



AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON THE ADVENTURE TOURISM CONCEPT AND LOCAL TOURIST SATISFACTION

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ABSTRACT	KEYWORDS
The concept of “adventure tourism” has been developing fast since its inception attracting the attention of researchers and scholars. Indeed, adventure tourism has become increasingly popular among travelers who enjoy physical activities. Adventure tourism is regarded as an economic asset in terms of infrastructure development, with advantages to local communities and many other areas of the economy. Adventure tourism activities directly benefit the local economy by building ties and boosting locals’ living standards. The objective of this research is to conduct an empirical study on adventure tourism concept and local tourist satisfaction in Uzbekistan. The study highlighted certain recommendations for this occasion.	Adventure tourism, tourism concept, local tourist, tourism market, travel motivation, tourist satisfaction.

Introduction

Adventure tourism has grown in most of the locations throughout the world, some of the most no-table growth in recent years has been experienced in developing countries as well. Matter fact, the adventure tourism market size has grown exponentially in recent years. It will grow from \$292.68 billion in 2023 to \$351.57 billion in 2024 at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 20.1%. The adventure tourism market size is expected to see exponential growth in the next few years. It will grow to \$739.56 billion in 2028 at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 20.4% ¹. This is mainly due to the fact that many visitors desire to experience the outdoors, to engage in activities that involve action and excitement, and to be physically challenged rather than passive sightseers (Giddy, 2018). Many people are looking for one-of-a-kind experiences, frequently in isolated regions. This style of travel experience typically entails traveling in smaller groups and frequently encountering various forms of danger (Patterson, 2018).

Previously, the travel and tourism business were overlooked and not seen as a priority in the economy. However, given Uzbekistan’s geographical area and tourist resources, it has the potential to become a high-earning and significant contribution to the country's overall economic performance. This state of

¹ Adventure Tourism Trade Association (ATTA) statistical information – 2024

neglect seems to be gradually changing. Uzbekistan provides beautiful vistas and sweeping landscapes. The location has potentials for tourism because of natural water bodies such as tiny and large lakes with turquoise color tinges, the tallest mountain ranges, reservoirs, hot radon springs, jagged snow peaks with cliffs, and waterfalls. Throughout the year, the temperature is moderate, if not constant. Uzbekistan has a country's diverse tourist resources, which includes a distinctive landscape and natural attractions. Bioclimatic conditions also enable travelers to actively participate in wellness and sports tourism, particularly during the winter. Indeed, Tourist flows rapidly growing in the country, according to the statistics agency, a total of 8.2 million foreign citizens visited Uzbekistan for tourist purposes in 2024². Uzbekistan's historical and cultural legacy, which represents the region's lengthy history, is principally related with the history of the Great Silk Road (Fergana-Tashkent-Samarkand-Bukhara-Urgench-Khiva).

Uzbekistan is geographical area where tourists are mainly interested in visiting cultural and historical sites, which are largely concentrated in Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, and Tashkent. As a result, they will spend less time in Uzbekistan than those who participate in a variety of other tourism activities. However, if the government wants tourists to stay longer and to promote return visits to discover locations more than once, they must promote other types of tourism, such as adventure tourism. Therefore, main aim of this research The objective of this research is to conduct an empirical study on adventure tourism concept and local tourist satisfaction in Uzbekistan.

Literature Review

Since the 1980s, motivation has been a major focus of the study of adventure tourism (Rantala, 2016). The traditional debate has been between Ewert's (1989) assertions that the idea of risk-taking is the primary driving force behind adventure travel activities and his claims that performance in adventure travel is correlated with skill level (Ewert, 1987; Ewert and Hollenhorst, 1994) and linked to the achievement of more ethereal, self-imposed personal goals (Ewert, 1989). In contrast, Walle (1997) contends that the pursuit of insight is a primary driver for engaging in outdoor activities, and that achieving personal self-actualization through such activities does not involve taking risks but rather results from doing so. As a result, an adventurer finds fulfillment in the process of gaining such insight. Actual numbers, however, supports the danger argument.

