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AMAN, ELIYAS EBRAHIM<sup>1</sup> – PAPP-VÁRY, ÁRPÁD FERENC<sup>2</sup>

## Tourism marketing and national parks. A systematic literature review

The primary focus of this paper is on national parks and tourism marketing, where tourism marketing plays a crucial role in reducing poverty and ensuring the quality of life, employment, and decent work for the nation, as well as the preservation of the natural and cultural environment. The interaction between tourism marketing and national parks is the most intimate context in which tourism marketing is increasingly regarded as a powerful tool for socioeconomic development. The purpose of this review is to investigate the environmental, sociocultural, and economic contributions of tourism marketing in and around a national park to strengthen progress on sustainable tourism development by reviewing 55 relevant journal articles indexed in Scopus and Web of Science. The principal search terms were used to discover the pertinent journal articles. It was discovered that no article with the title “Tourism Marketing and National Parks” existed. Instead, sustainable destinations and ecotourism have been emphasized. The reviews implied that tourism marketers do not engage in the sustainability of national park tourism for future usage and do not care about the environmental conservation of destinations. It's crucial to take into account the features of national parks and their potential value as attractive destinations for tourism development when implementing an effective tourism marketing strategy for national parks and encouraging the sustainable use of the natural environment and resources.

*Keywords: tourism marketing, national park, sustainable tourism development, Systematic literature review*  
*JEL Codes: Q26, Z32*

## Turizmusmarketing és nemzeti parkok – Szisztematikus irodalomkutatás

Tanulmányunk fő célja a nemzeti parkok és a turizmusmarketing vizsgálata, ahol a tágan értelmezett turizmusmarketing kulcsfontosságú szerepet játszhat a szegénység csökkentésében, javítja az életminőséget, megfelelő foglalkoztatást és méltó munkát biztosít, valamint segíti a természeti és kulturális környezet megőrzését. Így a turizmusmarketing és a nemzeti parkok kölcsönhatásában a turizmusmarketingre egyre inkább erőteljes eszközként lehet tekinteni a gazdasági és társadalmi fejlődés szempontjából. Ezen áttekintés célja a turizmusmarketing környezeti, szociokulturális és gazdasági hozzájárulásainak vizsgálata egy nemzeti parkban és annak környékén, bemutatva a fenntartható turizmusfejlesztés terén történt előrehaladást. Az áttekintéshez 55 releváns folyóiratcikket tekintettünk át, amelyeket a Scopus és a Web of Science indexelt. A megfelelő folyóiratcikkek felderítéséhez releváns keresőszavakat választottunk. Megállapítást nyert, hogy nem létezik cikk kifejezetten „Turizmusmarketing és nemzeti parkok” címmel. Ehelyett a tanulmányok főként a fenntartható úti célokra és ökoturizmusra helyezték a hangsúlyt. Az áttekintés azt jelzi, hogy a turizmusmarketinggel kapcsolatban nem foglalkoznak a nemzeti parkok turizmusának fenntarthatóságával, illetve a helyszínek környezeti megőrzésével a jövőbeni használat szempontjából. Fontos lenne ugyanakkor figyelembe venni a nemzeti parkok jellemzőit és potenciális értéküket vonzó turisztikai célpontként, és ösztönözni a természeti környezet és erőforrások fenntartható használatát, amikor hatékony turizmusmarketing stratégiát alakítunk ki a nemzeti parkok számára.

*Kulcsszavak: turizmusmarketing, nemzeti park, fenntartható turizmusfejlesztés, szisztematikus irodalomkutatás*  
*JEL-kódok: Q26, Z32*

<sup>1</sup> Eliyas Ebrahim Aman, PhD Student, University of Sopron Alexandre Lamfalussy Faculty of Economics István Széchenyi Economics and Management Doctoral School, Hungary.

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4825-4734> (eliyas.ebrahim.aman@phd.uni-sopron.hu)

<sup>2</sup> Dr. habil. Árpád Ferenc Papp-Váry, Senior research fellow, University of Sopron, Alexandre Lamfalussy Faculty of Economics, Hungary.

