


Chapter 11

Tourism Marketing: Perspective of Visual Behavior in Adventure Sports

Juan Carlos Castro

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5371-9727>

Universidad Tecnica de Ambato, Ecuador

ABSTRACT

People visiting different destinations around the world demand that tourist attractions be showcased before being visited. This drives us to study which types of adventure tourist attractions arouse greater interest among potential visitors, with the aim of optimizing communication in the city of Baños de Agua Santa in Ecuador. An eye-tracking-based design was used with 42 male and female participants, who were shown adventure images according to visual path-oriented pairings. Among all fixations, it is men who prevail in visual scanning, focusing on action elements, while women contribute with greater peripheral fluency in visual elements and their processing. There is a marked coincidence in the visual attraction of rafting between both sexes, as a group activity within the set of sports considered adventure sports. Thus, the data set shows a certain dominance by the male target in fixations on adventure images, probably rooted in competitive culture, defined by the covert action around the practice of these sports, which involves adventure and nature.

1. INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, visual stimuli are leading us to a visual culture (Burri, 2012) that has been exploited by tourism marketing for the promotion of destinations and their attractions in different regions of the world (Jiang et al., 2024; Wisnujati et al., 2024). This has increased the visibility of many destinations and, in the same way,

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-6289-1.ch011

has increased competition among them, aiming to enhance their image with visual resources used in tourism marketing strategies.

In this way, tourism marketing becomes a driver for the use of images or photographs (Li et al., 2024) of recreational activities, landscapes, adventure sports, and other attractions, as visual means for the promotion and commercialization of destinations. This is based on tourist attractions that establish a competitive position (González et al., 2023; Navarro et al., 2023; Saqib, 2019), playing a key role in developing a positive image in target markets. Thus, tourism marketing emphasizes the use of images as a means of communication, incorporating people to enhance realism (Zhang et al., 2023), interpreted and influenced by potential visitors in various media to become factors that affect their purchasing decisions and behaviors.

From the above, it is clear the importance of images of adventure sports as tourist attractions (Mihai et al. 2023) for the promotion and marketing of destinations, as elements that capture attention and enhance social presence, as well as the attractiveness and intention of viewers to visit the destination (Filieri et al., 2021; Roy et al., 2021). Undoubtedly, the effect that images provoke when exposed to potential visitors in various media is a topic that is receiving increasing attention within tourism marketing research.

Despite its importance, greater effort is still needed to study the phenomenon of images of adventure sports as attractions of a destination (Hunter, 2012; Ye & Tussyadiah, 2011). In this way, through the analysis of images of adventure sports and their representation in human visual signals, measured through eye tracking, it is expected to find which images related to the practice of adventure sports (rafting, bungee jumping, canyoning, paragliding) are more attractive to the male target audience compared to the female audience (Calderón et al., 2024; Wang & Sparks, 2016).

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. A Glance at the Tourism Sector

Tourism has emerged as one of the primary sectors contributing to the economic development of countries worldwide (Díaz, 2012; Holik, 2016; Moral, 2016; Mihalič, 2014; Orgaz & In 2015, there was an increase of 52 million tourists, representing a 4.6% rise compared to 2014. This resulted in revenues of \$1.186 billions, marking the sixth consecutive year of growth since the 2009 crisis, despite the influx of visitors, currency fluctuations, oil prices falling, and insecurity during that period (World Tourism Organization, 2016; World Travel & Tourism Council, 2017). Thus, international visitors movements worldwide has been steadily increasing, rising from 25 million in 1950 to approximately 1.2 billion in 2015. This growth has reflected

32 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/tourism-marketing/367397

Related Content

Online Teaching and Learning Amidst COVID-19

Ashok Asthanaand Swati Srivastava (2023). *Measuring the Effectiveness of Organizational Development Strategies During Unprecedented Times* (pp. 176-189). www.irma-international.org/chapter/online-teaching-and-learning-amidst-covid-19/326538

Innovative Approaches to Building Enterprise Risk Management in Emerging Economies: The Case of Mexico's Grupo Proeza

Ilse Patricia Lopez de la Cruz, Alasdair James Marshall, Udechukwu Ojiako, Serkan Ceylanand Fefang Lin (2021). *Innovation Management and Growth in Emerging Economies* (pp. 133-154). www.irma-international.org/chapter/innovative-approaches-to-building-enterprise-risk-management-in-emerging-economies/264633

Information Systems Governance and Industry 4.0: People as a Central Link

Pedro Fernandes Anunciação, Fernando Gonçalvesand João Pimenta (2021). *Reviving Businesses With New Organizational Change Management Strategies* (pp. 217-228). www.irma-international.org/chapter/information-systems-governance-and-industry-40/280455

Public-Private Partnerships in the Education Sector: Best Practices and Challenges

Vaishali Mahajan, Kannan Rajagopaland R. Meena Kumari (2025). *Public Private Partnerships for Social Development and Impact* (pp. 369-388). www.irma-international.org/chapter/public-private-partnerships-in-the-education-sector/374192

Tuhu: Changing China's Automotive Aftermarket

Chenyu Wu (2025). *Cases on Chinese Unicorns and the Development of Startups* (pp. 291-306). www.irma-international.org/chapter/tuhu/357072