A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND COMPETITIVENESS OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

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Abstract

The tourism industry is one of the most innovative and dynamic in the world. Planning and developing tourism with purpose and sustainability is extremely important, while also looking for compromises between environmental, economic, and social goals of society. The purpose of this paper is to identify the meaning of sustainable tourism through a review of research. The thorough systematic literature review produced intriguing results, the business community is interested in implementing new technologies in tourism services that have a positive impact on the environment and local communities, but there are many obstacles to overcome in order to change the environment, increase consumer motivation for sustainable tourism services, and alter consumer behavior. The primary obstacles to the development of sustainable tourism are explored in this paper, along with fresh perspectives for enhancing the competitiveness of sustainable tourism destinations.

Keywords: sustainable tourism, competitiveness, tourism destinations, consumer needs

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most significant industries for the global economy is tourism. It has been proven that it can also help with socio-cultural preservation and environmental protection. Its contribution to global advancement is so crucial that any local or global efforts to achieve sustainable development must take this into account. It is a global phenomenon and a significant economic driver, accounting for 10.3 percent of all economic activity in 2020 and 8.9 trillion US dollars of the global GDP (WTTC, 2021). It is one of the industries that is growing the quickest, with an annual growth rate of 3.9 percent (Leposa, 2020). Simply put, sustainable tourism is ethical tourism that aims to create jobs and income while having a minimal negative impact on the environment and the local way of life.

Sustainable tourism principles, as stated by the World Tourism Organization in 2004, refer to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural facets of tourism development. Any attempts to achieve sustainable development, whether on a global or local scale, are doomed to failure without taking into account the implications of tourism and making sure that tourism activities are fully integrated within sustainable development policies and procedures. This is because tourism's contribution to global progress is so fundamental. The majority of countries actively promote tourism because of its advantages, and this trend is predicted to continue. At the same time, there is growing awareness of the potential harm that tourism, in its current state of extensive development, may cause to the environment, societies, and cultures. Therefore, if tourism is seen as a way to support society's advancement toward sustainability, concerns for

responsible tourism practices should place equal emphasis on correcting past mistakes and on preventing future ones from occurring. As a result, a clear preventative approach must be embedded into current tourism policies and strategies at all levels.

Travel has already ingrained itself into human existence. However, just like any other economic sector, tourism has both positive and negative effects on states' economies, including increased energy consumption and harmful environmental effects like climatic change. The environment is being wasted as a result of tourism and travel expansions. Tourist destinations also suffer from heavy tourist traffic, which has a negative impact on locals' quality of life. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) declared 2017 the year of sustainable tourism in an effort to reduce the negative effects of tourism, and it invited everyone on earth to travel while adhering to these principles and supporting local communities (UNWTO, 2017).

The research is timely because it addresses the significant obstacles to sustainable tourism that have emerged as a result of the tourism industry's rapid growth. Currently, however, there is a lack of sustainability because this rapid growth has led to unsustainable solutions in the tourism industry. The main obstacles to the development of sustainable tourism are discussed in this paper, along with some suggestions for how to strengthen competitiveness in the industry and promote sustainable tourism. To evaluate the level of research currently being done and to provide guidelines for future research in the field of sustainable tourism, the study is based on a systematic literature review.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Sustainable tourism

In many developing and developed economies, tourism is regarded as one of the key industrial sectors for the generation of wealth, social benefits, and employment. Over time, it became clear that tourism needed to be both economically and socially advantageous while also being environmentally sustainable (Macleod and Todnem, 2007). Sustainable tourism has evolved from its early environmentalist or conservationist conceptions to more holistic perspectives that can be seen as a tool for economic growth, population welfare, and environmental conservation. This shift in perspective has impacted institutional initiatives and tourism policies at all territorial levels, spreading the idea and giving it significance and value (Torres-Delgado and López Palomeque, 2014).

According to Butler (1993), "tourism that is in a form which can maintain its viability in an area for an indefinite period of time" is what is meant by sustainable tourism. According to this definition, numerous tourist destinations in America, Paris, India, etc., may appear eminently sustainable given their longevity or persistence. But maintaining tourism is only a small part of sustainable tourism, which also includes maintaining a region's development and upkeep to the point where it can sustain itself indefinitely. Additionally, such tourism must make sure that it does not prevent the successful development of other endeavors or procedures (Butler, 1993). Additionally, sustainable tourism was defined as "tourism that meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future" by

the World Tourism Organization (1993). It not only seeks to benefit locals but also to lessen adverse effects on the community's natural environment and culture (Yu et al., 2011).

