

## The Role of Media in Promoting Sustainable Tourism Practices

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### ABSTRACT

*This research is entitled The Role of Media in Promoting Sustainable Tourism Practices, which aims to understand the contribution of the media in increasing tourist awareness of the concept of sustainable tourism. The method used in this study is Systematic Literature Review (SLR), which allows the collection, analysis, and synthesis of various relevant research in a systematic manner. The SLR process involves identifying key research questions, literature search strategies from academic sources such as Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, and ScienceDirect, as well as data analysis to identify trends, key findings, and research gaps in the field under review. The results of the study show that media, both traditional and digital, have a strategic role in the promotion of sustainable tourism. Digital media, such as social media, blogs, and vlogs, are effective tools in disseminating information and shaping tourists' perceptions of sustainable destinations. Meanwhile, traditional media remains relevant in reaching certain segments of tourists. However, there are several challenges in the implementation of media as a means of promoting sustainable tourism, including greenwashing practices that can mislead tourists and low awareness of sustainability among industry players. Therefore, collaboration between the government, industry players, and the public is needed in optimizing the role of the media to support socially responsible, economic, and environmentally responsible tourism practices. With the right strategy, the media can be an important instrument in ensuring the sustainability of the tourism sector and providing long-term benefits for all stakeholders*

**Keywords:** Media, Sustainable Tourism, Promotion, Public Awareness, Sustainability

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### INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the largest economic sectors in the world that plays an important role in driving economic growth, creating jobs, and supporting cultural and environmental preservation. This industry contributes significantly to gross domestic product (GDP) in many countries through revenue from the hospitality, transportation, culinary, and various other supporting services sectors (Handrawan, MNR, & Nisa, FL 2024). In addition, tourism is also a major source



of job creation, both directly in the hospitality and tourism industries and indirectly through related sectors such as trade and local crafts. In addition to economic benefits, tourism also plays a role in preserving culture and the environment. With increasing tourist visits, tourist destinations have an incentive to preserve cultural heritage, traditions, and local uniqueness in order to attract more tourists. In terms of the environment, the concept of sustainable tourism is increasingly being promoted to ensure that the growth of this sector does not have a negative impact on the natural ecosystem (Uhai, S., et al. 2024). Practices such as eco-tourism, natural resource conservation, and environmental education are part of modern tourism management strategies. Therefore, with good management, tourism is not only a driving force for the economy but also an important instrument in maintaining environmental and cultural sustainability. However, the rapid development of the tourism industry also brings various challenges, such as environmental degradation, exploitation of natural resources, and social and cultural impacts on local communities (Hunihua, RI 2023). The uncontrolled increase in the number of tourists can cause pollution, increased waste, and damage to vulnerable natural ecosystems. In addition, the phenomenon of overtourism is also a problem in many tourist destinations, where the excess number of tourists actually damages the tourist attraction itself and disrupts the lives of local people (Anang, S., & Par, MM 2023).

To overcome these challenges, the concept of sustainable tourism is becoming increasingly important. Sustainable tourism aims to create a balance between economic growth, environmental conservation, and social welfare. Through this approach, the development of the tourism sector is carried out by paying attention to natural sustainability, empowering local communities, and responsible business practices (Kurniawan, R., et al. 2024). The main principles of sustainable tourism include environmental conservation by reducing negative impacts on nature, improving community welfare through their involvement in tourism activities, and economic sustainability so that this sector continues to provide long-term benefits without damaging existing resources (Prathama, A., et al. 2020).

In an effort to promote sustainable tourism, the media has a very crucial role. Through various platforms such as television, social media, blogs, and documentaries, the media can be an effective educational tool in building tourist awareness about the importance of responsible tourism practices. The media can also promote tourist destinations that apply the principles of sustainability and inspire tourists to contribute to preserving the environment and local culture. With the strong role of the media and awareness from various parties, it is hoped that sustainable tourism can be a solution to maintain a balance between the growth of the tourism industry and environmental and cultural sustainability (Nurrohman, T. 2019).

