



Green Marketing in Community-Based Tourism: Strategies, Responses, Sustainability Outcomes, and Theoretical Foundations

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Abstrak

Artikel ini mengulas studi empiris tentang pemasaran hijau desa wisata, karena sering kali hanya dianggap sebagai aktivitas promosi dan bukan sebagai bagian integral dari pengembangan destinasi berkelanjutan. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi penentu utama, hasil utama, dan arah teoritis pemasaran hijau desa wisata. Metode yang digunakan adalah tinjauan literatur sistematis dengan kriteria penyaringan empiris saja. Setelah mengecualikan sumber konseptual, berbasis tinjauan, dan sumber non-empiris lainnya, 17 studi primer dipertahankan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa pemasaran hijau desa wisata efektif bila didukung oleh keberlanjutan operasional, partisipasi aktif masyarakat, kemampuan komunikasi digital, dan kolaborasi pemangku kepentingan. Strategi seperti label ramah lingkungan, branding ramah lingkungan, iklan lingkungan, penceritaan komunitas, komunikasi media sosial, promosi influencer, segmentasi pengunjung, dan branding destinasi yang transparan dikaitkan dengan kepercayaan hijau yang lebih kuat, citra destinasi yang lebih baik, niat kunjungan dan pembelian yang lebih tinggi, niat kunjungan berulang, dan perilaku wisatawan yang lebih bertanggung jawab terhadap lingkungan. Artikel ini berkontribusi dengan mengusulkan kerangka kerja integratif yang menghubungkan kemampuan komunitas, proposisi nilai hijau, saluran komunikasi, mediator psikologis, dan hasil keberlanjutan, sekaligus menyoroti perlunya pengukuran dampak longitudinal, verifikasi anti-greenwashing yang lebih kuat, analisis tata kelola komparatif, dan konsolidasi teoritis yang lebih besar.

Kata Kunci: Desa Wisata, *Digital Marketing*, *Green Marketing*, Pariwisata Berkelanjutan, Perilaku Wisatawan

Abstract

This article reviews empirical studies on green marketing in community-based tourism (CBT), as it is often treated merely as a promotional activity rather than an integral part of sustainable destination development. The study aims to identify the key determinants, major outcomes, and theoretical directions of green marketing in CBT. The method used is a systematic literature review with an empirical-only screening criterion. After excluding conceptual, review-based, and other non-empirical sources, 17 primary studies were retained. The findings show that green marketing in CBT is effective when supported by operational sustainability, active community participation, digital communication capability, and stakeholder collaboration. Strategies such as eco-labels, eco-branding, environmental advertising, community storytelling, social media communication, influencer promotion, visitor segmentation, and transparent destination branding are associated with stronger green trust, improved destination image, higher visit and purchase intention, repeat-visit intention, and more environmentally responsible tourist behavior. This article contributes by proposing an integrative framework linking community capability, green value propositions, communication channels, psychological mediators, and sustainability outcomes, while also highlighting the need for longitudinal impact measurement, stronger anti-greenwashing verification, comparative governance analysis, and greater theoretical consolidation.

Keywords: Tourism Village, *Digital Marketing*, *Green Marketing*, Sustainable Tourism, Tourist Behavior

INTRODUCTION

Community-based tourism (CBT) is commonly associated with a development model in which tourism benefits are expected to remain in the locality, involve local residents more directly, and support the stewardship of cultural and environmental resources (Lo & Janta, 2020). In this setting, tourism growth is not judged only by visitor numbers or revenue, but also by whether local people participate in decision-making, represent their place authentically, and receive tangible economic benefits (Ngo et al., 2018a; Yang & Bi, 2024). Under such conditions, sustainability communication becomes more than a branding exercise. CBT destinations must convince visitors that environmental and community values are embedded in the tourism experience rather than presented as symbolic claims (Hendrayani & Zen, 2025; Kurniawati & Kohar, 2025). This pressure has made green marketing a strategic concern for CBT destinations seeking to communicate sustainability credibly without separating the message from local practice.

The main problem is the credibility of green claims. In the CBT context, green marketing extends beyond eco-labels or short promotional slogans (Chin et al., 2018). It includes the design of low-impact tourism products, the visibility of waste-management and conservation practices, community-led storytelling, environmental interpretation, destination branding, social media communication, and relationship-building with tourists and institutional partners (Alhomaidd, 2025; Kilipiri et al., 2023; Kurniawati & Kohar, 2025). Literature shows that green claims are more persuasive and trusted when visitors can observe operational evidence, such as local sourcing, environmental management, participatory governance, or distinctive community experiences (Alhomaidd, 2025; Chin et al., 2018). The evidence, therefore, suggests that green marketing serves as a bridge between what a destination actually does and how it is represented to outsiders (Alhomaidd, 2025). Its effectiveness depends not only on persuasive messages, but also on the community's ability to demonstrate environmental commitment, coordinate among stakeholders, and deliver benefits that local residents regard as legitimate (Hendrayani & Zen, 2025; Ngo et al., 2018a).

Green marketing in the context of CBT can undeniably achieve sustainability outcomes, too. For the purposes of this review, sustainability outcomes are grouped into environmental, social, and economic dimensions. Environmental outcomes include reduced waste, greener operations, lower resource use, conservation awareness, and more responsible visitor behavior (Chang et al., 2025). Social outcomes include participation, empowerment, social cohesion, local legitimacy, and the preservation of cultural meaning within tourism development (Kurniawati & Kohar, 2025; Ngo et al., 2018a). Economic outcomes include competitive advantage, visit or revisit intention, local income generation, entrepreneurship, and reduced leakage from the community. This three-part definition is important because the empirical studies do not all measure sustainability in the same way. Some focus on tourist behavior and intention, while others focus on destination governance and community process. The three-dimensional definition allows the review to interpret green marketing in terms of multiple forms of value rather than reducing success to demand stimulation alone (Kurniawati & Kohar, 2025; Lo & Janta, 2020; Silva et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the literature remains dispersed across different methodological traditions, ranging from behavioral surveys and digital communication studies to qualitative fieldwork on collaboration and community development. Other than that, two gaps recur across this literature. First, tourism marketing outcomes and sustainability outcomes are often examined separately. Some studies focus on tourist-side variables such as segmentation, trust, concern, destination image, purchase intention, revisit intention, or environmentally responsible behavior (Alhomaidd, 2025; Chin et al., 2018; Hu et al., 2026; Lee & Jan, 2019; Sinsup & Phumsathan, 2025; Vilkaite-vaitone & Skackauskiene, 2026), whereas others focus on community participation, collaborative marketing, CSR support, digital capability, market design, or governance constraints at the destination level (Hendrayani & Zen, 2025; Kurniawati & Kohar, 2025; Ngo et al., 2018a). When these strands are not synthesized together, it becomes difficult to explain how operational sustainability, communication strategy, and psychological response interact in community-based settings. Second, theory use remains uneven. A small number of studies clearly draw on named frameworks such as the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), Customer Engagement Theory (CET), Attachment Theory, or the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model (Alhomaidd, 2025; Chang et al., 2025; Hu et al., 2026), while several case-based studies rely more loosely on stakeholder, participation, collaboration, or empowerment logics (Deeprasert & Yimprasert, 2023;

