

EXPLORING COLLABORATIVE MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH IN TEA TOURISM: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

ISTRAŽIVANJE KOLABORATIVNIH MARKETINŠKIH STRATEGIJA ZA ODRŽIVI RAST U ČAJNOM TURIZMU: SUSTAVNI PREGLED LITERATURE



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Review

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper investigates how collaborative marketing strategies shape the tea tourism industry, promote sustainable development, and improve destination competitiveness. It addresses gaps in the literature by offering detailed insights into the role of collaborative marketing as part of industry development, sustainable practices, and destination appeal.

Methodology – A systematic literature review of 52 peer-reviewed articles was conducted, including 42 written on tea tourism between 2006 and 2024 and 10 on market orientation theory dating from 1990–2022. Key themes and findings were identified and analyzed to understand the impact of collaborative marketing strategies.

Findings and implications – The research highlights the pivotal role of collaborative efforts within the Destination Marketing System (DMS) framework and market-oriented approaches in tea tourism. It identifies a gap in the application of market-driving or collaborative

Sažetak

Svrha U radu se istražuje kako kolaborativne marketinške strategije oblikuju industriju čajnog turizma, promiču održivi razvoj i poboljšavaju konkurentnost destinacije. Popunjavaju se istraživački jazovi u literaturi ponudom detaljnih uvida u ulogu kolaborativnog marketinga unutar razvoja industrije, održivih praksi i privlačnosti destinacije.

Metodološki pristup Proveden je sustavni pregled literature koji je obuhvatio 52 recenzirana članka uključujući 42 o čajnom turizmu u razdoblju od 2006. do 2024. godine i 10 o teoriji tržišne orijentacije u razdoblju od 1990. do 2022. godine. Da bi se shvatio utjecaj kolaborativnih marketinških strategija, identificirane su i analizirane ključne teme i nalazi.

Rezultati i implikacije Istraživanje ističe ključnu ulogu kolaborativnih napora unutar okvira Destinacijskog marketinškog sustava (DMS) i tržišno orijentiranih pristupa u čajnom turizmu. Identificira jaz u primjeni strategija upravljanja tržištem ili kolaborativnog upravljanja trži-

market-driving strategies and suggests future research directions. Stakeholders can leverage insights to craft effective marketing strategies, integrate sustainable practices, and foster collaboration, thereby enhancing destination attractiveness and competitiveness.

Limitations – The study is limited by its reliance on the existing literature and potential biases in article selection. Its scope is confined to peer-reviewed journals within the specified timeframe, which may affect the generalizability of the findings.

Originality – This study contributes by synthesizing extant research on tea tourism marketing strategies within a comprehensive framework encompassing the DMS and market orientation theory, offering valuable guidance for academics, practitioners, and policymakers.

Keywords: tea tourism, collaborative marketing, Destination Marketing System (DMS), market orientation theory, sustainable growth, stakeholder collaboration

štem te predlaže buduće smjerove istraživanja. Dionici- ma se pruža mogućnost korištenja ovih uvida za stvaranje učinkovitih marketinških strategija, integraciju održivih praksi i poticanje suradnje, čime se jača privlačnost i konkurentnost destinacije.

Ograničenja Ograničenja rada proizlaze iz oslanjanja na postojeću literaturu i potencijalnih pristranosti u odabiru članaka. Opseg je ograničen na recenzirane časopise unutar navedenog vremenskog okvira, što može utjecati na generalizaciju rezultata.

Doprinos Studija doprinosi sintezom postojećih istraživanja o marketinškim strategijama u čajnom turizmu unutar sveobuhvatnog okvira koji obuhvaća DMS i teoriju tržišne orijentacije nudeći vrijedne smjernice znanstvenicima, praktičarima i kreatorima politike.

Gljučne riječi: čajni turizam, kolaborativni marketing, destinacijski marketinški sustav (DMS), teorija tržišne orijentacije, održivi razvoj, kolaboracija dionika

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Tea tourism is an emerging niche within the global tourism industry that offers visitors immersive experiences centered around the history, heritage, and consumption of tea (Aslam & Jolliffe, 2015; Lin & Wen, 2018; Bohne, 2021). According to Jolliffe (2003), tea tourism is defined as “tourism that is motivated by an interest in the history, traditions, and consumption of the beverage, tea.” This form of tourism includes a variety of components such as visits to tea gardens, plantations, and factories, as well as experiences in tea museums, exhibits, tours, festivals, and retail environments (Jolliffe & Aslam, 2009). Tea tourism stands out due to its integration of cultural and historical significance with sustainable practices that support local economies. It serves as a key vehicle for cultural preservation and economic development by highlighting traditional tea cultivation and consumption practices while promoting sustainable tourism practices (Lin & Wen, 2018; Bohne, 2021).

While prior research has examined tea tourism within broader tourism contexts, including integration with tourism activities and marketing elements, there is a notable scarcity of comprehensive analyses focused on marketing strategies specific to tea tourism (Su et al., 2019; Xu et al., 2022). This gap underscores the need for research on how stakeholder collaboration and sustainable practices can be integrated into marketing strategies to enhance the growth and resilience of tea tourism (Cheng et al., 2012; Mondal & Samaddar, 2021; Pike & Page, 2014).

