

A REVIEW OF THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF ADVENTURE TOURISM AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

An examination of the current literature on adventure tourism reveals that research on the issue has thus far been primarily based on scholars’ and practitioners’ preexisting conceptions. This article contends that the subjective experience of adventure, as well as individual perceptions of what comprises it, must be examined and considered in the study of adventure tourism. Qualitative research methodologies should receive more attention in their examination. The planned shift in focus on people’s perceptions of adventure also calls into question the association of adventure tourism with only particular market segments and independent travelers. Further research, adventure tourism motive, and the ramifications for tourist behavior are examined.

Keywords: tourism industry, adventure tourism, tourism theory, tourism literature, tourism development, adventure tourism, adventure tourism motivation.

Introduction

The term “Adventure tourism” is rapidly gaining popularity since its inception. Recently, adventure tourism has gained popularity among those who enjoy physical activities. The following fact could be the core reason for this. Adventure tourism not only contributes to infrastructure development but also benefits local people in several economic sectors. Adventure tourism boosts the local economy and improves living standards. Adventure tourism is especially important for developing countries since it stimulates economic growth. Adventure tourism may benefit those countries by producing the majority of tourism jobs in this industry. Locals are also profiting by starting enterprises in this industry. Intrinsic enjoyment, adventure, and travel are driving people all around the world to explore the outdoors. They head out for adventure every day, in little and huge numbers. They can participate in a limitless variety of adventure tourist activities, including snorkeling, cycling, and rafting. There are an infinite number of interesting facts about the great outdoors that can serve as valuable resources for adventure tourism sites. Adventure tourism has typically been defined as adventure recreation. Such experiences are distinguished by the interaction of competence and risk. Recently, academics proposed an expansion and reinvention of adventure tourism, using the insight model as the foundation. The thirst for insight and knowledge (rather than risk) underpins adventure tourism. These definitions have one thing in common: scholars have established what comprises it, and study takes place within these set limitations. The



concern is whether such a narrow research emphasis is sufficient to get a thorough grasp of adventure tourism. This article suggests an alternate but complementary strategy. It contends that a more thorough understanding requires taking into account individuals' subjective experiences and perceptions of adventure. In making this argument, the paper first surveys the present literature on the subject, particularly the proposal to replace the common “**risk theory**” as the cornerstone of adventure tourism—a proposition that needs to be critically evaluated. According to the literature assessment, adventure tourism is now seen primarily as an extension of adventure/outdoor recreation, with the tourist component largely ignored.

Literature Review

Adventure tourism has been increasingly popular in recent years. According to the Adventure Travel Trade Association and George Washington University (2013), adventure travel encompasses physical activity, cultural exchange, and nature-related activities. Adventure tourism is divided into two categories: extreme and non-extreme. This study examined characteristics that influence tourist satisfaction in extreme and non-extreme adventure tourism.

Cognitive evaluation theory (CET) suggests that people appreciate activities that meet their basic demands for competence and autonomy. Perceived competence refers to a person's belief in their ability to achieve their goals. Self-determination refers to individuals' ideas of autonomy and choices, which shape their actions. Ryan and Deci (2017) describe autonomy as a sense of self-direction and authentic will that drives independent conduct and self-determination.

According to Sung, adventure tourism is the sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the interactions of adventure touristic activities with the natural environment away from the participant's usual place of residence area and containing elements of risk in which the outcome is influenced by the participation, setting, and the organizer of the tourist's experience (2004, pp.13-15). According to UNWTO:

“Adventure tourism can be domestic or international, and like all travel, it must include an overnight stay, but not last longer than one year.”

Collins dictionary defines it as tourism involving activities that are physically challenging.

Carl Cater, Paul Beedie, Sebastian Filep et al., and Georgie Urry describe adventure as a complex phenomenon, thus supporting the idea of a multidisciplinary approach to its study (Farcik, 2014, p. 32). Beedie suggests that adventure is constituted of four overlapping forms: education, recreation, sport, and tourism, all of which are in some sense related to risk (2015, p. 9). He postulates that risk management is central to adventure tourism development.

Kane and Tucker assert that definitions of adventure tourism and the supposed motivators for the experience of adventure tourism focus on the concepts of risk, danger, and adrenaline. Risk and danger are related to the potential for injury and loss. Tourism on the other hand indicates fun, exciting events and safe experiences (Kane, 2004, pp. 217-234).

It is inherent in most definitions of adventure tourism in that it takes place in natural outdoor settings (Giddy, 2016, pp. 351-366). Adventure tourism generally is defined with an emphasis



on the involvement of traveling in smaller groups and often experiencing different types of risks (Patterson, 2018).