Forms of sustainable tourism that could be applied to the regions are (a) agro and rural experience (rural tourism), (b) activities in nature and cultural tourism – including recreation and leisure (riding horses, hunting, fishing, hiking, biking) and culture history, archaeology and other characteristics of a particular rural area, (c) eco and ethno-tourism and (d) other combined forms of rural tourism related events, festivals, outdoor recreation, and so on, which represent secondary motives for the arrival of tourists in rural areas (Angelkova et al., 2012).

The term "ecotourist" denotes a type of traveller who is both interested in and focused on the environment (ecology), as well as having the financial means to pay the high prices demanded by such vacations (economic capital) (Mowforth and Munt, 2015). Similarly, ecotourism or sustainable tourism can make use of technologies created to reduce consumption of water, energy, and waste for travellers who are interested in learning more about these technologies as well as continuing to practice ecologically through verbal communication at home. The use of sustainability practices in the three main study areas (water, energy, and waste) has produced a significant positive impact on both the economy and the environment. According to Mowforth and Munt (2015), environmental audits are carried out on hotels, airlines, tour operators, and other segments of the industry, with the main focus being on the operation's effectiveness-whether that be economically or otherwise. Reference to the wider distributive effects of the operations is rarely made. Instead, they focus on issues like recycling cans, bottles, and other materials, reducing water use by, for example, not changing towels every day, installing energy-efficient lighting systems, and reducing the use of hazardous chemicals.

According to Lu et al. (2009), "green tourism" refers to travel that addresses environmental concerns. Around 8% of the world's carbon dioxide emissions are attributed to tourism, according to research of Lenzen et al. (2018). As a result, the importance of sustainable tourism is currently of the utmost significance. As a result, a number of future guidelines for sustainable tourism have been developed, providing the main environmental indicators for the tourism sector, such as mitigating climate change, reducing pollution, using renewable energy sources, disposing of waste, etc (UNEP, 2004; UNWTO, 2013, 2014, 2017, 2019).

In terms of providing services to tourists and taking into account the quality of life of locals in tourist destinations, the quality of life is one of the most important goals of sustainable development (Crouch, & Ritchie, 1999; Hassan, 2000; Jeon et al., 2016). According to an analysis of scientific literature, the following crucial elements of sustainable tourism development can be identified: the development of new employment opportunities in tourist destinations, the preservation of the natural environment, the mitigation of climate change, the reduction of pollution and waste, and the encouragement of environmentally friendly and sustainable consumption habits (UNEP, 2004; UNEP, 2005; UNWTO, 2013, 2014, 2017). Other social factors, such as local employment and unemployment rates, the emotional climate, the accessibility of social services in popular tourist areas, etc., also play a role in how these effects are manifested. In order to sort waste, preserve natural resources, and address other issues of ethical tourism, it is currently crucial to ensure socially responsible or sustainable

tourism (Andereck & Nyaupane, 2011; Andereck, Valentine, Knopf, & Vogt, 2005; Andereck, Valentine, Vogt, & Knopf, 2007; Luekveerawattana, 2018; Morgan et al., 2015; Murava & Korobeinykova, 2016).

Scientists are currently paying a lot of attention to the social issues relating to the growth of tourism. In order to address concerns about those who are socially disadvantaged, the term "social tourism" was created (Kakoudakis et al., 2017; Morgan et al., 2015). Kakoudakis et al. (2017) examined the economic effects of social tourism and how they affect the quality of life for those who are socially disadvantaged. The standards of values form the development framework for social tourism and are based on the idea that everyone has the right to travel (Ozdemir & Yolal, 2017). Due to the growing global popularity of tourism, there are now significantly more people who can take vacations. However, there are still groups of people who are unable to take vacations for a variety of reasons, including a lack of resources, social exclusion manifestations, a lack of public sector attention, the application of social resources, and the actions of passive communities and non-profit organizations.

