

An Overview of the Importance of Marketing in Rural Tourism

Maryam Seyednazari¹, Hossein Kuhestani^{2*}, Fatemeh Kazemiyeh³, Ghader Dashti⁴

1. *Ph.D. Student of Agricultural Development, Department of Extension and Rural Development, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Tabriz*
- 2, 3. *Associate Professor, Department of Extension and Rural Development, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Tabriz*
4. *Professor, Department of Agricultural Economics, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Tabriz*

Abstract

Tourism is one of the most dynamic economic activities of the present era. The systematic development of tourism and the use of many capabilities of this sector to improve the current state of tourism in the country requires the use of tourism planning, so that according to the existing sensitivities and the capacity of the society and the needs of the tourists, the capabilities of this industry can be used for the progress and development of the community. At the same time, planning for tourism development requires action and attention to the needs, characteristics, and demands of the market as tourism demand factors. One of the most important types of tourism is rural tourism, which is more than a century old. Rural tourism has attracted a lot of attention due to its attractiveness and the desire to use the space and features of the rural environment for tourists, as well as its function to improve and improve the economic, socio-cultural, and ecological indicators of the host region. In the meantime, one of the aspects that can be the source of many developments for the sustainable development of the rural tourism industry is the accurate identification of the current situation through tourism marketing. Therefore, in this research, the importance of marketing in rural tourism has been reviewed.

Keywords: Marketing; Village; Tourism; Rural tourism.

**Corresponding author:* Hkein2004@yahoo.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8419-5989>

Received: 09/12/2023

Accepted: 09/03/2024



1. Introduction

In recent decades, the growth and development of the tourism industry and its adoption as one of the significant economic activities by developed and developing countries and the competition of the major tourist destinations in order to attract tourists have prompted planners to pay attention to two essential categories for the increase of income from tourism activities; 1: increasing the satisfaction of tourists and improving the pleasure and quality of the tourism experience and 2: trying to protect the interests of the host (Hatami, 2015). Therefore, most countries look at rural tourism as a necessity and use all their capacities and facilities to achieve their desired benefits (Shamsara, 2019). The tourism and travel market develops more in urban and advanced areas (Zhong et al., 2008). Many residents of advanced regions tend to escape from this modern and artificial environment and seek refuge in less developed and unpolluted countries; they go on excursions or travel to rural areas. For this reason, the environmental characteristics of the destination are important for tourists. In this direction and for the development of rural tourism, tourism marketing is of particular importance. Because if we consider marketing as a management process, then all planning activities, preparation of tourism products, and attraction of tourists need marketing operations and activities (Fang, 2014). Correct and targeted marketing is one of the most critical factors affecting tourism development in a destination. On the other hand, special attention to the marketing of rural tourism is essential. Because in planning and marketing, attention should be paid to the type of tourist (cultural tourist, historical tourist, and religious tourist), etc. In this regard, the village as a product is a market (Lockrey, 2015). The village has tangible and intangible elements that make it a unique product for marketing. Characteristics such as imperceptibility, inseparableness, variability, unstorability, and unpredictability are among the traits that distinguish rural tourism (Henrour, 2009).

Although much research has been done on the motivations of rural tourists, these motivations can be different according to the country of origin and destination of tourism (Ali Qolizadeh, et al., 2015). On the other hand, motivation is a dynamic concept and varies from person to person, from tourist to other tourist, and from target market to target market. Some researchers based their research on the premise that people choose their travel destinations and leisure activities to satisfy their needs and desires (Rustai Hossein Abadi, 2020). In marketing for rural tourists, it is beneficial to determine what makes people choose village-based entertainment; In addition, different motivations for rural tourism have been stated

in comparison with other types of tourism. For example, motivations such as empowering the local people, achieving a sustainable livelihood, and improving the quality of life of people in their place of residence, celebrations, ceremonies, traditional programs, and other side programs for rural tourism have been expressed (Roberts et al., 2017). Goldner and Ritchie (2005) divide the motivations for making rural tourism attractive to consumers/tourists into four groups: (1) physical (as in relaxation). (2) Cultural (familiarity with new cultures, customs, and lifestyles); (3) interpersonal (meeting new people); and (4) prestige (introspection and self-actualization). However, it should be kept in mind that although consumers/tourists enjoy the old lifestyle during their visit to a rural tourism destination, the content should be adapted to their needs and expectations. Therefore, the proposal of a rural tourism destination should include a wide range of activities such as hunting, fishing, horseback riding, hiking, ecotourism, ethnic tourism, even elements of health and wellness tourism (Rodriguez et al., 2010). In this direction and for the development of rural tourism, tourism marketing is of particular importance if we consider marketing as a management process, then all planning activities, preparation of tourism products, and attraction of tourists need marketing operations and activities. Correct and targeted marketing is one of the most critical factors affecting tourism development in a destination.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Rural tourism

