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INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCED RESEARCH (IJAR)

Article DOI: 10.21474/IJAR01/20954

DOI URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/20954>



RESEARCH ARTICLE

UNDERSTANDING ADVENTURE TOURISM INTENTIONS IN THE ANDAMAN ISLANDS: A THEORETICAL APPROACH TO EXPERIENCE-DRIVEN ENGAGEMENT

S. Varalaxmi

1. Ph.D Research Scholar Department of Commerce Annamalai University Anamalai Nagar, Chidambaram.

Manuscript Info

Manuscript History

Received: 27 March 2025

Final Accepted: 30 April 2025

Published: May 2025

Key words:-

Adventure Tourism, Andaman Islands,
Tourist Behaviour, Perceived Value,
Behavioural Intention

Abstract

Adventure tourism is gaining traction as a thrilling way to explore, challenge oneself, and connect with nature. The Andaman Islands, with their stunning biodiversity and landscapes, are a prime spot for this in India. This paper proposes a framework to understand what drives tourists to choose adventure tourism there, using the Theory of Planned Behaviour, Value-Belief-Norm Theory, and Experience Economy Framework. It pinpoints novelty seeking, environmental awareness, and social influence as key factors shaping tourists' intentions, with perceived value of adventure experiences acting as a mediator. The framework sheds light on how tourists make decisions in nature-based adventure travel. It provides practical insights for tourism marketers, policymakers, and destination managers to create sustainable, exciting adventure offerings. The paper also suggests directions for future research and testing.

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Introduction:-

Adventure tourism has become one of the most exciting segments of the worldwide travel market, driven by travellers' growing demand for distinctive, exciting, and experiential holidays. In contrast with traditional tourism, adventure tourism entails discovery or travel with some element of danger, physical activity, and contact with nature, usually to distant or foreign destinations. The Andaman Islands with their beautiful beaches, coral reefs, dense tropical rainforests, and facility for activities such as scuba diving, trekking, snorkelling, and sea kayaking provide an excellent environment for the cultivation of adventure tourism. However, though the area is so vast in potential, academic research on the psychological and Behavioural motivators of adventure tourism on the Andaman Islands is scarce. Understanding why tourists are participating in adventure tourism is paramount not only to marketers of tourism but also to policymakers and sustainability activists seeking to balance economic development with environmental protection. With changing travel habits towards experience-led and socially driven trends, classical models of tourism motivation may fail to capture the subtle drivers of contemporary adventure tourism. This requires a theory-based investigation that employs constructs like novelty seeking, environmental awareness, and social influence—components that inform how tourists perceive and select adventure experiences.

Ever wonder what drives someone to seek out thrilling adventures in a place like the Andaman Islands? This paper dives into that question, building on well-known ideas like the Theory of Planned Behaviour, the Value-Belief-

Corresponding Author:- S. Varalaxmi

Address:- Ph.D Research Scholar Department of Commerce Annamalai University Anamalai Nagar, Chidambaram.

Norm Theory, and the Experience Economy Framework. We're exploring what makes tourists eager to try adventure tourism in this stunning destination. The focus is on three key factors: the urge to try something new, care for the environment, and the influence of friends or social circles. These factors shape how much value—both emotional and practical—tourists see in adventure activities. Ultimately, we want to understand what sparks their desire to dive into these experiences. For many, it's about chasing novelty—craving fresh, exciting moments that break the monotony of everyday life. In the Andaman Islands, that might mean snorkelling vibrant coral reefs, exploring far-off islands, or connecting with local indigenous communities. For thrill-seekers, these unique experiences are what make adventure travel so irresistible.

Environmental consciousness is a measure of an individual's awareness of and concern for the natural world. With environmental sustainability increasingly considered in travel choices, eco-friendly tourists might be more likely to opt for destinations and activities that fit into their value system. The Andaman Islands, as an ecologically unique region, have been drawing an increasing number of travelers who prefer conservation and practices of responsible tourism. Social influence refers to the perceived encouragement or pressure from friends, relatives, or social media groups towards certain behaviors. In the present-day digitally interconnected world, travel choices are influenced by shared experiences and internet opinions. Adventure tourism in the Andamans is increasingly being highlighted in travel blogs, Instagram profiles, and YouTube channels, boosting its visibility and social popularity.

