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Keynote presenters

Seeking new tourist experiences: Disorienting the sensorium

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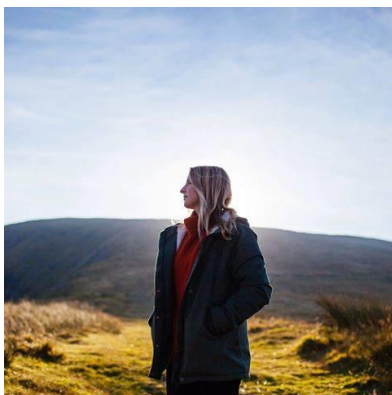
In recent years, the idea that tourism is primarily characterized by visual experience has become challenged by a host of accounts that foreground other sensations of touch, smell, movement and sound. In this paper, I firstly provide a broad review of the different ways in tourist practices increasingly expand to provide an ever more diverse array of sensations. Subsequently, I will focus on the multiple ways in which darkness is offered as a tourist attraction. After discussing how

darkness has been feared and reviled in western cultures, I show how it is becoming a desired quality, offering experiences of mobility, speed, intimacy, enhanced sensations and attentiveness across a range of attractions, from dark sky parks to dark restaurants. I conclude by suggesting that we need to pay far greater attention to the productive ways in which tourist practices can productively defamiliarise space and question normative perceptions and meanings.

Reflections from the borderlands of surfing, self and sense

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Using the physical culture of surfing as its focus, this paper presents an auto-ethnographic account of the journey of being a woman who surfs, doing 'social good' and engaged research in surfing. Reflecting upon personal experiences and the origins of my beliefs reveals the concepts of liminality, boundary-crossing and borderlands and how it affects my positionality. That is; the geographical and political borders of my origin; the borders of the masculine and feminine that exist within my surfing body; the borders between my senses and the sea; the border between land and water.

This concept of borderlands is then used to frame a sensory body narrative that investigates the coming together of body, space, place, identity, mobility in the fluid environment of the sea and movement of waves. I explore how this creates a language of the senses and

relationship. Using Ingold's concept of meshwork this paper sketches these relations between surfing, senses and identity in order to understand the how we journey to where and why. Findings from case studies are presented to further evidence a process of reclamation that is underway to understand surfing as a boundary-crossing, feminine, sensual and reciprocal experience. The case studies show how surfing is fostering new relationships with women the sea and society in both Papua New Guinea and Iran.

This paper challenges the absence, or misrepresentation, of the feminine and lack of open dialogue on gender, sex and identity within historical and contemporary travel and adventure literature and mainstream surf and adventure culture. Furthermore, it contributes to how we might engage a more critical self-reflective practice that allows for a deepening of our understanding of positionality on, in and between borderlands, and how we consider the body (and senses) in knowledge production.

The wasp, the cave and the lamppost

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Eco-theory is dominated by green just as Western perceptions of landscapes are dominated by maps. How does this green lens influence how we perceive, explore and exploit the world? What does it do? What is this green world really like? This keynote is an experience that exposes an unseen environment using a 'prismatic ecology' (Cohen, 2013); a more-than-human rainbow of colourful lenses for you to adorn. It invites you to be involved, challenged and entertained—to become a participant rather than an observer. There will be analogies, metaphor and empirical musings. We welcome you to join in the exploration of dark rhizomatic passages and discover what you never knew about lampposts but be prepared for a sting in the tale!



Consuming adventure

How would you like your geoduck served? Adventure tourists participate in 'risky' activities – does this extend to the food they eat whilst on their travels?

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Abstract

As a tourist, eating and dining out are essential activities as all travellers need to eat (Henderson, 2009). However, what and why travellers eat is determined by their underlying motivations for travel. Therefore, if adventure tourism, as defined by Sung et al (1997, p.66) is to “explore a new experience, often involving perceived risk or controlled danger associated with personal challenges”, what are the different food consumption needs of adventure tourists? Are adventure tourists more likely to be adventurous in their food choices as well as their activities?

If so, how much of this is about personal challenge and how much relates to the concept of conspicuous consumption? That is, by eating fried tarantula in Cambodia are these adventure tourists attempting to demonstrate their superior status to others? Does this also lead to a paradox in that the theory of conspicuous consumption suggests that consumers are motivated by a desire to impress others with their ability to pay particularly high prices for prestige products, (Phillips & Back, 2011)? However, many of these “scary foods” (Gyimothy & Mykletun, 2009, p.261) tend to be cheap, left over unwanted cuts or easily available items, for example lamb sweetbreads retail at £11 per kilo as opposed to lamb cutlets at £22 per kilo. Given this, does consumption of this food become competitive consumption rather than conspicuous consumption? Furthermore, if consumption or competitive behaviour informs identity and expression then is there an impact on the adventure tourist's social-capital, and, in particular, its influences on self-esteem and satisfaction with life (Steinfeld et al, 2008) as well as the social capital to be derived from atypical consumption experiences.

This conceptual paper will explore the linkage between adventure tourism, conspicuous consumption, competitive consumption and social capital. Specifically, it will consider if and how the adventure tourist chooses to seek 'food' thrills.

The paper will highlight implications for both the adventure tourism market and for the development of food tourism. Allied to this, it will examine the effects on niche areas such as the slow food movement and the preservation of traditional skills and produce.

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Framing yourself in picture perfect landscapes: Mass-visitation to an iconic nature-based attraction

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Abstract

Introduction

This research has explored mass-visitation to an Iconic nature-based visitor attraction Trolltunga, in a Norwegian destination context. Trolltunga has experienced exponential increases in visitation within a four-year time span from a hundred to a total 64.000 in 2015. The narrow cliff at Trolltunga "Trolls Tongue" is considered the main highlight, as reached by an average round-trip hike of 8 hours (experienced hikers) bridging 23 km. Once reached, visitors stand on the cliff, hovering, 700 m. above Ringedalsvatnet.

As we are moving towards an increasing popularity of nature based visitation, the tourism industry has to develop strategies in coping with this new form of visitation in nature-based environments and the visitors' behaviour at the site. One of the key dimensions in developing an effective strategy revolves around safety issues and rescue operations. In the case of Trolltunga, every year there are many search and rescue operations for hikers in serious trouble.

Method

Research on nature based tourism visitation is underdeveloped and in particular the understanding of the phenomenon of mass-tourism into such natural vulnerable areas. Nature based attractions are highly complex and dynamic and nature. This paper is based on an exploratory in-depth case study, revolving around the development of gaining a deeper understanding of the how and why we create ourselves through our consumption and our experiences at an Iconic nature based tourist attraction.

Unique insights are presented within the context of visitors' self-planned journeys as empirically observed and registered in a multiphase dynamic perspective and presented in the study as such. Qualitative on-site data sources include – systematic observations, in-person interviews, narratives, and photographic collections. Secondary data is derived from social media platforms.

Findings / Discussion

This study has analysed both the landscape as object, and social dimensions to be of key influence on the visitor's experience, through an analysed synergic effect on the experience evolved around visitation. The experience is mainly constructed around reaching the "Trolls Tongue", and is thus regarded a clear goal-oriented project. As for safety, this study has analysed the little time spent on information search during the before phase. Visitation in the particular case of international (66%) visitors is expressed "spontaneous" and generally "unprepared" and observed by a general ill preparedness for the hike. This study has observed acceleration, and a general strong focus of reaching the top during hiking. The construction of photographs at the cliff is a key observed goal and behaviour at the site. As for the post-experience phase, importance of sharing post-experiences is indicated by all respondents, of which 90% share via on social media in form of images (47%). Whereas the hike is generally experienced tough and exhaustive, the overall experience is however regarded highly positive in graded >8 out of 10 by 90% of visitors.

Conclusion

Based upon the findings and discussion of this study, identity is analysed to be a key driver as this study finds similarities with the presentation of self (via Goffman) as a potential means for explaining the driver behind, and differences concerning the meaning and activity of the increasing nature based visitation. Building upon a multitude of similar motives the study has analysed a number of key crosscutting dimensions including acceleration, staging, heroism and (in)authenticity as further important dimensions influencing the experiences. The findings of this study argue for the understanding of visitation as identity-forming experiences, and tourists' desire not to just see sights, but rather seek to act out culturally approved roles.

Trolltunga – an unfortunate “hot-spot” adventure attraction

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Abstract

Background

Trolltunga; a unique mountain formation 1,187 meters above sea level in Hardanger in “Fjord-Norway”, has recently become a world famous iconic “hot spot” attraction for tourists from

all over the world. As indicated by its name, Trolltunga resembles a “troll tongue” stretching out in the air from the steep mountain wall about 700 meters above the lake Ringdalsvatnet in the valley below. It constitutes a unique place for photos, gives a “top of the world-feeling”, and provides a wonderful view over the pristine landscapes. While most of the area is undisturbed by human activities; 100 years ago the lake itself was stemmed and the water is used for hydro-electric energy production. A steep old one-lane road leads from the sea level and up to the dam at 419 meters above the sea level. From here, the cliff may be reached by means of a challenging 23 kilometer hike out to and back from the cliff Trolltunga, ascending about 700 meters in total from the end of the road, and estimated to take 8 hours for experienced hikers. The research addresses how safety is handled and how search and rescue operations are functioning.

Method

Data were collected by interviews with hikers returning from the tour, supplied with interviews with rescue teams from the Red Cross, the Chief Police Officer in the municipality, tour guides and the manager of the Hardangerfjord destination. Observations were made on the entire route, and texts from newspapers and webpages were examined. The data contained redundant information and gave rich possibilities for triangulation to enhance the validity and reliability of the study.

Results and conclusion

The growing interest in Trolltunga is created by stunning images of visitors on the cliff, shared via social media online. The cliff has experienced an exponential growth in number of visitors rising from about 100 visitors in 2009 to 64.000 in 2015. The area is accessible all year round, but in wintertime only by advanced skiers, and the main bulk of visitors come between June and October. A new type of hikers constitute half of the visitors – they are unexperienced hikers coming mainly for photos of themselves on the cliff. They lack hiking competence and are neither equipped nor dressed for the hike. They often start late in the day and do not reach back before darkness. As the access to the Trolltunga cliff has not been developed for tourism, accidents are likely to happen, especially on narrow, steep and wet places. Some of these requires assistance, and a few hikers get lost and searches are needed. In 2015, 22 official rescue operations were made, of which one was a fatal accidents where a tourist fell off the cliff while taking photos. The search and rescue operations are led by the police, and the practical part is taken care of by local Red Cross volunteers in four neighbouring villages. In extreme emergencies only, a helicopter may assist, else the volunteers must find and assist the victim with no technical aids. Most often this is a strenuous and time-consuming activity. As the volunteers have ordinary jobs, this rescue service becomes increasingly overloaded as the number of operations increases. Moreover, in search for assistance, some hikers also break into private cabins to find shelter, which is annoying to the owners. A need for preventive efforts appears, and the municipality now plans for better information by signs and a couple of emergency shelters along the trail. Most likely, this is insufficient, as the basic understanding of how this wild nature may exceed the coping resources of some of the visitors is lacking. Hence, the expectation of the study is that the number of rescue operations will continue to rise, and alternative rescue services must be provided.

Cities and the management of their natural environments: The benefits brought by outdoor activities to local communities

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Abstract

Nowadays, outdoor activities are attracting many people to the natural environment. Tourists, locals and practitioners enjoy going outdoors to participate in a variety of recreational activities. Many interesting and popular destinations offer a range of outdoor experiences to enjoy the natural environments. However, many are fragile and can be degraded when overused. Willis (2002), Marshall (2003) and Machado (2005) suggest that many activities promote disrespect and attitudes of competition, generating many negative environmental impacts, as soil compaction, water contamination, flora degradation, as well as scaring away animals and adversely affecting influencing the local culture. Furthermore, traveling to remote environments generates significant carbon emissions, especially when air travel is used. Consequently, if the development of outdoor activities generates overcrowding, environmental degradation or increasing carbon emissions, the value of promoting these activities needs to be critically examined. On the other hand, cities should be aware of the adequate management of their natural environment and the benefits it will bring. Barker & Dawson (2010) point out that the engagement in outdoor activities raises awareness of environmental issues and can be helpful on building up gratefulness of natural areas. According to Godbey (2009) some recreational activities can also help on building gratifying social relations, relieving stress, and revitalizing some fragile rural economies. This study aims to outline the benefits brought by outdoor activities to local communities. The research was an exploratory study using a qualitative approach that analyzed information from interviews, documents and observations. The 29 interviews were held with government representatives, sports federations, NGOs, lecturers, entrepreneurs and instructors who operate in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. The documents consisted of guidelines, programs and management plans on the geographical and environmental characteristics of the Region. The observations, in a total of 8, were performed at potential practice sites. Content analysis techniques were used to analyze the information. Results evidenced the benefits brought by outdoor activities to local communities in four perspectives: social, educational, environmental and economic. Social benefits: new leisure options; better quality of life; emergence of social projects; free time occupation of social misfits; and the increasing sense of security due to the fact that natural environments are better occupied. Educational benefits: development of environmental education; dissemination of knowledge thanks to the interaction with practitioners; and dissemination and enrichment of the local culture.

Environmental benefits: sustainable occupation of natural areas; emergence of belonging values and affective identification with the natural environments; positive environmental interventions; and a greater knowledge of the natural areas and their use. Economic benefits: generation of employment and income; new events; increase in tourism; and foreign capital inflows through the creation of new businesses such as sports retail, hotels and restaurants. In conclusion, the evident benefits brought by outdoor activities to the local communities justify a special attention to the adequate management of the natural areas by the public and private sectors.

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Responsible tourism

"There one minute: Gone the next!!!": Adventure tourism providers' journeys through climate change

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Abstract

Introduction

Over the past 40 years the adventure tourism and recreation sectors in New Zealand have steadily grown alongside demand from domestic and international participants. Since the early 19th century mountain guiding has evolved from a necessary livelihood for local alpine inhabitants to being a vocation with an elite, professional status. This paper explores a recent

challenge, the impacts of climate change, facing alpine adventure activities and the professional guides and guiding businesses involved in mountain guiding. The development of international guiding qualifications, increased demand from amateur or novice climbers and the global mobility of guiding businesses' activities have seen individuals' passion for mountaineering become a career. Commitment to a long term, sustainable, engagement in the guiding profession means guides need to adapt to changes arising from market, and other, forces. The focus is on the entrepreneurial business implications of climate change for the adventure tourism sector using the lens of guided mountaineering.

Method

The researcher collated data from interviews with guides, photographic archival material, a literature review and a content analysis of online and print media, books, blogs and websites. Transcribed notes and observations identified key themes and subthemes to record the experiences and coping mechanisms utilized by guides and guiding companies as they journey through the challenges of climate change.

Findings, discussion and conclusion

Many New Zealand IFMGA/UIAGM guides operate internationally as freelancers or through their businesses marketing a worldwide array of expeditions. Individual guides are increasingly mobile, pursuing international guiding careers when guiding clients in mountaineering pursuits including alpine snow and ice climbing, alpine rock climbing, heli-skiing, and expeditions including filling a modern-day demand for climbing the "Seven Summits". The past decade has seen many guiding companies acknowledge openly the challenges around business sustainability arising from climate change and associated impacts including values change for instance the reluctance of clients to travel by air. This has implications for New Zealand adventure tourism businesses with mainly international client bases, or companies offering international destinations. The business challenges are further exacerbated by diminishing access in to routes in alpine zones owing to diminishing ice coverage, shrinking glaciers, collapsing glacial moraine and expanding terminal lakes (Beniston 2003; Byers 2005; Espiner and Becken 2013; Gossling et al. 2012; Ritter et al. 2012). The paper concludes with a journey through an area of the Southern Alps of New Zealand to illustrate the climbing sector's responses to this change, utilizing archival and contemporary images alongside the accounts of guides and climbers. By utilizing sustainability strategies, new technologies, online marketing, social media and innovative product development the adventure journey, mediated by guides, equipment and technology is adapting as the geological and glacial 'alpinescapes' change.

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Leaving no trace in the Irish countryside: Attitudes and behaviours of recreationists

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Abstract

The Irish countryside has become a hotspot for outdoor recreation and tourism. Recent reports from Fáilte Ireland show that in 2014 Ireland hosted over 16 million holidaymakers and has seen a steady increase in tourism numbers that are now almost equal to the pre-global economic recession figures. Furthermore, there has been a steady growth in tourists heading to remote rural locations enticed by programmes such as the Wild Atlantic Way and participating in outdoor activities for their holiday. International tourism literature evidences the many positive impacts of rural tourism. However, negative impacts on wildlife, the environment and farming practices are an unfortunate consequence of irresponsible land use. Thus far there exists a lack of relevant research about the attitudes and behaviours of outdoor recreationists in Ireland, hindering the development of a sustainable outdoor recreation and tourism policy. A review of the literature revealed that although research exists in other countries, the application across cultures can cause significant difficulties. The aim of this study is to assess the attitudes and behaviours of both native and non-native outdoor recreationists.

