Sustainable Destination Attributes' Imparting Overall Satisfaction on the Adventure Tourists of Rishikesh, Uttarakhand

[1]Ms. Somya Negi, [2]Dr. Himali Lakhera, [3]Mr. Rahul Garg, [4]Dr. Sandeep Dhankar, [5]Chef Manas Sarkar

[1](Corresponding Author)

Research Scholar, MMICT & BM (Hotel Management)

Maharishi Markandeshwar (Deemed to Be University)

Mullana,Ambala(Haryana)

Email Id – negisomya4@gmail.com

[2]Assistant Professor, MMICT & BM (Hotel Management)

Maharishi Markandeshwar (Deemed to Be University)

Mullana,Ambala(Haryana)

Email Id – himali.lakhera@mmumullana.org

[3]Research Scholar, MMICT & BM (Hotel Management)

Maharishi Markandeshwar (Deemed to Be University)

Mullana,Ambala(Haryana)

Email Id – rahulgarg1108@gmail.com

[4]Assistant Professor, Department of Tourism and Hotel Management

Kurukshetra University

Kurukshetra

Email Id – drsandeepdhankar@kuk.ac.in

[5]Assistant Professor, Department of Hospitality and Hotel Administration

Assam Don Bosco University

Email ID - manas.sarkar@dbuniversity.ac.in

ABSTRACT

Adventure tourism, a rapidly growing travel industry segment, presents unique challenges and opportunities for sustainable destination management. This research investigates how various sustainable destination attributes affect overall satisfaction among adventure tourists. The study begins by understanding the sustainability of adventure tourism, identifying the primary attributes that contribute to an adventure tourism destination's appeal, including factors such as safety, accessibility, accommodation, and the availability of unique adventure experiences. It then explores the relationship between these attributes and tourists' overall satisfaction, employing quantitative analysis to measure how each attribute influences satisfaction levels. The results indicate that certain destination attributes significantly enhance overall satisfaction. These findings provide valuable insights for destination

planners and tourism professionals seeking to optimize their offerings and improve both tourist satisfaction and loyalty in the adventure tourism sector.

KEYWORDS – Destination Attributes, Tourist satisfaction, Adventure Tourism, Sustainability

BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Rishikesh, nestled in Uttarakhand, India, is a renowned tourism destination celebrated for its spiritual and natural allure. Known as the "Yoga Capital of the World," it attracts visitors with its numerous ashrams offering yoga and meditation retreats, as well as the mesmerizing Ganga Aarti held daily on the riverbanks. The city's scenic beauty, set against the backdrop of the Himalayas, complements its status as a hub for adventure sports like white-water rafting and trekking. With its deep cultural and religious significance, Rishikesh continues to draw both spiritual seekers and adventure enthusiasts, while efforts are made to ensure sustainable tourism practices to preserve its unique charm.

The term "destination" refers to places people visit for leisure, business, or other purposes. The "destination attributes" are the characteristics or features that make a place attractive or suitable for visitors. These attributes can significantly influence a tourist's destination choice and overall experience.

Adventure tourism has emerged as a dynamic and expanding segment within the global travel industry, appealing to an increasingly diverse demographic seeking novel and challenging experiences. As destinations strive to attract and retain adventure tourists, understanding the attributes that influence their satisfaction and likelihood to revisit is crucial. This study aims to explore the complex interplay between destination attributes and tourist satisfaction, focusing specifically on adventure tourism settings. Sustainable adventure tourism seeks to balance the enjoyment of thrilling experiences with protecting natural and cultural resources for future generations.

The significance of destination attributes—such as safety, accessibility, natural beauty, and the quality of adventure activities—has become more pronounced as competition intensifies among adventure destinations. Identifying which of these attributes are most valued by tourists and how they impact overall satisfaction can provide crucial insights for enhancing the attractiveness of a destination. Furthermore, understanding the relationship between satisfaction and revisit intentions can offer valuable guidance for long-term strategic planning and customer retention.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Tourist satisfaction and perception are crucial indicators of success in the adventure tourism industry. These factors influence repeat visits, word-of-mouth recommendations, and overall destination reputation. This literature review explores the latest research on tourist satisfaction and perception in adventure tourism, focusing on various dimensions such as service quality, safety, environmental sustainability, and cultural experiences.

