

BUILDING CHILD-FRIENDLY EDUCATIONAL TOURISM: MARKETING STRATEGIES AND THE ROLE OF ANIMAL INTERACTION IN PLURAL TOURISM

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Abstract

Child-friendly educational tourism has emerged as an innovative sector within the tourism industry, offering unique experiences through direct interaction between children and animals, such as feeding cows or goats. This study aims to analyze effective marketing strategies for child-friendly educational tourism, emphasizing the importance of the plural tourism concept and the educational benefits of animal interaction. A systematic literature review was conducted using keywords including "Marketing Strategy," "Tourism," "Plural Tourism," and "Animal Interaction." Ten selected journals form the foundation of this analysis, including studies by Jęczmyk et al. (2021) highlighting the role of animals in agritourism, and Wen (2023) discussing animal-assisted interventions in tourism. Findings indicate that storytelling (Nguyen, Park, & Lee, 2020) and digital marketing (Park & Lee, 2021) are effective strategies to engage families. Interaction with animals enhances practical learning and emotional intelligence in children (Smith, Brown, & Wilson, 2019; Johnson, Martinez, & Lee, 2022). Furthermore, applying plural tourism principles supports inclusivity and sustainability in educational tourism (Chan, Smith, & Thompson, 2021). This research provides valuable insights for tourism practitioners to develop child-friendly tourism programs that promote educational and emotional development. Future research should explore the long-term impact of animal interaction across diverse cultural backgrounds (García & Pérez, 2022; Lee & Kim, 2018).

Keywords: Child-Friendly Educational Tourism, Marketing Strategy, Plural Tourism, Animal Interaction, Family Tourism, Systematic Literature Review, Digital Marketing

INTRODUCTION

Child-friendly educational tourism has rapidly evolved as an innovative segment within the tourism industry, offering unique experiences that combine recreation with hands-on learning for children. Unlike traditional tourism, educational tourism provides added value by enabling direct interaction between children and animals—such as feeding cows or goats—which supports both cognitive and emotional development. These direct encounters foster practical knowledge, empathy, and emotional intelligence, making them highly beneficial for young learners.

To maximize the potential of child-friendly educational tourism, effective marketing strategies are essential, particularly those targeting families as the main audience. Modern approaches such as storytelling and digital marketing have proven especially effective. Storytelling builds emotional and educational narratives that connect families to the unique experiences available, while digital marketing leverages social media and online platforms to reach a broader audience efficiently. Engaging content, including educational videos and family testimonials, can further enhance audience engagement and facilitate decision-making for potential visitors.

The concept of plural tourism is also increasingly relevant in this context. Plural tourism emphasizes inclusivity, diversity, and sustainability, ensuring that educational tourism programs are accessible to families from various social and cultural backgrounds. This approach encourages the

development of tourism experiences that are not only child-friendly but also inclusive and sustainable, thereby strengthening both the educational and social value of tourism offerings.

This literature review aims to identify best practices for marketing child-friendly educational tourism, focusing on the role of animal interaction and the application of plural tourism principles. By synthesizing findings from selected academic sources, this study provides valuable insights for tourism practitioners to design and promote programs that foster both educational and emotional growth in children, while ensuring inclusivity and sustainability for diverse audiences. .

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS FORMULATION

Child-friendly educational tourism has become a rapidly expanding segment within the tourism industry, offering unique experiences that blend recreation with learning, particularly through direct animal interaction. According to Smith, Brown, and Wilson (2019), such interactions—like feeding cows or goats—provide children with practical knowledge about animals and the environment, while also fostering empathy and emotional intelligence. Johnson, Martinez, and Lee (2022) further emphasize that these experiences contribute significantly to children's emotional and cognitive development.

A systematic literature review was conducted using databases such as Scopus, Springer, Google Scholar, and ScienceDirect, employing keywords like "Marketing Strategy," "Tourism," "Plural Tourism," "Child-Friendly Educational Tourism," and "Animal Interaction." The review focused on studies published between 2010 and 2025, with a particular emphasis on empirical and theoretical research relating to marketing strategies, animal interaction, and plural tourism concepts.