These three variables are hypothesised to affect the perceived value of adventure tourism experience, which further determines the intention to take part. Perceived value is a mediating variable, determining the way tourists assess the advantages of the experience relative to personal aspirations, price, and emotional satisfaction. High perceived value increases satisfaction and intensifies behavioural intention, and it is an important link in the decision-making process. By developing this theoretical model, the paper adds to the adventure tourism body of literature by presenting a complete picture of psychological and experiential drivers of tourist behaviour. In addition, it has practical applications for Andaman tourism stakeholders—aiding them to develop marketing campaigns, education programs, and sustainability policies that appeal to the changing demands of adventure tourists.

Review of Literature:-

Novelty Seeking (NS):

Lee et al. (2004) carried out a research to determine the segmentation of festival motivation by nationality and satisfaction. Through this research, novelty seeking is established as an important motivational factor in festival tourism, specifically targeting international tourists. The authors discovered that tourists with high novelty-seeking characteristics are likely to pursue new and unfamiliar experiences. Novelty seeking was positively correlated with tourist satisfaction and revisit intention, thus being a critical element in destination marketing. For adventure tourism in specific contexts such as the Andaman Islands, novelty seekers will be attracted to activities that provide novel natural environments and the element of surprise (e.g., scuba diving in virgin reefs). This research offers basic justification for bringing novelty seeking into the role of a primary independent variable.

Crompton (1979) came up with the "push and pull" motivations in tourism, where novelty was divided into a main push factor. The research highlighted that visitors are motivated by intrinsic wants such as a need to escape routine, rest, and exposure to new surroundings. Novelty seeking, specifically, portrays the urge to come across the unknown, which tends to prompt the individual to choose places that are diverse from their daily environment. Taking this to adventure tourism in the Andaman Islands, visitors might be attracted to isolated and distant places to fulfil this need for novelty and so buttress its role as an underlying driver in tourist choice decisions.

Yoon and Uysal (2005) established a new structural model to investigate the impact of motivation and satisfaction on destination loyalty. The outcomes showed that novelty seeking has a strong influence on tourist satisfaction, which in turn affects destination loyalty and Behavioural intention. The research proved that novelty-seeking consumers find more enjoyable and memorable unique and unusual travel experiences, leading to their overall satisfaction. In the Andaman Islands scenario, activity adventure like trekking through dense forests or snorkelling in diverse marine areas can satisfy novelty-driven motivations. This study confirms the incorporation of novelty seeking as a vital variable that influences tourists' Behavioural intentions through perceived satisfaction.

Assaker et al. (2011) analysed the influence of novelty seeking, satisfaction, and destination image on tourists' repeat patterns through a two-factor, non-linear latent growth model. The analysis revealed that novelty seekers are less likely to return to the same destination, but they report high satisfaction with novel experiences and are more inclined to practice positive word-of-mouth behaviour. This finding implies that novelty seeking is part of the perceived value generated by a travel experience, even if it does not lead to repeat visitation. For Andaman Islands

adventure tourism, this implies that providing one-of-a-kind experiences could be more vital than encouraging repeat visits, and hence novelty seeking is a key variable in experience design and destination branding. Pearce and Lee (2005) formulated the Travel Career Pattern (TCP) model to describe tourist motivations throughout their lifetimes. Novelty seeking was pinpointed by the research as a persistent and long-lasting motivation across different phases of a tourist's travel career. Although some other motivations would change with age and travel experience, novelty seeking was always a prime mover. The writers reiterated that first-time travellers, as well as those in the initial phases of their travel life cycle, tend to be adventure-oriented and exploratory in nature. This characteristic is particularly salient for Andaman Island adventure tourism, wherein young first-time tourists looking for novelty can serve as a viable marketing strategy. This research lends support to incorporating novelty seeking in theory frameworks investigating tourist behaviour.

