



BALI JOURNAL OF HOSPITALITY, TOURISM AND CULTURE RESEARCH

Journal Homepage: www.baliacademicpublishing.com

Exploring the Conceptual Coherence of Adventure Tourism: A Review of Research Approaches

Ajay Kumar¹ , Sanjeev Kumar², Kuldeep Singh³

Chandigarh College of Hospitality, Landran, Punjab, India¹, Lovely Professional University, Punjab, India², Amity University, Haryana, India³

ajaygautam1118@gmail.com¹, kumarsharma12360@gmail.com², singh911kuldeep@gmail.com³

Corresponding Author: ajaygautam1118@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT

The adventure tourism is one of the rapidly emerging branches of the world tourism sector due to the rising demand of the travel experience that is experiential, nature-based, and activity oriented. Nonetheless, as the concept of adventure tourism gains increasing academic and practical relevance, it remains conceptually gray due to the wide range of interpretations along the disciplinary lines. The current research analyzes the coherence of adventure tourism conceptually by using a systematic review of the available research methods. The study utilises secondary data obtained using peer reviewed academic literature, in synthesis, using the thematic analysis of the key views regarding risk perception, tourist motivation, experiential outcomes, environmental interaction, commercialization and sustainability practices. The results suggest that the research on adventure tourism is still disjointed on psychological, sociological, environmental, and managerial levels, which leads to the lack of consistency in the definition and classification. Nonetheless, conceptual coherence comes out clearly when adventure tourism is interpreted in a multidimensional framework which involves a combination of conceptual, experiential and managerial dimension. The research hypothesizes a holistic model that presents adventure tourism as a holistic tourism system that entails controlled risk experiences in the natural settings with the assistance of institutionalized services. The study seeks to solve the issue of inconsistencies in definitions and provides a single approach to analytical examination in future interdisciplinary studies. The implications of the findings are also practical in the destination managers and policymakers who would want to foster sustainable competitiveness in the development of adventure tourism.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Sent 03-March-2026

Accepted 04-March-2026

Approved 22-May-2026

Published 01-June-2026

KEYWORDS

Adventure Tourism;
Conceptual Coherence;
Research Approaches; Risk
Perception; Tourism
Experience; Systematic
Review

1. Introduction

Adventure tourism has become one of the most vibrant and fast-growing industries in the world tourism industry. In the past twenty years, the demand of tourism has changed considerably as a passive sightseeing to an immersive, experience-based tourism where people participate in physical activities, through emotions and experience interaction with the natural environments (Morgan, 2025). The contemporary tourists are ever seeking activities that give them excitement, personal challenge as well as psychological fulfillment making adventure tourism a major aspect of the modern tourism development strategy.

CONTACT Language Assistance bjhtcr@balilanguageassistance.com

©2026 The Author(s). Published by **Bali Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Culture Research**

Open Access article distributed in terms of Creative Commons Attribute License (CC BY 4.0) <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Adventure tourism is viewed by global tourism organizations and destination management bodies as one of the primary catalysts to economic diversification and rural development as well as sustainable destination branding (Chauhan et al., 2024). Mountainous areas, seashores, forests, deserts and nature reserves have turned into popular venues of adventure-based sports like trekking, mountaineering, rafting, skiing, paragliding, scuba diving as well as wildlife viewing. These activities do not only attract the international tourists but they also spur the generation of employment, infrastructural developments as well as community involvement. Even with its practical and economical significance, there remains a serious conceptual ambiguity of adventure tourism in the academic discourse. Researchers have come up with various definitions that focus on various qualities such as risk-taking behavior, outdoor recreation, experiential consumption, environmental interaction, or commercial tourism operations. This has led to a theoretical framework of adventure tourism not having a universally recognized theoretical underpinning and thus raises the question as to whether it is a coherent form of tourism or a blanket term to cover the various activities. Lack of conceptual clarity has a number of academic and managerial issues (Cheng et al., 2018).

Policy makers are faced with difficulties when trying to formulate regulatory mechanisms, and the tourism operators are faced with the challenge of standardising safety, marketing and sustainability. Moreover, the overlapping nature of the boundaries of adventure tourism, eco-tourism, sports tourism and nature-based tourism makes the academic comprehension a bit more difficult. Due to the interdisciplinary interactions, the fragmentation of adventure tourism research is extensively determined. The topics addressed in psychology are sensation-seeking and perception of risk; sociology is how people form their identities and how they interact with others; management studies are how it can be commercialized and the competitiveness of different destinations, and the environmental studies are how it can be sustained. Although both views offer useful insights, there has been a lack of integration between the views which has not allowed the conceptual coherence. The purpose of this study is therefore to critically look at whether adventure tourism is a theoretically sensible concept by looking at prevailing research approaches taken by academic literature (Carvache-Franco et al., 2025). The research, using the systematic synthesis of secondary sources, establishes conceptual dimensions that reoccur, theoretical underpinnings, methodological trends, and gaps in the research that influenced the development of the body of knowledge related to adventure tourism.

