

Determining the benefits of adventure tourism from a providers' perspective in Fethiye

Ayşe Celik Yetim*, Tourism Management Department, Faculty of Management, Mugla Sıtkı Kocaman University, Fethiye, 48300, Turkey.

Suggested Citation:

Yetim, A.C. (2017). Determining the benefits of adventure tourism from a providers' perspective in Fethiye. *Global Journal of Business, Economics and Management: Current Issues*. 7(1), 02-07.

Received November 20, 2016; revised January 3, 2017, accepted March 17, 2016;

Selection and peer review under responsibility of Prof. Dr. Andreea Iluzia IACOB, Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies, Romania.

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Abstract

There has been a significant growth in adventure tourism globally in recent years including Turkey. Fethiye is a good example of this trend as the resort has great potential for adventure tourism. Adventure tourism helps holiday destinations to attract sustainable tourism management in comparison with the traditional sea, sun and sand form of tourism. The specific aim of this study is to reveal the benefits of adventure tourism for the adventure traveler and for the providing organization too. Questionnaire technique was used to gather data. The questionnaire was directed and employed towards the service providers. Data was collated between May and October 2014 and 161 questionnaires were completed via face to face survey methodology. Adventure travel/ traveler benefits were ascertained from enquiries appertaining to: experience, activity, environment and other miscellaneous factors. Findings of the survey identified that the greatest benefits of adventure tourism for the providing organizations were 'self actualization' and 'supporting culture and environment' both of which, from statistical analysis, appeared to have a direct impact on increased business opportunity and growth market potential. As a result of this study, it is surmised that the provision of serving such destinations with adventure tourism should be of significant benefit to travelers and service providers alike.

Keywords: adventure tourism, benefits of adventure tourism, adventure-based leisure/recreation, service providers.

*ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: **Ayşe Celik Yetim**, Tourism Management Department, Faculty of Management, Mugla Sıtkı Kocaman University, Fethiye, 48300, Turkey. E-mail address: aysecelik@mu.edu.tr

1. Introduction

The traditional package seaside holiday is now less popular than it used to be because tourism has entered a new phase providing for a different type of touristic experience. As a result of this providers within the tourist industry have had to adopt alternative marketing strategies to cater for this need. Product diversification is the key to success for such marketing strategies because the new type of alternative tourism is, by its very nature, extremely varied. One such branch breaking new frontiers in alternative tourism is adventure tourism. Conveniently, most of the adventure tourism activity types can be experienced in the famous seaside resort of Fethiye which has more than sufficient resource potential but which at the moment still requires more focused marketing strategies to enhance the economic benefits of adventure tourism in this area of Turkey. In order to determine the benefits of adventure tourism in Fethiye, a survey was conducted with local service providers. The questionnaire included a question on the perceived mutual benefits of adventure tourism for tourists and suppliers/providers. However, as mentioned, the research and survey sought to reveal the benefits of adventure tourism for Fethiye from the perspective of service providers' within the resort.

1.1. Literature Review

Adventure travel has been described as 'a leisure activity that takes place in an unusual, exotic, remote or wilderness destination (Millington, Locke & Locke, 2001). Further the concept, outdoor adventure recreation has been referred to as "a self-initiated, non-consumptive recreational outdoor setting, that contains real or perceived elements of risk in which the outcome is uncertain but influenced by the participant and/or circumstance (Ewert, 1985). Adventure tourism can mean different things to different groups of participants at various levels (Shephard & Evans, 2008). That risk also motivates the adventure tourist (Zuckerman, 1990). Sung, Morrison and O'Leary (1997) has determined adventure travel as being 'a trip or travel with the specific purpose of activity participation to explore a new experience, often involving perceived risk or controlled danger associated with personal challenges, in a natural environment or exotic outdoor setting. Adventure tourism can be split into two distinct types of activity namely, hard and soft adventure tourism (Hill, 1995). Thus for example, birdwatching, fishing, trekking and walking tours are considered to be soft adventure tourism whereas activities such as bungee jumping, paragliding, jungle exploring and skydiving are clear examples of hard adventure tourism. Adventure tourism has come to be recognised as a significant growth sector (Loverseed, 1997; Ewert, 1989).

There is little doubt that the concepts 'adventure tourism\adventure travel' are now an essential part of the tourism industry and that the "benefits are too important to too many people to ignore their magnitude and value when justifying programs and budgets, formulating and analyzing policies, and making investment decisions" (Lewis & Kaiser, 1991). Ewert categorized potential benefits of outdoor adventure recreation as being: psychological, sociological, educational and physical. He further defined psychological benefits as being synonymous with: self-concept, confidence, self-efficacy, sensation seeking, actualization, well-being and personal testing. In the same way, he assimilated sociological benefits with: compassion, group cooperation, respect for others, communication, behaviour feedback, friendship and belonging. He goes on to liken educational benefits with: outdoor education, nature awareness, conservation education, problem-solving, value-creation, outdoor techniques, improved academics and last but not least, he links physical benefits with: Fitness, skills, strength, coordination, catharsis, exercise and balance (Ewert, 1985).