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0395-4315>

## Introduction

Tourism marketing is one of the major areas of marketing that plays a great role in poverty reduction and ensures the quality of life, employment, decent work for the nation, and sustainability of the natural and cultural environment (Shaalán, 2005; de Sausmarez, 2007; Reihanian et al., 2012; Elid, 2014). The importance of tourism marketing has been highlighted in previous studies by different researchers. For instance, Rahmoun & Baeshen (2021) pointed out tourism marketing as a source of income and employment. According to the author, tourism marketing provides a macroeconomic and financial benefit not only to national economies or regional advancement but also to local communities. Additionally, Ali (2021) explained that tourism marketing encompasses an opportunity for nations troubled with joblessness and destitution to generate employment and income for regional and national socioeconomic development.

However, due to the prioritization of short-term economic gains at the expense of long-term economic and environmental sustainability, particularly developing countries are exposed to the negative effects of tourism marketing (UNWTO, 2020). Furthermore, tourism marketing to date is perceived as the enemy of sustainability as it traditionally concentrates on increasing tourist numbers and treats tourism like a commodity (Pomeroy et al., 2011). Moreover, lack of strong control and effective management of tourism marketing, such as tourism products, tourism pricing, distribution and accessibility of tourism products, promotional activities, skilled human power, physically attached facilities, and processes, are major issues in the national parks (Sharpley–Pearce, 2007). In contrast, tourists seek quality tourism products, appropriate prices, accessibility, the right information about the destination, hospitality, standard service delivery, and an attractive tourism environment (Foued–Sawsan, 2019).

National Park is a well-defined protected area under a brand name, mixing all tourism products and services, including its unique nature and diverse attractions, fauna, flora, and birds (Hartwell et al., 2018). It has immense potential to offer high quality and unique environmental characteristics to succeed in tourism development as well as attract many visitors (Alters et al., 2007). For instance, globally, national parks attract approximately eight billion tourists per year (Balmford et al., 2015), and European national parks attract more than two billion tourists annually (Schägner et al., 2016). Despite this, the national park could also be an effective tool in the conservation of natural resources, socio-cultural heritage, and economic development (Ballantyne et al., 2009; Balmford et al., 2009; Steven et al., 2011). Currently, many countries promote national park tourism to achieve their goals for both nature conservation and socio-economic development. For instance, in Vietnam, national park tourism is recognized as playing a crucial role in local, regional, and national development, particularly in the tourism sector (An et al., 2019).

Nevertheless, despite its wide contribution to economic, social, and environmental conditions in our world (Valdivieso et al., 2015; Sriarkarin–Lee, 2018), critical human-made challenges and constraints are the main difficulties (Mamo–Bekele, 2011; Teshome et al., 2011; Belayneh et al., 2013). Moreover, many national parks suffer from a lack of effective tourism marketing strategies, tourism facilities, and services (An et al., 2019). Tourism marketing is a substantial marketing strategy that impacts the sustainability of national parks and tourism. Hence, tourism marketing must address the challenges of a national park in all aspects. This necessitates a comprehensive tourism marketing strategy as well as an understanding of the complexities of the challenges in this area. Thus, the application and concept of tourism marketing and the urgency of incorporating holistic tourism marketing in the tourism industry contribute to the sustainability of both a national park and tourism development.

## **Objectives of the review**

The review aimed to investigate the environmental, sociocultural, and economic contributions of tourism marketing in and around the national park to strengthen and accelerate progress on sustainable tourism developments. Specifically, the purpose of the review was to:

- Assess the relationship between a national park and tourism marketing.
- Investigate the role of tourism marketing in demonstrating respect for host communities' sociocultural authenticity and conserving their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values in and around the national park.
- Identify the role of tourism marketing in making optimal use of environmental resources, maintaining essential ecological processes, and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.
- Explore the impact of tourism marketing to ensure viable, long-term economic operations; provide long-term socioeconomic benefits to all stakeholders that are distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities; and contribute to poverty alleviation.