1.2. Importance of marketing strategies in tea tourism

Tea tourism, characterized by its cultural heritage, historical significance, and commitment to sustainability, demands specialized marketing strategies distinct from other forms of tourism like wine tourism. While wine tourism emphasizes the production and enjoyment of wine, tea tourism offers a broader range of experiences,

focusing on cultural traditions, social practices, and environmental stewardship (Jolliffe & Aslam, 2009; Jill, 2019).

To attract diverse tourists and support sustainable growth, tea tourism must highlight its cultural and environmental elements. Unlike wine tourism’s focus on sensory experiences in vineyards (Santos et al., 2019), tea tourism strategies should promote tea ceremonies, educational workshops, and tea’s role in local traditions and sustainability (Jolliffe & Aslam, 2009).

Effective marketing also requires collaboration between local communities, tea producers, and tourism operators (Naipaul et al., 2009; Pike & Page, 2014). This shift from traditional product-focused marketing to relationship-building (Vargo & Lusch, 2004) aligns with tea tourism’s unique dynamics, enhancing destination competitiveness and stakeholder cooperation.

Despite its importance, there remains a gap in cohesive marketing strategies for tea tourism (Su et al., 2019; Xu et al., 2022; Yilmaz & Kumar Dixit, 2023; Bohne, 2021), which threatens sustainable development efforts. While existing research offers some insights, the fragmented discourse (Chen et al., 2021) highlights the need for a comprehensive investigation of collaborative marketing strategies to fully realize tea tourism’s potential.

1.3. Theoretical underpinnings

This study draws upon two fundamental theoretical frameworks—the Destination Marketing System (DMS) framework and Market Orientation Theory—to inform the researcher’s investigation of collaborative marketing strategies in tea tourism destinations.

The DMS Framework offers a comprehensive lens for understanding the intricacies of destination marketing, highlighting the interconnectedness of stakeholders within a destination (du Rand & Heath, 2006; Sigala, 2014). By embracing the DMS framework, the researcher aims to analyze how collaborative marketing initiatives among stakeholders contribute to sustainable

growth and enhanced visitor experiences in tea tourism destinations.

Market Orientation Theory, deeply rooted in marketing management literature, is examined from two seminal perspectives: as a guiding behavior, emphasizing the critical role of generating, disseminating, and responding to market intelligence; and as a cultural aspect, prioritizing the creation and maintenance of superior customer value, encompassing customer orientation, competitor orientation, and inter-functional coordination. This theory serves as a basis for improving market performance, with applicability across diverse industries (Karlíček, Chytková, Tyll & Mohelská, 2014; Snoj, Gabrijan & Milfelner, 2010; Kohli & Jaworski, 1990; Narver & Slater, 1990; Kumar et al., 2011).

Building upon foundational theories of market orientation, contemporary discourse emphasizes two pivotal strategies: market-driven and market-driving approaches (Stathakopoulos et al., 2022). Market-driven strategies respond to existing market conditions and consumer needs by adapting offerings accordingly. Conversely, market-driving strategies take a proactive stance, shaping new market opportunities and driving industry evolution through innovative approaches (Vlašić et al., 2022; Humphreys & Carpenter, 2018).

Jaworski et al. (2000) advocate for a balanced approach, emphasizing the integration of short-term market-driven actions with long-term strategies to effectively reshape markets. Additionally, Vlašić et al. (2022) suggest that while market-driven strategies were once advantageous, they are now perceived to be con-

ventional and no longer guarantee enduring success. In contrast, market-driving approaches are highlighted as having greater potential for long-term success and competitive advantage. Furthermore, market-driving strategies, as emphasized by Maciel and Fischer (2020) and Humphreys and Carpenter (2018), entail collaborative endeavors among stakeholders to deliberately influence market dynamics and attain sustainable competitive advantage.

In the realm of sustainable tourism, Sheth and Parvatiyar (2021) highlight the importance of integrating market-driving strategies through stakeholder collaboration. This aligns with Stathakopoulos et al. (2022), who examine the implications of such strategies at both firm and market levels, moving beyond reactive measures and collectively advancing sustainability goals while positively impacting the market.

2. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY TO THE REVIEW

2.1. Methodology

To comprehensively investigate tea tourism marketing strategies, this study employed a systematic review methodology aligned with the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines (Moher et al., 2009). The PRISMA approach facilitated a structured, transparent, and reproducible systematic review process, encompassing four key stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion (Table 1).