Hendrayani & Zen, 2025; Ngo et al., 2018a). Without clearer theoretical integration, the field risks accumulating disconnected findings rather than building a coherent explanation of green marketing in CBT.

Recent empirical literature also indicates that CBT-based sustainability communication should be supported by social entrepreneurship, community empowerment, stakeholder governance, and local resource-management capacity. Studies in Kenya, Vietnam, Iran, the Philippines, South Africa, and Indonesia show that community awareness, local social capital, conflict management, empowerment, and stakeholder role clarity influence whether tourism initiatives can translate sustainability narratives into equitable and credible destination practices (Curcija et al., 2019; Ghasemi et al., 2024; Juma & Khademi-Vidra, 2019; Musavengane & Kloppers, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2022; Rosalina et al., 2023; Roxas et al., 2020; Van Tuyen et al., 2023). This fragmentation is the reason the topic requires an SLR: the evidence is dispersed across methods, countries, and theoretical lenses, making it difficult to see how green communication, local practice, and tourist response work together.

Based on this argument, the first objective of this study is to identify the green marketing strategies most frequently discussed in relation to CBT and closely related community-oriented destinations. The second is to explain the organizational and behavioral mechanisms through which those strategies influence tourists, communities, and destination performance. The third is to identify which theories or theory-informed lenses are used in the empirical studies and how they are operationalized. The fourth is to highlight the research gaps that emerge from the empirical evidence base. The contribution of this article is threefold. Conceptually, it positions green marketing in CBT as an embedded socio-marketing capability rather than an isolated promotional variable. Theoretically, it connects consumer-behavior models such as TPB and S-O-R with organizational lenses such as stakeholder collaboration, participation, and empowerment. Practically, it offers an integrative framework that links community capability, visible green practice, green value propositions, communication channels, psychological mediators, and sustainability outcomes. By consolidating the empirical evidence, this review provides guidance for destination managers, community actors, policymakers, and future scholarship.

METHODOLOGY

This review uses a systematic design based on a seed-reference corpus extracted from Scopus-indexed articles on green marketing in community-based tourism. The initial map contained 77 references spanning tourism studies, marketing, sustainability, and community development. Because this wider set included journal articles, book chapters, proceedings, and contextual references, an explicit screening process was required before synthesis.

Studies were only included when they met four criteria (see Table 1 and Figure 1). First, they explicitly addressed green marketing, sustainable marketing, destination branding, green communication tools, digital promotion, or closely related constructs. Second, they were directly connected to CBT, rural or community destinations, ecotourism, or sustainable destinations with clear implications for community-based tourism. Third, sufficient abstract or full-text information was available to identify the research design, context, and main findings. Fourth, the study had to be a primary empirical contribution, such as a survey, qualitative field study, mixed-methods study, case study, model-development study with field or expert input, or another form of original data-based analysis.