## **Research Questions**

As an attempt at addressing this, the researcher developed the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between the national park and tourism marketing?
2. How does tourism marketing demonstrate respect for the sociocultural authenticity of host communities and conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values in and around the national park?
3. How does tourism marketing make optimal use of environmental resources, maintain essential ecological processes, and help to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity?
4. How does tourism marketing ensure viable, long-term economic operations; provide long-term socioeconomic benefits to all stakeholders that are distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities; and contribute to poverty alleviation?

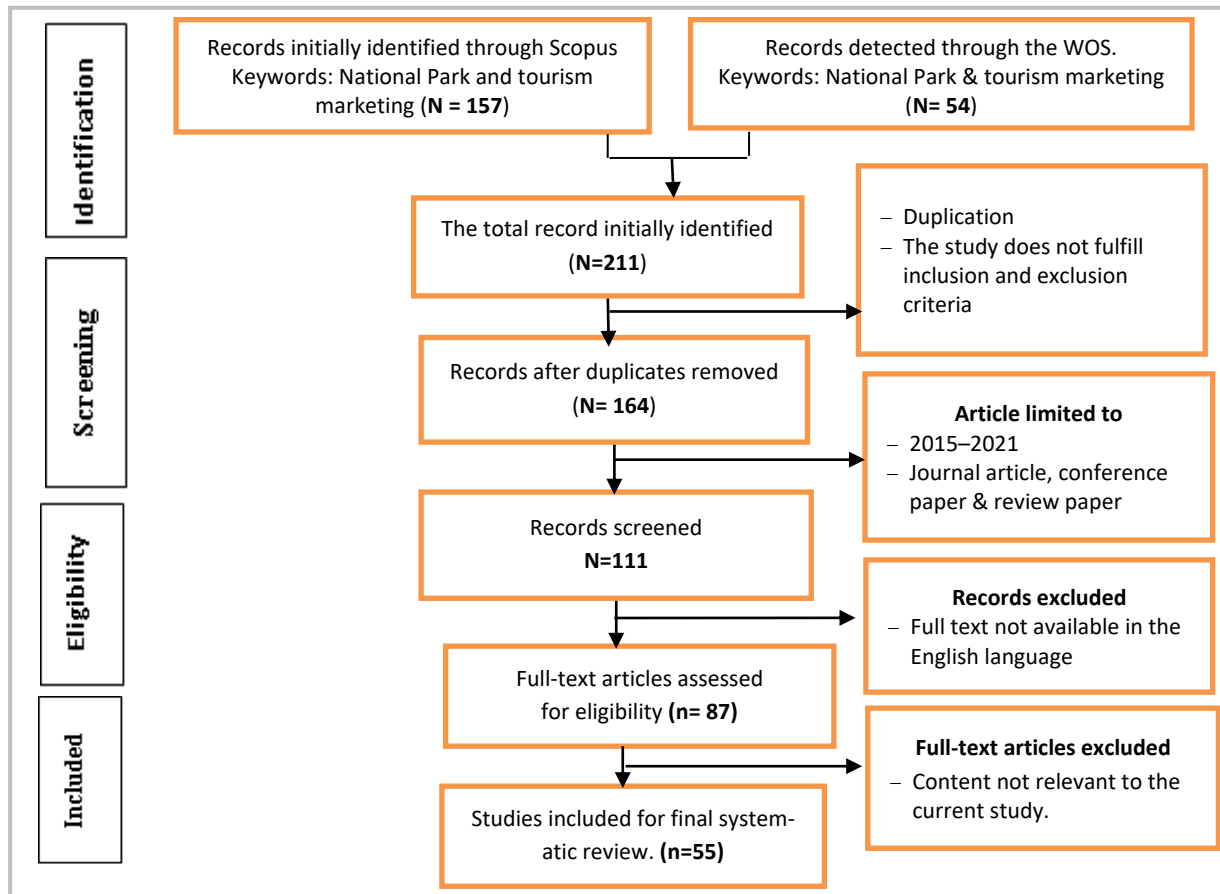
## **Rationale of the review**

The rationale for this review lies in the assumption that while previous studies have explored and focused on the management and planning of natural resources, they have not given meticulous attention to the contributions of tourism marketing in and around the national park, which plays a significant role in the sustainability of national parks and tourism development. In this regard, the review clarifies the essence of tourism marketing by enhancing national parks and sustainable tourism development. Accordingly, through a detailed review of journals and articles, it outlines how tourism marketing contributes to environmental conservation, sociocultural, and economic development to strengthen and accelerate progress on sustainable tourism developments.