Environmental Awareness (EA):

Hsu & Roth (1998) carried out research to explore environmental literacy in high school students and its effect on responsible environmental conduct. The research revealed that environmental concern—viewed as awareness and concern for environmental problems—is a major determinant of environmentally responsible attitudes and intentions. To tourism, this consciousness expresses itself in the form of visitors being more aware of sustainable actions and selecting destinations in keeping with ecological values. For the Andaman Islands, more environmentally conscious tourists are more probable to indulge in sustainable adventure tourism in the form of eco-diving or sustainable wildlife foraging, so this becomes a significant variable for the prediction of Behavioural intention.

Kaiser et al., (1999) examined the relationship between ecological behaviour and environmental attitude under the theory of planned behaviour. The research illustrated that awareness and knowledge of the environment lead to the creation of pro-environmental attitudes, which in turn influence ecological behaviours. In tourism, it means that those who are environmentally aware are more prone to advocate for eco-tourism and reduce adverse effects while traveling. This is very true for the Andaman Islands; a fragile environment where responsible tourist conduct is crucial to sustainability.

Ballantyne and Packer (2011) reviewed research investigating the influence of environmental interpretation on pro-environmental tourist behaviour. Research showed that tourists subjected to conservation messaging and nature-based education programs were more likely to adopt elevated environmental consciousness and exhibit environmentally responsible behaviour. In adventure tourism environments such as the Andaman Islands, services like eco-guides or educational signs may increase tourists' awareness of the environment, which results in more respect for coral reefs, marine life, and forest ecosystems.

Chiu et al., (2014) examined the effects of environmental concern on green Behavioural intentions in tourism. The results verified that environmental awareness has a significant effect on tourists' intention to engage in environmentally friendly travel practices and on choosing green tourism destinations. In adventure tourism, environmentally aware tourists tend to prefer providers with sustainable practices. This has implications for Andaman Islands adventure tourism, where environmental management and sustainable infrastructure are the differentiating factors.

Han et al., (2010) investigated the interaction between environmental concern and Behavioural intention towards environmentally friendly tourism. The researchers discovered that environmental awareness predicts both visiting eco-destinations and taking environmentally friendly actions as a visitor. They applied an extended Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) framework, including environmental concern as an essential attitudinal factor. In the case of the Andaman Islands, this means tourists who are more aware of environmental issues may be more motivated to participate in low-impact adventure tourism, such as kayaking or nature trekking.

Social Influence (SI):

Bearden and Etzel (1982) carried out early work on the social influence on consumer decision-making through research on roles of reference groups and social norms. They developed that individuals' decisions, including travel decisions, are significantly influenced by opinions and behaviours of family members, friends, and significant others. For holidaymakers, particularly for those engaged in adventure tourism, suggestions and acceptance by respected social groups can significantly influence destination choice and activity involvement. Social influence is also paramount when applied to the context of the Andaman Islands because tourists tend to use recommendations from peers or social media influencer endorsements as they choose to participate in adventures such as scuba diving or hiking.

Cialdini and Goldstein (2004) investigated the psychological processes driving social influence such as obedience to authority, conformity, and social proof. Their review highlighted the fact that individuals tend to follow perceived social norms in actions when faced with novel situations such as tourism to unfamiliar countries. Social influence in adventure tourism can lead tourists to venture into novel experiences and adopt behaviours supported by their peer groups or admired figures. Transferring this to the Andaman Islands, travellers could be encouraged to take part in green adventure sports when they see that their social networks prioritize these kind of activities, highlighting the ability of social influence to mold tourist behaviour.

Hsu et al., (2012) conducted an empirical investigation into the influence of social influence on online holiday purchase decisions, concentrating on social networking platforms and consumer-generated content including reviews and ratings. Their findings indicated that social influence has a dramatic effect on tourists' decisions, with positive online ratings making it more likely to choose particular destinations and adventure sports. The growing significance of electronic word-of-mouth within the travel sector indicates social influence through social media platforms is a leading force influencing tourists' intentions. In the case of the Andaman Islands, this implies that maintaining positive social buzz and influencer participation can maximize the appeal of adventure tourism products.