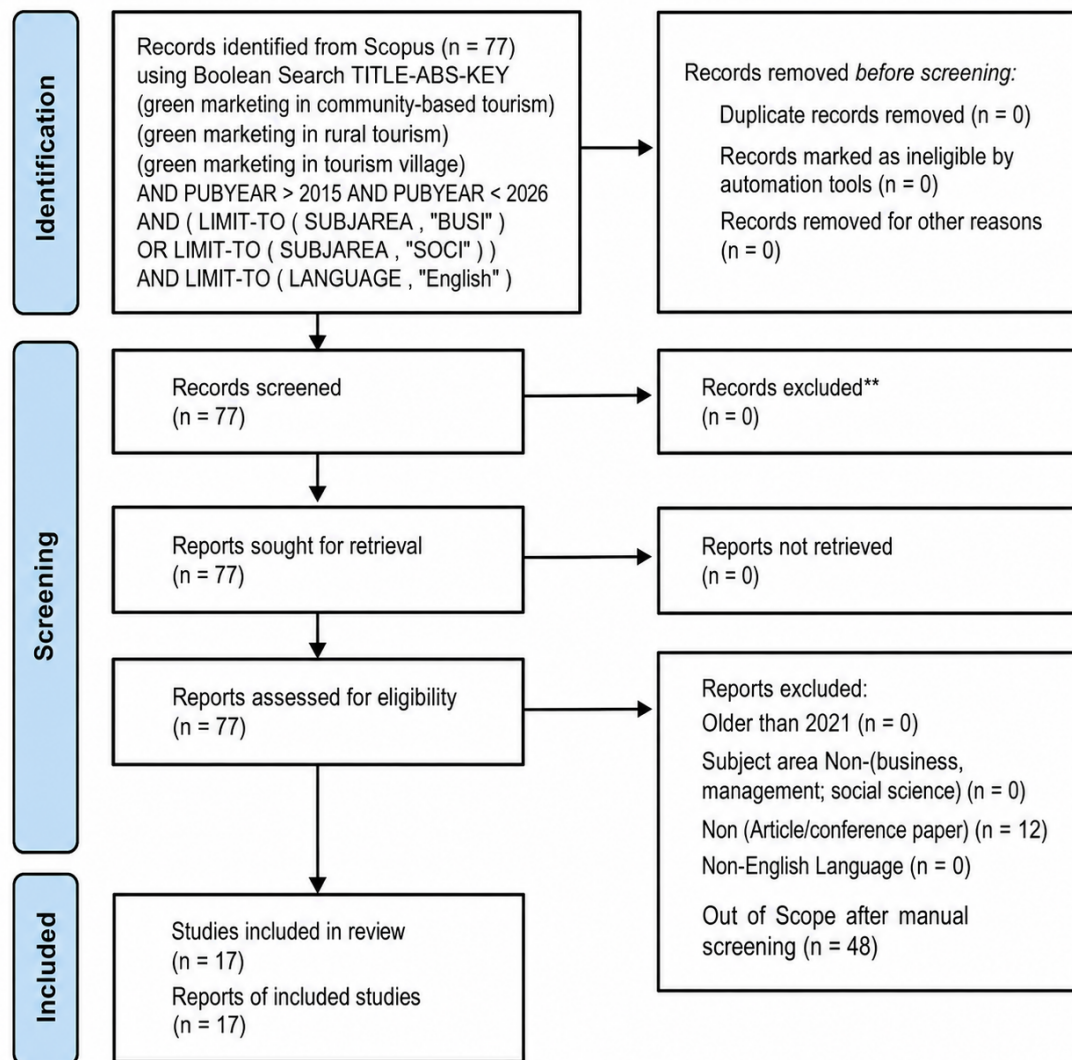


Figure 1. The PRISMA flow diagram detailing the screening and selection process of the literature.

Source: Compiled by the authors, 2026

Table 1. Review Protocol Used in the Revised Manuscript

Component	Operationalization
Seed corpus	77 references mapped in the attached source file.
First screened corpus	29 core studies retained in the broader pre-revision synthesis.
Additional exclusion rule in this revision	Systematic literature reviews, narrative reviews, conceptual or viewpoint papers, and other non-primary review-style sources were removed from the evidence base.
Final empirical corpus	17 primary empirical studies retained for close synthesis.
Inclusion focus	Green marketing, sustainable marketing communication, destination branding, digital promotion, tourist response, and CBT or community-oriented sustainable destinations.
Synthesis approach	Narrative-thematic synthesis supported by a structured evidence matrix with an added theory-lens field where identifiable.

Source: Compiled by the author, 2026

After screening, 17 empirical studies were retained for close analysis (see Table 2). The retained evidence base remains geographically concentrated in Asia and methodologically plural. The coding process was conducted in six stages: extraction of bibliographic and methodological information; open coding of reported strategies, mechanisms, and outcomes; grouping of codes into strategic, organizational, psychological, and theoretical categories; formation of cross-study themes; validation of themes against the evidence matrix; and discussion among authors to reconcile ambiguous classifications. This process preserved methodological diversity while allowing the review to identify recurring mechanisms across tourist-level and destination-level studies.

Table 2. Corpus Studies Included in the Analysis

Study	Title	Design	Context or Sample	Key Contribution	Empirical	Theory or Lens
Chin et al. (2018)	The Implementation of Green Marketing Tools in Rural Tourism: The Readiness of Tourists?	Quantitative	Rural tourism tourists, Malaysia	Tests eco-brand, eco-label, and environmental advertisement as green marketing tools linked to green purchasing readiness.		Explicit TPB
Ngo et al. (2018)	Collaborative marketing for the sustainable development of community-based tourism enterprises : voices from the field	Qualitative multi-case	30 interviews; 3 CBTEs in Vietnam	Identifies commercial, community-development, and balanced collaborative marketing approaches.		Collaborative or stakeholder lens
Lee and Jan (2019)	Market segmentation based on the environmentally responsible behaviors of community-based tourists: Evidence from Taiwan's community-based destinations	Quantitative segmentation	Tourists at CBT destinations in Taiwan	Segments CBT tourists based on environmentally responsible behavior.		Behavioral segmentation logic
Lo and Janta (2020)	Resident 's Perspective on Developing Community-Based Tourism – A Qualitative Study of Muen Ngoen Kong Community, Chiang Mai, Thailand	Qualitative	Residents in Muen Ngoen Kong, Chiang Mai, Thailand	Shows benefits and barriers of CBT from the resident perspective, including participation and leakage issues.		Participation or empowerment lens

Study	Title	Design	Context or Sample	Key Contribution	Empirical	Theory or Lens
da Silva et al. (2021)	Environmentally responsible behaviour, place authenticity and openness to experience for community-based tourism (CBT) destinations.	Quantitative	CBT destination visitors, Brazil	Shows environmentally responsible behavior and openness to experience influence intention to visit CBT destinations.		Behavior-behavioral disposition framing
Utarasakul and Kasemsawat (2021)	Model Of Environmental-Friendly Market for Community-Based Tourism Enterprises in Phatthalung Province, Thailand	Model-development study	Community markets and expert or field input in Thailand	Develops an environmental-friendly market model for CBT enterprises.		Operational market-design framework
Deeprase rt and Yimprasert (2023)	Developing Thailand's Koh Lad E-Tan as a sustainable community tourism destination.	Qualitative	Koh Lad E-Tan, Thailand; key informants and volunteer tourists	Identifies tourist targets and communication strategies for a sustainable community tourism destination.		Destination development lens
Kilipiri et al. (2023)	Social media and influencer marketing for promoting sustainable tourism destinations : the Instagram case	Social media study	Global sample	Shows influencers can positively shape sustainable destination choice.	Instagram	Influencer-communication lens
Yang and Bi (2024)	Marketing the Community-Based Eco-tourism for Thai and Chinese under the New Media Era for Local Authorities	Case study	Sapphaya Community and Thai-Chinese eco-tourism context	Links new media, local authority support, and community eco-tourism promotion.		Governance and communication lens
Kurniawati and Kohar (2025)	Green Technology as a Marketing Strategy in	Mixed methods	Pantai Tiga Warna, Indonesia	Shows digital platforms and visible green technology support competitive		Strategy-capability lens