## **Methodology**

The researchers chose a systematic literature review (SLR) to find the existing body of knowledge about national parks and tourism marketing. This was done to provide answers to the research questions. A systematic literature review is a useful tool for summarizing the state of knowledge in a particular field of study, pinpointing existing knowledge gaps, and

pointing the way toward potential future lines of inquiry (Liberati et al., 2009). It offers a widespread view of the literature in each field and helps to discover avenues for future research by revealing the research gaps (Swartz–Marth Kirk, 2011). Guided by PRISMA protocols and a checklist referred to by Rethlefsen et al. (2021), researchers collected data from the database through four main phases: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Study selection process**

Source: Literature review by authors

In the identification phase, the researchers determined the search keywords and databases to decide the types of journals to include in this study. Thus, the search keywords that the researchers applied as a selection criterion were based on the topic of the studies and the following terms used in the title, keywords, and abstract of the studies: (national AND park AND tourism AND marketing). Even though all databases have their pros and cons, Amentae & Gebresenbet (2021), the researchers employed the Web of Science and Scopus as sources of publication based on their more comprehensive coverage of high-quality scholarly information used in most review research. Based on this search keyword criterion, initially, the researchers extracted 157 and 54 studies from the Web of Science and Scopus databases, respectively (see Table 1).

Initially extracted data encompasses studies belonging to diverse languages and different categories, including journal articles, reviews, conference papers, books, book chapters, and editorials. Thus, in the second phase, the researchers checked for duplication and determined the inclusion and exclusion criteria to select relevant studies for the analysis, using the following inclusion and exclusion criteria: (1) studies related to marketing tourism; (2) studies discussing national parks and sustainable tourism, and (3) journal articles published in Eng-

lish only from 2010 to 2021. Based on inclusion/exclusion criteria, the researchers were left with 135 Web of Science-listed journals and 36 Scopus-listed journals, for a total of 164 articles in this phase.

In the third phase, to ensure the quality of the selected article review, the researchers discover and deeply read the abstract, methodology, and conclusion. After reading the articles, the researchers remove those that do not fit the inclusion or exclusion criteria. In this phase, 77 articles were removed for not meeting the criteria, and only 87 articles were identified as the most suitable papers in this phase. Finally, after applying all inclusion and exclusion criteria, 55 unique articles were included for synthesizing and analyzing the review.

**Table 1: Selected databases and retrieved papers.**

Database	No. of retrieved studies	Link
<i>Scopus</i>	157	( <a href="https://www.scopus.com/results/results.uri?sort=plff&amp;src=s&amp;st1=national+park+and+tourism+marketing&amp;sid=60eb7df8eeb68ff692344d47c1a7c716&amp;sot=b&amp;sdt=b&amp;sl=50&amp;s=TITLE-ABSKEY%28national+park+and+tourism+marketing%29&amp;origin=searchbasic&amp;editSaveSearch=&amp;yearFrom=Before+1960&amp;yearTo=Present">https://www.scopus.com/results/results.uri?sort=plff&amp;src=s&amp;st1=national+park+and+tourism+marketing&amp;sid=60eb7df8eeb68ff692344d47c1a7c716&amp;sot=b&amp;sdt=b&amp;sl=50&amp;s=TITLE-ABSKEY%28national+park+and+tourism+marketing%29&amp;origin=searchbasic&amp;editSaveSearch=&amp;yearFrom=Before+1960&amp;yearTo=Present</a> )
<i>Web of Science</i>	54	( <a href="https://www.webofscience.com/wos/woscc/summary/8f141e5d-60dc-4ea4-8ebb-9db74a046cf6-532236fb/relevance/2">https://www.webofscience.com/wos/woscc/summary/8f141e5d-60dc-4ea4-8ebb-9db74a046cf6-532236fb/relevance/2</a> )