This research, designed in partnership with Leave No Trace Ireland, employed the use of on-site user completed surveys that were distributed during the summer months, coinciding with the busy tourist season in Ireland. Due to the geographical scale in which outdoor recreation can take place, as well as the multitude of activities that can be defined as outdoor recreation, the surveys were distributed during a number of outdoor recreational events throughout the country in order to produce a representative sample of the population.

The findings of this research will provide policy makers and NGOs like Leave No Trace Ireland with a foundation of information to the opinions and beliefs of outdoor recreationists and will aid in the development of policy making and marketing strategies.

Demanding mountains and supplying the dream: but at what cost?

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Abstract

Introduction

"We live in a consumer society. Supply and demand, demand and supply. This is our world and it is spreading rapidly from West to East" (Bullock, 2011: 33). When trekkers and climbers demand summits through their dollars how far should others go in ensuring they supply. The aspirations of many Westerners to summit the highest mountains in the world are often fulfilled at the expense of jeopardising the safety of local workers. Deontological ethics suggests a universal understanding of basic human rights and needs. We instinctively know what is right and wrong, fair and equitable. Yet the difficult and dangerous work on high mountains to establish and keep open routes for Westerners to gain their summits is almost exclusively the domain of highly paid (locally) indigenous workers.

Such practices undermine fundamental principles of trust, self-reliance, challenge commensurate with experience and the importance of style: how we climb rather than what we climb. The Everest tragedy in the Khumbu ice fall in the 2014 season draws into sharp focus the need to review climbing practices on the highest mountains in the world but also to consider the greater message this commercialised, commodified and rationalised approach sends to the mountaineering community and the adventure tourism industry more generally.

Method/Discussion

Through critically reviewing reports from the greatest single accident ever to occur on Everest in its climbing history, this paper will consider the ethical lens of deontology to critically evaluate current practices on Everest and revisit Beedie's (2004) "examination of changes in philosophical interpretations of 'being a mountaineer'". In doing so the rationalisation of mountaineering as an activity and its boundaries will be explored and the extent to which commercialisation, commodification and the rationalisation process is detracting from the more romantic ideal of what it means to be a mountaineer. The paper will examine the chasm that seems to be developing between the face of mountaineering depicted by high altitude climbing and Everest as an icon of practice and the more general mountaineering culture. While recognising that all facets of mountaineering (and indeed the outdoors more generally) are becoming more commercialised, commodified and rationalised (Beedie 2004, Bullock 2011, Haywood 1994) fundamental questions will be addressed regarding its boundaries and the acceptability of the ultimate rationalised experience where others take on fundamental risks to allow Westerners a relatively safe mountaineering experience.

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The journey

Chasing Coryat, revisiting misadventure and acknowledging the unstructured journey

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Abstract

Introduction

When Tom Coryat stepped out from Oldcombe Church in 1608 with a scanty backpack to embark on his ‘...hastily gobbled up in five moneths travells’ (Coryat 1611), around Europe, he became the world’s first tourist, and indeed its first adventure tourist. Subsequently Coryat revealed Europe via the first travel guide ‘Coryat’s Crudities’ (Coryat 1611), within which he vehemently retained his outsider persona while presenting a flaneur type perspective on the various architecture, arts, social and religious forms which he had encountered.

His limited finances, his aloofness and separateness, the nature of his journey and his at times abrasive personality, frequently meant that Coryat encountered happenstance and risk to which he had to respond with shrewdness. Coryat foresaw the encountering, collecting and narration of his experiences as an opportunity to define himself and enrich his status within the court of Prince Henry, hence his liminal journey had self-fashioning and self-aggrandisement, rather than understanding and self-development as the sought outcomes.

Discussion

This combination of haphazard adventure and self-aggrandisement are part of Coryat’s contrasting legacy for contemporary adventure travel. The growth in commodification and the over-emphasis on planning, structure and indeed safety, are displacing singular adventures, preventing haphazard risk and distorting the liminal into the limited. Furthermore Coryat’s retention of self as outsider and his search for social status in the court of his era, hears an amplified echo amongst contemporary adventure travellers in the hypermodern court of social media.

It was our belief that chasing Coryat had merit, which formed part of the inspiration for this first author to undertake a series of solo expeditions with a two stroke paramotor engine on a scanty backpack and little else other than a fabric wing which doubled as a tent and sleeping

bag. This author flew and dropped in on remote locations in Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and the Ukraine. Eschewing planning and structure for haphazard encounters, the author stepped up into the liminal sky and allowed the throw of the dice, the prevailing wind and the fuel capacity of the motor to generate the happenstance challenges which revealed a daily adventure and a contrast to the often 'Empty Meeting Grounds' (Mac Cannell, 1992).

The open air foot dangling seat thousands of feet aloft, provides a liminal space and perspective of a place, and its people that even its multi-generation residents cannot gain. On parachuting down onto the fields and hills distant from the worn traveller routes, communities reveal themselves more authentically and less as frontstage constructs or archetypes. Presented with the opportunity to take responsibility for a compromised traveller's need for fuel and food, and in some cases respond to the travellers sidestepping of aviation law and security legislation, reveals the unmediated nature of a people.

Unlike Coryat however, this traveller realised his aloofness and separateness and gradually recognised the sameness of the visited and the visitor and the revealing of the traveller to himself.

Conclusion

In chasing Coryat, one seeks out a singular adventure achieved through a haphazard format. A dice is thrown so that the participant is exposed not just to a climbing or river grade, but also to volumes of happenstance. The participant must draw on more than a sport skill or a honed experience, their quick-wittedness, cognitive plasticity and behavioural flexibility define the route for this journey. This is not a call to reject the commodified and the structured adventure, which have a role, but rather it is a desire to retain the quirky, to value the process more than the summit and to recognise the importance of unforeseen challenges as devices to integrate the liminal flaneur with the place, its people and the self.

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The Non-journey: Perceiving and coping with non-places

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Abstract

Drawn from Marc Augé's conception of 'non-places' (1995), this study explores and forwards the idea of the 'Non-Journey': the scheduled ceaselessness of waiting for arrival, the walk through infinite airplane hallways, the vanishing of individuality within the streams of mass mobility. Augé builds his ideas of supermodernity around occurring transformations

regarding time, space and the individual (the ego). Ongoing globalisation, time-space compression and hypermobility contribute to the production of non-places and are said to be particularly visible within the sphere of travel. Thus, whereas tourism is often assumed to carry meaning to the individual, to seek insight, one can indeed acknowledge that all travel (even the most adventurous) transits and relies on non-places: the airport hall, the highway restaurant, the station. There are signs to be obeyed to, schedules to be kept, roles to be acted out. "Everything proceeds..." (Augé, 1995, p.104) and the individual passes through. It is these experiences the study is interested in: how are non-places perceived within travel and which strategies do individuals develop to cope with them? So far, little research attention in tourism studies has been spent on the mere A-to-B and especially the way people experience as well as cope with these transitional spaces.

The study takes its methodological departure in phenomenology and explores the individual experience of non-places through the eye of 'lived experience' as understood in hermeneutics. This methodology integrates with the conceptual/analytical categories suggested by Augé: time, space and the self. Practically, conversational interviews at European airports, as supposed 'non-places', were carried out. The results highlight the different perceptions and embodiment of time, space and the self in these 'non-places'.

One could argue that if we seek to understand what 'adventure' or 'journey' truly mean, then we also need to address the 'non-adventure' or the 'non-journey'. In previous years, our work was dedicated to the journey, the solo-hike (Schilar, 2015), the (slow) adventure (Varley & Semple, 2015), trips with subjective significance, places loaded with meaning, gained insights that transform the individual. Thus, this new study adds to these earlier findings and shows how 'journey' and 'non-journey' contradict or overlap at times. The 'non-journey' can be both: integral part as well as antipode to the 'journey'. It shows for example that conceptually: The journey is about the path, the non-journey is about the destination; the journey is rich in time, the non-journey is scheduled; the journey is abundant in meaning, the non-journey exposes scarcity in meaning; the journey is motivated, the non-journey is tolerated; ... It is this type of thoughts we seek to steer up during the conference. Hence, in its spirit our study interlinks with ideas and problems forwarded on earlier conferences as for example Beau Miles auto-ethnographic account on 'The commute', where he sought to transform his everyday transit space into a place for journeying, or Tove I. Dahl's and Jon-André Dalbakk's presentation forwarding the question how transitional non-places can become places: 'Slow travel at 90kmh: What gets motorists to stop and smell our roses when otherwise whizzing through our countryside?'

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Signs for adventure along the way: Can road signs penetrate the bubble of travel by facilitating serendipity to enhance experiential wealth?

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Abstract

If serendipity is about realizing the potential of the unknown, the unfamiliar or the uncertain, then it has a central place in the study of adventure and experiential wealth. To reach the destination of a planned adventure, we often find ourselves traveling in a motorized vehicle through landscapes either as a driver or as a passenger. Signs along the road are primarily intended for regulating traffic and informing drivers about terrain and road conditions. Meanwhile, the vehicles we drive have evolved into complex machines that facilitate insular experiences that can be technologically-guided, climate controlled, media-rich and social. As a result, movement from one destination to another can occur without any significant awareness of, attention to, or interaction with the rich platter of opportunities presented for the motorist to discover the world outside the vehicle.

Signs along our motorways are the first and primary informational mechanisms available for capturing motorists' attention and inspiring them to stop and engage. Every so often signs designed to draw both the drivers' and the passengers' attention to the world outside the car appear. Can they make us stop? Look? Have an unplanned adventure along the way to our planned destination?

We postulate that signs along the motorways can penetrate the car bubble and arouse motorist interest. Interest motivates us to seek novel or uncertain experiences, to explore and discover. It can, for example, prime us to experience new places, cultures and local people – as they are, where we are (i.e., place-based serendipity). So we ask: Which signs do this more effectively than others?

We have previously presented work where we documented what kinds of signs characterize the open road of several vast, open roads in Canada, The US and Northern Norway. This second part of our study, promised last at year's conference, tests the impact a subset of those signs have on people's interest, and how that is related to their openness to serendipitous stops and engagement with people or activity in the local area.

Method

Using a snowball sample and internet based questionnaire, we are testing how a subset of previously collected and grouped signs appear to influence people's interest in where they are, and their desire to stop to engage in unplanned ways in the local area or culture. More specifically, we are measuring people's interest-related responses to signs (general curiosity,

positive/negative emotion, personal meaningfulness and boredom) and how people are drawn to act in response to the signs (where to look and what to do).

Findings and discussion

Not surprisingly, previous findings from our research indicate that the signs documented in all places are primarily intended for drivers (not passengers). The number of signs related to the nature of the place or people of the region is also surprisingly few. Rather, the information is overwhelmingly limited to orienting people and reporting the nature of the terrain and road conditions in which they drive.

What we learn will help us better understand how signs – particularly those in large open spaces – may (or may not) influence adventurer awareness of and interest in the environments they whiz through on their way to something else. Openness to serendipity (or planned serendipity) could facilitate greater adventure in its own right and expand adventurers' overall experiential wealth. Our approach to understanding that starts by working to understand the sign language of the road, how it influences interest and how they, together, guide people to the adventures of place-based serendipity.

The journey: micro-adventures

An autoethnography of sacred travel: Microadventures as the post-modern pilgrimage

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Abstract

Introduction

Adventure travel is a broad term used to describe a vast range of travel experiences from hard adventure, characterized by risk and adrenaline seeking (Ewert & Hollenhorst, 1989; Fluker & Turner, 2000; 1991; Griffith & Albanese, 1996; Plog, 1991; Priest, 1992; Robinson, 1992; Sung, Morrison, & O'Leary, 1996), to soft adventure, a performance of self-discovery and insight seeking (Bloom & Goodnow, 2014; Walle, 1997). Regardless of the level of risk involved, adventure travel is often conceptualized as a quest (Borella, 2006; Bloom & Goodnow; 2014; Campbell, 1968; Cousineau, 1998; Goodnow & Ruddell, 2009; Moir-Bussy, 2003; Thursby, 2005;) that is spiritual in nature (Goodnow & Ruddell, 2009) where the traveler journeys for that which is sacred (Campbell, 1968). The quest genre is a metaphorical vehicle for narrating

a spiritual journey composed of several stages, the call to journey, preparation, the journey itself, and returning home (Campbell, 1968; Goodnow & Ruddell, 2009).

Pilgrimage, a quest for the sacred, has traditionally been defined as “a physical journey in search of truth” (Vukonic, 1986, p. 80) whereas today the “separation of the spiritual from the religious has led to a reinterpretation of what constitutes the ‘sacred,’ where people are no longer constrained by religion in interpreting what spaces they view as sacred” (Hammond, 1991, p. 118).

Cousineau (1998) claims that any journey can be transformed into a pilgrimage if there is a commitment to finding something personally sacred along the road.

Goodnow and Bloom (2016-in press) explored the properties of the sacred, drawing on evidence from travel narratives, to understand the qualities of the sacred journey. In their work, sacredness contains twelve properties: hierophany, kratophany, myth, mystery, sacrifice, ritual, opposition to the profane, contamination, communitas, commitment, objectification, and ecstasy and flow (Belk, Wallendorf, & Sherry's, 1989). Goodnow and Bloom's paper explored the sacred via the archetype of the quest, however, further research is needed to understand how the sacred is experienced on an individual level in post-modern America. To date no known work has been published on the lived experiences of modern-day pilgrims in search of the sacred as defined by the twelve properties. Thus, the objective of this presentation will be fill in the gaps of existing knowledge and contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of adventure travel as sacred travel, modern-day pilgrimage, performed through the archetype of the quest.

Method

Autoethnography will be conducted summer 2016 to explore the specific components of four microadventure travel trips to examine how the sacred is experienced on an individual level. “Autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno)” (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011 , p. 273).

Microadventure is an accessible and sustainable alternative to traditional long-term, long-haul adventures and contain similar adventure spirit, levels of liminality, and insight as traditional adventure travel experiences. Furthermore, microadventures were chosen because the average US resident does not engage in long-term adventure travel that has characterized pilgrimages of the past. The US is the only industrialized country in the world that does not have paid mandatory vacation leave, moreover, US residents tend to take fewer and shorter vacations/travel experiences than those in other industrialized vacation. Thus, microadventures are typical adventure travel experience of Americans.

Results

Results of this study will contribute to our understanding of modern-day pilgrimages and the potential role that microadventure, a more assessable and sustainable alternative to traditional long-term adventure, play in the growing field of adventure.

“Oi mate, the water’s that way”: Traversing the social contours of Essex by open canoe

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Abstract

Annual canoeing expeditions which have traversed the social and demographic contours of the county of Essex in SE of England have afforded us new insights as reflexive tourists encountering people who often struggled to see any point in our journey. This type of urban adventure viewed through a marine lens is an embodied physical experience which starkly contrasts with the values and motives of the ‘locals’ we met.

By journeying in creeks, on the open sea, through major shipping ports and portaging on land one can be in the countryside but almost in the town at the same time, providing an ideal perspective from which to gain novel experiences through these richly rewarding expeditions undertaken for nearly 20 years now. A social stratification of wealth and social class has been observed through these journeys. At sea level along the north and south coast of the Thames (south Essex and north Kent) there tends to be a lower socio-economic existence to engage with, whilst rising just 20m above sea level but 3-5 miles north or south of the Thames estuary inland, a much higher socio-economic class is encountered (multi-million pound houses, Gin palaces and expensive sailing yachts, high spec cars etc). Being ‘on passage towards’ the next area of water to launch our canoe has provided the ideal passport to wander through diverse areas with the boat on a trolley where no canoe has ever been before.

Essex has hundreds of miles of coastal marine environment with many tidal challenges and adventure opportunities for us as canoeists, but also affords a richness of social interaction in the Essex cultural mixing-pot for the Flâneur or social observer. There is rich language, strange accents, exotic cafes and complete freedom of movement wherein lies an educational opportunity, perhaps, to make better use of the local environment for personal development. Taxi drivers can be relied upon for comments during portaging “Oi mate, the water’s that way” being their usual retort, but apart from one incident of being (wrongly!) accused of drug smuggling in a canoe, a debacle involving RNLI, MCA, Police Drugs Squad and an Air Sea Rescue helicopter, we have never been challenged and enjoy complete freedom to explore the environment from the marine perspective. On the basis that the majority of people in this densely populated county spend most of their time looking at each other and rarely over the sea wall, means that we often adventure unhindered and for free in a land of sand, beaches, warm creeks and fabulous sunsets.

