability, employment, quality, local prosperity, visitor fulfilment, social equity, cultural richness and community well-being. It can also be helpful for resource efficiency, biological diversity, and environmental purity. Sustainable tourism is the agenda of the 2030 Sustainable Development Target (SDGs) 8.9, which aims to devise a policy of sustainable tourism and implement sustainable changes to promote local culture and create local products. By 2030 the changes can manage the importance of sustainable tourism highlighted in the SDG target 12 (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020). There can be different, sustainable travel destinations which encourage other countries to take the right path, such as Costa Rica, Scotland, Finland, New Zealand, Bhutan and Slovenia. It is becoming a trend with growing awareness of environmental and social responsibility amongst travellers in recent years. It can also create impressive sustainability innovation of over 50% based on the share of global travellers looking for accommodation with local culture.

Opportunities for sustainable tourism

The opportunities of sustainable tourism are responsible, planning and managing tourism destinations, creating more jobs, promoting cultural heritage, managing inclusive social integration and protecting the natural environment by conserving barriers. Sustainable development can also be responsible for tourism management by generating sustainable livelihood and improving human well-being. The opportunities can also create openness for health, promotion and educational recreation to grow marginalised people and their culture and develop a bridge between the gap to reach the mainstream. Tourism practises have been progressing since the introduction of the social and economic mechanisms, which can impose serious challenges of underdevelopment. As sustainable tourism has been enhancing the quality of tourism and creating useful community empowerment and interaction activities, it is also providing opportunities for conserving natural resources to benefit mankind and raising awareness about local cultures; as per the views of Sgroi, (2020), the number of focuses also increased from the social values of people residing in local areas to the development of sustainable social growth. Other opportunities are based on proper resource allocation and opportunities for health promotion, employment and educational recreation. It can also promote local economies by raising opportunities such as capacity building of societies. Based on a community-based tourism approach, sustainable tourism also develops the local communities and the challenges of these communities in participating with development concepts. Afterwards, addressing the challenge of less interaction can help people explore the factors and drivers that actually drive the sustainable development concept and reach evident support for future implications. On the other hand, sustainable tourism can be helpful for meeting the needs of most rural areas and addressing the deprivations. Sustainable tourism can have useful opportunities to decrease negative perceptions about tourism, which can provide opportunities for local communities to adapt to the tourism culture (Font *et al.* 2021). Also, sustainability is becoming the key entity for tourism competitiveness. Organisations are applying sustainable tourism standards in the form of the International Union of Official Travel Organisations, which is now known as the World Tourism Organisation (WTO). Also, organisations are complying with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development OECD which is important for managing sustainable tourism and articulating policies for maintaining the natural attraction of places and natural resources in the local communities. According to Hall, (2021), the increasing number can be calculated during the COVID-19 crisis, which negatively impacted an inference to the tourism sector. Sustainable tourism helped local communities get 50 million lost jobs, including environmental, economic, social, and political aspects.

Actualities of sustainable tourism

Sustainable tourism develops the actual with five key pillars in the background such as tourism, attraction, accessibility, community, environment, amity, and ancillary (Dwyer, 2023). It is by looking at the needs of visitors, the environment, the industry and the host communities. Sustainable tourism has numerous benefits and identifications, such as green tourism, community tourism, and responsible tourism, which are opposed to traditional and mass tourism.

‘The triple bottom line’ can be a successful framework for sustainable tourism development. The triple bottom line can be a philosophical orientation to lead organisations in implementing and developing changes through environmental and social sustainability strategies. The bottom-line philosophy can be useful for measuring organisations' triple-bottom-line performance. The theory also manages three concerns as organisations do on the profits such as profit, people and the planet. Sustainable tourism manages profit margins by producing tourist attractions as conventional tourism, which leads tourists to stay with the local community and conserve natural resources and culture. On the other hand, entrepreneurs who are investing in the sustainable growth of tourism are well-positioned for long-term success and profitability due to the increasing number of travellers who seek eco-friendly options (Palacios-Florencio *et al.* 2021). The people strategy, in theory, can also be aligned with sustainable tourism in which people desire more challenging experiences and authentic results in their destinations. They can become the actors involved in tourism, such as tourists, tourism businesses, residents, tour agents, destinations, management, organisations, and investors. People must take

responsibility for implementing sustainable tourism. These key players in the societal system can operate most of the tourism planning and identify other stakeholders through open-up communications with them. Lastly, the planet strategy, in theory, can also be responsible for sustainable consumption and production from 2023 to 2030, which accelerates sustainability across the value chain of multiple sectors. It can also aim to aid Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) tourism policy that promotes positive environment and social practices, developing new skills, investments and tools to protect irreplaceable global resources (Paniccia, and Baiocco, 2020).