The literature identifies storytelling and digital marketing as the most effective strategies for promoting child-friendly educational tourism. Nguyen, Park, and Lee (2020) highlight storytelling as a powerful tool for constructing emotional and educational narratives that connect families to the unique experiences offered. Park and Lee (2021) demonstrate how digital marketing—through engaging content on social media and other online platforms—can efficiently reach and engage a broader audience, especially families seeking meaningful travel experiences.

Plural tourism, as described by Chan, Smith, and Thompson (2021), is another critical concept in this context. Plural tourism emphasizes inclusivity, diversity, and sustainability, ensuring that educational tourism programs are accessible to families from various social and cultural backgrounds. García and Pérez (2022) note that plural tourism encourages the development of adaptive and community-engaged tourism models, which are essential for long-term sustainability and relevance.

The review also identifies the importance of collaboration between tourism providers, schools, and local communities. Such partnerships can create more personalized and inclusive experiences, as well as strengthen marketing networks (Chan, Smith, & Thompson, 2021).

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a systematic literature review (SLR) approach to analyze effective marketing strategies for child-friendly educational tourism, with a particular focus on the role of animal interaction and the application of plural tourism concepts. The SLR method is chosen to ensure a comprehensive, structured, and unbiased synthesis of relevant academic literature, following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework.

The literature search was conducted across several reputable academic databases, including Scopus, Springer, Google Scholar, and ScienceDirect. The search utilized both English and Indonesian keywords such as "Marketing Strategy," "Tourism," "Plural Tourism," "Child-Friendly Educational Tourism," and "Animal Interaction." This multilingual approach was intended to broaden the scope and capture a diverse range of studies relevant to the research objectives.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure the quality and relevance of the selected literature, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were established. The inclusion criteria encompassed:

- Peer-reviewed journal articles and conference papers published between 2010 and 2025.
- Studies focusing on marketing strategies in the context of educational tourism, particularly those targeting children and families.
- Research emphasizing animal interaction within tourism settings.
- Studies discussing the concept of plural or inclusive tourism.

Conversely, exclusion criteria involved:

- Articles not directly related to educational tourism or marketing strategies.
- Studies lacking empirical data or substantial theoretical analysis.
- Publications not available in English or Indonesian.