TABLE 1: Methodological overview

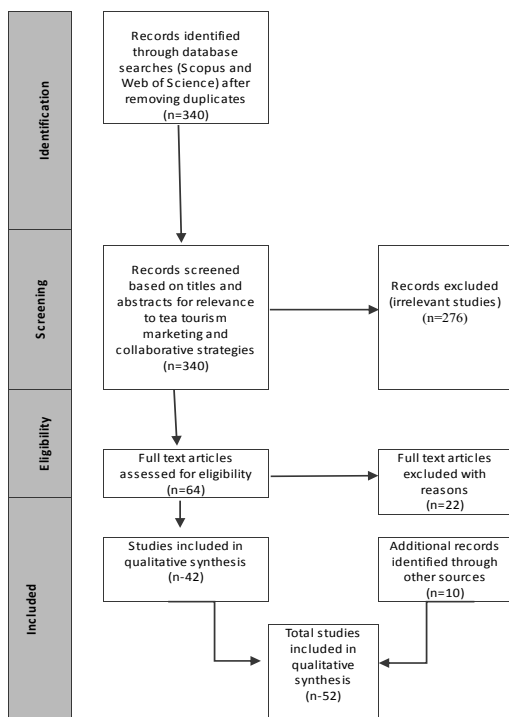
Step	Description
Step 1: Identification	A comprehensive search was conducted in bibliographic databases, Web of Science and Scopus, for studies published between 2006 and 2024. Web of Science and Scopus were selected as primary databases due to their extensive coverage of high-quality, peer-reviewed research articles across various fields, including tourism and marketing. Keywords used included “tea tourism marketing,” “agro-tourism marketing, ² and 2tea tourism marketing strategy.” The search identified 340 studies after removing duplicates. Titles, abstracts, and keywords were gathered for further review.
Step 2: Screening	The titles, abstracts, and keywords of the initial 340 studies were screened to determine their relevance to the research focus on tea tourism marketing and collaborative strategies. During this screening process, studies that did not meet the inclusion criteria—specifically those focusing solely on tea production or selling rather than marketing and collaboration—were excluded. This filtering resulted in the exclusion of 276 studies, leaving a refined sample of 64 articles for the next stage.
Step 3: Eligibility	Full-text reviews were conducted for the 64 articles that advanced from the screening stage. Each article was evaluated against clearly defined eligibility criteria, which included methodological rigor, relevance to collaborative marketing strategies, and alignment with the research focus on tea tourism. Following this thorough review, 42 studies were retained for in-depth analysis. The remaining 22 articles were excluded because they did not meet the predefined eligibility criteria. This approach ensured that the final selection of studies was both rigorous and relevant, providing a solid foundation for further analysis and synthesis.
Step 4: Inclusion and Synthesis	The 42 selected articles were thoroughly reviewed for alignment with the study’s aims. In addition, 10 seminal papers on market orientation and related theories were included through citation tracking. This integration resulted in a richer theoretical perspective. The synthesis of these 52 studies constructed a comprehensive understanding of tea tourism marketing strategies, incorporating both current findings and theoretical insights. To enhance the robustness of these findings, a thematic analysis was employed to synthesize the data extracted from the selected studies. This analytical technique involved identifying and analyzing recurring patterns or themes within the literature related to tea tourism marketing strategies.

Source: Author’s own research.

These stages ensured a thorough search, selection, and analysis of relevant scholarly articles within the 2006–2024 timeframe, thereby en-

hancing methodological rigor and clarity. The review process is visually represented in the PRISMA flow diagram (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1: PRISMA flow diagram



Source: Adopted from Moher et al. (2009)

2.2. Theoretical framework: Destination Marketing System (DMS)

This research study employs the Destination Marketing System (DMS) framework to explore the impact of collaborative marketing on sustainable growth in tea tourism destinations. The DMS framework, utilized by scholars such as du Rand and Heath (2006) and Sigala (2014), provides a structured lens through which to analyze destination marketing and stakeholder interactions. Key constructs within the DMS framework include sustainable growth, collaborative marketing strategies, sustainable tourism practices, heritage as a tourism asset, consumer motives, attitudes, behaviors, branding, and competitive advantage determinants (Figure 2). By integrating these constructs, this research aims to develop insights for effective collaborative marketing strategies and promote sustainable growth in the tea tourism industry.

FIGURE 2: Theoretical framework



Source: Author's own research.

3. SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. Introduction

This systematic literature review adopts a dual theoretical lens to examine tea tourism marketing strategies: the DMS framework and the market orientation theory. The DMS framework, as outlined by du Rand and Heath (2006) and Sigala (2014), offers a comprehensive structure for understanding the dynamics of destination marketing and the stakeholder interactions crucial for destination development. The market orientation theory, grounded in the works of Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and others, offers insights into how tea tourism destinations can effectively respond to market intelligence and capitalize on opportunities and trends to deliver superior customer value.

By integrating these frameworks, the author seeks to explore collaborative marketing strategies in tea tourism destinations, focusing on stakeholder collaboration, the adoption of sustainable practices, adaptation to market dynamics, and responsiveness to consumer demands and emerging market opportunities, with the aim of achieving long-term success.

3.2. Sustainable growth in the tea tourism industry

Sustainable growth in the tea tourism industry (the study's outcome variable) involves balancing economic prosperity, environmental conservation, and social well-being (Rosardi et al., 2022). This includes initiatives that generate economic returns while preserving cultural heritage and enhancing community engagement.