Weber (2018) found data to prove that extreme sports cause fatal or serious injuries by comparing registration data from Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Finland, Slovenia, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. The most severe injuries occurred in airborne sports, then climbing, skating, and contact sports. A high percentage of spinal injuries in climbing accidents and aerial activities was caused by very high falls. Mei-Dan and Carmont's (2017) detailed an analysis of the danger and catastrophes associated with adventure and extreme sports. Gyimothy and Mykletun (2017) demonstrated how meta-motivations shift during adventure activities. Para-telic motivations and playful moods predominate for the majority of the time, but shifts to telic motivations happen in response to threats to the participants' well-being and safety when the circumstances call for it. They come to the conclusion that adventure travel was primarily motivated by risk, insight seeking, and play. According to Gyimothy and Mykletun (2017, p. 18), "Adult tour" in adventurous pursuits corresponds with risk and the management of hazards to achieve an optimal balance between anxiety and boredom.

² Statistics Agency under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan - 2025

At least 14 different kinds of motivation for adventure activities were discovered by Buckley (2012) after searching a total of 50 papers on the topic. These motives were grouped by Buckley into three broad categories:

- 1) Internal activity;
- 2) Internal/External location in nature;
- 3) Social Position (external).

The idea that travelers' behaviors reflect changing motivational patterns during their travel. Some of other studies conducted a motivational study of pleasure vacationers. There are seven conceptualized push and socio-psychological motivational factors:

- Escape from a perceived mundane environment;
- Exploration and evaluation of self;
- Relaxation;
- Prestige;
- Regression;
- Enhancement of relationships;
- Facilitation of social interaction.

There are still two elements that were partially regarded as draw factors: novelty and education. These elements are crucial in identifying what motivates people to travel to far-off places and how they affect travelers' decision-making processes.

By boosting pull factors such as better rates, improved service quality, and solid infrastructure, planners may further augment and enhance destination offers, as outlined. The referenced motivational theory gives marketers a better understanding of the aspects of the location that is significant to tourists choosing a destination. Destination planners must be aware of how they must raise their service standards to draw visitors since quality of service is seen to be a factor driving tourists to travel. Additionally, it's important to understand each visitor's unique reasons since, as segment the tourism market more precisely. This makes it possible for destination marketers to use their resources more wisely.

Some of the most popular incentive theories in tourist research are summarized in Table 1.

Table-1.

Tourist motivational concept and theories³

Author (Year)	Theory Name	Contribution
Cohen (1972)	Types of tourists	- Tourists are classified based on their travel behaviors and groups them as 1) organized mass tourists, 2) individual mass tourists, 3) explorers 4) drifters
Dann (1977)	Push and pull theory of tourist motivation	- Developed a theoretical foundation on the ideas of anomie and eco-enhancement. - Explained that the anomie component is the urge to overcome emotions of loneliness, whereas eco-enhancement results from individual wants.
Crompton (1979)	Sociopsychological motivations to travel	- Described two cultural motivations, seven socio-psychological motivations, and a total of nine motivations for people to travel.
Iso-Ahola (1982)	Social psychology model of tourism	- Argued that motivations for personal and interpersonal escape and search drive travel and leisure based on push and pull effects. - Combined the two primary components (escape and reward) according on the scenario and the objectives of the visitors

³ Author work

Adventure tourism concept - The core of adventure, according to Beard (2019), includes a number of significant and interconnected elements, including uncertain outcomes, danger and risk, challenge, anticipated rewards, novelty, stimulation and excitement, escapism and separation, exploration and discovery, absorption and focus, as well as contrasting emotions. Uncertainty was highlighted by Carpenter and Priest (1989) as a distinctive aspect of the adventure experience paradigm, highlighting its key role within adventure activities. While an adventure is extremely possible if all of these components are present, it will not be one if any of them are present alone. The elements are compatible with “rapid adventure” (Varley and Semple, 2017).

Adventure tourism is defined by the Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA) as, “a trip (traveling outside of a person’s normal environment for more than 24 hours and not more than one consecutive year) that includes at least two of the following three elements: physical activity, natural environment, and cultural immersion” (Adventure tourism development index, 2016). A total of 34 different sorts of activities are included in the study, ranging from physically taxing outdoor pursuits in the wild to calling on friends and family, seeing a historical location, and taking part in volunteer tourism programs. According to this description, adventure tourism is developing faster than both overall tourist growth and cruise tourism, another rapidly rising industry. Its data includes Iceland, Germany, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, Canada, Australia, Finland, Austria, and Denmark as the top 10 destinations for adventure travel. Because of the Asian population’s thirst for adventure, ATTA anticipates that this growth will continue.

However, political changes may affect the movement of tourists in various ways, and the collapse of democracies worldwide may increase the possibility of unjust treatment and a lack of assistance from the home nation in specific crisis situations (20 Adventure Travel Trends to Watch in, 2018).