Even though the study of adventure tourism has grown exponentially in the last 30 years there are still considerable gaps in conceptualization and methodology in the literature. The recent increase in scholarly research on adventure tourism, has generated a variety of views; yet the input has been conducted largely in solitude and therefore, the theoretical results have only been disjointed and not brought into a unified concept. Probably the most notable gap in the literature is connected to the lack of standard definition of adventure tourism. The current literature identifies adventure tourism using different parameters like physical activities, engagement with a natural environment, perceived risk, or experience (Persson et al., 2026). Even though there are those scholars who focus on extreme and high-risk activities, there are also those who incorporate low-risk recreational activities in the same bracket. This classification disparity causes confusion in the classification and constrains comparative studies between destinations and settings. As a result of this, adventure tourism still remains a loosely defined umbrella term, instead of a theoretically well-defined tourism domain. The second significant gap is with regard to the interdisciplinary gap. Disciplinary silos have dominated research in adventure tourism, and these include psychological research on risk perception and motivation, sociological research that has studied identity and social interaction, and managerial research that has

considered commercialization and destination competitiveness. Despite the utility of the two points of view, little has been done to combine these standpoints in a unified conceptual framework. Lack of such integration inhibits theoretical development and makes it impossible to understand the phenomena of adventure tourism in a holistic way.

There is another important gap in methodological consistency. The past research has used varied qualitative, quantitative and mixed-method designs with various scales of measurement and different analysis frameworks. The absence of standardized measures of measuring the experience of adventure tourism, level of risk or the features of participation makes the findings less reliable and comparative. Moreover, most of the research is context-based with attention being paid to specific destinations or activities without the formation of general theoretical frameworks. There is also a gap in literature with regard to inadequate coverage on conceptual delimitation of adventure tourism and other forms of tourism such as eco-tourism, sports tourism and nature-based tourism. Redundant nature of these types of tourism causes confusion in the conceptualization and makes it hard to formulate policies, destination planning as well as classifying the industry. Future studies should therefore explain the differences dimensions that make adventure tourism a special segment in tourism. Besides, current literature shows that there exists a geographical clustering of developed tourist destinations, especially in Europe, North America and Oceania. Very little has been researched on the adventure tourism in the growing economies and developing areas where natural resources and the community-based tourism opportunities play a key role. These bias limits the generalisability of theoretical frameworks around the world and avoids socio-cultural diversity affecting adventure participation. Other issues that have emerged like technological innovation, effects of climate change, safety governance, and inclusive adventure tourism have also received a comparatively small academic focus. With the growing overlap of adventure tourism with the digital world, sustainability issues, and the challenges of accessibility, newer conceptual models with the latest tourism dynamics are in need. Thus, the gaps that exist will be considered in the current research through the extensive thematic review of research methods and an offer of an integrated framework to improve the conceptual coherence of adventure tourism research. The synthesis of fragmented views will serve to contribute to both the clarity of theories, alignment of methods and development of further interdisciplinary research in the future.

The study is guided by the following objectives:

1. To examine the evolution and conceptual development of adventure tourism.
2. To analyze major theoretical and research approaches applied in adventure tourism studies.
3. To identify key dimensions influencing conceptual coherence.
4. To evaluate methodological trends within adventure tourism research.

By addressing these objectives, the study contributes toward strengthening theoretical clarity and promoting interdisciplinary integration within adventure tourism research.

2. Literature Reviews

Adventure tourism has become a multidimensional research field that covers the psychological, environmental, sociological and managerial dimensions. The accumulating literature is a sign of the rising academic interest; nevertheless, the studies are still conceptually incomplete because of the inconsistency of disciplinary methods. The thematic review facilitates systematization of the current body of literature through the determination of prevailing research themes that influence the conceptualization of adventure tourism. The analysis of literature on previous studies has revealed that there are six broad themes, i.e. conceptualization of adventure tourism, risk and uncertainty,

motivation and experience, environmental interaction, commercialization and destination development, and methodological evolution.

2.1 Conceptualization and Definition of Adventure Tourism

The conceptual definition of adventure tourism is one of the most controversial questions of adventure tourism research. The initial tourism researchers put adventure tourism in close relationship with exploration and extreme outdoor recreation that involved physical risk and technical skills. These interpretations placed adventure tourism as a niche market that was controlled by well skilled individuals struggling in activities like mountaineering, rock climbing and deep sea diving activities (O'Reilly et al., 2022). In the course of time, scholars broadened the concept to encompass more experiential aspects. In modern literature, adventure tourism is identified as a kind of activity that integrates physical activity, contact with nature and perception of danger or uncertainty. This expanded meaning would result in the universally recognized division of hard adventure and soft adventure tourism, allowing both professional adventures and leisure tourists to take part. Although these have developed, there are conceptual inconsistencies (Yan et al., 2026). Other studies describe adventure tourism basing on the nature of activities whereas others focus on the psychological consequences or the environmental setting. The fact that it overlaps with related tourism like eco-tourism, sports tourism and nature-based tourism only adds to the lack of conceptual clarity. Therefore, researchers claim that adventure tourism is more of an umbrella notion and not a well-defined tourism category. Lack of definitional consensus is one of the main issues in establishing conceptual coherence and some of the things it affects are measurement methods, policy development and comparative study findings.