Research underscores the multifaceted impacts of tea plantations across economic, cultural, and social dimensions. Efforts such as education and skill development (Magar & Kar, 2016) are pivotal in promoting sustainable tourism practices and bolstering the tea and agro-tourism sectors. Shen and Chou (2022) emphasize integrating tea tourism with ancient village preservation, underlining the role of place identity and effective leadership in sustaining rural areas.

Market-oriented strategies are instrumental in responding to evolving consumer preferences and market trends. Yan et al. (2021) advocate for integrating tea industry offerings with diverse tourism and leisure activities to cater to the demand for immersive experiences. Similarly, Mondal and Samaddar (2021) stress the importance of adopting a socio-economic perspective in marketing strategies, recognizing the broader societal implications for sustainability.

Collaborative efforts among industry stakeholders are paramount for creating superior customer value and enhancing destination attractiveness. Effective branding strategies (Liang & Lai, 2023) shape consumer perceptions and drive sustained growth. Collaborative marketing initiatives, guided by market orientation principles, amplify branding efforts, resulting in increased revisits and long-term industry sustainability.

3.3. Collaborative marketing strategies

Collaborative marketing in tea tourism involves stakeholders pooling resources and expertise to enhance travel experiences and competitive-

ness (Cheng et al., 2012). This synergy aligns with the DMS framework and fosters sustainable growth by working toward common goals. Nairpaul et al. (2009) stress the critical role of stakeholder dynamics, while Liu et al. (2023) discuss co-marketing alliances that promote tea-related experiences. Collaborative efforts enhance the overall tourism experience and contribute to destination sustainability, as noted by Su et al. (2019) and Mondal and Samaddar (2021). However, Li et al. (2020) caution against potential conflicts of interest if key stakeholders are not equally involved.

Wang et al. (2019) propose strategies for leveraging geographical advantages and local resources, aligning with the DMS framework and contributing to sustainable growth. Khaokhruea-muang (2021) explores international exchange programs in tea tourism, highlighting collaborative marketing efforts and partnerships beyond geographical boundaries. Successful case studies, such as coffee tourism in Ethiopia (Degarege & Lovelock, 2021), underscore the importance of cross-sectoral planning and collaboration. Liu et al. (2023) suggest integrating agrifood products with tea tourism, indicating the potential for enhanced visitor experiences through strategic partnerships.

3.4. Sustainable tourism practices

The literature extensively discusses sustainable practices in tea tourism, examining various dimensions such as environmental, social, and economic aspects. Scholars including Rosardi et al. (2022) and Magar and Kar (2016) highlight the significance of sustainability in shaping the tea tourism experience, with a particular focus on educational initiatives, the preservation of cultural heritage, and community engagement. These insights have been integrated into collaborative strategies that foster partnerships among tea producers, local communities, and tourism operators, thereby promoting sustainability and enhancing the competitiveness of destinations (Su et al., 2019; Mondal & Samaddar, 2021).

Additionally, Rai (2023) emphasizes the necessity of balancing economic prosperity, environmental conservation, and social well-being. He showcases initiatives aimed at fostering community involvement, preserving cultural heritage, and promoting environmental sustainability. Similarly, in their study Fernando et al. (2017) underscored the potential of tea tourism to generate supplementary income and benefits for communities without compromising the integrity of tea estates, thereby contributing to socio-economic development and community enhancement.

Nonetheless, challenges in the implementation of sustainable practices persist, particularly regarding the delicate balance between economic interests and environmental conservation (Maciel & Fischer, 2020). Achieving stakeholder alignment and equitable resource allocation remains a significant obstacle (Maciel & Fischer, 2020). Despite these challenges, the literature indicates that sustainable practices in tea tourism align well with market orientation principles, including market-driving and collaborative market-driving strategies (Jaworski et al., 2000; Maciel & Fischer, 2020). By prioritizing innovation and market shaping, stakeholders can identify untapped opportunities and co-create value with consumers (Stathakopoulos et al., 2022).

Moreover, research has identified a shift in visitor contributions to sustainable practices, revealing that tourists increasingly prefer eco-friendly and educational experiences (Yan et al., 2021). Understanding tourists' preferences and behaviors regarding green tourism is vital for tailoring marketing strategies and offerings to meet the demands of environmentally conscious consumers (Gheorghe et al., 2023; Su & Zhang, 2022).

3.5. Heritage as a tourism asset in tea tourism

Heritage serves as a vital asset within tea tourism, significantly enriching the experience for visitors through the promotion of traditional tea customs, rituals, and practices. This strategic

approach is aimed at creating culturally immersive experiences that add substantial value to the overall tourism product (Jolliffe, 2006). The intrinsic value of heritage aligns closely with the principles of the DMS, as it shapes marketing strategies and supports sustainable growth. Research by Jolliffe and Aslam (2009) highlights this alignment, emphasizing the collaborative ethos ingrained within the DMS and the necessity of creating superior customer value.

