



Exploring the Factors Shaping Memorable Adventure Experiences: A Qualitative Study of Emerging Destinations

Pinky

Phd Research Scholar, Department of Commerce, Manav Rachna International Institute of Research & Studies, Faridabad, India. Email ID: Pinky31jan@gmail.com ORCID ID: Pinky: <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-2520-819X>

Dr. Urvashi Sharma

Associate Professor, School of Leadership & Management, Manav Rachna International Institute of Research & Studies, Faridabad, India Email ID: Urvashi.slm@mriu.edu.in **Corresponding Author:** Pinky31jan@gmail.com

Abstract

The industry of adventure tourism is experiencing explosive growth within the tourism industry across the globe especially in developing countries where there is potential for exploitation of the existing natural and cultural resources. In this study, the role of various factors affecting the memorability of adventure tourism experience is analyzed and evaluated. Utilizing a qualitative methodology, the study makes use of a content analysis of current literature and evidence from various cases to determine these factors. It is evident from the results obtained that memorability is a product of several interconnected factors including authenticity, risk perception, environmental involvement, interpersonal interaction, and service quality. The research shows that while these elements increase emotionality and satisfaction, they also create contradictions between commodifying experiences and preserving sustainability. Fostering authentic, well-managed adventure experiences enhances memorability while promoting sustainable tourist behavior, ensuring long-term environmental conservation, community well-being, and resilience of emerging tourism destinations.

Key Words: Adventure Tourism, Sustainable Tourism, Memorable Tourism Experience, environmental involvement, Sustainable Tourist Behaviour, Perceived Risk, Authenticity.

Introduction

The concept of adventure tourism has tremendously grown internationally in the recent decade and has become one of the rapidly increasing tourism divisions. This phenomenal expansion is prompted by shifting consumer lifestyles, with more than 65% of global travellers shifting towards experiential travel as opposed to traditional leisure travel (Booking.com, 2023). In contrast to mass tourism, adventure tourism merges the associated points of physical activity, cultural experience, and interaction with nature, which is consistent with the concept of sustainability and

responsible tourism practices (Buckley, 2018).

Asia Pacific Adventure Tourism Market Size, 2021-2034 (USD Billion)

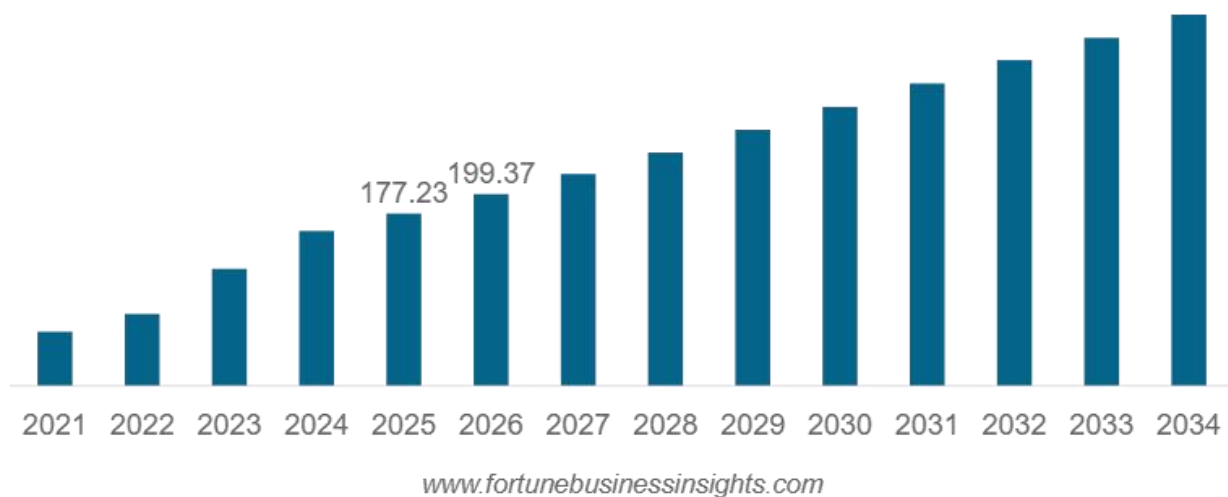


Figure: Asia Pacific Adventure Tourism Market Size 2021 to 2034 (USD Billion)

Source: Fortune Business Insights, 2026

Asia Pacific witnessed adventure tourism market growth from USD 177.23 billion in 2025 to USD 199.37 billion in 2026 (Fortune Business Insights, 2026). The Asian, African, Latin American continent has witnessed the emergence of key growth regions which have been largely characterized by their high levels of biodiversity and relatively untapped fields of cultural landscapes. An example is that several countries in the last few years have recorded growth of 10-20% in the number of adventure tourists annually, amongst others, including Nepal, Bhutan, and Peru (UNWTO, 2022). These destinations have high value experience experiences, but are struggling with significant sustainability issues, such as environmental harm, and socio-cultural effects associated with high tourist inflows.