This is a form of marine-based psychogeography, the practice of exploring the urban environment while being led by curiosity and a paused sense of time and place (Sinclair, 2002; Humphreys 2012). However, on the issue of place and identity, one of the authors who grew

up on Canvey Island in Essex, realised that he is a product of the social malaise that he now travels through and marvels at. He reports with a degree of haunting shame that everything depicted on The Only Way Is Essex TV show is, indeed, true. It could have been him, it was me for a while, but he escaped and now just 'visits the zoo' for fun. This curiosity in social geography afforded some valuable research opportunities to practice qualitative field work techniques (Palmer and Stott, 2012). Essex lives up to all its stereotypes and when on land it is very difficult to escape these, but the canoe gave us reason and cause to step into and away from social situations which we wanted to experience and could later reflect upon.

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Enhancing well-being - middle aged women doing adventure activities

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Abstract

This presentation presents the findings of a study that examined the experiences of a group of middle aged women engaging in adventure activities, exploring what the women get from belonging to the group and how they prioritise it in their lives.

Introduction

As a result of low participation rates women are identified as priority for many government strategies designed to increase physical activity. When data is examined on women's participation in physical activity it is much lower than that of men, with this pattern being even more evident when participation in adventure activities is examined. Many reasons are put forward for this including the traditional perceived masculine nature of adventure activities; time demands such as care for others and lacking skills. This current study explored the experiences of a group of middle aged women who had taken up adventure activities in their middle years.

Method

All (N20) women belonging to an adventure group based in the east of Scotland were invited to take part in interviews, of which 14 (36yrs – 64yrs) participated. The focus of the study was aimed at understanding the culture of the group and the experiences of belonging to the

group, but also their beliefs, challenges and attitudes to the activities they undertake. Interview questions focussed around the women's own individual experience, but also the role of the group and activities within their broader lives. These included reasons for participation; barriers; their own identity in relation to activities; attitude to risk and role within the group. Transcriptions of the interviews (40-70minutes) were thematically analysed to establish themes.

Findings/Discussion

All of the women acknowledged that joining the group and taking up the activities had a transformational impact on their lives. They found the activities both enjoyable and challenging and as a result their confidence, skills and ability had improved. Belonging to the group and making time for activities had become a priority in their lives and as such they altered their attitudes to other aspects such as housework and care demands to enable them to participate. There was an acknowledgement of the risks associated with outdoor activity with the women having individual responses to risk. These responses meant that some of the women would opt out of certain activities such as kayaking/canoeing or find a level of the activity that they were comfortable with, such as jumping from a lower point on the cliff when coasteering. However, opting out was never challenged and the women felt supported in their decisions by others in the group. As a consequence of belonging to the group they valued the social support both, in doing the activities but also in their wider lives. Their enjoyment of the activities increased their desire to continue to be active as they age, which encouraged them to live healthier lives by being aware of their nutrition and also doing regular exercise. Alongside maintaining physical health was the belief that being out on the mountains or completing an activity helped reduce stress, lift mood, improve self-belief and manage stresses in other aspects of their lives, such as work. The women also believed that they were role models for other women, especially their daughters.

Conclusion

Participating in outdoor adventure activities has the capacity to promote activity in middle aged women. Belonging to a group engaged in adventure activities provides women with social support, improved physical and mental health as well as enjoyment and improved confidence and skills. Group membership and doing adventure activities can enhance and improve the overall well-being of middle aged women.

The journey: psychological considerations

Rock climbing and the “good life”: Cultivating an ethics of lifestyle mobilities

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Introduction

As a subculture of the rock climbing community, lifestyle climbers maintain hypermobile lifestyles in order to climb full-time. Collectively, they form itinerant and ephemeral mobile communities of climbers in the midst of individual journeys that prioritize rock climbing and travel. Their travel circuits overlap at varying destinations, in ways that are not always predictable, resulting in community practices that can be spontaneous and flexible. Issues of ethics and responsibility course through this community, from individuals’ motivations of relinquishing themselves of certain social and economic responsibilities in order to pursue personal pleasure through leisure to notions of trust and risk that are the foundations of this community as individuals put their lives in the hands of others as climbing partners. Considering ethics in regards to lifestyle climbing, this paper thus moves across social scales, from the individual to the collective, so as to inquire about and problematize conceptualizations of responsibility, privilege, and freedom at work at the intersection of leisure and mobility.

Methods

This research is based on observation and interviews at a world renowned rock climbing destination (Red River Gorge, KY, USA), in combination with online forum analysis of a popular rock climbing social media website (rockclimbing.com). Hundreds of conversational threads from the forum were analyzed and 21 semi-structured interviews form the data presented here.

Findings and discussion

For lifestyle rock climbers, the primary motivation is a desire to climb full-time. Thus, the sport becomes the center of their lifestyle, community, and mobility decisions. Yet, when

pressed, these same individuals offer greater social and personal contexts for this lifestyle decision. They frequently discuss feeling alienated in their previous lifestyles and appreciative of the strong sense of community that accompanies lifestyle climbing. Climbing becomes the central organizing point around which lifestyle climbers can organize their new way of life and orient self-reflection. However, their pursuit also demonstrates self-indulgence as a pursuit of pleasure at the expense of family and/or economic responsibilities. This causes moral dilemmas for some as they concede certain elements of selfishness in their pursuit. However, many also turn the tables suggesting the more profound ethical problems lie with social ideals that are constraining to the individual, unrealistic, or unsustainable (socially, economically, and/or ecologically.).

At the same time, within the lifestyle climber community specifically, responsibility, safety, and trust are central values. In order to rock climb full-time, each individual needs a partner at the rock face. Further, that partner must offer care and attention so as to assure safety. Being a climbing partner means belaying someone as they climb and therefore having that person's life in your hands - a grave responsibility that is taken very seriously. Thus, at the heart of this mobile lifestyle community are trust and responsibility so that each is able to pursue their leisure interest.

Conclusion

Tourism and leisure mobilities are ripe for examinations of pleasure, trust, and responsibility. Yet, it has only been with more recent work that scholars have initiated more critical moral and ethical examinations of these fields. Rather than isolating one's travel behavior as touristic, lifestyle mobilities integrate travel and everyday life suggesting greater ethical implications - collectively and individually. An examination of the ethics of this lifestyle mobility reveals from the outside a selfish endeavor, but from the inside a community built upon trust and responsibility so that each has the opportunity to continue on their journeys.

Mapping the embodied experiences of women mountaineers: Affect, absence and uncertainty in serious tourism

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Abstract

Introduction

The concept of 'serious leisure' (Stebbins, 1982) is well established, where amateur participants aspire to become elite in their field. Based on personal and anecdotal experiences of women in the mountains, feelings of uncertainty and absence underlie the motivations of these mountaineers. I propose that there is an emerging touristic trend to professionalise experiences, suggesting a shift towards a form of 'serious tourism'.

Through the lens of 'serious leisure' I explore how the affective encounters of women who participate in 'hard' mountaineering could be mapped through an ethnographic approach. In doing so I aim to understand the tensions between achieving a sense of 'otherness' or 'escape' from the everyday in contrast to the responsibilities associated with professionalisation of mountaineering practices. Building on concepts of sensoria, this study will consider whether expressions of masculinity and femininity create 'other' mountaineering touristic spaces and places.

Method

Through a review of the literature exploring how women experience mountaineering, strong theoretical connections are suggested with Derrida's work on a responsibility-to-others and 'otherness'. As 'bodies', mountaineers are islands of the everyday in search of distance and isolation, pursuing a sense of 'otherness' in a true adventure of the spirit. Yet we are haunted by a responsibility-to-others, connected by responsibility, but always alone, There is not a world, there are only islands, Derrida tells us. I argue that the seas that connect us wash the shores with a politics that are bound by quotidian tensions (Wylie, 2011, Derrida, 2006).

Discussion

Little is known about the role that gender plays in mountaineering tourism (Pomfret & Doran, 2015). The findings from the review suggest contributions to knowledge by proposing a new approach for exploring how women experience 'hard' mountaineering in the context of tourism (Pomfret & Doran, 2015). This presentation attempts to reveal how different kinds of masculinities and femininities are expressed through the politics of movement. Matched by a lack of research that examines affectual geographies from a female perspective, few studies have managed to communicate the aesthetic aspects and complexities of sensoria (Humberstone et al., 2016). Therefore a gap exists in understanding how women practise mountaineering and if participation in 'serious tourism' is positional creating social capital both in terms of identity and place-making.

Conclusion

My engagement with 'hard' mountaineering is a serious lifestyle choice motivated by an embodied sense of movement, exertion, challenge and 'toughness'. Engagement produces both status and sense of community as well as enjoying the aesthetic qualities of sensory beauty in mountain landscapes. The tension between 'being safe' through professionalising practice in mountains conflicts with the desire to escape the 'everyday' in a bid to achieve sentient feelings of 'otherness' or 'other-worldliness'. An exploration of this tension shows how masculinities and femininities are played out, revealing 'other' forms of mountaineering practice, masked by masculinised practices or 'norms' prevalent within a mountaineering community. The practical implications could lead to enhancing women's perceptions and experience in mountain places through creating a social and political voice.

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Are safe adventure tours boring?

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Abstract

Adventure tourism tours are often related to thrill, excitement and uncertainty. At the same time, we observe a development where safety become more and more important in this commercial context. This paper enlightening how guides balance the challenge of giving thrilling experiences for heterogeneous groups where clients have different activity skills, experiences and attitudes towards risk. The study takes a story approach to get an inside view how tourists participating in guided adventure activities experience risk and safety. The construction of the stories is based on the data generated from interviews, observations and participation in guided activities. We have outlined four personal stories that transforms into four typologies of how clients relate to risk and safety - The mother hen, the fun hunter, the adrenalin seeker and the follower. The analyses describes what kind of strategies guides use or may use to create and co-create value for these typologies of clients. The main conclusions indicate that guides need to know how they can predict, understand and deal with this heterogeneity. The paper suggest three strategies for (co)- creation of experiences that are within the clients' different comfort zones in relation to perceived risk. These insights are useful for both adventure tourism companies, guides and guide education.

Perceptions on an adventure definition

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Abstract

In the invitation letter of the International Adventure Conference it said: "This fifth conference heads off on a different tack, opening up the conversation about what adventure is...". This is an important issue, since adventure tourism, like other forms of travel, is based on a set of

motivations that stems from the wish to satisfy needs. Previous research into defining the concept of adventure tourism has not resulted in one definition that is accepted worldwide. There are several reasons for this, but the most important reason is that every single adventurer has a different perspective on this. When teaching in adventure tourism, I always ask my students what adventure tourism is according to them. This is in order to set boundaries for the interpretation of the term. There are many surprising answers, but there are some clear patterns too. If someone says that he likes adventure tourism, it does not say all that much, because it can mean so many things.

One of the characteristics of adventure tourism is therefore that it is highly individual, because what can be defined as an adventure for one is not necessarily an adventure for another. There are many possible definitions of adventure tourism, and to a certain extent it can be said that none of them is better than another. For this abstract, the description of adventure tourism that will be used contains six essential elements (Postma and Van Acker, 2015), that to a high or low extent are present in adventure activities:

“Adventure activities are mainly physical and outdoor (1), consisting of a certain level of risks and having uncertain outcomes (2), undertaken by people outside their known environment (3), in order to satisfy intrinsic or extrinsic adventure goals (4), which are based on satisfying psychological, social and (sub-)cultural needs (5), resulting in rewarding experiences (6)”.

Besides the different perspectives on adventure tourism, people behave differently in holiday situations than at home (3, in the description above), which underlines the importance of looking at their motives and behaviour. Escapism can form a major motivation for people to participate in adventures.

Adventures contains uncertain outcomes and a particular level of risk (2, in the description above). Still, both uncertain outcomes and risks can be perceived as annoying by some adventurers. Some tourists seek for adventures that are highly predictable, and uncertainties are perceived as annoying by them. On the other hand, for other people, when something unforeseen happens, this is perceived as interesting and therefore exciting and adventurous, though possibly especially afterwards (6, in the description above). The question if an adventure is positive for an individual is if his personal expectation of risks is being met or not. The level of risks accepted is depending on the individual's competencies and personal background. The presence of danger in an adventure activity creates risks and ensures that the outcome is not predictable and therefore highly uncertain. Uncertain outcomes can be an ultimate reward (6, in the description above) that is anticipated by an adventurer. Normally one can say that the rewards are intrinsic, because it is one's own goals that need to be satisfied (4, in the description above). In some cases however there are extrinsic goals to be met. Children may climb a mountain in order to receive a reward like an ice cream or maybe just a compliment; some adults climb a mountain in order to brag to their neighbours or colleagues. One must notice the paradox between the uncertainty of the outcomes of adventures versus the expectation of rewards. The reward can be that uncertain expectations are being met in the form of unforeseen experiences.

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Travel, a way to enlightenment: An existentialist and educational approach in the eastern and western transcultural content

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Abstract

The thesis applies Western outdoor pedagogics and Eastern philosophies to categorise and explain the self-development and enlightenment that emerges from long-term budget travellers' journeys from both cultures. Empiricism and authenticity from the practice of travelling are emphasised in both outdoor education and the oriental philosophies of Daoism and Buddhism. Being on the road can contribute to first hand and sensory involvement learning processes, which, it is argued, is vanishing in contemporary society due to technology development. An important element of the journey is the liminal space. Confrontation with the unknown breaks existing routines and allows people to think about themselves. Therefore, the questions of 'I' emerges. Bildung, the German tradition of self-cultivation, emphasises "Who I can be". (Becker, 2005) Moreover, the Daoist principle "let individuals be who they are", and "self is non self" in Buddhism both highlight the importance of knowing self as the way that leads to enlightenment.

The research focussed on an individual scale rather than a social scale regarding the outcomes of the journey. Using a qualitative approach I identify transcultural aspects of the journey by interviewing both an Easterner and a Westerner. They are youths and took their journeys when they faced graduation from university. I explain the transcultural content with different modes: the braid of life, the picture of gestalt and fractal geometry. From the evidence I suggest that a transcultural approach should be complementary rather than contradictory between different cultures.

Current research on travel and personal development has the tendency to be on a social scale rather than an individual scale. (Desforges, 2000) Having used an existential perspective I focus on the individual scale. This breaks the western linear perception of the journey by bringing in Eastern philosophy and case study. Comprehensive studies on travellers of different nationalities could bring comparative understanding and a wider perspective on aspects of travelling. In addition, transcultural perspectives will bring the integrity of the content of the journey. Given the fact that the majority of long-term budget travellers are

youths, I conclude that the pedagogical value of adventure is an important sector of adventure study. (Cohen, 2003)

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The evolution of adventure at the International Adventure Conference: Where have we been and where are we headed?

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Abstract

This year marks the fifth International Adventure Conference – a conference where people interested in advancing our understanding and prime use of adventure meet. During its nascent beginning in northern Europe, the conference has drawn participants from around the world with research from describing over 60 different adventure settings as diverse as urban exploration, eclipse chasing, and conflict zones. They have covered grand adventures like climbing K2 and experiencing utter stillness in the northern territories of Canada to friluftsliv and microadventures and in or near our home environments.

At the same time, conference participants have approached these experiences and the concepts they touch from a vast range of fields such as history and philosophy, education and marketing and everything in between. What a wild interdisciplinary journey it has been so far!

Nevertheless, it is important to consider where we have been and where we would like to head. What have been the dominant themes over these first four years of work, how do they fit into the extant literature (e.g., Cater, 2006; Lieper, 1995; Swarbrooke, 2003; Varley & Semple, 2015; Walle, 1997; Weber, 2001), have they changed over time, and are there obvious gaps in our knowledge that deserve greater attention in the years ahead? Have we sufficiently pushed the envelope in our understanding of adventure, or should we be pushing harder?

Method

All the available abstracts from the first four years of the conference (2012-2015) were analyzed in both a top-down and bottom up manner. Categories for analysis were first derived from the current literature with a particular focus on people and their experiences of adventure (e.g., setting, participant mode, access, activity, equipment and technology, participant involvement, and outcomes) more than on the business of facilitating adventure. As the

abstracts were studied, additional categories and sub-categories were added (e.g., key demographics, activity quality, safety, and some provider perspectives).

Findings and discussion

The data are still being analyzed, but trends in the work will be shared to identify where the work has been strong, where there are notable gaps, and to make some suggestions for how to think about our next step as a research community.