Moreover, Cheng et al. (2012) advocate for collaborative efforts to preserve and promote the cultural heritage associated with tea production, enhancing tourist engagement while fostering community involvement. Mondal and Samaddar (2021) further emphasize the importance of integrating heritage conservation into marketing strategies, allowing for an adaptation to evolving market conditions and encouraging partnerships on preservation initiatives.

Various dimensions of heritage that enrich the tourist experience are explored in the literature. For instance, Yilmaz and Kumar Dixit (2023) discuss tea's cultural significance as a representation of socio-cultural heritage and community bonding. Aslam (2015) investigates the innovative repurposing of heritage buildings, while Gupta et al. (2022) point to the importance of weaving heritage and culinary elements into destination marketing strategies to enhance cultural experiences for visitors.

Several case studies illustrate the integration of heritage into market-oriented strategies in tea tourism. Research conducted in Wuyishan National Park (Wang et al., 2022) and an examination by Nikiforova and Nikiforova (2023) highlight traditional dishes as elements supporting sustainable growth and customer satisfaction.

Recent years have seen a surge in tea culture tourism, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, as noted by Zhou et al. (2023). This trend interlaces agricultural and ecotourism facets, presenting new opportunities for leveraging heritage assets. Weber's (2018) investigation into cultural representations of tea culture

in tourism contexts provides insights into utilizing heritage assets while understanding tourist behavior, in harmony with the DMS framework. Finally, Bohne (2021) accentuates the role of tea heritage in promoting sustainable tourism development, advocating its significance for economic growth and enhancing customer satisfaction through market-oriented approaches.

3.6. Consumer motives, attitudes, behavior, and branding in Tea Tourism

Consumer motives, preferences, attitudes, behavior, and branding are pivotal in shaping the landscape of tea tourism, influencing its trajectory and success.

Thus, in their research study, Sultana and Khan (2018) underscored the importance of understanding consumer preferences and incorporating sustainable practices to elevate the attraction of tea tourism destinations. Their findings were further echoed by Yeap et al. (2021), who drew attention to the escalating influence of eco-consciousness and sustainability on travelers' decisions to engage in tea tourism.

Banerjee & Tyagi (2024) highlight the dynamic nature of taste and preference among tourists, emphasizing the necessity of continuously evaluating and understanding their consumption behaviors, such as preferred tea varieties. Adding to this, Liang et al. (2024) explored the relationship between individuals' tea-drinking habits and their inclination to visit tea tourism destinations, finding how these habits shape perceptions of destination image and influence travel intentions.

Moreover, Ng et al. (2022) identified factors contributing to memorable tourism experiences, including activities, cleanliness, language, and security. These elements are crucial for designing tea tourism offerings that form positive attitudes toward tea tourism destinations. Additionally, through research based on tea museums, Seyitoğlu and Alphan (2021) emphasized the educational aspect as significant

to travelers' gastronomic experiences. These findings highlight the imperative for tea tourism operators to incorporate sustainable practices throughout their offerings, aligning them with contemporary consumer preferences.

Further, Li et al. (2024) focus on the impact of experiential and opportunity perceptions on the attitudes of tea tourists, stressing the importance of providing immersive and convenient experiences. Yoopetch et al. (2021), as well as Jolliffe (2006), reinforce the link between sustainable practices, tourist satisfaction, and consumer attitudes, suggesting that implementing such initiatives can foster positive perceptions of tea tourism destinations.

Distinct attitudes between tea tourists and non-tea tourists, as highlighted by Cheng et al. (2010), underscore the significance of tailored marketing strategies to effectively engage tea enthusiasts. This suggests a need for tea tourism operators to develop targeted campaigns and experiences that cater to the unique preferences of this niche market segment. For instance, tea can serve as a vehicle for showcasing creative tourism, such as tea ceremonies, as demonstrated by the findings from Shanghai, China (Wang et al., 2020).

Moreover, Mondal and Samaddar (2021), Xia et al. (2023), Li et al. (2024), and Liang et al. (2023) emphasize the critical role of consumer attitudes in shaping destination perceptions and behaviors. Astrini et al. (2022) contribute to this understanding by suggesting that companies marketing herbal teas should leverage social referents, such as medical professionals or social media influencers, to persuade current customers to remain loyal. They also propose focusing on creating feelings of happiness and relaxation through cause-related marketing strategies to enhance repurchase intention.

Strategic branding initiatives within the DMS framework, as proposed by Liang et al. (2023), Gupta et al. (2022), and Dutta et al. (2023), highlight the potential for collaborative efforts in destination management. These initiatives un-

underscore the impact of collaborative marketing strategies within the DMS framework to amplify the effectiveness of branding efforts. Similarly, a study by Li et al. (2023) on involvement, place attachment, and environmentally responsible behavior related to geographical indication (GI) products complements the discussion on strategic branding initiatives, emphasizing the importance of pre-existing bonds formed through involvement with specific products, like GI tea products, in influencing the behavior and attitudes of tourists during their visits.

