

Relationship between Mental Well-Being and Nature Based Adventure Activities for Non-Local Tourist in Sri Lanka

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Abstract: Nature based activities have been utilized as therapeutic interventions for mental health wellbeing. Tourism is considered a source of social economic, and environmental development linked through sustainable tourism development. This study investigates whether nature based adventure activities could be effects of relief of stressful life events on the mental health of foreign tourists in Sri Lanka. For the study tourists were interviewed through the questionnaire and data of sociodemographic and motivational factors of 82 participants on the location of the adventure parks in Sri Lanka from March 2023 to May 2023 were observed. Most seventy-six males (76), followed by twenty-four females (24) with visitors were between the ages of 25-30yrs (42), ages 15-20 (19), 20-25(28), and above 30yrs (11). Foreign visitors were engaged in activities with 62.20% of their friends, 39.02% of their families, 14.63% of alone, and 14.17% of other individuals who were specifically visiting for tourism. The data were analyzed through Microsoft Excel and SPSS Software (version 20). The pioneering study revealed that most tourists are attracted due to Fun/Adventure experiences (8.63%), Thrill (8.27%) and stress buster (7.84%) among other categories. Foreign tourists seek Fun/Adventure, thrill and stress release through their visits to Sri Lanka and from nature-based adventure activities. The study, concludes that nature based activities have the potential to provide improvement in the mental well-being of non-local tourists.

Keywords: Adventure tourism, Environment, Motivation, Stress buffering, Sustainable

I. Introduction

Tourism is a significant method of sustainable economic development in the countries (Milne & Ateljevic, 2010). The diversity of the geographic locations, genetic changes in animals, cultural aspects, unique history and natural beauty attract tourists to engage recreational activities with desirable tourism destinations (Fernando, 2016). Nature based activities have relied on all multidimensional leisure activities that are based on the geographical different environment (Jenkins & Pigram, 2003). The successful growth of nature based adventure tourism is beneficial for the sustainable environment utilization for mental wellness (UN, 2022). Ensuring a balance between the economic and environmental, consequences of tourism is all that becomes sustainable tourism (Štrba, et al., 2022). This is mentioned in relation to nature-based tourism we embrace because it is believed that using modern concepts of sustainability will strengthen the validity of the research (Force, et al., 2017). Further, tourism is based on nature and is often considered the tourist influence to environmentally friendly, attitudes development, knowledge and personality development" (Nicole, et al., 2015).

In tourism, human psychology is environmental and social aspects that can do effects the tourist's behaviour, attitudes and motivations development (Simkova, 2014). The World Health Organization refers to a plight of mental well-being that allows individuals to manage life's stressors situations, realize their capabilities, perform well in their day to day lives and at school, work, and give back to their communities under mental health conditions (WHO, 2022). Wealthy persons engaged adventure activities due to the breakdown of their monotonous lifestyles, mood fixations, higher life satisfaction, relaxation, life changes, reduce stress levels and improve work efficiency (Neal, et al., 2007). Providing adventure activities is affects how visitors evaluate motivation factors and whether they plan to travel again. Further, which "consists of the cognitive, affective, and physical connection we have with nature," it is a measure of "connectedness to the natural world with mood fixation." Considered as the nature-relatedness (Elizabeth, et al., 2019). Further, (Barriga, 2017), sustainable tourism comprises a variety of techniques, including adventure tourism, birdwatching, geotourism, responsible tourism, cultural tourism, and ecotourism, these also social and environmental perspectives. However, according to Fennell's study (Fennell,

2021)emphasize the adverse impacts of new technology, safety and health issues, financial losses, and disasters on the environment bring about a new era of travel and tourism. Instead of using harmful methods that disregard people, destinations, and the environment, we now have a chance to rethink tourism in new ways tohave positive effectson mental health(Everingham & Chassagne, 2020). Respect with to all this there wasidentified that it is important to investigate the factors which touristswere attracted to Sri Lanka’snature based adventure activitiesand how theyaffect their mental wellbeing.