2.2 Risk, Uncertainty, and Sensation-Seeking Behaviour

Risk perception is one of the themes underlying the adventure tourism literature. Contrary to the conventional tourism, adventure tourism integrates the sense of uncertainty and challenge as key parts of the experience. The most common psychological theories of sensation-seeking and risk-taking behavior in which researchers explain adventure participation are these theories. Research indicates that adventure tourists do not have to face real danger but rather experience perceived or controlled risk that gives them excitement and emotional stimulation. Controlled risk environments enable the participants to enjoy the thrill and simultaneously be safe due to professional instructions and technical assistance. The perception of risk is dependent on the personal competence, culture, age and previous experience (Deb et al., 2023). The participants who are experienced might be less likely to have contrived high risk as compared to the novices who also undertake the same activities. Thus, the construction of risk is not objective, but it is a social construction. The recent literature changes the focus on risk management and safety governance in the adventure tourism operations. Commercialization of adventure experience has triggered the need to have unified safety standards, training procedures, and emergency preparedness procedures (Alvarado-Tolentino et al., 2024). As pointed out by scholars, a successful adventure tourism experience lies in the ability to balance between thrill and safety insurance, which strengthens confidence among the participants. Accordingly, risk is a both a pull and psychological motivator and a management challenge to the adventure tourism systems.

2.3 Tourist Motivation and Experiential Outcomes

Another theme that takes the centre stage in advancing adventure tourism studies is motivation and experience. The experience-oriented consumers are now described as adventure tourists who want to experience and not to relax passively. Push drives as found

in literature are usually escape living, excitement seeking, personal challenge, achievement, novelty seeking and self-discovery (Alvarado-Tolentino et al., 2024). The pull motivations concern the destination features like special landscapes, presence of adventure activities and cultural uniqueness. The transformative effects of adventure tourism are usually achieved. These are stimulated by participation which allows one to conquer fear and instil self-confidence as well as personal competence. Scientists stress that adventure tourism leads to psychological development and identity building, which creates long-term satisfaction and distinctive experiences of traveling. The experiential approach is also close with the experience economy paradigm that locates tourism experiences as collaboratively constituted in interaction between tourists and service providers and natural environments (Pomfret et al., 2023). Emotional involvement, narration, and memory-making turn into the areas of value creation. Additionally, research shows that social interaction is very important in the adventure experiences. The social interaction with others in the group helps in bonding, collaborating and achieving collectively and strengthens the repeat purchase behavior and loyalty to the destination.

2.4 Environmental Interaction and Sustainability Perspectives

The nature of adventure tourism requires, and the interaction with the environment is a vital research topic. The key environments where adventure activities take place to create authenticity and the intensity of the experience include mountains, rivers, forests, deserts, and marine ecosystems. Adventure tourism is being placed in sustainable tourism discourse more and more in literature. The scholars maintain that the adventure tourism would be able to enhance conservation awareness through direct interest of the tourists on the natural scenery. Adventure tourism could be used to finance ecological preservation activities and community conservation programs through the revenue generated (Jurkus et al., 2022). But the same fast development of the tourism industry also creates some concern about the degradation of the environment, the disruption of habitats, the production of waste, and the overstrain on resources (Kumar, 2025). Excessive use of weak ecosystems can compromise sustainability goals when there is lack of proper management practices. In recent studies, the concepts behind responsible adventure tourism are highlighted, such as visitor education, management of the carrying capacity, the use of environmentally friendly equipment, and community involvement. Sustainable management systems seek to create a balance between economic and environmental conservation (Jurkus et al., 2022). Environmental sustainability is thus an opportunity and a challenge to the development of adventure tourism highlighting the need to use integrated planning strategies

2.5 Commercialization and Destination Development

Another theme of interest in literature is the metamorphosis of the adventure tourism as a form of exploration to an organized tourism product. Commercialization has also increased participation greatly by eliminating technical and logistical barriers. Tour operators, destination management organizations and government agencies are very important in packaging the adventure experiences into marketable tourism products (Xuemei et al., 2024). Adventure tourism also helps in destination competitiveness as it helps in differentiating destinations based on unique natural and experience packages. Studies point to the economic prospects of adventure tourism in remote and rural areas whereby the usual tourism infrastructure might be inadequate. Adventure-based activities create business jobs, spur local business and promote infrastructural growth. However, the issue of commercialization brings about conflicts between authenticity and standardization. According to scholars, too much commodification can reduce the perceived adventure

value when experience becomes too predictable or mass-produced. Experience: Being authentic and at the same time safe and accessible is also a significant management challenge (Seyitoğlu & Atsız, 2023). Also, community participation is becoming a key requirement to sustainable destination development. Inclusive tourism planning aims at increasing the level of local acceptance and fair allocation of economic gains.

