

Rafting as a part of adrenalin tourism offer in the republic of croatia

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ABSTRACT

Sports and tourism are activities which in ancient times acted together so that sports tourism today is undoubtedly one of the most important industries which is characterized with increasing profits, without experiencing almost no aftershocks and repercussions of the global economic crisis. Modern tourism includes providing comfortable accommodation and healthy diet, but not neglecting the content of active leisure, recreation, sport, cultural relaxation with music and entertainment. The returning towards nature and reconnecting with tradition and their roots are pleasures that are increasingly required by the modern tourists. The modern passive lifestyle presupposes the development of new alternative forms of tourism related to the combination of active sport and relaxation, on the basis of which good health are maintained and physical and mental balance forces are restored. The second decade of the 21st century witnesses the active introduction on the international tourist market of specific tourist services aimed at those who are looking for strong sensations, and who are active users of extreme forms of tourism. Closely related to sports tourism is the adrenalin tourism, which can be defined as a type of tourism, involving exploration or travel with perceived (and possibly actual) risk, and potentially requiring specialized skills and physical exertion. Adrenalin tourism is characterized by its ability to provide the tourist with relatively high levels of sensory stimulation, usually achieved by including physically challenging experiential components. Adrenalin tourism is a gateway to break the routine, delving into strong physically and psychologically challenging tasks that can trigger profound ecstatic experiences. Also, adrenalin tourism helps in self-assessment of physical and emotional abilities. The aim of the study is to reveal the preconditions and conditions for the development of adrenalin tourism in the destination and to analyze and present main characteristics of rafting tourism destinations in republic of croatia. Inductive, deductive, and descriptive methods are used for the purpose of this work.

Keywords: Adrenalin tourism, Rafting, Sports tourism, Republic of Croatia

1. TOURISM AND SPORT

Adrenaline activity is a personal challenge for tourists in a natural or exotic environment, exploring new experiences with a certain risk or a controlled level of danger (Buckey, 2006, p. 91). In recent years there have been new trends in tourism caused by globalization, the emergence of new technologies, political changes, economic integration, environmental

concerns, etc. Adrenaline tourism is becoming more popular in the world, it has a positive impact on people, the environment and economic growth, and more and more tourist destinations want to develop this kind of tourism. In Europe, more than 50% of travel is related to sport, and active forms of vacation are the fastest growing segment of tourist demand (Bartoluci, Čavlek, 2007, p. 72).

Tourism and sport have always been linked to social phenomena. While in the old of Rome and Greece the sport was the initiator of the people's journey to visit great sporting events, in modern tourism sport has gained a wider role. Sport in modern tourism has not only an observational role - it is an important content of stay during which tourists are active participants in various sports activities (Bartoluci, 2003, p. 65). Contemporary tourism is marked by changes in all segments of business. The increasingly sharper market competition, changes in the environment, adaptation to the new system of market values and the change of affinity of tourists make it possible to demolish the traditional offer (Stipanović, Gračan, 2005, p. 205-213).

Today, the growing expectations of tourists are backed by media and advanced telecommunications, higher education and previous personal experience and knowledge. The same factors also affect the faster transmission of information and the ever-greater impact of mouth-to-mouth promotion. Innovative offers that, besides basic standards, also provide unusual experiences, surprises and incentives, are more and more present in tourism. Tourists get a special atmosphere or emotional advantage. All of this is sold on the tourist market and according to the needs of the tourists it creates offers oriented to the chosen demand of this kind of wants. That particular tourism demand has initiated specific forms of tourism such as adrenaline tourism.

2. ADRENALINE TOURISM AS AN ACTIVE HOLIDAY

Adrenaline tourism is an activity that takes place in an unusual, exotic, distant or desolate destination. It strives to be associated with a high level of participants' activity, mostly in the open space. Adventurous travellers want to experience different levels of risk, excitement and relaxation, while seeking for a personal challenge (Millington, Locke and Locke, 2001, p. 91). Adrenaline tourism refers to all tourist activities that contain two of the following three components: physical activity, interaction with cultural tradition and meeting with nature (Scheider et. al., 2008, p. 22). The research conducted by the Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA, 2017) has shown that tourists who enjoy adrenaline sports are craving for transformative experiences. In fact, instead of accepting transformation as a by-product of their pursuit of fun and excitement, the adventure travel actively promotes the desire for personal development and change.