Media plays a very important role in the tourism industry, both as a promotional tool, source of information, and educational tool. With the development of technology and digitalization, media is increasingly influential in shaping tourist perceptions, influencing travel decisions, and raising

awareness of responsible tourism practices. Various platforms such as social media, travel blogs, tourism websites, and television and documentary films contribute to introducing tourist destinations to a wider audience. Attractive images and videos can increase the appeal of a place, while reviews and recommendations from other tourists can build trust and increase interest in visiting (Surentu, YZ, et al. 2020).

In addition to being a promotional tool, media also serves as a source of information for tourists in planning their trips. Travel articles, blogs, and reviews from platforms such as TripAdvisor or Google Reviews help tourists choose destinations, accommodation, transportation, and learn about local culture and rules. Not only that, media also plays an important role in educating tourists about sustainable tourism. Campaigns through social media and documentaries often highlight the importance of protecting the environment, reducing carbon footprints, and supporting local economies through more responsible tourism choices (Tunjungsari, HK 2025).

In addition, the media also has the power to create and change tourism trends. For example, the concepts of slow travel, eco-tourism, and community-based tourism are increasingly popular because they are often promoted by the media and travel influencers. This trend encourages tourists to be more environmentally conscious, avoid the negative impacts of overtourism, and seek more authentic experiences when traveling. In addition, in crisis situations such as pandemics, natural disasters, or security issues, the media plays an effective communication tool in conveying the latest information to tourists and tourism industry stakeholders. Governments and industry players can use the media to provide safety guidelines, clarify information, and rebuild the image of tourist destinations after being affected by a crisis. With a broad and strategic role, the media is not only a promotional tool, but also an important instrument in shaping tourist awareness, creating trends, and ensuring that the tourism industry develops sustainably and responsibly.

This study aims to analyze the role of media in promoting sustainable tourism practices, both through digital media, print media, and social media. In addition, this study also seeks to identify the most effective types of media in increasing tourist awareness of the importance of sustainable tourism. Marketing and communication strategies used in media campaigns will also be explored to understand how sustainability messages can be conveyed well to the audience. In addition, this study aims to identify the challenges and obstacles faced in using media to promote sustainable tourism and provide recommendations for tourism industry players, governments, and other stakeholders in optimizing media as an educational and promotional tool.

This research has various benefits for various parties. For the tourism industry, the results of this study can help business actors understand how media can be used effectively to promote sustainable tourism practices and provide more environmentally friendly marketing strategies that have a positive impact on local communities. Meanwhile, for the government and policy makers, this study can provide insight into policies and regulations that can support the use

of media in promoting sustainable tourism, as well as encourage cooperation between the government and industry players in developing more responsible tourism campaigns.

In addition, this study is also useful for academics and researchers as a reference for further research related to the role of media in the tourism industry and sustainability practices. This study can also help identify research gaps that can be used as a basis for future studies. Other benefits are for tourists and the general public, where this study can increase tourists' awareness of the importance of sustainable tourism and encourage them to contribute to more responsible tourism practices. Local communities can also be more active in promoting and managing sustainable tourism destinations. Thus, this study is expected to help optimize the role of the media in disseminating information, educating, and shaping tourist behavior to be more concerned about environmental and cultural sustainability in tourist destinations.

## METHODOLOGY

In the study entitled "The Role of Media in Promoting Sustainable Tourism Practices", the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method was used to systematically collect, analyze, and synthesize various relevant studies. SLR is an approach that allows researchers to review published literature in depth to identify trends, key findings, and research gaps in the field being studied. By using this method, research can provide a broader understanding of how media contributes to the promotion of sustainable tourism based on previous data and studies. The first stage in SLR is the identification and formulation of research questions. In the context of this study, the main questions asked include how the media plays a role in promoting sustainable tourism, what media is most effective in increasing tourist awareness, and what challenges are faced in implementing media for sustainable tourism campaigns (Amalia, F. 2024). After that, a literature search strategy was carried out, where researchers determined the academic sources used, such as Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, and ScienceDirect. The keywords used in the search included "sustainable tourism", "media and tourism promotion", and "eco-tourism campaigns".

To ensure that only relevant studies were analyzed, researchers set inclusion and exclusion criteria. The selected studies had to come from indexed journals, published in the last 10 years, and directly address the relationship between media and sustainable tourism. Meanwhile, articles that were not available in English or Indonesian, did not have a clear methodology, or were not relevant to the research topic were excluded. After the literature was collected, data analysis and synthesis were carried out using the thematic analysis method, where the main findings of each study were grouped based on themes such as the effectiveness of digital media, the influence of media campaigns on tourists, and challenges in using media to promote sustainable tourism.