Lee et al., (2010) examined the impact of social norms and social influence on environmentally responsible behaviours among tourists. They found that tourists are more likely to adopt sustainable tourism behaviour when they feel that their social reference groups have appreciation for environmental conservation. Social influence is therefore a mediator that promotes pro-environmental behaviour among travellers. In the ecologically fragile Andaman Islands, the use of social influence to encourage sustainable adventure tourism can assist in preserving natural resources while meeting social motivations of tourists.

Sparks and Browning (2011) examined social influence in the decision process of experiential travel, with a focus on how social comparison and social acceptance needs influence travel decisions. Their work identified that tourists tend to choose destinations and activities based on what is considered desirable by their peers and publish their experiences on social media to earn the approval of others. This generates feedback where social influence affects both pre-trip and post-trip behaviours. For the Andamans, tapping into this social phenomenon via strategic narrative and social media involvement has the potential to increase adventure tourism by inviting tourists to pursue new and socially endorsed experiences.

Perceived Value of Adventure Activities (PVAA):

Zeithaml (1988) presented an early conceptualization of perceived value as the customer's general judgment of a product or service in terms of how much is received versus given. She focused on the fact that perceived value is not simply price, but rather quality, benefits, and emotional gratification are also involved. In tourism, perceived value becomes the main factor in determining tourists' satisfaction and their ability to revisit or refer a destination. For Andaman Islands' adventure tourism, tourists evaluate value in terms of the quality of adventure activities like scuba diving, trekking, and wildlife sightings against values such as price, time, and effort. This would imply that value perceived through the balancing of cost and experience quality is central to the attraction and retention of tourists.

Sweeney and Soutar (2001) elaborated on perceived value by conceptualising the PERVAL scale, comprising four dimensions: emotional value, social value, quality/performance value, and price/value for money. Their study proved that perceived value is indeed multidimensional and has a significant impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty intentions. Of particular importance to adventure tourism, emotional value, as a result of excitement, thrill, and novel experiences, is a significant driver of tourists' overall value perception. Social value, for instance, status enhancement through the sharing of exotic adventure experiences with friends, reinforces perceived value. Hence, in the case of the Andaman Islands, marketing efforts need to emphasize not just functional quality but also the emotional and social values to enhance perceived value.

Petrick (2002) explored perceived value in cruise tourism but gave findings widely relevant to experiential tourism. He made a distinction between cost-effectiveness (monetary value) and experiential value (quality of experience and personal enrichment). Tourists' perceptions of being offered greater experiential value were reported to have a high impact on their satisfaction and Behavioural intentions like loyalty and positive word-of-mouth. In this context, attributing this to Andaman Islands' adventure tourism, visitors who feel that their investment returns in terms of rich, memorable experiences are likely to revisit or refer others to the destination, highlighting the need to manage price and experience quality.

Chen and Tsai (2007) focused on the role of perceived value in driving destination loyalty. Their research highlighted that perceived value acts as a mediator between tourists' motivations (such as novelty seeking or environmental consciousness) and their Behavioural intentions like revisiting or recommending the destination. Specifically, in adventure tourism, perceived value integrates various motivational factors into a unified perception that influences loyalty. For the Andaman Islands, ensuring tourists perceive high value through authentic, adventurous, and eco-friendly experiences will foster loyalty and sustainable tourism growth.

Cronin, Brady, and Hult (2000) discussed the relationships between service quality, perceived value, customer satisfaction, and Behavioural intentions within service settings. They concluded that perceived value is an antecedent that is significant in determining satisfaction, and together they have a powerful influence on consumers' repurchase or word-of-mouth behavioural intentions. In adventure tourism environments such as the Andaman Islands, offering high quality service (e.g., good-quality guides, safe and well-maintained equipment) increases perceived value, thus customer satisfaction and supporting desirable Behavioural outcomes such as repeat visitation and recommendations.