Picture 1: Motivations for adventure travel (Adventure Travel Trade Association, 2017)



Adrenaline activities represent a personal challenge for tourists in a natural or exotic environment, exploring new experiences with a certain risk or a controlled level of danger. Adrenaline tourism promotes an active vacation in a preserved landscape with a dose of excitement, a contentiously complete program filled with fun and creativity, guided by well-trained and professional guides. Adventure travelers expect experience of different levels of risk, excitement and personal testing. Adventure sports are all sports activities that prefer speed, height, exceptional mental and physical effort, special equipment and a certain level of risk. Unlike conventional sports, the opponent here is not another man but a natural force or an obstacle, for whose overcoming, apart from persistence, requires good governance with a certain skill and responsibility (Millington, Locke and Locke, 2001, p. 92).

Adrenaline tourism is oriented towards staying in nature and natural resources, so it can be concluded that the basic resources of any destination that develops adrenaline tourism are precisely its natural attractions and the environment. This form of tourism is one of the selective forms of tourism based on active living in nature, mainly using its own power to advance, with the desire to make a direct acquaintance with destination.

It is believed that adrenaline tourism offers: an enhanced nature experience - the natural environment provokes a series of emotions, the excitement of which is crucial and separates tourists from everyday life; intellectual, physical or emotional risk and challenge, and

represents an internal tourist award, providing the opportunity for enjoyment, learning and self-development (Swarbrooke et al., 2003, p. 31).

The main characteristics of adrenaline tourism are (Buckley, 2006, p. 114):

- Use of the natural environment: participants are looking feeling of sensation and excitement, and not by observing nature, although these activities are not uncomfortable.
- Main motivation (risk, adventure) can be combined with others (fun, nature, landscape).
- The destination of adrenaline tourism must be adequately represented on the international market.
- Adventure tourists can use almost all types of tourist accommodation: camps, hostels, rural houses, hotels, apartments, etc.
- An adventurous tourist is usually young, although more and more adventurous sports are adapted by all ages. The most frequent group are tourists around thirty.
- In this form of tourism, seasonal changes have little impact.
- This form of selective tourism can be developed on a multitude of sites, including those of artificial origin.

The product of adrenaline tourism is a relatively well-defined and recognizable sector in tourism. Adventurous tours are commercial products and services that customers buy to engage in outdoor activities that are more exciting than observation and where the outdoor environment serves more as a foundation for activities than because of their landscapes, plants or animals (Buckley, 2006, p. 32).

3. DESTINATIONS OF ADRENALINE TOURISM

In many forms of tourism, especially those offering sun, sand and sea, tourists do not value destination itself that much as they value the price as a decisive factor. However, in some forms of tourism, especially in adrenaline tourism, the destination is of primary importance for tourists. The destination provides a key attraction that motivates tourists to travel. The destination does not only offer the attractions desirable by the adventurers. In addition to adrenaline activities that take place in nature, it also provides other tourist services such as accommodation, equipment, food, transport. Adrenaline tourism destinations can be typed in a number of ways (Swarbrooke et al., 2003, p. 126):

- Long-term destination vs. modern destination,
- Destination associated with certain types of activities,
- A destination that is exclusively based on adrenaline tourism vs. destinations where other types of tourism are also important,
- Adrenaline tourist destination oriented to the domestic market vs. destinations oriented mainly to the international market,
- A destination where adrenaline visit itself is due to climate, political tensions or lack of infrastructure vs. destinations that are comfortable to visit and offer facilities for adrenaline activities,
- Destination that actively promotes adrenaline tourism vs. destinations that do not encourage adrenaline tourism but attract tourists,

- A destination whose entire area offers opportunities for adrenaline tourism. where adrenaline activities are limited to individual locations.