Conclusion

This paper is intended as a contribution to the conversation we should have as a research community in our fifth year as adventure explorers. What are the great unknowns, unfamiliar turfs and uncertain outcomes? Where lie the dangers in their pursuit? Are we taking sufficient risks? Have we pushed the envelope enough, or do we want to push more? If so, where, how and with whom? And, most importantly, why?

The analyses will guide this conversation, but the audience representing multiple academic domains is as important to the interpretation of the findings as that of the presenter. This paper is therefore offered as a catalyst for rich discussion.

The journey: motivations and intentions

Danger or adventure? An exploratory study of views about riding public bicycle in Taipei

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Abstract

Introduction

Since 1998, bicycle riding has become the most prevalent recreational activity in Taiwan (Chang & Chang, 2003; Lee & Huang, 2014). Furthermore, major Taiwan cities such as Kaohsiung, Taipei, Taichung, and even smaller ones like Changhua, have built a public bicycle system (PBS) in the past few years, which encourages a new generation of urban cyclists. Among all the PBSs in Taiwan, the YouBike system in Taipei City is the most

successful. To date, it has experienced 4.87 million users taking 56 million rides. In spite of the popularity of riding a YouBike in Taipei, there is relatively little qualitative research on this phenomenon. The purpose of this study is to discover the lived experience of PBS users and to explore the underlying factors that inhibit or encourage use. This phenomenological study will offer a better and more detailed understanding of the public bicycle riding experience.

Methods

This study employed the phenomenological method, which can aid the researcher in understanding human beings from “inside” their subjective experience. This study mainly used purposive sampling, but snowballing was also employed to identify cyclists. Data was collected through semi-structured one-to-one interviews with 3 commuting cyclists, 4 leisure cyclists, and 3 mixed purpose cyclists (commuting, recreation, and touring). All participants in this research were interviewed in a publicly available space with a relaxed atmosphere to encourage in-depth conversation. Interviews begin with questions related to the cycling experience in Taipei. The researcher also asked the participants to describe particular feelings or concerns that they mentioned as they told their stories. All the interviews were audio recorded and the interviewer took notes to support the research data. An inductive thematic method was used to analyze the data. A coding scheme was developed to identify semantic major themes and sub-themes. Thematic saturation was reached when the data did not generate new key words or themes.

Findings

A consistent pattern emerged after analyzing thematic data. All the participants addressed a major concern with harassment from motorists. Some cyclists felt threatened when motorists drove too close, too fast, or hustled to pass them. However, some stated that motor scooters were the most prevailing form of transport in Taiwan. They themselves or their family were also motorists and thus they can tolerate riding bicycles around motor scooters even though they did not enjoy it. The participants also described that cyclists and pedestrians in Taipei had a very harmonious relationship. Most pedestrians would spontaneously make way for cyclists without being asked. This appeared to be a silent convention and subtle agreement between these two groups. All the participants agreed that the YouBike system was a driving force of establishing the bicycle culture in Taipei. After 4 years of operation, riding a YouBike in Taipei for leisure, commuting, or touring is common and “just something that people do here”.

Discussion and conclusion

Compared to the amount of existing PBS related literature in Europe and North America, there is a relative paucity of studies in Asia (Fishman, 2016). This inductive exploratory study seeks to bridge this gap by providing distinctive insights from the “lived” experience of urban PBS users in Taipei. Future research can examine the interaction between motorists and cyclists in Southeast Asia considering the unique motor scooter culture in this area. Furthermore, based on the questions raised by this study, future work can investigate the transformation of a cycling culture after a PBS is built. This study provides additional

resources for advocates and policy makers who manage PBS and for communities who are considering starting a PBS.

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“Bad” weather aversion in outdoor activities. A stereotype to overcome in Spain

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Abstract

Tom Gill (2006, 2007, 2010) has shown social risk aversion when adults take care of children, an overprotective instinct that leads us to maximize warning. This risk aversion makes it harder for children to learn to manage risks by themselves and to become more autonomous. The adult tends to overestimate the subject-risk when it comes from children. Then, children's self-sufficiency and ability to manage the environmental and activity risks are affected by adult's control (Funollet, 1995, Grimaldi, Philip & Square, 2013).

David Orr (2004), in English, or Heike Freire (2011), in Spanish, analyze the social aversion to nature: biophobia. Richard Louv (2005) has named one of these effects in children “nature deficit disorder”. The urban lifestyle, isolated from nature, is deviating from natural phenomena, especially from weather events; unlike the rural lifestyle, where rain or winter snow are a precious “commodity”, especially in a dry and hot country like Spain. We are experiencing a kind of social aversion as a result of risk avoidance and biophobia. We named it “bad” weather aversion.

Spain is warmer and drier than others countries like Scandinavian countries, Scotland or Canada, where outdoor activities are quite common in schools and outdoor education is very important in school. Spanish people have a lot of reluctance to play outdoors when the weather is cold, it is raining or it is snowing; probably too accustomed to sunny days. Spanish weather is more predictable and weather events are more moderate than in Northern Europe, except in the Spanish mountains or in North. Our excellent climate is one of the reasons why, Spain was third most popular tourist destination in the world last three years. “Good” weather could be an important reason.

Often, some rain drops are sufficient to cancel the school break and a rainy forecast enough to delay an outdoor activity. We have analyzed this social phenomenon in outdoor activities and

we are provoking reflection to drive a social movement. We are trying to learn how we can make the most of “bad” weather in outdoor education during all school time, during all educational stages, in all seasons.

We have developed outdoor activities in different contexts and fields (school, sport, leisure, and tourism). We are looking at “bad” weather in the activity’s environment, analyzing how risk is assessed and managed in each scenario. Some of these are: a) the case study in an early-years group at a rural school (Martín-Sanz & Pérez-Brunicardi, 2016); b) Corremontes, a project for teaching children trail-running and for managing not-competitive races outdoors; or c) a training teacher project to make the most of autumn and winter weather to overcome “bad” weather aversion in outdoor physical education.

We can observe how “bad” weather can be used as an opportunity for learning, a challenge, and an incentive for outdoor activities. The most difficult challenge is to change the attitudes of adults (parents, teachers or instructors) convincing them to accept these weather conditions and teach them to manage this kind of risk. The next step is learning to share the responsibility and allow children to manage the risk by themselves, discovering a new environment for learning. We should follow the model of countries like Scotland, where outdoor education is a key element in the education system, regardless of its rainy, blustery weather.

We subconsciously reproduce “bad” weather stereotypes in language or actions, but we must challenge them and work to enjoy this educational resource, especially in a country where water is a scarce and precious commodity. We must hope for rain and snow, enjoy them and teach our children to enjoy them too, taking Vitamin “N” (Louv, 2016) and “putting a smiling face when the weather goes wrong” (literally a popular Spanish sentence like “when life gives you lemons, make lemonade”).

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Bicycles empower youth adventure

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Abstract

Introduction

The United States is overwhelmingly car centric, however there is dramatic growth of and demand for multiuse trails and bicycle lanes, which are used for recreation and transportation. However, despite this increase in bicycle use some people still view the bicycle as a child's toy or in some cases a child's transportation tool to only be used prior to being old enough to drive. Both fueling and responding to this increased interest and lingering negative views are advocacy and lobbying organizations such as People for Bikes, League of American Bicyclists, Adventure Cycle Association, and the Alliance for Biking and Walking just to name a few. Additionally, bicycle oriented socially minded organizations are on the rise which focus on connecting people to each other and their communities. One unique organization, the non-profit Momentum Bicycle Club (MBC) in Greenville, South Carolina, USA, uses the bicycle as a medium to connect mentors with disadvantaged youth, 12-18 years old. MBC has 9 volunteer clubs, with 2-3 mentors and 8-12 youth per club, and each club meets and rides at least weekly, usually immediately after school during the middle of the week. Each youth is given a bicycle and instructed on how to care for it and the bicycle stays at a MBC storage location between rides. Once the youth has participated regularly in MBC for a solid year they are able to keep the bicycle at home. This effort is supported by several local health, recreation, education, and bicycle organizations and businesses. Volunteer mentors were interviewed for this project and this abstract is focused on the bicycle as an instrument that provides youth opportunities for adventure and discovery.

Methods

MBC mentors were interviewed in a series of recorded focus groups, and each group contained 3-6 participants and lasted 1.5 – 2 hours. Five focus groups were conducted and due to repetitive responses, 5 were deemed sufficient. Mentors ranged in age from early 20s to early 60s, most were employed full time, an almost equal number of men and women, and the vast majority were Caucasian. The data was transcribed and then thematically coded individually by researchers including university faculty, graduate and undergraduate students. Researchers then compared themes.

Findings/Discussion

Several factors were considered important to the success of the MBC program, most notably the relationships built between mentors and youth and between the youths. When queried on the role the bicycle plays in the positive outcomes of the program, respondents indicated that the bicycle is instrumental as it provides: 1) a freedom experience as they travel under their

own power; 2) liberation as the youth are leaving the very controlled environment of school to be in control of and responsible for the bicycle and their journey 3) the excitement of a journey; and 4) accessibility to a larger geographic area, which expands their community and world. The bicycle as a medium provides these youth with varied unusual and exciting experiences, which is one definition of adventure, or perhaps more accurately these youth have a weekly series of micro-adventures. Other youth programs certainly offer important opportunities and lessons, but it appears that the bicycle may provide more opportunities for adventure than most traditional youth programs in the USA. This presentation further explores the bicycle as a tool for providing disadvantaged youth weekly micro-adventures.

Adventure tourism: Do values and motivation influence behavioural intention?

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Abstract

Adventure tourism is the one of the growing subset of tourism which has recently increased in popularity as a niche form of tourism. Muller and Cleaver (2000) characterized adventure tourism as having “relatively high levels of sensory stimulation, usually achieved by including physically challenging experiential components”. It is designated having travel, sports, and outdoor activities components; but is also distinguished by its higher degree of experiential engagement compared to other forms of tourism (Christiansen, 1990; Trauer, 1999). There are already unique elements in a tourism product which differentiate them from other products. Tourism services have unique characteristics such as intangibility and risk involvement that distinguish tourist buying behaviour from other products. Tourism purchase decisions are often risky, require extensive problem solving, advance planning. Adventure tourists are usually thrill seekers and are willing to spend significant amounts of money for their recreation and often demanding and their satisfaction is related to challenge, excitement, emotional high and novelty. Swarbrooke (2003), Tsui (2000) also highlight that adventure tourism customers are often “young, educated, affluent, active”, thus identifying it as a separate and attractive market segment. As such, it is important to understand adventure tourist’s socio-psychological perspective to understand their satisfaction and behavioural intentions in order to target this segment more effectively.

In view of the growing popularity and broadening of the segment, a body of research has been conducted in adventure tourism; however, few studies have focused on adventure tourist satisfaction and their behavioural patterns (Williams & Souter, 2009). The purpose of the study is to develop a conceptual model to understand the relationship between motivation, perceived value, satisfaction and behavioural intention of adventure tourists. The constructs were conceptualized based on previous marketing literature, and several hypotheses are

developed and a model has been proposed to test those relationships in the adventure tourism context to determine such tourists' behavioural intention.

The study is planned to be empirical in nature, and will conduct surveys among participants in various adventure activities in the western region of Norway over the winter 2016-17. The abundance of activities in the region that includes mountaineering, skiing, hiking, kayaking, gliding, base jumping etc. and the geographic positioning renders the region as an attractive arena of research in the topic.

What on earth are they looking for? Chinese backpacker's gaze in Yading

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Abstract

Introduction

Since its emergence in travel literature in the 1970s, 'backpacker' has been a popular field of research in tourism studies. However, in the English language literature, so far little has been done on the travel motivation and behaviour of Chinese backpackers, whose domestic outdoor recreation activities primarily involve hiking, camping and other outdoor activities. Although it is a common belief that Chinese culture distinguishes largely from Western culture, there are very few case studies showing the cultural difference between the two groups of backpackers (Chen et al., 2013). Therefore, this study contributes to the knowledge of outdoor recreation by offering insights into the culture, travel motivation and behaviour of Chinese backpackers (who under the context of English literature are also known as hikers, recreationists or adventure travellers) through a case study of Yading Village, a top-notch paradise for backpacking and adventure tourism in China.

To analyse what Chinese backpackers are pursuing in their backpacking experience, 'tourist gaze' is used as a theoretical lens because 'it is a matter of socially and technologically patterned and learned ways of seeing' (Larsen, 2014). Ever since the term 'tourist gaze' was brought to the study of backpackers, most researches have been focused on the visual sense of backpacker's gaze. However, as a multimodal term, the tourist gaze embodies other senses, which are deficient in but worthy of academic attention. Therefore, this study advances the study of tourist gaze by elaborating the multisensory, localized gaze of Chinese backpackers.

Method

This study employs content analysis of travel reviews and field trip as research methods in a case study of Yading Village. Yading is selected as the case for the following reasons: (1) it is located in the Tibetan Plateau with an altitude of 2900 to 6032 meters, which blends adventure experience, especially physical challenge, into hiking activities; (2) ranked fourth on a top-ten

list of 'the most beautiful mountains in China' in a Special Issue of Chinese National Geography, Yading is nationally renowned for its sacred snow-capped mountains and Tibetan ethnic culture and internationally recognized as the essence of Shangri-La, which makes exploring into this less-developed yet mysterious area an adventure.

To analyse Chinese backpackers' multisensory gaze on Yading, this study innovatively uses content analysis method based on 223 reviews collected from typical Chinese 'TripAdvisor' style websites. Supplementary to the content analysis is the field investigation of Chinese backpackers, during which in-depth semi-structured interviews are conducted to further explore their motivations and culture.

Discussion and Conclusion

It shows that Chinese backpacker's gaze upon Yading has been composed of visual, kinaesthetic, gustatory, audio, tactual, olfactory and complex sensory perceptions. Unlike Western backpackers, they are not authenticity pursuers but mundane tourists that gaze on landscape of aesthetic value with the assistance of comfortable infrastructures. Under such a mundane gaze, Yading has turned from a village at the foot of sacred mountains to another traveller's enclave.

Such spatial alienation resulted from the absence of Chinese backpackers' reflexivity (or intra-gaze) and of local community's myth-making. Therefore, efforts should be made to turn Chinese backpackers into responsible tourists and focus on their intra-gaze building. On the other hand, stage manager should make a new 'myth' shifting backpacker's natural gaze more to a cultural gaze on local community's folklore, customs, religion and culture and help Yading-like adventure tourist attractions to set up a stage where the local residents can perform their own culture in the front and reversely gaze back on the backpackers.

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Experiencing The North - motivations and experiences of racers of the North Pole Marathon 2016

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Abstract

Introduction

Undertaking a journey to participate in marathons organized all over the world, with a high significance of a tourism component of a travel, is a pretty new tendency of amateur runners

behaviour. In the literature it is sometimes even used the category “marathon tourism” [Lisle, 2016; Saayman M., Saayman A., 2012]. The choice of the race is connected with a marathon image and a destination attractiveness; however it is influenced also by other factors. Explanations can refer to the concept of the event-tourist career trajectory [Getz, Andersson ,2010].

The North Pole marathon is an exceptional event. It is more demanding and challenging than many others marathons. The identification of participants motivations is a very interesting research task. And understanding runners’ experiences connected with the participation has both a cognitive and practical value.

Aims of the paper:

- Create a socio-demographic profile of The North Pole 2016 racer;
- Compare runners’ profiles in years 2006-2016.
- Identify motivations of the North Pole Marathon 2016 participants;
- Analyse runners experiences connected with travel and participation in The NPM 2016.

Method

Empirical research was conducted in Longearbyen (Svalbard) at 7th April 2016, during the briefing before the North Pole Marathon 2016. It was a direct survey questionnaire of all participants – it means a purposive sampling was applied. 41 racers filled the questionnaire (of 47 finishers).

A modified version of Sport Motivation Scale II [Pelletier at all, 2013] was used in the questionnaire to assess motivations of the racers. The tool for the experience analysis was the memorable tourism experience scale by Kim, Ritchie and McCormik [2012]. A statistic descriptive analysis of results was performed.

Findings: The results reveal that participants of The North Pole Marathon 2016 were a very differentiated group as for their running involvement and sport achievements (from 94 marathons to 0) and sociodemographic features were concerned. The majority of them tries to combine a marathon participation with tourism. The main motivations are: challenging oneself, getting new experience and sense of achievement, testing physical limits, experience the uniqueness of destination and beauty of the arctic nature. Participants highlighted: an adventure, an excitement connected both with the marathon and the Arctic, the comradeship among other race participants and travel companions as the most crucial experiences.