Memorable Tourism Experiences (MTEs) are important in determining tourist satisfaction and the long-term behavioral results. According to empirical research, it can be said that around 70% of tourists tend to revisit places that they have good experience as emotional and memorable (Kim et al., 2012). Moreover, MTEs play a major role in electronic word-of-mouth and 80% of travelers post their experience online, resulting in a larger exposure of the destinations (Statista,



2023). Memorability in an adventure tourism setting is further compounded with issues of perceived risk, novelty and personal attainment leading to enhanced emotional and psychological attachment.

With these trends, however, there is still a sharp gap in research in comprehending how these forms of experiences are relevant to the development of memorability in developing destinations and the impact the experiences have had on the development of sustainable tourist behavior. This paper serves to fill this gap by studying important determinants using a qualitative thematic analysis of published data. It targets the destinations that have an emerging tourism infrastructure that require a balance between growth and sustainability (ATTA, 2023).

Among the goals of the research is to determine the factors which influence memorable adventure experiences, the effects which they have on responsible tourist behavior, and implications in sustainable tourism management. This research will add to the sphere of development of sustainable tourism as it will place into practice the theoretical and real-life ideas of sustainability and experiential approaches in sustainable tourism development.

2. Literature Review

The concept of adventure tourism and memorable tourism experiences (MTEs) have become a matter of growing scholarly interest, especially in the areas of sustainability and destinations in the emerging world. Recent researches point out the fact that success in tourism cannot be defined as purely based on physical attraction but is highly determined by experiential, psychological and services attributes.

Sutrisno (2024) offers a background on this subject, locating the critical factors of success in various tourism places, in the approach used to conduct his study, based on qualitative methodology. The paper insists the concept of destination success where authenticity, service quality, infrastructure, and stakeholder collaboration combine to determine destination success. Notably, Sutrisno (2024) claims that experiential value is one of the primary issues in the attraction and retention of tourists in the destination with natural and cultural uniqueness as some of the primary competitive advantages. This is in line with the general concept that emerging destinations need to strike a balance between development and preservation to only be able to continue with the growth of tourism in the long-term.

Continuing the idea of conceptualizing the memorable tourism experiences, Hosseini et al. (2024) cover the dimensions of memorability as a dark tourism concept. Their results indicate that the intensity of emotion, novelty intensity and self-reflection significantly improve memory. The research pans further into traditional MTE models, where negative or emotionally complicated affects are integrated, as it was found out that memorability does exist in a positive effect rather than in significant and transformative experiences (Hosseini et al., 2024). This observation applies



especially in the case of adventure tourism where risk and uncertainty can be part of enhanced emotional involvement.

Akhshik et al. (2023) explore MTEs within the framework of nature-based tourists using the fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis. According to their study, environment engagement, perceived value, and service quality are vital antecedents to the memorable experiences. Another significant finding of the study is that memorable experiences are associated with such significant outcomes as destination loyalty, revisit intention, and pro-environmental behavior (Akhshik et al., 2023). This confirms a close relationship between the outcome of experiential quality and sustainability, which strengthens the need to create meaningful tourism experiences.

Besides, environmental and experiential factors, social and psychological factors are also significant. Akhoondnejad et al. (2022) examine the preconditions of long-lasting commitment to tourism experiences, specifically in a case of dining. Their qualitative results reveal that personal relevance, emotional attachment, and cultural authenticity are all the factors that are involved in sustainable engagement in tourism experiences. This notion of prolonged engagement is important in learning how instructional experiences affect medium-term behavioral intentions and affective bonds with locations (Akhoondnejad et al., 2022).

The psychological aspects also influence the decision-making by tourists and perception of the experience. Damasih (2025) emphasizes that motivations, emotions, and thinking assessments play a significant role in influencing the behavior of tourists. The research highlights that intrinsic motivation, like the need to experience something new and self-realization, should be given special focus in the context of adventure tourism. Moreover, there might be increased satisfaction through perceived risk and individual challenge, provided that it correlates with the expectation and the abilities of the tourists (Damasih, 2025). This goes along with the argument that one of the most important factors of memorability is psychological engagement.