Rohman (2020) investigates the factors influencing adventure tourist loyalty through the mediating roles of tourist satisfaction and quality of life. The study underscores the significance of satisfaction and quality of life in shaping tourist loyalty within the context of adventure tourism. Rohman's research contributes valuable insights into enhancing tourist experiences and loyalty in niche tourism segments.

Cordova-Buiza, Calderon-Sanchez, and Chuzon-Canicela (2022) investigate tourist satisfaction within the context of a Peruvian adventure tour operator. The study aims to evaluate factors influencing

satisfaction levels among adventure tourists, providing insights into enhancing service quality and customer experience in niche tourism sectors.

Pangestu, Handoko, and Widodo (2023) explore the factors influencing visitor satisfaction at the New Royal Adventure site, focusing on service quality and facilities. Their study contributes to understanding how these elements affect visitor experiences and satisfaction levels within the context of adventure tourism destinations.

Williams and Soutar (2009) delve into the dynamics of value, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions within the realm of adventure tourism. Their study explores how perceived value influences tourist satisfaction and subsequently shapes behavioral intentions in adventure tourism settings. The main findings of Williams and Soutar's (2009) study indicate that perceived value strongly influences satisfaction, which in turn shapes behavioral intentions in adventure tourism.

Nasution et al. (2023) explore the factors influencing adventure tourist satisfaction in Indonesia. Their study provides empirical evidence on the determinants of satisfaction within the context of adventure tourism, offering insights into enhancing tourist experiences in Indonesian adventure destinations.

Bagri and Kala (2015) investigate tourist satisfaction at Trijuginarayan, an emerging spiritual and adventure tourist destination in the Garhwal Himalayas, Uttarakhand, India. They employ Importance-Performance Analysis to assess the relationship between the importance and performance of destination attributes. Key findings indicate that attributes related to spiritual and cultural experiences, climate and atmosphere, variety of tourist activities, hospitality, and safety significantly influence tourist satisfaction. However, tourists express dissatisfaction with basic facilities such as accommodation, transportation, tourism infrastructure, hygiene, and sanitation at the destination. These findings underscore the need for strategic improvements in infrastructure and service quality to enhance overall tourist satisfaction and destination competitiveness.

Carvache-Franco et al. (2022) explore the motivations and loyalty of adventure tourism as a form of sustainable travel. They emphasize that adventure tourists are driven by the desire for unique experiences, personal growth, and a sense of achievement. These motivations align closely with sustainability principles, as travelers seek to minimize environmental impact and support local communities.

The study underscores that loyalty among adventure tourists is influenced by factors such as destination authenticity, service quality, and environmental stewardship practices. Sustainable tourism practices, including waste management and community engagement, play a pivotal role in enhancing visitor satisfaction and fostering long-term loyalty.

Furthermore, Carvache-Franco et al. (2022) highlight the importance of collaborative efforts among stakeholders — including tour operators, local communities, and policymakers — to promote responsible tourism practices. By integrating sustainability into adventure tourism experiences, stakeholders can contribute to environmental conservation and socio-economic development.

In summary, adventure tourism as sustainable travel encompasses experiential motivations, environmental stewardship, and community engagement. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing strategies that enhance visitor experiences while safeguarding natural and cultural resources.

Ajzen, I (1991) highlight several studies that have utilized the Theory of Planned Behaviours (TPB) to investigate revisiting intentions in adventure tourism. TPB posits that an individual's behaviour is

directly influenced by their intention to perform that behaviour, which in turn is affected by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control).