Conclusions: Results are in line with Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and support opinions expressed in the literature [Ryan & Deci, 2007; Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2007; Standage & Ryan, 2012; Vallerand, 2007] that motivation of participation in a marathon is a complex phenomenon, with multiple motives for engagement. In this particular case the set of motivations is enhanced by the specificity of the destination.

The experience is created by racers themselves, by the event per se and by the nature. It supports Mossberg’s idea of “experiencescape” [Mossberg, 2007].

Limitations: The sample of racers was small (N=41), so results can be treated as a case study for The North Pole Marathon 2016. The quantity of questionnaires imposes also the descriptive statistical analysis only.

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The journey: sense of place

Wide and wild – perceptions of seascapes

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Abstract

Seascapes have always affected people. Over centuries the sea has been regarded as chaotic, dangerous and unhealthy. Its vitality symbolized wild, and therefore “immoral”, behaviour (Richter 2014, 145; Corbin 1990). For maritime cultures like the Phoenicians and the Vikings, however, the sea represented a medium for negotiating and expanding their spheres of action (de Souza 2003). The various meanings attached to the sea reflect its dynamic nature. They nurture a number of simultaneously existing representations of the sea. The sea can be perceived as a source for meditation, deceleration and contemplation, as well as an impulse for adventure, challenge and excitement. It evokes intense, often contradictory, emotions, ideas, narratives and metaphors (cf. Brown/Humberstone 2015). Today seascapes attract a considerable number of people interested in spending their leisure time in, on or by the water. As highly dynamic spaces encountered and embodied entirely within often skill-based activities, seascapes represent anti-structural drafts (Turner 2005) perceived as alternatives to

the predictable, measured and well-structured everyday spaces of post-modern society. Considering the fact that in 2050 around 70 percent of the world population will live in urbanized spaces (Birch/Wachter 2011, 3), one can assume that the fascination of natural, less domesticated, spaces will continue to grow.

According to Brown seascapes move “beyond the visual to include the non-human world, embodied lived-experiences, representations of these experiences of being in and on the sea, and the historical and social dimensions that constitute individual and collective consciousness of the sea” (Brown 2015, 20). Seascapes don’t stay exterior to human activities but can be understood as an integral part of them. They exert a direct influence on the way they are perceived, interpreted, laden with values and used. Like every space they are not ontologically given, but medium and product of human activities (Lefebvre 2006; Crouch/Aronsson/Wahlström 2001), shaped by our expressions of cultural and personal identity as well as shaping them in return (Brown 2015, 21).

The contribution sheds light on the question, how seascapes are currently perceived and constructed in the context of recreational activities related to the sea. Why is a growing number of people interested in spending their leisure time at or on the sea? Why are 71 percent of Germans, asked about their individual travel interests in a quantitative survey by the IMT (IMT 2013), interested in spending their holiday “in nature”, “on the beach” (66 percent) or “actively in and on the water” (58 percent)?

Qualitative research relating to these questions is currently under way in the context of a study project supervised by the author and the results will be presented in the contribution.

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Warm spots in cold climates

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Abstract

Nordic region is a geographical area which is characterized by a combination of nature, culture, history and technology and regarded as a common entity in political, economical and historical sense. Although rich in its resources, Nordic tourism has not actualized its potential in full. The present paper aims to identify weaknesses of the region, to outline a new set of directions for improving Nordic tourism and to delineate major challenges. Its geographical and natural beauties, cultural characteristics, technological advancement and policy development are identified as assets for tourism advancement in the region. Winter tourism, adventure tourism, nature-based tourism and cultural tourism are demonstrated as potential routes of growth. Marketing strategies and changing trends are discussed as major challenges, with suggestions for implementation.

The journey: engaging participants

Wilderness children

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Abstract

Introduction

Recent Norwegian surveys shows that children are less active in the nature than before (Gundersen et. al 2016). Accordingly Louv (2009) states the fact that children worldwide are getting a childhood with less nature contact – and he claims that this can lead to nature deficit disorder. In Norway The Norwegian government put emphasis on the importance of children getting nature contact. The Ministry of Climate and Environment has made strategy plans and guidelines for how the communities, organizations, schools and kindergartens in Norway in different ways shall enhance the use of nature by children and young people - and thereby support a healthy lifestyle and nature contact among the young generations (Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment 2013 & 2016). There is a trend for an increasing focus

on children experiencing nature and children participating in adventures – not only in an educational aspect, but also for self-development, nature contact and in adventure tourism.

Presentation

The author is engaged in the educational field at The Arctic University of Norway, campus Alta, teaching how to involve children in nature activities for the reasons mentioned above. Additionally she has been involved in projects for Television. One of the projects is called “Wilderness children” and has been sent in prime time on The Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) – on the channel for children (NRK Super 2016). Wilderness children has been broadcasted with three seasons – each with 8 programs. All of the programs show children from age 4 - 17 in various activities – such as skiing, canoeing, fishing, hunting, biking, bird-watching, on expeditions etc. The response has been great. Many families, children and adults report that they are inspired to get into the outdoors themselves. In the planned presentation the audience will see a variety of pictures and videos from Wilderness children activities.

Discussion

Why has the concept “Wilderness children” received so much attention? And how can the experiences from this be used in both educational and leisure concepts as well as adventure tourism development for the family segment? How can children be inspired to get into the outdoors through such a Television concept? And can this “save” children from a nature deficit disorder? The author plans a study and an article with these topics, and on the conference there will be presented some of these questions and some preliminary results and reflections.

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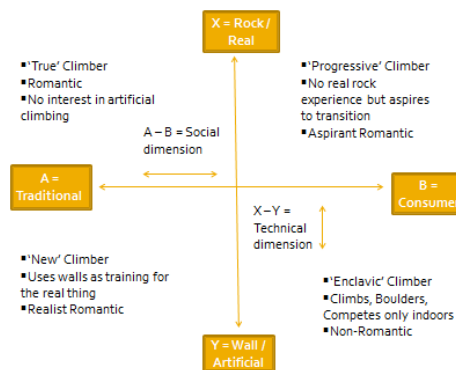
The journey to elsewhere: Climbers who start early and finish late

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Abstract

This presentation is a report on the 'live project' that comprises the climbing ethnography of my regular visits to Big Rock indoor climbing wall in Milton Keynes. A previous presentation to ATRA introduced the project and led to grounded theory which proposed the following model:



This latest presentation discusses the model with a particular emphasis upon data generated over time by a group of regulars (the 'Wednesday Club'). This informal and fluid group is mixed gender and aged from the 40s through to late 70s, with a gravitation towards the older ages.

The model proposes, via the two axes, four climbing 'types' in an attempt to illuminate the complexities of creating and sustaining an identity of 'climber' today. The tensions of choosing to undertake a leisure activity which appears to be dangerous in a contemporary risk averse world have been well documented and explored in the literature, for example: Beedie (2003 & 2015), Kiewa (2001a, 2001b & 2002). The duality of the 'climbing body' (organic, self-determined, tactile, grounded) set against the 'metropolitan body' (inorganic, passive, ocular, groundless) illustrates the case (Lewis, 2000). The tension here is one of control, at one level epitomised by the negotiation of self in the constraining dimensions of structure set out by 'leisure' more generally (Kiewa 2002).

One important development catalysed by technical developments in climbing that contribute to risk reduction has been to blur the boundaries between the climbing 'types' set out above. Whereas previously 'real' climbers could distinguish themselves from 'pretend' climbers because they climbed on real rock and engaged judgement about real risks, today these people are just as likely to be found climbing indoors at Big Rock as they are on the mountain cliffs of Snowdonia. The suggestion is that there has therefore been an erosion (or blurring) of structural boundaries and as a result a commensurate rise in symbolic boundaries (Kiewa 2001a; Kiewa 2001b; Heywood 2006) as climbers navigate the social territory of climbing identities. However, contributions to the relevant literature exploring climbing groups / communities have generally been concerned with the ethics (or rules) by which climbers

perform their activities (e.g. Heywood 2006), the lifestyle immersion of climbers (e.g. Rickly-Boyd 2012) or the relationship and gender issues integral to climbing (e.g. Kiewa 2001a).

Whilst all these themes are important illuminating aspects of the bigger picture of being a climber, this is not a comprehensive overview of climbing today. In particular, there are three significant areas of insight not yet adequately discussed by this literature and these are (1) indoor climbing walls; (2) fluctuations in climbing participation over time determined by an individual's changing responsibilities and (3) climbing amongst older people (and in this latter point, I am using the assumption of sustained engagement over time to distinguish from such climbers – young and old – who might undertake an instructor led climbing experience as part of an adventure tourism package or an aspirational tick list of 'things to do before you die').

It is, therefore, the idea of self determination that remains central to the negotiation of a climbing identity. For example, Paul Nunn (1988 p. 194) suggests: "whatever he [sic] could climb, the sign of the true climber was that he went away regularly". Has the 'going away' morphed into regular outings to one's local climbing wall? A fundamental tension seems to be the extent to which the seductive attractions of commercial interests in artificial climbing (weather free climbing, in-situ ropes, colour coded climbs, cafe etc.) have compromised the adventure of rock climbing as activity (and perhaps the striving amidst discomfort). The proposed presentation will explore this tension through an analysis of data drawn predominantly from the elderly climbers who are the focus of this project and thereby make a contribution to the extant literature.

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Outdoor adventure: study of activities and attitudes in wild nature in Norway and Poland

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Abstract

Introduction

Wild nature is an unmodified, undisturbed area retaining its natural character and influence, which humans have not developed with industrialization and urbanization (Kliskey, 1998). Wild nature is not only a physical area, it is also a psychological field because humans in wild nature can realize adventures, passions or styles of life. Adventure enjoyed in close contact with the wild nature is gaining in popularity. More and more people are taking up mountaineering, canoeing/kayaking, diving, cycling or cross-country running (Priest & Gass, 1997; Horgen 2016). Individuals' subjective experience and perception of adventure became a subject of the scientific study (Weber, 2001), for example cultural differences in outdoor activities and attitudes. In Norway outdoor life (friluftsliv) is often described as a typical lifestyle, which influences nearly all aspects of personal and social life (Odden, 2008; 2013; Zoglowek, 2013; Breivik, 2013). In Poland outdoor life is not known as such a social phenomenon and exploration of wild nature is not very common (Próchniak, 2014).

Method

The main purpose of the research is to study outdoor activities and attitudes in close contact with wild nature in Norway and Poland. The research was conducted in 2015 on the group of Polish students (Pomeranian University) and Norwegian students (UiT - The Arctic University of Norway) with a random selection of participants. Polish group consisted of 99 students (Mage=21,36, SD=3,70). Norwegian group consisted of 89 students (Mage=24,50, SD=6,20).

During the study the following questionnaires were used: Wilderness Attitudes Scale, Wilderness Survival Self Efficacy Questionnaire, Motives of activity in Wilderness Scale, Perception of Risk in Wilderness Scale and Wilderness Novelty Seeking Scale (Próchniak, 2014). Among the psychological characteristics were studied: seeking of wilderness experiences, preferred types of outdoor activities, motives of engagement, emotions and perception of risk connected with exploration of wild nature.

Results

Results show that there are no significant differences in types of outdoor activities. However, the findings indicate that culture can differ adventure seeking and evaluation of experiences, which may lead to different behavior and attitudes towards wild nature. At the same time, it was found out that the differences are not homogeneous among the countries, and it cannot

be said, taken as a whole, that the attitudes to the wild nature are country specific. It is rather to assume that attitudes may be person specific.

Conclusion

It looks that adventure seeking is not implicitly characteristic of particular countries, but rather characteristic determined by personal attitudes and values. The limitation of the study is the size of the sample. Nevertheless, the obtained results allow us to prepare a good basis for the further study with the aim to enrich the knowledge in the field of adventure seeking in wild nature in Poland and Norway. Subjective outdoor adventure experience may both have theoretical implications and prove profitable to practitioners. Therefore, it should be of interest to researchers and practitioners alike to engage in more research to further exploration of adventure tourism and outdoor activities.

The journey: risk taking and decision-making

Can we possibly talk about female decision-making and heuristics in avalanche terrain?

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Abstract

Introduction

For many years we have gone into the backcountry to seek out adventure, freedom and untouched white gold, also called snow. Our behaviour in the backcountry has changed rapidly during the past 10-15 years, and more and more people are seeking both fast and slow adventures in snow covered nature.

One increasing trend that gets more and more established, is female-only groups in the mountain. Female only avalanche courses, ski & yoga camps, climbing festivals, avalanche workshops and so on is increasing in fast numbers. Previous research in decision making processes, have not investigated the gender and/or cultural aspect and implications towards avalanche knowledge. It exist very little research in women only groups to rely on. McCammons (2004) material in heuristics and decision - making, is all based on data from

male and mixed groups. There are several implications to believe that decision - making processes may work different in female only groups, than in male or mixed groups. The phenomenon of female - only groups in the ski and avalanche world, is relatively new.

Background

The statistics in (recreational) fatal avalanche accidents world wide, has showed us the past 20 years, that victims mainly are male skiers, snowboarders and snowmobile drivers. In Norway the average type of victim in avalanche fatalities are male, 30-45 years old. In the US and Canada 88 % of fatal avalanche recreational accidents, has male victims. The victims seems to often have quite a lot of mountain experience and/or do have some avalanche awareness in different levels. In 9 out of 10 avalanches with fatal outcome, the person itself, or someone in the person party is the trigger of the avalanche (Brattlien, 2013; Tremper, 2011). Both literature and previous research shows us that avalanche accidents in the backcountry, in tourism and recreational activities, are not a terrain, weather or snowpack problem. Avalanche accidents are a human problem. (Atkins, 2000).

Methods

This paper explores known and unknown issues to get a better understanding of human factors in decision making, from sociological and gender perspectives.

The data material will consists of practical fieldwork, a survey, comparative observations and interviews from the two previous winter seasons. (2015 & 2016 in Tromsø and Lyngen region, Norway). (N ≈ 30).

I have been participating both as an observer, course instructor and course leader, and as a participant aspirant in Norwegian avalanche instructor education level 1. I do have a wide perspective from all the different roles. Both workshops, courses and ski camps for female only, has been a part of my work. Few questions have earlier been asked concerning different levels of cultural or gender biases influencing risk management and decision-making in avalanche terrain. Hopefully I can ask some new questions and maybe bring some new answers to the field of avalanche research.

Summary/work in progress

There might be a paradigm shift in the internal ski culture related to behaviour in avalanche terrain. This due to several factors, among them; culture change, social trends and development of new knowledge in the backcountry. Why do women choose to go on women-only-workshops, and what is the result related to risk taking and group dynamics? Why do some women feel more comfortable and tend to show more of their knowledge and experience when they are in female-only groups? And can we possibly talk about female heuristics as something different than what we already know from previous research, which further can explain why men is the main victims in avalanches? Implications towards social and cultural issues is to be analysed and presented.

Drowning causes and prevention in water based recreation in Estonia

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Abstract

Death caused by drowning has been a major public health problem for humans for ages. Today according to the WHO, the drowning incidence is the third biggest death cause in the world after traffic and home accidents. More than ninety percent of drowning related death cases occur in the low- and middle-income countries. There are big differences in the Baltic region while Russia (24) and Lithuania (26) are on the top of 172 countries by drowning deaths. Sweden (156) and Norway (158) are among the countries with the smallest drowning cases in the world. According to the GDP and human development Estonia is among the group of developed countries in the world, but according to drowning deaths Estonia is with its 2,95 persons for 100,000 in the 97th position among the developing world countries (Sethi et al 2006, WHO 2014).

As in most of the low income countries a big amount of drownings happen with kids and/or people during their daily activities and our northern neighbours have relatively big amount of suicides (Rosenberg 2004, Moran 2011, Ahlm et al 2013). Estonia has a large amount of drownings during the recreational activities like swimming, boating and fishing.

In current research causes for Estonian drowning deaths and effectiveness of prevention is analysed in comparison with our neighbouring countries based on the official statistics, interviews with stakeholders of rescue and safety services and water-based recreation entrepreneurs.

Estonia started its national water safety and drowning prevention campaigns 6 years ago. Among all the countries in the region only Estonia and Latvia have national water safety strategy, in all other countries safety and prevention are in the competence area of local authorities. Estonian drowning statistics is still very dependent on the weather, keeping numbers low in cool summers and high in hot summers. Despite that it is possible to say that after safety and prevention campaigns a number of the drowning deaths have reduced. Moreover, water-based recreation entrepreneurs have pointed out that the awareness of safety and risk behaviour has been improving a lot since campaigns have started.