The above concepts tend, almost without exception, to involve considerable levels of energetic activity by those tourists taking part and most of them take place in an outdoor environmental setting. Adventure travellers anticipate in advance and by their own personal choice, expect and desire experiences involving various levels of risk, excitement and\or tranquillity. Also they expect to be personally tested both physically and mentally. To be more specific, they are in effect explorers

wishing to experience the more natural, unspoilt, exotic parts of the Earth as well as being personally challenged (Millington et al., 2001). This sector of tourism provides benefits both to travellers and service providers alike (Sung, Morrison &O'Leary, 1996). Thus from the literature and by research analysis this study seeks to determine the question: "What are the mutual benefits of adventure tourism both to the traveller and local service providers in Fethiye's holiday resort destination?"

1.2. Method

Sung, Morrison and O'Leary (1996) determined the benefits of adventure tourism with open-ended questions. More specifically, the most important benefits of adventure tourism were determined as being those ones which mutually benefit both travellers and providing organisations. Sung, Morrison and O'Leary (1996)'s defined concepts were used in this research. Benefits of adventure travel to travellersand providing organisations were analysed utilizing experience, activity, environment and other defined miscellaneous dimensions.

Accordingly, a questionnaire that included questions on the perceived mutual benefits of adventure tourism for tourists and suppliers/providers in Fethiye was handed out, locally, to adventure tourism companies, tour operators, travel agencies, accommodation establishments, guide services and the vocational College Of Tourism to complete. As previously stipulated, the research sought to establish and identify those benefits of adventure tourism in Fethiye, from the service provider's perspective, that are equally beneficial to adventure travellers and service providers in the resort. Data was collated between May and October 2014. 161 questionnaires were completed via a face to face interview survey technique. Besides the research study's aim to determine the benefits of adventure tourism both to travellers and providing organisations, the study's quest was also to search perception differences of the various types of business currently operating in Fethiye.

Thus, the hypothesis of this research was to determine whether or not:

H1: There is any significant and or meaningful difference in view point amongst service providers in any given resort, concerning providing organisations beneficial perceptions of adventure travel. In other words, is there a perception difference amongst service providers dependent upon the nature of the type of business being run by them in any given resort (the resort in question for this particular study being Fethiye).

The details of the participants and results data are set below.

Table 1.Demographic results of the respondents\participants (n=161)

Demographics and other statistics of the Participant					
	f	%		f	%
Gender			Marital Status		
Female	30	18,6	Married	76	47,2
Male	131	81,4	Single	85	52,8
Total	161	100	Total	161	100
Education			Business Type		
Primary School	4	2,5	Accommodation Agency	28	17,4
High School	42	26,1	Travel Agency	47	29,2
College-Two years	32	19,9	Adventure Education&Training	22	13,7
College Degree	68	42,2	Recreation	5	3,1
GraduateDegree	11	6,8	Entertainment	6	3,7
Missing Value	4	2,5	Tourism Guide	18	11,2
Total	161	100	Tourism Education	13	8,1

				Other	13	8,1
				Missing value	9	5,6
				Total	161	100
Age				Working period in tourism		
18-19	10	6,2				
20-29	33	20,5	Less than 1 year	8	5	
30-39	44	27,3	1-5	31	19,3	
40-49	45	28	6-10	29	18	
50-59	21	13	More than 10 years	91	56,5	
Over 60	8	5	Missing value	2	1,2	
Total	161	100	Total	161	100	

It can be seen from the results of table 1 that 81,4% (131) of the responses to the questionnaire were from males. The education data revealed that college degree respondents, 42,2% (68) gave the highest response to the questionnaire. The age data revealed that the 30-39 and 40-49 age range had higher degrees namely 27,3% (44) and 28% (45). According to marital status 52,8% (85) were single and 47,2% (76) married. The business type part of table 1 showed that 29,2%(47) of the respondents were travel agencies, 17,4% (28) were accommodation establishments; 13,7% (22) were adventure education and trainer businesses, 11,2% (18) were tourism guides, 8,1% (13) worked in tourism education, 3,7% (6) were in the entertainment field and 3,1% (5) were recreational business types. The working period in tourism data revealed that 8% (5) of the respondents were working in tourism less than 1 year, 19,3% (31) for 1-5 years; 18% (29) for 6-10 years and 56.5% (91) for more than 10 years.