II. Methodology/ExperimentalDesign

The study data was gathered by visiting the adventure parks and filling out the questionnaire by interviewing them. The participant was selected by who was willing to answer questions during this time period in these locations through the snowball sampling methods.This study was carried out on 82 participants of non-local tourists who participated in the Activation base, water-based and land-based activities around therecreational activitycenters from March, 2023 to May, 2023ages between 15yrs to 35yrs years.The study objective was to identify the mental wellbeingfactors that are attracted to nature based adventure parks. For this study tourists with differently abled were excluded due to their perceptions could be varied. Further, tourists who are not willing to engage in activities are also excluded.The questionnaire was to be designedto comprise two sections including the first section on sociodemographic characteristics, and the second section included the mental wellbeing for making the adventure tourism factors compiledwith 15 factors. The scale was made using a 5-point Likert scale, in there one means the lowest mark and five was the highest mark.Then After the well-informed objective of the study questionnaire was provided based on interview mode. After completing the data collection all data were included in the Microsoft Excel sheet to analyze the data by utilizing SPSS version 20 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL).

III. Results, and Discussion

Initiate it was gathered the sociological data for identify the sample.

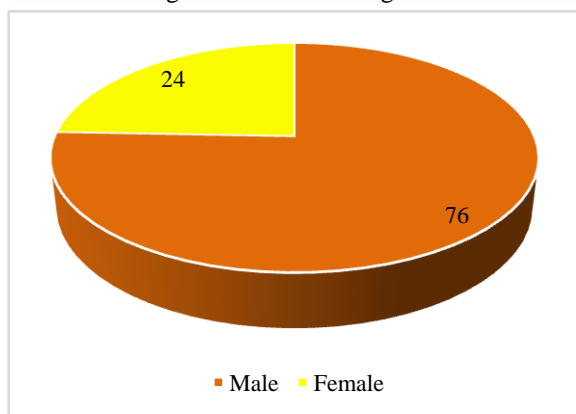


Figure1.Tourist with genders

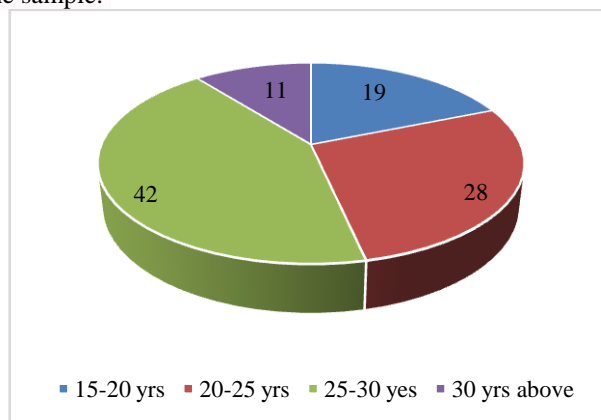


Figure2.Tourist with ages

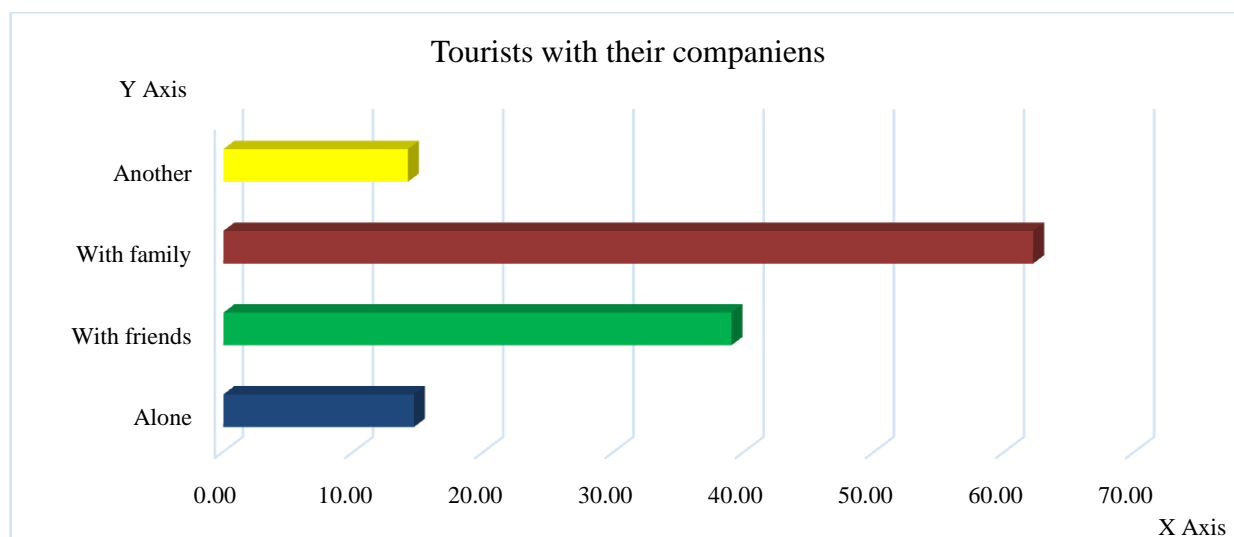


Figure3.Tourist with their companions
The study sample comprised non-local tourists with their perception of mental wellbeing factors. Seventy-six males

(76) made up the largest group, followed by twenty-four females (24) shown in Figure 1. Figure 2 shows the majority of visitors (42) were between the ages of 25 and 30, followed by visitors between the ages of 15 and 20 (19), 20 and 25 (28), and above 30yrs (11). Then observed non-local tourist participation and it was varied activity participation