Study	Title	Design	Context or Sample	Key Contribution	Empirical	Theory or Lens
	Improving Competitive Advantages Of Community-Based Tourism MSMEs in Indonesia (Sustainability of CMC Pantai Tiga Warna)			advantage and revisit intention.		
Sinsup and Phumsat han (2025)	Creative Tourist Segmentation for Nature-Based Tourism : A Social Media Framework for Sustainable Recreation Planning and Development in Thailand' s National Parks	Mixed methods	Thailand national parks; 1,133 tourists/respondents	Develops segmentation and media strategy for sustainable planning.	visitor and social recreation	Segmentation framework
Hendray ani et al. (2025)	Nglanggeran Village : A Model for Sustainable Tourism Through Multi-Stakeholder Engagement and Corporate Social Responsibility	Case study	Nglanggeran Village, Indonesia	Shows multi-stakeholder engagement and CSR strengthen sustainable tourism development.		Stakeholder and partnership lens
Chang et al. (2025)	Influencing eco-conscious travelers : The role of green marketing in promoting sustainable destinations.	Cross-sectional survey	317 tourists in Jiuzhaigou Valley, China	Shows green marketing communication influences visit intention via eco-friendly attitudes and destination trust; biospheric values moderate.		Theory-informed mediation and moderation
Alhomaid (2025)	Building Trust in Sustainable Journeys: The Interplay Between Green Marketing Green Brand Trust, and	Quantitative	882 valid tourist questionnaires	Shows green marketing influences purchase intention through brand engagement and green brand trust.		Theory-informed mediation

Study	Title	Design	Context or Sample	Key Contribution	Empirical	Theory or Lens
	Tourism Purchase Intentions					
Chen et al. (2025)	Influencing consumer perceptions in green tourism : criteria and strategies for effective destination branding	Prioritization study	Green tourism branding criteria and strategies; China	Ranks branding criteria and strategies for shaping green tourism consumer perceptions.		Branding-prioritization framework
Hu et al. (2026)	Sustainable marketing and tourists' sustainable behavior in South Korea: The roles of emotional value, connectedness to nature, and green consumption values	Quantitative	378 tourists in South Korea	Shows sustainable marketing affects sustainable behavior through emotional value and connectedness to nature; green consumption value moderates.		Theory-informed mediation and moderation
Vilkaite-Vaitone and Skackauskiene (2026)	Going Green : The Key to Winning Over the Next Generation of Travellers.	Quantitative	693 recent travellers to the Canary Islands, Spain	Shows perceived green marketing influences green purchasing behavior through green trust and green concern, with age as a boundary condition.		Explicit or strong S-O-R logic

Source: Compiled by the authors, 2026

For each included study, the review extracted the author(s), publication year, article title, research design, theory and/or theoretical lens, sample information, analytical approach, main findings, and novelty. The synthesis then proceeded in two linked stages. First, descriptive reading was used to identify dominant strategic, behavioral, organizational, and theoretical issues across the 17 empirical studies. Second, a narrative-thematic synthesis connected those findings into broader explanatory categories, especially the links among community capability, visible sustainability practice, digital communication, tourist segmentation, psychological mediation, and outcomes at tourist and destination levels. Particular attention was paid to whether the studies used explicit formal theories, relied on theory-informed constructs, or interpreted their findings through governance and empowerment lenses. This two-stage process preserved methodological diversity while producing a more coherent analytical structure.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Profile of the Empirical Evidence Base

The final corpus contains 17 studies. The publication window spans 2018 to 2026, with a clear concentration in recent years: eleven of the seventeen studies were published between 2023 and 2026 (see Figure 2). This pattern suggests that research on green marketing in CBT and closely related

community-oriented sustainable destinations has expanded alongside broader interest in sustainable tourism, digital transformation, and responsible consumption (Alhomaid, 2025; Kurniawati & Kohar, 2025; Ngo et al., 2018a; Sinsup & Phumsathan, 2025). The evidence base is methodologically diverse, including survey-based quantitative studies, qualitative fieldwork, case studies, mixed-methods research, social media studies, and model-development work informed by interviews, surveys, or expert input. Although the corpus is methodologically varied, it is narrower in evidentiary status because all retained sources are based on primary empirical material.

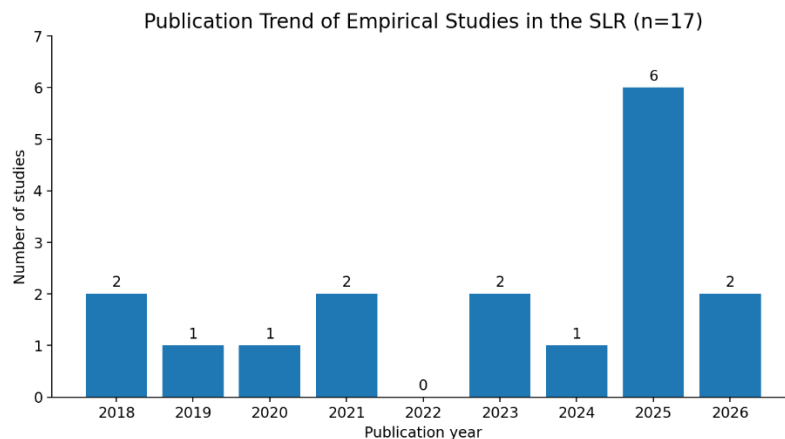


Figure 2. Publication trend of empirical studies

Source: compiled by the authors

Geographically, the strongest concentration remains in Asia, especially Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Taiwan, China, South Korea, and Thai-Chinese eco-tourism contexts. This matters because the literature is particularly rich in settings where local governance, nature-based attractions, social media use, and destination differentiation are tightly intertwined. At the same time, the retained studies examine two complementary units of analysis. One is the tourist as a decision-maker whose trust, concern, attitudes, values, emotional response, and behavioral intention can be measured (Chang et al., 2025; Lee & Jan, 2019b). The other is the destination or community enterprise as an organizational actor that must build collaborative marketing, digital presence, operational sustainability, and institutional support (Hendrayani & Zen, 2025; Vilkaite-vaitone & Skackauskiene, 2026; Yang & Bi, 2024). The combined evidence therefore supports a multi-level understanding of green marketing in CBT.