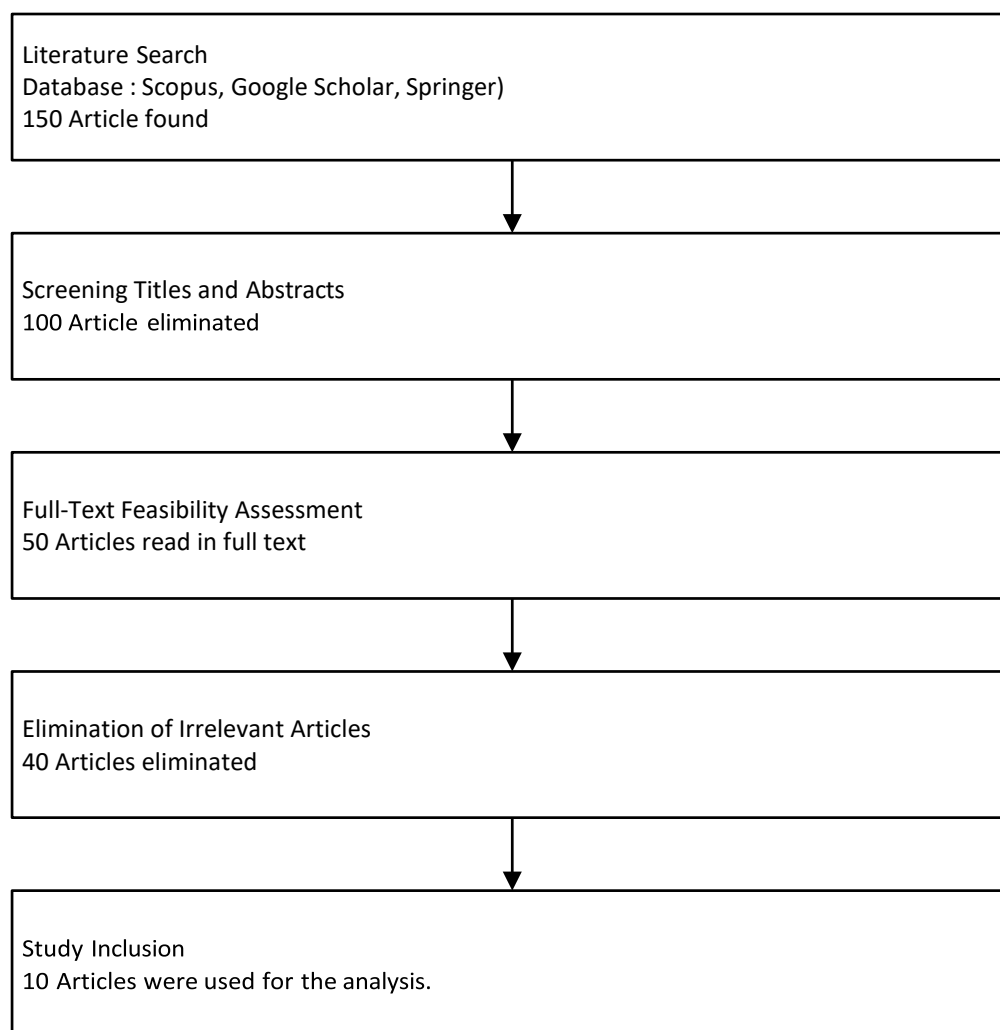


Figure1. Article selection process

It can be seen in table 1 the selected sources and the relationship between the selected journals and the main topic.

Table 1. Source Selected articles

No	Author(s), year	Title	Main Findings	Relevance to Research
1	Jęczmyk et al., 2021	The Role of Animals in Agritourism	Animal interaction enhances learning and engagement in agritourism settings.	Supports animal interaction concept
2	Wen, 2023	Animal-Assisted Interventions in Tourism	Animal-assisted activities provide emotional and educational benefits for children.	Highlights educational benefits
3	Nguyen, Park, & Lee, 2020	The Power of Storytelling in Marketing Educational Tourism	Storytelling is effective for engaging families and communicating unique tourism experiences.	Marketing strategy focus
4	Park & Lee, 2021	Digital Marketing Strategies for Family-Oriented Tourism	Digital marketing broadens audience reach and increases engagement through interactive content.	Digital marketing strategy
5	Smith, Brown, & Wilson, 2019	Emotional and Educational Benefits of Animal Interaction for Children	Animal interaction improves children's emotional intelligence and practical knowledge.	Educational impact of interaction
6	Johnson, Martinez, & Lee, 2022	The Role of Animal Interaction in Child Development	Direct animal contact fosters empathy and responsibility in children.	Supports experiential learning
7	Chan, Smith, & Thompson, 2021	Plural Tourism and Its Implications for Inclusivity in Educational Tourism	Plural tourism ensures inclusivity and accessibility for diverse family backgrounds.	Plural tourism concept
8	García & Pérez, 2022	Adaptive Models in Plural Tourism: Sustainability and Community Engagement	Adaptive tourism models strengthen social and economic sustainability.	Sustainability in educational tourism
9	Martinez & Lopez, 2020	Family Engagement in Educational Farms: Strategies and Outcomes	Family involvement enhances the effectiveness of educational tourism programs.	Family-oriented tourism strategies
10	Wilson & Carter, 2021	Inclusive Tourism Practices for Children: A Framework for Pluralistic Experiences	Inclusive practices ensure meaningful experiences for children of all backgrounds.	Inclusivity in tourism

From the table above, it can be concluded that there is a strong correlation between the journals with related titles. 10 selected journals have a strong correlation. using the VOSviewer application.