2.6 Methodological Evolution in Adventure Tourism Research

The research of adventure tourism has been shown to have a significant methodological heterogeneity due to the interdisciplinary involvement. Initial research was mainly based on qualitative research like the participant observation and narrative analysis as the way to comprehend the subjective experiences. Later, quantitative methods became significant especially in research that studies the motivation, satisfaction, perception of risk and behavioural intention. The empirical validation of theoretical constructs was made possible through survey-based research and statistical modelling. Recent research is moving toward mixed-method methodology that involves the use of experiential knowledge and quantitative rigor (Mikulka et al., 2026). Literature reviews and meta-analyses have become significant, as well, to systematize scattered research results. Although the methodology is becoming more and more advanced, there are still difficulties because of the lack of uniform measures and classifications. Variations in research design also restrict comparability across studies and cause conceptual fragmentation in the literature of adventure tourism.

3. Research Methods

This study is based on the systematic literature review study design to assess the conceptual coherence of adventure tourism through a critical approach to the already existing academic research methodology. As the study aims at theoretical synthesis, as opposed to empirical research, the study is fully rooted in the secondary data sources in the form of peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and scholarly publications. To maintain credibility and academic rigor, relevant literature was searched systematically in international recognized academic databases such as Scopus, Web of science, science direct, emerald insight, Taylor and Francis, and Google scholar. A systematic search strategy was applied with the help of keywords like adventure tourism, adventure travel, risk tourism, tourist motivation, adventure experience and conceptualization of adventure tourism with the help of Boolean operators to narrow the search. Inclusion criteria were used to ensure consistency and relevance, such that English-language published materials between 2000 and 2025 that covered conceptual, theoretical, or methodological aspects of adventure tourism were included, and non-academic sources, duplicate studies, and irrelevant publications were eliminated. The systematic screening process to apply in the study was based on PRISMA guidelines wherein identification, screening, and eligibility assessment of the study, as well as final selection of suitable studies, were followed. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the collected literature and allow identifying and synthesizing recurring patterns and predominant research themes among disciplines (Hild et al., 2023). The important themes that were identified in the analysis were conceptual definitions, risk perception, tourist motivation, the interaction with the environment, commercialization, and sustainability perspectives. These themes were further categorized into conceptual, experiential as well as managerial to assess the fitness of adventure tourism as one concept. The systematic review methodology guarantees transparency and reproducibility, whereas application of various databases and peer-reviewed sources increases the reliability and validity of the study. Notwithstanding, the use of secondary data and publications in English language could narrow the representation of the region, indicating the possibility of conducting empirical validation in the future.

3.1. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual model of the current paper is constructed to put together the piece-meal views in the study of adventure tourism and to investigate the conceptual soundness of the study by adopting a multidimensional level. The literature that has been reviewed shows that adventure tourism has been examined using varied disciplinary perspectives such as psychological, environmental, experiential, and managerial perspectives, and this has led to conceptual ambiguity. In order to overcome this weakness, the proposed framework integrates adventure tourism into three inseparable dimensions namely, conceptual, experiential, and managerial aspects (Faber et al., 2025). The conceptual dimension aims at establishing physical activity, perceived risk, uncertainty, and interaction with natural environments, which, in combination, define the differences between adventure tourism and the traditional types of tourism. The experiential aspect is focused on tourism motivation, emotional involvement, personal challenge, novelty-seeking behavior, and transformational experiences that determine the participation and satisfaction outcomes. The managerial aspect, on the other hand, involves commercialization procedures, safety management, sustainability and the management of destinations which facilitates ATC delivery to be carried out in a structured manner (Pop et al., 2023). The framework presumes that conceptual coherence is obtained when such dimensions are running in parallel and not separately. Risk perception is a glue that bonds the features of activities and tourist experience whereas sustainability and management practices guarantee the long-term sustainability of adventure sites. Through the combination of these dimensions, the framework transcends the one-discipline understandings of adventure tourism and makes adventure tourism a systemic form of tourism comprising of the creation of experiences, interaction with the environment, and the provision of organized service (Chalkidou & Skourtis, 2023). This combined framework presents a conceptual basis of the comprehension of adventure tourism as an integrative construct and facilitates future research efforts in the capacity of quantifying the associations that exist between motivation, risk perception, experience quality, and destination management outcomes (Chauhan, 2026). The framework thus helps in the development of theory by providing a systematic approach to the study of adventure tourism in which one can study the tourism sector with the same approach regardless of the circumstances of the research.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Adventure Tourism Coherence



Figure 1 illustrates the integrated conceptual framework highlighting the interaction between conceptual, experiential, and managerial dimensions that collectively contribute to the conceptual coherence of adventure tourism.