3.7. Competitive advantage and determinants

Competitive advantage in business refers to the unique qualities, assets, or strategies that enable a company to outperform its competitors in the marketplace (Tiwari et al., 2022). Thus, understanding the determinants of competitive advantage is essential, particularly when framed within the context of the DMS.

Tiwari et al. (2022) utilize Porter's Diamond model to highlight the determinants influencing tea tourism and emphasize the necessity for targeted marketing strategies tailored to the strengths of each destination. Their insights underscore the importance of understanding the unique strengths of tea tourism destinations and crafting marketing strategies accordingly, aligning with the market orientation principle of responding to market intelligence within the collaborative framework of the DMS.

Yilmaz and Kumar Dixit (2023) shed light on the efficient utilization of tea tourism products and experiences by travel agencies, emphasizing cultural significance as a vital determinant. Their findings contribute to effective marketing strategies within the DMS by identifying specific products and experiences based on cultural relevance, thus aligning with the principle of creating superior customer value. This underscores the importance of cultural sensitivity and relevance in shaping tea tourism offerings to enhance competitiveness.

Similarly, Ranasinghe et al. (2017) examine the application of strategic place branding models in product-place co-branding contexts, illustrating how these strategies contribute to gaining competitive advantage. In a related study focusing on tea tourism in Sri Lanka, Fernando (2015) underscores the importance of variables such as tourist arrivals, price, and investment as crucial determinants of competitive advantage for achieving sustainable growth in the tea tourism sector. Notably, both studies demonstrate characteristics aligned with traditional marketing approaches, rather than exploring innovative or market-driving strategies.

Furthermore, the literature discusses the challenges of achieving competitive advantage. Wang et al. (2019) provide insights into challenges faced by Taiwan's tea industry, such as decreasing tea-drinking popularity and a lack of innovation and propose strategies for sustainable growth that are directly relevant to collaborative marketing efforts within the DMS. By addressing industry-specific challenges and proposing tailored strategies, they contribute to the development of sustainable competitive advantages in tea tourism destinations.

4. DISCUSSION

This discussion delves into the intersection of the DMS framework and market orientation theory, with a focus on tea tourism. The analysis is structured around five pivotal themes derived from the systematic literature review: sustainable growth, collaborative marketing strategies, sustainable tourism practices, heritage as a tourism asset, and competitive advantage. Each theme is explored through the lens of these theoretical frameworks, illustrating their relevance and application within the tea tourism sector.

4.1. Integration with theoretical frameworks

The integration of the DMS framework and market orientation theory offers a robust founda-

tion for comprehending tea tourism marketing strategies. The DMS framework, as articulated by du Rand & Heath (2006) and Sigala (2014), underscores the critical role of stakeholder interactions, resource pooling, and destination development. This framework is particularly relevant to tea tourism, where the synergy between tea producers, tourism operators, and local communities is essential for crafting effective, market-driven strategies.

Market orientation theory, stemming from the work of Kohli and Jaworski (1990), emphasizes the need for businesses to respond to market intelligence and consumer demands. In the context of tea tourism, this means adapting marketing efforts to evolving visitor preferences, such as the rising demand for eco-friendly experiences. The discussion demonstrates that successful tea tourism strategies require a delicate balance between stakeholder collaboration (according to the DMS framework) and market responsiveness (as outlined by market orientation theory) to enhance destination competitiveness and sustainability.

For instance, Liu et al. (2023) reveal how co-marketing alliances between agricultural producers and tourism organizations foster a shared understanding of market trends. These alliances not only facilitate resource pooling but also enrich visitor experiences. By integrating both frameworks, this discussion elucidates how tea tourism destinations can better align their organizational efforts with market needs to achieve holistic development.

4.2. Sustainable growth in tea tourism

Achieving sustainable growth in tea tourism necessitates a balance between economic prosperity, environmental conservation, and social well-being. The literature highlights that market-oriented strategies are pivotal in navigating this balance, especially as consumer preferences shift towards more eco-conscious and sustainable travel options (Yeap et al., 2021). Yan (2021) suggests that tea tourism can leverage its cul-

tural heritage and natural landscapes to diversify tourism activities and attract a wider range of visitors.

Rosardi et al. (2022) emphasize the value of partnerships between local communities and tourism operators in driving sustainable growth. Such collaborations not only ensure local involvement and investment in tourism development but also enhance community resilience. Initiatives focused on education and skill development, as noted by Magar and Kar (2016), empower local workers to manage tea tourism operations sustainably. This approach reinforces the local economy while promoting environmental stewardship, as economically invested community members are more likely to prioritize long-term resource preservation.

Shen and Chou (2022) advocate for integrating tea tourism with heritage village preservation, demonstrating how such practices contribute to sustainability by maintaining both natural and cultural assets. Aligning sustainable initiatives with market orientation principles—such as responding to evolving consumer preferences for eco-friendly tourism—can significantly enhance the attractiveness and sustainability of tea tourism destinations.