Today, new forms of tourism are evolving, and rural tourism is one of the most important parts of tourism in other words, it is one of the results of tourism that is accessible to tourists. This tourism competes with other tourism sectors such as coastal tourism, urban tourism, and sea trips (Shakur et al., 2011). In the classical sense, rural tourism is a type of tourist activity that provides additional income for those whose main occupation is mainly in the field of agriculture (Szabo, 2005). In this way, rural tourism can be defined as a set of activities and services such as accommodation, hospitality, entertainment facilities, local celebrations and ceremonies, production, and sale of handicrafts and agricultural products, which are offered to tourists by residents in return for earning (Zhong et al., 2008). Rural tourism was formed in the 19th and 20th centuries, and it was expanded as a separate and specific part of tourism due to the growth of demand and more due to the increase in accessibility and mobility, increase in income, and leisure time (Amiri et al., 2022). However, the nature of the demand is changing due to the rise

in competition among new tourist destinations and attractions (Rizvani, 2010). In general, rural tourists are important from two aspects: One as a broad global activity and the other in terms of emphasizing it in regional and local development policies; (Hatami, 2015). Rural tourism as a superstructural function can expand and continue through participation and dependence on other economic and cultural sectors of society. It plays an essential role in the development process of the country in the growth and excellence of the village and as a result of its connection with the national development (Shams al-Dini, 2010). Tourism can lead to adverse social effects such as dramatic impact, commodification of culture, displacement and migration, dependence, crime, addiction, change in the social values of the host society, and language change (Ziaei and Tarabian, 2010). Rural tourism is a part of the tourism market and a source of employment and income, and it can be considered an essential tool for the economic, social, and ecological development of rural communities (Shamsara, 2019). In many countries, this is related to agricultural policies, and is often promoted as a strategy to preserve the environment and traditional rural culture. Rural tourism includes any type of recreational activity and spending leisure time by receiving services such as food, accommodation, and local products from residents in a place that is considered a village in terms of the current laws and regulations of the country or terms of the economic and cultural nature of the village (Kazimieh, 2015). As a result, rural tourism is a scale of tourism activities that provides interaction between tourists and local communities, especially in rural areas, and in that, the tourist prioritizes environmental sustainability and compliance with social and cultural rights. Therefore, it also affects the awareness and learning of tourism from rural life (Aleh Yaari, 2020).

2.2. Marketing and tourism

According to the unique characteristics of the tourism product, the role of marketing in this industry is vital compared to other industries, and the effective use of tourism marketing tools for a country or a region is essential; Because with marketing, potential tourists can be offered information about what the specific area can offer and encourage them to visit it (Laimer, 2009); Therefore, taking into account the significant position of the tourism industry, which is witnessing an increase in competition every day and it is known as one of the most important economic and social phenomena of the last century (Bastik & Gojcic, 2012); This industry should have a robust marketing system compatible with the market environment. The Marketing management system is stronger and more appropriate

and will be equally successful. The research of the World Tourism Organization and various studies show that; that marketing is necessary for the development of this industry in any country or any region (Mirtahari et al., 2023). Although studies show that only marketing for the attractions of an area without the existence of infrastructure and services cannot lead to the sustainable development of the tourism industry; the necessity and importance of tourism marketing planning is so great that it is sometimes mentioned in the field of tourism literature as the central pillar of the development of this industry in tourism destinations (Ebrahimzadeh and Yaari, 2011). Among the factors that can develop and improve the tourism industry, it is the practical tools and parameters of marketing. In fact, through marketing methods, potential tourists can be attracted to the desired destinations. Therefore, it is very essential to formulate the design and formulation of macro policies and strategic strategies for tourism development in the form of a tourism marketing planning process (Azeimi Yanchashmeh, 2018). Due to the nature of tourism, it is somewhat difficult to provide a comprehensive definition of the marketing category; because it is tough to predict future market conditions due to changes and developments, and depends a lot on many components, including economic, social, and political conditions. Therefore, tourism marketing can be defined in this way, which is an interactive process between suppliers and consumers (tourists) during which tourism goods and services are exchanged in an environment that is specific to this industry (Haidari Chianeh, 2000). This process may start from the stage of creating the motivation to travel and continue until the return stage. Marketing is very essential and necessary for the continuation of tourism life.