4. Result and Discussion

This study aimed at investigating whether adventure tourism is a conceptually consistent discipline by bringing together the current research methods and thematic views. The literature review analysis shows that the phenomenon of adventure tourism has developed as a dimension of tourist phenomenon manifestations influenced by psychological, experience, environmental and managerial interpretations (Beames et al., 2022). Although the amount of research has increased significantly, the conceptual clarity is still subjected to disciplinary diffraction. The discussion incorporates the findings on the significant dimensions of analysis to assess the consistency of adventure tourism as a coherent construct.

4.1 Conceptual Understanding of Adventure Tourism

Based on the analysis, it shows that adventure tourism does not have a universally defined definition although there is a tendency to agree on some of its main attributes. Physical activity, experience with natural world, and perceived risk are found to be the major factors distinguishing adventure tourism and traditional leisure travel in most of the research. But there are also differences as far as the risk or skill level needed to be classified (Jia et al., 2026). Previous studies focused on the extreme and high-danger sports, placing adventure tourism in the niche of outdoor recreation. The modern literature however acknowledges the growth of the soft adventure tourism giving mass tourists a chance to participate more. This shift is based on evolving trends in tourism needs in which the experiential experience is now prioritized over objective risk. The fact that hard and soft adventure go together shows the flexibility and ambiguity of concepts. Although flexibility helps develop industries, it makes the theoretical limits difficult (Nemati et al., 2025). The results indicate that adventure tourism can no longer be characterized on the basis of intensity of the activities but based on experiential outcomes as a result of challenge, uncertainty and involvement with the environment.

4.2 Risk as a Central Integrating Dimension

The theme that comes out as the most uniform in the adventure tourism literature is risk perception. Instead of being the symbol of uncontrolled threat, risk serves as an element of a psychological tool that adds stronger emotional involvement and perceived success (Dagustani et al., 2022). Tourists are actively engaged in trying to discover circumstances where there is manageable uncertainty that can enable them to find excitement in the safety of operation conditions. This evaluation reveals that commercialization has made risk become a controlled experience. The perception of danger is maintained by using professional guides, standard equipment, and safety measures to mitigate real risk (Rantala et al., 2018). This change describes the way through which adventure tourism has moved beyond the high-end exploration to the low-end tourism consumption. Risk is thus seen to be a unifying factor between conceptual and experiential levels (Doran et al., 2022). It associates adventure tourism and passive tourism experiences with emotional gratification and satisfaction and makes physical activity central to this satisfaction. As it is mentioned in the discussion, conceptual coherence can be reinforced when risk is construed as perceived challenge instead of quantifiable hazard.

4.3 Experiential Value and Tourist Motivation

The other important observation is associated with adventure tourism in terms of experiential orientation. Literature always shows that adventure tourists are driven by self-development, seeking of novelty, avoiding the routine settings, and personal accomplishment. Involvement creates a sense of emotional intensity and confidence and

experiences to recall (Reinhardt et al., 2026). Adventure tourism has a lot in common with the experience economy paradigm, where the value is created, not by consumption of service. The process of co-creation of experiences involves interaction between the tourists and natural environment and service providers. Emotions, narration and social connectivity portend satisfaction and loyalty to destination (Carvache-Franco et al., 2022). The discussion also shows that a lot of the adventure experiences lead to transformational outcomes such as psychological wellbeing and identity formation. These results strengthen recurring attendance and protracted involvement of adventure pursuits. Hence, experiential transformation is a concept characteristic that promotes conceptual cohesiveness in an adventure tourism study.

4.4 Experiential Context and Sustainability Integration

Another important aspect of environmental interaction is another important dimension of conceptual coherence. Adventure tourism is also dependent on natural environments like mountains, rivers, forests and marine ecosystems unlike many other forms of tourism which are dependent on the built attractions. These settings are authentic, unpredictable and experience based. The analysis shows that there is a growing academic interest in the issues of sustainability (Weber, 2001). Adventure tourism has two possible potentials: it can be used to spread the need to be more aware of conservation, and it can create economic reasons to protect the environment, but on the other hand, the unregulated development may lead to the ecological decline. Sustainability in management is thus relevant in ensuring long term survival. The conceptual coherence becomes solid by incorporating sustainability views which connect the development of environmental responsibility and experiential tourism (Jóhannesson et al., 2024). Adventure tourism is taking on the values of responsible tourism, with the main focus on the least damage to the environment, the involvement of communities, and resources conservation.

4.5 Commercialization and Industry Transformation

The findings are used to show that modern adventure tourism has been greatly influenced by commercialization. The destination management bodies and the organized tour operators have transformed exploration-based activities into a packaged tourism product that can be available to the broader markets. Commercialization lowers the barriers to participation through training, equipment's and logistical services. Economically, adventure tourism is known to add to the competitiveness of a destination especially the rural and peripheral areas that may have natural resources yet lack urban infrastructure. The major benefits that crop up are employment creation, building of entrepreneurship, and diversification of the region. But there are also conflict areas of commercialization and authenticity as analyzed. The over-standardization can decrease perceived adventure value in case experiences are controlled or predictable. The question of balance between safety, accessibility and authentic challenge is one of the primary managerial issues.