Soliman (2021) has extended this model to include factors such as perceived service quality, perceived value, destination image, and satisfaction, offering a comprehensive understanding of revisit intentions

Kim (2020) mentions memorable experiences play a pivotal role in influencing tourists' revisit intentions. Studies indicate that elements such as hedonism, novelty, meaningfulness, and social interaction significantly contribute to the overall enjoyment and memorability of the adventure tourism experience. These factors subsequently enhance the likelihood of tourists recommending and revisiting the destination

Zaid (2023) mentions Adventure tourism inherently involves higher risks, which can affect tourists' revisit intentions. Effective risk management and communication strategies can mitigate perceived risks and enhance tourists' confidence in revisiting the destination. Research suggests that lowering perceived risk can positively influence revisit intentions and overall tourist satisfaction.

Abbasi (2021) highlights satisfaction is a critical mediator between perceived service quality, value, and revisit intentions. High levels of tourist satisfaction are associated with positive word-of-mouth recommendations and repeat visits. Factors contributing to satisfaction include the quality of services, overall value, and the image of the destination .

Tosun et al. (2015) highlighted the role of emotional and psychological factors in determining revisit intentions. Memorable experiences that evoke positive emotions, such as thrill, excitement, and a sense of accomplishment, are strong predictors of tourists' intentions to return. Emotional connections with the destination can foster loyalty and repeat visits.

Zaid, Sudirman, Sarini Yusuf Abadi, and Murdjani Kamaluddin (2023) conducted an empirical study focusing on adventure tourism risk, environmental image, and revisit intention within the context of underwater cave diving tourism in Buton Island, Indonesia. The study highlighted the significant impacts of various adventure tourism risks—such as equipment, physical, psychological, social, and financial risks—on tourists' perceptions of the destination's environmental image. Their research utilized the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach to analyze data from 98 tourists who participated in cave diving tours between January and March 2022. The findings underscored that the formation of an environmental image directly influences tourists' intentions to revisit the destination, with adventure tourism risks playing a mediating role in this relationship. This study contributes to understanding the dynamics of adventure tourism and provides insights for destination management and marketing strategies to enhance environmental perceptions and encourage repeat visits in similar contexts.

Anisatul Auliya and Diani Mustika Prianti (2022) explores how destination attributes affect tourist satisfaction and loyalty, with a focus on Pramuka Island. The findings underscore the importance of improving destination attributes to increase both satisfaction and loyalty among tourists. The authors suggest further research on standardizing marine tourism practices and enhancing promotional efforts for Pramuka Island to better capitalize on these insights.

Mohamed A. M. Raazim and M. A. T. K. Munasinghe, study explores how various destination attributes affect tourists' selection decisions, focusing on Sri Lanka's Cultural Triangle. Despite its significance as a major income-generating destination, the Cultural Triangle attracts fewer tourists compared to other sites in Sri Lanka. Through data collected from 222 foreign tourists via questionnaires, the research found that attributes such as amenities, destination attractions, accessibility, ancillary services, and the destination environment have a moderate positive relationship

with tourists' destination selection, with destination attraction being the most influential factor. Service quality showed a weaker positive relationship. The results offer valuable insights for policymakers to enhance tourist attractions and improve the destination's appeal.

Mangali and Ortaleza (2021) conducted a systematic review of the attributes influencing tourists' decisions when selecting travel destinations. By applying the PRISMA model, the authors identified five key attributes—accommodation, articulated stories, affordability, accessibility, and attribution—that significantly impact tourists' choices. Their analysis highlights how these factors affect decision-making and provides valuable insights for business owners in the tourism industry to understand and leverage these attributes to enhance their appeal and maintain competitiveness.