A hazy notion and a diverse industry where new activities are always emerging are both seen as adventure tourism. Due of its complexity, adventure tourism is more akin to a category than a concept (Rantala, et al., 2016). Uncertainty was highlighted by Carpenter and Priest (1989) as a distinctive aspect of the adventure experience paradigm, highlighting its key role within adventure activities. While an adventure is extremely possible if all of these components are present, it will not be one if any of them are present alone. The elements are compatible with “rapid adventure” (Varley and Semple, 2017).

Beard (2019) contends that while exercise is necessary, an adventure as defined is mostly a “state of mind” and “an attitude” of the individual. As adventure is about involving, thrilling, and testing participant abilities, this may be seen as one pillar in comprehending the appeal of adventure tourism. Pushing one’s own boundaries is a crucial component in discovering one’s own self.

Buckley (2017) concludes that an adventure tourist’s “rush sensation” is their greatest gain. “The simultaneous sense of thrill and flow associated with the successful performance of an adventurous activity at a high level of competence” is what the term “rush” means (Buckley, 2017). The term “thrill” in this context refers to “a solely adrenalin-based physiological response”, while the term “flow” refers to “any sort of skillful activity when the exponent’s mental attention coincides totally with their physical practice”, such that they are “intensely engrossed” (Buckley, 2017). Large and Schilar (2018) primarily focused on adventure as a mental state, and their study takes into account the experiences of the individuals.

Another aspect of adventure tourism and travel that Demiroglu, Dannevig, et al., (2018) discussed was climate change. Their article focuses on how climate change will interact with the very weather-

dependent ski tourism industry. Climate change will interact with adventure tourism in many ways. The sustainability of skiing areas will be at risk due to climate change, which has drawn a research focus to impact and adaptation studies including ski areas, resorts, and destinations, but the amount of study on the demand side of the problem is rather small.

The most noteworthy change has been the increased influence of environmental elements. The overwhelming relevance of the natural environment in respondents' pull factors, or external reasons, illustrates the growing value of distinctive natural surroundings in validating adventure tourism experiences. Several of these activities may now be done in a variety of different places Figure-1.