objectives and their perception. According to that, foreign visitors were participating in activities with 62.20% of their friends, 39.02% of their family, 14.63% of alone, and 14.17% of other individuals who were specifically visiting for tourism shown in Figure 3. It becomes clear during the conversation that they were visitors with a recreational intent and were here on business. student extremely rarely found.

In order to promote mental wellbeing through nature-based activities during a time of economic crisis, this study's significant findings recognized five important factors. The major goal of the present study was to discover the factors that lie behind demand in an adventure location in order to ensure the tourist industry's mental attraction over the long term, Results are shown in Table 1.

Table1.Motivational factors with the priorities level

	Motivation Factors for Activation base Adventure sports	Ranking the motivational factors in Activation base	Motivation Factors for Land base Adventure sports	Ranking the motivational factors in Land base	Motivation Factors for Water base Adventure sports	Ranking the motivational factors in water base	Average prioritizes
	Mean+ Median		Mean+ Median		Mean+ Median		
01. Thrill	4.32+4.00	1	4.43+5.00	1	4.00+4.00	1	2 8.27%
02. Requires zeal	3.58+4.00	7	3.56+4.00	5	3.42+3.50	8	12 6.15%
03. Spells status	3.24+3.00	13	3.09+3.00	13	2.92+3.00	14	6 6.86%
04. Builds confidence	3.50+4.00	9	3.49+4.00	6	3.48+3.50	5	8 6.45%
05. Helps in personality development	3.80+4.00	4	3.65+4.00	4	3.47+4.00	6	10 6.31%
06. Instills self-belief	4.38+4.00	5	3.33+3.00	10	3.42+3.00	11	11 6.26%
07. Creates unique identity	3.64+4.00	6	3.47+3.00	7	3.44+3.00	7	9 6.37%
08. Stress buster	3.10+3.00	14	3.05+3.00	15	3.83+4.00	2	3 7.84%
09. Helps in goal-setting	3.39+3.00	10	3.25+3.00	12	3.83+3.00	12	5 6.91%
10. Is challenging	3.39+3.00	11	3.44+3.00	8	3.43+4.00	9	13 6.10%
11. Requires toughness	3.05+3.00	15	3.07+3.00	14	3.02+3.00	13	14 6.12%
12. Builds sense of achievement	3.53+4.00	8	3.42+3.00	9	3.53+4.00	4	7 6.61%
13. Is a unique experience	3.93+4.00	3	3.94+4.00	3	3.42+3.50	10	4 7.46%
14. It is fun/adventure	4.18+4.00	2	4.10+4.00	2	3.66+4.00	3	1 8.63%
15. Improved technology has reduced risk	3.27+3.00	12	3.27+3.00	11	2.83+3.00	15	15 3.67%