Different regions of the world are associated with certain types of adrenaline tourism. A country can include a wide variety of adrenaline tourist destinations. Central and South America and the Caribbean have become almost synonymous for adventure travel.

North America encompasses a large space so every adventurer can find something for himself. The selection of activities includes rafting in the Grand Canyon, ice fishing in Alaska, horseback riding in the wild west, diving in the tropical waters of Florida. Deserts, rivers, mountains provide various opportunities for adventure activities.

South America has great popularity among the adventurers. Trekking by the Amazon's deep sprigs, biking to the volcano in Ecuador, diving on the Galapagos, several-day hiking in Patagonia, rafting in Chile, excursions to Machu Picchu, kayaking by Lake Titicaca, enable South America to be visited throughout the year. In the Caribbean, most adventure activities revolve around water like diving, sailing, surfing. Europe also provides some of the best adventure travels. Ireland, Scotland, England, Belgium and France offer some of the best hiking and biking trails. Germany, Switzerland, France and northern Italy are popular for skiing, hiking and climbing. Whether it is biking around the Tuscan villages, mountain climbing in Mont Blanc, trekking in the Dolomites, kayaking in the Mediterranean waters, sledding with dogs in the north of Sweden, the choice is diverse.

The Middle East offers hiking and camel riding in the deserts of Iran and Turkmenistan. Mountaineering and skiing are popular in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Jordan, Yemen and Oman are popular for diving in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. The desert hiking is offered in abundance especially in Oman, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.

Asia offers some of the most unexplored places in the world. Mongolia offers hiking through the Gobi Desert, and the Mounts of Songisan and Sorkasan in China are excellent for climbers. Smaller Japanese islands are well known for diving and surfing. In India, the safari is popular. Nepal is known for Mount Everest, but on the lower slopes it offers excellent climbing and hiking opportunities. Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia are excellent for water activities.

Australia and New Zealand offer hiking, kayaking, biking, ice climbing, and even bungee jumping in different landscapes, including forests, glaciers and some of the sumptuous coastline with plenty of opportunities for swimming, diving, surfing, kayaking and sailing.

According to Millington (2001, p. 98) and United World Travel Organization (UNWTO, 2001), the international adventure travel market covered over 7% of all international travels in

2000. It is estimated that the adventurous adventure tourism on the domestic and international market is about 60 million or 14% of all travel.

The main characteristics or adventures characteristics can be identified as: uncertain outcome, danger and risk, challenge, expected prize, novelty, stimulus and excitement, escape and separation, research and discovery, emotional opposition. It is difficult to give a universal definition of adrenaline tourism since adrenaline has different meanings for different people. Differences between nature tourism, eco tourism, adventure tourism, adventure travel, commercial expeditions, outdoor recreation are not clearly set. Generally, adventure tourism refers to the conduct of a commercial tour, where the main attraction is outdoor activity based on natural features of the location, mainly requires specialized equipment and is exciting for tourists (Buckley, 2006, p. 121).

4. RAFTING AS A SPECIFIC FORM OF TOURISM

Specific forms of tourism can be defined as a special group of tourist movements that are conditioned by a certain, dominant tourist motive driving tourists to visit destination whose tourist offer is adapted to the experience of the consumer's dominant interest.

Contemporary theorists emphasize the development of alternative (specific) forms of "soft" tourism as travels that are not massive, schematic and impersonal. Those forms of tourism are also known as responsible tourism, individual tourism, tourism of special forms (interest), alternative tourism, etc. and represent the opposite of the disadvantages brought by mass tourism, and their aim is to satisfy the special wishes and needs of modern tourists (Geić, 2011, p. 222).

Adrenaline tourism products make up a relatively well-defined and recognizable sector in tourism. Adrenaline tours are commercial products and services that customers buy to engage in outdoor activities that are more exciting than observation and where the outdoor environment serves more as a foundation for activities than because of their landscapes, plants or animals (Buckley, 2006, p. 32).