Tourism is a contribution into social integrity, the activities of which can be perceived as a measure of social integration/integrity that enables the establishment of relations with other cultures, cognitions of places, customs, and conduct of cultural exchange and pithy spending of spare time (Cloquet, Palomino, Shaw, Stephen, & Taylor, 2018; Ganglmair-Wooliscroft & Wooliscroft, 2017; Ozdemir & Yolal, 2017; Ponnapureddy, Priskin, Ohnmacht, Vinzenz, & Wirth, 2017). Though the promotion of green and social tourism is central to sustainable tourism issues. The main issue identified based on a systematic review of sustainable tourism research is how to find ways to achieve all three sustainability dimensions (economic, social, and environmental) simultaneously, that is, how to develop competitive tourism businesses by addressing environmental and social challenges of tourism development holistically.

2.2 Competitiveness and sustainability issues in tourism

According to a recent study (UNWTO, 2017), the modern economy is distinguished by high competitiveness in all business sectors, including tourism. Organizations must increase business efficiency, implement cutting-edge technologies, seek competitive advantage in products and services, compete for a larger market share, and retain the best specialists in order to survive. Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that sustainable tourism development is intrinsically tied to consumer payment attention, as this allows for increased consumer attraction, business expansion, and competitiveness (Luekveerawattana, 2018). Tourism businesses invest heavily in consumer market research and are interested in the behaviours and motivations of their customers. It is stated in scientific literature that not only motivation, lifestyle, or demographic parameters influence tourist behaviour, but also nationality and country culture (Andereck et al., 2005, 2007; Andereck & Nyaupane, 2011; Morgan et al., 2015).

Tourism is rapidly expanding; more tourists of various nationalities and cultures are emerging, which fosters greater interest in cultural differences, as well as knowledge of local traditions and habits. Tourism service providers who understand intercultural differences and tourist

behavior use this knowledge to create tourist service packages and take the following factors into account when forming tourist groups. This will allow us to meet the expectations of our customers and create a more favorable environment for both group and individual service. As a result, consumers and organizations benefit from increased everything involving added value (Ozdemir & Yolal, 2017).

The sustainable consumption aspect of sustainable tourism has been widely penetrated. Tourists who value sustainability and responsible consumption do not typically choose sustainable tourism service packages offered by Destination Marketing Organizations (DMO). According to Ponnapureddy et al. (2017), this can be attributed to mistrust in the organization that is providing the service. Some organizations, in order to attract more tourists, portray themselves as more sustainable than they are.

Sustainable tourism is more than just environmental preservation or socially responsible business. It is worth noting that the theoretical definition of sustainable tourism includes economic, social, and environmental aspects. In that context, it has been observed that social involvement receives less attention. The following can be observed when analyzing communication between organizations and potential tourism service consumers, particularly those who are disabled in some way. According to Cloquet et al. (2018), tourism advertising measures are not focused on disabled tourists; no relevant information is delivered in commercials/films for them, disabled people are not shown, and the result is a sense of disengagement. As a result of the research findings, it is possible to state that tourism organizations should pay more attention to the involvement of disabled tourism service consumers as they expand the development of sustainable tourism (Benur & Bramwell, 2015).

Aging is a natural process that brings both benefits and drawbacks. As India's population ages, a high-potential market niche is emerging. The elderly population in India (people aged 60 and over) is expected to reach 194 million in 2031, up from 138 million in 2021, according to the Technical Group on Population Projections for India and States 2011-2036 (2019). Most seniors see retirement as an opportunity to travel because they will have more free time and fewer responsibilities (Nimrod, 2008). They may not be able to travel as frequently as they would like due to obstacles such as deteriorating health, the death of a spouse, and so on (Huber et al., 2018; Kazeminia et al., 2015). This demographic shift suggests that senior tourism will be a major market for tourism and hospitality companies in the future. For the development of attractions that will meet their needs and aspirations, research on the senior market for tourism and hospitality is critical (Otoo et al., 2020). In this study, those aged 60 and up are considered "seniors" according to commonly used criteria (Hung et al., 2016; Otoo et al., 2020).

As a result, the main competitiveness issues in tourism can also be addressed by achieving social and environmental targets of sustainable tourism development through the development of innovations linked to sustainable consumption practices in tourism services and attracting and training environmentally conscious consumers through the provision of green or environmentally friendly tourism services. Another important factor contributing to tourism's competitiveness is social innovation and the provision of social tourism services for the

disabled and the elderly. At the same time, green and social tourism can provide numerous benefits to the local communities of tourism destinations, such as increased quality of life.