4.6 Methodological Fragmentation in Adventure Tourism Research

An important observation that is drawn in the analysis is the issue of methodological diversity in studies. Experiential research is dominated by qualitative approaches and quantitative methods are concerned with motivation and behavior intention. Mixed-method designs are trying to be integrated although they are few. The lack of known measurement structures limits comparability between studies and adds to conceptual incoherence. Indicatively, risk perception, adventure intensity and experience quality differ in the research context. Such fragmentation of the methodology supports the view that adventure tourism has no theoretical cohesiveness (Schmidt Rojas et al., 2024). The current study

indicates that there is need to create standardized constructs in future that are able to measure experiential, environmental, and managerial dimensions concurrently.

4.7 Interdisciplinary Nature and Conceptual Coherence

The discussion shows that the issue of adventure tourism cannot be sufficiently addressed by one disciplinary approach. Individual motives are explained using psychology, identity and group processes are investigated using sociology, sustainability is covered by environmental studies and commercialization and governance are studied using management research (Li & He, 2023). These images can only form a conceptual coherence when they are combined under a holistic system. Adventure tourism can thus be considered a system that embraces communication between the tourists, the activities, the natural environments and the structures of the organization. The integrative understanding is congruent with the proposed multidimensional framework.

The results of this paper have a significant theoretical, managerial, and policy value in the future development of adventure tourism research and practice. Theoretically, the research makes a contribution to literature on tourism by helping to solve the old problem related to conceptual ambiguity with regard to adventure tourism. The research offers an organized insight into adventure tourism as a coherent tourism phenomenon instead of a vaguely defined assortment of outdoor activities by taking conceptual, experiential, and managerial aspects and integrating them into a single framework. This combined viewpoint facilitates research across disciplines and helps scholars to overcome the interpretations which focus on one way of thinking to that of a comprehensive theoretical examination. In the context of management, the paper has noted the role of balancing risk, quality of experience and safety management when designing adventure tourism products.

The proposed framework can guide tourism operators and destination managers to create experiences that are perceived to be challenging and ensure the safety and satisfaction of the participants. Knowledge of tourist motivation and experiential expectations can be used to help service provider to develop a personalized meaningful experience of the adventure that will help to increase customer loyalty and competitiveness of the destination. Also, the importance of interaction with the environment should be identified which underlines the necessity to sustain operational practices which impact ecological footprint lesser than possible but increase visitor interest.

The implications of policy also cannot be underestimated, especially when it comes to the destinations that endorse the use of adventure tourism as the means of regional development. Standardized conceptual knowledge can be used by governments and tourism bodies in the development of effective regulations and safety levels and certifications to adventure tourism activities. Incorporation of sustainability concepts in the management planning of adventure tourism is capable of promoting conservation initiatives as well as creating economic opportunities to the communities around the rural and mountainous areas. Moreover, the research highlights the need to adopt collaborative governance, that is, between local communities, private operators, and policy makers in order to have responsible tourism development. The research will help the stakeholders formulate strategic policies that can enhance sustainable, safe, and economical development of adventure tourism in the country and internationally by clarifying the boundaries of the concepts and dimensions of operation.

Despite the growth in the research of adventure tourism, the current research indicates that various opportunities are available in future scholarly research to enhance the theoretical rigor and practical use. To begin with, standardized conceptual definitions and measurement scales of adventure tourism need to be developed in the future. Risk

perception, adventure intensity and experience outcomes have no universally agreed indicators, which remains a limitation of comparability of studies. This would be of great benefit to the theoretical consistency since the integrated conceptual models would be empirically validated across different tourism settings. Second, the need to develop interdisciplinary research methods that integrate psychological, sociological, environmental and managerial views, is increasing. The majority of the current research looks at adventure tourism through the isolated disciplinary perspectives thus ignoring multi-dimensional interaction between tourist behavior, environmental sustainability and destination governance. Mixed-method research designs can also be utilized to conduct integrative empirical studies that can be used to understand more about the multidimensionality of adventure tourism experiences. Third, the studies in the future should focus more on the regional diversity and new destinations, especially in developing countries where the potential of adventure tourism is underdeveloped. Most of the existing literature is clustered in developed states like Europe, North America and Oceania and thus may not be applicable globally to new theoretical frameworks. The comparison of cross-cultural research can enhance the cognition of the impacts of socio-cultural variables on adventure-related participation and risk perceptions. The other potential avenue is to explore how technology and digital innovation can be used in adventure tourism. Fusion of VR, mobile applications, artificial intelligence, and smart tourism systems is transforming the way adventure is planned, safety is tracked and tourists are interested. The studies that depend on the use of technology to transform adventure experience could help to shed light on how tourism may be transformed in the future. Also, growing environmental uncertainties due to climate change necessitate specific studies on destination resilience, risk-adaptation, and sustainable management of adventure tourism. Environmental carrying capacity and responsible tourism practices are vital studies that should be carried out in the long-term sustainability. Lastly, the study of inclusive and accessible adventure tourism needs to be undertaken in the future, where the diversity of the target population is also involved, such as elderly tourists and individuals with disabilities. Diversification of inclusivity worldviews will help bring in the development of the socially sustainable tourism and widen the market possibilities.