Rafting is a demanding and complex job for skippers and organizers, but for most of tourists, it's a key fun on the water. Rivers used to be seen as barriers to cross over or as traffic routes for boats. Today, most attractive and valuable are the rivers that descend from the mountains or go through canyons.

The simple raft, most likely one of the first waterborne vehicles, has become a boat with a miraculous adventurous spirit. Shuttles, originally the simplest type of vessel, have been used by many cultures. They are made of several bumps, thick boards or cans connected to the floating platform. The main similarity between the rafters from ancient and modern days is that they are relatively light and have a shallow gas. Because of this, rubber boats sailing on wild waters easily cross over and drift away from obstacles (Buckley, 2006, p. 32). Well

trained crews on the contemporary pneumatic inflator raft will bypass the dangerous currents in rivers with many rocks and elegantly overcome the rapids.

Rubber boats were originally made as rescue boats, and later the army began to use them to unload troops on the shore. After the Second World War, the American market overwhelmed the surplus of military rubber boats. Although these first vessels were heavy and unobtrusive, they soon became a popular means of exploring local rivers among the rafters.

The best time for rafting is during spring and autumn months, especially after heavy rains. Depending on the weight of certain stock on the rivers, people of all ages can choose rafting as an activity. They all consume it: adults, children, teenagers, business people, families, singles.

Regarding the degree of difficulty of the rafting path, they range from the initial calm rivers to the rivers with high waves and rapids. According to the international scale of demanding there are six degrees (Houge Mackenzie and Kerr 2014, 5-27): The first stage refers to calm rivers with a slow flow. The second stage implies a calm river with a slightly faster flow with a slight wave. The third stage refers to rivers with intermittent waves, medium speed and sometimes mild waterfalls (best for rafting and getting acquainted with the sport itself). The fourth stage is already for more experienced raiders, there is a chance to get out of the raft, the river is fast, the waves are unpredictable. The fifth level refers to areas where the river is exceptionally fast, the paths are very demanding, it requires extreme physical readiness and there is a possibility of injury. The sixth stage is extremely dangerous for life, these are rivers that have fast streams, dangerous waves and big rocks. Despite their great physical abilities, concentration and experience, many athletes leave their lives on these paths.

The table below shows the target markets as well as the sales promotion and marketing communications activities with the desired tourist segment when it comes to rafting.

Table 1: Activities of sales promotion and marketing communications with desired tourist segment (Main Plan and Tourism Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia, 2012, p. 72)

Target Markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recreational - a larger segment, often part of the main vacation, predominantly men of younger and middle age• Passionate - a smaller segment, focused on the challenge, satisfied with simpler accommodation, importance for them is interaction with other people, predominantly male middle aged and younger
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Activities of product development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of minimum standards for rafting centers • Acquisition of relevant, internationally recognizable licenses • Introduction of reputable certification systems • Offering small, themed accommodation facilities • Profiling several top rafting destinations • Attracting competitions and events • Establishment of a professionally run national adventure tourism association
Activities of merchandising and sales promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating an online information and sales platform specializing in adventure tourism • Making online guides, with B2B content about rafting tourism offerings for specialized brokers, clubs • Creating an online newsletter about the offer • Organizing study tours for specialized brokers • Participation in specialized fairs and events • Targeted direct sales • Development and sales of innovative programs • Encouraging the development of specialized tourism agencies for products of adrenaline and sports tourism with the offer of complex programs • Networking of local and regional tourism agencies and partnerships with global and specialized distributors
Activities of communication improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating an online information and sales platform specializing in adrenaline tourism • Organization of on-line and off-line information and education modules on the offer of adrenaline tourism for specialized brokers • Intensify public relations through specialized on and off line media • Organizing study trips for specialized journalists • Participation in specialized fairs and events

5. RAFTING TOURISM OFFER IN THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

In Croatia visitors who are interested in water-sports activities can find many offers, not only on the vast Adriatic coast which has excellent conditions for swimming and sports activities, but the interior of the country which offers excellent opportunities for rafting adventure with wild, sparkling waters through spectacular canyon clans located in the magnificent landscape of Croatia. Because of the variety of rivers and lakes, almost all variations can be imagined in canoe or kayak. You can choose a ride with less or more current water on fast rivers or light lakes.