4.3. Collaborative marketing strategies

Collaborative marketing strategies are vital for boosting the competitiveness of tea tourism destinations, enabling stakeholders to pool their resources and expertise to create enriched tea-themed travel experiences. Cheng et al. (2012) highlight the importance of stakeholder synergy in developing cohesive marketing strategies. These strategies not only enhance tea tourism's visibility but also foster innovation and creativity in product offerings.

Liu et al. (2023) further illustrate that co-marketing alliances between tea producers and tourism operators can enhance market orientation by creating a unified brand identity. Such collaborations are crucial in developing immersive

experiences that align with market demands. For instance, Su et al. (2019) found that effective communication and innovation within these partnerships lead to more memorable visitor experiences, fostering repeat visits and long-term loyalty.

However, challenges such as potential conflicts of interest among stakeholders (Li et al., 2020) may arise due to asymmetric resource contributions or differing priorities. Addressing these challenges requires a balanced and inclusive approach to collaboration, ensuring that all stakeholders have a voice in decision-making processes. Practical strategies, such as joint stakeholder meetings or the establishment of co-branded initiatives, can foster stronger alignment and shared goals, thereby enhancing the success of collaborative marketing efforts.

4.4. Sustainable tourism practices in tea tourism

Sustainable practices within tea tourism encompass environmental, social, and economic dimensions, which are essential for aligning the industry with contemporary consumer preferences. As travelers increasingly seek eco-friendly and culturally enriching experiences, integrating sustainability into core marketing strategies becomes imperative. Rosardi et al. (2022) argue that tea tourism, with its intrinsic connections to agriculture and natural landscapes, presents unique opportunities for aligning market principles with sustainable development goals.

Sthakopoulos et al. (2022) assert that the adoption of market-oriented approaches—such as innovation and value co-creation with consumers—facilitates the exploration of new avenues for sustainability across various sectors. This concept is particularly relevant for tea tourism. For instance, in response to the increasing demand for eco-tourism, tea tourism operators can enhance their offerings by providing green tea farm tours or organic tea production experiences that align with the values of environmentally conscious travelers (Sultana & Khan, 2018). Furthermore, Yan et al. (2021) highlight visitor

preferences for eco-friendly experiences, underscoring a significant demand for sustainable tourism initiatives within the tea tourism sector.

Despite these opportunities, challenges in stakeholder alignment remain, as noted by Maciel and Fischer (2020). Issues related to resource allocation, particularly in less developed tea regions, can impede the implementation of sustainable practices. To overcome these obstacles, strategic collaboration among tourism operators, tea producers, and local governments is critical. By applying market orientation principles—such as adapting to consumer demands for sustainability—stakeholders can collaborate effectively to create environmentally responsible and economically viable tourism offerings.

4.5. Heritage as a tourism asset

Heritage serves as a crucial component of tea tourism, playing a significant role in preserving and promoting traditional tea-related customs and practices. Jolliffe (2006) underscores that integrating heritage elements with contemporary marketing strategies enables stakeholders to attract diverse tourists and enhance their engagement with the destination. This synergy fosters a profound connection to the cultural essence of tea tourism while enriching the visitor experience (Mondal & Samaddar, 2021).

By aligning heritage with market orientation theory, tea tourism destinations can adeptly adjust to changing market dynamics while preserving cultural authenticity. Jaworski et al. (2000) argue that market-driven strategies can integrate heritage elements, thereby providing a competitive advantage. Cheng et al. (2012) found that incorporating cultural assets into the DMS framework enhances the overall brand appeal of tea tourism destinations, effectively differentiating them in competitive markets.

Recent studies, such as those conducted by Yilmaz & Kumar Dixit (2023) and Gupta et al. (2022), suggest that post-pandemic travel trends favor heritage tourism, making it an increasingly valuable asset. Emphasizing the preservation of tea

culture allows destinations to appeal to tourists seeking meaningful and authentic experiences, driving both heritage preservation and market growth.

4.6. Competitive advantage and determinants

The determinants of competitive advantage in tea tourism are multifaceted, closely tied to the principles of both the DMS and market orientation frameworks. Tiwari et al. (2022) stress the importance of tailoring marketing strategies to leverage the unique strengths of tea tourism destinations, such as their rich cultural history and natural landscapes. Yilmaz & Kumar Dixit (2023) argue that tea tourism products can capitalize on their cultural significance, aligning with DMS principles to create superior customer value.

Addressing challenges such as industry-specific issues, strategic place branding, and stakeholder conflicts (Wang et al., 2019) necessitates targeted marketing strategies that enhance the competitiveness of tea tourism. Practical recommendations include focusing on niche marketing to cater to eco-tourism and heritage tourism markets while leveraging market intelligence to adapt to evolving visitor preferences. The literature supports the notion that aligning marketing efforts with market-driven strategies and fostering collaborative stakeholder engagement can yield sustainable competitive advantages in tea tourism.

5. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

While the existing literature on tea tourism marketing strategies provides a foundational understanding, several key areas remain underexplored, offering opportunities to deepen insights and inform strategic decision-making:

Exploration of Market-driving Strategies: With the prevailing focus on market-driven approaches in tea tourism, there is a notable re-

search gap regarding market-driving strategies. Future studies should examine how proactive market shaping and innovation foster sustainable growth and enhance competitiveness in the tea tourism sector. That exploration could analyze the influence of such strategies on market trends and the positioning of tea tourism destinations.

Cultural Perspectives on Market Orientation: Research into the cultural dimensions of market orientation, particularly its relationship with market-driving strategies, could provide valuable insights. Understanding how culturally informed market orientation affects the ability of tea tourism businesses to influence market trends and innovate can offer theoretical and practical contributions to the field.

Longitudinal Studies on Sustainable Tourism Practices: To assess the long-term impact of sustainable practices, heritage preservation, and stakeholder collaboration, longitudinal studies are essential. Tracking key indicators such as visitor numbers, revenue, and environmental conservation over time will provide data-driven recommendations for sustainable growth and policy development.

Policy Evaluation and Development: Considering the critical role of government policies in supporting sustainable tea tourism, future research should focus on comprehensive policy evaluations. This could include policies related to land use, conservation, infrastructure, and community empowerment, as well as exploring opportunities for public-private partnerships to promote sustainable development.

6. THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study contributes to the refinement of market orientation theory within tea tourism by examining stakeholder collaboration, destination marketing, and consumer behavior. It advances theoretical understanding of how market-driven and market-driving strategies influence tour-

ism development and destination management (Maciel & Fischer, 2020; Humphreys & Carpenter, 2018; Pike & Page, 2014; Jaworski et al., 2000; Kumar et al., 2000; Kohli & Jaworski, 1990).

Furthermore, by applying the DMS framework to tea tourism, this research builds on the work of du Rand & Heath (2006) and Sigala (2014), enriching perspectives on destination marketing, collaborative governance, and sustainable development. The proposed research directions provide a roadmap for advancing both theoretical and practical insights into tea tourism and destination marketing.

7. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings provide significant insights for tea tourism marketers, managers, and other stakeholders, highlighting several key areas for actionable improvement:

Sustainable Practices: Emphasizing ecological conservation is essential for the sustainability of tea tourism. Managers should focus on adopting sustainable agricultural techniques, minimizing waste, and implementing rigorous environmental protection measures. Such initiatives are not only vital for long-term viability but also resonate with environmentally aware consumers, enhancing the marketability of tea tourism offerings.

Community Engagement: Engaging local communities in tourism planning is crucial for nurturing a sense of ownership and ensuring that cultural traditions are preserved. This involvement enriches the visitor experience by adding authenticity while simultaneously benefiting the local community.

Cultural Heritage Preservation: Integrating and preserving cultural heritage within tourism offerings significantly enhances visitor experiences and strengthens regional identity. This strategy not only attracts tourists but also supports the safeguarding of cultural assets. By intertwining cultural heritage with tourism, stakeholders

contribute to both sustainability and competitive advantage in the market.

Stakeholder Collaboration: Successful tea tourism initiatives depend on robust collaboration among various stakeholders. By fostering partnerships and cooperation between local communities, government bodies, and the private sector, resources and expertise can be more effectively utilized. These partnerships are essential to achieving shared goals, maximizing marketing efforts, and enhancing the competitiveness of tea tourism.

8. CONCLUSION

This study explored the integration of collaborative marketing strategies with sustainable growth principles in tea tourism, drawing on the DMS framework and market orientation theory. The findings confirm the importance of these frameworks in enhancing the competitive positioning of tea tourism through stakeholder collaboration and market-driven approaches, addressing key gaps in the literature.

Achieving sustainable growth in tea tourism requires balancing economic prosperity, environmental stewardship, and social well-being. The research emphasizes that sustainability goes beyond green practices, encompassing education, skill development, and community engagement, all critical for long-term growth. Aligning marketing strategies with market orientation principles—such as responding to consumer preferences—can further enhance tea tourism's appeal and viability.

Collaborative marketing plays a critical role in creating competitive advantages. The study shows that stakeholder synergy through co-marketing and resource pooling fosters innovation and improves communication, even though challenges like conflicts of interest and equitable engagement remain. Incorporating heritage into marketing strategies amplifies authenticity and cultural preservation, strengthening the destination's marketability.

Sustainable tourism practices are essential for successful tea tourism. Marketing strategies that unite tea producers, local communities, and tourism operators attract environmentally conscious tourists and sustain competitiveness. Despite challenges in stakeholder alignment and resource distribution, market orientation principles offer strategies to overcome these hurdles and promote sustainable tourism.

Heritage serves as a cornerstone for tea tourism experiences. Strategic incorporation of heritage

into marketing not only preserves cultural integrity but also adapts to market changes, enhancing the destination's global appeal.

In conclusion, integrating collaborative marketing strategies with sustainable growth principles offers a promising approach to strengthening tea tourism's competitive positioning. Leveraging these insights enables stakeholders to drive innovation, foster sustainability, and achieve long-term success in this evolving sector.

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