5. Conclusion

Adventure tourism has become an important and a fast-developing sector in the world tourism as it reflects the rising trend of the contemporary travellers to prefer experiential, activity based and nature-based tourism experiences. In spite of its growing economic and social significance, the notion of adventure tourism has been conceptually disjointed given that various definitions have been given using different academic fields. This paper aimed to explore the conceptual integrity of adventure tourism through a systemic survey of the literature on the subject and analysis of common themes through literature synthesis. The review showed that the research in adventure tourism always centres on the major aspects such as perceived risk, physical activity, environmental contact, tourist motivation, experiential change, and management organization. But the definition differences, the methodology side and the disciplinary side have led to conceptual ambiguity. The psychologists are concerned with sensation-seeking and emotional outcomes whereas sociological and managerial researchers are concerned with identity construction, commercialization and destination competitiveness. The environmental views also come with sustainability issues that put an emphasis on the reliance of adventure tourism on the sensitive natural environments. In combining these disjointed views, the paper suggests a multidimensional conceptualization of adventure tourism in terms of conceptual, experiential and managerial aspects. The results indicate that adventure tourism is

conceptually coherent when risk is viewed as an experiential aspect that is controlled and backed up by well-organized systems of services and environmental sustainability. Instead of looking at the concept of adventure tourism as an activity that is characterized by high risks, the concept ought to be viewed as an entire tourism system that entails the interaction of the tourists, the natural environments and the tourism providers. This study has added value to the tourism literature by demarcating the conceptual frontiers and presenting a comprehensive framework that can be used to inform future research and destination management approaches. However, the use of secondary data is a weakness, and it means that empirical validation is required in further studies. On the whole, enhancing integration of theories and interdisciplinary cooperation will be critical in developing adventure tourism as a rational and sustainable sphere of tourism research and practice.

References

- Alvarado-Tolentino, J., Ramirez-Asis, H., Chenet-Zuta, M., Villegas-Ramirez, D., & Norabuena-Figueroa, E. (2024, August 31). *Business Intelligence to Boost Competitiveness: The Case of Operators in the Adventure Tourism Sector*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-7202-5_14
- Beames, S., Mackenzie, S. H., & Raymond, E. (2022). How can we adventure sustainably? A systematized review of sustainability guidance for adventure tourism operators. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 50, 223–231. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2022.01.002>
- Carvache-Franco, M., Contreras-Moscol, D., Orden-Mejía, M., Carvache-Franco, W., Vera-Holguin, H., & Carvache-Franco, O. (2022). Motivations and Loyalty of the Demand for Adventure Tourism as Sustainable Travel. *Sustainability*, 14(14), 8472. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14148472>
- Carvache-Franco, M., Orden-Mejía, M., Carvache-Franco, W., Carvache-Franco, O., Bustamante-Ubilla, M. A., & Vera-Ronquillo, L. (2025). Adventure tourism and its relationship between activities and loyalty. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 12(1), 2606307. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2025.2606307>
- Chalkidou, T., & Skourtis, G. (2023, May 30). *Exploring the Role of Technology in Adventure Tourism*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-26829-8_17
- Chauhan, R. (2026). Gendered pathways to inner transformation: The role of memorable experiences and destination attributes in adventure tourism. *International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences*, 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJQSS-07-2025-0178>
- Chauhan, R., Kashyap, H., & Jishtu, H. (2024). Transformative adventure experiences scale: Validation and behavioral impacts. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, 28(4), 221–240. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14775085.2024.2448942>
- Cheng, M., Edwards, D., Darcy, S., & Redfern, K. (2018). A Tri-Method Approach to a Review of Adventure Tourism Literature: Bibliometric Analysis, Content Analysis, and a Quantitative Systematic Literature Review. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 42(6), 997–1020. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348016640588>
- Dagustani, D., Kurniawan, G. I., Vidyastuti, H. A., & Miharja, R. (2022). Implementation of Risk Management as an Effort to Develop the Potential of Beach Tourism. In B. S. Sergi & D. Sulistiawan (Eds.), *Modeling Economic Growth in Contemporary Indonesia* (p. 0). Emerald Publishing Limited. <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-80262-431-120221017>
- Deb, R., Kondasani, R. K. R., & Das, A. (2023). Adventure tourism: Current state and future research direction. *Tourism Review*, 80(9), 1581–1596. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-09-2022-0441>