Tables and Figures

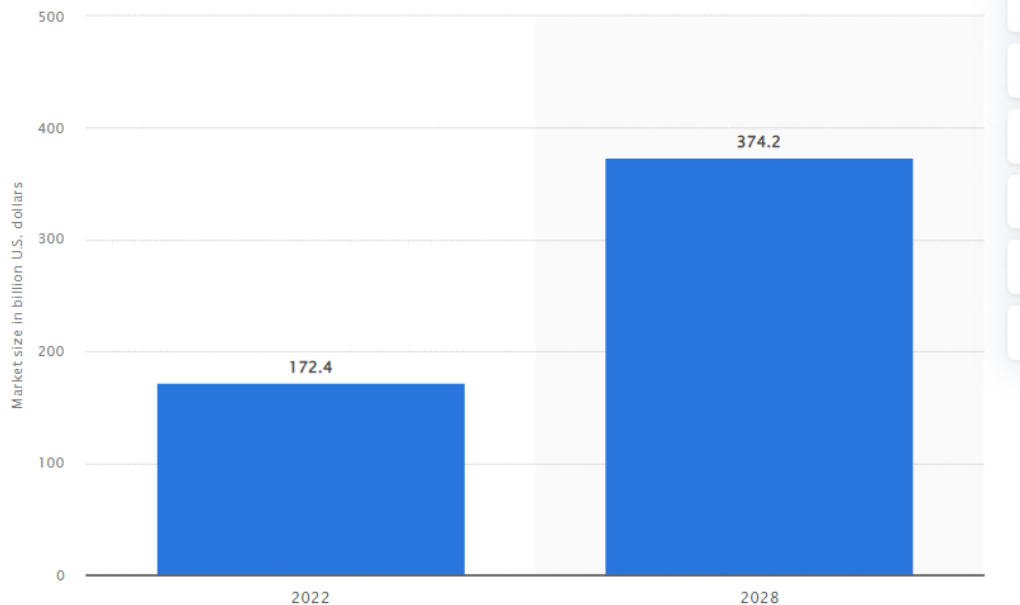
The statistics of sustainable tourism can be included by providing evidence of the survey in 2022 in which 80% of global travellers talked about the positive impacts of sustainable tourism. It has also reached the echo tourism market size worldwide and is expected to reach a growth rate of 13.9% CAGR. The global ecotourism industry worldwide was estimated at 172.4 billion US\$, which would adopt sustainable initiatives amongst travellers from Europe, the United States, Canada, Thailand and Australia. More than 87% of customers in sustainable tourism increased their awareness for maintaining Travelling in a sustainable manner (MacInnes, Grun, and Dolnicar, 2022).

- 87% of travelers want to travel more sustainably
- 39% of travelers always manage to actually keep it sustainable
- 43% said that "never, rarely or sometimes" manage to travel in a sustainable way



(Source: MacInnes, Grun, and Dolnicar, 2022)

Also, people in 2022 were asked about the challenges they face to travel sustainably and socially consciously. More than 48% said that travelling sustainably was choosing the hardest part of sustainable accommodation where, whereas 37% said the elimination and reducing carbon footprint was the biggest challenge (Goh, 2021). The global carbon dioxide emissions also increased in mass tourism, whereas it has been reduced from tourism-related transport to sustainable tourism throughout the global areas. According to the global corporate travel managers, 2022, most of the people are hosting and implementing sustainability policies that partner with hotels and other lodging services with sustainability practises.



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(Source: statista.com, 2024)

Conclusion

Based on the facts and figures, one of the main focuses of sustainable tourism must involve local communities to help them connect to their economy and maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction with meaningful experiences. Raising awareness about sustainable tourism can help the local communities in the long-term viability of conserving and protecting natural resources. It is necessary for increasing community engagement and empowerment for sustainable transportation destinations, planning and management, as well as monitoring and evaluation. Also, people must support sustainable tourism by travelling with zero waste and reusable products. It can also bring support for local businesses and local tourism operators by respecting local culture and communities. On the other hand, eating local food and making optimal use of environmental resources can develop the key element in tourism development, in which organisations must know the motivation of tourism attraction and promote responsible tourism experience for both tourists and local communities.

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