The final stage of the SLR method is interpretation and drawing conclusions. Based on the synthesis of the analyzed literature, this study is expected to provide in-depth insights into how media can be used optimally in

promoting sustainable tourism. In addition, this method also helps identify research gaps that can be used as a basis for further studies. The advantage of the SLR method is its systematic and structured nature, allowing for more accurate analysis and reducing bias. With this approach, research can provide evidence-based recommendations for the tourism industry, policy makers, and academics in optimizing the role of media to support more sustainable tourism practices.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Sustainable Tourism Concept

Sustainable tourism is a tourism development concept that aims to meet the needs of tourists and the tourism industry today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. This concept emphasizes the balance between environmental, socio-cultural, and economic aspects in tourism management. Sustainable tourism is based on three main principles, namely environmental conservation, socio-cultural welfare, and economic sustainability (Fattah, V. 2023). In terms of the environment, tourism must protect ecosystems, reduce pollution, and use natural resources wisely. In terms of social and culture, tourism activities must respect local traditions, increase community involvement, and provide economic benefits to local residents. Meanwhile, in terms of the economy, sustainable tourism must support local economic growth, create jobs, and encourage the development of small and medium enterprises. By implementing these principles, tourism can continue to develop without damaging the local environment and culture, thus providing long-term benefits for all parties (Susanti, PH, et al. 2023).

Tourism has a wide range of environmental, social, and economic impacts, both positive and negative. From an environmental perspective, tourism can contribute to nature conservation by supporting ecosystem preservation and providing funding for wildlife protection. In addition, educational tourism can raise awareness among tourists and the public about the importance of preserving nature. However, on the other hand, tourism can also cause environmental degradation due to pollution, exploitation of natural resources, and increased waste, especially in ecologically sensitive destinations (Butarbutar, RR 2021).

From a social and cultural perspective, tourism can be a means of preserving local culture through festivals, arts, and handicrafts that attract tourists. The presence of tourists can also increase intercultural interaction that encourages understanding and tolerance between communities. However, the negative impact is the commercialization of culture that can eliminate the original meaning of tradition and the shift in social values due to the entry of foreign cultures. In addition, the surge in the number of tourists in an area often causes inconvenience to local communities due to congestion and rising prices of goods (Gai, AM, et al. 2024).

Economically, tourism provides great benefits by creating jobs, increasing regional income, and helping to diversify the economy. Income from this sector can be used for infrastructure development and improving public services.

However, there is also a risk of economic dependence on tourism, which can make a region vulnerable to crisis if there is a decrease in the number of tourists. Economic inequality can also occur if the benefits of tourism are enjoyed more by large investors than by local people. In addition, inflation due to increased demand can cause prices of goods and property to rise, which has the potential to make it difficult for local residents. Overall, tourism has great potential to provide benefits to society and the environment, but it can also have negative impacts if not managed properly. Therefore, the application of the concept of sustainable tourism is very important to ensure that the benefits generated outweigh the negative impacts caused (Ardiansya, A. 2024).

Sustainable tourism is a focus of global and national policies to ensure economic, social and environmental benefits without damaging resources. Globally, this policy is reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which emphasize job creation, sustainable consumption and ecosystem preservation. UNWTO encourages responsible tourism practices through the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism and the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Program, while the Paris Agreement targets carbon emission reductions in the tourism sector (Priyono, VRP 2024). At the national level, Indonesia implements policies such as the Ministry of Tourism's Strategic Plan 2020-2024, Law No. 10 of 2009, and Presidential Regulation No. 14 of 2022 that support sustainable tourism management. The government also develops ecotourism, such as in Komodo National Park and Raja Ampat, and implements the concept of zero waste tourism. With this policy, tourism is expected to continue to grow without sacrificing the environment and the welfare of local communities, as well as contributing to the preservation of culture and nature.