Schlesinger, Cervera-Taulet, and Pérez-Cabañero (2020) investigated the relationships between destination attributes, quality of service experience, and tourist loyalty in emerging Mediterranean destinations. The study reveals that tourists' perceptions of destination attributes significantly influence both their quality of service experience and their loyalty to the destination. The research identifies four key components of service experience—hedonics, peace of mind, involvement, and recognition—that shape tourists' perceptions. The study finds that while destination attributes directly impact loyalty, they also affect it indirectly through the quality-of-service experience

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. To understand the importance of sustainability in adventure tourism.
2. To identify the major destination attributes of an adventure tourism destination.
3. To Explore the relationship between Destinations attributes sustainability & Adventure Tourists' overall satisfaction

HYPOTHESES

H1- There is a set of destination attributes that relate to adventure tourism.
H2: There is no relationship between Destination attributes sustainability & adventure Tourist satisfaction

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted from June 2024 to August 2024. The research location was Rishikesh Uttarakhand. The sample examined consisted of 150 people out of whom 118 results were valid and complete and the rest 32 were invalid. The research was conducted with a quantitative approach. Data collection was carried out through questionnaires distributed via a Google form; data analysis was performed taking into the literature studies related to the research topic and SPSS Software.

Tools used   Objective 1: Descriptive Analysis

                Objective 2: Descriptive Analysis

                Objective 3: Regression

RESULTS & INTERPRETATION

OBJECTIVE 1 - To understand the importance of sustainability in adventure tourism.

Adventure travel has a long history of sustainability since nature is a crucial component of the experience. Consumers are still convenient and unwilling to limit themselves, despite efforts by travel operators, destination management organizations, and other stakeholders to provide sustainable products. This portion likewise exhibits a substantial attitude-behavior mismatch, necessitating

reconsideration. A change in the tourism sector is unavoidable due to the pandemic and the climate issue, among other factors. In this process, adventure tourism can serve as a model, and positive industry examples offer hope for change.(Schmidt Rojas, N., Sand, M.S. , and Gross, S.)

Sustainable tourism involves various aspects such as environmental management, tourism commodity management (including marketing, innovation, human resource management, and technologies), community management (including destination management and community development), and tourist management. Therefore, future work must take a segmented approach for a comprehensive analysis."(Huang, Ren-Yi & Chang) .According to Natalie L.B. Knowles Examining situations that foster sustainability in tourism is made easier by the political ecology lens. Adventure travelers are enthusiastic, willing to pay, and seek out unusual locations. Certain sustainability goals can be attained through adventure travel.Taking into account participant characteristics and their implications for sustainable practices, the Markéta Novotná study examines a number of sustainability-related topics related to adventure tourism. It draws attention to the need for a broader perspective when evaluating sustainability in tourism and challenges the simplifying of sustainability labels. It highlights how important participant behavior is in determining how sustainable tourism is. Simon Beames (2022) focuses on the types of sustainability guidance that are available, as well as their advantages and disadvantages, the current investigation offers a helpful resource. As a result, the study for the first time tackles a vitally significant topic in adventure tourism literature.

OBJECTIVE 2 – To identify the major destination attributes of an adventure tourism destination.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE TABLE

N=118

Demographic Profile		Frequency	Percentage
Nationality	Indian	76	64%
	Foreign	42	36%
Marital Status	Married	53	45%
	Unmarried	65	55%
Gender	Male	68	58%
	Female	50	42%
Age	18-25 years	36	31%
	26-35 years	40	34%
	36-45 years	22	19%
	46-55 years	13	11%
	56-65 years	5	4%
	Above 65 years	2	1%
Education	Primary	7	6%
	Secondary	16	13%
	High School	49	42%
	Masters/Doctorate	31	26%
	Others	15	13%

After a review of the literature related to the major destination attributes of an adventure tourism destination, the following attributes have been identified which are as follows

IDENTIFIED ATTRIBUTES	RANKING
Image of Destination	2
Cleanliness of the destination	1
Adventure Infrastructure	5
Safety & Security	8
Environmental; sustainability	9
Accessibility	6
Tourist Support System	3
Varieties of activities	7
Accommodation & Amenities	4

Further, on a ranking based system the responses of the respondents is taken for identified destination attributes from review of literature and results predicted as "cleanliness of the destination" as the top most destination attribute on the preference of an adventure tourist .Further, "Image of the Destination " and "Tourist support system " were at rank 2 and 3 respectively while "safety & Security" and " Environmental sustainability" ranked at lower orders in an adventure tourist' preferences. Hence there is a set of destination attributes that relates to adventure tourism destination.