While service providers' and users' awareness have improved a lot, the main victim in Estonia is still a drunk adult male who is participating in some recreational activity like swimming, fishing or boating. Despite in commercial recreational activities alcohol consumption is prohibited and also not tolerated by the clients, non-commercial recreational activities with friends and families have alcohol often as a must-be and friends and family do not stop the drunk comrade from water-based recreational activity.

In conclusion, most of the respondents were optimistic about improvements of drowning reduction and they pointed out several tools how to make prevention more efficient like more target group oriented campaigns and free swimming courses at schools etc.

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A journey through the mine field of risk perception management in adventure tourism activities

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Abstract

The adventure tourism industry is a customer service industry where product development and presentation is propelled by the clients' needs and desires. The majority of people who participate in adventure tourism activities are novices and have no prior experience or relevant skills (Morgan et al., 2005). It is this market of 'no skills required' which is the focus of the commercial adventure tourism industry. As there are inherent risks involved in all adventure activities, risk, risk perception and risk management are key skills for the adventure activity provider and guide. The responsibility of the provider to meet the safety requirements of the activity and to meet the clients' expectations of the adventure activity has been highlighted in several studies (Dickson and Dolnicar, 2000, Morgan, 2000, Weber, 2001, Morgan et al., 2005, Cater, 2006, Promfret, 2006, Smith and Espiner, 2007). Risk however is multidimensional, made up of physical risk components and subjective risk components.

This research is concerned with the subjective risk components of three adventure tourism activities: hill walking, rock climbing and kayaking. The aim of this research involved answering two main questions. Firstly; what risk perceptions are associated with adventure activities? Secondly; how are these risk perceptions managed by the providers and guides who deliver the adventure activities?

Quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (semi-structured interviews) data was used to underpin a comprehensive investigation of the topic. The quantitative data was analysed using SPSS software. The main statistical tests used were 'exact contingency tests' and 'principal component analysis' to test for associations and dominant patterns respectively. The analysis of the collected qualitative data used an inductive approach with a thematic content analysis method. The software package Nvivo was used to manage data and perform queries on the data.

The findings of this research suggest the motivation to participate in adventure tourism activities is not one dimensional, but is related to satisfying a collection of motives. All three client groups (hill walkers, rock climbers, kayakers) gave prominence to similar motivations; however, disparities in the providers' and guides' understanding of their clients' motivations were identified.

In relation to perceptions in risk awareness, safety awareness and safety responsibility, all three client groups displayed similar perceptions prior to participating in their chosen adventure activity. This finding is in total contrast to the perceptions of the providers' and guides' understanding of their clients' risk and safety perceptions.

A central finding of this research illustrates that neither the providers nor the guides of the adventure activities actively or knowingly addressed their clients' risk perceptions within the timeframe of the activity. This paper presents a model which can be used by both providers and guides to consciously address their clients' risk perception when delivering their adventure activity.

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The journey: technology and the outdoors

Adventure and social media: Tools for reconnecting underserved youth with nature

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Abstract

Despite the mental and physical health benefits of visiting natural areas (e.g. Hillman, Erikson, & Kramer, 2008; Pretty, Peacock, Sellens, & Griffin, 2005; Ryan et al., 2010), youth are increasingly disconnected from natural areas and outdoor adventure opportunities. Referred to by Louv (2005) as “nature deficit disorder”, this disconnection can result in decreased environmental awareness, and physical, social, mental health (e.g., Charles et al., 2008). This issue is particularly pronounced for minority youth in lower socioeconomic urban areas. In the United States, for example, Latino neighbourhoods in Los Angeles have an average of 1.6 acres of green space per thousand residents while predominantly white neighbourhoods have an average of 17.4 acres of green space per one thousand residents (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2006).

Emerging technologies hold great potential to connect underserved youth with natural areas. Although there are negative impacts of increased ‘screen time’ and technology use amongst youth (e.g., decreased physical activity), social media has the potential to create behaviour changes by engaging youth through media they use frequently. According to the Pew Research Center (2015), 75% of American youth own, or have access to, a smartphone, and 94% of these teens are online at least once a day. Approximately 70% of youth ages 13-17 reported using more than one social media platform. In addition, African-American and Hispanic youth reported going online (via any device) more often than their white counterparts; 34% of African-American and 32% of Hispanic teens are “almost constantly” online, compared to 19% of white teens. Digital media can suggest opportunities for participation in outdoor activities; remind youth nature benefits; and inform them of local resources. At a deeper level, social media messages can tap into youths’ values, beliefs, and attitudes about outdoor activities. Although strategic use of social media can facilitate positive behaviour changes, understanding the strongly held attitudes, values, and beliefs of underserved audiences is critical to crafting messages that can foster behavioural change.

This project sought to identify social media messages that would effectively engage underserved youth with natural areas. Researchers investigated underserved urban youths' attitudes toward nature and their social media use in seven focus groups comprised of 42 youth, aged 11-20 years old, primarily of Latino or African-American descent from a densely populated urban area. Data analysis revealed six key themes that captured youth motives for engaging with nature. These themes included: unique and novel experiences, escape, social connections, challenge, adventure, and achievement. All of these themes reflected key aspects of the adventure experience, such as the desire to do something unusual or different from peers.

Although using social media to inspire adventure and connection with nature may seem counterintuitive, gaining youth attention is the first step towards engagement, and one powerful medium is technology. This presentation will discuss study findings in terms of how practitioners can encourage participation in outdoor adventure for underserved populations, as well as approaches to facilitating youth created content. The study findings suggest that youth created content, which highlights opportunities for novelty and adventure, may be one of the most powerful ways to establish and promote continued engagement with natural areas. The implications of engaging underserved populations with outdoor adventure to enhance physical, social, and mental well-being will also be discussed.

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Mountain bike deserts: A spatial analysis of US mountain bike trail data

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Abstract

Mountain biking has enjoyed steady popularity since its inception in the 1970's and 80's. Today, with the increase in technological design and new bicycle forms we are seeing a growing interest in the activity of getting outdoors on a bicycle. Mountain bike trail infrastructure, the foundation of these adventures, is usually poorly mapped in existing natural areas. More recent web-based platforms are seeking to address this deficiency by having users catalog trails and using social media to promote them.

In the USA the website mtbproject.com host trails that are uploaded by users as GPS tracks. Using this user-generated data, this study mapped mountain bike trails in the contiguous USA to identify areas lacking trail infrastructure. Questions that are addressed include:

Where are "mountain bike deserts"?

What are the spatial characteristics of mountain bike trails in the USA?

How does trail location relate to geographic and socio-economic conditions?

The presentation will give an overview of the challenges related to user-generated data and findings related to the spatial distribution of mountain bike trails in the USA, highlighting access and the potential of mountain biking adventures.

Development of an app-dependent trail accessibility checklist: Ensuring the journey is for all people

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Abstract

Introduction

Trails or footpaths are an avenue to outdoor adventure popular with a broad spectrum of the population. In the U.S., for example, walking and hiking continue to be outdoor activities with the highest participation rates (Outdoor Foundation, 2016). People with disabilities have the same interest in outdoor activities and experience the same benefits as people without disabilities (Anderson, et al. 1997; Burns, Paterson, & Watson, 2008; Dorsch et al., 2016; Goodwin, Peco, & Ginther, 2009; McAvoy et al., 2006). However, people with disabilities experience greater barriers to full participation related not necessarily to impairment but to

external factors (Burns et al., 2008; Burns & Graefe, 2007; Williams, et al., 2004). Routinely, people with disabilities have expressed the need for greater and more detailed information about outdoor recreation environments in general and trails in particular to assess risks and make decisions about participation. In the U.S., the Universal Trail Assessment Process (UTAP) was adopted by several land management agencies to assess trails in order to provide detailed information to trail users with disabilities (Axelson & Vican, 2014). UTAP requires specialized training and equipment, significant time demands, and cost that has impeded its adoption. A more streamlined trail assessment process was needed that was time, resource, and cost-effective so that more trails could be assessed, giving people with disabilities the information needed to plan and participate in outdoor adventures. This study describes the development of a trail accessibility checklist that uses the Backpacker GPS Trails Lite app on a mobile device in conjunction with a simplified trail accessibility checklist.

Methods

The trail accessibility checklist was tested for validity, reliability and usability. A panel of 12 experts was chosen to complete the face validity review. Newly developed federal standards for trail accessibility as well as UTAP and other research literature were used to assess content validity. Concurrent validity was tested by comparing trail data collected with the checklist to data collected using the UTAP process. Reliability of the trail accessibility checklist was tested by comparing the results of independent trail assessors on the same sections of trail. The trail sections were chosen to provide a broad range of trail types. Usability was gauged by having outdoor recreationists with disabilities provide feedback on the trail accessibility checklist. Also, the usability of the GPS app was determined by having experts in field data collection (e.g., geologist, geographer, outdoor recreation resource planner) review and evaluate apps to choose a user friendly but rigorous tool to be used in conjunction with the checklist.

Results/Discussion

The results of the validity studies showed strong face and content validity. Concurrent validity data analysis is still in progress. For each of the 26 questions about trail characteristics, reliability ranged from .76 to 1.0, with an average of .92. The final trail checklist has 25 questions that provide essential information about trail characteristics (e.g., trailhead parking, length, width, slope cross-slope, surface, obstructions, amenities) as well as a link to an online trail topographical map and a trail elevation profile. The trail accessibility checklist allowed trail data to be collected in a short time frame with sufficient information for the user.

Conclusions

The trail accessibility checklist, used in conjunction with the GPS trails app, is a valid, reliable and useful way to gather detailed information about a trail's characteristics, so that people with disabilities can assess the risk and make informed decisions about accessing a particular outdoor trail environment. Though some may argue that designated trails and footpaths limit one's adventures and explorations, for people with disabilities, trails can open up a whole world of possibility, given the right information.

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The art of guiding

A polar bear attack – reflection on rule based risk management in Adventure Tourism

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Abstract

Introduction

The discussion about safety based on clear rules or safety based on experience and ability to

recognise patterns is old. A polar bear attack in a camp with 22 students in the middle of the night, August 2014, inspired us to write down and share interesting points from the discussion. The polar bear did not behave the way you learn a polar bear usually do. And the situation was similar to the situation where a British student was killed by a polar bear in 2011 (Aftenposten, August 05. 2011) Luckily we only had material damages and nobody was hurt. Managing the guests' safety is one of the nature guides' basic tasks (Cohen, 1986; Pond, 1993; Wieler & Black, 1993). Recent research of Rokenes, Schumann and Rose (2014, in review progress) on nature based experiences also show that guests emphasize the nature guides' expertise and leadership in relation to safety.

Such a polar bear attack to a camp does have an obvious risk potential, but in all activity in nature risk management and safety play an important role. The purpose of this paper is to explore how experiences from this episode may be used in a discussion about what approach to risk management and safety is most suitable for guides in adventure tourism.

Method

This paper will discuss risk assessment for nature guides by describing, analysing and discussing the groups and leaders' action in general, with reference to the experienced polar bear attack.

Findings/discussions

The discussion is focusing on what approach to safety and risk assessment that is relevant and functional in adventure tourism. Methods, patterns and values from the Norwegian friluftsliv tradition such as *choose your own way according to your experience* (ferd etter evne), *group meeting/planning before the trip* (Ferdraad), and *transparent guiding* (Faarlund, 1973) can be relevant and an important contribution to risk management in adventure tourism. It is possible that the competence and experience of the guide is more important than schematic and rule based risk management to achieve adequate decisions and actions in risky situations in the nature. It may therefore be necessary that risk management in nature have to include the experience based competence to find safe alternative solutions.

Conclusion

Our analysis and discussions so far indicates that the competence and value based approach to safety and risk management is important for safety in adventure tourism. And especially when you work in remote areas.

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Nature guiding: Supporting guest happiness along with a low ecological footprint

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Abstract

Introduction

Despite the rough nature of Norway, the standards of professional adventure guiding have until recently been less debated in the Norwegian tourism context. With the widespread myth of Norwegians as “nature people” (Witoszek, 1998), less focus has been on the quality of adventure guide services. As a consequence, the adventure guide profession has not been clearly described. This concerns safety issues as well as reflection of the purpose of nature guiding and understanding of guest happiness. How the guide relates to her guests is essential in how the guests meet the total experience (Vold, 2015). With the new standards from the Norwegian Nature Guide Association (established in 2015), a new profession in Norwegian tourism has emerged: the Norwegian nature guide, which through a clear focus of safety analogously to international standards, aims to facilitate for transformative experiences built on traditional values of “friluftsliv” (Henderson & Vikander, 2007). In a nature tourism context, this approach includes facilitation of green transports, local and ecological food, local accommodation, and cooperation with local culture. Moreover, “friluftsliv” includes a search for happiness and meaning, which is identified by needs to feel satisfied but also to strive for personal growth (Vittersø, 2011). This paper aims to explore how the guide training supports guest happiness along with a low ecological footprint.

Method

By a hermeneutic approach (Gadamer, 1998), the understanding of the professional guide role is interpreted from the Norwegian discourses on guiding and safety, the need for qualification from the tourism perspective, and the Aristotelian discourse on Eudaimonia. Moreover, observations from the one-year qualification course will be interpreted.

Findings/Discussion

The guide training needs to include high quality practical skills as well as development of soft skills, including human relationships, nature knowledge, philosophy, and the ability to design guide services built on sustainability. A clear value orientation towards traditional Norwegian friluftsliv challenges an idea of “hard adventure” as the primary goal for adventure based guide services. By including guests in decision making processes, by the principal of “transparent guiding”, the guide facilitates for learning as well as active guest experiences. Guiding provided by these standards contests an idea of experiences as being “objects” and encourages an idea of the art of guiding as an area for groundbreaking experiences, where the guide – guest relation is a dynamic process of seeking meaningful experiences. There is potential to bring these approaches into ecological awareness.

Conclusion

With a clear value oriented guide profession, including the philosophy of Norwegian friluftsliv, this new direction within Adventure guiding aims to contribute to the green tourism transformation within the practical guide work.

Human factor and avalanche decision making in a commercial context

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Abstract

Professionals, as ski and nature guides or outdoor educators have a considerable amount of time in exposed avalanche terrain. This paper focusses the special human factor challenges these groups are revealing, and describes the demands that ski guides experience with commercial groups of clients. Further, we investigate how this complicates decision-making related to avalanche safety and we evaluate strategies the guides use to reduce the negative interference of these human factors. Our point of departure is three specific kinds of situations where such demands complicate the safety decisions.

A) Client demands: When clients create a pressure to do steep skiing or reach a specific peak under unsafe snow conditions.

B) Guide status: Pressure in the guide community to stretch the safety limits in order to establish or increase personal status.

C) Profit demands: Many guide companies have low profit, which means they are dependent on every income activity and cancelation because of weather and snow conditions is avoided. To illustrate and analyze these human factors we will present four cases from guided ski tours. We will pay special attention to transparent discursive models based in Norwegian friluftsliv traditions in contrast to more instructive, hierarchic models. This study is a part of an ongoing Norwegian national project aiming to develop a risk management system for nature based outdoor activity businesses. The data collection is done by participating involved

observations, case studies and workshops where guides and business managers discuss and share experiences.

Preliminary findings indicate that all the above-mentioned situations are present and well known among practicing guides. The most common situation is client demands, and these are increasing the more money the tourist have invested to participate on the guided tour. Likewise is lack time an important factor. For instant if tourists have limited days to experience a specific peak, they have a tendency to put pressure on the guides to defy risk factors like weather and snow conditions. Situations related to guide status is harder to identify because it is diffuse, and individual. We expect to find variations in relation to how this effect the guides both in relation to guide's education, work experience, present status among other guides, life situation, gender and cultural background. Also profit demands are confirmed present, yet to be explained is the importance of these processes.

This study will create knowledge about what is effecting decision processes related to safety and in the next step improve guide education and risk management systems in businesses.

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Arctic tourism competence

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Abstract

This paper presents preliminary findings from a joint project between a Northern Norway's tourism industry group (ARENA Profitable Winter Experience) and UiT The Arctic University of

Norway. The cooperation focuses on developing and delivering research-based education to fulfill the required needs from Arctic tourism industry.

The aim of the current paper is to share the Arctic tourism competence as identified from a set of focus group interviews and discuss implications for education and research in order to contribute to sustainable Arctic adventure tourism.

Relationship between tourism industry and educators have not been one of collegial ones, sometimes described the state as 'mistrust' (Cooper & Shepherd, 1997). The urgent need between the industry needs and education, however, are increasingly recognised as an essential pathway for a sustainable future of tourism (Jafari & Ritchie, 1981; Budeanu, 2015). Here, research based-education should be the starting point for the most beneficial collaboration between the industry and educators. The research-based education, before any planning for implementation, needs to be firmly grounded on the needs of the industry where the graduates are supplied as the future doers, planners and strategists. Placed firmly within this philosophical and structural grounds, Arctic Tourism Competence project, funded by Innovation Norway, aims to identify current and future needs of Arctic tourism sector of Northern Norway. Subsequently, the educational and research partner of the project, UiT The Arctic University of Norway will develop the identified skill sets in its curriculum offerings.