### **The Role of Media in Sustainable Tourism**

In tourism promotion, media plays an important role in attracting tourists. In general, there are two types of media used, namely traditional media and digital media. Traditional media includes television, radio, newspapers, magazines, brochures, and billboards. The advantages of this media are that it has high credibility, wide reach, and is effective in attracting attention through visual advertising. However, traditional media has disadvantages, such as expensive promotion costs, lack of interactivity, and difficulty in measuring its effectiveness. Meanwhile, digital media includes websites, social media, email marketing, and digital advertising which are increasingly popular because of their easier and more flexible accessibility. Digital media has advantages in more affordable costs, two-way interaction with the audience, and ease in measuring the effectiveness of promotions. However, digital media also has challenges, such as tight competition and the risk of false information. Therefore, the best strategy in tourism promotion is to combine traditional and digital media in order to reach more tourists effectively (Supriyadi, N., 2025).

The media plays an important role in raising awareness of sustainable tourism among tourists through information dissemination, education, and promotion. Through various platforms, the media can inspire tourists to care

more about the environment and local culture, for example by highlighting the negative impacts of mass tourism and introducing the concepts of ecotourism and slow travel. In addition, the media also promotes sustainable destinations through influencer reviews and digital campaigns, thus encouraging the tourism industry to be more committed to environmentally friendly practices.

### **Media Strategy in Promoting Sustainable Tourism**

In the digital era, the use of social media, blogs, and vlogs is an effective strategy in educating tourists about tourist destinations, local culture, and sustainable tourism practices. Social media such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and Twitter allow for the rapid and interactive dissemination of information. Through uploading photos, videos, and travel stories, tourists can obtain information about tourist destinations, rules that must be followed, and useful travel tips. In addition, the comment and direct message features facilitate interaction between tourists and destination managers (Ramaputra, MA 2022).

Meanwhile, blogs act as a source of more in-depth and detailed information. Articles in blogs can discuss various aspects of tourism, such as the history of tourist attractions, travel recommendations, and ethical guidelines for traveling. With SEO (Search Engine Optimization), blogs can also help tourists find the information they need easily through search engines. On the other hand, vlogs or video blogs published through platforms such as YouTube and TikTok are increasingly popular in providing visual and attractive tourism education. Through vlogs, tourists can see someone's travel experience firsthand, which provides a real picture of the atmosphere of the destination, activities that can be done, and things to consider during a visit. With more attractive visualizations, vlogs can increase tourist interest and provide information that is easier to understand than written text. By combining social media, blogs, and vlogs, tourist education can be carried out more widely and effectively. Tourists not only get information about tourist destinations, but are also invited to apply the principles of responsible and sustainable tourism (Ramaputra, MA 2022).

Creative content and storytelling play an important role in promoting sustainable tourism by presenting information that is interesting and emotionally appealing to tourists. Through this approach, messages about sustainability can be conveyed in a more understandable and memorable way, so that tourists are more motivated to choose responsible travel. Creative content such as cinematic videos, infographics, high-quality photography, and interactive social media campaigns can attract tourists' attention. The use of digital platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok allows for visual and attractive messaging, for example by showcasing the natural beauty that needs to be preserved or environmentally friendly practices in a destination.

Meanwhile, authentic storytelling can create an emotional connection with tourists. For example, stories about the struggle of local communities to preserve culture and the environment can have a deeper impact than ordinary promotions. Through storytelling, tourists not only see the beauty of the destination, but also understand the values of sustainability applied in that place.

With a combination of creative content and effective storytelling, sustainable tourism promotion can be more attractive, educational, and inspiring for tourists to contribute to preserving the environment and local culture.

### **Challenges and Barriers in Promoting Sustainable Tourism**

Greenwashing is the practice of a business, organization, or tourist destination providing misleading or exaggerated information about their commitment to environmental sustainability. In the context of tourism, greenwashing often occurs when a destination or tourist business claims to be environmentally friendly without any concrete actions to support the claim. One common form of greenwashing is the use of terms such as “eco-friendly,” “sustainable,” or “environmentally friendly” in promotions without transparency about the concrete steps taken to reduce environmental impact. For example, a hotel may claim to be a “green hotel” simply because it reduces plastic use, when in fact it still uses large amounts of fossil fuels and does not practice proper waste management. The impacts of greenwashing are quite serious, especially for tourists who want to contribute to sustainable tourism. When the information disseminated is inaccurate, tourists can be misled and unknowingly support practices that are not truly environmentally friendly. In addition, greenwashing can damage public trust in genuine sustainability initiatives (Yanti, R., et al. 2023).