Regarding sustainability, Orden-Mejia et al. (2025) identify motivation, the quality of services, or image of the destination to be a very important driver of loyalty in adventure tourism. Their research shows that the quality of experiences does not only enhance tourist satisfaction, but also leads to sustainable behaviors and destination competitiveness in the long term. Moreover, the study notes that the incorporation of sustainability in adventure tourism experiences can improve conservation efforts on the environment as well as the welfare of the communities (Orden-Mejia et al., 2025).

The literature suggests that the experience of memorable adventure tourism is formed in a multifaceted environment due to the interplay of factors of experience, psychology, and contexts. Although past research offers a good understanding of the individual determinants, the



combination of these factors in the emergent destinations where the challenge of sustainability prevails is lacking. The proposed study fills this gap by integrating these dimensions and creating a coherent framework to connect memorability to the outcomes of sustainable tourism.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Approach

The present study uses a qualitative research methodology in order to understand the subjective and intricate aspects of memorable adventure tourism experience. The qualitative research is especially suitable in investigating phenomena with experience, as it helps to perform a deep level of knowledge regarding the perception, feelings, and interpretation of individuals (Creswell, 2014). In contrast to quantitative approaches, which depend on measurement and generalization, qualitative approaches work with the meaning-making and context, which are crucial to tourism experience studies (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018). Since memorability is determined by personal, social and environmental engagement, the interplay approach is an interpretivist approach, which allows studying how tourists create and remember their experiences in a more subtle and holistic way.

3.2 Data Collection

The research is based on secondary data resources in order to have a comprehensive and evidence-based research. Peer-reviewed journal articles, industry reports, and case studies on adventure tourism in emerging destinations were used as sources of data collection. Relevant literature was identified using academic databases including Scopus, Web of Science and Google Scholar. In order to stay up to date and capture the industry dynamics, the sources released since 2015 were considered to be prioritized. Also, it included reports by international organizations like the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and adventure travel trade association (ATTA) to access the empirical data and insights on a global scale (UNWTO, 2022; ATTA, 2023). Triangulation is supported by the use of a wide range of sources, making the research results in more robust and richer (Saunders et al., 2019).

3.3 Data Analysis

They used the thematic analysis approach in order to extract patterns and themes in the data systematically. This approach is a common approach in qualitative tourism studies because it is very flexible and rigorous (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The data analysis was in a five-step manner, that is, (1) familiarization with the data by reading it repeatedly, (2) coming up with the first codes to identify the concepts of interest, (3) finding the broader themes, (4) reviewing and refining themes to ensure coherence and (5) interpreting the findings in relation to research objectives. This analytical method offers transparency and consistency of analysis and makes possible the identification of important factors affecting memorable adventure experiences and how these factor impact on sustainability of adventure experiences.



3.4 Reliability and Validity

To uphold the reliability, data triangulation was employed in the study as several quality sources that were high-quality data were combined, such as academic literature and reports in the industry (Saunders et al., 2019). There was consistency in coding and thematic development during the analysis process. Critical analysis of sources enhanced validity with a preference to peer reviewed and credible sources. The utilization of the developed theoretical frameworks, including experience economy (Pine and Gilmore, 1999) and sustainable tourism principles (Buckley, 2018), contributes to the increased credibility and theoretical basis of the work.

4. Findings And Discussions

A thematic analysis of the chosen literature shows that vivid adventure tourism experiences (MTEs) are conditioned by a complex of interconnected experiential, psychological and contextual variables. These not only contribute to the level of satisfaction among the tourists but also define the results of sustainability in the emerging destinations. The analysis has provided 5 themes, i.e. authenticity and cultural immersion, risk, emotional intensity, engagement with the environment, psychological drivers, and service quality and destination management.

4.1 Authenticity and Cultural Immersion

In order to be considered an authentic experience, authenticity is always defined as a defining factor in unforgettable tourism experiences. Tourists desire more authentic transactions with the local culture, traditions and styles of life especially in the developing destinations where commodification has not been as widespread compared to the developed countries. Key to improving destination competitiveness, Sutrisno (2024) highlights that authenticity builds a distinctive value propositions, which are difficult to imitate. Equally, Akhoondnejad et al. (2022) underscore the fact that cultural authenticity can lead to long-term participation, and tourist engage on the destination at the emotional and cognitive level.