2.3 Sustainable development of tourism destination

Tourism has become the primary economic business field and means of survival for many countries. As a result, tourism competitiveness issues are inextricably linked with addressing sustainable development targets of tourist destinations and providing green tourism services that have no negative impact on the environment, ensure resource savings, natural environment protection, and are based on innovations in green service development. Strengthening public economic and cultural integration, in accordance with Ilinskas (2011), determines the growth of regional tourism, which is inextricably linked to the effects on the economy, sociocultural environment, and nature. Municipalities encourage tourism in an effort to generate revenue, add jobs, and support the growth of business services in response to the increasing demand for travel.

According to Paulauskien (2013), "tourism management is a complicated process - it is directly and indirectly related to many fields (accommodation, catering, transport, connections, insurance, etc.) that are intended not only to satisfy the needs of tourists but also of the local residents. The local environment, host communities, and employees all interact with tourists. The interaction between the host regions, which include the social and natural environments, and the development of local communities, host environments, and employment opportunities (Lee, 2001). Therefore, the impact of tourists and the tourism sector on the long-term sustainability of travel destinations is significant. In order to contribute to the sustainable development of tourism destinations, the tourism industry should promote sustainable consumption habits (Sharpley, 2000; Singh & Singh, 1999; Zmylony, Kowalczyk-Anio, & Dembiska, 2020).

In order to improve the effectiveness of public administrative processes, scientists are currently discussing communities and their centres (Szromek, Kruczek, & Walas, 2020; Widz & BrzeziskaWójcik, 2020; Zmylony, Leszczyski, Waligóra, & Alejziak, 2020; Zucco, et al., 2020). Local community participation in the process of self-government development can take many different forms, including political, social, meeting individual needs, and rural business development. Numerous authors (Aldebert, Dang, & Longhi, 2011, Bilgihan & Nejad, 2015, Peters & Pikkemaat, 2006, Szromek & Naramski, 2019, Zarbski, Kwiatkowski, Malchrowicz-Moko, & Oklevik, 2019) agree that implementing various types of innovations is the most crucial factor in fostering competitiveness in the tourism industry. The introduction of innovative services to the market is made possible by the creation of new services and the improvement of existing ones. Green tourism service development is a cutting-edge innovation that draws travellers who care about the environment. The success of innovative activities, which are based on advancement that encourages the growth of business companies, is a criterion for both economic growth and social welfare. Processes of social change are involved, encouraging innovations. As a result, one of the primary sources of competitive advantage is the use of innovations and the development of novel goods and services. Innovations are increasingly regarded as the primary source of competitive advantage.

The most important component in growing a tourism business is having employees who can speak with customers directly and take care of the needs of the surrounding community. Theoretical and methodological knowledge, the capacity to identify the interests and needs of the local community in various fields of leisure activities, the capacity to engage children, teenagers, the disabled, and the elderly in engaging cultural activities are all necessary for tourism agencies and their specialists to meet the leisure, recreational, or creative interests and needs of customers (Bilgihan & Nejad, 2015).

2.4 Sustainable Tourism and Developing Countries

According to Tosun (2001), a large number of developing nations experience persistent and serious macroeconomic issues, including high unemployment rates, rapid population growth in the working age group, high rates of inflation and interest, growing current account and balance of payments deficits, and rising debt to service ratios. Many developing nations lack short-term alternatives to tourism for generating foreign exchange and providing employment for their rapidly expanding working-age populations. Governments in developing nations therefore have little choice but to support the current tourism industry, despite the fact that it might not be consistent with the ideals of long-term sustainable development. In essence, the growth of tourism is based on long-term investment for short-term gains. The only way sustainability as a long-term goal can be relevant is if it can garner the support of current beneficiaries. According to these macroeconomic imperatives, developing nations will support any form of tourism development that is offered to them, even unsustainable ones, unless they are able to find new ways to generate foreign currency and jobs.

According to Yasarata et al., (2010), it is necessary to contextualize and problematize tourism policy and planning processes within the political system and power structure of society as a whole in order to understand them (especially, in the present case, environmental and sustainability aspects).