OBJECTIVE 3 -To Explore the relationship between Destinations attributes sustainability & Adventure Tourists' overall satisfaction

REGRESSION TABLE

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	7.183	.570		12.594	.000
Image of Destination	.001	.022	.002	.047	.963
Cleanliness of the destination	-.219	.097	-.207	-2.259	.026
Adventure Infrastructure	-.246	.061	-.462	-4.044	.000
Safety & Security	-.773	.065	-.761	-11.853	.000
Environmental; sustainability	-.179	.062	-.133	-2.900	.005
Accessibility	.283	.034	.559	8.271	.000
Tourist Support System	.129	.053	.216	2.447	.016
Varieties of activities	.216	.027	.385	8.130	.000
Accommodation & Amenities	.199	.067	.217	2.949	.004

Dependent Variable: Overall Tourist Satisfaction

The above table depicts that out of 9 variables, 6 variables show a positive impact on the overall satisfaction of the tourist.

The variables **adventure infrastructure, safety and security, accessibility, Tourist Support System, Varieties of activities, Accommodation & Amenities show an impact on the overall satisfaction of the tourist as the obtained value is below the stated value of 0.05.**

Finally, as out of 9 variables 6 variables show impact, which shows there is a significant impact of the obtained variables on the overall satisfaction of Tourists.

Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected as the results are not in line with the hypothesis.

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTION

This study revealed the major attributes that attract tourists to the adventure tourist destination.

The variables cleanliness of the destination, adventure infrastructure, safety and security, accessibility, Tourist Support System, Varieties of activities, Accommodation & Amenities show an impact on the overall satisfaction of the tourist as the obtained value is below the stated value of 0.05.

The following points can be made to enhance tourist satisfaction and promote revisit intentions -

1. Promote sustainable tourism by implementing eco-friendly practices, such as waste management programs and promoting local conservation efforts, to enhance the overall experience and attract environmentally conscious travelers.

2. Conduct training for local guides and service providers on customer service, safety, and adventure skills to ensure high-quality interactions and experiences for tourists.

3. Develop specialized adventure packages that combine activities (e.g., rafting, trekking, yoga) with local cultural experiences, appealing to diverse interests and enhancing overall satisfaction.

4. Strengthen online marketing strategies and create user-friendly websites or apps that provide comprehensive information on activities, accommodations, and support services to help tourists plan their trips easily.

5. Host adventure tourism festivals or events that showcase local culture and adventure activities, creating a vibrant atmosphere that encourages repeat visits and attracts new tourists.

6. Collaborate with local restaurants, shops, and service providers to create packages that offer discounts or special deals, enhancing the overall value of the tourist experience.

7. Involve local communities in tourism planning and operations, ensuring that their voices are heard and fostering a sense of ownership and pride, which can lead to better service and tourist satisfaction.

8. Install clear and informative signage throughout Rishikesh to guide tourists to attractions and activities, enhancing accessibility and reducing confusion.

9. Create loyalty programs for returning visitors that offer discounts, special packages, or exclusive experiences, encouraging tourists to revisit Rishikesh.

10. Conduct regular assessments of tourist satisfaction and needs, using surveys and feedback to make informed decisions on improvements and updates to services and facilities.

11. Enhance local transportation services (e.g., shuttle services, bike rentals) to improve accessibility to adventure sites and attractions, making it easier for tourists to explore the area.

12. Create initiatives that encourage tourists to share their experiences on social media, which can enhance Rishikesh's visibility and attract new visitors through positive word-of-mouth.

By implementing these recommendations, Rishikesh can significantly enhance tourist satisfaction and foster strong revisit intentions, ultimately solidifying its status as a leading adventure tourism destination.

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