This paper reports on five focus group interviews in Tromsø, Narvik, Harstad and Alta. Due to the size of the Arctic tourism operators in terms of visitor numbers, number of operations and total revenue turnover, two focus group interviews were held in Tromsø. The interviews were conducted in Norwegian language which was also transcribed accordingly. The focus group interviews lasted about 2 hours individually.

Three main questions were posed:

- What are the currently lacking skill sets for your business/ Arctic tourism?
- What do you think will be the required skill sets for your business/ Arctic tourism in 5-10 years' time?
- How should the research-based knowledge be delivered to the Arctic tourism industry?/ what type of subjects/ courses should educators offer?

A preliminary analysis of the findings provides the word map below.



- Guiding
- Guests
- Tourism/ travel
- English
- Norwegian
- Language
- Economy

We would like to discuss our findings with other participants of the conference and compare, if possible. We would also like to discuss the dimension of 'guiding', a multiple and complex element particularly in the context of Arctic tourism and consider how this guiding element in Arctic tourism may differ/ comparable to that of organised mass tourism settings. Implications for developing and delivering a tailor-made education program to Arctic tourism sector in the current world of academic capitalism (Slaughter, Leslie, 1997) are further raised.

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Understanding adventure tourism experiences through positive psychology frameworks: Implications for guided tours

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Abstract

A growing body of literature suggests that adventure activities may improve participants' physical health and psychological wellbeing (Clough, Houge Mackenzie, Mallabon & Brymer, 2016). These activities are linked to outcomes such as: positive life transformations, emotional regulation, goal achievement, social connections, escape from boredom, pushing personal boundaries, overcoming fear, and pleasurable sensations (e.g., Willig, 2008; Woodman, Hardy, Barlow, & Le Scanff, 2010). Numerous theories have emerged to explain how adventure produces these benefits. The aesthetic, spiritual and novel qualities of natural or unfamiliar environments are proposed to promote

development, wellbeing, and self and environmental awareness, (e.g., Boyes, 2013; D'Amato & Krasny, 2011; Marsh, 2008). Novel environments are thought to promote development through 'flow' experiences when participants overcome challenges with personal skills (e.g., Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009). Socioecological models have also connected nature-based adventure with healthy behavioural changes and eco-centric perspectives (e.g., Pryor, Carpenter, & Townsend, 2012). The 'restorative' effects of wilderness and natural places have been investigated (e.g., Kaplan, 2001), along with the importance of autonomy and personal meaning in fostering positive adventure outcomes (e.g., Ramsing & Sibthorp, 2008). Notwithstanding, adventure literature has often focused on what questions (e.g., What benefits resulted from participation?), rather than seeking frameworks to explain why or how adventure activities benefit, or do not benefit, participants. This issue is exacerbated in relation to adventure tourism studies, which often employ consumer behavior approaches to investigate adventure tourism experiences.

In tandem with the growing recognition that adventure can facilitate wellbeing, guided adventure tours have increased in popularity. In contrast to traditional tour guiding, which primarily focuses on helping clients understand destinations, adventure tourism lends itself to 'co-created' tours that also require guides to facilitate intragroup or intrapersonal experiences (Weiler & Black, 2015). Co-creation models of tour guiding highlight the immense potential for guides to enhance, or detract from, tourists' experiences depending on how they 'broker' physical and psychological experiences. In response to tourist demands for unique, customised experiences that provide meaning and enjoyment (Weiler & Black, 2015), adventure guides are being challenged to move beyond providing safety and destination information to facilitating optimal intragroup or intrapersonal experiences.

Given the changing nature of adventure guiding, from traditional tours to co-created experiences, and the need for enhanced psychological models of adventure experiences, this presentation explores how positive psychology theories (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 2012) can be applied to adventure studies and practice. Findings from recent adventure studies using positive psychology models (e.g., Houge Mackenzie, Hodge & Boyes, 2011, 2013; Houge Mackenzie & Kerr, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016) will be discussed in terms of how these emerging frameworks can improve our understanding adventure experiences generally, and co-created adventure tours specifically. The implications of these findings for researchers, guides, and clients will be explored, with an emphasis on facilitating optimal experiences.

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Outdoor education

Beyond adventure

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Abstract

Practitioners, professionals and participants all claim that outdoor experiences impact on their lives in many ways (Mortlock, 2001). This could be through building lifelong friendships, developing a passion for adventure, expeditions and journeys and providing opportunities for others to experience the outdoors for themselves.

The outdoors is an unlimited source of inspiration and a context for learning about ourselves and others (Knapp 1988). History reports that human learning in outdoor settings has been around for a long time. Plato mentioned the virtues of outdoor experiences in developing healthy bodies and souls (Hattie et al. 1997) while 6th century Greeks used outdoor activities to strengthen their youth emotionally as well as physically (Neill, 1997), to help their youth journey into themselves and beyond.

Many such journeys continue today, one of which explored the impact of outdoor education experiences on participants' interpersonal skills, skills that are vital for continuing competitiveness but are lacking in industry, services and in education.

The participants (N=9) of this qualitative study were purposefully selected as they had participated in a three day outdoor education programme with the Burren Outdoor Education Centre in Co. Clare. The participants were all professionals who had just started an 18 month training programme with their new employer.

Semi structured interviews were carried out with the respondents and interview data were analysed using thematic analysis.

The results show that outdoor experiences that included a journey to the Burren, a journey to a distinct community of practice, impacted positively on all the participants' interpersonal skills. The findings suggest that outdoor education provides valuable and effective learning opportunities relevant to all levels of education and training in Ireland. The author recommends further research across a range of adult learners and the establishment of a more formal link between outdoor and adult education.

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Evaluating the development of a sustainable and relevant course culture through a Higher Education outdoor mentor scheme

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Abstract

Introduction

Employability is a key graduate attribute for universities as identified in Leeds Beckett University's 2010 - 2015 Strategic Plan. In April 2015 a successful Curriculum Innovations Bid (CIB) laid the foundations for an Outdoor Mentor Scheme (OMS) developed by staff working in and through the outdoors. Successful student applicants to the OMS programme were able to take advantage of a series of workshops and National Governing Body (NGB) award programmes in both land and water based activities. Three objectives were considered: to capture the OMS students journey documenting both tangible and intangible outcomes using quantitative and qualitative methods; to consider reasons why students have not been involved in the OMS allowing further evaluation and important development considerations for future plans and to measure and evaluate the cascading effect of the OMS to the student cohort as a whole using quantitative and qualitative methods.

The OMS scheme was rolled out to all three cohorts of Physical Education with Outdoor Education undergraduate students (approximately 120) with a maximum of 15 places available. Part of their contract of engagement was based on their willingness to 'give back' to the programme by using their skills to engage other students in the outdoors. This allowed not only the involvement of many more students in the outdoors, but vital experience for OMS students to ensure securing of NGB Awards. This presentation evaluates the effectiveness of the scheme in creating an outdoor course culture and its outcomes to date.

Method/Discussion

A mosaic approach to capturing all student experiences was considered (Clark and Moss 2011) lending itself more readily to the qualitative through questionnaires, logbook work, diary entries, observations and semi-structured interviews. Self Determination (Deci and Ryan 2000) laid the theoretical foundations underpinning all interviews and observations. Autonomy, relatedness and competence together with intrinsic motivation for involvement in the OMS were all careful consideration. Building competence through skill development

was of particular importance. However, there was also great value attained in the relatedness gained from participation on the OMS. Of particular importance was the intrinsic motivation of students to actually be in the outdoors. The BA (Hons) Physical Education with Outdoor Education course allows student an outdoor focus for up to half their programme. However, many students opt for the minimum 25% of study time and view the outdoors as a way of ensuring holistic learning that enhances chances of gaining employment, though not necessarily in and through the outdoors. The belief that up-skilled students would become more autonomous in their approach to the outdoors (and study more generally) was a questionable outcome. With a greater emphasis on outdoor education in the National Curriculum (National Curriculum 2013) and more opportunity for outdoor employment (Natural England 2015) ensuring higher education curricula dovetail with the needs of outdoor education and the outdoor industry more generally requires educators to move away from common assumptions about the intrinsic nature of being in the outdoors.

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Learning leadership skills in outdoor education through systematic use of feedback

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Abstract

Introduction

Outdoor education should not only provide students with only excitement and memorable experiences in the nature. They should also become aware of using different pedagogical instruments contributing to develop leadership skills. Reflection and feedback are examples of pedagogical instruments used in learning processes. Paisley et al. (2008) indicates that research has provided insights into leadership outcomes of adventure and outdoor experiences, but has done little to clarify the processes by which those outcomes are achieved. Therefore, the purpose of this paper was to investigate if the use of systematic feedback

between students could affect their perceived ability to lead. Leadership theories used are situational leadership and transformational leadership. Martin et al. (2006)

Methods

Data were collected from 20 outdoor education students from the University of Stavanger using a descriptive quantitative research design that was developed using a specific questionnaire based on Yukl (1989), where the students provide their reflections and feedback. The 20 students were divided into 2 groups, an intervention group (n = 12) and a control group (n = 8). The intervention group was further divided into 3 groups of 4 students each, and the control group was divided into 2 groups of 4 students each. All subgroups answered the questionnaire where each student assessed him/her self 5 times during the semester, where the first time was at the beginning of the semester and the last was at the end of the semester. In addition to evaluating once self, the students in the intervention groups were requested to provide feedback about the leadership behaviour of the other students at the same subgroup after conducting tours. The feedback was provided orally and in written. The control group did not provide feedback to other students at their respective subgroup.

Findings/discussion

The result shows a significant development in the perceived leadership skills in both control and intervention groups. However, the results did not show any statistical significant difference in the development of perceived leadership skills between the control group and intervention group.

The fact that the within groups results showed a significant development in the perceived leadership skills indicate feedback is important for the development of leadership skills in outdoor activities. However, the unmarked differences observed between groups could be as a result of several factors, such as (a) both groups were gathered in all learning situations and received the same instruction and guidance from the same teachers, (b) all students provided a self-feedback by assessing themselves through the written reflection exercises after excursions, and (c) the evaluations after tours which was organized in the subgroups has contributed to the use of reflection and feedback between students, including control groups which could also explain the lack of difference between intervention group and control group.

Conclusion

The fact that the intervention group and the control have had significant progress in the perceived outdoor life management indicate that self-management, own-controlled field trips, feedback and responsibilities assigned to small groups are in total promotional for the learning of outdoor life management. In line with other research, student led activities in small groups when students felt they played an active role in the decision-making (Sibthorp et al., 2007), and structure oriented teaching to develop leadership (Paisley et al. 2008) is perhaps the learning form that gives the greatest learning benefits

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Heritage and nature-based tourism

Adventure tourism and heritage

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This paper discusses the opportunities for heritage attractions to increase their appeal through the use of adventure experiences. Heritage may be defined as ‘contemporarily used inherited and selected cultural and/or natural element from the past’ (Saarinen, 2015:258). Both natural and cultural heritage attractions struggle in an increasingly competitive marketplace to adequately define their product offering. However, examples of mining heritage in New Zealand (gold) and Wales (slate) are used to show how innovative operators have created product that appeals to a wider market. Similarly, the growth of adventure tourism has allowed visitors to experience natural phenomena in a new way. The paper discusses interview results from visitors to a slate mine who engaged with aspects of both tangible and intangible heritage assets, and their value in the adventure experience. Challenges in this approach include the potential for erosion of heritage value and alienation of certain market segments, but positives in terms of place connection and long term sustainability.

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Lost in beauty? What happens when we insert art into our nature experiences?

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Abstract

What role might art in nature play in the creation of slow, soft journeys along nature trails? Might art in nature help us see in new ways and enhance feelings of perceived restorativeness? Or would the combination of art and nature decrease feelings of novelty and the restorative benefits of being there?

Place-specific art has inspired artists, particularly sculptors, to create new places in outdoor environments by placing their works in wild landscapes (e.g., Andy Goldsworthy, Michael Grab, Scott Thoe and Olga Ziemka). In that way, they have raised place awareness and created interest and attention for both artwork and place. By placing art in natural environments, they have made art accessible for everyone, regardless of social group and economy, and helped people perceive both nature and art with new eyes.

Nonetheless, art can work both with nature and against nature, and by association, with and against nature experiences. Indeed, nature-based sculptures have been met with ambivalence, sometimes inciting voracious debate among locals regard their changed and otherwise “pristine” landscapes as undesirable (Cruickshank, 2005). Also, something that is perceived as beautiful on its own may not be perceived the same way when perceived in combination with something else (or vice versa).

Not all forms of art have to be dominant in the landscape, however, and not all forms of art have to be visible at all. Using poetry as an example, we know that aesthetic texts can be experienced differently by different readers, introducing new ways to look at, feel about and/or think about things. We therefore asked “How is the presence of poetry in a natural environment experienced? Does combining poetry with nature improve or impair feelings of novelty and the restorativeness of the nature experience as compared to experiencing poetry and nature on their own?”

Understanding this can help us make more informed decisions about the use (or not) of at least this art form in rural and/or wilderness settings, particularly along paths on the way to or from yet other kinds of adventures.

Method

A total of 137 participants in one of three different conditions (Pure Nature, Pure Poetry and Nature+Poetry) shared their experiences either at designated stopping points along a trail and/or of a poem. In the Pure Nature condition, participants simply walked a trail in a natural environment. In the Pure Poetry condition, participants read poems in a neutral indoor environment, and in the Nature+Poetry condition, participants read a subset of the original poems at the same designated stopping points along the trail that the Pure Nature group experienced.

Participants reported how complex they regarded each task, how novel and challenging it was for them, and the degree to which they perceived restorativeness through the task.

Findings and Discussion

Multivariate analyses revealed significant differences between groups, with the Nature+Poetry condition being experienced as more novel and less challenging than the pure nature and pure poetry experiences. Likewise, participants in the combined group reported greater feelings of restorativeness than participants in either of the pure groups.

The results are relevant for understanding the potential role that the unobtrusive art form of poetry could play in enhancing outdoor experiences emotionally and cognitively – particularly on the way to and from other types of adventure activities.

Might poetry offer a non-intrusive cultural dimension to the experience that makes us more reflective about and attuned to the nature around us? What core psychological mechanisms are at work when we experience poetry through nature (or when we experience nature through poetry)? We will discuss some practical implications of our findings, as well as offer suggestions for future research.

Abandoning active nature-based leisure: experiences and implications

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Abstract

Researchers have put much effort into understanding the motivations for and constraints to leisure participation, but less research has been undertaken on exploring the phenomenon of discontinuation of leisure activities, or what we will refer to as ‘abandonment’. The instinctual response, which is to say that ‘if we understand, motivation, constraints and constraint negotiation, then we understand abandonment’, may be simplistic. The nature of abandonment is less well understood than its conceptual counterparts, and in particular, the process of abandonment, how it is managed, who is involved, how it manifests on the lives of individuals and their other leisure choices are aspects that have not been thoroughly explored. Importantly, neither the roles of other significant individuals, nor of recreational organisations in this process have been well documented. Even less explored is the process of re-engagement, either back in to the same, related or different leisure activities (i.e. substitution). Responding to a call from Stebbins (2008, p. 19) who notes that “A complete theory of the pursuit of leisure activities across the life course will consist of, among others, propositions about continuation, abandonment, substitutability, replacement and their inter-relationships”, the purpose of this paper is to explore the phenomenon of leisure abandonment, its antecedents and outcomes. The paper draws upon the leisure narratives of a sample of outdoor recreationists (trampers, hunters, anglers and mountaineers) to inform our discussion of how abandonment of a leisure activity is experienced and managed by individuals, and what the key influences in this process may be.