Travel Experiences: What Influences the Purchase Decision

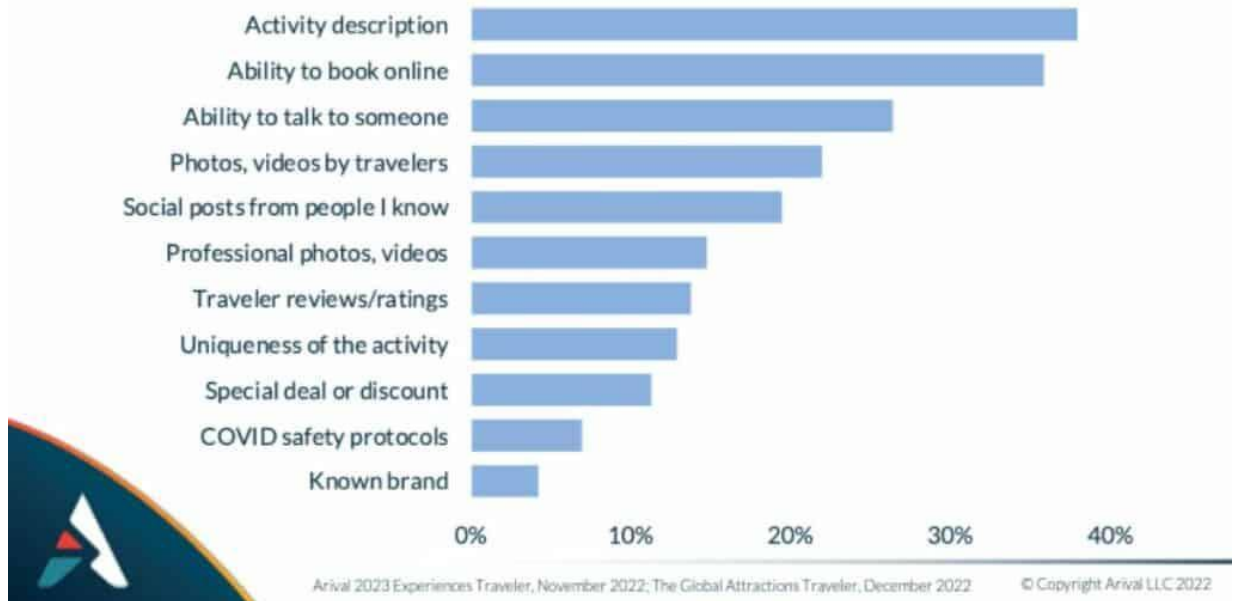


Figure: Factors influencing the purchase decision in Travel Experience

Source: Visser, 2023

Another conflict that is presented in the analysis is authenticity versus commercialization. With increasing popularity in destinations, it has also been seen to stage or twist cultural experiences with the aim of fulfilling the expectations of tourists and at the expense of authenticity. The sustainability can be compromised due to cultural commodification and the loss of their identity caused by this phenomenon. Thus, although authenticity helps create with stronger memories, its incorrect management may adversely affect socio-cultural sustainability.

4.2 Risk and Challenge, and Emotional Intensity

Perceived risk and physical challenge are also inherently linked to adventure tourism and have a major influence on the level of emotion and memory. Hosseini et al. (2024) claim that fear or uncertainty experiences are most prone to being recalled since they are more remembered due to their psychological influence. The pursuit of adventure thru activities like trekking, rafting and mountaineering can produce the kind of emotion related to excitement, achievement and self-efficacy. Psychologically, as proposed by Damiasih (2025), perception of risks is a dual thing. Perceived risk should be moderate as it increases satisfaction and engagement whereas perceived risk which is excessive may trigger anxiety and bad experiences.



Table 1: Key Factors Shaping Memorable Adventure Experiences

Factor	Description	Key Source
Authenticity	Genuine cultural and local experiences	Sutrisno (2024)
Risk & Challenge	Physical and emotional intensity	Hosseini et al. (2024)
Environmental Engagement	Interaction with natural landscapes	Akhshik et al. (2023)
Psychological Drivers	Motivation, emotions, personal growth	Damiasih (2025)
Service Quality	Safety, infrastructure, professionalism	Orden-Mejía et al. (2025)

This implies that there is value in the need to balance difficulty and safety in designing adventure tourism experiences. Emotional experiences tend to make people remember moments and share such moments more intensely, which enhances destination recognition in word of mouth and Internet sources.