A good rafting offer is available by the river Cetina, which flows into the Adriatic Sea in Omis and is a paradise for canoes. Its beauty is enchanting, located close to picturesque villages that have inherited a rich historical and archaeological heritage as well as the beautiful nature created for a perfect canoe trip. The river changes direction from the source to the sea mouth several times, and thus enables the possibility for different speeds in the wild waters. In higher areas it runs very quickly through deep canyons, and as it descends towards the sea the flow is slower and its width is increasing and it gives the kayakers the opportunity to pay attention to the beauty of the landscape. A unique rafting station is also at the mouth of the river Cetina (beside the beautiful sandy beach) that made its way through the magnificent big canyon. Less exciting, but beautiful and diverse is the River Dobra, located in the north-eastern part of Gorski kotar, which offers unlimited water fun for inexperienced canoeists and rafting novices, but it also makes wild rafting routes from the Gojak to Lesce power plant.

In northern Dalmatia, there is a river Zrmanja, a favorite among rafting fans, though much more demanding. The stream of river and some waterfalls represent a real challenge for kayakers, some of whom dare to cross larger waterfalls while others are holding smaller waterfalls and slimmer waters that are less adventurous but also exciting and interesting. Those who want to immerse their paddles in the water without speeding excitement can do it on the rivers Kupa, Mrežnica, Korana and Krka. These rivers offer first and foremost modest rafting adventure, but also wonderful impressions for nature lovers.

6. CONSLUSION

In the bustling and monotonous rhythm of today's lifestyle, a man cries for breath-taking moments to feel alive. Time has become the most precious currency. Tourists want every minute of their memories to be memorable. There is an ever-increasing need for "smartly spent" leisure time. Thanks to this, both in the world and in the Republic of Croatia, the trend of active tourism is recognized. Travel, besides the opportunity to meet new places and enjoyment, bring a chance to explore and try out new things. Among the most popular one is the adrenaline tourism recognized as a holiday that turns into an unforgettable adventure. Reserved for the bravest, adrenaline tourism brings a unique experience that, in addition to accelerated pulses, brings a new look to the place where tourists reside.

From rafting on fast streams to parachute and bungee jumping, the adrenaline-spicy tourism is a popular way of entertainment in the world, but also in the Republic of Croatia. The ever-increasing popularity of adrenaline sports and similar activities has stimulated the accelerated development of such tourism in Croatia over the last few years, especially when it comes to rafting tourism. The largest number of trails in Croatia are related to the third level paths where the flow of the river is moderate, with some waterfalls and adrenaline injections, but without any life threats. Although there is rafting in the northern part of Croatia, it is more famous in Gorski kotar and Dalmatia.

The most famous rafting destinations in the Republic of Croatia are located in Gorski kotar, at Risnjak National Park. One of the rivers that offers rafting opportunities is the river Kupa. During high tide rafter tourists can enjoy the natural beauty, while water levels are lower, the tour is possible by kayaking and canoeing. Apart from Kupa, there are rafting areas in the Mreznica river, which because of high waterfall in spring and late fall waterfalls and natural slides attracts rafters. The river Dobra attracts rafters with its "wild fall", while Korana with its magnificent beauty and quieter nature attracts nature lovers who like less speed.

The river tourism, which is very important for nature tourism, does not require big investments and constitutes the entire offer together with environmental, historical, archaeological, cultural, authentic values and other types of tourism. Republic of Croatia, which has rich natural resources, offers a significant potential with a variety of river sporting activities, especially rafting.

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