Source: Literature review by authors

## Result and Discussion

### *Relationship between tourism marketing and national park*

Literature reveals that the relationship between tourism marketing and national parks is the most intimate place where tourism marketing is progressively considered as an effective tool for socio-economic development (Plummer–Fennell, 2009). According to (Lei et al., 2014), national park tourism and tourism marketing have a big relationship that has subsequently direct impact and effect on sustainable tourism development and sustainable national park. Similarly, Puhakka and Saarinen (2013) and Mihanyar et al. (2016) argued that for future sustainable tourism development, national parks and tourism marketing cannot be separated. In national parks, tourism marketing is applied to protect the natural environment and biodiversity while improving the living standards of the community by optimizing local economic benefits and providing high-quality experiences and satisfaction for tourists (Plummer–Fennell, 2009). Additionally, Bowers (2016) states that tourism marketing is a driving force that is significantly changing society, the economy, and the environment.

On the other hand, national parks have a great potential to hasten sustainable tourism development to maintain a sustainable combination of economic, social, and environmental conditions in our competitive world (Valdivieso et al., 2015; Sriarkarin–Lee, 2018). Thus, tourism marketing and a national park together can balance tourism needs and the environment with the sustainable socio-economic development of local communities (Sharpley–Pearce, 2007). Furthermore, well-managed tourism marketing (Albrecht, 2018) in the national park can generate quality jobs for durable growth, reduce poverty, and offer incentives for environmental conservation (Watson et al., 2013; Ristić et al., 2019). Therefore, given the vital significance of sustainable tourism for the social and economic fabric of national parks, the appropriate application of tourism marketing is indispensable.

Moreover, the quality of tourism in national parks plays a key role in the success of sustainable tourism development, and the role of tourism marketing in improving the quality of destinations is crucial (Lei et al., 2014). It enhances the country’s tourist attractions, including its biodiversity, cultures, natural environments, and ancient history (An et al., 2019). Never-

theless, not much academic research has been conducted yet on finding out the role of tourism marketing in contributing to successful and sustainable tourist destinations (Eagle et al., 2016). For instance, Sharpley and Pearce (2007) argued that there is no specific tourism marketing role specifically for sustainable tourism in English National Park destinations, but sustainable tourism is rather promoted by other organizations. According to the author, marketing for them is only socio-economic, although it increases tourism to a destination.

Similarly, Esparon et al. (2015) suggest that sustainable tourism in some areas acts as a destination competitiveness tool in tourism marketing processes but does not contribute in a meaningful way to a successful tourist destination. Thus, it is important for national park managers not only to promote a larger number of tourist arrivals but also the protection and conservation of the environmental, social, and cultural heritage of a destination (Simón et al., 2004; Tse–Qiu, 2016). The literature noted that it is important for tourism marketing to be concerned with meeting customers' needs and organizational objectives by doing good socially and environmentally (Sharpley–Pearce, 2007).

### ***Role of tourism marketing***

Conventionally, tourism marketing has been focused on growing tourist numbers and treating tourism sites as commodities (Buhalis, 2000). As a result, tourism marketing is sometimes regarded as an enemy of sustainability. Such critique implies that either marketing has been construed far too narrowly or it has done a very poor job of marketing itself, or both (Mwinuka, 2017). Despite the fact that a growing number of visitors can aid in the development of new conservation programs and contribute to the continuous upkeep of the environment, they inevitably have several negative effects. Similarly, Mossaz and Coghlan (2017) pointed out that most tourism agents sell destinations in an effort to get customers, but they do not really care about the environmental conservation of the destinations. This shows that tourism marketers do not really engage in the sustainability of the destination for future use.