Table 3. Descriptive Profile of the Empirical Evidence Base

Dimension	Observed Pattern
Corpus size	17 primary empirical studies.
Publication window	2018-2026, with 11 of 17 studies published in 2023-2026.
Geographic concentration	Strong concentration in Asia, particularly Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Taiwan, China, South Korea, and Thai-Chinese eco-tourism contexts.
Common designs	Survey-based quantitative studies, qualitative fieldwork, case studies, mixed methods, social media studies, and model-development studies with empirical input.
Behavioral emphasis	Trust, concern, attitudes, emotional value, connectedness to nature, sustainable behavior, purchase intention, visit intention, and revisit intention.
Organizational emphasis	Collaborative marketing, community capability, CSR, digital communication, eco-market design, and destination branding criteria.
Theoretical pattern	A small formal-theory stream (especially TPB and S-O-R) plus broader theory-informed governance and segmentation lenses.

Source: Compiled by the authors, 2026

Green Marketing as Value Creation Rather Than Mere Promotion

Across the corpus, green marketing is most credible when it is tied to visible environmental benefits rather than presented as a purely symbolic message. The early rural tourism study by Chin et al. (2018) already treated eco-brand, eco-label, and environmental advertising as substantive marketing tools linked to green purchasing behavior, implying that these tools matter only when tourists regard them as relevant and believable (Chin et al., 2018). More recent empirical work strengthens this interpretation by showing that digital communication becomes more persuasive when it is linked to observable environmental practice, such as waste management, green technology, or destination-branding criteria that visitors can recognize (Chen et al., 2025; Kurniawati & Kohar, 2025). In other words, the evidence suggests that green marketing in CBT works best when communication is backed by operational substance. The message does not create sustainability on its own; rather, it translates enacted sustainability into forms that tourists can notice, interpret, and trust.

This finding has direct implications for community-based destinations. Community enterprises cannot rely on sustainability claims if the destination experience, resource management, and local participation do not support those claims (Chen et al., 2025). The mixed-methods case of Pantai Tiga Warna shows that communication through websites, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook was strengthened by environmental management practices that visitors could associate with the destination (Kurniawati & Kohar, 2025). Likewise, model-development and branding studies indicate that eco-friendly markets and green destination positioning require concrete criteria, visible practices, and coherent product differentiation rather than generic green language (Utarasakul & Sunandha, 2021). The empirical evidence therefore reframes green marketing as a process of value articulation grounded in real practice, not merely a creative promotional tactic.

Collaborative and Community-Centered Marketing Capability

A recurring theme in the empirical corpus is that green marketing in CBT is inherently collaborative. The multi-case study by Ngo et al. (2018) shows that community-based tourism enterprises in Vietnam adopt different collaborative marketing logics, ranging from commercially driven approaches to community-development-driven approaches and more balanced arrangements (Ngo et al., 2018a). This finding is important because it suggests that marketing in CBT is not simply a matter of message design or promotional skill. It is also a question of who participates in strategy, whose interests are prioritized, and how benefits and responsibilities are negotiated among community actors and outside partners. Marketing capability in CBT is therefore partly relational and institutional. Its credibility depends on how successfully communities coordinate with local authorities, NGOs, private partners, and intermediaries while maintaining local legitimacy.

Other case studies reinforce the same conclusion. The Nglanggeran village case demonstrates that multi-stakeholder engagement and strategically organized CSR can strengthen long-term destination sustainability by helping communities mobilize resources, address environmental and economic problems, and project a coherent identity (Hendrayani & Zen, 2025). The resident-centered study of Muen Ngoen Kong shows the issue from another angle: tourism development may generate benefits, but unresolved ownership conflicts, uneven participation, financial constraints, and leakage risks can weaken local support (Lo & Janta, 2020). Together, these studies indicate that community participation is not a decorative background condition. It is an enabling capability for credible green marketing because it shapes who has a voice, who can verify sustainability claims, and whether the destination's public image corresponds to local experience.

Digital Communication, Social Media, and Visitor Segmentation

The studies show a clear shift toward digitally mediated green marketing. In the Indonesian Pantai Tiga Warna case, websites and social media channels contributed to growing visitation and stronger repeat-visit intention when combined with visible eco-tourism practices and waste-management rules (Kurniawati & Kohar, 2025). The Thai and Chinese new-media case similarly emphasizes that local authorities and community eco-tourism initiatives must connect digital communication with local economic and environmental narratives rather than treating online promotion as a detached media exercise. These findings suggest that digital channels do more than distribute information (Yang & Bi, 2024). They shape the visibility, emotional tone, and social reach of sustainability narratives, and they

can help smaller community destinations amplify their distinctiveness when the underlying sustainability practice is tangible.

A second digital pattern concerns audience differentiation. The literature indicates that communication becomes more effective when content is matched to the audience's profile and behavior. Lee and Jan (2019) show that CBT tourists are not homogeneous; they can be segmented into distinct clusters based on environmentally responsible behavior, with different strategic implications (Lee & Jan, 2019b). Sinsup and Phumsathan (2025) similarly develop a social-media-oriented segmentation framework for nature-based tourism (Sinsup & Phumsathan, 2025), while Kilipiri et al. (2023) show that Instagram influencers can shape sustainable destination choice (Kilipiri et al., 2023). Taken together, these studies suggest that green marketing in CBT is moving away from generic destination promotion toward segmented communication that considers tourist values, media habits, and behavioral readiness. This shift is especially important for community destinations with limited budgets because segmentation can make communication more efficient and more relevant.

This digital turn is consistent with newer green-marketing studies showing that social media, digital green campaigns, eco-labels, green advertising, and clustering-based visitor segmentation can strengthen sustainable destination positioning when they build green trust, green brand image, pro-environmental behavior, and revisit intention (Akram et al., 2024; Gheorghe et al., 2023; Hysa et al., 2022; Sanjaya et al., 2024; Vicente, 2024). These findings strengthen the argument that digital marketing in CBT should not only increase exposure but also translate sustainability evidence into credible and behavior-shaping messages.