Adventure tourism is inextricably related to action; it is not a passive experience and is generally found to be engaging and absorbing in most cases (Swarbooke et al, 2003, pp. 12-24). Ewert defined adventure tourism as:

“A self-initiated recreational activity typically involves a travel and overnight stay component that usually involves a close interaction with the natural environment, structurally contains elements of perceived or real risk and danger, and has an uncertain outcome that can be influenced by the participant and circumstance”.

Some scholars have criticized the available definitions for accentuating only single aspects. They blamed that traditional definitions of adventure tourism have focused on only the adventure tourism activity or the adventure tourism environment. In these definitions and cases, the activity is most often associated with risk-taking in terms of activities and the environment associated with unfamiliarity and natural terrains.

Methodology

This article used a qualitative approach. This enabled an analysis of the literature and theoretical background of adventure tourism. These types of technique are the comprehensive measures taken by a researcher before beginning a research project. A qualitative research technique is an effective tool for investigating specific occurrences since it explains human nature and how individuals make sense of their surroundings and lives. This sort of analysis looks at people’s attitudes in everyday circumstances and is less technical than quantitative approaches, making it perfect for researching tourism issues. This research can be conducted through ethnographic fieldwork and/or a combination of methodologies that are more inductive and explorative in nature. Such procedures can include interviews, participant or non-participant observations, and focus groups.

Result

When assessing adventure tourism, it is necessary to also refer to adventure recreation, as the latter is at the heart of the former as it is currently defined. The vast majority of studies accept adventure recreation as its integral part. Adventure recreation has its origin in traditional outdoor recreation. Based on the result, the article reveals the theoretical aspect of adventure tourism (Table 1).



Table-1. The theoretical aspect of adventure tourism¹

Form	Activity	Thrills, Attitude	Norms, Codes, Compliance	Author
Climbing	Extremal	Skilling	Motivation	Patterson (2018)
Rafting	Extremal	Skilling	Motivation	Patterson (2018)
Scuba diving	Extremal	Learning	Education	Farcik (2014)
Snorkeling	Extremal	Skilling	Motivation	Ryan and Deci (2017)
Canoe	Non-extremal	Skilling	Adventure	Ryan and Deci (2017)
Paragliding	Extremal	Skilling	Adventure	Kane (2004)
Sightseeing	Non-extremal	Learning	Education	Adventure Travel Trade Association (2013)
Hiking	Non-extremal	Skilling	Culture	Adventure Travel Trade Association (2013)
Camping	Non-extremal	Learning	Education	Adventure Travel Trade Association (2013)

It is pointed out that this traditional perspective of definitions of adventure tourism is limited. The risk focus and approach are the things that are somehow considered to be paradoxical. That is mainly because clients purchase adventure experiences involving risk and uncertainty having the burning desire to experience extreme activities, whereas tour operators prefer to minimize the risk. When adventure tourism providers are offering their tour packages, they should emphasize safety. Additionally, it is noteworthy that adventure tourism can also take place in urban or man-made environments. Man-made environments refer to the places that are created manually. The traditional definitions ignore the lived experience of the adventure consumer in most cases. These traditional definitions emphasize that individuals undertake adventure for a variety of reasons. Risk and thrills, health and well-being, connection to others and nature, recreational mastery, and personal development are the main incentives for adventure tourists to choose this type of tourism. The desire to experience the outdoors is also one of the common features. Another universal feature mentioned in the above definitions is the fact that numerous travelers want to participate in programs that require action, thrill, and excitement. Another mostly repeated incentive is to be physically challenged rather than being passive sightseers in other types of tourism. Many seekers of adventure tourism want to have unique and special

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experiences that they have never undergone before. The description of these journeys is as follows:

The location is often in remote locations. That is basically because they feel exhausted by their hectic lifestyle. They regard quiet, unique, inherent places as remote areas. An adventure can be of different types by its very nature. But in most cases, an individual would be engaged in adventure travel to gain pleasure and personal development through participation in leisure pursuits in specific, non-repeated settings.

Conclusion

This article has evaluated the available literature on adventure tourism, arguing that the prevalent focus on researchers' and marketers' comprehension of it is insufficient to assess the entire scale and potential of this business. This statement is based on the realization that individuals' subjective experiences of adventure, as well as their self-perception, may differ from the classifications used by researchers and practitioners. This has significant consequences for research, administration, and marketing. The majority of the existing study in commercial adventure tourism is based on outdoor recreation literature. Adventure tourism deserves its own research. So far, the emphasis appears to have been on individual participants, their risks, and their experiences. The economics and geography of adventure tourism products, packages, and suppliers appear to have been overlooked.

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