At face value, it's not clear how important tourism marketing is for improving sustainable tourism development and tourist destinations (Pomeroy et al., 2011). Thus, to determine the role of tourism marketing in sustainable tourism and sustainable tourist destinations, let's first explain the concept of tourism marketing. Tourism marketing is described as the systematic and organized efforts exerted by the tourism industry at international, national, and local levels to optimize the satisfaction of tourists, groups, and individuals, given the sustained tourism growth (Raju, 2009). According to the author, tourism marketing is a group of related activities that involve the management of specific elements to create an exchange that satisfies its customers. Similarly, Ali Akasha et al. (2020) defined tourism marketing as the application of marketing concepts and principles to the travel and tourism industry. Furthermore, the author explains that tourism marketing is the application of marketing concepts to the travel, visit, and tourism industries not only to extract tourism resources but also to solve the problems of resource depletion, pollution, species destruction, and climate change. It accomplishes this by implementing a comprehensive tourism marketing technique and plan in tourism destinations (Morrison, 2013).

### **Environmental contribution of tourism marketing**

Due to a lack of an appropriate tourism marketing strategy, protected areas such as parks have experienced extensive erosion to their coastal paths as a result of the number of walkers, climbers, and fishermen using them for access (Pecl et al., 2017; Mamo et al., 2010), as well as littering, excessive noise, damage to verges from parked vehicles, debris from illicit companies, open fires, and disturbances to wildlife (Belayneh et al., 2013; Mamo–Bekele, 2011; Teshome et al., 2011). This causes topsoil erosion and compaction, resulting in damaged flora

and fauna disturbances (Löf et al., 2012). To minimize this effect, appropriate use of tourism marketing strategies could be an effective tool in the conservation and management of national parks, as well as in the social and economic development of the countries (Steven et al., 2011, Ballatyne et al., 2009, and Balmford et al., 2009). Tourism marketing is a potentially useful approach for the tourism industry to promote environmental and ecological awareness (Sharpley–Pearce, 2007). According to Bushell (2003), environmental consciousness and the significance of supporting nature conservation cannot be taught in a classroom; rather, visitors are frequently more inspired to contribute to the protection of natural places when they can see a visible benefit or return.

Literature implies that tourism marketing within national parks has various positive environmental effects (Sharpley–Pearce, 2007). Primarily, it enhances environmental awareness and appreciation by providing environmental information and raising tourists' knowledge of the ecological effects of their actions (Yu et al., 2020; Zheng et al., 2020). Furthermore, the money brought in by tourists is an additional source of conservation funding (Goodwin, 2002). Therefore, it immediately contributes to the preservation of sensitive zones and living areas. For instance, park fees and other kinds of revenue can be dedicated to funding environmentally beneficial projects. Finally, promote national park tourism that has minimal negative environmental and sociocultural impacts (Truong–Hall, 2016).

### **Socio-cultural contribution of tourism marketing**

It is widely assumed that tourism marketing activities have a significant impact on the community's eventual fate, as well as increased pride in the local area where residents are receptive and welcoming to visitors (Verbeek et al., 2011). It has many impacts on sociocultural life because multi-cultural societies are enriched with unique and different new experiences such as new traditions, new cultures, and new civilizations from all over the world (Liu et al., 2013). Moreover, it helps protect cultural heritage by generating money that is directly reinvested in the restoration of historically significant buildings, archaeological sites, and architectural landmarks. (Eagles et al., 2002; Hall–Law, 2009).

Furthermore, it supports locally-based tourism-related businesses such as hotels, restaurants, and lodges (Eagles et al. 2000). In addition to supporting locally-based tourism-related businesses, it paves the way for improved accommodations, transportation, and attractions, which also benefit the local economy (Ali Akasha et al., 2020). While the primary goal of many of these initiatives is to provide a better experience for tourists, they also have positive effects on the surrounding community and can safeguard other essential rural services such as providing public transportation, maintaining village shops, and developing and maintaining cycleways and footpaths (Sharpley, 2003). However, besides its positive impact, tourism marketing has a negative impact on local communities, such as creating hostilities between residents and visitors as the host community becomes resentful of tourism and a tendency towards gambling, nightclubbing, and prostitution that can undermine the social fabric of traditional communities, especially in developing countries (Archer, 2005). This requires an appropriate and considerate application and implementation of tourism marketing to minimize any negative social impacts as a long-term strategy (Avraham–Ketter, 2015).