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Sustainable tourism development can be accomplished without jeopardizing the sector's competitiveness if important issues such as senior tourist needs, disabled people needs, sustainable consumption, and sustainable development of tourism destinations are addressed by providing tourism services. Therefore, a number of social and environmental issues related to the development of sustainable tourism in tourist destinations must be addressed in order to address the main economic sustainability issues or to increase the competitiveness of the sustainable tourism sector. The welfare and needs of local communities, sustainable development priorities of tourism destinations, changing tourist demographics, and changing consumer demands for tourism services and goods must all be addressed simultaneously. When creating new tourism goods and services, sustainable consumption issues should be prioritized in order to address environmental sustainability issues. Addressing the needs of senior and disabled travelers as well as contributing to the development of local communities are social issues of sustainability in the tourism industry.

The current COVID-19 outbreak is having an impact on the tourism industry and creating new difficulties for the growth of sustainable tourism. Health experts warn that pandemics will continue to occur, so businesses that survive the outbreak will need to make their products more resistant to them as well as adapt to the anticipated shift in consumer preferences, which will include a greater demand for sustainable products, according to Lew et al., 2020. The challenge for global sustainable tourism will be to strike a balance between bringing activity to poor countries, some of which are overly dependent on the sector and markets, and maintaining activity in rich countries while avoiding overcrowding (Romagosa, 2020). Travel and tourism will undoubtedly change in a post-Covid world, and these changes will probably be fueled by consumer choice, destination availability, and regulatory change (Spalding, Burke, & Fyall, 2020). Therefore, these issues must also be taken into consideration when shaping sustainable tourism development trends in light of the potential for pandemics in the future.

4. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, it can be said that although sustainable development and sustainable tourism are receiving more and more attention, the following are not fully implemented by tourism service providers, neither by the tourists themselves. Systematic education of businesses, consumers, and other interested parties is required if sustainable and responsible tourism is to become the norm. There are new perspectives on the development of sustainable tourism in terms of goods and services, focusing on distinct consumer groups like the elderly and the disabled as well as green tourism services. Although it is now easier for the majority of people to travel and access tourism, some social groups, such as the elderly and disabled, were frequently overlooked in the tourism industry because they represented the minority with weak economic power. The world's low birth rate and high elderly population have created a new trend in this situation, and seniors are now a significant and widespread group that uses tourism services more frequently than other demographics.

The sustainable consumption component of sustainable tourism is widely accepted. Tourists are eager to choose the sustainable tourism service packages that are offered by various tourism organisations because they are currently looking for sustainable tourism services and value responsible consumption. By putting new ideas into practice, promoting sustainable consumption practices, developing new tourism services for the elderly and disabled, and focusing on the sustainable development priorities of tourist destinations, it is possible to address competitiveness, environmental issues, and social issues of sustainable tourism development all at once.

Travel and tourism will undoubtedly change in a post-Covid world due to consumer preferences, destination accessibility, and regulatory changes. As a result, these issues will also need to be addressed in the future, including sustainable consumption habits that should be further promoted and fully incorporated in the tourism sector by including also international agreements on carbon footprint or other limitations, etc. Environmental regulations ought to be created and upheld in order to safeguard cultural heritage and rare and vulnerable natural resources. For this, necessary laws and regulations ought to be passed. These regulations ought

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to be exacting and free from misunderstanding and abuse. International organizations should be contacted if necessary to work together and safeguard these non-renewable resources. Signboards should also be put up warning visitors of the restrictions. Tourists can learn how these delicate resources can be easily damaged through booklets and newsletters. Environmental issues should be taught to tour guides. Tourist guides should be in charge of explaining pertinent environmental laws to visitors and offering pertinent brochures and newsletters at no cost. Most importantly, local communities, non-governmental organizations, and local governments should have control over how these environmental codes are implemented. If those codes are broken for any reason, there should be hefty fines that can be used as additional funding for environmental protection and improvement. Without the support of international organizations, this cannot be accomplished in many developing countries under the current circumstances.

The provision of tourism services for the elderly and disabled should also be prioritized for policy agenda of the developing countries taking into account current trends of ageing population and risks of pandemics. Further studies on how to ensure social tourism development are required to ensure innovations in this field.

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