Psychological Mechanisms Shaping Tourist Response

The quantitative portion of the empirical corpus provides a more detailed explanation of why green marketing matters. Its dominant message is that the effect of green marketing is usually indirect. Marketing practices influence tourist behavior through psychological mediators such as green trust, green concern, eco-friendly attitudes, emotional value, connectedness to nature, brand engagement, and green consumption value (Chang et al., 2025; Hu et al., 2026; Silva et al., 2021; Vilkaite-Vaitone & Tamuliene, 2024). This means that green marketing works not simply because tourists receive information, but because that information changes how they evaluate the destination, how morally appropriate it appears, how emotionally resonant it feels, and whether it becomes worthy of trust (Alhomaïd, 2025). The presence of these mediating mechanisms is one of the strongest and most consistent findings in the retained empirical literature.

Several studies also show that these mechanisms are conditional rather than universal. Chang et al. (2025) find that eco-friendly attitudes and green destination trust help translate green marketing communication into intention to visit sustainable destinations, while biospheric values moderate the process (Chang et al., 2025). Alhomaïd (2025) shows that green brand trust and brand engagement mediate the effect of green marketing on tourism purchase intentions (Alhomaïd, 2025). Hu et al. (2026) demonstrate that emotional value and connectedness to nature mediate the relationship between sustainable marketing and tourists' sustainable consumption behavior, with green consumption value acting as a moderator (Hu et al., 2026). Vilkaite-Vaitone and Skackauskiene (2026) add that green trust and green concern can mediate perceptions of green marketing, with age operating as a contextual boundary condition (Vilkaite-Vaitone & Tamuliene, 2024). Together, these studies show that tourist response depends on both message content and the psychological architecture through which that content is interpreted.

Theoretical Foundations Used in The Retained Empirical Studies

The synthesis shows that explicit formal theory is present, but unevenly distributed across the 17 retained studies. Only a small number of articles clearly identify a named formal theory and use it to organize variables, hypotheses, or explanatory pathways. The clearest case is Chin et al. (2018), which uses the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to explain how green marketing tools such as eco-brand, eco-label, and environmental advertising relate to green purchasing behavior in rural tourism. In that study, TPB supplies a recognizable behavioral logic by connecting marketing stimuli to attitudes, intention-related reasoning, and behavioral readiness. Its importance lies in this formal clarity: it shows how green marketing can be embedded in a theory of action rather than treated as a descriptive collection of tools (C.-H. Chin et al., 2018).

A second clear theoretical stream appears in recent survey-based work that adopts S-O-R logic or theory-informed mediation structures. In these studies, green or sustainable marketing functions as the stimulus; trust, concern, attitudes, emotional value, or connectedness to nature function as organism-level internal states; and purchase intention, visit intention, or sustainable behavior function as the response. This logic is most visible in (Hu et al., 2026; Vilkaite-vaitone & Skackauskiene, 2026), and it is strongly echoed by the mediator-moderator structures in (Alhomaïd, 2025; Chang et al., 2025; Hu et al., 2026). These studies operationalize theory through structural relationships among latent constructs, typically estimated with PLS-SEM, rather than through descriptive observation alone. Their contribution is to clarify the internal mechanisms by which green communication becomes behaviorally meaningful.

Other theories that come up from the corpus are Attachment Theory and Customer Engagement Theory (CET). Attachment Theory is applied to emphasize the emotional and psychological connections that tourists develop with brands, providing a perspective for understanding how brand engagement and green brand trust function as key mediating factors in the decision-making process (Alhomaïd, 2025). On the other hand, CET serves as an umbrella term for green marketing as an engagement initiative that can build stronger connections with eco-friendly destinations (Chang et al., 2025).

The qualitative and case-based studies rely less on a single named theory and more on broader interpretive lenses. Ngo et al. (2018), Lo and Janta (2020), Yang and Bi (2024), and Hendrayani et al. (2025) mobilize stakeholder, collaborative governance, participation, and community-empowerment logics to explain how tourism development, green positioning, and destination communication depend on local voice, institutional support, and negotiated legitimacy (Hendrayani & Zen, 2025; Lo & Janta, 2020; Ngo et al., 2018b; Yang & Bi, 2024). In these studies, theory is used less to estimate causal paths and more to explain how actors coordinate, how benefits are distributed, and why community-rooted claims gain or lose credibility. Theory use is therefore interpretive and organizational rather than strictly positivist. This matters because CBT requires explanation at more than one level: visitor cognition is important, but so are community processes and institutional arrangements.

The remaining studies use theory more lightly. Segmentation studies such as Lee and Jan (2019) and Sinsup and Phumsathan (2025) do not primarily test a grand theory, but they still rely on behavior-based and audience-differentiation logics that are theoretically meaningful for marketing practice. Chen et al. (2025) use a prioritization framework for green destination branding, while Kurniawati and Kohar (2025) emphasize green technology and digital communication as strategy-linked capabilities. These studies are theory-informed even when they do not foreground a single named theory. The overall pattern suggests that the field contains active constructs and active models, but still lacks a fully consolidated theoretical center. In practical terms, the empirical literature already offers building blocks for theory development, yet those blocks remain distributed across behavioral, organizational, branding, and communication traditions.

Table 4. Theoretical Lenses and Theory-Informed Models Used Across the Retained Empirical Studies

Theory or Lens	Representative Studies	How It is Used	Implication for CBT Green Marketing
Formal Theories			
Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)	Chin et al. (2018)	Used as an explicit behavioral framework connecting green marketing tools to green purchasing behavior or readiness.	Shows how eco-labels, eco-branding, and environmental advertising can be interpreted through attitude-intention logic.
Attachment Theory	(Alhomaïd, 2025)	Used to explain how green marketing influences eco-conscious purchasing decisions.	It describes how individuals form strong emotional bonds with brands they view as reliable, aligned with