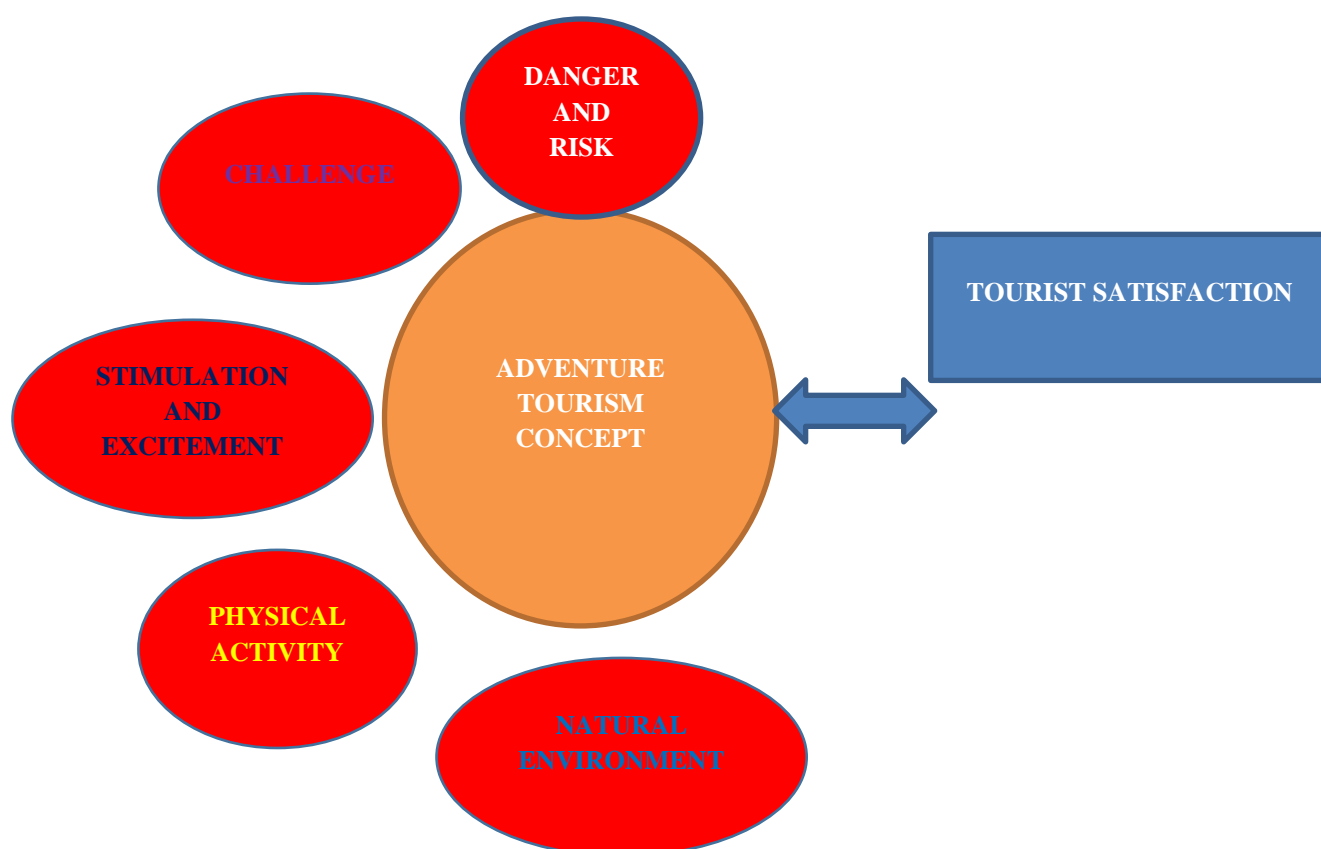


Figure -1. Concept of adventure tourism and tourist satisfaction⁴

Methodology

This study will take a qualitative approach to research. This will enable an analysis of adventure tourism concept and local tourist satisfaction in Uzbekistan. 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 and hospitality 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.

⁴ Author work

The general goal of this research is to establish ways to assist the growth of adventure tourism in Uzbekistan, and visitor satisfaction for adventure tourism. The use of research philosophy in research means that qualitative research is based on interpretivism, whereas quantitative research is based on positivism.

A convenience sample of 20 international tourists will be used to conduct this research at the resort. The tourists will be approached and asked whether they would be agreeable to answer several questions about their satisfaction by participate in adventure tourism in Uzbekistan.

Result

The interviews were conducted with local tourists who for adventure purposes. There were 11 males (55%) and 9 females (45%) interviewed. Two of the respondents were 70 years of age, the majority of respondents were between the ages of 20 and 30. Another 30% of respondents were 31 years or older. The findings show that there is a growing demand for adventure tourism and that the adventure tourism market in Uzbekistan that is close to Tashkent such as resort one of the main adventure tourism destinations which is attracting a significant flow of international tourists from all over the world. This region's tourism potential and attractions had been promoted, and tour companies had worked hard to bring more international tourists to Uzbekistan. However there some major issues and improvements needed that must to be considered in order to encourage more tourists to come to Uzbekistan.

Replies from several respondents have revealed that there are several problems in the training of the adventure tourism industry in Uzbekistan, particularly in regard to the need for better training. Several responses suggested that the government should provide this type of training, especially for extreme activities. Respondents cited the importance of gaining more knowledge about adventure tourism, extreme activities, and tourist desires for new activities were identified as primary elements influencing visitors' incentives to participate in adventure activities.

Based on the interviews, respondents noted various concerns, such as instructions on safety measures were frequently too short, ambiguous, difficult to comprehend, not presented in multiple languages, nor delivered using the latest technology such as through monitors and video displays. However, several guests commented that the resort utilized a range of brand new, high-quality equipment. The need for safety equipment and instructions are critical to reducing risk during activities, and when dangers are present, this can affect tourist decision making in their selection of activities.

Conclusion

Adventure tourism has gained in popularity in recent years, alongside traditional and classic types of travel such as historical tourism, ecotourism, agricultural tourism, medical tourism, virtual tourism, backpacking and bicycle tourism as well as culinary tourism. This may be because tourism services are becoming more diverse. In recent years, practical initiatives have been taken to diversify the structure of tourist services and to promote new kinds of tourism in Uzbekistan. Through adventure tourism, much attention has been placed on increasing the flow of tourists. This qualitative study has demonstrated that there are several weak points inhibiting the expansion of adventure tourism.

- These are linked to the need for further training, risk management procedures, adventure equipment, and more in-depth education about winter activities.

- Another disadvantage that was stated was a lack of danger signs or billboards warning about trespassing, medical services, ambulance or first aid supplies, more helmets, defibrillators, anti-poison medicine, and satellite phones.

The research also revealed the need for more adventure tourism specialists to aid in the expansion of the adventure tourism market in the Uzbek tourist industry.

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