### **Economic contribution of tourism marketing**

Tourism marketing has a positive effect on the country's economic development, local community, and regional and federal governments (Mayer et al., 2010). This is due to the formation of the tourism industry from various sectors such as the travel sector, the hospitality sector, and tourist destination products including its natural resources, cultural heritage, and

cuisines and foods from various cultural backgrounds (Rahmoun–Baeshen, 2021). Particularly, national park tourism enhances the country’s tourist attractions, including its biodiversity, cultures, natural environments, and ancient history (An et al., 2019). It is a significant component of the growing footprint (Truong–Hall, 2016). The literature exposes that tourism marketing presents a chance for countries plagued by poverty and unemployment to generate employment and income for regional and national socioeconomic development (Foued–Sawsan, 2019), but the outcomes, including the potential for both positive and negative impacts, are determined by the management of tourism development (Zanina Kirovska, 2011).

## **Summary and conclusions**

The literature revealed that the right application and holistic tourism marketing strategies can lead us to economic growth, employment opportunity, and poverty reduction, which brings sustainable tourism development and a sustainable national park. Moreover, it can be a useful tool for organizing and operating national park tourism in a way that limits their natural effects. On the other hand, protection and tourist use of ecological resources must approach the problem in a global manner to handle ecological damage. It is important to consider the nature and characteristics of national parks and their potential value as attractive destinations for tourism development while implementing an effective tourism marketing strategy for national parks and encouraging the sustainable use of the natural environment and its resources. National park managers need to identify the right tourism marketing strategy that induces tourism and enhances the attractiveness of destinations, which increases the tourist flow in a way that doesn’t affect the sustainability, biodiversity, and natural environments of national parks. Additionally, the national parks authority is required to form local, regional, and national tourism marketing strategies to enable effective national park tourism, sustainable tourism, and socio-economic development.

The quality of tourism in national parks plays a key role in the success of sustainable tourism development. Services must provide a fairly valued incentive for biodiversity conservation, taking on the management of the biological system as well as its co-benefits, which may include socio-cultural services for local communities. Therefore, the management of national parks and tourism marketers require a comprehensive strategy for promoting national park tourism that will help unify norms and practices for environmental utilization, such as providing a forum through which individuals can experience nature and gain an appreciation for its significance to society as a whole.

In terms of achieving sustainable tourism development, it is apparent that there must be the right application of tourism marketing to maximize the economic benefits to the local community while simultaneously minimizing the environmental and social costs. One of the most crucial things the tourism sector can do to reduce the amount of environmental harm it causes is to move toward „green tourism marketing” approaches, which involve the use of energy-efficient and non-polluting construction equipment, drainage systems, and renewable energies. Furthermore, contamination avoidance, and waste minimization measures are especially important for tourism due to the fact that trash treatment and disposal are typically substantial, long-term natural challenges in the tourist destination.

## **Conclusion**

This review employs a systematic literature review methodology, focusing primarily on a mapping of the current literature on tourism marketing and national parks. The literature comprises 55 articles published between 2000 and 2021 in various scientific journals. The study has found some of the essential relationships between national parks and tourism mar-

keting, the importance of tourism for the preservation of national parks, and the development of sustainable tourism. This research has some drawbacks. The data for this study was obtained from scholarly journals, which exclude conference articles, book chapters, and Ph.D. dissertations on the subject. Second, the scope of this analysis was limited to only national parks; other tourist destinations were not analyzed. This may imply that the review is not exhaustive; however, the authors believe that it provides a foundation for future research, particularly on the relationship between tourism marketing, national park sustainability, and tourism development.

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