Various definitions have been presented in multiple research about to tourism marketing, some of which are mentioned below:

- ✓ Tourism marketing refers to a set of factors that help to identify and predict the needs of tourists. These factors determine what facilities and conditions should be provided to meet the needs of tourists and to attract more tourists with the information provided to them (Viper et al., 2014).
- ✓ Madasu (2013), considers tourism marketing as a set of efforts that public and private sector activists do tourism in countries to make the industry grow and develop by satisfying as many tourists as possible. He considers the most critical factors affecting the success of tourism marketing to be related to the government, and emphasizes that government laws and

regulations that facilitate the attraction of tourists have the most significant impact on the success of this industry.

Tourism marketing is a new category that refers to identifying and predicting the needs of tourists, providing facilities to meet their needs, and informing them and motivating them to visit (Brown, 2009). Tourism marketing is a technical management process that includes forecasting the needs and satisfaction of current and future tourists so that this has put travel companies and suppliers in competition with each other (Kotler et al., 2005).

3. Research Method

The research method in this article is library and internet sources. Therefore, research materials and methods are a combination of library work and the use of Internet resources.

4. Result

4.1. The role of marketing in rural tourism

Rural tourism plays an important role in diversifying the economy of rural communities and is a means to stimulate national economic growth. It also plays a major role in empowering local people, developing human resources, diversity, and economic development, and creating new job opportunities (Rizvani, 2010). Based on this, it can be said that one of the best ways to save the village from social, economic, and environmental issues and problems and to achieve social justice and geographical development is to expand rural tourism (Qadiri Masoom et al., 2010). Therefore, in order to succeed in this field, in addition to having the conditions of tourism and tourism destinations, we should look for planning to attract tourists and better introduce our facilities and needs to tourism markets (Roy, 2021). Since marketing is one of the essential elements in the sustainable development of rural tourism, It is possible to attract tourists to destinations through marketing methods. Today, the concept of marketing and the philosophy of doing business are essential for all policymakers and implementers of rural development. Marketing in rural tourism should be a means to achieve the strategic development goals of rural tourism (Mihailovic and Morich, 2012).

Dennis (2006) states two primary objectives to achieve marketing in rural areas:

- ✓ Empowering rural areas to be more competitive

- ✓ Providing conditions for a higher quality of life for the economically active population of the regions.

Similarly, Kostic-Stankovic (2013) points out the following objectives of marketing application in rural tourism:

- Creating and promoting competitiveness by emphasizing the distinct advantages of rural areas
- Strengthening local infrastructure
- Development and promotion of rural areas concerning to rural development initiatives and strategies
- Attracting, creating, and maintaining long-term relationships with foreign partners/investors and
- Protecting and improving the environment by sustainable rural development (González-Mansilla, 2019).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Considering the importance of tourism marketing, it can be said that one of the primary ways for the development of the country can be investing and formulating clear policies in the matter of marketing. Among the factors that can develop and improve the country's tourism industry, is the use of practical marketing tools and parameters. With careful planning and implementation of marketing management, foreign exchange income from tourism can be increased to a large extent, foreign income can be diversified, and the country can be protected from the vulnerability caused by oil price fluctuations. Also, paying attention to the marketing attitude can be a solution to increase the attraction of tourists. Since rural tourism as one of the sectors of the tourism industry has turned into a revenue-generating industry in the world and is considered a booming industry in many countries with proper management and recognition of hidden tourism opportunities, these countries will receive significant economic benefits; marketing is an important pillar to attract rural tourists.

REFERENCES

Amiri, F., Mohebi, S., Ranjber, M.H. and Bagheri, M. (2022). The effect of structural, behavioral, and contextual factors on rural tourism marketing in Hormozgan province. *Scientific-Research Quarterly of Geography and Regional Planning*, 12(3): 199-186.

Azimi Yancheshme, A. (2018). Investigating the obstacles and opportunities of the tourist industry with an emphasis on tourism marketing based on the service marketing mix. P7 Master's Thesis. Payam Noor University.

Bastic, M., and Gojic, S. (2012). Measurement scale for eco-component of hotel service quality. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 31(3), 1012-1020.

Brown, K. G. (2009). Island tourism marketing: music and culture. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 3(1), 25-32.

Ebrahimzadeh, A. and Yari, M. (2011). A comparative study of the functions affecting the behavior patterns of tourists in Iran and America tourism marketing planning using the SWOT model, *Tourism Space Quarterly*, 1(1): 1-26.

Elahyari, S., Tajzadeh Namin, A., Badiezadeh, A. and Pour Faraj, A. (2020). The marketing model of rural tourism destinations in Iran, *Journal of Tourism Social Studies*, 8(16): 88-59.