4.3 Environmental Game and Nature Association

The involvement in the environment was identified as the main variable affecting the memorable experiences especially those in nature-based adventure tourism. The interaction with the environmental surroundings is one of the primary antecedents of MTEs specified by Akhshik et al. (2023), who point out that the experience of direct contact with natural environments will benefit other sensory and emotional experiences. Tourists tend to have a sense of belonging to the nature, which can be turned into pro-environmental attitudes and behavior.

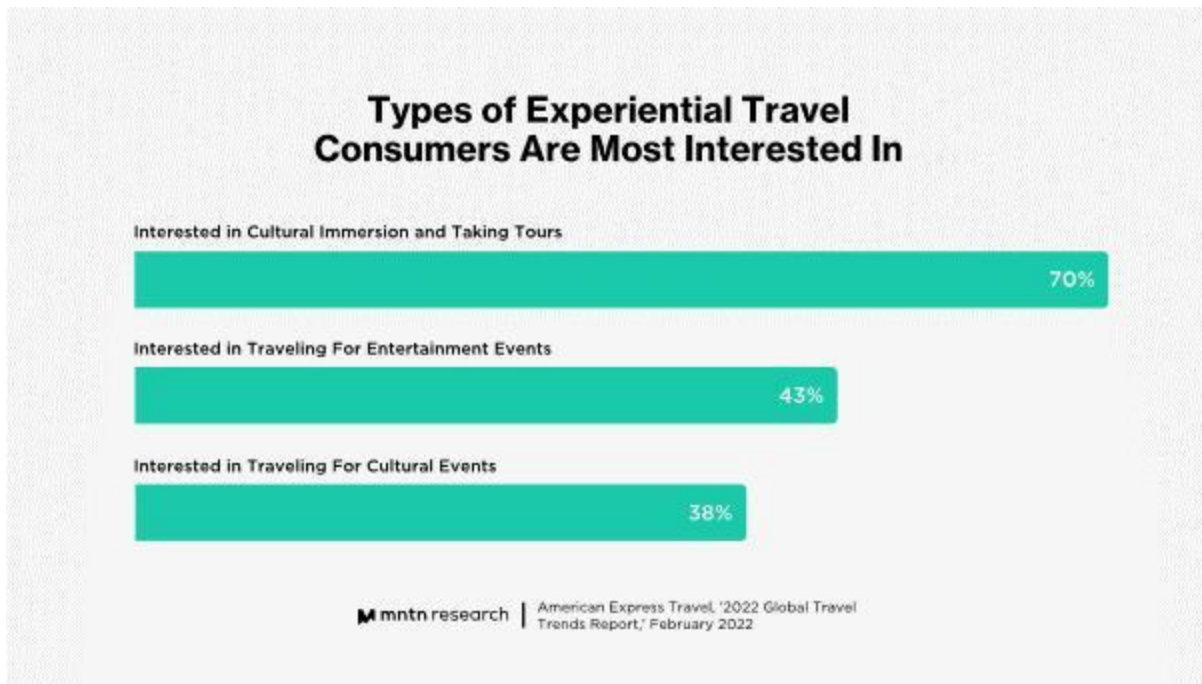


Figure: Types of Experiential travel consumers are most interested in

Source: West Ford Online, 2024

The more engagement with the environment comes with sustainability issues. The increasing human and natural transport of tourists in sensitive ecosystems may cause degradation of the environment, such as loss of biodiversity, pollution and depletion of resources. Orden-Mejia et al. (2025) note that these consequences can be reduced through sustainable management schemes, including visitor control and environmentally friendly infrastructures. Therefore, although environmental involvement promotes memory, it must be handled well to make it ecologically sustainable.

4.4 Psychological Motivators and Tourist Motivation

Memorable experiences are influenced by such psychological factors as motivation, perception and emotional involvement. As Damiasih (2025) points out, novelty-seeking, self-development, as well as escapism are examples of intrinsic motivations, which are outstanding in adventure tourism. These inspirations affect the perception and the evaluation of tourists to their experiences and finally their memorability.