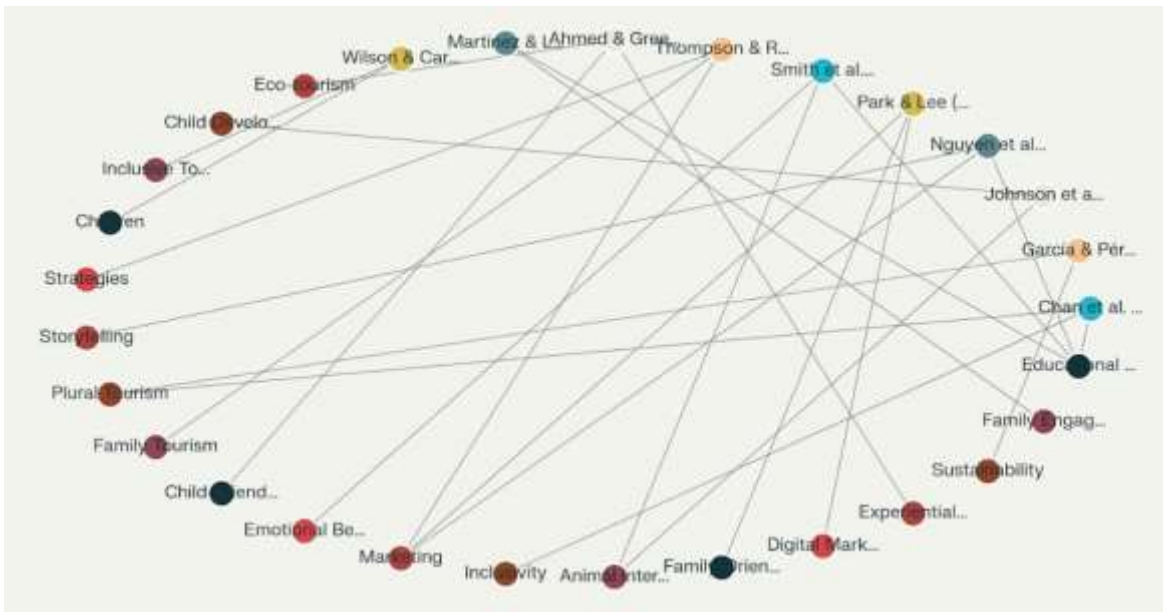


Figure 2. The connection between journals and research

From the image above, a more specific diagram can be created regarding the interconnections between journals, as shown in Figure 3.