Analysis of our participants' experiences of abandonment reinforces Routier's (2013) conclusion that abandonment is a multifaceted and complex phenomenon. We found evidence that it may be complete, partial, sudden or incremental, and that even when temporary, abandonment may be profoundly traumatic. Abandonment is most obviously displayed by a physical abstention or exclusion from the activity. But for many participants, this was merely the outward manifestation of abandonment while they retained their inner identities as participants – in the hope that they could resume their physical participation (even if sometimes this was not likely). In some cases abandonment was substituted by a more cerebral, social or institutional involvement with the activity. Thus this temporal uncertainty, along with the physical/affective aspects of abandonment, means that the distinction between involvement and abandonment is not always clear. The study supports and builds upon Stebbins (2008) typology of abandonment, and poses the notion that multiple antecedents can be operative for any one abandonment experience. And when leisure participants engage closely in their activity with a partner (husband/wife/significant other), the complexities of the interactions between abandonment antecedents become more pronounced. The study also supports the view that substitution is closely related to abandonment, primarily through the volitional leisure abandonment pathway. Furthermore we found the effectiveness of substitute leisure activities in mitigating the negative affective outcomes of abandonment to be unpredictable, and also worthy of more research attention, similarly so for the process of re-engagement with the original activity, which is not an uncommon practice. This small scale study of the personal narratives and experiences of leisure abandoners is a starting point for further work which will hopefully lead towards better situating abandonment within a leisure framework.

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Entrepreneurship in adventure tourism

The journey of a destination: Process dynamics of adventure sports tourism destination development. Case study of Squamish, Canada

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Abstract

Introduction

An adventure sports tourism destination develops through the complex interaction between its stakeholders, who act without centralized coordination - tourism businesses, traditional industries, landowners, natural parks, DMOs, passionate sports practitioners and volunteers. The destination under study - Squamish (British Columbia, Canada) - was created more than a century ago to support the industries of logging, mill work and mining. Over the last two decades, the political and economic narrative has been leaning towards tourism and residential development. Squamish has attempted to foster a new brand image - "Outdoor Recreation Capital of Canada", with the tagline "Fueled by Nature, Hardwired for Adventure" added in 2014.

This research aims at understanding how the process dynamics of an adventure sports tourism destination development influence its identity, and to what extent the brand image formation should take this into account.

Method

The research is based on both primary and secondary data. Following a synthesis of existing adventure tourism and destination development publications, information is gathered via web content analysis and via two semi-structured video-conference interviews with key stakeholders involved in development initiatives.

Traditionally, tourism destination development has been represented through a tourism area life cycle (Butler, 1980). This reductionist approach fails to capture the complex, fluid nature of adventure sports destination developing at the frontier of society and wilderness. Therefore, we apply complexity and chaos theories to understand the development of Squamish, which is looked at as a complex agglomeration of diverse systems of interrelated economic, social and environmental phenomena and networks (Baggio, 2008). Our research is limited by its dependency on time and context, due to constant changes in the destination.

Findings and discussion

After studying Squamish development throughout its history, we outline the most significant interactions between the destination stakeholders and we present them in the form of a circular model. We demonstrate how conflicts (and disequilibrium) drive further development.

The problem of composite land ownership and trail access requires the collaboration of many stakeholders with differing interests. Another issue is the creation and maintenance of rock climbing routes and mountain trails, which is performed by the volunteer societies of passionate rock climbers and mountain bikers. Initially, this work (not always legal) was not done with tourists in mind, but with the recent surge in adventure tourism, it is starting to be recognized and funded by the local authorities.

There is a process of transformation taking place, revealing a shift in values attributed to the same natural resources: from large-scale extraction and unhindered usage to recognizing ecological and tourism services of nature and protecting the environment.

The brand image of Squamish – how people perceive the destination (Simonin & De Vicente, 2010) – emerges as a result of this transition from a resource town to a tourism destination. We find that the gap between the brand image of Squamish and how the DMO positions it as a tourism destination is relatively narrow, implying that the processes described above were taken into account when developing the brand identity.

Conclusion

The case study demonstrates the need to take into account the historical development of the destination and the dynamic interactions of all its major agents when creating a brand identity for an adventure tourism destination. The transitional state of the destination adds complexity to its branding.

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Transfer effects of soft and hard adventure activity associations in evaluation of adventure destination brands

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Abstract

Adventure destination branding is a marketing strategy usually initiated by the DMO (Destination Management Organization) with the objective of developing a unique destination brand identity closely linked to tourism adventures. DMOs seeking to position their destinations as adventure destinations often associate themselves closely with local soft and hard adventure activity suppliers who promote their activities in cooperation with the DMO. A clear objective of a DMO associating itself with adventure activity suppliers is, from a branding standpoint, to obtain association transfer effects from these activities to enhance attitude toward the adventure destination. Association transfer effects are the measure of the impact soft and hard adventure activity associations have had on the destination brand on consumers' attitude.

Many adventure destinations seem not to have a conscious strategy as to what extent priority should be put on soft versus hard adventure activity association transfer. Such lack of strategy may result in a "dual" soft and hard adventure activity association positioning, leading to an ambiguous destination image and consequently a destination not being able to brand itself as distinct and differentiating.

In spite of the soft adventure segment being considerably larger than the hard adventure segment on a global basis, it should be noted that some of the world's most successful adventure destinations appear to deliberately prioritize association transfer from hard rather than soft adventure activities. One example is Queenstown in New Zealand where the destination seems to intently seek association transfer effects from hard adventure activity associations to build an inimitable image. Communicating the image as an adventure-based, thrill seeking holiday destination backed by the slogan "The Adventure Capital of the World", Queenstown strongly advocates more extreme activities such as bunjy jumping and dangerous adrenalin speed boat rides on the narrow Shotover River. Another example is Voss in Norway where the same prioritization appears to be the case, as hard adventure activities such as sky diving, paragliding and white water rafting are heavily promoted. For the sake of clarity: both destinations offer ample soft adventure activities in addition to the hard adventure ones, yet they seem to have a clear strategy to position their adventure destination brands based on association transfer effects from hard more so than from soft adventure activities.

Little attention has been paid to positioning strategies of adventure destination brands in spite of escalating research interest in destination branding and adventure tourism. Consequently, investigation on how association transfer effects of soft and hard adventure activities may impact attitude toward an adventure destination appears to be largely unexplored. The main objective of this study is therefore to gain more knowledge on this matter. The hypothesis is that association transfer from hard adventure activities makes the destination more

emotionally exciting to consumers and therefore enhance attitude toward the adventure destination brand more so than association transfer from soft adventure activities, regardless of personal preferred level of adventure activities.

By linking destination branding literature to the soft and hard activity aspects of adventure tourism literature by the means of theories explaining association transfer effects (such as brand associations and brand attitude), this study will contribute to both research streams by providing more clarity as to how adventure destination brands may optimize their brand positioning when targeting adventure travel segments.

Adventure Tourism in Germany – Analysis of the status quo and results from two studies on the importance of adventure for German destinations

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Abstract

Adventure tourism is one of the major niches in tourism (Cater, 2006). It has established itself within the last decade and is said to be the fastest growing outdoor tourism market sector (Williams & Soutar, 2009; Buckley, 2007). Adventure tourism brings together travel, sport and outdoor recreation (Beedie and Hudson, 2003).

In Germany, adventure tourism research and education is lagging behind. Other countries, mostly English speaking, offer a wide range of university degrees in adventure sports and adventure tourism. International conferences (e.g. Adventure Conference) and Journals (e.g. the newly founded Journal of Adventure Tourism) focus on adventure tourism related research topics.

This paper aims to emphasise the importance of Adventure Tourism in Germany. It analysis the status quo in adventure research and opportunities to study adventure related programmes. The authors plead for a stronger emphasis on adventure in German tourism research and in the academic world. This paper tries to demonstrate the current situation in Germany and discuss important next steps for the implementation of adventure programmes. The authors plan to establish a network of researcher's to promote adventure tourism in Germany. For the beginning of 2017 an adventure tourism conference in Germany is scheduled.

In addition two recent studies that were conducted in Germany are introduced. Tourists in the Harz mountains (n=568) and in the South Franconian tourist destinations (n=78) were asked about the importance of adventure to their holiday and the adventure facilities offered in each destination. The studies show, that tourists are interested in adventure activities, but the term adventure is not used for the activities they engage in. They also look for more exciting activities and more structured and promoted network of suppliers.

The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS by means of univariate and bivariate statistics.

About three-quarters of the respondents in the Harz mountains had already used diverse adventure offerings before, ranging from an Amazon tour to zorbing, and from Africa to Zell am See. Results show that almost a quarter of the activities were undertaken prior to 2010, and that the majority of the respondents have first used an adventure offering within the last five years. At the top of the previously used adventure activities are rock climbing and summer luging. Other adventure activities included water-based activities and air adventures. Despite previous research suggesting that the Harz is visited mostly by older guests (average age is 52 years), through adventure offerings new target groups are addressed, increasing the attractiveness for young and middle-aged adults. Overall, the respondents showed in the Harz mountains relatively high satisfaction rates with the adventure offerings in the Harz. However, the results also show that there is room for improvement, especially when it comes to the culinary offerings and signage.

In the Franconian study one third of the participants stated, that the reason for their holiday was sports related. 30% were on a hiking trip, 33% went biking (5% mountain biking), 12% were participating in water-based activities and only 5% mentioned Fun- and Actionsports as their main motive for being on holiday in the area. One in four had partaken in adventure activities before. Experiences ranged from Canopy in Costa Rica or speed boating in the Dominican republic to hiking in the alps or local activities. Tourists in the area are satisfied with the sports activities in general, although there is room for improvement regarding quality, diversity, accessibility and desirability. The lack of information given in the tourist information is the biggest criticism.

According to the ATDI Germany has a lot of adventure potential, which is still left untouched in most destinations (ATTA, 2015). The author's try to strengthen the awareness for adventure tourism, both within tourism and academic research.

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Visitor created content and adventure tourism

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Abstract

The principle rationale of this research is to contribute new knowledge to the field of Adventure Tourism by investigating online social content that is created and consumed by visitors. The focus is on content that is time and location specific. Digital content is increasingly being created and shared via mobile devices by tourists as they experience outdoor destinations. Such information is useful to us because it influences tourists in both choosing Ireland as a destination and while they are planning their visit (Failte Ireland, 2014). In an attempt to identify a typology of content creators in the context of adventure tourism this research sets out to explore content created by adventure tourists while they travel and stay in Ireland. It seeks to explain what motivates visitors to create content, who consumes that content and what impact this has on adventure tourism. Key trends in relation to Visitor Created Content (VCC) and a typology of content creators are identified drawing on 'Net-nographic' techniques. The field is now online - a hybrid space (Germann Molz, 2015) - a hybrid space where tourists tweet, blog, post digital photographs and podcasts, link to social networks, map their location, review and comment. For this reason a content analysis is chosen to interpret the experiences of tourists while visiting chosen destinations within Ireland.

Desk research compliments content analysis of blogs, podcasts, images, videos, reviews, custom maps and WIKIS created by visitors. The concept of VCC and the participative web is increasingly gaining more attention from industry and academics alike (Failte Ireland 2013; Cook, 2008; IAB, 2008; OECD, 2007; MIC, 2006; O'Reilly, 2005, 2002). Hartley (2008) describes creative production through the creation and public dissemination of cultural artefacts as becoming increasingly part of the logics of everyday life.

Self-promotion and self-expression are important motivators of internet activity as demonstrated by Goodchild (2011) but content is also created as a convenient way of making it available to friends and relations, irrespective of the fact that it becomes public. Goodchild (2007) outlines the contrast between websites such as Picasa, which allow contributors of personal photographs to point others to them, to content on sites such as Flickr or Wikimapia where content creators are comparatively anonymous. A great deal can be learnt about remote places through sites such as these, acquiring the type of information needed for planned tourist visits and travel logs (Goodchild, 2007). Thus VCC may be one of the most powerful tools for underfunded destination management agencies and struggling SMEs. Although there has been some attempt to identify a typology of tourist created content (Munar, 2010, OECD, 2007) there has been limited research to identify a typology of content creator in an adventure tourism context. This research seeks to analyse what motivates visitors to create

content, who consumes that content and what impact this has on the image of a destination. Furthermore, this research aims to develop a tool to help destinations benefit from content created by visitors by allowing tourists to potentially sell destinations to other tourists.

It's all downhill from here: Examining the trail builder's art

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Abstract

Mountain biking has developed from a trend to a well-established form of outdoor sport (Chavez, Winter & Bass, 1993; Taylor, 2009). Within the last decade the touristic aspects of mountain biking became more relevant and tracks were set up in suitable areas (Symmonds, Hammitt & Quisenberry, 2000). Scotland and Canada among others (e.g. New Zealand or Australia) have set up networks of mountain bike trails in designated areas that are of interest to mountain bikers due to several reasons (Taylor, Varley & Diggins, 2013a; White, Waskey, Brodehl & Foti, 2006;). These trails are used by local bikers, but are also marketed to mountain bikers all over the world. Established hotspots have a scenic landscape, tracks that appeal to beginners as well as expert cyclists, necessary infrastructure for mountain bike tourists and a distinctive adventure image (Symmonds, Hammitt, & Quisenberry, 2000). Yet the key elements of successful tracks have not been analysed in detail. So far we know that a few aspects e.g. scenery, variety of trails, flowing trails and adventure are relevant to mountain bikers (Taylor, 2009). There is not enough evidence about mountain bike destinations from a global perspective; there are hardly any empirical criteria to evaluate trails and destinations. Furthermore there are no studies that compare international mountain bike trails and there key to success.

This paper will give first results of a study conducted in Scotland, Canada and Germany to analyse important aspects and key-elements of mountain bike trails. This will be important in terms of strategic track development all over the world. It will also show how mountain biking can be developed and promoted within Germany and the Altmühltal area in particular. The results will help the trail developing process in the area and state important aspects of a strategic track development. It will be the first track network within Germany and set the mark for further trails.

Qualitative and structured interviews were held with three expert trail builders in each of the three counties, regarding different aspects of mountain bike trails and trail building. The interviews are currently analysed. The research team will be able to present first results in September and will explain further steps of their research project.

New northern playgrounds. Backcountry skiing and destination development in northern Norway

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Abstract

Introduction

“When the winter is fading away, and most skiing centers in Europe start packing their stuff, there are a couple destinations that become the perfect refuge for backcountry skiing lovers. North of Norway, and away from the crowds” (Ishaso 2016)

The mountains of Finnmark are still relatively remote and unknown landscape for the majority of avid skiers in Norway and Europe. This is partly due to our bordering to more famous ski destinations, like Lyngen and Lofoten. In many ways, Finnmark have always been in “the attraction shadow” of the more commodified neighbourhoods. One of my objective is to look into the local processes of commodification, through the experiences, negotiations and practices of key agents in this region, in their attempts to develop a ski destination.

My article in progress is based upon ethnographic fieldwork during the winter of 2016 in the region of west Finnmark. The winter of 2016 was an all-time “high” with visitors to the region. For the first time locals, tourists, entrepreneurs and leisure seekers could be found skiing the same mountains.

Findings/discussion

There are several findings I wish to pursue, and try to engage in theoretically. I hope that I can elicit some commentary from the audience.

According to Granås, “a key term in dialogues in tourism “destinations” is strongly embedded in political and management discourses, rather than in socio-cultural theorizations” (Viken and Granås 2014:79).

The present article will focus on how this specific “destination” is about to develop from a bottom-up (Richardson 2014) situation, through a small knit society of skiers. Skier who engage in the field through different processes, who create practices, ideas and meanings that can be analysed in the context of the Norwegian tradition of friluftsliv, colonial representations and imagery, and practical issues of avalanche safety and other discourses.

For example, some of the findings deals with the ambiguous situation the developers of this ski destination find themselves in. One the one hand they want to develop this type of destination, but not too much. One understanding is that the region will be better off to be the backyard of the Arctic. Unlike the concepts ski-by-boat, who can move away from the crowds, the local entrepreneurs can risk the situation to be stuck with crowds of skiers. Fear for competition is also present.

Local entrepreneurs and locals’ alike risk that the sign value of their products and area decrease over time if a crowded situation appear. The area have already been assigned a symbolic and sign system that portray this area as remote and a hint of edginess. Where, if we

use the conceptions of Ardner, remoteness is a way of being (Ardner 2014), and edginess can be thought of as a position, a border to civilisation.

Næss (et.al 2014) talks about the role of inter-destination bridge ties, as in the actors developing global and national ties to other similar destinations, and how this is important in the development of the destination. However, these ties or “sideway” gazes (Viken 2016) also become the main source for discussion and frame ideas for the present and for the future. For instance, the crowded mountain issue has led to an understanding that this region should not produce ski-guides, avoid the main touristic systems. Furthermore, this is also legitimized in avalanche safety, whereas producing guides will produce heuristic traps and heighten the risk among skiers.

Conclusion

As I see it, this has a lot to do with conflict over a variety of interests, and the community try to find ways to balance this. One question that has been raised, maybe it is not so bad to be a “late-comer” to the touristic alpine scene. Entrepreneurs have time to discuss and understand their cultural situation, and manoeuvre in a terrain of different users, and make frames a commodity process from below.

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