This reveals that emotional attachment and personal involvement is a significant improvement on experience quality. Akhoondnejad et al. (2022) state that long-term engagement results in greater emotional commitment to destinations and the propensity to come back and remain loyal to a <https://unicredit-capitalia.eu/>



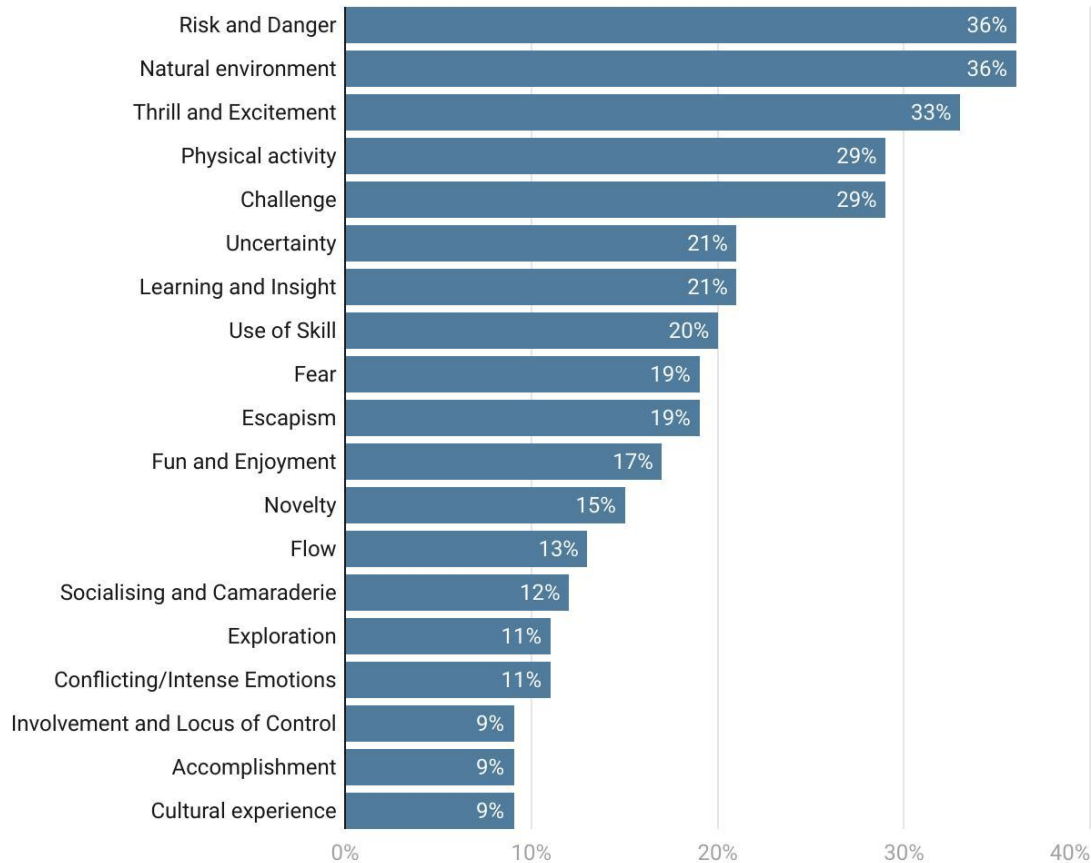
destination. Hosseini et al. (2024) show that despite negative or difficult experiences, it is possible to perceive them in a positive way as long as they result in self-development or thoughtful contemplation. This makes the memorability as a construct more complex because it is not only based on positive experiences but also varies with the intensity of emotional and psychological involvement. For tourism managers, this implies the need to design experiences that are not only enjoyable but also meaningful and transformative.

4.5 Service Quality and Destination Management

Infrastructure and service quality are pivotal facilitators of memorable experiences, especially where tourism systems are not well established such as emerging destinations. According to Sutrisno (2024), service delivery, safety levels, and alignment of stakeholders are the main success factors affecting the overall tourism performance. On the same note, Orden-Mejia et al. (2025) point out that a quality service directly influences the satisfaction and loyalty of tourists.

Safety, professionalism, and reliability are also intricately connected with service quality as far as adventure tourism is concerned. Even the most unique and authentic experiences can become unpleasant and herald dissatisfaction and negative perceptions when there is poor service delivery. On the other hand, superior quality of services leads to better trust and confidence enabling the tourists to have an opportunity to engage in adventure activities.

Factors Inspire In Adventure Tourism



Source: ElectroIQ

Electro IQ

Figure: Factors inspiring Adventure Tourism

Source: Dey and Jambhale, 2025

The results too show differences in service quality among the emerging destinations, because of inadequate infrastructure and resources. This highlights the idea of capacity building, training of the local guides as well as investing in local sustainable infrastructure. Management of the destination has to be a partnership between governments, local communities and the private stakeholders to maintain uniform standard of services and sustainability in the destination.