To avoid greenwashing, travelers and tourism industry players need to be more critical in evaluating sustainability claims. Travelers can look for official environmental certifications, such as those from the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) or EcoCert, which ensure that a destination or business is truly implementing environmentally friendly practices. Transparency in presenting data, such as sustainability reports that show real impacts on the environment and communities, is also an indicator of an entity's honesty in sustainability efforts. With increasing awareness of greenwashing, it is hoped that the tourism industry will become more responsible in conveying information, so that travelers can make wiser decisions in supporting truly sustainable tourism.

Lack of awareness of tourism industry players towards sustainability is a challenge in realizing environmentally friendly and socially responsible tourism. Many industry players are still more focused on short-term economic profits without considering the long-term impacts on the environment and local communities. One of the causes is the lack of education and understanding of the principles of sustainable tourism. Some destination managers, hotels, and travel agents do not yet understand how environmentally friendly practices, such as waste management, energy efficiency, and cultural conservation, can be implemented without reducing business profits. In addition, the lack of strict regulations and incentives from the government makes some industry players not feel encouraged to invest in sustainable practices.

In addition to education and regulation factors, tight business competition is also a reason why sustainability is less considered. Some industry players prefer a strategy of low prices and high tourist volumes, although this can lead



to over-tourism and environmental degradation. The lack of coordination between industry players, the government, and local communities also makes the implementation of sustainable tourism slow. To overcome this problem, efforts are needed to increase awareness through education, supportive policies, and incentives for industry players who implement sustainable practices. With better awareness, the tourism sector can develop without sacrificing the environment and the welfare of local communities.

### **Case Study and Data Analysis**

Several studies have highlighted the role of media in promoting sustainable tourism practices. One study by Muhammad Nazar Hariski (2021) discussed how the Banda Aceh City Tourism Office utilized social media to promote local tourism. The results showed that social media was very effective in reaching a wider audience, both nationally and internationally, with promotional strategies through videos, billboards, flyers, short films, and collaboration with tourism ambassadors and local communities. Another study by Elisabeth Windiana Jayanti and Johann Wahyu Hasmoro Prawiro (2024) examined the role of social media on tourism in Gunung Mas Agrotourism, Bogor. This study revealed that social media has a significant role in building the visibility and reputation of tourist destinations, which ultimately increases the number of tourist visits.

In addition, other studies also examine how social media contributes to shaping the image of a tourist destination. For example, a study on the role of social media in promoting tourism in Bukit Lawang Plantation Village showed that interactive and engaging content distributed through digital platforms can increase destination visibility and attract tourists. Another study analyzed the tourism promotion strategy carried out by the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism through Instagram. The results of the study showed that a structured and innovative promotion strategy through social media can increase the number of domestic and foreign tourists. Overall, these studies confirm that social media has an important role in tourism promotion, especially in increasing tourist awareness and shaping an attractive destination image. Although not all studies directly highlight the sustainability aspect, effective use of media can encourage tourists to care more about cultural and environmental preservation. Thus, social media is not only a marketing tool but can also be used as an educational tool in supporting sustainable tourism.

### **CONCLUSION**

Sustainable tourism is an important approach in managing the tourism sector to ensure a balance between environmental, socio-cultural, and economic aspects. By applying the principles of environmental conservation, local community welfare, and inclusive economic growth, tourism can provide long-term benefits without damaging local ecosystems and cultures. The diverse impacts of tourism, both positive and negative, indicate the need for appropriate regulations and strategies so that the benefits obtained

outweigh the negative impacts caused. In the context of promotion, the media has a strategic role in supporting sustainable tourism. Traditional and digital media can be utilized to raise tourist awareness of the importance of responsible tourism practices, as well as introduce destinations that implement sustainability principles. The use of social media, blogs, and vlogs is increasingly effective in disseminating information and shaping tourist perceptions of tourist destinations. However, challenges such as greenwashing practices and low awareness of industry players towards sustainable tourism are still obstacles in implementing this concept. Therefore, synergy is needed between the government, industry players, media, and the community to create tourism that not only provides economic benefits, but also maintains environmental and social sustainability. With the right approach, tourism can continue to develop sustainably and provide benefits for current and future generations.

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