Fang, S. R., Chang, E., Ou, C. C., and Chou, C. H. (2014). Internal market orientation, market capabilities, and learning orientation. *European journal of marketing*, 48(1/2): 170-192.

Goeldner, C.R., and Ritchie, J.R.B. (2005). *Tourism: principles, practices, philosophies*. John Wiley and Sons, Hoboken.

González-Mansilla, Ó., Berenguer-Contrí, G., and Serra-Cantalops, A. (2019). The impact of value co-creation on hotel brand equity and customer satisfaction. *Tourism Management*, 75: 51-65.

Hanror, A. (2009). *Designing a marketing model for sports tourism in Iran*. Ph.D. Thesis. Tarbiat Modares University.

Hatami, P. (2015). *The position of the target villages in the development of North Khorasan tourism*. Master's thesis. Hakim Jurjani Institute of Higher Education, Department of Tourism Sciences.

Heydari Chianeh, R. (2000). *The position and importance of green space in urban planning, a case study: Tabriz city*, Master's thesis, Department of Geography and Urban Planning, Tabriz University.

Kazimieh, F. (2015). *Presentation of the rural tourism development promotion model in the rural areas of East Azarbaijan province*, doctoral dissertation, Tarbiat Modares University.

Kotler, P., Gary, A., Veronica, W., and Saunders, J. A. (2005). *Principles of marketing*. Fourth European edition published, Pearson Education, prentice hall.

Laimer, P., and Juergen, W. (2009). Portfolio analysis as a strategic tool for tourism policy, *tourism review*, 64 (1), 17-31.

Lockrey, S. (2015). A review of life cycle based ecological marketing strategy for new product development in the organizational environment. *Journal of cleaner production*, 95: 1-15.

Madasu, P. (2013). Social media marketing and promotion of tourism. *Management insight*, 9(1).

Mihailovic, B., and Moric, I. (2012). The role of marketing philosophy in rural tourism development. *Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 18(2), 267-279.

Mirtahari, A., Noami, A.A. and Village, A. (1402). Designing and explaining the integrated marketing communication model in the financial and economic growth of the tourism industry. *Investment Knowledge Research Quarterly*, 12(3): 456-435.

Qadiri Masoum, M., Astelazhi, A. and Pazki, M. (2010). *Sustainable rural and nomadic tourism*, Tehran University Press, first edition, Tehran.

Rizvani, A.A. (2010). *Geography and tourism industry*, Payam Noor University Publications, 8th edition, Tehran.

Roberts, L., Hall, D., and Morag, M. (2017). *New directions in rural tourism*. Routledge.

Rodrigues, A., Kastenholz, E., and Rodrigues, A. (2010). Hiking as a relevant wellness activity: results of an exploratory study of hiking tourists in Portugal applied to a rural tourism project. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 16, 331-343.

Roy, S., Dryl, W., and de Araujo Gil, L. (2021). Celebrity endorsements in destination marketing: a three- country investigation. *Tourism Management*, 83: 104- 213.

Rustai Hossein Abadi, A., Qolipour, S., Shabgo Monsef, M. and Del Afrooz, N. (2019). Marketing of cultural-historical capabilities, urban tourism, case study: Gilan province. *Journal of Urban Tourism*, 7(4): 21-33.

Shakur, A., Qureshi, M.B., Lashkari, M. and Jafari, M. (2011). Evaluating how to measure the sustainability of tourism in the lost paradise of Bovan Mamsani using the ecological footprint model, *Scientific Research Quarterly of New Attitudes in Human Geography*, 3(3).

Shams al-Dini, A. (2010). Rural tourism is a constructive solution for rural development, a case study: Fahlian village, housing, and rural environment, (95): 103-131.

Shamsara, P. (2018). Investigating the effects of rural tourism on the development of home businesses (a case study of target villages for tourism in Mashhad). Master's thesis in rural development engineering, majoring in agricultural development, Payam Noor University.

Szabo, B. (2005). Rural tourism is an alternative income source for rural areas along the hortobagy. *Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 20 (11), 178-191.

Vaiper, M. A., Akhlagh, E. M., and Rafiee, A. A. (2014). The effect of social marketing on development of ecotourism, *Journal of Novel Applied Sciences*, 3(4), 376-381.

Zhong, L., Dengb, J., and Xiangc, B. (2008). Tourism development and the tourism area life-cycle model: A case study of Zhangjiajie national forest park, China. *Tourism Management*, 29: 841–856.

Ziaei, M. and Tarabian, P. (2010). Measuring the acceptable level of the adverse social effects of tourism on local communities in Iran in the study of rural settlements in the disturbed wetland area, *Geography (Scientific-Research Quarterly of the Iranian Geographical Society)*, (29): 205-225.