Intention to Participate in Adventure Tourism (IPAT):

Ajzen (1991) suggested the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), which is still one of the most well-known frameworks for explaining Behavioural intentions, including adventure tourism participation. In TPB, intention is predicted based on attitudes toward the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived Behavioural control. In the adventure tourism scenario, tourist positive perceptions about adventure activities (e.g., thrill-seeking, nature appreciation), social group or family influence (subjective norms), and perceived control over decision to perform such activities safely and comfortably (perceived Behaviour control) all determine their intention to undertake the activity in conjunction. The theory has been investigated extensively in tourist contexts, and the role of psychological and social determinants is favoured in explaining tourists' adventure participation decisions. For the Andaman Islands, promoting positive attitudes through marketing, encouraging supportive social norms, and minimizing perceived barriers (such as safety issues) can effectively increase participation intentions.

Prayag and Ryan (2012) examined the determinants of tourists' Behavioural intentions to participate in adventure tourism and concluded that perceived risk and destination image have significant impacts on the intention to participate. They found that although adventure tourists are driven by excitement and novelty, safety concerns and risk management can deter them from participating. Furthermore, a pleasant destination image, encompassing natural scenery and excellent adventure services, reinforces tourists' confidence and eagerness to undertake adventure activities. For the Andaman Islands, marketing a good safety record, risk reduction practices, and an attractive destination image would ease risk perceptions, thus reinforcing tourists' intention to take part in adventure tourism activities.

Pomfret (2006) emphasized that psychological drivers like sensation seeking and novelty seeking play key roles in determining the intention to take part in adventure tourism. Travelers inspired by the quest for new, intense, and challenging experiences have more powerful intentions to practice adventure activities. Pomfret's work points out that adventure tourists intentionally pursue settings offering excitement and the possibility to challenge their physical and intellectual limits. Within the context of the Andaman Islands, which provide varied adventure opportunities such as scuba diving, snorkelling, and trekking, these motivations are central to tourism attraction. Destination management should thus aim to craft and market adventure activities that fulfil these intrinsic psychological needs to maximize participation intentions.

Swarbrooke and Horner (2007) explored the impact of demographic characteristics and past experience on adventure tourism participation intentions. Based on their findings, younger tourists, those with higher education levels, and those who have had past adventure experience are more prone to having a future intention to engage in adventure tourism activities. Further, past positive experience with adventure tourism positively influences future participation intention through the enhancement of confidence and the elimination of uncertainty. In the case of the Andaman Islands, this would mean that marketing to youth, educated tourists and promoting repeat visitation through high-quality adventure experiences can help increase participation intentions meaningfully. Also, presenting initial adventure packages can bring in new starters and transform them into frequent adventure tourists.

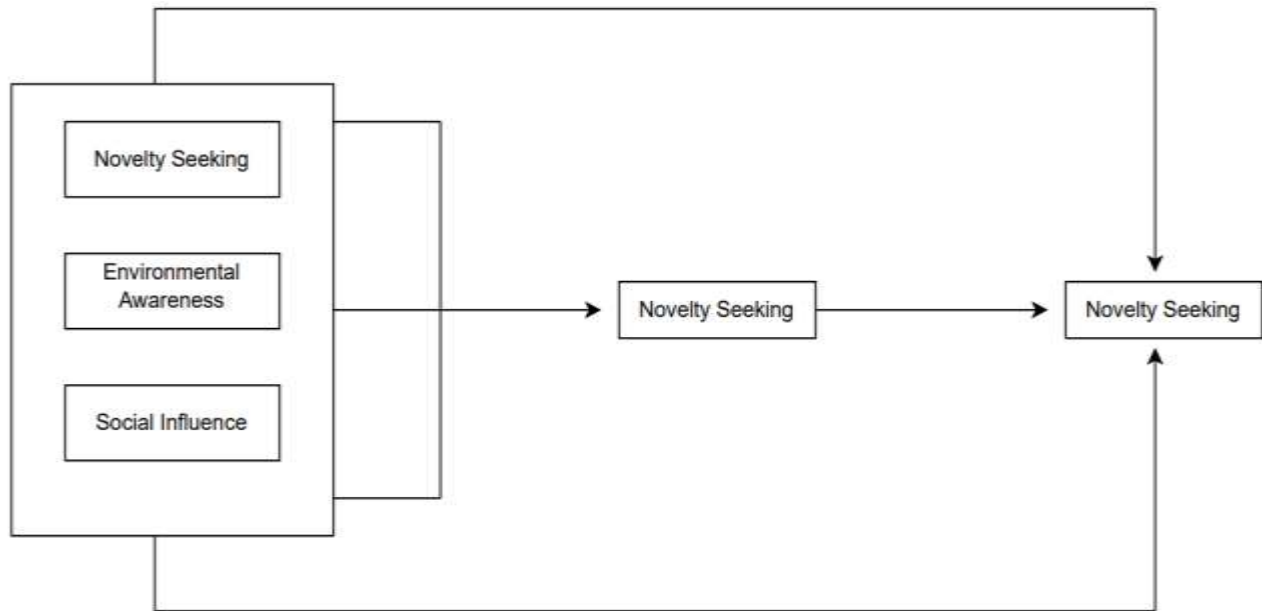
Huang et al., (2010) examined the influence of environmental consciousness and attitudes towards sustainable tourism in determining tourists' intention to engage in nature-based and adventure tourism. They discovered that tourists who have high environmental values and a desire for sustainability in tourism activities are more likely to engage in nature-based eco-friendly adventure tourism activities. These visitors want activities that not just give thrills and excitement but also support conservation and local well-being. This fits well for the Andaman Islands,