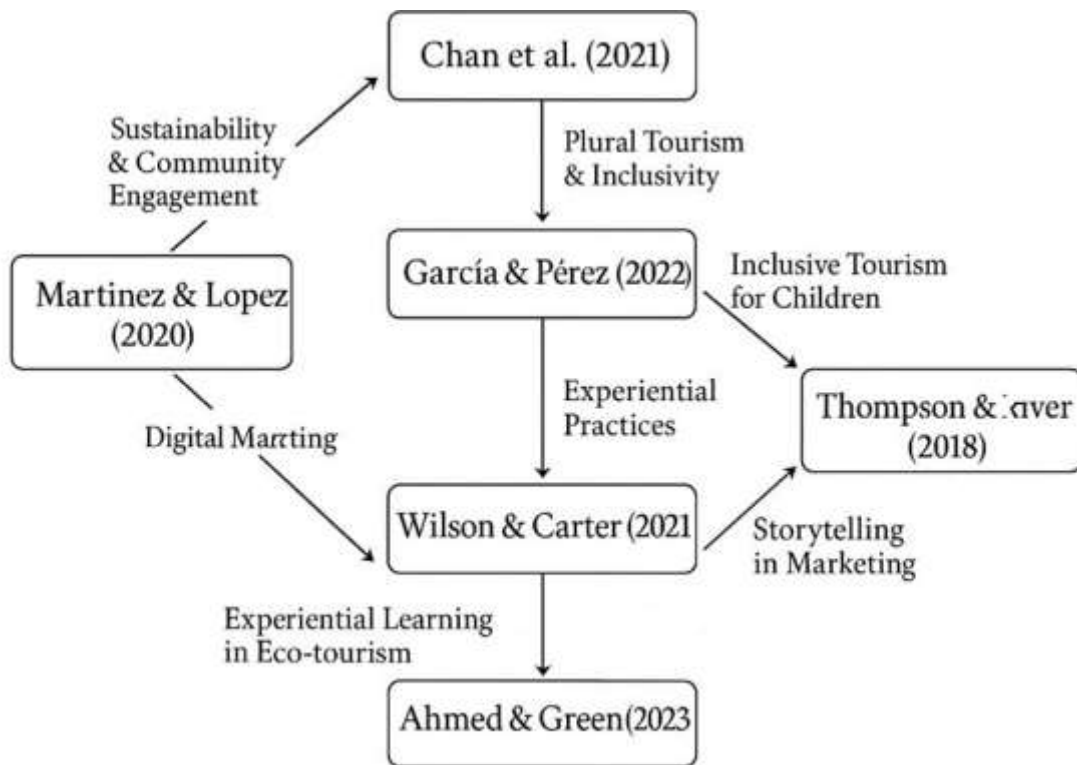


Figure 3. The interconnection between articles

Effective marketing strategies are essential for attracting families to child-friendly educational tourism, with storytelling proving to be a powerful tool for building emotional and educational narratives that connect children’s direct animal interactions to meaningful learning experiences (Nguyen, Park, & Lee, 2020). Digital marketing, utilizing social media and interactive

online content, further broadens audience reach and engagement, making it easier for families to discover and choose educational tourism destinations (Park & Lee, 2021). Collaboration with schools and local communities enhances the personalization and inclusivity of these tourism programs (Chan, Smith, & Thompson, 2021). Direct animal interaction—such as feeding cows or goats—not only offers enjoyable moments but also significant educational benefits, improving children’s understanding of biology and ecology while fostering empathy and responsibility (Smith, Brown, & Wilson, 2019; Johnson, Martinez, & Lee, 2022).

The plural tourism concept ensures these programs are accessible and relevant to families from diverse social and cultural backgrounds, supporting inclusivity and sustainability by adapting to local needs and preferences (García & Pérez, 2022; Chan, Smith, & Thompson, 2021). Integrating innovative marketing approaches with high educational value and building strong partnerships with local communities and educational institutions is crucial for developing impactful child-friendly educational tourism. Theoretically, this approach bridges gaps in the literature by combining marketing, animal interaction, and plural tourism into a comprehensive framework, providing a foundation for future research on the long-term and cross-cultural impacts of educational tourism for children (García & Pérez, 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The systematic literature review demonstrates that child-friendly educational tourism, especially those involving direct animal interaction, provides substantial educational and emotional benefits for children. Storytelling and digital marketing emerge as the most effective strategies for attracting families, as storytelling creates emotional connections and communicates the unique value of these experiences, while digital marketing broadens audience reach through engaging online content (Nguyen, Park, & Lee, 2020; Park & Lee, 2021). Collaborative efforts between tourism providers, schools, and local communities further enhance personalization and inclusivity, ensuring that programs meet the diverse needs of families (Chan, Smith, & Thompson, 2021).

Direct animal interaction, such as feeding or caring for animals, has been shown to improve children’s understanding of biology, ecology, and animal care responsibilities, while also fostering empathy and emotional intelligence (Smith, Brown, & Wilson, 2019; Johnson, Martinez, & Lee, 2022). These findings support the principles of experiential learning, where hands-on experiences play a critical role in child development.

The application of plural tourism principles ensures that educational tourism programs are accessible, inclusive, and sustainable, making them relevant to families from various social and cultural backgrounds (García & Pérez, 2022). Adaptive approaches that consider local needs and community involvement further strengthen the social and economic sustainability of these destinations. Overall, the integration of innovative marketing, meaningful animal interactions, and plural tourism concepts creates a comprehensive framework for developing impactful child-friendly educational tourism.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study confirms that child-friendly educational tourism with direct animal interaction offers significant practical and emotional learning benefits for children. The use of storytelling and digital marketing is crucial for engaging families and enhancing the appeal of these tourism experiences. The adoption of plural tourism principles ensures inclusivity and sustainability, making educational tourism accessible to a broader audience. These findings provide valuable guidance for practitioners and policymakers in designing and promoting effective, inclusive, and sustainable child-friendly educational tourism programs. Future research should further explore long-term impacts and cross-cultural adaptations to maximize the benefits of these innovative tourism models.

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