The study's findings relevant to all participants merely showed that after participating in nature-based experiences, individuals experienced beneficial psychological effects or feelings of wellbeing. The scientists used terms like "increased sense of well-being", "stress-reduction," "restorative," and "psychological healing," to specifically describe these therapeutic advantages. The most significant factor was, "It is fun/Adventure," which has the most significant potential to explain the total variance, affecting 8.63% of the total of them. According to the studies, the fun/adventure factor contributes to tourists' contentment. The study also found that also supports escaping stress, tension, relationships, and escapism apart from fun and enjoyment (Sirgy, et al., 2010). The next factor was "Thrill" which reached 8.24% of the total variance. It is defined by a sudden feeling of excitement and pleasure (Buckley, 2018) explained by a behaviour related to the feeling of challenging to break the monotonous lifestyles of which they had. These researchers stated that the Thrill aspect results in satisfied guests with improved body image (Hennigan, 2010).

For the third factor, "Stress buster", the study has shown that it included 7.84% of the total variables and the study Rodriguez also has revealed outdoor camping also a way of stress release (Rodriguez, 2017). It is concerned with the physical and mental health of the foreign tourist and the reason for visiting an adventure destination scoping with resting, relaxing, getting away from the hustle, and escaping the monotonous life style of the daily routine tension and stress. Concerning the well being dimension of relaxation, Naidoo et al., found a relationship and refresh (Naidoo, et al., 2015). As well as Bichler and Peters also found it as a motivation for relaxation (Bichler & Peter, 2021). On the other hand, Pop et al., discovered that stress levels had decreased. In order to enhance the stress release component of adventure sports attraction, rest and relaxation places could also be incorporated into adventure sports travel along with Yoga practices (Pop, et al., 2023).

The quantity of quality the tourists perceive from and associated websites can also be influenced by functional and technical characteristics (Vassiliadis¹, et al., 2013). But the most identifies factors were the least average as the improved technology used for the reduced risk with 3.67% of the total variables. The study of the Arie also found that poor technological support also reduces foreign tourists' attraction due to lack of information and poor safety (Reichel, et al., 2001). The study of Zebrack, et al. included a month observation study and this study has found that there is a significant positive relationship between nature based adventure and mental health (Zebrack, B, et al., 2017). Future studies might attempt to approach the effects of multiple nature-based recreation activities done in different environments to identify the mental health outcomes.

IV. Conclusion.

Sri Lanka's economic culture and geographical differentiation provides huge facilitation for sustainable environmental relevant activity participation. Nature based adventure tourism is mostly based on environment and leisure activities with vigorous intensity, adventure, pleasure and well being. After the pandemic period, it was important to conduct the study for identifying demanded motivations factors for the tourism field associated with the mental well being. The studies shows, adventure tourism revealed that fun, thrill and stress bursting were the major motivational factors to engage of non-local tourist. Therefore, studies revealed that, non-local tourist arrived nature based adventure activities for overcome these components. Eventually, these findings can use adventure park owners/managers to implement activities to provide better service and increase tourist attraction with mental and physical well being. Future research could be beneficial when exploring the connection between travel goals and spending in adventure locations. It will be important to strengthen the adventure tourism attractions by offering tourist protection and building locations where adventurous activities like paragliding, snorkeling, trekking, and parasailing may be carried out in order to increase the competence mastery dimension for a mentally strong community.

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