where ecological sensitivity is most important. Encouraging responsible adventure tourism practices that are aligned with environmental consciousness can increase the intention of environmentally conscious tourists to engage while making sustainable tourism development possible.

Conceptual Framework

Conceptual model of this study describes the inter-linkages among the variables that shape tourists' intention to engage in adventure tourism in the Andaman Islands. It combines independent variables like Novelty Seeking, Environmental Awareness, and Social Influence, with Perceived Value as the mediator, and Intention to Participate as the dependent variable. This model offers a systematic way to comprehend how these variables interact and influence tourists' behaviour and decision-making.

Figure 1:- Theoretical Framework.



Discussion:-

Literature shows that Novelty Seeking takes a central position in encouraging tourists to take part in adventure tourism activities. Those tourists that have high novelty-seeking scores are attracted to novel, exciting, and unknown activities, which the Andaman Islands abundantly offer through its varied adventure activities like scuba diving and jungle trekking. This inherent motivation not only strengthens tourists' satisfaction but also positively impacts their intention to engage and return, highlighting the significance of servicing this psychological characteristic in tourism advertising and product development.

Environmental Concern is another important driver of tourists' intention to participate, especially for ecologically fragile places such as the Andaman Islands. Findings reveal that more environmentally conscious tourists prefer responsible and sustainable tourist practices. Environmental awareness generates a preference for environmentally friendly adventure activities that leave little impact on the environment, which increases their perceived value of the destination. Thus, incorporating environmental sustainability into adventure tourism can appeal to environmentally conscious tourists and ensure long-term destination sustainability.

Social Influence plays a major role in shaping tourists' Behavioural intentions by influencing perceptions and justifying decisions through peer groups and social networks. Social norms and peer suggestions increase the confidence and eagerness of tourists to use adventure tourism. When allied with perceived value—resulting from high-quality services, emotional satisfaction, and social image—these variables combined induce tourists' intention to take part. This calls for destination managers to utilize social influence through word-of-mouth, social media, and community participation to enhance the attractiveness of the Andaman Islands as a leading premier adventure tourism destination.

Conclusion:-

Literature highlights the significant influence of psychological, environmental, and social variables in forming tourists' intentions to engage in adventure tourism. The desire for novelty is the driving force behind tourists seeking novel and exciting experiences, and environmental consciousness promotes sustainable and responsible interaction with nature-based tourism. Social influence also supports these intentions by securing social approval and support. Perceived value is a mediating factor that converts these variables into positive Behavioural intentions. For the Andaman Islands, strategically managing these variables in terms of targeted marketing, sustainability initiatives, and participation with the local community can maximize tourist engagement and contribute to sustainable expansion of adventure tourism in this environmentally delicate area.

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