Table 2: Activity type activities

Types Name	Revenue (USD)		CAGR (2025 to 2030)
	2024	2030	
Hard segment	88,380.4 million	207,528.1 million	15.7%
Soft segment	263,217.5 million	669,731.6 million	17.3%

According to a report published by grandviewresearch.com in 2024, the global adventure tourism market was worth USD 406,124.9 million and will grow at 16.8% yearly by 2030 (Dey and Jambhale, 2025).

4.6 Integration of Memorability and Sustainability

One of the main insights of the analysis is that memorability and sustainability are closely interconnected. The unforgettable moments do not only improve tourist satisfaction but also impact responsible actions and awareness towards the environment.

Ratio of Tourists to Residents in Destinations

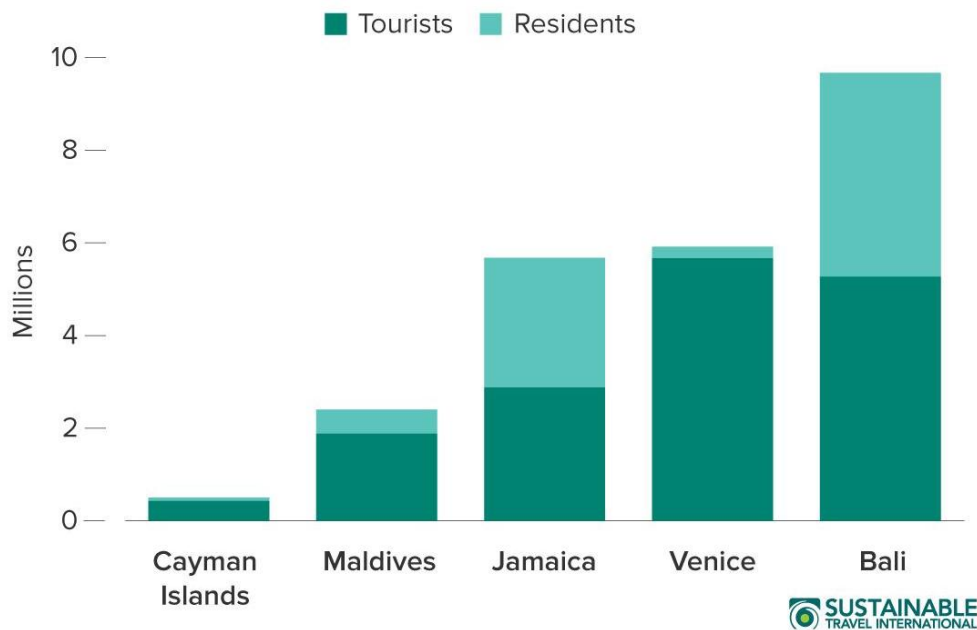


Figure:

Source: Brajich, 2024

Akhshik et al. (2023), tourists whose experiences in nature are memorable are likely to take pro-environmental behaviors. In the same vein, Orden-Mejia et al, (2025) suggest that quality <https://unicredit-capitalia.eu/>



experiences bring about loyalty and contribute to destination development sustainability. Memorability and sustainability are not necessarily a positive correlation.

Table 2: Link Between Memorable Experiences and Sustainability Outcomes

Experience Factor	Impact on Tourist Behaviour	Sustainability Outcome
Authenticity	Cultural respect	Preservation of traditions
Environmental Exposure	Awareness of nature	Eco-friendly behaviour
Emotional Engagement	Strong attachment to destination	Repeat visits
Service Quality	Satisfaction and trust	Destination competitiveness
Risk & Challenge	Personal growth	Responsible tourism choices

Not handled well, the quest of special and extreme experiences may over-tourist a given area and cause environmental strain. It is why it is important to find the compromise between the experiential value and sustainability.

5. Conclusion

This paper has examined the characteristics of the adventure tourism experience that make it powerful in the mind of tourists, particularly to emerging destinations, and how the experiences are associated with sustainability. It has been found that authenticity, risk and challenge, interaction with nature, personal emotions, and quality of service, are the key influencing factors contributing to memorable experiences. When these factors are combined, they form significant and fun experiences that are remembered long by the tourists.