- Doran, A., Pomfret, G., & Akwasi Adu-Ampong, E. (2022). Mind the gap: A systematic review of the knowledge contribution claims in adventure tourism research. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 51, 238–251. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2022.03.015>
- Faber, K., Kingham, S., Conrow, L., & van Lierop, D. (2025). Exploring active travel behaviour of high-income immigrants in the Netherlands throughout the life course. *Transportation*, 1–36. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11116-025-10591-z>
- Hild, B. O., Jóhannesson, G. T., & Sydnese, A. K. (2023). “Everyone can be a guide until something goes wrong”: Adventure guides’ competencies and tourist safety in the Arctic. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 23(4), 325–344. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15022250.2023.2289946>
- Jia, R., Xu, H., Huang, C., Ma, Y., & Wei, Z. (2026). How nature adventure tourism heals employees’ unhappiness: A logotherapy approach. *Tourism Management*, 113, 105345. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2025.105345>
- Jóhannesson, G. T., Haraldsdóttir, L., & Aquino, J. (2024). *Navigating Sustainability: Meaning and Manifestation of Sustainable Coastal Tourism in Northwest Iceland*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-73187-7_2
- Jurkus, E., Povilanskas, R., & Taminskas, J. (2022). Current Trends and Issues in Research on Biodiversity Conservation and Tourism Sustainability. *Sustainability*, 14(6), 3342. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14063342>
- Kumar, A. (2025). Demographic Analysis Of Adventure Tourists Visiting Himachal Pradesh: Trends, Preferences, And Motivations. *Journal On Tourism & Sustainability*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.16319500>
- Li, C., & He, J. (2023). Restorative Environmental Perception’s Influence on Post-Tour Behavior of Desert Off-Road Self-Driving Tourists: The Mediating Role of Flow Experience. *Sustainability*, 15(17), 12934. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su151712934>
- Mackenzie, S. H., & Goodnow, J. (2022). Adventure in the Age of COVID-19: Embracing Microadventures and Locavism in a Post-Pandemic World. In *Leisure in the Time of Coronavirus*. Routledge.
- Mikulka, O., Pyszko, P., Kamler, J., Drimaj, J., Plhal, R., & Homolka, M. (2026). Effects of Bike Trails on Roe Deer and Wild Boar Habitat Use in Forested Landscapes. *Sustainability*, 18(2), 1030. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su18021030>
- Morgan, D. (2025). *Adventure Tourism*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-74923-1_229
- Nemati, V., Madani, J., Mostafazadeh, R., & Kaboli, S. (2025). Identifying Behavioral Preferences of Generation Z in Adventure Tourism from Environmental Conservation Perspective. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 0(0), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1528008X.2025.2602775>
- O’Reilly, N., Nadeau, J., & Warwick, L. (2022). Adventure tourism and the place brand of Argentina. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, 26(3), 297–313. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14775085.2022.2094991>
- Persson, K., Andrée, M., & Caiman, C. (2026). Every step is an adventure: Ecological literacy as becoming-with forest through fieldwork play in folk high school education. *Environmental Education Research*, 0(0), 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2026.2616700>
- Pomfret, G., Sand, M., & May, C. (2023). Conceptualising the power of outdoor adventure activities for subjective well-being: A systematic literature review. *Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism*, 42, 100641. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jort.2023.100641>
- Pop, N. Al., Stăncioiu, F. A., Onişor, L.-F., Baba, C. A., & Anysz, R. N. (2023). Exploring the attitude of youth towards adventure tourism as a driver for post-pandemic era

- tourism experiences. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 26(7), 1147–1161. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2022.2049712>
- Rantala, O., Rokenes, A., & Valkonen, J. (2018). Is adventure tourism a coherent concept? A review of research approaches on adventure tourism. *Annals of Leisure Research*, 21(5), 539–552. <https://doi.org/10.1080/11745398.2016.1250647>
- Reinhardt, E., Coleman, K., Perry, E. E., & Leahy, J. (2026). Mountain biking and environmental justice: What can “the bike boom” teach us about recreation equity? *Journal of Leisure Research*, 0(0), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00222216.2026.2621144>
- Schmidt Rojas, N., Sand, M. S., & Gross, S. (2024). Regenerative adventure tourism. Going beyond sustainability – a horizon 2050 paper. *Tourism Review*, 80(1), 270–285. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-12-2023-0874>
- Seyitoğlu, F., & Atsız, O. (2023). Discovering cities with peer-to-peer local-guided bike tours: Tourists’ experiences and perceptions. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 26(20), 3261–3267. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2022.2120798>
- Weber, K. (2001). Outdoor adventure tourism: A Review of Research Approaches. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 28(2), 360–377. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383\(00\)00051-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(00)00051-7)
- Xuemei, L., Wang, F., Huili, C., & Jingwen, T. (2024). Development of an Indicator System for Evaluating Risks in Trekking Tourism. *Leisure Sciences*, 0(0), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2024.2415941>
- Yan, Y., Ye, Q., Dong, J., & Li, T. (2026). Adventure tourism involvement and quality of life: The sequential mediating roles of experience quality and happiness in river tracing. *Acta Psychologica*, 262, 106173. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2025.106173>