Theory or Lens	Representative Studies	How It is Used	Implication for CBT Green Marketing
Formal Theories			
			their values, and emotionally satisfying. In the context of green tourism, such attachment typically develops through consistent, meaningful interactions with brands that reflect consumers' environmental values and sense of identity.
Customer Engagement Theory (CET)	(Chang et al., 2025)	Serves as an umbrella term for green marketing as an engagement initiative that can build stronger connections with eco-friendly destinations	For CBT destinations, green marketing should not just say, "our destination is eco-friendly." It should create real engagement with tourists. That means marketing should invite visitors into the sustainability story of the community through local conservation activities, waste reduction programs, cultural-ecological tours, or community-led environmental education
Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) logic	Vilkaite-Vaitone and Skackauskiene (2026); related logic in Chang et al. (2025), Alhomaïd (2025), and Hu et al. (2026)	Green or sustainable marketing acts as stimulus; trust, concern, attitudes, emotional value, or connectedness to nature act as organism-level states; intention or behavior acts as response.	Clarifies the internal psychological pathway through which communication affects sustainable tourist response.
Organizational Lens			
Theory-informed mediation and moderation models	Chang et al. (2025); Alhomaïd (2025); Hu et al. (2026)	Operationalized through PLS-SEM with mediators such as trust, engagement, attitudes, and emotional value, and moderators such as biospheric values, age, or green consumption value.	Shows that green marketing effects are conditional and mechanism-based rather than direct and universal.
Stakeholder, collaborative governance, and empowerment lenses	Ngo et al. (2018); Lo and Janta (2020); Yang and Bi (2024); Hendrayani et al. (2025)	Used interpretively to explain participation, partnership, local legitimacy, CSR support, and coordination among actors.	Demonstrates that green marketing credibility in CBT depends on collective action and local governance, not just promotional skill.

Theory or Lens	Representative Studies	How It is Used	Implication for CBT Green Marketing
Formal Theories			
Managerial Framework			
Behavioral segmentation and audience differentiation logic	Lee and Jan (2019); Sinsup and Phumsathan (2025); Kilipiri et al. (2023)	Used to classify visitors by environmentally responsible behavior, activity preference, or media influence patterns.	Supports targeted communication rather than generic sustainability messaging.
Branding and prioritization frameworks	Chen et al. (2025); Kurniawati and Kohar (2025)	Used to identify branding criteria, strategic priorities, and green technology or digital communication capabilities.	Helps translate sustainability practices into marketable, evidence-based destination positioning.

Source: Compiled by the authors, 2026

Sustainability Outcomes and Persistent Barriers

The literature attributes several benefits to green marketing in CBT and closely related community-oriented destinations. At the tourist level, the most commonly reported outcomes are stronger destination image, higher green trust, more favorable attitudes, greater visit or purchase intention, repeat-visit intention, and more sustainable consumption or environmentally responsible behavior (Chang et al., 2025; Hu et al., 2026; Kurniawati & Kohar, 2025). At the destination and community levels, the studies suggest enhanced visibility, improved differentiation, and greater local economic participation when marketing aligns with community practice (Alhomaidd, 2025; Silva et al., 2021). These outcomes indicate that green marketing can support both market performance and sustainability performance, but only when communication is tied to visible operational substance and credible community involvement.

At the same time, the empirical evidence shows that these outcomes are not automatic. Barriers repeatedly appear in the form of weak governance, uneven participation, low digital literacy, infrastructure limitations, financial constraints, ownership conflict, leakage risk, and the possibility that sustainability claims may outpace actual practice (Hendrayanti & Terini, 2021; Lo & Janta, 2020; Ngo et al., 2018a; Yang & Bi, 2024). These barriers are especially visible in the qualitative and case-based studies, which show that community support and stakeholder coordination remain fragile when institutional arrangements are weak. In that sense, green marketing can magnify both strengths and weaknesses. It can help communities communicate value more effectively, but it can also expose gaps between narrative and practice if operational capability and governance do not keep pace with the message.

The literature further confirms that barriers in CBT are multi-dimensional rather than purely promotional. Participation does not automatically produce empowerment, and community-based destinations often require deliberate mechanisms for conflict management, stakeholder coordination, capacity building, and benefit distribution before green positioning can be sustained (Curcija et al., 2019; Gutierrez, 2023; Lee & Jan, 2019b, 2019a; Zielinski et al., 2020). This reinforces the need to treat green marketing as part of destination governance and community capability building.

Table 5. Thematic Synthesis of the Retained Empirical Literature

Theme	Representative Empirical Evidence	Main Synthesis	Remaining Gap
Strategic foundation	Chin et al. (2018); Utarasakul and Kasemsawat (2021); Kurniawati and Kohar (2025); Chen et al. (2025)	Green marketing works best when embedded in product design, visible practice, branding criteria, and operational substance.	Need stronger measurement of actual environmental performance.
Community capability	Ngo et al. (2018); Lo and Janta (2020); Hendrayani et al. (2025)	Participation, legitimacy, and stakeholder coordination are enabling capabilities for credible green marketing.	Need comparative evidence on governance models, conflict management, and benefit distribution.
Digital communication	Yang and Bi (2024); Kurniawati and Kohar (2025); Kilipiri et al. (2023); Sinsup and Phumsathan (2025)	Digital channels expand reach and engagement when aligned with visible sustainability practice and audience segmentation.	Need more evidence on digital literacy, platform differences, and community-level adoption capacity.
Tourist psychology	da Silva et al. (2021); Chang et al. (2025); Alhomaid (2025); Hu et al. (2026); Vilkaite-Vaitone and Skackauskiene (2026)	Trust, attitudes, affect, and values are key pathways from message exposure to behavior.	Need longitudinal tests linking intention to actual behavior and repeat visitation.
Outcomes and barriers	Lo and Janta (2020); Kurniawati and Kohar (2025); Hendrayani et al. (2025)	Benefits include trust, image, intention, visibility, and competitive differentiation, but barriers remain structural and institutional.	Need better anti-greenwashing indicators and stronger evidence on equity and leakage reduction.

Source: Compiled by the author, 2026

Based on the thematic synthesis, green marketing in community-based tourism can be understood as a multi-level process that links community-side capability, visible sustainability practices, communication strategy, tourist psychology, and sustainability-related outcomes. The reviewed studies show that green marketing is not effective when treated only as promotion, because its credibility depends on community participation, stakeholder coordination, operational sustainability, and transparent communication (Kurniawati & Kohar, 2025; Lo & Janta, 2020; Ngo et al., 2018b). In this context, green marketing becomes a bridge between what the destination actually practices and how those practices are communicated to visitors through branding, storytelling, digital platforms, and green signals (C. H. Chin et al., 2018; Kilipiri et al., 2023; Yang & Bi, 2024). Figure 3 presents an integrative framework that summarizes these relationships and clarifies how green marketing operates from internal destination capability to tourist response and final outcomes.