The research also shows that an experience creates a memorable memory that can make tourists act more responsibly. As an illustration, tourists tend to be respectful of nature and even contribute to local communities when they have a sense of belonging to the surroundings or a particular culture. This demonstrates that the adventure tourism would be relevant in ensuring sustainable tourism. However, the study also points out some challenges. The increase in popularity of destinations will result in a danger of over-tourism, environmental degradation, and cultural loss. As a case in point, natural sites can be damaged through excessive numbers of tourists and local cultures can be altered to appeal to tourists. This requires that whilst tourism may be good, it can also spell out issues when not handled well.

Tourism planners and businesses need to strike a balance. They should be able to offer not only to preserve the environment, but also to safeguard the local cultures by offering exciting and meaningful experiences. This will be through better infrastructure, training of the locals and adherence to sustainable practices. Thus, to conclude that adventure tourism is highly capable of bringing valuable and memorable experiences, but it requires the careful and responsible management in the long-term that would lead to the success of adventure tourism in both tourist and destination respect.

5.1 Limitations

This research is grounded in secondary information, and thus might not be as insightful as primary research. The dependence on the existing literature also can create bias. Also, the findings might not be applicable across the board to the emerging destinations because of differences in the context.

5.2 Future Research Scope

In future research, primary data collection methods like interviews and surveys could be employed to find out more. Generalizability can be increased through comparative research in various regions. The use of technology and digital platforms can be investigated as well in the future to develop the adventure tourism experiences.

References

1. Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA), 2023. Adventure Tourism Market Report.
2. Akhoondnejad, A., Rosin, C. and Brennan, C., 2022. A qualitative study of antecedents of enduring involvement and its role in dining experiences of tourists. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 34(3), pp.993-1011.
3. Akhshik, A., Rezapouraghdam, H., Ozturen, A. and Ramkissoon, H., 2023. Memorable tourism experiences and critical outcomes among nature-based visitors: A fuzzy-set



- qualitative comparative analysis approach. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 26(18), pp.2981-3003.
4. Booking.com, 2023. Sustainable Travel Report 2023.
 5. Brajich, K., 2024. What is Overtourism and why is it a problem? Sustainable Travel International. <https://sustainabletravel.org/what-is-overtourism/>
 6. Buckley, R., 2018. Sustainable tourism: Research and reality. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 66, pp.230–233.
 7. Damiasih, D., 2025. Psychological factors influencing tourist decision making: a qualitative review in the context of business psychology. *Golden Ratio of Social Science and Education*, 5(1), pp.59-72.
 8. Dey, M. and Jambhale, R., 2025. Adventure Tourism Statistics, By Market, Activity Type, Companies and Facts (2025). <https://electroi.com/stats/adventure-tourism-statistics/>
 9. Fortune Business Insights, 2026. Adventure Tourism Market Size, Share & Industry Analysis, By Type and Regional Forecast, 2026-2034. <https://www.fortunebusinessinsights.com/adventure-tourism-market-107924>
 10. Hosseini, S., Cortes-Macías, R. and Almeida-García, F., 2024. Extending the memorable tourism experience construct: An investigation of tourists' memorable dark experiences. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 30(1), pp.21-44.
 11. Kim, J.H., Ritchie, J.R.B. and McCormick, B., 2012. Development of a scale to measure memorable tourism experiences. *Journal of Travel Research*, 51(1), pp.12–25.
 12. Orden-Mejía, M., Carvache-Franco, M., Palomino, O., Carvache-Franco, O., Minchenkova, L., Núñez-Naranjo, A., Minchenkova, A. and Carvache-Franco, W., 2025. Motivations, quality, and loyalty: Keys to sustainable adventure tourism in natural destinations. *Sustainability*, 17(13), p.5789.
 13. Statista, 2023. Travel and Tourism Statistics Report.
 14. Sutrisno, W., 2024. Exploring Critical Success Factors that Influence Tourism Success: a Qualitative Study in the Context of Diverse Tourism Destinations. *International Journal of Green Tourism Research and Applications*, 6(1), pp.33-43.
 15. UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organization), 2022. Global Tourism Trends Report.
 16. Visser, J., 2023. Choosing a Booking System just got easier. Arival. <https://arival.travel/article/choosing-a-booking-system-just-got-easier/>
 17. West Ford Online, 2024. The Rise of Experiential Travel: Beyond Accommodations. <https://www.westfordonline.com/blogs/the-rise-of-experiential-travel-and-its-advantages/>