Table 2. Benefits of adventure travel/travellers

Experience	Mean	Std. Deviation
Discovering new experiences	4,73	,554
Increased sense of personal growth	4,44	,736
Educational opportunities	4,32	,832
Activity		
Fun and excitement	4,77	,466
Integrated, better travel opportunities	4,79	,427
Outdoor adventure activity participation	4,61	,579
Recreational opportunity	4,49	,683
Environment		
Improved interpretation of the environment and culture	4,45	,751
Return to nature	4,47	,719
Carefree, "blown away" setting	4,44	,757
Interaction with environment/people	4,48	,731
Miscellaneous.		
Improved awareness of physical fitness and health	4,49	,722
Mental, physical stimulation	4,49	,809
Self-fulfilment	4,50	,742

Table 2 shows the perceived benefits of adventure travel/travellers according to service providers. For travellers, the greatest benefits of adventure tourism were identified as 'Discovering new experiences' (4.73) within the experience dimension; 'Fun and excitement' (4,77) within the activity dimension ; 'Interaction with environment/people' (4,48) within the environment dimension and 'Self-fulfilment' (4,50) within the miscellaneous dimensions.

Table 3. Benefits of adventure travel to providing organisations

	Experience	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Providing adventure expertise with an integrated itinerary	4,51	,663
	Interaction with people	4,54	,631
	Job satisfaction	4,34	,847
	Extended experience	4,50	,669
	Self Actualization	4,68	,583
	Education		
	Promote tourism to remote destinations	4,38	,817
	Educational rewards	4,16	1,047
	Supporting the culture and environment	4,55	,702
	Enhance local benefits	4,46	,706
	Business		
	Increased business opportunity with growing market potential	4,47	,782
	Profitability	4,45	,776
	Satisfied, repeat customers	4,34	,895

Table 3 shows Benefits of Adventure Travel to Providing Organisations according to service providers. According to providing organisations, the greatest benefits of adventure tourism were identified as ' Self Actualization' (4,68) within the experience dimension; ' Supporting the culture and environment' (4,55) within the education dimension ' and increased business opportunity with growing market potential' (4,47) within the business dimension.

Table 4. Result of one-way ANOVA on mean difference benefits of adventure travel to providing organisations according to service providers by business type

Dimension	Group	n	Mean	SD	F	p
EXPERIENCE	Accommodation	24	4,458	0,615	,977	,457
	Travel Agency	41	4,372	0,556		
	Adventure	21	4,547	0,589		
	Education&Training					
	Recreation	4	4,375	0,433		
	Entertainment	6	4,791	0,400		
	Tourism guide	17	4,617	0,434		
	Tourism Education	10	4,450	0,562		
	Other	12	4,375	0,527		
	EDUCATIONAL	Accommodation	25	4,470		
Travel Agency		43	4,325	0,570		
Adventure		21	4,488	0,609		
Education&Training						
Recreation		4	4,062	0,826		
Entertainment		6	4,625	0,493		
Tourism guide		17	4,588	0,475		
Tourism Education		10	4,700	0,468		
Other		12	4,270	0,907		
BUSINESS		Accommodation	26	4,461	0,618	
	Travel Agency	43	4,410	0,649		
	Adventure	20	4,533	0,545		
	Education&Training					
	Recreation	4	4,083	0,876		
	Entertainment	6	4,500	0,691		
	Tourism guide	16	4,666	0,471		
	Tourism Education	10	4,700	0,483		
	Other	12	4,277	1,023		

One way ANOVA analysis was used was to accurately assess the differentiation of the providing organisations beneficial perceptions of adventure travel within the varying types of business being run in the locality. It can be deduced from the result of the statistical analysis that there is a meaningful and significant correlation between the perceptions of providing organisations and the benefits of adventure travel according to all of the service providers in the resort. It can therefore be deduced from this that the hypothesis referred to H1 is not supported as the results of the analysis indicate that the views of service providers were consistently positive regardless of the business being interviewed using the questionnaire.

3. Discussion

The benefits of adventure tourism are revealed within the holiday resort destination of Fethiye by both travellers and service providers perspectives. The specific benefits to adventure travel/travellers were found to include: experience, activity, environment and other miscellaneous factors. Benefits of adventure travel to providing organisations were determined as being: experience, education and business. Sung, Morrison and O'Leary (1996) also found the dimensions to be the same but the actual choice of the defined conceptual factors are essentially different.

Discovering new experiences, Fun and excitement, interaction with environment/people' and 'self-fulfilment' are the determining factors shown to be of the greatest benefit to travellers. Sung, Morrison and O'Leary (1996) also found the discovering new experiences and fun and excitement factors to be of the greatest benefit to travellers participating in adventure tourism. However, in the Fethiyespondent sample, the "interaction environment and people" factors were recorded as being more popular than the "improved interpretation of the environment and culture" factors.

So far as providing organisations are concerned, the adventure tourism factors with the greatest beneficial value were identified as being: 'Self Actualization', 'Supporting the culture and environment' and 'increased business opportunity with growth market potential'. Sung, Morrison and O'Leary (1996) also recognised the same dimensions but there was a variance in the item score proportions. Increased business opportunity with growth market potential benefit was a result factor found to be prevalent in both this study and Sung, Morrison and O'Leary (1996)'s research study.

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