Figure 3. Integrative Framework of Green Marketing in Community-Based Tourism (CBT)

Source: Developed by the authors based on the systematic literature review synthesis, 2026.

Figure 2 illustrates that green marketing in CBT begins with two foundational elements: community capability and governance, and visible green practices. Community capability includes participation, stakeholder involvement, CSR support, and local legitimacy, while visible green practices include waste management, green technology, local sourcing, and low-impact visitor rules (Hendrayani & Zen, 2025; Lo & Janta, 2020; Ngo et al., 2018b). These two elements form the basis of a credible green value proposition. This value proposition is then communicated through eco-labels, eco-branding, storytelling, influencer communication, and social media, while also being adjusted to visitor segments based on ecological values, media habits, and behavioral readiness (C. H. Chin et al., 2018; Kilipiri et al., 2023; Lee & Jan, 2019b; Sinsup & Phumsathan, 2025). These communication and segmentation strategies influence tourists' psychological responses, including trust, concern, attitudes, emotional value, and a sense of connectedness to nature (Alhomaïd, 2025; Vilkaite-vaitone & Skackauskiene, 2026). In turn, these responses contribute to outcomes such as visit, purchase, and revisit intentions, green behavior, and competitive advantage.

Thus, the empirical evidence supports an integrative interpretation of green marketing in CBT. Community capability, stakeholder coordination, and visible sustainability practices shape the destination's green value proposition (Ngo et al., 2018a). That value proposition is then translated through branding, certification signals, digital media, storytelling, influencer communication, and visitor segmentation (Hu et al., 2026; Kurniawati & Kohar, 2025; Lee & Jan, 2019b). These communication processes influence trust, concern, attitudes, emotional value, connectedness to nature, and related internal states, which in turn contribute to visit intention, purchase intention, revisit intention, sustainable behavior, and destination competitiveness (Alhomaïd, 2025; Chang et al., 2025). This overall chain is moderated by contextual conditions such as audience profile, age, environmental values, digital capability, resource availability, and governance quality. Green marketing in CBT should therefore be understood as a connected system of organizational capability, communication strategy, and tourist psychology.

The corpus also makes clear where the evidence is strongest and where it remains thin. Green marketing is most persuasive when it is linked to community-rooted practice, visible sustainability signals, credible stakeholder arrangements, targeted digital communication, and clearly modeled psychological mediators (Chang et al., 2025; Hendrayani & Zen, 2025; Kurniawati & Kohar, 2025). By contrast, longitudinal environmental outcomes, distributional equity, and cross-context comparison remain less developed than intention-based outcomes. The stricter empirical-only screening strengthens evidentiary consistency and makes these gaps easier to identify.

Several theoretical families stand out. The first is the consumer-behavior family, which includes TPB, S-O-R logic, others are Attachment Theory, and CET, and the rests are related mediator-moderator models centered on trust, attitudes, values, and affect (Alhomaïd, 2025; Chang et al., 2025; C.-H. Chin et al., 2018; Vilkaite-vaitone & Skackauskiene, 2026). The second is the community-governance family, which includes stakeholder, collaborative, participation, and empowerment lenses used to explain how local legitimacy and inter-organizational coordination shape destination credibility (Hu et al., 2026; Lo & Janta, 2020). These two families should not be treated as competing explanations. Green marketing in CBT works through both visitor-side cognition and community-side coordination, so future theory building will be strongest when it connects the two levels in a single explanatory model.

CONCLUSION

This review demonstrates that green marketing in CBT is effective only when it is embedded in genuine community participation, operational sustainability, and transparent communication. Across the reviewed studies, green marketing is consistently shown not as a mere promotional device, but as an integrated mechanism linking community capacity, visible sustainability practices, digital communication, destination differentiation, and tourist responses. Accordingly, the strength of green marketing in CBT lies less in the attractiveness of sustainability claims than in the credibility of their implementation. The review also advances several theoretical implications. First, green marketing in CBT should be understood as an embedded socio-marketing capability rather than an isolated promotional variable. Sustainability messages become persuasive only when they are supported by community-recognized practices and by the organizational capacity to deliver on environmental promises. Second, tourist behavior models in this context gain stronger explanatory power when trust, environmental concern, attitudes, emotional value, connectedness to nature, and biospheric or green consumption values are treated as mediating or moderating mechanisms rather than peripheral constructs.

SUGGESTIONS

Practical Suggestions

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that green marketing should begin with operational integrity rather than promotional intensity. Waste management, low-impact visitor rules, local sourcing, community participation, and transparent standards need to be established before sustainability claims are amplified. Communication is most effective when it renders existing practices visible, understandable, and credible to visitors. In addition, communication strategies should be segmented and platform-specific, with messages tailored to different visitor groups and supported by credible sustainability signals. Policymakers and supporting institutions likewise play an important role in strengthening digital capabilities, stakeholder coordination, and evidence-based branding, particularly in CBT destinations with limited resources.

Theoretical Suggestions

Several priorities for future research emerge from this review. A first priority is stronger outcome measurement. While much of the existing literature focuses on intentions, attitudes, trust, and image, future studies should pay greater attention to observable outcomes such as waste reduction, energy savings, repeat visitation, local spending, and leakage reduction. A second priority is expanding comparative and longitudinal designs to determine which green marketing mechanisms are context-specific and which are generalizable across destinations, governance arrangements, and visitor segments. A third priority is the development of stronger anti-greenwashing verification tools, including indicators of transparency, evidence quality, community-based verification, and consistency between sustainability claims and operational practice. This is particularly important in CBT, where misleading claims may damage not only destination reputation but also community livelihoods.

Overall, this review suggests that the future of green marketing in CBT depends on stronger theoretical integration, more rigorous measurement, deeper institutional collaboration, and more credible sustainability communication. For scholars, the field offers substantial opportunities to build multilevel frameworks connecting community governance and tourist behavior. For practitioners, the

central lesson is clear: green marketing creates durable value only when sustainability is not merely communicated, but visibly practiced, socially validated, and consistently sustained

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